

The Post-Romantic Syndrome: Reflections on Work, Wealth, and Trade from Adam Müller to Ernst Jünger

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The article presents an original, innovative and interdisciplinary contribution to intellectual history. It examines the intersections between economic and political thought, social philosophy, and aesthetics and literature that inform a pervasive post-romantic discourse on work, wealth and capital spanning the nineteenth century and becoming particularly prominent in the first third of the twentieth century in Germany and Austria..

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At the heart of this article is the desire to understand how discourses and ideas are transposed in time, indeed how entire domains of ideologically constructed meaning get relocated and grafted in the tissue of a historically different culture.¹ I offer a case study of this complex and evasive process: post-romanticism as a discursive formation that modifies the Romantic legacy and responds to it from the perspective of new, previously unknown, social, economic, and political challenges. Ultimately, the theoretical concern behind this article is captured in the question: how

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does one describe the life of discursive formations, their impact on, and their changes at the hands of, later generations?

Post-romanticism was constituted in the public space to a large measure as a continuous debate on the value of Romanticism in subsequent intellectual debates. The immediate purpose of this paper is to reflect on a set of ideas of wealth, capital, property, and work that were current in Germany and Austria during World War I and also during the brief tenure of democracy in the Weimar Republic. In analysing these ideas, I hope to substantiate the case for the continuous after-life of Romanticism in the various guises of post-romanticism, a process which de-emphasises the notion of period and constructs instead a complex discursive formation that re-negotiates past intellectual agendas and energies.

But before I venture into a more detailed discussion of post-romantic economic and social thought in Germany and Austria between the World Wars, let me first detail what is actually meant by the “post-romantic syndrome”.

1

Romanticism occupied a unique place in the cultural formation of modernity. Not only did Romanticism enjoy – like so many artistic currents from the 18th century onwards – a resurrection in periods of imitation and emulation in literature, music, and the arts; unlike all later currents, Romanticism became an attitude, a wider cultural reality, one might even say, a life-style. It branched out with equal force into philosophy, the sciences, and social theory; it established its own code of social intercourse and intimacy, its own privileged heroes and villains, in short – a whole philosophy and ideology of culture. Aesthetic and cultural modernity, most of us would agree today, began with the Romantics, even though its roots lay in an earlier defense of the autonomy of reason.

Romanticism's relations with modernity are much more complex than the picture painted by those asserting it as a promoter of the process of modernization. In Germany and Britain, this ambiguous dynamic is particularly evident: the very same generation of poets and thinkers that began by embracing the French Revolution ended up bitterly opposing its ideals; in Germany, some of the major Romantics went as far as undertaking religious conversions (to Catholicism) to seal their change of heart and mind. It would thus be much fairer to describe the stance of Romanticism towards modernity as profoundly contradictory. Romanticism did not always play into the process of modernisation; much of its energy was spent

doubting, criticizing, or simply rejecting it. The French Revolution, with its radical agenda, served not as the cause but as the point of crystallisation; latent social and intellectual forces gathered and focused on an event of enormous momentum, thus revealing the entire spectrum of reactions to modernity, from passionate embrace to uncompromised resistance.

This is certainly nothing new for students of Romanticism. What needs to be emphasised instead is the fact that Romanticism, with its dual attitude towards the Revolution, presented a laboratory case of reaction towards modernity. In a way, Romanticism was the first such reaction that would display the whole gamut of enthusiasms and critique. Behind the particular responses to the Enlightenment belief in the universality of reason embodied in the acts of the Revolution, there lurks a paradigm-setting instance of responding to modernity. It is this paradigmatic nature of the Romantic attitude to modernity and the Revolution that has not been sufficiently recognised before. Pulling out the implications of this paradigm-setting process is an indispensable step in appreciating the longevity of post-romanticism in the multitude of forms and guises it took long after the Romantic movement itself had ceased to exist. Romanticism, one may suggest, was an examination of modernity, a check on its performance, an inspection of its resources. Such an examination was bound to take place with renewed vigour in different circumstances every time a society and a culture would find themselves at a critical juncture in their modern history. Being an evolving and “incomplete” process, as Habermas has called it, modernity is subject to these regular performance tests throughout its history. Because Romanticism was historically the first such critical assessment, the features and the parameters of the test, as well as the mode of formulating its questions (and often also the answers), would be drawn upon and would resurface in an ever-changing fashion every time modernity would be subjected to such an examination. This continuous after-life of the Romantic intellectual legacy, at a time when Romantic responses to the new social and cultural agendas would no longer do, constitutes the essence of the post-romantic syndrome. To put it in today’s terms, checking on the performance of modernity has proven to be intimately dependent on mobilizing and carrying forward the arguments and the style of argumentation – at times in the guise of severe critique – worked out in the various strains of Romanticism.

Let me dwell at this point a little bit on the word “syndrome” that is so central to the title of this article. There are at least two likely objections to this term: a) that it naturalises rather than historicises the phenomenon I am discussing; and b) related to this: that it is turning the phenomenon into some kind of clinical predisposition to illness, evil, or other undesir-

able conditions. “Syn-drome” comes from the Greek *syn* ‘with’ and *dromos* ‘a race’; running; race-course; or even “a public walk.” The verb, *syndromein*, means “running together”, “meeting”, or “running along with”, or “following close”. The noun, then, has accrued the meaning of somebody or something that runs along but maybe still just behind something or somebody else. In other words, a response that is not late in coming, but also a set of features that occur simultaneously and characterise a particular phenomenon, usually seen as some kind of “abnormality”. This brief etymological excursus is needed in order to demonstrate that at its very origin the term “syndrome” has a diachronic dimension built into it: “following close”, “unfailingly appearing just behind” something. I thus insist that writing about a “syndrome” does not naturalise the phenomenon, as it actually allows us to follow the curves of the race, with our eyes fixed on the run and the response of the chaser. This is exactly what we do when we interpret Romanticism and post-romanticism as discourses that represent responses to modernity in its historical evolution – but also as discursive formations characteristic of modernity and tracing its dynamics as an integral part of it. To some extent, Marx captures this – although in negative terms and from premises I do not entirely share – when he writes in the *Grundrisse* that “The bourgeois viewpoint has never advanced beyond this antithesis between itself and this romantic viewpoint, and therefore the latter will accompany it [i.e. the bourgeois viewpoint] as legitimate antithesis up to its blessed end” (Marx 162).

What is more, I deliberately choose to speak of “post-romanticism”, thus placing the emphasis on the notion of distance, transformation and non-identity vis-à-vis Romanticism, rather than of, say, “neo-romanticism,” which both narrows down the scope to literature and the arts, excluding sociology and political and economic thought,² and also – equally unacceptable – stresses repetition and identity through imitation and emulation.

But what about the reservation that “syndrome” is redolent of disease, of an unhealthy condition that is dormantly available and awaiting actualisation? This impression is further corroborated by the resilient link produced in scholarship between Romanticism and Nazism, in the case of Germany. Indeed, there has been a long tradition in seeking and locating the longevity of Romanticism and its supposedly baleful impact precisely and solely in Germany. One has to re-examine this connection and rethink this bond that seems so deeply entrenched. There are two crucial implications to asserting, as I do, that Romanticism and post-romanticism are

² For a still rare interpretation of post-romanticism (and not just of Romanticism) that extends beyond the domain of literature and the arts, see Löwy and Sayre (2001).

evolving responses to modernity: one is that Germany cannot be singled out as the sole target of analysis, and as the only host tissue in which post-romanticism recurred; rather, the intimate link between modernity and post-romanticism can be observed across the cultural, ideological, and geographic divide, and throughout the 20th century: the examples of this article are drawn almost exclusively from Germany and Austria, but we encounter different manifestations of post-romanticism also in the intellectual and artistic life of France, the Soviet Union, and other countries (as I briefly demonstrate below). In a sense, the geographical distribution needn't even matter: what is really at stake is the pervasive nature of the post-romantic syndrome that permeates modernity at each critical juncture of its evolution. The second implication, going back to the *Urszene* of Romanticism responding to the French Revolution in ways that set the parameters of future responses – both for and against – is that post-romanticism should not be seen as linked exclusively to Conservatism and the Right, as has been the case for so long. In equal measure, albeit in a more complicated fashion, it was also linked to Left (usually Leninist or social-democratic and reformist) thinking and action, a connection that has so far remained largely unexplored. Thus the wider target of this article is the double misconception that post-Romanticism is a specific German malaise, and that it was nurtured by an exclusive alliance with Conservatism and the Right.

But if this is the case, the word “syndrome” warrants rethinking, in the sense that it no longer applies to post-romanticism as such but to modernity, whose structural problems post-romantic ideologies come to address and reflect. I am here evoking the work of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman who, in what is one of his most seminal books, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), made the case for the structural deficiency of modernity, or to use his stronger word, its “pathologies”. It is this deficiency that generates the discourses of post-romanticism which function as a syndrome to the extent to which they accompany, or “follow closely”, modernity at different junctures of its history, by critiquing its various deep-seated problems – sometimes latent, sometimes manifest – from vantage points across the ideological spectrum.

The pattern of drawing on Romanticism in formulating and dealing with twentieth-century concerns could be observed, as I have already suggested, in different fashions, in other European cultures and intellectual traditions as well. In France, Baudelaire and the surrealists re-discovered Romanticism and revived its critical potential.³ In Italy and Scandinavia, a range of fin-de-siècle writers availed themselves of the Romantic legacy to

³ On this, see Bohrer 39-61 and 72-83.

articulate new anxieties and to diagnose new social problems.⁴ In Russia, where in the nineteenth century a string of writers partaking – to a different degree – of the Romantic movement built the national poetic canon (thus fusing indiscernibly Romanticism and the classic), the post-1917 age called into being a state-sponsored stream of “revolutionary romantic” (“revoliutsionnaia romantika”) which was more than a mere artistic current and stood for an entire world view and a broader life-attitude.⁵

In all these countries, the resurrection of the Romantic legacy at various points of their cultural history in the twentieth century was the inevitable result of these societies’ complicated dealings with modernity. In Germany it was precisely Romanticism that presented the first consistently articulated and large-scale reaction to the philosophical project of modernity, fused with the very important agenda of a cultural-political nationalism (Fichte, after all, wrote his *Addresses* while looking through his window on the French troops marching outside), every time this project had to be revised, criticized, or evaluated, the spectre and the resources of Romanticism in philosophy, economic thought, sociology, literary theory, historiography, and theology would be revived in turn.

All this accounts for the unique longevity of Romanticism, and for the extraordinarily value-laden notion of Romanticism as a cultural code that stands for a recognizable range of responses to the perpetual crises of modernity. This is why Romanticism became such a contested axiological territory in the twentieth century. In the next and final part of this paper, I attempt to exemplify this working hypothesis by briefly looking at some aspects of German and Austrian economic and social thought, with a focus on occurrences during the Weimar Republic.

2

I have chosen to build this part of the article around four thinkers, each of whom exemplifies a particular mode of writing. Werner Sombart and Edgar Salin are classic cases of political economists, even though the rhetorical force of their argument is the result of deliberate effort and should not be underestimated. Sigmund Rubinstein is a social thinker, whose writing embraces political activism. Ernst Jünger, in *The Worker* (1932), attempts a piece of philosophical essayism, a blueprint or a diagnostic

⁴ This process is explored in Mario Praz’s classic study *The Romantic Agony* (1930-33), which was the first broad survey of the after-life of Romanticism in European literature (as such, it also contains some inevitable exaggerations and oversimplifications).

⁵ See, in particular, Nikē, “Revoliutsionnyi”.

prophecy with strong claims to intrinsic literary value. Two other important names recurring in the paper are the Romantic economist and political philosopher Adam Müller and the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies.⁶

One needs to focus on two particular features of Romantic socio-economic discourse – the centrality of the nation and the desirability of community life – and follow their inflections between the World Wars in Germany and Austria. In trying to establish the foundation for the revival of this repertoire of Romantic ideas in the Weimar Republic, I wish to begin by referring to a symptomatic text of 1923 written by Edgar Salin, a former member of the George Circle, who after World War II would narrate the history of his involvement with the Master in *Um Stefan George* (the book appeared in two different versions, 1948 and 1954). Back in 1923, Salin was still a Privat-Dozent at Heidelberg, and the text in question, his *History of Economics* (Salin, *Geschichte*), was to stir the spirits and propel Salin into prominence and a tenured professorship at Basel. Written as an installment of the *Enzyklopädie der Rechts- und Staatswissenschaft*, Salin's history of economics also enjoyed independent existence as a university textbook. What the profession was truly amazed by was the size of the book. And since no one would have been surprised by the publication of a rather long scholarly book in German, one is right to assume that Salin actually produced an alarmingly short piece of work. Over mere 42 pages, he presumed to give his personal account of the history of economic thought from Plato to Max Weber. The book later grew in length, by the 1960s, in its fifth edition, it was 200 page-long but had lost a great deal of its verve, elegance, and strength of conviction.

The major point Salin seeks to make in the 1923 version of the history is that a genuine science of economics only becomes possible with modernity, i.e. later in the 18th century. What is more, economics becomes truly modern only when shaped by a specific national agenda of economic growth, considered not in the abstract terms of growth for its own sake, but as an instrument of maintaining and enhancing the cohesion of the nation. Salin, one of the great experts on Friedrich List, repeated here the latter's dictum: every nation must have its own political economy. Small wonder then that Salin should place such palpable emphasis on Romantic economic thought as the opening stage of a modern discourse on work, capital, and property in Germany.

At the centre of Salin's discussion of Romantic economics was Adam Müller (1779–1829), best known to historians of German literature for

⁶ In an autobiographical article that testifies to his complicated relationship with German Romanticism, Tönnies acknowledged the formative impact of Adam Müller on his work (cf. Tönnies, "Mein Verhältnis" 103).

his friendship with Kleist, the co-editorship of *Phöbus*, and his lectures on rhetoric and aesthetics.⁷ Müller's important work in sociology and politics had been discovered by Friedrich Meinecke when the latter was researching his book *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (Cosmopolitanism and the National State) published in 1907. A few years later a vogue of some momentum was already in evidence, if one is to judge by the fact that, as Meinecke's memoirs record, at a Faculty costume party in Freiburg the historian appeared dressed and made up as Adam Müller. Carl Schmitt's interpreters and commentators might be well advised to keep in mind that *Political Romanticism* is a book that cannot be understood without the background of this vogue around Müller. In attacking Adam Müller, Schmitt had chosen a public figure of the past, whose ideas were gradually gaining the status of a common currency in the present; Schmitt's own argument thus enjoyed the added resonance that Müller's image would generate.

A key feature of Adam Müller's work in economics is his disagreement with Adam Smith on the central issue of wealth and capital. In a number of shorter polemical pieces, notably his essay "Adam Smith" (1808), Müller moved away from his early appreciation of the Scottish economist, arguing that it is not the freely circulating, mobile and portable wealth measured by money that matters most; rather, it is the possession of land and immobile property that should be considered the true measure of wealth. Not only do land and immobile property offer a better guarantee in a time of crisis; they also concentrate in themselves the invisible added value of time-honoured attachment, family links, and rootedness. The "wealth of nations" is thus made up of tangible property, preferably land and durable infrastructure, and – in the same proportion – of intangible emotional wealth that resides in the awareness of tradition, immutability, and a most valuable community spirit. Material wealth would not be upheld and would not survive without the essential support of the emotional economy of attachment, familiarity, and dedication to a piece of land consecrated by uninterrupted family possession and care. Similarly, Adam Müller distanced himself vigorously from the way Adam Smith conceived of capital. On Müller's reading, capital must be an inclusive category that takes into account not simply, or primarily, the available funds for investment (or the monetary value of the investment), but also a wide range of "forces of production" (*Produktivkräfte*). This term, later on hijacked by Marxist political economy, had, in Müller's hands, a meaning broader than that which either Smith or Marx would invest in it. The designation "forces of production" was not limited to those engaged

⁷ For an outline of Müller's life and work, see Baxa, *Adam Müllers Philosophie*.

directly in the creation of added value in the factory, or in another sector of the economy. It would extend much further to include everyone who did some work (conditioned by their rank in society, their natural abilities and acquired skills) for the good of the nation. On this charitable interpretation of “work” and “capital”, the teacher, the scholar, and the priest qualified as “forces of production” to, no doubt, even larger extent than the worker, the farmer, or the businessman, for they were responsible for producing – and reproducing – the intellectual and moral foundations of national life. A corollary of this way of reading “capital” and “wealth” was also Müller’s insistence on the parity between exchange value and use value, the latter lovingly restored to prominence by him.⁸

Until the 1940s, this powerful Romantic discourse shaped the most influential current in German economic thought, which, in today’s parlance, could be termed “institutionalism”, although its exponents preferred to call their method “historical”. From Werner Sombart all the way until Wilhelm Röpke and Walter Eucken, who signaled the first explicit break with this tradition after World War Two, the science of economics in Germany sought to explain its subject from the premises of cultural history.

A case in point is Werner Sombart’s ambitious version of the genesis of capitalism. Both Max Weber and Sombart, different as their findings were, essentially agreed that capitalism originated in a change of prevalent mental dispositions, or *Geist*, that they sought in religion. Whether in Protestantism or in Judaism – although the political implications were far from identical – Weber, and especially Sombart, remained committed to a theory of the origins of capitalism that locates its roots in religious beliefs serving as an engine of cultural change and, only through this, of economic change as well. Sombart pushed this line of enquiry further still: in work following immediately the publication of his *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (1911; English translation, 1913),⁹ he turned his attention to other possible “cradles” of capitalism: war, or more precisely the spirit of exploration, conquest, and war-waging that facilitates production and the expansion of the available markets, and luxury, the feature of early-modern European court life which stimulated consumption and, in turn, production. Particularly indicative is Sombart’s approach in *Krieg und Kapitalismus* (1913), where in the Introduction he promises to dwell

⁸ Müller’s writings on economics are most easily accessible in Müller, *Nationalökonomische Schriften*; see there especially Müller’s essays „Adam Smith“ (1808); „Vom Nationalkredit“ (1810); and „Streit zwischen Glück und Industrie“ (1809). There is a considerable body of scholarly work on Müller in German; in English, see Spann 158–170 (strongly biased in favour of Müller), and, more recently, Gray, “Economic” and Gray, *Money*.

⁹ The 1911 German original is titled *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*.

in a special chapter on the merits of the martial spirit that, embodied in war, furnishes incessant fillips for the growth of the economy. Sombart was clearly determined to distance himself from a Marxist explanation of the economy: whether through recourse to religion or to a pattern of consumption (luxury), he was adamant to defend an explanation of the origins of capitalism which was grounded in a host of *cultural* factors that would *then* mediate and induce progress in the forces and patterns of production. If an oxymoron be allowed, Sombart practiced an anti-economic economics, reviving Adam Müller's Romantic line of enquiry that scorns the validity of purely economic factors, and adapting this line to his own time to match the advances of the Historical School and the realities of pre-War Europe.

Sombart's argument comes to the fore in a most conspicuous way during the crisis of the War years. His earlier valorisation of industry and artisanship is now supplanted by praise for the bravery and courage in battle that the Germans are capable of, against the ever fluid, unsettled and unsettling mercantile spirit of the English: *Händler* and (vs.) *Helden* (*Traders and Heroes*, as the title of Sombart's 1915 book has it). Most striking in this work is that the nationalistic impulse is sustained within a framework seeking to arrive at a typology of all social and economic actors as either "traders" or "heroes":

Trader and hero: they constitute the two great opposites, the two poles, as it were, of all human orientation ... The trader approaches life with the question: what can you give me ... The hero approaches life with the question: what can I give you? He wants to give many things away, to spend himself, to make sacrifices – without a return ... The trader speaks only of "rights", the hero only of his duties. [The trader] regards the whole existence of man on earth as a sum of commercial transactions which everyone makes as favourably as possible for himself ... Economic and especially commercial activity will achieve honour and respect. Consequently, economic interest will ... gradually subordinate the other aspects of life. Once the representatives of the economy have the upper hand in the country, they will easily transfer the attitudes of their profession to all sectors of life ... until the trader's worldview and practical commercialism finally join together in an inseparable unity, as is the case in England today.¹⁰

Taking up his slightly earlier distinction between the "heroic" and "trading" peoples of Europe from *Der Bourgeois* (1913) [the Scottish there are explicitly classed as "trading people", no doubt a pointer to the theory of wealth based on free trade and enterprise expounded by Adam Smith], Sombart now generalises this division in ontological terms, while at the same time narrowing down its political relevance by singling out two nations at war.

¹⁰ Quoted here from the English translation (Stehr and Grundmann xxix).

One has to take this discussion forward by posing the question of the post-romantic nature of Sombart's stance towards capitalism. In his 1903 book *Die deutsche Volkswirtschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, Sombart, foreshadowing Heidegger's much later essay "Why do we remain in the provinces?"¹¹ and to some extent also Jünger's *Der Waldgang* (1951), indulges in painting a picture that doubles on some unmistakably Romantic motifs:

The old German culture as it was still basically maintained in the beginning of the nineteenth century had actually derived from this ideal of a forest; the murmuring brook, the rustling oak tree are synonymous with the German soul, which in those very days when our imagination travels through the German countryside created the romantic notion of the magic *blaue Blume* ("blue flower"). The sensitive, the fragile, the feelings of dread, the deep sentimental disposition and whatever else differentiates the Germans from all other nations: Its primary cause lies in the forest, in the untended wild grown forest, where the birds sang in the bushes during springtime, where fog moved across clearings in the fall. But also the material culture of the Nordic countries is rooted in the forest before iron and other inorganic matter created a new culture (Sombart 195–196).

Undoubtedly, this passage does not strike one as exhibiting a sense of distance from the Romantic features that it evokes. This almost seamless identification was the outcome rather than the start of a long process of trying very hard to implant the virtues of community life in the heart of advanced industrial society. Earlier in his career, Sombart had hoped that the proletariat could over time embody the features of true community life amidst the well-entrenched capitalist social order. But the proletariat had turned out to be a disappointment; as Sombart concluded in his eponymous book, "Like all city people, the proletarian distinguishes himself from the earthbound, rooted child of the land through the predominance of the understanding over the feeling and instinctual faculties."¹² Unable to transcend the opposition between country and city, the proletarian is "remote from nature and fantasy, rather he is abstract, rational and utilitarian" (*ibid.*). The loss of hope in the proletariat as the repository of a "natural" life-style was a loss of hope in the chance to rebuild community life within the framework of advanced capitalist society, without turning the clock of history back to rural culture. With this hope vanished, Sombart left the discourse of post-romanticism and

¹¹ For a parallel between Sombart and Heidegger, see also Grundmann and Stehr, "Why" 271–273.

¹² Sombart, *Das Proletariat* (1906), quoted from the English translation (Stehr and Grundmann xvi).

adopted the nostalgic posture that we can discern in his book on German economy in the nineteenth century.

What Sombart seems to have given up early in the twentieth century, and certainly by 1906 when his damning *Das Proletariat* was published, was a prospect kept alive by a range of thinkers in the 1920s in Germany and Austria. It seems important to stress that restoring the primacy of the community and building the very foundations of communal cohesion into the mechanism of capitalist production was a major concern for thinkers on the Right (usually associated with Catholic ideas of social justice: the first German philosopher to address directly the plight of the proletariat, as early as the 1820s, was after all Franz von Baader, not Marx). Othmar Spann, a professor at the University of Vienna and a zealous propagator of Adam Müller's legacy, was the most prominent economist and sociologist arguing in favour of a society based on professional guilds supervised by the state. But community was – equally – a valuable model for thinkers on the Left. Ferdinand Tönnies, who had borrowed from Adam Müller and Burke in his *Community and Society* (1887),¹³ loomed large once again in the 1920s and served as an example for these Left-leaning communitarians. In a little book on the question of property (1925), Tönnies defended co-operative property over the private possession of the means of production, thus lending economic substance to his earlier dream of extending the life of the community into the age of society, i.e. the age of capitalist modernity. The co-operative, a topic of signal importance in Germany, but also in Soviet Russia, where Alexander Chayanov was chastised for suggesting small-scale independent cooperative farms as the backbone for a successful Soviet agriculture, exemplified the ideal state of identity between the owner and the worker, where exploitation is abolished by virtue of the vested personal interest and attachment of the owner-worker. Thus both Marx's idea of a radical transformation of society through the abolition of class and Sombart's idea of a "German Socialism" (*Deutscher Sozialismus*), an altogether different project, where the state was summoned to play a crucial regulatory role, were both supplanted by the idea of a "Romantic Socialism". In a book of the same title published in 1921 by the Drei Masken Verlag (which was the publisher associated with the Adam Müller renaissance in the early 1920s), Sigmund Rubinstein, an Austrian-Jewish journalist of social-democratic persuasion, rejected both the Marxist spectre of revolution and Sombart's license for state control and interference in the well-fare provision. Romanticism, Rubinstein claimed, has been, right from the start, a source for socialist thinking and action. The so-

¹³ For a detailed account of the significance of Müller and Burke and their presence in Tönnies' book, see Tihanov, "Community and Society".

cial ideas of Romanticism and the workers' movement would have found each other, were it not for the state, which kept coming in-between. The extension of community life into advanced capitalism is indeed possible, Rubinstein asserts, but only on the basis of self-governed bodies, such as the co-operatives, where the cold redistributive justice of the state is abandoned in favour of the warmth of a more primeval and personal solidarity. For Rubinstein, the co-operatives had every advantage of a true grass roots occurrence: they had been built from below, without a dictate from the state, and were thus able to absorb and negotiate whatever differences there might have been present in the social background of the membership. The proposition that co-operatives should function as the cornerstone of a reformist "Romantic Socialism" is an unmistakable example of the workings of the post-romantic syndrome: this proposition recognises the fact that capitalism is there to stay, it does not wish to go back to a pre-modern social regime, and yet it also wishes to sublimate the worthwhile project of community building in the new conditions by using the means that the new times have made available.

In the concluding part of this article, one must draw attention to a very different approach to the Romantic, exemplified by Ernst Jünger's *The Worker* (*Der Arbeiter*), published in 1932. Jünger occupies a unique position in the post-romantic discursive formation. In his hierarchy of values and attitudes shaping the new figure (*Gestalt*) of the Worker, the Romantic holds a low and rather transitory place. Jünger's blueprint for the future dramatises a clash between the Worker and the Bürger. Unlike the former, whose *Gestalt* is not anchored chronologically, the latter is a synonym for the blind alley that high capitalism had proved to be. The Worker becomes truly possible when the human condition opens itself to and mobilises the Elemental (*das Elementare*),¹⁴ a mode of being that asserts itself in the dangerous and the incalculable.

Jünger's book opens with a classic contrast between the bourgeois and the warier, referring, no doubt, to Sombart's antagonistic couple of the trader and the hero, as Kracauer noted in an astute early review (cf. Kracauer 118). The bourgeois lives by the contract (*Vertrag*), he strives to build for himself a world which cannot be touched by the uncertain and the dangerous. The Romantic is the *historical* product of the Elemental receding ever deeper into the background under the pressure of this ethos of calculation, predictability, and contractual certainty. As the Elemental gets pushed back further and further, the gaping space is occupied by the

¹⁴ Jünger sometimes also uses „das Elementarische“; both „elementar“ and „elementarisch“ can also be rendered as “fundamental”, but that would fail to convey the “nature-like” character of the elemental.

Romantic, this rather imperfect but solely imaginable habitus of self-distanciation from bourgeois mentality. The Romantic is thus a temporary gesture of reclaiming the Elemental in a world that has not yet seen the beneficial rise and domination of the (metaphysical) Worker. Because the Romantic functions only in a reactive mode, by trying to fight the poverty of living by the contract, its space (*der romantische Raum*) has no centre and is never actually present; the Romantic space, Jünger avers in section 14 of the book, is available only as a projection.¹⁵ This lack of centre reminds one very strongly of Carl Schmitt's charge (in his *Political Romanticism*) that the Romantic is vacant and hollow. Yet Schmitt is a principled enemy of the Romantic for its failure of political decision-making. Unlike him, Jünger praises the Romantic for providing a make-shift shelter for those fleeing or resisting the dominant ethos of bourgeois modernity. At the same time, Jünger clearly insists that the Romantic will become redundant, as soon as the new *Gestalt* of the Worker succeeds in enthroning the Elemental.

Ernst Jünger, then, represents a third position in the range of attitudes in the Weimar Republic to work and its social value. His is an intentionally and emphatically post-romantic attitude, in that it seeks to transcend the historically-limited possibilities offered and played out in the Romantic; at the same time, it conforms with the broader notion of an anti-economic economy, where work is by far not simply the value-generating exertion of the mind and the body, but a porous domain which incorporates any act of living, so long as it is a living in the mode of productive uncertainty. Ironically, when it came to the specific economic foundations of the heroically uncertain life of the Worker, Jünger found them in the planned economy (*planmäßige Wirtschaft*) – a rehearsal for a totalitarian social and economic order and the exact opposite to Jünger's proclaimed ideal of danger and charitable uncertainty. In Jünger's case, this infatuation with the planned economy was influenced very demonstrably by the Soviet example. In an indicative meeting of Left and Right, both Jünger and Georg Lukács frequented in the early 1930s, in Berlin, the meetings of the society for the study of the Soviet planned economy.¹⁶

¹⁵ Jünger 57 („Dem romantischen Raume ist ein eigenes Zentrum nicht gegeben; er besteht lediglich in der Projektion“).

¹⁶ In the early 1930s Jünger participated in the work of *Arplan* (Arbeitsgemeinschaft zum Studium der sowjet-russischen Planwirtschaft) in Berlin; Georg Lukács was also amongst those attending the meetings (cf. Lange and Dmitriev 200).

I have attempted in this paper to map out the playfield and the structural options available within the post-romantic discursive formation during the Weimar Republic and in interwar Austria, with reference to economic thought. My discussion of work, wealth, capital and property traversed a complex political landscape, paying attention to both restorative and reformist projects and finding the post-romantic syndrome reproduced with equal force in the folds of either. Understanding and revealing this capacity to mobilise diverse social and political energies seems to be one of the keys to beginning to comprehend the longevity of Romantic ideology in its post-romantic discursive permutations.

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Postromantični sindrom: refleksije dela, bogastva in kapitala od Adama Müllerja do Ernsta Jüngerja

Ključne besede: zgodovina diskurzivnih formacij / romantika / postromantika / politična ekonomija / socialna filozofija / skupnost in družba / nemški kulturni prostor / Müller, Adam / Sombart, Werner / Jünger, Ernst

Članek raziskuje polje in strukturalne različice znotraj postromantične diskurzivne formacije v Weimarski republiki in Avstriji med obema vojnama z navezavo na ekonomsko misel. Razprava o delu, bogastvu, kapitalu in lastnini prečka kompleksno politično pokrajino, ob čemer namenja pozornost tako obnovitvenim kot reformnim projektom in pri obojih odkriva reprodukcijo postromantičnega sindroma enake moči. Članek sledi pomenu ekonomske misli Adama Müllerja v poznejših poskusih ponovne oživitve romantične ekonomije. Preučene so tudi ključne opozicije, kakršna je tista med trgovci in junaki, kakršno je predlagal Werner Sombart in kakršna odmeva v delu Ernsta Jüngerja. Članek razkriva in analizira zmožnost postromantične ekonomske misli, da mobilizira raznolike socialne in politične energije od konzervatizma prek socialne demokracije do totalitarnega levega projekta državno planirane ekonomije. Zmožnost, da neguje in aktivira včasih diametralno nasprotno politične in socialne agende se kaže kot ključ za začetno razumevanje dolgoživosti romantične ideologije v svojih postromantičnih diskurzivnih permutacijah.