Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature

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Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature

By

Dagmar C.G. Lorenz

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For Mohsin Abdou

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Introduction

Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature presents readings of texts that establish positive Nazi stereotypes in nationalist and National Socialist texts in juxtaposition to Nazi constructs in exemplary antifascist works in which these stereotypes are modified and repurposed to express opposition. The function of Nazi characters in literature and propaganda is explored in the context of the struggle for discursive dominance in Germany and Austria from the end of the German Empire to the collapse of the Third Reich. From the outset, the ideological contests were unequal. Nationalists and National Socialists deployed the rhetoric of propaganda and strategies of genre-crossing to appeal to the largest possible readership, while Nazi opponents, including authors whose stated intent was to reach out to the masses, mostly adhered to the aesthetics of high culture. Anti-Nazi literature was more likely to appeal to educated readers, which limited the reception of these often modernist and experimental works. In addition, the views of authors who opposed Nazi tenets were generally minority views held by intellectual Marxist, feminist, and Jewish writers. Their works were of limited interest to the predominantly conservative mainstream readership in Germany and Austria.

Nazi authors and their detractors both concretized their positions through the use of model characters that personified their ideological messages. While *Rassenkunde* (racial science) informed the typology in National Socialist manifestos, Nazi opponents responded with countermodels to discredit the Nazi ideal of a racialized German *Volk* (nation). Both Nazi and antifascist writers deployed stock characters to communicate their ideological codes. Negatively or positively connoted Nazi stereotypes became ensconced in the collective imaginary and were used in texts of different genres and orientations. Nazi writing positioned the respective stock characters as heroes, and antifascist literature represented them as villains and criminals. While Nazi figures were initially suppressed after 1945, they eventually reemerged and were repurposed for use in the postwar literary market.

In contrast to the historical Nazi movement and its representatives, Nazi characters as ideological signifiers have received little scholarly attention. Perhaps because propagandists and more literary authors strategically authenticated stock Nazi characters by references to actual people and events, the lines between fiction and non-fiction in the Nazi era often seem blurred, and scholars, seeking factuality, ignored the intertextual nexus that had produced these fictional characters. Literary versions of Nazis and the Third Reich reflect the authors' respective visions, not reality. Historical studies are based on

research, archival work, and documents including memoirs and diaries.[1] In non-fiction, the "truth" is essential. In contrast, fiction and propaganda map desires and aspirations. Despite references to actual events and people, their appeal is to the imagination. The political imagery of the Weimar Republic and the First Republic of Austria produced prototypes for Nazi characters as ideological markers that were also used in literature.

Nazi authors aligned their writings with trends in ethnography, nationalist propaganda, and racial theory to frame their notions of race and nation. According to *Rassenkunde*, the quintessentially German traits were those of the "Nordic" or "Aryan" race, which Nazi ideologues declared the superior human race. From their racial model they concocted their vision of a homogeneous nation and proposed that Germany's racial composition needed improvement.[2] Nazi opponents rejected the concept of a racial state and the "Nordic" ideal. Still, in their attempts to deflate racial paradigms, they referenced the core elements of these paradigms and reproduced them in their own critical responses.

Nazi authors infused their writings with seemingly factual information, including specific dates and places, to create an air of authenticity. They embedded their messages in a blend of propaganda and personalized case studies to make them palatable. Their message of German superiority resonated with the pre-World War I vision of a triumphant German Empire and mobilized energy to restore the nation to its alleged former glory. Such simple thoughts were expounded in a variety of genres to suggest an abundance of ideas. The prospect of greatness and entitlement particularly deluded the demoralized German middle class, who lived in fear of economic and social displacement. Questionable theories such as racial science and racial hygiene coagulated with the Nazi program, which pronounced that a leadership role in global affairs was a German birthright. Echoing nineteenth-century Germanophilia, Nazi radicalism also fed into expansionist ambitions. After World War I, reactionary politicians and officers of the former imperial military nurtured nostalgic dreams of colonies and expansionism. Conservatives resented the postwar republics and democratic structures that empowered women and the working class. National Socialists benefitted from these attitudes and entrenched racist and anti-Semitic images, and the notion of Aryan world domination as a divine right. The founders of the Nazi party had esoteric associations and infused the new movement with spiritualist trends, as indicated by the frequent references to God and providence in Nazi speeches.[3]

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1 Philippe Lejeune (*On Diary,* 215) wrote: "The object of an autobiographical text is the truth of the past, and its contract implies both the possibility and the legitimacy of verification."

2 Harten, Neirich, and Schwerendt, *Rassenhygiene,* 12–3.

3 Kurlander, "Supernatural Sciences," 141; Hakl, *Unknown Sources*.

German readers were accustomed to physical descriptions in literature from Realist and Naturalist writers. Concreteness in representation served to specify a literary character's personal qualities. Readers were also familiar with racial clichés. The generally one-dimensional Nazi characters lacked psychological depth and could be adapted to different contexts. Their contextualization in cultural or social terms was merely perfunctory, since these figures functioned as templates, like the stock characters of antique drama. The bold, assertive, blond, and blue- or grey-eyed hero, complemented by his submissive yet robust blond female counterpart, was paradgimatic of Nazi masculinity and the German *Volk*. These figures remained relatively undifferentiated since racial theory linked a Germanic appearance with a specific psychological profile. Anti-Nazi authors attributed negative, even monstrous, qualities to similarly configured characters and marked them as adherents of an inhumane ideology that threatened the civilized world.

This book first explores exemplary texts that contributed to the emergent Nazi ideal at the end of the First World War, and then traces Nazi characters in works of the interwar period and the Third Reich. Finally, it explores the "afterlife" of Nazi figures in autobiographical and literary texts after 1945. The conclusion confirms that Nazi stereotypes established in the 1920s were perpetuated in the cultural imaginary after the Second World War. The title *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* points to the adaptability of Nazi characters and the fact that their precise role was predicated upon the trajectory of the texts in which they appeared.

Nazi characters in literature absorbed elements of the contentious environment in which they originated and developed an elusive quality that fascinates authors and readers alike. In certain scenarios, these characters can be identified directly or by their attributes, while in other scenarios their identity only becomes clear after a discovery process. While Nazi-friendly texts tend to identify their heroes immediately, Nazi figures as presented by the opposition emerge from the shadows only when it is safe to do so. In the latter case, readers are encouraged to assume the role of detective.

In the interwar period, Nazi stereotypes proliferated and authors could reproduce them without paying much attention to real people or political details. The often unduly optimistic antifascist narratives exemplify the failure to recognize the dangerous potential of the Nazi movement. Their Nazi figures were detached from reality, as projection took precedence over realism. Representations that glamorized or, alternatively, demonized Nazi politicians prevented them from being perceived accurately.

After the Second World War, representations of Nazi characters initially showed little change. However, the political circumstances and the revelations regarding Nazi crimes ruled out further glamorization of Nazi figures. Some

publications included obliquely revisionist images of Nazi soldiers and victims of Allied bombing without mentioning victims of National Socialism. These often ambiguous depictions of Nazi figures encouraged different readings, including nostalgic interpretations that were favorable to the defeated regime. While very few authors, in exceptional circumstances, continued to proclaim their allegiance to National Socialism, many others, through a rather common avoidance of Nazi characters, created a discursive vacuum in their work that left readers to fill in the blanks. In postwar literature, Nazi protagonists were associated with viewpoints ranging from condemnation to distancing and cautious vindication. The established stock characters retained their versatility and were used in both exculpatory narratives and Socialist antifascist literature. Later, they appeared in social critical works of the Sixties Generation. In the postwar era, Nazi figures in memoir literature and fiction illustrate different stragegies for coping with the past. The recasting of Nazi characters eventually produced a tenuous consensus in postwar literature.

Constructing "the German" in racial terms had been common practice in colonial literature.[4] In Nazi writing, the racial model was the normative paradigm, to which anti-Nazi literature assigned negative connotations under terms such as "Nazi," "fascist," "nationalist," and "populist" (*völkisch*). National Socialist writing itself did not use the term "Nazi," but rather used "*deutsch*" (German) to identify German nationals according to their standards. Early terminological instabilities in Nazi writing were later eliminated. In antifascist texts, the derogatory terms "Nazi" and "fascist" became accepted as an indication of the author's opposition to the movement. *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* traces evolutionary patterns pertaining to Nazi characters within these contrasting ideological codes.

Gender plays an important role in this study. Nazi texts constructed female characters as unequal but complementary to the heroic males. Oppositional writing cast them as companions to monstrous Nazi males or as their naïve followers who die a tragic death. However, a few female characters have a change of heart. The Nazi ideal of femininity included both the blond, athletic *Mädel* (girl) and the mother and nurturer. These configurations were culturally palatable as they required minimal adjustment to conservative gender-role expectations. Antifascist writing also presented female characters, especially female Nazis, as lacking in autonomy and agency. The constructs of female

4 Adjai A. Paulin Oloukpone-Yinnon (*Unter deutschen Palmen*) and Joachim Warmbold (*Ein Stückchen neudeutsche Erd'*) examine issues of racist thinking such as white superiority and "miscegenation," which refers to relationships between German colonizers and African women, in German colonial literature.

characters in both pro- and anti-Nazi writing reiterated and politicized patriarchal viewpoints. In Nazi texts, the function of females is to validate the heroic Nazi male in his leadership role. In antifascist writing, female characters, including those that initially sympathize with the Nazis, often symbolize common sense. Either intuitively or for romantic reasons, such characters become disaffected with the Nazi movement and project an eventual antifascist victory, since their decisions are taken as a shift in the mindset of the population. Lower-middle-class females are the exception in this literary spectrum. In accordance with antifascist theory, the petty bourgoisie represents the Nazi mainstay, under the assumption that women of that stratum stood much to gain from their Nazi affiliations and thus opportunistically attached themselves to male Nazis.

Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature also explores postwar works, when Nazi characters were generally suppressed, as well as later works, where these figures reappear in new guises that link the pre- and postwar eras. As signifiers, Nazi characters proved to be resilient. They were included in stories about an envisioned future Germany, as reminders of wartime losses, or to express hope for reforms that could include the rehabilitation of former Nazis. The readings presented here are in chronological order to trace the application of Nazi characters over time, and span the critical decades from their emergence to their suppression and devaluation after 1945.

The discrepancy between historical facts and the Nazi narrative was immediately obvious to antifascists, who cited the eccentric pronouncements of Hitler and his followers in an attempt to discredit the populist movement. Clearly, the Nazis did not live up to their ambitions, and it was easy for their critics to unmask their populist outreach and elitist ambitions as mere demagoguery. Antifascists dismissed as mere fantasy the Aryan supremacist doctrine, which conflated the discourse on German identity with racial theory and the Nazi cosmovision. Nazi followers, on the other hand, seemed oblivious to the disparity between the movement's claims and empirical reality. In their literary responses, liberal and Marxist authors such as Joseph Roth, Lion Feuchtwanger, Ferdinand Bruckner, and Bertolt Brecht, and the satirists Hans Reimann and Hugo Bettauer tried to expose the incongruence of Nazi propaganda and their political practices. The studies of Marxist social theorist Franz Neumann and psychoanalysts Wilhelm Reich and Erich Fromm confirmed the assumptions of Leftist literary authors, but their works did not appear until the 1930s, which was too late to have an effect within Germany. After Hitler's rise to power, the Institute for Social Research, later known as the Frankfurt School, whose representatives included Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Löwenthal, Friedrich Pollock, and Erich Fromm, transferred to

New York's Columbia University. Through publications in German and English, these authors reached out to the American public with the objective to expose the Nazi ideology. They proposed rational explanations for Hitler's mass appeal and depicted the Nazi regime as a danger to the free world. Their explanations for Hitler's rise to power included Germany's repressive social structures, the autoritarian Wilhelminian educational system, the collective trauma of the First World War, economic crises beleaguering the interwar republics, and crowd phenomena.[5] Marxist theorist Wilhelm Reich in *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* (*The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, 1933) and Horkheimer and Adorno in the later *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1947) highlighted the loss of authentic experiences under capitalism which they believed clouded the judgment of German citizens.[6]

None of these analyses offers a definitive explanation for the apparent self-deception of the German public that embraced a political program that did not serve their interest and a national typology that was far removed from the appearance of the general population. A similar lack of realism prevailed among antifascists who, even after Hitler's rise to power, denied the popular appeal of National Socialism despite evidence to the contrary, and who dismissed Nazi ideology as an anachronism. Even in hindsight, former supporters of the Third Reich rarely acknowledged the discrepancy between Nazi claims and historical facts. Among the texts analyzed here, the memoir of former Auschwitz Commandant Rudolf Höß is an extreme example of the self-serving illusions that persisted even after Germany's unconditional surrender.[7] Works of war veterans often included a revised version of the German military hero, reconfigured as the tragic figure of the defeated soldier: Wolfgang Borchert's returning soldier Beckmann is discussed as an early example. Postwar writing often positioned German veterans as victims without paying attention to Jewish or political victims of Nazism. War fiction of the 1950s generally features members of the Nazi military as heroic survivors and men of integrity. Maggie Sargeant observes that Heinz G. Konsalik's narrators assumed the perspective of German soldiers and members of the SS, implying that no blame could be attributed to them.[8] These openly exculpatory tendencies exceed the apologetic gestures in high-culture literature in East and West Germany, exemplified here by works of Borchert and Heinrich Böll. In examining continuities between Nazi German and postwar discourses, Clifford Geertz's semiotic concept of culture as a

5 Canetti, *Masse und Macht*.

6 Reich, *Massenpsychologie;* Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik*.

7 Höß, *Auschwitz*, 133–202.

8 Sargeant, *Kitsch & Kunst*, 218.

man-made "web of significance" applies to the literary Nazi characters before and after 1945, as well as to their function as ideological modules.[9]

The acquiescence of German citizens to the inconsistencies of Nazi ideology and Hitler's unrealistic promises remains a conundrum. The discussions presented should contribute to the scholarship on the German mentality in the interwar period and the Nazi era by problematizing the rift between the National Socialist and antifascist imaginary. The myth-making aspects of propaganda and literature become obvious: the utopian Germans in Nazi texts and the dystopian Nazi figures in antifascist literature result from the attribution of vastly different qualities to an almost identical stereotype.

In antifascist writing, the figure of the Aryan male as an iconic representation of Germanness, according to National Socialism, became a negative figure. Thus, two competing paradigms evolved. The blond men and boys in Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda film *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*, 1934) were fashioned to garner audience approval for the utopian Nazi vision, while the unsavory blond Nazi figures in works by Feuchtwanger, Friedrich Wolf, Brecht, and Veza Canetti identify National Socialism as a movement of misfits. In antifascist writing, the "Aryan" appearance and the aggressiveness that Nazi texts coded as the heroic masculinity of the *Herrenmenschen* (master race) denote brutality and moral weakness.

In *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich*, historian Ian Kershaw maintains that the ideal of the leader epitomized in Hitler's *Führer*-cult had deep roots in German tradition and served to integrate the motley Nazi following.[10] Kershaw remarks upon the incongruity between the deified *Führer* figure in Nazi propaganda and Hitler as a historical person, concluding that the source of Hitler's immense popularity lay within those who adored him rather than within Hitler himself.[11] Kershaw doubts that notions of "realism" can be applied to representations of persons and events. Instead, he maintains, hopes and aspirations were mobilized in association with the leadership cult. Of particular interest to Kershaw is the split between factuality and image construction, hence his assertion that the Nazi iconography dominated over perception and observation. The readings presented here support this conclusion. They confirm that, in the construction of the image of the Nazi leader, the primary goal was its "integratory function in providing the regime with its base of mass support."[12] Indeed, not only the Hitler-construct, but all

9 Geertz, "Thick Description," 5.

10 Kershaw, *"Hitler Myth,"* 3.

11 Kershaw, 2.

12 Kershaw, 3.

of Nazi typology functioned virtually without correlation to historical facts. The Nazi characters were elements in a self-referential ideological code. Likewise, the antifascist counter-models were designed to deflate the Nazi agenda by offering alternative scenarios. Even seemingly realistic representations and fact-based elements were meant to persuade rather than document.

While Nazi figures were not realistic representations, they were also not mere fantasy figures. They carried all the momentous implications that Canadian author Margaret Atwood articulates in her remark about the importance of understanding the imagination as an expanding reservoir of potentialities:

> Literature is an uttering or outering of the human imagination. It lets the shadowy forms of thoughts and feelings—Heaven, Hell, angels, monsters, and all—out into the light, where we can take a good look at them and perhaps come to a better understanding of who we are and what we want, and what the limits of those wants may be. Understanding the imagination is no longer a pastime or even a duty, but a necessity; because increasingly if we are able to imagine it, we'll be able to do it.[13]

It would seemingly be impossible to determine a causal nexus between cultural production and history—habitual thought patterns and aesthetic and moral sensitivities assume their own dynamic. While texts alone do not initiate or *cause* social developments, by presenting options and alternatives they mobilize inclinations and desires. They also express and elicit responses to actual events and sketch scenarios that expand the realm of what is imaginable.

Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature treats propaganda and literature as reservoirs of ideas and character templates for cultural production. For this reason, it is essential to include Artur Dinter's anti-Semitic novel *Die Sünde wider das Blut* (*The Sin against the Blood*, 1917) as a Nazi text even though it predates the Nazi Party.[14] The novel sets forth racially defined character templates that anticipate the official Nazi typology of the following decades. Dinter participated in populist movements and joined the Nazi Party in 1925 with honorary membership number five, which confirmed his prominence within the movement and the centrality of his works for the Nazi canon. Later Nazi characters are modeled in accordance with *Die Sünde wider das Blut* and the Nazi party line. Racial theory and other non-fiction, including Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*, 1925/26) and Alfred Rosenberg's *Der Mythus des Zwangzigsten Jahrhunderts* (*Myth of the Twentieth Century*, 1930), further

13 Atwood, "Aliens"; Wisker, *Margaret Atwood*, 194.

14 Dinter, *Sünde wider das Blut*.

specified the normative racial traits. Among Nazi opponents, Dinter's book triggered critical responses and satires targeting his fictional Nordic protagonist. Hans Reimann, in *Die Dinte wider das Blut* (*Ink Against Blood*, 1922), insinuated that Dinter's racist ideology was a mere smokescreen for opportunism.

Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature also explores exemplary exile works from the 1930s, some of which could not be published until much later. For example, Veza Canetti's *Die Schildkröten* (*The Tortoises*, written in 1939) was not published until 1999 because of the author's precarious circumstances in England at the outbreak of the war.[15] The effects of displacement and lack of status experienced by exiles from Nazi Germany were especially severe for women.[16] Publishers may have considered their often harsh negative portrayals of the Nazi regime as unbecoming for women writers; they may have also generally discounted women as writers and intellectuals. Canetti's feminist anti-racist novel launches a virulent attack on anti-Semitic racial science, represented here by Hans F.K. Günther's *Rassenkunde des Deutschen Volkes* (*Racial Science of the German Nation*, 1922). Canetti's anti-racist trajectory was probably a factor that prevented her novel from being published in Britain.[17]

The rising fear of Socialism in Western countries contributed to the hesitant reception of Marxist works such as Friedrich Wolf's *Professor Mamlock*, and to the late publication of Bertolt Brecht's *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches* (*Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, written between 1935 and 1943, published 1945). Gertrud Kolmar's prose narrative *Die jüdische Mutter* (*A Jewish Mother*, written in 1932/33, published 1965)[18] was published long after its critique of the misogyny and racial anti-Semitism of the predatory Nazi male could have hit its target. Despite the fact that these works were unknown or only little known when they were written, they eventually took a prominent place in German literary history. These authors' astute assessment of the German situation and their unsentimental portrayal of Nazi figures in the style of the New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) contribute to a fuller understanding of their generation's mindset and discursive culture.

While Hitler's followers ignored the incongruity between the idealized Nordic male and the physical appearance of their "*Führer*" and his entourage, anti-Nazi authors took careful note of these details. They reconfigured elements of the Nazi typology for their own critical purpose, which was to debunk

15 Pato, "Canetti's Exile Erzählung," 78.

16 Brinson, "Woman's Place," 210.

17 Goldman, "Resurgence of Antisemitism," 37–50.

18 Krick-Aigner, "Gertrud Kolmar."

the Nazi vision. However, by relying too heavily on the original typecasting, they risked reproducing Nazi models, and at times came close to losing their critical momentum; instead of fundamentally denouncing the racist model of the blond combative German, they validated the model but tried to give it new meaning. The Jewish activist fighting anti-Semites and Nazis in Hugo Bettauer's novel *Die Stadt ohne Juden* (*The City Without Jews*, 1922) exemplifies an anti-Nazi counter-model, as does the Jewish revolutionary, a proletarian cosmopolitan, in Joseph Roth's *Das Spinnennetz* (*The Spider's Web*, 1923). In the 1930s, the proletarian resistance fighter developed into a stock character in Leftist literature. The respective authors attributed noble traits to the working-class resisters, including intelligence, integrity, and courage, and trivialized the Nazi movement by making its fictional representatives look funny or primitive. These representational practices fostered overconfidence in the antifascist resistance, since they projected the imminent victory of the working class over fascists as an inevitable fact. In the early 1930s, when this paradigm of the victorious resistance had taken hold, an antifascist mass movement did not exist. While there was an obvious disconnect between Nazi propaganda and the actual situation in interwar Germany, a similar disconnect also affected antifascist literature: Nazi authors unrealistically projected a racially homogeneous *Volk* and a race-based nation-state, and antifascist authors, equally unrealistic, envisioned the triumph of the working class and a future Socialist Germany.

Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature applies a blended approach that combines perspectives from cultural and gender studies with historically contextualized close-reading analyses. The objective is to explore Nazi characters in exemplary texts as they relate both to the typology championed by Nazis and to anti-Nazi viewpoints. The epithet "Nazi" is used retroactively. National Socialists did not label themselves as "Nazis," but rather used the designations "German" and "Aryan." The term "Nazi" became popular among opponents of the movement and was used in the international context. Since 1945, the term has been used worldwide.

The authors of the Nazi texts examined here were prominent members of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), and their works enjoyed the approval of Hitler, which positioned them firmly within the ideological canon of their party.[19] The authors of antifascist literature, regardless of their ideological orientation, were mostly members of the bourgeoisie; they were educated at college preparatory schools and many were academics. Unlike the Nazis, they were civilians who worked on an individual basis outside organized

19 Geertz, "Thick Description," 216.

cadres. While they certainly had political convictions, only a few of them functioned as members of a particular party.

When comparing pro-National Socialist texts with anti-Nazi literature, it is important to keep in mind the political balance of power, the market conditions, and the distribution of the respective texts. The political and social circumstances were disadvantageous for the Left, as Martin Jay describes in "The Weimar Left: Theory and Practice" significantly fewer copies of anti-Nazi works were published and circulated compared to ultranationalist and Nazi publications.[20] As early as the 1920s, a striking asymmetry existed in the market conditions, reflecting the power imbalance between the political Left and Right. While Nationalist publications and Nazi propaganda enjoyed a wide circulation, in the presence of growing hostility, Marxist and feminist authors found it increasingly difficult to place their manuscripts for publication. Nazi posters, novels, newspapers, and pamphlets, including Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* (*The Stormer*, 1923–1945), the Nazi Party paper *Der völkische Beobachter* (*The People's Observer*, 1920–1945), and Joseph Göbbels's *Der Angriff* (*The Attack*, 1927–1945), inundated the public sphere with inflammatory messages. The intellectually more challenging antifascist publications failed to achieve a broad-based distribution similar to that of the populist press. Moreover, Leftist authors usually lacked the kind of protection enjoyed by their well-organized adversaries. The latter were supported by veterans and officers of the First World War, industrialists, and aristocrats who resented the loss of their privileges. In the absence of wealthy sponsors, antifascists had to work with smaller specialized presses. Political violence began spreading in the early 1920s, and Nazi opponents came under attack from right-wing militants. For example, the German Foreign Secretary, Walther Rathenau, was murdered in 1922, Hugo Bettauer was murdered in 1925, and Theodor Lessing, the author of *Der jüdische Selbsthaß* (*Jewish Self-Hatred*, 1930), was assassinated by a Nazi supporter in 1933. The Viennese journalist and editor of *Die Fackel* (The Torch), Karl Kraus, was fatally assaulted in 1936.[21] Bruce Pauley, in his study of Austrian Anti-Semitism, lists some of the assaults on Marxists and Socialists with special attention to the murder of Bettauer, which followed the publication of his novel *Die Stadt ohne Juden*.[22]

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20 Jay, "Weimar Left," 384–6.

21 Lessing, *Der jüdische Selbsthaß*; Dirk Schumann (*Political Violence*, xvii-xx) defines and discusses forms of right-wing political violence in the 1920s and 1930s, e.g. murder, assassination, and assault, and the condition of the political culture and language.

22 Pauley, *Prejudice to Persecution*, 105.

An exception in terms of its distribution, Roth's *Das Spinnennetz* was serialized in 1923 in the feuilleton of the widely read Socialist newspaper *Wiener Arbeiter-Zeitung* (*Vienna Workers' Paper*), which had a circulation of ca. 100,000 copies.[23] However, the serialization was discontinued, perhaps as a result of the anti-Semitic attacks launched against Roth and threats against the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.[24] *Das Spinnennetz* was not published in full until a complete edition appeared in West Germany in 1967.[25] By contrast, by 1934, the anti-Semitic publishing company Matthes and Thost had issued 240,000 copies of Dinter's novel *Die Sünde wider das Blut*, with a readership of one and a half million, according to Werner Jochmann.[26] Dinter's first anti-Semitic bestseller was followed by two additional novels of the same general format, and all three works were collected as a trilogy titled *Die Sünden der Zeit* (*The Sins of the Time*, 1922). Michael Schmidt maintains that the trilogy was widely and favorably received by readers with diverse backgrounds and status.[27] By 1939, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* had sold 5,200,000 copies, and free copies of the book were handed out at weddings and naming ceremonies.[28]

In 1933, antifascist literature became outlawed in Germany. In addition, the circulation of exile literature outside Germany was limited. Most exile writers suffered economic difficulties and had limited access to publishers.[29] The exceptionally high profile of Thomas Mann, the 1929 Nobel Prize recipient in literature, and perhaps the most successful exile author, can be explained by Mann's international standing prior to his exile, and to his apolitical stance. Excellent translations of his works further ensured his international acclaim.[30] In contrast, politically active exiles, especially Marxists, often remained sidelined and untranslated.

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23 Melischek and Seethaler, "*Auflagenzahlen der Wiener Tageszeitungen*."

24 Ochse, *Roths Auseinandersetzung mit dem Antisemitismus*, 148.

25 Roth, *Spinnennetz*.

26 Jochmann, "Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus," 460.

27 Wiede, *Rasse im Buch*, 129; Schmidt, "Antisemitismus," 98.

28 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Mein Kampf."

29 The financial ruin of the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom in 1940 is one example of the difficulties faced by exile authors. The guild had supported Bertolt Brecht, Hermann Broch, Robert Musil, Joseph Roth, Walter Mehring, Franz Blei, Oskar Maria Graf, Ernst Bloch, Albert Ehrenstein, Franz Theodor Csokor, Hermann Kesten, Egon Erwin Kisch, Annette Kolb, Theodor Kramer, Anna Seghers, Alfred Polgar, Ernst Waldinger and Arnold Zweig. (Kucher and Müller, *Österreichische Literatur im Exil*).

30 Mann, *Joseph und seine Brüder* (*Joseph and his Brothers*); Mann, *Lotte in Weimar* (*The Beloved Returns*).

After the war, the German book market changed dramatically. Both exile and international literature was now available, as was new fiction and nonfiction about the war, the collapse of Nazi Germany, and the problems endured by the German population. Under Allied occupation, the public discourse was immediately transformed. Nazi publications disappeared and Nazi propaganda, including Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, was outlawed.

CHAPTER 1

The Origins and Conceptualization of Nazi Figures after the First World War

The Utopian Typology of a Nazi State and Its Citizens

The Program of the National Socialist German Workers' Party

The program of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) of 1920 defined the German nation (*Volk*) and the ideal Nazi in national and racial terms without the specificity provided by Nazi propaganda. Still, the Party Program associated Germanness with particular virtues and traits and prescribed patriarchy as the social norm. These identity issues were presented alongside a program of action that sought to revise the political developments since the First World War. The program called for the unity between all Germans across the political factions of the Weimar Republic and demanded equal standing for Germany in the international arena. An important unifying issue was the widely unpopular Peace Treaty of Versailles, which political conservatives and the extreme right wing considered a humiliation. The NSDAP program called for annulment of the conditions of the treaty and dismantling of the postwar republic.

The Nazi concept of German citizenship as being limited to *Volksgenossen* (German nationals) defined by race precludes democratic structures and diversity. The term "*Volk*" itself reverberates with Romantic notions of premodern conditions and simple country folk. At the same time, it invokes Socialist anti-elitism and holds out to Germans who might be receptive to a socialist model with a national emphasis the opportunity to change affiliations and embrace National Socialism.

The concept of the nation and the *ius sanguinis*—nationality according to lineage and language—in contrast to the *ius soli,* which defines citizenship in terms of the country of birth, was thoroughly ingrained in German thought and upheld in the Weimar constitution. As a result, the Nazis' racial imperative did not seem far-fetched. Point Four of the Nazi Party Program confirmed the notion of homogeneity: „Volksgenosse kann nur sein, wer deutschen Blutes ist, ohne Rücksichtnahme auf Konfession."[1] This key statement prioritizes race

1 Brubaker, *Citizenship,* 186; "None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation." Rabinbach and Gilman, *Third Reich Sourcebook*, 12. (All excerpts from this source were translated by Lilian M. Friedberg).

over religion and individual preference. It makes national identity an unalterable fact and a status that cannot be renounced or acquired. In addition, the concept of race-based German citizenship inherently classifies Jews as an alien race within the German boundaries. The discourse of *Rassenkunde* (racial science), firmly established at the end of the First World War, lends itself to legitimize the shift in the Party Program from the traditional religious definition of Jewishness to a racial definition. Contrary to the religious paradigm, which allows for conversion, the racial paradigm ultimately eradicates the concept of the individual. The assertion „Kein Jude kann daher Volksgenosse sein" derives from a model of biological determinism.[2]

In Point Four, the Program specified that, for an individual to qualify as German, positive attributes are as important as the distinction from the negative construct of the Jew, and the phrasing left room for the later exclusion of additional undesirable ethnicities. By making a German lineage the primary qualifier for citizenship in the projected Nazi state, the Program disqualifies Jews, including German citizens of Jewish ancestry, from being citizens. The use of the singular for the positive insider, *Volksgenosse*, and the negative outsider, *kein Jude*, establishes the two collectives as opposites and enemies. The undercurrent of the rhetoric of national competition, which had served as a tool to mobilize the German military in 1914, continued to fuel nationalist resentments after 1918.

Point Five, „Wer nicht Staatsbürger ist, soll nur als Gast in Deutschland leben können und muß unter Fremden-Gesetzgebung stehen," reiterated the distinction between nationals and aliens and assigned the concepts of citizen and *Gast* (guest) a specific ideological meaning that modified the terms of the constitution of the *Deutsche Reich* (*Weimarer Reichsverfassung*) of 1919.[3] The term "citizen" in Point Five carried the racial implications articulated earlier, in contrast to the neutral concept of *Staatsangehöriger* (member of the state) according to the Weimar constitution, which emphasized gender equality and freedom of religion, and based the legal concept of German citizenship upon provincial affiliation, thereby upholding the identity paradigm of the German federation. The concept of a *Volk* implied a normative national identity and a levelling of regional particularity. Superficially, the Nazi phraseology echoed the preamble of the Weimar constitution. However, upon closer examination, the differences are significant. The constitution of 1919 proclaimed the political

2 Frederickson, *Racism*, 89; "No Jew therefore may be a member of the nation." Rabinbach and Gilman, *Third Reich Sourcebook*, 12.

3 "Anyone who is not a citizen of the state may live in Germany only as a guest and must be regarded as being subject to foreign law," Rabinbach and Gilman, *Third Reich Sourcebook*, 12; DocumentArchiv.de, *Weimarer Reichsverfassung*.

unity of the German *tribes* under the auspices of the nation, but also allowed for potential changes in nationality by Germans who desired to emigrate.[4] The Nazi Party Program included in its call for unity German citizens and German nationals by ancestry who lived abroad. Emigration and changes in nationality were not included as options.

The difference between the Weimar constitution and the Nazi Party Program is evident from the fact that the terms "Jew" and *"Ausländer"* (foreigner) do not occur in the former but are central in the latter. Regardless of how persons of Jewish background identified themselves, according to Nazi statutes they were foreigners or "guests."[5] In the phrasing of the Party Program, the term *"Gast"* reflects an older etymology and carries the negative connotation of an unwelcome stranger. Both "foreigner" and "guest" are introduced for the purpose of discrimination and eventual segregation. In the 1950s, these terms reverberated painfully in the designation "*Gastarbeiter* "(guest worker), which was applied to migrant Mediterranean workers.[6]

While the Nazi Party Program appealed to German nationals by ancestry who lived in a diaspora to follow the call for German unity, it was impossible for persons without German lineage who were actually born and raised in Germany to achieve citizenship. The special protection promised to mothers and children in Point 21 identified the projected Nazi state as a regime of male dominance, and implied state control of procreation and gender behavior. Male supremacy and the exploitation of women's reproductive capacities are the most basic forms of hierarchical stratification. Stratification was also envisioned in the areas of commerce and industry. The projected model of synchronization included the abolition of capitalism, the initiation of state-controlled land reform, and the nationalization of real property. Implied in the emphatically stated work ethic for both white- and blue-collar workers were anti-labor union policies that set the course for a system of labor for its own sake, uncompensated labor, and slave labor that was integral to the projected Nazi state. The primacy of the German language in the media at the exclusion of other languages was in contrast to the Weimar constitution,

4 „Das Deutsche Volk, einig in seinen Stämmen und von dem Willen beseelt, sein Reich in Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit zu erneuen und zu festigen, dem inneren und dem äußeren Frieden zu dienen und den gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt zu fördern, hat sich diese Verfassung gegeben." [The German Nation, united in its tribes, gave itself this constitution, motivated by the will to renew its empire in freedom and justice while serving peace within and internationally and to promote social progress.] (except where noted otherwise, all translations are by the author) (DocumentArchiv.de, *Weimarer Reichsverfassung*, "Präambel").

5 Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, "Gast."

6 Kriebitzch, *Etymologie*, 9.

which guaranteed minorities in Germany autonomy in education, language, and customs.[7] The Nazi Party also envisioned intervention in religious matters. The recommendation of a "positive Christianity" in Point 24, and the implied control of the press and censorship evidenced the fundamental intolerance of the movement.

The ideal German citizen, the Nazi as defined by the Program, was characterized in both positive and negative terms. As a German national, he was the unquestioned insider, empowered by his Aryan racial identity regardless of his religion, country of citizenship, or residence. He was envisioned as able-bodied, a dedicated worker, community-minded, and a protector of German women and children. German by ancestry, his concerns were by definition German concerns, which included spreading German culture and national honor. Above all, he was an "Aryan," and all that this epithet signified. The Party Program was integral to Nazi writing, which included primarily manifestos, speeches, programmatic memoirs tracing the career paths of Nazi activists, and propagandistic prose fiction glorifying Nazi characters.

The NSDAP program articulated an aspirational racial ideal for the future Nazi state through the construct of the German male, which was already present in an exemplary popular version in Artur Dinter's novel *Die Sünde wider das Blut* (*The Sin Against the Blood*, 1917), which illustrated the racial traits of the German Aryan in opposition to those of his Jewish characters. In much the same manner as an educational novel, Dinter constructed positive German and negative Jewish protagonists. In the main text and the appendix, he included allegedly scientific information about race and heredity, a new narrative strategy that had a special appeal for Nazi followers. Well before publication of the Party Program, Dinter's novel had delivered a concretized version of the Nazi racial typology.

Artur Dinter's Anti-Semitic Novel Die Sünde wider das Blut

Die Sünde wider das Blut was arguably the most influential Aryan supremacist novel. During the First World War, it presented the anti-Semitic tenets on which the Nazi movement based its concept of identity.[8] Dinter fully articulated the

7 Article 113. „Die fremdsprachigen Volksteile des Reichs dürfen durch die Gesetzgebung und Verwaltung nicht in ihrer freien, volkstümlichen Entwicklung, besonders nicht im Gebrauch ihrer Muttersprache beim Unterricht, sowie bei der inneren Verwaltung und der Rechtspflege beeinträchtigt werden." [Legislation and administration must not negatively affect the non-German speaking national segments of the Reich in the free practice of their ethnic traditions, especially with regards to their mother tongue and at school as well as in their internal administration and judicature.] (DocumentArchiv.de, *Weimarer Reichsverfassung*).

8 Dinter, *Die Sünde wider das Blut.*

racial typology for the ideal Nazi in the characters of his protagonist Hermann Kämpfer and the women with whom Kämpfer is involved. Dinter's scheme lacks a political vision of the racial state, which was later mapped out in books by Hitler and Rosenberg. Dinter designed a racist cosmology that extends from the human sphere to the spirit world. He blends racial theory with theological and esoteric motifs in a plot replete in love, sex, and crime. His main characters are surrounded by complementary and antagonistic figures representing racial types ranging from the blond, blue-eyed, and physically and mentally perfect representatives of the German or Aryan race, to characters of mixed background, whose occasionally light complexion and hair color is attributed to their partly Aryan descent, to dark-complexioned villains. In the case of deceptively blond figures of mixed race, less-than-classical features and emotional imbalance are invoked to suggest a partly Jewish ancestry. Dinter's Jewish characters are depicted as swarthy and physically repulsive. They are crass materialists as opposed to the idealistic Germans. Dinter demonizes Jewish males in particular, asserting that they are intent on destroying the Aryan race and German culture.

In addition to race, Dinter explores other social identifiers, including religion and *Weltanschauung* (world view). His narratives essentialize racial identity as a character's hereditary physical traits, which allegedly determine their mental and emotional qualities. Religion, like state citizenship, is viewed as coincidental and a matter of preference. Dinter dissociates the Christian religions from his concept of the Aryan race and German culture. With his protagonist Hermann Kämpfer serving as his mouthpiece, he denounces the Christian denominations as Jewish propaganda and outlines an anti-Semitic pseudoreligion that blends Christian themes, racial science, and occultism, which Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society (founded in 1857), had popularized. Dinter advocated a "German Christianity," which Susannah Heschel explored in her study *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany.*[9]

The mere name "Hermann Kämpfer" evokes heroicism, as it alludes to the leader of the Germanic tribe of the Cherusci. Arminius, popularly known by his Germanicized name "Hermann der Cherusker" (Hermann the Cherusci), symbolized the ideal of a unified German Imperium. Arminius had defeated the Roman legions in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (AD 9) and was idolized by German nationalists as the first pan-Germanic leader. Dinter couples this momentous first name with the surname *Kämpfer* (fighter).

9 Heschel, *Aryan Jesus.*

The reader first encounters Kämpfer in his laboratory, where he appears to be on the verge of a momentous discovery. This opening segment provides insight into Kämpfer's psyche. It reveals his dedication to his project, which he pursues without any commercial considerations. The thirst for knowledge drives him to conduct research for its own sake. This kind of idealism is, according to Dinter, a quality that is only possessed by Aryans. In contrast, Kämpfer's Jewish antagonist, the Councilor of Commerce Burghamer, has only one goal: his personal financial gain. Burghamer is not interested in progress, the welfare of mankind, or the production of goods. He buys and sells the inventions of others without understanding their significance.

Burghamer is associated with Berlin and the hectic modern life that offers a kind of luxury that is accessible only to the rich. In his sphere, nationalities and races intermingle and names can be changed at will. It is in Burghamer's circles that Kämpfer meets his future wife and eventual nemesis Elisabeth, the daughter of Burghamer and his statuesque, blond, and blue-eyed Aryan wife. Kämpfer, depicted as an unpretentious, nature-loving man from rural Germany, is an outsider in the cosmopolitan clique of vacationers who have invaded the ski resort of St. Moritz. Contrary to his Jewish antagonist, Kämpfer is initially naïve about race. His artlessness reflects Dinter's concept of the Aryan mentality according to which the representatives of this "race" are strong, but their honesty and integrity make them vulnerable to deceit. These assumptions coincide with the racist theories of Joseph-Arthur Comte de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, to whom Dinter dedicated his novel and from whose theses on race he derived the basis for his melodramatic narrative.[10]

Dinter envisions in his novels a struggle of cosmic dimensions in which Hermann Kämpfer plays a part. As a paradigmatic Aryan male, Kämpfer is attributed noble traits, including a capacity for unconditional love. This very trait leaves him defenseless against the members of the alien Jewish "race" that, as the narrator assumes, have infiltrated Germany. The Jewish characters have achieved a degree of social integration that makes it impossible for an uninitiated observer like Kämpfer to recognize them. Invoking the familiar anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, Dinter portrays his male Jewish characters as crooks that maneuver themselves and each other into leadership positions in commerce and politics. The extensive physical descriptions in *Die Sünde wider das Blut* function as a popular guide for its readers to determine racial identity. In increasingly inflammatory comments about Jews and Jewish culture, Dinter mobilizes and justifies anti-Semitism. He strategically attributes

10 Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité*; Chamberlain, *Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*.

a Yiddish accent and vocabulary to his Jewish characters to mark them as the racial Other. Hermann Kämpfer, in contrast, speaks Standard German.[11]

The paradigm informing Dinter's narrative is the educational novel. His novel traces the hero's development from childhood to maturity and from ignorance to racial knowledge. Through personal suffering in his relationship with Elisabeth Burghamer and his research in esoteric spirituality and racial theory, Kämpfer becomes an expert in matters of race and heredity. He shares the results of his readings with his half-Jewish fiancée, whom he idolizes as his soul mate, and instructs both her and her mother about the detrimental effects of race-mixing. Kämpfer's diatribes are designed to enlighten not only the characters within the novel, but also Dinter's readers.

The story of the marriage between Kämpfer and Elisabeth fictionalizes the ideological assumptions about race and warns against the assault on Aryans by their Jewish enemy. During his engagement, Kämpfer becomes increasingly uneasy in Elisabeth's presence—he would actually prefer their relationship to remain platonic. This development indicates the couple's racial incompatibility, which is confirmed by the events of their marriage. During her pregnancy, Elisabeth seems torn between her Jewish and her Aryan identity. Finally, she gives birth to a Jewish-looking son, Heinrich, who resembles his Jewish grandfather Burghamer instead of the blond and blue-eyed Elisabeth and Hermann Kämpfer. Both parents are devastated, and Elisabeth dies soon after giving birth.

Attributing tragic dimensions to this episode, Dinter stresses that the relationship between Kämpfer and Elisabeth was based on a spiritual friendship in an era of cultural confusion. He injects elements of the Romantic love discourse into the narrative to identify Elisabeth as Kämpfer's one and only beloved. In contrast, Kämpfer's second marriage to a blonde nurse by the name of Johanna results from his wish for an Aryan child, but again, the issue of this second marriage is another Jewish-looking boy. Kämpfer suspects adultery but learns a new supposedly scientific fact: his wife had been "ruined" by her past relationship with a Jewish officer. Contact with him had rendered her incapable of bearing "Aryan" children. In Dinter's narrative framework, Kämpfer's ensuing outrage appears more than justified. He kills Johanna's former lover and the court eventually acquits him for having acted in defense of his race. Johanna considers herself disgraced and commits suicide. To atone for his errors, Kämpfer joins the military and meets a hero's death in the First World War. To make this trite narrative palatable, Dinter stresses Kämpfer's fair-mindedness early on and his tolerance of the Jewish characters' foibles, until it dawns on him that those shortcomings are not mere idiosyncrasies, but racial attributes that endanger German society.

11 Richter, *Sprache jüdischer Figuren*, 107.

In his following novels, *Die Sünde wider den Geist* (1921) and *Die Sünde wider die Liebe* (1922), Dinter elaborates further on the psychological and spiritual implications of race. However, numerous passages in his first book already address religion in racial terms and prepare the way for a cosmic vision of race as the organizing principle of the universe and for the notion that since the beginning of time there has been a rivalry between Aryan and Jewish forces, the forces of light and the Satanic forces of darkness.[12] For example, Hermann Kämpfer explains to Elisabeth that „die Träger des Christentums sind ganz wesentlich die Arier."[13] This dictum is borne out in the parallel life stories of his first son, born out of wedlock prior to the fateful first marriage, and his and Elisabeth's legitimate Jewish-looking son. The comparisons of his children are unfavorable to the dark-haired boy Heinrich, who is presented as a diabolic figure. No less portentous than the name Hermann, the name Heinrich is reminiscent of Germany's famous poet Heinrich Heine who was of Jewish descent. Kämpfer's Aryan son Hermann by his abandoned childhood sweetheart, Rosel, has inherited the noble traits and intelligence of his parents. Rosel, although a minor character, is central to the novel. A naïve country girl, she had a passionate relationship with young Kämpfer and sacrificed her own future out of love for him. She bore Kämpfer's child, keeping the identity of the father a secret, and eventually died in poverty. This long-suffering mother of Hermann's "pure" Aryan child epitomizes in the novel a woman's true love and loyalty.

Dinter's novel positions Kämpfer, an unspoiled German from the Alps, a region for which the Nazi leadership also had a predilection, as the embodiment of German virtue and unspoiled nature. A lengthy account of his childhood mentions the piety of his parental home, regional festivals, and Christmas traditions to characterize him as a sensitive idealist.[14] In addition, Kämpfer, according to the narrative, combines the qualities of an athlete and a genial scientist. The sentimentalized mountain idyll is an emblematic setting for the idealized German character as opposed to urban settings, of which the luxury hotel is an extension. It suggests that degenerate modernity is encroaching upon the pure mountainscape.[15] Kämpfer's future wife is at home in the playground for the rich and famous, which is characterized as a Jewish sphere.

Kämpfer embodies the endangered German hero. Even though he ends up committing murder, Dinter does not label his protagonist a criminal. From a racist point of view, Kämpfer's motives were honorable and necessary because the act of vengeance draws much-needed attention to the racial dilemma in

12 Dinter, *Sünde wider den Geist*; Dinter, *Sünde wider die Liebe*.

13 "the adherents of Christianity are in essence the Aryans," Dinter, *Sünde wider das Blut*, 135.

14 Dinter, 28–9.

15 Dinter, 45–7.

Germany. The preview at the end of the novel tells of Kämpfer's death as a volunteer in the First World War and seems purposefully designed to allay any objection on the part of the readers to the murder Kämpfer commits. The ending, again, suggests that he is in the service of higher forces, and his death for the Fatherland, the narrative implies, is a high price to pay for his rival's life. From the author's perspective, Kämpfer is vindicated when he dies a hero's death.

Dinter's storyline sends a clear ideological message: a German male may murder a Jew with impunity if he feels that his sexuality and racial identity are threatened. Ultimately, Dinter condones any act an Aryan character may commit because racial determinism precludes him from doing wrong. On the other extreme, Councilor Burghamer, Elisabeth's father, is evil personified and, according to the narrative, all of his acts must be evil. Dinter stresses that the Councilor assumed the German-sounding name "Burghamer" to hide his Jewish-sounding name "Hamburger" to facilitate his criminal activities in German-speaking countries. Among other things, Burghamer oversees an organization that systematically defiles German women, and engages in corrupt business practices that victimize "Aryans." He defrauds scientists of their research, acts as a loan shark, and cheats farmers and property owners out of their possessions. Burghamer's character combines superstitious elements from traditional anti-Judaism and the racial and economic arguments of modern anti-Semitism. His sexual crimes aim at the essence of the Aryan race, reproduction and paternity, through which German identity is established. Burghamer's wife, a stereotype of German womanhood, is one of his victims, and he has forced others into sexual slavery. Living in a forced marriage with the man who raped and impregnated her, Mrs. Burghamer has lost her self-confidence. However, even in this unfortunate union, she remains impervious to her husband's corruption. Kämpfer, through his racist presentations, provides guidance and support to Mrs. Burghamer and her daughter Elisabeth, who is drawn as a split personality. Because of her mixed background, German identity is inaccessible to her, and Dinter implies that the love between her and Kämpfer is an aberration.

Kämpfer's second wife, the nurse Johanna, exemplifies another variation of the racial problem. An earlier intimate relationship with a Jewish man has made her unfit for a marriage with an Aryan man. Like Elisabeth, she cannot bear Aryan children.[16] In contrast, Kämpfer's childhood sweetheart Rosel is a true representative of German womanhood. Kämpfer's two sons, Hermann and his counterpart Heinrich, exemplify the generational implications of racial

16 Dinter, 349.

identity according to racial science. Through their example, Dinter argues that genetics rather than environment determines human qualities. According to his ideology, racial purity is the only means to ensure the nation's future.

Dinter's novel interconnects the experiences of individuals with the fate of the collective. For example, Kämpfer initially suspects that his wives had been unfaithful, but the revelation that race is at the root of his problems strikes him as even worse. The women's inability to pass on Aryan genetic properties leaves him unfulfilled as a German, and worse, it poses a threat to his nation. Similarly, Kämpfer's sons represent the German and Jewish collectives as envisioned by the author. The dialectical narrative pattern of one Jewish and one "German" protagonist was used previously in Gustav Freytag's novel *Soll und Haben* (*Credit and Debit*, 1855), where the life story of the German hero provided a positive model and that of the Jewish protagonist offered a negative model. Dinter racialized this earlier pattern, thereby adding an element of inescapability to his narrative.

The death of Kämpfer's illegitimate Aryan son caused by his legitimate but Jewish-looking child is a tragic blow of fate on both an individual and a collective level.[17] Kämpfer had tried to provide both children the same opportunities, but had to realize that his attempts were doomed to failure. The deaths of the two boys confirm his fears. They both die in a swimming accident: Heinrich, who cannot swim, pulls Hermann, who tries to rescue him, under the water. Dinter adds a spiritual dimension to this tragedy. Kämpfer interprets the self-sacrificial death of his Aryan son as an apotheosis (the blond boy is called back to the divine sphere), but he feels that his "Jewish" child is irredeemably lost.[18] Again, collective interests take priority over individual concerns. The death of little Hermann signifies the end of the Kämpfer family line and weakens the German nation. According to Dinter, Kämpfer's failure to choose the right woman is the result of widespread ignorance about race, and his novel calls for a change.

Dinter's references to racial theorists and anti-Semitic historians are presumably meant to lend his novel truth value. The traditional motifs of love, betrayal, and redemption function as a platform for including popularized religious motifs; for example, the digression on Jesus's supposed Aryan descent in Elisabeth's salon.[19] Through Kämpfer, Dinter presents a historical panorama according to which race is the decisive factor in world history.[20] Presenting

17 Dinter, 332.

18 Dinter, 255.

19 Dinter, 173–8.

20 Dinter, 240–8.

these views to Elisabeth and her mother, Kämpfer assumes the role of a spiritual guide in a scenario reminiscent of Jesus's conversations with Mary and Martha.

Throughout, the narrator interweaves physical descriptions with the plot line. The details about Kämpfer and the Aryan women's angelic beauty contrast with the satanic appearance of Elisabeth's father, Burghamer.[21] To support his untenable claims relating to race and heredity, Dinter provides footnotes and an appendix with false biological information.[22] One example of these claims involves the birth of Kämpfer's second son by Johanna. Although Johanna is Aryan by race, as Kämpfer learns, it is a supposedly well-known biological fact that, after a female of a superior race gives birth to inferior offspring, she is no longer capable of producing racially valuable progeny because „der ganze Organismus des edelrassigen weiblichen Geschöpfes [ist] vergiftet."[23]

Culturally determined perceptions of beauty are fundamental to Dinter's evaluation of racial traits. The physical descriptions of Kämpfer emulate the ideal of beauty promoted by Germanocentric racial scientists. The effect of the physique of Dinter's hero is amplified by the erotic appeal attributed to it: „Und auch fühlte sie [Elisabeth], daß sie mit Leib und Seele diesem starken blonden Mann verfallen war. Das war der Held, den sie in ihren Träumen erschaut, der Mann, von dem sie sich Kinder ersehnt, der Gatte, nach dem ihr Blut in ihren schlaflosen Nächten schrie."[24] As the embodiment of racial purity and beauty, Kämpfer[25] seems an ideal mouthpiece for the Germanic cause, which he defends with invectives against Jews and Jewish society. When he makes his case in court against a supposed conspiracy by his Jewish antagonists, he does so with the vocabulary of anti-Semitic slander. He invokes notions of Jewish vampirism, and defines anti-Semitism as the highest form of idealism.[26] Dinter infuses his narrative with hate speech and inflammatory statements: for example, „Aber der Jude hatte das Unglück ins Haus gebracht. Es war, als ob seither der Teufel seine Hand im Spiele hätte."[27]

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21 Dinter, 351.

22 Dinter, 266.

23 "the entire organism of the female of noble race has been poisoned," Dinter, 266.

24 "And she (Elisabeth) also felt that she had fallen for this strong blond man body and soul. That was the hero, whom she had envisioned in her dreams, the man, whose children she yearned to bear, the spouse, for whom her blood cried out in her sleepless nights," Dinter, 181.

25 "open and honest Germans," Dinter, 271.

26 Dinter, 357–69.

27 "But the Jew had carried misfortune into the house. It seemed as if since that time the devil had become involved in their lives," Dinter, 9.

By attributing ostensibly factual racist observations and anti-Semitic expressions to the character of Kämpfer, an academic and renowned scientist who holds a doctoral degree, Dinter tries to validate anti-Semitism socially and intellectually. The mini-treatises on race, religion, and history in the appendix suggest expert knowledge and support the positive conclusions he encourages the reader to draw from Kämpfer's valiant struggle and defeat. The noticeable conflation of author and protagonist, and the blending of racist concepts with an adventure-filled story combined with an anti-Semitic message make Dinter's novel an important forerunner of Nazi ideology.[28] Configuring Kämpfer as a pioneer in a solitary battle for racial purity, Dinter suggests that it will take a collective effort to prevail against a virulent anti-German conspiracy. Hermann Kämpfer seems the type of person who is called upon to save the nation's soul. *Die Sünde wider das Blut* does not map out a plan for collective action nor does it envision a social scheme such as those conceived by Nazi ideologues in the 1920s. However, Dinter established a model character that in different variations served as a staple in Nazi writing.

Hans F.K. Günther's Racial Theory in Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes

In *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (*Racial Science of the German Nation*, 1922), Hans F.K. Günther attempts to establish race according to physical, emotional, and intellectual traits. He propagates the same fundamental ideas as Dinter in *Die Sünde wider das Blut*, albeit in a different format.[29] Günther (1891–1968), who had studied biology and zoology and eventually obtained his doctorate in linguistics, conducted research on race and eugenics. His *Rassenkunde* presents a racist ideology in an approach that combines "scientific" and humanities perspectives. The copious use of illustrations depicting faces and bodies of individuals of different ethnicities, many of them nude, made the volume interesting and alluring to a wide readership; by 1929, it had gone through thirteen editions.

Building on the race theories of Joseph-Arthur Comte de Gobineau, Charles Darwin, Richard Wagner, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and his own teacher, Eugen Fischer, Günther provides instructions for racial physiognomy, i.e., measuring skulls and hair structure to determine race. He also quotes from classical German poets to lend his racial paradigms intellectual legitimacy. Citing literary sources in scientific argumentation was common practice in early-twentieth-century academe. It is also found in Sigmund Freud's case

28 Kren and Morris, "Race and Spirituality."

29 Günther, *Rassenkunde*.

studies and Otto Weininger's dissertation *Geschlecht und Charakter* (*Sex and Character*, 1903), which inspired race theorists and anti-feminists including Günther.[30]

Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes is a popularizing amalgamation of anthropology and racial science. Günther places his concept of race in a comprehensive framework that he describes as appropriate to the German *Weltanschauung*, a totalizing world view. Juxtaposing the holistic *Weltanschauung* to intellect and philosophy, he declares that critical analysis is a Jewish approach to knowledge and thus fundamentally alien to the German race. He asserts, „Der Jude ist seelisch dem Deutschen fremd, am fremdesten vielleicht dem vorwiegend nordrassischen Deutschen."[31] *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* sets forth a binary scheme juxtaposing Jews and Germans as human embodiments of the forces of darkness and light in concrete as well as transcendental terms.[32]

Günther's primary concern is the collective of "Nordic" men and women, who are cast as the elite of the Aryan races. This racial concept is more inclusive than Dinter's because, in addition to the Nordic elite, it includes a range of sub-"races" which are classified as "Aryan" and whose members are considered fit to be German nationals, albeit of a lesser order. *Rassenkunde* describes a typology of interconnected genetic physical and mental human traits that facilitate racial profiling on the basis of appearance and psychology, and could be used to predict aptitudes and future behavior.

In his discussion of race, Günther deplores the general lack of awareness of racial traits among his fellow Germans that resulted in the mixing of races, and proceeds to categorize the existing European "races." Günther's main aims are the racial definition of Germanness and the setting of boundaries between Germans and alien races. The included maps of linguistic and physical characteristics reveal that, counter to his own assertions, Günther bases his arguments on the paradigm of the nation-state. The factors most disruptive to his static model of race and nation include modern phenomena such as international mobility, cosmopolitanism, and urban development. The races that Günther characterizes as qualified subgroups for German nationhood include as the racial elite the blond and athletic Nordic race, a shorter brunette Western or Mediterranean race, a stout dark-haired East European race and its

30 Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, 153.

31 "The Jew [note the singular; D.L.] is psychologically foreign to the German mentality, but perhaps most foreign to the German of predominantly Nordic race," Günther, *Rassenkunde*, 415.

32 Günther, 192, 367.

blond counterpart, the East-Baltic race, and the tall and dark Dinaric or Alpine races and their sub-strata.[33]

Günther differentiates between racial and language groups as well as between race, culture, and citizenship.[34] In his theory, bloodline and heredity, to which he accords mental and spiritual dimensions, take priority. He argues that humans of the same race produce offspring of the same genetic make-up, and declares such a genetic group "pure" and distinct from all others.[35] Concepts associated with Enlightenment thought, such as character formation through education, individual intellectual development, milieu, and progress, do not factor into his theoretical framework. Günther argues that the "Aryan" race constitutes the population appropriate to the German nation. In particular, he idealizes the so-called Nordic race as the stratum most deserving of support and privilege, and recommends that the racial profile of the German population be altered and its Nordic character increased by establishing a population policy that promotes this racial segment. Günther's remarks on racial inferiority and compromised genetic qualities read like a blueprint for later selective breeding, euthanasia, and ethnic cleansing.

Günther describes the attributes of the Nordic race in great detail. He typifies its representatives as tall and slender [ranging from 1.70 m (5'7") to 1.80 m (5'11")], long-legged, and slow in their growth and maturation processes.[36] The Nordic male has broad shoulders and narrow hips. Günther compares this physical type with Greek sculptures of young athletes. He furthermore asserts that, while females of the Nordic "race" appear slender, they are in reality curvy, as would be appropriate to their gender. The discussion of the body type of the Nordic female borders on voyeurism as Günther describes the shape of the breasts and hips in a manner one might expect in erotic literature.[37] The overall depiction of the Nordic body culminates in its idealization as the perfect model for artistic representation, as the star participant in sports competitions, and as the apex of good health and a good posture.[38]

To illustrate that race and nationality do not coincide, Günther speculates about the racial stock of Sir Francis Bacon, complete with skull measurements, and ventures to assess the racial features of poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff on the basis of her portrait. He proclaims that both are racially Nordic, although

33 Günther, 3.
34 Günther, 7–9.
35 Günther, 13.
36 Günther, 31.
37 Günther, 32.
38 Günther, 33.

one is English and the other German. Race, he argues, transcends national and political boundaries, and perfect specimens of the Nordic type can be found in Germany, the Scandinavian countries, and Great Britain. The lack of information about the family background and genetic data for his exemplary types reveals that Günther's approach does not meet the scientific standards that he professes in his introduction.[39]

In the descriptions of the physical appearance of the Nordic type, the following elements stand out: elongated facial bones and muscles, slender bones, and thin lips in conjunction with a light skin color, a rosy hue, and a tendency to blush due to low pigmentation, which causes sensitivity to sunlight and sunburn upon exposure.[40] Absurdly, to document these points Günther invokes medieval poetry and the classical German ideal of beauty as evidence for racial traits. In addition, he draws on obscure theories about the link between pigmentation and brain structure.[41] As a foregone conclusion, he interprets the idiosyncrasies he ascribes to the Nordic race as marks of excellence.

Obviously, *Rassenkunde* borders on phantasy, such as when it claims that the quality and color of hair are racial traits. Günther discusses the thickness, color, and growth patterns of human hair in conjunction with the racial profile he aims to establish. The Nordic race, he maintains, is hairy compared to other racial groups, and he mentions the women's light, long, and thick hair, and the men's strong facial hair.[42] He also elaborates on how hair color can change with age in the Nordic race, which makes it supposedly impossible to classify the hair type of younger persons since their hair typically becomes darker with age. Finally, he declares light blond as well as darker hues acceptable variations among the Nordic race and devotes a special section to red hair. He rejects superstitious notions associated with red hair as the attribute of witches, as well as medieval and early modern assumptions according to which red hair was a Jewish trait.[43] In his descriptions of races, Günther usually begins by establishing apparently scientific criteria, but he usually shifts to literary references that include classical Greek and Roman authors, Shakespeare, the German

39 Günther, 35–6.

40 Günther, 39–44.

41 Günther, 45.

42 Günther, 50.

43 For example, Shakespeare's Shylock, originally a comical figure, wore a red wig on stage. (Shakespeare, *New Variorum Edition,* appendix to *The Merchant of Venice*, 370); Edgar Rosenberg (*From Shylock to Svengali*, 35) notes that, at the time of Sir Walter Scott, red hair was no longer needed to represent Jewish figures.

classics, and race theorists. The purpose of the many illustrations in Günther's *Rassenkunde* is obviously to overwhelm the reader and mask the absence of fact-based proof.

Even less convincing is his discussion of the Nordic psychology.[44] To deflect from the shortcomings in his argumentation, Günther admits the difficulty inherent in the project of developing a reliable racial psychological profile. With reference to his major source, John Beddoe's *The Races of Britain* (1862), he defines his preferred "race" by invoking highly valued characters traits including „Scharfsinn, Wahrhaftigkeit, Ausdauer, Willenskraft und Fleiß, gesundes Urteil, Liebe zur Behaglichkeit, zur Ordnung und Reinlichkeit."[45] In addition, he ascribes to the Nordic race a spirit of freedom and a high degree of self-criticism combined with a keen conscience. More cerebral than passionate, including in matters of sex and eroticism, the Nordic man, according to Günther, possesses an exceptional sense of justice and, in a particularly strange observation, is especially well-qualified as a trainer and groom for horses.[46]

Another outstanding trait is boldness, even recklessness, that predestines the Nordic man to heroic deeds. Günther goes on to emphasize this type's inclination to broad-based projects rather than attention to petty detail or materialistic gain.[47] He notes the Nordic male's inordinate inventiveness; indeed, he claims that the diasporic Nordic race is the source of creative activity world-wide.[48] Not even the observation that Nordic males are often less-than-average students diminishes Günther's claim of their high performance later in life.[49] Other characteristics of the Nordic man include leadership abilities and assertiveness,[50] both of which were important to the Nazi ideal of the "master race" and informed the training in the leadership schools for the SS.[51] Finally, according to Günther, the Nordic population also excels in the secondary virtues of orderliness, cleanliness, and accuracy.[52]

Günther bases his claim of German superiority on his thesis that the predominant component of the German population is Nordic, without taking into

44 Günther, 128–44.

45 "Incisiveness, truthfulness, perseverance, strong will and diligence, common sense, a 'spirit of fair play,' love of comfort, order and cleanliness," Günther, 129.

46 Günther, 131.

47 Günther, 133.

48 Günther, 134.

49 Günther, 139.

50 Günther, 135.

51 Bialas and Fritze, *Nazi Ideology and Ethics*, 231–2.

52 Günther, 148.

consideration changing social structures. Günther also claims that criminal tendencies are race-based and cites the alleged propensity for criminal behavior among African-Americans to draw parallels to the criminality among the "lesser" European races.[53] These assertions set the course towards the criminalization of entire populations defined as inferior races and provide arguments for the "protective custody" the Nazi regime later put into practice. There are striking similarities between Artur Dinter's hero and Günther's Nordic male. This iconic type links two different modes of discourse: racist fiction and racial science.

Adolf Hitler's Autobiographical Manifesto Mein Kampf

As a complement to racial thinking, in his autobiographical manifesto *Mein Kampf* (1925), Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) introduces the charismatic political leader. Hitler authored *Mein Kampf* largely by dictation to his deputy Rudolf Hess during his detention at Landsberg Prison in 1924.[54] Volume One (1925) and Volume Two (1926) were edited by Hess. Hitler had been convicted of treason after the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich, which he had instigated together with former General Erich Ludendorff. The incident resulted in bloodshed and drew attention to the Nazi Party, propelling it to the forefront of the political debate. Hitler's notion of personal authority takes into consideration individual characteristics and thus counterbalances the concept of racial determinism. Hitler repeatedly notes that he is aware of the racial variations within the German population and declares this lack of homogeneity acceptable. Hitler considers the pure Nordic race an aspirational ideal to be realized over time. He, too, regards the Nordic race as the most valuable element of the future Nazi German state and emphasizes the need to build it up. For the present, he is willing to accept a variety of types into the fold, provided they qualify as "Aryans" according to Günther's definition.

Hitler's book combines a heroic account of his life with his political vision. On the first page Hitler validates the Nazi definition of German identity based in the national community and national identity based on blood lineage. Perhaps because the physical traits of the actual Nazi leadership deviated markedly from the Nordic ideal, he emphasizes the importance of personality and masculine determination as a leader's foremost qualifications.[55] In his rhetoric, he feminizes the masses, stressing the leader's mission to dominate them.

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53 Günther, 143.

54 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*; Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (trans. James Murphy).

55 Hitler, 492–504.

Hitler's vision has a foundation of unquestioned obedience to the leader, achievement, and the categories of gender and race. The theme of male domination permeates his manifesto, which echoes the definition of the *Staatsbürger* (citizen of the state) in the Party Program. According to *Mein Kampf*, the status of citizen must be acquired through an oath of allegiance to the German nation, while the lesser status of *Staatsangehöriger* (subject of the state) is the birthright of all German children of Aryan descent.[56] Military service is a precondition for a man to be granted citizenship: „Dem unbescholtenen jungen Mann wird daraufhin nach Vollendung seiner Heerespflicht in feierlichster Weise das Staatsbürgerrecht verliehen."[57] It seems to be an afterthought when he ends his section on citizenship with the statement that „das deutsche Mädchen ist Staatsangehörige und wird mit ihrer Verheiratung erst Bürgerin. Doch kann auch den im Erwerbsleben stehenden weiblichen deutschen Staatsangehörigen das Bürgerrecht verliehen werden."[58]

Hitler's validation of Günther's racial theory and Dinter's typology is obviously not unqualified. While he shares many of these authors' opinions, in *Mein Kampf*, his personal experience is front and center. He considers the lessons he claims to have learned as a young man in Vienna to have been momentous for the development of his views on race and nation. Hitler describes himself as an independent mind and a rebellious genius from a conservative middle-class family, who fought against formidable odds until he reached the top position in a history-changing movement. In his hometown of Braunau at the German-Austrian border, he supposedly acquired his keen sense of national identity, and he considers it providential that he assumed a leadership role for which he believed he was ideally qualified.[59]

Hitler asserts that he grew up without racial prejudices or anti-Jewish sentiments and ascribes his anti-Semitism to his experiences in the Austrian capital, where he claims to have arrived with an open mind:[60] „In dieser Zeit

56 Hitler, 490; Hitler/Murphy, 341.

57 Hitler, 491; "The rights of citizenship shall be conferred on every young man whose health and character have been certified as good, after having completed his period of military service." Hitler/Murphy, 341.

58 Hitler, 491; "The German girl is a subject of the state and will become a citizen when she marries. At the same time, those women who earn their livelihood independently have the right to acquire citizenship if they are German subjects." Hitler/Murphy, 342.

59 Hitler rationalizes his decision to become a founding member, with provisional membership number seven in the Nazi movement: „Das Schicksal selbst schien mir jetzt einen Fingerzeig zu geben" Hitler, 242; "Fate herself now seemed to supply the finger-post." Hitler/Murphy, 178, or, more simply, "Now fate appeared to give me a hint."

60 Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna,* 16; Hamann, 166.

sollte mir auch das Auge geöffnet werden für zwei Gefahren, die ich beide vordem kaum dem Namen nach kannte auf keinen Fall aber in ihrer entsetzlichen Bedeutung für die Existenz des deutschen Volkes begriff: Marxismus und Judentum."[61] Hitler's typecasting of Germans and Jews as antagonistic opposites evokes the racialized paradigm of lightness and darkness that is also found in Dinter and Günther. One striking example is Hitler's report about an encounter with an unassimilated Jewish man in Vienna who wore a *Kaftan*, the traditional black overcoat of Jewish men. Hitler claims to have asked himself: „Ist dies auch ein Jude? war mein erster Gedanke. So sahen sie freilich in Linz nicht aus. Ich beobachtete den Mann verstohlen und vorsichtig, allein je länger ich in dieses fremde Gesicht starrte und forschend Zug um Zug prüfte, umso mehr wandelte sich in meinem Gehirn die erste Frage zu einer anderen Fassung: Ist dies auch ein Deutscher?"[62] Hitler omits physiognomic descriptions such as those provided by Dinter and Günther, probably because they were already being propagated in the Nazi media. With just a few strokes, he evokes the Jewish stereotype as a racial and national alien, and leaves it up to the reader to envision the blond and blue-eyed counterimage of the German national. In describing his own presumed reactions at length, he suggests that some danger emanates from the dark-haired stranger. His reaction implies a warning to his presumably Aryan readers to keep their distance from alien-looking individuals and groups. Equally important is Hitler's insinuation that his response transcended the realm of the personal. Increasingly in his narrative, Hitler arrogates the role of a seer and spokesman on behalf of Germany and presumes to intuit the perceptions and feelings of all Germans.

The second volume of *Mein Kampf* sketches the Nazi state. Hitler deplores Germany's lack of racial uniformity and praises the Nordic race as the most desirable racial element for future population management: „Dies ist der Segen des Unterbleibens restloser Vermischung, daß wir auch heute noch in unserem deutschen Volkskörper große unvermischt gebliebene Bestände an nordisch-germanischen Menschen besitzen, in denen wir den wertvollsten

61 Hitler, *Mein Kampf,* 20; "It was during this period that my eyes were opened to two perils, the names of which I scarcely knew hitherto and had no notion of their terrible significance for the existence of the German people. These two perils were Marxism and Judaism." Hitler/Murphy, 29.

62 Hitler, 59; The translations typically omit the questions "Is he too a Jew? .... Is he too a German?" Hitler/Murphy proceed as follows: "I suddenly encountered a phenomenon in a long kaftan and wearing black sidelocks. My first thought was: Is this a Jew? They certainly did not have this appearance in Linz. I watched the man stealthily and cautiously, but the longer I gazed at the strange countenance and examined it feature by feature, the more the question shaped itself in my brain: Is this a German?" Hitler/Murphy, 55.

Schatz für unsere Zukunft erblicken dürfen."[63] For his own time, Hitler deemphasizes the Nordic imperative and simultaneously rejects democratic principles and majority rule. Instead, he endorses individual leadership—essentially his own—arguing for a worldview that assigns universal domination to the most advanced human race „baut nicht auf dem Gedanken der Majorität, sondern dem der Persönlichkeit auf."[64]

Mein Kampf is driven by a claim of universality according to which Hitler's experience is equal to the experience of the German nation: his awakening foreshadows the awakening of the entire nation. Within this panorama, Hitler claims the position of a prophetic leader. From this point of view, he writes with unwavering certainty about all aspects of the German nation. His topics range from the economic crisis and mass poverty to the adversarial political movements of Marxism and Social Democracy. At the core of all perceived social and political problems, he detects the interference of Jewish conspirators.

The first volume of *Mein Kampf* established Hitler as the exemplary German in a narrative modeled after the educational novel, in which the protagonist moves from innocence to enlightenment. Hitler cites painful experiences that supposedly caused him to recognize a global Jewish conspiracy and its threat to German society. He details his humble origins and the hardships he faced as a young man from a small rural town. He immediately turns to the themes of heritage and bloodlines, and emphasizes Germany's racial superiority as the reason and justification for its future role as a colonial power.[65]

On its initial pages, *Mein Kampf* offers expansionist visions and points to future wars, martyrdom, and national greatness. Envisioning himself as the paradigmatic German, who like most of his fellow Nazis did not enjoy the privilege of an elitist education, Hitler disparages the Humanistic educational ideal.[66] Obviously aggrieved by his mediocre education, he articulates anti-intellectual views throughout his book. On one hand, his background presents a social handicap, on the other, it is an asset when he espouses his role as a self-taught genius. In no way do his educational shortcomings stop Hitler from

63 Hitler, 438; "A benefit which results from the fact that there was no all-round assimilation is to be seen in that even now we have large groups of Nordic Germanic people within our national organization and that their blood has not mixed with the blood of other races. We must look upon that as our most valuable treasure for the sake of the future." Hitler/Murphy, 309.

64 Hitler, 493; "Hence it is not based on the idea of the majority but on that of personality." Hitler/Murphy, 342.

65 Hitler, 1.

66 Hitler, 5.

theorizing and prophesizing. His discussions of a staggering number of topics are interspersed with slogans designed to win the hearts and minds of his readers: „Deutscher Knabe vergiß nicht, daß du ein Deutscher bist" and „Mädchen gedenke, daß du eine deutsche Mutter werden sollst."[67]

These slogans are directed at the male youth and bestow German national identity upon boys. For a female, her ability to achieve full membership in the national community is synonymous with her willingness and ability to procreate. According to Hitler, the German national identity is static and homogeneous, and he professes a decided antipathy toward the Habsburg model of the multination state. He asserts: „Wußten wir nicht schon als Jungen, daß dieser österreichische Staat keine Liebe zu uns, Deutschen, besaß, ja überhaupt nicht besitzen konnte?"[68] Hitler's representational strategy includes effective narrative models. *Mein Kampf* starts out as a self-narrative to connote authenticity, since the author and the narrator by all appearances are identical and fulfill the "autobiographical contract" as defined by Philippe Lejeune.[69] Gaining the reader's trust in a seemingly personal manner makes the programmatic aspects of the text palatable and paves the way for the digressions on history and society in a tone that is both visionary and prophetic. Thus, Hitler's writing achieves the effect of "totality" and all-inclusiveness that other Nazi authors and orators such as Joseph Goebbels also evoked. In their presentations, they mixed genres and stylistic registers, included statistics and data, and persuaded through the use of popular sayings and allusions to classical German literature.[70] Embedded in Hitler's blended narrative are the core messages directed against Social Democrats and the bourgeoisie, and the issue of the so-called *Judenfrage*—the Jewish question.[71] Hitler solidifies his construct of the German as Aryan in conjunction with an image of "the Jew" as the radical Other, who is to be excluded from German society.[72]

Gender is not at the forefront of Hitler's theorizing. *Mein Kampf* describes women primarily as wives and mothers with little creative potential. A cursory comparison of women and the masses encapsulates Hitler's viewpoint according to which the masses, like women, follow their emotions and

67 Hitler, 10; "German youth, do not forget that you are a German," and "Remember little girl, that one day you must be a German mother." Hitler/Murphy, 23.

68 "Did not we as youngsters fully realize that the House of Habsburg did not, and could not, have any love for us Germans?" Hitler/Murphy, 25.

69 Lejeune, "Autobiographical Pact," 5–6.

70 Stollmann and Smith, "Fascist Politics," 42–4, 48.

71 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 54–6.

72 Hitler, 59–61.

instincts and yearn for harmony and "completion" by a strong male force.[73] Motherhood, Hitler believes, is a woman's natural role, and he likens childbirth to a battlefield, where a woman has the opportunity to realize herself as a German since she „kämpft ihren Kampf für die Nation."[74] Beyond these clichés, Hitler does not attempt to comment on the lives of women. He seems to envision a kind of gender segregation that was later formalized in the NS-Frauenschaft (Nazi Women's League), headed by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, who was appointed *Reichsfrauenführerin* (Leader of the National Socialist Women's League) and held this increasingly insignificant office until the end of the war.

Mein Kampf infuses the paradigm of the racial nation with pragmatic considerations that are absent from Dinter's novel and Günther's *Rassenkunde*. Despite its flights of fancy, Hitler's manifesto attests to the author's deter mination to engage with Germany in its current condition and his plans to gradually impose his cosmovision of world domination and racial superiority.

Alfred Rosenberg's Racialized Cultural History Der Mythus des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts

In his monumental tome *Der Mythus des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (*The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, 1930), Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg foregrounds as his major theme leadership by men of Nordic race in a state founded on racial exclusivity and gender differences.[75] He envisions the role of women in the future Nazi state as that of helpmates and reproducers, and solidifies his Nordic-German-Nazi construct by contrasting it to the Jewish stereotype, which he also envisions in racial terms as homogeneous and highly adaptable. Rosenberg is in agreement with Dinter, Günther, and Hitler when he declares the mixing of races and racial diversity the major problems of his time. The second binary model in Rosenberg's scheme is that of masculinity versus femininity. The paradigmatic citizen of his envisioned Nazi state is Aryan and male.

Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts purports to survey race as a dominant force in world history. Rosenberg's scholarly aspirations are evident from the critical apparatus and index he places at the beginning of his book. In a pretentious prose style, he feigns complete coverage similar to the comprehensive treatises by the conservative philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) and the cultural and racial theorist Houston Stewart Chamberlain

73 Hitler, 44.

74 "where she fights her battle for the nation." Hitler and Scholtz-Klink, "Frauenkongress 1935," 3.

75 Rosenberg, *Mythus*; Rosenberg, *Myth* (trans. Vivian Bird).

(1855–1927). Rosenberg shared Dilthey's anti-materialist views and the vague concept of *Weltanschauung*, and was inspired by the racializing historical study by Chamberlain, Richard Wagner's son-in-law, to whom Artur Dinter had dedicated *Die Sünde wider das Blut*.[76] Rosenberg anchors his theses in the traumatic experience of the First World War and the collapse of the German Empire, transforming his lingering sense of loss into a vision of hope in the conviction that the sacrifices made in the war had not been in vain.[77]

In his treatise, Rosenberg sketches elements of a future Germany and its citizens following racial cultural-historical paradigms in the chapter "*Rasse und Rassenseele*," where racial identity is characterized as a creative force.[78] Like Hitler, Rosenberg combines the concept of the superior race with that of personal excellence.[79] In his typical uncompromising phraseology, he elevates racial science to the level of a religion, which has its own laws and takes its prescribed course.[80] Consistent with Günther's typology, Rosenberg lists the features of the Nordic race as light skin, blue eyes, and exemplary leadership qualities. This race, he maintains, is superior to all other races, regardless of their geographic location or language. Thus, he identifies alleged representatives of the Nordic race in early Egyptian art and follows a supposed trail of Nordic "blood" through India, Iran, and Greece.[81] Impressed with the military achievements of ancient Rome, Rosenberg asserts that the Roman Empire was founded by the Nordic race.[82] However, like Dinter, he has difficulty reconciling the Christian religion with its Jewish roots, and addresses this dilemma by differentiating between a positive form of Christianity expressed in the works of Germany's foremost German poet, Goethe, and a destructive tradition presumably derived from Judaism.[83]

In conjunction with race, gender and male supremacy play important roles in Rosenberg's racial historiography. Rosenberg criticizes Swiss anthropologist Johann Jakob Bachofen, author of a pioneering study about a prehistoric Greek matriarchy, *Das Mutterrecht* (1861). According to Rosenberg, patriarchal societies were established wherever Nordic invaders prevailed because male

76 The dedication reads: „Dem Deutschen Houston Stewart Chamberlain" (To the German Houston Stewart Chamberlain).

77 Rosenberg, 3.

78 "Race and Race Soul," Rosenberg/Bird, 6.

79 Rosenberg, 5.

80 Rosenberg, 23; "religion of the blood," Rosenberg/Bird, 6.

81 Rosenberg, 27, 30, 35.

82 Rosenberg, 54.

83 Rosenberg, 78–82.

dominance was an ingrained trait of the Nordic race.[84] Hence, the Nordic invaders created the institution of marriage for the sake of discipline and morality. Still, as Rosenberg paradoxically claims, the status of women was raised wherever Nordic men ruled.[85]

Rosenberg supports his historical fantasies with references to several disciplines, notably aesthetics and art. He ascribes the expression of nobility and beauty exclusively to the Nordic male and insists that this ideal of beauty is universal and enjoys world-wide admiration.[86] Rosenberg adamantly rejects modern art and its alternative and abstract modes of representation. He condemns painter Paul Gauguin for choosing South Pacific Islanders as his models and Pablo Picasso for painting distorted bodies.[87] Arguing that aesthetic sensitivities are racial traits, Rosenberg calls for a race-based cultural homogeneity that imposes aesthetic norms and justifies censorship. These views in *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* correspond to the concept of "Degenerate Art."

Rosenberg claims that legitimate states were created by male associations (*Männerbünde*) and were rightfully under male control.[88] He condemns feminism and the emancipation of women and Jews as aberrations that jeopardize German society by fostering unbridled individualism. He maintains that individual freedoms threaten the integrity of the racial nation and expresses the strongest support for a regime that assigns women a subordinate, albeit "respected," position.[89] He opposes voting rights for women, which he believes are incompatible with a woman's true calling.[90] Women, he holds, should not compete with men in what he defines as the male domain—politics, science, and academic pursuits. He envisions women as the protectors of life and the race in the service of their men.[91]

Rosenberg maps out strategies for women to help their men in the fight against capitalism and commercialism; for example, through good housekeeping and thriftiness. He recommends virtually unlimited opportunities in female education, but with the caveat that the purpose of education should be the enrichment of women's social and family lives. By no means does he

84 Rosenberg, 41; Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht*.
85 Rosenberg, 47.
86 Rosenberg, 291, 296.
87 Rosenberg, 299.
88 Rosenberg, 485.
89 Rosenberg, 484–5.
90 Rosenberg, 494–5, 497.
91 Rosenberg, 509–10.

envision women entering a career, and he rejects their involvement in politics and the military.[92] The Nazi doctrine of gender inequality was realized in decreased opportunities for women and a *numerus clausus* for female students at universities.

The preceding exploration of programmatic Nazi writing reveals that, despite the differences in focus, the texts under discussion share the precepts outlined in the program of the Nazi Party. Regardless of the genre of a given Nazi text—Dinter's melodramatic tale of racial conflict, Günter's racial science, Hitler's autobiographical manifesto, and Rosenberg's cultural history—the fundamental assumptions are identical. All of these works call for racial and cultural homogeneity, patriarchal structures, and a race- and personality-based social hierarchy. The reactionary and anti-democratic values promoted by Nazi authors were immediately challenged by intellectuals who rejected the National Socialist cosmovision and the notion of a racially homogeneous nation.

At the time of the Nazi takeover, the process of National Socialist image-building through propaganda texts had been completed. Programmatic texts had consolidated the program of Aryan superiority and the preeminence of the Nordic race as the German ideal. This ideal was soon the dominant model of cultural production with the task of presenting propaganda as fact. The stereotype of the German as Aryan was propagated in literature and film; it fueled manifestos and theories of history, informed classroom instruction and determined the course of research in academic disciplines. Alleged German and Jewish identity predetermined inclusion or exclusion at universities, and the outcome of criminal and civil suits in the courts.

Critical Responses to the Nazi Typology

Hans Reimann's and Hugo Bettauer's Political Satires

Dinter's bestseller drew immediate opposition from authors and critics. One of the most effective and funniest responses was Hans Reimann's parody *Die Dinte wider das Blut. Ein Zeitroman* (*Ink Against Blood. A Novel of our Time*, 1921), published under the pseudonym Artur Sünder—literally Artur Sinner, a parodistic pun on Dinter's name.[93] A play of words in the title targets Dinter and his work: "*Dinte*" is a dialect form of "*Tinte*" (ink) that ridicules Dinter's Alsatian dialect and at the same time is a mutilated version of his last name.

92 Rosenberg, 512.

93 Reimann, *Die Dinte wider das Blut.*

The deviation from High German in the distortion of Dinter's name suggests that the author who determines traits of inferiority in others is himself inferior.

Reimann (1889–1969) deftly exposes the sentimentality and dilettantism of Dinter's narrative and the spurious claims of Aryan purity that Dinter attributes to his protagonist. Reimann condenses and collates highlights from Dinter's novel to ridicule the pretentious and factually misleading work dressed up as a documentary novel. He exposes the materialistic underpinnings of *Die Sünde wider das Blut* underneath its ostensible idealism. Through a counter-hero with the ludicrous name "Hermann Stänker"—"Hermann Stinker," a parody of the name "Hermann Kämpfer"—Reimann attributes ignoble qualities such as greed and cunning to Dinter's supposedly noble Aryan. Other correspondences include the "Nordic" appearance of the two characters and their failure to produce "Aryan" children. Reimann's Stänker, like Dinter's Kämpfer, fails in both his professional and racial aspirations, but eventually he abandons his racial ideals and joins the monocled business elite and the modern world of capitalism.

Reimann's parody implies that Aryan supremacists need not be taken seriously since they cannot prevail in the long run. By making light of the racist fanaticism of the extreme Right, *Die Dinte wider das Blut* aims at deflating Dinter's message and exposing the implausibility of the protagonist's preaching, perhaps in the hope that naming and shaming the weaknesses of Dinter's novel might neutralize its effect. However, if this had been Reimann's intention, future events showed that he failed: the distribution of Dinter's novel—16 editions in five years and 200,000 copies sold—attest to the popularity of his work with the general public.[94]

A similar miscalculation underlies the conception of the satirical novel *Die Stadt ohne Juden. Ein Roman von übermorgen* (*The City Without Jews. A Novel of the Day after Tomorrow*, 1922) by Hugo Bettauer (1872–1925).[95] In the opening paragraphs, Bettauer introduces Jewish and Gentile Viennese at a political rally during which an anti-Semitic movement clearly has the upper hand. Their battle cry is „Hinaus mit den Juden," and the narrator reports that it is common for Jewish-looking persons with dark hair and the stereotypical Jewish nose to be assaulted.[96] The name of the leading anti-Semite, Chancellor Dr. Karl Schwertfeger, is reminiscent of the German nationalist and anti-Semite Karl Lueger, who served as Mayor of Vienna from 1897 to 1910. Schwertfeger, driven in a

94 Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 502.

95 Bettauer, *Stadt ohne Juden*; Bettauer, *The City Without Jews* (trans. Salomea Neumark Brainin).

96 Bettauer, 3; "Throw out the Jews!" Bettauer/Brainin, 8.

state-of-the-art motor vehicle in allusion to the car fleets of the Nazis, wears a big floppy hat like an American gangster. Indeed, this middle-aged, white-haired demagogue bears little resemblance to the Nordic athletes idealized by Dinter and Günther.[97] However, he is an enthusiastic orator who incites crowds. Bettauer observes that young girls and women adore him in a manner that, to the reader, calls to mind the adulation of Nazi leaders by female fans. The big car enhances the erotic appeal and makes this rather unattractive male seem alluring.

Through physical descriptions of negative non-Jewish and positive Jewish figures, Bettauer discredits racial anti-Semitic stereotypes. For example, a „schlanker, großer und hübscher" Zionist parliamentarian, who is exposed to racial slurs, serves as a contrasting figure for the heavy-set Chancellor and his loutish minions.[98] Schwertfeger's proposed anti-Jewish laws echo the program of the National Socialist Party with which Bettauer was familiar, as Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan Pelt point out. Schwertfeger's proposals are met with jubilation from his electoral base. The satire targets the Nazis, who made their presence in Vienna felt even though their party was at the time still outlawed in Austria.[99] The policies endorsed by his followers, the *Hakenkreuzler* (Swastika people), mirror Dinter's and Günther's tenets about race, but Bettauer suggests that the masses see these laws not as an opportunity for racial improvement, but rather for profit-making. The prospect of disowning and expelling the Jews would make great wealth available to those who follow Schwertfeger's German National Party. Bettauer applies the term "*Hakenkreuzler*" to associate the swastika symbol with Austria's right-wing Christian Socialists as well as the National Socialists. In the early 1920s, Socialists used the term "*Hakenkreuzler*" as a designation for National Socialists in protest against the latter's cooptation of the term "Socialist" in their Party's name. Socialists rejected the very notion of a "German Socialism" as nationalist propaganda.[100] Bettauer's *Hakenkreuzler* are configured as a core of fanatics, whom translator Salomea Neumark Brainin, in her introduction, compares to the Ku Klux Klan. Bettauer juxtaposes the victories of the racist contingent in his novel to the suffering of the persecuted Jews and families of mixed ancestry that are torn asunder. Still, *Die Stadt ohne Juden* has a happy ending: the chaos is of short duration and democracy is restored.[101]

97 Bettauer, 4.

98 Bettauer, 10; "the tall, slender, handsome young man," Bettauer/Brainin, 21.

99 Dwork and Pelt, *Holocaust*, 54; Herzog, *Vienna is Different.*

100 Eitz and Engelhardt, *Diskursgeschichte der Weimarer Republik*, 310.

101 Bettauer, 54–5.

After the depiction of an economic downswing, the chapter "*Das Ende der Hakenkreuzler*,"[102] marks the decline of the Schwertfeger regime as a result of the anti-Jewish legislature. Vienna's cultural life turns out to be dependent upon the Jewish presence in the city. The Austrian mainstream presumably is miserly and lacks the taste and love for luxury that is needed for the arts and nightlife to flourish. In a short time, Austria's cosmopolitan capital is in decline and resembles a provincial town.

A particular source of satire is the *Hakenkreuzler*'s rejection of modern life. Most specifically, they have no sense of fashion, as revealed in the chapter "*Loden—die große Mode*."[103] The story of a textile merchant who tries to take advantage of the anti-Semitic laws is a case in point. He appropriates a Jewish businessman's property, but suffers business losses because his fashion articles no longer sell.[104] Even in popular vacation spots, Austrian patriots are generally seen in Alpine dress, rough woolens, knickerbockers, and Alpine hats with a feather. Without the Jews, the narrator notes, Austrians have become undemanding and neglectful of their appearance.[105]

Bettauer's narrative is driven by a love plot involving a young woman, Lotte Spineder, and a Jewish World War I veteran, Leo Strakosch. She is the daughter of Strakosch's superior, a high-ranking civil servant, and a traditional Austrian gentleman. Bettauer's characters seem fashioned in response to Dinter's *Die Sünde wider das Blut.* Lotte's father holds the title of "*Rat*" (Councilor) as does Dinter's villain Burghamer. The characters of the male lovers in Dinter and Bettauer, Kämpfer and Strakosch, share certain traits in common: a seemingly ingrained elegance, an athletic physique, and a clean-shaven face, with the difference that Kämpfer is blond and Aryan, and Strakosch dark-haired and Jewish. According to Bettauer, Strakosch is a creative, talented young man, and the Austrian girl loves him dearly.[106] The forbidden romance has a special allure for Lotte, since it requires disguise and deception. The element of mutual affection distinguishes Bettauer's scenario from Dinter's, which implies that Aryan women involved with Jewish men must have been duped and victimized. In Bettauer, the Jewish man and the Austrian woman meet as equals. The category of race plays no role in their choice. Bettauer depicts their marriage as an individual choice, not an institution for breeding.

102 "The End of the *Hakenkreuzler*," Bettauer/Brainin, 111.

103 Bettauer, 35; "Rough Woolens," Bettauer/Brainin, 75.

104 Bettauer, 35.

105 Bettauer, 56.

106 Bettauer, 28.

Bettauer devotes a chapter to the analysis of his primary *Hakenkreuzler* figure, Schwertfeger, to uncover the base mentality of this character.[107] There are striking parallels between the figure of Schwertfeger and Hitler. The life-long bachelor Schwertfeger is an over-ambitious workaholic. He resides in the most prestigious part of Vienna and enjoys standing by his window towering over the human masses. He only watches the crowds, without establishing personal contact. His diction is succinct and authoritative, but the reader soon learns that his assertive pose hides a nervous condition, and he avoids administrative details.[108] He delegates important tasks, takes extensive vacations in the Alps, and loses touch with current developments. When he is in the company of his closest confidant, he discloses his disdain for the common people and admits that he uses anti-Semitism as a useful political tool.[109]

Neither the news about an impending financial crisis nor the mounting social problems impress Schwertfeger. He seems incapable of empathy, as demonstrated by his orders to end rent control, implement new border controls, and execute harsh police raids. Those around him must always be on guard, since he may turn against them at the slightest mistake. His egomania becomes obvious in an exchange with his deputy when he discloses that his primary concern is his personal legacy. Schwertfeger expects a marble statue to be erected in his honor and a portion of Vienna's *Ringstraße* to be named after him.[110]

Convinced that a character like Schwertfeger would not survive the fall of his regime, Bettauer envisions a severe depression and suicide as Schwertfeger's ultimate response.[111] Besieged by problems, Schwertfeder first violates his racist principles and turns to a Jewish firm to raise money. In the end, he shoots himself with his revolver. The demise of Bettauer's protagonist marks the end of the *Hakenkreuzler* regime: the Jews are called back, freedom of the press is restored, and prosperity lies ahead.

Envisioning a fascist Nazi movement like the *Hakenkreuzler* or the Nazis as a mere interlude with a happy ending was fairly typical for antifascist authors in the early 1920s, when the implications of National Socialism were still impossible to gauge. Tragically, Bettauer, whom right-wing extremists labeled

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107 Bettauer, 22–6.

108 Bettauer, 22.

109 Bettauer, 22.

110 Bettauer, 26; In an apparent irony of history, in 1922, a section of the Vienna *Ringstraße* was named after Vienna's anti-Semitic Mayor Karl Lueger, and in 1926 a prominent square with a statue of him was designated "*Dr Karl Lueger Platz*."

111 Bettauer, 74.

immoral and a Communist, was murdered by a member of the Nazi party, Otto Rothstock, who was enraged about Bettauer's critique of anti-Semitism in *Die Stadt ohne Juden*.

Joseph Roth's Society Novel Das Spinnennetz

The novel *Das Spinnennetz* (1923) by Galicia-born author Joseph Roth (1894–1939) paints a literary panorama of Berlin society. Social class is featured as a prominent theme and the narrative provides factual information specific to the period after the First World War. Roth, a Socialist at the time, contextualizes his characters with the developments that shaped German society in the 1920s.

Similar to authors of German Realism such as Gustav Freytag, Roth characterizes his literary figures through physiognomic descriptions. In contrast to the typecasting in Dinter's novels, Roth's typology aims at undermining racial anti-Semitism. He explicitly criticizes the principles of Nazi ideology, subverts the practice of contrasting German and Jewish figures as opposites, and debunks radical nationalism. Roth's paradigmatic Nazi character is a Gentile opportunist of obscure background who, like Hitler, rises to prominence in the aftermath of the First World War. Juxtaposing this character with a likewise problematic Jewish figure, Roth subverts the predictable model of good versus evil that informs Nazi narratives.

Das Spinnennetz was published as a serial novel in the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the organ of the Social Democratic Party. The novel begins by surveying problems stirred up by disgruntled conservatives, jobless soldiers, and socially displaced members of the middle class. In this volatile climate, the increasing crowd appeal of nationalism poses a major problem. Roth's assessment shows similarities to the later scenarios presented in Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories* and Bertolt Brecht's *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*.[112] These similarities reveal a discursive continuity between earlier and later antifascist writings.

Roth provides details of the Nazi milieu. He mentions stormtroopers marching triumphantly into assembly halls, where they bask in a feeling of power as members of a mass movement, as well as rituals such as the Nazi salute and carrying speakers to the podium at public events.[113] He describes the atmosphere of exhilaration in Nazi circles fueled by the hope for a new start under their authoritarian leader: „Aber Unterwerfung forderte der Groβe,

112 Roth, *Spinnennetz*. Translations follow Roth, *The Spider's Web and Zipper and his Father* (trans. John Hoare); Isherwood, *Berlin Stories*.

113 Roth, *Spinnennetz*, 59, 61.

der Naive, Ungebildete, im Rausch der Begeisterung Lebende."[114] Roth notes the mystical tendencies in National Socialism, which Wilhelm Reich later identified in *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* (*Mass Psychology of Fascism*, 1933).[115] Roth's protagonist, Theodor Lohse, is emblematic of the Nazi mentality. Roth attributes to him an unpredictable disposition brought about by envy, resentment, and a boundless ambition to excel, behind which lurk feelings of inferiority.

The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* announced *Das Spinnennetz* as an exploration of the "morass of reactionary forces" from which the "Swastika Movement" emerged.[116] Roth captured the moment when the nascent Nazi movement was coming to the fore. The character of Lohse anticipates later studies of Hitler's psychology and analyses of the mass appeal of fascism. Lohse came from a destabilized authoritarian family of civil servants and became skewed during his childhood. During the war, he suffered further psychological damage. As a child and adolescent, he lacked the recognition he craved and later rejects the mid-level career his father, whom he despises, wants him to pursue. Instead, he tries to attain wealth, elegant women, and social status.

Roth's narrator reveals that the racist views in Lohse's home were reinforced by anti-Semitism in the military, where Lohse was indoctrinated with the notion of a Jewish world conspiracy.[117] Nonetheless, he takes employment with a Jewish jeweler and enters an environment where he meets wealthy patrons and beautiful women, who are inaccessible to him. His anti-Semitism deepens because of his frustration.[118] Roth suggests that the main factor in Lohse's hatred of Jews is not racism, but rather humiliation resulting from social exclusion. His contempt for his own background also causes him to reject the egalitarianism advocated by the Socialist Party.

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114 Roth, 60; "But these big, naïve, uneducated men, living in a whirl of enthusiasm, needed taming." (Roth/Hoare, 53). However, this translation deviates greatly from the original meaning. Literally, the text reads in reference to Hitler, who is mentioned in the previous paragraph: "But the Great One, the Naïve One, the One intoxicated with enthusiasm, demanded submission."

115 Reich, *Massenpsychologie*.

116 Roth's novel was announced in *Arbeiter-Zeitung, Wien* No. 274 (October 6, 1923) as „Der Roman, der in der Arbeiter-Zeitung zum erstenmal gedruckt erscheint, schildert den Sumpfboden der Reaktion, die moralische und geistige Verwilderung, aus der als Blüte das Hakenkreuzlertum aufsteigt." (The novel is published for the first time in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. It depicts the morass of the reactionary forces and the moral and spiritual barbarization from which emerges as their blossom the Swastika Movement.)

117 Roth, 6.

118 Roth, 9.

Roth contextualizes his plot within a literary panorama of the economically depleted Germany that is unable to take care of the masses of disabled war veterans and addresses the demagoguery with which the clique around General Erich von Ludendorff manipulates these desperate men. Ludendorff remains in the background, but Roth introduces other right-wing extremists with whom Lohse tries to associate. He participates in conspiratorial activities and undercover work. He even becomes sexually involved with aristocrats in the military establishment as well as with upper-class women. One of his affairs involves a homosexual liaison with a prince who habitually consorts with ambitious young men. The prince refuses to become Lohse's sponsor since he considers his trysts casual and inconsequential. The experience of being used and abused instills in Lohse resentments against homosexuals and the aristocracy.

Similar to his exclusion from the jeweler's inner circle, Lohse remains an outsider in the prince's social group, where he witnesses an opulent lifestyle without participating in it. This causes his appetites to grow out of bounds and he turns to the most radical political movement, National Socialism, where for the first time he feels acknowledgment.[119] Lohse also despises the Nazi Party and its ideology, but he supports the movement because he sees it as his best chance for advancement.

The theme of opportunism among Nazi adepts is a common thread in antifascist literature. All that Lohse seems to share with his fellow Nazis is the goal to amass money and power, and he basks in the respect he is shown by Party members.[120] Roth describes his protagonist's shortcomings without moral condemnation, but rather suggests that, at heart, Lohse is still the submissive boy who left a humble home with a burning desire to succeed. By assuming a social critical tenor, *Das Spinnennetz* indicts the rich and powerful postwar elite for its corruption, which lays the groundwork for the emergent fascist movement and the empowerment of characters such as Lohse.

Lohse's ascent leads all the way to the position of Chief of State Security. Along the way, he acquires status symbols including a blond upper-class trophy wife and the financial means to support a lavish lifestyle. The narrator emphasizes that Lohse's racial profile is a key element in his success; he is a perfect fit for the physical requirements of the Nazi movement: „Noch war man blond, noch waren ein paar allzu frühe Fältchen an den Schläfen nicht deutlich geworden, noch konnte man seine weiβen gesunden Zähne zeigen."[121] Unlike

119 Roth, 38, 52.

120 Roth, 44, 59.

121 Roth, 5, 99; "One was still blonde, those two tiny, premature lines at the temples were scarcely visible, one could still display fine white teeth." Roth/Hoare, 90.

Nazi authors, Roth refrains from correlating appearance and disposition, and avoids connoting race and psychology. The foremost criteria used in his novel to assess a character include his chosen milieu, his background and education, and his personal experience. This is true for Lohse and his Jewish counterpart, Benjamin Lenz, an Ashkenazic Jew from Lodz.

Roth attributes to Lenz some of the features traditionally associated with Jewish male characters. However, by placing Lenz into the proper cultural context, Roth opens a window into the mentality and motives of a Jewish man, who has experienced poverty and persecution. Thus, the effect of Lenz's lack of acculturation is minimized and reasons are provided for his anarchistic tendencies. The characters of Lenz and his brother predate Roth's essay *Juden auf Wanderschaft* (*The Wandering Jews*, 1927), which examines the situation of displaced Jews from Eastern Europe living in the immigrant quarters of Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and New York, and who became the scapegoats of German society for a host of social problems. Even assimilated Jews held them responsible for the rising anti-Semitism.[122] As in Lohse's life story, social exclusion is a driving force for Lenz. In contrast to Lohse, who follows his personal ambition, Lenz thinks in collective terms. He acts out of a sense of justice and feels emotionally connected to Jews everywhere. The suffering of his community unleashes within him a revolutionary energy aimed at destroying the existing social order.

For both of Roth's characters, social inequality is the core problem they have faced in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic. The excessive wealth of a select few stands in stark contrast to the disenfranchisement of the many. The prominence of figures like General Ludendorff suggests that, despite external reform, little has actually changed since the war. The class system has remained intact, leaving the masses to live in poverty. This reality drives Lenz's anarchistic fervor and Lohse's personal resentment, and both figures resort to antisocial measures. Roth's narrator approves of the anarchistic potential he sees in the oppressed Jewish masses and casts Lenz and his brother Lazar as potential leaders and visionaries. In contrast, the ambition of Lohse and his Nazi friends appears small-minded, since it only aims at personal success. Like a gangster, Lohse fights everyone he sees standing in his way, but fails to understand the even more powerful forces around him.

The traits Roth attributes to his Nazi character Lohse will become the earmarks of similar characters in the works of Feuchtwanger, Wolf, and Brecht. In his novel, Roth undertakes a major revision of Nazi themes. For example, he transforms the theme of a simple life that Dinter connotes positively in the story of Hermann Kämpfer into petty provincialism, and he reconfigures

122 Roth, *Juden auf Wanderschaft*; Roth, *The Wandering Jews* (trans. Michael Hofmann).

the idealistic ambition of Dinter's hero as the opportunism of a parvenu. Roth associates the motif of the genial scientist, which Dinter associates with the Aryan male, with the mysterious figure of Lazar Lenz, a radical idealist, who builds explosives for revolutionary purposes. Through the figure of this potential terrorist, Roth suggests a counterbalance to the threat posed by the Nazi movement: „Aber dieser junge Bruder mit den sanften, golden schimmernden Augen ließ den ganzen Weltteil in die Luft fliegen."[123]

Roth's engaging narrative about Nazis and their antagonists was purely fictional. In the 1920s, it was the Nazis who laid the groundwork for the very actions that *Das Spinnennetz* associates with a Jewish anarchist network. The Nazis were scheming to expand across the borders into Austria and Italy, and also included Britain and the United States in their plans.

Gertrud Kolmar's Novella Die jüdische Mutter

Popular lore and Nazi propaganda mystified and demonized the figure of the Jew in the anti-Jewish legend of the "Wandering Jew" about an immortal Jew who must roam the Earth until the end of time. Joseph Roth repurposed this legend in *Juden auf Wanderschaft* (*The Wandering Jews*, 1927), a documentary account of the fate of Eastern Jewish immigrants in the world capitals, to symbolize their persecution and displacement since the late nineteenth century.[124] Artur Dinter uses figures evocative of the Wandering Jew to illustrate the danger facing the Aryan race. He casts Jewish figures as carriers of corruption, like an epidemic infecting Gentile society. Sander Gilman, in his study *Difference and Pathology*, traced the pathologizing of Jewish traits in medical and social science discourses and examined the role of racial theory in the cultural imaginary.[125] In her novella *Die jüdische Mutter* (written 1930/31; published 1965), poet Gertrud Kolmar uses contrasting Nazi and Jewish figures in a narrative designed to undermine affirmative Nazi stereotypes.[126] She attributes demonic features to her two almost interchangeable blond and blue-eyed Aryan male protagonists, the late husband and new lover of her Jewish female protagonist Martha, and reveals the detrimental role these males play in the lives of Martha and her daughter.

Berlin-born Gertrud Chodziesner, the daughter of a Jewish defense attorney, wrote under the pen name Kolmar (1894–1943). Her family belonged to the educated bourgeoisie and faced hardships during the First World War and

123 Roth, 124; "But this young brother, with his gentle eyes, and their golden lights, could blow up half a world." Roth/Hoare, 111.

124 Roth, *Juden auf Wanderschaft.*

125 Gilman, *Difference and Pathology*, 157.

126 Kolmar, *Die jüdische Mutter.*

economic decline in the Weimar Republic. Kolmar in particular suffered under the restrictive gender-role expectations of her class, which limited the creative potential of women. Suffering persecution under National Socialism, she was conscripted as a forced laborer and eventually perished in the Holocaust. Many of her manuscripts were published posthumously.[127] *Die jüdische Mutter* (translated as *A Jewish Mother from Berlin*) first appeared in 1965 under the title *Eine Mutter* (*A Mother*).[128] The West German publisher omitted the word "*jüdisch*" (Jewish) from the original title, perhaps to circumvent any potential for an anti-Semitic response. However, omission of the descriptor "Jewish" alters the trajectory of the novella because it erases the cultural specificity that is central to the work and to the understanding of an author who was directly affected by Nazi anti-Semitism. Like her protagonist Martha Jadassohn Wolg, Kolmar had roots in East European Jewry, the segment of the Jewish population who, since the late nineteenth century, had suffered from racist anti-Semitism and were not considered welcome in the Weimar Republic by non-Jews and assimilated Jews.

Two unlikely matches are at the center of *Die jüdische Mutter*, the first of which is the marriage of Martha Jadassohn, the daughter of a conservative Jewish family, to a Christian engineer and son of a businessman, Friedrich Wolg. When his excitement about Martha, who represents to him an exotic trophy wife, wears off, Wolg tries to escape his marriage by taking a Gentile mistress and later going to America, where he dies. Martha takes custody of their daughter, Ursa. Her second partner is Friedrich's friend, Albert Renkens, an engineer like Friedrich, to whom he bears a striking resemblance. Renkens is an adventurer, and it is not explained why he seeks Martha out upon his return from America. Martha does not realize that he has extreme right-wing and racist propensities, in part because she seems to have become desensitized to them. Having lived most of her life among anti-Semites, she has absorbed racist beliefs herself, and seems to think that her Jewishness predestines her to have a strong libido and immoderate passions. Kolmar employs familiar racial stereotypes in her construction of characters. Reminiscent of Dinter's male protagonist, Kolmar's Aryan male figures contrast with Martha, both in appearance and character. Confirming the notion that opposites attract, Martha's appearance was a major factor in her husband's choice: „Wenn ich Blauaugen will und blondes Haar, brauch' ich bloß in den Spiegel zu gucken," Friedrich insists.[129]

127 The first to appear was Kolmar's novella *Susanna* in the anthology *Das leere Haus* (Otten, 1959).

128 Kolmar, *A Jewish Mother from Berlin* and *Susanna* (trans. Brigitte Goldstein).

129 "If I want blue eyes and blond hair, all I have to do is look in the mirror." Kolmar/Goldstein, *A Jewish Mother from Berlin and Susanna*, 12.

Clearly, he takes pleasure in the contrast between his blondness and Martha's dark complexion.[130]

Kolmar inverts the assumptions about heredity and race found in Artur Dinter and Hans Günther. Ursa, the daughter of Friedrich Wolg and Martha, has even darker features than her mother and stands out among her blond playmates.[131] „Als hätte bei seinem Entstehen des Vaters Helle mit dem Dunkel der Mutter gekämpft und ihr Finsteres hätte sein Lichtes zuletzt erschlagen und aufgefressen. Ursulas Auge und Haar waren nächtig, die Haut war gelblich, fast braun, klang tiefer noch als der Elfenbeinton im mütterlichen Gesicht."[132] According to the sequence of heredity Dinter presumes to be the norm, Ursa would be expected to be blond like her father; the darker complexion would dominate later, in the third generation. In *Die Sünde wider das Blut*, Elisabeth, the daughter of a Jewish banker and his Aryan wife, is blond and white-skinned, and her beautiful features resemble those of her mother except for a few telling details, while her son is curly-haired and dark-skinned.[133] By presenting alternative models of heredity, Kolmar questions Nazi genetics, according to which racial mixing predictably produces inferior offspring, and dismisses the notion of a superior Aryan race altogether. These theories later figured prominently in Nazi school curricula on racial hygiene, such as that developed by high-school headmaster Alfred Vogel. Theories based on Mendel and Darwin were included in history and biology classes with the claim that race mixing always corrupts the superior race.[134]

Martha is keenly aware of her and her daughter's exceptional appearance, which makes them look like misfits compared to the majority population. Martha's apprehensions are confirmed when she approaches her neighbors to come to her aid after Ursa's abduction by an unknown sex offender. The mainstream characters look at her „böse, fast knurrig, wie Hunde, die man beim Fressen stört."[135] Kolmar's use of the canine simile to frame the neighbors'

130 Kolmar, 18.

131 Kolmar, 25, 56.

132 Kolmar, 20–1; "As if the lightness of the father had been battling with the darkness of the mother as it was coming into being, and as if her darkness had in the end demolished his light and devoured it, Ursula's eyes and hair were nocturnal, her skin yellowish, almost brown, and of an even deeper hue than the ivory tone of her mother's face." Kolmar/Goldstein, 14.

133 Dinter, *Sünde wider das Blut*, 49, 97.

134 Wegner, *Anti-Semitism and Schooling*, 76–8, 83–4; Pine, *Education*, 43; Mendel, *Versuche über Pflanzenhybriden*; Darwin, *Origin of Species*.

135 Kolmar, *Die jüdische Mutter,* 28; "hostile, almost growling like dogs who had been disturbed devouring their food." Kolmar/Goldstein, 21.

response implies criticism of human pack behavior and of the exclusion of a mother who does not look like her neighbors.

The ordinary Berliners in Kolmar differ markedly from the citizens of the same city in Fritz Lang's popular film *M* (1931), which was released around the time Kolmar wrote her novella.[136] *M* showcases the concern of ordinary people over a kidnapped girl: the community embarks on a manhunt to find the perpetrator. The important distinction between Lang's little Elsie and Kolmar's Ursa is the fact that blond and blue-eyed Elsie is, in racial terms, a member of the national community, while Ursa, with her dark complexion and eyes, is not. Kolmar depicts a society that collectively denies a Jewish woman and her child the same degree of support they would provide an Aryan fellow-German. Kolmar questions the favorable impression of German citizens offered by Lang's film and surmises that their good will would not extend to a Jewish child. When Ursa is found, severely injured and raped, the police seem disinterested, and the hospital staff and other patients react to the traumatized child with hostility.

There are other striking correlations between Lang's film and *Die jüdische Mutter*, which tells a story reminiscent of *M*. However, the details are different since Kolmar presents a critical reading of the film from a Jewish feminist perspective. Not coincidentally, in *M*, the Jewish actor Peter Lorre was cast in the role of the sex murderer Beckert, who is targeting blond girls. Thus, *M* feeds into the stereotype of the lecherous Jew, a stock character of anti-Semitic propaganda, which accuses Jewish men of plotting to systematically destroy the German race by "contaminating" the blood of Aryan women. Lang's *M* configures the female child as the most vulnerable link in the "Aryan" collective. Playing into the image of the Jew as the enemy, the film confirms the widespread fears of a Jewish peril.

In direct contrast, Kolmar presents her Jewish characters as the most vulnerable members of suburban Berlin, where Martha's and Ursa's physical appearance alone elicits anti-Semitic reactions. She also problematizes Jewish identity issues using Martha as a case in point. As a result of her marriage to a non-Jew, Martha has become an outsider to her community of origin. Her parents ostracize her, and she feels discouraged from practicing her faith. Her daughter's situation is even more problematic. Her appearance precludes her from blending into German society, but without a Jewish religious education she has no Jewish identity.[137] Finally, the withdrawn, symbiotic lifestyle of Ursa and her mother provides no protection in a real crisis.

136 Lang, *M.*

137 Kolmar, *Die jüdische Mutter,* 103.

Kolmar's most troubling character is Albert Renkens, who embodies the Nordic type of racial science, and the masculine ideal promoted in anti-Semitic propaganda. His silvery hair and pale blue eyes with small pupils evoke the qualities of a vampire or a wolf, perhaps a werewolf. Nazi lore idealized the wolf as a noble creature, and touted it as the predecessor of the Germanic *Urhund*, a legendary primeval dog associated with the Germanic tribes. The wolf, like the blond, pale-eyed male, thus became a national symbol and racial icon.[138] Once he has become her lover, Renkens becomes aggressive towards Martha and considers her sensuality a shameless Jewish trait. He begins to openly display his anti-Semitism when he gloats over the destruction of the Jews of Spain and makes the callous prediction that a similar fate awaits the Jews of Germany. Martha seems oblivious to these warning signs since she envisions Renkens as Ursa's avenger. Martha's state of alienation stems in part from the lack of support in her time of need and in part from her own self-defeating responses. For example, she harbors prejudices against assimilated Jews; she rejects the assistance offered by a Jewish lawyer and instead turns to Renkens for help.

In her predominantly anti-Semitic environment and under the influence of her racist husband, Martha is cut off from the life-style of the enlightened German Jewish bourgeoisie, and is also cut off from her parents' East European Jewish heritage as a result of her marriage. Left to her own devices, she begins to blend misunderstood Biblical precepts and anti-humanitarian notions of lynch-law killing, blood guilt, and kinship liability to justify her lust for revenge. Her attitude becomes increasingly radical as her feelings of powerlessness intensify. When she visits her traumatized daughter in the hospital, she decides that it is her duty as a mother to kill her child. Irene Kacandes aptly notes that *Eine jüdische Mutter* "is the story of a Jew who goes from apparent acceptance and assimilation into German society (the protagonist marries a gentile) to marginalization and death."[139] Ultimately, Martha falls prey to the Nazi tenets she has internalized and which end up destroying her.

Initially, Martha Wolg believed that she could protect her daughter from life in a big city by moving to a cluster of allotment gardens in a suburb of Berlin. In this depressing lower-middle-class setting, a Jewish mother and her daughter are clearly not welcome. In the city, Martha has found a niche for herself

138 Boria Sax (*Animals,* 83) writes that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Max von Stephanitz bred dogs that he considered "the 'primeval Germanic dog,' an animal we know today as the German shepherd. This dog was intended to embody the virtue of the Germanic people."

139 Kacandes, "Making the Stranger the Enemy," 100.

as an animal photographer, but in the suburb, among unemployed and retired people, she is isolated. Without explicitly mentioning the crises in Germany of the late 1920s, Kolmar alludes to them on several occasions. All of the Gentile figures are overtly or latently anti-Semitic and potentially violent. In his own anecdotes from his life overseas, Renkens flaunts his Nazi propensities, his killer instincts as a big-game hunter, and his colonialist racism.

Kolmar limits her narrator's perspective to engage her readers and approach *Die jüdische Mutter* as they would a mystery story: the identity of the rapist, whom Martha labels a murderer, remains unknown. Perhaps his identity becomes irrelevant in light of the murder Martha commits, perhaps the rapist is one of the main characters—perhaps even Renkens instead of the anonymous truck driver, who is mentioned in the concluding newspaper notice.[140] Throughout the narrative, tantalizing tidbits emerge, most significantly the resemblance between Wolg and Renkens, and the men's affinity for one another based on their shared basic attitudes.[141] Friedrich's bigotry and misogyny begin to show soon after his wedding to Martha, whose sexual assertiveness he finds difficult to cope with. He then raises the issue of Martha's Jewishness and associates her personality traits with her "race."[142] For Friedrich, race is the decisive category—religion only comes into play in the context of Ursa's baptism. Friedrich wants his daughter to be christened, but Martha rejects this idea in keeping with the importance of matrilineality in Jewish culture.[143] Friedrich's references to "blood" and his comparisons of Martha and various animals attest to his racial supremacism and contempt for his wife's identity.[144]

Albert Renkens is the second Gentile male in Martha's life. Like Friedrich, he is associated with the American "Wild West" and the former German colonies in Africa. His memories evoke the oppression and mass slaughter of the Native Americans and the enslavement of Africans. Finally, Renkens also boasts about his prowess as a hunter, suggesting his readiness to exploit and kill, which makes him like the heroes of fascist literature. Renkens represents the opposite of the maligned "Semitic" type, which Martha also rejects when choosing her partners.[145] With his thin lips, strong chin, and weather-beaten skin, Renkens is reminiscent of another popular Nazi type, the seafarer, which connotes danger, adventure, and conquest. He often seems to gaze ahead toward

140 Kolmar, *Die jüdische Mutter,* 192.

141 Kolmar, 100.

142 Kacandes, "Making the Stranger the Enemy," 102–3.

143 Kacandes, 104.

144 Kacandes, 104–5.

145 Kolmar, *Die jüdische Mutter,* 100.

imaginary oceans, like a Viking. Martha feels uneasy about his peculiar qualities, which at the same time arouse her.[146]

Martha does not condone the life-style of the modern metropolis, but is unable to extricate herself from it. For example, her search for an avenger accidentally takes her to a gay bar, where she is mistaken for a cross-dresser and is revolted by the interactions between patrons. This episode reveals Martha's naiveté, which extends to her assessment of the close friendship between her husband and Renkens. The notion that the two men may have had a sexual liaison escapes her.[147] During her involvement with Renkens, her state of mind deteriorates, perhaps because of the denial she has to muster to maintain her association with an anti-Semite. Martha is also in denial about her sexual desires for Renkens. Only when she discovers pamphlets bearing Nazi symbols on Renkens's desk does awareness set in, and she realizes that Renkens never intended to help her. She also recognizes the absurdity of her search for Ursa's "murderer," since she herself killed her child.

The case of Martha reveals the spreading influence of Nazi ideology, which Daniel Goldhagen termed "eliminationist."[148] Renkens is paradigmatic of racist anti-Semitism as a danger to European Jews, whom the pressure of persecution had rendered susceptible to self-hatred and self-denial.[149] Kolmar's particular use of racial stock characters subverts the light-dark iconography of Nazi propaganda. In Kolmar, the blond males are the dangerous ones, who pose a threat to the dark-haired Jewish females. The rape of a Jewish girl, presumably by a Gentile male, constitutes a second reversal of the Nazi model according to which Jewish males are sexual predators.

By choosing Renkens as the instrument in her quest for justice, Martha places herself in the dual role of victim and perpetrator. Kolmar's narrative thus moves in two different directions: on one level, it traces Martha's vulnerability in her relationships with German men, and on the other, perhaps the more important, level, Martha turns out to be her own worst enemy. She has accepted anti-Semitic notions and, by rejecting other Jews, has developed an internal "Nazi" voice that tells her that her sexuality is a "Jewish" trait, that she

146 Kolmar, 100; Heimerdinger (*Der Seemann*, 216–7) discusses popular works such as Felix Graf von Luckner's *Seeteufel* (1921) and B. Traven's *Das Totenschiff* (1926) as well as popular sailor figures. The respective characters signify an unconventional life, patriotism, masculinity, and freedom. Sailors played a prominent role in German popular music and film under Nazi rule, notably *Große Freiheit Nr.* 7 (1944) starring Hans Albers, known as "blond Hans."

147 Kolmar, *Die jüdische Mutter*, 112–9, 135, 178.

148 Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, 177, 439.

149 Gilman, *Jüdischer Selbsthaß*.

has to find a blond Aryan mate, and that she must euthanize her injured child. Kolmar's narrative ends on a note of mordant irony: the Jewish mother has eliminated herself and her daughter from German society. In symbolic terms, by killing her female child she has eliminated the Jewish future, since Jewish identity is established matrilineally.

The previous discussions have revealed that, in terms of their physical and psychological profiles, the Nazi protagonists in the antifascist literature of the 1920s and early 1930s resemble one another, except in cases where the literary character is modeled after an actual historical figure. The Nazi characters in the exemplary texts in this section range from the satirical figures in Reimann and Bettauer to the more complex characters in Roth and Kolmar. The Nazi protagonists in Roth and Bettauer, conceived long before a Nazi victory seemed feasible, come across as ultimately inconsequential and pathetic. Roth, in contrast, attributes to his central figure, Theodor Lohse, street smarts and persistence fueled by resentment and ambition, thus adding an element of danger to his Nazi opportunist. As representatives of the expanding Nazi movement shortly before Hitler's rise to power, Kolmar attributes to the characters of her predatory Nazi males racist fanaticism in combination with uncanny and irrational elements that suggest that they are associated with a mysterious sinister force.

CHAPTER 2

Contested Nazi Characters

Literature Exploring the Turning Point of 1932/3 through Nazi Figures

The examples from the 1920s illustrate that the "Aryan" typology became increasingly adapted to the political objectives of the Nazi movement. Antifascist authors rejected the ideological significance of the Nazi typology. Without fundamentally revising the physical or psychological models set forth in Nazi propaganda, antifascist writers reversed the meaning of the Nazi ideal. They reinterpreted traits that Nazi writing considered to reflect masculine strength and heroism as narrow-mindedness, brutality, and pettiness, and constructed hero figures, often working-class and Jewish characters, to mark their oppositional stance.

Antifascist literature before 1933 had projected confidence by casting the Nazis as a movement of the lunatic fringe. However, in 1933, the shock regarding Hitler's victory introduced an element of profound pessimism. Antifascist writers still ridiculed the symbols and practices of the Nazi movement, but the dismissive attitude toward the Nazi phenomenon gave way to despondency. Antifascist authors viewed Hitler's rise to power as a historical turning point. While German masses indulged in triumphant rallies nationwide, dissenters tried to flee the country, as illustrated in many literary works. The Nazis took immediate repressive measures against Marxists, Socialists, and Jews. Following Hitler's appointment as German Chancellor, the Nazis began a massive propaganda campaign to win over undecided German nationals and impress the international community.

German authors in exile tried to expose the brutal measures of the new regime that were intended to destroy Germany's democratic structures, but their works were often published by exile presses and did not reach the German public. The brain-drain caused by the mass exodus of academics and artists depleted Germany's intellectual resources, but enabled the Nazi regime to tighten its grip by replacing the exiles with Nazi loyalists. The following exploration of literary responses by exiled antifascists to the Nazi victory in Germany illustrates changing attitudes toward the triumphant regime and its representatives.

Lion Feuchtwanger's Family Saga Die Geschwister Oppenheim

Die Geschwister Oppenheim by Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958), who was already a prominent novelist in the Weimar Republic, showcases a wide spectrum of Nazi characters and organizations. Feuchtwanger's works were banned and burned by the Nazis. Immediately after taking exile, he wrote his novel based on notes he had taken while still in Germany and information he received from German friends. In his novel, a society portrait set in 1932/1933 Berlin, Feuchtwanger illustrates the increasing popular support for National Socialism and searches for reasons to explain the Nazi Party's mass appeal. His narrative repeatedly points to careerism, anti-Semitism, and greed as the predominant factors.[1] Few of the Nazi characters are genuine fanatics. For the majority of Hitler's followers, according to Feuchtwanger, race is a matter of indifference or a political tool.

Feuchtwanger contextualizes his fictional characters with references to actual events and historical personalities. For the representation of Nazi characters, he resorts to the available stereotypes of provincial opportunists, power-seekers, and ruffians. Female Nazis are configured as social climbers, who seek advancement through men affiliated with the movement. One of the most radical Nazi males is a small-minded authoritarian, the teacher Bernd Vogelsang. Another figure, the poet Friedrich Wilhelm Gutwetter, calls to mind the vainglory of Bettauer's Chancellor Schwertfeger, and the furniture-packer Hinkel resembles lower-class Nazi types in the works by Reimann and Roth. Historical references in Feuchtwanger's novel produce an impression of authenticity in an attempt to discredit Nazi propaganda, which presented the new regime as stable and progressive. The complex narrative structure of *Die Geschwister Oppenheim*, the astute insights, and the multitude of characters undoubtedly appealed to informed readers, but may have proven tedious to an uninitiated international readership. Even after it appeared in English translation, this epic novel seems to be an improbable vehicle for counter-propaganda.[2]

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1 Quotations follow Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim*. Translations follow Feuchtwanger, *The Oppermanns* (trans. James Cleugh). Maik Grote (*Schreiben im Exil*, 65) reports that that the novel was ready to go to press in Amsterdam in 1933 under the title "*Die Geschwister Oppermann*" when Lion Feuchtwanger's brother received a threatening letter from an SA leader, a professor by the name of Oppermann, who asserted that there had never been a Jewish family by the name of Oppermann, as he could prove by his genealogy which went back to the 13th century. Feuchtwanger informed the Querido publishing house of the situation and asked that the title of the novel be changed to "*Die Geschwister Oppenheim*."

2 Feuchtwanger, *The Oppermanns* (London: Secker, 1933); *Oppermanns* (Stockholm: Skoglund, 1933). A Russian film version was also released: *Semya Oppengeym*, directed by Grigory Roshal, USSR, 1939.

The key episodes are set before, during, and after the Nazi takeover. The central figures are the members of a fictitious Jewish family, the Oppenheims, business people, academics, and students, whose lives are intertwined with those of non-Jewish and Nazi characters. Characterizing his literary figures in psychological terms, Feuchtwanger opens perspectives into the mentality that drives the Nazi movement, and his narrator functions as a quasi-objective commentator. To ascertain who stands to gain or lose from National Socialism, Feuchtwanger explores representatives of different social strata, but his primary focus lies on the bourgeoisie. Without making class the determining factor in his characters' decisions, Feuchtwanger describes loyalties as being in flux. The Nazi takeover transforms the political landscape and certain characters adjust slowly to the new circumstances, while formerly covert Nazi sympathizers suddenly reveal their true colors. Feuchtwanger's characters include upstanding, intelligent Nazi opponents, who prevail against the generally mediocre and corrupt Nazi figures. Feuchtwanger indicates that there are many Nazis and Nazi sympathizers, but only a few determined dissenters and antifascists.

Reflecting the fascination with mass psychology in the interwar period, Feuchtwanger takes different approaches to the phenomenon of Nazi crowds and to individual Nazi figures.[3] He links the outward appearance of uniformed Nazi units to a collective psychological profile. The mere mention of extraneous details such as truncheons, polished boots, and swastika flags suffices to evoke a mentality of ruthless brutality. In contrast, when specific Nazi leaders such as Rosenberg are mentioned by name, their position in the movement is specified and their individual role is mentioned. Hitler, who is mentioned by name, is designated as the "*Führer*" (leader), as he preferred to be called.[4] The casual allusions to *Mein Kampf* suggest that, in 1933, Feuchtwanger believed Hitler's manifesto to be universally known.[5]

Die Geschwister Oppenheim captures Hitler's personal charisma by describing his reception at mass rallies. The Nazi cadres, on the other hand, resemble cardboard cutouts—some unseen master seems to pull their strings as they march and goose-step. Feuchtwanger furthermore describes the pointless rituals, symbolic gestures, uniforms, and regalia of the SA and SS that serve to

3 See the classic studies by Le Bon (*Psychologie des foules*); Freud (*Massenpsychologie*); Geiger (*Die Masse und ihre Aktion*); Stieler (*Person und Masse*); and Canetti (*Masse und Macht*), which Canetti had begun to research in the 1920s.

4 Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* 133, 370.

5 „Am 30. Januar ernannte der Reichspräsident den Verfasser des Buches „*Mein Kampf*" zum Reichskanzler." Feuchtwanger, 143.

establish their group identity. These details seem to provide the Nazi operatives a sense of purpose and the authority to degrade civilians.

The episodes set in prisons and concentrations camps provide additional information about the Nazi mindset and the society it creates.[6] The environment of the detention centers is hidden from the public eye; it serves as the regime's secret playground. Here, Nazi factotums follow their predisposition for sadism with impunity, as revealed by the segments about Martin and Gustav Oppenheim's imprisonment. The guards subject the prisoners to mindless drills, keep them under filthy conditions, and feed them disgusting meals. Further torments include beatings, ordering prisoners to sing Nazi songs and for Jews to recite Christian prayers.[7] The low-ranking Nazi henchmen are described as primitive men from the dregs of society. They bark their orders, laugh uproariously loud, and try every which way to strike terror in the hearts of their victims.[8]

As the ultimate insult, these uneducated guards are appointed to conduct brainwashing classes, which consist primarily of the prisoners having to listen to slogans from Hitler speeches and *Mein Kampf* and repeat in unison disparaging messages directed against Marxists and Jews.[9] Feuchtwanger depicts the prison system as a looking-glass world constructed to demoralize the prisoners, who are mostly professionals and intellectuals.[10] Finally, the prisoners are forced to engage in pointless work according to the misleading camp slogan „Arbeit ist um ihrer selbst willen da."[11] The sole products resulting from labor such as moving stones back and forth are humiliation and death. Already at the time of the Nazi takeover, Feuchtwanger identifies the principle that, in the context of the Holocaust, became known as "destruction through work."[12]

Feuchtwanger illustrates many instances of the pack mentality the Nazis unleash in the general public, pitting individuals against gangs of thugs. Hate speech in public discourse overrides rational debate and incites mob action against harmless citizens. These scenarios evoke a sense of impending doom: resistance against the militias appears to be futile since they are armed and obviously enjoy the support of the masses. The descriptions of the

6 Kühnrich, *Der KZ-Staat*.

7 Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* 414–5.

8 Feuchtwanger, 410–5.

9 Feuchtwanger, 418.

10 Feuchtwanger, 418.

11 Feuchtwanger, 415; "Still, work is there to be done for its own sake." Feuchtwanger/Cleugh, 385.

12 Wagner, "*Selektion und Segregation*," 332.

demonstrations following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor show the rising popularity of the Nazis.[13] The "Brown Shirts" of the SA and masses of civilians take to the streets, singing, yelling, and screaming.[14] Nazi symbols are displayed everywhere, especially the swastika flag, to create the impression that Hitler's party is the only viable political force. Protests by intellectuals such as the manifesto Gustav signs serve no purpose but to draw attention to the dissenters and make them targets of retribution.

The changing terminology Feuchtwanger applies to Hitler and his followers mirrors the streamlining of public speech in 1933. He frequently uses the term "*die Völkischen*" (nationalists or populists) to refer to Nazis and Nazi sympathizers and as a generic designation for a variety of right-wing groups.[15] He also applies the term "*Nationalisten*" (nationalists).[16] Without providing a detailed analysis of the factions that brought Hitler to power, the use of these terms implies that the radical nationalism and anti-Semitism of several right-wing organizations overlapped with the ideological spectrum of National Socialism, which prevailed since it combined multiple viewpoints under its umbrella. Feuchtwanger's bourgeois protagonists respond with consternation to the Nazis' political fervor, for which they have no explanation. The attorney Mülheim speaks of a barbarian invasion, and the humanist Gustav Oppenheim is dumbfounded that a civilized, modern nation would revert to savagery.[17] The Nietzsche-inspired poet Friedrich Wilhelm Gutwetter, who has nothing to fear from the Nazis because he is a conservative and of Aryan background, expects the chaos of 1933 to produce a universal rebirth and a new human race.[18]

Among the Nazi characters, opportunists stand out, represented by business owners, craftsmen, and workers. Only a few of them rise to positions of relative power, as does the college preparatory teacher Bernd Vogelsang, the central character in the tragic episode involving the suicide of the student Berthold Oppenheim, who incurs the teacher's wrath because he is Jewish and a liberal. The fascism theories of the 1930s resonate with the portrayal of Vogelsang, an emotionally repressed individual who embodies the traits psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich identified in his examination of the mass psychology of fascism.[19] Vogelsang acts cowardly under adverse conditions and as

13 Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* 143.

14 Feuchtwanger, 383.

15 Feuchtwanger, 279, 305, 326, 370.

16 Feuchtwanger, 169.

17 Janzen, *Die Darstellung der Weimarer Republik,* 24.

18 Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* 144.

19 Reich, *Massenpsychologie*.

a tyrant when he has the upper hand. Empowered by the success of his party, he is uncompromising in claiming his privileges as a Nazi and a representative of the Aryan master race.

Vogelsang's provincial attire was the preferred style of clothing by Nazi insiders and calls to mind Bettauer's descriptions of the *Hakenkreuzler* in *Die Stadt ohne Juden*. The mention of his volunteer service in an authoritarian all-male youth association points to his authoritarian yearnings and possibly homosexual desires.[20] Reserved and quiet before Hitler's rise to power, Vogelsang emerges from his cocoon after the regime change. His transformation symbolizes the transformation of German society:[21] „Sein Gesicht war maskenhaft starr, das unheimlich freundliche Lächeln war fort. Er trat als Sieger vor den Besiegten, als Rächer, ehern, der unsichtbare Säbel an seiner Seite."[22] Hitler's ascent has changed the non-descript, somewhat ridiculous, civil servant into a tyrant.

Vogelsang's curricular offerings consist primarily of nationalist propaganda.[23] In his lectures, he adopts Hitler's mannerisms and preaches the anti-intellectual tenets of *Mein Kampf*: „Rede ist wichtiger als Schrift, diese These des Führers der Völkischen hält er [Vogelsang] heilig."[24] Vogelsang's description matches the Nazi typology, except for his short stature. He is described as having a flax blond moustache, pale blue eyes, and a scar on his cheek—proof of his affiliation with an anti-Semitic fencing society. His crisply parted hair and cliché-riddled language point to a military affiliation.[25] The observation that he comes from the "deepest province" further categorizes him. Historian Richard Grunberger, in *The 12-Year Reich. A Social History of Nazi Germany 1933–1945,* elaborates on the provincialism of the Nazi movement, noting that many Nazi bureaucrats were of "small-town or rural origin."[26] With his lackluster roots in a backward part of Germany, his dialect and squeaky voice, Vogelsang is also reminiscent of Hitler, who came from a rural Austrian town and only gradually overcame his Southern dialect.[27]

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20 Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* 76.

21 Feuchtwanger, 221.

22 "His face was set like a mask, the wryly amiable smile was gone. He entered the room with the air of a victor in the presence of a vanquished enemy, a stern avenger with an invisible sabre rattling at his side." Feuchtwanger/Cleugh, 202.

23 Feuchtwanger, 66–7.

24 Feuchtwanger, 68; "Talking is more important than writing. He considered that thesis of the Leader of the Nationalist party sacrosanct." Feuchtwanger/Cleugh, 59.

25 Feuchtwanger, 63–5.

26 Grunberger, *12-Year Reich*, 58.

27 Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* 70.

Examining the pragmatic interests that caused various characters to join the movement, Feuchtwanger insinuates that the Nazi ideology expressed the desires of the silent majority. Nazis move into positions of power everywhere, and resistance seems futile. They are merciless in their persecution of perceived enemies and obviously have come, not to collaborate, but to rule. While they do allow "converts" into their fold, they categorically exclude whoever they do not consider racially fit. Feuchtwanger's Oppenheim family in its diversity represents modern Germany, which is incompatible with the Nazi vision of the Reich.

An important Nazi figure is the Oppenheim's non-Jewish competitor, the furniture-maker Heinrich Wels. He is a traditional craftsman committed to the guild system and resists mass production. Wels's convictions coincide with those Dinter endorsed in *Die Sünde wider das Blut*, where modern business practices and the international finance system are labeled as dangerous Jewish inventions. Feuchtwanger, in turn, takes up the theme of modernity versus traditionalism in a positive way. The old-fashioned furniture-maker Wels demonizes the successful Oppenheim brand, but Feuchtwanger's narrator provides rational explanations for its popularity: reasonable prices and functionality that appeal to urban customers.

The example of the Wels and Vogelsang rivalry shows that the Nazis want their Jewish competitors out of the way and cannot wait to lay claim to their property or take over their positions. Other iconic episodes trace the breakdown of German civil society and the rule of law to illustrate the efficiency of the Nazis in achieving their goals. The segregation of "Germans" and "Jews" progresses at an incredible pace. Within only a few months, the Nazis have forged a totalitarian society, run by oversight organizations and complete with a network of prisons and concentration camps. All Jewish professionals have been removed from office.

Germans eager to improve their lot now insert themselves into the story of Nazi success, as illustrated by several characters, including Professor Gutwetter and Gustav Oppenheim's girlfriend Sybil Rauch, who are considered Aryans. When the opportunity arises, both align themselves with the Nazis. Even skeptics, like the headmaster of Bernhard Oppenheim's school, Professor François, acquiesce out of concern for their families. The shocking experience of non-Jewish employees trying to remain loyal to their Jewish employers is illustrated by the mistreatment of Gustav's valet by the invading SA men and the contempt displayed towards Edgar Oppenheim's devoted non-Jewish head nurse.

The second-rate novelist Friedrich Wilhelm Gutwetter represents the intellectual variant of the Nazi type. His name, literally "fair weather," implies

opportunism. Gutwetter would join any movement if it were to his advantage. He is an unimaginative traditionalist, a ponderous writer and a pedantic stylist. While he is intellectually superior to Vogelsang, the teacher, and Wels, the furniture-maker, like them, he is a schemer. His ponderous pronouncements and his "*strahlende Kinderaugen*"[28] suggest a calculated naiveté that masks his lack of critical acumen. Possibly in an allusion to the acclaimed conservative authors Gerhart Hauptmann and Stefan George, who aligned themselves with the Nazis, the narrator mentions Gutwetter's stuffy attire.[29] Gutwetter's Nazi affiliation ends his dependence on Gustav as a sponsor, and offers him a framework for his apocalyptic visions.[30] Even romantic prospects open up to him. His newly acquired status brings him in closer contact with beautiful women like Gustav's lover Sybil, who, in silently comparing her two suitors, rates Gustav as more intelligent and attractive than Gutwetter. Even though she considers Gutwetter an object of ridicule and pity("*lächerlich und rührend zugleich*"),[31] she finds it difficult to refuse the access to fame and security he offers.[32] In her ability to understand and correct her mistakes, Sybil is a prefiguration of the female Nazi characters in Hermynia Zur Mühlen's later novel, *Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen*. After living for a while with the eccentric Gutwetter, Sybil returns to Gustav Oppenheim.

Lesser Nazi characters demonstrate the ubiquitous Nazi presence in German society. The school janitor, Mellenthin, a wounded veteran of the First World War and a low-ranking Nazi, immediately recognizes Vogelsang as a war veteran and a superior Party member. At their first encounter, he stands at attention and salutes the teacher.[33] This soldierlike gesture of respect reveals the military stratification of the Nazi movement, even if the members are in civilian attire. Another example is that of the furniture-packer Hinkel, who turns out to be a ranking SA member and leader of a unit that has secretly infiltrated the Oppenheim furniture company. The proletarian Hinkel comes across as the most genuine adherent of the movement. His trust in the Nazi ideology seems uncontaminated by ulterior motives, and he retains some common decency when he vouches for his former boss Martin to spare him from torture during his detention. Thus, he foreshadows the "good" Nazi of later publications that show the tendency to attribute moral potential to working-class characters.

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28 Feuchtwanger, 50.

29 Feuchtwanger, 50; "his big, shining, childish eyes." Feuchtwanger/Cleugh, 39.

30 Feuchtwanger, 45.

31 Feuchtwanger, 58.

32 "ridiculous and touching," Feuchtwanger/Cleugh, 50.

33 Feuchtwanger, 64–5.

Indeed, Feuchtwanger and his friend Bertolt Brecht both possessed a class-related optimism, which was shared by other Marxist authors such as Friedrich Wolf.

In the episode of a rebellion in the clinic of surgeon Edgar Oppenheim, Feuchtwanger illustrates the susceptibility of academics, especially those in the medical profession, to National Socialism.[34] In Feuchtwanger's novel, a seriously ill lower-class man incites his fellow patients to resist the orders of Jewish staff members. This episode suggests that even the most uneducated "Aryan" assumes that he is above the law by virtue of race. The main target of the anti-Semitic patient is an East European Jewish doctor, from whom he refuses treatment.[35] The calumnies the Nazi patient hurls at this doctor echo those in Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic paper *Der Stürmer* (*The Stormer,* 1923–1945). An arriving Nazi delegation functions like a well-oiled machine to bring order to the scene. The fact that the stormtroopers are able to expel Edgar Oppenheim and the Jewish staff members from the clinic within half an hour is proof that the takeover was preceded by long-planned secret preparations and backed by spy organizations and militia. Feuchtwanger's narrative leaves no doubt that individual citizens could not defend themselves against such a massive onslaught. Entering the clinic in uniform, the SA men unite with Nazi interns in a military-style ritual; each man, cognizant of his rank in the Nazi hierarchy, salutes. The cadre then proceeds in a rehearsed fashion indicative of the men's paramilitary training. In public, the Nazis avoid the use of excessive violence.[36] They "only" place a stamp on the forehead of non-compliant individuals, a gesture that is sufficient to instill terror and ensure submission. The victory of Nazi cadres over medical experts marks the end of the German academic tradition.[37]

The downfall of the entire Oppenheim family offers a warning to the individuals who are most at risk in Germany, Jews and Marxists. To escape arrest and murder, exile seems the only solution, at least in the short run. The fact that several characters express the opinion that National Socialism is an anomaly in German history vaguely points to the prospect of an international resistance movement and attenuates the otherwise stark outlook for the more distant future. Departing from the Marxist notion that the bourgeoisie and the lumpenproletariat were the mainstay of National Socialism, Feuchtwanger envisions Nazi characters in all social groups. Their common denominator is

34 Proctor, "Nazi Medicine," 348.

35 Feuchtwanger, *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* 183.

36 Feuchtwanger, 282.

37 Feuchtwanger, 283.

their Aryan identity as specified by the Nazi program, and their dissatisfaction with the *status quo.* Convinced that they received a raw deal in the postwar republic, and hungry for status and power, Feuchtwanger's Nazi characters try to compensate for their lack of talent and accomplishment by joining the most radical political movement in the hope that "the *Führer*'s" promises will materialize. The typecasting of the Nazi characters in *Die Geschwister Oppenheim* is reminiscent of the models established in antifascist texts of the 1920s, which also inspired Ferdinand Bruckner and Friedrich Wolf in constructing their characters.

Ferdinand Bruckner's Drama Die Rassen

The three-act drama *Die Rassen* (1934) by Bulgarian-born author Ferdinand Bruckner, aka Theodor Tagger (1891–1958), is an important contribution to the oppositional discourse in exile.[38] In his work, Feuchtwanger draws an extensive social panorama with characters described as physical and psychological entities. It would be impossible to provide so many details in a dramatic text. Beyond the limitations of time, location, and *dramatis personae*, a playwright takes into consideration that the style and cast of each production determine the dramatic effect anew.

Bruckner wrote *Die Rassen* in 1933 in Switzerland. The setting is the student milieu at a provincial German university. For the medical students in the play, National Socialism is fast becoming a major force, especially since racial science and racial hygiene are popular among medical researchers. In *The Nazi Doctors*, the historian Robert J. Lifton confirmed Bruckner's notion that the medical profession was especially vulnerable to National Socialism. Lifton examined the key role the medical profession played in the sterilization and euthanasia programs of the Third Reich and the human experiments during the Holocaust. Similarly, Georg Lilienthal in *Der Lebensborn e. v.* traced the implementation of the infamous breeding program by Nazi doctors.[39] Bruckner's drama examines the mentality that later fostered these abuses, and focuses on racist anti-Semitism, especially among students, and the issue of declining integrity within the discipline as a result of its politicization. *Die Rassen*, banned in Nazi Germany, was performed to acclaim in Zürich in 1934, but, like similar works, was soon forgotten.

The drama revolves around the unhappy love story of a privileged Jewish woman and an "Aryan" student. Bruckner's characters are somewhat similar to those of Feuchtwanger in *Die Geschwister Oppenheim*. The primary focus

38 Bruckner, *Die Rassen*. Translations follow Bruckner, *Races* (trans. Ruth Langner).

39 Lifton, *Nazi Doctors*, 33–5; Lilienthal, *Lebensborn e. v.*

in *Die Rassen* is racist anti-Semitism as the centerpiece of Nazi ideology and a connection is established between anti-Semitism and the morally decrepit fraternity code at German universities, whose rituals include dueling, drinking to excess, and elitist posturing. Many of the medical students are frustrated by the economic stagnation of the Weimar Republic. Some are drawn to the Nazi movement by its promise of German greatness and, for them, better career opportunities. In his article "The Totalitarian Present," Jeffrey Herf scrutinized the factors that caused members of Germany's educated elite opt for National Socialism, including the "great enthusiasm for modern technology with a rejection of the Enlightenment and the values and institutions of liberal democracy" as a defining element in the Nazi revolution.[40] Herf notes that intellectuals, namely "Marxists, conservatives, and liberals," erred in defining sophistication as "the ability to see past Hitler's ideological statements to his deeper, more genuine motivations. Hence these 'sophisticated' thinkers underestimated the prescriptive intent of his publicly expressed views."[41] Bruckner took the Nazi ideologues literally and issued a warning in his play against ignoring the Nazis' racism and their stated political goals. He illustrates their growing influence among Germany's future elite and, in the context of *Die Rassen*, portrays racist anti-Semitism as the most destructive element in National Socialism.

The statements of the radical right-wing student leaders in the play echo the rhetoric of racial science that provided the basis for racial testing as the determinant for German citizenship. Individuals who were found to be deficient were excluded from military and civil service, and from the professions. *Die Rassen* demonstrates that, at the university, the result was a divided student population: the privileged Aryans serve as the antagonists of Jewish students and faculty members. The Nazi students assume that they are urban warriors, intent on transforming Germany into a racist dictatorship. Bruckner's protagonist Peter Karlanner is a mediocre student and an alcoholic, who moves between the political lines. Susceptible to temptations of all kinds, he wavers between National Socialism and his love for his Jewish fiancée, Helene Marx. Under the influence of his radicalized fellow students, he eventually abandons Helene along with his academic aspirations.

As a dramatic construct, Karlanner is reminiscent of Goethe's Faust. Although of lesser caliber, he, too, is torn between good and evil. His childhood friend Tessow plays the part of the demonic tempter who holds out the prospect of a glamorous future in the Nazi movement. He wins out and

40 Herf, "The Totalitarian Present."

41 Herf, 2009.

Karlanner declares: „Mein Platz ist an der Front … An der Rassenfront."[42] After his "conversion," Karlanner derives his sense of purpose from his status as an Aryan. He accepts the dictate to wage war against "the Jew," and starts at home by verbally attacking Helene. The imagery of incompatible animals, sheep and wolves, symbolizes the incompatibility between Jews and Nazis.[43] In Bruckner's iconography, the Nazis are identified as predatory animals to denote their aspirations as conquerors and warlords in a nexus that is also present in Gertrud Kolmar's unpublished novella. Boria Sax, in his path-breaking study *Animals and the Third Reich* (2000), thematized the Nazis' admiration for ferocious animals, a historically documented aspect of the Nazi imaginary.[44]

Karlanner is an emotionally unstable young man rather than a hardened activist. He only recognizes his growing predicament of having followed the wrong path after it is too late. Instead of leaving a "glimmer of hope," as Judith Beniston argues, his belated repentance signifies his failure to grasp Helene's humanistic values when there was still time.[45] After Hitler's rise to power, Karlanner starts down a road of no return, as predicted by his changing use of language: prior to the decisive election, he insists on using the official designation for the Nazi party, *Die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party), and chides Helene for denigrating the Party.[46]

Bruckner's choice of a university setting challenges the popular misconception that the Nazis recruited primarily from the ranks of the disenfranchised masses. *Die Rassen* exposes the predisposition certain students and faculty had for the doctrine of Aryan supremacy, and provides examples of hate-mongering. Karlanner's statements especially illustrate that approval-seeking is a primary motive for lazy students to join the Nazis. As long as he was serious about his studies, he needed Helene's encouragement to abstain from drinking. His affiliation with extremist fellow students puts an end to his academic pursuits. Under peer pressure, he abandons his plan to marry Helene because she is Jewish, and resumes his earlier drinking and rabble-rousing.[47]

Die Rassen depicts National Socialism as a lifestyle associated with drunkenness and brew houses.[48] In this milieu that attracts Germans from all walks

42 Bruckner, *Die Rassen,* 79; "My place is in the front lines … In the racial front lines." Bruckner/Langner, 108.

43 "*Hammel und Wölfe*," Bruckner, 97.

44 Sax, *Animals*, 90.

45 Beniston, "Drama in Austria," 48.

46 Bruckner, *Die Rassen,* 25.

47 Bruckner, 7, 9.

48 Bruckner, 27.

of life, Bruckner exposes anti-Semitism as an attitude that transcends class and gender barriers. The patrons in the brew-house scene include members of the conservative elite such as the State Attorney, who raises the provocative question „Denn was ist der Jude?"[49] In agreement with a colleague, he proceeds to praise anti-Semitism as a tool to diffuse social crises: „Dann sinkt der Arbeiter dem Direktor in die Arme; denn es sind beides Deutsche."[50] A teacher in attendance cites racial science to support her anti-Semitic statements. There is a clear consensus among the brew-house patrons that Germans are superior to all other nations. While different patrons have different reasons for holding this belief, ultimately, their reasons for endorsing the Nazis are of no consequence, since they all agree that action must be taken against Jewish citizens.

Karlanner's affiliation with Nazi students is partly the product of his alcohol addiction and partly his lack of critical acumen. Deep, deep down he yearns to be included in a strong collective that demands conformity. His tendency to identify with the dominant party comes to the foreground when, after the Nazi takeover, he turns his back on Helene and his academic advisor who is Jewish, since they so obviously have been defeated.[51] At that point, Karlanner completely submits to the rituals that shape the daily routine of his Nazi association and adopts their anti-intellectualism and hate speech.[52] The student leader Rosloh coaches Karlanner to perform the Hitler salute and to develop the diction and body language appropriate to a member of the "master race." He also incites Karlanner against his Jewish professors who supposedly treat him unfairly because he is an "Aryan."[53] Eventually, Karlanner no longer wants to become a physician, and instead yearns to be a fighter in the nationalist revolution.[54]

The process of indoctrination is predicated upon an inordinate appreciation of discipline and fitness. Body building and a militaristic mindset become Karlanner's top priorities, and he begins to belittle traditional values and the opinions of women. The preeminent critic of racial theory, Wilhelm Reich, considered the kind of irrationalism Karlanner cultivates an integral component

49 Bruckner, 34; "What is the Jew?" Bruckner/Langner, 43.

50 Bruckner, 34; "But if the man who's egging on both sides is eliminated, the worker and employer will fall into each other's arms, for aren't they both German?" Bruckner/Langner, 44.

51 Bruckner, 38.

52 Bruckner, 38.

53 Bruckner, 39.

54 Bruckner, 39.

of the Nazi mentality.[55] For example, Karlanner asserts that he joined the Nazi movement precisely because he did not understand it, and denounces analysis as the wrong approach. The references to Nazi torch marches and rallies illustrate that, in their recruitment strategies, the Nazis appeal to the prospects' emotions to drown out rational objections.[56] Karlanner proudly reports to Helene that in his group he is learning many "*schöne Lieder*" (beautiful songs). Singing as a substitute for studying is just one of the seemingly harmless activities in which he is called upon to engage.[57] Yet, like the drinking rituals, singing is a bonding mechanism among the Nazi students.

Similarly problematic is the honor code within the student organizations. Bruckner implies criticism of the false sense of honor the fraternities propagate, which involves saving face and aggressive acts. These are part of the Nazi "shame culture" that discourages personal responsibility. As defined by Ruth Benedict, a shame culture dictates ritualistic behavior and adherence to conventions.[58] In Nazi circles, a member is rewarded for "choosing what is expected" rather than choosing what is moral, and a man is obligated to defend his reputation by acts of violence and dehumanizing perceived opponents.[59] An incident involving a Nazi and a Jewish student demonstrates the mentality gap between Nazis and average citizens. The Nazi spits on the Jewish student's shoe, a gesture that in his view establishes dominance, while the Jewish student finds it merely absurd.[60] The honor code also pits comrades against one another, for example when Karlanner refuses to follow Rosloh's order to put his former fiancée Helene under arrest. As a consequence, Rosloh declares Karlanner a traitor, who must be killed notwithstanding their earlier friendship.[61] Despite these internal tensions, the Nazi contingent closes ranks against the outside and maintains ingroup/outgroup thinking based on nation, race, and gender.

The use of language reflects the attitudinal differences of Bruckner's characters. Many examples reveal that Nazi speech invalidates the individual through the use of generalizations such as „die typischeste Eigenschaft Eurer Rasse,"[62]

55 Reich, *Massenpsychologie*, 16.

56 Bruckner, *Die Rassen,* 19–20.

57 Bruckner, 23; "All sorts of new songs I'd never heard—beautiful ones." Bruckner/Langner, 26.

58 Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*.

59 Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights,* 212.

60 Bruckner, *Die Rassen,* 21.

61 Bruckner, 55.

62 Bruckner, 29.

or the use of the inclusive singular as in "*der Jude*" and "*das Weib.*"[63] According to collectivized thinking, a person's function takes precedence over his or her individuality. Tessow considers it more important to be a "fighter" than a decent human being. His comments about Helene especially demonstrate how anti-Semitism functions.[64] He attributes all of Helene's traits to her "Jewish race" and dismisses all of her decisions as destructive and scheming. Her actual qualities are irrelevant since biology is all that matters: „Aufs Biologische kommt es an."[65]

In agreement with the Nazi Party Program and Günther's *Rassenkunde*, Tessow regards German nationals as a cohesive gene pool. Accordingly, Jews, including Jewish citizens of Germany, are a distinct race and must therefore be excluded from German nationhood: „Wenn Du, ein Deutscher, eine Jüdin heiratest, vergrößerst Du den Sumpf der biologischen Erbmischung."[66] Tessow's fantasies about the Germans mindset reveal a sentimental and mystical streak. For example, he considers the ability to appreciate music and the ability to submit to discipline uniquely German experiences and bases upon them his claims of German superiority.[67] Primarily, he articulates the characteristics of the supposed master race in physical terms: blond hair, athletic built, and a light complexion. Following Nazi ideology, his conception of gender roles is binary and patriarchal, and he believes that compliant Aryan femininity complements the heroic masculinity whose appropriate expression is toughness, and is based on a "master ethos."[68]

Finally, when Tessow speaks about his own family background, the origins of his attitudes come to light. Like his idol, Hitler, Tessow comes from a troubled home. He blames his fatherless childhood for his rebellious tendencies and confesses that his mother was the first object of his aggression because he considered her a weak person.[69] Tessow rejects the Weimar Republic, whose democratic structures strike him as effeminate, he disparages the Treaty of Versailles as Germany's ultimate humiliation, and proclaims that Germans must embrace the heroic era that lies ahead.[70] Tessow has shaped his vision

63 Bruckner, 11, 19; "yet it's absolutely typical of your race" (36), "the Jew" (19), "the Jewess" (6–7), Bruckner/Langner.

64 Bruckner, 8.

65 Bruckner, 9; "This is a case of biology, not God." Bruckner/Langner, 6.

66 Bruckner, 9; "If you, a German, marry a Jewess, you will only deepen the swamp of our mixed inheritance." Bruckner/Langner, 6.

67 Bruckner, 19.

68 Bruckner, 11.

69 Bruckner, 11.

70 Bruckner, 13.

of Germany in accordance with Hitler's vision, and is convinced that everyone who is for "*Deutschland*" must also vote for Hitler.[71]

Karlanner exemplifies the many people who yielded to the temptation of National Socialism but became disillusioned and changed their minds when the criminal character of the Nazi movement became clear. At that point it is too late: Karlanner is taken on a "little trip" to be murdered, and the Nazi ringleaders assert that the business of the execution will be covered up. Karlanner's death confirms the Nazi victory and the impending destruction of anyone who does not conform. Hitler's triumph marks the beginning of a tyrannical rule of mediocrity and brutality—the triumph of thugs over intellectuals.

In this drama, privilege in the Nazi state is accorded on the basis of racial identity. The notion that Germans are beings of a higher order is an effective recruitment tool. Enemy images of allegedly inferior humans such as Jews and women instill Nazi males with pride and fuel their aggressions. *Die Rassen* illustrates through its characters that the ingroup-outgroup bias prescribed by the official party line is a stabilizing element in the Nazi mentality.

Friedrich Wolf's Drama Professor Mamlock

The medical profession also provides the setting for the four-act play *Professor Mamlock* (written 1933, premiered 1934) by playwright and physician Friedrich Wolf (1888–1953), who had been a conscientious objector in the First World War.[72] Wolf wrote the drama after his escape to France in 1933. The main characters are interns and doctors at a prominent clinic. They are wavering between National Socialism, Conservatism, and Socialism. His young hero, a Socialist from a Jewish physician's family, and his paramour, a non-Jewish doctor, initially a Nazi who eventually embraces Socialism, offer a vision of hope for the antifascist cause.

In Wolf's play, racial anti-Semitism is a key factor in the dramatic development. However, equally important is the motif of the class struggle between the Nazis and the proletariat. The determination Wolf attributes to the antifascists injects a positive perspective into the otherwise pessimistic drama. The drama, originally in German, was first performed in 1934 in Yiddish on a Warsaw stage under the title *Der gelbe Fleck* (*The Yellow Badge*). In 1935, an English translation appeared, but, similar to Bruckner's *Die Rassen,* the reception of *Professor Mamlock* was limited.

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71 Bruckner, 12.

72 Wolf, "*Mamlock*," 294–365. Translations follow Wolf, *Professor Mamlock* (trans. Anne Bromberger).

At the turn of the millennium, both *Die Rassen* and *Professor Mamlock* drew renewed scholarly attention. Sarah Rosorius analyzed these plays in her study on the responses of assimilated Jews to the Nazis' rise to power.[73] Rosorius notes striking similarities between the two works that review the decline of academic standards and increasing corruption at universities under the auspices of National Socialism. From a Marxist point of view, Wolf foregrounds class-related issues and implies that the anti-Semitism of the Nazi doctors in his play is secondary to their frustrated ambitions and social displacement. The economic crisis in the Weimar Republic has intensified competition among the interns, and race has become a mechanism for exclusion. Many of the conflicts in the play remain unresolved. The absence of a fifth act in *Professor Mamlock* suggests that, in light of the events of 1933, it was impossible to provide closure. This open-ended structure invites the audience to envision a fifth act, as it were, and a positive change through an antifascist revolution.

The setting alternates between the private living quarters of the protagonist, Professor Hans Mamlock, and his adjacent private practice. The combination of living and work spheres is reminiscent of Sigmund Freud's private practice and his thoroughly bourgeois existence in Vienna. The time-span in *Professor Mamlock* is 1932/1933, when the decline of the medical profession occurs in tandem with the destruction of all professional structures in Germany. Mamlock, a Jewish surgeon and head of his own clinic, shares certain traits with Feuchtwanger's Edgar Oppenheim. He derives his sense of identity from his profession and his patriotism, and staunchly dismisses the idea that anyone could not consider him a German.

The opening lines of the play address the tensions between the junior physicians and the chief surgeon. As the most experienced surgeon, Hans Mamlock performs the difficult procedures himself. Surgical resident Inge Ruoff is adamant in expressing her discontent about Mamlock's practice of taking charge of the seriously ill patients and leaving the less-challenging cases to the junior staff.[74] With ostensible objectivity, her colleague Hellpach confirms that Mamlock is an impediment to the advancement of the interns and concludes that, as long as Mamlock is the head physician, the younger colleagues have no chance.[75] This seemingly job-related exchange has strong anti-Semitic undercurrents.

Through his choice of names, Wolf marks his characters in terms of their ethnic background to suggest to the audience that anti-Semitism is his central

73 Rosorius, *Reaktionen assimilierter deutscher Juden*.

74 Wolf, 297.

75 Wolf, 297.

theme; however, this turns out not to be the case. The names Mamlock, Hirsch, and Simon indicate Jewishness, while Carlsen, Hellpach, and Seidel reflect a non-Jewish identity. Allegiances in the clinic form along ethnic lines so that differences of opinion become irrelevant and racial affiliation prevails. For example, Dr. Hirsch, a Jewish doctor, accepts Mamlock's preeminence without question: „Na, in den Gallenblasensachen, da ist er ja doch unbestrittener Champion."[76] The "Aryan" contingent takes the opposite view and launches *ad hominem* attacks against Mamlock by raising doubt about his military career. The most combative character, Inge Ruoff, rests her argument on Nazi clichés when she surmises that Jewish officers were slackers. She describes Mamlock as an opportunist and includes the other Jewish colleagues in her anti-Semitic blanket slurs. An article in praise of Mamlock's professional achievements in a daily newspaper serves as an outside perspective that clearly attests to the excellence of Wolf's protagonist. Ruoff's unbending attitude reveals that neither proof nor argument can change the foregone conclusions of an anti-Semite.

There is a generational perspective as well. The senior physicians give first priority to their profession, while the younger "Aryans" are motivated by politics and career considerations. Drs. Ruoff and Hellpach have Nazi allegiances which they hope will help them to advance into leadership positions. They express their identity in racial terms to disqualify their Jewish colleagues as professional competitors.[77] Their pan-German visions are couched in supremacist platitudes: „Der Untergang der Untüchtigen, der Feiglinge, der Schwachen."[78] Hans Mamlock, similar to Edgar Oppenheim, insists that he is an apolitical professional and a German patriot. Attributed an impeccable sense of duty, he represents the conservative professional, not in the same league as Feuchtwanger's Jewish *haute bourgeois*, but clearly an established professional. Staying true to the Hippocratic Oath, he treats all patients regardless of their background and status.

Wolf uses the pejorative term "Nazi" throughout the play in accordance with his Marxist views. Unsurprisingly, a politically astute proletarian patient provides information about National Socialism.[79] Even Dr. Ruoff is impressed by the working-class man's remarks; from her anti-Semitic point of view, she finds it hard to believe that the antifascist activist is actually Jewish.[80] The unfolding

76 Wolf, 297; "Well, in gall bladders he's undisputed champion." Wolf/Bromberger, 14.

77 Wolf, 302.

78 Wolf, 302; "The destruction of the incompetent, the cowardly, the weak." Wolf/Bromberger, 21.

79 Wolf, 305.

80 Wolf, 306.

spectrum of right-wing and Leftist opinions in Wolf's play sets the stage for the dramatic conflict in the second act, which takes place on the day after the Reichstag fire. A scene in Mamlock's living room showcases the mixed background of the surgeon's family, a kindred group of diverse individuals similar to Feuchtwanger's Oppenheim clan. Mamlock's wife is Northern German and a Christian; according to Jewish matrilineality, the children she has with Mamlock are Gentiles, while by Nazi racial norms they are considered Jewish. The living room scene further models bourgeois gender roles. The only prospect for change seems to lie with Mamlock's twenty-year-old son, Rolf, the only one who pays attention to politics.[81]

The characters' statements bring to light the increasing gulf between Jews and Aryans, Nazis and Communists, Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. Counter-intuitively, the female characters—even those with pro-Nazi proclivities—turn out to be more open-minded than their male counterparts, a fact by which Wolf insinuates that they draw fewer benefits from the Nazi regime and are more aware of their own emotions. By contrasting the adaptability of the women with Hans Mamlock's unbending adherence to principles for principles' sake, Wolf reveals a general perspective: the affinity between the professor and professionals of the older generation. Some of Mamlock's attitudes correspond to the mentality that fascist theory ascribes to the authoritarian personality.

Mamlock's rigid mindset reflects the military-style education during the Wilhelminian era, which he shares with the veterans of the First World War. In his path-breaking study on the psychology of men and women of the First World War generations, *Männerphantasien* (*Male Fantasies*, 1977), Klaus Theweleit maintained that self-control and discipline had been the foremost educational objectives in bourgeois Wilhelminian homes and schools, where flogging was the customary punishment for children, with the result of creating „deutsche nicht zu Ende geborene Mensch[en]."[82] The character of Mamlock and his Gentile age-cohort was shaped by this milieu, which fostered obedience and a sense of duty rather than independence and critical thinking. It comes as no surprise that the traditionalist Mamlock tolerates the pro-Nazi statements of his friend Seidel, who praises the Nazis for getting tough on socialist papers and for their swift justice.[83] Neither man seems troubled by the mass arrests of communists, pacifists, and internationalists. Only the

81 Wolf, 310.

82 Theweleit, *Männerphantasien* (2000), 221. Translations follow Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (trans. Chris Turner, Erica Carter, and Stephen Conway); "The German version of the not yet fully born." Theweleit/Turner, Carter and Conway, 222.

83 Wolf, "Mamlock," 315.

attacks on Jewish citizens give Mamlock pause. Seidel, a character reminiscent of Feuchtwanger's Gutwetter, enjoys observing the unfolding drama of nationalist mobilization: „grandios, bluthaft, schicksalhaft, gigantisch, ein Naturschauspiel. … Das Volk steht auf, der Sturm bricht los!"[84] Passages such as these illustrate how deeply Hitler's rhetoric and Nazi Social Darwinism have penetrated the collective imaginary.

Wolf also thematizes the personality cult fostered by Hitler's sensationalist appearances at rallies and in weekly newsreels, and the display of Nazi propaganda in public spaces.[85] Even Ruth Mamlock, the protagonist's daughter, who will soon be classified as a "Half-Jew," is taken in by Nazi propaganda.[86] The assumption that a girl of Jewish descent expresses admiration for Hitler implies that the charismatic leader exuded movie-star appeal. In contrast, *Professor Mamlock* attributes rational thinking to the Communist figures, whose resistance is presented as the only viable alternative.

Feuchtwanger had introduced the notion of a resistance movement, but invested little confidence in its ability to succeed. In contrast, Wolf construes Mamlock's son Rolf as a positive role model whose resolute opposition inspires greater optimism.[87] Revolutionary impulses are furthermore ascribed to a female character, Dr. Inge Ruoff, as a model exemplifying that change is possible. In her case, the motivating factor is love. Inge's affection for Rolf Mamlock helps her to overcome her anti-Semitism and dedicate herself to the cause of antifascism. This romantic subplot suggests that, in the presence of genuine emotions, National Socialism must fail. At the same time, the love story confirms entrenched gender stereotypes by showing that even an academically trained professional woman will follow her partner's lead in politics and abandon her career to do his bidding.

Communism as a libidinal force was discussed in Marxist psychoanalysis, for example Reich's *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus*. According to Reich, the propensity for fascism derived from sexual repression which consumed

84 Wolf, 315; "magnificent, a thing of blood, of fate, gigantic, a drama of natural forces: 'The people rises; the storm breaks loose.'" Wolf/Bromberger 45. The latter phrase *„der Sturm bricht los!"*—the storm breaks loose—is a verbatim quote from the 1813 poem *„Das Volk steht auf, der Sturm bricht los"* from the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon by patriotic poet Theodor Körner (1791–1813) (Körner, *Werke 1*, 109–11). Joseph Goebbels used the lines *„Nun, Volk, steh auf, und Sturm brich los!"* as a call for action in his Sportpalast speech calling for "total war" (Goebbels, *Speech*); "Now, People, Rise Up and Let the Storm Winds Blow." Rabinbach and Gilman, *Third Reich Sourcebook*, 828–9.

85 Wolf, 316–7.

86 Wolf, 317.

87 Wolf, 347.

inordinate energy and resulted in diminished reasoning powers. In her exchange with Mrs. Mamlock, Inge reveals that her desire to find fulfillment through love motivates her to join the antifascist cause. Choosing his side—in the framework of the drama, the historically correct side—offers her the gratification and active life that National Socialism denied her.

Professor Mamlock represents the Nazis as a focused movement with a tremendous capacity for outreach. It is apparent that only an even better organized, more powerful collective would be able to defeat a force of this magnitude. In the framework of the play, only the Communist resistance has the necessary potential for a counter-movement. Wolf subtly redefined the problem at hand: anti-Semitism gradually loses its importance as the focus shifts to the theme of the class struggle. A dialogue between Rolf and Inge suggests that definitions of identity in national or ethnic terms are irrelevant in light of the struggle of the international proletariat against fascist capitalism.[88]

Professor Mamlock follows the Marxist model for the interpretation of National Socialism. The drama ends with the fourth act, which indicates the end of traditional professionalism in Germany. The bourgeoisie which fostered the German-Jewish symbiosis faces defeat, but the play implies that the Nazi regime is not the final chapter of European history. The missing final fifth act is for the young generations to write: the Communist Ernst, Mamlock's activist son Rolf, and Dr. Ruoff, who dedicate their lives to antifascism.

Transfigured Germans. Leni Riefenstahl's Celebration of the National Community in the Propaganda Film Triumph des Willens

Filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, ps. for Helene Bertha Amalie Riefenstahl (1902–2003), positioned herself as a German national according to the Nazi Party program and as an insider of the Third Reich. This viewpoint shapes her iconic propaganda film *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*, 1935). The film stands out because of its approach and aesthetic. It projects a stratified, gendered vision of the Third Reich through its soundtrack and imagery. Riefenstahl achieves a totalizing vision that other Nazi films imply but communicate only partially and indirectly.[89] *Triumph des Willens* introduces leading

88 Wolf, 345.

89 Karsten Witte ("Indivisible Legacy," 29) remarks upon the exceptionality of Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* and the *Olympia* films, which retained their prominence after the war: "They remain examples of a shocking and notoriorious power."

Nazi personalities by name, through dramatic appearances and in soundbites that subsume them under a mythical saga of German supremacy.

In the interwar period, film had become an important propaganda tool. Earlier works had personalized Nazi ideology through individual stories; for example, Hans Steinhoff's *Hitlerjunge Quex* (*Our Flag Leads Us Forward*, 1933), based on the novel with the same title by Karl Aloys Schenzinger (1932), a political melodrama about a working-class boy's conversion from Communism to National Socialism. Anti-Semitic plots were often presented in historical settings, for example, in Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940), or ideological messages were embedded in sentimental romantic comedies such as Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Der Mustergatte* (*The Model Husband*, 1937).[90] Love and adventure plots in popular movies combined ideological messages with the idealization of the military; for example, in Eduard von Borsody's *Wunschkonzert* (*Request Concert*, 1940).

Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* is distinct from these popular feature films, and is an exception among Nazi non-fiction films disseminating enemy images, as is the case in Fritz Hippler's *Der ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew*, 1940), an anti-Semitic propaganda film shot in Polish ghettos under Nazi occupation. In a similar vein, historical documentary films such as Erich Waschneck's *Die Rothschilds* (*The Rothschilds*, 1940) defamed prominent Jewish families, and Gustav Ucicky's anti-Slavic film *Heimkehr* (*Homecoming*, 1941) provides a justification of the Nazi invasion of Poland. Riefenstahl, in contrast, represents the Third Reich in a positive and celebratory manner, and leaves enemy images to the viewer's imagination.

Impressed by her previous work, Hitler commissioned Riefenstahl to produce a documentary film of the 1934 Party Congress and granted her complete artistic license.[91] Riefenstahl's focus was the resurgent nation under National Socialism with its leaders and collectives making up this new Germany. Supported by virtually unlimited government resources, Riefenstahl was in a position to cast mass scenes featuring Nazi organizations and the military, including the SS, the SA, the Wehrmacht, and the German Labor Front, as the collective protagonist of her monumental spectacle. She was able to hire countless extras and showcased the Nazi elite including Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess, Hermann Göring, Heinrich Himmler, and Baldur von Schirach as

90 Witte identifies as a central point in the film the German husband's regaining his position as a patriarch, in keeping with the Nazi ideal of male dominance, and observes this character's ability to hold his own as an international businessman and a gentleman. (Witte, 26).

91 Riefenstahl, *Der Sieg des Glaubens;* Riefenstahl, *Triumph*.

spokespersons for the movement and masters of ceremony. In their entirety, the participants embody the German nation. Everyone is assigned his or her proper rank and position. The diverse cadres are distinguished by the color and cut of their uniforms, which the black-and-white film does not fully display, but with which the audience was familiar: the SS in crisp black attire, the SA in more casual brown shirts and pants, and the Nazi Labor Service in unassuming workmanlike uniforms. The implements the men carry and present in military fashion, the spades of the Labor Service, the Swastika Flags of the SA, and the rifles of the SS, communicate the function of the formations. The boys of the Hitler Youth, in shorts and neckties reminiscent of Boy Scout uniforms, represent future generations of Nazis. While the standards in the hands of the men during the carefully choreographed procession at the final event in the meeting hall identify the German cities they represent with the eagle and swastika symbols towering above, the top leaders have their hands free. Hitler, unlike his entourage, is unrestricted in his movements and facial expressions except when inspecting troops, when a formal salute is expected. The ranks of men and boys in uniform set the male paradigm, and the cheering women and girls in civilian dress set the female paradigm.

The film projects the views on race from Hitler's *Mein Kampf,* which emphasizes Aryan diversity and a wide-ranging German typology instead of prioritizing the ideal of the Nordic race celebrated in Günther's *Rassenkunde*. Only among the children, especially the Hitler Youth boys, does the blond and blue-eyed type dominate to provide the directive for the future. Hitler himself does not represent the idealized racial type of the Aryan male of Nordic provenance. Still, at the pinnacle of the power pyramid, he assumes his preeminent role as the visionary of Germany's future. Hitler stands by himself without female companion or descendant. His splendid isolation calls to mind Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883) and the notion that Man represents the bridge between primate and Superman.[92]

Hitler is usually photographed from below to make him appear tall and imposing as the embodiment of the ultimate leader.[93] The thundering applause his appearances draw are registered by the sound track and, along with the images of human masses on the move, the uproar denotes the melting of the nation into one under Hitler's guidance. By reiterating the same message on both the visual and acoustic levels, Riefenstahl designed a collectivizing filmic strategy. Her cosmovision differs fundamentally from earlier representational models as well as antifascist films and literature that mediate their message

92 Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*; Stramiello, *Übermenschen*, 71.

93 Pedrotti, *Diktatur,* 472–4.

through story lines, documentation, and examples set by individual protagonists whose character development is traced and historically contextualized. Not so *Triumph of the Will*, which ignores history once the opening shots of idyllic old Nuremberg have served their purpose. Thereafter, the focus lies on the future, the overcoming of regional differences, and the creation of a totalitarian state that transcends all boundaries. Hence, Riefenstahl's film does not tell a conventional story but rather provides images of group expansion into crowds and eventually into masses, whose aspirations the privileged elite knows and articulates, with the "*Führer*," Hitler, as the special individual who embodies the entire nation. According to his pronouncements, he senses, knows, and expresses each German national's, as well as the collective's, desires and needs. He speaks in a prophetic, all-knowing voice. After his cataclysmic speech at the Party rally, Rudolf Hess in summary proclaims, „Die Partei ist Hitler, Hitler aber ist Deutschland wie Deutschland Hitler ist."[94]

Triumph des Willens derives its momentum from the implied invitation to the viewer to sing along with familiar tunes and to march along through settings that change from day to night, outdoors to indoors, from choreographed mass scenes to individual faces and bodies, and then back to frenetically cheering crowds. In its repetitiveness, the film has a primarily emotional, almost hypnotic effect. It shows rather than argues its message of the growing power of the Nazi movement and invites anyone with the proper qualifications to join the movement, whose representatives promise that it will last throughout millennia.

Triumph des Willens won acclaim not only within Germany, but was also awarded international prizes in France and Nazi-friendly Italy—the film clearly also resonated with non-German audiences.[95] According to George Dickie, *Triumph of the Will* challenged generations of "aestheticians writing about the moral content of art."[96] The preeminent role of choreography and music leaves the film of national rebirth open to interpretation and makes it potentially attractive to viewers outside Germany. Images suggesting discipline and enjoyment, passion and submission are complemented by the soundscape and a stentorian voice-over that denotes an unequivocal national consensus that a reasoned narrative would undermine.[97]

The symbol of the Party Eagle, fashioned after the earlier Imperial Eagle but more streamlined and positioned upon a swastika encircled by a wreath,

94 "The Party is Hitler! But Hitler is Germany as Germany is Hitler!" Riefenstahl, *Triumph*.

95 Wildmann, *Begehrte Körper*, 29; Ruch, *Medium Film.*

96 Dickie, "Triumph in *Triumph*," 151.

97 Cowan and Sicks, "Premiere."

precedes the credits to position the film ideologically. The opening cosmic images, clouds and fog, evoke a Wagnerian twilight of the gods and the dawning of a new age. From the mist through which the contours of medieval towers appear, descends Hitler's airplane, a standard Junkers, which was at the time a state-of-the-art private plane. Hitler descends the plane accompanied by heroic Wagnerian notes tempered by softer, more romantic themes from which the melody of the "Horst Wessel Song" emerges. The selection of melodies synthesizes history and modernity, high and popular culture, innovation, and the glamor of political activism in a nexus that has been compellingly analyzed by Samuel Weber.[98]

Feuchtwanger and Bruckner had demonstrated the role that political songs played in Nazi indoctrination. Sung by soldiers and men at work, the lyrics and melodies of these catchy songs with their straightforward, simple lyrics were appropriate for harmonizing. One of these songs, *Die Fahne hoch* ("The Flag On High," 1929) by Nazi activist Horst Wessel assumed legendary proportions after the author's assassination in 1930. It became the unofficial anthem of Nazi Germany. In the score of *Triumph des Willens*, this song serves as the *leitmotif*. In the last scene in the Party assembly hall, the "Horst Wessel" song rings out and the audience joins in, demonstrating their familiarity with the lyrics, which evokes a mystical union of the fallen fighters and the applauding crowds as the 1934 Party Day comes to a close.

The combination of various forms of expression makes Riefenstahl's film a total political art and propaganda work that supports aesthetically the political process of bringing all aspects of German society in line. This *Gleichschaltung* (political synchronization) began with Hitler's rise to power. *Triumph des Willens* suggests that this process was complete after the Nazis purged their own ranks of stormtroopers in the "Night of the Long Knives" (June 29, 1934). Riefenstahl's film is a contribution to the legitimization of the regime after this episode of political murders and introduces the restructured organizations to the national and international public.

The film provides visual evidence of the mass approval the regime claimed to enjoy, amplified by the pomp and circumstance of parades and the apparent popularity of the exclusively male Party leadership. The women and children cheering from the sidelines express complete popular approval. Hitler's plane and his fleet of cars, the new uniforms and shining boots, and the well-fed onlookers project prosperity and an economically sound state that the international public should both trust and fear. Riefenstahl's images reinforce Hitler's model of a varied German population, but within the seeming diversity,

98 Weber, "Clouds," 339–40.

clear lines are drawn. According to cultural anthropologist Klaus Theweleit, Riefenstahl's wider spectrum is constructed as part of the promise the Nazi Party extended to the German masses that they will be accepted and loved. Theweleit notes that it is obvious that the movement embraces „jede Fratze, die hässlichen, Gesichter, die abstehenden Ohren, das schiefe Grinsen, die Triefäugigen, die die Säufernasen, die harten knochigen ebenso wie die dicken Kerle zuliess zur Elite, zum Kern der Bewegung zu gehören, nämlich zumindet aber zum höchsten Volk, zur einzigen Rasse."[99] This variety characterizes the masses and the Nazi leadership. Theweleit aptly raises the question, „Wo sonst bekamen die Zukurzgekommenen, die Nicht-zu-Ende-Geborenen dermassen viel?"[100]

The limitations to apparent inclusivity apply to men and women of non-European appearance, and to any ethnic apparel other than the German regional costumes. Civilian male attire is also not shown. The scarcity of civilian garments suggests the end of Germany's civil society and the bourgeoisie. Women, with the exception of a few young girls, are not featured as active participants in the spectacle. No woman appears on stage as a presenter, and not one women's organization is showcased in the pageants. However, the presence of women as spectators is needed to validate the display of male valor. Nazi feature films also followed this gendered model: divas and starlets in feature films were defined by the feminine sphere as wives, objects of desire, and victims.

As a propaganda film, *Triumph des Willens* is unsurpassed. The Third Reich's totalitarian world view was exemplified by Riefenstahl's tightly controlled aesthetics. The seemingly unending sequences of the film make the viewers receptive to the film's central theme: German greatness. The flow of images stirs the emotions and prevents critical thoughts. Ultimately, the principle of uniformity shaped Nazi Germany's cultural production as a whole. Nazi works of art communicate the identical core content in varying registers. In contrast, the antifascist cultural production by exile authors reflects divergent attitudes

99 Theweleit, *Männerphantasien* (2000), 400; "As Riefenstahl clearly demonstrates, the Nazis attracted the most grotesque individuals, the ugliest, most dispirited of faces—men with sticking-out ears and crooked smiles, watery eyes, bulbous noses, tough and sinewy, or plump and cheery. The very minimum the Nazis promised them was entry into the unique race of a supreme people; on occasion, they offered entry to the elite at the core of their movement." Theweleit/Turner, Carter and Conway, *Male Fantasies*, 410.

100 Theweleit, 400; "The men they addressed were the not-yet-fully-born, men who had always been left wanting; and where was the party that would offer them more? It was certainly not the rationalist-paternalist Communist Party." Theweleit/Turner, Carter and Conway, 410.

toward the Nazi regime, and this diversity prevented them from speaking in a unified voice.

Representations of Nazi Characters in Exile Literature

Hermynia Zur Mühlen's Novel Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen

While assessments of the Nazi movement and its followers differed significantly, Nazi characters could be easily identified. Antifascist feminist authors expanded the cast of Nazi figures by expanding the range of female Nazi characters. They explored gender-specific experiences from social critical perspectives. Taking into consideration the unequal status of women in German society, they addressed issues that male authors generally ignored, underrated, or romanticized.

The novel *Unsere Töchter, Die Nazinen* (*Our Daughters, the Nazis*, 1935) by Vienna-born aristocrat and feminist Hermynia Zur Mühlen, née Hermine Isabelle Maria Gräfin Folliot de Crenneville-Poutet (1883–1951), was serialized prior to the release of Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens*.[101] Influenced by Marxist theory, Zur Mühlen explores women's responses to National Socialism in class-specific terms. Her protagonists, the *Nazinen* (Nazi girls), find themselves marginalized in the patriarchal society of the Weimar Republic and join the Nazi Party primarily for personal reasons. Preempting Riefenstahl's film images of unorganized female contingents, Zur Mühlen, however, in an affirmative mode, depicts female Nazis as less-committed to the movement than their male counterparts. Her women can be swayed by better prospects, which makes them unreliable Nazis.

Zur Mühlen wrote from her position of social marginality as a renegade aristocrat and female intellectual. In her novel, she explores various predicaments confronting unmarried women after the First World War and the temptation to join the Nazi movement that promised them social and professional integration. These problems include the fact that the war had drastically reduced the number of potential marital partners, and the economic crisis had depleted employment opportunities. Zur Mühlen features six interconnected first-person narratives by three female narrators from around the time of the Nazi takeover. The narratives explain why women with different social standings embraced an ideology from which they had nothing to gain.

101 Zur Mühlen, *Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen.* Translations follow Gossman, "*Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen*."

The narrators are three mothers living in small-town Southern Germany. One of them, Kati Gruber, a widowed working-class woman, remains committed to her and her late husband's Socialist cause. She remembers her married life as a happy partnership of equals. The second narrator, Countess Agnes, also a widow, lost her fortune after the war but maintains her aristocratic lifestyle and has a distinct distaste for Nazi upstarts whose contempt for religion she condemns. After a disappointing marriage to an aristocratic playboy, Agnes leads a secluded life on her Lake Constance estate. The third narrator, Martha Feldhüter, is from the lower middle class. She married a rather unattractive physician to improve her social status and affiliates herself with the Nazi movement for opportunistic reasons.

Gender, politics, and religion are key aspects in Zur Mühlen's novel. Religion is rarely thematized in exile literature about Nazi Germany. The established denominations, Catholic and Protestant, were also not a topic in pro-Nazi literature, since, as Samuel Koehne points out, the Nazi Party was "contemplating limiting and suppressing doctrines or religious teachings, if they offended the German 'moral sense'—itself viewed as racially derived."[102] While Nazi policies first and foremost targeted Judaism, more generally, they also promoted anti-Christian views. Similarly, most modernist and Marxist writers also championed secular protagonists and rarely took note of the dilemma facing religious individuals and communities.

The Feldhüter family is Zur Mühlen's only dyed-in-the wool Nazi family. Martha, or as she prefers to be called in true bourgeois fashion, Frau Doktor Feldhüter, eventually increases her own prospects as a society woman by securing a match for her daughter with a Nazi of aristocratic background. Zur Mühlen draws the Feldhüter family in a stereotypical manner. The women are gold-diggers, and the cartoonish Dr. Feldhüter is reminiscent of derogatory descriptions of Nazi academics in Feuchtwanger and Bruckner. Antifascist authors often targeted the Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Like Goebbels, Feldhüter has a club foot—a deformity he shares with the medieval devil who is attributed a cloven hoof to suggests his spiritual flaws. Feldhüter excels in greed and dishonesty; he does not even share his true intentions with his family. In fact, they are surprised when he discloses, after Hitler's rise to power, that he has been a member of the Nazi Party all along. Similar to the scenario in Wolf's *Professor Mamlock*, the resentment of the mediocre Feldhüter is directed at successful competitors, including a renowned Jewish physician.

Zur Mühlen's narrators, the mothers of the younger protagonists, disclose their experiences in two phases; before the federal election of March 1933,

102 Koehne, "Racial Yardstick."

which paves the way to the establishment of the Nazi government, and after the election, when the regime puts in place new authoritarian policies. Initially, the young women had been in support of the Nazi movement for different reasons. After the election, only the daughter of the Feldhüters continues to support the movement. This particular character constellation reflects the view that the most pro-Nazi contingent came from the lower middle class.[103] Adverse to collectivizing thinking, Zur Mühlen herself considered the autonomy of the individual the cornerstone of her political philosophy and joined the ranks of the "Left Catholics."

Primus-Heinz Kucher states that Zur Mühlen's foremost concern is the alarming progress National Socialism made in all parts of German society. In her novel, she interlinks this issue with generational problems between mothers and daughters. While the daughters of Kati and Agnes have developed a propensity for National Socialism against their mothers' opposition, in the Feldhüter family there is complete agreement about joining the Nazi Party.[104] This constellation contradicts the popular myth that German women had a special affinity with Nazi ideology, which was debunked by empirical studies of the 1970s, showing that women's political attitudes had been far less predictable than historians assumed. In her novel, Zur Mühlen demonstrates counter-currents in the mentality of the mother-and-daughter generations as opposed to a direct positive or negative transfer from the older generation to the younger.

Of special interest are the aspects of the Nazi agenda that appeal to women as the novel examines the expectations of women of the interwar generation. The assumption arises that they are motivated by traditional "female" concerns (marriage, sex, and security) and that their fears make them vulnerable to right-wing politics. Zur Mühlen justifies these fears in light of the economic woes of the Weimar Republic and the scarcity of eligible men. Other factors include class-related shifts, most notably the decline of the lower nobility and middle classes, gender inequality, and the relentless Nazi propaganda promising a better future. These factors shape the outlook of Zur Mühlen's protagonists, single women discomfited by their diminished chances of finding a husband or meaningful employment.

Zur Mühlen's literary cosmos is a small world that allows the differences between her characters to be highlighted. The proletarian mother Kati Gruber is often assigned the role of the commentator who criticizes the Nazi followers

103 Gossman, "Red Countess," 64.

104 Kucher and Müller, *Österreichische Literatur im Exil,* 4.

and their slavish adherence to the "*Führer.*"[105] Uncovering the inconsistencies in Nazi propaganda, Gruber denounces the Nazi leadership ideal and anti-Semitism as tools for mass manipulation.[106] Through the character of Kati Gruber, Zur Mühlen introduces a view of National Socialism as seen through the eyes of a disempowered but critically astute female citizen. Martha Feldhüter's version of a woman's experience under National Socialism differs from those of Kati Gruber and Countess Agnes. A former nurse, Martha entered a marriage of convenience with a doctor. Her naïve account shows her as devious, greedy, and cowardly. All of her decisions seem to be based on ambition and vanity. In her psychological make-up, Martha resembles Lion Feuchtwanger's Mrs. François, whose highest ambition is to run a flourishing household and live vicariously through her children.

The focus of *Unsere Tochter, die Nazinen* is on the daughters, Toni Gruber, Claudia, and Lieselotte Feldhüter, who embrace National Socialism. Toni Gruber is robust and intelligent, and Claudia, Countess Agnes's spinsterly daughter, is hyper-sensitive, but both are equally vulnerable to demagoguery.[107] In Toni's case, the economic crisis, her father's absence, and the job shortage make the Nazi Party seem like a viable option. For Claudia, the decisive factors are her social and sexual needs. For both the proletarian and the aristocrat, the association with National Socialism is temporary. In contrast, the petty bourgeois Lieselotte uses her Nazi affiliation as a ticket into high society. She does not care which direction the movement will take as long as she benefits from it.

Through her *Nazinen*, Zur Mühlen highlights insidious modes of benefitting from the regime in terms of material advantages and emotional fulfillment. By validating their male partners, the female characters become complicit in the Nazis' rise to power. Toni, for example, attends meetings, wears a swastika pin and assumes ancillary roles in Party activities from which she derives a sense of belonging.[108] Claudia's story conforms with accepted views on female sexuality, including those in Anna Fischer-Dückelmann's widely available *Die Frau als Hausärztin* (*Woman as Family Physician*, 1901), which the Nazis temporarily put on the list of banned literature.[109] According to Fischer-Dückelmann, premature aging in women is caused by a lack of sexual activity.[110] Zur Mühlen

105 Zur Mühlen, *Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen,* 12.

106 Zur Mühlen, 12–3.

107 Zur Mühlen, 18.

108 Zur Mühlen, 25, 27.

109 Fischer-Dückelmann, *Die Frau als Hausärztin*, 238.

110 Oels, *"Ein Bestseller der Selbstsorge."*

interprets Claudia's blossoming after finding a love interest along those lines, but also indicates that the Nazi Party is hardly the right place to find a partner. Maria-Antionette Macciocchi, in her study "Female Sexuality in Fascist Ideology," observes that women hoping for sexual fulfillment in fascist organizations were likely to be disappointed, since the movement rejected sex not intended for procreation.[111] Claudia's story confirms this assessment: she ultimately loses her groom to the better-connected and younger Lieselotte Feldhüter, the ideal future mother of Nazi children. Zur Mühlen also takes note of the appeal Hitler had to women such as Claudia, an ardent admirer of Hitler. Her adulation of the "*Führer*" prompted her to join the Party in the first place. In contrast to the far-less sentimental Lieselotte Feldhüter, Claudia considers National Socialism the vehicle to her self-actualization as a woman. Unlike the Feldhüter women, she ends up resisting commodification and makes autonomous choices.

The central section features Martha Feldhüter as a paradigm of Nazi womanhood. Based on her authoritarian family background, she seems ideally suited for life under National Socialism. Her chatty account discloses embarrassing details of her unhappy marriage and complaints about being ostracized by other women, a predicament she blames on her limping husband. Lacking the attributes of Nazi masculinity and the normative racial features, Dr. Feldhüter ironically reflects the Nazi leadership, who bore no resemblance to the Nordic ideal. Trying to compensate for his shortcomings, Martha never tires of proclaiming that Dr. Feldhüter is a verifiable Aryan and a husband to be proud of. However, contrary to Martha's assertions, Feldhüter completely lacks integrity. His reasons for joining the Party are economic and professional—he is indifferent to the political implications of his decisions. His acceptance into the Party, in turn, shows that the Nazis are not choosy. They welcome him regardless of his mediocrity. Initially, when Feldhüter is not sure that the Nazis will succeed, he keeps his membership secret. Like Feuchtwanger's furniture-maker Wels, he only displays his party pin after Hitler has been appointed Chancellor. Only then does he disclose his real motives to his wife: he trusts that, with the help of the Nazis, they will acquire wealth and status.[112]

The character of Martha Feldhüter is split into two life stories, presumably a trait of the entire middle class. Zur Mühlen implies that the apparent dishonesty of this social group is the product of the shame culture that shaped it. Martha's parallel, but conflicting, stories expose the discrepancy between her private thoughts and her public persona. While the first narrative articulates her frustration, the second narrative is aspirational, created by whitewashing

111 Macciocchi, "Female Sexuality," 69.

112 Zur Mühlen, *Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen*, 73.

embarrassing facts. Dominated by shame and a craving for recognition, Martha seems predestined for the Nazi movement, where strong leadership would silence the two voices that emerge from her constant self-censorship and erase her negative self-assessment, leaving only her "public" narrative. This latter narrative showcases her and her family as upstanding Aryan citizens living an ideal life.

Martha's attitude towards National Socialism is also ambivalent. In public, she has nothing but praise for the SS and SA, „die schmucken Uniformen,"[113] and the „tapferen Burschen, die jahrelang verfolgt und von den Feinden meuchlings überfallen worden sind."[114] In her personal narrative, though, she confesses that the movement and its men leave her unimpressed. To realize her own goals, she is willing to submit to power in the private sphere of marriage as well as in the public sphere of politics. In order to live with herself, she cultivates the ability to ignore inconvenient truths. Thus, she interprets her success in Nazi Germany as the product of her hard work and moral values, which conveniently enough coincide with Nazi ideology, her praise of motherhood being but one example.[115] Even Martha's sense of beauty is entirely practical. Lieselotte meets her expectations of a beautiful daughter because she makes an advantageous match. Martha's hateful comments about her husband's competitor, Dr. Bär, are also aligned with Nazi ideology: he is Jewish, which makes her diatribes socially acceptable. Clearly, however, her anti-Semitism is personally motivated and fueled by envy.

Zur Mühlen's female Nazi characters correspond to the class and gender paradigms of Marxist antifascism theory. Similar to Wolf's *Professor Mamlock, Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen* ends on a moderately hopeful note based on the supposition that most Germans fundamentally disagree with the regime, and their acquiescence will end as soon as the proletariat is strong enough to topple the Third Reich.

Klaus Mann's Roman à Clef Mephisto

The social critical novel *Mephisto* (*Mephisto–Novel of a Career*, 1936) by Klaus Mann (1906–1949), the son of Thomas Mann, is an extraordinary literary exploration of the Nazi mentality set within the panorama of the Third Reich

113 Zur Mühlen, 81.

114 Zur Mühlen, 81; "She admires the SA and SS men in their handsome uniforms," "those brave lads who for years were persecuted, treacherously attacked, and murdered." Gossman, "*Unsere Töchter die Nazinen*."

115 Zur Mühlen, 85.

elite.[116] Mann's central character is the second-rate actor Hendrik Höfgen, a Socialist-turned-Nazi, who rises to stardom because superior performers have fled the country. Klaus Mann himself, and the Mann family, escaped from Germany in 1933. In 1936, *Mephisto* was published in Amsterdam, where Mann worked for the Querido publishing house.

The novel was immediately read as a roman à clef and the chameleon-like Höfgen identified as Nazi star actor and Mann's former friend Gustav Gründgens.[117] Mann drew massive criticism from Gründgens's associates, who recognized the connection, for configuring Höfgen as a spineless individual and a likely candidate for the Nazi stage.[118] The relationship between Höfgen and his sponsor, the portly German Prime Minister, resembles that between Gründgens and Prime Minister Hermann Göring (1893–1946). The politician's voluptuous blonde wife, Lotte Lindenthal, calls to mind Göring's wife Emmy, a minor actress who rose to prominence in the Nazi elite. The powerful couple's rivals are the demonic propaganda minister, who resembles Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Göbbels, and his fussy wife.

Höfgen resembles Bruckner's protagonist Karlanner, who likewise wavers between old loyalties and the allure of power. Mann's emotionally unstable protagonist and the rivalries attributed to the Nazi leadership signal volatility behind the rigid façade of the Nazi government. Mann's novel outlines how the only viable alternative Germans have at the beginning of Nazi rule is making common cause with the Nazis or leaving the country. Staying and refusing to cooperate poses an inordinate risk, as the unhappy fate of several characters shows. Höfgen affiliates himself with the winning party and enters into the inner circles of the regime, thus occasioning a satirical panorama of the Nazi elite, some of whom the author knew personally.

The novel operates on several levels: it's a realistic-historical novel that chronicles events from the Weimar Republic to the Nazi period, a symbolic-literary tale that reviews key events from the cosmic perspective of Goethe's *Faust*, and an autobiographical story that introduces materials from the author's circle of acquaintances. Through the Faust motifs, which were familiar to educated German readers, Mann satirizes the Third Reich and its major and minor players. Read as a satirical commentary mediated through Goethe's masterful classical drama, the middle-aged Höfgen represents a Faust-character on a reduced scale. His Afro-German mistress, the domina Juliette, serves as a

116 Mann, *Mephisto* (1936). Quotations follow Mann, *Mephisto* (2000). Translations follow Mann, *Mephisto* (trans. Robin Smyth).

117 See: Spangenberg, *Karriere eines Romans*.

118 Hoffer, "Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*," 245.

contrast figure to Faust's childlike paramour Gretchen, who was envisioned as the ideal of German womanhood in Nazi society.[119] The Höfgen/Faust scenario runs parallel to the Gretchen story; Faust follows Mephisto, leaves Gretchen who is pregnant with his child, and takes up with Helen of Troy, the golden-haired paragon of classical female beauty. Similarly, Höfgen follows the wishes of the Nazi Prime Minister and abandons Juliette to marry a blond Aryan actress.

The novel also contains a critique of Nazi aesthetics, as is evident in the opening episode at the Prime Minister's birthday party. The narrator's comment invokes the apocalyptic horsemen to signify the end of German civilization:

> Wehe, die apokalyptischen Reiter sind unterwegs, hier haben sie sich niedergelassen und aufgerichtet ein gräßliches Regiment. … Überall soll ihre Mißgestalt verehrt und angebetet werden. Ihre Häßlichkeit soll bewundert sein als die neue Schönheit. Wo man heute noch über sie lacht, soll man morgen vor ihnen auf dem Bauche liegen.[120]

These pronouncements signify the near-complete subversion of the norms of modern art and architecture, which the Nazis condemned as degenerate. For their gala event, although the Nazi elite has spared no expense, nothing, including the stage-Mephisto Höfgen, rises above mediocrity. The champagne flows freely and the decorations are of epic proportion, but the music, a potpourri of stuffy military marches, popular ditties, and even jazz tunes, lacks refinement. The women's vulgar display of wealth clashes with the frugality imposed on the general public and exposes the double standard. While the prominence splurges, the masses still hope for the "the day of freedom and bread" promised in the "Horst Wessel Song."[121] While the majority of the Nazi prominence is in attendance at the gala event, the dictator himself does not appear as an icon of his importance.

Höfgen stands out among many other opportunists because he combines his careerism with the skills of a stage actor. His conversion from Socialism

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119 Fritz Murnau's film *Goethe's Faust* proliferated the image of Faust's innocent Gretchen with long blond braids.

120 Mann, *Mephisto* (2000), 225–6; "The horsemen of the apocalypse are on their way. Here they have dismounted and conscripted a hideous regiment. From here they mean to conquer the world—where men today laugh at them, they shall tomorrow prostrate before them." Mann/Smyth, 155.

121 Mann, *Mephisto* (2000), 225–6; For the text of the Horst Wessel song, considered the unofficial hymn of the Nazi regime, and a historical analysis, see: Broderick, "*Horst-Wessel-Lied*."

to National Socialism is generously rewarded: he gains personal access to the Prime Minister, his wife, and later the dictator. Under the watchful eye of the Prime Minister, Höfgen transforms himself into a minion of the Nazi "court." In every respect, the hierarchical stratification of the regime intrudes upon the gala function: nobody dares to have fun and leave their assigned place since the men's insignia and the women's jewelry define their rank and status. Parisian perfume, expensive cigars, and decorative people including slender SS youths in tight-fitting uniforms, and film divas reveal high-level consumerism.[122] The presence of aristocrats demonstrates the regime's power for which journalists and university professors provide the intellectual legitimation. One member of the Nazi intelligentsia, the blond-haired and blue-eyed patriotic author Cäsar von Muck, is a special object of Mann's satire. He exudes respectability and simplicity in a manner similar to Feuchtwanger's Professor Gutwetter. Jewish bankers and international diplomats complete the spectrum, adding an element of urbanity that will soon be abolished.

To indicate that, despite their odd practices, the Nazis are anything but amusing, the Minister of Propaganda, who carries his club foot in the manner of Shakespeare's stage villain Richard III, evokes terror by his demonic aura. Having assumed the role of supreme arbiter, he regulates the cultural life of the nation.[123] Everyone mistrusts and avoids him: „Eine eisige Luft schien zu wehen, wo er vorbeiging."[124] In his presence, Höfgen is reduced to a simple stage-demon. The tension between guests at the party indicates that even Nazi insiders have reason to be careful of one another. The forces shaping public life are interconnected with everyone's private sphere, even the bedrooms. Ideology dictates family life and morality, and the jealousies among the wives play a role as well; for example, since the dictator is not married, the wife of the Propaganda Minister and Lotte Lindenthal compete for the role of First Lady.

For the construction of his characters, Mann uses descriptions that deviate strategically from the Nazi racial and gender stereotypes. Upon close inspection, the blond, green-eyed, rather than blue-eyed, protagonist Höfgen is balding. The air of controlled calm he assumes in public is an act; in private he is given to tantrums.[125] An actor through and through, he makes the most of his unimpressive features and carefully displays his supposedly aristocratic head in the most advantageous manner.[126] According to the narrator, Höfgen

122 Mann, 14.

123 Mann, 18.

124 Mann, 18; "An icy wind seemed to blow as he passed." Mann/Smyth, 11.

125 Mann, 22.

126 Mann, 22.

manages to assume the appearance of a beautiful man only by posing. The Prime Minister requires even greater pretense to produce the required impression. Mann refers to the powerful man disrespectfully as "*der Dicke*," and mocks his flamboyant attire, medals, and uniforms.[127] The reference to Lotte Lindenthal as "*ein Weib*" (a female) suggests that she represents the female Nazi as a biological entity, but, despite her motherly appearance, she lacks any nurturing qualities.[128] Lotte takes Höfgen under her wing as a trophy for unknown reasons that may include an element of sexual attraction. In this scenario, the Prime Minister plays a bizarre father-role: he forgives his protégé's youthful transgressions, even his past association with Marxism. However, he draws the line at Höfgen's affair with a black woman, indicating that racial issues are non-negotiable.

Hitler represents Power Incarnate. In their private meeting, he initially subdues the actor psychologically by his mere presence.[129] Slowly regaining his senses, the actor observes that the great man has an insignificant forehead and his "legendary" strand of hair is greasy. His unattractive glare and his paunch make the aura crumble.[130] These details, in conjunction with the low voice and broad Southern German dialect, seem shocking to Höfgen, all the more as the Leader forcefully expounds his national and racial doctrine.[131]

A survey of Höfgen's career further supports Mann's notions about the deceptiveness of the Nazi elite.[132] The account begins in the Weimar Republic and reveals that the actor has had emotional problems throughout his career. His superior, Director Kroge, remarks, „Alles an ihm ist falsch, von seinem literarischen Geschmack bis zu seinem sogenannten Kommunismus. Er ist kein Künstler, sondern ein Komödiant."[133] Höfgen is emphatically characterized as a blond Rhinelander,[134] but, in Mann's typology, blondness is not a positive trait; it usually signifies selfishness and untrustworthiness. For the most part, the blond women in *Mephisto* are of questionable character and willingly submit to Nazi standards.

Several contrasting figures are introduced to further define Höfgen, including the theater-worker Miklas, a confirmed Nazi and anti-Semite of low status.

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127 Mann, 23; "The fat leader" (15), "the Fat one" (184), Mann/Smyth.

128 Mann, 24.

129 Mann, 357.

130 Mann, 356–7.

131 Mann, 358.

132 Mann, 28–9.

133 Mann, 38; "Everything about him is phony, from his literary taste to his so-called Communism. He's no artist, he's just an actor." Mann/Smyth, 22.

134 Mann, 228.

Similar to the "old fighters" of the SA, he is eventually discarded when he has served his purpose. Another such figure is Juliette, the "*dunkle Mädchen*,"[135] whom Höfgen pays to play the part of the barbaric exotic woman, a role that is incongruent with her affable disposition.[136] She genuinely likes Höfgen, who, in turn, cannot imagine her to be capable of anything but primitive impulses.[137] Höfgen's first wife, Barbara, also possesses the integrity he lacks: she comes from a distinguished family and divorces him when his Nazi affiliations become known. Among the male figures juxtaposed to Höfgen, Otto Ulrichs stands out. Ulrichs is a gifted actor and a decent human being who defends the downtrodden and rejects National Socialism. While Höfgen thrives, Ulrichs dies a martyr's death for the antifascist resistance.

Klaus Mann's pessimistic novel portrays opportunism and hypocrisy as the path to success in the Third Reich. His protagonist follows this path and, becoming identified with the role of Mephisto in Goethe's Faust, becomes the poster-boy for the Nazi theater. To achieve this success, he must repudiate his likes and dislikes, put up with terrible company, and become complicit in heinous crimes. Mann's prototypical Nazi is someone who, like Höfgen, sells his soul and the people closest to him for money and status. His complete lack of empathy marks Höfgen as a psychopath.

Bertolt Brecht's Epic Drama Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches

The annexation of Austria, the Night of Broken Glass, and the impending war spurred further literary assessments of the Nazi regime, including Bertolt Brecht's epic drama *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches* (*The Private Life of the Master Race*, 1948), which Brecht began in exile in 1934 together with Margarete Steffin. In 1938, selected scenes were published by the Malik publishing house, and eight episodes were performed in Paris.[138] The play was published in the United States in 1944, and for the first time in Germany in 1948. Encompassing the years 1933 to 1938, Brecht's critical dramatic panorama continues the tradition of Feuchtwanger and Wolf. Brecht's interpretation of the Nazi mentality is informed by Marxist theory and presents the class struggle as the key element.

Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches traces the ascent of the Nazis through brute force and deception, and depicts a concurrent awakening among the proletariat. Increasingly vigilant working-class characters develop the skills

135 Mann, 73.

136 "the black girl," Mann/Smyth, 49.

137 Mann, 282.

138 Brecht, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*; Brecht, *Private Life* (trans. Eric Bentley); See also: White and White, *Brecht's Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*.

needed to outsmart the class enemy. Rather than psychologizing, Brecht introduces *dramatis personae* as factors in the processes that allow the Nazi regime to function. Female characters are cast predominantly in menial roles. Brecht focuses on males who are complicit in the regime as either active participants or indifferent by-standers. The play explores the Nazis' recruiting strategies and their tactics in controlling the population along with strategies of resistance. Formally, the drama follows Brecht's concept of the epic theater and appeals to the audience's critical faculties.

The title is reminiscent of Honoré de Balzac's novel *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* (*The Splendors and Miseries of Courtesans*, 1847) and implicitly compares the Germans to harlots surrendering to the highest bidder, in this case an illegitimate government. The dramatic trajectory predicts the inevitable downfall of the Third Reich. The final message is that the terror will not last if the common people collectively resist. In chronological order, the individual scenes illustrate Germany's fate under Nazi rule, showing, on one hand, increasingly radical policies and, on the other, emerging dissatisfaction.

The introductory poem "*Die deutsche Heerschau*"[139] alludes to Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens.*[140] Brecht takes the phrase "*Heerschau halten"* (reviewing the troops) from the film and uses it satirically to call into question Riefenstahl's message that Hitler is a military genius and a national prophet. According to Brecht's poem, five years after the Nazi takeover, the situation in Germany has steadily deteriorated.[141] The plight of the disenfranchised becomes obvious and increases with the prospect of war. Due to the arms build-up, ordinary families go hungry, but their complaints are drowned out by war mongering and military music. With its episodic structure and everyday language, Brecht's play is geared towards audiences who are ready to prepare for collective resistance.[142]

Each episode shows German society at a particular historical juncture and builds up to a didactic punch line. Beginning with the methodical infiltration of the social structures, Brecht traces the Nazis' early successes in co-opting the professions and the administrative establishment through intimidation, bribery, and detention. Over time, Nazi supporters can be found among the working classes as well as the bourgeoisie. Concurrent with the consolidation of the regime, increasing dissent among the proletariat becomes manifest, first

139 Brecht, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*, 1075.

140 Brecht called the poem "a barbaric march." "The soldiers sing to the tune of the Horst Wessel Song." Brecht/Bentley, 1.

141 Hochstetter, *Motorisierung und "Volksgemeinschaft,"* 188, footnote 208.

142 White, "*Brecht's Furcht und Elend*," 143.

as discontent, but later as an emergent organized resistance. In the context of antifascist writing, Brecht's Nazi characters are less than original. Their unsavory behavior is familiar from the works of Feuchtwanger, Bruckner, and Wolf. Several of the play's scenes expose the moral turpitude of the Nazi elite. Scene One features two drunken SS men holding forth about German superiority while urinating in the street and accidentally killing an old man.[143]

Causing people to act against their own interest, National Socialism destroys intimate relationships, as revealed in Scene Two through the example of a misogynist SA man who spies on his lover, motivated by the paranoia Brecht attributes to the Nazis.[144] Reminiscent of Bruckner's Nazi students, Nazis trust no one, including their fellow Party members. Some low-ranking Nazis seem to have retained a sense of solidarity with former comrades, as suggested in Scene Four, which is set in a concentration camp where the prisoners are routinely tortured.[145] In this unlikely setting, a show of solidarity takes place among the prisoners, which certain SS men refuse to expose. The events suggest that the Nazi terror may ultimately turn against itself.[146] A further probe into the mentality of the low-ranking SS men in Scene Five reveals that they eventually become demoralized when they are ordered to administer unwarranted punishment.[147] The disaffection Brecht ascribes to some of the SS guards foreshadows the figure of the "good Nazi" engaging in covert subversive behavior in postwar literature.

Brecht's assumption that the lower middle class was most vulnerable to Nazi ideology is borne out by the research of Dick Geary in "Who Voted for the Nazis?" (1998): "The lower middle class of Germany's Protestant towns did constitute the hard-core of Nazi support and were over-represented in the membership of the NSDAP."[148] On the other hand, Nazi trials and memoir literature reveal that, contrary to these assumptions, there was little solidarity between the prisoners and the camp personnel, and cruelty existed in all ranks.[149] Similar to Feuchtwanger, Bruckner, and Wolf, Brecht exposes the

143 Brecht, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*, 1076.

144 Brecht, 1081; Steinbacher, *Volksgenossinnen,* 14–5.

145 Brecht, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*, 1097.

146 Brecht, 1099.

147 Brecht, 1101.

148 Geary, "Who Voted for the Nazis?"

149 Reinhard Kühnl ("Theory of German Fascism," 30) identifies the bourgeoisie as the stronghold of fascism, in contradistinction to literature that attempted to shift the blame to the working class; Michael Mann (*Fascists*, 28) emphasizes the appeal of fascism to young men who were imbued with the ideal of a modern morality involving militarism in secondary and higher education. Mann holds that fascism reached out to people affected

subversion of Germany's professional structures and the legal system under National Socialism. Scene Six envisions judges and lawyers submitting to the new order. Benefitting from the general compliance, the Nazis are in a position to turn Germany into a segregated society where interracial relationships are criminalized.[150] When selected scenes from *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches* were published, the revision of the German legal code was already a fait accompli. Race, the play reveals, had become a tool for deciding whether or not a person receives due process in court.[151] Brecht goes on to expose the decline of the medical profession by showing doctors covering up for atrocities committed in concentration camps,[152] and introduces scientists bending to Nazi rule because they lack the moral fiber to resist.

Scene Nine, "*Die jüdische Frau*" ("The Jewish Wife"), is the best-known vignette in the play. It explores the effects of Nazi race politics on assimilated German Jews. The scene consists of one-sided telephone conversations between a Jewish woman, Judith Keith, and her non-Jewish husband. For his sake, she feels she must leave Germany. Her concern contrasts with her friends' and husband's indifference. He makes no attempt to stop her from going abroad. Nathan Stoltzfus confirms Brecht's assessment of how easy it was to destroy Germany's integrated society and observes that "much compliance was due to passivity or social conformity."[153] In the case of intermarried couples, he observes that "Germans did not fully exploit their chances for noncompliance."[154]

There are parallels to the experience Brecht attributes to Judith Keith and Gustav Oppenheim's initial disappointment with his lover Sybil in *Die Geschwister Oppenheim*. In Feuchtwanger, when Sybil abandons her Nazi-friendly sponsor Gutwetter, the incident is all but forgotten. In contrast, Brecht's scene does not suggest a happy ending; Judith's departure seems to be the end of this intercultural marriage.[155] A further examination of the status of family life in Nazi Germany shows the breakdown of another family because of the son's

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by a faltering economy, but did not limit its outreach to a particular class. Rather, it appealed to those who objected to Socialism or Marxism. Its followers were nationalists, and often from military or civil servant families; Alasdair King (*Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 263) remarks upon the reevaluation of the petty bourgeoisie, who were traditionally considered apolitical, in 1980s German literature.

150 Brecht, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*, 1105.

151 Brecht, 1109.

152 Brecht, 1123.

153 Stoltzfuss, *Resistance of the Heart*, 3.

154 Stoltzfus, 9.

155 Brecht, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*, 1133.

membership in the Hitler Youth.[156] The examination of the destruction caused by a single Nazi adept takes a family to the breaking point. Another issue that is brought to light is the vulnerability of young people to sexual exploitation in state-ordained activities, as suggested by the example of a working-class girl, who is eager to enroll in a labor program that is known for incidents of child abuse.[157] A growing community spirit among workers—men and women—comes into focus in the later scenes, which suggests that the scales may be tipping in favor of the antifascists.

The effects of Germany's "nazification," as revealed in *Furcht und Elend*, include the ideological subversion of the language. Scene Thirteen introduces SA representatives and managers wooing workers with seductive rhetoric that blends socialist and nationalist concepts and glorifies technology as the way of the future. Contrary to expectations, the workers who earn the minimum wage know that they have been duped and voice their discontent.[158] The next scene shows that individual dissidents are easy to eliminate; here, they are murdered and the authorities cover up the crime.

Furcht und Elend begins by demonstrating the gap between the organized Nazis and the general population, who are taken by surprise. As the people's skepticism increases, their will to overthrow tyrannical regime grows. The subplots in Brecht's play lead up to the conclusion that organized resistance under the leadership of the proletariat is the only viable option for opponents of the Nazis.

Once he had completed this drama, all of Brecht's writings were banned in Nazi Germany. Thus, his drama could only be received outside of Germany, and its appeal had to be international. Like other antifascist publications, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches* had virtually no impact prior to 1945. Indeed, the first production in the United States, in 1945, postdated the developments that Brecht had intended to warn against.[159]

Veza Canetti's Novel Die Schildkröten

Vienna-born Veza Canetti, neé Taubner-Calderon (1897–1963), was an author of Sephardic descent. Until her marriage to Elias Canetti, she was a Bosnian citizenship and thereafter stateless. She wrote short stories and a serialized novel that appeared in the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung.* Canetti's narratives of the early 1930s reflect her Socialist views. Before the annexation of Austria by Nazi

156 Brecht, 1135.

157 Brecht, 1147.

158 Brecht, 1152.

159 Weisstein, "Brecht in Amerika," 384–5.

Germany, she seems to have avoided the issue of racial anti-Semitism, perhaps because she considered the oppression of the proletariat under capitalism the first priority.

The Nazi invasion and the Night of Broken Glass precipitated the Canettis' escape to England. Veza Canetti's exile novel *Die Schildkröten* (*The Tortoises*, 1999), written in England in 1939, marks a radical change in the author's point of view. Anti-Semitism and racist persecution are the central topics in the novel, for which she found no publisher in either its German or English version.[160]

The widespread acceptance of eugenics outside Germany may have been one of the reasons why *Die Schildkröten* could not be placed for publication. Moreover, the onset of the war made the author's status in England precarious, and British publishers may have considered the book too controversial for a Jewish refugee author. Anti-Semitism and pro-Nazi sentiments had also taken hold in Britain, and may have contributed to the author's inability to publish *Die Schildkröten* during the war years.[161] The satirical novel *The Monster* (1940) by Frieda Benedikt (ps. Anna Sebastian), a friend of the Canettis from Vienna, was published by London publisher Jonathan Cape. Benedikt's book was also potentially controversial because it lent itself to be read as a spoof on Hitler, but it steered clear of the theme of anti-Semitism. These circumstances are inconsistent with Fritz Arnold's claim that Veza Canetti's *Die Schildkröten* remained unpublished because of the war.[162]

Die Schildkröten identifies anti-Semitism as a tool to disenfranchise Vienna's Jews. The example of the highly educated Kain family and their acquaintances indicates that this segment of the population differed widely in appearance, lifestyle, and religious identity. Canetti introduces as the Kain's adversaries two representatives of the invading power, a ruthless German SA officer and his passive-aggressive wife. They complement one another in their greed and disregard for the lives of other human beings and animals. Throughout the novel, the abuse of humans is set parallel to the mistreatment of animals to demonstrate that species categories are fluid. Human beings who, like the Jews under Nazism, are classified as less than human or animals, lose their rights to life, liberty, and property.

Canetti takes issue with "racial science" and the attendant stereotyping that encourages anti-Semitism on one hand and Aryan self-glorification on the

160 Canetti, *Die Schildkröten*. Translations follow Canetti, *The Tortoises*. (trans. Ian Mitchell). "Terror now reigns in the Heart of Europe." Canetti/Mitchell, 21.

161 Black, *War Against the Weak*; Degler, *In Search of Human Nature*; Brunius, *Better for All the World.*

162 Sebastian, *Monster*; Arnold, "*Nachwort*," 277.

other. Canetti emphasizes the suffering of her Jewish characters at the hands of the German invaders and their Austrian supporters, who bring about the destruction of Viennese society and the end of assimilation in a few weeks. The main Nazi character is Baldur von Pilz, an allusion to Baldur von Schirach, who had been appointed District Leader of Vienna. Pilz's lack of empathy, arrogance, and cunning correspond to the portrayal of Nazi characters seen in Roth, Feuchtwanger, and Brecht.

The Pilz family is drawn according to the stereotypical model of the lower-middle-class Nazi household and conservative gender roles. The overbearing husband dominates his simple-minded wife, a former maid, while pursuing other women. Despite her lack of education, Mrs. Pilz, like Zur Mühlen's character of Martha Feldhüter, is anything but harmless; she nurtures her husband's ambition and takes care of his material needs. She benefits from his position enough to submit to his wishes. Indirectly, she contributes to the persecution of the Jewish couple, Eva and Andreas Kain, whose apartment she covets, and eventually takes over after having them evicted.

In her portrayal of the German invaders, Canetti suggests that, despite their second-class status in the Nazi regime, women can also be perpetrators. The Jewish protagonist Eva Kain knows that she is confronting a mortal enemy whenever she comes face-to-face with a Nazi—male or female.[163] She sees the German occupiers as the embodiment of terror, whether they are singing Schubert arias or marching songs.[164] The voluptuous blond Frau Pilz, the identical physical type as Klaus Mann's Lotte Lindenthal, combines the looks of a Wagnerian Valkyrie with naïve girlish behavior à la Goethe's Gretchen figure. Eva's Jewish neighbor Hilde is a contrasting figure to both Eva Kain and Mrs. Pilz. She is blond, and, based on her appearance, she can "pass" as Aryan, but her sophistication and worldliness set her apart from the Nazi German women.

Canetti attributes contradictory traits to her Nazi characters. Baldur von Pilz's grandiosity clashes with his pettiness. Because of his quirks and mannerisms, Hilde, who underestimates him, thinks he is pathetic. Her miscalculation about a man who enjoys inflicting pain on other humans and animals mirrors the initial reactions to the Nazis, when the public had not realized that Hitler's erratic behavior did not imply that he was ever harmless. *Die Schildkröten* makes it clear that despite their grotesque qualities, the National Socialists presented a threat to the entire civilized world.

Canetti's Nazi characters are consumed by greed. Her Jewish protagonists, counter to popular belief, are shown to be devoted to intellectual and cultural

163 Canetti, *Die Schildkröten*, 28.

164 Canetti, 28.

pursuits. The dark-haired Eva Kain exemplifies a modern cosmopolitan ideal of beauty that includes makeup and international fashions, whereas blonde Mrs. Pilz dresses without finesse. Eva describes her as a creature straight from the forests and „Dienstmädchen, das geheiratet wurde."[165] Similar to Zur Mühlen's female Nazis, Frau Pilz appears to be inoffensive when she is by herself, but she becomes aggressive when her husband is around. This leader-follower constellation calls to mind Hitler's views on women and the masses, both of which he believed to be incapable of acting on their own.[166] Mrs. Pilz never seeks to intervene in her husband's initiatives and thus contributes to the Kains' ruin without appearing evil. She aspires to attain the Kains' lifestyle, and wants to take possession of all their worldly goods. In secret, she also experiments with putting on makeup, but removes it when she feels that her husband may observe her.[167] Non-Jewish Austrians aid and abet the robberies of the Pilzes. They invade the Kains' apartment in a scenario that makes the collusion between Austrian fascists and the German Nazis obvious. The two groups form an alliance against the Jewish couple.

Die Schildkröten sketches a panorama of occupied Vienna that shows the effects of Nazi rule on the social fabric and on individual persons. The novel also displays the tenets and function of Nazi racism as well as the authoritarian mentality in its male and female manifestations. In her narrative, Canetti rejects the race-based categorization of human beings as well as the Cartesian division between human and non-human animals, as they serve to cement structures of power and privilege.[168] The episodes showing Pilz killing several animals serve to identify the Nazis' attribution of physical and mental deficiency as a strategy for reducing human beings and animals to the status of "life not worthy of living."[169] Thus, *Die Schildkröten* strikes at the heart of racism—not only Nazi anti-Semitism, but also the racism that was practiced by the colonial empires and in the United States before the Civil Rights Movement. The novel furthermore identifies analogies between speciesism, misogyny, and racism and, preempting the feminist animal rights discourse of the late twentieth century, implies that the killing of animals is a preliminary step to the killing of human beings. Canetti's novel proposes that ending all discrimination and recognizing the interrelatedness of all creatures is the only way to defeat

165 Canetti, 13, 110; "She looks like a maid who got herself married." Canetti/Mitchell, 90.

166 "The people in their overwhelming majority are so feminine by nature and attitude that sober reasoning determines their thoughts and attitudes far less than emotion and feeling." Rash, *Language of Violence*, 20.

167 Canetti, *Die Schildkröten*, 121.

168 Lorenz, "Man and Animal."

169 Rees, *Hitler's Charisma,* 87, 138; Rees, *Auschwitz*, 176–7.

fascism. This radical ethical imperative would hardly have been palatable to her contemporaries in the 1940s.

Anna Seghers's Narrative Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen

The narrative *Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen* (*The Excursion of the Dead Girls*, 1946) by Marxist author Anna Seghers (1900–1983; ps. Netty Reiling) was written in Mexico and first published in New York. Seghers surveys the period between the declining German Empire and the expected defeat of the Third Reich. Autobiographical references reveal that the narrator is a literary representation of the author; she is even referred to by Seghers's given name, Netty.[170] The fictional Netty is recovering in Mexico after a serious accident. During her convalescence, she reviews the lives of her former classmates at an all-female German high school. This gendered perspective makes *Ausflug der toten Mädchen* stand out among Seghers's exile works since it highlights the often-overlooked experience of German women. Before the "Great War," all of the girls in the story seem to coexist in harmony with one another. Some of them later embrace National Socialism, others oppose it, and Jewish women, including the narrator, are driven into exile. The narrator's mother, like Seghers's mother, perished in the Holocaust.

The title of the story refers to a field trip by the high school girls at a time when the cataclysmic events could not be foreseen. The girls, whose tragic end is implied in the title, lead carefree and fun-loving lives.[171] The first impression is almost bucolic, and the narrator, who in the narrative present lives in Mexico, discloses that she was part of the group. Mexico was a refuge for members of the antifascist Left, Socialists and Communists. The reference to the deportation of Netty's mother reveals that Netty is of Jewish background[172] and, under National Socialism, is ostracized from the German national community.

Despite similar circumstances, Anna Seghers and Veza Canetti assess Nazi Germans in very different ways. Whereas Canetti in *Die Schildkröten* depicts an irreparable rift between Jews and the Nazi-dominated mainstream, the narrator in *Ausflug der toten Mädchen* is empathic towards her former classmates, including those who became Nazis.[173] While she condemns the actions of

170 Seghers, *Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen.* Citations follow Seghers, *Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen. Erzählungen*, 51–82. Translations follow Seghers, "Excursion of the Dead Girls," (trans. Elizabeth Rütschi Herrmann and Edna Huttenmaier Spitz).

171 Seghers, *Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen. Erzählungen*, 53.

172 Seghers, 80–2.

173 Gilman and Zipes, *Companion to Jewish Writing,* 662–70. Maier-Katkin, "Debris and Remembrance," 91. Fromm, *Fear of Freedom*; Fromm et al., *Studien über Autorität und Familie.*

one, Marianne, who betrayed her former friends, she also tries to understand her actions. In the borderline situation of convalescence, Netty envisions her friends, most of whom did not survive the war, with nostalgic fondness. Her memory of them as innocent school girls whose world was destroyed in the First World War allows her to understand the unexpected and difficult choices they later faced.

Class affiliation, milieu, and economic conditions are determining factors in the development of the girls. The proletarian girl Leni, for example, embraces antifascist views as a result of her upbringing in a politically-informed home and her exposure to the workers' movement. Her partner choice is connected to her activities in Socialist organizations. On the other hand, Leni's best friend Marianne loses her fiancé, an open-minded youth from a liberal home, in the war, and marries a Nazi, whose political views she adopts. Completely indoctrinated by Nazi ideology, she ends up informing on Leni and abandons Leni's child when Leni is incarcerated in a concentration camp.

Seghers avoids making categorical distinctions between her Nazi characters and those that may be wavering without committing themselves one way or the other. From a humanist perspective, the author suggests that everyone can change, and that political structures and historical coincidence determine the direction a person's life takes. The story suggests that everyone living in Nazi Germany, if left to their own devices, was impressionable. Seghers also looks at those who were persecuted for reasons ranging from politics to racial classification and perceived physical abnormality. When the most fanatic Nazi women, including Marianne, perish in Allied air raids, their deaths seem like poetic justice. Netty's healing after her car crash in Mexico signals that the time for healing has come for her, as it has for her nation of origin which she remembers so well.

The nostalgic tone in *Ausflug der toten Mädchen* forecasts Seghers's return to Germany, where she took an active part in the rebuilding of German society in East Germany. She became a distinguished and decorated member of the literary establishment in the German Democratic Republic. As a mirror of her hopes and intentions for herself and German society, Seghers's literary figures, including those of Nazis, are configured in a manner that does not preclude reconstruciton and reconciliation.

CHAPTER 3

The Problem of Nazi Identity and Representation after 1945

Processing Defeat

A new phase in the representation of Nazi characters began at the end of the Second World War. The collapse of the Third Reich necessitated an ideological reorientation among Nazis and Nazi supporters. The memoir of the former Commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höß (1900–1947), written in 1946 and published as *Kommandant in Auschwitz: autobiographische Aufzeichnungen* (1958), is a striking example of an individual's refusal to revise his views to fit the new reality.[1] Similar to Heinrich Himmler in his diary, Höß rationalized his entire career in a self-glorifying self-portrait. He provides a chronicle of the death camp of Auschwitz that is exemplary of his intransigence, even though his career and life of privilege had ended.[2] Less prominent authors with Nazi affiliations were usually careful not to disclose their involvement with the defeated regime and avoided references to Nazi personalities in their writing. Exile authors holding on to the notion of a "better" Germany and the distinction between Germans and Nazis configured redeemable Nazi figures, contrasting them with base fanatics. Some authors who had grown up in Nazi Germany exhibited divided loyalties, as evidenced by their ambiguous characterizations of low-ranking Nazi characters while condemning the Nazi leadership.

This final chapter examines texts that follow the three basic options available at the end of the war: intransigence and denial, silence and moving ahead, or confronting and processing the past. Death camp commandant Rudolf Höß's memoir is paradigmatic of the attitude of denial that many former Nazis displayed at the Nuremberg Trials and later Nazi trials. In contrast, journalist Marta Hillers implies in her memoir an eagerness to leave the past behind and go on with her life. Young Ingeborg Bachmann, who grew up in a Nazi-friendly environment in small-town Austria, learned from a British soldier the truth about National Socialism and embarked upon a life-long journey of critical fact-finding and self-reflection.

1 Höß, *Auschwitz*, 5.

2 Witte and Tyas, *Himmler's Diary 1945*.

The Memoir of Auschwitz Commandant Rudolf Höß

By May of 1945, Germans understood that the victorious Allies would not tolerate continued expressions of allegiance to the Third Reich. Only the most fanatical or least-informed individuals refused to acknowledge the new reality. The major defendants at the Nuremberg Trials held by the Allies after the Second World War were among the unrepentant. The most notorious Nazi leaders, including Hitler, Göbbels, and Himmler, had committed suicide or, like Hitler's successor Martin Bormann, had fled the country. Göring, the Commander of the German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*), eventually killed himself after trying to play a star role at the trial. Rudolf Hess, Hitler's former secretary, his architect Albert Speer, and Baldur von Schirach, among others, served sentences in Spandau prison. Having remained in the public eye, they had little choice but to disavow the legality of the Allied military tribunal, declaring Allied judges unqualified to rule on acts committed during the Third Reich.

The autobiographical notes of the former Commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Franz Ferdinand Höß, cover the years 1900–1947.[3] The self-characterization in the memoir reads like a case study of the stereotypical Nazi male. There are obvious parallels in the trajectory of Höß's self-narrative and Hitler's personal account in *Mein Kampf*. Both authors tell from-rags-to-riches stories and style themselves as self-made men. Höß, the son of a civil servant, appears to have resorted to intransigence early in life as a survival tool in his oppressive birth-family. While still a teenager, he ran away from home and enlisted in the military to serve in the First World War. Thereafter, he joined a *Freikorps*, spent some time in jail, and eventually signed up for the Death Head SS in charge of the concentration camp system. He achieved the rank of an *SS Obersturmbannführer* (lieutenant colonel) and served as the Commandant of Auschwitz from 1940 to 1943. In a supervisory position, he helped to coordinate the deportation of the Jews of Hungary. After the German surrender, he assumed a false identity, was captured by the British, and made a witness statement at the Nuremberg Trial. In 1946–47, he stood trial in Cracow and was executed by hanging in Auschwitz in 1947. While awaiting his execution, he wrote the extensive report about his life and career which will be discussed here.

Steven Paskuly, editor of the English translation of Höβ's memoir titled *Death Dealer*, writes that Höβ, by his own admission, had been the "greatest mass murderer of all time," and apparently took pride in having been in charge of the operations of Auschwitz-Birkenau.[4] Höß obviously did not grasp the

3 Citations are to Höß, *Auschwitz*. Translations follow Paskuly, *Death Dealer* (trans. Andrew Pollinger).

4 Paskuly, 19.

gravity of his circumstances when he testified before the Nuremberg military tribunal in April 1946, and provided details about the death camp. Similarly, his memoir implies that, if only he told the world how faithfully he had done his duty, he would be exonerated. He declared that, according to his convictions, he was still a National Socialist and in agreement with the Nazi program. He also advocated the idea of German expansionism, which suggests that he considered his views and actions valid to the very end.[5]

Following the pattern of the educational novel, Höß begins his memoir with his childhood. He provides details about his experiences in the First World War, his activities in the paramilitary *Freikorps*, including a murder charge and the ensuing imprisonment. He reminisces about his participation in the Artamans (a radical right-wing organization) and his career in the SS, from junior-level assignments in Dachau to his promotion to camp leader in Sachsenhausen and his post of Commandant at Auschwitz. He writes as an omniscient narrator with astonishing precision about dates and events, specifying the names of fellow officers, superiors, and subordinates. Höß characterizes himself as forthright and disciplined, mature for his years already as a boy, and later in life a law-abiding citizen who had been unjustly incarcerated for being a patriot. In his view, he was a model organizer, and an officer who upheld the strictest ethical principles. Frequently, Höß's positive self-characterization clashes with his descriptions of his interactions with other people.

A careful reading reveals discrepancies between the facts and Höß's self-serving interpretations. He discusses as a formative experience in his youth a brawl with a classmate, who broke his foot when Höß pushed him down a staircase. He dismisses the injury as a trifle and denies responsibility.[6] Another event involves his exploits as a boy soldier in the First World War and the killing of an enemy soldier, which he experienced as exhilarating: „Mein erster Toter!"[7] His lack of empathy combined with the automatic dismissal of guilt, even to himself, is a recurrent theme. For example, Höß seems to have forgotten that he was incarcerated at Brandenburg for political murder. Instead, he describes his role as that of a student of human nature and of "real" criminals, his fellows prisoners. In retrospect, he interprets his time in jail as a preparation for his SS career.[8]

Höß defines himself alternately as an achiever and a victim. The mentality that emerges from his remarks corresponds with the profile Klaus Theweleit

5 Höß, 229.

6 Höß, 37–8.

7 Höß, 42; "He was my first kill!" Paskuly, *Death Dealer*, 56.

8 Höß, 56–7.

outlines in *Männerphantasie*n (*Male Fantasies*, 1977–78), an analysis of the fascist male based on earlier studies by Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, Elias Canetti, and the psychiatrists Margaret Mahler and Alice Miller.[9] Höß's violent tendencies were manifest early on and continued throughout his life. The exaggerated sense of duty that he considers proof of his professionalism runs parallel to an inability to think critically. In awe of uncompromising rigor, Höß assumes that this quality which he cultivated made him a target for less-effective colleagues, and he blames his growing isolation on his efficiency as an organizer. Posing as a victim of his demanding job, he occasionally wallows in self-pity while demonstrating a chilling lack of disregard for the prisoners in Auschwitz.[10] Obviously a man with sociopathic tendencies, Höß understands no suffering but his own and is in complete denial about his brutality and criminal acts.

At the time he wrote his account, Höß had no prospects for the future, which may be why he disclosed facts that other authors kept secret. He presents staggering figures of the mass murders in Auschwitz and details about the prisoners and the killing methods used during the Holocaust. He boastfully admits that he was present at all phases of the killings, including the gassing of Jewish prisoners.[11] He occasionally claims to have been powerless to stop the most extreme excesses, which he attributes to the initiative of sadistic *Capos* (prisoners in supervisory positions).[12]

Höß tries to differentiate between his professional and private lives when he discloses that the most sacred things in his life were his patriotism as defined by National Socialism and his family.[13] As proof for the latter statement, he depicts a few sentimental scenes from his wife's presumably idyllic life in Auschwitz, but does not mention her by name. He completes the vignettes of peace and harmony with the preposterous statement that even the prisoners idolized his children.[14] These sugar-coated fantasies clash with Höß's callousness in job-related matters, but he is full of self-pity when describing his

9 Theweleit, *Männerphantasien* (1977–1978); Theweleit/Turner, Carter and Conway, *Male Fantasies*; Mahler, *Symbiose und Individuation*; Mahler, Pine, and Bergman; *Psychological Birth;* Alice Miller, *Am Anfang war Erziehung*; Miller, *For Your own Good* (trans. Hildegard Hannum and Hunter Hannum). Here: *„Die Kindheit Adolf Hitlers—vom verborgenen zum manifesten Grauen,"* Miller, *Am Anfang war Erziehung*, 169–228; "Adolf Hitler's Childhood: From Hidden to Manifest Horror," Miller/Hannum and Hannum, 142–96.

10 Höß, *Auschwitz*, 5.

11 Höß, 199.

12 Höß, 150.

13 Höß, 233–4.

14 Höß, 200.

anguish about ordering exterminations.[15] He even blames the growing alienation between him and his wife on his work, and reports that he went horseback riding or retreated to the stable to find companionship.[16]

Höß's motivation for writing was, according to his own statements, his fear of inertia while in his prison cell. Other factors probably included the public interest he had attracted and the desire to present himself in a positive light.[17] His meticulous descriptions suggest that he took his writing very seriously; he made editorial changes until the day of his execution. The combination of exhibitionist pride and ostensible thoughtfulness in Höß's memoir provides a perplexing and troubling glimpse into the psyche of an unreformed Nazi.

Marta Hillers's Anonymous Memoir Eine Frau in Berlin

The memoirs of the SS officer Rudolf Höß and those of the civilian and citizen of the Third Reich Marta Hillers complement each other. Höß's self-characterization corresponds with the stereotypical Nazi character, and Hillers's descriptions of herself correlate with female Nazi figures in literature and the marginal position assigned to women in Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens*.

Höß's memoir projected the model of the headstrong Nazi male, emphasizing his strength of character and unwavering convictions. In her account of the invasion of Berlin, Marta Hillers assumes quite a different attitude. She tried to avoid exposure by publishing *Eine Frau in Berlin* (English, 1954; German, 1955) under the pseudonym Anonyma.[18] Her self-portrait corroborates the descriptions of female Nazis in the literature examined earlier. Hillers apparently affiliated herself with the regime and its men for opportunistic reasons, but, when faced with the collapse of her world, she quickly adjusted to the changed circumstances. She avoids references to National Socialism and Nazis, and instead focuses on her survival and everyday life in the destroyed city. She seems ready to put the past behind her. The diary introduces the reader to a sphere dominated by women who, in times of crisis, bond and work together for their own and their children's survival. Their perceived common enemies are the males of the invading Allied forces as well as Germans.

Eine Frau in Berlin covers the period from April 20 to June 22, 1945. Until her death, Hillers (1911–2001) kept her identity as the author of the controversial diary a secret. Cressida Connolly of *The Telegraph* reports that Anonyma's

15 Höß, 200.

16 Höß, 200.

17 Broszat, "*Einleitung*," 11–2.

18 Anonymous, *Woman in Berlin;* Anonyma, *Eine Frau in Berlin.*

memoir caused "outrage" when it was originally published in German at the end of the 1950s. It was accused of "besmirching the honor of German women."[19] Rape, according to Connolly, "a lonely experience in civilian life, is collective in war." Because of her transgression against the code of silence regarding what was considered a woman's honor, the diary drew immediate controversy. Hillers's biographer Clarissa Schnabel comments on its reception in the 1950s as follows:

> For who should review? The leftist press was bothered by the stereotype of the "evil Russian." … The right-wing press would have been annoyed by the human depiction of the occupiers as well as the, though not quite voluntary, willingness of German women to sleep with the propagandized Slavic "sub-humans" for protection and food instead of choosing glorified self-sacrifice. The center? The moderate, conservative, Christian press? They were indignant—similar to "*Gerd*" [her husband]—not over the description of the mass rapes per se, but over the tone in which it was made.[20]

Having experienced instances of rape by Russian soldiers, Anonyma also reports successful interactions with Russians, including women trading for cigarettes and the exchange of sexual favors in return for food and protection. In the following decades, German readers considered such details scandalous. Anonyma clearly broke a taboo by not keeping the topics of rape and fraternization under wraps. Indeed, as late as the 1990s, Helke Sander's documentary film *BeFreier und BeFreite, Krieg, Vergewaltigungen, Kinder* (*Liberators Take Liberties. War, Rapes, Children*, 1992), which features interviews with wartime rape victims, touched upon a sore spot in Germany memory. Some of Sander's critics suggested that it was a form of revisionism to discuss the victimization of German women.[21] Hillers, similar to other German authors, foregrounds the victim status of German women in contrast to international authors who expose the cruelty of female concentration camp guards. In *Sourcis Pour L'Orchestre* (*Playing for Time*, 1976), Auschwitz survivor Fania Fénelon

19 Connolly, "She screamed for help."

20 Schnabel, "Marta Dietschy-Hillers," Part 6; See also: Schnabel, *Mehr als Anonyma.*

21 Sander, *BeFreier und BeFreite*; Sander, *Befreier und Befreite Das Buch zum Film*. Sheila Johnson ("Helke Sander's '*BeFreier und Befreite*,'" 81) contrasts the international success of Sander's film with the controversy it provoked in Germany, and Gertrud Koch and Stuart Liebmann ("Blood, Sperm, and Tears") intervene against the notion of "feminist revisionism," which was used as an argument to inveigh against the film's validity.

presents female characters who are as cruel as their male counterparts.[22] These characters are reminiscent of historical figures such as Ilse Koch, the wife of Buchenwald Commandant Karl Otto Koch, who was known for her sadism and barbaric acts as *Hexe von Buchenwald* (The Witch of Buchenwald). Other such figures include Irma Grese and Maria Mandl, who were commissioned by the SS as concentration camp guards in Auschwitz, where they tyrannized female prisoners. The potential of women to abuse their position of power has not been fully explored in German literature and films. Ilse Koch, for example, appears only briefly in the first East German film about a concentration camp, Buchenwald, *Nackt unter Wölfen* (*Naked among Wolves*, 1963), and in Bernhard Schlink's novel *Der Vorleser* (*The Reader*, 1995), on which Stephen Daldry based his film *The Reader*, the protagonist, a former female concentration camp guard, is all but exonerated in light of her underprivileged ethnic German background and her illiteracy.[23]

An English version of Hillers's diary was first published in 1954 in the United States with the help of journalist Kurt Marek (ps. C.W. Ceram, 1915–1972) under the title *A Woman in Berlin.* In 1959, the German original appeared in Switzerland, and in 2005 a new edition was issued.[24] A German-Polish film production came on the market in 2008 when the petty bourgeois morality of the 1950s was no longer an issue.[25] Brad Prager views Hillers's diary as an account about women's responses under extreme circumstances, a narrative about "emotions, survival, and even 'working conditions' once the war rolls into Berlin."[26]

Anonyma captures the chaos faced by women who had been associated with the defeated regime. She becomes aware of her vicarious dual position as a member of the German perpetrator collective and her concurrent role as a victim due to her vulnerability to male-on-female violence and the loss of status that she, like most Germans, experienced. Hereafter, Hillers will be referred to by her authorial mask, Anonyma. Through the use of this pseudonym, she constructed a unique voice, which is unmistakably that of an educated woman in her thirties, who was neither a resistance fighter nor a consummate Nazi.

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22 Fénelon, *Sourcis Pour L'Orchestre*.

23 Schlink, *Der Vorleser*.

24 Anonymous, *Woman in Berlin*; Anonyma, *Eine Frau in Berlin*.

25 Laurel Cohen-Pfister ("Rape, War, and Outrage," 325) maintains that there is a difference between Hildegard Knef's retrospective position in Helke Sander's *Befreier und Befreite* and Anonyma's immediacy as an eyewitness of very recent events.

26 Prager, "Occupation," 67; Bisky, "*Wenn Jungen Weltgeschichte spielen, haben Mädchen stumme Rollen*," 16.

Her language retains a kind of tomboyish spontaneity reminiscent of women's writing of the Weimar era. Rife with inherent tensions and uncertainties, her memoir attests to the prevailing disorientation in 1945 and the general panic at having to construct a new identity.

Distinct from many of the female characters in Nazi-era fiction, Anonyma's female characters possess agency. Resourceful and pragmatic, they resort to survival strategies that violate peace-time codes of conduct, often involving consensual sexual exchanges. Anonyma thus debunks the Nazi stereotypes of heroic German mothers, chaste wives, and maidens in distress. Her frank description of women's conduct is accompanied by her revelations of the unheroic demeanor of former Nazi men. Her depictions of demoralized German males at the moment of defeat and of Allied, mostly Russian, occupiers taking full advantage of their victory were considered an assault on German masculinity. To add insult to injury, Anonyma thematizes consensual encounters and even alliances with occupiers acting as the women's protectors. The criteria for choosing particular male partners, according to Anonyma, included physical strength, position, and rank—the same criteria that Hermynia Zur Mühlen and Anna Seghers considered factors in the partner choices of women under National Socialism.

The diary begins prior to the arrival of the Red Army and ends with the division of Berlin into Allied sectors. In light of the large amount of information available in the twenty-first century, the scope of the diary may seem limited. Readers must also take into consideration that Anonyma excludes secondhand information in addition to the many details unknown to her at the time of writing. The destruction of the German cities, the liberation of the concentration camps, and the fate of world leaders and prominent Nazis were beyond her scope. The prospect that Germans would be held accountable for their war-time activities also seems to escape Anonyma, as did the gravity of the crimes with which the deposed elite and their supporters were to be charged.

The narrative horizon is limited to the basements of ruined houses, air raid shelters, and bombed-out streets—the scenery of her daily life after the civilians were left to fend for themselves. Anonyma describes how she manages, despite food shortages, and how she adjusts to the crowded conditions after the loss of residential space. Often, she writes, she was forced to share her living quarters with complete strangers—people she did not trust, but who were allocated rooms in her and her friends' dilapidated homes. The struggle for survival leveled class, age, and gender distinctions.[27]

27 Anonyma, *Eine Frau in Berlin*, 16.

Anonyma writes all of this with the detachment of a reporter. She depicts her fellow Germans with a keen, unloving eye, taking particular note of their shortcomings.[28] Her emotional distance calls to mind Höß's unsympathetic assessments of his fellow officers. Still, Hillers reveals a sense of solidarity with other Germans. Her attitude vacillates between distance and empathy, but she tries to maintain a certain degree of objectivity commensurate with her role as a chronicler. Especially when revealing her fear of violence, she tries to keep her emotions in check.

Occasionally, she uses ethnic stereotypes reminiscent of Nazi rhetoric. In her characterizations of the Russian invaders, the boundaries between her first-hand observations and ethnocentric clichés become blurred. On the other hand, counter to the Nazis' doctrine of male superiority, she displays an anti-male bias and casts men, including German men, as potential rapists and exploiters, who base their claims on nothing but brute strength and traditional gender-role expectations. In her opinion, these expectations had remained constant throughout the war and were perpetuated after the collapse of the regime. Considering the content and outlook of Anonyma's account, it is not surprising that it made for uncomfortable reading even several decades after the demise of the Third Reich.[29] The vivid descriptions of wartime brutality and sexual transgression in *Eine Frau in Berlin* were not apt to soothe the emotionally wounded veterans and their descendants.

Anonyma's awareness that the Nazi regime had been completely discredited is apparent throughout the text. She carefully avoids expressions that could associate her with National Socialism, but nonetheless, her diction often echoes Nazi speech and compromises her narrative. Her linguistic patterns do not keep pace with her projection of attitudinal changes,[30] such as the change in her attitude toward the victors. Counter to Nazi propaganda that had vilified Russian soldiers as pure evil, Anonyma writes about successful exchanges with Russian men. Whereas the mere mention of Russians had struck terror in the hearts of German civilians, Anonyma's account emerges from this atmosphere of fanaticism. Her portrayal of Russian soldiers is nuanced, and her command of the Russian language obviously increased her effectiveness in communicating with the occupiers. By the same token, her descriptions of German men also deviate from Nazi ideology and the tenet of the master race.

The frequent references to gender indicate that, in Anonyma's day-to-day reality, gender was a more critical category than nationality. While her personal

28 Anonyma, 17.

29 Baer, *Dismantling The Dream Factory*.

30 Anonyma, *Eine Frau in Berlin*, 143.

view of women as men's equals clashes with Nazi doctrine, her attitude is not entirely free of ideological bias. On an abstract level, she does attribute positive qualities to German men, including former Nazis, whom she envisions to be disciplined and trustworthy. In practical terms, however, she grows as wary of them as she was of Russian soldiers.

Anonyma's story brings to light collective lapses of memory and paradoxes that are typical of accounts about the final days of the Third Reich. The fact that she lays bare inconsistencies in the collective memory may have added to the discomfort readers experienced with her book. Compared to more straightforward accounts of Germany's transition from National Socialism into the postwar era, such as some of the East German "conversion" narratives, *Eine Frau in Berlin*, with its unresolved tensions, continues to be a challenging text.[31]

Ingeborg Bachmann's Wartime Diary Kriegstagebuch

The short wartime diary of Ingeborg Bachmann (1926–1973) is exemplary of the way young people viewed the society in which they had grown up at the end of the war. Bachmann's horizon did not extend beyond the parameters of the Third Reich. After the annexation of Austria in 1938, the Nazis imposed on the Austrian population the same restrictions to which they had subjected the Germans. Manifestations of Nazi rule were pervasive in every form of social expression, including greetings, fashions, and language, so that not even dissenters could avoid Nazi clichés in their speech and demeanor, and the rift between those who lived in the Third Reich and Germans and Austrians in exile continued to widen. After the liberation, it would take only a few sentences to pinpoint a speaker's Nazi-era experience.

The communication barriers between exiles, Holocaust survivors, and the German and Austrian mainstream continued beyond 1945. The relationship between Ingeborg Bachmann and Austrian refugee and Allied soldier Jack Hamesh (1920–1987) is an example.[32] The few documents resulting from the encounter between the young Austrian woman and the British-Jewish-Austrian soldier include Bachmann's diary, published as *Kriegstagebuch* (2010), and the letters Hamesh sent her.[33] Hamesh had left Austria on a children's transport to

31 For example, Stephen Brockmann ("From Nazism to Socialism") describes the narrative by Anna Seghers (*Der Mann und sein Name*) as a "conversion narrative" that traces the transformation of Nazis into Socialists.

32 Jack Hamesh's dates follow the information provided by Agence Bibliographique de l'Enseignement Supérieur (ABES). Accessed December 20, 2015. http://www.idref.fr/145669955.

33 Bachmann, *Kriegstagebuch*. Translations follow Bachmann, *War Diary* (trans. Mike Mitchell).

England and returned as an Allied soldier, welcomed by few and resented by many, as indicated by Bachmann's sporadic observations and his comments.[34]

Hamesh brought to his romantic interlude with Bachmann the language of an outsider struggling to explain his experience as a Jewish exile. His letters reveal that he was aware of Bachmann's predicament as the sheltered daughter of an Austrian family with Nazi leanings who welcomed a Jew into her home. Clearly, Bachmann could be considered a perpetrator, and, as her diary reveals, she had already come to doubt her parents and the authorities before meeting Hamesh. Her diary is a document of a teenager's naïveté and mirrors the narrow-mindedness of her Catholic and Nazi middle-class circles in the provincial town of Klagenfurt. Hamesh tries to enlighten Bachmann about international reactions to the German and Austrian recent past, while treating her and her relatives with delicacy. He avoids asking questions about the politics in Bachmann's home and makes courtesy visits like a prewar suitor. His curiosity about this girl, whom he would have had to consider an enemy only a few months earlier, is undeniable, and he probes into her view about the Nazis when he quizzes her about her time in the BDM, the *Bund Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend* (League of German Girls in the Hitler Youth).[35]

Some of Bachmann's relatives had affiliated themselves with the regime, as had her school teachers, whom, as she notes in her diary, she intuitively despises. The school curriculum and her family's attitudes had mutually reinforced one another, and the extracurricular school activities formed an integral part in a synchronized educational program. Bachmann had become increasingly skeptical of the integrity of the older generation, but she lacked the knowledge to form a cohesive critical perspective.[36] Hamesh had encountered Austrian anti-Semitism as a boy, suffered persecution, and lost family members in the Holocaust. In Great Britain, his outlook was influenced by the anti-Nazi sentiments of other exiles and information about Nazi atrocities. Allied media source such as the BBC had shaped his views. In contrast, Austrians could listen to British and American radio stations only at considerable risk.

In postwar Austria, Hamesh's views about the Third Reich put him at odds with mainstream Austrians, as is obvious from his responses to the clearly ill-informed Bachmann. Although she expresses her distate for Nazi activities, she lacked the intellectual defenses to refute the dominant ideology, especially in consideration of her apparent affection for her family. Gender may also have factored into her ignorance of political matters; girls were even less expected than boys to think in political terms. Hamesh, in turn, insists on providing

34 Vieth, "*Ingeborg Bachmann*," 323.

35 Bachmann, *Kriegstagebuch*, 16.

36 Bachmann, 15.

Bachmann with factual information about the persecution of Jews and the exile situation.

Bachmann, as one diary entry suggests, satisfied a rebellious impulse directed against adults by dating "the Jew."[37] She appears to have been motivated by her desire to learn about a world from which she had been cut off, and to gather evidence against the authority she disdained. Her relationship with Hamesh, who represented the enemy to the people in her environment, was an expression of her rebellion. No doubt, she instrumentalized him in her desire to transform herself. To Hamesh, Bachmann must have been a symbolic figure signifying an idyllic Austria, which the Holocaust had made inaccessible to him. Eventually, he continued on to Germany, from where he sent Bachmann several typed letters, and later relocated to Tel Aviv.

Through Bachmann, Hamesh seems to have tried to recapture a sense of his lost youth, and to effect a reconciliation with Austria, which had become enemy territory, even though he still spoke German. His conflict becomes manifest after the escapist affair. In a letter from Germany, he mentions the fascist mentality that is still prevailing in Austria as his reason not to return.[38] His nostalgia had prompted him to seek out Bachmann, even though her family's viewpoints were no secret to him. The romantic liaison seems to have made him realize that a future among former Nazis was out of the question for him. Nonetheless, his continued effort to disclose his feelings to the daughter of Nazis suggests a longing for healing.[39] At the same time, Hamesh expresses a lack of confidence in Bachmann. He questions their relationship, which he surmises may have been nothing more than „eine zufällige Episode."[40]

Reflections such as these interrupt the superficial harmony between two unequal partners and call for a closer look at the gulf separating Hamesh, who asserts that he stands „auf Ruinen ohne Heim ohne Eltern ohne Verwandte, ohne Heimat, ohne Hoffnung und das Schrecklichste ohne Zukunft"[41] and Bachmann, who eventually leaves Klagenfurt to escape the everyday fascism in her home-town environment.[42] For Bachmann, the Jewish Englishman represented a resource in her endeavor to disengage from the burden of the past. She seems to have inquired about his life in greater detail than he was willing

37 Bachmann, 22.

38 Bachmann, 49.

39 Bachmann, 51.

40 Bachmann, 51; "Was our life together just a chance episode?" Bachmann/Mitchell, 47.

41 Bachmann, 51.

42 "Today we are standing on ruins, without a home, without parents, without a homeland, without hope and worst, without a future." Bachmann/Mitchell, 47.

to reveal.[43] Ultimately, the two dissimilar partners were also separated by their ages as well as their plans for the future.

The interlude between Bachmann and Hamesh exemplifies the "Negative Symbiosis" which, according to Dan Diner, at once connected and separated German and Jewish post-Shoah memory. Bachmann's later relationships with exiles and survivors such as Paul Celan and Ilse Aichinger, and her admiration for Jean Améry confirm Diner's thesis that the antagonistic bond between the victims and the perpetrator collective increased in intensity over time.[44] Bachmann, who began her career as a writer in Austria, where former Nazis held positions of power, needed the emotional intensity in her relationship with Hamesh to gather momentum and develop an informed critical stance towards the past. Once she had grasped the extent to which the past had shaped post-Shoah German society, she distanced herself from the Nazi legacy and eventually moved to Rome.

Bachmann's "critical moment" was facilitated by her relationship with Hamesh, which was frowned upon in Klagenfurth. Hamesh encouraged her to face up to her misconceptions and develop empathy for Holocaust survivors and exiles. The psychologists Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, in their collection of essays *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern* (*The Inability to Mourn*, 1967), determined that the wounds of the past could not heal without a fundamental examination and emotional processing.[45] Bachmann's development in the postwar period and her later literary message largely confirms the Mitscherlichs' analysis.

Writing about Nazis—A Postwar Dilemma

The military man had been an iconic figure in German literature. The figures of soldiers and officers dominated literature after the Second World War. All of German society had been implicated in the so-called "total war." Virtually every family had members who were soldiers, and the war effort had placed men in uniform at the forefront of Nazi society. The SS, classified as a criminal organization after the war, had been deployed alongside the German Wehrmacht, and even women had participated in the war effort, for example, as "flak" helpers

43 Bachmann, 48.

44 Diner, "*Deutsche und Juden nach Auschwitz*."

45 Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*; Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, *Inability to Mourn* (trans. Beverly Placzek).

supporting the air force.[46] The total militarization precluded wholesale condemnation of the Nazi military, since most Germans and Austrians had participated in one fashion or another. After the war, the representation of German soldiers in the literary works of veterans was therefore predominantly exculpatory. The characters of Nazi soldiers were rarely cast as criminals, and the type of the "good" Nazi emerged under the assumption that the Wehrmacht, the regular military, had been "clean." The German mainstream was often represented as an apolitical collective controlled by a few Nazi fanatics. The second postwar generation explored the past more thoroughly. The New Left in the 1960s and the *Väter* and *Mütter Literatur* (father and mother literature) in the 1970s took the older generations to task for their involvement with the Nazi regime and their wartime activities.

Authors who had begun writing in the Weimar Republic generally favored traditional genres and mediated events of the Nazi era through exceptional characters, including high-ranking Nazi officers. These characters' conflicts typically occasioned an exploration of Nazi society and its more depraved representatives, suggesting that not all Germans, not even all Nazis, had been involved in the criminal activities of the regime. Neither entirely good nor entirely evil, literary Nazi heroes were depicted as victims of their moral scruples that prevented them from supporting the Nazi state without reservations. Typically, their lukewarm attitude is shown to cost them their position and, ultimately, their life. The drama of Carl Zuckmayer, *Des Teufels General*, places the downfall of the ambiguous protagonist on a par with the tragic heroes of Goethe or Schiller.

Younger postwar writers were interested in the predicament of common soldiers as puppets in a criminal regime that had betrayed them. These works, usually by veterans, tend to cast soldier-protagonists as victims among victims. Examples of these works include the play *Draußen vor der Tür* (*The Man Outside*, 1946) by Wolfgang Borchert and the narrative *Der Zug war pünktlich* (*The Train was on Time*, 1949) by Heinrich Böll. The observations about exculpatory tendencies in the works of Borchert and Böll made here call for a clarification of these authors' positions in the Third Reich. There is no comparison between conscripted soldiers such as Borchert (born 1921) and Böll (born 1917), draftees into the Nazi military at a relatively young age, and high-ranking Nazis such as Rudolf Höβ, who had worked for the Nazi movement since the 1920s. The letters and notes of the younger authors indicate reservations about the Nazi regime that were foreign to Höβ until the very end.[47] However, the younger men

46 Boog, Krebs, and Vogel, *Germany and the Second World War*, 225.

47 Böll, *Briefe aus dem Krieg 1939–1945*; Borchert, *Allein mit meinem Schatten und dem Mond*.

did not seem to realize that their brainwashing in Nazi schools, youth organizations, and the military had desensitized them to the Nazi ideology which they had internalized and to the jargon which they themselves used. Like their protagonists, the authors themselves were profoundly affected by the Nazi worldview. Borchert's and Böll's literary figures expose the dilemma of having been socialized in a totalitarian state that allowed no alternative perspectives. The authors may have been unhappy with the regime, but they were also fully absorbed in it. They may have been reluctant to serve in Hitler's Wehrmacht, but the reasons for their distaste are unclear. Was it that Borchert, who had already been an unenthusiastic Hitler Youth, became traumatized after his deployment at the Eastern Front in 1942, where he saw first-hand the disaster Hitler's army faced? And did Böll, also at the Eastern Front in 1942, realize that he and his comrades were fighting an unwinnable war? Since his conscription in 1939, Böll had been deployed in many theaters of war and witnessed the deteriorating conditions. He must have suspected that the promised German victory could not be achieved.

A comparison with an even younger German author, Günter Grass (born 1927), will help to put Böll's authorial position into perspective. Grass had joined the Hitler Youth and later served in the SS in 1944. His career path suggests a commitment to the Nazi regime. After the war, Grass concealed his SS-membership for decades, and, as an articulate Social Democrat, he became a moral authority in West Germany. In 2006, his autobiography *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel* (*Peeling the Onion*, 2006) was published, and he finally broke his silence, much to the consternation of the German public.[48] The fact that Grass, like Böll, had received the highest honors, including the Nobel Prize, made his revelations especially painful. Borchert and Böll were impacted by the Nazi ideology in the course of their education in the Third Reich and their service in the Nazi military, but they did not participate in Nazi organizations to the same degree as Grass. They both constructed literary characters to help them uncover the effects of Nazi indoctrination and the damage resulting from the experience of the war. Their figures reveal the authors' intimate knowledge of Nazi structures, Nazi jargon, and army slang. While most of their Nazi characters are cast in a negative light, these works also include positive, redeemable Nazi figures, with whom the authors seem to identify.

Carl Zuckmayer's Drama Des Teufels General

In his well-known drama *Des Teufels General* (1946), exile writer Carl Zuckmayer (1896–1977) introduced as his protagonist a member of the Nazi elite, Luftwaffe

48 Serrier, "*Günter Grass*," 2.

General Harry Harras. By foregrounding the individual traits of this problematic figure, Zuckmayer avoids a wholesale condemnation of the Nazi military. He probes into Harras's presumably apolitical motivations for endorsing the Nazi regime and distinguishes him from less high-minded Nazi figures. Harras is a passionate pilot, who always puts his professional ambitions ahead of politics and seems oblivious to the nature of the regime. In different scenarios, his moral fiber is put to the test. Ultimately, he is exonerated by his suicide in a scenario that preempts Henry Hathaway's idealizing portrayal of Nazi Field Marshal Rommel in the film *The Desert Fox* (1951). Similar to the suicide of Zuckmayer's Harras, the melodramatic demise of Rommel in Hathaway's work suggests that this high-ranking Nazi officer was not a "real" Nazi. Hathaway's scenario is reminiscent of Zuckmayer's exculpatory mode of interpreting particularly glamorous Nazi characters.[49]

The case of Zuckmayer's general proposes that it is possible to be a traditional tragic hero and also a member of the Nazi elite. This is an interesting proposition in the work of an already accomplished dramatist, whose plays had been banned from German stages in 1933 and who had fled to the United States in 1939. Still, Zuckmayer had friends among the Nazis, including the unnamed fighter to whom he initially dedicated his play, which was first drafted in 1942, but then recast and first performed in 1946.[50] In his rather traditional three-act-tragedy, Zuckmayer showcases the crème de la crème of Nazi Germany: officers, politicians, aristocrats, and celebrities. Controversies involving the character of Harras ensued immediately, but the frequent performances of *Des Teufels General* attest to continued interest in the play. Following Zuckmayer's insinuations, Anthony Waine suggests that the conduct Zuckmayer ascribes to the Nazi leadership—boisterous patriotism and masculine bravado—captures the *zeitgeist* of a broader "culture of masculinity."[51] Stephen Brockman stresses the ambivalence of the Harras figure, which is set apart from the

49 Hathaway, *Desert Fox*.

50 Zuckmayer, "*Des Teufels General*." Translations follow Zuckmayer, *The Devil's General* (trans. Ingrid Komar and Virginia Wurdak). The revised dedication of 1945 for *Des Teufels General* reads as follows: „Den ersten Entwurf zu diesem Stück widmete ich im Jahre 1942 DEM UNBEKANNTEN KÄMPFER. Jetzt widme ich es dem Andenken meiner von Deutschlands Henkern aufgehängten Freunden THEODOR HAUBACH, WILHELM LEUCHNER, GRAF HELLMUTH VON MOLTKE." (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1966). (In the year 1942 I dedicated the first draft of this play to the "UNKNOWN FIGHTER." Now I dedicate it to the memory of my friends who were hanged by Germany's executioners, THEODOR HAUBACH, WILHELM LEUCHNER, GRAF HELLMUTH VON MOLTKE.) This dedication is omitted in Komar and Wurdak's translation.

51 Waine, "Zuckmayer's *Des Teufels General*," 257.

general environment by its critical perspective, but suggests that the fact that the Luftwaffe general seems more likeable than the other Nazi figures makes him appear doubly culpable—with his charisma, he might have influenced the course of history, but he made no such attempt.[52] Katrin Weingran dismisses the frequent assumption that *Des Teufels General* was intended as a justification of the Nazi regime, perhaps even as a nod to the public to ignore *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the effort of critically processing the past.[53] Obviously, by attributing glamor and human interest to a high-ranking Nazi, Zuckmayer had created a quandary for literary scholars and audiences alike.

The model for Harras was the star pilot Ernst Udet, who had joined the Nazi Party in 1933. He enjoyed the support of Hermann Göring, who provided him with state-of-the-art airplanes for research and propaganda purposes. Udet started out as a lieutenant colonel in the *Luftwaffe*, the Nazi air force, and had a brilliant career. However, like other prominent officers, including Rommel, he later fell out of favor when he was blamed for military setbacks. Rather than face public censure and humiliation, Udet put a bullet in his head in 1941. The German media reported his suicide as an accident.[54]

Zuckmayer presents a reconfigured protagonist to better fit the pattern of a hero; Harras was obviously not intended as a mirror-image of Udet. Harras, like Udet, is a flying ace but rather than shooting himself, he undertakes a spectacular suicide mission in his plane as an act of quasi-atonement. There is no mention of a drunken display of the kind that supposedly precipitated Udet's death. Zuckmayer's Harras draws admiration for his star appeal and a certain degree of integrity places him at odds with the regime he serves. His romantic personal traits co-mingling with dogged determination in the professional sphere call to mind not only other conflicted hero figures of German literature but also Nazi autobiographers like Hitler and Höβ, who in their accounts underscore their staunch independence and rebelliousness. Harras seems to be high-minded until he becomes embroiled in petty politics for the sake of his passion: flying. Only the Nazi leadership can make the most advanced airplanes available to him, which means that he has to compromise his ideals, including his regard for his friends and associates. Unsurprisingly, Zuckmayer attributes to his hero a special appeal to women, but his male friends also appreciate his joie de vivre and loyalty. Harras shares certain character traits with Klaus Mann's protagonist. Like Hendrik Höfgen, Harras yearns for the limelight, and as a result compromises dissenters among his friends to whom he wants

52 Brockmann, *German Literary Culture*, 45.

53 Weingran, *"Des Teufels General" in der Diskussion.*

54 Mitcham, *Blitzkrieg No Longer*, 14.

to extend a helping hand. By assigning Harras positive impulses, Zuckmayer comes close to vindicating him, even though the Luftwaffe general lets himself be used by the regime. Zuckmayer categorically distinguishes him from "real" Nazis like, for example, the Minister of Culture, modeled after Joseph Goebbels, the ruthless "old fighter" Pfundtmayer, and Waltraud von Mohrungen, a fanatical female Nazi.

Des Teufels General revolves around the question as to whether it was possible to belong to the Nazi elite without being a real Nazi. Zuckmayer uses various strategies to communicate Harras's valor: at times, he has Harras voice his disenchantment with the Third Reich, just as the historical model, Ernst Udet, might have done, despite or precisely because he was a member of the Nazi Party. However, an elite fighter pilot's loyalty would rarely be questioned. Until Harras faces arrest, he believes himself to be above the law and uses the transgressive language that was common in the elite units. Unlike Udet, though, Harras refuses to join the Party and openly contradicts SS officers and party officials. His frequent refusal to follow orders makes him prone to conflict, and his arrogance causes him to ignore the perceptions others have of him. However, none of his statements amount to real resistance.

Harras's hubris and his child-like passion for flying constitute his tragic flaws. Although his arrogance differs from the type of vulgar bullying in which Nazi leadership workshops trained the SS, Harras observes the rituals of dominance associated with the landed gentry. His demeanor vacillates between smooth urbanity and a type of posturing found among aristocratic swashbucklers. German film star Curd Jürgens, who was usually cast as the worldly and reckless hero, was ideal for the role of Harras in Fritz Käutner's film, fitting Zuckmayer's stage direction: „Er ist in grosser Galauniform, aber in Haltung und Benehmen leger, eher etwas salopp. Das geleerte Glas hält er noch in der Hand, eine Zigarette hängt im Mundwinkel. Sein kluges, trotz gelichteter Haare noch jugendliches, ja jungenhaftes Gesicht—er mag nicht älter als fünfundvierzig sein … scheint von einer kaum bemerkbaren nervösen Spannung erfüllt."[55]

For a compelling rendering of a Nazi insider who is at once a dissident and victim, Zuckmayer needed to make the point that Harras was genuinely

55 Zuckmayer, "*Des Teufels General*," 499; "He is in full dress uniform, but his bearing and manner are casual, even somewhat sloppy. He still holds the empty glass in his hand and a cigarette dangles from the corner of his mouth. He can't be older than forty-five, his face is intelligent, youthful, even boyish, despite his thinning hair. By nature it is a gay face, carefree, pleasant, and a little mischievous. Not it seems to be suffused with a perceptible nervous tension." Zuckmayer/Komar and Wurdak, 3–4. [It should read correctly, "…with a *barely noticeable* nervous tension." D.L.]

disgusted by the regime. Thus, he shows Harras poking fun at the political fanatics. His anti-Semitic and anti-religious environment must consider his frequent use of Biblical allusions provocative, especially those to the book of Exodus, and his occasional positive remarks about Jews are inflammatory. His underhanded jokes suggest that he considers himself an exception to any code of conduct—be it National Socialist, Christian or Jewish. His immoderate drinking also clashes with state-ordained asceticism, despite the fact that his predilection for alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs was shared by other high-ranking Nazis. "During the war, of course, almost everyone had more reason and, sometimes in spite of shortages, more opportunity to indulge in drinking, smoking, and the use of drugs. Before alcohol became especially scarce in urban Germany during the war, it often replaced the coffee that was almost impossible to get after 1939," Geoffrey Cocks explains.[56] The historical Udet, owner of a luxuriously equipped airplane bar, made a cult of his alcohol abuse.

Keenly aware of the ongoing attacks on the nuclear family and the middle class, Harras ridicules the absence of decorum in Nazi society, noting the lack of morals in the Hitler Youth: „Nämlich bei der Hitlerjugend verlobt man sich nicht mehr, das hält zu lange auf."[57] Indeed, Cocks writes that even the medical establishment had loosened the standards regulating sex, just as they had with regard to alcohol, citing a shift toward "problem-oriented discourse and practice concerning the increased sexual activity as a result of war and the mobilization for war."[58] Zuckmayer does not intend for Harras to seem prudish, nor appear to be a lecher and highlights his refusal of the sexual advances of Waltraud von Mohrungen. With a kind of old-fashioned gallantry, he assumes the aura of a traditional ladies' man while his use of vulgarisms, on the other hand, attests to his masculine prowess and marks him as a disillusioned war hero.

The degree to which Harras has internalized Nazi ideology is rendered apparent by his verbal expression. For example, he refers to nationalities in the singular—speaking of "*der Russe*" instead of "*die Russen,*"[59] and he collectives Jewish individuals as "*der Jud*" ("the Jew" in the singular).[60] Another example is his uncritical use of Nazi terms such as "*alte Kämpfer*" (old fighter), in

56 Cocks, "Sick Heil," 113.

57 Zuckmayer, "*Des Teufels General*," 504; "Of course, in the Hitler Youth no one gets engaged any more. That holds you up too long." Zuckmayer/Komar and Wurdak, 7.

58 Cocks, 114.

59 Zuckmayer, "*Des Teufels General*," 511.

60 Komar and Wurdak do not imitate the dated German usage and instead use "Russians" and "Russia." Zuckmayer/Komar and Wurdak, 15, 17.

conjunction with early Party supporters. Harras's conversations with fellow officers reveal that he knows about the planned attacks against the Jewish population, and he does not object when Pfundmayer, a fellow Luftwaffe officer, expresses his approval of pogroms regardless of any potential detrimental impact they may have on his career: „Mir ham kaa Zeit gehabt fuer die Karriere, mir ham erst den inneren Feind liqudieren müssen … Der Jud is in der Konkurrenz gewesen un hat uns ausgschmiert. Mei Lieber—da lernst du hassen. Nach der Machtergreifung is mir scho besser gangen."[61] The fact that Harras, who is otherwise not shy to criticize, seemingly approves, suggests that he is either indifferent about anti-Semitism or in agreement with it.

The character of Waltraud von Mohrungen is designed to reveal the negative effects of Nazi indoctrination on women. In her attitudes, she appears to be a direct correlation to the Nazi male. Nazi tenets rule her thinking and decisions; for example, she breaks her engagement to a respected officer on the basis of his presumably flawed racial background.[62] Her predilection for athletic bodies and choreographed gymnastics seems informed by the aesthetics expressed in Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938), a documentary film about the Olympic Games in Berlin.[63] Evoking the "Nordic" male of Günther's *Rassenkunde*, Waltraud praises hard male bodies, „breite Schultern, schmale Hüften, Langschädel,"[64] and raves about a women's sports program, where the participants are almost nude. „Lauter stramme Mädels, mit nicht als Schamhöschen bekleidet."[65] Waltraud's areas of expertise include racial politics, selective breeding, and sexual hygiene. Her current research project deals with the function of pain as a character-building factor in the life of a nation.[66] Waltraud regards humanitarian concerns as misguided and dreams instead of training courses to steel mind and body. Compared to a fanatic like her, Harras harbors no prejudices to speak of. His dismissive remarks about genealogical research

61 "We old party men, we didn't have no time for careers. We was obliged first to 'liquidate the enemy within.' After that come business and family—I married into the hops business, ya know. But it didn't pay off—Jews was in the competition and squeezed us out. Good buddy, that's when ya learn ta hate. When the party come to power I made out a little better." Zuckmayer/Komar and Wurdak, 12. [The translation renders "*Alte Kämpfer*" as "old party men" and then proceeds to assign the character of Pfundtmayer an awkward ungrammatical idiom that is inappropriate to his Bavarian dialect. D.L.]

62 Zuckmayer, "*Des Teufels General*," 544.

63 Riefenstahl, *Olympia.*

64 "Broad shoulders, narrow hips, long skull," Zuckmayer/Komar and Wurdak, 57.

65 Zuckmayer, "*Des Teufels General*," 577–8; "Strapping girls wearing nothing but panties," Zuckmayer/Komar and Wurdak, 58.

66 Zuckmayer, 577–8.

corroborate this impression. He also dismisses racial science and questions notions of ethnic cleansing. With these attitudes, he alienates his Nazi buddies until they finally refuse to put up with his antics any longer, and he becomes the object of a spy-and-smear campaign.[67] His opponents cast doubt on his character and accuse him of disloyalty. The Minister of Culture finally accuses him of supporting enemies of the state.[68]

Harras's allure includes his boyish charm, which distinguishes him from the functionaries and makes for unfailing audience appeal. Within the play, though, it is precisely this popular allure that renders him vulnerable. Cast as a genuine patriot, he insists on remaining in Germany, where he is at risk. His presumably noble decision distinguishes him from other Germans who have fled the Fatherland. The implied criticism also applies to Jews in exile, where—according to Harras's paramour Diddo—they lead a life of comfort while other Germans suffer.[69] These anti-Semitic assumptions must be interpreted as a nod to German postwar audiences who held this opinion. Diddo's unrealistic vision of one day moving to New York reinforces the notion of the joys of exile, which is surpassed by Harras's insensitive remark that they both should become honorary Jews: „Vielleicht werden wir noch mal Ehrenjuden—wir beide."[70] Ignorant of the difficulties involved in securing the visas and the means required to immigrate, the postwar public may have considered Harras's decision to stay in Germany an option that was actually available, and an honorable choice that also validated the majority experience. Harras pays the price for his old-time patriotism when he falls prey to the "real" Nazis.

Zuckmayer's scenario is flawed by incongruities that arise at the outset. For one, the implied distinction between German patriots and Nazis remains unconvincing, as do the superficial conversations about race and the Jewish experience in light of historical facts. *Des Teufels General* alludes to anti-Semitism, but does not take into consideration that at the time of Udet's suicide in November of 1941, the "Final Solution" was a foregone conclusion. At least Zuckmayer in 1946 would have known about the Wannsee Conference, where the genocide was announced. In Zuckmayer's play of 1946, Harras minimizes the threat to the Jewish population, and his remarks about Jewish identity place him squarely in the Nazi camp. His disparaging comments about

67 Zuckmayer, 558.

68 Zuckmayer, 558.

69 Zuckmayer, 566.

70 Zuckmayer, 566; "DIDDO: Sometimes I envy the Jews madly, I mean the ones outside. /HARRAS: Maybe we'll become honorary Jews, us two." Zuckmayer/Komar and Wurdak, 48.

Jewish exiles, who were spared the ordeals of air raids, and his approving response to the suicide note from a Jewish friend, who chose death over exile, suggest that he, and perhaps the author, believe that standing one's ground in Nazi Germany is preferable to escape. The representation of suicide as a heroic feat can be read as a vindication of Nazis who committed suicide at the end of the war, including Hitler and Eva Braun, and as an attribution of tragic dimensions to those suicides.

To flesh out the discord among high-ranking Nazis, Zuckmayer provides insight into the lives of dissenters and the working class.[71] The plot lines suggest that the norms of solidarity and comradeship still hold sway for this set of characters, even though the risks resisters take are high—the practices of *Schutzhaft* (protective custody) and torture are known in Harras's circle. Within this wider spectrum, Harras represents a hero at the turning point. Eventually, he overcomes his moral paralysis[72]. He is shown in several encounters with characters who appeal to his conscience. The most significant meeting is with the widow of a friend, who asserts that her husband was murdered, although his death was ruled "accidental." Harras's remorse regarding withholding his suspicions about his friend's death is a precipitating factor in his own death by suicide.[73] Harras's kamikaze flight derives from his decision that death is preferable over continued service in the Nazi air force. Through his suicide, Harras supposedly achieves redemption. Through this extreme decision, Zuckmayer's hero tries to convince himself, and the German audience, that he could rise to the highest ranks of the Nazi hierarchy without actually being a Nazi.

Wolfgang Borchert's Play Draußen vor der Tür

In the play *Draußen vor der Tür* (1947), author and playwright Wolfgang Borchert (1921–1947) tried to establish that the returning veteran Beckmann, through his suffering and death, was a victim.[74] Beckmann, wounded and demoralized, confronts former Nazis who successfully adjust to postwar reality. The characters of the Colonel, the Cabaret Director, and his former neighbor Frau Kramer show no empathy with the young veteran in his old uniform and combat spectacles, and presumably contribute to his decision to try suicide for a second time. Without information about Beckmann's wartime deployment,

71 Zuckmayer, 602.

72 Zuckmayer, 609.

73 Zuckmayer, 616.

74 Borchert, *Draußen vor der Tür*. Translations follow Borchert, *Man Outside* (trans. David Porter).

the veteran appears to be a victim of circumstances, an existentialist figure, who is thrown into a hostile new Germany.

Draußen vor der Tür is set among ordinary Germans in Hamburg, the author's hometown, and has an autobiographical flavor. The damage to life under National Socialism is evident in Borchert's biography. Borchert met the requirements of the regime as much as necessary, but occasionally his disaffection surfaced. He was not affiliated with any resistance organization and submitted to compulsory conscription in the army. He was deployed in Eastern Europe and wounded. He contracted diphtheria and was accused of self-mutilation.[75] The charge was dismissed, but he remained in custody for criticizing the regime. After his release from active duty, he worked as a cabaret artist. In a stage act, he parodied Culture Minister Joseph Göbbels, and was again incarcerated. He then was deployed to the Western front and taken prisoner by the French. His German prison documents proved his prior opposition to the regime, and he was released. Back in Hamburg, he worked at the Schauspielhaus until his death in 1947.[76]

Heinrich Böll, likewise a veteran and part of the German perpetrator collective, rose to the level of a moral authority in West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s. In his afterword to *Draußen vor der Tür,* he compares Borchert's personal non-conformism unfavorably to the activism of organized resistance fighters.[77] Both authors wrote about German suffering during and after the war, the suffering of the perpetrators, as Laurel Cohen-Pfister notes in her article on collective memory. Böll opines that characterizing Borchert as a Nazi opponent solely on the basis of his Göbbels parody is tantamount to elevating a personal antipathy to the level of political opposition. Nonetheless, Böll has to concede that resisters who engaged in public opposition, as did the Scholl siblings of the *White Rose,*[78] lost their lives to little avail.

In the afterword, Böll draws attention to his own inactivity during the war. His letters from different fronts reveal discomfort and doubt about a German victory and trepidations about a likely defeat. Critics base their notions of Böll's dissidence on Böll's later, more resolute, literary assessments after a period of silence.[79] Seeing the devastation of German society at the end of the war, young authors called for a new beginning, a *tabula rasa,* since neither the humanist educational system nor German philosophy had prevented

75 Wolfgang-Borchert-Archiv.

76 Burgess, *Life and Works*.

77 Böll, Afterword.

78 Hanser, *Noble Treason.*

79 Böll, *Briefe aus dem Krieg 1939–1945*.

the devastation cause by the Nazi regime. Along similar lines, British historian Alan John Percivale Taylor maintains in *The Course of German History* (1945) that German exceptionalism had led to the Third Reich.[80] German critics in the West maintained that Nazi jargon had so thoroughly perverted the German language that the entire literary tradition needed to be eradicated by a cultural *Kahlschlag* (deforestation) to make a new start. Helmut Böttiger identifies Borchert as the primary exponent of this short-lived phase of postwar German literature. Böttiger notes that, in 1949, when war veteran Wolfgang Weyrauch coined the term *Kahlschlag*, this movement was already in decline.[81] Postwar literature, including Borchert's play, did not live up to the project of a radical overhaul. There were intertextualities with earlier literature, such as motifs and imagery of Classicism, Romanticism, and Expressionism. In addition to these aesthetic continuities, there were also ideological continuities.

Draußen vor der Tür shows an obvious affinity with *Faust*, Goethe's cosmic drama about guilt and redemption. In *Draußen vor der Tür*, Borchert inscribes himself in the classical tradition. The prelude of the play features the allegorical figures of God and Death. Death is endowed with satanic traits and is reminiscent of Goethe's Mephisto. God, neither omniscient nor all-powerful, is too old and weak to intervene. All he can do is bewail his children. The injection of army jargon into the play further subverts the classical model by insinuating that the language of high culture is inappropriate in the defeated Germany. Borchert reduces Goethe's high drama about the struggle between God and Satan to a struggle for survival. Goethe's Faust is partially redeemed, but the pleas of Borchert's presumably more harmless returning soldier remain unanswered. Without a divine presence to appeal to, his condition is reminiscent of Heidegger's concept of man being thrown into an indifferent world.[82]

The play appeals to a wide range of postwar audiences by voicing despair after Germany's defeat without assigning blame. The theme of collective suffering neutralizes the expectation of the international community that Germans take responsibility for the war crimes they committed. *Draußen vor der Tür*, in its vagueness, invites multiple readings, some palatable to former Nazis, others implying a universalizing "modern" Existentialist message. A specific political trajectory is conspicuously absent. The pervasive misery seems to imply that the fall of the Third Reich—the only Germany that the author's generation had known—marked the end of the German tradition in its entirety. In Borchert's

80 Taylor, *Course of German History*.

81 Böttiger, *Die Gruppe 47*, 94–5.

82 Inwood, *Heidegger Dictionary*, 131. "Thrownness" is associated with fear and boredom, and may involve a turning away signified by Beckmann's attempts to leave the world.

framework, the year 1945 represents the ultimate collapse rather than the liberation from a regime of terror, as it did for exiles and Holocaust survivors.

Perpetuating the familiar gender model, Borchert does not consider female agency when constructing his characters, but rather presents Nazi clichés and army jargon, using terms like the diminutive "*Mädchen*" for a married woman, which is correctly "*Frau*."[83] Phantasies of the commodification of women inform assumptions made in the play about male dominance and female passivity. Borchert obliquely addresses the crisis of German masculinity through his wounded hero, who was too young to have been in a position of responsibility. Thus, he is emblematic of a misled and doomed generation robbed of their opportunities. The allusions to Siberia elicit the horror of Russian POW camps, but no mention is made of atrocities the German military committed. The most troublesome emotional burden for Beckmann is his memory of a group of men of whom he was in charge and who were killed on his watch. No similar scruples arise with regard to enemy soldiers or civilians he and his unit may have killed.

While Beckmann does consider other people and the future of Germany, his narcissist anguish increases with every new misfortune he encounters; rejection by other Germans; separation from his new girlfriend, and his parents' suicide. Frau Kramer, a neighbor, tells him about the death of his parents in an especially hurtful way, emphasizing their Nazi affiliation and anti-Semitism. By inserting this vulgar figure of an anti-Nazi, Borchert comes close to exonerating the old Beckmanns by comparison. The method they chose for suicide, cooking gas, might even insinuate a parallel to the Nazi gas chambers. Within the play, which is synchronous with the Nuremberg Trials and debates about the genocide, the Kramer-episode minimizes German guilt by suggesting that not only Jews but also Germans died by gassing. Ultimately, the episode trivializes the Holocaust and disparages antifascists. It even implies that Beckmann's father, who was stripped of his position and his pension after the war, had atoned for his fanatical anti-Semitism before his suicide. By extension, whatever young Beckmann may have done, he is exonerated by his presumed victim status. The characters that cause Beckmann the most discomfort are those who are coming to terms with life in the a postwar era while he prefers suicide over readjustment.

Borchert's apolitical scenery successfully targeted postwar audiences who were seeking a respite from reality. *Draußen vor der Tür,* first performed one day after Borchert's death, earned the author immediate recognition as the

83 The use of "girl" instead of "woman" is reminiscent of soldier slang and the term "*Mädel*."

leading representative of *Trümmerliteratur* (literature of ruins).[84] With easy-to-relate-to characters and simple scenarios, the play captures the uncertainty after the collapse of the Third Reich and deplores the collapse of the old order. The sentimentalized death of the parents establishes an analogy to the suicides of leading Nazi politicians.

Draußen vor der Tür insinuates that the end of the war, rather than the Nazi regime, eroded the social fabric. In his gas mask goggles and fatigues, Beckmann's appearance is the same as during the war, but to his dismay everything around him has changed. The German defeat has transformed even the universe where Death gorges himself. No redeemer is in sight, except, perhaps, the long-suffering veteran. Beckmann bases his claims of privileged insight on his wartime and near-death experiences. When at the opening of the play he returns from the dead after his first suicide attempt, he comes endowed with prophetic insight that raises him above the level of the mundane debates about Nazi trials or collective guilt.[85] On his short path through life, this average "little man" becomes the embodiment of German heroism, even in defeat.[86]

The popularity of *Draußen vor der Tür* made the play a staple in German school syllabi. In his reflections on the postwar writers' association *Gruppe* 47, Heinz Ludwig Arnold notes that, in the early publications of the group, mainstream Germans were cast as the primary victims of National Socialism. He asserts that many authors attributed a victim status to former Nazis, in blatant disregard of the historical facts:

> Erst spät geriet in den Blick, dass sich die Autoren der Gruppe zwar viel mit Krieg und Nachkrieg beschäftigt hatten, dass aber in den 1950er Jahren die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden kein Thema für sie war, dass sich die Kriegsteilnehmer kaum selbstkritisch mit ihrer Rolle in Krieg und ‚Drittem Reich' auseinander setzten und dass die Gruppe mit den aus dem Exil heimgekehrten Schriftstellern Probleme hatte.[87]

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84 Reiko Tachibana (*Narrative as Counter-Memory*, 90) examines Borchert's place within the postwar spectrum of *Trümmerliteratur*.

85 Burchard, "Nuremberg Trial"; Atkins, *Holocaust Denial*.

86 See: Waine, "*kleiner Mann*."

87 "Only later did it become obvious that the authors of the Group had been preoccupied with the war and the postwar period, but that during the 1950s they had not thematized the destruction of the European Jews, or that the veterans had rarely confronted their role in the war and the Third Reich, or taken notice of the fact that the Group had problems with writers returning from exile."

Arnold, "*Aufstieg und Ende der Gruppe 47*."

Draußen vor der Tür confirms the trend identified by Arnold. Borchert directs audience attention away from politically troublesome details and accommodates a silent consensus about collective victimhood.[88] By using social status as a criterion, he portrays the "good" Germans as disenfranchised and the "bad" ones as successful in the postwar era. The play thus assumes a populist tenor that comes painfully close to Nazi propaganda. Depicting ordinary Germans as victims amounts to a vindication of the mainstream, whose dreams of world domination had ended.

The avoidance of the terms Nazi or National Socialist in the play transposes the postwar problematic into an ahistoric arena away from politics. Beckmann claims the moral high ground by distancing himself from the Colonel and the mercenary cabaret director. The Allied occupying forces are excluded from Borchert's scope, but their presence is manifest in the new commercialism. This constellation suggests that during the Third Reich, Germans were honest people, and blames a cheapening of values on Allied influence. Beckmann, however, is a loyalist until his death.[89] His refusal to start anew amounts to a belated confirmation of the all-or-nothing ethos propagated by the Nazis.[90]

The trajectory of *Draußen vor der Tür* suggests that Germans suffered a historic injustice that eclipses their entanglement with National Socialism. By discrediting antifascist points of view, Borchert casts aspersion at denazification and reeducation programs. Ironically, by using the term "denazification" in conjunction with the suicide of Beckmann's parents, the only antifascist in the play, Mrs. Kramer, is positioned to discredit Allied reforms: „Entnazifiziert.

88 „Erst viel später, als die Gruppe 47 längst Geschichte war, fielen Schatten auf die Biographien einiger Mitglieder: So hatte Günter Eich ein Hörspiel im nazistischen Zeitgeist geschrieben; Alfred Andersch hatte sich bei der Reichsschrifttumskammer angebiedert, indem er ihr die Trennung von seiner jüdischen Frau mitteilte. Und dass Günter Grass bis 2006 verschwieg, Mitglied der Waffen-SS gewesen zu sein, hat ihm gewiss die Nicht-Aufnahme in die Gruppe oder einen späteren Rausschmiss erspart—denn da war Richter eindeutig." Arnold, "*Aufstieg und Ende der Gruppe 47*." (Much later, when the Group 47 was history, did shadow fall upon the biographies of some of its members. Günter Eich, for example, had written a radio play in the spirit of National Socialism; Alfred Andersch had curried favors with the Reich Literature Chamber by informing it about his separation from his Jewish wife. And the fact that Günter Grass had kept his membership in the Waffen-SS a secret until 2006 most certainly had spared him non-admittance to, or a later dismissal from, the Group—[Hans-Werner] Richter was unambiguous in such matters.)

89 Barthold C. Witte ("Two Catastrophes," 240) notes that the German self-perception of being loyal, which was highly rated on the scale of values, was out of keeping with the impression that neighboring countries had of German fickleness and unreliability.

90 Omer Bartov (*Hitler's Army*, 2) discusses the Nazi doctrine of all-or-nothing war.

Das sagen wir so, wissen Sie. Das ist so ein Privatausdruck von uns. Ja, die alten Herrschaften von Ihnen hatten nicht mehr die rechte Lust. Einen Morgen lagen sie steif und blau in der Küche."[91] *Draußen vor der Tür* attributes to the successful members of postwar society a lack of moral stature that places them beneath Beckmann, who refuses to change. Valorizing his Nazi war veteran, Borchert raises Beckmann's suicide, and by analogy the downfall of the regime he served, to the level of tragedy.

Heinrich Böll's Narrative Der Zug war pünktlich

In Heinrich Böll's (1917–1985) narrative *Der Zug war pünktlich* (*The Train was on Time*, 1949), the suffering of soldiers in the Nazi military is presented in a strategy of placing the German armies and their victims on the same level. Böll isolates the soldiers' activities from the historical context and thus deflects attention away from their role in different theaters of war.[92] Heinrich Böll, a war veteran, often explored the mindset of Nazi soldiers at the time of defeat. He depicts a demoralized military and soldiers, who were too young for the leadership positions they were assigned. His main figures are apolitical draftees, who go on their tours of duty without special enthusiasm. His disillusioned narrators are partial to these characters and cast them as the helpless victims of a corrupt regime.

Robert C. Conard, in his study *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, notes that Böll's outlook was shaped by the emergent anti-authoritarian lifestyle of the interwar period,[93] and Renata Kocfeldová maintains that Böll's father had imparted to his son an anti-militaristic ethos.[94] In the 1930s, Böll avoided joining the Hitler Youth and the Nazi Labor service, and as a consequence was excluded from university study. Like his heroes, he was drafted into the military and from 1939 to 1945 served as a front-line soldier. Considering that Böll was a devout Catholic, it seems incongruent that his wedding photo of 1942 shows him in his military uniform, which suggests a more than casual affinity for the military. Not surprisingly, especially after his deployment to France and Russia in 1942 and 1943, he grew increasingly wary of the war and attempted to desert. Ultimately, he was taken prisoner by the U.S. Armed Forces.

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91 Borchert, *Draußen vor der Tür*, 38; "Denazified themselves. Just an expression, you know. It's a sort of private joke amongst us. Yes, those old people of yours didn't feel like it. There they were one morning lying blue and stiff in the kitchen." Borchert/Porter, 116.

92 Böll, "*Der Zug war pünktlich*." Citations follow this edition. Translations follow Böll, *Train was on Time* (trans. Leila Vennewitz).

93 Conard, *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, 4.

94 Kocfeldová, "*Heinrich Böll*," 8.

In his fiction, Böll does not tire of expressing disdain for ranking officers and privileged civilians, who had supported the Nazi regime and the war. Still, his wartime correspondence contains a far less streamlined trajectory. Here, Böll vacillates between his hopes for a German victory and dread for what such victory might entail.[95] Critic Peter Lange mentions "*irritierende Äußerungen*"[96] that seem to be incongruent with the existing Böll image and suggest that the young Böll was a man of contradictions in search of an ethical foundation.

In *Der Zug war pünktlich*, one of only a few postwar publications that mention Nazi war crimes and the Holocaust, the ideological fluctuations in the letters seem to have been overcome. The original title, *Zwischen Lemberg und Czernowitz* (*Between Lvov and Czernovice*), situates the plot in Galicia, the epicenter of the genocide. The timeframe, 1943, points to the battle of Stalingrad, which began in July 1942 and resulted in the devastating defeat of February 1943, which ended the German prospects for victory. Böll's implied subtext thus juxtaposes the Holocaust and the defeat of the sixth German Army, which makes *Der Zug war pünktlich* a tale of crime and punishment—the beginning of the Nazi genocide in Poland precedes the decisive German defeat.

The protagonist and narrator of *Der Zug war pünktlich* is the ordinary German soldier Andreas. Andreas returns from furlough to be sent to the Eastern front as cannon fodder. The Catholic prayers he recites, even though he serves in the Nazi military, establish a religious frame of reference marking Andreas as a silent dissenter. The prayers evoke a sense of divine justice that transcends the comprehension of the deeply compromised and yet empathetically drawn Nazi soldiers. Böll's characters include SS men, Gestapo, high-ranking officers, and Nazi Party members. All of these men seem warped, but a sense of camaraderie distinguishes the Wehrmacht soldiers from the "real" Nazis, the SS: „*Wieder SS*," says a soldier disdainfully, suggesting that the Nazi special units intrude upon the decent Wehrmacht soldiers.[97]

The narrator identifies with the regular military, soldiers and lower-ranking officers, and against the "Nazis," as a remark about a young lieutenant reveals: „dem die Leutnantsschulterstücke schwer auf den Schultern lagen, sehr schwer."[98] The soldiers and the lieutenant alike are victims—victims among victims. He looks pathetic, and Andreas explains that this officer, like himself,

95 Lange, "*Heinrich Böll*."

96 "disturbing statements"

97 Böll, "*Der Zug war pünktlich*," 116; "More S.S. troops." Böll/Vennewitz, *Train was on Time,* 62.

98 Böll, 117; "the lieutenant's shoulder patches lay so heavily on his shoulders, so heavily, and you could tell that he was marked for death." Böll/Vennewitz, 63.

is on a hopeless mission. „Ich hab Witze über ihn gemacht, über sein Hitlerjungenaussehen, und er war ein Todeskandidat, ich habe es ihm am Gesicht angesehen, und er ist gefallen."[99] The narrator's sympathy extends even to "real" Nazi characters at the moment of their demise when they cease to be the universally feared Germans. Andreas refrains from condemning them for the evil they have done and from exposing the atrocities that are generally thematized by antifascist and Jewish writers. Böll features no irredeemable fanatics. His approach may be the product of his Catholic faith, which calls for forgiveness, but it also fosters an apologetic attitude toward Nazi war criminals.

The title phrase "*Der Zug war pünktlich*" (*The Train was on Time*) serves as a *leitmotif*. It alludes to the punctuality ascribed to the Germans as a national trait and to fate, which is inescapably "on time." The motif suggests that Böll was cognizant of the role of trains in the business of war and the logistics of the Holocaust, which was the focus of Raul Hilberg's study *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961).[100] Andreas senses that he will die between Lemberg (Lvov, Poland) and Czernowitz (Chernivtsi, Ukraine). Gradually, his presentiment becomes a certainty: he is convinced that he will die in Strij (Stryi), a Jewish *shtetl* at the Polish/Ukrainian border, where the Germans had erected a ghetto and in 1942 deported the Jewish population to the death camp of Belzec. In 1943, the Jewish community of Strij was completely wiped out.[101] Böll's narrator does not provide information about the massacres in Strij and the deportations, but he is obsessed with the site in the manner a criminal may be drawn to the scene of his crime. Andreas is obviously aware of the genocide, as his prayers for the Jews of Galicia reveal:

> Komm Heiliger Geist; noch einmal das Credo, weil es so wunderbar vollständig ist; dann die Karfreitagsfürbitten, weil sie so wunderbar umfassend sind, auch für die ungläubigen Juden. Dabei denkt er an Czernowitz und er betet besonders für die Czernowitzer Juden und für die Lemberger Juden, und in Stanislau sind auch sicher Juden, und in Kolomea … dann noch einmal ein Vaterunser, und dann ein eigenes Gebet; es läßt sich wunderbar beten neben den schweigenden beiden.[102]

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99 Böll, 117; "I made fun of him, of the way he looked like a Hitler Youth kid, and he was marked for death. I could tell from his face and he was killed." Böll/Vennewitz, 63.

100 Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews*.

101 Bartov, *Erased*, 62.

102 Böll, "*Der Zug war pünktlich*," 90–1; "Come Holy Ghost; then the Credo again because it was so wonderfully complete; then the Good Friday intercession, because it was so wonderfully all-embracing, it even included the unbelieving Jews. That made him think of

Andreas senses that his Catholic prayers are oddly misplaced in the imagined Jewish context with which he is unfamiliar.

Like most of Böll's protagonists, Andreas is no hero. He reluctantly boards the train he is ordered to take, afraid of what lies ahead. He even contemplates suicide, as he admits to the Chaplain who is standing by as the train leaves the station:

> Ich kann mich ja unter die Räder schmeißen wollen … ich kann ja fahnenflüchtig werden … wie? Ich will nicht sterben, das ist das Furchtbare, daß ich nicht sterben will … Sei still! Ich steig schon ein, irgendwo ist immer Platz.[103]

Andreas is aware of the misery the German soldiers inflict upon the countries they invade and the hatred they evoke, for example, in France. He remembers the contempt with which French citizens treated them: „Da stand ein französischer Kleinbürger mit seiner Pfeife im Mund, und der ganze bleierne französische Spießerspott war in seiner Augen, und dieser Mann wußte nichts."[104]

Such passages reveal how the Germans are viewed by the conquered populations, who do not even know the extent of the war crimes. As a German insider, Andreas is much better informed. The French civilians have "only" been subjected to plundering and vandalism by Nazi troops. „Da die Vitrine. Haben die Deutschen zerschmissen. Und den Teppich mit Zigarettenstummeln verbrannt und auf der Couch haben sie mit ihren Huren gepennt, es war alles versaut."[105] On the other hand, Andreas's insider perspective shows the German soldiers up close: unkempt, demoralized, and in pain. One staff sergeant, Willi, is traumatized about having to leave his wife, whom he found in

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Cernauti, and he said a special prayer for the Jews of Cernauti and for the Jews of Lvov, and no doubt there were Jews in Stanislav too, and in Kolomyya … then another Paternoster, and then a prayer of his own; it was a great place to pray, sitting beside those two silent men" Böll/Vennewitz, *Train was on Time,* 31.

103 Böll, 66; "'Why, I might want to hurl myself under the wheels, I might want to desert … eh? What's the hurry, I might go crazy. I've a perfect right to go crazy. I don't want to die, that's what's so horrible—that I don't want to die. …' 'Don't say any more, I'll get on all right there's always a spot somewhere.'" Böll/Vennewitz, 3.

104 Böll, 95; "A Frenchman was standing there, a real lower-middle-class type, his pipe between his teeth, his eyes full of that truly French derision—ponderous, bourgeois—and the man had known nothing." Böll/Vennewitz, 37.

105 Böll, 95; "That glass cabinet: the Germans had smashed it up. And burned holes in the carpet with their cigarette butts, and slept on the couch with their whores and messed it all up. He spat with contempt." Böll/Vennewitz, 37.

the arms of a Russian man.[106] A blond private admits that he yielded to the "seduction" of a constable, who according to him behaved like an animal: „Er hat uns verführt, was ist da noch zu sagen? Wir waren alle so … bis auf einen. Der wollte nicht."[107] He reports that one young man resisted the advances but ended up being shot by the constable. The other men all had relations with the constable and helped cover up the murder and bury their comrade's body. These abuses leave long-term individual traumata. The young soldier discusses the effects of the sexual abuse he endured as follows:

> Keine Freude hab ich mehr gehabt und keine kann ich mehr finden. Ich habe Angst, eine Frau anzusehen. Hingedämmert und geheult habe ich zu Hause die ganze Zeit wie ein schwachsinniges Kind, und meine Mutter hat gedacht, ich hätte eine furchtbare Krankheit. Aber ich hab's ihr doch nicht sagen können, das kann man keinem Menschen sagen.[108]

Andreas conforms neither to the image of the German soldier as described by the occupied population nor to the propagandistic representation of heroic soldiers in the Nazi media. He, like his comrades, is a broken man, and as such evokes sympathy.

Andreas depicts the German military culture as fundamentally corrupt. Morale can only be maintained by numbing the senses: drinking, gambling, smoking, and sex serve as coping mechanisms even if basic needs are not met, as indicated by Andreas's hunger attacks.[109] Based on their appearance, the soldiers have become mere shadows of their civilian selves: „Der Unrasierte ist ganz still. Er ist fast ohne Leben. Er hat die ganze Nacht nicht schlafen können; er ist erloschen, und seine Augen sind wie blinde Spiegel, seine Wangen sind gelb und eingesunken, und das Unrasiertsein ist jetzt schon ein Bart."[110] The lack of military standards results from the loss of soldiers and prompts rapid

106 Böll, 85.

107 Böll, 104; "My God, he groaned, so he seduced us, what else is there to say? We were all like that … except one. He refused." Böll/Vennewitz, 47.

108 Böll, 105; "After that I never enjoyed anything again, and I never will. I am scared to look at a woman. The whole time I was home I just lay around in a kind of stupor, crying away like some idiot child, and my mother thought I had some awful disease. But how could I tell her about it, it was something you can't tell anyone," Böll/Vennewitz, 48.

109 Böll, 90.

110 Böll, 99; "The unshaven soldier was silent. There was hardly any life left in him. He had not been able to sleep at night; the spark in him had gone out, and his eyes were like blind mirrors, and his cheeks yellow and cavernous, and what had been the need of a shave was now a beard, a reddish-black beard below the thick hair on his forehead." Böll/Vennewitz, 41.

promotions, as shown in the example of an NCO who is randomly appointed to the rank of officer simply because he had a shave and a haircut. However, the narrator also makes it apparent that outward appearance is a factor in a person's attitude. After being groomed, the man in question recaptures his soldier-like demeanor. Even his speech changes; he resumes brash military jargon.[111]

Böll also uncovers the sentimentality of the Nazi military and Third Reich popular culture. The proliferation of escapist songs and films that subliminally supported the war effort demonstrate the penchant for trite sentimentalism. On the other hand, the maudlin tunes sung by Lale Andersen, Hans Albers, and Zarah Leander served as a cover for the Nazis' inhumanity toward perceived enemies inside and outside Germany.[112] The issue of make-believe romance arises in *Der Zug war pünktlich* in the episode of the prostitute and spy Olina, who makes fun of her dealings with a German general. Even though she admits that she extracted information from her client during their trysts, Andreas still considers her affectionate behavior toward him to be genuine trust.

The loss of personal identity is an important element in the observations about the Nazi military mentality. Any man can seemingly assume any function provided he acts correctly. While shining one's boots translates into a renewed interest in life, physical neglect is a sign of mental disintegration. Being assigned a specific task increases an individual's sense of self-worth. For example, unexpected orders from an SS man give one of the common soldiers a sense of direction and draw him out of his lethargy.[113] Even as banal a task as standing guard duty is a psychological boost. By uncovering these dynamics, Böll sheds light upon the mechanics of dominance and submission. Everyone, the narrative suggests, has the potential of becoming a Nazi soldier.

Eventually, Andreas's own values come to light. His attachment to Germany constitutes a positive element: „Nie mehr werde ich Deutschland sehen, Deutschland ist weg. Der Zug hat Deutschland verlassen während ich schlief … da war die Grenze, und der Zug ist kaltblütig darüber gefahren."[114] His affection for Olina, to whom he tells his life-story, is also intended to evoke sympathy. The romanticized encounter between the soldier and the prostitute in a front-line brothel the night before his fatal car crash personalizes the sex exchange

111 Böll, 107.

112 Berszinski, *Modernisierung im Nationalsozialismus?*, 58–60.

113 Böll, "*Der Zug war pünktlich*," 115.

114 Böll, 93; "Never again will I be in Germany. Germany's gone. The train left Germany while I was asleep. Somewhere there was a line, an invisible line across a field, … and the train passed callously over it, and I was no longer in Germany." Böll/Vennewitz, *Train was on Time*, 34.

and makes it palatable to bourgeois notions of intimacy—Andreas apparently needs the illusion of love in order to cope. Böll's maudlin brothel fantasy oozes the disingenuous emotionality of literary kitsch.

Engaging in the same activities as his comrades, Andreas construes an emotional framework to justify himself. His yearning for authentic emotions seems to be a pattern that also applies to his professed love for a French woman, whom he saw for only a split second: „Nur eine Zehntelsekunde habe ich die einzig Geliebte sehen dürfen, die vielleicht nur ein Spuk war."[115] The memory of the beautiful woman helps him to ignore the war. Instead of taking note of the here-and-now, he keeps wondering, „welche Stirn zu diesen Augen gehörte, welcher Mund, und welche Brust und welche Hände? Ach, wäre es zuviel gewesen, wenn ich hätte erfahren dürfen, welches Herz dazugehörte, ein Mädchenherz vielleicht."[116]

The encounter of Andreas and Olina is similarly embellished and leads the readers to believe that there is a give-and-take between the prostitute and the Nazi soldier. The episode with the sex-worker is make-believe designed to satisfy a German invader's fantasy of a Polish woman. Information that might interfere with the atmosphere of mutual understanding is suppressed.[117] Olina's heartbreaking memories alongside the German soldier's tale of woe suggests a parallel between the conquered Poles and the German aggressors, classifying both of them as victims of the war. A sergeant's apparent alcoholism serves the same end, as a signal of the cruelty of war, which causes mental and physical deterioration.[118] Even the "hysterical" officers, who are mentioned in passing, display signs of emotional disturbance when they frantically order the soldiers around and look more like victims than victors.[119]

Ultimately, *Der Zug war pünktlich* obscures the brutality of the war and atrocities committed by the soldiers. The events leading up to Andreas's death serve to engage the reader emotionally without having to describe human beings in the war-torn territories. Instead, Andreas only lists the names of Polish and Ukrainian towns. The practice of alluding to killing sites is also evident in the abstract prose of Nazi veterans, who report insider information to an

115 Böll, 90; "For only a tenth of a second was I allowed to see my only love, who was perhaps no more than an apparition." Böll/Vennewitz, 30–1.

116 Böll, 89; "Is it such a disgrace, then, to long to know what forehead belonged to those eyes, what mouth and what breast and what hands? Would it have been asking too much to be allowed to know what heart belonged to them, a girl's heart perhaps," Böll/Vennewitz, 30.

117 Böll, 144–5.

118 Böll, 90.

119 Böll, 89.

initiated readership, perhaps like-minded former comrades.[120] The names of the towns draw attention to massacres committed by the Nazi military. They point specifically to the extermination of the Jewish population—most of the towns in question were prominent in Jewish history. However, the terms "Jews" and "Jewish" are avoided. Andreas remembers "*dunkelgekleidete Gestalten*" (traditional Jews) when the train passes through Galicia,[121] and he lists the Jewish centers Lemberg, Czernowitz, Kolomea, Stanislau, Breslau, and Przemyzl. The Carpathian mountains, which are more commonly associated with the Roma, who were relentlessly persecuted by the Nazi military, are also mentioned.[122]

Der Zug war pünktlich leaves no doubt about the author's awareness of atrocities committed by ordinary soldiers and establishes a connection between their demoralization and participation in genocide. It is interesting to note that the stress experienced by the SS death squads during mass shootings was the Nazis' rationale for establishing gas chambers that would avoid the "bloodbaths."[123] Böll takes up the narrative of soldiers tired from killing and tries to elicit sympathy for them. This strategy is especially effective in the case of Andreas, a somewhat naïve but not fundamentally evil narrator. Despite his deployments to the Eastern front, he has preserved his religious values and a certain respect for humanity. None of this prevents him, however, from being fully involved in the military machinery.

The way Andreas relates to non-Germans, especially women, is particularly problematic. On one hand, he treats them as a source of comfort, while on the other hand he claims superiority over them as a male and a soldier. Not without self-pity, he depicts the German soldiers as the pawns of absent power brokers and still accords them heroic greatness because every day they face death. Except for the religious dimensions in Böll, there are striking analogies between the soldier figures in *Der Zug war pünktlich* and Borchert's *Draußen vor der Tür.* The protagonists of both authors conform to the paradigm of *unschuldige Täter* (innocent perpetrators) coined by Ruth Wodak, Peter Nowak, and Johanna Pelikan.[124] The German soldier as a sacrificial lamb is a recurring motif in Böll's fiction. By keeping the impressions of war as the epitome of barbarism and chaos abstract, he avoids specificity, and dwells on emotional details that illustrate the suffering experienced by average soldiers. The following lines from the prose narrative "*Nicht nur zur Weihnachtszeit*" ("Christmas

120 Böll, 100; See: Schütter, *Männer der Waffen-SS*.

121 "dark-clad figures," Böll/Vennewitz, *Train was on Time,* 43.

122 Böll, "*Der Zug war pünktlich*," 82–4; See: Lewy, *Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*.

123 McDonough, *Holocaust*, 69.

124 Nowak, Pelikan, and Wodak, *"Wir sind alle unschuldige Täter!"*

not Once a Year," 1951) are characteristic of his strategy of depersonalizing the war:

> In den Jahren 1939 bis 1945 hatten wir Krieg. Im Krieg wird gesungen, geschossen, geredet, gekämpft, gehungert und gestorben—und es werden Bomben geschmissen—lauter unerfreuliche Dinge, mit deren Erwähnung ich meine Zeitgenossen in keiner Weise langweilen will.[125]

Ilse Aichinger's Novel Die größere Hoffnung

The family constellations in the novel *Die größere Hoffnung* (*Herod's Children*, 1948) by Vienna-born postwar author Ilse Aichinger (1921–2016), a survivor of racial persecution, reflect the destruction of the German-Jewish symbiosis under National Socialism.[126] Aichinger's hero Ellen, the daughter of a Nazi father and a mother classified as Jewish, participates as both a perpetrator and a victim. In a confrontation with her father, a Nazi police officer, the father turns out to be a man who has lost his integrity. Through this figure, Aichinger issues an indictment of the followers of Nazism, but the victims emerge as morally superior, even if they cannot escape death at the hands of their persecutors.

Aichinger was one of the few women authors affiliated with Group 47. She had been invited to the 1951 meeting and received the Prize of the Group in 1952. As an Austrian of partly Jewish descent, she stood out among the Group's membership because of her experience and point of view. Her topic was the difficulties Austrians faced under National Socialism and racial discrimination. Her essay "*Das vierte Tor*" ("The Fourth Gate," 1945) was the point in Austrian literature when the deportation of Jews was first addressed. The novel *Die größere Hoffnung* exposes the dire conditions faced by children of Jewish descent who tried to survive on their own in the occupied city.[127]

In keeping with its deliberately naïve children's perspective, *Die größere Hoffnung* does not delve into politics or discuss the Nazi German occupation of Vienna. Instead, it focuses on the effects of Nazi policies and the segregation they produce in a once-integrated society. Families are torn apart, and children

125 Böll, "*Nicht nur zur Weihnachtszeit*," 13; "During the years 1939 to 1945 there was a war on. In wartime there is a lot of singing, shooting, talking, fighting, starving, and dying—and bombs are dropped, all disagreeable things with which I have no intention of boring my contemporaries." Böll, "Christmas not Once a Year" (trans. Leila Vennewitza), 727.

126 Aichinger, *Die größere Hoffnung*. Translations follow Aichinger, *Herod's Children* (trans. Cornelia Schaeffer).

127 Aichinger, "*Das vierte Tor*."

end up in a void. Aichinger had experienced such conditions under National Socialism and experienced Nazi racial laws that pronounced a death sentence for many of her friends and family members.[128] Her novel features as the most notable Nazi character Ellen's father, who left his daughter in the care of her Jewish grandmother and joined the Secret Police. His true character is revealed in a dramatic encounter with his child, whose presence embarrasses him, in front of his subordinates; he feels threatened by his affiliation with a girl of Jewish background.[129]

In *Die größere Hoffnung*, the Nazis are neighbors and relatives turned against each other. The dominant perspective is that of Ellen, whose experience is paradigmatic of the broken Austrian-Jewish symbiosis. Ellen is straddling the fence between Jewish and Christian society—she is Catholic, her grandmother Jewish, and her father a Nazi. This constellation makes her an outsider to all of these segments of society. She spends most of her time with her Jewish friends, but she does not entirely fit in with them since she neither has to wear the Jewish star nor does she face immediate deportation. To minimize her privilege, she tries to be doubly helpful to the Jewish children, but most of her attempts fail since, as a child, her options are limited.

Lacking designations such as Nazi, Austrian, Catholic, or Jew, Aichinger's narrative has a surreal quality, which is reinforced by the use of metaphors and allegories. These literary devices call to mind those in *Draußen vor der Tür*, but they take a different trajectory. Rather than concealment, as in Borchert, Aichinger's objective is exposing the racial persecution, the Nazi mentality, and the Holocaust, and to demonstrate the codes of Nazi language, which, as Ellen realizes, cannot be trusted. The more realistic episodes bring the social conditions into focus through dramatic encounters that help to clarify the situation in the 1930s and 1940s. The confrontation between the Nazi officer and his and his Jewish wife's daughter Ellen is a key episode. Beyond the apparent conflict, the character constellation points to a past, where love and intermarriage between Jews and "Aryans" were common occurrences. Ellen is the product of such a union, but under the prevailing circumstances, she is an unwanted child left behind by her mother who has fled to the United States, and her father, who has become her political enemy.

In the encounter between daughter and father, the diction is concrete and to the point, sending a clear message: the Nazi father and his men are "*Verirrte*" (lost souls). Ellen, looking beyond appearances, realizes that the persecutors play a pathetic role. In order to gain power, they relinquish their autonomy.

128 Aichinger, *Die größere Hoffnung*, 8–9.

129 Aichinger, 50.

Now, like robots, they follow orders and must wear helmets to hide their faces. The arrival of Ellen's father in the attire of her mortal enemies is announced by his boot steps. The boots seem harder than stone and *„zertreten den Kies*."[130] A seemingly disembodied voice gives orders that are threatening and hostile.

Ellen's father, with his shiny epaulettes and his arrogance, stands out as the officer in charge. To the children, including his daughter, he signifies the master race. He has no patience with the young people whom he believes to be Jewish and in no way connected to him. He plays with his revolver to show that he is master over life and death. To further display his power, he begins to interrogate the children, who are in violation of a Nazi ordinance that prohibits Jews from sitting on park benches or playing in a park. He inquires if they have the right to be in this park and demands their ID cards.

His decisive question pertains to race: he asks them if they are Aryan. None of his questions are about the children's activities, which makes it clear that their fate is determined exclusively by their ancestry.[131] The Nazi regime denies them their human and personal dignity, and they are forced to run and hide. At the opening of the encounter, Ellen's father acts like a god who keeps the smaller creatures in check. Thus, the lines between perpetrators and victims are initially clearly drawn. The officer appears to be in total control of the subjugated collective of Jews, conceptualized as the inferior Other.

Aichinger, herself of mixed background, is keenly aware of the intimate ties between the victims and the perpetrators. In the father-daughter encounter, she demonstrates that politics cannot erase the power of family ties. Ellen turns the tables by calling the officer "*Vater*" ("Father") to expose a relationship that empowers her and compromises the Nazi officer. The very existence of his child makes the father's ties to a Jewish woman publicly known. Having a "*Mischling*," a mixed-race child, with a mother living in the United States cannot but harm his career, considering that America was an enemy force and, in the Third Reich, relations between Aryans and Jews constituted the offense of race defilement.

By the same token, a father's repudiation of his child is a transgression against the traditional patriarchal norms in Austria. From a Nazi point of view, Ellen's father has defiled the race, but the Catholic mainstream would consider him a delinquent father. The character of the Nazi father thus symbolizes the incompatibility between traditional patriarchal norms and Nazi law. In his untenable situation, his ploy to make his daughter leave him alone doesn't solve

130 Aichinger, 48; "Bootsteps crushed the gravel, purposeless and self-satisfied as are only the steps of those gone astray." Aichinger/Schaeffer, 40.

131 Aichinger, 49.

his problem: „Das hier war der Mann, der Ellen gebeten hatte, ihn zu vergessen. Aber kann das Wort den Mund vergessen, der es gesprochen hat?"[132] Gradually, the father's power crumbles, at least for the time it takes for all the children to escape. Ellen's counter-attack is both psychological and physical. To secure her friends' retreat she kisses her father and makes a display of their relation. In the end, she bites him in the face.[133] While first assuming the act of a child who embraces her long-lost father, Ellen eventually acts out the role the Nazis have assigned the Jews: she behaves like an annoying little animal.[134] In this latter role, she is free to let her emotions take over: she cries, laughs, rages, and soils her father's uniform, while he, a representative of the regime, must keep up appearances. He cannot defend himself against his own child in the presence of his subordinates, nor can he display his repressed emotions. Clinging to his authority as a servant of the regime, he asserts that Ellen must be sick and finally sends her away. This central episode in Aichinger's novel exposes the limitations of state authority. Relying on rituals and uniforms, the secret police agents respond only as soldiers and bureaucrats. The ruined father-child relationship shows the Nazi father as an emotionally and socially deficient personality who has surrendered his human potential to the dictatorship.

Another direct confrontation between the persecutors and the persecuted children occurs in the chapter "*Im Dienste einer fremden Macht*" ("In the Service of an Alien Power").[135] Here, the Nazi characters are Hitler Youth boys. They proudly wear their uniforms and sing the sentimental military song "*Die blauen Husaren.*"[136] These hints suggest that their imagination is dominated by visions of war and blood as the ultimate heroic feat: stomping horses, rattling sabers, and waving coats. Even though they are mere children, they are identified through uniforms, belts, belt buckles, and knives.[137]

There is an unexpected intrusion into the world of these boys: one of them discovers a German-English vocabulary book. The find arouses suspicion among the young Nazis and stirs their anti-Semitic rage since they suspect that the notebook belongs to Jewish children.[138] Questions ensue about the

132 Aichinger, 49; "This was the man who had asked Ellen to forget him. But can the word forget the lips that have spoken it?" Aichinger/Schaeffer, 41.

133 Aichinger, 50.

134 Aichinger, 50.

135 Aichinger, 81–8.

136 Aichinger, 82.

137 Aichinger, 82.

138 Aichinger, 83.

purpose of learning English in a time of war, especially since the Nazi boys know that only death awaits the Jews. They find it perplexing that their imagined enemies would engage in intellectual pursuits considering the hopeless situation they face. The blend of Jewish and Christian motifs throughout the novel suggests that the distinction between the Nazi boys and the Jewish children is merely superficial: one group is in uniform, the other is in civilian clothes; one group wears lighter socks, the other wears darker socks; one group, because of their exposure to the sun, has darker faces, the other, confined at home, has pale faces.[139] Yet, all of them are connected by their common humanity and desire to live.

The differences between the children are the product of the difference in their socialization. The narrator suggests that the boys in uniform need a uniform to gain a sense of community—their ostensible self-confidence is false. In contrast, the Jewish children identify themselves as individuals; they study to expand their horizon for the sake of self-realization. The Nazi boys are conditioned to act aggressively, while the Jewish children embrace a peaceful demeanor. When the Hitler Youth attack the secret study place of the Jewish children, an old teacher challenges the intruders. Frustrated over being outmaneuvered intellectually, the young Nazis resort to violence. They may prevail in physical terms, but Aichinger's narrator suggests that they are morally defeated by the teacher's passive resistance. The Nazis, incapable of comprehending the old man's strength of conviction, have no explanation other than that he serves an alien force. Everywhere in the novel, crude coercion is seen as inferior to the intellectual resistance of the intended Nazi victims. Another striking example is Ellen's interrogation by a Nazi officer. She demands to be deported to "the East" so that she can be with her Jewish friends, and she stands her ground defying the ensuing beatings and threats.[140]

This discussion of postwar writing has revealed that 1945 was an ideological and generational watershed. Instead of allowing for a reconciliation as the term "*Wiedergutmachung*" (restitution or rectification) implies, the end of the war put the open conflicts to rest, but the calm was superficial. The end of the Third Reich required profound attitudinal changes not only in Germany and Austria, but also in the victor nations. The emerging democracies of West Germany and Austria and the Socialist regime in East Germany were predicated upon revised concepts of nation, citizenship, government and family.

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139 Aichinger, 82–3.

140 Aichinger, 200–2.

Many postwar texts featured characters designed to exonerate former supporters of the Third Reich; others condemned Nazi society in the strongest terms. The spectrum of scenarios reveals widely divergent perceptions that shaped the postwar imaginary from which a new mentality and cultural life were to arise.

Conclusion

In its exploration of the evolution of the literary trope of the Nazi, *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* has identified different applications of Nazi characters as ideological signifiers in the context of different political settings between 1920 and 1950. The adaptability of Nazi figures has become obvious, as well as their constructedness, which allows them to be introduced in a wide variety of plots and scenarios. Simultaneously, their adaptability reveals that they are disconnected from "reality," events and historical facts, and instead are part of the scientific and literary imagination from which they originated in the first place. Through text analyses and discussions, this book establishes a paradigm for the production and use of Nazi figures and other literary stereotypes. The discussions revolve around a set of identifiable and predictable textual constructs and a typology that involves physical descriptions, fictional mental and emotional profiles, behavior patterns, and attire. For example, the blue- or grey-eyed, blond- or brown-haired male Nazi constructs are envisioned wearing either conservative clothes, regional costumes, or uniforms, complete with pins, medals, boots, and party and military regalia. Descriptions of their blond- or brown-haired female counterparts include plain hairstyles, simple dress, or regional attire. The ideal female Nazi characters wear no make-up and only simple, if any, jewelry, with the exception of the imposing blond companions of powerful Nazi males in antifascist writing; these women are adorned with flashy jewelry, wear expensive perfume, and occasionally dye their hair. Literary Nazi figures in Nazi texts as well as antifascist literature are constructed to evoke the Aryan profile referenced in racial science, *Rassenkunde*.

Since their emergence in the 1920s, Nazi figures have stirred the cultural imagination in positive and negative terms, depending on the specific political environment. They were shaped and reshaped in the ideological contests that raged in the interwar republics and continued beyond the defeat of the Third Reich when the Allied forces outlawed Nazi organizations and started re-education programs. Further disputes about National Socialism and the Nazis were fueled by the conflicts between the Western Allies and Russia, and during the Cold War, in the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, which endorsed divergent interpretations of the "recent past," Nazi mentality, and the Shoah. At the turn of the millennium, only a few contemporaries of the Nazi era were still alive, while there was renewed interest in Nazi themes and characters. Thus, more recent literary Nazi stereotypes have been constructed on the basis of the earlier models, in the absence of an actual Nazi

regime. The thriving Nazi lore ensured that literary Nazi characters retain their appeal to this day.

The analyses presented here begin in political texts, where the aspirational Nazi ideal of the Nordic or "Aryan" male, originated. The program of the National Socialist Party from 1920 identifies the racial boundaries this decisive document draws in defining German nationhood and Nazi requirements for German citizenship. The concepts the party program presents in the abstract are fleshed out in a variety of texts, including anti-Semitic fiction, racial theory, propagandistic self-writing, and racialized cultural history. Artur Dinter's anti-Semitic novel *Die Sünde wider das Blut* is presented as an example of the manner in which the notions of racial purity and the *Volk* (nation) are concretized. Dinter thematizes the struggle between Aryans and Jews in personal, historical, and cosmic dimensions, extending the concept of race beyond the human sphere to include racially defined angels and demons, and casts Jesus as Aryan. Referencing familiar nineteenth-century stereotypes, Dinter's novel operates with a racialized typology of Germans and Jews and individual characters that served to concretize Nazi stereotypes in the decades to come. Concurrent with Dinter's racist novels, the discourse of *Rassenkunde* (racial science) gained traction. Implied in its directions for the identification of racial types was a program of ethnic cleansing that would extend beyond the borders of Germany.[1] Insignificant typological and terminological deviations notwithstanding, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* by anthropologist Hans F.K. Günther complements and confirms the racial models Dinter embedded in his literary format. An examination of Günther's work sheds light on the concept and function of race in the envisioned Nazi society. Dinter's book includes illustrations, photographs "documenting" racial types, references to other racial theorists, and measurements of skulls and bones, all of which were intended to create the impression that the theory of race and culture was derived from scientific data. The human types that Günther qualifies as being fit for German citizenship coincide with the Aryans described by Dinter, with the exception that *Rassenkunde* casts a wider net to include an array of lesser Aryan "races" that do not measure up to the ideal Nordic type. Dinter and Günther are in complete agreement about the exclusion of Jews from German nationhood. Both authors define Jews as a separate race and describe them in the vilest terms as the physical and spiritual enemies of the Aryan. In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler blends the genres of autobiography and political propaganda in a narrative that personalizes political precepts. Like Dinter and Günter, Hitler references ultra-nationalist and racist sources

1 Martin, *Nazi-Fascist New Order,* 2–5.

to create the impression of erudition, but he places greater importance on his own life story and personal insights to authenticate his message of German superiority. He maintains that charisma and leadership are equally important as collective traits shaped by culture and race. Still, the concept of race is also a major cornerstone in *Mein Kampf.* Hitler raises the issue of race in anecdotes about righteous Germans who suffer at the hands of villainous Jews. As is the case in Dinter and Günther, he frequently invokes the Jewish enemy to consolidate the ideal of the Aryan male. All three authors are in agreement about the outstanding physical and mental qualities of the ideal German, which require cultivation and care. In light of the racial composition of twentieth-century Germany according to racial theory, Hitler and Günther concede that Aryans of lesser race must be included in the German racial universe, at least for the time being. Like Günther, Hitler emphasizes that every effort must be made to improve Germany's racial profile.

Rosenberg's treatise *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* provides yet another access to the National Socialist program: racialized cultural history. With an obvious appeal to an intellectual readership, Rosenberg surveys world history while placing Germany at the center and cutting edge. His discourse on the function of race casts the Aryan race of Nordic provenance as the cultural protagonist of European, even world, civilization. Rosenberg's interpretation of the major forces in history supports the racial typology presented by Dinter, Günther, and Hitler. The discussion of these paradigmatic texts *in tandem* illustrates the Nazi movement's singleness of purpose. The uniform racist message presented in different registers and genres is essential to the concerted propaganda effort aimed at making the program of National Socialism palatable to readers of different levels of education and interest. By the mid-1920s, the multilayered racist message, supported by idealized Nazi characters, was finalized and could be deployed and redeployed to disseminate the doctrine of the total, hierarchically ordered and racially homogenous Nazi German state as the way of the future.

This book further argues that, earlier than generally assumed, Nazi opponents advanced thoughtful and persuasive counterarguments in different literary genres. The first exemplary works examined here are the political satires of Hans Reimann and Hugo Bettauer. In his short narrative *Die Dinte wider das Blut*, Reimann combines literary satire and *ad hominem* attacks on Dinter as a self-styled Nordic intellectual and a bad writer. Reimann responds succinctly to Dinter's anti-Semitic novel to discredit the myth of Aryan supremacy and to ridicule the racist notion according to which "Nordic" features are a sign of excellence. Reimann's protagonist has the appearance of an Aryan hero, but he is a less-than-mediocre scientist and a shifty character. As soon as he has

the opportunity to associate himself with prosperous Jewish circles, he casts his racist principles to the wind. In a similar vein, Hugo Bettauer repurposes stereotypes from Nazi propaganda in his antifascist novel *Die Stadt ohne Juden*. Bettauer's protagonist Schwertfeger is reminiscent of Vienna's anti-Semitic mayor Karl Lueger and Adolf Hitler and their style of leadership. By appearance, Schwertfeger, like the historical models, is clearly at variance with the Nordic ideal. Instead, Bettauer attributes to his young Jewish protagonist the fine physical and mental qualities racial theorists identified as typical of the Aryan race. This reverse typecasting foreshadows the playfully macabre approach to German identity in Edgar Hilsenrath's post-Shoah novel *Der Nazi und der Friseur* (1977),[2] which juxtaposes a Jewish-looking Nazi, Aryan and mass murderer, and an Aryan-looking Jew.

In his society novel *Das Spinnennetz*, Joseph Roth introduces a diversified set of Nazi characters ranging from lumpenproletarians to aristocrats, thereby expanding the range and complexity of Nazi figures in antifascist fiction. Juxtaposing Jewish revolutionaries and non-Jewish social climbers such as the protagonist Theodor Lohse, Roth differentiates between opportunistic lower-middle-class Aryans and class- and identity-conscious Eastern Jewish proletarians who are prepared to commit acts of terror for the cause of Ashkenazic Jewry.

Reimann's, Roth's, and Bettauer's narratives are early examples of a body of literature that attempts to disqualify Nazi ideals and the assumptions on which they are based: Jewish inferiority and Aryan supremacy. These early works introduced the trope of the unprincipled, politically unreliable, and fundamentally evil Nazi opportunist to German and Austrian literature, with the objective of neutralizing Nazi propaganda. Roth's extensive range of characters provided literary models for pre- and post-World War II writing. Although Gertrud Kolmar's novella *Die jüdische Mutter* was not published until 1965, it is an important example of an anti-Nazi narrative written from a Jewish woman's point of view. Kolmar attributes to the figures of blond Nazi males a demonic sex appeal, which her female protagonist, who is of East European Jewish background, is unable to resist. The association between National Socialism and the occult, which occurs as a potentiality in Kolmar's work, spurred the popular imagination and was encouraged by Nazi symbolism: the swastika, the runic insignia of the SS (ϟϟ), and the light and dark imagery mobilized in torch rallies. Kolmar deploys the imagery of lightness and darkness in connection with her characters' body colors as a mark of their ethnicity; she attributes different qualities to physical traits than would be seen with Nazi writers. Blond,

2 Hilsenrath, *Der Nazi und der Friseur*.

blue- and grey-eyed Aryans in *Die Jüdische Mutter* signify danger, while the Jewish mother's and her daughter's dark complexion denotes vulnerability.

The exploration of works predating 1933 makes it obvious that the scope of Nazi characters was fundamentally established by the time Hitler came to power. The Nazi movement's worldview was formalized and exemplary characters emblematic of German virtues continued to be produced accordingly. With a short delay, the anti-Nazi opposition had developed an arsenal of negatively connoted types to discredit Nazi ideology. These included images of destructive, dangerous, incompetent and even demonic Nazis of Aryan appearance. These figures were juxtaposed against idealized antifascist protagonists, mostly Socialists or Communists.

Chapter 2 discusses the challenges to the Nazi regime by Jewish, Socialist, and feminist authors. Two points are immediately obvious: while the Nazi opponents were extraordinarily creative and intellectual, their writings were relatively ineffective because of the market conditions in the interwar period. In the Third Reich, publications by Marxist and Jewish authors were banned. Their works could only be published in exile, if at all. Prominent authors, such as Lion Feuchtwanger, Friedrich Wolf, and Ferdinand Bruckner, chronicled in detail the developments at the time of the Nazi takeover and tried to provide explanations for Hitler's success. Feuchtwanger, in *Die Geschwister Oppenheim,* a family saga set in 1932/33 reveals that Nazis had infiltrated all institutions and all walks of life, and secretly prepared to take over key positions in business, schools, universities, and especially medical schools. Feuchtwanger's Nazi figures are reminiscent of Bettauer's and Roth's earlier models, however, for Feuchtwanger, the notion of Nazi bunglers has given way to that of dangerous plotters and conspirators. His Jewish characters face the ruthlessness of Nazi organizations in prisons and concentration camps, and describe stormtroopers ruling with an iron fist. Feuchtwanger's Nazis are different in terms of appearance and life-style, but all of them are power-hungry and share an insistence on the racial divide between Aryans and Jews. In Bruckner's drama *Die Rassen*, the issue of race is front and center. The main theme is the destructiveness of Nazi anti-Semitism at universities. Nazi bullies and organizers are about to take over and tyrannize politically indifferent and Jewish students. Bruckner invokes the notion of Nazi incompetence through his central character, the mentally unstable student Karlanner, who must choose between the life of a bourgeois academic and the laziness and drunkenness his fellow Nazi students enjoy. The instability attributed to Karlanner places him between Nazi and anti-Nazi forces. Characters who have to choose between the two sides are common in both pro- and anti-Nazi writing. In the former, they opt for Nazi ideals, as does the hero in the novel and film *Hitlerjunge Quex;* in contrast, in

the Marxist film *Kuhle Wampe*, the activities organized by the workers' movement including a sports competition and agitprop performances draw the politically indifferent Fritz, the fiancé of a class-conscious working girl, into the Communist movement.[3] In Bruckner's drama, Karlanner eventually abandons his Nazi views, but too late to start a new life. Similarly, Friedrich Wolf, in his drama *Professor Mamlock*, features a female Nazi doctor who eventually follows her heart and opts for Socialism and her Jewish lover. Feuchtwanger, Bruckner, and Wolf, with a focus on the increasingly radicalized public sphere prior to the Nazi takeover, and the systematic destruction of lives thereafter, suggest that the Nazi victory marks the end of Germany as a progressive and intellectually viable society.

The prominent place of the analysis of Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph des Willens* is appropriate to the centrality of this propaganda film, which surveys the consolidating Third Reich and projects Germany's brilliant future through the 1934 Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg. The film expresses the consensus within the Nazi regime and its expected prominence in world politics. Through images of bodies and faces, the sound track, and Nazi symbolism, Riefenstahl showcases Hitler as an eminent presence towering over the political spectacle. She positions him as leader and prophet, as the embodiment of Nazi Germany, and as the spokesman for every single German. Hitler proclaims, personally and through his delegates, his aspirational message of German might. Aryan-looking boys and girls model the racial ideal of the future Germany, whereas Hitler and his entourage are positioned as the initiators and path-breakers of a new world order.

Nazi publications asserted a national consensus about *Volk* and race, and *Triumph des Willens* visualized the total racial state and broadcast its roaring voices. Antifascist writers, in contrast, approached what was clearly a state of emergency for many segments of German society from a multitude of viewpoints, but lacked the power base that made Nazi propaganda so effective. Through the analysis of works by Hermynia Zur Mühlen, Klaus Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Veza Canetti, and Anna Seghers, *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* illustrates the ideological diversity of anti-Nazi literature. The male writers included here generally exemplify social and political problems through the use of male characters. Feminist and Socialist female authors highlight the impact National Socialism has on their female characters, who lack the social status their male compatriots enjoy, but have options nonetheless. Some of these female figures are shown to affiliate themselves with Nazi males and the Nazi movement; for example, Zur Mühlen's

3 Birgel, "*Kuhle Wampe*," 50; Steinhoff, *Hitlerjunge Quex*; Dudow et al., *Kuhle Wampe.*

lower-middle-class women avail themselves of the advantages they have as "Aryans." Proletarian females may be tempted to join the "class enemy," but, at least in *Unsere Töchter, die Nazinen,* they eventually come to their senses. Similar to Anna Seghers, Zur Mühlen connotes the propensity for Nazi membership with class identity and identifies the lower middle class as the stronghold of National Socialism. This assumption also prevails in Klaus Mann's social novel *Mephisto*, which centers on the chameleon-like figure of Hendrik Höfgen, a Socialist actor who turns Nazi. Initially the lover of an Afro-German performer, he ends up marrying an Aryan actress under the orders of high-ranking Nazis. Höfgen is the male counterpart of Zur Mühlen's lower-middle-class females. He is a man devoid of loyalty, whose affections are ultimately for sale. In the framework of Mann's novel, his shiftiness makes him a perfect addition to the Nazi elite, which Mann portrays as a corrupt, opportunistic, and, upon closer inspection, physically unattractive group. Mann's cast of Nazi figures is reminiscent of similar characters in Roth and Feuchtwanger.

Bertolt Brecht's theatrical vignettes, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches,* juxtapose working-class characters and potential antifascist activists with reprehensible Nazi characters, and cast the Nazi Party as a criminal organization. Brecht's Nazi figures differ in language and life-style but resemble each other in their disloyalty, greed, and cowardice. Brecht's proletarians and the character of a Jewish wife about to leave the country, on the other hand, are attributed genuine feelings and concern for each other. In Veza Canetti's novel *Die Schildkröten*, racial categories constitute the decisive factor in the destruction of Jewish life and Jewish diversity. In the end, all of the Jewish characters have to fear for their lives, and, after having been forced into overcrowded ghetto houses, their education, philosophy, and aspirations no longer matter. Canetti operates with the familiar negative Nazi stereotypes and, like Gertrud Kolmar, pays special attention to the function of race in Nazi politics. Her physical descriptions show her Jewish characters as individuals—some are "Jewish" looking, others are not—confronted by Nazi characters who call to mind the stock characters of racial science. The sophisticated dark-haired protagonist, Eva, is emblematic of the cosmopolitan, modern Vienna, in contrast to the uncivilized blonde, blue-eyed Frau Pilz, the wife of a sadistic SA-man. These characters denote the regression that the illegitimate Nazi regime forces upon Austria and exposes notions of German superiority as false. Marxist authors, too, provided physical descriptions of their characters, but mostly without correlating racial features with personality traits or politics. In some instances, the exterior is made to match the expected conduct; for example, in Seghers's *Ausflug der toten Mädchen.* The figure of Marianne, a fair-haired beauty, whose liberal fiancé died in the First World War, epitomizes the "Aryan" prototype. She ends up marrying a Nazi and later betrays her former classmates.

After 1945, it seemed that it would be impossible to establish continuity between the pre- and postwar literary culture, as indicated by concepts such as *Stunde Null* (zero hour), *Trümmerliteratur* (rubble literature), and *Kahlschlagliteratur* (clear-cutting literature). Authors in the Eastern and Western occupational zones called for radically antifascist ways of thinking and writing. In the West, the young generation attempted to break with tradition, and embraced the rigorous individualism of French Existentialism. East German authors and critics aimed at eradicating residues of National Socialism and reactionary class structures. East German cultural programs declared the aesthetics of German classical and Socialist Realist literature as normative for the cultural production.

A close look at Nazi characters in postwar writing makes it clear that the new beginnings which the young literary elite demanded were impossible to achieve. Chapter 3 of *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* begins by introducing three autobiographical texts by authors of different ages and levels of involvement with the Nazi regime to determine the responses of real people to the Allied victory and the changes required after the collapse of the Third Reich. The attitudes in the texts under discussion range from boastfulness, concealment, and denial, to shock and a willingness to learn the truth. The memoir of former Auschwitz Commandant Rudolf Höβ, written while he was imprisoned in Cracow, discloses the thoughts of a man on death row, when he has no reason to withhold information. In its defiant tone, Höβ's account harkens back to Hitler's life-story in *Mein Kampf.* Höβ describes himself as an individualist and a rebel, who remained loyal to Nazi Germany until the end. He takes pride in his record as a death camp commandant, and provides facts and figures for the killings he ordered. Throughout his memoir, he claims that he was motivated by his sense of duty and dismisses the notion that anti-Semitism or personal ambition played a role in his actions. The memoir of Marta Hillers, who lived comfortably under Nazi rule, stands in stark contrast to Höβ's "confessions." Hillers presents an extensive account of the fall and occupation of Berlin and her own experiences, but avoids discussing the Nazi regime and individual Nazis. She also keeps silent about her politics, but some of her casual observations reveal racist views and solidarity with the defeated Nazi collective, especially "our" men. Hillers's memoir implies a desire to escape the past without consequences or reform. In contrast, the wartime diary of young Ingeborg Bachmann, a school girl at the end of the war, manifests the impact of Nazi ideology on young people and the ordeal of adjusting to a new reality. Bachmann tries to be critical but does not elude the effects of Nazi indoctrination at home and in school. Her ignorance about the Third Reich and the Holocaust is obvious from her correspondence with a Jewish survivor. Her account provides insight into the mindset of a sheltered young woman who

realized that, after the world of her youth had been destroyed, she needed to question everything she had assumed to be true.

Höß's reticence, Hillers's concealment and denial, and Bachmann's naiveté are emblematic of the views and attitudes expressed in postwar literature, represented here by returning exile author Carl Zuckmayer's drama *Des Teufels General*, and the works of two war veterans, Wolfgang Borchert's radio play *Draußen vor der Tür* and Nobel Laureate Heinrich Böll's narrative *Der Zug war pünktlich.* The novel *Die größere Hoffnung* by Ilse Aichinger, a survivor of racial persecution, differs markedly from mainstream writings, which reveal varying degrees of attachment to the defeated Nazi state and its people. This is also the case in Aichinger, but her setting is the ethnically complex society of Vienna. Aichinger situates the split between past and presence, Nazi and Nazi victim, within one representative of this society. Her novel introduces Jewish and Nazi characters as members of the same family, illustrating the destruction of Austria's integrated society under Nazi occupation. The Nazi figures are distinguished from other Austrians by their uniforms *and* their boots. The narrator describes their demeanor as a combination of cruelty and cowardice, similar to the Nazi characters of Roth and Brecht. Aichinger's protagonist, as the child of an Austrian Nazi and a Jewish mother, cannot treat either group as distant and alien. She is associated with both, and although she condemns the Nazis' behavior, they are eerily familiar to her.

The discussions of the postwar texts presented here reveal that the early attempts to revise and repurpose Nazi characters in an effort to come to terms with the past were rarely successful. Most authors whose careers began before the Nazi era continued writing in their accustomed manner after the war. The following generations, despite the ambitious manifestos about new beginnings, had difficulties distancing themselves from the ideology and the jargon that had shaped their thinking in their younger years. In their efforts to produce a new literature, the representation of Nazi characters was a major problem. Nazi characters were close and familiar to the protagonists and narrators in mainstream writing, but the historical narratives of the postwar era configured them as enemies. Positive Nazi figures were not acceptable in the new German literature. The sense of uncertainty in the works of Borchert and Böll results from the general disorientation after the war. Only a few authors were intimately familiar with the Nazi mentality and the experience of the persecuted Jewish population. Aichinger tried to open perspectives into the segregated spheres of the Third Reich in her insightful and critical approach to Nazi figures.

Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature uncovers intertextualities between Nazi figures in different texts, from works of propaganda and

literary texts of the 1920s to examples from the 1950s. Nazi figures were imaginary and aspirational at their inception; they were derived from theoretical, scientific, and literary sources with the initial purpose to flesh out the claims of National Socialist programs and propaganda. The clashes between the political Right and the Left, National Socialists and Marxists, in the 1920s had a consolidating effect on the Nazi typology. The stereotypes deployed in propaganda and literature did not correspond to or represent real people, nor were they intended to do so. They functioned as ideological signifiers to indicate the trajectory of the given texts, and to persuade readers to embrace a particular political line by evoking desirable and undesirable scenarios.

After the war, the representational imbalance that favored positive Nazi characters in German texts ended. Nazi authors were eliminated from the market and popular Nazi era literature lost its appeal. The emerging right-wing publishers and revisionist papers served niche markets and were excluded from the public and academic discourse. In the long run, antifascist images of Nazis prevailed and superseded favorable revisionist versions of these characters. In their various figurations, Nazi characters have become permanent fixtures in the cultural imaginary. Each generation has responded to National Socialism in its own particular manner. Figures that Nazis might have considered embodiments of Germany's fascist utopia instilled horror in the opposition. Later, character constructs that would often be associated with an idyllic past by mainstream Germans and Austrians signaled the exact opposite to Nazi victims and their descendants. Toward the end of the twentieth century, Nazi figures in literature and film became increasingly uncoupled from history. As a cultural trope, the image of the Nazi has entered the mythical arena of the battle between good and evil that under different guises continues to play out in literature and film.

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