Joseph Roth’s March into History

From the Early Novels to Radetzkymarsch
and Die Kapuzinergruft

Kati Tonkin
Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude to the Österreichischer Austauschdienst for an Österreich-Stipendium and to the University of Western Australia for a Fay Gale Fellowship. These two awards enabled me to spend the period from September 2001 to February 2002 in Vienna conducting the initial research for this study.

Emeritus Professor Leslie Bodl gave me the benefit of his expertise in Austrian literature and culture in stimulating conversations over a period of several years. I am indebted to him also for providing me with many contacts in Vienna, whose assistance in the early stages of my research was invaluable. Of these I would like to thank particularly Professor Moritz Csíky of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften; Professor Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler from the Universität Wien; and Dr. Heinz Lunzer, director of the Literaturhaus Wien for their interest in my project and their academic advice. I am also indebted to Dr. Lunzer for his advice and assistance in relation to the cover image for this book.

My doctoral supervisor, colleague, and friend Associate Professor Peter Morgan has been a wonderful mentor and an inspiration since I first attended his classes as an undergraduate. I greatly appreciated, enjoyed, and benefited from our supervision meetings over the years, and I cannot thank him enough for his unfailing support and encouragement. I am particularly grateful for his comments and suggestions as I was preparing the final manuscript for publication.

It has been a great pleasure to work with editorial staff at Camden House over the past twelve months. In particular I would like to thank Jim Walker for his initial and ongoing enthusiasm for my project, and both Jim Walker and Jane Best for their unfailing support and their advice at various stages of the work.

My family and friends have supported me throughout and I am thankful for their confidence, their understanding, and their patience. In particular, I would like to thank Barbara Tonkin for helpful comments on drafts and for her constant support, and Annette Harre for proofreading. Most of all I thank Ian Gollagher, to whom I wish to dedicate this book.

K. T.
May 2008
Note on References andAbbreviations

All references to Roth’s fiction and journalism are to Joseph Roth, Werke, 6 vols., vols. 1–3, Das journalistische Werk, ed. Klaus Westermann; vols 4–6, Romane und Erzählungen, ed. Fritz Hackert (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1989–91) and are given in the form (vol:page number).

Abbreviations Used in the Text

The following abbreviations are used in the text.

AA Katharina Ochse, Joseph Roth’s Auseinandersetzung mit dem Antisemitismus (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999).
AD Klaus Vondung, Die Apokalypse in Deuschland (Munich: DTV, 1988).
Introduction

Critics have never been able to reconcile Roth’s early writing with his most famous novel, *Radetzkymarsch*, and its sequel *Die Kapuzinergruft*. According to the widely accepted periodic thematic divisions of Roth’s work, the early fiction is grouped under the rubric “socialist” and the later works are interpreted as manifestations of the idealizing nostalgia of an alcoholic monarchist with a decreasing grip on reality. This categorization can be traced back to Roth’s friend Hermann Kesten, who published the first collection of Roth’s works in 1956:

In den fünfzehn Jahren, da er Bücher veröffentlichte, ward Roth aus einem skeptischen, zuweilen pessimistischen Moralisten ein legitimistischer Katholik, aus einem Linksradikalen ein Rechtskonservativer, aus einem Mitarbeiter sozialdemokratischer Blätter ein Inspirator sozialdoktrinärer Zeitschriften, aus einem “Frontsoldaten” ein “österreichischer Leutnant,” aus einem Neuerer ein Erbe, aus einem witzigen Spötter ein frommer Prediger.

Kesten’s dualistic assessment of Roth’s writing was adopted and developed by Ingeborg Sültemeyer in the late 1960s in the first major study of Roth’s early work, before which very little critical attention was paid to the early novels. As a result Roth was viewed as a conservative writer. Since Sültemeyer’s ground-breaking study, Roth’s early works of fiction and journalism have been the subject of greater scholarly interest, with a majority of critics concurring with Sültemeyer that the early work in general is characterized by a leftist political engagement that is strikingly absent from later texts.

There is less agreement, however, on what exactly constitutes Roth’s “early work” and where to locate the turning point. For Sültemeyer the salient characteristic of the early period is Roth’s commitment to socialism, which ended quite abruptly in 1926, his journey that year to the USSR having left him disillusioned with socialism as a solution to the problems of postwar Europe (*FW*, 92). This political commitment, she contends, had been the driving force not only of Roth’s early journalism but also of his first three novels, *Das Spinnennetz* (1923), *Hotel Savoy* (1924), and *Die Rebellion* (1924), which are remarkable more for their prescient and perceptual analysis of the contemporary political situation than for their literary quality. Once he had turned his back on socialism, Sültemeyer argues, a new period in his output began: “Die politisch aufklärerischen Interessen des Journalisten, die bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt dominierten, treten von nun
an zurück; für die folgende Schaffensperiode wird der künstlerische Ehrgeiz des Romanciers bestimmend" (FW, 13).

While subsequent studies have endorsed Sültemeyer’s classification of the early work as socialif, with some qualifications, the Jewish novel *Hiob: Roman eines einfachen Mannes* (1930) is more commonly cited as marking the point at which Roth finally broke from his early political engagement, taking flight from the problems of the present into the nostalgically recreated lost worlds of the *shtetl* and the Habsburg Empire. According to this classification, the novels published between 1927 and 1929 — *Die Flucht ohne Ende* (1927), *Zipper und sein Vater* (1928), *Rechts und Links* (1929) — are included in the early work, while the novels from *Hiob* to *Die Kapuzinergruppe* comprise the late work. However, although a majority of critics agree that with the publication of *Hiob* and *Ratdeltzynchron* "ein neuer Roth [trat] vor die Öffentlichkeit" (HMS, 25), the change in the writer is acknowledged to have begun earlier: "Seine ‘Wandlung’ läßt sich zwar einige Jahre zurückverfolgen und ist oft mit seiner Reise in die Sowjetunion (1926) in Zusammenhang gebracht worden, gewinnt jedoch konkrete literarische und für die Öffentlichkeit sichtbare Form erst mit dem Erscheinen *Hiobs*" (HMS, 25).

If critics who consider that *Hiob* marks "der Umschlagpunkt in der Wende vom ‘sozialistischen’ Autor der *Neuen Sachlichkeit’ zum konservativen, teils reaktionären sensiblen Stilisten und Legenden- und Mythenschöpfer" (HMS, 25) nonetheless agree with Sültemeyer that this transformation began in 1926, what does this mean for the classification of novels published between *Die Rebellion* and *Hiob*? Scholars have suggested or implied that Roth’s work of the 1920s — the "early" work — must itself be divided into two phases. They variously nominate 1924 or 1927 as the turning point or locate it somewhere between these years. In all cases this subdivision sees Sültemeyer’s grouping of the first three novels retained, while those of 1927–29 are treated separately; these later novels sometimes being referred to as a "spätes Frühwerk."* The very fact that Roth published no novels between *Die Rebellion* in 1924 and *Die Flucht ohne Ende* in 1927 indicates a break in his literary output, suggesting a natural division between the novels of the early and those of the late 1920s. The present study acknowledges this break and concludes the analysis of the early work with Roth’s third novel, *Die Rebellion*.

While the timing of the turning point in Roth’s work has been the subject of some disagreement, the existence of a fundamental thematic and ideological disjunction between the novels of the 1920s and those of the 1930s has rarely been challenged. Scholars who have attempted to establish parallels between the early and later work have for the most part contended or implied that Roth was always a conservative at heart. Roth’s biographer David Brion, for example, while largely endorsing the dualistic view of Roth’s development as a writer, asserts that “der legitimistische Roth [hätte] einen großen Teil der Feuilletons schreiben können, die er als ‘Sozialist’ für Linkszeitungen schrieb” (RB, 513). Similarly, C. E. Williams argues that “Roth’s socialism was largely emotional and to some extent opportunistic” (BE, 96) and that his subsequent “espousal of monarchism did not involve any radical transformation of his social and cultural values” (BE, 100). At base, he implies, Roth’s values were always traditional and conservative, his early cultural and political criticism being “in the first place an attack on the dehumanizing tendencies of urban industrial society, on capitalism, on the decadence of modern culture and on the moral bankruptcy of the age” — all “consistent with left-wing sympathies, but equally . . . commonplaces of the right-wing ideologies of the period” (BE, 100). Wolf Marchand’s study rests on this same contention (WB), and Claudio Magris has similarly argued that aspects of the traditionalist and anti-secularist polemic on which Roth’s later conservatism rests are already present in the early novels (WW, 16), and that the nihilism and pessimism of these novels are a reaction to the collapse of the Habsburg world and evidence an attachment to it (HMO, 257).

By contrast, Thorsten Jürgens maintains that the social criticism that is usually considered characteristic only of the early period is in fact evident throughout Roth’s work: “Roth [hat] bis zum Ende seines Lebens die gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen und Zustände der Zeit verfolgt und sie in seinen Werken als Thema verwendet oder auf sie reagiert.” Jürgens unequivocally rejects the suggestion that *Hiob* represents a turning point in Roth’s work, but at the same time he partially adopts the interpretation of the later novels as attempting “[eine] Wiederbelebung und Würdigung alter Werte der Habsburger Welt” (4). For him the novels from *Ratdeltzynchron* onwards evidence a twofold intention: “jetzt geben humanistisch-sozialistische Gesellschaftskritik und Konservatismus, sich gegenseitig befürchtend, vereint den Weg in die Vergangenheit, da die Gegenwart blockiert zu sein scheint” (4–5). That none of these attempts to reconcile the seemingly antithetical early and late work of Joseph Roth by suggesting an underlying continuity in his political outlook has been considered convincing is evident in the continuing prevalence of the dualistic view of Roth’s work.

While most critics do not attempt to reconcile the two generally recognized phases of Roth’s work, many seek to account for the disparity between the two periods with reference to an identity crisis allegedly triggered by the collapse of the multi-national Habsburg Empire and exacerbated by the rise of National Socialism. Robbed of his German identity by the Nazis, so the argument runs, Roth searched in vain for a *Heimat*, “for rootedness in a national and cultural identity” (UFR, 12). He was a Jew in search of a fatherland, a “doppelter Außenseiter” and “heimatloser Östjude” who felt compelled to lose himself in a fictive and utopian world in which ethnic and national groups lived side by side in harmony...
an zurück; für die folgende Schaffensperiode wird der künstlerische Ehrgeiz des Romanciers bestimmend" (FW, 13).

While subsequent studies have endorsed Süßtemeyer’s classification of the early work as socialist, if with some qualifications,6 the Jewish novel Hiob: Roman eines einfachen Mannes (1930) is more commonly cited as marking the point at which Roth finally broke from his early political engagement, taking flight from the problems of the present into the nostalgically recreated lost worlds of the shetel and the Habsburg Empire.7 According to this classification, the novels published between 1927 and 1929 — Die Flucht ohne Ende (1927), Zipper und sein Vater (1928), Rechts und Links (1929) — are included in the early work, while the novels from Hiob to Die Kapuzinergruft8 comprise the late work.9 However, although a majority of critics agree that with the publication of Hiob and Radezkynmarsch “ein neuer Roth [trat] vor die Öffentlichkeit” (HMS, 25), the change in the writer is acknowledged to have begun earlier: “Seine ‘Wandlung’ läßt sich zwar einige Jahre zurückverfolgen und ist oft mit seiner Reise in die Sowjetunion (1926) in Zusammenhang gebracht worden, gewinnt jedoch konkrete literarische und für die Öffentlichkeit sichtbare Form erst mit dem Erscheinen Hiobs” (HMS, 25).

If critics who consider that Hiob marks “der Umschlagpunkt in der Wende vom ‘sozialistischen’ Autor der Neuen Sachlichkeit zum konservativen, teils reaktionären sensiblen Stilisten und Legenden- und Mythenschöpfer” (HMS, 25) nonetheless agree with Süßtemeyer that this transformation began in 1926, what does this mean for the classification of novels published between Die Rebellion and Hiob? Scholars have suggested or implied that Roth’s work of the 1920s — the “early” work — must itself be divided into two phases. They variously nominate 192410 or 192711 as the turning point or locate it somewhere between these years. In all cases this subdivision sees Süßtemeyer’s grouping of the first three novels retained, while those of 1927–29 are treated separately,12 these later novels sometimes being referred to as a “spätes Frühwerk.”13 The very fact that Roth published no novels between Die Rebellion in 1924 and Die Flucht ohne Ende in 1927 indicates a break in his literary output, suggesting a natural division between the novels of the early and those of the late 1920s. The present study acknowledges this break and concludes the analysis of the early work with Roth’s third novel, Die Rebellion.

While the timing of the turning point in Roth’s work has been the subject of some disagreement, the existence of a fundamental thematic and ideological disjunction between the novels of the 1920s and those of the 1930s has rarely been challenged. Scholars who have attempted to establish parallels between the early and later work have for the most part contended or implied that Roth was always a conservative at heart. Roth’s biographer David Bromsen, for example, while largely endorsing the dualistic view of Roth’s development as a writer,14 asserts that “der legitimistische Roth [hätte] einen großen Teil der Feuilletons schreiben können, die er als ‘Sozialist’ für Linkszzeitungen schrieb” (RB, 513). Similarly, C. E. Williams argues that “Roth’s socialism was largely emotional and to some extent opportunist” (BE, 96) and that his subsequent “espousal of monarchism did not involve any radical transformation of his social and cultural values” (BE, 100). At base, he implies, Roth’s values were always traditional and conservative, his early cultural and political criticism being “in the first place an attack on the dehumanizing tendencies of urban industrial society, on capitalism, on the decadence of modern culture and on the moral bankruptcy of the age” — all “consistent with left-wing sympathies, but equally . . . commonplaces of the right-wing ideologies of the period” (BE, 100). Wolf Marchand’s study rests on this same contention (WB), and Claudio Magris has similarly argued that aspects of the traditionalist and anti-secularist polemic on which Roth’s later conservatism rests are already present in the early novels (WW, 16), and that the nihilism and pessimism of these novels are a reaction to the collapse of the Habsburg world and evidence an attachment to it (HMÖ, 257).

By contrast, Thorsten Jürgens maintains that the social criticism that is usually considered characteristic only of the early period is in fact evident throughout Roth’s work: “Roth [hat] bis zum Ende seines Lebens die gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung und Zustände der Zeit verfolgt und sie in seinen Werken als Thema verwendet oder auf sie reagiert.”15 Jürgens unequivocally rejects the suggestion that Hiob represents a turning point in Roth’s work, but at the same time he partially adopts the interpretation of the later novels as attempting “[eine] Wiederbelebung und Würdigung alter Werte der Habsburger Welt” (4). For him the novels from Radezkynmarsch onwards evidence a twofold intention: “jetzt gehen humanistisch-sozialistische Gesellschaftskritik und Konservatismus, sich gegenseitig befruchtend, vereint den Weg in die Vergangenheit, da die Gegenwart blockiert zu sein scheint” (4–5). That none of these attempts to reconcile the seemingly antithetical early and late work of Joseph Roth by suggesting an underlying continuity in his political outlook has been considered convincing is evident in the continuing prevalence of the dualistic view of Roth’s work.

While most critics do not attempt to reconcile the two generally recognized phases of Roth’s work, many seek to account for the disparity between the two periods with reference to an identity crisis allegedly triggered by the collapse of the multi-national Habsburg Empire and exacerbated by the rise of National Socialism. Robbed of his German identity by the Nazis, so the argument runs, Roth searched in vain for a Heimat, “for rootedness in a national and cultural identity” (UJR, 12). He was a Jew in search of a fatherland,16 a “doppelter Außenseiter”17 and “heimatloser Ostjude”18 who felt compelled to lose himself in a fictive and utopian world in which ethnic and national groups lived side by side in harmony
The disjointed structure and curiously incomplete or underdeveloped characterization in Roth’s early novels seem on one level to be an appropriate response to and reflection of a world in which there appeared suddenly to be “less ordering vision, less coherence and comprehension, less certainty.” Yet while it might be argued that with the fragmentary form Roth is attempting to find appropriate expression for this changed reality (MIV, 171), these novels must also be seen as not entirely successful experiments with form. In his early fiction Roth is struggling to find a form that will give adequate expression to the problems he observes in German-speaking Central Europe, a form he finally finds with the historical novel Radetzynmarsch.

In searching for form in the early novels, Roth examines various possible solutions to the chaos he observes — ethnic nationalism, socialism, American capitalism, individual withdrawal from political and social engagement — but finds none of them to be satisfactory. As an assimilated Jew who grew up in the multi-ethnic Habsburg province of Galicia, Roth was skeptical of both ethnic nationalism and Zionism, as the first chapter of the study demonstrates. In the early novels he extends this skepticism to other modes of thought, modes that aim at absolute or total solutions to the problems of post-Habsburg Central Europe. His deep pessimism about the future is reflected in the apocalyptic imagery that features in each of these novels, yet in each case the apocalypse is not fully realized. Roth ultimately rejects apocalyptic endings as symptomatic of contemporary problems rather than a constructive response: as a Central European Jew he would ultimately look to history as the only answer to the questions of the times.

Roth’s rejection of the apocalyptic paradigm is indicative of his insistence on the importance of continuing to engage with political and social questions, despite his pessimism about the future development of Europe. In a 1924 review of Heinrich Mann’s Die Diktatur der Vernunft27 he expresses deep concern about the retreat from reason and aversion to politics he found among many intellectuals in the Weimar Republic.28 Roth writes of the imperative of political engagement for the German writer of the present day, citing Mann as an exemplar, and pens a harsh polemic against the unpatriotic German writer. Comparing intellectuals of the Weimar Republic with those of bygone eras, he comments that since Goethe poets in Germany have considered it their duty not to be politically engaged but to undertake a “Reise nach Italien,” both literal and metaphorical:

The disjointed structure and curiously incomplete or underdeveloped characterization in Roth’s early novels seem on one level to be an appropriate response to and reflection of a world in which there appeared suddenly to be “less ordering vision, less coherence and comprehension, less certainty.”26 Yet while it might be argued that with the fragmentary form Roth is attempting to find appropriate expression for this changed reality (MIV, 171), these novels must also be seen as not entirely successful experiments with form. In his early fiction Roth is struggling to find a form that will give adequate expression to the problems he observes in German-speaking Central Europe, a form he finally finds with the historical novel Rudolfskynernacht.

In searching for form in the early novels, Roth examines various possible solutions to the chaos he observes — ethnic nationalism, socialism, American capitalism, individual withdrawal from political and social engagement — but finds none of them to be satisfactory. As an assimilated Jew who grew up in the multi-ethnic Habsburg province of Galicia, Roth was skeptical of both ethnic nationalism and Zionism, as the first chapter of the study demonstrates. In the early novels he extends this skepticism to other modes of thought, modes that aim at absolute or total solutions to the problems of post-Habsburg Central Europe. His deep pessimism about the future is reflected in the apocalyptic imagery that features in each of these novels, yet in each case the apocalypse is not fully realized. Roth ultimately rejects apocalyptic endings as symptomatic of contemporary problems rather than a constructive response: as a Central European Jew he would ultimately look to history as the only answer to the questions of the times.

Roth’s rejection of the apocalyptic paradigm is indicative of his insistence on the importance of continuing to engage with political and social questions, despite his pessimism about the future development of Europe. In a 1924 review of Heinrich Mann’s Die Diktatur der Vernunft27 he expresses deep concern about the retreat from reason and aversion to politics he found among many intellectuals in the Weimar Republic.28 Roth writes of the imperative of political engagement for the German writer of the present day, citing Mann as an exemplar, and pens a harsh polemic against the unpatriotic German writer. Comparing intellectuals of the Weimar Republic with those of bygone eras, he comments that since Goethe the poets in Germany have considered it their duty not to be politically engaged but to undertake a “Reise nach Italien,” both literal and metaphorical:

Immer war es eine vorgetäuschte “innere Notwendigkeit,” die verwerflichen, unwürdigen Zustände des nationalen, politischen, sozialen Diesseits zu versagen und von den heiteren Himmlern anderer Zonen das sogenannte “innere Gleichgewicht” zu entnehmen. Ach, wie leicht erhielt man das innere Gleichgewicht! Es wurde wenigstens niemals hörbar erschüttert. (2:59)
Roth prophesies a time when the Weimar Republic will have fallen as a result of the failure of writers to defend it, and warns that then it will be far too late for these intellectuals to turn their attention to its fate: "In einigen Jahren, wenn die Republik eine Legende geworden, wird sie ihnen das gegebene ‘distanzierte’ Thema geworden sein. Denn ihr Blick ist so auf die Nachwelt gerichtet, daß sie an dem Untergang der Mitwelt schuldig werden" (2:61). Roth’s early novels, written in the same period as this review, are set in the present and are clearly socially and politically engaged. That he began to set his novels in the past should not, however, be understood as an expression of his own desire to undertake a “Reise nach Italien,” as Wörschings contends, but should be seen as representing only a change of emphasis. In the early novels Roth repeatedly suggests a historical continuity between past and present, despite the apparent radical break represented by the war, the revolution, and the dissolution of the Empire. In turning to the Habsburg Empire with Radetzkymarsch Roth is not seeking to create a utopian ideal, as has been generally argued, but is attempting to make sense of the present through an exploration of the past.

Chapter 3 therefore analyzes Radetzkymarsch as a historical novel in the terms proposed by Georg Lukács, who argues that the portrayal of the past aids in achieving a real understanding for the problems of contemporary society (HR, 280). While Lukács subordinated his view of history to a Marxist scheme in which the final stage would be that of the classless society, his insight into the structure of the historical novel remains valid and valuable. The interpretation of Radetzkymarsch as a historical novel in Lukács’s sense aims at refuting the more common view that in this novel the present is relevant only as a catalyst to Roth’s “flight from reality”; “The political circumstances of the early 1930s, along with the calamities of his personal life,. . . led Roth to take flight from the present and seek solace in a subjectively transfigured past.” Hilde Spiel, Roth’s compatriot and herself a writer, declares that with Radetzkymarsch the reporter Roth finally became a poet (“Dichter”), but at the same time he was also already “auf dem Weg zu einem rührend gegenwärtsfremden Monarchismus, [er] flichtete . . . in diese Anschnauzung vor der Oligarchie der Sowjetunion wie vor der fachistischen Drohung und trank sich allmählich in die zurückwärtsgewandte Utopie hinein.” While few have expressed it quite as poetically as Spiel, a majority of critics share her view of Radetzkymarsch as both a great work of literature and a nostalgic elegy to an idealized lost world. Scholars routinely employ the expression “rückwärts gewandte Utopie,” or a similar formulation to express the same idea: thus the Habsburg Empire portrayed in Radetzkymarsch has been called a “utopian construct” (MM, 119), “an imaginary world of [Roth’s] own making,” a “utopian vision of what might have been” (UJR, 55), “a promised land,” a “lost paradise” (UJR, 55), and “Roth’s own nostalgic wish dream.” What exactly is meant by these variations on a utopian theme is, however, far from clear. On the face of it, the idea of a backward-turned utopia is a paradox: utopias imagine the future, not the past; they draw us onward, compelling us forward to a better tomorrow. Utopias typically depict a harmonious and just society that offers freedom from danger, injustice, physical and mental want, insecurity, and negative human passions such as anger, envy, and hatred. A utopia that imagines not the future but the past in these terms connotes political and social conservatism, regresiveness, even reaction.

Yet few critics who employ the term utopia or one of its synonyms actually interpret Radetzkymarsch as an unmitigated idealization of the Habsburg Empire. Those who do, such as Martha Wörsching and Wolf Marchand, certainly view the novel as regressive in its ideology. Wörsching’s feminist reading of the novel explains “the gendered nature” of Roth’s text as “a particular type of masculinity as ideology” (MM, 118): “Roth’s ‘backward-looking utopia’ . . . turns out to be a place inhabited by men only, being ‘cleansed’ of women; in this patriarchal mythology, women are dismissed in the asides or dealt with as exasperations, as diversions from the straight path towards male individual autonomy” (MM, 119). Wörschings explicitly rejects the possibility of interpreting Radetzkymarsch as a historical novel about the decline of the Empire, declaring that it is instead “a utopian construct of ‘life praxis’ which, in [Roth’s] view, is the only avenue left for the artist (male) genius” (119). The world Roth idealizes in his reconstruction of the Habsburg past embraces “the legacy of archetypal patriarchs” (120), male individuation being achieved through the control and subordination of women (130). This interpretation relies heavily on Wörschings’s psychoanalytic reading of the author’s life, in which she argues that Roth’s “mythology of masculinity” is an expression of a desperate desire to belong (127), which stemmed from his problematic identity as a Jewish man (120) and his struggle to free himself from dependence on his mother and mother-figures (119, 130).

Wolf Marchand goes further, declaring that the past that is uncritically idealized by Roth is prior to the Habsburg Empire actually depicted:


The patriarchal and Arcadian utopias that Wörschings and Marchand’s interpretations identify are politically and socially regressive and thus consistent with the connotations of the phrase “backward-turned utopia.” However, when other critics employ this term in the analysis of
from clear. On the face of it, the idea of a backward-turned utopia is a paradox: utopias imagine the future, not the past; they draw us onward, impelling us forward to a better tomorrow. Utopias typically depict a harmonious and just society that offers freedom from danger, injustice, physical and mental want, insecurity, and negative human passions such as anger, envy, and hatred. A utopia that imagines not the future but the past in these terms connotes political and social conservatism, regressiveness, even reaction.

Yet few critics who employ the term utopia or one of its synonyms actually interpret Radetzkymarsch as an unmitigated idealization of the Habsburg Empire. Those who do, such as Martha Wörschling and Wolf Marchand, certainly view the novel as regressive in its ideology. Wörschling’s feminist reading of the novel explains “the gendered nature” of Roth’s text as “a particular type of masculinity as ideology” (MM, 118): “Roth’s ‘backward-looking utopia’ . . . turns out to be a place inhabited by men only, being ‘cleansed’ of women; in this patriarchal mythology, women are dismissed in the asides or dealt with as exaggerations, as diversions from the straight path towards male individual autonomy” (MM, 119). Wörschling explicitly rejects the possibility of interpreting Radetzkymarsch as a historical novel about the decline of the Empire, declaring that it is instead “a utopian construct of ‘life praxis’ which, in [Roth’s] view, is the only avenue left for the artist (male) genius” (119). The world Roth idealizes in his reconstruction of the Habsburg past embraces “the legacy of archetypal patriarchs” (120), male individuation being achieved through the control and subordination of women (130). This interpretation relies heavily on Wörschling’s psychoanalytic reading of the author’s life, in which she argues that Roth’s “mythology of masculinity” is an expression of a desperate desire to belong (127), which stemmed from his problematic identity as a Jewish man (120) and his struggle to free himself from dependence on his mother and mother-figures (119, 130).

Wolf Marchand goes further, declaring that the past that is uncritically idealized by Roth is prior to the Habsburg Empire actually depicted:


The patriarchal and Arcadian utopias that Wörschling’s and Marchand’s interpretations identify are politically and socially regressive and thus consistent with the connotations of the phrase “backward-turned utopia.” However, when other critics employ this term in the analysis of
Radetzkmarsch, the necessary implication that the novel is informed by a regressive ideology is often undercut by the critics’ conclusion that the novel is not simply a nostalgic paean to an idealized lost world but contains a measure of criticism of the world portrayed.\textsuperscript{39}

A similar paradox is evident in the association of Roth with the Habsburg Myth, from which the concept of Radetzkmarsch as a backward turned utopia probably derives.\textsuperscript{40} The term Habsburg Myth was coined by the Italian Habsburg scholar Claudio Magris, whose influential doctoral thesis on the subject was published as Il Mito Absburgico nella letteratura austriaca moderna in 1963.\textsuperscript{41} Magris argues that when the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in 1918, intellectuals and writers saw the foundations of their lives and their culture destroyed. They were unable to cope with the demands of a vastly changed political climate, and looking back they remembered Habsburg Austria “[a]ls eine glückliche und harmonische Zeit, als geordnetes und märchenhaftes Mitteleuropa . . . , in dem die Zeit nicht so schnell verging und in dem man es nicht so eilig hatte, Dinge und Empfindungen zu vergessen. In ihrer Erinnerung wurde dieses Österreich zu einem ‘goldenen Zeitalter der Sicherheit.’”\textsuperscript{42} While these writers were often aware of the shortcomings of this “world of yesterday,” it became in their memory an “idéal fatherland,” which had preserved virtues absent from the new world: a sense of decency and correctness, respect and peace, and even a zest for life. Magris contends that the metamorphosis of the Empire in the imagination and writings of such intellectuals characterizes a large part of Austrian literature written after 1918 (HMÖ, 8). The emotional remembering of the world of yesterday is combined with a partly conscious, partly unconscious process of sublimation of a concrete society into a picturesque, secure, and ordered fairy-tale world (HMÖ, 9).

Magris declares that an ironic tone and intent do not necessarily preclude an author from falling prey to the transfiguring Habsburg Myth and cites Robert Musil’s Mann ohne Eigenschaften as a case in point (HMÖ, 9–10, 278–95). He differentiates between merely ironic depictions, which still perpetuate the Habsburg Myth, and texts that attempt to demythologize the past and unmask some of the more celebrated values of the Habsburg tradition.\textsuperscript{43} Choosing Roth as one of six case studies of writers who maintain the Habsburg Myth after the First World War,\textsuperscript{44} Magris writes that Radetzkmarsch perpetuates the myth without becoming an empty glorification of a lost world. It is, he argues, “ganz einfach ein Roman, der jene Welt begriffen hat. Die Sympathien oder Antipathien des Menschen Roth zählen dabei nicht; wichtig ist, daß Roth die Auflösung des habsburgischen Mitteleuropa verstanden hat und ihm nun nicht — wie angenommen wurde — eine Elegie, sondern ein Epis widmete” (HMÖ, 259). Significantly, however, he implicitly contradicts his own conclusion earlier in the study when he writes that the specter of Nazism intensified the yearning of writers for Habsburg times, with increasing national tensions heightening the supranational element of the myth in particular: “In der Tat entstehen die schwärmerischsten, leidenschaftlichsten Beschreibungen dieser Welt zu einer Zeit, da der Nationalismus an Boden gewinnen oder sich schon festgesetzt hat, und sind größtenteils jüdischen Schriftstellern, wie Werfel oder Roth, zu verdanken” (HMÖ, 243–44). Magris’s endnote cites both Radetzkmarsch and Die Kapuzinergruft as examples of these “effusive” portraits (HMÖ, 342, n 10). This same contradiction — Magris’s interpretation of Radetzkmarsch as dispassionate epic on the one hand and effusive elegy on the other\textsuperscript{45} — characterizes much of the criticism of Radetzkmarsch as a backward-turned utopia and accounts for some of the lack of clarity in the use and meaning of the term.

Whatever else it implies, the description of Roth’s novel as a utopia signifies the creation of a world both ideal and unreal, a world that by definition does not, and did not, exist. By contrast, the interpretation offered in the third chapter of this study argues that far from presenting an idealized version of the last half century of Habsburg rule Roth sets out to expose the Habsburg Myth, and in so doing reveals the very real connections between the structures and norms of this period and the rampant nationalism of his own time. In this sense Radetzkmarsch conforms entirely to Lukács’s model of the historical novel: it represents the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, not in terms of grand historical events, but rather in terms of the lives of everyday figures and, by revealing the past as “prehistory” of the present, contributes to an understanding of Roth’s own time.

A central element of my interpretation of Radetzkmarsch in these terms is the close analysis of what Sarah Praiman has called Roth’s “schwankende Erzählhaltung,”\textsuperscript{46} a narrative stance that is also relevant to the other novels under consideration in this study. Roth’s first person narrators Gabriel Dan (Hotel Savoy) and Franz Ferdinand Trottta (Die Kapuzinergruft) are unreliable, and careful attention must be paid to contradictions within the narrative and between the narrator’s words and his actions. In the case of the third person narratives Das Spinnennetz, Die Rebellion, and especially Radetzkmarsch, the reader has to contend with an omniscient narrator who makes comments that, upon closer inspection, cannot always or necessarily be taken at face value.\textsuperscript{47} The narrator is elusive, oscillating almost imperceptibly between a distanced point of view — often with ironic undertones — and the perspective of the characters, whereby the narrator sometimes identifies with this perspective and sometimes maintains ironic distance. Roth makes frequent use, particularly in Radetzkmarsch, of erlebte Rede,\textsuperscript{48} a technique that obscures the narrative perspective, making it unclear whether a particular statement or thought should be attributed to the character or to the narrator.\textsuperscript{49} In grammatical terms there is no difference between erlebte Rede and the form of the
Radeckymarsch, the necessary implication that the novel is informed by a regressive ideology is often undercut by the critics’ conclusion that the novel is not simply a nostalgic paean to an idealized lost world but contains a measure of criticism of the world portrayed.89

A similar paradox is evident in the association of Roth with the Habsburg Myth, from which the concept of Radeckymarsch as a backward-turned utopia probably derives.88 The term Habsburg Myth was coined by the Italian Habsburg scholar Claudio Magris, whose influential doctoral thesis on the subject was published as Il Mito Absonorico nella letteratura austriaca moderna in 1963.41 Magris argues that when the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in 1918, intellectuals and writers saw the foundations of their lives and their culture destroyed. They were unable to cope with the demands of a vastly changed political climate, and looking back they remembered Habsburg Austria “als eine glückliche und harmonische Zeit, als geordnetes und märchenhaftes Mitteleuropa . . . , in dem die Zeit nicht so schnell verging und in dem man es nicht so eilig hatte, Dinge und Empfindungen zu vergessen. In ihrer Erinnerung wurde dieses Österreich zu einem ‘goldenen Zeitalter der Sicherheit.’”42 While these writers were often aware of the shortcomings of this “world of yesterday,” it became in their memory an “ideal fatherland,” which had preserved virtues absent from the new world: a sense of decency and correctness, respect and peace, and even a zest for life.43 Magris contends that the metamorphosis of the Empire in the imagination and writings of such intellectuals characterizes a large part of Austrian literature written after 1918 (HMO, 8). The emotional remembering of the world of yesterday is combined with a partly conscious, partly unconscious process of sublimation of a concrete society into a picturesque, secure, and ordered fairy-tale world (HMO, 9).

Magris declares that an ironic tone and intent do not necessarily preclude an author from falling prey to the transfiguring Habsburg Myth and cites Robert Musil's Mann ohne Eigenschaften as a case in point (HMO, 9-10, 278-95). He differentiates between merely ironic depictions, which still perpetuate the Habsburg Myth, and texts that attempt to demythologize the past and unmask some of the more celebrated values of the Habsburg tradition.44 Choosing Roth as one of six case studies of writers who maintain the Habsburg Myth after the First World War,44 Magris writes that Radeckymarsch perpetuates the myth without becoming an empty glorification of a lost world. It is, he argues, “ganz einfach ein Roman, der jene Welt begriffen hat. Die Sympathien oder Antipathien des Menschen Roth zählen dabei nicht; wichtig ist, daß Roth die Auflösung des habsburgischen Mitteleuropa verstanden hat und ihm nun nicht — wie angenommen wurde — eine Elegie, sondern ein Epos widmete” (HMO, 259). Significantly, however, he implicitly contradicts his own conclusion earlier in the study when he writes that the specter of Nazism intensified the yearning of writers for Habsburg times, with increasing national tensions heightening the supranational element of the myth in particular: “In der Tat entstehen die schwärmersischen, leidenschaftlichsten Beschreibungen dieser Welt zu einer Zeit, da der Nazismus an Boden gewinnt oder sich schon festgesetzt hat, und sind größtenteils jüdischen Schriftstellern, wie Werfel oder Roth, zu verdanken” (HMO, 243-44). Magris’s endnote cites both Radeckymarsch and Die Kapuzinergruft as examples of these “effusive” portraits (HMO, 342, n 10). This same contradiction — Magris’s interpretation of Radeckymarsch as dispassionate epic on the one hand and effusive elegy on the other — characterizes much of the criticism of Radeckymarsch as a backward-turned utopia and accounts for some of the lack of clarity in the use and meaning of the term.

Whatever else it implies, the description of Roth’s novel as a utopia signifies the creation of a world both ideal and unreal, a world that by definition does not, and did not, exist. By contrast, the interpretation offered in the third chapter of this study argues that far from presenting an idealized version of the last half century of Habsburg rule Roth sets out to expose the Habsburg Myth, and in so doing reveals the very real connections between the structures and norms of this period and the rampant nationalistic of his own time. In this sense Radeckymarsch conforms entirely to Lukács’s model of the historical novel: it represents the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, not in terms of grand historical events, but rather in terms of the lives of everyday figures and, by revealing the past as “prehistory” of the present, contributes to an understanding of Roth’s own time.

A central element of my interpretation of Radeckymarsch in these terms is the close analysis of what Sarah Frayman has called Roth’s “schwankende Erzählhaltung,”446 a narrative stance that is also relevant to the other novels under consideration in this study. Roth’s first person narrators Gabriel Dan (Hotel Savoy) and Franz Ferdinand Trotta (Die Kapuzinergruft) are unreliable, and careful attention must be paid to contradictions within the narrative and between the narrator’s words and his actions. In the case of the third person narratives Das Spinnewetz, Die Rebellion, and especially Radeckymarsch, the reader has to contend with an omniscient narrator who makes comments that, upon closer inspection, cannot always or necessarily be taken at face value.47 The narrator is elusive, oscillating almost imperceptibly between a distanced point of view — often with ironic undertones — and the perspective of the characters, whereby the narrator sometimes identifies with this perspective and sometimes maintains ironic distance. Roth makes frequent use, particularly in Radeckymarsch, of erlebte Rede,48 a technique that obscures the narrative perspective, making it unclear whether a particular statement or thought should be attributed to the character or to the narrator.49 In grammatical terms there is no difference between erlebte Rede and the form of the
omniscient narrator; third person and past tense characterize both (SeR, 22). But erzähle Rede gives expression to the subjective thoughts of the character (SeR, 26) and allows for the creation of an ironic and critical distance between the narrator and the character, while the overall sympathetic narrative stance is seemingly retained (SeR, 23). The interpretation of a given passage as erzähle Rede depends on context and on a wide variety of linguistic indicators, "die den objektiven Berichtton aufheben und dem Bericht eine subjektive, expressive oder emotionale Note geben." Much of Roth's criticism of the Habsburg monarchy is revealed through passages of erzähle Rede, and thus it is unsurprising that readers who overlook this aspect of narrative technique come to a one-sided interpretation of the novel as a nostalgic evocation of an idealized past.

While many of the critics who view Radekzwamarsch in these terms acknowledge that Roth expresses some criticism of the world portrayed in this novel, they are virtually unanimous in their assessment of its sequel, Die Kapuzinergruft, as presenting an idealized vision of the fallen Habsburg monarchy that is entirely untempered by critical undertones. Roth's final novel is generally interpreted in the light of his avowed monar- chism at this time, with little or no attempt made to differentiate between the fictional text and Roth's journalistic interventions on behalf of the heir to the Habsburg throne. Thus Dollenmayr, for example, asserts that in Die Kapuzinergruft "Roth has become an unabashed apologist for the Habsburgs," and Williams goes so far as to label the novel propaganda. In contrast to these interpretations, I argue in the fourth and final chapter of this study that Roth does not idealize the past, instead continuing the dialogue between past and present begun in the historical novel Radekzwamarsch six years earlier. Once again using literature to make sense of historical processes, Roth reveals strong parallels between the failure of Austrians to prevent the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy in the past and their failure in 1938 to prevent the political catastrophe of the Anschluss. Rather than sharing the naïve nostalgia of his protagonist and narrator Franz Ferdinand, Roth condemns the fictional character's apathy and his refusal to engage with reality, thus echoing his 1924 condemnation of the political and moral negligence of German intellectuals.

While the early novels are set entirely in the postwar present and Die Kapuzinergruft bridges past and present, it is with the historical novel Radekzwamarsch that Roth finds the form with which he can best give literary expression to contemporary reality. Here he recognizes that the understanding of the present can be achieved only through insight into how we have become who we are. This study demonstrates that what links Roth's early novels with Radekzwamarsch and Die Kapuzinergruft is the author's ongoing concern with the state of postwar German-speaking Central Europe. Far from being an attempt to erase "die Spuren zur Gegenwart," Roth's "march into history" reveals the present in all its complexity.

Notes

1. The terms "socialist" and "monarchist" are used in this study to refer to the conventional reading of Roth's work as consisting of two antithetical phases.


3. Sültemeyer, FW. This monograph is the book version of Sültemeyer's dissertation of 1969.

4. Sültemeyer outlines the few studies in which the early work had been discussed before the completion of her dissertation in 1969 (FW, 16-17).


6. These will be discussed in chapter 2.

7. See, for example, Ritchie Robertson, "Roth's Hiob and the Traditions of Gothic Fiction," in Chambers, Co-existant Contradictions, 185; Claudio Magris, HMO, 261; Werner Sieg, Zwischen Anarchismus und Fiktion: Eine Untersuchung zum Werk Joseph Roth (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), 10; Bernd Hiippauf, HMS, 25; and Ward Hughes Powell, "Joseph Roth, Ironic Primitivist," Monatshfte 53, no. 3 (1961): 116.

8. Although Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht was not published until 1939, it was completed before Die Kapuzinergruft, which must therefore be regarded as Roth's last novel.

9. Variations on the definition of the work from 1930 can be found in Ritchie Robertson, "1918: This Year of the Austro-Hungarian Empire Marks a Crucial Historical and Symbolic Change for Joseph Roth," in Tale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1006-1996, ed. Jack David Zipes and Sander L. Gilman (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1997); Ian Reifowitz, NMM; and Sidney Rosenfeld, UJR. Robertson separates Hiob and Radekzwamarsch from "the fiction of Roth's 'Catholicizing' phase" ("1918," 357). Reifowitz divides the work from 1927 into two phases, 1927–32, in which "Roth presented an insightful and relatively balanced picture [of] Austria's strengths and weaknesses," and 1933–39, in which the "nuanced portrait of Austria transformed into an idealized version of a multinational paradise that barely resembled the reality of the past" (NMM, 120). Rosenfeld divides the period from 1930 to 1939 into three phases based on the themes of the novels (UJR, 39–86).
omniscient narrator: third person and past tense characterize both (SeR, 22). But erl compassionate Rede gives expression to the subjective thoughts of the character (SeR, 26) and allows for the creation of an ironic and critical distance between the narrator and the character, while the overall sympathetic narrative stance is seemingly retained (SeR, 23). The interpretation of a given passage as erl compassionate Rede depends on context and on a wide variety of linguistic indicators, “die den objektiven Bericht von oder und dem Bericht eine subjektive, expressive oder emotionale Note geben.”50 Much of Roth’s criticism of the Habsburg monarchy is revealed through passages of erl compassionate Rede, and thus it is unsurprising that readers who overlook this aspect of narrative technique come to a one-sided interpretation of the novel as a nostalgic evocation of an idealized past.51

While many of the critics who view Radetzkmarsch in these terms acknowledge that Roth expresses some criticism of the world portrayed in this novel, they are virtually unanimous in their assessment of its sequel, Die Kapuzinergruft, as presenting an idealized vision of the fallen Habsburg monarchy that is entirely untampered by critical undertones. Roth’s final novel is generally interpreted in the light of his avowed monarchism at this time, with little or no attempt made to differentiate between the fictional text and Roth’s journalistic interventions on behalf of the heir to the Habsburg throne. Thus Dollenmayer, for example, asserts that in Die Kapuzinergruft “Roth has become an unabashed apologist for the Habsburgs,”52 and Williams goes so far as to label the novel propaganda.53 In contrast to these interpretations, I argue in the fourth and final chapter of this study that Roth does not idealize the past, instead continuing the dialogue between past and present begun in the historical novel Radetzkmarsch six years earlier. Once again using literature to make sense of historical processes, Roth reveals strong parallels between the failure of Austrians to prevent the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy in the past and their failure in 1938 to prevent the political catastrophe of the Anschluss. Rather than sharing the naïve nostalgia of his protagonist and narrator Franz Ferdinand, Roth condemns the fictional character’s apathy and his refusal to engage with reality, thus echoing his 1924 condemnation of the political and moral negligence of German intellectuals.

While the early novels are set entirely in the postwar present and Die Kapuzinergruft bridges past and present, it is with the historical novel Radetzkmarsch that Roth finds the form with which he can best give literary expression to contemporary reality. Here he recognizes that the understanding of the present can be achieved only through insight into how we have become who we are. This study demonstrates that what links Roth’s early novels with Radetzkmarsch and Die Kapuzinergruft is the author’s ongoing concern with the state of postwar German-speaking Central Europe. Far from being an attempt to erase “die Spuren zur Gegenwart,”54 Roth’s “march into history” reveals the present in all its complexity.

Notes

1 The terms “socialist” and “monarchist” are used in this study to refer to the conventional reading of Roth’s work as consisting of two antithetical phases.


3 Sültemeyer, FW. This monograph is the book version of Sültemeyer’s dissertation of 1969.

4 Sültemeyer outlines the few studies in which the early work had been discussed before the completion of her dissertation in 1969 (FW, 16–17).


6 These will be discussed in chapter 2.


8 Although Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht was not published until 1939, it was completed before Die Kapuzinergruft, which must therefore be regarded as Roth’s last novel.

9 Variations on the definition of the work from 1930 can be found in Ritchie Robertson, “1918: This Year of the Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire Marks a Crucial Historical and Symbolic Change for Joseph Roth,” in Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096–1990, ed. Jack David Zipes and Sander L. Gilman (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1997); Ian Reifowitz, NMM; and Sidney Rosenfeld, UJR. Robertson separates Hiob and Radetzkmarsch from the “fiction of Roth’s ‘Catholicizing’ phase” (“1918,” 357). Reifowitz divides the work from 1927 into two phases, 1927–32, in which “Roth presented an insightful and relatively balanced picture [of] Austria’s strengths and weaknesses,” and 1933–39, in which the “manic portrait of Austria transformed into an idealized version of a multinational paradise that barely resembled the reality of the past” (NMM, 120). Rosenfeld divides the period from 1929 to 1939 into three phases based on the themes of the novels (UJR, 39–86).

Zelewitz proposes both 1924 and 1927 as turning points in Roth’s work: Zelewitz, “Zweimal politische Illusion,” 105–8. Reifowitz nominates 1927 as a turning point because it was in this year that “Roth first began to discuss the Dual Monarchy in his fictional works and essays” (NM, 120).

See, for example, Helmut Famira-Parschitz, Die Erzählung in den Romanen Joseph Roth’s (Bern and Frankfurt am Main: Herbert Lang & Cie, 1971); and Rosenfeld, UJR.

Scheible uses this phrase of Zipper und sein Vater: (JR, 13).


Ochse, AA, 100. Ochse’s description refers to Roth’s situation as an Eastern Jew in Germany, which meant that he was faced with the hostility of both anti-Semites and assimilated German Jews. She also calls him an “Außenseiter unter Außenseitern” (AA, 40).


Rosenfeld’s pronouncement is typical: “[Radetzkymarsch] became an elegy for a lost paradise, which had never existed in the way his longing for a rooted life led him to describe it. In its pages, his own inner conflicts are resolved in the twilight glow of a humane vision, to which he gave the name Austria” (UJR, 55).

Bronsen calls Roth “der ewige Nomade und unstete Bohemien” (RB, 516).

Bronsen’s description of Roth as a “Mythomane” is often cited in support of the identity-crisis theory (RB, 13).

Among the many critics who have written about Roth’s identity crisis and drawn connections between his work and his search for identity are Bronsen, “Austrian versus Jew,” and Bronsen, “Der Jude”; Wörsching, MM; Csáky, ZO; Rosenfeld, UJR, and Hüppauf, HMS. Herzog’s claim that Roth’s work can be explained “aus dem doppelten Verlust” of the Habsburg monarchy and his Heimat in Galicia is similar: Andreas Herzog, “Der Segen des ewigen Juden: Zur ‘judischen’ Identität Joseph Roth’s,” in Habsburger Apothei: Geisteshaltungen und Lebenskonzepte in der multinationalen Literatur der Habsburger Monarchie, ed. Eva Reichmann, Bielefelder Schriften zu Linguistik und Literaturwissenschaft 9 (Bielefeld: Aschendorff-Verlag, 1998), 113.

Hawe writes that Radetzkymarsch and Die Kapuzinergruft “are frequently categorized as ‘Österreich Romane,’ works of nostalgia for the lost Empire that originate in Roth’s late, so-called classical period” (KGD, 157).


On the widespread rejection of politics and reason in the Weimar Republic, Peter Gay, GC, 70–96.

Wörsching explicitly charges Roth with having described his own subsequent position in the 1924 article: Martha Wörsching, “Die rückwärts gewandte Utopie: Sozialpsychologische Anmerkungen zu Joseph Roth’s Roman Radetzkymarsch,” in Arnold, Joseph Roth: Text + Kritik Sonderband, 90.

Wagner takes a slightly different view of the relevance of the present, arguing that Roth holds his idealized image of the past “verklärend” up to his immediate present: Margarete Wagner, “Abgrenzungen und Entgrenzungen in Joseph Roth’s Radetzkymarsch,” Stimulus: Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Germanistik 1, no. 2 (2002): 187. However, while this interpretation suggests that Roth is not completely turning his back on the present and flecing into the (idealized) past, it still implies an absence of connection between the past and the present in Roth’s eyes.


11 Zelewitz proposes both 1924 and 1927 as turning points in Roth's work: Zelewitz, "Zweimal politische Illusion," 105–8. Reifowitz nominates 1927 as a turning point because it was in this year that "Roth first began to discuss the Dual Monarchy in his fictional works and essays" (NMM, 120).

12 See, for example, Helmut Famira Parcetch, Die Erzähllsituation in den Romanen Joseph Roth (Bern and Frankfurt am Main: Herbert Lang & Cie, 1971); and Rosenfeld, UFR, 9.

13 Scheibe uses this phrase of Zipper und sein Vater (JR, 13).

14 "Aus dem Revolutionär wurde ein Reaktionär": Bronsen, RB, 513.


17 Ochs, AA, 100. Ochse's description refers to Roth's situation as an Eastern Jew in Germany, which meant that he was faced with the hostility of both anti-Semites and assimilated German Jews. She also calls him an "Außenseiter unter Außenseitern" (AA, 40).


19 Rosenfeld's pronouncement is typical: "[Radetzkymarsch] became an elegy for a lost paradise, which had never existed in the way his longing for a rooted life led him to describe it. In its pages, his own inner conflicts are resolved in the twilight glow of a humane vision, to which he gave the name Austria" (UFR, 55).

20 Bronsens calls Roth "der ewige Nomade und unstete Bohemen" (RB, 516).

21 Bronsens's description of Roth as a "Mythomane" is often cited in support of the identity-crisis theory (RB, 13).

22 Among the many critics who have written about Roth's identity crisis and drawn connections between his work and his search for identity are Bronsien, "Austrian versus Jew," and Bronsien, "Der Jude": Wörsching, "Mf: Csáky, ZÖ; Rosenfeld, UFR, and Hüppauff, HMS: Herzog's claim that Roth's work can be explained "aus dem doppelten Verlust" of the Habsburg monarchy and his Heimat in Galicia is similar; Andreas Herzog, "Der Segen des ewigen Juden: Zur 'jüdischen' Identität Joseph Roths," in Habsburger Aporien? Geisteshaltungen und Lebenskonzepte in der multinationalen Literatur der Habsburger Monarchie, ed. Eva Reichmann, Bielefelder Schriften zu Linguistik und Literaturwissenschaft 9 (Bielefeld: Bielefelder Humboldt-Universität, 1998), 113.

23 Howes writes that Radetzkymarsch and Die Kapuzinergrafft "are frequently categorized as 'Österreich-Romane,' works of nostalgia for the lost Empire that originate in Roth's late, so-called classical, period" (KGD, 157).


28 On the widespread rejection of politics and reason in the Weimar Republic, Peter Gay, WC, 70–96.

29 Wörsching explicitly charges Roth with having described his own subsequent position in the 1924 article: Martha Wörsching, "Die rückwärts gewandte Utopie: Sozialpsychologische Anmerkungen zu Joseph Roths Roman Radetzkymarsch," in Arnold, Joseph Roth: Text + Kritik Sonderband, 90.

30 Wagner takes a slightly different view of the relevance of the present, arguing that Roth holds his idealized image of the past "verkäufend" up to his immediate present: Margarete Wagner, "Abgrenzungen und Entgrenzungen in Joseph Roths Radetzkymarsch," Stimulus: Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Germanistik 1, no. 2 (2002): 187. However, while this interpretation suggests that Roth is not completely turning his back on the present and leaping into the (idealized) past, it still implies an absence of connection between the past and the present in Roth's eyes.

32 Hilde Spiel, “Eine Welt voller Enkel,” in Romane von gestern — heute gelesen, ed. Marcel Reich-Ranicki (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1989), 357. Spiel seems to imply here that the process of withdrawal from reality was only beginning when Roth published Radeckymarsch, yet she then claims that in the last eight or nine years of his life — i.e. from 1920 or 1921 — Roth was “nur noch Legitimist.” Subsequently she argues that he was well aware of the impossibility of a restoration of the monarchy, and knowingly took flight from reality: Spiel, “Eine Welt voller Enkel,” 358.

33 I refer here to criticism of Roth’s work since he was rediscovered in the 1950s. As Fritz Hackert notes, despite Roth’s own preface to the newspaper serialization of the novel, which is generally understood as a declaration of his political views, contemporary critics did not read the novel as a nostalgic idealization of the empire, but as a symbolic criticism of Germany’s political and cultural conditions.


38 Curt Sanger, “The Figure of the Non-hero in the Austrian Novels of Joseph Roth,” Modern Austrian Literature 4, no. 2 (1969): 37.

39 See, for example, Menhennet, FBE, Bruce Thompson, “Schlecht kommen wir beide dabei nicht weg!” Joseph Roth’s satire on the Emperor Franz Joseph in his novel Radeckymarsch,” Neophilologus 81 (1977); and Reitowitz, NMM.


41 Claudio Magris, Il Mito Abruzzesco nella letteratura austriaca moderna (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1963). The German translation was published three years later: Magris, Der bulgarische Mythos (HMÖ).

42 Magris, HMÖ, 7. The quotation is from Stefan Zweig’s Die Welt von gestern, written in 1940–41 (Gütersloh, 1960), 14.

43 Magris cites Odon von Horváth’s Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald (1931) as a text that does not perpetuate the myth (HMÖ, 244).

44 Magris states that the myth is brought to its zenith after the collapse of the empire, and that for modern generations the reality of the Habsburg Empire has been almost completely superseded by the myth, “so daß die Donaumonarchie nun mehr das Reich Werfelis, Rothsd oder Musils, als jenes der Staatsmänner Berchtold und Tisza ist“ (HMÖ, 239).

45 In a subsequent monograph on Roth Magris contends that the author “rückt” das Habsburgerreich in eine verklärte übergeschichtliche Dimension” (WW, 15).


48 See Werner Hoffmeister, “‘Eine ganz bestimmte Art von Sympathie’: Erzählhaltung und Gedankenschilderung im Radeckymarsch,” in Joseph Roth und die Tradition, ed. David Bronsen (Darmstadt: Agora, 1975), 163–80. Hoffmeister defines the term erlubte Rede in Hoffmeister, SeR, 11–44. The German terminology is retained here because there is no adequate English translation. Although erlubte Rede is often translated as interior monologue, it is a stylistic form that may be part of an interior monologue but is “einem Ursprung und Wesen nach eigenständige sprachliche Form der Rede- oder Gedankenwiedergabe”: Hoffmeister, SeR, 8. Hoffmeister distinguishes between three forms of rendering speech and thought in narrative: direct speech, indirect speech and erlubte Rede (SeR, 12).


50 Hoffmeister, SeR, 30. The construction of erlubte Rede is highly individual from case to case. Nevertheless Hoffmeister argues that there are certain similarities that can be discerned. He attempts a typology on pages 33–44, whereby he stresses: “Meistens wirken mehrere [sprachliche] Indizien zusammen, um den Eindruck des Gedachten oder Gesprochenen im Leser zu erwecken. Immer aber ist die Situation, der Erzählzusammenhang für die Beurteilung der erlubten Rede entscheidend” (SeR, 33).

51 Cf. Fraiman, who warns against assuming that the narrator shares the characters’ perspective and that “Interpretationen, die sich allein auf inhaltliche Momente stützen, können fehlgehen”: Fraiman, “Dichter des Offenen,” 41.


53 Williams, BE, 108. Menhennet cites and concurs with Williams’s assessment (FBE, 61).

54 Wörsching, “Die rückwärts gewandte Utopie,” 95.
Hilde Spiel, “Eine Welt voller Enkel,” in Romane von gestern — heute gelesen, ed. Marcel Reich-Ranicki (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1989), 357. Spiel seems to imply here that the process of withdrawal from reality was only beginning when Roth published Radetzkymarsch, yet she then claims that in the last eight or nine years of his life — i.e. from 1930 or 1931 — Roth was “nur noch Legitimist.” Subsequently she argues that he was well aware of the impossibility of a restoration of the monarchy, and knowingly took flight from reality: Spiel, “Eine Welt voller Enkel,” 358.

I refer here to criticism of Roth’s work since he was rediscovered in the 1950s. As Fritz Hackert notes, despite Roth’s own preface to the newspaper serialization of the novel, which is generally understood as a declaration of love to the empire, contemporary critics did not read the novel as a nostalgic idealization: “Eine nostalgische Verklärung der k.a.k.-Monarchie in dem Roman zu erblicken konnte keinen Zeitgenossen gelingen”: Fritz Hackert, “Nachwort” (5,892).


Curt Sanger, “The Figure of the Non-hero in the Austrian Novels of Joseph Roth,” Modern Austrian Literature 4, no. 2 (1969): 37.

See, for example, Menhenett, FBE; Bruce Thompson, “Schlecht kommen wir beide dabei nicht weg!” Joseph Roth’s satire on the Emperor Franz Joseph in his novel Radetzkymarsch,” Neophilologus 81 (1997); and Reitowitz, NMM.


Claudio Magris, Il Mito Abbandonato nella letteratura austriaca moderna (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1963). The German translation was published three years later: Magris, Der bahnbrecherische Mythos (HMO).

Magris, HMO, 7. The quotation is from Stefan Zweig’s Die Welt von gestern, written in 1940–41 (Gütersloh, 1960), 14.

Magris cites Odon von Horváth’s Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald (1931) as a text that does not perpetuate the myth (HMO, 244).

Magris states that the myth is brought to its zenith after the collapse of the empire, and that for modern generations the reality of the Habsburg Empire has been almost completely superseded by the myth, “so daß die Donaumonarchie nun mehr das Reich Werfels, Roths oder Musils, als jenes der Staatsmänner Berchtold und Tisza ist” (HMO, 239).

In a subsequent monograph on Roth Magris contends that the author “[rückt] das Habsburgerreich in eine verkürzte übergeschichtliche Dimension” (WW, 15).


See Werner Hoffmeister, “Eine ganz bestimmte Art von Sympatie”: Erzählhaltung und Gedankenschilderung im Radetzkymarsch,” in Joseph Roth und die Tradition, ed. David Bronsen (Darmstadt: Agora, 1975), 163–80. Hoffmeister defines the term erlebte Rede in Hoffmeister, SeR, 11–44. The German terminology is retained here because there is no adequate English translation. Although erlebte Rede is often translated as interior monologue, it is a stylistic form that may be part of an interior monologue but is “eine ihrem Ursprung und Wesen nach eigenständige sprachliche Form der Rede- oder Gedankenwiedergabe”: Hoffmeister, SeR, 8. Hoffmeister distinguishes between three forms of rendering speech and thought in narrative: direct speech, indirect speech and erlebte Rede (SeR, 12).


Hoffmeister, SeR, 30. The construction of erlebte Rede is highly individual from case to case. Nevertheless Hoffmeister argues that there are certain similarities that can be discerned. He attempts a typology on pages 33–44, whereby he stresses: “Meistens wirken mehrere [sprachliche] Indizien zusammen, um den Eindruck des Gedachten oder Gesprochenen im Leser zu erwecken. Immer aber ist die Situation, der Erzählszenenverlauf für die Beurteilung der erlebten Rede entscheidend” (SeR, 33).

CF. Fraiman, who warns against assuming that the narrator shares the characters’ perspective and that “Interpretationen, die sich allein auf inhaltliche Momente stützen, können fehlgehen”: Fraiman, “Dichter des Offenen,” 41.


Williams, BE, 108. Menhenett cites and concurs with Williams’s assessment (FBE, 61).