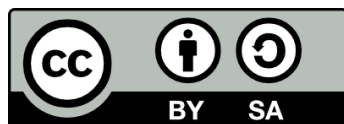




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From the World of Yesterday to the Europe of Tomorrow: On Commitment, Ethics, and Europe in the Works of Stefan Zweig

David Fontanals Garcia



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UNIVERSITAT DE
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**From the World of Yesterday to the Europe of
Tomorrow: On Commitment, Ethics, and Europe in
the Works of Stefan Zweig**

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Programa de doctorado

Estudios lingüísticos, literarios y culturales

Línea de investigación

Construcción y representación de identidades culturales

AGRADECIMIENTOS

A mis directores, el Dr. Rodrigo Andrés y la Dra. Loreto Vilar, por permitirme crecer como investigador, dejarme recorrer mi propio camino (aunque siempre presentes) y, en especial, por el empujón final de estos últimos meses.

A Rodrigo Andrés, Cristina Alsina, Joana Masó y Lorena Fuster por brindarme valiosas oportunidades como investigador y por ofrecerme un lugar intelectual y emocional al que regresar tras la finalización de este proyecto; sin duda, es el mejor premio.

A mis compañeras del Centre Dona i Literatura / Centre ADHUC, por las vivencias, risas y por compartir conmigo de manera cómplice el camino hacia la tesis. A Helena González, por darme mi espacio en el centro de investigación, y escuchar mis sugerencias y propuestas.

En cuanto a los contenidos de estas tesis, quiero agradecer a Helena González su sugerencia de trabajar *Brasilien* para una de sus clases, lo que me llevó eventualmente a repensar los límites de la Europa de Zweig. A Joana Masó, por acogerme en su proyecto Tosquelles, lo que me llevo a incluir, en mi intento de releer *Die Welt von Gestern*, las reflexiones del pensador francés en torno a la vivencia del fin del mundo. También quiero agradecerle sus sugerencias bibliográficas en cuanto a la noción de *engagement*. A Marleen Rensen, por las charlas sobre Zweig en Brno y sus sugerencias bibliográficas en el campo de los Transnational Biography Studies. Por último, me gustaría agradecer a Stephan Resch haber compartido sus conocimientos sobre Zweig, así como sus numerosos contactos con otros investigadores. Espero que esta tesis sea el punto de partida de muchos proyectos conjuntos.

A Arturo Larcati y Mark H. Gelber quienes, como leyendas de los estudios de Stefan Zweig, me animaron a seguir, dándole el visto bueno al proyecto en nuestros breves encuentros en Barcelona y Zaragoza. A la Internationale Stefan Zweig Gesellschaft, que respondió a mi llamada de auxilio cuando no sabía por dónde empezar. Especialmente, a Hildermar Holl y Tilman Winterling, por mantener la comunidad de zweigianos unida, por su voluntad de acogerme en Salzburg y dar difusión a mi trabajo. A la gente del DLA-Marbach, que han conseguido crear en la idílica aldea de Marbach am Neckar un pequeño paraíso para todo investigador. Mis tres meses allí fueron fundamentales para que haya podido llegar hasta aquí.

A mi familia, por interesarse por el proyecto, por respetar su magnitud y, sobre todo, por contribuir a él con recomendaciones, por estar alerta a las apariciones de Zweig en los medios, y por querer escuchar con paciencia mis intentos de explicar la tesis.

A todos aquellas y aquellos que, desde que empecé este proyecto en 2014, me han transmitido su pasión por Zweig, su interés en la tesis y, en definitiva, sus mejores deseos para que el proyecto llegara a buen puerto. En parte, esta tesis también se ha fraguado en los pasillos y aulas de las facultades de Filología e Historia de la Universidad de Barcelona, así como en el Archivo y en el CRAI de la Facultad de Historia, que me acogieron emocional y materialmente en los momentos más complicados. Igualmente, a todos aquellas y aquellos que habéis pensado el proyecto y, viendo alguna de las apariciones fulgurantes del Zweig ‘trending topic’, me habéis mandado un mensaje para que estuviera a la última (algo no siempre fácil en estas circunstancias).

Por último, a Lara, por estar allí hasta el último segundo, por cubrirme las espaldas a todos los niveles, por querer hacer infinitos sacrificios porque creía en mí y en el proyecto. Y para que no se queje: a Arthur Guinness y Lady Macbeth, mis incansables compañeros de oficina.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	9
ABBREVIATIONS	11
PREFACE	15
INTRODUCTION	23
I. The Aesthetic and Political Reception of Stefan Zweig’s Work	23
II. The “(A)/Politics” of Writing: The ‘Troubled’ Reception of Stefan Zweig as a Committed Writer.....	40
CHAPTER I: Figures of Commitment in the Works of Stefan Zweig	49
1.1. Suprapersonal (Self-)Writing? An Introduction to Stefan Zweig’s Narrative of Commitment.....	52
1.1.1. How do I tell my Story beyond Myself?	60
1.1.2. From the Formation of the Writer to the Making of the Intellectual in <i>Die Welt von Gestern</i> and Other Autobiographical Texts by Stefan Zweig.....	66
1.2. The Commitment of Stefan Zweig, the Writer, before the First World War	81
1.2.1. Translation and Cultural Mediation in the Way Towards Europe.....	90
1.2.2. “Verhaeren war für mich eine Entscheidung”: Singing the Modern Times and the European Dream	96
1.3. Responding to the First World War: The ‘Birth’ of Stefan Zweig the Intellectual	111
1.3.1. Stefan Zweig’s Response(s) to the First World War.....	113
1.3.2. Jeremias: The Prophet of Suffering and Defeat.....	127

1.4. Interwar Period and Second World War: Responding to Totalitarianism (1918-1942).....	155
1.4.1. Romain Rolland au-dessus de la mêlée: The Intellectual as a Moral Authority	161
1.4.2. Virata and the Quest Against Violence in “Die Augen des ewigen Bruders”	200
1.5. The Artist’s Commitment in Exile (1934-1942)	212
1.5.1 The Mission of the Intellectual.....	214
1.5.2. Stefan Zweig’s Historical Turn	234
1.5.3. Erasmus: Mediation and the Third Way.....	241
1.5.4. Castelli: ‘The Man I Should Like to Be’	279
1.5.5. Cicero: The Committed Exile.....	297
1.5.6. Montaigne: <i>Rester soi même</i>	303
CHAPTER II - BUILDING A ‘EUROPEAN’ WELTANSCHAUUNG: THE ORIENTATION(S) OF STEFAN ZWEIG’S COMMITMENT.....	317
2.1. The historical narrative of <i>Die Welt von Gestern</i> : The Roots of Zweig’s Utopian ‘Europe’	319
2.1.1. Writing in the Apocalypse: The Mental and Experiential Framework of the End of The World.....	326
2.1.2. The Nostalgic Alternative?.....	339
2.1.3. From the Past to the Future: Stefan Zweig’s Philosophy of History.....	344
2.1.4. Longing for a ‘Past’ Utopia? Desire, Failure and Redemption in Stefan Zweig’s European <i>Weltanschauung</i>	371

2.1.5. The Materializations of Zweig’s ‘European’ Utopia.....	386
2.1.6. Between the World of Yesterday and the Land of the Future: Zweig’s ‘Utopia’ Beyond Europe— <i>Brasilien</i> (1941).....	402
2.2. Stefan Zweig’s Europe: From an Identity Paradigm to an Ethical Program	421
2.2.1. Looking for ‘Europe’ in the World of Yesterday	423
2.2.2. A Saga of ‘Great Europeans’	433
2.2.3. Striving Towards the ‘Common’ European.....	456
2.2.3.1. <i>Humanism or Stefan Zweig’s Commitment to the ‘Human’</i>	492
2.2.3.2. <i>From Peace to Cohabitation: Stefan Zweig’s Articulation of a Discourse of Non-Violence</i>	525
2.2.3.3. <i>“The Freest of Persons, a Fanatic of Liberty” : On Stefan Zweig’s Ethics of (Radical) Freedom</i>	556
2.2.3.4. <i>Between the Universal and the Particular: Stefan Zweig’s Beyond-the- National Commitment</i>	576
CONCLUSIONS	603
WORKS CITED	627

SUMMARY

In July 1941, Stefan Zweig (1881-1942), finished the first draft of his memoirs, which he titled *Blick auf mein Leben*. One month later, in August 1941, he and his wife Lotte would leave for Brazil never to return. The last years of Zweig's life were surrounded by an impending sense of doom. In this context, his autobiography, which was finally published posthumously in 1942 as *Die Welt von Gestern*, emerged as a farewell from someone—an Austrian, a Jew, a writer, a pacifist, and above all, a European—who wished to leave his testimony for posterity, who believed that he had the duty to bear witness, to pass down to the next generations his hopes and dreams and the story of how these had been shattered twice by the forces of nationalism and war. The current scenario of Zweigian Studies, marked by an incipient Zweig 'revival', coincides with a moment in history when the need to rethinking and redefine our common spaces of cohabitation has become an imperative. This dissertation examines the intellectual and committed dimension of Stefan Zweig's oeuvre as it crystallizes around the idea of Europe. It seeks, above all, to question and problematize the understanding of Stefan Zweig as an 'uncommitted', 'silent' writer which has dominated a significant part of the critical reception of his works since the nineteen thirties.

With *Die Welt von Gestern* as the point of departure of my reflections, given the text's unique combination of Zweig's life-story with the construction of a collective, historical account, the Introduction aims to reconstruct and assess the reception of Stefan Zweig's works and figure, both from an aesthetic and a political perspectives. Especially, it addresses the question of Zweig's 'politics' and 'apoliticism' as it is crucial in the configuration of his committed responses. Chapter I examines a selection of Zweig's works in order to analyze how his commitment—to Europe, broadly speaking—informed the construction of his public, authorial persona and resulted in the articulation of a narrative of commitment. After considering the textual specificities of Zweig's personal discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern* in an attempt to establish the parameters that inform

Zweig's self-writing, this chapter leads us through a succession of Zweigian intellectuals, from Émile Verhaeren, Jeremias and Romain Rolland to Erasmus, Castelli and Michel de Montaigne. In doing so, it aims to provide a critical assessment of the way(s) in which Zweig constructed his figures of intellectuality, that is to say, of how he negotiated through those figures his commitment to a set of values and, above all, to a vision of the world (*Weltanschauung*). In doing so, Chapter I reveals the difficulties, contradictions and limitations that emerge throughout Zweig's articulation of his beliefs and ideas in the public sphere.

Chapter II examines the construction of Zweig's 'European' project and *Weltanschauung* as the main goal or enterprise towards which the Austrian writer orients the figures of commitment discussed in the previous chapter, their 'intellectual' efforts and responses. More specifically, I focus my analysis on three main valences or functions of Zweig's 'Europe'. On the one hand, in its potential to become an 'identity' paradigm and affiliation, I distinguish between Europe's individual and collective dimensions. On the other, I conclude my reflections in Chapter II by considering the possibilities of discussing Zweig's 'Europe' as an ethical program. In my reading, Zweig's ethical ('European') program emerges as the core of Zweig's commitment, the foundations of his utopian 'Europe', allowing us to consider the possibility of expanding the Austrian writer's *engagement* beyond the fight for the 'spiritual' union of Europe. In this sense, it becomes the link between Zweig's figures of commitment and his 'European' project. In sum, I argue that at the center of Zweig's commitment lies an ethical program made up of four essential notions— human(ism), peace, freedom, and post-nationalism— that invites us to travel from the Zweig's world of yesterday to the Europe of tomorrow.

ABBREVIATIONS

“1914” = “1914 und Heute”

“AG” = “Aufruf zur Geduld”

“AR” = André Rousseaux “Aujourd’hui, un homme comme Érasme serait on ne peut plus nécessaire”

“Autobiography 1914” = “Autobiographische Skizze”

“Autobiography 1922” = “Stefan Zweig, Einleitung”

“Autobiography 1936” = “Stefan Zweig”

“BD” = “Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus”

BEGEGNUNGEN = *Begegnungen mit Menschen, Büchern, Städten*

BEWARE = *Beware of Pity*

BRASILIEN = *Brasilien. Ein Land der Zukunft*

“BvS” = “Berta von Suttner”

“BUCHMENDEL” = “Buchmendel” in *Buchmendel: Erzählungen*

“CASANOVA” = “Casanova” in *Drei Dichter ihres Lebens: Casanova, Stendhal, Tolstoi.*

CASTELLIO = *Castellio gegen Calvin oder Ein Gewissen gegen die Gewalt*

“CICERO” = “Cicero” in *Sternstunden der Menschheit*

CLARISSA = *Clarissa*

“EE” = “Einigung Europas. Eine Rede”

“EEV” = “Erinnerungen an Émile Verhaeren”

“EGHE” = “Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historischen Entwicklung”

“EI” = “Die Entwertung der Ideen”

“EPISODE” = “Episode am Genfer See”

ERASMUS = *Triumph und Tragik des Erasmus von Rotterdam*

“ERB” = “Der Erziehung zum republikanischen Bewußtsein”

“EVB” = “Epilog einer vergeblichen Bemühung”

“FDTI” = “SZ Tells Plans for a Review, Says Folks Don’t Trust intellectuals”

“FF” = “An die Freunde im Fremdland”

FOUCHÉ = *Joseph Fouché. Bildnis eines politischen Menschen*

“FT” = “Für die ‘Freie Tribüne’, Paris”

“GaD” = “Die Geschichte als Dichterin”

“GEE” = “Die geistige Einheit Europas”

“GG” = “Galiziens Genesung”

“GS” = “Das große Schweigen”

“GvM” = “Die Geschichtsschreibung von Morgen”

HDG = *Die Heilung durch den Geist. Mesmer-Mary Baker-Eddy-Freud*

“HE” = “Das Herz Europas. Ein Besuch im Genfer Roten Kreuz”

“HÖLDERLIN” = “Hölderlin” in *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon*

“HTS” = “Das Haus der tausend Schicksale”

“IDS” = “In dieser dunklen Stunde”

“IGG” = “Ist die Geschichte gerecht?”

JEREMIAS = *Jeremias*

KMD = *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon: Hölderlin-Kleist-Nietzsche*

“KOP” = “Keep out of politics!”

“LOP” = “Das Land ohne Patriotismus”

“LUX” = “Adam Lux”

MAGELLAN = *Magellan. Der Mann und seine Tat*

MARIE ANTOINETTE = *Marie Antoinette. Bildnis eines mittleren Charakters*

“MEE” = “Die moralische Entgiftung Europas”

“MI” = “The Mission of the Intellectual”

“MONOTONISIERUNG” = “Die Monotonisierung der Welt”

MONTAIGNE = *Montaigne*

“NIETZSCHE” = “Nietzsche”, in *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon*

“OWF” = “Opportunismus, der Weltfeind”

RAUSCH = *Rausch der Verwandlung*

“RGW” = “Reisen oder gereist werden”

ROLLAND = *Romain Rolland. Der Mann und das Werk*

“RR70” = “Romain Rolland. Zum 70. Geburtstag”

SCHACHNOVELLE = *Schachnovelle*

SZ = Stefan Zweig

“TB” = “Der Turm zu Babel”

“TV” = “Die Tragik der Vergeßlichkeit”

UNGEDULD = *Ungeduld des Herzens*

VERHAEREN = Émile Verhaeren

VIRATA = Die Augen des ewigen Bruders

“WD” = “Ein Wort von Deutschland”

“Wien” = “Das Wien von Gestern”

“WONDRAK” = “Wondrak”

WvG = Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers

“WW” = “Widerstand der Wirklichkeit”

“ZWANG” = “Der Zwang”

PREFACE

In July 1941, Stefan Zweig finished the first draft of his memoirs, which he titled *Blick auf mein Leben*. One month before, in May 1941, he had deposited his will with his New York lawyer, naming his second wife Lotte as his sole heiress. One month later, in August 1941, they would leave for Brazil, never to return. The last years of Zweig's life were surrounded by an impending sense of doom. In this context, his autobiography, which was finally published posthumously in 1942 as *Die Welt von Gestern*, emerged as a farewell from someone—an Austrian, a Jew, a writer, a pacifist, and above all, a European—who wished to leave his testimony for posterity, who believed that, despite his shyness and timidity, despite his fear of being under the spotlight, he had the duty to bear witness, to pass down to the next generations his hopes and dreams, and the story of how they had been shattered twice by the forces of nationalism and war. Zweig looked at the world of yesterday to address the Europe of tomorrow.

The origin of this dissertation is my first 'encounter' with *Die Welt von Gestern* seven years ago. In my reading of the text, Stefan Zweig appeared as a strongly committed individual, as a voice that resonated in contemporary concerns and debates. The plight of the European and the humanist, his commitment to peace and freedom, reverberated in a context where the European dream, after decades of progress, was being challenged again by the forces of isolation and division. The current scenario of Zweigian Studies, marked by an incipient Zweig 'revival', coincides with a moment in history when the need to rethink and redefine our common spaces of cohabitation has become an imperative. Animated by both said 'encounter' and context, this dissertation aims to examine the intellectual and committed dimension of Stefan Zweig's oeuvre as it crystallizes around the idea of Europe. In doing so, it attempts to question and problematize the understanding

PREFACE

of Stefan Zweig as an ‘uncommitted’, ‘silent’ writer that has dominated a significant part of the critical reception of his works since the nineteen thirties.

Hypothesis—Objectives—Structure

Considering *Die Welt von Gestern* as the point of departure of my reflections, I have established three main lines of inquiry that will orient my critical discussion of Zweig throughout this dissertation. The first is concerned with the potential of reading Zweig’s memoirs as the textual repository of Zweig’s commitment to ‘Europe’ and, especially, to an idea of the world (*Weltanschauung*). Given that *Die Welt von Gestern* combines Zweig’s life-story with the construction of a collective, historical account, my objective is to examine how both dimensions conflate in a single narrative and how Zweig’s *engagement* affected their composition. The second axis that vertebrates my exploration of Stefan Zweig as a committed writer and intellectual revolves around the evolution and the construction of the Zweigian figures of commitment and intellectuality. In other words, following the premise that there is a committed ‘impulse’ that underlies and pervades Zweig’s life and work, this dissertation aims to analyze how the Austrian writer publicly negotiates his commitment and responsibility. Finally, the third issue that I would like to examine is the nature of Zweig’s commitment and the functions and valences of his idea of Europe.

In brief, the question of Zweig’s *engagement* structures the contents of this dissertation. Accordingly, the Introduction aims to reconstruct and assess the reception of Stefan Zweig’s works and figure both from an aesthetic and a political perspective. Especially, it tries to determine the concepts, models and patterns of reception that have contributed to the (de)valuation of Zweig’s oeuvre. Additionally, as the question of Zweig’s ‘politics’ and ‘apoliticism’ appears to be crucial in the configuration of his committed responses, I conclude the Introduction by briefly defining Zweig’s

PREFACE

conceptions of politics and how it affects our approach to his *engagement*. Then, taking these premises into account, and with the purpose of establishing a dialogue with the main lines of reception of Zweig's work, Chapter I aims to explore a selection of his works in order to analyze how the Austrian writer's commitment—to Europe, broadly speaking—informed the construction of his public, authorial persona. This chapter tries to answer, among others, the following questions: What figures of intellectuality and forms of commitment, as represented in his work, did Zweig use to communicate and negotiate his commitment and participate in the sociopolitical debates of his time? How are these figures built? How is the link between author and character forged? To what extent can these figures be considered as Zweig's alter-egos? What are the genres and textual devices employed by Zweig to communicate his commitment?

Chapter I starts by considering the textual specificities of Zweig's personal discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern*—which oscillates between the genres of autobiography and memoirs—in an attempt to establish the parameters that guide Zweig's self-writing. In particular, I am concerned with the mechanisms used by the Austrian writer to mask and reveal his self at the same time through the 'narration' of the other, as most of the texts analyzed in this chapter belong to the biographical genre. Then, I will consider Zweig's autobiographical production in order to establish a general 'narrative of commitment' that can help detect the main turning points and phases in the evolution of Zweig's commitment. Having established a macrostructure, and following a chronological order, the rest of the sections of Chapter I will be devoted to analyzing the Zweigian figures of commitment, starting with Émile Verhaeren, as representative of Zweig's commitment efforts before the First World War. Then, I will explore how the war affects, and forces to reorient, Zweig's commitment both during and after the conflict, paying especial attention to the literary and historical figures of Jeremias, Romain Rolland, and Virata.

PREFACE

Finally, the last sections will assess the evolution of Zweig's responses in exile (1934-1942), which, seen in retrospect, was perhaps the most decisive period in the formation of the myth of the *dégagé* Zweig. At this point, Zweig turns his gaze towards the past, producing, among other, the 'biographies' of Erasmus, Castelli, and Montaigne, and the historical miniature of Cicero.

Whereas Chapter I is focused on the figures that enunciate Zweig's *engagement*, the aim of Chapter II is to examine the project that orientates his committed efforts. As I have argued before, I am particularly concerned with Zweig's idea of Europe as the center of Zweig's commitment and *Weltanschauung*. The questions that I will attempt to answer in this chapter are, among others: What is/are the function(s), valence(s) and meaning(s) of 'Europe'¹ in Zweig's work? What kind of 'European' community does Zweig project in his work? Does Zweig's 'Europe' have an individual dimension? That is to say, does it project and contemplate also an ideal 'European' citizen? How does Zweig's 'apoliticism' affect the nature of his 'European' project? And finally, what are the links between the figures of commitment of Chapter I and Zweig's 'Europe'?

Addressing these questions, Chapter II mirrors the beginning of the previous chapter and starts by considering the particularities of Zweig's collective/historical discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern* in order to assess how a narrative that looks towards the past can be, in fact, addressed to the future. In doing so, I will explore the 'defects' and 'deviations' of Zweig's historical discourse in relation to certain historiographical standards, and will also consider the possibility of re-reading them from 1) the perspective of Zweig's emotional and psychological state in the last years of exile, focusing my analysis on the impact of the Apocalypse imaginary in *Die Welt von Gestern*, 2) his utopian thinking, 3)

¹ In referring to Zweig's idea of Europe, I will use single commas for both 'Europe' and 'European' in attempt to dissociate the Austrian writer's project with any specific geopolitical and cultural reality.

PREFACE

the role of nostalgia, and 4) the idea of ‘failure’ in the context of Zweig’s rhetoric of defeat. Then, I will consider the meaning of ‘Europe’ in Zweig’s works—especially *Die Welt von Gestern* and the essays and lectures Zweig dedicated to Europe,² as well as the sources analyzed in Chapter I, focusing my discussion around the individual and collective dimensions of Zweig’s ‘Europe’.

Sources and Methodology

In accordance with the objectives presented above, *Die Welt von Gestern* will remain throughout this dissertation at the core of our reflections. As it combines in a single narrative, written at the end of Zweig’s life, the personal, literary and historical dimensions of his existence, I suggest that it may help us organize the exploration of Zweig’s commitment, guiding us through his oeuvre and providing structure and patterns for our analysis. Given that the exploration of the topics of Zweig’s commitment and his idea of Europe exceed the scope of one dissertation, I will use *Die Welt von Gestern* as my particular (intellectual) ‘*Heimat*’, bearing in mind Zweig’s realization in his memoirs that in the end “benötigt man doch [...] einen stabilen Punkt, von dem aus man wandert, und zu dem man immer wieder zurückkehrt” (*WvG* 179). As for the rest of the corpus, I have based my selection of primary sources on two criteria: on the one hand, I have prioritized the analysis of those works where, in my reading of the text, the topic of *engagement* and ‘Europe’ shaped and conditioned to a certain extent the form and content of the narrative. By exploring how Zweig’s commitment produced ‘alterations’ in a selection of his fiction and non-fiction production, I hope to be able to determine its nature and limitations.

² “Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historischen Entwicklung” (1932), “Die moralische Eingiftung Europas” (1932), “Einigung Europas. Eine Rede” (1934), “Die geistige Einheit Europas” (1936), and the interviews “The Conscience of Europe” (1931, interview with Robert Merrill Bartlett) and “Pour une Europe de l’esprit” (1936, Zweig’s answer to a survey on the ‘European spirit’ carried out by the journal *Les Nouvelles littéraires*).

PREFACE

On the other hand, I have limited the scope of this dissertation to the texts that were either published during Zweig's lifetime or were written to be published, excluding correspondence and archival materials. While I consider that unpublished sources and documents of a more private nature might be relevant to further analyze some of the topics of this dissertation, I am particularly concerned with the public dimension of Zweig's commitment, that is to say, in exploring how Zweig negotiated his duty and responsibility as an artist and presented himself to the world. As far as the use of critical theory is concerned, I will resort to it in order to contextualize, reassess and extract the potential of Zweig's *engagement*. Although this dissertation does not respond to a specific theoretical framework, I will recur to theoretical concepts, hermeneutical tools, and methodologies hoping to try to open new directions in Stefan Zweig's research and to further contribute to the discussion of his voice as a thinker and an intellectual. Whereas in some sections I will start by presenting the theoretical tools that will guide my analysis and help me articulate my observations; on other occasions, theory will emerge at the end of our discussion as the consequence/result of the preceding analysis, and as a way to signal and assess its potential. In general, I will start every section by introducing the topic, my hypothesis and by briefly commenting the state of the research. Then, I will develop my critical reading of the text(s).

Formatting and Style

Finally, I would like to make the following observations: 1) this dissertation is written in English although, generally, I quote from the original source, especially in the case of Zweig's works; 2) as for the primary sources, I have based my analysis on Knut Beck's edition of Zweig's collected works (published by Fischer) either in its paperback or electronic editions, with the following exceptions: *Die Welt von Gestern*, which I quote from the most recent critical edition by Oliver Matuschek; *Sternstunden der Menschheit*,

PREFACE

which I quote from the 2017 Zsolnay edition; and *Montaigne*, which I either quote both from Beck's or Richard Friedenthal's 1960 edition included in the collection of essays *Europäische Erbe*;³ 3) the formatting, in-text citations and works cited follow the MLA Style Guide (8th edition) with a slight variation: I have decided to systematically include the city of publication for every bibliographical entry in the works cited section. Additionally, I mention in the body of the text the year of publication of both primary and secondary sources so as to provide more context to the quotation; I will use footnotes for indicating important bibliography and recommended readings not directly quoted in the text and therefore not included in the list of works cited; 4) as the titles of the primary sources have been shortened, I have included a list of abbreviations at the beginning of this dissertation; the use of single quotation marks is reserved for emphasis and for whenever the meaning of a word is either problematic in the context of my analyses or has required a specific discussion—such as 'apoliticism' and 'Europe'; foreign words are italicized, except when they are inserted between quotation marks, and therefore constitute a quotation, or when they can be found in the dictionary (I will use as a reference the Collins Dictionary in its online version); whenever I want to emphasize a word or phrase within a quotation, I will indicate my modification of the original text with the phrase 'my italics' in a footnote.

³ Given that Zweig left only a manuscript with handwritten annotations, in some fragments the text differs greatly from one edition to the other. I will quote from the most recent edition (Beck's) except when Beck decided not to include some handwritten notes that I consider relevant for my analysis of the text. In any case, whenever I use Friedenthal's edition, I will indicate it in a footnote.

INTRODUCTION

The point is that ‘modern times’ keep receding into the past, and in another generation the day [...] of Shaw, Wells, Stefan Zweig and the rest of their generation will merge, and to the succeeding generation they will both seem the same. [...] Just as Zweig found in the medieval Erasmus something ‘so strangely modern’ that he seemed to speak to him in his own thoughts and words about the crisis of his own life and time, so Zweig may still have something to say to the younger people who were children when he died.

Joseph Leftwich “Stefan Zweig and the World of Yesterday”, 1958, pp. 83-84.

I. The Aesthetic and Political Reception of Stefan Zweig’s Work

Stefan Zweig—his life trajectory, his work—has always had a complex reception, both from an aesthetic and a political point of view. On the one hand, as Randolph Klawiter has amply demonstrated (see “Stefan Zweig Bibliography”),⁴ the Austrian writer was not exaggerating when he claimed in his memoirs, *Die Welt von Gestern* (1942), that “eines Tages las ich in der Statistik der ‘Coopération Intellectuelle’ des Genfer Völkerbundes, daß ich zur Zeit der meistübersetzte Autor der Welt sei” (*WvG* 344).⁵ However, on the other hand, at the same time that his books were consumed by countless readers across the world, the responses of the critics and fellow artists were more divided. There seemed

⁴ To access the electronic version of Klawiter’s bibliography, visit the following URL: http://zweig.fredonia.edu/index.php?title=Stefan_Zweig_Bibliography

⁵ In the most recent edition of *Die Welt von Gestern*, Oliver Matuschek corroborates this information: “Der Völkerbund gab vom Juli 1932 bis zum Juli 1939 vierteljährlich den Index translationum als internationales Repertorium der Übersetzungen heraus. In diesem Zeitraum war Stefan Zweig mit 126 nachgewiesenen Bänden der weltweit in die meisten Sprachen übersetzte Autor (INDEX TRANSLATIONUM 1932–1939)” (*WvG* 592)

INTRODUCTION

to be a wider consensus among writers like Karl Kraus, Hugo von Hofmannsthal,⁶ Irmgard Keun⁷ or Robert Musil,⁸ to mention a few, that Zweig's style was superficial and *feuilletonistisch*, closer to the commercial rather than the 'literary', addressed to a bourgeois readership that felt comfortable with Zweig's non-disruptive, highly repetitive, ornamental language. For instance, Kraus opened thus a 1926 article of *Die Fackel*: "Herr Stefan Zweig, heute einer der repräsentativen Schmuser der europäischen Kultur, würde es mir unmöglich machen, in der Seichtheit seiner tiefen Sätze nicht zu versinken, wenn ich mir in mühevoller Praxis nicht doch eine gewisse Resistenz erworben hätte, um mir's an der Stelle genügen zu lassen, auf die mein Blick gerade fällt" (Weinzierl 34). Later on, in 1931, and in his characteristic satiric-ironic style, Kraus asserted that "[a]ls Novellist großen Formats hat er [Stefan Zweig] sich alle Sprachen der Erde erobert. Bis auf eine" (Weinzierl 35).

In this regard, Birger Vanwesenbeeck argues that this "demystification of Zweig's novellas as inauthentic, excessively ornate, and, ultimately, all too well-tailored to the worldly concerns of the middle-class audience [...] is what saddled Zweig early on with the epithets of 'Erwerbszweig' (commercial branch) and 'Literaturindustrieller' (producer of literature in bulk) in Vienna" (19). In the thirties, the gulf between the admiration of the reading public and the criticism of a wide sector of the—European and

⁶ Matuschek comments that "Zweig's own admiration and respect for the genius of Hofmannsthal [...] amounted to an almost unbounded reverence. So it was somewhat galling that Hofmannsthal, with whom he was in contact in later years by letter and in person, showed not the slightest interest in Zweig's own writing and did not rate him much as a person either" (41).

⁷ The German author Irmgard Keun represents another line of criticism that is concerned with Zweig's 'aloofness', that accuses him of living in a secluded ivory tower. As recounted by biographer George Prochnik: "[H]e never quite lost his aura of removal from the common lot, which worked against any real embrace of his social program, even when it earned polite applause. As [...] Keun noted, Zweig always came off as 'one of those noble Jewish types who, thin-skinned and open to harm, lives in an immaculate glass world of the spirit and lacks the capacity themselves to do harm'" (246).

⁸ According to Michael Reffet, Robert Musil, who considered Zweig a *Großschriftsteller*, "zählt Stefan Zweig zum 'Auswurf der Demokratie', zu den 'Nutznießern der Emigration, die erst recht Weltliebliche geworden sind, während sich gute Schriftsteller kaum vor dem Untergang bewahren können'" (288).

INTRODUCTION

American—intelligentsia would grow, adding political bias to the previous aesthetic concerns. Although Zweig tried to evade any kind of political confrontation, it was precisely his aversion to the public sphere that damaged his prestige not only as a writer but, above all, as an intellectual. Although he tried to avoid taking sides, to stay ‘above the battle’ (and ‘silence’ did not work either), eventually he found himself immersed in every single polemic and discussion. Leopold Decloedt, who has studied the reception of Zweig in the Viennese press of the thirties, argues that the “eben beschriebene Palette an Reaktionen auf das Werk Zweigs in den Literaturgeschichten findet sich auch und zum Teil noch überspitzt in den literaturkritischen Beiträgen der Presse dieser Zeit. Lobpreisungen wechseln sich mit politisch motivierten Attacken oder dem kompletten Ignorieren der Existenz des Autors ab” (260).

This tendency to assess the value of both Zweig’s persona and his work according to his political positioning would worsen in the years of exile (1934-1942), when Zweig’s ‘evasion’ from the world of politics generated frustration and incomprehension among his peers. This process culminated with some of the reactions to Zweig’s suicide. According to Klemens Renoldner and Hildemar Holl, “[s]ein Selbstmord, auf den viele Zeitgenossen mit Unverständnis wenn nicht sogar mit Unmut reagierten, hat eine lange Vorgesichte. Eine Spur dieser Vorgesichte führt auch ins antisemitisch-intolerante, sich schließlich immer heftiger deutschnational gebärdende Österreich der Ersten Republik” (14). In the same vein, Birgen Vanwesenbeeck argues, concerning Thomas Mann’s memorial published in *Aufbau*, that “[t]he picture of Zweig that emerges here, notwithstanding how much Mann rhetorically strove to maintain a positive image of the author, is clear: in contrast with other, ‘more robust’ exiles, Zweig is evoked as an expatriate weakling unable to carry out the ‘reconstruction of life’ that exile demands” (26).

INTRODUCTION

In truth, Zweig himself admitted in his memoirs that he had never been a ‘man of action’, that he had always valued ‘moderation’ over ‘confrontation’, and that his nature was mostly ‘unheroic’ (WvG 251). However, none of this, I believe, justifies the abovementioned criticism, especially regarding his death. For, in my opinion, it was precisely Zweig’s ‘sensibility’, which brought its own measure of private ‘exposure’ and ‘vulnerability’, that partially accounts for his literary achievements and the configuration of his *engagement*. As Friderike Zweig reflects:

Despite this admiration, despite the fact that their lives have been enriched by his work, their attitude is evidence of their failure to appreciate the fact that Zweig’s profound understanding of psychic distress—an understanding that many have found in him—was based on unremitting sympathetic vibrations, complete empathy on his part, which brought about an extreme vulnerability of his own self. In not recognizing this, it was as though people were willing to permit him only to share their suffering, but not to be vulnerable himself” (*Greatness Revisited* 97-98).⁹

As the tribute volumes, edited by Hans Arens, *Stefan Zweig. A Tribute to his life and work* and *Der große Europäer Stefan Zweig* show, Zweig was also a beloved and respected writer. For some Zweig died a ‘failed’ intellectual and writer; for others, a ‘champion’ of the European letters (see Romains). His production during his last months in Brazil also received this ambivalent reception. While his monograph *Brasilien* was heavily criticized (see Dines *Morte no paraíso*), upon his death, as Oliver Matuscheck narrates, “the funeral [...] took place the following day, after the coffins had been placed

⁹ The Austrian-American essayist Ernst Waldinger, remembering the speeches in honor of Zweig, expressed his sense of shame at some of the reactions, especially those that diminished his literary merits: “Es ist das Gefühl der Scham und Reue, das in mir aufsteigt, wenn ich mich an die Ansprachen erinnere, die damals dem großen Europäer galten. Scham und Reue: denn auch ich hatte in jugendlicher Leichtfertigkeit das Wort vom Zweigschen “Feuilletonismus” oft nachgeplappert, das dort droben, zwar verblümt, von zwei Rednern im Munde geführt wurde, Rednern, die heute auch bereits im Grabe liegen und deren Name nicht erwähnt werden soll, von denen der eine am wenigsten zu einer solchen Äußerung berechtigt war, während den anderen, dem großen Könnern und dem in allen Gangarten des Pegasus Wohlberittenen, die Dankbarkeit, die er Zweig schuldeten und die er öffentlich bekannte, abhalten hätte sollen, diese verkleinernde Qualifikation in einer Gedenkrede zu verwenden” (108).

INTRODUCTION

on public display first. The government had insisted on meeting the costs of the obsequies and the grave. Amidst a great display of public mourning the funeral cortege wound its way to the Catholic cemetery in Petrópolis” (353). In light of these examples, we could argue that Zweig’s dimension as a writer was that of a celebrated literary ‘bestseller’. Accordingly, his words and actions had a great repercussion and therefore opinions of all sorts abounded. As Vanwesenbeeck argues, we need to avoid the extremes if we are to assess the Stefan Zweig’s legacy: “All too often the story of that reception history has been presented in caricatural terms as either a most underserved fall from grace, on the one hand, or as a much overdue reckoning for a produce of literature in bulk, on the other. Monochromatic views of this nature obscure the nuances in that story, such as the often-unacknowledged persistence of his influence in areas of inquiry as diverse as psychoanalysis and historiography” (17).

Having said that, in my opinion, what we cannot ignore, in the context of Stefan Zweig’s complex reception history, is that, in the last years of Zweig’s life, a pattern of decline in the consideration of his works and figure started that would affect enormously his literary status after his death. Without going any further, Hannah Arendt wrote a review of *Die Welt von Gestern* (“Los judíos en *El mundo de ayer*”) in 1943 that, to a certain extent, sealed the fate of the mainstream perception of Zweig for many decades to come. In brief, Arendt described Zweig—in what George Prochnik considers to be the “single most devastating indictment of Zweig’s existence”—as someone who had lived all his life in the margins of the world, aloof from any sociopolitical reality, secluded in the world of wealth and *Geist* (Arendt 78). After this and other such indictments on the figure of Zweig, both in literary and political terms, Zweig became the representative of a bygone era, and so the gap between his works and the new readers widened. As Kurt Böttcher reminisced in 1988, the value of Zweig’s memoirs for the post-war generations

INTRODUCTION

became above all testimonial, insofar as it bore witness of a world of art and culture that had been destroyed by the Nazis.¹⁰ Above all, Böttcher reflects, the postwar scenario was mostly dominated by ideological conflicts, and, as we will discuss later, Zweig, because of his insistence on keeping out of politics (see Zweig “Keep Out of Politics”), failed to provide ‘valid’ arguments for any of the competing parties: “Es war für uns die Zeit des Suchens, der Erkundung und Orientierung, in der sich Marxismus und Existenzialismus geistige Schlachten lieferten, liberale und klerikale, bürgerlich-demokratische und sozialistische Programme sich alternativ anboten, die Kollektivschuld des deutschen Volkes für den Faschismus heftig diskutiert wurde” (123-124).

In one of the most thorough studies of Zweig’s reception in Germany after 1945,¹¹ Zweig specialist Guo-Qiang Ren shows that, despite the publication of some unpublished material and Donald Prater’s biography *Stefan Zweig. European of Yesterday* (1972), the sixties and the seventies were by far the worst years in terms of Zweig’s popularity and critical reception, as they were dominated by a heated political climate whereby the main concern was Zweig’s attitude towards Fascism. What is more, Ren’s analyses aim to demonstrate that, around the notion of Zweig’s alleged *Parteilosigkeit*, a controversy for the (political and intellectual) appropriation of Zweig’s legacy unfolded, so that the same facts were given radically opposed meanings. For instance, his exile was either read as a refusal of National socialism or a desertion of his duties. Meanwhile, works like *Erasmus* (1934) or *Castellio* (1936) were either praised as political manifestoes or denigrated as

¹⁰ In the same vein, Leon Botstein argued in 1983 that a change of philosophical, artistic and existential paradigms in the postwar rendered Zweig’s work obsolete: “The particular brand of social and political idealism with which Zweig’s is associated historically [...] has been eclipsed in our post-World War II era, together with the fame of many of its most noted heroes. [...] Like the ideal of Esperanto and world government, the ‘humanism’ of Stefan Zweig and those with whom he would have wished posterity to associate him, appears to us moribund, anachronistic, naive, and superficial. It has been abandoned by the elite world of artists and intellectuals and by public opinion alike” (82-83)

¹¹ See also: Klein, Monika, and Michael Klein. *Stefan Zweig. Bibliographie zur Rezeption in deutschsprachigen Tages- und Wochenzeitungen 1961-1991*. Innsbruck, Institut für Germanistik, 1994.; Larcati, Arturo, Klemens Renoldner, and Martina Wörgötter. *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 783-834.

INTRODUCTION

one more instance of Zweig's escapism (61-80). In the end, Ren contends, Zweig's commitment remained largely misunderstood:

Diesem Denkmodell zufolge können und wollen manche Kritiker Zweigs politisches Engagement nicht wahrnehmen, geschweige denn, ihm eine positive Anerkennung verleihen. Damit befindet sich die gängige Zweig-Forschung in dem Dilemma, daß sie beiseitigerweise nicht weiß, wie man mit Zweigs Solidarität gegenüber den Emigranten zurechtkommen soll. Aussagen wie "bürgerliche Solidarität" oder auch "feines Gespür für Krisensymbole" machen deutlich, wie Zweigs politisches Engagement mit ein paar weitschweifigen Worten abgefertigt ist. (68)

After this Zweigian 'Dark Age',¹² when Zweig's presence disappeared in the academic and publishing map significantly diminished, in the eighties, on the occasion of the celebration of Zweig's 100th anniversary in 1982, a number of conferences took place and scholarly works were published that assesses the artistic and intellectual legacy of the Austrian writer. However, far from being a turning point, the reflections of those who participated in said events and publications indicate, in my view, that the mood was closer to being that of a homage and a farewell than that of a revival. Thus, Joseph Strelka asserts that: "granted, on the occasion of his centenary a small wave of rediscovery sought to check the decline, but basically the latter continued to be decisive" (337). More significantly, Georg Iggers, in his introduction to the proceedings of the 1992 conference *The World of Yesterday's Humanist Today*, declared that "[w]e are celebrating Stefan Zweig's one hundredth birthday at a time when the interest in his work has drastically declined. But even we, many of whom have roots in the Central European, Jewish milieu of the pre-Nazi period, have links to Zweig's past. It is less likely that a later generation

¹² Mark Gelber claims that there was a generation born at the aftermath of the Second World War that barely knew Zweig: "Gleichzeitig existiert eine jüngere Generation, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg geboren und ausgebildet, die kaum den Namen Zweigs gehört, ja keines von seinen Werken je gelesen hat, und diese Generation steht den Weltanschauungen und Werten der Zweig'schen Welt von Gestern entschieden fremd gegenüber" ("Stefan Zweigs verspätete Bekehrung zum Judentum?" 3).

INTRODUCTION

will share our interest” (7). According to Harry Zohn, the main problem was that German and Austrian scholars were reproducing the same aesthetic patterns, which distinguished between ‘low’ and ‘high’ literature/culture, that had been articulated by some of Zweig’s contemporaries: “Obwohl er einer der meistübersetzten Schriftsteller unseres Jahrhunderts ist (seine Werke sind in mindestens 30 Sprachen erschienen), hat sich die Forschung kaum mit ihm befaßt. Im Gegensatz zu seinen Zeitgenossen Rilke, Hofmannsthal, Broch, Schnitzler und Musil ist er selten das Objekt literaturwissenschaftlicher Aufmerksamkeit gewesen” (“SZ: Literatur” 583). As Zohn notes, not even the fascination with fin-de-siècle Vienna in the seventies and the eighties—which produced a wealth of monographs, mostly by cultural historians, like Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin’s *Wittgenstein’s Vienna* or Carl Schorske’s *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (1980)—¹³managed to incorporate Zweig in the academic discussion. As a matter of fact, it is curious that Schorske only mentions Zweig once, in passing, while exploring the figure of Theodor Herzl, an absence that contrasts with the many parallelisms between Schorske’s observations (on culture, society and politics) and Zweig’s testimony in *Die Welt von Gestern*, especially as regards topics such as the sociopolitical status of wealthy assimilated Jewish families, anti-Semitism or the new politics that emerged at the turn of the century.

All in all, while most commentators were not optimistic in 1982, ten years later, during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Zweig’s death, the efforts to revive the figure of Stefan Zweig started to yield the first results. In 1992, the organization of a Zweig conference in Salzburg led to an exhibition that allowed its organizers to expose the need to recover the legacy of Stefan Zweig as a prominent figure of the city

¹³ For a more recent approach to fin-de-siècle Vienna, see: Beller, Steven, editor. *Rethinking Vienna 1900*. Oxford, Berghahn, 2001.

INTRODUCTION

and in the context of his contribution to the Austrian and European cultural heritages.¹⁴ In this sense, Donald Prater remarked in his introduction to the volume published on said occasion—*Stefan Zweig: für ein Europa des Geistes*—that while he had encountered enormous difficulties in the sixties and the seventies to get publishers interested in his biography of Zweig, the publishing and academic landscape that emerged after 1982 gave reasons to be optimistic, especially as regards Knut Beck’s edition of Zweig’s collected works (Prater, “Geleitwort” 11). While in the early nineties there was still a lot of work to be done, as Renoldner acknowledged (*SZ.. Instants d’une Vie* 218),¹⁵ we can discern from today’s perspective the first seeds of what has turned out to be in the first years of the twenty-first century a Stefan Zweig ‘revival’.

Notably, this Zweig renaissance experienced its heyday with the foundation in 2008 of the *Stefan Zweig Zentrum*, a research center dedicated to literature and art, and especially to the figure and work of Stefan Zweig. With its annual publications—both of secondary literature and critical editions of Zweig’s work—and conferences around the world, the center has been key in revitalizing the study of the Austrian writer around the world. Above all, it has put remedy to a lack of recognition of the author in his own country of origin. As Renoldner, director of the center from 2008 to 2018, noted in 1992: “Die Enthaltbarkeit der österreichischen Germanisten zum Thema Stefan Zweig ist ja

¹⁴ The rationale of the 1992 exhibition is thus described by Hildemar Holl and Klemens Renoldner: “Die Salzburger Ausstellung 1992 versucht, Stefan Zweig, einen der wirkungsmächtigsten österreichischen Schriftsteller unseres Jahrhunderts, in seiner geistigen und politischen Welt zu zeigen. Der bis in unsere Tage oft als feuilletonistisch-gefühliger Erfolgsautor geringgeschätzte Schriftsteller Stefan Zweig verfolgte das politische Zeitgeschehen Europas mit Anteilnahme und sein humanistisches, antinationalistisches Programm für ein friedliches “Europa des Geistes” war keine sympathische Liebhaberei eines großbürgerlichen Snobs, sondern eine bis zur Erschöpfung angenommene Berufung. Wer etwa Zweigs zahllose Briefe aus der Emigration liest, von seinem großzügigen Engagement für politische Verfolgte und verarmte Kollegen weiß, kann ermessen, wie ernst er seine eigene Verantwortung nahm” (14)

¹⁵ Joseph Strelka claimed in 1992 that the name of Stefan Zweig was associated with a bygone and forgotten era: “The most typical reply will consist of the derogatory remark that with Stefan Zweig we are not dealing with anything that is still timely, but rather with something alien to and detached from our time—something no longer having any real connection with us: the figuration of the luxurious cares of the haute bourgeoisie, of a past relegated in every way to remoteness” (339).

INTRODUCTION

seit vielen Jahren bekannt: Literaturwissenschaftler, die aus dem Ausland nach Salzburg kamen, konnten nur staunen, daß so gut wie alle wichtigen Forschungen zu diesem berühmten Autor in der Schweiz, in Deutschland, den USA, Frankreich und Belgien - nicht aber in Österreich geschrieben wurden” (“SZ. Anfang eines neuen Bildes” 51).

In fact, following Renoldner’s words, we could question (see Vanwesenbeeck 15) if ‘revival’ is the most adequate word for an author who was never fully forgotten. While it is true that, until Zweig’s centenary and the beginning of the publication of his collected works in the eighties, he had been partly marginalized in the German-speaking world, Zweig ‘survived’ in other parts of the globe. In this regard, and seen from a bird’s eye view, the task of the abovementioned American Germanists, among others, was instrumental in keeping his legacy alive. What is more, the American reception of Zweig during those years somehow seems to question the dominant patterns of reception of Zweig’s work that we have been discussing so far, since, as Klawiter remarked in 1987, “[i]t would seem therefore that—in America at least—Zweig has retreated from the arena of marketing competition and withdrawn into the relative peace and security of academe, where he is still alive in symposia, seminars, and papers for publication or for deliver at conferences” (“Reception of SZ in United States” 53).¹⁶

Additionally, countries like France or Spain have contributed both to the further recognition of Stefan Zweig’s work. In the former, according to scholar Jacques Le Rider, Zweig has always had a favorable reception at the level of writers like Musil or Kraus (31). In this sense the French editor Jean Pierre Lefebvre points out that “[l]e succès fut immédiat, favorisé sans doute par les nombreux liens que Zweig avait tissés dans l’univers du livre en France, en Belgique, et en Suisse. Mais aussi par des facteurs intrinsèques opérant en synergie : un indéniable sens du suspense, une écriture identifiée

¹⁶ See. Leftwich “SZ and the World of Yesterday” 81-82; Zohn “SZ: Bericht und Bekenntnis”, 29.

INTRODUCTION

comme littéraire, malgré certains traits désuets, enfin des sujets dans l'air du temps, l'enfance, la sexualité, le suicide, puis la guerre" (91).¹⁷ In this light, it is important to note that Lefebvre's article was written within the context of the publication in 2013 of Zweig's works in the prestigious collection La Pléiade. Although Zweig had previously been available in pocket format in the collection La Pochotèque and other minor editions, Lefebvre goes on to explain, the inclusion of Zweig's oeuvre in the prestigious La Pléiade had been retarded due to a controversy surrounding the 'literary value' of Stefan Zweig's works: "L'objection s'appuyait sur une sorte de postulat énoncé depuis longtemps, et du vivant même de l'auteur: cet auteur 'mineur' ne 'valait' pas la distinction d'être édité dans ce panthéon" (90). Once again, even in a country where Zweig's success among the reading public is uncontested, we encounter the phantom of Zweig's *'feuilletonismus'* and 'shallowness', a question that has not been settled yet.

As Vanwesenbeeck argues, "the twenty-first century has witnessed a resurgence of cultural and critical interest in the works of Stefan Zweig [...]. With the appearance of new English translations [...], renewed debate within the English-speaking world regarding the literary value of his work has been vigorous, and this calls for a reassessment of his legacy and works" (15). Definitely, several ephemerides in the last few years seem to mark the beginning of a new era in the reception and study of Stefan Zweig. On an academic level, to the invaluable and extensive contributions of the Stefan Zweig Zentrum—a special mention must be made to the publication of the first *Stefan Zweig Handbuch* (2018)—, we must add the digital archive project "Stefan Zweig

¹⁷ On Zweig's reception in France, see: Tunner, Erika. "Zur jüngsten Zweig-Renaissance. Am Beispiel: Frankreich", edited by Klemens Renoldner, Vienna, Brandstätter, 2014.; Sauvat, Catherine. "Stefan Zweig en France: état des lieux d'un succès", edited by Régine Battison and Klemens Renoldner, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2011, 21-26.; Battison, Régine. "Stefan Zweig, ein mythischer Autor in Frankreich", edited by Régine Battison and Klemens Renoldner, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2011, pp. 27-38.; Larcati, Arturo, and Christine Berthold. "Romanische Länder in Europa", edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, and Martina Wörgötter, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 814-816.

INTRODUCTION

Digital”, which gives remote access to archive material on the Austrian writer from around the world. Additionally, on a publishing level, and closely associated to the renaissance of Zweigian Studies, Zweig’s works have lately reentered the far-reaching channels of dissemination of the Anglo-Saxon publishing industry.

All this, in turn, has given way to a wealth of adaptations—both into cinema and theater—of his texts (see Wes Anderson’s *The Grand Hotel Budapest* (2014) and Schaubühne’s theater version of *Ungeduld des Herzens* (2015)) and even a biopic, Maria Schrader’s *Vor der Morgenröte. Stefan Zweig in Amerika* (2016), which has helped dispel some myths surrounding Zweig’s last years of exile and which, as I have hinted at before, have shaped his reception ever since. In sum, today, once again, Stefan Zweig emerges as a global phenomenon, as a paradigmatic example of world literature¹⁸ and as a case study for European, Post-/transnational, and Global studies.¹⁹ This dissertation, both because of its context of production (written from Barcelona [Spain] by a Ph.D. candidate with a transdisciplinary background in History, English and Spanish Studies) and its focus on Zweig’s ‘Europe’ and post-national *Weltanschauung*, aims to participate of this twenty-first-century Zweig revival, continuing the line of research of recent monographs such as *Stefan Zweig und Europa* (2007), edited by Marh H. Gelber and Anna-Dorothea Ludewig, and, especially, Stephan Resch’s *Stefan Zweig und der Europa-Gedanke* (2017).

It must be noted that, in this renaissance context where Zweig and his work have gained again the necessary visibility to reactivate the debates surrounding his work, the

¹⁸ See Vanwesenbeeck and Gelber *Stefan Zweig and World Literature. Twenty-First-Century Perspective*.

¹⁹ According to Vanwesenbeeck: “Acknowledgement of the global, world-literary element in Zweig has long been eclipsed by the image of the author as an old-world European unfit for exile. In part, this is an image created and perpetuated by other German expatriate writers who, from Thomas Mann to Hannah Arendt and continuing with Michael Hofmann, have sought to distinguish *their* experiences and understanding of exile and *their* sense of world-belonging from those of Zweig” (25).

INTRODUCTION

case of Catalonia and Spain stands out. Since the publishing house Acantilado/Quaderns Crema started to systematically publish Zweig's works at the turn of the century, their popularity among the reading public has grown exponentially, with *Die Welt von Gestern* reaching 26 editions.²⁰ Additionally, we find several reasons to believe that, in the last few years, Zweig has been incorporated somehow in the collective imagination, both as a great narrator and, above all, as a Europeanist. Here are some examples: A pseudoliterary television program—"Convénzeme"—that uses the claim "con zeta de Zweig" ('Z stands for Zweig') to attract the audiences;²¹ a history magazine titled *El món d'ahir* ('The world of yesterday') that draws inspiration from Zweig's historical works, emphasizing "the pleasure of reading and recognizing oneself in the past" (Soler 3);²² a president of the Generalitat de Catalunya who confesses through Instagram pics his devotion for the Austrian writer;²³ a number of references to Zweig in parliamentary and political speeches, where he is usually invoked, both from the left and right of the political spectrum, in connection with Europe and nationalism (see Marrón). With this evidence, to which we must add the uninterrupted publication of Zweig-related books,²⁴ it comes as no surprise that some journalists have recently 'elevated' his influence to the category of 'trending topic'.²⁵

²⁰ It must be noted that, in contrast to other countries such as France or the Netherlands, where Zweig's works have also been recently reprinted, in Spain the Austrian writer's works are still protected by copyright until 2022. In this sense, the Zweig boom experienced in the last twenty years cannot be simply explained by the commercial/economic opportunity that works of public domain offer to, especially, independent publishers.

²¹ See: www.bemad.es/convenzeme/

²² My translation.

²³ See: www.instagram.com/p/BksZGbXAkNQ/?igshid=1e259opyfn3fc

²⁴ In 2019 alone, four volumes were published: the illustrated biography *Stefan Zweig, la tinta violeta* by Jesús Marchamalo, *La revolución interior*, which combines texts by Zweig and Tolstoy, and the Spanish translations of *Amerigo* and *Begegnungen mit Büchern* (Acantilado). The publication of Zweig's journals has been announced for 2020.

²⁵ See: Marrón, Núria. "Stefan Zweig. El pensador 'trending topic'. *El Periódico*, 16/06/2018: www.elperiodico.com/es/mas-periodico/20180616/stefan-zweig-pensador-trending-topic-6872580

INTRODUCTION

And yet, this is just one side of the coin. On the other, Zweig remains a largely unknown figure, as his ‘public’ apparitions are riddled with clichés and superficial approaches to the same topics: his suicide, Europe, pacifism,²⁶ and nostalgia (especially in relation to his memoirs) are the four axes around which most discussions on Zweig revolve. Equally, there is a huge contrast between his—both historical and contemporary—popularity among the reading public and his meagre success as subject matter of critical analysis and scholarly research.²⁷ Although his quality or values are not unacknowledged, the truth is that, in proportion to the popularity of his works, Zweig remains an understudied figure in this particular region of the world. Without going any further, for an author with such an impact, we barely know anything about his connections with Catalan and Spanish culture or the historical reception of his texts here.²⁸ According to Georg Pichler: “Ein kurioser Widerspruch: So häufig und gerne Zweig in Spanien

²⁶ It was not until the Catalan publication in 2014 of some of Zweig’s ‘patriotic’ articles written in the first months of the First World War (see *El món de 1914*, edited by Antoni Martí Monterde), which had been known in Germany and Austria at least since the publication of Prater’s biography, that the narrative of his unquestionable pacifism was challenged.

²⁷ For some recent exceptions, see, among others: Maldonado Alemán, Manuel. Monterde, Antoni Martí. “El solatge de la modernitat (Literatura i Cafè).” *L’Espill*, no. 20, 2005, pp. 6-32. “Über das Ende der Humanität: Stefan Zweig und Goya.” *Österreich, Spanien und die europäische Einheit*, edited by Paul Danler, Innsbruck, Innsbruck UP, 2007, pp. 131-152.; Monterde, Antoni Martí. “Els suïcidis d’Europa en el periodisme de Stefan Zweig.” *Qui acusa?: figures de l’intel·lectual europeu*, edited by Antoni Martí Monterde and Bernat Padró Nieto, Barcelona, Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2015, pp. 191-230.; Würsig, Ingrid Cáceres. “Germanofilia y nacionalcatolicismo: contradicciones en la recepción franquista de Stefan Zweig (1939-1947).” *Revista de Filología Alemana*, no. 26, 2018, pp. 121-138.; Barbancho Galdós, Iñigo. “The Self as the ‘Mittelpunkt’, the World as the ‘Hauptperson’. The ‘Super-Personal’ Autobiography of Stefan Zweig.” *Neophilologus*, vol. 95, no. 1, 2011, pp. 109-122.; Vilar, Loreto. “El Zweig de Fontcuberta: de la superació de la censura franquista al Premi Ciutat de Barcelona, i fins a la darrera tria.” *Quaderns: revista de traducció*, vol. 26, 2019, pp. 109-121.

²⁸ Some of the threads connecting Zweig with Catalonia and Spain and which remain to be explored in depth are: 1) the impact of the Spanish and Catalan culture in Zweig’s works, and especially the great classics of the Spanish Golden Age, such as Lope de Vega and Miguel Cervantes, whom Zweig quoted with assiduity in his works; 2) Zweig’s connections with contemporary writers like Joan Estelrich or Vicente Blasco Ibañez (Zweig wrote a short review of Blasco Ibañez’s *Los cuatro jinetes del Apocalipsis* two months before his suicide titled “Hartrott und Hitler”, in which he presents the Spanish writer as a kind of visionary) or artists like Dalí (see Ridge) and philosophers like José Ortega y Gasset, another Europeanist like Zweig and whom the latter mentions in a letter addressed to Bruno Kreitne (undated, probably from January 29th 1942) as a possible collaborator in a publishing project devoted to exile writing (see Fontanals); 3) His visits to Spain, of which we know, for instance, that he was in Madrid and Sevilla (which resulted in the writing of “Frühling auf Sevilla” (1905)), Barcelona (which he compares to Milan and Sao Paulo in *Brasilien* (2580 and 2966), Vigo (in his way to America in 1936, see *WvG* 422-423) and the Balearic Islands (Friderike Zweig *Greatness Revisited*) 4) The historical reception of Zweig’s works (see Cáceres Würsig).

INTRODUCTION

gelesen und zitiert wird, so sehr fehlt eine umfassendere kritische Auseinandersetzung mit seinem Werk und seinem Einfluss auf die spanische Literatur und Wirklichkeit” (“SZ in Spanien” 29). In a way, we are reproducing the patterns of reception that originated in Zweig’s lifetime. Having said that, there is a particularity that somehow questions the dichotomic model of reception (commercial success/aesthetic failure) observed so far. Both in Catalonia and in the rest of Spain, Zweig has been recuperated not only as a bestseller but also as a modern classic of the *mitteleuropean* letters of the twentieth century. Thus, following the French example, the publishing houses immersed in this renaissance have included Zweig’s works in a historical ‘canon’ that is closer to the ‘literary’ than to the ‘commercial’. In other words, for the reading public, Zweig is not only presented as an excellent writer but also as a thinker, an intellectual.

Stefan Zweig: ‘Fake’ or ‘Real’ Literature?

Following on this survey, it would seem that, at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the question of Zweig’s value and recognition has not been settled yet. Although, according to Jean-Jacques Lafaye, “[p]ronto Zweig será reconocido junto a un Goethe y a un Balzac, pero todavía no ha transcurrido el tiempo suficiente para superar el rechazo que supone reconocer a los contemporáneos” (17), this optimism coexists with some criticism that evokes the long-held debates concerning the quality and ‘depth’ of Zweig’s writing. The most notorious twenty-first-century libel against Zweig is Michael Hofmann’s 2010 review of *Die Welt von Gestern* for the *London Review of Books*:

Stefan Zweig just tastes fake. He’s the Pepsi of Austrian writing. [...] As well as knowing him best, a man’s contemporaries have every reason for getting him wrong, but the fact remains that there is an unusual consensus here—Mann, Musil, Brecht, Hesse, Canetti, Hofmannsthal, Kraus—to the effect that Stefan Zweig was

INTRODUCTION

a purveyor of *Trivialliteratur* and, save in commercial terms, an utterly negligible figure.

Bearing this in mind, I argue that, to provide some context to our study of Stefan Zweig's work, it is worth looking closer at the reasons why there has been such controversy regarding the value of Zweig's legacy. While, in doing so, I do not aim to question the validity of the lines of criticism articulated by critics like Hofmann. However, given that this dissertation engages in a reassessment of Zweig's work, it might be worth contextualizing how our approach to the Austrian writer dialogues with the patterns of reception exposed so far. Some scholars like Klemens Renoldner believe that factors like 'success' and 'prosperity' played a role in the critique of Zweig's 'greatness' as a writer: "Neben zahlreichen, sagen wir, innerliterarischen, thematischen bzw. stilistischen Einwänden berührt der außerordentliche Erfolg dieses Autors so manchen bis heute unangenehm. Erfolg bzw. Wohlstand bei Künstlern erscheint der Durchschnittsmeinung immer suspekt. Stefan Zweig war aber sehr erfolgreich" ("SZ. Anfang eines neuen Bildes" 51). In other words, Zweig's 'popularity', his 'bestseller' condition, inevitably kept him away from the spheres of 'high' literature. As Vanwesenbeeck points out, Zweig's success is explained from this perspective as a 'mistaken', 'confused' judgement: "The wide appeal of Zweig's novellas, according to this critical perspective, thus finds its origin in the mistaken views of a specific readership that is unable to distinguish literary quality from kitsch, and that wrongfully turns literature as one would to a self-help guide, seeking flattery and validation rather than truth and aesthetic recognition" (19).

In my opinion, what is most illuminating about this line of criticism is that it points out, as many of the quotes above show, the centrality of notions such as 'depth', 'surface', and 'truth' as parameters for establishing the quality of a text or an author. Behind the

INTRODUCTION

apparently irreconcilable antagonism between success and quality lies a complex ‘vision’ of literature, of its function and value. As Vanwesenbeeck argues, “Zweig fell into near oblivion during the second half of the twentieth century. His writings and persona were often deemed too straightforward and sentimental for a modernism that championed impersonality and difficulty” (15). In fact, Zweig never concealed the fact that his vision of literature differed greatly from some of the aesthetic movements emerging after the First World War. Thus, we read in his memoirs that “Gleich das erste Buch, das ich nach dem ‘Jeremias’ veröffentlichte, der erste Band meiner ‘Baumeister der Welt’, die Trilogie ‘Drei Meister’, brach mir Bahn; die Expressionisten, die Aktivisten, die Experimentisten hatten sich abgespielt, für die Geduldigen und Beharrlichen war der Weg zum Volke wieder frei” (WvG 339). Also, he goes on to tell us, what he valued the most in a book is that “[j]ede Weitschweifigkeit, alles Schwelgerische und Vage-Schwärmerische, alles Undeutliche und Unklare, alles Überflüssig-Retardierende in einem Roman, einer Biographie, einer geistigen Auseinandersetzung irritiert mich. Nur ein Buch, das ständig, Blatt für Blatt, die Höhe hält und bis zur letzten Seite in einem Zuge atemlos mitreißt, gibt mir einen vollkommenen Genuß” (WvG 340). All in all, we can deduct from these assertions that what some deemed Zweig’s lack of ‘depth’—favoring the idea that his works just tasted ‘fake’, that he was but a ‘simulator’ of greatness—is but the expression of his own poetics of literature, which favors ‘communicability’, ‘agility’ and ‘pleasure’.

In this sense, some scholars have noted that what mainly separates Zweig from the aesthetic movements emerging after the war is his unnegotiable belief in reason—one of Lyotard’s fallen grand narratives (see *Postmodern Condition*)—as a tool to comprehend and represent reality: “Die Voraussetzung für Zweigs Komposition ist der Glaube an die rationale Fassbarkeit und die Darstellbarkeit der Wirklichkeit, an die Kausalität der Weltgeschichte sowie an die Autonomie des Subjekts, was ihn von den modernistischen

INTRODUCTION

Autoren seiner Zeit radikal unterscheidet” (Hu 91). Consequently, we could contend that Zweig mostly ‘inhabited’ other networks of friendships and cultural exchange where similar outlooks prevailed: “In brief he communicates with those writers who share his conception of a humane world [...] and he has no contact with those poets and writers who represent the new outcries of cultural despair and antirationalism and severe criticism of democracy” (G. Iggers 7). Hence, we could conclude that at the core of the many assessments of his works lies a radical opposition between (at least) two different ideas on the value of literature and art. In this light, Vanwesenbeeck suggests that “it is no coincidence, then, that the global rediscovery of Zweig in the first decade of the twenty-first century has been contemporaneous with a renewed scrutiny of the ideological underpinnings of modernism. Indeed, the two are largely complementary phenomena in that they both prompt a reevaluation of the question of what does not constitute serious literature” (26).

II. The “(A)/Politics” of Writing: The ‘Troubled’ Reception of Stefan Zweig as a Committed Writer

In the previous section, we explored the reception of Stefan Zweig’s work in order to contest and contextualize patterns/models of interpretation that were responsible for certain processes of (de)valuation of his works. As I argued before, this dissertation is not concerned primarily with aesthetic considerations. However, I believe that the use of critical notions such as ‘shallowness’, ‘fakeness’, ‘imitation’, ‘triviality’ or ‘ornament’ has resulted not only in the idea that Stefan Zweig’s texts were not ‘good’ or ‘serious’ enough (from an aesthetic point of view) to be considered ‘high’ literature, but has also contributed to his delegitimization as a thinker, philosopher and, broadly speaking, intellectual. What may appear as merely aesthetic or formal considerations hides, as well, ideological concerns, differing poetics and visions of the world (i.e. *Weltanschauungen*). Following

INTRODUCTION

on this observation, I would like to examine one of the elements that have affected the reception of most of Stefan Zweig's works: politics. We have claimed before that Zweig's reactions to the events of the interwar years, and especially in the thirties (i.e. Hitler and National socialism), created a pattern of reception of his works and life-trajectory based on the idea of *Parteilosigkeit*, which signals apparently both an indecision and an undefinition, the willingness not to commit oneself, to remain above party and conflict. In addition to having an enormous impact on Zweig's popularity after his death, this idea was instrumental in the creation of the 'myth'/image of the 'silent', 'uncommitted', 'dégagé' Zweig, hindering the reception of his works as intellectual (and 'political') contributions.

Additionally, closely related to the image of Zweig as a 'failed' intellectual, we find the myth of his 'apoliticism', which, in turn, reinforces the idea of the 'inadequacy' of Zweig's *engagement*. As a consequence, many Zweigian scholars, in the process of reassessing the legacy of the Austrian writer, have tried to question these preconceptions, encouraging researchers to discuss Zweig's 'politics'. For instance, in 1992, Klemens Renoldner argued that "[d]enn das Bild, das Stefan Zweig lediglich als feuilletonistischen Biographie-Schreiber oder als halbseidenen Erotik-Novellist zeigt, kann übrigbleiben für diejenigen, die es schon immer besser gewußt haben, ohne Zweigs Biographien, Novellen und Essays zu lesen. Ein neues, komplexeres Stefan Zweig-Bild, das den österreichischen Schriftsteller als engagierten Vorkämpfer gegen jegliche Nationalismen zeigt, könnte entstehen" ("SZ. Der Anfang eines neuen Bildes" 52). As the Austrian scholar points out, there is usually a close link between aesthetic and political assessments.²⁹

²⁹ Two years later, in 1994, Renoldner claimed that Zweig's importance as 'Vermittler' had been largely ignored: "Cependant, aujourd'hui encore, sa 'biographie politique', son importance comme médiateur entre les artistes et les intellectuels dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres n'a pas attiré l'attention des lecteurs. On sait peu que Stefan Zweig, qui se considérait comme un individualiste apolitique était très au fait de la situation politique de ces années. La correspondance avec Romain Rolland en est un témoignage saisissant et très éclatant" (*SZ. Instants d'une vie* 218).

INTRODUCTION

In my opinion, in making those claims what Renoldner was challenging was not so much Zweig's alleged 'apoliticism', but its constant misinterpretation. Taking this into account, in the following pages I will attempt to determine the meaning of Zweig's 'apoliticism', as it is one of the central elements in the construction of both his figures of commitment and his 'European' *Weltanschauung*. The first thing that must be noted is that Zweig did not live with his back turned to the times, neither socially nor politically. For instance, as Rüdiger Görner observes, "[m]an lese seine Ausführungen zu Walter Rathenau und dessen politisches Selbstverständnis vor und nach 1928 in Österreich und die Überlegungen zur politischen Bedeutung europäischen Kulturbewusstseins und man wird den Vorwurf der Naivität naiv finden müssen" ("Wie man wird" 96). And like the article on Rathenau, we can find multiples examples of Zweig's directly commenting on political events and processes, from his discussion of the Empire and nationalism in the prewar essays "Das Land ohne Patriotismus", "Die indische Gefahr für England" and "Politische Eindrücke von einer mexikanischen Reise" (see Beck 13-20) to his assessment of mass politics, totalitarianism and the Jewish question during exile in "The Mission of the Intellectual", "Keep out of Politics!" and/or "Das große Schweigen".³⁰ What these and other texts show is that Zweig's 'apoliticism' does not entail a lack of commitment nor the absence of 'politics' in his work, but rather a profound aversion to a very particular conception of politics. This disdain for 'politics' (i.e. 'apoliticism') pervades his work to the point that the close analysis of Zweig's figures of commitment, from Verhaeren to Montaigne, reveals that all of them are built in opposition to the 'politician'.

³⁰ In recent years many scholars have devoted their research to explore Zweig's 'connections' with his time. See, especially: Eicher, Thomas, editor. *Stefan Zweig im Zeitgeschehen des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Oberhausen, Athena, 2003.; and Kerschbaumer, Gert. "Stefan Zweigs Ekel vor jeglicher Politik." *Stefan Zweig Reconsidered. New Perspectives on his Literary and Biographical Writings*, edited by Mark Gelber, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 2007.

INTRODUCTION

Zweig's 'apoliticism' entails eventually a reorientation (not renunciation) of his commitment towards the sphere of morality and ethics. In the end, as we will explore throughout this dissertation, it is in the name of the ethical pillars that support his *Weltanschauung*—peace, freedom and humanism—that Zweig repeatedly refuses to engage in politically related issues. If we consider *Die Welt von Gestern*, we can observe that Zweig's 'apoliticism' is deeply ingrained in the atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Vienna. It is part therefore of both his 'utopian' vision and his upbringing. A significant part of Vienna's charm, as described in the first chapter, "Die Welt der Sicherheit", consists in the supremacy of art and culture over politics. Ultimately, what animates Zweig's conception of the artist's duty and responsibility is an idealism that directs his/her efforts towards the sphere of *Geist*, morality and ethics. In other words, Zweig's idealism entails a movement away from materiality and towards humanity, eternity and the universal. Not coincidentally, Zweig insisted that Europe should be above all a 'spiritual' union if it had to fulfill the ideal of unity and peaceful cohabitation (see "Die moralische Entgiftung Europas").

In this light, it is interesting to note that Zweig was not brought up to think in political/'material' terms. As Carl Schorske argues, and this is also reflected in Zweig's autobiographical narrative, the assimilated Jewish families of Vienna generally did not have access to the political posts of the administration or the imperial court, a factor that propitiated the conversion of art into a symbol of prestige and wealth, and a means to climb the social ladder.³¹ What is more, in this context, "[t]he life of art became a substitute for the life of action. [...] art became almost a religion, the source of meaning

³¹ Commenting on the high place of *Bildung* in Austrian culture at the end of the nineteenth century, Schorske claims that "art held a position almost equal in importance to that of rational knowledge. [...] Art was closely bound up with social status, especially in Austria, where the representational arts [...] were central to the tradition of a Catholic aristocracy. If entry into the aristocracy of the genealogical table was barred to most, the aristocracy of the spirit was open to the eager, the able, and the willing" (296).

INTRODUCTION

and the food of the soul” (8-9). In Zweig’s account, in front of the division and animosity between groups fostered by politics, it is the binding force of art that impulses the creation a democratic Eden in the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Taking this into account, we might argue that Zweig was both ‘unprepared’ and ‘unwilling’ to engage in political discussion. In fact, *Die Welt von Gestern* offers testimony of what we could call Zweig’s ‘banal apoliticism’, that is, those instances where his hate for ‘politics’ takes him to show pride over his refusal to use his right to vote, or to claim that “[d]er Burenkrieg, der japanisch-russische Krieg, selbst der Balkankrieg reichten nicht einen Zoll tief in die Existenz meiner Eltern hinein. Sie überschlugen alle Schlachtberichte in der Zeitung ebenso gleichgültig wie die Sportrubrik” (WvG 40) or that “Was ging es uns an, dieses ewige Geplänkel mit Serbien, das, wie wir alle wußten, im Grunde nur über ein paar Handelsverträge wegen serbischen Schweineexports entstanden war? Meine Koffer waren für die Reise nach Belgien zu Verhaeren gepackt, meine Arbeit in gutem Zuge, was hatte der tote Erzherzog in seinem Sarkophag zu tun mit meinem Leben?” (WvG 237). All in all, I believe we should distinguish between this kind of ‘apolitical’ remarks, which only show Zweig’s indifference and might be even considered a ‘limitation’ of his *Weltanschauung* and *engagement*, and another ‘ideological’, ‘responsible’ (i.e. born out of duty and responsibility) ‘apoliticism’, which influences the configuration and orientation of Zweig’s commitment.

The naivete that some commentators observe in the historical account of Zweig’s memoirs can be ‘justified’ or explained in these terms, as the result of Zweig’s orientation of his commitment towards the sphere of ideas and *Geist*. As Leo Botstein claims “Stefan Zweig embodied a conception of intellectual work as abstract and ‘spiritual’, as divorces from mundane, everyday reality, from politics, society and economics. The intellectual and the artistic, in Zweig’s view, reflected the ‘core’ of reality. [...] A spiritualization and

INTRODUCTION

aestheticization of politics and society emerged in Zweig's work which separated body from mind, mass from elite, reality from ideal, action from thinking" (84). It cannot be denied that Zweig's work, especially his essays and biographies, is riddled with politics. The moment he pledges to fight for 'Europe' and against 'nationalism', his fight turns necessarily 'political'. However, the fact that Zweig's responses to politics are articulated from an 'apolitical'/idealist perspective render them 'ingenuous', 'misinformed' or simply 'useless' for the resolution of 'practical' and 'materially-bounded' conflicts. As Lionel Steiman contends, Zweig did not produce a "consistent political view integrating the function of artistic work with a vision of society's future development" ("The Eclipse of Humanism" 157); "because he approached the world in psychological and moral terms, he did not discriminate politically between these conflicting elements. [...] [H]is comments on programs and politicians reveal a naive attempt to consider the ethical as something separate from the political" ("The Eclipse of Humanism" 167).

To conclude this introduction, I would like to explore how Zweig articulates his critique of power through one of his most popular biographies, *Fouché* (1929), which is paradigmatic not only of Zweig's conception of politics but also of the image of the politician as the highest expression of power for power's sake. In the words of Friderike Zweig,

[h]e saw everywhere the negative side of politics, and he expressed it in another biography which became so popular in many countries because every country has had men more or less dangerous than Joseph Fouché. He showed with great intensity through the infamous acts of his life how far a politician could go in his ruthlessness if he is devoid of ethical feeling and responsibility toward his fellow men. (*Greatness Revisited* 93)

In this sense, Zweig himself drew the connection between his biographical subject and National Socialism when he asserted in his memoirs that "Meine Bücher hatten schon

INTRODUCTION

vordem die Ehre genossen, reichlich von den Nationalsozialisten gelesen zu werden; insbesondere war es der ‘Fouché’ gewesen, den sie als Vorbild politischer Unbedenklichkeit immer wieder studierten und diskutierten” (*WvG* 5886). As the contributions of notable Zweigian scholars have shown, *Fouché* is what we could call an ‘example *a contrario*’ (see Auernheimer 419). According to Botstein, “Fouché stood for all politicians, even though when he was clearly and extreme example. Politicians were reduced by Zweig to individuals whose so-called ideals were only the naked ambitions of nonnoble men and second-rate minds seeking merely to dominate” (89). In this sense, Wilma Iggers went one step further and claimed that *Fouché* is not so much the biography of an “unprincipled politician but [...] an example of what it takes to be successful in politics” (17), whereas Rüdiger Görner has claimed that the political implications of *Fouché* should be read as a warning: “Es soll ein Hinweis und eine Warnung für die Politiker von heute und allerzeit sein und das Gefährliche in bildnerischer Form andeuten, das der ‘brauchbare’, der geriebene Politiker für alle Nationen und Europa bedeutet” (“Ghostwriter der Toten” 92).

Additionally, Görner draws our attention to the fact that *Fouché* might be only the beginning a wider biographical project dedicated to the several manifestations of the political ‘type’—*homo politicus* (see Zohn, “SZ: the European” 327)—, from the social dimension of Marx and Rousseau to the revolutionary and dogmatist character of Marat and Münzer (“Ghostwriter der Toten” 88). In this regard, Zweig wrote in the introduction to *Fouché* that “[s]o kam ich unvermutet, aus rein seelenwissenschaftlicher Freude dazu, die Geschichte Joseph Fouchés zu schreiben als einen Beitrag zu einer noch ausständigen und sehr notwendigen Biologie des Diplomaten, dieser noch nicht ganz erforschten, allergefährlichsten geistigen Rasse unserer Lebenswelt” (*FOUCHÉ* 50). As far as *Fouché*

INTRODUCTION

is concerned, there is no doubt that the aim of the biography is to formulate an exposure of the dangers inherent to power and political practices:

[T]äglich erleben wir es neuerdings, daß in dem fragwürdigen und oft frevlerischen Spiel der Politik, dem die Völker noch immer treugläubig ihre Kinder und ihre Zukunft anvertrauen, nicht die Männer des sittlichen Weitblicks, der unerschütterlichen Überzeugungen durchdringen, sondern daß sie immer wieder überspielt werden von jenen professionellen Hasardeuren, die wir Diplomaten nennen, diesen Künstlern der flinken Hände, der leeren Worte und kalten Nerven. Wenn also wirklich, wie Napoleon schon vor hundert Jahren sagte, die Politik ‘la fatalité moderne’ geworden ist, das neue Fatum, so wollen wir zu unserer Gegenwehr versuchen, die Menschen hinter diesen Mächten zu erkennen, und damit das gefährliche Geheimnis ihrer Macht. Ein solcher Beitrag zur Typologie des politischen Menschen sei diese Lebensgeschichte Joseph Fouchés. (FOUCHÉ 61)

The story of Fouché provides Zweig with the opportunity to demystify the workings of power, but from a biased—non-impartial—starting point. As Leon Botstein argues, Zweig aims to discuss politics as ‘disease’, that is, Fouché’s Machiavellian character and his defects must be seen as “an extreme extension of that which infests all politicians and politics: the lust for power for its own sake, which, in most instances, masquerades as ideology” (89). All in all, the French politician is presented in Zweig’s narrative as a political survivor, as someone lacking any morality or, rather, guided by a power-oriented ethics. Consequently, his lack of morals is equated to a lack of humanity. Fouché is a cold, passionless character, which turns out to be his best asset to navigate the world of politics: “Diese Kälte also des Blutes bedeutet Fouchés eigentliches Genie. Sein Körper hemmt ihn nicht und reißt ihn nicht mit, er ist gleichsam nicht dabei in all diesen verwegenen Geistspielen. Sein Blut, seine Sinne, seine Seele, all diese verwirrenden Gefühlselemente eines wirklichen Menschen tun nie wirklich mit bei diesem heimlichen Hasardeur, dessen ganze Leidenschaft hinaufgeschoben ist ins Gehirn” (FOUCHÉ 175).

INTRODUCTION

Zweig's humanism takes him to explore eventually the limits of human 'nature' and the processes of dehumanization inherent to the exercise of power and violence. In this sense, there is an obvious correlation between politics and inhumanity in the configuration of Zweig's *Fouché*. Not only is he passionless, as the quote above reveals, but also, eventually, deprived of will. Power demands of the individual that he or she renounces to his/her agency in order to 'serve'. Thus, we are told that "im Exil hat Fouché die Macht des Geldes erkannt und dient ihr wie jeder Macht" (*FOUCHÉ* 1323) and that: "Denn, Medusenblick der Macht! Wer einmal in ihr Antlitz gesehen, kann nicht mehr den Blick von ihr wenden, bleibt bezaubert und gebannt. Wer einmal die Rauschlust des Herrschens und Gebietens geübt, vermag ihr nie mehr zu entsagen" (*FOUCHÉ* 1833). Eventually, when Fouché is deprived of power, he must face the consequences of having renounced the higher ideal of humanity in the name of the temporary victories and rewards of politics: "ein Machtmensch ohne Macht, ein erledigter Politiker, ein abgespielter Intrigant ist immer das erbärmlichste Ding auf Erden. Spät, aber mit Wucherzinsen wird Fouché jetzt seine Schuld bezahlen, niemals einer Idee, einer moralischen Leidenschaft der Menschheit gedient zu haben, sondern immer nur der vergänglichen Gunst des Augenblicks und der Menschen" (*FOUCHÉ* 3404).

In sum, the aim of this section was to clarify the meaning of Zweig's 'apoliticism' in order to dispel the myth of Zweig's 'uncommitment'. In this light, there seems to be two alternatives to illuminate Zweig's *engagement*. On the one hand, we must bear in mind the fact that Zweig's disdain of politics might be understood as a consequence of the idealism that pervades Zweig's *Weltanschauung*, producing a hierarchy of values whereby politics and power are seen as forces that work against higher ideals such as freedom, humanity and peace. On the other hand, we have witnessed how the Austrian writer's 'apoliticism' might be regarded as a critique of power, its dynamics and practices, an aspect of his commitment that we will explore in this dissertation.

CHAPTER I: FIGURES OF COMMITMENT IN THE WORKS OF STEFAN ZWEIG

[D]ie Geschichte belehrt uns, daß niemals einem gewöhnlichen Selbstdarsteller mehr gelungen ist, als bloße Zeugnisleistung über Tatsachen, die ihm der pure Zufall verstattete, mitzuerleben; das innere Seelenbild aus sich selbst zu erschaffen, fordert dagegen immer den geübten, schauensmächtigen Künstler, und selbst unter ihnen wurden nur wenige diesem äußersten und verantwortungsvollsten Versuche vollendet gerecht.

Stefan Zweig, *Drei Dichter ihres Lebens: Casanova. Stendhal. Tolstoi*, p. 54

[D]enn allem kann man entfliehen, nur sich selber nicht.

Stefan Zweig, *Ungeduld des Herzens*, p. 229

Considering the main parameters that have guided the reception of Stefan Zweig's works and figures since the nineteen thirties, both from a political and an aesthetic point of view, the aim of this chapter is to examine how Stefan Zweig becomes a committed writer and how he negotiates what he considers his duty as an artist in a representative selection of his work. It must be pointed out, however, that in this reconstruction of Zweig's trajectory as an intellectual, I do not intend to write—as it has already been done in a number of excellent publications—a biography of Zweig that takes into account both the private and public spheres, but to consider his authorial dimension as he himself devised it for his readers and posterity. That is to say, my analysis is not concerned with (a version of) the 'real' Zweig, the Zweig 'behind the scenes' that can be allegedly recreated through his diaries, letters and contemporary accounts. Rather, the focus of my reflections is on the process of construction of Zweig's public persona in those works that were written for

publication—and which most of them finally were—and through which he could establish both a ‘public’ identity and a dialogue with his readers (present and future) and around contemporary events. In sum, this chapter examines the forms of commitment and intellectuality contained in his texts through which he articulates and problematizes his own commitment as a writer and artist.³²

As established in the Preface, I will start my analysis by focusing on Zweig’s memoirs *Die Welt von Gestern*, which will serve as a guide and map to orient ourselves in and around Zweig’s oeuvre and life experiences. In this sense, the ‘narrative of commitment’ elaborated in this chapter does not start from scratch, but follows Zweig’s efforts at self-representation, which are used both as a framework and inner structure, connecting Zweig’s works to one another. *Die Welt von Gestern* is understood in our analysis as a ‘reading key’ that continually points beyond the autobiography itself constituting a massive hypertext and (self-)referential network through which the reader can follow Zweig’s footsteps and reimagine both his *Welt(anschauung)* and the forms of his commitment. Additionally, I consider Zweig’s memoirs to be its author’s most precious legacy, in that they do not only establish a historical narrative, but they also articulate a future-oriented appeal to coming generations. At the time of its writing (1940-41), Zweig’s emotional state prevented him from imagining a future for himself and for

³² See, especially: Prater, Donald. *European of Yesterday. A Biography of Stefan Zweig*. Clarendon Press, 1972.; Matuschek, Oliver. *Three Lives. A Biography of Stefan Zweig*. Translated by Allan Blunden, Pushkin Press, 2011; (focused on Zweig’s exile) Prochnik, George. *The Impossible Exile. Stefan Zweig at the End of the World*. Other Press, 2014.; (focused on Zweig’s reception and stay in Brazil) Dines, Alberto. *More no paraíso. A tragédia de Stefan Zweig*. Nova Fronteira, 1981.; (a contemporary account by his close friend Erwin Rieger) Rieger, Erwin. *Stefan Zweig: der Mann und das Werk*. Spaeth, 1928. See also: Allday, Elizabeth. *Stefan Zweig. A Critical Biography*. W.H. Allen & co, 1972.; Niémetz, Serge. *Stefan Zweig. Le Voyageur et ses mondes*. Belfond, 1996.; Kerschbaumer, Gert. *Stefan Zweig. Der fliegende Salzburger*. Fischer, 2005.; Sauvat, Catherine. *Stefan Zweig*. Gallimard, 2006.; Bona, Dominique. *Stefan Zweig. L’ami bléssé*. Grasset, 2010.; Wenzlerl, Ulrich. *Stefan Zweigs brennendes Geheimnis*. Paul Zsolnay, 2015. For the latest concise up-to-date biographical account of Zweig, see: Renoldner, Klemens. “Biographie”. *Stefan-Zweig-Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner and Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 1-42. Finally, for a joint analysis of the biographies dedicated to Zweig: Thuswaldner, Gregor. “Die Biographien.” *Stefan-Zweig-Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner and Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 835-846.

Europe, and so he sought refuge in the past, the only place where he could still feel safe. In other words, he projected all his hopes and dreams backwards in a last attempt at saving from the apocalypse what was left of his utopia. As Zweig himself put it in the prologue to his memoirs: “Aber wenn wir mit unserem Zeugnis auch nur einen Splitter Wahrheit aus ihrem zerfallenden Gefüge der nächsten Generation übermitteln, so haben wir nicht ganz vergebens gewirkt” (WvG 14). From this perspective, the writing of *Die Welt von Gestern* becomes Zweig’s ultimate and desperate act of commitment to both an individual and collective project, to a form of living and thinking—to a *Weltanschauung*—that, although it had ‘failed’ in front of violence and war, it could still be reenacted by future generations.³³

The first thing that must be said about *Die Welt von Gestern* is that its composition, its form and contents, are structured around two levels of discourse. On the one hand, the personal discourse, which tells us about Zweig’s wanderings and anecdotes—related to his publications, hobbies, personal acquaintances, among other details. On the other, a collective discourse, which comprises the history of Europe from the fin-de-siècle to the outbreak of the Second World War. What I contend is that, between these two layers of the text, and by looking at its gaps, silences and diversions from what is expected in this kind of memory or autobiographical narrative, an idea of the world and an ethical program emerge. At this point, I will examine the elaboration of Zweig’s personal discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern*, which will act as a departing point to explore the forms of

³³ Following this direction, biographer George Prochnik argues that “*The World of Yesterday* itself was intended as a bridge between generations, to inform the young about a world that now loomed only in Zweig’s imagination, and might never have been reachable beyond the pages of his writing” (82). Additionally, he also brings to the fore Berthold Viertel’s idea that with his oeuvre Zweig was taking care of the “park we call Europe”, trying to “garner, to save the essentials [...] from perishing into the abyss” (qtd. in Prochnik 270). Also, in this sense, scholar Wei Hu argues that “Unter diesen Umständen *Die Welt von Gestern* war in vieler Hinsicht ein Testament, in dem Stefan Zweig eine Bestandaufnahme durch seine Zeit und sein Leben machte und dadurch die humanistische Geisteshaltung, den Pazifismus und den Europa-Gedanken and die Nachwelt zu vermitteln hoffte” (66).

intellectuality constructed in Zweig's works. However, before looking at how this 'I' narrative of the text unfolds, and as a way of introducing the work, I will discuss its formal and generic particularities, which will shed light on the mechanisms used by Zweig to discuss his own life and to present himself to the world.

1.1. Suprapersonal (Self-)Writing? An Introduction to Stefan Zweig's Narrative of Commitment

One of the most controversial aspects of *Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers* is its generic hybridity or indeterminacy, especially when the text is discussed from the point of view of life writing and (auto)biographical studies. As a way of illustrating this fact, we could consider the several translations of the German word *Erinnerungen* ('memories' in the sense of 'reminiscences').³⁴ On the one hand, in the early English editions of the text since 1943, the title is translated as *The World of Yesterday. An Autobiography*, favoring thus a concept ('autobiography') which Zweig himself uses to allude to the text in the manuscript of 1941 (Galle 361).³⁵ Similarly, the first Spanish edition of the text published in 1942—by the publishing house Claridad (Buenos Aires)—³⁶comes under the title *Mundo de ayer: autobiografía*. On the other hand, the first Brazilian edition of 1942 uses the word 'memoirs' as subtitle (*O mundo que eu vi: minhas memórias*), inaugurating a tradition that has survived until nowadays

³⁴ According to the DUDEN dictionary (online version), the second meaning of the word *Erinnerung* corresponds to the English word 'memory' in the sense of "Besitz aller bisher aufgenommenen Eindrücke; Gedächtnis". However, to complicate things further, in its plural form (*Erinnerungen*), this word can also refer to the genre of the *Autobiographie*. Additionally, the word *Memoiren* refers back to *Autobiographie*. Taking this into account, we may contend that that the ambiguity of *Die Welt von Gestern's* subtitle does not have so much to do with the capacity of any of these words—*Erinnerungen*, *Memoiren*, *Autobiographie*—, also in their several translations, to refer to the contents of the work, be it an autobiography or a memoir, but their connotational value and how it affects the readers expectations and the kind of scholarly analyses carried out under these labels/traditions.

³⁵ In the English edition of the text, translated by Anthea Bell and published in 2009 by the London-based publishing house Pushkin Press, the subtitle (*Erinnerungen eines Europäers*) was not translated but the word 'memoir' features in the back-cover synopsis to describe Zweig's work. In the 2011 edition, the subtitle has been translated as "memoirs of a European".

³⁶ This first Spanish edition did not include the chapter "Eros matutinus" (see Cáceres Würsig 130).

with the most recent Spanish edition of the text—published by Acantilado in 2001 with the renowned translation by Joan Fontcuberta i Gel and Agata Orzeszek. This second option, although it seems to be closer to the original *Erinnerungen*, also assigns the text to a writing tradition or genre (i.e. memoirs), attaching to it a set of expectations that may influence the potential reader of the text. Last but not least, and in order to avoid a generic ascription, we can also find a third and more ‘neutral’ option in the French edition of the text, which uses the word *souvenirs*.

These discrepancies and vacillations in the translation of the subtitle of *Die Welt von Gestern* go beyond, I argue, the mere linguistic anecdote and point to a key element in the configuration of the text and the organization of its contents, namely that they resist an easy labelling or ascription to a generic tradition, showing a high degree of hybridity between autobiography (*Autobiographie*), memoirs (*Memoiren*) and testimony (*Zeugnis*), and between the narration of an ‘I’ person and the telling of a ‘We’ experience, as explored by Helmut Galle in the *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*.³⁷ In this sense, we could start by considering the definition of ‘autobiography’ by Philippe Lejeune in his seminal work *Le Pacte autobiographique*, published for the first time in 1975: “Récit rétrospectif en prose qu’une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu’elle met l’accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l’histoire de sa personnalité” (14). To this definition Lejeune adds four parameters (form of language, subject treated, situation of the author and the position of the narrator) which help distinguish autobiography from other life-writing genres. As regards autobiography and memoirs, the main difference between the two genres is that the latter does not have as a subject matter of the narration the life of

³⁷ See also Hu, Wei. *Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Welt: die kulturelle und die poetische Konstruktion autobiographischer Texte im Exil; am Beispiel von Stefan Zweig, Heinrich Mann und Alfred Döblin*. Lang, 2006. Esp. pp. 35-48 for a discussion of the intersection between autobiography and exile from a cultural and literary perspective, and chapter “III. 1. Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) *Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers*” for Hus’ analysis of Zweig’s memoirs.

an individual, the history of his or her personality, but focuses instead on notable people and events as they have been met, witnessed or experienced by the narrator. Thus, memoirs emphasize the relationship and links between the self and the community, adding a collective dimension to the text and getting closer to the writing of history.

What we can easily gather from these definitions—which Lejeune conceived always from the point of view of the reader and his/her horizon of expectations in relation to the text (the ‘pact’)—is that Zweig’s memoirs do not fully adjust to any of them. Even though, as we said before, the word *Erinnerungen*, chosen by Zweig himself, points towards the memoirs genre, and even though Zweig focuses for most of the text on his encounter with famous individuals and his witnessing of epoch-changing events, “der historiografisch-dokumentarische Charakter wird allerdings bei Zweig dadurch eingeschränkt, dass der Autor die politischen und historischen Ereignisse nur sehr selektiv behandelt” (Galle 362). In other words, if we judge Zweig’s text from the perspective of its historical value—or rather its value as a historical text—, we observe that “the ‘world’ (*Welt*), which is the central topic of *Die Welt von Gestern*, which supposedly represents Europe before the First World War, is significantly different from that described by historians” (Barbancho Galdós 110). On the other hand, if we consider the text as an autobiography, much information and many details are actually absent concerning ‘private’ issues: family life, the relationship with those friends who were, according to the biographers, closer to Zweig such as Victor Fleischer or Erwin Rieger, among others.³⁸ In the same manner, there is no trace of Joseph Roth, whose friendship with Zweig culminated in an outstanding correspondence that attests to the importance each had in the other’s life until

³⁸ The case of Erwin Rieger is quite blatant, since he was Zweig’s assistant for a long time and also the author of one of the first biographies of Zweig published during his lifetime. For a modern reprint of Riegers’ 1928 biography, see: Rieger, Erwin. *Stefan Zweig. Der Mann und das Werk*. Severus, 2013.

Roth's death in 1939.³⁹ What is more, it is impossible to find a single explicit and meaningful reference to any of his two wives, whose existence—in the case of Friderike Maria Zweig—is only hinted at by the apparition of an unexpected *unseres* ('ours') in the middle of the text, in chapter 12 "Heimkehr nach Österreich", when Zweig describes his new residence in Salzburg's Kapuzinerberg: "Eine prächtige alte Tapete und eine bemalte Kegelkugel, mit der Kaiser Franz 1807 bei einem Besuche in Salzburg eigenhändig im langen Gange dieses *unseres* Hauses Kegel geschoben" (*WvG* 310).⁴⁰

Following this line of discussion, I would argue that the reason for this problematic classification of *Die Welt von Gestern* is not mere chance—the fact that more often than not texts escape generic conventions due to their fluid nature—but the result of the will and intentions of its author, who—it must be borne in mind—was not alone in trying to find a textual and literary space to convey his life and *Weltanschauung* (Galle 362). In this sense, many autobiographies written in the first half of the twentieth century tried to connect the self with the great heroes and deeds of its time, in an attempt at monumentalizing the subject and emphasizing his heroic nature (see Hoffman). Also, in the context of exile, many writers downplayed the personal aspect of their narrations in favor of connecting them with their own time and with history (see Hilmes). As we have said before, *Die Welt von Gestern* can be considered as Zweig's endeavors to stabilize his own self and his own story, to get hold of a cohesive narrative in the middle of chaos, mobility, changing circumstances and uncertainty. This—the sense of uprootedness, unbelonging and instability—is voiced clearly by Zweig in the preface to the text, when he asserts that "[s]o gehöre ich nirgends mehr hin, überall Fremder und bestenfalls Gast;

³⁹ The correspondence between Roth and Zweig has been recently published under the title *Jede Freundschaft mit mir ist verderblich* by Wallstein Verlag in 2011. A fictional recreation of the last summer spent by Roth and Zweig in the Belgian coastal resort of Ostende can be found in: Weidemann, Volker. *Ostende 1936. Sommer der Freundschaft*. Kiepenheuer, 2014.

⁴⁰ My italics.

[...] [s]o verschiedenen ist mein Heute von jedem meiner Gestern, meine Aufstiege und meine Abstürze, daß mich manchmal dünkt, ich hätte nicht bloß eine, sondern mehrere, völlig voneinander verschiedene Existenzen gelebt” (*WvG* 10).⁴¹

Zweig builds a narrative told by an ‘I’ narrator that, in turn, wants to connect with an experiencing (*erlebendem*) ‘we’, seeking a community of experience and belonging. As Galle claims: “Zweig verallgemeinert sein persönliches Schicksal zum kollektiven. So erscheint die Individualbiografie als Biografie einer Epoche” (359). In fact, the first thing that Zweig does in the preface is to establish a difference between the *Hauptperson* (‘main character’) of the narration and the *Mittelpunkt* (‘central character’): “Viel mußte sich ereignen [...] ehe ich den Mut fand, ein Buch zu beginnen, das mein Ich zur Hauptperson hat oder—besser gesagt—zum Mittelpunkt. [...] Und es wird eigentlich nicht sosehr *mein* Schicksal sein, das ich erzähle, sondern das einer ganzen Generation” (*WvG* 9). As has been claimed by most of his biographers and those who personally knew him, Zweig abhorred being under the spotlight. His introvert nature—“Ich habe meiner Person niemals soviel Wichtigkeit beigemessen, daß es mich verlockt hätte, anderen die Geschichte meines Lebens zu erzählen” (*WvG* 9) is the first sentence of *Die Welt von Gestern*—often took him away from the public arena, something that placed him in a difficult position in the thirties with the rise of Hitler and totalitarianism throughout Europe. Sometimes he even advised others to avoid the public activity par excellence—

⁴¹ Scholar Wei Hu conceives *Die Welt von Gestern* as an attempt to save or affirm the autonomous, total ‘I’, a conception of the individual originating in the idealism and bourgeois liberalism that inform Zweig’s upbringing and thought (92). As a consequence, Hu considers that it was understandable that Zweig resorted to the genre of autobiography to carry out a restoration of both the self and the world it had inhabited, being one’s memories the only thing left for those who had lost everything: “Nur in der Arbeit vermochte Zweig noch die Ordnung der Welt wieder aufzurichten, die Vernunft wieder wirken zu lassen und die Würde des souveränen, selbstbestimmenden Ich wieder zu retten. So ist es verständlich, dass Zweig in *Der Welt von Gestern* an der konventionellen Poetik festhält. Die Autobiographie war die letzte Zuflucht für den Heimatlosen, und die Zeitzeugnisse verwandelten sich in Bekenntnisse zu den humanistischen Werten von Ordnung, Kontinuität und Vertrauen. Auch wenn er eingestand, dass die Welt der Sicherheit nur Illusion, “edler Wahn” sei, bekannten sich Zweigs letzte Worte zu dem Glauben an die Zukunft” (98).

politics—, especially Jews during the Nazi persecution.⁴² In the same vein, and regarding *Die Welt von Gestern*, Donald Prater argues that “not until near sixty did he venture an autobiography, and there, however graphic his depiction of the far-off world of his youth, anything personal is entirely omitted” (*European of Yesterday* 330).

Finally, in our assessment of *Die Welt von Gestern*'s generic specificity, a third ingredient must be considered. For, if in connection with what we could call ‘factual truth’, both the personal and the historical/collective discourses that underpin *Die Welt von Gestern* miss their marks or have their obvious shortcomings, where does the value of the text reside? To answer this question, we must consider the testimonial nature of the work, which goes hand in hand with what I would dare to label a sense of ‘generational exceptionalism’ and responsibility. Despite Zweig’s claims to having produced an objective—or honest—account thanks to the freedom and ‘independence’ afforded by exile,⁴³ it is obvious—and it could hardly be otherwise—that his work is tainted with the subjective. This subjectivity is precisely what gives cohesion to his narrative and what brings it closer to the idea or genre of the ‘testimony’ (*Zeugnis*), which became a variant of the autobiographic genre after the Second World War. In Galle’s words: “Wichtiger als die Wahrheit des historischen Details ist hier das subjektive Erleben, die Erfahrung und moralische Autorität des Verfassers, der sich für die Authentizität der Darstellung verbürgt” (362). In the light of these reflections, what I contend is that this subjective quality of the narration, what some critics have deemed as ‘manipulation’, accusing Zweig of providing a false and naive image of what happened, is but the byproduct of his *Weltanschauung*, an ethical program or project that had defined Zweig’s way of looking

⁴² See, for instance, the short article with the unambiguous title “Keep out of Politics”, addressed to Jews and published in *Query Book* (volume 2) in 1938.

⁴³ “Gerade der Heimatlose wird in einem neuen Sinne frei, und nur der mit nichts mehr Verbundene braucht auf nichts mehr Rücksicht zu nehmen. So hoffe ich wenigstens eine Hauptbedingung jeder rechtschaffenen Zeitdarstellung erfüllen zu können: Aufrichtigkeit und Unbefangenheit” (*WvG* 9-10).

at the world and which can be reconstructed precisely by paying attention to the subjective crevices and cracks of both his personal and historical discourses.

Additionally, it is precisely the Zweigian ethics which lay at the core of his commitment as a writer that impel him—together with a sense of ‘generational exceptionalism’—to bear witness: “Dies unser gespanntes, dramatisch überraschungsreiches Leben zu bezeugen, scheint mir Pflicht, denn—ich wiederhole—jeder war Zeuge dieser ungeheuren Verwandlungen, jeder war genötigt, Zeuge zu sein. Für unsere Generation gab es kein Entweichen, kein Sich-abseits-Stellen wie in den früheren” (WvG 13). In this sense, the last sentence of this quote is not alone in highlighting the fact that what Zweig has lived through is in a certain way extraordinary. From the first lines of the preface to the assertion, a few pages later, that

Ich selbst kann nicht umhin, mich zu verwundern über die Fülle, die Vielfalt, die wir in den knappen Raum einer einzigen [...] Existenz gepreßt haben, und schon gar, wenn ich sie mit der Lebensform meiner Vorfahren vergleiche. Mein Vater, mein Großvater [...] lebten jeder ihr Leben in der Eiform. Ein einziges Leben vom Anfang bis zum Ende, ohne Aufstiege, ohne Stürze, ohne Erschütterung und Gefahr. (WvG 11)⁴⁴

Adding to the exceptional quality of Zweig’s lived/witnessed experiences, we must consider the fact that these catastrophic events resulted in the demise of both Zweig’s personal cosmopolitan project and his fight for the ‘spiritual’ union of Europe. Therefore, what in a sense he is bearing witness to is his own ‘failed project’, which permeates the structure and configuration of the memoir’s personal and historical discourses. For it is

⁴⁴ Also, in the foreword to *Die Welt von Gestern*: “Wir aber lebten alles ohne Wiederkehr, nichts blieb vom Früheren, nichts kam zurück; uns war im Maximum mitzumachen vorbehalten, was sonst die Geschichte sparsam jeweils auf ein einzelnes Land, auf ein einzelnes Jahrhundert verteilt. [...] Wir aber, die wir heute sechzig Jahre alt sind und de jure noch eigentlich ein Stück Zeit vor uns hätten, was haben wir *nicht gesehen, nicht gelitten, nicht miterlebt?*” (WvG 12).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

precisely this *leitmotiv*, this message, this witnessing and experiencing, that he and only he could communicate to future generations.

I contend from this perspective that the generic hybridity of *Die Welt von Gestern* is caused to a great extent by Zweig's deliberate blending of the generic boundaries in order to serve his own purposes. That is to say, in trying to find a voice beyond the self, in trying to reach a space beyond the limits of the 'I' where communal action is possible—can be addressed—, he writes what Barbancho-Galdós has termed his “super-personal” autobiography. We are facing therefore a text that escapes Lejeune's definition and which, as Barbancho-Galdós proposes, asks for a more fluid conception of autobiography, pointing to Mark Freeman's, who claims that there is an “unconscious narrative” at work when we—our selves—meet the world. “Unconscious”, he says, not in a Freudian sense, but in a “cultural” sense, “having to do with those largely unrecognized and in turn uncognized aspects of our own histories” that nonetheless shape our identities (200). In a way, he proposes a way of considering autobiographies as a means to reach the self via our cultural and social histories, that is, past our personal narratives and into the “supra-personal dimensions of self-formation” (201). In Freeman's words: “my own ‘autobiography’ is much less about my *self* [...] than it is about my *world*, my existence as a social and cultural subject” (200). In the case of Zweig, I argue that what lies behind the writing of *Die Welt von Gestern*, halfway between consciousness and unconsciousness, is a narrative of commitment that permeates and refers back to a significant number of Zweig's works, providing a common thread for navigating Zweig's oeuvre. This is a narrative that is shaped by an ethical program that can be articulated using as a reference point those passages in the text where this ‘unconscious’ layer is felt with more intensity. As Barbancho Galdós summarizes: “It may be said that Stefan Zweig does not define

himself in relation to his family, but rather by means of a certain idea of the ‘world’, so, by writing about the latter, he is writing his own ‘impersonal biography’” (121).

1.1.1. How do I tell my Story beyond Myself?

Following what has been discussed so far concerning the difficulty of defining the generic specificity of *Die Welt von Gestern*, we could ask ourselves: If it is true that Stefan Zweig, as an individual, does not want to stand in the limelight in his own biography, if he does not want to tell us about his private relationships and innermost feelings, if he is constantly fleeing from the outset into a generational ‘we’ whereby all his personal experiences are amplified into the communal, how can we propose to analyze the image of Stefan Zweig—his public/authorial *persona*—in *Die Welt von Gestern*? How can we attest to the existence of a ‘personal discourse’ that allows us to discuss his narrative of commitment and his life as an intellectual? As we have said before, Stefan Zweig was a rather private person. In a way, privacy and freedom formed a correlation in his mind, something that, according to Zweig, he had inherited from his father:

Nun kommt im Leben eines jedweden unverweigerlich die Zeit, da er im Bilde seines Wesens dem eigenen Vater wiederbegegnet. Jener Wesenszug zum Privaten, zum Anonymen der Lebenshaltung beginnt sich in mir jetzt von Jahr zu Jahr stärker zu entwickeln, so sehr er eigentlich im Widerspruch steht zu meinem Beruf, der Name und Person gewissermaßen zwanghaft publik macht. (*WvG* 25)

In a way, to defend privacy was to defend his own right to be free from the constraints of public life. His first wife Friderike Maria Zweig, who does not receive a single allusion by name in the text—even though she played a key part in its composition, aiding Zweig to reconstruct some blurred memories and facts—, reflected, in a letter sent to Zweig on July 18th 1930—on the opacity that surrounded the writer and which made it impossible for anyone to get to know him through his public work, his books:

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Repasando los pensamientos que ayer tuve sobre tus amigos [...] me sentí bastante afligida al observar que en realidad nadie—excepto yo— te conoce verdaderamente y que llegará el día en que se escribirán sobre ti las cosas más vanas y estúpidas. [...]. Tus escritos son solo una tercera parte de tu modo de ser, e incluso en ellos nadie ha comprendido lo que es esencial para la captación del significado de lo otro, o sea, de los dos tercios restantes. (Zweig, *Correspondencia* 268-9)

Even though these words might seem an obstacle in our attempts to articulate and analyze how Stefan Zweig embodied in his work certain forms of intellectuality and commitment, I must insist on the fact that it is this ‘third part of his self’ Friderike Zweig alludes to that interests us the most. For it is here, in the small portion of his self that he conveys in his oeuvre, where Stefan Zweig constructs his public and authorial persona. And it is through this personal discourse that he engages with society, history, and contemporary events. Therefore, what we call here ‘commitment’ is the way in which Zweig builds bridges between his ‘self’ and the several communities of belonging, the several ‘we’, of which he was a member and to which he could somehow relate—Vienna, Austria, Europe, Cosmopolitanism, Humanism, Pacifism, Jewishness, Literature—: “Jeder von uns [...] ist in seiner innersten Existenz aufgewühlt worden von den fast pausenlosen vulkanischen Erschütterungen unserer europäischen Erde; und ich weiß mir inmitten der Unzähligen keinen anderen Vorrang zuzusprechen als den einen: als Österreicher, als Jude, als Schriftsteller, als Humanist und Pazifist jeweils just dort gestanden zu sein, wo diese Erdstöße am heftigsten sich auswirken” (WvG 9). Bearing this in mind, I contend that Stefan Zweig devises several ways to disguise his experiences as an individual and to construct what we have called his ‘super-personal autobiography’, that is to say, a way of narrating the self that goes beyond the ‘I’. In these “Umwege auf dem Wege zu mir selbst”, as the chapter 6 of his memoirs is titled, Zweig implements two main strategies/processes to build his personal discourse: (1) the ‘amplification’ of

an individual experience to make it ‘suprapersonal’; (2) the ‘exteriorization’ or ‘projection’ of his inner constitution, which results in (a) the conversion of objects—people and places—outside himself into symbols; and (b) the use of ‘identification’ as a mechanism to discuss his desires and ontological aspirations.

First of all, Zweig inscribes personal experiences on collective narratives, thus making them ‘paradigmatic’ or ‘representative’. For instance, when he discusses his way of life in Vienna before the First World War, within the walls of “die Welt der Sicherheit”, he tells us of his family—precisely when the narration starts to become a bit personal—that:

Ihre Lebensform scheint mir dermaßen typisch für das sogenannte ‘gute jüdische Bürgertum’, das der Wiener Kultur so wesentliche Werte gegeben hat und zum Dank dafür völlig ausgerottet wurde, daß ich mit dem Bericht ihres gemächlichen und lautlosen Daseins eigentlich etwas Unpersönliches erzähle: so wie meine Eltern haben zehntausend oder zwanzigtausend Familien in Wien gelebt in jenem Jahrhundert der gesicherten Werte. (*WvG* 22)

Or, when he discusses the negative experiences he had during his school years (chapter 2), he makes it a matter of the *Zeitgeist*: “Dieses Mißvergnügen an der Schule war nicht etwa eine persönliche Einstellung; ich kann mich an keinen meiner Kameraden erinnern, der nicht mit Widerwillen gespürt hätte, daß unsere besten Interessen und Absichten in dieser Treitmühle gehemmt, gelangweilt und unterdrückt wurden” (*WvG* 49). In the same vein, informal education and the interest—or mania—in the new artistic and cultural expressions of the fin-de-siècle is turned into the shared experience of a young ‘we’,⁴⁵ which, in turn, resonates within the broader artistic, social and cultural movements

⁴⁵ “Wir bartlosen, unausgewachsenen Burschen, die tagsüber noch auf der Schulbank hocken mußten, bildeten wirklich das ideale Publikum, das sich ein junger Dichter erträumen konnte. [...] Denn unsere Fähigkeit zum Enthusiasmus war grenzenlos; während unserer Schulstunden [...] haben wir halbwüchsigen Jungen Jahre nichts getan als Bücher, Bilder, Musik, Philosophie zu diskutieren” (*WvG* 58).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

of the Secession and Jung-Wien. In this sense, Zweig's passion for art is contextualized within a group of juvenile art devourers that become the perfect audience for a new artistic and sociopolitical movement: "Aber es war noch etwas anderes, was uns an dieser neuen Kunst so maßlos interessierte und faszinierte: daß sie fast ausschließlich eine Kunst junger Leute war" (*WvG* 62).

The (possibility of) identification between audience and artist is, Zweig goes on to explain, one of the factors that kindled this young people's enthusiasm, a kind of identification that alludes to the second mechanism deployed by the Austrian writer to transmit the key elements that enable us to reconstruct his personal discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern*—and which might be one of the consequences of Zweig's love of privacy. For, if he could not bring himself, out of modesty or embarrassment, to openly discuss his life, commitment and *Weltanschauung*, he certainly could resort to 'objects' outside himself to express what he held to be his innermost ideas and feelings. The first consequence of this process of 'exteriorization' by means of which Zweig builds his personal discourse is that the events, places and people that make up *Die Welt von Gestern* acquire a symbolic dimension. Although we will resume the analysis of this strategy in Chapter II, suffice it to mention here, as a way of example, that Zweig turns both his parents into key symbols of his narrative of commitment and ethics. Whereas the father, as we have learned in a previous quotation, passes onto him the love of privacy and "denn ihm danke ich, was ich vielleicht als meinen einzig sicheren Besitz empfinde: das Gefühl der inneren Freiheit" (*WvG* 25); his mother's—or rather her side of the family's—exceptional trait is her cosmopolitanism: "Aber die Familie meiner Mutter war keineswegs italienisch, sondern bewußt international; die Brettauers [...]. [D]ieser internationale Kontakt verlieh ihnen besseren Schliff, größeren Ausblick und dazu einen gewissen Familienhochmut" (*WvG* 26).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Likewise, it is not only individuals that form this symbolic landscape, but also several places that, beyond their given ‘realities’, become sites of projection of Zweig’s ethical program and utopia. In a way, these locations embody an aspect or the totality of what the writer considers to be the essential conditions of belonging and realization of ‘home’ (*Heimat*), understood as something lost and deeply missed in *Die Welt von Gestern*: “So gehöre ich nirgends mehr hin, überall Fremder und bestenfalls Gast; auch die eigentliche Heimat, die mein Herz sich erwählt, Europa, ist mir verloren, seit es sich zum zweitenmal selbstmörderisch zerfleischt im Bruderkriege” (*WvG* 10). Notably, among the places where Zweig envisions the materialization of his *Weltanschauung* are fin-de-siècle Vienna, Paris before the First World War, or Rio de Janeiro in the late thirties and during Zweig’s final exile. However, leaving aside for a while these—almost complete—realizations of Zweig’s utopia, which will be analyzed in depth at the beginning of Chapter II, we must also bear in mind that there are other locations that symbolize, if only partially, an aspect of Zweig’s ethics, such as Berlin or Switzerland in *Die Welt von Gestern*. Whereas the former will be closely associated at the end of Zweig’s life with the idea of freedom (*WvG* 128 and ff.), the latter will signify in Zweig’s memoirs the idea of peaceful coexistence and supranationalism (284 and *WvG* ff.).

Finally, in this process of ‘depersonalization’ or ‘impersonalization’ of his self-discourse, Zweig resorts to a series of ‘identifications’ with other individuals to discuss his experiences—as well as his innermost longings and wishes—and to negotiate his stance as a committed writer and intellectual. This identificatory mechanism recurs throughout his non-fictional work, especially in some of his biographies and portraits, and is of paramount importance to unravel the foundational stones of his narrative of

commitment.⁴⁶ It is also one of the instances where Zweig's empathic drive or potential is felt with more intensity. In this sense, we could argue that narrating one's life through 'others', as Zweig does in his works, and especially in his autobiography, constitutes an act of empathy, where the process of identification reaches the point of 'legitimizing' or 'authorizing' the 'other' to express and constitute the 'one'.⁴⁷

Applying this notion to the *Die Welt von Gestern*, I claim that Zweig builds his personal discourse through a series of identifications that relates, and adds up, to a bigger constellation of figures in his oeuvre, from Hugo von Hofmannsthal to Michel de Montaigne. What is more, I contend that Zweig uses this device specifically to discuss that part of himself that clashes more evidently with contemporary events and realities, that is to say, that part of himself that is committed to both an idea of the world and an ethical project. In sum, Zweig uses identification to 'defend' his authorial persona from exposure to the public sphere by building a genealogy of figures that act as his 'representatives' or alter-egos. In Zweig's own terminology, these figures constitute 'examples', voices to follow and which bind individuals to one another. As the narrator in the story *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* asserts: "Denn das Beispiel ist das stärkste

⁴⁶ The psychoanalytic term 'identification' is understood here, following Alan Vanier, as a process of 'assimilation' by means of which the 'self' identifies totally or partially with the 'other', constituting an accumulative notion of 'personality'. That is to say, personality is conceived as a sum of identifications whereby the 'self' is made upon the image of the 'other'. Among the forms of identification distinguished by Freud, we will refer mostly to two types: a partial one, whereby the self apprehends a characteristic of the 'other' (62), "borrowing only one of the object's traits" (Mijolla 788); and another, more far-reaching, that is based on a trait shared with the other that allows for the possibility of placing oneself in the 'other's' situation and therefore to become 'the other' (Vanier 62). Additionally, Alain de Mijolla contends that identification should be differentiated from imitation, in that the latter is "a voluntary and conscious act" (787). In sum, I will use the notion of identification in its broadest sense, as a form of 'internalization', a concept that refers to "processes that lead to the psychological contents of significant others being brought inside one's mind and, to a greater or lesser degree, made part of it" (Akhtar 150). As compared with other forms of internalization, identification does not imply the will to destroy or master the object but, on the contrary, is "more likely to be ego-syntonic and in harmony with the individual's self-image" (150).

⁴⁷ On this topic, Laurent Seksik asserts in his fictionalized account of Zweig's last days in Petrópolis that "él necesitaba, para escribir sus biografías, una fuerte resonancia, una forma de identificación—'Usted practica la transferencia perfectamente', le había dicho Freud como un cumplido. *Hablar de otro era una forma de explicarse a sí mismo*" (81; my italics).

Band auf Erden, das die Menschen bindet; jede Tat weckt in anderen den Willen zum Rechten, daß er aufspringt vom Schlummer seines Träumens und tätig die Stunden erfüllt” (*VIRATA* 51).⁴⁸

1.1.2. From the Formation of the Writer to the Making of the Intellectual in *Die Welt von Gestern* and Other Autobiographical Texts by Stefan Zweig

In the previous section we have explored the hermeneutic tools required to read into and ‘personalize’ Zweig’s ‘super-personal’ discourse as it unfolds in his works in general and in his memoirs in particular. Now it is time to put them into practice in the analysis of the frame narratives of this study, namely, those autobiographical texts where Zweig tells his own story and thereby makes an attempt at self-fashioning. The most important of these texts, *Die Welt von Gestern*, will be our point of departure and reference throughout this dissertation. The rest, three short autobiographical sketches, will help us distinguish the forms of intellectuality that delineate the evolution of Zweig’s narrative of commitment around a big turning point: The First World War.

Roughly speaking, the sixteen chapters that make up *Die Welt von Gestern* can be thematically divided into three parts. The first is made up of eight chapters (from ‘Die Welt der Sicherheit’ to ‘Glanz und Schatten über Europa’), which are devoted to describing the heyday of what Zweig called ‘Die Welt der Sicherheit’ and its progressive demise until 1914, covering approximately the first three decades of the Austrian writer’s life. The second part (from chapter nine ‘Die ersten Stunden des Kriegs von 1914’ to

⁴⁸ Following this line of discussion, we could argue that Zweig found some inspiration for using this self-writing technique in one of his mentors, the French writer and Nobel Prize winner Romain Rolland, who also turned to the geniuses of the past, to literature, to find both solace and guidance in one of the most difficult epochs of his life. Feeling misunderstood and rejected by his contemporaries, Rolland, as we will discuss later, “in dieser seiner Einsamkeit durchblättert er die Bücher der Zeiten. Und da der Mensch in allen Stimmen zutiefst immer seine eigene hört, findet er überall nur Schmerz” (*ROLLAND* 1464). In this sense, Rolland, too, found in his biographies—in the narration, recreation, and remembrance of others’ lives—a way to negotiate and transmit his own ideas, feelings, and dreams. In this epoch of his life, Rolland wrote a cycle of ‘heroic biographies’, including those of Beethoven, Michelangelo, and Tolstoy.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

chapter eleven ‘Im Herzen Europas’) narrates Zweig’s experience of the First World War. Finally, the third part, comprising the last five remaining chapters, from ‘Heimkehr nach Österreich’ to ‘Die Agonie des Friedens’, tells us about the time of Zweig’s worldwide success in the twenties and the rise of Hitler and the period of exile from 1933 to 1939, ending right at the beginning of the Second World War. Considering this structural overview, we can argue, as far as Zweig’s narrative of commitment is concerned, that the autobiography—more specifically its personal discourse—covers two clearly differentiated periods. On the one hand, what we have called the first part of the memoirs, up until the First World War, narrates step by step how Zweig comes to be a ‘writer’, from the cultural enriching atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Vienna to his extensive travels and activities as a translator. According to Zweig himself, these formative years helped him reach a certain point of maturity as an artist and therefore he came out of them with a voice and *persona* that allowed him to participate in the public sphere through his books, translations, etc. However, when the ‘unexpected’—in the eyes of Zweig and ‘his generation’—catastrophe occurs, he will feel the weight of his responsibility as an artist, devoting all his energy to recover what has been lost in the conflict and to the only solution that he thought could bring peace to Europe: it ‘spiritual’ union.

On the other hand, after this ‘awakening’ or epiphanic moment—whose relevance and transition are more or less emphasized or smoothed out depending on who tells the story, as we will discuss later—, we witness how a second layer of meaning is attached to Zweig’s public identity as a writer, that of the ‘intellectual’, a figure of commitment that will define most of his creative activities after the war. This transformation of Zweig’s role as a writer, of his ‘mission’, is seen by the Austrian author as the logical consequence of what had been his European and cosmopolitan life, a way of life that up until the war had prepared him to combat the rhetoric of nationalism and war:

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

So war ich gewissermaßen geimpft mit Mißtrauen gegen die Infektion patriotischer Begeisterung, und vorbereitet wie ich war gegen diesen Fieberanfall der ersten Stunde, blieb ich entschlossen, meine Überzeugung von der notwendigen Einheit Europas nicht erschüttern zu lassen durch einen von ungeschickten Diplomaten und brutalen Munitionsindustriellen herbeigeführten Bruderkampf. (WvG 247)

This determination is what compels him to fulfil “jenem Dienst, der mir der wichtigste in diesem Kriege war: der Dienst and der künftigen Verständigung” (WvG 248-249), dictating his movements and choices: “Nach einigen Wochen [he tells us at the end of chapter nine] übersiedelte ich, entschlossen, dieser gefährlichen Massenpsychose auszuweichen, in einen ländlichen Vorort, um mitten im Kriege meinen persönlichen Krieg zu beginnen: den Kampf gegen den Verrat der Vernunft an die aktuelle Massenleidenschaft” (WvG 256-256). In brief, this is how Zweig articulates his narrative of commitment in *Die Welt von Gestern* until the First World War. From this point onwards, the remainder of the text is devoted to Zweig the ‘intellectual’. However, it must be pointed out that, except for the war chapters, this emphasis on what he terms in the last quote his “persönlichen Krieg”—his activities to promote the intellectual union of Europe and the common understanding of its peoples and nations—is gradually left in the background, appearing only spontaneously at the center the narration. In other words, as the text approaches Zweig’s present, his voice seems to ‘falter’, favoring the ‘anecdotic’ over the ‘committed’, as we will now comment.

Die Welt von Gestern encapsulates Stefan Zweig’s ethics and *Weltanschauung*, leaving to the reader the possibility—as we are attempting in this dissertation—to (re)articulate his commitment, both in terms of the figure that enunciates said commitment and the project(s) onto which it materializes—in our case Zweig’s (idea of) Europe. Nonetheless, we cannot rely on this text alone, for, as I was arguing, one of the

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

shortcomings of *Die Welt von Gestern* as read from the perspective of Zweig's *engagement*, is that, in contrast with Zweig's claims of having found a new direction or task for his creative output, the last five chapters of the text leave us with but just a few hints of Zweig's work as an intellectual. What is more, the closer we get to one of the hottest points in the European history of the first half of the twentieth century—the rise of national socialism—the more Zweig seems to be hiding behind trivialities. Once again, we observe that Zweig does not work well with (temporal) immediacy, a constant throughout his life, and this may explain the huge contrast and unbalance between the first two parts of the narration and the third, to the point that figures of paramount importance to Zweig's commitment such as Romain Rolland and Émile Verhaeren are amply discussed, whereas Erasmus, Castellio or Montaigne—who will play a key role in the articulation of Zweig's *engagement* in the thirties during exile—may go unnoticed to the distracted reader.⁴⁹

A revealing passage, in this sense, is when Zweig mentions incidentally the writing of *Erasmus* in chapter 15 “Incipit Hitler”, only to go on talk about his biography of Mary Stuart, whose significance he himself downplays deeming it the result of curiosity for her implication in the murder of her second husband (*WvG* 406-407). Thus, after stating that *Erasmus* was a kind of “verschleierte Selbstdarstellung”, when we would expect him to explain further this identification with one of the founding fathers of humanism, we are left with the impression that it was just one more book in his repertoire. In the same line of discussion, if we browse in the index of names at the end of text, we see that Castellio

⁴⁹ As he himself admits, his ‘nature’ tended to keep him out of the spotlight: “Meine natürliche Haltung in allen gefährlichen Situationen ist immer die ausweichende gewesen, und nicht nur bei diesem einen Anlaß mußte ich vielleicht mit Recht den Anwurf der Unterschiedenheit auf mich nehmen, den man meinem verehrten Meister in einem fremden Jahrhundert” (*WvG* 248).

and Erasmus combined only get six mentions, amply surpassed by the most quoted name in the work: Adolf Hitler.

In sum, and leaving this brief excursion behind—which has helped us establish both the potential and the limitations of the narrative of commitment of *Die Welt von Gestern*—, it is possible to conclude that the personal discourse in Zweig’s memoirs leads us to think that Zweig the ‘intellectual’ is born at some point in time, that is to say, that he ‘becomes’ an intellectual as a reaction to certain events, namely, the First World War. In the same way that, as we saw before, the writing of Zweig’s autobiography is a response to defeat—one that is felt to be permanent and that demands a desperate act of self-preservation—; Zweig, upon the destruction of a way of life that he assumed to be a sign of progress and of betterment of humanity, takes on his responsibility as a writer and commits his voice and work, or a great part of it, to the realization of an idea, mission or task. Consequently, this point in the narrative marks a split in the Austrian writer’s personal discourse, reinforcing the idea that there was one Zweig before and another one after the First World War. Likewise, the notion that there are two great phases in Zweig’s trajectory as a writer/artist/intellectual is condensed in other autobiographical texts by Zweig, the analysis of which will provide us with clearer delimitations and further points of comparison for exploring the forms of intellectuality and commitment in Zweig’s works.

Stefan Zweig’s Autobiographical Narratives (1914, 1922, 1936)

The three texts selected for this purpose belong to three very differentiated epochs. The first, “Autobiographische Skizze”, which appeared in the journal *Literarisches Echo* in November 1914, is perhaps the last text of this nature to be published before Zweig radically changed his personal discourse and the way he presented himself to the world. The second (“Stefan Zweig. Einleitung”)—published right after the war in a volume

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

dedicated to examining the work of contemporary German writers—clearly reflects the personal toll taken by the conflict while at the same time it acts as a sort of hinge between the other two autobiographical portraits, assimilating features of the first and advancing some of the key topics we will observe in the last of them. Finally, the third text (“Stefan Zweig”)—which can be found in a collection of *Portraits and Self-Portraits*, anthologized and illustrated by Georges Schreiber in 1936 for the American publishing house Houghton Mifflin Company—belongs to the most heated period in the public consideration of Zweig’s authorial persona, right when he was caught in the middle of the cross-fire between opposing ideologies that demanded of him that he clearly stated which side he was in. In this sense, all these texts are located in key spots within Zweig’s narrative of commitment, when the self must meet the times, when it is confronted by events that go way beyond himself, but which, notwithstanding, call the subject to some sort of action. Contrarily to what the chronological order dictates, we will start by looking at the 1936 sketch, for, on being informed by a much wider temporal perspective, it helps us establish a link with *Die Welt von Gestern*’s discourse as it has been discussed so far.⁵⁰

As regards the provenance of the text, we must take into account that this sketch, signed in London in 1936 and roughly 300-word long, seems to be the translation, or rather the adaptation of another autobiographical writing published in German in the same year as an advertising prospect for the Buchhandlung Perles.⁵¹ The only difference between the German and the English versions of the text is that the former is a few lines longer, containing a further explanation on what Zweig was doing at the time and the

⁵⁰ For an analysis of Zweig’s autobiographical production, including the 1914 and 1922 texts, see: Chédin, A. Renate. “Zweigs Weg zur Autobiographie.” *Das ‘Geheim Tragische des Daseins’. Stefan Zweig ‘Die Welt von Gestern’*. Königshausen & Neumann, 1996, pp. 1-13.

⁵¹ This German version of the text can be found in Salzburg’s Literaturarchiv and in the Stefan Zweig Collection at the Reed Library, Fredonia. A digital copy of both versions is available at the website Stefan Zweig Digital: www.stefanzweig.digital/o:szd.werke.

places where he had lived since the war.⁵² This self-portrait is divided into three paragraphs. The first covers what we have called the period of the formation of the writer, namely, up until the First World War. In it he mentions the importance of travelling and the influence of the great “leaders of [his] generation—Verhaeren, Romain Rolland, Freud, and Rilke” (“Autobiography 1936”), as well the impact of the psychological approach on his fictional writings. In the second paragraph, Zweig the ‘intellectual’ emerges. Once again, Zweig highlights the fundamental role of the First World War in shaping his ‘mission’ as a writer. According to him, this event had two consequences in his understanding of his role as a writer. On the one hand, it made his works and thought undergo a ‘historical turn’, whereby the past became a source of knowledge and reflection, a *topos* where a swiftly changing and unapprehendable present could somehow be grasped: “Only with the coming of the war, which was to me the greatest of emotional shocks as well as the strongest of moral lessons, did history begin to attract me. I began a new study of it, so that I might better understand our present time; and in particular the periods of critical uprisings in the past gave me analogies of the present” (“Autobiography 1936”). On the other hand, the experience of the war functions as a sort of catalyst, revealing to Zweig what he will assume to be his ‘mission’ as an intellectual:

Since the war I have felt it to be my moral duty to create in one direction only, that one which would help our time to progress; through clarifying the past, through exhorting the present, because I believe that effort alone should be considered valid which furthers the unification of humanity and increases the mutual understanding of peoples and nations. (“Autobiography 1936”)

⁵² This is the fragment missing from the second paragraph in the English version of the text: “Nach dem Krieg lebte ich viele Jahre in Salzburg, und erst vor einigen Jahren habe ich mich nach London zurückgezogen, wo ich einen großen Teil des Jahres lebe, um ruhig zu arbeiten. Die übrige Zeit unternehme ich größere und kleinere Reisen, dir mir immer wieder neue Anregung und Belehrung geben”.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Finally, the third paragraph contains a farewell and thanks to his readers, proclaiming at the same time the universalist nature and the supranational allegiance of Zweig's 'gaze' or *Weltanschauung*, one of the central elements in the configuration of his ethics: "From the very beginning, I have always looked toward the universal and thought in terms above mere nationalism".

All in all, this short autobiographical text confirms some of the premises that we have been exploring in this section. The First World War is once again the turning point in Zweig's personal narrative, the beginning of his task as an intellectual. Additionally, Zweig establishes a direct link between the committed nature of some of his works and certain vision of history—a historiography—which permeates most of his non-fiction texts, and especially his memoirs, as we will explore in Chapter II. For Zweig the past becomes a site for the articulation and enactment of the utopic, and so history becomes a site of 'redemption', closely linked to his commitment and therefore separated from what he calls in this same text his "purely creative" ("Autobiography 1936") writings. Finally, it is interesting to note that both the effect of the war on Zweig—defined by the writer as "the strongest of moral lessons"—and one of its direct outcomes—his "duty"—are characterized by the epithet 'moral' ("Autobiography 1936"), indicating precisely the area of influence, within the sphere of the 'human', that Zweig's commitment and writing are aimed at. Whereas Zweig claimed on many occasions to be 'apolitical', he was also convinced that art, and especially literature, could aspire to the 'ideal' and consequently affect the ethical aspect of human life, which is supposed to be, or so Zweig believed, above and beyond the mundane and the narrow temporality of our everyday existence.

We could contend that the 1936 text bears all the signs of Zweig's narrative of commitment, emphasizing precisely this aspect of his production and personality. Contrastingly, what is rapidly summarized in just a few lines at the beginning of this

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

text—Zweig’s life as writer—becomes the main theme of the 1914 portrait. Obviously, Zweig could not narrate what he had not lived yet. However, I contend that there is more to this than Zweig’s choice of topics for his self-narration. For it is not only that the impact of the First World War has not been ‘felt’ yet, but also that in the 1914 “Autobiographische Skizze” we can observe another way of conceiving both Europe and the sort of commitment his oeuvre engages with. On the one hand, the lack of a clear positioning in respect to his mission as a writer and intellectual confirms that Zweig’s narrative of commitment, as he himself conceived it, begins ‘with’ The First World War. On the other hand, this ‘sketch’ shows that in Zweig another form of commitment had existed previously to that turning point, what we could call a ‘proto-commitment’ that serves as the basis for the posterior evolution of his work and *Weltanschauung*. In other words, I contend that there is some sort of *engagement* that questions Zweig’s narrative of commitment as it has been articulated thus far, and that this forces us to look beyond his self-formulated personal discourse in order to best explore other possibilities and systems of intellectuality beyond a narrow conception of ‘politics’.

Following these reflections, the first thing we notice in the “Autobiographische Skizze” of 1914—of roughly 1,200 words and five paragraphs long—is that it is mostly focused on the elaboration of Zweig’s artistic trajectory, from the beginnings of the young writer to his influences and poetic choices. Thus, the first paragraph is devoted to showing the cultivation of an early passion for art and artists, starting with the confirmation in the first sentence of Zweig’s admiration for the ‘other’ in detriment to the affirmation and exploration of his own self: “Ich habe lange von fern auf den Dichter geblickt, ehe ich’s magte, ihn in mir selbst zu suchen” (“Autobiography 1914”). Once again, as in *Die Welt von Gestern*, Zweig talks about himself through a parade of other voices and figures (Hauptmann, Schnitzler, Sudermann). As a result of this enthusiasm and admiration—he

tells us in the second paragraph—comes the will to imitate and follow in the footsteps of his heroes. What Zweig is basically implying here is that his passion for literature drove him to write about life before he even had begun to experience it, producing works under an aesthetics based on the credo of ‘art for art’s sake’. Thus, he admits that “ich sage es frei, dass meine ersten Gedichte nicht andern Ursprung hatten als den spielhaften Trieb der Verskunst, vielleicht auch der Eitelkeit” (“Autobiography 1914”). From here onwards unfolds a narrative of renunciation and transformation, whereby Zweig rejects this sort of ‘aestheticist’ practices—in which he indulges at the beginning of his career—in favor of a new poetics, thus committing his work for the first time to the realization of a project or mission. Consequently, he asserts that

ich dichtete dann all die leeren [...] Gymnasialjahre lange vor dem Erlebnis [...] und da ich damals viele Verse schrieb, war das Ergebnis eine frühe Vertrautheit mit den Formen, eine erstaunliche Glätte des versifizierten Ausdrucks und eine Leichtigkeit der Produktion, die mir längst an der innern Erkenntnis der Werte wieder abhandengekommen ist. (“Autobiography 1914”)

In other words, Zweig offers a critique of his first works based on their superficiality, on the fact that he was more worried about form and its musicality than with content or message. Especially, he feels that he no longer can relate to, or identify himself with, his first book of poetry *Silberne Saiten*⁵³ despite its relative success: “Seine Melancholie und müde Traurigkeit ist mir heute so fremd wie nur möglich, und ich frage mich selbst, ob ich damals innerlich am Erlebnis der ersten Erkenntnisse so sehr litt, oder ob die

⁵³ This self-critique towards the style and poetics of these early works can be also found in *Die Welt von Gestern*: “Wie ich bald selbst über diese frühen Verse dachte, ist durch die einfache Tatsache bezeugt, daß ich nicht nur diese ‘Silberne Saiten’ [...] nie mehr neudrucken, sondern, kein einziges Gedicht in meine ‘Gesammelte Gedichte’ aufnehmen ließ. Es waren Verse unbestimmter Vorahnung und unbewußten Nachfühlers, nicht aus eigenem Erlebnis entstanden, sondern aus sprachlicher Leidenschaft” (*WvG* 115). And later he refers to them as “meine eigenen, von mir selbst längst vergessenen und verworfenen Verse” (*WvG* 116).

Verschattung jener Verse nicht bloß Nachklang der Pubertät war” (“Autobiography 1914”).

Zweig goes on to inform us that he is glad his work took a new direction, that which aims to spread joy (*Freude*) and kindness (*Güte*), and to affirm life through enthusiasm and vitalism. Accordingly, he devotes the third paragraph to discussing his activities as a translator and cultural mediator—another proof of Zweig’s devotion to and admiration for the ‘other’, as we will explore in the subsequent chapters—, which allowed him to discover the figure of Verhaeren. Whereas the other authors whose texts he had translated—Baudelaire, Verlaine, Morris, Gamain—helped him perfect his prose, in Verhaeren he had found something else: a mentor and a moral example, someone whose enthusiasm and love for any living creature went beyond his verses to constitute the essence of his life:

Ich sah jene Gestalt, der meine Saft noch knabenhaften Vorstellungen galten, den wirklichen Dichter endlich leibhaftig vor mir, den gesteigerten Menschen, bei dem jedes Wort und jede Handlung Bestätigung seiner dichterischen Entäußerungen war; niemals hatte ich Lebensfreude und Güte so sehr schöpferisch in einem Menschen gekannt. (“Autobiography 1914”)

In this sense, in choosing to help disseminate both the figure and works of Verhaeren, to dedicate so many hours to the work of another writer instead of to one’s career, Zweig opts for a conscious choice and an act of commitment: “Verhaeren war für mich eine Entscheidung. Ich meine damit nicht, dass ich seinen Vers nachahmte oder den Stil seiner Dichtung: er war mir wie Dehmel und Rilke viel bedeutsamer als moralisches Vorbild denn als Literarisches und meine Übertragung, meiner Eintreten für ihn dann eigentlich ein Akt religiöser Überzeugung” (“Autobiography 1914”).

Finally, after a short mention of his travels and the impact they had on his formation as a writer, the last and longest paragraph summarizes Zweig’s poetics and how they are

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

fashioned after the influence of his master Verhaeren. Above all, we consider the ‘affirmation of life’ (*Bejahung des Lebens*) the most important tenet, the most essential part of his works, behind which is the desire to connect with the times, to address the modern world by giving its dwellers a sense of joy and belonging: “Das Wesentliche meiner Art bildete sich langsam darin heraus: eine Bejahung des Lebens, ein gewisses Pathos der Freude, die Sehnsucht nach einer Kunst, die blutbefeuernd wirst und in innigen Zusammenhang mit der Gegenwart steht” (“Autobiography 1914”). On the other hand, as a consequence of this *Bejahung*, Zweig admits that he is incapable, even in the essay format, of being critical with another artist, which is essential to understand the style, approach, and contents of some of his later writings, especially his biographies, and also to contextualize some of his reactions in the thirties. Thus, he affirms about his own volume *Drei Meister (Balzac, Dickens, Dostoievski)* that it

zeigt nur Vorbilder, und nun, in den Jahren der Entscheidungen, spüre ich, dass ich unbewusst mit meinem Anbeginn im Einklang stehe: mit der Verehrung der Heroen und Dichter. Ich weiß nun, dass die Fähigkeit leidenschaftlicher Hingabe und Bewunderung in mir stärkte und entscheidende ist und von allen meinen kritischen Ausflügen bringe ich die Beruhigung zurück oft manchem förderlich gewesen zu sein und niemanden gehemmt und geschädigt zu haben. (“Autobiography 1914”)

Zweig, “als Adept Verhaerens” (“Autobiography 1914”), wants to connect with the present by spreading joy and passion, offering his work to the times and to his contemporaries, which is felt as a duty (*Verpflichtung*): “Ich liebe die Gegenwart und freue mich, dass sie so groß geworden ist in diesen Tagen weil sie jeden der ihr dienen will, zu ihrem eigenen Maße emporzwingt und uns mehr al irgendwann verpflichtet, für ihre neuen Gefühle und Gedanken das aufrichtige Wort und den Rhythmus zu finden” (“Autobiography 1914”). In brief, it is clear from our analysis that the First World War is

a turning point in Zweig's own conception as a writer and intellectual. There is no trace in the "Autobiographische Skizze" of 1914 of Zweig's willingness to promote the unification of Europe or the common understanding between peoples and nations, probably because up until that point Zweig took that union for granted. However, while it is true that the figure of the intellectual as the defender of Europe and humanity has not been yet introduced in Zweig's authorial discourse, we can also claim that there is a sense of commitment that predates 1914, and which emanates from the need to give purpose to his writing.

Finally, the last autobiographical work we will be analyzing—"Stefan Zweig. Einleitung. Mit einer Autobiographie des Dichters"—was written after the war, in 1922, and, as we have indicated at the beginning of this section, it acts as a sort of hinge between the two previous texts. The first two paragraphs are devoted to Zweig's youth in fin-de-siècle Vienna and his university years, while the third offers a recapitulation of Zweig's career up until the war. Similar to the 1914 autobiography, we find a renunciation of those early uncommitted works that provided young Zweig with fame in the fin-de-siècle literary circles, but which did not have a purpose beyond the 'aesthetic'. According to Zweig, during this time, literature was for him "nur eine Ausdrucksform des Lebens [...]. Meine Leidenschaft aber war immer auf das Ganze des Lebens gerichtet: ich habe der Literatur nie etwas geopfert, sie war für mich nur [...] eine Steigerungsform der Existenz, eine Art, das Erlebte zu verdeutlichen und mir selbst zu verstehen" ("Autobiography 1922"). Contrastingly, he tells us in the next paragraph—echoing the words of 1936—that the war was an awakening experience—a turning point—, that despite the trauma of the conflict, was for him "eine Entscheidung, die mein Leben mitten durchriss" ("Autobiography 1922"). Curiously enough, Zweig chooses the same word—*Entscheidung*—to describe both the effect of meeting Verhaeren—in the 1914 text—and

the war in 1922, pointing to the fact that these two events imply a change of direction in Zweig's narrative of commitment, as we will discuss in depth in the next sections. Additionally, in this self-portrait, the idea that Europe was something taken for granted by cosmopolitan individuals like Zweig before the war is emphasized, as he admits that "ich fühlte, ich lebte ganz als Europäer, Grenzen waren nur leere Linien, Sprachen und Nuancen, nicht Gegensätze, persönliche Freiheit das Selbstverständliche, ja der einzige Sinn des Daseins" ("Autobiography 1922").

Other aspects worth noting are, first, Zweig's unambiguous position as a pacifist from the beginning of the conflict, a controversial point in his narrative as we will explore later:

Ich rechne es mir gar nicht (wie andre es freundlich taten) als besonderes Verdienst an, von der ersten Stunde an das verhängnisvoll Sinnlose des europäischen Selbstmordes erkannt und mich mit allen seelischen Kräften gegen den Krieg gestellt zu haben: mir war das Gemeinsame, die Einheit Europas so sehr selbstverständlich wie der eigene Atem und deshalb wurde mir, was andre kaum spürten, unerträgliche Qual, die Absperrung vorerst und noch mehr die heroische Lüge, die aus allen Worten der Menschen, bewusst oder unbewusst, und noch gesteigert aus allen Zeitungen quoll. ("Autobiography 1922")

Second, we observe that Verhaeren, whose centrality in the 1914 autobiography we have already established, is displaced to a secondary role, only mentioned in passing. Besides the desire to experience life in all its forms that marks the period going from his eighteen to thirty years, there is no trace of the aesthetics and philosophy of *Bejahung*. Instead, Romain Rolland, responsible for Zweig's 'conversion' to pacifism during the war, occupies the place of the master. Features like Rolland's exemplary role as a moral authority, his pacifism and disdain for politics—which will be central in our analysis of Zweig's biography *Romain Rolland. Der Mann und das Werk*—define Rolland's influence on Zweig's position as an artist during the war:

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Wir trieben keine Politik—noch heute verabscheue ich sie—wir bereiteten nur den Frieden vor [...] und proklamierten durch unsre Haltung das ‘au dessus de la mêlée’ Rollands, die Neutralität der Kunst. Nie habe ich in meinem Leben einen Menschen so lieben und verehren gelernt als damals Rolland (dem ich längst schon nahestand und mit dem ich viele Briefe während dieser Jahre gewechselt)—er war für uns alle, Deutsche, Franzosen, Russen, Neutrale, der moralische Halt, die Tröstung und Erhebung. (“Autobiography 1922”)

Finally, the last paragraph contains a redefinition of the meaning of Zweig’s (literary) work in the postwar world away from the dandyism and carefree attitude he had shown before the conflict. After the War and Rolland, “die Arbeit, einst bloß Auswirkung, gleichsam Radius des Lebenskreises, ist jetzt das Zentrum geworden und ich wünschte nur, dass sie seitdem das an Wert gewonnen habe, was ich ihr jetzt mehr an Intensität von meinem Leben gebe” (“Autobiography 1922”). Conscious of his duty, Zweig embraces his intellectuality and pledges to work through his writing for the European cause. He tells us that, given the cosmopolitan nature of his former life, he hopes to contribute to the “Wiederaufbau der alten europäischen Gemeinschaft” (“Autobiography 1922”) and to prevent the isolation of Germany. In the same vein, the last sentences give us a hint of the kind of commitment Zweig is hoping to enact through his works. This is a commitment that has to do, on the one hand, with the moral—“In seiner Kunst kann man sich durch bloßen Willensakt nicht steigern, wohl aber in seiner moralischen Haltung” (“Autobiography 1922”)—, and, on the other, with the ‘spiritual’, the invisible: “hier sehe ich eine Ausgabe, [...] dass meine literarische Leistung, wenn sie nicht in sich selbst bedeutend genug sein sollte, im solidarischen Sinne jedenfalls eine nützliche sein kann und im Unsichtbaren vielleicht noch stärker wirken als in der bloßen sachlichen Erscheinungsform der Bücher und der Bühne” (“Autobiography 1922”). In brief, Zweig’s autobiographical sketch of 1922 confirms that the First World War opens up a new chapter in Zweig’s narrative of commitment and offers us insight on how this process of

transformation and reorientation of the artist's *engagement* unfolded around the (re)construction of Europe and under the guidance of a new voice: that of Romain Rolland.

1.2. The Commitment of Stefan Zweig, the Writer, before the First World War

As we have hinted at before, the autobiographical portrait of 1914, while it indirectly confirms that the First World War is the starting point in the journey of Stefan Zweig's journey as an intellectual, also points to the fact that, before then, the Austrian writer had already felt the need to justify his artistic activities beyond pure aestheticism. This need to commit his life and work to a certain cause derives ultimately from acknowledging the responsibility/duty of the writer to use his privileged position and his influence upon a community of readers. This sense of duty is what, for instance, drives him to express his internationalist convictions at the beginning of the First World War: "Und ebendeshalb war ich mir bewußt geworden, daß ein bloß passives Verhalten, das Nicht-Mittun bei diesen wüsten Beschimpfungen des Gegners nicht zureichend sei. Schließlich war man Schriftsteller, man hatte das Wort und damit die Pflicht, seine Überzeugungen auszudrücken" (*WvG* 258). It must be noted that in Zweig's works and thought, the writer's responsibility is first and foremost—before one 'becomes' a mediator, prophet, moral leader, etc.—the duty that comes with one's own talent and 'exceptionalism', to be able to express it and put it at the service of humanity. It is also, as he reflects in his biography of Émile Verhaeren, what gives meaning and coherences to both the artist's life and his mission:

Die letzte, die entscheidend wirkende Kraft eines jeden, diejenige, die allein erst sein Werk oder seine Tätigkeit zur höchsten Möglichkeit anspannen kann, ist das Verantwortungsgefühl. Verantwortlich sein und sich so empfinden heißt, das

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

ganze Leben gewissermaßen als eine ungeheure Schuld betrachten, die man mit allen Kräften abzuzahlen sich bemühen muß, heißt, seine jeweilige irdische Aufgabe in ihrer ganzen umspannenden Bedeutung, Wichtigkeit und Peripherie zu überschauen und dann seine eigenen innerlichen Möglichkeiten und Fähigkeiten zu ihrer vollkommensten Bewältigung zu erheben. (*VERHAEREN* 130)

This feeling of responsibility impels the writer to provide his works with a purpose and significance beyond himself, becoming a tool to connect with other individuals' needs and desires. Ultimately, the duty of the writer must be understood as his response to his—aspiring as well as historically and culturally determined—privileged and preeminent condition/position within society, in general, and in the sphere of culture and the intellect, in particular.⁵⁴ In this sense, we can claim that, for Zweig being an artist implies committing one's work to a 'cause' as a result of one's 'inherent' duty.⁵⁵

Taking these ideas into account, I contend that in Stefan Zweig the need to commit his work to a purpose arises well before he 'becomes' an intellectual. That is to say, we can observe in Zweig's construction of his personal discourse the will, since his teenage years, to give meaning to a *métier* he chooses consciously and which, in turn, gives meaning not only to his career, but to his existence as an individual. Consequently—and despite the dismissal or renunciation of his own early works in his autobiographical texts—the act of writing and becoming an artist always implies a function, goal or mission that makes it transcend the mere playfulness of 'art for art's sake' and the decadence of the bohemian ethos. In this sense, we can observe how Zweig tries in his

⁵⁴ As Lionel Steiman summarizes: "What is unique to Zweig's outlook is not its aestheticism but the ethical imperative of that aestheticism. The poetic transvaluation of private perception and experience is not a personal indulgence but a positive public duty, and Zweig had evolved this conception long before the war invades his consciousness demanding transvaluation. This conception, in short, is the very essence of Zweig's idea of the artist as a social being" ("The Worm in the Rose" 136).

⁵⁵ Following his reflections on *Verhaeren* and the artist's responsibility, Zweig claims that it derives precisely from the fact that art is the force that harmonizes and binds the universe together: "Je höher nun die Idee der Kunst begriffen ist, je mehr sie ihre Aufgabe als Aufgabe zum universellen Lebensausgleich empfindet, um so mehr muß das Verantwortlichkeitsgefühl in einem Schaffenden gesteigert sein" (*VERHAEREN* 130).

memoirs to elevate both culture and art to a superior category, imbuing his vocation with a sense of respect and greatness. To examine how Zweig became a writer is also to explore how his responsibility takes him step by step into committing his work to a/several cause(s) or mission(s). First of all, in his narration of the process of becoming a writer, Zweig links his vocation in part to his Jewish heritage in that, according to him, there is a close link between Judaism and intellectuality whereby the Jew ultimately aspires to the immaterial. In his own words from *Die Welt von Gestern*: “Im allgemeinen wird angenommen, reich zu werden sei das eigentliche und typische Lebensziel des jüdischen Menschen. Nichts ist falscher. Reich zu werden bedeutet für ihn nur eine Zwischenstufe, ein Mittel zum wahren Zweck und keineswegs das innere Ziel. Der eigentliche Wille des Juden [...] ist der Aufstieg ins Geistige, in eine höhere kulturelle Schicht” (WvG 27). And he goes on to claim, in his enthusiastic—also hyperbolic and prone-to-exaggeration—style, that

selbst der Vermögendste wird seine Tochter lieber einem bettelarmen Geistmenschen zur Gattin geben als einem Kaufmann. Diese Überordnung des Geistigen geht bei den Juden einheitlich durch alle Stände; auch der ärmste Hausierer [...] wird versuchen, wenigstens einen Sohn unter den schwersten Opfern studieren zu lassen, und es wird als Ehrentitel für die ganze Familie betrachtet, jemanden in ihrer Mitte zu haben, der sichtbar um Geistigen gilt, einen Professor, einen Gelehrten, einen Musiker. (WvG 28)

Thus, ‘nobility’ is attained through culture and, in the specific historical context of fin-de-siècle Vienna, the Jewish families that wished to assimilate used it as a means to attain prestige and recognition: “Eine ‘gute’ Familie [...] meint ein Judentum, das sich von allen Defekten und Engheiten und Kleinlichkeiten, die das Ghetto ihm aufgezwungen, durch Anpassung an eine andere Kultur und womöglich eine universale Kultur befreit hat oder zu befreien beginnt” (WvG 28). Therefore, wealthy Jews,

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

according to Zweig, in order to be accepted by society, to gain a feeling of belonging, became not only consumers but also both generators and direct or indirect producers of Austrian and German culture: “Ihr Verlangen nach Heimat, nach Ruhe, nach Rast, nach Sicherheit, nach Unfremdheit drängt sie, sich der Kultur ihrer Umwelt leidenschaftlich zu verbinden” (*WvG* 36-37). What is more, the cultural explosion of fin-de-siècle Vienna, which turned the city into one of the most important cultural and artistic capitals of Europe, is largely the result of the Jewish investment in the maintenance and production of the arts: “Ohne das unablässige stimulierende Interesse der jüdischen Bourgeoisie wäre Wien [...] in gleichem Maße künstlerisch hinter Berlin zurückgeblieben wie Österreich politisch hinter dem Deutschen Reich” (*WvG* 38-39). It must be said, however, that Zweig is aware that this drive towards culture is not only the result of an ancient cultural or racial trait, but also of a given socio-historical context, one in which Jews—as Carl Schorske analyzes in his seminal work *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*—did not have access to the positions of power in the old and stagnated administration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: “[D]er Glanz des kaiserlichen Hauses stellte jeden privaten Reichtum in den Schatten, die hohen Stellungen in der Staatsführung waren in ererbten Händen, die Diplomatie der Aristokratie, die Armee und hohe Beamtschaft den alten Familien vorbehalten, und die Juden versuchten auch gar nicht, in diese privilegierten Kreise ehrgeizig vorzudringen” (*WvG* 38).

For Jews, the only way to exert influence “im öffentlichen Leben” (*WvG* 38) was necessarily through the patronage of cultural production and the pursuing of artistic or intellectual careers, to the point that it became a way of asserting their belonging to the community and, in turn, a sort of vocation: “Durch ihre leidenschaftliche Liebe zu dieser Stadt, durch ihren Willen zur Angleichung hatten sie sich vollkommen angepaßt und waren glücklich, dem Ruhme Österreichs zu dienen; sie fühlten ihr Österreichertum als

eine Mission vor der Welt” (WvG 39). All in all, Zweig sees in his Jewish heritage a “tiefe[n] Instinkt für geistige und ästhetische Werte” (WvG 37), imbuing his choice of career with both an—individual and collective—sense of purpose and elevation. In other words, to become a writer is not a mere triviality, and in doing so Zweig is fulfilling a noble destiny linked to his family’s cultural and ‘spiritual’ roots. Thus, the centrality of culture in the configuration of a Viennese and Austrian identity—as articulated by Zweig in *Die Welt von Gestern*—is what allows the creation of a framework—a context—where the young Zweig can aspire to become a writer, understood as a *métier* that would provide him and his family with the cultural capital necessary to climb the social ladder. At the same time, he would be contributing to a collective project, a common cause, a utopian vision of society—that we will explore in Chapter II—where art functions as the ultimate binding force: “Einzig gegenüber der Kunst fühlten in Wien alle in gleiches Recht, weil Liebe zur Kunst in Wien als gemeinsame Pflicht galt” (WvG 38).

It is in this context, then, that Zweig’s choice of a literary career serves a higher calling. By becoming an artist, Zweig is committing himself for the first time and thus avoiding the ‘easy life’⁵⁶ that the wealth of his family could afford him.⁵⁷ In this sense, we will see in following sections of this dissertation how his activities as a translator and cultural mediator also bring this sense of purpose to Zweig. For the moment—and given the committed nature of Zweig’s first steps as an artist—we will explore how he narrates in his memoirs the experience of becoming a writer, for, as we have claimed before, it is

⁵⁶ Zweig mentions in a letter to Emil Franzos from July 3rd, 1900, this fear of becoming just a dabbler, a mere *littérateur*: “I have written under five or six pseudonyms, always different. Perhaps if I had not done so, my name would be known a little; but this would not have given me much pleasure. I really publish only as a spur to further work and to avoid being merely a dilettante” (qtd. in Prater, *The European of Yesterday* 12).

⁵⁷ In this respect, Zweig tells us in *Die Welt von Gestern* that the fact that his brother would continue the family business meant that for him, the second son, “es handelte sich schließlich doch nur darum, der Familienehre eine Dokortitel zu sichern, gleichgültig welchen” (WvG 112). Therefore, higher education becomes a means to accomplish his real vocation: “Dann hatte die Universität mir gegeben, was ich einzig von ihr wollte: ein paar Jahre voller Freiheit für mein Leben und für die Bemühung in der Kunst: *universitas vitae*” (WvG 114).

from the position of the writer that Zweig articulates his commitment as an intellectual. Besides the context of the fin-de-siècle Vienna and his personal heritage, both in terms of ancestry and economic position, *Die Welt von Gestern* features two artists whose presence marks the birth and formation of Stefan Zweig the writer: Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Rainer Maria Rilke. In the case of the former, his success, given the similarities in terms of upbringing and social context, allows Zweig to dream of the possibility of becoming an artist:

Sie bewies geradezu optisch, daß auch in unserer Stadt, in unserem Milieu der Dichter möglich war. Sein Vater, ein Bankdirektor, stammte schließlich aus der gleichen jüdischen bürgerlichen Schicht wie wir andern, der Genius war in einem ähnlichen Hause wie wir mit gleichen Möbeln und gleichen Standesmoral aufgewachsen [...]. Durch Hofmannsthal war uns gewissermaßen ad oculos demonstriert, daß es prinzipiell möglich sei, auch in unseren Jahren und selbst in der Kerkeratmosphäre eines österreichischen Gymnasiums Dichterisches, ja dichterisch Vollendetes zu schaffen. Es war möglich sogar [...] schon gedruckt, schon gerühmt, schon berühmt zu sein, während man zuhause und in der Schule noch als halbwüchsiges, unbeträchtliches Wesen galt. (WvG 69)

Hofmannsthal is the figure—among *Die Junge*⁵⁸ that are changing the cultural and artistic landscape of Vienna—that captivated him the most. The fact, Zweig tells us, that Hofmannsthal had achieved such success with such precocity—being only sixteen years old—at a time when he could have barely experienced the topics he discussed in his poetry, made him a hero, a memorable figure to be admired by young Zweig, “eines der

⁵⁸ By introducing *Die Junge* and the Secession in his discourse, Zweig adds another element to the sense of generational exceptionalism that permeates the prologue to the memoirs. In a way, he and his peers are both witnesses and participants of a new era that allows them to leave behind the atmosphere and position of servitude and paternalism to which the school and the family had morally condemned them—as Zweig widely explores in chapter two and three of *Die Welt von Gestern*: “überall waren wir die Stoßtruppe und der Vortrupp jeder Art neuer Kunst, nur weil sie neu war, nur weil sie die Welt verändern wollte für uns, die jetzt an die Reihe kamen, ihr Leben zu leben. Weil wir fühlten, ‘nostra res agitur’” (WvG 62).

großen Wunder früher Vollendung” (WvG 63).⁵⁹ Following from this, Zweig points to the power of admiration, highlighting the importance of others in the formation of the self and relating admiration to the aforementioned notion of ‘example’ as a community-binding force: “Talent in allen Formen ekstatisch zu bewundern, führt sie unwiderstehlich dazu, in sich selbst Nachschau zu halten, ob nicht eine Spur oder Möglichkeit dieser erlesensten Essenz in dem eigenen unerforschten Leib oder der noch halb verdunkelten Seele zu entdecken wäre” (WvG 71). In terms of identification, this is a clear example of how this rhetorical mechanism works in *Die Welt von Gestern*, for Hofmannsthal—and Rilke, Verhaeren, Rolland, etc.—are not only mentioned in passing, but, as we have seen, their importance in the narrative and the ample space they occupy in the discourse displace to the background, to a secondary plane, the ‘I’ that tells the story. As a consequence, instead of discussing his own successes in their own merits, Zweig explains them away through the effect or influence of an ‘other’: “Sehe ich heute zurück, so muß ich ganz objektiv bekennen, daß [...] das künstlerische Niveau für Siebzehnjährige ein wirklich erstaunliches war und nur erklärlich durch das anfeuernde Beispiel jener phantastischen Frühreife Hofmannsthals, das uns, um nur halbwegs voreinander zu bestehen, eine leidenschaftliche Anspannung zum Äußersten abzwang” (WvG 72).

However, to become Hofmannsthal, with all his extraordinariness, is but a fool’s dream. And therefore, Zweig and his colleagues turned to another star in the literary firmament and who “wiederum bedeutete uns eine Ermutigung anderer Art, die jene durch

⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that the only ‘but’ Zweig includes in his praise of Hofmannsthal is that he would never again achieve the level of success he had enjoyed when he was sixteen to twenty-four years old. And the reason is that, later, he would try to approach the interests of his age and connect with ‘reality’: “[A]ber mit seiner stärkeren Bindung an das reale Theater und die Interessen seiner Zeit [...] von reinen Inspiriertheit jener ersten knabenhaften Dichtungen und damit auch von dem Rausch und der Ekstase unserer eigenen Jugend dahingegangen” (WvG 68). Thus, Zweig establishes here a comparison between artistic practices that are kept within the realm of the artistic and the aesthetic, and those that aim to establish a link with their ‘reality’, which is seen as a possible form of intoxication or degeneration. Clearly, at this stage in the narrative, the force of figures like Hofmannsthal or Rilke is still a matter of art and spirit, away from morality, politics and a narrow conception of commitment.

Hofmannsthal in einer beruhigenden Weise ergänzte” (WvG 70). For if Rainer Maria Rilke had too begun writing and publishing at such an early age, his verses were still “unreif[...], kindlich[...] und naiv[...]”, and “erst nach und nach, im zweiundzwanzigsten, im dreiundzwanzigsten Jahr hatte dieser wunderwolle, von uns maßlos geliebte Dichter sich persönlich zu gestalten begonnen; das bedeutete für uns schon einen ungeheuren Trost”, therefore “man mußte sich nicht sofort aufgeben, weil man vorläufig Unzulängliches, Unreifes, Unverantwortliches schrieb, und konnte vielleicht statt des Wunders Hofmannsthals den stilleren, normaleren Aufstieg Rilke in sich wiederholen” (WvG 70). The figure of Rilke will appear later in the memoirs, in chapter five “Paris, die Stadt der ewigen Jugend”. Now, however, Rilke is no longer used as a figure of identification but as a symbol of a generation of writers and artists that no longer exists but of whose acquaintance and close relationship Zweig feels proud:

Gedenke ich heute seiner und jener anderen Meister des wie in erlauchter Goldschmiedekunst gehämmerten Worts, gedenke ich dieser verehrten Namen, die wie unerreichbare Sternbilder meine Jugend überleuchtet haben, so drängt sich mir unwiderstehlich die wehmütige Frage auf: werden solche reine, nur dem lyrischen Gebilde zugewandte Dichter in unserer gegenwärtigen Zeit der Turbulenz und allgemeinen Verstörtheit abermals möglich sein? Ist es nicht ein verschollenes Geschlecht, das ich in ihnen liebend beklage, ein Geschlecht ohne unmittelbare Nachfolge in unseren von allen Orkanen des Schicksals durchstürmten Tagen. (WvG 157)

The characterization of these “masters of the word” at this point in *Die Welt von Gestern* reveals once again that in his beginnings as a writer Zweig pursued, in the imitation of such masters, “in stillem und doch leidenschaftlichen Bemühen Strophe an Strophe vollendet zu binden, jede Zeile durchdrungen von Musik, leuchtend in Farben, glühend von Bildern” (WvG 157). His aspirations, his goals, and all he hoped to achieve through his art, was directed to the artistic and intellectual spheres: “Eine Gilde bildeten

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

sie, einen fast mönchischen Orden mitten in unserem lärmenden Tag, sie, diese bewußt vom Täglichen Abgewandten” (WvG 157). However—in line with the narrative of commitment we have been outlining so far—when Zweig is writing his memoirs, he sees this artistic ethos, close to aestheticism and art for art’s sake as a relic of the past, a mode of writing that belonged to the utopian world before the First World War, where the autonomy of certain artistic practices was still valued and even brought to the individual a certain aura of respect and transcendence:

Aber ist nicht gerade die unsere eine, die auch dem Reinsten, dem Abseitigsten keine Stille erlaubt, jene Stille des Wartens und Reifens und Sinnens und Sich-Sammelns, wie sie jenen noch gegönnt war in der gütigeren und gelasseneren Zeit der europäischen Vorkriegswelt? Ich weiß nicht, wieviel alle diese Dichter [...] heute noch gelten, wieviel sie einer Generation sind, der statt dieser zarteren Musik durch Jahre und Jahre das klappende Mühlrad der Propaganda und zweimal der Donner der Kanonen die Ohren durchdröhnt. (WvG 158-159)

It is rather obvious in this quote, in its nostalgic tone, that this initial commitment to an idea of art in general and literature in particular which underpinned the whole process of formation of Stefan Zweig the writer would have to be eventually abandoned in favor of more *engagée* practices. As we have claimed at the beginning of this chapter, even aestheticist movements, which apparently tend to stand diametrically opposed to committed art, can be considered responses imbued by an ethics and propelled by an idea of the world (*Weltanschauung*), and thus related, no matter how indirectly, to the society and the contexts with which they coexist and which even might ‘sponsor’ them. However, in the case of Zweig, we may contend that he reaches a point in his career where his dedication to language and the pure forms of art is not enough, that, while that has given him the motivation and opportunity to become a writer, he needs to find his own way of meeting the times. In other words, despite his claims to aiming at a higher purpose by

simply indulging in artistic activities, by the turn of the century Zweig has not found yet a specific way to transform his work into something relevant for the community. Then, as a first step towards his own reinvention, Zweig will devote his efforts to other fellow artists, to translation and, in doing so, he will discover a new artistic credo—*Bejahung*—embodied in the figure and work of Émile Verhaeren, which will give him a new sense of direction and commitment in his way towards Europe.

1.2.1. Translation and Cultural Mediation in the Way Towards Europe

Stefan Zweig's activities, both as a translator and cultural mediator have not received enough critical attention, considering that they span most of the Austrian writer's life and that they have a direct bearing on the development of his *Weltanschauung* and the materialization of his commitment to the 'spiritual' union of Europe.⁶⁰ This mediation covers not only Zweig's role as translator and promoter of European writers and artists, but also his massive correspondence with the most prominent figures in the European letters of the first half of the twentieth century, his role as the editor of transnational publishing projects—such as *Bibliotheca Mundi* and the *Insel Bücherei*—and as an adviser of young talents, as well as his own work, especially, among others, the bibliographical series *Baumeister der Welt*⁶¹ and his collection of essays *Begegnungen*

⁶⁰ According to Harry Zohn: "From the point of view of the literary historian, his greatest successes were achieved as a sensitive interpreter and *Mittler* of Europe's rich cultural heritage, as a *Nachdichter* and literary mediator" ("Stefan Zweig and Contemporary European Literature" 202). Also, George Iggers: "If Zweig was not a consistent pacifist, he was consistent in his cosmopolitanism. Both as translator and as literary critic, he sought to bring contemporary European literature to the attention of the German reading public" (2). In the same line of discussion, Donald Prater argues that "regarding himself as a European rather than an Austrian, he worked hard as a *Mittler*, a mediator in the world of European letters, and as a would-be architect of the intellectual unity of Europe: the essay trilogy *Three Masters* (Balzac, Dickens, Dostoevsky), his studies of Rimbaud and Verlaine, and his biography of Romain Rolland, all published soon after the war, were manifestations of these efforts" (*European of Yesterday* vii).

⁶¹ According to Knut Beck, editor of the complete works of Stefan Zweig published by Insel Verlag in the nineteen eighties: "Sein großangelegter 'Versuch der Typologie des Geistes', wie der Untertitel der Trilogie *Die Baumeister der Welt* lautet, ist ein neuer, kraftvoller Ausdruck seiner Mittlerrolle, die Völker und die Menschen Europas auf geistiger Ebene einander näherzubringen" (27).

mit Menschen, Büchern, Städten, published by Herbert Reichner Verlag in 1937.⁶²

Additionally, the idea of mediation is an essential characteristic of the portraits of crucial figures in Zweig's narrative of commitment, such as Verhaeren, Rolland and Erasmus. Having said that, it must be noted that, since in 1994 Klemens Renoldner, Hildemar Holl and Perter Karlhuber claimed that Zweig's role as mediator (*Mittler*) carried out in the interwar years had not received enough critical consideration,⁶³ a number of scholarly works⁶⁴ have been published that attempt to map Zweig's relationships with his contemporaries, both in terms of individual figures and entire nations, starting thus to reconstruct Zweig's European networks of (intellectual) exchange. However, there remains an aspect of Zweig's role as mediator—his activities as a translator before the

⁶² On Zweig's diverse activities as a mediator, Zohn argues that "Zweig's mediating activities were by no means confined to literature. Suffice it to mention his essays on Toscanini, Busoni and Walter, and his support of the Jewish painter and book illustrator E. M. Lilien, the Belgian woodcut artist Frans Masereel, and the deaf sculptor Gustinus Ambrosi. Zweig wanted to grasp, mediate and support everything that he considered excellent in his time." ("Stefan Zweig and Contemporary European Literature" 209). On his extensive network of friends, Zohn claims that "Stefan Zweig besaß es in hohem Masse und stellte es in den Dienst des Begeisterns und Freudespendens. Wie viele Dichter und Künstler gehörten mittelbar und unmittelbar, gebend und nehmend, seiner Kreise an! Wie viele jungen, ungenügend anerkannten Talenten hat er geholfen! Wie vielen Dichtern hat er als Übersetzer und Einführer den Weg geebnet, neue Leser und Freunde gewonnen! [...] die Liste ist schier endlos, denn Stefan Zweig war ein Meister der Freundschaft, ein wahrer Dichterfreund und unnachahmlicher Förderer" ("Bericht und Bekenntnis" 28).

⁶³ In his afterword to *Stefan Zweig. Instants d'une vie*, Klemens Renoldner claims that "aujourd'hui encore, sa 'biographie politique', son importance comme médiateur entre les artistes et les intellectuels dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres n'a pas attiré l'attention des lecteurs" (218).

⁶⁴ For a discussion of Zweig's role as a mediator and his network of international contacts, see: Zohn, Harry. "Stefan Zweig and Contemporary European Literature: In memoriam Stefan Zweig 1881-1942." *German life and letters*, vol. 5, 1951/1952, pp. 202-212.; Cap, Biruta. "Stefan Zweig as Agent of Exchange between French and German Literature". *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 10, 1973, pp. 252-262.; Zohn, Harry. "Stefan Zweig: The European and the Jew." *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1982, pp. 323-336.; Zohn, Harry. "Stefan Zweig: Bericht und Bekenntnis." *Wiener Juden in der deutschen Literatur*, 1964, pp. 19-30.; Zohn, Harry. "Stefan Zweigs Kulturelles Mittlertum: ein jüdischer Charakterzug?" *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, no. 63, 1982, pp. 19-31.; Renoldner, Klemens. Afterword. *Stefan Zweig. Instants d'une vie*. Edited by Klemens Renoldner, Hildemar Holl, and Peyer Karlhuber, Stock, 1994.; Battison, Régine, and Klemens Renoldner. "Ich liebte Frankreich wie eine zweite Heimat." *Neue Studien zu Stefan Zweig*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2011.; Vanwesenbeeck, Birger, and Mark H. Gelber (eds). *Stefan Zweig and World Literature. Twenty-First Century Perspectives*. Camden House, 2014.; Görner, Rüdiger, and Klemens Renoldner. *Zweigs England*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2015.; Wörgötter, Martina. *Stefan Zweig. Positionen der Moderne*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2017.; Rensen, Marleen. "Restoring the Republic of Letters: Romain Rolland, Stefan Zweig and Transnational Community Building in Europe, 1914-34." (*Re*)*Constructing Communities in Europe, 1918-1968: Senses of Belonging Below, Beyond and Within the Nation-State*. Edited by Stefan Couperus, and Harm Kaal, Routledge, 2017, pp. 163-175.; Larcati, Arturo, and Klemens Renoldner. "Am liebsten wäre mir Rom!" *Stefan Zweig und Italien*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2019.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

First World War—that remains to be explored in depth in connection with the origins and development of Zweig’s European commitment.

This omission might seem even more serious as we observe that the importance of translation is highlighted by Stefan Zweig himself in *Die Welt von Gestern*. As we had anticipated, becoming a translator is a way for Zweig to commit his work to something beyond himself. For, in doing so, he is temporarily laying aside his own production and therefore ‘sacrificing’ for a while his career as a writer. According to Zweig, it was Richard Dehmel who encouraged him in the first place to invest his time

um aus fremden Sprachen zu übersetzen, was ich noch heute für die beste Möglichkeit für einen jungen Dichter halte, den Geist der eigenen Sprache tiefer und schöpferischer zu begreifen. [...] Gerade dadurch, daß jede fremde Sprache in ihren persönlichsten Wendungen zunächst Widerstände für die Nachdichtung schafft, fordert sie Kräfte des Ausdrucks heraus, die ungesucht sonst nicht zum Einsatz gelangen, und dieser Kampf, der fremden Sprache zäh das Eigenste abzuwingen und der eigenen Sprache ebenso plastisch einzuzwingen, hat für mich immer eine besondere Art künstlersicher Lust bedeutet. (WvG 137)

Therefore, on the one hand, his activities as a translator are directly related to his craft. It is not about finding a new vocation, but rather about taking a brief detour from his own production in order to improve his skills as a writer through knowing first-hand the works of the great masters. On the other hand, I contend that turning to translation was also a means for Zweig to satisfy his personal need to commit his work to a social function: “[D]enn an dieser bescheideneren Tätigkeit der Vermittlung erlauchten Kunstguts empfand ich zum erstenmal die Sicherheit, etwas wirklich Sinnvolles zu tun, eine Rechtfertigung meiner Existenz” (WvG 137).

It is interesting to note Zweig’s choice of the noun *Vermittlung*, which points out to the fact that he is translating in the wider sense of the word, actively recreating in German

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

what had been originally penned down in French. And it is in this sense that he becomes a mediator or *Mittler*, contributing, in a way, to build bridges between nations, aiming to strengthen the cultural and intellectual substratum that is at the base of his idea of Europe as a community. In the prologue to the aforementioned series of essays *Begegnungen*, Zweig refers to this conception of translation, claiming that he had strived all his life “das Fremdeste zu verstehen, immer Völker und Zeiten, Gestalten und Werke nur in ihrem positiven, schöpferischen Sinne zu bewerten und durch solches Verstehenwollen und Verstehenmachen demütig, aber treu unseren unzerstörbaren Ideal zu dienen: der humanen Verständigung zwischen Menschen, Gesinnungen, Kulturen und Nationen” (*BEGEGNUNGEN* 6). According to Harry Zohn, even the subtitle of *Die Welt von Gestern* is “indicative of both Zweig’s rise and fall, for the career of Stefan Zweig was that of a European mediator. All his life he strove to translate in a wider and higher sense, to inform, to educate, to inspire, and to arouse appreciation and enthusiasm across personal, literary, cultural and national boundaries” (“SZ: The European and the Jew” 323). In the same vein, we are told in Zweig’s memoirs that Léon Bazalgette—the French translator of Walt Whitman—was not only a fellow translator but also a kindred spirit in their efforts to mediate:

Mit diesem Vorbild eines freien, weltliebende Mannes den geistigen Blick seiner Nation über die Grenzen zu lenken, seine Landsleute männlicher, kameradschaftlicher zu machen, war sein Lebensziel: der beste Franzose, war er zugleich der leindenschaftlichste Anti-Nationalist. Wir wurden bald innige, brüderliche Freunde, weil wir beide nicht vaterländisch dachten, weil wir beide fremden Werken mit Hingebung und ohne jeden äußeren Vorteil zu dienen liebten und weil wir geistige Unabhängigkeit als das primum und ultimum des Lebens werteten. (*WvG* 155)

As this quote shows, Zweig saw in his task as a translator and mediator a higher calling. And when he ‘discovered’ Émile Verhaeren—by whom Zweig was fascinated,

“weil er der Lyrik einen völlig neuen Weg wies” (WvG 138)—, his mission acquired even a greater status by becoming ‘moral’: “Aber indem ich mich entschloß, meine ganze Kraft, Zeit, und Leidenschaft dem Dienst an einem fremden Werke zu geben, gab ich mir selbst das Beste: eine moralische Aufgabe. Mein ungewisses Suchen und Versuchen hatte jetzt einen Sinn” (WvG 142).⁶⁵ In a way, Zweig found in Verhaeren—as we will see in the next section—a model, an ‘example’, that encouraged him to contemplate and forward the European dimension of his work. As I claimed before, the fact that we can situate Zweig’s turning point in his narrative of commitment in the First World War has to do with a reaction—a response—to the loss of something that had been taken for granted: the fraternity between Europe’s nations.

At this point in the narration, therefore, when Europe is not yet lost, mediation constitutes a form of commitment or affiliation to the European ideal. And so Zweig reflects in *Die Welt von Gestern* that “wir glaubten genug zu tun, wenn wir europäisch dachten und international uns verbrüdereten, wenn in unserer—auf das zeitliche doch nur auf Umwegen einwirkenden—Sphäre uns zum Ideal friedlicher Verständigung und geistiger Verbrüderung über die Sprachen und Länder hinweg bekannten” (WvG 217). Thus, we can argue that Zweig believed in the power of translation and cultural mediation to forge links between communities, to the extent that he and his fellow Europeanists failed to acknowledge the imminent threat that was hanging above them: “[W]ir waren überzeugt, daß die geistige, die moralische Kraft Europas sich triumphierend bekunden würde im letzten kritischen Augenblick. Unser gemeinsamer Idealismus, unser im

⁶⁵ And he goes on to say: “Und wenn ich heute einen jungen Schriftsteller beraten sollte, der noch seines Weges ungewiß ist, würde ich ihn zu bestimmen suchen, zuerst einem größeren Werke als Dartsteller oder Übertragender zu dienen. In allem aufopfernden Dienen ist für einen Beginnenden mehr Sicherheit als im eigenen Schaffen, und nichts, was man jemals hingebungsvoll geleistet, ist vergebens getan” (WvG 142). According to Harry Zohn, this self-depreciation of one’s work, his modesty and the lack of self-promotion, as well as the fact that he himself did not recognize his talent and found his purpose not so much as a creator but as a mediator, contributed to the consideration of Zweig as a second-rate writer which went down in literary history for most of the second half of the twentieth century (SZ: “The European and the Jew” 324).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Fortschritt bedingter Optimismus ließ uns die gemeinsame Gefahr verkennen und verachten” (WvG 218).

In other words, we could argue that his role as a translator and mediator is the first step in the formation of Zweig’s European *Weltanschauung* and ethos, as well as one of its first manifestations. It is in this sense that Zweig laments the futility of his efforts when the First World War is getting closer, for the world is becoming a place where such artistic and cultural practices did not hold the power to influence the course of the events: “ich hatte vieles übersetzt, auf die Dichter unter unseren Nachbarn hingewiesen [...]. Nie war unserer Zusammenarbeit hüben und drüben herzlicher, intensiver, impulsiver gewesen, und in manchem Stunden des Enthusiasmus gaben uns der Täuschung hin, wir hätten der Welt das Richtige, das Rettende gezeigt” (WvG 223). And, in spite of all of this, he goes on to regret, “die Welt kümmerte sich wenig um solche literarischen Manifestationen, sie ging ihren eigenen schlimmen Weg” (WvG 223-224).

Taking these ideas into account, I contend that Zweig—once he had become a writer but before he adopted a clear intellectual stance—attempts to enact a sort of praxis of commitment that paves the way towards his *engagement* with the idea of Europe as we know it from the First World War onwards. On the one hand, mediation allows Zweig to leave behind the aestheticism of fin-de-siècle Vienna that he had embraced in his youth and that “manifested itself in an aesthetic cult of beauty, in surface smiles masking an aloofness from the world’s pursuits, in frequently quixotic personal responses to problems that seemed to offer no solutions” (Zohn, “The European and the Jew” 324). On the other, it is the beginning of a new adventure, a new mission that gives meaning to his activities as an individual and, above all, as a writer and artist. This ‘road’—translation and cultural mediation—will lead him to Verhaeren, who, in turn—and as we saw in the 1914 “Autobiographische Skizze”—will become a choice (*Entscheidung*), an act of

commitment where both his activities as a mediator and his European *Weltanschauung* meet. As Harry Zohn summarizes:

It took a characteristic experience for Zweig to shed the last vestiges of dalliance, dandyism, and decadence, and to launch himself on the road on which he was to continue unerringly for the rest of his life: the road to Europe, but also to a central quality within himself, that of mediatorship (which, in the view of some, is an eminently Jewish quality). This experience was his discovery of Émile Verhaeren. (“SZ: The European and the Jew” 325)⁶⁶

1.2.2. “Verhaeren war für mich eine Entscheidung”: Singing the Modern Times and the European Dream

Émile Verhaeren is a key figure in the articulation of Zweig’s poetics and commitment before the First World War. On the one hand, in the “Autobiographische Skizze” of 1914, Zweig’s refers to his ‘discovery’ of the Belgian poet—as well as his commitment to his work as a translator and promoter in Germany and Austria—as an *Entscheidung*, a decision and a choice that influenced both his writing and *Weltanschauung* through the creed of *Bejahung* (‘affirmation’), enthusiasm, and vitalism,⁶⁷ and whose importance in Zweig’s self-writing gradually decreased in the texts of 1922 and 1936, only to reemerge in *Die Welt von Gestern*. On the other hand, our analysis in the previous section has shed light on the role of Verhaeren in linking Zweig’s activities as a translator/cultural

⁶⁶ Before moving on to the next section—dedicated to Émile Verhaeren—and to provide a complementary perspective on Zweig’s role as *Mittler* before the First World War, it must be noted that some scholars, and especially Harry Zohn, have attempted to read Zweig’s cultural mediation as a Jewish characteristic. From this perspective, Zweig would be fulfilling a historical mission of Jews that goes back to the Middle Ages: “Die Juden haben viele Jahrhunderte lang, besonders in mittelalterlichen Spanien und im Italien der Renaissance, eine Mittlerrolle zwischen Ost und West gespielt. Die Anfänge dieser jüdischen Mittlerrolle gehen auf das Iraq des achten Jahrhunderts zurück, und in einigen Gemeinden wurden Übersetzungen zur Familientradition” (“SZs Kulturelles Mittlertum” 23).

⁶⁷ For an exploration of Zweig’s adherence to the cultural and artistic movement of vitalism through Verhaeren and its impact on his early work in terms of style and content, see: Resch, Stephan. “‘Lust, Kraft, Wille und Ekstase erzeugen’—Tracing Vitalism in Stefan Zweig’s Early Works.” *Literatur für Leser*, vol. 37, 2014, pp. 203-217.

mediator with his European commitment.⁶⁸ In this sense, in *Die Welt von Gestern*, Zweig tells us that one of Verhaeren's unique characteristics is his ability to embrace and sing the (European) modern times, following the trail of what Walt Whitman had done for America, a recurrent analogy in Zweig's assessment of Verhaeren:⁶⁹ "Verhaeren hatte als erster von allen französischen Dichtern versucht, Europa das zu geben, was Walt Whitman Amerika: das Bekenntnis zur Zeit, das Bekenntnis zur Zukunft. Er hatte die moderne Welt zu lieben begonnen und wollte sie für die Dichtung erobern" (WvG 138). Whereas other writers felt a certain disdain for what modernity, industrialization, and progress had brought in terms of aesthetic substance, "hatte er für jede neue Erfindung, jede technische Leistung Begeisterung" (WvG 138), an all-encompassing admiration for both new and old, religion and science, urban and rural life, which led him to send to the nations of Europe a message of coexistence and mutual understanding: "'Admirez-vous les uns les autres', war seine Parole an die Völker Europas" (WvG 138). Thus, there is a clear link in Verhaeren between the affirmation and admiration of everyone and everything to the construction of a European ethos and (a sense of) community, a collective identity based on the shared experience of modernity and a belief in progress and the unrelenting betterment of humanity: "Der ganze Optimismus unserer Generation [...] fand bei ihm den ersten dichterischen Ausdruck, und einige seiner besten Gedichte werden noch lange das Europa und die Menschheit bezeugen, die wir damals erträumt" (WvG 138).

⁶⁸ To this respect, biographer Donald Prater contends that at this point in Zweig's life, "his third year as student over, there was a firm sense of direction in his life, a conscious plan of application to the serious profession of letters, and of dedication to the new spirit of Europe he had recognized in Verhaeren" (*European of Yesterday* 24).

⁶⁹ See, for instance, the following pages in Zweig's biography of Verhaeren: 403, 1047, 1316, 1407-9, 1596, 1632, 2182, 3054. Also, for an analysis of Zweig's reception of both Whitman and Verhaeren and their impact on the formation of his European *Weltanschauung*, see Unger, Nikolaus. "The Influence of Walt Whitman and Émile Verhaeren in Stefan Zweig's Pre-1914 Conception of Cultural Modernism." *TRANS. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, vol. 17, February 2010, www.inst.at/trans/17Nr/1-11/1-11_unger17.htm. Accessed 4 February 2019.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Additionally, to his importance as a preacher of admiration and singer of modern times, as well as “Hymniker Europas” (WvG 142), there is a close connection between Verhaeren’s oeuvre and his personality, which turns him, as will happen with Romain Rolland a few years later, into a moral example, someone who embodies in his daily life the message that emanates from his work. Zweig is touched, therefore, by how the Belgian poet deals with the other and the unknown, including Zweig himself when they first met: “Mit dem ersten Wort griff er in die Menschen hinein, weil er ganz aufgetan war, zugänglich jedem Neuen, nichts ablehnend, jedem einzelnen bereit. Er warf sich gewissermaßen gleich mit seinem ganzen Wesen aus sich heraus einem entgegen” (WvG 140). One of Verhaeren’s most precious qualities is, thus, his ability to embrace ‘otherness’, his extreme capacity for empathy, which Zweig will take for himself and make it an essential part of his *Weltanschauung*. For, with Verhaeren, as we saw with Hoffmannsthal and Rilke, Zweig is projecting and identifying his own self. So we observe a certain confusion and overlap between the biographer and his subject, something that Zweig himself admitted in the *Erinnerungen an Émile Verhaeren* of 1917, written right after the Belgian poet’s death: “Für mich nur und diese Nächsten erwecke ich heute das Bild eines Menschen, der so innig meinem Leben verbunden ist, daß ich das seine nicht darzustellen vermag, ohne mein eigenes Leben darin mitgestaltet zu fühlen. Und ich weiß: mit der Erinnerung an den großen verlorenen Freund erzähle ich meine eigene Jugend” (WvG 10).

Memories of *Émile Verhaeren* (1910)

Following these passages from *Die Welt von Gestern*, in which Zweig constructs an overall image of Verhaeren, we turn now to his biography of 1910 and the aforementioned *Erinnerungen* (‘memories’) of 1917 in order to complete our exploration of the forms of intellectuality and commitment that lie behind both the identification with Verhaeren and

the idea of ‘mediation’.⁷⁰ Above all, we can contend that, according to Zweig’s image of Verhaeren in these two texts, the Belgian poet embodies several forms of intellectuality that might be articulated as follows: first, the artist is praised as a *singer* of modernity and Europe, a (quasi)*philosopher* who ‘makes sense’ of the new (‘modern’) world; second, and—perhaps—as a consequence of the latter, the artist, having glimpsed what unites human beings in their modern condition, adopts the role of *mediator/translator* between individuals and reality by endorsing a collective experience/narrative and by spreading harmony through ‘enthusiasm’; finally, in so doing, the poet becomes a *leader*, a visionary, someone who addresses the masses to guide them, becoming a voice to follow, a new authority for a new ‘religion’.

These different aspects or *formulae* of Verhaeren’s commitment—which need not be articulated necessarily in a logical cause-effect sequence—converge under an idea of the poet and his responsibility that clashes with the notion of the artist as an isolated individual devoted to the production of art for art’s sake and blinded by his own aestheticism. In other words, Verhaeren’s vitalism represents a break with a certain bourgeois tradition (*VERHAEREN* 52), and instead implements the idea that poetry must go back to the streets, to action, to a purpose outside *l’art pour l’art*: “Was die Zeiten der Absonderung erzeugt haben an technischen Fähigkeiten und Werten, an süßer Musik, an schwingender Rhythmik, an Geschmeidigkeit und Biegsamkeit der Sprache, darf hier nicht mehr Selbstzweck sein, sondern nur Mittel zur Erregung von Enthusiasmus” (*VERHAEREN* 135). Zweig is foregrounding through Verhaeren a poetry that responds to the times, a poetry that is in a way ‘committed’: “Und vor allem, nicht mehr als Einzelnes

⁷⁰ Contrary to what may seem at first, and as Robert Dumont claims in his study of the relationship between Stefan Zweig and France, the *Erinnerungen* of 1917 are not just a summary of the 1910’s biography, but rather offer a complementary view of the Belgian poet; whereas the latter text resembles more a literary essay, the former adopts markedly a more personal and biographical stance (53).

wird sein Gedicht betrachtet, sondern als Werk, als Weltanschauung, als Antwort auf die Fragen unserer Zeit, als stärkste und schönste Bereicherung unseres Lebensgefühles” (VERHAEREN 247). In this sense, then, as we saw in our analysis of the autobiography of 1914, Zweig conceives his dedication to Verhaeren—through translations and promotional activities in the German-speaking world—as a form of commitment, as an *Entscheidung*, as a reaction to a paralyzing bourgeois morality and culture, as well as to his own former poetics.⁷¹ As Stephan Resch points out, the fact of following Verhaeren implies the adherence to a literary and cultural movement—vitalism—that sought to confront 19th century bourgeois *Weltanschauung* primarily through the celebration of life (“Lust, Kraft, Wille und Ekstase” 203). Closely linked to expressionism, Resch argues, following Gunter Martens and his ‘dynamic’ concept of vitalism,⁷² this movement does not only refer to a form of escapism, but “can also be extended to an intellectual current which sought to engage with contemporary issues more actively” (VERHAEREN 204).

Under this general premise, Verhaeren’s biography provides us with an overview of both the Belgian poet’s life and work.⁷³ Within the bulk of Zweig’s biographies, it has often been classified as ‘literary’ one, together with, for instance, those on Romain Rolland and Michel de Montaigne, in that it does not focus so much on recreating the life of a historical figure or episode, but rather concentrates its efforts on sketching the literary personality of the biographical subject. Therefore, it could be objected that these texts do not comply with the standards of accuracy and research demanded by historical and

⁷¹ As Stephan Resch indicates: “In his essay [specially in the chapter “Das neue Pathos”], Zweig is pleading for the return to a more immediate engagement with poetry. What was in ancient times an oratory skill requiring direct interaction with an audience, has turned into what Zweig regards as an artificial and solitary linguistic pursuit. [...] Zweig’s criticism takes aim at the decadent and symbolist poetry which he himself had emulated only years earlier [...], predict[ing] a paradigm shift, which would see poetry and poet once again aligned with the demands of an urban, industrial and fast paced society” (“Lust, Kraft, Wille und Ekstase” 206).

⁷² See Martens, Gunter. *Vitalismus und Expressionismus*. Kolhammer, 1971.

⁷³ Published in 1910—with an extended second edition in 1913—, the work follows a chronological order and is divided into three chapters “Entscheidungen” (1883-1893) [“Decisions”], “Gestaltungen” (1893-1900) [“Forms”], “Vollendungen” (1900-1910) [“Completions”].

scholarly works, being “therefore panegyrics rather than critical studies, subjective, inspired, and inspiring manifestos of admiration, rather than objective, logical, biographical-critical or philological studies” (Zohn, “SZ und Émile Verhaeren” 201). We encounter once again the most recurrent critique against Zweig, which points out the excessive subjectivity and unreliability of his non-fiction works. However, as we have claimed before, it is precisely in this gap between ‘reality’ and ‘representation’ where we encounter the possibility of accessing a deeper layer of meaning that is imbued with the author’s ethos and *Weltanschauung*. In the words of Marleen Rensen: “it is precisely because of this subjectivity that these biographical works can provide insight into Zweig’s own notion of Europe and his self-proclaimed European identity” (“Writing European Lives” 3).⁷⁴ What we seek in our analysis of *Verhaeren*—and, by extension, in Chapter I—is precisely those passages where, by dint of admiration, exemplariness and identification, we can no longer distinguish between author’s desires and aspirations and those of the biographical subject as regards the notion of *engagement*.

As we indicated previously, Verhaeren’s most salient feature as a poet has to do with his commitment to reality, to the world. He embodies, according to Zweig, a new breed of artists that are able to ‘sing’ (with) the times, capturing contemporaneity. In this sense, he is a *visionary*, someone who is able to see beyond the ‘ugliness’ of modern life, to perceive unity where everyone sees chaos: “Alle Manifestationen der Neuzeit sind hier im Dichterischen, im Seelischen reflektiert in ihrer Wirkung auf das zuerst verwirrte, dann verständnisvolle und dann begeisterte Gefühl des neuen Europäers” (*VERHAEREN* 28). Moreover, this exceptional ability to ‘see’ not only ‘reality’ but also what is to come

⁷⁴ See Bolle 451.

endows him with a prophetic or mystic quality.⁷⁵ Verhaeren's voice, Zweig tells us, is "immer lauter und lebendiger geworden, wirklich wie eine Orgel, voll von priesterlichen Klängen und der mystischen Gewalt des großen Gebetes. Eine geradezu religiöse Gewalt, aber nicht eine des Verzagens, sondern eine des Vertrauens und der Freude geht von ihr aus" (VERHAEREN 31).⁷⁶ As this quote reveals, the poet does not only see, but he also creates, the world, using the power of language to shape and transform reality. In other words, he makes sense out of chaos and 'organizes' the sphere of the 'perceptible'. He cannot be compared to a regular artist, painter or artisan; he is something else: "Er steht [...] neben den großen Organisatoren, jenen, die die neuen sozialen Ströme in Dämme gepreßt haben, neben den Gesetzgebern, die den Zusammenstoß der aufflammenden Energien zu ordnen und zu vermeiden suchen, neben den Philosophen, die in genialer Synthese all diese tausendfach verwirrten Triebe ordnen und vereinen wollen" (VERHAEREN 29). Therefore, the poet, in 'explaining' the world (VERHAEREN 89), founds a new order, a new moral and a new religion: "sie werden nicht nur die neuen Schönheiten finden müssen, sondern auch neue Gesetze für diese neue Ordnung, eine andere Moral, eine andere Religion, eine andere Synthese für dieses andere Beisammensein" (VERHAEREN 94).

And it is precisely in this act of shaping reality that Zweig sees Verhaeren's ultimate form of commitment, of response(ability). This is how he becomes an intellectual, an *engagé* poet that places his art, his *métier*, at the service of an idea, mission and/or *Weltanschauung*. In this sense, his work undertakes to transform what is only perceived

⁷⁵ As we will see repeatedly in this section, the use of religious vocabulary is a feature in the articulation of Verhaeren/Zweig's commitment, starting a practice that will be largely recreated and amplified in the drama *Jeremias*.

⁷⁶ In another instance of the text, Zweig compares Verhaeren with a preacher, in that he is able to (re)create the world with his words: "Seine Dichtung ist der Versuch einer dichterischen Welterschöpfung, ist ein Wille zu neuen Formen, neuer Ästhetik und neuer Begeisterung. Er ist nicht nur der Dichter, auch der Prediger unserer Zeit" (VERHAEREN 29).

as the pain and alienation of the modern condition into a sign of hope. According to Zweig, he is the “erste nun diesen Schmerz der Masse, diese Gärung schon freudig vorahnend als Lust empfunden zu haben, diese Unruhe als Hoffnung, heißt selbst ein wahrhaft Neuer sein, einer von denen, die berufen sind, dichterisch eine Antwort zu geben auf alle Klagen und Fragen unserer Zeit” (*VERHAEREN* 111). At this point, when Zweig has clearly established and delimited the extent of Verhaeren’s commitment, he makes the final turn in his analysis and associates this new world, this new moral and religion, this new regime of visibility and perceptibility, not only with modernity, but also with Europe, providing the Belgian poet’s work with what he calls at the end of the essay an “europäische Bedeutung” (*VERHAEREN* 243 and ff.). As Marleen Rensen notes, this is perhaps one of the first instances where Zweig “already shows a tendency to insert the idea of a European identity into the ‘biographical’ narrative” (“Writing European Lives” 3). Verhaeren, having given himself to the world, becomes a European poet, that is to say, the singer and preacher of the reality he has ‘seen’ and therefore ‘founded’: “Nur durch Hingabe an jedes Ding konnte Verhaeren so grandios das Zeitgenössische verstehen, konnte er nun Dichter der Demokratie der Städte, des Industrialismus, der Wissenschaft, der Dichter Europas, der Dichter unserer Zeit werden” (*VERHAEREN* 85). In other words, Verhaeren is singing a new sense of the common, a new collective identity, manipulating the distribution of the sensible in order to extract a new shared destiny or teleology. Through enthusiasm, through affirmation, he becomes a “soziale[r] Dichter, der Dichter des Maschinenzeitalters, der Demokratie und der europäischen Rasse” (*VERHAEREN* 96). This new ‘race’, this new ‘idea’—Europe—has according to Zweig a solid point of anchorage, the modern city, which, as a result of technology and progress, has managed to reduce the distance between the nations and create a network of supranational citizens:

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

[D]iese Vereinungen von Millionen zu Städten sind keine isolierten. Ein Band hält sie alle zusammen, der moderne Verkehr. Die Distanzen der Realität sind geschwunden und mit ihnen auch die nationalen Scheidungen. Neben dem Problem der einzelnen Konglomerate, die nun langsam Organismen werden, neben den einzelnen Rassen, den einzelnen Massen erhebt sich eine größere Synthese, die Synthese der europäischen Rasse. (*VERHAEREN* 118)

Here we observe what Zweig perceives as a truth, that is to say, the fact that modernity inevitably brings isolated individuals and nations closer to one another, creating (a) new horizon of experience(s). Also, that Europe does not constitute a future utopia, but a reality that simply needs to be unveiled by the poet. Therefore: “in unseren Hauptstädten, in Paris, Berlin und London, wachsen schon Menschen auf, die keine Franzosen mehr sind und keine Deutschen, sondern vorerst nur Pariser und Berliner, die eine andere Sprachtönung, eine andere Denkart haben, denen die Großstadt, die Menge zur Heimat geworden ist” (*VERHAEREN* 117-118). However, although the European poet and citizen is already a reality, despite the fact that Europe—as a new community and form of conscience—is the materialization of the spirit of modernity, where “greifen hart Wunsch und Wirklichkeit zusammen” (*VERHAEREN* 119), the task has not been yet completed. Although, for Verhaeren, “Europa ist [...] das Land der Bewußtheit”, it must not be taken for granted, because “noch ist innerlich die Vereinung nicht vollkommen, noch befeinden die Staaten sich und sind unkund ihrer Gemeinsamkeit” (*VERHAEREN* 119). Thus, the poet has found a new mission: in his efforts towards humanity and the universal, he must help bring to completion the birth of Europe as a supranational community. As a final remark, it is interesting to note that in Verhaeren’s formulation of the poet as an intellectual that aims towards Europe, we can observe a trait that will recur in Zweig’s narrative of commitment: his ‘apoliticism’. For, it does not matter how *engagée* or intellectual Verhaeren might be, his value as an artist remains above politics, the only position from

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

which to reach ‘humanity’: “Und wie nun die Partei in Brüssel das *Maison du peuple* begründet, [...] nimmt teil an allen Bestrebungen, um sie dann in der schönsten Vision seines dichterischen Werkes weit über das Politische und Aktuelle in die großen Geschehnisse der Allmenschlichkeit emporzuheben” (*VERHAEREN* 99).

So far, we have delineated the contour of the main form of intellectuality embodied by Verhaeren: that of the poet that sings the new times, that gives shape to the world and therefore a meaning to a whole collective experience. He is a visionary and a ‘(sense) maker’. However, as a socially responsible individual, that should not be enough; his task, as we discussed in the previous paragraph, does not stop in the act of seeing, comprehending, and it involves sharing his vision, guiding, orientating the crowd/individual in the articulation of a new community and horizon of experience(s). And it is in this act of transmission where we encounter again the notions of mediation and translation. More specifically, Zweig discusses here a form a mediation that goes beyond the participation in a network of exchange and circulation of ideas and cultural goods, such as the one he himself was a part of in his efforts to promote of Verhaeren’s work. Here, instead, mediation is used in the sense of ‘reconciliation’ between the individual and the times, between individual experience and collective processes. It is the duty of the artist, and therefore a form of commitment, to translate the intellectual evolution of his time. That is to say, ‘seeing’ the ‘truth’ implies a responsibility to communicate it: “Eben weil sein Werk ganz die Gegenwart umfaßt, sie ganz aussagen will, fühlt er sich vor der Zukunft verantwortlich. Für ihn muß ein wahrhafter Dichter die ganze seelische Sorge seiner Zeit veranschaulichen” (*VERHAEREN* 244). Additionally, in a world in transition between old and new forms of production, ways of being, and social relationships, mediation also implies an effort to bring all the apparent differences and contrasts into a single whole, under a framework of intelligibility where every piece of

the puzzle finds its place and fulfils its role and therefore gives meaning to what could otherwise be an alienating experience. In order to cement the pieces of this multifarious whole ('reality'), the poet resorts to enthusiasm and *Bejahung* (affirmation), a key concept in Verhaeren's *Weltanschauung* that acquires an ethical import, affecting the individual's behavior, the way(s) in which he relates to his fellow beings and the choices he makes. In other words, *Bejahung* prescribes certain forms of being in the world, an effort to dominate the negative forces of existence and eradicate our capacity for negative thinking or even criticism: "Und so muß unsere ganze Anstrengung sein, das Negative in uns zu überwinden, nichts abzulehnen, den kritischen Geist in uns zu töten, das Positive zu stärken, möglichst viel zu bejahen" (VERHAEREN 208).

These words point out the fact that the consequences of the creed of *Bejahung* in both Zweig's work and his ethos go beyond the realm of aesthetics and poetics. As Harry Zohn argued, "it is not so much Verhaeren as a literary model which is important for Zweig [...] but Verhaeren's *Weltanschauung*, his unique affirmation of life, which found such an enthusiastic disciple in Zweig" ("SZ und Émile Verhaeren" 200). Especially, the association between the affirmation of life and the 'refusal' of criticism would leave a lasting mark in Zweig's production and thought. From this perspective, we could contend that what has been often deemed naive in Zweig's historical descriptions and literary analyses within his non-fiction works—especially those distortions that arise from an excess of praise, eulogy, and wishful thinking—is a part of Verhaeren's legacy. In this line of inquiry, we could bring to the discussion, for instance, Zweig's unease surrounding the writing of *Fouché*, a rarity within Zweig's biographical subjects. As we observed in the Introduction, far from the great Zweigian heroes, who become models to follow and imitate (Verhaeren, Rolland, etc.), the French politician becomes heroic precisely as a counterexample, serving thus to articulate a critique against both politics and the *homo*

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

politicus. That it was an exception, that it was something that went quite off the mark as compared with the rest of his works is reflected in *Die Welt von Gestern*, where Zweig comments that he would have never expected such a big success from such a despicable book. After the publisher's intentions of printing ten thousand copies, Zweig advised him otherwise, arguing that "Fouché sei eine unsympathische Figur, das Buch enthalte keine einzige Frauenepisode und könne unmöglich einen größeren Kreis von Lesern heranziehen" (WvG 341).⁷⁷

Furthermore, we should refer here once again to that paragraph in the autobiographical sketch of 1914 we analyzed before, and in which Zweig asserts that in his essays, "blieb ich mehr Hymniker als Kritiker", building only "Vorbilder" and being proud of never having "niemanden gehemmt und geschädigt" ("Autobiography 1914"). Lastly, another instance of what we could call Zweig's disdain for open—negative—criticism can be found in an interview from 1935 conducted in the offices of his American publisher Viking Press. As reported by the *Jewish Daily Bulletin* of the 31st of January 1935, there was a lot of expectancy from the press as to what Zweig might say about the political situation in Germany. However, Zweig refused to criticize Germany. The aforementioned report opens precisely with this fact, which caused great surprise and costed Zweig much of his reputation: "Stating that anything he might say against the present German regime would be interpreted as having been said against Germany itself, Stefan Zweig, exiled German [sic] Jewish author, declined to comment on Germany, Nazism or Hitler" ("FDTI" 3).

It must have been a shock especially from the perspective of the Jewish readership—the subtitle reads "Writers Dodges Questions Asked Concerning Reich Today"—and so

⁷⁷ Although these words do not constitute an open rejection of his work, biographer Oliver Matuschek claims that "Zweig let quietly be known that he couldn't abide the protagonist of his new book, and that he would never make the mistake of writing about such a monster" (237).

the reporter is quick to amend the situation by confiding to the reader that “following his general press interview, [he] reveal[ed] to a reporter for *The Jewish Daily Bulletin* [...] that he is keenly conscious of the Nazi persecution of Jews” (“FDTI” 3). And we could add that the point here is not Zweig’s awareness or which side of the battle he is on, but the fact that even in desperate times, in times of violence, persecution, and war, he did not feel comfortable with speaking negatively or criticizing in public, believing that aggressive words could only bring further pain for those who were in the weakest spot—in this case Jews still living in Germany at the time. However, it must be said, Zweig did not resign himself to his “I would never speak against Germany. I would never speak against any country. I make no distinctions” (“FDTI” 3), but he looked for other—more indirect—ways of transmitting his commitment, as we will see in later sections of this chapter. All in all, what I have attempted to prove here is that the transformation of *Bejahung* into an element of ethical value and consequences left a deep imprint on Zweig’s *Weltanschauung* and poetics, and especially on what he would conceive as the duty of the artist and the intellectual.

To conclude our discussion about the forms of intellectuality that Zweig elaborates in his biography of Verhaeren, I argue that, as a consequence of what he considered his duty of mediating between the new-found truth and the individual, and therefore converting his vision into a collective experience, the artist undergoes a process of heroization and sacralization. Thus, he must adopt a role of leader and guide of the community, given that he comes to represent and embody this collective experience of contemporaneity: “der Heros unserer Zeit ist der Denker, das Ideal geistiger Kraft und Geschmeidigkeit” (*VERHAEREN* 91). In this sense, he becomes a ‘spiritual’ guide, a voice to follow: “Wieder wie einst scheint heute der lyrische Dichter befähigt, wenn nicht der geistige Führer der Zeit, so doch der Bändiger und Erreger ihrer Leidenschaften zu

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

werden, der Rhapsode, der Anrufende, Befeuernde, der Entfachende des heiligen Feuers” (*VERHAEREN* 134). As we mentioned before, Verhaeren is also described by Zweig as a ‘preacher’, ‘orator’ or ‘priest’. Nonetheless, and despite Zweig’s continuously resorting to religious imagery, Verhaeren will only become a preacher in acting as a substitute thereof, in its stead, and not replicating any sort of religious teaching. In fact, Zweig tells us that everything Verhaeren learnt from the Jesuits in his school years would constitute the very core of what he would later rebel against:

Der Priester, den sie aus ihm machen wollten, ist er wirklich geworden, nur daß er alles predigte, was sie versagten, alles befeindete, was sie anpriesen. Wie Verhaeren die Schule verläßt, ist er schon erfüllt von jener edlen, doch fiebernden Lebensgier, jener unbändigen Sehnsucht nach intensiven und bis zum Schmerz gesteigerten Reizen, die für ihn so charakteristisch ist. (*VERHAEREN* 46-47)

Verhaeren will become a preacher and a ‘spiritual’ guide in the sense that, according to Zweig, in an age devoid of faith, poetry replaces religion. The new faith, Zweig tells us, will be propagated by the poets, who, “‘venus trop tard pour être prêtres’, [...] werden Prediger sein müssen einer neuen Inbrunst” (*VERHAEREN* 62). All in all, the new poetic ideal is transformed into a new credo: “Denn mit neuen und größeren Gefühlen ist hier die dichterische Idee verstanden als im Anbeginn. Dichtung ist Konfession für Verhaeren nicht nur im goethisch-individuellen Sinn, sondern auch im religiösen: als höchstes moralisches Bekenntnis” (*VERHAEREN* 62-63). And the poet is ultimately turned into a saint: “Für diese letzte Wahrheit, den Menschengott, den sie entdecken sollen, sind die Dichter und Gelehrten die neuen Heiligen” (*VERHAEREN* 200).

As Zweig himself would witness only few years later, this leading position of the artist/intellectual who addresses, exhorts, guides and orientates the masses—making good of his authority and privileged position in the social hierarchy—would fall to pieces during the First World War, when the cultural elite would lose his prestige and capacity

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

for prescription, creating an scenario divided between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ intellectuals. As a matter of fact, both Zweig and Verhaeren would have their share of ‘bad intellectuality’. As has been amply documented, Verhaeren’s open attacks on Germany in the first years of the war would result in a huge distance between master and disciple. At the time, and as Zweig recalls in his “Erinnerungen an Émile Verhaeren” of 1917, when his old friend became an ‘enemy’, Zweig was tempted to answer back. However, he opted, perhaps for the first time, for silence, for not entering a direct confrontation: “Ich habe damals geschwiegen, öffentlich und im Stillen. Zu ihm selbst war der Weg mir versperrt [...]. Manche haben mich damals gedrängt, Zeugnis und Gegenzeugnis vorzuholen, aber in diesem Jahre habe ich es gelernt, in einer Welt von Gedrückten und Geknechteten mit verbissenen Zähnen zu schweigen” (“EEV” 313). This ‘learning to stay quiet’—which echoes both the interview of 1935 and Hannah Arendt’s remarks about Zweig in her review of *Die Welt von Gestern*—, this silence which, as paradoxical as it may seem, would end up becoming an essential part of Zweig’s commitment, can also be read as a part of Verhaeren’s legacy. It was, after all, Verhaeren who showed Zweig to love, not to hate, to embrace, not to reject, and who would remain a part of Zweig’s thought, ethos, and *Weltanschauung*; someone Zweig could never entirely part with because he had become a part of himself: “Und doch, ich vermochte es nicht; etwas in mir weigerte sich noch, Abschied zu nehmen von einem, der in mir lebt als blutgewordenes Beispiel meiner Existenz, meines irdischen Glaubens” (“EEV” 314-315).

This section has attempted to show that there exist certain figures and forms of *engagement* before the great turning point in Zweig’s narrative of commitment: the First World War. It also has explored the extent to which identification is used by Zweig to build his personal discourse and how much of he inserted in his biographical subjects. Summing up, we can contend that the forms of commitment and intellectuality embodied

in the figure/image of Verhaeren are marked by the fact that Europe, as a community, as a reality, is incipient but strong, growing together with progress and a sheer faith in the future. In other words, the dream has not been shattered yet. As a consequence, there is a belief in the power of poetry and the artist to complete the European mission. At this point, the Zweigian intellectual remains closer to the world of ideas, aesthetics, and the perceptible. In this sense, Zweig's future forms of intellectuality, will have to adapt the idea of mediation to the post-war reality, favoring non-fiction genres over poetry to engage with/in more 'politicized'—if not directly political—issues and debates.

1.3. Responding to the First World War: The 'Birth' of Stefan Zweig the Intellectual

We have already established that the First World War constituted a turning point in Zweig's narrative of commitment. If we were to establish a place to start our discussion of Stefan Zweig as a committed writer—as an intellectual who wants his work to engage, for instance, with the sociopolitical and ideological debates of his time—certainly this would be our point of departure. However, the previous sections have attempted to prove that—informed by a sense of duty and responsibility—there are certain figures and forms of commitment ingrained in Stefan Zweig's idea of art and the artist that predate this moment. Can we still contend—as the title of this section claims—that Stefan Zweig, the committed writer, was born as a result of the war, as a response to it? There is no doubt that the First World War constitutes a turning point in Zweig's narrative of commitment. As such, we will bear witness in the following sections to certain figures of intellectuality and *engagement* that are, in a way, more conscious of their participation in the (ideological) struggles of the time. Even though there is in Verhaeren and his aesthetic-ethical program a close relationship between the poet's duty and Europe as a community

and horizon of both collective and individual experiences, the idea of fighting for Europe, for its ‘spiritual’ union, is not present in Zweig’s ‘intellectual’ agenda until the war.

In other words, the fight for Europe, for the common understanding of its peoples and nations, does not begin until that reality—or the illusion thereof—is destroyed. At this point, what was supposed to be the inevitable result of modernity and progress⁷⁸ becomes a position of resistance, a counternarrative, a pacifist solution, and even an ethical, sociocultural and political program. It is only in this sense, then, that we can claim that the First World War is the beginning of certain forms of *engagement* and figures of intellectuality that determine Zweig’s future trajectory as a committed writer. Taking these factors into account, this section analyzes how Stefan Zweig represented in his memoirs this foundational moment, this second “Entscheidung”, as he refers to it in his self-portrait of 1922. In other words, it explores the consequences of that “greatest of emotional shocks” and “strongest of moral lessons” (“Autobiography 1936”). For one, the new forms of commitment—born out of Zweig’s response to the war—will create a division between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ intellectuals that will have an impact on the configuration of the figures of intellectuality in the play *Jeremias* and the biography *Romain Rolland*. Also, and as a sort of foreword to these two ‘episodes’ in Zweig’s narrative of commitment, we will elaborate on the concepts of ‘defeat(ism)’ and suffering as key notions inherent to the performance of the intellectual’s task. Finally, we will problematize the way in which Zweig narrates this life-changing moment, building up on a long-held debate within Zweig’s scholarship that may shed some light on the textual configuration of Zweig’s autobiography.

⁷⁸ Zweig refers thus to the idea of Europe as a more-than-likely future reality in the first years of the twentieth century: “Nie habe ich unsere alte Erde *mehr* geliebt als in diesen letzten Jahren vor dem ersten Weltkrieg, nie *mehr* auf Europas Einigung gehofft, nie *mehr* an seine Zukunft geglaubt als in dieser Zeit, da wir meinten, eine neue Morgenröte zu erblicken” (*WvG* 211)

1.3.1. Stefan Zweig's Response(s) to the First World War

Following our thematic division of *Die Welt von Gestern* elaborated from the perspective of his commitment as a writer, I will now focus on the chapters devoted to the turning point between the making of the writer and the intellectual, that is to say, the First World War—from chapter 9 to chapter 11: “Die ersten Stunden des Kriegs von 1914”, “Der Kampf um die geistige Brüderschaft”, “Im Herzen Europas”. One of the first things Zweig notices, when he recounts the first moments after the outbreak of the conflict, is the strong appeal of nationalism and enthusiasm during wartime: “[I]n Wien fand ich die ganze Stadt in einem Taumel. Der erste Schrecken über den Krieg, den niemand gewollt, nicht die Völker, nicht die Regierung, [...] war umgeschlagen in einen plötzlichen Enthusiasmus” (WvG 242). What is more, he even admits that “trotz allem Haß und Abscheu gegen den Krieg möchte ich die Erinnerung an diese ersten Tage in meinem Leben nicht missen” (WvG 242). For, at first, having found a common enemy and a sense of purpose,

alle Unterschiede der Stände, der Sprachen, der Klassen, der Religionen waren überflutet für diesen einen Augenblick von dem strömenden Gefühl der Brüderlichkeit. [...] Jeder einzelne [...] war nicht mehr der isolierte Mensch von früher, er war eingetan in eine Masse, er war Volk, und seine Person, seine sonst unbeachtete Person hatte einen Sinn bekommen. (WvG 243)

However, as we have already discussed, Zweig is quick to claim his immunity to this sudden outburst of collective passion, having “zu lange kosmopolitisch gelebt, um über Nacht eine Welt plötzlich hassen zu können, die ebenso die meine war wie mein Vaterland” (WvG 247). Therefore, both his disdain for politics and his identity as a “Weltbürger” (WvG 251) prevent him from falling victim to patriotic fervor. Accordingly, he chooses to serve in the War Archive, avoiding the huge penalties that lay in wait for a “conscientious objector” and, at the same time, “ohne hetzerisch tätig zu sein” (WvG 251). And it is at this point precisely when Zweig makes a clear distinction between ‘good’ and

‘bad’ intellectuals, between those, like him, who from the outset fulfilled their “Dienst, der mir der wichtigste in diesem Kriege war: der Dienst an der künftigen Verständigung” (WvG 249) and those who, “[w]enig europäisch geschult, ganz im deutschen Gesichtskreis lebend, meinten die meisten unserer Dichter ihr Teil am besten zu tun, indem sie die Begeisterung der Massen stärkten und die angebliche Schönheit des Krieges mit dichterischem Appell oder wissenschaftlichen Ideologien unterbauten” (WvG 249). The latter, Zweig tells us, have betrayed the trust of their readers, of their audiences, and at the same time “die wahre Mission des Dichters [...], der Wahrer und Verteidiger des Allmenschlichen im Menschen zu sein”, in a context where “wurde am meisten gehört, wer am wildesten tobte, und so sangen und schrien sie hüben und drüben im wilden Chor” (WvG 250). And it is not only the artist who perpetrates this betrayal, but also other voices with the capacity of influencing opinion in the social sphere, such as medical doctors and “Priester aller Konfessionen”, “Männer [...] deren Vernunft, deren formende Kraft, deren menschliche Haltung wir vor einer Woche, vor einem Monat noch bewundert” (WvG 249). Moreover, what makes this phenomenon—what Julien Benda would call in the twenties “la trahison des clercs”—⁷⁹ unforgivable in the eyes of Zweig is that it helps the war continue, propagating hatred, lies and enthusiasm: “Krieg läßt sich mit Vernunft und gerechtem Gefühl nicht koordinieren. Er braucht einen geseigerten Zustand des Gefühls, er braucht Enthusiasmus für die eigene Sache und Haß gegen den Gegner” (WvG 253). Spread like a contagious disease, “Freunde, die ich immer als entschiedene Individualisten und sogar als geistige Anarchistischen gekannt, hatten sich über Nacht fanatische in Patrioten verwandelt und aus Patrioten in unersättliche Annexionisten” (WvG 255).

⁷⁹ For a joint analysis of both Zweig and Benda’s thoughts on Europe and the figure of the intellectual, see Büssgen, esp. 106-128.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

However, in not pursuing the way of ‘bad’ intellectuals, the ‘good’ ones jeopardize their own reputations. That is to say, they position themselves in a place where the notion of ‘defeat’ implies an ethical resistance against violence and the fatherland: “Sie deuteten sogar vorsichtig an, daß man Ansichten wie jene, daß dieser Krieg ein Verbrechen sei, eigentlich zur Kenntnis der Behörden bringen sollte, denn ‘Defaitisten’ [...] seien die schwersten Verbrecher am Vaterlande” (*WvG* 255). At this point, Zweig contends that the only way for the artist to fulfil his duty implies going against the grain—as Romain Rolland did—, “seine Überzeugung auszusprechen und sei es auch gegen den Widerstand seines Landes und sogar den Unwillen der ganzen kriegführenden Welt” (*WvG* 260). Therefore, after a visit to the field, to which he had avoided going as a press correspondent so as not to have to write a single word that “den Krieg in einem ausschließlich positiven und patriotischen Sinne darzustellen” (*WvG* 267), and seeing, once back home, that the press was only willing to write “von dem unbeugsamen Siegeswillen, von den geringen Verlusten unserer eigenen Truppen und den riesigen der Gegner” (*WvG* 272), he is compelled to action. It is not enough to be a ‘good’ intellectual and refraining from spreading hate and lies; one must engage in the fight against those that use their word to foment war. One must, as a committed writer, combat “das falsche Heldentum, das lieber die andern vorausschickt in Leiden und Tod, den billigen Optimismus der gewissenlosen Propheten, der politischen wie der militärischen, die, skrupellos den Sieg versprechend, die Schlächtereie verlängern” (*WvG* 272). Yet, as we argued before, this position comes at the price of being considered a “Schwarzseher”, a “Verräter”: “Immer war es dieselbe, die ewige Rotte durch die Zeiten, die die Vorsichtigen feige nannte, die Menschlichen schwächlich” (*WvG* 272-273).

At this moment, Zweig strongly identifies with mythical figures who also dared speak the truth and who were rejected, scorned and mocked for it, such as the princess of Troy Cassandra, who

could foresee the future, or the prophet Jeremias. Moreover, if the artist becomes a warner, or a prophet, he must also put up with loneliness, with the feeling of doubt “ob ich selbst wahnsinnig sei unter all diesen Klugen oder vielmehr allein grauenhaft wach inmitten ihrer Trunkenheit” (WvG 273). If he does not believe in ‘victory’, if his true enemy is the rhetoric of war and nationalism—those poems that rhyme “Krieg auf Sieg und Not auf Tod” (WvG 249)—, then he must accept that his situation is that of the “‘Defaitisten’—dieses Wort hatte man erfunden, um jenen, die sich um Verständigung bemühten, den Willen zur Niederlage zu unterschieben” (WvG 273). That is to say, he must embrace what his enemies use as a derogatory term, turning the celebration of defeat into the only way to disarm the nationalist discourse, and the defeated intellectual into the hero of peace and humanity. It must be noted here that, underpinning this whole idea of the ‘good’ (and also the ‘bad’) intellectual, there is a belief in the power of words to affect reality, the conviction that even “die spontane Manifestation eines großen Dichters übte tausendmal mehr Wirkung als alle offiziellen Reden der Staatsmänner. [...] Auch in diesem Sinne des Vertrauens auf den Dichter als den besten Bürgen reiner Gesinnung wohnte noch unendlich mehr Gläubigkeit jener—später so sehr enttäuschten—Generation inne” (WvG 261-262). This remark implies in an indirect way that, as Zweig himself notices, “[w]ährend 1939 keine einzige Kundgebung eines Dichters, weder im Guten noch im Bösen, auch nur die mindeste Wirkung zeitigte” (WvG 261), which threatened the very existence—raison d’être—of the intellectual and the committed artist, and therefore, as we will see in subsequent sections, complicating the very articulation of his commitment.

As we announced at the beginning of this section, the reception of Zweig’s ‘conversion’ to pacifism and his commitment to the defense and the unity of Europe—as they are told in *Die Welt von Gestern*—has generated a great deal of controversy. Many scholars and critics have disputed Zweig’s claims of not being ‘intoxicated’ by the rhetoric of war and aggressive nationalism, by what he calls ‘patriotic fervor’. And they have done so by rewriting Zweig’s narrative through the incorporation, not only of unpublished sources, such as diaries and letters, but also of Zweig’s

essayistic production written at the very beginning of the war. Remarkably, a series of articles published in the first months of 1914 show a Zweig who was completely carried away by the war. For instance, in “Ein Wort von Deutschland” (*Neue Freie Presse*, 6th August 1914), he claims his loyalty to Germany, praising its strength, organization, and will to victory: “Dieser ganze ungeheure Organismus verwandelt sich bei Angriff oder Abwehr in einen prachtvollen Mechanismus, in dem jeder einzelne Wille funktioniert wie die Feder im Uhrwerk, kein Atom der Volkskraft wird in der Stunde der Not brach liegen oder durch Nachlässigkeit verschwendet sein” (“WD” 311). What is more, he makes a virtue out of a sense of duty that surrenders the individual to the pull of the general will:

[I]n Deutschland die Philosophie, die den Pflichtgedanken zum kategorischen Imperativ aller Tätigkeit erhebt. Restlose Unterordnung des Einzelnen unter den Gesamtwillen, Disziplin des Egoismus zum Gemeingefühl ist die erhabene Formel, die sechzig Millionen Deutscher in den Tagen der Not in eine einzige Masse verwandelt, eine einlinig wirkende ungeheure Kraft, deren Stärke sich ruhmvoll auch an dem furchtbarsten Gegner erproben wird. (“WD” 319)

Also, in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of 19th September 1915, Zweig will publish an ambiguous ‘good-bye’ (see Müller) to his European friends in the article “An die Freunde im Fremdland”. While it entails a clear break with what had been his international friendships and supranational community of belonging, it also, at the same time, praises the existence of such a community, remembering it fondly with a hint of desire for its restoration and regret for its destruction:⁸⁰

[I]n stetem Vergleichen wurden wir stolz, eigene Werte zu empfinden und die fremden zu bewundern. [...] unsere Gemeinschaft, so meinte ich, so dachtet ihr damals zu fühlen, sei stärker als alle Entzweiung, und das, was uns verbinde—so

⁸⁰ On the ambiguity of said text, Denis Charbit comments that “derrière de ses accents martiaux et sa reconnaissance du primat national, la réponse de Zweig n’est pas sans disséminer, si l’on procède à une lecture implicite, des nuances et des formules ambiguës. Certes, le repérage de cette ambiguïté ne justifie nullement l’interprétation tirée du côté du pacifisme qu’en donnera Zweig rétrospectivement dans *Le Monde d’hier*” (48).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

dachten wir damals—, sei selbst stärker als das Band der Geburt, die Fessel der Sprache. An diesem Vertrauen wurden unsere Stunden schön und der Begriff der Heimat gelöst von den Grenzen der Reiche: unsere Brüderlichkeit war stark über die Sprachen und rein jenseits aller Anfechtung. (“FF” 440-448)

However, and this sets the tone of the article, Zweig is forced to surrender—or so he claims—his will for the greater good of the nation, asserting that “heute ist das Maß verwandelt und jeder Mensch nur wahr durch Gemeinsamkeit mit seiner Nation” (“WD” 448). It is time to let go any personal feeling or conviction, now it is about the “um ganze, und die Völker zählen nicht mit Worten, sondern mit Waffen: lassen wir jetzt unsere kleine Gerechtigkeit der Worte und opfern wir unsere persönliche Freundschaft der höheren Gemeinschaft, deren Schicksal jetzt gestaltet wird” (“FF” 473). In the same line, another article published in the *Neue Freie Presse* in 30th August 1915, “Galiziens Genesung”, focuses on the ‘recovery’ of Galitzia after the intervention of the German army. Thus, Zweig, who starts by describing the horrors of war and its devastating effects, ends up shifting the focus of the article towards recovery and the prevalence of creative over destructive forces: “auch hier ist das Gewaltige getan, die Zerstörung des Krieges überwunden durch seine schöpferische Tat” (“GG” 194-195). In other words, through enthusiasm even war might seem beautiful: “Und da begreift man’s, aufatmend, wie schwer es ist, ein ganzes Land zu zerstören, ein Volk zu vernichten, begreift es mit einer Lust, die eine Sekunde—aber nur für eine Sekunde!—mit dem Krieg versöhnt” (“GG” 196). Finally, the initial destruction is turned into optimism and sheer praise for the intervention of the German troops: “Fast überall wehen hier Fahnen auf den Häusern, schwarz-gelbe, weiß-rote [...]. die tiefste Armut, die Zerstörung selbst trägt hier einen bunten Wimpel der Hoffnung” (“GG” 199). It must be noted that this tone marked by enthusiasm and optimism is recognizable in many of Zweig’s posterior texts. However, the difference in this case is that they serve to justify precisely what those texts will fight

to eradicate: nationalism, violence and war.⁸¹ In this sense, it has been noted by Lionel Steiman that Verhaeren's *Bejahung*—with both its affirmation and partial suspension of 'criticism'—was responsible for Zweig's conflicted vision of the war in the aforementioned articles: "It was this same optimism, aesthetic and intuitive rather than critical, which later caused him to find beauty in the tortured landscape and humanity of war-torn Galitzia and which, nourished by a sense of providential design, saw moral progress and spiritual victory in human misery and defeat" ("The Agony of Humanism" 106).

The previous examples—which are in no way exhaustive as concerns Zweig's nationalistic and belligerent production in the first months of the 1914 war—have shown that the birth of Stefan Zweig the intellectual, committed to the cause of Europe and pacifism, is more complex than what *Die Welt von Gestern* might reveal. Without going any further, what we have considered as a text where Zweig renounces to his adscription to a supranational community of belonging is, contrastingly, described in the memoirs as one of his first acts of loyalty to the cause of common understanding:

Ich schrieb einen Aufsatz, betitelt 'An die Freunde im Fremdland', wo ich in gerader und schroffer Abweichung von den Haßfanfaren der andern das Bekenntnis aussprach, allen Freunden im Ausland, möge auch jetzt eine Verbindung unmöglich sein, treu zu bleiben, um mit ihnen bei erster Gelegenheit wieder gemeinsam am Aufbau einer europäischen Kultur zu arbeiten. (*WvG* 258)

Also, Romain Rolland's reprimand to Zweig's declaration—"Non, je ne quitterai jamais mes amis"—is defined as a test to see if communication by letter with 'the enemy' was possible at the time, becoming a symbolic moment, the beginning of an affiliation,

⁸¹ For it is not only optimism and enthusiasm that Zweig shows in this text, but also a blatant justification of war: "Die Vernichtung erst lehrt den Wert des Bestandes, die Invasion war vielleicht vonnöten, um den Bürgern aller Rassen hier ihre wahre Zugehörigkeit zu erweisen; an der Folie der russischen Herrschaft erst haben sie sich als Österreicher erkannt, und die Arbeit, die sie vollbringen, gilt jetzt dem Ganzen, fördert und gründet das neue Reich" ("GG" 200-201).

of a common project: “Ich fühlte mich nicht mehr allein, sondern endlich wieder gleicher Gesinnung verbunden” (*WvG* 259). In the same vein, and as we have discussed at the beginning of this section, Zweig’s visit to the war field is presented in *Die Welt von Gestern* as an eye-opening experience to the horrors of war, without any optimism, enthusiasm or beauty. Reflecting on this divergences between Zweig’s account and what some critics and biographers have managed to reconstruct, Donald Prater (*European of Yesterday*)—perhaps one of the first biographers to unveil the complexity of Zweig’s position during the war, together with Lionel Steiman (*The Education of an Aesthete*)—comments on the progressive ‘silencing’ and ‘elimination’ of this initial attitude towards the war in Zweig’s self-writing, and affirms that “it would be quite wrong to describe him as a pacifist from the start. When he himself looked back in [the autobiographical text] 1922 he had forgotten this early period. [...] And by the time he came to write *Die Welt von Gestern* he had convinced himself that his pacifism (or, more accurately, his opposition to the war) had dated from the very outbreak” (*European of Yesterday* 79). Pointing also to the discrepancies between Zweig’s account and the ‘truth’ of the documents, Oliver Matuschek—whose biography of Zweig is, at some points, less critical with his initial patriotic outburst—⁸² asserts that Rolland’s reply was in fact a “sharp rebuke from Romain Rolland, who made it abundantly clear that he himself was not about to give up on the common cause or abandon anyone” (136). Additionally, instead of a mere non-violent occupation, Zweig’s work in the War Archive, ‘The Hero Factory’, was, according to Matuschek to “compile reports on those soldiers who had

⁸² For instance, in relation to the very first of Zweig’s patriotic texts—“Heimfahrt nach Österreich”—Matuschek contends that “what sounds on the surface like an enthusiastic embracing of the general war euphoria in those opening days was in fact troubling him inwardly in ways that he concealed from his reading public” (*Three Lives* 135).

been singled out for military awards. The object of the exercise was to celebrate their more or less heroic deeds in polished style and ringing tones” (139).⁸³

Summing up, we have presented at least four elements whose interpretation and significance vary to a great extent according to who tells the story. First, Zweig’s work in the War Archive, which contradicts his fight against war propaganda and nationalist rhetoric as emphasized in his memoirs. Second, his article “An die Freunde im Fremdland”, which for some, Zweig included in *Die Welt von Gestern*, is a declaration against the war and in favor of peace and mutual understanding—or even the first instance of Zweig’s change of position towards pacifism (Lafaye)—whereas for others it is but one more instance of Zweig’s nationalistic mindset at the beginning of the war (Müller “Aspects”). Third, Rolland’s response to Zweig’s “An die Freunde im Fremdland”, which is either seen as a statement of a fellow friend or as the strong reprimand of Zweig’s future master and therefore a sort of epiphanic moment in the way towards Zweig’s ‘conversion’ to the pacifist cause. Finally, we have examined Zweig’s different responses to his visit to the field, to Galitzia, which is either discusses as a proof of the war’s devastating effects or of its potential for creation and rebirth. All in all, one thing is clear, Zweig’s discourse of commitment in *Die Welt von Gestern* is not neutral, objective, but one version of the truth conveyed at a very specific point in time and context (of production). Equally, it must be said that Zweig’s biographers and scholars have also participated, with their different interpretations and contexts (of reception), in the creation of a more complex narrative. Antoni Martí Monterde (2014), in his edition of some of the articles we have been discussing in this section, which was the first of its kind in Spanish or Catalan, speaks of a deliberate simplification of the image of Zweig as a Europeanist and pacifist,

⁸³ Some of these reports have been preserved. See, for instance, the publication *Unsere Soldaten: Episoden aus den Kämpfen der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee im Weltkrieg 1914/15*, edited by Alois Veltzé (Manz, 1915), where he figures as collaborator in the title page.

of “la necessitat gairebé desesperada de buscar referents pacífics i intel·lectuals per a l’Europa del segle XX” (4). Also, he points to the fact that many of Zweig’s nationalistic and bellicose texts, written as a result of his tasks in the War Archive, were not signed, and that made it easier for editors and publishers to offer an immaculate image of the Austrian writer (13). It is harder to explain, then, the attenuation or justification of Zweig’s attitude in more recent biographies, such as Matuschek’s or Catherine Sauvat’s, these articles by Zweig being available since the nineties in Knut Beck’s edition of *Die schlaflose Welt* (Fischer, 1990).

As we noted earlier, we do not have to contend only with discrepancies or possible biases in the analyses of the figure of Zweig by literary critics and specialists, but also, and perhaps more interestingly for our purposes, we have to deal with Zweig’s own self-fashioning decisions, where both what he says and what he keeps to himself shed light on his *Weltanschauung*. From this perspective, if we speculated about why Zweig in *Die Welt von Gestern* reduces his ‘conversion’ to pacifism and Europeanism to a mere continuation of what had been his attitude and way of living in the pre-war world, we could contend that the particularities of the context of writing of *Die Welt von Gestern* make it difficult to produce a nuanced vision in front of the ‘enemy’. In other words, at the moment of writing his memoirs, Zweig is immersed in an ideological battle.⁸⁴ Seeing that as a writer and intellectual his words can do little to stop the brutal force of Hitler’s weapons, he focuses his energy on crafting a narrative that may be recuperated by future generations, a narrative that serves both the function of preserving a (failed) project and

⁸⁴ On the differences between 1914 and 1939, Zweig comments: “Das schuf den Unterschied. Der Krieg von 1939 hatte einen geistigen Sinn, es ging um die Freiheit, um die Bewahrung eines moralischen Guts; und um einen Sinn zu kämpfen, macht den Menschen hart und entschlossen. Der Krieg von 1914 dagegen wußte nichts von den Wirklichkeiten, er diente noch einem Wahn, dem Traum einer besseren, einer gerechten und friedlichen Welt. Und nur der Wahn, nicht das Wissen macht glücklich. Darum gingen, darum jubelten damals die Opfer trunken der Schlachtbank entgegen, mit Blumen bekränzt und mit Eichenlaub auf den Helmen, und die Straßen dröhnten und leuchteten wie bei einem Fest” (*WvG* 246-247).

of building a potentially utopian (textual) space for its future reenactment. Additionally, we could simply argue that Zweig might have been ashamed of his nationalistic reactions at the beginning of the war, of his not being brave enough to declare himself a ‘conscious objector’—as he admits reluctantly in his memoirs—⁸⁵ and follow his ideas and until the last consequences, or of appearing weak in front of his adversaries.

In this regard, C. A. Williams devoted a chapter of his monograph *The Broken Eagle* (1974) to dismantling Zweig’s ‘pacifism’ during the war, reading Zweig’s actions and texts not as a result of a true conviction but of the doubts and weaknesses of a conflicted man, caught between his idealism and the demands of the time.⁸⁶ Thus, for instance, Williams claims that Zweig’s escaping to Switzerland in February 1917 was not based on humanitarian grounds but rather for selfish reasons, leaving behind a boring job and the prevailing poverty of Austria (115). What is more, he brings to the discussion the criticism by Karl Kraus—published in the periodical *Die Fackel* (no. 484-498)—as regards those “Good Europeans”, such as Zweig himself, who had gathered in Zurich to defend the ‘good cause’ but who, according to Kraus, were not doing enough at home. Kraus demanded of them that they accepted the responsibility inherent to their ideals instead of leading a ‘double’ life (115-116). Finally, Williams claims that the drama *Jeremias*, which is considered to be Zweig’s great contribution to the pacifist cause during the war, had made it past by the censors and was in fact published only when in Austria antiwar sentiments were more or less ‘official’. In other words, Zweig’s boldest action as a

⁸⁵ The consequence of not doing what was “die richtige Haltung für einen Mann meiner Überzeugung” (WvG 251) was, as he tells us, his getting a post in the War Archive, where Zweig crafted many of his nationalistic texts under his superiors’ order, that is to say, in a position where he could not refuse, where he had to obey others’ commands.

⁸⁶ For instance, Williams claims of the aforementioned essay “An die Freunde in Fremdland” that “it is possible to interpret this as a humanitarian protest disguised as moderate propaganda; it is more likely a token of Zweig’s susceptibility to the mood of the time and a mark of his moral confusion” (*The Broken Eagle* 117).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

pacifist writer, as well as the fact that he was allowed to travel to Switzerland to attend the premiere, were only possible, so Williams argues, with the connivance of the Austrian government at a stage in the war when Emperor Karl was trying to secure peace with France and progressively detaching himself from Germany's more belligerent position.⁸⁷

On the other hand, we could adduce other reasons for Zweig's 'manipulation' of his self-narrative that have to do more with his vision of the world than with his personality 'traits'—i.e. cowardice, lack of courage, etc. We could contend that, by 1941, Zweig could no longer defend, as he had done for instance in the autobiographical text of 1914, the ideals and values that had led him to write about war with enthusiasm. In this sense, other scholars have attempted to explain Zweig's nationalistic outburst—or initial response to the war—as the natural consequence of his aesthetic and 'political' ideas developed in the pre-war world under the mentorship of Verhaeren and the cultural atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Vienna. In this line of discussion, Lionel Steiman claims that Zweig's ambiguous response during the war was the result of a conflicting set of values inherited from the fin-de-siècle context, based on the ideals of cosmopolitan liberalism and an aesthetic humanism, which did not have "the political commitment nor the social awareness which alone could have made them vital" ("The Agony of Humanism" 102).

In other words, "the context of compromise and weakness of his war-time activities" would have been influenced by the development of a bourgeois fin-de-siècle idealism that discouraged any concern with political and social issues and which impeded the development of a "critical response to the cultural and ideological atmosphere in which he grew up" ("The Agony of Humanism" 102). As we have already explored, Zweig's

⁸⁷ Also, following this line of discussion, Williams argues that *Jeremias* was, as a pacifist text, too vague and weak a claim as compared to other works, such as Andreas Latzko's *Menschen im Kriege*, where "the social protest against the War and those who live by it is more direct, more urgent, and more compelling than Zweig's stylised Old Testament epic" (123).

‘apoliticism’, with its origin in the cultural and historical milieu of fin-de-siècle Vienna, went hand in hand with an idealism that permeated Zweig’s *Weltanschauung* and which defined the role of both art and artist in society, as well as—as we will examine in Chapter II—his vision of the past and of history, especially the way he explained historical events such as World War I. Additionally, and as we have seen in the previous sections, Zweig’s idealism was not the only determining factor in the development of his uncritical point of view. His adherence to Verhaeren and his creed of *Bejahung* played a key role in the configuration of Zweig’s early war texts, such as “Die schlaflose Welt”, where “Zweig conjured up the vision of an entire continent not so much victimized by war as transcending it in a community of feeling and destiny”, where “war appears as a tragic necessity [...]; it was not Zweig’s purpose to question it.” (Steiman, “The Agony of Humanism” 108). Thus, as we have already pointed out in the previous section, what have been deemed ‘obscure’ episodes or aspects of Zweig’s biography and *oeuvre* can be analyzed from the perspective of the influence of Zweig’s early masters and their philosophies. In this light, Verhaeren’s legacy is translated into a *Weltanschauung*, “a compound of cosmic optimism and the belief that the function of the artist was to give aesthetic expression to an enthusiastic and unconditional affirmation of life in all its manifold totality” (Steiman, “The Agony of Humanism” 105). Instead of seeing the war as the conjunction of historical forces and processes, “it was the psychology of that phenomenon—not its sociology or politics—that interested him (Steiman, “The Agony of Humanism” 108).

Steiman’s analysis explains Zweig’s ambiguous response to the war as the consequence of his developing European *Weltanschauung*, not as a mere flaw in his character or as a sign of his weakness. In this sense, it reinforces our assumptions of both the existence of certain forms of commitment before the First World War and the fact that

the latter was a turning point in Zweig's narrative of commitment. In other words, we could contend, or at least entertain the possibility, that Zweig did not have yet, at the outbreak of war, the appropriate intellectual and emotional tools to produce an unambiguous answer to it. Rather, the formulation of this answer, of this stance—as we will explore it in the following sections—was the result of 'having to respond' to the war, to the times, of having to go through them and therefore to adjust his ideals, ethics and position as a writer. As Steiman claims, there were some limitations to Zweig's "prewar internationalism", which "was only cultural and limited to peoples of French and German culture", producing a "conception of the phenomenon of war [that] lacked sophistication, and [where] cultural prejudice could take the place of political analysis" ("The Agony of Humanism" 111).

As Stephan Resch concludes in his analysis of Zweig's pacifism during the war, "Zweig's ambivalent response to the war is not simply the opportunistic schmoozing of a morally questionable writer but is rooted in a complete set of personal, aesthetic and social values which need to be considered before a final judgement on Zweig's attitude towards the events of 1914 is made" ("Pacifist in the 'Spirit of 1914'" 70). We started, a few paragraphs back, to wonder why Zweig might have 'manipulated' and 'simplified' his self-narrative, which has brought us to discuss the evolution of his idea of the world and how this idea affected the extent and forms of his commitment. We must insist that our primary concern lies not with an alleged 'biographical truth', with clarifying whether Zweig had always been a pacifist and a 'good European', but in representation, in the ways in which Zweig had to constantly (re)negotiate his position as an individual—and artist/intellectual—through the construction of an authorial *persona*. From this perspective, this section has proved that the First World War was indeed a turning point, one that interpellated Zweig's responsibility in a way that he had never had to deal with

before, producing new forms of commitment and intellectuality that would shape his future works.

1.3.2. Jeremias: The Prophet of Suffering and Defeat

As a matter of fact, we do not have to go far to find these new forms of commitment and intellectually arising out of the moral and emotional impact of the First World War. As the months and years went by, Zweig's position, both private and public—the latter being the focus of our reflections—, veered progressively towards pacifism and the fight for 'the spiritual union of Europe', two aspects which are somehow interrelated—understanding 'Europe' as a pacifist solution, as we will analyze in Chapter II. In this section we will look at those texts which start to reveal Zweig's new forms of negotiating his responsibility, paying especial attention to the pacifist-humanist play *Jeremias*, together with other essays which help us to further explore Zweig's response to the war. One of these texts, "Der Turm zu Babel", resorts to the Judeo-Christian cultural repository to formulate an allegory of the historical fate of Europe. As will happen with *Jeremias*, in "Der Turm zu Babel" Zweig rewrites and appropriates said legacy to convey a message directed to the present, both in individual and collective terms.

"Der Turm zu Babel" (1916)

Published first in the Swiss pacifist journal *Le Carmel* in its April/May edition, and then on the 8th of May 1916 in the German newspaper *Vossische Zeitung*—, in "Der Turm zu Babel" Zweig recuperates the Biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel, which comes to symbolize the joint efforts of humanity to rise in union, in common understanding and shared effort: "Damals, kaum erstanden aus dem Unbekannten, noch umschattet von der Dämmerung des Unbewußten, hatten die Menschen sich zusammengetan zu einem gemeinsamen Werk" ("TB" 746). However, God, afraid of what men could do when they

“einträchtig waren und einhellig” (“TB” 753) driven by “emsiger Eintracht”, sowed discord among humans by taking away their entente. Incapable anymore of communicating with one another, “über alle Felder und Wälder der Erde zerstreuten sie sich, bauten jeder nur mehr seine enge Heimstatt, die nicht in die Wolken reichte und nicht zu Gott, sondern nur eben sein Haupt schützte und seinen nächtlichen Schlaf” (“TB” 769).

After centuries and millennia of isolation, negotiating their coexistence through walls, frontiers and violence, some of them started to travel abroad and enjoy the exchange: “Ihre Weisen erkannten, daß keine Wissenschaft aus einem Volk allein die Unendlichkeit begreifen könnte, [...] die Dichter übertrugen die Worte der Brüder in die eigenen und Musik, die einzige, die frei ward vom engen Band der Sprache, durchdrang gemeinsam aller Gefühle” (“TB” 778). This time humans were able to enjoy not only what they had in common, but also their particularisms, thanking God, “weil er ihnen damit die Möglichkeit gegeben, vielfach die Welt zu genießen und an den Verschiedenheiten die eigene Einheit stärker bewußt zu lieben” (“TB” 778). And so, once again, the tower starts to rise. However, this new tower is not made of brick and mortar, but “aus dem feinsten unzerstörbarsten Stoff des irdischen Wesens, aus Geist und Erfahrung, aus den sublimsten seelischen Substanzen” (“TB” 786). At this point in the narration, Zweig weaves the dimension of ‘History’ with the present, projecting his European utopia through the symbol of the tower, which becomes a monumental representation of Europe:

So wuchs der Turm, der neue Turm von Babel, und nie stieg seine Spitze so hoch empor wie in unserer Zeit. Nie waren die Nationen gegenseitig so sehr in ihren Geist eingedrungen, nie die Wissenschaften ähnlich innig verknötet, nie der Handel so sehr verwoben zu einem wundervollen Netz und nie hatten die Menschen Europas ihre Heimat und die ganze Welt so sehr geliebt. (“TB” 794)

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

From this point onwards, Zweig's story replicates the narrative we have articulated in the previous sections, inaugurating a particular use of the past to which Zweig will resort in his historical biographies and portraits, as we will see in the last sections of this chapter. Feeling that the European dream had been fulfilled, "die Dichter aller Sprachen begannen gerade in den letzten Jahren in Hymnen die Schönheit des Seins und des Schaffens zu preisen und fühlten sich wie einst die Erbauer des mythischen Turms" ("TB" 794). However, God—the quintessential historical force in Zweig's historiography—⁸⁸ intervenes again, causing chaos and confusion: "Wieder warfen sie ihr Arbeitszeug weg und richteten es als Waffe gegeneinander, die Gelehrten ihre Wissenschaft, die Techniker ihre Entdeckungen, die Dichter ihre Worte, die Priester ihre Glauben" ("TB" 802). In this great disbandment of the (second) communal project, the intellectuals—poets, scholars, etc.—"haben sich verlaufen" ("TB" 802). In this context, Zweig, who clearly considers himself one of these workers or builders, dispels all ambiguity and enunciates a call to action. Between those who have decided to care only for the individual and national interests and those "die meinen, es könne niemals einem Volke, einer Nation, gelingen, zu erreichen, was kaum die vereinte europäische Kraft in Jahrhunderten heroischer Gemeinsamkeit vermocht" ("TB" 810), Zweig has already chosen his side, asking the 'good' intellectuals—himself included—to "doch wieder an den Bau zurück, jeder an die Stelle, wo er ihn verließ in dem Augenblick der Verwirrung" ("TB" 815). In this regard, the intellectual/artist/builder must forego his national affiliation and answer to the call of that "alte Ahnherr, unser Geist, der gleich ist in allen Gestalten aller Legenden, jener namenlose Werkbauer von Babel, der Genius der Menschheit" ("TB" 815).

⁸⁸ Williams comments on Zweig's approach to history in his reading of "Der Turm zu Babel", remarking his 'apoliticism': "The significance of this curious parable is to suggest that aggression and conflict, however cruel, are an inevitable divinely-ordained phase of human history. Responsibility for the War is transferred from man to God. Zweig depicts war as imposed from above because it seems to him impossible to explain it as the action of individuals or merely human agencies. Zweig's article illustrates the bemusement of an apolitical writer peremptorily enmeshed in the toils of a continental war" (119).

Jeremias I: An Introduction to Zweig's 'Defeated' Heroes—"Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus"—"Die Entwertun der Ideen"

The analysis of "Der Turm zu Babel" revealed the beginning of a novel phase in Zweig's narrative of commitment, when he opts to craft a whole new response as an artist and individual. The Europe that had been taken for granted as a 'spiritual' community before the war, that community that had been sung by Verhaeren as the coming future propelled by 'progress', has collapsed, and those who still attempt to stand by it must fight for its recovery and definitive materialization. As much as Zweig might seem to be hiding behind allegories and biblical motives, his position is clear. No matter how indirect his ways of expressing his commitment might be considered, he counts himself undoubtedly among the 'we' and 'us' who must answer to his own call to work for 'the spiritual union of Europe'. One of the aspects that links this short article with the drama *Jeremias* is Zweig's appropriation or rewriting of a biblical theme, a choice that had to do more with achieving a rhetorical or stylistic effect than with aiming at a religious conviction or 'spiritual' purpose. According to Armin Eidherr, the use of religious texts as source materials is a practice shared by many writers in German, such as Hermann Hesse or Thomas Mann, but "ihre Benutzung sagt somit erst einmal nichts über die Religiosität des jeweiligen Autor aus. Auch Zweig ist aufgrund der bloßen biblischen Intertextualitäten nicht als ‚religiöser Autor‘ zu betrachten [...]. Für ihn ist die Bibel ein literarisches Werk und Bezugssystem wie andere auch, wengleich natürlich ein bevorzugtes und von zentraler Autorität" ("Biblische Stoffe und Motive" 635).⁸⁹ The past echoing the present, the Bible as a metaphor, working on the lives of

⁸⁹ In the case of *Jeremias*, Zweig comments on this choice of biblical figure in *Die Welt von Gestern*, as the first instance of connection with his Jewish heritage, which is presented not as a conscious act but rather a coincidence, something he realized while working on the play: "Aber unbewußt hatte ich, indem ich ein Thema der Bibel wählte, an etwas gerührt, das in mir bisher ungenützt gelegen: an die im Blut oder in der Tradition dunkel begründete Gemeinschaft mit dem jüdischen Schicksal. War es nicht dies, mein Volk, das immer wieder besiegt worden war von allen Völkern, immer wieder, immer wieder, und doch sie überdauerte dank einer geheimnisvollen Kraft—eben jener Kraft, die Niederlage zu verwandeln durch den Willen, sie immer und immer wieder zu bestehen? [...] ich fühlte dies beglückt, während ich an diesem Drama schrieb" (274).

others—whether actual historical figures or cultural personae—in order to, indirectly, discuss elements of his own life; all these phenomena constitute some of the most recurrent devices that Zweig will employ in order to both reveal and, at the same time, mask his own self and, by extension, the articulation of his commitment.⁹⁰

In this respect, it must be said that the traces of Zweig ‘self’ both in his fiction and non-fiction works are usually not difficult to find, to the extent that sometimes Zweig himself singles them out for the readers’ notice. And this is clearly the case with *Jeremias*. In Zweig’s memoirs, the writing of the play, which marks the turning point⁹¹ in his process of articulating a solid committed stance regarding the conflict, is considered as the first work, “das ich von meinen Büchern vor mir selbst gelten ließ” (WvG 274), and he goes on to ‘confess’ that without all that he went through during the war, “wäre ich der Schriftsteller geblieben, der ich vor dem Kriege gewesen, ‘angenehm bewegt’, wie man im Musikalischen sagt, aber nie gefaßt, erfaßt, getroffen bis in die innersten Eingeweide” (WvG 274). In a sense, what had become a contradiction in Zweig’s commitment—the omnipresent ambiguity of his stance, as we have discussed it in the previous section—is ‘resolved’ with *Jeremias*: “in eben der Stunde, da alles in mir ein ‘Nein’ war gegen die Zeit, hatte ich das ‘Ja’ zu mir selbst gefunden” (WvG 275). Consequently, this piece of text is imbued with a very strong personal imprint, to the point that Zweig declares that “zum erstenmal hatte ich das Gefühl, gleichzeitig aus mir selbst zu sprechen und aus der Zeit. Indem ich versuchte, den andern zu helfen, habe ich damals mir selbst geholfen: zu meinem persönlichsten, privatesten Werk neben dem *Erasmus*” (WvG 274). Following this cue, we will now proceed to analyze the projection of Zweig’s

⁹⁰ On Zweig’s use of biblical motives, see also: Reffet, Michael. “Stefan Zweig und das Christentum.” *Stefan Zweig Reconsidered. New Perspectives on his Biographical and Literary Writings*, edited by Mark H. Gelber, Niemeyer, 2007, pp. 91-106.

⁹¹ According to Donald Daviau: “*Jeremias* marks the beginning of Zweig’s intellectual rebirth. His period of apprenticeship to Verhaeren and Rolland was ended, and he was now a mature, serious and self-sufficient author, accountable only to his own conscience” (“Victors in Defeat” 5).

self onto a historical figure the narrative of whose life serves Zweig to come to terms with his commitment as a writer.

As far as the play is concerned—⁹² written between 1915 and 1916⁹³ and premiered in Zurich’s Stadttheater on February 27, 1918—, we have already observed that one of the first mentions of Jeremias in *Die Welt von Gestern* situates him in a genealogy or sequence of ‘defeated’, ‘mocked’ individuals whose warnings of disaster were dismissed systematically by the “Rotte”, by those who had scorned “Kassandra [...] in Troja [and] Jeremias in Jerusalem” for being weak, for being cowards and traitors, and for opposing the war (*WvG* 273). Zweig, at this moment in the evolution of his life-long presentation of himself to his readership, sees himself as a ‘defeatist’. In the case of Jeremias, what makes the choice of this adjective particularly relevant is that, according to Zweig, with *Jeremias* he did not simply set out “ein ‘pazifistisches’ Stück zu schreiben, die Binsenwahrheit in Worte und Verse zu setzen, daß Frieden besser sei als Krieg, sondern darzustellen, daß derjenige, der als der Schwache, der Ängstliche in der Zeit der Begeisterung verachtet wird, in der Stunde der Niederlage sich meist als der einzige erweist, der sie nicht nur erträgt, sondern sie bemeistert” (*WvG* 273). Thus, the point was not only to defend ‘peace’—by showing its necessity—but also, and especially, to question and disarticulate the rhetoric that fuels violence and war, a discourse that revolves around the notion of ‘victory’. For Jeremias—and Zweig’s other ‘defeated’ heroes—‘victory’, paradoxically, is not reached via the annihilation of the enemy, as a matter of fact, but by embracing defeat. From this perspective, triumph—so that it does

⁹² For a contextualization of Zweig’s dramatic production, see, among others: Peter, Birgit (ed.). *Zweigs Theater. Der Dramatiker Stefan Zweig im Kontext europäischer Kultur- und Theatergeschichte*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2013; and Larcati, Arturo. “Theater.” *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 694-701.

⁹³ For a more detailed account of its genesis—following Zweig diaries of the war—see Plank, Eva. “Jeremias (1917)”. *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 128-134.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

not become a “form der Macht in einem Menschen bewirkt, die seelische Erstarrung, die bei ganzen Völkern jeder Sieg bedingt” (*WvG* 273)—can only occur on a ‘spiritual’ or moral level, through resignation and acceptance, resulting in the formulation of the oxymoronic figure of the ‘victor in defeat’.

As Zweig himself informs us in his autobiography, “das Problem der seelischen Superiorität des Besiegten” (*WvG* 273) was present in his works since the drama *Thersites* (1907). In fact, this theme was to become a fixation for Zweig, “einen gewissen persönlichen Zug meiner inneren Einstellung an, die unweigerlich nie die Partei der sogenannten ‘Helden’ nimmt, sondern Tragik immer nur im Besiegten sieht” (*WvG* 187), to the point that he was “in meinen Novellen ist es immer der dem Schicksal Unterliegende, der mich anzieht, in den Biographien die Gestalt eines, der nicht im realen Raume des Erfolgs, sondern einzig im moralischen Sinne rechtbehält” (*WvG* 187-188). According to the scholar Donald Daviau, who coined the expression ‘victors in defeat’ in an homonymous essay, this reversal of the idea of the ‘hero’ in Zweig’s works was crucial in the articulation of his commitment: “This tendency of Zweig to champion the moral victor, to stress the superiority of intellect over force, forms one of the most important aspects of his life and thought, for in addition to representing a major theme throughout his works and determining his concept of tragedy, it was also the code by which he lived and died” (“Victors in Defeat” 2). Additionally, as we will conclude from our analysis of *Jeremias*, this conviction was closely linked to an empowering conception of suffering. As Daviau articulates it: “Even in works where there is no occasion for a moral victory, Zweig uses the motif of defeat to demonstrate his belief in the energizing effect of suffering on character, by showing the victim emerging from his ordeal ‘spiritually’ strengthened and capable of rising superior to events and to his personal fate, even though it be death” (“Victors in Defeat” 1). In a way, we could actually contend that even *Die*

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Welt von Gestern features as its ‘Hauptperson’ a victor in defeat, someone who decides to pen the temporary failure of a personal and collective project which he hoped, precisely because of its moral superiority, would be reenacted by future generations.⁹⁴

From this work, “in dem ich nicht nur Einzelnes aussagen könnte, sondern meine ganze Einstellung zu Zeit und Volk, zu Katastrophe und Krieg” (*WvG* 266), emerges a form of commitment, considering the limitations of fighting wars with words, turns upside down the notion of victory and rejects the possibility that those who inflict violence can become heroes. Before analyzing the actual development of these topics in *Jeremias*, I would like to draw attention to two articles published in the final months of the war, and in which Zweig expands the notion of defeat, delimitating somehow the power and extent of the artist’s commitment. On the one hand, in the article “Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus”—published in the journal *Die Friedens-Warte* in August 1918—Zweig looks for a way to unite all those who oppose war. Having accepted that words do not stand a chance against brute force, against weapons, that individual resistance “ist machtlos, der Einzelne ohnmächtig im Protest” (“BD” 1422), Zweig articulates a call to union (*Gemeinsamkeit*) beyond politics, as ‘politics’, according to him, play a fundamental role in separating and hindering the dialogue between otherwise potentially like-minded individuals: “Aber zwischen diesen Menschen gleicher Gesinnung steht noch trennender als die Mauern der Sprache, als die Gräben der Grenzen der Dämon von Babel, der sie verwirrt: Politik. Vier Menschen an einem Tisch können sich kaum zusammenhalten, ohne daß der Hochmut, der Imperialismus ihrer politischen Ideen sie nicht widereinander wendete” (“BD” 1422). Again, Zweig invokes the “demon of Babel”

⁹⁴ In this line of discussion, Daviau suggests that “on the spiritual plane Zweig resembles his defeated heroes, for as a humanist he, too, was defeated by his age. However, in death he transcended this defeat, supremely confident that the ideas which he represented would live on and would once again dominate the day” (“Victors in Defeat” 12).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

to explain the disaccord that reigns among those who wish the conflict to end, recognizing the need to become a larger body (*Masse*) that can enunciate his position from a common platform. In Zweig's words: "Wir müssen eine breite Plattform suchen (keinen elfenbeinernen Turm), damit viele Platz finden, damit wir Masse werden und damit Macht" ("BD" 1422-1434).

Therefore, in order to transcend 'politics' and build a common temporary—"Nicht für eine Ewigkeit, nur solange noch Krieg ist" ("BD" 1434)—space of dialogue, the supporters of pacifism must find a common ground, which starts, so Zweig believes, by acknowledging their common humanity: "Unsere Gemeinsamkeit soll beginnen im Menschlichen, im Allmenschlichen und soll da enden" ("BD" 1434). It is time to look beyond differences in a context where the freedom of the individual to shape his/her destiny is the only thing that matters: "Suchen wir unsere Brüderlichkeit jenseits von Politik, denken wir abseits von Geographie und Geschichte" ("BD" 1434). According to Joseph Pischel, this renunciation of politics and the affirmation of the freedom of the individual beyond communal affiliations is a precursor of what Zweig will later call the 'Erasmian stance', which is focused on a sphere 'above'—above the nation, the party, class, etc. This formula, as Zweig expresses it in "Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus", is the answer to the intellectual's dilemma, who looks for support for his endeavors but who does not want to respond with further violence. According to Pischel:

Der politischen Gewalt [...] wollen sie sich ein für allemal versagen. Gegenkräfte, mit denen sie sich verbünden könnten, sind nicht in Sicht: auch nicht die Arbeiterklasse, deren revolutionäre Ziele ohne Gewalt nicht erreichbar sind— auch der kulturelle Graben scheint unüberbrückbar. Zwischen Politik und Moral, Macht und Geist, Handeln und Betrachten klafft ein Widerspruch, der unüberwindbar scheint. (28-29).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Following these arguments, Zweig considers that this movement needs a word, a “Kampfwort” that defines their identity and represents their ambitions. Discarding all-too-used and worn out expressions such as ‘peace’ or ‘pacifism—which during war had lost their primordial sense and original appeal, hiding now the obscure motives and the true intentions of those without humanitarian principles—, Zweig proposes to embrace the enemy’s rhetoric in order to subvert it: “das Haßwort unserer Feinde, machen wir aus ihrem Schimpf unsern Stolz, aus ihrer Verachtung unsere Ehre: nennen wir uns offen Defaitisten! Vereinigen wir uns im Defaitismus! Seien wir Flaumacher! Soyons défaitistes! Siamo disfattisti! Geben wir dem Wort unsern Sinn, wie wir es verstehen, tragen wir es als Waffe” (“BD” 1446). All things considered, by attaching to the figure of the intellectual the idea of ‘defeat’, Zweig inscribes his commitment on a sphere, be it moral or ‘spiritual’, where it is possible to avoid taking ‘sides’. Or, rather, we could say that, by taking the side of humanity and defending the freedom of the individual, his task consists in disarming the discourses that animate violence and promote hatred:

Wir sind Defaitisten, das heißt: wir wollen keines Sieg und keines Niederlage, wir sind Siegfunde und Freunde des Verzichts. Wir sind Defaitisten, das heißt: wir sehen mehr Größe in der Nachgiebigkeit und der Versöhnung als im Kampf mit verbissenen Zähnen! [...] Wir sind Defaitisten, das heißt: kein Opfer des Stolzes, des Geldes, der Ehre, der Erde scheint uns vergebens, wenn das heilige Blut von Menschen nicht mehr vergossen und Europa von seiner Qual erlöst wird. Wir sind Defaitisten, das heißt: uns ist Politik nicht das Erste, sondern das Letzte, uns ist das Leiden der Menschen wichtiger als die kommerzielle Blüte der Nationen und die kalten Monumente der Ehre. (“BD” 1459)

As Zweig’s rhetoric indicates, the debate about the best strategy to end the war was very much alive at the time and featured (apparently) irreconcilable points of view. Following this direction, the next text I will be discussing—“Die Entwertung der Ideen” (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 1918) was crafted as a response to Alfred H. Fried’s article “Die

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Suche nach dem Vernunftmeridian” (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 1918), in which the latter claimed that between those who would go to any length to end/win the war (*jusquaboutistes*) and those who espoused the cause of the defeatists, the most reasonable/pragmatic approach was the former, as if it was just a matter of common sense and following the dictates of reason—who would not want the war to end no matter what?

In front of this line of reasoning, Zweig decided to pursue the aforementioned strategy of dismantling his opponent’s rhetoric. In this case, he starts by emphasizing the need to shift from reason to feeling, contending that it is precisely what Fried sees as a defect of the “nur mit dem Gefühl arbeitenden Defaitisten” (“EI” 1471) that makes these ‘defeatists’ stronger before the delusion and fallacy of ‘ideas’. In fact, in “Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus”, Zweig had already pointed out that the kind of community he proposes to articulate around the notion of ‘defeat’ must base its strength on an affective bond, on the feeling of shared belonging to humankind: “nein, denken wir überhaupt nicht. Fühlen wir nur! Unsere mögliche Gemeinsamkeit kann einzig in dem Gefühl sein” (“BD” 1434). Thus, we assist to the addition of a new layer in the construction of the figure of the intellectual, in that this new intellectual needs to start distrusting his own reason and veer towards ‘feeling’, preparing the ground for the incorporation of ‘an ethics of suffering’ as a form, or characteristic, of the enactment of one’s *engagement*.

Following this direction, in “Die Entwertung der Ideen”, Zweig argues that trusting one’s ‘feelings’, instead of one’s reason or one’s/others’ ‘ideas’, is the only option for those who “[sich] von der Politik losgesagt und zu Menschlichkeit zurückgefunden [haben]” (“EI” 1471). The main argument for this transition “von der Vernunft zum Gefühl” (“EI” 1471) is that, in an epoch of collective folly, humanity must come before politics, before any kind of ‘idea’—or perhaps ‘ideology’, we could argue—that animates violence and drives individuals against each other. When ‘reason’ cannot sustain peace

and ensure cohabitation, when it is used as a tool to justify war, it cannot longer serve to distinguish between allegedly ‘good’ and ‘bad’ actions, or between sanity and madness: “Nein, unsere Vernunft ist nicht der Meridian, der unverrückbar in den Umschwung der Welt eingezeichnete, auf den wir unsere Berechnungen aufbauen können. Einzig das Gefühl” (“EI” 1485).

At this point we bear witness to a variation of the ‘apolitical’ stance discussed at the Introduction. In this case, ‘politics’ or ‘the political’ is equated to an ‘idea’/‘ideology’ that is used to manipulate the masses towards the goals of those in power or who contend to conquer it, and therefore contrary—and radically opposing—the welfare of ‘humanity’: “Seit vier Jahren hat Europa Millionen Menschen einigen Ideen geopfert. Wäre es nicht Zeit, daß jetzt einige Ideen den Millionen Menschen geopfert würden?” (“EI” 1485). Among these ‘untrustworthy’ ideas, we find some of the keywords that will later inform the Zweigian ethics. In the same vein that Zweig asked in “Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus” to find union beyond pacifism, he will claim in “Die Entwertung der Ideen” the volubility of “Ideen, die so hohe, so verführerische Namen tragen wie die der Freiheit, der Gerechtigkeit, der Ehre, des Nationalgeistes” (“EI” 1485), ideas that grow with victory and shrink with defeat, ideas that are as susceptible to change as the individuals who spouse them. Given the diversity of human character, ideas, Zweig argues, will never come true ‘communally’—effected by the ‘mass’ (of soldiers, for instance). Whereas an individual is entitled to sacrifice his own life for an idea, as many of Zweig’s biographical subjects do, and so become a secular martyr, to let others die for one’s ideas is the worst crime committed by those who encourage the continuation of the war and violence—even if the latter’s purpose is to end the war: “Massenschicksal. Das Märtyrertum in ein Massenschicksal zu verwandeln, Millionen für seine Idee sterben zu lassen, statt ihr voranzusterben—an diesem verbrecherischen Irrtum ist jeder mitschuldig, der eine

Verlängerung des Kampfes für irgendeine ihm wichtig scheinende Idee fordert” (“EI” 1511). Therefore, if in “Bekenntnis zu Defaitismus” Zweig dismantles the idea of ‘victory’, in “Die Entwertung der Ideen” he attempts, in my reading, to contest not only the reliability of ‘reason’ but also the validity of the notion of the ‘necessary evil’ or the use of violent means for an alleged honorable and fair end; violence can never be used, Zweig seems to reason, to stop its own reproduction:

Aber ich weiß: diesmal ist die verführungsvollste Idee der Menschheit an das Ende des Kampfes gestellt, die Vernichtung der Gewalt. Gewalt soll das Ende aller Gewalt erzwingen. Blut nur noch deshalb fließen, damit nie mehr Blut vergossen werde. Aber wer bürgt für die Gewißheit? Wer kann zu einem Menschen heute mit aller Bestimmtheit sagen: “Stirb, du rettetest damit deiner Enkel Leben”. Und wer sich dem Wahne hingeben, die Gewalt würde je enden auf Erden? (“EI” 1498)

Bearing all this in mind, and before we further explore how these ideas unfold in the drama *Jeremias*, we could argue that these two articles—“Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus” and “Die Entwertung der Ideen”—show a radical shift in Zweig’s concept of the intellectual, which at this point transcends the idea of the committed writer as the spokesperson of an idea, ideology or discourse. Instead, Zweig proposes to embrace an alleged common denominator—a ‘felt’ humanity which offers shelter to the suffering individual—that aims to transcend parties, nationalities and any other discriminating forms of collective agency and affiliation. As we have explored before, this reformulation of the stance of the intellectual will mark Zweig’s future forms of commitment, especially as regards the ideas of defeat, suffering, and ‘standing above the battle’ (*au-dessus de la mêlée*). There is something unique in these texts, insofar as they show that, in Zweig’s radical attempt to reach ‘peace’, he does not spouse any other ‘cause’—Europe— or any other ‘-ism’—pacifism, humanism, supranationalism, cosmopolitanism.

Jeremias II: Analysis of the play *Jeremias* (1916)

Following our reflections on Zweig's antiwar articles, it is time to start our analysis of *Jeremias*, a text where Zweig articulates in a fictional form a critique that aims to disarm the rhetoric of war, the allegiance to the nation, and the fueling of hatred, division and violence. Bearing this in mind, this section analyzes the different forms and figures of commitment articulated in the construction of the character of the Prophet Jeremias in Zweig's homonymous play. Especially, I will consider how defeat and suffering affect the voice and configuration of the artist/intellectual as a committed individual. *Jeremias* is the story of an awakening, the narration of the process of realization of a 'truth' embodied in its main character, the prophet Jeremias. Its nine scenes, which, although they were too long to be easily represented, did not stop the work from being staged again and again after the war,⁹⁵ cover the process of warning and utterance of a prophecy—which foresees the destruction of Jerusalem at the hand of the Babylonians—and its dismissal or negation, followed by its inevitable materialization, and, with it, the final moment of revelation and acceptance of the true prophet, his words and leadership. Throughout this 'process', Jeremias embodies several modes or forms of commitment, variations which we will explore for the remainder of this section. Above all, and already from the first scene—when the vision of the prophecy descends upon Jeremias in the form a dream—he is presented as a 'visionary', as someone who experiences 'visions/dreams' during his sleep. Jeremias himself refers to the "Trug und Traum, der fürchterliche! (*JEREMIAS* 119), to the exceptional fate that awaits him: "Nur mir sprengt Traum den Schlaf, nur mir frißt feurig Graun das Schwarze von den Lidern!" (*JEREMIAS* 120).

⁹⁵ According to biographer Elisabeth Allday "During the immediate post-war years, the play proclaimed its message throughout Austria and Germany, and after translations into many languages, it was soon playing to audiences in Palestine, England, France and to thousands of spectators in open-air performances in Holland and America. Jeremiah became in turn a symphony and an opera, and tracts of it have been used for readings in churches and synagogues" (96).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Likewise, when he is trying to get his message across, to give his warning to the citizens of Jerusalem in scene two he utters: “Auf... daß ich ausgieße meine Gesichte und schreie mein Warnen wider den König” (*JEREMIAS* 154). It must be noted here that the notion of ‘vision’, the idea of someone who ‘sees’, becomes one of the key characteristics of the form of intellectuality embodied by Jeremias. As we noted with Verhaeren, ‘seeing’ implies in a sense ‘foreseeing’, being able to anticipate what is to come, the future of Europe (Verhaeren) or the destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremias). Thus the faculty of ‘seeing’ is extended, involving the other senses and an all-encompassing experience of the ‘future’: (Jeremias) “Hörst du... hörst du nicht, es rauschet, es rauschet schon nah...” (*JEREMIAS* 126).

Throughout the text, a distinction is made between those who ‘see’ and those who do not or do not want to. Especially symbolic is the fact that king Zedekiah—who has dismissed Jeremias’ warnings and brought destruction to the city—is blinded at the end by the Babylonians, precisely at the moment when he has acknowledged Jeremias’ truth (or God’s spoken through his prophet): (Voices) “Führelos sind wir [...] der König, wo ist er... der Geblendete... blind ist er immer gewesen” (*JEREMIAS* 304). In fact, this reference to the king’s inherent blindness is explicitly articulated in an exchange between Zedekiah, the king, and Jeremias in scene six (“Stimmen um Mitternacht”). When the former threatens to blind the latter—“Nichts wirst du sehen, du Rasender du”, Jeremias replies: “*wie in einem fürchterlichen Erwachen ihn anstarrend. Dann plötzlich grell auflachend, in vorbrechender Ekstase* Mich?! / Du mich blenden, du Ruchloser!?! Nein! / Anders hat Gottes Entschluß bestimmt! / Wohl wird einer geblendet sein, / Ehe der Tag noch sein Ende nimmt, / Doch jener, der längst schon verblendet war, / Als sein Auge noch blickte und sah” (*JEREMIAS* 251)

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

From this perspective, ‘vision’ moves away from a literal sense to encompass the idea of someone who is able to read the signs of his time and to prophesize the future; we assist to the transformation of the ‘visionary’ into a ‘prophet’. By embracing this role, Jeremias feels the obligation to convey God’s message, what has been revealed to him. While his mother compares his words to those of a “Gottesleugner” (*JEREMIAS* 128) and a “Trunkenen” (*JEREMIAS* 130), he has no doubts about his mission: “Ja, trunken bin ich nun der Gewißheit seines Willens und so voll der Rede, daß mich der Odem in meinem Innern ängstet. Die Siegel sind gebrochen meines Mundes, und mir brennet die Lippe der Verkündung” (*JEREMIAS* 130). And when, in scene four, the visions in his dreams start to materialize, his role as prophet is once again brought forward: (Jeremias) “Meine Träume, sie sind wach geworden [...]. Und all dies Unselige, aus mir quillt es vor, aus meiner Träume Schoß drängt sichs fort; in mir war es zuerst, ehe es war in der Welt, und ich, ich warf es im Wort über sie. Ich hab es gewußt, ich allein, eh Gott es getan!” (*JEREMIAS* 182). Finally, Jeremias is recognized as “der Prophet” by the people of Jerusalem in scene seven (“Die letzte Not”): (Voices) “Er hat gewarnt... Friede hat er gefordert... gedenket ihr noch... ja... Ich habe es gehört... Ja... ja... Hier hat er es gesagt... ja... ja... Er ist der Prophet... immer wurde sein Wort Wahrheit” (*JEREMIAS* 262).

However, the prophet, being the main figure of commitment in the drama, the one that stands closest to the biblical narrative, presents some variations. First, Zweig’s Jeremias is referred to as a *Wächter*, once again a word that is closely related to the faculty of ‘seeing’ and ‘vision’. And so he laments when he is rejected, his warnings unheard, that: “Fort sind sie... zu spät... Fluch über dich, Fluch über dich, daß du mich fälltest... [...] Oh Mörder mehr, als wenn du mich schlugest... nicht mein Blut hast du gemordet, aller in Israels Blut... [...] den Wächter hast du getötet, und sie wüten im Heiligtum des Herrn” (*JEREMIAS* 153). In scene four (“Die Wachen auf dem Walle”), an exchange occurs

between Jeremias and one of the sentries manning the walls of the city which reveals, by contrast, in which sense or, towards what aim, the main character is ‘keeping watch’: (Jeremias) “Ich darf nicht schlafen! Keiner darf schlafen mehr. Der Wächter bin ich, der Wächter!” (*JEREMIAS* 185). To which The Second Sentry replies: “(*ihn anfassend*) Ein Mondkranker bist du, daß du dich Wächter nennst... ich selbst bin die Wache... fort mit dir ...” (*JEREMIAS* 185).

Thus, although both figures aim to defend the city from its enemies, Jeremias is not there to take up arms against them, but his task is carried out within the sphere of the immaterial. The purpose of his watch, before the tragedy takes place, is to avert the catastrophe, to prevent it from happening. Given that his fellow citizens are asleep, both literally and figuratively, his will is directed towards their ‘awakening’: (Jeremias) “Daß ichs vermöchte, oh, daß ichs vermöchte! Auf! erwache, Jerusalem... Gottesstadt, errette dich...” (*JEREMIAS* 184). To wake up in time, therefore, becomes a matter of life and death. In this sense, the figure of the watchman will acquire an important role after the First World War. In Zweig’s essay “Die Tragik der Vergeßlichkeit”—published originally in the *Prager Presse* of March 27th, 1921—, it becomes central in the attempt to prevent humanity from falling again, from forgetting what has happened and so allowing the repetition of the catastrophe in the future:

Aber wenn dies auch der Menschheit als Schicksal verhängt ist, immer wieder dem Wahn der Entzweiung anheimzufallen, so bleibt es ewige Aufgabe der Wachen, zu warnen und dem Unvermeidlichen zu wehren. Alles Erleben ist sinnlos, insoweit es vergänglich ist und wieder verloren geht, alle Wahrheit nutzlos, wenn sie wieder vergessen wird. Und darum muß es der Lebenssinn jedes Wachen sein, die einmal klar erkannte Wahrheit für sich selbst festzuhalten. (“TV” 1716)

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

On the other hand, in his attempts to watch after his people, to awaken them to the forthcoming ‘truth’, the prophet/intellectual becomes a ‘*Warner*’: (Jeremias) “Halte dich fest, du Schwankende, und birg deine Kinder an dich, höre, Jerusalem, des Warnenden Stimme höre, [...] und wahre den Frieden, wahre den Frieden” (*JEREMIAS* 148-149). Thus, his task and duty as a prophet, before the prophecy materializes, is to warn the community about the coming truth: (Jeremias) “Dem, der da wachen soll über das Volk, ist kein Schlafen verstatet, und zum Wächter bin ich gesetzt und zum Warner” (*JEREMIAS* 245). And it is precisely the duty to let others know about their impending fall, instead of keeping his vision to himself that deserves the praise of Baruch, the first to strike Jeremias but also the first to realize his courage and convert to his ‘truth’: (Baruch) “Einen Schwachen und Scheuen vermeinte ich dich, darum stand ich wider dich, der du schmähtest die Tat und den sanften Frieden gefordert” (*JEREMIAS* 154). To which Jeremias replies: “Meinst du, der Frieden sei eine Tat nicht und aller Taten Tat? [...] Stark müssen die Sanftmütigen sein, und die den Frieden wollen, stehen im ewigen Streit” (*JEREMIAS* 154).

At this point in the play, as exemplified in this quotation, Zweig reveals one of the aspects of the realization of one’s commitment to peace, and to an ethics of defeat, in times of war, and which has to do with the limitations inherent to words when the fight is carried out with swords. Therefore, Jeremias will have to prove his valor in order to validate and legitimize both his message and his status as a prophet. When he does not budge in front of Baruch’s threats of violence, he proves that he is willing to sacrifice himself, that his words are not just empty statements. This is an essential aspect in the making of the intellectual, one which will also be embodied in, for instance, the figure of Rolland and which echoes that passage in *Die Welt von Gestern* where the French writer, as a reply to Zweig’s ‘abdication’ in “An die Freunde im Fremdland”, insists on not giving

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

up, on making one's words good through (non-violent) action. What Baruch realizes is that there is power in words, especially when what is at stake is the realm of the immaterial or the 'spiritual'. What he perceives is that "mächtig ist die Gewalt, die dich treibt, Jeremias... ich habe dich gesehen unter meinem Schwert, und dein Auge war klar... Jeremias... einen Feigen habe ich dich geschmäht und einen Weichling vor dem Volke... Doch ich sehe, daß du stark bist in deinem Willen wider den Tod... Jeremias... ein Gewaltiges kündest du mir" (*JEREMIAS* 153). However, this does not imply that Jeremias is not aware of the limitations of words as 'action'. When at the very end of scene six Zedekiah has realized his mistake and the terrible fate that awaits them, when he acknowledges all-too-late Jeremias' 'truth' and begs for his help, the prophet is powerless: "Arm sind meine Worte, Zedekia, Ohnmacht meine Macht. Nur wissen kann ich und nicht wenden!" (*JEREMIAS* 254). And a bit later: "(düster): Es muß sein! Nichts vermag ich zu wenden. Verkünden ist mein Amt. Wehe den Ohnmächtigen!" (*JEREMIAS* 254). Once violence is unleashed—the advice of the prophet not having been able to affect those who wield 'power'—the only remaining deed is to embrace defeat, echoing Zweig's "Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus".

Above all, with the embodiment of these forms of commitment comes a responsibility, the responsibility of delivering the message, of conveying a 'truth' that no one else is ready/willing to hear. In this sense, as the play comes towards its conclusion—the destruction of the city—the voice of the prophet becomes the conscience of those who resist acknowledging defeat, of those who put their pride before the well-being of the community. In a conversation with Baruch—who has risked his life going to the enemy camp in order to mediate between the two parties and has returned with an offer from Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king—, Zedekiah, upon discovering Baruch's loyalty to Jeremias, who—unaware—has inspired his actions, utters: "*ausbrechend* Jeremias! Er,

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

immer er! Immer der Schatten hinter meiner Tat, immer in Aufruhr wider mich! In den Kerker habe ich ihn verschlossen, aber noch immer schreit er zu mir wie am ersten Tage: Friede, Friede! Was drängt er sich vor? [...] Was verfolgt er mich?" (*JEREMIAS* 239). And so, in a way, although at this point everything is lost, Jeremias starts to 'win' his own battle.

When Zedekiah is all alone with his servants Nehemiah and Joab, and starts to regret his decision to go to war, the voice of Jeremias creeps slowly into his ears: "Es spricht! Es spricht! Es spricht hier von irgendwo. Ich höre eine Stimme, ich höre, ich höre sie. Und es soll niemand jetzt reden in meinem Haus. Wie Gesang tönt es her, es soll niemand jetzt singen in meinem Haus. Hört ihr es, hört ihr es nicht?" (*JEREMIAS* 242). Even from his confinement in a pit, the 'truth' of the prophet cannot be silenced: (Zedekiah) "An jedem Kreuzweg hinter meinem Rücken und immer zu spät, und immer muß ich ihn hören" (*JEREMIAS* 245). All in all, and as we have claimed before, the intellectual must be ready to tell the truth no matter the consequences, even if, in the case of Jeremias, he is risking his life in the process. Being aware that his words, and also his mere existence, 'bother' the king, make him uncomfortable—insofar as the latter is reminded of two whom he owes allegiance and for whom he is ultimately responsible: his people—, he does not hesitate to make his plea over and over: "Soll ich die Hände klappen zu deiner Verblendung und jauchzen zu deinem Wort? Rat scheinst du zu fragen und buhlst doch nur Beifall. Doch eher dorre meine Zunge und zerfalle mein Gebein, als daß ich deine Torheit lobe und nicht schreie wider deine Verblendung" (*JEREMIAS* 248).

However, not every single figure of commitment articulated in *Jeremias* performs the same function. Following the discourse of *Die Welt von Gestern* and other texts, such as "Der Turm zu Babel", and to further delineate the duty and responsibility of the committed intellectual, Zweig resorts to the creation of antagonists, of figures that,

through comparison and contrast, embody the notion of the ‘bad intellectual’. As we can already observe in scene two (“Die Warnung”), at the core of this distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ intellectual lies a very specific use of words, a choice about what one does with one’s power to influence others and to legitimize the actions and the fate of the community. Thus, when the people rally to the great square of Jerusalem for their leaders to make a decision—either to become allies of Egypt and go to war against the Babylonians or refrain from doing so and remain, instead, under the yoke of Ashur—, they look for the prophets and priests to legitimize their actions and opinions. In this regard, a not-yet-converted Baruch, who is ready to sacrifice himself for Israel, proclaims: “Zum Tempel empor! Nichts ohne Gottes Wort! Sie mögen entscheiden, die Gottesmänner!” (*JEREMIAS* 140), to immediately ask for “Hananja, Gottes Gesandter, siehe, dein Volk dürstet nach deiner Rede! Gieß aus die Welle deines Wortes über sie, daß Kraft ihnen entbrande, mache fruchtbar unsern Ingrimm und ziele unsern Zorn. In deinen Händen liegt Jerusalems Schicksal!” (*JEREMIAS* 141). In this sense, Hananiah, the Prophet of the People and the highest religious authority of the city, is the character that provides us with the starkest contrast to define Jeremias’ commitment. In fact, the quotation from the *Bible* preceding the scene anticipates this theme. Opposed to the prophets concerned with earthly power, with commanding the nation side by side with kings and nobles, there is the ‘true’ prophet: “Wenn aber ein Prophet von Frieden weissagt, den wird man kennen, ob ihn der Herr wahrhaftig gesandt hat, wenn sein Wort erfüllet wird” (*JEREMIAS* 132; qtd. from *Jeremias*, XVIII, 8 and 9). Ensuing the words of Baruch, Hananiah appears in front of the crowd and delivers—literally—God’s command to “tritt unter die Fersen, die dich bedrückten, hole heim meine Habe, erlöse mich, wie ich dich erlöse. Wirf weg, die dir widerraten, tilge aus, die dich zäumen, nicht höre die Schwachmütigen, nur meinen Boten erhöere! Höre, Israel, höre auf ihn!” (*JEREMIAS* 142),

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

to which Jeremias replies: “Nicht höret ihn, nicht höret denen zu, die euch nach dem Munde reden, tut ab die Schlingen seiner Worte! Nicht höret die Gleisner, die euch ins Schlüpfrige stoßen, nicht tappet in die Netze der Vogelsteller, nicht lausche, Jerusalem, den Lockpfeifern des Krieges!” (*JEREMIAS* 143).

In the struggle for the ‘spiritual’, one of the hard truths that the ‘good’ intellectual must learn is that only when his message carries good news do the people hail him as their hero and savior. Thus, when the city has already been taken by the Babylonians, and the action focuses on a group of refugees hidden in a crypt, among whom is the very Jeremias, he experiences this reality firsthand. When trying to comfort his fellow citizens by reminding them that God will never forsake them and will eventually punish their enemies, they happily second his words: “Stürze nieder auf sie, wie er gesprochen... erfülle, erfülle sein Wort... oh, Verheißung... sende den Rächer... sende den Rächer... fälle Babel, wie er gekündet... erhöre ihn, Gott... erhöre ihn” (*JEREMIAS* 294). In the same vein, in scene nine (“Der ewige Weg”), at the very end of the play, when Jeremias has ‘convinced’ them that the road to exile may be their opportunity to build an eternal home for God, he who used to be the “Verfluchte[...]”, “Umbarmherzige[...]”, is hailed by some characters as he who “hat gewarnet”, as the bearer of a “Worte Gottes, mit dem Brote des Lebens!” (*JEREMIAS* 308-309). In this way, a struggle for the control of the word is staged throughout the play. Jeremias—the incarnation of the ‘good’ intellectual—must convey his message in terribly difficult circumstances and from a position of inferiority in front of the powers that be. In scene two, when he tries for the first time to issue his warning, he is ousted from the public arena, both physically and symbolically: (Pashur, der Hohepriester) “Zu Jeremias, der die Stufen emporgestiegen ist Fort von des Tempels Stufen! Den Gesandten Jahves, den Gottesmännern und Propheten ist allein verstattet die heilige Schwelle! Uns allein ist es, Gottes Wille zu künden!” (*JEREMIAS* 143), to which

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Jeremias answers by questioning those who claim to be the only confidants of God's will and wisdom and by asserting that anyone may be chosen by the Lord to convey His message—which is transmitted via dreams. Consequently, an attempt to delegitimize Jeremias ensues in which his opponents allude to the 'dream nature' of his revelation: (Baruch) "Fort mit den Träumern und Traumdeutern! Wache will die Stunde!" (*JEREMIAS* 144). Likewise, Hananiah will declare the authority of those who have been 'anointed' to speak before the temple: "Ich bin Gottes Prophet und keiner sonst in Israel. Auf mich sollet ihr hören und nicht die Schwätzer der Gasse. Weg die Träumer vom Markte!" (*JEREMIAS* 144).

It is interesting to note that in this verbal confrontation over the right to speak in public and convey God's message, a distinction is made between the word that calls to action and the word that calls to reflection—to refrain from action—and, therefore, disobedience. In this sense, the voice of Jeremias, even before it is characterized as such—when it is only "A Voice" in the crowd that opposes the "Voices" (Scene two, "Die Warnung")—is presented as a voice of 'dissent', the intellectual going against the grain, against the voice of the mass/majority and against the voice of the hegemonic powers and discourses. And to this dissention follows an attempt to eradicate it. First by opposing arguments and contesting legitimization, and then by threatening to impose physical measures: (Zedekiah) "Keiner rühre ihn feindlich an, solange er sich zähmet. Doch schreit er noch einmal Schrecknis über die andern, so fasset ihn, und er büße nach euerm Spruch" (*JEREMIAS* 194). As we have seen, the voice of Jeremias, the voice of dissent, will not be easily silenced and instead will infiltrate the king's conscience. However, despite the 'final conversion' and triumph of he who stands against everything to speak the truth nobody wants to utter or hear, the road ahead is full of obstacles. To attain redemption through suffering, one must first confront the pain and isolation that his position of dissent

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

inflicts on him. To the verbal abuse we have already referred to ensues a characterization of Jeremias/the intellectual that aims to destroy his reputation and the ‘truthfulness’ of his message.

Jeremias becomes throughout the play a marginalized, despised and rejected figure. From the start, when he tries to deliver his warning, none heed him, “*Der Sturm der andern flutet über ihn hinweg*” (*JEREMIAS* 152). The cost of delivering the ‘truth’ is abuse—(Stimmen) “ausrotten soll man diese Kleinmütigen”, “totschlagen soll man diese Würger der Freude” (*JEREMIAS* 163)—and isolation. From Jeremias’ cry “Keiner mit mir... keiner ist mehr mit mir...” (*JEREMIAS* 198) when Baruch leaves him to try to parley with the enemy to his own admission in front of his dying mother: “Nicht dein Sohn, nicht atmend Fleisch bin ich mehr, nur Gelächter einer Welt, der Ausgestoßene bin ich worden meines Volks und der Zorn der Gerechten, der Vergessene Gottes und Ekel mir selbst. Allein, laß mich allein, abseits laß mich stehen im Dunkel, den Verfluchtsten aller!” (*JEREMIAS* 204). Even when the people of Jerusalem are about to ‘convert’ to Jeremias’ ‘truth’, he is still called (Stimmen) “Gottverfluchter”, called to remain “weg von uns”, to “verperste uns nicht” (*JEREMIAS* 287).

Likewise, he who proposes an alternative to hegemonic discourses of power is branded a madman and, above all, a traitor (Baruch) “Gekauften”, someone who “für Babel spricht [...] und Bel” (*JEREMIAS* 145). Even when the materialization of the prophecy is upon Jerusalem and Jeremias’ warning has been proved true, he is called a traitor for not being able to avert the disaster: (Die Menge) “*ihn wild umstürmend Verräter... Er betet um unsern Tod... Er verflucht uns... Steiniget ihn... steiniget ihn ...*” (*JEREMIAS* 268). All in all, Jeremias, the ‘bearer’ of the ‘truth’ becomes the scapegoat: (Die Menge) “Wehe... wehe... die Chaldäer... unsere Stunde ist gekommen... er hat das Unheil über uns gebracht... Wehe... er... er... liefern wir ihn aus ...” (*JEREMIAS* 289); the

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

cursed one: (Jeremias) “*auffahrend, seine Stimme ist gewaltig von schmerzlichem Zorne* Wer sucht mich noch? Wer will noch Fluch schreien über mich? Er komme, daß er es tue, der Aufgetane bin ich allen Flüchen dieser Erde!” (*JEREMIAS* 216). At the very end of the play, after so much suffering, the position of prophet and visionary becomes, I claim, a curse: “Fluch hat er in meinen Atem getan... Er... Er... der Furchtbare... die Galle in meine Rede... und das Bittere in meinen Speichel... Oh, wehe über die Gottesfaust... wen er faßt, der Furchtbare, den läßt er nicht wieder... oh, daß er mich freigäbe, den Verfluchten seines Worts” (*JEREMIAS* 278).

That is the fate of the intellectual, that when his/her message brings pain and suffering, it becomes a curse: [Ein Mann] “Dort... dort sehet hin... von ihm geht es aus... er hat sie gerufen... er hat den Boten gekündet... er hat uns verflucht” (*JEREMIAS* 171). Bearing all this in mind, we could contend that adopting a committed stance implies in *Jeremias* a sacrifice which the intellectual must be ready to accept. Already in the very first scene (“Die Erweckung des Propheten”), when Jeremias’ mother asks him to pay no heed to his dreams and fulfil his destiny by going to ‘God’s house’—that is to say, when she attempts to inscribe her son’s calling within a legitimized social and ‘spiritual’ structure—, he will reply “nein, Mutter, nicht Opferers Dienst hab ich genommen—selbst will ich das Opfer sein” (*JEREMIAS* 130). As we saw before, it was precisely this readiness to give his life for his message that convinced Baruch of Jeremias’ superiority (*JEREMIAS* 65).

At the end of the prophet’s ordeal, Jeremias embodies the idea of ‘defeatism’ as we have discussed it at the beginning of this section. He is a ‘defeated’, ‘vanquished’ individual, rejected by all and at the same time unable to thwart the fulfillment of his prophecy. And so he warns Baruch when the latter decides to follow his footsteps: “Du wirst keines Sohn mehr sein, so du mir glaubest, der Verstoßene wirst du sein, so du mir

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

folgest, der Gehäßte und Verbannte, denn in Flammen muß verbrennen, wer leuchten will im Wort” (*JEREMIAS* 155). Later in scene IV (“Die Wachen auf dem Walle”), in a dialogue between the same two characters right after Jeremias has tried and failed to convince Zedekiah, the king, to seek peace, to send an envoy to Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremias will see himself as someone who has failed in his mission to protect Jerusalem: “So sage doch, zeuge, künde mir, daß ichs gewahr sei... was hab ich vermocht? [...] Wem hab ich Freude geschenkt? Ein Greuel bin ich den Gerechten und meiner Mutter Kümmernis. Kein Weib trägt ein Kind mir im Schoß, und kein Lebendiger glaubet meiner Rede!” (*JEREMIAS* 195-196). And despite Baruch’s words of consolation, Jeremias goes on to say: “Was hab ich denn Jerusalem zum Heile getan... hab ich gebeugt des Königs Starnis, hab ich zum Rechten geführt das irrend Volk, hab ich erweckt den Boten des Friedens mit meiner Rede Stachel?” (*JEREMIAS* 196). As the story nears its end, the ideas of defeat and suffering intensify the dramatic tension, becoming all-pervasive in the characters’ action and words.

However, having reached a point of climax, this defeat—the feeling of being vanquished—is slowly embraced by Jeremias and the people of Jerusalem. In their darkest hour, (Jeremias) “die Verirrten, [...] [die] Besiegte” (*JEREMIAS* 297) start to raise up ‘spiritually’, following the example of Jeremias, who proclaims that “ich habe gefluchet meinem Gotte und ihn getötet in meiner Seele. Doch, meine Brüder, meine Brüder, ehe der Atem noch kalt war in meinem Munde, ist er mir auferstanden. [...] Er hat mich besiegt, meine Brüder, und nichts ist süßer, als von ihm besiegt zu sein” (*JEREMIAS* 300). In the last scene (“Der ewige Weg”), which follows “Die Umkehr” (scene VIII), sorrow becomes “unser Erbe”. The message is to “lasset den andern ihr Glück und den Stolz, lasset ihnen Haus und die Heimstatt der Erde, du aber lasse dich prüfen, du Leidensvolk” (*JEREMIAS* 311). In their efforts to find meaning to their collective and

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

individual fate, to find transcendence, (Jeremias) “selig die Besiegten, die wir sind um seinetwillen, selig unsere Vertriebenheit! Selig, daß wir alles verlieren, um ihn zu finden” (*JEREMIAS* 312). In this way, a close connection is forged between suffering and happiness, (Jeremias) “doch Israel lebt und veraltet nicht an den Zeiten, ist doch das Leid seine Kraft und der Sturz seine Stufe. Durch Leiden haben wir die Zeit bestanden, immer war Untergang unser Anbeginn. [...] Rühmet die Prüfung, ihr Geprüften” (*JEREMIAS* 312).

Through suffering, a material defeat is turned into a ‘spiritual’ victory, the history of the Jewish people into a history of happiness attained through pain. From this perspective, the first exodus becomes the (Jeremias) “Anhub des Glückes” (*JEREMIAS* 313), and from then onwards “niemalens aber war Sicherheit uns gegeben. Ewig warf er uns nieder mit seiner heiligen Hand!” (*JEREMIAS* 314). Thus, Zedekiah, who has been blinded after witnessing the execution of his sons, becomes “des Leidens König [...] und nie warst du mehr königlich” (*JEREMIAS* 317), “Wer mag wie er, / König der selig Besiegten sein?” (*JEREMIAS* 318). Having accepted their destiny, the “Weltbesiegten” (*JEREMIAS* 324) march towards exile in a mood of triumph, to the astonishment of the Chaldean conquerors, who cannot help but wonder “was ist mit diesem Volke ... sind sie die Besiegten nicht [...] ein Einzug ist dies eines Königs und nicht Auszug der Geknechteten” (*JEREMIAS* 325) In the words of Jeremias: “Städte verschwemmen im Strome der Zeit, doch was die Seelen in Leiden gestalten, Dauert in Gottes Allewigkeit” (*JEREMIAS* 322). Thus, a complete redefinition of the terms ‘victory’ and ‘defeat’ is achieved—amplified by the effect of the stage—, the rhetoric of war disarticulated: (Der chaldäische Hauptmann): “Ihr Gott? Haben wir nicht seine Altäre zerbrochen? Haben wir nicht gesiegt über ihn?” (*JEREMIAS* 327), to which *der Chaldäer* replies: “Man kann das Unsichtbare nicht besiegen! Man kann Menschen töten, aber nicht den Gott, der in ihnen lebt. Man kann ein Volk bezwingen, doch nie seinen Geist” (*JEREMIAS* 327). Thus, the

intellectual, by becoming a prophet/visionary/watchman is able to transform through a radical ethics of suffering the defeated into victors. From the historical and biblical fate of the Jewish people, a message of comfort and consolation is sent to humanity in pain, from the mythical time of the Bible to the twentieth century. At the end of the day, Jeremias is following the counsel of his creator, embracing defeatism and choosing to leave rather than die for (another) 'idea'—or ideology—, for someone else's—nationalistic, religious and power—discourses. Rather than accepting the position of authority he is offered in the new ecosystem of power; he refuses to enter any structure that implies the continuation of violence in any of its possible manifestations. Rather than endorsing a system of beliefs and a social organization that craves for the exercise of power, conquest and expansion onto others, he prefers to lead his people towards exile.

Following these reflections and the textual analysis deployed above, we could contend, on the one hand, that exile is seen in *Jeremias* as a sort of redeeming force, whereby the individual can not only escape the containment and limitations imposed by the nation-state to exercise control within its borders but also articulate a collective identity based on a shared experience of suffering and defeat.⁹⁶ On the other hand, in terms of the figures of commitment and intellectuality articulated in the text, we can argue, following the reflections above, that the one of the prophet/watchman/visionary embodied in Jeremias emerges as a response to the impossibility of confronting physical violence with words. A feeling of powerlessness is what takes the intellectual/artist to embrace suffering and defeat as alternatives to the ideological battle that, in the eyes of Zweig, can only contribute to further promote violence and confrontation. Thus, we

⁹⁶ It must be pointed out, however, that the theme of exile will evolve throughout Zweig's career, wavering between an idealized state of freedom (see, for instance, *Jeremias* and *Fouché*) and, as the author experiences exile in his own flesh at the end of his life, as a burden, as the distressing condition of the eternal homeless person (see, for instance, *Die Welt von Gestern* or the historical miniature "Ciceros Tod oder Das Haupt auf der Rostra").

witness in *Jeremias* the articulation of a kind of committed response that tries to avoid taking sides or, rather, that tries to go beyond the confronting parties, aligning its interest with a party/cause ‘above’, ‘beyond’, or even ‘underneath’, a ‘common’ space—immaterial/‘spiritual’—where everyone may experience belonging. As a consequence, we could ask ourselves the same question that will make other intellectuals that will generate skepticism in other intellectuals regarding these forms of commitment: Is the embracing of suffering and defeat not a form of resignation and therefore passivity? Can these be truly considered forms of *engagement*, forms of enacting one’s responsibility? Can one find commitment in silence and defeat? These are probably the most difficult questions that make up the intellectual’s dilemma. For Stefan Zweig, the experience of the war will come to define his response to violence, triggering a desperate search for forms of enacting one’s commitment that avoid confrontation and that look for a ‘middle/third way’, an area of influence for the intellectual—be it moral or ‘spiritual’—away from ‘politics’ and where he—allegedly—can evade the promotion of hostility and violence and bring about a peaceful cohabitation.

1.4. Interwar Period and Second World War: Responding to Totalitarianism (1918-1942)

As the title of this section indicates, Zweig’s narrative of commitment in the interwar period (1918-1939) and the Second World War is marked by his reaction and fight against the upsurge of totalitarianism throughout Europe. Especially, the rise to power of Nazism and Adolf Hitler in the thirties will affect Zweig’s life and work in unprecedented ways. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the most important ‘committed’ works of the interwar period—*Erasmus* (1933) and *Castellio gegen Calvin* (1936)—belong to this particular period. Having said that, we cannot forget that between *Jeremias* and *Erasmus*

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

almost fifteen years elapse; a period described in *Die Welt von Gestern* as a time of success and new hopes for the future of Europe. Once settled in Salzburg and having gone through the hardest moments of the postwar economic recession—which in Zweig’s case were mitigated thanks to his wealth and fame—, it was time for new publications and travels, such as his first and only visit to Russia—which for a brief time had encapsulated the European intelligentsia’s hope of regeneration of an stagnated liberal bourgeois system—on the occasion of the celebration of Tolstoy’s centenary. It is clear from Zweig’s description of this event that the idea of Europe as a communal space of peace and cohabitation was (felt to be) strong again. Thus, he writes that his reasons for going to Russia had to do with his perception that Tolstoy could not be read politically, that “Tolstoi als der Apostel der non-violence war nicht als Bolschewist zu deuten” (*WvG* 352). And he goes on to say that “auch schien es mir im europäischen Sinne eine bedeutsame Demonstration, wenn sich die Schriftsteller aller Länder vereinten, um dem Größten unter ihnen eine gemeinsame Huldigung darzubringen” (*WvG* 352). From this perspective, it could be argued that Zweig and other European-minded individuals fell prey again to the same relaxation and naive forgetfulness that had dominated the pre-First World War scenario. This could explain to a certain extent why ‘Europe’, that “cause” to which Zweig pledges to dedicate his energy and writing, is almost relegated to the background of his narrative as, once again, something that was/could be taken for granted. In this sense, Zweig tells us that upon encountering in Florence his old friend the painter Alberto Stringa and embracing him in the street, he thought that “alles war wie früher, nein, noch herzlicher. Ich atmete auf: der Krieg war begraben. Der Krieg war vorüber” (*WvG* 329). Obviously, from the distance afforded by time and from the mindset of exile and war, Zweig acknowledges right away that the war was not over, “wir wußten es nur nicht. Wir täuschten uns alle in unserer Gutgläubigkeit und verwechselten unsere

persönliche Bereitschaft mit jener der Welt. Aber wir brauchen uns dieses Irrtums nicht zu schämen, denn nicht minder als wir haben sich die Politiker, die Ökonomen, die Bankleute getäuscht” (WvG 329). And so, at this point, Zweig narrates his first encounter with fascism, admitting that “niemand dachte daran, diese ‘Faschisten’, [...] als einen wesentlichen Faktor der künftigen europäischen Entwicklung anzusehen” WvG (329-330). As it turned out to be, Zweig had seen the signs, but he had just not been able/willing to ‘interpret’ them.

All in all, this relegation of Europe as something ‘given’, as a byproduct of an alleged general ‘recovery’, does not imply that Zweig did not engage during these years with his European commitment. In fact, as we will explore in Chapter II, with his biographical project *Die Baumeister der Welt*, among other essayistic writings, he attempted to create a constellation of European—or Western—figures and landscapes that would bring about the longed-for ‘spiritual union of Europe’, the proclaimed ‘common’ heritage that would serve as the basis for Zweig’s idea of Europe. Also, in this line, he kept enlarging his contacts and personal friendships abroad, constituting through his correspondence a solid supranational community. However, in terms of his production, and as we noted before, up until 1933 most of these texts fall short of the expectations created during the First World War. For what affords Zweig’s success between 1924 and 1933 is not precisely his ‘committed’ writings, but rather his psychological/sentimental *novellas*—such as *Amok* and *Brief eines Unbekanntes*—, the aforementioned biographies and some of his plays, such as the tremendously successful adaptation of Ben Jonson’s *Volpone*. When looking back upon these years, Zweig asserts in his memoirs that “von heute aus gesehen, stellt das knappe Jahrzehnt zwischen 1924 und 1933, vom Ende der deutschen Inflation bis zur Machtergreifung Hitlers, trotz allem und allem eine Pause dar in der Aufeinanderfolge von Katastrophen, deren Zeugen und Opfer unsere Generation seit

1914 gewesen ist” (WvG 339). Equally, as occurred with his visit to Italy, Zweig is forced to acknowledge the delusion which he and some of his contemporaries had fallen victim to, burdened with certain feeling of remorse and guilt:

Es war wieder heller Tag, man sah, wo aus und wo ein. Und schon grüßten wir in dem Aufstieg der Ordnung den Anfang einer dauernden Beruhigung. Abermals, abermals meinten wir, der Krieg sei überwunden, Toren, unheilbare, wie wir es immer gewesen. Jedoch dieser trügerische Wahn, er hat uns immerhin ein Jahrzehnt der Arbeit, der Hoffnung und selbst der Sicherheit geschenkt. (WvG 338)

All things considered, one can sense how the depiction of what was for Zweig a second Golden Age is imbued with mixed feelings and framed as a second wasted chance for Europe. While he defines this epoch as a time of success, where one “konnte sogar wieder träumen und auf ein geeintes Europa hoffen” (WvG 339), Zweig feels the need to justify his indulgence in happy memories: “[A]ber ich habe ein besonderes Recht und bin sogar gezwungen, diese Tatsache in der Geschichte meines Lebens nicht zu verschweigen, denn dieser Erfolg ist seit sieben Jahren, seit Hitlers Ankunft ein historischer geworden” (WvG 339). In so doing, Zweig is refusing again—as he announced he would do in the preface—to occupy the position of the *Hauptperson* in his self-narrative, while, at the same time, he sheds some light on one of the central elements that shape the structure of *Die Welt von Gestern*, namely the need to emphasize the demise—the ‘failed’ nature—of his European project:

So spreche ich, wenn ich meinen ‘Erfolg’ erwähne, nicht von etwas, das zu mir gehört, sondern das einstmals zu mir gehörte wie mein Haus, meine Heimat, meine Selbstsicherheit, meine Freiheit, meine Unbefangenheit; ich könnte also den Absturz, den ich—mit unzähligen andern und ebenso Schuldlosen—später erlitten, nicht in seiner ganzen Tiefe und Totalität anschaulich machen, wenn ich nicht zuvor die Höhe zeigte, von der er erfolgte, und nicht auch die Einmaligkeit

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

und Konsequenz dieser Ausrottung unserer ganzen literarischen Generation, für die ich eigentlich in der Geschichte kein zweites Beispiel weiß. (WvG 340).

It is worth remarking that this need to insist on the toughness of the fall could account for much of the embellishment, lack of accuracy and naiveté Zweig has been repeatedly accused of. In other words, I contend that what has been considered as a utopian and idealistic description of both fin-de-siècle Vienna and the ‘golden twenties’ could be better understood if we consider the narrative or rhetorical dimension of Zweig’s memoirs. If we set aside for a while the pact, in Philippe Lejeune’s words, established between author and reader in the autobiographical genre—without necessarily questioning Zweig’s honesty or truthfulness—, and opt for reading *Die Welt von Gestern* as Zweig’s latest European ‘fiction’, the last chapter in a narrative of commitment dedicated to ‘Europe’, then, we could understand—make sense of—the structure, tone and orientation of the text.

Having said that, and if we go back to our analysis of Zweig’s forms of commitment and intellectuality, I contend that, following what I have been saying so far, we could distinguish two epochs from the end of the First World War to Zweig’s death in 1942. The first—from 1918 to 1934—encompasses both the post-war and ‘success’ years and will give birth to two works that define Zweig’s mood in terms of commitment. On the one hand, Romain Rolland and his pacifism will occupy the place—both in terms of mentorship and orientation of Zweig’s *engagement*—of Émile Verhaeren. As a result, in 1921, Zweig writes a biography of the French intellectual, which is the focal point of the next section. In this sense, Zweig is continuing the line of defeated and suffering individuals he had started with *Jeremias*, adding nonetheless the notion of ‘moral authority’ as a feature of the committed artist. On the other hand, and also as a sort of afterthought to his war-time reflections on the writer’s responsibility and duty, he writes

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

a short story—“Die Augen des ewigen Bruders” (1922)—where he explores the possibility of living as an individual without hurting the other, without inflicting pain or animating confrontation. As can be observed, both works predate the decade of ‘success’ we mentioned before. In this sense, we must insist on the fact that our selection of primary sources does not exclude the possibility that Zweig wrote “committed” texts during this period. As a matter of fact, he did, as we will analyze in Chapter II. However, none of these works—which bear the mark of Zweig’s commitment to notions such as peace, freedom, or the denunciation of war—features an alter-ego/figure of intellectuality might allow us to discuss Zweig’s self-exploration of his *engagement*.⁹⁷

Following this first period, we can distinguish a second more ‘politicized’ phase, which goes from 1933/34 to Zweig’s suicide in 1942. Here we can locate most of the texts we will be dealing with until the end of this chapter. I have already mentioned the biography of Erasmus and the recreation of the historical struggle between Sebastian Castellio and John Calvin. To these we can add the short biography/life-portrait of Michel de Montaigne and the historical miniature “Ciceros Tod oder Das Haupt der Rostra”, published posthumously. “Cicero” and *Montaigne* were written at the very end of Zweig’s life in exile and, while they do not differ significantly from other previous works as regards the figures of commitment they center on, they do present certain variations from previous figures caused by the experience of exile and the beginning of the Second World War, as well as, we might guess, by the impending suicide of their author.

⁹⁷ For instance, the short story *Der Zwang* (1929), set in Switzerland during the war, has very clear personal connotations and biographical echoes, featuring an artist trapped between his personal convictions and his duty to the fatherland. However, I contend that this tale is more concerned with denouncing what both the rhetoric of war and nationalism do to the individual than with creating a figure of commitment which Zweig could relate to.

1.4.1. Romain Rolland au-dessus de la mêlée: The Intellectual as a Moral Authority

The first work we will be focusing on is Zweig's biography of Romain Rolland—first published in 1921 by Literarische Anstalt Rütten & Loening under the title *Romain Rolland. Der Mann und das Werk*. As we have already established, Rolland became Zweig's mentor during the First World War—participating in the latter's 'conversion' to pacifism—and remained an influential figure throughout his life.⁹⁸ Alongside Verhaeren, Freud and Rilke, the French Nobel Prize winner was a key figure in the development of Zweig's career as well as one of his closest friends, as the Austrian acknowledges in the autobiographical sketch of 1936, where Rolland is mentioned as one of the most "important leaders of my generation" ("Autobiography 1936"). Likewise, as we saw in our analysis of the short autobiographical text of 1922, Rolland's influence on Zweig will grow during the war to the point of substituting Verhaeren as a model of the 'committed artist'.

However, the relationship between Zweig and Rolland—developed within the framework of a wider pacifist, humanist, and European struggle—cannot be easily reduced to that of master-disciple. For, despite Zweig's admiration of Rolland, their opinions were not always aligned in respect to key issues related to both their stance as intellectuals and the articulation of their commitment. Thus, Rolland, who was not afraid of taking his ideas and his fight to the public arena, who was not afraid of exposing himself, was much more 'direct' than Zweig in his tactics. Paradoxically enough, as we will discuss later on, it is precisely Rolland's attitude towards conflict that led Zweig to consider him a 'moral authority', an example for his generation. And it is precisely as a

⁹⁸ While discussing the effects of the First World War on the Zweig-Rolland friendship, Denis Charbit asserts that "ils avaient constaté, avant son déclenchement, qu'ils partageaient une communauté de goût littéraire et d'idéal politique. Elle avait suffi à justifier leur rencontre et le début de leur correspondance. Avec la guerre, cette amitié naissante fut appelée à se transformer en une complicité définitivement scellée" ("Stefan Zweig et Romain Rolland" 46).

result of this attitudinal distance between both writers that they will come progressively apart in the twenties and the thirties.

Given the scope of this dissertation, this may not be the place to map in depth the Zweig-Rolland relationship, as it has already been amply and ably done by many scholars.⁹⁹ Suffice it to say for now that the discrepancies that surrounded the publication of Zweig's "An die Freunde im Fremdland" during the war and its controversial and ambiguous interpretation would recur during the interwar years. Generally speaking, whenever Zweig took a more distanced, silent and cautious position, Rolland would reply with a call to action, to make the most of one's potentialities as an intellectual and committed artist. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that Rolland expressed a certain disregard towards the notion of 'defeatism', which entailed for him a certain 'passivity', words he did not want to 'attach' to his cause.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, when the time came to look for alternatives to an stagnated liberal bourgeois Europe, and, as Stephan Resch discusses

⁹⁹ See, among others: McClain, William H., and Harry Zohn, "Zweig and Rolland: The Literary and Personal Relationship." *The Germanic Review*, vol. XXVIII, no. 4, 1953.; Dumont, Robert. *Stefan Zweig et la France*. Didier, 1967, esp. "Deuxième partie: Zweig et Romain Rolland"; Nedelkovic, Dragan. *Romain Rolland et Stefan Zweig*. Klincksieck, 1970.; Grapin, Pierre. "Stefan Zweig, écrivain de l'entre-deuxguerres." *Stefan Zweig: 1881-1942. Actes du Colloque tenu à l'Université de Metz*. Université de Metz, 1981, pp. 1-12.; Cheval, René. "Romain Rolland und Stefan Zweig, eine europäische Freundschaft." *Österreichische Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Edited by Sigurd Paul Scheichl and Gerald Stieg, Innsbruck University Press, 1986, pp. 115-126.; Rogister, Margaret. "Romain Rolland: One German View." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 86, no. 2, 1991, pp. 349-360.; Renoldner, Klemens. Afterword. *Stefan Zweig. Instants d'une vie*. Edited by Klemens Renoldner, Hildemar Holl, Peter Karlhuber, Stock, 1994.; Charbit, Denis. "Stefan Zweig et Romain Rolland. Naissance de l'intellectuel européen." *Stefan Zweig Reconsidered. New Perspectives on his Literary and Biographical Writings*. Edited by Mark. Gelber, Max Niemeyer, 2007. pp. 41-58.; Larcati "Vielstimmig eines Sinnes'. Zum Briefwechsel zwischen Stefan Zweig und Romain Rolland während des Ersten Weltkriegs." *Briefkultur: Transformationen epistolaren Schreibens in der deutschen Literatur*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2015, pp. 143-160.; and Spedicato, Eugenio, and Arturo Larcati. "Romain Rolland. *Der Mann und das Werk* (1921)." *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 461-465.

¹⁰⁰ According to Jean Lacoste, Rolland did not accept Zweig's proposal in "Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus", arguing that would not stand down, that he would keep on fighting towards peace, that his role is not that of a Tolstoi or a Buddha (126). Furthermore, Lacoste sees a connection between this refusal of defeatism and the communist turn of Rolland in the thirties: "Nous devinons dans cette image et dans le refus de l'étiquette de défaitiste, les raisons morales de politiques qui conduiront plus tard Rolland, malgré ses options spiritualistes, à soutenir les communistes français et l'URSS de Staline dans les années trente, seul rempart solide à ses yeux contre le fascisme" (127)

(“Auf der Suche nach Klarheit”),¹⁰¹ pacifism took a more revolutionary turn—veering towards the internationalism and socialism of Henri Barbusse and the journal *Clarté*—, Zweig would distance himself from more radical views and positions, insisting once again on the separation between the intellectual and politics, as well as on the articulation—as we will discuss in Chapter II—of a humanist, individual, Tolstoian pacifism.¹⁰²

Despite the fact that during the initial stages of the journal Zweig belonged to the director’s board of *Clarté*, the progressive sovietization of the group in 1919 clashed irremediably with his claim for the independence of the intellectual.¹⁰³ As Resch argues: “Barbusse hatte sich Direktivgewalt vorbehalten und folgt damit dem zentralistischen Modell der Sowjets. Die *Clarté* hatte sich vom demokratischen Forum zum kommunistischen Propagandaorgan gewandelt. Eine Mitarbeit musste dem Individualisten Zweig daher unmöglich erscheinen” (“Auf der Suche nach Klarheit” 195). To this process of radicalization Zweig replied with a call to ‘patience’ in the article “Aufruf zur Geduld”, favoring once again the separation between the intellectual and politics and giving public voice to his concerns and skepticism regarding the attitudes of Barbusse and *Clarté*. This form of commitment and intellectuality that occurs outside the realm of politics—and therefore in consonance with Zweig’s ‘apoliticism’ as we have discussed it in the Introduction—would consolidate itself in these years:

¹⁰¹ For an in-depth study of the several ramifications within the pacifist movement during these years in connection with Stefan Zweig’s commitment, see Resch *Europa-Gedanke*, 133-166.

¹⁰² In this regard, we could argue that whereas Zweig was still attached to the idea of writing ‘positively’, ‘enthusiastically’, under the inherited-from-Verhaeren kind of ‘ethics of affirmation’, Rolland was more prepared to embrace radical forms of criticism. According to Dragan Nedeljkovic: “Rolland se lanča dans une critique [...] totale de la société bourgeoisie, dont la morale ne le satisfaisait point. L’art le heurtait par son manque de sincérité et son formalisme esthétique. Aux sciences humaines il reprochait leur absence de passion pour la vérité” (16). Also, on Rolland, Zweig and revolution, see Chapter III “Face a la Révolution”, where the main difference between both intellectuals is, according to Nedeljkovic, the in/ability to bring their ideas down to ‘reality’, to transform their commitment and thinking into actions. It is in these terms that Nedeljkovic questions Zweig’s freedom: “L’homme libre qui reste à l’écart des dangers était-il vraiment un homme libre? La vraie liberté se manifeste toujours par l’action; Zweig n’a jamais connu cette liberté! Dans ses analyses il ne cherchait que la justification de sa passivité” (64).

¹⁰³ For an account of the relationship of both Rolland and Zweig with *Clarté*, see Nedeljkovic 87 ff.

Zweig positioniert den Intellektuellen als Impulsgeber, als gesellschaftliches Korrektiv, der Missstände diagnostizieren und Anregungen zu deren Behebung machen sollte. Dabei muss er einzig seinem Gewissen verantwortlich sein, niemals jedoch den Zielen einer Ideologie, die ihn dazu nötigen könnte, die innere Freiheit einem politischen Ziel unterzuordnen. (Daviau, "Literary" 200)

As for Rolland, while he supported in principle Zweig's idea of the intellectual and his disdain for the turn taken by Barbusse and *Clarté*,¹⁰⁴ he was ready to sacrifice, to a certain extent, his ideals for the greater good—to bring about the revolution.¹⁰⁵ And it was precisely their contrasting views on the 'communist experiment' being carried out in Russian soil what drove them definitely apart. Zweig, despite agreeing on the need of a new socioeconomic order that would allow for the idea of a paneuropean community to flourish, was not ready to give up either Europe itself or the intellectual's freedom for any cause, no matter how noble it seemed to be.¹⁰⁶ As William H. McClain and Harry Zohn argue:

Yet, even while defending her [Russia], he reprimanded her repeatedly for her disregard of individual liberty and for her treatment of her intellectuals. He never subscribed to the view held by Henri Barbusse and certain other French sympathizers with Russia, that intellectuals should surrender their independence entirely and become slaves of the revolution. (276)

¹⁰⁴ In 1921 Henri Barbusse wrote for *Clarté* the article "À propos du Rollandisme", where he attacked Rolland and his followers for the impracticality of their position and ideals.

¹⁰⁵ According to Dragan Nedeljkovic, quoting from Romain Rolland's *Quinze ans de combat*, "Pour protéger les 'liberté du monde', il allait jusqu'à admettre la violence. Il se rassurait par l'idée que la dictature du prolétariat n'est pas le but de la révolution, mais une étape passagère, nécessaire et désagréable, sans laquelle, cependant, 'la liberté sociale et individuelle, cette sainte liberté serait asservie'" (115).

¹⁰⁶ Denis Charbit argues that as the years went by after the war, and in front of a 'Janus-faced' Europe—capable of generating hope for the future while at the same time showing symptoms of decay and relapse into barbarism—, Rolland would move ideologically further and further away from it, looking for other solutions both in Russia and India. Thus, Rolland was much more critical and sceptic as regards Europe's potentialities and tried to 'universalize' his message by turning to figures such as Tagore and Gandhi (53-54). Also, on Rolland's veering 'east' looking for a new order and a way to transcending a 'European nationalism' both intellectually and politically, see McClain and Zohn, esp. pp. 274-278, and Nedeljkovic 124 ff.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Whereas Rolland remained an enthusiast about Russia and communism in the years before World War II, Zweig grew wary of the similarities between Fascism and Communism, observing, as the aforementioned scholars describe it, that “the wonderful *élan* which Rolland felt in Russia [was] akin to the enthusiasm which [had] fired young people in Italy and Germany—an enthusiasm which [has] caused them to lose all critical sense” (276).¹⁰⁷ All in all, Zweig’s insistence on reminding Rolland of his duty and responsibility to remain free from any party/ideological alliance created an unbridgeable gap between the two. However, notwithstanding their discrepancies—and as his presence in *Die Welt von Gestern* reflects—, Rolland continued to be a friend and an admired figure until the very end, someone to look up to and even emulate, especially in terms of his committed response as an artist.¹⁰⁸ As we have done in previous sections, in order to explore the figures of commitment and responsibility represented in Zweig’s image of ‘Rolland’, we will start by analyzing at Zweig’s memoirs. Then, we will move on to the analysis of his biography of the French writer and intellectual.

¹⁰⁷ To this regard, Resch comments that “in der entschiedenen Zurückweisung jeglicher Diktaturen, auch solchen, die in Namen der Freiheit und der Demokratie errichtet werden, sieht Zweig die Rolle des Intellektuellen abseits jeder Politik. Nur durch geistige Unabhängigkeit von Parteien und Ideen sieht er eine Möglichkeit für den Schriftsteller, in das Zeitgeschehen einzugreifen, denn jede Parteinahme würde früher oder später mit den Prinzipien der Menschlichkeit und der Freiheit in Konflikt geraten” (“Auf der Suche nach Klarheit” 199-200).

¹⁰⁸ Zweig’s ‘timid’ o ambiguous response to the rise of fascism in Europe contributed to drive the two friends apart. According to Dragan Nedeljkovic (135-149), there were two major events in the thirties which sow discord between the two. The first was the Germani affair—recounted as a ‘happy’ anecdote in *Die Welt von Gestern*—in which Zweig wrote to Mussolini to ask for the liberation of the antifascist Giuseppe Germani after the latter’s wife had asked him to. Whereas Zweig—after achieving his goal—will rejoice in having done good with his pen, in having been able to influence events through his ‘writing’, Rolland became desperate at his friend’s attitude and his inability to transcend his individualist humanitarianism in order to articulate a larger political action. The second event was Zweig’s non-attendance to the World Congress Against Imperialist War celebrated in Amsterdam in 1932, an occasion in which Rolland joined forces with Barbusse to mediate between anti-fascist groups/formations. Last but not least, when Hitler gains power and Zweig fails to turns to communism or protests publicly, the break-up is final; Zweig’s ‘silence’ becomes unbearable for Rolland: “En 1914, le silence, la résistance passive, le refus des armes, le pacifisme en général représentaient une résistance héroïque à une guerre fratricide menée pour les intérêts du grand capital et pour l’orgueil des potentats. En 1933, le pacifisme total, le renoncement au combat seraient une capitulation de l’Homme, une désertion peureuse. En s’opposant au courant de la haine, le “défaitisme” de 1914 était un signe de force d’âme” (163).

Romain Rolland in the World of Yesterday

The portrayal of Romain Rolland in *Die Welt von Gestern* is built in two sequences: the first following Zweig's narration of his accidental 'discovery' of the French writer in the house of a Russian friend living in Florence (chap. 8 "Glanz und Schatten über Europa"). And the second during Zweig's stay in Switzerland during the First World War (chap. 11 "Im Herzen Europas"). In this regard, although the context of Zweig's first 'encounter' with Rolland might seem trivial, a mere anecdote, it does reflect the existence of a supranational/cosmopolitan community made up of an intellectual European elite, the very context of development of Zweig's European *Weltanschauung*. It is no coincidence that Zweig reads Rolland—the very incarnation of Europe's 'conscience' and its greatest 'moral authority'—for the first time in the house of a Russian sculptress living in Italy, for that is the kind of transnational 'European' space Zweig inhabits and experiences before the First World War, a congregation of characters and ideas that travel with no restrictions throughout the continent, favoring this sort of capricious and inspiring meetings. Above all, Rolland is a European, an individual, as well as a literary voice, striving to cross borders and mediate between nations. After reading some fragments of the *Aube* published in the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* in 1904, Zweig wondered "wer war dieser Franzose, der Deutschland so kannte" (*WvG* 220), for he had just found "hier war endlich das Werk, das nicht einer einzelnen europäischen Nation diene, sondern allen und ihrer Verbrüderung, hier war er, der Mann, der Dichter, der alle moralischen Kräfte ins Spiel brachte: liebende Erkenntnis und ehrlichen Willen zur Erkenntnis" (*WvG* 220). What is more, Rolland's work seemed to be a continuation and even a certain improvement of Verhaeren's message, establishing a direct link between the two figures: "Es war der erste bewußt europäische Roman, der hier sich vollendete, der erste

entscheidende Appell zur Verbrüderung, wirksamer, weil breitere Massen erreichend, als die Hymnen Verhaerens, eindringlicher als alle Pamphlete und Proteste” (WvG 220).

Zweig goes on to tell us that they did not only share a European horizon of experience and *Weltanschauung*, but also an idea of what art could do to bring about that idea: “[He showed] einen beschwingenden Glauben an die verbindende Mission der Kunst. Während wir in kleinen Manifestationen uns verzettelten, war er still und geduldig an die Tat gegangen, die Völker einander in jenen Eigenschaften zu zeigen, wo sie individuell am lebenswertesten waren” (WvG 220). At the same, regarding the topic of art and *engagement*, Rolland is in a sense realistic, aware of the limitations of art—and therefore of one’s commitment as an artist and intellectual—measured against the forces of ‘reality’. He was very conscious that the artist must act to prevent, to curb “die Kräfte, die zum Haß drängen” (WvG 222) which “seien ihrer niederen Natur gemäß vehementer und aggressiver als die versöhnlichen” (WvG 223). Art, Roland tells Zweig, “kann uns trösten, uns, die Einzelnen, [...] aber sie vermag nichts gegen die Wirklichkeit” (WvG 223). All in all, Rolland comes to embody, as we have said, Europe’s conscience, providing the ‘true’ intellectual with a moral superiority and inner freedom: “Hier spürte ich [...] menschliche, moralische Überlegenheit, eine innere Freiheit ohne Stolz, Freiheit als Selbstverständlichkeit einer starken Seele. Auf den ersten Blick erkannte ich in ihm [...] den Mann, der in entscheidender Stunde das Gewissen Europas sein würde“ (WvG 222). Rolland showed Zweig a way—other than Verhaeren’s aestheticism—to commit to his work, or to make his work commit to a cause, following what the French writer had done with his *Jean-Christophe*: “Rolland erklärte mir, er habe versucht, damit eine dreifache Pflicht zu erfüllen, seinen Dank an die Musik, sein Bekenntnis zur europäischen Einheit und einen Aufruf an die Völker zur Besinnung” (WvG 222).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

However, something had yet to happen for Rolland to acquire all his ‘symbolic’ potential. The second scene in Zweig’s memoirs that completes the portrait of the French writer encapsulates Rolland’s efforts and response to the First World War. It is during Zweig’s time in Switzerland that he encounters Rolland for the first time after the latter’s response to Zweig’s “An die Freunde im Fremdland”. In Switzerland Rolland was carrying out humanitarian work for the International Agency for Prisoners of War, while at the same time he corresponded with thousands that looked for his counsel, and continued to produce new works. As we have seen before—and already fulfilling his role as Zweig’s mentor—, Rolland was instrumental in defining Zweig’s commitment through his own example. Zweig tells us in his autobiography that, besides the excuse of *Jeremias*’ premiere, “vor allem Rolland sehen, den Mann, von dem ich wußte, daß er mich fester, klarer und tätiger machen konnte, und ich wollte ihm danken für das, was mir sein Zuspruch, seine Freundschaft in den Tagen bitterster Seeleneinsamkeit gegeben” (*WvG* 285). This remark is followed by a description of Rolland’s character and personality that delineates the main characteristics of his (figure of) commitment. First of all, in the eyes of Zweig, Rolland features a high degree of exemplariness and leadership, the embodiment of the artist fulfilling his duty and responsibility: “Es war der Einsatz, der restlose, pausenlose, aufopfernde Einsatz seiner ganzen Existenz für die ungeheure Verantwortung, die er auf sich genommen, innerhalb dieses Wahnsinnsanfalls der Menschheit vorbildlich und menschlich gerecht in jeder Einzelheit zu handeln” (*WvG* 287). Rolland is, in a sense, a ‘Jeremias’, a good intellectual, doing what he must do no matter the consequences. And this is precisely what earns him the title of ‘moral conscience of Europe’: “Nur wir, die Zeugen jener Zeit, wissen, was sein Dasein und sein vorbildliches Unerschütterlichsein damals bedeutet hat. Durch ihn hatte das in Tollwut verfallene Europa sein moralisches Gewissen bewahrt” (*WvG* 288). In the same vein, by embodying the ‘conscience of Europe’, Rolland is working as a mediator for the common of understanding of peoples and nations: “Ich war mir voll bewußt, daß mit diesem Freunde der wichtigste Mann

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

dieser unserer Weltstunde mir gegenüber stand, daß es das moralische Gewissen Europas war, das zu mir sprach. Nun erst konnte ich übersehen, was alles er tat und getan in seinem großartigen Dienst um die Verständigung” (WvG 286). Finally, Rolland leads the way in the intellectual’s fight for his own freedom and independence, aligning himself with the values of ‘humanism’, understood to be above local and national loyalties: “Aber Rolland blieb fest entschlossen, keiner Gruppe sich zu verschreiben, sondern unabhängig nur mit der eigenen Person der Sache zu dienen, der er sich geschworen: der gemeinsamen. [...] er wollte kein anderes Beispiel geben als dies eine: wie man frei bleiben kann und getreu seiner eigenen Überzeugung” (WvG 288).

The last feature I would like to consider is the French writer’s alleged disdain for politics, especially national politics, a trait which Zweig can easily identify with. Thus, Zweig tells us that “er war voll Erbitterung über die Politiker und diejenigen, welche für ihre nationale Eitelkeit nicht genug bekommen konnten an fremden Opfern. Aber gleichzeitig schwang immer Mitleid mit für die Unzähligen, die litten und starben für einen Sinn, den sie selbst nicht verstanden und der doch nur ein Widersinn war” (WvG 288). Nonetheless, it must be pointed out, again, that, despite the Austrian writer’s efforts to relate to his master, Rolland’s ‘apoliticism’ has nothing to do with Zweig’s. While it can be argued that both writers shared sheer contempt for nationalist political practices and discourses, that both believed that a new political order might be the solution to bring about European unity and common understanding after the First World War, the ways in which they engaged themselves with ‘politics’ and the ‘political’ could not be more radically opposed. As Riley Kastinger contends, even though Zweig cannot be considered ‘passive’ or ‘inactive’ in his commitment, his ‘apoliticism’ orientates his efforts towards the sphere of the ‘spiritual’, the immaterial realm of morality and ideas, “largely removed from the political forces which wielded power” (25). On the other hand, Rolland “too, was an idealist and a pacifist; but [he] was also a political activist” (25). In this sense, Rolland’s political alignment with the ‘communist’ revolution turned him into a European referent within the movement, while Zweig

was hardly considered a ‘party’ writer/intellectual, averting thus any kind of political/ideological ‘affiliation’.¹⁰⁹

Romain Rolland I: A Moral Authority

Considering these features of Rolland’s image in *Die Welt von Gestern*, let us further discuss them by turning to the main text Zweig dedicated to Romain Rolland, his biography of 1921 *Romain Rolland. Der Mann und das Werk*. As it can be already deduced from the subtitle of the work, Zweig attempted to unite under a single biographical account both a literary analysis and a personal portrayal of Rolland. In fact, Zweig believed that both dimensions were part of a single whole, emanating from a sort of ‘essence’ or ‘core drive’ which shaped both the personality and the artistic production of his biographical subjects.¹¹⁰ This is a characteristic that recurs in most of Zweig’s biographical texts and literary portraits, mixing a psychological approach to both human personality and history—under the influence of his friend and mentor Sigmund Freud—and the theories of Hippolyte Taine—father of the influential ‘Race, milieu, and moment’ theory and the subject of Zweig’s doctoral

¹⁰⁹ As an (indirect) testimony to this fact, we could look at the international reception of both figures in the communist journals of the thirties, for instance in Catalonia, Spain. If we take as a source *L’Hora*, a weekly Barcelonian periodical associated successively with the leftist-communist parties BOC (Bloc Obrer i Camperol) and POUM (Partit Obrer d’Unificació Marxista) from 1930 to 1937—which has been preserved in microfilm format in the Biblioteca de Catalunya’s archives—, we find that Rolland is repeatedly invoked as an authority against the liberal bourgeois order and in favor of communism, as a voice that demands that Europe go beyond itself in order to attain regeneration (see for instance in the issues of 14th January and 4th March 1931) or that supports the revolution in Spain, alluding particularly to the Asturian miners’ strike of 1934 (see issue 53 of October 1935). On the other hand, Zweig is only mentioned on the occasion of his visit to Russia, and more specifically as the author of a portrait of Gorki, which is reproduced in its entirety in the issue of 28th July 1934. We could argue from this evidence that while both were thought of as European intellectuals, their impact on the communist movement was in accordance with their degree of political involvement and activism.

¹¹⁰ According to McClain and Zohn: “Zweig admired in them both [Verhaeren and Rolland] the rare kind of harmony which they had been able to realize between their lives and their works, and their consistent refusal to compromise their ideals” (265). In the same vein, Nedeljkovic contends that “Zweig aurait pu trouver des créateurs plus forts que Rolland. Mais il aurait difficilement trouvé un poète qui fût, en même temps si fidèle à lui-même, si conscient de ses responsabilités vis-à-vis de ses lecteurs. Rolland représentait pour l’Autrichien la parfaite harmonie du poète et de l’homme” (232).

thesis.¹¹¹ All in all, these factors combined resulted in what we could call an ‘essentialist’ approach to culture, authorship and personality. Zweig assumes that his subjects, be they an artist like Rolland or a discoverer, a man of action, such as Magallanes, are ‘driven’ emotionally and psychologically, and that the biographer’s task is to unravel this primary force, to map its influence throughout the subject’s life and oeuvre. In a way, Zweig’s biographies, regardless of his textual and scholarly research, are mostly an attempt to understand the psychic structure of their protagonists, a ‘thematic’ rendering of their lives and the exploration of the ‘idea’ behind their legacy.

This approach to his subjects superimposes to the ‘truths’ of their existence a ‘hermeneutical impulse’ that contributes to bend the narrative in a way that, I contend, reflects the biographer’s ethos and *Weltanschauung*, that reveals his intention to turn said figure into a symbol that is often inserted into a wider movement, genealogy or cause. Nonetheless, while we are arguing throughout this dissertation that it is precisely this—more or less conscious/intended—deviation from factuality and a general avoidance of nuance and critique in favor of conveying a larger ‘truth’ that allows us to glimpse at Zweig’s ethical premises and practices, it must also be noticed that, as Mark Gelber remarks, this may also entail—from our twenty-first-century perspective—the perception of a certain impoverishment of the text. According to Gelber, “Taine’s categories, which cannot provide reliable guidelines for precise literary analysis, may have encouraged Zweig to avoid close reading of literary texts, while he formulated instead hopelessly

¹¹¹ On Zweig’s doctoral thesis and the influence of Taine on his works and *Weltanschauung*, see: Dumont, Robert. *Stefan Zweig et la France*. Didier, 1967.; Weschenbach, Natascha. *Stefan Zweig und Hippolyte Taine: Stefan Zweigs Dissertation über “Die Philosophie des Hippolyte Taine” (Wien 1904)*. Rodopi, 1992.; Le Rider, Jacques. “‘La race, le milieu, le moment’.” *Revue Approches*, no. 156 (Stefan Zweig), december 2013.; Gelber, Mark H. “Stefan Zweig and the Concept of World Literature.” *Stefan Zweig and World Literature. Twenty-First Century Perspectives*. Edited by Birger Vanwesenbeeck, and Mark H. Gelber. Camden House, 2014, pp. 102-105.; Le Rider, Jacques. “Stefan Zweig und Hippolyte Taine.” *Stefan Zweig. Positionen der Moderne*. Edited by Martina Wörgötter, Königshausen und Neumann, 2017, pp. 17-50.; Le Rider, Jacques. “*La race, le milieu, le moment: Hippolyte Taine.*” *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 715-721.

speculative pronouncements and empty generalizations. In a sense, he became [...] a master of sometimes acute, but more often gross generalizations” (“SZ and the Concept of World Literature” 103). Gelber suggests that, while this approach to his biographical subjects may have found at the time a wide acceptance and approval among diverse reading publics, its survival after his death was a challenge, especially as it indulged in “empty nationalistic rhetoric” and the “meaningless racialist jargon of his time” (“SZ and the Concept of World Literature” 104).

On the other hand, when dealing with Zweig’s biographical production, another factor must be taken into account: his—and also Verhaeren’s—‘enthusiasm’, which turns his subjects, in this case Romain Rolland, into ‘heroes’ and the biography into a sort of eulogy.¹¹² As Marleen Rensen argues, the biography of Rolland serves the same mediating purpose we observed in *Verhaeren*.¹¹³ That is to say, it must be located within Zweig’s efforts to both pay homage to his mentor and make him known to a wider readership (“Writing European Lives” 10). In this sense, Rensen has argued that there is a common thread running from Verhaeren through Rolland to Erasmus, in the sense that all these figures are discussed in terms of their ‘Europeanness’. They are inscribed into a genealogy of ‘great Europeans’. Additionally, in the cases of Verhaeren and Rolland, they share with their disciple Zweig the fact that they were both also biographers of other Europeans. And so, in a way, as Rensen defends, there exists at this time, before the actual process of integration and unification of Europe began, a network of writers/biographers

¹¹² According to William McClain and Harry Zohn: “At times, to be sure, the Rolland biography, too, tends to be overemphatic and all too dithyrambic, a panegyric rather than a critical study. It is a mistake, however, to condemn the work on these grounds, for Zweig’s avowed intention was not to present a scholarly treatment of the work of Rolland but to inspire his readers and arouse in them some of his own enthusiasm” (271).

¹¹³ This is also the impression of Nedeljkovic, who notices Rolland, despite the Nobel Prize he had won in 1915, remained a largely unknown and misunderstood figure in France: “Pour la masse qui s’oriente toujours d’après les attitudes officielles, il était un écrivain sans grand intérêt. Pour les esthètes, il manquait de style ; pour les snobs, il était trop moraliste” (272).

writing about great European figures in order to bring about a sense of community, of shared cultural legacy.¹¹⁴ All in all, she concludes, in line with what we have been discussing so far, that “Zweig was far more concerned with ethics than aesthetics in this [Rolland’s] life-narrative” (“Writing European Lives” 10). In other words, in the following pages we will be dealing with a biography that, although for the most part is devoted to discussing the literary production of Rolland, is especially concerned with his/its ethical import, with the moral strength of the French writer as both an artistic and public figure. Rolland is above all a ‘mentor’ for Zweig not in the literary sense, but as an example, as a model, as someone who is able to give purpose and direction to his work, to make it ‘matter’ in terms of commitment.¹¹⁵

As far as the structure of the text is concerned, Zweig, following the pattern of *Verhaeren*, combines biographical anecdotes with literary analysis. However, here we can observe a sharper distinction between the first part (“Lebensbildnis”)—which is purely devoted to narrating the life of Rolland from his childhood to the First World War—and the rest, which follows a chronological approach to the literary production of Rolland, from his first dramatic cycles through his biographical series and *Jean*

¹¹⁴ As Rensen announced in the Biography Society’s panel (“Transnational Biography in Europe”) at the 14th European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) Conference (Masaryk University, Brno, 29th August-2nd September) with the paper “Transnational Approaches to Artists’ Biographies, 1900-1945”, she is currently developing a research project that aims to map this biographical network from a transnational perspective, analyzing the production of authors such as Zweig, Rolland, Verhaeren, or Klaus Mann. More specifically, she is interested in exploring how life-writing becomes a means to express a certain idea of Europe and how this purpose shapes the ‘lives’ of the biographical subjects to the point of ‘hiding’ certain cultural clashes and fashioning the work towards a certain goal. In the same vein, Margaret Rogister argued in 1991 that “Zweig’s book followed the pattern his writing was now taking, that of the monograph, such as he had written on Verhaeren and others. It was also closely linked to Rolland’s own writing, which before the novel *Jean-Christophe* has largely consisted of monographs on painters and musicians, most notably Michelangelo and Beethoven. Both Zweig and Rolland had considered one aim of their writing to be that of recreating heroic figures through biography” (356).

¹¹⁵ Dwelling on Zweig’s bond with his masters and those who were close to him, it must be said that the concept of ‘friendship’ is crucial in order to understand Zweig’s personal and professional relationships, as well as the role he played as mediator and as, we could say, ‘node’ and ‘diffusor’ within a vast network of ideas which travelled across national frontiers. According to Denis Charbit: “Zweig n’est pas en reste: lui aussi fut un homme d’amitiés. Il a recherché avec le même bonheur ce compagnonnage d’artistes, de poètes, de romanciers, valeureux pour les qualités humaines autant que pour leur œuvre créatrice” (42).

Christophe to his most salient works written during the war: the pacifist manifesto *Au-dessus de la mêlée* and the novel *Clérambault*.¹¹⁶ In terms of how—within this structure—Zweig deploys several forms of commitment and intellectuality around the subject of ‘Rolland’, we could distinguish a number of topics that constitute both a continuation and evolution of *Jeremias*: Rolland as a moral force/authority, as the conscience of Europe and the last bastion of the independence/freedom of the individual and the spirit (*Geist*); Rolland as a European mediator; Rolland as a defeated individual, a ‘victor’ or ‘hero’ in defeat; and, finally, Rolland as a committed writer that engages with the dichotomy ‘good’/‘bad’ intellectual to define the relationship between artist and commitment.

As we have already discussed, *Rolland* is above all a tribute, a commemoration of the master, a sort of hagiography which, in the words of Nedeljkovic, “ne sera pas une véritable étude critique, mais ‘l’œuvre de la foi’ humaniste et pacifiste, un livre écrit à la gloire de celui qui, d’après Zweig, était ‘le plus grand événement moral de notre époque’”. (*ROLLAND* 272). Therefore, we could contend that the text is animated by Zweig’s belief that Rolland could really make a difference, that because of his ‘moral superiority’ he could become a leader for the masses, offering both solace and guidance in troubled times.¹¹⁷ It is worth noting that that Zweig subsumes the political activism and revolutionary ideals of Rolland into the sphere of morality. For, in

¹¹⁶ In 1926 the third revised and augmented edition of the text was published including an analysis of Rolland’s production between 1919-1925. This addendum features the ‘Eastern turn’ we have discussed throughout this chapter, with added emphasis on the importance of the figure of Gandhi on Rolland’s thought. For instance, on the Hindu thinker and on Rolland’s looking beyond Europe, Zweig writes that “in Mahatma Gandhi und seinen dreihundert Millionen offenbart sich ihm nun [...] eine neue Form des Widerstands, ebenso wirksam, ebenso solidarisch, aber ethisch unendlich reiner [...]. Mahatma Gandhis Krieg entbehrt aller jener Elemente, die den Krieg für unsere Epoche so erniedrigt haben, er ist ‚ein Kampf ohne Blut, ein Kampf ohne Gewalt, vor allem ein Kampf ohne Lüge’” (*ROLLAND* 3470-3484). Additionally, in Gandhi Rolland perceives a mixture of Tolstoy and Thoreau: “Seine Waffe ist einzig die ‘Nonresistance’, das Nicht-Widerstehen, die ‘heroische Passivität’, die Tolstoi gefordert, und die ‘Non-cooperation’, die Nicht-Teilnahme an allem Staatlichen und Solidarischen Englands, die Thoreau gepredigt” (*ROLLAND* 3484).

¹¹⁷ On this aspect of Rolland’s intellectuality, Nedeljkovic comments that: “Le but de Zweig était justement de rendre accessible aux gens simples cette harmonie et cette beauté. Il estimait indispensable qu’un écrivain comme Rolland devînt le guide moral des plus larges masses populaires. C’est à celles-ci que Zweig destinait son livre” (276).

my reading, that is the dimension of reality Zweig is mostly interested in, insofar as he believes it exists separately from the social and the political, being the space where he, Rolland and other artists alike can intervene with their writing, where they can effect change.¹¹⁸

In a note that precedes—together with a quote by Goethe—the first chapter of the biography, we find what might be considered an admission of the author's intentions as they have been outlined so far: "Dieses Buch will nicht nur Darstellung eines europäischen Werkes sein, sondern vor allem Bekenntnis zu einem Menschen, der mir und manchem das stärkste moralische Erlebnis unserer Weltwende war" (*ROLLAND* 284). Echoing his words on the First World War in the autobiographical portrait of 1936—"the greatest of emotional shocks as well as the strongest of moral lessons" ("Autobiography 1936"—Rolland, his impact, is described as a "moralische Erlebnis" (moral experience). For, as we are told in the brief introductory chapter "Kunstwerk eines Lebens", Rolland's fame was forged after many years of solitude and suffering, which left a "festen Grund des Wissens" (*ROLLAND* 308) from which Rolland drew his inexhaustible strength: "Aber dank solchen Wurzeln in der Tiefe, der Wucht seiner moralischen Schwerkraft, kann gerade dies Werk dann unerschüttert bleiben im Weltensturme Europas" (*ROLLAND* 305). Thus, the rest of the work attempts to show how the French writer became such a 'moral

¹¹⁸ In a text written for the celebration of Rolland's 70th birthday, Zweig emphasizes these moral attributes of Rolland away from the political, and his exemplary role as individual, writer and intellectual: "Nicht im Namen einer Gruppe, einer Partei oder gar im Auftrag einer Regierung oder einer Nation, sondern nur als einer von den unzähligen seiner dankbaren Freunde möchte ich heute den Mann begrüßen, der unserer Generation das entscheidende Vorbild menschlicher Unabhängigkeit und geistiger Freiheit gegeben hat" ("RR70" 4058). In the same vein, other scholars have pointed out the importance of ethics and morality in Zweig's reception of Rolland. For instance, Robert Dumont claims that "si influence il y a, elle ne peut être principalement que du domaine spirituel et moral" (*Stefan Zweig et la France* 241). Moreover, he contends that Rolland was instrumental in driving Zweig away from aestheticism and into a conception of the artist as a social force: "L'unique justification de son œuvre est son action morale sur la foule" (241). Equally, Nedeljkovic, commenting on Zweig's conception of the artist, asserts that "Zweig était même prêt à pardonner à un créateur ses défauts artistiques s'il les rachetait par des valeurs morales, s'il défendait la justice et propageait la fraternité" (230).

force' and, finally, during the war, the keeper of Europe's conscience. In so doing, Zweig traces the beginning of Rolland 'the intellectual' to a very specific point in time in his youth, when he received the answer to a letter he had sent to Tolstoy.¹¹⁹ In Zweig's own wording, the Russian thinker told Rolland "daß nur jene einen Wert habe, die Menschen verbinde, und daß nur jener Künstler zähle, der seiner Überzeugung ein Opfer bringt. Nicht Liebe zur Kunst, sondern Liebe zur Menschheit sei die Vorausbedingung aller wahren Berufung; nur wer von ihr erfüllt sei, dürfe hoffen, jemals in der Kunst etwas Wertvolles zu leisten" (*ROLLAND* 479). However, Zweig remarks that Tolstoy's doctrine was not what affected Rolland the most. What had, actually, affected him the most was the fact that Tolstoy had offered his words of help and consolation to a stranger. Later on, Zweig tells us, Rolland would remember his "eigene[...] Not, in Erinnerung der fremden Tröstung gelernt, jede Krise eines Gewissens als etwas Heiliges zu betrachten, jede Hilfeleistung als erste moralische Pflicht des Künstlers. Und von jener Stunde, da er das Briefblatt löste, war in ihm der große Helfer, der brüderliche Berater erstanden" (*ROLLAND* 490).¹²⁰ And so we encounter again one of those forms of intellectuality we found in the figures of Verhaeren and Jeremias: the intellectual as an adviser, as that individual who has enough moral/'spiritual' authority to act as a mentor to other people and as a guide to the masses. A voice, we could say, worth listening to, in the sense that his interests are supposed to be aligned with the 'common', with those of humanity and therefore above parochial discourses and practices. Moreover, according to Zweig, this quality of Rolland's intellectuality is what turns him into a leader at the decisive hour,

¹¹⁹ According to McClain and Zohn, "Rolland's Tolstoy experience [...] awakened Zweig as well to the responsibility of the artist towards his age, that of furthering understanding among men by playing a mediating and uniting role" (280).

¹²⁰ In this sense, we could argue that, in one of those recurrent biographical parallels between Zweig and the subjects of his biographies—probably due to that strong process of identification we discussed before, Rolland somehow acts as Zweig's Tolstoy in the sense that he participates in the epiphanic moment of his conversion to pacifism as described in *Die Welt von Gestern*.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

what gives power and authority to his words after a life devoted to love and mankind: “Wie ein Schwert gibt er sich ihm in die Hand. In entscheidendem Augenblick schenkt er ihm Macht und Stimme, damit er für Europa spreche, er hebt ihn hoch, damit er sichtbar sei im Getümmel” (*ROLLAND* 771).

Besides these passages from the introductory chapter, Rolland’s conversion into Europe’s conscience—and his earning said moral authority—is amply described by Zweig, especially in the second part—devoted to his early works as a dramatist—and the sixth and last—“Das Gewissen Europas”. In this sense, many of Rolland’s deeds and works are interpreted from the point of view of their moral value, of how they are imbued with their author’s ‘moral surge’. For instance, when Zweig comments on his friend’s early production, he asserts that “immer ist seine Anstrengung auf das höchste moralische Maß gerichtet, immer auf ewige Formen, immer empor zum Monumentalen [...] die größten Vorbilder sind sein Beispiel, die großen Helden der Jahrhunderte, nicht die literarischen Kollegen. [...] Tolstoi, der einzig Schaffende im Sinne jener Großen, wird ihm Lehrer und Meister” (*ROLLAND* 854). Following this direction, it must be noted that both in his early plays and in his biographical cycles, Rolland would turn to history for examples of poetical and intellectual moral forces. As Zweig would do after the war, “er durchforscht ihr Leben, um Mut zu finden an ihrem Mute, er studiert ihre Werke, um die seinen an ihrem Maß zu erheben über das bloß Tägliche, das nur Relative” (*ROLLAND* 854). All in all, Zweig projects Rolland’s moral authority retrospectively, detecting what he considers to be the influence of his biographical subject’s essence—or core drive—throughout his life and career:

Immer muß irgendeine moralische Kraft der Hebel sein, um einen geistigen Kosmos aus den Angeln zu heben. Und diese moralische Kraft Rollands ist ein in der ganzen neueren Literatur unvergleichlicher Mut. Was seine Stellung im Kriege erst sichtbar der Welt offenbart hat, den einsamen Heroismus, sich mit

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

seiner Gesinnung einer ganzen Zeit allein entgegenzustellen, das hatte im Unsichtbaren seine anonyme Leistung schon ein Vierteljahrhundert vorher den Wissenden bekundet. (*ROLLAND* 865)

In this quote we observe a characteristic of Rolland—which we will analyze later in depth—that will be echoed in Zweig’s attempt to subvert the dynamics and rhetoric of war and nationalism. Rolland is presented as a ‘hero’, as someone who shows ‘courage’ not because he excels in defeating the nation’s enemies in bloody combat, but because he is able to resist what is perceived as ‘the mainstream’—the dominant discourses and opinions of his time. In other words, part of Rolland’s moral authority derives from this act of rebellion against “einer ganzen Zeit”, from his attempt to change a society that he perceives as corrupt through his art, using his pen. Consequently, his first artistic projects are immense, monumental in their own conception, insofar as their incommensurability is an essential characteristic to realize their grand moral purpose: “Breite ist für Rolland mehr eine moralische Notwendigkeit als eine künstlerische” (*ROLLAND* 898). In the end, Zweig uses the moral lenses to justify the formal features of Rolland work, being much more interested in the higher mission that propels it than in its aesthetic or literary value. In a way, Zweig seems to be projecting his own need to find a purpose in his art. Therefore, Zweig asserts that

über diesen fünf Schaffenskreisen aber schwebt noch unsichtbar ein anderer, Späteren erst in Anfang und Ende, Ursprung und Wiederkehr deutlich erkennbar: die harmonische Bindung einer vielfältigen Existenz zu erhobenem universellen Lebenskreis im Sinne Goethes, wo gleichfalls Leben und Dichtung, Wort und Brief, Zeugnis und Tat selbst Kunstwerk werden. (*ROLLAND* 920)

Furthermore, from this moral approach, theater emerges as a weapon, as a means to effect change that, nonetheless, at that time, needs to be renovated in order to fulfil said function. For theater cannot be elitist, the divertimento of the bourgeoisie, “den

ungeheuren Möglichkeiten der Bluterneuerung verschlossen” (*ROLLAND* 1062). Rather, “das Theater darf, wenn es national sein will, nicht nur Luxusprodukt der oberen Zehntausend sein: es muß die moralische Nahrung der Masse werden und selbst produktiv die Fruchtbarkeit der Volksseele beeinflussen” (*ROLLAND* 1072).¹²¹ And so Zweig introduces here an aspect of his construction of the figure of the intellectual—as embodied by Rolland—, namely the fact that that intellectual must be in a position to address the masses, which in an exercise that may be read also as an elitist stance. Rolland’s story is that of an exceptional individual trying to educate/emancipate the people, supposed to be ignorant, victims of the system, in need of rescue. This is how the intellectual becomes a leader, someone who prescribes and guides in ‘spiritual’ matters, a sort of secular priest. And this analogy might explain why Zweig’s figures of intellectuality are up to this point—Verhaeren-Jeremias-Rolland—imbued with a sort of religiosity which marks the language with which they are described and articulated. According to Nedeljkovic Rolland embodies the figure of the poet as prophet or apostle: “À mesure qu’un écrivain devient un apôtre, il se développe comme poète. La suprême poésie n’est qu’une nouvelle religion qui devrait purifier le monde. La poésie de Rolland portait en elle cette force régénératrice” (233)

Another feature or by-product of presenting Rolland as a moral authority is the equation of moral force with idealism. Usually, the word ‘idealist’, applied to Zweig’s attitude and/or to his work, has been used by critics to mark either a weakness or a fault, a feature that reveals either Zweig’s naivete, ignorance or his intellectual/conceptual simplicity. However, and going against such interpretations, I contend—as an argument

¹²¹ In that sense, in another passage, we read the following criticism: “[D]ie zwanzig oder dreißig Volksdarbietungen kommen dort bestenfalls einem verschwindenden Teil der Bevölkerung zugute, und sie bedeuten vor allem keine seelische Bindung, keinen moralischen Aufschwung. Die Kunst ist ohne dauernde Einwirkung auf die Masse, die Masse wiederum ohne Einwirkung auf die dramatische Kunst” (*ROLLAND* 1094).

that will be discussed throughout this dissertation, and especially in Chapter II—that what Zweig is signaling with the characterization of an artist or a work of art as ‘idealist’ is the notion that the artist’s commitment can only be inscribed in the sphere of ‘immateriality’, of the ‘spiritual’, moral, or ethical. Thus, a distinction ensues between an idealism that seeks to effect change, an attempt to modify (an aspect of) reality and an idealism that is purely abstract—we could read ‘aestheticist’: “Immer ist bei ihm der Impetus mehr ein moralischer als ein künstlerischer, immer fühlt er die Verantwortung einer Nation in sich. Und nur ein solch produktiver, ein heroischer Idealismus, nicht der bloß theoretische, kann Idealismus zeugen” (*ROLLAND* 1160). What is more, idealism is, in Zweig, another word for ‘apoliticism’. There is an opposition—a non-negotiable enmity—between art and politics.

The ‘true’ artist’, the ‘good’ intellectual, does not seek to impose his ideas, to see them realized no matter the cost; he is in a sense ‘doomed’ to failure. Drawing on the historical example of the French Revolution and Rolland’s recreation of Danton—as well as his experience of the Dreyfus affair—Zweig asserts that “jede geistige Bewegung und insbesondere jede Revolution und Reformation kennt diesen tragischen Augenblick des Sieges, wo die Macht an die Menschen fällt, das Moralisch-Einheitliche in politische Strebung zersplittert” (*ROLLAND* 1236). And he goes on to argue that “Rolland hat in jenen Tagen der Dreyfus-Affäre Ähnliches im Menschlichen gespiegelt gesehen. Wie dort in Wirklichkeit, ist er auch in der Dichtung mit den Besiegten, mit jenen, denen die Idee alles war und der Erfolg nichts; denn er weiß, die Kraft einer Idee ist immer in ihrer Nichterfüllung” (*ROLLAND* 1236). Here we witness once again this idea of politics being equated to power; a power that is egotistical, unfair, unequally distributed. Therefore, the only way to escape the wheel of injustice is to contest the rhetorical devices and discursive practices that feed this power. It is in doing so that Rolland becomes a hero, “Anwalt

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

jenes Heroismus, der keine andere Instanz anerkennt, weder Vaterland noch Sieg, weder Erfolg noch Gefahr: immer nur die eine, die höchste, sein Gewissen” (*ROLLAND* 1324).

Following this line of discussion—and moving on to the chapters that deal with Rolland and his European and pacifists works in the first two decades of the twentieth century (Parts V and VI)—, Zweig does not hesitate to call *Jean-Christophe* a “deed” in the spirit of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*—but set in a contemporary context: “Hier wie immer war der menschlichste aller Künstler sein Vorbild—der Künstler, dem die Kunst nicht Endzweck war, sondern nur Durchgang zu ethischer Wirkung, und im Sinne Tolstois will sein ‘Johann Christof’ kein literarisches Werk sein, sondern eine Tat” (*ROLLAND* 1780). Therefore, resuming what has already been argued, Zweig sees this text, this work of art, as something that transcends the limits of art itself, that goes beyond a traditional conception of the literary to claim a unity between art and life: “Dieses Buch ist außerhalb alles Gewohnten und doch mitten in der Zeit. Es ist jenseits der Literatur und doch ihre stärkste Manifestation. [...] Es ist kein Buch, sondern eine Botschaft, keine Geschichte und doch unsere Zeit. Es ist mehr als ein Werk: es ist das täglich Wunderbare eines Menschen, der sich als Wahrheit erlebt und damit das ganze Leben” (*ROLLAND* 1784). Again we find this exemplary quality of Rolland as an intellectual that allows him to produce works of art whose “Wert liegt weitaus im Moralischen” (*ROLLAND* 2817).

Last but not least, an aspect of Rolland’s moral superiority concerns his inner freedom, his ability or strength to remain ‘spiritually’ independent in trying times, when the individual is forced to take sides—a topic we will see again with Erasmus and, above all, Montaigne. Freedom is a quality of the intellectual, a precondition of his commitment. Equally, it is a fundamental ingredient in the formulation of Zweig’s European and humanist ethics. In the case of Rolland, of the form of intellectuality he represents, freedom is conceived as an opposition to the “Herdennatur” (*ROLLAND* 3127). Despite

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Rolland's awareness of the difficulty of remaining free in times of 'collective madness', he focuses his energy on combating the inertia of the masses, which is seen as "alles Unheils Anbeginn" (ROLLAND 3127). That "Unheil[...]" refers obviously to the First World War, and the recipe to combat it consists in extending the freedom of the intellectual to the masses: "Nur die Herdennatur, das Nachsprechen fremder Argumente, die blinde Begeisterung für niemals wirklich gefühlte Gefühle konnten eine solche Katastrophe möglich machen: und nur die Freiheit möglichst vieler Menschen kann in Zukunft die Menschheit vor solcher Tragödie erretten, nur die Nichtsolidarität der Gewissen" (ROLLAND 3127). The mission of the intellectual is, therefore, to turn the unthinking mass into free individuals.

Lastly, it must be noted that freedom, understood as an essential quality of the intellectual, is symbolized by the figure of Clerambault, the protagonist of Rolland's homonymous novel—devised during the war and published in 1920 as Rolland's diagnosis of Europe's ailments, what had turned its peoples against one another: "Aber die ernste, stille, dauernde Auseinandersetzung des Dichters mit der Zeit ist sein Roman *Clerambault*, die 'Geschichte eines freien Gewissens', die er in vier Jahren langsam zur Vollendung gestaltet hat. Nicht eine Autobiographie, sondern eine Transkription seiner Ideen ist dieser Clerambault" (ROLLAND 3280). Once again, as with with *Jean-Christophe*, we are dealing with a work that is much more than a literary text: "Was man einen 'Roman' nennt, er ist wie jener weniger und unendlich viel mehr. *Clerambault* ist ein Entwicklungsroman, aber nicht der eines Menschen, sondern einer Idee" (ROLLAND 3290). However, Zweig argues, the exposition of Rolland's thought or philosophy is not a matter of "etwas Fertiges, Abgeschlossenes und Gegebenes. Stufe um Stufe aus dem Irrtum und der Schwäche steigen wir mit einem Menschen zur Klarheit empor" (ROLLAND 3290). We may deduce from these that Zweig believed that a work of art, a literary text,

can effect a certain ‘spiritual’ transformation on the reader, and not merely by exposing a doctrine, but by appealing to the readers’ way of being in the world, their (sense of) responsibility and their ethics.¹²²

As a conclusion, we contend that Zweig is constructing a doubly oriented form of intellectuality that directs its intentional force both towards the outside and the inside of the individual, which becomes the center, the axis. Thus, as Rolland becomes a mediator between European nations before and during the war by building a character, Jean Christophe, who deliberately makes the exercise of stepping out of his comfort zone in order to see, feel and negotiate difference and other forms of being in the world, his action and intellectual force must tend to individuals’ inner needs and awakening. In contrast to Jean-Christophe, who encounters in his journeys several ‘counter-types’, Clerambault’s fight is with himself, “der alte, der frühere, der schwache Clerambault, den der neue, der wissende, der wahre Mensch erst niederringen muß; sein Heroismus spielt nicht gegen die sichtbare Welt wie jener Johann Christofs, sondern im unsichtbaren Raum der Gedanken” (*ROLLAND* 3290).

Romain Rolland II: A European and a Citizen of the World

As has been demonstrated so far, the forms of commitment and intellectuality embodied in Zweig’s image of Rolland are first and foremost determined by the notion of ‘moral authority’, to which we have devoted the first pages of our analysis of *Romain Rolland. Der Mann und das Werk*. However, Rolland as an intellectual, as a committed artist, cannot be easily circumscribed to a single characteristic. In fact, Rolland might be one of

¹²² By ‘ethics’ I refer to those values that guide our actions, inform our opinions, shape our sense of responsibility, and orient how we (re)act to the world that surrounds us. Accordingly, when I refer to the ‘ethical’ dimension of Zweig’s commitment, I am pointing to those parameters and core values of his *engagement* that inform and condition his choices and responses as a writer and as an intellectual. As far as my analysis of Stefan Zweig’s work in this dissertation is concerned, I do not distinguish between ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’, ‘morality’ and ‘ethics’. In my reading, both terms refer back to Zweig’s idea of the ‘spiritual’.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

the most complete images of intellectuality ever portrayed by Stefan Zweig, touching on key ideas and notions in Zweig's *Weltanschauung*, such as Europe, pacifism, transnationalism, defeat, etc., which, far from being isolated from one another, are deeply connected within an ethical matrix. First of all, Rolland is—like Verhaeren—a European, in the sense that his intellectual efforts are directed to the task of mediating between European cultures, the task of bringing them together. Unsurprisingly—considering Zweig's determinist approach to biography—, we encounter Rolland's Europeanness already in his childhood, transmitted by the 'universal language' of music, which acts as a door to 'humanity': "Früh entdeckt er sich, Sprache über den Sprachen, die erste große Botschaft der Seele: die Musik. Seine sorgliche Mutter unterrichtet ihn am Klavier, aus den Tönen baut sich unendliche Welt des Gefühls, früh schon die Grenzen der Nationen überwachsend" (*ROLLAND* 326). We see already in these passages from the initial chapters how Europeanness, post-nationalism and a sense of the human are closely connected, part of a yearning to transcend the limitations of the 'local', to pass beyond "die Enge der Stadt, der Provinz, der Nation und der Zeiten" (*ROLLAND* 337). Similarly, literature is another factor in Rolland's upbringing that helps him go beyond the national: "Und auch der andere Heilige seiner Kindheit, Shakespeare, kommt aus der Ferne: mit seiner ersten Liebe ist der unbewußte Knabe schon jenseits der Nationen" (*ROLLAND* 337). And so does his education at the *École Normale Supérieure*, considered to be an institution that aspires towards "Universalität der Bildung" (*ROLLAND* 402). All in all, loving culture and art—which conform the realm of the 'spiritual' (*Geist*)—is a way of loving humankind, of accessing "eine Höhe des Erkennens und Genießens [...], wo Nationen und Sprachen gleichgültig werden vor der ewigen Sprache der Kunst" (*ROLLAND* 533).

Step by step Rolland veers unconsciously towards Europeanness, towards feeling that there is a larger community of allegiance beyond his country: "Der Dreiklang aus

Dichtung, Musik und Wissenschaft harmonisiert sich unbewußt mit dem andern: Frankreich, Deutschland, Italien. Europäischer Geist ist nun für immer der seine, und noch ehe der Dichter eine Zeile geschrieben, lebt schon in seinem Blute der große Mythos des Johann Christof" (*ROLLAND* 576-587). However, Zweig points out, Rolland's post-national ethos does not simply substitute the nations, their individuality and difference, for a larger collectivity but it is based on the coexistence of both communities, the national and the supranational, and their capacity to understand each other: "Er zeigt [...] wie die Nationen in dieser scheinbar abstrakten Sphäre zwar ihre Charaktere ausprägen, aber doch immer die höhere, die zeitlose, die internationale Einheit unbewußt aufbauen. Fähigkeit des Verstehens und des Verstehenlassens ist ja der innerste Kern seiner menschlichen Wirksamkeit" (*ROLLAND* 597). It is in this sense that, as a European intellectual, Rolland becomes a mediator, a force that brings about unity and harmony. Like Verhaeren, Rolland is also seen by Zweig as the representative of a new order that is unfolding beyond the nation. As a consequence, his intellectual contribution is filtered—as happens recurrently in Zweig's work—through Zweig's European lenses, constituting a key element of his characterization as a committed artist. For instance, Zweig writes in this text about Rolland's assuming as his highest function his "europäischer Verantwortlichkeit" (*ROLLAND* 771); about the "Einheit Europas" as "seine teuerste Idee" (*ROLLAND* 781); about his work—following Goethe's dictum "Nationalliteratur will nicht mehr viel sagen, die Epoche der Weltliteratur ist an der Zeit" (qtd. in Zweig *ROLLAND*, 1149)—as expanding "de[n] französische[n] Hymnus in den europäischen" (*ROLLAND* 1138). In sum, Zweig continuously amplifies the horizon of address and reception of Rolland's work in an attempt to 'universalize' it, to make it matter in terms of humankind, raising it to the "Allmenschliche" (*ROLLAND* 1367).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Following the same line of discussion, it must be noted that in this process of presenting Rolland as the European intellectual par excellence, the figure of Jean-Christophe appears again as the embodiment of Rolland's spirit of conciliation and harmony. In a way, *Jean-Christophe* is read as an example of how mediation works, a journey into discovering otherness and learning to love it. According to Zweig, said work can be considered "eine Eroika der großen europäischen Gemeinsamkeit" (ROLLAND 1746); an attempt to write for Europe, to build a common heritage—something that resonates with Zweig's own European project: "Er wollte für alle schreiben, nicht bloß für sein Vaterland, sondern für alle Nationen, nicht nur für die Künstler und Literaten, sondern allen jenen, die um das Leben und die Zeit zu wissen begehren, ein Bild des Lebens inmitten ihrer eigenen Gegenwart schenken" (ROLLAND 1557). We can observe in this last quote how Rolland the intellectual is a mediator in the sense of—like Verhaeren—he who builds the horizon of the common and binds people together. He is therefore also someone who has left his preconceptions put aside, someone who has been freed from "jedem Glauben, jedem Wahn, [...] von den Vorurteilen der Völker und Nationen" (ROLLAND 1999). In other words, the goal of Jean-Christophe's journey is humankind: "Wer an ihn rührt—die ersonnenen Menschen im Buche ebenso wie die wirklichen Menschen, die das Buch lesen—, wird von seinem Wesen gesteigert, denn die Macht, durch die er siegt, ist eben dasselbe Leben selbst, das uns allen zugeteilt ist" (ROLLAND 2011). In the same vein, his relationship with the Frenchman Olivier is read by Zweig as a supranational allegiance, a symbol of European friendship: "Ein Symbol sollte diese gegenseitige Beglückung sein für die beiden Völker, eine geistige Freundschaft, die hier in zwei Individuen geprägt war, zu einem Seelenbund der Brudernationen zu erheben, die 'beiden Schwingen des Abendlandes' zu verbinden, daß sich frei in ihnen der europäische Geist aufschwinde über die blutige Vergangenheit" (ROLLAND 2064).¹²³

¹²³ On supranationalism and European friendship, see also pp. 2249.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Last but not least, once Jean-Christophe/Rolland/the individual has freed himself from the lies and isolation of nationalism, embracing a European *Weltanschauung*, he becomes a citizen of the world:

Es bleibt ja notwendiges Verhängnis, daß wir zuerst—und viele ihr Leben lang— das eigene Land nur von innen kennen, das fremde nur von außen: erst wenn wir das eigene auch von außen kennen, das fremde von innen, in der Brust seiner eingeborenen Kinder, dann erst können wir europäisch sehen, können die verschiedenen Länder begreifen als ein notwendiges Nebeneinander, als eine Ergänzung. Johann Christof ist nun der Kämpfer um das Ganze des Lebens: deshalb ist sein Weg auch der des Nationalmenschen zum Weltbürger, zur “europäischen Seele”. (*ROLLAND* 2118)

It must be noted that at this point in Zweig’s thought the world is clearly equated to Europe¹²⁴ and vice versa, so that Europeanism and Cosmopolitanism refer broadly speaking to the same phenomenon. In his quality as a citizen of the world, Zweig writes of *Jean-Christophe* that “am Ende der Wanderschaft sind sie [the nations] dem Weltbürger nur Heimat der Seele” (*ROLLAND* 2151); and that “der Weltbürger, der keiner Nation mehr die Prägung seiner eigenen aufzwingen möchte, sieht lächelnd und froh die ewige Verschiedenheit der Rassen, aus denen sich, wie aus den sieben Farben des Spektrums, das Licht der Welt, die wundervolle Vielfalt des ewig Gemeinsamen, der ganzen Menschheit zusammenfügt” (*ROLLAND* 2206).¹²⁵

Leaving Jean-Christophe—the citizen of the world—and going back to Rolland, we could argue that the forms of intellectuality that traverse the French writer’s image turn him into a mediator, a European, and a (free) citizen of the world. Finally, by proxy, and in the specific context of the war, the intellectual

¹²⁴ And Europe to the triad France-Germany-Italy.

¹²⁵ On Jean-Christophe as a citizen of the world and cosmopolitanism, see also pp. 2378 and 3423.

also becomes a pacifist insofar as he carries out his duty to defend Europe.¹²⁶ For if we can contend that the universalizing and humanizing impulse in Rolland results in two forms of post-nationalism—Europeanism and Cosmopolitanism—, equally we can equally claim that when society collapses in front of barbarism, his love for mankind, his function as mediator, and his desire to harmonize and unite make him a pacifist. After 1914,¹²⁷ and echoing Zweig’s call to (reconstruct)action in *Der Turm zu Babel*, the intellectual must take sides and fight to recover what has been lost.¹²⁸ In this context, Rolland’s conscience emerges as something indestructible. Following the same rationale that took Jeremias and his fellow citizens to leave Jerusalem with hope and optimism because they had realized that faith—an idea—could not be destroyed while it survived in one single soul, the

¹²⁶ On the intellectual as pacifist, see, for instance, pp. 1682 and chapter “Der Kampf gegen den Haß”. Zweig will ironically call pacifism Rolland’s “third crime”: “Das dritte Vergehen—das staatsgefährlichste—für jene Mentalität aber war, daß Rolland im militärischen Siege nicht das Wunderelixier der Moral, des Geistes, der Gerechtigkeit erblicken wollte, daß ihm ein nachgiebiger, ein unblutiger Friede, der eine völlige Versöhnung, eine brüderliche Bindung der europäischen Völker brächte, segensreicher schien als eine blutige Bezwingung, die nur wieder Drachensaat von Haß und neuen Kriegen zeugte” (ROLLAND 2996).

¹²⁷ The situation is thus described by Zweig: “Der zweite August 1914 reißt Europa in Stücke. Und mit der Welt bricht auch der Glaube, den die Brüder im Geiste, Johann Christof und Olivier, mit ihrem Leben erbaut, zusammen. Ein großes Erbe liegt verwaist. Voll Haß scharren in allen Ländern die Kärner des Krieges mit zornigen Spatenschlägen den einst heiligen Gedanken der menschlichen Brüderschaft wie einen Leichnam zu den Millionen Toten” (ROLLAND 2505).

¹²⁸ On this occasion, Zweig strikes a similar analogy to that of the tower by using the image of Noah’s ark, which in Zweig’s text symbolizes the safeguarding of the European heritage—to be later recovered in times of peace to build the common edifice anew: “Und man kann eine Arche bauen, um aus der Sintflut das geistig Kostbarste der selbstmörderischen Generation einer späteren zu übermitteln, sobald die Wogen des Hasses wieder gesunken sind. Man kann ein Zeichen aufrichten über die Zeit, an dem sich die Gläubigen erkennen, einen Tempel der Eintracht inmitten der blutigen Felder der Völker und doch hoch über ihnen” (ROLLAND 2669). In this sense, Rolland and Zweig dream of uniting Europe’s intellectuals within this ark/tower/space above so that they can fight together for Europe and against nationalism: “Innerhalb der entsetzlichen Organisationen der Generalstäbe, der Technik, der Lüge, des Hasses träumt Rolland von einer andern Organisation: von einer Gemeinschaft der freien Geister Europas. Die führenden Dichter, Gelehrten, sie sollen die Arche sein, die Bewahrer der Gerechtigkeit in diesen Tagen des Unrechts und der Lüge. Während die Massen, betrogen von den Worten, in blindem Hasse gegeneinander wüten, sie, die einander nicht kennen, könnten die Künstler, die Dichter, die Gelehrten Deutschlands, Frankreichs, Englands, sie, die doch seit Jahrzehnten an gemeinsamen Entdeckungen, Fortschritten, Ideen schaffen, sich zusammentun zu einem Tribunal des Geistes, das mit wissenschaftlichem Ernste alle Lügen zwischen ihren Völkern ausroden und über ihre Nationen miteinander hohe Zwiesprache führen würde” (ROLLAND 2680).

idea of Europe has endured in he who has been able to keep his conscience free:¹²⁹

“Diesen Kampf im Kampfe der Völker haben wir durch fünf Jahre heroisch gesteigert erlebt, das Wunder eines Nüchternen gegen den Wahn der Millionen, des Freien gegen die Knechtschaft der öffentlichen Meinung, des Liebenden gegen den Haß, des Europäers gegen die Vaterländer, des Gewissens gegen die Welt” (*ROLLAND* 2529). In this sense, the intellectual—besides his roles as an apostle, leader, advisor, becomes a sort of consoler, a guiding-light in the dark:

Und es war in dieser langen blutigen Nacht, da wir manchmal in Verzweiflung über das Sinnlose der Natur zu vergehen meinten, einzige Tröstung und Erhebung, zu erkennen, daß die stärksten Gewalten, die Städte zermalmen und Reiche vernichten, doch ohnmächtig bleiben gegen einen einzigen Menschen, wenn er den Willen und die seelische Unerschrockenheit hat, frei zu sein; denn die sich Sieger über Millionen dünkten, konnten eines nicht meistern: das freie Gewissen. (*ROLLAND* 2529)

The fight for Europe is a fight against war and hatred. Acknowledging the limitations of the artist when the opponent resorts to physical violence,¹³⁰ the intellectual must focus his energies on sustaining the communal framework of understanding,¹³¹ which is

¹²⁹ As we have already noted, Zweig recurs to a religious vocabulary to describe the European ‘crusade’. Thus, Europe is presented by Zweig first as a faith and second as a teleology, the inevitable destiny of Europe’s nations if they are to get back on the track of progress and humanity. As an example of this conceptual proximity between faith and Europe in Zweig and in his image of Rolland: “aber bei ihm verwandelt sich jede Erkenntnis in religiöse Leidenschaft, jeder Glaube in Bekenntnis, jeder Gedanke in Tat. Daß er seiner Idee gerade dann treu geblieben, als die Zeit sie verleugnete, daß er den europäischen Geist verteidigte gegen alle die rasenden Heerhaufen der einstmals europäischen und nun vaterländischen Intellektuellen, ist ein Ruhm, der ihn einsam macht unter den anderen Dichtern” (*ROLLAND* 2572). See also Rolland’s words about his belief in the unity that was to come: “Ich zweifle nicht im mindesten an der zukünftigen Einheit der europäischen Gemeinschaft. Sie wird wahr werden. Und der Krieg von heute ist nur ihre blutige Taufe” (*ROLLAND* 2941).

¹³⁰ On these limitations: “Nun hat der Dichter klar seine Aufgabe erkannt: den Krieg zu bekämpfen wäre sinnlos. Vernunft bleibt machtlos gegen Elemente. Aber im Kriege das zu bekämpfen, was die Leidenschaften der Menschen wissend dem Entsetzlichen hinzutun, die geistige Vergiftung der Waffen, scheint ihm seine vorbestimmte Pflicht” (*ROLLAND* 2885).

¹³¹ In the same vein, Zweig highlights Rolland’s efforts to sustain Europe as a community through his abundant correspondence, the keeping of which becomes a kind of ethical activity: “Diese Hunderte und Tausende von Briefen während der Kriegszeit bedeuten ein moralisches Werk, dem kein Dichter unserer Epoche ein gleiches zur Seite zu setzen hat. Unzählige Einsame haben sie beglückt, Unsichere befestigt, Verzweifelte erhoben: nie war die Mission eines Dichters reiner erfüllt” (*ROLLAND* 3094).

precisely the most difficult cause to represent, the one with less adepts: “Nur ein Land, das allen Gemeinsame, das Mutterland aller Vaterländer, das heilige Europa hat keinen Sprecher, keinen Vertreter. Nur eine Idee, die selbstverständlichste einer christlichen Welt, bleibt ohne Anwalt, die Idee der Ideen, die der Menschlichkeit” (ROLLAND 2777). In short, the intellectual becomes the spokesperson of Europe, its advocate: “Denn in diesen Aufsätzen redet nicht ein einzelner, sondern das unsichtbare Europa, als dessen Kronzeuge und öffentlichen Verteidiger Romain Rolland sich zum ersten Male fühlt” (ROLLAND 2820). And in doing so, he is also forced, by his responsibility and moral duties, to stand—in Rolland’s own words—“above the battle”: “Am 22. September 1914 erscheint im *Journal de Genève* jener Aufsatz ‘Au-dessus de la Mêlée’, nach dem flüchtigen Vorpostengeplänkel mit Gerhart Hauptmann die Kriegsansage an den Haß, der entscheidende Hammerschlag zum Bau der unsichtbaren europäischen Kirche inmitten des Krieges” (ROLLAND 2842). From this perspective, the intellectual situates himself on a ‘third’ space, refusing to take sides: “Daß in einer Zeit der Parteien keine Bestrebung undankbarer sein werde als die zur Unparteilichkeit, darüber gab sich Rolland von allem Anbeginn keinem Zweifel hin” (ROLLAND 2941).¹³² Bearing all this in mind, we could argue that this is precisely the reason why the analysis of Rolland’s multiple forms of intellectuality is so central to understanding Zweig’s continuous negotiations with his own commitment. For this position Rolland adopts ‘above the battle’, which is another version of his efforts as a mediator, will leave a deep imprint on Zweig’s thought, shaping his reception/construction of other ‘masters’ like Erasmus and orientating his public actions in the thirties, as we will see in the next sections.

¹³² On standing ‘above’: “Aber dank solchen Wurzeln in der Tiefe, der Wucht seiner moralischen Schwere, kann gerade dies Werk dann unerschüttert bleiben im Weltstürme Europas, und indes die andern Standbilder, zu denen wir aufblickten, stürzen und sich neigen mit der wankenden Erde, steht es frei, ‘au dessus de la mêlée’, über dem Getümmel der Meinungen, ein Wahrzeichen für alle freien Seelen, ein tröstender Ausblick im Tumult der Zeit” (ROLLAND 305).

Romain Rolland III: A 'Defeated', 'Good' Intellectual

To end our analysis of Zweig's construction of Rolland as an intellectual, I would like to briefly discuss two features present in the biography and which imply a continuation between Jeremias and the French writer, helping us further delineate the contour of the figure of the intellectual embodied by Rolland: the idea of defeat and the opposition between the 'good' and the 'bad' intellectual. According to Donald Daviau, the notions of 'defeat' and 'suffering' are at the core of what Zweig learned/incorporated from Rolland's example, which, in his own words, "added a new dimension to Zweig's belief in the strengthening effect of suffering, for every defeat was transmuted by the great humanitarian into a moral triumph, humanly and artistically. From him Zweig learned that suffering alone was not sufficient to produce greatness, but that one must first have achieved a triumph over suffering" ("Victors in Defeat" 3). As a consequence, we observe how both concepts become instrumental in Zweig's interpretation of his mentor's works. First, in the dramatic cycles, Rolland is presented as a writer who identifies with a kind of idealism based on the potential greatness of suffering and the redemptory force of defeat, two discourses that question the rhetoric of violence and revenge. In front of those individuals that try to manipulate the young "mit der fanatischen Mahnung":

Der andere Idealismus aber, der stillere und lange unbekannte, der Rollands, sucht anderen Glauben und anderen Trost für die Niederlage zu geben. Er deutet nicht auf die Zukunft hin, sondern hinaus in die Ewigkeit. Er verheißt keinen neuen Sieg, er entwertet nur die Niederlage. Für diese Dichter, die Schüler Tolstois sind, ist die Macht kein Argument für den Geist, der äußere Erfolg kein Wertmaß für die Seele. Für sie siegt der einzelne nicht, wenn seine Generäle auch hundert Provinzen erobern. (*ROLLAND* 822)

In this manner, we find that Tolstoy is again at the core of both Rolland's attitude as intellectual and of his program, a key intellectual 'instrument' in the fight against 'toxic'

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

nationalism. In the same vein, Zweig informs us that “die Niederlage ist nicht nur das Erlebnis seiner Jugend, sie ist auch der tragische Sinn seiner Mannesjahre geworden. Aber von je war es seine Kraft, aus den Niederlagen die stärksten Werke zu schaffen, aus Resignationen neue Erhebungen, aus Enttäuschungen leidenschaftliche Gläubigkeit” (ROLLAND 844). In plays such as *Saint-Louis*, Rolland stages Jeremias-like figures, as “zeigt Rolland zum erstenmal seinen liebsten Typus: den besiegten Sieger” (ROLLAND 1007), Louis, who “weiß es, daß im Kampf um das Aussichtslose die irdische Welt keine Siege gibt” (ROLLAND 1007), that “dem Besiegten in solchem Kampf bleibt doch der höchste Triumph” (ROLLAND 1019); or in *Aërt*, considered by Zweig as “die Tragödie der Besiegten, der starke leidenschaftliche Aufruf zum Erwachen” (ROLLAND 1029). Equally, even Rolland’s unsuccessful works are described by Zweig as moral triumphs, connecting the concept of defeat and suffering to Rolland’s later moral authority: “Sein Manifest ‘Le Théâtre du peuple’ (‘Das Theater des Volkes’) und sein ‘Théâtre de la Révolution’ (‘Theater der Revolution’) sind ein dauerndes Denkmal jener Bemühung, zeitlich mit einer Niederlage endend, aber wie alle seine Niederlagen menschlich und künstlerisch zu einem moralischen Triumph gestaltet” (ROLLAND 1084). It is from his own defeat that the intellectual informs his ethical stance: “hier ist zum erstenmal die Dialektik der Niederlage voll entfaltet, jenes leidenschaftliche Bekenntnis für die Besiegten, jene Umwertung des realen Unterliegens in geistigen Triumph, die—aus der Kindheit anklingend und von allen Erlebnissen Resonanz gewinnend—den Kern seines moralischen Gefühls bildet” (ROLLAND 1269). As the heroes of his plays become defeated individuals, Rolland “die Feindschaft gegen den Sieg proklamiert” (ROLLAND 1279). All in all, Zweig’s biography presents Rolland, in his twenties and thirties, as a defeated intellectual who is attentive to his and others’ suffering in his attempt to make his work ‘transcend’, to give to it a purpose or cause: “Aber auch Rolland bleibt derselbe, der ewige

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Beginner von Werk zu Werk, über das Hingesunkene ohne Klage aufsteigend, neuerem und höherem Ziel entgegen, um im Sinne von Rilkes schönem Wort ‘der Besiegte von immer Größerem zu sein’” (ROLLAND 1345).

Additionally, in his pursuit of the transformative power of defeat, Rolland will turn to history for examples, for friendly, sympathizing voices of those who also suffered but eventually found meaning in their pain. It must be noted that this is a double turn, both to history and to biography writing, that resulted in the practice of historical-life writing as the instrument through which both Rolland and Zweig would deal with their need to produce committed texts. In writing those biographies, these intellectuals found inspiration, courage, and also a way of transmitting to their readers their ethical and political projects/programs. Both writers follow the example of Plutarch, whose words preside the beginning of chapter three “Die heroischen Biographien”:

Durch die Beschäftigung mit geschichtlichen Untersuchungen nehmen wir nur das Andenken der besten und anerkanntesten Charaktere in unsere Seele auf, und dies befähigt uns, alles Schlechte, Unsittliche und Gemeine, das uns der unumgängliche Verkehr mit unserer Umwelt entgegenstellt, aufs entschiedenste abzuweisen und nur den Vorbildern die versöhnte und befriedigte Welt unserer Gedanken entgegenzukehren. (ROLLAND 1446)

Rolland and Zweig will create through their biographical series genealogies of (committed) figures who, by dint of the threads that bind them together under a single purpose—built and woven by the author—, will act as a sort of repository of knowledge and moral reference, as the foundations of communal spaces of experience and feeling. According to Zweig, Rolland realized that, although it is true that with artistic and intellectual genius often come pain and isolation, and that the privilege of a heightened sensibility oftentimes becomes a curse (ROLLAND 1455), it is also true that “es gibt noch eine andere Größe, eine tiefere, als jene der Tat, die er immer im Werke erhoben: die

Größe des Leidens” (*ROLLAND* 1469). Rolland’s community of address, like that of the Prophet at the end of *Jeremias* is a community of survivors, of fellow suffering souls, who must awake to the fact that “das Leben nie größer, nie fruchtbarer ist—nie glücklicher—als im Schmerz” (*ROLLAND* 1480).¹³³ According to Zweig, it is both for his own good and for his “unbekannte[...] Brüder[...] im Leiden” that Rolland set to write “die ‘heroischen Biographien’”. The term ‘heroic’ (*heroisch*) must be adapted, redefined, so that the ‘hero’ can become an ‘example’ in Rolland’s sense. Accordingly, Zweig is quick to clarify that he does not think anymore of

jene, die Massen führen und aufrühren, Kriege siegreich beenden, Revolutionen entzünden, nicht mehr die Männer der Tat und des todzeugenden Gedankens. Er hat die Nichtigkeit aller Gemeinsamkeit erkannt, hat unbewußt in seinen Dramen die Tragödie der Idee dargestellt, die nicht verteilt werden kann unter die Menschen wie Brot, sondern die sich in Hirn und Blut jedes einzelnen sofort zu anderer Form, oft zu ihrem Widerspiel verwandelt. (*ROLLAND* 1478-1488)

As we have hinted at before, Rolland’s goal as an intellectual is to turn the masses into a plurality of emancipated free-conscious individuals. Greatness cannot be achieved communally without first undergoing a painful and solitary process of personal transformation: “Das Leiden ist nicht das Ziel des großen Menschen. Aber es ist seine Probe, der notwendige Filter aller Reinheit” (*ROLLAND* 1508). In this light, according to Zweig, Rolland wants to show “Beethoven, den Helden [...], der an das Ende eines unendlichen Leidens den höchsten Hymnus der Menschheit stellt, das gottselige Jauchzen der Neunten Symphonie” (*ROLLAND* 1528). In the end, Rolland’s biographical series becomes a sort of treatise on different kinds of suffering and how greatness can indeed be

¹³³ Also on Rolland’s community of sufferers: “Ein erster Sieg über die Einsamkeit ist errungen: unsichtbare Brüder fühlt Rolland im Dunkel, sie harren auf sein Wort. Nur die Leidenden wollen um das Leiden wissen (und wie viele sind ihrer!); ihnen will er nun andere Gestalten zeigen, gleich groß in andern Schmerz, gleich groß in anderer Überwindung. Aus der Ferne der Zeiten blicken ihn ernst die Gestalten der Gewaltigen an: ehrfürchtig naht er ihnen und tritt in ihr Leben” (*ROLLAND* 1557).

the end result of that suffering: “Beethoven fällt das Schicksal mitten im Leben an durch ein Gebrest, Michelangelo ist das Verhängnis angeboren: Tolstoi schafft es sich selbst aus freiem bewußtem Willen” (ROLLAND 1598). We could argue that, for Rolland, suffering is a condition of humanity that comes in many forms, but which is never chosen. As it may come unexpectedly to any of us, it is also what binds us together, a sort of ‘common substance’ that cannot be dismissed or simply denied. Rather, it must be embraced—conquered by one’s will—in the path towards loving life and mankind.¹³⁴ However, as a ‘suffering’, ‘defeated’ intellectual and biographer, Rolland realizes that the experience of pain does not always fulfil an edifying function, nor does it always lead into a moral and ‘spiritual’ renaissance. Therefore, he faces the difficulty of having to falsify ‘reality’ for the sake of his commitment. In other words, sometimes the higher purpose or mission to which he commits his work forces him to manipulate, to fashion his subjects so that they can fulfil their role properly: “Es gibt, so erkennt er, Wahrheiten, die man aus Liebe zur Menschheit verbergen muß” (ROLLAND 1632).¹³⁵

As a conclusion, we could contend that the configuration of Rolland as an intellectual that is ready to go against the grain of his culture for the sake of conveying a larger ‘truth’ brings him suffering, rejection, isolation¹³⁶ and misunderstanding. Like Jean-Christophe, Rolland is for many years a wanderer in the desert, an artist, “den die Zeit nicht versteht”

¹³⁴ Zweig quoting Rolland on the meaning of suffering: “Das Leid aber ist unendlich, es nimmt alle Formen an. Bald wird es durch die blinde Willkür des Geschicks bedingt: Unglück, Siechtum, Ungerechtigkeit des Schicksals, bald hat es seinen tiefsten Grund im eigenen Wesen. Dann ist es nicht weniger beklagenswert, nicht weniger verhängnisvoll, denn man wählt nicht seine Natur, man hat das Leben nicht so begehrt, nicht verlangt, zu sein, was man geworden ist” (ROLLAND 1564).

¹³⁵ This reflection echoes our discussion of Zweig as a biographer as he who approaches his subjects with an intention, a hermeneutical edge which sometimes takes him away from factual truth and into the realm of subjective interpretation and identification.

¹³⁶ On Rolland’s loneliness: “Die letzte Wahrheit, die des Gewissens, hat keine Gemeinsamkeit, niemand hilft ihm, für die Freiheit des europäischen Geistes zu kämpfen, für die Wahrheit inmitten der Lüge, für die Menschlichkeit gegen den wahnwitzigen Haß. Er ist wieder allein mit seinem Glauben, mehr allein als in den bittersten Jahren seiner Einsamkeit. Aber Alleinsein hat für Rolland nie Resignation bedeutet. Zuschauen, wie ein Unrecht tätig wirkt, ohne Einspruch zu erheben, hat schon dem jungen Dichter so verbrecherisch geschienen, wie das Unrecht selbst. “Ceux qui subissent le mal sont aussi criminels que ceux qui le font” (ROLLAND 2786).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

(ROLLAND 1695). Only when the time is ripe, and moral and ‘spiritual’ leaders like Rolland are needed does he become a hero, does he achieve greatness albeit having overcome the isolation of his position ‘above’ and ‘against’ violence and the ‘common’ sense. In the end, Rolland becomes himself the ultimate hero in defeat: “[during the war] Wieder—zum wievielten Male!—ist Romain Rolland der große Besiegte der Umwelt. Keine seiner Ideen, keiner seiner Wünsche, seiner Träume hat sich verwirklicht: wieder hat Gewalt recht behalten gegen den Geist, die Menschen gegen die Menschheit” (ROLLAND 3434).

Last but not least, Rolland’s figure of intellectuality is built on the contrast/difference between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ intellectuals. This is a trait we have already discussed in our analysis of *Die Welt von Gestern* and *Jeremias*. Here, again, the context is primarily the First World War, when one is forced to take sides publicly.¹³⁷ After that, in the twenties, the role and morality of the intellectual will be the topic of a heated debate, especially after Julien Benda’s publication, in 1928, of *La Trahison des Clercs*. In the case of Rolland and Zweig, according to Nedeljkovic, the issue they will complain about the most is their solitude: “Le nombre de ceux qui furent capables de veiller sur l’ ‘humanité fourbue’ était infime selon Rolland. Il ne croyait pas en la plupart de ses confrères, de même que Zweig avait douté des grands écrivains allemands” (80). The difficulty of getting the intellectuals together after the conflict, to rally them around a ‘moral parliament’ that would be dedicated to the rapprochement between Europe’s nations and therefore to avoid a new conflict will cause, among other things, Rolland’s distrust in the bourgeois system and Zweig’s growing feeling of despair and powerlessness.

¹³⁷ However, according to Zweig, the opposition of Rolland to other writers and intellectuals dated back to the first years of his career, when he had already shown a rebellious attitude against the establishment: “So steht Rolland nicht erst in der Stunde des Krieges, sondern von allem Anbeginn im Gegensatz zu den anderen Dichtern und Künstlern der Zeit—daher auch die Einsamkeit seiner ersten zwanzig Schaffensjahre” (ROLLAND 2554).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Returning to the war context, we have already established that both Rolland's and Zweig's struggle is eminently 'spiritual' or 'moral', against hate, against the poisonous rhetoric of nationalism and war. In this sense, McClain and Zohn assert that this fight lashed out "especially sharply against armchair intellectuals who sought to sow discord and to perpetuate hatred among the nations of Europe" (267). In Zweig's biography of Rolland, especially in part six "Das europäische Gewissen", a clear distinction is drawn between both kinds of intellectuals. Thus, we read that "hier hat er versucht, was die andern Dichter und Intellektuellen durch Haß gegeneinanderhetzten, durch gütige Sorge zu versöhnen, wenigstens einen Bruchteil der millionenfachen Qual zu lindern durch gelegentliche Beruhigung und menschliche Tröstung" (*ROLLAND* 2635). As an example of 'bad' intellectual, Zweig dedicates some pages to the correspondence between his mentor and Gerhart Hauptmann, who according to Rolland has just accepted war as a given, as fate, for which reason Rolland accuses him of not protesting, of "sich 'mit den Verbrechen der Machthaber zu solidarisieren'" (*ROLLAND* 2789). Equally, the figure of Verhaeren, whose 'conversion', as we have seen, was a shock to his friends and disciples, is brought forward here as another counterexample. Whereas before the war the Belgian poet had been a promoter—mediator—of international brotherhood, "der Einbruch Deutschlands in seine Heimat lehrt ihn zum ersten Male das Gefühl des Hasses, und seine Dichtung, bisher Hymnus der schöpferischen Kräfte, dient nun mit aller bewußten Leidenschaft der Feindseligkeit" (*ROLLAND* 2738).¹³⁸

All in all, the 'bad' intellectual, in this context, is described as a 'nationalist', as someone who has fallen victim to the rhetoric of nationalism or who has consciously betrayed his duties towards humanity on his/his country's behalf: "Nein, die Liebe zu

¹³⁸ See also the chapter dedicated to the correspondence between Rolland and Verhaeren "Der Briefwechsel mit Verhaeren" (*ROLLAND* 2738-2773).

meinem Vaterlande fordert nicht, daß ich die gläubigen und treuen Seelen, die das ihrige lieben, hasse und hinmorde. Sie fordert, daß ich sie ehre und mich mit ihnen zu unserem gemeinsamen Wohle vereine” (*ROLLAND* 2854-2866). And so Rolland reminds his fellow intellectuals that in the context of war-torn Europe, “muß es die Sorge eines jeden Einzelnen, der eine Feder führt, sein, nie das Leiden der Welt um ein neues Leiden zu vermehren, keinen neuen Grund eines Hasses dem schon brennenden Strom noch hinzuzufügen” (*ROLLAND* 3201). In this light, two options remain for the ‘good’ intellectual, for he who is ready to go to any length to fulfill his responsibility. On the one hand, he can try to make his fellow countrymen aware of their mistakes, to awaken them to their own folly. On the other, and this is the path followed by Rolland, he can “den feindlichen Brüdern Europas nicht das Böse, sondern das Gute, das sie haben, [...] zeigen, das, was sie auf eine weisere und liebevollere Menschheit hoffen lassen kann” (*ROLLAND* 3201). In sum, the ‘bad’ intellectual is he who has sold his soul and prestige to the interests of the powers that be, of a class, a race or a political group. It is he who has kept the war going through spreading hate and lies. In Rolland’s condemning words:

Die Denker und Dichter beugten sich knechtisch vor dem Götzen des Tages und fügten dadurch zu den Flammen, die Europa an Leib und Seele verbrannten, unauslöschlichen giftigen Haß. Aus den Rüstkammern ihres Wissens und ihrer Phantasie suchten sie alle die alten und auch viele neue Gründe zum Haß, Gründe der Geschichte und Gründe einer angeblichen Wissenschaft und Kunst. Mit Fleiß zerstörten sie diesen Zusammenhang und die Liebe unter den Menschen und machten dadurch auch die Welt der Ideen, deren lebendige Verkörperung sie sein sollten, häßlich, schmutzig und gemein und schufen damit aus ihr—vielleicht ohne es zu wollen—ein Werkzeug der Leidenschaft. Sie haben für selbstsüchtige, politische oder soziale Parteiinteressen gearbeitet, für einen Staat, für ein Vaterland oder für eine Klasse. (*ROLLAND* 3400-3411)

Rolland IV: Conclusions

To conclude our exploration of the forms of intellectuality and commitment embodied in the image of Romain Rolland as built by Stefan Zweig, we can contend that, despite their growing differences as the Second World War drew near, Rolland remained a model for Zweig, a source of inspiration to negotiate his own responsibility as a writer. As for the different aspects that shape Rolland's articulation of his *engagement*, we have witnessed how the idea of 'moral authority'—based on the notions of 'suffering', 'rebellion' and 'defeat'—is instrumental in Zweig's understanding of Rolland's greatness as an intellectual. It is above all his ethical stance that makes him different, an outstanding figure moving against the winds of hatred and violence to preach the gospel of peace and mutual understanding. In this sense, Rolland is also a mediator between the nations of Europe, a non-aligned individual situated 'above' the battle and dedicated to the reconstruction of the European Tower of Babel. Additionally, it must be noted that we have been able to recognize many of the traits of Zweig's commitment in Rolland—the way he negotiates it throughout his work (and especially through the biographical genre), or the function/status of art as an 'ethical deed'—, as well as the reasons behind Zweig's choice of figures of study, such as Verhaeren or Jeremias. In this regard, Rolland contributes with his example to Zweig's genealogy of 'defeated' individuals whose triumph can only be measured in 'spiritual' or moral terms. Finally, by contrast with the figure of the 'bad' intellectual, Zweig's biography of Rolland has helped us delineate one of most complete Zweigian figures of *engagement*, a pivotal point in our journey throughout his oeuvre.

1.4.2. Virata and the Quest Against Violence in “Die Augen des ewigen Bruders”

Before we leave the nineteen twenties behind and move on to a new phase in Zweig’s narrative of commitment, I would like to discuss the short story “Die Augen des ewigen Bruders”, published in May 1921 in the journal *Neue Rundschau* and later as a book in 1922 in the series Insel-Bücherei. Loosely set in India “in den Jahren, ehe noch der erhabene Buddha auf Erden weilte und die Erleuchtung der Erkenntnis eingoß in seine Diener” (*VIRATA* 1), the text, classified as one of Zweig’s *Legende*,¹³⁹ features a main character, Virata, who is caught between his duties—as a soldier, father, judge, etc.—and his quest for a non-violent way of being and cohabiting the Earth. Thus, the narrative addresses the question of the individual responsibility, which has been the common thread of our reflections so far. According to Arturo Larcati and Christine Berthold, Zweig was not alone among the German-speaking writers of the time in looking East for new—ethical and philosophical—answers to Europe’s quandaries after the war had undermined its ‘spiritual’ and cultural tradition (309).¹⁴⁰ In fact, this idea of looking beyond Europe for alternatives and sources of regeneration mirrors Rolland’s ‘Eastern turn’ as we have discussed it in the previous section.

¹³⁹ Together with *Die Legende der dritten Taube* (1916), *Rachel rechnet mit Gott* (1927), *Die gleichunglichen Schwestern* (1927), *Der begrabene Leuchter* (1937).

¹⁴⁰ Especially noteworthy is Herman Hesse’s *Siddharta* (1922). For an exploration of both Hesse’s and Zweig’s production in the light of their relationship and interaction with Indian culture, see: Prater, Donald. “Stefan Zweig and Hermann Hesse.” *Modern Austrian Literature*, vol. 14, no. 3/4, 1981, pp. 1-70.; Roy, Pia. “Indien in der deutschen Literatur dargelegt an *Siddharta* von Hermann Hesse und *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* von Stefan Zweig.” Doctoral thesis, Universität Zurich, 1998.; Rovagnati, Gabriella. “Umwege auf dem Wege zu mir selbst’: zu Leben und Werk Stefan Zweigs.” Bouvier, 1998.; Schein, Rheinhold. “Stefan Zweigs Reise nach Indien und sein Ausflug in die indische Philosophie.” *Indien in der Gegenwart*, vol. V, no. 1-2, 2000, pp. 35-61.; Manthripragada, Ashwin J. *Constituting a Self through an Indian Other. A Study of Select Works by Stefan Zweig and Hermann Hesse*. Doctoral thesis. University of California, 2014.; Zhang, Ya. “Die Eigenartigkeit in Legenden von Stefan Zweig.” *Aktualität und Beliebtheit. Neue Forschung und Rezeption von Stefan Zweig im internationalen Blickwinkel*, edited by Yi Zhang, and Mark Gelber, Königshausen & Neumann, 2015.; Manthripragada, Ashwin J. “Stefan Zweig’s Fear of Postcolonialism.” *Transit*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2017, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5sg5r8ms>.; Berthold, Christine, and Arturo Larcati. “Die Augen des ewigen Bruders (1921).” *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 356-364, pp. 309-313.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

In terms of plot, the abovementioned scholars assert that the central topic of *Die Augen* is the exploration of the concept of ‘non-violence’ (*Gewaltlosigkeit*) and the confrontation between action and non-action. Inspired by the third and fourth songs of the Hinduist religious and philosophical poem *Bhagavad-Gita*, which are used as epigraphs to the story and which “fragen nach der Dialektik und Ambivalenz zwischen Handeln und ‘Nicht-Tun’” (310), Zweig’s work tells the story of Virata, one of the bravest warriors of the kingdom, who is asked by his ruler to help him destroy a rebellious faction. Endowed with strength, bravery, and intelligence, Virata succeeds in his mission. However, in doing so, he kills his own brother completely unawares. It is precisely at the moment of lifting the helmet to see the faces of those slain by his sword that he meets the dead look of his own brother’s eyes. This is the moment of Virata’s ‘awakening’:

Da er aber des letzten Antlitz zu sich wandte, ward es ihm dunkel vor den Blicken, denn sein älterer Bruder Belangur, der Fürst der Gebirge, war dies, den jener zur Hilfe gezogen und den er nächstens unwissend erschlagen mit eigener Hand. Zuckend beugte er sich nieder zu des Hingekrümmten Herzen. Aber es schlug nicht mehr, starr standen die offenen Augen des Erschlagenen, und ihre schwarzen Kugeln bohrten sich ihm bis in das Herz. Da ward Viratas Atem ganz klein, und wie ein Abgestorbener saß er zwischen den Toten, abgewandten Blicks, daß nicht das starre Auge jenes, den seine Mutter vor ihm geboren, ihn anklage um seiner Tat. (*VIRATA* 13)

Following this epiphanic encounter, Virata throws his sword to the river and rejects the king’s offering to command his armies. Instead, in his quest for justice and peace, Virata accepts the post of judge supreme. However, one day, when he is about to deliver a sentence, he is confronted by an accused of multiple murder, who questions his knowledge based only on words and hearsay, as well as the humanity of his decision to send him to prison (which Virata considers more ‘humane’ than a death sentence). Some days later, facing doubt, Virata decides to experience first-hand the fate of the culprit by

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

locking himself up in a prison without telling anyone, requesting the prisoner that on the next full moon he must tell the king of Virata's location. Therefore, being confident that he will be released eventually, Virata even 'enjoys' the first eighteen days of confinement, which he sees as an opportunity to meditate and gain peace of mind. Nonetheless, when the day comes and he is not released, he starts to think that he will be there forever, and his peace is transmuted into anxiety and fear. After thirty days, he is eventually freed by the king, who sees his action as the most noble and just, offering him all the honors, to which Virata replies: "Du hast mich, König, einen Gerechten genannt, ich aber weiß nun, daß jeder, der Recht spricht, unrecht tut und sich anfüllt mit Schuld" (*VIRATA* 35). Then, for the second time, Virata, who is offered to become the king's right-hand, asks his ruler to release him of all obligations and goes home.

Having questioned first the meaning of victory and then of justice, Virata refuses to engage in any action that can further promote violence and dehumanization. In this sense, he does not expect to encounter either one of these realities at home. However, one evening he sees his children mistreating one of the household slaves, and the eyes of the suffering slave remind him of his dead brother and of the darkness of the pit where he had been convicted. At that point, Virata decides to free all his slaves, a decision that is met with the anger and incomprehension of his family. On a last attempt to find what he is looking for, Virata leaves his family to lead a life of peace and quiet in the woods, in a remote, uninhabited location. However, once again his wishes are frustrated. One day the rumor of a sage living in the woods starts to spread in the neighboring villages. When Virata is forced to visit one of them—carrying the body of another hermit he has found in the woods—he is confronted by a woman who accuses him of having ruined her life, since her husband, wishing to follow the Great Virata, had abandoned her and their children. More confused than ever, Virata abandons his quest and goes back to the palace

to take care of the king's dogs, spending the rest of his days without freedom or guilt, at the service of someone else, progressively forgotten by everyone.

Soldier-Sage-Servant

That is the story of Virata's failed attempts to find justice and peace. If we consider it from the point of view of the figures of commitment and intellectuality which unfold throughout the narrative, we could define this text as Zweig's exploration of the difficulties inherent to embracing one's responsibility and the (im)possibility of the individual to escape and transcend violence.¹⁴¹ However, in contrast to Verhaeren, Jeremias and Rolland, this time we find a hero who is not an artist, nor does he embody the typical figure of the intellectual. He is neither a prophet nor a mediator; he does not seek to guide or to convert the masses. Virata is first and foremost a warrior, someone who does not hesitate to strike down his enemies in the name of his duty as a citizen and of his loyalty to the king. In this sense, his actions do not belong to the realm of the 'spiritual'. With Virata, I contend, Zweig takes his reflections—on commitment, responsibility, violence, freedom, and peace—to another level, the level of the 'good' citizen, the individual who does not '(fore)see' a/the truth behind the manipulation of the individual by the system, or the state/the nation, to maintain itself through violence. In the next pages we will analyze the subsequent transformations of Virata. For, despite his final surrender, the 'spiritual' path trodden by Virata leaves a trail of knowledge with which Zweig explores the possibility of disarming the rhetoric of war and violence.

As we saw with Rolland and the Tolstoy letter, Virata undergoes a moment of unexpected revelation. All the discourses that justify his function and actions as a soldier

¹⁴¹ For analysis of *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* from the perspective of the writer's responsibility, see: Resch, Stephan. "Das verinnerlichte Europa: Virata oder die Frage nach der Verantwortung des Schriftstellers." *Stefan Zweig und der Europa-Gedanke*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2017, pp. 187-192.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

are challenged by an unforeseen demand of recognition and responsibility. As he looks at the eyes of his dead brother, Virata realizes their common humanity; the fallen enemy is no longer an anonymous and abstract embodiment of evil, but a fellow human being. From then onwards, Virata cannot perform his assigned role within the system. Instead, he will seek to lead a life without violence in the name of peace, justice and humanity. As a committed individual, his quest is to live without hurting the other. As a consequence of this initial epiphany, the first notion that Zweig seems to question is that of victory. While Virata and his troops come back victorious, the first thing he does is to get rid of his weapon in front of his troops, renouncing his former duties:

Virata ließ sie voran, denn ihr Singen und Schreien gellte ihm in der Seele, und als er ging, war ein Abstand zwischen jenen und ihm nach seinem Willen. In der Mitte der Brücke hielt er inne und sah lange hinab in das fließende Wasser zur Rechten und zur Linken,—vor ihm aber und hinter ihm hielten, daß sie Raum wahrten, staunend Krieger. Und die sahen, wie er den Arm hob mit dem Schwerte, als wollte er es schwingen wider den Himmel, doch im Sinken ließ er den Griff lässig gleiten, und das Schwert sank in die Flut. (*VIRATA* 15)

In the same vein, and since victory understood as the result of annihilating one's enemies is no longer seen as a reward/honor but a curse/sin, he rejects the offer to command the king's troops. His answer to the king reveals Virata's new mission, what will mark the rest of his choices. Echoing Zweig's reflections in "Bekanntnis zum Defaitismus" and "Die Entwertung der Ideen", Virata has learnt that violence can only engender more violence, and that hurting another human being is also an act of self-aggression:

Der Unsichtbare hat mir ein Zeichen gesandt, und mein Herz hat es verstanden. Ich erschlug meinen Bruder, auf daß ich nun wisse, daß jeder, der einen Menschen erschlägt, seinen Bruder tötet. Ich kann nicht Führer sein im Kriege, denn im Schwerte ist Gewalt, und Gewalt befeindet das Recht. Wer teilhat an der Sünde

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

der Tötung, ist selbst ein Toter. Ich aber will, daß nicht Furcht ausgehe von mir, und lieber das Brot des Bettlers essen, denn unrecht tun wider dies Zeichen, das ich erkannte. Ein kurzes ist das Leben in der ewigen Verwandlung, laß mein Teil mich leben als ein Gerechten. (*VIRATA* 17)

As we have argued before, Virata—in looking for ways to live (modes of being) without violence, and bring justice to the world—acquires a new ‘role’. For a while, delivering justice seems to be exactly what he had been looking for: “Sein Ruhm wuchs, wie der junge Bambus wächst, aufrecht und hell in einer Nacht, und die Menschen vergaßen seines Namens von einst, da sie ihn als Blitz des Schwertes priesen, und nannten ihn weithin im Lande Rajputas die Quelle der Gerechtigkeit” (*VIRATA* 20). However, he will be confronted again, in an unforeseen way, with the accusation of being the least just and the guiltiest of men. While Virata asserts the righteousness and equity of his decision, the accused person in front of him questions the meaning of (Virata’s) justice: “Gerecht gemessen? Wo aber ist dein Maß, du Richter, nach dem du missest? [...] Ein Unwissender bist du und kein Gerechter, denn nur wer ihn fühlt, weiß um den Schlag, nicht wer ihn führt; nur wer gelitten hat, darf Leiden messen. [...] Steh weg von der Stufe, unwissender Richter, und richte nicht lebendige Menschen mit dem Tode deines Wortes!” (*VIRATA* 25-26).

This leads Virata to experience, to a certain extent, the fate of those he had been condemning for the last six years. In his (self-)seclusion he has a new revelation: a system of justice that dehumanizes the individual cannot be called ‘just’. Thus, having disarmed a rhetoric of violence based on the notions of ‘victory’ and ‘justice’, he goes one step further and associates the wielding of the power with the exercise of violence. When the king asks to become his personal counselor, he rejects the offer precisely because “Macht reizt zur Tat, und welche Tat, mein König, ist gerecht und nicht wider ein Schicksal? Rate ich Krieg, so säe ich Tod, und was ich rede, wächst zu Taten, und jede Tat zeugt einen

Sinn, den ich nicht weiß” (*VIRATA* 36). Here we glimpse for the first time the Zweigian (intellectual’s) dilemma—embodied in the figure of Virata—as it will unfold in the thirties. Virata has tried to act, to engage in public life in an attempt to make the world a better place. However, every action (*Tat*) seems to be inextricably linked to the suffering of other human beings. It seems that the individual cannot be in the world and at the same time avoid hurting his peers, those with whom he partakes in the community and cohabits the Earth. If the violence of soldier or warrior seems to be a conscious choice, the experience of Virata as a deliverer of justice exposes other forms of violence that are not necessarily codified as violence but which are equally legitimized by the system.

This is the point where Virata, as an individual who is entitled by his fame and prestige to make a difference in the management of the sphere of the common, starts to confront the system itself and the necessity of having to withdraw from it in order to escape the cycles of violence that pervade its very foundations. This is the point where Zweig exposes his doubts about the possibility of truly committing oneself to notions such as justice, peace (non-violence) and humanity within the sphere of power and politics. Here starts a process of retreat into the self that will continue with *Erasmus* and *Montaigne*: “Gerecht kann nur sein, der nicht teilhat an keines Geschick und Werk, der einsam lebt” (*VIRATA* 36). The first step in this process, as we have already mentioned, is Virata’s withdrawal from public life. He renounces the possibility of influencing the destiny of others and the belief that he will be able to lead a life ‘without flaw’.

Instead of confronting the system, Virata seeks shelter in the sphere of the private and the familial, where he finds a new way of helping the community by giving counsel to those who seek his wisdom: “Von morgens bis abends las er in den Büchern der Weisheit und übte sich in den Arten der Andacht [...]. [D]ie Seinen liebten ihn mehr, als sie ihn jemals geliebt. Den Armen war er ein Helfer und den Unglücklichen ein Tröster. [...] Sie

nannten ihn nicht mehr wie einst den ‘Blitz des Schwertes’ und ‘die Quelle der Gerechtigkeit’, sondern ‘den Acker des Rats’” (*VIRATA* 37-38). Insofar as his ruling is not made into law and punishment, Virata is “glücklich [...] daß Raten besser sei als Befehlen, und Schlichten besser als Richten: ohne Schuld empfand er sein Leben, seit er kein Schicksal mehr zwang und doch an vieler Menschen Schicksal schaltend rührte. Und er liebte den Mittag seines Lebens mit aufgeheiterten Sinnen” (*VIRATA* 38). In his first retreat, Virata still has contact with the community. He has found a way of being true to his values and at the same time avoiding the exercise of power. However, Virata still must confront another kind of violence that is ingrained both in the economic system and the social structure that regulate the life of the community, as well as in the very idea of success and parental responsibility. The evening he faces the pain his own children inflict on a household slave, Virata’s life gives another turn.

The slave’s look of terror—“Und die Augen des Sklaven, in gepreßter Qual aufgerissen, starrten ihn an: wieder sah er des gemordeten Bruders Blick von einst in seiner Seele” (*VIRATA* 39)—and the anger of his own kin when he decides to free all the domestics make him realize that his own household is also an economic unit. In being part, a member, of the family unit, he is in fact taking part in the maintenance of domestic structures of economic power. All of a sudden, his house, which is supposed to be a refuge from certain forms of oppression and violence sanctioned by the state, becomes for Virata a site of production and reproduction of social and economic hierarchies that are legitimized by the law. As his children remind him, by freeing the slave he is rebelling against the “Zeichen des Rechts [...], diese Sklaven sind unser eigen wie die Erde und der Baum dieser Erde und die Frucht dieses Baumes. [...] An eine Reihe rührst du, die seit Jahrtausenden wächst durch die Zeiten: der Sklave ist nicht Herr seines Lebens, sondern Diener seines Herrn” (*VIRATA* 43). What is more, he is confronting his own family and

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

the allegedly immutable law of 'nature'. His oldest son challenges him with these words: "Und mit einmal willst du sie von dir jagen, daß niemand sich mühe als wir, dein eigenes Blut? [...] Nicht rühre, Vater, an das Bestehende, denn auch dies ist von dem Gotte. Nicht willig tut die Erde sich auf, Gewalt muß ihr getan werden, damit Frucht ihr entquelle, Gewalt ist Gesetz unter den Sternen, nicht können wir ihrer entbehren" (*VIRATA* 45).

However, there are neither laws nor rational arguments that can lead Virata to ignore his responsibility, his duty to love his fellow human beings. He believes that in depriving someone of his freedom, he loses his own, and so Virata experiences another moment of revelation. In the middle of the night, "überkam es Virata geheimnisvoll: nicht sein Raum sei dies mehr, den er blinden Blickes umtaste, sondern der Kerker von einst, in dem er damals schreckführend erkannt, daß Freiheit das tiefste Anrecht des Menschen sei und keiner keinen verschließen dürfe, nicht auf ein Leben und nicht auf ein Jahr" (*VIRATA* 41). The house has become a prison; Virata must escape if he wants to live a life that is just and free from violence. Given that the exercise of power, of any form of possession or domination, is rarely just, Virata argues that "wer herrscht, macht unfrei die andern, doch seine Seele vor allem. Wer leben will ohne Schuld, darf nicht teilhaben an Haus und fremdem Geschick, darf sich nicht nähren von fremder Mühe, nicht trinken von anderm Schweiß, darf nicht hängen an der Wollust des Weibes und der Trägheit des Sattseins" (*VIRATA* 45).

Thus, Virata leaves his family and goes into the woods. His answer to the injustice of slavery as perpetrated by his sons is a further retreat into isolation. Instead of trying to change that which is not fair, Virata capitulates for the second time. This time, though, he does not simply look for another place within the system from where to articulate his commitment to an ethics of non-violence, but he goes one step further and leaves the community altogether. By going to the woods, Virata has surrendered all his capacity to

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

affect the course of reality. There is also violence in the woods, but he is no longer part of it: “Er sah, wie die Alligatoren einander bisßen und jagten im Zorne [...], die jene feindliche Göttin um die Welt geschlungen, ward ihm offenbar Gesetz, dagegen das Wissen sich nicht weigern konnte. Doch dies tat wohl, nur als Schauender über diesen Kämpfen zu sein, unteilhaft jeder Schuld am wachsenden Kreise der Vernichtung und Befreiung” (*VIRATA* 47-48). Therefore, echoing some of the reflections we have elaborated in the previous sections, we find that the intellectual, the sage, is powerless in front of certain forms of violence. In other words, there are limits to intellectual/‘spiritual’ action.

The penultimate transformation of Virata takes him away from civilization, to a place where he believes he cannot inflict pain nor affect the lives of others. However, his example is observed and followed. Silence and isolation do not equal inaction, and this is the last lesson Virata must learn. When he visits a neighboring village to find someone to help him bring back the dead body of a fellow anchorite he has found in the woods, Virata realizes “wie sehr und wie rein er die Menschen wieder zu lieben vermochte, seit er ihnen nicht mehr verbunden war” (*VIRATA* 52). But when he is closest to experience unbounded love, “sah er dort die zwei Augen eines Weibes voll Haß auf sich gerichtet – er schrak zurück, denn ihm war, als hätte er wieder die starren, seit Jahren vergessenen Augen seines gemordeten Bruders gesehen” (*VIRATA* 52). When he is told that his (in)action has brought pain, and even death, to other human beings, he learns that one can never really escape his responsibility towards his peers and the community: “Verzeihe mir darum, daß ich es bekenne: ich trage an dir Schuld, und an vielem anderen Schicksal wohl auch, das ich nicht ahne. Denn auch der Untätige tut eine Tat, die ihn schuldig macht auf Erden, auch der Einsame lebt in allen seinen Brüdern” (*VIRATA* 56). Virata’s final decision is to leave his hut in the woods and return to the king. He is welcomed with honors and as a

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

sage. But again he refuses the king's offerings and asks for a last favor: he wants to be rid of his freedom. Since he cannot avoid action nor violence, since his retreat into the self has been in the end but a form of egoism and the negation of one's deep codependence with other human beings, he prefers to surrender his will to serve another's:

Ich will nicht mehr frei sein meines Willens. Denn der Freie ist nicht frei und der Untätige nicht ohne Schuld. Nur wer dient, ist frei, wer seinen Willen gibt an einen andern, seine Kraft an ein Werk und tut, ohne zu fragen. Nur die Mitte der Tat ist unser Werk—ihr Anfang und Ende, ihre Ursache und ihr Wirken steht bei den Göttern. Mache mich frei von meinem Willen—denn alles Wollen ist Wirrnis, alles Dienen ist Weisheit—, daß ich dir danke, mein König. (*VIRATA* 58)

And here ends Virata's journey. For some, such as Lionel Steiman, this finale is disappointing, in that "the pitiable peace he gains through spending his remaining life as keeper of the king's dogs is not a solution to life's complexity but a denial of its ethical and social dimensions" ("The Eclipse of Humanism" 161). In a way, we, as readers, are expecting a solution, not a total renunciation of one's possibilities to change the world for the better. Instead, we are offered a final act of surrender. While it is true that the hero's final revelation—one cannot escape the consequences of one's actions and therefore one's responsibility towards the well-being of our fellow human beings—seems to offer some hope for the individual's emancipation, his last re(action) is anything but empowering. Instead of accepting the limitations of his commitment, Virata renounces the possibility of producing an ethical response in front of violence. According to Steiman, "that Zweig chose such utter self-abnegation in (purportedly) unconditional service indicates his failure to define an operational relationship between individual and social ethics, between ethical values and ethical action, but not a renunciation of them in favor of some Eastern quietism" ("The Eclipse of Humanism" 161).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

As an intellectual, Virata is also, like Jeremias and Rolland, a ‘defeated’ individual—we are told both at the beginning and the end of the story. These are the lines that open the story: “Dieses ist die Geschichte Viratas, den sein Volk rühmte mit den vier Namen der Tugend, von dem aber nichts geschrieben ist in den Chroniken der Herrscher noch in den Büchern der Weisen und dessen Andenken die Menschen vergaßen” (*VIRATA* 9). And this is how it ends: after Virata’s death, we are told that “nur die Hunde heulten zwei Tage und zwei Nächte lang, dann vergaßen auch sie Viratas, dessen Namen nicht eingeschrieben ist in die Chroniken der Herrscher und nicht verzeichnet in den Büchern der Weisen” (*VIRATA* 61). However, in the case of Virata, as opposed to Rolland’s and Jeremias’, defeat and sacrifice do not bring power, authority or triumph. Virata does not embrace an ethics of suffering, but he finally surrenders his will to the system. For the first time in Zweig’s production, we do not find an assertive and enthusiastic account of intellectuality. Even though Zweig manages to disarm several manifestations of violence by exposing how they work and the processes by which they are legitimized and naturalized, his ‘hero’ fails in his quest to transcend them. Even though *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* might be one of the texts where Zweig indirectly reveals in more detail and crudity the difficulties he is facing as an intellectual caught between the limitations of his actions and his radical alignment with the values that made up his ethos and *Weltanschauung*, it is also the story that offers us the fewest possibilities of emulation. For this reason, it remains a challenging text, as well as an anticipation of what is to come in following chapters of Zweig’s narrative of commitment.

1.5. The Artist's Commitment in Exile (1934-1942)

Following the chronology that we have established at the beginning of section 1.4, it is time to focus our analysis on the second phase of Zweig's commitment during the interwar period and the first years of the Second World War. It is, as it could be expected, a more 'politicized' phase, going from 1934 to Zweig's suicide in 1942, which corresponds, broadly speaking, to the period of Zweig's exile. As for the structure of this section, we will start by analyzing four short texts that define Zweig's intellectual mood during this epoch of his life. Then, we will discuss the relation of the four main works of this period with the genre of the historical biography. Finally, the last four sections will be devoted to examining the figures and forms of commitment of the selected works, starting with the biography of Erasmus and the recreation of the historical struggle between Sebastian Castellio and John Calvin, which will be followed by the historical miniature "Ciceros Tod oder Das Haupt der Rostra" and the short biography/life-portrait of Michel de Montaigne.

Generally speaking, this second phase in Zweig's 'committed' works is marked by events that affect directly the Austrian writer both at a personal and public level. The most important of these ephemerides is the rise to power of the Nazi party in Germany in 1933, the same year that Zweig will see his books banned, first, and then burnt on May 10. With an equally 'intense' political climate in Austria, on February 18, 1934, his house in Salzburg's Kapuzinerberg will be searched for weapons, something that, according to Zweig's own account in *Die Welt von Gestern* will trigger his decision to go into exile and sell the house along the way. As we saw in the Introduction, many of Zweig's reactions to contemporary events—to the rise to power of Hitler and of Mussolini, his collaboration with Strauss or *Die Sammlung*'s affair—would affect both the public image and posthumous reception of Stefan Zweig. According to Klaus Zelewitz, with the rise of

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Nazism from 1927/8 in the Weimar Republic, his works took a more ‘political’ turn, to the extent that some of them can be considered responses to contemporary—personal and collective—events, an ‘indirect’ response in the line of *Jeremias* (“Vom Ende der Humanität” 28-29). At this point, it must be noted that, despite the clear political resonances of his works, even then Zweig avoided at all costs giving these texts a ‘political’ reading (“Vom Ende der Humanität” 36). In sum, Zweig’s *engagement* in this period can be defined by two complementary factors. On the one hand, ‘Europe’, as we have already anticipated in the previous sections, will become a keyword in his intellectual and personal struggle. As Williams points out: “The key to Zweig’s attitude towards the political situation of the postwar years is his renewed emphasis on the need for European cooperation and unity. [...] Only through the success of the European movement, Zweig maintained, would it be possible to keep the militarists and their supporters in check” (124).

On the other hand, as happened during the First World War, this epoch is defined to some extent by the complexity and ambivalence of Zweig’s commitment. This is not to say that he doubted his own convictions, but rather that he was unsure about how to express them, about the steps he should follow to help further the cause of peace and Europe. Trapped between his ethos and *engagement*, on the one hand, and his abhorrence of public confrontations and the political arena, on the other, Zweig keeps looking for detached, in-between ways of articulating his commitment. As Donald Daviau expresses it: “Zweig was a socially responsible individual, an *Auklärer* (enlightener), who sincerely wanted to make an impact on the world and improve it to the extent he could. However, at the same time he wanted to remain totally free by the public or even by his friends. [...] Zweig stood for high principles and abhorred compromise” (“Literary and Personal Responses” 121). While this dissertation is all about contesting Zweig’s lack of

‘commitment’/‘engagement’, it cannot be denied that both ambivalence and inner contradiction—which are an integral part of his position—may not suit those instances where a clear stance is needed in order to articulate a solid (political/ethical) discourse.

From this perspective, Daviau concludes that:

For all his high-mindedness, his moral and ethical principles, and his sincere humanitarian desire to improve the world, Stefan Zweig was ultimately not a good model of a humanistic defense against totalitarianism. Instead of acting, his personal need to stay free of involvement precluded any possibility of his taking fascism in direct polemical terms [...]. While he advocated opposition, although always in subdued or indirect terms, and while he glorified the victor in defeat, he was not mentally tough enough to follow either role himself’. (Literary and Personal Responses” 128)

We discussed in the Introduction how his ‘failure to act’—to act unambiguously—affected the reception of Zweig in the postwar and the Cold War years, which resulted in the decrease of his popularity during the seventies and the eighties. The next sections attempt to clarify Zweig’s ‘ambiguity’, which is riddled with notions such as ‘defeat’, ‘suffering’ and ‘silence’.

1.5.1 The Mission of the Intellectual

Contrary to what some of his detractors argue, the period of exile is one of the most fecund as regards Zweig’s public manifestations on the question of the intellectual. Not only did he use his literary and historical works to articulate his ethos and *Weltanschauung*, but he also gave interviews and wrote articles where he offered his opinion on the ‘mission’ of the artist in troubled times. Thus, I propose to reassess a corpus of crucial texts in an effort to conceptualize the ways in which Zweig discussed his own authorial persona free of any historical or fictional masks. The first text I will analyze is a report of the press conference organized by his American editor Ben Huebsch—in the offices of the

publishing house Viking Press (New York) in 1935—titled “Stefan Zweig Tells Plan for Review, Says Folks Don’t Trust Intellectuals”. This press conference is a turning point in the history of the reception of Stefan Zweig’s public persona.¹⁴² As biographer George Prochnik relates, many people were expecting Zweig to “take advantage of the attention garnered by his New York visit to finally make a bold public statement about Nazi atrocities” (59). However, Zweig’s determination, as he phrased it, not to speak against any country, and his subsequent characterization of the role of the artist and his responsibility towards society and politics “failed to give the answers his interrogators wanted” (Prochnik 65). This was followed by criticism coming from all corners, the “sense of being attacked from right and left simultaneously” (Prochnik 68), affecting enormously Zweig’s popularity and prestige. To understand this reaction from the press, it is necessary to analyze the notion of intellectuality elaborated by Zweig in said press conference, which not coincidentally echoes some of the features of the forms of commitment embodied by *Erasmus* and *Castellio*—written around the same dates.

“Folks Don’t Trust Intellectuals” (1935)

First and foremost, it must be said that the structure of the article—containing both the comments of the journalist Henry W. Levy and Zweig’s words reported either directly or indirectly—resembles a sort of dialogue which reveal not only the image Zweig wished to project as an artist and intellectual, but also what was expected from him and the reception of his positioning both from a Jewish and non-Jewish perspective. The title and subtitle point out in three headlines the kind of discussion that will unfold in the text. First, we read of Zweig’s “Plan for Review”, a topic which covers the first two sections of the article. Then, his statement that “Folks Don’t Trust Intellectuals”. Finally, in one

¹⁴² The most complete account of the exchange between journalists and Zweig in said press conference can be found in the edition of 31st January 1935 of the *Jewish Daily Bulletin*.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

of the subtitles: “Writer Dodges Questions Asked Concerning Reich Today”. Following these headlines, the text opens with Zweig’s project for “an International Literary Review, which will publish the works of contemporary Jewish writers, scientists and other creative artists” (“FDTI” 3). At first glance, and as far as its description and contents are concerned, Zweig’s publishing enterprise does not seem to tell us much about his response to the rise of totalitarianism. However, it is indicative of the kind of response Zweig’s wanted to give as an intellectual, the kind of commitment he wished to enact. For, as Levy writes, this is “undoubtedly” Zweig’s “answer to the Nazi charge of ‘Aryan’ superiority” (“FDTI” 3); an answer that is not intended as a defense of Jews except for “the high value of its content” (“FDTI” 3).

In other words, Zweig’s response as an artist to the political situation of the time evades politics and is exclusively concerned with literary value, aesthetics, and creativity. According to Levy, this should be read as a part of Zweig’s “creative philosophy, which holds that the writer’s place is with the books, not in the hurly-burly of the larger arena of world politics and leadership” (“FDTI” 3). Once again, Zweig’s ‘apoliticism’—his refusal to engage with the world of politics—marks both the possibilities and limitations of his commitment. Thus, it is clear to Levy that Zweig’s plan is “the vision of a man who would fight the materialism of dictatorships on a plane so high they wouldn’t quite understand it” (“FDTI” 3). Once again, Zweig’s commitment is characterized—as was Rolland’s—as being ‘above’ and, therefore, out of reach or outside the realm of politics and the material. As a consequence, and since it rejects “polemics” (“FDTI” 3) and the possibility of crafting a ‘direct’ answer, the orientation of Zweig’s commitment is towards the future. According to Levy, “it is clear, from his views, that he believes that such a project would live while the published day-to-day polemics and argumentative discourses

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

of the current German and world scene change and lose their values almost before they achieve print” (“FDTI” 3).

From this point, the text moves on to discuss Zweig’s ideal figure of commitment, which refuses to engage with present-day political affairs. In this sense, we observe a clash between different notions of *engagement*. Above all, given that the ideas of commitment and of the intellectual seem to presuppose an immediate—and unmediated—response to events, we may understand the frustration of some of the journalists who “ask[ed] Dr. Zweig to comment on the anniversary of two years of the dictatorship of Hitler” (“FDTI” 3) and got only evasive answers. In the same vein, Levy, in trying to justify Zweig’s reaction, asserts that “[i]t was the historian and biographer talking, the artist who sought to write only after he had gained the proper perspective” (“FDTI” 3). Zweig’s positioning is not considered ‘*engagé*’, but the stance of a “gently, scholarly man who would reside in an ivory tower” (“FDTI” 3). To confront this image of an ‘uncommitted’ artist, to defend his position, Zweig elaborates on his own vision of the intellectual. As we have seen before, the ‘apolitical intellectual’ seems to be the form of commitment that best represents Zweig. The intellectual, Zweig argues, is not ready “for the needs of popular leadership” (“FDTI” 3); he “can only give advice” and “should remain close to his books—that is his sphere of greatest influence” (“FDTI” 3). What is more, for Zweig, the intellectual and the politician are, in essence, radically opposed figures. Whereas a politician acts within and on behalf a political group, “the intellectual is never a good party man” (“FDTI” 3), since that would compromise one of his greatest assets: his independence or personal freedom.

Being an intellectual implies “to be just, to understand the opponent and thus weaken the conviction of your own righteousness” (“FDTI” 3). It implies to be able to arbitrate between opposing contenders and apparently irreconcilable positions. To be an

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

intellectual is to be in this sense a mediator, as we saw with previous figures of intellectuality in Zweig's narrative of commitment. Moreover, in moral terms, a politician, in the eyes of Zweig, resorts to lies and half-truths to gain supporters, whereas "[t]he artist that believes in justice can never fascinate the masses, nor give them slogans to rally around" ("FDTI" 3). If we go back to *Die Welt von Gestern's* chapters on the First World War, it is precisely those intellectuals who contribute to spread hate through the dissemination of lies that are depicted as 'bad' intellectuals. In this sense, the propaganda against the enemy—as well as the political slogans Zweig alludes to in the last quote—are the forms of a rhetoric based on violence and confrontation. And it is precisely 'violence' and its promotion that constitute the second great sin of the politician, to be avoided at all costs by the intellectual. In the line of the articles "Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus" and "Die Entwertung der Ideen", the exercise of power seems to be inextricably connected to violence, and the intellectual, according to Zweig, "should never indulge in violence or appeal to violent measures" ("FDTI" 3).

All in all, the writer, in his capacity—or potential to act—as an intellectual, must confine his commitment to the sphere of the 'spiritual': "The writer must stand aloof. He may fight in a spiritual sense but the great writers and artists have never been good politicians. They have always been diverted by some abstract judgement—they have always failed" ("FDTI" 3). The writer—in becoming a politician—does not only betray his own ethics and deontology, but he is also doomed to failure because the kind of knowledge he produces is incompatible with the 'reality' and 'concreteness' of politics. Additionally, another factor that curbs the influence of the intellectual is the fact that the community of address in the great arena of public life does not recognize him or her as a legitimate voice: "The masses at the moment [...] distrust the intellectual. They seek leadership from within themselves" ("FDTI" 3). Echoing once again Benda's assessment

regarding the ‘treason of the intellectuals’, Zweig—albeit admitting that “[t]he influence of critics [...] is greater than ever”—believes that “[i]ntellectual protest [...] is always doomed to failure” (“FDTI” 3). The intellectual has lost both his/her voice and prestige. There is a double dichotomy at work here—intellectual/political and elite/masses—that makes it impossible for the artist to act as a politician, signaling thus both the possibilities and limitations of Zweig’s commitment.

Summing up, we could contend that the figure of the artist/intellectual—as built by Zweig—is trapped between his responsibility towards a personal ethos and the external demands to use/commit his voice to a cause. Zweig’s response to this quandary is silence—refusal to criticize—and retreat; Zweig’s response is that of Erasmus. In Levy’s words: “He wrote it [*Erasmus*] to show that the intellectual writer has no influence outside of his books. Erasmus, in public life, failed in every crisis. The intellectual [...] always will fail and always has. That is why he shouldn’t leave the cloistered protection of his works” (“FDTI” 3). At this point in Zweig’s exile, it is clear that Zweig’s response to his duty as a writer and intellectual is one of resignation—as we will further discuss in our analysis of *Erasmus*. Feeling an all-pervasive helplessness, Zweig is ready to take in that “if such silence is a sign of weakness, [...] he must accept the stigma” (“FDTI” 3). That this was interpreted not only as lack of courage, but also as a sign of ‘defeat’, can be deduced, I contend, from Levy’s comments: “But Dr. Zweig is far from a defeatist. He thinks in positive terms” (“FDTI” 3). As it can be observed, the idea of a ‘silent’ Zweig linked to his positioning as an intellectual in the period of exile starts to take hold in the public discussion around these dates. Although we have already remarked that Zweig contemplates silence as a kind of ‘response’ for the first time during the First World War, it is in these last years of his life when it will acquire all his ethical potential. However, I argue, this does not mean that all of Zweig’s figures of intellectuality are marked by

‘silence’. As we will observe in the next sections, Zweig’s discussion and negotiation of his responsibility oscillates between a more pessimistic tone—of silence and retreat—and a slightly optimistic exploration of other forms of commitment, for instance in *Castellio*, where the artist leaves the “cloistered protection of his works” (“FDTI” 3) and, without compromising his values, tries to combat injustice.

“Keep out of politics!” (1938)

Another instance of Zweig’s progressive (self-)removal from the political sphere can be found in the article “Keep out of politics!”, published in *Query Books* in 1938. Following the line of argumentation established in the interview of 1935, this time Zweig specifically addresses the European Jewish community, combining once again an apolitical stance with the notion of silence. Before plunging into the text, we must bear in mind the fact that the war had not started yet. At this point, Zweig seems to hope that the conflict might be averted, given that he is well aware—drawing from his experience of the First World War—that once the fight has begun, the artist—words and reason—are of no use before the sheer brute force of tanks and bombs. In my reading, it is from this position of fear of an upcoming catastrophe that the words of Zweig must be considered. In brief, in this article Zweig prescribes to his fellow European Jews the same recipe he has applied to himself and the artist: retreat and silence. Zweig’s aim in this text is not, as he phrases it in the first paragraph, to discuss the difficult situation Jews are going through, but to try to find a means to overcome it.

In this sense, Zweig’s formula, following the rationale of the previous article, implies a refusal of the public sphere as a place of struggle, asking “rather [for] the exertion of all our powers [...] by moral means, both in our lives and in relation to the outside world” (“KOP” 77). Appealing to each individual’s “sense of responsibility” (“KOP” 77), Zweig’s demands Jews, and especially those involved in politics, to stand down. The main

reason, according to Zweig, is that their success and exposure in the context of public life has put them in a vulnerable spot, insofar as in a time of economic and social crisis their Jewishness—their culture and ethnicity—has become an argument of delegitimization: “There is nothing that has so promoted the anti-Semitic movement as the fact that Jews have been too much in evidence in various countries in various trends of political life, and in opposing parties, too often as leaders” (“KOP” 77). Being mainly responsible for the revolution in Germany after the war, it is no mere coincidence, according to Zweig, that Hitler ‘happened’ there. What is more, he goes on to argue that “[t]here was nothing more natural than that the reaction against the failures of that revolution should have been exploited, and the Jewish leader of a party presents an irresistible target” (“KOP” 77).¹⁴³

All in all, against all odds, Zweig seems to be justifying or even ‘understanding’ Antisemitism. At least, his arguments seem to put the blame on its victims, to the point of accusing Jewish leaders of (unconsciously) acting in an irresponsible manner: “They may not know it, [...] but [they] imperil the cause they so desire to promote. They become a danger in the State to which they belong, and at the same time they are a danger to the Jews” (“KOP” 77). One may contend that it is true that a politician—in that he acts as the depository of other people’s wills, as representative of a collective form of agency—has a responsibility to behave ‘adequately’ to the position he or she occupies. However, Zweig is not lamenting that Jewish political leaders lack ethical behavior but challenging their very participation in a democratic public sphere. In other words, he appears to be

¹⁴³ In an unpublished article from 1938 for the journal *Freie Tribüne* (Paris), Zweig expressed similar views on the best course of action for Jews, appealing to the responsibility of all those who had a public voice: “Sosehr ich es also befürworte, daß wir uns nicht ins rein Jüdische einengen lassen und nicht von den allgemeinen Problemen abdrängen lassen sollen, für so gefährlich halte ich es—und ich habe es öffentlich schon vor Jahren ausgesprochen—, wenn Juden in irgendeiner politischen oder sozialen Bewegung als *Führer* auftreten. [...]. Diese Zurückhaltung scheint mir heute ebenso wie in der politischen Betätigung auch in jedem anderen Beruf äußerste Pflicht. Wer heute als Schriftsteller, als Künstler schon das Glück und die Gnade hat, durch seine Werke Weltwirksamkeit zu erreichen, möge seine Person möglichst im Hintergrund halten” (“FT” 3274-3285).

recriminating them their use of their fundamental rights in a democratic context. We could argue, against Zweig, that it is he who is not aware of his responsibility, that it is he who does not realize that in asking Jews to “Keep out of Politics” he is legitimizing his enemies’ actions and discourses. However, to a certain extent, he is aware that what he is saying may raise more than a few eyebrows within the Jewish community. As a consequence, the third paragraph begins by anticipating some counterarguments in the form of rhetorical questions—such as “Is the Jew to resign his citizenship rights?” (“KOP” 77)—and to later provide a political analysis of the Jewish question.

In this line of discussion, Zweig makes clear that he is not contending that Jews are neither less capable nor inferior as far as they fundamental rights are concerned. Nonetheless, he thinks that they have to step aside for a while, sacrificing their goals for the common good: “There is nothing that proves one’s loyalty to a party or to an idea more than the ability to sacrifice oneself for its sake, to have the capacity to occupy the first, the most prominent position, and to place oneself voluntarily in the ranks” (“KOP” 77). Once again, as in the interview of 1935, in front of a position where Zweig feels trapped between duty and conviction, a situation that creates a sense of powerlessness, he chooses resignation instead of fighting. In a way, Zweig’s political analysis is not off the mark. He argues that the masses—hungry and insecure—cannot be convinced with lofty ideals but through the ‘invention’ of an enemy responsible for their situation. In Zweig’s words: “It is useless to talk political economy to them. They want to see visible, tangible causes of the crisis, [...] [and] it is easy to whip enmity or at least sow distrust against a single group” (“KOP” 77). Additionally, he shows a certain understanding of how populist rhetoric works and makes use of Antisemitism as a political instrument: “Anti-Semitism is still a welcome tool in a time of crisis, and political groups and parties who

wish to exploit it have their task made much easier for them if they can point to the Jews” (“KOP” 77).

Summing up, we could claim that, while Zweig presents an accurate rationale as far as the political situation of Jews is concerned, it is his answer to that quandary that bothered many intellectuals and disappointed some of his friends and followers; an answer that accuses Jewish leaders of being vain for wanting to hold on to their positions of power and that launches a sort of crusade “against those few ambitious persons, no matter what party they belong, who refuse to make the sacrifice of working quietly in the ranks, and unobtrusively serving their party or their idea, instead of thrusting themselves into the limelight” (“KOP” 77). Summing up, I contend that, in “Keep out of Politics!”, Zweig expresses not only contempt for but also ‘fear’ of politics, of the consequences of engaging in political activities. Although the text focuses on the Jewish question, the figure of commitment that is being articulated throughout Zweig’s argumentation makes a clear separation between the sphere of morality, where silence is an option, and the sphere of politics, where one is forced to act, to speak out; between the interests of ‘humanity’ and those of the ‘party’:

It is not by pushing forward, but by consciously holding back that a man reveals his moral strength. It is not the agitators, the zealots, and the politicians who are our true spiritual expression, but those who in a thousand different ways re-create the idea of the invisible God that we have brought into the world, and which does not belong to any Party or to any class, but to the whole of mankind. (“KOP” 77)

“The Mission of the Intellectual”

To bring this section to a conclusion, I would like to explore two essays that were published after the start of the war: “Das große Schweigen” (*Das Neue Tage-Buch*, 4 May 1940) and “The Mission of the Intellectual” (*Adam Int. Review*, 1941). Both articles are in a way a continuation of the topics discussed in the interview of 1935 and in the short

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

article “Keep out of Politics!”. However, the context has changed, forcing Zweig to adapt his voice to the circumstances of war and conflict. I will start by analyzing the essay of 1941—“The Mission of the Intellectual”—, since I believe that it provides a more fruitful continuation of our discussion. The text—published next to Thomas Mann’s very short commentary “Racialism, Germanism, and Pacifism” and under the heading “Two European Voices: Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig”—is informed for the most part by a feeling of ‘regret’, of having lost once again the chance to make things better. The focus is on the figure of the intellectual, on what it could have done to prevent the catastrophe, offering an extension of the dialectic reason-fanaticism/intellectual-politician that we have been discussing so far. In the first paragraph, Zweig recriminates the intellectuals their ‘inaction’, their not having done enough to fulfil their duty, which could have been otherwise “had they tried to combat the fanaticism and the passions which are now overwhelming the life of all the countries” (“MI” 2). Therefore, Zweig—who was systematically accused of inaction—is consistent in his defense of the intellectual as someone whose “moral duty was to show with patience and conviction that all the conflicts and contradictions which are raging to-day in Europe could be resolved through a counter-action of the men of conscience and thought” (“MI” 2). I would like to contend that it is particularly relevant to note that Zweig refers to the activity of the intellectual as a “counter-action”, adding a nuance to the dichotomy action/thought which often pervades his figures of intellectuality of the time (e.g. Erasmus). Indeed, what distinguishes in Zweig the activity of the politician and from that of the intellectual is not so much their capacity for action, but the goal and sphere of reality to which those actions are directed. The tension is between the material and the immaterial—the ‘spiritual’, moral, ethical. Whereas it is not the intellectual’s business to meddle in socioeconomic or political affairs, it is his responsibility to counteract the “spiritual blackmail” (“MI” 2)

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

of politicians, who instead of mediating between social, economic and cultural differences, have used those differences to foster conflict and favor local interests and allegiances.

In Zweig's analysis of the war and its causes, we can observe again that the economic, social and political reasons for the conflict do not particularly interest Zweig. He recognizes as a critical factor the 'needs' of the masses. But, above all, he puts the blame on the agitators who manipulated those needs. Zweig therefore does not only dispute the existence of a crisis in Europe—both economic and moral—that has contributed to the war, but he also points out that “politicians and agitators” are to blame, insofar as they “took advantage of the general discontent, constructing their murderous ideology. All these leaders and future dictators promised all kinds of remedies, when the remedy was only one, namely, to bring understanding among the peoples on the Continent” (“MI” 2). Opposed to the figure of the ‘bad’ intellectual/politician, we encounter again the figure of the ‘mediator’. In this case, however, it is not deployed so much in the sense of Verhaeren, but, more specifically, in the context of war and conflict, as a way to forward peace and common understanding. We will expand idea in our analysis of *Erasmus*.

Furthermore, in the fight between intellectuals and politicians for the ‘spiritual’ and moral command of the masses, Zweig identifies a disadvantage for the intellectual regarding the means available to convey his or her message are concerned, which are “completely weakened because of the competition of political propaganda” (“MI” 2). The intellectual is powerless in front of the “powerful apparatus for spreading official news [...]. Megaphones, radio, demonstrative marches, and an infinite number of other accessories were capable of producing a deep impression on the masses” (“MI” 2). Although he does not state it explicitly, Zweig and the kind of figure of intellectuality he is promoting have to face the consequences of being too removed from the modern

political agent par excellence—the masses. While he alludes to their moral guidance as a duty of the intellectual, he does not seem to comprehend their ‘nature’. All in all, it is the elitism ingrained in Zweig’s image of the intellectual that condemns him to lose his voice and power to address those he is supposed to guide.

Having made this point, I would like to conclude my analysis of “The Mission of the Intellectual” by noting that, while the first five paragraphs are permeated by a sense of regret, negativity and pessimism, the sixth and last offers a glimpse of hope. We cannot know to what extent Zweig truly believes in the power of the intellectual to turn the odds against him and make his word regain its former power, prestige and capacity for guidance and prescription. We cannot know if Zweig is just giving expression in this paragraph to the last bit of hope that allows him to go on living and believe in the future. Be it as it may, Zweig ends his reflection on the duty and responsibility of the intellectual by restating once again the rules of the game, by identifying the enemy—fanaticism—and the intellectual’s most precious ally—reason—, by reminding his fellow “spiritual leaders of Europe” (“MI” 2) of “[their] mission and [...] possibilities” (“MI” 2): “Our word should become stronger and stronger. The louder the shoutings of fanaticism, the stronger should be our word, the voice of reason. Some of us may be stifled, but governments cannot destroy us all” (“MI” 2).

“Das große Schweigen”

Taking all this into account, we shall now proceed to the last text of this section titled “Das große Schweigen”. Following our reflections on the last paragraph of “The Mission of the Intellectual”, we could argue that Zweig’s production during exile is always vacillating between a growing pessimism and the last vestiges of his belief in progress, in the capacity of humanity to make the world a better place. We have started this section by analyzing two articles that showed a ‘prudent’ Zweig, someone who, as an intellectual,

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

sees the trauma of war approaching and wants to avoid it at all costs, even if it takes the temporary renunciation of his voice and agency. The third text was, equally, one marked by regret and which only at the end, and in vague terms, turned into an expression of hope. Thus, Zweig tells the intellectual what he must do but never how, except by referring to very broad and abstract concepts and ideas. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes Zweig is more specific as regards the formula or the path the intellectual should be following to accomplish his mission. We will see in the final sections of this chapter some illustrative examples of Zweig's attempt to further elaborate on his idea of the intellectual and the writer's commitment. As for "Das große Schweigen", it could be described as a text where Zweig articulates a form of intellectuality that deals with the ethical or 'spiritual' dimension of the conflict and where he shows awareness, at the same time, of his privileged position, bridging to a certain extent the gap between the intellectual and the masses. In other words, the question that animates the article seems to be: What can the intellectual do from his/her position to improve that of those who are suffering the most?

It is relatively well-known, as it has been amply documented by his biographers, that Zweig responded to numerous petitions of help during exile. Many must have thought that his economic well-being as well as his ample and far-reaching network of friends could help secure a visa out of, or an escape from, Europe. As George Prochnik relates: "There's abundant evidence of how much Zweig did in fact on behalf of the unfortunates—deploying his myriad connections to find employment for the jobless, procuring visas to Portugal and the Americas for scores of individuals and families, making contributions from his own funds and helping to gather donations from others" (75), to the point that his involvement imposed a huge psychological burden in his last

years.¹⁴⁴ Mostly, Zweig's charitable and humanitarian work addressed the Jewish community. In this regard, Oliver Matuschek tells us about one occasion at a dinner hosted by the banker Rotschild in November 1933 where Zweig gave a speech "making an urgent appeal for the organization of extensive humanitarian aid for Jewish children in Germany" (276). In the same vein, in 1937, Zweig wrote for the fiftieth anniversary of the 'Shelter' in London "Das Haus der tausend Schicksale"—first published by the *Mitteilungsblatt (Hilfsverein deutschsprechender Juden/Asociación filantrópica israelita en Buenos Aires)*—, where he confronts an imagined 'privileged audience' with the reality of the Jewish émigrés who, like their ancestors, are forced to leave their land: "Aber wenn es immer schwer war, Fremde zu bestehen, so nie schwerer als in unseren Tagen. Denn feindselig und eifersüchtig sperren sich die Länder gegeneinander ab. Es ist mehr Mißtrauen unter den Menschen als je zu einer Zeit, und wer heute heimatlos ist, der ist es mehr, als jemals ein Volk gewesen" ("HTS" 3602). For this reason, Zweig goes on to appeal to the responsibility of his 'more fortunate' readers not to turn their backs and gaze away from those who need their help the most:

Sieh sie darum gut an, die Heimatlosen, Du Glücklicher, der Du weißt, wo Dein Haus ist und Deine Heimat, der Du, heimkehrend von der Reise, Dein Zimmer gerüstet findest und Dein Bett, und die Bücher stehen um Dich, die Du liebst, und die Geräte, die Du gewohnt bist. Sieh sie Dir gut an, [...] damit Du demütig begreifst, wie Du durch Zufall bevorzugt bist vor den anderen. Sieh sie Dir gut an, die Menschen dort zusammengedrängt am Rande des Schiffes, und tritt zu ihnen, sprich zu ihnen, denn schon dies ist Tröstung, daß Du zu ihnen trittst. ("HTS" 3602)

¹⁴⁴ As Prochnik discusses: "At times Zweig clearly felt physically trapped in his room at the Wyndham—picturing himself mobbed by hordes waving grubby documents if he dared show his face. He could not strike a balance between giving to others and the writing, reading, and conversation with friends that nurtured his inner life—between the labours of compassion and creation" (77).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

I believe that these few examples of Zweig's humanitarian activities help us obtain a more nuanced view of Zweig's concept of the intellectual. This information provides us with an image of Zweig that is radically different from the egotistical and selfish man our previous analyses might have led us to imagine. And that is, in my opinion, far from the truth. One thing is that he preferred to keep himself away from politics—or so his public discourse goes—and another completely different is that he kept his eyes and ears closed to social injustice and precariousness. Although this is not a recurrent topic in his work—but transpires rather in his letter and diaries, and therefore falls a bit out of the scope of this dissertation—, it is certainly a key element in the redefinition of Zweig's commitment. In this light, in “Das große Schweigen” two trends within Zweig's reflection on commitment conflate: his willingness to find an ‘unpolitical’/ethical purpose for the intellectual in times of war and his preoccupation to ameliorate the conditions of those who are receiving the hardest blows. The article—published in May 1940 in German and published in English on June 30th, 1940 (“The Great Silence”, *The Shreveport Times*)—opens with a definition of duty for those who still retain their voices. This obviously does not only include writers, but all those who can act as intellectuals, all those who have a role to play in the arena of public opinion: “Ich glaube, dass die erste Pflicht aller, die die Freiheit des Redens haben, heute die ist, im Namen der Millionen und Abermillionen zu sprechen, die es selber nicht mehr können, weil dieses unentwendbare Recht ihnen entwendet ist” (“GS” 103).

One of the consequences of the conflict, Zweig argues, is that an estate of silence has been imposed upon many individuals, defining their war experience: “Schreckliche Vision: vierzig oder fünfzig Millionen menschlicher Wesen erleiden diesen Zustand der Erniedrigung, vierzig oder fünfzig Millionen leben, besser gesagt: vegetieren, ohne die geringste Möglichkeit, ihre Gedanken, ihre Wünsche, ihre Klagen, ihre Hoffnungen

auszusprechen“ (“GS” 103-104). The beginning of this process can be found in the rise to power of National Socialism in Germany, an ideology that seeks to impose one single source of truth and legitimization: “Ersticken. Ersticken alle Stimmen, außer einer. Ausrotten alle Manifestationen des freien Wortes, in welcher Form auch immer, künstlerisch, literarisch, journalistisch,—selbst in der Form der einfachen Unterhaltung. Einebnen, ausrodern, zertrümmern jede Freiheit der Äußerung” (“GS” 104). One voice rises above the others; a radical form of nationalism identifies as its enemy the Jew and the European. Although Zweig does not specifically mention the collectivity that is most affected by the eradication of freedom of speech and association—the Jews—the references are unequivocal: “Einige Tage später wurde die ungeheuerliche Parole befolgt. Man verbrannte die Bücher, man jagte die Gelehrte aus ihren Laboratorien, die Priester von ihre Kanzeln [...]. Man unterdrückte die Zeitungen und Versammlungsfreiheit. Männer, die durch ihre Ideen und Werke die europäische Kultur bereichert hatten, wurden wie wilde Tiere gehetzt” (“GS” 104).¹⁴⁵

Concerning this omission, one may suspect that there is a strategy at play here. As it is often the case with Zweig, humanity is favored over racial, cultural or national categories. In this sense, he signals what had been perhaps the biggest mistake made by the nations that opposed Hitler, that is to say, to allow him to go on as an exclusively German problem. In other words, they forgot that the eradication of human rights, of the dignity and freedom of the individual—no matter how geographically and historically localized—is the concern of all humanity: “[D]ass die Menschheit mit ihren Rechten und

¹⁴⁵ In his review of *Die Welt von Gestern*, Hannah Arendt specifically mentions this text to discuss/asses the shortcomings of Zweig’s positioning, especially as regards the Jewish question: “En su último artículo, ‘The Great Silence’ [...], Zweig intentó tomar posición en política, la primera vez en toda su vida. En este escrito no aparece la palabra ‘judío’; por última vez, Zweig intentaba representar a Europa, a Europa Central, que se asfixiaba en silencio. De haberse pronunciado sobre el terrible destino de su propio pueblo, sin duda se habría aproximado a los países europeos cuya lucha contra el opresor fue también una lucha contra la persecución de los judíos” (87).

heiligen Pflichten eine Einheit und Unteilbarkeit ist, und dass ein Verbrechen ein Verbrechen ist, gleichgültig, unter welchem Breitegrad, unter welcher Fahne und im Namen welcher Ideologie es begangen wird” (“GS” 105). As Zweig was already aware at the time of writing the essay, the process of silencing was not contained within the borders of Germany—“Die Opfer wechselten, die Methode blieb dieselbe” (“GS” 105)—but grew in scope and force. After a bit of resistance and an unheard cried of help, silence has spread throughout Europe, and it is not only the silence of the directly oppressed by violence, but also of those who manage to escape the horror but are unable to speak about it. It is the silence of the concentration camp and the silence of death. It is the silence that has invaded even the private space of the home, the realm of the domestic. It is the silence of those who have remained and are afraid to speak at the dining table, just in case their maid will betray them to the Gestapo: “Am Familientisch beisammensitzend, wagen sie kein Wort zu sprechen: vielleicht spioniert das Dienstmädchen sie aus. Schweigen also, Schweigen, Schweigen” (“GS” 108).

Once Hitler unleashes his strategy of conquest, it is the silence of the friends and relatives who used to—or still—live in the occupied lands: “Keine Briefe mehr, keine verlässlichen Nachrichten. [...] [T]ot die Stimme der Dichter und Schriftsteller; kein Zeichen mehr von ihnen, das Schweigen... Ein Schweigen, das heute wie Blei auf so vielen Nationen liegt, auf so vielen Völkern, die gestern noch frei waren und deren Stimme für uns die von Brüdern war“ (“GS” 106). All in all, it is a silence that is not only linked to the loss of freedom, but also the breaking of which becomes an ethical demand. It is not the silence one experiences in nature, a ‘natural’ silence, but “eine künstliche Stille [...], ein Schweigen des Terrors” (“GS” 106-107). As an artificial, imposed silence, the voices that are repressed can be ‘heard’ as loud as ever. The intellectual, the privileged individual who still retains his freedom, can feel “hinter diesem Schweigen [...] die

Erniedrigung und die Empörung dieser Millionen geknebelter und erstickter Stimmen” (“GS” 107). Thus, it is a silence that cannot be ignored, a ‘loud’ silence that hits the individual’s conscience. It does not mask the terror but just amplifies its effects. One cannot turn away from it, nor ignore its demand for action and response(ability):

Dieses Schweigen, dieses furchtbare, undurchdringbare, endlose Schweigen, ich höre es bei Nacht, ich höre es am Tag, es erfüllt mein Ohr und meine Seele mit seinem unbeschreiblichen Schrecken. Es ist unerträglicher als jeder Lärm; es ist mehr Grauen in ihm als im Donner, als im Heulen der Sirene, als im Krachen der Explosionen. Es ist nervenzerrüttender, niederdrückender als die Schreie oder das Schluchzen, denn in jeder Sekunde ist mir bewusst, dass in dieses Schweigen die Knechtschaft von Millionen und Millionen Wesen eingepresst ist. (“GS” 106)

According to Zweig, to speak in this context becomes shameful. To speak while so many others are forced to remain silent reminds the individual of the exceptionality of his privileged position and activates his conscience. The intellectual, in this situation, has the duty to give voice to the voiceless, to those who only dare to lament in whispers “[w]enn die Nacht fällt” (“GS” 109). And so Zweig continues his exposition by recreating the profiles of the silenced, by reminding the world of their existence, of their loss, their obliteration: “Ich denke an Prag, an ein Laboratorium dort unten, an den Chemiker, der mir seine Forschungen erklärte. Das Laboratorium ist leer; die Flaschen, die Gläser, die Röhren sind zerbrochen; mein Freund ist verschwunden” (“GS” 107-108). In the end, “Das große Schweigen” is a call not to forget either those who have been silenced—“diejenigen, die ihr Blut Tropfen für Tropfen hingeben würden, wenn sie es in Worte, in Flehen, in Gebet verwandeln könnten” (“GS” 110)—or, for those who retain their freedom, their possibility, and therefore responsibility, to commit their voice. It is a reminder of the power of words to bind people together, to provide comfort and consolation: “Aber wenigstens haben wir die Sprache behalten und durch sie atmet die

Seele wie die Körper durch die Lungen. Durch das Wort können wir unser Herz befreien, wenn es allzu gepresst ist, können wir uns, einer den anderen, in unserer Zuversicht bestärken” (“GS” 111). In sum, I contend that the silence of “Das große Schweigen” is not the self-imposed silence of “Keep out of politics!”. In the former text the notion of silence has been transformed, turning it into an ethical imperative that impels the intellectual to act. When those whom Zweig asked to keep quiet, to keep out of the public arena, can no longer ‘choose’ to do so, the intellectual must leave his bookish fortress to speak out for them, offering at last a glimpse of hope. To conclude, it must be noted that Zweig’s preoccupation for those who cannot speak, for those who have been forced into a condition of silence and subalternity, is also a pivotal element of his historiography. While we will be dealing with it in depth at the beginning of Chapter II, it is worth mentioning now that one of the key elements of Zweig’s philosophy of History is a concern with the ‘privileged’ voices of history, with the processes of (de)legitimization of certain agencies in order to promote a given ideology. Thus, Zweig maintains in the essay “Ist die Geschichte gerecht?” (1930) that it is the responsibility of the historian/intellectual—in his/her efforts to promote justice—to recover those voices which are not on the winning side of history, those who have been silenced by the officiality of the hegemonic discourses:

Darum tut es not, Geschichte nicht gläubig zu lesen, sondern neugierig mißtrauisch, denn sie dient, die scheinbar unbestechliche, doch der tiefen Neigung der Menschheit zur Legende, zum Mythos—sie heroisiert bewußt oder unbewußt einige wenige Helden zur Vollkommenheit und läßt die Helden des Alltags, die heroischen Naturen des zweiten und dritten Ranges ins Dunkel fallen. (“IGG” 1863)

1.5.2. Stefan Zweig's Historical Turn

Before we move on to the next chapter in Zweig's narrative of commitment and to a whole new historical and existential framework of analysis—marked by the rise of national socialism, exile and the Second World War—, I would like to reflect on the generic particularities of the corpus: *Erasmus* (1934), *Castellio gegen Calvin* (1936), *Ciceros Tod* (1939), and *Montaigne* (1941?). Although it is true that there are huge differences both in the conception and the formal characteristics of these works, all of them can be considered as part of Zweig's turning to History as a source of knowledge and intellectual emancipation from a confusing present and an increasingly-harder-to-imagine future. We have already noted that, according to the autobiographical text of 1936, one of the consequences of what we have established as the greatest turning point in Zweig's narrative of commitment—The First World War—was the reorientation of Zweig's intellectual gaze towards the past, “so that I might better understand our present time; and in particular the periods of critical uprisings gave me analogies of the present” (“Autobiography 1936”). In other words, although Zweig's interest in episodes from the past predates the First World War—see for instance the setting of the short stories “Im Schnee” (1901) and “Das Kreuz” (1906)—, if we consider Zweig's production after the conflict, the number of ‘historical’ works increases exponentially—a tendency that reaches its heyday in the thirties. In this process, we could distinguish an interest in particular settings or historical milieus, such as the French Revolution (see *Fouché, Marie Antoinette, Mesmer*, etc.) and the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (see *Erasmus, Castellio, Montaigne, Amerigo, Magallanes*, etc.); historical ephemerides or history-changing episodes (see *Sternstunden der Menschheit*); the fate of individual figures. At the beginning of Chapter II, we will discuss the characteristics of Zweig's philosophy of

History. Suffice it to say for now that the individual, propped against a constant struggle with the forces of fate, is the main protagonist of Zweig's history.¹⁴⁶

And this takes us again to the notion of example. As happened with Rolland and Verhaeren, the biographical/life-narrative accounts of Erasmus, Castello, Cicero and Montaigne are especially valuable insofar as, I contend, Zweig uses each one of them as a pretext to discuss his own commitment through the mechanisms of identification we have examined in Chapter I.¹⁴⁷ According to the French philosopher Jacques Rancière, the notion of 'exemplariness' belongs to a discursive tradition or paradigm—Plutarch's, also shared by Rolland—whereby lives are exemplary

inasmuch as they furnish an illustration of certain moral laws or an example of certain virtues—or of opposing vices. So it is not life as either a biological or a cultural reality that is important in Plutarch, nor the sequence linking one action to another. What matters is the capacity of episodes to illustrate a precept of conduct or a great moral truth. (173)

Accordingly, we may observe in these texts a certain indifference towards the accuracy of facts. The importance of a given life trajectory lies instead in its capacity to produce certain lessons or moral/'spiritual' 'truths' that are, in fact, drawn *a posteriori*. As we have already argued, this subjective approach to biographical narratives is a recurring trait in Stefan Zweig's *oeuvre*. There is an idea that preexists the writing of the text, a certain intentionality that deforms the life account of the biographical subject. In other words, there is a gap between facts and the recreation of the forces that bind them together to produce a cohesive narrative. And it is precisely this process of recreation and appropriation of history that interests us the most in our attempt to unravel both the forms of commitment and intellectuality in Zweig's works, as well his ethical stance as regards

¹⁴⁶ According to Rüdiger Görner on Zweig's individualism and biography writing: "Was Zweig besonders interessierte, das war die Kraft der Persönlichkeit, durch die der einzelne der Massenhaftigkeit des gesellschaftlichen Lebens samt ihrer Tendenz zum Anonymen entgegentritt" ("Ghostwriter Toten" 86).

¹⁴⁷ In this regard, not all these works are classified as historical biographies. On the one hand, there is a wide consensus in the case of *Erasmus* and *Castello*. However, on the other hand, *Montaigne* is often considered as a literary biography, while *Cicero* is included among Zweig's historical 'episodes' (*Sternstunden*).

the notion of Europe. In this light, the next section will analyze how Zweig fashioned his historical subjects so that they could produce certain forms of *engagement* with which the author could relate and even define his own commitment.

Before we proceed to that section, however, it is worth remarking that Zweig's highly interpretive and hermeneutically conditioned approach to both history and biography must be contextualized within a literary and historical trend, the epistemological complexity, as well as the popularity (commercial success) of which has complicated the reception of said works.¹⁴⁸ Generally speaking, the genre of the modern biography—as popularized in the twenties¹⁴⁹ in the German-speaking world¹⁵⁰ by writers like Lion Feuchtwanger, Emil Ludwig, Ernst Kantorowicz, Jakob Wassermann, or Stefan Zweig—is to a certain extent in-between fact and fiction.¹⁵¹ According to Raoul Auernheimer—for whom Zweig was one of the best representatives of modern biography, the genre in which he excelled the most (415)—, it presents two main characteristics. On the one hand, its focus on representation instead of objective recreation, resorting to a mixture of character and fate to reveal 'personality'. On the other hand, it entails the idea of the biographer as an actor, as he who must 'perform' someone else's role. Therefore, biography writing involves a kind of impersonation, assuming that the biographer always reveals

¹⁴⁸ For an extensive study on the biographical trends of the interwar period with an emphasis on German Literature and Zweig, see: Sogos, Giorgia. "La Moda Biografica negli anni Venti e le Biografie di Stefan Zweig". *Le Biografie di Stefan Zweig tra Geschichte e Psychologie. Triumph und Tragik des Erasmus von Rotterdam, Marie Antoinette, Maria Stuart*. Firenze University Press, 2013, pp. 19-84. Esp. "1.4. Le biografie di Stefan Zweig e la sua concezione della storia", pp. 49-84.

¹⁴⁹ According to Klaus Zelewitz, in the interwar period a new kind of reader and emerges together with a notion of aesthetics that favors journalism, and which is conditioned by the new technique and forms of communication ("Raconter l'histoire" 13).

¹⁵⁰ Franklin West reminds us that the biographical vogue was not specifically German but an international phenomenon in the West, with its first representatives being the English writer Lytton Strachey and the Frenchman André Maurois ("On the Significance of a Once Fashionable Trend" 207).

¹⁵¹ Franklin West's definition of biography based on the seminal work *Biographie* by Helmut Scheuer includes the idea of a hybrid genre between fact and fiction, as well as the insight it provides on the context of production of the text: "Biography is a mixed form which combines some techniques commonly used in imaginative literature with factual detail assembled, to a greater or lesser degree, according to the methods of historical scholarship. Skillful biographers use a variety of means to create a close identification between the reader and the chosen subject. They often strive for a strong didactic effect [...]. The close identification of reader and biographical subject can be investigated to reveal values and attitudes of major socio-historical significance" (199).

his personality in the work, because otherwise he would not be able to interpret his part. Biography is in a way, according to Auernheimer, the art of transformation of the self (417-418). In terms of the location of modern biography in the interwar literary landscape, Klaus Zelewitz argues that the genre has been interpreted as a countermovement to the modernist and experimental novel, insofar as it provided comfort to its readers through the exposition of a life in a chronological sequence which featured an exemplary ascension towards the accomplishment of the self (“Raconter Histoire” 22). Finally, Klaus Weissenberger has discussed the genre in relation to exile, contending that it belongs to the wider genre of ‘Kunstprosa’—which the scholar relates to Stephen Minot’s concept of ‘Literary Nonfiction’:¹⁵² “Ever since Montaigne and Bacon, the genres of “Kunstprosa” have become predominant in times of crisis. The reason for this phenomenon is that the observation of the self normally generates self-recognition as its purpose, and in some instances, it may appear to be the only means to affirm one’s own identity in view of the challenges presented by a crisis” (124).

All these formal and sociological features relate somehow to both the contents and context of Zweig’s works: from the ontological condition/dimension of exile to a high degree of self-projection and a certain conservatism in terms of form. At the same time, they brought about a wealth of criticism that participates in some of the long-held debates about the literary value of Zweig’s production. In this sense, Klaus Zelewitz is highly critical of the fact that Zweig’s subjects are victims of fate, unable of take their own hands in the matter, and therefore reinforcing rather than undermining totalitarianism (“Raconter Histoire” 20). Equally, he asserts, drawing on Eike Middell,¹⁵³ that “dans cette manie de recourir à l’analogie historique, il y eut même un moment des points communs entre la production de romanciers antifascistes en exil et les romans historiques soi-disant

¹⁵² Minot, Stephen. *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre*. Prentice Hall, 2003.

¹⁵³ Middell, Eike. *Exil in den USA*. Röderberg, 1980.

apolitiques de littérateurs serviles en Allemagne fasciste qui, en altérant l'Histoire, tentèrent de légitimer le régime" ("Raconter Histoire" 23). In the same vein, Franklin C. West brings forth Scheuer's criticism that the kind of works by writers such as Ludwig or Zweig fail to enact a critical stance of the Reich's system. Instead, either they provide a sense of conformity with the status quo or are escapist in nature, indulging in untimely intellectual and aesthetic matters: "The new interest [of 'modern biography'] in humanizing famous personalities by revealing intimate details from their private lives and making psychological interpretations of their characters or motivations distracted the reading public from acquiring a modern social and political awareness" (200). As a conclusion, West contends that Zweig's and Ludwig's success resided in their ability to connect with a wider audience, which, in turn, resulted in the devaluation of their texts: "[...] although Ludwig and Zweig wanted to supply a new understanding of history that would nourish humane and democratic values, their simplification of thought and expression, at times verging into the clichés of *Trivalliteratur*, resulted in the perpetuation of outmoded beliefs" (202).

Meanwhile, other scholars focus instead on Zweig's style. Zelewitz mentions Adorno's remark that these writers "ont la tentation permanente d'utiliser une forme qui affiche une profondeur factice et que rien n'empêche de basculer dans une habile superficialité"; Leo Löwenthal's "amour immodéré des superlatifs"; Bruno Berge's "essai biographique à la sauce freudienne"; or Ludwig Rogner's judgement of Zweig's style as "feuilletonist" ("Raconter Histoire" 21). Following the same line of discussion, we find Golo Mann's critique as quoted by Rüdiger Görner: "Ich habe solche Buchmacher und Großgeldmacher, die aus drei wissenschaftlichen Büchern ein viertes feuilletonistisches machen wie Stefan Zweig und Emil Ludwig, immer gering geachtet. Und wer mir sagte, ich selber gehörte dazu, mit dem würde ich mich duellieren"

(“Ghostwriter der Toten” 87). Finally, one of the harshest criticisms comes from the Marxist thinker Georg Lukács, for whom Zweig’s biographies belong to the literary genre of the *Roman*. As Hans Dahlke reminds us, Lukács’ criticism points to Zweig’s ignorance of social and political realities:

Die Existenz von Klassen, Klasseninteressen und Klassenkämpfen wurde in Zweigs Sicht durchaus nicht zu den zentralen Tatsachen der Geschichte gerechnet. Seine Tatsachen sind ‘isolierte’ Tatsachen, zwischen denen kein organischer, gesetzmäßiger Zusammenhang zu erkennen ist. Die Ausklammerung wesentlicher Realitätsräume zeigt sich nicht minder deutlich in Zweigs Auffassung von der nötigen Kulturgeschichtsschreibung. (175)

We could argue that the idea that Zweig’s historical biographies were aimed at a large audience, that they resorted to fictional devices to deal with historical facts, and that they explained historical processes from a psychologized and individualized perspective, contributed to their reception in scholarly circles as ‘ahistorical’, ‘unscientific’, ‘popular’ and ‘trivial’. There are other voices, however, that have attempted to read this kind of work in a more positive light. For instance, Joanny Moulin, in his paper “Transnational Artists’ Lives Are a Rare Species”,¹⁵⁴ referred to the distinction between ‘biographie romancée’, which consists in the (arbitrary) fictionalization of historical episodes, and ‘biographie romanisée’, a label for those works which, although they are based on fact and ‘serious’ research, make use of narrative techniques that are proper to fictional genres in order to achieve a certain communicative effect.¹⁵⁵ In these terms, it is possible to discuss Zweig’s *oeuvre*, which would belong to the latter category, without questioning

¹⁵⁴ This paper was read in the context of the Biography Society’s panel (“Transnational Biography in Europe”) at the 14th European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) Conference (Masaryk University, Brno, 29th August-2nd September 2018).

¹⁵⁵ In this regard, Jean Pierre Lefebvre argues that “nous pouvons à l’évidence considérer que dans ces conditions, il aurait fallu introduire également dans le processus l’ensemble des biographies historiques, d’autant qu’elles ont toutes une dimension narrative, voire romanesque, indéniable, et qu’elles ont fortement contribué à la renommée de l’auteur” (93).

its 'validity' or 'historicity', and therefore opening other analytic and interpretive paradigms. Similarly, Rüdiger Görner has linked Zweig's historical writing with Hans-Georg Gadamer's in *Wahrheit und Methode*, where the latter argues that true historical knowledge must always incorporate its own historiography. That is to say, that the author must be present in his historical account and strike a balance between one and the other ("Ghostwriter der Toten" 87). In this light, we could bring to the discussion Hayden White's idea that there is always some degree of fiction in historical writing ("Historical Fiction") or Roland Barthes' discussion of history's narrative and rhetorical strategies which challenge its claim to objectivity and scientific 'truth' ("Discours de l'histoire"). As a final remark, it must be noted that the criticism of Zweig's historical and biographical oeuvre did not stop at the texts themselves, but extended to their author, contributing thus to the classification of Zweig as a 'second-rate' writer. In this sense, Franklin C. West sets to question this notion by separating the intended circle of address of said works and their readers. In this regard, he notices that the publishing houses of authors such as Ludwig or Zweig were renowned for their ambition to publish new authors of high literary merit, concluding that

what appears to be the case is that Zweig and Ludwig were able to write in a style of interest to literate, sophisticated readers and choose topics that addressed their intellectual concerns, yet could also communicate on a somewhat different level with a public whose educational experience differed substantially from that of the *Bildungselite*. It appears, in fact, that the vogue for popular biographies began in well-educated circles, among readers aware of cultural trends elsewhere in Europe, and then spread, as fashions often do, to other segments of German society. (204).

1.5.3. Erasmus: Mediation and the Third Way

After this brief but necessary digression, it is time to resume our analysis of Zweig's forms of commitment and intellectuality in exile. Our reflections at the end of section 1.6.1. pointed out Zweig's concern with voice, silence, and the 'unnamed' heroes of history. Needless to say, Erasmus—along with Jeremias or Virata—can be considered one of such 'forgotten', 'defeated', individual. And the act of writing a biography of one of the founding fathers of humanism in the middle of one of Europe's toughest political crisis responds to the need to find alternative voices and the will to articulate certain forms of commitment that go against the grain, against what society expects from the intellectual at a given time. In sum, the tragedy of Erasmus is that of man trapped between his ideals and the demand of the times to act, to intervene, to use his influence to alter the course of the events. It is the tragedy of the intellectual that limits his commitment to the power(lessness) of his words. In the words of Donald Daviau:

In this book [...] he depicted the suffering and the tragedy of the type which was powerless to act except through the medium of the intellect and the written word. This was the tragedy of the universal spirit, who, for seeing all sides of a question, was unable to champion any but the vaguest general ideas, and these only reluctantly; for this type hates to makes a decision, realizing that every decision contains as much error as truth. This was also the tragedy of the vacillating, passive, conciliatory nature, who is called upon by history to play a direct, aggressive role. The tragedy here arises because this type of person recognizes what his function should be, and yet is unable, by virtue of his character, to act. ("Victors in Defeat" 7)

As an intellectual, Erasmus is a figure located in-between, above, and beyond. He is the champion of the middle/third way, the forefather of Rolland's 'au-dessus de la mêlée', a mediator between competing parties and ideologies who refuses to take sides even when he is

threatened with oblivion and marginalization.¹⁵⁶ Thus, we can connect, in my reading, the Erasmian figure of commitment with our reflections on the interview of 1935 and the other short texts analyzed before. In this sense, we must bear in mind that *Erasmus* is born out of Zweig's responsibility as a committed writer to position himself in front of a—socially, culturally and politically—critical situation. We have already claimed that there is a very close link—identification—in the selected texts between Zweig's biographical and fictional subjects and their author, which constitutes one of the methodological bases of our analysis. In the case of Erasmus, we might be dealing with one of Zweig's more significant alter-egos, as we will show in the following pages. That is the reason why we have claimed before that *Die Welt von Gestern* falls short of acknowledging the importance of Erasmus in Zweig's narrative of commitment, downplaying his status to a few sporadic mentions. Nonetheless, I believe that Zweig's memoirs are still a valuable source to contextualize the biography of 1934 and the correlations between Zweig's and Erasmus' commitments.

Erasmus I: Self-Portrait

In his autobiography, Zweig situates *Erasmus* at the same level of *Jeremias*, a work “in dem ich mich 1934 in Hitlers Tagen aus einer ähnlichen Krise emporrang. Von dem Augenblicke, da ich versuchte, sie zu gestalten, litt ich nicht mehr so schwer an der Tragödie der Zeit” (*WvG* 4003). It is a work that speaks for, that represents, Zweig, as it is deeply imbued with private feelings and thoughts (*WvG* 5986). Echoing the last paragraph of “Das große Schweigen”, the writing of *Erasmus* seems to fulfil a cathartic function, creating a way out of a personal crisis. Likewise, another feature that can be ascribed to Erasmus as a figure of commitment is that he is also a ‘Jeremias’ in that he belongs to a genealogy of defeated individuals, “[d]ie nicht im realen

¹⁵⁶ Following a negative assessment of the limitations of the Erasmian intellectual, Dragan Nedeljkovic argues that “L’*Erasme* de Zweig était un manifeste contre les deux espèces de dictatures. Cette attitude était-elle meilleure que celle des combattants révolutionnaires? Il nous semble que non, parce qu’elle menait à une passivité sans issue” (182).

Raume des Erfolgs, sondern einzig im moralischen Sinne rechtbehält[en]” (WvG 2700). Finally, he can be considered ‘unheroic’—an antihero—given that he prefers to retreat than to act: “Meine natürliche Haltung in allen gefährlichen Situationen ist immer die ausweichende gewesen, und nicht nur bei diesem einen Anlaß mußte ich vielleicht mit Recht den Anwurf der Unentschiedenheit auf mich nehmen, den man meinem verehrten Meister in einem fremden Jahrhundert, Erasmus von Rotterdam, so häufig gemacht” (WvG 3614).

As with Verhaeren and Rolland, Zweig’s relationship with Erasmus is that of master-disciple, acknowledging and establishing a continuation of intellectual practices. While reflecting on the lines of descent going from the historical figure of Erasmus and his context down to Zweig and the 1930s, many commentators have noted the constant analogies between both figures and their epochs. In this regard, Giorgia Sogos, who has written one of the most complete analysis of *Erasmus*, dedicates one section of her monograph *Le biografie di Stefan Zweig* to discuss said work as a *Selbstporträt*, emphasizing the paths of historical continuity between past and present, between *Erasmus* and *Die Welt von Gestern*. According to the Italian scholar, in the title of *Erasmus—Triumph und Tragik des Erasmus von Rotterdam*—the words ‘Triumph’ and ‘Tragik’ signal a structure that is mirrored in Zweig’s memoirs, which similarly start by evoking a glorious past only to plunge progressively into the abyss of war (123). More specifically, she argues that Zweig resorts to linguistic mechanisms such as the use of the personal pronoun *wir* to “coinvolgere il lettore nel processo narrativo, instaurando con lui una sorta di dialogo” (127), furthering the analogies between the Renaissance and fin-de-siècle Vienna.¹⁵⁷ In the same vein, Bernd Hamacher compares Thomas Mann’s and Stefan Zweig’s use of the historical period of the Reformation to make sense of, and analyze, contemporary events: “Wenn man auf Thomas Mann blickt, so zeigt sich, daß die Gestalten der Reformationgeschichte, auf die beide, Mann wie

¹⁵⁷ For a close analysis of the parallelisms between *Erasmus* and Zweig, see: Sogos, Giorgia. “Stefan Zweigs *Erasmus von Rotterdam*: Eine tagebuchartige Biographie.” *Stefan Zweig, der Kosmopolit. Studiensammlung über seine Werke und andere Beiträge. Eine kritische Analyse*. Free Pen Verlag, 2017.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Zweig, rekurren, als Deutungsmuster der politischen Gegenwart vom Beginn des Nationalsozialismus an zur Verfügung standen, und zwar weit über den im engeren Sinne literarischen Bereich hinaus” (166).¹⁵⁸

All in all, as Jakob Golomb concludes, “[s]ince there was and always will be a gap between the concrete man and the man that features in a biography, there was ample room for Zweig to introduce certain subjective idealizations of Erasmus that actually revealed his own personal projections. Thus, the biography of Erasmus can be regarded to some degree as a personal confession of its writer” (7).¹⁵⁹ So far, we have established—both through Zweig’s and his commentator’s analyses—the intimate link between the Austrian writer and the biographical subject Erasmus von Rotterdam, which gives the work a double orientation or perspective, insofar as it is engaged in writing the past while addressing the present. We have already noted that this double orientation creates a gap between historical ‘truth’—or accuracy—and biographical narration. And, in a sense, this could be said of all historical reconstructions, which entail a certain fictionalization and distortion of ‘reality’. In the words of Aina Pérez and Meri Torras—following Anthony Bennet¹⁶⁰ and David Lowenthal—¹⁶¹, there is a danger that

[amenaza] toda (re)construcción de la autoría: el de la ficción retrospectiva que [...] acecha de hecho cualquier narrativa histórica, que (des) figura su objeto porque siempre es—al mismo tiempo—*más* y *menos* que el pasado. *Menos*, porque éste permanece en parte irreconstruible; *más*, porque se inserta en un relato cuyo desenlace conocemos y cuya estructura escandimos según nuestra propia comprensión y nuestro propio deseo. (40)

¹⁵⁸ See also: Ingen, Ferdinand van. “Die Erasmus-Luther-Konstellation bei Stefan Zweig und Thomas Mann.” *Luther-Bilder*, vol. 20, 1984, pp. 91-117.

¹⁵⁹ Following the same line of discussion, Harry Zohn asserts that “Zweigs persönlichste Biographie ist wohl *Triumph und Tragik des Erasmus von Rotterdam*. [...] Erasmus war Zweigs geistiger Vorfahre und Mentor” (“Berich und Bekenntnis” 22). See also: Steiman “Eclipse Humanism”, 162; and Ullman 114-115.

¹⁶⁰ Bennet, Anthony. *The Author*. London, Routledge, 2005.

¹⁶¹ Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. New York, Cambridge UP, 2015.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

In the subsequent analysis, we will focus our discussion on the *more*, on the surplus, on what Zweig adds of his own wishes and intentions to make *Erasmus* something else than an ‘objective’ recreation of a life. As Helmut Koopman argues, although the text was praised by many professional historians, historical reality is the least important of its components (77). Bearing these ideas in mind, we ask ourselves: What impels Zweig to write the life of Erasmus? What message is he trying to send his contemporaries? In order to address these questions we will partially follow Jakob Golomb, for whom the main feature that defines Erasmus, as well as another of Zweig’s biographical subjects—Nietzsche—¹⁶²is his ‘Europeanness’: “It is fair to claim that Zweig identified himself with both the ‘first European’ (Erasmus) and the last (Nietzsche) for the same existential reasons” (8). Europe seems to be, as Marleen Rensen has observed, the main thread going from Verhaeren through Rolland to Erasmus (“Writing European Lives”). Europe and humanism conform the ‘spiritual’ legacy that is being endangered by totalitarianism and which Zweig tries to desperately save in his own terms.¹⁶³ Both legacies inform the idea

¹⁶² Zweig’s critical/biographical study of Nietzsche, to which we will come back in the second chapter of this dissertation, was published in 1925 by Insel Verlag together with those of Hölderlin and Kleist under the title *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon: Hölderlin-Kleist-Nietzsche*. It was the second volume of the biographical project *Baumeister der Welt. Versuch einer Typologie des Geistes* (1920-1928). It must be noted that Zweig’s *Nietzsche* could also be considered, in a way, as a text where the author articulates certain forms of intellectuality and commitment. In this sense, it is true that Nietzsche, as a philosopher, has a responsibility towards truth: “Bei ihnen, den gerechten Wägern und Wächtern, »deren Aufgabe das Wachsein ist«, darf es keine Konzilianz geben, keine Gutmütigkeit, keine Ängstlichkeit, kein Mitleid, keine der Schwächen (oder Tugenden) des bürgerlichen, des mittleren Menschen. Ihnen, den Kriegern, den Eroberern des Geistes, ist es nicht erlaubt, auf ihren verwegenen Patrouillengängen irgendeine Wahrheit, die sie ertappen, gutmütig entwischen zu lassen” (*NIETZSCHE* 3224). However, although Nietzsche might be presented in the text as an alter-ego of Zweig, and also as a committed philosopher and therefore an intellectual, the focus of the narrative, in my opinion, is on Nietzsche as an artist that embodies a form of radical intellectual—and even existential—freedom. Accordingly, Zweig is more interested in the psychological dimension of Nietzsche’s creativity, in how he transforms darkness and suffering into a creative output.

¹⁶³ In a letter to Thomas Mann of May 1933, Zweig argues for the need to fight back violence through art: “[B]ut in our quiet, determined insistence, the more effective strength lies perhaps in the artistic message. The others have proven their ability to fight, therefore one must defeat them on a different terrain where they are inferior and [...] demonstrate the images of *our* spiritual heroes in an artistically irrevocable form” (qtd. in Weissenberger 123).

that precedes the writing of *Erasmus*, providing the latter with a symbolic and exemplary dimension and shaping his forms of commitment and intellectuality.

Erasmus II: The Humanist Intellectual

In the previous pages we have established the necessity of reading *Erasmus* as a deeply personal work, as a device employed to articulate the author's position as a committed writer and intellectual. It is Zweig's answer to the rise of Hitler, something that did not go unnoticed among his contemporaries.¹⁶⁴ Equally, as it has been shown above, there is an abundance of secondary literature that discusses the work from this perspective, paying attention to what is known as the 'Erasmian stance'. Following the narrative of commitment that we have been articulating in this chapter, the rest of the section will be devoted to the analysis the several forms of intellectuality embodied in the recreation of the historical figure of Erasmus von Rotterdam. In this sense, we will try to separate the man from his doctrine. That is to say, *Erasmus* is both a life-narrative and a discussion of the possibilities and limits of humanism. As for the latter—humanism, humanitarianism, or more generally what we could call the drive towards the 'human' or a 'common sense of humanity'—, it is perhaps the most important element in the configuration of Zweig's ethical program, and therefore its discussion will be resumed in the second chapter of this dissertation.

Before plunging into a close reading of the work, I suggest that we consider its structure. As we have seen in other non-fiction texts—*Rolland* or *Verhaeren*—, Zweig usually devotes some pages, or even whole chapters to establish a way of reading his biographical subject, providing it with a hermeneutical orientation. In this case, the first

¹⁶⁴ On a diary entry of 29 July 1934, Thomas Mann said of *Erasmus*: "Ich las in Zweigs Erasmus-Buch. Die historische Anspielung und Parallele ist schon unerträglich, weil sie der Gegenwart zu viel schwächliche Ehre erweist" (qtd. in Hamacher 166-167).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

chapter—“Sendung und Lebenssinn”—and the last—“Das Vermächtnis des Erasmus”—configure said interpretive framework. The second chapter is devoted to briefly lay out the historical context, in an attempt not only to historically situate and inscribe Erasmus, but also to show the analogies between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries. These are the pages where we can more clearly observe Zweig’s willingness to involve the reader in the narration through the identification of common experiences. From the third chapter onwards, the text narrates Erasmus’ life from his childhood to his death, with his struggle against Luther featuring as the narrative climax. At the same time, the figure of Luther is of paramount importance as it provides a point of comparison and contrast which helps delineate not only the basic tenets of humanism but also the figures of intellectuality embodied by Erasmus.

Above all, Erasmus is presented as a ‘humanist’, as one of the founding fathers of humanism, a movement that brought about a ‘spiritual’ revolution in Europe. As I indicated above, we will be discussing the impact of humanism or ‘the human’ as an ethical category in Zweig’s idea of Europe and his work in the second chapter of this dissertation. Suffice it to say for now that the epithet ‘humanist’ signals in *Erasmus* 1) a concern with the ‘human’: “‘Die menschlichen Dinge bedeuten ihm mehr als die göttlichen’, schreibt er von Erasmus und bezeichnet damit meisterhaft ihre gegenseitige Distanz: für Luther war das Religiöse das Wichtigste auf Erden, für Erasmus das Humane” (*ERASMUS* 1218). From this perspective, it is a matter of scope and address; the ‘human’ is the ‘target’ to which Erasmus’ efforts as intellectual are directed; 2) someone who belongs to a movement of intellectual renovation, who engages in a fight against tradition, who acts as pioneer, as leader in the vanguard of the Reformation (*ERASMUS* 722), “[a]ls den ‘antibarbarus’, den Bekämpfer aller Rückständigkeit, alles Traditionalismus, als den Verkünder einer erhobeneren, freieren und humaneren

Menschlichkeit, als den Wegweiser eines kommenden Weltbürgertums stellt sie ihn allen anderen voran" (*ERASMUS* 848); 3) 'Humanism' defines a movement away from the political, following the path of other Zweigian figures of commitment. In this sense, towards the end of Erasmus' life, and mirroring once again the context of the author, Zweig builds an opposition between the realm of humanism and that of politics, lamenting that the time has come where the former has lost its power in front the latter's passion and brute force: "Das hohe Reich des Humanismus, das er erbaut, ist berannt von den Feinden und halb schon erobert, vorbei sind die Zeiten der 'eruditio et eloquentia', die Menschen hören nicht mehr auf das feine, das wohlwogene Wort der Dichtung, sondern einzig auf das grobe und leidenschaftliche der Politik" (*ERASMUS* 1936). Equally, at the beginning of chapter eleven, Zweig draws a comparison between an Erasmian legacy that aspires to justice and the theories of one his contemporaries, Niccolo Machiavelli, whereby the exercise of power is the ultimate expression of the individual:

Während Erasmus von den Fürsten und Völkern fordert, sie sollten ihre persönlichen, ihre egoistisch-imperialistischen Ansprüche freiwillig und friedlich der brüderlichen Gemeinschaft der ganzen Menschheit unterordnen, erhebt Machiavelli den Machtwillen, den Kraftwillen jedes Fürsten, jeder Nation zum obersten und einzigen Ziel ihres Denkens und Handelns. (*ERASMUS* 1995)

As a humanist intellectual, Erasmus tries to, we could claim using Zweig's own articulation, 'keep out of politics'. His aspirations toward the human seem to be contraposed to the exercise of power. His efforts towards 'reformation'—not 'revolution'—are inscribed on the realm of the ideal or the ethical, apparently removed from the political arena. In this sense, to be a humanist takes the intellectual to other forms of commitment, to other affiliations. While remaining 'apolitical', the drive towards humanity brings Erasmus above the national and therefore, in the first place, closer to the European. Thus, Erasmus' significance consists, above all, in his ability to keep the

European dream alive at a time of collective madness. He is in a way the founding father¹⁶⁵ of the European credo as a form of bringing humankind together, a legacy that will be repeatedly brought back and kept alive in the subsequent centuries by alike-minded individuals:

[I]n Schlupfwinkeln und auf Schleichwegen hat er sich zeitweilig geduckt und gedeckt während der wildesten Zusammenstöße des Massenwahnes; aber – dies das Wichtigste – er hat sein geistiges Kleinod, seinen Menschheitsglauben, unversehrt heimgebracht aus dem furchtbaren Haßorkan seiner Zeit, und an diesem kleinen glimmenden Docht konnten Spinoza, Lessing und Voltaire und können alle künftigen Europäer ihre Leuchte entzünden. (*ERASMUS* 146)

There is no need to say that Zweig sees himself—together with Verhaeren, Rolland, etc.—as a member of the family or saga of ‘good Europeans’. Accordingly, and following some of the biographical patterns we have discussed in previous sections, Erasmus’ Europeanness or supranational affiliation is something that is developed at a very early age. In fact, Zweig associates the obscurity surrounding his birth and youth to a kind of ‘universal’ condition: “Unübertreffliches Symbol für diesen übernationalen, der ganzen Welt gehörigen Genius: Erasmus hat keine Heimat, kein richtiges Elternhaus, er ist gewissermaßen im luftleeren Raum geboren” (*ERASMUS* 238). The fact that his name was not given to him by his family, but was the product of Erasmus’ conscious choice, points to the idea of Erasmus as an individual who does not have to deal with the burden of a familiar and national affiliation, who has the possibility to reinvent himself and choose his homeland. As an unwanted child given to the church when his parents die, the framework of said transnational institution seems to be instrumental in the formation of his supranational personality.

¹⁶⁵ On Erasmus as the first European: “Er anerkannte, seßhaft in keinem Lande und heimisch in allen, der erste bewußte Kosmopolit und Europäer, keinerlei Überlegenheit einer Nation über die andere” (*ERASMUS* 52).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

The importance of these remarks, I contend, resides not in the ‘truth’ behind Zweig’s narrative, but in the fact that Europeanness is often described as something ‘given’ to a few exceptional individuals who, by reason of fate, were reared up in an atmosphere that transcended the ‘local’ and the ‘national’. Therefore, we could argue that the European identity is in Zweig a condition of exceptionality granted to a minority who has the duty to spread it to the rest of the community. It is rarely a ‘learned’ quality but rather an inborn seed that is nurtured and developed throughout life. And perhaps this is the greatest obstacle in Zweig’s project, the fact that he never found the/a formula for the development of a supranational consciousness or attitude in someone who does not possess such faculty from the start. The fact that Europe is ingrained at the very core of the Zweigian intellectual’s essence reveals a certain lack of understanding of how supranationalism works. While Zweig may be able to recognize a European mind whenever he sees/read/meets one, he does not really know, beyond the contextual factor, how to explain it or how to replicate it.

Be it as it may, Erasmus is defined as a European, as an intellectual whose efforts are directed to accomplish the European dream: “[In] Erasmus sieht die Zeit das Symbol der still, aber unaufhaltsam wirkenden Vernunft. Einen wunderbaren Augenblick lang ist Europa einig in dem humanistischen Wunschtraum einer einheitlichen Zivilisation [...] und dieser unvergeßliche Versuch bleibt denkwürdig gebunden an die Gestalt und den Namen des Erasmus von Rotterdam” (*ERASMUS* 848). He is the defender of Europe when war threatens to ravage the continent—and tear apart the idea of an *ecclesia universalis*—after Luther’s ‘rebellion’. This is how Zweig defines Erasmus’ duty: “[A]llein inmitten all der Überreizten die klare Vernunft zu verkörpern und, einzig mit einer Feder bewehrt, die Einheit Europas, die Einheit der Kirche, die Einheit der Humanität und des Weltbürgertums zu verteidigen gegen Zerfall und Vernichtung” (*ERASMUS* 1302). Having

said that, it must be noted that Europe is not the only form of supranational affiliation embodied by Erasmus. As it is hinted in the previous quote, his beyond-the-national mindset provides him with, on the one hand, a sort of world citizenship and cosmopolitan identity, to the point that he is ‘paraphrased’ as “de[r] weltbürgerliche Verständigung zwischen geistigen Naturen als höchstes Ziel galt” (*ERASMUS* 1124). Equally, towards the end of his life, we read that “der sein ganzes Leben als Kosmopolit, als bewußt Heimatloser verbracht, empfindet ein ängstlich liebevolles Bedürfnis nach heimischer Erde. Der müde Leib will zurück, von woher er gekommen, eine Ahnung in ihm weiß, die Fahrt geht zu Ende” (*ERASMUS* 1958).¹⁶⁶

On the other hand, according to Zweig, Erasmus represents a new ‘type’ and that is the reason why renowned painters such as Holbein or Dürer are avid to paint his features, to extract the essence from his likeness: “Denn Erasmus, das lumen mundi, malen zu dürfen, war zugleich öffentlich dargebrachte Huldigung an den universalischen Mann, der die abgetrennten Handwerksgilden der einzelnen Künste zu einer einzigen humanistischen Bildungsbrüderschaft vereinigt hatte” (*ERASMUS* 459). In other words, the scope of humanism is seen—with a certain degree of Eurocentrism that cannot be ignored—as universal, as an ‘unbounded’ doctrine with an ‘unlimited’ (theoretical) applicability. Like Verhaeren, who had a special connection with modernity at the turn of the twentieth century, “[d]ieser Zeitwunsch prägt sich für eine kurze Spanne in Erasmus vollkommen aus, denn der ‘uomo universale’, der Nichteinseitige, der Vielwissende, frei in die Zukunft Blickende ist der Idealtypus des neuen Geschlechts geworden” (*ERASMUS* 837).

¹⁶⁶ This quote anticipates a larger debate as regards the ‘rooted’ nature of Zweig’s cosmopolitanism—between universalism and particularism—, which will be discussed at length in Chapter II.

Erasmus III: Freedom/Independence

Moving on in the description of the Erasmian forms of commitment, we can observe that the new type of ‘universal’ man discussed in the previous quote is defined by his intellectual ‘independence’, which is probably the feature Zweig valued most around these dates, but also—if we go back to Rolland and his ‘above the battle’ stance—in the days of the First World War. Accordingly, Zweig chooses as the epigraph preceding the first chapter of *Erasmus* a quote from the 1515 work *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* that remarks precisely Erasmus’ non-allegiance: “Ich versuchte zu erfahren, ob Erasmus von Rotterdam bei jener Partei sei. Aber ein gewisser Kaufmann erwiderte mir: ‘Erasmus est homo pro se’ (Erasmus steht immer für sich allein)” (*ERASMUS* 8). This might be interpreted as an open invitation to the reader from Zweig, who, as we have already argued, uses the paratextual spaces of his works to favor a (preferred) reading of the text, to establish the hermeneutical directives that give shape to the narrative. Bottom line: Erasmus is both politically and intellectually free. Already in chapter one, we read that “Selbständigkeit im Denken war ihm eine Selbstverständlichkeit” (*ERASMUS* 30). Thus, freedom of speech, of thought, and the individual’s entitlement to his or her own truth become the hallmarks of Erasmism, values that must be kept at all costs, even under the institutional domain of the Church:

In diesem seinem geistlichen Kleide haben Erasmus zeitlebens nur wenige jemals gesehen; und es bedarf immer einer gewissen Anstrengung, sich zu erinnern, daß dieser freidenkende und unbefangene schreibende Mann tatsächlich bis in die Sterbestunde dem Priesterstand angehört hat. Aber Erasmus verstand die große Lebenskunst, alles, was ihm drückend war, auf sachte und unauffällige Weise von sich abzutun und in jedem Kleid und unter jedem Zwang sich seine innere Freiheit zu wahren. (*ERASMUS* 247)

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Thus, Zweig anticipates one of the possible counterarguments or limitations of Erasmus' freedom. For, as a non-party man, the intellectual from Rotterdam was otherwise engaged within one of the most powerful institutions in the sixteenth century. It would be logical, therefore, to question his independence due to his affiliation to the Catholic Church. However, what might be considered as an obstacle to the definition of Erasmus as an independent thinker and scholar—for how could he remain independent within the hierarchy of such institution?—is presented as a further merit, a factor that increases Zweig's admiration. It is, once again, the formula so much acclaimed by Zweig whereby the man is so closely united to one idea—*Weltanschauung* or set of values—that it comes to inform every one of his decisions and actions. All in all, Zweig argues,

[d]amit enthüllt sich schon ein bedeutsamer und vielleicht der wesentlichste Zug seines Charakters: Erasmus will sich an nichts und niemanden binden. Keinen Fürsten-, keinen Herren- und selbst keinen Gottesdienst will er dauernd auf sich nehmen, er muß aus einem innern Unabhängigkeitszwang seiner Natur frei bleiben und niemandem untertan. Niemals hat er innerlich einen Vorgesetzten anerkannt, an keinen Hof, an keine Universität, an keinen Beruf, an kein Kloster, an keine Kirche, an keine Stadt fühlte er sich je verpflichtet, und wie seine geistige Freiheit, hat er lebenslang seine moralische mit stiller und zäher Hartnäckigkeit verteidigt. (*ERASMUS* 258)

In his life narrative—as recounted by Zweig—, once Erasmus has left the cloister to act as the Bishop of Cambrai's Latin secretary, accompanying him in his diplomatic journeys throughout Europe, he is determined never to go back. When the bishop no longer requires his services, Erasmus convinces him to send him to Paris to pursue the degree of Doctor of Theology and provide him with a pension. This moment is endowed with symbolic force as the turning point in Erasmus' way to freedom: “[U]nd vergebens wartet der Prior des Klosters auf die Rückkehr des Ungetreuen. Aber er wird sich gewöhnen müssen, Jahre und Jahrzehnte auf ihn zu warten, denn längst hat Erasmus sich

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

seinen Urlaub vom Mönchstum und jedem andern Zwang für das ganze Leben selbstherrlich erteilt” (*ERASMUS* 279). Obviously, guarding his freedom in a context where he had to pay homage to patrons and institutional hierarchies—both religious and secular—had its consequences in the configuration of Erasmus as an intellectual. He had to pay certain tolls.

In this regard, Zweig notes the many dedications in his books and flattering letters in his correspondence (*ERASMUS* 321). Nonetheless, Zweig goes on to clarify that “hinter diesem oft bedauerten Mangel an Charakterstolz verbirgt sich bei ihm ein entschlossener, großartiger Wille zur Unabhängigkeit” (*ERASMUS* 321). If he ever sacrificed his (moral) integrity, if he ever failed to the truth by dint of excessive flattering, it was all so that he could preserve his independence, which set up a line that he was never willing to cross: “Er läßt sich fortwährend beschenken, aber von keinem einzigen kaufen, er weist alles zurück, was ihn dauernd an eine besondere Person binden könnte” (*ERASMUS* 321). According to Zweig, one of the prices paid by Erasmus for the sake of his intellectual freedom was a sort of instability, the necessity to wander around looking for patronage. Whereas he could have accepted any of the fixed posts offered by the most prestigious universities of the time, he preferred not to take (ideological) roots, but to move incessantly: “[A]ber all das immer nur genauso lange, als es ihm gefällt, und niemals für dauernde Frist an einem Ort. Dieser hartnäckig entschlossene Wille zur Freiheit, dies Niemandem-dienen-Wollen hat Erasmus zeitlebens zum Nomaden gemacht” (*ERASMUS* 331).

In a way, it is this nomadism or mobility that allows Erasmus to free himself from the shackles of society and the powers that be. While independence of thought may deprive him of stability, it certainly allows to further a process of continuous renovation. Bearing these ideas in mind, it is interesting to observe that, in contrast to other figures

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

of commitment discussed in previous sections, Erasmus' degree of idealism is somehow downplayed. In other words, while certainly Zweig presents him as an example, the admission that sometimes he has to concede, that he has to give or sacrifice something in return for his freedom, makes Erasmus a more 'nuanced' figure, even 'flawed' to a certain extent, showing an evolution in Zweig's forms of commitment. By 1934 he has had to navigate difficult waters personally, desacralizing the image of the intellectual he had embraced during the First World War under the mentorship of Rolland. We could argue, therefore, that the negotiation with the political and 'spiritual' realities of the interwar years leaves a mark in Zweig's idealism. Although he never completely renounces his aspirations and hopes, he is aware of his examples' and his own deficiencies: "Um dieser geistigen Freiheit willen geht er viele dunkle, ja sogar krumme Wege, aber alle auf ein und dasselbe innere Ziel hin: auf die geistige Unabhängigkeit seiner Kunst, seines Lebens" (*ERASMUS* 331).

Following the discussion of Erasmus as a 'free' intellectual, we could contend that an important factor in the compromise of his independence relates to the material conditions of his existence. Not only does he have to procure funding for his creative/scholarly work, he also needs to nurture his body, to keep it healthy. To keep illness at bay is also an expression of Erasmus' independence, refusing any sort of 'excess' that would potentially weaken his frail body: "Er vermeidet üppige Gastlichkeiten, er achtet sorgsam auf Reinlichkeit und gutbereitete Nahrung, er meidet die Lockungen der Venus, und vor allem fürchtet er Mars, den Gott des Krieges" (*ERASMUS* 532). These material 'sacrifices' or 'choices' are what allows Erasmus to keep his most highly valued treasure: "die Helligkeit seines Blicks und die Unantastbarkeit seiner innern Freiheit" (*ERASMUS* 542). Additionally, his independence is the precondition to attain moral authority. If he is to exert any influence on terrestrial affairs, he needs to

maintain his integrity, which grants and boosts his capacity for prescription, guidance and counselling. Erasmus is not to be bought: “Er läßt sich dienen, aber er übernimmt niemandes Dienst, unerschütterlicher Vorkämpfer jener innern Freiheit und Unbestechlichkeit des Künstlers, die er als notwendige Vorbedingung jeder moralischen Wirkung erkannt hat” (*ERASMUS* 816).

Ultimately, this core directive of Erasmus’ life—as recreated by Zweig—orientates and gives direction to his behavior. For instance, we are told that “[a]us seiner seelischen Zaghaftheit ebenso wie aus seinem unerschütterlichen Unabhängigkeitsgefühl ist Erasmus entschlossen, mit niemandem, also auch mit Luther nicht, gemeinsame Sache zu machen” (*ERASMUS* 1281). This points out to the fact that most of the limitations that we will analyze later on derive precisely from the need to keep inner freedom safe. The same asset that turns Erasmus into both an example and an exceptional intellectual makes him at the same time vulnerable. Continuing the life-work symbiosis with which we started this section, Erasmus will die a free man. Upon being offered a cardinal’s position by the new pope, he rejects it on behalf of his independence: “Nein, frei sterben, wie man frei gelebt! Frei und im bürgerlichen Kleid, ohne Abzeichen und irdische Ehren, frei wie alle Einsamen und einsam wie alle Freien” (*ERASMUS* 1979).

We could conclude at his point that both the drive towards the human—his beyond-the-national stance—and his inner freedom permeate Erasmus’ behavior as an intellectual. In this light, he is presented, as we have mentioned before, as a ‘non-aligned’ figure, beyond the conflicting parties that claim his support, as someone who abhors any final answer: “Erasmus in schicksalsträchtigen Augenblicken zu beobachten, ist beinahe peinlich, denn sobald es scharf auf scharf geht, schleicht er eilig aus der Gefahrenzone, [...] pendelt zwischen Ja und Nein, verwirrt seine Freunde und verärgert seine Feinde [...]. Denn Erasmus als unerschütterlicher Einzelgänger will niemandem treu bleiben als sich

selber. Er verabscheut instinktiv jede Art von Entscheidungen, weil sie Bindungen sind” (*ERASMUS* 542). In this sense, Zweig draws a connection between non-partisanship and humanism, as he who claims to think in ‘human’ terms can never swear loyalty to any idea that aims to achieve superiority above the others and impose its own rules: “Der humanistisch erzogene, der human gesinnte Mensch im erasmischen Sinne darf deshalb keiner Ideologie sich verschwören, weil alle Ideen ihrem Wesen nach zur Hegemonie streben, er hat an keine Partei sich zu binden, weil es Pflicht jedes Parteimenschen ist, parteiisch zu sehen, zu fühlen, zu denken” (*ERASMUS* 953).

Echoing Zweig’s words in the interview of 1935, the figure of intellectuality embodied by Erasmus is directly contraposed to that of the politician in his or her capacity as a party member or representative, as he or she who must compromise his thinking and speech to the values and benefit of a collectivity. The main argument is that one of the intellectual’s main objective is the safeguarding of justice: “Er hat sich die Freiheit des Denkens und Handelns bei jedem Anlasse zu wahren, denn ohne Freiheit ist Gerechtigkeit unmöglich, sie, die einzige Idee, welche der ganzen Menschheit als höchstes Ideal gemeinsam sein soll” (*ERASMUS* 953). And he concludes: “Erasmisch denken heißt darum unabhängig denken, erasmisch wirken im Sinne der Verständigung wirken” (*ERASMUS* 953). The only way for Erasmus to implement the humanist ethos is by keeping himself independent. Freedom is not simply one of the tenets of the humanist program, but also the very condition that makes possible the articulation of a humanist stance; it is not only the goal of the intellectual, but also what creates his ‘intellectuality’, what allows him or her to become an intellectual in the first place: “[U]nd je fanatischer die Zeit wird in ihrer Parteilichkeit, um so entschlossener hat er in seiner Überparteilichkeit zu verharren, die auf das menschlich Gemeinsame in all diesen Irrungen und Verwirrungen blickt,

unbestechlicher Anwalt der geistigen Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit auf Erden” (*ERASMUS* 953).

As Zweig probably experienced himself countless of times, the intellectual—his/her moral authority, capacity for prescription, voice—are of great value to the politician and the party man. In the case of Erasmus, Luther—the great opponent of the scholar from Rotterdam—tried to win him for the cause of the Reformation while looking for allies (*ERASMUS* 1239). In this situation, the ‘good’ intellectual must decline any such offer in order not to compromise his or her voice in the public arena, “[d]enn Luther jetzt offen bejahen, heißt im voraus schon ja sagen zu allen seinen kommenden Büchern und Schriften und Angriffen, ja sagen zu einem maßlosen und unmäßigen Menschen” (*ERASMUS* 1250). The security of a fixed position, the stability provided by the support of a group, party or collectivity is not enough for Erasmus, who can only think of the future incalculable debt he might incur if he accepts to espouse such ideologies. He will not speak for anyone other than for humanity: “Für einen Menschen Partei nehmen, sich verpflichten, heißt ein Stück seiner eigenen sittlichen Freiheit aufgeben, für Forderungen eintreten, deren Tragweite man nicht überblicken kann, und nie wird Erasmus sich in seiner Freiheit einschränken lassen” (*ERASMUS* 1250). Thus, Erasmus must resort once again to the art of finding a middle solution, to give an answer to (in this case) Luther’s demand without openly confronting or agreeing with him. He must answer, as we have seen, without compromising his voice (*ERASMUS* 1260).

From this perspective, we may argue that, as a non-party man, as an intellectual, Erasmus’ position is characterized by a strong individualism, a trend that, as we will discuss at length in chapter two, informs not only the Zweigian forms of intellectuality but also his ethos. The importance of the individual, its integrity, rights and freedom, are the basic units of Zweig’s ethics and thought, even when he discusses the collective and

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

common dimensions of experience. In Erasmus' case, individualism is what lies at the core of the formula '*homo per se*' and may be seen both positively and negatively. On the one hand, it might be regarded as the only way to safeguard the individual's freedom. On the other, it may be seen as the perfect excuse to shed responsibility, to not commit and therefore cowardly avoid the consequences of one's stance. It is—paradoxically—at the same time a form of affiliation—to one's own path in the interest of humanity—and non-belonging: "Aber nicht Drohung und nicht Beschimpfung können Erasmus bewegen, zur einen Partei zu gehen oder zur anderen; nulli concedo, keinem will ich angehören, diesen seinen Wahlspruch macht er bis zum letzten wahr, homo per se, Mann für sich allein, bis in die letzte Konsequenz" (ERASMUS 136). Following this line of discussion, another expression of Erasmus' individualism or independence is the adoption of a so-called neutral position: "Ich verhalte mich, soweit ich kann, neutral (*integrum*), um besser die wiederaufblühenden Wissenschaften fördern zu können, und glaube, daß durch klug gehandhabte Zurückhaltung mehr erreicht wird als durch heftige Einmischung" (qtd. in Zweig, ERASMUS 1260).

Bearing that in mind, we could argue that Erasmus' neutrality can be 'easily' challenged, insofar as by refusing to take sides he is in fact creating a third option. Therefore, we cannot argue, nor does Zweig, that Erasmus did not have his own opinions regarding the matter of the Reformation, he just did not want to express them in public. Be it as it may, the Erasmian intellectual does not only wish to be 'neutral', but also to adopt the position of spectator, the role of onlooker. When he refuses Luther's offer to join him, they agree on a non-aggression pact: "Das Bündnisangebot ist zurückgewiesen, ein Neutralitätspakt geschlossen. Luther ist es bestimmt, das Drama zu gestalten, und Erasmus hofft—vergebliche Hoffnung!—, es werde ihm erlaubt sein, dabei nur Zuschauer, nur 'spectator' zu bleiben" (ERASMUS 1281). This is perhaps one of the

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

greatest contradictions in Zweig's Erasmus: that he is presented at the same time as a humanist—and humanism as a movement of renovation and, also, reformation—and as an intellectual that, when the time comes to fight for what he believes, prefers to stand aside and let God do his bidding—even if we can sense a hint of irony in Zweig's words: “Wenn Gott, wie aus dem mächtigen Aufstieg der Sache Luthers hervorgeht, dies alles so will und vielleicht für die Verdorbenheit dieser Zeiten einen so rauhen Wundarzt wie Luther nötig erachtet hat, dann ist es nicht meine Sache, ihm zu widerstreben” (qtd. in Zweig *ERASMUS*, 1281).

Erasmus' commitment is limited by the very values that give it direction, that orientate its force. If one is to stick always to one's independence as one's most precious treasure, one might be relegated to a position of 'passivity' or even 'silence', which is seen as an ethical imperative: “Wie beredt rühmt Erasmus, der Diplomat, gegenüber der agitatorischen Kraft der Redekunst jene andere Meisterschaft des Geistmenschen, die hohe Kunst des Schweigens zu rechter Stunde” (*ERASMUS* 1313). We have already discussed the complexities and evolution of the idea of 'silence' in the articulation of Zweig's commitment in exile, from a form of renunciation to an ethical demand to act with response-ability. In the case of Erasmus, it reveals the idea that “[n]icht immer muß die ganze Wahrheit gesagt werden. Viel kommt darauf an, wie sie verkündet wird” (qtd. in Zweig *ERASMUS*, 1313). It is not about what one says, but about how one says and to what end. As biographer George Prochnik observes, silence in Zweig “under[ies] his concept of ethical integrity” (127). Commenting on his reaction to the Nazi book burnings of May 1933—to which Zweig reacted by telling his friends to “wait, wait, keep silent, and silent again” (127)—, Prochnik affirms that it is easy to dismiss these remarks as the ultimate proof of Zweig's “political disengagement” (127).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

However, the biographer goes on to say, there is another way of interpreting Zweig's 'silence' following his reflections on "the historical link between demagoguery and noisemaking, on the one hand, and the quiet, calm forces of reason on the other" (127). From this angle, silence would not be just a form of retreat, of non-engagement, that exposes the intellectual's powerlessness in front a situation where he feels that the only option is to disappear until the conditions of 'normality' that allow him to act are reinstated again. Rather, silence is a conscious positioning that aims to oppose a way of articulating discourse, of performing in the public sphere. Against the harshness and brutality that animate Hitler's public appearances, which seek to rouse feelings of anger and hatred in the masses that rally around him, waking their 'basic' impulses, Zweig proposes softness, moderation and, if it comes to that, even silence. According to Prochnik: "Zweig believed that silent withdrawal could render a form of moral judgement, and that such stereotypically female attributes as softness, receptivity, and even oversensitive nerves could serve an ethical purpose" (129).

In a sense, Zweig is refusing the adoption of a discourse of masculinity that, so he claimed, had emerged after the war and greatly contrasted with the ideal of manhood promoted during his upbringing in fin-de-siècle Vienna. As he remembers at the beginning of chapter two of *Die Welt von Gestern*—"Die Schule im vorigen Jahrhundert"—, the liberal education he and his contemporaries received was focused mainly on the cultivation of the mind, leaving sports and physical activities to occupy a marginal place in the curricula: "Es war mehr als zu viel und ließ für körperliche Entwicklung, für Sport und Spaziergänge fast keinen Raum und vor allem nicht für Frohsinn und Vergnügen" (*WvG* 566). Additionally, Zweig seems to regret the displacement of theatre, literature and art—whose centrality is a defining trait of his utopian recreation of Vienna at the turn of the century—by the rise of sports and mass media:

An und für sich war diese Begeisterung für Theater, Literatur und Kunst eine ganz natürliche in Wien; die Zeitung gab in Wien allen kulturellen Geschehnissen

besonderen Raum, rechts und links hörte man, wo immer man ging, bei den Erwachsenen Diskussionen über die Oper oder das Burgtheater, in allen Papiergeschäften standen in den Auslagen die Bilder der großen Schauspieler; noch galt Sport als eine brutale Angelegenheit, deren ein Gymnasiast sich eher zu schämen hatte, und der Kinematograph mit seinen Massenidealen war noch nicht erfunden. (WvG 708).

All in all, there is a contrast—or even an enmity—between a culture or civilization that favors (the cultivation of) mind over body and another where bodily strength wins the day over intellectual achievement. Suffice it to say, Zweig prefers the former over the latter, insofar as he associates the cult of the body, of physical exercise, to rudeness, brutality and even violence. What could be less opposed to the spirit of *Geist* than the practice of boxing or any other sport where some form or other of physical contact is the rule?¹⁶⁷ What is more, there seems to be a correlation between the ‘brutality’ of these practices and the actions of infuriated masses, of (para)military groups marching the streets.¹⁶⁸ Coupled with the expansion of mass media—and with it of mass propaganda—, a new model of public discourse seems to dominate the political

¹⁶⁷ In a lecture originally given in French in Rio de Janeiro during Zweig’s first visit to Brazil in 1936—“Die geistige Einheit Europas”—the Austrian writer asked his audience, following his distrust of technical progress after the First World War, not to confuse brute force with true, lasting achievements: “Hören wir endlich auf, die äußere Kraft mit schöpferischen Leistungen zu verwechseln, und so wichtig, so hygienisch der Sport auch sei, lasst uns nicht im Preisboxer des Jahres einen Helden sehen und erinnern wir uns immer, dass, wenn auch ein Schwimmer in zwei Sekunden schneller schwimmt, als je vordem anderer geschwommen ist[,] damit die Menschheit moralisch nicht um einen Zoll vorwärtsgebracht wird. Das übermäßige Interesse an der physischen Kraft führt nur zur Lust an der Kraft, die Lust an der Kraft führt zum Kriege” (“GEE” 151).

¹⁶⁸ In Zweig’s novella “Widerstand der Wirklichkeit“ (1929), the two protagonists of the story—former lovers—reunite after the First World War and take a train to spend some days together and see if their feelings have resisted the weight of time and memory. Upon arriving at their destination, they witness a demonstration in support of the fatherland. For the narrator, the sight becomes a devastating experience, a show of force that can only conduce to war: “Sie traten aus dem Bahnhof, aber kaum aus der Tür, stieß ein Brausen wie Sturm gegen sie, zerknattert von Trommeln, überschüllt von Pfeifen, wuchtiger tönender Lärm – eine vaterländische Demonstration der Kriegervereine und Studenten. Wandernde Mauer, Viererreihen nach Viererreihen, von Fahnen bewimpelt, krachend im Paradeschritt marschierten militärisch gewandete Männer in einem Takt wie ein einziger Mann, den Nacken starr rückgestoßen, gewaltsame Entschlossenheit, den Mund aufgehöhlt zum Gesang, eine Stimme, ein Schritt, ein Takt. [...] Noch einmal diesen Krieg, der eben ihm sein ganzes Leben zerschlagen? Mit einem fremden Schauer sah er hinein in diese jungen Gesichter, starrte er hin auf diese schwarz wandelnde Masse, die vieregereichte, dies quadratische Filmband, das aus der engen Gasse einer dunklen Schachtel sich aufrollte, und jedes Antlitz, das er anfaßte, war gleich starr von entschlossener Erbitterung, eine Drohung, eine Waffe” (“WW” 3386-3407).

arena. Opposed to a rational and moderate debate emerges the image of a ‘strong’ leader addressing the masses, infuriating them, creating the enemies towards whom they are entitled to strike their fists; the image of a politician whose words, whose voice, is modulated to achieve such effects by resorting to a passionate and instinctual rhetoric. As Prochnik asserts, “Zweig—characterized so frequently by others as soft and feminine in his manners—saw the Nazis as having already taken the position of hardness. Even if it meant doom, a counter-position had to be staked out” (130).¹⁶⁹

It is not coincidental, thus, neither the fact that Erasmus may consider ‘silence’ as a (sort of) committed option, nor that he is (over)emphatically described as a ‘frail’, ‘fragile’ individual. This is a characteristic—also present in the portrait of Romain Rolland—that dominates the chapter dedicated to Erasmus’ likeness, an intrinsic feature of the new type of man he represents, defined by—and this is what attracts so many painters—his intellectual potency: “In Erasmus verherrlichten die Maler ihren Schirmherrn, den großen Vorkämpfer um die neue musische und moralische Gestaltung des Daseins; mit allen Insignien dieser geistigen Macht stellten sie ihn darum auf ihren Tafeln dar” (*ERASMUS* 459). There is in Zweig’s deterministic approach to character, body and intellectual production a correlation between outward appearance and personality. Therefore, a man so abundantly gifted with ‘spiritual’/intellectual prowess must necessarily have a weak bodily presence:

Die Natur hat diesen geistig reichen Mann nicht verschwenderisch bedacht, sie hat ihm nur ein geringes Maß von wirklicher Lebensfülle und Vitalität mitgegeben: ein ganz kleines, schmalköpfiges Körperchen statt eines festen, gesunden, widerstandsfähigen Leibes. Dünn, blaß, temperamentlos hat sie ihm

¹⁶⁹ Moderation is an intrinsic aspect of the ‘Erasmian’ intellectual. As an example, we can read how Zweig uses said epithet to describe the attitude of Luther at a certain point: “Zum erstenmal (denn seine Stellung ist über Nacht der des Erasmus sehr ähnlich geworden) versucht er erasmisch zu handeln. Er mahnt die Fürsten zur Nachsicht, er mahnt die Bauernschaft, ‘den christlichen Namen nicht zum Schanddeckel Eures unfriedlichen, ungeduldigen und unchristlichen Fürnehmens zu machen’” (*ERASMUS* 1720).

das Blut in die Adern getan und über die empfindlichen Nerven eine zarte, kränkliche, stubenfarbene Haut gespannt, die mit den Jahren sich fältelt wie graues, brüchiges Pergament und zu tausend Runzeln und Runen zerbröckelt. Überall fühlt man dies Zuwenig an Vitalität; [...] nirgends glüht eine starke Farbe, rundet sich volle Form in diesem strengen Arbeits- und Asketengesicht. Es ist schwer, sich diesen gelehrten Mann jung vorzustellen, Pferde reitend, schwimmend und fechtend, mit Frauen scherzend oder gar kosend, von Wind und Wetter umstürmt, laut redend und lachend. (ERASMUS 468-479)

Erasmus IV: The Middle Way

Taking all this into account, we could argue that to the description of the forms of intellectuality and commitment embodied in the recreation of Erasmus of Rotterdam follows also a physical profile that is in direct correlation to such forms or some of their characteristics. Now, moving on to the analysis of the other ‘skins’ donned—or the ‘roles’ adopted—by the Erasmian intellectual, it must be noted that, if independence—freedom—and non-alignment are to be followed to the last consequences, the committed artist must find his or her own sphere to commit his/her work, displacing his/her area of effect away from the opposing sides, away from binarisms and static positions. In doing so, one may opt for silencing his/her voice; or may choose to go ‘above’; equally, one may try to find a third alternative or a middle course away from the radicality of the extremes. And the truth is that these three options may be found one way or another in *Erasmus*.

However, it must be said that the third way or middle course dominates throughout the narrative, turning Erasmus into a sort of mediator, a figure of commitment we have already explored with *Verhaeren* and *Rolland*. In the very first pages of the text, when discussing Erasmus’ significance in terms of his non-alignment, we read that “die Zeit zwingt ihn hinein in das Getümmel zur Rechten oder zur Linken, [...] keiner unter den Hunderttausenden und Millionen von Kämpfern braucht dann mehr Mut, mehr Kraft,

mehr moralische Entschlossenheit in solchen Zeiten als der Mann der Mitte, der sich keinem Rottenwahn, keiner Denkeinseitigkeit unterwerfen will” (*ERASMUS* 115). Taking a middle course or a third way out of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers is presented as (quasi)heroic. It takes boldness and strength to seek an alternative where one is pushed to commit oneself. In the same vein, and following our discussion of Erasmus’ non-alignment, we read that when he was asked by the Elector of Saxony if Luther was right or wrong, he could not give a straight answer, for “Fragen, die ein klares Ja oder Nein fordern, liebt nun an sich Erasmus nicht sehr” (*ERASMUS* 1365); or that even upon the matter of the freedom of the individual—a topic that irremediably divided Erasmus, who believed in the possibility of moral betterment, and Luther, who took a rather fatalistic view—, he would not dare take a radical stance: “Aber Erasmus wäre nicht Erasmus, sagte er zu irgendeiner gegnerischen Meinung ein schroffes und grobes Nein; hier wie überall lehnt er nur den Extremismus ab [...]. Er selbst habe, sagte er in seiner vorsichtig pendelnden Art, ‘keine Freude an festen Behauptungen’, er neige persönlich immer zum Zweifel, aber gern unterwerfe er sich in solchen Fällen den Worten der Schrift und der Kirche” (*ERASMUS* 1679).

It is for these reasons that Erasmus can be thought of as a (potential) mediator: “Vergeblich stellt er sich, um das Allmenschliche, das gemeinsame Kulturgut aus diesem Zwist zu retten, als Mittler in die Mitte und damit an die gefährlichste Stelle” (*ERASMUS* 125). We have amply discussed this form of commitment in our analysis of Verhaeren. Now, it presents a variation. Whereas Verhaeren’s action as an intellectual was directed to the reconciliation of the individual and the times, his work promoting a certain sense of collectivity—or collective framework experience—and therefore harmony, in the case of Erasmus the context is closer to that of Rolland. It is a context of open—religious and political—conflict that might lead to war and the dismembering of an Empire. The

mediator's role in this situation consists in preventing said conflict. According to Zweig, Erasmus' view of the intellectual is located 'above':

Konsequenz. Gegenüber den Politikern, den Führern und Verführern zur einseitigen Leidenschaft hat der Künstler, der Geistmensch im Sinne Erasmus', die Aufgabe, der Verstehend-Vermittelnde zu sein, der Mann des Maßes und der Mitte. Er hat an keiner Front zu stehen, sondern einzig und allein gegen den gemeinsamen Feind allen freien Denkens: gegen jeden Fanatismus; nicht abseits von den Parteien, denn mitzufühlen mit allem Menschlichen ist der Künstler berufen, sondern über ihnen, au-dessus de la mêlée, die eine Übertreibung bekämpfend und die andere, und bei allen denselben unseligen, unsinnigen Haß. (ERASMUS 136)

Above all, Erasmus' capacity as mediator is informed by his ability to synthesize, to bring opposites closer to one another: "Denn des Erasmus Sendung und Lebenssinn war die harmonische Zusammenfassung der Gegensätze im Geiste der Humanität" (ERASMUS 41). In this light, Erasmus is presented as a multifaceted artist and thinker (ERASMUS 584) and, in a context of all-out 'spiritual' war, Erasmus "von einer letzten Synthese aller ehrlichen Formen geistiger Gläubigkeit träumt, von einem rinascimento des Christentums, das alle Welt für immer vom Streit und Widerstreit erlösen soll und damit den Gottesglauben wahrhaft zur Menschheitsreligion erheben" (ERASMUS 752). Likewise, another aspect of Erasmus' mediating nature manifested itself in how he dealt with the Church. As a reformer, as a man who believed that the Holy Scriptures should not be confined only to those who could read Latin, he undertook several projects that might have offended said institution and its representatives, such as the publication of a new corrected edition of the Vulgate. However, mediation is not just in Erasmus a political position but also an attitude in life: "Aber typisch für Erasmus: auch dort, wo er revolutioniert, wahrt er so geschickt die äußeren Formen, daß der wuchtigste Stoß nicht zum Anstoß wird" (ERASMUS 772). All in all: "Immer hat Erasmus individuell, dank seiner

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

konzilienten Natur, den Konflikt zwischen kirchlicher und freier Forschung zu überwinden gewußt, der bei allen andern immer zu furchtbarster Feindschaft führte: sein Genius der Vermittlung und seine Kunst des milden Ausgleichens triumphierten siegreich auch in dieser gespanntesten Sphäre” (*ERASMUS* 783).

Following the same line of discussion, conciliation and harmony are also a reaction against the tyranny of thought, against those who seek to curb intellectual freedom: “wer, wie Erasmus, für alle Ideen eine höchste Synthese sucht, eine allmenschliche Harmonie, muß darum jede Form der Denkeinseitigkeit, des blindesten Nicht-verstehen-Wollens als Angriff gegen seinen Verständigungsgedanken betrachten” (*ERASMUS* 953). Reading these quotes above, we could ask ourselves if there is any limit to Erasmus’ predisposition to ‘synthesis’. Can he accept any view/idea or establish a dialogue with any interlocutor? According to Zweig, besides those ideologies that aspire to total hegemony, the intellectual of Rotterdam cannot accept those that aim to inflict (any sort of) violence: “Jeder Idee billigt darum Erasmus ihr Recht zu und keiner den Anspruch auf Rechthaberei; er, der die Torheit selbst zu verstehen und zu rühmen versuchte, steht keiner Theorie und These von Anfang feindlich entgegen und jeder im Augenblick, da sie die anderen vergewaltigen will” (*ERASMUS* 964).

Ultimately, Erasmus aspires through humanism to a state of universal understanding: “[M]ußte es ihm glaubhaft scheinen, auch die ganze Menschheit werde einmal die Vielfalt ihrer Erscheinungen in ein beglückendes Zusammenspiel, ihre Widersprüche in eine höhere Harmonie verwandeln” (*ERASMUS* 964). In a way, as it similarly happened with Romain Rolland, Erasmus’ role as mediator and his disdain for violence turned him into a pacifist (*ERASMUS* 1115). Erasmus’ mediation encompasses the tasks of mitigating conflict, of alleviating tensions and showing opposing parties how to speak to one another, how to negotiate in order to arrive to a peaceful conclusion or settlement. For

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

instance, when the Catholic Church declares war on Luther, Erasmus is the first to call for the parties to avoid extreme measures—such as declaring Luther a heretic—and make a public declaration of (good) faith; “wenn der Papst von jeder Partei ein öffentliches Glaubensbekenntnis verlangen würde. Damit würde dem Mißbrauch falscher Darstellung abgeholfen und die Tollheit des Redens und Schreibens abgeschwächt” (*ERASMUS* 1334). Likewise, Zweig reads Charles V’s attempts to mediate between Catholics and Protestants by organizing the Diet of Augsburg as the last materialization of the Erasmian idea of reconciliation (*ERASMUS* 155-156).

Despite all his mediating efforts, at the end of his life, “[d]as Denken ist dem Rottenwahn verfallen [...], keiner will den anderen verstehen, sondern jeder dem anderen seinen Parteilglauben, seine Doktrin wie ein Brandmal gewaltsam aufpressen, und wehe denen, die abseits bleiben wollen und ihrem eigenen Bekenntnis anhängen: sie, die zwischen den Parteien und über ihnen stehen wollen, gegen sie wendet sich zweifacher Haß!” (*ERASMUS* 1936). At the end of the day, Erasmus’ message of tolerance, pacifism and mutual understanding loses the battle against the fanatic shouts of those who believe in a single truth. However, for Zweig, who recuperates the figure of Erasmus for the twentieth century, his actions as mediator, mitigator, harmonizer and synthesizer conform still a valid form of intellectuality, one that can and should be reproduced. Thus, we could conclude that mediation, that remedy against hate and violence, is at the core of the Erasmian intellectual: “Die seltene Kunst, Konflikte abzuschwächen durch gütiges Begreifen, Dumpfes zu klären, Verworrenes zu schlichten, Zerrissenes neu zu verweben und dem Abgesonderten höheren gemeinsamen Bezug zu geben, war die eigentliche Kraft seines geduldigen Genies, und mit Dankbarkeit nannten die Zeitgenossen diesen vielfach wirkenden Willen zur Verständigung schlechthin ‘das Erasmische’” (*ERASMUS* 41).

Erasmus V: The ‘Spiritual’ Hero – Luther – Limitations

Last but not least, I would like to explore several aspects of the forms of commitment discussed in this section that may help us further outline the contour of the Erasmian intellectual: 1) the kind of ‘heroic’ figure embodied by the scholar of Rotterdam; 2) the need to construct a full-fledge adversary, a ‘bad’ intellectual, an antagonist, to which Zweig devotes a whole chapter; 3) Zweig’s own critique of Erasmus’ intellectuality; 4) and the consequences of adopting an Erasmian stance. First of all, and that should not surprise us by now, the kind of heroism attributed to Erasmus is not inscribed in the realm of ‘action’, opposed in Zweig’s narrative to the realm of the intellect or the ‘spiritual’. In this sense, Erasmus may be credited with many ‘heroic’ deeds. For one, he is presented as a founding father, as he who situates the men of letters into the map: “Durch Erasmus wird der Schriftsteller zum erstenmal eine europäische Macht neben den andern Mächten. Und daß er sie nicht im Sinne der Auflösung und Aufhetzung, sondern einzig in jenem der Bindung und Gemeinsamkeit geübt hat, bleibt sein dauernder Ruhm” (*ERASMUS* 426).

However, despite Erasmus’ contribution in moral/non-material terms, when it comes to ‘act’, he falls short of his contemporaries’ expectations: “Mitten aber aus diesem Getümmel, ein wenig hinter den großen Kapitänen des Kirchenkrieges und deutlich abseits von ihnen allen, blickt das feine, von leichter Trauer überschattete Gesicht des Erasmus. Er steht an keinem Marterpfahl, seine Hand ist mit keinem Schwert bewehrt, keine heiße Leidenschaft verzerrt sein Gesicht” (*ERASMUS* 156). Equally, we read that “Erasmus kann sich nur verteidigen in der Art gewisser Kleintiere, die in Gefahr sich totstellen oder die Farbe verändern, am liebsten aber zieht er sich bei einem Tumult in sein Schneckengehäuse zurück, in seine Studierstube: nur hinter dem Wall seiner Bücher weiß er sich innerlich gesichert” (*ERASMUS* 542). More importantly, Erasmus is not a ‘revolutionary’—“Erasmus ist zwar Unabhängigkeitsfanatiker, aber darum keineswegs

ein Rebell, ein Revolutionär” (*ERASMUS* 258)—, favoring the role of diplomat over soldier: “[E]r verabscheut alle offenen Konflikte, er vermeidet als kluger Taktiker jeden unnützen Widerstand gegen die Mächte und Machthaber dieser Welt. Er paktiert lieber mit ihnen als gegen sie zu frondieren, er erschleicht lieber seine Unabhängigkeit als sie zu erkämpfen” (*ERASMUS* 258).¹⁷⁰ As we have already stated, moderation is a key aspect of Erasmism; being an Erasmian intellectual is not only about the message but, more importantly, about how it is conveyed. The red line of Erasmus’ tolerance is violence.

Therefore, action—or more precisely ‘revolutionary’ action—seems to be inextricably linked to the production of violence, and, according to Erasmus, “Humanismus ist seinem Wesen nach niemals revolutionär, und wenn Erasmus durch seine Anregungen der Kirchenreform auch die wichtigsten Wegbereiterdienste leistet, so schreckt er gemäß seiner verbindenden, seiner extrem friedfertigen Gesinnung doch scharf zurück vor einem offenen Schisma” (*ERASMUS* 731). Not coincidentally, this disdain for a kind of action that, although it may be well intended, requires violent means to bring about its ends echoes the wedge that drove apart Romain Rolland and Stefan Zweig when they tried to find alternatives to the stagnation of Europe in the interwar period. How far is the intellectual willing to go for the improvement of humankind, for the attainment of justice? For there is nothing that the Erasmian/Zweigian intellectual fears more than to contribute to spreading violence: “Hellsichtiger als all die andern Humanisten, die Luther als einem Heiland zujubeln, erkennt Erasmus in der aggressiven, unbedingten Art Luthers die Vorzeichen eines ‘tumultus’, er sieht statt der Reformation eine Revolution, und diesen gefährlichen Weg will er keinesfalls gehen” (*ERASMUS* 1270).

¹⁷⁰ In this sense, we also read that “[a]ber Erasmus ist in tiefster Seele kein ‘seditiosus’, kein Rebell, keine radikale Natur: die grelle, die pathetische Anklage entspricht nicht seinem gemäßigten und vorsichtigen Temperament” (*ERASMUS* 612).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

The second aspect of the construction of the Erasmian intellectual that I would like to discuss is how his personality is revealed by dint of contrast with an archenemy, a radically opposed figure which forces the ‘good’ intellectual to react in some way or another. We have already hinted at some of the key elements of Erasmus’/humanism’s program: tolerance, common understanding, freedom, which inform the intellectual’s ethos and therefore his actions and behavior. As a consequence of sticking to these ideals or values, Erasmus loathes intolerance and, above all, fanaticism, which is described as his major enemy: “Die Menge stürmt die Kirchen, reißt die Bilder und Schnitzereien von den Altären, die dann vor dem Münster in drei großen Haufen verbrannt werden. Entsetzt sieht Erasmus seinen ewigen Feind, den Fanatismus, mit Flamme und Schwert um sein Haus toben” (*ERASMUS* 1816). It is not so much the ideas of his adversary that Erasmus has sworn to combat, but a form of thinking and communicating. It is about absolute truths and one-sided views. Something so ingrained in his essence, in Erasmus’ example, that Zweig situates its origins in his youth, as a reaction to a very particular milieu. Once he has abandoned the confined atmosphere of the cloister for the first time, he discovers his true sphere of activity: “Aber dieses Salz und diese Bitternis waren vielleicht notwendig, um ihm jenen ungeheuren Durst nach Weltwissen und Freiheit zu geben, denn in dieser Zucht hat der lange Geprüfte gelernt, ein für allemal alles engstirnige Bornierte und doktrinär Einseitige, alles Brutale und Befehlshaberische als unmenschlich zu hassen” (*ERASMUS* 342).

In sum, out of this context an intellectual profile is born against 1) dogmatism; 2) ignorance and folly; 3) partisanship and narrow-mindedness. This is how the figure of the intellectual is built, against such forms of discourse that produce—and are informed by—hate and violence: “[D]enn am leichtesten kann der Fanatismus seine frevlerische Flamme am Haß entzünden” (*ERASMUS* 83), we read in the first chapter of Erasmus, which

takes us inevitably to Zweig's memoirs. When discussing the duty of the intellectual in times of conflict, Zweig concludes that hate, lies and enthusiasm are required to keep the conflict alive. It is the poison that pushes the war forward, that helps create a state where there is "[k]eine Stadt, keine Gruppe, die nicht dieser grauenhaften Hysterie des Hasses verfiel" (*WvG* 3717). Thus, the 'good' intellectual must focus his or her energies on putting down that rhetorical fire. Going back to *Erasmus*, the 'bad' intellectual works in the other direction. I believe it is worth mentioning the fact that Zweig devoted a whole chapter—"Der große Gegner"—to describe the 'adversary'. It is not just through allusion and indirect, secondary references, such as those we found in *Rolland* or *Jeremias*. Rather, here we find a complete profile of the enemy in the form of Martin Luther.

When describing the positions represented by Erasmus and Luther, Zweig devises a series of dichotomies that shapes their differing personalities: "Selten hat das Weltchicksal zwei Menschen charakterologisch und körperlich so sehr zu vollkommenem Kontrast herausgearbeitet wie Erasmus und Luther. [...] Konzilianz gegen Fanatismus, Vernunft gegen Leidenschaft, Kultur gegen Urkraft, Weltbürgertum gegen Nationalismus, Evolution gegen Revolution" (*ERASMUS* 1082). In the same vein, we read towards the end of the biography that:

Das Erasmische und das Lutherische, Vernunft und Leidenschaft, Menschheitsreligion und Glaubensfanatismus, das Übernationale und das Nationale, das Vielseitige und das Einseitige, das Biegsame und das Starre können sich sowenig binden wie Wasser und Feuer. Wann immer sie auf Erden aneinandergeraten, zischt im Zorne Element gegen Element. (*ERASMUS* 1784)

In brief, this is what lies at the core of the struggle between Erasmus and Luther. Accordingly, Zweig's Luther adopts the role of the fanatic and the man of 'action' that resorts to slogans and a 'popular' rhetoric to win over his followers: "Dutzende Male haben Luther und Erasmus die gleichen Gedanken ausgesprochen, aber was bei Erasmus

bloß einen feinen geistigen Reiz auf die Geistigen ausübt, eben das gleiche wird bei Luther dank seiner mitreißenden Art sofort Parole, Feldruf, plastische Forderung, und diese Forderungen peitscht er so grimmig wie die biblischen Füchse mit ihren Feuerbränden in die Welt” (*ERASMUS* 1114). Once again, it is not so much about content but form: “Nicht die Worte, nicht die Thesen Luthers beunruhigen also Erasmus, sondern einzig der Tonfall des Vortrags, der demagogische, der fanatische Akzent in allem, was Luther schreibt und tut” (*ERASMUS* 1208).

Additionally, another element that separates Erasmus from Luther is the latter’s ‘materiality’ in front of the former’s ‘spirituality’. This is how Zweig describes Luther:

Blickt man von diesem stämmigen, grobfleischigen, hartknochigen, vollblütigen Erdenkloß Luther, diesem Mann, dem von der niedern Stirn drohend die geballten Buckel des Willens vorspringen, gemahnend an die Moseshörner Michelangelos, blickt man von diesem Blutmenschen hinüber zum Geistmenschen Erasmus, zu dem pergamentfarbenen, feinhäutigen, dünnen, gebrechlichen, behutsamen Menschen, blickt man die beiden nur körperlich an, so weiß das Auge schon vor dem Verstand: zwischen solchen Antagonisten wird dauernde Freundschaft oder Verständnis niemals möglich sein. (*ERASMUS* 1093).

Likewise, this opposition extends to the categories of ‘body’ and ‘mind’: “Erasmus’ Macht dagegen äußert sich am stärksten, wo er selbst unsichtbar bleibt: in der Schrift, im Brief, im geschriebenen Wort. Er dankt nichts seinem kleinen, armen, vernachlässigten Leibe und alles nur seiner hohen, weiten, seiner weltumfassenden Geistigkeit” (*ERASMUS* 1103). Hence, in contrast to the mediator, conciliator and harmonizer, Luther is presented as a violent man, a warrior, embodying a type of masculinity—the warrior, the fighter—that is radically opposed to both Zweig, as we have discussed before, and Erasmus:

Der Sieger in diesem Kampf, dies war von vornherein gewiß, mußte Luther sein, nicht bloß weil er der stärkere Genius war, sondern auch der kriegsgewohntere und kriegsfrohere Streiter. Luther war und blieb zeitlebens eine kämpferische

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Natur, ein geborener Raufbold mit Gott, Mensch und Teufel. Kampf war für ihn nicht nur Lust und Entladungsform seiner Kraft, sondern geradezu Rettung für seine überfüllte Natur. Dreinschlagen, Zanken, Schimpfen, Streiten bedeutete für ihn eine Art Aderlaß, denn erst im Aus-sich-Herausfahren, im Losdreschen spürt und erfüllt er sein ganzes menschliches Maß. (*ERASMUS* 1134)

Finally, one of the key differences in the forms of commitment represented by Luther and Erasmus is their target group, their ‘audience’. Whereas the latter’s moral authority turns him into a counselor and adviser of the powers that be, the former’s rhetoric allows him to craft a special connection with the masses: “[S]o wie er Volkssprache spricht, aber mit einem ungeheuren Zuschuß an bildnerischer Kraft, so denkt er unbewußt aus der Masse heraus und stellt ihren Willen in einer bis zum höchsten Leidenschaftsgrad gesteigerten Potenz dar” (*ERASMUS* 1093). Equally, his dramatic nature, according to Zweig, helps Luther make use of his audience’s instincts and primitive dispositions, to get to their nerves and render his thoughts comprehensible to everyone; “er hat von erster Stunde an die geniale Volksführergabe der plastischen Geste, des programmatischen Worts” (*ERASMUS* 1197).

Following our reflections on the community of address of the intellectual’s commitment, we can move on to the third aspect of Erasmus’ intellectuality. For Zweig does not simply observe the gap that separates Erasmus and the masses, but he makes use of it to signal the limitations of his commitment. One interesting aspect of Zweig’s rendering of Erasmus is that he creates a nuanced figure. Without leaving aside his usual apologetic and enthusiastic tone, Zweig also includes this time a critique in his discussion of the artist’s commitment. One of the key aspects of such criticism has to do precisely with Erasmus’ ‘snobbism’, since all his well-intentioned efforts to promote a humanist *Weltanschauung* are articulated from a position of superiority informed by an all-pervading elitism: “Er meint, daß eine Erkenntnis, einmal durch das Wort in die Welt

getragen, sich dann auf rein geistigem Wege durchsetzen müsse und weder des Beifalls der Menge noch der Parteiformung bedürfe, um in ihrem Wesen wahrer und wirklicher zu werden” (*ERASMUS* 1208). The main limitation of his ideal is based on the fact that it cannot have an influence on the masses. In order to answer the question of why such lofty and humane ideals—comprised under the notion of Erasmism—did not triumph back then nor in the twentieth century, Zweig argues that:

Wir müssen leider klar erkennen und bekennen, daß niemals ein Ideal breiten Volksmassen vollkommen Genüge tut, das einzig die allgemeine Wohlfahrt ins Auge faßt [...]. Immer wird der Masse das Konkrete, das Greifbare eingängiger sein als das Abstrakte, immer darum im Politischen jede Parole am leichtesten Anhang finden, die statt eines Ideals eine Gegnerschaft proklamiert, einen bequem faßbaren, handlichen Gegensatz, der gegen eine andere Klasse, eine andere Rasse, eine andere Religion sich wendet. (*ERASMUS* 83)

As *Erasmus* might be thought of as a kind of self-portrait, equally we could equally say of these passages that they form a sort of self-critique. The powerlessness that Zweig lets transpire in his exile works, as we have demonstrated so far, is based mostly on the inability to get one’s message across. In the case of Erasmus, his project is doomed insofar as it is first and foremost directed to an aristocracy of the spirit: “[D]er Humanismus aber, die erasmische Lehre, [...] setzt heroisch ihre geduldige Anstrengung auf ein fernes und kaum sichtbares Ziel, sie ist und bleibt ein geistaristokratisches Ideal, solange das Volk, das sie sich träumt, solange die europäische Nation nicht verwirklicht ist” (*ERASMUS* 93). In other words, Erasmus’ commitment follows a top-down orientation which inevitably separates him from his goals.¹⁷¹ In the same vein, Zweig tells us of Erasmus’ preference

¹⁷¹ On the distance that separated the humanists and the masses, Zweig contends that “gerade dieses Vorbeisehen am Volke, diese Gleichgültigkeit gegen die Wirklichkeit hat von vornherein dem Reich des Erasmus jede Möglichkeit der Dauer und seinen Ideen die unmittelbar wirkende Kraft genommen: der organische Grundfehler des Humanismus war, daß er von oben herab das Volk belehren wollte, statt zu versuchen, es zu verstehen und von ihm zu lernen” (*Erasmus* 1008).

for the cultivated aristocracy. Whereas Erasmus learns to feel at home anywhere, enjoying a cosmopolitan existence, this feeling of belonging is circumscribed: “Von nun ab ist seine Liebe überall dort, wo Wissen und Kultur, wo Bildung und Buch herrschen” (*ERASMUS* 373). In this sense, his vision of the world is limited to the distinction between civilized and barbaric individuals: “[E]r kennt nur zwei Schichten mehr: die Aristokratie der Bildung und des Geistes als die obere Welt, den Plebs und die Barbarei als die untere. Wo das Buch herrscht und das Wort, [...] dort ist von nun ab seine Heimat” (*ERASMUS* 373).¹⁷²

Equally, we read that “[e]r liebte sie [books], weil sie leise waren und ohne Gewaltsamkeit und unverständlich der dumpfen Menge, das einzige Vorrecht der Gebildeten in einer sonst rechtlosen Zeit” (*ERASMUS* 383). What is more, Zweig situates Erasmus, as well as his commitment, ‘above’, secluded in an ivory tower. Whereas he travelled extensively, he never lived “innerhalb der Völker und Länder [...], sondern über ihnen, in einer dünneren, helllichtigeren Atmosphäre, in dem tour d’ivoire des Artisten, des Akademikers” (*ERA* 394). Following the dichotomy mind/body we have discussed before, Zweig describes Erasmus’ appearance as ‘otherworldly’: “Es ist das Antlitz eines Menschen, der nicht im Leben lebt, sondern im Denken, dessen Kraft nicht im ganzen Körper liegt, sondern einzig in der knöchernen Wölbung hinter den Schläfen verschlossen ist” (*ERASMUS* 479).

Another limitation of Erasmus’ commitment is connected to his already discussed impartiality. Whenever he was required to take one step further and expose himself, “zieht sich Erasmus zurück in sein kaltes Schneckenhaus der Unparteilichkeit, für keine Idee der Welt und für keine Überzeugung hätte er jemals sich bereit gefunden, als Blutzeuge

¹⁷² Erasmus’ elitism extends to the humanists, who are described as a novel kind of nobility: “So stellen im tiefsten Grunde die Humanisten keine Absage an das Rittertum dar, sondern seine Erneuerung in geistiger Form” (*ERASMUS* 997).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

das Haupt auf den Block zu legen” (*ERASMUS* 553). Thus Erasmus is presented as weak and cowardly. Whenever things got dangerous, he would disappear within the walls of this ‘tower’. As we have already explored, Erasmus is not a man of action and therefore his capacity to effect change is limited (*ERASMUS* 793). Accordingly, he is accused of being ‘absent’ at decisive hours: “Immer hat der Abwesende unrecht. Erasmus hat in dieser Weltstunde nicht den ganzen Einsatz seines Wesens, seiner Kraft, seiner Gegenwart an seine Überzeugung gegeben, darum ist seine erasmische Sache verloren” (*ERASMUS* 1397). Even when he had a second chance to mediate at the Diet of Augsburg (1530),

tragisch wiederholt sich die Form des erasmischen Schicksals, daß es diesem vorausschauenden und doch nie sich vorwagenden Manne immer nur gegeben war, welthistorische Augenblicke wie kein anderer zu erkennen und doch die Entscheidung durch persönliche Schwäche, durch eine unheilbare Mutlosigkeit zu versäumen: hier erneuert sich seine historische Schuld. (*ERASMUS* 1915).

All in all, Zweig renders Erasmus as a ‘flawed’ committed intellectual, far from the perfection and idealization of figures such as Verhaeren, Jeremias or Rolland. Erasmus, like Virata—and Zweig himself—, made mistakes. Or, at least, Zweig is willing to concede that he could have done better. Following Zweig’s strong identification with Erasmus, there are two passages that reveal a certain process of introspection and self-scrutiny, where Zweig addresses Erasmus directly and recriminates him his behavior: “Also zurück in die Zelle, alter Mann, und verhänge die Fenster gegen die Zeit! Laß den andern, die Gottes Ruf in ihren Herzen fühlen, den Kampf und folge der stilleren Aufgabe, die Wahrheit in der lautereren Sphäre der Kunst und der Wissenschaft zu verteidigen” (*ERASMUS* 1427). These words are closely followed by a ‘veiled’ analogy between author and biographical subject—on the impossibility to remain neutral “in politisch erregten Augenblicken” (*ERASMUS* 1427)—, which reinforces the idea that, by addressing

Erasmus, Zweig is in fact addressing himself. A few pages later, the same rhetorical device is employed:

Aber täusche Dich nicht, alter Mann. Deine wahre Zeit ist vorbei, Dein Acker verwüstet. Der Kampf ist in der Welt, ein Kampf auf Leben und Tod, der Geist ist parteiisch geworden, man schließt sich zusammen zu feindseligen Rotten: der Freie, der Unabhängige, der Abseitige wird nicht mehr geduldet. Ein Weltkampf ist da für oder gegen die evangelische Erneuerung, jetzt hilft es nicht mehr, die Fenster zu verschließen und hinter die Bücher zu flüchten; [...] [w]enn ein Kosmos in zwei Stücke zerfällt, geht der Riß durch jeden einzelnen Menschen; nein, Erasmus, vergeblich bist Du geflüchtet, und mit Feuerbränden wird man Dich herausröcheln aus Deiner Zitadelle. (ERASMUS 1470)

Finally, the last aspect I would like to briefly discuss is the consequences of taking an Erasmian position in terms of commitment. What's the price for going against the grain? For wanting to find a third, middle course? For wanting to remain independent when the fate of the individual is the last concern of humanity? First and foremost, we started this section by pointing out the configuration of Erasmus as a 'defeated' individual/intellectual. The Erasmian project, "weil schwer faßbar und in Zwischenlichtern und Widersprüchen schillernd" (ERASMUS 11), is in the end a failed quest. Zweig's preference for adopting such position, for inscribing Erasmus in a genealogy of 'losers'—or 'victors in defeat'—opens the text: "Erasmus von Rotterdam, einstmals der größte und leuchtendste Ruhm seines Jahrhunderts, ist heute, leugnen wir es nicht, kaum mehr als ein Name" (ERASMUS 11). His books have been forgotten, "seine persönliche Gestalt ist [...] von den kräftigeren und heftigeren Figuren der anderen Weltreformatoren stark verschattet worden" (ERASMUS 11). However, on a more positive note, Zweig is certain that such dreams never die. The ideals of Erasmus and humanism form a 'spiritual' legacy that, echoing the prologue of *Die Welt von Gestern*, must be handed down to next generations (ERASMUS 2026).

On the other hand, remaining ‘independent’ in times of collective madness, where one is forced to take sides, brings 1) loneliness to the intellectual: “Die ewige, die treueste Freundin aller Einsamkeit und ihre beste Trösterin, die Arbeit aber, sie bleibt bis zur letzten Stunde bei dem Kranken” (*ERASMUS* 1979); and 2) a poignant sense of injustice: “Die Geschichte aber ist ungerecht gegen die Besiegten. Sie liebt nicht sehr die Menschen des Maßes, die Vermittelnden und Versöhnenden, die Menschen der Menschlichkeit” (*ERASMUS* 146). Finally, on suffering—and continuing the intertextual and genealogical network woven by Zweig in some of his works—, Erasmus is a kind of Tolstoian figure, someone who prefers to suffer abuse rather than answer back with violence: “Mit einer an Tolstoi gemahnenden Entschlossenheit lehnt Erasmus jeden Appell an die Gewalt ab und erklärt sich lieber bereit, den ärgerlichen Zustand weiter zu ertragen, als diese Umwandlung mit einem ‘tumultus’, mit Blutvergießen, zu erkaufen” (*ERASMUS* 1291).

1.5.4. Castellio: ‘The Man I Should Like to Be’

Castellio gegen Calvin oder Ein Gewissen gegen die Gewalt—which was published in 1936 by Herbert Reichner Verlag—can be considered a continuation of *Erasmus*, since not only does it feature another humanist as its protagonist, but also the values—above all independence and the opposition to fanaticism—that inform Castellio’s figure of commitment are, to a great extent, ‘Erasmian’. The only mention of Castellio in *Die Welt von Gestern* is right next to Erasmus as the prototype of the Zweigian hero par excellence, as a member of that lineage of outstanding individuals whose victory can only be measured in ‘spiritual’ terms (*WvG* 188). As happened with *Erasmus*, there is a strong identification between author and biographical subject, transforming Castellio into one of Zweig’s alter egos, and the recreation of the historical episode of his fight against the dictatorship of Jean Calvin in Geneva into an analogy of the European 1930s. In this sense, Bernd Hamacher cites *Castellio* as an instance of Zweig’s looking at the past to

make sense of a disorientating present (“Verschwinden Individuums” 172). In the same vein, Rüdiger Görner discusses the work as a mirror of the times, arguing that

Zweig sucht im Scheitern des Übergangs vom Humanismus zur Reformation Paradigmen für seine eigene Zeit. Er beschreibt, wie sich die Reformation—gerade in der Schweiz—partikularisierte und damit radikalisierte; sodann befindet Zweig, in jener Krise spiegelt sich der nationalistische Eigendünkel der europäischen Staaten im Verkleinerungsglas des Kantongeistes prophetisch voraus. (*Stefan Zweig. Formen einer Sprachkunst* 57).

Following the same direction, Joseph Pischel reminds us that Zweig resorted to the writing of history in order to craft a response to the challenges of the present: “Seine Hinwendung zur politischen Geschichte, vor allem in der Form der historischen Biographie, war eine Antwort auf diese Herausforderung [of the present] und zugleich ein Versuch, sie abzuwehren” (31). Commenting more specifically on *Castellio* and the reception of *Erasmus*, he argues that the former did not enjoy a good welcome among exiles. The shortcomings discussed in the previous section and, above all, the impossibility of turning Erasmus’ positioning into a form of activism angered those who wished to find ‘real’ solutions to ‘actual’ problems (35). It is in this context, therefore, that Zweig is forced to modulate, to adapt, his response to both his own and to the others’ demands. Thus, *Castellio* presents two main differences in respect to *Erasmus*. On the one hand, it portrays a ‘braver’, more ‘activist’ figure of commitment. In a letter to Joseph Roth from 1937, Zweig described how he saw himself reflected in both Erasmus and Castellio, and the extent to which these figures bore a relation to his own self:

I won’t deny it when you say I’m hiding. If you are unable to impose your own decisions, you should avoid them.— You forget, *you, my friend*, that I state my problem publicly in my *Erasmus*, and only stand by one thing, the integrity of individual freedom. I’m not hiding myself, there is *Erasmus*, where I portray the so-called cowardice of a conciliatory nature *without* celebrating it—as fact, and

as destiny. And then *Castellio*—the image of a man I should like to be. (Roth, *A Life in Letters* 515).

Thus, we could conclude, with Pischel, that if *Erasmus* can be described as a *Selbstportät*, the historical study on *Castellio* should be considered a sort of “*Wunschbiografie*” (“*Hoffnung und Tragik*” 36). We are dealing with a work where Zweig tried to get out of his comfort zone and imagine figures of commitment that could strike a balance between values and duty, between ideals and the ethical demands of the time. We have described before how in the period of exile Zweig vacillates between ‘cautious’, ‘moderate’ forms of commitment and more ‘proactive’ solutions. I contend that *Castellio* should be included among the latter. Following said adscription, a factor that may explain this ‘evolution’—in terms of commitment—embodied by *Castellio* is the fact that three crucial years had elapsed since the publication of *Erasmus*. Consequently, Zweig had gained more insight into the workings of national socialist politics in Germany. Mild positions were no longer enough. Hence, we can observe an intensification of the values that defined the Erasmian struggle. For one, the adversary, Calvin, is not ‘merely’ a fanatic—whose ‘fault’ is not what he defends but his method, form or rhetoric—but a full-fledged dictator, the embodiment of intolerance at its highest expression. Accordingly, *Castellio*’s response—although he is imbued with the same values as Erasmus—must adapt to the might of his nemesis. We could argue, therefore, that *Castellio* contains a more ‘empowered’ and ‘empowering’ version of the Zweigian/Erasmian intellectual, and it is from this perspective that we will approach the text in the following pages.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Notwithstanding the above, it must be noted that there are some scholars who do not read *Castellio* in such positive terms. One such reader is Lionel Steiman, who observes a sort of ambiguity as far as Zweig’s commitment is concerned: “Where *Erasmus* was regarded as an apologia for its author’s aloofness, its successor was greeted as a declaration of commitment to the anti-fascist cause. Those who did so ignored, however, that it was not *Castellio*’s rebellion against the oppressor that Zweig was celebrating, but rather his commitment to spiritual independence. The book is ambiguous in this respect; Zweig did not clearly distinguish between *Castellio*’s spiritual independence and the activism he placed at his service. He himself remained more closely identified with Erasmian detachment than with active resistance. The preoccupation with *Castellio* had been solace and much-needed diversion, but Zweig remained uncertain of the significance of what he had written” (“The Eclipse of Humanism” 166).

Castellio I: Introduction—Calvin

The structure of *Castellio* differs to a certain extent from *Erasmus* and the other Zweigian biographical texts. Although it is often classified as a historical biography, its contents and organization are closer to the genre of the historical study. Accordingly, we do not find a chronological account of Castellio's life nor, for instance, a chapter devoted to his likeness. Rather, the narrative is focused on one single episode, his 'spiritual' struggle against Jean Calvin and the totalitarian state Calvin established in the Swiss town of Geneva. That episode is, in the eyes of Zweig, what gives Castellio a symbolic value. As usual, Zweig does not offer a prototypical historical account. He does not dive into the past to stay there, to relish on detail, factualness and accuracy, but he goes back and forth between past and present, leaving—as in all the texts analyzed in this section—a trail of analogies and echoes that intends to implicate Zweig's readership. Also, as compared to *Erasmus*, there is a greater emphasis on the figure of Calvin, the adversary, to the point that the text starts there, offering in the first two chapters a complete image of the 'bad' intellectual/politician. Following Zweig's 'suggestion', we will start our exploration of the forms of commitment articulated in the text by devoting some pages to Calvin and to how he serves as an anti-example and, like Luther, as the 'event' that forces the intellectual to commit himself and respond.

But first, to provide some context, it is interesting to discuss a couple of passages where Zweig encapsulates or summarizes the conflict between Castellio and Calvin by resorting to a series of binaries and the kind of dichotomous rationale that, as we have already observed, informed the articulation of his commitment. Like Erasmus and Luther, Castellio and Calvin embody an eternal fight, they "erscheinen nur als sinnlichste Exponenten eines unsichtbaren, aber unüberwindbaren Gegensatzes [...] [:] Toleranz gegen Intoleranz, Freiheit gegen Bevormundung, Humanität gegen Fanatismus,

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Individualität gegen Mechanisierung, das Gewissen gegen die Gewalt” (*CASTELLIO* 54). However, Zweig goes on to say, it does not really matter how we refer to these extremes or contrasting forces, for in the end it all comes to a personal choice, to how one responds, to what dimension of reality one pledges allegiance to: “das Humane oder das Politische, das Ethos oder der Logos, die Persönlichkeit oder die Gemeinsamkeit” (*CASTELLIO* 64). Once again, Zweig positions himself, his alter ego, against the ‘common’, emphasizing his individuality and his ‘apoliticism’. Politics are exclusively associated with the management of the community, and therefore Zweig seems to exclude the possibility of ‘individual’ politics. The community is, in turn, a limited one, one that includes but also excludes, one that demands sacrifices. One may feel safe inside but knowing that the price to pay for such security is the loss of inner freedom and the partial—or even total—surrendering of one’s will. The only common allegiance that does not force the individual to renounce his individuality is the one that is not ‘artificially’ constructed, the one that comes ‘by default’ and is therefore inalienable: humanity.

In order to continue our discussion, let us turn our attention to the construction of the anti-intellectual’s profile. The first crimes that Calvin is accused of are fanaticism and tyranny, the final straw being the execution of the Spaniard Miguel Servetus due to his ‘heretic’ views. Castellio charges Calvin “aus fanatischer Rechthaberei einen Menschen und damit die Gewissensfreiheit innerhalb der Reformation ermordet zu haben” (*CASTELLIO* 11). When Castellio, from the weaker position of an impoverished scholar in exile, decides to confront Calvin, the latter has made of Geneva a ‘spiritual’ tyranny: “Seine Lehre ist Gesetz geworden, und wer wider sie gelindesten Einspruch wagt, den beehren baldigst Kerker, Verbannung oder Scheiterhaufen, diese blank alle Diskussion erledigenden Argumente jeder geistigen Tyrannei, daß in Genf nur eine Wahrheit geduldet ist und Calvin ihr Prophet” (*CASTELLIO* 22). In this case, the prophet, Calvin, is

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

the embodiment of the ‘bad’ intellectual. A few pages later, Zweig digresses on the role of prophets and visionaries, arguing that when certain prevalent values or systems do no longer reflect people’s needs, there is an opportunity for visionaries to come up with new ideals for a new generation.

According to Zweig, “immer erschafft eine neue Ideologie (und dies ist wohl ihr metaphysischer Sinn) zunächst einen neuen Idealismus auf Erden. Denn jeder, der Menschen einen neuen Wahn der Einheit und Reinheit schenkt, holt zunächst aus ihnen die heiligsten Kräfte heraus: ihren Opferwillen, ihre Begeisterung” (*CASTELLIO* 75). In Zweig’s analysis, humankind is prone to surrender its freedom for the sake of the immaterial, for an idea (*CASTELLIO* 75). The ‘bad’ prophet—whose main ability consists in detecting the needs of the new generation and creating a discourse that satisfies them—profits from this circumstance in order to achieve victory, to get to power. And it is at this point, once a major ‘spiritual’ feat has been achieved thanks to the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of his followers, that the prophet becomes a dictator, turning his idea/ideology into dogma: “Aber verhängnisvollerweise entlarven sich gerade diese Idealisten und Utopisten sofort nach ihrem Sieg fast immer als die schlimmsten Verräter am Geist. Denn Macht treibt zur Allmacht, Sieg zum Mißbrauch des Siegs” (*CASTELLIO* 86).

They—these prophets—do not seem to be satisfied enough with having convinced millions to fight for their cause; they need to expand their power and turn their “Majorität in Totalität” (*CASTELLIO* 86): “nicht genug haben sie an ihren Gefügigen, ihren Trabanten, ihren Seelensklaven, an den ewigen Zuläufern jeder Bewegung – nein, auch die Freien, die wenigen Unabhängigen wollen sie als ihre Lobpreiser und Knechte, und um ihr Dogma als alleiniges durchzusetzen, brandmarken sie von Staats wegen jede Andersmeinung als Verbrechen” (*CASTELLIO* 86). Thus, idealism is turned into brutality, and war is declared on freedom of thought. Violence, the greatest enemy of the Erasmian

intellectual, is used to impose a single truth, and terror to influence and manage de masses. When giving an account of how Calvin takes over Geneva, Zweig focuses on the role of his right hand, Farel, who is described as a terrorist, as “[e]ine fanatische Natur, eine enge, aber eiserne Stirn, ein mächtiges und zugleich rücksichtsloses Temperament [...]; wie Danton als Politiker, weiß dieser religiöse Revolutionär die verstreuten und versteckten Instinkte der Straße zusammenzurotten und anzufeuern zum entscheidenden Stoß und Angriff” (*CASTELLIO* 190). As Zweig observes, one does not need great support to enforce violence: “wie immer schüchtert eine kleine, aber aktive Minorität, sofern sie Mut zeigt und mit Terror nicht spart, eine große, aber lässige Majorität ein” (*CASTELLIO* 200). Terrorism is therefore associated to the imposition of the ‘Idea’, which, at the same time, serves to justify and even normalize the use of such extreme measures: “[D]er Terror. Man täusche sich nicht. Gewalt, die vor nichts zurückschreckt und jeder Humanität als einer Schwäche spottet, ist eine ungeheure Kraft. Ein systematisch ersonnener, ein despotisch ausgeübter Staatsterror lähmt den Willen des einzelnen, er löst und unterhöhlt jede Gemeinschaft” (*CASTELLIO* 701). All in all, by resorting to violence and punishment to maintain power—and to acts of religious terrorism to manage the realm of the ‘spiritual’—, Calvin commits yet another crime: intolerance (*CASTELLIO* 723).

In sum, Calvin embodies the figure of the ‘bad’ intellectual at its worst. Although he still can be considered a man of intellect, since his domain is that of ideas and the ‘spiritual’—the immaterial—, the moment he resorts to whatever physical means are necessary to impose his vision and values, as well as to attain an increasingly bigger portion of power, in the eyes of Zweig he becomes, first, a politician, and, then, by radicalizing his methods, a dictator. From this perspective, Calvin, for whom obedience is the supreme value (*CASTELLIO* 263), is characterized as 1) a leader that enforces a totalitarian conception of the state (*CASTELLIO* 284 and 628) and as a ‘spiritual’ dictator

who only cares for power. When Zweig is recounting the sequence of events that leads to the murder of Servetus, we read that “von der ersten Stunde an war dieser Prozeß darum ein durchaus politischer, eine Machtfrage für Calvin, eine Belastungsprobe und die entscheidende Belastungsprobe für seinen Willen zur geistigen Diktatur” (*CASTELLIO* 1442). A trial is turned, thus, into a test of power, and all further resistance and opposition are evidences that one must resort to violent measures to stabilize one’s position of power (*CASTELLIO* 2281). Power for power’s sake, as we discussed in the introduction, is the *leitmotiv* of the Zweigian politician.

Another characterization of Calvin is 2) as someone who does not tolerate freedom, to the point that “[i]hm genügt es keineswegs, daß die Lehre formuliert sei, denn damit bliebe dem einzelnen immerhin noch etwas Freiheit, ob und inwieweit er sich ihr fügen wolle. Calvin jedoch duldet niemals und in keiner Hinsicht Freiheit in Dingen der Lehre und des Lebens” (*CASTELLIO* 306). Calvin’s obsession with the eradication of freedom transforms Geneva, otherwise a symbol of the Swiss freedom,¹⁷⁴ into a freedom-less state. In Zweig’s wording: “[D]er Logos hat über das Ethos, der Buchstabe über den Sinn der Reformation gesiegt. Mit jeder Art der Freiheit ist es in Genf zu Ende, seit Calvin die Stadt betreten hat; ein einziger Wille herrscht jetzt über alle” (*CASTELLIO* 316). And in the regime of the symbolic, this is a especially serious infringement, since Switzerland stands in Zweig’s *Weltanschauung* as a symbol of supranationalism, harmony and freedom, as evoked for instance in *Die Welt von Gestern* (see chapter “Im Herzen Europas”). Finally, Zweig draws a link between revolution and an eventual loss of freedom. If we bring back for a second our discussion of Erasmus as a man of non-action and Zweig’s insistence on his reformist rather than revolutionary stance, I argue that we may find in *Castellio* a

¹⁷⁴ “Wie aber konnte, fragt man sich verwundert, eine republikanische Stadt, die jahrzehntelang in helvetischer Freiheit gelebt, eine solche savonarolische Diktatur ertragen, wie ein bislang südländisch heiteres Volk eine derartige Abwürgung der Lebensfreude?” (*CASTELLIO* 691).

further explanation of that Erasmian trait. In this sense, Zweig accuses Calvin of having misused the liberty that Luther and other reformers fought so hard to achieve (*CASTELLIO* 469). According to Zweig, there is a direct—and paradoxical—correlation between violence and the limitation of freedom in a revolutionary context: “Immer ist eine dogmatische Gewaltherrschaft, die aus einer Freiheitsbewegung ihren Aufstieg nahm, härter und strenger gegen die Idee der Freiheit als jede ererbte Macht. Immer werden, die selbst einer Revolution ihre Herrschaft verdanken, späterhin die Unnachsichtigsten und Unduldsamsten gegen jede Neuerung sein” (*CASTELLIO* 490). We do not know what other examples of this phenomenon Zweig might have had in mind. Perhaps the dismembering of the European empires after the First World War? The movements of independence in the British colonies? The Russian Revolution? Or, perhaps, in a more diachronic perspective, was he thinking of the French Revolution, a period he knew relatively well? Be it as it may, we could argue that in Zweig even a lofty ideal such as freedom might degenerate in the wrong hands, and especially when violence and terror are used in the name of liberty.

Still, one more characterization of Calvin is as 3) being of an authoritarian nature (*CASTELLIO* 316) and a party man: “Für seine Lehre, für seine Partei ist er sofort gewillt (und in diesem Punkte wird die Polarität zu Loyola zur Identität), jedes Mittel zu billigen, sofern es nur wirksam erscheint” (*CASTELLIO* 1250). Consequently, he removes any trace of humanity in himself to create a more imposing—feared—public image, “denn nur als den Diener Gottes, nur im Gewande der Pflicht wollte er sich von den andern sehen und fürchten lassen, nicht als Menschen, als Bruder lieben” (*CASTELLIO* 522). Additionally, in his reign humankind is attacked in a number of ways—“um das Göttliche möglichst hoch zu erheben über die Welt, drückt Calvin das Irdische unermeßlich tief herab; um der Idee Gottes die vollkommenste Würde zu geben, entrechtet und entwürdigt er die Idee des

Menschen” (*CASTELLIO* 607)—, in order to justify the fact that individuals should be deprived of their freedom: “Wer im philosophischen Sinne den Menschen als derart mißlungenes und mißratenes Machtwerk Gottes betrachtet, wird als Theologe und Politiker selbstverständlich nie zugeben, Gott hätte einem solchen Unwesen auch nur die geringste Art von Freiheit oder Selbständigkeit verstattet” (*CASTELLIO* 617). In sum, Calvin’s ideology is built around a process of de-humanization, a topic—that of the limits of the human or, on broader terms, that of the human values—which pervades some of Zweig’s fictional works such as *Schachnovelle* or “Buchmendel”.

Last but not least, the anti-intellectual is 4) far from being, in his management of power, a conciliator, showing an utter disdain for the middle way: “Nichts ist diesem großen Zeloten zeitlebens fremder gewesen als Konzilianz. Calvin kennt keinen Mittelweg; bloß den einen, den seinen. Für ihn gibt es nur das Ganze oder das Nichts, die volle Autorität oder den völligen Verzicht” (*CASTELLIO* 368). Therefore, Calvin is someone who deals arbitrarily with truth, who manipulates it in order to adjust it to—to make it ‘serve’—his policy (*CASTELLIO* 1026). In the hands of a dictator, truth cannot be contested; there is no space for dissent or ‘heresy’. When Servetus demands to see Calvin to beg for forgiveness, the latter’s answer tells it all: “Jedoch nie wird Calvins steinernes Auge in einem politischen und religiösen Gegner noch einen Christen, noch einen Menschen erkennen wollen” (*CASTELLIO* 1537). The de-humanization of the enemy renders conciliation and mediation chimeric. In fact, Zweig associates Calvin’s monomania or obsession for the single Truth or Idea as the secret of his success: “Nie hat die immer dem Suggestiven erliegende Menschheit sich den Geduldigen und Gerechten unterworfen, sondern immer nur den großen Monomanen, die den Mut aufbrachten, ihre Wahrheit als die einzig mögliche, ihren Willen als die Grundformel des Weltgesetzes zu

verkünden” (*CASTELLIO* 390). In politics there is no space for nuanced truths and that is what makes it impossible for the Zweigian intellectual to act as a party man.

Castellio II: The Humanist Intellectual 2.0

To such dictatorial figure and his dystopic regime—the ‘surveillance state’ of Geneva (*CASTELLIO* 660)—we owe the birth of another Zweigian figure of commitment. Sebastian Castellio is, first and foremost, a humanist that confronts injustice from a position of inferiority. This is how he is introduced in the narrative—with strong autobiographical undertones: “[E]in Flüchtling im Fremdland ohne Bleibe- und Bürgerrecht, ein zwiefacher Emigrant: wie immer in den Zeiten des Weltfanatismus steht der Humane machtlos und völlig allein zwischen den streitenden Zeloten” (*CASTELLIO* 33). He is also, Zweig is quick to clarify, a ‘second-wave’ humanist: “Aber bald ergreift ihn eine stärkere Leidenschaft als die zu abgelebten Vergangenheiten: mächtig fühlt er sich angefaßt von den neuen Problemen der Zeit” (*CASTELLIO* 855). If it was first based on a humanism that has evolved. If it was first based on a belief in the redemption of man through culture and the study of the past, now the humanists have realized that that it is not enough. They need to step out of their bookish fortresses and engage with the current reforms and revolutions—with the political, national and social movements that are changing the world. In the case of young Castellio, there is a key event that transforms his stance: “Als er in Lyon zum erstenmal einer Verbrennung von Ketzern beiwohnt, erschüttert ihn einerseits die Grausamkeit der Inquisition und andererseits die mutige Haltung der Opfer bis hinab in die letzte Tiefe der Seele” (*CASTELLIO* 866). In this way, the humanist scholar becomes a humanist ‘fighter’.

Castellio’s commitment is directed, on the one hand, against dictatorship, which is the cause that unites all humanists: “einzig eine gemeinsame Trauer über die zunehmende Kasernierung und Reglementierung des Geistes hält diese einsamen ‘Remonstranten’ [...]

in stiller Brüderlichkeit verbunden” (*CASTELLIO* 1794). On the other hand, he pledges to fight the doctrinaire, “und den Rechthabern, welche es nicht ertragen können, daß sich nicht die ganze Welt zu ihren Nachsprechern und Nachbetern erniedrigt” (*CASTELLIO* 2439). As a humanist and Erasmian, the values he defends revolve around the notion of freedom and tolerance: first, freedom of thought (*CASTELLIO* 33 and 908), his struggle reaching European dimensions. After Castellio’s publication of *Contra libellum Calvinii*, Zweig reflects: “[D]urch ihre Wahrheit und Klarheit müßte sie auch die Gleichgültigsten der Zeit belehren, daß die Gedankenfreiheit des Protestantismus und darüber hinaus des europäischen Geistes verloren ist, wenn sie sich nicht rechtzeitig der Genfer Meinungsinquisition erwehrt” (*CASTELLIO* 2240); second, independence or inner freedom. Despite his dire living conditions, Castellio remained “ewig auch frei, weil keiner Partei verbunden und keinem Fanatismus verschworen” (*CASTELLIO* 33).

In the same vein, another keyword in Castellio’s ethos is that of conscience or, more precisely, free conscience: “‘Contra libellum Calvinii’ [...] wird dank ihrer moralischen Kraft zu einer der großartigsten Kampfschriften gegen jedweden Versuch, das Wort zu vergewaltigen durch das Gesetz, die Gesinnung durch eine Doktrin und das ewig freigebohrne Gewissen durch die ewig verächtliche Gewalt” (*CASTELLIO* 2041); finally, the defense of freedom takes Castellio to espouse the cause of tolerance and the right to heresy, to which Zweig devotes a whole chapter (“Das Manifest der Toleranz”). Zweig summarizes thus the significance of Castellio’s *De haereticis*: “Für alle Zeiten ist hier der Kampf eröffnet gegen den Erbfeind jeder geistigen Gerechtigkeit, gegen den engstirnigen Fanatismus, der jede Meinung außer der seiner eigenen Partei unterdrücken will, und ihm sieghaft jene Idee entgegenstellt, die einzig alle Feindseligkeit auf Erden befrieden kann: die Idee der Toleranz” (*CASTELLIO* 1836).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

So far, we could argue that Castellio's program resembles Erasmus', except for a greater emphasis on the ideas of tolerance and conscience. In any case: different terms, same project. Accordingly, Zweig's enacts in some passages a critique of the humanist intellectual along the same lines we have explored in our discussion of *Erasmus*. Above all, the humanist is not a man of action: "Aber wenn auch um die Wahrheit wissend, wagen diese Humanisten doch nicht, für sie zu kämpfen. Fast immer sind im Leben die Lose geschieden, die Erkennenden nicht die Täter, und die Täter nicht die Erkennenden" (*CASTELLIO* 118). In front of injustice, the humanists would exchange letters or publish veiled critiques without ever exposing themselves. Equally, we read that, after the execution of Servetus, the leaders of the humanist movement kept quiet: "Immer sind die humanen Naturen zu rasch resigniert und erleichtern damit den Gewalttätern ihr Spiel [...]: sie schweigen und schweigen, die Humanisten, die Geistlichen, die Gelehrten, die einen aus Ekel vor dem lauten Gezänk, die andern aus Angst, selber als Ketzer verdächtigt zu werden, wenn sie Servets Hinrichtung nicht heuchlerisch als lobenswerte Tat rühmen" (*CASTELLIO* 1772).

All in all, the faults humanists are accused of are the same in *Erasmus* as in *Castellio*: silence, lack of courage, excessive moderation. What is different in this case—and that is why I chose to recapitulate said limitations—is that the figure of commitment embodied by Castellio transcends the boundaries of the humanist intellectual and is even capable of reinventing said commitment paradigm to a certain extent. What makes Castellio especial is how he responds as an intellectual in the context of a 'limited' humanism. Once he has determined to espouse the cause of 'heresy' and 'subversion' against a totalitarian and repressive government, the intellectual, according to Zweig, can produce three types of response: 1) he can openly resist the authority and submit to punishment by it, becoming a martyr; 2) at the other extreme, you can follow the Erasmian way: "um die innere

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Freiheit und zugleich auch sein Leben zu wahren, sich scheinbar unterwerfen und seine eigentliche Meinung tarnen" (*CASTELLIO* 876); 3) yet a third, middle, option is possible through the way of exile: "Als dritter Ausweg bleibt die Emigration: der Versuch, die innere Freiheit aus dem Lande, wo sie verfolgt und geächtet ist, mit sich heil hinauszutragen auf eine andere Erde, wo sie ungehindert atmen darf" (*CASTELLIO* 876). This is the way of Castellio, to carry out a pacifist fight without throwing himself into the lion's den. Yet this is not the answer to Calvin's rise to power. At this point, Calvin is also a religious refugee running away from the Inquisition. And at this point, Castellio is following the way of Calvin, revered as a kind of mentor: "Von ihm hoffen alle diese Flüchtlinge der gleichen Verfolgung zu lernen, von ihm, der Forderungen auszusprechen und Ziele zu setzen weiß, eine Lebensaufgabe zu erhalten" (*CASTELLIO* 887).

This first choice—following in Calvin's footsteps—reveals a way out of the humanist deadlock, the first step towards the formation of another kind of 'spiritual' hero, one that can effectively resist and confront the earthly embodiments and materializations of the antihuman. The next and decisive step, as we have already mentioned, is the execution of Servetus, which triggers Castellio's conversion into a hero: "Erst als er durch den Mord an Servet sein Gewissen mächtig angerufen fühlt und er aufsteht von seinem friedlichen Werke, um Calvin im Namen der geschändeten Menschenrechte anzuklagen, erst dann wächst diese Einsamkeit ins Heldische" (*CASTELLIO* 33). Castellio is confronted by an ethical demand to act, to resist. In contrast to his fellow humanists, he "tritt als einziger von all diesen Humanisten entschlossen vor und seinem Schicksal entgegen. Heldisch wagt er das Wort für die verfolgten Gefährten und damit sein eigenes Leben. Völlig unfanatisch [...] hebt er wie ein Panier sein Bekenntnis über die grimmige Zeit, daß keinem Menschen eine Weltanschauung aufgezwungen werden" (*CASTELLIO* 118-128). Thus, Castellio becomes an example for coming generations in the moral sphere. In this

second choice, a new figure of intellectuality emerges, that of the ‘militant artist’: “so hat auch Sebastian Castellio in entscheidender Stunde niemanden hinter sich als seinen Schatten und mit sich keine Habe als das einzige unveräußerliche Eigentum des kämpfenden Künstlers: ein unbeugsames Gewissen in einer unerschrockenen Seele” (*CASTELLIO* 54). A figure that is compared to that of the ‘conscientious objector’: “Allezeit werden sich unabhängige Geister finden zur Auflehnung gegen eine solche Vergewaltigung der menschlichen Freiheit, die ‘conscientious objectors’” (*CASTELLIO* 107).

All in all, through his actions Castellio becomes a ‘spiritual’ hero, a “großartiges Vorbild jener heimlichen Helden des Geistes, die, ungesehen von der Welt, auch im Dunkel der Vergessenheit den Kampf für die ihnen heiligste Sache führen: für die Unantastbarkeit des Wortes, für das unerschütterliche Recht auf die eigene Gesinnung” (*CASTELLIO* 1078). If Erasmus was characterized at some point by his ‘silence’, Castellio is perceived as moving away from it: “Der, im tiefsten Gefühl seiner Menschlichkeit herausgefordert, als einziger das Schweigen nicht mehr erträgt und bis in die Himmel seine Verzweiflung über die Unmenschlichkeiten schreit, allein für alle kämpfend und gegen alle allein!” (*CASTELLIO* 43). He wants his voice to be heard, he wants his enemy to know that he is coming after him. Castellio is moved to raise his voice and that is the lesson to be learned from his example: “Und wie in seiner milden Botschaft der Toleranz Sebastian Castellio angesichts des Leidens der Gehetzten und Gejagten schließlich nicht mehr gelassen zu bleiben vermochte, [...] so steigert sich in diesem Kampfbuche sein Wort zu einem erschütternden Fluch gegen alle, die mit ihrem rechthaberischen Haß den Frieden der Welt verstören” (*CASTELLIO* 2230). Finally, a discussion of Castellio as an intellectual would not be complete without mentioning the way in which he articulates his message. For, like Erasmus, there is an epistemological and ‘communicative’ method

that goes hand in hand with the values that inform Castellio's commitment: "Als wahrer Humanist ist er kein geborener und kein überzeugter Streiter; das Verbindliche, das Versöhnliche, das eindringlich Konziliante entspricht unendlich mehr seiner milden und im tiefsten Sinne religiösen Natur. Wie sein geistiger Ahnherr Erasmus weiß er um die Vielförmigkeit und Vieldeutigkeit jeder irdischen, jeder göttlichen Wahrheit" (*CASTELLIO* 1783).

Ultimately, how one approaches the notion of truth determines one's ethos and *Weltanschauung*. It is fundamental for notions such as independence, tolerance or freedom to flourish that truth is perceived as plural and nuanced. Castellio's challenge of dogma and orthodoxy is what Calvin fears the most: "hier aber, in Castellios Freiheitsforderung, fühlt er die Urprinzipie seines Wollens und Wirkens, die Idee der einheitlichen Autorität, den Sinn der Orthodoxie in Frage gestellt, und immer ist in jedem Kriege der Pazifist in den eigenen Reihen gefährlicher als der militanteste Gegner" (*CASTELLIO* 2355). Last but not least, as a part of his conciliatory method, Castellio tries to deploy a rhetoric that aims to ease tensions. He does not need to shout to get his point across, to make his argument: "Während die Sektierer wie die Marktschreier grell und laut und lärmend ihre Dogmen anpreisen, während jeder dieser engstirnigen Doktrinäre unablässig von der Kanzel schreit, er und nur er verhökere die reine, die wahre Lehre, nur in seiner Stimme verkünde sich wortwörtlich Gottes Wille und Wort" (*CASTELLIO* 1920). Likewise, we read that "Diese Antwortschrift Castellios gestaltet sich zu einem musterhaften und wahrhaft erhebenden Beispiel humaner und humanistischer Polemik. Auch die äußerste Gehässigkeit kann diesen zuinnerst toleranten Mann nicht mit Haß vergiften, keine Gemeinheit ihn selbst gemein werden lassen" (*CASTELLIO* 2836). To be a model/example of the humanist intellectual, not only does one have to act and behave accordingly, but one also needs to be able to communicate guided by the same principles.

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

I would like to end my analysis as I did with *Erasmus*, by paying attention to the consequences of taking the kind of intellectual stance we have been discussing so far. From the very first page, Castellio can be inscribed in Zweig's lineage of victors in defeat. Interestingly enough, Zweig uses as the epigraph of chapter 1 a quote by Michel de Montaigne—the last stop in our journey through Zweig's narrative of commitment—to suggest this reading of Castellio: “[I]l est battu, non pas de nous, mais de la fortune; il est tué, non pas vaincu: les plus vaillants sont parfois les plus infortunés. Aussi y a-t-il des pertes triomphantes à l'envi des victoires” (Montaigne *Of Cannibals* qtd. in CAS 11). As we have already discussed, Castellio's committed responses exposes him in a situation of vulnerability. His example is designed to show us how to act like 'heretics', how to stand up against persecution and intolerance. In one of the number of passages where Zweig forgets himself in the narrative of his biographical subject, we read that

Immer wiederholt sich das absurde Faktum, daß, während allen Aufreizungen eines Volkes oder eines Glaubens gegen den andern die Rede frei verstattet ist, alle versöhnlichen Tendenzen, alle pazifistischen, alle konziliannten Ideale verdächtigt und unterdrückt werden unter dem Vorwand, sie gefährdeten irgendeine (immer eine andere) staatliche oder die göttliche Autorität, sie schwächten 'defaitistisch' den frommen oder den vaterländischen Eifer durch ihren Willen zur Humanität. (*CASTELLIO* 1815)¹⁷⁵

The forces of oblivion almost managed to erase Castellio's 'spiritual' legacy, being the object of a process of *damnatio memoriae*: “Beinahe ist auch dies Äußerste der Gewalt wider den Gewaltlosen gelungen: nicht nur die zeitliche Wirkung dieses großen Humanisten hat jene methodische Unterdrückung erdrosselt, sondern für viele Jahre auch seinen Nachruhm” (*CASTELLIO* 149). In a way, Zweig's efforts are directed to counteract

¹⁷⁵ Additionally, Castellio is subject to abuse: “Voll und bis zur letzten Neige seiner Kraft hat Sebastian Castellio den Preis seines moralischen Heldentums gezahlt. Erschütternd, wie dieser Verkünder der Gewaltlosigkeit, der sich keiner als der bloß geistigen Waffe bedienen wollte, abgewürgt wurde von der brutalen Gewalt” (*CASTELLIO* 139).

said obliterating powers. There is a moral debt towards Castellio that underpins the writing of Zweig's biography: "Welch eine Dankeschuld ist an diesem Vergessenen noch zu begleichen! Welch ein ungeheures Unrecht hier noch zu sühnen!" (*CASTELLIO* 160). He might have been defeated by Calvin—"Calvin in seinem Kampf um die Freiheit des Geistes und um die endliche Herankunft der Humanität auf Erden" (*CASTELLIO* 1710)—but his deeds are measured in terms of their moral stature, their capacity to gain an 'atemporal' condition and therefore survive the context in which they were born: "Vorbildlich aber sollte vor allem im sittlichen Sinne für spätere Geschlechter der beispiellose und beispielgebende Mut dieses vergessenen Mannes bleiben" (*CASTELLIO* 128).

All in all, underpinning this whole dialectic victory-defeat there is a notion that history is not necessarily just—a key element in Zweig's historiography, as we will analyze in chapter two: "Denn die Geschichte, sie hat keine Zeit, um gerecht zu sein. Sie zählt als kalte Chronistin nur die Erfolge, selten aber mißt sie mit moralischem Maß" (*CASTELLIO* 170).¹⁷⁶ History is not just, but neither is it impartial; if it was truly 'impartial', it would provide an account both of the victors and the defeated. The challenge of the intellectual is to counteract the 'victory criterium', evaluating what deeds are moral and deserve to be remembered. History might be amoral, but the historian's narrative is plagued with choices. In the case of Zweig, his project might be thought as an attempt at restoring the lost voices of history, allowing Castellio's fight to continue in the author's and the reader's present:

¹⁷⁶ Similarly, we read later in the text that "die Geschichte, dieser irdische Schatten des Weltgeistes, handelt weder moralisch noch unmoralisch. Sie bestraft weder die Untat, noch belohnt sie die Guten. Da sie im letzten Sinn auf Gewalt fußt und nicht auf Recht, schiebt sie den äußeren Vorteil meist den Machtmenschen zu, und hemmungslose Verwegenheit, brutale Entschlüsse gereichen dem Täter oder Untäter im zeitlichen Kampfe eher zum Gewinn als zum Schaden" (*CASTELLIO* 2281).

Denn wie einsam erhebt sich diese Stimme, wie wenig Hoffnung hat seine erschütternde Beschwörung, gehört zu werden in einer Welt, wo die Waffen die Worte überklirren und der Krieg die letzten Entscheidungen an sich reißt. Aber wenn auch unzähligemal von allen Religionen und Weisheitslehrern verkündet, immer müssen gerade die allmenschlichsten Forderungen der vergeßlichen Menschheit in Erinnerung gebracht werden. [...] Denn nie ist das Notwendige zu oft gesagt und nie die Wahrheit vergeblich. Auch wenn es nicht siegt, so erweist doch das Wort ihre ewige Gegenwart, und wer ihr dient in solcher Stunde, hat für seinen Teil bewiesen, daß kein Terror Macht hat über eine freie Seele und auch das unmenschlichste Jahrhundert noch Raum für die Stimme der Menschlichkeit. (CASTELLIO 1952-1962)

1.5.5. Cicero: The Committed Exile

Ciceros Tod—or “The Head Upon the Rostrum”—was originally published in 1940 in the English version of Zweig’s *Sternstunden der Menschheit*, a collection of short historical essays, or miniatures, that had been first published in German in 1927. As Werner Michler explains, the first edition contained only five miniatures, to which two more were added in the second German edition of 1936. The other seven miniatures, making a total of fourteen, were published first in other languages—being the English and the Swedish editions the most comprehensive—and were only published in German after the death of Zweig in 1943 (Bermann-Fischer, Stockholm) (“*Sternstunden der Menschheit* (1927)” 324). The criteria for including or leaving out some of these texts were many, but mostly obeyed contextual—as well as cultural—reasons and took into account their potential readership. Thus, in the English edition of 1940 published under the title *The Tide of Fortune* the editor decided to include two more ‘political’ tales—“The Head upon the Rostrum. Cicero’s Death” and “Wilson’s failure”—instead of the miniatures dedicated to Tolstoy (*Die Fluch zu Gott*) and Dostoyevsky (*Heroischer Augenblick. Dostojewski*).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

In fact, according to Werner Michler, the global and personal contexts of production of said texts influenced greatly their contents. Thus, up to eight of the fourteen texts deal in one way or another with the topic of exile: “[N]icht nur in den thematischen fremdem Erfahrungsräumen, auch in den Selbstverhältnissen der Intellektuellenfiguren—am deutlichen *Ciceros Tod*—hat das Exil seine Spuren hinterlassen” (“*Sternstunden der Menschheit* (1927)” 324). In other words, exile is not merely the setting of these stories, but the author’s emotional state and experiential background, which makes him connect in an especial way with his subjects and render other forms of intellectuality that have adjusted to the new conditions of production of Zweig’s committed message. It is from this perspective that Johannes Evelein argues that, “[i]n his account of Cicero, Zweig inscribes his ideal self, his aspirations, but also his deepening despair that resulted in resignation and, ultimately, the embrace of death” (69). In other words, Zweig is trapped between his values and responsibility, on the one hand, and the material limitations of his existence on the other. In this sense, David Turner relates the miniatures of Cicero and Wilson to the biographies of Erasmus and Castellio, insofar as in the former “Zweig was doing no more than dramatize a conflict within himself between the desire to preserve his ideals intact and the demand of life to turn those ideals into action” (“History as Popular Story” 405).

In this regard, and before we move on to the analysis of *Ciceros Tod*, it must be noted that, once again, the kind of historical text that Zweig offers to his readers presents a hybrid form between history and poetry. Stephen Howard Garrin comments that “[o]ne could equate Zweig’s artistic portrayal of history with Aristotle’s contention about poetry, namely, that poetry is a higher form than the mere recounting of historical details, because it deals with universal statements. In *Sternstunden* the truth of Aristotle’s assertion is clearly borne out. That is, the artistic incarnation of historical events adds a dimension of

universality and eternity” (“History as Literature” 126). In the same vein, David Turner thinks of the *Sternstunden* as literary rather than historical pieces where the author uses rhetorical devices to captivate his readership (“History as Popular Story” 395-404). All in all, it is no conventional biography that we find in *Cicero*, but a glimpse, a key moment in the life of the Roman thinker; a moment that is somehow shared by the author, who projects his own self onto the life-trajectory and ethos of the protagonist of the story.

Cicero: Writing for Posterity

Cicero opens with a sort of manifesto, a reflection on the limits of the artist’s commitment when the situation has overcome him and he has no possibility of ‘winning’ the struggle in front a superior enemy. In other words, *Cicero* opens with an apology of silence and non-action that sets the tone of the text: “Das Weiseste, was ein kluger und nicht sehr tapferer Mann tun kann, wenn er einem Stärkeren begegnet, ist: ihm auszuweichen und ohne Beschämung die Wende abzuwarten, bis die Bahn ihm selbst wieder frei wird” (“CICERO” 230). After having been for three decades a key actor in the public life of the Roman Republic, the rise of mighty Caesar forces Cicero to retreat. Thus, we see reenacted the battle of freedom versus dictatorship: “Vergebens hat er versucht, die letzten Verteidiger der Freiheit gegen den Vergewaltiger aufzurufen. Aber die Kohorten erwiesen sich wie immer stärker als die Worte. Caesar, Geistmensch und Tatmensch zugleich, hat restlos triumphiert” (“CICERO” 230); the battle of spirit versus action, of words versus physical power, the man of letter against the dictator. When we meet the intellectual, he is in flight, that being the kind of breakdown or life-changing moment Zweig is interested in relating.

According to Zweig and his opening words, it is the right moment to turn ‘apolitical’, an occasion to be celebrated. For the man of spirit, there is no greater joy than being relieved of the burden of public responsibility: “Nun kann einem geistigen Menschen

nichts Glücklicheres geschehen als die Ausschaltung vom öffentlichen, vom politischen Leben; sie treibt den Denker, den Künstler aus einer seiner unwürdigen Sphäre, die nur mit Brutalität oder Verschlagenheit zu bemeistern ist, in seine innere unberührbare und unzerstörbare zurück” (“CICERO” 230). Here Zweig draws a link between exile and the opportunity to turn creative. Cicero, in this sense, becomes a true intellectual after leaving the life of politics behind and with it what is intrinsic to the management of power: violence. Echoing the interview of 1935, Zweig is arguing for a clear-cut distinction between the intellectual and the politician, two public identities that are, in Zweig’s *Weltanschauung*, incompatible: “Nur dem Exil dankt die Nachwelt den großen Schriftsteller in dem einstigen geschäftigen Redner. Innerhalb dieser stillen drei Jahre schafft er mehr für sein Werk und seinen Nachruhm als vordem in den dreißig, die er verschwenderisch der res publica [den Staatsgeschäften] hingegeben” (“CICERO” 234). All in all, exile provides Cicero with the opportunity of committing himself to posterity, of creating a legacy.

The renunciation of public life and the retreat into the self and the private are seen as key elements for the cultivation of the spirit: “Nun endlich ist ihm durch Caesars Staatsstreich, der ihn ausschaltet von der res publica [von den Staatsgeschäften], Gelegenheit gegeben, diese res privata [Privatangelegenheit], die wichtigste der Welt, fruchtbar zu pflegen” (“CICERO” 232). Thus, Cicero’s journey is from public life to inner freedom. In the Zweigian logic, in order to access the sphere of the immaterial, one needs to cultivate inner freedom, which is not possible while the self remains trapped in the perverse matrix of politics: “Schon scheint sein Leben das eines Philosophen geworden. [...] Der Lehrer des irdischen Rechts hat endlich das bittre Geheimnis erlernt, das jeder im öffentlichen Wirken schließlich erfahren muß: daß man auf die Dauer nie die Freiheit von Massen verteidigen kann, sondern immer nur die eigne, die innere” (“CICERO” 234).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Inner freedom is presented here as the ultimate refuge of the intellectual. It is the cornerstone of Cicero's intellectual and philosophical project. We could argue that the effects of the war, Zweig's feeling of powerlessness in front of mass violence, and the loss of hope affect the construction of Cicero as a figure of commitment and Zweig's alter ego. Even when Cicero is offered to come back to public life and give support to the new regime, he will turn down every proposal "in dem Gefühl, stärker zu sein im Wort als in der Tat und klüger allein als inmitten eines Klüngels, weiter und weiter an seinem Buche, ahnend, daß es sein Abschiedswort an diese Welt sein wird" ("CICERO" 243). And he is also described as "dieser Vorsichtigste und Behutsamste, der, immer den Ausgleich suchend, über den Parteien gestanden oder zwischen ihnen zaghaft gependelt hatte" ("CICERO" 243).

In a way, we could argue that Cicero is praised for redirecting his last energies towards himself. He has done his best to spread freedom to the masses. He is no longer responsible for the destiny of the world and the only wise thing to do in such circumstance is not contributing to the collective folly. Not coincidentally, Cicero is named Erasmus' mentor ("CICERO" 244), a kind of proto-humanist or humanist *avant-la-lettre* ("CICERO" 230), we read on the first page. In the same vein, we are told that "[k]napp vor seinem Ende wird Marcus Tullius Cicero, bisher nur Humanist, der erste Anwalt der Humanität" ("CICERO" 242). However, as a 'good' humanist, he faces the same limitations that paralyzed Erasmus and, to a lesser extent, Castellio. When he considers going back to the public stage after the murder of Caesar, he is no longer the same. He has doubts and experiences a certain discomfort: "Doch unablässig wiederholt sich in der Geschichte die Tragödie, daß gerade der geistige Mensch, weil innerlich von der Verantwortung beschwert, in entscheidender Stunde selten zum Tatmenschen wird" ("CICERO" 237).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

In the case of Cicero, distance has afforded him greater clarity to observe the foolishness of humankind, and, although he commits himself to act, his conscience betrays him:

Aber gleichzeitig zögert er auch, Gewalt mit Gewalt zu erwidern. Seine innere Verantwortung schrickt zurück, Terror zu üben und Blut zu vergießen, und dieses Zögern und Rücksichtnehmen gerade in jenem einzigen Augenblick, der Rücksichtslosigkeit nicht nur verstatet, sondern sogar fordert, lähmt seine Kraft. Nach dem ersten Impuls der Begeisterung blickt Cicero mit gefährlicher Klarsichtigkeit auf die Situation. ("CICERO" 237).

He distinguishes the seed of tyranny in the new masters, feels that he has failed again ("CICERO" 238); the limits of his commitment bring Cicero to a second retreat, corruption has won the battle over freedom: "Zum zweitemal ist Marcus Tullius Cicero aus der Welt in seine Einsamkeit geflüchtet. Nun ist er endgültig gewahr, daß er als Gelehrter, als Humanist, als Wahrer des Rechts von Anfang an fehl in einer Sphäre gewesen, wo Macht als Recht gilt und Skrupellosigkeit mehr fördert als Weisheit und Versöhnlichkeit" ("CICERO" 239).

In this second retreat, Cicero will perform his last act of commitment, writing for posterity what Zweig calls his testament ("CICERO" 243). In a striking analogy with Zweig's *Die Welt von Gestern*, Cicero pens down his last book as a result of his determination to warn future generations and pass down his message: "So besinnt sich der Gedeimigte seiner eigentlichen Kraft, und als Vermächtnis für andere Generationen verfaßt er in diesen einsamen Tagen sein letztes und zugleich sein größtes Werk 'De officiis', die Lehre von den Pflichten, die der unabhängige, der moralische Mensch gegen sich selbst und gegen den Staat zu erfüllen hat" ("CICERO" 239). Once he has performed this 'spiritual' deed, Cicero is ready to end his life. He abandons for the last time his 'silent' retreat knowing that he will pay for such transgression with his life: "Der Monate

und Jahre nur mehr den stummen Griffel geführt, nimmt wieder den Donnerkeil der Rede und schleudert ihn gegen die Feinde der Republik. [...] Cicero weiß, daß er nicht wie einst auf diesem selben Forum müßig mit Worten ficht, sondern diesmal sein Leben für seine Überzeugung einzusetzen hat” (“CICERO” 244).

If we consider Zweig’s reflection in *Castellio* on the different kinds of responses available to the intellectual when he is persecuted by a repressive state, we could argue that Cicero’s forms of commitment vacillate between going away to preserve one’s inner freedom—Castellio’s first choice—and a final act of sacrifice. Here, however, instead of ‘martyrdom’, Cicero’s figure gains ‘exemplarity’. Be it as it may, his final choice is to capitulate: “Eine Müdigkeit, die nicht bloß eine der Glieder, der Nerven ist, sondern eine Müdigkeit des Lebens und geheimnisvolles Heimweh nach dem Ende, nach der Erde hat ihn übermannt. Nur rasten noch einmal [...] und Abschied nehmen, Abschied von der Welt, aber ruhen und rasten, sei es ein Tag oder eine Stunde nur!” (“CICERO” 249-250). All in all, Zweig’s Cicero combines several traits of commitment we have been observing so far. He is a humanist, in the line of Castellio and Erasmus, and also, in a material sense, a defeated figure. Moreover, whereas his responses entail retreat into self, silence and renunciation to one’s public voice, he is also the one who goes further in his commitment, making the ultimate sacrifice for his values, hoping to at least make the world a better place through his example. While in front of the dead body of Cicero nobody dares to protest, “ein Krampf preßt ihre Herzen, und betroffen schlagen sie die Augen nieder vor diesem tragischen Sinnbild ihrer gekreuzigten Republik” (“CICERO” 252).

1.5.6. Montaigne: *Rester soi même*

The last chapter in Zweig’s narrative of commitment is dedicated to the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne. As Karl Müller explains, Zweig was working

intensively on Montaigne in November 1941, right after he had finished his autobiography and while he was also engaged in the writing of *Schachnovelle* and *Clarissa* (“*Montaigne*” 471). In fact, the text was published posthumously: first as a fragment—the first chapter—in *Die neue Rundschau* in 1948, and then the whole text edited by Zweig’s literary executor in 1960 within the anthology *Europäisches Erbe*. Additionally, if the conditions of publication of *Montaigne* are exceptional, the same can be said about the circumstances of its production. For the first time, deeply isolated in his Brazilian exile, Zweig does not have access to the usual secondary literature he employed to recreate the historical context and atmosphere of his biographical subjects. Besides a couple of biographies¹⁷⁷ and some other secondary literature sent over by Friderike Zweig from New York, Zweig’s main source were Montaigne’s *Essais*. In this sense, the conditions propitiated a more personal reading of the French intellectual. In Robert Dumont’s words: “Il semble bien qu’il n’ait cherché chez ses devanciers que les renseignements biographiques et les bases historiques indispensables, bien décidé à donner des *Essais* un commentaire tout à fait personnel, un commentaire ‘engagé’” (384).

To this regard, Zweig himself reflects in the first pages of the work on his ‘encounters’ with Montaigne. They had first ‘met’ around 1900, a time when the philosopher’s insights did not manage to attract the attention of young Zweig: “Aber meine Freude blieb eine literarische, eine antiquarische; es fehlte die innere Zündung der leidenschaftlichen Begeisterung, das elektrische Überspringen von Seele zu Seele” (*MONTAIGNE* 18). As we have already discussed, Zweig’s pre-First World War commitment was mostly focused on the realm of aesthetics. Therefore, “was sollte das kluge Abmahnen Montaignes [...], sein beschwichtigendes Drängen zu Temperiertheit

¹⁷⁷ Fortunat Strowski’s *Montaigne. Sa vie publique et privée* (1938) and Marvin Lowenthal’s *The Autobiography of Michel de Montaigne* (1935).

und Toleranz einem ungestümen Alter, das nicht desillusioniert werden will und nicht beruhigt, sondern unbewußt nur verstärkt in seinem vitalen Auftrieb? (*MONTAIGNE* 29). Additionally, Zweig argues that the time was not ripe for an author like Montaigne, that the world still needed to lose some of its fundamental values—freedom and tolerance—for the French writer to be fully appreciated (*MONTAIGNE* 29). All in all, Montaigne is presented as an author to be read from the eyes of experience and maturity. His significance is only revealed when the conditions of production (Montaigne's) and reception (Zweig's) meet each other at the crossroads of history. At that point, Montaigne becomes not only an intellectual and philosophical reference, but also a friend: “Erst in dieser Bruderschaft des Schicksals ist mir Montaigne der unentbehrliche Bruder, Helfer, Tröster und Freund geworden, denn wie verzweifelt ähnlich ist sein Schicksal dem unseren” (*MONTAIGNE* 50).

Following these words, we could contend that the experience of a deep historical and personal identification/analogy is what prompts the writing of *Montaigne*. There is a shift in value; the second time Zweig encounters Montaigne the latter is read from his potential to become a Zweigian figure of intellectuality. Furthermore, another reason for concluding this chapter with this text is the strong case for reading *Montaigne* as another of Zweig's self-portraits. There are many passages that support this reading, as it has been noted by Zweigian scholars such as Jacques Le Rider (“SZ und Frankreich” 42) and David Turner. More specifically, the latter provides ample evidence concerning the biographical parallels and deep ‘Montaignian’ resonances that can be found in Zweig's works—besides *Montaigne* (“Zweig und Montaigne” 264). Likewise, Turner remarks the importance of the personal analogies between author and biographical subject: “Der Zusammenhang zwischen Vergangenheit und Gegenwart [...] ist nicht nur eine Frage des Weltgeschehens [...]. Von ebenso großer Bedeutung ist die Tatsache, daß alle drei Werke

zugleich selbstbiographische Versuche sind” (“Zweig und Montaigne” 265). A textual evidence of such personal imprint would be, for instance, the recurrent use of the first personal singular (Ich) instead of the plural that dominated other similar works like *Erasmus*. Thus, having already written his memoirs, Zweig would have lost that fear of being privately exposed that we have discussed as an essential factor for masking his self in his works:

Hier ist ein Du, in dem mein Ich sich spiegelt, hier die Distanz aufgehoben, die Zeit von Zeiten trennt. Nicht ein Buch ist mit mir, nicht Literatur, nicht Philosophie, sondern ein Mensch, dem ich Bruder bin, ein Mensch, der mich berät, der mich tröstet und befreundet, ein Mensch, den ich verstehe und der mich versteht. Nehme ich die ‘Essais’ zur Hand, so verschwindet im halbdunklen Raum das bedruckte Papier. Jemand atmet, jemand lebt mit mir, ein Fremder ist zu mir getreten, und kein Fremder mehr, sondern jemand, den ich fühle wie einen Freund.
(*MONTAIGNE* 156)

Montaigne: Freedom, Individualism and Mediation

Bearing all this in mind, we shall now proceed to discuss the forms of commitment embodied in the recreation of Montaigne. First of all, it must be noted that Montaigne’s membership to Zweig’s family of committed figures is made patent through the evocation of both Erasmus and Castellio, with whom he does not only share a vision of the world but also the context, the struggle: “Dies [ist] wichtig zu sehen, weil es ein Beweis ist, daß der Mensch immer frei sein kann zu jeder Zeit. [...] Immer haben auch in Zeiten der Fanatiker die Humanen gelebt, zur Zeit des Hexenhammers die Chambre Ardente [...] und die Inquisition nicht einen Augenblick die Klarheit und Menschlichkeit eines Erasmus, eines Montaigne, eines Castellio verwirren können” (*MONTAIGNE* 811-822).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ On this passage, Klaus Weissenberger comments: “What a personal statement by Zweig, in which the simple reference to these three historical figures comprises the message of his entire literary production in exile!” (147).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Montaigne is united to his intellectual peers by exerting a form of rebellion against the main currents and hegemonic powers of his time.¹⁷⁹ Whereas others—either due to their fanaticism or scholarly snobbism—declare to know the truth, Montaigne challenges that very notion by asking what he knows and who he is: “Wer für sich selbst frei denkt, ehrt alle Freiheit auf Erden” (*MONTAIGNE* 822).

In addition to his disdain for an idea or truth made into dogma, Montaigne shares with Erasmus and Castellio a humanist affiliation;¹⁸⁰ he is committed to remain “menschlich in einer Zeit der Unmenschlichkeit” (*MONTAIGNE* 135). Also, we read that he was born into a humanist atmosphere, his father having achieved a decisive transformation from the realm of the material to the ‘spiritual’. Once again, and from a determinist point of view, milieu—and more precisely his upbringing—and family heritage/genetics play a key role in the configuration of Montaigne’s character, and more importantly, explain the values that form the intellectual’s response:

[E]ine Festung, von außen gesehen und zugleich eine Stätte humanistischer Bildung und generöser Gastlichkeit. Nicht ohne innere Belehrung und ohne noch größeren Willen zu weiterer Bildung hat der junge Soldat das Italien der Renaissance in seiner schönsten Kunstblüte gesehen. Die bloße Geldgier und Gewinnfreude seiner Ahnen verwandelt sich bei ihm in höheren Ehrgeiz. Er legt den Grund zu einer stattlichen Bibliothek, er zieht gelehrte Männer, Humanisten und Professoren in sein Haus. (*MONTAIGNE* 198)

In the same vein, after spending his first years living with a humble family not far from Chateau de Montaigne—so that he learns humility—, “[w]ie vom Heißen ins Kalte wird der junge Michel vom Proletarischen ins Humanistische hinübergestellt. [...] Er soll aufsteigen in die höchsten Kreise derjenigen, die durch geistige Überlegenheit, durch Bildung und Kultur die Schicksale der Zeit im Rat der Könige lenken und mit ihrem Wort die Ereignisse beeinflussen,

¹⁷⁹ On fanaticism as the enemy of the intellectual: “Und kaum der Knabe erwachsen ist, beginnt der Bürgerkrieg, der mit seinen fanatischen Ideologien Frankreich so völlig verwüstet wie heute die sozialen und nationalen Fanatismen die Welt von einem bis zum andern Ende” (*MONTAIGNE* 82).

¹⁸⁰ On Montaigne as an Erasmian hero, Dumont comments: “S’il respecte et admire les lutteurs: les Verhaeren, les Romain Rolland, sa sympathie secrète est acquise aux âmes sensibles, volontiers repliées sur elles-mêmes, à la sagesse un peu timorée, aux disciples d’Erasmus” (395).

die statt in der Enge der Provinz in weiteren Kreisen der Welt ihre geistige Heimat haben” (*MONTAIGNE* 283). In other words, Montaigne is educated to become a cosmopolitan man of spirit. On the other hand, the out-of-the-ordinary education he receives from his father teaches him to be free, both for the best and the worst. As a child he is encouraged to develop his own curiosity, to learn through experience and following his own rhythm. According to Zweig, this causes the development of two tendencies within Montaigne. On the positive side, he learns not to submit to any authority, “never to be the slave of one opinion or another” (*MONTAIGNE* 570). On the negative, “Diese Kindheit hat ihn für alle kommenden Jahre verwöhnt, jeder starken und gewaltsamen Anspannung, allem Schwierigen, Regelmäßigen, Pflichthaften möglichst auszuweichen und immer nur dem eigenen Willen, der eigenen Laune nachzugeben” (*MONTAIGNE* 326). In this regard, it must be noted that, in a striking parallelism with Zweig’s narrative in *Die Welt von Gestern*,¹⁸¹ Montaigne also experiences a formal education based on the transmission of ‘petrified’ knowledge, a process that does not lead to the formation of an individual but of a ‘parrot’, a machine-like being capable of repeating what others have said before but never of producing his or her own discourse. But how is one to know freedom if it has never been denied to him? According to Zweig, Montaigne’s school years allow him to appreciate his ‘informal’ education and, above all, the value of independence (*MONTAIGNE* 336).¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ One of the main aspects that Zweig criticizes in his otherwise utopian rendering of fin-de-siècle Vienna is the obsolete and all-too-suffocating education he and his contemporaries received at school (see chapter II “Die Schule im vorigen Jahrhundert”, pp. 45-82), which explains the immense liberty he experienced during his university years. Both leaving school and the family are presented as key factors in the development of his *Weltanschauung*.

¹⁸² Another passage where Zweig seems to apply Taine’s formula is at the end of chapter two, when he traces back Montaigne’s significance to his family history: ‘In ihm löst sich alles, was zwischen den gascognischen Fischersleuten und jüdischen Maklern gegensätzlich war, in eine neue, einheitliche und schöpferische Form. Was er der einen Linie verdankt, was der andern, aus einer so vollkommenen Bindung zu lösen, wird ohne Künstlichkeit kaum möglich sein, außer daß er durch diese Gemischtheit prädestiniert war, ein Mensch der Mitte und ein Mensch der Bindung zu werden, unbefangen nach allen Seiten blickend, unborniert in jedem Sinne, ‘libre penseur’ [freier Denker] und ‘citoyen du monde’ [Weltbürger], freigeistig und tolerant, Sohn und Bürger nicht einer Rasse und eines Vaterlands, sondern Weltbürger jenseits von Ländern und Zeiten” (*MONTAIGNE* 252).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Another key aspect of Montaigne as a figure of commitment is his role as an example. Already in the very first page of the text, we learn that Montaigne's struggle with his context, with war, violence, and fanaticism has afforded him an exemplary status. It has been necessary to go through such trial to prove oneself and the world that there is always a choice: to submit or to resist: "Erst wenn man selbst an der Vernunft, an der Würde der Menschheit gezweifelt und verzweifelt hat, vermag man es als Tat zu rühmen, wenn ein Einzelner inmitten eines Weltchaos sich vorbildlich aufrecht erhält" (*MONTAIGNE* 18). Whereas, when approaching Montaigne and his work, others have focused on assessing his literary and philosophical legacy, the only thing that matters for Zweig is to learn from his example:

Mich aber berührt und beschäftigt an Montaigne heute nur dies, wie er in einer Zeit ähnlich der unseren sich innerlich freigemacht und wie wir, indem wir ihn lesen, uns an seinem Sinne bestärken. Ich sehe ihn als Erzvater, Schutzpatron und Freund jedes 'homme libre' [freien Menschen] auf Erden, als den besten Lehrer dieser neuen und doch ewigen Wissenschaft, sich selbst zu bewahren gegen alle und alles. (*MONTAIGNE* 124).

What matters is Montaigne's example as a human being, a model of how to keep one's freedom, how to live one's life when most of humanity are simply being swept by the current of events: "selbst die nächsten, die ihn kannten, ahnten nicht, mit welcher Ausdauer, Zähigkeit, Klugheit, Geschmeidigkeit er im Schatten der Öffentlichkeit arbeitete an der einen Aufgabe, die er sich selbst gestellt: statt eines bloßen Lebens sein eigenes Leben zu leben" (*MONTAIGNE* 145). All in all, and we could say the same of Zweig to a certain extent, "Montaigne macht keinerlei Vorschriften. Er gibt nur ein Beispiel, wie er es selbst versucht, sich unablässig von allem zu befreien, was ihn hemmt, stört, einschränkt. Man kann versuchen, eine Tabelle zu machen" (*MONTAIGNE* 792).¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Similarly, we read that "[s]o ist er nichts weniger als ein Philosoph, es sei denn im Sinne des Sokrates, den er am meisten liebt, weil er nichts hinterlassen hat, kein Dogma, keine Lehre, kein Gesetz, kein System. Nichts als eine Gestalt" (*MONTAIGNE* 680).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Now, having attested to Montaigne's exemplary nature as an intellectual, as an individual capable of issuing a committed response, we could ask ourselves what drives Montaigne in his role as a figure of commitment. Above all, Montaigne is moved by the primordial ethical question 'How should I live?', "[a]ber das Wunderbare, das Wohltätige bei ihm ist, daß er nie versucht hat, diese Frage in einen Imperativ zu verwandeln, dies 'Wie lebe ich?' in ein 'So sollst du leben!'" (*MONTAIGNE* 755). Thus, Montaigne's quest is first and foremost oriented towards the self, towards knowing the self. While he does not expect to find a final answer, this process—materialized in the *Essais*—reveals some of the pillars of his *Weltanschauung*. On the one hand, what is only hinted at in *Cicero*—inner freedom—is made here into a cornerstone of Montaigne's figure of commitment. In fact, *Montaigne* can be seen as a sort of 'apology of freedom', and as such it will be discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation. Suffice it to mention for now that the necessity to keep oneself free, independent, is an essential ingredient in the configuration of Montaigne's responsibility:

Nur wer in der eigenen erschütterten Seele eine Zeit durchleben muß, die mit Krieg, Gewalt und tyrannischen Ideologien dem Einzelnen das Leben und innerhalb seines Lebens wieder die kostbarste Substanz, die individuelle Freiheit, bedroht, weiß, wieviel Mut, wieviel Ehrlichkeit und Entschlossenheit vonnöten ist, in solchen Zeiten der Herdentollheit seinem innersten Ich treu zu bleiben.
(*MONTAIGNE* 8)

On the other hand, we can observe a strong individualism influencing Montaigne's responses as an intellectual. As we have mentioned before, the self, the individual is at the center of Montaigne's quest. The freedom he seeks is only for himself. He does not fight to liberate the masses; "[e]r wußte zu gut, eine wie ungeheure Aufgabe schon dies allein bedeutet, in sich selbst die innere Selbständigkeit zu bewahren. So beschränkt sich sein Kampf ausschließlich auf die Defensive, auf die Verteidigung jener innersten

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

Schanze, die Goethe die 'Zitadelle' nennt und zu der kein Mensch einem andern Zutritt verstatet" (*MONTAIGNE* 135).

Bearing this in mind, for the remainder of the chapter, we will focus our analysis on how both freedom and individualism affect the trajectory of Montaigne as an intellectual, how they shape his committed response. In this direction, we learn that the first consequence is Montaigne's reluctance towards the very notion of responsibility. Describing how Montaigne becomes head of the family after his father's death, Zweig writes that "[a]ls major domus, als Chef der Familie hat er, der nur ungern für sein eigenes Tun und Lassen die Verantwortung übernimmt, die Pflicht, die hundert kleinen Geschäfte und täglichen Verrechnungen zu leiten oder wenigstens zu prüfen" (*MONTAIGNE* 440). In the same vein, we are told that "[d]ie nächsten Jahre werden ungeheure Verantwortung bringen, und Montaigne ist der geschworene Feind aller Verantwortung. Er will ausweichen den Entscheidungen. Als der Weise in einer Zeit des Fanatismus sucht er Rückzug und Flucht" (*MONTAIGNE* 484). So pressured both privately and publicly, Montaigne's first great decision is to abandon all responsibility and—following the footsteps of Cicero—retire to the solitude of his tower: "Dieser Abschied soll mehr sein als ein Abschied vom Amt. Es soll eine Absage sein an die äußere Welt. Bisher hat er für andere gelebt, nun will er für sich leben. Bisher hat er getan, was das Amt, der Hof, der Vater von ihm forderten. Nun will er nurmehr tun, was ihm Freude macht" (*MONTAIGNE* 507). Now it is time to take care of the self while the world self-destructs outside: "Er will lesen, denken, genießen und sich nicht beschäftigen lassen, sondern selbst beschäftigen. Was Montaigne sucht, ist sein inneres Ich, das nicht dem Staat, der Familie, der Zeit, den Umständen, dem Gelde, dem Besitz gehören soll, jenes innere Ich, das Goethe die 'Zitadelle' nannte, in die er niemandem Einlaß gewährte" (*MONTAIGNE* 518). But the renunciation of public duty is just the first step, followed by a further retreat into

his citadel, saying goodbye to family and the rest of his daily obligations (*MONTAIGNE* 712).

In his journey from the realm of the public to the sphere of the private, Montaigne seeks to be alone. In contrast to the enforced loneliness experienced by other Zweigian figures of intellectuality because of their committed stance, Montaigne's solitude is the expression of his innermost desire. At the same time, retreat is the condition that allows the birth of Michel de Montaigne the intellectual. Curiously enough, what may have been considered—for instance in the case of Erasmus: “Er hat sich verschanzt in seinen Turm, er hat den Wall seiner tausend Bücher zwischen sich und den Lärm gestellt” (*MONTAIGNE* 835)—as a limitation of his commitment is praised here as a wise and exemplary decision.¹⁸⁴ In this light, another characteristic of Montaigne's retreat is silence. In a way, in this chapter we have travelled through the whole spectrum of commitment: from enthusiastically meeting the times with Verhaeren to running away from them and seeking the solace of ‘silent’ partners: “Sie [Montaignes Bücher] sagen ihm ihre Meinung, und er antwortet mit der seinen. Sie sprechen ihre Gedanken aus und regen bei ihm Gedanken an. Sie stören nicht, wenn er schweigt, sie sprechen nur, wenn er sie fragt. Hier ist sein Reich. Sie dienen seinem Vergnügen” (*MONTAIGNE* 566).¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Thus Zweig justifies, instead of recriminating as in *Erasmus*, Montaigne's—and perhaps also his own—choice: “[W]arum nimmst du dies alles so schwer? Warum dich anfechten und niederbeugen von dem Unsinn und der Bestialität deiner Zeit? All das rührt doch nur an deine Haut, an dein äußeres Leben, nicht an dein innerstes Ich. Das Außen kann dir nichts nehmen und kann dich nicht verstören, solange du dich nicht selber verstören läßt. [...] Die zeitlichen Geschehnisse sind machtlos über dich, sofern du verweigerst, an ihnen teilzunehmen, der Wahnsinn der Zeit [ist] keine wirkliche Not, solange du selbst deine Klarheit behältst. Und selbst die schlimmsten deiner Erlebnisse, die scheinbaren Erniedrigungen, die Schläge des Schicksals, du fühlst sie nur, solange du schwach vor ihnen wirst, denn wer ist es als du selbst, der ihnen Wert und Schwere, der ihnen Lust und Schmerz zuteilt?” (*MONTAIGNE* 166).

¹⁸⁵ Discussing Montaigne as an Erasmian figure and comparing it to Zweig's Verhaeren, Leo Botstein argues: “Zweig lost will to assert the ethical duty of responsibility as he had done in 1910 in the Verhaeren biography. Montaigne's greatness was his modesty (in relation to Erasmus) in public life, his resilience against disaster, and his instinct that the only viable and highest enterprise was protecting one's freedom, one's inner independence even in the external conditions of servitude” (103).

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

We could contend that the self is at the center of Montaigne's commitment: "Was ihm müßige Laune geschienen hat, offenbart allmählich einen Sinn. Was immer er beschreibt, beschreibt er eigentlich nur [als] die Reaktion seines Ich auf dies und jenes. Die Essais haben einen einzigen Gegenstand, und er ist derselbe wie der seines Lebens: das 'moi' [das Ich] oder vielmehr 'mon essence' [mein Wesen]" (*MONTAIGNE* 702). Writing about himself is the means for Montaigne to meet his contemporaries and the world: "Wer sein eigenes Leben schildert, lebt für alle Menschen, wer seine Zeit zum Ausdruck bringt, für alle Zeiten" (*MONTAIGNE* 745). In terms of commitment, Montaigne has lost all hope of changing the world, working only for his own self (*MONTAIGNE* 825). Keeping the sphere of the public at a distance, he resigns himself to non-action: "Er sagt sich dasselbe wie wir alle so oft in ähnlichen Zeiten des Irrwitzes: kümmere dich nicht um die Welt. Du kannst sie nicht ändern, sie nicht verbessern. Kümmere dich um dich, rette in dir, was zu retten ist. Baue auf, während die anderen zerstören, versuche vernünftig zu sein für dich inmitten des Wahnsinns. Schließ dich ab. Bau dir eine eigene Welt" (*MONTAIGNE* 835).

However, everything is not said and done for Montaigne. Even in the solitude of his tower, the world comes knocking. Total retreat, in tempestuous times, proves to be a chimera. Besides, Montaigne has made another miscalculation: "er hat die Freiheit gesucht, indem er sich aus der großen Welt, aus Politik und Amt und Geschäft zurückzog in seine kleine Welt von Haus und Familie" (*MONTAIGNE* 846). He needs more freedom. To escape the materiality of everyday life, to attain 'spiritual' heights, one must run away: "Nur äußere Distanz gibt die innere. [...] Wer auf einen kleinen Ort sich beschränkt, gerät in kleine Proportionen. Alles ist relativ" (*MONTAIGNE* 868). Montaigne's second choice implies a further renunciation of responsibility: "Einen anderen Grund und einen nicht minder wichtigen für seine Flucht aus der Einsamkeit muß man eher zwischen den Zeilen

lesen. Montaigne hat immer und überall die Freiheit und das Wandelbare gesucht, aber auch die Familie ist eine Einschränkung und die Ehe eine Monotonie, und man hat überdies das Gefühl, als ob er nicht restlos glücklich in seinem häuslichen Leben gewesen wäre” (*MONTAIGNE* 879). At the age of forty-eight, after a decade of solitude and retreat, he embarks on a journey “die ihn zwei Jahre von Frau und Turm und Heimat und Arbeit, von allem, nur nicht von sich selbst entfernt” (*MONTAIGNE* 912). Travel becomes a form of commitment; the direction of Montaigne’s response is the same—away from duty/responsibility and towards the self—but the means to attain inner freedom have changed from retreat and solitude to mobility.

Curiously enough, the most ‘egotistical’ Zweigian figure of commitment still had to experience another transformation, still had to find a mission to fulfil. Curiously enough, Montaigne’s choices, which seem to echo the desperation experienced by Zweig at that time, turn out to be ‘effective’, ‘productive’, in terms of commitment. The years of catering for the self and inner freedom ‘pay off’—even against Montaigne’s wishes to remain undisturbed. After the conflict is over, everybody suddenly remembers Montaigne, and he is called back to occupy the post of mayor of Bordeaux, following a direct order of the king. The intellectual is thus forced to return to the world of politics. But Montaigne is not just another politician. His struggle to remain independent has earned him a reputation and soon he is also asked to counsel in state affairs. What had been disdainfully considered as passive and unproductive—the non-party man—is now endowed with prestige:

Ein solcher Mann war unbrauchbar gewesen in einer Zeit des Entweder-Oder, in einer Zeit des drohenden Siegs oder einer drohenden Ausrottung des Hugenottentums in Frankreich. Aber nun, nach den grauenhaften Verwüstungen des Bürgerkriegs, nachdem der Fanatismus sich selbst ad absurdum geführt, wird plötzlich in der Politik der bisherige Defekt der Unparteiischkeit zum Vorzug und

CHAPTER I-FIGURES OF COMMITMENT

ein Mann, der immer freigeblieben ist von Vorurteil und Urteil, der unbestechlich durch Vorteil und Ruhm zwischen den Parteien gestanden, zum idealen Vermittler. (*MONTAIGNE* 1051)

Somehow, Montaigne has achieved, following the discourse we have been articulating in this chapter, a synthesis between the politician and the intellectual. Or, rather, he has truly performed as a (political) mediator. Not just theoretically, like Erasmus, but in the resolution of ‘practical’ affairs. It is in this sense, then, that he manages to mediate between Henry III and the future Henry IV: “Montaigne soll als Vermittler nach Paris reisen und dem König seine Vorschläge machen. Anscheinend hat es sich um nichts Geringeres gehandelt als um den entscheidenden Punkt, der dann den Frieden Frankreichs und seine Größe für Jahrhunderte verbürgt hat: die Konversion Heinrichs von Navarra zum Katholizismus” (*MONTAIGNE* 1105). In the end, Montaigne has acted; his last response—within his role as mediator—has given a U-turn to the orientation of his commitment and reintroduced him into ‘reality’.

And yet, at the last moment, there is another decision to be made. When Henri the Navarre is coronated as Henri IV of France, Montaigne is offered the highest position in court, right by the king’s side, acting as his counselor (*MONTAIGNE* 1105). But he refuses, for the sake of his independence and inner freedom: “Er weiß, daß es ihm gelungen ist, was Plato einmal als das Schwerste auf Erden bezeichnet: mit reinen Händen aus dem öffentlichen Leben zu treten” (*MONTAIGNE* 1126). All in all, in *Montaigne* we do not only find a justification of Zweig’s last committed choices, but also an ideal outcome had he survived both the war and his inner struggles. Montaigne is both a politician and an intellectual; a synthesis of two figures that seem otherwise irreconcilable in Zweig’s *Weltanschauung*; a chimera of sorts that combines radical freedom and individualism with the willingness, when one is required to do so, to act in the public sphere, mediate and put an end to conflict and violence

CHAPTER II - BUILDING A 'EUROPEAN' *WELTANSCHAUNG*: THE ORIENTATION(S) OF STEFAN ZWEIG'S COMMITMENT

Stefan Zweig appartient à une espèce qui n'est peut-être pas en voie de disparaître—du moins, je l'espère—mais qui est sérieusement menacée par les conditions actuelles, et qui ne se perpétue qu'à travers toutes sortes de difficultés: celle des grands Européens. Plus tard, on fera leur histoire. On publiera à leur sujet, et sous ce titre, une thèse magnifique—si du moins le temps à venir reste capable de publier des thèses; si tout l'argent disponible en Europe n'est pas accaparé par les avions et les canons.

Jules Romains, *Stefan Zweig. Grand Européen*, 1941, p. 15

Following the premises and objectives established in the introduction, let us turn to the other side of our discussion of Stefan Zweig's *engagement*. Whereas Chapter I was dedicated to exploring the forms of commitment and figures of intellectuality articulated in a selection of his works—thus constituting what we could call a 'Zweigian narrative of commitment'—, Chapter II aims to discuss the orientation of said figures and forms towards the realization of Zweig's main enterprise: 'Europe'. In other words, we have already demonstrated that there is a strong 'committed' current that underpins a great part of Zweig's creative output whereby the writer exposes and negotiates his commitment in its most 'public' and/or 'authorial' dimension through a series of figures and forms of commitment, from Veraheren to Montaigne. Bearing that in mind, this chapter seeks to explore the 'project' or 'cause' that gives meaning, purpose, and direction to the intellectual's response. In this sense, we do not start from scratch, since some of the

attributes of Zweig's 'alter-egos' speak volumes about the values they espouse, and which inform their 'duty'. Thus, we have already reflected—albeit indirectly—on the birth of Zweig's European *Weltanschauung* and ethics at the turn-of-the-century through the figure of Verhaeren as a mediator; on his pacifist attempts to dismantle and counteract the rhetoric of war and nationalism (Jeremias and Rolland), as well his meditations on how to arrest the cycles of violence (Virata); and, finally, on the humanism of Zweig's exile figures of commitment, which, according to Zweig, takes them to defend certain forms of supranationalism and freedom.

Taking all this into account, this chapter will explore the (ethical) items/values that make up Zweig's European 'project' or *Weltanschauung*. Our efforts are directed at putting back together the scattered pieces of said project, at (re)constructing a narrative that may give an overall sense to Zweig's commitment. The center of Zweig's story is 'Europe'; the starting point, as it could not be otherwise, *Die Welt von Gestern*, which I consider the only textual unit within Zweig's production capable of containing a representative portion of the main aspects, ideas and expressions of his European *engagement*. However, to make the most of Zweig's memoirs, I contend that they must be approached and assessed from new angles that are capable of redirecting their potential away from a set of traditional readings that have condemned the text to a static—or rather stagnated—reception. Thus, the autobiography will be discussed: 1) as an expression of Zweig's experience of the end of the world in exile; 2) as a historical narrative shaped by nostalgia and a Zweigian 'philosophy of history'; 3) as a 'failed' (past) utopia. Then, we will move on to dissect Zweig's 'Europe' by discussing the impact of the noun 'Europe' and the adjective 'European' in his work through the exploration of some texts where, I contend, the Austrian writer discusses his idea of Europe. Finally, we will stick to one of the ramifications of said idea, namely its potential to become an ethical project, by exploring how five elemental aspects or categories of Zweig's European ethos shape/orient some of his production and turn it,

thus, in a sense, into an act of 'committed' writing: humanism or the drive towards the 'human'; peace/pacifism and the formulation of an anti-war discourse; freedom; a beyond-the-national stance (supranationalism and cosmopolitanism); and empathy.

2.1. The historical narrative of *Die Welt von Gestern*: The Roots of Zweig's Utopian 'Europe'

In 1941, under the extreme emotional and material adversities of exile, Stefan Zweig started writing his memoirs, *Die Welt von Gestern*, which would be published a few months after his suicide in 1942. During the second half of the twentieth century, and also today—in the context of a twenty-first-century Zweig revival—, said text has been usually read as a nostalgic memento of a bygone era, the longings of a European idealist whose account of the demise of Europe in the first half of the twentieth century is conceived more as a highly evocative, naive and stylized exercise in self-narration than an accurate historical narrative. As I have suggested before, this traditional reading of Zweig's memoirs is based on an analysis that looks only at the surface of the text, and which focuses on the accuracy (or lack of it) of its historical descriptions and its degree of political and social awareness. From this perspective, the description and articulation of fin-de-siècle Vienna as the Age of Security, as the materialization of the Golden Age of humankind propelled by an absolute faith in progress, contributes to the characterization of Zweig as a naive writer that belonged to a privileged class which, in turn, remained completely aloof from the social and political context it inhabited. In brief, as we have seen in the introduction to Zweig's historical biographies in, they way in which Zweig engages himself—and his writing—with the past (i.e. how he deals with History) has been a controversial topic among his critics.

Bearing this premise in mind, and given that the historical discourse articulated in *Die Welt von Gestern* is a vital source for the reconstruction of his European *Weltanschauung*, it is necessary—in order for us to reassess and resignify Zweig's memoirs from a twenty-first century

perspective—to bear in mind how said discourse both deviates from and measures up to certain historiographical standards and expectations. Zweig’s autobiography is recurrently accused of not being rigorous and factual enough, of misrepresenting history, and of lacking certain political and social insights that would account for what is otherwise presented by Zweig as the workings of the mysterious forces of Fate. Without going any further, Hannah Arendt, in the already mentioned review of *Die Welt von Gestern*, is critical with the Austrian writer for his ‘elitist’ approach to the complex reality of fin-de-siècle Vienna:

Naturalmente, el mundo que describe Zweig no pertenece en absoluto al ayer; naturalmente, el autor de este libro no vivía propiamente en el mundo, sino sólo en sus márgenes. Los barrotes de la verja dorada de ese particular parque natural estaban demasiado juntos para que sus moradores pudiesen ver a través de ella, una visión que sólo habría podido estropear su gozosa experiencia en el recinto. (78)

As an example of Zweig seeming indifference to worldly affairs, Arendt points out the absence of any mention to the high levels of unemployment that ravaged postwar Austria (78).¹⁸⁶ In the same vein, Alice Goldfarb Marquis criticizes Zweig’s memoirs by focusing also on those very same omissions regarding social and political terms, such as the housing crisis that condemned thousands of families to live in inhuman conditions—

¹⁸⁶ Actually, although we could argue that Arendt’s assessment of Zweig’s memoirs’ ‘historical’ discourse is correct, on the topic of Austria’s postwar recession, I believe that we should challenge her statement. For one thing, Zweig dedicated some of his works of fiction to the long-term dehumanizing consequences of war and the asphyxiating postwar atmosphere. See, for instance, the short stories “Die unsichtbare Sammlung. Eine Episode aus der deutschen Inflation” (1927) and “Leporella” (1925/1928), as well as the unfinished novel *Rausch der Verwandlung*. Likewise, in *Die Welt von Gestern*, contrary to what Arendt claims, Zweig discusses amply—in chapter “Heimkehr nach Österreich”—the postwar recession suffered by Austria. This is just one passage of many on the subject of ‘postwar misery’: “Jeder Gang in die Stadt hinab war damals erschütterndes Erlebnis; zum erstenmal sah ich einer Hungersnot in die gelben und gefährlichen Augen. Das Brot krümelte sich schwarz und schmeckte nach Pech und Leim, Kaffee war ein Absud von gebrannter Gerste, Bier ein gelbes Wasser, Schokolade gefärbter Sand, die Kartoffeln erfroren; die meisten zogen sich, um den Geschmack von Fleisch nicht ganz zu vergessen, Kaninchen auf, in unserem Garten schoß ein junger Bursche Eichhörnchen als Sonntagsspeise ab, und wohlgenährte Hunde oder Katzen kamen nur selten von längeren Spaziergängen zurück. Was an Stoffen angeboten wurde, war in Wahrheit präpariertes Papier, Ersatz eines Ersatzes; die Männer schlichen fast ausschließlich in alten, sogar russischen Uniformen herum, die sie aus einem Depot oder einem Krankenhaus geholt hatten und in denen schon mehrere Menschen gestorben waren” (*WvG* 311).

especially a huge number of migrants that came from all over the empire and soon surpassed the autochthonous Viennese population—or the pressure that a growing capitalist economy was exerting on the *Kleinbürgertum*, which had to either get into debt to buy new machinery or become suppliers of bigger companies on less-than-favorable terms. According to Marquis, the petit bourgeoisie became the roots of the antiliberal and antisemitic political movements that took over Austrian politics in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In this context, Marquis argues, “Vienna’s Young intellectuals avoided confronting these demagogic cesspools as studiously as they averted their consciousness from the real sewers which sheltered thousands of homeless every winter night. Instead, they isolated themselves in the perpetual springtime of youth” (32).

Following this line of discussion, Robert Wistrich claims that “Zweig leaves out a great deal when he ignores the many examples of mass suffering, major social or national conflicts, and radical challenges to the State in this pre-1914 idyll” (63). Especially, from this perspective, it is quite frustrating to observe Zweig’s leniency toward antisemitism and his mild treatment of one of its instigators, Carl Lueger—who would become an inspiration for Adolf Hitler—: “[S]elbst als Lueger als Führer der antisemitischen Partei Bürgermeister der Stadt wurde, änderte sich im privaten Verkehr nicht das Mindeste, und ich persönlich muß bekennen, weder in der Schule noch auf der Universität noch in der Literatur jemals die geringste Hemmung oder Mißachtung als Jude erfahren zu haben” (*WvG* 510). Although the raw material seems to be there for making connections or suggesting explanations for certain historical processes, Zweig insists on breaking up the lines that make up these historical continuities. Thus, albeit recognizing the antisemitic lineage going from Lueger to Hitler, as well as their similar strategies to gain a significant body of followers from the lower middle class, Zweig establishes a clear distinction between the two:

Aber die ganze Vulgarisierung und Brutalisierung der heutigen Politik, der grauenhafte Rückfall unseres Jahrhunderts zeigt sich gerade im Vergleich der beiden Gestalten. Karl Lueger [...] konnte populär sprechen, war vehement und witzig, aber selbst in den heftigsten Reden—oder solchen, die man zu jenen Zeiten als heftig empfand [...]. Gegen seine Gegner bewahrte er—unanfechtbar und bescheiden in seinem Privatleben—immer eine gewisse Noblesse, und sein offizieller Antisemitismus hat ihn nie gehindert, seinen früheren jüdischen Freunden wohlgesinnt und gefällig zu bleiben. Als seine Bewegung schließlich den Wiener Gemeinderat eroberte und er [...] zum Bürgermeister ernannt wurde, blieb seine Stadtverwaltung tadellos gerecht und sogar vorbildlich demokratisch; die Juden, die vor diesem Triumph der antisemitischen Partei gezittert hatten, lebten ebenso gleichberechtigt und angesehen weiter. (*WvG* 1076-1087)¹⁸⁷

Bearing this in mind, Wistrich contends, “[t]he innocent reader of *The World of Yesterday* would scarcely realize that Vienna was the only capital in Europe governed by an openly antisemitic party” (63). And it becomes a harder-to-swallow pill if we take into account that the above quoted passages happen to be written by a Jewish exile. In sum, there is great consensus among Zweigian scholars that the historical discourse of *Die Welt von Gestern* is ‘flawed’. As Georg Iggers claims, “[i]f the book is inadequate as an autobiography, it is even more so as an intellectual or cultural, or even literary history of *fin-de-siècle* or early twentieth-century Europe. This world cannot be understood without reference to the political context which accompanied its crises” (4).¹⁸⁸ After acknowledging the validity of these accusations, we still would like to pose the question:

¹⁸⁷ In reference to Zweig’s discussion of Hitler, Georg Iggers argues that “[o]ut of this normalcy, Hitler, as we saw, seems to come from nowhere; there is little of an attempt in *The World of Yesterday* to trace his antecedents. He does not explore the roots of Hitler in the intellectual world of the 1920s, in its political or social settings. [...] Only when this freedom is restricted, when he is cut off from his public in the Hitler years, does Zweig become aware of the dimensions of the catastrophe” (6).

¹⁸⁸ Equally, Iggers tells us that “[t]he world of security, which he portrays in his initial chapter, was already deeply threatened in the nineteenth century. It is less the world of yesterday, of his youth, that he describes than an earlier world. Zweig is very little aware of the tensions which mark Austrian society and politics in his youth” (4). For a critique of *Die Welt von Gestern* that addresses the issue of (mis)representation, see: Leser, Norbert. “Der zeitgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Werkes von Stefan Zweig.” *Stefan Zweig Heute*, edited by Mark H. Gelber, New York & Berne, Peter Lang, 1987, pp. 10-24.

Is there anything else to say about *Die Welt von Gestern* after having undermined its value in terms of historical representation?

Many stop here. Judgement has been passed on Zweig's memoirs. Once the shortcomings of his narrative have been listed, there is no attempt to 'explain' them, to contextualize them beyond—apparently preestablished—generic conventions and reading expectations. Against those analyses, the aim of this section is to give a new hermeneutic direction to Zweig's work by discussing it from an ethical perspective. As I will attempt to demonstrate, there is an alternative reading of Zweig's memoirs which does not assume that Zweig's aim was to accurately reproduce the history of Europe from the last decades of the nineteenth century up to 1939, but which, instead, considers the text as the ultimate legacy of its author, a text devised to transfer to his future readers his commitment to a set of ethical values and an idea of the world (*Weltanschauung*). As we have already mentioned in first chapter of this dissertation, Zweig asserts in the prologue to his memoirs that, having witnessed the end of an epoch that had formed and reared his generation, his duty was to rescue as much as possible of that (already) lost world (*WvG* 22), giving the text an existential turn and orienting the narrative towards the future. Self-writing, and through it the transmission of one's legacy for the coming generations, becomes an act of commitment. Towards the end of the autobiography, after describing the increasing difficulties he encounters for travelling abroad, Zweig reflects that “[a]ber nur, wenn man diese kleinen Symptome festhält, wird eine spätere Zeit den richtigen klinischen Befund der geistigen Verhältnisse und der geistigen Verstörung aufzeichnen können, die unsere Welt zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen ergriffen hat” (*WvG* 6462).

We could argue that Zweig imagines his future readership, adopting the role of the historian and reconstructing (a portion of) the past through his work. Despite the factual lacunae in political and social terms, there is a message to be conveyed. *Die Welt von*

Gestern is somehow directed at 'eternity', creating the possibility of recovery and (re-)appropriation of a 'spiritual' legacy that might have been otherwise lost. In this regard, Zweig resembles his biographical subjects, in that he situates himself on the side of the defeated; he is the last member of a saga of lost voices. As he writes in *Erasmus*, he knows that the forces of reason, albeit being momentarily marginalized by violence and fanaticism, will come back triumphantly and that is when his voice/message will speak again to those willing to listen: "Es ist das Schicksal jedes Fanatismus, daß er sich selbst überspielt. Die Vernunft, sie, die ewige und still geduldige, kann warten und beharren. Manchmal, wenn die anderen trunken toben, muß sie schweigen und verstummen. Aber ihre Zeit kommt, immer kommt sie wieder" (*ERASMUS* 167). Not coincidentally, Zweig projects in one of his last historical alter-egos, Cicero, this act of passing down one's legacy through a single masterpiece:

Es ist sein politisches, sein moralisches Testament, das Marcus Tullius Cicero im Herbst des Jahres 44 und zugleich im Herbst seines Lebens in Puteoli aufzeichnet. Daß dieses Traktat über das Verhältnis des Individuums zum Staate ein Testament ist, das endgiltige Wort eines abgedankten und aller öffentlichen Leidenschaften entsagenden Menschen, beweist schon die Ansprache dieser Schrift. 'De officiis' ist an seinen Sohn gerichtet. ("CICERO" 239)¹⁸⁹

This is how Cicero becomes the first defender of humanity, this is how his deeds are immortalized as a 'spiritual' legacy. Similarly, other critics have pointed out the need to reorient our assessment of *Die Welt von Gestern* in order to move beyond the abovementioned hermeneutical deadlock. For instance, Klaus Weissenberger proposes to read Zweig's memoirs—together with his historical biographies—from the perspective of *Kunstprosa*: "Zweig's autobiography is often criticized for various reasons. Generally

¹⁸⁹ On *Die Welt von Gestern* as Zweig's testament or legacy, Wei Hu asserts: "Unter diesen Umständen *Die Welt von Gestern* war in vieler Hinsicht ein Testament, in dem Stefan Zweig eine Bestandaufnahme durch seine Zeit und sein Leben machte und dadurch die humanistische Geisteshaltung, den Pazifismus und den Europa-Gedanken and die Nachwelt zu vermitteln hoffte" (66).

speaking, most critics view it solely from the perspective of factual information and consequently point out lacunae and nostalgic misrepresentations. Very few judge it from the point of view of 'Kunstprosa', which is constituted by an aesthetic truth rather than a documentary one" (138). Quoting some letters written by Zweig, Weissenberger approaches the text as an act of witnessing and transmission,¹⁹⁰ classifying it as an 'elegiac' autobiography, insofar as it "distances itself from the present, in contrast to the 'picaresque' type, that attempts to distance itself from the past" (140).¹⁹¹

We could contend that Zweig is running away from the present while trying to make sense out of it. And we could add that, at the same time that he plunges into the past, he hopes to convey a message to the future. In my reading, here lies the temporal complexity of Zweig's autobiography, in that it addresses several time frames at the same time—which should warn us against reading it exclusively from a 'historical' angle. In this direction, Rüdiger Görner argues that Zweig's rhetorical exercise is underpinned by a simultaneous looking at the past and the future: "Es trieb ihn um, den durch seine letzten Lebensjahre Gejagten, das Ringen um Zukunft. Zuletzt glaubte er sie in Brasilien gefunden zu haben. Wie viele Schriftsteller haben es am Ende gesucht, so schwierig ihre Lebensbedingungen oder Seelenzustände auch gewesen waren, diese Kommende, Künftige, Werdende" (*SZ. Formen einer Sprachkunst* 38).

Taking all this into account, in the next sections we will carry out a reassessment of the historical discourse of Zweig's memoirs in order to discuss how the narrative is

¹⁹⁰ In a letter from May 18th, 1940 addressed to Max Herrmann-Neiße, we read that: "Aus Verzweiflung schreibe ich die Geschichte meines Lebens. Ich kann nicht konzentriert arbeiten. So will ich wenigstens ein Dokument hinterlassen, was wir geglaubt, wofür wir gelebt haben; ein Zeugnis ist heute vielleicht wichtiger als ein Kunstwerk. Nie ist eine Generation so geprüft, so gepeinigt worden wie die unsere. Sagen wir es der nächsten zur Warnung" (Zweig, *Briefe an Freunde*, 312).

¹⁹¹ In this classification of *Die Welt von Gestern*, Weissenberger follows Jean Starobinski's terminology in "Der Stil der Autobiographie." *Die Autobiographie: Zu Form und Geschichte einer literarischen Gattung*, edited by Günter Niggel, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgemeinschaft, 1989, pp. 200-213.

shaped—oriented, molded—to fit its role as an ‘ethical repository’ of Zweig’s European *Weltanschauung*. In doing so, we will use some of the labels that are normally used ‘against’ Zweig, especially the concepts of ‘utopia’ and ‘nostalgia’, which—whereas they are considered negative when applied to historical accounts—might become ‘emancipating’ and thought-provoking when they can be applied to narratives of resistance that question the status quo and attempt to forward some sort of alternative. Before getting there, though, we will start by looking at the context production of *Die Welt von Gestern*—exile—from an emotional/psychological perspective in our efforts to unlock the temporal paradox of Zweig’s last act of commitment.

2.1.1. Writing in the Apocalypse: The Mental and Experiential Framework of the End of The World

If we assume that, in a way, this dissertation—in its attempt to analyze Zweig’s European project—is responding to a demand formulated in *Die Welt von Gestern* not to forget, a petition to recover from oblivion/incomprehension an (‘spiritual/ethical’) message—and therefore we are acting as Zweig’s intended readers; if we assume that we are, in fact, ascertaining its orientation towards the future in our discussion of the potential of Zweigian ethics from the twenty-first century Barcelona (Spain): How can we explain that the ‘protagonist’ of Zweig’s story—and what has fascinated countless of readers—is the (glorious) past, what is no longer there and can only be evoked through memory? In my reading, I contend that in order to try to formulate an answer to this ‘riddle’, we should consider first the context of production of *Die Welt von Gestern*.

As it might be expected, we are not the first to try to contextualize/explore Stefan Zweig’s memoirs—as well as his life and the rest of his work—from the perspective of

exile, both in literary and experiential terms.¹⁹² In fact, even Zweig himself reflected on the topic, on the effects of exile on the self, throughout his work, ranging from enthusiastic appraisals to depressing realizations. For instance, as we have seen in our analysis of *Cicero*, exile is first discussed as a positive, creative, force, an opportunity to reinvent oneself and focus, in the case of the Roman orator, on what really matters, since “[j]ede Form des Exils wird für einen geistigen Menschen Antrieb zur inneren Sammlung, und Cicero begegnet dieses gesegnete Mißgeschick in dem besten und glücklichsten Augenblick” (“CICERO” 230). However, in the same narrative, as the individual loses progressively his strength, he can no longer face a life of persecution plagued with constant toils, and his view of exile changes radically, becoming a force that pushes the individual to the edge and forces him to meet his ‘fate’. Even though both Cicero and Zweig could have endlessly run away from the world and themselves, a mysterious force makes them realize that they have run out of time: “[W]er einmal die Trostlosigkeit des Exils gekannt, spürt selbst in der Gefahr die Wollust der heimischen Erde und die Unwürdigkeit eines Lebens in ewiger Flucht. Ein geheimnisvoller Wille jenseits der Vernunft und sogar wider die Vernunft zwingt ihn, sich dem Schicksal zu stellen, das ihn erwartet” (“CICERO” 249).

Following the same line of discussion, in *Fouché* we find a comparable trajectory in Zweig’s appreciation of exile. Opening the fourth chapter, dedicated to the years 1799-1802 (“Minister des Direktoriums und des Konsulats”), we encounter an ode to exile of sorts:

¹⁹² See, among others: Prochnik, George. *The Impossible Exile. Stefan Zweig at the End of the World*. New York, Other Press, 2014.; Gelber, Mark H., and Klaus Zelewitz, editors. *Exil und Suche nach Weltfrieden*. Riverside, Ariadne Press, 1995.; Hu, Wei. *Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Welt: die kulturelle und die poetische Konstruktion autobiographischer Texte im Exil; am Beispiel von Stefan Zweig, Heinrich Mann und Alfred Döblin*. Lang, 2006; Eckl, Marlen. “Literatur des Exils.” *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 86-102; Prater, Donald. “Stefan Zweig.” *Exile: The Writer’s Experience* John M. Spalek and Robert F. Bell. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982, pp. 311-32.

Hat schon jemand den Hymnus des Exils gedichtet, dieser schicksalsschöpferischen Macht, die im Sturz den Menschen erhöht, im harten Zwange der Einsamkeit neu und in anderer Ordnung die erschütterten Kräfte der Seele sammelt? Immer haben die Künstler das Exil nur angeklagt als scheinbare Störung des Aufstiegs, als nutzloses Intervall, als grausame Unterbrechung. Aber der Rhythmus der Natur will solche gewaltsamen Zäsuren. Denn nur wer um die Tiefe weiß, kennt das ganze Leben. Erst der Rückschlag gibt dem Menschen seine volle vorstoßende Kraft. (FOUCHÉ 1239)

In not so many words, exile is seen as a creative, salutary interruption of one's life, a forced retreat into the self, out of the world and away from a position of comfort. It is, ideally, a process of displacement that affords the creative gaze a certain distance from the hubbub of daily life and current affairs. In terms of creativity, Zweig continues his musing by proclaiming the necessity of exile:

Der schöpferische Genius, er vor allem braucht diese zeitweilig erzwungene Einsamkeit, um von der Tiefe der Verzweiflung, von der Ferne des Ausgestoßenseins den Horizont und die Höhe seiner wahren Aufgabe zu ermessen. Die bedeutsamsten Botschaften der Menschheit, sie sind aus dem Exil gekommen, die Schöpfer der großen Religionen, Moses, Christus, Mohammed, Buddha, alle mußten sie erst eingehen in das Schweigen der Wüste, in das Nicht-unter-Menschen-Sein, ehe sie entscheidendes Wort erheben konnten. ("CICERO" 1249)

Even for individuals whose actions are directed to the lower spheres of reality—politics—, as Zweig argues, it helps them gain a wider picture, an outside perspective, provided that it is temporary. If one gets used to his/her will being fulfilled without interruption, obstacle or defeat, his/her work will rarely attain its highest value:

[E]rst im Mißerfolg lernt der Künstler seine wahre Beziehung zum Werk, erst an der Niederlage der Feldherr seine Fehler, erst an der Ungnade der Staatsmann die wahre politische Übersicht. [...] Harte Lehre, aber Lehre und Lernen ist jedes Exil: dem Weichlichen knetet es den Willen neu zusammen, den Zögernden macht es

entschlossen, den Harten noch härter. Immer ist dem wahrhaft Starken das Exil keine Minderung, sondern nur Kräftigung seiner Kraft. (FOUCHÉ 1259)

In brief, exile is presented as a positive experience. Following the rhetoric of defeat that we have amply discussed in Chapter I, it might be considered a temporary setback that turns, in the long run, into a victory, a sort of 'spiritual' conquest that fortifies both the individual and his/her work. However, as happened with Cicero, when the times of political and personal decay come for Fouché, his last banishment is seen as a tragedy, a humiliation. In his last years, Fouché becomes a pariah, unwanted by both his mother country and his European friends, his last exile in Prague will turn him into a shadow of his former (powerful) self: "So schleicht sich, ohne rechte Einladung, ohne Ehre, bedeutend mehr geduldet als gebeten, Joseph Fouché von Dresden nach Prag hinüber, um dort Aufenthalt zu nehmen: sein viertes Exil, sein letztes und grausamstes, hat begonnen" (FOUCHÉ 3425). Old, hated by everyone, expelled from everywhere, and cheated by his wife, exile is seen with different eyes.

In this light, we can observe a similar trajectory in Zweig's own self-narrative, in *Die Welt von Gestern*. Already in the first page of the text—and what seems in retrospect an exercise in wishful thinking—Zweig frames his work in the setting of exile, which provides freedom to the artist/individual and impartiality to his production. Exile is not seen first as a cause of complaint: "Aber ich beklage das nicht; gerade der Heimatlose wird in einem neuen Sinne frei, und nur der mit nichts mehr Verbundene braucht auf nichts mehr Rücksicht zu nehmen. So hoffe ich wenigstens eine Hauptbedingung jeder rechtschaffenen Zeitdarstellung erfüllen zu können: Aufrichtigkeit und Unbefangenheit" (WvG 56). However, as the narrative nears the present of the author, and general reflections on exile are turned into more detailed, embodied accounts of personal experience, Zweig's musings take another turn. For instance, when in chapter

“Sonnenuntergang” he tells an anecdote concerning the Russian writer Maxim Gorky, back then living in Italy, Zweig is quick to clarify that “Gorki irrte, wenn er Sorrent ein Exil nannte. Er konnte doch jeden Tag heimkehren und ist auch tatsächlich heimgekehrt. Er war nicht verbannt mit seinen Büchern, [...] nicht wie wir es heute sind” (WvG 365).

Equally, when discussing his first years of (still) voluntary exile in England after leaving his Salzburg home, he reflects that “[n]och hatte nicht jener grauenhafte, jener keinem, der ihn nie am eigenen Leibe erlebt, erklärbare Zustand der Vaterlandslosigkeit begonnen, dieses nervenzerwühlende Gefühl, mit offenen, wachen Augen im Leeren zu taumeln und zu wissen, daß man überall, wo man Fuß gefaßt hat, in jedem Augenblick zurückgestoßen werden kann. Aber ich stand erst am ersten Anfang” (WvG 415). As it is hinted at in these quotes, it still has to become harder, Zweig still has to become a refugee after the Austrian *Anschluss*: “Über Nacht war ich abermals eine Stufe hinuntergeglitten. Gestern noch ausländischer Gast und gewissermaßen Gentleman, der hier sein internationales Einkommen verausgabte und seine Steuern bezahlte, war ich Emigrant geworden, ein ‘Refugee’” (WvG 436). It is later in Zweig’s exile that the wishful thinking expressed in the prologue crumbles under the heavy burden of a condition that is no longer chosen or temporary. Without freedom, without a place to go back to, the subject feels uprooted, displaced:

Jede Form von Emigration verursacht an sich schon unvermeidlicherweise eine Art von Gleichgewichtsstörung. Man verliert—auch dies muß erlebt sein, um verstanden zu werden—von seiner geraden Haltung, wenn man nicht die eigene Erde unter sich hat, man wird unsicherer, gegen sich selbst mißtrauischer. Und ich zögere nicht zu bekennen, daß seit dem Tage, da ich mit eigentlich fremden Papieren oder Pässen leben mußte, ich mich nie mehr ganz als mit mir zusammengehörig empfand. Etwas von der natürlichen Identität mit meinem ursprünglichen und eigentlichen Ich blieb für immer zerstört. (WvG 438)

We could conclude that two vectors seem to define Zweig's experience of exile: duration—temporary or permanent—and freedom of movement. As Robert S. Wistrich remarks, “after the Austrian *Anschluss* of March 1938, Stefan Zweig could no longer be so enamoured by the bitter fruits of an enforced rather than a freely chosen exilic fate” (74). In the end, a negative experience of exile wins the day and informs the writing of Zweig's memoirs. In this sense, according to Johannes Evelein, exile entails a process of self-estrangement, a break with time and space and with any sort of historical continuity: “In exile, the meaning of life opens up to existential scrutiny, especially at a time deemed to be the end of time, at the edge of the abyss which marks the death of civilization, or so it seems, and the dawn of an age of brutality” (131). Thus, the subject undergoes a crisis of identity whereby his previous existence does not seem to belong to himself anymore (Grapin 10).

Finally, it is worth remarking—following the connections between exile and existentialism drawn by Henri R. Paucker—¹⁹³ that exiles tend to follow a double movement: “a dissolution of ties to the world as a result of the crisis of the rational faculty, and the plunge back into the world in the form of commitment” (91). Thus, exile is characterized first by a retreat, a plunge into isolation, and then by the need to commit oneself, to find the voice of reason amid the irrationality and chaos of ‘reality’. In the case of Zweig, and in contrast to many existentialist writers, his need to express his commitment did not take him to the world of politics or the articulation of an ideology that could counteract national socialism. Rather, he looked to—the/his own—past for the restoration of both reason and sense, for salvaging the remnants of the dream of a better world. As Donald Prater recounts, for many of his contemporaries the end of Zweig's

¹⁹³ “Exile literature is the literature of those who, voluntarily or involuntarily, were exposed to the point of departure of the French existentialists [alienation, ostracism, state of crisis] in the most direct and brutal manner. Exile is the basic existential situation of man par excellence” (Paucker 90).

exile seemed incomprehensible: “That such a man [a restless traveler, whose work profits from it] should succumb to despair and take his own life when exile became a necessity and movement no longer his free choice was a paradox to his contemporaries, and even today seems at first hard to explain” (“Exile” 311). Our reflections do not attempt to further elucidate the mystery, but insist on recreating an experiential framework for the writing of Zweig’s memoirs; a framework that is marked by an existential crisis, a detachment from oneself and the present, and the necessity to turn to the past in order to find meaning and transcendence to one’s existence.

Exile as the End of the World

And yet, this only explains why Zweig turns away from the present, not necessarily why he turned to the past—instead of to the future—to save his legacy from the abyss of oblivion. In this light, there is another concept that I believe can help us further understand the orientation of Zweig’s narrative: the experience of exile as the end of the world. In this regard, other commentators have noted the apocalyptic qualities of Zweig’s memoirs. For instance, Evelein claims that “Stefan Zweig imbues [in his memoirs] his departure from Salzburg with apocalyptic finality. He *knows* at the moment of his exile that the world he once called his own is irretrievably lost. He described his separation from his world, from the center of meaning, as irreparable” (120). Suffice it to say that the way we understand the end of the world in our analysis is, on the one hand, symbolic and, on the other, as a personal—emotional and psychologic—experience/perception. In any case, we are not discussing a literal/material apocalypse, but the perception that the/a world (*Welt*) as we know it is coming to its end. It is in this sense that both an existential reading of exile and the consideration of *Die Welt von Gestern* as a product of an ‘apocalypse mentality’ can be considered as a part of the same larger psychological/emotional state in which Zweig writes his autobiography.

From this viewpoint, Georges-Arthur Goldsmidt argues that one of the factors that makes possible the combination of such multifarious elements under a single narrative is the fact they are united by the same apocalypse (84). For his part, Rüdiger Görner comments that, facing the end of the world in his exile, the past became for Zweig the only place where he could survive (*SZ. Formen einer Sprachkunst* 43). That would explain, in a way, why Zweig looked back instead of forward to convey his last message. We will come back to this later, but first I would like to closely examine some passages of Zweig's memoirs where a certain rhetoric of the apocalypse is felt with greater intensity. In brief, it is my contention that the mental framework of the end of the world affects two main aspects of the narrative: its temporal orientation and its structure. As it is generally well known for those familiar with the Austrian writer's memoirs, in his attempt to justify in the prologue both the writing of the text and its structure, Zweig alludes to his several lives or existences. Not coincidentally, as Donald Prater and Oliver Matuschek discuss in their respective biographies of Zweig, before deciding the final title of *Die Welt von Gestern*, Zweig considered another option: 'My three lives'. In this respect, Zweig tells us that "[s]o verschieden ist mein Heute von jedem meiner Gestern, meine Aufstiege und meine Abstürze, daß mich manchmal dünkt, ich hätte nicht bloß eine, sondern mehrere, völlig voneinander verschiedene Existenzen gelebt" (*WvG* 68). And he goes on to claim that "die Welt, in der ich aufgewachsen bin, und die von heute und die zwischen beiden sondern sich immer mehr für mein Gefühl zu völlig verschiedenen Welten. [...] Und ein geheimer Instinkt in mir gibt ihnen recht: zwischen unserem Heute, unserem Gestern und Vorgestern sind alle Brücken abgebrochen" (*WvG* 79).

Bearing this in mind, I contend that Zweig makes it clear that the context of production of his memoirs—the writer's present—represents a sort of threshold between an old world that is

being/has been destroyed and another that has not yet been born: “Auch heute stehen wir abermals an einer Wende, an einem Abschluß und einem neuen Beginn. Ich handle darum durchaus nicht absichtslos, wenn ich diesen Rückblick auf mein Leben mit einem bestimmten Datum vorläufig enden lasse. Denn jener Septembertag 1939 zieht den endgültigen Schlußstrich unter die Epoche, die uns Sechzigjährige geformt und erzogen hat” (WvG 123). We may infer from these words that, in exile, it has been increasingly harder for Zweig to make sense of the present, to understand the transformation that his beloved Europe is going through, and so he needs to stop his narrative at the last recognizable point of anchorage, at the symbolic day his ‘spiritual’ homeland has entered once again the whirlwind of self-destruction. Following this direction, we could argue that Zweig conceptualizes his life as the sum of several existences that end abruptly due to exceptional cataclysms—notably the two world wars. In fact, this philosophy of life—this way of dealing with collective traumas—is in line with the words from Rolland at the end of *Jean-Christophe*, which Zweig duly reproduced in *Rolland*: “Ich selbst nehme Abschied von dem, was meine Seele war; ich werfe sie hinter mich wie eine leere Hülle. Das Leben ist eine Folge von Toden und Auferstehungen. Laß uns sterben, Christof, auf daß wir wieder geboren werden” (ROLLAND 2368). To further reinforce these intertextual echoes, we also read in said work that “[f]ast alle Künstler erkannten ebenso wie er vor dem apokalyptischen Jahr den europäischen Bruderkrieg als ein Verbrechen, eine Schmach unserer Kultur, mit ganz wenigen Ausnahmen waren sie Pazifisten oder meinten es zu sein” (ROLLAND 2558).¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ On the description of war as an/the apocalypse, we read in *Erasmus* how the same eschatological rhetoric emerges to describe the historical context the humanist of Rotterdam had to live through: “[E]r [der Fanatismus] will nur brennen und lodern, seine aufgestaute Haßkraft entladen, und gerade in solchen apokalyptischen Weltstunden des Massenwahnes zersprengt am häufigsten der Dämon des Krieges die Ketten der Vernunft und stürzt sich frei und lustvoll über die Welt” (ERASMUS 115). Likewise, when Jules Romain tells us about his encounter with his close friend Stefan Zweig after the First World War he emphasizes the apocalyptic nature of the event: “Nous avions l’impression de nous retrouver après la fin du monde, et après avoir vécu cette fin du monde chacun de notre côté. Nous nous demandions si nous saurions encore parler la même langue, si nous saurions faire en termes comparables le bilan de notre expérience, si quelque abîme plus profond que nos pensées n’allait pas nous séparer malgré tout” (48).

Bearing that in mind, and going back to *Die Welt von Gestern*, we observe that whenever the narrative reaches a breaking point, the eschatological dimension of the text emerges. At the beginning of chapter twelve—'Heimkehr nach Österreich'—, which marks the beginning of Zweig's second life after the First World War, the narrator witnesses, at Buchs train station, in the Swiss border, the symbolic end of Austro-Hungarian Empire, watching Emperor Karl and Empress Zita abandon the country by train. The scene is described as follows:

Die Lokomotive zog mit einem starken Ruck an, als müßte auch sie sich Gewalt antun, langsam entfernte sich der Zug. Die Beamten sahen ihm respektvoll nach. Dann kehrten sie mit jener gewissen Verlegenheit, wie man sie bei Leichenbegängnissen beobachtet, in ihre Amtslokale zurück. In diesem Augenblick war die fast tausendjährige Monarchie erst wirklich zu Ende. Ich wußte, es war ein anderes Österreich, eine andere Welt, in die ich zurückkehrte. (WvG 318-319)

Similarly, at the end of chapter fourteen—"Sonnenuntergang"—, Zweig starts to muse—just when he turns fifty on November 28th, 1931—about the turn his life is about to take after his Salzburg's house is searched for weapons and he decides to leave everything behind and move to England. He has not told us about it yet but he creates tension by anticipating that life-changing episode that will throw him into uncharted territories and force him to start anew: "Daß ausgelöscht werden könnte ohne Spur alles, was dreißig und vierzig Jahre beharrlich geleistet, daß all dies Leben, aufgebaut, fest und scheinbar unerschütterlich wie es vor mir stand, in sich zerfallen könnte und daß ich nahe dem Gipfel gezwungen sein würde, mit schon leicht ermüdenden Kräften und verstörter Seele noch einmal von Anfang zu beginnen" (WvG 379). Finally, at the outbreak of the Second World War, Zweig tells us that "[e]s war wieder Krieg, ein Krieg, furchtbarer und weitausgreifender, als je zuvor ein Krieg auf Erden gewesen. Abermals war eine Zeit zu

Ende, abermals begann eine neue Zeit" (WvG 461). Worlds that collapse, lives that start from scratch, death and rebirth. That is how Zweig frames his life-narrative. This is how he chooses to transmit his personal experience of the vast transformations and upheavals that mark the history of Europe in the first half the twentieth century. Veering towards a more positive note, Zweig ends up reflecting that no matter how strong the forces of destruction are, while the subject lives there is always hope at reconstruction: "Etwas anderes, eine neue Zeit begann, aber wie viele Höllen und Fegefeuer zu ihr hin waren noch zu durchschreiten. [...] Aber jeder Schatten ist im letzten doch auch Kind des Lichts, und nur wer Helles und Dunkles, Krieg und Frieden, Aufstieg und Niedergang erfahren, nur der hat wahrhaft gelebt" (WvG 463).

Having said that, and although we could these passages above as a mere rhetorical or stylistic device designed to convey to the reader the (symbolic) magnitude of certain events (i.e. the war as the apocalypse), what I would like to suggest is, rather, that we approach them as evidence of the emotional and psychological state that informs the writing of Zweig's memoirs. In other works, I contend that an ontological or existential reading could be far more enlightening. For this purpose, I would like to incorporate to our discussion the reflections of the relatively unknown—at least among literary critics and theorists—Catalan psychiatrist Francesc Tosquelles (1912-1994), who is considered to be one of the most influential figures in the development of French and European critical thinking in the second part of the twentieth century, the forefather of what has been called 'institutional psychotherapy' and, among other things, Frantz Fanon's mentor during the latter's research stay at the psychiatric hospital of Saint-Alban from 1954 to 1956. Tosquelles, who strived all his life to (literally) tear down the walls between the asylum and society, between the labels of sanity and madness, wrote his doctoral

dissertation in 1947 on the topic of the 'catastrophic' experience (*Erlebnis*)¹⁹⁵ of the end of the world, taking as a case study the life and writings of the French poet Gerard de Nerval, who underwent several psychotic episodes throughout his life until his suicide in 1855.

The complexity of Tosquelles' thought—at the crossroads between psychoanalysis and Marxism—cannot be easily summarized.¹⁹⁶ Suffice it to say that the way he analyzes the effects, on the ailing subject, of going through the 'experience' of the end of the world sheds an interesting light on the Zweigian 'case'. This does not mean that Zweig's mental health at the time can be equated to Nerval's, even if Zweig's bouts of depression were not a secret to anyone.¹⁹⁷ In any case, that is not our point nor Tosquelles', for, as it had already been said, the latter believed that the distance between folly and sanity was an

¹⁹⁵ By using the concept of '*Erlebnis*' Tosquelles wants to pinpoint the difference between a mere event and what he calls "l'expérience vécue", which refers to an event that becomes 'transcendental' for the (re)configuration of the self. Experiencing the end of the world is thus an existential event: "Landsberg a montré que l'expérience empirique a un caractère d'événement mécanique. L'expérience vécue, par contre, est transcendante. L'événement passe. L'expérience vécue dure et s'approfondit; sa profondeur est illimitée. L'expérience vécue est en même temps l'expérience de nous et de quelque chose qui n'est pas nous. Le 'je' que l'on trouve par l'expérience vécue apparaît toujours comme un 'je' différent de celui qui vit des événements de la vie quotidienne. [...] L'expérience vécue suppose une révélation du moi et du monde qui, même non formulée, n'en constitue pas moins la charpente de nos notions et de nos pensées. C'est par là que l'expérience vécue dépasse la conscience stricte pour être un phénomène existentiel" (47-48).

¹⁹⁶ For a contextualization of Tosquelles' work and thought, see: Comelles, Josep Maria. "Forgotten Paths: Culture and Ethnicity in Catalan Mental Health Policies (1900-39)." *History of psychiatry*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2010, pp. 406-23.; Faugeras, Patrick. *L'ombre portée de François Tosquelles*. Paris, Érès, 2007.; García Siso, Andrés. "El Dr. Francesc Tosquelles i Llauredó: Posición del autor dentro de la Psiquiatría catalana anterior a la Guerra Civil y la proyección de esta posición en su obra posterior." *Revista de la Asociación Española de Neuropsiquiatría*, vol. 13, 1993, pp. 195-202.; Labad, Antoni. "Théorie et pratique chez Tosquelles." *Revue Institutions*, vol. 31, 2002.; Robcis, Camille. "François Tosquelles and the Psychiatric Revolution in Postwar France." *Constellations*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2016, pp. 212-22.

¹⁹⁷ For a reading of Zweig's work and life from a psychological/medical perspective, see: Araújo Lima, Claudio de. *Ascensión y caída de Stefan Zweig*. Madrid, Alento, 2012. For instance, this is how Araújo diagnoses Zweig's psychological state in his last years of exile, characterized according to him by a crisis that was simply one more instance, although exacerbated by the circumstances, of his unstable emotional structure: "La crisis depresiva que sufrió a la edad del climaterio no representa nada esencialmente nuevo en su manera-de-ser. Bajo el punto de vista cualitativo se reduce, en última instancia, [a] la ampliación excesiva de las muchas y habituales oscilaciones de su dinámica afectiva, que explicaban por qué este hombre era, ora expansivo y exuberante, en las fases que correspondían a su producción artística, ora deprimido e inseguro de sí, como confiesa insistentemente en su biografía" (96).

artificial construct, that the so-called 'normal' subject also could show symptoms of pathology in his/her 'normal' life.

Having said that, it is interesting to note that, according to Tosquelles, the 'experience' of end of the world—where both emotional and intellectual factors converge—, while it brings pain to the subject, it often also opens the possibility for the reinvention of the self.¹⁹⁸ While in many occasions, such as Zweig's or Nerval's, this experience may end in suicide, it is also true that it contains a potential for rebirth, a factor that, as we have already observed, is present in Zweig's rhetoric of the apocalypse. Additionally, for a subject in such circumstances, Tosquelles argues that the past becomes a place of 'redemption'. In other words, when the individual cannot, because of his mental state, imagine the/his/her future, the act of remembrance, of looking at the past, acquires a distinctive temporal structure, that is to say, instead of facing an already written or static history, the subject's memories are animated by an enabling and regenerating past, where memories become desires, where historical realities become historical possibilities, where history becomes myth: "Le souvenir dans l'existence esthétique prend une structure temporelle spéciale. Il est un 'souvenir agissant' qui ne se place pas dans le passé mort mais se change en désir pour s'inscrire dans l'avenir. Le souvenir se transforme [...] en espoir" (149).¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ It must be noted that Tosquelles bases his reading of Nerval on the concept of 'aesthetic existence' developed by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, whereby the subject experiences a synthesis/confusion between the self and the world. The boundaries between what is real and what is possible are no longer clear; the self is looking for a reaffirmation of his identity and his connection with the world: "Il s'agit d'un détournement de l'attention, dans une certaine mesure dirigée. Le réel se résout dans le possible, ou mieux encore, le réel apparaît dans les mêmes droits que le possible" (*Vécu* 111). All in all, "[l]a possibilité est préférée à la réalité; il s'agit d'une substitution poétique, d'un jeu de mirages, avec bouleversement de la structure temporelle. Conversion de l'histoire en mythe. Monde sans *réaffirmation*" (114).

¹⁹⁹ In the same line of discussion, Tosquelles argues that "[l]a reviviscence du passé n'a pas la structure du souvenir 'normal', elle éclot chez le poète en tant que tâche-à-assurer-dans-l'avenir, en tant que perspective du futur. Elle n'est pas un phénomène isolé dans le vécu du poète mais forme partie d'un changement global où toutes les conduites et pensées s'inscrivent en tant que possibilités dans un mon où le moi historique lui-même est une possibilité de plus, où il vit une infinité de moments dans une toute puissance que le poète décrit sans camouflages" (195).

In this sense, and in order to counteract some traditional readings of *Die Welt von Gestern*, we could contend that the reconstruction of fin-de-siècle Vienna in Zweig's memoirs might be an attempt to explore the healing potentialities contained in the recreation of the past,²⁰⁰ which would explain why Zweig invested his utopian efforts in the articulation of a personal and collective history, why he employed his future-oriented energies in the fictional reconstruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. From this perspective—from Zweig's perspective—the writing of *Die Welt von Gestern* would not be about getting it right, in terms of factuality and scientific criteria, but about making the most of the only (temporal) space where desires and possibilities could still be projected. As a final remark, we should note that the idea that Zweig could not imagine anymore a future for himself 'as a European' or 'for Europe as a community' is also reinforced by the writing, around the same dates, of his essay on Brazil titled *Brasilien. Ein Land der Zukunft*. In this case, as we will analyze later on, the displacement of Zweig's utopia does not affect the temporal dimension of the narrative but the setting—the *locus*—where it is inscribed. When the sum of 'future' plus 'Europe' does not yield any results, one either goes for the mythical past or for the exotic 'new' world.

2.1.2. The Nostalgic Alternative?

In the previous section we have focused on the conditions of production of *Die Welt von Gestern*, creating a context whereby the past becomes an opportunity, a site for the redemption of both the subject—Zweig—and a collective project—'Europe'; it becomes a space to reconnect the self and the world at a time when the individual feels estranged both from himself and from reality. In a way, I suggest that we are now better equipped to understand why Zweig oriented his future-directed narrative towards the past, which

²⁰⁰ On the potential for healing the self through the experience of the end of the world, see Tosquelles 162-163.

would account for 1) the abovementioned 'temporal paradox' and 2) some of the cracks—shortcomings, deficiencies—of the historical discourse of the memoirs. Following this direction, and in order to further appreciate how Zweig uses the past to convey an ethical project that, for its most part, materializes in the construction of a 'past' utopia (see Bauman *Retrotopia*), I contend that we need to take into account two factors that inform Zweig's vision of the past: on the hand, nostalgia, and, on the other, his philosophy of history—which we will discuss in the next section.

For one may spare Zweig his lack of rigor, but still believe that the picture he draws of fin-de-siècle Vienna—or the pre-First World War years—is too idealistic or sentimental to be of any use/value for the twenty-first century reader. In this sense, Wistrich argues that “[t]he gilded, sanitized version that Stefan Zweig offers us of this era [...] is indeed pure nostalgia. The musical, theatrical, and *gemütlich* Vienna that is so marvelously evoked, sometimes reads to the more cynical modern eye like a dream advertisement for the Austrian tourist industry. It is hardly reliable history” (60). One may even be tempted to brand Zweig a 'conservative' who places his hopes for Europe in the ancient and long-buried Austro-Hungarian Empire. This path also leads us nowhere. However, I believe there is some truth in the characterization of Zweig's narrative as nostalgic. We just need to realign the concept towards the premises of our analysis.

Traditionally, the word 'nostalgia'—and the epithet 'nostalgic'—has been used, at least in the domain of critical history, as a derogatory term, signaling a recreation of the past that has been sugarcoated to serve a process of memorialization that, in turn, is animated by political agendas that aim to reinforce hegemonic discourses and practices.²⁰¹ In this sense, and following Frederick Jameson, a nostalgic approach to history tends to suppress any sort of critical engagement with the past by prioritizing one discourse, mostly positive, over the rest and

²⁰¹ Given the scope of this dissert, I will not discuss the meaning of 'nostalgia' from a psychoanalytic point of view, which, considering the influence of Sigmund Freud on Zweig's thought and writing, could potentially become an interesting topic of study. On the connection between nostalgia and autobiography, see: Dickinson, Hilary, and Michael Erben. "Nostalgia and autobiography: The past in the present." *Auto/Biography*, no. 14, vol. 3, 2006, pp. 223-244.

silencing certain voices that may contradict said account or at least undermine its foundations (281). Equally, Svetlana Boym points out that “[n]ostalgia too easily mates with banality, functioning not through stimulation, but by covering up the pain of loss in order to give a specific form to homesickness and to make homecoming available on request” (339). She concludes that nostalgia might be seen as “an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming, an ethical and aesthetic failure” (2). This is, in brief, what Zweig is systematically accused of, of idealizing an epoch that was far from ideal, of being oblivious to certain social and political realities that would account for the catastrophes he so tactfully portrays, of being complicit with certain processes of social amnesia. And yet, although those remarks might be accurate, Stefan Zweig’s ‘agenda’ is far from serving ‘political’ or ‘hegemonizing’ purposes. If anything, his account of the past is a counternarrative, the story a ‘failed’ utopia.

Therefore, if we insist on describing *Die Welt von Gestern* as nostalgic, we need to reconsider said term in order to unleash the (utopian) potential of Zweig’s narrative. In this direction, Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley point out the centrality of ‘loss’ in the experience of modernity and the fact that nostalgia is but a “composite feeling of loss, lack and longing” (921). They propose that “[r]ather than dismissing it as a concept, we should perhaps reconfigure it in terms a distinction between the desire to return to an earlier state or idealized past, and the desire not to return but to recognize aspects of the past as the basis for the renewal and satisfaction in the future” (921). Thus, we could distinguish between nostalgic accounts of the past that allow us to engage in a critique of the present by pointing to alternatives, missed paths and opportunities, and those that merely provide certainties in an attempt to forward ontological security at the cost of silencing dissent, repression and marginality. As the abovementioned scholars put it,

“[n]ostalgia can be both melancholic and utopian” (921), and, needless to say, I contend that our analysis must necessarily veer towards the latter.

Accordingly, I believe that the reflections on the notion of nostalgia elaborated by the literary scholar Svetlana Boym can help us complete our task, insofar as they illuminate several aspects of Zweig’s account as we have been discussing it so far. Without going any further, Boym asserts that “[n]ostalgia itself has a utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed toward the future. Sometimes nostalgia is not directed toward the past either, but rather sideways. The nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional confines of times and space” (11). In other words, nostalgia becomes the crossroads of past and future. It opens the possibility of creating ‘past’ utopias, that is to say, of articulating dreams or alternative histories that never were but could still be realized in the future. What if, instead of looking at Zweig’s ‘world of yesterday’ as an attempt to go back to a certain point in the past, we consider its potential to become a/the ‘world of tomorrow’? What if we took into account its more ‘prospective’—rather than ‘retrospective’—dimension?

However, Boym warns us, in this reappraisal of nostalgia, we should be careful with ‘unreflected’ or ‘restorative’ nostalgia, an attempt to reconstruct the lost home: “The danger of nostalgia is that it tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one. In extreme cases it can create a phantom homeland, for the sake of which one is ready to die or kill. Unreflected nostalgia breeds monsters” (12). In this sense, many readers—acting under the ‘historicity paradigm’ we have mentioned before—have confused, in my opinion, Zweig’s longing for a lost homeland—Europe—with an actual desire to restore Austro-Hungarian Empire. I contend that nothing could be further from the truth than to label Zweig a defender of the Empire as a viable option for the future of Europe as a (political) community. Rather, what matters the most about fin-de-siècle Vienna is its

symbolic potential to encapsulate Zweig's European *Weltanschauung*. In the words of Boym, "the nostalgia explored here is not always for the ancient regime or fallen empire but also for the unrealized dreams of the past and visions of the future that became obsolete" (13).

What is more, and connecting with the existentialist context of production we have explored in the previous section, Boym argues that "the creative rethinking of nostalgia was [for many displaced people over the world] not merely an artistic device but a strategy of survival, a way of making sense of the impossibility of homecoming" (13). Finally, we should take into account that 'reflective'—as opposed to 'restorative'—nostalgia may often entail a certain sense of distance which "drives them [these writers] to tell their story, to narrate the relationship between past, present and future"; in a sense, nostalgia "is a form of deep mourning" (64-65), the result of the loss of collective frameworks of memory. In sum, besides providing a useful distinction and typology between the two types nostalgia, Boym's reflections help us put together in the same formula several ingredients that make up Zweig's narrative: a) its utopian dimension; 2) its reaction to loss and mourning; 3) its deep investment in History as a site for redemption and hope; 4) and its temporal 'suspension'—addressing to the future while looking at the past. Above all, I argue that *Die Welt von Gestern* presents an ethical challenge by articulating a collective narrative that never existed, by inviting us to mourn and long for a dream that has not yet been realized. It is precisely by digging in the gap between fact and fiction, between aspiration and reality, that the 'ex-temporal' and 'u-topic'—or otherwise 'nostalgic'—qualities of the Zweigian project can appeal to our sense of responsibility.

2.1.3. From the Past to the Future: Stefan Zweig's Philosophy of History

In our exploration of the forces/factors that shape Zweig's historical discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern* we have so far contemplated two elements that might be called 'unconscious', or at least partially acting in an unconscious manner: the experience of the end of the world and the feeling of nostalgia. They are at the core of Zweig's European utopian and the context of its production/articulation. In the next section, we will discuss the form, function and contents of said utopia. But, before getting there, and to complement Zweig's approach to the past in his work in general and his autobiographical narrative in particular, it is interesting to note that there are also more 'conscious' elements at play, especially what we could call Zweig's historiography or philosophy of history. Although we have not offered a full discussion of the subject in Chapter I, some of the fundamentals have already been explored. For one, we have observed that Zweig's engagement with history is the result of a full-fledged strategy to make sense of the present and offer a sort of 'distanced' or 'mediated' form of commitment. As discussed by Zweig himself in the autobiographical sketch of 1936 ("Autobiography 1936"), the past acquires an epistemological condition, becoming both a repository of living (non-static) knowledge and a methodology for producing discourse and thought. Additionally, the exploration of the past acquires an individual dimension in the form of historical biographies.

Hence, I contend that historiography becomes a key element in the configuration of some of his works, and, as we have demonstrated, it is not devoid of polemic and controversy. Zweig was never an academic nor a professional historian; he was a writer that used the past as a resource to mold and communicate his *Weltanschauung*, to give shape to his creative output. This does not mean that Zweig was not 'serious' in his

attempts to recreate history—he²⁰² would invest time and energy in doing research for his works—, but that he was looking for ways to enhance its potential from an ethical and poetic point of view.²⁰³ For instance, he discussed history in terms of morality or justice, far from the emotionally detached, objective style of professional (positivist) historians. That is the reason why I have been contending that we need to adjust our assessment criteria in order to make the most of Zweig's historical accounts. Having said that, and given the importance of history in Zweig's thought, many scholars have engaged themselves in the critique of Zweig's 'poetics of history'.²⁰⁴ Our scope, however, is narrower, being confined to those items in Zweig's historiography that help explain the characteristics of *Die Welt von Gestern's* historical discourse.

²⁰² On his biographical and research method, Zweig comments in *Die Welt von Gestern* that: "Ebenso verwerte ich bei einem biographischen Werke zunächst alle nur denkbaren dokumentarischen Einzelheiten, die mir zu Gebote stehen; bei einer Biographie wie 'Marie Antoinette' habe ich tatsächlich jede einzelne Rechnung nachgeprüft, um ihren persönlichen Verbrauch festzustellen, alle zeitgenössischen Zeitungen und Pamphlete studiert, alle Prozeßakten bis auf die letzte Zeile durchgeackert. Aber im gedruckten Buch ist von all dem keine Zeile mehr zu finden, denn kaum die erste ungefähre Fassung eines Buches ins Reine geschrieben ist, beginnt für mich die eigentliche Arbeit, die des Kondensierens und Komponierens, eine Arbeit, an der ich mir von Version zu Version nicht genug tun kann. Es ist ein unablässiges Ballast-über-Bordwerfen, ein ständiges Verdichten und Klären der inneren Architektur; während die meisten andern sich nicht entschließen können, etwas zu verschweigen, was sie wissen, und mit einer gewissen Verliebtheit in jede gelungene Zeile sich weiter und tiefer zeigen wollen, als sie eigentlich sind, ist es mein Ehrgeiz, immer mehr zu wissen, als nach außen hin sichtbar wird" (WvG 343).

²⁰³ In fact, Zweig was very critical with those literary works that do not take history seriously enough, what he calls 'historical novels' and 'biographies romancées'. One needs to get the right balance between fact and fiction in order to recreate the past. It is a matter of method and honesty: "Glücklicherweise ist dieser Respekt vor den Tatsachen, vor der urtümlichen Bildnerkraft der Geschichte wieder im Wachsen, und der "historische Roman", die plumpe Geschichtsfälschung unserer Großväterzeit, vorbei. [...] [U]nd darum wird das meiste, das sich als historischer Roman oder als historische Novelle darbietet, eigentlich zur Karikatur an der Geschichte, eine ungültige Zwitterform, ein literarisches Mißwerk" ("GaD" 3111-3122). Also, on the writing of historical biographies, Zweig claims that "[e]ine ähnliche Achtungslosigkeit vor der dichterischen Überlegenheit der Geschichte bedeutet nach meinem Empfinden die jetzt so übliche 'biographie romancée', das heißt die zu einem Roman umgarnierte Lebensdarstellung, wo Wahrhaftes mit Erfundenem, Dokumentarisches mit Geflunkertem sich gefällig vermischt, wo große Gestalten und große Geschehnisse aus einer privaten Psychologie beleuchtet werden statt aus der unerbittlichen Logik der Geschichte" ("GaD" 3133).

²⁰⁴ See, among others: Koch, Hans-Albrecht. "Geschichtsbilder und Geschichtsauffassung." *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 709-715.; Garrin, Stephen Howard "History As Literature: Stefan Zweig's Sternstunden der Menschheit." *Stefan Zweig. The World of Yesterday's Humanist Today. Proceedings of the Stefan Zweig Symposium*, edited by Marion Sonnenfeld, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1983, pp. 118-127.; Steiman, Lionel B. "The Worm in the Rose: Historical Destiny and Individual Action in Stefan Zweig's Vision of History." *Stefan Zweig. The World of Yesterday's Humanist Today. Proceedings of the Stefan Zweig Symposium*. Edited by Marion Sonnenfeld, State University of New York Press, 1983, pp. 128-156.; Turner, David. "History as Popular Story: On the Rhetoric of Stefan Zweig's 'Sternstunden der Menschheit'." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 84, no. 2. 1989, pp. 393-405.

As far as our sources are concerned, Zweig wrote four major essays dedicated to his thoughts on the nature and writing of history: “Die Tragik der Vergeßlichkeit” (published in the *Prager Presse* on 27 March 1921); “Ist die Geschichte gerecht?” (published originally in May 1930 (*Kunst und Volk*) with the title “Etwas über Macht und Moral. Eine kleine Anmerkung zu meinem Drama *Das Lamm des Armen*”); “Geschichtsschreibung von morgen” (a lecture delivered in America in 1939); “Die Geschichte als Dichterin” (a lecture written for the 17th P.E.N. Congress, which was due to take place in Stockholm in September 1939 but never did because of the start of the war). Additionally, Zweig’s prologue to *Sternstunden der Menschheit* offers a glimpse to Zweig’s conception of history. Finally, one of the most important sources, as usual with Zweig, is not concentrated in a single work but made of multiple passages in his *oeuvre*. These fragments usually produce an interruption in the narrative, a digression of sorts, that is used by the narrative voice to offer some (meta)reflections concerning either his idea of history or his method for writing the past.

In brief—and putting together some of the ideas we have already explored in Chapter I—, Zweig’s historiography is mainly affected by two currents: Psychology (Freud)²⁰⁵ and Determinism (Taine). While the former makes the most of the gaps left by historical documents and provides an—emotional and affective—interpretation of past deeds and figures, the latter gives importance to biology, inheritance and the forces of context (such as geography or climate) to explain historical processes and phenomena. Also, these two vectors converge on the individual, the protagonist of Zweig’s his/stories, the unit that helps make sense of the chaos of historical representation. Said individual is pitted against

²⁰⁵ In the essay “Die Geschichte als Dichterin” Zweig claims that “[a]llerdings, wer Geschichte verstehen will, muß Psychologe sein, er muß eine besondere Art des Lauschens, des sich Tief-in-das-Geschehnis-Hineinhorchens besitzen und eine wissende Fähigkeit der Unterscheidung der historischen Wahrheiten” (“GaD” 3133). In other words, psychology becomes the best ally of the historian/poet in his/her attempts to recreate the past and fill the gaps without excessively distorting the facts.

the forces of Fate, either to be conquered—as a mediocre personality (see *Marie Antoinette. Bildnis eines mittleren Charakters* [1932])—²⁰⁶ or to conquer them by resorting to the strength of monomaniac belief (see *Magellan. Der Mann und seine Tat* [1938]). Complementing this characterization, Zweig's historiography entails a reassessment of the notions of victory and defeat and gives paramount importance to the capacity of history to produce, to create, to act agentively. In this sense and following the reasonings of Stephen Howard Garrin, history in Zweig allows him to fulfil three roles: as a *Dichterin* (poet), *Lehrerin* (teacher), and *Richterin* (judge).

Taking these ideas into account, we will focus on the following items of Zweig's philosophy of history. First, as to illustrate some of the points made in the previous paragraph, we will rearticulate and analyze the metahistorical discourse of *Die Welt von Gestern*. Second, I will discuss the role of history as a teacher and maker of 'sense', as a source of knowledge and intelligibility. Third, I will approach Zweig's conception of historical justice—deeply influenced by morality—and how the artist reacts to and tries to 'repair' the (in)justices of history and fulfil the duty to remember. Last but not least, I will explore the potential of history, in its capacity as pedagogic agent, to combat the rhetoric of war and nationalism.

²⁰⁶ In the 'Introduction' to *Marie Antoinette*, we read that she "war weder die große Heilige des Royalismus noch die Dirne, die 'grue' der Revolution, sondern ein mittlerer Charakter, eine eigentlich gewöhnliche Frau, nicht sonderlich klug, nicht sonderlich töricht, nicht Feuer und nicht Eis, ohne besondere Kraft zum Guten und ohne den geringsten Willen zum Bösen, die Durchschnittsfrau von gestern, heute und morgen, ohne Neigung zum Dämonischen, ohne Willen zum Heroischen und scheinbar darum kaum Gegenstand einer Tragödie. Aber die Geschichte, dieser große Demiurg, bedarf gar nicht eines heroischen Charakters als Hauptperson, um ein erschütterndes Drama emporzusteigern. Tragische Spannung, sie ergibt sich nicht nur aus dem Übermaß einer Gestalt, sondern jederzeit aus dem Mißverhältnis eines Menschen zu seinem Schicksal" (*Marie Antoinette* 7). This 'mediocre' status of Marie Antoinette as a historical character is what fascinates Zweig the most: Dieses Leiden des Nicht-Helden, des mittleren Menschen, sehe ich, weil ihm der sichtliche Sinn fehlt, nicht als geringer an als das pathetische des wahrhaften Helden und vielleicht noch als erschütternder; denn der Jedermannsmensch muß es allein für sich austragen und hat nicht wie der Künstler die selige Rettung, seine Qual in Werk und überdauernde Form zu verwandeln. (*Marie Antoinette* 8).

In the prologue to *Die Welt von Gestern*, Zweig distinguishes at least two forces that animate the writing of his memoirs and, more specifically, the articulation of a historical discourse. On the one hand, memory is presented as a creative force per se. Without the resources necessary to provide a factual account of both his life and the history of Europe from the fin-de-siècle to the beginning of the Second World War,²⁰⁷ the writer abandons the narration to the whims and selective powers of remembrance, to its capacity to deliver a cohesive framework of interpretation and discourse-building. This is how Zweig ends the prologue to his autobiography:

Denn ich betrachte unser Gedächtnis nicht als ein das eine bloß zufällig behaltendes und das andere zufällig verlierendes Element, sondern als eine wissend ordnende und weise ausschaltende Kraft. Alles, was man aus seinem eigenen Leben vergißt, war eigentlich von einem inneren Instinkt längst schon vordem verurteilt gewesen, vergessen zu werden. Nur was sich selbst bewahren will, hat ein Anrecht, für andere bewahrt zu werden. So sprecht und wählt, ihr Erinnerungen, statt meiner, und gebt wenigstens einen Spiegelschein meines Lebens, ehe es ins Dunkel sinkt! (*WvG* 133).

In this sense, and to put these assertions into perspective, Michael Stanislawsky points out in his introduction to *Autobiographical Jews* that “[the] retrieval of episodic memory involves bringing different kinds of information together that are stored separately in different storage sites and reassembling information into a coherent whole. Retrieval of memory is thus much like perception; it is a constructive process and therefore subject to distortion, much as perception is subject to illusion” (16). In other words, by acknowledging the primary role of memory in the construction of his autobiographical narrative, Zweig seems to be moving away from factuality and opening

²⁰⁷ It must be pointed out that, although Zweig laments that “[v]on all meiner Vergangenheit habe ich also nichts mit mir, als was ich hinter der Stirne trage” (*WvG* 123), his are not the only memories that help build *Die Welt von Gestern*. As Matuschek notes, there is a second, hidden, unacknowledged, voice that helps give shape to the narrative: “In Ossining he was frequently visited by Friderike, and they talked about old times, which proved very helpful when he was putting his memories down on paper” (340).

the possibility of introducing his subjectivity in the gaps left by past episodes, events and experiences. Paradoxically, at the same time that he refuses to be the protagonist of his story—limiting himself to the role ‘compiler’ of a material that has been pre-selected before getting to his hands—, he is admitting to the ‘artificial’ nature of his narrative.

Similarly, Zweig endows history with an agentive capacity. We are told that Zweig puts his pen at the service of ‘History’. His inspiration, so to speak, comes from the outside, from the input that the times have offered him throughout his life. In this sense, and continuing our reflections in Chapter I, the narrative should not be regarded exclusively as a personal, individual, account, but as the reflection of a collective experience, something given and shared outside the self and for which the latter acts as a mere ‘conductor’: “Nichts liegt mir ferner, als mich damit voranzustellen, es sei denn im Sinne des Erklärers bei einem Lichtbildervortrag; die Zeit gibt die Bilder, ich spreche nur die Worte dazu” (*WvG* 47).²⁰⁸ As I claimed before, this idea of history as creator is further developed in other texts, above all in the prologue to *Sternstunden* and in the lecture *Die Geschichte als Dichterin*. In the former we read that, in relation to the creative capacities of history in comparison with those of the artist, “[s]o ist auch die Geschichte, in der wir die größte Dichterin und Darstellerin aller Zeiten bewundern, keineswegs unablässig Schöpferin” (*Sternstunden* 7). Sometimes History acts simply as a recorder, as a chronicler which dutifully writes down a succession of events. In other occasions, however, it condenses all his creative energies on a single point or epoch, appealing to the imagination of the reader and enlarging the soul:

²⁰⁸ About this sentence, Oliver Matuschek—in his edition of *Die Welt von Gestern*—asserts that “Stefan Zweig hat diesen prägnanten Satz in den Entwürfen und Fassungen seines Manuskripts mehrfach umgearbeitet und neu formuliert. Im Kern geht er auf eine sehr ähnliche Aussage des von ihm bewunderten Schriftstellers Honoré de Balzac zurück, der in seiner Vorrede zur ‘Menschlichen Komödie’ schreibt (BALZAC 1971, S. 148): ‘Der Zufall ist der größte Romanautor der Welt: um fruchtbar zu sein, braucht man nichts zu tun, als sich eingehend mit ihm zu befassen. Die französische Gesellschaft sollte der Geschichtsschreiber sein; ich selber lediglich der Sekretär’” (*WvG* 467).

Stellen wir also fest—die Geschichte ist nicht ununterbrochen Dichterin, sie ist meist nur Chronistin, Tatsachenreferentin. [...] [M]anchmal treten innerhalb der Geschichte einzelne Episoden, Menschen und Epochen uns entgegen in solcher Höchstspannung, in so dramatischer Fertigbildung, daß sie als Kunstwerk unübertrefflich sind und in ihnen die Geschichte als Dichtung des Weltgeistes die Dichtung aller Dichter und jeden irdischen Geist beschämt. ("GaD" 2994).

This may help explain Zweig's insistence on 'Fate' as a historical force and the lack of 'historical' explanations for the events related in *Die Welt von Gestern*. Somehow Zweig—by de-authorizing his voice and avoiding 'responsibility' for the facts that make up his account—creates the illusion of 'distance' and 'objectivity'.²⁰⁹ At the same time, by invoking the poetic powers of the muses of 'History' and 'Memory', he tries to activate the readers' imagination, their capacity of fantasizing with a better world. In other words, he tries to convey the notion that the pre-First World War Viennese and European Arcadia was in fact one of those *Sternstunden der Menschheit* and so the embellishment and stylization to which he submits the past seem to be the product of history's poetic skills rather than his own *Weltanschauung*. Certainly, we could argue that Zweig is not interested in 'explaining' or 'analyzing' how certain events came to be, but in making the

²⁰⁹ It is interesting to note that Zweig is not negating the work of the poet/historian—or the poet-historian—in the making of History. He is ready to concede that sometimes the poetic force of History must be supplemented by the writer's ability to craft 'stories', to recombine the pieces of a fragmentary—and never absolutely knowable—reality. Anticipating those who might question history's poetic powers by pointing out the many writers that attempt to recreate the past, he contends that "[n]ichts berechtigter als diese Frage, als dieser Einwand. Aber hier muß ich an ein früher Gesagtes erinnern—die Geschichte ist doch nicht immer Dichterin, es gibt leere Punkte, zu breite, zu langsame Entwicklungen in ihrem Ablauf, brache Stellen auf diesem ungeheuren Acker, und dann—dies ist noch entscheidender—alles, was uns als Geschichte übermittelt wird, ist ja niemals das vollständige Geschehen, niemals das volle totale Bild eines Menschen, sondern bloß ein Schatten seines wahren Wesens, immer etwas Fragmentarisches. Schon der Einzelne, jeder von uns, weiß nur selbst gewisse entscheidende Dinge und Geschehnisse von sich, und er nimmt sie mit ins Grab. Wie erst bei einer solchen Fülle von Geschehnissen und Gestalten in solcher Ferne! Die Weltgeschichte—führen wir uns dies immer wieder vor Augen—ist ja kein komplettes, ausgedrucktes Buch, das man von Anfang bis zu Ende lesen kann, sondern sie ist ein riesiges Palimpsest, ein zusammengestoppeltes, nein, ein zu neun Zehnteln verdorbenes Manuskript; Hunderte Seiten sind unentzifferbar, Tausende aber verschollen und nur durch Kombination, durch Phantasie in ihrem Zusammenhang zu ergänzen. Diese zahllosen rätselhaften Stellen in der Geschichte müssen natürlich den Dichter zur Ergänzung, zur Erdichtung reizen" ("GaD" 3098-3107).

most of the past to forge an image that is full of poetic force and which creates in the reader a feeling of longing and aspiration.

As mentioned before, one of the side effects of Zweig's 'submission' to the (creative) forces of History are the several instances where 'Fate' is invoked as the force behind historical processes and events. For instance, while commenting on the differences between the wars of 1914 and 1939, we read that "[m]an ging an die Front, aber man träumte nicht mehr ein Held zu sein; schon fühlten die Völker und die einzelnen, daß sie nur Opfer waren entweder irdischer, politischer Torheit oder einer unfäßbaren und böswilligen Schicksalsgewalt" (*WvG* 245). Equally, during his stay in Switzerland during the war: "Denn alle diese Menschen, die das Schicksal hergeschwemmt, waren mit ihrer Existenz an den Ausgang des Krieges gebunden" (*WvG* 295). Finally, Fate is the force against which the individual must struggle to gain control of his or her life. Right before leaving Salzburg, Zweig writes that "[a]lles schien erreicht, das Schicksal gebändigt. Die Sicherheit, die ich in der Frühzeit meines Elternhauses gekannt und die im Kriege verloren gegangen war, sie war wiedergewonnen aus eigener Kraft. Was blieb noch zu wünschen?" (*WvG* 379-380). Finally, at the start of the war, when Zweig is still in England: "Halb war es Trotz, nicht nochmals und nochmals fliehen zu wollen, da das Schicksal mir doch überallhin nachsetzte, halb auch schon Müdigkeit" (*WvG* 455).²¹⁰

Die Geschichte als Lehrerin

The last fragment from Zweig's memoirs that I would like to discuss allows us to move on to explore another feature of Zweig's historiography, that is, the possibility of learning from History, of using it as a site for the production of knowledge and intelligibility. In

²¹⁰ In the prologue to *Sternstunden* Zweig makes explicit the link between History as a poetess and Fate: "Solche dramatisch geballten, solche schicksalsträchtigen Stunden, in denen eine zeitüberdauernde Entscheidung auf ein einziges Datum, eine einzige Stunde und oft nur eine Minute zusammengedrängt ist, sind selten im Leben eines Einzelnen und selten im Laufe der Geschichte" (*Sternstunden* 7).

the same pages we discussed before, where Zweig compares 1914 with 1939, he remarks that History played a key role in shaping a 'romantic', 'gullible' view of the war:

Und dann, was wußten 1914, nach fast einem halben Jahrhundert des Friedens, die großen Massen vom Kriege? Sie kannten ihn nicht, sie hatten kaum je an ihn gedacht. Er war eine Legende, und gerade die Ferne hatte ihn heroisch und romantisch gemacht. Sie sahen ihn immer noch aus der Perspektive der Schullesebücher und der Bilder in den Galerien: blendende Reiterattacken in blitzblanken Uniformen, der tödliche Schuß jeweils großmütig mitten durch's Herz, der ganze Feldzug ein schmetternder Siegesmarsch. (WvG 245)

Following these thoughts, we could argue that the potential of History as a *Lehrerin*, as a teacher, can be directed towards two goals. On the one hand, it can be used to legitimize a rhetoric of violence and war, as reflected in the quote above. This is an aspect we will discuss at the end of this section through Zweig's formulation of 'historiography of tomorrow' that opposes the 'evil' use of history's educational capabilities. On the other hand, Zweig believed in the epistemological value of the past and its capacity to produce knowledge, make sense of unintelligible realities, and produce future-oriented alternatives. This is exactly what he unambiguously claims in the autobiographical sketch of 1936 when he asserts that "[o]nly with the coming of the war [...] did history begin to attract me. I began a new study of it, so that I might better understand our present time; and in particular the periods of critical uprisings in the past gave me analogies of the present" ("Autobiography 1936"). In this regard, we have already noted that Zweig chose to portray and recreate certain episodes of the past because in them he could distinguish certain lines of continuity between those epochs/milieus/figures and the present; he was animated by a desire to make sense of a chaotic present that escapes reason and to find 'solutions' and solace to a bleak reality. Presentism is a mark of Zweig's 'ethical'

engagement with the past, offering us an epistemological fracture to reconstruct his *Weltanschauung*.

As an example of Zweig's use of analogy, we might go back to *Erasmus*, *Castellio*, or *Montaigne*. We have already observed in our analysis certain biographical patterns, as well as moments of identification and projects, that allow us to discuss said figures as Zweig's self-portraits or alter-egos. Adding to that, in those works we find certain contextual parallelisms which reveal an interest in the context of Zweig's biographical subjects. It is as important to find a voice that can match one's commitment and values as a *milieu* to which the reader can relate. Without going any further, we read in chapter one that "Die persönliche Tragik des Erasmus aber bestand darin, daß gerade er, der unfanatischste, der antifanatischste aller Menschen, und gerade in dem Augenblick, da die übernationale Idee zum erstenmal Europa sieghaft überglänzte, in einen der wildesten Ausbrüche nationalreligiöser Massenleidenschaft hinabgerissen wurde, den die Geschichte kennt" (*ERASMUS* 93). Equally, on the transcendence of Erasmus' fight and message, Zweig writes: "Aber klar hebt sich das Auge, das blauleuchtende und zarte, das Holbein unvergänglich gemalt, und blickt durch all diesen Tumult der Massenleidenschaften herüber in unsere nicht minder aufgewühlte Zeit" (*ERASMUS* 167). More specifically, in the case of *Erasmus*, Zweig devotes a whole chapter to the context—"Blick in die Zeit", which opens with the following statement: "Der Übergang des fünfzehnten in das sechzehnte Jahrhundert ist eine Schicksalsstunde Europas und in ihrer dramatischen Gedrängtheit nur der unseren vergleichbar" (*ERASMUS* 173). Similarly, after listing the great achievements and discoveries of the Renaissance, he writes that "nur unsere Jahrhundertwende mit der ebenso plötzlich sich überbietenden Raum- und

Zeitverkürzung durch Telephon, Radio, Auto und Flugzeug hat eine gleiche Umwertung des Lebensrhythmus durch Erfindung und Entdeckung erfahren" (*ERASMUS* 192).²¹¹

Following the same line of discussion, but changing our source, we must note that Zweig turns Castellio's manifesto on behalf of tolerance—his book *De haereticis*—into a symbol of an eternal struggle: "In jener Stunde nur zugunsten der Ketzer geschrieben, sind sie zugleich ein Sühneruf für all jene, die in späteren Tagen um politischer oder weltanschaulicher Selbständigkeit willen von andern Diktaturen Verfolgung zu erleiden haben" (*CASTELLIO* 1836). Also, at the end of chapter six—"Das Manifest der Toleranz"—, Zweig claims that "[d]enn nie ist das Notwendige zu oft gesagt und nie die Wahrheit vergeblich. Auch wenn es nicht siegt, so erweist doch das Wort ihre ewige Gegenwart, und wer ihr dient in solcher Stunde, hat für seinen Teil bewiesen, daß kein Terror Macht hat über eine freie Seele und auch das unmenschlichste Jahrhundert noch Raum für die Stimme der Menschlichkeit" (*CASTELLIO* 1962). Finally, in *Montaigne*, Zweig emphasizes along the lines of *Erasmus* the kind of 'spiritual altitude' reached in the Renaissance, which is followed by the cruelest of falls: "Aber immer, wenn die Welle zu steil und zu rasch ansteigt, fällt sie um so kataraktischer zurück. Und so wie in unserer Zeit gerade die neuen Errungenschaften, die Wunder der Technik, die Vervollkommnung der Organisation in die fürchterlichsten Faktoren der Zerstörung, so verwandeln sich die Elemente der Renaissance und des Humanismus, die heilsam erschienen, in mörderisches Gift" (*MONTAIGNE* 61). As we have already noted, the rise-fall pattern structures both the narratives of *Erasmus* and *Die Welt von Gestern*.

²¹¹ Likewise, at the end of the chapter, Zweig concludes that "Großartiger Augenblick, eine Jahrhundertwende, die zur Zeitwende wird: Europa hat einen Atemzug lang gleichsam ein Herz, eine Seele, einen Willen, ein Verlangen. Übermächtig fühlt es sich als Ganzheit angerufen von noch unverständlichem Befehl zur Verwandlung. Herrlich bereit ist die Stunde, Unrast gärt in den Ländern, atmende Angst und Ungeduld in den Seelen, und über all dem schwingt und schwebt ein einziges dunkles Lauschen nach dem befreienden, nach dem zielsetzenden Wort; jetzt oder niemals ist es dem Geist gegeben, die Welt zu erneuern" (*ERASMUS* 234).

Bearing in mind these examples of how Zweig resorts to past analogies to 'think' the present, we might be tempted to conclude that Zweig believes in the repetition of historical cycles and therefore in the possibility of predicting the future. However, further reading suggests that Zweig's approach to the past is not based on the premise of repetition but on those of recognition, variation and similarity, which allow the historian to deviate from already trodden paths in the search for alternatives. There is a recurrent paradox in Zweig, which is that while on many occasions we may believe that his thought is based on a monolithic conception of truth—informed by a positivistic and deterministic outlook on both the subject and the world, as well as, by extension, the past—, at the same time he composed some reflections on the fragmentary and discursive nature of reality. We already attested to the recurrence of this paradox in Chapter I, where we insisted, on the one hand, on the determinist approach to character as exemplified by the subjects of his biographies, who are usually driven by an idea around which both their lives and production revolve; while, on the other hand, we have repeatedly observed the intellectual's struggle against ideas that are turned into dogmas and truths that become hegemonic, one-sided and repressive.

Following this direction, and paying attention to how this applies to Zweig's philosophy of History, we find both a systematic use of History as present and, at the same time, a critique of cyclic conceptions of History, of those who attempt to elevate historical narratives to the category of law and truth. In the text "Geschichte als Dichterin", we read—in Zweig's review of some of those history-changing episodes he called *Sternstunden*—that "[h]ier scheint es einen Augenblick, als ob die Geschichte sich wiederholen wollte. Aber nein, sie wiederholt sich niemals. Sie spielt manchmal mit Analogien, aber sie ist so reich an Material, daß sie immer wieder neue Situationen aus ihrem unerschöpflichen Arsenal hervorholt" ("GaD" 3047). As a consequence, Zweig

argues, one cannot predict what is to come by attempting to discern historical patterns. Analogy does not equal repetition: “Nein, die Geschichte läßt sich nicht voraus erraten, denn sie ist zu reich, um sich zu wiederholen, und zu vielfältig, um sich errechnen zu lassen [...]. Nie wird es also gelingen, aus Vergangenheit das Zukünftige zu errechnen. [...] es gibt nur ein ewig Neues, das sich aus den erweiterten Elementen des Vergangenen gestaltet” (“GaD” 3058). From this perspective, we may contend that Zweig is hoping to dive into history to steer the present away from dangerous roads, but never to find ‘truths’ that legitimize (violent) ideologies or ‘solutions’.²¹²

In part, we might consider that Zweig’s is a positive outlook that contrasts with his abovementioned fatalism. For if one concedes that history cannot repeat itself, one is also contemplating the possibility of variation, change, deviation and, by extension, betterment/progress. Turning to *Die Welt von Gestern*, we certainly do not find there a recourse to analogy, in the way that we do find it in *Erasmus* or *Montaigne*. Zweig did not attempt in said his memories to understand or make sense of his present. In the case of Zweig’s memoirs, the potential of its historical discourse to provide orientation and intelligibility is not directed towards Zweig’s contemporaries, but to the future, with the hope that, as he did with the Renaissance, future readers might find in fin-de-siècle Vienna both consolation and a repository of (past) experience that may allow for the (re)orientation of both their private and public lives in times of crisis. All in all, *Die Welt*

²¹² In an interview with André Rousseaux published in the journal *Candide* on 4th January, 1934, Zweig asserts that after the catastrophe of 1914, one could no longer look away from reality. In this scenario, history was an excellent tool to make sense of the present: “Nous avons été brutalement réveillés et contraints de prendre part à ce qui se passe autour de nous: nous devons nous efforcer de comprendre le monde dans lequel nous vivons, ainsi que ses lois. Pour cela, il n’y a pas, il ne peut y avoir de meilleur moyen que l’histoire. Je suppose que je ne suis le seul à penser que cet amour de l’histoire et de ses descriptions n’est jamais apparu aussi clairement qu’en ces années de crise” (“Entretien AR” 163). Also, in the same interview, Zweig exposes his views on the repetition of history. Because all the major events his generation has gone through, what we have called Zweig’s ‘generational exceptionalism’, “[n]ous pouvons mieux comparer et mieux comprendre ce qui s’est passé que n’importe quelle génération avant nous” (“AR” 163).

von Gestern is animated by Zweig's belief in the redeeming potential of history, in its capacity to address us and provide other ways of seeing and being in the world.

The Morality and Justice of History

The third aspect of Zweig's philosophy of History that I would like to discuss is related to what we could call the process of 'history making'. Far from being a mere objective, scientific procedure, we have already discussed how Zweig's idea of History is imbued with both aesthetical and ethical factors. In this regard, one cannot, or rather should not, engage with history in a totally detached manner but being conscious of two converging duties: one the one hand, the poet/historian has a responsibility towards those who have been silenced, and, on the other, his/her discourse must be guided by the duty to remember those 'truths' that have become uncomfortable. As we discussed at the end of our analysis of *Castellio*, history, in his agentic capacities, does not have time to be moral or just. Therefore, those who devote their work to produce/write historical narratives and therefore participate in the collective process of history making must fight to remedy said amorality and injustice. In brief, this is the subject of the text "Ist die Geschichte gerecht?", which leads us again to consider Zweig's preoccupation with voice, silence, and the prerogative to speak.

According to Zweig, History, far from being fair, tends to reward those who have been victorious. Therefore, we could argue that the same rhetoric based on the dialectic winners/losers that animates nationalism and war—and against which Zweig's ethics of defeat and suffering rebels—permeates the writing of the past. Whoever wins gets to say his piece and oppress the voice of the defeated. Success wins the day: "[A]uch die Geschichte, auch sie, die leidenschaftslos sein sollte, klarsinnig und gerecht, auch sie hat die Neigung, nachträglich dem recht zu geben, der im wirklichen Leben äußerlich recht behalten hat; auch sie neigt sich, wie die meisten Menschen, zur Seite des Erfolges, auch sie vergrößert noch nachträglich die Großen, die Sieger, und verkleinert oder verschweigt die Besiegten" ("IGG" 1863). Facing this injustice: Whose voices

must the historian strive to recover from the darkness of oblivion? To rectify history's amorality, the writer must pay attention to all those who have been marginalized by the processes of legitimization propelled by the powers that be. Zweig warns us: "Nichts gefährlicher als die Pietät vor der einmal erkannten Größe, nichts verhängnisvoller als die Kniebeuge vor der offiziell geheiligten Macht!" ("IGG" 1874). Away, then, from officiality and institutionalization, two processes that far from being representative are designed to support inequality and the status quo.

All in all, Zweig invites us to be critical with the kind of histories we are told, since there are other voices, as well as silences, that can help us get a more comprehensive image of the past. More specifically, Zweig asks us to be concerned with the 'unnamed' heroes of history, those who made it possible to achieve certain ephemerides but who were sidelined by the great hero—the captain, the general, the president: "Von der Heldentat eines Schiffes bleibt der Name des Kapitäns, und ins Dunkle sinken jene, die an seiner Seite gestorben und vielleicht mehr als er die wahre Leistung gefördert und getan" ("IGG" 1863). Continuing this line of discussion, Zweig shows distrust against the process of glorification that tends to turn history into legend and myth, since ultimately it threatens to mask the 'truth'. History "heroisert bewußt oder unbewußt einige wenige Helden zur Vollkommenheit und läßt die Helden des Alltags, die heroischen Naturen des zweiten und dritten Ranges ins Dunkel fallen. Legende aber ist immer [...] der gefährlichste Feind der Wahrheit, und darum ist es unsere Pflicht, sie ständig zu überprüfen und die eigentliche Leistung auf ihr historisches Maß zurückzuführen" ("IGG" 1863).²¹³

²¹³ As an example of how Zweig inserts this kind of historiographical observations in his biographical narratives, we might note the following passage in his biography *Magellan. Der Mann und seine Tat* (1938) where he highlights the importance of the 'minor' figures of History: "Aber oft entscheidet die Geistesgegenwart und Energie einer Hintergrundfigur für Jahrhunderte Geschichte" (MAG 478). Likewise, in the same work, we can read about how historians tend to tautologically justify the winners—"wenn die Geschichte seitdem Magellan recht gegeben, so vergesse man nicht, daß sie fast immer dem Sieger recht gibt wider den Besiegten"—or about the discursive 'nature' of History: "Was wir Geschichte nennen, stellt keineswegs die Summe aller bedeutsamen Taten dar, die jemals in Raum und Zeit sich ereignet haben; die Weltgeschichte, die Welthistorie umfaßt einzig jenen kleinen belichteten Ausschnitt, der zufällig von dichterischer oder gelehrter Darstellung erhellt wurde. Nichts wäre Achill ohne Homer, Schatten bleibt jede Gestalt, und wie leere Welle zerrinnt jede Tat im unermeßlichen Meer der Geschehnisse ohne den Chronisten, der sie in seiner Darstellung erstarren läßt, oder den Künstler, der sie neu und bildnerisch formt" (MAG 1602).

The historian, when approaching the past, engages him/herself in a process of recovery. He/she must either give voice to the voiceless or must try to look for the silenced narratives of history. That is to say, his/her concern is both with those who never left a trace—who never got to tell their side of the story—and those who, despite having a voice, were delegitimized or simply ignored. This line of thinking takes Zweig to create another philter, another vector, that must be taken into account when writing history. He argues that, in order to be just, we should get away from the sphere of power and look for those individuals who truly merit to be remembered, whose achievements were not realized at the cost of someone else. As a result of crossing two currents in Zweig's *Weltanschauung*—his 'apoliticism' (the opposition between power and *Geist*) and his anti-war/violence discourse—, he suggests “nicht die Macht an sich zu bewundern, sondern nur jene seltenen Menschen, die sie redlich und gerechterweise gewonnen. Redlich und gerecht gewinnt sie eigentlich nur immer der geistige Mensch, der Wissenschaftler, der Musiker, der Dichter, denn was er gibt, das ist niemandem genommen. Das irdische, das militärische, das politische Herrschertum eines einzelnen entsteht ausnahmslos aus Gewalt, aus Brutalität” (“IGG” 1874).

As we already know by now after having journeyed for so many pages through Zweig's narrative of commitment in Chapter I, the Austrian writer is looking for another type of hero. To the hero of might he opposes the hero of *Geist*. For this, as we will discuss more at length at the end of this section, takes us to write another kind of historical discourse. Not only one that is more just, but also less violent: “[S]ehen wir die Weltgeschichte nicht einzig als eine Chronik von Siegen und Kriegen und nicht den Eroberer schon vorneweg als Helden an, dann erst machen wir jener gefährlichen Vergöttlichung des Erfolges ein Ende” (“IGG” 1884). As Zweig sentences, power and moral are incompatible. And so the intellectual/poet/historian, if he or she is to resist the

hegemony of success in the production of history, must base his/her power to give voice, his power to historicize and memorialize, on more fair and humane criteria. Taking all this into account, we could conclude that this is the kind of historical project that shapes a great part of Zweig's creative output, whereby he invests his energies in the creation of lost genealogies: Jeremias, Cicero, Erasmus, Castellio, Montaigne. We have amply discussed the kind of hero all these figures represent. In the case of Zweig's memoirs, I contend that Zweig also aimed there to contribute to the history of *Geist* by giving the reader a tour around the most prominent figures—in cultural and 'spiritual' terms—that helped forge a dream of tolerance, freedom, peace and common understanding. In Zweig's eyes, the heroes of *Die Welt von Gestern* might be considered 'losers' in material terms. At the end of the day, and as I will discuss at the beginning of next section, their European utopia carries with it a strong sense of failure. Facing oblivion, the writing of his memoirs—and with them a discourse that covers the history of Europe from the fin-de-siècle to the beginning of the Second World War—is consequential to Zweig's vision of History. In other words, I contend that Zweig produced a historical discourse that matched his ethos and *Weltanschauung*, as well as his philosophy of History.

“Die Tragik der Vergeßlichkeit”

Before moving on to the last aspect of Zweig's historiography that can help us contextualize some of the features of *Die Welt von Gestern*'s historical discourse, we will briefly discuss a second ethical demand that Zweig imposes on the writer of history. For the latter does not only have the responsibility towards the voiceless and the silenced, but he must also be the guardian of collective memory, keeping at bay the (un)conscious efforts to forget certain truths that have become uncomfortable or even traumatic. In the essay “Die Tragik der Vergeßlichkeit” (1921), Zweig inaugurates his reflections by proclaiming his faith in progress and the 'spiritual' elevation of humankind, propelled by

humanity's innate desire to learn, to amass knowledge and apprehend reality. Obviously, this is still 1921, a time when, after having survived the apocalypse—First World War—one was allowed to dream again with a renewed belief in the peaceful union of humankind brought about by the unstoppable advance of science and technique. However, Zweig warns us using a 'prophetic' tone, there is a tendency that might hinder this evolution. For, more often than not, sometimes consciously, sometimes completely unawares, we tend to follow our instincts and forget that which reminds us of the painful side of our existence: "Und das ist der unbewußte und oft auch bewußte Wille von einzelnen Menschen, Völkern und ganzen Generationen, die Wahrheit, zu der sie sich selbst mühsam durchgerungen haben, wieder gewaltsam zu vergessen, die Fortschritte der Erkenntnis freiwillig aufzugeben und sich zurück in den alten wilderen, aber gleichzeitig wärmeren Wahn zu flüchten" ("TV" 1651-60).

Zweig is thinking of the recent experience of the war. And so he goes on to say that there seems to be a correlation between the harshness or intensity of knowledge/truth and the desire to forget: "[D]enn es scheint, daß eine geheimnisvolle Relation zwischen der Intensität der Wahrheit besteht und der Beschleunigung, mit der sie das Bewußtsein flieht: je erfolgreicher der Wille zur Erkenntnis einsetzt, um so stärker auch der Zwang, von dem Druck, von der Qual dieser Erkenntnis wieder loszukommen" ("TV" 1671). Zweig laments that, after having gone through so much suffering, after having learnt the 'truth' of unity—i.e. the necessity of Europe as a higher form of brotherhood—, the nations, once the dust is settled, are ready to resume their paths as if nothing had ever happened: "Und doch haben wir ein noch Unbegreiflicheres erlebt, haben erlebt, daß auch diese im tiefsten Leiden geborene Wahrheit, kaum daß die Völker, die Nationen wieder ein wenig Rast und Ruhe und Heiterkeit und Trägheit hatten, für immer unterging" ("TV" 1681). The tragedy does not reside simply in the fact that war has become an unpleasant

memory, but that people are ready to believe in the same kind of discourse that lead them to the war in the first place. That is Zweig's most painful realization. In his eyes, those who spouse national and political ideals do so without truly believing in them. The politics of the interwar period lack conviction—belief—, they have become the incredulous expression of those who want to stay or climb to a position of power: “Und das, gerade dies macht unsere Zeit so furchtbar tragisch, [...], daß alle nationalen und politischen Ideale, die jetzt so laut gebrüllt werden, irgendwo einen falschen Ton haben und aus einer Absicht, nicht aus einer Innerlichkeit klingen” (“TV” 1692).²¹⁴

One has a duty to remember the tragedy, so as not to make the same mistakes again and again. The intellectual/historian must watch out for the truth not to be forgotten or manipulated: “Aber wenn dies auch der Menschheit als Schicksal verhängt ist, immer wieder dem Wahn der Entzweiung anheimzufallen, so bleibt es ewige Aufgabe der Wachen, zu warnen und dem Unvermeidlichen zu wehren” (“TV” 1718). In this sense, we could contend that the historian becomes a sort of Jeremias, a watcher of sorts whose job is to keep people awake, not to let them slumber again into the way of tragedy. Zweig was convinced that the fact that people, above all his generation, had forgotten about the last conflicts of the nineteenth century lead them straight, and gullibly, to the greatest of catastrophes. Also, as a part of his duty to remember those (warning) voices that had been

²¹⁴ Following this line of discussion, it must be noted that this is not the only text published in the immediate aftermath of the war where Zweig warned against opportunism and demagoguery. As an example, in “Der Eziehung zum republikanischen Bewußtein”, where he argues for the necessity of building a Republican ‘consciousness’ in Germany, a deeper form of engagement with the ‘idea’ of the Republic. Otherwise, it might become just a passing ‘trend’. Society needs true convictions, not just empty discourses that change as the wind blows: “Betrügen wir uns nicht; es war nicht der Geist, der Glaube, die Überzeugung, die jene Wandlung bewirkten, sondern die Not, der Haß, die Erbitterung. Sie war ein Rückstoß gegen Gewalt, ein Vorstoß aus freiem Willen” (“ERB” 1617). Equally, the same argument is discussed in depth in “Opportunismus, der Weltfeind”, a text where Zweig articulated the opposition between politics and *Geist*, arguing for the necessity of ‘conviction’ (*Überzeugung*) and not just mere ‘opinion’ (*Meinung*): “Meinung und Überzeugung. Meinung haben viele. Überzeugung ganz wenige. Meinung fliegt zu aus Wort, Zeitungsblatt, Wunsch und Gerede, fliegt wieder fort mit dem nächsten Wind, klebt an den Tatsachen und ist immer dem Druck der Luft, der Massenpsychose, unterworfen. Überzeugung wächst aus Erlebnis, nährt sich an Bildung, bleibt persönlich und unteilhaft an den Ereignissen” (“OWF” 1552).

dismissed because their tone was 'annoying' to the happy-go-lucky, Zweig wrote two texts during the war that paid homage to such individuals.

The first, dedicated to the late Berta von Suttner, one of the leading advocates of peace, turns the tragedy of 'oblivion' into the tragedy of pacifism. She had been a witness of the war of 1866 as child, which left an indelible print in her spirit, making of her life a struggle to avoid the repetition of such calamity: "Sie aber, Berta von Suttner, hatte einsam die tragische Mission übernommen, die ewige Aufstörerin zu sein, unbequem ihrer Zeit wie Cassandra in Troja und Jeremias in Jerusalem. Sie hatte sich heroisch entschlossen, lieber im Gelächter der Menschen zu leben als in Trägheit des Herzens" ("BvS" 1405). With the case of Berta von Suttner, Zweig exemplifies the necessity to remember, to listen even when the message hurts or destabilizes our certainties. The task of the historian is unappreciated but necessary. He or she must be relentless: "Sie schrak nicht zurück, das scheinbar Unerreichbare zu fordern. Sie wußte ja selbst besser als jeder andere um die tiefe Tragik der Idee, die sie vertrat, um die fast vernichtende Tragik des Pazifismus, daß er nie zeitgemäß erscheint, im Frieden überflüssig, im Kriege wahnwitzig, im Frieden kraftlos und in der Kriegszeit hilflos" ("BvS" 1405). In the same vein, Zweig wrote "Das Herz Europas" (1917) a text-homage to the task carried out by Red Cross in Geneva during the First World War and, more specifically, to the efforts of the Agence Internationale des Prisonniers de Guerre. Besides describing the conditions under which said enterprise was carried out and praising its heroes, Zweig emphasizes the fact that, despite having been created in 1870, the Red Cross—its existence and mission—had been utterly forgotten right before the war. Everybody had lost interest in their efforts:

Aber dennoch, wer hat ihrer sich dann noch erinnert im Frieden? Wir sind alle—
heute wissen wir es schmerzlich und tragen diese Erkenntnis als unsere Schuld—

sehr vergeßlich gewesen, sehr leichtfertig und sehr gleichgültig. [...] Wir hatten Friedensgesellschaften und die wundervolle Frau in Österreich, Berta von Suttner, und haben sie mit einer Art lächelnder Nachsicht gerade noch gewähren lassen, sie nie geschützt gegen den Hohn und den Spott der anderen. ("HE" 832)

War is the price of our forgetfulness, of our eternal denial that life is made both of pleasure and pain, and that the lessons that latter can offer will quickly turn into regret if their warning goes systematically unheeded: "O Schuld, unendliche Schuld von uns allen, grausam gerächt bis ins siebente Glied! Gleichgültigkeit von einst und Gleichgültigkeit auch jetzt noch der meisten gegen alle Taten und Leistungen, die nicht heroisch aufgepäuselt sind, die nur im Dunkeln, im Abseits geschehen! Noch immer klagen wir nicht genug unsere Schuld an, ahnungslos gewesen zu sein. Noch immer danken wir nicht jenen genug, die es nicht gewesen sind" ("HE" 853).²¹⁵ Bearing these ideas in mind, we could contend that, at the time of writing his memoirs, and having witnessed twice the tragedy of *Vergeßlichkeit*, Zweig invested his last energies in sending a message to future generations, in erecting a monument to a failed project, to save it from the abyss of oblivion. An act of remembrance of the tragedy and those who tried their best to formulate an alternative—'Europe'—that could have averted it, with the hope that in the future humanity might know better, might be willing to remember the 'truth'.

Finally, and resuming our analysis of "Die Tragik der Vergeßlichkeit", I believe that it contains yet another valuable reflection that might illuminate the historical discourse of *Die Welt von Gestern*. For Zweig contends, in the line of the previous reflections, that

²¹⁵ In his essay "1914 und Heute", Zweig argues that the neglect or indifference towards the past has reached such a peak in 1936 that it is not simply that people have forgotten about the war, but they simply seem not to care anymore. The transmission of knowledge from generation to generation has been broken: "Nichts hat mir stärkeren Eindruck gemacht, als ich in Argentinien die Schlachthäuser besuchte, wie dies, daß die Tiere unten zu ebener Erde in ihren Hürden munter beisammen standen, fraßen und muhten (und ein Paar sogar noch vergnüglich der Liebe gedachte), während oben im ersten Stock schon die Maschinen hämmerten und blitzten, die sie zehn Minuten später erschlagen, zerstückeln, zerlegen, abhäuten und ausweiden würden. Aber immerhin, das Tier ist in Ahnungslosigkeit gehüllt, es weiß nicht, wohin es geführt wird. Unseren menschlichen Herden in Europa, die heute vielleicht schon näher der Schlachtbank sind, als sie es ahnen, fehlt diese Entschuldigung" ("1914" 63).

this instinct that keeps people from remembering their painful or tragic experiences does not only work at a collective level—in terms of collective memory—but it also applies to individual narratives. Therefore, so the Austrian writer argues, “[d]ieser Prozeß einseitiger Auslese und Umfälschung läßt darum ewig den Menschen ihre Jugend schön und jedem Volk seine Vergangenheit großartig erscheinen, und vielleicht ist dieser gewaltsame Trieb zur Verschönerung, zur Idealisierung des Lebens den meisten Menschen überhaupt eine Vorbedingung, daß sie die Wirklichkeit und ihre Existenz zu ertragen vermögen” (“TV” 1660). In other words, said instinct, which here is triggered by one’s efforts to survive, tends to veer one’s past towards the mythical and the legendary, invariably turning our infancy and youth into a sort of Golden Age. And this human ‘propensity’ seems to be ubiquitous, from the Greco-Roman and Biblical traditions to the myth of the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—in the construction of which Zweig’s memoirs play a key role in conjunction with other works by Austrian writers like Robert Musil or Hemann Broch.

All in all, this should make us rethink how we approach the utopian and mythical construction of fin-de-siècle Vienna in Zweig’s autobiography. For, if Zweig was aware of, and even swore to combat, this embellishment of the past, this tendency to forget the negative and tragic aspects of one’s life, why would he offer us, as his ‘spiritual’ testament, a work that did precisely otherwise? Why would he make of fin-de-siècle Vienna a pristine *topos*, the quintessential result of the forces of progress, a myth, a utopia, a legend? Many critics, as we have already observed, attribute this process of embellishment to Zweig’s (existential) naïveté or the logic byproduct of Zweig’s efforts to survive. And we certainly cannot dismiss that option. However, I argue that, having dug a bit deeper into Zweig’s conception of history, we are allowed to entertain the possibility that Zweig was consciously crafting a utopia, that he was intentionally

recreating an ancient myth that would condition the structure of his narrative and, from a poetic point of view, would help convey his ethical message. If Zweig, in a way, failed to lay bare some 'truths' through omission, it might have been with the intention of endowing the coming catastrophe with greater emotional and symbolic force.²¹⁶

Zweig's Pedagogy of History: The Historiography of Tomorrow

Last but not least, Zweig's historiography revolves around the notion that History has an important role to play in our (ethical) education, in our formation as social beings. This might be seen as another aspect of history as *Lehrerin*. However, the focus here is on the kind of attitude the study of the past can instill in the individual, its power to inform our vision of the world and the values that guide our decisions and (re)actions. Whereas before we have explored the potential of History to provide a frame of intelligibility for the present, now we will discuss its potential to fulfil a more humane purpose, that is, to broaden the individual's moral imagination. In this regard, we have already observed how Zweig, in his efforts to remedy the injustice and amorality inherent to History, asks for a reassessment of who gets to have a voice/be the subject of a historical narrative. Equally, he will pledge for the disarticulation of a historical discourse that fosters nationalism and war. History as a pedagogical tool to combat violence and promote common understanding is the topic of the essay "Die Geschichtsschreibung von Morgen". The point of departure of said text is Europe's state of nervous tension in the midst of an escalating moral crisis. According to Zweig, the hatred that dominated the 1914 scenario poisoned the blood of the European citizen, whose body has ever since been avid for the

²¹⁶ On the construction of the myth of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its role as the foundation of a European utopia, Wistrich argues that "[t]his myth, which Zweig's memoirs shared with Roth's *Radetzky* and some of Franz Werfel's writings, existed even before the collapse of the Habsburg State. But after 1918, it was swiftly transmuted in the name of a vague, indeterminate cosmopolitanism—espoused primarily by Jewish pacifist authors—in search of a broader European homeland" (67). On the myth of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Austrian Literature, see: Magris, Claudio. *El mito habsbúrgico en la literatura austriaca moderna*. Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998.

drug of anger and confrontation: “Wenn sich ein Organismus einmal an Narkotika oder Stimulantien gewöhnt hat—Kaffee, Morphin, Nikotin—kann er sie nicht plötzlich entbehren, und so ist das Bedürfnis, sich zu militarisieren, zu hassen, zu bekämpfen, in dieser Generation weiterhin aktiv geblieben. Es hat sich nur umgeschaltet. Man haßt nicht denselben Landesfeind wie 1914” (“GvM” 2689).

According to Zweig, propaganda, the bad intellectual’s tool par excellence, has kept the flame burning. Therefore, the question that animates Zweig’s reasonings is the following “Wie dieses ständige Fieber niederdrücken, wie die kriegerische Atmosphäre wieder humanisieren, wie den mit Haß vergifteten Organismus wieder entgiften, wie die moralische Depression, die wie eine Gewitterwolke über unserer Welt lastet, beseitigen?” (“GvM” 2669). In a context where international reunions, supranational meetings of intellectuals and artists, cannot revert the situation, Zweig advocates for a change of tactics. Instead of focusing on the present situation, one should instead look beyond it, into the future: “Vielleicht ist es unsere eigentliche Aufgabe, unsere ganze Kraft dahin zu wenden, daß wenigstens die nächste Generation, die Jugend von heute, nicht mehr dieser Ansteckung, diesem Fieber verfällt” (“GvM” 2710). Once again, we can observe the same epistemological movement from past to future that informs *Die Welt von Gestern*. Given the fact that history plays a key role in the formation of the individual, “[es] scheint mir das wichtigste eine neue Form und eine andere Auffassung der Geschichte, als wir sie in der Schule gelernt haben. Eine Geschichte, die zeigt, wie die Menschheit geworden ist, Geschichte seines eigenen Volkes und aller anderen Völker, gibt dem jungen Menschen sein zukünftiges Weltbild” (“GvM” 2720).

Zweig formulates two radically opposed ways of using the past as a source of edification. Looking back on his childhood, he realizes that Austrian children were raised to be loyal to his country, no matter what. The school’s textbooks were designed to turn

the individual into a good citizen, servant, soldier. At the same time, it created animosity towards the neighbor, inculcating a sense of superiority in front of other races and nations: "Ebenso demütig wie gegen den eigenen Staat und seine Institutionen sollten wir hochmütig und gleichzeitig mißtrauisch werden gegen alle anderen Staaten und Nationen und Rassen durch die eingelernte Überzeugung, daß unser Vaterland das beste aller Vaterländer" ("GsM" 2731). In brief, History was manipulated to create a sense of belonging and loyalty, to inculcate in the individual the responsibility towards that superior collectivity that gave him/her both a past and an identity (transcendence). In this sense, history had the purpose to teach that sacrificing oneself for one's country was the most honorable of deeds, that war was a desirable event, a chance to proof one's valor and become a hero: "[U]nd so von Anfang an unseren fügsamen Gehirnen der Gedanke mit immer wiederholtem Hammerschlag eingehämmert, das Wichtigste unserer Welt sei der Krieg und die wesentlichste Leistung eines Menschen, eines Volkes der Sieg" ("GvM" 2752).

According to Zweig's assessment, whereas propaganda had served to keep the conflict alive, to artificially create animosity between the nations, History had planted the seed of war in the first place: "Ich konnte meinen Ärger schließlich nicht bezähmen und warf das Buch in eine Ecke, denn ich sah, durch diese Darstellung war unsere Generation zum Weltkrieg erzogen worden. Es war ein Lehrbuch aller, der gefährlichen und schlechten Instinkte, die unsere Zeit vergiften" ("GvM" 2774). If we were to summarize, following Zweig, the main premises of this 'nationalistic' historiography, we would highlight two elements: 1) a rhetoric based on the notion of victory and the cult of the hero: "Und wir sehen heute die Folgen. Immer ist es uns in die Ohren geschrien, in das Herz gehämmert worden, daß Sieg die höchste Leistung ist, deren ein Mensch, deren ein Volk fähig ist, und daß es völlig gleichgültig ist, mit welchen Mitteln dieser Erfolg

errungen wird" ("GvM" 2774); and 2) the nation as the category that orientates and gives purpose to the individual's life and efforts. The ultimate goal of this historiography is to reinforce the nation as community of belonging: "Man hört es bis hier herüber in dieses Land, das Geschrei der Diktatoren, die eine sogenannte heroische Lebensauffassung fordern, die predigen, Friedensliebe sei Weichlichkeit, und für den Menschen gäbe es nichts Wichtigeres, als für sein Vaterland zu sterben. Die als Recht kodifizieren: was meinem Volke nützt, ist erlaubt, und Ideologien erfinden, um jedes Verbrechen zu entschuldigen" ("GvM" 2774).

Having claimed that, Zweig continues his argumentation by clarifying that the fact that this kind of historiography goes against the interests of humanity does not mean that history should be removed from the school syllabi. Instead, a new historiography must be crafted. Instead of exalting and promoting war, instead of teaching the individual to hate his 'neighbors' (i.e. the artificially constructed Other), Zweig's historiography of tomorrow focuses on showing humanity's efforts to attain universality. In other words, history should serve the purpose of showing us the efforts of humanity to coexist, cooperating to make the world a better place: "Aber von ihr zu fordern wäre, daß sie in einem anderen, in einem neuen Sinn geschrieben wird, in einem Sinn, der das Leben der Menschheit nicht als eine stagnierende Erscheinung darstellt, sondern als einen Fortschritt ins Humane und ins Universelle, und daß die Geschichte darum vor allem alle jene Dinge betont und unterstreicht, welche diesem endgültigen Werke der Zivilisation gedient haben" ("GvM" 2795). Instead of nationalism and war, culture and progress should be placed at the center of the teaching of the past. Instead of victory, teaching should revolve around the notion of 'unity': "Geschichte von morgen muß also eine Geschichte der ganzen Menschheit sein, und die einzelnen Streitigkeiten müssen ihr belanglos erscheinen gegenüber dem Wohl der Gemeinschaft. [...] Sie muß dem alten

Ideal des Sieges das neue der Einheit, der alten Vergötterung des Krieges dessen Verachtung entgegenstellen als Richtpunkt ihrer Bewertung" ("GvM" 2805).

All in all, Zweig is not demanding that a part of our history is deleted, omitted, in favor of other contents that are more suitable to his *Weltanschauung*. Being congruent with his idea of mediation and synthesis, he will try to accommodate the realities of both peace and violence. His demands are not solely focused on the contents of history, but, above all, on the goal of educating through the past: "Ich glaube, die Geschichte von morgen wird, wenn sie erzieherisch wirken soll, in diesem Sinne geschrieben werden müssen, daß die Kriegsereignisse zwar nicht unterdrückt werden, aber nicht als die höchsten positiven Leistungen eines Volkes weiterhin gewertet werden" ("GvM" 2827). History must be part of an education that is focused on culture and *Geist*, a cosmopolitan education, in direct contrast with the 'history of yesterday', whereby "[w]ir sollten ja nicht unseren Ehrgeiz, unseren Stolz daran wenden, kosmopolitische, brüderliche Menschen zu werden und brüderlich zu fühlen, sondern die Geschichte sollte uns erziehen, Österreich, Frankreich, Deutschland—einzig unser Vaterland—zu lieben und allen anderen Völkern zu mißtrauen" ("GvM" 2837). It is the purpose of the coming history to wake our altruistic instinct, to show the way of cooperation instead of mutual detestation and isolation, to wake and nurture our empathy. Following Kropotkin's seminal work *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, Zweig wonders: "Wenn nun schon rein instinktmäßig die Tiere sich so verhalten, unbelehrt, ohne Bewußtsein, um wieviel eher müßte es uns möglich sein, die wir erziehbar sind und in deren Seelen doch der geheimnisvolle Gott durch das Gewissen spricht, uns immer weiter vom Tierischen und seinen schlechten Instinkten wegzusteigern" ("GvM" 2859).

The historiography of tomorrow should be guided by morality, focused on the history of culture instead of war, power and the struggle for existence. Accordingly, it must

destroy the hero cult, thwart the logic of sacrifice; it must read the past from a collective/cooperative perspective. Without undermining individual achievement, it must focus on how these feats have contributed to the work of humanity and civilization: “Dieser letzte Maßstab, was ein Mensch nicht für sich und nicht bloß für seine eigene Nation, sondern was er für alle geleistet hat, wird und muß der Maßstab der Geschichte von morgen sein” (“GvM” 2922). In sum, history is seen as a tool to counteract the forces that aim to divide humankind, that do not hesitate to impose regimes based on violence: “[N]ur dann können wir uns trösten über die Torheit der Nationen und der Diktatoren, die versuchen, die Völker gegeneinander zu stoßen, während sie doch gemeinsam fortschreiten, die versuchen, Rückschritt im Politischen zu erzwingen, wo der Fortschritt unaufhaltsam ist” (“GvM” 2944). To conclude, I believe that the exploration of Zweig’s historiographic project allows us to better situate the writing of *Die Welt von Gestern* within a wider enterprise that comprises other Zweigian works whose aim is to combat Europe’s moral crisis. We could argue, then, that the historical discourse of Zweig’s memoirs is designed to undermine the kind of approach to the past that helps promote violence, justifying, for instance, Zweig’s emphasis on culture as a core element of his Viennese utopia, or the fact that war and nationalism are presented as the enemy responsible for the destruction of the European dream.

2.1.4. Longing for a ‘Past’ Utopia? Desire, Failure and Redemption in Stefan Zweig’s European *Weltanschauung*

Our last attempt at reassessing Zweig’s memoirs takes us to consider the utopian dimension/potential of *Die Welt von Gestern*’s historical discourse. The previous sections have provided perspectives and theoretical tools that can help us contemplate new scenarios out of the hermeneutical deadlock to which said work has been confined for the last decades. In our movement away from genre expectations and certain reading

practices—which demanded of Zweig that he abide by notions such as factuality, scientific rigor and ‘political’ commitment—, we have allowed for the inclusion in our analysis of other experiential, emotional and ethical factors, notably: the experience of the end of the world and the ontological implications of exile; the feeling of nostalgia; and the responsibility of the poet-historian/intellectual to amend the amorality of History and produce (a) narrative(s) that help(s) counteract the violence inherent to certain power discourses. All in all, without denying the shortcomings of *Die Welt von Gestern* as a historical narrative, we have tried to look closer at those cracks and crevices that forcefully open the gap between ‘reality’ and possibility.

Whereas Zweig may not be considered an ‘academic’ historian, I contend that the kind of historical discourse we find in his memoirs is certainly consistent with both his *Weltanschauung* and the context of production of said discourse. Therefore, by looking at the variations, discordances and anomalies in Zweig’s recreation of the past we will hopefully be able to articulate his ethical program, which is intimately connected to his idea of Europe. Following this line of discussion, I contend that *Die Welt von Gestern* can be read as an expression of Zweig’s utopian thinking.²¹⁷ In fact, when discussing the concept of nostalgia, we have already noted its potential to harbour the utopic. Bearing these ideas in mind, the next pages will be devoted, on the one hand, to briefly discuss the concept of utopia following the contributions of sociologist Ruth Levitas and other scholars, and, on the other, to explore the implications of thinking of Zweig’s utopia as a ‘failed’ project.

Branding Zweig’s project utopic or saying that his *Weltanschauung* and ethos are embedded in the construction of a (European) utopia is, to a certain extent, problematic.

²¹⁷ For a survey of Zweig’s utopian thinking across his oeuvre, see: Peck, Clemens. “Utopie.” *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 670-680.

For one thing, it runs the risk of contributing to the further delegitimization of Zweig's discourse by bringing to the fore a never-ending thread of criticism against utopian thinking, which is usually considered in 'materialistic' cultures as naive, unrealistic or even delusional. Additionally, utopias that are located in the past are usually called 'myths' and 'legends', and therefore recurrently dismissed as fairytales. It is no surprise that, in societies that favor scientific truths and economic laws over metaphysics, an idea of the world such as Zweig's—based on a disdain for the realm of matter/power, always below the sacrosanct sphere of *Geist*—is dismissed as irrelevant, anachronistic or even 'false'.

It cannot be denied that most of the 'action' in Zweig's thought occurs in the realm of ideas, a plane where one is, in principle, concerned with the 'universal' and the 'eternal'/'transcendental'. Be it as it may, Zweig believed in the power of imagination to change the world. In the introduction to his biography of Magellan, he pays homage to the power of imagination to transcend reality and widen our 'spiritual' horizons. Reality can only be overcome when one dares to think beyond it. Magellan, by performing what had been considered impossible—circumnavigating the earth—, proves that change can only be effected through an act of 'faith', by believing that what seems inaccessible can only be reached when one dares to envision it: "Doch nichts Besseres als eine Wahrheit, die unwahrscheinlich wirkt! Immer haftet den großen Heldentaten der Menschheit, weil sie sich so hoch über das mittlere irdische Maß erheben, etwas Unbegreifliches an; aber immer gewinnt nur an dem Unglaubhaften, das sie geleistet, die Menschheit ihren Glauben an sich selbst zurück" (*MAGELLAN* 72). What is more, at the end of his evocation of fin-de-siècle Vienna, Zweig, despite having to admit how wrong he had been, cannot renounce to his belief in the power of a dream that ended up becoming a utopia:

Und trotz allem und allem, [...] ich vermag den Glauben meiner Jugend nicht ganz zu verleugnen, daß es wieder einmal aufwärts gehen wird trotz allem und allem. Selbst aus dem Abgrund des Grauens, in dem wir heute halbblind herumtasten mit verstörter und zerbrochener Seele, blicke ich immer wieder auf zu jenen alten Sternbildern, die über meiner Kindheit glänzten, und tröste mich mit dem ererbten Vertrauen, daß dieser Rückfall dereinst nur als ein Intervall erscheinen wird in dem ewigen Rhythmus des Voran und Voran. (WvG 202).

It must be noted that Zweig was aware that his ideas could be considered too optimistic or even naive. He was not afraid of admitting, in 1936, that before the First World War his actions had been guided by a strong belief in the unstoppable progress of humanity: “Sie lächeln vielleicht über diesen Optimismus. Aber ich schäme mich nicht, so jung und gläubig gewesen zu sein, und ich liebe Schillers schönes Wort[:] ‘Man soll Ehrfurcht haben vor den Träumen seiner Jugend’” (“GEE” 150). In the same vein, Zweig often described his European project/utopia as a ‘dream’ (see, for instance, WvG 1196 and 3593). What is more, there are some passages in *Die Welt von Gestern* that suggest that Zweig was not only ready to accept criticism due to the ‘utopian’ nature of his narrative, but also that he ‘intended’ to create a myth, that it was no accident or casual misremembrance. Above all, what reveals Zweig’s awareness and signals intentionality is his engagement with a process of self-critique that recognizes the distance between aspiration (‘dream’) and ‘reality’ (‘what came to be’). For instance, at the end of chapter two “Die Schule in vorigen Jahrhundert”, Zweig offers the reader his own assessment of the picture he has just drawn, acknowledging his ignorance:

Wir jungen Menschen aber, völlig eingesponnen in unsere literarischen Ambitionen, merkten wenig von diesen gefährlichen Veränderungen in unserer Heimat: wir blickten nur auf Bücher und Bilder. [...] Und erst als Jahrzehnte später Dach und Mauern über uns einstürzten, erkannten wir, daß die Fundamente längst unterhöhlt gewesen waren und mit dem neuen Jahrhundert zugleich der Untergang der individuellen Freiheit in Europa begonnen hatte. (WvG 1121).

Also, in the middle of his description of fin-de-siècle Vienna, and before moving on to talk about his family, there is an impasse of self-critique that is especially critical with what had been an utter belief in security and progress: “Es ist billig für uns von heute, die wir das Wort ‘Sicherheit’ längst als ein Phantom aus unserem Vokabular gestrichen haben, den optimistischen Wahn jener idealistisch verblendeten Generation zu belächeln, der technische Fortschritt der Menschheit müsse unbedingterweise einen gleich rapiden moralischen Aufstieg zur Folge haben” (*WvG* 20). And he concludes: “Heute, da das große Gewitter sie längst zerschmettert hat, wissen wir endgültig, daß jene Welt der Sicherheit ein Traumschloß gewesen. Aber doch, meine Eltern haben darin gewohnt wie in einem steinernen Haus” (*WvG* 21). Similarly, after the First World War, and following this critique to his ‘naive’ faith in progress before the conflict, he writes that “[h]errlich war diese tonische Welle von Kraft, die von allen Küsten Europas gegen unsere Herzen schlug. Aber was uns beglückte, war, ohne daß wir es ahnten, zugleich Gefahr. Der Sturm von Stolz und Zuversicht, der damals Europa überbrauste, trug auch Wolken mit sich” (*WvG* 215).

Last but not least, in his ‘decade of success’ and stability in the twenties, Zweig acknowledges his own foolishness for believing that the new period of peace and quiet was going to last: “Und schon grüßten wir in dem Aufstieg der Ordnung den Anfang einer dauernden Beruhigung. Abermals, abermals meinten wir, der Krieg sei überwunden, Toren, unheilbare, wie wir es immer gewesen. Jedoch dieser trügerische Wahn, er hat uns immerhin ein Jahrzehnt der Arbeit, der Hoffnung und selbst der Sicherheit geschenkt” (*WvG* 338). Together with one of the key elements of Zweig’s philosophy of history—the duty to remember traumatic and painful experiences in order to learn from them and to avoid their repetition—, these examples of Zweig’s self-critique towards his dreams, hopeful expectations, and utopian ‘mood’ point out the fact that there might be a

conscious effort behind the formulation of fin-de-siècle Vienna as a utopia; an effort that might have wanted to convey its unrealized nature and, therefore, the possibility of its being reenacted by future generations. In other words, I contend that Zweig, in accordance to his *Weltanschauung*, was trying to make the most of myth, legend and utopia as discursive spaces that allow the reader to imagine and articulate alternative realities. As Wistrich argues: “In addition to their foundational function, myths also possess a mythomotic, that is, specifically counter-factual function, which emanates from deficiency experiences in one’s own presence and which conjures up the memory of the past by emphasizing what is missing lost, forgotten, or marginalized” (126-127).

So far, we have established the necessity to approach Zweig’s historical discourse—in his memoirs—from the perspective of their utopian potential. However, not only do we need, as I have argued before, to redefine our concept of utopia in order to explore its critical and ethical dimensions, but we also must tackle another controversial aspect, namely, its temporal orientation. We have already given several reasons why Zweig situates his European utopia in the past in his attempts to address the future. In this light, we must bear in mind that, by dealing with *Die Welt von Gestern*, we are discussing a ‘past utopia’, an idea that, if it is not properly elucidated, might be thought of as an oxymoron or lead to radically opposed conclusions.²¹⁸ We could argue that explicitly or implicitly, utopias are inextricably linked in our collective mentality to what is yet to come—something to be attained, reached, realized. Therefore, it seems to follow that,

²¹⁸ Although, just by looking at the dictionary entries for ‘utopia’ in the Collins, Cambridge, Oxford, Dudeln or DRAE dictionaries, there does not seem to be any temporal restriction attached to said term—all of them convey the notion of an ideal society where all its members are happy and coexist peacefully—most of these definitions emphasize, at least in one of its senses, the unrealizability of said ideal, especially in Dudeln—“undurchführbar erscheinender Plan; Idee ohne reale Grundlage”—and DRAE—“Plan, proyecto, doctrina o sistema deseables que parecen de muy difícil realización”. These entries convey the notion that the ideal to which ‘utopia’ alludes is something that has to be realized, and therefore it is forcefully located in the future. In fact, in the second sense of the DRAE dictionary, we do find an explicit mention to its forthcoming nature: “Representación imaginativa de una sociedad futura de características favorecedoras del bien humano”.

contrary to what we are claiming in this dissertation, their actual location should be the future. To dispute this claim, we might consider, in the first place, Reinhart Koselleck's contribution to the topic. Koselleck, in his essay "The Temporalization of Utopia" argues that the link between utopias and the future was forged at a certain point in time. While we might believe that utopias have always been about the times to come, Koselleck goes back to the eighteenth century to mark the actual point when they started to be about time—and not space—and more specifically about the future—and not the present or the past. According to the German historian, said turning point is the publication in 1770 of Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *L'An 2440*.

As traditional utopias consisted of travelers discovering new lands beyond, elsewhere—'nowhere'—, and managing to come back home to tell the story of those other marvelous worlds 'out there', "what was fundamentally missing was the temporal dimension of the future as the site of utopia" (86). However, all this changed as the 'Age of Discovery' added the missing pieces back on the map. By the eighteenth century there were few territories left to discover, and so, with less and less 'nowheres' to be 'found', a new space for the location of utopia was required: "If utopia was no longer to be discovered or established on our present-day earth nor in the divine world beyond, it had to be shifted into the future. Finally, the additional space in which fantasies could stream in was available, and infinitely reproducible, like time itself" (86). With this 'relocation' of utopia, humanity's fantasies of a better world, our striving for a perfect and ideal state, were no longer, primarily, based on experience but on the workings of the imagination (87). Interestingly enough, although Koselleck does not provide us with a framework of analysis to discuss 'past utopias', his reflections do allow us to contemplate the possibility that the temporal location of utopias is not a given, that their orientation is dependent on context. In fact, and even though he opposes future to present, he mentions in passing that

past projections of an ideal society had always been there (86). It is not, therefore, unconceivable to think of the expression of a desire for future perfectibility that is based on a 'vision' of the past. What is more, writing from the age of dystopias, Zweig's quandary that does not seem so alien to us. If we assume that dystopias flourish when visions of the future do no longer seem capable of containing our hopes for a better world, looking to the past seems a logical shift of orientation.

Following this line of discussion, we might be tempted to brand Zweig's fin-de-siècle European utopia as a 'retrotopia', a concept articulated by philosopher Zygmunt Bauman in his homonymous book. One thread linking Bauman's assessment to our reflections on Zweig's *Die Welt von Gestern* is precisely Boym's insights on nostalgia. According to Bauman—following Boym—, we live currently under a “‘global epidemic of nostalgia’ [that has taken] [...] over the baton from the (gradually yet unstoppably globalizing) ‘epidemic of progress frenzy’ in the relay race of history” (*Retrotopia* 4). The pervading idea that the future can only be a path of corruption and generation, rather than improvement has “prompted the pendulums of the public mindset and mentality to perform a U-turn: from investing public hopes of improvement in the uncertain and ever-too-obviously un-trustworthy future, to re-investing them in the vaguely remembered past, valued for its assumed stability and so trustworthiness” (*Retrotopia* 6).

The soil is fertile for the emergence of 'retrotopias', defined by Bauman as “visions located in the lost/stolen/abandoned but undead past, instead of being tied to the non-yet-unborn and so inexistent future” (*Retrotopia* 5). Apparently, then, if we stick to this 'sober' definition, we could easily apply the term to Zweig's memoirs. However, it must be noted that, in so doing, we may be condemning Zweig's dream to a conservative reading. For Bauman's analysis of contemporary society, of the Age of Nostalgia, is not simply based on a temporal reorientation exempt of ideological implications; his brief

definition is followed by a full-fledged exploration of how we are moving backwards as a community, how retrotopias are the symptom of a wider reactionary tendency or movement. Although Bauman's reflections on how to combat said tendency—especially his suggestion, following Beck (*Cosmopolitan Europe*), that the 'cosmopolitan condition' we enjoy should be followed by the raising of a 'cosmopolitan awareness' (*Retrotopia* 160)—are in line with Zweig's work and *Weltanschauung*, his articulation of retrotopias as a triple movement back—to Tribes (isolation, nationalism and raising of new borders and frontiers), to Inequality, to the Womb (to the self, to egotism)—does not match the possibilities of *Die Welt von Gestern's* utopian potential. For, as I pointed before, this is the main risk we run by attributing to Zweig's project a utopian quality whose main space of deployment is the past; the risk of it being read as an expression of the variety of nostalgia Boym calls 'restorative'.

Zweig's aim, in my reading of his work, was not to offer an ideal vision of the past that could be simply 'continued' or 'restored' in the present, but to show that history could have been otherwise, that there had been better projects for Europe than an status quo dominated by nationalism, totalitarianism and war. In other words, Zweig offers us in *Die Welt von Gestern* historical *topoi* that never existed. Only the seeds were there, in the lives and beliefs of a few dreamers. By writing his memoirs Zweig is articulating the history of a possibility, halfway between experience and imagination, and therefore, following Koselleck's impressions on the temporalization of utopia, a hybrid 'experiment' between present and future utopias. Above all, Zweig contests the notion that past utopias are necessarily 'retrotopias', in the mirror of what Ruth Levitas calls the 'neo-conservative' utopia, which "emphasizes not the individual and freedom but nation, authority, tradition and loyalty" (*Concept Utopia* 217). Following sociologist Karl Mannheim, she argues that "while both liberal and socialist utopias were future-oriented

the conservative utopia is oriented to the past. Institutions and practices are value-laden in so far as they represent the past as immanent in the present; their merit is in their persistence" (*Concept Utopia* 217).

Die Welt von Gestern: A 'Past' Utopia?

Bearing all this in mind, I contend that Zweig's 'utopia' is neither conservative nor does it imply, in my reading, and attempt to go back to the 'good old days' of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Rather, it offers a rereading/rewriting of History whereby the author exposes both his *Weltanschauung* and ethical program so that it can be re-appropriated by future generations. An element that can give us further insight in order to claim that Zweig was not in any case legitimizing past hegemonic practices or power structures is the fact that the main elements that conform his vision/utopia, including the very idea of Europe, were far from being 'dominant'. As I will argue later, in terms of both individual and collective identities, Europe and cosmopolitanism were forms of resistance. In fact, we have already discussed in other sections the elitist/'marginal' condition of Zweig's narrative, for instance when we have brought forward Arendt's criticism of *Die Welt von Gestern* or Schorske's exploration of the socioeconomic and cultural limitations of the Viennese Jewish community in the fin-de-siècle. In other words, I claim that Zweig could not pledge a return to the past he depicts in his memoirs because in fact it never existed, and that is precisely what makes it a utopia. Zweig's journey to the 'lost' home is but the reenactment of a dream, a project which, at the time of writing *Die Welt von Gestern*—and in fact well before—has already 'failed'.

The fact that Zweig presents his utopia as 'past' gives it a sense of failure. Or, at least, it suggests that, had things gone his way, it could have been definitely materialized; in *Die Welt von Gestern*, Zweig's European utopia is a 'failed' project for a better world. Having said that, and given the importance of defeat and failure in the Austrian writer's

thought, the use of the adjective 'failed' must be clarified. We have already discussed how Zweig includes throughout his description of fin-de-siècle Vienna a sort of self-critique that points out the distance between 'reality' and expectations. This, I contend, is part of Zweig's admission to failure. Additionally, we must bear in mind that *Die Welt von Gestern* is not the only Zweigian text that depicts a 'failed' utopia. This is also the case of *Erasmus*. While we will discuss later the role of humanism within Zweig's ethical program, suffice it to say for now that said intellectual movement is also, in Zweig's historical account, an unrealized dream/ideal. At the end of *Erasmus*, when we are given an assessment of his intellectual legacy, we read that:

Niemals dagegen hat bisher der erasmische Gedanke Geschichte gestaltet und sichtbaren Einfluß genommen auf die Formung des europäischen Schicksals: der große humanistische Traum von der Auflösung der Gegensätze im Geiste der Gerechtigkeit, die ersehnte Vereinigung der Nationen im Zeichen gemeinsamer Kultur ist Utopie geblieben, unerfüllt und vielleicht nie erfüllbar innerhalb unserer Wirklichkeit. (ERASMUS 2015)

Notwithstanding the above, Zweig himself questions the 'failed' nature of Erasmus' project. His dream (*Traum*) and utopia (*Utopie*) may have not been realized, but their imprint on the 'spiritual' world has inspired and guided many generations to come, and more specifically individuals like Zweig. There is yet another analogy to draw between Erasmus and Zweig in terms of the kind of 'legacy' they leave behind: "Eine Idee, die nicht in Erscheinung tritt, ist darum weder besiegt noch als falsch erwiesen, eine Notwendigkeit, auch wenn sie verzögert wird, nicht minder notwendig; im Gegenteil, nur Ideale, die sich nicht durch Realisierung verbraucht oder kompromittiert haben, wirken in jedem neuen Geschlecht als Element sittlichen Auftriebs fort. Nur sie, die nie noch erfüllten, haben ewige Wiederkehr" (ERASMUS 2026). This takes us to a topic we have amply discussed in Chapter I, that of Zweig's 'victors in defeat', which in turn is informed

by the Austrian writer's efforts to disarm a rhetoric of war based on the conceptual matrix winners/losers that permeates nationalistic and bellicose ideologies. In other words, we cannot assert the 'failed' nature of Zweig's European utopia without bearing in mind his philosophy of 'defeat' and his project to recover a 'lost' genealogy of intellectual figures whose success cannot be measured in material terms. In sum, in Zweig's *Weltanschauung* failure can have a redeeming effect. It is not a mere act of surrender, but the refusal to participate in violent power structures, an alternative to toxic notions of 'triumph' and 'heroism'. In the case of Zweig's memoirs, the failure of the European project does not only signal the scale of the tragedy, but it also leaves open the possibility of fulfilling an unrealized dream. Zweig's project might have failed, but through his memoirs he managed to save the essentials, to turn his project into a timeless 'ideal'/'utopia'.²¹⁹

Curiously enough, and following this line of discussion, we seem to be living through a time where the notion of 'failure' is being overturned both within and without the walls of Academia. Against the 'cult of success' that has dominated Western societies for many decades—with the paradigmatic phenomenon of the 'American Dream'—, a desire to reevaluate the meaning of failure seems to be rising. According to an article by Lindsay Parker in *BBC Culture*—"Is failure the new literary success?"—, we are being witness to a surge in both fiction and non-fiction works that propose to reevaluate the idea of success by embracing failure as an inextricable part of our lives. Some, however, criticize that rather than celebrate failure, these—sometimes successful—attempts at showing one's vulnerability and the less shiny parts of our existence are but another formula/path towards triumph. And the truth is that it is hard to distinguish between celebrations of

²¹⁹ Making idealism a recurrent feature of Zweig's writing, Klaus Weissenberger reflects on the fact that many of Zweig's critics "overlook Zweig's intention to give his principal narration a dimension of timelessness. Similar to the manner in which oral cultures stabilize narratives, Zweig transforms his plots into exemplary messages bridging the gap between past, present, and future" (132).

failure and the celebration of other 'forms' of success. Be it as it may, it seems that the prevailing paradigm/myth of success, which orientates the life of the majority, is presenting the first symptoms of exhaustion. Accordingly, many writers, 'influencers' and other public voices are trying to explore how success and failure need to be redefined to contemplate non-normative subjectivities, sexualities and life-trajectories. In the end, the burden of success is too toxic if a society aspires to be truly democratic.

From this perspective, Zweig's plight seems to resonate strongly in our days. In this regard, and to conclude our reflection on the 'failed' nature/condition of Zweig's utopia, I would like to bring to the fore Judith Halberstam's reflections on the topic in her monograph *The Queer Art of Failure*. Although it may require a (small) 'conceptual and historical leap', I believe that Halberstam's project can help us illuminate our reading of Zweig. At least, I contend that there are certain resonances and parallelisms that might be worth exploring. Whereas the object and goal of those two exercises differs, both projects are animated by the same purpose to transcend certain 'measures' or 'standards' of success, the main difference being that, while Halberstam's object of critique is capitalism—with a particular focus on the United States and the spheres of gender and sexuality—, Zweig's foe, what he seeks to challenge or dismantle is a certain type of nationalism based on a violent/radical rhetoric of war, heroes and victims. As Halberstam claims, "[u]nder certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world" (2-3). Looking to transcend what she calls the cult of positive thinking and "precarious models of success", she proposes to embrace failure in order to 'produce' other worlds/create alternative models of society. By embracing other forms of producing knowledge, sometimes considered 'not serious'—happening at the periphery, or "besides" long established academic institutions—, Halberstam's

project is an attempt to 'think outside the box', which brings her close to Zweig's need to resort to imagination in order to move beyond a 'reality' that does not leave room for his *Weltanschauung*. In both cases, their focus is on the "paths not taken": "The social worlds we inhabit, after all, as so many thinkers have reminded us, are no inevitable; they were not always bound to turn out this way, and what's more, in the process of producing this reality, many other realities, fields of knowledge, and ways of being have been discarded and [...] 'disqualified'" (8-9).

In the same vein, Halberstam advocates for a "project on subjugated knowledge", which involves a process of retrieval of discarded memories and lost genealogies: "In this book [*The Queer Art of Failure*] forgetting becomes a way of resisting the heroic and grand logics of recall and unleashes new forms of memory that relate more to spectrality than to hard evidence, to lost genealogies than to inheritance, to erasure than to inscription" (15). Looking back on Zweig, we do not necessarily need to fully abide by the binaries that inform Halberstam's project, since in our analysis we have already attested to the fact that 'erasure' leads necessarily to 'inscription'. Zweig's task—digging in the forgotten pits of history, retrieving voices that challenge certain forms of remembrance and putting them together in a new cartography—leads him to elaborate new legacies. Inheritance is a key concept in our reading of *Die Welt von Gestern*, a form of passing down a fragile, vulnerable and threatened *Weltanschauung*. However, it cannot be denied that both this dissertation and Zweig's project must deal, from their conception, with processes of obliteration sanctioned by power structures. In the case of Zweig's heroes of *Geist*, they have to contend with the violence of totalitarian and nationalistic 'materiality'; in our case, and echoing our reflections in the Introduction, we must confront the canonization of certain authors and aesthetic movements—as well as hermeneutic practices, reading ideologies, and (de)valuations of literary production—that

have relegated Zweig to a position of marginality, (intellectual) unproductivity and de-authorization.

A Utopian Method

To conclude, once we have explored the 'utopian', 'past' and 'failed' nature of Zweig's European project as codified in *Die Welt von Gestern*, we still need to overcome another limitation concerning the traditional reception and interpretation of utopias and utopianism. Away from notions that relegate utopias to futile aspirations or delusional castles in the air with no capacity of effecting critique or change, we need a 'method' that takes utopias 'seriously'. As Koselleck reflects, the fact that "writers of utopias only reluctantly call themselves 'utopian'", proves that "a good author of utopias evidently has very little desire to be a utopian" (84). As Ruth Levitas argues, the most prevalent understanding of utopia brands it "an irrelevant fantasy or [...] a malevolent nightmare leading to totalitarianism. This anti-utopian discourse equates utopia with a blueprint producing violence and terror, and gives rise to a politics of quiescent subordination to the dictates of capitalist markets" (*Utopia as Method* xiii). Against such anti-utopian perspectives, Levitas engages in a process of revalorization of utopias as a (possible) space of resistance, where the horizons of expectations and reality break/fall to allow for change. In this light, utopias become critical tools for signaling the limitations of our societies, of our discourses and power structures. In order to lose the 'fear of utopia', it is crucial that we stop seeing it as a goal and start to think of it as a method; a method that "facilitates genuinely holistic thinking about possible futures, combined with reflexivity, provisionality and democratic engagement with the principles and practices of those futures. The core of utopia is a desire for being otherwise, individually and collectively, subjectively and objectively. Its expressions explore and bring to debate the potential contents and contexts of human flourishing" (*Utopia as Method* xi).

At the core of Levitas' method lies the idea that when we want to approach the 'utopic', we should not look exclusively for blueprints of alternative societies—full-fledged materializations

of how our communal and individual lives ought to be—, but for expressions of desire, which is what all utopias have in common. Desire, together with lack and longing, is the essential element in a utopia: “the desire for a better way of being. It involves the imagining of a state of being in which the problems which actually confront us are removed or resolved, often, but not necessarily, through the imagining of a state of the world in which the scarcity gap is closed or the ‘collective problem’ solved” (*Concept Utopia* 221).

This redefinition of the concept of utopia allows us to transcend the limitations imposed by those analysis that restrict the scope of utopia to questions of form, content and function. In this sense, utopias do not even need to be ‘possible’ to be critical: “The function of utopia thus reverts from that of goal and catalyst of change to one of criticism and education of desire, without any necessary move forward into action” (*Concept Utopia* 226). All in all, I believe that Levitas’ insights liberate us from narrow conceptions of utopia and allow for the ‘free’ exploration of desire. In this respect, one last thing I would like to borrow from Levitas is the three ‘modes’ that help me define Zweig’s method and which come into play “in the process of imagining ourselves and the world otherwise” (*Utopia as Method* xvii): an archaeology mode, which lays bare the foundation of utopias so that they can be openly criticized; an architectural mode, which “involves the institutional design and delineation of the good society” (*Utopias as Method* xvii); and an ontological mode, which relates to the ideal subjects or agents encouraged by a given utopia. Our analysis of Zweig’s European utopia will take into account all these aspects in order to reconstruct Zweig’s ethical program and establish its (critical) possibilities and utopian potential from our twenty-first century perspective.

2.1.5. The Materializations of Zweig’s ‘European’ Utopia

The first sections of this chapter have attempted to provide new directions and angles for the analysis of Stefan Zweig’s memoirs. As I have already argued, I consider *Die Welt von Gestern*

as a repository of Zweig's ethics and *Weltanschauung*, the author's last attempt not only to make sense of his life and work but also to send a 'message' to the generations to come. This message conditions the contents, shape, and orientation of both the personal and the historical discourse embedded in Zweig's autobiographical narrative. Also, it comes in the form of a utopia that revolves around the concept, the idea of, Europe. Although I will discuss the meaning and function of 'Europe' in the configuration of Zweig's ethical program later, suffice it to say for now that it has a kind of agglutinating role, that it serves as a nexus that unites the main elements of the Zweigian project.

Having said that, and before we start articulating Zweig's 'European' ethics (its architectural mode), we need to consider its foundations (archaeological mode), at the spaces, the *topoi*, where it materializes. In this sense, the main location of Zweig's European utopia is the recreation of fin-de-siècle Vienna in Zweig's memoirs. There, I claim, we will find an 'embodied' representation of the values that inform Zweig's ethical discourse. What is more, the 'past' nature of the Viennese utopia, the fact that it is made of both memory and historical material, provides it with a foundational role. Given that Zweig's utopian spaces are mostly born out of experiences that become symbolic—and not due to the exclusive exercise of the imagination—, by looking at Zweig's fin-de-siècle Vienna we are somehow accessing the roots of his European *Weltanschauung*. The source of our analysis is, I have already said, *Die Welt von Gestern*, and in particular, those passages which acquire a utopian dimension. To complement Zweig's memoirs, we will analyze the lecture "Das Wien von Gestern", given in Paris in 1940.²²⁰

²²⁰ Commenting on the mythical/utopian qualities of the lecture "Das Wien von Gestern", Klaus Weissenberger argues that it "is the first major document of this almost exclusively counterfactual mythomotoric paradigm. He transfigured Vienna into an object of cultural memory, or a *mnemotopos* consisting mainly of *lieux de memoires*. This tendency indicates that for Zweig the *Anschluss* represented the total separation from what Vienna represented to him. He was confronted with the loss of the physical manifestations of his cultural homeland, his 'Heimat', and he experienced a void" (136).

Stefan Zweig's Viennese 'Utopia'

As it can be easily deduced, the main passages where Zweig built his utopia can be found in the first chapters of the autobiography, especially in chapter one "Die Welt der Sicherheit". The other two chapters that complement the description of turn-of-the-century Vienna—"Die Schule in vorigen Jahrhundert" and "Eros Matutinus"—are less idyllic in that their main function is either to criticize or to reflect on certain mores and social practices of Zweig's childhood and adolescent years. In brief, what distinguishes Zweig's Viennese utopia, what the Austrian writer seems to miss the most, is the idea and feeling of security. Thus, he opens his memoirs with these memorable lines:

Wenn ich versuche, für die Zeit vor dem ersten Weltkriege, in der ich aufgewachsen bin, eine handliche Formel zu finden, so hoffe ich am prägnantesten zu sein, wenn ich sage: es war das goldene Zeitalter der Sicherheit. Alles in unserer fast tausendjährigen österreichischen Monarchie schien auf Dauer gegründet und der Staat selbst der oberste Garant dieser Beständigkeit. Die Rechte, die er seinen Bürgern gewährte, waren verbrieft vom Parlament, der frei gewählten Vertretung des Volkes, und jede Pflicht genau begrenzt. Unsere Währung, die österreichische Krone, lief in blanken Goldstücken um und verbürgte damit ihre Unwandelbarkeit. Jeder wußte, wieviel er besaß oder wieviel ihm zukam, was erlaubt und was verboten war. Alles hatte seine Norm, sein bestimmtes Maß und Gewicht. (*WvG* 17)

Fin-de-siècle Vienna is a place where everything is predictable, calculable. One can foresee, one can know, or at least dare to imagine, the future. In radical contrast to the context of production of *Die Welt von Gestern*, what is to come does not scare the individual but is embraced as one more step forward towards the ideal society. The utopia of security, of stability, is the product of the age of reason, where one seemed to be the master of his own fate. What would later come to be an incognizable, fearsome power in Zweig's historiography—Fate—had been tamed by the forces of progress, technique and

reason. With the Emperor on top—that same figure whose exile marks the end of the dream in the chapter “Heimkehr nach Österreich”—, everything seemed to be ‘guaranteed’: “Niemand glaubte an Kriege, an Revolutionen und Umstürze. Alles Radikale, alles Gewalttätige schien bereits unmöglich in einem Zeitalter der Vernunft” (WvG 159).

Propelled by a liberal idealist *Weltanschauung*, the cult of progress, almost with a religious status, spread throughout society—becoming what gave sense and direction to everyone’s lives—, the epoch’s *Lebensideal*. It was just a matter of time that poverty and illness should be eradicated, as one of the most idyllic fragments of the chapter reflects:

Der Komfort drang aus den vornehmen Häusern in die bürgerlichen. [...] Die Menschen wurden schöner, kräftiger, gesünder, seit der Sport ihnen die Körper stählte, immer seltener sah man Verkrüppelte, Kropfige, Verstümmelte auf den Straßen, und all diese Wunder hatte die Wissenschaft vollbracht, dieser Erzeugel des Fortschritts. Auch im Sozialen ging es voran; von Jahr zu Jahr wurden dem Individuum neue Rechte gegeben, die Justiz linder und humaner gehandhabt, und selbst das Problem der Probleme, die Armut der großen Massen, schien nicht mehr unüberwindlich. (WvG 19)²²¹

Additionally, and as a consequence of both progress and security, Vienna espouses, on the one hand, the ideals of tolerance and conciliation: “An barbarische Rückfälle wie Kriege zwischen den Völkern Europas glaubte man so wenig mehr wie an Hexen und Gespenster; beharrlich waren unsere Väter durchdrungen von dem Vertrauen auf die unfehlbar bindende Kraft von Toleranz und Konzilianz” (WvG 19). On the other hand, peace and a common sense of humanity become the guiding principles of such society,

²²¹ A bit later, before the First World War, Zweig reminds us that before the catastrophe, “Überall entstanden neue Theater, Bibliotheken, Museen; Bequemlichkeiten, die wie Badezimmer und Telephon vordem das Privileg enger Kreise gewesen, drangen ein in die kleinbürgerlichen Kreise, und von unten stieg, seit die Arbeitszeit verkürzt war, das Proletariat empor, Anteil wenigstens an den kleinen Freuden und Behaglichkeiten des Lebens zu nehmen. Überall ging es vorwärts. [...] Aber nicht nur die Städte, auch die Menschen selbst wurden schöner und gesünder dank des Sports, der besseren Ernährung, der verkürzten Arbeitszeit und der innigeren Bindung an die Natur” (WvG 212).

values that are taken for granted: “Redlich meinten sie, die Grenzen und Divergenzen zwischen den Nationen und Konfessionen würden allmählich zerfließen ins gemeinsam Humane und damit Friede und Sicherheit, diese höchsten Güter, der ganzen Menschheit zugeteilt sein” (WvG 19). All in all, we can argue that both humanism—expressed by a drive towards the human, the dissolution or coming together of humanity’s differences under the banners of tolerance and conciliation—and peace are two basic pillars of Zweig’s European utopia.

In the same vein, another key characteristic of fin-de-siècle Vienna is the supremacy of culture and art over politics. In other words, Zweig’s ‘apoliticism’ finds expression in the atmosphere and daily life of the old capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: “In kaum einer Stadt Europas war nun der Drang zum Kulturellen so leidenschaftlich wie in Wien. Gerade weil die Monarchie, weil Österreich seit Jahrhunderten weder politisch ambitioniert noch in seinen militärischen Aktionen besonders erfolgreich gewesen, hatte sich der heimatliche Stolz am stärksten dem Wunsch einer künstlerischen Vorherrschaft zugewandt” (WvG 29). Under the spell of an omnipresent ‘theatermania’ and a passionate love for music, Zweig claims that nobody cared for politics, that the most famous actor of the time gained in popularity over the Prime Minister: “Nicht das Militärische, nicht das Politische, nicht das Kommerzielle hatte im Leben des Einzelnen wie in dem der Gesamtheit das Übergewicht; der erste Blick eines Wiener Durchschnittsbürgers in die Zeitung galt allmorgendlich nicht den Diskussionen im Parlament oder den Weltgeschehnissen, sondern dem Repertoire des Theaters, das eine für andere Städte kaum begreifliche Wichtigkeit im öffentlichen Leben einnahm” (WvG 29). In the same line, according to Zweig, art was a mass phenomenon that cut through the social divide: “Dieser Fanatismus für die Kunst und insbesondere für die theatralische Kunst ging in Wien durch alle Stände” (WvG 33).

Meanwhile, in “Das Wien von Gestern”, Zweig emphasizes this condition of Vienna as the capital of European culture (“Wien” 3943), a city with a historic mission that goes back to the time of the Romans: “eine Verteidigungsstätte überlegener Kultur” (“Wien” 3952). The idea of Vienna as an ideal community, its role as the defender of Latin—European—culture goes back to times immemorial, preceding the Habsburg monarchy. All the traits that define such *topos* form part of its (historical) ‘essence’. The centrality of culture in the configuration of the Viennese utopia acquires not only a symbolic but also a mythical quality. Accordingly, as the cradle of European culture, it provides a perfect scenario for the reception and development of art. Music, the universal artistic form par excellence, finds in Vienna an audience that is willing to see art reach its highest potential: “Der wahre Grund, daß die Musiker nach Wien kamen und in Wien blieben, war: sie spürten, daß hier das kulturelle Klima der Entfaltung ihrer Kunst am günstigsten war” (“Wien” 4036).

What is more, “[s]o konnten auch die großen Musiker keine idealere Stadt für Schaffen und Wirken finden als Wien, weil Wien das ideale Publikum hatte, weil die Kennerschaft, weil der Fanatismus für die Musik dort alle Gesellschaftsschichten gleichmäßig durchdrang” (“Wien” 4036). As in Zweig’s memoirs, art mania is a synonym of a disregard for politics. Even before the Jewish bourgeoisie started to act as the patrons of art, in the eighteenth century—the times of great composers like Mozart, Gluck, Haydn, Beethoven—that role was fulfilled by the Imperial house and the aristocracy. In sum, in Vienna art came before politics: “Ihre Hofkapelle, ihr Hoftheater sind ihr Stolz, und nichts auf dem weiten Gebiet der Verwaltung erledigen sie so persönlich wie diese Angelegenheiten. Welche Oper gespielt wird, welcher Kapellmeister, welcher Sänger engagiert werden soll, ist die Lieblings Sorge ihrer Sorgen” (“Wien” 4047). Finally, going a bit forward to his childhood days, and echoing some of the reflection in chapter two of

his memoirs—"Die Schule im vorigen Jahrhundert", Zweig claims of himself and his classmates that "[w]ir jungen Menschen kümmerten uns als rechte Wiener nicht um Politik und nicht um Nationalökonomie, und wir hätten uns geschämt, etwas von Sport zu wissen" ("Wien" 4090).²²²

Moving on in our analysis of Zweig's utopia, it must be noted that Vienna, as the capital of multinational Empire, is the perfect embodiment of supranationalism, with its focal point on the Imperial court: "Das Pult gehörte noch immer dem Kaiserhaus. Die kaiserliche Burg war das Zentrum nicht nur im räumlichen Sinn, sondern auch im kulturellen der Übernationalität der Monarchie" (*WvG* 34). Likewise, in "Das Wien von Gestern", Zweig expands this notion by arguing that "[i]n ihr [Hofburg] ist immer wieder der alte Traum eines geeinten Europas geträumt worden; ein übernationales Reich, ein 'heiliges römisches Reich', schwebte den Habsburgern vor—und nicht etwa eine Weltherrschaft des Germanentums" ("Wien" 3973). Also, he goes on to say that "[a]ll diese Kaiser dachten, planten, sprachen kosmopolitisch. Aus Spanien hatten sie sich die Etikette mitgebracht, Italien, Frankreich fühlten sie sich durch die Kunst verbunden, und durch Heirat allen Nationen Europas. [...] Ebenso war der Adel, der sich rings um das Kaiserhaus scharte, vollkommen international" ("Wien" 3973). What is more, this Viennese supranationalism and cosmopolitanism—coupled with the passion for art—created a plural atmosphere where difference was respected and contrasts eased, contributing to social harmony and peace.²²³ Vienna was a place to enjoy life: "In dieser Empfänglichkeit für alles Farbige, Klingende, Festliche, in dieser Lust am

²²² In *Die Welt von Gestern* there are other instances of Zweig's apolitical reading of fin-de-siècle Vienna. Thus, we read that there was a connection between the disdain for politics and the flourishing of Viennese modernism: "Es war eine besonders glückliche Atmosphäre, bedingt durch den künstlerischen Humus der Stadt, die unpolitische Zeit, die drängende Konstellation geistiger und literarischer Neuorientierung um die Jahrhundertwende" (*WvG* 74). Another example of this feature is the mild treatment of antisemitism in politics, which we have already discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

²²³ On art as a binding force: "Einzig gegenüber der Kunst fühlten in Wien alle ein gleiches Recht, weil Liebe zur Kunst in Wien als gemeinsame Pflicht galt" (*WvG* 38).

Schauspielhaften als Spiel- und Spiegelform des Lebens, gleichgültig ob auf der Bühne oder im realen Raum, war die ganze Stadt einig" ("Wien" 401).

Thus, we have already observed in chapter one how culture is a key factor, both in the eyes of Zweig and of cultural historians, in the assimilation and thriving of well-off Jewish families. In the same vein, in another passage that summarizes the Viennese spirit of conciliation, we read that

erst die nächsten Jahrzehnte werden erweisen, welches Verbrechen an Wien begangen wurde, indem man diese Stadt, deren Sinn und Kultur gerade in der Begegnung der heterogensten Elemente, in ihrer geistigen Übernationalität bestand, gewalttätig zu nationalisieren und zu provinzialisieren suchte. Denn das Genie Wiens—ein spezifisch musikalisches—war von je gewesen, daß es alle volkhaften, alle sprachlichen Gegensätze in sich harmonisierte, seine Kultur eine Synthese aller abendländischen Kulturen; wer dort lebte und wirkte, fühlte sich frei von Enge und Vorurteil. Nirgends war es leichter, Europäer zu sein. (WvG 40)

One of the most highlighted characteristics of fin-de-siècle Vienna is its harmony, the way it welcomed strangers and 'absorbed' them into this Arcadia of art, progress and security: "Aufnahmswillig und mit einem besonderen Sinn für Empfänglichkeit begabt, zog diese Stadt die disparatesten Kräfte an sich, entspannte, lockerte, begütigte sie; es war lind, hier zu leben, in dieser Atmosphäre geistiger Konzilianz, und unbewußt wurde jeder Bürger dieser Stadt zum Übernationalen, zum Kosmopolitischen, zum Weltbürger erzogen" (WvG 29). As we can discern in some of the quotes above, it is not easy to separate one aspect of Zweig's utopia from the rest, as they are inextricably linked in his *Weltanschauung* and form part of a wider 'semantics of Europe' that works mostly through a process of conceptual iteration, as I will discuss later. In brief, hospitality, cohabitation and diversity are the core of the Viennese utopia: "Es war wundervoll, hier zu leben, in dieser Stadt, die gastfrei alles Fremde aufnahm und gerne sich gab, es war in ihrer leichten, [...] das Leben zu genießen" (WvG 30). What is more, these values are

reflected everywhere, even in the physical shape of the city: “Diese Kunst der Angleichung, der zarten und musikalischen Übergänge, sie ward schon offenbar im äußeren Gebilde der Stadt. [...] man fühlte kaum, wo die Natur, wo die Stadt begann, eines löste sich ins andere ohne Widerstand und Widerspruch” (*WvG* 29-30).

Similarly, in “Das Wien von Gestern”, Zweig forwards the idea that the harmonic force of Vienna is essential for the dissolution of contrasts and (potential) conflicts: “Die Gegensätze verloren nur durch die ständige Mischung ihre Schärfe, alles wurde hier weicher, verbindlicher, konzilianter, entgegenkommender, liebenswürdiger—also österreichischer, wienerischer” (“Wien” 3983). Viennese and Austrian identities are made of a mixture of ‘bloods’ and cultures, traditions and histories. Vienna is the ideal place for nurturing a common culture; the Viennese outlook respects and embraces difference and otherness, all that lays beyond its frontiers: “Weil aus sovielen fremden Elementen bestehend, wurde Wien der ideale Nährboden für eine gemeinsame Kultur. Fremdes galt nicht als feindlich, als antinational, wurde nicht überheblich als undeutsch, als unösterreichisch abgelehnt, sondern geehrt und gesucht” (“Wien” 3983). Accordingly, German becomes ‘softer’ in Vienna thanks to the influence of the other languages from the Eastern regions of the Empire: “Unser Deutsch wurde dadurch nicht so hart, nicht so akzentuiert, nicht so eckig und präzise wie das der Norddeutschen, es war weicher, nachlässiger, musikalischer, und so wurde es uns auch leichter, fremde Sprachen zu lernen. [...] Wir hatten keine Feindseligkeit zu überwinden, keinen Widerstand, es war in den besseren Kreisen üblich, Französisch, Italienisch sich auszudrücken, und auch von diesen Sprachen nahm man die Musik in die unsere hinein” (“Wien” 4005); cuisine developed into a “*Mixtum compositum*” (“Wien 4005); and even the artistic hero of the Jung-Wien—Hofmannsthal—was the hybrid outcome of a rich cultural assortment:

Und Hofmannsthal, ein Viertel Oberösterreicher, ein Viertel Wiener, ein Viertel Jude, ein Viertel Italiener, zeigt geradezu symbolisch, welche neuen Werte, welche Feinheiten und glücklichen Überraschungen sich durch solche Mischungen ergeben können. In seiner Sprache ist sowohl in Vers als auch in Prosa vielleicht die höchste Musikalität, die die deutsche Sprache erreicht hat, eine Harmonisation des deutschen Genius mit dem lateinischen, wie sie nur in Österreich, in diesem Lande zwischen den beiden, gelingen konnte. Aber dies ist ja immer das wahre Geheimnis Wiens gewesen: annehmen, aufnehmen, durch geistige Konzilianz verbinden und das Dissonierende lösen in Harmonie. ("Wien" 4015)

Last but not least, a precondition for the functioning of the Viennese Arcadia is freedom. Accordingly, the lack of it is what put to an end the first attempt to realize the European dream: "Kunst wie Kultur kann nicht gedeihen ohne Freiheit, und gerade die Kultur Wiens kann ihr Bestes nicht entfalten, wenn sie abgeschnitten ist von dem lebendigen Quell europäischer Zivilisation. In dem ungeheuren Kampfe, der heute unsere alte Erde erschüttert, wird auch das Schicksal dieser Kultur entschieden" ("Wien" 4214). In this line, in *Die Welt von Gestern*, we read that at that time "noch war jenes Herden- und Massengefühl nicht so widerwärtig mächtig im öffentlichen Leben wie heute; Freiheit im privaten Tun und Lassen galt als eine—heute kaum mehr vorstellbare—Selbstverständlichkeit" (*WvG* 41).²²⁴

²²⁴ It may be seen as a trivial anecdote, but the utopian spirit with which Zweig imbues his memories of fin-de-siècle Vienna extends to the most unsuspected of places, such as the coffee house, which is described as a symbol of the democratic spirit of the city, elevated to the category of cultural emblem: "Aber unsere beste Bildungsstätte für alles Neue blieb das Kaffeehaus. Um dies zu verstehen, muß man wissen, daß das Wiener Kaffeehaus eine Institution besonderer Art darstellt, die mit keiner ähnlichen der Welt zu vergleichen ist. Es ist eigentlich eine Art demokratischer, jedem für eine billige Schale Kaffee zugänglicher Klub, wo jeder Gast für diesen kleinen Obolus stundenlang sitzen, diskutieren, schreiben, Karten spielen, seine Post empfangen und vor allem eine unbegrenzte Zahl von Zeitungen und Zeitschriften konsumieren kann" (*WvG* 56).

From Vienna to Flanders

In our analysis of the utopian foundations of Zweig's *Weltanschauung* as it unfolds in the Austrian writer's memoirs and the lecture "Das Wien von Gestern", we have discussed some of the key traits and values embedded in the historical recreation of fin-de-siècle Vienna. Said *topos* has been explored as the ur-materialization of Zweig's utopian thinking, the origin of his European dream. Therefore, by exploring *Die Welt von Gestern*'s historical discourse we have been able pinpoint some of the main tenets of Zweig's ethical program: supremacy of art and culture over politics ('apoliticism'); freedom; peace; surpanationalism/cosmopolitanism; tolerance, conciliation and humanism (drive towards the 'human' and the notion of a 'common sense of humanity'); harmony, diversity, cohabitation. Some of these 'values' are familiar to us, since they have informed the figures of commitment and intellectuality explored in Chapter I. As the ethical fundamentals of Zweig's idea of the world, they impregnate everything—or, at least, this is the premise that informs our reflections throughout this dissertation—, contributing to the notion that one of the meanings of 'Europe' in Zweig's work is its potential to become 'an ethical program'. As such, we will try to articulate it at the end of this chapter.

Before we get to Zweig's 'Europe', however, we need yet to consider other materializations of the Viennese/European utopia. I contend that, as a proof of the utopian 'nature' of Zweig's historical discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern*, there are other *topoi* in his work which are also, although more partially, manifestations of his utopian drive. In other words, Vienna is not the only location where Zweig foresees the possibility of projecting his utopian thinking. As an example, I would like to discuss Verhaeren's Belgium—Flanders—and the Paris of *Die Welt von Gestern*. The first thing that must be said is that Zweig's utopia unfolds mainly in an urban landscape. Thus, there is a clear

connection between 'die Welt' and 'das Wien' *von Gestern*, with the former taking roots in the latter. In this regard, the city is not only the utopian place par excellence, but also the core of the European idea. There is a special 'sound' in the European city of the fin-de-siècle, something that raises beyond national languages and boundaries: "In Deutschland ist er gewesen, in Berlin, in Wien und Prag, immer allein als einsamer Wanderer, unkundig der Sprache und nur horchend auf die Stimme der Stadt selbst, auf das fremde, finstre Rauschen, auf die Meeresbrandung der europäischen Metropolen" (VERHAEREN 48). The city is where modernity takes place, where the multifarious elements that compose the experience of contemporaneity come together, resolving differences and contrasts effortlessly: "[D]ie ideale moderne Stadt, die Riesenstadt überhaupt, dieses fremde und ungeheure Ding, das vampirisch alle Kräfte des Bodens und der Menschen an sich gerissen hat, um ein neues Residuum an Kraft zu bilden" (VERHAEREN 49). All in all, and as Wilma Iggers concludes, Zweig's Europe, the Europe of the cosmopolitan artist, 'happens', materializes in the city: "When Zweig said 'Europe', he meant big cities" (11).

If we focus our attention on Verhaeren's Belgium/Flanders, we will observe that, as in Vienna, harmony is its main feature. Belgium is presented as a land of conciliation, a space for the negotiation of contrasts and difference, where some of the most powerful European cultures converge:

Belgien ist eine Wegkreuzung Europas. Wenige Stunden führen von Brüssel, dem Herzen des eisernen Geäders, nach Deutschland, Frankreich, Holland und England und dann von der Küste hin auf der pfadlosen Ebene des Meeres zu allen Ländern und allen Rassen. Klein ist die Fläche des Landes und spiegelt so übersichtlich in charakteristischer Verkürzung unendliche Vielfalt. Alle Gegensätze stehen sich knapp und scharfkonturiert Stirn an Stirn gegenüber. [...] wallonischen. Nackt, klar, unvermittelt und wundervoll übersichtlich trotzen sich hier die Gegensätze. (VERHAEREN 10).

In this location, out of the contrasts a new race emerges, the product of the European synthesis. There is power and beauty in this new race: “Und diese neue belgische Rasse ist eine starke Rasse, eine der tüchtigsten Europas. [...] Und wie in Amerika hat hier die Mischung der Rassen und ein fruchtbares, gesundes Land starke Menschen gezeugt. Denn die belgische Rasse ist eine Rasse der Vitalität” (VERHAEREN 11). In the same vein and echoing one of passages from *Die Welt von Gestern* quoted above, health becomes a ‘feature’ of the landscape; even the poor do not look it anymore: “Gesundheit, Kraft und Fruchtbarkeit spürt man heute noch überall in Stadt und Land. Selbst die Armut ist hier nicht hohlwangig und entknöchert” (VERHAEREN 11). Likewise, wealth abounds, the riches of Belgium and its colonies (Congo) seem to be endless: “Belgien ist heute verhältnismäßig das reichste Land Europas. [...] Kaum wissen sie, wohin mit ihrem Kapital; in Rußland, in China, in Japan ist belgisches Geld investiert, an allen Unternehmungen sind sie beteiligt, ihre Finanziers beherrschen die Konsortien der großen Länder” (VERHAEREN 27).

Besides embodying the material side of progress, Flanders also comes to represent a sort of ‘apolitical’ community, a precondition, as we have seen, for the flourishing of art and culture. In the end, this is the context out of which the great European poet Verhaeren is born: “Denn der Drang zu künstlerischer Betätigung ist am größten in Ländern mit geringen Expansionsmöglichkeiten. [...] wo die Politik notwendigerweise kleinlich, die Verwaltungsprobleme begrenzt sein müssen, sind geniale Naturen in ihrer Betätigung fast ausschließlich auf künstlerische Probleme angewiesen” (VER 12). Additionally, the sum of this supremacy of art and culture and the harmony and diversity of the region, it becomes the perfect place for the development of the European utopia. All in all, Verhaeren’s Belgium/Flanders are the ideal spot for the nurturing and cultivation of a European conscience. It is precisely in the homes of artists like Verhaeren that Zweig

experiments for the first time a feeling, an atmosphere, of Europeanness: “Denn sie gerade waren befähigt, das große komplexe und erst im Werden begriffene europäische Gefühl durchleuchten zu lassen, weil sie im Begriff der Heimat nicht nur das begrenzte belgische Land, sondern alle die Nachbarländer empfanden, weil sie Heimatliche und Weltfahrer zugleich waren: die Wegkreuzung, zu der nicht nur alte Wege führen, sondern von der auch alle ihren Ausgang haben” (VERHAEREN 15). For all these reasons, the Belgian utopia is, like fin-de-siècle Vienna, supranational and cosmopolitan, the heart of Europe. At least, that is the image forwarded in Verhaeren’s work, which through enthusiasm embraces diversity and is able to provide a single frame of cohabitation for multiple particularisms: “Nicht vereinzelt hat er dieses Flandern gefühlt als eine Provinz, sondern als das Herz Europas, hat Blutkraft von außen nach innen und von innen nach außen strömen lassen, die Horizonte hinter den Grenzen aufgetan und so lange erhöht, verbunden und in gleicher Begeisterung das Einzelne zusammengeglüht” (VERHAEREN 15)

From Vienna to Paris

The analogies between Flanders and Vienna are not accidental; both are born out of Zweig’s experiences, recreated through memory, and put together in order not to simply describe a place, but to convey an idea. Another instance of the utopian evocation of an urban landscape can be found, as I pointed out before, in *Die Welt von Gestern*. For Vienna is not the only utopian location of said work. In the first pages of chapter five “Paris, die Stadt der ewigen Jugend”, Zweig similarly projects some of the traits of his European utopia on the French city. Above all, Paris symbolizes freedom, both at a personal and collective levels. On the one hand, it is the first place where he travels to after finishing university in order to enjoy his new freedom. On the other hand, before evoking his memories of the city, Zweig reflects on its fate after the Nazi invasion. While

doing so, he remarks the great qualities of the city—happiness, tolerance, freedom, and creativity. The Paris Zweig is trying to recover from memory is in the literal sense a 'utopia' a 'no-place'; at the time of writing his memoirs, it no longer exists (and perhaps never did):

Kaum je ein eigenes Unglück hat mich so betroffen, so erschüttert, so verzweifelt gemacht wie die Erniedrigung dieser Stadt, die wie keine begnadet gewesen, jeden, der ihr nahte, glücklich zu machen. Wird sie noch einmal wieder Generationen zu geben vermögen, was sie uns gegeben: die weiseste Lehre, das wundervollste Beispiel, gleichzeitig frei und schöpferisch zu sein, jedem aufgetan und nur immer reicher werdend an dieser schönen Verschwendung? (*WvG* 144)

Europe is no longer the same, it has been poisoned. Despite all the progress achieved in the last twenty-five years, the European nations find themselves in a state of decay. Continuing this comparison between 'today' and 'yesterday', Zweig reinvokes his duty to bear witness to what has been lost: "Wir aber, die wir noch die Welt der individuellen Freiheit gekannt, wir wissen und können es bezeugen, daß Europa sich einstmals sorglos freute seines kaleidoskopischen Farbenspiels" (*WvG* 150). There had been another—potential—road for Europe, and Paris was at its center. The city was much more than French, it congregated people from all over the world, traditions and cultures experienced and explored their differences in an atmosphere of joy and lightness: "Chinesen und Skandinavier, Spanier und Griechen, Brasilianer und Kanadier, jeder fühlte sich an der Seine zuhause. Es gab keinen Zwang, man konnte sprechen, denken, lachen, schimpfen, wie man wollte, jeder lebte, wie es ihm gefiel, gesellig oder allein, verschwenderisch oder sparsam, luxuriös oder bohèmehaft, es war für jede Sonderheit Raum und gesorgt für alle Möglichkeiten" (*WvG* 145).

All in all, Paris had room for everyone. The city is described as a community where the categories of race, class and origin do not evolve into prejudices. The individual is

free from those constraints: “Niemand genierte sich vor niemandem; die hübschesten Mädchen schämten sich nicht, mit einem pechschwarzen Neger oder einem schlitzäugigen Chinesen Arm in Arm und ins nächste petit hôtel zu gehen—wer kümmerte sich in Paris um solche später erst aufgeblasenen Popanze wie Rasse, Klasse und Herkunft?” (WvG 145). Following this line of discussion, I contend that the most important idea in Zweig’s European utopia is the notion of harmony or coexistence. For a place to become utopian and live up to the values of Zweig’s *Weltanschauung* it must be capable of peacefully ‘managing’ diversity. At the end of the day, for harmony, pluralism and cosmopolitanism to emerge, the other values that lay at the core of Zweig’s ethics—freedom, peace, and tolerance—are indispensable.

Continuing our exploration of the Paris of Zweig’s youth, we must insist on the extent to which the notion of social freedom pervades the city. Having inherited the democratic values and spirit of the French Revolution, “der proletarische Arbeiter fühlte sich ebenso als freier und vollwichtiger Bürger wie sein Brotgeber, der Kellner schüttelte im Café dem galonierten General kollegial die Hand, fleißige, solide, saubere Kleinbürgersfrauen rümpften nicht die Nase über die Prostituierte auf demselben Gang, sondern schwatzten täglich mit ihr auf der Treppe, und ihre Kinder schenkten ihr Blumen” (WvG 147).²²⁵ In sum, Paris was a city open to everyone, beautiful and pleasurable to the senses. What is more, it is also a place with a rich cultural and artistic milieu, which, together with an exceptional historical tradition, makes it a place where *Geist* has reached its maximum expression. In fact, while discussing the cultural heritage of the city, Zweig lets us know that he had to come to know Paris before actually being there through its poets and historians. In a way, Zweig admits to having internalized an ‘ideal’ image of the city that

²²⁵ In the same vein, we read that “Paris kannte nur ein Nebeneinander der Gegensätze, kein Oben und Unten; zwischen den Luxusstraßen und den schmutzigen Durchläßen daneben lief keine sichtbare Grenze, und überall ging es gleich belebt und heiter zu” (WvG 148).

might have influenced both his experiences and, later, his memories, making of Paris an embodiment of his utopia and, thus, an immortal, eternal, city:

Überzeugend empfand ich hier wie immer in Frankreich, wieviel eine große und dem Wahrhaften zugewandte Literatur ihrem Volke an verewigender Kraft zurückgibt, denn alles in Paris war mir eigentlich durch die darstellende Kunst der Dichter, der Romanciers, der Historiker, der Sittenschilderer geistig im voraus vertraut gewesen, ehe ich es mit eigenen Augen gesehen. (*WvG* 151-157).²²⁶

2.1.6. Between the World of Yesterday and the Land of the Future: Zweig's 'Utopia' Beyond Europe—*Brasilien* (1941)

Although it might have seemed that we were heading, in the previous section, towards a conclusion of our exploration of Zweig's utopian spaces, there is still one more location we need consider. For, although we will still call it 'European'—being informed by the same values we have already discussed—it differs from everything we have seen so far in two fundamental ways. On the one hand, the last of Zweig's utopias is oriented towards the future. That is to say, not only can we contend that Zweig's message is directed to future generations, but also that the actual place of projection of this utopia is the future as foreseen from present experience. In other words, without disregarding all the arguments we have given for reading Zweig's historical discourse as a 'past utopia', the truth is that, although 'disguised' as something else, the Austrian also left us a 'future' European utopia. However, as this section will hopefully prove, it becomes harder to interpret this utopia as 'European' without taking into account, and dissecting the main elements of, the Viennese utopia. To be able to read *Die Welt von Gestern* and *Brasilien*

²²⁶ Other locations of Zweig's utopia include, for instance, the Switzerland of *Die Welt von Gestern*, which is also another 'heart' of Europe, the embodiment of the supranational ideal, as we will discuss later, or, according to Prochnik, the Great Britain evoked in the essay "Die Gärten im Kriege" (1940): "Thus he rhapsodized over the eroticized social freedom of Paris in the early twentieth century—and the eroticized political freedom he discerned in Brazil in the 1930s. In Great Britain, as well, he discovered a version of his democratic idyll" (280).

as 'European' utopias, one must analyze them together. On the other hand, besides the aforementioned temporal reorientation, this Brazilian utopian *topos* also suffers a spatial relocation that, paradoxically, transposes Zweig's European *Weltanschauung* beyond the margins of the Old World.

This Zweigian utopia is located in South America. More especially, in Brazil, with Rio de Janeiro—a city, as it could not be otherwise, at the core of the utopian experience. As the title of this section indicates, the textual articulation of Zweig's Brazilian utopia is to be found in his monograph *Brasilien* (1941), which will be analyzed in depth in this section. However, before getting there, we must analyze how Zweig reaches the point where Europe's reality is not 'good' enough. At a certain point, the European model is exhausted; future prospects are bleak. Zweig feels the need to either go back in time—as we have amply discussed—or beyond Europe. In the last chapter of *Die Welt von Gestern* "Die Agonie des Friedens", Zweig describes his first years of exile in England. He tells the reader that, despite remaining for many years in England—first in London and then in Bath, where he bought a house—, he never truly felt at home there. That is the reason why, he suspects, he travelled extensively between the rise of Hitler and the beginning of the Second World War. Among said travels, Zweig crossed the Atlantic twice. Looking back on those journeys, he reflects that

Vielleicht drängte mich das Vorgefühl, daß man sich, solange die Welt offenstand und Schiffe friedlich ihre Bahn über die Meere ziehen durften, für dunklere Zeiten an Eindrücken und Erfahrungen aufspeichern sollte, soviel das Herz zu fassen vermochte, vielleicht auch die Sehnsucht zu wissen, daß, während unsere Welt sich durch Mißtrauen und Zwietracht zerstörte, eine andere sich aufbaute, vielleicht sogar eine noch ganz dämmerhafte Ahnung, daß unsere und selbst meine persönliche Zukunft jenseits von Europa läge. (WvG 421)

Likewise, after briefly narrating his impressions of Argentina during his visit to the country on the occasion of the P.E.N. Congress of 1936, he feels that Europe is somehow a thing of the past, that the regeneration of Europe, of its culture, its civilization, must happen elsewhere: “Man mußte nur lernen, in größeren Dimensionen zu denken, mit weiteren Zeiträumen zu rechnen. Man sollte beginnen, sagte ich mir, nicht mehr bloß europäisch zu denken, sondern über Europa hinaus, nicht sich selbst in einer absterbenden Vergangenheit begraben, sondern teilhaben an ihrer Wiedergeburt” (WvG 423). In the same vein, his visit to Brazil confirmed his hopes and started the process of relocation of Zweig’s European utopia. In said country Zweig saw reenacted his dream of a peaceful society where social, economic, political and racial differences coexisted side by side. Above all, he saw the future potential of the land:

Friedlicher lebten hier die Menschen zusammen, höflicher, nicht so feindselig wie bei uns war der Verkehr selbst zwischen den verschiedensten Rassen. [...] [H]ier war der Raum, um dessen ärmste Quentchen in Europa die Staaten kämpften und die Politiker quengelten, in ungemessener Fülle der Zukunft bereit. [...] Hier konnte, was Europa an Zivilisation geschaffen, in neuen und anderen Formen sich großartig fortsetzen und entwickeln. Ich hatte, das Auge beglückt durch die tausendfältige Schönheit dieser neuen Natur, einen Blick in die Zukunft getan. (WvG 425)

From Zweig’s words we can deduce that he had not found a radically new utopia; the values that inform his ‘vision’ are the same. What the New World can offer is both the space and the possibility of creating a community informed by said values. As for Zweig’s insistence on the future, it can also be observed in the manuscript of a lecture given in Rio de Janeiro during the 1936 trip, where Zweig addresses, with a certain patronizing tone, these ‘young’ American countries, asking them to carry on the European dream (“GEE” 142). What is more, the genesis of this manuscript reveals the Zweig’s intellectual movement, his need to look for alternatives beyond Europe. According to the editors of

the text—which had been ‘lost’ for 77 years—the conference paper had been originally written in German as “Die geistige Einheit Europas”. However, in order to reach a wider audience, Zweig decided to translate it into French and change the title to “L’Unité spirituelle du monde”. All in all, it seems obvious, as we will explore in the following pages, that Zweig was still mentally and emotionally attached to Europe. He might have changed the title of this lecture—from Europe to the World—or rewritten his Viennese/European utopia on Brazilian soil, but the fact remained that he never entirely escaped his *Heimat*:

Aber reisen und selbst weithin reisen bis unter andere Sterne und in andere Welten hieß nicht Europa und der Sorge um Europa entfliehen. Fast scheint es boshafte Rache der Natur an dem Menschen, daß alle die Errungenschaften der Technik, dank derer er die geheimnisvollsten ihrer Gewalten in seine Hände gerafft, ihm gleichzeitig die Seele verstören. Keinen schlimmeren Fluch hat die Technik über uns gebracht, als daß sie uns verhindert, auch nur für einen Augenblick der Gegenwart zu entfliehen. (WvG 425)

From *Die Welt von Gestern* to *Brasilien*

In the last years of his exile, Zweig looked for other places, besides fin-de-siècle Vienna, to locate both his ethical commitment and his utopia. While Europe, engaged in a suicidal war, did not offer many possibilities nor future hopes, South America, and especially Brazil, presented new opportunities. As a result of Zweig’s fascination with the country, he wrote of his last and most polemic works, *Brasilien. Ein Land der Zukunft*, published in 1941 simultaneously in four languages (Portuguese, French, German and English). As we will discuss later, said text was met both with the highest praise and the harshest of criticisms, either as a tribute to Brazil from one of the most prominent European authors of the time or as a work of propaganda financed by the government of the dictator Getúlio Vargas. Coincidentally enough, most judgements resemble those of *The World of*

Yesterday, dubbing the work as a too idealistic, picturesque, exotic, and utopian description of an otherwise poverty-ridden and totalitarian state. While that is a legitimate claim, it is also true, as it was for Zweig's autobiography, that the author never intended to write either a factual and accurate history of Europe or a comprehensive view of Brazil.

On the contrary, Zweig's idealism, which had made him the recipient of many reproaches and condemnations, was based on the belief in the power of ideas and art to transcend both time and space. For Zweig, at a time of failure and estrangement, in the mental framework of the apocalypse, both fin-de-siècle Vienna and Brazil became places to ensure that his ethical commitment survived an all too scary and destructive present (Hu 92). From this perspective, we could argue that *Brazil* is a sort of afterthought to Zweig's memoirs, an epilogue that opens up a new space to unleash the potential of Zweig's commitment. Taking all this into account, in this section I will analyze the text from the perspective of Zweig's ethical project and utopian (European) thinking, analyzing it together with his autobiography and in the context of his intellectual *engagement* as a writer.²²⁷

Stefan Zweig in Brazil

Before analyzing the way in which Zweig's European utopia unfolds in *Brasilien*, it is important to lay out its genesis and context of production, since they will provide us with

²²⁷ Alberto Dines, in his biography of Zweig *Morte no paraíso* (1981), was one of the first to propose a utopian reading of Zweig's text. Others who have followed this line of inquiry are: Jeroen. "Neue Perspektiven zu Stefan Zweigs Brasilien. Ein Land der Zukunft." *Stefan Zweig: Abschied von Europa*, edited by Klemens Renoldner, Vienna, Christian Brandstätter, 2014, pp. 137-146.; Kestler, Izabela Furtado. "Die Exilliteratur und das Exil der deutschsprachigen Schriftsteller und Publizisten in Brasilien." Frankfurt am Main, Lang, 1992.; Pooth, Xenia. *Der Blick auf das Fremde. Stefan Zweigs Brasilien. Ein Land der Zukunft*. Marburg, Tectum Verlag, 2005.; Schwamborn, Ingrid. *Die Letzte Partie. Stefan Zweigs Leben und Werk in Brasilien*. Bielefeld, Aisthesis, 1999.; Weidong, Ren. "Das imaginäre Brasilien als Projektionsfläche von Zweigs Europa-Träumen—Stefan Zweigs Brasilien, ein Land der Zukunft." Aktualität und Beliebtheit. Neue Forschung und Rezeption von Stefan Zweig im internationalen Blickwinkel, edited by Zhang Yi, and Mark H. Gelber, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2015, pp. 229-236.; Sogos, Giorgia. "Ein Europäer in Brasilien zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft: utopische Projektionen des Exilanten Stefan Zweig." *Europa im Spiegel von Migration und Exil. Projektionen-Imaginationen-Hybride Identitäten*, edited by Lydya Schmuck, and Marina Corrêa, Berlin, Frank & Timme, 2015.

some crucial information to understand the composition of the text as well as some aspects of its reception. Zweig visited Brazil on three different occasions. The first visit, which I have already mentioned, occurred during Zweig's first South American tour, which took place from the 8th August to the 6th October 1936. Zweig had been invited to participate in the International P.E.N. Congress in Buenos Aires (from the 4th to the 14th September). However, upon the insistence of his Brazilian publisher Abrahao Koogan and following a formal invitation by the Brazilian government, Zweig decided to make a stop off in Brazil first, where he arrived on the 21st August 1936.

According to Oliver Matuschek, his fame and success in both Europe and Brazil ensured him “a reception worthy of an official state visitor” (293). A tightly packed schedule took him from Rio de Janeiro to Petrópolis, Sao Paulo and Santos, including a visit to a coffee plantation and several other activities which were later incorporated in his first account of Brazil, *Kleine Reise nach Brasilien*, a series of articles published in the Hungarian journal *Pester Lloyd* in 1936. In these first impressions we can already observe a fascination with the land, especially with the beauty of Rio, which will become the core experience of Zweig's idea of Brazil. At the end of the journey, Zweig asked Abrahao Koogan not to publish these articles, since he had in mind to visit the country again next year and then write a whole book about his journey. Both the second trip and the book would have to wait a few years due to both historical and personal circumstances—the Spanish Civil War in 1936, the *Anschluss* in Austria in 1938, and Zweig's divorce from his first wife Friderike, among other things. Finally, in 1940, Zweig went back to Brazil to complete his research for the book, which would be published in November 1941. By then, Zweig had obtained a permanent visa (5th November 1940) and rented a house in Petrópolis for six months (17th September 1941), where he lived with his second wife Lotte until they committed suicide on the 22nd February 1942.

Brasilien I: Introduction—The Idea of Brazil

The contents of *Brazil. A Land of the Future* are divided into two very different parts. The first comprises the “Einleitung” and the chapters “Geschichte”, “Wirtschaft” and “Blick auf die brasilianische Kultur”—and it is used by Zweig to develop his idea of Brazil—, whereas the second is devoted to narrating a journey—or tour—through some of Brazil’s most prominent sights. We could contend that, whereas the first one is an essay on several aspects of the country, the second resembles a sort of travel book, partly derived from the articles written in 1936. Following the table of contents, we will start by carrying out a close reading of the introduction, which offers us some key ideas for unravelling the not-so-obvious layers of the text. The first thing that must be noted is that Zweig establishes a direct link between his text and the well-known accounts by the ‘discoverers’ of America in the 15th and 16th centuries (see Dines *Morte Paraíso*): “Brasilien ist heute im kulturellen Sinne noch ebenso eine terra incognita, wie sie es den ersten Seefahrern im geographischen gewesen” (*BRASILIEN* 26).

Thus, he acknowledges that the way he looks at Brazil is tinted by his European mindset, by a sort of prefiguration and anticipation that make his account deviate to certain extent from ‘reality’. Once he has got rid of the European arrogance that expects Brazil to be “irgend eine der südamerikanischen Republiken, die man nicht genau von einander unterscheidet, mit heißem, ungesundem Klima, mit unruhigen politischen Verhältnissen und desolaten Finanzen, unordentlich verwaltet und nur in den Küstenstädten halbwegs zivilisiert, aber landschaftlich schön und mit vielen ungenützten Möglichkeiten” (*BRASILIEN* 26), Zweig knows that he has gazed into the future. However, at his point, after embracing the beauty and possibilities of the land, he risks, as did the first *Crónicas de Indias*, getting carried away and embellishing or distorting reality. We must not forget that, as we pointed out at the beginning, Zweig is desperate, running away

from the European “Nationalitäten- und Rassenwahn” (*BRASILIEN* 89): “Immer leidenschaftlicher wurde mein Wunsch, mich aus einer Welt, die sich zerstört, für einige Zeit in eine zu retten, die friedlich und schöpferisch aufbaut” (*BRASILIEN* 57). Hence it is from this very specific mindset, which establishes a connection between the old and the new continents, between Zweig’s memoirs and *Brasilien*, that we must read his enthusiasm and his willingness to project and materialize his European ‘failed’ utopia.

Following what we have established in the previous section, Zweig sets a very specific goal for the text, that is, being aware of the impossibility of conveying a complete general picture of the country, he will focus on one single issue (the core of his utopia): how Brazil, despite all its internal differences and contrasts, has managed to coexist peacefully and harmoniously. For, according to Zweig, no other country has been able to find a most exemplary answer to the question: “[W]ie ist auf unserer Erde ein friedliches Zusammenleben der Menschen trotz aller disparaten Rassen, Klassen, Farben, Religionen und Überzeugungen zu erreichen?” (*BRASILIEN* 92). From this moment onwards, Brazil will become Europe’s dialogical opposite, acquiring all the traits and ideals that are no longer realizable in the old continent. For instance, nationalism—which in Europe has turned every country against its neighbors and therefore has become, according to Zweig’s memoirs, “the ultimate pestilence that has poisoned the flower of our European culture” (*WvG* 20)—in Brazil has managed to unite a community made up of the most diverse elements, fomenting a national culture defined by the notions of harmony, equality, intermixing, softness (in opposition to vehemence), tolerance, and peace.

Above all, according to Zweig, the ‘idea of Brazil’ defies the basis of any racial theory by proving that “die ständige Durchströmung und gegenseitige Anpassung unter gleichem Klima und gleichen Lebensbedingungen hat einen durchaus individuellen Typus herausgearbeitet, dem alle die von den Rassenreinheitsfanatikern großmäulig

angekündigten 'zersetzenden' Eigenschaften völlig fehlen" (*BRASILIEN* 121). This realization had deeper consequences for a European who, by witnessing that another way of living together is possible—as the humanists and pacifists had imagined for Europe in the interwar period—, is forced to redefine the standard of civilization: "Wir sind nicht mehr willens, sie kurzerhand dem Begriff 'Organisation' und 'Komfort' gleichzustellen. [...] So sind wir nicht mehr gewillt, eine Rangordnung anzuerkennen im Sinne der industriellen, der finanziellen, der militärischen Schlagkraft eines Volkes, sondern das Maß der Vorbildlichkeit eines Landes anzusetzen an seiner friedlichen Gesinnung und seiner humanen Haltung" (*BRASILIEN* 159).

Brasilien II: History

All these arguments, notions, and ideas developed by Zweig in the introduction—and which make Brazil 'a land of the future'—form the core of his ethical program as articulated both in his memoirs and in a significant number of his texts. In fact, most of these concepts will recur throughout *Brasilien*, informing Zweig's vision of the country's history, economy and culture. As it could not be otherwise, Zweig starts by looking at Brazil's past in order to find there the roots and antecedents of the 'Brazilian idea'. On the one hand, amid a number a basic facts and dates of Brazil's history, Zweig highlights the role of the Jesuit missionaries in bringing to the country the ideas of civilization, the intermixing of races (*mestiçagem*), freedom and peace. Whereas other colonizers went there only for the immediate profit, the Jesuits were the first whose aim is directed into the future: "Aber gerade daß ihr Ziel von Anfang an vollkommen ins Weite, ins Jahrhundertweite, ja ins Ewige gerichtet ist, hebt sie so großartig ab von der Beamtschaft und Kriegerschaft, die raschen und sichtbaren Gewinn für sich und das Heimatland wollen" (*BRASILIEN* 398). Equally, according to Zweig, they started to carry out through education the idea of systematic mixing that formed Brazil into a whole:

“Darum ist es den Jesuiten das Wichtigste, Schulen einzurichten, in denen sie, weit vorausblickend, mit jener Idee systematischer Vermischung beginnen, die Brasilien zur Einheit geformt und allein als Einheit erhalten hat” (*BRASILIEN* 446).

In the same vein, Zweig traces back to the action of the Jesuit missionaries the notions of freedom and equality: “[I]n ihrem Plan soll es im künftigen Brasilien nicht eine Herrennation von Weißen und eine Sklavennation von Farbigen geben, sondern nur ein einheitliches, freies Volk auf freier Erde” (*BRASILIEN* 494). On the other hand, and following the same line of discussion, the next protagonists are the Dutch colonizers and, more specifically, their leader Moritz von Nassau. According to Zweig, they are responsible for continuing and expanding the civilizing mission of the Jesuits. Not only do they bring an entire army of scholars, scientists, engineers, etc., but they also foment the ideals of tolerance and pacifism. As for the former—tolerance—being closely associated with the credo of humanism, it is one of the most relevant aspects of the Zweigian ethics, as we will discuss later on. In his own words, “Moritz von Nassau macht gute Figur in der brasilianischen Geschichte. Er hat als Humanist die Idee der Toleranz mitgebracht, allen Religionen freie Wirkung verstattet, allen Künsten fruchtbare Entwicklung ermöglicht, und selbst die alten Ansiedler können über keine Gewalttätigkeit klagen” (*BRASILIEN* 49).

Finally, Zweig develops in this chapter the idea that, historically, the Brazilian rarely resorts to violence, for essentially the Brazilian is neither “weder radikal noch revolutionär” (*Brasilien* 849). Even the abdication of Pedro I “wird wieder die brasilianische Tradition glücklich gewahrt, staatspolitische Umstürze womöglich ganz ohne Blutvergießen und in konzilianter Art zu vollziehen. Still, nicht verfolgt von Haß und Groll, verläßt der erste Kaiser Brasiliens das Land” (*BRASILIEN* 946) From this perspective, among all the great political and military figures of Brazilian history, Zweig

will praise the figure of Pedro II, who in his eyes embodies the ideal of the humanist and scholar: “Pedro II. ist dem Wesen nach eine kontemplative Natur, eher ein auf den Thron verschlagener Privatgelehrter oder Bibliothekar als ein Mann der Politik oder der Armee” (*BRASILIEN* 965). Thus, pacifism, a key category of Zweig’s ethical program, becomes one of the deepest traits of the Brazilian identity both at the individual and collective levels: “In all seinen verschiedenen Formen hat sich Brasilien im tiefsten nicht verändert, es hat sich nur entwickelt zu immer stärkerer und selbstbewußterer nationaler Persönlichkeit. Sowohl in seiner inneren wie in seiner äußeren Politik hat es unerschütterlich, weil die Seele von Millionen und Millionen spiegelnd, dieselbe Methode angewendet: friedliche Schlichtung aller Konflikte durch gegenseitige Konzilianz” (*BRASILIEN* 70).

Brasilien III: Economy and Culture

The chapter devoted to Brazil’s economy—where Zweig does not seem to find much room to project his utopia—focuses on explaining Brazil’s several economic cycles in order to understand not only its current deficiencies but also, above all, to emphasize its enormous potential (*BRASILIEN* 1079). Additionally, it deals with the several migratory movements, both within the country and from abroad, that have contributed to its diversity. It is interesting to note here one of the negative byproducts of Zweig’s fixation with the idea of Europe. If we are claiming that the articulation of Zweig’s ethical program is one of the keys not only to make sense of his legacy but also to include his works in our discussions on ethics, Europe, post-nationalism, or the role of literature and the artist’s commitment, among others, we must also establish the limits of the Zweigian thought. Can we say that, by exporting or projecting his European utopia onto Brazil, Zweig’s discourse in his memoirs—those of a European according to the text’s subtitle—becomes automatically universal?

Although that may be the author's intention, the truth is that the text is underpinned to a large extent by Eurocentrism, primitivism and even, to some extent, racism. Without going any further, on the topic of migration, Zweig will claim that

Diese Immigration von vier bis fünf Millionen Weißen in den letzten fünfzig Jahren hat einen ungeheuren Energieeinschuß für Brasilien bedeutet und gleichzeitig einen gewaltigen kulturellen und ethnologischen Gewinn gebracht. Die brasilianische Rasse, die durch einen dreihundertjährigen Negerimport in der Hautfarbe immer dunkler, immer afrikanischer zu werden drohte, hellt sich sichtbar wieder auf, und das europäische Element steigert im Gegensatz zu den primitiv herangewachsenen, analphabetischen Sklaven das allgemeine Zivilisationsniveau. (*BRASILIEN* 1643).

All in all, following the ideas of the literary critic José Heredia Maya as recently discussed by the Americanist Rodrigo Andrés, I contend that we are in the obligation, when discussing or teaching Zweig's or, in fact, anyone else's works, of pinpointing those instances where the author may promote any sort of discrimination or hate, whenever he puts in motion what Heredia terms the "mirada sucia" ("contaminated gaze"), a biased and prejudiced way of looking at the other (119).

Resuming our analysis of Zweig's text, this first part of the work ends with an assessment of Brazilian culture, including a discussion of the country's character, lifestyle and artistic achievements. Here Zweig deals once again with many of the features mentioned in the introduction, namely harmony, conciliation, intermixing, pacifism, softness, etc. After asserting—in the most Eurocentric fashion—that "[a]lles was wir heute brasilianisch nennen und als solches anerkennen, läßt sich nicht aus einer eigenen Tradition erklären, sondern aus einer schöpferischen Umwandlung des Europäischen durch das Land, das Klima und seine Menschen" (*BRASILIEN* 1851). Zweig focuses on the idea of softness or lack of vehemence—echoing our reflection on silence and noisemaking in the analysis of *Erasmus*. In other words, Zweig argues that the Brazilian

is by nature non-violent, to the point that Zweig explains murder as a sudden fit of passion: “[A]lles Brutale stößt den Brasilianer instinktiv ab, und es ist statistisch festgestellt, daß Mord und Totschlag fast niemals als geplante und vorausbedachte Tat geschehen, sondern immer spontan als ‘crime passional’, als ein plötzlicher Ausbruch von Eifersucht oder Gekränktheit” (*BRASILIEN* 1899).

Next to the ideas of courtesy, goodness, harmony and delicacy—which have already been discussed—, Zweig reflects on the ideal of civilization materialized in Brazil. As we have observed in the first section of this article, the vision, and experience, of Brazilian society made Zweig rethink the notions of ‘culture’ and ‘civilization’. At this point in the text, he insists on the fact that the Brazilian places greater value on pleasure than on economic ambition, so that he or she offers an alternative to the idea of progress as it is conceived in Europe and North-America, and discussing “ob bei dem hundertprozentigen Herausholen aller seiner dynamischen Kräfte nicht etwas im seelischen Erdreich des Menschen durch dieses ständige ‘doping’, diese fiebrige Überhitzung eintrocknet und verdorrt. Der kommerziellen Statistik, den trockenen Zahlen der Handelsbilanz steht hier etwas Unsichtbares als der wahre Gewinn gegenüber: eine unverstörte, unverstümmelte Humanität und ein friedliches Zufriedensein” (*BRASILIEN* 134). Summing up, Zweig offers an image of Brazil as a socially and racially harmonious community based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and intermixing. However, even though we have defended that all these ideas and values stem from Zweig’s utopian thinking and ethical stance, he was not the only one that promoted these principles. In fact, his definition of Brazil’s character engages directly with the debates on Brazilian identity that took place in the decades following the end of the First World War.

According to Horst Nitschak, in the Brazilian context the First World War ended with the West’s hegemony as a model of progress, resulting in a modernist movement that

searched in the country's own history in order to develop an autochthonous discourse away from colonization, European superiority, racism and social rigidity. In this process of construction of a collective identity, two notions must be highlighted in connection with Zweig's *Brasilien*. On the one hand, the sociologist Gilberto Freyre develops in *Casa Grande & Senzala* the notion of intermixing or *mestiçagem* understood not as a form of biological discrimination, but as an ethnical and cultural strength. On the other hand, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's concept of *cordialidade* encapsulates a way for individuals to relate to one another away from institutions, establishing the basis for negotiating difference and coexisting peacefully. Although it is difficult to determine the extent to which these theories influenced Zweig's vision of the country, we know for certain that he did some research before writing his book and it is rather likely that he read or was told about these authors and their ideas on Brazilian identity (Dewulf).²²⁸ However, as we have argued before, these notions can be found already in some of Zweig's works predating his visits to Brazil and, therefore, we can only speculate as to their influence on Zweig's ethical program and point out the fact that they form one of the text's intertextual layers, adding more arguments to an already fertile soil for the articulation of Zweig's utopia.

Brasilien IV: A Brazilian Tour—From Vienna to Rio

Following this line of discussion, we get to the second part of the text, where Zweig takes us through a tour of the country's most prominent cities and landmarks. With the

²²⁸ It must be noted here that, although Zweig was not alone in reading the concept of '*cordialidade*' as a trait of Brazilian pacifism, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda himself provided a completely different view of his work (*Raízes do Brasil*), clarifying that what he meant by '*cordialidade*' was a predominance of passion over reason in the Brazilian character that often lead to violence and a complicated relationship between the individual and the State. Provided that Zweig had indeed read the work, this could be one more instance of a utopian thinking in Zweig that favored optimistic and idealistic interpretations. For a full discussion of the polemic reception of *Raízes do Brasil*, see, among others: Avelino Filho, George. "Cordialidade e civilidade em Raízes do Brasil." *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, vol. 5, no. 12, 1990, pp. 5-14; De Souza, Ricardo Luiz. "As Raízes e o Futuro do 'Homem Cordial' Segundo Sérgio Buarque de Holanda." *Caderno CRH*, vol. 20, no. 50, 2007, pp. 342-353.

impressionistic, affirmative, and hyperbolic style that characterizes his travel writings, this second part fulfills the function of giving a spatial and corporeal reality to the community Zweig described and analyzed in the first part of the text, showing the reader how some of his impressions of Brazil emanated from a physical experience of discovery and beauty. Additionally, in this part of the text, we also find one of the core experiences that defines Zweig's vision of Brazil, namely his visit to Rio. In his description of the city, Zweig projects his idealized image of Viena *fin-de-siècle*. In fact, this projection of Vienna starts in the section dedicated to Brazilian culture, where Zweig assigns to Brazil some of the traits for which the Austro-Hungarian capital was known among the European elite of the turn of the century: the existence of an 'aristocracy of the spirit' represented by some of the oldest families and their love of art and intellectual liberality (*BRASILIEN* 2100); the fact that, away from sport and politics, intellectual and artistic production is the focus of interest for the entire nation (*BRASILIEN* 2129); the reverence for intellectual accomplishments and the eagerness to embrace new ideas notwithstanding tradition; and the prestige of the poet and the intellectual (*BRASILIEN* 2159), especially as compared to the demise of this figure in the old continent after the First World War (see Benda).

What is more, when we get to the description of Rio, and especially the subsection "The art of contrasts", we observe a striking resemblance between the Vienna in Zweig's memoirs and the Rio of *Brazil*, in their idealism and utopianism that even embellish extreme poverty and illness. To illustrate this point and as a way of closing my analysis of *Brazil* from the perspective of Zweig's ethical commitment, let us consider the most salient aspects of Zweig's Rio de Janeiro bearing in mind the articulation of the Viennese/European utopia carried out in the previous section. Above all, and as I have already anticipated, the central element of Zweig's utopian thinking is the idea of harmony and coexistence. In the Austrian writer's characteristic—iterative and

accumulative—style, we read that “alles geht hier durcheinander, ineinander, kreuz und quer, arm und reich und neu und alt, Landschaft und Kultur, Hütten und Wolkenkratzer, Neger und Weiße, altväterische Lastkarren und Automobile, Strand und Fels und Grün und Asphalt” (*BRASILIEN* 2311). Likewise, a few pages later, Zweig tells us that “[a]lles ist hier Harmonie, die Stadt und das Meer und das Grün und die Berge, all das fließt gewissermaßen klingend ineinander, selbst die Hochhäuser, die Schiffe, die bunten Lichtplakate stören nicht; und diese Harmonie wiederholt sich in immer anderen Akkorden” (*BRASILIEN* 2364). Al in all, Rio represents the perfect balance between diversity and unity. It is a city that surprises at every corner: “In dieser Stadt der Vielfältigkeit wirkt dasselbe Meer, dasselbe Gebirge infolge der unbeschreiblichen Varietät der Ausblicke immer neu und überraschend. Statt dasselbe wiederzufinden, entdeckt man sich alles hier immer wieder von Anfang an” (*BRASILIEN* 167).

Another aspect of Rio’s harmonizing character is its capacity for synthesis: “[W]ie überall erlebt man in Rio an allen Stellen und auch an den abgesondertsten und einsamsten diese unvergleichliche Zwiefalt von Stadt und Landschaft, von Zeitlichem und Zeitlosigkeit” (*BRASILIEN* 2349). Therefore, the beauty that intoxicates Zweig “in der unvergleichlichen Kunst, wie sie alle Gegensätze harmonisch zu lösen vermag” (*BRASILIEN* 2493). The art of Rio is the ‘art of contrasts’, as Zweig titled one of the subchapters dedicated to the Brazilian city. As with Vienna and Paris, the contrasts are not merely geographical, but social and economic: “Hier spannen sich die Enden weitestens auseinander und gehen doch mit einer besonderen Harmonie ineinander über. Der Reichtum wirkt hier nicht provokant” (*BRASILIEN* 2630). Extremes, rather than oppose, complement each other. There is discord between social classes: “[N]ichts befeindet sich, und man findet da und dort, bei dem Stiefelputzer und dem Aristokraten die gleiche Courtoisie [das gleiche zurückhaltende Benehmen], die hier alle Schichten

einverständlich verbindet. Was sonst sich feindselig oder mißtrauisch abtrennt, spielt hier alles frei durcheinander" (*BRASILIEN* 2648). This peaceful cohabitation extends to the idea of 'race'. Accordingly, Zweig's Rio is a city that celebrates its ethnic diversity:

Wieviele Rassen allein schon auf der Straße, der schwarze Senegalneger im zerrissenen Rock und der Europäer in seinem schnittigen Anzug, die Indios mit ihrem schweren Blick und schwarzglatten Haar und dazwischen in hundert und tausend Schattierungen die Mischungen aller Völker und Nationen [...]. Sondern all dies wogt heiter durcheinander, und die Straße wird durch die Fülle der Physiognomien zu einem ständig wechselnden Bild. (*BRASILIEN* 2648).

Whereas in Europe race and difference are used to create enmity and prejudice, in Rio the art of contrasts manages to dissolve the tensions without eliminating the individuality of every subject. Finally, in the Brazilian utopia even poverty has some dignity and a role to play. In this direction, Zweig takes his utopian thinking to the extreme, claiming that favelas should be preserved as part of the city's image "weil es ein Stück menschlicher Natur darstellt inmitten der Zivilisation" (*Brasilien* 2663). This is the extent to which Zweig's projection of his 'European' *Weltanschauung* alters the Brazilian 'reality':

Man hat das Summum [das Äußerste] an Primitivität gesehen, die niederste Form des Hausens und Lebens, eine Form, die man in Europa oder Nordamerika kaum mehr für glaubhaft gehalten. Aber sonderbar—der Anblick hat nichts Bedrückendes, nichts Abstoßendes, nichts Aufreizendes, nichts Beschämendes. Denn diese Neger fühlen sich hier tausendmal glücklicher als unser Proletariat in seinen Mietskasernen. Es ist ihr eigenes Haus, sie können dort tun und lassen, was ihnen beliebt, abends hört man sie singen und lachen – sie sind hier ihre Herren. (*BRASILIEN* 2681)

Brasilien V: Conclusions

The publication of *Brasilien: Ein Land der Zukunft* was met with great enthusiasm by the reading public. Meanwhile, many 'authorized' voices articulated severe criticisms which argued, among other things, that: Zweig's look at the country was superficial; lacked historical accuracy; was the byproduct of a persecuted Jew that desperately projected his dream of a harmonious society; was too soft on the policies of the Vargas government; celebrated an image of Brazil based on leisure and the exotic instead of economic progress and modernization (Dines' *Morte Paraíso*). For some, Zweig was too conservative; for others, too progressive. Those who read the title—which was subject to controversy—as an affirmation of Brazil's future potentialities ('A Land of the Future'), thought that it was too hard with the present, whereas those who read the text as a celebration of Brazilian society ('The Land of the Future'), considered that it was too obliging and uncritical with the difficult situation of the country, which suffered from extreme poverty, political oppression, etc. In this sense, one thing all these critiques agree on is the fact that there was a huge gap between Zweig's utopian and idealistic assessments and what was perceived as the Brazilian 'reality'. Although some of these issues may be a matter of opinion and perspective, other omissions are very difficult to justify. For instance, the migration policies regarding Jews, something which affected directly Zweig and his family. In this sense, Matthew Goodwin ("Brazilian Exile") argues that, during the thirties, and as the war was getting closer, the Brazilian borders were more difficult to cross for people of Semitic origin. In fact, only due to international pressure did Vargas permit the entrance of prominent Jews such as Zweig.

How could he turn a blind eye to all this? Was he aware of it but chose not to confront the country that was giving him and his wife a passport and a place to live? Was *Brasilien*, as some claimed, propaganda for the Vargas government? As we have repeatedly said, it

is often the case with Stefan Zweig that, after highlighting the deficiencies and shortcomings of his works, rarely follows an attempt to 'understand' them. In this case, both the criticisms that point to Zweig's idealism and those that claimed the possibility that his text was a way for him to gain the favor of Vargas speak, on the one hand, of the difficult situation the Austrian writer was going through at the time. But also, on the other, of his commitment as writer, his ethical stance and the extent of his utopian thinking. Hopefully, the analysis of *Brasilien* from the perspective of Zweig's European *Weltanschauung* has provided us with further evidence of the importance of the 'European' utopias in the configuration of Zweig's ethical program; a program or project that did not only end up trespassing the 'limits' of Europe, but also finally embracing a (relocated) future as a possibility for continuing to pursue the European dream.

2.2. Stefan Zweig's Europe: From an Identity Paradigm to an Ethical Program²²⁹

With the analysis of *Brasilien* we have completed our exploration of the 'utopian' foundations of Zweig's European *Weltanschauung*. I propose now that we consider the architectural mode of Zweig's ethical project. The first thing that must be said is that 'Europe' in Stefan Zweig's work is an elusive yet omnipresent concept. It is elusive insofar as, in relation to its preeminence in his *Weltanschauung*, there are few texts that overtly approach the subject. Yet the discussion of Europe—and the understanding of Europe as affiliation or identity—is all-pervading, continually addressing the reader when one would least expect it. These (textual) manifestations—or appearances—of 'Europe' in Stefan Zweig's work contribute to the idea that 'Europe' goes beyond any geographical and cultural predetermined reality. Rather, I argue, its power resides in its force as an 'idea' or 'concept' that encapsulates the main vectors of Zweig's philosophical and

²²⁹ The importance of 'Europe' in Zweig's works and thought, in his daily life and in the configuration of both his private and public identity, has been duly noted by many Zweigian scholars, and it was not a secret for his contemporaries either. In fact, in retrospect, the makers of Europe, of its history as an idea, aspiration and reality, usually pay homage to Zweig, together with names such as Victor Hugo or Coudenhove Khalergi, as one of the intellectual forefathers of the European Union, as one of those 'visionaries' who dared to imagine, and saw the necessity of, 'Europe' before the actual process of unification and integration began to take place. Notwithstanding this well-known association between Zweig and Europe, it has remained for many years an understudied subject. Very few scholars have engaged so far in the articulation of Zweig's European project/discourse or in the discussion of Zweig's European thought and its impact on his work. Having said that, the last years have seen a rise in the study of topic, due to the ubiquitous nature of Europe as a topic of discussion both within and outside Academia. Being threatened by populism and an escalating Euroskepticism, mostly animated by the resurgence of nationalistic discourses that aim to counteract the evils of international terrorism and/or migration, Europe and its reinvention are a hot topic of debate. In this context, Zweig's ideas and thought have gained topicality and so the 'void' in publications dealing with Zweig's 'Europe' is starting to be remedied. On Stefan Zweig and Europe, see, among other: Steiman, Lionel. *Stefan Zweig: The Education of an Aesthete and his Response to War and Politics*. 1970. University of Pennsylvania, PhD dissertation.; Büssgen, Antje. "Umwege zu einem geeinten Europa. Zum Verhältnis von Kultur und Politik bei Friedrich Schiller, Stefan Zweig und Julien Benda." *Positionen der Moderne*. Edited by Martina Wörgötter, Königshausen & Neumann, pp. 91-130.; Fragnière, Gabriel. *Stefan Zweig ou espérer l'Europe en mourir*. Brussels, Presses Interuniversitaires Européennes, 1993.; Gelber, Mark, and Anna-Dorothea Ludewig (editors). *Stefan Zweig und Europa*. Zürich, Georg Olms, 2011.; Le Rider, Jacques. "Europa-Konzeptionen." *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 748-754.; Botstein, Leon. "Stefan Zweig and the Illusion of the Jewish European." *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, 1982, pp. 82-83.; Zarini, Marie-Emmanuelle. *L'idée d'Europe chez Stefan Zweig*. 1999. Université Paul Verlaine-Metz.; Resch, Stephan. *Stefan Zweig und der Europa-Gedanke*. Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2017.

ethical output. In other words, approaching the subject of Zweig's European thought entails an effort of (re-)construction, Zweig's Europe never being 'programmatic'. That is the reason why, I contend, we do not find in Zweig's oeuvre a text titled 'My Idea of Europe', a treatise where Zweig thoroughly discusses the subject or exposes the main tenets of his philosophy—the closest to this being *Die Welt von Gestern*. Contrastingly, 'Europe' is created by dint of association, metonymy, and a process of conceptual iteration whereby other words, notions and ideas are physically (i.e. textually) attached to 'Europe', giving it substance and enlarging, at the same time, its referential capacity. Without going any further, this is what we find in the first page of Zweig's memoirs: "Jeder von uns [...] ist in seiner innersten Existenz aufgewühlt worden von den fast pausenlosen vulkanischen Erschütterungen unserer europäischen Erde; und ich weiß mir inmitten der Unzähligen keinen anderen Vorrang zuzusprechen als den einen: als Österreicher, als Jude, als Schriftsteller, als Humanist und Pazifist jeweils just dort gestanden zu sein, wo diese Erdstöße am heftigsten sich auswirkten" (WvG 9)

As we can observe in the quote above, there is first a reference to a space of belonging in which the 'I'—and the 'we'—are inserted, 'Europe', and then several identity markers/affiliations that define the narrative/authorial voice: humanism, pacifism, etc. This—as I will demonstrate in the following sections—is, in brief, the process employed by Zweig to build both a personal/collective identity and an ethical program; what we have been calling so far 'Stefan Zweig's *Weltanschauung*'. All in all, the idea of 'Europe' in Zweig's work can be approached from many perspectives. It is a porous, elastic, notion, a signifier with a complex signified that continually transcends itself to accommodate Zweig's evolving thought. Europe is, at the same time, a polysemic word and an 'umbrella' concept that hosts all the values, as well as contradictions, of the Zweigian

ethos. To attempt to define it is, necessarily, an attempt at constructing a sort of Zweigian ethics. And this is the direction we will follow for the remainder of the chapter.

2.2.1. Looking for 'Europe' in the World of Yesterday

I would like to start my reflections by remarking that Stefan Zweig himself took care of conveying to his readers, as unambiguously as possible, the importance of 'Europe' in his *Weltanschauung*. By pointing out in one of the most visible parts of *Die Welt von Gestern*—the title—that his memories were those of a 'European', he inevitably condemned the notion of 'Europe' to have an essential role in the articulation of his 'spiritual' legacy. As I pointed out before, *Die Welt von Gestern* can be considered a sort of Zweigian 'European treatise'. Additionally, there are other texts, essays, lectures and interviews, where Zweig elaborates on his idea of Europe—notably, the essays “Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historischen Entwicklung” (1932), “Die moralische Eingiftung Europas” (1932), “Einigung Europas. Eine Rede” (1934), “Die geistige Einheit Europas” (1936), and the interviews “The Conscience of Europe” (1931, interview with Robert Merrill Bartlett) and “Pour une Europe de l'esprit” (1936, Zweig's answer to a survey on the 'European spirit' carried out by the journal *Les Nouvelles littéraires*). However, as I am trying to demonstrate in this dissertation, 'Europe', as a concept, as an idea (of the world), is much more than what these texts convey. This is not to say that they are not good sources to unravel Zweig's 'Europe', but that we must bear in mind the fact that they form only the surface of the Austrian writer's 'European' thought, its most external layer. Often, they are immediate answers/reactions, texts written on an impulse, devised to seduce and educate an audience. While they provide interesting reflections, we must dig deeper in Zweig's work if we aim to assess the impact and depth of his 'European' *Weltanschauung*.

Besides the title of the text, I have already mentioned the first allusion to Europe in Zweig's memoirs. It is in the prologue, where Zweig situates his home, his *Heimat*, what has been endangered by two human-made mass catastrophes, in Europe (WvG 9). More specifically, he goes on to claim this community of belonging by asserting that “[s]o gehöre ich nirgends mehr hin, überall Fremder und bestenfalls Gast; auch die eigentliche Heimat, die mein Herz sich erwählt, Europa, ist mir verloren, seit es sich zum zweitenmal selbstmörderisch zerfleischt im Bruderkriege” (WvG 10). It is interesting to note Zweig's choice of words, since it points out the fact that his 'European' affiliation is the result of a conscious decision, the emotional and intellectual response of a committed individual.²³⁰ Europe is not a given. Zweig was not born a 'European', he chose to be(come) one. That is what makes, at least in Zweig's context, the 'reality' of Europe so ethereal, the fact that its substance is not given an institutional form. Rather, as we have already borne witness to, Zweig's Europe is made of—immaterial—ingredients such as *Geist*, ideals, and ethical/moral values. All in all, 'Europe' provides the framework, the setting of Zweig's narrative, both in its personal and collective/historical dimensions. The places we visit, the figures we meet, the events we witness in Zweig's memoirs, all of it gives shape and character to the 'European' landscape.

As we have observed in our analysis of the Viennese utopia, Zweig claims that the heart of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the perfect place to be a 'European', its supranational atmosphere nurturing the soul and educating the spirit of the cosmopolitan citizen (WvG 40). In this sense, 'Europe' is the embodiment or materialization of a supranational ideal, the expression of a beyond-the-national philosophy/stance. Also,

²³⁰ As Swiss philosopher Gabriel Fragnière argues: “Pour Zweig, l'identité européenne n'est pas donnée, elle est le résultat d'un choix, d'un engagement. [...] Choisir une patrie, c'est donc manifester un acte de liberté, c'est reconnaître en elle une valeur qui justifie cet engagement. Il est donc important de comprendre le cheminement de Stefan Zweig qui l'a conduit à faire ce choix dans son existence” (25).

Zweig hints in this passage at the fact that 'Europe' is, in a sense, a 'historical reality'. In other words, the 'reality' of Europe is seconded, legitimized, by the fact that it has a past. It is but the last materialization of an idea that goes back to the Roman Empire—or even beyond into mythical times, as we saw in the essay "Der Turm zu Babel"—and which presents several points of anchorage or decisive moments in its development, such as fin-de-siècle Vienna. However, notwithstanding the fact that it already exists, that it is not something that must be built from scratch, each epoch must renew the fight for the realization of the European dream. It is in this context of Europe-building or 'reenactment' where Zweig locates the poetic task of Verhaeren, described, as we observed in Chapter I, as the 'singer' of Europe, he who tries to give cohesion, to make sense out of, the chaotic and diverse experience of modernity by providing a common horizon of intelligibility and experience that revolves around the idea of 'Europe'. As we remarked, Zweig, by putting himself at the 'service' of Verhaeren's work—in promoting the Belgian poet—was contributing to the 'visibility' of 'Europe', embodied in the very act of translating and mediating, which acquires a 'moral' dimension (WvG 142).

Likewise, another passage that reveals the collective dimension of Zweig's 'Europe', its potential to become a community/space of belonging—a world that, at the time of writing his memoirs, has been destroyed by the forces of unreason, war and violence—, is Zweig's evocation of Paris, which is described by the author as the memory of a place that is no more, as a testimony to that 'other' Europe which is no longer there. Thus, 'Europe' becomes, and using some of the terminology and theoretical tools deployed in the first sections of this chapter, a historical 'possibility', and alternative born out of a feeling of loss and nostalgia, a path non-taken: "Ich weiß, ich weiß, es ist nicht Paris allein, das heute leidet; auch das andere Europa wird für Jahrzehnte nicht mehr sein, was es vor dem ersten Weltkrieg gewesen. Eine gewisse Düsternis hat sich seitdem auf dem

einstmals so hellen Horizont Europas nie mehr völlig verflüchtigt, Bitternis und Mißtrauen von Land zu Land, vom Menschen zum Menschen ist wie ein zehrendes Gift im verstümmelten Leibe verblieben" (WvG 145).

Additionally, and as our first reflections pointed out, the collective aspect of 'Europe' is accompanied in *Die Welt von Gestern* by its more individual dimension. For 'Europe' is made of 'Europeans', that is to say, individuals who, in the eyes of Zweig, embodied, through their work and personalities, the idea of 'Europe. Most of them, like Verhaeren and Zweig himself, are artists/intellectuals.²³¹ Yet there is room for other individuals, who, like Walter Rathenau, have contributed with their genius to the construction of Europe by acting in the areas of politics and economics. Zweig dedicates the following words to the German politician and writer:

Erst in der verantwortlichen Stunde, als 1919 nach dem Zusammenbruch der deutschen Armeen ihm die schwerste Aufgabe der Geschichte zugeteilt wurde, den zerrütteten Staat aus dem Chaos wieder lebensfähig zu gestalten, wurden plötzlich die ungeheuren potentiellen Kräfte in ihm einheitliche Kraft. Und er schuf sich die Größe, die seinem Genie eingeboren war, durch den Einsatz seines Lebens an eine einzige Idee: Europa zu retten. (WvG 201)

In brief, Zweig's 'apoliticism' makes an artist out of a businessman, a man of 'spirit' out of a politician. Europe gives meaning to the life and work of individuals like Rathenau and, as we have seen in Chapter one, it provides an identity to those who seek to transcend the ontological limitations imposed by the rhetoric of nationalism. As we will discuss later on, there is an ideal form of citizenship in Zweig's 'European' *Weltanschauung* that turns the 'European' into a cosmopolite, a citizen of the world, showing the movement

²³¹ On Verhaeren as a 'European', we read at the beginning of chapter "Glanz und Schatten über Europa" that, upon hearing the news of the crash of a Zeppelin in Echterdingen in 1908, "Verhaeren hatte Tränen in den Augen und war furchtbar erregt. Nicht war er etwa als Belgier gleichgültig gegen die deutsche Katastrophe, sondern als Europäer, als Mann unserer Zeit, empfand er ebenso den gemeinsamen Sieg über die Elemente wie die gemeinsame Prüfung" (WvG 214).

toward the universal ingrained in Zweig's idea of 'Europe'. In this regard, Zweig realizes that the values that inform his moral mission cannot be reduced to what he experiences as the (geographical) reality of 'Europe'; this is, as I have argued, the function of *Brasilien*. Although the Zweigian ethics are Eurocentric—that cannot be denied—, there seems to be at some points in Zweig's narrative the need to export or readjust said values to a world, a horizon, that is getting wider, that cannot be constrained to the dynamics of the European nations. After travelling to Asia and America for the first time following precisely Rathenau's advice, Zweig confesses that “[v]eränderte Distanz von der Heimat verändert das innere Maß. Manches Kleinliche, das mich früher über Gebühr beschäftigt hatte, begann ich nach meiner Rückkehr als kleinlich anzusehen und unser Europa längst nicht mehr als die ewige Achse unseres Weltalls zu betrachten” (*WvG* 203). Although Zweig never left—mentally, emotionally—his *Heimat* behind, we can feel a constant need to renegotiate and transcend its boundaries.

Moving on in the narrative, before the outbreak of the First World War, Zweig insists on the community that was built at the time around 'Europe', to the point that it became for a 'conviction', a dream that was about to be realized. Before the catastrophe, Zweig asserts that “[n]un hatte ich zehn Jahre des neuen Jahrhunderts gelebt, Indien, ein Stück von Amerika und Afrika gesehen; mit einer neuen, wissenderen Freude begann ich auf unser Europa zu blicken. Nie habe ich unsere alte Erde mehr geliebt als in diesen letzten Jahren vor dem ersten Weltkrieg, nie mehr auf Europas Einigung gehofft, nie mehr an seine Zukunft geglaubt als in dieser Zeit, da wir meinten, eine neue Morgenröte zu erblicken” (*WvG* 205). 'Europe' is experienced as a space of belonging, a way of seeing the world beyond the confines of the nation, where the only achievements that make sense are those of humanity. 'Europe' is the space where individuals from different nations can cooperate, exchange knowledge, work together, become friends. Likewise, 'Europe' is a

teleology, the inevitable result of the forces of progress and reason. The currents that underpin the Viennese utopia in the fin-de-siècle must necessarily converge in 'Europe':

[A]us Stolz auf die sich stündlich überjagenden Triumphe unserer Technik, unserer Wissenschaft war zum erstenmal ein europäisches Gemeinschaftsgefühl, ein europäisches Nationalbewußtsein im Werden. Wie sinnlos, sagten wir uns, diese Grenzen, wenn sie jedes Flugzeug spielhaft leicht überschwingt, wie provinziell, wie künstlich diese Zollschranken und Grenzwächter, wie widersprechend dem Sinn unserer Zeit, der sichtlich Bindung und Weltbrüderschaft begehrt! (*WvG* 214)

Before the war, 'Europe' becomes, as I have argued before, a given, something taking for granted. The belief that technical and scientific progress equal moral progress is still intact. Zweig and his fellow Europeans are so intoxicated by such optimism that they fail to see the coming apocalypse: "[W]ir waren überzeugt, daß die geistige, die moralische Kraft Europas sich triumphierend bekunden würde im letzten kritischen Augenblick. Unser gemeinsamer Idealismus, unser im Fortschritt bedingter Optimismus ließ uns die gemeinsame Gefahr verkennen und verachten" (*WvG* 215). But then, as we know, comes the hardest of blows. From the immeasurable height of such hopefulness, 'Europe' plunges into the abyss of war. The intellectual that thought that 'Europe' could be already felt and that it was only a matter of time that it became a 'reality' throughout the continent must witness the destruction of the European Tower of Babel. Since the outbreak of the war, 'Europe' becomes something to fight for, a community that must be rebuilt. It becomes, above all, a counternarrative, a discourse against the prevailing forces of hate, division and violence. In brief, 'Europe' becomes a 'pacifist' solution, a way out of the conflict. In this light, in the context of his stay in Switzerland during the war—chapter "Das Herz Europas"—, Zweig reflects on those that find themselves between countries, with divided allegiances, who have to seek refuge in a neutral country because they have

become objects of suspicion in both their old and new countries. These persons in-between symbolize for Zweig the 'European' cause, and so he reflects that "[j]e europäischer ein Mensch in Europa gelebt, um so härter wurde er von der Faust gezüchtigt, die Europa zerschlug" (WvG 299).

Once the war is over, and as far as Zweig's 'European narrative' is concerned, the cycle of rebirth-destruction starts again. What happens then to the old ideal of a united Europe? According to Zweig, the years from the end of the First World War to the rise of Hitler were a second Golden Age for those who had once believed that 'Europe' was the true destiny of humankind. The return to 'normality', as Zweig's argues, renovates the faith and hopes of bringing about the 'European' dream, which by then has already become a utopia: "[D]ie Aufmerksamkeit war nicht mehr so fieberhaft auf diese äußerlichen Probleme gerichtet. Man konnte wieder arbeiten, sich innerlich sammeln, an geistige Dinge denken. Man konnte sogar wieder träumen und auf ein geeintes Europa hoffen. Einen Weltaugenblick— diese zehn Jahre— schien es, als sollte unserer geprüften Generation wieder ein normales Leben beschieden sein" (WvG 339). Zweig's memories of these years reflect yet another aspect of his idea of 'Europe', that is to say, that fact that, above everything, 'Europe' is an intellectual, 'spiritual' and cultural space.²³² It is a framework for the exchange of both ideas and cultural goods. At the core of Zweig's 'Europe' lie the notions of mediation and translation as forms of cultural rapprochement and as formulas for negotiating difference and building dynamics of peaceful cohabitation. Thus, Zweig associates the rebirth of the 'European' dream to the fact, among others, that his books were reaching all corners of the earth:

²³² At the beginning of the chapter "Sonnenuntergang", Zweig refers again to 'Europe' as a 'spiritual'/intellectual reality and as his leitmotif: "Das brachte allerhand Vorteile. Ich konnte mit stärkerem Nachdruck und breiterer Wirkung für die Idee werben, die seit Jahren die eigentliche meines Lebens geworden: für die geistige Einigung Europas" (WvG 349).

[U]nd es wurde wahrhaft beglückend für mich, dessen Gedanken von Anbeginn einzig auf das Europäische, auf das Übernationale gerichtet gewesen, daß sich nun auch aus dem Ausland Verleger meldeten, französische, bulgarische, armenische, portugiesische, argentinische, norwegische, lettische, finnische, chinesische. Bald mußte ich einen mächtigen Wandschrank kaufen, um alle die verschiedenen Exemplare der Übertragungen zu verstauen, und eines Tages las ich in der Statistik der 'Coopération Intellectuelle' des Genfer Völkerbundes, daß ich zur Zeit der meistübersetzte Autor der Welt sei (ich hielt es abermals meinem Temperament gemäß für eine Falschmeldung). (WvG 344)

In the same vein, Zweig, going back to his present, laments the loss of a great part of that network of exchange and dissemination of culture, of intellectual cooperation, while, at the same time, he is aware that it was thanks to his international reputation and the fact that their books were published also in America that his career as intellectual and writer was able to survive Hitler: "Es war Benjamin Huebsch von der Viking Press, der mir seitdem der verlässlichste Freund und Berater geblieben und, da all dies andere von den Stulpenstiefeln Hitlers in Grund und Boden gestampft ist, mir eine letzte Heimat im Wort erhalten hat, da ich die alte, die eigentliche, die deutsche, die europäische verlor" (WvG 5059). Despite the fact that his dream would be shattered again, Zweig rejoices at the thought that nobody, not even Hitler, could take from him the memory of his European existence: "Und so viel Hitler mir später genommen, das gute Bewußtsein, doch noch ein Jahrzehnt nach eigenem Willen und mit innerster Freiheit europäisch gelebt zu haben, dies allein vermochte selbst er mir weder zu konfiszieren noch zu verstören" (WvG 347). As we can observe in this quote, freedom is a pillar of 'Europe', which can only be 'experienced' if the individual chooses to do so. Europe cannot be imposed, cannot be forced unto the self. For Zweig's 'Europe' to come true, the individual must enjoy his liberty.

During these years Europe finds new spaces that become 'home'; locations where, like fin-de-siècle Vienna, or Verhaeren's Flanders and Romain Rolland's Paris, the utopia, albeit momentarily, materializes. In the case of Zweig, he invokes again the forces of Fate to reflect on the fact that Europe seemed to follow him wherever he went. Having moved after the war to a house on Salzburg's Kapuzinerberg to enjoy its quiet atmosphere, the house ends up becoming as years go by—and thanks to the growing popularity of the city's summer festival—a symbol of 'Europe': "So lebte ich mit einemmal in der eigenen Stadt inmitten von Europa. Wieder hatte das Schicksal mir einen Wunsch erfüllt, den ich selbst kaum auszudenken gewagt, und unser Haus auf dem Kapuzinerberg wurde ein europäisches Haus" (*WvG* 371). It is interesting to note that 'Europe' does not only 'happen' in big metropolises and large communities. Rather, its collective dimension is also made up of individual and local gestures. In other words, for Zweig 'Europe' is not a mass movement, but a network of individuals and small-scale events and milieus.

This phase of rebirth and new hopes closes with an admission that this glorious decade (1924-1933) had made Zweig and his fellow Europeanists believe that the existence of a 'European' conscience would stop humanity from falling again into the abyss: "Man kann dreißig oder vierzig Jahre inneren Weltglaubens schwer abtun in einigen wenigen Wochen. Verankert in unseren Anschauungen des Rechts, glaubten wir an die Existenz eines deutschen, eines europäischen, eines Weltgewissens und waren überzeugt, es gebe ein Maß von Unmenschlichkeit, das sich selbst ein für allemal vor der Menschheit erledige" (*WvG* 389). What had made them hope that the tragedy might be prevented was their belief that 'Europe' would act as a space of mediation, that by providing a second, larger, affiliation for the individual, a second home beyond the nation, war could be averted in the name of Europe's 'conscience'. They had fallen again for an

illusion. From here onwards the story of 'Europe' is one of (moral) decadence, of the destruction of a conscience that does not react (no-response) in front of Hitler and of the Spanish Civil War. After stopping off at Vigo in his 1936 journey to America, Zweig declares that "todgeweiht schien mir Europa durch seinen eigenen Wahn, Europa, unsere heilige Heimat, die Wiege und das Parthenon unserer abendländischen Zivilisation" (WvG 424). The story ends, as we already know, with the 'European' exiled and 'Europe' destroyed. 'Europe' is, in the end, what gives meaning—sense—to Zweig's life and work. This is the idea that orientates his commitment, that directs his efforts and responses. 'Europe' is the Zweigian 'spiritual' legacy presented to us as the story of a 'failed' utopia:

Denn die innerste Aufgabe, an die ich alle Kraft meiner Überzeugung durch vierzig Jahre gesetzt, die friedliche Vereinigung Europas, sie war zuschanden geworden. Was ich mehr gefürchtet als den eigenen Tod, den Krieg aller gegen alle, nun war er entfesselt zum zweitenmal. Und der ein ganzes Leben leidenschaftlich sich bemüht um Verbundenheit im Menschlichen und im Geiste, empfand sich in dieser Stunde, die unverbrüchliche Gemeinschaft forderte wie keine andere, durch dieses jähe Ausgesondertsein unnütz und allein wie nie in seinem Leben. (WvG 462)

Taking into account our exploration of 'Europe' in *Die Welt von Gestern*, we could conclude that it presents at least three aspects that can help us organize our subsequent discussion. First, 'Europe' has an individual dimension or 'mode', whereby some persons—either historical figures of prominent contemporaries—qualify as 'European', peopling the European landscape and contributing with their work and example to the construction of the 'spiritual' union of Europe. Second, 'Europe' has a collective dimension in its capacity to generate a sense of community and a beyond-the-national (collective) affiliation. In this regard, 'Europe' is, among other things, a pacifist/mediation solution and a collective framework of intelligibility and experience. Last but not least, as we have anticipated at the beginning of this chapter, informing both

the individual and collective dimensions of 'Europe'—which largely match the personal and historical discourses that structure *Die Welt von Gestern*—there is an ethical program, a behind-the-scenes scaffold that is responsible for giving shape to Zweig's *Weltanschauung* and his 'utopian' impulse. This ethical program that revolves around the idea of 'Europe' extends beyond Zweig's memoirs, which act as the superstructure that contains the main elements than inform Zweig's frame or 'attitude' towards the world.

2.2.2. A Saga of 'Great Europeans'

Following our exploration of 'Europe' in Stefan Zweig's memoirs, I would like now to start our analysis by focusing on its individual dimension and its impact on Zweig's *Weltanschauung*. As I said before, we have already reflected albeit indirectly on Zweig's 'Europe' in Chapter I, by either mentioning the European affiliation of some of Zweig's figures of commitment or discussing 'Europe' as the project/mission/cause that vertebrates and gives sense to their intellectual production. In this sense, we have already noted, following Rensen, that there is a 'European' thread running from the portrayal of Verhaeren to that of Erasmus via that of Rolland. In other words, their 'Europeanness' makes them members of a larger family of artists and intellectuals around which 'Europe', in its 'spiritual' dimension, is built. We could argue that they are the architects of the European Tower of Babel, contributing to its realization through their work and example. Thus, the individual is one of the main ingredients of his 'European' *Weltanschauung*.

Following this direction, and before we start analyzing Zweig's 'Europeans', I suggest that we take a brief detour to consider, following Marleen Rensen ("Transnational Approaches to Artists' Biographies") the hermeneutical potential of reading Zweig's work from the field of transnational biography studies, especially as far as the connection between Zweig's life-writing and his efforts to build 'Europe' are concerned. The starting

point of this transnational turn in the writing and study of life narratives is the desire to overcome the conceptual framework of the nation state, which has determined for a long time the way the lives of individuals are narrated, turning them into fragments of collective (national) memory, representatives of a culture and a community that gives their live and work transcendence. In this light, the legacy of an individual seems to become valuable insofar as he or she has contributed to the greatness of his/her community of origin or adoption. Be it as it may, lives that are lived across national and cultural boundaries tend to be either forgotten or reduced/simplified to fit the national paradigm. However, as Hannes Schweiger suggests, in a globalized and increasingly interconnected world, the national perspective has become obsolete. It does no longer suffice to explain complex processes of mobility/exchange, nor is it able to account for the emergence of what he calls the 'global subject'.

What is more, adopting a transnational perspective does not only apply to contemporary individuals, but also to historical figures: "In order to render the transfer processes between cultures visible, we have to focus on the lives of global subjects, on transnational lives—not only contemporary transnational lives, but also past ones" (Schweiger 254). Thus, Schweiger organizes his reflections around what he deems a paradigmatic instance of—historical—global subject, the multi-faceted (German) thinker Alexander von Humboldt. What I see as the fundamental common ground between Humboldt and Zweig, the fact that they lived cosmopolitan lives that left behind vast networks of cross-cultural connections—biographies located in-between and beyond—, turns the former, in the word of Schweiger, into "a prototype of cultural mediator whose life story makes points of connection and interdependence between different cultures visible. Intensifying research on global subjects is a way of accessing the shared history of nations and cultures, which is the main focus of cultural-transfer studies" (252). Thus,

the notion of mediator, exemplified not only by Zweig himself but also by many of his alter-egos is essential in the construction of transnational narratives.

In the end, writing/discussing transnational lives cannot be reduced to a matter of form and content, of going beyond generic conventions, but, more importantly, it becomes an act with ethical implications. By choosing to embrace a cosmopolitan outlook that liberates subjects from their national 'interpretations', that emphasizes, following Zweig's reflections on the historiography of tomorrow, the common efforts of humanity instead of the isolated achievements of the nation in the race for world supremacy, we are enforcing a *Weltanschauung* that respects difference and promotes dialogue and exchange. Suffice it to say, transnational biography studies are closely connected to the rise of global and transnational history, which, according to Akira Iriye, "look beyond national boundaries and seek to explore interconnections across borders [...] [,] [and] are particularly concerned with issues and phenomena that are of relevance to the whole of humanity, not just to a small number of countries or to one region of the world" (11). Transnationalism, by deviating from the national paradigm, assumes that life, in its fluidity, continuously exceeds national boundaries. In the words of Deasley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott, "[l]ives elude national boundaries; yet biography, the telling of life stories, has often been pressed into the service of the nation, downplaying its fleeting acknowledgements of lives lived in motion" (2).

Taking this into account, we could contend that one of the aspects of Zweig's commitment to the idea of 'Europe' entails the creation of a 'common substance' made up of individual contributions. The 'spiritual' union of Europe takes roots in a constellation of figures—artists/intellectuals—that belong the same saga or genealogy of 'great' Europeans. What these individuals have in common, what makes them 'European' is that they transcend the sphere of the nation, veering in different ways towards the

universal 'human'. By focusing on their individual contributions as examples of 'human' achievement, Zweig conveys a 'European' transcendence to what is otherwise perceived as a national trait or product. According to Gabriel Fragnière, "[u]n être humain, à ses yeux [Zweig's], a une valeur en tant qu'être humain, et jamais en tant que représentant de telle culture particulière ou de telle identité nationale. Nous sommes donc tous engagés dans une aventure humaine qui n'a de signification que dans la perspective de l'universalité. C'est à cette signification que doit contribuer l'unité de l'Europe, dans sa dimension culturelle" (33-34).

Following this direction, Zweig's saga of 'great Europeans' can be considered, in my reading, another manifestation of his concern for recuperating the 'lost' voices of history. For, in one way or another, all these Europeans have in common a 'subversive', 'rebellious' condition. Both their identities and projects clash with the ideological establishment, producing alternatives to the status quo. This does not mean that Zweig's European heroes can be equated to one of those voiceless, unnamed individuals—mentioned by Zweig in "Ist die Geschichte gerecht?"—that are silenced by the 'cult of the great hero' and the 'victory bias' that inform certain historiographical practices, or to E.P. Thompson's 'subalterns'; rather, they are heroes and great men of another sort. Individuals whose greatness and heroism are measured according to Zweig's 'European' standards. To become a reference within Zweig's 'European' constellation, one must have had to contribute to the history of *Geist*, his/her merits being assessed in cultural and 'spiritual' terms. Above all, what counts is their capacity to produce a 'universal' message that goes along with Zweig's *Weltanschauung* and ethics.

The 'Europeans'

Bearing these ideas in mind, I suggest that we examine some of Zweig's 'European' heroes, starting with the figures of commitment and intellectuality discussed in Chapter I. The first 'great European' in Zweig's narrative of commitment, although not the oldest, is Émile Verhaeren, described in *Verhaeren* as the singer of Europe, the quintessential European poet, and in Zweig's memoirs as the European 'Walt Whitman' (*WvG* 138). As Erasmus was the representative of a new 'type' of man, the *uomo universale*, Verhaeren also embodies the features of a new 'race'; his efforts to mediate and synthesize are framed in his condition of 'new European', the product of progress and modernity (*VERHAEREN* 28). There are no limits to Verhaeren's enthusiasm, and that elevates his work to a beyond-national, 'European' perspective. All in all, 'Europe' becomes also the Belgian poet's dream, his utopia: "[D]er Traum scheint ihm nicht mehr Absonderung vom Leben, sondern Fähigkeit, das Wirkliche von seinem Sein in ein Werdendes zu steigern. Europa ist ihm nicht mehr der Zusammenschluß von Nationen, ein geographischer Begriff, sondern das große Symbol der Eroberung" (*VERHAEREN* 102).

In the same vein, Romain Rolland, in his efforts, both before and during the war, to approach the other, to embrace difference and develop a supranational consciousness, becomes the 'conscience' of 'Europe' and its 'moral authority'. Rolland is a 'European' insofar as he and his work can travel between nations, cross frontiers and try to look at the world beyond local preconceptions and prejudices. As we noted, his work *Jean-Christophe* was described in Zweig's memoirs as the first 'consciously' European novel, that is to say, the first to be written as a call to fraternity, with the aim to forward a message of mediation, tolerance and conciliation between what Zweig considers the most important European cultures, the French, the Italian and the German (*WvG* 220). Rolland inhabits a transnational space, a network of cultural and intellectual exchange. Whereas

the atmosphere of Verhaeren's house allows Zweig to experience and savor 'Europe' for the first time, a sense of brotherhood between the nations, the casual discovery of Rolland in Florence in Russian aristocrat's house situates both figures in the kind of cosmopolitan, transnational space where Zweig's idea of 'Europe' is born.

Observing for the first a time a 'European' voice—above the absurdity of nationalism—that matches the values of Zweig's upbringing in fin-de-siècle Vienna creates a deep 'European' connection between the two writers, which will be reinforced by Rolland's above the battle, non-negotiable, stance during the First World War. Also, it must be noted that Rolland's 'Europeanness' goes hand in hand with his 'defeated' nature, a link that Zweig establishes in all his European 'subjects', making them part of that lost cartography of outstanding individuals, forefathers, visionaries of the coming 'European' utopia. Last but not least, I argue that Rolland exemplifies the centrality of 'Europe' in Zweig's *Weltanschauung*. Zweig's 'European' attitude/awareness leads him to look for traces of 'Europe', fragments of an ancient dream, sometimes reading back into individual lives, literary works and historical events from a 'European' perspective. As we have already noted in Chapter I, Zweig spots the first seeds of 'Europe' in Rolland's youth, in his love of music—that universal language, in Zweig's phrasing—and literature from other countries. To become a European is a matter of choice but also, Zweig seems to be implying, of the circumstances of one's upbringing. In sum, Rolland is the embodiment of the European 'spirit', which immortalizes, gives transcendence to his work and figure: "1912 ist er noch unbekannt, 1914 ein Weltruhm. [...] Aber er kommt noch zur rechten Stunde, er kommt vor dem Krieg. Wie ein Schwert gibt er sich ihm in die Hand. In entscheidendem Augenblick schenkt er ihm Macht und Stimme, damit er für Europa spreche, er hebt ihn hoch, damit er sichtbar sei im Getümmel" (ROLLAND 769).

If Verhaeren is the 'European' poet par excellence and Rolland the quintessential 'European' intellectual, Erasmus is the father of them both. Already in the first chapter of Zweig's biography Erasmus becomes "der erste bewußte Europäer" (*ERASMUS* 9). And certainly it is not a coincidence that Zweig uses the same adjective—conscious (*bewußt*)—to describe the historical figure of Erasmus von Rotterdam and Romain Rolland's *opus magnum*—*Jean-Christophe*; rather it points out two complementing aspects of Zweig's 'Europe': on the one hand, as we have already claimed, to become a European is a matter of choice, a way of committing one's life and work to a 'cause', a response to the duty of the artist and the intellectual towards a set of values, especially 'humanity', which becomes his/her ultimate allegiance. On the other hand, it signals the possibility of 'reading' Europe back into other figures, works or epochs which were not necessarily 'conscious' of the role they were playing in the genesis and construction of the world that would end up becoming Zweig's 'European' dream. As we will analyze later, 'Europe', as a collective narrative that provides an affiliation/layer of identity to the individual, has a history of its own.

Returning to Erasmus, besides the fact that Zweig, as we have already argued, traces his above-the-national condition back to his 'obscure' childhood, his importance as first 'European' goes beyond what he actually achieved in his time in terms of commitment. Thus, we discussed in our analysis of *Erasmus* as *Selbstporträt* how, notwithstanding his shortcomings and weaknesses, above all in terms of 'action', Erasmus' radical 'independence' or 'inner freedom' allowed him to do a better service to coming generations than to his own contemporaries. The fact that Erasmus was able to keep his 'spiritual treasure' intact is what allowed future 'Europeans' to resume his values and also his 'European'—and humanist—allegiance, starting a saga of 'good Europeans': Spinoza, Lessing, Voltaire, who were inspired to a certain extent by Erasmus' 'European'

example (*Erasmus* 146). Similarly, Castellio, although his 'Europeanness' is not a topic of discussion in Zweig's biography, is also incorporated into the 'European' family as a successor of Erasmus, as a humanist; he is one of the members of what is left of a Pan-European movement after Erasmus' death. After going to exile, we read that "Basel ist ihm geruhige Heimstatt geworden, diese letzte Insel des religiösen Friedens; hier hütet die Universität noch das Erbe des Erasmus, und darum sind in diese letzte Freistätte der einstmals alleuropäischen Humanität all jene geflüchtet, die Verfolgung durch kirchliche Diktaturen erlitten" (*CASTELLIO* 1783).

In the same vein, there are other individuals that, although they do not participate so clearly of Zweig's narrative of commitment, have certain qualities which make them 'European'. One these individuals is the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, whose—philosophical and intellectual—value, much in line with the figures analyzed in Chapter I, is related to the notion of example, which appears already in the epigraph to Zweig's text:²³³ "Ich mache mir aus einem Philosophen gerade so viel, als er imstande ist, ein Beispiel zu geben" ("NIETZSCHE" 2771). The example of Nietzsche, his extraordinariness, from Zweig's perspective, consists mostly of two attributes: one the one hand, his relentless freedom, which we will discuss as a part of Zweig's European ethics; on the other, his supranationalism, which turns him eventually into a 'good European': "Von nun an gibt es für ihn keine andere Perspektive mehr als die Vogelschau des 'guten Europäers', jener 'wesentlich übernationalen und nomadischen Art Mensch', deren unausbleibliches Kommen er atmosphärisch fühlt" ("NIETZSCHE" 3482). The moment Nietzsche realizes that he can feel at home anywhere in the world, that his fatherland is only the starting point of his journey, he becomes a 'European' and a

²³³ Zweig's essay on Nietzsche was published for the first time in 1925 by Insel-Verlag (Leipzig) as the last chapter of the second volume of the biographical series *Baumeister der Welt. Versuch einer Typologie des Geistes*.

cosmopolite Using Goethe as a comparison throughout the essay—as an artist driven by reason and science in contrast to Nietzsche’s demonic and rebellious character—, Zweig reflects:

Nicht, wo er geboren war—Geburt ist Vergangenheit, ‘Historie’—, sondern wo er zeugt, wo er selbst gebärt, ist für Nietzsche der geistige Mensch zu Hause: ‘Ubi pater sum, ibi patria’—‘Wo ich Vater bin, wo ich zeuge, ist meine Heimat’, nicht wo er gezeugt wurde. Das wird die unschätzbare, unverlierbare Gabe der Südenfahrt an Nietzsche, daß für ihn nun die ganze Welt gleichzeitig Ausland und Heimat wird, daß er jenen Vogelschaublick, jenen hellen, niederstoßenden Raubvogelblick von einem Darüber behält, einen Blick nach allen Seiten, nach überall offenen Horizonten (indes Goethe sich nach seinen Worten durch das ‘Umstellen mit geschlossenen Horizonten’ gefährdete, freilich aber auch bewahrte). (“NIETZSCHE” 3493)

Basing our argumentation on these figures, we can contend that Zweig’s utopia is sustained by the individual personalities that contribute to erect the ‘spiritual’ foundations of ‘Europe’ as a community of belonging, as a *Heimat*. As Will Stone claims in his introduction to the English version of *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon*: “In Europe’s collective cultural achievement, its historic cornerstones laid by the genius of select individuals, Zweig saw the European ideal he treasured above all else” (121). Both the great ‘Europeans’ of the past, which provide a sense of legitimacy to Zweig’s project, and those of the present, which are examples for his contemporaries and a living proof that the ideal has survived the tests of time, make up the individual dimension of Zweig’s ‘European’ utopia. They are its ideal citizens, and as such they become its leaders, a moral repository, a source of consolation, the guardians of collective memory. This is how the figures of commitment discussed in Chapter I find their place within Zweig’s utopia, for wherever culture and *Geist* reign supreme over politics, the intellectual will be afforded the highest value and appreciation.

Moving on in our exploration of the individual dimension of Zweig's 'Europe', we need yet to pay attention to the last member of the saga of 'great Europeans': Stefan Zweig himself. At this point in our discussion, we barely need to state the 'Europeanness' of the Austrian writer. For one thing, we have amply attested to the 'European' condition of most of his alter-egos, which are essential in the construction of his identity discourse. What is more, Zweig himself took care of framing his life narrative from a 'European' perspective, dubbing his memories those of a 'European', and therefore equating 'die Welt' (von Gestern) to 'Europe'. However, this was not just a matter of self-perception. People around Zweig also recognized the fact that he was trying to live a 'European' life, to abide by the values embedded in his utopia. In this sense, his good friend the French novelist Jules Romains, in an essay written in 1939 and then published in book format on the occasion of Zweig's sixtieth anniversary in 1941, did not have any doubts that Zweig deserved the epithet of "Grand Européen", as the subtitle of his text reflects. Romains' text offers priceless insights on Zweig's life as seen from his peers. It is a kind of homage/memory book that looks at Zweig from the perspective of a 'shared dream'; one of the first attempts to read Zweig's legacy—while he was still alive—focusing on his 'European' efforts:

Stefan Zweig appartient à une espèce qui n'est peut-être pas en voie de disparaître—du moins, je l'espère—mais qui est sérieusement menacée par les conditions actuelles, et qui ne se perpétue qu'à travers toutes sortes de difficultés: celle des grands Européens. Plus tard, on fera leur histoire. On publiera à leur sujet, et sous ce titre, une thèse magnifique—si du moins le temps à venir reste capable de publier des thèses; si tout l'argent disponible en Europe n'est pas accaparé par les avions et les canons. (15)

Once again, we observe a correlation between being a 'European' and a condition of marginality and decadence. Romains' words imply that this 'species' had known a better

day. Or, at least, that there had been a time when being a 'European' seemed to be the individual expression of the progress of civilization; a progress that has been arrested twice by war and has left the pioneers of 'Europe' on the brink of extinction. All in all, Romains, by evoking his memories of Zweig, is enacting a critique of the times and situating 'Europeanness' not only as an identity paradigm but also as a space of resistance, in that the possibility of becoming 'European' has become chimeric, a relic of the past.²³⁴ In the preface, he laments that in 1941 there is no longer room in the public sphere for the 'true' sage/intellectual, the masses having abdicated their will in favor of leaders with mediocre personalities in whom they can see themselves reflected: "Les hommes ne cessent de déclarer, souvent en gémissant qu'ils veulent des guides, de bons guides, justes, raisonnables, désintéressés, et que méchamment on ne les leur donne pas. Or en fait ils ne tolèrent que des guides veules et mous, qui ne savent et ne veulent rien, c'est-à-dire faits à leur image, et en qui ils retrouvent, convenablement grossis, leurs propres aveuglements et leur propres faiblesses" (9-10).

As we have noted in Chapter I, there is a huge distance between the masses and the 'European' intellectual, which holds on to the memory for a time when he had prestige, authority, and was respected as a member of the aristocracy of the 'spirit'. Zweig's 'Europe', both in its collective and individual dimensions, might be considered 'democratic', in that many of the values it represents can be considered fundamental pillars of any democracy, but it is far from being radically egalitarian (i.e. non-

²³⁴ Through Romains' words we can infer that Zweig's fin-de-siècle 'European' dream was not merely the byproduct of Zweig's imagination and optimism, but something 'experienced', 'felt' at some point by a collectivity, the beginning of what would later become a utopia. In this sense, Stephan Resch asserts that Europe was "für viele Schriftsteller der Jahrhundertwende eine gelebte Realität. Ungeachtet der immer weiter erstarkenden Nationalismen, die zunehmend auf Abgrenzung anstatt auf Zusammenarbeit der europäischen Staaten bauten, war es durchaus möglich, sich europäisch zu fühlen, wie Stefan Zweig in der *Welt von Gestern* bestätigt" (*SZ und der Europa-Gedanke* 27). Although we have insisted on the necessity to avoid a literal reading of Zweig's memoirs, especially as regards their historical discourse, considering instead Zweig's conscious efforts to pass on a 'spiritual' legacy in a very specific emotional context, this does not exclude the possibility that Zweig's depiction of fin-de-siècle Vienna is based to a certain extent on 'experienced truth'.

hierarchical, class-free), in that it presupposes the existence of a 'leading' elite whose prerogative is to guide the moral life and manage the 'spiritual' goods of the community. The 'great Europeans', as discussed by Romain, aspire to 'lead' the masses without fully understanding that they have, since the fin-de-siècle, become a key (f)actor in the processes of social and political change. In fact, Zweig had been a first-hand witness to the emergence of the masses as a (uncontrollable) political agent that helped bring down the liberal governments in the last decades of the nineteenth century, prompting the appearance of a new breed of politicians. Ultimately, it was a clash between—philosophical and sociopolitical—systems/ideas of the world. As Carl Schorske argues:

All [the new politicians] possessed the peculiar gift of answering the social needs of their followers by composing ideological collages [...]. In liberal eyes, these ideological mosaics were mystifying and repulsive, confounding the 'above' with the 'below', the 'forward' with the 'backward'. Yet each of these political artists [...] grasped a social-psychological reality which the liberal could not see—each expressed in politics a rebellion against reason and law which soon became widespread. (119-120)

Being brought up under the values of Liberalism, the kind of post-rational politics that contributed to the rise of Nazism, among other 'popular' movements, looked incomprehensible to Zweig. Thus, this form of 'elitism', which is deeply ingrained in Zweig's *Weltanschauung*, is one of the greatest limitations of Zweig's thought. All in all, in the picture of Zweig as a 'great European' drawn by Romain, he belongs, together with his peers, to a sort of aristocracy of the spirit: "[I]ls tendaient à former, au-dessus d'une Europe où les souverains ne comptaient plus guère et n'entretenaient que des rapports bien indirects et tout formels, un cercle de souverains de l'esprit, dont la vie

extérieure pouvait être sans apparat [...] et les rencontres sans publicité aucune” (19).²³⁵ According to the French writer, the names of these figures used to mean something for the community, especially to its cultivated strata. Being a ‘European’ meant, in line with some of the examples above, to stay and act beyond the nation: “Ils constituèrent vraiment des valeurs communes. [...] [O]n peut dire qu’ils étaient pour beaucoup dans l’existence d’une civilisation européenne. Il en étaient le pôle spirituel; l’autre pôle, le matériel, étant représenté par les mécanismes dont les Européens usaient en commun: les chemins de fer, les échanges commerciaux, la libre circulation des monnaies” (17).

Last but not least, the image of the ‘European’ articulated by Romain is closely linked to the values of difference, diversity and harmony. Zweig, as the quintessential ‘European’, is fond of travelling as a form of satiating his curiosity for the other, to experience him or her as a fellow human being, to recognize foreign landscapes as home: “Eux-mêmes circulaient beaucoup. [...] Ils avaient envie de savoir par eux-mêmes comment les hommes vivent et pensent, quand ils sont façonnés par une autre langue. Ils voulaient vérifier à quoi correspondaient, dans la réalité de chaque jour, les différences, les originalités, ou les analogies, qu’ils avaient appris à goûter dans les littératures nationales” (17). As the analyses above show, sometimes it is difficult to make a clean break between the individual and the collective dimensions of Zweig’s utopia, as at the core of them both lies the same ethical program whose values—supranationalism, freedom, harmony, among others—inform both the configuration of ‘Europe’ as a community and as an individual ‘attitude’. Following this direction, and to conclude our

²³⁵ It must be said that probably Romain is thinking of Erasmus, and by extension the Erasmian intellectual, when he projects the image of Zweig as a member of a ‘European’ ‘spiritual’ elite. However, not all of Zweig’s ‘Europeans’ kept their distance from the masses, as our analysis of *Verhaeren* and *Rolland* has demonstrated. In my opinion, This proves the close link, as perceived by his contemporaries, between Zweig and his biographical subject/alter-ego Erasmus von Rotterdam. Although we might be tempted to present a unified image of the ‘European’ as the ideal citizen of Zweig’s utopia, the truth is that, as we have pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, ‘Europe’ is a changing, nuanced concept that evolves together with Zweig’s thought and *Weltanschauung*.

exploration of the individual dimension of Zweig's 'Europe', I would like to discuss a transformation of the 'European' into a related form and identity paradigm. If we think of the ideal citizens inhabiting Zweig's 'European' utopia, there is a figure that recurs throughout his work and which embraces and represents the values of the Zweigian ethics: the citizen of the world or *citoyen du monde*.

From the 'European' to the Citizen of the World

The first thing that must be said is that I believe that Zweig's *Kosmopolitismus* or *Weltbürgertum* should re-evaluated as one of ethical pillars that sustain Zweig's *Weltanschauung*—an aspect of his beyond-the-national stance. As such, we will discuss the meaning of Zweig's cosmopolitanism and the end of this chapter. For now, we will focus on how it is embodied in the figure of the citizen of the world, a variation of Zweig's 'Europeanness', and an essential ingredient in the configuration of Zweig's personal discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern*. In fact, we had already observed, when discussing Nietzsche as a 'good European', how the 'European' can easily adopt a cosmopolitan vision/identity. By using the mechanism of conceptual iteration mentioned before, Zweig builds his 'European' *Weltanschauung* and automatically extends the circle of belonging from Europe to the 'World'. Although we may doubt how large Zweig's 'world' is—given his Eurocentric limitations—, we cannot deny his universalizing 'vocation'.²³⁶ It remains unclear, therefore, which are the conceptual/imaginative borders of this 'world' that gives the *citoyen du monde* a home and an identity, or if the expansion of one's

²³⁶ About Nietzsche and Europe, Stephan Resch comments, following Paul Michael Lützeler, that his vision, in contrast to what Zweig suggests, was limited by the Eurocentric and Imperialist view that dominated his time: "Es lag ihm wenig an einer internationalen Zusammenarbeit über Europa hinaus. Vielmehr überträgt er [...] den Nationalchauvinismus seiner Zeit auf die europäische Ebene und stellt sich die neue europäische 'Mischrasse', den 'guten Europäer' als elitäre Schöpfung vor, die anderen Völkern der Erde überlegen sei und daher eine zumindest moralische und kulturelle Führungsposition innehaben müsse" (*SZ und der Europa-Gedanke* 26).

horizons is an act of reinvention of the self or even an imperialistic process of colonization.

Be it as it may, being a citizen of the world is, especially from the First World War onwards, also an act of resistance, a condition of marginality in the sense that cosmopolitan subjects inhabit the margins of society and challenge the state ideology, albeit frequently, like in Zweig's case, from a position of privilege. In other words, by adopting a cosmopolitan 'skin', Zweig is producing a response to the ideological and moral preeminence of his nemesis: nationalism. To ascertain the opposition/confrontation between nationalism, especially in its most 'toxic' and violent manifestations, and cosmopolitanism in Zweig's thought, we just need to go back to our discussion in Chapter I on how Zweig negotiates his ambivalent position during the war in his autobiographical narrative, and remember how he thanks 'his cosmopolitan way of life' for having inoculated him against the patriotic fervor of the moment (*WvG* 247). By that time, according to Zweig's 'official' narrative, cosmopolitanism had become a 'conviction', something so deeply ingrained in his identity that it could not be undone. To understand to what extent Zweig's cosmopolitan identity opposes the ideal subject of nationalistic discourses, we may briefly mention Laura Doyle's reflections on transnationalism.

In front of a nationalistic identity that makes the subject participate of a common experience but, at the same, establishes very clear delimitations to said national community of belonging—animating the fallacy of the 'autonomous', isolated (individual and collective) self whose identity is built through a series of oppositions to radically different others—, Doyle discusses the need to consider identity as a intersubjective phenomenon based on the self's incessant shifting between a subject and an object position, the space in-between being where our sense of identity is forged: "[e]ach body, each person is in this sense two bodies—or a kind of double helix where the opposite sites of one ribbon touch and this loop generates a circle of time and space, a here and

now, an entry into worldness” (6). Additionally, Doyle contends that identity is not reduced to the encounter of ‘one’ with the ‘other’, but we need to take into account that there might be also a third-party playing the role of onlooker, projecting his gaze on the encounter and at the same being influenced by that very act of contemplation. All in all, what nationalism seems to dispute is the idea that we are ‘essentially’ wired to live and exist collectively. To defend a transnational/cosmopolitan way of being in the world is to understand the world as a collection of “subjects ‘thrown’ together, in a Heideggerian sense, caught-up-alongside each other, intertwined dialectically with each other by way of a materiality we never quite hold yet always inhabit, apprehending and resisting and continually forgetting this existential-dialectical condition and yet always unconsciously counting on it” (10).

In the same vein, Jonathan Rée, in his discussion of “Nationalism and the Experience of Nationality”, asserts that one of the fallacies of nationalism—and by extension internationalism, which are considered “inseparable partners, two aspects of a single historical phenomenon” (79-80)—is that it tries to hide the fact that “[n]ations exist only in the plural [...]. Local sentiments acquire national significance only in the light of an imagined international order. It is essential to the principle of nationality that it presuppose internationality, but perhaps it is also essential that it should cover this presupposition up, by presenting the nation as an extended family” (83). Taking these ideas into account, we could argue that the intersubjective identity of the citizen of the world as embodied by Stefan Zweig is constructed against the extremely autonomous vision of the individual subject forwarded by nationalism. Thus, Zweig presents an alternative and a warning before the impossibility of isolating the individual, and in turn the nation, by creating artificial walls around him/her that are devised to confront him/her with an ‘other’—in peace times, a competitor, in war times, an enemy.

Following the reflections of sociologist Manuel Castells, the ‘European’ and cosmopolitan identity paradigm embodied by Zweig could be conceived as a ‘project-based identity’, which is

based on the correlation between an individual identity and its potential to become a collective identity and an ideological project. As such, it opposes a 'legitimizing identity' subservient to the interests of the state that ostracizes any potentially subversive element, while, at the same time, goes beyond a 'resistance-based' identity by surpassing a position of subordination and proposing an alternative that must draw upon historical, cultural or geographical components if it does not want to become "purely subjective and hence unlikely to be adopted by society as a whole" (63). As we have argued before, when discussing the different conceptions of 'Europe' in Rolland and Zweig, the latter showed that he was no revolutionary, preferring a reform of the system rather than its complete overturning. Additionally, he thought and acted from the position of someone who had felt once fully assimilated—as a Jew—into the Austrian, German, and European culture. Although his condition might have become 'marginal' during exile, his project attempted not merely to resist but to redefine Europe's ethical basis.

Last but not least, it is interesting to note that the identity of the 'citizen of the world' becomes a common trait of many of Zweig's biographical subjects, whose deeds and achievements are interpreted as those of a cosmopolitan mind and/or soul. Besides Zweig himself—in *Die Welt von Gestern*—and Nietzsche, we can observe the notion of the '*citoyen du monde*' for instance in *Montaigne*, who represents a new synthesis between the two ancestry lines that converge on him, between the Gascon fish merchants and the Jewish brokers: "[E]r [war] durch diese Gemischtheit prädestiniert [...], ein Mensch der Mitte und ein Mensch der Bindung zu werden, unbefangen nach allen Seiten blickend, unborniert in jedem Sinne, 'libre penseur' [freier Denker] und 'citoyen du monde' [Weltbürger], freigeistig und tolerant, Sohn und Bürger nicht einer Rasse und eines Vaterlands, sondern Weltbürger jenseits von Ländern und Zeiten" (*Montaigne* 252). Even in the morally disputable figure of Giacomo Casanova, Zweig glimpses a cosmopolitan existence. In any case, the cosmopolitan identity, even in a banal context such as Casanova's, always entails a negative critique of patriotism: "Liebe zum Vaterland?—Er, der Weltbürger, der

durch dreiundsiebzig Jahre kein eigenes Bett besitzt und immer nur im Zufall wohnt, er bläst auf Patriotismus. Ubi bene, ibi patria [...], wo er die Taschen am besten vollkriegt und die Weiber am leichtesten ins Bett, wo man die Narren am bequemsten an der Nase faßt und das Leben am saftigsten genießt, dort spreizt er behaglich die Beine unter den Tisch und fühlt sich zu Hause” (“CASANOVA” 584).

Also, it is interesting to note how through the biography of Casanova, Zweig signals an important limitation of the cosmopolitan condition, namely, the difficulty to maintain indefinitely an uprooted existence. We will come back to this idea in our discussion of Zweig’s beyond-the-national stance and its particularities, suffice it to mention now how Zweig describes what looks like the demise of a citizen of the world overcome by age: “Seit das Blut nicht mehr so warm ihm im Leib umrollt, beginnt der alte Citoyen du monde [...] plötzlich zu frieren inmitten seiner einst so geliebten Weltunendlichkeit und sich ganz sentimental nach Heimat zu sehnen. So senkt der ehemalige Stolze [...] reumütig das schuldige Haupt und bittet das venezianische Governo [...] kläglich um Verzeihung” (“CASANOVA” 1110). Finally, and proving how the basis of Zweig’s ethical program shows a high degree of interconnectedness between its categories, in both *Erasmus* and *Castellio*, Zweig recurrently describes the humanists as cosmopolitans: “welches Grauen schüttelt diese abgeklärten Weltbürger vor diesen unmenschlichen Menschheitsverbesserern, die in ihre schönheitsgläubige Welt eingebrochen sind und mit Schaum vor dem Munde ihre gewalttätigen Orthodoxien proklamieren” (*CASTELLIO* 107).²³⁷

²³⁷ In the case of *Erasmus*, the first mention to his cosmopolitanism comes also with a criticism of its limitations in terms of scope (i.e. elitism): “Dieses hartnäckige Sichbeschränken auf den geistesaristokratischen Kreis, auf die damals so haardünne Schicht der Kultur, gibt der Gestalt des Erasmus und seinem Schaffen etwas Wurzelloses: als der wahre Kosmopolit bleibt er überall nur Besucher, nur Gast, nirgendwo nimmt er Sitten und Wesen eines Volkes in sich auf, nirgends eine einzige lebendige Sprache. Mit allen seinen ungezählten Reisen ist er eigentlich am Wesenhaftesten jedes Landes vorbeigereist” (*Erasmus* 373).

Begegnungen mit... 'Europe'

To conclude our exploration of the individual dimension of Zweig's utopia, and drawing from our reflections so far, we could argue that there is a strong 'personal' component in Zweig's 'Europe' that is inextricably linked to the genre of life-writing. I believe it might be interesting to read many of the abovementioned (auto)biographies and portraits as part of Zweig's efforts at sustaining and building the 'European' Tower of Babel—as part of his commitment to promote the 'spiritual' union of 'Europe'. In other words, if Zweig's 'Europe' is, above all, a post-/trans- national substratum made up of the immaterial ingredients of art and culture, Zweig's task of recognizing, situating (on the map of the European letters), and paying homage to artists and, broadly speaking, other intellectual figures can be read as an attempt at giving substance to his 'imagined' community. In 1987, the most important compiler of Zweig's bibliography to date, the American scholar Randolph J. Klaviter, counted, in the context of his study on the reception of Stefan Zweig in the United States, up to a total of 698 essays, book reviews, forewords, afterwords, and other similar texts written by the Austrian writer between 1899 and 1942, of which the most important were published in three volumes: *Begegnungen mit Menschen, Büchern, Städten* (1937), *Zeit und Welt* (1943) and *Europäisches Erbe* (1960) ("Reception SZ United States"). Having said that, I would like to focus our reflections on the first of the three—*Begegnungen*—, not only because it was published while Zweig was still alive, but also because of the idea of 'encounter'/'meeting' incorporated in the title, which, in my opinion, speaks volumes about the process of construction of Zweig's 'Europe'.

The idea I would like to suggest is that, as abstract as many of the concepts discussed here might sound (humanism, cosmopolitanism, harmony, peace, freedom, among others), at the core of Zweig's 'Europe' lies a number of (lived) experiences, of actual—both physical and imagined—encounters with human beings, works of art and

landscapes.²³⁸ The impression they left on Zweig—and the fact that he is able through his own narrative to provide a certain unity, a collective sense of belonging—is what constitutes the basis of his 'European' community. They are incorporated in one way or another in his world and, in the end, they are all that is left of it. Not coincidentally, Harry Zohn usually starts his analyses of Zweig as a mediator—see “Stefan Zweigs Kulturelles Mittlertum” and “SZ European and Jew”—by quoting from the introduction to *Begegnungen*. In this text, Zweig relates the difficulty of putting together a life of essays, of selecting what is most important or representative of one's work; and the fact that the task had been postponed many times until—his words seem to imply—became a matter of survival. For when Zweig finally decides to compile his essays, the world has irremediably changed, a new generation with new idols and values has emerged. Using a rhetoric that reminds us of the prologue to *Die Welt von Gestern* and the notion of 'generational exceptionalism', Zweig decentralizes/de-personalizes his readings and experiences and makes them participate of a collective dimension: “Denn dreißig Jahre literarischer Weltbetrachtung bedeuten in sich einen geschlossenen Block Zeit, sie spiegeln Erlebnis und Anschauung nicht eines eitlen Einzelnen mehr, sondern Weltgefühl und Geschehnis einer ganzen Generation” (*BEGEGNUNGEN* 5).

Ultimately, it is in this sense that Zweig's tasks as mediator gains significance. He is in the middle of a vast network of individuals and landscapes that through him interact and redefine their boundaries, engaging in multiple processes of cultural transfer. As he

²³⁸ The idea of 'Europe' as the sum of individual personalities has also been noted by Riley Kastinger, who argues that Zweig “searches philosophy and history for examples to be held up against the powers of destruction. Portraits of Tolstoy, Ramuz, Jaurès, Rathenau, Montaigne, Chateaubriand, Weininger, and many other bring indirectly the message for the need of unification” (“The Quest for Reason” 25). Also, commenting on the potential of 'exemplary' figures to combat national, cultural and ethnic prejudice, Denis Charbit affirms that “[t]erritorialement enracinée et géographiquement repérable, c'est moins la diversité et la beauté de ses paysages qui inspirent leur représentation idéale que le panthéon des génies qui y sont nés. [...] Parce que chaque pays en a produit quelques spécimens, leur exemple pourrait bien contribuer à abattre les préjugés ethniques” (52).

admits in the same text, it is the feeling that he can see from the distance the porous contours of a 'world', a self-contained image of something that has been lost, that has become 'utopian', that impels him to pass it down to posterity:

Aus diesem Gefühl, nicht selbst mehr Mittelpunkt und Sinn dieses Buches zu sein, sondern bloß Mittler von Werten und Erlebnissen, die unserer ganzen Generation den Sinn ihres Daseins erhöhten, habe ich mich schließlich doch zur Sammlung meiner durch die Jahre verstreuten Essays entschlossen [...]. Es sind Begegnungen mit Menschen, mit Städten, mit Büchern, mit Bildern, mit Musik, mit einer manchmal begeisternden und dann wieder ernüchternden Zeit" (*BEGEGNUNGEN* 5)

Finally, Zweig strives to clarify that there is only one aspect of life he has not deemed worthy of being included in his selection: politics. His world, his community, exists only in a 'spiritual' sense, beyond any party and/or ideology. What unites its multifarious components lies not in the domain of power but of ideas and the immaterial. This bias corresponds to Zweig's desire to live beyond the nation, not to discriminate but to bring together, to make his readers realize that they have much in common with their neighbors. The people, books and cities that make up *Begegnungen* have been given a symbolic and transnational/'European' dimension:

Aber wenn dieses Buch wirklich im geistigen Sinne eine Einheit darstellt, so ist sie es einzig durch meinen Lebenswillen zur Überparteilichkeit in allen Dingen geworden, durch die unbeugsame Anspannung, auch das Fremdeste zu verstehen, immer Völker und Zeiten, Gestalten und Werke nur in ihrem positiven, ihrem schöpferischen Sinne zu bewerten und durch solches Verstehenwollen und Verstehenmachen demütig, aber treu unserem unzerstörbaren Ideal zu dienen: der humanen Verständigung zwischen Menschen, Gesinnungen, Kulturen und Nationen. (*BEGEGNUNGEN* 5-6)

Looking at Zweig's work from this perspective, we realize that a community/world emerges from the continuity he provided to a series of individuals and locations. In other words, we could deal with a part of his *oeuvre* as an Encyclopedia of Zweig's 'European'

utopia; the essays of *Begegnungen*, the biographies and his memoirs are at the core of Zweig's idea of the 'world'. Although most of these works have already been discussed separately, a task remains undone yet: to put them together within the same 'frame' so as to recreate Zweig's 'spiritual' legacy. While this is not the primary aim of this dissertation, I believe that we have so far—albeit partially—reconstructed certain aspects of Zweig's *Welt/Anschauung*, opening up the possibility of reading his work from a committed, 'European' perspective. Bearing this in mind, I would like to finish our discussion by alluding to an emerging field in Literary Studies that can help us illuminate Zweig's efforts at building a transnational 'spiritual' community.

Following this direction, we must briefly mention Zweig's biographical project *Baumeister der Welt. Versuch einer Typologie des Geistes*. Although this biographical series—consisting of three biographical trilogies: *Drei Meister: Balzac-Dickens-Dostojewski* (1920); *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon: Hölderlin-Heinrich von Kleist-Friedrich Nietzsche* (1925); *Drei Dichter ihres Lebens: Casanova-Stendhal-Tolstoi* (1928)—is not where we find most of Zweig's great 'Europeans', it is the perfect example, in its conception and execution, of how Zweig used the biographical genre to contribute to the sphere of the 'common', to materialize the 'spiritual' union of Europe.²³⁹ As Pierre Grapin claims: "Il y a, au coeur de cette grande entreprise, un dessein d'ensemble, celui de dresser quelques colonnes de la cathédrale internationale de l'esprit en Europe, au dix-neuvième siècle. Le choix des thèmes, résolument international, ne

²³⁹ Reflecting on Zweig's biographical production, Rüdiger Görner argues that Zweig engages his work in a process of 'personification' of history, his 'type-oriented' biographies being a sort of personified history of ideas that is informed by both a transhistorical and transeuropean perspective ("Ghostwriter der Toten" 89). As Görner comments in relation to Zweig's biography of Balzac, "[d]ie Zirkel, von denen er sprach, kannte auch er, hatte er sie doch selbst beschrieben; nur daß sein Mittelpunkt nicht die großen Städte, sondern die großen Europäer waren. Und dieses Verfahren, dieses Kreise-um-einen-Mittelpunkt-Ziehen war für ihn zutiefst mit dem biographischen Erzählen verwandt" ("Ghostwriter der Toten" 92). In the same vein, Gabriel Fragnière writes that Zweig's biographical subjects "ne représentent jamais l'image type d'une culture nationale, mais des individualités engagées dans la poursuite d'un idéal plus élevé d'humanisme et de valeur morale. C'est en ce sens qu'ils étaient représentatifs de cette dimension européenne commune dans laquelle il se sentait lui-même complètement intégré" (34).

compte que trois Allemands sur les neuf, groupés sur un titre révélateur: *Le combat avec le démon*” (6). In this light, Joseph Pischel sees Zweig’s ‘architects of the world’ as an attempt to build a ‘world’ that is opposed to a monotonous and politicized one. Zweig’s typology is not about radical oppositions, but a process of interaction, where difference is discussed within a common framework that helps build bridges between the biographical subjects. As he himself reflects in the introduction to *Nietzsche*:

[U]nd diese zwei Bände [*Drei Meister* and *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon*] sollen nur die ersten einer werdenden Reihe sein, die ich ‘Die Baumeister der Welt, eine Typologie des Geistes’ nennen will. Nichts liegt mir aber ferner, als damit ein starres System in die Welt des Genius einkonstruieren zu wollen. [...] [M]ich aber lockt an diesem weiten Plan gerade die Zwiefalt, daß er an Unendliches rührt und sich doch keine Grenzen stellt. Und so baue ich, langsam und leidenschaftlich zugleich, mit meinen selbst noch neugierigen Händen den durch Zufall begonnenen Bau weiter hinauf in das kleine Himmelstück Zeit, das unsicher über unserem Leben hängt. (KMD 32)

Conclusion: from the ‘I’ to the ‘We’

Following the analysis above and the theoretical premises discussed at the beginning of this section, we could contend that both Stefan Zweig’s life and work—in their combination of mediation, cultural transfer, and cosmopolitanism—become paradigmatic for the study of transnational life-writing and history. On the one hand, Stefan Zweig seems to be the ideal subject of a transnational biography, since any attempt to read his life from a perspective other than the ‘European’ will necessarily collide with his transnational *Weltanschauung*. On the other hand, his efforts at constructing ‘European’, cosmopolitan subjects (Erasmus, Rolland, Verhaeren, Nietzsche, etc.), at making sense of their life and work beyond national and cultural frontiers, striving towards the ‘universal’ and the ‘human’, convey the idea that in Zweig life-writing becomes a means to express a ‘European’ identity, and, what is more, to build a sense of community by

bridging the gap between the nations and showing an affiliation that transcends them. Zweig's 'Europe' can be read, as I have attempted to demonstrate throughout this section, as the sum of individual life-trajectories and cultural products that are bounded by common landscapes, ideas and, above all, Zweig's vision of the world.

2.2.3. Striving Towards the 'Common' European

In the previous section we have discussed the individual dimension of Zweig's 'Europe', bringing to the fore the presence in the Austrian writer's work of a saga of 'Europeans' and, by extension, of 'citizens of the world' that give substance and help construct—with both their life-trajectories and their intellectual legacies—the 'spiritual' union of Europe. They are supposed to act as common 'referents' and 'moral leaders', as well as, in a sense, mediators between cultures. This is how these figures are 'read', their narrative being adapted to fit a transnational framework. Having said that, we need to move on to the other dimension of 'Europe' that we have distinguished in our exploration of said concept in *Die Welt von Gestern's* narrative. Above all, 'Europe' stands for a collective identity, a 'community' or 'union' of sorts grounded on the 'immaterial' side of reality. Our aim in this section is to explore the multiple valences of the concept/idea of 'Europe' as a community of belonging in Stefan Zweig's work. Suffice it to say, we cannot pretend to be exhaustive at this point in our discussion. For one, we have already touched upon this dimension of 'Europe' both in Chapter I and at the beginning of Chapter II—when discussing the main features of Zweig's 'European' utopia. In other words, this section will follow previous analyses, trying to build from there the 'architectural' mode of Zweig's 'Europe'. Especially, we must not forget that we are discussing 'Europe' as the materialization of Zweig's commitment—the expression of his *Weltanschauung* and ethos—, which, in my opinion, is its first and most fundamental value.

Before we start considering the valences of Zweig's 'Europe' in its collective dimension, I propose that we consider Zweig's efforts at building, or promoting the materialization of, a community in the context a crisis of a modern crisis of identity. In this sense 'Europe' belongs to a movement of collective reinvention and redefinition. This crisis starts at the fin-de-siècle with the progressive demise of the liberal ideology that had dominated the cultural, political and economic life of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth, giving rise, especially in the sphere of art and culture, to what has been called by historian Carl Schorske an "oedipal revolt" that crystallized, in the case of Vienna, in the movement of the *Jung Wien*. It is a revolt against the culture of the previous generation (that of the 'founders' (*Gründer*)), which "valued an art that was oriented towards the values of the past; they were collectors, or curators of those museums which they referred to as their homes. The art of the younger generation, by contrast, was forward looking and innovative, and it formed the center of their lives" (Janik and Toulmin 45).

What Zweig and his generation experienced in their youth is a total change of paradigm marked by the need to overcome the cult of rationality that intended to hide/ignore the most passionate and instinctual side of human nature. In the words of art historian Josep Casals: "[P]ara los artistas y escritores de la *Secession* y la *Jung Wien*, el objeto prioritario de atención es la parte del iceberg que en el racionalismo quedaba bajo el agua: las fuerzas disolventes del yo en el flujo de la vida. Al cientificismo frío y desencantado ellos oponen un entrelazamiento mágico de vitalidad y belleza" (*Afinidades Vienesas* 38). And this is not only the aesthetic evolution of Gustav Klimt and Alfred Loos against historicism and ornamentation, but also a whole questioning and rethinking of the nature of reality and the individual. It is a crisis of language and identity, propitiated by, among others, Ernst Mach's theories concerning the fluid and unstable nature of the

self, which challenge the notion of the individual as an immutable entity, or Sigmund Freud's challenge to bourgeois morality by exposing how sexuality and the unconscious affect and condition human behavior. As Francis and Stacey put it: "Freud rejected the then conventional, narrow conception of sexuality and its manifestations; and deliberately set out to extend greatly this conception of sexuality and to establish the idea of sexuality as an all pervasive factor in human life" (108).

Following Jacques Le Rider's *Modernity and its Crises of Identity*, the fin-de-siècle milieu is defined by three closely-related crises: 1) the crisis of Viennese Modernism; 2) the challenge to traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity; 3) the crisis of Jewish identity between emancipation and assimilation and, as the twentieth century draws nearer, between antisemitism and nationalism. In this context, many intellectuals and artists—such as Otto Weininger or Hugo von Hofmannsthal—will try to formulate individual responses, looking to the self in order to repair their 'broken' identities, to salvage the gap between what they had inherited in the context of family and school and the rapidly-changing world they were experiencing. Other intellectuals, such as Karl Kraus or Arthur Schnitzler, will try to confront the system. In sum, this is the beginning of a crisis that would culminate with the First World War and the fall of what Jean-François Lyotard termed the great Western narratives—among them the belief in progress, God or the possibility of knowing the world (i.e. truth) through science and reason (*Postmodern Condition*). In other words, the First World War inaugurated a new epoch marked by growing skepticism; what started with the Viennese Modernism would culminate with the avantgarde movements based on experimentation and the need for new languages. In the field of politics, new ideologies such as communism and fascism tried to provide alternatives to the old doctrines, especially liberalism, which had not only failed politically but also economically after the 1929 crash. In the same vein, in front of

the threat of a growing nationalism, many intellectuals would defend the need to rethink collective identities, pointing out to the limitations of nationalism as an 'imagined' community (see Anderson).

Stefan Zweig's 'Spiritual' and 'Utopian' 'Europe'

If we attempt to organize and discuss the several valences of 'Europe' as the materialization of Stefan Zweig's (ethical) commitment, we will note that, beyond any particular function, Zweig's ideal community is defined above all by two adjectives that specify its 'nature' and, at the same time, signal both its possibilities and limitations: Zweig's 'Europe', in its collective capacity and aspiration, can be described as 'spiritual' and 'utopian'. On the one hand, Zweig's insistence on situating his efforts as an artist and an intellectual beyond the sphere of the material and, more specifically, beyond politics and, broadly speaking, those (discursive) spaces where power relations are established and negotiated, turns his commitment and, by extension, his 'European' project into a moral/'spiritual' enterprise. The ideal community projected from his *Weltanschauung* aims to modify the sphere of *Geist*, producing, for instance, a number of intellectual figures—some of them inserted in a genealogy of 'great' Europeans—that are presented as 'apolitical' insofar as their legacies and voices acquire an extemporal and 'universal' dimension. In the end, the adjective 'spiritual' (*geistig/seelisch*) situates 'Europe' in the realm of 'ideas' and 'ideals', in an attempt to break through spatial and temporal limitations and therefore access the dimension of the 'human'. It is a matter of always going 'beyond'; especially, it is about transcending those discourses that attempt to separate and isolate human beings through their differences instead of emphasizing their common condition. Also, the sphere of *Geist* becomes the proper sphere of action for the writer/intellectual, whose sole aim should be to contribute through his/her work to said

domain of human existence (see “SZ Tells Plan for a Review” and “The Mission of the Intellectual”).

On the other hand, Zweig’s ‘Europe’ acquires, especially towards the end of his life, a ‘utopian’ dimension. In other words, ‘Europe’ is literally a ‘no-place’, the projected image of a better society where some of the fundamental values that make up Zweig’s ethical program—freedom, peace, tolerance, supranationalism, to name a few—direct and shape both the live of the individual and the community. As we have amply discussed before, to discuss Zweig’s ‘Europe’ as a ‘u/topia’, or non-location, is problematic, since we are able to reconstruct said utopia precisely trough some of its historically-situated materializations: fin-de-siècle Vienna, Flanders or Paris, and the Brazil/Rio de Janeiro of the late 1930s. Most of these *topoi* become at the moment of writing a recreation/evocation of the past—except in the case of Rio—that is supposed to be ‘accurate’, ‘objective’, ‘honest’. The ‘European’ utopia is hidden behind the mask of history. As I have argued before, we need to assume that there is a ‘utopian’ ‘drive’ behind the composition of these historical images if we want to move beyond the hermeneutical deadlock to which Zweig’s work, and especially *Die Welt von Gestern*, has been condemned by a traditional criticism excessively ‘loyal’ to generic conventions and epistemological practices. However, having said that, we must not forget that Zweig’s ‘European’ utopia—always between commas given the malleability of the concept ‘Europe’—is grounded on experience. It is never presented as a fully realized ‘dream’, but its locations are rooted in (historical) contexts where it was possible to imagine the future utopia. Zweig, at some point in his life, seemed to have ‘glimpsed’ ‘Europe’, so that, through his experiences as a ‘European’, he is able to reconstruct the longed-for utopia. Especially, in his memoirs, these foundational ‘fragments’ of the ‘utopian’ take the form of ‘memories’; Zweig’s ‘Europe’ becomes in *Die Welt von Gestern* a past utopia,

an unrealized dream and a 'failed' project. The conditions for believing in the future of 'Europe' are no longer there when Zweig 'writes' his memoirs. Ultimately, by saying that Zweig's 'Europe' is a utopia we are pointing out the fact that it is made of both desire and aspiration; an ideal that must orientate our lives in a common direction; a goal to be achieved both individually and collectively.

The Valences of Zweig's 'Europe'

Continuing our recapitulation and having established two essential characteristics of the 'nature' of Zweig's—'spiritual' and 'utopian'—'Europe', let us bring forth and discuss some of the functions or valences of 'Europe' as they have been hinted at during our discussion of Zweig's narrative of commitment. Following the chronological approach to Zweig's work carried out in Chapter I, our first stop is *Verhaeren*. We have already mentioned how Zweig reads the Belgian poet's work from the perspective of his 'European' significance. Verhaeren is elevated beyond the national and his efforts as mediator and synthesizer make him deserve the label of the 'European Walt Whitman'. He is much more than a poet; he is the member—and one of the founders—of the new 'European' type. In *Verhaeren* 'Europe' becomes not only an identity paradigm but also a community and a horizon of experience. As a privileged intellectual and artist, Verhaeren is able—through his extraordinary sensitivity and capacity to 'perceive'—to first experience the new 'reality' that is unfolding and then to comprehend that his vision is that of the coming future.

As a pioneer, the Belgian poet experiences 'Europe' as a community, as a new existential horizon beyond the national paradigm. In a sense, 'Europe' is in *Verhaeren*—written before the First World War—not so much a future utopia but a present reality that just needs to be unveiled; 'Europe' is already there but in an embryonic form: "Auf breitem Fundament formt sich über den Ländergrenzen eine einheitliche Rasse, eine neue

Gemeinsamkeit, die europäische. Hier greifen hart Wunsch und Wirklichkeit zusammen. Verhaeren sieht Europa bereits vereint durch eine große, gemeinsame Energie" (*VERHAEREN* 60). The task of the poet, as we saw in Chapter one, is to contribute to the construction of this new framework of intelligibility, to 'produce' a new regime of visibility that corresponds to the 'modern' condition: "[D]er Traum scheint ihm nicht mehr Absonderung vom Leben, sondern Fähigkeit, das Wirkliche von seinem Sein in ein werdendes zu steigern. Europa ist ihm nicht mehr der Zusammenschluß von Nationen, ein geographischer Begriff, sondern das große Symbol der Eroberung" (*VERHAEREN* 101). With the city as its epicenter, 'Europe' provides shelter and belonging to the modern individual, which is being overcome—de-centered and alienated—by a rapidly-shifting environment. In this light, 'Europe' becomes a space of mediation, where the nations' mosaic can negotiate its multiple—socioeconomic, cultural and political—contrasts; through difference a new 'common' space of cohabitation emerges: "Europa 'la forge, où se frappe l'idée', die große Schmiede, in der alle Unterschiede, alle einzelnen Beobachtungen, alle Resultate umgehämmert werden in eine neue Geistigkeit, in das europäische Bewußtsein" (*VERHAEREN* 60).

Additionally, in its present-future condition, 'Europe' becomes a teleology, the inevitable outcome of progress and evolution. As we have already discussed, there is a religious rhetoric/vocabulary that permeates some of Zweig's texts and figures of commitment. That rhetoric manifests itself in the recreation and re-appropriation of the biblical legends of the Jeremias and the Tower of Babel, but it can also be observed in the prophetic images of *Verhaeren* and *Rolland*. Suffice it to say, there is a subtle but important difference between 'Europe' as a teleology in *Verhaeren*—and in the first chapters of *Die Welt von Gestern* (save for the self-critique)—and the 'Europe' of *Rolland* and "Der Turm zu Babel". Whereas in the former the idea of 'Europe' as the fate of

humankind is the product of a still intact belief in the unstoppable force of progress, in the latter, at a point when that incipient community and space of coexistence has been destroyed by war—also the byproduct of progress and technique—, 'Europe' adopts a redemptive role; it is, more than ever, a matter of 'faith'. With the setback of the First World War, 'Europe' is no longer 'inevitable', but it becomes a matter of 'conviction', something to fight for with the certainty that is the only way for the European nations to get back on the path of progress, peace and cohabitation.

In other words, after the war 'Europe' has become a 'lost paradise'. As Klaus Weissenberger reflects, commenting on Zweig's memoirs: "He saw in the cosmopolitanism exemplified in Vienna under the Habsburgs [...] the preliminary stage towards a united post-war Europe. The demise of the monarchy was precisely what created such a feeling of loss that the vision of a united Europe took on the proportions of a messianic goal" ("SZ's Non-Fictional Prose in Exile" 128). Also, Antje Büssgen, who compares the Europeanism of Friedrich Schiller, Stefan Zweig and Julien Benda, sees in Zweig's 'historiography of tomorrow' a similar 'teleological' configuration of the historical discourse, which serves to support the 'European' narrative: "Geschichtsteleologie erscheint bei Schiller wie auch bei Zweig als motivationpsychologische, pädagogische Strategie der Humanitätsbeförderung und damit als Remedium gegen menschlichen Egoismus, gegen eine kleinmütig-pessimistische Darstellung, Abwägung und Beurteilung vergangener Epochen" (104).

Following Büssgen's reflections, it must be noted that thinking Zweig's 'Europe' as a teleology takes us to reflect upon its 'historical' dimension. Both aspects of the configuration of 'Europe' are inextricably linked. For if 'Europe' must be understood as the collective destiny of humankind, the exercise of tracing the beginning of the European narrative back to times immemorial helps us reinforce the conviction and desirability of

said goal. That is why, Zweig reflects, another kind of historical discourse and methodology is needed. In the Austrian writer's 'modernity', people no longer live in isolation from one another, but in a global state of interconnection; simultaneity and synchronicity dominate in this new existential landscape. Therefore, Zweig argues that, "weil wir diesen Überblick über das ganze Rund der Erde haben, müssen wir selbstverständlich einen neuen Maßstab setzen. Nicht was die einzelnen Nationen auf Kosten anderer Nationen zeitweise vorwärts gebracht hat, muß uns wichtig sein, sondern einzig, was der gemeinsamen Bewegung, dem Fortschritt dient, der menschlichen Zivilisation" ("GvM" 2805). The creation of new common frameworks of intelligibility and experience ('standards') that bring humanity closer to 'Europe' is not the sole responsibility of the poet/prophet; the intellectual/historian has also a role to play. We need both a present and a past narratives to accommodate the subject in the common 'European' collectivity.

In accordance to these premises, Zweig engages some of his works in the (re-)creation of this 'European' historical dimension. This is the aim, for instance, of his 1932 lecture "Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historischer Entwicklung" (Milan/Florence), which opens with a reflection on the double nature of the self, always isolated in its personality and uniqueness and, at the same time, inevitably bound to the common. Applied to the nation as 'individuality', Zweig affirms: "Was aber sind Völker anderes als kollektive Individuen? Und so unterliegen auch die Nationen dieser zwiefachen Tendenz, einesteils ihre Individualität, ihre geistige und kulturelle Persönlichkeit nationalistisch zu betonen, andererseits immer auch übernational höhere Gemeinschaften zu suchen, um sich zu befruchten und den anderen Völkern von ihrem Reichtum und ihrer Persönlichkeit abzugeben" ("EGHE" 2158). This quote—which tangentially reinforces the notion discussed before of 'Europe' as a sum of individual figures—reveals a vision of history

that is marked by the extent to which humankind fights to survive between two gravitational poles: on the one hand, its actions are guided by the desire to entertain the illusion of an isolated, walled-in secure existence, to preserve the self, its uniqueness; on the other hand, in their efforts to survive and, also, to give transcendence to their actions, the human being strives towards the common. The history of humanity can be explained, thus, through a series of cycles of attraction/repulsion, peace and war. In order to forward his idea of 'Europe' as one more stage in humanity's efforts towards unification, Zweig's historical narrative aims to highlight those great historical episodes that slowly but unstoppably lead humankind to its 'European' destiny: "[I]ch will in einer Zeit nationaler Zerrissenheit gerade das verbindende Element betonen, den geheimnisvollen Eros, der die Menschheit von ihrem ersten Anfang über alle Verschiedenheiten der Sprache, der Kultur, der Ideen hinweg zu einer höheren Einheit drängt" ("EGHE" 2169).

Beyond the mythical times of Babel, the first stage towards Europe is the Roman Empire, which, despite bringing unity through the violence of colonization and imperialism, becomes a model of 'spiritual' conquest:

Die wahre politische und geistige Einheit Europas, die Universalgeschichte beginnt erst mit Rom, mit dem römischen Imperium. Hier geht zum erstenmal von einer Stadt, einer Sprache einem Gesetz der entschlossene Wille aus, alle Völker, alle Nationen der damaligen Welt nach einem einzigen, genial durchsonnenen Schema zu beherrschen und zu verwalten—Herrschaft nicht nur wie bisher einzig durch militärische Macht, sondern auf Grund eines geistigen Prinzips, Herrschaft nicht als bloßer Selbstzweck, sondern als sinnvolle Gliederung der Welt. ("EGHE" 2201)

For the first time, humanity came under a unified order propelled by a single idea of 'civilization' and its moral principles. Its collapse, according to Zweig, hindered the realization of the 'European' ideal for many centuries to come. What followed can only be described as a 'Dark Age'—following the classical historiographical pattern-cum-

prejudice of the 'Middle' Ages as 'barbaric' times: "[U]nd selbst ihre eigene Geschichte zu erzählen, hat diese Zeit keine Kraft mehr, während vierhundert Jahre früher Tacitus und Livius und Caesar und Plinius vorbildlich die Geschichte der Welt erzählt haben" ("EGHE" 2222). However, in such obscurity, a glimpse of hope was offered to humankind through the preservation of Latin thanks to the work of another macro/common institution: The Roman Church. According to Zweig, the forces of unity, such is their transcendence, can never be destroyed ("EGHE" 2243). What is more, slowly but unstoppably, after some centuries of degradation, of being exposed to the secluded, cloistered air of a religious minority, Latin will become a universal language.²⁴⁰ While it had been preserved by the Church, it still needed to be reanimated by a wave of artists and intellectuals who would lead the second Golden Age of 'unified' mankind. In the times of humanism and the Renaissance, "[z]um erstenmal fühlt Europa wieder, daß es an einem Gemeinsamen arbeitet, an einer neuen Zukunftsform abendländischer Zivilisation" ("EGHE" 2264). Through Latin a new intellectual community is formed, the so-called 'Republic of Letters', which is located above all frontiers: "In diesem übernationalen Reich des Humanismus, in dieser Herrschaft einer internationalen Elite, die [...] in künstlerischer Leidenschaft über alle Grenzen hinwegdenkt, ist zum erstenmal wieder seit Rom nach langer Entfremdung der Beweis geliefert, daß ein gemeinsames europäisches Denken möglich ist" ("EGHE" 2275).

Let us take a brief detour here, for this second Golden Age of humankind is the time of Erasmus, Castello, and Montaigne. Unsurprisingly, Zweig uses their biographies, especially those of Erasmus and Castello, to further recreate the historical dimension of 'Europe'. For instance, in *Erasmus*, we read in the introduction that his concept of a united

²⁴⁰ We should note here that in "Das Wien von Gestern", it is precisely this 'Latin' legacy that the Danubian metropolis had sworn to protect. It was Vienna's historical mission to defend (Latin) culture.

Europe has developed under the particularly favorable circumstances of the Renaissance, an epoch when “zum erstenmal—rühmen wir diese Tat!—seit dem Einsturz der römischen Zivilisation war durch die Gelehrtenrepublik des Erasmus wieder eine gemeinsame europäische Kultur im Werden, zum erstenmal nicht die Eitelkeit einer einzigen Nation, sondern die Wohlfahrt der ganzen Menschheit das Ziel einer brüderlich idealischen Gruppe” (*ERASMUS* 73). ‘Europe’ is conceived as a community, as the expression of a collective life that has seen their standards and measures redefined both in terms of space and time. As in the age of Zweig and Verhaeren, Erasmus’ turn of the century is marked by the experience of a new dimension both in a physical and in a ‘spiritual’ sense. ‘Europe’ is discussed once again as a response to the acceleration of life and humanism, as the cradle of the ‘European’ movement, the moment when “sieht Europa seinen Sinn und seine Sendung in der Vorherrschaft des Geistes, im Aufbau einer einheitlichen abendländischen Zivilisation, in einer vorbildlich schaffenden Weltkultur” (*ERASMUS* 837). Finally, the unity of ‘Europe’ becomes an unrealized dream/utopia (*ERASMUS* 1852), and by extension Erasmus’ ‘spiritual’ inheritance for the coming generations. Through Erasmus ‘Europe’ becomes the most sublime of ideals, the most sacred of humankind’s collective aspirations (*ERASMUS* 1995). It is this sense that we noted Castellio’s membership to what is left in his time of Erasmus’ Pan-European movement. Although in his biography Zweig does not make the narrative—nor Castellio’s commitment—revolve around the ‘European’ dream, he makes clear that the ideal is indestructible. Even when it faces the major threat of Calvin, it is able to resist and flourish again: “Glücklicherweise hat Europa sich nicht disziplinieren, nicht puritanisieren, nicht vergenfern lassen: Wie gegen alle Versuche, die Welt in ein einziges System zu kasernieren, hat auch diesmal der Lebenswille, der ewige Erneuerung begehrt, seine unwiderstehliche Gegenkraft eingesetzt” (*CASTELLIO* 2752).

Continuing Zweig's history of the 'European' 'spirit', the glorious times of the Renaissance will come to an end, being destroyed by the Reformation and the wars of religion, which would be followed by the surge of nationalism across Europe. Art becomes a 'local' matter and the only way the ideal can survive is through a generation of musicians who elevate their art to the category of universal language. According to Zweig, these great musicians—Händel, Mozart, Gluck, etc.—belong to a cosmopolitan type, “denn sie fühlen sich einig im Ziel, menschliches Gefühl auszusprechen—alle Priester eines einzigen Gottes, alle Diener an einem einzigen gemeinsamen Werk” (“EGHE” 2318). Yet, once again, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars prompt a resurgence through violence of nationalistic feeling, burying all hopes of unity. That is: until a luminary appears in the horizon, inaugurating a new dawn for the 'European' ideal; with Goethe as a prophet, an alternative to what Zweig calls 'intellectual autarchy' is born: world literature. Goethe is both a German and a European intellectual, the first representative of a new supranational consciousness.

We have arrived at the nineteenth century, when “zum erstenmal ahnt man, daß etwas wie eine gemeinsame europäische Psyche im Werden ist und über der nationalen Literatur und dem nationalen Denken eine Weltliteratur, ein europäisches Denken, ein Menschheitsdenken beginnt” (“EGHE” 2350). Continuing the task of Goethe, we encounter three of Zweig's 'great Europeans': 1) Nietzsche, who declares “daß man innerhalb Europas die 'Vaterländerei' beende und ein neues, ein übernationales Nationalbewußtsein schaffe, das Vaterlandsgefühl des 'neuen Europa'” (“EGHE” 2350); 2) Verhaeren, who developed “in seinen Gedichten das gemeinsame europäische Rassegefühl” (“EGHE” 2371); 3) Rolland and his *Jean-Christophe*, a work that seeks to remedy “der Gegensatz der Nationen, der bisher solche Werke erschwerte, wird hier zum bindenden Element. Dieser Roman war gedacht als Katechismus des gegenseitigen

Verstehens, der wechselseitigen Erziehung unter Erstattung jener Schuld, die jede Nation im Geistigen gegen die andere hat” (“EGHE” 2402). And so we reach Zweig’s generation, who in their youth felt closely the goal and imagined that “die vereinigten Staaten von Europa schon Wirklichkeit [...]. Und gerade dieser unserer Generation, die an die Einheit Europas glaubte wie an ein Evangelium, war es verhängt, die Vernichtung aller Hoffnungen, den größten Krieg zwischen allen Nationen Europas zu erleben” (“EGHE” 2412). At the moment of writing the essay, in a post-war context edging closer to Hitler, the unrelenting progress of technology has brought people closer than ever—although, Zweig perceives, in a more ‘material’ (impersonal) than ‘spiritual’ (humane way). However, the drive towards individualism is thwarting once again the formation of a single community, creating a state of perpetual tension between the two forces: the national and the supra-national.

Zweig offers us a vision of ‘Europe’ that is grounded in history; ‘Europe’ does not have to be ‘invented’, created from scratch, since it has always been there; it is a matter of perspective, of how you consider both the past and the present. Ultimately, as I have noted several times throughout this dissertation, it all comes down to a choice. In brief, legitimization through history is the strategy followed by Zweig to persuade his ‘audience’ of the necessity of ‘Europe’, to create the ‘conviction’ that it is the only solution that will bring perpetual peace and cohabitation to the nations. In this direction, the text ends with the postulation of ‘Europe’ as a teleology, reinforcing the link between ‘Europe’ as fate and its historical dimension. Thus, Zweig remarks that, while isolationism is stronger than ever, “ist ihnen doch allen bewußt, daß europäische Wirtschaft und europäische Politik ein gemeinsames Schicksal sind, daß einer gemeinsamen Weltkrise kein Land sich durch eine Absperrung entziehen kann” (“EGHE” 2444). And concludes with a call to patience and faith. ‘Europe’ may not happen

tomorrow, Zweig admits, “[a]ber [...] eine wahrhafte Überzeugung braucht nicht die Bestätigung durch die Wirklichkeit, um sich richtig und wahr zu wissen. Und so kann es auch heute schon niemandem verwehrt sein, sich selbst seinen Heimatbrief als Europäer zu schreiben, sich Bürger dieses noch nicht vorhandenen Staates Europa zu nennen und [...] unsere vielfältige Welt von innen her brüderlich als eine Einheit zu empfinden” (“EGHE” 2465).²⁴¹

Zweig's 'Europe' as a Pacifist Solution

So far, we have discussed Zweig's 'Europe' as a utopia, 'spiritual' union/community, teleology and historical reality. Following up on this, the next function of Zweig's 'Europe' that I would like to discuss is as a 'solution' to collective problems. Before the war, Zweig's 'Europe' is not only a morally superior aspiration/way of being, but also as the necessary common framework for the peaceful negotiations of contrasts and differences. Taking this into account, we have claimed that, especially in *Verhaeren*, 'Europe' is presented as a space of mediation. When the war breaks out, however, it becomes a 'pacifist' solution. The fight for 'Europe', in artists/intellectuals like Rolland and Zweig, becomes the fight for 'peace'. Although this sense was already implied in its

²⁴¹ A similar discussion of 'Europe' as a historical reality can be found in the 1936 Rio conference "Die geistige Einheit Europas", which goes from Babel to Rolland through the Roman Empire, the Church (*ecclesia universalis*), Charles V-Renaissance-Humanism, Music, Nietzsche and Verhaeren. However, the fact that four years have elapsed since the Florence/Milan conference makes Zweig adopt a more cautious stance towards his 'European' ideal. On the one hand, as we have already noted in our discussion of the 'European' utopia, it does no longer stop at the frontiers of the old world but places its hopes in what Zweig calls the countries of the future. Given the massive display of heroism shown by the younger generations back in Europe, “[e]ine wirkliche Befriedung der Welt kann darum im gegenwärtigen Augenblicke nicht mehr von Europa ausgehen und am wenigsten von Europa allein. Ein anderer Idealismus, ein weiterer, der nicht wie hypnotisiert auf die Landesgrenzen starrt, ein Idealismus, der nicht mit alten Rancunen und sentimentalen Erinnerungen belastet ist—nur er kann wieder aufbauen helfen an dem alten Turm von Babel, an der Gemeinsamkeit der Menschheit und unsere ganze Hoffnung geht nun Euch entgegen, den jungen, der unverbrauchten Völkern, die der Zukunft leben und nicht der Vergangenheit und ihren abgebrauchten Ideen” (“GEE” 151). On the other hand, the evolution of science and technology, which is discussed in “Geschichtsschreibung von Morgen” as an important factor in the forthcoming unity of 'Europe', is heavily criticized here. The union cannot be simply material, it has to be also 'spiritual': “[T]rotz aller Bewunderung nicht zu viel von der Technik für den moralischen Fortschritt der Menschheit zu erhoffen. [...] Wir wollen sie weiter bewundern und bewahren in allen ihren Leistungen, aber vorbei ist unser Glaube, dass die räumliche Annäherung auch schon eine stärkere seelische Bindung bedeutet” (“GEE” 151).

mediating role—for in the end creating a supra-space of dialogue was aimed at easing tensions and avoiding conflicts—, in 1914 it acquires a more urgent and tragic dimension. We have already attested to the importance of 'peace' in Zweig's *Weltanschauung*, to how many of his figures of commitment have sworn to struggle to eradicate war and violence. However, at the same time, to understand the implications of 'Europe' as a pacifist solution, we must consider Zweig's increasing contempt and mistrust for the 'idea' of pacifism.

If we recall our discussion of the essays "Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus" and "Die Entwertung der Ideen" (1918), pacifism is one of those 'ideas' that have lost substance, that have degenerated into empty concepts and promises after being used both by intellectuals and politicians in a deceitful manner. On the one hand, during the war, those 'pacifists' Zweig calls 'jusqu'au-boutistes' are ready to use violence to bring peace, which could not be more contradictory to his eyes. Also, every European politician, no matter how much blood he has on his hands, calls himself a pacifist. In these texts, as we have discussed before, Zweig proposes to renounce to all reason, logic, discourse or idea and embrace our common 'humanity' and suffering, as well as to resist war by accepting defeat, that being the only way to effectively stop violence once and for all and bring a lasting peace. On the other hand, after the conflict, there is still the need for a pacifist project. The war might be over but without a long-term strategy to maintain peace, it is a matter of time that violence breaks out again. It is in this context that 'Europe' becomes a pacifist solution. It responds to the need to go beyond 'empty' words and find a solid project/organization that can effectively arrest the cycles of violence that have plagued the European nations for centuries. Although Zweig was, generally speaking, quite wary of activism and collective action, as well of institutions, associations and parties, he

recognized the need for organization. In this regard, in his homage to Bertha von Suttner, Zweig offers the following reflection as regards her pacifist efforts:

Nicht nur, daß sie [Bertha von Suttner] mit vorfühlender Angst diesen Weltkrieg gleichsam atmosphärisch gewittert, [...] sie hatte auch die einzige notwendige Waffe der Zeit rechtzeitig zu fassen gesucht: die Organisation. Wachsam, wie sie war, hatte sie beobachtet, wie in allen Ländern gleichzeitig die entsetzliche Maschine des Krieges sich vervollkommnete, wie diese Organisation alle Gebiete vertrustete [...]. Und sie sah ein, daß man mit unbewehrtem Gefühl eine solche gigantische Maschine nicht zerstören könne, daß man im Gegenteil ihrer Organisation eine andere, gleichstarke und noch stärkere entgegensetzen müsse, der Kriegsorganisation eine Friedensorganisation. Man mag denken, wie man will, von der Idee der Organisation—ob man sie bejaht als einen Triumph der modernen Menschheit, ob man sie verneint als die Mechanisierung der Persönlichkeit, sie ist und besteht als die stärkste Wesensform der Gegenwart, und selbst der, der sie zerstören will, kann es heute nur durch ihre eigene Methode. (“BvS” 1352-1362).

Despite Zweig’s fears for the fate of the individual in such collective contexts, he is aware of the need to build common spaces, to implement alternatives and solutions that may bring about ‘real’ changes and challenge the status quo.²⁴² In fact, Zweig was not alone in being critical of certain prominent pacifists. Other ‘European’ thinkers believed that if war was to be eradicated, another sustainable long-term project should be proposed instead. For instance, the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset—considered to be one of the intellectual forefathers of the European Union and author of the influential

²⁴² According to C.E. Williams, Zweig’s idea of organization as exposed in the article “Bertha von Suttner” is, as his political thinking in general, defective: “In this article, Zweig acknowledged the need for political organisation as the condition of political influence, asserting that those uncompromising individualists who, though sincere pacifists, had refused to join the organised pacifist movement, must bear a measure of responsibility for the failure of the movement in prewar days. Even here Zweig’s conception of political action was rudimentary—and in the postwar period he disavowed all forms of political organisation on the grounds that they were conducive to fanaticism and dogmatism, and encroached upon the moral freedom of the individual. He was drawn to actions which, though ineffective, represented the moral triumph of a solitary individual protester” (121).

essay *La rebelión de las masas* (1929)—wrote a text on pacifism (“En cuanto al pacifismo...”, 1937), as a part of an epilogue to the English edition of the aforementioned work, that questions precisely the ‘empty’ rhetoric of peace, focusing on the case of the English pacifists. According to Ortega, the pacifism carried out in England since the First World had failed spectacularly because it did not take into account the value of war as a solution. In his usually provocative tone, Ortega asserts that “el defecto mayor de el pacifismo inglés—y en general de los que se presentan como titulares del pacifismo—ha sido subestimar al enemigo. [...] El pacifista ve en la guerra un daño, un crimen o un vicio. Pero olvida que [...] la guerra es un enorme esfuerzo que hacen los hombres para resolver ciertos conflictos. La guerra no es un instinto, sino un invento” (277). And he concludes that pacifism will become sterile if it does not consider its enemy’s great potential to ‘solve’ conflicts. In other words, in order to overcome war, the pacifist movement cannot just denigrate and vilify it, but it must also find a ‘substitute’ for it: “Pero el enorme esfuerzo que es la guerra, sólo puede evitarse si se entiende por paz un esfuerzo todavía mayor, un sistema de esfuerzos complicadísimos y que, en parte, requieren la venturosa intervención del genio” (278).

All in all, and this the point where Zweig’s and Ortega’s ideas converge the most, pacifism is not just about preventing war but also, and more importantly, about constructing a framework of cohabitation based on the idea of peace. Thus, Ortega proposes, as part of the efforts to build an alternative space of coexistence, to establish an international law that regulates on an egalitarian basis the relationships between the states (288 and ff.). However, Ortega is aware that a common law that is not based on a social substratum will only produce an ‘association’, but never a ‘society’: “En el vacío social no hay ni nace derecho. Éste requiere como substrato una unidad de convivencia humana, lo mismo que el uso y la costumbre, de quienes el derecho es el hermano menor, pero más

enérgico” (289). As it might be expected, in both thinkers ‘Europe’ becomes a supranational society based on the principle of peace and cohabitation. Like Zweig, Ortega does not sacrifice the nation for the sake of Europe but imagines the coexistence of actual nations under a system of double affiliation/belonging. In fact, he defends that Europe in its social and moral dimension has historically preceded the nations. Europe is for the Spanish philosopher a historical reality. His point is, in the end, that Europe cannot become just a ‘society of nations’: “La sociedad europea no es, pues, una sociedad cuyos miembros sean las naciones. Como en toda auténtica sociedad, sus miembros son hombres, individuos humanos, a saber, los europeos, que *además* de ser europeos son ingleses, alemanes, españoles” (291).²⁴³

Returning to Zweig, we may consider his ‘European’ commitment as the will to promote the establishment of said above-the-national society. His work, as well as that of Verhaeren, Rolland, etc., aims to make the individual participate in a sphere of existence that goes beyond his specific national affiliations. That is how ‘Europe’ becomes a pacifist project;²⁴⁴ an association established, for instance, in *Rolland*. As we observed in our analysis of Romain Rolland as a figure of commitment, he is the quintessential pacifist and European. His unrecognized efforts to mediate between European nations before the war (to turn the French ode into a European narrative), to create a supranational hero in *Jean-Christophe*, and turn him at the outbreak of the war into a moral authority, into

²⁴³ For a comparative analysis of the idea of ‘Europe’ and the figure of the intellectual in Stefan Zweig and José Ortega y Gasset, see: Fontanals, David. “Tras la pista de Europa: una aproximación a las narrativas posnacionales de Stefan Zweig y José Ortega y Gasset.” *TRANS-. Revue de littérature générale et comparée*, 23, 2018, <https://journals.openedition.org/trans/1971>.

²⁴⁴ For an in-depth study of the relationship between Zweig’s European commitment and pacifism, see: Resch, Stephan. *Stefan Zweig und der Europa-Gedanke*. Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2017. Especially illuminating for our discussion of Zweig’s ‘Europe’ as a pacifist solution—and his pacifism in general—are the last three sections of chapter three “Der Erste Weltkrieg”, devoted to discuss how several branches of pacifism converge in Zweig’s war *engagement* and his *Weltanschauung*: 1) a secularized version of Tolstoy’s anarchic-religious pacifism; 2) the revolutionary pacifism of Alfred H. Fried, author of the article “Vernunftmeridian” that triggers Zweig’s response “Die Entwertung der Ideen”; and 3) the ethical pacifism of Bertha von Suttner.

Europe's conscience; the fight for 'Europe' is a fight against war and hate. Rolland's responsibility and moral duties take him to adopt an 'above the battle' ('pacifist') stance. Aware that he cannot reverse violence only with words, he will devote his efforts to sustain 'Europe' as a community. From this perspective, the First World War is the reenactment of the long battle between nationalism and supranationalism, between patriots and Europeans. Rolland's pacifism and 'Europeanness' are in this light inextricably linked: "Diesen Kampf im Kampfe der Völker haben wir durch fünf Jahre heroisch gesteigert erlebt, das Wunder eines Nüchternen gegen den Wahn der Millionen, des Freien gegen die Knechtschaft der öffentlichen Meinung, des Liebenden gegen den Haß, des Europäers gegen die Vaterländer, des Gewissens gegen die Welt" (*ROLLAND* 2528). In sum, to fully comprehend the meaning of 'Europe' as a pacifist solution, we must distinguish—echoing our reflections in Chapter I on Zweig's 'good' and 'bad' intellectuals—between 'good' and 'bad' pacifists. Reflecting about those who had clearly proclaimed before the conflict that war would only bring disgrace to civilization (and their duplicity), Zweig comments that:

Fast alle Künstler erkannten ebenso wie er vor dem apokalyptischen Jahr den europäischen Bruderkrieg als ein Verbrechen, eine Schmach unserer Kultur, mit ganz wenigen Ausnahmen waren sie Pazifisten oder meinten es zu sein. Denn Pazifismus heißt nicht nur Friedensfreund sein, sondern Friedenstätter 'εἰρηνοποιός' wie es im Evangelium heißt; Pazifismus meint Aktivität, wirkenden Willen zum Frieden, nicht bloß Neigung zur Ruhe und Behaglichkeit. Er meint Kampf und fordert wie jeder Kampf in der Stunde der Gefahr Aufopferung, Heroismus. Jene aber kannten nur einen sentimental Pazifismus, Friedensliebe im Frieden, sie waren Friedensfreunde, wie sie wohl auch Freunde des sozialen Ausgleichs, der Menschenliebe, der Abschaffung der Todesstrafe waren – Gläubige ohne Leidenschaft, die ihre Meinung lose trugen wie ein Kleid, um es in der Stunde der Entscheidung dann gegen eine Kriegsmoral auszutauschen und irgendeine nationale Uniform der Meinung anzuziehen. (*ROLLAND* 2569)

Zweig's 'Europe': An Alternative to the National Paradigm

While in the previous pages we have discussed the possibilities of 'Europe' to function as a pacifist solution, it must be noted that war and violence are not the only collective quandaries Zweig's 'Europe' must work out. The greatest challenge for 'Europe' comes after the conflict, when it needs not only to maintain peace but also to become a supranational community, winning the battle over the forces of isolation. As one of the characters of Zweig's unfinished novel *Clarissa*, professor Silberstein, argues once the war is over: "Wir sind gerettet, aber es ist der Sieg der andern. [...] Was soll die Vaterländerei: Entweder wird jetzt Europa—oder alles ist verloren. Erst dann, wenn es nicht wird, haben wir den Krieg verloren" (*Clarissa* 2282). The true war has just begun in 1919; whoever wins, either the forces of union leading to Babel or those of isolation/disintegration, will decide the fate of the European nations. In this context, Zweig's 'Europe' becomes a counternarrative, a way to challenge the status quo marked by the hegemony of nationalism and nationalistic/totalitarian discourses. As we have seen before, in the historic contest between nationalism and supranationalism, between the desire to preserve the self's independence and the call to unity, the interwar period faces an existential paradox: as people seem to be closer than ever, nations reinforce their borders and feed the monster of hate, prejudice and xenophobia.

There is a battle for the 'soul'/identity of 'Europe' at a time when its hegemony is being challenged. In the context of Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918/1923), Zweig's 'Europe' aims to counteract the moral crisis of the old continent. In other words, 'Europe' is a program/project for combatting nationalism and what Zweig calls the—moral—'intoxication' or 'poisoning' of Europe. This function of 'Europe' is amply discussed, as the title of the essay point outs, in the 1932 lecture "Die moralische Entgiftung Europas", which has the same point of departure as the already analyzed text

“Die Geschichtsschreibung von Morgen”: Europe’s moral crisis and a volatile state of tension that derives from the toxic residues of the war. Anger and hate have been artificially prolonged by means of propaganda and nationalistic discourses, feeding a perpetual war mentality: “Es ist ein Haß geworden von System zu System, von Partei zu Partei, von Klasse zu Klasse, von Rasse zu Rasse, von Ideologie zu Ideologie. Aber im wesentlichen sind die Formen noch immer die von 1914, bestimmt durch das Bedürfnis, Gruppen zu bilden und sich als Gruppe feindselig gegen andere Gruppen zu ereifern” (“GvM” 2699) Equally, “Die moralische Entgiftung Europas” opens thus: “Wenn wir Europa als einen einzigen geistigen Organismus betrachten—und dazu geben uns die zweitausend Jahre gemeinsam aufgebauter Kultur ein unbedingtes Recht—, so können wir uns der Erkenntnis nicht verschließen, daß dieser Organismus im gegenwärtigen Augenblicke einer schweren seelischen Verstörung anheimgefallen ist” (“MEE” 40).

To combat this moral/‘spiritual’ illness, Zweig proposes a detoxication program. Change will not happen overnight. The reasons for the decadence of Europe come from afar, they are deeply ingrained in the nations/individuals’ psyches. However, the intellectuals’ duty is to work on long-term solutions. They must put their efforts at the service of future generations (“MEE” 42). Before we briefly detail Zweig’s program, it must be noted that, broadly speaking, most of its points remain within the sphere of what we could call ideology or discourse. In this sense, the education of the younger generations acquires an important dimension. The first measure is to adopt Zweig’s ‘historiography of tomorrow’, to instill in the young a vision of the past that is based on the common achievements of humanity instead on a nationalistic and bellicose rhetoric and the us/them divide. History must teach the individual to love his/her neighbors instead of promoting division and animosity towards difference and alterity (“MEE” 42-48). This role of history, which we have already discussed, is followed by a more ‘practical’ approach to ‘Europe’, a practicality could be considered an ‘exception’ within Zweig’s work.

Zweig points out the necessity to complement the intellectual formation of the individual with a practical 'understanding' of diversity. In this sense, travelling becomes a way to experience 'Europe'. However, tourism is not enough, since it often provides a superficial, sweetened, prearranged image of the visited country. The experiences abroad must be based on an educational basis; they must serve to edify the youth's moral imagination and turn them into citizens of the world: "Die wichtigste Frage also wäre, die Jugend mit Jugend in Kontakt zu bringen, und zwar nicht in einen äußerlichen, sondern in den wirklich schöpferischen einer gemeinsamen Arbeit und wirklichen Kameradschaft" ("MEE" 49). If we take a brief detour and consider Zweig's notion of 'travel', we could in fact assert that throughout his work 'Europe' is presented in a sense as a community of travelers. Travelling is key both in the formation of the artist/intellectual and also as a process of cultural exchange that underpins the idea of 'Europe' as a 'spiritual' union. For instance, in *Verhaeren* travelling is a way or experiencing/embracing 'Europe'. The intellectuals travels from city to city listening to their 'sound' of Europe: "In Deutschland ist er gewesen, in Berlin, in Wien und Prag, immer allein als einsamer Wanderer, unkundig der Sprache und nur horchend auf die Stimme der Stadt selbst, auf das fremde, finstre Rauschen, auf die Meeresbrandung der europäischen Metropolen" (*VERHAEREN* 48).

Expanding on this idea, we find in *Rolland* another example of how edifying the experience of other cultures can be. Once again, Jean-Christophe becomes a case study of the positive effects of travelling as a way to meet and experience the other: "Der Erziehungsroman will in Lehr- und Wanderjahren zeigen, wie ein Mensch das fremde Leben erlernt und damit das eigene bewältigt, wie er durch Erfahrungen die angelernten, vielfach irrigen Begriffe über alle Dinge in Anschauung verwandelt, die Welt sich aus einem äußeren Sein in ein inneres Erlebnis umsetzt. Wie er wissend wird aus einem bloß

Neugierigen, gerecht aus einem bloß Leidenschaftlichen" (ROLLAND 1763). All in all, travelling acquires an ethical dimension in the context of Zweig's 'European' *engagement*. As we will discuss later, Zweig's 'Europe' is a community based on a heterogeneous and diverse landscape. The kind of travel Zweig defends aims to respect and foster such difference, which is at the core of 'Europe' identity. Therefore, by the same token, Zweig's 'Europe' becomes a defense against what is perceived as a worldwide trend towards uniformity. In an essay of 1926—"Reisen oder gereist werden"—, Zweig defends the freedom of the traveler as compared to that of the tourist, subject to a depersonalizing process of massification:

Daß unser eigenes tägliches Leben immer mechanischer, ordnungshafter auf den glatten Schienen eines technischen Jahrhunderts verläuft, wir können es nicht mehr hindern, ja wir wollen es vielleicht gar nicht, weil wir unsere Kräfte damit sparen. Aber Reise soll Verschwendung sein, [...] wir wollen sie darum verteidigen gegen die neue bürokratische, maschinelle Form des Massenwanderns, des Reisebetriebs. Retten wir uns dies kleine Geviert Abenteuer in unserer allzu geordneten Welt, lassen wir uns nicht reisen als Frachtgut praktischer Agenturen, sondern reisen wir weiter nach Altväterart aus eigenem Willen eigenem Ziele entgegen. ("RGW" 2542)

Suffice it to say, Zweig himself had embodied this kind of mobility experience. His travel essays—compiled by Knut Beck in the volume *Auf Reisen* (1993)—, both before and after the war, reflect the changing—sociopolitical and cultural—landscape of Europe, for instance as regards the progressive loss of individual freedom. In this sense, travelling becomes a form of reaffirming the reality of 'Europe', of endorsing its role as a community. In the words of Will Stone in the preface to a selection of Zweig's travel essays, as Zweig incessantly moved from country to country, he seemed to be engaged in the act of «stitch[ing] the uncooperative continent together» (Stone xv). In sum, traveling and community-building go hand in hand. Last but not least, before going back to Zweig's detoxication program, I believe it is interesting to remark that

as an extension or part of this notion of 'Europe' as a community of travelers, we must contemplate another form of mobility and exchange: letter writing. As I established at the Introduction, the Zweig's correspondence falls out of the corpus of this dissertation. However, it is interesting to observe that, in the context of Zweig's life and work, letter writing emerges as a way to keep the supranational community alive. The Austrian writer himself comments on the importance of Romain Rolland's letters during the war to sustain 'Europe'. Not only did he work at the Agency of Prisoners of War in Geneva, but he also answered to any person in distress who wrote to the master hoping to find solace and guidance. Rolland takes his response-ability literally and to the extreme. As he had once been comforted by a letter from Tolstoy, finding in the Russian writer's act of 'response-ability' purpose and transcendence to his life, he hoped to exert a similar influence upon his correspondents.

Among these we find Stefan Zweig, for whom “[d]iese Hunderte und Tausende von Briefen während der Kriegszeit bedeuten ein moralisches Werk, dem kein Dichter unserer Epoche ein gleiches zur Seite zu setzen hat. Unzählige Einsame haben sie beglückt, Unsichere befestigt, Verzweifelte erhoben: nie war die Mission eines Dichters reiner erfüllt” (*ROLLAND* 3100). All in all, the network of European intellectuals comes alive by means of travels and letters, which, according to Marleen Rensen, will be essential to build an idea of 'Europe' in the interwar period, following the Renaissance and Enlightenment model of the Republic of Letters: “Intellectuals were inspired by the idea of a transnational community of men of letters, a notion that dates back at least to the sixteenth century. The exchange of knowledge and opinions was at the heart of this imagined community, which had ‘no borders, no capital and no government’” (“Restoring the Republic of Letters” 153). Rensen argues that 'Europe', as it came alive in the exchange of letters between intellectuals such as Rolland and Zweig, was conceived as a “community of discourse, grounded in communication and exchange” (“Restoring the Republic of Letters” 153). Bearing

these ideas in mind, we could conclude that at the core of Zweig's Europe lies the very democratic practice of dialogue and exchange, which is based on a constant physical and intellectual mobility.

We have diverted from Zweig's 'detoxication' program to discuss two other valences of 'Europe': as a community of travel and discourse. Going back to Zweig's suggestion that the youth of Europe should be trained to analyze the world from a supranational perspective, he goes as far as drafting what has been considered a sort of Erasmus mobility program:²⁴⁵ "Längst scheint mir eine gemeinsame Vereinbarung der Staaten und Universitäten nötig, die international dem Studierenden die Anrechnung eines Studiensemesters oder eines Studienjahres an einer auswärtigen Universität erlaubt" ("MEE" 49). What is more, Zweig suggests financial help for those families who cannot afford to send their children abroad. The ultimate aim of said initiative would be to create an intellectual elite: "Damit würde in allen Ländern gleichzeitig eine wachsame und wohlgesinnte Generation erzogen werden, eine Elite, welche die fremden Sprachen, die fremden Sitten, die fremden Länder aus eigener Anschauung kennt, eine Art Generalstab der geistigen Armee, welche gemeinsam die Zukunft erobern soll" ("MEE" 50). The task of these cosmopolitan elite²⁴⁶ would be to speak on behalf of 'Europe', to combat the mistrust

²⁴⁵ In a lecture given at Brandeis University, Friderike Zweig commented on her former husband's student mobility idea: "I brought this launching idea of exchange students by Stefan Zweig to your attention because you, as students of an ambitious and international-minded university, might be specially interested in this educational pioneering of Stefan Zweig" (*Greatness Revisited* 90-91).

²⁴⁶ In connection with Zweig's proposal, it must be noted that, as it has already surfaced in our previous analyses, Zweig's *Weltanschauung*, and by extension his idea of 'Europe', is tainted to a certain extent by an elitist mentality. Even when the values he espouses might be considered egalitarian and democratic, his solutions for 'Europe' almost always end up in the formation of a cultural/intellectual/'spiritual' elite. A caste of 'great men' who are in charge of managing the 'spiritual' life of the nations. Zweig's 'Europe' is a top-down movement, which, as we had noted in the committed essays of the interwar period, fears the masses and their uncontrollable and unpredictable instincts. An example of Zweig's difficulty to think of 'Europe' as a massive movement—as opposed to an individual revolution—can be found in some of his articles after the First World War. For instance, in "Epilog einer vergeblichen Bemühung", he recounts his—and his colleagues'—failed efforts to organize a reunion of intellectuals to discuss, 'in silence', without cameras or publicity, the fate of 'Europe'. Back then, this meeting of artists and intellectuals is Zweig's response to the poisoning and aggressive tactics of politicians. In this context, there is only one possibility: "[D]ie einer gemeinsamen freundlichen Aussprache zwischen den Führenden aller Länder über Zwecke und Ziele, Wirksamkeit und Wirkungsform der Bewegung, deren Notwendigkeit wir, die Minoritäten in allen Ländern, mit gleicher Überzeugung empfanden und noch empfinden" ("EVB" 1764). Likewise, in his "Aufruf zur Geduld", Zweig not only signals the need for 'Europe' to become more than an opportunity for politicians—that is, the need for it to become an individual conviction, but he also brings forth the idea that 'Europe' will never be achieved through manifestoes but through the patient action of the men of spirit" ("AG" 1851).

between the nations through their mutual knowledge and exchange of experiences, and to promote common understanding.

Additionally, Zweig reflects, given that the attempts to bring about political understanding, such the League of Nations, only add up more tension to an already heated scenario, that the efforts must be directed to create a non-political/economic understanding, to 'materialize' a 'spiritual' union: "[D]a Politik immer Schwierigkeiten bietet und auf Spannungen gegründet ist, muß unsere ganze Bemühung darauf hingehen, zur Gesundung Europas die Annäherung der nationalen Mentalitäten mehr und mehr auf die Tragfläche der kulturellen Leistung zu verschieben" ("MEE" 51). To this end, Zweig suggests the creation of a European journal or newspaper whose articles would be translated to a number of languages. Thus, Zweig argues, not only a sense of community would be promoted, but also a more salutary space of dialogue, far from the lies, hatred and defamations of the national press. Also, in this direction, he suggests the creation a European organization in charge of controlling the circulation of lies and of abusive propaganda: "Hier müßte nun endlich eine Instanz geschaffen werden, eine internationale und übernationale, welche die Macht und die Pflicht hat, jede in irgendeinem Lande über ein anderes Land gebrachte falsche Mitteilung oder Anklage zu dementieren" ("MEE" 54).

All in all, to a nationalistic rhetoric of violence and hate 'Europe' and the intellectual must respond with respectful and integrating dialogue. This is, in brief, Zweig's detoxication program as presented in "Die moralische Entgiftung Europas". In the end, the final aim is that both the nation and the individual learn to love their neighbors. For 'Europe' to regain his (moral/'spiritual') health, it must become a second *Heimat* in a system of double affiliation. In this light, the outlook of the future generations of citizens of the world must be both national and European ("MEE" 50). For the next generations

to enjoy a 'Europe' free of hate and war, the intellectual must work to create this second, larger sphere of coexistence: "[S]o wollen wir doch für dieses noch unsichtbare Ideal unsere ganze Kraft bereithalten und ihm unsere ganze Leidenschaft widmen, damit die nächste Generation in allen Nationen die Sphäre eines von allem Haß und Mißtrauen entgifteten Europas als zweite Heimat neben und über der eigenen Heimat erlebe" ("MEE" 56).

Zweig's 'Europe': From Theory to Practice

This new subsection is not due to a change of topic nor are we moving forward to explore another function of 'Europe'. While we have yet another text to explore in which Zweig focuses his energies on discussing how to achieve the moral regeneration of 'Europe'—"Einigung Europas. Eine Rede" (1934)—, the two years that elapsed, between 1932 and 1934, since Zweig first proposed his 'detoxication program' as a way to boost 'Europe' as a counternarrative heavily affected the tone of his discourse. Although the topic is the same, the unification of Europe and how to get there, already from the very first lines we perceive the urgency in the treatment of the topic. While I have argued before that we have the obligation to point out the Eurocentric, imperialist (see *Brasilien*) and elitist aspects of Zweig's idea of 'Europe'—that is, our analysis must take into account also its limits and shortcomings—, in this case Zweig's reasonings take a very different course and challenge some of our assumptions. For one thing, Zweig starts by declaring the futility of the closed-door meetings of intellectuals, artists, etc., which are largely ignored and unable to get their message across. The defenders of Europe have been acting alone, without taking into account the 'masses', their agency and role within modern politics, and that has proved ineffective. In this context, Zweig throws a call to actual 'action', which also entails a challenge to the practice of most of his figures of intellectuality:

“Unsere eigentliche Aufgabe muss sein, unsere Gedanken aus der unfruchtbaren Sphäre der Diskussion in jene schöpferische der Tat umzustellen” (“EE” 13).

What is the source of Zweig’s frustration? ‘Europe’ as a community of belonging does not arouse the instincts and passions of the masses: “Der europäische Gedanke ist kein primäres Gefühl, so wie das vaterländische Gefühl, wie jenes der Volkszugehörigkeit, er ist nicht urtümlich aus dem Instinkt geboren, sondern aus einer Erkenntnis, nicht das Produkt einer spontanen Leidenschaft, sondern die langsam aufgeblühte Frucht eines überlegen Denkens” (“EE” 14). ‘Europe’, Zweig seems to imply, requires an intellectual effort on behalf of the individual. It is a matter of choice and commitment. As I have pointed out before, ‘Europe’ is just for a privileged minority, whereas nationalism and patriotism have the necessary—technological and ideological—apparatuses to convey their message and gain adepts: “Mit Büchern und Broschüren, mit Konferenzen und Diskussionen erreichen wir immer nur einen minimal geringen Teil der europäischen Gesamtheit und verhängnisvollerweise immer gerade jenen der schon vorher Überzeugten [...]. [D]ie wirkliche anonyme Masse [hat] von unseren Bemühungen gar keine Kenntnis genommen” (“EE” 14-15).

‘Europe’ has no roots in the individual, and the symbolic gestures of a scholarly elite have proved, also historically, to be ineffective. Zweig realizes that “[g]elingt es uns nicht, gleichzeitig von unten her den Bluttiefen der Völker eine solche Leidenschaft für unsere Idee zu erwecken, so ist jede Formulierung vergeblich, denn niemals in der Geschichte ist bloss vom Geistigen her, aus der blossen Überlegung Wandel geschaffen worden” (“EE” 16-17). Following the example of the massive scientific conferences and sport events, which create this feeling of unity for a brief moment, Zweig proposes the creation a rotating European capital of the ‘spirit’, with a monthly event that would allow the masses to see and experience ‘Europe’. Making the most of his activism, he asks for a

change of tactics, from patient reflection to practical organization: “In diesem praktischen und organisatorischen Sinn müssen alle unsere Gedanken und Anregungen sich zusammenfinden und jeder von uns sollte für seinen Teil nach praktischen und psychologischen Möglichkeiten Ausblick halten” (“EE” 17). Taking this into account, we may argue that, while Zweig does not betray his ‘apoliticism’ (“EE” 22), insisting on the ‘spiritual’ nature of such organization, by becoming more ‘realistic’ he adopts the practices of nationalism and patriotism.

In other words, Zweig is adopting some of the strategies and rhetorical devices of populism: “[E]ine europäische Politik muss mit aller Kraft und List der europäischen Technik bedient sein, mit Rundfunk und Lautsprecher, mit Sportfesten und Darbietungen, mit dem Aufgebot grösser lebendiger Massen, den nur die sichtbare Masse macht Eindruck auf die Masse und starke Bewegung im realen Raum unterstützt die geistige Bewegung” (“EE” 21). In this sense, he seems to be locked in the national paradigm. He aims to gain popularity, to arouse the feelings of the masses and create in them the need for ‘Europe’, which would not come this time from personal emancipation but through a process of crowd management/manipulation: “[Solange] die europäische Idee nicht diese Urformen des Sichtbaren, des Fühlbaren, des Leidenschaftlichen erreicht, solange sie nicht eine Art Patriotismus und Übernationalismus für die Menschen wird, ist sie verurteilt, unfruchtbar zu bleiben und wird sich nicht in Realität umsetzen können” (“EE” 18). All in all, this text allows us to observe another Zweig, as well as a different approach to his idea of ‘Europe’. Additionally, it shows the complexity of the emotional and intellectual context in which Zweig’s ‘Europe’ evolves. In a single text, Zweig questions some of the key components of his supranational projects, pointing to the fact that what we might consider from our distance as a cold, abstract discussion, was back then a matter of life or death. Especially, he reneges of his former elitism and engages in a process of

(self-)criticism of the Erasmian stance: “[L]assen wir den eitel humanistischen Glauben, mit Worten, Schriften, Kongressen, könne in einer Welt die von Waffen startt und mit gegenseitigem Misstrauen überfüllt ist, etwas erreicht werden” (“EE” 23).

Conclusion: The United States of Europe

Summing up, ‘Europe’ as a counternarrative engaged in the struggle of supranationalism versus nationalism does not aim at an actual complete subversion of the status quo. In contrast to, for instance, Rolland, Zweig tries to find the formula to balance both the forces of union and of separation, to accommodate them in a system of double affiliation. As Dragan Nedeljkovic claims, “[a]ussi l’européanisme de Zweig, à la différence de celui de Rolland, ne s’est pas formé comme une opposition à l’ordre existant, mais plus ou moins, en harmonie avec lui” (SZ 17). In this sense, Zweig’s ‘Europe’ participates of a debate concerning the form that ‘Europe’ should take, especially in economic and sociopolitical terms, by using one of the formulas that animated said debate in the first half of the twentieth century: The United States of Europe (*Die Vereinigten Staaten Europas*). The first text where Zweig used said notion in the context of his ‘European commitment’ is the essay “Die Tragik der Vergeßlichkeit” (1919). In it, he refers to what he perceived as the creation of a supranational community of feeling after the war: “Das tiefste Leiden hatte eine mystische Gemeinsamkeit erzeugt und aus allen Völkern brach ein unwiderstehliches Verlangen nach einer höheren brüderlichen Gemeinschaft als jener der Regimenter, Armeen und Nationen. Das seit hundert Jahren geträumte Sternbild der vereinigten Staaten Europas, des friedlichen Völkerbundes, stand mit einem Male glühend am Horizonte” (“TV” 1671).

Likewise, he temporally dislocates said notion by inserting it in his discussion of Erasmus’ Europeanist efforts, which are seen as the beginning of the idea of the United States of Europe. The exceptional value of Erasmus’ cosmopolitan community resides in

the fact that for the first time in history—in contrast with the Roman Caesars, Charlemagne or Napoleon—said aspiration is based on a moral and ‘spiritual’ dimension: “Bei Erasmus aber—entscheidender Unterschied!—erscheint Europa als eine moralische Idee, als eine vollkommen unegoistische und geistige Forderung; mit ihm beginnt jenes noch heute nicht erfüllte Postulat der vereinigten Staaten Europas im Zeichen einer gemeinsamen Kultur und Zivilisation” (*ERASMUS* 879). Especially, the idea gains significance in “Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historische Entwicklung”, where it serves the purpose of gathering under a single movement the efforts of Zweig and his fellow Europeanists: “Wenn so schon vordem eine geistige Einheit innerhalb Europas in gewissen Augenblicken bestanden hatte, so waren dies doch nur gleichsam Stimmungen, persönliche Brudergefühle gewesen, gelegentliche Konstellationen, ein kosmopolitisches Empfinden—erst am Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts aber wird der Gedanke der ‘Vereinigten Staaten Europas’ eine politische und gleichsam überpolitische Forderung” (“EGHE” 2350).

Taking into account the context of collective crisis briefly discussed at the beginning of this section, we could argue that, although Zweig’s solution to said crisis is far from being radical or experimental (i.e. he seems to prefer reform and moderation over revolution), his ‘European’ ethics can also be thought of as part of his process of redefinition, especially as far as sphere of collective identities is concerned. In this regard, he was not alone in thinking that a supranational community was the best solution to recover the lost ontological and moral stability/security, to reconstruct the necessary conditions for progress to flourish again. While the history of the idea of Europe can be traced back to Classical Antiquity, its evolution during Zweig’s lifetime was fundamental

in shaping the world as we know it today.²⁴⁷ After the few operative networks of solidarity in the European continent—the Socialist International and the brotherhood of intellectuals—were smashed by the war (Bugge 88-89), many thinkers (i.e. artists, politicians, economists, etc.) started to devise, once the conflict was over, plans and projects for redistributing power on a supranational scale. For instance, Friedrich Naumann proposed an alliance between Austria, Hungary and Germany under the geopolitical notion of “Mitteleuropa”. He believed that the need for creating larger political units was a historical necessity that would culminate with the formation of a “United States of the Planet”.

In the same vein, the philosopher T. G. Masaryk developed his project for a “New Europe”, a supranational organization made up of small nation states between Germany and Russia (Bugge 90-95). In the years between 1923 and 1930, new plans were drawn that tried to surpass the obvious (regional and conceptual) limitations of the abovementioned projects, getting closer to the ‘union of Europe’. Among the many proposals, we will briefly discuss the ideas of Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and those of Aristide Briandt. The former, a renowned transnationalist and with whom Zweig corresponded,²⁴⁸ founded the movement of ‘Pan-Europa’, whose main goal was to secure the peace and economic stability that had been severely damaged in the interwar years by autarchy and the arms race. Although both thinkers shared the same goal, their focus on economy and defense contrasted with Zweig’s ‘spiritual’ project. Briandt, on the other hand, influenced by Kalergi’s ideas, formulated the notion of the “United States of Europe”, which was thought of as an extension of the League of Nations. In this sense, Briandt’s formula maintained the states’ sovereignty while fostering at the same time international cooperation. According to the political scientist Ariane Chebel d’Appollonia, the idea of the “United States of

²⁴⁷ For a survey of the evolution of the idea of Europe between 1871 and 1939 in the context of Zweig’s commitment, see Resch *Stefan Zweig und der Europa-Gedanke*, 22-44.

²⁴⁸ For a discussion of Zweig’s relationship with Kalergi and the movement of Pan-Europa, see Resch *Stefan Zweig und der Europa-Gedanke*, 193-203; and Resch “Differenz des Einklangs”.

Europe” set the tone of the second phase of the development of Europeanism (1848-1939), which was marked by the notion that ‘Europe’ should be not only a pacifist solution but also a way to combat the moral decadence of Europe (176-179).

We cannot know to what extent Zweig’s use of the concept of “United States of Europe” was just a useful formula to convey his ‘European’ project or reveals Zweig’s alignment with the Europeanist movement. In other words, since Zweig does not use political nor economic jargon to discuss his idea of ‘Europe’, we cannot ascertain if he was ‘aware’ that the concept was being used at the time in Europeanist circles to discuss a very specific union program. In my reading, Zweig should not be considered *strictu sensu* a political thinker. All these proposals were aimed to establish a political and economic union, whereas Zweig’s ‘Europe’ as a community is grounded on culture and *Geist*. However, the fact that he was somewhat close to these Europeanist movements and thinkers helps us deconstruct the ‘myth’ of the politically uneducated/uninterested Zweig. That we recurrently describe his thought, commitment and *Weltanschauung* as ‘apolitical’ does not imply, in my reading, that he was not aware of the need to bring about also a politically and economically united Europe. As a conclusion, we may argue that the multiple valences of Zweig’s ‘Europe’ both in its individual and collective dimensions make him and his work participate in the larger processes of modernity. Far from being a ‘conservative’ and ‘reactionary’ thinker, at the center of Zweig’s plight is the need to find new certainties, from Verhaeren’s enthusiasm to Erasmus’ humanism.²⁴⁹ The question that informs Zweig’s ‘European’ commitment is not how to go back to the Age of Security, but how to find a new collective paradigm that can repair the common spheres of cohabitation.

²⁴⁹ On Zweig’s ‘conservatism’ as a response to modernity, Brenda Keiser argued that “[i]n such a time of upheaval, it is understandable that Zweig would join in a conservative, intellectual movement calling for a reexamination of values and a return to basics. He urges Europeans to look within themselves for amelioration of themselves as individuals, and then, as a result of this new self-understanding, to a betterment of the state of mankind.” (“SZ: The Man of the Hour and the Consistent Humanist 35).

2.2.4. Stefan Zweig's 'European' Ethics

As I anticipated at the beginning of our exploration of Stefan Zweig's 'Europe', there is a common thread running through the Austrian writer's figures of commitment (see Chapter I) and both the individual and collective dimensions of his idea of 'Europe'. They are all informed, I contend, by Zweig's *Weltanschauung* and his commitment to a set of values/categories that, in turn, constitute his ethical program. This Zweigian ethics gives cohesion to his life narrative—as told in *Die Welt von Gestern* and other autobiographical texts—and a significant portion of his works, conforming a 'spiritual' legacy that offers multiple angles for reading and evaluating his literary and philosophical production. Above all, what is most significant in the context of our analysis is that the main elements of Zweig's ethical program conflate in his idea of 'Europe'. Beyond any individual or collective function, the fundamental value of Zweig's 'Europe' lies in its potential to become an ethical program.

As we have seen before, Zweig rarely discussed 'Europe' from a political, economic or institutional point of view. In this sense, I believe that Zweig's commitment cannot be converted into a political culture, discourse or ideology. Rather, if we are hoping to incorporate Zweig's thought in our debates and reflections on 'Europe', we should approach him and his work from an ethical perspective, that is, focusing our discussion on the values that (should) guide both our individual behavior and our lives in common. By insisting on the 'spiritual' character of his 'European' utopia, Zweig is pointing to its potential to orientate our individual lives and collective spaces of cohabitation. In brief, our goal in this section is not to reconstruct Zweig's image of a perfect(ed)/ideal society—as we have partially done by analyzing the materializations of his utopian thinking—but rather to render visible what George Lakoff calls a 'frame', that is, the mental structure(s) that affect(s) the way we see the world and, consequently, our way of being in the world

(*Don't Think of an Elephant!* xv). In the end, Zweig's 'European' ethics does not consist of a set of instructions, a decalogue of 'good'/'proper' behavior, nor does it conform to an ideological program; rather, they make up an 'attitude', providing certain parameters to guide our actions, the way we behave towards the world and other human beings, and the choices we make; said 'attitude' informs our answers and (sense of) responsibility. Taking all these premises into account: Where do we start?

First of all, it must be noted that, in exploring in the previous sections the foundations and pillars of Zweig's 'European' utopia and commitment, we have, albeit indirectly, outlined its basic tenets, showing how certain 'core values' inform Zweig's fiction and non-fiction production. In other words, (re)articulating Zweig's 'European' project takes us to (re)read some of his texts in a different light—as well as to build conceptual and hermeneutical bridges between them—, showing the recurrence of said ethical program and the extent to which Stefan Zweig's was committed to it. Also, this perspective allows us to build a framework of analysis that turns said works into 'committed' practices. Inevitably, the pages that follow are permeated by a sense of conclusion. Our task, at this point, is primarily to put together and further discuss the 'fragments' of Zweig's ethical program that have emerged throughout our discussion. The endless possibilities of reading Zweig's work from an ethical perspective—and more specifically from the point of view of his 'European' ethics or *Weltanschauung*—exceed the scope of this dissertation.

Bearing this in mind, I will limit my analysis in two ways. On the one hand, I will focus my discussion on four keywords or categories that allow us to assess the recurrence of Zweig's ethos throughout his work. Accordingly, most of these notions are already familiar to us by now: humanism, peace, freedom, and anti/post-nationalism. On the other hand, the aim of this section is not to comprehensively discuss but to survey the potential

of said ethical categories to create new directions and hermeneutical practices for the reception and analysis of his work. Following these premises, we will start by examining how each of these values unfolds in *Die Welt von Gestern*, which, once more, will act as compass in our assessment of Zweig's 'spiritual legacy', being the only Zweigian work where all these categories come together as inextricably linked to his 'European' commitment. Following on from there, I will explore some examples of how Zweig uses some of his works to articulate an ethical program and establish the foundations for the reconstruction of his *Weltanschauung*.

2.2.3.1. Humanism or Stefan Zweig's Commitment to the 'Human'

The first point in Zweig's ethical program can be summarized in a single—although deeply connoted—word: humanism. Literally, said concept links Zweig with a series of philosophical and aesthetic movements that place the 'human' at the center of their intellectual reflections and artistic production. Historically, as we have seen before, Zweig situates the beginning of humanism, as a 'spiritual revolution', in the Renaissance, with the figures of Erasmus, Castellio and Montaigne. They are the founding fathers, embodying the values of the movement to the point of becoming, in Zweig's eyes, exemplary figures. However, as our analyses have shown, humanism in Zweig is much more than a historically located/limited philosophy, in that it has the potential to become a *Weltanschauung* and hence likely to be adopted and adapted to any context and by any individual. In a way, 'humanism' is yet another ethical program. Its role in Zweig's philosophy can be equated to that of 'Europe' or 'Europeanism', insofar as its referential and symbolic potentials allow us to put together under a single 'frame' the central values of the Zweigian ethics. All in all, 'humanism' in the Austrian writer's work becomes a way of looking at and being in the world. This is how a figure like Cicero is presented as a humanist *avant-la-lettre* or how Zweig himself and his mentors—Verhaeren and

Rolland—, through their work and commitment, are defined as modern (secular) 'humanists'. As a matter of fact, current definitions and views on humanism situate the beginning of the movement as we understand it today in the eighteenth century. Modern humanism, as opposed to its Renaissance or Classical versions, is born under the shadow of a late Enlightenment.

At this point in history, the most basic premises of humanism are the rationality of human beings and the belief in progress and in an increasingly perfectible society. In his discussion of the genesis of humanism, the scholar Tzvetan Todorov emphasizes the centrality of the notion of 'freedom'. According to Todorov, the 'humanist family' is born as a response of a process of 'democratization' of freedom that will incorporate in the sphere of action or politics what had been before an exclusively erudite movement. These 'neo-humanists' "admired the beautiful new principles discovered by their elders and wanted to *live in harmony with them rather than subject them to intellectual reflection*" (3).²⁵⁰ In the end, what singles out humanism as an independent movement is its reaction to the newly acquired freedom. Whereas some will renounce to said liberty (conservatists), negate its existence (proponents of scientism) or embrace the potential losses derived from it—God, society and the self—as a liberation of responsibilities (individualists), humanists believed, "on the contrary, that freedom exists and that it is precious, but at the same time they appreciate the benefit of shared values, life with others, and a self that is held responsible for its actions; they want to continue to enjoy freedom, then, without having to pay the price" (5). Humanism situates the individual at the center, beyond the reach of any supra/infrahuman entities, but also considers the collective dimension of existence, striving to reconcile the individual with the community.

²⁵⁰ My italics.

Bearing these ideas in mind, I would like to consider the possibility of expanding the notion of 'humanism' by equating it to a concern for the 'human'. In other words, our discussion of Zweig's humanism will not be merely a contextualization of his thought and ethics from the perspective a historically located intellectual movement. When I argue that 'humanism' or the 'human' is one of the core ethical categories of Zweig's *Weltanschauung*, I am pointing out the centrality of said concept and the values that are associated therewith. In my reading, beyond any affiliation to a (neo)humanist family, what makes Zweig and his work an expression of humanism is the Austrian writer's constant search for 'humanity' and the 'human' in a context where these values have lost preeminence in the moral lives of individuals and nations; Zweig's humanism is formulated in a highly de-humanized milieu where it becomes a 'committed' response. In adopting such a 'broad' view of humanism, we might be 'accused' of not being 'specific' enough, and therefore of indulging in too vague abstractions for them to become 'practical' solutions.

And yet, I argue, this is the point of our analysis. If we do not expand the limits of our—intellectual and emotional—gaze, if we do not attempt at some point to unmake and disrupt what is otherwise inherited as static knowledge, we are denying the continuously changing and evolving 'nature' of our experience. In the case of Zweig, if we cannot transcend certain prejudices and established hermeneutical narratives, we will be renouncing, in my opinion, a great part of his work's potential. I am not arguing that we must ignore the difficulties and anachronisms derived from discussing Zweig's 'humanism' from our twenty-first century critical paradigms, as we are deeply influenced in our practices by what has been called 'antihumanism'.²⁵¹ In this sense, many dominant

²⁵¹ According to the Penguin's *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* antihumanism can be broadly defined as a rejection of the belief in the existence of a universal human nature and the rational, autonomous individual (42).

thinkers of the second half of the twentieth century can be said to have espoused such 'antihumanist' views, from Althusser's defense of Marxism from the negative influence of humanism—especially as its essentialist view of human nature undermined the primacy of historical forces and obscured class dynamics and their role in the organization of society ("The Humanist Controversy")— to Foucault's postulation of a 'de-centered subject' ("L'Homme est-il mort"), which became a seminal text for post-structuralism, or Lyotard's fear that an abstract notion of humanity could become another grand narrative (*The Inhuman*).

Without diminishing the importance of these contributions or the validity of their premises, if we drop the '-ism' and leave behind our fears of humanism becoming another ideology or grand narrative, what is left—the concern for the 'human', for its nature, its construction and destruction—is still of paramount importance in our context. Even in the age of post-humanism, new materialism and ecocriticism, the central topics of the humanist discussion—reason, freedom, tolerance, peace—dominate our debates. What is more, we may be wary—and rightfully so—of essentialist and restricted identity paradigms, but the need for new spaces of cohabitation—e.g. 'Europe'—and ways of constructing the 'common' is as pressing as ever in a world that is increasingly interconnected and globalized and yet at the same time full of distrust and isolation. Although many of the utopias and projects for the future that the humanists imagined have by now been partially materialized, retracing their steps and ours might help us construct new horizons and adapt their longing for a better, more humane world to the conditions and concerns of our existence. In sum, following Todorov, to discuss humanism in its historical evolutions allows to access the present from another point of view; an approach that impels us to act upon the present: "To understand the thought of

yesterday allows us to change the thought of today, which in turn influences future acts” (226).

Taking these premises into account, I propose to take a broad view of the term ‘humanism’ in our analysis of Zweig so that we are not limited by our possible prejudices and reductionist views. Otherwise, we might not be able to explain, for instance, how two apostles of antihumanism such as Friedrich Nietzsche—with his imperative to transcend the human—and Sigmund Freud—with his belief in the role of forces beyond human reason in the shaping of human character—are essential figures in Zweig’s exploration of the ‘human’ condition. In this sense, most of Zweig’s psychological novellas—although they are not part of the corpus of this dissertation—can also be considered as part of Zweig’s ‘humanist’ commitment. This is the approach taken by David Turner’s monograph *Moral Values and the Human Zoo*. In contextualizing Romain Rolland’s description of Zweig as a ‘*chasseur d’âmes*’, Turner contends that “[t]he metaphor seems to imply something of the predatory instinct which may be present in the attempt to lay bare the inner workings of a human quarry. Yet the evidence of the stories themselves suggest that Zweig is able to be regarded as a hunter with a less sinister purpose: to capture the widest possible variety of human specimens for his psychological menagerie” (11).

Following Turner’s insights, we must acknowledge that the topic of humanism has been favored for a long time by many Zweigian scholars, who have adopted such focus to analyze almost the totality of the Austrian writer’s work.²⁵² While Turner has focused his reflections on Zweig’s fiction (“The Humane Ideal”), Klaus Matthias has explored the exile period from the point of view of humanistic ideals (“Humanismus in der

²⁵² For a recent survey of the topic, see: Maldonado-Alemán, Manuel. “Humanität und Humanismus.” *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 743-747,

Zerreiprobe"). For his part, Donald Daviau examined Zweig's dramatic production, asserting that "[d]espite the wide range of both style and theme, the dramas [...] all reflect Zweig's basic concern for humanistic values: the ideal of personal freedom, a belief in the capacity of man to improve through reason, the central role of culture in the betterment of mankind, the necessity for international peace, the power of ethics and morality over brute force, and triumph of the free spirit over tyranny" ("The Spirit of Humanism" 196). Additionally, he contends that the "lack of humanity, respect, and understanding is the cause of the tragic situation" in plays like *Tersites* ("The Spirit of Humanism" 197). In this sense, we may observe that more often than not in Zweig's works the exploration of 'humanness' is closely related to that of abuse, tragedy and defeat. This conceptual turn in our approach will allow us later on to discuss some scenes of dehumanization as part of Zweig's humanism. As Daviau argues: "The humanistic message is presented by contrast. The importance of such values is demonstrated by showing the tragedy that can result between individuals when compassion, understanding, and forgiveness are lacking" ("The Spirit of Humanism" 201).

Zweig's commitment to humanity implies also the adoption of a counternarrative. In this regard, 'bourgeois humanism' was heavily criticized by socialist and communist thinkers in a debate that was accentuated during the exile period. These voices argued that humanism needed a change, that it could not be any more a contemplative practice (Jarmartz 97). In this sense, Turner claims that the faults or contradictions in the realization of Zweig's ideal—which is deeply classist and cannot be turned into 'political' action—can be traced back to the context of the Jewish *haute-bourgeoisie* in fin-de-sicle Vienna, which was severely distanced from the classes below ("Humane Ideals"). Last but not least, it must be noted that Zweig was not alone in looking back to humanist legacy for answers. Thus, Rdiger Grner asserts that humanism was a popular movement

among assimilated Jews (“Erasmisches Bewusstsein” 51), and that it should be considered within a context of redefinition animated by a deviation from scientifically dominated visions of human nature and, among others, Eduard Spranger’s project for a ‘third humanism’:

Mit *Castellio gegen Calvin und Erasmus* befand sich Zweig gleichsam *zwischen* dem Erbe des Neuhumanismus der Klassik und dem dritten Humanismus Spranger’scher Prägung. Er grenzte sich entschieden von dem ab, was auch Karl Jaspers noch 1949 mit einem Begriff Wilhelm Windelbands als ‘Hominismus’ kritisierte. Damit war ein Humanismus gemeint, der sich [...] auf die naturwissenschaftliche Erkenntnis des Menschseins beschränkte. Jaspers kam es vielmehr darauf an, die Potenzialität des Menschen; seine Orientierung an Werten, die Bedeutung der individuellen Freiheit und der Menschenwürde für den ‚neuen‘ Humanismus fruchtbar zu machen. (“Erasmisches Bewusstsein” 52)

Stefan Zweig’s ‘Humanism’ I: *Die Welt von Gestern*

After this brief introduction to humanism in the context of Zweig’s work, I propose to start our analysis by considering, aided by his memoirs, the main ideas that make up the Austrian writer’s commitment to ‘humanity’/‘humanness’. Without going any further, the importance of humanism in *Die Welt von Gestern* can be observed in the very first page of the prologue, where Zweig describes himself as a “Humanist” (WvG 9). Thus, it becomes one of his identities or affiliations and one of the reasons why he can claim that he has been at the center of all the catastrophes and hecatombs that have plundered Europe during his lifetime. As I have mentioned before, humanism—and this is something we had already observed in our analyses of *Erasmus*, *Castellio*, *Cicero* and *Montaigne*—has the potential of becoming an individual ‘attitude’, which, in Zweig’s context, situates the person who espouses its values and *Weltanschauung* in a position of resistance. Being a humanist in times of war and persecution, in times where the most basic human rights are denied on a massive scale, implies embracing intellectual dissidence. This first

'appearance' of the notion of humanism in Zweig's narrative, which is permeated by a sense of loss and mourning, contrasts with its more positive or optimistic sense when Zweig discusses it as a crucial element of the 'utopian' atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Vienna. On referring to the values espoused by his parents and their generation, Zweig relates that they were convinced that the conflicts between the nations were a thing of the past, that tolerance and conciliation were powerful enough to guarantee peace and security, and that step by step the peoples from different cultures and faiths would unite into a common sense of humanity (WvG 20).²⁵³

Following on this, it is interesting to note that here humanism equals a desire to overcome any kind of particularity or difference. Beyond the affiliation(s) given to the individual by culture, nation and religion, Zweig's discourse presupposes the existence of a 'common' horizon. As we saw in *Erasmus*, the humanist intellectual is also a *citoyen du monde*, a European and even the representative of new race of 'universal men' (*ERASMUS* 837). In this sense, 'humanism' can be thought of as an expression of Zweig's post-national stance, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter. According to Dragan Nedeljkovic, in both Rolland's and Zweig's oeuvres, humanism is understood as a love for humanity that, translated into the sphere of supranational relations should adopt a universalist and internationalist form: "L'Humanisme conséquent, l'amour vrai et pur de l'homme détruisent inévitablement les barrières entre classes, nations, races et religions. Le véritable humanisme, sur le plan des relations mondiales devrait se traduire par l'internationalisme et l'universalisme" (*SZ et Romain Rolland* 13). Following this line

²⁵³ In another passage from the chapter "Die Schule im vorigen Jahrhundert", Zweig reflects on the predisposition of the Austrian society to approach any kind of potential conflict with a conciliatory spirit. Both conciliation and mediation are integral elements of the humanist creed: "Dank dieser tadellosen Haltung war es dem Bürgertum dann nicht mehr lange möglich, die Arbeiterschaft als eine 'revolutionäre Rotte' zu brandmarken, es kam—wie immer im alten und weisen Österreich—zu gegenseitigen Konzessionen; noch war das heutige System der Niederknüpfung und Ausrottung nicht erfunden, noch das (freilich schon verblässende) *Ideal der Humanität* selbst bei den Parteiführern lebendig" (WvG 78; my italics).

of discussion, we observe, echoing Görner's remark that humanism was a popular philosophy among assimilated Jews, how Zweig tries to establish a link between his Jewishness and humanism through the elevation of art and the sphere of *Geist*: "[V]ielleicht drückt sich darin sogar die geheime Sehnsucht aus, durch Flucht ins Geistige sich aus dem bloß Jüdischen ins allgemein Menschliche aufzulösen" (WvG 28).

In Zweig's 1941 perspective, art had been a key instrument in the path towards assimilation, offering his family the possibility to transcend one's inherited/imposed identity, which at the time of writing his memoirs had become a 'stigma' and a 'burden'. Striving towards the 'human' becomes then a form of post-nationalism and post-ethnicity. In this light, during the First World War, the idea that an individual—an intellectual—could align him/herself with 'humanity' became anathema from a patriotic, nationalistic perspective. Commenting on the furious reception in France of Rolland's volume *Audessus de la mêlée*, Zweig reflects that "eine Broschüre nach der andern erschien mit der Argumentation: 'Ce qu'on donne pendant la guerre à l'humanité est volé à la patrie'. Aber wie immer bewies der Aufschrei, daß der Schlag vollwichtig getroffen hatte. Die Diskussion über die Haltung des geistigen Menschen im Kriege war nicht mehr aufzuhalten, das Problem für jeden einzelnen unvermeidlich gestellt" (WvG 262).²⁵⁴

Continuing our discussion of Zweig's humanism, it must be noted that as a philosophy that claims the sphere of the 'human' as a space to mediate and negotiate

²⁵⁴ A similar passage can be found in *Castellio*. On that occasion, however, the dichotomy is not between humanity and the nation, but between humanness and 'discipline', the ultimate expression of Calvin's authoritarian power. Quoting Theodore de Bèze's views against freedom of conscience, we read that "erst die Disziplin und dann erst die Humanität! Auf keinen Fall und um keinen Preis darf ein Führer einer Regung der Menschlichkeit nachgeben, wenn es die 'Doktrin' gilt, denn nicht christlich, sondern teuflisch wäre eine solche 'charité diabolique et non chrétienne'; zum ersten-, aber nicht zum letztenmal begegnet man hier der militanten Theorie, Menschlichkeit—die 'crudelis humanitas', wie de Beze formuliert—sei ein Verbrechen gegen die Menschheit, die nur durch eiserne Disziplin und unnachsichtige Strenge zu irgendeinem ideologischen Ziele geführt werden könne" (CASTELLIO 2009). Equally, a few pages before: "Entsetzliches Wort und tragischer Beweis, wie weit einen sonst klardenkenden Menschen der Fanatismus verblenden kann! Denn mit erschreckender Nacktheit ist hier gesagt, daß als fromm im Sinne Calvins nur gelte, wer für die 'Lehre'—seine Lehre—"tout regard humain", also jedes Gefühl der Menschlichkeit in sich abtöte" (CASTELLIO 1741).

difference, it becomes a response against the forces of uniformization and dehumanization that dominate modern life. For instance, it is from this perspective that Zweig criticizes the education he received at school, which he associates with military discipline. He is especially critical of what he calls “ein kalter Lernapparat, der sich nie an dem Individuum regulierte und nur wie ein Automat mit Ziffern ‘gut, genügend, ungenügend’ aufzeigte, wie weit man den ‘Anforderungen’ des Lehrplans entsprochen hatte. Gerade aber diese menschliche Lieblosigkeit, diese nüchterne Unpersönlichkeit und das Kasernenhafte des Umgangs war es, was uns unbewußt erbitterte” (WvG 47).

Embracing humanity is also embracing the individual in its own uniqueness. Towards the end of the narrative, Zweig expresses his disgust for an increasing bureaucratization of life, whereby a person is reduced to his passport or visa, which he saw as yet another manifestation of a decaying humane ideal: “Ständig sollte man fühlen, mit freigeborener Seele, daß man Objekt und nicht Subjekt, nichts unser Recht und alles nur behördliche Gnade war” (WvG 438). This idea that modern life has brought alienation and inhumanity to the world is so pervasive a topic in Zweig’s thought that it regularly appears both in his fiction—as we will see later—and non-fiction production (see Brenda “The Man of the Hour and the Consistent Humanist”, 32). An example of the latter can be found in the introduction to the biographical trilogy *Die Heilung durch den Geist: Mesmer-Mary Baker-Eddy-Freud* (1931), where Zweig exposes his opinions against the objectification of patients by modern medicine, which has become yet another commercial enterprise:

[E]benso die Ärzte aufgeteilt, laufende Bänder, die, von Bett zu Bett sausend, die einzelnen ‘Fälle’, immer nur das kranke Organ untersuchen, meist ohne Zeit, dabei einen Blick in das Antlitz des Menschen zu tun, aus dem das Leiden wächst. Die Mammutorganisationen der Krankenkassen, der Ambulatorien tragen ihr weiteres Teil zu dieser Entseelung und Entpersönlichung bei: ein überheizter Massenbetrieb entsteht, wo nicht ein einziger Funke innerlichen Kontakts

zwischen Arzt und Patienten Zeit hat, zu zünden, wo auch nur ein Aufzucken jener magnetischen Geheimniskraft zwischen Seele und Seele bei bestem Willen immer unmöglicher wird. (HDG 94).

Zweig's 'Humanism' II: The Humanists, Tolerance and Common Understanding

Besides the passages above from *Die Welt von Gestern*, the other texts where Zweig offers a significant discussion of humanism are the biographies of *Erasmus*, *Castellio*, *Montaigne* and *Cicero*. In this sense, we have already explored the main tenets of the movement in the analyses of these four figures of intellectuality in their capacity as Zweig's alter-egos. Starting from there, I would like to focus our attention on some of the most important aspects of humanism that are incorporated into Zweig's 'European' *Weltanschauung*. The first thing that must be said is that in *Erasmus* we find further evidence to establish the link between 'Europe' and humanism. Thus Zweig summarizes the Erasmian legacy as the sum of modern humanism and the European ideal (*ERASMUS* 594), which became inseparable: "Einen wunderbaren Augenblick lang ist Europa einig in dem humanistischen Wunschtraum einer einheitlichen Zivilisation, die mit einer Weltsprache, einer Weltreligion, einer Weltkultur der uralten, verhängnisvollen Zwietracht ein Ende machen sollte, und dieser unvergeßliche Versuch bleibt denkwürdig gebunden an die Gestalt und den Namen des Erasmus von Rotterdam" (*ERASMUS* 848). To pursue a united Europe is but the logical consequence of espousing the humanist values of peace, freedom tolerance, and common understanding.

Moreover, humanism is presented as a form of mediation, as a form of supranationalism and as an attitude against uniformization/dehumanization. Above all, it is an expression of Zweig's 'apoliticism'. We had already observed in *Castellio* how Zweig (re)constructs the humanist creed through a series of binary oppositions whereby humanism is radically opposed to tyranny and dictatorship; the archenemies of humane

behavior are fanaticism and the desire to uniformize, to suppress individuality. And at the core of this confrontation there is a choice, Zweig tells us, between humanity and politics (*CASTELLIO* 64). In the end, echoing Todorov's reflections, humanism situates 'human' at the center of our decisions and behavior. On the debit side, we find ourselves sometimes trapped, as Ben Hamacher argues, in a vision of the world that is excessively dualistic to the point of contradiction (172-173). All in all, in Zweig's efforts towards the 'human', two concepts emerge that structure his ethics and inform his *Weltanschauung*—tolerance and common understanding. While the former is closely intertwined with the notions of freedom and respect for difference, the latter is a synonym for peaceful cohabitation.

Following this direction, Kwame Anthony Appiah notes that there is a close link between tolerance and the defense of the rights of the individual, its autonomy and independence—what he calls liberalism. He argues that “[i]t is the historical experience of the dangers of intolerance—religious intolerance in Europe in the seventeenth century, for example, for Locke; racial intolerance in the colonial context, for Ghandi (or for my father)—that often lies behind the skepticism about the state's interventions in the lives of individuals that itself underlies much liberal sentiment” (Appiah 109). It is no coincidence, therefore, that Zweig's discussion of tolerance is mostly developed through his humanist biographies, which are all framed in a context of persecution and dictatorship. As we have already explored, it is precisely the analogies that these 'troubled' times can offer to the twentieth-century individual that make them so valuable as spaces of reflection and commitment. Especially, the figure of *Castellio* and his struggle against Calvin acquire a symbolic dimension in terms of tolerance, to the point that Zweig devotes a whole chapter to *Castellio's* “Manifest der Toleranz”. Accordingly, to defend tolerance becomes the axis of his duty as an intellectual: “Laut und deutlich muß jetzt in letzter und allerletzter Stunde der Welt dargetan werden, daß alle Intoleranz

unchristlich handelt und, wenn sie zum Terror greift, unmenschlich; laut und deutlich, sie fühlen es alle, muß jetzt ein Wort ergehen zugunsten der Verfolgten und ein Wort gegen den Verfolger” (*CASTELLIO* 1804).

As discussed by Zweig through the example of *Castellio*, embracing tolerance entails the defense of a non-monolithic conception of truth, especially when it comes to interpretive realities. Castellio defends the right to dissidence and ‘heresy’ in front of the attempt to force the ‘word of God’ into one single mold, the attempts to create out of a matter of opinion an unswerving dogma (*CASTELLIO* 1857-1868). In this sense, tolerance becomes a requirement to establish freedom of thought and peaceful cohabitation: “Ohne Willen zur Konzilianz ist eine wahre Humanität unmöglich [...] [...] Nur eines kann darum für Castellio die Menschheit von diesen Barbareien erretten: Toleranz. Unsere Welt hat Raum für viele Wahrheiten und nicht nur für eine, und wenn die Menschen nur wollten, könnten sie nebeneinander wohnen” (*CASTELLIO* 1910). The biography of Castellio concludes with a mention to the Peace of Utrecht, which put an end to the wars of religion, as the culmination of his commitment. Tolerance is at the center of the progress of Western civilization, from the humanists to the French Revolution, which takes Europe to espouse in the nineteenth century the idea of freedom as an inalienable human right: “In der Französischen Revolution wird dem Individuum endlich sein Recht gegeben, frei und gleichberechtigt seinen Glauben und seine Meinung zu bekennen, und in dem nächsten Jahrhundert, dem neunzehnten, beherrscht die Idee der Freiheit—Freiheit der Völker, der Menschen, der Gedanken— schon als unveräußerliche Maxime die ganze zivilisierte Welt” (*CASTELLIO* 2804). As we can observe in the quotes above, the ethical categories that make up Zweig’s ‘European’ *Weltanschauung* are deeply interconnected. The discussion of one inevitably takes us to other key concepts in the Austrian writer’s ethical program, inviting us to read them as the ‘common substance’ of his *engagement*.

In addition to *Erasmus* and *Montaigne* (see *MONTAIGNE* 29), we had already discussed the idea of tolerance as one of the pillars Zweig's Viennese 'utopia', where it is deeply connected with the notions of freedom, harmony and coexistence in the fin-de-siècle milieu.

On the other hand, the notion of common or mutual understanding becomes a keyword of Zweig's committed discourse, especially in the context of the First World War. On its behalf Zweig justifies accepting the job at the war archives: "Jedoch das Entscheidende für mich war, daß mir Zeit blieb nach diesem nicht sehr anstrengenden Dienst für jenen Dienst, der mir der wichtigste in diesem Kriege war: der Dienst an der künftigen Verständigung" (*WvG* 248-249). Once his commitment to 'Europe' and pacifism is unambiguously formulated after the conflict, 'common understanding' is incorporated in his autobiographical narrative as the ultimate goal of his commitment (see "Stefan Zweig 1936").²⁵⁵ Moreover, we are told in *Erasmus* that to act in the Erasmian way is, in a sense, to work for mutual understanding (*ERASMUS* 953).²⁵⁶ Accordingly, in the biography of the scholar from Rotterdam we find several allusions to said notion, which appears as the most significant way to oppose fanaticism: "Seiner Überzeugung nach wären beinahe alle Konflikte zwischen Menschen und Völkern durch gegenseitige Nachgiebigkeit gewaltlos zu schlichten[.] [...] Darum bekämpfte Erasmus jedweden

²⁵⁵ The fact that mutual understanding becomes a key concept around these dates and in the context of the war can also be observed in the biography of Rolland, where the 'misunderstanding' promoted by 'bad' intellectuals must be confronted with an effort towards unity. Mutual understanding is the only force that can keep the European nations together in a state of peaceful coexistence, that can fight their 'voluntary' isolation: "Nur solches Erkennen von Seele zu Seele bindet die Völker: was sie trennt, ist das ewige Mißverstehen, daß sie einzig ihren Glauben für richtig halten, ihr Wesen für das einzig gemäße, daß sie den Hochmut haben, die einzig richtigen zu sein. Einzig der Nationalismus, das kollektive Selbstgefühl, die 'große europäische Hochmutspäst', die schon Nietzsche 'die Krankheit des Jahrhunderts' nennt, entfremdet gewaltsam die Nationen von den Nationen" (*ROLLAND* 2138).

²⁵⁶ On mutual understanding as the guiding principle of Erasmus' commitment, we can also read that "Alles, was er gewollt, was er erstrebt, Verständigung und gütlichen Ausgleich statt wüster Kriegerei, ist gescheitert am Starrsinn der Zeloten, sein geistiger Staat, sein Plato-Staat inmitten der irdischen, seine Gelehrtenrepublik hat keine Stätte inmitten des Schlachtfelds aufgeregter Parteien" (*ERASMUS* 1841).

Fanatismus, ob auf religiösem, ob auf nationalem oder weltanschaulichem Gebiete, als den gebornen und geschwornen Zerstörer jeder Verständigung" (*ERASMUS* 20).

Likewise, it is closely related to Erasmus' mediating efforts: "[D]ies ist ja das Signum humanistischen Geistes, Gegensätze nicht als Feindschaft zu werten und für alles scheinbar Unvereinbare die übergeordnete Einheit, die menschliche, zu suchen. [...] Diese letzte Weltverständigung, die europäische, die geistige, sie bildet eigentlich das einzige religiöse Glaubenselement des sonst eher kühlen und rationalistischen Humanismus" (*ERASMUS* 964). In the lecture "Die geistige Einheit Europas" (1936), in which Zweig presents humanism as a movement that defined one those epochs in history when the forces of union seemed to have the upper hand in the battle for the soul of humanity, common understanding is elevated to the category of religion: "Sie träumten von einer höheren, einer besseren Menschheit, die durch besseres Wissen sich besser verständigen könnte[,] und wollten als eine erste kleine Elite allen anderen das Beispiel dieser neuen Gesinnung, dieser Religion der Verständigung geben" ("GEE" 148).

To conclude our exploration of Zweig's humanism and the ethical values that said notion represents, we must note that, in its 'idealistic' dimension, humanism turns out be also a sort of 'failed utopia': "Niemals dagegen hat bisher der erasmische Gedanke Geschichte gestaltet und sichtbaren Einfluß genommen auf die Formung des europäischen Schicksals: der große humanistische Traum von der Auflösung der Gegensätze im Geiste der Gerechtigkeit, die ersehnte Vereinigung der Nationen im Zeichen gemeinsamer Kultur ist Utopie geblieben, unerfüllt und vielleicht nie erfüllbar innerhalb unserer Wirklichkeit" (*ERASMUS* 2015). In this sense, the limitations we observed in Erasmus' commitment, articulated by Zweig himself in yet one more exercise of self-critique, can also be applied to humanism as an intellectual movement. This is basically what we find in the chapter "Größe und Grenzen des Humanismus", but also in

the reflection that follows the quote above from the 1936 Rio de Janeiro talk, where Zweig can no longer hide the fact that the humanists, counting himself as one of them, had been naive in thinking that silence and the safeguarding of inner freedom would not be valid solutions/responses in such a heated (political) climate.

In other words, humanism had actually never left the bookish fortresses of the scholarly world, never had an effect or an influence on the masses, to the people. As it is hinted at in the quote above on common understanding as a religion, humanism was made up of a minority, an elite. The same elitism that we observed in Zweig's 'European' project applies to humanism, turning out to be the Achille's heel of Zweig's commitment. Humanism was in the times of Erasmus and Castellio only for the happy few. On the one hand, it was aloof from 'reality': "[A]ber im tiefsten umfaßte dies Reich doch nur eine dünne Oberschicht und war schwach verwurzelt mit der Wirklichkeit" (ERASMUS 1008). On the other, it ignored the existence of the masses: "Weil das Volk für ihn nicht vorhanden war, weil er es für unfein und eines Gebildeten für unwürdig hielt, um die Gunst der Masse zu buhlen und sich mit Ungebildeten, den 'Barbaren', überhaupt einzulassen, hat der Humanismus immer nur für die happy few und niemals für das Volk existiert" (ERASMUS 1018). In sum, Zweig concludes that the tragedy of humanism is that its prophets were not up to the ideas they preached, that in their professional and academic ingenuity they thought that they could save the world writing tract after tract, thesis after thesis, while the world outside destroyed itself (ERASMUS 1018-1029).

Zweig's 'Humanism' III: The Limits of the 'Human'

To conclude our discussion of the 'human' as an ethical category of Zweig's 'European' *Weltanschauung*, I would like to further explore Zweig's search for and defense of 'humanness' as a response to what he perceives to be a dehumanizing epoch. The promises of modernity—such as they were represented in *Verhaeren* and fin-de-siècle

Vienna—have turned out to be nightmares, depersonalizing and uniformizing the individual. In that context, and following his commitment to individuality and diversity, Zweig will expose and confront said 'inhuman' realities through both his fiction and non-fiction texts. In this sense, we have already mentioned Zweig's criticism of 'modern' medicine in *Heilung durch den Geist*. Following on that, it must be noted that Zweig's crusade for humanity was not merely the logical consequence of the liberal individualism in which he was brought up; there were at the time certain ideologies and power discourses that attempted to dehumanize—the enemy, the Jew, the Gypsy—, among them the toxic nationalism Zweig had sworn to combat.

According to the historian Jean-Frédéric Schaub in *¿Tiene Europa una historia?*, one of the factors that led to the worldwide catastrophes of the first half of the twentieth century was the establishment of a culture of violence and war that helped sustain an extraordinary level of violence for several decades. During the First World War, both soldiers and civilians were culturally 'mobilized' by an unprecedented propaganda apparatus that made the most of the emerging mass media. The ultimate goal of said publicity machinery was to dehumanize the enemy, to create a cycle of endless hate at the service of the powers that be. Thus, Schaub argues, "[e]l enemigo es caricaturizado y denigrado hasta convertirlo en una entidad abstracta [...]. Se trata de un proceso que termina por deshumanizar al adversario. Esta primera experiencia influyó en otras formas de deshumanización posteriores" (25).²⁵⁷ Even after the war, Schaub goes on to relate, this process of dehumanization continued in a more subtle but equally effective way,

²⁵⁷ In the 'introduction' to *Ungeduld des Herzens* (1939), the narrator reflects on the role of propaganda in the conflicts of the first half of the twentieth century: "Bereits jetzt, mitten im Frieden, sei die allgemeine Servilität dank der Vervollkommnung der Propaganda in unglaublichen Proportionen gewachsen, und man möge der Tatsache nur klar ins Auge sehen, daß von der Sekunde an, wo das Radio die Meldung der Mobilisierung in die Stuben werfen würde, nirgends Widerstand zu erwarten sei. Das Staubkorn Mensch zähle heute als Wille überhaupt nicht mehr mit" (*UNGEDULD* 7).

leading to an increasing acceptance and 'normalization' of violence and to what George Mosse called the 'brutalization' of European societies (*Fallen Soldiers*):²⁵⁸ "Si se tiene en cuenta estos dos elementos—el embrutecimiento intelectual de la retaguardia y del frente, así como la participación de los combatientes en una determinada cultura de guerra—, comprendemos que cada vez más se tolerase una mayor nivel de violencia" (27).

Curiously enough, Schaub evokes an illuminating sequence from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) where 'flocks' of workers walk to the factory as beasts to the slaughterhouse, which is exactly the same metaphor—the slaughter house—that Zweig employs to reflect on the 'predisposition' of people to go to war in 1939 contrasting with the ingenuity of 1914 ("1914" 63). I argue that it is from this perspective—a 'dehumanized' environment— that Zweig and his figures of commitment fight against dehumanization, violence, hate and propaganda acquires all its significance. Challenging, warning his readers against the toxins that are progressively gaining control of their minds and bodies becomes one of his goals. Accordingly, we find what we could call 'scenes of dehumanization' permeating his works. Especially, as we will discuss in the next section, this is one of the main themes of Zweig's war and post-war novellas such as "Episode am Genfer See", "Der Zwang" and "Wondrak". In these texts, the exposure of, and confrontation against, dehumanizing cultures and ideologies are closely linked with the Austrian writer's pacifist efforts.

Zweig associates the sphere of the military and the education of the soldier as one of the main contexts where the individual is coerced into leaving his humanness behind. This is exemplified, for instance, in the relationship between Clarissa and his father in the homonymous unfinished novel, where it is already clear from the very first pages that

²⁵⁸ See esp. pp. 159-181.

rigidity and lack of affect is what defines colonel Leopold Franz Xaver Schuhmeister's relationship with his daughter Clarissa. At the time of narrating the story, Clarissa's first memory of his father is filled with severity and discipline: "[V]on ihrem Vater, den sie nur selten gesehen, blieb ihr im Gedächtnis wenig haften, erinnerte sie sich aus jenen Tagen eigentlich, mehr als an sein Gesicht und seine Stimme, an die strahlend blaue Uniform mit den klingenden runden Orden, mit denen sie gerne gespielt hätte, wenn er nicht ihr strenge, um sie zu erziehen, die kindlich kleine Hand" (*CLARISSA* 17). What is more, not only does the father treat his daughter as he would a soldier—under a strict military code of conduct—, but also, given that his area of expertise is the field of statistics, their relationship becomes an endless succession of daily reports; bureaucratization and militarization eliminate any possible human quality in the father-daughter relationship: "Je einsamer er lebte, umso mehr gewöhnte er sich, Konversation durch Aufzeichnung zu ersetzen. Jede Übung, unermüdlich fortgesetzt, beharrt auf Gewohnheit, ja erstarrt unversehens zur Gewohnheit, Gewohnheit wiederum härtet sich zu Zwang und Fessel: unfähig, etwas anders denn systematisch zu unternehmen" (*CLARISSA* 60).

As a consequence, Schuhmeister does not know how to treat his daughter when he visits her at the boarding school. There is no room for love in the life of a soldier: "Nur gewohnt an dienstlichen Umgang, nur eingestellt auf sachliche Frage und sachliche Antwort, wußte der hohe schimmernde Mann nie mit dem scheuen und verlegenen Kinde ein herzliches und persönliches Gespräch anzuknüpfen" (*CLARISSA* 122). When the story reaches 1914 and Clarissa goes to visit her father after working for a few months in a field hospital, she finds a man that seems alienated from his own mind and body, who does not recognize anything but his duty. With the death of his son, an early victim of the war, and feeling close to retirement, he is completely emptied of any vitality: "Er war erstarrt, war

hart geworden. Das Papier, das er in der Hand hielt, schien er nicht mehr zu fühlen. Er dachte an sein Vaterland. Ein Grauen lief Clarissa über die Schultern. Sie spürte, daß etwas erstarrt war in dem alten Mann, der ihr Vater war. Da er nichts sagen wollte, schwätzte er. Es war etwas tot in ihm. Nie mehr würde er aufrichtig sprechen, nie mehr sich wirklich verständigen" (*CLARISSA* 1401).

In the same vein, in the novel *Ungeduld des Herzens* (1939), the military upbringing of Toni Hofmiller seems to account for his sentimental immaturity. Not having been confronted by pity before, only knowing the life of the cavalry regiment—where one forgets himself as he mounts his saddle—he does not know how to react to other people's pain or 'manage' his own feelings, and is therefore left at the mercy of his conscience, morality, social expectations, military codes of conduct and the efforts of other characters to manipulate his 'innocence'. The lack of humanness inherent to military life leaves the young lieutenant unprepared to face any kind of ethical challenge. Although what exactly goes wrong with Hofmiller's 'pity' deserves further analysis, suffice it to note that Zweig himself felt the necessity to clarify—in an author's note that precedes the English translation—the impact that military education in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire had on the individual, highlighting the fact that military regulations extended also to that individual's private life: "The final criterion of an officer's behavior was invariably not the moral code of society in general, but the special moral code of his caste, and this frequently led to mental conflicts, one of which plays an important part in this book" (*BEWARE* 17).

Figures of Dehumanization I: Jakob Mendel

While the two previous examples have shown us how deeply intertwined dehumanization and military life are in Zweig's thought, for the remainder of the section I would like to explore another type of dehumanization that does not stand so much as a critique of the

system—political, military, technological, scientific—but rather as an exploration of the ‘essence’ and limits of our humanity, of what makes us ‘human’. For this purpose, I have chosen two characters—Mendel from “Buchmendel” (1929) and Mirko Czentovic from *Schachnovelle* (1941)—that are united in their ‘monomania’, which is presented, in my opinion, as an existential condition that threatens to dehumanize the individual while, at the same time, serves as a warning of wider and far-reaching processes of dehumanization that affect society and the individual alike. In both cases, I claim, a mere anecdote becomes a somber foreboding. In this direction, the first thing that must be noted is that in both cases the narrator expresses a deep fascination for these monomaniacs. Their exceptionality turns them into ‘collectable items’ for the hunter of oddities. In the first lines of “Buchmendel”, Mendel is described in laudatory terms as “diese[r] sonderbarste[...] Mensch[...] und sagenhafter Mann, dieses abseitige Weltwunder, berühmt an der Universität und in einem engen, ehrfürchtigen Kreis [...], de[r] Magier und Makler der Bücher, der hier täglich unentwegt saß von morgens bis abends, ein Wahrzeichen des Wissens, Ruhm und Ehre des Café Glück!” (“BUCHMENDEL” 200). Likewise, the narrator in *Schachnovelle* confesses, after hearing the story of Mirko Czentovic’s origins, that “[a]lle Arten von monomanischen, in eine einzige Idee verschossenen Menschen haben mich zeitlebens angereizt, denn je mehr sich einer begrenzt, um so mehr ist er andererseits dem Unendlichen nahe; gerade solche scheinbar Weltabseitigen bauen in ihrer besonderen Materie sich termitenhaft eine merkwürdige und durchaus einmalige Abbrüchigkeit der Welt” (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 113).

While in the quotes above we can observe the same sense of awe for this particular type of ‘personality’, in the latter we are told also at the same time about the rewards and the costs of inhabiting such hermetically sealed worlds. From the outside, one might be tempted to admire what we could call a ‘comprehensive experience of reality’; however,

at the same time, on the question of what said experience does to the individual, the very choice of words in the second quotation and the way the narrator conceptualizes the analytical exercise carried out in the story reveal the fact that monomania turns individuals into animalized or objectified beings, victims of their obsessions, without neither will nor agency. They are like 'termites'. Accordingly, in the subsequent lines, the narrator assumes the role of the man of science who believes that all reality can be 'dissected' under the microscope, indulging precisely in the kind of objectifying discourse Zweig aimed to challenge in *Die Heilung durch den Geist*: "So machte ich aus meiner Absicht, dieses sonderbare Spezimen intellektueller Eingleisigkeit auf der zwölf-tägigen Fahrt bis Rio näher unter die Lupe zu nehmen, kein Hehl" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 113).

Returning to "Buchmendel", it is tempting to read the story of the demise of 'poor' Mendel as the nostalgic longing for a time when such individuals were not only 'allowed to live', but also to 'play a role' in a community where culture and art ranked so high in its priorities that a bibliographical machine like Mendel was even respected. In fact, this reading is favored by the narrator when he reflects before the empty-as-a-gravestone rectangular table of Mendel that "[j]etzt erst, älter geworden, verstand ich, wieviel mit jedem solchen Menschen verschwindet, erstlich weil alles Einmalige von Tag zu Tag kostbarer wird in unserer rettungslos einförmiger werdenden Welt" ("BUCHMENDEL" 211), and then because "alles Besondere und Übermächtige in unserem Dasein [wird] nur geleistet [...] durch innere Zusammenfassung, durch eine erhabene und dem Wahnsinn heilig verwandte Monomanie" ("BUCHMENDEL" 211). We could argue that the last sentence encapsulates the paradox that lies at the core of Zweig's story: the text transpires a certain admiration for the 'sublime' monomaniac existence of Mendel while at the same time it acknowledges his borderline status between humanity and inhumanity.

On the one hand, Zweig's unnegotiable defense of individuality and his belief that every life should be honored notwithstanding particularity or difference invites us to read the story of Mendel as a homage and as a criticism. This reading turns Mendel into a victim of historical change. What was possible 'back then' has become a 'chimera' after the war, a time when materialism has won the battle over humanity and *Geist*. Frau Sporschil, who has been in charge of cleaning the café since the times of Mendel and who helps the narrator reconstruct his story, becomes the spokesperson of such criticism when she tells the narrator how Mendel was kicked out by the new owner of the café because he had stolen some food: "Sowas hätt nicht passieren können bei dem alten Herrn Standhartner [...]. Aber die Leute von heut, die haben ja kein Herz" ("BUCHMENDEL" 225). As her words suggest, the postwar Viennese society is mainly driven by the market laws, which tend to create relationships between human beings that are profit-delimited/oriented. Gain becomes the new moral standard. In the same vein, from the point of view of Zweig's supranationalism, Mendel, who is put during the war in an internment camp for having corresponded with 'enemy' booksellers—completely unaware of the war context—, comes to symbolize the supranational community of books and culture that has been shattered by the conflict.

On the other hand, none of these reflections makes of Mendel a more 'human' figure. While Mendel is turned by the narrator and Frau Sporschil into a symbol of the more empathic and cosmopolitan prewar community, his personality does not stand for any active defense of such humanity and supranationalism. As David Turner points out, if the character of Mendel serves to challenge indeed the workings of contemporary nationalism and the absurdity of frontiers, he does so "naively, unwittingly, passively: Mendel has retreated into an inner world beyond time and space and so continues to write to 'enemy' booksellers in complete *ignorance* of the realities of the war" ("The Humane Ideal" 161).

Equally, Turner claims that while it is true that postwar society tends towards dehumanization and uniformity, “it is important to recognize that his regrettable oneness predates his ostracism and is not its result. No changes in the law, in the social structure, or in human attitudes, however desirable in themselves, would transform Mendel into a rounded human being or integrate him into society” (“Memory and the Humanitarian Ideal” 46).

From this perspective, Mendel is not an ‘example’ of humanity. The isolation he ‘practiced’ before the war is the reason why, when he comes back from the camp, he can no longer reconnect with the world. His monomania, his reclusion in the world of bibliographical data, hampers any attempt to (re)forge meaningful relationships. When Mendel’s microcosm collapses, he possesses neither the social nor the emotional skills to reinvent himself, to rewrite his story. In the words of Frau Sporschil: “Nein, Mendel war nicht mehr Mendel, nicht mehr ein Wunder der Welt, sondern ein müd atmender, nutzloser Pack Bart und Kleider, sinnlos auf dem einst pythischen Sessel hingelastet, nicht mehr der Ruhm des Café Glück, sondern eine Schande, ein Schmierfleck, übelriechend, widrig anzusehen, ein unbequemer, unnötiger Schmarotzer” (“BUCHMENDEL” 224). We could argue that Mendel had found transcendence and a sense of belonging in a deeply dehumanized and egocentric environment. Not coincidentally, the organisms that form such community are ‘inert’ tiny letters and symbols: “Hinter dieser kalkigen, schmutzigen, von grauem Moos überwucherten Stirn stand in der unsichtbaren Geisterschaft jeder Name und Titel wie mit Stahlguß eingestanz, der je auf einem Titelblatt eines Buches gedruckt war” (“BUCHMENDEL” 205). What is more, books, far from offering their knowledge and ‘spiritual’ friendship, are reduced to mere numbers and ‘sterile’ data. It is only in this sense that Mendel participates in the ‘international community of books and literature’. When he is awaiting to be interrogated, ‘innocent’

Mendel does not show any symptoms of anxiety. For “In seiner obern Welt der Bücher gab es keinen Krieg, kein Nichtverstehen, sondern nur das ewige Wissen und Nochmehrwissenwollen von Zahlen und Worten, von Titeln und Namen” (“BUCHMENDEL” 220).²⁵⁹ Once again, there seems to be a contradiction between Mendel’s ‘spiritual’ heroism and his superficial, cold relationship with books/literature.

The potential of art to unite human beings and create supranational communities is far from being embodied in the character of Mendel’s. As Turner concludes, Jakob Mendel “falls short of the humanitarian ideal” (“Memory and the Humanitarian Ideal” 43). His humanity does not come from within; rather, Mendel is ‘humanized’ throughout the process the recovery/evocation of his story/memory by the narrator and Frau Sporschil. In his isolation, Mendel does not seem to be aware of the world outside his ‘office’ in the Café Gluck. Nonetheless, people around him do have feelings for him; they care for Mendel. This is how Frau Sporschil explains to the narrator her worry that Mendel might never come back after being kicked out: “da hab ich mir schon denkt, es muß vorbei mit ihm sein, und ich würde ihn nimmer sehen. Und schon hab ich überlegt, ob ich nicht sollt eine Messe für ihn lesen lassen; denn ein guter Mensch war er, und man hat sich doch gekannt, mehr als fünfundzwanzig Jahr” (“BUCHMENDEL” 226).

These observations lead Turner to affirm that the only positive aspect of Mendel’s story—from a humane/humanitarian perspective—is the transcultural/social community that is formed around him (“Memory and the Humanitarian Ideal” 56). Thus, we could distinguish two kinds of memory at play in the story. On the one hand, memory might serve to bind individuals by means of a shared past or collective experience. Two people from very different backgrounds come together in their fondness of the memory of

²⁵⁹ In this scene, Mendel’s glasses, which are the key to his world, break accidentally in yet one more step towards his and demise: “Aber dabei klirrte leider seine Brille zu Boden, und dies sein magisches Teleskop in die geistige Welt brach in tausend Stücke” (“BUCHMENDEL” 220).

Mendel, for what he stood for, which they saw as a symbol of a lost, more meaningful, world. They unite in their love and grief: “And yet we understood one another wonderfully well as we sat at his old table, now abandoned, in the company of the shades we had conjured up between us, for memory is always a bond, and every loving memory is a bond twice over” (“BUCHMENDEL” 281). On the other hand, Mendel’s bibliographic memory, instead of providing him with an identity and a space of belonging, happens to dehumanize him. His most precious gift deprives him of his ‘humanness’.

On a textual level, this ‘dehumanized’ existence is recurrently conveyed through a process of animalization and reification of Mendel. The metaphors employed by the narrator convey the idea of an ex-temporal existence and dehumanized condition. In the presentation of the character, we can observe how, already before the war, he is considered a sort of ‘relic’ from the past, the last member of an extinct race: “Der tüchtigste Mann in Wien und überdies noch ein Original, ein vorweltlicher Bücher-Saurier aussterbender Rasse” (“BUCHMENDEL” 201). In the same vein, ‘dinosaur’ Mendel is also described as a “Titan des Gedächtnisses” (“BUCHMENDEL” 205), an otherworldly mythical figure. Additionally, we are told that “[e]r rauchte nicht, er spielte nicht, ja man darf sagen, er lebte nicht”, and that “die Menschen interessierten ihn nicht” (“BUCHMENDEL” 207). Finally, we could argue that being closer to books does not give him a more creative or intellectual life; he is just an isolated ‘machine’. Monomania dehumanizes Mendel to the point that he becomes, first, another piece of furniture—“Er gehörte dort ebenso zum Inventar wie die alte Kirschholzkasse” (“Buchmendel” 210)—and then, in the transfer from the café’s old owner to the new one, a purposeless object: “Aber Florian Gurtner hatte sich mit den neuen Möbeln und der blanken Aluminiumzahlkasse auch das massive Gewissen der Verdienerezeit zugelegt und wartete

nur auf einen Vorwand, um diesen letzten lästigen Rest vorstädtischer Schägigkeit aus seinem vornehm gewordenen Lokal hinauszukehren" ("BUCHMENDEL" 224).

In my reading, the story of Mendel serves as a warning against a kind of knowledge or memory that, instead of being 'creative', end ups dehumanizing the individual and the way he or she looks at/inhabits the world. The case of Mendel is an extreme instance of how a memory—as a cognitive faculty—that only serves the purpose of recording data does not 'produce' an individual but a 'parrot-like' automaton that is neither capable of creating nor of thinking for himself. Jakob Mendel—who only gets access to the world through books—does not even read the texts that pass through his hands. Or, rather, he does read them, but not in search of narrative or intellectual content: "[N]ur ihr Name, ihr Preis, ihre Erscheinungsform, ihr erstes Titelblatt zog seine Leidenschaft an. Unproduktiv und unschöpferisch im letzten, bloß ein hunderttausendstelliges Verzeichnis von Titeln und Namen, in die weiche Gehirnrinde eines Säugetieres eingestempelt statt wie sonst in einen Buchkatalog geschrieben" ("BUCHMENDEL" 206). In other words, Mendel is solely concerned with 'metadata'. In sum, when knowledge/the world gets to Mendel's brain, it has been 'sterilized': "Eingesetzt in ein Seminar, an eine öffentliche Stelle, hätte dies Gehirn Tausende, Hunderttausende von Studenten und Gelehrte belehrt und erstaunt, fruchtbar für die Wissenschaften" ("BUCHMENDEL" 206).

The story of Mendel can be related to a wider concern in Zweig's work for the uncritical and uncreative transmission of knowledge. The function of Mendel's memory does not only stand in sharp contrast to those of the narrator and Frau Schorspil, but also to its role in the composition of *Die Welt von Gestern*, as we discussed in the first sections of Chapter I, where Zweig considers his memory as a creative force of its own, with the capacity to select only what is worth remembering, in human and generational terms, and therefore also to construct a coherent narrative (*WvG* 14-15). Equally, in the chapter of

dedicated to Zweig's memories of the school system at the turn of the century, Zweig is highly critical of a syllabus and pedagogical method that stifle the critical spirit of the students while, at the same time, preventing them from developing their creativity.²⁶⁰ More specifically, Zweig complains of a lack of humane feeling (*WvG* 53), a remark that implies, adding to his reflections on the role of history in the moral education of the individual (see Zweig "GvM"), that this kind of pedagogical practices facilitated the conversion of children into patriotic citizens. Similarly, we had already observed in our analysis of Montaigne as a Zweigian figure of commitment that, being a passionate guardian of 'individuality', the French philosopher revolted against 'formal' education. As Helmut Rudolf argues, Zweig defends a kind of knowledge that is 'alive', which stands diametrically opposed to Mendel's: "Für Zweig ist Wissen lebendig, nicht tot, wie Mendel es vorlebt. Deshalb ist sein Untergang die Konsequenz dieses Lebens; sein Untergang ist Zweig symbolisch für all jene, die Wissen lediglich konservieren, ohne es gesellschaftlich wirksam werden zu lassen, die sich absondern, einschließen in ihr Ich. Je einsamer der Mensch, um so größer die Gefahr, überwältigt zu werden" (126).

Figures of Dehumanization II: Mirko Czentovic

To end our discussion of how 'monomania' turns the individual into a 'dehumanized' being, I would like to discuss the character of Mirko Czentovic from *Schachnovelle*. Although the question that animates our analyses remains unaltered, the context, and especially the political landscape, have changed enormously. In this sense, the novella

²⁶⁰ The adjective 'creative' (*schöpferisch*) has deeply ethical implications in Zweig's discourse, whereby creativity is closely associated with 'humane' behavior and practices, as well as with the capacity of forging bonds between individuals. This sense of the word might be observed, for instance, in the epigraph—an extract of a conversation between Hofmiller and Doktor Condor—that precedes *Ungeduld des Herzens*: "Es gibt eben zweierlei Mitleid. Das eine, das schwachmütige und sentimentale, das eigentlich nur Ungeduld des Herzens ist, sich möglichst schnell freizumachen von der peinlichen Ergriffenheit vor einem fremden Unglück, jenes Mitleid, das gar nicht Mit-leiden ist, sondern nur instinktive Abwehr des fremden Leidens von der eigenen Seele. Und das andere, das einzig zählt—das unsentimentale, aber *schöpferische* Mitleid, das weiß, was es will, und entschlossen ist, geduldig und mitduldig alles durchzustehen bis zum Letzten seiner Kraft und noch über dies Letzte hinaus" (*UNGEDULD* 10; my italics).

has been read as a part of Zweig's long struggle in the thirties against fanaticism and the radicalization of politics. For instance, Hanspeter Brode ("Mirko Czentovic") has analyzed the character of Mirko Czentovic as another caricature of Hitler in the line of Luther (*Erasmus*) and Calvin (*Castellio*), while Donald Daviau and Harvey Dunkle, despite acknowledging its historical and symbolic resonances, argue that the story is above all a 'character study': "*Schachnovelle* is not primarily an attempt by Zweig to confront his age but instead may be considered a theoretical psychological experiment, intended to test under stress the emotional reactions of two men with unique background" (371). Accordingly, they interpret the confrontation between Czentovic and Dr B as one more reenactment of the conflict between thought and action (373)—a topic that dominated Zweig's 'committed' biographies—and problematize the extent to which Dr B plays the role of the humanist intellectual and Czentovic that of the dictator. If anything, they conceive the latter as a materialist and therefore the instrument of a critique to the values of the age (378-379). Contrastingly, D. B. Douglas discusses the figure of Dr B as a humanist that is forced to defend the human in him, to resort to the violence of politics, creating the unsolvable tension that sustains the rhythm of the narrative: "His former customary politeness and respect are supplanted by rudeness and sarcasm aimed at his rival. Violence and hatred, the characteristic symptoms of fanaticism, overwhelm him. Chess is no longer a game, but a vicious life-and-death encounter" ("The Humanist Gambit" 22).

In my opinion, it seems inevitable to situate historically the conflict depicted in the novella, as well as to compare the game of chess with the game of politics.²⁶¹ Given

²⁶¹ For a recent political reading of chess through *Schachnovelle*, see: Jahrhaus, Oliver. "Das Schachspiel als politische Metapher und Stefan Zweigs *Schachnovelle*." *Schachnovelle. Stefan Zweigs letztes Werk neu gelesen*, edited by Margit Dirscherl and Laura Schütz, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2019, pp. 33-46.

Zweig's noteworthy 'apoliticism', an image (chess) that favors a conception of politics as confrontation—rather than mediation—, as the battle for power between black and white figures seeking each other's destruction, that are destined to clash, seems to be in line with Zweig's ethical commitment.²⁶² Bearing these ideas in mind, and continuing our reflections on the dehumanizing consequences of monomania, I would like to explore how chess affects Mirko Czentovic's humanity. For, while he might be considered a monomaniac like Jakob Mendel, the way both characters are introduced in the narrative differs to a great extent, which forces us to reevaluate and adjust some of our previous conclusions. To begin with, Czentovic is a less 'innocent', fragile, figure than Mendel. Although he reads and filters the world through the game of chess—as the bibliophile did through books—he is more 'functional' as an individual, as a social being, than Mendel. However, this only increments the degree of hostility and perversity of his story; Czentovic does not stand as a symbol of a lost, better world, he does not inspire human bonding; rather, he is the product of dangerous times.

As this monomaniac does not seem to have Zweig's 'sympathy', the narrator tries from the start to highlight his ignorance and diminish his talent. First of all, he is described as an unintelligent child who, after his father's accidental death, is taken in by the priest of his small hometown. Despite the latter's efforts, the kid cannot learn a single letter of the alphabet. What is more, he does not even seem to have a will of his own: "Was den guten Pfarrer aber an dem querköpfigen Knaben am meisten verdroß, war seine totale Teilnahmslosigkeit. Er tat nichts ohne besondere Aufforderung, stellte nie eine Frage,

²⁶² However, According to Klaus Zelewitz, the comparison between chess and politics is a failed one: "Daß folgende Vergleich zwischen Politik und Schachspiel in zweifacher Hinsicht fehlerhaft ist, gibt interessante Aufschlüsse für Zweigs Politikverständnis: denn zum einen haben sich Schachspieler an klar definierte Regeln zu halten, Politiker aber nur bedingt; zum zweiten geht es selbst im Fall des Faschismus nicht nur um den sich ausdrückenden Vernichtungswillen eines einzelnen, also um idealistische, psychologische Momente, sondern eben auch um materielle, ökonomische Bedingungen" ("Vom Ende der Humanität" 40)

spielte nicht mit anderen Burschen und suchte von selbst keine Beschäftigung, sofern man sie nicht ausdrücklich anordnete" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 28). Later on, he is referred to as unintelligent, "halb analphabetisch[...]" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 49) and "leeren Kopf" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 102). In a way, this 'emptiness', which the narrator also perceives in his gaze, seems to indicate that young Czentovic is devoid of any trace of creativity or intelligence. Adding to his apathy, or rather as a consequence of it, as a child, before he accidentally starts to play chess, little Mirko looks like a domesticated animal. Once he had done his chores, "saß er stur im Zimmer herum mit jenem leeren Blick, wie ihn Schafe auf der Weide haben, ohne an den Geschehnissen rings um ihn den geringsten Anteil zu nehmen" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 28).

From the narrator's point of view, the young 'genius' becomes a mystery, an object of fascination. Once Czentovic has 'discovered' his talent, he only craves for more victories, money and power. That is the danger, Zweig seems to be arguing, of instilling in an uneducated mind a vision of the world so polarized and therefore prone to violence and destruction: "[A]ber wie schwer, wie unmöglich doch, sich das Leben eines geistig regsamen Menschen vorzustellen, dem sich die Welt einzig auf die enge Einbahn zwischen Schwarz und Weiß reduziert, der in einem bloßen Hin und Her, Vor und Zurück von zweiunddreißig Figuren seine Lebenstriumphe sucht" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 144). Ultimately, power is the force that has dehumanized Czentovic. What could have turned through education (*Bildung*) into an individual or even a creative personality becomes a dangerous 'monster'. The way he plays chess, always attached to the materiality of the game, never being able to reproduce in his head any movement, shows that he is incapable of exercising his imagination (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 70). Nonetheless, thanks to "seiner zähen und kalten Logik" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 81), which is here radically opposed to intelligence, he is able to defeat rivals of a superior intellectual force. In sum, the Czentovic's genius

does not allow him to gain a place in the sacred realm of *Geist*, given that he is described as a “ein völliger Outsider der geistigen Welt einbrach, ein schwerer, maulfauler Bauernbursche” (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 81).

Like Mendel, Mirko is presented as an uncreative individual. His intellectual capacities only yield results in a very specific area of reality, leading him to experience isolation. His obsession, his monomania, having fully shaped his personality, does not allow him to form any bonds with his peers. What is more, he consciously avoids any contact with other human beings that is not filtered through the game of chess: “In den Gesellschaftsräumen wiederum, in der Bar, im Rauchzimmer zeigte er sich niemals; wie mir der Steward auf vertrauliche Erkundigung hin mitteilte, verbrachte er den Großteil des Tages in seiner Kabine, um auf einem mächtigen Brett Schachpartien einzuüben oder zu rekapitulieren” (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 123). In the same vein, when the passengers of the steamship manage to attract Czentovic’s attention and one of them, the Scottish McConnor, offers to pay the chess master’s fee, the behavior of this “unmenschliche[r] Schachautomat” (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 230), as the narrator describes Czentovic, is also dehumanizing; he only sees his opponents as enemies that must be beaten: “Er warf jedesmal nur einen scheinbar flüchtigen Blick auf das Brett, sah an uns so lässig vorbei, als ob wir selbst tote Holzfiguren wären, und diese impertinente Geste erinnerte unwillkürlich an die, mit der man einem rüddigen Hund abgewendeten Blicks einen Brocken zuwirft” (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 230).

The subsequent story of Dr B’s kidnapping and interrogation by the Gestapo insists on the dehumanizing nature of power and the terrible consequences for the individual when one’s *Weltanschauung* is exclusively dominated by ‘politics’. Dr B, an educated individual, experiences first-hand what it is like to be Mirko Czentovic. Deprived of any stimulus for the imagination, laying in complete isolation in a hotel room, looking every

day at the same furniture, he loses his sense of self and is thrown, much in the guise of Mendel, into a dimension out of time and space. The monotony and nothingness of his world threaten to drive Dr B mad:

Aber niemand kann schildern, kann messen, kann veranschaulichen, nicht einem andern, nicht sich selbst, wie lange eine Zeit im Raumlosen, im Zeitlosen währt, und keinem kann man erklären, wie es einen zerfrißt und zerstört, dieses Nichts und Nichts und Nichts um einen, dies immer nur Tisch und Bett und Waschschüssel und Tapete, [...] immer dieselben Gedanken, die im Nichts um das eine kreisen, bis man irre wird. (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 475).

This first stage of Dr B's dehumanization is a process of erasure. The second phase in his way to monomania consists of a process of inscription. In this case, the chess book that saves him from 'nothingness' initiates a process of mental degeneration. Once he has successfully completed all the games multiple times, he needs more: "[Es gab] nur einen Weg auf dieser sonderbaren Irrbahn: ich mußte mir statt der alten Partien neue erfinden. Ich mußte versuchen, mit mir selbst oder vielmehr gegen mich selbst zu spielen" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 592). At this point, Dr B is trapped in the game of power for the sake of survival: "Jedes meiner beiden Ich, mein Ich Schwarz und mein Ich Weiß, hatten zu wetteifern gegeneinander und gerieten jedes für sein Teil in einen Ehrgeiz, in eine Ungeduld, zu siegen, zu gewinnen" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 635). Curiously enough, in this state bordering schizophrenia, Dr B's body is taken over by a terrible thirst—we may assume for victory and power: "Das einzige, was ich körperlich empfand, war ein fürchterlicher Durst; es muß wohl schon das Fieber dieses ständigen Denkens und Spielens gewesen sein" (*SCHACHNOVELLE* 656). He learns to compete and win, but victory comes at the cost of his humanity, at the division of the world between white and black figures set on a course of self-destruction. To conclude, the ultimate challenge that

monomania presents for the individual and his/her humanity is that it turns him/her into a slave of his/her obsession, dominating his/her will and depriving him/her of his agency.

Bearing this in mind, I would like to conclude by arguing that not all of Zweig's monomaniacs are equally 'dangerous'. In the case of *Magellan*, for instance, his monomania allows him to combat the forces of fate and achieve a 'spiritual' victory for the world. His is the perfect embodiment of a monomania driven by a 'creative' spirit; whereas in the case of Mendel, monomania is dangerous, above all, to himself. Finally, in the case of Czentovic, his fixation is expansive, affecting his surroundings. As D. B. Douglas claims, "[i]gnorance and monomania have bred the materialism and misanthropy Dr B's counterpart displays" ("The Humanist Gambit" 19). From this perspective, the chess master's ability to win at the game of power without showing a hint of humane feeling functions as a veiled criticism of the 'politician', of he or she who 'plays', in the name of victory and power, with the lives of countless individuals as if they were mere wooden chess pieces. Behind Zweig's reflection lies the idea he had already expressed in the New York interview of 1936 concerning the dictator's lack of culture and his radical antagonism with the artist-intellectual. As naive a thought as it may seem, it was unthinkable in Zweig's *Weltanschauung* that an educated individual—one who could appreciate art—could participate in a culture of repression, violence and inhumanity: "Not a single one of the present world dictators, Dr. Zweig pointed out, has the slightest academic or intellectual background" ("FDTI").

2.2.3.2. From Peace to Cohabitation: Stefan Zweig's Articulation of a Discourse of Non-Violence

The second pillar of Zweig's ethical program concerns the notions of 'peace' and 'pacifism'. As I did with 'humanism', I would like to take a broad approach to said notions. For, as we have already hinted at, the fact that Zweig's work towards mutual

understanding and peaceful cohabitation is not exclusively circumscribed to the pacifist movement allows us to consider at least two different ways of approaching the topic. On the one hand, as Stephan Resch has amply discussed, the connections between Zweig's stance and several branches of the pacifist movement are manifold and have far-reaching consequences for our understanding and definition of the Austrian writer's commitment and Europeanism (*Europa-Gedanke*). Following this line of discussion, the fact that he has been criticized for having an unrealistic approach to the matter (see Botstein "SZ and the Illusion of the Jewish European, 95) is, in my reading, but another instance of the negative reception of Zweig's 'political' commitment.

Even in a war context, Zweig rarely offers a solution that considers specific geopolitical realities. Rather, his concern is focused on long-term solutions that are mostly directed to the sphere of *Geist*—morality, ethics, and culture. In this sense, in comparison to a writer who underwent a similar 'conversion' from a nationalistic (and belligerent) stance to pacifism—and who based also his pacifism on Tolstoy's religious anarchism—, Fritz von Unruh, Zweig's non-activist approach is manifest. According to Resch, the pacifism of Unruh, a man whose background was the German military elite, was deeply admired by Rolland and Zweig, both of whom saw in him an example of how one, if he or she were to open his/her eyes to the tragedy of war, could even renounce his/her most inner convictions: "Unruh verkörperte für Zweig vielleicht besser als jeder andere deutschsprachige Schriftsteller die Wandlung vom Militarismus zur konsequentem Kriegsgegnerschaft aufgrund eigener Erfahrungen" ("Mächtig seid ihr nicht in Waffen" 63). However, although both Zweig and Unruh follow more or less the same road and espouse similar opinions, the way they act on their commitment differs greatly: "Während Zweig es vorzieht, sich mit zeitgeschichtlichen Fragen parabolisch oder über den Umweg

historischer Anspielung auseinanderzusetzen [...], spürte Unruh den Drang zum unmittelbaren Appel" (Resch "Mächtig seid ihr nicht in Waffen" 75).

On the other hand, we can complement this approach to Zweig's pacifism by taking also into account his struggle against all forms of violence, which goes beyond his alignment with the pacifist movement and encapsulates his attempts to produce a framework of peaceful cohabitation, to eradicate violence from the nations' social fabric. In other words, I contend that one of the most important manifestations of Zweig's commitment towards peace can be found in his efforts to combat those discourses, mainly nationalism, that employ a belligerent and violent rhetoric. As he reflects in *Rolland*, against an ethics of destruction one must fight to build and implement an ethics of peace: "Das Furchtbarste gerade dieses Krieges [...] [ist] der Versuch, [...] der Gewalt eine Moral, der Vernichtung eine Ethik zu unterstellen, einen Massenkampf der Völker gleichzeitig in einen Massenhaß der Individuen zu steigern. Nicht den Krieg also bekämpft Rolland (wie vielfach vermeint wurde), er bekämpft die Ideologie des Krieges, die künstliche Vergöttlichung des ewig Bestialischen" (*ROLLAND* 2890). Considering these premises, I would like to start by exploring the impact of pacifism in *Die Welt von Gestern* and other works by Zweig, some of which have already been analyzed in Chapter I. Then, I will discuss— basing my analysis on the war novellas *Episode vom Genfer See* (1918), *Der Zwang* (1920) and *Wondrak* (1990)—how Zweig articulates through his fiction a discourse that aims to challenge both the nation's and the war's ideological foundations.

Stefan Zweig's Pacifism: Jeremias-Rolland-Virata-Adam Lux

First of all, 'pacifist' is another of Zweig's self-attributed identities in the first page of his memoirs, next to, among others, the already analyzed categories of 'writer' and 'humanist' (WvG 9), while 'peace' is one of the central elements of his Viennese utopia (WvG 20 and 42). Pacifism gives

Zweig both a position/identity from which to articulate his commitment and a goal to give it direction. Besides the figures of Rolland and Jeremias, two other names are closely intertwined with the idea of peace. On the one hand, Zweig recounts a brief encounter with Bertha von Suttner, 'mother of all pacifists' whose warning went unheeded. For Zweig, she represents, as we observed before, the efforts to organize pacifism in order to effectively combat the organization of war. On the other hand, Tolstoy is described, on the occasion of Zweig's visit to Russia, as the "Apostel der non-violence" (WvG 352). In this sense, it is interesting to remark that while Bertha von Suttner represents pacifism in its most 'institutional' sense, Tolstoy's pacifist efforts are framed within the broader notion of 'non-violence'. As I have argued before, these are two conceptions of pacifism that converge on Zweig. Finally, in the last chapter—"Die Agonie des Friedens"—'peace' is evoked again as one of Europe's most valued treasures, as it is about to be lost again to violent discourses and ideologies; Hitler's thinking is described as "militaristisch", that is, an abuse to pacifism (WvG 387), and the totalitarian and fascistic movement across Europe as a "neue Macht, die zur Herrschaft kommen wollte, ein und dieselbe Macht, die da und dort am Werke war, eine Macht, die Gewalt liebte, Gewalt benötigte, und der alle die Ideen, denen wir anhängen und für die wir lebten, Friede, Humanität, Konzilianz als antiquierte Schwächen galten" (WvG 423).

We could argue that *Die Welt von Gestern* does not engage in a profound discussion of pacifism but, nonetheless, points out its centrality in Zweig's *Weltanschauung*. If we want a more comprehensive view of the topic, we need to look for the idea of 'peace'/'non-violence' as it unfolds in other texts by the Austrian writer. In this regard, if we retrace our steps, our first encounter with Zweig's pacifism took place at the time of his 'conversion' to the cause of 'Europe' and peace: The First World War. Although we have defended that Zweig's commitment predates 1914, we have also observed how that life-changing event triggers a complete reformulation in the way Zweig conceived his *engagement*, as he turns to 'Europe' and pacifism

as the goals that will define his subsequent committed writings. Besides his ambiguous public statement “A die Freunde in Fremdland”, it is in “Der Turm zu Babel” where Zweig expresses for the first time his pacifist and Europeanist views. In the biblical symbol he sees the efforts of humanity to unite, to come together and build a monument to common understanding. From this moment onwards, Zweig will engage, especially during his stay in Switzerland, in the writing of several pacifist/anti-war texts: *Jeremias*, the abovementioned novellas, the article on Bertha von Suttner, “Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus” and “Die Entwertung der Ideen”.

The most important of these texts for the pacifist movement, the one that had a greater impact both during and after the war, was the play *Jeremias*. As we have analyzed in Chapter I, peace is what gives meaning and purpose to the figure of commitment embodied by the prophet. Jeremias’ vision of the destruction of the city moves him to confront the hegemonic (political, military and religious) powers in their decision to go to war. When Jeremias decides to step up, to enter the public arena, he finds the citizens of Jerusalem—most of them—are ready to go to war following the mandate of their leaders. Young Baruch, before converting to Jeremias’ cause, represents the masses inflamed by patriotic feeling: (Baruch) “Ich will es schauen, ich will es erleben, wie Israel aufsteht wider seine Peiniger. Meine Seele verzehrt sich, das Gewaltige zu erschauen, und nun ist die Stunde genaht” (*JEREMIAS* 375). Equally, when some of his peers provide reasonable (e.g. economic) arguments to question his decision, he abuses them in the name of the fatherland: (Baruch) “[wild] Schmach über dich! Schmach über dich! Daß du doch faultest in deinem Acker und ersticktest an deinen Früchten! Fluch denen, die am Gewinn ihren Mut messen und an ihrem Leben des Landes Geschick! Israel ist unser Acker, und wir wollen ihn düngen mit unserm Blute, denn, ihr Brüder, es ist Seligkeit, zu sterben für den alleinigen Gott” (*JEREMIAS* 473). In the first half of the play, Zweig exposes the dynamics of war-making, showing how in the pro-war message both religious and national arguments conflate to produce a sense of inalienable duty. In this sense, Jeremias’ pacifist efforts are directed to uncover the lies and rhetorical devices used by

the religious, military and political establishments to coerce their subjects. Before the prophesy is fulfilled, he tries to avert the catastrophe: (Jeremias)

Ich aber sage dir, Volk von Jerusalem, ein bös und bissig Tier ist der Krieg, er frißt das Fleisch von den Starken und saugt das Mark von den Mächtigen, die Städte zermalmt er in seinen Kinnladen, und mit den Hufen zerstampft er das Land. Nicht schläfert ihn ein mehr, der ihn weckte, und wer das Schwert zücket, mag leicht selber darein fallen. Weh darum über den Fürwitz, der Streit anhebt ohne Not, denn auf einem Wege wird er ausziehn, und auf sieben wird er rückfliehen, weh denen, die Mord tun am Frieden mit dem Wort! Hüte dich vor ihnen, hüte dich, Volk von Jerusalem! (*JEREMIAS* 589)

In the same vein, in scene IV "Die Wachen auf dem Walle", one of the sentries manning the walls of the city questions the necessity of war: (Der zweite Krieger) "Warum wirft Gott die Völker gegeneinander? Es ist doch so viel Raum unter dem Himmel, daß einer nicht störte den andern. Viel Land noch harret der Pflugschar[.] [...]Ich verstehe es nicht, ich verstehe es nicht!" (*JEREMIAS* 1289), and, when his comrade answers that it is all for the sake of the nation, he asks: (Der zweite Kirger) "Wer sind die Völker? Bist du nicht unsres Volkes einer, bin ich es nicht, und unsere Frauen, die meine und die deine, sind die nicht Volkes Teil, und haben wir dieses Krieges begehrt? [...] Was ist dies, das Tod unter die Menschen stellt und den Haß säet zwischen sie, da dem Leben so viel Raum ist und der Liebe so lange Frist? Ich verstehe es nicht, ich verstehe es nicht!" (*JEREMIAS* 1301). To these musings, the responses of the first sentry are based on a mixture of three components: God, nation, and duty. There is no attempt to produce a reasonable counterargument; he assumes that it is his duty to do as he is told and he assumes the demonization of the enemy carried out through propaganda: (Der erste Krieger) "Unsere Feinde sind sie, das weiß ich, und wollen wider unsere Heimat" (*JEREMIAS* 1313) and "Sie sind unsere Feinde, wir müssen sie hassen" (*JEREMIAS* 1326).

However, neither Jeremias' pacifist efforts nor the doubts of some of the citizens of Jerusalem, including the king, succeed in avoiding the catastrophe. Once Jerusalem has been

conquered, Jeremias continues his pacifist struggle by turning to the notions of suffering and defeat, which help him undermine the cult of victory and heroism that ideologically sustains the war efforts—in this context, exile becomes a 'spiritual' victory. This ethics of suffering, as we have explored in Chapter I, will be further articulated in the 1918 articles "Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus" and "Die Entwertung der Ideen", in which Zweig produces a formula to arrest violence by finding a common space of recognition between the different proponents of pacifism: their common humanity and (potential) suffering must be the basis for uniting in a common front against the war. In a context where ideas such as peace and pacifism have lost their 'true' meaning, being successively manipulated by politicians, defeat offers the opportunity to subvert and disarm the rhetoric of war. Thus, Zweig moves from articulating a pacifist stance to espouse the cause of non-violence. When reason and ideas can no longer be trusted, embracing our common vulnerability aligns us with the cause of humanity, and, by extension, of peace.²⁶³

²⁶³ As we can observe, in the context of war, suffering becomes the common denominator of human experience. When Zweig asks his readers not to 'think' but 'feel' what is right, trying to expose their common grief, he is proposing the recognition of a post-national space of belonging that is not founded on past victories or patriotic pride but defeat and loss. From this perspective, I argue that the reflections of philosopher Judith Butler, above all her suggestion that we might rethink the category of the 'human' through the notion and experience of grief, might help us illuminate the depth and potential of what we have called Zweig's—and also Rolland's—'ethics of suffering'. As Butler points out in the preface to *Pecarious Lives. The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, where she focuses her reflections on the military response of the Bush administration after September 11: "If we are interested in arresting the cycles of violence to produce less violent outcomes, it is no doubt important to ask what, politically, might be made of grief besides a cry for war" (xii). Moreover, in the essay "Violence, mourning, politics", Butler draws the link between the question of the human—what makes us human—and the possibility of finding a common thread running through us all on the basis of loss and vulnerability, which echoes the pacifist practices of Jeremias and Zweig: "Perhaps, then, it should come as no surprise that I propose to start, and to end, with the question of the human [...]. Despite our differences in location and history, my guess is that it is possible to appeal to a 'we', for all of us have some notion of what it is to have lost somebody. And if we have lost, then it follows that we have struggled to find the conditions for our desire" (20). Zweig's ethics of suffering and defeat were diluted after the war as a path towards the 'human', which veered progressively towards a more 'identitarian' response based on the idea of 'Europe'. Be it as it may, in Butler's philosophy we find, for our reading of Zweig, an interesting combination of 'peace' 'human'(ism) and suffering/loss. What is more, the idea of admitting to one's 'vulnerable' condition—which translates for some as 'weakness' and 'cowardice'—and making of it a way towards the other, the basis of an empathic consciousness, was deeply ingrained in the articulation of Zweig's commitment. In this regard, Friderike Zweig, following the criticisms of Zweig's suicide, reflects: "Despite this admiration, despite the fact that their lives have been enriched by his work, their attitude is evidence of their failure to appreciate the fact that Zweig's profound understanding of psychic distress—an understanding that many have found in him—was based on unremitting sympathetic vibrations, complete empathy on his part, which brought about an extreme vulnerability of his own self. In not recognizing this, it was as though people were willing to permit him only to share their suffering, but no to be vulnerable himself" (*Greatness Revisited* 97-98).

Taking this into account, we could argue that the idea of suffering and defeat played a key role in the articulation of Zweig's 'pacifist' and 'Europeanist' commitment. Accordingly, we noticed in our analysis of *Rolland* how the French writer's philosophy of suffering became the basis for building a transnational and transhistorical community. In terms of pacifism, Rolland's efforts signal a deep connection between 'peace' and 'defeat'. Contrary to Jeremias, Rolland deploys his non-violence strategy well before the conflict starts: "[I]m letzten sind die dreißig Jahre seines Werkes nichts anderes als ein einziger Versuch, einen neuen Krieg zu verhindern, um nicht nochmals den entsetzlichen Zwiespalt von Sieg und Niederlage zu erneuern. Kein Volk soll in seinem Sinne mehr siegen durch Gewalt, sondern alle durch Einheit, durch die Idee der Brüderlichkeit Europas" (*ROLLAND* 842). The work of the pacifist begins by eradicating the seeds of violence sown within the sociopolitical matrix. Moreover, in this epoch Rolland starts to explore through *Jean-Christophe* the idea of mediation as a tool to create a space for the peaceful negotiation of difference: "Seit zwanzig Jahren kreist das Denken, das Schaffen dieses Künstlers unablässig um das Problem des Widerspruchs von Geist und Gewalt, Freiheit und Vaterland, Sieg und Niederlage: in hundertfachen Variationen, dramatisch, episch, dialogisch, programmatisch, durch Dutzende von Figuren hat er das Grundthema abgewandelt" (*ROLLAND* 2538). In this sense, mediation also becomes an expression of Zweig's pacifist efforts, linking Verhaeren's with Rolland's commitment, and, from the latter's response to the war to Erasmus and, especially, Michel de Montaigne, who emerges from his former radical individualism to serve as mediator between political powers. As we have demonstrated in Chapter I, the context of Verhaeren and the other figures of mediation affects the ways their task is conceived, completing a reorientation from the realm of aesthetics to the sphere of politics. However, at the core of Zweig's notion of mediation lies the drive towards peaceful cohabitation. It is yet another attempt

to produce a long-lasting pacifist solution. Finally, concerning *Rolland*, we have attested in the previous sections how he embodies an activist and 'creative' conception of pacifism, one that can be linked with the function of 'Europe' as a pacifist solution. Pacifism signifies 'struggling' for peace, 'working' for a project that can 'sustain' cohabitation; it goes beyond the mere acknowledgement that peace is the most desirable state of humankind.

In brief, with *Jeremias* and *Rolland* Zweig veers towards the notion of non-violence, which will find its momentum in the character of Virata in *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*. His quest to 'exist' without violence leads him to expose the brutality that pervades the system, the violence that derives from certain notions of justice and power, as well as from social hierarchies and divisions. Pacifism, or the quest for non-violence, takes the shape of a challenge to the hegemonic discourses that underpin the state ideology. The bottom line is that the foundations of communal life presuppose a rhetoric of violence; violence to maintain order, violence of the haves against the have nots. The radicality of this approach to pacifism takes Zweig to confront the violence ingrained in ideas such as justice, reason, and even peace itself. In other words, to fully comprehend the implications of Zweig's pacifism, we need go beyond its institutional and organizational aspects, usually focused on a given conflict, and encompass any efforts whose goal consists in realizing a peaceful (i.e. non-violent) cohabitation. In this regard, another expression of Zweig's approach to the notion of peace as a fundamental category of his ethical program can be found in his insistence that the intellectual must not become a politician (e.g. "FDTI"), that he must direct his commitment to the sphere of *Geist*, the fear being that politics implies, at some point, resorting to (violent) action and therefore the betrayal of one's ideals. This is, also, one of the most valuable reflections of the play *Adam Lux*

(1928), which provides us with invaluable insights on Zweig's conception of politics and his efforts to produce a non-violent response as an individual and as an intellectual.

The setting of the play is the French Revolution, a historical context that has an ambivalent reception in Zweig's work. On the one hand, it inspired a few of Zweig's biographies and historical texts—*Fouché*, *Mesmer*, *Marie Antoinette*, the *Sternstunde* “Die Weltminute von Waterloo”, etc. and it was considered by the Austrian writer as a turning point in the history of humankind and of the humanist values. As we have noted before, the idea of tolerance/freedom embodied by Castelli found its continuity, according to Zweig's genealogy, in the values of the revolution, above all the defense of the rights of the individual (*CASTELLIO* 2807). On the other hand, we can observe Zweig's contempt for the concept and the (political) practice of revolution in its history of the ‘European’ *Geist*—“Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historischen Entwicklung”—, where we are told that the French Revolution inaugurates a period of ‘recession’ for the forces of union: “[A]ber immer wieder unterbricht die Gewalt—stets ist es die Gewalt, die den Geist befiehlt—dieses brüderliche Gefühl: diesmal die Revolution und dann die Napoleonskriege, welche die Volksheere erschaffen und damit die Idee des Vaterlandes nicht mehr als eine Angelegenheit der Fürsten, sondern der Völker erscheinen lassen. Damit wird auch die Kunst und das Denken völlig national” (“EGHE” 2318). Also, Erasmus' ‘spiritual’ revolution—humanism—is insistently described as a ‘reformation’ within the system, emphasizing the ‘moderation’ of Erasmus' commitment as a key characteristic that distinguishes him from Luther's more abrasive tactics.

Last but not least, we discussed in Chapter I how Rolland and Zweig parted ways in the thirties due to their differing opinions on the future of Europe and their respective understandings of the Russian Revolution. There are red lines Zweig is not ready, nor willing, to cross for his (or any) ideal(s)—no matter how noble and just. In this sense, the

story of Adam Lux, a German revolutionary who tried to establish the Mainzer Republik in the wake of the French Revolution, serves as a further critique to the violent dynamics of revolutionary practices. Lux, who in a sense could be considered another of Zweig's figures of commitment, is from the start an idealist. Intoxicated by the values of the revolution, he convinces his fellow citizens to fight for their freedom and send him to Paris along with his friend Georg Foster to form an alliance with the newly founded republic. There Lux and his friend will discover the 'true' face of revolution. The political skirmishes between the several revolutionary factions have corrupted the government, starting a witch hunt and a reign of terror and fear. The degeneration of the ideal has turned the republic into a dictatorship established in the name of freedom.

In the first scene, when Lux's stance is more radicalized, he proclaims that he is ready to die for the cause of freedom, that the intellectual must become a politician in order to turn his ideas into action: "Ewig war es der Geistigen Schuld, daß sie dem Volk fehlten als Führer, und was taugt der Geist, wenn er nicht der Menschheit dient und dem Willen der Zeit! Seit über Mainz die Trikolore weht, weiß ich nur eine Sache auf Erden mehr: zu kämpfen gegen jede Gewalt, zu leben und zu sterben für die Freiheit!" ("LUX" 346). At this point, Lux's words are imbued by his readings, his approach to the revolution is mostly theoretical. From this perspective, his sojourn in Paris will provide him the opportunity to experience first-hand the darkest side of politics. In the end, Lux's story allows Zweig to expose the dynamics of violence that underpins certain forms of political change. Even before the former goes to Paris, there is a voice among the 'nameless' crowd—which seems to be brought directly from the public square of Jerusalem, from the first scenes of *Jeremias*—that predicts the catastrophe (the destruction of Mainz), that lays bare the real cost of the revolution: (Der alte Bauer) "Gehuppt wie gedantzt, Franzose oder Preuße, nur fort mit der Karr! Soldate für die Bauern, die eigene oder die andern,

das fällt wie Rotz und Grind aufs liebe Vieh; an beide krepierst. Gleich wie du eine von dene gottverdoppelte Gäulsdieb siehst, laß laufe, was die Huf halte" ("LUX" 339).

Once in Paris, when Lux and Forster grasp for the first time the brutality that dominates the social and political atmosphere of the French capital, a dialogue between the two friends shows Lux's transformation. When the latter learns that some of the ministers of the republic freely chosen by the people are being threatened with the guillotine, accused of treason to the ideal of the revolution, he is left bewildered. It is the task of Foster, more experienced than Lux and a historian by profession, to open his eyes to the perversion of the ideal: "Vernunft wird jeder Bewegung bald unbequem, sie bereitet der Revolution nur die Leidenschaft vor. Die Welle muß an den Strand laufen. Du hast zu viel geträumt, Lux, und zu wenig Geschichte gelesen. Jede Idee, auch die lauterste, säuft schließlich Blut. Es scheint, sie können anders sich nicht behaupten" ("LUX" 355). And he concludes: "Den Terror... [So führt nur ein] Schritt über Menschenrechte weiter" ("LUX" 357). From this point onwards, and after meeting some of the bloodiest characters of the revolution—Robespierre and Marat—, Lux commences to defend both in public and private a discourse of non-violence. In a conversation with Robespierre, who defends violence for the sake of the people's liberty, Lux argues that nothing good can come out nor grow out of hate and violence: "Die Menschheit kann eine Idee nur lieben, solange sie menschlich bleibt. Mit jedem Schlag der Guillotine köpft ihr euch tausend Freunde mit. Gerade den Terror entfremdet euch die Sympathie der Welt" ("LUX" 367). What is more, he does not hesitate to blame a certain kind of politician—radicalized, extremist, fundamentalist—for this process of degeneration: "Darum hasse ich sie so, diese Ideologen, diese Tyrannen ihrer Idee, die Tausende opfern ihrer Rechthaberei. Sie haben die Einheit zerstört, immer zerstören sie jeden Gedanken! [...] [D]ie Dogmatiker [haben]

einen Götzen [daraus] gemacht, [der] menschenfresserisch [ist]. Oh, wie ich müde bin” (“LUX” 372).

Once again, Zweig articulates through Lux his belief in the impossibility to reconcile humaneness with a certain conception of politics (“LUX” 382). Lux has realized the great distance that separates ideas from reality, and so he decides to perform his ultimate act of commitment. In the different options available to the intellectual—as presented in *Castellio*—Lux goes for the most tragic; his choice is that of Cicero. Considering that silence is but another form of complicity with brutality and terror, he will openly denounce the republic. Since he cannot bring himself to carry out any deed of violence (i.e. assassinate the dictators), Lux chooses to die for his ideas, to become a symbol, an example. These are his last words before the president of the revolutionary committee: “Als Untertan eines deutschen Fürsten geboren, bin ich Franzose geworden im Glauben an die Reinheit der Revolution. Heute habe ich kein anderes Vaterland mehr als die Freiheit” (“LUX” 403).

Images of Human Suffering I: “Episode am Genfer See”

In the context of Zweig’s pacifism, the story of Adam Lux represents the writer’s efforts to take his struggle for peace beyond the war scenario. Ultimately, fighting for peace means opposing all kinds of violence—even when it is justified/legitimized in the name of great ideas such as freedom or justice; likewise, it means fighting for the human and challenging revolutionary, radicalized (un-moderate) political practices. Having said that, for the remainder of this section, I would like to analyze Zweig’s pacifist efforts against the war, understood as a specific form of violence/conflict that disrupts the fabric of life

on a collective basis.²⁶⁴ More especially, I would like focus my analysis on three of Zweig's war *novellas*²⁶⁵ to observe how he uses fiction—its devices and rhetorical strategies—to show the all-pervading, dehumanizing nature of war. In this sense, my reading of these texts might be thought of as a continuation of our discussion of “Buchmendel” and *Schachnovelle*. As we have already discussed, the ‘acceptance’ of war and violence as solutions to political, social and national conflicts in the first half of the twentieth century was closely related to the ‘brutalization’ of culture and the spread of certain dehumanizing discourses. In this sense, Zweig's struggle for peace entails necessarily the exposure and disarticulation of said discourses. From this perspective, we might contend that Zweig relied on the power of fiction to persuade, to implicate the reader and his/her capacity to identify or, otherwise, empathize with the plight of certain characters on behalf of their shared humanity. In a way, while his lectures and other essayistic texts might generate certain consensus, they remained too abstract when compared to the bare exposure of the suffering of a fellow human being. Thus, in these texts Zweig takes the focus away from the trenches. As Iris Himmlmayr has noted, in none of his war novellas does Zweig provide us with a political analysis of the war.

²⁶⁴ The disrupting nature of war is the topic of Zweig's 1914 essay “Die Schlaflose Welt”. Although it cannot be easily classified as a pro-war text, the truth is that its general tone can be considered ‘enthusiastic’, showing a certain fascination with a ‘unique’ historical event of global dimensions. From this perspective, a still ‘nationalistic’ Zweig might be considered to be under the influence of the all-affirming/embracing aesthetics of Verhaeren's *Bejahung*. Be it as it may, the text provides an interesting reflection on the all-pervasive nature of war that is later resumed in the novellas analyzed in this section. So many fates are being simultaneously decided in a conflict of global dimensions—in a more-than-ever interconnected world—that no one is allowed to rest: “Eine ganze Menschheit fiebert jetzt nachts und tags, furchtbare übermächtige Wachheit funkelt durch die aufgeregten Sinne von Millionen, Schicksal dringt unsichtbar durch die Tausende Fenster und Türen und scheucht den Schlummer, scheucht das Vergessen von jeder Lagerstatt. Es ist weniger Schlaf jetzt in der Welt, länger die Nächte und länger die Tage” (“Schlaflose” 343). In this situation, no one can stand aloof, everyone must produce their own response: “Es gibt kein Gleichbleiben gegenüber verwandelten Wirklichkeiten, keiner steht heute gesichert auf einem Felsen und blickt lächelnd nieder auf die erregte Welle[.] [...]Keiner kann sich abschnüren, denn mit unserem Blut und Geist kreisen wir im Strom einer Nation und jede Beschleunigung treibt uns weiter, jedes Stocken in ihren Pulsen hemmt den Takt unseres eigenen Lebens” (“Schlaflose” 405).

²⁶⁵ Besides the novellas *Episode am Genfer See* and *Der Zwang*, and the fragment *Wondrak*, the unfinished novel *Clarissa* and the novel *Ungeduld des Herzens* engage in one way or another with the topic of war. We could also add to the list the unfinished manuscript *Rausch der Verwandlung* and other stories such as *Die Unsichtbare* Sammlung, which are very critical with the post-war context, exploring the consequences of the conflict once it is over.

Rather, he aims to show its stupidity and criminal nature (75). War must not be understood but eradicated as a crime against humanity. If we use reason to try to elucidate its causes and effects, we run the risk of either producing indifference or even, in the worst cases, naturalizing and/or justifying it.

Bearing these ideas in mind, our first stop is the shores of Lake Geneva “in der Nähe des kleinen Schweizer Ortes Villeneuve” (“EPISODE” 45), where one day in the last months of the First World War, the arrival of an unexpected visitor disrupts the tranquility of the place. It is a fisherman rowing in the first hours of the morning who spots the yet unrecognizable figure of Boris, a Russian deserter who, as it is later explained, had swam over from the French bank in the hope of getting to Russia and his family. *Episode am Genfer See* is the story of an unexpected encounter with the other, a failed dialogue—literally, a misunderstanding between a ‘primitive’ ‘East’ and a ‘civilized’ ‘West’. As Matjaz Birk claims, Boris is constructed using the popular *topos* of the ‘Noble Savage’, which embodies the values of nature as contraposed to those of culture and civilization:

Mit Hilfe des Stilmittels der Kontrastierung schafft der Autor ein weitgehend schematisiertes semantisches Raster, in dem einerseits jene, verbunden mit Natur, Spontaneität, Instinkthaftigkeit und Menschlichkeit, zu finden sind. Darüber hinaus entwirft Zweig anhand der Figur des russischen Deserteurs ein alternatives Wertesystem, das allmählich Konturen gewinnt und auf Erde, Liebe, Religion, Familie, Heimat und Vaterland beruht. (236).

Following Birk’s observations, the novella might function as a criticism of the values of industrialized modernity and as the expression of a desire to go back to the times when man was closer to nature and led a simpler and more peaceful existence. At the same time, on a less allegoric plane, *Episode* has been discussed as a pacifist novella, in which Boris stands for humanity’s innocence, exposing, in turn, the corruption and degeneration of ‘civilization’ under the banners of reason and progress: “Er setze sich zum Ziel, im

Kriegesfeuer, in den Zeiten der blutigen Auseinandersetzung der als Kulturvölker geltenden Nationen, von der politisch weniger exponierten 'Kanzel' der Literatur aus für die Idee des Pazifismus und der Humanität einzutreten" (238).²⁶⁶

Following on these reflections, I suggest that the central element that unites both readings of the story is the difficulty of approaching what we could call a 'radical' other, someone whose language and *Weltanschauung*, as well as his needs and feelings, cannot be easily 'read' or 'understood', which may produce an inadequate response. In this clash of worlds, what is meant to be a welcoming, hospitable experience produces the further victimization and isolation of Boris. His final decision to kill himself, to go back into the waters whence he came, provides him with a 'spectral' quality; a visitation of sorts that announces the dangers of failing to acknowledge and properly honor the humanity of the other: from the First World War to Boris' suicide. Following these premises, I would like to examine how this process of (un)recognition unfolds. The novella starts with the appearance of "eines merkwürdigen Gegenstandes mitten auf dem Wasser" ("EPISODE" 45) that only progressively is found to be a "nackter Mann", a shivering figure huddling nervously into the corner of the boat ("EPISODE" 45). Yet when the fisherman starts asking questions, the mysterious figure replies in "einer fremdartigen Sprache" ("EPISODE" 45), and it is not until the sun comes up that "begann sich auch das Antlitz des nackten Menschen zu erhellen" ("EPISODE" 45), revealing a smiling man that keeps repeating but one word: "*Rossiya, Rossiya?*". As the townspeople start to gather around him, Boris realizes that he is not at home. Until the appearance of the hotel manager, "der lange im Ausland gelebt hatte und mehrerer Sprachen mächtig war" ("EPISODE" 2427), he is

²⁶⁶ Commenting on the pacifist reading of Boris, Turner remarks that although both Boris and Mendel (from "Buchmendel") challenge contemporary nationalism, they do so passively and therefore lack the heroism that could turn them into examples to follow and emulate: "Boris stands above the nationalistic concerns of wartime because he *fails to understand* political and geographical realities, even the very concept of *Grenze*. Where, one must ask, is the informed, intelligent, conscious challenge to nationalism and its human consequences?" ("The Humane Ideal" 161).

somehow deprived of his humanity, treated like an exotic animal, with a mixture of reluctance, curiosity and 'basic' hospitality. He is given clothes, food—"das er mißtrauisch wie ein Affe liegen ließ" ("EPISODE" 2427)—, photographed and even unsuccessfully interrogated at the courthouse. Incapable of telling his story, of communicating his feelings, he remains indecipherable.

Finally, as Boris tells his story aided by the hotel manager, who acts as his interpreter, yet another obstacle emerges: "Denn nicht nur, daß der zufällige Dolmetsch sich als unzulänglich erwies, bald wurde auch die für Westländer gar nicht faßbare Unbildung dieses Menschen klar" ("EPISODE" 2448). As it turns out, although he finally might be able to communicate with someone, Boris' *Weltanschauung* is so radically different from that of the villagers of Villeneuve that these are incapable of relating to him as an equal: "Die ängstliche Frage, mit der er seine unklare Erzählung beschloß, ob er schon morgen daheim sein könne, erweckte, kaum übersetzt, durch ihre Unbelehrtheit erst lautes Gelächter, das aber bald gerührtem Mitleid wich, und jeder steckte dem unsicher und kläglich um sich Blickenden ein paar Geldmünzen oder Banknoten zu" ("EPISODE" 2448). Even though Boris is welcome to stay at a small inn—after one of the hotel guests offers to pay for his accommodation—, he feels lonelier and lonier, displaced, disoriented. He wants to go back to his family, to his land, but even the only person with whom he can talk cannot provide the answers he is looking for, as Boris does not understand notions such as 'war' and 'border'.

Thus, I contend that a profound lack of understanding, of recognition, does not allow Boris to feel at home, to feel secure; there is an unbridgeable distance, both physical and emotional, that impedes his acceptance and participation in the community. For instance, when he learns that he can stay in town for the immediate future, "[d]er Russe wollte ihm die Hand küssen, die ihm jedoch der andere rücktretend rasch entzog" ("EPISODE" 2468).

In other words, the limits of Villeneuve's hospitality, of its politics of refuge and welcome, prevent the formation of a framework of dialogue and the establishment of affective bonds; Boris is left in a limbo, with people looking at him yet not daring to interact. He, in turn, cannot lift his gaze and look them back: "Er drückte sich an den Tisch [...] und blieb dort verhangenen Blicks den ganzen Vormittag unbeweglich sitzen. Unablässig spähten vom Fenster die Dorfkinder herein, lachten und schrien ihm etwas zu—er hob den Kopf nicht. Eintretende betrachteten ihn neugierig, er blieb, den Blick auf den Tisch gebannt, mit krummem Rücken sitzen, schamhaft und scheu" ("EPISODE" 2479).

Progressively, Boris becomes once again an unnoticeable, strange, animalized figure: "Bis gegen Abend blieb er so sitzen. Menschen gingen und kamen, er fühlte sie nicht und sie nicht mehr ihn: ein Stück Schatten, saß er im Schatten des Ofens, die Hände schwer auf den Tisch gestützt. Alle vergaßen ihn, und keiner merkte darauf, daß er sich in der Dämmerung plötzlich erhob und, dumpf wie ein Tier, den Weg zum Hotel hinaufschritt" ("EPISODE" 2479). In the final conversation with the hotel manager, Boris begs for help to go home. However, even the promise to find him work does not satisfy him: "Die Menschen verstehen mich hier nicht, und ich verstehe sie nicht", wiederholte er hartnäckig", to which the hotel manager replies: "Ich kann nicht, Boris. Kein Mensch kann jetzt dem andern helfen" ("EPISODE" 2508). The next morning, Boris is pulled out of the water by the same fisherman that had found him a few days earlier. After the authorities make a statement of the incident, he is buried as an unnamed 'stranger'—unknown forever: "da man den Namen des Fremden nicht kannte, ein billiges Holzkreuz auf sein Grab gestellt, eines jener kleinen Kreuze über namenlosem Schicksal, mit denen jetzt unser Europa bedeckt ist von einem bis zum andern Ende" ("EPISODE" 45).

In my opinion, the story of Boris exemplifies the difficulty of approaching and getting to know the other, of recognizing his/her humanity. Without resorting to aggressiveness or (physical) violence, the impossibility of establishing channels of communication and exchange with the host community further alienate an individual that has been plucked out from his home and yet is unable to find a new one. In this context, hospitality becomes hostility²⁶⁷. The pity and charity of the citizens of Villeneuve are not enough to break the barriers of culture and language. Rather, they make Boris feel uncomfortable and experience shame and un-belonging. Having said that, the war context adds its own unsurmountable barriers. Boris is, after all, one more victim of a conflict he does not even understand. Through him the great discourses that animate war not only reveal their inhumanity but also their absurdity.

Images of Human Suffering II: “Wondrak”

Following the reflections above, we could argue that Boris is a grotesque character, a trait he shares with Ružena Sedlak, a woman from the small Southern Bohemian town of Dobitzan and the protagonist of the unfinished novella “Wondrak”. Her story starts with the news that Ružena, “dieses häßliche Gebilde”—otherwise known as “Der Totenkopf” (“WONDRAK” 123)—has had a baby. Being rejected practically since birth due to her ugly face, she has been forced to live in the margins of society. ‘Ugly’ Ružena is yet another of Zweig’s dehumanized characters: “Daß sie Totenkopf hieß, und mit Recht, wußte Ružena Sedlak schon als Kind: gleichzeitig mit der Sprache wurde ihr ihre Schande gelehrt, und jede Sekunde erinnerte sie von neuem, daß sie um dieses fehlenden Zoll Knochens willen unerbittlich aus unbefangener Gemeinschaft der Menschen ausgestoßen war” (“WONDRAK” 125). Having interiorized her ‘condition’ from a very early age,

²⁶⁷ In this sense, it might be interesting to read the story of Boris in light of Jacques Derrida’s reflections on hospitality and hostility in his essay “Hostipitality”: Derrida, Jacques. “Hostipitality.” *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2000, pp. 3-18.

Ružena happily accepts employment as the caretaker of a hunting lodge deep in the woods, far from town. Thus, her life of banishment proceeds undisturbed until one day she is raped in the woods by three men.

When months later she realizes that she is pregnant, her first thought is to kill the baby so that he or she does not suffer her same fate. However, when the baby is born and she barely survives the birth, her life changes forever: “Sie, die Mißgeborene, hatte ein reines, ein wirkliches, gesundes Wesen zur Welt gebracht; [...] Hell sah das Kind aus, und ihr dünkte sogar, schön, es war kein Totenkopf, sondern gestaltet wie alle, und eben begann ein kleines winziges Lächeln auf dem kaulquappigen Mund. Da hatte sie keine Kraft mehr zu ihrem Vorsatz, und sie nahm das kleine, dünnatmende Wesen an ihre Brust” (“WONDRAK” 129). Motherhood brings purpose to Ružena’s life; she lives for the boy, becoming the most caring of mothers. However, at the same time, what the narrator describes as her “dumpfe bäuerliche Habgier” and her “unverständiger Instinkt” (“WONDRAK” 2947) makes her afraid someone is going to come and take the baby away from her, her only bond, the only human being who can love her back. In fact, her predictions turn out to be true; as the news spread around town, she is progressively forced to let the boy go as the administration and the church reclaim their share of power over the new body:

Ein fünfmonatiges Kind und noch nicht gemeldet, noch nicht eingetragen in die Register, murrte der Bürgermeister (ansonsten Bäcker) in aller Empörung, und mit ihm ereiferte sich der Pfarrer: ein fünfmonatiges Kind und noch nicht getauft!, das sei Heidenwirtschaft. Der Gemeindegemeindeführer Wondrak wurde nach eingehender Zwiesprache zwischen den beiden Verwaltern der irdischen und [der] göttlichen Welt in den Wald entboten, um die Sedlak an ihre Staatspflichten zu erinnern. (“WONDRAK” 127)

As the boy grows, they tell her he must go to school. While she had hoped they had forgotten, the moment the boy's name had been registered, he had to fulfill certain obligations: "Aber das war das verfluchte Buch da drinnen im Bürgermeisteramt. Wer da drinnen stand, gehörte nicht mehr sich selbst. Und jetzt fingen sie schon an, ihr ihn wegzunehmen" ("WONDRAK" 132). Finally, war breaks out. At first, being still a boy, Karel is not drafted. But as he turns eighteen, and being fully integrated in society, he decides with other lads his age to present himself to enlist for military service. When he tells his mother, "Ružena wurde blaß. In einem Sturz stob ihr das Blut weg aus dem Gesicht. Daran hatte sie nie gedacht, daß er auch achtzehn würde, das Kind, daß man ihn ihr auch nehmen könnte. Jetzt verstand sie: dazu hatten sie ihn damals eingetragen in das verfluchte Buch am Bürgermeisteramt, diese Diebe, um ihn wegzuschleppen in ihren Krieg, den vermaledeiten" ("WONDRAK" 133). And so Ružena Sedlak starts her crusade against the 'book', against the men that want to send her boy to the war. However, although she hides him and tries to convince the whole town that Karel has already been recruited, complaining bitterly here and there, his hideout is finally discovered, the story ending with Ružena sobbing all alone in a cell and Karel being sent away to war.

While we will never know the story's ending, Ružena Sedlak's resistance against the war reveals one again the dehumanizing discourses that the state uses to control the citizens and the how motherhood is turned into a counterdiscourse that challenges the rhetoric of war and nationalism. For it is precisely the characterization of Ružena as a marginal figure, uncultivated and dull-witted that helps Zweig make his point. Living in the woods all by herself for the greater part of her life, Ružena does not know about the laws or rules, written and otherwise, that organize and structure society; or about citizenship and duty; the notions of 'war', 'nation', 'state', etc. mean nothing to her. Through her isolation she has reverted, according to the narrator, to a 'primitive' state

where she only cares for survival. In other words, Ružena's life is presented as devoid of any purpose until Karel is born. Equally, society and the state's institutions, which until that point had banished her from the public/common space, start demanding that she fulfills her duties, both to the religious and secular powers. At this point, Ružena faces an enemy she cannot see or understand. Her world is literally Karel. All her decisions, actions, and feelings revolve around her boy: baptism, civil registry, school, all these words only mean one thing for her: that her son, the center of her existence, the only thing that keeps her tenuously linked to the community, will be taken away. Motherhood becomes Ružena's *leitmotiv*.

Accordingly, we are told that she barely notices when the war starts; if anything, she is happy for her son because he is being paid better wages and she, also, can sell her eggs at a higher price: "Schon hatte sie eine ganze versteckte Lade voll Geld und Papier; noch drei solcher Jahre und sie konnte in die Stadt ziehen mit ihrem Karel. Das war das einzige, was sie wußte und dachte vom Krieg" ("WONDRAK" 133). After her confrontation with Karel, when she makes him swear that he will do as she commands, she sees herself pitted against the 'books' that represent the mysterious, unknown forces that want to deprive her of her only joy: "Aber doch, das kleine dumpfe unwissende Wesen, das sie war, hatte Furcht vor dem Unbekannten jener Macht, mit der sie jetzt Krieg begann. Wozu hatten sie eigentlich diese Bücher im Amt in Dobitzan, in Budweis und Wien? Was stand da drinnen? Irgendwie mußten sie von allem wissen und von jedem, dank dieser verfluchten Bücher" ("WONDRAK" 136).

In this light, I contend that it precisely the state of 'primitiveness' in which Ružena's character is inscribed that makes her plight against the war so strong. It is not just the fact the she is a mother that might lose her son, but someone who cannot—literally—understand any reason why she would have to make that sacrifice. What arguments can be given against the emotional bond that links mother with son? Ružena is repeatedly described by the narrator as a 'creature'; her

'animality'—as opposed to her 'humanness'—dominates her being. In her confrontation with Karel, she transforms herself: "Sie saß ganz starr, und als Karel zu ihr verwundert aufschaute, erschrak er zum erstenmal vor seiner Mutter. Denn was da saß, war kein Mensch mehr" ("WONDRAK" 133). We could argue that Ružena is guided primarily by her most elemental and primitive instincts and feelings; she is a mother with no familiar or societal structures around her through which the state can deploy its ideological apparatuses: "Und während von oben her die starken Atemzüge ihres Sohnes durch die dünne Wand gleichmäßig die Stille zersägten, quälte sie sich, eine Mutter, allein gegen das Ungeheure der Welt, wie man sie täuschen konnte, diese Leute, drin in der Stadt mit ihren schuftigen Büchern und Zetteln und Scheinen" ("WONDRAK" 136).

From this perspective, Ružena wonders what life, precious, healthy life, is in front of the unending lists of names for her come out of the blue to threaten said vitality: "Kraft für Jahrzehnte war in diesem Fleisch, das sie aus sich geformt, und unausdenkbare Fülle des Lebens in diesem kaum mannbar gewordenen Leib. Und das sollte sie hergeben an die in Wien, um einen einfältigen Wisch, unwillkürlich fuhr ihr ein scharfes Lachen aus den Zähnen" ("WONDRAK" 141). At the end of the story, the artificiality of notions such as 'duty' or 'nation' is exposed. Echoing his reflections in "Die Entwertung der Ideen", in *Wondrak* Zweig confronts Reason with Feeling. When the former can no longer be trusted, as it has been perverted, manipulated, the only argument that is left against war is the most primeval instinct to preserve life. In this framework of contestation/confrontation, as happened with Lux, solid binaries such as good/bad, victory/defeat, friend/enemy suffer a process of reevaluation and redefinition. When a troop of soldiers finally shows up at Ružena's door to recruit Karel, she thinks to herself: "Und sie kamen wirklich. [Eine] riesige Macht. [...] Das waren sie. Der *Feind* war da" ("WONDRAK" 141).²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ My italics.

Between Love and Duty: “Der Zwang”

The analyses of the novellas “Episode am Genfer See” and “Wondrak” have allowed us to explore the dynamics of war through the eyes of two peripheral, ‘primitivized characters’. Two human beings living in the margins of society and, by extension, in an in-between state between ‘humanity’ and ‘inhumanity’. Seen from Western, ‘civilized’, eyes, their passive (Boris) or active (Ružena) resistance to war challenges the very discourses that hold the community together. The fact that both Boris and Ružena are uneducated, uncivilized individuals (out of the [discursive] system), and yet victims of the war, allows Zweig to formulate another sort of pacifist ‘logic’, one that is presumably ‘primeval’, based on feeling rather than reason, language or culture. The incommunicativeness/isolation of Boris and Ružena makes their plight against (senseless) war even stronger, as their stories are riddled both with injustice and absurdity.

In the case of our last text, *Der Zwang*, the anti-war message is focused on the nation’s power to turn an individual, a citizen, into a soldier. As David Turner argues, in opposing war, Zweig calls “attention not only to the slaughter and mutilation involved, but to the process of dehumanization which affects all participants, irrespective of whether they are killed or injured” (“Expressionist Pathos” 304). In contrast to the previous stories, the dehumanization of its protagonist, the painter Ferdinand—exiled in Switzerland during the First World War with his wife Paula and their dog—, has nothing to do with his culture, education or otherwise his degree ‘primitiveness’. Following Zweig’s scale of (social) values, as represented for instance in *Die Welt von Gestern*’s Viennese utopia, he belongs to the ‘spiritual’ elite of the country. Ferdinand is, as I have suggested in Chapter I, is a potential Zweigian ‘hero’ and alter-ego. However, as compared to the figures of commitment of Rolland, Erasmus or Montaigne, Ferdinand lacks their exemplarity. Although he could potentially become a model, or an enunciator, of Zweig’s

commitment, his struggle with his conscience and duty leave him in a state of perpetual resistance to the forces that try to deprive him of his humanity and will.²⁶⁹

Generally speaking, and notwithstanding the huge differences between the two characters, Ferdinand's battle is fought on the same terms as Ružena's; his struggle is also that of the individual against the forces of collective domination. From the beginning, the setting of the story conveys Ferdinand's restlessness; he is living in such a peaceful scenery in the middle of a world raving mad that his existence is riddled with a sense of unreality. As he wakes up, the fog surrounds his house and only progressively the world outside is revealed: "Von den Fenstern dämmerte erste Helligkeit. Aber der winterliche Morgen hatte nur armes Licht. Zwitterschein von Dunkel und Tag wogte unsicher über dem Schlaf der Dinge und hüllte ihre Gestalt" ("ZWANG" 153). His emotional state contrasts with the quiet outside. There is something that bothers him, a desire to share the fate of countless others who are suffering at that hour the most horrendous atrocities. Although he tries to live in his 'reality' (the peaceful Swiss exile), something keeps pulling him back into the (other) world, leaving him temporally suspended: "Oder daß er sich abends im Auskleiden vergaß und, den abgestreiften Schuh starr in Händen, auf dem Bettrand sitzen blieb, bis ein Rufwort seiner Frau ihn aufschreckte oder plötzlich der Stiefel polternd zu Boden fiel" ("ZWANG" 153). Ferdinand's new homeland distills a

²⁶⁹ The autobiographical undertones can be perceived throughout the *novella*. However, in the first pages, when Ferdinand relates how he came to be in Switzerland, there is a paragraph that is especially relevant to establish the connection between Zweig and his character: "Acht Monate kaum waren es, daß er nackt, vor Kälte und Ekel zitternd, drüben vor einem Militärarzt gestanden, der nach den Muskeln an seinen Armen griff wie ein Pferdehändler, daß er an dieser Erniedrigung die Menschenunwürde der Zeit erkannt und die Sklaverei, in die Europa verfallen. Zwei Monate lang ertrug er es noch, in dieser Stickluft der patriotischen Phrase zu leben, aber allmählich ward ihm der Atem zu eng, und wenn die Menschen um ihn die Lippen aufboten zur Rede, meinte er das Gelbe der Lüge auf ihrer Zunge zu sehn. Was sie sprachen, widerte ihn an. Der Anblick der frierenden Frauen, die mit ihren leeren Kartoffelsäcken im Morgendämmer auf den Stufen des Marktes saßen, preßte ihm die Seele entzwei: mit geballten Fäusten schlich er umher und fühlte, wie er böse und gehässig wurde, sich selbst widerwärtig in seiner ohnmächtigen Wut. Endlich war es ihm dank einer Fürsprache gelungen, mit seiner Frau in die Schweiz herüberzukommen: als er die Grenze überschritt, sprang ihm plötzlich das Blut in die Wangen. Er mußte sich an den Pfosten festhalten, so taumelte er. Mensch, Leben, Tat, Wille, Kraft fühlte er sich zum erstenmal wieder" ("ZWANG" 157-158).

message of peace—“alles das sagte ihm so sichtlich: Friede! Friede!” (“ZWANG” 154)—, supranationalism and humanity: “Und seine Lungen taten sich auf, Freiheit aus der Luft zu spüren. Vaterland, das hieß ihm jetzt nur mehr Gefängnis und Zwang. Fremde, sie war ihm Weltheimat, Europa die Menschheit” (“Zwang” 157). Ferdinand lives in a kind of ivory tower: “Und selbst wie auf einer Turmspitze fühlte er sich unsäglich allein, die Welt vor sich und seine Frau hinter sich im Dunkel ihres Schlafs” (“ZWANG” 155).

However, his fears of losing it all, his restlessness, are justified. Although he has consciously chosen to take flight “vor der Zeit und den Menschen” (“ZWANG” 154), the seed of duty and obedience is deeply ingrained in Ferdinand’s mental and emotional fabric. Finally, through the postman, the world comes knocking at Ferdinand’s door; out of the mist appears a figure carrying an envelope with the words ‘official’, ‘to be signed for’. Like Ruzena, Ferdinand must combat as well the ‘piece of paper’ that comes reclaim his will and body. What happens after Ferdinand takes the letter is symbolic of the fate that awaits him in Zweig’s story: “Dann griff er nach dem Brief, den die dicke rote Hand ihm bot. Aber seine Finger waren so starr, daß das Blatt ihnen entglitt und zu Boden fiel, in nasse Erde und feuchtes Laub. Und wie er sich bückte, es aufzuheben, drang in seinen Atem ein bitterer Geruch von Fäulnis und Verwesung ein” (“ZWANG” 157).

From this moment onwards, the rest of the story describes Ferdinand’s progressive loss of individuality and conscience to the compulsion and intoxication of the fatherland. From the start, it seems apparent that he has lost the battle; although Ferdinand is in a ‘favorable’ position from which he can choose his fate—and despite his reasonable musings that apparently deactivate the bureaucratic apparatus and render the ‘official’ letter an ‘invalid’ absurdity, of no effect whatsoever—, the pull of duty (towards the nation) is stronger than his reason and will, which he surrenders the moment he opens the letter: “Die Finger spannten sich, das harte Kuvert durchzureißen und in Fetzen zu

zerpflücken. Aber seltsam: die Muskeln gehorchten ihm nicht. Irgend etwas war wider seinen eigenen Willen in seinen eigenen Händen, denn sie gehorchten nicht. Und indes er mit seiner ganzen Seele wollte, daß sie die Hülle zerfetzten, taten sie ganz behutsam das Kuvert auf, falteten zitternd das weiße Blatt auseinander" ("ZWANG" 159).

It is interesting to note that, following other analogies and metaphors used by Zweig in texts such as "Die moralische Eingiftung Europas", the compulsion that takes possession of Ferdinand's mind and body is described as a toxin that alienates the individual from himself/herself, that turns the citizen into a soulless dehumanized killing machine. In other words, Ferdinand has been brainwashed, so that his *Weltanschauung*, and commitment to peace are radically altered: "Die Farben auf der Palette schienen ihm Schlamm und Blut. Er mußte an Eiter und Wunden denken. Sein Selbstporträt, im Halbschatten stehend, zeigte ihm einen Militärkragen unter dem Kinn. 'Wahnsinn! Wahnsinn!' sagte er ganz laut und stampfte mit dem Fuße, um diese irren Bilder zu verscheuchen" ("ZWANG" 160). Not even his work, his art, nor his wife can provide refuge from such an omnipresent idea: "Dick und drückend stand der Gedanke mit einemmal im Zimmer zwischen den Dingen und stieß sie alle zur Seite. Breit und klebrig saß er auf den angebrochenen Speisen. Er kroch, eine feuchte Schnecke, über ihren Nacken und machte sie schauern" ("ZWANG" 160). Thus, when he leaves his house to go to the consulate, there is something that pushes him on hurriedly, a feeling of persecution overcomes him as his house is engulfed by the mist, reinforcing the division and progressive distancing between Ferdinand's two worlds ("ZWANG" 168). And once he is there, awaiting his turn, he feels 'trapped' and 'oppressed'.

As I argued before, the conversion from citizen to soldier entails a process of dehumanization. Especially, Zweig uses Ferdinand's visit to the consulate, his meeting with the administrative and bureaucratic apparatus of the state, to convey this idea. For

instance, the first thing Ferdinand notices in the consulate is that he has been reduced to ordinariness, to just another number: "Unwillig nahm er Platz, er spürte feindselig, daß er hier Angelegenheit sei, eine Erledigung, ein Fall" ("ZWANG" 175). And when he leaves the building, something has broken within him; he cannot recognize who/what he has become: "Blaß stieg er die Treppen hinab und fühlte nur, daß es nicht er selber war, der da ging. Daß schon die Macht, die fremde, die mitleidlose, ihn hatte, die eine ganze Welt unter ihre Füße getreten" ("ZWANG" 178). At this point, Ferdinand has lost all his will, a process that started when he opened that letter. Slowly, he is converted into a piece, a cog, within a larger killing machine; as Paula reflects: "[B]isher warst du ja noch ein klarer mündiger Mensch, der wußte, was er wollte, jetzt bist du schon so eine verstörte zerbrochene Pflichtmaschine mit abgetötetem Willen wie die Millionen Opfer draußen" ("ZWANG" 179). Once again, Zweig emphasizes the disproportion between the two opponents; what can Ferdinand, a single, human being like Ružena in "Wondrak", do against an all-pervasive inhuman force: "Sie haben Willen, und ich habe Nerven. Es ist ein ungleicher Kampf. Man kann nicht an wider eine Maschine. Wären es Menschen, man könnte sich wehren. Aber es ist eine Maschine, eine Metzgermaschine, ein seelenloses Werkzeug ohne Herz und Vernunft. Man kann nicht wider sie" ("ZWANG" 163).

In this context, Ferdinand's freedom is revealed as a chimera, an illusion he had entertained while he knew that in a world of war there is no such thing as freedom, which disappears when duty calls: "Man gehorcht", says Paula, "[m]an ist der Schulknabe: der Lehrer ruft, man steht auf und zittert" ("ZWANG" 162). All things considered, Ferdinand is not alone in this battle between humanity and the nation. While he presents little resistance, it is his wife Paula who struggles to take her husband out of the vortex in which he is immersed. First by using her reasoning, trying to talk him out of his obsession,

opening his eyes to the fact that he has a choice, that 'they' cannot force him to kill another person. To which Ferdinand replies:

Ich weiß, ich weiß. Jetzt zitiere noch Tolstoi! Ich weiß doch alle Argumente: verstehst du denn nicht, ich glaube ja nicht, daß sie ein Recht haben, mich zu rufen, nicht, daß ich eine Pflicht habe, ihnen zu folgen. Ich kenne nur eine Pflicht, die heißt, ein Mensch zu sein und zu arbeiten. Ich habe kein Vaterland jenseits der Menschheit, keinen Ehrgeiz, Menschen zu töten, ich weiß alles, Paula, ich sehe alles so klar wie du – nur, sie haben mich eben schon, sie rufen mich, und ich weiß, trotz allem und allem, ich werde kommen. ("ZWANG" 162)

It does not matter how hard she tries to convince him with rational arguments, with moral examples, or by evoking the great pacifist philosophers. What pulls Ferdinand away from his wife and into the war does not stand on reasonable ground; it goes deeper, it touches a part of himself he cannot consciously control. And so Paula, having uncovered the 'nature' of the enemy and its strategy, resorts to feeling: "Ich lasse mir nichts nehmen von einem Wisch Papier, ich erkenne kein Gesetz an, das im Mord endet. Ich lasse mich nicht ins Rückgrat knicken von einem Amt. Ihr Männer seid jetzt alle verderbt von Ideologien, ihr denkt Politik und Ethik, wir Frauen, wir fühlen noch geradeaus" ("ZWANG" 179). In her fight for Ferdinand, Paula presents him with a choice: either her or the war. It is no longer about himself; he has to choose between love and duty: "Was bin ich dir denn? Ein Feldwebel schmiert einen Wisch Papier voll, und schon wirfst du mich weg und läufst ihm nach. Aber ich lasse mich nicht wegwerfen und dann wieder aufheben: jetzt entscheide dich! Sie oder ich! Verachtung wider sie oder wider mich!" ("ZWANG" 182). And thus she formulates the terms of Ferdinand's final choice: "Das ist ein Abschied. Verläßt du mich, um einzurücken, um diesen uniformierten Mördern zu folgen, so gibt es keine Rückkehr. Ich teile nicht mit Verbrechern, ich teile einen Menschen nicht mit diesem Vampir, dem Staat. Er oder ich—du hast jetzt zu

wählen" ("ZWANG" 182). However, Ferdinand finds it harder and harder to think for himself. In the last moments before he goes to station, he is confronted with several kinds of love: his wife's, the tender memories of his childhood ("ZWANG" 184), and finally his dog, who for a moment makes him believe that he has not become a machine yet ("ZWANG" 165). Yet the spell is too strong. Not even a last-minute rendezvous with his wife at the station can stop the compulsion that is dragging him away.

Ultimately, it is only through Ferdinand's experience of the border's artificiality that the spell begins to break: "Er spürte, wie, seit er die Grenze körperlich sah, diese Brücke zwischen Tod und Leben, etwas in ihm zu arbeiten begann, das nicht die Maschine war, daß ein Wissen in ihm wach werden wollte und ein Widerstand" ("ZWANG" 193). When he sees a soldier pacing up and down the border, it is like looking at a reflection of the deadly fate that awaits him. Finally, a train comes in from the other side of the border. When the doors open, a burst of joy comes through together with the terrible sight of human suffering: "Der ganze Auswurf des Elends drängte sich in Gestalt: Verstümmelte mit leeren Ärmeln, Abgezehrte und Halbverbrannte, Überreste einer Jugend, verwildert und gealtert. Aber von allen Augen glänzte es beruhigt in den Himmel hinein: sie fühlten alle der Pilgerschaft Ende" ("ZWANG" 194). Ferdinand has seen/experienced the humanity of the other which has, in turn, awakened his own: "Willen? Mächtig sprang die große Wahrheit des Gefühls in ihm auf und zerbrach die Maschine in seiner Brust, Freiheit stieg hoch, selig und groß, und zerriß den Gehorsam. Niemals! Niemals! schrie es in ihm auf, eine Stimme, urmächtig und unerkant. Und schon schlug es ihn hin. Schluchzend brach er vor der Tragbahre zusammen" ("ZWANG" 195).

In his reading of the novella, David Turner contends that "In Zweig's story [...], the recovery of true humanity entails the recognition of a common brotherhood. The Tolstoian renunciation of violence, which has been Ferdinand's fitful guide hitherto,

crystallizes at the sight of the wounded French soldiers into a definite act. He faces a dawning realization" ("Expressionist Pathos" 306). However, in terms of Ferdinand's pacifist stance, Turner considers Ferdinand's story as insufficient. Freedom, far from being a positive communal force, entails the neglect of the public dimension of life in favor of personal pleasure. It is a freedom that justifies escapism and passivity. Thus, Ferdinand's conception of peace is "not of the sort actively pursued by pacifists such as Bertha von Suttner, but peace as an avoidance of all decisions and responsibility" ("The Humane Ideal" 161). Following Turner's reflections, we might argue that neither of three characters we have analyzed in the last pages—Boris, Ružena, Ferdinand—offers an 'alternative' to war. However, I do not believe that presenting an alternative to war was Zweig's intention. As I said before, what takes us to explore these stories in our discussion of Zweig's pacifism is Zweig's idea that lectures, proclamations and manifestoes must be complemented with individual experiences. In this sense, fiction offers the reader the possibility to feel with the character, to relate to his or her plight; no matter how uneducated or animalized Zweig's characters may appear to be, their humanity, which ultimately is revealed through their acts (i.e. Boris' suicide or Ružena's resistance), is indisputable. The individualization/embodiment of Zweig's ideals is devised precisely to awaken his readers, to remind them of their humanity through their witnessing of the suffering of another fellow human being. In this sense, Zweig addresses himself and his readers emulating Ferdinand's eleventh-hour awakening. Collective revolutions start by looking within, to one's own humanity, by going back to our own self and finding the path back to love:

Spätabends kam er zurück in sein Haus. Es war dunkel und verschlossen wie ein Sarg. Er klopfte an. Schritte schlurften: seine Frau tat auf. Wie sie ihn sah, schrak sie zusammen. Aber er faßte sie mild und lenkte sie in die Tür. Sie sprachen nichts. Sie bebten nur beide vor Glück. Er trat in sein Zimmer: seine Bilder standen da,

sie hatte alle vom Atelier herabgeholt, um ihm nahe zu sein durch sein Werk. Unendliche Liebe fühlte er an diesem Zeichen und verstand, wieviel er sich gerettet. Schweigend preßte er ihre Hand. Aus der Küche stürmte der Hund, sprang hoch an ihm auf: alles hatte ihn erwartet, er fühlte, nie war er mit seinem wirklichen Wesen hier weggegangen, und doch war ihm wie einem, der aus dem Tod wieder ins Leben tritt. ("ZWANG" 196)

2.2.3.3. "The Freest of Persons, a Fanatic of Liberty": On Stefan Zweig's Ethics of (Radical) Freedom

Freedom is a ubiquitous concept in Zweig's work. Under many guises and variations, it is the foundational stone of his *Weltanschauung* and the core directive of both his commitment and idea of 'Europe'. Contrastingly, its value is often taken for granted and rarely subject to serious consideration.²⁷⁰ Although this dissertation does not attempt nor could fill this absence in Stefan Zweig's scholarship, I believe it is interesting to explore the centrality of said notion as it pervades the Austrian writer's production and shapes his philosophy and ethical program. For one thing, it must be noted that the idea of freedom was one of Zweig's lifelong obsessions, to the point that his first wife Friderike defined him in her memoirs as "the freest of persons, a fanatic of liberty" (*Destellos* 153). As I will demonstrate in the following pages, in defining her second husband in said terms, Friderike Zweig was not simply using a figure of speech. Freedom is both the goal and precondition of Zweig's 'European' utopia; a metacategory in his ethical program that complements some of the notions we have been discussing so far. Without going any further, and as Todorov reminds us in *The Imperfect Garden*, the experience of freedom is indissociably linked to the configuration of the modern condition, and will become the most important possession for the humanist 'family', which will try to safeguard it and at the same time find the right balance between its collective and individual dimensions; we

²⁷⁰ See: Neundlinger, Helmut. "Die Freiheit des Einzelnen." *Stefan Zweig Handbuch*, edited by Arturo Larcati, Klemens Renoldner, Martina Wörgötter, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 758-763.

could argue, thus, that freedom is also a key category of Zweig's understanding of humanism. Bearing all this in mind, I propose to commence our reflections on the different kinds of freedom that permeate Zweig's discourse by considering its impact on the narrative of *Die Welt von Gestern*.

Die Welt von Gestern

The first passage where freedom is presented as a key category in Zweig's *Weltanschauung* is when the Austrian inserts in the chapter "Die Welt der Sicherheit" a brief description of his family's origins as members of the Viennese Arcadia. Special attention is paid to the legacy of both his father and mother, to what they came to symbolize. In this context, we are told that Moritz Zweig was obsessed, in material terms, with the idea of freedom, with not owing anything to anyone. He assumed that independence and autonomy were the most desired goals of the individual, what would provide him with security for the present and confidence in the future: "Daß zeitlebens nie jemand seinen Namen auf einem Schuldschein, einem Wechsel gesehen hatte und er nur immer auf der Habenseite seiner Bank—selbstverständlich der solidesten, der Rothschildbank, der Kreditanstalt—gestanden, war sein einziger Lebensstolz" (WvG 23). What is more, Zweig associates his father's way of life, his desire to be free from debt, with a certain modesty and simplicity. Even as a millionaire, Moritz Zweig never indulged in ostentatious behavior nor did he want to partake in any public responsibility nor honor that might have been offered to him due to his prominence as industrial mogul of the Austro-Hungarian-Empire. The desire to avoid the spotlight—which by now we recognize as an essential trait of the Zweigian figure of commitment—is linked to a preference for privacy and anonymity. And Zweig goes on to acknowledge how conflicting these values are as regards both his own status as a famous writer/intellectual in an epoch when the freedom of the individual is systematically targeted and challenged:

Ich weiß, wie unzeitgemäß derlei Hemmungen sind in einer Welt, wo man nur frei bleiben kann durch List und Flucht, und wo, wie Vater Goethe weise sagte, 'Orden und Titel manchen Puff abhalten im Gedränge'. Aber es ist mein Vater in mir und sein heimlicher Stolz, der mich zurückzwingt, und ich darf ihm nicht Widerstand leisten; denn ihm danke ich, was ich vielleicht als meinen einzig sicheren Besitz empfinde: das Gefühl der inneren Freiheit. (WvG 25)

Thus, the character of Zweig's father acquires a symbolic dimension. While he is far from being a hero of *Geist*, Zweig, I argue, possibly influenced by Taine's determinism, is impelled to look back and find the roots of what he considers to be the 'essence' of every form of intellectuality and commitment. At the same time, this passage signals Zweig's awareness of the difficulty of defending freedom when one can only preserve it by engaging in a process of perpetual (self)evasion. We will come back to this kind of freedom (inner, intellectual) later, using some of our reflections from Chapter I on figures such as Rolland, Erasmus or Montaigne. Suffice it to say for now that, as the following pages will hopefully demonstrate, the safeguarding of the paternal legacy will influence, or even determine, Zweig's reactions and responses throughout his life. Freedom, as the most sacred value of the individual, constantly orientates Zweig's commitment.

In this sense, freedom is an essential ingredient of Zweig's Viennese 'utopia', even though, on a personal level, Zweig's first experience of 'true' freedom is to be found in his university years and, especially, during his semester in Berlin. As we have already mentioned when considering Zweig's reformulation of the pedagogy of history, the Austrian writer endured the school system at the turn of the century as a dehumanizing, authoritarian experience. The fact of having been taught dogmatic truths from 'above', and of having suffered the subsequent limitation of all creativity and experimentation, will define Zweig's disdain for anything that attempts to shackle the individual by curtailing his/her freedom either in 'spiritual' or material terms. The experience of a

disciplinary system that tries to squeeze the individual in preestablished (existential) molds will 'convert' Zweig to the cause of 'radical' freedom:

Ich persönlich danke diesem Druck eine schon früh manifestierte Leidenschaft, frei zu sein, wie sie in gleich vehementem Ausmaß die heutige Jugend kaum mehr kennt, und dazu einen Haß gegen alles Autoritäre, gegen alles 'von oben herab'-Sprechen, der mich mein ganzes Leben lang begleitet hat. Jahre und Jahre ist diese Abneigung gegen alles Apodiktische und Dogmatische bei mir bloß instinktiv gewesen, und ich hatte schon vergessen, woher sie stammte. (*WvG* 53)

It is, then, from the perspective of the need to leave school and family behind that Zweig's university years will provide him with his first taste of freedom: "Dann hatte die Universität mir gegeben, was ich einzig von ihr wollte: ein paar Jahre voller Freiheit für mein Leben und für die Bemühung in der Kunst: *universitas vitae*" (*WvG* 114). In the same vein, his Berlin semester is revealed as an excuse to leave his hometown behind for a while: "[V]on früh bis nachts war ich in Berlin mit immer neuen und immer anderen beisammen, begeistert, enttäuscht, sogar geprellt von ihnen. Ich glaube, ich habe in zehn Jahren nicht so viel geistiger Geselligkeit gefröhnt wie in diesem einen knappen Semester in Berlin, dem ersten der vollkommenen Freiheit" (*WvG* 136). The process of liberation will culminate with Zweig's Ph.D. and the completion of his studies from then on Zweig's life struggle would revolve around the preservation of that freedom: "Nun war ich äußerlich frei, und alle die Jahre bis auf den heutigen Tag haben nur dem—in unseren Zeiten immer härter werdenden—Kampf gegolten, innerlich ebenso frei zu bleiben" (*WvG* 139).

Having said that, I would like to briefly discuss some instances in Zweig's narrative where freedom acts as the core directive of both his private and public choices. Without going any further, while Zweig comments on Henri Barbusse's efforts to set up a union of intellectuals right after the war, he considers that what had spoiled their project is

Barbusse's experience of Russia, which had led him to believe that communism was the only possible means to bring about international fraternity. In doing so, Zweig decided to move away from the *Clarté* circle, afraid that its growing radicalism and politicization would eventually threaten the freedom of the artist and the intellectual: "Unmerklich suchte er aus 'Clarté' ein Instrument des Klassenkampfes zu machen, wir aber verweigerten uns einer Radikalisierung, die unsere Reihen notwendigerweise schwächen mußte. So fiel auch dies an sich bedeutende Projekt vorzeitig in sich zusammen. Wieder hatten wir im Kampf um die geistige Freiheit versagt aus zu großer Liebe zur eigenen Freiheit und Unabhängigkeit" (*WvG* 325). In other words, the prioritization of freedom takes Zweig to refrain from collective action—which Zweig considers a failure for the rights of the individual—and to retreat towards the sphere of the private. Freedom is one more reason for the Zweigian intellectual to stay out of politics. As a further proof, we could mention, in connection to Zweig's 'apoliticism' and the Barbusse episode, his negative assessment/distrust of Russia as a society where the intellectual was forced to be a party man (*WvG* 5148 and ff.), and assessment which eventually would drive him apart from his mentor Romain Rolland. Additionally, and as regards Zweig's life as a bestseller writer, he discusses success as a burden:

Aber ich bin ehrlich, wenn ich sage, daß ich mich des Erfolgs nur freute, solange er sich auf meine Bücher und meinen literarischen Namen bezog, daß er mir aber eher lästig wurde, wenn sich Neugier auf meine physische Person übertrug. Von frühester Jugend an war nichts in mir stärker gewesen als der instinktive Wunsch, frei und unabhängig zu bleiben. Und ich spürte, daß bei jedem Menschen von seiner persönlichen Freiheit viel des Besten durch photographische Publizität gehemmt und verunstaltet wird. (*WvG* 347)

In my opinion, this quotation, while pointing out Zweig's inherent shyness or timidity (i.e. his desire to stay out of the spotlight), also signals that his experience of the public

arena, of authorship, ended up being problematic; it was harder to run away from the world when one had a public voice and therefore a public responsibility. Additionally, this responsibility carries with it the impossibility of being 'true' to oneself, or rather the difficulty of sticking to one's values and opinions as they are constrained by the circumstances that surround the utterance of one's responses. Zweig considers that loss of freedom—and with it of human dignity—is the greatest tragedy of the twentieth century. When Zweig describes the Hitler's ascension, that historical phenomenon is explained through the German preference for order over liberty and justice: “[E]in ungeheures Verlangen nach Ordnung war in allen Kreisen des deutschen Volkes, dem Ordnung von je mehr galt als Freiheit und Recht. Und wer Ordnung versprach—selbst Goethe hat gesagt, daß Unordnung ihm unlieber wäre als selbst eine Ungerechtigkeit—, der hatte von Anbeginn Hunderttausende hinter sich” (*WvG* 385).

In this sense, it seems that Zweig detects in some of the—according to him—defining traits of German culture the seeds of populism and violence. When he evokes his university years, he observes what, looking back, might seem as the seeds of the malady in the prevalence of the German tradition of student associations (i.e. fraternities) and their 'brutish' code of conduct, which was based on a masculinity discourse that favored physical over intellectual prowess and promoted an 'irresponsible' heroism: “Auf uns dagegen wirkte dieses einfältige und brutale Treiben einzig abstoßend, und wenn wir einer dieser bebänderten Horden begegneten, wichen wir weise um die Ecke; denn uns, denen individuelle Freiheit das Höchste bedeutete, zeigte diese Lust an der Aggressivität und gleichzeitige Lust an der Hordenservilität zu offenbar das Schlimmste und Gefährlichste des deutschen Geistes” (*WvG* 111).

As I argued before, freedom not only conditioned Zweig's public stance, but also some of the resolutions he took in his private life. From this perspective, Zweig explains

his decision to leave Salzburg and his family on the need to preserve his personal liberty: “Am selben Abend begann ich meine wichtigsten Papiere zu packen, entschlossen, nun immer im Ausland zu leben, und diese Loslösung bedeutete mehr als eine von Haus und Land, denn meine Familie hing an diesem Haus als ihrer Heimat, sie liebte das Land. Mir aber war persönliche Freiheit die wichtigste Sache auf Erden” (WvG 414). In other words, he goes into exile hoping to preserve his freedom: “Ich wußte nicht, für wie lange Zeit ich in London wohnen würde. Bloß eines war mir wichtig: wieder zu meiner eigenen Arbeit zu gelangen, meine innere, meine äußere Freiheit zu verteidigen” (WvG 415-416). As Zweig tells us of Montaigne, sometimes one needs to travel, to move abroad to find oneself and recover the freedom that has been lost by committing oneself to a house, a city, a family (*Montaigne* 724). The responsibilities of everyday life also impose a burden on the freedom of the individual:

Um sich frei zu machen, reist Montaigne, und während der ganzen Reise gibt er ein Beispiel der Freiheit. Er reist, wenn man so sagen darf, seiner Nase nach. Er vermeidet auf der Reise alles, was an eine Verpflichtung erinnert, selbst eine Verpflichtung gegen sich selbst. [...] Er will sich, wenn man so sagen darf, reisen lassen statt zu reisen. [...] Nur sich bewegen. [...] Glaube ich etwas versäumt zu haben, so gehe ich den Weg zurück. Ungebundenheit wird ihm allmählich zu einer Leidenschaft. Sogar auf dem Weg zu wissen, wohin der Weg führt, gibt ihm manchmal eine leise Bedrückung. (*MONTAIGNE* 933)

In this context, travel/physical mobility becomes yet another manifestation of Zweig’s freedom that is closely related to a cosmopolitan existence: “Wir vermochten kosmopolitisch zu leben, die ganze Welt stand uns offen. Wir konnten reisen ohne Paß und Erlaubnisschein, wohin es uns beliebte, niemand examinierte uns auf Gesinnung, auf Herkunft, Rasse und Religion. Wir hatten tatsächlich—ich leugne es keineswegs—unermeßlich mehr individuelle Freiheit und haben sie nicht nur geliebt, sondern auch genutzt” (WvG 107). As the past tense of this quote points out, another aspect of the

demise of freedom in the interwar period has to do with an increasing control of mobility and the bureaucratization of travel, which reduces the individual to his/her passport and picture. Inevitably, when Zweig remembers his journeys beyond Europe before the First World War, he cannot help but compare his American experience with the reality of 1939: “Auch hatte ich durch dieses Wandern von Agentur zu Agentur, durch das Mich-Vorstellen in Geschäften Einblick in die göttliche Freiheit des Landes gewonnen. Niemand fragte mich nach meiner Nationalität, meiner Religion, meiner Herkunft, und ich war ja—phantastisch für unsere heutige Welt der Fingerabdrücke, Visen und Polizeinachweise—ohne Paß gereist” (*WvG* 208).

Equally, Zweig's decade of success (1924-1933) is marked by his incessant travels around the world, which are considered a way for Zweig to contribute to the intellectual union of Europe (*WvG* 349). As we observed in our discussion of Zweig's 'Europe' in its collective dimension, one of its valences consisted in the idea of 'Europe' as a community of travelers, as a space of continuous cultural exchange. In this sense, freedom becomes a precondition for the realization of 'Europe', which becomes a way to combat the 'border' as the expression of xenophobic sentiment:

Vor 1914 hatte die Erde allen Menschen gehört. [...] Es gab keine Permits, keine Visen, keine Belästigungen; dieselben Grenzen, die heute von Zollbeamten, Polizei, Gendarmerieposten dank des pathologischen Mißtrauens aller gegen alle in einen Drahtverhau verwandelt sind, bedeuteten nichts als symbolische Linien, die man ebenso sorglos überschritt wie den Meridian in Greenwich. Erst nach dem Kriege begann die Weltverstörung durch den Nationalismus, und als erstes sichtbares Phänomen zeitigte diese geistige Epidemie unseres Jahrhunderts die Xenophobie: den Fremdenhaß oder zu mindestens die Fremdenangst. (*WvG* 435-436)

The loss of freedom of movement goes hand in hand with the resurgence of nationalism and its isolationist practices, which often entail the demonization of the other.

The traveler that used to be welcome now is seen with distrust. Ultimately, to fight for freedom means to fight for human dignity: “Wenn ich zusammenrechne, [...] wieviele Durchsuchungen an Grenzen und Befragungen ich mitgemacht, dann empfinde ich erst, wieviel von der Menschenwürde verlorengegangen ist in diesem Jahrhundert, das wir als junge Menschen gläubig geträumt als eines der Freiheit, als die kommende Ära des Weltbürgertums” (*WvG* 437). This is something that can be observed in Zweig’s travel essays, which reflect the transformation of Europe after the First World War. For instance, in the already discussed 1937 essay “Das Haus der tausend Schicksale”, Zweig opens the text with a reflection of the nerve-shattering influence of the frontier on the exile and the émigré (“HTS” 3582). Equally, we discussed how Zweig uses the story of Boris in “Episode am Genfer See” to expose the absurdity of frontiers. In sum, our analysis of *Die Welt Gestern* points out the centrality of freedom in Zweig’s *Weltanschauung*. On the one hand, to preserve freedom becomes the priority of the intellectual, his/her ultimate duty, and orientates his/her responsibility and commitment. On the other hand, there is no ‘Europe’ without freedom, as Zweig’s utopia is based on the idea of cultural exchange and physical mobility. Likewise, the ideal of the citizen of the world cannot be realized in a world where borders and frontiers have become increasingly harder to cross.

Inner Freedom—Rolland, Nietzsche, Montaigne

Continuing our survey of freedom in Stefan’s Zweig’s ethical program, I would like to further discuss a few examples of how said ethical category permeates his work. We have already observed in Zweig’s memoirs how freedom lies at the core of the ‘European spirit’, an idea that is emphasized in *Castellio*. Dogma and single-truth systems are contrary to the idea of ‘Europe’ in that they do not allow diversity to flourish. There is no progress nor creativity without freedom: “[V]erkümmert wäre in theologischer Rabulistik der europäische Geist, statt sich in schöpferischem Wandel zu entfalten. Denn

unfruchtbar und unschöpferisch bleibt die Welt, wenn nicht getränkt und gefördert durch Freiheit und Freude, und immer erfrosten das Leben in jedem starren System" (*Castellio* 2741-2752). Likewise, in the 1941 essay "In dieser dunklen Stunde", Zweig argues that freedom is something inherent to humanity, to the point that depriving the individual of freedom brings about a process of dehumanization: "So mußte auch erst diese dunkle Stunde über uns kommen, [...] damit wir erkannten, daß die Freiheit von unserer Seele so unlösbar ist wie der Atem von unserem Leibe. [...] [N]ie, meine Freunde, nie und niemals hat andererseits die Menschheit so klar erkannt, wie unentbehrlich Freiheit für die Seele des Menschen ist" ("IDS" 3311). In this sense, we noted at the end in Chapter I how the life and example of Michel de Montaigne offered solace to a soul deprived of freedom like Zweig's, in that the French philosopher had also strived to remain free in a time of collective madness (*MONTAIGNE* 8).

The fight for 'spiritual'/inner freedom is the central element of many of Zweig's figures of commitment—from Rolland to Montaigne—and as we have already contended, it is both the precondition of their intellectuality and the goal of their commitment. It is essential therefore that, as intellectuals, Rolland, Erasmus, Castellio and Montaigne do not compromise their inner freedom, which they run the risk of doing if they try to interfere in the world of politics—as Zweig warns in texts like "The Mission of the Intellectual" or "Folks don't Trust Intellectuals". For instance, for Rolland to become the moral authority and conscience of 'Europe', it is indispensable that he keeps his inner freedom intact when the First World War breaks out. In this light, we can observe a clear connection between morality, conscience and freedom in Zweig's discussion of Rolland in *Die Welt von Gestern* (222), which is expanded in *Rolland*. Not only does Zweig see in many of Rolland's characters the embodiment of freedom, but also in Rolland himself an example of taking one's commitment to inner freedom to the last consequences, when

the individual is forced to choose between humanity and fatherland: “Noch ist er sich in diesen ersten Tagen der Qual und des Entsetzens nicht klar, ob und bei welchem Anlaß ihm das Wort notwendig sein wird: aber er weiß schon, daß er es nur in einem Sinne gebrauchen wird, im Sinne der geistigen Freiheit und übernationalen Gerechtigkeit” (ROLLAND 2599). What is more, Zweig justifies Rolland’s move to Switzerland for the sake of effectively preserving his independence: “Gerechtigkeit aber braucht selber Freiheit des Blickes. Nur hier, in neutralem Land konnte der Historiker der Zeit alle Stimmen hören, alle Meinungen empfangen—nur hier war Ausblick über den Pulverdampf, den Qualm der Lüge, die Giftgase des Hasses: hier war Freiheit des Urteils und Freiheit der Aussprache” (ROLLAND 2599).

Last but not least, many years later but in a similar context, on the occasion of the French writer’s 70th birthday, Zweig will insist on the fact that nobody embodies better the idea of ‘inner freedom’ than Romain Rolland at a time when it has been so (mis)used that it has become banal and shameful: “Es ist so weit gekommen, daß wir uns fast schämen, dieses Wort Freiheit auszusprechen, so mißbraucht ist es zur Phrase, so abgegriffen von Politikern, so beschmutzt von den Geschäftemachern, so sehr haben die Gewalttäter seinen Sinn umgelogen in einen Widersinn” (“RR70” 4058). Even in this context of devaluation, Zweig associates the notions of freedom and independence with his mentor, who has struggled with passion to live by these ideals, to the point that “[n]ie habe ich Romain Rolland in Abhängigkeit gesehen von einer Partei, von einer Parole, von einem System, und nicht einmal von seinem eigenen Vaterland, nie einer Versuchung zu Kompromissen erliegen. Und wie viele wollten ihn an sich binden, dort wollte man ihn ehren, dort ihn mit Würden verlocken” (“RR70” 4058). Zweig concludes through the example of Rolland that there cannot be morality in art without freedom.

In the same vein, liberty plays a key role in the construction of the portraits of another two 'fanatics' of freedom: Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel de Montaigne. In my opinion, what is most interesting about these two figures is that they take their commitment to freedom to the extreme: not only does freedom permeate their work, but also every choice in their lives. In the case of Nietzsche, whom we have already briefly discussed as a cosmopolitan and a 'European', Zweig relates in his biography of the German philosopher how the latter, who had been ill for most of his life, ends up embracing his suffering as a liberating force: "Denn aus dieser höheren Schau, die den Blick weghebt vom eigenen Leiden und das eigene Leben nur als einen Weg zu sich selber mißt, entdeckt er (mit jener übertreiblichen Freude an der Magie des Extrems), daß er keiner Macht der Erde so sehr verbunden und verschuldet ist als seiner Krankheit, daß er gerade dem grimmigsten Folterknecht sein Höchstes dankt: die Freiheit. Die Freiheit der äußern Existenz, die Freiheit des Geistes" ("NIETZSCHE" 3003). In what seems to be a complete inversion of the terms of the equation, suffering is what allows Nietzsche to live his life at full tilt, without any ties nor restrictions imposed upon his creativity:

Aus allen Rinden, die ihn umwachsen wollten, aus allen Bindungen, die ihn zu umschließen begannen, hat sein Leiden ihn (schmerzhaft, aber hilfreich) herausgeschält. 'Die Krankheit löst mich gleichsam aus sich selbst heraus', bekennt er selbst—sie war ihm Geburtshelfer des innern Menschen, Wehemutter und Wehetäter zugleich. Ihr dankt er, daß das Leben für ihn statt einer Gewohnheit eine Erneuerung wurde, eine Entdeckung: 'Ich entdeckte das Leben gleichsam neu, mich selber eingerechnet'. ("NIETZSCHE" 3008-3014)

Had Nietzsche been given the gift of a quiet, healthy, peaceful existence, his creativity would have diminished. While other philosophers—Kant, Fichte, Hegel—had hoped to find truth and, once apprehended, build around it an orderly system that could be fixed and passed on to posterity, Nietzsche's philosophical insights were animated by

the highly destructive forces of the 'daemonic':²⁷¹ "Darum richtet sich Nietzsche niemals haushälterisch ein im Sinne des Sparens und Bewahrens und baut kein geistiges Haus: er will—oder er muß vielmehr aus dem nomadischen Zwang seiner Natur—der ewig Besitzlose bleiben, der mit der Waffe einsam schweifende Nimrod in allen Wäldern des Geistes, der nicht Dach hat und Weib und Kind und Gesind" ("NIETZSCHE" 3083). Nietzsche's radical conception of freedom affects his relationship with truth. While other thinkers have, in a way, 'married' their truths, Nietzsche does not want anything that binds him in his incessant pursuit of knowledge, which is, in turn, what keeps him going. Nietzsche's commitment is to truth, even when it hurts: "Bei ihnen, den gerechten Wägern und Wächtern, [...] darf es keine Konzilianz geben, keine Gutmütigkeit, keine Ängstlichkeit, kein Mitleid, keine der Schwächen (oder Tugenden) des bürgerlichen, des mittleren Menschen. Ihnen, den Krieger, den Eroberern des Geistes, ist es nicht erlaubt, auf ihren verwegenen Patrouillengängen irgendeine Wahrheit, die sie ertappen, gutmütig entwischen zu lassen" ("NIETZSCHE" 3230).

The constant urge towards liberty is what makes Nietzsche a different thinker, acquiring prophetic qualities (*Nietzsche* 3451). His obsession with continuously freeing himself from possessions, relationships, customs, places, etc. allows him to access other dimensions of knowledge and experience—among others, 'Europe' as an expression of his supranational stance: "Nietzsche [ist] endgültig expatriert und bei sich selbst angelangt, 'Prinz Vogelfrei', selig heimatlos, ohne Heim und Habe, für alle Zeit losgelöst von jeder 'Vaterländerei', von jeder 'patriotischen Einklemmung'" ("NIETZSCHE" 3485). In brief, from Zweig's perspective, Nietzsche becomes the 'teacher of freedom', he who

²⁷¹ In the introduction to *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon*, Zweig defines 'daemonic' thus: "Dämonisch nenne ich die ursprünglich und wesentlich jedem Menschen eingeborene Unruhe, die ihn aus sich selbst heraus, über sich selbst hinaus ins Unendliche, ins Elementarische treibt, gleichsam als hätte die Natur von ihrem einstigen Chaos ein unveräußerliches unruhiges Teil in jeder einzelnen Seele zurückgelassen, das mit Spannung und Leidenschaft zurück will in das übermenschliche, übersinnliche Element" (*KMD* 37).

is able to 'spot' the first cracks in the 'European' Tower of Babel and strives to liberate 'Europe' from the national malady before it is too late. And yet, that same freedom that allows him to reach such heights in the realm of knowledge ends up isolating him, constructing a wall around him that impedes all communication with his peers. In other words, 'radical' freedom engenders individualism, a message that cannot be successfully transmitted *en masse*. As a consequence, the voice of the prophet goes once more (see *Erasmus*) unheard: "Denn die Unabhängigkeit existiert immer nur im Individuum, in der Einzahl, sie läßt sich nicht multiplizieren mit den Massen, sie wächst nicht aus Büchern und Bildung: 'es gibt keine heroischen Zeitalter, es gibt nur heroische Menschen'. Immer ist es der einzelne, der sie mitten in die Welt und immer nur für sich allein errichtet" ("NIETZSCHE" 3862). Nietzsche's freedom, which is the value that ultimately gives meaning to his life and work, cannot be systematized, encapsulated in a doctrine:

Nietzsches großartige Unabhängigkeit schenkt darum keine Lehre [...], sondern eine Atmosphäre, die unendlich klare, überhelle, von Leidenschaft durchströmte Atmosphäre einer dämonischen Natur, die sich in Gewitter und Zerstörung erlöst. Tritt man in seine Bücher, so fühlt man Ozon, elementarische, von aller Dumpfheit, Vernebelung und Schwüle entschwängerte Luft: man sieht frei in dieser heroischen Landschaft bis in alle Himmel hinauf und atmet eine einzig durchsichtige, messerscharfe Luft, eine Luft für starke Herzen und freie Geister. Immer ist Freiheit Nietzsches letzter Sinn. ("NIETZSCHE" 3868)

After Nietzsche's biography, I propose to turn briefly to *Montaigne* to observe how Zweig makes of his life and work another 'defense of freedom'. In fact, we have already established in Chapter I how Montaigne's choices entail, for most of his life, a progressive renunciation of all responsibility. First, he will retreat into his tower, turning his back on his former public duties; second, he will go abroad to avoid escape his own family and the management of his state. In Zweig's narrative, all Montaigne ever cared for was the preservation of his inner freedom. And, by doing so, like Nietzsche, he built a position of

resistance against the insanity of the times, which turned him into an example for Zweig and his contemporaries. In brief, we could argue that freedom is the single issue that marks Montaigne's life and defines his commitment:

Um dieser Freiheit willen hat er sich beobachtet, überwacht, geprüft und getadelt in jeder Bewegung und in jedem Gefühl. Und dies sein Suchen und Mühen um die seelische Rettung, um die Rettung der Freiheit in einer Zeit der allgemeinen Servilität an Ideologien und Parteien macht ihn uns heute brüderlich wie jeden andern; wenn wir ihn als Künstler lieben und vor allem ehren, so geschieht es darum, weil er wie keiner der höchsten Kunst des Lebens sich hingeeben: 'le plus grand art: rester soi-même'. (*MONTAIGNE* 114)

It is interesting to note that, in another point of convergence with Nietzsche's trajectory, Montaigne does not want to impose his freedom on others. His commitment is, as we have already mentioned, first and foremost directed to himself: "Er hätte gelächelt über den Gedanken, etwas so Persönliches wie innere Freiheit auf andere Menschen oder gar Massen übertragen zu wollen, und die professionellen Weltverbesserer, die Theoretiker und Überzeugungsverschleißer hat er aus dem innersten Grunde seiner Seele gehaßt" (*MONTAIGNE* 135). In a way, this reflection provides further proof of the individualist impulse that permeates Zweig's 'European' ethics. One cannot preach freedom on a collective level: it is a process of personal awakening and conviction (see "OWF"). Accordingly, it is transmitted by dint of personal example. The only way to spread freedom on earth is to free oneself: "Niemand aber haben wir dankbarer zu sein als jenen, die in einer unmenschlichen Zeit wie der unseren das Menschliche in uns bestärken, die uns mahnen, das Einzige und Unverlierbare, das wir besitzen, unser innerstes Ich, nicht preiszugeben an alle die äußeren zeitlichen, staatlichen, politischen Zwänge und Pflichten. Denn nur jener, der selbst frei bleibt gegen alles und alle, mehrt und erhält die Freiheit auf Erden" (*MONTAIGNE* 166). In other words, freedom cannot

become another dogma, can never restrict the freedom of another (*MONTAIGNE* 912; see “LUX”).

Reflecting on the radicalism of Montaigne’s freedom, Zweig establishes nonetheless some limits: “Um frei zu sein, darf man nicht verschuldet und nicht verstrickt sein, und wir sind verstrickt an den Staat, an die Gemeinschaft, an die Familie; der Sprache, die wir sprechen, sind die Gedanken untertan; der isolierte Mensch, der völlig freie, ist ein Phantom. Es ist unmöglich, im Vakuum zu leben” (*MONTAIGNE* 781). Following on this, Zweig clarifies that the individualism is inherent to Montaigne’s freedom: “Wir brauchen uns nicht von der Welt zu entfernen, nicht in eine Zelle zurückzuziehen. Aber wir haben einen Unterschied zu machen: ‘Nous pouvons aimer ceci ou cela, mais ne pas nous ‘unir en mariage’” (*MONTAIGNE* 781). Given that Montaigne, in the manner of Nietzsche, does not provide us with a set of instructions, but just an example, Zweig elaborates a list of Montaigne’s ‘freedoms’, presented as a sort a moral decalogue. One should be free of vanity or pride; of presumption; fear and hope, belief and superstition, of conviction and parties; of customs; of avarice; of family and familiar surroundings; of fanaticism and possessiveness; before Fate and in the face of death (*MONTAIGNE* 792-801). As it can be observed, the concept of freedom is so pervasive in Montaigne’s life narrative that it allows us to draw some links with other ethical categories in Zweig’s *Weltanschauung*. For instance, Montaigne’s freedom promotes diversity and tolerance, a way to combat “die ‘frénésie’ [Tobsucht] der geistigen Diktatoren, die ihre ‘nouveauautés’ [Neuigkeiten] frech und eitel als die einzige und unumstößliche Wahrheit der Welt aufprägen wollen und denen das Blut von Hunderttausenden Menschen gleichgültig ist, wenn sie nur recht behalten” (*MONTAIGNE* 811). In sum, *Montaigne* opens a door to Zweig’s radical conception of freedom will be embodied in his figures of commitment’s and will become his own *leitmotif*. To remain free is a challenge, an ethical imperative, a goal and a duty:

“Montaigne hat das schwerste Ding auf Erden versucht: sich selbst zu leben, frei zu sein und immer freier zu werden” (*MONTAIGNE* 1020).

However, as we have hinted at several times throughout this dissertation, the path of freedom as a formula to combat violence and ‘collective’ folly had also its detractors. We already noted how Erasmus’ safeguarding of his inner freedom prevented him from participating in certain historical events and political processes where his mediation skills could have helped produce a more peaceful outcome. Likewise, Zweig points out to Pascal’s criticism that Montaigne lived literally disconnected from reality: “Das hat eine absolute Verneinung des Lebens zu bedeuten. Den Menschen, der sich loslöst, der im Leeren lebt, alles bezweifelt. So hat ihn auch Pascal geschildert, als ‘l’homme’, der sich ‘dénoue partout’, von allem loslöst und an nichts bindet” (*MONTAIGNE* 801). In this sense, although Zweig is able to counterargue said criticism by pointing out that the French philosopher’s movement towards the self is ultimately a path to better know—and apprehend—reality, the truth is that many, Zweig himself, doubted that this form of commitment could be of any use when the times demanded action and unambiguous responses.

In this direction, David Turner points out the limitations of a commitment that is based on freedom: “Above all, where personal freedom is the highest in a hierarchy of values, ideals of a public nature, which almost inevitably entail some compromise or curtailment of that freedom, are destined to suffer. Or rather, they are likely to remain ideals, to be cherished, but seldom realized” (“The Humane Ideal” 163). There seems to be an unsurmountable barrier between individual commitment and collective action, to the point that we might wonder if it is even possible to discuss ‘freedom’ as an element of Zweig’s *engagement*; or if, instead, we should include it as part of his *dégagement*, at least in the last years of his life, where the retreat into the self—and then his suicide—

might be read as the renunciation of all possibility to bring about any change in the public sphere. In this light, Zweig's radical freedom might be thought of—in cases like those of Montaigne, Nietzsche, Zweig himself or Ferdinand from *Der Zwang*—as the renunciation of any kind of responsibility. While it is true that Zweig argues that collective changes can only be properly carried out through processes of 'individual awakening', it is not so clear how to complete, eventually, the transfer from the private to the public sphere.

Conclusion—Other Zweigian Freedoms—Freedom and Suicide

If we were to summarize the meaning of freedom as an imperative of Zweig's ethical program, we would argue that the main types of freedom that vertebrate Zweig's thought are inner/'spiritual' freedom—of speech, of faith, of opinion—and freedom of movement. In addition to that, we have presented two individual cases in which freedom is taken to the extreme and becomes the core directive of the work and life of both Michel de Montaigne and Friedrich Nietzsche, two case studies where freedom is closely linked to individualism. However, we must point out that there are other angles from which to assess the impact of freedom on Zweig's work. For instance, some of Zweig's novellas engage in the exploration of sexual freedom or, alternatively, of the constraints imposed upon fin-de-siècle men and women. *Angst* (1913), *Phantastische Nacht* (1922) or *Vierundzwanzig Stunden aus dem Leben eine Frau* (1927) can be read to a certain extent as tales of sexual liberation. Additionally, another kind of enfranchisement is the one we find in the unfinished novel *Rausch der Verwandlung*²⁷². The dull, austere life of the post office girl Christine Hoflehner in the one-horse town of Klein-Reifling is marked not only by the economic poverty of post-war Austria, but also by a sense of social stagnation. The atmosphere of the post office recreated in the first pages of the novel serves to mark

²⁷² First published in 1982.

precisely the bureaucratized nature of an environment that is averse to change, mirroring the existential condition of Christine. Thus, we read that “[i]nnerhalb dieses, durch den Amtsdler geheiligten Dienstraums ereignet sich niemals sichtbare Veränderung” (RAUSCH 39), and also that:

So sitzt die Postassistentin in einer Art wachen, wohligen Lähmung inmitten ihrer kleinen schlafenden Welt. Eigentlich hatte sie eine Handarbeit machen wollen, man sieht es an der vorbereiteten Nadel und Schere, aber die Stickerei ist zerknüllt auf die Erde gefallen, ohne daß sie Wille oder Kraft hätte, sie wieder aufzuheben. Weich und fast atemlos lehnt sie im Sessel und läßt sich, geschlossenen Auges, überrieseln von dem wunderbar seltenen Gefühl berechtigten Müßigganges. (RAUSCH 82).

Living in such suffocating atmosphere, Christine has little prospects of happiness. She goes straight from work to home to take care of her ailing mother. She feels like she has lost her best years. Even though she is in her mid-twenties, she has already given up all her hopes and dreams. Overall, the novel offers a critique of the dire living conditions of post-war Austria. In this sense, this novel could be added to the list of Zweig's anti-war fictional texts discussed in the previous section. Additionally, I contend that Christine's story allows Zweig to formulate a social critique and, while doing so, approach another dimension of freedom. Christine's (temporal) meteoric ascension points to the restrictions imposed on the individual by socioeconomic factors. Her radical transformation during her stay in a hotel resort—which acts as a Foucauldian heterotopia (“Des espaces autres”)—with her aunt and her aunt's wealthy American husband provides the reader with insight on how Christine's context conditions the personality and *Weltanschauung*. After spending just one night at the hotel, Christine—who registers under the more aristocratic-sounding name of Fräulein von Boolean—wonders how it is possible that the same landscape can change overnight:

Ist das wirklich noch dieselbe Straße wie gestern oder sieht bloß die geöffnete und geweitete Seele heller und freudiger als die beengte? Jedenfalls: ganz neu erscheint Christine der Weg, den sie schon einmal, aber gleichsam noch mit verhängten Augen gegangen, farbiger, festlicher der Ausblick, als ob die Berge noch gewachsen, die Matten malachitfarbener oder satter, die Luft kristallischer und reiner und alle Menschen schöner geworden seien, helläugiger, freundlicher, zutraulicher. (RAUSCH 1242)

As I have tried to demonstrate in my analysis, Zweig equates freedom with mobility, and the lack of with stagnation. Christine's transformation is a sort of experiment on the psychological and physical changes undergone by the subject when it is freed from his/her social and economic constraints: "Ruhig zu sitzen, etwas gemächlich zu tun, wird ihr mit einmal schwer, immer muß sie ausfahren und sich tummeln, wie ein Windstoß fährt sie durch die Zimmer, immer beschäftigt, immer von Neugier gejagt" (RAUSCH 1321).

Last but not least, Zweig's work offers several instances of the liberating power of suicide. If we recall Zweig's list of Montaigne's freedoms, the last item on said list is 'freedom in the face of death': "Das Leben hängt vom Willen anderer ab, der Tod von unserem Willen: 'La plus volontaire mort c'est la plus belle'²⁷³ (MONTAIGNE 58). To willingly choose when to depart from this world is imbued with a certain sense of honor. For instance, in *Ungeduld des Herzens*, Hofmiller contemplates suicide as a liberation from an overwhelming feeling of (social) shame: "Als entlarvter Lügner konnte ich das Portepée nicht länger tragen, aber auch zu den andern, zu den Verratenen, den Verleumdeten konnte ich nicht mehr zurück; selbst für Balinkay war ich erledigt. Diese drei Minuten Feigheit hatten mein Leben vernichtet: es gab für mich keine andere Wahl

²⁷³ This quote is from the Fischer edition of *Montaigne* edited by Richard Friedenthal in the collection of essays *Europäisches Erbe* (1960). In the Fischer/Knut Beck edition of 1985 this fragment, which belongs to the paragraph starting with "Und die Letzte Freiheit: vom Tode", is not included. See the following note: "Im Originaltyposkript sind die Abstände zwischen den einzelnen Stufen wesentlich größer; diese Zwischenräume sind, ebenso wie die Ränder und Rückseiten nahezu des gesamten Typoskripts, mit handschriftlichen Zitaten und Notaten versehen; bei dieser Edition blieben sie wie auch die übrigen unberücksichtigt. (MONTAIGNE 1280).

als den Revolver" (*UNGEDULD* 5499). Following this direction, we should consider the role of freedom in Zweig's own suicide, which has been interpreted as a paradox in the context of Zweig's cosmopolitan and 'nomadic' nature. As Donald Prater reflects: "That such a man [a restless traveler, whose work profits from it] should succumb to despair and take his own life when exile became a necessity and movement no longer his free choice was a paradox to his contemporaries, and even today seems at first hard to explain" ("SZ: the Writer's Experience" 311). In fact, Prater himself provided one possible solution to said paradox; the key to the apparently irresolvable equation is freedom itself. As this section has tried to demonstrate, freedom is not only a goal but also a precondition and a metacategory. Without it, there is no possibility of living a 'cosmopolitan' existence. Freedom vertebrates Zweig's life and thought, to the point that when the subject no longer feels free, exile—which had been originally an escape route from other constraints—becomes a prison, threatening the existence of the 'European' and the 'citizen of the world'. In this context, suicide can be interpreted as Zweig's last act of freedom.

2.2.3.4. Between the Universal and the Particular: Stefan Zweig's Beyond-the-National Commitment

The last item in Zweig's 'European' ethical program is formulated 'against'; against what Zweig describes as the most dangerous illness of his time: nationalism (see *WvG* 12). In this sense, we have established on several occasions so far how Zweig's 'European' commitment aims to transcend the nation as paradigm and community of belonging. To be more precise, Zweig's battle is against what we could call a 'variation' of nationalism that goes hand in hand with a rhetoric of violence and war. As Zweig reflects in "Geschichtsschreibung von Morgen" and "Die moralische Entgiftung Europas", nationalism is a venom, a toxin that has poisoned the European citizen, installing in

his/her mind a deep-seated culture of isolation and xenophobia. Nationalism is the evil force that has destroyed the 'European Tower of Babel', it is the seed of the populist, totalitarian and dictatorial movements that have wrecked the 'spiritual' union of 'Europe'. As Zweig's nemesis, nationalism triggers and conditions the response of the Zweigian figures of commitment, from Verhaeren to Montaigne. In this sense, we have discussed how in *Verhaeren* the Belgian poet's significance is framed beyond the nation. At that point, at the turn of the century, when, according to Zweig in "Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historische Entwicklung", the victory of the forces of union seems to be closer than ever, nationalism does not appear to be such a threat as after the First World War. In the context of *Verhaeren*, nationalism is on the verge of extinction and 'Europe' looms of the horizon as the inevitable future. From then onwards, however, the tide turns, and Zweig will reflect on, and argue for, the need to find a common space of coexistence as a long-term pacifist solution that is needed to challenge the national paradigm.

Bearing this in mind, we might be tempted to ask why we should include Zweig's beyond-the-national stance as a category is his ethical program. While it is true, as it has been amply demonstrated so far, that Zweig's commitment against the nation informs a great deal of both his fiction and non-fiction works (i.e. it becomes a hermeneutical orientation and impulse), it might be simply considered a matter of range and scope, of how large our spaces of belonging are. In this light, I would like to clarify that, by including Zweig's post-nationalism as an ethical pillar of his *Weltanschauung*, I am trying to follow two lines of inquiry. On the one hand: What kind of supranational community is Zweig's 'Europe'? On the other: To what extent is Zweig's post-nationalism a formula to negotiate difference and alterity? and, most importantly: What is the meaning of and what are consequences of going 'beyond'/leaving 'behind' the nation?

“Jene Erzpest, den Nationalismus”

Taking all this into account, let us start by considering some examples of how Zweig turns nationalism into his archenemy. In this sense, we have already discussed how one of the greatest tragedies of the century is, in the eyes of Zweig, the reduction of Vienna—a city that, animated by its musical spirit, embodied the supranational ideal—to a mere provincial city. The Viennese potential to harmonize and synthesize differences, which is at the core of its later transformation into a utopia, is destroyed by the imperialistic drive of German (Hitler’s) nationalism (*WvG* 40).²⁷⁴ In the same vein, Zweig criticizes those friends who—until then proud citizens of the world, or simply individualists—became the most fervent patriots overnight at the onset of the First World War (*WvG* 253-255). In Zweig’s attempts to understand the war, nationalism plays a far more important role than any other social or political factor, in that it is equated to an eclosion of collective madness and naiveté:

Die Priester predigten von den Altären, die Sozialdemokraten, die einen Monat vorher den Militarismus als das größte Verbrechen gebrandmarkt, lärmten womöglich noch mehr als die andern, um nicht nach Kaiser Wilhelms Wort als ‘vaterlandslose Gesellen’ zu gelten. Es war der Krieg einer ahnungslosen Generation, und gerade die unverbrauchte Gläubigkeit der Völker an die einseitige Gerechtigkeit ihrer Sache wurde die größte Gefahr. (*WvG* 255)

Likewise, the Ferdinand-like (see “Der Zwang”) experience of watching human suffering during his field visit to Galitzia—compared to the ignorance and carefree attitude of his Viennese fellow citizens when he gets back home—opens Zweig’s eyes to the ideological apparatus that fuels and sustains the animosity between the nations (*WvG* 272). Following the same line of discussion, in *Castellio* and *Erasmus* we find the historic

²⁷⁴ The same idea is articulated in the prologue to Zweig’s memoirs: “Ich bin aufgewachsen in Wien, der zweitausendjährigen übernationalen Metropole, und habe sie wie ein Verbrecher verlassen müssen, ehe sie degradiert wurde zu einer deutschen Provinzstadt” (*WvG* 55).

roots of this evil force, historic analogies that should serve as a warning that (national) isolation (i.e. the lack of will towards common understanding) is the breeding ground for conflict: “[S]chon in jener Krise spiegelt sich der nationalistische Eigendünkel der europäischen Staaten im Verkleinerungsglas des Kantongeistes prophetisch voraus. In kleinen Zänkereien, in theologischen Haarspaltereien und Traktaten vergeuden Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Bucer und Karlstadt, sie alle, die gemeinsam den Riesenbau der Ecclesia Universalis unterhöhlten” (*CASTELLIO* 222). Likewise, in *Erasmus* Zweig insists on the duty of the intellectual to, in times of war, strengthen the bonds between countries rather than fostering their hostilities (*ERASMUS* 908), and in *Nietzsche* we read that “zornig bricht die Verkündigung einer Katastrophe aus seinem Mund, wie er die krampfartigen Versuche sieht, ‘die Kleinstaaterei Europas zu verewigen, eine Moral zu verteidigen, die nur auf Interessen und Geschäft beruht’” (“NIETZSCHE” 3843). Following the same direction, we could mention as another instance of nationalism as Europe’s sworn enemy the essay “Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historische Entwicklung”, where Zweig situates and contextualizes his ‘European’ commitment in the historic struggle between nationalism and supranationalism; or the biography of *Magellan*, which Zweig uses as an ‘excuse’ to articulate his criticism of the national mentality. For instance, he considers that one of the main obstacles the Portuguese navigator had to face was the different national allegiances of his crew, which became a hindrance to their common enterprise. In this light, Zweig claims that “[n]un ist Nationalismus erfahrungsgemäß eine Saite, welche auch die plumpste Hand ohne viel Mühe ins Schwingen bringen kann” (*MAGELLAN* 1306). The patriot resembles a religious zealot, he cannot wait to raise his flag and show his allegiance. Zweig uses irony to ridicule the patriotic feeling:

Im ersten Eifer merken die so heftig angesprochenen Lungerer gar nicht, daß der Erzpatriot, der sich derart emphatisch über die Verletzung der nationalen Ehre entrüstet, gar kein Spanier ist, sondern daß hier der Konsul des portugiesischen

Königs, der Señor Sebastian Alvarez die Rolle des *agent provocateur* mimt. Aber auf jeden Fall schreien sie kräftig mit, und kaum hören sie Tumult und Geschrei, so laufen von allen Seiten andere Neugierige zu. Schließlich genügt, daß einer vorschlägt, man solle nicht lange fragen, sondern einfach die fremde Flagge herunterreißen, und schon stürmt die ganze Rotte auf das Schiff. (MAGELLAN 1316)

Examples like these recur throughout Zweig's work. And the point is always the same: the nationalist—and especially the patriotic—mentality aims to set people apart. It is a source of corruption for those who strive to build a common framework of experience and belonging, be it 'Europe', the 'world', or even the 'universe'. The final words of Zweig's 1936 short autobiography unambiguously orientate Zweig's responsibility: "From the very beginning, I have always looked toward the universal and thought in terms above mere nationalism" ("Autobiography 1936").

Zweig's Post-National Variations

Once Zweig's antinationalist stand has been established, what kind of community does Zweig project to counteract the poisonous and isolating discourse of nationalism? Several options have emerged so far. In a way, humanism and 'Europe' are representative of Zweig's efforts to transcend nationality and the local. In the same vein, cosmopolitanism is a keyword in Zweig's post-national *Weltanschauung*. We have observed in our analysis of the ontological dimension of Zweig's 'Europe' that both the identity paradigms of the 'European' and the 'citizen of the world' end up becoming forms of resistance in a context where nationalism prevails. Zweig's post-nationalism comes under a myriad of forms. For example, in Zweig's memoirs, we observe that cosmopolitanism is an integral part not only of his upbringing in fin-de-siècle Vienna but also of his family's culture. Whereas Zweig's father is responsible for instilling in his son a sense of inner freedom, his mother, Ida, would pass on to him her and her family's cosmopolitan way of life:

“Meine Mutter, die mit ihrem Mädchennamen Brettauer hieß, war von einer anderen, einer internationaleren Herkunft. Sie war in Ancona, im südlichen Italien geboren und Italienisch ebenso ihre Kindheitssprache wie Deutsch. [...] Aber die Familie meiner Mutter war keineswegs italienisch, sondern bewußt international” (WvG 25). Zweig grew up in a multilingual context where it was easier to develop a cosmopolitan *Weltanschauung*, a beyond-the-national ‘attitude’. On top of this, as we discussed in our exploration of the Viennese ‘utopia’, the city was imbued with a cosmopolitan atmosphere (WvG 40), with spaces, such as the coffee house, whose markedly cosmopolitan character contributed to the international education of its citizens: “[N]ichts hat vielleicht so viel zur intellektuellen Beweglichkeit und internationalen Orientierung des Österreichers beigetragen, als daß er im Kaffeehaus sich über alle Vorgänge der Welt so umfassend orientieren und sie zugleich im freundschaftlichen Kreise diskutieren konnte” (WvG 56).

In the same vein, Zweig’s post-nationalism is also discussed in his memoirs through the idea of the ‘supranational’. If Zweig’s mother becomes a symbol of cosmopolitanism, Switzerland comes to embody the supranational ideal. As Berlin comes to signify in the symbolic map of Zweig’s *Weltanschauung* the idea—and experience—of freedom, the role of the Helvetic country during the war—as a place of refuge for the pacifist and the ‘European’—will turn it into the ‘heart of Europe’. Although Zweig had visited the country on other occasions, “[n]ie aber hatte ich den Sinn seines Daseins so sehr empfunden: die schweizerische Idee des Beisammenseins der Nationen im selben Raume ohne Feindlichkeit, diese weiseste Maxime, durch wechselseitige Achtung und eine ehrlich durchlebte Demokratie sprachliche und volkliche Unterschiede zur Brüderlichkeit zu erheben—welch ein Beispiel dies für unser ganzes verwirrtes Europa!” (WvG 283). Switzerland symbolizes a key aspect of Zweig’s post-national philosophy, a symbol to

which we will come back later: the country acts as a model of peaceful coexistence and negotiation of difference. In Switzerland we visualize the aspiration of Zweig's 'Europe' to become a second home (*Heimat*) for all individuals—regardless of their nationality, race or social class; it reminds us of the Viennese Arcadia in that “hier war man nicht fremd; ein freier, unabhängiger Mensch fühlte sich in dieser tragischen Weltstunde hier mehr zuhause als in seinem eigenen Vaterland” (*WvG* 283).

Last but not least, we must mention two figures from Zweig's memoirs whose work and projects are interpreted in the light of Zweig's drive to go beyond the nation. On the one hand, it is precisely during his stay in Switzerland that Zweig meets James Joyce at the Café Odeon and is fascinated by the latter's project of creating a language beyond tradition and particularism, a language that would serve all languages: “Er schreibe zwar in englischer Sprache, aber er denke nicht englisch und wolle nicht englisch denken—‘ich möchte’, sagte er mir damals, ‘eine Sprache, die über den Sprachen steht, eine Sprache, der sie alle dienen. In Englisch kann ich mich nicht ganz ausdrücken, ohne mich damit in eine Tradition einzuschließen’” (*WvG* 297). On the other hand, Zweig briefly discusses Woodrow Wilson's plan (“The Fourteen Points”) and the failure to implement in Europe a supranational organization that would help peacefully manage the aspirations and needs of both the old states and the new ones created after the war: “Indem man diese übergeordnete Organisation—den wirklichen, den totalen Völkerbund—nicht schuf und nur den anderen Teil seines Programms, die Selbständigkeit der kleinen Staaten, verwirklichte, erzeugte man statt Beruhigung ständige Spannung” (*WvG* 426).

From this evidence, we must observe that Zweig's commitment, as we claimed at the beginning of this section, is defined by a quest against nationalism and, ultimately, by a vision of the world that aims to transcend any localism and particularism. Cosmopolitanism, internationalism, supranationalism, humanism, universalism, and

'Europe': all of these words/concepts refer to Zweig's will to create, to open people's eyes to the existence of, a 'common' space of belonging that goes from 'Europe' to the 'Human' to the 'Universe'. Having said that, we could argue that Zweig's post-nationalism reproduces in a way the tension observed in our current debates on the identity of Europe, which are usually polarized between a populist discourse that demands the shutdown of the nation's frontiers emphasizing particularity at the cost of inclusion and the rights of the individual—that is, at the cost of sacrificing core democratic values—and an aspiration towards the common, 'Europe', that warns us against the dangers of nationalistic—popular and patriotic—rhetoric. Thus, on a supranational level, Europe and the nation seem to be incompatible realities. In this light, Zweig emerges as a champion of post-nationalism, a forefather of the European Union and a voice, literary and intellectual, that is closely intertwined with the 'European' side of the struggle. However, if we stop our analysis here and uncritically accompany Zweig in his projection towards the universal, we run the risk of reproducing the polarization of the current debates on Europe. Additionally, from a post-nationalist perspective, we would be giving support to the idea that Zweig's 'European' project is all about creating a 'supernation', a single space of belonging, a uniformizing framework of coexistence. In sum, we would be simply exporting the dynamics of nationalism into a larger dimension. From an ethical perspective, nothing could more opposed to Zweig's *Weltanschauung*, which is based on values such as 'difference', 'plurality', 'diversity', 'harmony', and 'coexistence'.

Bearing this in mind, I contend that Zweig's 'Europe', far from being a mono-reality, should be discussed as a space of mediation (and belonging) whereby Europe and the nation should not be necessarily seen as competing and mutually exclusive projects for the best "imagined community" but, instead, as two coexisting and parallel realities. What I will try to demonstrate in the following pages is how Zweig's 'European'

Weltanschauung may help us open new directions to reconcile the plural and diverse reality of Europe's nations and cultures with the construction of a common enterprise, of a post-national narrative. In other words, if we look closely beyond the surface of Zweig's European allegiance, we will find that his vision of the supra or post-national is somehow 'rooted'. And not only historically and culturally, but also in terms of affiliation. Thus, I contend, the exploration and articulation of Zweig's European *Weltanschauung* can help us navigate through the 'European paradox', can help us, in the words of George Steiner, "to balance the contradictory claims of political-economic unification against those of creative particularity [...] [to] dissociate a saving wealth of difference from the long chronicle of mutual detestations" (*The Idea of Europe* 411-422). The premise on which the following reflections are based is that Zweig's ideal community, the path towards common understanding, does not stand on the ground of a single supranation or culture (on, for instance, the expansion of Mitteleuropa), but on the sum of the manifold personalities that inhabit and give shape to the European landscape. Therefore, in Zweig's ideal community, one should be able, as he writes in his memoirs, "die Fremdheit als etwas Vertrautes zu genießen" (*WvG* 328).

On Roots and *Heimat* in Zweig's Post-National *Weltanschauung*

Having said that, it might be a good idea to start our (re)assessment of Zweig's post-nationalism by challenging our own assumption that Zweig's commitment is essentially constructed against the nation. Without going any further, in the first page of *Die Welt von Gestern*, Stefan Zweig the 'European', the 'pacifist', states that first and foremost, he is an Austrian (*WvG* 9). That, besides 'Europe' and peace—and together with his condition as a 'Jew' and a 'writer'—Zweig also speaks from his Austrianness, that is, from his filiation to the Austrian nation and culture. At this point in the narrative, it is no surprise that this detail goes unnoticed, as it is inserted in a discourse that revolves around

the loss of Zweig's true *Heimat*, the one he had chosen: 'Europe'. What is more, Zweig tells us that his memoirs are written partly to pay homage to that lost home. In fact, it is not until much later in the text, when Zweig starts to dispel the myth of his cosmopolitan existence, that his claim that the position from which he writes his memoirs is that of an 'uprooted' individual gains all its significance: "Denn losgelöst von allen Wurzeln und selbst von der Erde, die diese Wurzeln nährte,—das bin ich wahrhaftig wie selten einer in den Zeiten" (WvG 10). At the beginning of the chapter "Umwege auf dem Wege zu mir Selbst", which in Zweig's life-narrative corresponds with his wanderings throughout Europe in the intervening years after finishing his Ph.D. and the war, Zweig inserts the following reflection on that time of incessant travels: "Aber schließlich benötigt man doch—wann wußte ich es besser als heute, da mein Wandern durch die Welt kein freiwilliges mehr ist, sondern ein Gejagtsein?—einen stabilen Punkt, von dem aus man wandert, und zu dem man immer wieder zurückkehrt" (WvG 179). At some point during his exile, Zweig has realized, as we discussed at the end of the previous section, that freedom is a precondition of his cosmopolitan existence. As paradoxical as it may seem, to be able to feel at home everywhere, one needs a stable center, a point of departure and return. Thus, Zweig reveals, the ethereal nature of the citizen of the world is grounded, localized, rooted. And this does not necessarily mean that this space of belonging that is below the cosmos, below the world, equates to a given geographical reality; the notion of *Heimat*, and the feeling of belonging that derives from it, can be grounded on language and culture. In this sense, when Zweig discusses *Fouché* as an instance of his success in the twenties, he laments the loss of his German readership, and the fact that the ban on his books had severed him from what had been his literary home for many years (WvG 343).

Zweig is forced to admit the failure of his cosmopolitan ideal, or at least to rethink its nature. When he loses his passport after the fall of Austria to Hitler, and is therefore forced to apply for British citizenship, Zweig reflects that

[o]ft hatte ich in meinen kosmopolitischen Träumereien mir heimlich ausgemalt, wie herrlich es sein müsse, wie eigentlich gemäß meinem inneren Empfinden, staatenlos zu sein, keinem Lande verpflichtet und darum allen unterschiedsloser zugehörig. Aber wieder einmal mußte ich erkennen, wie unzulänglich unsere irdische Phantasie ist, und daß man gerade die wichtigsten Empfindungen erst versteht, sobald man sie selbst durchlitten hat. (WvG 434).

Ten years earlier, Zweig tells us, he had comforted the Russian writer Dmitri Merezhkovsky in Paris, whose publications had been banned in Russia, by telling him that the international translations of his works were much more important. Only now, ten years later, does Zweig realize how vital that bond with his own *Heimat* was:

Und ich zögere nicht zu bekennen, daß seit dem Tage, da ich mit eigentlich fremden Papieren oder Pässen leben mußte, ich mich nie mehr ganz als mit mir zusammengehörig empfand. Etwas von der natürlichen Identität mit meinem ursprünglichen und eigentlichen Ich blieb für immer zerstört. [...] Es hat mir nicht geholfen, daß ich fast durch ein halbes Jahrhundert mein Herz erzogen, weltbürgerlich als das eines 'citoyen du monde' zu schlagen. Nein, am Tage, da ich meinen Paß verlor, entdeckte ich mit 58 Jahren, daß man mit seiner Heimat mehr verliert als einen Fleck umgrenzter Erde. (WvG 438)

In my opinion, this Zweigian epiphany is one of the most important passages for our understanding of his 'European' *Weltanschauung*. After this revelation, Zweig 'realizes' that he has lived, for the greater part of his life, in a system of, at least, a double affiliation; that the widening of his 'spiritual' horizons was an (intellectual and emotional) operation carried out from a base, a center, a starting point; that his *Heimat* had expanded from Vienna to 'Europe', and that without the former the latter crumbled. In the words of Lionel Steiman: "All his life he had proclaimed his allegiance to universal, cosmopolitan

ideals, but only after leaving Salzburg did he discover how much an Austrian he was and how much he had depended on his homeland. When the *Anschluss* sealed his exile, he felt it as a fall into the void” (“The Eclipse of Humanism” 149). Bearing this in mind, we could argue that, to make the most of Zweig’s post-national philosophy, we need to consider that his universal aspirations do not stem from the desire to elevate his particularism to a single world ‘religion’. Rather, post-national categories like ‘Europe’ or the ‘human’ are construed as ‘common’ spaces of belonging where cultures can find the necessary grey zone to meet their others with respect for both their commonalities and their differences. As Denis Charbit argues when discussing Romain Rolland and Stefan Zweig’s cosmopolitanism: “Toutefois, leur attitude prête à confusion, car s’ils se méfient des Etats, ils reconnaissent la réalité des nations et des cultures qui les fondent. Certes, elles sont appelées à être dépassées par une unité supérieure, mais, entre-temps, ils manient sans hésiter les notions d’esprit français, allemand, latin, etc.” (55).²⁷⁵ In the end, the ‘confusion’ that Charbit perceives in both writers might be the necessary response to unlock—or simply to address—the paradoxical reality of ‘Europe’.

In this way, I contend that Zweig’s post-nationalism, both in his thought and experience, offers an interesting balance between the multiple universalisms and particularisms that make up the European—and world—mosaic. Although we have observed a universalizing tendency in Zweig’s Europeanism and humanism, we cannot ignore the potential of its ‘rooted’ nature. As a matter of fact, this assessment of Zweig’s post-nationalism, between the local and the universal, finds many resonances in the work of contemporary thinkers of cosmopolitanism. Following this direction, Judith Butler, in

²⁷⁵ And he will add, in reference to Rolland, that “[l]e souci de l’Europe n’oblige nullement a Rolland à se détacher de ses racines bourguignonnes. L’enracinement n’est pas, chez lui, une tare fatalement contradictoire avec la liberté de l’esprit, la circulation des idées et des personnes. Rolland se veut simultanément citoyen français, citoyen européen et citoyen du monde. Ces trois identités ne s’ordonnent ni dans une hiérarchie ni dans un dépassement. Plutôt que d’en faire identités verticales, Rolland les considère comme les trois cercles d’appartenance dont l’homme a besoin pour s’épanouir pleinement” (55).

her challenge to Martha Nussbaum's 'cosmopolitanism', argues that the old 'single' universalism needs to be reconsidered, which does not mean that "there ought to be no reference to the universal or that it has become, for us, an impossibility. On the contrary. All it means is that there are cultural conditions for its articulation that are not always the same, and that the term gains its meaning for us precisely through these decidedly less than universal conditions" ("Universality of Culture" 59). In the same vein, Ernesto Laclau defends a universalism that is not 'One', that is to say, what he actually defends is a universalism constituted as a space of constant undefinition, which, in its turn, provides the necessary conditions for the realization of democracy:

The conclusion seems to be that universality is incommensurable with any particularity yet cannot exist apart from the particular. How is this relation possible? This paradox cannot be solved, but its insolubility is the very precondition of democracy. The solution of the paradox would imply that a particular body had been found that was the true body of the universal. But in that case, the universal would have found its necessary location, and democracy would be impossible. (89-90)

At the same time, other thinkers are focused on building a new relationship between nationalism and cosmopolitanism whereby both paradigms are combined in an effort to build a common framework that promotes mutual understanding. In his attempt to break said dichotomy, Pheng Cheah suggests that "instead of indulging in the complacent demystification of nationalism as a 'derivative' discourse or moralistically condemning cosmopolitanism as uncommitted bourgeois detachment, we ought to turn our critical focus to the mutating global field of political, economic, and cultural forces in which nationalism and cosmopolitanism are invoked as practical discourses" (31). In brief, in its balance between universalism and particularism, it might be interesting to discuss Zweig's post-nationalism from the perspective of what Bruce Robbins calls 'actually

existing cosmopolitanisms', an intellectual and philosophical effort to situate cosmopolitanism, which is thought of as 'located' and 'embodying'. In Robbin's words: "instead of an ideal of detachment, actually existing cosmopolitanism is a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance" (3).

This is the kind of cosmopolitanism that David Hollinger, in his revision of American multiculturalism, calls "rooted", a cosmopolitanism that "promotes multiple identities, emphasizes the dynamic and changing character of many groups, and is responsive to the potential of creating new cultural combinations", adding that "where all of humankind was once taken to be the referent, we are now more inclined to speak about, or on behalf of, an 'ethnos', a particular solidarity rooted in history" (*Postethnic America* 4). Last but not least, we could bring to the discussion Appiah's concept of "patriotic cosmopolitanism", understood as an identity that claims to be "cosmopolitan—celebrating the variety of human cultures; rooted—loyal to one local society (or a few) that you count as home; liberal—convinced of the value of the individual; and patriotic—celebrating the institutions of the state (or states) within which you live" (106).

Having said that, I do not believe that we must necessarily ascribe Zweig to any of the current post-national philosophies. As a matter of fact, we might find that task a bit daunting and, even, irresponsible, since, in my opinion, if we attempt to fit Zweig in, for instance, the cosmopolitan or the universal mold, we risk reducing the potential of his own intellectual particularity. Without going any further, we could claim, following the materials discussed throughout this dissertation, that Zweig is the quintessential representative of the old 'enlightened' cosmopolitanism, which believed in the endless exportability, and even the moral necessity, of Western values, as well as in the categories of the 'universal' and the 'human'. However, at the same time, Zweig's insistence on diversity, difference and history call, in my opinion, for a more nuanced approach, which

the thinkers above reflect in one way or another. As David Hollinger argues in his survey of cosmopolitanism at the turn of the twenty-first century, “the point of a rooted, situated, national, vernacular, critical, and so on, cosmopolitanism is to bring cosmopolitanism down to earth, to indicate that cosmopolitanism can deliver some of the goods ostensibly provided only by patriots, provincials, parochials, populists, tribalists, and above all nationalists” (“Not Universalists, Not Pluralists” 237).

**Between Universalism and Particularism I: Reassessing the Role of the Nation in
Zweig’s Post-National *Weltanschauung***

Taking all this into account, I would like to conclude our exploration of Zweig’s post-nationalism as a category of his ethical—‘European’—program by providing further evidence of how Zweig’s work attempts to find a certain balance between an aspiration to the universal and the will to respect particularity and diversity. Following this direction, I would like to start from our previous assessments on Zweig’s anti-nationalistic stance. While there is no point in denying Zweig’s identification of nationalism as the enemy of the European, the cosmopolitan, the pacifist and the humanist, it must be noted, to do justice to the complexity of Zweig’s thought, that there are some passages in his work where he considers the ‘positive’ side of nationalism as a force that binds people together. What is more, in 1909, in the essay “Das Land ohne Patriotismus”, he complained that Austria was the only nation in Europe that was not united under a single nationalism, a fact that did not allow it grow into the future. This is something, Zweig goes on to say, that needs to be remedied: “Sie muß ungerecht sein, weil aus dieser Selbstüberschätzung Kräfte entwachsen, weil in jedem Chauvinismus eine Bindung liegt, eine Stärkung und ein Rausch. Und diese Sekunden des Rausches einer Millionenmasse, sind sie denn nicht auch die wundervollsten, die der Einzelne erleben kann, wirkliche Feste einer Zeit, in der

das religiöse Empfinden schwächer geworden und durch das nationale fast entwertet worden ist?" ("LOP" 29).

In this light, we discern in these words, and in the whole rationale of the article, the seed of Zweig's nationalistic stance at the beginning of the war. He sees a danger in the fact that, beyond the figure of the Emperor, there is no other supranational discourse/ground that can bind the several patriotisms of the Austro-Hungarian Empire together. It is the history of the imperial house that gives meaning to the diversity of the nations, and therefore Zweig considers that "[t]ragisch ist nur an dem seltsam schönen Schauspiel, daß diese Einheit eine Vergangenheit als Lebenssinn feiert und bar ist aller Zukunftsträchtigkeit. Wir müssen uns zurückwenden, nicht nach vorwärts wie die andern Völker, um Begeisterung in uns zu finden. Und das ist ein gefährliches Symbol" ("LOP" 104-114). Thus, (supra/super-)nationalism, the need to find a common space of belonging and a collective identity beyond socioeconomic, cultural and 'racial' differences seen as one step more towards the future. Although Zweig concludes that the diversity of the empire is precisely what makes it beautiful, he foresees in it the danger of fragmentation and dissolution: "[N]irgends sind so viele Elemente des Landschaftlichen, nirgends so viele Rassen und Begabungen in eine äußerliche Einheit zusammengedrängt, in eine unwiederbringliche, wenn sie verlorengehen sollte durch den politischen Ehrgeiz der andern Nationen, in eine unzerstörbare, wenn sie ein neuer Wille und ein neuer Glaube zusammenhalten könnte" ("LOP" 114). In a prewar context, what would later become an irreconcilable antagonism between the forces of unity (i.e. 'Europe') and isolation (i.e. nationalism) collapses in that the latter becomes an expression of the former.

In *Die Welt von Gestern*, Zweig resumes this idea when he evokes his memories of the times before the war and of the first years of the conflict. On the one hand, Zweig tells us that in the harmonic, conciliatory and hospitable context of the fin-de-siècle utopia, he

learned to love the idea of community (*Gemeinschaft*) as the highest ideal (*WvG* 39). Therefore, the two concepts, diversity and unity, seem to go hand in hand and to be at the roots of Zweig's *Weltanschauung*. From this perspective, Zweig does not hesitate to admit, as we saw in Chapter I, when we discussed the making of Zweig's intellectuality in *Die Welt von Gestern*, that in the first days of the war he also felt the intoxication of joining a community of millions, of finding transcendence beyond individuality thanks to the war:

Wie nie fühlten die tausende und hunderttausende Menschen, was sie besser im Frieden hätten fühlen sollen: daß sie zusammengehörten. Eine Stadt von zwei Millionen, ein Land von fast fünfzig Millionen empfanden in dieser Stunde, daß sie Weltgeschichte, daß sie einen nie wiederkehrenden Augenblick miterlebten und daß jeder aufgerufen war, sein winziges Ich in diese glühende Masse zu schleudern, um sich dort von aller Eigensucht zu läutern. (*WvG* 242)²⁷⁶

Written circa 1940, in this particular text Zweig is inclined to justify this outburst of collective passion as a momentary 'lapsus', to be soon remedied by his long-cultivated cosmopolitanism. However, in my opinion, these passages do not show a blatant justification of nationalism or war's potential to boost nationalistic feeling. Rather, they point to the fact that Zweig had been worried from a very early phase in his career about the construction of the 'common'; worried about the potential of difference, which he otherwise loves and respected, to tear people apart, to degenerate into violence and conflict. Last but not least, in *Brasilien*, Zweig reflects on the two sides of the nationalistic coin. In his discussion of the history and economy of the country, he recognizes that at some point in its colonial past, nationalism had offered the Brazilian people the opportunity to unite in a higher will: "Aber hinter ihrem eigenmächtigen Widerstand

²⁷⁶ On the potential of nationalism and war as a binding force, Stephan Resch comments that: "[d]ie Kriegseuphorie der ersten Monate sowie die Burgfriedenspolitik zwischen den deutschen Parteien schienen Zweig zu suggerieren, dass der Krieg die Macht habe, nachhaltig innenpolitische Spannungen zu lösen und ideologische Unterschiede enzuebnen." ("Mächtig seid ihr nicht in Waffen" 59)

wirkt als höherer Wille schon unbewußt ein nationales Empfinden. Die Paulisten stellen mit diesen ersten Revolten gegen die portugiesische Autorität rein instinktiv die Forderung auf, allerdings noch ohne sie zu formulieren, daß jeder Reichtum der brasilianischen Erde Brasilien gehöre" (*BRASILIEN* 800). Equally, we read that by 1700 a common consciousness, a collective identity independent of the metropolis, has already formed: "[E]s hat seine Städte, seine Festungen, seine Häfen, und—was immer entscheidender ist als dies alles—es bildet bereits eine nationale Gemeinschaft und in ihr eine unsichtbare Armee, die bis zum letzten Manne gegen jeden fremden Einbruch sich wehren würde" (*BRASILIEN* 1313).

However, on the other hand, while discussing the positive influence of European immigration at the turn of the twentieth century—which according to Zweig helped make the Brazilian 'character' even more diverse and heterogeneous—, the Austrian writer claims that "[h]ätte anderseits die Hauptimmigration, die Massenzuwanderung sich nicht in dieser noch kosmopolitisch gesinnten Epoche, sondern in unserer Zeit des überreizten Nationalismus vollzogen, so wären die Einzelnen nicht mehr gewillt gewesen, sich in eine neue Sprachform und Denkform aufzulösen" (*BRASILIEN* 1659). Hence we could argue that there is a huge contrast between a historic, 'emancipatory', nationalism that embodies a drive towards unity, the will of people coming from different places to unite under a single language and framework of coexistence, and its most modern, 'exaggerated' (i.e. radicalized) version: "Denn seiner ethnologischen Struktur gemäß müßte, sofern es den europäischen Nationalitäten- und Rassenwahn übernommen hätte, Brasilien das zerspaltenste, das unfriedlichste und unruhigste Land der Welt sein" (*BRASILIEN* 89). Echoing our exploration of the Viennese utopia, what makes Brazil the land of the future in the eyes of Zweig is precisely the fact that it has found the right balance between unity

and difference.²⁷⁷ In brief, these texts challenge, in one way or another, the radical opposition between nationalism and 'Europe' that we have articulated at the beginning of our discussion. While it is true that Zweig's Europeanism and humanism revolve around their opposition to nationalism, we must also note that Zweig distinguishes between a nationalism that contributes to unity and a toxic, imperialistic, aggressive form that drives peoples towards disunion, isolation and, ultimately, war.

**Between Universalism and Particularism II: On Difference, Uniformization
and Individualism**

Following this line of discussion, I would like to conclude this section by exploring the role of 'difference' and 'diversity' in the construction of Zweig's *Weltanschauung*. While our reflections on the importance of *Heimat* and 'roots' in the articulation of his cosmopolitanism have opened the door for rethinking the role of the nation in Zweig's post-national 'European' project, the positivization of difference throughout his work allows us to further establish the need to situate Zweig's project between the aspiration to the common and the respect for particularity. In fact, as we saw before, the treatment/consideration of difference is a key element in the distinction between old and new cosmopolitanisms. For instance, Appiah argues for a 'rooted cosmopolitanism' that celebrates "regional inflections" and, accordingly, for a cosmopolitan subject as he or she who "can entertain the possibility of a world in which *everyone* is a rooted cosmopolitan,

²⁷⁷ Having said that, we must remark that Zweig's search for 'balance' on a post-national scale is far from being devoid of fault. At some points in the Austrian writer's discourse, we can discern an 'assimilationist drive' at work that endangers diversity and plurality. Joining in a higher community, a higher sphere of belonging, often entails the renunciation of certain original traits. In this sense, Zweig does not seem to be aware that his positive assessment, in *Die Welt von Gestern*, of the assimilation history of his family—which freed itself "von allen Defekten und Engheiten und Kleinlichkeiten, die das Ghetto ihm aufgezwungen" (*WvG* 28) in his path towards a more universal culture—contradicts the harmonizing spirit of his project. A similar asseveration can be read in *Brasilien*: "Zum größten Erstaunen wird man nun gewahr, daß alle diese schon durch die Farbe sichtbar voneinander abgezeichneten Rassen in vollster Eintracht miteinander leben und trotz ihrer individuellen Herkunft einzig in der Ambition wetteifern, die einstigen Sonderkeiten abzutun, um möglichst rasch und möglichst vollkommen Brasilianer, eine neue und einheitliche Nation zu werden" (*BRASILIEN* 100).

attached to a home of his or her own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different, places that are home to other, different, people” (91).

In this regard, I contend that at the core of Zweig’s *Weltanschauung* lies a deep respect for difference and individuality that coexists with the will to establish common frameworks of intelligibility and coexistence. In fact, we have already observed in our analyses how these notions affect the configuration of the Zweigian figures of commitment and also, at the same time, condition the materialization of his *engagement*. Without going any further, this awareness that ‘Europe’ must face its diversity and its different historical and cultural legacies—represented—to a certain extent—by the reality of the ‘nation’—is embedded in the utopian construction of fin-de-siècle Vienna in Zweig’s memoirs as a place where harmony and peaceful cohabitation reign supreme in ethnical, religious, economic and social terms. Vienna is a city open to everyone, with a special predisposition towards synthesis and harmony, two elements that, as we have already discussed, are also present in the Brazilian ‘essence’. In a context where Europe has exhausted its potential to contain the cosmopolitan ideal, Brazil becomes the land of the future in accordance to its ability to host a plural, diverse reality. In brief, Brazil becomes ‘utopian’—the expression of Zweig’s desire for a better world—in its capacity to preserve difference and promote unity: “[I]hre Überraschungen, ihre Eigenwilligkeiten und Winklichkeiten und vor allem ihre Kontraste—diese Kontraste von Alt und Neu, von Stadt und Natur, von Reich und Arm, von Arbeit und Schlenderei, die man hier in ihrer einzigartigen harmonischen Gelöstheit genießt” (*BRASILIEN* 2660). In the same vein, in Chapter I we amply discussed the figure of the intellectual-mediator, whose goal was to peacefully manage difference, to bring opposing parties closer, to synthesize, from Verhaeren’s *admirez vous les uns les autres* to Erasmus’ neutrality (see *ERASMUS* 953).

In the case of the humanist of Rotterdam, his call to respect difference is closely intertwined with the notion of common understanding, while, as far as Verhaeren is concerned, his work and *Weltanschauung* are animated by enthusiasm—a desire to accept life in all its forms—and a life-affirming (*Bejahung*) ethics.

In *Verhaeren*, Zweig elevates the figure of the Belgian poet and his work to a symbol of harmony; from this perspective, the Verhaeren's poetry becomes a celebration of otherness and alterity. By dint of admiration, Verhaeren is able to connect with the world and see himself in every single aspect of reality: “[J]ener Kraft [...] [zwingt] nicht mehr zur Eroberung [...], sondern zur Hingabe, zur grenzenlosen Demut. Über der ungeheuren Wildheit und anscheinenden Zerrissenheit des einstigen Werkes wölbt diese Erkenntnis den versöhnenden Bogen, über ‘Les Forces tumultueuses’ [...] leuchtet ‘La multiple Splendeur’” (*VERHAEREN* 119). Thus, what might be perceived as a threat—difference—becomes the opportunity to celebrate life; diversity and multiplicity are ways towards the human, an expansion of the self: “Und da diese schrankenlose Bewunderung den Egoismus zerstäubt [...] eröffnet sie auch die Möglichkeit eines Ausgleiches des Verhältnisses von Mensch zu Mensch. Das Buch ‘La multiple Splendeur’ [...] war ursprünglich unter dem Titel ‘Admirez-vous les uns les autres’ [...] gedacht. Hingebung gilt darin als das höchste Ideal, Hingebung, das Sichverstreuen, Sichverschenken an alle Welt, an alle Menschen” (*VERHAEREN* 113). To give oneself to the other and the world is Verhaeren's formula against isolation and egoism.

Following this line of discussion, another aspect of Zweig's commitment to diversity is his fight against the uniformizing forces of modernity. This can be observed in Zweig's fear of the masses (pitted against the intellectual and the artist; see “The Mission of the Intellectual” and “Folks Don't Trust Intellectuals”) as a phenomenon that threatens to destroy the last bastion of freedom: the individual and his/her singularity. Most notably,

Zweig expressed his anguish at what he called the 'monotonization' of the world in his 1925 article "Die Monotonisierung der Welt". After having travelled extensively throughout Europe, Asia and America, Zweig concludes that the world finds itself in a homogenizing vortex:

Stärkster geistiger Eindruck von jeder Reise in den letzten Jahren, trotz aller einzelnen Beglückung: ein leises Grauen vor der Monotonisierung der Welt. Alles wird gleichförmiger in den äußeren Lebensformen, alles nivelliert sich auf ein einheitliches kulturelles Schema. Die individuellen Gebräuche der Völker schleifen sich ab, die Trachten werden uniform, die Sitten international. Immer mehr scheinen die Länder gleichsam ineinandergeschoben, die Menschen nach einem Schema tätig und lebendig, immer mehr die Städte einander äußerlich ähnlich. ("MONOTONISIERUNG" 30)

Given the rapid technological advances of his time, Zweig has the impression that the increasing interconnectedness of the world is erasing individuality. What starts simply as a unification of outward appearances propelled by the force of American capitalism and its expansionist policies ends up a becoming a force that shapes mentalities using the same mold. The main consequence of this phenomenon—of which the already discussed massification of travel is but another of its manifestations, see "Reisen oder gereist werden?"—is, according to Zweig, the "Aufhören aller Individualität bis ins Äußerliche. Nicht ungestraft gehen alle Menschen gleich angezogen, gehen alle Frauen gleich gekleidet, gleich geschminkt: die Monotonie muß notwendig nach innen dringen. Gesichter werden einander ähnlicher durch gleiche Leidenschaft, Körper einander ähnlicher durch gleichen Sport, die Geister ähnlicher durch gleiche Interessen" ("MONOTONISIERUNG" 32). Similarly, in *Brasilien* Zweig expresses his concern that modernity may take away the 'essence' of his Brazilian utopia: "Welcher Fehler, wollte man diese ein wenig lärmende und wacklige Romantik verschwinden lassen, um das zu

haben, was alle andern haben, und damit etwas zu verlieren, was Rio allein gehört: seine farbige, unbesorgte Lebendigkeit!" (*BRASILIEN* 2725).²⁷⁸

Last but not least, Castelli, in his struggle against intolerance, embodies the revolt of the human 'spirit' against uniformization: "Denn die moralische Selbständigkeit der Menschheit bleibt auf die Dauer—ewiger Trost dies!— unzerstörbar. Nie ist es bisher gelungen, der ganzen Erde eine einzige Religion, eine einzige Philosophie, eine einzige Form der Weltanschauung diktatorisch aufzuzwingen, und nie wird es gelingen, denn immer wird der Geist sich jeder Knechtschaft zu erwehren wissen" (*CASTELLIO* 97). In this sense, uniformization entails a process of suppression of the self that is inherent to a totalitarian and dictatorial conception of the state (*CASTELLIO* 306). In Calvin's Geneva, "verboten alles [wird], was festlich die graue Nüchternheit des Daseins unterbricht, verboten selbstverständlich jeder Schatten und Schimmer einer geistigen Freiheit im gedruckten oder gesprochenen Wort" (*CASTELLIO* 681). The defense of tolerance equals in *Castellio* the defense of individuality and diversity: "Und als endlich dann wieder ein Künstler in dieser Stadt geboren wird, so wird sein ganzes Leben eine einzige Revolte sein gegen die Vergewaltigung der Persönlichkeit" (*Castellio* 786).

As we can observe in the quotes above, there is a close link between the respect, celebration and promotion of diversity and Zweig's individualism. As we have witnessed throughout this dissertation, the individual is a basic unit in Zweig's thought, the epistemological category around which he builds and organizes both his philosophy of History and his *Weltanschauung*, as well as, to a certain extent, his idea of 'Europe'. However, the valences and reception of Zweig's individualism are complex. On the one

²⁷⁸ In the same way, after visiting a sugar plantation, Zweig observes that: "Aber wieder fühlt man verwundert (und wohlütig belehrt), einen wie schmalen Streif des Landes erst in Brasilien das Maschinelle und Neuzeitliche erfährt, wieviel noch hier alter Brauch ist, alte Formen, alte Methoden – mag sein, volkswirtschaftlich zum Nachteil. Aber welche Freude doch jedem Auge, das sich ermüdet an der Monotonisierung der Welt" (*BRASILIEN* 3630).

hand, an extreme individualism entails the degeneration of nationalism into isolationist and aggressive 'variations'. In the same vein, and when applied to the intellectual, it might be interpreted as a flight from responsibility, as a renunciation to participate in the public sphere (see *Erasmus*). In this light, as he compares Rolland's individualism—subservient to the greater good of the revolution in the interwar years—and Zweig's, Dragan Nedeljkovic reflects that:

[L']individualisme de Zweig est d'une autre espèce. C'est l'individualisme qui se dérobe à l'action, qui peut facilement glisser — à son insu même — vers l'égoïsme, c'est-à-dire, dans certains cas extrêmes, vers la négation complète de l'humanisme. Chez Zweig, l'individualisme dissimulait une crainte de s'engager. Cette crainte fut, plus tard, à l'origine de difficultés dans ses relations avec Rolland, et notamment dans les années qui suivirent 1930. Zweig n'était pas véritablement libre. Esclave de sa faiblesse de caractère et de ses nerfs fragiles, il lui fut impossible de prendre position dans la lutte de son époque. (95)

Thus, Nedeljkovic points out the most negative aspect of Zweig's individualism, which is tantamount to 'an excuse' in the name of freedom to justify the author's cowardice and weakness. However, on the other hand, the preservation of all individuality is what allows Zweig to diminish the dangers of the will to unity—and potentially monotonization, uniformization—embedded in his post-nationalist ethics. Zweig imbues the individual with sacredness, and so, ultimately, the defense of diversity entails a flight toward the self. In a battle against the times, there is only one solution: "Flucht, Flucht in uns selbst. Man kann nicht das Individuelle in der Welt retten, man kann nur das Individuum verteidigen in sich selbst. Des geistigen Menschen höchste Leistung ist immer Freiheit, Freiheit von den Menschen, von den Meinungen, von den Dingen, Freiheit zu sich selbst. Und das ist unsere Aufgabe: immer freier werden, je mehr sich die anderen freiwillig binden!" ("MONOTONISIERUNG" 38).

This close connection between individualism and difference can be detected also in Montaigne. While we have already discussed how Zweig vertebrates Montaigne's commitment to independence and freedom around the French philosopher's journey of self-discovery, for which he was heavily criticized, it must be noted as well that the defense of individualism articulated throughout the text goes hand in hand with 'Verhaerenian' statements such as "Alles ist gut, und Gott segnet die Vielfalt" (*MONTAIGNE* 801) and "[f]alsch ist nur eines und verbrecherisch: diese vielfältige Welt in Doktrinen und Systeme einschließen zu wollen, und verbrecherisch, andere Menschen abzulenken von ihrem freien Urteil, von dem, was sie wirklich wollen, und ihnen aufnötigen zu wollen etwas, was nicht in ihnen ist" (*MONTAIGNE* 811). Likewise, when Montaigne travels in order to free himself, according to Zweig, he is willing to experience and get to know the other: "Montaigne will in der Fremde das Fremde sehen—'Ich suche keine Gascogner in Sizilien, ich sehe zu Hause genug von ihnen'—, und so will er den Landsleuten ausweichen, die er zur Genüge kennt. Er will sein Urteil haben und kein Vorurteil" (*MONTAIGNE* 944).

Bearing all this in mind, we could argue that Zweig's approach to both individuality and difference reinforces our assumption that in his post-national, cosmopolitan stance one can find a certain balance between the two gravitational poles that shape Europe's identity: union and difference, universalism and particularism.²⁷⁹ Exporting Zweig's reflections once again to the current debates on the identity of Europe, and proving the topicality of his legacy, sociologist Ulrich Beck defends the idea of a 'cosmopolitan Europe' as a way to disarm a rhetoric—and also a political practice—that sees the nation

²⁷⁹ In this regard, Birgit Wiedl argues in her discussion of Zweig's memoirs that the Austrian writer respected other nations and cultures in their own difference: "Aufgrund dieser weltbürgerlichen Einstellung läge die Annahme nahe, Zweig hätte alle Nationen als gleich empfunden, doch nichts wäre falscher als das. Seine Reisen ließen ihn immer wieder Vergleiche zwischen den verschiedenen Nationen ziehen, wobei er von Anfang an das Ausland als anders denn seine Heimat betrachtete. Diese Andersartigkeit zu ergründen und zu verstehen war sein vornehmliches Ziel" (297-298).

and Europe as mutually exclusive realities: “[W]hen we speak of *cosmopolitan Europe* we do not mean to imply the dissolution and replacement of the nation but its reinterpretation in light of the ideals and principles for which Europe in essence always stood and stands, that is, in light of a new conception of political cosmopolitanism” (*Cosmopolitan Europe* 5). According to Beck, to thinking of Europe in cosmopolitan terms “opens up new possibilities of social organization and political participation, though *not* based on the model of a European demos or a conventional European political monopoly based on homogeneity and uniformity” (*Cosmopolitan Europe* 5).

For his part, Zygmunt Bauman claims that difference and diversity are intrinsic categories of the European experience, that “[t]he European life is conducted in the constant presence and in the company of others and the different, and the European way of life is a continuous negotiation that goes on despite the otherness and the difference dividing those engaged in, and by, the negotiation” (*Europe* 7). All things considered, we could argue that Zweig’s answer to the ‘European paradox’, as well as the basis of his commitment to the idea of ‘Europe’, is an ethical program that embraces difference and particularity as a path towards peaceful cohabitation, that aspires to the ‘human’ and the universal without sacrificing the individual’s. In this sense, Zweig contends that ‘Europe’ and the ‘nation’ are not two mutually exclusive realities, as it seems to be the case in the current rhetoric of populism, nationalism and Euroscepticism. Europe cannot simply become a supranation, seems to be Zweig’s message; Europe cannot become a unique and uniformizing collective discourse/identity, but must retain its adaptability, its flexibility, continually redefining itself in order to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of Stefan Zweig's commitment, guided by the premises, hypothesis, and questions formulated in the Introduction, has led us through, in the first place (Chapter I), a succession of Zweigian figures of commitment, from Émile Verhaeren to Michel de Montaigne, which has allowed us to analyze the Austrian writer's 'narrative of *engagement*'. In our attempt to illuminate the committed dimension of Stefan Zweig's oeuvre, I have carried out a critical assessment concerning the way(s) he constructed his figures of intellectuality, that is to say, concerning how he negotiated through those figures his own commitment to a set of values and, above all, to a vision of the world (*Weltanschauung*). In doing so, I have also exposed and examined the difficulties, contradictions and limitations that emerged throughout Zweig's articulation of his beliefs and ideas in the public sphere by means of his works and authorial persona. Then, in Chapter II, I have examined how the construction of Zweig's 'European' project informs the process of articulation of the figures of commitment discussed in the previous chapter. More specifically, and in light of our analysis of the idea of Europe in *Die Welt von Gestern*, I have recognized three main valences or functions of Zweig's 'Europe'. On the one hand, in its potential to become an 'identity' paradigm and affiliation, I have distinguished between Europe's individual (1) and collective (2) dimensions. On the other hand, I have concluded my analysis in Chapter II by assessing the possibilities of discussing Zweig's 'Europe' as an ethical program (3).

Stefan Zweig's 'European' Ethics

Taking this into account, I would like to start by referring to the nature of Zweig's ethical program as it has emerged at the end of my analysis. One of the main conclusions of this dissertation is that Zweig's ethical ('European') program is the core of his commitment,

CONCLUSIONS

the foundations of his utopian 'Europe'. Thus, approaching the ethical dimension of Zweig's commitment has allowed us to consider the possibility of examining the Austrian writer's *engagement* beyond the fight for the 'spiritual' union of Europe. In my reading of Zweig's work, said ethical program informs and shapes Zweig's ethos and *Weltanschauung*, becoming the link between Zweig's figures of commitment and his 'European' project. In sum, I have concluded that at the center of Zweig's commitment lies an ethical program made up of four essential notions.

First of all, I have considered Zweig's concern for the human and its limits, which finds its most relevant expression in his discussion of humanism. The humanist 'credo', made up notions such as freedom, tolerance and common understanding, is reinterpreted by Zweig in light of his 'European' commitment, so that figures such as Erasmus, Castelleo and Montaigne become 'Europeans' and 'citizens of the world'. Then, by taking a wider approach to Zweig's humanism, I have examined Zweig's concern with the processes of de-humanization that threaten the (modern) individual's will and freedom: from belligerent nationalistic discourses and propaganda apparatuses ("Wondrak" and "Der Zwang") to a psychological concern for the 'monomaniac' individual ("Buchmendel" and *Schachnovelle*), the dynamics of power, and even a difficulty of understanding the (radical) other, which becomes in "Episode am Genfer See" a symptom of the 'European' malaise that leads to the First World War. My analysis has proved that the term 'humanism' functions in Zweig's oeuvre, like 'Europe', as an umbrella concept that hosts the key categories of Zweig's commitment.

Secondly, in Zweig's search for formulas to promote common understanding and cohabitation, peace becomes another pillar of his committed *Weltanschauung*, from the notion of mediation embodied in Verhaeren, Erasmus and Montaigne, through Zweig's 'conversion' to pacifism during the war, to its posterior transformation into a non-

CONCLUSIONS

violence discourse that aims to arrest the cycles of violence that plague the history of Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. Ultimately, in my reading of his works, Zweig's pacificism aims to confront the populist and dictatorial rhetoric of hatred and confrontation in the context of a 'brutalized' culture that systematically denies the humanity of the 'other'. In this scenario, Zweig's 'Europe' emerges as a pacifist solution, a common framework of belonging that allows for the peaceful negotiation of difference and alterity. Finally, through the analysis of the novellas "Episode am Genfer See", "Wondrak" and "Der Zwang" from the perspective of Zweig's pacifist strategies, I have argued that, in the context of the First World War, Zweig ended up resorting to fiction, feeling (vs. reason and ideas) and the domain of individual experience to awaken his readers, to remind them of their humanity through the witnessing of the suffering of other fellow human beings. In this sense, I have claimed that, while it can be argued that none of the protagonists of these stories—Boris, Ružena, Ferdinand—offers an 'alternative' to war, as it can be found for instance in *Jeremias* or *Rolland*, Zweig's works point out, in my reading, the fact that collective revolutions start by looking within, to one's own humanity, by going back to one's self and finding the path back to love. Following this line of discussion, I have noted how 'defeat' and 'suffering' emerge as key notions in the articulation of Zweig's pacifist stance during the war (see "BD" and "EI"). Thus, I have argued that by resorting to these notions Zweig makes an appeal to the 'common' humanity—and therefore the vulnerability and (potential) suffering—of all those immersed in the war regardless of their origin, ideology or faith.

Thirdly, I have established the importance of 'freedom' as a goal, a pre-requirement and a metacategory of Zweig's ethical program, permeating in its multiple valences Zweig's oeuvre. In this sense, I have tried to demonstrate the paramount importance of freedom of speech, opinion and thought, as well as freedom of movement (both in

CONCLUSIONS

reference to cultural exchange and physical mobility), for the realization of Zweig's 'utopia'. On the one hand, the idea of 'Europe' as a community of travelers and exchange cannot be realized amid hard borders and concentration camps. On the other, without freedom, as Zweig realizes towards the end of his memoirs, *Die Welt von Gestern*, the dream of a cosmopolitan existence—based on the possibility of travelling, embracing difference, and establishing a community beyond any frontiers—crumbles. My analysis has shown that freedom vertebrates Zweig's life and thought, to the point that when the subject no longer feels free, exile—which had been originally an escape from other constraints (i.e. a form of liberation)—becomes a prison, threatening the existence of the 'European' and the 'citizen of the world'. In this context, I have contended, suicide can be interpreted as Zweig's last act of freedom.

Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, I have tried to show how Zweig's ethical program evolves as a reaction against nationalism. More precisely, I have argued that, in adopting a post-national stance based on concepts such as cosmopolitanism, supranationalism, universalism, humanism and Europeanism, Zweig does not attempt to challenge the existence of the concept of nation or his connection with the Austrian culture and the German language, but focuses his efforts on dismantling the rhetoric of a 'toxic' nationalism that aims to foster division and isolation between social, ethnic, religious and political groups. My analysis has led to the conclusion that Zweig's post-national *Weltanschauung* does not promote the construction of a 'supernation'. Rather, Zweig's 'Europe', in its collective dimension, is presented as a space of mediation, a site for peacefully managing the European 'mosaic', which is defined by its diversity and plurality. In accordance with his respect for difference and individuality, Zweig's 'Europe' does not aim to uniformize or to eradicate diversity. In this light, I have contended that thinking of Zweig's 'Europe' as an ethical program responds to the

CONCLUSIONS

‘European paradox’ by presenting a balanced approach to the multiple universalisms and particularisms that define Europe as a collective identity.

In conclusion, our study has revealed, following the reflections above and the analyses carried out throughout this dissertation, how Zweig articulates his commitment along a ‘humanism-peace-freedom-post-nationalism’ axis that informs the construction his figures of intellectuality and orientates his own committed responses. In other words, this is the (ethical) nucleus, the matrix, around which the figures through which Zweig enunciates his commitment, on the one hand, and the ‘project’ onto which it materializes (i.e. ‘Europe), on the other, are built. Bearing this in mind, I would like to remark that, in proposing to vertebrate Zweig’s *engagement* around these four categories, I am well aware that they do not account for the totality of Zweig’s ethical depth. The discussion of Zweig’s commitment from an ethical perspective is far from being complete. For instance, we could further discuss the Austrian writer’s ethos by exploring how these values are informed by his complex reception of Judaism. Likewise, ‘friendship’ is another concept that might help us assess the extent of Zweig’s commitment to the respect of difference and alterity, especially as that concept emerges in its correspondence.

Finally, I would like to point out the possibility of reading Zweig’s ethical program and ‘European’ commitment in the context of the current Empathy Studies. In my opinion, although the term ‘empathy’ does not have the same textual and rhetorical impact as the abovementioned notions, analyzing, from this perspective, Zweig’s efforts to promote tolerance and common understanding (symbolized, for instance, in the myth of the Tower of Babel), as well as to build common frameworks of experience and belonging, could help illuminate how Zweig’s deep concern for the other might be relevant for our times. According to thinkers such as Jeremy Rifkin (*The Empathic Civilization*) and Roman Krznaric (*Empathy*), we are witnessing the emergence of a new

CONCLUSIONS

understanding of the ‘nature’ of human nature based on the notion of the *homo empathicus* (Rifkin 46-180), which questions the prevailing paradigm of the *homo self-centricus* and the “back to the womb” phenomenon observed by Zygmunt Bauman in his analysis of the ‘retrotopic’ tendencies of contemporary societies’ (*Retrotopia* 118-152).

The Zweigian Intellectual

Following the hypothesis that one of the main values of Stefan Zweig’s oeuvre, as read from the twenty-first century, resides in the *engagée* dimension of his work, and in his role as a thinker and as an intellectual, I have analyzed how Zweig negotiated his commitment—and its transmission—through the construction of several figures of intellectuality/commitment that evolve in accordance with the constant (re)adjustment of his response as an intellectual. From this perspective, my analysis has questioned and problematized the long-prevailing image of the ‘un-committed’, ‘silent’ Zweig. As I claimed in the Introduction, the reception of Stefan Zweig has been conditioned since the nineteen thirties by his alleged *Parteilosigkeit*, which, added to his ‘apoliticism’, resulted in what I consider the partial negation and underestimation of the Austrian writer’s commitment and intellectuality. In opposition to that underestimation, my analyses have revealed that the question of commitment shaped and conditioned a significant part of his oeuvre, producing as a result a ‘narrative of commitment’ whereby Zweig struggled to communicate his *Weltanschauung* and inscribe publicly his *engagement*.

Before examining the Zweigian figures of commitment, I have examined Zweig’s efforts at self-representation in his memoirs and other autobiographical texts. As a result of my analysis, I have argued, on the one hand, that Stefan Zweig devises a number of strategies and mechanisms to ‘disguise’ his own experiences as an individual and to construct what I have called his ‘supra-personal autobiography’. Thus, I have attested to the fact that Zweig implements two main strategies/processes to build his personal

CONCLUSIONS

discourse: first, the ‘amplification’ of an individual experience to make his experience ‘suprapersonal’; second, the ‘exteriorization’ or ‘projection’ of his inner self, which results in the conversion of objects (people and places) into symbols; and in the use of ‘identification’ as a resource to discuss his desires and aspirations. In my reading of Zweig, the discussion of these ‘self-writing’ techniques is crucial for considering some of Zweig’s biographical subjects as the Austrian writer’s alter-egos and their biographies as *Selbstopträts*.

On the other hand, the critical assessment of Zweig’s autobiographical production has allowed us to formulate a preliminary chronology of Zweig’s commitment that revolves around a turning point: The First World War. Thus, Zweig discusses the war as an existential and emotional ‘shock’, or even a sort of ‘epiphany’, that forces him to reorient his conception of the writer’s duty and responsibility towards the defense of ‘Europe’ and peace, away from aesthetic concerns and into the sociopolitical debates of the time. Accordingly, in view of Zweig’s rejection of his previous work as ‘irrelevant’, ‘immature’ or ‘transcendence-less’, I have located the birth of Stefan Zweig the intellectual between the years 1914-1918.

However, without denying the importance of this event, allotted by Zweig himself, I have problematized the notion that before the First World War the Austrian writer led a *degagée* existence. By considering a broad conception of *engagement*, I have traced back the origins of Zweig’s commitment to his youth in fin-de-siècle Vienna. Although at that point the connection between the idea of ‘Europe’ and the writer’s duty had not been established yet, I have claimed that Zweig always showed, according to his own self-narratives, a concern with the function of literature and the artist’s duty, from the preeminence of art in his ‘utopian’ description of fin-de-siècle Vienna—an ‘apoliticized’ milieu where choosing an artistic career is presented as a way of contributing to society

CONCLUSIONS

and bringing prestige upon one's family (especially in the context of assimilated Jewish haute bourgeoisie)—to his decision to dedicate his time and skills, at the turn of the century, to the promotion of other artists by translating their works. Thus, one of the first expressions of Zweig's commitment is articulated around the fields of cultural mediation and translation, which allow the Austrian writer to find a purpose beyond 'pure aestheticism'. What is more, I have demonstrated that Zweig's role as translator and mediator, given that it entails the participation of a transnational community of cultural exchange, is essential in the formation of his 'European' *Weltanschauung*.

Following the same line of discussion, I have observed how this committed 'path' led Zweig to discover the figure of Émile Verhaeren, who becomes, in terms of commitment, a 'choice' (*Entscheidung*), a turning a point in the configuration and orientations of Zweig's commitment. Verhaeren's poetics of affirmation (*Bejahung*) and enthusiasm turn him, in Zweig's 1910 biography, into the 'singer' of Europe. As a poet and intellectual, his task, according to Zweig, consists in harmonizing and synthesizing the (socioeconomic and cultural) contradictions of modern life by creating through his poetry common horizons of experience and intelligibility (i.e. 'Europe'). In this sense, Verhaeren is also a mediator and translator insofar as he aims to reconcile the individual with a rapidly evolving context that threatens to alienate him/her. Verhaeren provides 'sense' and 'transcendence', and given that—due to his especial 'sensitivity'—he is able to foresee the future as it unfolds in present reality, he becomes a leader, a voice who addresses the masses in order to guide them in the management of the community's 'spiritual' goods. Finally, due to Verhaeren's visionary role, Zweig turns him into the inaugurator of a genealogy of Zweigian 'prophetic' figures of commitment that can be related, following my analyses in Chapter II, to the teleological dimension of 'Europe' in Zweig's work. Following this line of discussion, I have argued that the religious

CONCLUSIONS

imaginary and lexicon have a significant impact on the articulation of the first Zweigian figures of intellectuality. As a matter of fact, it constitutes one of the main threads linking Verhaeren with the prophet Jeremias and, after the war, with Romain Rolland.

The First World War becomes the most significant turning point in Zweig's narrative of commitment. Whereas Verhaeren can be considered the Austrian writer's first committed 'choice', the conflict, described also as an *Entscheidung* in the autobiographical sketch of 1922, forces Zweig, after facing some initial doubts, to reorient his commitment towards 'Europe' and peace away from the sphere of aesthetics and into the sociopolitical debates of the time. The Europe that had been taken for granted before the war as the result of progress of humanity has been destroyed. Therefore, in the first article in which Zweig publicly claims his allegiance to Europe, "The Tower of Babel" (1916), he formulates a call to action, addressed to artists and intellectuals, to start the process of rebuilding the 'spiritual' European community. The analysis of this article has revealed how Zweig establishes for the first time a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' intellectuals. Whereas the former have stayed loyal to their pacifist, cosmopolitan and Europeanist ideals, the latter have betrayed their convictions in the name of the motherland. Zweig, by including himself among the 'we' that pledge to use their public influence to fight for peace, signals his definitive 'conversion' to the cause of 'Europe'. As the subsequent analyses have shown, this distinction between 'good' and 'bad' intellectuals would remain a key strategy for the definition of Zweig's intellectuality. Progressively, the 'bad' intellectual, in its role as the nemesis of the Zweigian figure of commitment, leaves the sphere of *Geist* and veers towards politics. Accordingly, in *Erasmus*, and above all in *Castellio* and "Cicero", the image of the intellectual is built in contrast with that of the politician/dictator.

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of Zweig's 'conversion' to Rolland's message during the First World War, the play *Jeremias* has emerged as the work in which Zweig's pacifist efforts crystallize. In our analysis of the first half of the play, I have witnessed the birth of the intellectual/prophet, who, in the act of combatting the rhetoric of war and violence promoted by the hegemonic—military, religious and political—powers, adopts the role of 'watcher' and 'warner' and. At this stage in the development of the conflict, the intellectual focuses his energies on trying to avert the catastrophe. Thus, through the recreation of the story of Jeremias, Zweig stages the rhetorical battle between nationalistic and pacifist discourses, emphasizing, above all, the connection between, on the one hand, patriotism and religion—as an excuse for, and justification of, violence—and war, on the other. Additionally, I have attested Jeremias' change of strategy when—after his warning goes unheeded—war breaks out and the city is conquered. At that point, by resorting to the notions of suffering, which allow him to unite the people of Jerusalem and to lead them to exile, the intellectual refuses to further participate the conflict

In this sense, following my analysis of the play, I have concluded that in *Jeremias* exile becomes a redeeming force whereby the individual can escape the containment and limitations imposed by the nation-state and, at the same time, articulate a collective identity based on a shared experience of suffering and defeat. When words cannot fight in equal terms with physical aggression, the intellectual looks for alternatives to the ideological battle that, according to Zweig, can only contribute to further promote violence and confrontation. Thus, similar arguments can be found in the articles "Bekenntnis zum Defaitismus" and "Die Entwertund der Ideen", where I have analyzed Zweig's attempts to arrest the European cycles of violence by resorting to 'feeling' in a context where reason can no longer guarantee peace. Therefore, I have concluded that the experience of the war comes to define Zweig's psychological response to violence,

CONCLUSIONS

starting a search for forms of enacting one's commitment that avoid confrontation and that look for a 'middle/third way', an area of influence for the intellectual—be it 'moral' or 'spiritual'—away from 'politics' and where he aims to stop the promotion of hostility and violence and bring about peaceful cohabitation.

In the relative calm postwar years, when Zweig enjoys his particular decade of success (1924-1933), the impact of the conflict and the subsequent reorientation of Zweig's commitment are consolidated in two works: the biography *Romain Rolland* (1921) and the novella *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* (1922). On the one hand, continuing the previous reflections on the possibilities of suffering as a tool to combat violence, I have argued that Romain Rolland is one of the most complete Zweigian figures of commitment. Accordingly, I have examined how the idea of 'moral authority'—based on the notions of 'suffering', 'rebellion' and 'defeat'—is instrumental in Zweig's understanding of Rolland's 'greatness' as an intellectual. Above all, in promoting common understanding, Rolland becomes for Zweig a mediator between the nations of Europe, a non-aligned individual situated 'above' the battle and dedicated to the reconstruction of the European Tower of Babel. Additionally, Rolland contributes with his example to Zweig's genealogy of 'defeated' individuals whose triumph can only be measured in 'spiritual' or moral terms.

On the other hand, I have analyzed how, through the legend of Virata, Zweig attempts to go one step further in his exploration of the artist's responsibility and his quest against violence. Exceptionally in Zweig's overall 'narrative of commitment' (from Verhaeren to Montaigne), the protagonist of *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* is not an artist. Rather, his intellectuality unfolds through a succession of roles—warrior, judge, head of family, hermit and, finally, the warden of the king's dogs—that is the consequence of his attempt to live a life free of violence. After killing his own brother in the confusion of battle, the

CONCLUSIONS

latter's dead gaze will remain forever in Virata's conscience, determining his formulation of an ethics of radical peace. In his successive transformations, Virata confronts those manifestations of violence that are inherent to the workings of the system, as they are deeply ingrained in the sociopolitical and economic matrix, as well as in a certain idea of justice that condemns individuals to an inhuman existence. In his penultimate choice, Virata decides to leave the system, to renounce both his public and private duties. However, when he realizes that not even in the margins of society can he escape the consequences of his actions, his final decision entails a total renunciation of his responsibility and of the possibility of producing an ethical response in front of violence. In this light, I have concluded that, even though Zweig manages to expose several manifestations of violence—how they work and the discourses that legitimize and naturalize them—, his hero fails in his quest to overcome them. *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* is one of the texts in which Zweig reveals in more detail the difficulties he faced as an intellectual caught between the limitations of his actions and his radical alignment with the values that made up his ethos and *Weltanschauung*.

In the nineteen thirties, the question of the limits of one's responsibility and commitment to non-violence, as staged in the story of Virata, has become, in the study of the evolution of Zweig's commitment, a key element in the subsequent analysis of the Zweigian intellectual. Regarding the context of exile, I have determined the extent to which that epoch can be considered a new turn/reorientation in the conception and articulation of Zweig's *engagement*. On the one hand, as the future of 'Europe' becomes increasingly harder to imagine, Zweig resorts to history as a source of knowledge and intelligibility. There he encounters, principally, the humanist thinkers, in whom Zweig sees kindred souls who had to endure, like himself, the madness of their times; Erasmus, Castellio, Montaigne and Cicero—as a humanist 'avant la lettre'—function, in terms of

CONCLUSIONS

commitment and ethics, as mirror figures that share with Zweig the defense of freedom, the desire to transcend nationality and unite in the sphere of the ‘universal’ and the ‘human’, the promotion of tolerance and common understanding, and, as a consequence, the articulation of a pacifist message. On the other hand, the period of Zweig’s exile is defined, in terms of intellectuality, by a number of texts and interviews (“Folks don’t Trust Intellectuals”, “The Mission of the Intellectual”, “Keep out of Politics!”, “Das große Schweigen”) in which the Austrian writer momentarily abandons his usual ‘veiled’ and ‘indirect’ strategies of commitment and adopts the role of intellectual in the public arena. In the assessment of these texts, I have observed how this period is marked by the tension resulting from the clash between Zweig’s aspirations and desires, derived from his sense of duty and responsibility, on the one hand, and the limitations imposed by both the context of enactment of one’s commitment as well as the ‘loyalty’ and prevalence of the core values (i.e. the ethical program) that inform Zweig’s *engagement*. Especially relevant to this discussion are the notions of ‘silence’ and ‘apoliticism’, which, decontextualized, led to the formation of the ‘myth’ of the ‘uncommitted’ Zweig. Contrastingly, our study has demonstrated that exile is one of the fecund periods in Zweig’s narrative of commitment.

In sum, we could contend that the figures of intellectuality that Zweig articulated during exile are influenced by his having to navigate through the ‘intellectual’s dilemma’, which he had first explored in *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*. In this sense, *Erasmus* reveals both the ‘greatness’ (potential) and the limitations of a (‘humanist’) commitment that revolves around the idea of ‘inner freedom’, which emerges as the individual’s most fundamental possession, and the search for a ‘third’, ‘non-aligned’ stance. Whereas in *Rolland* I have discussed his movement to ‘go above’ the conflict, in *Erasmus*, this desire to ‘transcend’, to ‘go beyond’ manifests itself in 1) Erasmus’ allegiance to the ‘human’

CONCLUSIONS

and the ‘universal’ in search of a sphere beyond nationality and particularity, and 2) his search for a ‘third’, ‘middle’ way, a committed solution and response that challenges the parameters of the conflict and establishes a position that does not support any of the opposing parties. Ultimately, the examination of *Erasmus* has revealed how the ‘value’ of his commitment resides in how he leaves a legacy for future generations. Concerning Erasmus’ ‘reality’, his aloofness, the distance with the masses, and his refusal to act as a mediator—a figure of commitment that by now has left the sphere of aesthetics and entered the arena of politics—when he has the chance, determine the ‘failure’ and ‘defeat’ of his project.

In this sense, I have concluded that *Erasmus* can be discussed, in part, as a vehicle of self-critique. Contrastingly, *Castellio* becomes the ‘idealized’ projection of the Zweigian intellectual in that, while unrelentingly abiding by his values, he actually dares to confront his enemies. Without having to sacrifice his own life, Castellio finds a way to articulate his commitment, which is framed in the defense of tolerance (and freedom) against dogma, dictatorship and totalitarianism. In *Castellio* I have discussed the culmination of a process of ‘politicization’ of the intellectual’s enemy. While it is true that the physical and intellectual differences between Erasmus and Luther are recurrently emphasized in Zweig’s narrative, in the case of *Castellio*, Calvin is ‘demonized’ and turned into the embodiment of the dictator. There is no possibility of ‘true’ dialogue between them, as their positions have been ‘radicalized’. The eternal fight between ‘humaneness’ and ‘fanaticism’ reaches in this text a symbolical climax. The construction of Zweig’s figures of commitment in the thirties revolves around a few dichotomic axes: tolerance versus intolerance, freedom versus servitude, individuality against uniformity, and conscience against violence. Ultimately, Zweig argues in *Castellio* that to commit oneself implies a choice between ‘humanity’ and ‘politics’.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the biographies of Erasmus and Castellio as part of Zweig's own negotiation of his commitment to humanism and 'Europe' in front of the rise of totalitarianism and fascism, I have tried to demonstrate, on the one hand, that Zweig's strong identification with these figures turns them into 'alter-egos' and the recounting of their struggles into 'self-portraits'. I have concluded, therefore, that the process of identification, which had transformed Verhaeren and Rolland into figures of admiration, mentors and examples, intensifies in the thirties, producing even more intimate links between biographer and biographical subject. On the other hand, and expanding some of the patterns I examined in *Jeremias*, I have examined how Zweig's insistence on the status of 'defeatedness' of his figures of commitment—which precisely due to their views are marginalized and abused—created a genealogy of 'lost' legacies and 'forgotten' individuals. Thus, I have concluded that the act of recuperating these voices and legacies entails the rewriting of certain 'official'—historical—discourses and the establishment of a constellation of figures that gives cohesion, and provides foundations, to the 'European' enterprise.

More importantly, the last Zweigian figures of commitment analyzed in Chapter I, Cicero and Montaigne, are constructed against the background of the war. It is the same context as that of *Jeremias*. However, on this occasion, the feeling of powerlessness is all-pervading. Mirroring the last phases of Zweig's exile, these texts reveal a process of retreat from the public sphere; there seems to be only one thing left to fight for: the individual's freedom. At the same time, although the choices made by these figures seem to be guided by a strong, and even radical, 'individualism', Zweig leaves some space—of hope and aspiration—for a final act of commitment. In the case of "Cicero", I have concluded that, despite the fact that Zweig contends that Cicero 'the intellectual' is born only once he has left the public sphere, as the narration veers towards its end, the Roman

CONCLUSIONS

philosopher emerges, in my reading, a more ‘empowered’ and ‘empowering’ figure of commitment that is ready to confront the dictatorship at the cost of his life; Cicero’s sacrifice does not become an act of ‘martyrdom’ but one of ‘exemplarity’. Additionally, echoing Zweig’s writing of *Die Welt von Gestern*—and reinforcing our hypothesis that Zweig’s memoirs are the repository of Zweig’s ‘spiritual’ legacy—, Cicero’s last months are devoted to leave on paper his ‘humanist’ legacy, for his son and for future generations.

In the case of Montaigne, the process of retreat into the self is even more radical, resulting in successive renunciations of responsibility, first from public duties—epitomized in Montaigne’s seclusion in his tower—and then from familiar and economic obligations, which takes him to temporarily leave his home to see the world. Nonetheless, out of Montaigne’s efforts to know himself and remain independent in times of collective folly, and once the storm of conflict is over, the intellectual—Montaigne—acquires moral prestige and, as a result, is asked to act as a (political) mediator. Montaigne’s last act of commitment, I have contended, turns him into the ‘perfect’ Zweigian intellectual, showing an almost ‘ideal’ balance between loyalty to the values that inform his commitment (notably, peace and freedom) and political action.

In sum, the analysis of Zweig’s narrative of commitment from *Verhaeren* to *Montaigne* has pointed out some central elements that, in my reading, vertebrate the formulation and negotiation of the Austrian writer’s commitment: first of all, the image of the Zweigian intellectual is conditioned by his ‘apoliticism’, that is to say, on the one hand, by the opposition between the politician and the intellectual as morally contrasting figures, and, on the other, by the orientation of the intellectual’s commitment towards the sphere of *Geist* (i.e. morality, ethics and culture); secondly, the analyses have revealed that, as a consequence of this ‘spiritual’ orientation of Zweig’s commitment, a number of these figures of intellectuality aim to inscribe their commitment on a plane ‘beyond’,

CONCLUSIONS

either by situating themselves *au-dessus de la mêlée*, as Rolland, or, as Erasmus, by formulating a ‘third’ or ‘middle’ way, a non-alignment formula that protects the intellectual’s independence. Also, the search for a ‘space’ beyond politics is the result of the intellectual’s efforts to transcend the national paradigm and to access the ‘ex-temporal’ and ‘universal’ realm of the ‘human’.

Thirdly, the Zweigian intellectual usually emerges as a ‘fragile’ figure, someone whose mental capacities surpass by far his bodily strength. Thus, the Zweigian intellectual, aloof, to a certain extent, from the material side of existence, is not, in principle, a man of ‘action’. The discordance between thought and action in Zweig’s articulation of his commitment affects and limits the intellectual’s response, orientating it towards a ‘discursive’, ‘ideological’ or ‘rhetorical dimension’. In this sense, I have observed how Zweig focuses his efforts on combatting nationalistic, belligerent discourses by exposing their artificiality/rhetorical fallacies, rendering them, thus, ‘unnatural’ and contrary to the interest of reason, progress, and humankind; fourthly, the Zweigian intellectual is the ‘champion’ of moderation. As a result, he prefers ‘reformation’ over ‘revolution’; there are red lines that the intellectual can never cross and that are determined by his unnegotiable allegiance to peace and freedom; fifthly, among all the forms of commitment explored in this dissertation, the mediator has proved to be one of the most recurrent in Zweig’s oeuvre, from Zweig’s own tasks as a translator before the war to Michel de Montaigne’s last act of commitment. Accordingly, the mediator, he who looks to reconcile, to synthesize, to harmonize, in the name of peaceful cohabitation, is crucial in the construction of ‘Europe’ as a space of negotiation of difference and alterity, both in aesthetic/cultural (Verhaeren) and political (Rolland, Erasmus, Montaigne) terms. Finally, the Zweigian intellectual is consistently described as a ‘defeated’ hero, as someone whose achievements are always measured in ‘spiritual’

CONCLUSIONS

terms, as judged by posterity. Thus, traditional conceptions of victory, defeat and heroism are challenged, aiming to disarm the rhetoric of ‘toxic’ nationalism and war.

At the same time, as it has been hinted at before, the very parameters and values that inform the construction of the Zweigian figures of commitment mark their ‘failures’ and limitations. First, the centrality, and prioritization, of freedom/independence as the intellectual’s most important possession reinforces his isolation. He cannot join in or give support to any cause that, regardless of its nobility, is ready to sacrifice the freedom of the individual to achieve its goal. Accordingly, the Zweigian intellectual can never be a party man or take part in an organization, as that would endanger his independence, will, and ‘inner’ freedom. In the same vein, as it has become paradigmatic in our analysis of *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*, the difficulty of finding non-violent ways of committing oneself in the sociopolitical context relegates the intellectual to the sphere of ideals and of the ‘immaterial’. Thus, silence and non-action are preferred over other ‘well-intentioned’ responses that, in the name of great ideals, might end up producing violent outcomes.

Second, while I have attested the potential of notions such as defeat or silence to be considered as ‘committed’ responses and forms of intellectuality—as they challenge the rhetorical and discursive foundations of war and violence—, it must be noted that these notions relegate the committed writer to a position of intellectual ‘vulnerability’ or ‘suspension’, in that articulating one’s commitment along these terms might easily revert into being the object of accusations of passivity and inaction, and therefore of *dégagement*. Not coincidentally, this is the origin of the ‘myth’ of the ‘uncommitted’ Zweig. Third, the fact that the articulation of Zweig’s commitment is riddled with an all-pervasive individual component hampers the possibility of turning his ideals and convictions into collective action. Thus, there is an unbridgeable gap between the

CONCLUSIONS

Zweigian intellectual and the masses, in spite of the Austrian writer's recognition of their crucial role in modern politics. As a final conclusion, the analysis of Zweig's works has shown that the main difficulty in considering Zweig as a committed writer or intellectual does not lie with the 'nature' of his convictions, which he expressed unambiguously in countless occasions and forms, but with his struggle to communicate his 'spiritual' commitment, with the process of inserting his ethical program and *Weltanschauung* into the sociopolitical debates of his time without betraying its very foundations. Our analyses have shown that, in my reading, Zweig did not doubt the values and ideas that made up his *Weltanschauung*, but was unsure about how to express them in the public sphere.

Zweig's 'Europe'

The study Zweig's narrative of commitment has led me to critically examine his idea of 'Europe' as his main committed enterprise. In this sense, I have already articulated my conclusions concerning the nature and potential of Zweig's 'Europe' as an ethical program, which I consider to be the core of Zweig's commitment and idea of the world. Following this direction, my analysis of the corpus of this dissertation has proved the importance of 'Europe' in the configuration of Zweig's work and thought, revealing that, in the end, Zweig's 'European' ethics does not consist of a set of instructions, a decalogue of 'good'/'proper' behavior, nor does it conform an ideological program; rather, it crystalizes in a 'mental frame', providing certain parameters to guide our actions, the way we behave towards the world and other human beings, and the choices we make; said 'mental frame' informs our answers and (sense of) responsibility.

In considering the meaning of Zweig's 'Europe', beyond any particular function or valence, I have argued that 'Europe' acts in Zweig's discourse as a sort of 'umbrella' concept, going beyond any specific geographical and cultural reality or fixed meaning. Its force resides in its role as an 'idea' or 'concept' that encapsulates the main vectors of

CONCLUSIONS

Zweig's philosophical and ethical output. In Zweig's work, 'Europe' is created by dint of association, metonymy, and a process of conceptual iteration whereby other words, notions and ideas are physically (i.e. textually) attached to 'Europe', giving it substance and enlarging, at the same time, its referential capacity.

In addition to this, in assessing the meaning of 'Europe' in *Die Welt von Gestern*, I have distinguished two aspects that have helped us organize our subsequent discussion of Zweig's 'Europe' as an identity paradigm and affiliation. On the one hand, 'Europe' has an individual dimension or 'mode', whereby some persons—either historical figures or prominent contemporaries—qualify as 'European', inhabiting the European landscape and contributing with their work and example to the construction of the 'spiritual' union of Europe. Verhaeren, Rolland, Erasmus and Zweig himself, are perhaps the best examples of this dimension of Europe. What these individuals have in common, what makes them 'European', is that they transcend the sphere of the nation, veering in different ways towards the universal 'human'. By focusing on individual contributions as examples of 'human' achievement, Zweig conveys a 'European' transcendence to what is otherwise perceived as a national trait or product. Moreover, I have claimed that Zweig's saga of 'great Europeans' is another manifestation of his concern for recuperating the 'lost' voices of history, as these Europeans have in common a 'subversive', 'rebellious' condition. Both their identities and projects clash with the ideological establishment, producing alternatives to the status quo.

Following the same direction, I have considered the figure of the 'citizen of the world' as another aspect of the individual dimension of Zweig's 'Europe'. In this sense, I have claimed that being a 'European' and a citizen of the world is, especially from the First World War onwards, an act of resistance, a condition of marginality in the sense that the cosmopolitan subject inhabits the margins of society and challenges state ideology, albeit

CONCLUSIONS

frequently, like in Zweig's case, from a position of 'privilege'. By adopting a cosmopolitan 'skin' in his memoirs and describing some of his biographical subjects—Erasmus, Montaigne, Casanova—as cosmopolitans, Zweig produces a response to the ideological and moral preeminence of the national paradigm. In this sense, I have observed the potential of reading Zweig's biographical works where 'Europe' becomes the main hermeneutical directive as a way to contribute to the edification of the 'European' Tower of Babel. In brief, if Zweig's 'Europe' is, above all, a post-/trans-national substratum made up of the immaterial ingredients of art and culture, Zweig's task of recognizing, situating (on the map of the European letters) and paying homage to artists and, broadly speaking, other intellectual figures can be read as an attempt at giving substance to his 'imagined' community.

On the other hand, the main valence of Zweig's 'Europe' concerns its collective dimension, its capacity to generate a sense of community and to act as a beyond-the-national (collective) affiliation. In this regard, Zweig's 'Europe' can be considered as a community and a horizon of experience that responds to the complex sociopolitical and economic matrix/landscape of modernity; as a teleology, as the inevitable result of the forces of progress before the war and, after the conflict, as a 'conviction', something to fight for with the certainty that it is the only way for the European nations to get back on the path of progress, peace and common understanding; as a space of mediation and negotiation of difference and therefore a long-term pacifist solution; as a community of travelers and as a framework of cultural exchange; as a historical reality, which reinforces its teleological nature. Zweig's 'Europe' does not have to be 'invented', created from scratch, the ideal has always been there in one form or another; it is a matter of perspective, of how one looks at both the past and the present; as a counternarrative that aims to challenge the prevalence of the forces of isolation and of the national paradigm;

CONCLUSIONS

finally, as an overall response to the crisis of identity that marks the experience of modernity since the turn of the century, and as ‘The United States of Europe’—one of the branches of the Europeanist movement before the actual process of unification began to take place after the Second World War.

In the same vein, I have established how Zweig’s ‘Europe’, in its collective/communal dimension, is defined by two adjectives: ‘spiritual’ and ‘utopian’. On the one hand, Zweig’s insistence on situating his efforts as an artist and as an intellectual beyond the sphere of the material and, more specifically, beyond ‘politics’, turns his commitment and, by extension, his ‘European’ project into a moral/‘spiritual’ enterprise. The ideal community projected from his *Weltanschauung* aims to modify the sphere of *Geist*, situating ‘Europe’ in the realm of ‘ideas’ and ‘ideals’, an attempt to break through spatiotemporal limitations and access the dimension of the ‘human’. It is a matter of always going ‘beyond’; especially, it is about transcending those discourses that attempt to separate and isolate human beings through their differences instead of emphasizing what they have in common.

On the other hand, Zweig’s ‘Europe’ acquires, especially towards the end of the Austrian writer’s life, a ‘utopian’ dimension. In other words, ‘Europe’ becomes a ‘no-place’, the projected image of a better society where some of the fundamental values that make up Zweig’s ethical program—freedom, peace, tolerance, supranationalism—direct and shape both the life of the individual and the community. In this sense, I have tried to determine the nature of the Zweigian ‘European’ utopia by analyzing some of its materializations in Zweig’s work: fin-de-siècle Vienna and Paris in *Die Welt von Gestern*, and Verhaeren’s Flanders. As a result, I have argued that, in order to provide a possible explanation to the distortions and deviations of Zweig’s historical discourse in his memoirs, it is necessary to consider how Zweig used the ‘mask’ of History to project his

CONCLUSIONS

ideal vision of society. Zweig's 'European' utopia is, to a certain extent, grounded on experience. At some point in his life, Zweig had a 'glimpse' of 'Europe', so that, starting from his (past) experiences as a 'European', he was able to reconstruct the longed-for utopia.

In *Die Welt von Gestern*, Zweig's 'Europe' becomes a 'past utopia', an unrealized dream and a 'failed' project. Ultimately, in saying that Zweig's 'Europe' can be considered a utopia, I am pointing out the fact that it is made of both desire and aspiration, two elements that predominate over the need to provide an accurate historical account. Above all, Zweig's 'Europe' emerges an ideal to orientate our lives in common; a goal to be achieved both individually and collectively. Last but not least, I have assessed how in *Brasilien*, Zweig reorients his past 'European' utopia towards the future and beyond Europe. In this sense, the analysis of *Brasilien* from the perspective of Zweig's European *Weltanschauung* has provided us with further evidence of the importance of the 'European' utopia in the configuration of Zweig's ethical program; a program or project that did not only end up trespassing the 'limits' of Europe, but also finally embracing a (relocated) future as a possibility for continuing to pursue the 'European' ideal.

From the World of Yesterday to the Europe of Tomorrow

As established in the Preface, in the analysis of the committed dimension of Stefan Zweig's work, *Die Welt von Gestern* has guided our reflections on Zweig's figures of intellectuality and his 'European' project. In this sense, at the end of our study, Zweig's memoirs have emerged as the repository of his 'spiritual' commitment and therefore as the 'door' to a possible revalorization of Zweig's oeuvre along the lines/axes of politics. Zweig's memoirs might be considered as the center of his future-oriented efforts to save his utopia from total destruction and as his last expression of hope for its future reenactment. In order to support this reading of the text, this dissertation has reassessed

CONCLUSIONS

Zweig's historical/collective discourse in *Die Welt von Gestern* along three lines. First, I have determined its 'utopian' dimension, providing an alternative to those analyses focused on determining its 'validity' and 'rigor' as a historical discourse.

Secondly, following the theories on the catastrophic *Erlebnis* of the end of the world formulated by the Catalan psychiatrist Francesc Tosquelles, I have showcased that there are psychological and emotional factors that affect the context of production of *Die Welt von Gestern* and impel Zweig to look towards the past in order to survive the destruction of his world. History is posited here not as a static reality but as a dynamic source of rebirth and reinvention of the self. Thirdly, I have assessed, following Svetlana Boym's contributions, the potential of nostalgia to serve as a critical mode or platform for enacting a critique of the present by pointing to unrealized dreams of the past which might become future alternatives. This idea, I have argued, is further reinforced by Zweig's philosophy of history, which is based on a moral concern for justice and the promotion of freedom and peace. In the context of Zweig's 'historiography of tomorrow', the study and teaching of history become tools to combat nationalism, violence and fanaticism.

In sum, in my reading, Zweig's memoirs *Die Welt von Gestern* become a future-oriented narrative, a gift and a warning to coming generations; Zweig's world of yesterday leads us to the Europe of tomorrow. In that sense, I conclude that Zweig might become a relevant voice in our current debates on the identity of Europe. Especially, the study and discussion of his 'European' commitment may contribute to the definition of the kind of communities we want to live in and to the problematization of the values that inform our collective existence. By approaching Zweig's 'Europe' from an ethical perspective, we have partially accessed to the remnants of a *Weltanschauung*, a utopia and an ethical program that, in spite of the distance that separates us from Zweig's world, invite us to question our own commitment and responsibility.

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