

Perceptions of Evil

A Comparison of Moral Perspectives in Nazi Propaganda and Anti-Nazi Literature

by

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Abstract

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This thesis examines how the concept of evil was understood by opposing German perspectives during the era of National Socialist rule (1933-1945). The rise of Nazism in Germany marked a period of massive political upheaval wherein the National Socialist government encouraged the masses to view the world in terms of a great struggle between forces of good and evil. This was the central theme of their propaganda, which zealously encouraged racist beliefs in the popular consciousness, and was based on assumptions of German superiority and Jewish evil. Despite Hitler's apparent success in creating an obedient nation, a significant number of Germans opposed his rule, amongst whom a small group of writers expressed their discontent through creative fiction. Through a comparison of the worldviews communicated through political propaganda and anti-Nazi literature, it is revealed that the crux of the divide between their opposing perspectives hinged on the meaning of evil.

Since evil is a concept with many meanings, this thesis approaches the subject thematically. The comparison begins by focusing on the perception of evil as an all-corrupting force that had taken hold of Germany, followed by an exploration of how power and brutality were understood, ending with a comparison of views on how the struggle between good and evil took place on both a social and individual level.

In addition to demonstrating the subjectivity of moral perspective during a

tumultuous period of the recent past, this research reveals how the struggle against Nazism existed as a conflict of ideas. Moreover, the comparison of cultural sources (including Nazi art, visual propaganda, written texts such as *Mein Kampf*, and anti-Nazi creative fiction) demonstrates the value of art as a tool for conducting historical enquiry. Since the legacy of the Third Reich continues to directly influence modern perceptions of evil, exploring how evil was understood according to contemporary Germans – from both pro and anti-Nazi perspectives – is of particular historical interest.

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Introduction

Evil is a concept that has evolved through time with the rise and decline of every great civilization, and affects our basic understanding of what it means to be human. Through the intercession of moral judgement on an otherwise objective reality, the meaning of evil also shapes our understanding of reality, which in turn influences perceptions of the past. Since the biases of history have always used notions of evil to vilify the opposing forces of any political conflict, it is essential to remain mindful of the differences in perspective that inform how different groups are portrayed. This is particularly true of the Second World War, which was driven largely by divergent ideological beliefs. In Germany alone, political conflict between the fascists and their opponents had been intense throughout the Nazis' rise to power, and would continue after 1933 until the end of Hitler's dictatorship.

Belief in evil as a real and immediate danger which threatened to overwhelm and destroy society was an essential component of both the Nazi and anti-Nazi perspectives. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the competing notions of good and evil that were expressed through culture during the Third Reich, as revealed by Nazi propaganda and anti-Nazi literary fiction. This comparison demonstrates that the conflict of worldviews which existed between the Nazis and their literary opponents hinged on differences in moral outlook, as opposed to political or ideological differences.

The racial component of the Nazi worldview, which stemmed from long-established traditions in modern European thought, can be summarized as a belief that race was the basis for humanity's struggle for survival, and that the Jews were an entirely evil people whose sole ambition was for the enslavement of humanity. Thus, the National Socialist movement was presented in its simplest terms as a struggle for survival between

forces good and evil. By contrast, critics of Hitler's rule attributed the primary cause of suffering in German society to the destructive effects of Nazi political extremism. Since opposition stemmed from a variety of perspectives and took many forms, there is no single ideological basis by which anti-Nazi feeling can be accurately summarized. By focusing on anti-Nazi authors as a specific group in German society who made use of literature as their mode of communication, a panorama of views that challenged the Nazi perspective is revealed, demonstrating common themes that likened the struggle against Nazism to a conflict between good and evil.

Historiography

In the domain of thought and feeling, the new extremes of modern warfare and the horrors of genocide brought on by the Second World War had a profound impact on human self-perception and the associated meaning of good and evil. An example of this can be found in Hannah Arendt's influential work, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1964). Since existing perceptions of human behaviour could not explain Nazi crimes adequately, Arendt argues for the need to reexamine the meaning of evil.¹ According to her view, the perpetrators of Nazi crimes were predominantly ordinary men driven by banal motives, such as the desire to succeed professionally and solve bureaucratic problems, and should not be viewed as different from the rest of humanity for their supposed malevolence or insanity. A more recent example which builds on Arendt's conclusions is found in Susan Neiman's history of the philosophy of evil (*Evil in Modern Thought*). According to Neiman, the existence of Auschwitz in modern times defied the limits of imagination and

¹ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 272, 278-279.

shattered pre-existing notions of humanity, indicating a fundamental flaw in Western civilization.² Accordingly, one of the most shocking revelations Neiman attributes to the Holocaust is the capacity for ordinary people to willingly participate in genocide.³

The close association between modern perceptions of evil and atrocities committed during the Second World War is also reflected in the historiography pertaining to this era. A question that is central to many of the debates surrounding investigations into Nazi crimes stems from an interest in evil, as the precise nature of guilt and the motivation behind atrocities remain two of the most divisive issues. This is primarily (though not exclusively) centred around the Holocaust, regarding which the Intentionalist and Functionalist schools of thought are the two most prevalent. Intentionalist historians view the Holocaust as a direct result of the Nazi leadership's plan to kill the Jews, and in some cases blames the German people for adopting radical Antisemitism. Conversely, Functionalist historians typically view responsibility for the Holocaust in broad terms as a result of social context, and argue that its cause was primarily a result of the functionality of the Nazi state as a system which had an enormous influence on the decision making process of individuals.⁴

In relation to the meaning of evil, Intentionalist historians tend to assign guilt more exclusively than their counterparts, an example of this being demonstrated by historian Daniel Goldhagen in *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1997). In this work, Goldhagen examines one of the special police battalions who were responsible for carrying out the execution of Jews during the early phases of the Holocaust, arguing that

² Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 252-262, 272-277.

³ Ibid, 238-252.

⁴ Richard Bessel, "Functionalists vs. Intentionalists: The Debate Twenty Years on or Whatever Happened to Functionalism and Intentionalism?" *German Studies Review*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Feb., 2003): 15.

for such perpetrators there were no moral obstacles to be overcome, and that ordinary Germans were self-motivated to commit murder according to their deeply rooted belief in “demonological Antisemitism.”⁵ This argument is in direct opposition to an earlier study on the same group of perpetrators by historian Christopher Browning (*Ordinary Men*, 1992), in which he argues that individuals were often led to murder Jewish civilians *despite* deep feelings of moral revulsion and without threat of real punishment. This, he concludes, resulted from a variety of influences on individual behaviour, foremost amongst which was the social pressure to conform to group behaviour, to appear manly and without weakness, and to aid one's comrades in carrying out orders.⁶

A crucial difference between these arguments hinges on their respective view of the perpetrators as either ordinary or extraordinary men. While Goldhagen does not go so far as to claim the perpetrators were simply demonic and evil, his analysis does run from a premise that the Germans of the Third Reich were fundamentally different from the rest of humanity.⁷ By contrast, Browning presents the perpetrators as ordinary men whose decision making process was heavily influenced by their social context, with the implication that any group of people placed under similar circumstances would behave similarly.⁸

The differences between these views are also reflected in the primary sources used for this research. While projections of the Nazi worldview reflect Goldhagen's argument by demonstrating messages of deep and abiding hatred for Jews, the anti-Nazi worldview

5 Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, (New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House Inc., 1997), 9-14, 392.

6 Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, (New York: Harper-Collins, 1998), 170-175.

7 Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, 27-28.

8 Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 159.

exhibited through literature lends support to Browning's arguments by suggesting perpetrators were morally conflicted.

Though responding to the Intentionalist-Functionalist debate is not the primary objective of this research, it is noteworthy that the historiographical legacy of Nazism is intimately bound to the same questions of evil and human nature as were given expression during Hitler's reign. Additionally, out of consideration for the historians who refute Goldhagen's views⁹ and in agreement with the Functionalist school generally, this thesis relies primarily on the writings of such historians as Hans Mommsen, Martin Broszat, Hannah Arendt, Götz Aly, Robert Gellately, and Christopher Browning for historical contextualization.

Antisemitism and European racist thought

To examine the Nazi worldview, a background understanding of European racist thought is essential. As a system of beliefs, the emergence of Nazism was not a spontaneous phenomenon; rather it was the result of a long progression in scientific, political, and religious thought that drew on influences from across the European continent.

According to George L. Moss' *Towards the Final Solution*, modern racism grew out of the Enlightenment era's combination of scientific reason and Christian evangelism, which gradually evolved towards Antisemitism, culminating with the Nazis and the

9 Christopher Browning criticizes Goldhagen for focusing on a limited view of the perpetrators to fit his arguments, for offering an insufficient explanation for the Holocaust (that it was more than a matter of irrational Jew-hatred), and for underestimating the coercive environment of a totalitarian dictatorship. Other historians, such as Alexander Groth, point out that Goldhagen's arguments run the risk of demonizing the Germans to such a degree that he implies the rest of humanity was incapable of similar acts. Christopher R. Browning, "Ordinary Men or Ordinary Germans," *Unwilling Germans: The Goldhagen Debate*, (ed.) Robert R. Shandley, translated by Jeremiah Riemer, Minneapolis (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 55-66; Alexander J. Groth, "Demonizing the Germans: Goldhagen and Gellately on Nazism," *The Political Science Reviewer*, 118-119, (online) http://www.mmisi.org/pr/32_01/groth.pdf (January 4, 2012).

Holocaust. During the period of colonial expansion (from the 16th century to the late 19th and early 20th centuries), it was not uncommon for Europeans to view indigenous non-Western people with fascination as embodiments of a 'primitive' ideal that was supposedly more natural, innocent, and noble than themselves; however, this soon gave way to negative stereotypes of 'savages' and a return of focus to the classical age as the standard for physical and moral ideals.¹⁰ Scientific studies of the physical differences between races (pioneered by such notables as anatomist Peter Camper (1722-1789) and physiognomist Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801)) were based on subjective standards of beauty for racial classification that drew inspiration from the art of antiquity; this combination of aesthetics with science heightened the importance of outer appearances as a measure of worth. An inadvertent contribution to race theory was made by Charles Darwin (1809-1882), who introduced the concepts of natural selection and evolution, as well as the idea of nature being governed by an all-encompassing struggle for survival.¹¹ This, in conjunction with Sir Francis Galton's (1822-1911) theory of "eugenic worth,"¹² set the stage for 'social Darwinism' and modern 'scientific' racism in Europe.¹³

Another characteristic of race theory leading towards Nazism was the addition of mystical qualities to perceptions of race, which emerged out of 19th century attempts to define national characters. Conservative advocate Comte Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) contributed significantly to this field by reinterpreting studies of linguistics and anthropology to present race as the determining factor in the past, present, and future of

10 George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1997), 8-11.

11 Charles Darwin, "On the Races of Man," *The Descent of Man and Selections in Relation to Sex*, 2nd ed., (London: J. Murray, 1901, Online), 169-185.

12 Eugenics: the idea that desirable or undesirable human traits could be passed on by one generation to another.

13 Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 22-26, 72-75; Francis Galton, "Eugenics, its Definition, Scope and Aims," *Essays in Eugenics*, (London: The Eugenics Education Society, 1909), 35-43.

civilization.¹⁴ In conjunction with this, newly formed nation-states searched their histories for common roots in order to build their national identity, resulting in the emergence of 'outsiders' whose 'race' did not belong. In addition, the mythic character of race was furthered significantly by the pan-Slavic and pan-Germanic movements, which, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, made use of national mythologies as a basis for imperialist expansion.¹⁵

The drive for national identity and centrality of race led some to theorize that it was the governing factor behind all human relations, including Comte Georges Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936). He venerated Greek (specifically Spartan) culture as the ideal society, basing much of his reasoning on physical traits, and applied the Darwinian logic of natural selection to human beings, concluding with an apocalyptic view of the future in which the physically and spiritually inferior Jews fatally undermined the Aryans¹⁶ through racial contamination. Another advocate of this view was Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954), a Viennese publicist who advocated for the initiation of human breeding programs to create an Aryan super race, as well as the extermination or enslavement of the lesser 'animalistic' peoples. These expressions of modern racism combined the scientific concepts of racial biology with the mysticism of the evangelist, spiritualist, and mythic-nationalist movements of the late 19th century, and were the direct predecessors to Nazism.¹⁷

Antisemitism itself has a long and complicated history, and many of the modern

14 Comte Arthur de Gobineau, "The Inequality of Races," *Selected Political Writings*, (ed.) Michael D. Biddiss, (London: Jonathan Cape, 109-143.

15 Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 48-54; Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 291, 300-302, 306, 312.

16 A term with various meanings, 'Aryan' is used here to refer to Hitler's Nordic-inspired physical ideal of blond, strong, tall, blue-eyed, and fair-skinned Caucasians.

17 Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 58-61, 94-95, 99.

themes linking Jews to evil stemmed from medieval fears which were adapted in the 19th century to reflect modern anxieties. One of the most common fears utilized by the Nazis was the supposed international Jewish conspiracy which blamed the Jews for all-manner of anxieties linked to modern society.¹⁸

Social resentment against the Jews was aggravated when economic hardships and financial scandals inspired a rise in anti-banking sentiment that was easily transferred to the Jews. Hannah Arendt argues that the Jews were hated for possessing undeserved wealth, an idea passed on from their historic role as financial backers to the nobility, a function which had diminished significantly since industrialization resulting in a contemptuous perception of the Jews as social parasites who did not deserve their wealth.¹⁹

This tradition of European racist thought was essential to the development of the Nazi worldview, without which their notions of Antisemitism, Aryan supremacy, natural law, and race struggle could not have existed. Moreover, the basis in scientific study from which modern racism sprang lent Nazi propagandists an appearance of legitimacy in the public eye.

Propaganda and culture during the Third Reich

Propaganda was an essential component of the Third Reich, and serves as material evidence of the Nazis worldview. The importance of propaganda to Hitler's strategy is reflected through his pronouncement in *Mein Kampf* that the first task of the Party

¹⁸ Ibid, 113-118, 152-153.

¹⁹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 12-14, 26, 32-33, 51, 74-76.

organization was to spread propaganda in order to produce more supporters.²⁰ Though Hitler bore considerable contempt for the masses, he also recognized the necessity of earning their support, and to this end, controlling information and the means of public communication was key.²¹ Shortly after Hitler's rise to power, the German free press was purged of supposed dissidents and brought under the collective control of the state Propaganda Ministry, which issued news directives and ready-made opinions at daily press conferences. Under Hitler's guidance, Nazi propagandists appropriated existing institutions and spread their Party's ideology using every available mode of communication (including: newspapers, magazines, public wall posters, film, literature, visual art, radio, and educational materials). Hitler's chief propagandist, Joseph Goebbels, was placed at the head of the Reich Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda, and had thousands of employees as well as dozens of branch offices under his control. Otto Dietrich, who was notable for the frequency of his direct communication with Hitler, was another prominent propagandist in charge of Germany's National News Agency, and often came into conflict with Goebbels.²²

The intended outcome of the Nazi propaganda campaign was to control the opinion and attitude of the masses to the extent that they should demonstrate absolute obedience and feel justified in carrying out political actions for the state. Political theorist Jacques Ellul observes that creating justifications for action was one of the primary functions of propaganda, to the extent that it amounted to a refusal by the propagandist to

20 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, John Chamberlain (et. al.), (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940), 851.

21 Hitler demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of how to manipulate public opinion, and set many of the guidelines for his propagandists to follow, including the importance of appealing to emotion over reason, of favouring the use of simple phrases over complex political concepts, of the importance of message repetition, and of framing propaganda in the right context (that their own propaganda was a form of 'education' and good, while enemy propaganda was 'agitation' and bad.) Randal Bytwerk, *Bending Spines: The Propaganda of Nazi Germany and the German Democratic Republic*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2004), 42-43.

22 Ibid, 18, 24-25, 59-64.

admit the possibility of being wrong. This also served to nullify the anxiety of responsibility attached to freedom of choice by fostering in the public an impression that there was only a single course of action for them to follow.²³

According to Ellul, the ultimate goal of propagandists during the Third Reich was to achieve “total propaganda,” which entails a system of complete control over all forms of media and communication, leaving “no part of the intellectual or emotional life alone.”²⁴ With total propaganda, public opinion becomes 'crystalized' as a fixed or standard mode of thought, in which all forms of nuance and variety in opinion gradually fade.²⁵ To achieve this end, a diversity of propaganda sources would be required, even when the underlying meaning of those sources were the same.²⁶

This included cultural works, such as art, architecture, literature and film. As a special form of sociological propaganda, these types of media had the potential to act as a major influence on public opinion by strategically encouraging the masses to adopt ideas and attitudes that matched the political interests of the state. In this way, Ellul describes cultural propaganda as covert in form and general in focus, helping to establish the pretext for Nazi rule and conditioning the public to accept Party demands.²⁷

The appropriation of culture by the Nazi state followed a similar process as had occurred with Germany's news-media, enforcing obedience and excluding or repressing 'undesirable' artists from professional life. This was achieved through the Party's control over professional employment in Germany's cultural sphere by requiring membership in

23 Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, (New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, 1973), 155-159.

24 Ibid, 9-10.

25 Ibid, 204-205.

26 Ibid, 102-104.

27 Ibid, 15, 64-66.

the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture, established in 1933 under the authority of Joseph Goebbels to deal specifically with the arts and cultural media). This enabled the Party to selectively eliminate undesirable artists from their respective fields. Additionally, conservative artistic societies – such as the German Art Society and the Combat League for German Culture – aided in the process of cultural Nazification by promoting traditional motifs as 'true art' and combating the influence of modernism. Before 1933, German art had been diverse and internally competitive, but after Nazism's intrusion into cultural life, much of the richness and diversity of German culture faded.²⁸

The appropriation of art was presented by the state as a defence of classical ideals,²⁹ a fact which was reflected in Nazi art that adopted Greco-Roman themes. At the same time, modernist artists were condemned as degenerate, and their works were used as evidence of the corruption that had befallen society. Hitler felt that a total purge of culture from its 'non-German' elements was a necessity for the creation of a pure Germanic utopia.³⁰ In the struggle between races for survival, culture was to function as a key indicator of racial worth, demonstrating a people's relative value as culture bearers (Europeans), culture founders (Germans), or culture destroyers (Jews).³¹ Of Jewish artists, Hitler argued their talent was only evidence of trickery, that their race was incapable of creating 'true art', and that the Jews were responsible for all forms of cultural degradation.³²

28 Alan E. Steinweis, "The Nazi Purge of German Artistic and Cultural Life," *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, eds. Robert Gellately and Nathan Stolfus, (New Jersey; Oxfordshire (UK): Princeton University Press, 2001), 100-103.

29 As Hitler states: "The struggle that rages today involves very great aims: a culture fights for its existence, which combines millenniums and embraces Hellenism and Germany together." (Quoted in) George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural, and Social Life in the Third Reich*, (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1968), 11.

30 Hitler states: "This cleansing of our culture must be extended to all fields. Theatre, art, literature, cinema, posters, and window displays must be cleansed of all manifestations of our rotting world and placed in the service of a moral, political and cultural idea." (Quoted in) J. A. Mangan, "Icon of Monumental Brutality: Art and the Aryan Man," *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1999), 130.

31 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 398.

32 Adolf Hitler, (November 5, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944, His Private Conversations*, New Updated Edition, eds. H. R.

Nazi theory and visual propaganda as primary sources

The selection of sources for this research was conducted with the aim of contrasting Nazi and anti-Nazi perspectives using similar modes of expression. To demonstrate the Nazi worldview, this thesis draws from a combination of theory and visual propaganda. Accordingly, the writings and statements of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels are heavily relied upon as two of the Party's leading theoreticians. In conjunction with this, visual Propaganda is used as a reflection of Nazi ideals, including such examples as the documentary-style films of Leni Riefenstahl, the sculptural works of Arno Breker and Josef Thorak, the paintings of Adolf Ziegler, and the portrayals of 'evil' in the public news media, including illustrations, cartoons, and public news-posters.

Visual propaganda was a preferred medium for Nazi propagandists because it was readily available to the masses through public display and was capable of expressing complex meanings in an appealing simplified form. As a result of these considerations, art and culture were drawn into the Nazis' race struggle as a tool for furthering the Nationalist cause, and as a reflection of their greatest concerns.³³ The use of visual propaganda as a source has the advantage of adopting the same media for historical analysis which was used to influence German audiences during Hitler's reign. However, it is important to distinguish the ideas presented through propaganda from the real motives of contemporary people, which were not necessarily the same.³⁴ Since a primary objective of propaganda was to establish in the public a set of desirable preconditioned responses

Tevor-Roper and Gerhard L. Weinberg, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens, (New York: Enigma Books, 2008), 91.

33 Jeffery Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 29-33.

34 As an example of this concern, Christopher Browning mentions ideological propaganda as a likely influence on the behaviour of Holocaust perpetrators, but questions the degree to which it had real impact on the decisions being made by individuals, concluding that if ideological propaganda did have a direct impact, it would have been but one of several contributing factors. Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 159-175.

that corresponded to political objectives, its function can be understood as the fabrication of motive by the state, but the degree of its success is the subject of debate. In this vein, propaganda should be interpreted according to various levels of meaning, including the “usual meaning” (propaganda's overt properties), the “intended meaning” (what message the propagandist wanted to convey), and the “comprehended meaning” (how propaganda was understood by its audience).³⁵ Since this research is primarily concerned with the Nazis' worldview, analysis has focused on the the intended and usual meanings of propaganda.

German literature and anti-Nazi authors

In opposition to the Nazi worldview are the anti-Nazi authors who managed to give voice to criticism through works of literary fiction. For these writers, the context of Germany's cultural appropriation by the state was a key influence on their vision of society.

The appropriation of literature was just one part of Germany's Nazification, which began with massive purges of 'undesirable' authors and intellectuals from professional life. Academic Antisemitism actually preceded Hitler's acquisition of power, with over three quarters of Prussian university students voting in 1927 to form a university government that strictly excluded non-Aryans.³⁶ The 'cleansing' of German literature reached a climax during the massive public book burning demonstrations of April 20 – May 10, 1933. The burnings, which accompanied a purge of academic staff, were carried

³⁵ Alexander L. George, *Propaganda Analysis: The Study of Inferences Made From Propaganda in WWII*, (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1959), 77, 107-115.

³⁶ Roland Taylor, *Literature and Society in Germany 1918-1945*, Brighton, (Sussex; Totowa, New Jersey: The Harvester Press; Barnes & Noble Books, 1980), 28.

out in front of university libraries across Germany with apparent festive enthusiasm.³⁷

They were carefully orchestrated affairs, involving ritualistic declarations by students as books were added to the fire in a symbolic gesture of German cultural purification.³⁸

Marxist writers were driven from literary occupations by anti-communist laws implemented following the Reichstag fire, which also abolished constitutional rights and led to the arrest of nearly 5000 supposed dissidents.³⁹ Jews were steadily driven from their professions everywhere, culminating in the 1935 Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, which brought writers, publishers, book shops, and libraries under national control and excluded Jews from related fields of employment.⁴⁰

The purge of literature was accompanied by efforts to draw respected German authors into the Nazi organizational fold. For example, after dissidents were removed from the Prussian Academy of Arts (including its director, Heinrich Mann), the remaining twenty-seven governing members were asked to sign declarations of loyalty, amongst whom eighteen complied.⁴¹ Other institutions were combined into the newly established *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (one of seven departments in Joseph Goebbels' Reich Chamber of Culture), including the *Börsenverein für den deutschen Buchhandel* and Reich Association of German Writers.⁴²

In addition to gaining control over authors, the Nazis attempted to use literature as

37 J. M. Ritchie, *German Literature under National Socialism*, (London; Canberra; Totowa NJ: Croom Helm and Barnes & Noble Books, 1983), 66-69.

38 A few examples of the declarations that accompanied book burnings: "Against class struggle and materialism, for solidarity of the people and an idealistic outlook on life! I surrender to the flames the writings of Marx and Kautsky [...] Against the over-evaluation of instinctual urges that destroy the soul, for the nobility of the soul! I surrender to the flames the writings of Sigmund Freud [...] Against literary betrayal of the soldiers of the World War, for the education of the people in the spirit of truthfulness! I surrender to the flames the writings of Erich Maria Remarque." Egbert Krispyn, *Anti-Nazi Writers in Exile*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 21.

39 Ibid, 16-17.

40 Ritchie, *German Literature under National Socialism*, 65.

41 Krispyn, *Anti-Nazi Writers in Exile*, 14, 18.

42 Ritchie, *German Literature under National Socialism*, 71.

a form of propaganda to demonstrate the cultural tenacity of the new Germany. This aim was never fully achieved, for pro-Nazi literature never blossomed as an art the way authorities might have hoped. For this reason, the Nazis (and Hitler in particular) regarded literature with disdain as the product of intellectuals who were out of touch with reality, and viewed it in general terms as an inferior form of propaganda.⁴³

In response to the repression of literature in Germany, many of the nation's most respected authors fled into exile.⁴⁴ The flight from Germany presented an enormous challenge to authors who were not only separated from the security of their professional lives and family, but from the German-speaking readers they depended on.⁴⁵ Because these authors were widely dispersed, most were not able to collaborate with each other and faced the struggles of life in exile alone.⁴⁶ Despite considerable hardship, they were at least able to write with relative freedom and managed to produce a number of highly critical anti-Nazi works.

For authors who remained in Germany, the alternatives to producing propaganda literature included strict neutrality, silence, or “inner-emigration.”⁴⁷ Some of these authors sought to subvert the system of censorship by writing coded social criticisms using vague references and suggested meanings; what literary historian Egbert Krispyn calls the

43 As an example, Hitler writes: “For let it be said to all knights of the pen and to all the political dandies, especially of today: the greatest changes in this world have never yet been brought about by a goose quill! [...] the power which set the greatest historical avalanches of political and religious nature sliding was, from the beginning of time, the magic force of the spoken word alone [...] [as opposed to] the lemonade-like outpourings of aestheticizing *literati* and drawing-room heroes.” Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 136.

44 Krispyn, *Anti-Nazi Writers in Exile*, 19.

45 After the war, famed author Golo Mann described the unique nature of this challenge, stating: “Science is international. So are commerce and trade in general, but literature is closely bound up with one's language and the innumerable experiences and references attached to that language.” Golo Mann, “Exile and the Present Day,” *Exile Literature 1933-1945*, (Bad Godesberg: Inter Nationes, 1968), 37.

46 An example can be found in the contrast between two schools of thought: Dutch writer Menno ter Braak argued that exiles should be politically engaged and write more than pleasing literature, while on the other hand, author Ludwig Marcuse argued it was pointless to advocate for authors to act or write in a particular way, because they were not a unified movement and could only act according to the allowances of their individual circumstances. Krispyn, *Anti-Nazi Writers in Exile*, 37-39.

47 A term coined by author Frank Thiess to describe the intellectual attempt to maintain one's spiritual integrity by deliberately retreating from the contemporary world as a result of one's inability or unwillingness to emigrate after 1933. Taylor, *Literature and Society in Germany 1918-1945*, 266.

“slave language” of the inner-emigrants.⁴⁸ The problem here was that the hidden meanings had to be hinted at with enough subtlety to pass the scrutiny of Nazi censors, yet remain clear to a reading audience. As a result, non-exile authors were accused after the war of falsifying or exaggerating their claims of covert opposition. In return, exile writers were criticized for not understanding the true reality of life under Nazi rule.⁴⁹

Despite their disunity, moral objections against Nazism were widely shared in all segments of the anti-Nazi literary world, including exiles, non-exiles, socialists, conservatives, Jews, and non-Jews alike. The critical worldviews of authors were exhibited through their works, and because Hitler's reign had upset the lives of so many, a considerable portion of their creative efforts were directed against his regime. Just as the world conflict with Nazism developed politically, Hitler's Third Reich was challenged in the literary world by a diversity of writers who did not share his vision, and in this way, anti-Nazi literature should be viewed as a form of resistance.

Literature as historical document

The portrayal of Nazism in literature is a subject with its own historiography which draws from the related controversies surrounding artistic depictions of the Holocaust. A leading voice in this discourse is that of cultural theorist Theodor Adorno, whose famous statement, “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,” reflects a belief that art was incapable of representing the true nature of Nazi crimes. According to this view, artists who depicted such atrocities as the Holocaust ran the risk of exploiting

⁴⁸ Krispyn, *Anti-Nazi Writers in Exile*, 114.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 151-155.

victims by applying invented meanings to the suffering of others.⁵⁰ By contrast, Jewish-Italian Holocaust survivor, Primo Levi, viewed the task of 'bearing witness' to the past as an obligation for survivors of genocide, despite the inherent failings of imagination and memory that impedes our ability to accurately represent the past.⁵¹

The problem posed by literature as a corrupting influence on memory is given focus by historian Saul Friedländer, who argues that depictions of the Third Reich appearing in post-war German literature had begun to rewrite the historical narrative in a more bearable light that shifted responsibility away from perpetrators. Specifically, Friedländer takes issue with the heroic *Frontkämpfer* archetype of post-war German fiction, which contrasts the stalwart and un-ideological Wehrmacht soldier against the evil Waffen-SS, a paradigm which overlooks much of the involvement of the German army in atrocities. Also at issue is the equivocation of Nazi crimes with Allied atrocities, such as those committed by the Red Army or the bombing of German cities. During the Cold War, such narratives served to shift responsibility away from the Germans to the Bolsheviks, who were burdened with responsible for having invented modern political extremism.⁵²

Regarding the distinction between narrative fiction and actual witness testimony, James E. Young argues that since all reconstructions of the past are “inevitably fictionalized by any narrative that gives them form,” it is possible for documentary fiction to impart the same evidence as witness testimony, and that the difference between narrative types is primarily one of form. Nevertheless, he also notes that the difference

50 Theodor Adorno, “Commitment,” *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 779-780.

51 (Cited in) Nancy Wood, “The Holocaust: Historical Memories and Contemporary Identities,” *Media, Culture & Society*, (July 1991), 13 (3), 363.

52 Saul Friedländer, “Historical Writing and the Memory of the Holocaust,” *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. Berel Lang, (New York: Homes & Meier, 1988), 72-75.

between literary forms is of great significance, because what is remembered hinges on how it is represented.⁵³ Taking a broad view human culture, theorist Raymond Williams argues that literature and all forms of art should be considered foremost as a type of specialized communication ideally suited to expressing ideas about certain facets of reality, and should not be regarded as special in relation to other types of communication.⁵⁴

In approaching literary sources for this thesis, creative fiction is regarded primarily as a form of communication that seeks to document aspects of reality that were of particular importance to authors, and is used to explore how life in the Third Reich was understood according to contemporary Germans. Literature also provides a suitable contrast to Nazi propaganda, which, like the ideas imparted through creative fiction, was the product of a critically engaged and subjective worldview. In this way, anti-Nazi literature can be compared with Nazi sources as a competing form of propaganda, though literature lacked the organizational structure and means of production provided to Nazi propagandists. In principle, both perspectives were responding against perceived injustices that were thought to be responsible for causing hardship in German society, and sought to promote a specific system of values as their remedy.

In examining the anti-Nazi perspective, the literary output of fourteen writers are examined, including fourteen novels, four plays, four short stories, and one novella. The scope of these sources is defined by the ability and need of authors to create critical works, most of which were created during Hitler's reign. Several, however, were

53 James E. Young, "Holocaust Documentary Fiction: The Novelist as Eyewitness," *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. Berel Lang, (New York: Homes & Meier, 1988), 211-213.

54 Williams argues that the influence of organization and tradition have made art into an an incredibly complex system of meanings, which in all its forms (literature, dance, music, architecture, visual art, film, etc.) remain tied to the sphere of communication. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, revised edition, (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 22-24, 34.

produced following the collapse of the Third Reich, extending as far as 1950; these sources were included in research out of consideration for the difficulties authors faced in producing material and having them published within the same time-frame as the Nazi regime.

For the analysis of sources, special consideration was made for the individual circumstances under which authors produced their works. The immediate context of a sources could have a significant impact on its form and content, as exhibited by the differences between exile and non-exile literature. While the purpose of this thesis is not to describe the biographical background of individual authors' lives, such details as upbringing, political orientation, relation to the Nazi Party, religious belief, and gender could have a significant impact on the meaning invested into works.

Approach

In approaching examples of Nazi propaganda and anti-Nazi literature as historical documents, it is the aim of this thesis to identify how sources demonstrate historical worldview, how these worldviews compare against each other, and where the focus of conflict between them resides. Each chapter consists of a comparison based on specified themes relating to the meaning of evil, with the aim of demonstrating the similarities and differences between them in terms of form and meaning.

The first chapter examines how notions of evil can be directed towards entirely different subjects, yet relate to common fears. This is demonstrated through the perception of evil as an intangible all-corrupting force that permeates society. In anti-Nazi literature, this relates to the Nazification of Germany and the spread of ideology which

resulted in a corruption of basic notions of moral decency. The parallel Nazi perspective identifies a similar form of evil through the omnipresence of the 'Jewish conspiracy', which derived its power from lies and corrupted society at all levels. Though each worldview identifies an entirely dissimilar source of evil, the similarities in form suggest an underlying common ground of moral belief between Nazi supporters and their opponents, with which both perspectives sought to communicate.

Chapter two highlights differences in worldview through the examination of a subject that is common to both perspectives, focusing on how power in the Third Reich was perceived and represented. The anti-Nazi view identifies the power of the state as a key attribute of evil in the Third Reich, which was overwhelming, totally corrupt, and responsible for enormous pain and suffering. This theme is situated in relation to the historical context of Hitler's ascent to power, the cult of supporters who celebrated his image, the Nazis' brutal repression of opposition, and the widespread persecution of 'outsiders'. In contrast, the Nazi perspective demonstrates an admiration for strength as the one true measure of human worth, and accepts brutality as a honest reflection of natural law. While the power of the Third Reich appears in anti-Nazi literature as the purest embodiment of evil, the Nazi view regarded that same power as critical to holding evil at bay and preserving the race.

In chapter three, focus shifts to the impact of Nazism on German society, and pays particular attention to the motives of ordinary people as supporters or opponents of Hitler's regime. While anti-Nazi literature identifies the factors which led ordinary people to overcome their moral objections and lend support to the regime, the Nazi perspective presents the various reasons why the masses should want to lend their support voluntarily

based on the nobility and justice of their cause. Conversely, resistance against evil is presented by authors as a personal struggle for individual freedom, or by propagandists as a collective struggle to prevent mass-annihilation in the event of military defeat.

Conclusions drawn from these comparisons show that between the differing perspectives of state propaganda and narrative fiction, perceptions of good and evil were the central issues of conflict between Nazi and anti-Nazi worldviews. By focusing on the political ideas and perceptions of humanity that were manifested through cultural works, the intellectual conflict that surrounded the Nazi movement is revealed as a moral disagreement between the advocates and opponents of National Socialism.

As with any historical investigation, there are obstacles and limitations which have hindered this research. Foremost amongst these has been my lack German language skills. For this reason, I have been forced to rely on works which exist in an English translated format, and to take into consideration the variations which can occur between an original work and its translation, particularly with regards to style. Additionally, some works I knew to be valuable could only be found in their original German format, such as Anna Gmeyner's *Manja*, and Klaus Mann's *Der Vulkan*. There is an enormous amount of research which can still be done on this topic for which a proper grasp of the German language would be an enormous asset.

CHAPTER 1

The All-Encompassing Form of Evil

After Adolf Hitler was elected Reich Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the Weimar Republic came to an end and German society became dominated by the extreme ideology of the National Socialist worldview. To Hitler, the Jews were responsible for society's every hardship, and his 1933 political victory was presented accordingly as a triumph of good over evil. In relation to this view, propaganda played a key role in the success of the Nazi state, which through its combination with brute force enabled the new government to silence criticism and procure mass obedience to great effect.

It is with regard to this stifling of opposition that the views of Anti-Nazi authors are of significance. Though the impact of their literature on Germany was minimal due to heavy censorship, they provide a glimpse into the worldview of individual Germans who opposed the Nazi regime during the 1930s and 40s. Despite the fact authors represent a great variety of differing perceptions, a common characteristic of their criticism holds the Nazis responsible for the complete corruption of Germany's basic values. Nazism is presented in these terms as an all-encompassing threat that accosted the individual psychologically (or spiritually) as well as physically.

For both the Nazi and anti-Nazi sources, evil was presented as an all-encompassing force that entirely saturated society, yet remained hidden from public awareness. For the Nazis, this was represented by the 'international Jewish conspiracy', against which they declared it was their mission to spread Antisemitic belief and expose the Jewish menace before public scrutiny. Conversely, anti-Nazi authors took aim at the intangible threats posed by the Nazis, and attributed them with an unprecedented capacity

to influence thought and distort truth, culminating in the complete perversion of justice and inversion of meaning between good and evil. Both Nazi propagandists and anti-Nazi authors present the root of their struggle as a conflict of beliefs in which the meaning of evil played a key role.

Nazi belief and the omnipresence of Jewish evil

In both visual and written propaganda, there is a consistent preoccupation in Nazi ideology with the problem of evil as it relates to the menace of the supposed 'international Jewish conspiracy'. In many respects, the Nazi worldview was centred on the Jews, who were presented as an all-pervasive, entirely corrupt, and innately evil menace. Since the Jews were said to be masters of deception and camouflage, it was argued that visual propaganda was essential to the Nazis' effort of exposing the monstrous 'true form' of Jewish evil.

The Ideology of Antisemitism

Compared with other revolutionary political movements, Nazi ideology was relatively simplistic. Besides their racist beliefs, ardent nationalism, and celebration of 'volkish' traditions, their movement was driven largely by the will of Adolf Hitler.⁵⁵ This does not mean ideology was unimportant to the Nazis, but rather, that the strength of National Socialism relied heavily on the charisma and beliefs of its leader.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich*, trans. John W. Hiden, (New York: Longman Group, 1981), 29.

⁵⁶ Martin Broszat suggests this weak ideology and central unity based on Hitler's character was the reason the National Socialist movement was more unified and less prone to 'splitting' than its Marxist and Socialist competitors.

Hitler believed human beings were governed by unalterable laws of nature, as reflected through racial stereotypes and the parallels drawn between humans and the behaviour of animals. According to this view, every race was inferior to the Europeans, of whom the tall, blond, blue-eyed 'Aryans' were the natural elite. While other races such as Slavs, Arabs, Africans, and Asians were regarded as simply inferior, the Jews held a special place in the hierarchy as both the lowliest and most evil of all races.⁵⁷

Since the Jews were blamed for virtually every problem facing modern society, the precise reason for the Nazis' hatred is difficult to define, though the essence of their fear can be reduced to their belief in the Jews' racially motivated desire to destroy civilization. According to Hitler, this was the result of three inherent characteristics: the Jews were the weakest of races (which forced them to survive as parasites off the labour of other peoples); they were the most cunning of races (which made them naturally gifted as exploiters); and they were the most selfish and malevolent of all races (which made them destructive and drove them to hate all other peoples).⁵⁸ The reason these traits were not immediately visible to the public reflects Hitler's belief in the Jews' ability to mask their 'true' racial identity behind the veil of a religious community; accordingly, it was argued that the "great lie" of Judaism was the Jewish religion itself.⁵⁹

As an extension of their racial flaws, the Jews were said to operate a vast international conspiracy with the objective of world domination. The broad political

57 It is worth noting that with regards to the Nazis' perception of evil, the Jews were not the only hated race. The Russians and Slavic peoples were viewed with comparable animosity as racially and culturally inferior. Hitler claimed that these people were incapable of creative thought and were entirely uncivilized, and were thus a great threat to European culture. For this reason, a special department called the *Gesamverband Deutscher Antikommunistischer Vereinigungen* was created with the specific task of spreading anti-Soviet propaganda. Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk*, 33, 140-141; Lorna L. Waddington, "The Anti-Komintern and Nazi Anti-Bolshevik Propaganda in the 1930s," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 42, no. 4 (Oct., 2007), Sage Publications, Ltd, 576-577.

58 Hitler states: "[...] the instigators of this national illness must have been devils incarnate; only in the brains of a monster – not in the brains of a human being – could the plan for an organization take shape and meaning, an organization whose activity must lead to the ultimate collapse of human culture and with it the devastation of the world." Hitler, *Mein Kampf* 82-83.

59 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 313, 420-421.

context of Germany's economic and political status was presented in these terms as part of a centuries-old race struggle wherein the Jews were responsible for every form of hardship. Overthrowing the Jews and preventing them from inflicting further harm was thus a central concern of Nazi ideology. Since the Jews were said to threaten all humanity, Hitler treated their persecution as a gift to the civilized world:

If our people and our State falls victim to this bloodthirsty and money-thirsty Jewish tyrant over nations, then the whole world will fall into this polyp's net; if Germany frees itself from this embrace, this greatest of all dangers to the nations can be regarded as crushed for the entire world.⁶⁰

The rise of Hitler and the events of the Second World War were narrated by propagandists in these terms as part of a great struggle between good and evil. Germany acted as the defender of Western civilization and strove to bring order to the world by reestablishing racial purity through cultural cleansing, the strict regulation of sex and marriage, and ultimately through the 'final solution' of removing the Jewish presence from the European continent.

An additional element of the supposed Jewish threat was its link to Marxism, as Hitler made repeatedly clear in *Mein Kampf*:

Understanding Jewry alone is the key to comprehension of the inner, the real, intention of Social Democracy. He who knows this race will raise the veil of false conceptions, and out of the mist and fog of empty social phrases there rises the grinning, ugly face of Marxism.⁶¹

This relation was key, for it combined the imaginary Jewish enemy with something tangible, powerful, and threatening; the Nazis owed much of their support to anti-communist fears, and it was essential that the Jewish conspiracy be viewed in this light as synonymous with Marxism. The communists and Bolshevik Russians in particular figured prominently in Nazism's pantheon of enemies, but always as an extension of the Jewish

⁶⁰ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 906.

⁶¹ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 66.

conspiracy.

Hitler's Antisemitism has been assessed by some historians as a pretext for other motives, such as a desire to win the masses through an appeal to their anti-Jewish sentiments, or as an extension of extreme nationalism, or as a convenient scapegoat for Germany's problems. However, according to Hannah Arendt, these interpretations only give a partial explanation for why Antisemitism was so crucial to the Nazi movement.⁶² While the true reasons for Antisemitism are debatable, it can be seen that the Jews stood for absolute evil in the Nazis' system of beliefs, and were an essential component of their complex and mystical worldview.⁶³

Another key attribute of the Jewish threat was its invisibility. The Jews were presented as masters of disguise who advanced themselves through trickery, attacked with misleading propaganda, and used the power of wealth to exert their influence. According to propaganda, they represented a threat whose presence was everywhere, but everywhere remained unseen; a 1943 proclamation by Joseph Goebbels⁶⁴ illustrates this paranoid fear:

Who among us had any idea that the enemy was beside him, that a silent or clever auditor was attending to conversations on the street, in the subway, or in the lines outside cigarette shops? There are Jews one cannot recognize by external signs. These are the most dangerous. [...] The enemy is in our midst. What makes more sense than to at least make this plainly visible to our citizens?⁶⁵

Hitler's own 'discovery' of the Jewish world conspiracy is described in *Mein Kampf* as a

62 Hannah Arendt examines these explanations critically: as a political tool for winning some of the masses Antisemitism was a useful but not all-encompassing feeling that at times had to be moderated to enhance the Party's broad appeal; the nationalist character of Nazism cannot be denied, but the movement was envisioned to be a *supranational* coalition in its fully evolved form, and cannot be viewed for this reason as exclusively nationalist; and finally, the scapegoat argument is true in that the Jews were a minority who lacked power and were burdened with blame and guilt, but because their selection was informed by a complex history of racism, they were not arbitrary victims, and Arendt suggests another group could not have stood in for their role. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 11-16.

63 As Hitler states: "he [the Jew] is the inexorable and mortal enemy of all light, the despiser of all true culture." Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 434.

64 Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) was head of several important cultural institutions including the Reich Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda. Bytwerk, *Bending Spines*, 60-63.

65 Joseph Goebbels, "Die Juden sind schuld!" (The Jews are Guilty!), *Das eiserne Herz*, (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943), 85-91, accessed online, <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb1.htm> (August 1, 2013), page copyright © 1998 by Randall Bytwerk.

nightmarish realization in which the corrupting Jewish presence is seen clearly for the first time, appearing within German society like a cancerous tumour.⁶⁶ The Jews were presented in this way as responsible for every hardship, yet they remained devilishly hidden from view. This was a carefully crafted perception that the Nazis wanted the public to adopt.

In order to spread Antisemitism, the German public would first have to be conditioned to accept its principles, as Hitler made clear:

In the year 1918 there was absolutely no systematic Antisemitism. I still recall the difficulties which one ran into the minute one used the word Jew. One met either a dumb stare or experienced the most violent opposition. Our first endeavours to show the real enemy to the public then seemed almost hopeless and only very slowly did things begin to turn for the better.⁶⁷

After 1933, one of the first strategies adopted by the Nazis to encourage discrimination against the Jews was to make them stand out from the rest of society through distinguishable badges and compulsory laws of self-identification. In a proclamation, Goebbels presented this as a public health and safety measure:

We wanted to make them visible as Jews, particularly if they made even the least attempt to harm the German community. It is a remarkably humane measure on our part, a hygienic and prophylactic measure to be sure that the Jew cannot infiltrate our ranks unseen to sow discord.⁶⁸

Even with these measures, the 'true form' of Jewish evil remained hidden from public view, and it was thus the task of visual propaganda to give form to this imaginary evil.

Visual propaganda: the Jewish conspiracy in German political life

The task of spreading Antisemitism fell to the Party's chief propagandists, Joseph Goebbels and Otto Dietrich.⁶⁹ Though Goebbels is considered the most important

⁶⁶ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 75-77.

⁶⁷ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 824.

⁶⁸ Goebbels, "Die Juden sind schuld!" (The Jews are Guilty!)

⁶⁹ Otto Dietrich (1897-1952) retained control of the *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* (National News Agency). Bytwerk, *Bending Spines*, 64-66.

propagandist in the Third Reich, Dietrich was given personal directives by the Führer and was primarily responsible for many of the public news posters which gave visual form to the Party's Antisemitic fears.⁷⁰ Another significant figure was Julius Streicher (1885-1946), whose infamous *Der Stürmer* printed some of the most radical Antisemitic images to emerge during the Nazi era (though his readership was smaller than that of Goebbels or Dietrich).⁷¹

Since an important facet of Germany's racial purification extended to the cultural sphere,⁷² images of Jews could only be produced using 'low art' forms, such as magazine illustrations, political cartoons, and public news posters. This was to spare Germany's 'high art' from further corruption. In visual propaganda, Jews appeared in a wide variety of forms, each relating to specific areas of concern. Each image format offered distinct strengths; while magazine illustrations could be mass-produced for readers to examine in private, news-posters were an effective format for strategically targeting Germany's urban crowds. The intention of visual propaganda was to convey the essentials of an idea in a simplified eye-catching form, as described through a Nazi instructional pamphlet:

The effect of the picture poster lies with its capacity to be understood at a glance, to get across the spiritual attitude instantly, whereas the text poster needs a certain time to read and a longer time to think about. The hurried city-dweller does not have much time. Mostly, he only catches a quick look at a poster while walking past. The picture has to instantly say at a glance everything that a longer text poster says.⁷³

For the most effective visual propaganda, images were designed to aim for the optimum balance between complexity and simplicity in their symbolic meaning, communicating the greatest amount of information to the broadest audience with the least effort of

⁷⁰ Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 13.

⁷¹ Ibid, 35.

⁷² Hitler makes special mention of his disgust at seeing evidence of the Jews' corrupting presence in the cultural domain: "Was there any form of filth or profligacy, above all in cultural life, in which at least one Jew did not participate? When carefully cutting open such a growth, one could find a little Jew, blinded by the sudden light, like a maggot in a rotting corpse." Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 75.

⁷³ G. Stark, "Moderne politische Propaganda," [Pamphlet], Munich: Verlag Frz. Eher Nachf., 1930, accessed online, <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/stark.htm>. (August 1, 2013), page copyright © 1998 by Randall Bytwerk.

interpretation.

Regarding their goal of exposing the Jewish conspiracy, one prominent theme of Nazi propaganda reinforced the idea that the Jews were not really Germans. This is illustrated by a *Der Stürmer* cartoon (fig.1) in which the speaker at a Jewish congress declares: “Let the Goyim believe that we can be Americans, Englishmen, Germans, or French. When our interests are at stake, we are always Jews, and nothing but.” The intended meaning of this cartoon was to illustrate the international character of the Jewish conspiracy, and to show their supposed lack of nationalist loyalty. In this vein, Hitler believed the Jews could never form their own state because they were loyal only to their race and could not perform honest work.⁷⁴ Instead, Hitler believed the Jews lived as parasites off the fruits of other people's labour, with the ultimate goal of their enslavement.

The Jews' transition from parasite to master was a key aspect of the Antisemitic conspiracy theory. This was envisioned as a process of social change, beginning with Jewish emancipation and the overthrow of the aristocracy using the bourgeoisie. Afterwards, the implementation of democracy and capitalism would undermine society through the inflated importance of wealth and the weakening of political leadership. The last stage would see a “final revolution” during which the “the democratic national Jew” would be revealed in their true form as “the blood Jew and the people's tyrant.”⁷⁵ This was also a direct reference to the Bolshevik Revolution, which was portrayed through propaganda as an overt example of the Jewish conspiracy seizing power. The association

⁷⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Hitler's second book: The unpublished sequel to Mein Kampf*, ed. Gerhard L. Weinberg, trans. Krista Smith, (New York: Enigma Books, 2003), 230.

⁷⁵ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 435-436, 440, 450.

between the Jews and the communist threat also made their conspiracy seem more tangible, and was used to justify the German invasion of the Soviet Union.⁷⁶

'International Jewry' was blamed for every traumatic episode of Germany's recent past, which, in addition to the Bolshevik Revolution, included the 1929 economic crash, the military defeat of 1918, and even the long era of disunity that preceded German unification.⁷⁷ Most contemporary political affairs were presented by propagandists through this lens of Antisemitic fear, constructing a vision of a world overrun by Jewish meddling. Visual propaganda capitalized on this belief during the Second World War when the enemies of Germany were depicted as victims of the international Jewish conspiracy (fig.2-3).⁷⁸ Another illustration of this is found in one of *Der Stürmer's* war-era cartoons titled "Pressure from Above," (fig.4) which depicts the Allied leadership in a hierarchy of command with an unnamed Jewish figure at the top. This also reflects Hitler's professed belief that Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Franklin D. Roosevelt were puppets to the Jewish conspiracy, and that the people of the Allied nations were the unwitting slaves of Jewish masters.⁷⁹ In this way, the Nazis portrayed the Jews as a real political player that should be feared and hated, despite their supposed weakness and inferiority.⁸⁰

The Jews' ability to dominate political affairs was also attributed to their control of information, primarily through the means of deceitful propaganda. An image illustrating of this belief features a hook-nosed face with a flood of monsters pouring out from its

76 Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 90-91.

77 Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 3-4; Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 826.

78 In one image, a great tentacled creature with a Jewish face entangles representative caricatures of the Allied nations. In another, they appear nailed down like insects to a Star of David.

79 Hitler, (October, 1941 and January 7, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 57, 145.

80 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 828, 906-907.

open mouth (fig.5). This hellish image reflects how propagandists wanted the Jews to be seen as the masters of deception who nurtured discord between nations with the intention of provoking wars. This was an especially useful premise for the Nazis, for any antagonism between Germany and its neighbours, including enemy propaganda, could be attributed to the Jewish plot.

Antisemitism became an incredibly useful tool for the Nazis, since any enemy and every hardship could be attributed to the same source; it did not matter how distinct enemies might appear, they could always be linked to the Jews. A 1944 proclamation by Joseph Goebbels illustrates this point, as he describes how capitalism and communism were each players in the Jewish plot:

Plutocracy and Bolshevism spring from the same roots of a period of liberal-democratic decline. They may differ in nuance, but in essentials they are the same. [...] They do not want order among the peoples of the world. They both depend on disorder, anarchy, and chaos. They seek them because they can only draw their infernal power for evil and destruction from those sources. Jewry has two ways to gain and maintain power over unified peoples: international capitalism and international Bolshevism. The one is the more radical brother of the other. Their lust for power is limitless. Whenever they cannot reach their goal by the usual means, they seek to introduce conditions of hopelessness and desperation in which they can sow their seed.⁸¹

The multifaceted character of this ideologically crafted form of evil was treated in visual propaganda with an innovative technique that combined the various components of enemy signifiers into a single composite form. A poster from 1938, titled *Entarte Musik* (fig.6), advertising an exhibition of degenerate music, exemplifies this technique by featuring an African musician playing a saxophone (an allusion to American jazz culture), a Star of David on the musician's lapel (indicating Judaism), a red background (suggesting communism), and a tuxedo suit (signifying capitalism). In addition to demonstrating the Nazis' focus on German culture, this image reflects the element of their

⁸¹ Joseph Goebbels, "Die Krise Europas" (The European Crisis), *Der steile Aufstieg* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1944), 205-212, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb72.htm> (August 1, 2013), page copyright © 1998 by Randall Bytwerk.

worldview which wove all of their 'enemies' together into a single narrative, despite emanating from distinct and arguably unrelated sources.⁸²

The Jews were a perfect enemy for Nazi propagandists; they were present everywhere yet remained invisible, and any argument against Antisemitism could be used as further evidence of the Jewish conspiracy. Since the Jews played a part in everything that opposed the Third Reich, all of Germany's enemies were the same in essence. Also in these terms, anyone could be implicated as part of the Jewish conspiracy and an enemy of the race. This notion that all the enemies of Germany were part of a vast Jewish conspiracy was essential to the Nazis' ideological worldview, and was maintained through propaganda until the very end of Hitler's reign.

Visual propaganda: the Jewish conspiracy and Germany's struggle for survival

The Antisemitic propaganda narrative was not only concerned with political themes of war and diplomacy. The Jewish conspiracy was used to explain a whole host of social problems, including Germany's moral degradation and the collapse of the economy.

Since the end of the First World War, economic instability had been a constant source of anxiety for millions of Germans, and was an enormous factor influencing public opinion at the time of Hitler's election to power. Financial stress also provided a very important window of opportunity for propagandists who blamed the Jews for every manner of economic hardship. Lingering hatred of the Versailles treaty was linked to the Jews, as illustrated through a 1929 *Der Stürmer* cartoon depicting the German economy as a wounded patient in the murderous care of an evil Jewish doctor (fig.7). The blood

⁸² Kristen Williams Backer, "Kultur-Terror: The Composite Monster in Nazi Visual Propaganda," *Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*, ed. Niall Scott, (Amsterdam, NY; New York: Rodopi, 2007), 91.

soaked patient is wrapped in bandages bearing the names of various treaties, and the stereotypical Jewish doctor states, “I can give him another injection. In the state he's in, he won't notice anything at all.” In addition to reflecting the Antisemitic fear of Jewish doctors, the intention of this image was to link the Jews to the defeat of 1918 and Germany's ongoing financial problems. In another illustration (bearing the simple caption of “Fatherland!”), Jewish business owners are depicted benefiting from the financial ruin of Aryan Germans (fig.8)⁸³, and in a third image, the Jews are shown as the parasites within Germany's weakened economy (fig.9).⁸⁴

While the negative association between Jews and money can be traced back to the medieval period, the Nazis were primarily focused on linking Jews to anti-capitalist sentiment in the modern era. The logic of their thought maintained that, because the Jews were weaker as a race, their success depended on other sources of power, namely wealth. Accordingly, capitalism was presented through propaganda as part of the Jewish conspiracy to weaken the German people in preparation for a Jewish take-over. An image depicting this belief shows a monstrous Jewish caricature clutching a sack of money and inhaling an assortment of figures (a monarch, an artist, a general, etc.), which suggests not only Jewish greed, but the power of Jewish capital to dominate society (fig.10).

Though Germany's financial ruin was presented as a key objective of the Jewish conspiracy, an even greater threat was posed by the prospect of race contamination. To address this fear, visual propaganda took aim at women whose role as carriers of Germanic blood was put in jeopardy whenever they consorted with Jews.

83 In the two-panelled cartoon, Jewish businesses prosper while a German family is forced to emigrate.

84 A worm-ridden apple stands as a metaphor for Jewish corruption, where the worm is used to indicate the Jewish influence on the economy. A knife with a swastika bearing down on the parasite suggests the level of force the Nazis believed would be necessary to remove the Jews.

Regarding courtship and romance, the Jews were criticized in visual propaganda for being lecherous and exploitative towards women. This is demonstrated in a political cartoon from *Der Stürmer* titled *Jewish Culture* where the different courtship rituals of Aryan and Jewish men are compared (fig.11). While the proper courtship rituals are shown involving a conservatively dressed man and woman sitting in a serene pastoral landscape, the Jewish method depicts a man and woman sitting together at a pornographic film. Another illustration which bears the caption “the beginning and the end” (fig.12), shows the shameful fate of a 'modern' woman who is degraded and turned into a prostitute after her encounter with a Jew. In addition to showing the corruption of women caused by Jewish men, an overt aim of these images was to link the Jews to the worst traits of urban modernity. The liberated avant-garde culture of the Weimar Republic, though celebrated in progressive circles as a period of innovation and creativity, was also subject to a conservative backlash, which the Nazis actively supported.⁸⁵

The seduction of women by Jews was presented as an extremely serious problem, and propaganda sought to shame Aryan women for having relations with Jews, as well as warn about the consequences of racial mixing. This is further illustrated through an image titled *Legion of Shame* (fig.13), in which a monstrous Jewish figure looms over a crowd of disgraced and weeping women, sprinkling coins on their heads. The caption reads: “Ignorant, lured by gold – They stand disgraced in Judah's fold. Souls poisoned, blood infected – Disaster broods in their wombs.” The “disaster” of mixed-race relations resulted from the fact any Jewish progeny would inherit the 'evil' of Jewishness. This idea is carried further in an image titled *The curse is in the blood* (fig.14), wherein a group of

⁸⁵ For further discussion of the Nazis' adoption of Classical motifs, see page 92.

stereotyped Jewish men crowd around a hook-nosed baby accompanied by the caption, “Every little Jewish baby grows up to be a Jew.”

Race contamination was presented by propagandists as a strategic part of the Jewish conspiracy that amounted to an assault on the very essence of the German people. This, in combination with their supposed mastery of camouflage and deceit, as well as their powers of wealth and political influence, amounted to an image of the Jews as an all-encompassing force of evil, and the fate of humanity depended on revealing their conspiracy to the world and crushing it with every available means.

The ghoulish and ridiculous rendition of Jewish figures in these political cartoons was part of a well-developed propaganda campaign to strategically vilify Jewishness, and drew artistic inspiration from the effective propaganda techniques used by some of the Nazis' competitors during the Weimar era.⁸⁶ Though the German public was not wholly favourable towards such obvious exaggerations as those found in Streicher's *Der Stürmer*, Hitler defended these as truthful depictions, stating: “Streicher is reproached for his *Stürmer*. The truth is the opposite of what people say: he *idealized* the Jew. The Jew is baser, fiercer, more diabolical than Streicher depicted.”⁸⁷

That the Jewish conspiracy was imaginary only made belief in Antisemitism a more powerful weapon, as it lent the Nazis the creative freedom to stand opposed to something which existed only as they invented it. In this capacity, visual propaganda played an important role in making the Jewish menace seem more realistic by lending it a tangible form. Regardless of whether the Nazi worldview was shared by the masses or not, the propaganda narrative created its own reality by nurturing an atmosphere of fear

⁸⁶ Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 32-33.

⁸⁷ Hitler, (December 28, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 118.

and paranoia which encouraged Germans to either accept the Nazis as protectors or obey them as oppressors.

The anti-Nazi perspective: the Third Reich as an all-encompassing form of evil

While anti-Nazi authors did not share a common ideology against which Nazism can be compared, the reoccurring themes that appear within the limited scope of the literary sources used for this research can be regarded as stemming from a common set of values or beliefs that, when viewed collectively, constitute an anti-Nazi worldview. As a contrast to the Nazis' Antisemitic beliefs, a persistent theme of criticism appearing in literature takes aim at the atmosphere of corruption brought to Germany as a result of Nazi rule. This is approached through literary examinations of the political rhetoric and propaganda of the Third Reich, as well as the hypocrisy of Nazi justice. In this regard, the collective vision presented by anti-Nazi authors amounts to a perception that all sense of morality had been fundamentally altered in the corrupting atmosphere of the Nazi state, that good and evil had switched places under the influence of Germany's new masters, and that the consciousness of the German public had been enslaved by the poisonous influence of Nazism. While this perception is entirely distinct from Antisemitism, the anti-Nazi worldview mirrors Nazi ideology through its focus on evil as an entirely corrupting and all-encompassing threat that remained hidden from public view, even as it drove to dominate the masses.

The Rule of Lies and Inversion of Meaning between Good and Evil

More than the use of force it remains the lie and corruption of 'goodness' that stands out as the overarching evil which defines Nazism in its broadest terms. An example of this is found in Lion Feuchtwanger's⁸⁸ 1934 novel, *The Oppermanns*,⁸⁹ which focuses heavily on the problem of Antisemitism but attributes much of the underlying evil of the Third Reich to its manipulation of information. The novel tells the story of a fictional middle-class Jewish family living in Berlin at the beginning of the Third Reich who try to live a normal life despite escalating levels of fear, hysteria, and violence. Feuchtwanger presents the Nazis as masters of deceit who rule through their use of lies, and whose only true feeling was hatred, as he writes:

Inconsistency and deceit were the underlying characteristics of all the actions of their leaders. Their speech was deceitful and so was their silence. They got up with a lie and they went to sleep with a lie. Their discipline was a lie, their code of laws a lie, their judgements a lie, their German a lie, their science a lie, their sense of justice and their faith were lies. Their nationalism, their socialism were lies, their ethical philosophy was a lie, and so was their love. Everything was a lie, only one thing about them was genuine: their Hate!⁹⁰

The Nazis are presented in this way as liars who embraced deception as a matter of principle, and link it to their sense of racial superiority in the form of "Nordic cunning."

Thus, lies were instrumental to the Nazi strategy for success, as Feuchtwanger writes:

[...] the Leader, in solemn, extravagantly sentimental speeches, asserted that the Reich was keeping strictly to the terms of the treaties and wanted nothing but peace. It was explained to the people, with many sly winks, that these speeches by the Leader were designed only to deceive the stupid foreigners, so that warlike preparations could go on undisturbed. The ultimate noble purpose sanctified this "play acting" born of "Nordic cunning." Such were the attempts made by the

88 Lion Feuchtwanger (1884-1858) was a German-Jewish author and playwright who was heavily critical of Hitler and the Nazi Party several years before they gained power. After 1933 he fled to France where he was briefly interned before continuing his flight to the United States. He remained productive and critical throughout the period of Hitler's rule, and collaborated briefly with other anti-Nazi writers. F.S. Grosshut, "Lion Feuchtwanger and the Historical Novel," *Books Abroad*, vol. 34, no. 1 (Winter, 1960), 9-12.

89 First published in 1934, Lion Feuchtwanger's *The Oppermanns* is the story of a fictional German-Jewish family living in Berlin during the transition from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich. Of the works studied for this thesis, this novel offers the most direct commentary on Antisemitism. The Oppermanns are meant to portray a typical Jewish family, the principle characters being Gustav (an academic and cultured man), Martin (a business man and furniture store owner), and Berthold (a teenage student); together their lives reflect the hardships faced by Jews during this era. As a commentary on the contemporary social environment, portrayals of various collaborators, opportunists, and ideological Nazis are also included. In designing the Nazis, the author notes in the preface that he drew inspiration from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

90 Lion Feuchtwanger, *The Oppermanns*, (New York: Sun Dial Press, Inc., 1939, first published in 1934 by Viking Press), 346.

government to unite sixty-five millions of human beings in an association dedicated to sly winks and deceitful cunning.⁹¹

In *The Oppermanns*, the greatest threat posed by the state relates to this rulership of lies, which envelopes the German people entirely works to enslave their minds through propaganda. Feuchtwanger writes:

[...] the fog of deception was spreading more and more densely over Germany. The Reich was hermetically sealed, cut off from the rest of the world, completely abandoned to the lies which the Nationalist's daily disseminated through millions of loudspeakers and printed pages. They had created a special ministry for the purpose. All the methods at the disposal of modern technique were employed to suggest to the hungry that they were fed, to the oppressed that they were free, to those threatened by the growing universal indignation that all peoples of the earth envied them their strength and glory.⁹²

As Germany becomes more detached from reality under this influence, the civilian population is overtaken by a form of mass hysteria in which observable facts became secondary to the 'truth' spouted by propaganda. In one scene, a Jewish doctor is harassed by his patients who accuse him of performing ritualistic murders at his practice, despite the fact these same patients had only just been treated under his care.⁹³ As the insanity of this behaviour becomes typical of the entire nation, a marked split emerges in German society, as the people are divided between the oppressors and the oppressed, and thousands of 'undesirables' are forced from work, imprisoned, or killed. Crucial to all of this hardship was propaganda and censorship:

[...] the papers were not allowed to report unpleasant matters. In a country of sixty-five million people, it had become possible to slaughter three thousand people, to cripple thirty thousand, and to imprison one hundred thousand without trial and without reason, and yet preserve an outward aspect of peace and order. The one thing necessary was not to allow the radio or the press to report these events.⁹⁴

Through the examination of propaganda and mass manipulation, Feuchtwanger presents

91 Ibid, 341-342.

92 Ibid, 341.

93 Feuchtwanger writes: "He could not understand how sick men, who had been given such diligent scientific attention, could, in spite of its obvious success, turn upon their doctors. The fact that these people, confronted on the one side by their own experience and on the other by a stupid persecution in the papers, decided against their experience and in favour of the persecution, staggered him." Ibid, 167.

94 Ibid, 256.

the effect of Nazism as the complete undoing of Germany's civilized society. That brutes and fanatics existed in the world was not extraordinary, but what made the Third Reich so horrible was the fact these brutes had taken power in an otherwise advanced and highly civilized nation and injected their ideology into its laws.⁹⁵

The theme of propaganda and lies re-appears in another of Feuchtwanger's anti-Nazi works written in exile, titled *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*.⁹⁶ Here, the author demonstrates the perspective of a propagandist to illustrate the State's deceptive character. The novel follows the story of Oscar Lautensack, a stage magician and professional psychic who rises through the ranks of Nazi society, coached along the way by his brother, Hans. Hans provides a commentary on the nature of propaganda while explaining to Oscar the necessity of lies:

It simply isn't possible, my dear Oscar, to teach the masses anything without dressing it up, without advertisement, without fraud. People resist everything that's out of the ordinary. Do you by any chance imagine that our Lord Jesus Christ would have accomplished anything if he hadn't sent out his apostles to advertise his miracles? Not even the Führer would have succeeded without certain supplementary aids, without big words. [...] Just look up what he says in his book about the necessity of propaganda, of lies, of fraud. How many false oaths, how much self-humiliation he had to take on himself!⁹⁷

Oscar takes this speech to heart, and later passes it on to his naive romantic interest, the goodhearted Käthe:

A bit of the charlatan is hidden in every magician, in every religious leader, in every creator of a new world order. If Adolf Hitler were only the Führer, if he weren't also an actor, hadn't a theatrical flare, he would never have got to the top.⁹⁸

In addition to demonstrating how the author believed lies were essential to the Nazi

⁹⁵ Ibid, 287.

⁹⁶ First published in 1943, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble* relates the story of Oscar Lautensack, a stage magician and psychic who struggles between the noble calling of his gift, and the ignoble satisfactions of greed and ambition offered by his Nazi peers. Set on the eve of Hitler's assumption of power, it is a novel that focuses on individual culpability amidst an environment ruled by fear and terror. Oscar's character is also used as a commentary on the character of Adolf Hitler. Oscar sacrifices his artistic integrity in exchange for the rewards fame and wealth in collaborating with the Nazis. Ultimately, this collaboration proves his undoing, and he is betrayed.

⁹⁷ Lion Feuchtwanger, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, trans. Caroline Oram from the manuscript *Die Zauberer*, (New York: Viking Press, 1943), 47.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 215.

success, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble* attempts to illustrate the Nazi worldview in its own terms by speculating upon how the Nazis justified their tactics of deception.

Another author who offered a commentary on Nazi propaganda is Erich Maria Remarque,⁹⁹ whose 1945 novel, *Arch of Triumph*,¹⁰⁰ relates the experiences of German exiles living abroad. Set in Paris on the eve of war, the protagonist, Ravic (a surgeon), is tormented by his memories of the Third Reich, which – even in France – he cannot evade. The false claims of propaganda made by the Nazis find their way to the outside world, presenting Hitler's Germany as a glorious revolution. Ravic and his fellow exiles know these accounts to be false, but are powerless to do anything against them, as he writes.

Cans with false labels. [...] Counterfeiting! Take a look at that! They build their ammunition factories because they want peace; their concentration camps because they love the truth; justice is the cover for every factional madness; political gangsters are saviours; and freedom is the big word for all greed for power.¹⁰¹

Klaus Mann¹⁰² is another author who offers a perspective on propaganda in his 1936 novel, *Mephisto*,¹⁰³ which follows the career of Hendrik Höfgen, an ambitious stage-actor who switches allegiances according to what is fashionable and who holds power. In order to advance himself, Höfgen adopts a Nazi persona to fit in with the Third Reich. Over time, the distinction between Höfgen's Nazi persona and his true identity becomes

99 Erich Maria Remarque (1891-1970) was conscripted for military service in 1917 and then wounded while serving on the Western front during the First World War. He became a prominent writer afterwards, producing his most famous anti-war novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. He fled into exile in 1933, and his works were banned and publicly burned by the Nazis during their great cultural purge. Hans Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), xi-xii, 1.

100 First published in 1945, *Arch of Triumph* follows the story of Ravic, a German exile living in Paris on the eve of the Second World War. The cynical Ravic is a surgeon who struggles with his past (as a victim of torture in a concentration camp) and seeks revenge on the Nazi interrogator who tortured him.

101 Remarque writes: "Cans with false labels. [...] Counterfeiting! Take a look at that! They build their ammunition factories because they want peace; their concentration camps because they love the truth; justice is the cover for every factional madness; political gangsters are saviours; and freedom is the big word for all greed for power." Erich Maria Remarque, *Arch of Triumph*, trans. Walter Sorell and Denver Lindley, (New York; London: D. Appleton Century Company Inc., 1945), 150.

102 Born in Munich, Germany, Klaus Mann (1906-1949) was the son of famed novelist, Thomas Mann. He fled into exile after 1933 and became an American citizen. He served with the United States Army as a reporter in post-war Germany.

103 Set in Germany at the end of the Republic and extending to the early Nazi years, *Mephisto* follows the career of theatre-actor Hendrik Höfgen who advances himself enormously by cooperating with the Third Reich. The story is based on the actual career of the author's former brother-in-law, Gustaf Gründgens, a former communist turned Nazi sympathizer who enjoyed the patronage of senior Nazi officials. The book was later the subject of a lawsuit over this legacy.

increasingly ambiguous. As the Nazi side of his character grows in prominence, Höfgen's life becomes increasingly ruled by lies, both of his own creation and from those of his new masters.¹⁰⁴ His cooperation with corrupt political authorities and the facade of lies that govern his behaviour are presented in this way as a reflection of German society at large:

The foul lie usurps power in this land. It roars in the congress halls, from the microphones, from the pages of newspapers, from the cinema screen. Its mouth gapes wide, and from its rage comes the stench of pestilence. Many are those who are driven from this land. And for those who are forced to stay, their land has become a prison – a stinking dungeon.¹⁰⁵

While Klaus Mann's novel characterizes Nazi propaganda as a blatant display of lies, political and social theorist Jacques Ellul argues that facts were generally a more effective means for influencing public opinion, and that twentieth-century propagandists required a sophisticated understanding of sociology and human psychology in order to achieve success.¹⁰⁶ However, he also states that propaganda “by its very nature is an enterprise for perverting the significance of events and of insinuating false intentions.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, 'truth' was an idea that could be used by skilled propagandists as a tool for masking lies and manipulating perceptions of reality.

With regards to the importance of propaganda to the Nazi system of rule, the examples drawn from anti-Nazi literature serve as a fair reflection of reality, for propaganda was central to the Nazis' political strategy, and arguably, their success. Though the ideological backbone of Nazism was founded rather tenuously on Antisemitic fears and romantic racial ideals, it was nonetheless successful in achieving popular

¹⁰⁴ Mann writes: “[...] they seemed intent on ensuring that lies and nothing but lies issued from his lips: such was the secret commandment that governed in this hall, as in the country at large.” Klaus Mann, *Mephisto*, written in 1936, trans. Robin Smyth, (New York: Random House, 1977), 18.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 155.

¹⁰⁶ Ellul, *Propaganda*, 58.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 3-4.

support in Germany. While it can be argued that the ideology of Nazism lacked sophistication, the methods employed by Party officials to control public opinion and direct behaviour was strategically brilliant. In this vein, Jacques Ellul argues that – for the Nazis – ideology was secondary in importance to propaganda. The immediate aim of Nazism was the empowerment of the Party through the mobilization of individuals and masses towards political actions, which were in turn justified by ideology (that the ends justified the means). Thus, the official doctrine (the ends) was an accessory to the propaganda that won power (the means), for Nazism would have been powerless without the apparatus to spread its worldview and shape attitudes.¹⁰⁸

Hitler wrote extensively on the significance of propaganda in relation to the Party's success, describing it as “by far the most important,” and that in the interest of furthering the spread of ideology:

[...] everything, beginning with child's primer down to the last newspaper, every theatre and every movie, every billboard and every bare wall, must be placed at the service of this single great mission.¹⁰⁹

The success of propaganda depended on the Nazis' control of information, as Hitler states:

[...] I have tried, since I came to power, to bring the whole of the German press into line. To do so, I have not hesitated, when necessary, to take radical measures. It was evident to my eyes that a State which had at its disposal an inspired press and journalists devoted to its cause possessed therein the greatest power that one could possibly imagine.¹¹⁰

The Germany described by anti-Nazi authors, in which all forms of public communication had been appropriated by the government, relates to the coordination of news agencies under Nazi rule, which began with the purge of some 2000 or more dissidents from the media. The strictly controlled press were given their stories at daily conferences hosted by the Propaganda Ministry and instructed on how to report them

108 Ellul, *Propaganda*, 194-197.

109 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 848, 920-921.

110 Hitler, (May 14, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 361.

through secret press directives.¹¹¹ The lack of free speech and political freedom alluded to by authors was acknowledged by Hitler as one of the goals of his propaganda strategy:

The organization of our press has truly been a success. Our law concerning the press is such that divergences of opinion between members of the Government are no longer an occasion for public exhibitions, which are not the newspapers business. We've eliminated that conception of political freedom according to which everybody has the right to say whatever comes into his head.¹¹²

The extent to which propaganda was relied on as a tool for political power is revealed through the dramatic reversals in opinion that were required to fit the political needs of the moment. In May of 1942, Hitler boasted of the efficient and manoeuvrable propaganda machine he had created:

As, in the military sphere, the aircraft has now become a combat weapon, so the press has become a similar weapon in the sphere of thought. We have frequently found ourselves compelled to reverse the engine and to change, in the course of a couple of days, the whole trend of imparted news, sometimes with a complete *volte face*. Such agility would have been quite impossible, if we had not had firmly in our grasp that extraordinary instrument of power which we call the press – and known how to make use of it.¹¹³

Despite some variety in how literature depicted the style of Nazi rule, anti-Nazi authors are consistent in portraying the leaders of the Third Reich as liars who did not believe in their own ideology. The implication carried by this view suggests that in the domain of belief, Nazism was not about ideology or political theory, but the strategic misrepresentation of reality. By extension, propaganda was not only evidence of deceit, but a manifestation of the hypocrisy that defined the Nazi movement more truthfully than the ideas put forth as ideology.

Literary criticism also extends to the moral influence exerted by the Third Reich over individuals, largely through propaganda but also by means of social pressure. In Feuchtwanger's *The Oppermanns*, the new Germany is characterized by a complete

111 Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 18, 23-25.

112 Hitler, (February 22-23, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 251.

113 Hitler, (May 14, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 362.

destruction of civilization¹¹⁴ where “the highest goal of life was death on the field of battle”¹¹⁵ and in the minds of youths were planted the seeds of fanaticism.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* presents the rule of lies in Germany as the defining character of the new society, in which the moral perversion of everyday life is reflected in the new professional class responsible for running the institutions of the Nazi state:

[There were] very nice murderers who now occupied high positions in the secret police; a professor recently released from a mental hospital and now minister of culture; jurists who considered justice a liberal prejudice; doctors who considered the art of healing a Jewish swindle; philosophers who considered “Race” to be the only objective truth.¹¹⁷

Germany's values under the new regime are presented as having been turned inside out, and that brutality and insanity had usurped the place of goodness and reason. As in *The Oppermanns*, Klaus Mann gives focus to the corruption of German youth, as he writes:

German youth learned the word “pacifist” as a swear word. German youth no longer needed to read Goethe or Plato; they learned how to shoot and throw bombs; they enjoyed themselves on night manoeuvres; and when the Führer preached about peace they understood that he was joking.¹¹⁸

The narrative of *Mephisto* does not focus on all levels of society, but the author is careful to describe the coercive environment of the Third Reich as it affects his principle character, Hendrik Höfgen. Though he is not cruel, sadistic, or Antisemitic, his desire to succeed professionally within the corrupted Nazi state results in his inevitable moral downfall. In this way, Klaus Mann's text presents Hitler's Germany as a confusing and nightmarish world of debauched cruelty where contradictions between right and wrong constitute the new norm, and that the ambitious pursuit of professional success in such a

114 Feuchtwanger writes: “They had smashed the standards of the civilized world to pieces.” Feuchtwanger, *The Oppermanns*, 288.

115 Ibid, 341-342.

116 The author writes: “The younger generation was educated in this spirit. They were taught that the war had not been lost, that the German people was the noblest in the world and therefore menaced from within and without by corrupting forces. [...] Children were taught that they belonged to the State, not to their parents. What their parents esteemed was derided and condemned. What appeared execrable to their parents was extolled. They were severely punished if they professed the sentiments of their parents. They were taught to lie.” Ibid, 342.

117 Mann, *Mephisto*, 187.

118 Ibid, 247-248.

context would inevitably result in moral contamination. That which defined 'evil' before Hitler's reign had been incorporated into the new standards of justice, and the euphemistic facade of virtuous words is recognized by the public for the lie that it was.

As historical documents, anti-Nazi literature identifies the attack on moral meaning posed by the Third Reich as the underlying character of the movement. Linguist and German-Jewish survivor of the Third Reich, Victor Klemperer (1881-1960), supports this view through his recorded observations. He documented the effects of Nazism on the domain of language, and was particularly appalled with the Nazis' dehumanizing euphemisms for murder (ie. "liquidation," "relocation," "special treatment") which not only masked the truth, but suggested an impersonal, inhuman disregard for the victims.¹¹⁹ The "Language of the Third Reich" was to Klemperer a poignant manifestation of the infectious mode-of-thought which "poisoned" the minds of Germans.¹²⁰ As an example, the meaning of 'heroic' under Nazism entailed blind obedience, mercilessness, and thoughtless brutality, and was arguably unheroic. Conversely, the meaning of 'fanatic' was elevated from its typically negative connotations to a more noble status, used to describe heightened courageousness and devotion, and was promoted accordingly as one of the essential German virtues.¹²¹

As a social critique, the inversion of meaning between good and evil in anti-Nazi literature also serves as an accurate commentary on the system of values that gave direction to the National Socialist movement. Though ostensibly standing in defence of traditional values, Nazism represented a revolutionary break from long-standing ethical

¹¹⁹ Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii, A Philologist's Notebook*, trans. Martin Brady, (London; New York: Continuum, 2000), 149-151.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 96.

¹²¹ Ibid, 5-6, 57-58, 60.

standards of humility, rationalism, and egalitarianism. Any institution or system of values that might disrupt the individual's enthusiastic loyalty for the Nazi cause was subject to suspicion, and would likely come under attack by propagandists for being un-German. For instance, Hitler viewed Christianity with great animosity because it seemed to contradict his worldview, was marked by Jewish-corruption, and was responsible for great suffering in the world (namely the Thirty Years War). He expressed a desire to bring Christianity to an end, but believed it was unnecessary in light of the Church's slow decay, and that a confrontation could needlessly provoke the masses' lingering superstitions.¹²² Nevertheless, Hitler did denounce religious figures with particular hostility, stating:

[...] if I ever have the slightest suspicion that they are getting dangerous, I will shoot the lot of them. This filthy reptile raises its head wherever there is a sign of weakness in the State, and therefor it must be stamped on whenever it does so. We have no sort of use for a fairy story invented by Jews.¹²³

With regards to the new system of values brought into place under Nazi rule,

Historian Robert Gellately notes:

In the kind of total war rhetoric the Nazis used, it followed that mercy and compassion toward all enemies was portrayed as a vice, while intolerance and fanaticism were transformed into virtues.¹²⁴

In this vein, Joseph Goebbels was intent on warning Germans to resist their naturally generous and sympathetic natures, insisting they “must learn to hate.”¹²⁵ He writes:

The bourgeois era with its false and lying idea of humanitarianism is over. We are in the middle of a hard century. It will be won not by good nature, but by manliness and strength. The world is divided by love and hate. To be on firm ground, one must know whom to love and whom to hate.¹²⁶

The Nazi perspective held that their cause was both just and of supreme

122 Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk*, 8, 40, 110, 472-473.

123 Ibid, (11 August, 1942), 472-473.

124 Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4-5.

125 Joseph Goebbels, “Seid nicht allzu gerecht!” (Don't be Too Fair!), *Das eherne Herz*, (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943), 451-457, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb13.htm>, (March 2, 2011), page copyright © 1998 by Randall Bytwerk.

126 Goebbels, “Seid nicht allzu gerecht!” (Don't be Too Fair!).

importance, and because of this all questions of morality were to be either disregarded or amended according to the needs of the German people; unconditional love of the race required unconditional hatred of the enemy. Anti-Nazi authors interpreted this as a systematic inversion of meaning between good and evil which elevated the criminal fanatics of another era to the status of heroes under Hitler, and likewise, turned many previously 'innocent' persons into hated enemies.

Justice in the Third Reich

While propaganda was heavily criticized for its hypocrisy and corrupting influence, the most poignant illustration for the effects of Nazi morality on the state appear in relation to the perversity of justice in the Third Reich.

State-sponsored injustice is a central theme of Erika Mitterer's¹²⁷ *The Prince of Darkness*,¹²⁸ a work of subversive fiction written in Nazi-occupied Austria using the historical setting of pre-Reformation Germany as its veil for social criticism. On first glance, the novel is a critique of the Inquisition and Catholic Church, however themes relating to mass hysteria, fanaticism, political hypocrisy, arbitrary-authoritarian power, and the inner darkness of human nature all apply to the Third Reich as subversive criticisms of the State. Moreover, the novel was read by opponents of the regime as a critique of contemporary political and social events.¹²⁹

127 Austrian-born Erika Mitterer (1906-2001) did not flee into exile during the era of Nazi rule. Instead, she wrote coded criticisms of the state using historical fiction as her guise and was successful in masking the critical intent of her novel, and was read by opponents of the regime as a political/social critique aimed at contemporary events. Herwig Gottwald [Afterword] "*The Prince of Darkness* and the Intellectual Resistance to Nazism," *The Prince of Darkness*, (Riverside California: Ariadne Press, 2004), 667-668.

128 First published in the city of Hamburg, 1940, *The Prince of Darkness* (set in medieval Germany), tells the story of two female protagonists (Hiltrud, a minor noble who changes her name to Maria upon joining a convent, and Theresa, her innocent and beautiful younger sister) who fall victim to Church and patriarchal authorities during an inquisition, and the rational Dr. Fabri who tries in vain to help them. The guise of historical fiction was successful in masking the critical intent of the novel, and was read by opponents of the regime as a political/social critique aimed at contemporary events.

129 Gottwald "*The Prince of Darkness* and the Intellectual Resistance to Nazism," 667-668.

The subjectivity of morality appears as a theme early in the novel through the character of Hiltrud vom Reid (the daughter of a minor lord), whose secular education causes her to question many of her basic assumptions about the world, including justice:

What astonished her most was the fact that justice was also subject to changes in time, that all laws by no means originated so unquestionably with God as did the tablets Moses had received on Mount Sinai.¹³⁰

The crone-like character of Ursula (a wise woman and healer) provides a second influence on her developing worldview as she teaches Hiltrud of hidden wisdom and acts as the voice of an outsider in an otherwise homogenous Christian society. Through these influences, and in addition to her observations, Hiltrud is taught about the impermanence of supposedly inherent truths, of the importance of perspective in colouring our perceptions of reality, and of the possibility for widely-held opinions to be false.¹³¹ As a political commentary, this alludes to the Nazis' influence on the meaning of good and evil, and the resulting corruption of justice.

The corruptibility of justice in Mitterer's novel is given more direct examination through the character of Dr. Jacobus Schuller, a high inquisitor and judge who terrorizes the citizens of a German city during a witch trial. The inquisitor is presented as a zealous true-believer who cares little for material gain.¹³² He is completely confident in the moral righteousness of his cause, and ignores any evidence that seems to contradict his assumptions. He is an all-powerful figure who embodies the authority of the ruling belief-system and is completely unbound by any sanctions on behaviour, as the exasperated and defeated city bishop declares, "The Inquisition has the right to make every right its

¹³⁰ Erika Mitterer, *The Prince of Darkness*, written in 1940, trans. Catherine Hutter, (Riverside California: Ariadne Press, 2004), 64.

¹³¹ Ibid, 68.

¹³² Ibid, 471: "Jacobus Schuller considered it his business in life the cheat Satan."

own!”¹³³

However the power of the judge is reliant upon another destructive force, which is the fear of evil itself, as personified by the Devil. In *The Prince of Darkness*, Germany is saturated by fear of evil, which is described as an invisible but omnipresent force that seeks to corrupt mankind in all its forms. In hunting and persecuting supposed Devil worshippers (who were in actuality innocent), no manner of ruthlessness or brutality was too extreme. In this way, fear of Satan also serves as a suitable analogy for the Antisemitic fears of the Third Reich. Either view stems from a ruling ideology and leads to the unjust persecution of innocents on the basis of a subjective moral perspective. An implication that can be drawn from this comparison suggests Nazism represented a return to a darker period of the past, wherein fanaticism, hysterical fears, and blind devotion trumped reason and observation with disastrous consequences.

A similar criticism of Nazi justice is found in Hans Fallada's¹³⁴ *Every Man Dies Alone*,¹³⁵ which tells the story of a middle-aged Berlin couple who face persecution after being caught distributing subversive messages on postcards. Written immediately following the Second World War and based on true events, Fallada depicts the character of the Nazi judge (Judge Fromme) with particular malice as a needlessly cruel and vindictive authority. The Judge derives sadistic pleasure from the delivery of death

¹³³ Ibid, 366.

¹³⁴ Hans Fallada (1893-1947, born Rudolf Wilhelm Friedrich Ditzen) was an accomplished author who suffered throughout his life from psychological distress and substance abuse, and spent time on separate occasions in prisons and sanatoriums. He remained in Germany throughout the era of Nazi rule and remained neutral in his stance towards the regime, collaborating with them on some literary projects. In his personal life he suffered mentally under the Nazis, and wrote in secret his heavily autobiographical *The Drinker* while incarcerated for the attempted murder of his wife, and completed *Every Man Dies Alone* immediately following Germany's defeat at the end of the Second World War. Geoff Wilks, (Afterword), *Every Man Dies Alone*, (New York: Melville House Publishing, 2009), 511-517; Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., “Fallada for Historians,” *German Studies Review*, vol. 26, no. 3 (Oct., 2003), 477-479.

¹³⁵ First published in 1947 with the German title *Jeder stirbt für sich allein*, the novel was written in a twenty-four day span following the Second World War, as the author struggled with depression and relapses of narcotics abuse. The narrative follows the story of Otto and Anna Quangel who resist through the distribution of anonymous postcards with anti-Nazi statements written on them in the streets of Berlin, and the investigations of the Gestapo who close on their prey. The events and characters are based on the true story of Otto and Elise Hampel who were found guilty of treason and executed by beheading in March, 1943.

sentences, works to enact the greatest torment and humiliation possible upon victims, and is described as a living embodiment of the perversion of truth and justice.¹³⁶ Other characters who collaborate with the Nazis are treated with relative understanding: the informant is motivated by poverty and moral weakness; the SS guards are numbed to suffering but are also human; even the relentless Gestapo agent is subject to extreme moral doubts. Fallada's judge is like Mittere's Inquisitor in that he is a true believer who gleefully condemns the innocent and acts without regret because he stands in defence of the ruling moral code. In this way, the sadism of both figures is used to personify the most vile and infuriating hypocrisy of Nazi justice, which reserves no place for mercy or compassion.

Author and playwright Bertolt Brecht¹³⁷ provides an alternative perspective on the corruption of justice through his 1938 play, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*.¹³⁸ Here, the character of a judge is presented as a tormented and compromised individual whose professional duty is affected by the political demands of the state. The judge presides over a case involving a Nazi street thug, a Jewish shopkeeper, and an unemployed worker, and while the verdict should be clear (as the Nazi thug is clearly guilty), the compromised political system turns it into a complex and dangerous affair, as the judge professes:

I'll do anything , my God, can't you see my position? [...] I'll give my judgement this way or that way, whatever way they want me to, but I've got to know first what they want me to do. If one doesn't know that, there's no justice left. [...] I'm prepared to go over everything in the most careful and conscientious possible way, but I have to be told what kind of a decision will satisfy higher considerations. [...] It's easy for my wife to say I should just find out what actually happened. I'd

¹³⁶ Hans Fallada, *Every Man Dies Alone*, New York: Melville House Publishing, 2009, 449-455.

¹³⁷ Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) was an accomplished German playwright of international renown. Due to his openly professed Marxist sympathies, he fled into exile after 1933 and relocated frequently within Europe, eventually reaching the United States, where he remained throughout the war. He maintained his vocal opposition of the Third Reich, and completed numerous critical works, including *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, *The Visions of Simone Machard*, *Schweyk in the Second World War*, and *Mother Courage* (amongst others).

¹³⁸ *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (written 1935-1938, first produced in 1938) is an openly-critical anti-Nazi play consisting of a collection of vignettes portraying the various negative traits of life under the Third Reich.

wake up in a hospital if nothing worse.¹³⁹

Brecht directs additional criticism against Hitler's police, who, by enacting 'police justice', also fulfil the role of judge. The disregard for law or justice by Nazi police is evident in his satirical play, *Schweyk in the Second World War*,¹⁴⁰ as illustrated through a telephone conversation between a police chief (Bullinger) and an anonymous Nazi interrogator:

TELEPHONE VOICE: Motorized squad. Banker Krusha denies making any remarks about the attempted assassination. Says he couldn't have read the news because he was arrested before it happened.

BULLINGER: Is he the Commercial Bank? In that case, give him ten on the ass.[...]

TELEPHONE VOICE: Motorized squad. Krusha has confessed to the remarks, but only that the attempted assassination was all one to him. Not that he was happy about it, or that the Führer's a clown, but only that he's human like everybody else.

BULLINGER: Five more until he's happy and the Führer's a stinking clown. [...]

TELEPHONE VOICE: Motorized squad 4. Mrs. Moudra, the grocer, denies overstepping the ordinance that shops must not be opened before nine A.M. She claims she opened at ten.

BULLINGER: Lock her up for a couple of months, the lazy bitch, for *under*-stepping the ordinance.¹⁴¹

This satirical portrayal of corruption and injustice showcases the arbitrary power of the police to operate with obvious disregard for truth, and – like the figure of the judge - signifies the moral corruption of the state.

The corruption of justice portrayed in literature is an accurate commentary on Germany's compromised legal system. Under Nazi rule, the court system became radicalized as they were forced to adapt to new laws and meet the demand for harsher judgements. The death sentence became increasingly common for minor crimes, particularly during the war years when the difference between 'normal' and 'political' crimes grew ever-more vague. Additionally, Hitler was careful to monitor justice

139 Bertolt Brecht, "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich," *Collected Plays*, vol. 4, part 3, eds. John Willett and Ralph Manheim, trans. John Willett, (London: Methuen, 1983), 40.

140 *Schweyk in the Second World War* takes place in occupied-Prague, following the story of a working-class, irreverent and playful individual who passively opposes Nazi officials by making a mockery of their authority and performing false acts of collaboration. Though this satirical narrative is at times lighthearted and playful, it is also bears deeply critical meanings.

141 Bertolt Brecht, "Schweyk in the Second World War," *Collected Plays*, vol. 7, eds. Ralph Manheim and John Willett, (New York: Vintage books (A division of Random House), 1975), 77-82.

proceedings and would personally intervene in cases he felt had been dealt with too leniently, as he stated in June, 1942:

Eventually I had to tell Gürtner of my implacable resolve to have traitors, who had been too leniently treated by the normal courts, handed over to an SS Commando and shot. For treason is an offence revealing a hostile mind [ein Gesinnungsdelikt], and every traitor must be executed regardless of the amount of damage he has done.”¹⁴²

A “special” court system run by the SS was established to function as competition for the regular courts, and would often execute prisoners if civil courts would not.¹⁴³ The challenge to judicial authority posed by this competing court system, which succeeded on the basis of its absolute loyalty to Hitler and the Nazi government, led to an escalation of ruthlessness in the civil courts that were forced to compete in order not to be overshadowed. Hitler encouraged this escalation by rewarding mercilessness and punishing 'weak' judgements.

The judges of today have no clear notion of their duties. [...] I shall not hesitate to dismiss ruthlessly any judge who consistently gives judgement harmful to the good of the people and contrary to the national outlook [...] Discipline at the front demands rules of iron, and it would be an injustice to the front line to allow mercy to hold sway at home.¹⁴⁴

These factors combined into a notoriously bloodthirsty court system that sentenced to death an estimated 16,500 people inside Germany between 1933 and 1945, three-fourths of which were carried out.¹⁴⁵

In its essence, the institution of legal justice serves as a reflection of the moral will of a state, and was given emphasis by anti-Nazi authors to illustrate the furthest reaches of the Nazis' corrupting influence. For this purpose, the figure of the judge serves a dual role as both a symbolic representative of Germany's official moral code, and a direct

¹⁴² Hitler, (June 7, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 391.

¹⁴³ Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 48, 77-78.

¹⁴⁴ Hitler, (May 22, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 380.

¹⁴⁵ This number is an estimate and would likely be much higher, for it does not take into account the thinly veiled police executions that would have occurred outside the legal process, and were sometimes the recourse for execution in cases of insufficient evidence. It also does not include the extrajudicial deaths that occurred in the concentration camps. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 85-87.

illustration of the harsh reality of Nazi-justice. In making such criticisms against Germany's new brand of laws, the writings of Fallada, Mitterer, Brecht, and others, likely reflect the fear and hatred felt by ordinary Germans towards the officials that enforced 'justice' within the Third Reich. It is also noteworthy that criticism was not typically focused on Antisemitism, as Post-Holocaust histories tend to be. Rather, it was the broadly conceived conquest of cruelty, dishonesty, and insanity over compassion, truth, and reason that characterizes of the Nazi state.

Conclusion

The corruption of meaning through propaganda and the spread of ideology under Nazi rule is presented in anti-Nazi literature as extending to all fields of human experience, culminating in a complete destruction of 'civilization' that turned mere existence within the Third Reich into a trial of body and mind. Crucial to these works is the presentation of Nazism as an attack on the sphere of thought in which traditional notions of truth, decency, and justice, are imperilled by the spreading Nazi worldview.

Conversely, belief in the supposed 'international Jewish conspiracy', as presented through Nazi propaganda, identifies the Jews as a similar form of omnipresent evil that posed a threat to society's most basic values. The supposed Jewish threat also amounted to an attack on the domain of thought, due in part to the conspiracy's requirement of secrecy to ensure that the 'true' nature of Jewish evil be kept from public awareness. It was thus the duty of all racially aware Germans to embrace Antisemitism and take part in eliminating the Jewish menace.

For either worldview, belief in evil was used to explain how modern society had

come to be, and where the root of suffering lay. In both cases, evil is presented as the result of a vast organizational conspiracy that operated through deception, that corrupted everything it infested, and operated with the ultimate goal of enslaving or destroying the free people of Germany. For the Nazis, this form of evil meant the international Jewish conspiracy and the threat posed through their corruption of the Germanic race, and for anti-Nazi authors it was the perversion of truth, 'goodness', and justice brought through the spread of Nazism.

Though the ideas put forth in anti-Nazi literature and Nazi propaganda draw from distinct assumptions about reality, the similarities in form between either perception of evil suggests they were responding to common anxieties, namely the mistrust of information, which was central to either worldview. Through the comparison of Nazi propaganda with anti-Nazi literature, a contest of ideas based on similar fears is revealed, the stakes of which would determine Germany's future. While many issues were involved in this contest (including notions of race, history, and morality), at its root, the division in belief hinged on distinct perceptions of evil. It would have been possible for the Nazis to embrace a racist worldview without Antisemitism, but belief in true evil gave an urgency to their movement that justified their every excess. However, since race was not a significant feature of anti-Nazi literature, it cannot be considered the central issue of disagreement. Rather, authors demonstrate an entirely different worldview that presents evil in its purest forms through the hypocrisy of Nazi-justice, the perversity of Nazi-morals, and the rule of lies brought through the Nazis' disregard for truth. Thus, belief in evil not only differentiated one worldview from the other through a fundamental difference in moral perspective, but gave meaning and purpose to their respective causes.

CHAPTER 2

Power and Brutality

Inevitably, criticisms of Nazism will touch on the subjects of power and brutality. This is not only because of the extreme violence carried out by Nazis during their rule, but applies to the fact power and brutality were highly valued on an ideological level. Propagandists presented brutality in the context of Germany's struggle for survival as a necessary measure for preserving the race and the nation's enemies. Accordingly, overwhelming physical force became idolized through Nazi art and rhetoric as a pure and beautiful reflection of their racist worldview.

Anti-Nazi authors agree with this perception to the extent that Hitler's supporters were shown to be forceful, but their approach is from a perspective on the receiving side of Nazi brutality. Thus, a common trait in defining the character of Hitler's rule bears focus on the imbalance of power it created between the people and the state.

In this way, both the Nazi and anti-Nazi worldviews present power and evil as sharing a close relationship, with the crucial difference resting on the direction of influence between either subject. While the Hitler believed evil was a natural part of life that required brutal-force as a counter-measure, anti-Nazi authors present the brutality of Nazi power as the force which made evil a part of everyday life in the Third Reich.

Natural law and the struggle for survival

Though the central concern of Nazism was to expose and destroy the 'international Jewish conspiracy,' the core principle of their ideology that preceded any other belief

maintained that nature was the determining factor behind all worldly affairs. Hitler believed in 'natural law' as the governing principle of the universe against which notions of civilization and religion were meaningless.¹⁴⁶ Because nature determined the innate character of human beings and supplied the eternal laws that governed existence, he believed that man should seek to obey nature rather than set out to conquer it, as he states: "I have the feeling that it's useful to know the laws of nature – for that enables us to obey them. To act otherwise would be to rise in revolt against heaven."¹⁴⁷ Hitler proposed that the inner workings of nature were beyond human comprehension and should be simply accepted as a matter of fact.¹⁴⁸ As for traditional religion, he proclaimed that all spiritual feeling was the result of an instinctual awareness of the higher powers of nature, which had been misleadingly exploited by priests.¹⁴⁹

One of the first rules of natural law maintained that the essence of life was a great struggle for survival. This drew inspiration from Darwin's theory of evolution, but was also derived from Hitler's personal experiences of violence in the trenches of the First World War, as he writes:

It was with feelings of pure idealism that I set out for the front in 1914. Then I saw men falling around me in thousands. Thus I learnt that life is a cruel struggle, and has no other object but the preservation of the species. The individual can disappear, provided there are other men to replace him.¹⁵⁰

Hitler was directly affected by this cataclysm, as was much of Europe, creating a potentially deadly common-ground between the leader and his subjects. On this notion, historian George Mosse argues that the war caused a certain "brutalization of conscience" that rendered death and killing into a more acceptable part of reality, leading to a

¹⁴⁶ Hitler, (July 11-12, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, (December 1-2, 1941), 104.

¹⁴⁸ Hitler states: "A thing is so, and our understanding cannot conceive of other schemes." Ibid, (July 11-12, 1941), 7.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, (September 23, 1941), 32.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, (September 25-26, 1941), 36.

glorification of death, that one might see reflected in the Nazis' obsession with violent struggle, self-sacrifice, and martyrdom.¹⁵¹

To Hitler, existence had no greater meaning than the struggle for survival, and the life of any person was insignificant next to the preservation of the species; death was not a tragedy but an essential part of natural law.¹⁵² Hitler saw the struggle for species survival in everyday events and used it to explain the meaning of suffering and war.¹⁵³ Of the modern age, he states:

War has returned to its primitive form. The war of the people against people is giving place to another war – a war for the possession of great spaces. Originally war was nothing but a struggle for pasture grounds. Today war is nothing but a struggle for the riches of nature. By virtue of an inherent law, these riches belong to him who conquers them. [...] That's in accordance with the laws of nature. By means of the struggle, by allowing the survival of the fittest.¹⁵⁴

History, culture, and politics could all be explained through to the logic of natural struggle, and accordingly, Hitler seems to have taken inspiration from the examples set by animals as honest embodiments of natural law, using evidence of brutality in the animal world to justify the ruthlessness of his own policies.¹⁵⁵

Because natural law and the struggle for species survival were central to Nazi thought, physical strength and brutal force became idolized as two of the movements' highest ideals. To illustrate this point, Nazi-inspired 'high art' adopted classical motifs as a form of cultural propaganda to glorify the human body in its racially ideal form.

151 Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 174, 204-205.

152 Hitler states: "The earth continues to go round, whether it's the man who kills the tiger or the tiger who eats the man. The stronger asserts his will, it's the law of nature. The world doesn't change; its laws are eternal." Hitler, (September 23, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 31.

153 Hitler, *Hitler's Second Book*, 9.

154 Hitler, (October 10, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 41.

155 Hitler states: "During the showing of a film of Tibet, Reichsleiter Dietrich was struck with the way in which the wild horses of the high Tibetan plains followed the stallion who was guiding them. And what is true of wild horses applies equally to every community of creatures desirous of safeguarding its survival. [...] This undoubtedly explains why monkeys put to death any member of their community who show a desire to live apart. And what the apes do, men do, too, in their own manner." *Ibid*, (May 14, 1942), 364.

Representing the master race

After the Nazification of German culture, many artists found work in service to the state producing art that represented Nazi ideals. This 'Nazi art' served as a form of propaganda which could advertised the cultural sophistication of the Third Reich. Additionally, since art and life were perceived as reflections of each other, 'racially pure' depictions of the human form could serve as demonstrations of Germany's purification.¹⁵⁶

The monumental male nude is perhaps the most iconic figure of Nazi art. While the male figure is not an uncommon subject for artistic representation, its treatment by Nazi artists was unusual for its scale and prominence in public display. Massive scale contributed to the spectacle of Nazi art, and appropriately conveys the epic nature of the Nazis' supposed race struggle.

Joseph Thorak's¹⁵⁷ *Monument to Work* (ca. 1937, unfinished), a gigantic sculptural composition which depicts a group of male nudes straining together under the effort of moving a large boulder up a slope, is an example of Nazi cultural propaganda that celebrates power. The work was commissioned to decorate a newly constructed highway, and while it was never completed, its intention was to glorify the working man for his fortitude, strength, and cooperative spirit. This relates to the Nazis' appeal to the German working classes, and their general opposition to modernism, which it was felt had robbed modern man of his masculinity through oppressive and dehumanizing industrial labour. In this vein, historian J. A. Mangan argues that the idealized male form in Nazi art served as

¹⁵⁶ Mangan, "Icon of Monumental Brutality," 130, 136.

¹⁵⁷ Josef Thorak (1889-1952) was born in Vienna, became a professional sculptor, and had earned some international recognition by 1933. His talent was recognized by the Nazis, and his career prospered in their service. He was recognized by Hitler and granted a professorship, earned several private commissions from the Führer, and for the creation of his massive sculptural works had a massive four-story studio constructed for him by Nazi architect Albert Speer. His ideological convictions are questionable, as he joined the National Socialist Party relatively late in 1941, and a colleague described him as "politically clueless and naive," but many of his works were nonetheless commissioned by the Nazis to represent the ideals of their movement. Jonathan Petropoulos, *The Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 265-267.

an emblem of powerful male authority that could serve as an antidote to the modern industrial age.¹⁵⁸

The cooperative effort depicted in this work also suggests the virtue of duty and the comradeship of arms, each of which were essential principles for the Nazi cause. One intention of Nazi propaganda was to present the Third Reich as a revolution in body and spirit that could only be brought about as the cumulative result of a great collective effort; it is likely that *Monument to Work* alludes to this perception, with the boulder symbolizing the German Nation's struggle to achieve greatness. The theme of communal effort is evident in another of Thorak's monumental sculptural works, titled *Comradeship* (1937), which portrays two enormous male figures standing with a hand in each others' grasp, their gaze staring fixedly ahead, as if looking to the future. The enormous size and pronounced musculature of these figures suggests an obsession with masculine physical strength that verges on a form of worship, and was intended to reflect the powerful character of the Third Reich.

While it may be argued that figures such as these reflect a mindless adoration of masculine barbarity, the aim behind such works was to encourage the recruitment of the nation's young men to the Nationalist cause by celebrating brute strength and the male duty of defending the homeland. The Nazis were not unique in adopting this mode of cultural expression; the Soviet's, for example, were famous for their use of monumental sculptural figures to convey key concepts of Communist belief, as demonstrated by the Soviet Pavilion for the 1937 Paris World's Fair (fig.15).¹⁵⁹

158 J. A. Mangan, "Blond, Strong and Pure: 'Proto-Fascism', Male Bodies and Political Tradition," and "Icon of Monumental Brutality: Art and the Aryan Man" *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1999), 115-117, 139-140.

159 Ades, "Paris 1937: Art and the Power of Nations," 58-60.

Depictions of women in Nazi art also bear ideological features relating to race and power, though the focus is not on physical strength so much as it is on feminine purity and motherhood. An example of this is found in Joseph Thorak's *Devotion* (1940), a sculptural representation of a female form standing in a symmetrical pose with outstretched arms, gazing upwards. While the title and pose suggest religious connotations, it is more likely that this work was intended as a racially-inspired vision of the ideal woman. Pure, balanced, and submissive, she appears as a monumental object of desire, that – like the masculine icon of strength – was both noble and eternal.¹⁶⁰

This interpretation reflects the perception of women maintained by Nazi propagandists, who argued that in the context of race struggle, it was the mission of women to appear beautiful and bear children. On this subject, Joseph Goebbels made his views clear:

The first, best, and most suitable place for the women is in the family, and her most glorious duty is to give children to her people and nation, children who can continue the line of generations and who guarantee the immortality of the nation. [...] If the family is the nation's source of strength, the woman is its core and centre. The best place for the woman to serve her people is in her marriage, in the family, in motherhood. This is her highest mission.¹⁶¹

On the importance of feminine beauty, Goebbels pronounced that maintaining an attractive appearance for the sake of procreation was an essential part of female duty, stating: “The mission of woman is to be beautiful and to bring children into the world. [...] The female bird pretties herself for her mate and hatches the eggs for him.”¹⁶² This focus on the biological function of women as breeders was not only a rebellion against the trend for 'modern' women to live beyond the restraints traditionally assigned to their

¹⁶⁰ Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, trans. Janet Lloyd, (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 158.

¹⁶¹ Joseph Goebbels, “Deutsches Frauentum” (German Women), *Signale der neuen Zeit, 25 ausgewählte Reden von Dr. Joseph Goebbels* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1934), 118-126, accessed online:

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb55.htm> (March 2, 2011), page copyright © 1999 by Randall Bytwerk.

¹⁶² (Quoted in) Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 41.

gender, it was a vital component of the race struggle, and was equated with to the masculine duties of war.¹⁶³ Of this view, Hitler declared, "Everytime she [woman] brings a child into the world, she emerges victorious in the battle for being or non-being of the people."¹⁶⁴ Similarly, Reich physician Dr. Wagner declared:

The prolific German mother is to be accorded the same place of honour in the German volk community as the combat soldier, since she risks her body and her life for the people and the Fatherland as much as the combat soldier does in the roar and thunder of battle.¹⁶⁵

Nazi theorists were obsessed with the aesthetics of physical power because it was synonymous with their broadly conceived notions of racial purification. This extended to all fields, including art, architecture and the planning of public spaces.¹⁶⁶ An example of Nazi architecture that was built to represent Germanic power can be found in Albert Speer's¹⁶⁷ German pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair (fig.15), a cubic mass that was intended to counter the Soviet pavilion by showing the rigid might of the Third Reich.¹⁶⁸ Hitler was even critical of modern dress (which he describes as "dandified fashionableness") for concealing too much of the body's physique and thus weakening the people by undermining the the benefits of attaining a "beautiful, well-shaped body."¹⁶⁹ As a remedy, Hitler proposed young men should adopt the practice of wearing tightly fitted

163 It is interesting to note in this context that female-Nazi militants in the late 1920s and early 1930s had argued for the equality of women within the Party, demanding the opportunity to uphold Nazi values beyond the bedroom. Leila J. Rupp, "Mother of the 'Volk': The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology," *Signs*, vol. 3, no. 2 (University of Chicago Press, Winter, 1977), 364.

164 (Quoted in) Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 158.

165 Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 45.

166 Of this, Hitler states: "What is ugly in Berlin, we shall suppress. Nothing will be too good for the beautification of Berlin. When one enters the Reich Chancellery, one should have the feeling that one is visiting the master of the world. One will arrive there along wide avenues containing the Triumphal Arch, the Pantheon of the Army, the Square of the People – things to take your breath away! It's only thus that we shall succeed in eclipsing our only rival in the world, Rome. Let it be built on such a a scale that St. Peter's and its square will seem like toys in comparison!" Hitler, (21-22 October, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 64.

167 Alber Speer served as Hitler's chief architect before taking on additional ministerial duties. He was a prolific figure in the National Socialist cultural world, designing many of the iconic structures associated with Hitler's reign.

168 The architect, Albert Speer, states: "The Soviet Russian and the German Pavilions were to be placed directly opposite one another on the fairground; the French directors of the fair had deliberately arranged this confrontation. [...] I therefore designed a cubic mass, also elevated on stout pillars, which seemed to be checking this onslaught, while from the cornice of my tower an eagle with a swastika in its claws looked down on the Russian sculptures." Dawn Ades, "Paris 1937: Art and the Power of Nations," *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators 1930-45*, eds. Dawn Ades et. all, (Stuttgart, Germany: Oktagon in association with Hayward Gallery, 1995), 160.

169 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 619.

leather shorts.

The aspect of beauty in Nazi art also reflects the apparent contradiction between the ordinary and the extreme that underlines Nazism, and relates to the problematic nature of their idealism. Nazi art was based on recognizable virtues of moral and physical purity, yet came to signify racism, death, and extreme evil. It may be for this reason that art historians seem to view Nazi art with considerable discomfort, as for example Jonathan Petropoulos who describes it as technically good but “strange and sterile,” and “precise yet unreal,” or historian Saul Friedländer who defines the the distinguishing characteristic of Nazi art to be the feeling of uneasiness it elicits.¹⁷⁰ While these views are partly the result of hindsight, they suggest a fundamental characteristic of the Nazi worldview which continues to perplex us.

The reason for this may reside in the Nazis' strategic use of popular and recognizable themes (such as classical ideals in beauty) to convey their views to the masses. In purely visual terms, their creations can be called beautiful, though the meaning they carry as symbols of murderous racism are bound to anti-Nazi perceptions of evil. This creates a confusion of meaning between good and evil, resulting in an unsettling form of art which could be termed 'uncanny'.¹⁷¹ In this regard, cultural Theorist Susan Sontag argues the beauty of Nazi art should never be separated from the ugliness of the ideology that inspired its creation.¹⁷²

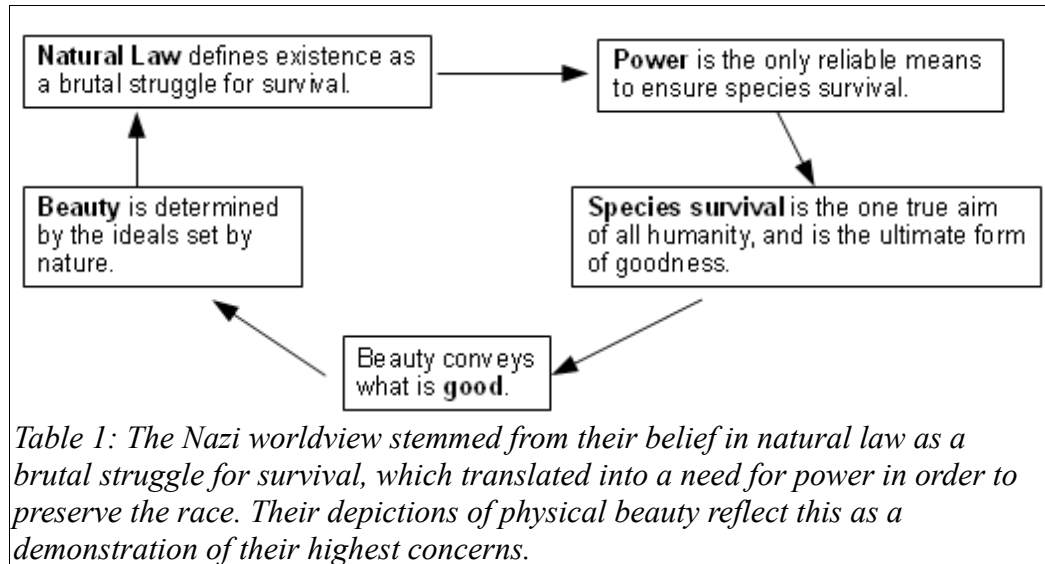
By examining Nazi art and ideological rhetoric, it becomes evident that beauty,

¹⁷⁰ Petropoulos, *The Faustian Bargain*, 225, 257-258; Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*, (Indiana: Indiana University Publishing, 1993), 19-20.

¹⁷¹ The uncanny is a concept developed by Sigmund Freud to signify "the strange within the familiar", or the *hemlich* (familiar and comfortable) reversed and made *unheimlich* (uncanny strangeness) that results in unconscious fear and anxiety that is not always explainable. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, (New York: Columbia University, 1991), 182-183.

¹⁷² Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *Under the Sign of Saturn*, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 6-10.

power, and notions of race were combined into one entity. Beauty was consistent with the ideals of nature, which in relation to the race struggle meant physical power or even brutality.



Even though the human body is a common subject for artistic representation, Nazism turned it into an ideologically charged form of expression tied to the specific context of the Third Reich. The desire to purify the race was an all-consuming obsession, and the ideals they represented in art were reflected in their eugenic attempts at social engineering.¹⁷³ The works of Josef Thorak highlight the importance of physical strength and power in Nazi thought, and he was by no means the only artist to do so. Arno Breker and George Kolbe were fellow sculptors who created works representing similar themes, as did the painters Adolf Ziegler and Albert Janesch, to name but a few.

¹⁷³ Peter Reichel, "Festival and Cult: Masculine and Militaristic Mechanisms of National Socialism," *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, ed. J.A. Mangan, (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1999), 165.

Power as an attribute to evil

Regarding the theme of power and evil, the focus of anti-Nazi authors falls on the imbalance of power between the people and the state caused by the Third Reich. This perception was not the result of a systematic worldview derived from a particular ideology, but rather, reflects the role of their literature as social commentary derived from the observations of individual authors. As such, a consistent complaint raised by authors relates to the difficulty faced by opponents of the Nazi regime in carrying out acts of meaningful resistance, due to their own lack of power.

The Nazi leadership

In criticizing the power of the Third Reich, many authors focus on the Nazi leadership, and Hitler in particular, as heavily flawed figures of immense authority who were treated by the press and the public with a kind of spiritual reverence. This relates to the historical reality of the actual power enjoyed by Hitler and his chiefs of staff, as well as the aura of authority they created for themselves through propaganda and pageantry.

Ernst Jünger¹⁷⁴ is one author who made a unique contribution to anti-Nazi literature through his 1939 novel, *On Marble Cliffs*,¹⁷⁵ which is set in a vaguely historical fantasy land and documents the rise of a tyrannical menace, called “the Chief Ranger.”

¹⁷⁴ Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) began a military career early in life after running away from school to join the Foreign Legion African Divisions. In 1914 he volunteered for military service, was commissioned as an officer, and became a highly decorated veteran after being wounded several times in the trenches. He recorded his experiences in his 1920 novel, *Stahlgewittern* ('The Storm of Steel'), which became his most famous and widely read work. Though Jünger retained some similar 'blood and soil' nationalist ideals as the Nazis and was celebrated by them as a hero, he became disillusioned with the tyranny of Hitler's regime. This criticism of tyranny is evident in his 1939 novel, *On Marble Cliffs*, which also reveals elements of the nihilism that Jünger struggled with throughout life. John K. Cooley, "The Adventures of Ernst Jünger," *Books Abroad*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Autumn, 1958), 365-368.

¹⁷⁵ *On Marble Cliffs* is an example of subversive literature which criticizes Hitler and the Third Reich using the veil of a semi-historical setting. The narrative is set in a pristine natural landscape that incorporates elements of history and fantasy, called 'The Great Marina', which is threatened by the rise of a tyrant called the 'Chief Ranger'. The novel was published in 1939 in Germany and though it was recognized for its subversive commentary, the author was not punished.

The Chief Ranger is the leader of a people called “the Mauretanians,” and can be read as a relatively thinly veiled commentary on Hitler and the Nazis. The narrative takes place in an idyllic pastoral land called “The Great Marina,” which is conquered by the Chief Ranger and descends into a state of anarchy. The narrator is a naturalist and respected war veteran who spends time in the Chief Ranger's camp, becoming familiar with his character, as well as that of his supporters:

Thus I had frequent opportunities to see him close at hand, and felt the breath of primitive power that surrounded him like a breeze from his forests. At this period I was scarcely disturbed by the inflexibility of his nature, for all Mauretanians acquire with time something of the nature of an automaton. This characteristic is particularly marked in their glance, and so the eyes of the Chief Ranger, too – especially when he laughed – gleamed with terrifying mirth. Like those of hardened drinkers, they were touched with a red flame, but expressed both cunning and unshakeable power yes, at times even majesty. Then we took pleasure in his company and lived in arrogance at the table of the great ones of the world.¹⁷⁶

The tyrant is described in these terms as something akin to a primitive force of nature, and his followers are presented similarly as fearless beings of chaos and destruction.¹⁷⁷

They are innately savage due to their inherited traits, and demand that their leaders rule with absolute authority. Jünger writes:

They demanded that power should be exercised dispassionately as by a god, and correspondingly its schools produced a race of spirits who were bright, untrammelled, but always terrible. Similarly, whether their duties lay in insurrection or in order, wherever they won the day they won it as Mauretanians, and the proud 'Semper victrix' of this Order applied not only to its members, but to its head and fount of doctrine. Immovable amongst the wild currents of the times he stood, and in his residence and palaces one was on firm ground.¹⁷⁸

Though the savagery of 'the Mauretanians' is presented as a characteristic of their innate nature, they become unnecessarily destructive towards the simple agrarian lifestyle idolized by the narrator, and as their power swells, they becomes a threat to the world's natural balance. The disillusionment expressed by the narrator in light of this destructive

¹⁷⁶ Ernst Jünger, *On Marble Cliffs* (*Auf dem Marmorkippen*), first published in 1939, trans. Stuart Hood, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Inc., 1970), 33.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 34-35.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 34.

behaviour likely reflects the author's own relationship with the Nazi Party, for, as a veteran of the First World War with nationalist leanings, Jünger shared some views with the Nazis,¹⁷⁹ but he did not support Hitler's style of government and distanced himself from the Party. As a solution to the problem of tyrannical power, Jünger suggests in his novel that the imbalance to nature brought by the excessive savagery of the Mauretanians would be their undoing, for the universe, which was far more powerful than humanity, would seek to right itself, bringing ruin to the tyrant and his supporters.

Unlike the veiled criticisms in Jünger's novel, the characterization of 'power' in Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* portrays Hitler and the Nazi high-command directly. Hitler is presented as a partially insane man with with a godlike aura of authority, whose sense of reality had become almost entirely unhinged. Mann writes:

The Führer's eyes are abstracted and dull like those of a blind man. Is he looking inward, straining his ears to hear something inside himself? Perhaps. Perhaps he is listening to the same message that his propaganda ministers and all the newspapers he controls never tire of repeating: that he is the one sent from God who need only to follow his own star and Germany and then the whole world will prosper under his leadership.¹⁸⁰

In a surreal vision of corrupt power, Klaus Mann describes the atmosphere of dread and power surrounding Hermann Göring and Joseph Goebbels, who join Hitler in a triumvirate of evil:

[...] the massive air force officer, newly promoted to general, belonged to the very highest summit of the authoritarian and all-powerful state. Above him was only the Führer – a man hardly to be numbered any longer among mortals. Like the Lord of Heaven with his archangels, so was the dictator surrounded by his paladins. At his right hand stood the agile gnome with the profile of a bird of prey, the deformed prophet, the eulogist, the insinuator and propagandist, who had the cleft tongue of a snake and invented lies at the rate of one a minute. To the left of the Master stood the obese giant, resting on his executioner's sword, blazing with medals and gold braid, every day tricked out in a new fancy dress. While the little man on the right of the throne created the lies, the fat man daily thought up surprises – for his own diversion and that of the people – entertainments, executions.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ He was arguably nationalistic, struggled with feelings of nihilism throughout his life, was interested in the land and nature as sacred ideals, and focused on militaristic themes in his writings. He was also celebrated as a hero by the National Socialists.

¹⁸⁰ Mann, *Mephisto*, 183-184.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 181-182.

Individual descriptions of Hermann Göring and Joseph Goebbels present either man as a disfigured monstrosity whose evil character is reflected through their menacing physical presence. Mann describes Goering as an immensely fat giant who is both terrifying and ludicrous, stating:

The smirk of even the boldest onlooker would fade at the thought of how much blood had already flowed at the bidding of the fat giant, and what incalculable rivers of blood might yet flow in his honour.¹⁸²

Goebbels is similarly characterized as deformed monster, whose twisted birdlike appearance inspires extreme fear and animosity, as Mann writes:

The minister of propaganda, overlord of the spiritual life of millions, limped nimbly through the glittering throng which bowed down before him. An icy wind seemed to blow as he passed. It was as though an evil, solitary and cruel god had clambered down among the everyday bustle of pleasure-seeking, cowardly, pitiful mortals.¹⁸³

Hitler is a more extreme example, who, in addition to being hypocritical and deceitful, executes his most loyal comrades for being “too unmanageable.”¹⁸⁴ Throughout *Mephisto*, the Nazi leadership is presented in these and similar forms as immensely powerful, ugly, and utterly devoid of moral scruples. By embodying the overwhelming force of evil that had taken hold of Germany, Klaus Mann uses the Nazi leadership to establish an image of evil for the surrounding narrative context.

The description of the Nazi leaders as larger-than-life personalities of immense power is not unique to Mann's novel. Bertolt Brecht's *Schweyk in the Second World War* presents a similar vision of Hitler and the Nazi high command as godlike beings who stand above worldly events planning the fates of common men, (though his portrayal is somewhat ambivalent towards their moral character, as they are more out-of-touch with

¹⁸² Ibid, 15.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 11.

¹⁸⁴ Mann writes: “He was the gentlest of men – he loved animals, never touched meat – but he could watch the execution of the most loyal comrades without turning a hair.” Ibid, 247-248.

reality than truly evil).¹⁸⁵ A similar portrayal of Hitler's immense power is made in Arnold Zweig's¹⁸⁶ *The Axe of Wandsbek*,¹⁸⁷ where the Nazi state is referred to as the "Empire of the Sun-God Adolf" and it is later suggested that Hitler could even be the Antichrist.¹⁸⁸ Zweig also attributes the Führer's power to enthrall the masses through speech to a supernatural gift:

That men should be capable, for hours together, of producing a succession of word-pictures, was surely a little uncanny. In earlier days it would have signified that God or the Devil must have had his finger in the game. [...] It was now described as the spirit of the Nordic race, the expression of all that is most gloriously German.¹⁸⁹

The characterization of Nazi leaders as supernatural or godlike in appearance relates to an element of historical reality, for Hitler was treated as a kind of Germanic messiah by propagandists, and was the object of an adoring personality cult. The massive Party rallies are but one example of Hitler's strategically planned larger-than-life persona, as demonstrated in *Triumph of the Will*,¹⁹⁰ a film by Leni Riefenstahl.¹⁹¹ In this artistic documentary-style film based around the 1934 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg, Hitler's presence is first announced through the appearance of a plane, whose cruciform shadow passes over the land, followed shortly after by Rudolf Hess' declaration to Hitler "You are Germany!" The throngs of radiant faces, cries of joy, and communal ecstasy juxtaposed

185 Brecht, "Schweyk in the Second World War," 111.

186 After serving on the Western Front during the First World War, Arnold Zweig (1887-1968) became a pacifist and academic. This, in addition to being a Jew, made Zweig a natural target for persecution and as a result he went into exile after 1933. He eventually settling in Palestine after relocating several times within Europe.

187 Written in 1943, *The Axe of Wandsbek* was inspired by a report read by the author in 1938. The narrative follows master-butcher Albert Teetjen and his wife Stine, who, after collaborating with the Nazis and collecting a payment in return for conducting several executions, become ostracized from their community and fall into disgrace; the disloyal, opportunistic, and indecent character of the Nazi Party is revealed in the process.

188 Arnold Zweig, *The Axe of Wandsbek*, trans. Eric Sutton, (London; New York; Melbourne; Sydney; Cape Town: Hutchinson International Authors Limited, 1948), 77, 328.

189 Ibid, 126-127.

190 Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens*.

191 Leni Riefenstahl (1902-2003) was a German-born film director who is notable for her role in the creation of *Triumph of the Will* (1934) and *Olympia* (1936). Either film exhibits prominent National Socialist ideological themes, and were utilized by the State as propaganda. Though Riefenstahl repeatedly denied the propagandistic quality of her cinematic works, insisting instead that they were documentaries of "pure history" and that her primary interest was in beauty, many art historians have countered her views, citing both their historical function as propaganda, and the focus on beauty as an excuse for its noxious political meanings. Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," 2-6.

with Hitler's stern paternal gaze seems to reinforce this idea of the Führer as a super-human being or divine German saviour.¹⁹²

Overwhelming power was also an important aspect of Hitler's political appeal near the end of the Weimar Republic when the National Socialist Party became associated with the strict authority many believed was necessary to overcome Germany's social turmoil. In this capacity, Hitler was credited with having restored German honour by destroying the hated Versailles treaty. Hitler's use of propaganda was largely successful in manoeuvring public opinion to strengthen his popularity, and his policies were often supported by the people.¹⁹³

Though National Socialism was a political movement and not a religion, many of its characteristics resemble religion in form or feeling. An example of this can be found in the ritualized 'German greeting' of "Heil Hitler" which could be translated to suggest Hitler's spiritual role (as in 'best wishes to you in the name of Hitler').¹⁹⁴ Despite Hitler's criticisms of organized religion and insistence that National Socialism should not in any way become a form of worship,¹⁹⁵ many elements of the movement came to mimic Christian forms of expression, such as a prayer written by Baldur von Schirach for the Hitler Youth:

Adolf Hitler, we believe in Thee. Without Thee we would be alone. Through Thee we are a people. Thou has given us the great experience of our youth, comradeship. Thou hast laid upon us the task, the duty, and the responsibility. Thou has given us Thy Name (*Hitlerjugend*), the most beloved Name that Germany has ever possessed. We speak it with reverence, we bear it with faith and loyalty. Thou canst depend upon us, Adolf Hitler, Leader and Standard-Bearer. The Youth is Thy Name. Thy Name is the Youth. Thou and the young millions can never be sundered.¹⁹⁶

192 Leni Riefenstahl (director), *Triumph des Willens*, film, German, 112 minutes, 1 VHS cassette, first distributed in Germany, 1934-1936, (Santa Monica, Calif.: Connoisseur Video Collection/An Esicma Corporation, 1992).

193 Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 257-260.

194 Tilman Allert, *The Hitler Salute: On the Meaning of a Gesture*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), 42.

195 Hitler states: "[...] there will never be any possibility of National Socialism's setting out to ape religion by establishing a form of worship. Its one ambition must be scientifically to construct a doctrine that is nothing more than a homage to reason." Hitler, (September 23, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 32.

196 (Quoted in) Julius Yourman, "Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, vol. 13, no. 3,

This, combined with the idolization of Hitler's image and his widely quoted infallibility fostered an idea of the Führer as an omnipresent figure of godlike authority.¹⁹⁷

These characteristics suggest a pseudo-religious *belief* in Hitler that warrants a treatment of his views as the basis for a Hitler-worshipping system of racist belief. As the power of the Nazi Party increased during the Second World War (1939-1945), Hitler's will became an irresistible force in German society. Thus, the anti-Nazi literary depictions of Hitler as the cruel patriarch of a racist theocracy were in many ways an accurate reflection of historical reality.

As a contrast, many authors also bring focus to Hitler's petty personal flaws, which serves to undermine the Führer's aura of invincibility. Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*, which also presents the Führer as a figure of immense authority, describes Hitler's physical presence as ordinary and unflattering:

Power incarnate had an insignificant receding forehead, over which fell the legendary greasy strand of hair, and dead staring eyes. The face of Power was putty-white, bloated porous. Power had a very ordinary nose – a vulgar nose [...] Under the brown shirt swelled a flabby stomach. [...] Power used long words to impress the actor with its “education.” [...] The result was like a zealous schoolboy's lesson carefully learned by heart.¹⁹⁸

Similarly, in Zweig's *The Axe of Wandsbek*, the character of 'Albert Teetjen' (a Party member) describes his underwhelming impression of Hitler as “a dull, ordinary, stocky little man, with the wild and glittering eyes of a mouse” whose violent and brutish speech leaves only a bad impression.¹⁹⁹ In an unrelated episode from the same novel, the character of 'Käte Neumeier' (a member of the professional class, opposed to the Nazi regime) concludes that Hitler must be insane after examining his *Mein Kampf*, and

(Education Under Nazism, Nov., 1939), 152.

¹⁹⁷ Bytwerk, *Bending Spines*, 15-16, 41.

¹⁹⁸ Mann, *Mephisto*, 243.

¹⁹⁹ Zweig, *The Axe of Wandsbek*, 158.

comparing its paranoid theories to those of a known lunatic.²⁰⁰

The appearance of Nazi leaders in Lion Feuchtwanger's novels also serve as symbols of corrupt power. In *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, Hitler is described as a charismatic speaker with shallow personality. His power to mesmerize the masses is likened to that of a stage-magician who wins the audience without fail, but remains little more than an actor at heart. Feuchtwanger was an author who saw the Third Reich with considerable clarity and attributed much of the success of Nazism to Hitler's ability to capitalize on the fears and desires of the masses during moments of crisis, and to operate beyond the scope of conventional human behaviour. This idea is also found in Feuchtwanger's earlier work, *The Oppermanns*, in which Nazi power is attributed to their willingness to break from the conventions of civilized behaviour, as the author relates:

[...] our opponents have one tremendous advantage over us; their absolute lack of *fairness*. That is the very reason why they are in power today. They have always employed such primitive methods that the rest of us simply did not believe them possible, for they would not have been possible in any other country.²⁰¹

In addition to providing a social commentary on contemporary political affairs, descriptions of the Nazi leadership are used to characterize the environment or setting in which narrative-events unfold. In the world presented through anti-Nazi literature, reality is shaped by Hitler and his fellowship of commanders, who appear as heavily flawed and entirely corrupt beings of unstoppable power. Though the political leadership plays an important role in several works, they are never the centre of focus; In most cases they exist as an absent-presence whose authority is only felt through symbols and agents of their power. In this way, characterizations of the Nazi leadership serve to personify the spirit of brutality and hypocrisy that define the social environment of the Third Reich.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 180, 188.

²⁰¹ Feuchtwanger, *The Oppermanns*, 168.

Powerlessness and cruelty

Closely associated with these portrayals of political power is the depiction of powerlessness in anti-Nazi literature, as expressed by authors through the related themes of imprisonment, torture, and police brutality. Unlike characterizations of the Nazi leadership, descriptions of the prisoner experience demonstrate concern for the immediate physical threats posed to individual by the state.

For example, in Lion Feuchtwanger's *The Oppermanns*, the most poignant expression of Nazi power is the image of the concentration camp prisoner as a human marionette doll, flailing about under the command of an evil master. This is imagined by the character of Gustav Oppermann, a once prosperous Jewish man who had been forced into exile. Shortly after leaving Germany, Gustav returns to Germany wishing to better understand what had befallen his homeland, and what manner of resistance was taking place. His findings prove a disappointment, and he is soon arrested with false documents and sent to a concentration camp where he is tortured and subjected to forced labour. Over time he is transformed into an obedient mindless puppet, completely subjugated to the will of his tormentors. Though he survives and escapes into exile, the experience of complete powerlessness in the grip of overwhelming evil leaves him a broken man.²⁰²

Stephan Zweig²⁰³ is another author who commented on the prisoner experience in his 1942 novella, *The Royal Game*,²⁰⁴ which relates the story of a mysterious chess master who had been an accountant in Austria during the 1938 annexation. He is imprisoned by

²⁰² Ibid, 379-405.

²⁰³ Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) was a renowned German-Jewish author, playwright and journalist. He became a pacifist during the First World War, and he would remain so for the remainder of his life. After fleeing into exile, Zweig and his wife committed suicide together in 1942. Leon Botstein, "Stefan Zweig and the Illusion of the Jewish European," *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1 (Winter, 1982), 63-65.

²⁰⁴ First published in 1942, *The Royal Game* tells the story of a reclusive Austrian chess master aboard a transport ship off the coast of South America. The chess master had been arrested by the Nazis and held in solitary confinement and interrogated repeatedly, eventually causing a mental break to occur due to his isolation.

Nazi authorities and held in confinement without any interaction or mental occupation as a form of torture, and, as the chess master describes, is slowly driven towards madness:

In a concentration camp you might have had to cart stones, perhaps, until your hands bled and your feet froze in your shoes. You might have been crammed together with two dozen others, stinking and shivering. But you would have seen faces, had a field, a square, a tree, a star, something, anything, to look at; instead of here, where everything was never changing, always the same, always unbearably the same. There was nothing here that could release me from my thoughts, from my obsession with them, from my pathological reiteration of them. And that was exactly what they intended. I was to choke and choke on my thoughts until they asphyxiated me [...] ²⁰⁵

Zweig presents the Nazis as sophisticated torturers who are capable of specializing their method of torment to fit the needs of a given situation; in the case of the narrator this means breaking his mental resolve over a long and arduous duration of imprisonment.

A similar description is found in Hans Fallada's *Every Man Dies Alone*, during an episode in which the character Otto Quangel is awaiting execution and experiences the psychological terror of complete powerlessness:

There is a monstrous cruelty in the way fear is spun out over days, weeks, months. [...] it's a question of cruelty, of sadism, of barbarism. They don't beat you up in this establishment, don't torture you physically; here the poison is dribbled imperceptibly into you. They don't want to let your soul out of the clutches of death for a single minute. ²⁰⁶

In this work, torture is remorseless and sadistic, but also bureaucratic and impersonal; even the the Gestapo detective is sickened by the treatment of prisoners. ²⁰⁷

In addition, Hans Fallada's largely autobiographical work, *The Drinker* ²⁰⁸ offers a veiled commentary on the prisoner experience during the Third Reich. The narrator is a middle-class grocery owner who experiences financial difficulties and responds by becoming a severe alcoholic. He recounts his fall from grace as a result of addiction

²⁰⁵ Stefan Zweig, "The Royal Game," *The Royal Game and Other Stories*, trans. Jill Sutcliffe, (New York; London: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 22-23.

²⁰⁶ Fallada, *Every Man Dies Alone*, 475.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 149.

²⁰⁸ Written in 1944 while the author was incarcerated at Alt-Sterlitz prison for the attempted murder of his wife, Fallada wrote *The Drinker* in a code which was not deciphered until after the war, and was not published until 1950. The novel is heavily autobiographical and relates the story of a grocery owner who falls on hard times and quickly destroys his life's work by becoming an alcoholic, squandering his savings, and abusing his wife. This is followed by his incarceration in prison and eventual committal to an insane asylum, where he purposefully infects himself with tuberculosis in order that he should die.

which leads towards his complete ruin and eventual imprisonment. Since the novel was written inside Germany during the Second World War, the author was unable to make overt criticisms of the State, but the subversive messages of this work are fairly clear. This is especially true during the last stages of the narrators incarceration at a mental hospital, which is described as a place without hope or justice, where “blind obedience” and “iron discipline” prevail as the basic rules of existence. In the narrator's voice, Fallada writes:

[...] I realized how helplessly I stood at the mercy of gigantic and pitiless powers, powers without heart, without compassion, without human qualities. I was caught in a great machine and nothing that I did or felt was of any more consequence, the machine would run its unalterable course, I might laugh or cry, the machine would take no notice.²⁰⁹

This theme of being caught within a relentless machine is a common subject found in many anti-Nazi works, which also relates to the prospect of resistance against evil.²¹⁰ Though the self-destructive behaviour of Fallada's protagonist serves as a confession of guilt, the description of the prison system and mental hospital also acts as a criticism of the brutality, inhumanity, and hopelessness of everyday life within the fascist police-state.

The plight of the innocent before the might of cruel authority figures is also a major theme of Erika Mitterer's *The Prince of Darkness*. The character of Theresa Nothafft is used in this novel to embody youthful innocence, but is accused of witchcraft, condemned and imprisoned, tortured, and finally executed. The Inquisitor in this work is the primary force of evil, and provides an interesting characterization of corrupted authority. He is an agent of religious power, and is never accosted by moral qualms or feelings of self-doubt. Moreover, he survives the novel unharmed; he is never made accountable or punished in any form, and the innocent are never saved. While the overt

209 Hans Fallada, *The Drinker*, trans. Charlotte and A. L. Lloyd, (London: Putnam & Co. Ltd., 1952), 175.

210 For further discussion on the questionable prospect of personal freedoms, see page 145.

narrative is a criticism of the Church patriarchy and papal Inquisition, Mitterer used the veil of historical fiction to criticize the Nazi state, and in this way, criticisms directed against the irrational fear of Satan and associated persecution of social undesirables are easily transferred to Hitler's persecution of Jews and dissidents.

The persecution of 'outsiders' and brutal treatment of prisoners described in the works of Feuchtwanger, Zweig, Fallada, and Mitterer (to name a few), reflects the harsh reality of civilian persecution under Hitler's reign. The Nazis strategically targeted “objective enemies” whose victimization stemmed not from misdeeds, but from the nature of their identity.²¹¹ The identity of objective enemies could change according to circumstance, and may have included considerations of physical form, ethnicity, ideological view, or social status. Historian Robert Gallately notes that early acts of persecution targeted the mentally ill, communists, and Jews, but soon expanded to include a whole host of other 'social outsiders'.²¹² With time, as the Nazi Party increased its position of power and opposition dwindled, persecutions became increasingly brutal as definitions of treason were broadened to include a greater number of crimes, including such banal charges as “malicious gossip” and the vaguely defined 'asocial' (which could indicate any person who went against the Nazi-defined concept of good citizenship).²¹³

The persecution of enemies was not kept secret by the Nazis, who promoted hatred and violence as the necessary evils of the Aryan struggle. Public awareness of Nazi brutality was demonstrated on the 'night of the long knives',²¹⁴ which revealed to the

211 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 547-549.

212 Robert Gallately and Nathan Stolfus (eds.), *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, (New Jersey; Oxfordshire (UK): Princeton University Press, 2001), 11-12.

213 Gallately, *Backing Hitler*, 12, 20-21.

214 A 1934 internal purge of National Socialist ranks, which amounted to a brutal massacre. It was directed primarily against Ernst Röhm and the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) para-military group, and was a very public event.

world the level of violence Hitler was capable of. Hitler respected the use of violence in politics, and even expressed admiration for the communists' willingness to use "terror and force" to win their arguments.²¹⁵ Despite this, popular support for Hitler was maintained thanks largely to a propaganda narrative which framed such harshness as necessary for the protection society and preservation of good order.

The brutality of Hitler's government increased near the end of the Third Reich, as the condition of 'total war' meant social life was treated with the severity of the battlefield, and even minor violations of law could result in execution. This was out of consideration for the front-line soldiers who faced death in battle; in return, Hitler believed the civilian population should expect little mercy when they violated the law.²¹⁶ In this vein, Hannah Arendt argues that it is typical of totalitarian governments to rule in the style of a foreign conqueror, even in their own homeland, a pattern which holds true for Hitler and the Nazis.²¹⁷

Theorist Hannah Arendt perceived Nazi violence as both a political instrument for repressing dissent, and as a reflection of the social environment during the Weimar Republic. Political violence, she writes, "had become a kind of philosophy through which to express frustration, resentment, and blind hatred, a kind of political expressionism..."²¹⁸ The violence of brutality could also be attributed to a basic desire to live beyond the facade of bourgeois hypocrisy, and to accept the destructive urges that

215 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 53-54.

216 Hitler states: "If the slightest attempt at a riot were to break out at this moment anywhere in the whole Reich, I'd take immediate measures against it. Here's what I'd do: a) on the same day, all the leaders of the opposition, including the leaders of the Catholic party, would be arrested and executed; b) all the occupants of the concentration camps would be shot within three days; c) all the criminals on our lists – and it would make little difference whether they were in prison or at liberty – would be shot within the same period. [...] As for the justification of these summary executions, I've only to think of the German idealists who are risking their lives in front of the enemy or showing their devotion in a war factory, whatever their job may be, and employing all their efforts for the victory of the fatherland." Hitler, (April 7, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 308-309.

217 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 539.

218 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 439.

dwelt inside the frustrated individual.²¹⁹ Alternatively, Jacques Ellul interprets Nazi violence as an example of “action for action's sake;” that political actions served as an accessory to propaganda by aiding in the mobilization of the masses and thereby furthering the Party's empowerment.²²⁰ Regardless of the motivation behind acts of terror, Nazi brutality amounted to a criminalization of everyday life and widespread victimization of the civilian population.

In anti-Nazi literature, criticisms of brutality were also made through descriptions of those immediately responsible for physical violence against civilians, namely torturers and interrogators. In *The Prince of Darkness*, Erika Mitterer speculates on the mentality of a torturer, presenting him as internally conflicted but also unwilling to challenge the will of his superiors:

The screams of the tortured rang in his ears long after he had left the fetid chamber and was out in the bright autumnal street. He began to worry – was everything true that the tortured women screamed aloud when they were practically out of their minds with pain? But he rejected such thoughts angrily. To brood over it is not one of your duties, he told himself. That's what the educated men are for. But his thoughts were as pesky as fleas and just as difficult to squelch.²²¹

Though he is not inherently cruel, sense of duty and peer-pressure compels him to behave as an unthinking brute, and over time he undergoes a process of moral hardening which lends itself to greater acts of cruelty. Mitterer writes:

But now he had to get accustomed to inflicting, not a quick death on the guilty, but slow torture and inescapable fear. As if it were in his power to free them, they raised their fettered hands up to him and begged for mercy. And he, who knew that in his position pity was a sin, because it only increased the misery of the victims, didn't want to soften, and in his defence became mean and brutal.²²²

As a historical document that comments on the Third Reich, Mitterer suggests the low-level collaborators with Nazi crimes – the police interrogators and street thugs – were not

²¹⁹ Ibid, 443-444.

²²⁰ Ellul, *Propaganda*, 195-198.

²²¹ Mitterer, *The Prince of Darkness*, 580-581.

²²² Ibid, 581.

necessarily motivated by cruel or sadistic desires, but rather, by their passive obedience towards social pressures.

Other anti-Nazi authors write in agreement with this perspective, such as Bertolt Brecht whose *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* presents the character of a torturer as a normal man dutifully bound to the will of a cruel overseer.²²³ As a contrast, Erich Maria Remarque presents the Nazi torturer as a purely sadistic and immoral figure in his novel, *Arch of Triumph*. In this work, Ravic, the cynical protagonist, is the former prisoner of a Nazi concentration camp living in Paris as an exile. During a climactic moment of traumatic memory recall, he imagines himself confronting his former interrogator and recounts the crimes he and other prisoners had been forced to endure. Through all of his memories of pain and suffering, the image of the interrogator's smiling face emerges as the epitome evil.²²⁴ In this capacity, the torturer is presented as a sadistic criminal whose evil could not be redeemed.

It is not surprising that the prisoner experience was treated with such prominence in anti-Nazi literature, as the concentration camps and prison system were a very real and terrifying threat used in the suppression of dissent. While historian Robert Gallately notes that the concentration camps were not openly discussed by German media after the outbreak of war, there was still everyday evidence of their existence conveyed through their proximity to outside communities and the rumours that circulated around them.²²⁵ Authors would have known of the prison-camps and had a personal reason to fear them, as is reflected through the animosity by which they are described.

²²³ Brecht, "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich," 26-27.

²²⁴ Remarque, *Arch of Triumph*, 394.

²²⁵ Gallately, *Backing Hitler*, 204.

Themes relating to the powerlessness of victims and the cruelty of perpetrators are used to highlight the unnecessary pain and suffering inflicted by the Nazis against the civilian population as a result of their brutal authority. While some individual perpetrators are given focus as embodiments of sadistic evil, the overarching focus of criticism with regards to cruelty stems from the imbalance of power brought to Germany as a result of Nazi rule.

Conclusion

In anti-Nazi literature, power is overwhelmingly blamed for having facilitated evil. Though the Nazis' political leadership is presented as immeasurably corrupt, ugly, and even stupid, they retain immense power and are left free to commit any excess they please. This is due largely to the fundamental injustice of their worldview (described in chapter one) which not only removes the citizen's traditional protective barriers (such as a fair trial), but encourages acts of cruelty against supposed 'enemies' of the state.

According to anti-Nazi literature, propaganda was used to spread the infectious Nazi worldview, but force was the means by which it became a reality, as reflected through the new laws governing behaviour and abilities granted the police. Power made the Nazis unstoppable, so much so that the personality of the Nazi leadership is used to embody the character of Germany's harsh new reality.

In contrast with this view, Nazi propaganda presented power as an essential tool in resisting evil, and that the use of brutal force merely reflected the brutality of natural law. In this context, lack of power could even be viewed as a cause of evil, for it was the Jews'

supposed weakness which prevented them from surviving independently, forcing them to leech off the accomplishments of other peoples. Thus, to the Nazis, power was not only essential for preserving the race, it was an essential virtue defining Germanic 'goodness'.

While both worldviews agree that the Nazis were powerful and capable of extreme brutality, a crucial element which forces them into opposition is the rejection of belief in the supposed race-struggle by anti-Nazi authors.

In the previous chapter, it was argued that authors did not view the Nazis' belief in propaganda as genuine; the Nazis were presented as skilled liars who used misinformation and coercion to manipulate the public, and that every argument they made was a deceptive facade. As such, most authors do not address the official claims of the Nazis directly, leaving the problem of Antisemitism largely unexamined.²²⁶ In most cases, Antisemitism is mentioned in passing along with other Nazi crimes, and is typically presented as another symptom of the Nazis' dishonesty. Since the Germanic race's struggle for survival against Jewish oppression was the principle argument that lent legitimacy to the Nazi cause, rejecting the authenticity of their belief turned every extreme action into a demonstration of unjustified brutality.

²²⁶ One exception is Lion Feuchtwanger's *The Oppermanns* which does focus particular attention on the persecution of Jews, but even here it is not the only focus of his novel.

CHAPTER 3

Nazism and the Struggle Between Good and Evil

In light of the perceptions of evil described in the last two chapters, it was only natural for Nazi propagandists and anti-Nazi writers to envision the Third Reich as the object of a great struggle between good and evil. For the Nazis, this meant striving to achieve the social and political aims of their cause, while at the same time working to thwart the supposed evil of the 'international Jewish conspiracy'. Conversely, the pursuit of goodness in spite of the overwhelming power of the Third Reich is a central theme of conflict in most works of anti-Nazi literature. A distinct understanding of humanity lay at the heart of either perspective, which extended to their respective view of ideals and the individual's relation to the state. The Nazis' racist beliefs led them to see humanity in black and white as clearly divided between forces of absolute good and absolute evil. By contrast, anti-Nazi authors depict humanity in various shades of grey, often suggesting that social context played a powerful role in determining individual behaviour relative to the state. Moreover, while the Nazi perspective set limitations governing the behaviour of the masses (as established by their innate characteristics), anti-Nazi authors focus on free will as it applied to individuals, and present the freedom to choose one's own path as the last refuge for hope in the Third Reich.

Visions of society in Nazi propaganda

The social vision of the Nazis, pertaining to the supposed struggle between good and evil, should be regarded within the context of their primary concern: winning and

maintaining power. Since Hitler modelled himself as the hero of the people, winning the support of the masses – or at least maintaining the semblance of wide-spread public support – was crucial to his political image. As time passed and Europe became embroiled in the Second World War, the military needs of the state forced martial ideals (such as duty and self-sacrifice) to the fore as the most important German virtues. In these regards, propagandists framed the Nazi movement as part of a noble struggle between good and evil, which also served as a tool to motivate the masses, enticing them on the one hand with promises of a utopian future, and threatening them on the other with visions of terror in the event of defeat. The underlying significance of this theme was the suggestion that good and evil existed in fixed terms; that the Germans were necessarily good and the enemy were necessarily evil, and that either status was not so much a matter of choice as it was a fact of identity.

The utopian dream of Nazism as a reflection of the people's will

Harnessing the power of the masses by gaining their support was essential to the political success of the Nazi cause. To entice supporters, propagandists presented Germans with their grand vision of an idealized society based on the collective will of the people. This social ideal anticipated the emotional needs of the masses, and provided them with a solution to their feelings of alienation, insecurity, and bitterness. Moreover, their Utopian dream was presented as an achievable prospect which could be brought about through a united effort, though human nature would require engineering in order to do so.²²⁷

²²⁷ Bytwerk, *Bending Spines*, 38.

As should be expected, race also played a central role in the design of the Nazis' utopia. Establishing belief in Antisemitism and implementing eugenic practices was presented as a crucial first step towards perfecting society. According to Hitler's logic, this was because the offspring of mixed-race couplings would necessarily result in a "lowering of the standard of the higher race" and the "physical and mental regression" of the people.²²⁸ Thus, it can be concluded that the Nazis believed the will of the people could not be carried through until the people themselves had been purified.

After a process for purifying the race had been established,²²⁹ the only essential contribution from the masses that was needed to create the ideal society was belief in National Socialism. Since it was believed that the enthusiastic support for Nazism by a majority of the people would empower the Party organization, this requirement was essential to all of their political ambitions, including the perfection of society. In this regard, Hitler emphasized the political importance of the masses, and wished to present the power of National Socialism as an outpouring of the people's will. He states:

The man who means to act must find his support in faith, and faith is found only in the people. The great masses have no mercy, they go straight ahead with the simplicity of innocence. We have seen what a people is capable of, when it is led. All possibilities exist in it, for good as well as for evil. The duty of National Socialism inevitably boils down to this: all that is best in the people should be allowed ceaselessly to develop.²³⁰

Beyond these prerequisites of racial purity and Party enthusiasm, the precise character of the the Nazis' social ideal is best understood through the example set by their mass political rallies. As well as celebrating Nazi ideology, these massive events were intended to serve as an ideal environment for converting new members to the movement, as Hitler makes clear:

228 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 392.

229 Laws governing marriage rights and the persecution of Jews are two such examples.

230 Hitler, (21 Sept, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 30.

The 'community' of the mass rally strengthens not only the individual, but binds together all, and helps create party spirit [...] When a participant enters a mass gathering for the first time and suddenly has tens of thousands of men with the same views around him; when he, as one who is 'seeking' is swept along with the mighty effect of a suggestive ecstasy of three or four thousand others [...] then he himself lies under the magical influence of mass suggestion [...] he has become a member of the 'new community'.²³¹

In this way, the Nazi rally should be viewed as a highly symbolic event that represented their vision for a model society.

One of the best examples of Nazi propaganda demonstrating the social ideal of the 'new community' is found in Leni Riefenstahl's documentary style film, *Triumph of the Will*, which documents the 1934 Party rally at Nuremburg. While its objectives are disputed, Riefenstahl's film focuses attention on the masses in such a manner that an impression of the powerful emotional appeal of Nazism is conveyed. In the film, the crowd appears rapturously entranced in the presence of the Führer, as if standing before a messiah. Other than direct focus on Hitler and other Party leaders, individuals are given only brief moments of attention, but are used to show the emotional joy and enthusiasm of supporters. In *Triumph of the Will*, cheering crowds of jubilant spectators chant in unison and are viewed from above as a great collective mass whose saluting and marching legions take on the dizzying appearance of an enormous single entity. The singular identity or collective will of the mass, which also embodies the essence of 'the new community', can be understood as the underlying meaning of the film.

This depiction of collective will was meant to show the empowerment of the people, but it also serves as a demonstration of mass conformity. In abandoning their individual identities by joining together before their leader, the participants of the rally would come to embody the strength of the 'new community' through demonstrations of

²³¹ Simon Taylor, "Symbol and Ritual under National Socialism," *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 32, no. 4, (London: Blackwell Publishing, Dec. 1981), 512.

obedience. Thus, in addition to lending an appearance of legitimacy to Hitler's government, the Nazi political rally emphasized the weakness of individuality next to the great power of the mass.²³²

Since the notion of documentary realism in *Triumph of the Will* was part of its propaganda value, the impression of the people's enthusiasm was made to appear spontaneous, though the 1934 Party rally was in fact a carefully arranged and orchestrated event.²³³ However, regarding propaganda's objective of social control, reality was secondary to the presentation of reality, and in this way, participants of the rally can be viewed as symbolic objects used to advertise National Socialist values.²³⁴ In this vein, cultural theorist, Siegfried Kracauer, identifies the phenomenon of the Party rally as "the mass ornament," which he describes as "the rational and empty form of the cult, devoid of explicit meaning."²³⁵ Kracauer argues that the objective of the mass ornament was for its own end, for it did not arise naturally from a spontaneous occurrence, and its sole purpose was for the demonstration of an immense pattern of human bodies, glorifying obedience and conformity, while undermining the independence of the individual.²³⁶

This interpretation of the Nazi political rally is supported by Hitler's perception of the masses as irrational and driven by emotion, as he suggests: "The great mass of a people consists neither of professors nor diplomats. The small abstract knowledge it possesses directs its sentiments rather to the world of feeling."²³⁷ Rational objectivity was seen as a form of weakness by Nazi propagandists who promoted fanaticism as a more

232 Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," 8; Taylor, "Symbol and Ritual under National Socialism," 512.

233 Thomas Elsaesser, "Leni Riefenstahl: The Body Beautiful, Art Cinema and Fascist Aesthetics," *Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader*, eds. Pam Cook and Philip Dodd, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 192.

234 Taylor, "Symbol and Ritual under National Socialism," 512.

235 Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. Thomas Levin, (Printed in the United States of America: The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1995), 84.

236 Ibid, 75-85.

237 Quoted in: Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 8.

honest reflection of their Party spirit. Furthermore, political theorist Hannah Arendt argues that one reason the masses were drawn to Nazism was for the allure of escape from the everyday problems of their lives by letting go of reason and joining in with something magical.²³⁸ Along these lines, Hitler argued that making an emotional impression on the people through his and the Party's aura of power was the surest means of winning their hearts, for they bore the submissive traits of 'feminine irrationality':

Like a woman, whose psychic feeling is influenced less by abstract reasoning than by an undefinable, sentimental longing for complementary strength, who will submit to the strong man rather than dominate the weakling, thus the masses love the ruler rather than the suppliant, and inwardly they are far more satisfied by a doctrine which tolerates no rival than by the grant of liberal freedom they often feel at a loss what to do with it, and even easily feel themselves deserted.²³⁹

In keeping with Hitler's views, the characteristics of the 'new community' were determined largely by how propagandists perceived the masses, as well as how they wished them to be. While the degree by which the success of Nazism relied upon its use of propaganda is a matter for debate, Hitler viewed it as incredibly important to their cause, and placed great emphasis on the need for propagandists to properly understand the masses. This was in order for propaganda to reach its full effect, for public opinion was thought to be more easily manoeuvred in directions that agreed with its prevailing trends. This view is shared by cultural theorist Jacques Ellul, who also argues that the political leader whose rule relies on their effective use of propaganda must have a close understanding of society in order to maintain an appearance of serving public opinion while at the same time directing it.²⁴⁰

According to Ellul, the Nazis approached society by regarding the masses according to their assumed common traits. For this purpose the middle class – which was

²³⁸ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 458.

²³⁹ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 56.

²⁴⁰ Ellul, *Propaganda*, 124.

poor enough to be average but rich enough to be educated – served as an “average society” to gauge prevailing trends.²⁴¹ There were a number of concerns which particularly affected Germany's middle class during the lead-up to Hitler's reign, including a pronounced fear of communism, the desire for security and economic stability, a lingering sense of injustice over the Versailles treaty, and a desire for prestige on the world stage. Some historians, including Martin Broszat, have argued that the Nazis owed their popularity more to social fears of communism and a desire for Germany's economic rehabilitation than to notions of race or appeals to nationalism.²⁴² It can also be surmised that the collective experience brought through participation with the Nazi movement would have had a powerful emotional impact on supporters, which might have compensated for its relatively weak political theory and contributed significantly to its overall success.

The idea of becoming part of the 'new community' was intended to inspire feelings of joy and hope through participation with something grand, and of being special due to one's association with the movement rather than one's individuality. It was also presented as a choice, though appearing to support the Nazi Party became compulsory for survival in the Third Reich as fear of persecution increased. In this way, the 'new community' served as an ideal to entice supporters as well as a tool to repress opposition, for any individual suspected of harbouring anti-Nazi feeling (and thus an outsider to the 'new community') could automatically be considered an enemy to Germany. Thus, as the

²⁴¹ Ibid, 34-39, 67, 105-106.

²⁴² According to historian Martin Broszat, “For the millions of new Hitler voters, who (more for psychological reasons than material ones) wanted nothing to do with the Marxist parties and who overwhelmingly adopted an apolitical, ult-nationalist stance, voting for the NSDAP meant not so much a deliberate acknowledgement of National Socialist ideology as a rejection of the existing circumstances and the approval of the Hitler movement as probably the strongest force for change.” Broszat, *The Hitler State*, 27-28.

supposed embodiment of the people's utopian ambitions, the 'new community' was a powerful idea used to advance the political aims of the Party organization.

Martial values: duty and the nobility of self-sacrifice

The goal of forming the 'new community' relates to a second facet of the Nazis' social ideal, which is the glorification of the military as the model on which society should be structured. Just as the idea of the 'new community' was used to advance the political needs of the Nazi Party, martial virtues were applied broadly to society in order to match the needs of the state. This culminated in a celebration of duty and self-sacrifice as the defining traits of noble Germanic identity. This also fed directly into the supposed struggle between good and evil by establishing standards for the populace to follow when enduring hardship as a result of war under Nazi rule.

Germany's militarization during the Third Reich stipulated that society should reflect the function and structure of the army, as characterized by a utilitarian focus on strict order, severe discipline, obedience, duty, and self-sacrifice.²⁴³ Thus, despite Hitler's desire for authentic popular support, he also recognized the need for brutal force in maintaining power, stating:

Man is not endowed by nature with the herd instinct, and it is only by the most rigorous methods that he can be induced to join the herd. He has the same urge as the dog, the rabbit and the hare, to couple up with one other being as a separate entity. The social State as such can be maintained only by a rule or iron; take away the laws, and the fabric falls immediately to pieces.²⁴⁴

This “rule of iron” entailed harsh discipline and a generally militarized attitude towards society which focused on the worth of citizens according to their use in the race war.

Accordingly, men were of value primarily as fighters, and women primarily as breeders.

²⁴³ Allert, *The Hitler Salute*, 47, 51.

²⁴⁴ Hitler, (29 August, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 507.

It is also in relation to martial ideals that children were regarded as the greatest hope for the future.

In educating the German youth, aspects of the military were adopted as the standards of perfection that they should look to. The *Schutzstaffel* (SS), an elite paramilitary organization, were particularly celebrated as the epitome of masculine perfection, combining a dramatic and rigid appearance with extreme military discipline, party ethic, and racial purity, thereby illustrating the aesthetic and moral ideals set by Nazi theorists.²⁴⁵ Children were primed for susceptibility to National Socialism through enforced idolization of such military figures as heroic, beautiful, and manly. Through propaganda, manliness became associated with the Nazi Party, which in turn encouraged young boys towards a belief in militarism and Antisemitism.²⁴⁶ The National Socialist movement was particularly concerned with properly educating the youth, as it was believed that only future generations raised without the taint of Judaism and modernity could reach that ultimate goal of creating the perfect society.²⁴⁷

In its broadest terms, the social importance of the military related to its role as the “breeding ground for the German virtues,” which included discipline, efficiency, even disposition, courage, bold recklessness, perseverance, and unyielding honesty.”²⁴⁸ Nazi theorists maintained that soldiers would adopt these virtues as a result of military service, and then pass them on to society. Alfred Rosenberg,²⁴⁹ believed the essential German virtues lay in such martial qualities as “personal honour,” the application of which, he

²⁴⁵ Peter Reichel, “Festival and Cult: Masculine and Militaristic Mechanisms of National Socialism,” 162.

²⁴⁶ Yourman, “Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany,” 153.

²⁴⁷ “The youth of today, which in ten years, in twenty years from now will be the personification of the National Socialist idea, will have known no other conception of the world, and they will be the product of an education which will make of them men well-disciplined and sure of themselves.” Hitler, (20 May, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 370.

²⁴⁸ Hitler, *Hitler's Second Book*, 31.

²⁴⁹ Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946) was a senior Nazi bureaucrat who made important contributions to the formation of Nazi ideology.

stated, “is what will decide our European future.”²⁵⁰ War itself was understood as a noble enterprise that brought out the best in people, because it tested the individual's sense of duty, demanded self-sacrifice, and, according to Hitler, exposed young heroes to “Fate's hammer stroke.”²⁵¹ Moreover, Hitler foresaw in war the essential ingredient for establishing an unbreakable national legacy, stating in 1942 that, “The battlefields of this war will be the cement which will bind into one indissoluble whole all the races of the Greater German Reich.”²⁵²

Martial ideals were given visual representation through a variety of modes of expression by Nazi artists, three exemplary cases being the sculptural reliefs of Arno Breker,²⁵³ titled *The Guard* (fig.17), *Kameraden*, and *Sacrifice* (fig.18). In addition to celebrating masculine strength and racial purity, these works were intended to depict the heroic and ancient character of the dynamic male warrior. In *The Guard*, the figure of a warrior stands poised for action, vigilant and ready for violence, his confident expression suggesting the noble warrior archetype. In *Sacrifice*, the figure is that of a fallen soldier, which celebrates death in battle as a tragic and heroic cost for the community's survival. *Kamaraden* depicts a dead warrior next to his comrade-in-arms, who grieves yet seems energetic and ready to carry on with battle.

In portraying these figures, Arno Breker was making an intentional allusion to classical antiquity. Use of the nude sculptural form to depict the martial male and the adoption of archaic weaponry (such as swords and shields) are common motifs of Greco-

250 Eric H. Vieler, *The Ideological Roots of German National Socialism*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 56.

251 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 402-403.

252 Hitler, (20 May, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 371.

253 Arno Breker (1900-1991) was one of only two official state sculptors (the other being Josef Thorak). Works created by him during the Third Reich for the purposes of celebrating Nazi virtues should be viewed as important pieces of artistic propaganda. Petropoulos, *The Faustian Bargain*, 218.

Roman artistic convention, which in this context are used to suggest the eternal virtues and cultural sophistication of the National Socialist movement.²⁵⁴ As a form of propaganda, artistic references to classical antiquity serve as a symbolic short-hand signifying the highest ideals of European civilization. By tying the contemporary German context to a glorified ancient past through martial themes, Breker's sculptural works suggest the eternal virtues of the noble warrior, and that National Socialism was only the most recent manifestation of an ancient struggle between civilization and chaos.²⁵⁵ All of the heroic ideals on display in Breker's works relate to qualities that the masses would be called upon to adopt during Germany's war, namely the demand for people to fight and risk their lives, to endure the destruction of their property, and to sacrifice their children and loved-ones for the sake of the national cause.

The theme of self-sacrifice, which is also prevalent in these works, relates to the “cult of heroism” and worship of martyrs, a common theme to Hitler's rule.²⁵⁶ Hitler believed that more than any other martial quality, sense of duty and willingness to perform acts of self-sacrifice in defence of the community (called *Pflichterfüllung*) were the supreme virtues of the German race.²⁵⁷ He states:

We Germans have that marvellous source of strength – the sense of duty – which other peoples do not possess. The conviction that, by obeying the voice of duty, one is working for the preservation of the species, helps one to take the gravest decisions.²⁵⁸

The logic behind this admiration for self-sacrifice in relation to the struggle between good and evil was similar to the rationale that justified Nazi brutality, that is, in order to defeat great evil, great acts of violence must be committed and endured. In the context of the

254 Mangan, “Icon of Monumental Brutality,” 140.

255 Yourman, “Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany,” 50, 151.

256 Mangan, “Blond, Strong and Pure,” 117.

257 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 408-410.

258 Hitler, (20 November, 1941), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 104.

Second World War, this meant encouraging the people to accept the inevitable sacrifice of lives that would be needed in order to defeat their enemies.

The Third Reich and the rebirth of Antiquity

The use of classical imagery in visual propaganda relates to a third facet of the Nazis' social vision: the rebirth of classical civilization in the modern age. Not only did Nazi propagandists present their struggle as a defence of civilization, but as rebirth of 'true' European culture in art-forms borrowed from antiquity. As a form of propaganda, classicism was emblematic of the ultimate form of goodness, and contributed meaning to the Nazi movement as a struggle on behalf of civilization's highest ideals.

In accordance with nationalism, Hitler was eager to promote a uniquely German culture that was deemed racially pure and held mass appeal. However, because National Socialism was a new movement and had no preexisting culture to draw from, it was necessary to borrow from existing forms.²⁵⁹ Among various historical ideals, Hitler admired above all else the ancient Germanic tribes, as well as the Nordic peoples of late antiquity and the Teutonic kingdoms of the medieval period. However, these epochs were lacking the publicly recognized visual culture required by propagandists, and classically themed art was adopted in its place.²⁶⁰

Artistic motifs derived from the ancient Greco-Roman world were already well-established in the public eye as symbols of civilization, and was attractive to propagandists for its added associations with empire and longevity.²⁶¹ Since, for the

259 David Elliot, "The Battle for Art," *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators 1930-45*, eds. Dawn Ades, et. all, (Stuttgart, Germany: Oktagon in association with Hayward Gallery, 1995), 33.

260 Berthold Hinz, "'Degenerate' and 'Authentic': Aspects of Art and Power in the Third Reich," *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators 1930-45*, eds. Dawn Ades, et. all, (Stuttgart, Germany: Oktagon in association with Hayward Gallery, 1995), 332.

261 Dawn Ades, "Art as Monument," *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators 1930-45*, eds. Dawn Ades, et. all, (Stuttgart,

purposes of propaganda, it was easier to adopt existing forms than it would be to create something new, the National Socialists developed an iconography which sought to infuse new meanings into traditional images, resembling classicism but signifying fascism.²⁶² The intention was for the noble virtues associated with classical ideals to be transferred through art to the Nazi movement, which in turn could be regarded as the defender of traditional European values.²⁶³

It should be mentioned that references to a heroic past in nationalist propaganda was not new or unique to the German fascists. Classical motifs were a common feature of recruitment campaigns throughout Europe during the First World War, and martial-themed sculptural forms had a long tradition of representing national identities. However, in combination with their racial theory, the Nazi usage presents a distinct view of the classical past that was more than symbolic in meaning.²⁶⁴

Since Nazi theorists viewed culture as an extension of race, the Aryans (as the superior race) were deemed responsible for all of European civilization's greatest accomplishments. Thus, it followed that classical art was in fact the product of Aryan skill, and that ancient Greco-Roman artists were in fact depicting the ancestors of modern Germans.²⁶⁵ Alfred Rosenberg was one proponent of this view, stating, "There is no universal art. Art is always a creation stemming from a certain blood."²⁶⁶ Accordingly, the rebirth of ancient ideals in modern man was promoted as part of the National Socialists' utopian vision.

Germany: Oktagon in association with Hayward Gallery, 1995), 52.

262 Mangan, "Icon of Monumental Brutality," 132.

263 Ellul, *Propaganda*, 140; Yourman, "Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany," 50, 151.

264 Mangan, "Icon of Monumental Brutality," 128-130.

265 Mangan, "Blond, Strong and Pure," 120-121.

266 (Quoted in) Vieler, *The Ideological Roots of German National Socialism*, 57.

Suggestions of this vision can be found in Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*, a film documenting the 1936 Berlin Olympic games.²⁶⁷ In the introductory sequence, remnants of lost civilization (represented by weathered ruins and decaying sculptures) come to life as attractive physically fit nudes. In addition to demonstrating the National Socialist visual aesthetic, the sequence links the modern world to the past by suggesting the classical age had been reawakened in the modern man.²⁶⁸ Hitler was aware of this notion, as he regarded the focus of the ancient games on physical fitness and youth in competition to be a suitable illustrations of his social vision.²⁶⁹ The Third Reich was to herald the emergence of a 'new man' to match the 'new community'. Hitler states:

The new age of today is at work on a new human type. Men and women are to be more healthy, stronger: there is a new feeling of life, a new joy in life. Never was humanity in its external appearance and in its frame of mind nearer to the ancient world than it is today.²⁷⁰

Another illustration of this view is found in the paintings of Adolf Zeigler,²⁷¹ notably his *Judgement of Paris*, which portrays the climactic moment of decision from the classical Greek myth in which the hero, Paris, must decide which of three female goddesses is the most beautiful.²⁷² Significantly, the work breaks convention by portraying Paris as a modern man dressed in traditional German attire. In conjunction with National Socialist ideology, this leads to a suggestion that the spirit of the ancient world was alive in modern Germans. Since modern Germans were thought of as the

267 Leni Riefenstahl (director), *Olympia*, film, English language version of *Olympische Spiele*, 199 minutes, 2 VHS cassettes, first distributed in Germany, 1936-1938, (Chicago, IL.: Home Vision Cinema, 1997).

268 Hinz, "'Degenerate' and 'Authentic'," 333.

269 The games themselves also served as a useful propaganda platform for the Nazis to advertise German greatness and to display their Party's iconography to the world. Ian Boyd Whyte, "Berlin, 1 May 1936," *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators 1930-45*, eds. Dawn Ades, et. al, (Stuttgart, Germany: Oktagon in association with Hayward Gallery, 1995), 43.

270 (Quoted in) Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 15.

271 Adolf Ziegler, (1892-1959), the one time president of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, he was a classically trained and highly skilled painter who became a prominent figure in the cultural institutions of the Third Reich.

272 The story is part of the Trojan war saga, an ancient Greek myth. Paris, a young Trojan prince, must judge the three goddesses – Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite – to determine which is most beautiful. He is tempted by each with promises of a reward: Hera offers him power, Athena offers knowledge, and Aphrodite offers the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris chooses Aphrodite, receives Helen of Sparta as a reward, but also earns the animosity of the Greeks and the two snubbed goddesses, Hera and Athena. The story is used to explain the origins of the Trojan war.

inheritors of civilization's cultural flame, the ancient Greek hero and the modern German man could thus be viewed as interchangeable figures.

Visual representations of ancient myths also provided a convenient opportunity for Nazi artists to use images of nude figures to emphasize physical beauty as a reflection of moral and racial worth. Ziegler was particularly well known for his female nudes, and was nicknamed 'the master of pubic hair' by his contemporaries.²⁷³ However, beauty in Nazi art invariably becomes a depiction of racial ideals, and in *Judgement of Paris* this can be seen through the figures of the goddesses, who display many traits of racial feminine beauty (they are blond, white, physically fit, attractive and passive). In displaying contemporary German subjects alongside classical themes, Nazi artists exemplify both the European cultural tradition and the ideological emphasis on innate physical traits as the measure of human worth.²⁷⁴

Another key facet of the Nazis' celebration of classicism was its effect on the German cultural world, which amounted to a repression of modernism by the state. Since artists were thought to represent characteristics of the people as a whole, it was believed that their works typified the German race.²⁷⁵ As a consequence, Hitler's government adopted a practice of "cultural eugenics," which entailed the selective elimination or promotion of certain aspects of German artistic life. This was accomplished by requiring that artists must join the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of culture) in order to find employment, which the Nazis controlled.²⁷⁶

In this way, the use of classical motifs in Nazi art should also be understood as a

273 Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 93.

274 Whyte, "Berlin, 1 May 1936," 42; Dawn Ades, "Art as Monument," 52-53; Mangan, "Icon of Monumental Brutality" 130.

275 Joan L Clinefelter, *Artists for the Reich: Culture and Race from Weimar to Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Berg, 2005, 85.

276 Steinweis, "The Nazi Purge of German Artistic and Cultural Life," 100-103.

politically motivated conservative reaction against modernist trends in culture, which Hitler regarded as 'un-German' and symptomatic of all that was rotten and weak in Weimar society.²⁷⁷ Modern art was international instead of national, disturbing where it should be ennobling, and ugly where it should be beautiful.²⁷⁸ Hitler also saw the prominence of modernism as evidence of yet another attack by the Jews, who acted as critics to artificially inflate the value of 'worthless' art, thereby cheapening 'true' art for their own consumption.²⁷⁹

An exhibition of "Degenerate Art" (*Entart Kunst*) was organized in 1937 for the very reason of proving the depravity of modern culture. Hitler had the power to crush modernist artists, but he hoped to use their works to demonstrate the kind of cultural decay and 'intellectual snobbery' the Nazis stood against. To emphasize the problem of corruption in modern art and reinforce the link between culture and race, images of physical deformity were put on display adjacent to modernist works. Opposition to modernist culture was presented in these terms as part of Germany's 'racial healing'.²⁸⁰

By adapting propaganda to an existing artistic rivalry between traditional and modernist modes of expression, National Socialism was able to insert its racial beliefs into a well-established intellectual debate. The Nazis became defenders of tradition and in the process adapted the visual language of classicism and romanticism to their own ends.

The idea of defeat as a vision of apocalypse

Through the combination of social, martial, and cultural ideals, propagandists

277 Steinweis, "The Nazi Purge of German Artistic and Cultural Life," 100.

278 Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 11-13.

279 Hitler, (March 27, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 280.

280 Hinz, "'Degenerate' and 'Authentic,'" 330-332.

hoped to convince the masses that the Nazi cause was being righteously fought in defence of the highest standards of European civilization. The dark opposite to these ideals appeared during the Second World War through depictions of the enemy. As the war dragged on and became increasingly desperate, the black and white portrayal of Germany's struggle as a conflict between good and evil rendered the prospect of defeat in ever-more apocalyptic terms. According to propaganda, the enemy's victory would mean the complete annihilation of Germany, the destruction of its culture, and the enslavement or execution of its people. In this way, the Nazis offered the public two alternative visions for the future: either the Nazis would prevail, heralding the beginning of a new golden age; or Germany would be defeated, and in the ensuing apocalypse, the flame of European civilization would be extinguished forever.

The justification for this view hinges upon how the Nazis viewed their enemies as people. While stereotyped portrayals of good and evil during times of war are a common strategy of propaganda campaigns everywhere, the influence of racist belief amounted to a truly horrific perception of Germany's enemies (and the Russians in particular) as sub-human monsters. In the context of looming defeat during the final years of the Third Reich, this contributed to a belief that Germany faced an imminent apocalypse.

The idea of a German apocalypse originated with the pre-war notions of racial struggle which predicted either the collapse of society due to the Jewish threat, or the achievement of utopia through racial purification. Because the creation of utopia was a noble aim which would require a full community effort, Hitler saw Antisemitism as a potential unifying factor, citing as early evidence the solidarity it created between

Protestants and Catholics in National Socialist ranks.²⁸¹ His hope (which never materialized) was for this solidarity to extend far beyond German borders – that Antisemitism might act as a unifying force binding all Europeans together.²⁸²

For those who internalized the propagandists' claims of the war being a matter of race survival, military defeat became a truly terrifying prospect. Moreover, the catastrophic battle of Stalingrad and annihilation of the German Sixth Army²⁸³ delivered a shattering blow to the people's confidence in the war. Historian Christian Goeschel notes that after Stalingrad, suicide rates began to increase, caused in part by despair in the face of defeat and fear of what would come afterwards.²⁸⁴ The war continued to progress badly for Germany, and from Stalingrad onwards the escalating death tolls following battles were kept from the public, though the sheer scale of the conflict meant losses could not be kept entirely secret.²⁸⁵

Propagandists presented the advancing Russian army as a barbaric horde of depraved murderers who fought to annihilate Germany and enslave Europe, as directed by their Jewish-Bolshevik masters.²⁸⁶ Visual propaganda made use of real atrocities committed by the Red Army as evidence to justified such fears. As one example, a propaganda poster depicting the Katyn massacre (fig.19)²⁸⁷ features a pair of grinning Soviet officers preparing to execute an Aryan-looking Polish officer, which served to demonstrate the fate Europeans should expect from their Russian conquerors.²⁸⁸

281 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 829.

282 Hitler states: "We can live without the Jews, but they couldn't live without us. When the Europeans realize that, they'll all become simultaneously aware of the solidarity that binds them together. The Jew prevents this solidarity. He owes his livelihood to the fact that this solidarity does not exist." Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk*, 92.

283 August 23rd, 1942 – February 2nd, 1943.

284 Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 136-141.

285 Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 232.

286 Ibid, 142-143.

287 The Katyn massacre was a mass execution of Polish officers, police, intellectuals, and professionals by Soviet agents in 1940. The site of the massacre was discovered by the Germans after the invasion of Russia.

288 Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 207.

Though the terror of defeat was partly a reflection of racist beliefs, hard evidence for war's destructive toll would have been painfully obvious to most of the German public. From 1941 and 1942 onwards, the Allied bombing campaign – which had the power to obliterate whole cities – became another source of fear that caused intense anxiety for the German masses. By 1943, 300,000 civilians had been killed, with up to a quarter of German homes destroyed and nearly five-million people forced to relocate.²⁸⁹ This destruction by air is the theme of a 1944 propaganda poster by artist Leest Storm, titled *Liberators*²⁹⁰ (fig.20), which takes particular aim against the American enemy. The composite form depicted in the work represents the various threatening attributes of American culture as it looms over a European city, preparing to stomp the buildings below into rubble. Racist allusions to African-American culture are made through the inclusion of two muscular dark-skinned arms which hold a vinyl record in one hand (signifying Jazz music) and a boxing glove on the other (an allusion to boxing legend Joe Louis).²⁹¹ In the same image, America is criticized for *its* racist tendencies, alluded to through a Ku Klux Klan hood, lynching rope, and two caged Africans (an allusion to slavery). Other attributes include the gangster's striped prisoner sleeve and Tommy-gun, the Jewish star, the capitalist's bag of money, and the American air-force (represented by wings and bombs).²⁹²

In the context of total war, depictions of the enemy that followed similar visual conventions as were used to visualize the Jewish plot became more more frightening and powerful than before. A 1944 illustration from the magazine *Lustige Blätter* (fig.21)

289 Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, 129.

290 This particular poster was intended for the German-occupied Netherlands as a criticism of the Allied bombing campaign and as a warning against American invasion, suggesting the destruction of culture it would entail.

291 Joe Louis was an African American boxer who defeated Max Schmeling (a German hero figure for the Nazis) in 1938.

292 Backer, "Kultur-Terror: The Composite Monster in Nazi Visual Propaganda," 81-83, 86-91.

depicts a bleak and terrifying creature composed from aspects of Germany's major military opponents. The torso displays the red star of communism and the arms bear the flags of the United States and United Kingdom; the head – which has a vague resemblance to stereotyped Jewish caricatures – is reserved for the Jewish Star. Gone are the ridiculous or comical features typical of earlier Antisemitic images; the creature appears frightening and determined, carrying massive weapons in its great ape-like hands, as if the Jews who had been removed from the land were now returning, more monstrous and powerful than before. This image reflects the mood of desperation that preceded military defeat, emphasizing the need to fight as a matter of survival.

The mood of impending doom seems to have been intentionally intensified through the statements of Nazi leaders, such as Hitler's prediction on January 30th, 1944, that a victory for Russia would mean German annihilation.²⁹³ At a later date, Joseph Goebbels called on civilians to sacrifice themselves to the war effort in greater numbers in order to stave off this terrible fate:

The enemy does not want to take a province from us or push us back to more favourable strategic borders; he wants to cut our very arteries by destroying our mines and factories, destroying our national substance. If he succeeds, Germany will become a cemetery. Our people will starve and perish, aside from the millions who will be deported to Siberia as slave labour. In such a situation, any means is justified. We are in a state of national emergency; it is no time to ask what is normally done!²⁹⁴

There is some historiographical debate as to why Nazi leaders should wish to portray the enemy in this way as immensely powerful and terrifying. One view maintains that Hitler had become detached from reality, believed the war was still winnable, and did not heed contrary advice from his generals. By contrast, historian Christian Goeschel

²⁹³ Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 239.

²⁹⁴ Joseph Goebbels, "Widerstand um jeden Preis," (Resistance at any Price), *Das Reich*, 22 April 1945, 1-2, accessed online. <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb48.htm>, (March 2, 2011), Page copyright © 1999 by Randall Bytwerk.

attributes the propaganda campaign to the Nazi leaders' wish for the nation to die a heroic death as a means of avoiding dishonour. According to Goeschel, Nazi leaders understood that the war was unwinnable, but they continued in their efforts to radicalize the conflict in order to strengthen the people's resolve, to continue resisting the enemy, and preserve the nation's honour by fighting to the last. This was in order to avoid the disgrace of negotiated peace, and to set a noble precedent of heroic self-sacrifice for future generations to look back on.²⁹⁵

Regardless of political motivation, the goal of keeping the German people fighting was largely successful, for despite growing disillusionment, there seems to have been a strong consensus to support the regime until the very end.²⁹⁶ Hitler proclaimed that Germany would never surrender, no matter the cost, including total destruction if need be.²⁹⁷ During the last days of the war, hints of disobedience or expressions of a desire to surrender were met with on-the-spot executions for soldiers and civilians alike. Displaying the white flag entailed an automatic death sentence, and for civilians was to be followed-up with a burning of the individual's home.²⁹⁸

Evidence for the feeling of impending apocalypse which hung over Germany in these last days of the Reich is reflected in the mass of suicides that accompanied the final collapse of the regime. Throughout the 1939-1945 period, suicide rates had closely mirrored Germany's fortunes in war, and had been viewed by the State as as a cowardly and dishonourable way out. However, with the looming catastrophe of defeat, suicide

²⁹⁵ Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, 146-148.

²⁹⁶ Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 242.

²⁹⁷ His so called "Nero Order" called for scorched earth in the event of occupation, including the destruction of bridges, infrastructure, military equipment, and the execution of prisoners. Luckily this order was never carried through. David Safford, *Endgame, 1945: The Missing Final Chapter of World War II*, (New York; Boston; London: Black Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company, 2009), xii.

²⁹⁸ Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 234.

became an increasingly common and acceptable response to fear and despair, and was even presented by officials as a form of heroic refusal to outlive the regime. The cause behind most suicides was probably not a last act of patriotism, but a terrified reaction to the advancing Red Army, or a response to the general conditions of hardship that typified life in the Third Reich.²⁹⁹

The vision of apocalypse which heralded the end of the Third Reich is a reflection of the Nazi worldview, which was extreme in its beliefs in good and evil, and could not cope with the prospect of defeat. Propaganda had inadvertently created the perfect trap for the German people in which they were taught to believe in the war as a struggle for survival, and that in reality they had no choice but to continue fighting against the dreadful enemy. Death awaited the individual at the end of every road: if one fought the enemy, then they would be killed in battle or captured and taken into slavery; if one refused to fight or surrendered, then they would be executed by the secret police or sent to a concentration camp; if one did nothing, then the Russians would eventually take power and inflict unimaginable horrors on the survivors. Under such conditions, it is understandable that suicide became such a common response.

Conclusion: the Nazi social view

Though Nazism created this environment of fear in which death became preferable to life, it was not a fundamentally suicidal ideology. The Nazi social view presented a range of ideals that the people were expected to aspire towards in their daily lives, which also served to glorify the Third Reich. A sense of impending doom became a

²⁹⁹ Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, 154-165.

feature of propaganda only after the tide of war had turned and become hopeless. Nazi theorists had always presented the war as a black and white struggle for survival between forces of good and evil, and in this respect the Nazis' racist perception of utopia was darkly mirrored by their vision of apocalypse preceding defeat.

The fears and ideals communicated to the public through propaganda define the Nazis' vision of society, and should be interpreted within the context of propaganda's functional purpose as a controlling agent over the masses. One of the central objectives of the Nazi propaganda campaign was to foster in the public a favourable and obedient attitude towards the National Socialists, and to this end, the strategic promotion of specific ideals was essential, for they established the models of behaviour ordinary people were expected to emulate.

To what extent such ideals were believed by either propagandists or the public is a matter of speculation, for in the environment of fear, paranoia, and intimidation fostered by authorities, maintaining an appearance of support for Hitler's government became a matter of survival. After the war, many people claimed to have secretly opposed the Nazis, and that their support was in appearance only. Along similar lines, the objectives of propagandists – the winning of the masses by any means necessary – made actual belief in such ideas unnecessary. It did not matter what people believed, so long as they obeyed, and in this way all of the Nazis' social ideals should be regarded as leading towards the same goal: the empowerment of the Party.

From an ideological perspective, belief in the importance of power was the first principle of National Socialism, which presented adherence to 'natural law' and survival of the fittest as the one all-important truth governing reality. Conceivably, true belief in

any principle beyond this law was unnecessary (though the appearance of belief might have been an important asset). However, winning public support required a more noble set of ideals, and in this way the 'new community', the noble warrior, and the rebirth of the classical age could have served as an attractive facade behind which the brutal machine of totalitarian government could operate more smoothly.

Collaboration, subjugation, and resistance in anti-Nazi literature

While the Nazi propaganda narrative was concerned with expressing the ideals and fears people *should* draw inspiration from, anti-Nazi authors sought to explain what real motivations led their countrymen to collaborate with or resist the Third Reich. Since differing values influenced the perception of authors, the National Socialist struggle was understood in a variety of different ways. Though anti-Nazi literature represents the alternative views of authors as individuals rather than society as a whole, it does provide a glimpse into the reasoning that led some Germans to oppose Hitler's regime.

In the previous two chapters, literary portrayals of the anti-Nazi worldview were used to show how authors believed the chief characteristic of the Third Reich lay in the imbalance of power it brought between the citizen and the state, and how Nazism existed in the domain of thought and belief as a corruption of Germany's basic notions of good and evil. The combination of these factors amounted to a vision of Nazism as an all-encompassing and overpowering force of evil that confronted the individual on every front. While this view demonstrates how authors used their perceptions of evil to describe the environment of the Third Reich, it does not reveal their thoughts on the motives that

led ordinary people to support, obey, or resist the Nazi regime.

Within anti-Nazi literature, the interplay of motivation and action governing support for the state stems from a diversity of explanations, ranging from the naivety of common folk to the ruthless ambition of individual conspirators, and from the fear-driven hysteria of the masses to the honour-bound obedience of soldiers. Though literature also presents a diversity of motives inspiring acts of resistance, there is a common emphasis on the principled need to uphold personal moral values that forces individuals into a state of opposition. In this way, the individual's struggle against the state takes on the form of an internal conflict between good and evil.

In depicting the perpetrators of Nazi crimes, anti-Nazi authors gave focus to a broad array of subjects relating to the importance of social context in determining behaviour. A common conclusion drawn from this focus maintained that the perpetrators were predominantly ordinary in character, and that all of Germany shared in varying degrees of guilt. Unlike the examples set by portrayals of Nazi leaders, the distinctions between good and evil for these ordinary Germans is left ambiguous, as individuals struggle with their own survival and sense of spiritual well-being in a brutal system compromised by evil.

The rise of Nazism as a product of historical context

To begin, as the only work that examines the problem of Nazism from a perspective which predates Hitler's acquisition of power, Claire Bergmann's³⁰⁰ 1932

³⁰⁰ Not much is known about Clair Bergmann, as she was a new author at the time of the publication for this novel, and seems to have disappeared during the Third Reich.

novel, *What Will Become of the Children?*³⁰¹ attributes the rise of National Socialism to the the context of Germany's political, social, and economic turmoil. The focus of her narrative is on the “Deutsch family,” a middle-class household that struggles to get by amidst the hardship of late-Weimar Germany. The strangulation of society due to crushing economic and political concerns is held responsible for the rise of extremist groups, most notably the Nazis, who were themselves symptomatic of the people's despair and anger. Bergmann also attributes the rise of violent extremism to the First World War and the Revolution of 1918-1919, which marked the beginnings of Germany's tendency towards brutality and civil conflict.³⁰²

This perception that Germany's political extremism originated in its unique historical context is a common view shared by many historians who attribute the rise of Nazism to the variety hardships that preceding Hitler's rise to power. The violence of the First World War was perhaps the most notable precursor to Nazi extremism, which, according to Hannah Arendt, survived in memory as a potent symbol of death and dehumanization. The war also served as an emblem of classlessness and of reality unrestrained by the facade of civility, which testified to a popular desire to evade the trappings of society and “lose one's self” through “actions” that define identity.³⁰³ In addition, Arendt attributes the growth in political activism and social turmoil in Germany to its transition from a bourgeois-dominated class society to a society of masses, which was not unique to Germany but was perhaps aggravated by the widespread desperation of

301 *What Will Become of the Children* tells the story of a middle-class German family who struggle to overcome the economic and political hardships of life during the last years of the Weimar Republic.

302 While Bergmann describes the revolution as “relatively harmless,” it also marks the beginning of the time when “the Germans began to tear at their own flesh.” Claire Bergmann, *What Will Become of the Children?: A Novel of a German Family in the Twilight of Weimar Berlin*, (Original title: *Was Wird aus deinen kindern, Pitt?*), first published in Berlin, 1932, trans. Richard Bodek, (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 21.

303 By this, Arendt argues that political extremism was less a reflection of belief and more a matter of identity. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 435-436, 439, 458.

its populace.³⁰⁴ In this vein, historian Martin Broszat contends that the unreliability of the Weimar Republic, which was brought on by the collapse of authoritarian tradition at the end of the First World War, created a longing for strong leadership that factored into the motives of Germans who supported Hitler.³⁰⁵ Finally, the financial strain caused by the 1929 economic crash should not be overlooked as an important element that preceded Hitler's rule.³⁰⁶ According to Robert Gellately, the combination of these conditions contributed to the rising popularity of extreme political parties which grew in their degree of violence as the sense of crisis in Germany escalated.³⁰⁷

In addition to her focus on Germany's socioeconomic context, Clair Bergmann identifies the naive and ignorant qualities of Nazi supporters as a secondary cause leading to the rise in political extremism. This is explained through the character of Helmut Deutsch, the most childish and easily frustrated member of the family. Though he joins a Nazi youth gang and becomes involved with brutal street violence, Helmut's behaviour is attributed to his low education and youthful sense of rebellion against society's imperfections. He is led astray through the influence of his peers to the extent that he cannot think for himself, and is described as one who “doesn't want to be anything but a herd animal.”³⁰⁸ His stunted intellect is attributed to the broken social system of Weimar Germany, which failed to instill in him the proper values of a healthy mind. In this way, the author uses the youth and innocence of Helmut to portray the Nazis as victims of their

304 According to Arendt, the chief characteristic of the “mass man” was his isolation and lack of normal social relationships. The mass society developed as a result of the breakdown of the class system and corresponding growth in desire for political organization, which was generally prevented due to the sheer size of the uncohesive mass. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 342, 414-421.

305 Broszat, *The Hitler State*, 193.

306 Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 10-11.

307 The main rivals by the early 1930s were the National Socialists and Marxist factions. Either group competed politically in elections and through propaganda, and engaged in violent street brawls. While the depression won some support for the Marxists amongst working-class Germans, it was also accompanied by rising fear of communism and desire for security, sentiments which favoured the Nazis. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 11-12, 18, 36.

308 Bergmann, *What Will Become of the Children?*, 20, 44-45.

own leaders, and that like Helmut, the majority of Nazi supporters were simply too ignorant and angry to distinguish truth from lies.

Other authors echo this perception of Nazi supporters being essentially innocent fools manipulated by their leaders into committing or abiding heinous crimes. For example, the character of Käthe Severin in Lion Feuchtwanger's 1943 novel, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, is used to illustrate the naivety of ordinary people during the Nazis' rise to power, as she is easily misled and responds to stories of atrocity with genuine disbelief. Feuchtwanger suggests this behaviour was typical of the masses at large, whose support for the Nazis would only be shaken with great reluctance, despite growing awareness of their atrocities. He writes:

Few people in Germany at that time knew about these things, although they were taking place all around them, often in their immediate neighbourhood. Only those affected knew about them, only the opponents of the Party, but many millions of Germans suspected nothing, and if one told them they were incredulous.³⁰⁹

The reluctance of the public to acknowledge the 'evil' of National Socialism is corroborated by Victor Klemperer's account of life in the Third Reich, where he makes note of a young friend who did not believe in the sincerity of the Nazis' Antisemitic claims, stating, "The fuss and bother about the Jews is only there for propaganda purposes. You wait, when Hitler is at the helm he'll be far too busy to insult the Jews..."³¹⁰ While such disbelief and related claims to ignorance might have seemed plausible before 1933 (as reflected in Bergmann's 1932 novel), the truth of Nazi brutality would have been all but impossible to deny following Hitler's acquisition of power.³¹¹

Claire Bergmann's novel also attributes political extremism to the folly of racial

³⁰⁹ Feuchtwanger, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, 270.

³¹⁰ Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, 42.

³¹¹ This was largely due to the Nazis' widespread publication of stories of harsh justice, persecution of 'outsiders', and declarations of ill-intent towards Jews and Slavs spread through the media (in addition to the word-of-mouth rumours of secret killings and the disturbing regularity of 'disappearances'). Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 5-6, 19, 78-80.

thinking and adherence to divisive nationalism, as explained to Max Deutsch by his elder brother, Peter:

There's lots of fertile land, enough for everybody to grow their own bread. But people and races are so obsessed with each other and with their own territory that they don't care about anyone else. Each group thinks that it's better than the other, and then is afraid of mixing, even though this usually refreshes a race. And besides, we're all human beings. Do you understand Max, *human beings*, who in their efforts at furthering their own civilizations, are just trying to keep up with each other, and when there's no war, exchange their ideas, music, and so on? But war builds walls between them still higher, and then they just start to hate each other.³¹²

The Nazis do not appear uniquely evil in this context, merely one of several competing extremist groups, all of whom were mistaken in their sense of righteousness and desire for violent revolution.³¹³

As a solution to Germany's socioeconomic problems, Bergmann argues that despite the turmoil and uncertainty, ordinary people were still decent human beings whose overwhelming desire was to live simple lives in peaceful harmony with nature and each other. Elsa Deutsch, the middle-child of three sisters in the family, expresses this wish poetically:

A fresh smell of hay, or a strong ruffling sea breeze! Instead of smoke and dust in the air, and a cigarette to calm you down [...] to run once more in open fields, to really be tied to the earth. [...] Imagine, just for a minute, no machines, not having to figure out whether there's enough money to get through the month. To just lie on your back and look at the sky. Just once, to lose yourself and then find yourself again! Then, a real, deep peace in the land. Nobody staring at the other anymore thinking, 'And what party are you with?'³¹⁴

Though contemporary hardships obstructed this dream, Bergmann's novel presents the triumph of goodness as an inevitability in the future of German society.

312 Bergmann, *What Will Become of the Children?*, 19.

313 This is made clear by Max Deutsch, the elder brother to Helmut, who tries to expose the young man to the folly of his black and white worldview: "Neither side is right. [...] Where's it going to get us if we call each other murderers and dogs? Or if each ignores the exhausting work that the other does. Long ago we were known as a chivalrous people. Now our respect for our opponents has sunk as low as our cultural level." Bergmann, *What Will Become of the Children?*, 50.

314 Ibid, 44.

Nature, and the inherent differences of 'German character'

While other anti-Nazi authors identify historical context as one of the contributing factors leading to the rise of Nazism, none emphasize its significance to the same degree as Claire Bergmann. For instance, in Ernst Jünger's 1943 novel, *On Marble Cliffs*, he alludes to the importance of the First World War as a precedent for the brutality of the Third Reich, but it is only one element contributing to the broad scope of the surrounding social context.³¹⁵ To explain the underlying cause, Jünger focuses on the importance of nature in determining the character of Hitler's supporters.

As a text written within the Third Reich, Jünger's novel adopts the relatively thin veil of a historical fantasy in order to cast covert criticism against Hitler's rule. Accordingly, Hitler is represented through the character of a tyrant called the Chief Ranger, while his supporters (synonymous with the Nazis) are called the Mauretanians, and Germany (or perhaps Europe) is represented by a fictional land called the Marina.

The first element which allows to Chief Ranger to seize power is the weakening effect of fear upon society, as Jünger writes:

At first one heard only rumours like the first obscure heralds of a pest raging in distant harbours. Then reports spread from mouth to mouth of infringements of the law and of acts of violence in the neighbourhood, and finally such incidents occurred publicly and with no attempt at concealment. A cloud of fear preceded the Chief Ranger like the mountain mist that presages the storm. Fear enveloped him, and I am convinced that therein far more than his own person, lay his power. Only when things had begun to totter from their inherent weakness could he exercise his might; but when that moment came his forests were well placed for assault against the land.³¹⁶

This allusion to Hitler's rise is complimented by a critique of society's weak response; so easily surrendering its freedom and allowing itself to be intimidated (a fact for which the

³¹⁵ The First World War is alluded to through references to a great military catastrophe in recent living memory that fundamentally altered society: "[...] the war on the borders of Alt Plana, waged as if against the infidel, had had a more profound effect, ravaging like a frost that splits a tree to the core, but whose effect is first apparent only years later. That was how life developed by the Marina. It was the old life, and yet something had changed in it." Jünger, *On Marble Cliffs*, 36.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 36-37.

narrator accepts his share of guilt).³¹⁷ The tyrant's supporters (the Mauretanians) are similarly defined by their innate affinity for terror and chaos, as Jünger makes clear:

They say that if one falls headlong into an abyss one sees things in the minutest detail as though through a crystal-clear lens. This – without the fear – was the vision that one acquired in the air of Mauretania, in an atmosphere which was poisoned through and through. At the very moment when terror reigned, coolness of thought and spiritual detachment increased. In the face of catastrophe good-humour was everywhere, and they would jest at it like the keeper of a gaming-table at the losses of his clients.³¹⁸

It is important to note that Jünger's portrayal of the tyrant and his supporters gives emphasis to the unique differences that distinguish the conquerors from ordinary people, namely their aura of primitive power, comfort in the face of fear, and eagerness to rule by force. This lends them such a terrifying reputation that society collapses rather than face their wrath. As a social commentary, this view suggests that the Nazis were fundamentally different from the rest of humanity due to the violence of their inherently primitive character.

Despite this view, the author is also careful to show that the tyrant's supporters remain capable of free choice, and of resistance against evil. The character of a Mauretanian adventurer named Braquemart is used to illustrate this point, as he chooses to rebel against the Chief Ranger rather than endure his rule. This element likely alludes to the feelings of resentment against the Nazi Party that were prominent among conservatives of the professional military class before and during Hitler's rule.³¹⁹ Braquemart appears similar to the Nazis in that he believes in the existence of a racial imbalance between “masters and slaves,” and according to the text, “like all who hunger after power and mastery, he was led astray by his wild dreams into the realm of

³¹⁷ Ibid, 35, 42.

³¹⁸ Ibid, 34-35.

³¹⁹ The Valkyrie conspirators that attempted to murder Hitler is perhaps the most noteworthy example of this.

Utopias.”³²⁰ Despite these traits, he is driven to rebel against his own kind due to a fundamental difference in worldview:

It may seem noteworthy that in this affair Braquemart wished to confront the Ranger, although there was much in common in their ways of thought and action. But it is an error which often runs through our thought that we deduce identity of goals from identity of methods, and conclude that the aims are the same. Yet there was a difference to this degree, that the Ranger had in mind to people of the Marina with wild beasts, while Braquemart looked on it as land to be settled with slaves and their overlords. At bottom the question revolved round one of the internal conflicts between Mauretanians which it is not practicable to describe here. It is sufficient to indicate that between full-blown nihilism and unbridled anarchy there is a profound difference. Whether the abodes of men shall become a desert of primeval forest depends upon the outcome of this struggle.³²¹

This excerpt alludes to the subtleties of belief that could separate the supporters of National Socialism from their opponents, despite similarities in worldview. In this way, Ernst Jünger offers a unique perspective on the Third Reich, for he was a celebrated war hero whose nationalism and perceptions of natural law overlapped in many ways with Nazi ideology, yet he remained strongly opposed to Hitler's rule.³²² According to the views communicated through *On Marble Cliffs*, the reason for this opposition may have resided in the authors' distaste for the lawlessness and savagery adopted by Hitler and his unruly supporters.

In spite of his stance on the importance of opposition, Ernst Jünger treats the subject of resistance with considerable ambiguity. This fact might be attributed to the author's belief in the overwhelming power of nature, which rendered all human activity small by comparison, yet did not make all acts of resistance entirely without meaning. In some cases, the overwhelming majesty of the universe appears as a source of comfort to the protagonists, who regard their own problems as petty in comparison to its sublime

³²⁰ Ibid, 80-83.

³²¹ Jünger, *On Marble Cliffs*, 82.

³²² As a public figure, Jünger was celebrated by the Nazis as one of the few great modern authors, whose earlier work titled *Storm of Steel* presented a view of war that accorded to Nazi perceptions (as opposed to Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*). Jünger briefly spent time as an admired supporter of Hitler's regime, though he evidently grew disillusioned with the Third Reich shortly after it had been established. Nikolaus Wachsmann, "Marching under the Swastika? Ernst Jünger and National Socialism, 1918-33," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 33, no. 4 (Oct., 1998), 573-575.

power, as Jünger writes:

[...] we looked long upon the land and sought out some sign of salvation in every ridge and fold. Then the scales seemed to fall from our eyes, and we caught something of its imperishable splendour, which lived on like an image in poetry. It was with joy that we felt the certainty come over us that destruction finds no place in the elements, and that its seeming power moves on the surface of life like a swirling ghostly mist which cannot withstand the sun.³²³

In light of nature's invulnerability to evil, the narrator's first response to tyranny is to retreat from the world into naturalist studies as a form of inner spiritual release.

Alternatively, Jünger presents violent opposition against tyranny as a necessary struggle, but only when the proper time to strike had arrived. He writes:

Now battle had to be joined, and therefore men were needed to restore a new order, and new theologians as well, to whom the evil was manifest from its outward phenomena down to its more subtle roots; then the time would come for the first stroke of the consecrated sword, piercing the darkness like a lightning flash.³²⁴

The “new theologians” Jünger refers to are likely an allusion to men like himself who intimately understood the Nazi worldview, and therefore possessed the knowledge that would be necessary for its undoing.

While a great battle is waged against the tyrant, such violent opposition proves fruitless. Eventually, just as the tyrant stands at the edge of his ultimate victory, he is defeated by the excesses of his reign as elements of nature rise up and crush his power. This final conclusion suggests that evil was but a small part of reality's collective whole, and that tyranny was symptomatic towards a cosmic imbalance that would correct itself naturally through time, as Jünger writes: “[...] the time was ripe for terror. In this respect man-made order is like the universe – from time to time it must plunge into the flames to be born anew.”³²⁵ In this way, the rise of tyrannical evil is presented as a natural part of civilization's ongoing life-cycle, and by extension, all human behaviour could be regarded

³²³ Jünger, *On Marble Cliffs*, 63-64.

³²⁴ Ibid, 84.

³²⁵ Ibid, 54.

as reflection of natural law.

An alternative perspective on the influence of nature upon human behaviour is provided by Thomas Mann,³²⁶ who emphasizes the importance of 'German character' as an innate quality that contributed to the rise of Nazism, as depicted in his 1947 novel, *Dr. Faustus*.³²⁷ In this work, a reoccurring element of the social commentary is directed towards the people's fatalistic character and their desire for emotional release through irrational behaviour. According to the narrator, both these elements were the particular characteristics of Germans, which the Nazis exploited by making support for National Socialism an irresistible urge. Mann writes:

Yes, we are an utterly different people; we deny and reject the foregone conclusions; we are a people of mightily tragic soul, and our love belongs to fate – any fate, if only it be one, even destruction kindling heaven with the crimson flames of death of the Gods! [...] For liars and lickspittles mixed us a poison drought and took away our senses. We drank – for we Germans perennially yearn for intoxication – and under its spell, through years of deluded high living, we committed a superfluity of shameful deeds, which must now be paid for.³²⁸

Thus, despite the responsibility of the National Socialists in leading the people to disaster, the people were themselves responsible for the rise of Nazism and shared directly in the 'German guilt' that resulted from their collective crimes against humanity, as Mann writes:

[...] is it mere hypochondria to say to oneself that everything German, even the German mind and spirit, German thought, the German Word, is involved in this scandalous exposure and made subject to some distrust?³²⁹

In light of such guilt, Mann argues that the Germans deserved to be punished through

³²⁶ Thomas Mann (1875-1955) was a German novelist and social critic of enormous success and fame who frequently drew on Germany's literary, theological, and philosophical traditions in his works. After 1933, Thomas Mann went into exile, first to Switzerland and then to the United States, where he became leading proponent of 'exile literature' which opposed Hitler's regime. Unlike the experiences of many other exiles, Mann enjoyed considerable fame upon his arrival on foreign soil. Kurt S. Maier, "A Fellowship in German Literature: Thomas Mann, Agnes Meyer, and Archibald MacLeish," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Fall 1979), 385-386.

³²⁷ Begun during the Second World War but not completed until 1947, *Dr. Faustus* is a novel which tells the story of a fictional German composer of incredible talent who strives for greatness but contracts syphilis and goes insane. The story takes inspiration from the story of Faust, a German legend in which a brilliant scholar makes a pact with the Devil for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures in exchange for his soul. It is narrated through the recollections of a writer who lives in Germany during the Third Reich.

³²⁸ Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as told by a Friend*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 174-175.

³²⁹ Ibid, 481.

defeat and the destruction of their cities as the necessary price to be paid for evil.³³⁰

The notion of unique German difference, as either more primitive or more susceptible to delusion, feeds into the historiographical debate on Nazism, and the precise nature of guilt. According to the ideas presented in the literary works of Thomas Mann and Ernst Jünger, the innate qualities of the German people was a crucial factor contributing to the rise of Nazism, as well as the horrors that followed. This view relates to a common perception that is shared by some historians of the Holocaust, including Daniel Goldhagen in his 1997 study of a mobile killing unit on the Eastern Front, titled *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. Goldhagen's controversial argument maintains that the majority of Holocaust perpetrators had little or no moral objection to killing the Jews, that they were self-motivated by their belief in “demonological Antisemitism,” which resulted from an anthropological difference, characteristic of the Germans during that era. Goldhagen also challenges and rejects a number of other historiographical explanations, claiming they all fail because they assume the perpetrators did not want to commit their crimes.³³¹

While it is without doubt that Antisemitism did play an important role in events, many modern historians argue that it is short-sighted to focus on a single factor as the exclusive cause for the Holocaust. Since so many people were involved with Nazi war-crimes, it has been argued that they cannot be explained through the sheer malevolence or insanity of perpetrators. Historian Tilman Allert summarizes this view succinctly:

The success of National Socialism cannot be reduced to a pathological personality type or to some

³³⁰ This conclusion was likely influenced by the fact Mann's novel was completed after the end of the Second World War.

³³¹ Some of these rejected theories include external compulsion (being coerced into following orders through fear), mass ignorance or mesmerism (perpetrators as blind followers), intense social/psychological pressure to conform (peer pressure), and the role of bureaucracy, or functionality of the Nazi state, in determining the fate of the Jews (which the individual perpetrator could not fathom in its entirety). Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, 11-14, 28, 392.

typically German mentality; rather it reflects a will to ignorance, a desire to narrow one's perspective to the point of moral blindness.³³²

Moreover, Goldhagen has been criticized for excluding contrary evidence in his study that did not agree with his theory, and that his heavy emphasis on German guilt released other parties from their share of responsibility. Thus, it can be argued that blaming the Holocaust on a unique quality of the German people will invariably exclude many other factors, leading to a false or incomplete conclusion.³³³

Fear and intimidation

A more common explanation for why the masses collaborated with the Nazis relates to the terroristic policies of the Nazi government, and the problem of fear as the governing element behind social control in the Third Reich. While this view is shared by many authors, and appears to some degree in most of the literary works used in this study, two novels that stand out from the others are Anna Seghers³³⁴ *The Seventh Cross*,³³⁵ and Hans Falalda's *Every Man Dies Alone*.

In *The Seventh Cross*, the narrative follows an escape attempt by seven concentration camp prisoners, and the response it elicits from the people of the surrounding countryside. The community of Liebau, which plays host to the fictional concentration camp Westhofen, serves as a microcosm of the Third Reich in which fear of

332 Allert, *The Hitler Salute*, 90-91.

333 Groth, "Demonizing the Germans: Goldhagen and Gellately on Nazism," 118-158; Browning, "Ordinary Men or Ordinary Germans," 62-64; Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 3rd edition, (New York: Edward Arnold, 1993), 14; Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 491.

334 Anna Seghers (1900-1983) was of Jewish descent, was married to a known communist, and had been critical of the Nazi Party before their assumption of power, marking her fit for persecution after 1933. After a brief period of imprisonment, she fled into exile (first to France, and then Mexico) where she continued to voice her opposition to the Third Reich through literature.

335 First published in 1942, *The Seventh Cross* tells the story of a group of concentration camp escapees who are one-by-one hunted down by police and an unsympathetic public and returned to prison for further torture and eventual execution. The narrative focuses on George Heisler (an escapee) and his comrade Franz Marnet (a fellow member of a leftist resistance group) as the two work towards George's eventual escape.

persecution dominates society. While the townsfolk of Liebau are initially repulsed by the concentration camp for its gruesome reputation as place of death and torture, they learn to accept its presence after being threatened with imprisonment, and eventually become self-governing in the maintenance of their subservience.³³⁶ In this way, the prison camp becomes the perfect symbol for Nazi authority, representing the ultimate weapon for crushing opposition and controlling the public. The culture of fear which emerges as a result of persecution maintains a carefully constructed appearance of uniform obedience, in which any deviation is either reported to authorities or shunned.

A similar perspective is found in *Every Man Dies Alone*, though the focus of this novel is on the role played by suspicion in helping the Nazis retain power. According to Fallada's depiction of Berlin during the Second World War, the people's fear of persecution by the state and mistrust of strangers gives rise to an atmosphere of extreme suspicion in which opponents to the regime are made to feel entirely alone. Suspicion forces resistance operatives into hiding, and support from the public remains virtually non-existent as the terrified masses guard against anything which might compromise their safety. Maintaining an appearance of obedience was necessary to ward off Nazi agents, who, like the masses, viewed everyone as a potential traitor. To illustrate this point, Fallada's novel adopts the perspective of a Gestapo agent named Escherich, who continually hunts for evidence of anti-Nazi activity:

There was a bad smell wherever you stuck your nose. Inspector Escherich was firmly convinced that he would find a knot of secrecy and deceit in well-nigh every German home. Almost no one had a clean conscience – of course with the exception of Party members.³³⁷

The use of fear and intimidation as a means for social control in *The Seventh*

³³⁶ Anna Seghers, *The Seventh Cross*, trans. James A. Galston, (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1942), 70.

³³⁷ Fallada, *Every Man Dies Alone*, 263.

Cross and Every Man Dies Alone reflects an important element of everyday reality governing social behaviour in the Third Reich. The terroristic side of Hitler's rule has already been described in relation to the murderous court system, the widespread persecution of opposition, and systematic use of police brutality, all of which contributed to the state's frightening reputation. Germany's worsening position in the the Second World War only added to the brutality of Nazi rule, due in part to Hitler's conviction that any person who did not commit fully to the national effort should be punished as a traitor to the people, as he states:

If you wish to wage war successfully or to lead a people successfully through a difficult period of its history, you must have no doubts whatever on one point – namely, any individual who in such times tries, either actively or passively, to exclude himself from the activities of the community, must be destroyed.³³⁸

Additionally, opportunistic denunciations by the public, the arbitrary rule of police justice, and the practice of assigning guilt through association meant nobody could be sure of their safety.³³⁹

As a form of social control, the impact of persecutions extended far beyond the case of those directly effected. Rather than conceal the violence they committed against their own citizens, the Nazis regularly advertised stories about the 'enemies' they had captured and executed. For this reason, it should be understood that fear of the state was an intentional social construction spread through stories in the press, radio broadcasts, and by word of mouth. However, fear should not be seen as the only factor motivating the obedience of Germans. There was a considerable amount of willing support for Hitler's government among the masses, not only for the economic and political reforms he offered, but also for the 'evil practices' associated with his repression of opposition. Even

³³⁸ Hitler, (June 7, 1942), *Hitler's Table Talk*, 392.

³³⁹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 428, 512, 555-559.

as the severity of Nazi persecutions increased, Party membership continued to expand.³⁴⁰

Not all historians view the growth in support for Nazism as a reflection of genuine approval. For instance, Hannah Arendt argues that this support was partly a response to fear, as many people who joined the Nazi Party did so with the hope of avoiding persecution.³⁴¹ Since the mercilessness of the Nazi court system made suspicion of guilt a deadly prospect, maintaining the proper appearance of obedience and loyalty was vital to one's survival, though it also posed an obstacle to the organization of resistance.

This difficulty is reflected through the struggles faced by the protagonists of Anna Seghers' novel, *George Heisler* and Franz Marnet. As an escaped fugitive on the run from Nazi agents, George Heisler is unable to rely on help from ordinary people due to their fear and mistrust of strangers. Of this difficulty, he explains: "The bad one's will betray me, and the good one's are hiding. They hid themselves entirely too well."³⁴² A similar set of challenges is faced by Franz Marnet, a socialist resistance operative who tries to bring aid to the escapees, but is unable to enlist any help from the public without revealing his anti-Nazi sentiment. One of his co-conspirators (a working-class man named Fiedler) explains how fear added to the problem of gathering anti-Nazi supporters:

If things go wrong, the best that can happen is six or eight years in the CC [concentration camp]; the worst – off comes the head! No wonder, then, that one gets for an answer: 'What you want of me, Fiedler, isn't worth risking my neck for.'³⁴³

The perception of mass conformity communicated through the works of Fallada and Seghers suggest that the facade of support for Hitler's regime, created in response to fear, had the critical effect of undermining resistance, which proved instrumental to the

³⁴⁰ Additionally, with regards to Hitler's rule through fear, it is important to note the extreme differences between the Germany of 1933 with that of 1945, for in the early phases of Hitler's rule, terroristic policies were not as necessary for the maintenance of order. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 15, 256-260.

³⁴¹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 454.

³⁴² Anna Seghers, *The Seventh Cross*, 274.

³⁴³ Ibid, 279.

Nazis' dominion over German society. In support of this view, historian Tilman Allert's study of the 'Hitler salute' suggests that much of the Nazi's success hinged on their ability to insert ideology into all facets of German life, thereby politicizing even mundane affairs such as a casual greeting between associates. Since failure to perform the 'German greeting' could result in fines or imprisonment, the rigidly enforced Hitler salute had the effect of fostering an inflated appearance of the public's enthusiasm for the Nazi Party. For the masses, these small but cumulatively significant demonstrations of compliance had the important effect of reinforcing a perception that all of society was complicit with the regime, and served to condition individuals to demonstrate obedience.³⁴⁴

Denunciation, and the complicity of the masses with Nazism

Both *The Seventh Cross* and *Every Man Dies Alone* demonstrate a broad focus on society under totalitarian rule, and portray the masses as victim to forces beyond their control. A contrasting perspective is provided by Erika Mitterer, who's novel, *The Prince of Darkness*, also takes into account the effect of fear on society, but places a considerable burden of guilt on ordinary people. Specifically, Mitterer focuses on the subject of denunciation, and casts critical judgement against the people for their complicit role in spreading terror by procuring victims for the authorities to persecute.

Since *The Prince of Darkness* was written within the Nazi state and could not make its political criticisms overt, the setting of a medieval German city was adopted in order to communicate the author's anti-Nazi views. The central conflict revolves around a

344 Allert, *The Hitler Salute*, 2-7, 11-15, 30-32, 53, 60-61, 87; John W. Meaney, "Propaganda as Psychical Coercion," *The Review of Politics*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Cambridge University Press for the University of Notre Dame du lac on behalf of Review of Politics, Jan., 1951), 82.

cruel and arbitrary Inquisitor who persecutes the citizenry with absolute authority following the outbreak of a plague. This is under the pretext of rooting out satanic evil, the supposed cause behind all of the community's suffering. At first only marginal women are targeted by the Inquisitor – the poor, the insane, and the 'immoral' – but soon the people are called upon to expose their friends, neighbours, and family, if suspected of any wrongdoing. In the ensuing chaos, a majority of the community complies with this order and the Inquisitor's dungeon soon fills with the condemned.

As a coded criticism of the Third Reich, the subject of denouncement explores the motives behind acts of collaboration during the author's contemporary environment, and serves as a condemnation of the masses for their complicit role in state persecutions. While some cases relate to authentic ideological motives, Mitterer identifies a variety of other causes, including greed, idle curiosity, cruelty, revenge, and lust for power, and questions the degree to which fear actually drove the masses to collaborate, as she writes:

Was it really their conscience, their fear of being considered accomplices for concealing evil deeds and thoughts? Or was it the curiosity to see, close to the man who had taken up the fight against the devil? Or was it lust for something gruesome, or simply the urge to get away for an hour or so from everyday life – the whining of the hungry children, the brutality of a drunken husband – and to taste what it was like to have power oneself, to interfere in the course of fate, which until now one had only suffered in grim patience.³⁴⁵

A similar view of collaboration is echoed by historian Robert Gellately, who notes that non-ideological denunciations carried out as acts of revenge or for the sake of personal gain were a widespread phenomenon during the Third Reich, a fact which demonstrated the ability of individuals to adapt the brutality of the Nazi regime to their own selfish needs.³⁴⁶ Other anti-Nazi authors also share this view, including the noteworthy example of Lion Feuchtwanger's *The Oppermanns*, wherein acts of

³⁴⁵ Mitterer, *The Prince of Darkness*, 586-587.

³⁴⁶ Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 137-140.

denunciation are largely attributed to the opportunism of the masses, as he writes:

“Anyone who belonged to the party in power could have his competitor spirited away to a concentration camp.”³⁴⁷ Historian and cultural theorist, Theodor Adorno, offers a more theoretical explanation, arguing that denunciations resulted from the facet of fascist ideology that mimics religion, in that it holds great value for members of society who embrace the chosen worldview and great hostility against those who remain outside of it, resulting in a form of “malicious egalitarianism” that attacks all perceived differences.³⁴⁸

Hannah Arendt provides an alternative view of collaboration by focusing on the unusual relationship between moral belief and political action brought about by Nazi rule, as she states: “Evil in the Third Reich had lost the quality by which most people recognized it – the quality of temptation.”³⁴⁹ Instead, Arendt attributes the primary source of 'temptation' in Nazi Germany to the people's underlying desire to be good, to not tolerate the authority of killers or abide the victimization of their friends and neighbours, and to not become accomplices to Nazi crimes. However, Arendt states that the people resisted the temptation to be good, and took part in acts that violated their sense of moral decency. Arendt also stresses that reluctance did not undermine the significance of crimes or the guilt of perpetrators; rather, it suggests that a new understanding of human behaviour was needed to comprehend the true nature of evil.

This aspect of reluctance is explored further by historian of philosophy, Susan Neiman, who views the lack of true malevolence on the part of Nazi collaborators as an essential element to understanding why the masses became complicit. To her view, one of

347 Feuchtwanger, *The Oppermanns*. 344.

348 Theodor W. Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein, (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 144-146.

349 Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 150.

the most remarkable achievements of the Nazi regime was its ability to override the moral objections of the masses in order to procure denunciations. While the specific causes behind such acts remain a subject of controversy, Neiman argues that its widespread existence reveals the impotence of intention, for the German people as a whole loathed the Nazis, yet seemed completely unable to disobey them. In other words, what motivated the masses is of secondary significance to the fact many otherwise 'good' people chose to collaborate with the authorities in ways that violated their personal sense of morality, despite feeling averse to Hitler's regime. As an extension of Arendt's view, Neiman's explanation for why this occurred finds fault with the common misconception that evil actions were necessarily the result of evil motives. This misconception allowed many ordinary people to maintain their sense of moral decency even while collaborating in harmful ways against the innocent.³⁵⁰

The irrationality of the masses

The apparent irrationality of this contradiction between intention and action relates to a key element of Erika Mitterer's novel that is used to tie all causes for collaboration together. Though *The Prince of Darkness* touches on many subjects, the prejudice, superstition, hysteria, and mob mentality of the masses leads them towards a state of irrational mass-psychosis that serves to empower evil. As an anti-Nazi commentary, this idea communicates the authors' opinion that the people were largely responsible for Hitler's reign due to their inability to think or act rationally as a society.

In *The Prince of Darkness*, the collective will of the people is depicted as

350 Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought*, 274-275.

dangerously impulsive and destructive, even before hardship had befallen the community. Once riled by fear and anger, the people become particularly susceptible to manipulation as they seek to find the cause behind their suffering in order that it should not seem meaningless. Mitterer writes:

In the consciousness of the masses, the sequence of events is sometimes forgotten. History arranges itself according to likelihood at the cost of fact, thus creating a plausible rumour out of impossible suppositions. [...] When man experiences evil, he wants at least to be able to hate the source; then he finds it easier to bear.³⁵¹

Though the suffering brought to the people through an outbreak of plague is caused by a poor, sick, orphan girl, the people blame the disease on the immorality of sinners and the scheming of Satan worshippers because it agrees with their preexisting assumptions.

As an allusion to the Third Reich, Mitterer's observations find parallel faults with those in her contemporary society who blamed such 'enemies' as the Jews or the communists for all of Germany's problems. Like the irrational fear of Satan, belief in such evil relied on established prejudices rather than evidential proof, and the resulting effect of widespread persecution and empowerment of harsh authorities were the same. Moreover, that tyranny emerges as a result of mass hysteria and social disaster likely alludes to Hitler's practice of capitalizing on moments of crisis to lay additional blame on his chosen enemies, thereby reinforcing his grip on power.³⁵²

Criticism in *The Prince of Darkness* also applies to the more rational elements of society who collaborate selfishly out of fear, or submit before authorities because they cannot bear the burden of responsibility associated with free choice. Mitterer writes:

³⁵¹ Mitterer, *The Prince of Darkness*, 183-184.

³⁵² One example of this is the burning of the Reichstag buildings on February 27th, 1933, which was interpreted by Nazi officials as the signal for a communist attack, and as consequence was followed by widespread purges against leftist political opponents and the suspension of individual civil liberties. The official interpretation of the fire's cause was widely believed by the public in light of their pre-existing anti-communist fears and the known rivalry between the Nazis and Marxists. Broszat, *The Hitler State*, 70-71; H. Mommsen, "The Reichstag Fire and its Political Consequences," *Aspects of the Third Reich*, ed. H. W. Koch, (Houndmills (U.K.) and London: MacMillan Publishers, 1985), 63-67, 72-73.

[...] the thoughtful man saw the masses of the semi-determined, the semi-enthusiasts, the tepidly loving, who did not want to take their left hand from the Cross as they stretched out the right for profit. And perhaps they longed for nothing so glowingly in the semi-extinguished craters of their hearts as that at last someone strong enough to force them to an either-or and to decide for them so that they might follow him in the comforting blindness that suited them better than the restless lightning, the sudden flashing rays.³⁵³

Mitterer's conclusion suggests that, while the authorities remain directly responsible for committing atrocities, the people were also complicit for their role in bringing the system into place, for procuring victims through acts of denunciation, and for submitting too eagerly before the will of those in power in order to avoid any burden of responsibility.

An alternative perspective on the irrationality of the masses is provided by Lion Feuchtwanger, in his 1943 novel, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*. Here, the emotional appeal of Nazism is likened to a hypnotic force. In this work, the masses appear driven by their desire to submit before Hitler's authority and abandon their individuality in favour of the group identity. This is made clear through the observations of Feuchtwanger's lead protagonist, Oscar Lautensack, who takes part in the mesmerizing experience of beholding Hitler at a Party rally:

Oscar's heart beat in the same rhythm as the heart of the crowd and admitted no careful examination of what the man up there was saying. The speaker himself had not examined it at any length. Rather he had worked himself into a kind of trance. He believed while he spoke. And therefore the crowd believe, filled with fervour, and Oscar and the crowd were carried out of themselves and filled with fervour.³⁵⁴

In exerting his influence on the masses, Feuchtwanger goes on to suggest that Hitler's personality bore similar traits to that of a hypnotist or mind-reader. While this view is a stretch of reality, Hitler's awareness of the importance of psychology in understanding society is revealed through his writings, which also demonstrate his considerable insight on how a leader might successfully control the people. In *Mein*

³⁵³ Mitterer, *The Prince of Darkness*, 503-504.

³⁵⁴ Feuchtwanger, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, 38.

Kampf he states: “An agitator who shows the ability of imparting an idea to the great masses must be a psychologist” and in addition that, “to lead means: to be able to move masses.”³⁵⁵ Moreover, that Hitler was one of the primary theorists responsible for developing the Nazis' propaganda campaign, does suggest his genuine expertise on certain aspects of human behaviour. Regarding this link between psychology and propaganda, political theorist John Meaney notes that psychological coercion can exist for individuals (citing the example of hypnosis), but questions the feasibility of implementing such strategies on a grand societal scale. Regardless, Meaney notes that the tactics of coercion employed by a skilled propaganda apparatus amounted to a powerful force of persuasion that would have been difficult for anyone to resist, as he states:

The psychic penetration of the individual by using his own weaknesses as vehicles of entry and the conquest of him through the resulting interior division and paralysis of strength are only a small scale reproduction of the “Trojan horse” method of conquering nations.³⁵⁶

Feuchtwanger's implication that Nazism represented a form of psychological coercion is supported in part by Theodor Adorno's assessment of the impact of Nazism on Germany's social consciousness. According to Adorno, the style of Hitler's rule and the effect of his charisma inadvertently awoke in the masses the portion of their collective behaviour that seeks to maintain a compliant attitude towards powerful parent figures. This resulted in the people's adoption of a “passive-masochistic attitude” in which individuals were led to feel that submission before the authority of a threatening “primal father” was necessary. Hitler can be understood to have fulfilled this role, which Adorno saw as necessary for the creation of a communally self-identified “group ego.”³⁵⁷

However, Adorno goes on to argue that despite Hitler's successful use of

³⁵⁵ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 848.

³⁵⁶ Meaney, “Propaganda as Psychological Coercion,” 66-67.

³⁵⁷ Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” 138-142.

psychological techniques in directing the masses, Nazi leaders were not sophisticated enough to be familiar with the complexities of Freudian thought. Rather, he maintains that the “psychology of fascism” was concerned with manipulation, and Hitler's style of rule merely exploited a vulnerable aspect of human psychology. Furthermore, Adorno argues that there is a fundamental phoniness to fascism, and questions the authenticity of the communal ecstasy generated through political demonstrations, as he states: “They do not really identify themselves with him [Hitler] but act this identification, perform their own enthusiasm, and thus participate in their leader's performance.”³⁵⁸

Anti-Nazi resistance as a form of class warfare

Though the works discussed thus far have made use of a wide range of characters in order to present a multiplicity of perspectives, the subject of resistance has not yet been discussed in detail. Some authors, such as Erika Mitterer, hardly give any focus to the subject of resistance; though the virtuous characters of her novel struggle to survive and preserve their ideals, they appear powerless to do anything more than observe and endure as society collapses around them. One author who is notable for promoting a more active form of opposition is Bertolt Brecht, who presents the Third Reich through a Marxist perspective and promotes radical opposition to the fascist regime.

This is apparent in his 1937 play titled *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, wherein a matronly character announces her intention to fight the fascists, declaring “They're not human. They're a canker and they've got to be burned out like a canker.”³⁵⁹ Brecht's 1942-1943 work, titled *The Visions of Simone Machard*³⁶⁰ (co-written by Lion Feuchtwanger) is

358 Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” 147-152.

359 Bertolt Brecht, “Señora Carrar's Rifles,” (original title: “Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar”), written and produced 1937, *Collected Plays*, vol. 4, part 3, eds. John Willett and Ralph Manheim, trans. John Willett, (London: Methuen, 1983), 123.

360 Written between 1942 and 1943, *The Visions of Simone Machard* is a play that takes aim at the lack of patriotism that undermined efforts by the French to resist the German onslaught during the invasion of 1940, and the self-interested capitalists who sought to

another example, in which a young French girl advocates for resistance against the German army and burns a fuel deposit rather than let the invaders acquire it. The play is heavily critical of civilian collaboration and the general lack of patriotic resistance.³⁶¹

The plays of Bertolt Brecht frequently reference the need for the working classes to rise up against their Nazi oppressors, who in turn are commonly presented as retaining the worst elements of exploitative capitalism. Elements of a similar Marxist view are found in the works of a number of authors, including Lion Feuchtwanger, Klaus Mann, and Arnold Zweig. Accordingly, resistance in works by these authors is often portrayed through the context of a civil war, fought between the evil fascists and their industrialist allies, and the oppressed under-classes of peasants and workers.

While the portrayal of anti-Nazi resistance as a form of class conflict was intended to promote opposition, belief in an imminent civil war between communists and nationalists was also one of the key premises that won popular support for the Nazi cause. Before 1933, the uncertainty of democracy amidst unprecedented unemployment and rising levels of street violence led to a growth in extremism across the political spectrum. While economic hardship did draw some supporters to the Marxist cause, preexisting anti-communist fears pushed a majority of the population towards non-communist alternatives, including the Nazis. By positioning themselves as defenders of society against an imminent communist threat, the Nazis strengthened their hold on power and granted themselves the authority to rule with brutal force.³⁶²

benefit from the new rulers. Simone is a girl who channels the spirit of Joan of Arc, and risks her own life selflessly to sabotage the Germans, and is betrayed by her countrymen as a result. However, she provides a positive example of how true French patriots should act, with the implication that the French resistance would spring forth from similar roots.

361 Bertolt Brecht and Lion Feuchtwanger, "The Visions of Simone Machard," (*Die Gesichte der Simone Machard*), written 1942-1943, produced 1957, *Collected Plays*, volume 7, eds. Ralph Manheim and John Willett, (New York: Vintage books (A division of Random House), 1975), 49-50.

362 Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 10-12.

Anti-Nazi resistance as an existential struggle

An alternative to the Marxist view is provided through Hans Fallada's 1946 novel, *Every Man Dies Alone*, in which resistance is depicted as a solitary struggle to preserve one's sense of human decency. In light of the isolation faced by opponents to the regime and the futility of their actions, resistance takes on the character of an existential struggle, where the objective of defying the state becomes entwined with a search for meaning.

Based on true events, Fallada's portrayal of Berlin during the Third Reich adopts a broad range of perspectives representing a diverse social panorama of everyday life under Nazi rule, focusing on the small but meaningful acts of defiance carried out by ordinary people. His protagonists, Otto and Anna Quangel, attempt to undermine the state by anonymously distributing anti-Nazi messages on postcards around the city. Though they are able to carry out their acts and blend in with society for a time, they suffer from feelings of isolation, and are left disappointed when the hoped-for effect of their resistance never materializes. They are eventually hunted down by Escherich the Gestapo agent, captured, and sentenced to death.

The meaning of their resistance is made clear while Otto Quangel sits in prison contemplating the hypocrisy of Nazi justice. Despite the futility of his rather small act of defiance, Otto realizes that the purpose of his struggle was about the activity of resistance rather than its results, and bore meaning as a defence of basic human decency. In the face of the soul-crushing power of the state, defiance, no matter how small the act, is presented as the one means by which an individual might preserve their humanity. This point is shared by one of Otto's fellow prisoners, an intellectual who explains the importance of their struggle on a personal and political level:

At least you opposed evil. You weren't corrupted. You and I and many others locked up here, and many more in other places of detention, and tens of thousands in concentration camps, they're all resisting, [...] As it was, we all acted alone, we were caught alone, and every one of us will have to die alone. But that doesn't mean that we *are* alone, Quangel, or that our deaths will be in vain. Nothing in this world is done in vain, and since we are fighting for justice against brutality, we are bound to prevail in the end.³⁶³

Similar perspectives on the meaning of resistance are found in other works of anti-Nazi literature. For example, in Anna Seghers' *The Seventh Cross*, the character of Franz Marnet is used to illustrate the psychological conflict which accompanied acts of defiance. Franz contemplates the the alluring idea of falling into line and joining the obedient masses for the sake of his personal safety. However, despite his doubts, Franz reaffirms his need to persist with the deep yearning for justice that defined his existence.³⁶⁴ Despite the overwhelming power of the state and the debilitating terror experienced by the masses, Anna Seghers' message of hope proclaims that humanity's inner goodness was an unbreakable force which could be repressed but never destroyed. This belief in the endurance of the human spirit is expressed by the prisoners of a concentration camp, as narrated by an unnamed voice:

All of us felt how ruthlessly and fearfully outward powers could strike to the very core of man, but at the same time we felt that at the very core there was something that was unassailable and inviolable.³⁶⁵

A similar meaning is found in Lion Feuchtwanger's *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, wherein the character of Paul Cramer, a half-Jewish writer, expresses his dismay before the rise of Nazism, which very few people actively resist:

And nowhere was there a serious determination to put an end to the evil. Everybody retreated before them, made concessions. It was enough to turn one's stomach. More and more publishers and newspapers hesitated to irritate their powerful opponent, and they told Paul they must dispense with his collaboration if he would not drop his attacks on the Nazis.³⁶⁶

³⁶³ Ibid, 430.

³⁶⁴ Of this conviction, Seghers writes: "All my life I've wished for only the simplest things – a meadow or a boat, a book, friends, a girl, to be surrounded by quiet. Then this other thing – this yearning for justice – came into my life. It happened when I was still quite young. Slowly my life changed; now it is only outwardly quiet." Anna Seghers, *The Seventh Cross*, 258.

³⁶⁵ Ibid, 338.

³⁶⁶ Feuchtwanger, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, 128.

Though he is aware of the futility behind his solitary effort, Paul launches himself against the Nazis through literary attacks, justifying his activities as a compulsion born of his profession, stating: "I'm a writer. Call me stupid and conceited if it gives you pleasure, but I feel that it's up to me to show people the web in which they've to be caught."³⁶⁷ His resistance takes on new meaning once he is imprisoned and the capacity to act is taken away. Awaiting his execution, Paul Cramer is forced to contemplate the value of a hopeless struggle, and acknowledges the fact his martyrdom would have little impact on the world. However, he chooses not to kill himself (as the prison guards had encouraged), and commits the ultimate act of passive resistance by allowing himself the luxury of falling asleep in his cell; in doing so he refuses to lessen the burden of guilt that is owed to his captors by ending his life for them.³⁶⁸

In these works, the depiction of resistance as a personal struggle faced by individuals on both a spiritual and political level fits in with a long-standing historiographical debate. Though opposition to Hitler's reign was widespread during the Third Reich, fear of denunciation and the lack of organizational structure meant that for many Germans, resistance was solitary, secretive, and left little trace. In the aftermath of the Second World War, historians searched for examples of resistance within Germany, and tended to overlook the acts of individuals in favour of the few organized groups which did exist. Western historians have traditionally focused on the Valkyrie bomb plotters, though the heroics of this group became questionable after it was revealed some members had been long-term supporters of Hitler, and were not motivated by moral

³⁶⁷ Ibid, 162.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, 322-323.

outrage against the Holocaust.³⁶⁹ At the same time, studies of anti-Nazi resistance in the former Soviet Union gave emphasis to the efforts of communist organizations within Germany (such as the KPD). However, since communists were subject to harsh repression, most of their energy had been spent trying to maintain their organizational structure, rather than actively fighting the regime.³⁷⁰

In the 1970s, a historiographical shift in focus towards 'normal' forms of opposition came to regard non-organized acts of resistance as historically significant. In this vein, historian Martin Broszat viewed resistance as a direct reflection of the particular relations between the rulers and the ruled. His argument maintained that in an “asymmetrical” system of rule (in which there is no balance or bargain of power between the rulers and the ruled), any form of opposition that undermines the government's 'total rule' should be considered a form of resistance; this could include small everyday acts, which he calls “resistenz.” Resistenz was typified by behavioural, morally neutral, independent and non-organized acts, which as a form of resistance could be partial, limited in scope, or directed towards specific aspects of Nazi rule. Broszat's view was criticized for the fact many 'resistenz' activities had very little impact on the regime, and for being an overly broad concept that excluded considerations of moral intention. Other historians (notably Peter Steinbach and Hans Mommsen) viewed resistance as a process tailored to the context of individual circumstances, and should not be viewed in generalized concrete terms.³⁷¹

Another way to view anti-Nazi resistance is with consideration for the

369 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, New York: Penguin Books, 1964, 100.

370 Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 173.

371 Ibid, 152-163, 172-173, 177.

consequences that could result from acts of defiance. The strict regulation of German society turned even mundane acts of disobedience into major criminal offences, as indicated by the number of crimes punishable by death, which rose from three to forty-six during the Second World War.³⁷² Fallada's vision of the Third Reich reflects this harsh reality, and supports Broszat's concept of "resistenz," as he writes: "Whether their act was big or small, no one could risk more than his life. Each according to his strength and abilities, but the main thing was, you fought back."³⁷³

While the above mentioned works of anti-Nazi literature emphasize how resistance could take place as a private struggle, the conflict faced by individuals was also designed to reflect the greater context of Germany's moral turmoil. Though the specifics of this view are defined according to the particular perspective of authors, the prevailing notion communicated through anti-Nazi literature maintains that humanity's yearning for justice was a force which would eventually prevail over the brutality of Nazi repression by enduring and outlasting evil.

The spiritual cost of collaboration

The idea that resistance offered its own reward reflects an essential element of the anti-Nazi worldview, and indicates belief on the part of authors in some form of cosmic justice which would bring punishment to the wicked and restore balance to German society. Accordingly, the notion that the cost of collaboration was greater than its reward appears as a reoccurring theme of anti-Nazi literature.

An example of this is found in Hans Fallada's *Every Man Dies Alone*, where the

³⁷² Ibid, 172.

³⁷³ Fallada, *Every Man Dies Alone*, 132.

figure of the suffering perpetrator is used to portray the negative consequences of collaboration. In one instance, Fallada depicts a group of Nazi prison guards as men whose soul-crushing duties had so degraded their essence as human beings that they had been reduced to the status of unfeeling automatons.³⁷⁴ A more detailed exploration of this idea is found in the character of Escherich the Gestapo agent. Throughout his investigation into the Quangels' acts of defiance, he maintains a cold and professional demeanour, does not view the suspects as real humans, and does his best to ignore matters of 'justice' or morality in relation to their actual crimes. However, when he finally achieves victory and apprehends the suspects, he is overcome with guilt for his role in perpetrating evil and commits suicide.³⁷⁵

A key notion advanced through Fallada's text maintains that everyone is doomed to their fate, and Germans in particular faced violent death as an imminent prospect regardless of their chosen path. Since the increasingly paranoid and arbitrary police authorities could target anyone, and the allied bombing raids could strike anywhere, obedience and political neutrality were no longer guaranteed to provide any degree of safety. This lack of security made the individual's fight for decency ever more urgent, for those who collaborated with the Nazis still risked their lives, but did so for the sake of evil. Otto Quangel makes this point clear as he confronts his Nazi-appointed defence attorney, a man who recognizes the evil of the Nazi state, but collaborates regardless:

What was your price for turning into such a fine gentleman, with creased trousers and polished fingernails and deceitful concluding speeches? What did you have to pay? [...] And you will continue to pay more and more, and maybe one day, like me, you will pay with your life, but you will have done it for your indecency! [...] You know perfectly well that the man behind bars is the decent one, and you on the outside are a scoundrel, that the criminal is free, and the decent man is

³⁷⁴ Ibid, 474-475.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, 378.

sentenced to death.³⁷⁶

A similar notion is advanced through Lion Feuchtwanger's *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, wherein the focal character, Oscar Lautensack (a stage magician), is understood to have sold his integrity to the Nazis in exchange for fame and wealth. As his tastes grow ever more extravagant, it becomes clear that his materialist opulence is limitless, leading him to state, "If you haven't too much, you've too little."³⁷⁷ The fixation on wealth may also reflect the Marxist influence on Feuchtwanger's writing, wherein the Nazi Party is attributed the worst elements of exploitationist capitalism. The irony of Oscar's success is that his initial dissatisfaction lay in his desire to be considered a great artist, rather than a famous playboy. In keeping with the notion that collaboration would end up costing more than resistance, Oscar's good fortune comes to an abrupt end as he falls out of favour with Hitler and is abandoned by his former admirers. After he is left in ruin, his own brother betrays him at the command of his Nazi superiors.

Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* tells a strikingly similar story (based on true events)³⁷⁸ about a stage actor by the name of Hendrik Höfgen who trades his integrity for a chance at success under Nazi patronage. While similar elements such as the temptations of wealth and fame appear in this work, the emphasis of Mann's novel is on the gradual process of change which leads him by degrees towards full collaboration, despite his best efforts at remaining an independent artist.

In the beginning, Höfgen is a pronounced Marxist who takes part in ridiculing the Nazis along-side his leftist colleagues. After 1933 he refuses exile in the hopes of

³⁷⁶ Ibid, 480.

³⁷⁷ Feuchtwanger, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, 152.

³⁷⁸ The novel was a relatively thinly-veiled criticism of the accomplished actor, Gustaf Gründgens, whose career flourished during Nazi rule and who was also the former brother-in-law to Klaus Mann.

maintaining his career, and continues to privately express his anti-Nazi views. However, when his fame starts to blossom as a result of Nazi patronage, his true loyalty is revealed as a selfish drive for wealth and fame, and the full extent of his collaboration becomes increasingly difficult to deny.

The double life of acting the Nazi in public while claiming to retain moral integrity in private (a prominent element of both Feuchtwanger and Mann's texts) is suggestive towards a coping mechanism that historian Robert Lifton describes as “doubling,” whereby the self is divided into two functioning wholes, allowing the individual to perform acts that violated their moral conscience without destroying it entirely. According to Lifton, the 'prior self' serves to maintain identity and moral grounding, while the 'Nazi self' performs the evil necessities of collaboration, and absorbs the resulting guilt.³⁷⁹

While Klaus Mann's text does not end with Höfgen's destruction, it is made clear that the penalty incurred by his collaboration results in the corruption of his soul. To convey this idea, Mann attributes the actor with an obsession for Hamlet, a role that he is unable to play convincingly due to his moral contamination under Nazi patronage:

I've got to play you. If I fail at playing you, I'll have failed everything. You're my ordeal by fire; I've got to pass. My whole life, all the sins I've committed, my great betrayal, all my shame can only be vindicated by my art. But I'm an artist only if I can play Hamlet. [...] You are not Hamlet, you don't have the nobility that only suffering and experience can give. You are merely the monkey of power, a clown to entertain murderers. [...] You had the choice, my dear fellow, between nobility and a career. You made your choice.³⁸⁰

The above examples demonstrate how authors envisioned the dilemma faced by German professionals under Nazi rule; of having to choose between success and moral

³⁷⁹ While Lifton describes “doubling” in relation to the duties of Nazi medical doctors serving the concentration camps, he notes that it is a tactic that could be seen throughout the Nazi realm, signified by the slippery slope of compromises, from grudging cooperation to increasingly incriminating acts, and towards full collaboration. Robert J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 418-419, 423, 426.

³⁸⁰ Mann, *Mephisto*, 254.

integrity. This was a conflict known to authors on a personal basis, and their conclusions likely played a decisive role in encouraging their continued defiance. Similarly, descriptions of the factors which led to collaboration relate to real temptations that would have been faced by authors; it was not maliciousness or insanity that led to collaboration with the Nazis, but a rational desire for professional success.

Beyond this personal significance, the social commentary of anti-Nazi literature on the collaborative role played by artists relates directly to an element of reality. Many artists such as Arno Breker, Adolf Ziegler, Josef Thorak, and Leni Riefenstahl, were actively involved in promoting the ideals of the state, and benefited handsomely from Nazi patronage.³⁸¹ After the collapse of the Third Reich, Arno Breker, the Nazi-appointed state sculptor, defended his collaboration as the rational decision of an ambitious professional, stating, "In my capacity as an artist I could hardly reject artistic commissions, especially those from leading personalities of the Third Reich."³⁸²

Moreover, the perception that professional collaboration came as the result of a gradual process, most notably evident in Klaus Mann's text, also reflects an aspect of historical reality. According to historian Randal Bytwerk, the coercive power of Nazi propaganda was designed to bend the will of opposition gradually through a corrosion of the people's political, social, and moral barriers.³⁸³ Similarly, John Meaney describes the success of Hitler's propaganda campaign as a result of the "concentration" technique, the first step of which involved the staging of demands one at a time, thereby achieving a greater degree of success over time than what would have been possible through an

381 As an example, the painter Adolf Ziegler was placed at the head of the Reich Chamber for the Visual Arts and helped ensure that anti-Modernist policies would be obeyed, while both Arno Breker and Josef Thorak were granted prestigious titles, commissions, and personal studios. Hinz, "Degenerate' and 'Authentic': Aspects of Art and Power in the Third Reich," 332.

382 Petropoulos, *The Faustian Bargain*, 218.

383 Bytwerk, *Bending Spines*, 1-4.

immediate grasp at total control.³⁸⁴

In this vein, Fred Alford argues that bureaucratization was a crucial element that contributed to the coercive power of the Nazi state for its effect of fragmenting tasks so that individuals might remain oblivious to the broad implications of their actions. In Nazi Germany, this also had the effect of separating responsibility for actions from their implementation, thus encouraging participants of the system to do things they would not do as individuals. The distancing effect created by bureaucratization allowed perpetrators up and down the chain of command to claim their actions were strictly professional in motive, conducted without malevolence and in accordance with duty.³⁸⁵

Career ambition as a motivating cause for collaboration also relates to Hannah Arendt's theory on the 'banality of evil', which presupposes that some of the most heinously evil deeds could be motivated by relatively trivial causes, such as the common desire to advance one's career. Arendt argues that intentions did not have to be malicious for evil to take place, and that under the right conditions, the most ordinary 'good' person could be capable of performing some of history's most terrible crimes. Our desire to attribute great evil to psychopathy or sadism relates more our desire to distance evil from ourselves, and to see Nazis as somehow different from 'normal' human beings.³⁸⁶

The 'true Nazi' as a figure of exceptional evil

Despite Arendt's view, the idea that the Nazis were simply evil human beings persists as a common explanation for Nazi crimes, as described earlier through the

384 Meaney, "Propaganda as Psychological Coercion," 71-73.

385 Fred Alford, "The Organization of Evil," *Political Psychology*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Mar., 1990), 18-19.

386 Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 25-26, 246-247, 272-279; Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought*, 271-277.

Danielle Goldhagen controversy.³⁸⁷ To support this idea, the figure of the 'true Nazi' appears in anti-Nazi literature as an exceptionally cruel and self-consciously evil character, typically filling a small but important role as the epitome of the fascist ideal. In some works, authors explore the perspective of such individuals, who express their belief in evil through an appreciation for chaos, destruction, and carnage, and celebrate the inner darkness of the human soul. In turn, they cast scorn against such 'civilized' notions as mercy, empathy, and human equality as the outdated values of a dying era.

One example is found in Lion Feuchtwanger's *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, where the character of Hans Lautensack (a Nazi Party member) addresses the criticism of his intellectual adversary, Paul Cramer. While Cramer attempts to warn the public about how Nazism represented a threat to the positive light of civilization, Hans Lautensack accepts this criticism as a truthful assessment of their movement, stating:

What is your objection to darkness, Herr Cramer? Why shouldn't we let it close in? There are many whose eyes are hurt by the light. By far the greatest number, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, feel more comfortable in the dark. [...] Your "light" is hopelessly doomed to extinction. [...] Since for better or worse one lived in an era of darkness, one couldn't live as if one were in an era of light.³⁸⁸

A similar example is found in Klaus Mann's portrayal of an ideologically motivated Nazi poet who expresses his preference for the inner darkness of the human soul:

Our beloved Führer is dragging us toward the shades of darkness and everlasting nothingness. How can we poets, who have a special affinity for darkness and the lower depths, not admire him? It is absolutely no exaggeration to call our Führer godlike. He is the god of the Underworld, who has always been the most sacred of all for those initiated in black magic. I have a boundless admiration for him, because I have a boundless hatred of the dreary tyranny of reason and the bourgeois fetish concept of progress. All poets worthy of the name are sworn enemies of progress. Poetry itself is in any case a reversion to the sacred primitive state of humanity, before it became civilized. Poetry and slaughter, blood and song, murder and hymns-they are inseparable. Yes, I love catastrophe.³⁸⁹

Numerous other examples appear throughout the works of anti-Nazi authors, some of

³⁸⁷ For further details, see pages 4-5.

³⁸⁸ Feuchtwanger, *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, 123.

³⁸⁹ Mann, *Mephisto*, 202-203.

which include the figure of the inquisitor from Mitterer's *The Prince of Darkness*, the SS police chief in Fallada's *Every Man Dies Alone*, the 'lemur people' (an allusion to the Gestapo) from Jünger's *On Marble Cliffs*, the police interrogator from Remarque's *The Arch of Triumph*, and the concentration camp commander from Seghers' *The Seventh Cross*, to name but a few. While characters such as these do not explain why Nazism rose to power, nor what motivated ordinary people to collaborate, they do serve to illustrate how authors believed Nazism served the interests of a certain class of sadistic killers.

While the figure of the true Nazi appears with great prevalence in many works of anti-Nazi literature, it is noteworthy that such a simplistic view of evil is never used to explain the phenomenon of Nazism as a whole. Rather, the 'true Nazi' appears as a contrasting figure to the typical Nazi supporter (who is morally conflicted, frightened, and driven by promises of reward into acts of collaboration). In anti-Nazi literature, 'true Nazis' appear as the minority of the German population who carry out the most brutal acts with eager enthusiasm, and serve in this way as a representation of the worst elements of humanity that were allowed to flourish under Hitler's protection.

Duty, self-destruction, and redemption

With regards to the motives of ordinary Germans as collaborators, the subject of duty has not yet been explored in relation to its treatment by anti-Nazi authors. While most of the works used in this research feature some form of critique on this subject, Arnold Zweig's *The Axe of Wandsbek* and Theodore Plievier's³⁹⁰ *Stalingrad*³⁹¹ stand out

³⁹⁰ Theodor Plievier (1892-1955) fled to Russia during the Second World War and witnessed the civilian struggle in Moscow during 1941-1942. The following year, he read the personal correspondences of captured German letters, and conducted interviews with German prisoners of war following the battle of Stalingrad. M. Paul Holsinger and Mary Anne Schofield, *Visions of War: World War II in Popular Literature and Culture*, (Madison WI.: Popular Press, 1992), 36-38.

³⁹¹ *Stalingrad* documents the struggle for survival faced by German soldiers in the Hellish landscape of the Eastern Front. The

for their emphasis on the role of duty as a contributing factor behind German destruction. While each author approaches the subject from a distinct perspective, their shared conclusion suggests that destruction or death were the natural rewards for obedience before evil authorities, and was the fate which awaited all of Germany should the shackles of duty remain unbroken.

In many ways, the meaning of Arnold Zweig's 1948 novel, *The Axe of Wandsbek*, is similar to Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* and Feuchtwanger's *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, in that the central theme relates to the deadly cost of collaboration. Based on true events, Zweig's narrative follows the character of Albert Teetjen (a butcher by trade) who assists the Nazi Party by carrying out a number of executions, and the financial, spiritual, and physical ruin that follows for him and his wife, named Stine. A key difference between this work and the others is that the lead character, Albert Teetjen, is primarily motivated by a strong sense of duty, in addition to his financial needs. When Albert Teetjen is approached by a Nazi official and offered the job of executioner, he is reluctant because he sees the taking of human life as a sin, but he soon accepts the burden. He justifies his actions based on the fact they were carried out as a matter of duty, and performed in accordance with the law. In this way, Zweig's portrayal of the Nazi executioner was not intended to show the inner workings of an evil or twisted mind or as a critique of blind ambition, but to illuminate the motivations of an ordinary law-abiding man.

The remainder of the narrative focuses on the repercussions of his collaboration,

account was inspired by the first-hand testimony of German prisoners of war who survived the battle, and focuses on groups of soldiers as they struggle to survive. As a political critique, the novel lays considerable blame on the Nazi leadership, as well as the military command for their obedience towards "insane" superiors.

as the community reviles him for his crime and shuns his business. To add to his misery, Teetjen's Nazi comrades abandon him, only seeking to benefit from his ruin. Albert Teetjen's disillusionment with the Party grows as he and his wife sink deeper into debt and face ever harsher degrees isolation.³⁹² In the end, both Albert and his wife commit suicide to escape the shame and degradation of their lives.

Arnold Zweig is careful to portray his subjects in sympathetic terms as simple-minded and obedient pawns caught in the game of Nazi politics. Though they bore guilt for their crimes of collaboration, they were also individuals who had clung to decency, and realized too late the error of their ways. In this way, destruction and hardship is not entirely without value, for it is only as a result of their broken spirits that these individuals become awakened to the true nature of Nazism and the crime of their obedience, after which they go on to achieve a degree of redemption.³⁹³ The implication of Zweig's novel suggests many Nazis were naive and duty-bound in their sense of Party loyalty, and that only the catastrophe of defeat could reveal to them the truth.

The theme of awakening conscience and redemption through destruction is also prominent in Theodore Plievier's *Stalingrad*. The narrative, which is based on the witness testimony of German prisoners of war, follows a group of soldiers through the horrific battle of Stalingrad. Plievier's depiction of the battle is presented as the climax of the Third Reich in which the entire structure of the Nazi state – the war, the racism, the military ethos – converge in a maelstrom of cataclysmic ruin.

³⁹² Zweig writes: "Yesterday he had still believed in his Führer, but today something seemed to have gone wrong with the Party, some indefinite and impalpable evil presence had slipped between him and his fellows, between him and his people." Zweig, *The Axe of Wandsbek*, 303

³⁹³ Though this awakening comes too late to save the Teetjens, their redemption is alluded to through a last-moment vision of the executed prisoners, who regard Albert's suicide with approval: "They carried their heads once more upon their shoulders, and the expression in their faces said: It shall suffice." Ibid, 376.

The context of war and focus on soldiers makes this text distinct from those of other authors in that events unfold within the context of the military organization as opposed to the social context of everyday life. Nevertheless, the subjects of motivation, collaboration, and resistance remain highly relevant to the experience of soldiers.

Stalingrad focuses in this way on the problem of duty, which in relation to Nazism, prevents the individual soldier from opposing that which is deemed evil. According to Plievier, in the world of inverted morality brought about by Nazi rule, the best virtues of the common soldier, his “unconditional faith” become “his greatest fault”³⁹⁴ Despite being completely demoralized by war and disillusioned with the Nazi leadership, the officers and generals seem incapable of disobedience, for even as they are ordered to accept death, they instinctively respond with the thought: “The order will be carried through.”³⁹⁵ This dilemma, of being commanded to perform self-sacrifice in a hopeless situation, is extended to the entire military and indeed the whole of the German nation, for whom the “the only decision that remained was: suicide or not.”³⁹⁶

The character of General Vilshofen (a recently promoted general), becomes the voice of enlightened reason, who, after becoming disgusted with “military madness,” questions why disobedience or mutiny had never arisen. He asks:

Good god, where was the commander in chief, where was the general, where the officer who would put a stop to this shameful spectacle, who would give the signal for disobedience? It would no longer be disobedience; it was the command of the hour, obedience to a higher duty. And, if the signal did not come, where were the people, where were the men who could cast aside their false leaders and act for themselves?³⁹⁷

He condemns the military ethic of 'duty' in light of the apparent insanity of the political authorities, and takes the responsibility upon himself to advise his comrades to rebel, to

³⁹⁴ Theodor Plievier, *Stalingrad*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948), 280.

³⁹⁵ Ibid, 222.

³⁹⁶ Ibid, 259-260.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, 170-171

choose life over death, and to surrender to the enemy. Plievier writes:

When this state of affairs first became apparent [...] *then* we should have taken our own decision and overridden the madness of our superiors. But instead we remained instruments carrying out orders issued by the inmates of a madhouse, and we are, to this day.³⁹⁸

At stake is not only the soldiers' living existence, but the legacy their self-sacrifice would leave as a gift to the Nazis and a curse to future generations by making the the battle of Stalingrad seem glorious. This concern wins through, and what is left of the German army surrenders, following the high commander's lead.³⁹⁹

The catastrophe of Stalingrad is treated by Plievier in this way as a highly symbolic turning point for the soul of the German people; that the reign of Nazism embodied a triumph of evil, and Stalingrad represented the sacrifice of blood that was necessary to compensate for such a great sin. To the author, the crucial importance of Stalingrad was that it revealed the madness and brutality of the Nazis' ideological worldview, as Vilshofen observes:

The strong eat up the weak; the weak fall; the sick lie and are left behind. It's all logical. If a man is sick and can no longer crawl to the feed trough, it shows poor breeding, inferior racial stock. But those who steal from others and fill their own bellies will live a few minutes longer and are therefore of superior stock. Latte, have you had a chance to see those corpses with skulls cracked open and the brains eaten out? [...] I've seen them – and the men that can do that are the chosen people in this death trap and may survive [...] And that is the logical consequence, that is the goal we've been heading toward, not only since yesterday [...] That is the logical consequence of the doctrine of superior races.⁴⁰⁰

In this way, Plievier takes direct aim at the Nazis' racist ideology and presents the carnage and destruction of Stalingrad as the cumulative effect of their racial beliefs. Though the terrible price of this lesson is appalling, it is also necessary in order live “beyond Stalingrad” in defiance against “military madness” and the evils of insane political leadership:

398 Ibid, 281.

399 Ibid, 326-327.

400 Ibid, 122.

Stalingrad was necessary, not for us to triumph, but for us to learn a lesson. [...] It must mean to turn away from the long wrong road we have travelled, to turn away from our own wrongdoing and above all from the wrongs we have committed against our true selves.⁴⁰¹

Regarding the problem of duty, Plievier's novel celebrates individuality and personal acts of defiance as the heroic first step towards the reemergence of a new Germany. In the context of Stalingrad, defying authority required a recognition that Nazism was an ideology set to destroy itself, and that the ruined bodies of soldiers' corpses were the only natural outcome of Germany's misguided beliefs. While the characters within Plievier's novel are not burdened with concern for race or nationalism, belief in duty affects their fate directly, and had been heavily influenced as a concept by the celebration of patriotism in Nazi ideology. This view is supported by theorist Jacques Ellul, who argues that, because of the extreme hardships of modern warfare, it was necessary for 'duty to the nation' to become a part of political ideology, as represented through propaganda. He writes:

Man must be plunged into a mystical atmosphere, he must be given strong enough impulses as well as good enough reasons for his sacrifices, and at the same time, a drug that will sustain his nerves and his moral. Patriotism must become "ideological". Only propaganda can put man into a state of nervous endurance that will permit him to face the tension of war.⁴⁰²

Disillusionment and the loss of personal agency

A similar focus on the plight of the common soldier is found in the works of Heinrich Böll,⁴⁰³ where the Third Reich is presented according to the perspective of disillusioned young men caught in the rigidly structured yet chaotic world of military madness. Similar to Plievier's depiction, Böll presents self-destruction as one of the chief

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 169.

⁴⁰² Ellul, *Propaganda*, 143.

⁴⁰³ Heinrich Böll (1917-1985) was still a teenager when Hitler came to power, and was conscripted into the German Wehrmacht during the Second World War where he was wounded four times before being captured by American forces. In 1946, following his release, he devoted himself to writing, and his early works (1946-1949) revolve around his experiences as a soldier. Frank Finlay, "'Ein krampfhaftes Augenzumachen': Heinrich Böll and the 'Literaturbetrieb' of the Early Post-War Years," *Monatshefte*, vol. 95, no. 1 (Spring, 2003), 97-100.

effects brought to Germany as a result of the Nazis' misguided views. This is communicated through a short story titled, "Stranger, bear word to the Spartans we...". In this work, a vision of the destructive effects of Nazism on the individual and the State is shown through the eyes of a young soldier who awakes in a make-shift hospital ward, only to discover that the room is part of his old school-house, and he is horrifically wounded. When the soldier had been a student at this very school, he had been taught the ideology of race and nationalism that filled him with enthusiasm for war, and now the student, the school, and the country at large lay in burnt ruin because of those beliefs.⁴⁰⁴

In addition to this concern for self-destruction, a distinct theme of Böll's writings focuses on the loss of personal agency brought about as a result of martial authority. Under such conditions, resistance is expressed through small acts of self indulgence, as individuals seek to regain some semblance of control over their lives.

In the short story, "That Time We Were in Odessa," a frightened young man is forced to pass the time in occupied Ukraine while he waits for his transport to the Eastern front, where he is certain he will be killed.⁴⁰⁵ His plight is his hatred for army life, his fear of impending death, and his general lack of freedom. To escape is impossible, but he seeks refuge in distraction, and avoids the confines of his barracks.

Similarly, in "Children are Civilians Too" the perspective of a young wounded soldier is adopted as he is pitted against the arbitrary rules governing military life. As the protagonist awaits recovery in a field hospital on the Eastern Front, he attempts to buy a pastry from a Russian girl, but is prevented by a guard on the grounds that it is forbidden

404 Heinrich Böll, "Stranger, bear word to the Spartans we..." *Children are Civilians Too*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), 34-43.

405 Heinrich Böll, "That Time We Were in Odessa," *Children are Civilians Too*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), 30.

for soldiers to interact with civilians.⁴⁰⁶ He violates this rule, and barter with the girl in secret. This minor act of selfish defiance serves as a re-affirmation of his will, and though it is small in scale, serves as a rebellion against the militaristic belief wherein the needs of the many always outweigh the wants of the few.

Böll's depiction of military life as an intensely emasculating and debilitating experience also serves to contradict the macho ideals put forth by Nazi propaganda regarding masculinity and martial virtues. Despite showing considerable sympathy for the plight of the common soldier, the author also expresses deep contempt for the brotherly comradeship-of-arms that was expected of young men, as well as the romantic notions of duty and self-sacrifice that contributed to driving soldiers to their deaths. Böll is distinct in this way from Plievier, who adopted a more traditional view of a morally upright, though tragically doomed, professional soldier.

Whereas *Stalingrad* casts criticism against the military's sense of duty (for its role in preventing disobedience), Böll focuses on the immediate horrors of enlisted existence and the lack of personal freedom faced by young men. In his novel, *The Train was on Time*, the protagonist boards a train against his wishes knowing he is being taken towards his death, creating a strong impression of impending doom and powerlessness.⁴⁰⁷ It is the deep desire of this novel's protagonist to escape the war, to live simply, to indulge in human companionship, and most importantly to experience love. A similar interest is found in his short story, "Drinking in Petöcki," in which a soldier on temporary leave attempts to drink away his thoughts of the war, and focuses instead on the beauty of

406 Heinrich Böll, "Children are Civilians Too," *Children are Civilians Too*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), 57-58.

407 Heinrich Böll, *The Train was on Time*, (Original title: *Der Zug war pünktlich*), first published in 1949, trans. Leila Vennewitz. (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Limited, 1973), 6, 11.

young love, music, and the simple pleasures of care-free life.⁴⁰⁸

Though Heinrich Böll's literature is disparaging towards martial ideals, his works also show sympathy for the common man as essentially innocent and childlike in his lack of freedom, and for his ultimately doomed prospects in life. In this context, the evil of Nazism is not a matter of brutality or hateful ideology, nor is collaboration attached to a particular motive, such as greed or fear. Rather, Böll's criticism is directed against the coercive and dominating social environment brought on as a result of Nazi rule, wherein the individual's lack of freedom binds them to a fate beyond their control or choosing. Consequentially, resistance in these works focuses on the measures taken by reluctant German soldiers to extricate themselves from the system of Nazi power and reassert some degree of independence. As found in previous discussions of resistance as an existential struggle, finding the will to carry on with opposition despite the unlikely prospect of success proves a reoccurring obstacle for protagonists to overcome.

Conclusion

The question of what motivated ordinary Germans to accept the Nazi cause highlights a pivotal difference between the Nazi and anti-Nazi worldviews. A crucial element of this divide hinged upon their respective understanding of the individual's relationship to the state, specifically with regards to their need to resist evil while upholding ideals of goodness. While Nazi propaganda sought to undermine the value of individuality in favour of a collective identity, anti-Nazi authors present resistance against

408 Heinrich Böll, "Drinking in Petöcki" (1950). *Children are Civilians Too*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), 46.

evil as a deeply personal struggle in which freedom of choice and action were the determining factors behind moral integrity.

Through this comparison of worldviews, the depiction of the Third Reich by anti-Nazi authors suggests that the ideals of Nazi propaganda were directly opposed by the realities of their rule. While propagandists promised the German people a meaningful place in their new community as part of a collective identity with a noble group ambition, a contradictory view is presented through literary portrayals of everyday life in the Third Reich where the individual's primary experience was of fear and isolation.⁴⁰⁹ Similarly, the ideological vision of the noble warrior as an eternal and glorious ideal of manhood is negated by authors who write of the dehumanizing and emasculating effects of war, which not only strips the individual of all sense of personal agency, but brings ruin and destruction to the German homeland.⁴¹⁰ With regards to culture, Nazi art was used to convey an idea that National Socialism heralded a return to the purity and nobility of the ancient world; anti-Nazi authors contradict this view by portraying the National Socialist movement as a return to the primeval darkness of humanity's barbarian past, and as an overturning of all the goodness inherited through the progression of cultural civilization.⁴¹¹ Finally, the defeat of Nazism was presented by propagandists in apocalyptic terms as an event that would bring an end to European civilization, but anti-Nazi writers depict the end of civilization as having already occurred in Germany through Nazism's rise.

Though anti-Nazi literature presents a clear contradiction of the Nazi worldview,

409 Three novels that highlight this form of criticism are Hans Fallada's *Every Man Dies Alone*, Anna Seghers' *The Seventh Cross*, and Erika Mitterer's *The Prince of Darkness*.

410 The two authors who communicate this facet of criticism are Theodor Plievier and Heinrich Böll,

411 Ernst Jünger's *On Marble Cliffs*, Lion Feuchtwanger's *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*, and Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* provide the best illustrations of this view.

directly refuting National Socialist ideology was not the principle aim of writers. In most works, Nazi ideology is either disregarded or treated only as evidence of deception;⁴¹² nowhere is belief in National Socialism used to explain the wider phenomenon of its rise. Rather, one of the most compelling and frequently discussed threats posed by the Nazi state was its ability to procure obedience and cooperation from ordinary people despite their lack of authentic belief in the National Socialist cause. A wide variety of other causes were used to explain the people's motives, including fear of persecution, irrationality, mass hysteria, sense of duty, ambition, greed, lust for power, and sense of powerlessness. Whether cooperation from the masses was garnered through appeals to their existing desires or the exploitation of common fears, the general conclusion on Nazism maintained that the authorities could rely on the people's active support, despite the unpopularity of their rule.

Underlying the differences in perspective and opinion shown by anti-Nazi authors, the collective vision presented through their combined works serve as a fairly accurate reflection of post-war historiography. Many historians of the Functionalist school attribute the behaviour and motivation of Nazi perpetrators (as well as their collaborators) to a broad variety of interrelating causes, most of which did not require true belief in Nazism. For instance, one approach to the Holocaust takes aim at the bureaucracy of the Nazi state, which fostered competition, rewarded ambition, and compartmentalized the roles of perpetrators; this combined into a system which encouraged ruthlessness and served to distance individuals from responsibility for their actions. Other historians focus on the immense pressures to conform brought through the social context of the Third

⁴¹² See chapter one, page 35 onwards.

Reich, which included such elements as total propaganda, fear of arbitrary persecution, and the coercive power of peer influence.⁴¹³ Though it is widely acknowledged that Hitler did enjoy a strong element of popular support (particularly during the early years of his rule), few historians argue that the Holocaust and the wider phenomenon of Nazism can be attributed to such a simplistic cause as the people's belief in National Socialist ideology.

Since individual belief in Nazism was not presented by authors as the crucial element behind the people's obedience during the Third Reich, one must regard individuality itself as the underlying variable which either drove conformity or inspired resistance. The role of the individual in relation to the state is a subject which appears with great prominence in both Nazi propaganda and anti-Nazi literature, and according to either worldview, is presented as the key to Germany's success or failure in its struggle between good and evil.

On the one hand, Nazi propaganda set out to challenge the value of individuality in every form it could. The Nazis viewed humanity collectively as racially divided into defined groups with innate characteristics, whose behaviour and mode of thought stemmed from inherent traits. People did not become who they were because of their social context, upbringing, or personal decisions; rather, race was the key to all human behaviour, and individuals were encouraged to think of themselves and others in these terms. Individuality was also presented as contrary to the Germanic characteristic of willingness to perform self-sacrifice for the sake of the community. Additionally, the defining element behind forming the Nazis' social ideal (called the 'new community')

413 See discussion of Functionalism on pages 3-4.

hinged on the people's desire to surrender their individuality in favour of joining a group consciousness, or mass identity. The disdain for individuality is also evident in the broad objectives of propaganda, which sought to win over the masses rather than convert individuals through the power of reason, and attributed greater value to the assumed generalities of the populace rather than the particular traits of its outstanding citizens. Hand-in-hand with the persecution of 'outsiders' and dissidents, propagandists sought to reform the fractious masses into a harmonious whole that operated with the hive-like mentality of a great collective organism.

Conversely, the struggle against evil in anti-Nazi literature revolved around the moral integrity of the individual and their desire for personal freedom. Since the majority of ordinary Germans appear driven by fears or lured through promises of reward into various degrees of obedience and cooperation (and only the most simple-minded of fools are shown accepting the Nazi belief structure willingly), authors express the true power of the Nazi state through its ability to control the behaviour of individuals. In this context, resistance becomes a deeply personal and largely solitary struggle, as individuals must find the will to persevere without succumbing to despair, despite overwhelming odds and their own political impotence. Maintaining one's sense of individuality proves vital to this struggle, as it entails opposing the authorities through small but meaningful gestures of defiance that symbolically undermine the state's total control.

Both the Nazi and anti-Nazi worldviews present their struggle as a conflict between good and evil that, once recognized, created a moral imperative that could not be ignored. The divergent notions of good and evil behind either perspective are tied in this way to the supposed motives attached to the supporters of either cause, with the subject of

individuality highlighting the crux of the divide between them. With ideology and political opinion stripped away, the conflict of ideas between Nazi propagandists and anti-Nazi authors was about competing notions of good and evil, as characterized by the celebration of individual identity and personal moral values on the part of anti-Nazi authors, and on the part of the Nazis, through their belief in the superior importance of collective identity and group survival.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine how Germans envisioned the world during the Third Reich, with the aim of shedding light on this era using the the ideas and values communicated through Nazi and anti-Nazi cultural sources to compare the most important aspects of each worldview, and identify their differences. Since this aim is still very broad, the concept of evil was chosen to serve as the focus for this comparison.

Evil was selected for two reasons. Firstly, it appears at the centre of attention from both the Nazi and anti-Nazi perspectives, which is hardly surprising, since most worldviews are constructed in some way from notions of good and evil. The second reason relates to the legacy of Nazism, both in the popular consciousness, and ongoing matters of historiographical discourse. In the historiography of Nazism, evil remains a topic of considerable disagreement, as experts from multiple fields continue to argue about the nature of guilt, the forms of resistance, the manner of collaboration, the extent of complicity, the motives behind actions, and the severity of crimes. Though the meaning of evil is not the specific focus of these debates, each contentious subject is aligned to a question of morality, and seeks to explain the darker qualities of human nature. Moreover, Nazism continues to appear in popular culture as the great demon of modern civilization, and survives primarily as a symbol of evil in the twenty-first century. Thus, it is evident that for many historians and popular audiences alike, the fascination with Nazism is undeniably linked to its associations with the meaning of evil.

The primary sources used for this thesis include written Nazi ideology, National Socialist visual propaganda, and written works of anti-Nazi literature. Though each of

these sources communicates its perspective in a distinct fashion, each also presents a clear worldview in which the meaning of evil is given extensive explanation.

A different form of interpretation was also required for each type of source. In the case of anti-Nazi literature, sources were read with the personal history of individual authors in mind, and were regarded collectively as a patchwork of worldviews, each seeking to explain in its own way the evil that had befallen society. For Nazi sources, the combination of written ideology with visual propaganda was interpreted according to how propagandists wanted people to see the world, as dictated through the political aims of their cause. Unlike the patchwork of ideas represented by anti-Nazi authors, Nazi sources reflect a single set of ideas that were largely authorless. Besides Hitler's writings, Nazi sources such as visual propaganda reveal little about the views of individuals, but express a great deal about the political organization that spawned their creation.

Use of artistic sources provides the additional element of emotion to interpretation, as sources from each perspective were meant to inspire a specific set of feelings. Feeling can be a difficult sensation to communicate through words, as it requires the sensation derived from experience. In this way, Nazi art served as a tool to communicate the appropriate emotional sensation to German audiences. Its beauty (which sometimes translates as uncanny-beauty to modern viewers), which often takes the form of huge unwavering ultra-masculine men, conveys the intended grandeur of their ideas. The massive scale and expense of such works also reflects the importance Hitler attributed to appealing to the masses through their emotions rather than intellect.⁴¹⁴ Conversely, the feeling communicated by anti-Nazi authors is tied to the intentional

⁴¹⁴ For further explanation, see pages 85-86.

element of empathy they created between the reader and the fictional characters of their literary imagination. Each author attempted to explain in his or her own way the evil that had befallen society through Nazism's rise, and the sensations of fear, anger, disgust, and sadness associated with the Third Reich was an important element of their intended meaning.

Through these forms of interpretation, each type of source also comes to embody the essential elements of their respective worldviews. For instance, a key theme of anti-Nazi literature presents the defence of individuality as crucial to acts of resistance against tyranny, and in turn, the production of anti-Nazi literature represents real-life examples of defiance against Nazi rule. Similarly, just as Nazi ideology promotes the empowerment of the state, propaganda serves as evidence of the state's authority, which could control all forms of media and enforced an appearance of universal support for Hitler's regime. Furthermore, addition, the aspect of collective vision that inspired the creation of visual propaganda reflects the Nazis' aim of creating a hive-like society driven by the people's spirit of political enthusiasm and sense of communal identity. In short, just as anti-Nazi literature embodies the resistance it advocates, Nazi propaganda embodies the the power of the state and the mass consciousness it was designed to help create.

A final element to be mentioned is the influence of hindsight on the interpretation of sources. The Western bias of a twenty-first century Canadian perspective favours the anti-Nazi worldview, and automatically views Nazi propaganda as evidence of wrong-mindedness and injustice. This has the potential to influence the interpretation of sources to the detriment of their intended meanings. For example, anti-Nazi literature became highly valued after the Second World War as evidence of Germany's 'other self' that lived

in defiance of Hitler's rule, and could easily be viewed somewhat gloriously as a symbol of good triumphing over evil. However, this view deviates from the meaning of many anti-Nazi works of literature, much of which concerns the failure of resistance, and the triumph of evil. This is one reason why existential themes figure so prominently in these works, for it is the hopelessness of the anti-Nazi struggle which forces Hitler's opponents into a search for meaning. Conversely, it is easy to view Nazi propaganda in terms of its hypocrisies and failures in logic, but this only distances interpretations from the worldview that led to its creation.

While these considerations for the specific nature of sources played a vital role in research, the purpose of this thesis was to explore manifestations of the Nazi and anti-Nazi worldviews, as demonstrated through the contents of their respective cultural products. As such, the structure of arguments in the last three chapters has revolved around common themes relating to perceptions evil, with the focus remaining fixated upon the content of sources rather than their form.

By focusing on common themes, each chapter was designed to reveal a unique aspect of each worldview, both through an independent examination of their respective ideas and beliefs, and through the comparison of perspectives which followed. Each chapter was divided into two halves, beginning with an exploration of the Nazi worldview, followed by a discussion of comparative ideas appearing in anti-Nazi sources. Consulting secondary sources also proved essential to this process, not only for providing context, but for helping to explain why the differences in worldview might have existed.

Chapter one examined how either perspective envisioned evil as an all-powerful and all-encompassing force that derived power from lies and survived through deceptive

acts of manipulation. While the Nazis expressed this through their belief in an international Jewish conspiracy, anti-Nazi authors directed similar criticisms against the Nazi state for its use of lies, the corruption of justice, and for its perversion of basic notions of moral decency. The purpose of this comparison was meant to highlight the similarities in form which could exist between either perception of evil, despite extreme differences in external worldview. It was concluded, therefore, that both worldviews were responding to a common set of fears – namely the mistrust of information – and used the concept of evil to explain the righteousness of their own cause.

Chapter two assessed themes relating to power and brutality, illustrating the stark differences between the Nazi and anti-Nazi worldviews. On the one hand, Nazi theorists envisioned weakness as a form of evil and celebrated power as the one true measure of human worth. This was in the context of race, which identified Jewish weakness as the cause for their parasitic and manipulative behaviour, and celebrated the physical power of Aryans as the crucial element that might ensure racial survival according to the brutality of natural law. By contrast, anti-Nazi authors took aim at the imbalance of power created by the injustice of Hitler's rule, and identify power as an attribute of evil. The purpose of this comparison was to highlight how the two sides understood the meaning of power in relation to good and evil, which served to emphasize the underlying moral element defining the difference between these opposing worldviews.

Lastly, the third chapter focuses on how each perspective envisioned life as a struggle between good and evil. This comparison contrasts the utopian values of National Socialism with the realistic perspectives taken by anti-Nazi authors. Whereas Nazi sources attempt to show how their cause was noble and just, anti-Nazi sources attempt to

explain how it wasn't. At its root, this disagreement stems from competing perspectives on the value of individuality. While the Nazis were fixated upon the collective ideals that accompanied their attempts to construct a mass consciousness based on race and Party enthusiasm, a persistent theme of anti-Nazi literature celebrates individuality as a defence of moral principles and the basis of ongoing resistance against tyranny.

The issue of individuality touches upon a key difference in worldview that extends beyond the values portrayed in cultural works. The collective ideals of the Nazi worldview reveals a rigidity to their understanding of reality which is comparatively absent from anti-Nazi literature. From the perspective shown through Nazi culture, the world was built on fixed rules, which their enemies were at fault for disobeying. The Jews were presented in these terms as rule breakers on a racially determined level, whose survival despite inherent weakness was used as evidence of having cheated natural law. Thus, on a deeply ideological level, the Nazis' ideal form of human behaviour was to act as rule followers.

By contrast, the behavioural ideal that most consistently appears in anti-Nazi literature was to act according to the principles of moral goodness that all people knew they should strive inwardly to achieve. Defiance for the sake of maintaining personal integrity is promoted in these terms as the most important aspect of resistance. While there is considerable diversity between the specific views of authors, there is a consistent theme in which individuality carries with it an innate sense of goodness; this might become clouded by fear, ambition, stupidity, duty, or hysteria, but it would still define the core of human nature. Though there are a few cases where the sheer malevolence of villainous characters subverts this sense of inner-goodness, the overwhelming impression

made by anti-Nazi literature is that Nazism was experienced by individuals as a struggle between good and evil, wherein the desire to be good was pitted against a lawless and corrupt system driven by brutality and absolute power.

An underlying difference between each worldview's perception of reality is revealed through this comparison. While the Nazis divided human beings into groups of good or evil in rigidly defined terms of black and white, anti-Nazi authors present humanity according to various shades of grey, and attribute evil to the complex mix of individual circumstances that might influence behaviour. At the same time, Nazi ideology presents an amoral worldview in which notions of good and evil were the artificial constructions of civilization, and that natural law, race, and the struggle for survival were the only things that mattered. Conversely, despite the moral ambiguity of the Anti-Nazi worldview, authors present human decency and the desire for justice as innate unbreakable properties, against which no amount of tyranny or cruelty could prevail in the long-term. Two competing visions of the universe are revealed through these differences, appearing as either an orderly existence built from a desire for society to follow strict rules, or, as a chaotic existence built from the infinite number of circumstances that might influence the choices of individuals to act in morally positive or negative ways, according to their own inner sense of goodness.

To understand the significance of these views, Nazi and anti-Nazi sources must be understood according to their respective values. For instance, since ideology should not be used to explain the attitudes and opinions of ordinary people, it would be misguided to assume Nazi propaganda represents the actual beliefs of those who supported the Nazi

cause.⁴¹⁵ Rather, the importance of the Nazi worldview to public opinion is in its role as the official narrative guiding the interpretation of events on a national level. Whether the principles of Nazism were sincerely believed by the masses or not, they would have had an enormous influence on social behaviour as a result of the state's functionality, which both expected and enforced obedience towards its positions. Moreover, the expertise of Nazi propagandists appears to have been highly successful in bringing about the psychological unity of the masses and instigating their participation in actions, which more than compensated for any weaknesses in National Socialism as a political philosophy.⁴¹⁶

Along similar lines, it would be a mistake to interpret works of anti-Nazi literature as evidence for an all-encompassing worldview that might be broadly applied to represent 'ordinary Germans', or even to the small sampling of authors used in this research. Since the approach of this thesis focused on common themes, literary works were read in relation to each other as sharing parts of a common perspective, but this should not be construed to mean that authors were unified through their views in other ways. The true value of anti-Nazi literature rests on the element of individuality it represents, which not only serves as evidence of defiance against Hitler's rule, but sought to explain the conditions which gave rise to Nazism, and the reasons people behaved as they did.

Of additional importance is the means of communication, for authors were not only trained by profession to be skilled story-tellers, they possessed a remarkable understanding of how the structures of power and human nature operated. Similar to the

415 Historian Christopher Browning makes note of the difficulties involved in assessing motivation, and the problematic assumptions which connect propaganda to the actual beliefs of individuals. Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 159-175.

416 Ellul, *Propaganda*, 61.

works of later historians, anti-Nazi literature can be understood as an attempt to understand Nazism from an outsider's perspective, which predated any other historiographical interpretation. This was made evident throughout this thesis, where the views of authors came into line with works by later historians attempting to explain the same subject.

The absence of the Holocaust as a subject within literary sources also represents an important facet of their historical perspective, and marks a key difference between anti-Nazi authors and later historians. The closeness of authors to the Nazi state meant they did not have the benefit of hindsight to grasp the full scale of events, and as a consequence, literary sources often explore the evils of Nazism without discussing the Holocaust. While this does make them unreliable for expanding on the specific details of historical fact, their focus on the underlying elements of the Nazi state without fixation on the crushing horrors of Auschwitz allowed them to explore facets of Nazism that may otherwise have been overlooked. In this vein, an issue that the Intentionalist school of historiographical thought has been criticized for is its narrow field of vision, which seeks to attribute a cause to the Holocaust that befits its scale as a crime. For such a perspective, explanations offered by the likes of Hannah Arendt on the 'banality of evil' conflicted with latent assumptions about the past.

With these attributes informing the comparison of sources, the conflict between the Nazis and their opponents is revealed as a war of ideas, with propagandists and creative fiction writers serving as experts of communication, each seeking to influence the public through competing projections of worldview. Artistic works of Nazi culture reveal the Nazis' self-perception of goodness, not only for the sense of Aryan superiority

they were meant to convey, but for the classical aesthetics and utopian ideals they celebrated. At the same time, anti-Nazi literature reveals that authors did not consider belief in Nazism to be its primary threat. A greater evil by far was the phenomenon of obedience and active support by the masses towards Nazi authorities, despite deep feelings of moral objection against the style of their rule.

The true significance of evil within each of these worldviews relates generally to the matter of perception. If it wasn't for the intervention of human perspective, the objective world would exist without good or evil. Accordingly, the value and virtue of people, ideas, and objects, are all decided through a process of subjective evaluation. Useful or useless, beautiful or ugly, good or bad; all matters of human perception can be understood in these terms as a matter of moral perspective. In this regard, the balance between considerations for good and evil operate as the underlying element behind most concerns of political thought. In relation to this thesis, cultural sources representing both the Nazi and anti-Nazi perspectives demonstrate that both worldviews stemmed from a belief that evil had befallen society, a notion which also lent meaning and purpose to each of their respective political struggles. Since purpose is tied to action, and action was all that mattered according to each worldview,⁴¹⁷ the concept of evil can rightly be understood as the crux of the divide between the Nazis and their intellectual opponents.

The meaning of evil is also tied to the legacy of Nazism, since it survives as a symbol of evil throughout the modern world, due primarily to the horrific crimes they committed while in power. Since the meaning of evil also informs the limitations on acceptable forms of behaviour, it undoubtedly had an influence on the style of rule

⁴¹⁷ See discussions on pages 43 and 103.

adopted by Hitler's government, as well as the forms of resistance used by his opponents.

The long-term impact of twelve years of Nazi rule continues to shape the world, both in its political dimension and in the domain of human self-perception. There is value in this fact, as well as danger. Viewing Nazism as a form of evil teaches us to avoid the follies of the past, to beware of political extremism, to reject racist thinking, and to consider the hazards of mass manipulation by governments. At the same time, the Nazi state reveals unsettling truths about human behaviour, and the weaknesses inherent to apparently civilized societies. The Nazis manipulated notions of evil in order to exploit the emotions of the people, and their success remains a powerful testament to the susceptibility of the masses to the control of a highly skilled propaganda organization. In this modern age of information, the potential for organizations to communicate with the public and influence behaviour has never been greater, and the capacity for perceptions of evil to operate as a tool for successful mass manipulation should not be underestimated.

Appendix A: Figures

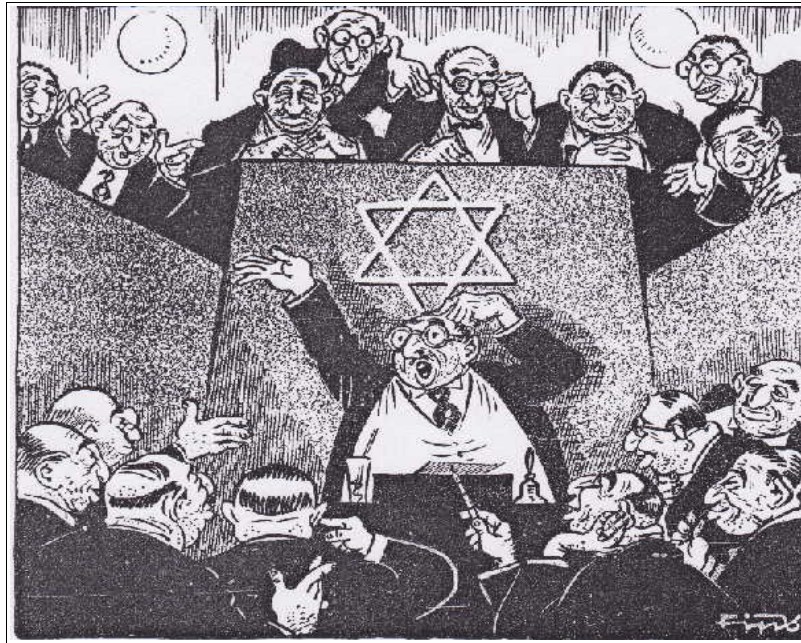


Fig.1: [artist unknown], “Jewish Contress” from *Der Stürmer* (Issue #34, July 1934), ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturmer.htm> (Jan. 30, 2014). Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk. Caption: “Let the Goyim believe that we can be Americans, Englishmen, Germans, or French. When our interests are at stake, we are always Jews, and nothing but.”

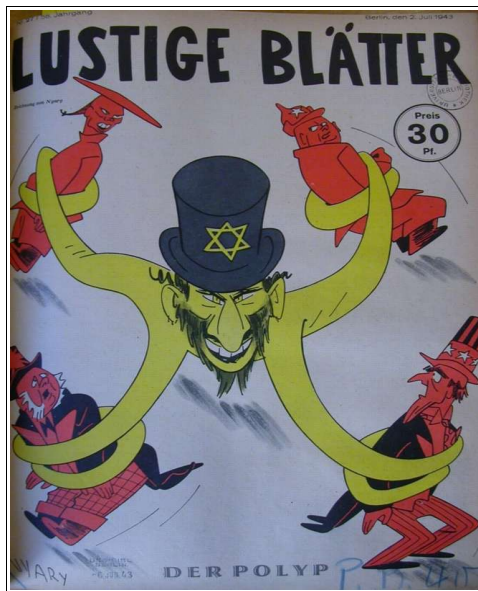


Fig.2: [artist unknown], from *Lustige Blätter* (Issue #27, 1943), accessed online: <http://www.bytwerk.com/gpa/lustige.htm> (Jan. 30, 2014). Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk. Caption: “The Polyp”



Fig.3: [artist unknown], from *Lustige Blätter* (Issue #49, 1943), accessed online: <http://www.bytwerk.com/gpa/lustige.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk. Caption: “Nailed down.”

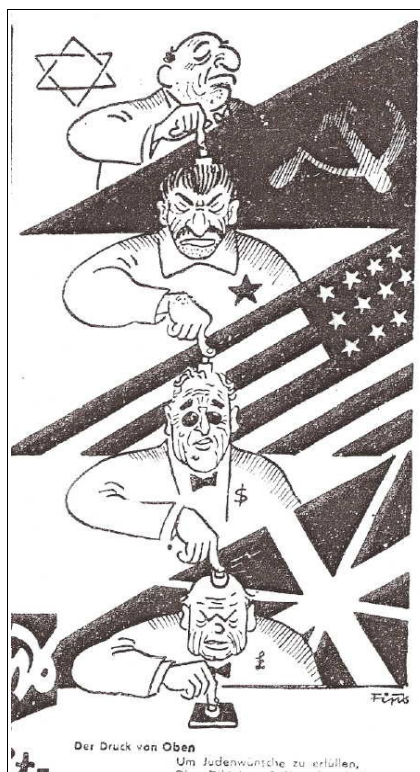


Fig. 4: [artist unknown], “Pressure from Above” from *Der Stürmer* (Issue #30, July 1944), ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.bytwerk.com/gpa/winstonchurchill.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

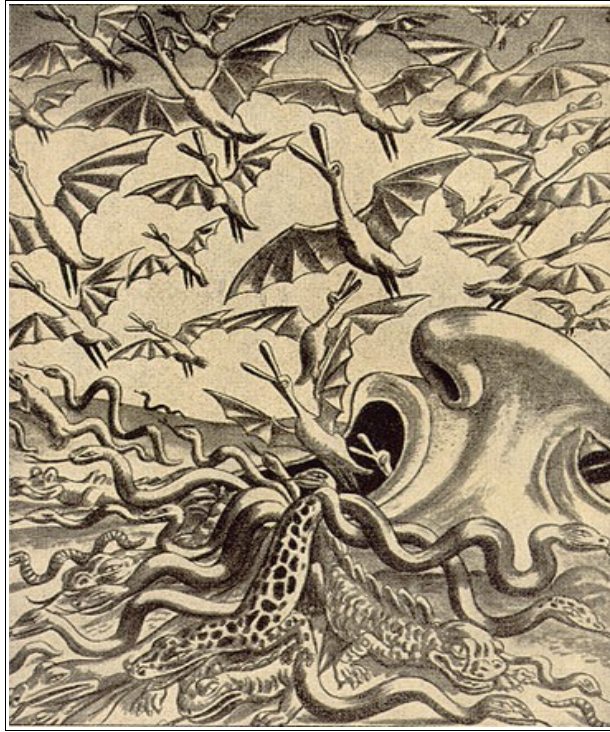


Fig. 5: [artist unknown], from *Simplicissimus*, caption: “The campaign of lies. The democracies have called on their most loyal troops to encircle Germany.”, date: April 9, 1939, accessed online: <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/lehmann.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

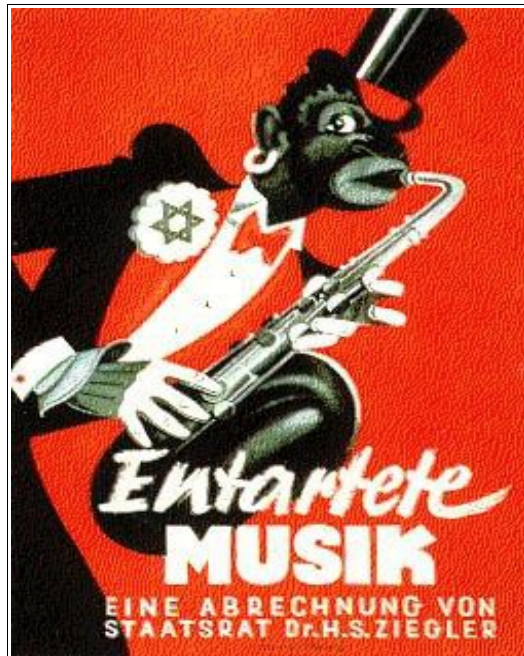


Fig. 6: *Entarte Musik* (Degenerated music), poster for exhibition of degenerate music (1938). Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk. Caption: “An account by state council H. S. Ziegler, PhD.”



Fig. 7: [artist unknown], from *Der Stürmer* (Issue #33, 1929), caption: “I can give him another injection. In the state he's in, he won't notice anything at all.”, ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturm28.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.



Fig. 8: [artist unknown], from *Der Stürmer* (March, 1929), caption: “Fatherland!”, ed. Julius Streicher. Accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturm28.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

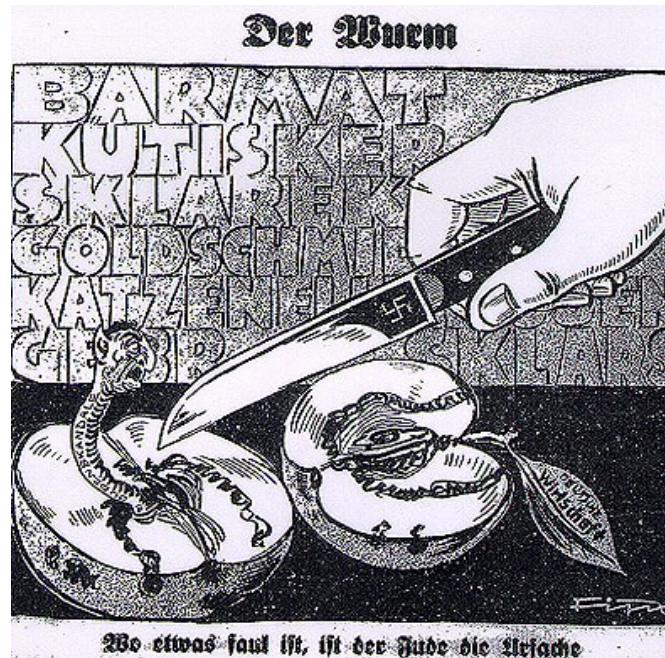


Fig. 9: [artist unknown], “The worm” from *Der Stürmer* (November, 1931), caption: “Where something is rotten, the Jew is the cause.”, ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturm28.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.



Fig. 10: [artist unknown], “Pan-Jewry,” from *Der Stürmer*, caption: “A frog sat in the green grass. He didn't do this, he didn't do that, he didn't do anything at all. Blinded by the glitter of gold, everyone flew into his mouth. Taken loosely from Boozmann.”, date: June, 1933 (Issue#25), accessed online: <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/sturmer.htm>, page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

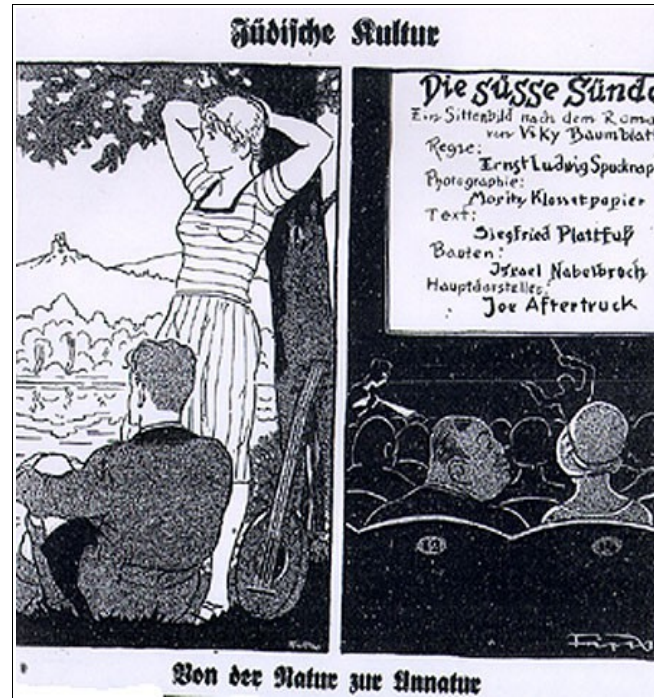


Fig. 11: [artist unknown], “Jewish Culture” from *Der Stürmer* (August, 1929), caption: “The natural and unnatural”, ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturm28.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

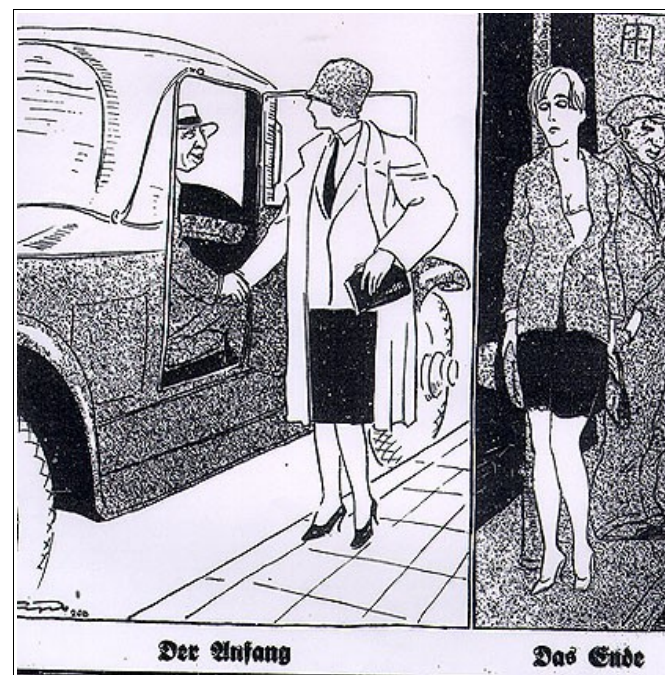


Fig. 12: [artist unknown], from *Der Stürmer* (July, 1929), caption: “The beginning [and] the end”, ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturm28.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.



Fig. 13: [artist unknown], “Legion of Shame” from *Der Stürmer* (Issue #37, 1935), caption: “Ignorant, lured by gold – They stand disgraced in Judah’s fold. Souls poisoned, blood infected – Disaster broods in their wombs.”, ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturmer.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

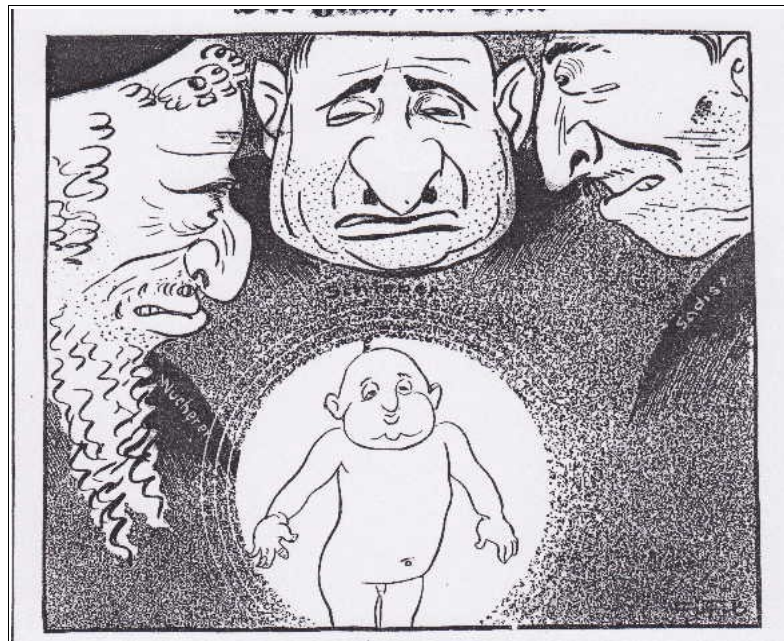


Fig. 14: [artist unknown], “The Curse in the Blood” from *Der Stürmer* (Issue #43, October 1934), Caption: “Every little Jewish baby grows up to be a Jew.”, ed. Julius Streicher, accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturmer.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

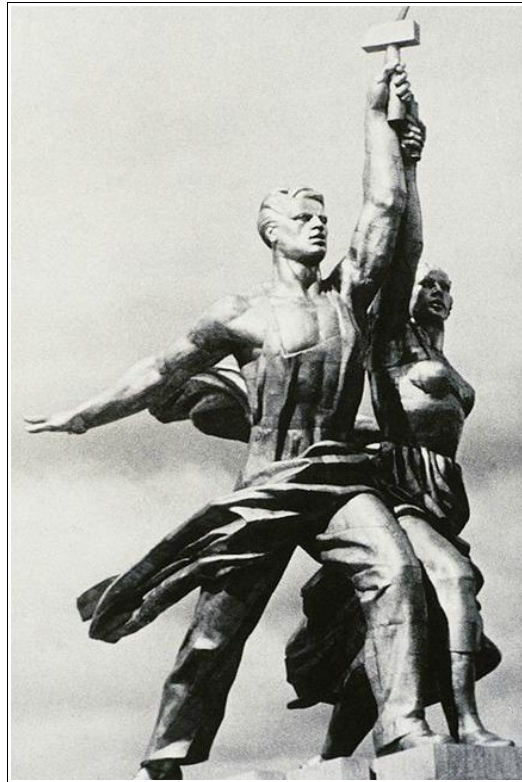


Fig. 15: Vera Muhina (1889-1953), *Peasant and Factory Worker Soviet Pavilion Paris Exposition*, 1937, bronze, height: 12m, Art © Estate of Vera Mukhina / Licensed by Vaga, New York, NY.



Fig. 16: Albert Speer (architect), "Paris: German Pavillion: general view," 1937, built for the Paris Exhibition, Paris (France), ARTstor Slide Gallery, Data from: University of California, San Diego.



Fig. 17: Arno Breker, *The Guard*, 1942, © Museum Arno Breker/MARCO-VG, Bonn Toestemming publicatie.

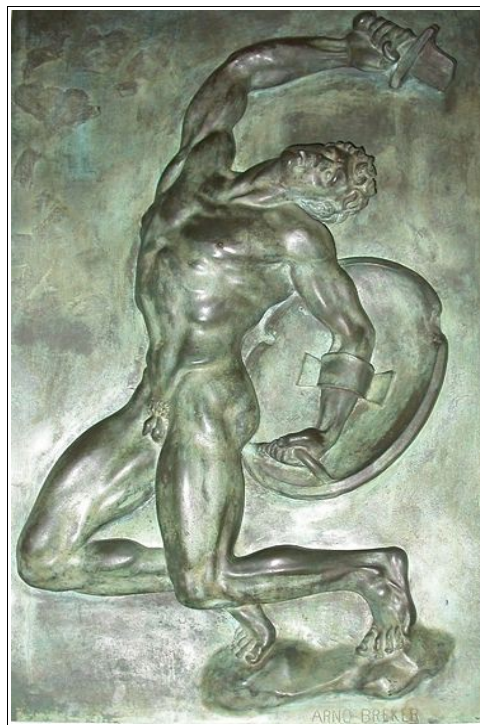


Fig. 18: Arno Breker, *Sacrifice (Opfer)*, 1940, sculptural relief, Wikimedia Commons, © Museum Arno Breker/MARCO-VG, Bonn Toestemming publicatie.

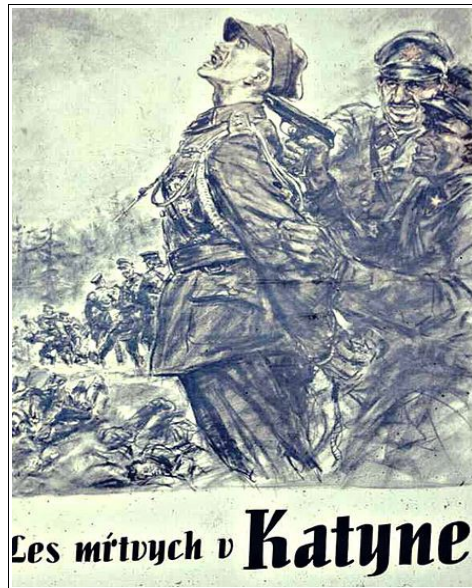


Fig. 19: A war-time poster aimed at foreign audiences, this one in Slovak portrays the Katyne massacre. Accessed online: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/ww2era.htm>, page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.



Fig. 20: Leest Storm, *Liberators*, Caption: "De U.S.A. Zullen de Europese Kultuur van de ondergang redden." 1944, lithograph, © Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie.



Fig. 21: [artist unknown], from *Lustige Blätter*; Caption: “His way to ‘liberate’ Europe!”, (Issue #37, 1944), accessed online: <http://www.bytwerk.com/gpa/lustige.htm>, Page copyright © 2001 by Randall Bytwerk.

Appendix B: Summary of Anti-Nazi Authors and Works

Clair Bergmann: Not much is known about Clair Bergmann, as she was a new author at the time of publication for her novel, *What Will Become of the Children* (1932), and she seems to have disappeared sometime during the Third Reich. Her novel tells the story of a middle-class German family who struggle to overcome the economic and political hardships of life during the last years of the Weimar Republic.

Heinrich Böll (1917-1985) was still a teenager when Hitler came to power, and was conscripted into the German Wehrmacht during the Second World War where he was wounded four times before being captured by American forces. In 1946, following his release, he devoted himself to writing, and his early works (1946-1949) revolve around his experiences as a soldier. Three of his short stories (“Children are Civilians Too,” “Drinking in Petöcki,” and “That Time We Were in Odessa”) deal with the lone struggle of enlisted men to enjoy life despite the crushing realities of war, and the maddening absurdity of strict military authority. Another short story, titled “Stranger, Bear Word to the Spartans We...”, focuses on the costs of war and of misleading ideology as a young man awakes in a field-hospital bed, only to realize he is missing limbs, and he is being treated in crumbled ruins of his old high school (where the destruction of war has now reached). Similar themes are found in his novel, *The Train was on Time*, where a young enlisted man wrestles with his fate as he rides a train with other soldiers towards the ominous Eastern-front.

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) was an accomplished German playwright of international renown. Due to his openly professed Marxist sympathies, he fled into exile after 1933 and relocated frequently within Europe, eventually reaching the United States, where he remained throughout the war. He maintained his vocal opposition of the Third Reich, and completed numerous critical works, including *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, *The Visions of Simone Machard*, *Schweyk in the Second World War*, and *Mother Courage* (amongst others). *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (written 1935-1938, first produced in 1938) is an openly-critical anti-Nazi play consisting of a collection of vignettes portraying the various negative aspects of life under the Nazi rule. *Schweyk in the Second World War* takes place in occupied-Prague, following the story of a working-class, irreverent and playful individual who passively opposes Nazi officials by making a mockery of their authority and performing false acts of collaboration. Though this satirical narrative is at times lighthearted and playful, it is also bears deeply critical meanings. *The Visions of Simone Machard* was written between 1942 and 1943 (co-written by Lion Feuchtwanger), and takes aim at the lack of patriotism that undermined efforts by the French to resist the German onslaught during the invasion of 1940. In particular, the self-interested capitalists are criticized for seeking to benefit financially from the new rulers. Simone is a girl who channels the spirit of Joan of Arc, and risks her own life selflessly to sabotage the Germans, and is betrayed by her countrymen as a result. However, she provides a positive example of how true French patriots should act, with the implication that the French resistance would spring forth from similar roots.

Hans Fallada (1893-1947, born Rudolf Wilhelm Friedrich Ditzen) was an accomplished author who suffered throughout his life from psychological distress and substance abuse, and spent time on separate occasions in prisons and sanatoriums. He remained in Germany throughout the era of Nazi rule and remained neutral in his stance towards the regime, collaborating with them on some literary projects. In his personal life he suffered mentally under the Nazis, and wrote in secret his heavily autobiographical *The Drinker* while incarcerated for the attempted murder of his wife, and completed *Every Man Dies Alone* immediately following Germany's defeat at the end of the Second World War. First published in 1947, *Every Man Dies Alone* was written in a twenty-four day span following the Second World War, as the author struggled with depression and relapses of narcotics abuse. The narrative follows the story of Otto and Anna Quangel who resist Nazi authority through the distribution of anonymous postcards with anti-Nazi statements written on them in the streets of Berlin, and the investigations of the Gestapo who close on their prey. The events and characters are based on the true story of Otto and Elise Hampel who were found guilty of treason and executed by beheading in March, 1943. *The Drinker* was written in 1944 while the author was incarcerated at Alt-Sterlitz prison for the attempted murder of his wife. Fallada wrote *The Drinker* in a code which was not deciphered until after the war, and was not published until 1950. The novel is heavily autobiographical and relates the story of a grocery owner who falls on hard times and quickly destroys his life's work by becoming an alcoholic, squandering his savings, and abusing his wife. This is followed by his incarceration in prison and eventual committal to an insane asylum, where he purposefully infects himself with tuberculosis in order that he should die.

Lion Feuchtwanger (1884-1958) was a German-Jewish author and playwright who was heavily critical of Hitler and the Nazi Party several years before they gained power. After 1933 he fled to France where he was briefly interned before continuing his flight to the United States. He remained productive and critical throughout the period of Hitler's rule, and collaborated briefly with other anti-Nazi writers. One of his works titled *The Oppermanns* (first published in 1934) relates the story of a fictional German-Jewish family living in Berlin during the Nazis' ascendancy. Of the works studied for this thesis, this novel offers the most direct commentary on Antisemitism. The Oppermanns are meant to portray a typical Jewish family, the principle characters being Gustav (an academic and cultured man), Martin (a business man and furniture store owner), and Berthold (a teenage student); together their lives reflect the hardships faced by Jews during this era. As a commentary on the contemporary social environment, portrayals of various collaborators, opportunists, and ideological Nazis are also included. In designing the Nazis, the author notes in the preface that he drew inspiration from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. A second of Feuchtwanger's novels was included in this research, called *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble* in the English translation. It was first published in 1943 and relates the story of Oscar Lautensack, a stage magician and psychic who struggles between the noble calling of his gift, and the ignoble satisfactions of greed and ambition offered by his Nazi peers. Set on the eve of Hitler's assumption of power, it is a novel that focuses on individual culpability amidst an environment ruled by fear and terror. Oscar's

character is also used as a commentary on the character of Adolf Hitler. Oscar sacrifices his artistic integrity in exchange for the rewards fame and wealth in collaborating with the Nazis. Ultimately, this collaboration proves his undoing, and he is betrayed.

Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) began a military career early in life after running away from school to join the Foreign Legion African Divisions. In 1914 he volunteered for military service, was commissioned as an officer, and became a highly decorated veteran after being wounded several times in the trenches. He recorded his experiences in his 1920 novel, *Stahlgewittern* ('The Storm of Steel'), which became his most famous and widely read work. Though Jünger retained some similar 'blood and soil' nationalist ideals as the Nazis and was celebrated by them as a hero, he became disillusioned with the tyranny of Hitler's regime. This criticism of tyranny is evident in his 1939 novel, *On Marble Cliffs*, which also reveals elements of the nihilism that Jünger struggled with throughout life. *On Marble Cliffs* is an example of subversive literature which criticizes Hitler and the Third Reich using the veil of a semi-historical setting. The narrative is set in a pristine natural landscape that incorporates elements of history and fantasy, called 'The Great Marina', which is threatened by the rise of a tyrant called the 'Chief Ranger'. The novel was published in 1939 in Germany and despite being recognized for its subversive commentary, the author was not punished.

Klaus Mann: Born in Munich, Germany, Klaus Mann (1906-1949) was the son of famed novelist, Thomas Mann. He fled into exile after 1933 and became an American citizen. He served with the United States Army as a reporter in post-war Germany. One of his more notable exile works, *Mephisto* is set in Germany at the end of the Republic, and extends to the early Nazi years. The novel follows the career of theatre-actor Hendrik Höfgen who advances himself enormously by cooperating with the Nazi authorities. The story is based on the actual career of the author's former brother-in-law, Gustaf Gründgens, a former communist turned Nazi sympathizer who enjoyed the patronage of senior Nazi officials. The book was later the subject of a lawsuit over this legacy.

Thomas Mann (1875-1955) was a German novelist and social critic of enormous success and fame who frequently drew on Germany's literary, theological, and philosophical traditions in his works. After 1933, Thomas Mann went into exile, first to Switzerland and then to the United States, where he became leading proponent of 'exile literature' which opposed Hitler's regime. Unlike the experiences of many other exiles, Mann enjoyed considerable fame upon his arrival on foreign soil. He began writing his anti-Nazi novel, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn*, during the Second World War but it was not completed until 1947. This work tells the story of a fictional German composer of incredible talent who strives for greatness but contracts syphilis and slips towards insanity. The story takes inspiration from the story of Faust. It is narrated through the recollections of a writer who lives in Germany during the Third Reich.

Erika Mitterer: Austrian-born Erika Mitterer (1906-2001) did not flee into exile during the era of Nazi rule. Instead, she wrote coded criticisms of the state using historical fiction as her guise. Her novel, *The Prince of Darkness* (first published in Hamburg,

1940) is set in medieval Germany and relates the story of two female protagonists (Hiltrud, a minor noble who changes her name to Maria upon joining a convent, and Theresa, her innocent and beautiful younger sister) who fall victim to Church and patriarchal authorities during an inquisition, and the rational Dr. Fabri who tries in vain to help them. The guise of historical fiction was successful in masking the critical intent of the novel, and was read by opponents of the regime as a political/social critique aimed at contemporary events.

Theodor Plievier (1892-1955) fled to Russia during the Second World War and witnessed the civilian struggle in Moscow during 1941-1942. The following year, he read the personal correspondences of captured German letters, and conducted interviews with German prisoners of war following the battle of Stalingrad. His novel, *Stalingrad*, documents the struggle for survival faced by German soldiers in the Hellish landscape of the Eastern Front. The account focuses on groups of soldiers as they struggle to survive. As a political critique, the novel lays considerable blame on the Nazi leadership, as well as the military command for their obedience towards “insane” superiors.

Erich Maria Remarque (1891-1970) was conscripted for military service in 1917 and then wounded while serving on the Western front during the First World War. He became a prominent writer afterwards, producing his most famous anti-war novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. He fled into exile in 1933, and his works were banned and publicly burned by the Nazis during their great cultural purge. His novel, *Arch of Triumph*, (first published in 1945) follows the story of Ravic, a German exile living in Paris on the eve of the Second World War. The cynical Ravic is a surgeon who struggles with his past (as a victim of torture in a concentration camp) and seeks revenge on the Nazi interrogator who tormented him.

Anna Seghers (1900-1983) was of Jewish descent, was married to a known communist, and had been critical of the Nazi Party before their assumption of power, marking her fit for persecution after 1933. After a brief period of imprisonment, she fled into exile (first to France, and then Mexico) where she continued to voice her opposition to the Third Reich through literature. Her novel titled *The Seventh Cross* (first published in 1942) tells the story of a group of concentration camp escapees who are one-by-one hunted down by police and an unsympathetic public and returned to prison for further torture and eventual execution. The narrative focuses on George Heisler (an escapee) and his comrade Franz Marnet (a fellow member of a leftist resistance group) as the two work towards George's eventual escape.

Arnold Zweig: After serving on the Western Front during the First World War, Arnold Zweig (1887-1968) became a pacifist and academic. This, in addition to being a Jew, made Zweig a natural target for persecution and as a result he went into exile after 1933. He eventually settling in Palestine after relocating several times within Europe. Written in 1943, his novel *The Axe of Wandsbek* was inspired by a report read by the author in 1938. The narrative follows master-butcher Albert Teetjen and his wife Stine, who, after collaborating with the Nazis and collecting a payment in return for conducting several

executions, become ostracized from their community and fall into disgrace; the disloyal, opportunistic, and indecent character of the Nazi Party is revealed in the process.

Stefen Zweig (1881-1942) was a renowned German-Jewish author, playwright and journalist. He became a pacifist during the First World War, and he would remain so for the remainder of his life. After fleeing into exile, Zweig and his wife committed suicide together in 1942. First published in 1942, his novella *The Royal Game* tells the story of a reclusive Austrian chess master aboard a transport ship off the coast of South America. The chess master had been arrested by the Nazis and held in solitary confinement and interrogated repeatedly, eventually causing a mental break to occur due to his isolation.

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