

The History of the XXth Century in a Nutshell... or in a Song: From Paul Valéry and the German Song "Das gibt's nur einmal" (It Just Happens Once) to Hayao Miyazaki's Animated Film "The Wind Rises"

François  
Genton



The song is sung by an antihitlerian emigrant named Castorp in a Japanese spa resort in the Nagano prefecture.

The main character, an aircraft designer, Jiro Horikoshi and his fiancée Naoko's father chime in...

Then they speak about Jiro Horikoshi's love for Naoko...

## Germany – France – Japan 1920-2013: The History of the XXth Century in a nutshell... more exactly: in a song

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1. 1920 Paul Valéry *Le cimetière marin* (*The Graveyard by the Sea*) : « Le vent se lève, il faut tenter de vivre »  
(« The wind rises, we must try to live »)
2. 1924 Thomas Mann *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*)
3. 1931 « Das gibt's nur einmal » - « Just once for all time »  
(Erik Charell's film *Der Kongress tanzt* 1931; *Congress Dances*) – Lyrics: Robert Gilbert – Music: Werner Richard Heymann
4. 1936-1937 風立ちぬ, Hori Tatsuo's (堀辰雄) Novel *Kaze tachinu* – *The Wind Rises* (Valéry – Thomas Mann)
5. 2013 Hayao Miyazaki's (宮崎駿) animated film *The Wind Rises* (風立ちぬ *Kaze tachinu*)

# « Das gibt's nur einmal » - « Just once for all Time » - « Serait-ce un rêve? »... 1931

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1. The original German Song in Erik Charell's Film « Congress Dances » (1931) – Music: Werner Richard Heymann – Lyrics: Robert Gilbert
2. Franz Antel's remake of « Congress dances » (1955) and the German Festival of Ichikawa (2012)
3. The song in Hayao Miyazaki's Movie *The Wind Rises* (2013)
4. The 5 meaning(s) of the song...



## « Das gibt's nur einmal » ... 1931

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### Strophen

Träum ich? Wach ich?  
Wein ich? Lach ich?  
Heut weiß ich nicht, was ich tu.  
Wo ich gehe, wo ich stehe,  
Lachen die Menschen mir zu.  
Heut werden alle Märchen  
wahr.  
Heut wird mir alles klar.

Liebe Sonne,  
Welt voll Wonne,  
Heut' bist Du schön wie noch  
nie.  
All' die lieben Vöglein üben  
Selig die Glücksmelodie.  
Heut' kommt das Glück von  
Haus zu Haus.  
Komm, such Dir etwas aus!

### Verses

Am I dreaming? Am I awake?  
Am I crying? Am I laughing?  
Today I don't know what I'm doing.  
Wherever I go, wherever I stay,  
People give me a friendly laugh.  
Today all fairy tales come true.  
  
Today I understand everything.  
  
Dear Sun,  
Happy World,  
Today you're more beautiful than ever.  
  
All lovely birdies sing  
The melody of happiness.  
Today happiness goes from home to  
home.  
Come, make your choice!

# « Das gibt's nur einmal » ... 1931

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## Refrain :

Das gibt's nur einmal.  
 Das kommt nicht wieder,  
 Das ist zu schön, um wahr zu  
 sein.  
 So wie ein Wunder fällt auf uns  
 nieder  
 Vom Paradies ein gold'ner  
 Schein.  
 Das gibt's nur einmal,  
 Das kommt nicht wieder,  
 Das ist vielleicht nur Träumerei.  
 Das kann das Leben nur einmal  
 geben,  
 Vielleicht ist's morgen  
 schon vorbei.  
 Das kann das Leben  
 nur einmal geben,  
 Denn jeder Frühling  
 hat nur einen Mai....

## Chorus :

It only happens once.  
 It won't happen again,  
 It's too beautiful to be true.  
 A miracle falls upon us  
 A golden shine from Paradise.  
 It only happens once.  
 It won't happen again,  
 Maybe it's just a dream.  
 Life can just offer it once  
 Maybe tomorrow it will be over.  
 Life can just offer it once  
 Tomorrow it will be over.  
 For every springtime  
 Does just have one month of May.

## « Das gibt's nur einmal » ... 1931

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Am I dreaming? Am I awake?  
Am I crying? Am I laughing?  
Today I don't know what I'm  
doing.  
Wherever I go, wherever I stay,  
People give me a friendly laugh.  
Today all fairy tales come true.  
Today I understand everything.

Dear Sun, Happy World,  
Today you're more beautiful  
than ever.  
All lovely birdies sing  
The melody of happiness.  
Today happiness goes from  
home to home.  
Come, make your choice!

**Chorus :**  
It only happens once.  
It won't happen again,  
It's too beautiful to be true.  
A miracle  
A golden shine from Paradise.  
It only happens once.  
It won't happen again,  
Maybe it's just a dream.  
Life can just offer it once  
Maybe tomorrow it will be over.  
Life can just offer it once  
Tomorrow it will be over.  
For every springtime  
Does just have one month of May.

# The moral and political meaning (1)... 1931

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Congress of Vienna in 1815: Christl, a charming girl, has spent a nice evening in a Viennese « Singing pub » with Tzar Alexander I. The day after, the Tzar sends a Russian soldier to bring her to a villa he has rented to spend pleasant moments with Christl...

An important detail – which is often overlooked: The girl is not smart... the movie suggests it repeatedly quite clearly. Here it compares the song's lyrics with the honk of geese...

## The moral meaning – The political meaning (2)

- The moral meaning: the character acts unworthily... and is ready to become the Tsar's mistress... to prostitute her body, her dignity and her freedom...

- The political meaning

The tsar represents a very authoritarian regime... and doesn't have a real consideration for the glove vendor from Vienna. He will in fact never have the time to spend the planned « pleasant moments »... and sends a Doppelgänger to the girl...

The song reflects a Jewish and liberal view of the world: against the Restoration, for the principles of the French Revolution (civil Equality, End of discrimination, People's Sovereignty, Freedom of the Press, of Speech...). Robert Liebmann, one of the writers, was murdered in Auschwitz, the composer, the producer, the director, the song writer were German Jews...



# The touristic meaning(s)

## The touristic meanings...

- 2012 [The Bavarian Way of Life](#) (leather trousers, dirndl dress... beer, noisy music...)...
- 1955 [Vienna is so beautiful](#)... Johanna Maatz in *Der Kongress tanzt* (Dir. Franz Antel, 1955)

# The melancholic contrastive meaning

Hayao Miyazaki's Movie *The Wind Rises* (2013)

The fictionalized biography of Jiro Horikoshi, a designer of fighter aircrafts during WW II, who admired the Italian aeronautical engineer Gianni Caproni.

The song is sung by an antihitlerian emigrant named Castorp in a Japanese spa resort. Castorp is the main character in Thomas Mann's Novel *The Magic Mountain* (1924) about a... sanatorium in the Swiss Alps (Davos) as symbol of « ill » world on the eve of WWI... The main character Jiro Horikoshi and his fiancée Naoko's father chime in...

Protest against the dictatorship (Jiro has witnessed Nazis persecuting Jews in Germany) + quotation of Thomas Mann's Novel *The Magic Mountain*... Karuizawa (District of Nagano...) Mountains... Tuberculosis (TB)... And « doomed » Happiness Jiro and his TB-ill fiancée Naoko Satomi...



# The geo-political meaning

The Congress of Vienna divided the European Continent in 5 parts:

- 4 Empires (Russia, Austria) and Prussia, the future German Empire whilst the United Kingdom « ruled the seas » and conquered a World Empire...
- The other countries were isolated, especially France because it had embodied the « new ideas »...

In 1931 mocking the Congress of Vienna meant a commitment for the reshaping of Europe after WWI and the dismantling of the old Empires... Free democratic countries that cooperate for the benefit of all citizens.

This Europe failed as we know (Lenin, Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Franco and many others... )...

but since 1989 Europe has returned and nobody would seriously wish to have the old Empires back...

## A Global Interpretation

The song implies a critical distancing from the authoritarian regimes in the 1930s

Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* and Castorp and Naoko, Jiro's TB-ill wife, who dies in 1945, mean the entanglement of public and private « icing » of societies in the years of dictatorships and wars...

An opener and freer world will come, the world Castorp, Naoko, her father and Jiro were longing for in the 1930s... Our world?