

Michael Ende and the End of the Money-Go-Round

Who was Michael Ende?

🕒 Born in 1929, the son of the surrealist painter Edgar Ende.

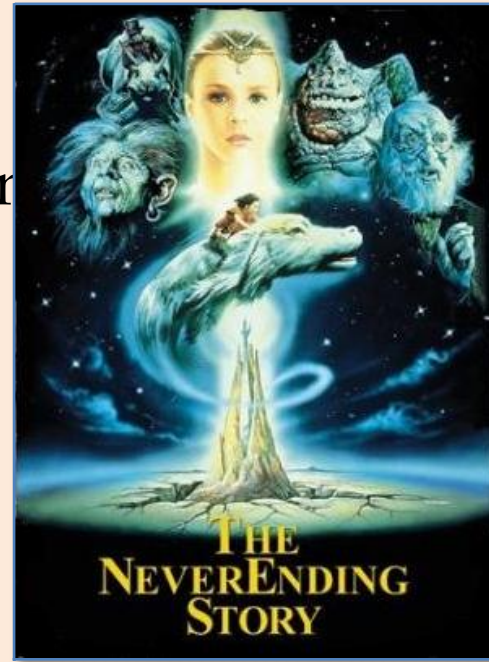
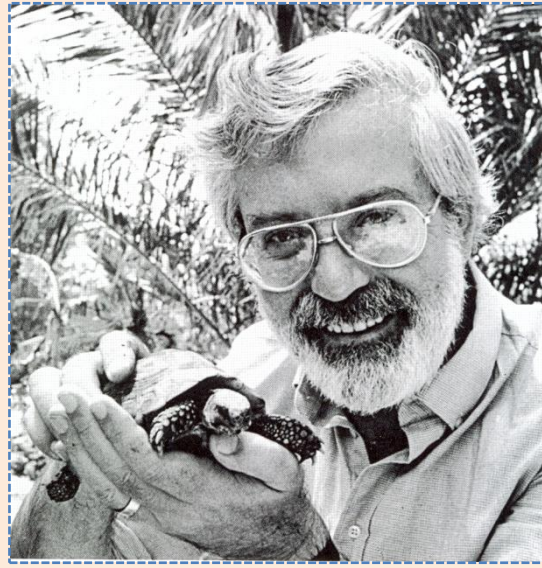
🕒 First published in 1960 with *Jim Knopf und Lukas der Lokomotivführer*. (Jim Button)

🕒 Best known as the author of *Die unendliche Geschichte* (*The Neverending Story*), which was filmed in 1984

🕒 He wrote novels, picture books, plays, operas, essays and poetry.

🕒 He was invited to Japan numerous times to give interviews and to create television specials about his economic system.

🕒 Ende died in 1995.



Selected Bibliography

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~ All of the translations on this poster are my own. ~

Thesis: Michael Ende integrated his economic philosophy into his fiction, where he criticizes the capitalist drive for profit, symbolized as an out-of-control carousel, the Money-Go-Round.

How is Ende's economic philosophy represented in his literary works?

In the top two examples Ende criticizes greed and the emphasis placed on increasing profit margins. Ende describes Tomorrow-Land, the literary embodiment of his ideal utopia, in the third example. These themes can also be found repeated in other works listed in the bibliography.

They [CEO's, economists, etc.] sit in a carousel, each chasing behind the other, and this carousel turns faster and faster. That is really the essence of a competition-based economy. None of them can get off of the carousel any more – even if they want to. They hunt each other in a circle, driven by their anxiety over the market, by their fear of the renowned “noble law” of supply and demand...

The carousel, which has become wild, turns itself in circles and no one has the power to stop it anymore. The people sitting on it know, or at least they suspect, that at some point the whole thing is going to have to fly apart, but they don't know what they can do – or there is nothing more that they can do. They close their eyes. (*Phantasie/Kultur/Politik*, p. 26)

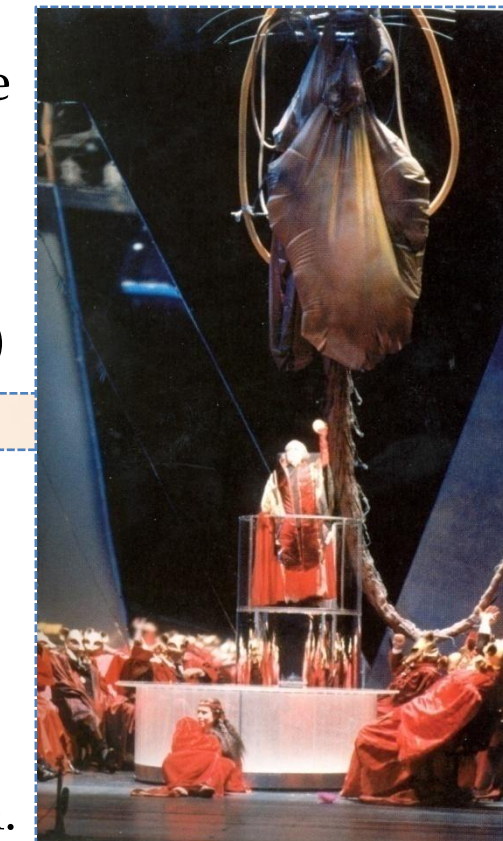
(A description of Tomorrow-Land:)

There the people are free in their minds To create whatever their innermost self wishes. They submit themselves to their self-given law. The goods of the earth are shared brotherly: They work together, helping by dividing tasks. Each is an artist in his or her own fashion. Purposeless games and play are holy to them because they open up freedom to the people. (*Das Gauklermärchen*, p. 39)

(In this surrealist scene, piles of money continue to grow in a cathedral as a bomb ticks down and people run around selling stocks. The preacher calls out:)

"Money is truth, the One Truth. All must believe in it! And may your belief be steadfast and blind! It is your belief that makes it what it is! Since even Truth [Wahre] is a Good [Ware] and follows the eternal law of supply and demand. That is why our God is a jealous God and you shall have no other Gods before Him! And yet He has given Himself into our hands and has made Himself into a good, so that we can own him and receive his blessings... Money is capable of everything! [...] It connects people together through giving and taking. It can transform itself into everything - spirit into matter and matter into spirit. It makes stones into bread and creates value out of nothing... It is the form God takes among us – it is God!" (*Der Spiegel im Spiegel*, p. 41)

In *Der Rattenfänger* (right) Hameln's wealthy receive money from a rat god, who excretes with each coin a shadow rat, which kills one more thing in Hameln town.



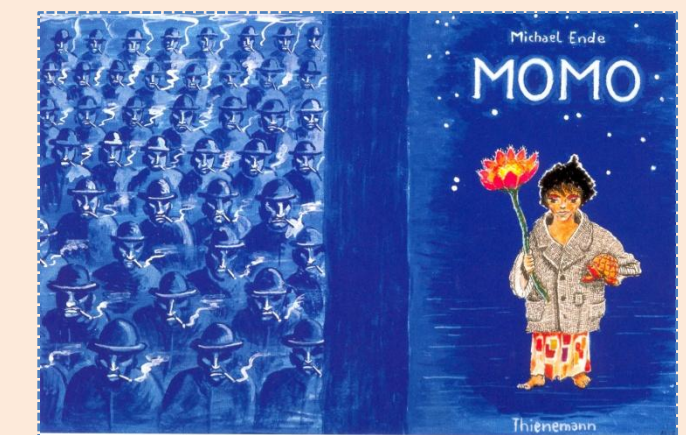
What was Ende's Economic Philosophy?

Ende's wished for society to...

- 🕒 Move away from a system based on profit, greed and overconsumption.
- 🕒 Keep a positive utopia in mind (a goal to work towards to benefit future generations).

Ende's own ideal utopia called for a society based on freedom, equality and brotherhood:

- 🕒 **Freedom = The Individual**
The individual should be able to develop himself or herself with education, culture, religion, etc. as he or she desires.
- 🕒 **Equality = The State**
The state guarantees equality before the law.
- 🕒 **Brotherhood = The Economy**
Instead of corporations, there should be productive associations working for the needs of people, rather than for stocks or profit margins. Unlike with Marx, the economy is completely separate from the state.



My Project's Future

I plan to explore this topic further in my dissertation, conducting more research at the Michael-Ende-Museum at the International Children's Library in Munich, the Marbach Archives, and, after improving my Japanese ability, at the Kurohime Fairy Tale Museum in Nagano, Japan. I want to construct a clear overview of Ende's economic philosophy, combining examples from his literary works with the real-world examples he discusses in his Japanese interviews and television specials. I also want to look at the thinkers who influenced him, such as Wilhelm von Humboldt and Rudolf Steiner.