

**A CRISIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS:
VÖLKISCH OCCULTISM IN AUSTRIA AND GERMANY, 1890-1933**

BY
SHANNA TURNER

A THESIS

Submitted to the Division of Social Sciences
New College of Florida
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree in
Bachelor of Arts
Under the sponsorship of Dr. David Harvey

Sarasota, Florida
April, 2010

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dad, Christopher Turner, who is everything a father should be and more. Thank you, always.

And to my very own cult: Mary Barnes, Sarah Brown, Mitchell Hearn, Sarah Thompson and Hannah Woerner. All of you made these past years some of the greatest. Thank you for everything, I could not have done it without your support.

And to Allison Miller, who has been there for me since the tenth grade and who spent the past year patiently listening to me moan and cry about this process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I must acknowledge Dr. David Harvey, who has guided me through my four years at New College and who patiently supported and shepherded me through the long and taxing process of writing this thesis. You have my eternal thanks.

I must also extend my thanks to my committee members, Dr. Wendy Sutherland and Dr. Robert Johnson for their time and effort.

CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures and Tables.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter I: The Austrian Atmosphere.....	5
Austria in the Nineteenth Century.....	5
Pan-German Awakening.....	11
The Changing City.....	17
Pan-Germanists and the Church.....	21
Enlightenment, Irrationality, and Esoteric Nationalism.....	23
Chapter II: Early Ariosophy.....	26
The Esoteric Tradition.....	26
Guido von List.....	29
Fin-de-Siècle Occult Tradition.....	31
Völkisch Ideology and Theosophy.....	33
The Spiritualist Movement in Germany.....	39
Theosophical Origins of Ariosophy.....	43
Chapter III: Later Ariosophy.....	50
Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels.....	50
Order of the New Templars.....	60
The Germanenorden and the Thule Society.....	63
Chapter IV: Occultism under the Third Reich.....	70
National Socialism and the Occult.....	70
Hitler and the Occult.....	79
Epilogue.....	88
Contemporary Society and the Pagan Revival.....	88
Conclusion.....	92
Appendix.....	95
Map of Cisleithania.....	95
Map of Austria-Hungary with Provinces.....	96
Proportion of Hungarians in Hungary.....	97
Bibliography.....	98

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.1— Austria-Hungary Ethnic Demographic Map.....	14
Table 1.2— Linguistic Distribution of Austria-Hungary.....	15
Table 1.3— Languages in Cisleithania.....	17
Table 2.1— Occult Clubs.....	42
Figure 4.1— Map of Germany.....	78
Figure A.1— Map of Cisleithania.....	95
Figure A.2— Map of Austria-Hungary with Provinces.....	96
Figure A.3— Proportion of Hungarians in Hungary.....	97

A CRISIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: VÖLKISCH OCCULTISM IN AUSTRIA AND GERMANY, 1890-1933

Shanna Turner

New College of Florida, 2010

ABSTRACT

The nineteenth century saw an occult revival throughout the Western world, but this occult revival impacted Germany uniquely. In the rest of Europe interest in the occult was a fad that died out within a few short years. This was not the case in the German-speaking world, where the social, political and economic atmosphere created conditions particularly well suited to fostering the occult. This thesis analyzes the unique conditions in nineteenth century Austria and Germany that resulted in the völkisch occult movement and the writers and thinkers who created the ideologies of the movement. One cannot address German occultism without, to some extent, addressing the relationship between the occult and the Third Reich. To those ends, this thesis discusses the tenuous relationship between the völkisch occultists, Guido von List, Lanz von Liebenfels and Rudolf von Sebottendorff, and National Socialism, concluding that National Socialism was not a product of the occult, but rather both were products of the nineteenth century culture of despair and irrationality prevalent in Germany.

Dr. David Harvey
Division of Social Sciences

Introduction:

*Teuflische Menschenbestien drücken von oben, schlachten gewissenlos Millionen Menschen in mörderischen Kriegen, die zur Bereicherung ihres persönlichen Geldbeutels geführt werden. Wilde Menschenbestien rütteln von unten her an den festen Säulen der Kultur... Was wollt ihr da noch eine Hölle im Jenseits! Ist die, in der wir leben, und die in uns brennt, nicht schauerlich genug?*¹

[Demonic beast-men oppress us from above, slaughtering without conscience millions of people in murderous wars waged for their own personal gain. Wild beast-men shake the pillars of culture from below... Why do you seek a hell in the next world! Is not the hell in which we live and which burns inside us sufficiently dreadful?]²

- Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels

Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels was a nineteenth century German occultist whose racist theories concerning the religious nature of what it means to be Aryan, and thus human, were at the center of the German occult revival, which combined *völkisch* racism with occultism to define ethnicity, and *Deutschtum* (Germanness) in particular, as a spiritual matter. This thesis began as a project to study the unusual ideologies emerging from the nineteenth century occult revival, largely focusing on the works of German national occultists such as Guido von List, Lanz von Liebenfels, Rudolf von Sebottendorff and

¹ Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, *Theozoologie oder die Kunde von den Sodoms-Äfflingen und dem Götter-Elektron* (Vienna, 1905), 26.

² Translated by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke.

Karl Maria Wiligut. As interesting as it was to read the fascinating and somewhat nauseating theories put forth by these men, I found the social conditions that created them to be perhaps even more interesting.

The occult movement and those that comprised it did not spring up from nowhere; there were deep political, social and economic forces at work. The nineteenth century was a time for great change, perhaps more so for Germany and Austria than for most societies. Germany had been an agricultural society whose mostly peasant population was crushed during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). The industrial revolution hit Germany faster and harder than any other nation and the agrarian society rapidly became a modern industrial society. The population skyrocketed and there were mass movements of people heading from the countryside to the cities, displacing traditional ties and uprooting communities. Religious faith was on the decline and science was taking its place, leaving a frightening sense of purposelessness in the spiritual void left behind. It was in this context that many of the fin-de-siècle occultists sought to strip away the soulless trappings of the modern, materialist world that had caused their national crisis of consciousness. In doing so they reached for the irrational to counter the soulless, heartless Reason of the modern age that had stolen from them their sense of identity, purpose and faith. The men on whom this work is primarily focused were obsessed with filling that void.

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on the unique atmosphere in Austria that gave birth to the *völkisch* occultist movement. This chapter explores nineteenth century Austria, which saw the rise of Pan-Germanism, drawing from the same conditions of dissatisfaction and resentment from which the Viennese occultists arose. These *völkisch*

nationalists and occultists combined esotericism with anti-clericalism and created a unique Aryan, racist, occultist nationalism. The next chapter focuses on early Ariosophy and Guido von List, the first occultist to synthesize occultism, *völkisch* ideology and Theosophy into what would later be known as Ariosophy. It also addresses the manner in which *völkisch* ideology became entangled with Theosophy and Spiritualism. The third chapter concerns later Ariosophy and its major ideologues, Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels and Rudolf von Sebottendorff and it addresses their organizations and contributions to German occultism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The final chapter addresses occultism and its role in the formation of the Nazi Party and its influences on Hitler and the Third Reich. The thesis concludes with the pagan revival in contemporary Western society, which draws heavily upon the thinkers and writers of the German occult revival.

The German occult movement that this thesis addresses was largely a combination of racism, German nationalism and esotericism used to prophesy the coming of a new Germanic world domination. Ariosophy, in this case primarily the doctrines of Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels, was one of the most prominent examples of this occult movement; the Ariosophists sought, perhaps unconsciously, to combat the feeling of helplessness and meaninglessness that had descended over many young Germans at the end of the nineteenth century. This combination of nationalism and occultism was a product of unique anxieties and insecurities felt at the end of the century. These nineteenth century issues of modernity, identity, and spirituality were particularly troublesome in Vienna, where urbanism and ethnic tensions exasperated developing conflicts, but would spread to Germany following the shocking defeat in the First World

War and the wretched social and economical conditions under which Germans suffered thereafter. The nineteenth century crisis of consciousness was largely a spiritual conflict, while the twentieth century flight from reason was an issue of a social and ethical nature, which is reborn within the racist, pagan movement seen in the twenty-first century.

Chapter I: The Austrian Atmosphere

Austria in the Nineteenth Century:

The German occult revival was born in Austria during an age of radical political and social change. Absolutism was giving way to democracy. Habsburg defeat at the hands of the French in 1859 and by the Prussians in 1866 resulted in the Habsburgs' retreat from absolutism and an internal transition to constitutionalism and the introduction to representative government in 1867. With the increased size of the voting class came a rise in nationalism and Pan-Germanism among Germans in the Habsburg Empire. The Habsburg Empire in the later half of the nineteenth century was a disconcertingly diverse state, having within its borders some twelve different nationalities, including Croats, Czechs, Germans, Magyars (Hungarians), Poles, Romanians, Ukrainians, Slovaks, and Slovenes.³ The hodgepodge of different ethnic groups and nationalities under Habsburg rule would come to undermine the stability of the empire. Much of the political and social unrest came from the Germans within the empire; Austrian Germans had been barred from joining with their ethnic brethren to the north after the Prussian-Austrian war, and from that point on they were forced, with great resentment, to remain one nationality among many in the melting pot of the Habsburg Empire. As Austria began to democratize many Germans feared that the supremacy of

³ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 8.

German language and culture, and thus German political dominance, would begin to wane in the multi-national empire. This rising fear led to the creation of the Pan-German nationalist movement dedicated to the unification and political advancement of ethnic Germans.

All of this was coming to prominence following the Austrian defeat by Napoleon III in 1859, which paved the way for constitutionalism within the historically absolute monarchy. Austria was facing threats from three sides: Napoleon III was championing Italian nationalism; Russia wanted to reverse the verdict of the Crimean War of 1856, which prevented Russia from establishing naval bases on the Black Sea; and Prussia was courting liberal national backing within the German states. The Habsburg Monarchy needed to secure one of these powers as an ally. Unable to compromise with France, Austria was torn between conservatism and liberalism and teetered between the two. The outcome would be decided in 1866;⁴ the decision was not made by statesmanship but rather by defeat in war.

Little by little Habsburg Emperor Franz Joseph was forced to yield concessions to the clamoring small-nation nationalists who were chafing under his prior neo-absolutist policies. Revolutionary fervor swept through Hungary in March of 1848 with the wave of revolutionary wars. The Hungarian Revolution was unsuccessful, but victory was costly to the Habsburgs- and to all other nationalities in the Empire. Alexander Bach, the Minister of the Interior (1849-1859), became the virtual dictator over Hungary. Hungary, according to Bach, had lost her right to a constitution when she deposed the House of Habsburg. All other states lost with Hungary. The Diets were dissolved and the Empire, for the first and only time, was truly unified. Administration, laws, taxes, and trade

⁴ A.J.P Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948), 95.

system became unified, as Bach tore down the barriers between Hungary and the rest of the empire.

The empire's constitution, established some two years before by Count Franz Stadion, was abolished and Franz Joseph became an absolute monarch in 1851. This policy was described by A.J.P. Taylor as absolutism "without promise."⁵ Before the Kübeck Patent in 1851 introduced the absolutist monarchy there had been hope that the emperor would agree to a solution acceptable to those who saw problems within the Bach system. The Kübeck Patent, though largely symbolic, ended any such hope of liberalization at the hand of the emperor.⁶ Kübeck abolished the constitution set up under Stadion and made the ministers solely responsible to the emperor, rather than to the parliament.⁷ After the Kübeck Patent all nations under Habsburg rule were equal, and all were equally unhappy.

Not even the Germans were content with Franz Joseph's absolutist rule. The Germans made up the most educated and wealthiest nation in the empire, and as a result they desired a constitution and resented the financial burden they were under to support the army. The Crimean War further isolated Austria and only reinforced Austria's growing irrelevance and declining political power on the continent. Poor foreign policy and economic crisis following the war combined to cause the necessary retreat from military absolutism, and martial law was ended in many of the Austrian territories. The Habsburg Monarchy had isolated itself both internally and externally. The Austrian

⁵ Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, 89.

⁶ Ibid, 88.

⁷ Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy: From Enlightenment to Eclipse*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001), 161.

Empire's decline in power made the empire vulnerable to her many enemies.

Compromise was needed for the survival of the empire.⁸

In October of 1860 Franz Joseph began the constitutional era by granting the October Diploma, the principal features of which included the creation of a pan-imperial Reichsrat that, along with the Diets, was to be consulted in the passage of laws; the rights and legislative powers not specifically reserved for the Reichsrat were to be the province of the provincial Diets; and the acknowledgement of Hungary's special status by having non-Hungarian delegates meet separately to discuss non-Hungarian matters.⁹

Unfortunately, the October Diploma did not satisfy the Germans, who wanted a more centralized government, or the Hungarians, who were not granted enough freedom from the emperor. The October Diploma was stillborn almost from the moment of conception and by the next year the February Patent had reversed the October Diploma. The Patent was needed to pacify the German liberal bourgeoisie, who found the federalizing Diploma repugnant. The powers granted to the Diets under the Diploma were revoked and the parliament took on a more traditional function. The Hungarians were outraged by the centralizing changes implemented in the February Patent and they expressed their displeasure by boycotting the Reichsrat.¹⁰ Hungary's stand against Vienna inspired the Slavs and the Romanians to follow their example. The empire was now torn between the Magyars demanding their historical rights, the German centralists, and the Slav federalists.

Franz Joseph's journey down the road of constitutionalism culminated in what was known as "The Compromise" in 1867 when he was crowned King of Hungary-

⁸ Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, 96.

⁹ Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy: From Enlightenment to Eclipse*, 178.

¹⁰ Ibid, 180.

creating the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Following Habsburg defeat in 1866 it was Hungary that offered a partnership between the Magyars and the emperor, who was in desperate need of allies. Franz Joseph was forced to make concessions to the Magyars in order to avoid making concessions to any of the other ethnic groups seeking greater autonomy.¹¹ Franz Joseph, obsessed with his own dynastic power, found Hungary's demands, which had not changed since the October Diploma, easier to stomach than surrendering power to the German liberals, who sought to interfere with his autocratic rule.

The compromise made by the emperor to the Hungarians gave the Hungarians control of the internal affairs of the 'Magyar nation' while leaving Franz Joseph in control of foreign affairs. The emperor was playing a dangerous balancing game; he sought to keep German liberal power at bay through the advancement of the Magyars, and Magyar supremacy could only be challenged by the united power of the Czechs and Germans- whom the emperor kept at odds.¹² Franz Joseph was willing to tolerate Magyar power to maintain his own supremacy and made his concessions to the Hungarians out of fear rather than conviction, which would ultimately lead to the destruction of the Habsburg Monarchy.

German subservience to the emperor and humiliation by the Hungarians combined with economic crisis and exclusion from foreign affairs to breed deep resentment. Somewhat ironically, the February Patent, created largely in response to German objections to the October Diploma, created a Parliamentary system that would mark the downward trend of German power in the Empire. The equalizing principles of

¹¹ Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, 130.

¹² Ibid, 141.

the Parliamentary system would force Germans to take their place among that other peoples of the empire. Much to the dissatisfaction of the Germans the new parliamentary empire was a place without privileges for ethnic Germans.¹³ The tides of foreign politics were also against Austrian Germans.

Bismarck had broken with the liberals and he preferred a powerful Habsburg nation to the dangers of Pan-Germanism. Bismarck sought to avoid a situation where Austria-Hungary would look to England or France for support against Russia, leaving Germany isolated with Russia on one side and France, England and Austria-Hungary on the other. Despite German support for a strong Habsburg Monarchy, Germany did not support Habsburg action in the Balkans. Bismarck desired to preserve the Turkish Empire and to those aims he initiated a conservative alliance with the Dual Monarchy that gave up on the idea of a Greater Germany, which would have incorporated Hungary. To strengthen the Habsburgs, who were trying to balance out the competing ethnic groups in their empire, Bismarck became a supporter of Czech interests, resulting in increased German disunity and promoted Hungarian independence. Because of Bismarck's support of small-nation interests, the Hungarians shifted their loyalties to the more reliable Germans of the Hohenzollern German Empire. During the elections of 1879 Imperial influence was used against the Germans and they lost their majority in the Reichsrat.¹⁴ Austrian Germans had been abandoned by both Germany and by Hungary. German hegemony in the empire was lost.

¹³ C. A. MaCartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918*, (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 521.

¹⁴ Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, 155.

Pan-German Awakening:

The Pan-German movement was first popularized in the 1860s within the same atmosphere rife with liberal-conservative political tension that created the Dual Monarchy. The movement first found a home among university students in Vienna, Graz, and Prague. These Austrian fraternities had an organization very similar to German *Burschenschaften* formed during the *Vormärz* period.¹⁵ The German *Vormärz* period (1815-1848) saw the development of traditional nationalism and romanticized ritual and secrecy, aspects that made German student fraternities in Austrian universities the perfect launching point for the Pan-German movement.¹⁶ Issues of German nationalism, which lingered after the failed Assembly of Frankfurt in 1848-49 and were exasperated by the preemptive exclusion of Austria from the German union after the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, frustrated many of the students in these fraternities.

Grossdeutsch nationalism became popular amongst these fraternity members, who formed a cult of prussophilia, glorifying Bismarck and worshiping force and aggressive militarism. *Kleindeutsch* nationalism sought to exclude Austria from the German state, as opposed to *grossdeutsch* nationalism, which argued for the inclusion of the ethnically German lands of the Habsburg Empire,¹⁷ or the even broader solution of *Mittleuropa*, which argued for the inclusion of all German-speaking peoples. Some took *Mittleuropa* further, wanting to include all Germanic peoples, such as the Dutch,

¹⁵ George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1971), 5.

¹⁶ Paula Sutter Fichtner, "History, Religion, and Politics in the Austrian Vormärz." *History and Theory* 10 (1971): 34.

¹⁷ Lawrence Birken, "Volkish Nationalism in Perspective." *The History Teacher* 27 (1994): 135.

Flemish, and even Anglo-Saxons.¹⁸ Following the Austrian-Prussian war in 1866 *Grossdeutschland* would have been politically impossible, yet it remained a founding principle of Pan-Germanism.

Georg von Schönerer shaped Austrian Pan-Germanism into a true political force. Schönerer became involved with the Pan-German movement in 1876 when he joined a federation of nationalistic fraternities in Vienna. Schönerer changed Austrian Pan-Germanism from a loose group of naive and politically disorganized students and working-class men into an anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, and anti-Semitic revolutionary nationalist movement.¹⁹ By 1878 he was loudly demanding the economic and political union of German-Austria with the German Reich. Schönerer's movement shared many qualities with other radical national movements, but he left a potent and lasting mark on Pan-Germanism, and on Austrian universities and fraternities, in the form of racism.²⁰ In 1888 Schönerer was convicted of assault and imprisoned for five years, during which time Pan-Germanism lost much of its political clout.

The Pan-Germanism movement regained its status in the 1890s with the Pan-German Association, which was organized in the last decade of the nineteenth century in Germany largely in protest of the potential release of the Helgoland (Heligoland) archipelago to the English.²¹ The Pan-German Association very quickly became a permanent organization concerned with German imperialism and ethnic promotion. It

¹⁸ Roger Chickering, *We Men who Feel Most German*, (Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 79.

¹⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 10.

²⁰ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 195.

²¹ *Ibid*, 219.

spread to Austria to protest the introduction of Slovene-language classes in exclusively German schools in Carniola, modern-day Slovenia.²²

Tensions between Germans and other ethnic groups were particularly high in Cisleithania, the Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy. Germans were the single largest ethnic group, making up roughly 24 percent of the population of the empire, with the Magyars following at 20.2 percent. In the Austrian half of the empire Germans made up 35 percent of the population and Czechs made up 23 percent.²³ Most of these conflicts were between Germans and Czechs in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, where Germans did not hold a clear majority.

Table 1.2
Linguistic distribution of Austria–Hungary:²⁴

Language:	% of Total Population:
German	24%
Hungarian	20%
Czech	13%
Polish	10%
Ruthenian ²⁵	8%
Romanian	6%
Croat	5%
Slovak	4%
Serb	4%
Slovene	3%
Italian	3

²² Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 11.

²³ Robert Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1819, Volume II*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1950), 305.

²⁴ Anstalt G. Freytag & Berndt (1911). *Geographischer Atlas zur Vaterlandskunde an der österreichischen Mittelschulen*. Vienna: K. u. k. Hof-Kartographische. "Census December 31st 1910".

²⁵ Note that "Ruthenian" includes Rusyn and Ukrainian.

Figure 1.1



Dr. Andrija Nacu, *The Ethnic Groups of Austria-Hungary in 1910*, 2006.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Austria-Hungary_administrative.jpg

The conflict was fuelled by developments in coal and textile industries, sectors where Germans tended to be owners and managers.²⁶ These industries attracted a great deal of cheap labor, mostly Czech, from central Europe. Conflicts between Germans and Czechs were not restricted to Czech laborers and German managers. Conflicts could also be seen between Czech farm-workers and German landowners, between merchants of both nationalities and between educated Germans and Czechs seeking public and administrative positions. The most significant issue in these conflicts was language- the most obvious mark of ethnic identity in the empire. Language caused ethnic conflicts concerning schools, local governance, elections, land sales and property rights, and in mixed marriages.

The Austrian Pan-German organization soon adopted the characteristic imperialist ideals based on a *völkisch* rationale and supported German territorial expansion both in the colonies and in Europe. *Völkisch*, which means “ethnic” or “national,” comes from the German word “*Volk*” meaning “people” but it also carries more complicated connotations of “race” and “tribe.”²⁷ “*Volk*” signified the union of a people possessing a specific German essence that spoke to the core of one’s deepest nature, inspiring one’s creativity, emotion, understanding, and unity with other members of the *Volk*.²⁸ To many German thinkers of the time exclusion from the *Volk* was synonymous with soullessness. *Völkisch* unity became an obsession for some Germans and the cornerstone of the Pan-German movement remained the demand that Germany’s borders reflect the racial and cultural unification of ethnic Germans. The idea of a “national community”

²⁶ Chickering, *We Men who Feel Most German*, 27.

²⁷ James Webb, *The Occult Establishment*. (Illinois: Open Court, 1979) 276.

²⁸ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 4.

(*Volksgemeinschaft*) needed an anti-thesis, an “other,” to aid in distinguishing *Volk* versus “alien” or “foreign.” It was the Jews who played this role of the “other” who threatened the values and racial purity of the *Volk*.²⁹

Other aspects of the German nationalist movement focused more heavily on *völkisch*-culture and the creation of defense leagues (called *Vereine*) to protect and foster German identity. The *Germanenbund*, and later its successor, the *Bund der Germanen*, consisted of a federation of nationalistic *Vereine* involved in the institution of *völkisch* community activities such as festivals, recreation of German mythology and ritual, and the promotion of Germanic *Volkstum*. By the year 1900 the *Bund der Germanen* claimed 160 *Vereine* in its federation.³⁰

German nationalist discontent grew throughout the decade of the 1890s, especially in 1897, when the Austrian premier introduced language decrees requiring all officials in Bohemia and Moravia to speak both Czech and German as most Czech officials already spoke German, the decree would discriminate against Germans, though German officials were given four years to learn Czech. German peasants now faced the difficulty of deciphering Czech if they wished to bring legal grievances against a Czech.³¹

²⁹ Petteri Pietikainen, “The Volk and Its Unconscious: Jung, Hauer and the 'German Revolution',” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35 (2000): 525.

³⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 9.

³¹ Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton: University Press, 1995) 207.

Table 1.3
Languages in Cisleithania: (1910 census)³²

Land:	Most common language:	Other languages (more than 2%):
Bohemia	63.2% Czech	36.8% German
Dalmatia	96.2% Croatian	2.8% Italian
Galicia	58.6% Polish	40.2% Ukrainian
Lower Austria	95.9% German	3.8% Czech
Upper Austria	99.7% German	
Bucovina	38.4% Ukrainian	34.4% Romanian, 21.2% German, 4.6% Polish
Carinthia	78.6% German	21.2% Slovene
Carniola	94.4% Slovene	5.4% German
Salzburg	99.7% German	
Silesia	43.9% German	31.7% Polish, 24.3% Czech
Styria	70.5% German	29.4% Slovene
Moravia	71.8% Czech	27.6% German
Tyrol	57.3% German	42.1% Italian
Küstenland	37.3% Slovene	34.5% Italian, 24.4% Croatian, 2.5% German
Vorarlberg	95.4% German	4.4% Italian

As a result nationalist outrage erupted throughout the empire.³³ Pan-Germanists, unable otherwise to prevent the passing of the language decree, purposely interfered with and slowed parliamentary business. Attempts by later premiers to establish control exasperated the situation and in 1897 the disorder erupted into outright violence as mobs took to the streets and clashed with the police and army. Hundreds of *Vereine* were shut down in the name of public order. From the combination of electoral gains by Pan-Germanists and public and parliamentary disorder came the source of a violently nationalistic mood that would see the birth of esoteric nationalism. It was within this atmosphere that many of the prominent esoteric writers and thinkers came of age.

³² Anstalt G. Freytag & Berndt (1911). *Geographischer Atlas zur Vaterlandskunde an der österreichischen Mittelschulen*. Vienna: K. u. k. Hof-Kartographische. "Census December 31st 1910".

³³ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 10.

The Changing City:

Vienna, the birthplace of List and Lanz, was historically a predominately German city, but by the start of the twentieth century the increasing immigration of non-Germans to the city began changing its ethnic demographics. The rapid urbanization of the commercial and cultural center of Vienna was alarming to many of her inhabitants. Vienna's Ringstrasse, thought to be a testament of liberal triumph, in many ways began as an expression of dynastic neo-absolutist values.³⁴ Long after other cities had dismantled their medieval fortifications Vienna's remained. While the defense zone was no longer needed to protect Vienna from the Turks there was a new enemy to consider, not an invading force, rather a revolutionary people. The Revolution of 1848 had increased the political demand by civilians for the public use of the defense zone while at the same time Austrian military leaders felt that the imperial court needed to be protected from revolutionary threats. It would turn out that economic needs were greater than fears of revolution. In 1857 Emperor Franz Joseph opened the military zone to civilian use. Where Vienna's great walls once stood now lies the Ringstrasse, a monument to the doubts and insecurities of the end of the nineteenth century.

The first allocation of the newly available space went to the Votivkirche, a great church built to celebrate the emperor's escape from a Hungarian nationalist's assassination attempt. The church would also stand as a representation of the closer relationship between the Imperial crown and the Catholic Church; the *Neue Freie Presse*

³⁴ Carl Schorske, *Fin-De- Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 30.

called the church a symbol of the “*Säbel- und Kultenregiment*,”³⁵ a troubling combination to the Pan-Germanists.³⁶ The military, despite their reluctance to see the fortifications dismantled, gained from the removal of the fortifications as well. Shortly after the building of the *Votivkirche* two barracks and an arsenal complex were built near railstations to facilitate troop movements to troublesome provinces. The new broad boulevard also aided troop mobility and prevented barricading by potential rebels and revolutionaries. Civilian and military desires combined to create the imposing scale and form of the Ringstrasse.

Political changes in Vienna widened the contrast between the old inner city with its imperial center and the new third estate centers of constitutional government and culture found around the Ring. The inner city, previously enclosed in protective military isolation, was now sociologically isolated. In many ways reconstructed Vienna was symbolic of the bourgeois rise to power. It was this new Vienna that would enchant a young Adolf Hitler; and it was this Vienna that would later be conquered by an older, angrier and disillusioned Hitler.

The Ringstrasse also inspired many intellectual debates concerning social issues within the liberal bourgeois society. Many intellectuals at the time felt that the Ringstrasse’s style and aesthetics represented the sacrifice of tradition on the altar of modernity. Camillo Sitte, a major critic of the Ringstrasse, argued that cities planned on grids were unnatural, suffocating and even claimed that they induced neurosis.³⁷ Sitte, and those intellectuals like him, were deeply nostalgic for a vanished past that represented the sense of community lost to the function and convenience of the heartless

³⁵ “the rule of the saber and religion”

³⁶ *Ibid*, 30.

³⁷ Elbert Peets, “Town Planners: II. Camillo Sitte,” *The Town Planning Review* 12 (1927): 251.

modern city. Richard Wagner was a great influence on Sitte and many other young intellectuals in the 1870s. Wagner glorified the medieval Germanic past in comparison to cold, modern capitalism in a time when many young Germans were dissatisfied with the economic situation of the 1870s. The Wagnerian nationalism that had such tremendous appeal to Sitte and to Pan-Germanists emphasized the importance of an integrating national myth to provide roots for the *Volk*, a theme that will be of great importance to many nationalistic occultist writers. During the period of Wagner's later work many young Austrian men were still flush with excitement after Prussia's defeat of France in 1870 and Germany's subsequent unification; as a result Wagner's nationalism spread like wildfire among Vienna's young intellectual elite.

The same Vienna that charmed Hitler and frustrated Sitte was also undergoing ethnic demographic changes that inspired Hitler to remark that "...*Mir erschien die Riesenstadt als die Verkörperung der Blutschande.*"³⁸ The rapid population growth could be seen most clearly in the housing sector. The very city that was building Baroque style *Adelspaläste* was also producing working class *Mietkaserne*, massive housing tenements for the increasingly downwardly mobile, and often non-German, industrial workers.³⁹ Between 1840 and 1870 the population of Vienna had doubled, and by 1900 the population of Vienna was three times what it was in 1860.⁴⁰ Poverty, overcrowding and slums became widespread. Many of the new residents of these urban

³⁸ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich, 1934), 59. Translation "the city appeared to me to be the very embodiment of racial infamy."

³⁹ Schorske, *Fin-De- Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, 47.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 27.

slums were Jewish immigrants from Galicia, who now made up eight percent of the city's population.⁴¹

Considering the Pan-Germanists' obsession with the growing power of non-German nationalities in the empire, the changes seen in Vienna would have been all the proof they needed of the growing problem. In the nineteenth century anti-modernism, anti-Catholic, and *völkisch* racist sentiments developed in the increasingly backwards-looking Austria to create a particular form of nationalism that would collide with the reviving esoteric tradition.

Pan-Germanists and the Church:

Guido von List was one such author who began to form his ideas in Vienna in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was a contributor to many journals of the *völkisch* movement such as *Neue Welt*, *Heimat* and *Prana*,⁴² and was a member of various Pan-Germanist cultural organizations such as "*Deutsche Geschichte*," the *Deutscher Turnverein*, *Donauhort* and "*Deutsches Haus*." List was influenced by the German-Slav conflict surrounding late nineteenth century Austria. The anti-Catholic aspects of Ariosophy can also be traced to the Pan-German movement. In 1855 Austria gave way to the Holy See and the demands of the Pope. A Concordat was signed that gave the Church nearly unlimited freedom to conduct its own affairs. The Church was also given complete control over the primary schooling of Catholic children, meaning most subjects of the empire. Church property was declared sacrosanct, and the emperor

⁴¹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 14.

⁴² George Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), 124.

promised not to tolerate any derogatory word against the Church or its institutions,⁴³ all concessions that *völkisch* Pan-Germanists resented. The Catholic Church was thought by some to be foreign to Germandom and many Pan-Germanists felt that a new, or rather old, religion was needed to counter the hold of the Church. Schönerer himself was already involved in emphasizing paganism as the natural religion of the Germans due to his involvement in the *Germanenbund*. Many Germans during these turbulent years felt that the Catholic Church was pro-Slav and anti-German.

The issue of religion was particularly complicated amongst Germans; while Germans in Austria and in imperial Germany shared a linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identity, they were divided on the issue of religion. Imperial Germans were largely Protestants while Germans in the Habsburg Monarchy were almost exclusively Catholic. Protestant Pan-Germanists felt that Catholicism was a force that would weaken the German nation and the issue could only be resolved by converting Catholic Germans to Protestantism.⁴⁴ Protestant Germans in the Reich could claim Martin Luther as their own, thus supporting the idea that Protestantism is itself German. The idea of Germanic paganism had greater strength in Austria where there was no positive association between the Church and Germandom and Catholicism was furthermore seen as foreign and anti-German. Within this atmosphere of animosity Schönerer created his *Los von Rom* campaign, which, though largely unsuccessful, highlights the growing anti-Catholic sentiments of Austrian Germans.

Schönerer, along with many Germans, was agitated and infuriated by Austrian Prime Minister Badeni's language decree in Bohemia and Moravia. Austrian Pan-

⁴³ MacCartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918*, 458.

⁴⁴ Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914*, 206.

Germans called for a break from the Slavophile Catholic Church and the call “Los von Rom” (break from Rome) struck a chord with Germans in the borderlands, where the clergy was mostly Czech. Ultimately, *Los von Rom* appealed to Germans in Vienna and in nationally mixed areas such as Bohemia, Styria, and Carinthia but most other Catholics in Austria did not see any tension between their religion and their nationality.

Anti-Catholicism was an important aspect to the formation and growth of occultist national movements such as Lanz’s Ariosophy and List’s earlier Armanism. Guido von List used the Catholic Church as one of the central villains in his recreation of the Germanic past. In his mind the Austrian government had fallen under the control of Catholicism and conservative Slav interests, which fueled the government’s anti-German aims. Racism, supported by Social Darwinist theory, was another defining aspect of Ariosophy and movements like it.⁴⁵ A particular brand of racist social Darwinism, promoted by Otto Ammon, Ernst Krause, Ludwig Wilser, and Ludwig Woltmann, strengthened *völkisch* nationalism by lending scientific justifications to racial prejudices against interracial mixing in Germany and Austria.

Enlightenment, Irrationality, and Esoteric Nationalism:

The fifteenth to seventeenth centuries saw much of the first occult revival, during which time there was a great interest in the Middle Ages; alchemy, astrology and other esoteric practices came back in vogue. This revival was ended by the introduction of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason in the latter half of the seventeenth century. By eighteenth century there was a backlash against the rationalist Enlightenment and interest

⁴⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 14.

in the occult returned. The end of the Enlightenment era precedes what James Webb calls the “flight from reason” in the late nineteenth century. The “flight from reason” is a reactionary product of an age of uncertainty characterized by political and social change.⁴⁶ Scientific and philosophical advancements challenged the previous certainty of the divine origin of man and placed in its stead the theory of evolution, resulting in a great societal crisis of faith. The effects of industrial revolution and modernity on a society torn between remaining true to what it considers to be its soul and modernization resulted in a deep conflict between technology and culture, science and religion, reason and irrationality.⁴⁷

These conflicts created a unique combination of occultism and science that became a basis for racist esoteric nationalism- irrational occultist religion using pseudo-science as a justification. James Webb described this conflict as:

[A] problem [that] is always faced by those dissatisfied with their present conditions. But because the crisis of consciousness was occasioned so greatly by the conscious or unconscious perceptions of *change*, the ultimate possible *change* began to appear to many reformers the only fruitful method of attack. This was the changing of man himself- the perfection of the human being, so palpably imperfect and self-destructive.⁴⁸

Political and social conditions in Austria, including issues brought on by modernity, Pan-Germanism, social Darwinism, and increasing urbanism, created the perfect environment for nationalistic esoteric movements.

Vienna is where all of these issues merged. The rapid population growth and urbanization experienced in Vienna in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

⁴⁶ Webb, *The Occult Establishment*, 8.

⁴⁷ Jeffrey Herf, “The Engineer as Ideologue: Reactionary Modernists in Weimar and Nazi Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 19 (1984): 635.

⁴⁸ Webb, *The Occult Establishment*, 16.

resulted in the creation of urban slums, overcrowding and exasperated ethnic tensions between ethnic Germans and other ethnic groups of the Habsburg Monarchy. As a result Pan-Germanism gained a strong foothold in the Habsburg capital, where anti-Catholicism met with a religious crisis of consciousness. Irrationalism collided with scientific empiricism left over from the Age of Reason and these features, Pan-Germanism, occultism, and bastardized scientific justification, culminated in the creation of racist, Aryan, esoteric nationalism.

Vienna, and its particular atmosphere, played a significant role in formation of the ideologies, writings, and organizations of many young German thinkers including Guido von List, Lanz von Liebenfels, and Rudolf von Sebottendorff. We now turn to consider their works and the emergence of Ariosophy.

Chapter II: Early Ariosophy

The Esoteric Tradition:

Western esotericism has seen a number of revivals throughout the medieval, early modern, and modern ages of European history. The roots of esotericism stretch back to antiquity encompassing Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Neoplatonism and many occult sciences.⁴⁹ Gnosticism encompasses the beliefs of early Christian sects that claimed to have special knowledge of spiritual matters, called *gnosis*. These Gnostic sects disappeared around the fourth century but their dualistic concepts and perception of the evil nature of materialism lingered on in the *Hermetica*, a collection of texts that also included a synthesis of Neoplatonic and other mystic ideas written during the third and fourth centuries. The Renaissance saw a brief revival of these esoteric traditions, during which time intellectuals edited classical texts to create many of the philosophical and religious ideas that resulted in the modern shape of occultism. Many of these Gnostic, Neoplatonic and Hermetic ideas in the eighteenth century became the basis for what we now consider to be the occult, largely because such ideas existed outside the accepted body of knowledge and reason. The eighteenth century also saw a backlash against Enlightenment thinking, which stressed rationalism and, in the opinion of some later

⁴⁹ James Lewis, *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements* (Oxford, 2004), 447.

thinkers, stifled the romantic soul. As a result there was a revival of mysticism and occultism towards the end of the century, mostly in America and England.

Large-scale revival of occultism was seen at the decline of the Roman Empire and towards the end of the Middle Ages, coinciding with rapid social and political changes, conditions replicated in nineteenth century Germany and Austria. During particularly turbulent and distressing times members of the society in flux often turn to the irrational for explanation and assurance. The extent to which the occult revival was popularized in the German-speaking world during the nineteenth century was largely due to the rise of Theosophy in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Theosophy was made popular internationally by the Russian occultist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who founded the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875. Blavatsky combined ancient religious ideas with Darwinist theories, a combination that was very appealing to nineteenth century Americans and Europeans who were searching for something to fill the spiritual void created by a rationalist, materialistic society. Theosophy also made a particular impression in Austria and Germany in conjecture with the *Lebensreform* movement, which was largely a backlash lead by the middleclass against the ills of modern existence.⁵⁰ The anti-positivist aspect of Theosophy was well received in Europe and especially in central Europeans countries rife with social and economic conflict. *Lebensreform*, Theosophy and the *völkisch* movement all had a number of aspects in common: all meant to return followers to a state of purer, natural spiritual existence. Theosophy fed into the Wilhelmine *Lebensreform* movement and provided rationale for many *Lebensreform* and *völkisch* groups.

⁵⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 24.

In 1884 the first German Theosophical Society was established and with it came the periodical, *Die Sphinx*. Though the scholarly periodical was not itself Theosophical it published contributions from prominent psychologists, historians, and philosophers on topics relevant to Theosophy. All of the contributors discussed scientific aspects of occultism and aided in bringing awareness of the occult to the German-speaking public. Though *Die Sphinx* stopped publishing in 1895 a number of other esoteric periodicals had sprung up, including *Lotusblüthen* and *Metaphysische Rundschau*. Paul Zillmann, publisher of the *Metaphysische Rundschau*, provided an important link between the occult underground and the Ariosophists, whose writings he published in his periodical. Zillmann was the first to publish List's and Lanz' works concerning esoteric subjects.

Branches of the Theosophical Society sprang up in a number of locations in Germany and Austria, including Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Essen, and Graz.⁵¹ The Theosophical Society branch in Berlin had as its general secretary a young Rudolf Steiner, who was also the publisher of the periodical *Luzifer*. Steiner would eventually break from the Theosophists and create the Anthroposophical Society in 1912, which had a stronger basis in Western philosophy than the original Theosophy. Steiner's influence in the occult world resulted in the creation of a number of other periodicals and books, including *Prana*, *Theosophie*, and *Der Wanderer*, which would serve to introduce occultist ideas to a broader German public.

Germany and Austria saw surges in publications addressing the occult in the period before the First World War and Vienna was especially ripe with occult interest. Vienna was the home of the Association for Occultism and the First Viennese

⁵¹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 26.

Astrological Society. The vibrant Viennese occult subculture fed the movements Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels created during the occult revival. Vienna produced a particular form of Theosophy that was influenced by disenchantment with Catholicism, Germanic mythology, and *völkisch* ideology.

Guido von List:

Guido von List was the first to combine *völkisch* ideology, occultism and Theosophy into a synthesized ideology. He dedicated some forty years of his life to researching German history and to the recreation of what he claimed to be the original pagan religion of the ancient Germanic tribes. List was a native of Vienna, born there in 1848 to an affluent, middle-class merchant family. List, like most Austrians, was raised a Roman Catholic, though later events would reveal a tendency to stray from orthodox Christianity. In 1862 List accompanied his father on a visit to the catacombs beneath St. Stephen's Cathedral, which he regarded as a pre-Christian shrine to an ancient Germanic deity.⁵² List considered his childhood visit to the catacombs to be the marker of his conversion to Germanic paganism.

As an adolescent List spent much of his time hiking and wandering in the Viennese countryside, where his lone excursions and midsummer solstice rituals earned him a reputation as a mystic. On midsummer solstice in 1875 he celebrated the 1,500th anniversary of the tribal German victory over Rome by burning wine bottles laid out in the shape of a swastika beneath the ruins of Carnuntum's Pagan Gate.⁵³ List's wanderings and rituals were an escape from the modernizing, metropolitan Vienna, with which he, like many young Viennese of the time, was deeply dissatisfied.

⁵² Stephen E. Flowers, *The Secret of the Runes* (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1988), 1.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 5.

List combined history with nature-worship, believing that whatever was closest to nature was closest to truth.⁵⁴ He believed that rationalism and modernism were evil afflictions of modernity and had held no place in the Germanic past. Nature, in the mind of Guido von List, was the guide to the divine and to truly embrace nature one must become one with the historical past of the *Volk*. The ancient Germanic wisdom that was needed in order to be able to truly appreciate nature was, however, suppressed by Christianity, which had in fact made an effort to eradicate Germanic paganism and the truth associated with it. List believed that ancient Germanic wisdom needed to be rediscovered. It was the task of scholars and historians to discover and decipher ancient scripts and symbols to uncover their meaning for modern-day Germans. To this end List studied runic symbols and published *Deutsch-mythologische Landschaftsbilder* (1891), in which he explores Austria's Aryan past and the lingering traces of the Germanic religion that remain in Vienna.⁵⁵

The *Deutsch-mythologische Landschaftsbilder* was not the first time that List tried to place Austria's pagan past within a modern setting. In the 1870s and 1880s List published a number of articles in periodicals with nationalist leanings.⁵⁶ Many of the articles studied landscapes colored by a pagan interpretation, the subject of which was often Germanic religious sites throughout Vienna and the surrounding countryside. List, along with many Pan-Germanists, was a member of the Austrian Alpine Association, which became a German-Austrian transnational organization in 1874. List established a national identity for the Alps and the Danube through the use of Teutonic myth and Germanic folklore, much to the satisfaction of the Pan-Germanist members of the

⁵⁴ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, 73.

⁵⁵ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 74.

⁵⁶ Flowers, *The Secret of the Runes*, 4.

Association. These *völkisch* articles were published in the newspapers *Heimat, Neue Welt*, and *Deutsche Zeitung*.⁵⁷

A strong anti-Christian theme is seen throughout List's work, even in his first novel, *Carnuntum*. List claimed that the Germanic civilization in Austria had been interrupted only two times, once by Roman forces (100-375 AD) and then again by Christianity, which had suppressed Germanic culture in earlier centuries. List's publications in the 1890s, starting with *Deutsch-mythologische Landschaftsbilder*, revealed his obsession with recreating the ancient, national and pagan Germanic Austrian past.⁵⁸ Throughout the 1890s List gave lectures and wrote dramatic plays in addition to articles and novels set in tribal Germany. His plays generally focused on young Teutons in ancient Germany overthrowing Roman or Christian conquerors and returning home to their original sun-worshipping religion. His literary works earned him praise and celebrity status among Pan-Germanists who reveled in any works that glorified Germany's past.

The turn of the century saw a shift in List's work. In the 1880s and 90s List focused largely on recreating a nationalistic, pagan past for Austria, but in 1902 List was left blind for eleven months following cataract surgery and the experience added a new element to his ideology- the occult.

Fin de Siècle Occult Tradition:

Guido von List's turn to the occult in the 1880s and 1890s was a reflection of a broader cultural trend well underway in Austria and Germany during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. List was stepping into a pre-existing fin-de-siècle occult tradition

⁵⁷ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 36.

⁵⁸ Flowers, *The Secret of the Runes*, 7.

that had been forming since the mid-nineteenth century in an attempt to address challenges presented to a disenchanted modern German society. After nearly half a century of attempted unification, the semi-feudal collection of principalities were united into a large and powerful nation-state, which coincided with a switch from a largely agrarian culture to an industrial economy.⁵⁹ The sudden economic and political changes were even more shocking considering the prolonged yearning for unity felt in the German states. For decades many of the best minds in these German states were preoccupied with questions concerning national destiny. Continual political failure to unite Germany resulted in many of these intellectuals turning towards social cohesion as a binding force rather than attempting to find a unifying political solution.

This cultural identity was defined largely in terms of national roots and after the revolutions of 1848 this was increasingly accompanied by anti-modernist sentiments, as many Germans felt that the strength to unite Germany could only be drawn from distant times rather than the failed strength of the modern age.⁶⁰ Achieving political unification was not satisfactory in the face of decades of anticipation resulting in a near-religious preoccupation with Germany's unity, identity and past. Unfortunately, political unification was soon followed by a crisis of Germany's emerging industrial economy, the consequences of which resulted in deep disappointment and discontentment, compounding the dissatisfaction felt concerning the unification. The crisis resulting from unification and industrialization was exasperated by economic crisis in 1873, increasing the backlash against modernity and materialism and deepening the longing for a greater unity of the *Volk*.

⁵⁹ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

The *Volk* represented an idealized, transcendent unity. It was through the essence of the *Volk*, a life force uniting Germans to one another on a cosmic level, that man becomes one with the universe. A large part of the romantic envisioning of the *Volk* was the concept of nature as possessing a soul, which connected nature to the *Volk* and to the individual. The increasing focus on the connection between *Volk* and nature increased German resentment of urbanization and industrialization, which were thought to uproot the German soul from its place in nature. Landscape and the countryside became the setting in which man could unite with nature and the *Volk*, leading to many nature-oriented activities such as camping, hiking and List's countryside wanderings.

Völkisch Ideology and Theosophy:

Alongside and intertwined with the development of Germanic paganism were the spiritualist and occultist movements, much of which became tangled with *völkisch* ideology. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a nearly obsessive interest in the unconscious as a comfortable middle ground for the modern German educated class, which was grounded in the empirical science of the modern age, but still uncomfortable with metaphysics of a materialistic philosophy that rejected a transcendent world. The German occultists coming of age in the 1870s and 1880s were inspired and influenced by intellectual icons of the modern age such as Friedrich Nietzsche, who explored the unconscious and its role in forming the human personality and will.⁶¹

The 1850s also marked the beginning of the German interest in the American-originated spiritualist movement. The impetus for the spiritualist movement in the

⁶¹ Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 36.

English-speaking world can largely be attributed to backlash against positivist and rationalist ideas in the industrial cultures of America and England. The spiritualist movement began in 1848 in upstate New York at the home of the Fox family, who offered “proof” visible to the eye and audible to the ear of some form of existence after death to the practically minded American society. The Fox family claimed that their house was being haunted by spirits of the dead who shook tables and chairs and communicated through snapping noises. It was in that small cottage in Hydesville that mediumship was born. The Fox family mediums were eventually discredited, but despite proof of their deception, by 1851 there were 100 mediums in New York City.⁶²

Spiritualist phenomena soon moved beyond séance-room table rapping into more complicated “ghost shows” and conjuring performances. No matter what proof was offered concerning the fraudulent nature of the mediums’ performances, the Spiritualist movement continued to gain followers and believers throughout America and Europe desperate for evidence of life beyond death. Western society, amidst a crisis of consciousness, longed for evidence of the immortality of the human soul. Spiritualism offered a sort of scientific “proof” that humans were more than the cold, accidental outcome of a biological process. Spiritualism began as a prank perpetrated by two mischievous girls but appealed to the insecurity and irrationality growing in the hearts of Western man.

Spiritualism in the nineteenth century shared many common ideas and interpretations with *völkisch* ideology. Belief in the extrasensory world and the existence of a mysterious, binding ether connecting man to nature were ideas shared by *völkisch*

⁶² James Webb, *The Occult Underground*, (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1974), 17.

ideology and by Theosophy.⁶³ Theosophy and mysticism continued to influence *völkisch* development and helped define the mystical connection between the individual and the cosmos. Madame Blavatsky, the foremost writer and thinker of the Theosophical Society, combined Western occultist thought, Eastern religion, and modern science⁶⁴ to create a new worldview that would deeply influence the racist, nationalistic occultist thesis created by List and Lanz.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, a Russian occultist and adventurer, is the most defining figure of the Theosophical movement. In 1877 Blavatsky published her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, which spent more time rambling against the evils of modern Western society than it did defining her new religion. Blavatsky drew upon arcane Renaissance lore, Gnosticism, and secondary sources concerning pagan mythology and religion in an attempt to discredit modern-day religious beliefs and find instead some form of ancient religious truth. She found much of her inspiration in the lore of ancient Egypt. Her fascination with ancient Egypt was a consequence of reading works of occultist fiction by the English author Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who was the author of *The Last Days of Pompeii*, *Zanoni*, *A Strange Story*, and *The Coming Race*, works that focused on secret occult fraternities that gathered occult knowledge⁶⁵.

In 1879 Madame Blavatsky and many of her followers moved to India, where Theosophy began to take its shape. In 1888, while in India, Blavatsky wrote *The Secret Doctrine*. This work incorporated modern science and Hinduism. Her focus shifted from Egypt as the source of ancient wisdom to the East. The Victorian era's crisis of faith

⁶³ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 50.

⁶⁴ Dan Burton and David Grandy, *Magic, Mystery, and Science: the Occult in Western Civilization*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 209.

⁶⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 19.

resulted in Western society turning to the East for spiritual guidance. The East was often associated with deep spirituality and a lack of materialism, which was seen as plaguing Western society.⁶⁶ Blavatsky sought to combine her occult background with Eastern religious dogmatism. *The Secret Doctrine* describes a cyclical, infinite process of the birth and death of the universe. Blavatsky's story claims to describe how this universe was born and the powers that created it. Her book contains many illustrated esoteric symbols, including triskelions and swastikas, meant to represent the stages of cosmic creation. The force employed to create and maintain the universe was described as electricity and solar energy; the concept of an electro-spiritual force holding together the universe was an idea that resonated with modern scientific thought. Blavatsky also aimed to fit man into the story of cosmic creation. Paleontology and racial theories of human evolution contributed to her theories concerning man's place in the cosmos.

Blavatsky developed these theories concerning racial human evolution into a scale of human races ascending in spiritual development. Her concept of a cyclical creation, destruction and recreation of the cosmos also included seven "root-races" that would rise and fall consecutively, each new race superior to the one that came before. The current manifestation of humanity constitutes the fifth race, existing within the fourth cycle or "round" of the universe.⁶⁷ The fifth root-race, the Aryans, follows the Atlanteans and three earlier proto-human races. In addition to the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth of the universe and of the races inhabiting the planet, Theosophy also embraces the Hindu concepts of reincarnation and karma, where a person's good deeds would allow him or

⁶⁶ Mark Bevir, "The West Turns Eastward: Madame Blavatsky and the Transformation of the Occult Tradition" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 62 (1994) 747.

⁶⁷ Goorick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 21.

her to achieve a superior reincarnation upon death in an endless cycle of root-races striving for redemption and salvation in the form of the ultimate reincarnation as a member of the final root-race.

Blavatsky's hybrid religion of ancient Egyptian myth, Eastern religion, and American spiritualism became popular in Europe and America but it was particularly well received in Austria and Germany. Many of these spiritualist and Theosophical ideas could be re-imagined with the *Volk* playing a vital role as the intermediary between the soul, which only the Germans possessed, and the spiritual world, aiding the merger between spiritualists and those embracing *völkisch* ideology. Theosophy lent sun worship, among many things, to *völkisch* custom, resulting in further merging between spiritualism and the *Volk*. *Völkisch* groups often celebrate the changing sun as a more authentic expression of Germanic spirituality and unity with the cosmos and in later years this emerging solar occultism would become a prominent feature in developing Germanic paganism.

The fixation with Germanic roots and connectivity to the *Volk* resulted in an obsession with tribal Germany in an attempt to solidify an ideological base in history. One of the favorite authorities on ancient Germanic history was Tacitus; who, in his work *Germania*, described the tribal Germans as a strong and virile people. Though Tacitus's purpose was to critique decaying Roman society by comparing it to the German tribes, *völkisch* writers took Tacitus's descriptions as evidence of Germanic purity, which was aided by Tacitus's description of the Germans as a people who did not mix with other tribes and had, in essence, remained a pure and distinct *Volk*.⁶⁸ Tacitus also aided the *völkisch* view of history through his demeaning depiction of Jews, which reinforced the

⁶⁸ Bernard Mees, "Hitler and Germanentum," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33 (2004) 264.

belief that Germans and Jews had always been in conflict and that this conflict between good and evil, Germans and Jews, light and dark, was grounded in antiquity and thus must be part of the modern *Volk*.⁶⁹

The ancient Germans were viewed as a righteous and heroic peasant force that defeated the decadent, corrupt, and decaying Roman civilization, saving humanity from its taint. This concept of Germans being a peasant people rooted in nature, honesty, loyalty, and righteousness resulted in a predictable consequence of idealizing ancient German history; if the ancient Germans and their way of life was more true to the *Volk* then so must the ancient Germanic religion be. Interest in Germanic runes, legends, symbols, and religion grew and with it interest in solar occultism increased.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the growth of solar occultism as part of the expanding interest in Germanic paganism. A common explanation for solar occultism was that northern peoples, due to their foggy climate and long nights in winter, experience a natural longing for the sun, which was, in addition to the center of the cosmos, the embodiment of hope and light.⁷⁰ This solar occultism came to include a racial division as well; it was thought that some races had more positive relationships with the sun, explaining why some races were superior to others. The Nordic peoples in particular had a special relationship with the sun; the souls of Nordic peoples would become troubled and broody when the sun was absent and experience great joy when the sun rose again. The sun became synonymous of life and rebirth.

The sun, symbolic of rebirth and renewal, and the concept of karma became sought-after central themes of ancient sagas. Collections of ancient legends, such as the

⁶⁹ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 68.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 72.

Edda, a thirteenth century Icelandic text containing medieval Norse mythology,⁷¹ became very popular among those with *völkisch* ideologies. Where anti-modernist sentiments went, irrationalism and romanticism flourished, giving rise to outlandish occult beliefs and supported *völkisch* ideology concerning race, religion and nationalism. Occultism became the means by which to bridge the present and the past, which Christianity had tried to destroy. Of these occult groups Guido von List's was one of the most important and influential. List and his followers combined nature and history, believing that the Aryan past was closest to truth and to nature.

The Spiritualist Movement in Germany:

German spiritualism and occultism began to differ from American spiritualism in the 1880s after the introduction of Theosophy. From the 1850s on a number of groups and organizations devoted to animal magnetism, *Naturphilosophie* and other spiritual concerns developed across the German-speaking world, many focused on proving that the human soul, in contradiction to the materialist philosophy, is independent of the body. Spiritualism was applied to the increasingly influential field of psychology and many who studied "transcendent psychology" considered the increased crime rate among the lower class and higher rates of insanity and suicide among educated classes to be the result of spiritual decay caused by the increasing influence of scientific materialists since midcentury.

Transcendental psychology was coined by philosopher Carl du Prel, who formed the *Gesellschaft für Experimentalpsychologie* to study the shadowy side of the human

⁷¹ Snorri Sturluson. *The Prose Edda: Tales from Norse Mythology*, translated by Jean I. Young (University of California Press, 1964), 8.

consciousness. To that end du Prel also founded the social club *Die Hoffnungslosen* (Those Without Hope).⁷² Du Prel and his followers were modern science enthusiasts and mourned a world devoid of God and divine meaning, yet at the same time many of these occultists were concerned about the modern implications of scientific advances. They did not seek a return to a Christian past; rather, du Prel and his followers were critical of both traditional Christian belief and of scientific materialism. Du Prel's transcendental psychology was the alternative to religion's blind faith and materialism's soullessness; it combined the best of science and religion to create a scientifically grounded but soulful worldview. The *Psychologische Gesellschaft*, of which du Prel was a member, was significant to both the development of psychology and modern German occultism and to the creation of the field of para-psychology in the late 1880s.

Experimental psychology lent scientific legitimacy to occult-rooted fields studying the human consciousness. Psychiatrists with occult sympathies, such as Freud and Jung, tightened the bonds between emerging scientific fields and the occult. Du Prel's combination of modern science subordinated to human spiritual needs became a central theme of German occultism. The association of spiritual desolation with fin-de-siècle modernity was not unique to either du Prel or to the occult movement, but to respond to the challenges of modernity with a psychological solution was a uniquely occult feature.⁷³

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw a shift from du Prel's scholarly occultism to a popularized, more accessible occultism presented to the German-speaking world by Paul Zillmann, editor of the unapologetically occultist journal *Neue*

⁷² Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 41.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 51.

Metaphysische Rundschau. One of the interesting aspects of the German public's relationship with the occult was, contradictory to the nature of the occult, how open the German occult movement was. The occult, by definition, is a system of thought that is hidden or secret. Occult knowledge is that which is unknown by the general population though it had come to mean more simply that which is outside the mainstream.⁷⁴ The occult movement in Germany was not small or hidden; rather, it was fairly significant in size. Munich and Berlin were particularly notable for spiritualist activities but the occult movement was by no means limited to those two cities. Some estimates place the number of Germans involved in the occult movement in the tens of thousands.⁷⁵ Until 1937 there were more than 200 occult-oriented clubs in Germany, with most major cities hosting occult organizations. These clubs could be focused on anything from astrology and parapsychology to Ariosophy and Theosophy.

Large urban cities tended to be hotspots of occultism due to their educated and bohemian population and infrastructure that could support occult events, but occult clubs were by no means limited to large cities. Many small towns contained spiritualist circles and occult organizations. Not only was the geographical range of the occult movement wide; the social make-up was equally varied. The occult movement's followers included lower-class labors and highly educated intellectuals. The members of occult organizations were aristocrats, housewives, artists, teachers, and shoemakers, and included both men and women. The petty bourgeoisie in particular embraced the occult.

⁷⁴ Flowers, *The Secret King*, 17.

⁷⁵ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 57.

Table 2.1**Occult Clubs: Number by Type of Club⁷⁶**

City	Total by City	Ariosophy	Occultism	Theosophy	Other ⁷⁷
Bad Schmiedeberg	2			1	1
Berlin	52	1	11	12	28
Breslau	4			1	3
Cologne	3		1		2
Dresden	6		1	4	1
Düsseldorf	8	1	2	3	2
Frankfurt	3		1	1	1
Hamburg	13	1	4	3	5
Hannover	9			5	4
Leipzig	15		6	3	6
Munich	27		6	6	15
Stuttgart	4	2		1	1
Other	63	4	9	22	28
Total	209	9	41	62	97

Many Germans not only embraced the occult but also relied on it to make a living.

The police department in Munich claimed that in 1924 over three hundred people working as fortune tellers, mostly young working class women but also men who were formerly tailors and shoemakers.⁷⁸ The lower classes tended to dominate the spiritualist circles while the educated, wealthy and propertied classes gravitated more towards Theosophy and para-psychology. While the professional element of the German occult movement tended to be male-dominated, bourgeois women founded and led occult organizations as well. Astrology and mediumship tended to be female dominated fields. The diversity of the German occult movement speaks to its mass character and the depth

⁷⁶ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 59.

⁷⁷ “Other” including astrology, dowsing, graphology, palmistry, pendulum, psychical research, parapsychology, spiritualism, magnetism, and mesmerism.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 61.

to which it appealed to the troubled German soul seeking answers that science and reason were unable to provide.

In many ways Guido von List embodied the spirit of the fin-de-siècle occult revival. His development of Ariosophy in many respects mirrors the historical development of the occult. His interest began as a young man deep in the depths of a Catholic cathedral where he viewed the catacombs as a shrine to an older Germanic presence. As he grew into an adolescent he turned to art and nature, painting landscapes while on long hikes in the countryside. He began to combine nature-worship with nationalistic *völkisch* concepts of history and added to the mix re-imagined Germanic pagan rituals. In later years his pagan and spiritualist beliefs collided with Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical ideas and other occult ideologies. It was this particular combination that helped to shape later Ariosophy. At the time List referred to his doctrine as Armanism.

Theosophical Origins of Ariosophy:

While the differences are great, there are a number of parallels and similarities between Blavatsky's Theosophy and List's emerging ideas. List began to refer to the ancient Germanic tribes not as a "people" but as a "race" and shifted to calling Germans Ario-Germans. This distinction underlined an association between Germans and Blavatsky's fifth-race. List, like Blavatsky, claimed to have knowledge of a secret science that by means of a life force (in List's case a uniquely German one) could unveil the past. List also fell in line with a number of other Theosophical beliefs, such as the existence of a supernatural world and occult sciences. Even the word "Ariosophy" is a

play off of the word “Theosophy,” Theosophy meaning wisdom of God and Ariosophy meaning wisdom of the Aryans.⁷⁹

Another commonality between Ariosophy and Theosophy was their joint assertion of the existence of spiritual masters who possessed occult knowledge. According to Ariosophists this knowledge was held by an elite priesthood similar to the Theosophists’ Great White Brotherhood. The most important feature that distinguished Ariosophy from Theosophy is the ends to which these different groups aspired. Theosophy was largely concerned with sharing spiritual enlightenment with humanity through the use of occult knowledge whereas Ariosophy was less concerned with enlightening humanity and more concerned with constructing a racially pure society.

Just as Ariosophy and Theosophy share some of the same ideas, they also shared many of the same members, who seemed unconcerned by the ideological differences between the two movements. Many of the founding members of the Guido von List Society were also prominent Theosophical thinkers and writers.⁸⁰ The movement of people between the two groups is also reflected in periodicals publishing on occult matters. Guido von List’s work was praised in the Theosophical periodical *Neue Lotusblüthen* and similar Theosophical publishings would introduce the Ariosophist writer and thinker Lanz von Liebenfels to Germany. Paul Zillman was one editor who managed to balance Theosophy and Ariosophy, and his journal, *Neue Metaphysische Rundschau*, published works by authors from both camps. List began to read important Theosophical writings and his obsession with the ancient Germanic runes and language

⁷⁹ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 104.

⁸⁰ Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 74.

grew.⁸¹ It was at this time that he began a decade of research concerning occult-nationalism.

List, using information from the *Edda* and from ancient runes, imagined that the ancient Teutons had practiced a Gnostic religion that he named Wotanism after the main god of the Germanic pantheon. List was the pioneer of *völkisch* rune occultism and applied his study of ancient runes to Wotanism. He used his knowledge of ancient runes to decipher what he believed to be ancient mottoes and maxims of Wotanism, many of which stressed the union of man and the universe and the cyclical laws of nature dictating movement from birth, life, death, and rebirth.⁸² Unity with one's race was seen as a byproduct of an individual's closeness to nature.

List's obsession with the religious significance of racial purity resulted in an interest in sexology, the sexual-religion of the Aryans, and what was viewed as the sacred practice of eugenics. Authors such as Max Ferdinand Sebaldt von Werth combined racial doctrine with the occult and Germanic paganism. Sebaldt proposed that eugenics was needed to ensure Aryan racial purity and superiority.⁸³ Many of his ideas were incorporated into List's ideology. By the turn of the century it became apparent that Sebaldt's ideas had helped List form a Germanic occult religion that was primarily concerned with racial purity. In the following years List combined Theosophy into the mix. The extent to which List incorporated Theosophy into his ideology is largely due to the members of the List Society who were interested in the occult. First and foremost among those members was Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, whose developing ideas concerning

⁸¹ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 104.

⁸² Flowers, *The Secret of the Runes*, 29.

⁸³ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 51.

racist occultism owe much to Theosophy and who deeply influenced his older mentor, Guido von List.

The Guido von List Society (*Guido-von-List-Gesellschaft*) was officially founded in 1908 by Pan-Germanists and occultists who wanted to finance and publish List's research projects into Austria's nationalist Germanic past.⁸⁴ Among the supporters of the founding of the List Society were Lanz von Liebenfels, a prominent Ariosophist who will be discussed later, and a number of Austrian public officials such as the mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, and Ludwig von Bernuth, who chaired a *völkisch* health organization. In addition to a long list of distinguished Pan-Germanists the List Society had a large number of occultist figures among its founding members, including *Metaphysische Rundschau* editor Paul Zillmann.⁸⁵ Membership to the List Society after 1908 continued to attract powerful and prominent nationalists and occultists.

With the support of his self-named society Guido von List researched and published a number of works on the magic and meaning of ancient runes, esoteric re-visioning of folklore, and a study of the Wotanist priesthood.⁸⁶ During this time List developed the concept of the *Armanenschaft*, which he claimed was the estate body of priest-kings who ruled over the ancient German tribes. He took his account from Tacitus's *Germania* and Germanized the word "Hermiones", originally the Latin name pertaining to the Germanic tribes of interior Germany, to "Armanen", which meant heirs to the sun-king. List was also drawn to the connection to Arminius (Hermann) who destroyed three Roman legions attempting to take German lands across the Elbe in 9

⁸⁴ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 104.

⁸⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 43.

⁸⁶ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 104.

A.D.⁸⁷ List drew heavily from Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism when describing the structure of the Armanenschaft. List claimed that the Armanenschaft survives even today within these secret societies. This claim allowed List to associate his own cult with the Armanenschaft by suggesting that the Armanenschaft had never been destroyed but had survived Christianization within these secret organizations, to which List and his followers belonged.

List imagined a revived Armanenschaft that would establish a Pan-German European empire. For this to happen non-Aryan races needed to be suppressed and subjugated within the strict hierarchal society. All positions of power in this new society would be legitimated by a candidate's racial purity. Non-Aryan peoples would become slave labor. List imagined a strict patriarchal society with strict racial and marital laws where only males had authority in society and only Ario-Germans had civil rights. Genealogical records were to be kept to attest to racial purity and estates were to be inherited by first-born male children. List's imagined society, accounts of which were published as early as 1911, deeply resembles the Nazi vision of the future put into place in 1935 with the Nuremberg racial laws.

The works List published concerning ancient runes, folklore, and the Armanenschaft enhanced List's notoriety among *völkisch* groups and the nationalist community in general. It was often the members of the List Society with strong *völkisch* sympathies who had a hand in spreading List's ideas across the border, increasing his popularity in Germany.⁸⁸ During the First World War List's ideas became even more attractive to young Germans suffering through the hardships of war. List's ideology was

⁸⁷ Herbert W. Benario, "Roman Germany. Three Sites," *The Classical Journal*, 51 (1956): 317.

⁸⁸ Flowers, *The Secret of the Runes*, 33.

deeply rooted in the Slav-German conflict of the Habsburg Empire and *völkisch* groups' desire to defend Germandom from liberals, Jews and socialists aided the spread of that ideology. Members of pre-war, anti-Semitic *völkisch* leagues such as the Germanenorden and the Thule Society were particularly interested in spreading List's ideology.⁸⁹

Another of List's influences on Germany came in the form of the individual Germans who built upon and spread List's ideas and ideologies. Writers and thinkers deeply influenced by List's ideology continued on to shape Ariosophy in the decades after List's death. *Hoher Armanen-Orden* (High Armanen-Order) was the innermost ring of the List Society. Member of the HAO throughout Germany travelled to Vienna to go on a pilgrimage with List. The group visited the catacombs at St. Stephen's where List believed he first encountered the essence of the pagan gods. They continued on to other pagan holy sites at Klosterneuburg, Brühl, Burg Kreuzenstein, and Carnuntum.⁹⁰ List relished the idea of a secret elite and imagined a secret, mysterious occult chapter to an ideal state that remarkably resembles Himmler's SS. While the HAO died out without achieving anything of great historical significance, individuals throughout the war era continued to be influenced by List's ideas and the compelling concept of an occult elite, an idea present throughout post-Enlightenment occultism, aided followers in the belief of a coming golden age for Germany. List's books were passed around in the trenches where tales of ancient Aryan victories gave hope for Ario-German triumph in war and for the creation of a Pan-German empire.

List envisioned a great German victory over the Allies but the 1918 blockade of Europe brought food shortages and hardship to Vienna. List took German defeat in

⁸⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 45.

⁹⁰ Flowers, *The Secret of the Runes*, 11.

stride, believing that the hardship was necessary before the salvation of the Ario-Germans. List survived the disappointment of German defeat in World War One but did not live to see Hitler's rise to power. List fell ill due to the food shortages in Vienna and in 1919 he died, but within a few short decades List's vision of the future was part of the foreign policy of Hitler's Germany.

Chapter III: Later Ariosophy

Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels:

Lanz was one of List's earliest supporters, Lanz having met the older man in the early 1890s. The man calling himself Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels was actually born Adolf Josef. He was born on July 19, 1874 in Vienna to a middle class schoolmaster, though he claimed to be the son of a baron born on the May 1, 1872 at Messina. From a young age Lanz had an interest in medieval religious orders, which inspired him to become a novice at Heiligenfreuz Abbey, where he became Brother Georg in 1893. Lanz' time at the abbey deepened his romantic sense of medieval history and religious elites. He was also well educated in Old Testament scholarship and in oriental languages, which influenced his later Gnostic Christian doctrines.

During his time at the abbey Lanz studied a tombstone that he believed depicted an allegorical battle between good and evil, where evil was represented by a great beast. He came to interpret evil as being subhuman in nature and developed an interest in zoology, which he began to synthesize into a religion. Race was at the center of Lanz' developing religion. In a very Manichaean view of the world Lanz saw Aryans, being fair and light-skinned, as representing good, while darker races represented evil. Lanz' developing pseudo-scientific racial-religion led to the study of what Lanz believed to be

the perfect life force that was manifested in blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryan races.⁹¹

Racial science, a field of great interest during the Enlightenment that continued to develop in the “Age of the Irrational”⁹² was combined with Gnostic doctrine to describe blond and dark races battling for order and chaos in the universe, respectively.

Gnosticism, to which many *völkisch* occultists subscribed, is characterized by a negative view of the physical world and by a belief that man’s divine essence was trapped in a material body as a result of some pre-cosmic tragedy and the only means of salvation and return to the divine state is through gnosis- the acquisition of the knowledge of the divine mysteries.⁹³ Due to conflict concerning his unorthodox ideas, Lanz left the abbey in 1899 and thereafter was free to develop his doctrine.

While Lanz’ ideologies were similar to List’s in many ways, they at first lacked the *völkisch* undertones common to List’s doctrine. List began with *völkisch*, pagan leanings and added occult sentiments to his ideology later. As Lanz’ ideas and ideologies developed he joined intellectual societies and published articles in many of the same *völkisch* periodicals and journals that introduced List to the German-speaking world. Lanz, from the start, focused on a kind of radical theology with a strange view of history that reinvented the Germanic past to include a prehistoric world of superhuman Aryans, a medieval Germany controlled by military organizations and a coming new world inhabited by racist, yet noble, knights and visionaries. Lanz took to studying anthropology, paleontology, and mythology to provide evidence for his ideologies. It was characteristic of this time in Germany to blur the lines between religion, nationalism

⁹¹ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 25.

⁹² Webb, *The Occult Underground*, 5.

⁹³ Roelof van den Broek, *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 4.

and science. Figures such as Richard Wagner and Paul de Lagarde were influential in the creation of the Aryan myth and the development of a German religion, which was supported by Christian religious tradition on one hand and by racism on the other.⁹⁴

De Lagarde believed that the German nation needed its own religion and to find such was to find the path to true liberty. De Lagarde, like Lanz and Himmler, was among those who wanted the Jews shipped to Madagascar. He believed that “every Jew is a proof of the weakness of our national life and of the small worth of what we call the Christian religion.”⁹⁵ De Lagarde was once a religious man who lost his faith; he was a conservative who broke with Prussian conservatism and reactionary politics, and a patriot who prophesied Germany’s ruin through moral decline. De Lagarde came of age in the time between the failed revolution and Bismarck’s rise to power, a period that deeply influenced his worldview. The particular time in which he grew up left him with a deep sense of pessimism concerning the fate of the German people, whose destruction, due to faithlessness and failing endurance, was approaching. Despite his gloomy outlook de Lagarde was more than a prophet of doom. He did believe that Germany could be reborn if a new Germanic religion could fuel Germany’s spiritual renewal.⁹⁶

De Lagarde was born Paul Anton Bötticher on November 2, 1827, in Saxony. His eighteen-year-old mother died soon after his birth, leaving the infant in the hands of a father who hated and blamed his son for his wife’s death. De Lagarde’s father was a deeply religious man who felt that coldness, joylessness and gloominess reflected the appropriate atmosphere for a Christian home. De Lagarde, at his father’s insistence,

⁹⁴ Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 305.

⁹⁵ Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, 309.

⁹⁶ Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the German Ideology*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), 27.

studied theology at the University of Berlin, where he studied under an aggressively conservative orthodox Protestant leader, Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg. At the University of Berlin de Lagarde developed many of the beliefs that would shape his scholarly concerns, including his emphasis on the Old Testament, philosophy and poetry. De Lagarde abandoned his loyalty to Prussian conservatism after the conservatives fabricated evidence in a trial against Benedikt Waldeck, a liberal charged with treason.⁹⁷ De Lagarde was infuriated by the conservatives and priests who supported the fraud. The injustice against Waldeck marked de Lagarde's breaking point with conservatism and with orthodox Christianity.

De Lagarde's continual failure to secure a professional position at a university fed his accusations of conspiracy. It was not until 1869 that he was granted professorship at the University of Göttingen.⁹⁸ It was at Göttingen in the 1870s that de Lagarde began his career as a prophet of doom and despair. De Lagarde believed that while Germans had fallen to evils and temptation they were a uniquely gifted people meant to live a heroic and moral life if they could conquer their enemies and recover the greatness of the past. De Lagarde, in his typical arrogance, felt that he was just the man to lead the German people to their rebirth and thought of himself as a prophet of the *Volkstum*, not just a prophet of God. De Lagarde saw materialism, progress and positivism as destroying the traditional virtues of the German people. After twenty years of considering the issues plaguing Germany, de Lagarde discovered that Jews, liberals and academics were the chief cause for the decline and despair ruining German society.⁹⁹ The cure to the cultural

⁹⁷ Stern, 30.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 40.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 59.

illness was a new education system, new political system, new nobility and a new religion.

De Lagarde attacked both Catholicism and Protestantism, declaring Protestantism to be weak and spineless and Catholicism to be anti-German. He sought to replace these inadequate faiths with a new Germanic-Christian faith. To do this Christianity needed to be divorced from Judaism. De Lagarde imagined that the major sacraments (confirmation, baptism, marriage and penance) would remain and that the Eucharist would be given new symbolic meaning to conform to the national character of the Germans and their new religion. He felt that religion was not universal and needed to meet the needs of individual national characteristics. To that point de Lagarde declared: “The basic principle of the new community must be that religion is the consciousness of the plan and purpose of the education of the individual, of peoples, and of humanity.”¹⁰⁰ The new German religion would have to halt the decline of German culture and recover German virtues. This new religion would also have to come soon because if it came too late “we may as well renounce the future of the fatherland. Germany then would exist for a while longer, but would then cease to live almost at once.... Germany in the future will be a secular state in a heavenly dress, a despotism that calls itself freedom.”¹⁰¹

The perceived need for a German religion for a German state became something of a national philosophical psychosis as many of the nation’s brightest minds grappled with issues of God, faith and religion. There was a bandwagon of scholars trying to reincarnate Tacitus’s Germany while adding a nationalistic, pagan spin. Richard Wagner was among those who compared Christ with the Germanic deity Wotan and he began to

¹⁰⁰ Paul de Lagarde, “Die Religion der Zukunft,” *Deutsche Schriften*, 3, (1937) 270.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 274.

introduce Europe to Germanic legends through his operas and essays. Wagner envisioned an ancient German past where, during a golden age, men lived as vegetarians in state of primitive innocence somewhere in Asia. They were eventually tainted by original sin after they killed the first animal, awakening the thirst for blood that would drive men to murder and make war.¹⁰² Christ, an Aryan, tried to show man the path back to innocence, symbolized by turning flesh into bread to signify that we should not be killing and eating the flesh of animals. In Wagner's opinion it was the Church, controlled by Jews, which perverted Christ's message. Lanz was also swept up in the need to create a German religion and sought to piece together his retelling of the Christian myth with the incorporation of occult science, Eastern religion, and racism.

Lanz, like Blavatsky, was fascinated with ancient cults in Europe and in the Near East. Both Blavatsky and Lanz were interested in reading Darwinism into Eastern religions, though Blavatsky was more interested in combining Eastern spiritualism with Western scientific and occultist thought¹⁰³ while Lanz' racial focus was significantly stronger. There was nothing inherently racist about Blavatsky's Theosophy, at least not in the same manner as Lanz' theories, though Lanz did find it convenient to interpret Blavatsky's theories concerning the cycle of root-races in a *völkisch*-racist light. While Lanz was concerned with race in the traditional sense, Blavatsky was not speaking of skin-color or ethnic races but rather of entirely different past and future species of men. Lanz was aided by much of Blavatsky's theorizing in *Secret Doctrine*, where she claims:

The world of to-day, in its mad career towards the unknown- which it is too ready to confound with the unknowable, whenever the problem eludes the grasp of the physicist- is rapidly progressing on the

¹⁰² Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, 313.

¹⁰³ Mark Bevir, "The West Turns Eastward: Madame Blavatsky and the Transformation of the Occult Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (1994): 748.

reverse, material plane of spirituality. It has become a vast arena- a true valley of discord and of eternal strife- a necropolis, wherein lie buried the highest and most holy aspirations of our Spirit-Soul. That soul becomes with every new generation more paralyzed and atrophied....

We have not long to wait, and many of us will witness the Dawn of the New Cycle, at the end of which not a few accounts will be settled and squared between races.¹⁰⁴

One of Lanz' most important claims was that the Aryans had committed bestiality with lower species, the interbreeding of which resulted in lower races of sub-humans. Lanz' Ario-Christianity describes a battle between good and evil, Aryans and inferior races, where Frauja, the Gothic name for Jesus, demands the extermination of all sub-races, the "apelings."¹⁰⁵ He rewrote traditional bible stories, explaining that Adam was not the first man but rather the first pygmy. He re-envisioned the Passion to be the attempted rape of Christ by pygmies who were part of a satanic cult that wanted to encourage bestiality and interbreeding. Lanz named his idiosyncratic combination of Judeo-Christian thought and racial science "theo-zoology."¹⁰⁶ In the manner of Judeo-Christianity Lanz embraced the concept of linear history with a great apocalypse at the end, in which the Aryans are the chosen people of God. Like many dissatisfied men of his generation, Lanz viewed the modern world as a product of evil and the social disorder of the age as the result of the ascendancy of the inferior races.

In Lanz' view, to combat the ascendancy of sub-humans, those inferior races and the lower classes that were tainted by them needed to be exterminated. He spoke out against compassion and mercy for the weak and inferior. He considered feminism, socialism, and democracy to be among the biggest contributors to modern-day evil.

¹⁰⁴ H.P. Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine* (London, 1888), 22.

¹⁰⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 90.

¹⁰⁶ Dan Burton and David Grandy, *Magic, Mystery, and Science: the Occult in Western Civilization*, 267.

Women, he thought, were a particular problem as they were more prone to bestial lust and as a result they need to be under the authority of Aryan husbands to secure the purity of the race. Racial purity could also be ensured by extermination or castration of inferior races, a line of thinking that reflected Lanz', and many Western thinkers', interest in eugenics.

The concepts of racial hygiene and eugenics were popular throughout Western society; however, the aims of Aryan eugenicists were not the same as those of the movement as a whole. Shelia Faith Weiss describes German eugenics as "a sometimes conscious, often unconscious strategy to buttress the supposedly declining cultural and political hegemony of Germany and the West through the rational management and control of the reproductive capacities of various groups and classes."¹⁰⁷ German eugenicists were united in the belief that the survival of the superior German culture depended on the implementation of eugenics. The spread and popularization of the eugenics movement in Germany is largely a result of a combination of factors including social conflict coming from rapid industrialization, the traditions of the German medical community, and the popularity of social Darwinist theories among German intellectuals.¹⁰⁸

The rapid transition from an agricultural society to an industrial society within an authoritarian political system resulted in deep social disruption. Rapid social change combined with political and social immobility led to the rise of the radical labor movement. Labor unrest and growing Marxism resulted in rising fear and anxiety within

¹⁰⁷ Shelia Faith Weiss. "The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904-1945" in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, ed. Mark B. Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

the German middle-class. The middle- and upper classes were also greatly concerned with increasing criminal activity, prostitution, suicides, alcoholism, and were more aware of the existence of the insane or feeble-minded. These “mental defectives” were singled out as a great financial and social burden falling upon the fragile new Reich. German social scientists debated the dilemma presented by the new “social question” and the best ways to integrate the proletariat into the German Reich. Most agreed that a new *Sozialpolitik* (social policy) was desperately needed to soothe the unrest before the social disorder disturbed the new Reich. To early German eugenicists, the best way to defend against the collapse of the state from social disruption caused by the increasingly visible numbers of asocial and non-productive people was a new form of *Sozialpolitik*- racial hygiene.

The leading members of the German racial hygiene movement were also members of the German medical and intellectual community, which uniquely shaped German eugenics. These medically trained, middle classes eugenicists were indoctrinated into the prejudices of the middle class and the assumptions of the medical community concerning the heredity nature of disease.¹⁰⁹ Complicating these assumptions was the belief, widely held by the German medical community, that it was a physician’s duty and responsibility to defend the health of the nation. Many young medical professionals of the time were focusing on the idea of heredity, and racial hygienists were convinced that many disorders, including mental illnesses, criminal behavior, and feeble-mindedness, were hereditary conditions. These eugenicists believed that the best way to guard the health of the state as a whole was to improve the general level of health of individuals by removing the hereditary likeliness of unwanted disorders.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

The eugenics movement gained popularity in Germany throughout the early twentieth century, with an increasing emphasis on the social cost and damage caused by the unproductive. Eugenicists during the Weimar Republic were directly concerned with preventing the decline of the German *Volk*, unlike earlier eugenics advocates who spoke in more theoretical terms.¹¹⁰ Eugenic policies became more important to those with *völkisch* ideologies as physicians and scientists used racial science to support the idea of the dangers that inferior peoples represented to the fatherland. Lanz eagerly used the “scientific” findings and theories of eugenicists to support his worldview. Lanz’ vision called for the widespread use of eugenics in a worldwide apocalyptic battle against the racially inferior people who threatened to degenerate the German race; Lanz’ ultimate aim was to create an Aryan Pan-German paradise once the danger of the inferior races was eliminated.

The bulk of Lanz’ doctrine was published in 1905 under the title “*Theozoologie oder die Kunde von den Sodoms-Äfflingen und dem Götter-Elektron*” (Theozoology, or the Science of the Sodomite-Applings and the Divine Electron). Here Lanz added modern day scientific discoveries to the historical framework by claiming that the interstellar higher-beings bred electrically. He also made many shocking claims of a sexual nature- insisting that in antiquity deviant sexual desires were met by love-pygmyies bred for such a purpose and capitalizing on the image of white Aryan women being sexually abused by racially inferior ape-men.¹¹¹

Following the establishment of the List Society in 1908 Lanz became increasingly more involved in the *völkisch* community. Lanz published numerous articles in *Ostara*, a

¹¹⁰ Weiss. “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904-1945”29.

¹¹¹ Bradley S. Smith, *Adolf Hitler: His Family, Childhood and Youth*, (Stanford: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967), 124.

magazine that would later influence a young Adolf Hitler, to promote and circulate his ideas.¹¹² He corresponded with many *völkisch* writers and became involved with the occult and Theosophical subcultures. Within Blavatsky's writings he found confirmation of his peculiar vision of the Fall as that of the corruption of man being a result of bestiality and racial impurity. He divided Blavatsky's fourth root-race, the Atlanteans, into two different groups- the pure and the bestial. He also included occult ideas concerning astrology, which he used to predict the coming apocalypse.

Like many of List's ideologies and visions for the future, Lanz' ideas can be seen in later Nazi policy, some of which were only theoretical and some actualized. Heinrich Himmler imagined Aryan women chosen to be bred like horses in maternity homes, which fell in line with Lanz' vision of Aryan women controlled by their husbands for the sake of breeding racially pure children. Lanz' proposals for ridding Germany of the Jews included plans to ship them to Madagascar, which was briefly considered in the Third Reich, or use as slave labor, which would be the fate of many European Jews two decades later; Lanz even proposed that Jews be used as live sacrifices to God.

Order of the New Templars:

Lanz' ideology was largely formed by 1905 but he was still developing the historical basis for his ideology beyond a conflict between the Israelites and Christians. Like List he felt the need to reach back into the past and provide a connection between himself, his ideologies, and some historical precedent, which is reflected in his desire to cement his identity with the Church and later with the German aristocracy. In List the desire to provide a stronger historical legitimization was manifested in the creation of

¹¹² Dusty Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult*, (New York: Dorest Press, 1977), 18.

fictional connections between secret organizations, including his own, and ancient religious bodies of authority. In Lanz this desire is seen in his fictionalized aristocratic ancestry. Obsession with the Knights Templar fed into his romantic view of the aristocracy and of holy orders, likely motivating his initiation into the Cistercian order. These romantic views were easily reinforced as Richard Wagner's operas were reviving interest in the Knights Templar and the Holy Grail across Germany.¹¹³

Lanz fancied that the Knights Templar had followed a similar racist doctrine in the Middle Ages to that which he was proposing. The Knights Templar became a historical focal point of Lanz' doctrine. He retold the story of the Templars to reframe them as an order fighting for the creation of a greater German state. Lanz also claimed that the Grail was a symbol of Aryan psychic powers and the Templars' quest for the Grail was a metaphor for eugenic practices meant to bring about a breed of pure god-like Aryan men. The suppression of the Knights Templar became synonymous with the triumph of the racially inferior, the corruption of pure Aryan culture and the creation of the corrupt modern world. Lanz decided to found an order of his own in honor of the Knights Templar, which he called Ordo Novi Templi, to fight the new crusade.

In 1907 Lanz and his friends bought Burg Werfenstein in the Austria town of Mühlviertel to be the headquarters of his new order.¹¹⁴ Lanz presented his Order of New Templars as a German mutual-aid society meant to encourage racial consciousness through beauty contests, genealogical research and the creation of Aryan utopias. A number of large and well-publicized festivals were held at Burg Werfenstein. The large attendance and media attention garnered by the Order's festivals contributed to the spread

¹¹³ Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, 311.

¹¹⁴ Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult*, 20.

of *völkisch* nationalistic ideas among the German-speaking public. It was at this time that Lanz formalized the structure of the Ordo Novi Templi. He wrote up a document laying out a disciplinary code similar to what might be found amongst other religious orders.

The documents described the rituals, rights and duties of the order's members. He also laid out the order's hierarchy, which was divided into seven different orders based on racial purity and seniority. There were Servers, the lowest rank, consisting of those who were considered fifty percent or more racially impure or were under twenty-four years of age.¹¹⁵ After Servers there were Familiars, followed by Novices, those who were more than fifty percent racially pure and over twenty-four years old. The superior orders consisted of Masters, fifty to seventy-five percent racially pure, Canons, who were seventy-five to one hundred percent pure, and the two highest ranks, the Presbyter and the Prior.¹¹⁶ This hierarchy played a significant role in the order's rituals and ceremonies, which promoted devotion and commitment to the Order.

German defeat in the First World War confirmed Lanz' worst fear concerning Jewish corruption. The Habsburg Empire was dissolving and in Carniola, Bohemia, and Moravia there were riots and revolts in the wake of the empire's waning power. Lanz abandoned Vienna and left for Hungary and from the end of the war on his ideology was violently anti-Semitic and based around a belief in a Jewish-Bolshevik-Masonic conspiracy.¹¹⁷ His anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevist ideologies were further strengthened by involvement in counter-revolutionary activities in Budapest immediately following the war. The ceremonies and rituals of the Order became particularly important after the war

¹¹⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 111.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 119.

when the New Templar doctrine offered a means of fighting the sense of chaos and darkness that seemed to permeate the post-war German society. The Order of New Templars was a product of discontent and anxiety in German and Austrian society, which was strengthened and validated by defeat in World War One. Lanz' goal, expressed through the Order, was salvation and redemption through eugenics and racial cleansing, a goal that struck a chord with much of the German elite.

The Germanenorden and the Thule Society:

In 1912 two groups were formed in Wilhelmine Germany to promote anti-Semitism, *völkisch* ideology, anti-socialism, and imperialism among Germans. These groups, the Reichshammerbund and the Germanenorden, were both heavily influenced by Lanz and List's ideologies, though the Germanenorden is of more historic importance.¹¹⁸ The Reichshammerbund had a short life and a membership that never grew beyond a few hundred. The Germanenorden was created to be the secret twin organization of the Reichshammerbund, which fed into the long established notion of secret anti-Semitic, Masonic-like organizations that had been spread among *völkisch* groups since the early twentieth century. The goal of the Germanenorden was to:

...stimulate co-operation towards the rebirth of a racially and morally pure Germandom; a ruthless defence against all enemies; a return to the blond, pure German bonds between woman and man; relentless eradication of the Hebrews and nomadic races, of the revolutionary mobs, of the hereditarily defective as well as the spiritually and physically degenerate from the German mass and the Germanic territories. This includes the reattainment and securing of a Germanic mastery over all other races, the pursuit of a spiritual God-Man with a Germanic-based world view, [...] advancement and ascent of all Germanic comrades in all aspects of life.... Pure-bred nations thrive, while racial interbreeding disturbs the harmony between

¹¹⁸ Reginald H. Phelps, "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden," *The Journal of Modern History* 35 (1963): 250.

spirit, soul and body, thus giving rise to imbalance and consequently disease and invalidism, degeneration and decline. In the end this will lead to the massification and disfiguration of the human race and ultimately- to the Jews. As you might assume, a large part of our nation's ailments are due to the natural result of racial interbreeding. [...] The most intelligent race and the race most capable of development is the northern Germanic Aryan, whose main characteristics in their purest forms distinguish them from all other races- these characteristics include: light blond hair, blue eyes, reddish and milky white skin colour, as well as a tall and superior physique; the Aryans are from the days of old the exclusive founders and bearers of noble morals and high culture. The Germanic race is the ancient, noble master race of humanity which for its natural born merits of true piety, temperament and honour, has been called to lead the human race in light of its righteousness, creativeness and drive.¹¹⁹

The 1916 propaganda flyer perfectly illustrates the ideological blend of racism, *völkisch* nationalism, racial science, and Aryan occultism that permeated nearly all *völkisch* and occult organizations in Austria and Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many *völkisch* nationalists believed in a secret worldwide Jewish conspiracy to destroy the righteous Aryan society and saw another secret organization as the best means to fight off the conspiracy.

Germanenorden lodges spread throughout northern and eastern Germany and its membership increased rapidly. A main goal of the Germanenorden was the circulation of *völkisch* journals; many of the articles published by the Germanenorden betrayed an Ariosophical leaning. All applicants of pure Germanic descent were eligible to become members of the Order. As one might expect from the rhetoric of the propaganda flyer, the forms potential members filled out asked detailed questions about the color of the applicant's hair, eyes, skin, and details concerning the applicant's grandparents, parents,

¹¹⁹ Jay Hatheway, "The pre-1920 Origins of the National Socialist German Workers' Party." *Journal of Contemporary History* 29, (1994): 453.

and spouse.¹²⁰ A great importance was placed upon looking like an ideal Aryan and handicapped and “unpleasant” looking people were barred from the Order. The Order also used Ariosophical symbols; the emblem of the Order was a swastika with a cross superimposed on top. The Germanenorden and the Thule Society first popularized the swastika, though they were not the first to use it, and it was through those organizations that the National Socialists adopted the symbol.¹²¹

The Germanenorden, like many *völkisch* occult groups, combined Masonic, racist and Wagnerian ideology, much of which is apparent in their rituals and ceremonies. A phrenologist confirmed racial purity of initiates before they were allowed to continue to the next stage of the initiation. The novices would be brought to a ceremonial room where the lodge brothers waited dressed in robes and Masonic sashes. At the back of the room was the “grove of the Grail” and a piano which was to be accompanied by a choir of “forest elves.”¹²² The brothers would sing the chorus from Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* while the Master would wield Wotan’s spear. The initiation rituals sought to personify Order officials as Germanic gods and mythic figures.

The war was incredibly disruptive to the Order. Nearly half of the members were called away to war and many were killed in action.¹²³ There was much confusion and dissatisfaction in the Order, and the Berlin lodge started a separatist schism. The strange and childish rituals began to annoy and frustrate many members of the disorganized and confused Order. In 1916 Hermann Pohl was removed as Chancellor of

¹²⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 129.

¹²¹ Phelps, “Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden,” 250.

¹²² Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 130.

¹²³ Phelps, “Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden,” 250.

the Order. The upper-level members were also increasingly paranoid; some insisted that they only be referred to by anonymous runes in any correspondence. The disruption and confusion of the war resulted in the assumed extinction of the Order by 1917. After the armistice the remaining brothers set out to revive the Order, whereupon Rudolf von Sebottendorff became the head of the Order in the Bavarian province.¹²⁴

After the defeat in war the Germanenorden became more deeply involved with militant *völkisch* groups. The Order became a cover for the recruitment of political assassins meant to target public officials of the new German Republic.¹²⁵ Lorenz Mesch, the leader of the Regensburg Germanenorden, met with Heinrich Schulz and Heinrich Tillessen, who later travelled to Munich and reportedly received instructions from an Order official to assassinate Matthias Erzberger, the former Finance Minister and armistice signatory.¹²⁶ They carried out the assassination in May of 1921. The attempted assassination of Maximilian Harden is also connected to the Order.

In 1921 the different fractions of the Germanenorden became a single organization, though without the involvement of Rudolf von Sebottendorff it is unlikely that the Germanenorden would have made such a deep impact on *völkisch* ideology and National Socialism. Sebottendorff can be credited with the survival of the Germanenorden, Ariosophy and with creating much of the *völkisch* nationalistic environment within which National Socialism thrived.

Rudolf von Sebottendorff, like many of the Ariosophists, claimed a fictional tie to nobility. He was born Adam Alfred Rudolf Glauer but called himself Baron Rudolf von

¹²⁴ Phelps, "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden," 251.

¹²⁵ Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult*, 7.

¹²⁶ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 133.

Sebottendorff.¹²⁷ Sebottendorff became involved in *völkisch* activities late in the war and joined the Germanenorden in 1916. His involvement in the Order increased after he met with Hermann Pohl, the future ex-chancellor of the Order. From that point on Sebottendorff's involvement increased; Sebottendorff organized lectures and group meetings and published a monthly Order periodical. In 1917 he became the Master of the Bavarian Order province. He began using the term "Thule Society" to mask the Order's meetings as the Germanenorden began to become a cover for radical right-wing activities that were attracting the attention of the socialists and pro-Republican element.¹²⁸ In November 1918, at the end of World War One, there was a bloodless revolution in Bavaria, followed by a revolution in Berlin.

Kurt Eisner, a Jewish journalist and the leader of the Independent Social Democrats in Munich, declared a Socialist Republic in the wake of post-war domestic collapse. As far as the Thule Society was concerned, the *völkisch* fatherland was in ruins and Germany had been taken over by Jewish socialists. Members of the Thule Society hoped to keep the *völkisch* nationalist ideology alive in the atmosphere of confusion, fear, and revolution that comprised post-war Germany. Sebottendorff gave a speech to the Thule Society, which displayed a combination of anti-Semitic, monarchical, and Ariosophical notions. Sebottendorff declared to the Society:

Wir erlebten gestern den Zusammenbruch alles dessen, was uns vertraut, was uns lieb und wert war. An stelle unserer blutsverwandten Fürsten herrscht unser Todfeind: Juda. Was sich aus dem Chaos entwickeln wird, wissen wir noch nicht. Wir können es ahnen. Eine Zeit wird kommen des Kampfes, der bittersten Not, eine Zeit der Gefahr!... So lange ich hier den eisernen Hammer halte, bin ich gewillt die Thule in diesen Kampf einzusetzen!... Unser Orden ist ein Germanenorden, Germanisch ist die Treue. Unser Gott ist Walvater, seine Rune ist die Aarrune. Und die

¹²⁷ Phelps, "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden," 246.

¹²⁸ Phelps, "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden," 251.

*Dreiheit: Wodan, Wili, We ist die Einheit der Dreiheit... Die Aarrune bedeute Arier, Urfeuer, Sonne, Adler. Und der Adler ist das Symbol der Arier. Um die Fähigkeit der Selbstverbrennung des Adlers zu bezeichnen, wurde er rot ausgeführt... von heut ab ist der rote Adker unser Symbol, er soll uns mahnen, dass wir durch den Tod gehen müssen, um leben zu können.*¹²⁹

[Yesterday we experienced the collapse of everything which was familiar, dear and valuable to us. In the place of our princes of Germanic blood rules our deadly enemy: Judah. What will come of this chaos, we do not know yet. But we can guess. A time will come of struggle, the most bitter need, a time of danger...As long as I hold the iron hammer, I am determined to pledge the Thule to this struggle. Our Order is a Germanic Order, loyalty is also Germanic. Our god is Walvater, his rune is the Ar-rune. And the trinity: Wotan, Wili, We is the unity of the trinity. The Ar-rune signifies Aryan, primal fire, the sun and eagle. And the eagle is the symbol of the Aryans. In order to depict the eagle's capacity for self-immolation by fire, it is colored red. From today our symbol is the red eagle, which warns us that we must die in order to live.]¹³⁰

Sebottendorff and his followers became involved in the counterrevolution, even attempting a failed assassination and kidnapping of Eisner and participating in the unsuccessful Palm Sunday *Putsch* on April 13.¹³¹ On April 26 Thule headquarters in Munich were raided and seven members arrested and executed by Red troops on April 30.¹³² After this event Sebottendorff was convinced that the execution of the Thule members was an act of revenge by Jewish soviet leaders and his anti-Jewish rhetoric became more impassioned.

Sebottendorff's *völkisch*, nationalistic anti-Semitism was very much in line with the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, the Deutschsozialistische Partei and predated and likely helped to form Hitler's Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), if only

¹²⁹ Rudolf von Sebottendorff, *Bevor Hitler kam*. Urkundliches aus der Frühzeit der national-sozialistischen Bewegung, second edition (Munich, 1934).

¹³⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 145.

¹³¹ Hatheway, "The pre-1920 Origins of the National Socialist German Workers' Party." 454.

¹³² Phelps, "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden," 253.

in a minor way. This is most prevalent when examining the journalistic basis for the Nazi Party. Sebottendorff bought a weekly paper, which he named *Münchener Beobachter und Sportblatt*. The anti-Semitic paper was gradually bought up by the National Socialist Party. The Thule Society hosted Gottfried Feder, Rudolf Hess, Alfred Rosenberg and Dietrich Eckart, all future prominent members of the Nazi Party, at Thule headquarters in the Hotel Vierjahreszeiten.¹³³ In addition to Pan-Germanism and anti-Semitism Sebottendorff promoted Ariosophy and sought to spread it among the working classes and labor parties, including the National Socialist German Worker's Party, though the NSDAP was an organization for extreme nationalism and focused less on Aryan occultism. There are a number of connections between the Thule Society and National Socialism and, while they might not have been as prevalent as Sebottendorff would like to claim, the Thule Society can be credited with aiding in the foundation of National Socialism.¹³⁴ Sebottendorff, to some degree, can be credited with introducing the Nazi Party to Ariosophy. List, Lanz and Sebottendorff, through their organizations, created and established the ideologies, attitudes, rituals and symbols that were the basis for the Nazi Party. It is from them that the Nazi Party incorporated an occult element, though to what degree the Nazis were involved with the occult is debatable.

¹³³ Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult*, 6.

¹³⁴ Bernard Mees, "Hitler and Germantum," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33 (2004): 255.

Chapter IV: Occultism under the Third Reich

National Socialism and the Occult:

There has been much debate as to the extent of Hitler's involvement in the occult. Much of this debate is a result of propaganda spread by the victorious Allies or by German nationalistic occultists or, more recently, by pop culture sensationalist novels. The most concrete connection between National Socialism and the occult comes through Karl Maria Wiligut by way of Heinrich Himmler. The influence the Ariosophists may have had is more subtle.

Defeat in the First World War aided the spread of occultism among German nationalists. Right- and left-wing political extremists arose within the Weimar Republic. Political violence erupted between right-wing paramilitary groups and communists. Four years of seemingly pointless loss of lives and resources struck harder as a result of the unexpected defeat and armistice and the resulting anger and confusion bred violence. Though the Weimar Republic was not just an age of violence; from the chaos emerged the age of cabaret, quantum mechanics, avant-garde theater, Bauhaus and Dada.¹³⁵ Wilhelmine Germany was destroyed, the Kaiser had abdicated and unknown politicians created a parliamentary democracy that was distrusted by many Germans and was thought to be a product of the victors. Weakness of democracy and the previous swift

¹³⁵ Jonathan Osmond, "German Modernism and Anti-Modernism. Weimar," *The Burlington Magazine*, 141 (1999): 575.

industrialization led to the conservative revolution. The leading figures of the conservative revolution and of National Socialism were born between 1885 and 1895 and their formative years took place during the Great War. The war had taught these young men contempt for bourgeois society, accustomed them to violence, and gave them a sense of community that they yearned for after the war. The German romantic tradition degenerated the role of reason in politics and the romantics born into these circumstances utilized the ethics of ultimate ends rather than ethics of responsibility. It was this irresponsible romanticism that led the conservative revolutionaries to destroy the Weimar democracy without considering the consequences. These right-wing intellectuals advocated a kind of amoral aestheticism- the idea of “beyond good and evil” and it was these intellectuals who created an irrationalist and nihilist atmosphere within German culture.¹³⁶

Oswald Spengler was an “anti-intellectual” intellectual and one of the conservative thinkers who came of age in this period. Spengler theorized that Christianity had a feminizing impact on German culture and equated “good” with power and “bad” with powerlessness rather than with traditional concepts of morality. He thought that the conflict between culture and civilization could be overcome through nationalist mobilization and believed, along with increasing numbers of thinkers of the interwar era, that the rejection of rationalism was a true representation of modernism. Spengler advocated traditional agrarian aristocracy, Prussian militarism, and traditional values of patriarchy and family. He also felt that money was a destructive, materialistic

¹³⁶ Jeffery Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 266.

force whereas war was the creator of all great things. He linked technology to the romantic and irrationalist traditions to will, struggle, gestalt, soul, destiny, and blood.

Post World War One Germany was rife with civil war, uprisings and economic hardship. Amidst these wretched conditions many Germans became obsessed with myths and ideologies that preached of Germany's salvation and restoration. Many times these rising occult beliefs were wildly irrational, as demonstrated by Konrad Heiden:

The best of them [Germans] found refuge from the despair of their daily life in a perverse fanaticism...called "the mysticism of a political movement."

Germany was the perfect place for this development. In almost no other country were so many 'miracles' performed, so many horoscopes read, between the two World wars. A veritable mania of superstition had seized the country.... General Ludendorff, who had commanded the German armies in World War I, tried to make gold with the assistance of a swindler.... There was scarcely a folly in natural or world history to which the great general did not lend credence; when the German Republic...had the barriers of the railway painted red and white for better visibility, Ludendorff declared that the Jews in the government were doing this because Moses had led the Jews through the desert under these colors.

Another high-ranking general was convinced that he possessed the secret of the death ray and that he could halt airplanes in their flight and stop tanks in their tracks. A steamship company dismissed its managing director because his handwriting had displeased a graphologist. Motorists avoided a certain road between Hamburg and Bremen because, it was rumored, from milestone 113 there emanated certain mysterious "terrestrial rays," which provoked one accident after another. A miracle worker, who had the faculty of making the dead Bismarck appear during his mass meetings and who healed the sick by application of white cheese, had enough followers to establish a city; another crackpot was almost elected to the Reichstag; and still a third, who also barely missed election, promised to perform the greatest miracle of all by undoing the German inflation that had depreciated the mark to the value of one trillion paper marks for one gold mark.

Among Hitler's intimates was a man on whose visiting card appeared the word "magician" to indicate his profession- and he meant it in all seriousness. Many were convinced that the course of world history was the sinister result of the ministrations of ancient secret societies- as such they considered not only the Free Masons, but also Jews and the Jesuits....¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Konrad Heiden, Forward to Felix Kersten, *The Memoirs of Dr. Felix Kersten*, (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1992), 5.

The same conditions and atmosphere that allowed for the belief in the healing power of white cheese also created the *völkisch* groups that arose to oppose the forces they felt were destroying Germany: Jews, communists and Freemasons. Conservatives demanded a new feudal order and German youths joined leagues that promoted nationalism.

During this time Guido von List's ideas gained popularity within the post-war *völkisch* community. The Ariosophists, Armanists and rune occultists all conformed to a certain basic doctrine that emphasized the existence of superhuman Aryan ancestors that brought wisdom and power to the ancient Germanic people but who were overcome by a hostile, foreign culture. These Aryan ancestors were said to have hidden their knowledge within runes and myths, which their "spiritual heirs" could decipher.¹³⁸ List, Lanz and Sebottendorff used this doctrine and the promise of uncovering hidden knowledge to gain followers. These were the people who created the mythological mood that aided Hitler and the Nazi Party.

Karl Maria Wiligut was one of the only occultists able to directly influence those in positions of political power. Wiligut, a favorite of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, was asked to work on prehistorical research for the SS in the 1930s. Wiligut designed the *Totenkopfring* insignia worn by the members of the SS as well as other ceremonial designs meant to depict the racial and elitist ideology of the SS. For his efforts Wiligut was personally recommended for promotion by Himmler and it was through Himmler and the SS that Wiligut wielded his influence.

¹³⁸ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 177.

Karl Maria Wiligut was born in Vienna in 1866 and made his career in the Austrian military, from which he retired as a colonel following the First World War and Austria's collapse. Before the war Wiligut wrote *Seyfrieds Runen*, a nationalistic, epic poem addressing the legend of King Seyfried of Rabenstein and contained other legends surrounding the March on the Austrian-Moravian border.¹³⁹ He also wrote of the Germanic origins of certain place-names, much as Guido von List had done. Around the same time Wiligut was introduced to the Viennese esotericists to members of Lanz' Ordo Novi Templi. Early twentieth-century Vienna was ripe with nationalistic occultist activity, mostly through the influence of List and Lanz, and it was there that Wiligut became immersed in studying esotericism. In the 1920s he became involved in political matters and sought to expose the conspiracies of the Jews, Freemasons and Catholics. Wiligut built a reputation among *völkisch* groups as being descended from a long line of German sages, from which Wiligut claimed to have received ancestral clairvoyant memories.¹⁴⁰ Through these clairvoyant memories Wiligut claimed to know the military organization and religious beliefs of the ancient Germans, and what he described was quite similar to List's writings and descriptions. In Wiligut's version of history the Bible was originally written in Germany and Krist (Christ) was a Germanic god that was later incorporated into Christianity.

Wiligut invented an elaborate ancestral past for himself in which his ancestors, descended from gods, saved and ruled over the ancient Germanic world but were driven out by Charlemagne's vicious persecution of the German pagans. Wiligut's ancestors fled to Russia where they founded a Gothic empire, which was subsequently destroyed

¹³⁹ Stephen Flowers, *The Secret King*, (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2007), 45.

¹⁴⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 179.

and erased from history by Russian Christians.¹⁴¹ Wiligut's ancestral myth was quite convenient, considering the anti-French and anti-Russian sentiments prevalent in Germany. Wiligut was also convinced that he was the victim of the age-old persecution of his family and that the perpetrators were Jews, Freemasons and Catholics, who were also responsible for the loss of the war and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. Wiligut essentially considered himself to be a victim of Germany's worst enemies. Wiligut also claimed that his grandfather had taught him the language of the runes and that his father handed down to him family secrets, including nine pagan commandments. It is a common theme among occultists, including List and Lanz, to claim a secret legacy dating back to pre-Christian times in an effort to claim an unbroken, legitimate line of knowledge and practice of ancient secrets and rites.

To spread his ideas Wiligut founded an anti-Semitic league and published a newspaper that addressed occultist, *völkisch* and anti-Semitic topics. At the same time Wiligut's marriage was becoming turbulent and in 1924 his wife had him forcibly committed to an insane asylum, which declared him to be a schizophrenic megalomaniac with paranoid delusions. He remained in the asylum until his release in 1927 though Wiligut continued to correspond with fellow occultists throughout his confinement. These correspondents included members of the Order of New Templars and members of the Edda Society such as Emil Rüdiger, Friedrich Schiller and Richard Anders, all members of occult societies.¹⁴² With their aid he was able to return to his occult activities upon his release. In 1932 Wiligut emigrated to Germany and became popular among the rune occultists there. Wiligut, along with many others, saw similarities

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 182.

¹⁴² Flowers, *The Secret King*, 47.

between his mythology and the hopes of the 1933 Nazi revolution. Among those that saw the similarities was an old friend of Wiligut's who was a member of the SS and proceeded to introduce Wiligut to Heinrich Himmler, who was impressed by the old mystic's clairvoyant memories.

Heinrich Himmler was a leading member of the Nazi Party, the Reichsführer-SS and a military commander. Himmler was one of Hitler's most trusted advisors and was the second most powerful man in Nazi Germany. In addition to all of this Himmler was perhaps the Nazi official most drawn to the occult. He felt that he was the reincarnation of the medieval king Heinrich, providing him with a spiritual connection to the pre-historic Aryan world.¹⁴³ Himmler also felt that Germany was in a state of spiritual longing and that Christianity was foreign to Germany and obsolete. Germanic paganism appealed to him as the solution for Germany's spiritual longing and Wiligut's claim to be the ancestor of an ancient Germanic religious leader fed into Himmler's desire for the resurrection of an ancient Aryan religion and culture. Wiligut joined the SS and became the head of the Department for Pre- and Early History, which was part of the Race and Settlement Main Office.¹⁴⁴ Here he wrote more about his ancestral memories and began to build a relationship with Himmler, to whom he sent copies of his work, including his nine pagan commandments and mythological poetry. Wiligut's close relationship with Himmler caused him to be quickly promoted through the ranks of the SS.

In 1934 Wiligut introduced Himmler to Günther Kirchoff, who wrote about Germanic prehistory and incorporated List's *Armanenschaft* and etymology into his theories. Himmler continued to support Wiligut's and Kirchoff's occultist theories even

¹⁴³ Dan Burton and David Grandy, *Magic, Mystery, and Science: the Occult in Western Civilization*, 265.

¹⁴⁴ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 215.

against evidence presented by his academic staff in the Ahnenerbe. Wiligut's influence led Himmler to purchase Wewelsburg, a castle near Paderborn in current-day North Rhine-Westphalia where the Irminsul, an important Germanic pagan site, was supposedly located. Wiligut claimed that the castle would one day be a German stronghold in a great conflict between Europe and Asia. Himmler turned the castle into a museum and a college to aid in the ideological education of SS officers. In addition to the selection of the castle Wiligut played a prominent role in creating the rituals of the SS. These rituals included pagan wedding ceremonies for SS officers, where Wiligut officiated over the ceremony with an ivory stick carved with runes and wrapped with a blue ribbon, and festivals for solstice, harvest and spring that were attended by SS personnel and the local villagers. Wiligut also designed the SS insignia, the death's head ring, which includes a skull, swastika and a grouping of runes.

Wiligut continued to be promoted through the ranks of the SS and made plans to promote the reemergence of the ancient Germanic religion but in 1939 Wiligut retired for reasons that are unclear, though it may be related to his failing health or possibly the embarrassing information concerning his institutionalization was leaked. Whatever the reason, the SS continued to look after Wiligut throughout his retirement but the last years of his life were spent wandering about war torn Germany. Wiligut spent the last years of the war in Austria, where English occupiers assigned him to a refugee camp near Velden. There he suffered a stroke that left him unable to speak. His SS-assigned caretaker, Elsa Baltrusch, was permitted to take him from the camp and Wiligut, exhausted from the journey, died in 1946 at Baltrusch's family home at Arolsen in Germany.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 191.

Figure 4.1

Map of Germany¹⁴⁶



©1992 Magellan GeographixSM Santa Barbara, CA (800) 929-4627

147

¹⁴⁶ Map of contemporary Germany.

Himmler had a habit of collecting mystics around him, some of them willing acquisitions and some of more forcibly obtained. In the 1920s Himmler consulted Felix Kersten, a massage therapist who subscribed to Eastern alternative medicines. Himmler suffered from intestinal spasms, which were relieved by Kersten's treatment.¹⁴⁸ Despite being Finnish Kersten was forced into being Himmler's personal doctor once the war started. Kersten later published an account of his time spent with Himmler, including their conversations on astrology, reincarnation and Eastern religions. Wilhelm Wulff, much like Kersten, was forced into Himmler's service and later published an account of his time with Himmler. Wulff was an astrologer who was arrested following the crackdown on astrologers due to Nazi Party deputy Rudolf Hess's astrology induced flight to Scotland. He was released after agreeing to work for Himmler.¹⁴⁹

Himmler's dependence on Wiligut, Kersten and Wulff demonstrate that the occult did have an impact on the upper ranks of the Nazi party but there is little evidence that these occultists had any true effect on important Nazi policy or political decisions.

Hitler and the Occult:

Much of the speculation that Hitler and Nazism were linked with the occult is a result of Allied wartime propaganda and post-war mythmakers.¹⁵⁰ It is known that Hitler read Lanz' *Ostara* and Lanz certainly claimed him as a disciple, writing to another occultist that: "Hitler is one of our pupils. You will one day experience that he, and

¹⁴⁷ Robert A. Walker, *Map of Germany*, 2002: http://www.cs.kent.edu/~walker/photos/01-03-13_Munich/Images/biggergermany.gif.

¹⁴⁸ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 214.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 216.

¹⁵⁰ Flowers, *The Secret King*, 21.

through him we, will one day be victorious and develop a movement that makes the world tremble,”¹⁵¹ but the extent to which any of the occultist influenced Hitler or National Socialism is highly debatable. Members of the National Socialist German Worker’s Party were involved with Sebottendorff’s Thule Society but there is no evidence that they practiced occult rituals and beliefs. The sponsors, newspapers and symbols of the Nazi Party can be traced to the Thule Society, the Germanenorden and ultimately to Guido von List, and much of the SS tradition can be traced to Himmler’s patronage of Wiligut. Most of the occult figures connected to Hitler (List, Lanz and Sebottendorff) were also highly active in the Pan-German and *völkisch* communities of the late nineteenth century along with many of the future members of the Nazi Party.

Rumors, mostly false, were spread after the war concerning Nazi occult sciences. There were claims that the Nazis were trying to build flying saucers or that they were involved with astrology. These rumors were popular despite the fact that, in the words of Walter Lacquer:

The Nazis took a dim view of astrology, which was suspected both for its Oriental origins and its universalist character; horoscopes that did not differentiate between Aryans and non-Aryans, between higher and inferior races, could not possibly be accepted. Neither Hitler nor Goebbels, contrary to widespread belief, took astrology seriously, and its only use was in German psychological warfare. A suitably edited version of Nostradamus’ prophecies was published, proving that Germany was to win the war.¹⁵²

Himmler, on the other hand, did consult an astrologer when German victory began to look less certain. The Nazi Party’s attitude towards astrology reflects its involvement with most of the occult; generally the Nazis sought to curtail occult activity

¹⁵¹ Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult*, 21.

¹⁵² Walter Lacquer, Foreword to Wilhelm Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika* (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1973), 6.

and it is only among certain individuals, such as Himmler and Rudolf Hess, that one finds support for the occult and other esoteric activity. Some interpret the Nazis attempt to eradicate occultism and esoteric groups as an attempt to destroy the abhorrent, irrational practice while others consider it to be evidence that the Nazis took the occult seriously.

In fact, Himmler did declare:

For us politics means...the elimination of all forces except those serving the one constructive idea....

In the Third Reich we have to forbid astrology....We cannot permit any astrologers to follow their calling except those who are working for us. In the National Socialist state astrology must remain a *privilegium singulorum*. It is not for the broad masses.¹⁵³

Because of the propaganda, spread by both the Allies and by Nazis and Nazi supporters, before and after the war, it becomes a difficult task to separate fact from legend when considering Hitler's connection to the occult.

Adolf Hitler was born in a town on the Austrian-Bavarian border to a father who was an imperial customs officer. His Catholic upbringing may have unintentionally made Ariosophy's dualist-millenarian ideas concerning good and evil particularly appealing to Hitler,¹⁵⁴ and in fact Hitler had a hostile relationship with Catholicism throughout his Chancellorship,¹⁵⁵ largely due to Hitler's policies and racial doctrines concerning eugenics and euthanasia and, on a more fundamental level, both the Catholic Church and Hitler demanded the entirety of a person, leaving nothing left for devotion to a competing force.

¹⁵³ Wilhelm Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika* (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1973), 34.

¹⁵⁴ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 193.

¹⁵⁵ Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 185.

It was at the turn of the century in Linz that Hitler encountered Pan-Germanism and nationalism as Linz was troubled by the growing Czech immigrant population in the Austrian-German town. Hitler, through his schooling, became enchanted by the idea of Germany and of the *Volk* and this introduced him to the Manichaeism and millenarian views that would be found later in List's and Lanz' writings. It was here in Linz that Hitler saw his first Wagnerian opera, which the young Hitler found to be a near-religious experience.¹⁵⁶ Wagner's operas awoke in Hitler a romantic longing for the world of the ancient Germanic heroes described in the operas. Wagner set a musical stage that embodied Hitler's longings, hates, hopes and fears.¹⁵⁷

Hitler moved to the multi-racial city of Vienna, which was full of urban slums, soup kitchens and Jews in strange dress, all of which represented a great contrast to the pure mother Germany Hitler longed for. This view made Hitler receptive to Lanz' *Ostara*, in which Lanz wrote about the dualism of blond and dark races, heroes and sub-men, Aryans and Apelings. Hitler sought out List to obtain back issues of *Ostara*, which Lanz provided free of charge.¹⁵⁸ The ideologies presented in *Ostara* were ones that would later be reflected in Nazi ideology but ultimately Lanz was an oracle, not a political leader, and while Lanz may have given Hitler a few ideas, his real significance to Hitler and National Socialism is having introduced a young Hitler to Germanic theorists and mystics such as Guido von List.

There are many aspects of Lanz' ideology with which Hitler would not have agreed. Lanz' doctrine was laced with Catholic liturgy, which Hitler, despite his upbringing, would have found repugnant. Lanz wished to see the Aryan nation ruled by

¹⁵⁶ Smith, *Adolf Hitler: His Family, Childhood and Youth*, 103.

¹⁵⁷ Robert L. Jacobs, "Wagner's Influence on Hitler," *Music and Letters*, 22 (1941): 82.

¹⁵⁸ Smith, *Adolf Hitler: His Family, Childhood and Youth*, 125.

the Habsburgs, while Hitler despised the ruling dynasty. When Hitler came to power Lanz was barred from publishing and his organizations were dissolved. This was partly a result of Nazi policy to dissolve all occult, secret or esoteric groups but it may also be that Hitler did not wish there to be any connection between his ideas and Lanz' doctrines.¹⁵⁹ If it is indeed true that Hitler was influenced by Lanz, which the evidence implies to a certain extent, he never acknowledged it and never mentioned Lanz in any speech or writing. It is unlikely that Hitler would ever admit that the original inspiration for his ideology came from an old Viennese mystic. Despite Hitler's attempt to erase his earlier influences Lanz' ideologies and doctrines can be seen in Hitler's writings, especially in *Mein Kampf*:

By defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the handiwork of the Lord....This Jewification of our spiritual life and mammonization of our mating instinct will sooner or later destroy out entire offspring....

Blood sin and desecration of the race and the original sin in this world and the end of humanity with surrenders to it.

With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her own people. With every means he tries to destroy the racial foundations of the people he has set out to subject. Just as he himself systematically ruins women and girls, he does not shrink back from pulling down the blood barriers for others, even on a large scale. It was and it is the Jews who bring the Negroes into the Rhineland, always with the same secret thought and clear aim of ruining the hated white race, by the necessarily resulting bastardization, throwing it down from its cultural and political height, and himself rising to be its master.¹⁶⁰

In this passage Hitler demonstrates the same paranoid, sex-crazed imaginings that Lanz was so fond of as well as the same racial characterization and fear that the Jews were damaging to the German spirit.

¹⁵⁹ Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult*, 21.

¹⁶⁰ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 46.

There is less evidence to support any direct connection between Hitler and List. List's political thought would have appealed to Hitler; List was anti-Czech, anti-feminist, anti-democracy and anti-Jewish, all of which Hitler would have appreciated.¹⁶¹ List, like Lanz, divided the world into Aryans and non-Aryans, masters and slaves. List also encouraged a hierarchy that was used by *völkisch* leagues, and later by the Nazi Party and the government of the Third Reich. On the other hand, Hitler had little interest in folklore, ancient customs or heraldry. As with Lanz Hitler would have been drawn to his dualistic racism but Hitler seemed to find little appealing in occult traditions. In particular, Hitler had no true interest in the Germanic neo-pagan aspect of List's and other *völkisch* occultists' ideologies. In fact, Hitler contemptuously referred to mystical, occultist thinkers as "*deutsch-völkisch* wandering scholars."¹⁶² While Himmler was supportive of the Ariosophists' vision of a Germanic religion, Hitler had little time or interest in the imaginings of the Germanic religionists.¹⁶³

While Hitler wished to support a stronger sense of German identity, he did not wish to alienate the great Christian majority by encouraging the implementation of a neo-pagan religion, especially considering the hostile relationship between the Nazi Regime and the Catholic Church.¹⁶⁴ Hitler had to battle the sentiment that the Nazi Party, and particularly the Hitler Youth and the SS, was anti-Christian. In 1934 the Catholic leadership in Bavaria capitalized on what they considered to be Nazism's heathenistic, anti-Christianity when a Nazi District Leader ordered that a large crucifix atop a hillside in a Bavarian town be replaced with a *Thingsplatz*- a pagan Teutonic assembly place

¹⁶¹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, 200.

¹⁶² Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 312.

¹⁶³ Mees, "Hitler and Germanentum," 267.

¹⁶⁴ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945*, 191.

related to sun-worship.¹⁶⁵ Hitler found old Germanic religiosity to be more dangerous than beneficial when considering the offence it caused to the Christian majority.

While there were certain affinities between the occult and Nazis, there was never any political alliance between the Nazi state and the occultists. One of the connections between Nazis and occultism comes in the form of alternative medicines. Adolf Hitler was terrified of getting cancer and had the Chancellery examined for potential cancer inducing “earth rays.” Despite this odd instance, Hitler, for the most part, despised the mystical aspects of occultism, feelings that were intensified following an incident with one of his most trusted cohorts. Rudolf Hess, the deputy leader of the Nazi Party, along with Heinrich Himmler, was one of the two most prominent and high-ranking occultists within the Nazi party. Hess was a supporter of naturopathy and had a magnet suspended over his bed in order to deflect harmful radiation. At the influence of his occult advisors, Hess parachuted into Great Britain with the intent of ending the war on the western front.¹⁶⁶ The ill-advised action caused a public relations disaster at home and Hitler was furious with both Hess and the astrologers who had led him to commit such an asinine action.

The Nazi regime generally viewed occultism as a dangerous, misleading force that the public needed to be protected from, but they also feared the independence occultism promoted and felt that it was an ideological threat.¹⁶⁷ As a result the state was increasingly hostile towards occult organizations and Hitler’s personal anger towards Hess only fueled the anti-occult sentiments. Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Party’s propagandist, was one of the party leaders most hostile to the occult. Goebbels referred

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 195.

¹⁶⁶ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 212.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 211.

to Hess' flight to Britain as: "a tragic comedy... [about which] one could simultaneously laugh and cry.... The whole thing arose from the atmosphere of his faith healing and grass eating. A thoroughly pathological affair."¹⁶⁸ Goebbels used the affair to crack down on occultism. The tides that had once contributed to the creation of the occult milieu and later created National Socialism were now turning against the occult.

Certain *völkisch* leaders in earlier decades had sought to Germanize Christianity, or to replace it all together with a Germanic neo-pagan religion and to those aims some *völkisch* theorists felt that the occult was a useful tool. Others did not. It was these critics that would inspire the Nazi regime's oppression of the occult movement and its practitioners. Some leaders of the *völkisch* movement considered occultists no different from the Freemasons, who were considered a dangerous secret organization that encouraged the kind of universal thinking that promoted Jewish emancipation.

In 1939 the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* was established and began monitoring occult activity. The RSHA classified certain German groups as sectarians, including Mormons, Christian Scientists, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses, who were classified as religious sects. Occultists who followed Theosophy, Anthroposophy, Rosicrucianism, Ariosophy and astrology were considered to be members of "worldview sects."¹⁶⁹ These sects were considered to promote disunity in the Reich and after the outbreak of war the crackdown on occultist groups intensified. Occult publications became illegal, and soon any occult activity became illegal. By 1941, prompted by Hess' embarrassing trip to Scotland, police action against occultists

¹⁶⁸ Joseph Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels, 1, 1940-1941*, ed. Elke Fröhlich (Munich: K.G. Sauer, 1998), 310. Translation by Goodrick-Clarke.

¹⁶⁹ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, 221.

increased. The movement to suppress the occult was done with little public attention, as the state did not wish to encourage any interest in occult activity.

Some Nazi officials, like Himmler and Hess, dabbled in the occult, though their private activities concerning the occult seem to have had little impact on the official policies of the Third Reich. Most of the conjecture that Hitler and the occult were deeply linked is little more than rumor perpetrated by the Allies and later by pop culture writers. Generally, the Nazi Regime was incredibly hostile towards the occult and occultists faced prison sentences, confinement to concentration camps or death. Hitler felt that occultism represented an ideological danger to the Third Reich and as such it needed to be stamped out.

Epilogue:

Contemporary Society and the Pagan Revival:

The suppression of esoteric movements by the Third Reich saw the end of the German occult revival in the 1940s, but since the 1970s a new movement has awakened, this time a Germanic neo-pagan movement. Germanic neo-paganism is a broader movement when compared to the turn of the century German occult revival, concentrated not just in Germany, but also in much of northern Europe, North America, South Africa and Australia. The Western world is facing a demographic shift as the population of the industrializing world dramatically increases due to better sanitation and medicine, resulting in major population flows of immigrants, workers and refugees migrating to lands traditionally settled by white Europeans.¹⁷⁰ The issues of white identity faced by the United States and much of Europe reflects the conflict faced by ethnic Germans in Austria during the nineteenth century who feared for their racial and cultural dominance in the Habsburg Empire. Aryan cults and Germanic paganism emerged within Western contemporary society due to individuals' fear of lost status and identity in an increasingly multicultural society.

¹⁷⁰ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*, (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 2.

The most prominent of the racial pagan movements, the Odinists, rejects Christianity as a Jewish product and instead invokes the gods of the Teutonic and Norse pantheons. Festivals, rituals and customs of the ancient Germanic people are used to break with the Christian tradition, which they feel is an alien oppressing force imposing its rule on naturally pagan peoples for two thousand years. Devotees of Odinism embrace an ideology with a basis in National Socialism and white supremacism.¹⁷¹

Odinists and other racist pagans make up only a small group of the neo-pagan movement, which is only one of the three broad categories of new religious movements, including New Age spiritualism (“sects” and “cults”), which possess doctrines and a structured hierarchical system, and pagan groups, which seek to recreate pre-modern pagan traditions. These groups may overlap or contain similar elements. New Age groups might organize and become sects and pagan groups might appropriate many New Age elements. Pagan groups tend to be less organized than other religious groups and do not have an orthodox uniformity of belief. Local pagan communities can form more global “tribes” or imaginary communities that transcend borders. This can cause problems among racist pagans who link ethnicity to spirituality, as is seen in Aryan paganism, which has a large Ariosophical element that considers the Aryan race to be divine and spiritually superior to other races.

Odinism finds its root in nineteenth century Germany within the *völkisch*, nationalist milieu. Folklorists of the nineteenth century wrote about Odin, Donar and Thor and praised Germanic heroism, honor and defiance as contrasted to the humility, shame and repentance of Christianity. Guido von List wrote about ancient Norse sagas

¹⁷¹ Betty A. Dobratz, “The Role of Religion in the Collective Identity of the White Racist Movement,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49 (2001): 291.

and the Wotan priesthood, which he revived in the form of the High Armanist Order. Solstice festivals and rituals were popular among some German youth groups in 1920s. The modern racists pagan revival began with the establishment of the Odinist Fellowship in 1969, which relied heavily on Alexander Rud Mills, whose writings deeply influenced the neo-Nazi character of Odinism.¹⁷² Mills' writings described how the Nordic races built the great civilizations in Rome, Greece, Egypt, Sumer and Persia and it was the Jews and their idea of a transcendent God that led to the Christian idea of the equality of man, weakening the Nordic civilizations.

Mills was unsuccessful when trying to start his own Odinist religion but he influenced Else Christensen's Odinist Fellowship. Mills' writings were combined with those of Francis Parker Yockey, who argued that cultures went through cyclical phases of birth, growth, fulfillment and death and that each culture has a soul that determines that culture's art, sciences, morality and religion. Yockey believed that Western civilization was coming to fulfillment and that the white race would come to dominance if they could eliminate the threat of the black and Asian races that were undermining and polluting Western society. Yockey identified the Jews as the most impending threat to the West and saw the defeat of the Axis as a great loss to the revival of Western civilization.¹⁷³ Christensen believed that Yockey's prediction of cultural degeneration as a result of Christianity, communism and capitalism could be remedied by Mills' Norse paganism.

Much like the German *völkisch* occultists of the nineteenth century current day racist neo-paganism functions under the belief that there is some organic connection between biology and spirituality. Aryans are biologically linked to the gods and

¹⁷² Peter Henderson, "Frank Browne and the Neo Nazis," *Labour History* 89 (2005): 75.

¹⁷³ Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*, 260.

goddesses; blood carries the memories of the ancient past and the *Volk* are subconsciously spiritually linked, making the source of Odinism biological. The racist pagan movement denounces Christianity as unnatural and anti-white, just as the German occultists felt that the Christianity was foreign and anti-German. European, American and Australian racist, nationalist, Aryan revolutionaries have reacted radically to globalization.¹⁷⁴ These racist nationalists view globalization as a homogenizing process brought on by a secret organization of Jews known as the Zionist Occupational Government who seek to exterminate the Aryan race. With regards to globalization the racist pagan milieu of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century parallels that of the German occultists of the late nineteenth century who were reacting against modernism, industrialization, positivism, and urbanism by idealizing ancient traditions, magic, secret organizations, primitivism, occultism and paganism. The philosophers and thinkers of the nineteenth century, List, Wagner, Blavatsky, may have died nearly a century ago but all have a heavy influence on the current pagan revival and the ideology of racist pagans more specifically.

¹⁷⁴ Mattias Gardell, *Gods of the Blood: the pagan revival and white separatism*, (London: Duke University Press, 2003), 11.

Conclusion:

Behold, we know what you teach: that all things recur eternally, and we ourselves too; and that we have already existed an eternal number of times, and all things with us. You teach that there is a great year of becoming, a monster of a great year; which must, like an hourglass, turn over again and again so that it may run down and run out again; and all these years are alike in what is greatest as in what is smallest; and we ourselves are alike in every great year, in what is greatest as in what is smallest.¹⁷⁵

-Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

The ideologies of the *völkisch* occultists did not end with the Third Reich. They are alive within modern racist, nationalist movements that were born from similar situations from which the nineteenth century German occult revival emerged. The occult is born anew with every cycle of societal disturbance. Fear and dissatisfaction felt by Germans in the nineteenth century resulted in the longing for a return to what was seen as a purer, righteous, more traditional way of life in the face of modern urbanization, industrialization and soullessness. While social disorder has led to occult revivals in many societies throughout the ages, the occult revival in the German-speaking world during the nineteenth century was unique. The conditions in Austria resulted in the rise

¹⁷⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 157.

of nationalism as well as occultism, creating a unique combination of *völkisch* nationalism and occultism that lingered longer and went deeper than occultism in other European nations during the same time.

The occultists born into this nineteenth century culture of despair combined the occult with racist, *völkisch* nationalism to preach the hope of a future Aryan paradise that could be achieved if Germans could triumph over their natural, racially inferior enemies. Among those occultists were Guido von List, Lanz von Liebenfels and Rudolf Sebottendorff, who gave German occultism its unique form by synthesizing occultism, *völkisch* nationalism, pagan traditions and Theosophy into Ariosophy in an attempt to give Germany a national religion that was true to the German soul. List created the foundation of Ariosophy in Germanic folklore, paganism, racism, nature worship and Theosophy. To that mix Liebenfels added a new creation story that imagined Jews to be lesser beings and provided pseudo-scientific “evidence” of the divine nature of man, meaning Aryans, and the subhuman nature of “lesser races.” Lanz, with the help of Rudolf von Sebottendorff, created organizations to spread and foster his ideology. Sebottendorff politicized Lanz’ organizations and Sebottendorff’s *völkisch*, nationalistic anti-Semitism fueled the environment upon which Hitler’s National Socialism feed.

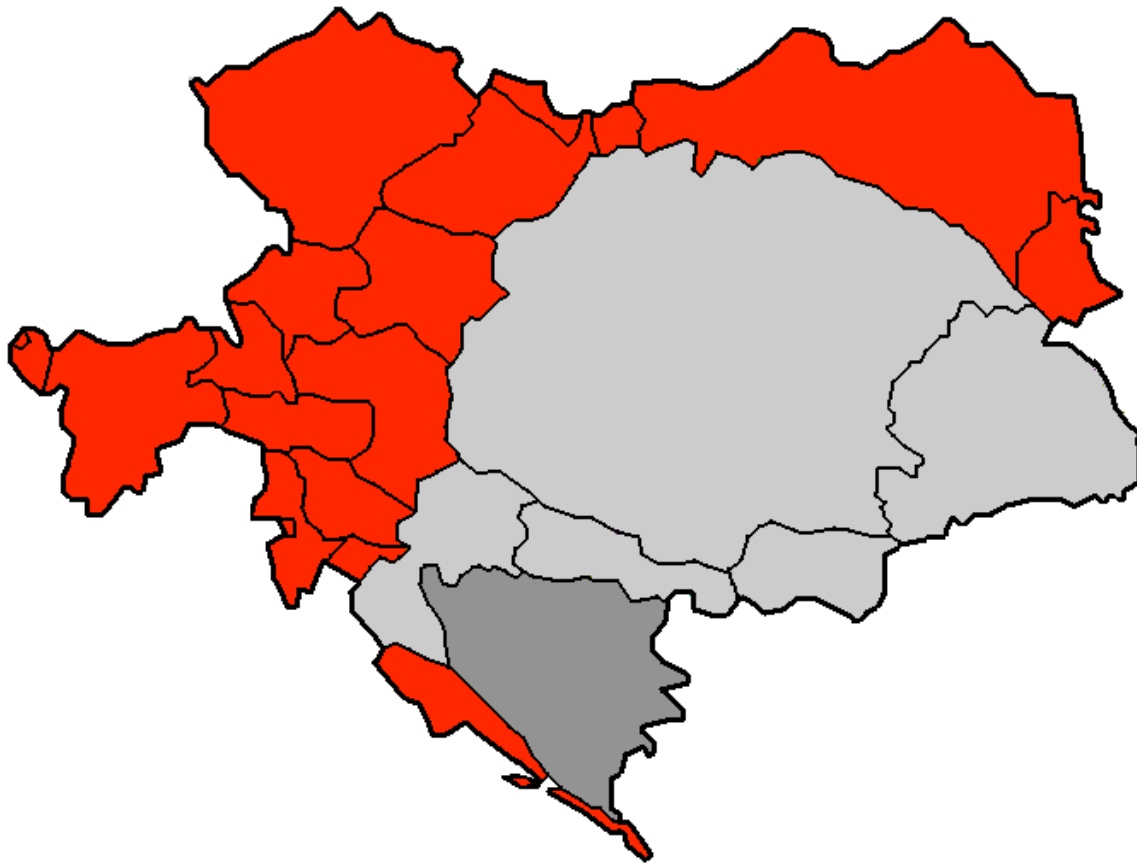
The ideologies of Guido von List, Lanz von Liebenfels and Rudolf Sebottendorff reflect the cultural atmosphere that led to Hitler’s rise to power and the subsequent extermination of the European Jews. While high-ranking members of the Nazi Party, such as Heinrich Himmler and Rudolf Hess, were influenced by occultists the actual connections between National Socialism and the occult are more a matter of propaganda and post-war rumor and scandal. Occultism did not create National Socialism; rather

both were reactions to the atmosphere of despair and hopelessness that consumed Germany.

Modern-day globalization, migration and racial tensions have resulted in the reemergence of occult and racist pagan ideas that a return to ancient, traditional ways of life and religion will result in victory over those they view to be the enemy and the emergence of a paradise over which they and their people will rule. Occult revivals like that of nineteenth century Germany and the twentieth century English-speaking world have happened throughout history in response to political, economic and social uncertainty, and are likely to happen again.

Appendix

Figure A.1
Map of Cisleithania:



This map shows Cisleithania (in red), the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy within Austria-Hungary. The light grey section is Transleithania and the dark grey is Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Immanuel Giel, *Map of Austria-Hungary*, 2009:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bd/Cisleithanien_Donaumonarchie.png.

Figure A.2
Map of Austria-Hungary with Provinces:



Austria-Hungary:¹⁷⁷

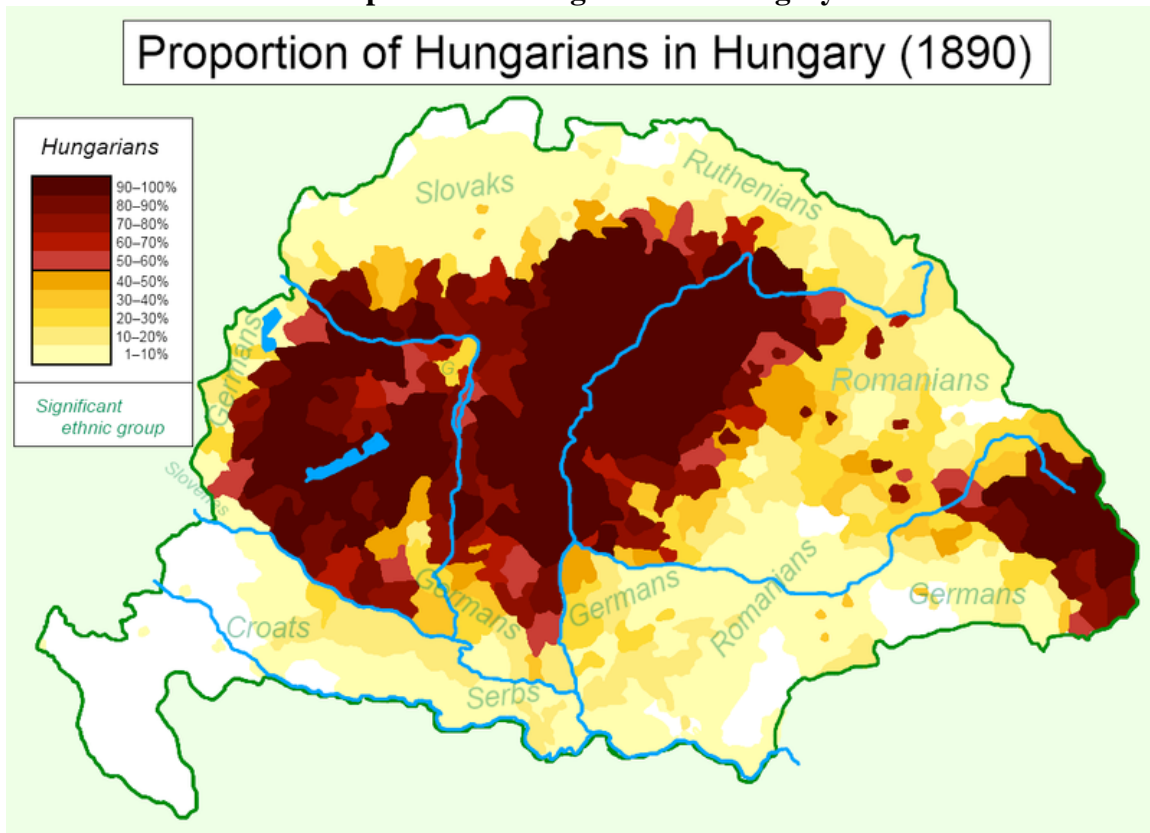
Cisleithania (Empire of Austria): 1. Bohemia, 2. Bukovina, 3. Carinthia, 4. Carniola, 5. Dalmatia, 6. Galicia, 7. Küstenland, 8. Lower Austria, 9. Moravia, 10. Salzburg, 11. Silesia, 12. Styria, 13. Tyrol, 14. Upper Austria, 15. Vorarlberg;

Transleithania (Kingdom of Hungary): 16. Hungary proper 17. Croatia-Slavonia;

Austrian-Hungarian Condominium: 18. Bosnia and Herzegovina

¹⁷⁷ *Austria-Hungary Map*, 2006: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Austria-Hungary_map.svg.

Figure A.3
Proportion of Hungarians in Hungary:



This map shows the distribution of ethnic Hungarians within the Hungarian half of the empire.¹⁷⁸ Hungarians are clustered in the center of the nation with Germans, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Romanians, Serbs and Croats surrounding them.

¹⁷⁸ Pallas Nagy Lexikon, *Proportion of Hungarians in Hungary, 1890*, 2009: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hungarians_in_Hungary_\(1890\).png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hungarians_in_Hungary_(1890).png).

Bibliography

- Austria-Hungary Map*, 2006: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Austria-Hungary_map.svg.
- Benario, Herbert W. "Roman Germany. Three Sites," *The Classical Journal*, 51 (1956): 305-352.
- Bevir, Mark. "The West Turns Eastward: Madame Blavatsky and the Transformation of the Occult Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (1994): 629-946.
- Birken, Lawrence. "Volkish Nationalism in Perspective." *The History Teacher* 27 (1994): 119-251.
- Blavatsky, H.P. *Secret Doctrine*, London, 1888.
- Burton, Dan and David Grandy, *Magic, Mystery, and Science: the Occult in Western Civilization*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004.
- Chickering, Roger. *We Men who Feel Most German*, Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1984.
- De Lagarde, Paul. "Die Religion der Zukunft," *Deutsche Schriften*, 3 (1937): 251-286.
- Dobratz, Betty A. "The Role of Religion in the Collective Identity of the White Racist Movement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49 (2001): 143-349.
- Fichtner, Paula Sutter. "History, Religion, and Politics in the Austrian Vormärz." *History and Theory* 10 (1971): 1-149.
- Flowers, Stephen. *The Secret King*, Los Angeles: Feral House, 2007.
- *The Secret of the Runes*, Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1988.
- Freytag, Anstalt G. & Berndt (1911). *Geographischer Atlas zur Vaterlandskunde an der österreichischen Mittelschulen*. Vienna: K. u. k. Hof-Kartographische. "Census December 31st 1910".

- Gardell, Mattias. *Gods of the Blood: the pagan revival and white separatism*, London: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Giel, Immanuel. *Map of Austria-Hungary*, 2009:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bd/Cisleithanien_Donaumonarchie.png.
- Goebbels, Joseph. *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels, I, 1940-1941*, ed. Elke Fröhlich, Munich: K.G. Sauer, 1998.
- Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*, New York: New York University Press, 2002.
- *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology* New York: New York University Press, 1985.
- Hatheway, Jay. "The pre-1920 Origins of the National Socialist German Workers' Part," *Journal of Contemporary History* 29, (1994): 371-544.
- Heiden, Konrad. Forward to Felix Kersten, *The Memoirs of Dr. Felix Kersten*, Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books; 1992.
- Henderson, Peter. "Frank Browne and the Neo Nazis," *Labour History* 89 (2005): 73-86.
- Herf, Jeffery. *Reactionary Modernism: technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- "The Engineer as Ideologue: Reactionary Modernists in Weimar and Nazi Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 19 (1984): 631-648.
- Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*, Munich, 1934.
- Jacobs, Robert L. "Wagner's Influence on Hitler," *Music and Letters*, 22 (1941): 81-83.
- Kann, Robert. *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1819, Volume II*, New York: Octagon Books, 1950.
- Kershaw, Ian. *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.
- Lacquer, Walter. Foreword to Wilhelm Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1973.
- Lanz von Liebenfels, Jörg. *Theozoologie oder die Kunde von den Sodoms-Äfflingen und dem Götter-Elektron*, Vienna, 1905.

- Lewis, James. *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements*, Oxford, 2004.
- MaCartney, C. A. *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918*, New York: Macmillan, 1969.
- Mees, Bernard. "Hitler and Germanentum," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33 (2004): 163-296.
- Mosse, George. *The Crisis of German Ideology*, New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1971.
- *The Fascist Revolution*, New York: Howard Fertig, 1999.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Penguin Books, 1978.
- Okey, Robin. *The Habsburg Monarchy: From Enlightenment to Eclipse*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001.
- Osmond, Jonathan. "German Modernism and Anti-Modernism. Weimar," *The Burlington Magazine*, 141 (1999): 517-588.
- Pallas Nagy Lexikon, *Proportion of Hungarians in Hungary, 1890*, 2009:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hungarians_in_Hungary_\(1890\).png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hungarians_in_Hungary_(1890).png).
- Peets, Elbert. "Town Planners: II. Camillo Sitte," *The Town Planning Review* 12 (1927): 249-259.
- Phelps, Reginald H. "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden," *The Journal of Modern History* 35 (1963): 227-337.
- Pietikainen, Petteri. "The Volk and Its Unconscious: Jung, Hauer and the 'German Revolution'," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35 (2000): 523-539.
- Poliakov, Leon. *The Aryan Myth*, New York: Basic Books, 1971.
- Schorske, Carl. *Fin-De- Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980.
- Sklar, Dusty. *The Nazis and the Occult*, New York: Dorest Press, 1977.
- Smith, Bradley S. *Adolf Hitler: His Family, Childhood and Youth*, Stanford: The Hoover Insitution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967.
- Smith, Helmut Walser. *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914*, Princeton: University Press, 1995.

- Stern, Fritz. *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the German Ideology*, New York: Anchor Books, 1961.
- Sturluson, Snorri, *The Prose Edda: Tales from Norse Mythology*, translated by Jean I. Young, University of California Press, 1964.
- Taylor, A.J.P. *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948.
- Treitel, Corinna. *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, London: John Hopkins University Press, 2004.
- Van den Broek, Roelof. *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998.
- Von Sebottendorff, Rudolf. *Bevor Hitler kam. Urkundliches aus der Frühzeit der national-sozialistischen Bewegung*, second edition. Munich, 1934.
- Walker, Robert A. *Map of Germany*, 2002: http://www.cs.kent.edu/~walker/photos/01-03-13_Munich/Images/biggermany.gif.
- Webb, James. *The Occult Establishment*. Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1979.
- *The Occult Underground*, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1974.
- Weiss, Shelia Faith. “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904-1945” in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, edited by Mark B. Adams, 8-50. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.