

REINHARD GOERING'S *JUNG SCHUK*: A REPRESENTATIVE NOVEL

Despite the relative success of his two plays, *Seeschlacht* (1918) and *Südpolexpedition des Kapitän Scott* (1930) – the latter won the *Kleist-Preis* in 1930 – Reinhard Goering chose to shun the little acclaim awarded him and hence for much of his life was regarded with a sceptical and suspicious eye by fellow writers and critics. Moreover, inconsistent political and religious allegiances,¹ together with a most unorthodox lifestyle and medical practice,² served only to alienate him from the literary circles of post World War One Germany.

Born in 1887, Goering was heir to the social and spiritual malaise prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century. His youth and young adulthood were caught between the stifling and obsolete values of parents who belonged to another age and the overwhelming advances of the industry and technology of the new epoch. For some of his contemporaries (particularly Ernst Toller), the Great War was to become the summit of their expectations, a liberation and catharsis from the depersonalization of a materialistic society. Yet all too soon, the evidence of its destructiveness and pervasion would defeat these premature hopes.

Against the oppressive traditions of the State, the *Bürger* and a treacherous glorification of war, Goering made an impassioned plea for pacifism and universal brotherhood. His plays, *Seeschlacht* (1918), *Scapa Flow* (1919) and *Die Retter* (1919), grasped desperately at the hope of the birth of a new world. He was by no means alone in such aspirations. Others, Ernst Stadler, Franz Werfel and Fritz von Unruh, also expressed an optimism concerning man's renaissance and cosmic harmony. Yet, in Goering's case, ideological conflicts and vacillating personal philosophies in his works reflected all too clearly a greater state of confusion in the mind of the author himself.

In 1913 Reinhard Goering wrote his only novel, *Jung Schuk*.³ While the short prologue to the work already forebodes the author's suicide twenty-three years later, Goering's own sense of destiny and death is made increasingly evident in the hero's hopeless self-appraisal and frequently shifting views concerning his lot among men. If the novel is viewed, in part, as a modern parallel to Goethe's *Werther*, then the *ennui*, aimlessness and the desperate search for self-identity are indicative of the social and moral quandary of the times. In this regard I view the novel as a representative work on two counts. On the one hand, the hero's spiritual meandering and uncommitted sorties into practical life are notably characteristic of the lot of a younger generation trapped by the conflicting morals and values of a changing German society. At the same time, *Jung Schuk*, as a first work, is also representative of Goering's subsequent literature, for it points to the very themes of all his plays, short stories and poems. Be

they sailor-visionaries or hapless nature wanderers, each hero rejects the structure of the social complex and, alone with muddled and changing philosophies, seeks to survive in the solitude of his own unsettled thoughts.

From the outset of the novel, a sense of discord and isolation separates Gustav Schuk, an undecided medical student, from the mainstream of life. As he confesses in an early letter to Hermann: "einmal gibt es in jedem Leben den Augenblick, wo man erfährt, daß man für nichts lebt, für etwas wenigstens was mit nichts von dem Gelebten, Vorgestellten, Gläubighingenommener zu tun hat, für etwas Unmögliches" (116). Schuk's comprehension of his own destiny is one of "ein ewiges Herumgetriebensein" (100), for he sees himself, as he does most others around him, as "innerlich falsch" (107).⁴ Despite this despair which reigns supreme early in the work ("Ich hatte die Vision von Männern, deren Herzen im Grund so tief heimatlos und irrend wären wie meines, und die sich so herumgetrieben sähen, wie ich mich" (100)), Goering does anticipate a remedy which he later suggests in the drama *Seeschlacht*: "Wie leer, wie tot alles, was nicht direkt von Mensch zu Mensch geht" (98).

A poem makes emphatic reference to Schuk's vision of the small minority of homeless outsiders and rebels like himself: "Traf ich euch auf allen Strassen der breitenackten Erde?/In aller Herren Länder, sah ich Euch kommen fliehen" (101). The hero's rejection of any social rapport overwhelms him with a haunting insecurity, for he is nevertheless distressed by the fact that he has very little in common with the everyday world around him. However, much of his isolation is the result of his desire to discover a solitary route towards personal fulfilment. Because of this constant loneliness, Schuk's mind has ample time to dwell upon a hopelessness and despair caused by the lack of resolve and commitment in his own life. Latent suicidal symptoms appear at a most dramatic moment when the cries of pain from an expectant mother break the silence of Schuk's own crisis. The birth of the new *liê* makes an ironic yet striking balance with the deathly images in the mind of the distraught student doctor.

The incessant references to his own suffering plague him throughout, for he can only confess, "Mir fehlt die Kraft, die Gewißheit meiner selbst" (161), and once again, is forced to ask, "In welchen Schlund bin ich geraten? In welchen Abgründen irre ich, während andere auf Höhen wandeln, wo auch ich vielleicht wandeln könnte . . . Muß ich noch einmal loslassen? Weiß ich jetzt den Weg?" (170) Yet perhaps this desperate question is answered when, after his later journey to the sea and England, he is able to remark more optimistically in another poem: "Im Regen stampf ich meinen Weg allein/und pflücke mir, mich bückend, eine blaue,/Betaute Glockenblume." (261)

Loneliness, a particular result of his unfulfilled relationship with Cäcilie,

the daughter of a solid, middle-class family, can only suggest impending death to Schuk: "Da fühle ich mich dem Tode nahe." (185) Yet Gustav is lonely anyway. His attempt at love offers only slight satisfaction, for he experiences more frustration in these relationships. Constant doubts about his feelings for Cäcilie, her refusal to accompany him on his search for a new life and his characteristic aimlessness accentuate the realization of his inability to live within normal social bounds.

On the subsequent journey of escape to the island of Sylt, Schuk finds himself surrounded by endless sand dunes,⁵ silent amidst the roar of the sea. He ponders his hopeless plight:

Ich sah plötzlich auf mein Leben wie auf ein Ding herab. Es war ein Gräuel. Wie ein widriges Gekröse lag es vor mir, ohne Sinn, ohne höhere Bedeutung, und ob ich es gleich selbst so sah, ergriff mich doch sofort ein Todesschrecken, und ich wollte das Schreckliche nicht zugeben. Um so klarer wurde es mir, und ich sprach: Aber doch waren meine Absichten rein, doch liebte ich im stillen meinen Bruder, glaubte ans Gute. Nein, liebte nicht, hatte keinen Glauben, war ein Scheusal an Unglaubigkeit, ein Fluch im Vernichten. Aber war doch ganz ein Scheusal, war doch ein reiner Fluch. Kann mich auch das nicht retten? Und dieses nicht, daß ich keine Rettung wollte, daß ich – daß ich – keine will. (222)

Despair and *Lebensekel* have overcome his ideas of brotherhood and universal goodness.

In an earlier letter to Hermann, Gustav utters similar sentiments of self-pity and dissolution: "Es liegt Trost in der Trostlosigkeit. . . . Verzweiflung frißt an mir, und doch kann ich nicht verzweifeln. Es liegt auch eine Befreiung im Nichts, im Gram etwas wie Erlösung." (108) Assaulted by this sense of insignificance, Schuk desires: "(mich) bloßzulegen, alles was ich bin und habe" (113), and, haunted by self-doubt, he considers it important to reveal to all the most intimate truths about himself. As opposed to his rather feeble plea for help directed to "(dem) Vater im Himmel" (106), he appears to realize that it must be man's relationship to man which will govern human destinies, regardless of any intervention from other distant forces.

Gustav Schuk is fully aware that his anti-*Bürger* attitude towards family, vocation and material things is one of the causes of his growing despair:

Ich gehe in Gesellschaften, die mir verhaßt sind, verstelle mich und mache mich schön, sehe im Regen nur ein Mißgeschick, das eine Zusammenkunft verhindert, in der Nacht nur die grausame Zeit der Trennung. . . . Ich bin der Schlechte, Nichtswürdige, der nichts versteht, der Traurige, der die Größe der Wirklichkeit nicht faßt, der Phantast! (159)

Bourgeois society⁶ prevents his metaphysical union and harmony with the powerful elements of Nature. In this letter to Hermann, Schuk remarks that he is forced to look and consider aspects of Nature as prosaic and ordinary. The rain, for instance, is described in stifling, practical terms – a hindrance and an annoyance, "ein Mißgeschick" (159), instead of the glorious natural event that it is. The bourgeois attitude towards the night is

that it is a time for sleep, whereas for Gustav, the night is not only "die grausame Zeit der Trennung", but also the height of artistic sensitivity and metaphysical power. Herein lies a harmony of moods which he seeks to embrace: "O Nacht, tiefe, stille Nacht, wäre ich wie du!" (120)

It is this unusual manner of thinking which causes his separation from Cäcilie. Yet this parting is not truly a result of malicious treatment by Schuk himself. Each time he gains some measure of fulfilment in their relationship, he feels he must terminate their union because it suddenly becomes finite. In this regard, Schuk's yearning implies a romantic search for an ideal, the essence of which is in the longing, not the attainment. Ordinary people fear his individuality, for Schuk does not adhere to the *Bürger* philosophy of the establishment of one's profession and vocational security. His idiosyncratic thoughts even shock Cäcilie during a discussion concerning the morality of suicide. At this point, Schuk questions saving a potential suicide if that person feels he has good reason to take his own life. The discussion suggests further reinforcement of the motif of suicide as a means of individual self-determination and independence, a philosophy which is supported in other Goering works.⁷ Schuk's radical remark causes a certain discomfort amongst the guests as he wonders aloud: "Ich weiß nicht, wenn einer einen Grund zu haben glaubt, sich zu töten, wie kann einer sich das Recht anmaßen, ihn zwingen zu leben?" (153)

Gustav Schuk seeks more than proprietary "Titel, Namen und Geld" (165) and can only maintain what others fail to see and understand: "Meine Sache ist Sache der Menschheit!" (165) Curiously however, on a previous occasion (Book II - *In der Stadt*), he had made a passionate commitment to becoming a doctor. For that time being, he had discovered a sense of direction to his life, in that the medical clinic had suddenly offered him a notion of productivity and social participation. Yet even here, the feeling of unfulfilment is soon to haunt him: "Ich werde mir nie selbst genügen" (120). He finds himself the antithesis to his active friend Liebmann, who "hat mir gezeigt, was mir immer fehlen wird und fehlt" (119).

Later in the novel, after his return from Sylt and the self-encounter amidst the sea and the sand, Gustav Schuk comes home to learn that another one of his friends, Wunderlich, has become a doctor, and as Gustav implies, has betrayed himself to the commonplace, practical demands of ordinary life: "Ich kannte den Mann nicht wieder!" (254) Schuk feels beckoned by a higher calling:

... daß mein Herz höher schlägt, daß ich sie (Wunderlich and others like him) aber doch nicht ganz verstehe, nicht ganz weiß, worum es sich handelt, keinen direkten Anteil daran habe, sie nicht besitze. Mir scheint doch, daß zum Leben etwas mehr gehört als ein Beruf, den man ausübt, und der Eifer, sich menschlich zu vollenden. (256)

His frequent endeavours to satisfy and fulfil the overpowering requisites of society can only confound and exhaust the insufficiently formulated notions which he thinks should dictate his own lifestyle. Hence, his desire to realize a personal identity is totally frustrated in an atmosphere of middle-

class normality which demands that his goals and values be submerged into its own commonplace standards.

Schuk's strained relationship with women further accentuates his difficult lot. Seeing Cäcilie for the first time, he is fascinated by this *blaue Blume*, yet immediately senses an urgent need to escape from her. His feelings fluctuate between disgust for his own emotions and an increasing passion for her: "Wie schnell wird man gemein, wenn man liebt, wie unpersönlich, wie flach." (132) Despite his desire to be sincere with Cäcilie and his deification of her, not only does he lie to her that he must leave the city, but also, in his frustrated passion, contemplates murdering his beloved. A selfwilled *Liebested* phantasy occupies his mind as he searches for a romantic escape in death. He sees this as the only means of preserving his passion. If he is to have her for himself, he must separate Cäcilie from the society which, through her, plagues him constantly. Exhausted by such tension, he can only experience brief tranquility when in her company: "Nach so vielen Kämpfen ist jetzt Ruh gekommen. Wenn ich bei Cäcilie bin, geht mein Geist zur Ruh, und wir sind nur eins... Wir sind beieinander, wir ersehnen nichts, es bleibt uns nicht mehr zu hoffen, wir haben alles." (178)

The relationship is essentially one-sided, for his attitude towards Cäcilie is frequently such that he considers her either a mere possession or just an object of his periodic affection. Without any thoughts of marriage, Schuk simply maintains: "Daß sie mein sei" (152) and "Sie gehörte ja mir." (148) He appears to have no control over his faculties and views his emotional state with a fatalistic eye: "Habe mich nie gefragt, ob Sie mich, ob ich Sie liebe, denn ich habe einfach geglaubt, daß das so sei und sein müsse." (151) A letter to Cäcilie, after he has left her, reveals his inability to account for his actions and explains his search for another realm of human relations: "Ich weiß nicht weshalb, aber dies (their relationship) ist die Sache der Menschheit, die heiligste Sache aller Menschen!" (167) Love and understanding are to be the essence of humanity; however, Gustav cannot be consistent in his feelings and behaviour.

Gradually his love becomes violent and almost pathological as he comes to realize his incompatibility with Cäcilie. Hence, he goes to the further extent of exploiting the love of another woman, Phyllis, in order to satisfy his frustrated love for Cäcilie. Not only does he abuse Phyllis, but he also selfishly injures his friendship with Walther who sincerely loves her. Schuk wishes only to possess Phyllis to spite his failures elsewhere: "Sei meine Magd, sei mein Leib.... und laß mich durch dich wieder gewaltig werden, sie (Cäcilie) zu verleugen." (180)

The one-sided relationship between Schuk and the two women so disarrays his mind that he has difficulty in distinguishing between reality and a dream world. Tortured by such uncertainties, he nevertheless gains a certain comfort in the feeling that perhaps dreams can help him against the oppressions of society. Yet, in other dream episodes (in which the

figures of both Cäcilie and Phyllis appear), he cries out the two women's names in seeming confusion and despair. Despite his desire to escape "ins Erhabene" (159) with his beloved, Gustav nonetheless realizes his quandary:

Aber ich bin ein seltsamer Geliebter, möchte fort, wenn es am schönsten wird, überhäufe sie mit Herabsetzungen, mit Ironie und schreie einen pathetischen Fluch in den Wind. ...Habe mich ja daran gewöhnt, mich in das Widersprechendste zu finden, habe mich vielleicht damit selbst gefunden. Lächerlich, lächerlich. Ich weiß und sehe voraus, wie es sein wird, sträube mich, und es wird, wie ich es erwartet habe... Ich stehe vor etwas, das tief unter dem ist, was ich wollte, und hoch über dem, was ich nicht wollte. (158-159)

The theme of escape plays a prominent role throughout the novel. Gustav Schuk is overwhelmed by a need to run from the stifling social and moral pressures around him. Cäcilie's refusal to travel with Schuk leads to his further frustration and despair. He had already lied about his earlier departure (he did not accompany her to the ball) because: "Ich wollte mich Dir (Cäcilie) nicht zeigen. Ich weiß mir gar nicht mehr zu helfen". (161) So he arrives in Berlin, more distraught than ever: "Ich bin nicht mehr ganz bei Sinnen." (163)

Gradually the constant doubts concerning Cäcilie and his own destiny bring about the decision to flee to Sylt. Yet relentless disillusion still haunts his thoughts: "ich erkannte die Gemeinheit meines Strebens, die Niedrigkeit des Gedankens und die Entwürdigung, die Verworrenheit meines Daseins." (170) Nevertheless, the powerful natural forces of the island prove to impress Schuk profoundly. When he must eventually depart for England, he laments desperately: "Was lasse ich zurück? List,⁸ du Saat-ferder der Hoffnung, du gewaltiges Treibbeet der Vollendung." (236)

Until the time of his journey, Gustav Schuk has always acknowledged "die Unklarheit, den Wankelmut, die Planlosigkeit (seines) Lebens." (112) This he feels to be his destiny – an "ewiges Herumgetriebensein." (100) Having realized this absence of any direction in his life and sensing the inevitable failure of his relationship with Cäcilie, he decides to search for personal stability and spiritual enlightenment: "Aber ich will versuchen, festzustellen, was ist. ...In mir ist nur ein Bedürfnis: ins Klare zu kommen". (151) Schuk seeks to sweep away *die Einbildungen* which dominate men's thoughts and motivations and attempts to rejuvenate himself by breaking with the past and discovering distant adventures. His own sense of nothingness emphasizes a need to have meaning for his existence: "Ich bin ja ein Nichts, und was an mir ist, ist Teil der ewigen Gewalt, die in allem wirkt, die mich nur kurze und belanglose Zeit vorschleibt, um mich dann wieder zurückzuziehen." (225) He comes to understand that: "In jedem Lebendigem ist ja ein Kern, ein unverrückbar Festes, das es zu erkennen, zu entwickeln gilt." (226)

Alone one night on Sylt amidst the sand, sea and the heavens, Schuk becomes aware of his finite state and that his personal quandary compares in small measure to the magnitude of the natural powers around him. The

solitude of the experience in the dunes confronts him with his own shortcomings and slowly, Schuk begins to discover his true self, beckoning: "hilfreicher Geist, komm über den Sand hinweg mir entgegen, du, der mir das Recht gibt, zu sein." (220) The new strength that he gains from these impressive surroundings of the island leads finally to some degree of self-discovery and *Klarheit*: "Ich spüre Natur leise in mir wirken, von Tag zu Tag es in mir fortrücken und meine Ergriffenheit mehrt sich von Tag zu Tag." (219) In joyful disbelief, he wonders aloud: "Beginne ich mich zu fühlen, beginne ich zu sein?" (220) His experience of bathing in the sea is tantamount to a baptism which anticipates a new life: "in diesem Bade bin ich erstarkt, in diesem Bade habe ich ein neues Leben empfangen." (211) The optimism is further stressed when he remarks: "Mich dünkt, mein Schreiben ist davon ein Zeichen." (211) Gustav's fascination for the sea and the dunes suggests a certain death-longing in which rebirth is the anticipated outcome: "Hier soll ich wirklich geboren werden." (214)

In a letter to Walther, Schuk describes the effects of his adventure by the sea. The stormy environs appear to clear his thoughts, and he realizes he must finish with his past. Overjoyed by a sudden sense of freedom, he writes: "Ich fühlte mich nur befreit und liess mich bald kindlich gehen, indem ich mich an allem, was um mich herum war, und an jeder meiner Bewegungen freute." (231) As he sat facing the elements about him, he remarks in the note to his friend: "wuchs ich, wurde ich größer." (232)

During the night of a storm on the island, Schuk sees a vision in the darkness. A mystical *Dünenmann* presents itself to the bewildered wanderer who sees what he thinks is "das Gesicht des Ewigen" (234), a figure of metaphysical dimensions who appears to offer spiritual aid to the lonely and desperate man. Amidst the tension of this unusual encounter, Gustav Schuk gains new insight into his own existence: "... der Geist mich gelehrt hat, daß besser als Wissen ist: Sein Leben zu bilden. Ich habe jetzt den Mut, das Wissen abzulehnen. Ich weiß mehr, als alles Wissen je wissen kann." (235) The vision soon passes; However, the seeds of rebirth have been planted in Schuk's weary soul and are to be further nurtured during his subsequent journey to England.

For Gustav Schuk, the trip to British soil is one of utter fascination and much needed rejuvenation: "Bin müde, aber in meiner Müdigkeit steigen andauernd Bilder von hoher Glut, Wirklichkeitsahnungen von hoher Stärke auf." (239) England appears to have a curious effect. His arrival in London exposes him to the relaxed manner of the British, their bustling humanity tempered by a moral strength and sense of direction: "Ja, Größe ist nur da, wo Einfachheit, wo keine Gewaltsamkeit ist, wo alles sich aus sich selbst vollendet." (246) London offers him personal inspiration and illustrates a model of social and spiritual stability which Gustav feels his native Germany should follow. Encouraged by this further injection of renewed confidence, he is filled with a sudden desire to return home, to begin life anew: "Ja, das ist das Dasein! Alles andere kommt von selbst!"

(246) The closing words of the chapter *Auf Sylt und in England* point to a changed Gustav Schuk. As he makes the homeward journey, an inner resolve and optimistic anticipation guide his thoughts. He sees a new life before him, not one of devotion to medicine, but one of greater substance and significance: "Das Entscheidende ist die stille Sicherheit, die mich ergriffen hat, der Glaube, der Schwung, die Begeisterung, die Gewißheit, daß es genügt, ein innerlich schöner Mensch zu sein, um zu leben." (253) Yet what, in fact, is this *stille Sicherheit*, and how is Schuk's sudden conversion to be explained? The isolation and independence experienced on Sylt and in London afforded him a time of reflection and meditation. His rebirth is the result of the effects of two quite different adventures. The first sojourn offered him an encounter with his inner self. At that time, he realized that, rather than continue the futile efforts to integrate his personality into the normal world, it would be far more satisfying to accept the gulf between two opposed lifestyles and, hence, gain peace within himself and greater conviction in such a realization. The second experience exposes the young man to an example of social behaviour and attitudes quite unlike the restricting values of his own country.

With new insight into questions concerning life and death, Schuk describes his unusually composed sentiments:

Ich bin ja ein sterbender Mann. Lächerlich zu sagen, ich lebe und fühle mich wohl. Aber warum ist mir alles Lesen, alles Tun unerträglich geworden; warum sehe ich, wie flach, wie unbefriedigend alles ist, was geschrieben, gedacht, getan worden ist. Ich glaube, so lange man im Leben drin steht, sieht man das gar nicht. (257)

Finally he sees the true futility of the thoughts and deeds of ordinary life, for the small and momentary satisfactions which he gains on earth are insufficient. He can only stare at the sterility of this life around him. Consequently, Schuk's uncharacteristic resolve presents him with the choice of taking his own life, of assuring a destiny of glory and beauty in death:

Sich zu enden, das eben ist die Logik, das die Tat, die alles heilt, der Aufschwung, das unwiderrufliche Zeichen, daß ich dem gehörte, der allem Sinn, allem Schönheit, allem Größe verleiht. Größe? Größe? Was brauche ich mich noch zu fürchten, was noch zu zögern. Ja ist gesagt, nun sei das Ja getan. (258-59)

He longs for the joy of his last heartbeat: "Oh, so müssen wir wohl alle unseres Schicksals Kreise vollenden." (259), for now he realizes that he will not die in confusion for want of knowing why he chooses death. Schuk envisions a new morality of the living since he knows that: "Über das Leben zu denken, geziemt nur den Toten.... Des Lebens Heiligstes ist das Versagen." (259)

Schuk now observes his life before him as an open book, nothing complete and no order in the text of his existence. The theme of darkness suggests his imminent destiny: "wenn das Licht ausbrennt, wird Finster-

nis. Meine Kraft ist verbraucht, mein Leben aufgezehrt." (260) Premonitions of the end abound: "Es gibt ein Ganzes, in das man hineingehört und das man wissen oder fühlen muß. Ich glaube, ich habe es am Ende erkannt." (262) Motifs of freezing and coldness describe Schuk's physical and spiritual condition as he gradually realizes that it is easier for him to embrace death than vainly continue to confront life: "Bin ich jetzt vorm Tode so, wie ich leben wollte und wie es mir nicht möglich war zu leben?" (263)

In a state of fatalistic quietism, the resolute Schuk sees his freedom in only one direction and prepares to take his leave: "Erde, Erde, wie süß, mit dir zu altern. Aber du bleibst jung, du betrügst uns, du überlebst uns alle." (264) As he writes his final thoughts in his *Taschenbuch*, he suddenly bursts forth in French: "je vais mourir, je vais mourir, je vais mourir. Rien que cela, rien que cela, rien que cela. Oui, oui, oui. Non, non, non. Est-ce vrai?" (266) Does he envision a new destiny? Why does he call out in a foreign tongue,⁹ yet when the storm (be it real or only in Schuk's mind) heightens, he cries aloud again, but this time in German: "Das ist ein Zeichen! Das ist ein Zeichen!" (266) Confronted by a totally unfamiliar circumstance, Schuk appears to experience certain inhibitions within the realm of his native tongue. The outburst in French characterizes a changing personality.

Gustav Schuk is now quite prepared for his desired end. His earthly lot of isolation and mutual social rejection has drawn full circle to the welcomed moment on the desolate Neufelder plateau where only scattered pages of notes can vaguely relate the terms of a lonely yet resolute death.

Through its presentation of the hero as an outsider, a dreamer and visionary, a seeker of truth in his own life, a figure whose difficult relationships with women caused much personal frustration and to whom self-determination, even to the ultimate act of suicide, was a compelling need, *Jung Schuk* not only emphasizes many of the motifs prevalent in Goering's subsequent writings but also possesses a unity of themes which reflect much of the author's own muddled aspirations and endeavours.

The novel is not a *Bildungsroman*. Gustav Schuk undergoes virtually no social development and very little spiritual growth. For all intents and purposes, he remains the same character as when the reader meets him at the outset of the book:

Instead of growing from an inadequate subjectivity to a mature consciousness of the objective world and his own place in it, the putative hero reverses the process, progressively embracing and inventing illusions, more and more determinedly resisting alternatives and voices that clash with his own.¹⁰

This tentative definition of the hero of an *anti-Bildungsroman* is, in the case of *Jung Schuk*, appropriate in its critical and literary reference. Moreover, it provides a particularly accurate assessment of the disparate

philosophies and behaviour of Reinhard Goering himself.

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Notes

1. Chapter VI (i, iii) of my dissertation – "The Writer as Outsider: Studies in the Drama and Fiction of Reinhard Goering" University of Toronto, Canada, 1975) – discusses in great detail Goering's political, religious and medical affiliations.

2. Goering received his medical degree from Leipzig in 1926 for his dissertation *Über einen Fall von Aneurysma Spurium*.

3. Reinhard Goering, *Jung Schuk in Prosa | Dramen | Verse*, (München: Langen-Müller, 1961), pp. 95-266. (All quotations will be from this edition.)

The novel received a few varying reviews. Elisabeth Dauthendey (*Deutsches Literaturblatt III* (1913), Nr. 9, S.11.) writes almost glowingly of the novel, calling it a herald of the feelings of the younger generation awaiting a new Germany. Her enthusiasm for Goering's first work gives her cause to await eagerly his next contribution.

On the other hand, Erwin Ackerknecht (*Das literarische Echo XVI* (1913-14), Sp. 1143) comments with far greater reservation that Gustav Schuk suffers from an incurable "Haltlosigkeit" and that the book lacks "...jene Kraft und Tiefe der Gesinnung, ohne die kein Kunstwerk wird."

4. This similar attitude occurs in the later essay, *Wieso ein neues Stück* (*Prosa | Dramen | Verse*, pp. 86-88) Here, Goering maintains that the essence of his education and upbringing has been false: "Wenn aber ich falsch bin, so ist falsch, was von mir kommt. Mein Leben, mein Streben, mein Sein, mein Leiden, meine Liebe, meine Arbeiten – alles falsch, verderblich, verwerflich, schlecht, wie ich selbst." (86)

5. Gustav Schuk's experience amidst the sand dunes brings to mind Hans Castorp's powerful self-encounter during a blizzard on the mountain in Switzerland. This sudden metaphysical vision in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* offers Castorp new direction and rebirth through death. The young man reappears from a brief yet intimate relationship with death, full of determination to re-enter life with fruitful and productive intent.

6. The issue of *bourgeois* attitudes is, at times, somewhat self-contradictory. The prime example is, of course, Cäcilie's brother, who, while living in Paris, considers himself to be a radical, socialist and extreme left-winger, – ostensibly rejecting all middle-class standards and values. Yet, it is this brother who is shocked, surprised and disgusted at the maid Frieda's supposed love affair with Gustav. The latter is discovered in Cäcilie's garden by her brother who orders the startled Schuk out, accusing him of having an affair with the maid. It is the brother who is the *bourgeois*!

7. Aside from its prominent place for discussion in *Seeschlacht* and *Südpolexpedition des Kapitän Scott*, the themes of self-determination and suicide are clearly emphasized in the short story *Gebet* (*Prosa | Dramen | Verse*, pp. 37-47) and Goering's theoretical essay "Mein Kampf" of 1933 (Schiller-Nationalmuseum Ms. No. 72.440)

8. List is the part of Sylt which Gustav visited.

9. In *Der Zauberberg*, Hans Castorp speaks in French to Claudia Chauchat when he confesses his love to her. Possibly, the change in the language indicates an entry into a new, unfamiliar realm for both Hans Castorp and, in this case, Gustav Schuk. Goering never investigates this domain of the after-life which Schuk appears to confront as the novel closes. Nonetheless, Schuk does seem to perceive some sign which suggests his destiny in an unknown sphere.

10. This quotation is taken from a *Times Literary Supplement* (June 24, 1977, p. 756) review by Walter Allen of Robert Bloom's *Anatomies of Egotism: A Reading of the Last novels of H. G. Wells*. Bloom's comment concerns his criticism that Wells' novel *The Bulpington of Blup* is an *anti-Bildungsroman*.