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The Spectre in Leopold Andrian's Garden of Knowledge

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In the closing decades of the nineteenth century a foreboding of crisis and impending doom was felt by European intellectuals, ideologues, and literati. Regarding Austria in particular, a widespread omen of imminent collapse in the realm of politics, prevalent among the upper classes, reflected a general awareness that the liberal ideals upon which bourgeois culture was presumed to be founded were being eroded by fateful economic vagaries and the social cataclysms that followed upon them. The political upheavals that occurred in Europe at the fin de siècle were accompanied by a deep sense of yearning for fading religious values that were once held to ground and to legitimize society. In science and philosophy, an extreme skepticism had developed since the onset of the critical philosophy movement in the wake of Immanuel Kant's writings. Put very simply, this crisis of skepticism centred on the question whether the mind has the capability of reproducing, in Aristotelean fashion, the structures and processes of external reality. In an overarching sense, skepticism's critique of epistemological realism claimed that the mind is encased, as it were, within its own cognitional apparatus; this conditions the sensible world as a unified phenomenon of experience, but makes it impossible for objective reality per se to be deciphered and transcribed by cognition.

The literary work central to this article epitomizes the epistemological crisis of the age in which it was produced. This article's objective is two-fold. First, it will consider how, in his novel *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* (1895), Leopold von Andrian zu Werburg (1875–1951) paints the picture of a world whose constituents are portrayed as fleeting appearances in the isolated consciousness of young Prince Erwin, the novel's main (and, arguably, sole) character. In Andrian's novel, reality is transformed into a dream. In the midst of his dream Erwin journeys upon a negative *Bildungsweg*, each stage of which leads him closer to the abyss. Second, and more importantly, this analysis will elucidate the philosophical concepts that inform the novel's content and that are the provenance of Erwin's ultimate nihilistic despair. Deriving from Johann Gottlieb Fichte's subjective idealism, these notions concern the phenomenon of solipsism in its relation to the nature of the thinking identity of a subject. In developing

this problematic in his novel, Andrian progressively radicalizes his character's solipsistic consciousness. An avid student of Platonism and German idealism, Andrian anticipates Husserlian phenomenology, while ingeniously incorporating salient doctrines of idealist philosophy into the architectonic of his novel (Renner, "Leopold Andrian über Hugo von Hofmannsthal" 18–19). He thereby endows these ideas with a vivid and complex literary gestalt.

In his work on the cultural development of fin-de-siècle Vienna, Carl E. Schorske highlights the importance of Andrian as a young aristocratic hierophant of the aesthetic movement in late nineteenth-century Austria. He shows how Andrian's novel exemplifies the general crisis of identity experienced by haute-bourgeois Austrian artists and intellectuals at the fin de siècle (310–11). Given its importance for understanding significant cultural movements of the period, the paucity of secondary literature about Andrian's work is puzzling. This is also perplexing in light of the exceptional literary quality of the text, which was admired by Andrian's friend Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The novel became a veritable cult book of the George circle.

In his elitism and in the impeccable elegance of his manner and dress, Andrian personified the late nineteenth-century European aesthete. Prefiguring the rarefied aristocratic world portrayed in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), a particular ideal of wealthy Austrian aesthetes in Andrian's time was to escape the confusion, chaos, and plebeian vulgarity that they felt were pervasive in contemporary society. In their cult of beauty they fled the shocking social collisions of their epoch and dreamed of retreating to Palladian villas located in the country. However, beyond their longing to withdraw into idyllic landscape paradises, Austrian aesthetes sought flight from reality in the rarefied interiority of the isolated subject. Schorske emphasizes that Andrian's subtitle for his novel is "Ego Narcissus" (308). As Andrian's literary alter ego, Prince Erwin's world resembles the Apollonian form of Narcissus; it composes only a reflection of his consciousness. He is thus unable to differentiate external reality from the stream of evanescent phenomena floating past his self-reflexive ego, or *ICH*. Indeed, in the inner world of Prince Erwin's subjectivity no reality subsists beyond mental events, which are portrayed exclusively as forms or modifications of consciousness. Occurrences depicted in the novel resemble surreal apparitions in a dream. These interior events reflect mental states of perception and nothing more. Illusion and reality are indistinguishable, inasmuch as all perceptive states are depicted as phenomena unfolding in Erwin's self-reflexivity, i.e., noetic activity of self-mirroring. As Iris Paetzke observes, this self-reflexivity pervades all states of perception described in the narrative. The novel portrays an interior world in which phenomena form aspects of a continuous act of "Selbstreflexion" (65). Regarding his subjectivization of reality, Andrian's wonderful descriptions of landscapes and scenes of the city transform themselves into "landscapes of the soul" (67). The

landscape, indeed, “fungiert [...] *als Spiegel* von Erwins Seele” (Bucher-Drechsler 328; emphasis added). Erwin identifies his ego as the self-reflexive source of all objective appearances. No world exists beyond his ego. Each facet of the novel evinces this solipsism and frustrates Erwin's desire to break through the confines of his ego universe to attain genuine “Erkenntnis,” that is, apodictic certainty of an autonomously existing world. The notion of solipsism that Andrian develops throughout his novel is exemplified early in the narrative.

Andrian's novel begins with a *memento mori*. Recollecting the loneliness felt by both his parents in their loveless marriage, Erwin relates that his father, a prince of Austria, began to sicken ten years after his son's birth. Before his death, his father's body took on the aspect of a corpse: “das Armband seinem Gelenk und die Ringe seinen Fingern [wurden] zu weit und sein Gesicht [...] wechselte” (7). Following the death of his father, Erwin is sent to a cloister school in the country, where he leads a lonely life. Here the objective appearances of the external world appear to his consciousness as phenomena in an extended dream. Indeed, these dream presentations seem equivalent to ciphers in an unknown metalanguage that are superimposed upon his empirical selfhood and assume colour and vitality only through his acts of willing their reality: “die Dinge der äußeren Welt hatten ihm den Wert, den sie im Traume haben; sie waren Worte einer Sprache, welche zufällig die seine war, aber erst durch seinen Willen erhielten sie Bedeutung, Stellung und Farbe” (8). However, in his isolated – one might say, world-less – consciousness, Erwin's willing of the actuality of external objects and events is as though a duty were imposed by a force external to himself; it proves to be a futile labour that, for reasons unknown, he feels he must perform: “Dieses Leben war wie eine fremde Arbeit, die er verrichten mußte, es machte ihn müde” (9). But the visits by his mother, the letters he receives, the luminous sacred images in the cloister church, the whiteness of the alpine heights against the azure sky – all these phenomena he contemplates as visions of, by, and for his reflexivity. They are akin to images in a dream, for they represent no objects existing externally to his consciousness. As mere reflections, these phenomena signify objects intended by his conscious ego and nothing more (8–9).

Especially in its opening scenes, Andrian's novel can be likened to a still-life by Pieter Claesz, whose fruits, delicate dining utensils, and carved glassware seem to live in a pellucid world that is a projection of consciousness. Throughout his work, Andrian dematerializes objects by portraying Erwin's continuous acts of self-reflection as manifesting themselves *within* his perceptions of “external” phenomena. At one juncture, Erwin draws an analogy of his noetic acts, in their kaleidoscopic variety, to a rich baroque interior in which elegant seventeenth-century soirées took place (40). In the darkest nights of winter these fêtes were held in heavily mirrored chambers illuminated by lamps: “in dunklen Winter-nächten zwischen Spiegeln und Lichtern” (40). As these colourful festivities

transpired, the feasting and dancing forms seemed to transmute themselves into refulgent nonextended images, like projections in a camera obscura. Erwin's self-reflexive consciousness can be likened to the mirrored light that scintillated in these reflections and in which they moved and lived.

However, in his lonely existence in the cloister school, Erwin desires only a deathlike slumber. His longing for absolute peace ("Ruhe") eventually takes on a religious significance. He seeks salvation in the sacred vessels, rites, and holy icons of the church. On an evening of Holy Communion, he recognizes – "[er] erkannte" – that spiritual solace comes only from god, and he decides to become a priest (10). His new-found religiosity awakens Erwin's awareness of the mysterious beauties of Christian worship. It also reveals the divine splendours of the surrounding landscape. These he perceives as radiant though unreal phenomena that, in a Christian-Platonic sense, represent only pale reflections of transcendent ideas. Erwin speculates that this intelligible world of forms subsists in a heavenly realm beyond the grave (10). Only in the church can one gain access to this numinous sphere of reality: "Von da ab wurde ihm sein Leben leichter, weil er es als unwirklich ansah und als Ahnung des wirklichen Lebens darin nur seinen Anteil am Leben der Kirche. Er dachte oft an dieses zukünftige Leben in Gott; es mußte sehr schön sein" (10).

Nevertheless, Andrian's detached narrator describes the religious imagination of his character as synonymous with a rarefied and narcissistic aesthetic sensitivity. In his mind, the spiritual domain is ultimately identical with a beauty that appears exclusively for his consciousness. Thus the verities posited by dogma do not for him reflect eternal propositions having absolute validity in and of themselves. As with all other ecclesiastical forms, these theological notions are, quite simply, manifestations of the beautiful. The crucifix hanging in the church does not symbolize for Erwin the literal suffering of Christ on the cross in the cosmically important event of his atoning Passion; instead, it denotes merely an elegant objet d'art imbued with mana:

denn schon in diesen Ahnungen fand er Schönheiten so verschieden, wie das Gemurmel der glorreichen Litaneien zu Ehren der Mutter Gottes an warmen Maiabenden verschieden ist vom Gedächtnis der Toten am Allerseelentag oder von jenem Karfreitag im frühen Frühling, an welchem Priester und Volk vor den entblößten Altären zum bösen Holze beten, an welchem das Heil der Welt gehangen hat. Aber er kannte noch andere Schönheiten. Die Schlösser auf dem Land im Herbst waren schön. (10–11)

For Erwin, God does not signify a transcendent being: a theological "wholly other." Rather, he is a painted hypostasis in a golden icon. Medieval castles in the mellow atmosphere of fall are commensurate in their beauty to High Mass

on Good Friday. In Erwin's aesthetic consciousness, no higher spiritual reality glows behind the Gothic facade of the church; no substantial being lies concealed beyond the iridescent forms of nature. All is appearance.

At the beginning of his novel, Andrian utilizes Prince Erwin's religious speculation concerning a supernatural reality subsisting beyond the veil of this world to effect a phenomenological bracketing of the objective being of the corporeal universe. By reducing the phenomena of this-worldly existence to reflections of intelligible ideas, he renders them insubstantial and unreal in themselves: "er [sah] das Leben als unwirklich [an]" (10). These realities are then absorbed into his consciousness to become translucent non-extended appearances – like the pastoral landscapes of a Corot, in which all forms are delicately painted as lucid phenomena *for* the percipient. Thus Andrian ultimately reduces religion, and the higher spiritual realm itself, to shimmering phenomena of his consciousness. For, as evidenced by the above quotation, Erwin holds the autumn landscape to be *equivalent* in its beauty to the rituals of religion. The sole meaning of the crucifix is that of presenting a beautiful appearance to and for Erwin's rarefied consciousness. This radically subjectivistic aesthetic attitude towards phenomena extends over a panoply of appearances encompassing medieval cathedrals, soaring mountain ranges, Viennese gardens, classical sculptures, etc. (31–32). Nevertheless, beyond the effulgent images of their beauty, these forms are devoid of content, mere shadows. Viewed in themselves alone, they are akin to the neo-Platonic conception of uninformed matter, which denotes a *Non-Ens* (Plotinus 3a: 37–39). Depicted as empty of meaning beyond their ultrasubjective aesthetic value, the symbols and mysteries of the church are transformed into appearances to – and for – Erwin's self-reflexive ego. Through his bracketing of their objective being, the mystic splendours of Catholicism are thus subordinated to and assimilated by the prince's dreaming consciousness. His ego's rarefied aesthetic perceptivity absorbs the external forms of religion to render them insubstantial in themselves, transmuting these phenomena into states of perception. Andrian illustrates this phenomenological reduction with the image of a duel:

Das Leben würde ein Kampf der Kirche gegen die Welt sein. Aber seine Gedanken gaben diesem *Zweikampf* eine so vielfältige Höflichkeit, ein so erhabenes Zeremoniell, so gesuchte Formen, daß er fast zu einer Parade wurde, zu einem Vorwand für die beiden großen ebenbürtigen Gegner, einander gegenüber zu stehen, die fremde Herrlichkeit zu bewundern und an der fremden Größe der eigenen gewahr zu werden. (11; emphasis added)

Clearly, Erwin's attitude towards religion resembles the *décadence* of Joris-Karl Huysmans' figure, Durtal, for whom the rich imagery of the church furnishes lush material for his aesthetic and erotic delectations. Durtal considers his

aestheticism reprobate, inasmuch as it suborns his aspirations for spiritual development by occasioning him to focus exclusively on the sensual outward appearance of religious symbols and not on their numinous inner meaning: "The beauty of Catholic art is his mainstay and succour. He can always lose himself in adoration of a beautiful and intricately carved wooden crucifix or in the aural delight of the strange melody of plain chant" (Ridge 83).

Andrian's reduction of reality to a phenomenon of his aesthetic consciousness anticipates Edmund Husserl's phenomenological reduction of the natural being of the world to the thinking ego. Husserl's phenomenism transforms the world, which naive consciousness conceives as having objective being, into an aspect of mind. This reduction comes about through a phenomenological bracketing – an "*Einklammern der objektiven Welt*" – in which all positing of objective being is suspended (60; emphasis in the original). In virtue of its suspension of such a positing activity, all things miraculously metamorphose into phenomena of consciousness, i.e., "*bloße Phänomene*" (60). The mind's bracketing of all positing of actuality accomplishes, specifically, this phenomenological reduction: that all phenomena become "purified" of any relation to objective being and are thereby sublimated into phenomena whose being is to be an appearance exclusively *for* mind. Through its act of bracketing, the ego assumes the status of a "*cogito*," in which all phenomena appear. These presentations are its "*cogitationes*" (60). The ego that abstains from all positing of being absorbs the world into its "*Bewußtseinsleben*"; this ego is a transcendental one, for it has overcome all "*natürliche Seinssetzung*" (72). A cleavage of the ego – "*eine Ichspaltung*" – has thus taken place. The cleavage of the ego proceeds through the superimposition of the transcendental ego upon the naive and interested (world-involved) empirical ego. The corollary of this cleavage is its sublimation to the status of a disinterested spectator ("*uninteressierter Zuschauer*"): a detached observer of all phenomena in the world of consciousness (73).

In his transfiguration of the world into a phenomenon of consciousness, Andrian's Prince Erwin becomes the embodiment of the Husserlian notion of "*Ichspaltung*." Transcending all interest in objective being, hence refusing to posit it as such, Erwin's ego contemplates all intuitions of reality as phenomena existing exclusively in and for its consciousness. In the autonomy of his consciousness over and above the world of phenomena, Erwin has become a pure spectator. In regard to his willing the reality of these phenomena, his act of contemplation is entirely will-less; for he is utterly disinterested in and detached from the procession of evanescent appearances floating past his reflexivity. Thus, near the close of the novel, Andrian writes the following about Erwin: "Er war immer allein [...]. Da wurde ihm klar, daß er nicht in der Welt seine Stelle suchen müsse, denn er selber war die Welt, gleich groß und gleich einzig wie sie [...] er hoffte, daß, wenn er sie erkannt hätte, ihm aus ihrem Bildnis sein Bildnis entgegenschauen würde" (54).

Like the sacred relics of the church, the phenomena of a world whose being is *for* Erwin's consciousness evince a magical splendour and charm. Nevertheless, at times he unwittingly slips out of the dream state inherent in his transcendental ego and temporarily falls into a crude condition of naive consciousness. One such occasion takes place upon his return from the country to Vienna. The city oppresses him: "[er] litt unter Wien" (30). For the manifold aspects ("Dinge und Wesen") of Vienna seem to be manifestations of a dark material plenitude subsisting beyond his mind (30). The ponderous facticity of the apparent *Ding-an-sich* that is Vienna and its surroundings weighs upon his consciousness, dulling its lucidity. Erwin realizes, however, that the epiphany of illumination by his transcendental ego approaches. This moment of mystic enlightenment will transmute the city into a dream world of clarity and beauty: "aber er wußte, daß sie [the "Dinge und Wesen" of the city] ihm nach der Erleuchtung klar und kostbar werden würden; und so suchte er mühselig zusammenzuraffen, worauf sein Auge fiel, um es für den großen Augenblick aufzubewahren" (30). He compares himself to a boy lost in a cave in which all the glorious treasures of the world lie hidden in a somnolent state of enchantment. In this condition these gemstones appear ugly; they seem mere inanimate aggregates of multicoloured earth: "in der Höhle [befinden sich] alle Schätze der Welt zu verschiedenfarbigen Erden verzaubert" (30). But he has only to await the incantation, as uttered by a sainted old man – the hermit of Novalis, perhaps – that will magically transfigure these muddy clumps into glistening translucent jewels (30). Indeed, at his appointed moment of vision, given in a transcendental "Ichspaltung," Vienna is suddenly metamorphosed into a fairy-tale paradise:

Alles hatte seine sinnreiche Schönheit: die Kathedralen des Mittelalters und die großen gelben Barockkirchen, deren Heilige an Sommertagen sich lässig in den blauen Himmel hinaufwinden [...] Alle Heiligenbilder waren schön, die goldenen geschnitzten Heiligenbilder, die niemals leer stehen, und die Heiligen auf den lärmenden Brücken, leuchtend von Blumen, Licht und Farbe, und die stillen Heiligenbilder, in die Häuser eingelassen sind [...] alle Häuser waren schön: die schwarzen Paläste mit ihren Dianen und Apollen [...] und alle Gärten waren schön, die festlichen Gärten der Schlösser mit Statuen, Trophäen und viereckigen Teichen und die öffentlichen Gärten voll Blumen und Musik. (31–32)

However, Andrian's character craves the light of absolute knowledge, that is, "Erkenntnis." Such knowledge, for Erwin, does not lie in descriptions of contingent states of affairs in the empirical world; instead, it involves the intellection of Forms subsisting in a higher, intelligible realm of essence. He therefore longs to transcend the dream emanating from his ego, with its stream of luminous, though evanescent images. Following his student years in the cloister school, he begins to seek higher knowledge in the form of a lover: "daß durch die

Frau eine Offenbarung über ihn kommen und das Leben wundervoll gestalten und es erhellen würde, eine Offenbarung, für die das ganze Leben nur die Form und das Vorhergehende nur die Vorbereitung war" (29). Through this revelation, as Erwin hopes, he will be reborn – his life will be transformed through an ingress of a beauty that subsists in itself and does not reflect a mere apparition of his isolated consciousness. Erwin's yearning for such "Offenbarung" from on high, in the form of a beloved, resembles Plato's visionary description of love. Jens Rieckmann points to Andrian's fascination with the *Phaedrus* dialogue; this story amalgamates homoeroticism with an aesthetic of spiritual love ("Knowing" 75). Plato writes that, in their antenatal state of perfection, the entelechies of those who are now denizens of the realm of mortality dwelled in the light of the transcendent divine, beatifically contemplating its eternal essence as they were bathed in its radiance. This was absolute beauty itself, which "shone in brilliance" in heaven (1:485). In their earthly incarnation in bodies of clay, mortals apprehend eternal verities through their memories of their preexistent condition of enlightenment. These acts of anamnesis achieve their optimal degree of clarity in the sense of sight: the "clearest of our senses" in our entombment in the cosmos of sensuality (1:485). If it has not already been tainted by the delusions of this realm, a spirit immediately ascends into the intelligible sphere upon beholding a physical form whose image exudes the hypostasis of beauty. As the effluence of absolute beauty enters the soul of the one who contemplates its refulgence, she or he is filled with mystic ecstasy and becomes like a winged god who soars into immortal regions (1:487). This act of transcendence denotes the transfiguration – the "Erhellung" – of mortal existence for which Erwin yearns (29).

Nevertheless, in a movement of phenomenological bracketing Erwin suddenly analogizes the revelation of divine love and beauty that will bring him true knowledge to the beauties of religion. He reflects that such a revelation would be as moving for him as were the sweet stories of Jesus that touched him so deeply in childhood (29). He now remembers the myths of the nativity of the saviour; his regal entrance into Jerusalem on Passover; the Agony in the Garden ("die Traurigkeit am Ölberg"); the horror of the Crucifixion; and the Christophany of Easter Sunday, when Jesus was resurrected from the dead to overcome the Gates of Death and Hell (29). With this comparison to the story of Jesus, Erwin ineluctably reduces his Platonic vision to a dream of his transcendental ego. For his juxtaposition of his yearning for a vision of Platonic beauty with the myths about the life of Jesus implies that, for him, this revelation is as void of objective reality as the ritual panorama of the church. Ultimately, the Platonic radiance emanating from love is reduced to the selfsame dreaming effulgaration of beauty that the sacred artifact of the crucifix had manifested to Erwin's consciousness. Consequently, his Platonic moment of vision in an epiphany of transcendental love and beauty signifies merely a shining phenomenon of and

for his transcendental ego. Erwin's juxtaposition of Platonic aesthetics with the charming stories of the life of Jesus highlights his ultimate inability to overcome the existential problem involved in the cleavage of his ego, in his "Ichspaltung" (Husserl 73). As a phenomenon for his consciousness, his imagined intellection of Platonic beauty, the light of the divine, is equivalent in its objective validity to the truths of religion. As with these verities, Erwin's mind absorbs Plato's intelligibles into its dreaming reflexivity (11).

Various dream visions appearing to Erwin's consciousness are ominous and disturbing. Paetzke correctly observes that, throughout his novel, Andrian devotes detailed phenomenological descriptions to such states of consciousness as mood (64). One bleak day, Prince Erwin perceives Vienna as a nightmare city haunted by ghosts and floating in a measureless void. This representation of the city reflects his sentiment of psychic isolation and spiritual emptiness. The following passage is crucial for the next stage of the argument:

Zwischen diesen Stunden des Reichtums kamen andere der Öde, die so unerträglich für seine Seele waren, wie es fürs Auge ist, ins Leere zu schauen. Einmal in Schönbrunn überkam ihn diese Öde besonders stark, indem ihm nicht bloß die Dinge nichtssagend erschienen, sondern auch seine Gedanken von sonst an ihm abglitten, auseinanderliefen und ihn allein ließen. (33)

In Erwin's mood of desolation, the presentations of "external" objects appear devoid of content and colour. They are analogous to an immense spatial void that strains the eye (33). Moreover, in his state of *Angst* Erwin becomes frighteningly aware that the perceptive activities of his mind compose seemingly autonomous intentionalities in and of themselves alone. It is as though his mind had lost its status as a thinking unit, a *cogito*. Apparently, his ego has forfeited its status as a thinking substance; for it has ostensibly surrendered its (presumably) self-contained reflexive identity. A hermetic power, hidden within the depths of his soul, seems to be continuously active in his conscious mind, projecting presentations of objects, i.e., "Vorstellungen," that merely glide past his reflexivity and over which he has little control: "seine Gedanken [glitten] von sonst an ihm ab" (33; emphasis added). These projections of the soul, welling up from a mysterious inner source of noesis, become confused and dissipate themselves ("auseinanderlaufen"). They leave Erwin's psychic sense of self in a vacuum (33). Erwin's quest for self-discovery progressively assumes the form of an inverted spiritual *Werdegang*. His pursuit of knowledge therefore goes topsy-turvy. It spirals helplessly away from the Enlightenment ideal of the errant soul's preordained possibility of developing higher intellectual potentialities that are preconditions of its ability to live and act virtuously in a divinely ordered universe.

Still, however, as an incorrigible aesthete Erwin discovers a strange beauty within his state of psychic isolation. This beauty, indeed, is a reflection of his mood of desolation, as this is accompanied by an uncanny intuition of the mysterious abysses of his soul:

Wenige Tage später freilich an einem Januarabend fühlte er dort [i.e., in Schönbrunn] den unsagbaren Reiz einer Statue, auf der sich zwei Frauen umschlungen hielten; hinter ihnen stieg über wenigen Sternen ein hoher grauer Himmel auf, die Erde war weiß von Schnee, nur etwas Licht von einem verwischten Mond fiel auf sie. (33)

Blending with the whiteness of the snow-covered landscape, the gray winter sky looms upward towards the evening stars. As they glitter in the empyrean, these celestial bodies suggest the illimitable vastness of the heavens. In the face of this immensity, the marble statue of the women, intertwined in their embrace, seems to dissipate into nothingness. The image of the sculpture illustrates the diminutive status of Erwin's subjectivity in his lostness within the abysmal world of his interiority.

On a trip through northern Italy, Erwin feels a spiritual affinity to the vast splendours of the places he sees. Perhaps they are manifestations of an all-encompassing reality concealing itself behind their lambent appearances. After his visit with his mother in Venice, Andrian's narrator relates the following:

Etwas müder kehrte die Mutter zu ihren Edelsteinen [...] zu den Kunstwerken der Künstler und zum wechselnden Mond und zu den gleichbleibenden Sternen und zum großen Anfang und zum großen Untergang der großen lebenden, für sie toten Sonne. Alles das liebte jetzt auch er, aber ganz anders wie sie; das Geheimnis des Lebens hatte sich ihm über alle Dinge und Wesen verbreitet, und doch verwirrten sie ihn nicht; sie waren ihm verwandt, er war einer von ihnen, und in jeder Schönheit, die seine Seele genoß, fühlte sie einen Schritt zur Erkenntnis. (51)

Unfortunately, Erwin's longed-for intuition of a reality higher than the isolated subject is exposed as an illusion during his stay with his mother in Venice. The above-quoted passage, in which he specifies the kinship of his soul with the appearances of things, proceeds from his discovery that his immediate consciousness *is* the world.

Andrian's narrator describes Erwin's mother as a self-indulgent aristocrat, his alter ego: "Sie hatte die Edelsteine, die kostbaren Stoffe und die gestickten Seiden geliebt und die Schauspiele [...] Sie liebte das alles noch immer; doch das alles machte sie nur sehnsüchtiger nach neuen Herrlichkeiten" (48). Towards

evening, Erwin and his mother stroll through the budding paradise of the Italian landscape: "Einmal gingen sie gegen Abend durch die sanfte und festliche Anmut der italienischen Landschaft" (49). Erwin asks his mother if she knows what is the secret meaning of life: "das Geheimnis des Lebens" (49). The princess answers that, although we can embrace and experience the world's beauties and pleasures, the boundless plenitude of their richness prevents us from ever penetrating the veil of their mystery to discover their ultimate inner secret (49–50). Disagreeing with his mother, Erwin insists that the world exists only in one's mind. Hence, one's fate ("Schicksal") is to be alone, enclosed within one's selfhood and unable to escape (50). Moreover, an individual's fate resembles an indecipherable hieroglyph inscribed in the soul: "'Der Grund muß in der Seele sein' sagte er" (50). Refusing to accede to Erwin's solipsism, the princess illustrates her position with a lovely metaphor: "wir gehn durch unser Leben wie durch die Lustgärten fremder Schlösser, von fremden Dienern geführt; wir behalten und lieben die Schönheiten, die sie uns gezeigt haben, aber zu welchen sie uns führen [...] hängt von ihnen ab. Zuerst sind es die Eltern, dann folgen die andern" (50).

The hedonistic temperament of Erwin's mother prevents her from joining her son in his opinion that one's destiny must isolate one from the pleasures of the senses and from other people. Erwin's rejoinder is as follows: "'Nein', sagte er, 'ich glaube, das Geheimnis liegt darin: Wir sind allein, wir und unser Leben, und unsere Seele schafft unser Leben'" (50). To this cryptic utterance, Andrian adjoins this passage: "An einem Schauer empfanden beide, daß er die Wahrheit gesagt hatte; und beide fühlten sich [...] schmerzlich, dumpf und *grundlos*" (50; emphasis added). The mystery of our fate is that we are utterly alone, confined within our selfhood. In our condition of pure isolation, our individual soul *creates* our life-world: the objects of our consciousness in their entirety. Thus Andrian's character asserts a radical form of solipsism, maintaining that the soul, contained within itself, spontaneously produces its world. This article argues that the solipsism – [das] "Alleinsein" – to which Andrian ascribes Erwin's subjectivity has its provenance in the phenomenalism of Fichte, whose theory of the absolute ego (*ICH*) he, in his diary, identifies as "Solipsismus" (Renner, "Leopold Andrian über Hugo von Hofmannsthal" 16). In a further journal entry, Andrian maintains that Fichte brought Kantian epistemology to its culmination as a radical form of idealism. In regard to Fichte's phenomenalism, he writes: "Alles ist Erscheinung; die ganze [...] Welt ist nur der Bewußtseinsinhalt des Menschen. Alles existiert nur in uns; sofern wir nicht sind ist die Welt nicht mehr" (Renner, "Leopold Andrian über Hugo von Hofmannsthal" 16). His identification of objecthood with "Erscheinung," which characterizes the world as a phenomenon of consciousness – "[ein] Bewußtseinsinhalt" – evinces a relationship to Fichte's noted *Populärschrift* entitled *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1801). Thus it is astonishing that, in her useful commentary on Andrian's notes about Hof-

mannsthal, Ursula Renner devotes no attention to the important relationship specified by Andrian between solipsism and Fichtean subjective idealism (see “Leopold Andrian über Hugo von Hofmannsthal” 44–45).

During the nineteenth century, Fichte’s text became famous and was generally considered one of the consummate descriptions ever written of the position of solipsism (Fuller 288–89). While George Berkeley’s deity ultimately guarantees a correspondence of ideas in all percipients, the phenomenism of Fichte acknowledges no such possibility. V. I. Lenin insists that Fichte’s work drives the epistemological “problem” of solipsism to its extreme limit (54–55). Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* was read in *Gymnasias* and universities throughout Germany and Austria (Knapp 8–10). In Victorian England, the treatise was valued by such luminaries as Thomas Carlyle, who, alluding to concepts developed in Book Three of the work, extols Fichte’s subjectivism and characterizes his voluntarism as demarcating a major phase of humanity’s intellectual progression (Carlyle 156–57). In regard to the twentieth century, ideas from *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* resonate in the phenomenology of temporal transcendence found in Martin Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* (326–29) – while on the other hand Bertrand Russell describes Fichte’s solipsism as a form of insanity that, conflated with his extreme voluntarism, was the progenitor of German nationalist totalitarianism (718).

Given his intense interest in philosophical idealism, Andrian would certainly have been familiar with the treatise. The following considerations discuss facets of Fichte’s text with the purpose of explicating the nature and significance of Erwin’s solipsism. Jens Rieckmann, of course, infers that it is Friedrich Nietzsche’s theory of the Apollonian that informs Erwin’s contemplative perspective on reality, a stance that renders his detached consciousness akin to a pure spectator of events (“Narziss” 74–75). Rightly emphasizing the importance, for Andrian, of Nietzsche’s *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), Rieckmann differentiates the Apollonian dimension of his novel from its Dionysian impetus, which lies in Erwin’s turbulent sexual urges (“Narziss” 78). This Dionysian element in the novel is significant and deserves further investigation. However, this analysis will urge that Erwin’s “Narcissism,” i.e., contemplative solipsistic consciousness, has its provenance in an underlying metaphysic deeper than Nietzsche’s vision of Apollonian rationalism.

At the beginning of Book Two of his treatise Fichte is in a state of anguish resulting from his discovery that his mind is nothing more than the form of a corporeal mode of Spinozan nature. This form is his body. As the mirror of his body, Fichte’s mind is equivalent in its autonomy to the perceptive states of a dragonfly. Hence, “Unmuth und Angst nagte an meinem Innern” (6:215). In the midnight hour, however, a mysterious shape appears out of the darkness. It is a spirit come to show Fichte that the world is a projection of mind.

The phantasm postulates a form of noesis that he conceives as operating in the minds of individuals who are higher spirits, i.e., self-intellecting beings. He calls this self-reflexivity, which accompanies all presentations or images of consciousness, “das unmittelbare Bewußtseyen deiner selbst” (6:216). A spirit’s sensible intuitions, its “Vorstellungen,” are presentations of objects presumably existing beyond its mental activities. However, the notion of a world subsisting beyond consciousness is a philosophically naive one. In its intentional acts of perceiving objects in the world, a spirit is an entity that perceives its own perceiving; it is likewise an entity that, feeling its sense impressions, self-reflexively intuit its own acts of feeling: “Du bist dir [...] das Sehende im Sehen, das Fühlende im Fühlen; und indem du des Sehens dir bewußt bist, bist du dir einer [...] Modification *deiner selbst* bewußt” (6:216; emphasis in the original). The spectre assures Fichte that only through his awareness of his intentional acts of perceiving, of seeing and feeling, etc., can he “have” objects of consciousness. Objects are “Erscheinungen,” appearances to and for the self-conscious mind (6:216–17). In primordial consciousness, there are only phenomena that appear: “Vorstellungen.” Through its application of the law of sufficient reason, the mind constructs a body out of these originally “dis-embodied” modifications of consciousness (6:248).

A *sine qua non* of worldhood, i.e., of states of affairs in their totality, is Fichte’s awareness of his acts of perceiving objects. In his imaginations of objects, were he not to apperceive that he was seeing and feeling, he would not be able to “intelligize” (“erkennen”) any object at all, inasmuch as no object could be presented to consciousness (6:216). Were he unable to objectivize the contents of his consciousness, his imaginations, all presentations would disappear (6:216). Sense impressions are phenomena of consciousness. If not a phenomenon of and for consciousness, the sensible body does not exist. Furthermore, all presentations of objects in sight and feeling are not only contingent upon Fichte’s awareness of his acts of perception; their existence also depends upon his awareness of his awareness of his acts of perception. Worldhood is given only in the self-conscious intellect. In Fichte’s proto-Husserlian sense, the world exists *for* mind. It is *through* it as well. The phantasm tells Fichte the following: “Sonach wäre das unmittelbare Bewußtseyen deiner selbst und deiner Bestimmungen [‘Modificationen’] die ausschließende Bedingung alles andern Bewußtseyns, und du weißt etwas, nur in wiefern du weißt – daß du dieses etwas weißt” (6:216). The reality of objective presentations lies in the self-mirroring reflexivity of the intellect: in its pure awareness of its awareness of being aware. This immediate consciousness constitutes the essence of mind and world. For this eminently Fichtean reason, Andrian writes: “die ganze [...] Welt ist nur der Bewußtseinsinhalt des Menschen. *Alles existirt nur in uns*; sofern wir nicht sind ist die Welt nicht mehr” (Renner “Leopold Andrian über Hugo von Hofmannsthal” 16; emphasis added).

All perceptions of objects are modifications of the mind's self-reflexivity: "In aller Wahrnehmung nimmst du zunächst nur dich selbst, und deinen eignen Zustand wahr" (Fichte 6:217). Fichte's midnight visitor could be the shade of the philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz. For the apparition tells his host that, inasmuch as the world is contingent upon the mind's immediate consciousness, all presentations or appearances of objects are given only *through* the phenomenon of self-reflexivity. In themselves, objects are nothing. These papilionoidea, these snowy egrets, are, exclusively, perceptive states of my mind. In order to perceive such phenomena, the intellect must objectify them. In naive consciousness, which views objects as things existing in an external world, the mind possesses only a vague and confused awareness of its awareness of perceiving and, hence, of its acts of objectifying phenomena *for itself*. But by apperceiving its intentional acts of objectifying itself, the mind becomes aware of its nature as a self-objectifying activity. Thus the ego apperceives the appearances of objects as posited in, for, and through immediate consciousness. Were the intellect not an intrinsically self-objectifying activity, objecthood in general could not appear. Hence, in apperceiving phenomena, the mind becomes aware of itself as a *positing* power of thought. Fichte writes: "I. Das Bewußtseyn *des Gegenstandes* ist nur ein nicht dafür erkanntes *Bewußtseyn meiner Erzeugung einer Vorstellung vom Gegenstande*. Um diese Erzeugung weiß ich schlechthin dadurch, daß ich es selbst bin, der da erzeugt. Und so ist alles Bewußtseyn nur ein unmittelbares, ein Bewußtseyn meiner selbst" (6:232–33; emphasis in the original).

Because the essence of intellect is a self-objectifying activity, it constitutes, ostensibly, an immaterial unit, an indivisible identity of subject and object. Its presentations of objects are therefore projections in which self-consciousness – the ego – apperceives itself *in* its acts of self-objectification or self-mirroring. Thus the ego's objects in their totality are projections of itself; for in these objects it perceives itself while apperceiving its perception of itself. These apperceptions disclose the intrinsic nature of the ego as a self-contained and self-subsistent, ideal world. Its noetic life is akin to that of a monad. Beyond the self-objectifications of immediate consciousness, however, neither world nor ego can appear. The ego is unknowable independently of its self-projections: its seeing ("Bewußtseyn") of its seeing ("Bewußtes"). This self-projective activity occurs only in the mirrors that are its presentations, its "Vorstellungen." Fichte writes:

In allem Bewußtseyn schaue ich mich selbst an; denn ich bin Ich: für das Subjective, das Bewußtseyende, ist es *Anschaung*. Und das Objective, das Angeschauete und Bewußte, bin abermals ich selbst, dasselbe Ich, welches auch das anschauende ist, – nur eben objectiv, vorschwebend dem Subjectiven [...] Ich bin ein lebendiges Sehen. Ich sehe – Bewußtseyn – sehe mein Sehen – bewußtes. (6:238; emphasis in the original)

In his journal, Andrian defines Fichtean phenomenalism as solipsism through his recognition that, in Fichte's view, the mind as a "monad" denotes a *spontaneous* thinking identity. Fichte's description of the mind's understanding of itself as the source of its modifications derives from Leibniz's doctrine of the mind's spontaneity, which has it that the mind has "no windows" through which it could egress into an external world or through which a world existing outside itself could ingress into its identity: "Les Monades n'ont point de fenêtres, par lesquelles quelque chose y puisse entrer ou sortir" (*Vernunftprinzipien* 28). In Leibniz's view, the ego is an autonomous thinking substance that generates its mental representations in their entirety. The universe represented by the perceptive activity of a monad is only a phenomenon of its mind. Consequently, all phenomena are both for consciousness, and through it as well (Leibniz, *Monadology* 316). Thus, in his *Théodicée*, Leibniz affirms this of immediate consciousness: "*Spontaneum est, cuius principium est in agente*" (*Philosophische Schriften* 6:296).

Prince Erwin's conceit, expressed to his mother, is that "we are alone." This assertion follows from his Fichtean assumption that the soul spontaneously generates ("schafft") its own internal worldhood (50). Because the soul is a noetic *causa sui*, in coming to full self-awareness it recognizes itself as the wellspring of its world, which reflects a "windowless" universe in itself. The mind's *cogitationes* thus compose mere modifications of its self-reflexivity. In fine, Erwin's solipsism involves a theory of the self that asserts it as a spontaneous perceptive and apperceptive "identity": a self-mirroring nous. For this reason, in *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* Andrian describes a world, all phenomena of which constitute appearances not only for, but through, the activities of an isolated *percipiens*. Hence, Erwin concludes that his ego is the world: "denn er selber war die Welt" (54).

In addition to his reference to Fichte, Andrian's reflections on philosophy manifest his abiding interest in the thought of Schopenhauer, who asserts that no object can exist, i.e., appear, without a percipient to which it appears (Renner, "Leopold Andrian über Hugo von Hofmannsthal" 17). As an object of consciousness, the world exists *for* consciousness as well: "Die Welt ist meine Vorstellung" (2:3). Renner infers that Schopenhauer's idealism forms the background of the phenomenalism developed in Andrian's novel, inasmuch as Schopenhauer affirms with Berkeley that the existence of objects lies in their being perceived: "*Esse is percipi*" (*Leopold Andrians Garten der Erkenntnis* 259; Berkeley 23–25). However, I submit that it is Fichte's radically solipsistic claim concerning the *object-generating* nature of immediate consciousness that motivates Erwin's identification of his subjectivity with the world and that thus induces him to project his self-objectifying *ICH* as the creative ground of being (the subject). Schopenhauer, on the other hand, assails Fichtean idealism by maintaining that, as the origin of objecthood (i.e., the *NICHT-ICH*), Fichte's ego represents a self-contradiction; for in it consciousness presupposes its object.

This presupposition superimposes upon the subject the a priori *necessity* that the object be a sine qua non of the subject, and vice-versa. Thus the law of sufficient reason dictates that the notion of an autarchic subject (a construct of subjective idealism) is as fallacious as the assertion of a pure object (materialism). Schopenhauer asserts that his radical subjectivism renders it impossible for Fichte ever to scale out of the abyss of the *ICH*. For Schopenhauer, moreover, Kant's categories – the a priori conditions of subjective experience – are the preconditions for intersubjective experience (2:40). It follows that, in Schopenhauer's view, the world's status as an object *for* consciousness does not entail solipsism, a deduction of which Andrian would have been aware.

It is the extreme solipsism involved in Fichte's subjective idealism that informs Andrian's phenomenism in his novel. Moreover, as suggested above, a dominant theme of Andrian's novel concerns the "Grundlosigkeit" of the self (33; 50). Andrian's narrator describes Erwin's thoughts ("Gedanken") as a stream of reflexive imaginations that produce themselves spontaneously; however, these presentations manifest no unitary subject in whose noetic intentions they occur (33). Having no apparent grounding in a thinking identity, these presentations well up, as it were out of nowhere, and sweep Erwin's consciousness along in their inexorable flow: "seine Gedanken [glitten] *von sonst* an ihm [ab], liefen [auseinander] und [ließen] ihn allein" (33; emphasis added). Intimately related to his view concerning the spontaneity of Erwin's consciousness is Andrian's ultimate defictionalization of the ego. This aspect of Andrian's text also evinces the influence of Fichte's phenomenism.

Still in Book Two of *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, Fichte characterizes the thinking activity of intelligences as a "zerstreutes Bewußtseyn," a phenomenon that is constituted by a continuous stream of immediate self-reflections (6:250). Fichte's phenomenology of the dispersed quality of immediate consciousness involves his critique of Leibniz's dictum that an immediate self-reflexivity accompanies a monad's representations of the universe: "l'identité apparente à la personne même, qui se sent la même, suppose l'identité réelle, à chaque *passage prochain* accompagné de reflexion ou de sentiment du *moy*: une perception intime et immediate ne pouvant tromper naturellement" (*Philosophische Schriften. Nouveaux Essais* 6:236; emphasis in the original). In authentic Leibnizian fashion, Fichte asserts that objects are nothing more than mental states: "Alles, was ich weiß ist mein Bewußtseyn selbst" (6:250). Because immediate consciousness accompanies all "Vorstellungen," Fichte tells the spectre that in all his perceptions of objects he is immersed in, and carried along by, a continuous flow of "ego-awarenesses" (6:250). Each moment in this stream of immediate consciousness transcends the moment of self-mirroring that preceded it: "in jedem Momente meines Bewußtseyns sage [ich]: Ich, Ich, Ich, und immer Ich – nemlich Ich, und *nicht das bestimmte in diesem Momente*

gedachte Ding außer mir" (6:250; emphasis in the original). As modifications of immediate consciousness, all perceptions in their infinite variety are simply ways in which consciousness, objectifying itself, immediately mirrors itself – and mirrors this, its own act of self-mirroring.

The phantasm posits immediate consciousness as the subjective source of time. In the flow of duration, its moments of self-reflection form a stream of self-imaginings ("Bilder"), which continues its flow ad infinitum – or until the demise of the self (6:251). The ego's acts of self-intellection compose a dispersed series of self-imaginings, for each act necessarily transcends those that went before it. If the ego were not a translucent flow of self-mirroring presentations – a continuous series of self-imaginings – it would not be a self-mirroring activity at all. Hence, the ego can never come to the stasis of a simple identity. For it must always project itself *beyond itself*; so long as it continues as a self-mirroring activity it must necessarily generate a series of self-imaginings, ad infinitum. In each of its "Vorstellungen," the ego therefore denotes a seeing – "ein Sehen" – that at every instant projects itself beyond itself, in order that it may apperceive itself in its acts of self-mirroring (6:238). As a continuously self-mirroring mirror, the ego is its transcendence; for it could not mirror itself were it unable to detach itself from itself.

Nevertheless, in light of the indefinability of the "I" as such, the following question arises: How does the ego come to be construed as a Cartesian thinking substance? In answer to this question, the spectre postulates an abstractive function of consciousness, which he calls "*das Denken*" (6:25; emphasis in the original). In the ghost's view, which is reminiscent of Berkeley, thought is an activity that abstracts from particulars, such as this white iris, to substantivize them into universal essences in language. Furthermore, explaining the concept of mind, "Leibniz" avers that thought abstracts from the disseminated self-imaginings given in the flow of immediate consciousness to hypostatize these modifications of consciousness into a subject, an ego-thing. Thought thus invents the fiction ("Erdichtung") of a substance that it projects as the spiritual substrate of its perceptive acts: "Alle Vorstellungen, die von dem unmittelbaren Bewußtseyn meines Vorstellens begleitet werden, sollen, zufolge dieser Erdichtung, aus Einem und demselben Vermögen, das in einem und demselben Wesen ruht, hervorgehen; und so erst entsteht mir der Gedanke von Identität [...] meines Ich" (6:250).

No thinking identity lies hidden behind the stream of presentations accompanied by immediate consciousness. One should, therefore, not say "*I think, I feel, etc.*" One should, rather, use the following language: "*es erscheint der Gedanke: daß ich empfinde, schaue an, denke; keineswegs aber: ich empfinde*" (6:251; emphasis in the original). Reality denotes a scattered series of noetic images in which consciousness continuously detaches itself from itself to mirror itself. The spectre of Leibniz thus eschews his own conception of the *moi* as a

substantial identity, a monad. For existence is akin to a dream that dreams itself ad infinitum. Agreeing with his nightly visitor, Fichte says: “Alle Realität verwandelt sich in einen wunderbaren Traum, ohne ein Leben, von welchem geträumt wird, und ohne einen Geist, *dem da träumt*” (6:251; emphasis added).

As Andrian has it in *Der Garten der Erkenntnis*, “we” are radically alone, prisoners of our own dreaming self-awareness. The hopelessly solipsistic nature of our selfhood is conditioned by the workings of a self-reflexive ego, which, in its spontaneous noetic activities, *gives itself* its worldhood. Indeed, the ego *is* its world. Nevertheless, the ego cannot be a substantial identity. For its self-reflexivity induces the ego at every instant to project itself beyond itself in the flux of its acts of self-mirroring. For this reason, the stream of Erwin’s spontaneous imaginations flows incessantly beyond the ostensible *nunc stans* constituted by the “substance” of his fictional subjectivity: “seine Gedanken [glitten] *von sonst an ihm [ab]*” (33; emphasis added). Engendered by his spontaneous mental activities, Erwin’s perceptions of objects, which appear seemingly *ex nihilo*, do not manifest the workings of an immaterial “*unum per se*,” or mind-unit, which operates behind the scenes of its presentations to determine their order and connection (Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften. Nouveaux Essais* 6:328). Though the source of all objecthood, the prince’s ego resembles a Fichtean “dispersed self-consciousness.” Each moment of this scattered, self-projecting consciousness transcends itself to reflect upon its own acts of perceiving. As Paetzke points out, Andrian’s narrator describes Erwin’s presentations of objects as accompanied by the phenomenon of immediate consciousness (64–65). In this sense, they represent modifications, or ways of appearing, of self-consciousness. However, no self-identical *cogito* lies concealed behind the kaleidoscope of Erwin’s imaginations of objects. These dream images surreally arise within and float past his acts of self-mirroring, like the ghostly alter egos manifested in pathologies of schizophrenia: “seine Gedanken [...] [liefen auseinander] und [ließen] ihn allein” (33). Erwin’s conscious “self” is helplessly carried along by these reflections. Thus Andrian’s novel describes the ego, as such, as a vacuous construction of thought, one whose origin is the continuously self-intellecting activity inherent in immediate consciousness. Erwin’s world therefore disperses into a fluidal series of appearances that, mirroring themselves, well up spontaneously from an isolated – and “Unnameable” – source: “Moi, dont je ne sais rien” (Beckett 29). Lost within the dream of his evanescent selfhood, Erwin confronts the paradox of the subject, whose intrinsic self-projective, self-mirroring activity calls into question its very being.

Ursula Prutsch and Klaus Zeyringer indicate that Andrian wrote and spoke of a mysterious “second soul” that haunts our sentient being (23–24). For this reason, as these researchers maintain, in Erwin’s conversation with his mother, cited above, he asserts that, though we are alone because our subjectivity creates the world, the soul is not *in* us alone: “Wir sind allein, wir und unser Leben, und

unsere Seele schafft unser Leben, *aber unsere Seele ist nicht in uns allein*" (50; emphasis added). Like Prutsch and Zeyringer, Rieckmann conflates Andrian's notion of a "second soul" with the "otherness" represented by his homosexuality ("Knowing" 68–70). This sexual orientation was a lifelong cause of guilt for Andrian and eventually contributed to his psychosis (Prutsch/Zeyringer 27). Rieckmann points out that Andrian characterized his homosexuality as a dark alien "other" that occasioned a permanent fissure in his empirical ego ("Knowing" 75). Presumably, in his novel Andrian hypostatizes his homosexual "otherness" in the schizophrenic image of a ghostly higher self or transcendental soul. Nevertheless, although Andrian indeed described his homosexuality using such terms as "second soul" and "other," his philosophical studies focussing on the problem of solipsism led him to the metaphysical notion of the universal ego (Rieckmann, "Knowing" 68). He alludes to this concept in his considerations on Kant's phenomenalism and its relation to his theory of the unknowable *Ding an sich*; however, this complex dimension of Andrian's intellectual pursuits cannot be examined here (see Renner, "Leopold Andrian über Hugo von Hofmannsthal" 16).

Rieckmann's claims in regard to Andrian's homoeroticism, though valid per se, are reductive in regard to the text of his literary work and neglect the important philosophical contents that emerge in the above-cited passage. In this passage, Andrian's character alludes to the concept of a superimposed *transzendentes Subjekt* or universal subject capable of grounding a "preestablished harmony" of all minds, hence making possible an ideal intersubjectivity of all the perceptive states occurring in the percipients that participate in this intellect (see Husserl 116ff.). However, the notion of the universal ego, i.e., the higher "Seele," contradicts Erwin's assertion that the individual ego in its state of isolation *produces* its own world: "unsere Seele schafft unser Leben [...]." For, as Husserl insists, the universal mind postulated in various forms of idealism, including that of Leibniz, mirrors a coherent world system whose noetic activities necessarily transcend the world-bound facticity of the empirical subject. Husserl himself resorts to the device of the universal subject in endeavouring to secure an intercorrespondence of perceptive states in his monads; with this hypostasis he seeks to insure an intersubjective noetic harmony in these identities (116–18; Adorno 93–95). Renner correctly interprets the above-quoted passage from Andrian's novel as positing a universal subject or soul whose subsistence is fatefully dis severed from and alien to the disintegrating ego of Prince Erwin (*Leopold Andrians "Garten der Erkenntnis"* 249–50). In this sense, we can construe the latter's notion of a universal soul as the effect of his nostalgic yearning for a transcendent spiritual divinity that educes a mystic harmony of intersubjectivity – a miracle that the dispersion of his egohood renders impossible.

What significance, however, lies in the contradictory statement expressed by Erwin? If it is a genuine thinking subject, Erwin's universal ego is exposed

to the selfsame logic relating to the individual soul that is developed by Fichte in his defictionalization of the subject. For, according to this logic, the universal subject, if it be a thinking subject at all, can as little be contained *in* our subjecthood as our (intrinsically self-transcendent) subjecthood can be enclosed *within itself*. Thus, if construed as an act of self-intellection, the universal ego cannot entail a self-subsistent identity, a universal *unum per se* – an ontological status that Aristotle, for example, attributes to his god. As shown by the considerations above, Andrian incorporates into his novel a defictionalization of the subject reminiscent of Fichte. A talented student of philosophy, Andrian would not have been unaware of the problem lurking in his character's metaphysic of the higher, or superimposed self. Thus Erwin's notion of the universal ego involves a dilemma, inasmuch as his solipsistic theory of mind hearkens back to Fichte's claim that, swept along by the flowing images of its self-dreaming dream, the subject *per se* constitutes a fabrication of thought, an *Erdichtung*. Implicitly, Andrian's character relates the *solus ipse* of the individual subject to the necessity of escaping the problem of the isolated self, as this phantasm is lost within its dispersed consciousness. Hence arises Andrian's dilemma revolving around the universal subject. Logically, this entity cannot be isolated within itself; for such an ontological status would amount to a *contradictio in adjecto* that would explode the universality inherent in its nature. If, on the other hand, the universal subject exists, it is vulnerable to the same method of defictionalization that pertains to the idea of the individual subject. The hypostasis of the universal ego can be nothing more than a fiction. It signifies a vacuous metafiction that issues from the dilemma alluded to here. The prince's soul must consequently be confined forever within its dispersed and dreaming world. Imprisoned within a surreal dreamscape that progressively unfolds into a nightmare, he is irremediably "alone." If the universal soul postulated by Erwin implies a metafiction of the subject, then arguably Andrian concurs with Fichte's assertion that, because the soul's spontaneity makes it the *vis motrix* of its world, *being itself* is a chimera.

Fichte's spectre identifies "true being" with permanently enduring identity: "[das] Dauernd[e]" (6:251). The apparition echoes Leibniz, for whom being denotes an indivisible subject, or unextended *unum per se*, which persists as the same unit throughout its changes of state in their entirety. These modifications are an entelechy's perceptions. Thus this identity's perceptive activities are merely fleeting expressions of its ideal nature, which, as a permanent subject of predication, constitutes a substance. Leibniz defines substance as actuality *per se*; for its being, in essence, signifies a pure (undivided) present. In consonance with Leibniz, Fichte holds that being *per se* implies indivisible actuality that remains eternally the same through all its modifications: "Das Seyn ist einfach, unveränderlich, und bleibt ewig sich selbst gleich" (9:58). But the ghost avers

that there are only self-awarenesses; there is no actuality. Only appearances shine; these are the “Bilder” that appear to immediate consciousness in a mirrorlike continuum of presentations. These ideas represent nothing existing beyond themselves. The phenomenal world is a pellucid veil that veils nothing. The “I” itself is only an *idea ideae*, and an *idea ideae ideae*, etc. – a dispersed and “confused” self-mirroring, ad infinitum, of images, i.e., presentations of immediate consciousness (Fichte 6:251; Spinoza 2:65). Formed of a dreaming gallery of self-reflections, the “I” is an invention: the corollary of an evanescent *forma ideae*, which elusive phenomenon Fichte characterizes as “das Sehen meines Sehens” (6:238). The spontaneous ground of its world, the ego is not a substance; it therefore has no being. In his dialogue with the ghost, Fichte articulates this paradox as follows:

I. Es giebt überall kein Dauerndes, weder außer mir, noch in mir, sondern nur einen unaufhörlichen Wechsel [...] Es ist kein Seyn. – *Ich selbst* weiß überhaupt nicht, und bin nicht. *Bilder* sind: sie sind das Einzige, was da ist, und sie wissen von sich, nach Weise der Bilder: – Bilder die vorüberschweben, ohne daß etwas sey, *dem* sie vorüberschweben; die durch Bilder von den Bildern zusammenhängen. Bilder, ohne etwas in ihnen Abgebildetes, ohne Bedeutung und Zweck. Ich selbst bin eins dieser Bilder; ja, ich bin selbst dies nicht, sondern nur ein verworrenes Bild von den Bildern. (6:251; third emphasis added)

With the ego's dissolution, being itself is absorbed into vertiginous images of a dream that continuously dreams itself, as though lost in the trance of an opium-eater. The spectre of Leibniz vanishes.

Scholars unanimously agree with Paetzke's observation that Andrian's *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* portrays the entire world as a series of dream images resembling the luminous two-dimensional forms projected in a camera obscura (67). This claim corresponds to the poet's auctorial intention in composing the novel. I would suggest, moreover, that the dream-character of the narrative reflects Fichte's argument concerning the nature of reality as a dream of immediate consciousness *without a subject* – without a spiritual identity *in* whose dreaming the dream is being dreamed. Immanent within this stratum of meaning is the ultimately *nihilistic* solipsism to which the spectre leads Fichte. This most eccentric form of solipsism represents the final stage in Prince Erwin's *Bildungsweg*.

To be sure, Andrian's description of things as phenomena *for* consciousness displays the influence of Ernst Mach's phenomenalism, an epistemology that dispenses with the Cartesian intuition of a *res Cogitans* active within its presentations of objects (Renner, *Leopold Andrians "Garten der Erkenntnis"* 255–59). Like other nineteenth-century thinkers, Mach was familiar with

Fichte's phenomenology of the ego as a stream of appearances. His claims relating to the fluidity and impermanence of the ego harken back to the second book of *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*. Thus, Mach writes: "Das Ich ist so wenig beständig als die Körper" (3). Echoing Fichte's defictionalization of the "I," Mach maintains that the notion of the permanent ego amounts to a fiction. Likewise, the concept of the body as an enduring identity through time is a construct. Similarly, Fichte describes the body as an ever mutating projection of immediate consciousness: it is the (dispersed) ego's "Versinnlichung" of itself (6:248). Mach's empiricism demonstrates the *moi* (Leibniz) to be unscientific, inasmuch as this noetic entity is not a phenomenon that can be observed. Like the ego, for Mach the conception of a thing as a permanent identity-through-change is an invention; for all objecthood is built up out of primary elements of sensation, which, in themselves, are neither "subjective" nor "objective." Nevertheless, Mach affirms the ability of scientific reasoning to develop systematic representations, or mappings, of phenomena in nature, and he brands as absurd Fichte's assertion that the world – and other egos ("die Ich anderer Menschen") – is an illusion: a notion that, together with Fichte's epistemological nihilism, Andrian embraces (Mach 23).

Andrian's novel ends with a memento mori. Near the beginning of the work, moreover, a memento mori occurs that repeats and deepens the *Todesmotiv* represented by the death of Erwin's father. Travelling by train with an old priest from his cloister school, Erwin notices a young military officer who boards the train at Innsbruck. The priest observes that the peculiar pallor of the young man's face portends a sickness unto death: "er habe die Schwindsucht, sagte der Pater, und werde wohl bald sterben müssen" (13). Furthermore, towards the conclusion of the narrative, Erwin begins to feel the foreboding sensation that a grim "stranger" is following him furtively through the streets of Vienna: "als er um die Ecke zweier Gassen ging, [stand] der Fremde vor ihm, mit dem er im Frühling sehnsüchtig nach Erkenntnis gegangen war; der Fremde grüßte ihn demütig [...] aber er sah ärmlicher aus, und die scheue Ruhe in seinem Blick war *drohender*" (44–45; emphasis added).

Rieckmann points out that the stranger is a literary personification of the self-alienation Andrian suffered both as a Jew and as a homosexual in an era of racial intolerance and homophobia ("Knowing" 61). Rieckmann correctly emphasizes how, in the fateful *Zeitgeist* of late nineteenth-century Austrian culture, the prevalent anti-Semitic mentality associated homosexuality with Jewishness. His fear of being victimized by such stigmatization constantly tormented Andrian ("Knowing" 61). Nevertheless, in his novel the stranger not only represents a personification of Andrian's sexual desires and their concomitant terrors, but also functions as a harbinger of death. In the "Dionysian" homoeroticism of his encounter with the bedraggled young stranger in a crowded Vienna

Heurigenlokal, Erwin's imagination superimposes upon the latter's made-up face the visage of the courtesan who is his lover, which surreally appears as a kind of death mask: "Und während ihm der Erwin ins Gesicht schaute, fiel ihm plötzlich dessen Gegensatz, das Gesicht seiner Geliebten ein, mit geschlossenen Augen wie eine Maske unter dem Helm ihrer goldfarbenen Haare in der öden und hochmütigen Schönheit des Todes" (37; emphasis added). As pointed out by Prutsch and Zeyringer, this figure metamorphoses into a terrifying omen of death – "ein Todesbote" – when the prince, just before the onset of his mortal illness, encounters him: "Da stieg vor ihm an der Ecke zweier Gassen der Fremde vom Frühling und vom Sommer auf; sein Gesicht war verändert, es war mager, verzerrt und unerbittlich geworden, nur die Bewegungen seines Körpers waren gleich geblieben" (Prutsch/Zeyringer 23; Andrian 55).

Here the countenance of the stranger, who is *mager*, *verzerrt*, and *unerbittlich*, unmistakably recalls medieval and baroque woodcuts of the figure of death in his cowl, holding his sickle. Erwin's omen of death is shortly followed by another; this image completes the circular structure of the novel as a work beginning and ending with portents of death. After a deathly sickness befalls him, Erwin has a fevered dream in which he sees his friend Clemens – or is it the face of the mortally ill young man on the train to Bozen? "Einmal schlief er ein und träumte. Da erschien ihm jemand, und er wußte nicht genau ob es der Clemens war oder jener Leutnant, der einst mit ihm nach Bozen fuhr; er litt unter dieser Ungewißheit; flehend bat er die Erscheinung, sich zu nennen. Aber sie verschwand" (57). Thus, as he falls deeper into a coma, Erwin sees a phantasm of death, which briefly assumes form as the "ghost" of the lieutenant. From his description of the stranger and from the "reappearance" of the sickly officer in the dying Prince Erwin's dream, we can infer that his pursuit of knowledge has, from the beginning and throughout, been haunted by the omen of death. This apparition, looming behind the spectre of Leibniz, reveals himself at the conclusion of Andrian's novel as a final sign of the *vanitas* involved in Erwin's search for reality: "So starb der Fürst, ohne erkannt zu haben" (58).

Leopold Andrian's *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* is a significant literary achievement in its own right, one deserving considerably more scholarly attention than it has received. In the work, Andrian amalgamates meticulous descriptions of subjective states of perception with sophisticated philosophical concepts, thereby creating a negative *Bildungsweg*, as it were, in which his character discovers the futility inherent in his pursuit of knowledge of self and world. Furthermore, Andrian's novel is a microcosm, *en miniature*, of literary and philosophical developments that were taking place in his time and would be prevalent in the twentieth century. Emerging from the identity crisis suffered by Austrian philosophers and literati during the waning years of the nineteenth century, the novel anticipates the subjectivistic orientation towards reality

that would characterize literary modernism. Moreover, by incorporating into the framework of his novel salient concepts developed by Fichte in his *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, Andrian addresses a philosophical and existential issue that concerns humankind to this day. This involves the metaphysical question whether a human being possesses an autonomous spiritual identity that, in a Leibnizian sense, can be conceived as an “*idée innée*” (Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften. Nouveaux Essais* 6:84). However, in his novel Andrian assimilates Fichte’s critique of Leibniz’s conception of the *moi* as a perceptive and apperceptive substance. Andrian thus ascribes to his literary figure a solipsistic consciousness that inexorably leads the latter to the realization that he is radically alone, imprisoned in the abyss of his (non-existent) selfhood. For he portrays the world as nothing more than a dispersed dream appearance to Erwin’s immediate consciousness, which is itself a dream within a dream: a self-dreaming dream whose ground is a nothing surrounded by death.

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