INTOXICATION, REJUVENATION, COMMUNITY: LITERARY
EXPRESSIONISTS AND RADICAL WEIMAR CONSERVATIVES IN EARLY
TWENTIETH-CENTURY GERMANY

A Dissertation in
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation compares and contrasts postwar literary Expressionists and radical conservative writers of the Weimar Republic. Both Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives believed that the world engendered chaos, pain, fear, horror, fragmentation, and other emotions that could shock an individual into abstraction, or into a psychologically distant state from normal perceptions and the order of the world. Related to abstraction and littered throughout Expressionist and Weimar right-wingers’ works are the terms “intoxication,” “Tat,” (‘activity/action”) “Leben” (“life”), and “Aufbruch” (“break through/Departure”). These terms entail people’s uprooting from their submissive, everyday existences making them more active individuals who seek discharge for their actions. To designate a person’s acceptance of their new ideas, Expressionists and Weimar’s ultraconservatives use the term Wandlung, or other words such as Verwandlung (“metamorphosis”/“change”), Erneuerung (“rejuvenation”), Wiedergeburt (“rebirth”), and the “New Human Being,” which stand for everything that Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives viewed as positive. After the rebirth of the human being, an all-encompassing rebirth of humans will lead to the Gemeinschaft or “community.” Despite being both groups’ teleologies, the birth of the “New Human Being” and ultimately the “Gemeinschaft” are methods to propagate their own very different ideologies. In other words, they are structures or significations that are conceptualized through more important ideas or content. Late Expressionism consisted for the most part of either leftist or apolitical pacifists who often fought in the German Revolution of 1918/1919, who pleaded for a loving and more humane world, and who preached a European or international fraternity of human beings. Conversely, radical Weimar conservatives praised the First World War, reprobed the Revolution of 1918/1919, celebrated the German nation, and demanded that a dictatorship seize power in Germany. Both Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives used these signifiers with radically different content to disseminate their ideologies because they best appealed to the commonality of feelings, experiences, and sufferings of Germans during this time period. Since the National Socialists used many of the same constructs as late Expressionists and radical conservatives of the Weimar Republic in promoting their fascist ideology, this dissertation helps explain the etiology of National Socialism among a disillusioned German populace.
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Chapter 1

Looking Back towards the Future

Many scholars have written numerous tomes on National Socialism, and despite their contributive efforts, humanity still does not have a comprehensive picture about the movement’s growth and appeal among the German populace.\textsuperscript{1} The real losers of this deficiency are current humanity because the horrors that occurred during National Socialist rule still occur today in various countries and lands. Much money is consumed, effort is wasted, and, even considerably worse, countless lives are lost when racist governments and leaders reach power and engage in genocide. Other nations, rightly wary of war, violence, and even more loss of life, eschew any military action to stop these horrors. This inaction is difficult to condemn because their thinking – violence does often breed more violence – is not necessarily illogical and results from morally honorable intentions; however, a profitable alternative to military intervention would be to prevent these atrocities through disparate nonviolent measures before they ever begin. To undertake this task, the sources of these racist governments must first be exposed so that we can begin to recognize and stop these governments’ emergence and the bigots who support and lead them.\textsuperscript{2} With this goal in mind, this volume strives to bring us closer to understanding the origins and growth of German fascism in the hopes that we

\textsuperscript{1} The plethora of explanations – Marxist interpretations, individual actors, or monocausal explanations such as constitutional weakness, sociology, culture, science, intellectual theories, and even psychology or the occult (Bracher, “Power Vacuum” 190) – indicate the tremendous progress and, yet, the work that is still to be completed. Each explanation brings us closer to the truth, but is far from bringing complete understanding.

\textsuperscript{2} The origins of racist, dictatorial governments are much more complex than to proscribe them all one uniform development; however, careful studies can expose several common factors that help spawn many of these regimes as Hannah Arendt has tried in her comparison and contrast between National Socialist and Soviet totalitarianism in her still seminal \textit{The Origins of Totalitarianism}. Other studies are Friedrich and Brzezinski’s \textit{Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy} and Perlmutter’s \textit{Modern Authoritarianism: A Comparative Analysis}.\textsuperscript{1}
can prevent similar recurrences of the crimes that transpired from 1933 until 1945.

Although the “hopes” may be lofty, they are attainable in my opinion. Towards realizing this end, but in no way claiming to offer the final word on the development of pre-1933 National Socialism, this dissertation will examine two antithetical and yet similar literary groups – late Expressionists and extreme conservatives – writing in early twentieth-century Germany.³

At first glance, postwar literary Expressionists and radical conservative writers of the Weimar Republic seem to have little in common. Late Expressionism, which lasted approximately from 1918 until 1925, consisted for the most part of either leftist or apolitical pacifists who often fought for workers’ rights such as in the German Revolution of 1918/1919, pleaded for a loving and more humane world, and preached a European or international fraternity of human beings.⁴ On the other hand, radical Weimar conservatives, who were middling authors, academics, journalists, politicians, and philosophers and wrote from the end of the First World War until 1933, praised the First World War, reprobated the Revolution of 1918/1919, celebrated the German nation, and demanded that a dictatorship seize power in Germany.⁵ Despite these drastic differences, both groups advocated similarities such as an extreme vitality revolving

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³ Obviously, this study cannot give a comprehensive examination of the growth of National Socialism. Such a work is probably beyond the scope of a sole monograph considering the complexity of the movement’s development, but this study can contribute to our overall knowledge on the subject.

⁴ This work will use the terms “early” and “late” to signify a break in Expressionism that occurs during or slightly after the First World War. This work often uses the year 1918 to communicate the completion of the transition from early to late Expressionism, but in reality, this shift to the later form of the artistic movement did not occur on a firm date. For the most part, this study will focus on late Expressionism as opposed to early Expressionism because the late form of the artistic movement was more popular in Germany than its earlier forms and likewise coincided with some extreme conservatives’ writings. However, because early Expressionists’ literature does have characteristics which correspond with late Expressionism – after all, both are called “Expressionists” –, this work will use early Expressionist works, but only in so far as they correspond with the characteristics of its later, more popular form. Chapter three will deal with pre- and postwar Expressionism in greater detail.

⁵ Oswald Spengler’s Untergang des Abendlandes is to my knowledge the lone exception to these dates. Spengler began his massive work before the war and published it in 1918.
around intoxication, abstraction, and Tat (“act”/”action”/”activity”), the *Wiedergeburt* (“rebirth”) of people into “New Human Beings,” these New Human Beings’ subsequent bonding into a *Gemeinschaft* or “community,” and a *Führertum* (“leadership”) to create and sometimes lead this community. That these parallels existed between both groups and yet that their end goals were politically and socially incompatible is unusual and raises the question why these similarities and differences between literary Expressionism and the writings of the Weimar Republic’s ultraconservatives occurred.

For the most part, the answer lies in the cultural, economic, political, and social problems of the time period in which both groups were active: Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives’ ideas were largely reactions to these problems and exemplary of tense relationships to their environment. Because both their ideas existed more or less within the same crisis-ridden time period, they were influenced by, wrote about, and can generally tell us much about this chaotic epoch. Hence, this work will uncover information about the culture, psychology, and society of early twentieth-century Germany. For strangers to the time period, its mood is difficult to comprehend because it is so unique in history. Novice historians and puzzled readers question how such wild and “irrational” notions, beliefs in utopias, and general radicalism spread as much as they did. A comparison of Expressionists and Weimar ultraconservatives’ similarities and differences will help answer these questions by yielding results about the thought processes, general tendencies, problems, and anxieties of Germans during the early twentieth-century, and more specifically, during the Weimar Republic. Their writings reflect their and other Germans’ negotiations with changes that were occurring in the world around them. For instance, many Germans’ attraction to late Expressionists and
Weimar conservatives’ utopian solutions – calling for action, the New Human Being, and Gemeinschaft – shows a great disenchantment among the populace with life during Weimar, especially with the divisiveness of unfettered capitalism and materialism, social and industrial alienation, and the constant chaos of life under democracy. In short, by examining these groups’ similarities and differences, this work will discuss the problems of a nation, some of their responses to these problems, and where those responses lead.

In addition, comparing and contrasting Weimar right-wingers and literary Expressionists’ writings will yield new information about both groups that was previously unknown: a study of one group helps better define and complements our understanding of the other. For example, Expressionists and ultraconservatives’ similarities and drastic differences help question the tradition of either correlating or distinguishing between both groups within the secondary literature through periodization. These taxonomies can be misleading by producing either an unjust equating or the balkanization of these “periods.” On the one hand, the periodization of literary or historical epochs such as “Expressionism” and the “Conservative Revolution” is useful for didactic purposes and describes each group’s differences. On the other hand, one could subsume both groups under literary “modernism” or even “modernity,” as scholars have done, but these labels do not adequately describe their striking differences. (See Huyssen and Bathrick’s Modernity and the Text; Laqueur 41-4). My work suggests a more fluid model of these groups, movements, and individual theories flowing into and out of each other, overlapping and yet remaining distinct, so that it is simultaneously a study of both similarities and differences. Unfortunately, researchers infrequently undertake such studies.
Another problem which can occur with periodization is the possible artificial construction of literary and historical epochs. Scholars have often tried to unify ultraconservatives of the Weimar Republic under the phrases “Conservative Revolution (Bullivant; Mohler; Woods, *Conservative Revolution*),” “Revolutionary Conservatism (Keßler 1),” “New Nationalism” (Breuer 180; Keßler 1), “Conservative Nationalism” (Hietala 9), “New Conservatism” (Klemperer; Keßler 1), “Utopian Conservatism” (Herzinger 106), “Activist Nationalists” (Schwarz 71), “Young Conservatives” (W. Bussmann 70, 71; Keßler 1) and “Revolutionary Nationalism,” (W. Bussmann 64, 70; Hietala 9; Herzinger 105; Schüdekopf). Although all these efforts are inadequate in some form as the multiple attempts at classification and definition in and of themselves show, “Conservative Revolution” has undoubtedly been the most popular term among all the abovementioned labels. However, even this phrase is insufficient and little more than a myth. To my knowledge, Thomas Mann was the first to use the term during the Weimar Republic in 1921 (“Russische” 598), but the 1927 Munich University lecture entitled *Das Schrifttum als geistiger Raum der Nation* from Hugo von Hoffmannsthal first applied the term “conservative revolution” to describe what he believed was a long and culminating process led by a youthful, prophetic, manly, and “probing” literature away from Renaissance and Enlightenment values to a new irrational reality focusing on a national community. Although newspapers did use the term during the early 1930s (Reimann 23), Edgar Jung is the only right-winger to my knowledge who ever propagated the label “Conservative Revolution” during the Weimar Republic (Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken* 119-20).  

6 There were instances of extreme conservatives using similar terms such as Moeller van den Bruck’s “die conservative-revolutionäre des Nationalismus” (Reich 234).
did “Conservative Revolution” become *au courant*. Armin Mohler, the secretary of Ernst Jünger and conservative scholar, first gave currency to the expression in his 1950 work *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932*.\(^7\) In comparison to literary Expressionists who either proudly called themselves “Expressionists,” openly championed the idea “Expressionism” in theoretical writings, or were commonly recognized by other Expressionists and did not object to being called “Expressionist,” these ultraconservatives did not agree among themselves on a unified nomenclature for themselves as to constitute a movement.\(^8\) Thus, the term “Conservative Revolution,” or similar terms for that matter, are disingenuous and fictionalized. They lend credence to an illusory goal to which ultraconservatives greatly aspired; namely, it made it seem as if they were truly staging a revolution, and those who use such terms only contribute to the solidifying of this falsehood in historical and literary lexica.

As an alternative to “Conservative Revolutionaries” or any other misleading term, this work will use several names – “conservatives,” “ultraconservatives,” “nationalists,” and “right-wingers” – to designate the lack of cohesiveness and self-designation among these individual writers in any one group.\(^9\) The qualifiers “radical,” “extreme,” or in some cases other appellations indicate their immoderate methods using intoxication, activity, abstraction, transformation, and a German community to attempt to realize their ideas. These structures separate them from many other conservative groups and

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\(^7\) Hermann Rauschning, a yielder at first to and later opponent of National Socialism, wrote a personal narrative, “The Conservative Revolution” in 1941, but Mohler was much more influential in propagating the term.

\(^8\) This work does not want to give the impression that Expressionism was not an extremely diverse movement, and in many ways, it rivaled extreme conservatives’ in their plurality of writers and ideas.

\(^9\) My use of the word “conservatives” in various forms to describe these authors is not misleading. Conservatives are known as such because they for the most part try to “conserv[e]” established political institutions and policy. As this work’s fourth chapter will discuss, right-winger sometimes used established conservative beliefs of Germany to further their teachings.
individuals during Weimar such as Vernunftrepublikaner and conservative political parties.

To my knowledge, no other work has compared and contrasted these two groups, their immoderate methods, and their beliefs in as thorough a manner as this study will compare and contrast them. In the early 1960s, the philosopher Helmut Kaiser wrote his book on the Expressionist Gottfried Benn and the Weimar right-winger Ernst Jünger entitled Mythen, Rausch und Reaktion: Der Weg Gottfried Benns und Ernst Jüngers. In his work, Kaiser found several similarities in the theories of both intellectuals. However, because his study focuses solely on the beliefs of these two individuals and is more than forty-five years old, a current study on both Expressionists and Weimar conservatives in their entireties is justified. Ann Linder’s Princes of the Trenches is more current, but her comparison of the two groups lasts only lasts five pages and is beset by gross errors about Expressionists and their writings (85–91).10 Martin Lindner’s Zeitromane der neuen Sachlichkeit und die intellektuelle Mentalität der klassischen Moderne analyzes many concepts such as Wiedergeburt, Leben, and Tat that this dissertation will discuss. However, M. Lindner examines the concepts among German intellectuals from 1890 until 1950, and because of the sixty-year breadth of his study, he cannot examine each concept within a specific time period in great detail. These concepts undoubtedly changed within the sixty-year period that Lindner studies them and also their meaning certainly varied in some fashion for each writer who used them and within each group in which they existed.

10 Linder calls the editor of the Aktion, a well-known periodical in which several Expressionists published, “Fritz Pfembert[sic]” instead of his real name “Franz Pfemfert” (87). Linder also stated that Expressionists were “heavily pacifistic…from the beginning [of the war]” (86). This statement is simply not true. There were several early Expressionists who yearned for the war and volunteered for war service during World War I. This work will discuss them in greater detail in chapter three.
The secondary literature of each individual group also contains some topics that this work must broach before discussions in later chapters. For instance, some of the commentary on late Expressionism ranges from just simply disregarding or belittling their social and political ideas to claiming that they were irrational nonsense and abandonments of social and political issues (Cysarz 83-4, 101-5; Ilberg 17; Lohner 70-1; Lukács 19-66; Marcuse 69-75; Muschg 38-9; Paulsen 8; Raabe, “historisches Phänomen” 14). In Lukács and Marcuse’s cases, this dismissal of Expressionists’ sociopolitical ideas was meant to make the movement a precursor to National Socialism. However, not all disparaging remarks about the social and political teachings of Expressionism have this purpose. Wolfgang Paulsen wrote incorrectly in 1979 that Expressionism “was not a political, nor even in any sense a socially oriented movement…The Expressionist writer’s primary concern remained aesthetics…” (8). Yet, others feel that many late Expressionists’ attempts at social and political change were “leerer Lärm” (Lohner 70), “das Absehen von der Entscheidung des Handelns” (Cysarz 102), “immer mehr zu einem unartikulierten Schrei” (Raabe, “historisches Phänomen” 14), or “Schwärmerei,” “veschwommerner Rhetorik,” “Naivität,” and “Wünschträumen“ (Muschg 38-9). Sokel uses the term “naïve” or “rhetorical Expressionism” to describe the hollowness and tautology of some activist and late Expressionists’ emotional responses (18-23, 159), and Richard Murphy states that these same artists “frequently lapse into what Kant would call a ‘delirium,’ ‘fanaticism,’ or ‘enthusiasm,’… as such ‘may be compared to mania’…” (Murphy 276).

Unfortunately, such descriptions have often devalued late Expressionists to the benefit of early Expressionism based upon aesthetic quality. Some retrospecting literary
scholars’ more favorable opinions of early Expressionism are based on the avant-garde and aesthetic superiority of its early poetry and drama in comparison to the literature – mostly drama – of late Expressionism.\textsuperscript{11} However, their discriminate attention has the byproduct of championing the aesthetic worth of Expressionist works instead of their political, social, and moral content. In addition, these limitations of Expressionism’s value to the aesthetic realm have the further upshot of salvaging it through its aesthetics after the utter and embarrassing failure at realizing its sociopolitical ideas.\textsuperscript{12} The ultimate goal of Expressionism’s aestheticism was still for the most part to realize its economic, political, and social teachings. Late Expressionists simply used other, radical methods to combat several social ills and realize sociopolitical goals – equality, peace, and social and economic justice – which many German writers had found lacking in society and had criticized long before Expressionism ever became vogue. This work does not want to claim that one cannot study the aesthetics of Expressionism, but rather simply wants to relate Expressionism to its economic, political, and social climate.\textsuperscript{13} Hence, it will examine the aesthetic nature of the movement sparingly and only to demonstrate its support for this goal. Expressionism may have been “\textit{Ausdruckskunst}” or art that should \textit{express} the artist’s inner feelings such as alienation, discontent, and anger, but within

\textsuperscript{11} See Korte, \textit{Der Krieg} 190-5 for some examples. Rumold and Murphy are studies on the “Expressionist avant-garde.”

\textsuperscript{12} This work will discuss Expressionism’s aesthetics and relationship to National Socialism more extensively in its ultimate chapter.

\textsuperscript{13} An attempt at defining the aesthetics of an artistic movement is a daunting task and depends to a large extent on the nebulous definition of “aestheticism” per se. How much does thematic content contribute to the “beauty” of a work in comparison to the form, style, and language of an artwork’s presentation? For instance, how much does racist ideology contribute to a German fascist aesthetic? Although this dissertation will discuss Expressionist aestheticism’s relationship to the economics, politics, and society of early twentieth-century Germany in greater detail during chapter three, it will focus, in general, on Expressionist content as independent of aestheticism in as far as that is possible. At this point, I should also mention that radical Weimar conservatives wrote much more matter-of-factlly than literary Expressionists so that their “aestheticism” deserves less study in this work.
early twentieth-century Germany and to other Germans who were feeling much the same as Expressionists.

Despite some commentators’ disparagement of Expressionism’s economic, political, and social aims, there still have been scholars who have scrutinized them. The aforementioned Walter Sokel wrote his fundamental study, *The Writer in Extremis*, as a self-avowed attempt to analyze the “social situation” of literary Expressionism (4), but strangely it focuses on Expressionism’s relationship to German intellectual, philosophical, and aesthetic theories instead of on historical factors. Thus, Sokel does not mention the economic, political, and social difficulties in Germany at this time as being influential in the rise of Expressionism. In his collection of previously published essays, *Begriffsbestimmung des literarischen Expressionismus*, Hans Gerd Rötzer has several very important articles for the purposes of this dissertation. Klaus Ziegler’s “Dichtung und Gesellschaft im deutschen Expressionismus,” Helmut Gruber’s “Die politisch-ethische Mission des deutschen Expressionismus,” and Werner Kohlschmidt’s “Zu den soziologischen Voraussetzungen des literarischen Expressionismus in Deutschland“ are pertinent; however, Christoph Eykman’s essay “Zur Sozialphilosophie des Expressionismus” from 1972 is the most important work of Rötzer’s edition because Eykman deals at length with the Expressionist concept of the term “Gemeinschaft.” Another excellent study on Expressionism comes from Hans Georg Kemper and Silvio Vietta and details the movement partly in relationship to the world around it. They discuss Expressionists’ objectification and focus greatly on the artists’ depictions of “Ichdissoziation” or the self’s fragmentation in modern environs (21-2), but late Expressionism’s criticisms of modern life are much more than just the communication of
existential emotions. Expressionists proposed action against many social, political, and economic problems such as materialistic attitudes, the lack of social equality and political freedom, and the ubiquitousness of violence in modern society. Stephen Bronner and Douglas Kellner’s *Passion and Rebellion: The Expressionist Heritage* has several pertinent articles for this work including Kellner’s own essay on the New Human Being and Barbara Drygulski Wright’s discussion of politics, ethics, and idealism in Expressionist writings and thought, but they are by no means comprehensive and are almost thirty years old. Since Bronner and Kellner’s work, research on German literary Expressionism has dwindled, but recently a few scholars such as Michael Stark and Thomas Anz have examined Expressionism’s relationship to modernity. Because of its currentness and explication of many concepts and ideas that are important for this dissertation, Thomas Anz’s *Literatur des Expressionismus* is important for this study. In relation to Expressionism, Anz discusses *Wandlung* and *Erneuerung* (44-49), *Leben* (49-60), *Gemeinschaft* (65-75), technology (117-24), activism and action (127-32), war (132-41), and revolution (142-47).

There is no less secondary literature on Weimar’s right-wingers. Kurt Sontheimer’s *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* is one of the more fundamental and senior works on the subject of radical conservatism during Weimar. Sontheimer is not only extremely thorough in his examination of disparate writers, but also details their “ideological” role in the destruction of the republic (17). In his tome *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, Fritz Stern highlights conservative irrationalism from the late nineteenth century into the Weimar Republic through a close assessment of Paul Lagarde, Julius Langbehn, and Moeller van den Bruck’s theories. Karl Prümm examines
“Soldierly Nationalism” from 1918 until 1933 in his 1974 two-volume study of the same name. Prümm focuses on a seminal part of ultraconservatives’ ideas, namely their use of the war and the war experience in post-war Germany. Important for our work is also Prümm’s concentration on Ernst Jünger’s writings, which he cursorily compares and contrasts with Expressionist style (135-43) and the New Human Being (155-9). In his book *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, Jeffrey Herf discusses radical conservatives such as Ernst Jünger and Oswald Spengler. Herf’s theory of reactionary modernism is that figures such as Jünger and Spengler embraced several aspects of modernity such as technology and dynamism while at the same time remaining hostile to many features of modernity such as modern industry, capitalism, and democracy. Stefan Breuer’s *Anatomie der Konservativen Revolution* also discusses right-winger’s relationship to science, technology, and industry, but in addition, gives interesting biographical information such as age and education on many of these writers. Much of this information corresponds closely with the demographics of their Expressionist counterparts. Roger Woods’ *The Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic* is one of the more recent works on radical Weimar conservatives. Woods highlights Weimar right-wingers’ attacks on liberalism, materialism, industry, and the general political culture of Weimar. Finally, Lious Dupeux’s article “‘Kulturpessimismus’, Konservative Revolution und Modernität” shows extreme right-wingers as flexible authors who incorporated many aspects of other modernist movements and writers’ ideas into their own beliefs. Despite these interesting assertions, Dupeux does not broach any relationship between Weimar conservatives and Expressionists leaving this work to explore their close connections.
Thus, the second chapter of this volume begins the comparison of both by examining the economic, political, and social tensions of the postwar environment in Germany and by giving sketches of both groups’ theories on the stages towards their disparate communities. This chapter not only introduces readers to the constructs “vitality,” “transformation,” and “Gemeinschaft,” but also finds various broad similarities between Expressionists and extreme conservatives with these ideas. However, the main goal of this chapter is to explain the appeal of these constructs to many Germans at this time in their history. The disparate economic, social, and political crises played an essential role in helping Expressionist and Weimar right-wingers’ teachings resonate to the extent that they did in early twentieth-century Germany.14

The next two chapters will individually detail both groups’ teachings. While the previous section focused on their broad similarities, the following sections will concentrate to a large extent on both groups’ conceptual differences of rejuvenation, the New Man, and community. To understand these differences, background information on Expressionists and radical conservatives is essential; however, it is not the goal of this work to regurgitate basic information on both groups that secondary works have already discussed ad nauseam. Instead, these chapters will only report general tendencies showing both groups’ relationship to economic, political, and social problems of their time. For example, chapter three on postwar literary Expressionism will examine the movement’s stand against war, capitalism, materialism, industry, commercial and social alienation, technology, science, politics, and dull bourgeois life. To convince human

14 Other European states and cultures such as Russia, Great Britain, and Italy either flirted with or used one or all of the constructs of the New Man, community, or intoxication in some form. This work does not want to maintain that the reasons for their emergence were the same throughout all countries; however, the study of the German use of these constructs could possibly contribute to an understanding of these other countries’ applications of them.
beings to abandon these social ills and embrace change, Expressionists posited a world full of loneliness, fear, horror, chaos, and suffering. When human beings finally realize and can no longer stand the terribleness of the world, they undergo a transformation on their way to the Expressionist community, which consists of love, freedom, and individual autonomy. Radical Weimar conservatives’ Gemeinschaft, on the other hand, consisted of a national and sometimes military fraternity which is in reality a dictatorship and that would transcend many of the same social ills that Expressionists criticized, but also other problems from conservatives’ purview such as humanitarianism, communism, Americanization, and Jews. Men should undergo a transformative process from the stresses of modern life and possibly war and become New Men practicing militarism, sacrifice, violence, nationalism, and existential freedom.

This first section of the dissertation incorporates many authors and intellectuals from both groups, and hence, descriptions of them are general. Its goal is to find shared beliefs, broad trends, and points of criticism from each individual group, to interpret them, and then to compare and contrast them between the groups. However, because of their lack of organization and centralization, Expressionists and Weimar conservatives also leave a wide margin of autonomy for several disparate authorial ideas to exist, including some which are adverse to each other.15 Indeed, because each Expressionist and ultraconservative differed from other authors within their respective groups, it is important to study as many individually as possible. Unfortunately because of time and space constraints, this work explores only two individual figures, their writings, and their theories. The purpose of this second section is to provide specific studies of individuals

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15 For instance, not all radical Weimar conservatives uniformly rejected technology, and there were some primitivists among Expressionists and ultraconservatives, but some members also rebuffed primitivism.
from both groups that yield further evidence of the aforementioned constructs between literary Expressionists and the Weimar’s ultraconservatives. The studies of the Expressionist dramatist Georg Kaiser and the radical Weimar conservative Ernst Jünger further establishes the characteristics within the context of the time period. One learns individual motivations for the use of the characteristics and better understands in what ways they were the reactions of these individuals to cultural, economic, political, and social affairs of early twentieth-century Germany.

Georg Kaiser’s Expressionist plays demonstrate his desire for social change through humanity’s rejuvenation and the creation of a just and egalitarian Gemeinschaft. Much as his Expressionist and radical conservative contemporaries, Kaiser attacks capitalism, mammonism, industry, the bourgeoisie, work, modern life, science, politics, war, and technology because Kaiser believes they allow and only exist for the exploitation of human beings. He wishes to eliminate these issues through human beings’ rejuvenation. In his plays, his protagonists almost exclusively undergo a transformation in which they are thrown from their quotidian existences experiencing intoxication, must search for the correct type of rejuvenation, and then attempt to communicate this type of rejuvenation to humanity to form the community. According to Kaiser, the correct Erneuerung demonstrates human beings’ care for their fellow humanity. For change in the world to occur, he maintains that members of society must repent and recognize the ills which they have committed and through this penitence, they begin to form the community.

Much as Kaiser, Ernst Jünger also desires a Gemeinschaft, but his community is the frontline community in war and ultimately a totalitarian dictatorship in Germany.
Because the ideal transformation occurs in battle from the exhaustion of nerves through fear, Jünger desires a perpetual war which penetrates into and dominates all forms of life to fulfill his beliefs. The front community, its discipline, militaristic hierarchy, and embrace of violence and destruction become the prototype for post-war society and helps to create the Arbeiter ("worker"), or a different type of New Man who labors on the home front for the goal of war. This male fraternity battles against all postwar, negative characteristics such as democracy, capitalism, the bourgeoisie, materialism, internationalism, pacifism, and women’s rights in favor of a dictatorship. To lead this totalitarian government, Jünger posits a Führer who is uncompromising and infused with great energies.

The last chapter of this work will deal with both groups’ relationships to National Socialism and, in particular, the failures of late Expressionism to realize several of their noble ideals. Despite their humanistic message of love, peace, and happiness, some scholars and intellectuals criticize Expressionism for contributing to the climate that made National Socialism possible through their subjectivism, irrationalism, idealism, and because the Nazis used the same terms – “vitality,” “rebirth,” “New Human Being,” and “community” – to promote their racial and violent ideology (Ilberg 171; Lukács 19-66; Marcuse 69-75; B. Ziegler 50-60). These accusations are misleading at best and demand further examination, but one can definitely state that because the abovementioned terms are solely theoretical structures used to promote varying content such as from extreme Weimar conservatives and National Socialists, Expressionists with their humanistic content had little to do with National Socialism. Indeed, their greatest contribution to the realization of German fascism was their failure to enter into the realm of praxis,
especially through ordinary politics. On the other hand, radical Weimar conservatives are truly protofascists because they undoubtedly paved the way for National Socialism through the propagation of their violent, nationalistic, militaristic, and conservative beliefs. For right-wingers, their aversion to parliamentary politics and to party organization were central factors distinguishing them from National Socialists’ views and actions. With goals in many ways just as idealistic as those of late Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives, namely making war and eradicating the Jews, the Nazis entered parliamentary politics with disastrous consequences for early twentieth-century Germans.

With these statements in mind, this introduction concludes by referring to its opening paragraph and title, namely ‘Looking Back towards the Future.’ Since the National Socialists used many of the same criticisms and constructs as late Expressionists and radical conservatives of the Weimar Republic in promoting their fascist ideology, this dissertation helps explain the etiology of National Socialism among a disillusioned German populace with the purpose of instructing others on preventing similar dictatorial movements’ emergence in the future. With hope, this study looks “back” at these two groups to in some way help the “future” and avert horrors like those that occurred during German fascism’s rule. Thus, this work exceeds the narrowness of examining only two groups during a little over twenty years of German history. The goal of this work is that readers view it within this vein as well.

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Chapter 2

Innerhalb großer geschichtlicher Zeiträume verändert sich mit der gesamten Daseinsweise der historischen Kollektiva auch ihre Wahrnehmung. Die Art und Weise, in der die menschliche Wahrnehmung sich organisiert...ist nicht nur natürlich sondern auch geschichtlich bedingt

–Walter Benjamin, “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,” 478

Signs of the Times: Profiting from the German Crises 1914-1933 and Similarities between Expressionists and Extreme Conservatives

Benjamin’s statement derives from an essay which correctly asserted that film in early twentieth-century Germany reflected a new form of “historically[-]conditioned” sense perception among Germans. In other words, several historically specific occurrences and trends, which Benjamin did and did not mention in his essay, are greatly responsible for this phenomenon of sensitivity.¹⁶ For instance, the growth of technology in the early twentieth century helped to acclimate many Germans to film because it was a new art form dependent on technology. In addition, Benjamin asserted that the massification of art through film engendered the loss of aura, or the unique sensational atmosphere from an original artwork; indeed, many Germans lamented what seemed to them to be the massification of human beings and the loss of individualism and uniqueness in modern life. As a replacement for this loss, they sought aura in charismatic leaders or, in the case of film, charismatic on-screen performers.

Film accommodated the psychological sensitivities of audiences through a variance of methods as well. Whereas many early twentieth-century Germans thought that they had no control over their own lives, movie viewers felt as if they exhibited

¹⁶ Benjamin’s theory of sense perception is of course not limited to the five physical senses.
power over the characters in the film because they had surreptitious access to characters’ lives through the cameras as voyeurs through the lens’ gaze. In some cases, they were able to have such closeness to the figures in the film that they not only identified with the figures but also substituted themselves for them.\(^{17}\) This identification and substitution provided them with an escape for a few hours from their lives and their feelings of helplessness against formidable economic, political, and social problems. At the same time, movie viewers had safe distance from experiencing the same consequences or fate as tragic characters. Because many films do not end in heartbreak, spectators could to their chagrin also be prevented from their “own” happy ending in a film through this distance. These moonstruck viewers pined for the same fate as the characters after the film was over.

Benjamin’s verity of “historically-conditioned” sense perception also extends beyond film so that its application is viewable in other cultural areas of early 1900s Germany. In many ways similar to film, late Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives’ writings and teachings captured the contemporary sensitivities of many Germans to the unique historical situation and new areas of experience. Their works sometimes simulate and often lament the fragmentation, massification, and stifling atmosphere of modern life. They appeal to many Germans’ desire for escape and allegedly attempt to give them control or power. They promote a charismatic leadership

\(^{17}\) The best examples of this latter effect are probably horror and romance films. The fright that causes “jumping” or startlement during horror films is the viewer’s identification with and own substitution for the character. The fear is fear for him- or herself. In romance films, the spectator’s intense desire that the “guy get the girl” or vice versa at the end of the film is again the same phenomenon. The spectator hopes to “get” the guy or girl. Even though they did not originally involve film, Hegel’ theories in His Lectures on Fine Art best explain this identification with or substitution for the figure: “In his appetitive relation to the external world, man, as a sensuous individual, confronts things as individuals…in accord with individual impulses and interests, he relates himself to the objects, individuals themselves, and maintains himself in them by using and consuming them, and by sacrificing them works his own self-satisfaction” (31).
to solve the problems of early twentieth-century Germans. However, their beliefs are not limited to these few historical phenomena and perceptions of and reactions to them. Thus, to give a more comprehensive picture of these groups’ beliefs, this chapter will explore their historical situation in Germany and how broad economic, political, and social crises influenced them. In addition, it will examine other similarities between both groups: Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives are part of the same generation, had many of the same intellectual forebearers, both enjoyed success among Germans, and of course used the same structures – vitality, intoxication, the New Human Being, Gemeinschaft. Through these similarities and an historical account of the time period, this chapter will illuminate contributing reasons for this type of sense perception, give the reader a broad understanding of it, and describe reactions to it among both groups and the German populace.

A factor in Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives’ reactions to early twentieth century Germany were their alike demographic features. Most extreme conservatives and Expressionists were part of the same generation which was born in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. For instance, the conservative Oswald Spengler was born in 1880, Wilhelm Stapel in 1882, Ernst Niekisch 1889, Edgar Jung 1894, Ernst Jünger 1895, and Friedrich Georg Jünger 1898 (Breuer 30-31). Likewise, the Expressionist dramatist Ernst Toller was born on December 12, 1893, Karl Otten in 1889, Kasimir Edschmid in 1890, Walter Hasenclever in 1890, and Fritz von Unruh in 1885. Their generation is known as the “war generation,” and indeed, most radical

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18 The term “popularity” is a subjective term and a contestable concept, and hence, I have used quotation marks around it. This chapter will speak at greater length about the “success” of both groups among the German populace.

19 This generation also produced many National Socialist leaders.
Weimar conservatives and several early Expressionists had served in Germany’s military during the war. Many Expressionists did not survive the war; by contrast, many radical Weimar conservatives returned from the war and made it an extremely influential topic of their writing. In addition, the majority of both groups hailed from bourgeois, Protestant families, but eagerly abandoned these lifestyles and the values associated with them, that is, if they had ever embraced them in the first place. Many Expressionists also gladly forsook the countryside or smaller cities where they had grown up for metropolitan areas, most notably Berlin where, for example, Georg Kaiser, Ernst Toller, Kurt Pinthus, von Unruh, and Gottfried Benn were active for extensive periods. Several extreme right-wingers also made the move to large cities. Spengler and Jung lived in Munich, Ernst Jünger and Nieckisch in Berlin, and Wilhelm Stapel in Hamburg just to name a few. Lastly, both groups were well-educated with several members having some type of university degree (Breuer 26, 30).

In addition to these demographic similarities, both groups had many of the same intellectual forebearers. Sigmund Freud’s theories contributed to Expressionists and Weimar right-wingers’ acceptance of abstraction, intoxication, and the unconscious that civilized society had subdued. German Romantics, Arthur Schopenhauer, Søren Kirkegaard, and Henri Bergson had sway on both groups with regards to idealism, subjectivism, phenomenology, vitality, and irrationalism as well (See Oehm). During the late nineteenth century, the conservative mandarin thinkers Paul de Lagarde, Julius Langbehn, and Ferdinand Tönnies published their respective works Deutsche Schriften,
Rembrandt als Erzieher, and Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, which had varying influence on both groups. While Tönnies’ impact on both of them is unquestioned, Lagarde and Langbehn’s theories had massive influence on Weimar’s ultraconservatives while probably having some effect on Expressionists because of the success of the two authors’ writings.\(^{22}\) The academic Paul de Lagarde invoked the Wiedergeburt to signify a national rebirth and stem Germany’s decline (F. Stern 49-50; See also Mosse, Crisis 32-3). He passionately criticized what he believed were the reasons for this national deterioration such as Jews, capitalism, industry, and liberalism. The fervent antisemite Julius Langbehn vehemently condemned science, intellectualism, the metropolis, and commerce and praised simplicity, spontaneity, and primitivism (F. Stern 118). He warned against national decay through abovementioned ills and preached that the country’s regeneration could occur through art and that a Führer would cause this regeneration (F. Stern 120, 149).

Although his book was not inherently right-wing, the conservative sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies’ Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, which was written in 1887, was immensely popular among both groups.\(^{23}\) In it, Tönnies claimed that modern humanity had become infatuated with Gesellschaft instead of seeking the Gemeinschaft. Gesellschaft is made by humans who are independent of each other so that it is inorganic and false and can be more or less equated with civilization whose main features are for the most part rationality, industry, technology, capitalism, commodification, and cupidity.

\(^{22}\) Although their ideologies differed dramatically, Lagarde and Langbehn’s respective beliefs about capitalism, industry, rational thinking, primitivism, and rebirth certainly correspond with several Expressionist critiques of modern life. It seems odd to make these types of connections between Expressionists and the right-wingers Lagarde and Langbehn, but one must remember earlier statements about the flowing model of intellectuals’ theories and literary and historical periods as opposed to viewing them as balkanizing entities.

\(^{23}\) Tönnies’ work first became popular in its second edition from 1912.
According to Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* is created by God, is organic, national, simplistic, frequently irrational, and requires concord among human beings and between human beings and their environment. In history, Tönnies claimed that the Middle Ages came closest to embracing the ideal of the *Gemeinschaft*.

Despite Tönnies and other thinkers’ undoubted sway on both groups, the most influential intellectual on Expressionists and Weimar’s ultraconservatives and their theories was unquestionably Friedrich Nietzsche as many scholars have already documented (Aschheim 51-85, 130-68; Martens, “Aufbruch” 115-66; Martens, *Vitalismus* 34-54; Oehm; Prümm 35-7; Woods, *Conservative Revolution* 29-58, Woods, *Jünger* 59-97). His nebulous and sometimes controversial theories on war, primal instincts, bourgeois values, the will, and the Overman played roles in the formation of Expressionists and radical conservatives’ teachings. Both groups’ use of intoxication as an antithesis to stagnant modern life is also consistent with Nietzsche’s beliefs. However, there are also several differences between Nietzsche’s philosophy and Expressionist and radical conservative ideas. His ideal of the Overman envisages a single person who would rule over the masses, and while conservatives accepted this notion, Expressionists certainly did not. Late Expressionists wanted to propagate humanitarian political and social causes among human beings; these ideas had nothing to do with creating a dominating type of human being which Nietzsche envisioned in his Overman. Consistent with this deviation from Nietzsche, Expressionists wanted nothing to do with Nietzsche’s *Wille zur Macht*, but rather preached a “Willen zur Menschheit” as Kurt Pinthus described it (“Rede” 420). Both groups’ use of the term “community” also

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24 In a poem, the Expressionist poet Jakob van Hoddis writes that “Nietzsche werde überwunden, / Wir beginnen auszumisten / Aus der Welt die ungesunden / Schranklosen Egoisten” (*Weltende* 17).
cannot be attributed to Nietzsche. He saw no improvement for the large majority of the masses or “herds.” In addition, Nietzsche would undoubtedly have objected to ultraconservatives’ intense nationalism and antisemitism.25

Thus, to equate Nietzsche or any other intellectual’s teachings for that matter, to Expressionists or Weimar right-wingers’ ideologies would be an error. Although their influence on both groups is noteworthy, literary Expressionists and extreme conservatives can and should be considered independent of other artists, philosophers, and scholars’ theories because their teachings are *sui generis* and much more complex than to just subscribe them to others’ viewpoints. Indeed, others’ beliefs can play only a small part in explaining both groups’ etiology and success, which disruptions and tensions occurring from historical, economic, political, and social events and trends can better clarify. Both late Expressionists and Weimar conservatives provided a vehicle for Germans’ emotive expression that occurred during years of war, revolution, and economic disaster; indeed, both groups relied heavily on philosophies of disaster. Hence, an examination of Expressionists and Weimar conservatives’ methods prquires a cursory look at these historical problems.

Before the First World War, a larger portion of the German populace had a greater feeling of security and progress than after this catastrophic event (Kohlschmidt 31). After having defeated France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, Germans felt militarily at the apex of their power and enjoyed an almost forty-five-year peace thereafter. Germany’s unification and overall economic growth from 1871 until into the early

25 Scholars have debated Nietzsche’s alleged antisemitism, but his most vociferous attacks came not against Jews but rather against Judaism and Judeo-Christian morals and are found to a large extent in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*. His association with hate for Jews mostly come from his antisemitic sister’s application and perversion of his works for antisemitic ends (Lieberman 504).
twentieth century gave the majority of its citizens a sense of national well-being (Stickelberger-Eder 39). However, German economic and military successes only helped to conceal and suppress underlying problems and tensions in Wilhelmine Germany.

Economic prosperity failed to reach the lower strata of society; rapid changes from an agricultural to an industrial society had severe repercussions on the German psyche; the rapid introduction of a national government in 1871 demanded a greater political and social purview and effort for which many parochial Germans were unprepared; certain cultural and political freedoms were deficient creating inexperience in the practice of liberties; and monarchical conservatism, militarism, and exuberant nationalism exacted immense sacrifice and psychological tolls from the populace.\(^{26}\) These problems and pressures clearly surfaced and became major issues with the beginning of the First World War and subsequent postwar crises.

World War I did more than just alter Germany’s borders and reduce its population. The war was omnipresent in Germans’ minds long after the ending of hostilities, especially during the Weimar Republic’s early years (Midgely 228; Natter 16).\(^{27}\) There were memorials and state ceremonies to commemorate the war dead (Midgley 228). The German people entrusted Paul von Hindenburg, the supreme commander of the German army during the First World War, with the office of President of the Republic. The state allocated a hefty sum for veterans’ pensions in addition to war reparations to the Allied Powers as dictated in the Versailles Treaty which Germans attacked unrelentingly. However, the war was salient first and foremost because of

\(^{26}\) For more information on the rapidity of German economic and industrial development in the nineteenth century and Germans’ failure to cope with it, see Plessner’s *Die verspätete Nation*.

\(^{27}\) Paradoxically, in the immediate post-World War II era, most Germans looked towards the future and tried to forget about the past war. One need only consider the concept of *Stunde Null*. Only with the 1968-generation did Germans first begin to critically examine the war and their fathers’ roles in it.
Germans’ postwar physical and mental state. They suffered from the war’s immediate effects through malnutrition, hunger, increased disease, shortages of goods, and coping with the loss of loved ones. In the long term, hyperinflation, economic depression, and political chaos stemmed to a large degree from the economic, political, and psychological burdens of the war. Indeed, psychologically, the loss of World War I haunted Germans. The emotions and effects would have been enormous if they had emerged victorious and would have presented other problems for Germany such as the unfair treaty that they would have probably imposed on and subsequent strained diplomatic relations with the Allied powers, but they had lost the war. Their suffering and sacrifice, including the millions of Germans who had fought and had died or been wounded in the conflict, had brought them seemingly nothing except the punitive Treaty of Versailles and the shame of defeat.

Because of their sacrifice, suffering, and the lack of war spoils, Germans in the Weimar period, especially soldiers, searched for the war’s meaning (Natter 16). Several Germans thought that the war’s end brought about a momentous break with the past and that the war itself was an epoch-changing event, but they just did not know how it would change future epochs. Because of these thoughts and because of the war’s enormous significance in postwar life, various groups and individuals attempted to define the future by convincing the German populace of their interpretations on the war’s meaning (Natter 1, 3). Two such groups were Expressionists and Weimar right-wingers whose antithetical opinions on the war were meant to influence future post-war Germany and to explicate the war in their own terms, either as a terrible occurrence to be prevented in the future or as an ideal ethos to be espoused in coming years. Out of the two, Expressionists
undoubtedly gave Germans the chance for a better future because they required an emotional and psychological working-through by coming to terms with aspects of the war such as its outcomes and Germany’s role in it. Unfortunately, many Germans never made this necessary adjustment so that the war’s meaning hampered and eventually helped scuttle Germany’s postwar future, especially its democratic future.\footnote{Germans’ failure to come to terms with the war eventually helped lead to a type of undemocratic “beginning” that relied heavily on the First World War’s exploitation.}

The emergence of the Weimar Republic from the immediate postwar chaos gave much of a weary German populace a resigned hope in the future. Although Weimar may have become the “Golden Twenties” for a few Germans, it was a disappointment for most in the fifteen years of its existence. Among several criticisms, the latter characterized it as loose social norms, laissez-faire economic liberalism, materialism, the balkanization of interests and organizations, dizzying technological advance, and a continuation of the home front’s wartime disorder. Tensions between young and old, men and women, employers and workers, and those who profited from modernization and those who were lost in it began to typify Weimar. Many Germans began to equate what they thought were the many negative qualities of Weimar’s ethos and culture not only with modernity but also with democracy and freedoms. While some Germans truly embraced the new social and political liberties of Weimar – in an odd way, Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives benefited from enhanced cultural freedoms and government’s increased tolerance of criticism during Weimar in comparison to Wilhemine Germany, but both groups still vehemently attacked Weimar democracy –, many others’ encounters with democracy produced anxiety, insecurity, isolation, powerlessness, and loneliness instead of infusing Germans with a greater sense
of freedom, purpose, and security. Many Weimaraners felt constrained so that they wanted more existential freedom and ability for social movement. They did not feel in command of their own lives in postwar society; they were delivered to the world, which held them hostage as objects instead of as letting them be free human beings. At the same time, Weimaraners’ lack of control under democracy could engender the opposite reactions in the individual. Instead of desiring more freedom, a person without control and security could have feared their experience with increased freedoms during Weimar and desired some type of, and in some cases more, structure to their lives. The loss of structure with the emperor’s abdication in 1918 and the abandonment of spiritual, religious frameworks in modern life in some cases left a void in many Germans’ lives. They began to search for any types of truths in which they could invest, but democracy failed to inspire confidence because it seemed incapable of dealing with the crises that beset it. Indeed, rare historical events put German democracy under great pressure.

Political instability constantly threatened the Weimar Republic. The Revolution of 1918/1919 saw the overthrow of the monarchy, fighting in streets that pitted German against German, and the creation of the short-lived Bavarian Räterepublik. In 1920, the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch attempted to overthrow the democratic government, and both the Putsch of the Schwarzen Reichswehr in Küstrin and Hitler’s march with his followers to the Feldherrenhalle in Munich occurred in 1923. Petty political organizations called for secession in parts of western Germany, communists revolted in central Germany and Berlin, and Freikorps disavowed the democratic government and fought with Poles, Russians, and Balts to the east of Germany. Right-wing groups assassinated political

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29 One associates an isolated individual with a sequestered individual who is away from frictions and harm, but in Weimar society, there was hardly a way to escape the crises so that one was alone and exposed.

30 See Fromm for more information about Germans’ “fear of freedom” during this time period.
leaders such as Kurt Eisner, Matthias Erzberger, and Walter Rathenau and murdered others such as Gustav Landauer, Karl Liebknecht, and Rosa Luxemburg. Even during the relative calm of the republic’s medial period, parties in the Reichstag worked little with each other (Kolb 67), and in the republic’s stormy later years, the Nazi Sturmabteilung brawled in the streets with their communist counterparts and Emergency Decrees bypassed parliament until the National Socialists finally extinguished democracy in Germany in the subsequent months after Hitler’s appointment to chancellor.

Contributing mightily to the republic’s unstable political situation was a crisis in capitalism caused by catastrophic economic results. Capitalism often intertwines with new democracies: while citizens frequently enjoy their new democratic freedoms in comparison to their experience with the previous authoritarian rule, they usually demand economic betterment over the previous regime’s results. In their first experiment with democracy, Germans were no different so that when capitalism failed to produce the desired results in Germany, democracy became a scapegoat and was eventually rejected. Thus, the fall of Weimar democracy was greatly the result of the failure of capitalism’s success. Even during the republic, politicians knew that economic growth was central to the republic’s success and, thus, worked closely with leaders in industry and those with great wealth. This chummy relationship between capitalism and democracy, industrialists’ easy access to political figures, and the accumulation of vast wealth by a few individuals during the republic led to theories of collusion between politicians and industrial moguls without the inclusion of the common German who was truly suffering. Although he also worked closely with industry before 1918, the imperial emperor gave

31 It is hard to underestimate the effect that these political assassinations had on left-wing groups. Their leadership ranks were decimated by Weimar’s end.
the impression of being above it. He was first and foremost a symbol of the nation that economic and industrial interests did not appear to taint.

One of the main components to Weimar’s economic crisis was insufficient industrial output, which exacerbated and in some cases caused several negative reactions from Germans to industrialization and its by-products. Despite Weimar Germany being a highly industrialized nation by world standards, its manufacturing remained depressed after the war so that in 1919, it was only 38% of prewar levels, barely reached 1913 output in 1927 through 1929, and dropped precipitously from these highs over the next few years (Peukert 120-1). Because many Germans depended on some form of manufacturing for their livelihood, the dearth of its success sometimes engendered resentment over industry’s continuing importance in modern life.

Workers had no choice but to devote a great deal of their lives to the increasing modernization of German industry, but recent troubles made them feel as if they were reaping little benefit. For instance, many industrial laborers could not find employment, and for those who could find work, much of their lives revolved around many hours of factory labor using rationalized techniques in highly mechanized surroundings. In this environment, rote methods, alienation, overwork, and the feeling that life only consisted of work were reasons for people to rebel against what they thought was their inane existences. Workers and their families frequently lived within cramped quarters in large proletarian apartment complexes proximate to the factory so that their work defined their place of residence (Mühlberg 131-2). Workers’ diversions during free time became small pleasures such as quicker cigarette and not pipe smoking, eating at a Schnellimbiß, or drinking beer with friends at a Stehbierhalle (Mühlberg 129-130). As mass
industrialization occurred, industry increasingly demanded and financially rewarded skilled, specialized, and highly-educated employees such as engineers and chemists to the chagrin of common laborers. Industrial monopolies such as the Stinnes empire, Flick concern, or IG Farben formed to the profit of relatively few individuals leaving manual workers to conclude resentfully that big business was becoming rich while the little man suffered. Several conflicts between employers and labor intensified workers’ bitterness towards industrialists. The landmark Stinnes-Legien Agreement from 1918, which made peace between management and labor leaders, crumbled only five years later when employers unilaterally left the accord during a brief period of economic stabilization. Employers also preferred younger, more productive workers to older laborers (Peukert 158), and competition from increased trade and globalization exacerbated workers’ fears of wage reductions and job loss.

Considering that a surplus rural population flocked to cities to find employment in manufacturing during the late nineteenth and turn of the twentieth centuries, the above-mentioned developments and a scarcity of jobs in general were especially bitter for many Germans who made the arduous move. In addition, the metropolis usually did not facilitate a smooth transition to urban life for migrants from rural areas because individuals could feel lost and estranged in its vastness, quick pace, mutability, utilitarian concrete and steel structures, complexity, and the unconcernedness and impersonality of its citizens. No less a thinker than Georg Lukács blamed many of these negative urban characteristics on capitalism, and more specifically on industry’s rationalization and

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32 Hugo Stinnes was born in 1870 and died in 1924. He built an industrial empire focusing on coal, iron, passenger ships, paper, and automobiles. The steel and chemical mogul Friedrich Flick was born in 1883 and died in 1970. IG Farbenindustrie was founded in 1925 only to be divided into twelve separate concerns including BASF, Hoechst, and Bayer after World War II.
unfettered technological advance, which had spread from industry “reifying” quotidian metropolitan life (*History* 83-93). Some thinkers even posited anti-civilizational and primitive attitudes as a way to escape modernity and urban life. Because of several of the abovementioned concerns, the metropolis was a contentious issue in early twentieth-century Germany.

An even more significant issue was certainly hyperinflation, which underscored to Germans the volatility and *insecurity* of modern capitalism, but whose effects went far beyond the economic realm (Durst 82-98; Feldman 513-555, 609-627; Peukert 61; Widdig 12). It began as the German government encouraged workers’ passive resistance in the Ruhr to war reparations’ payments by printing more money to support those not working. The overproduction of notes caused an already high inflationary rate that began with the First World War to transition to hyperinflation in 1923. An important result of this hyperinflation was the redistribution of some wealth among the German populace. Black marketers [*Schieber*] who operated on a barter economy, debtors who could easily settle financial obligations as money became inflated, or savvy speculators who invested in foreign currencies [*Devisenschieber*] or physical objects such as property and paid for it with worthless money were its main beneficiaries. The latter of these three groups acquired tremendous wealth, in some cases almost overnight, while millions of other Germans suffered and became needy. People on fixed incomes such as pensioners were especially vulnerable to skyrocketing prices for necessary expenses so that they struggled to survive.

In addition to shifts in wealth, a significant change in the German ethos became especially salient during the hyperinflation. The virtues of thrift, saving money, and
delayed gratification, which had been successful for decades, became counterproductive. In short, the system could no longer guarantee that a hard day’s work translated into any type of economic security. Instead, a profiteering ethic and poverty-induced crime became widespread as this economic turmoil coincided with a loss of morals (Peukert 66-7). Everyone was looking out for their own interests so that the hyperinflation contributed to atomization among Germans. Its psychological effects were devastating as well. In his essay Überreizte Nerven, Friedrich Kroner discusses the hyperinflation’s effects on a human being’s emotional state, especially his or her nerves: “Man hat nicht viel zuzusetzen. Das trommelt täglich auf die Nerven: der Zahlenwahnsinn, die ungewisse Zukunft, das über Nacht wieder fraglich gewordene Heute und Morgen. Epidemi der Angst, der nacktesten Not…die Nullen, die wachsenden Nullen!…Mit dem Dollar steigt das: Haß, Verzweiflung, Not. Tagesgefühle wie Tageskurse” (673).

Considering these issues, it is not surprising that some Germans wanted to abandon this new, modern capitalism and what they perceived as its enduring supporter, namely democratic Weimar. Thus, 1923 turned into one of the most turbulent years politically for the republic. Germans’ experiences with and trauma from earlier hyperinflation only contributed to their fears about the World Economic Crisis when it began in 1929. The economic disaster occurred chiefly through the recall of American loans from Germany following the stock market crash of 1929 in New York. The loss of this foreign

33 The loss of morals from the hyperinflation is evident in Georg Kaiser’s play Nebeneinander, which this work will examine later in detail.

34 This chapter has already discussed much of the political turmoil of Weimar; however, to demonstrate hyperinflation’s effects on political life, I will give a few examples. With regard to 1923, the failure of Germany to pay reparations initiated the march of Belgian and French troops into the Ruhr and loss of sovereignty over those areas until 1925. The inflation triggered strikes and protests, and separatists called for their own states in areas of the Ruhr. As previously mentioned, Freikorps were active in the east, and Hitler and his followers marched on the Feldherrenhalle.
investment crippled the German economy, which depended greatly on American finance for stability and growth. Shrinking manufacturing production, depressed wages, mass unemployment, and rapid pauperization characterized the economic crisis in Germany, but just as with the hyperinflation earlier in the decade, social and political concerns surfaced in its wake.\footnote{According to Mommsen and Dimsdale, unemployment reached 6.1 million by February 1932 or 25\% of the entire population (367; 788).} First, Germans questioned – much as they questioned with other crises – why it was happening to them. This feeling of victimization was exacerbated through a lack of understanding of why or how the Economic Crisis of 1929/30 was transpiring just as Germans had not fathomed the hyperinflation’s occurrence during the early 1920s. Their familiarity with modern capitalism was so scant and their situation so dire that some Germans ridiculously scapegoated Jews, Socialists, Americanization, democracy, and peace for their economic woes. In addition, both crises led to what ordinary Germans saw as their own devaluation. For instance, many former soldiers felt cheated because their country could not provide basic services for them despite their sacrifices for the fatherland. Older Germans saw savings and hopes for a peaceful retirement disappear. Younger generations had difficulty finding success in their careers, and others simply struggled to survive. In combination, these woes engendered a wide range of emotions in the German populace including despair, nervousness, anger, and worthlessness to which several groups appealed. Military discipline entered into the social sphere and replaced work discipline as Communists, National Socialists, and Social Democrats formed paramilitary organizations (Peukert 254; Mommsen 367). However, first and foremost, the World Economic Crisis meant the end of Weimar democracy in Germany (Peukert 249); Germans no longer had any trust in the republic.
Expressionists and Weimar’s ultraconservatives believed that their ideas were vast improvements over Weimar’s democratic and economic reality. Hence, Weimar and its tumultuous milieu were antithetical to both groups’ teachings. However, at the same time, Expressionists and extreme conservatives knew that the woes of Weimar also left many people vulnerable to change; indeed, the radical conversions that both groups desired depended on crises so that they encouraged these crises. For Expressionists, the First World War, the Revolution of 1918/1919, and hyperinflation were major factors in the dissemination of their movement. Extreme Weimar conservatives’ pattern for growth mirrored Expressionist development because they profited immensely from the World Economic Crisis of the late 1920s and the early 1930’s. The abovementioned cataclysmic occurrences caused a general imperviousness to amazement among Germans normalizing political, social, and artistic radicalism such as Expressionist and right-wing beliefs. Because these catastrophic events impoverished Germans in the present and extinguished any hope of long-term planning, they felt that they had nothing more to lose leaving them open to extremism as well. Thus, these crises emboldened both groups who worked industriously to capture the feelings and the expressions of postwar Germans and simultaneously spread their teachings. Expressionists and right-wingers’ ideologies appealed to people who were economically stricken, unemployed, humiliated, socially constrained, impressionable, consumed by an unhealthy skepticism, lost in the modern

36 As for references to both groups’ encouragement of chaos, the Expressionist poet and theorist Ludwig Rubiner wrote: “Aber die Gemeinschaft muß getan werden…Ihr erster Schritt heißt Umwälzung. Doch müssen wir schreiten wollen…Ihr müßt denken: Umwälzung! – dann bekommt ihr zuerst den Frieden” (“Schar” 2-3). The right-winger Ernst Jünger also viewed opportunity in the chaotic, postwar events: “Vorzüglich, und nur kein Mitleid mit uns! Dies ist eine Position aus der sich arbeiten läßt. Dieses Maßnehmen an dem geheimen, zu Paris aufbewahrten Urmeter der Zivilisation – das bedeutet für uns…die konsequente Durchführung eines nihilistischen Aktes bis zu seinem notwendigen Punkt“ (7: 133).
world, or generally dissatisfied with life. The Expressionist poet Karl Otten wrote that
the “Menschen des Krieges, der Revolution, die Enttäuschten über den Zusammenbruch
tlicher Illusionen, verlangte nach Ekstasen, nach Entsetzung aus der Gegenwart in eine
Welt der Zukunft, in der Recht und Gerechtigkeit dem Leidenden zuteil werden“
(Introduction 8). The right-wing war novelist Franz Schauwecker thought that because
of the revolution and the concomitant uncertainty that it produced, Germans would
finally be open to reexamining their lives (Aufbruch 408-9), and radical conservative
Moeller van den Bruck wrote that the events that lead to the Ruhr crisis “bewirkten eine
Wandlung…in den Menschen” (“An Heinrich von Gleichen” 8)[emphasis mine]. The
conservative philosopher Oswald Spengler wrote that the war was not the end, but rather
the beginning of an epoch that would lead to other catastrophies (Briefe 32). For late
Expressionists, war was an inhumane event and to be shunned at every opportunity, but
its instability could realize their pacifist ideology. The Expressionist theoretician
Friedrich Mark called the war the “eklatanteste Sinnlosigkeit,” but it could be used to
show “das Grauenhafte einer sinnlosen Welt aufreizend” (170). Instability is also
paramount in the Expressionist playwright Walter Hasenclever’s comments from his
novel Irrtum und Leidenschaft; Hasenclever believes that hyperinflation destroyed
confidence in the material world because money, much as language, is one of people’s
truths: “Die Anarchie der Inflation wurde für Deutschland eine viel schlimmere

37 Salomon uses much the same language and tone when he writes that the emergence of conservative
organizations was the result of people “die sich von der Zeit verraten und betrogen fühlten. Nichts war
mehr wirklich, alle Pfeiler schwankten. Da drängten sich die Hoffenden und die Verzweifelnden, die
Herzen waren alle offen, die Hände klammerten sich dem Gewohnten an. Ihre Sammlung förderte jenen
geheimnisvollen Strudel, aus dem in Spiel und Widerspiel, in Glaube und Widerglaube das aufsteigen
konnte, das wir das Neue nannten“ (Salomon, Geächteten 244).
A friend of the protagonist in the radical conservative Ernst von Salomon’s *Geächteten* stated that hyperinflation contributed to the chaos in Germany; it helped cause Germans’ balkanization and feelings of despair (438). According to the radical conservative Karl Paetel, the economic turmoil of the late 1920s and early 1930s would be the great “Entscheidungstag der nationalrevolutionären Bewegung” if conservatives could mobilize the two million unemployed in December 1929 (qtd. in Schüddekopf 271). As the numerous abovementioned statements show, civilization and its failures were to be the means to realize their teachings.

Despite their comments in the previous paragraph and both groups’ obvious dependence on these economic, political, and social crises for even modest modicums of success, Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives thought that hyperinflation, the World Economic Crisis of 1929/30, political chaos, a profiteering ethos, and upheavals in the job market were symptoms of the larger and more problematic capitalistic, industrial, and political systems. In other words, momentary crises could happen again while the true origins of these problems remained. Thus, both groups wrote more often about and wanted to eliminate these broader and, in their opinion, more central problems rather than the abovementioned temporary economic and political events, and because of these larger problems’ deep entrenchment in all types of life, they posited that Germans needed deep existential and societal transformation to become healthy. To accomplish this goal, Expressionist authors and ultraconservatives wrote extensively about the many negative, existential feelings that the crises of Weimar, the capitalistic, industrial, and political systems, and historical modernity caused in the individual. Indeed, their literature is teeming with portrayals of characters’ inner tensions, pressures, and existential anomie.
from the modern world. They believed that the world engendered chaos, pain, fear, horror, fragmentation, alienation, anxiety, nervousness, powerlessness, despair, suffering, and was no less than torture in its current form. Expressionists and ultraconservatives thought that these emotions and states of being could help individuals connect with their innermost existence and, hence, were essential to their aforementioned transformations.\(^{38}\)

They shock individuals creating a radical disturbance of equilibrium in their quotidian identities resembling in many ways a severe pubertal or mid-life crisis. A shocked individual has surpassed his final limit and can no longer handle the frequency or swell of emotions and states. He or she has begun to \textit{abstract} from the normal perceptions and order of an inhuman world and is physically present in his or her environment, but psychologically distant from typical life and thinking.\(^ {39}\)

As an avant-garde movement, early Expressionists tried to shock Germans with the aesthetic qualities of their works, but it was difficult to continue shocking when their aesthetics was becoming more established. Thus, the shock came mostly from historical crises and to a lesser extent from the themes of their works which showed the abovementioned negative emotions and existential conditions that were so prevalent in the real world. According to both groups, this shock helped allow for a new identity that would allegedly quell the cycle of chaos and catastrophe. Hence, they actually encouraged such negative emotions and situations as a method to ultimately destroy and, thus, deal with these very same emotions and

\(^{38}\) Martin Heidegger’s \textit{Sein und Zeit} contains a similar idea of \textit{Angst} or “insecurity/anxiousness.” He stated that anxiety could release humans from their standard existences introducing them to authentic Being. Contemplation of death engenders anxiety in the individual and ultimately exposes one’s previous inauthentic Being (245).

\(^{39}\) The shock is the sudden \textit{change} in an individual – or throwness in which no return to his or her previous life is possible –, but is not necessarily the result of one sudden incident. It can come from one catastrophic situation which engenders an existential feeling or feelings or through the buildup from several experiences which collectively at some point cause a shock in the individual. This build up could take time.
situations. By portraying these feelings, they appealed to suffering Germans in the postwar era and also demonstrated methods for them to triumph over their adversity.

According to Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives, shocked individuals or persons who have undergone abstraction, can become vitalistic. This vitality normally begins as a temporary loss of an individual’s mental and sometimes physical control, but after a period of time, the individual realizes that this state is superior to his former dull existence. Related to this concept “vitality” and littered throughout Expressionist and Weimar right-wingers’ works are the terms “rush,” “intoxication,” “activity,” “movement,” “Tat,” “Leben” (“life”), “Aufbruch” (“break through/departure”), and “ecstasy.” These terms entail the uprooting of people from their submissive, everyday existences, making them more active individuals supposedly in control of their own destiny because they become independent of the material world which previously controlled them. The intoxicated undergo a euphoric release of pressure and tension from their previous erroneous lives. Because these individuals feel active and dynamic, their internal excitations seek discharge in actions in society, but the types of actions are yet to be determined because the intoxicated individuals are still undecided on the uses of their new-found dynamism. After experiencing the rush, they must search for the utopian life for which they possess an inkling but still do not know. Thus, although both groups claim that the rush is a necessary component of a Wandlung or “transformation,” an intoxicated individual is not a transformed individual in their theories, but rather intoxication makes the individual active for a cause if he can be convinced of that cause.
Expressionists and Weimar’s ultraconservatives associate the aforementioned *Wandlung*, an essential concept in their teachings, with other terms such as *Verwandlung* (“metamorphosis”/”change”), *Erneuerung* (“rejuvenation”), *Wiedergeburt*, and the “New Human Being.”\(^{40}\) Much as in the Christian religious sources from which many of these words stem and upon which both groups built through Germans’ preexisting knowledge of these terms (Anz, *Literatur des Expressionismus* 48), the words denote human beings undergoing radical changes through which they could reach a higher level of existence to become New Human Beings.\(^{41}\) In general, the New Human Being is a symbol for everything that Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives viewed as positive.

Both groups use the words *Wandlung*, *Verwandlung*, *Erneuerung*, and *Wiedergeburt* interchangeably in many instances to emphasize the individual’s acceptance of crucial ideas. Sometimes Expressionists and ultraconservatives define this acceptance as a positive rollback – however large or small – to a psychological or material existence that humanity allegedly once practiced; thus, this regressive rebirth is a “figuring out of oneself” and ultimately an affirmation of true self and infinite values. However, this type of primitivism and counter to sublimation did not always encompass a complete rejection of modern civilization: for instance, it could be a return to primal instincts within the modern world.

\(^{40}\) This work will use the terms “New Human Being” for Expressionists and “New Man” for conservatives since conservatives only wanted to construct New Men. Although Expressionists have been accused of sexism, chauvinism, and gender stereotypes (Kuhns 8; Wright, “German Feminism” 582-99), it is not the purpose of this work to delve into their misogyny or lack thereof. For the sake of comparison with Weimar conservatives, Expressionists deserve the term “New Human Being” because Expressionists did desire the transformation of all of society, including women.

\(^{41}\) In the Bible, Paul preaches in *Ephesians* 4:24 to “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” In *Colossians* 3: 10, he states that “And ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”
Regardless of the term, the person embracing the New Human Being’s ideals would become whole, organic, and in short, human according to both groups. Indeed, some argued that this humanness existed in people, but had become lost through civilization. Although not all Expressionists and extreme conservatives agreed on this point, they did concur that the transformed individual must epistemologically alter his relationship to norms and objectivity eventually becoming active to create a new vision of reality.\textsuperscript{42} In other words, because outer factors and events influence the inner happenings of a human being, both groups wanted to reach the stage where a person’s inner being dominates outer events. Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives sometimes portray the rebirth as an inner experience or an inner transformation; however, for both groups, this description is misleading because of its incompleteness. This inner change is necessary to change the outer world: the ultimate goal of their \textit{Wandlungen} should be a cultural, social, and/or political transformation of humanity, and thus, one should view their theories primarily within the material world and not first and foremost as a spiritual experience.\textsuperscript{43} Expressionists and Weimar’s ultraconservatives believed that their visions of rebirth would supplant current economic, political, and social reality, which engendered existential crises. Thus, their theories of the New Human Being show and even interpret the traumatic experiences, the failures of the world, and the enormity of the current historical situation as well as convey desired necessary solutions to correct these failures, experiences, and the situation. After the rebirth of the human being, the rebirth of humanity – or at the very least of Germany and Europe – from Expressionists’

\textsuperscript{42} In this sense, “inhuman” does not signify lacking compassion because radical conservatives would never agree to a humanistic world, but rather simply means “not-human.”
\textsuperscript{43} The spiritual transformation that was advocated in their writings was a convenient surrogate for Germans’ loss of faith in religion that both groups saw occurring.
perspective or a national rebirth according to radical Weimar conservatives should occur. This all-encompassing rebirth will lead to the Gemeinschaft or “community.”

Expressionists and right-wingers’ Gemeinschaften are the ultimate and utopian goals of their ideologies. Both groups view the mass, or the aggregate of people’s mass-produced existences in Weimar, and the current state as antitheses to the community because they are either cold, alienating, or divisive and promote these negative characteristics. The utopian community, on the other hand, overcomes these features, especially divisions such as economic, class, and political differences, to allegedly create harmony and existential freedom. It promises belonging, simplicity, stability, structure, truth, and happiness in an era of perceived isolation, loss, distance, complexity, and widespread discontent in modern life. Sharing in its goals, the individual becomes one with and responsible to all other members of the community in an expression of warmth that is the converse of society’s coldness and divisions. This collective accord and creation of a “home” sometimes requires some type of loss of individuality on the part of the Gemeinschaft’s members, but in return, they supposedly receive endless Möglichkeiten (“possibilities”) and psychological and existential mobility overcoming the limits and constraints of reality. Weimar conservatives also promised Germans power in response to their alleged impotency in the republic whereas Expressionists wanted to bestow Germans with control over their situation. Indeed, Expressionists preached against the evils of power and wanted to destroy all types of power structures to create equality among human beings. To realize this idea, Expressionists posited that human beings sacrifice privileges for fellow humanity. On the other hand, Weimar right-wingers’ dictatorial ideology demanded unrelenting sacrifice for the nation. Thus, within
their communities, both groups advocated antithetical forms of sacrifice that would rid Germany of the selfish ethos that had festered during the Second Reich and continued during Weimar.

As these last few statements indicate and chapters three and four will better show, the rebirth of the “New Human Being” and ultimately the “Gemeinschaft,” despite being both groups’ teleologies, are methods to propagate their own very different beliefs. In other words, they are structures that are conceptualized through more important ideas or content. Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives used these structures to disseminate their ideas because they best appealed to the commonality of feelings, experiences, and sufferings of Germans during this time period. These molds are far from unimportant because their use by both groups among the German populace attests to their import, but rather our focus should be on their proper function, namely as signifiers to communicate content.

Because of both groups’ propagation of these structures during the postwar period, it is not surprising that Expressionists and right-wingers used the term “form” frequently in their writings. Because they thought that they understood and could give meaning to these crises and changes, Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives believed that they could provide “form” and stability for the German populace who felt lost in Weimar’s chaos. In a “formless” and rapidly changing world, both groups posited their teachings as eternal and appealed to Germans’ sense of a loss of identity by positing

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44 One must mention Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic theory of the signifier and signified from his *Writings in General Linguistics*. For instance, the term “Gemeinschaft” acts as a signifier for actual content or a concept, which is the signified. Expressionists and extreme Weimar conservatives use the same signifiers, but radically different signifieds. Both groups’ use of the same signifiers and antithetical signified created a synchronic flux for this term among the greater German populace. This chapter will discuss both groups competition for these signifiers later. Interestingly, the signifiers do not become arbitrary as in Saussure’s theories, but rather the signified.
another identity for them to claim: they wanted their ideas to supplant the preceding form and become normalized.\textsuperscript{45} To achieve this goal, both groups needed to displace the previous, dominant generation who created this form. Expressionists and conservatives openly attacked and stated that their theories would negate much of the present and immediate past to create a newer, more vibrant period, and, both groups did indeed assail Naturalism and other products of the nineteenth century, conservative monarchism, and modern capitalism.\textsuperscript{46} These and other assaults enabled them to claim distance for their theories from current reality and that they were novel and dynamic. Both Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives propagated the death and beginning of an epoch as evidenced in the titles of several Expressionist and right-wing works, publishing houses, and magazines such as \textit{Der Untergang des Abendlandes}, \textit{Menschheitsdämmerung}, \textit{Der Neue Geist}, \textit{Der Anbruch}, and \textit{Neue Jugend}.\textsuperscript{47}

Typifying their desire for the immediate past’s annulment and a new period’s construction was both groups’ embracement of the concept “youth.” During the 1910s and 1920s, being young was synonymous with experimentation, rebellion, risk, carelessness, and vitality in social, political, and aesthetic realms and meant belonging to and solidarity with a specific generation. These characteristics allowed “youthful” groups to allegedly negate their father’s generation which they connected with stifling bourgeois norms, monotony, stagnancy, pointlessness, and in Expressionist views,

\textsuperscript{45} The process of identity development is a normal one considering that our identities are in a constant state of flux (Gillis 3).

\textsuperscript{46} Expressionists tried a much more complete annulment of present and immediate past than ultraconservatives. Chapter four will discuss what extreme conservatives attempted to annul and keep from the immediate past and present. One should also mention that any attempt to negate one’s immediate past is bound to fail: no person or group lives in a vacuum. A complete annihilation and replacement of society cannot occur, but rather there must be some type of dialectical transition.

\textsuperscript{47} The German word “Dämmerung” means both “dusk” and “dawn” in English. Thus, “Menschheitsdämmerung” connotes the ending of an old era of humanity and the beginning of a new era.
conservatism. Closely associated with this generational conflict was experience as an antithesis to instruction: the younger generation often sought an intense experience while their predecessors mainly concentrated on learning through training. Youth’s intensity contributed to their ambition; however, many motivated German young people became exasperated with their inability to find their social or professional niche, whether it was from lack of upward mobility or even basic employment. Many young and middle-aged Germans sought the supposed “golden age” of youth which they had not experienced in a chronically sick economy, war, or inflation. These Germans found a sense of belonging in extreme organizations. Both Expressionists and radical conservatives frequently used the word “jung,” such as in the title of Paul Kornfeld’s Expressionist periodical Das junge Deutschland or the group the Jungkonservativen which Moeller van den Bruck led to appeal to these “active” parts of the population. Through these and similar references to youth, both groups wanted to communicate that their ideas were new, ecstatic, radical, and in the case of conservatives, that Germans’ youthfulness could help stem German cultural decline. Expressionists and Weimar right-wingers were part of a larger movement of competing organizations which attempted to appear young to demonstrate that they best represented and embodied the characteristics of young people. However, in examining just Expressionists and Weimar right-wingers, members of both groups were in some cases no longer youth by 1918 but rather their ages ranged up to thirty-five years. Their alleged “youthfulness” posited in actuality no limitations on age; for them, one becomes young through rebirth so that even elderly Germans could enjoy adolescence again (Rubiner, Gewaltlosen 71).
Such alleged “solutions” to the plethora of crises helped contribute to the recognition of both Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives among the German populace, but it is difficult to determine if both groups were “popular.” Their greatest success undoubtedly coincided with this chaos in which they thought that they viewed the realization of their very different ideologies through the destruction of current reality. However, to state that both groups were “popular” would be vague and misleading. Most scholars would assert that neither Expressionists nor radical Weimar conservatives had a mass following. This assertion is true, but rather than trying to wrestle with indistinct proclamations and academic opinions, this work will give sales, circulations, and further evidence that provide the reader with a sober view on the degree of both groups’ attractiveness to the German public. With this statement in mind, extreme right-wingers and Expressionists’ popularity and influence on post-World War I Germany was greater than most scholars would probably admit, and a major factor in their success was the quantity and repetition of Germans’ exposures to their ideas.

Conservative meetings, groups, political instruction seminars, speeches, and books were present everywhere during Weimar, but especially in Berlin because of its obvious political importance. Intellectual circles gathered around Ernst Jünger in Berlin and Wilhelm Stapel in Hamburg (Keßler 9). Conservative paramilitary organizations and, on a much larger scale, veterans’ organizations and right-wing youth Bünde or “youth leagues” formed. 48 Although radical Weimar conservatives did not control the

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48 Youth Bünde were nation-wide “youth” organizations which were the offspring of the Wandervogel- and Freideutsche Jugend-movements and which were usually for men of different age groups so that the term “youth” should be used loosely (Laqueur, Young Germany xiv; Speitkamp 187). They could be religious (Catholic), political (Socialist, völkisch), or philosophical (avant garde), but usually a mix of the three (Poewe 39; Speitkamp 190). They centered on a Führer and collectivity, and the right-wing Bünde –
latter groups, they did write for many of these organizations and not only influenced them theoretically, but also helped them to propagate a conservative message to the public. Hence, it behooves this work to examine some of these organizations with which extreme conservatives were in some way associated to give an idea of their resonance. According to Armin Mohler and Laqueur, the number of members in the youth Biinden was around 60,000 at their height while Speitkamp lists them at anywhere from 30,000-80,000 (Laqueur, Young Germany xi; Mohler 153; Speitkamp 187). Political combat leagues such as Wehrwolf, Bund Oberland, and Bund Wiking had members of 40,000, 10,000, and 6,000-10,000 respectively (Woods, Conservative Revolution 136). The largest of all political combat organizations was the Jungdeutscher Orden which had a membership of a little less than 100,000 (Mommsen 231).49 In addition, the deutscher Herrenklub, a group of diverse conservatives, enjoyed several important guests indicating their importance in German political circles. The future president Paul von Hindenburg, the chancellor Heinrich Brüning, minister of defense Wilhelm Groener, head of the state bank Hans Luther, and Prince Albert von Hohenzollern were all visitors (Ishida 150). The Berlin Juni-Klub, a group of right-wingers who chose the name “June” for the month in which the Socialist government signed the Versailles Treaty, had financial support or at least contact with the newspaper mogul Alfred Hugenberg, Hugo Stinnes, and other affluent social figures or businesses during the early 1920s (Petzold 103-6; Schwierskott 69-72. The club was able to raise one million marks for a political academy and actually expanded its base from Berlin to Königsberg, Stuttgart, Halle, Dresden, and Breslau.

which dominated the overall numbers of Biinde – cultivated manliness, nationalism, ritual, and racial homogeneity (Crossman xvii; Poewe 39-40; Speitkamp 185-6). Most Biinde were dissolved or incorporated under the National Socialist umbrella shortly after 1933 or ultimately in the Hitler Youth Law of 1936 (Laqueur, Young Germany 208).

49 Woods mentions that the Jungdeutscher Orden had 400,000 members (Conservative Revolution 3).
(Petzold 114; Schwierskott 72). When government sponsorship for their activities fizzled in 1920, heavy industry and private organizations made generous contributions. The club also counted among its organizational friends the *Freikorps*, *Orgesch*, and *bündische* organizations (Boehm, Introduction 24).

Radical conservative writers published diaries, autobiographies, fiction, journalistic works, manifests, and theoretical works. However, their greatest sway on the German public came from tomes on the First World War. Germans never forgot about the war as evidenced by high sales of war books from both opponents and proponents of the conflict. Their writings testify to the normalization of the war as an important political and ideological factor, especially in the later years of the republic. Indeed, the majority of books on the First World War (over 200) appeared on the market in Germany from 1928 until 1933 rather than in the first ten years of the republic which only had publications numbering one hundred (Müller 2). It is not surprising that a wave of war books occurred during the onset of the World Economic Crisis because the subject matter of the books went far beyond the military realm. Erich Maria Remarque’s *Im Westen Nichts Neues* is the most famous and successful piece of war literature selling over 900,000 copies from January 1929 until 1930 alone (Richards 198). Although individually not as successful as Remarque’s novel and certainly not as condemnatory of the war, conservatives, including radical Weimar conservatives, were extremely active and penned the majority of war literature published during the Weimar Republic. Ernst Jünger first published his autobiographical war novel *In Stahlgewittern* in 1920 and, by

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50 *Orgesch* (Organization Escherich) was a secret paramilitary organization in Bavaria under the leadership of the forester Georg Escherich. It was outlawed by the federal government under threats of the Entente in 1921.

51 The distinction between their war diaries and fiction is sometimes blurred since a good deal of their war diaries is most likely fiction.
the end of Weimar, it had reached sales of 50,000.\textsuperscript{52} Werner Beumelburg’s *Sperrfeuer um Deutschland* sold 166,000 copies by 1933, his *Gruppe Bosemüller* 90,000 by 1935 (Richards 61), Thor Goote’s *Wir fahren den Tod* 20,000 by 1930, Franz Seldte’s *M.G.K.* (1929) 30,000, Arnolt Bronnen’s *O. S.* (1929) 25,000 by 1930, and Franz Schauwecker’s *So war der Krieg* (1927) and *Aufbruch der Nation* (1930) 45,000 and 30,000 copies respectively (Prümm 75; Richards 104, 112, 138). The flourishing of right-wing war literature during the later years of the republic contributed to the militarization of society which was evident in the growth of paramilitary organizations among the parties and combat leagues. Thus, it is not surprising that *Standarte*, the supplementary magazine to the combat league *Stahlhelm* with a circulation of 150,000-180,000 (Woods, *Conservative Revolution* 3; Prumm 337), had several extreme right-wingers as contributors.\textsuperscript{53}

Weimar conservatives’ literature that did not deal exclusively with the war was also well-received among Germans. Ernst von Salomon’s *Die Geächteten* (1930) sold over 20,000 copies in three years (Richards 207), but Oswald Spengler’s philosophical treatise *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918) surpassed all war books reaching its forty-seventh edition in just four years and selling 100,000 copies in eight (Woods, *Conservative Revolution* 3; F. Stern 156). Spengler’s much shorter *Preußentum und der Sozialismus* sold 78,000 copies before 1933 (W. Bussmann 69). The conservative

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\textsuperscript{52} By 1945, *In Stahlgewittern* had sold 26 editions and circa 250,000 copies (Dempewolf 206; Woods, *Conservative Revolution* 9) and was translated into seven languages (Ashheim 162). The National Socialists thought highly of the work and helped its sales.

\textsuperscript{53} Franz Seldte founded *Stahlhelm*, the *Bund der Frontsoldaten*, in November 1918 to suppress radical left-wing groups, protest the signing of Versailles, and support the politics of the front generation. It had at least over 300,000 members in 1924 (Mommsen 231; Woods, *Conservative Revolution* 3) and had over one million in 1926/27 (Heitala 102). The surge in its numbers was largely due to the elimination of the prerequisite of armed service for membership in 1926 (Mommsen 232). *Stahlhelm* was disbanded in 1935 and then reformed in 1951.
magazine *Tat* edited by Hans Zehrer had a circulation of about 30,000 in 1933 (Bullivant 62; Prümm 72; Woods, *Conservative Revolution* 88), and other well-known conservative magazines such as Eduard Stadtler’s *Das Gewissen*, Ernst Niekisch’s *Widerstand*, Wilhelm Stapel’s *Deutsches Volkstum*, and *Der Ring*, had subscribers of 30,000, 4,500, 3-5,000, and 5,000 respectively (Keßler 7; Schwierskott 57; Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken* 33). The sales of each individual periodical may not have been impressive, but taken as a whole, they insured that the radical conservative ideology reached many Germans periodically.

As with war literature, right-wingers flourished more during Weimar’s later years as opposed to the late 1910s and early 1920s. Indeed, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, there was less oppositional material from other groups, and it was during those years that many Germans easily identified with extreme conservatives’ disillusionment at losing the war, their nationalism, their calls for community and rejuvenation, and their rejection of Weimar ethos, democracy, the Versailles Treaty, reparations, and war guilt. As a political and social movement, radical Weimar conservatives sided more often with popular opinion than Expressionists; thus, it is not surprising that Weimar conservatives enjoyed greater popularity in comparison to Expressionists when examining sales of their works and general social influence. Because their economic, political, and social objectives differed radically, the end of Expressionism around the mid-1920s and the continued success of Weimar’s ultraconservatives until the end of Weimar illustrate the resonance of the conservative message in the Republic.\(^{54}\)

\(^{54}\) There were several reasons for Expressionism’s demise, and this work will elaborate on them in later chapters.
Although it had less popularity in comparison to its radical Weimar conservative counterparts as evidenced by total sales, literary Expressionism went from being a novelty that reflected everything new, modern, and exciting to an established art movement in early postwar Germany (Pirsich 13-8, 24-6; See also Raabe, *Autoren* 4-5). Expressionism was a relatively unknown artistic movement until after 1918 (Anz, *Literatur des Expressionismus* 24), but the subsequent easing of censorship after the fall of the monarchy in November 1918 helped allow for greater exposure and helped lead to a rapid increase in Expressionism’s popularity after World War I. Although intellectuals are usually on the fringes of society, Expressionism was not only within the mainstream of intellectual thought, but was also to a certain extent “popular“ within greater German society.\(^{55}\) Indeed, the movement’s longevity during social and political upheaval and difficult economic times testifies to its resonance among many Germans. This work does not want to discount the success of New Objectivity or of writers such as Thomas Mann and Gerhart Hauptmann, but Expressionism was a dominant literary movement of the early postwar period. It was not solely the preeminent talents of the movement such as Toller, Kaiser, Werfel, and Benn that made it “popular,“ but rather there were many other lesser-known espousers of its goals and artistry. The Expressionist poet Kurt Pinthus stated that “nicht wie in früheren literarischen Gruppenbildungen: Sturm und Drang, Romantik, Junges Deutschland” which dealt with only “einige Dutzend Autoren, sondern [Expressionismus] tatsächlich um Hunderte, die sich kannten, erkannten, anerkannten” (“Nach 40 Jahren“ 12). These “hundreds“ of Expressionist authors made use of early

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\(^{55}\) It was known internationally as well extending beyond Germany to Slavic nations including Russia (See Belentschikow). Even opponents such as Lukács admitted to internationalism of Expressionism (“Größe und Verfall” 21-2). Kate Winskell’s article also gives a fascinating look at Herwarth Walden’s international work with Dutch, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian artists and publications during the First World War.
twentieth-century Germany’s café culture, theaters, opera houses, cabarets, and several journals and publishing houses which promoted artistic works. Although not always celebrating their use, Expressionists were fascinated with media such as newspapers and film. In particular, the easy dissemination of journals and other forms of printed material provided Expressionists with the opportunity to reach larger audiences so that not only metropolitan areas such as Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Hannover, Munich, Dresden, and Cologne had Expressionist groups or publications, but also more provincial areas such as Darmstadt, Saarbrücken, Brünn, Kattowitz, Mannheim, Thuringia and Heidelberg had them as well (Kuhns 94-95; Pirsich 13, 40-2). Although editors published over 100 Expressionist magazines from 1910 until 1920, most had a small circulation and an even shorter life span (Wright, “Sublime Ambition” 82). In the Palatinate and Breslau, editors founded Expressionist magazines such as Der Schrey, Der Revolutionär, and Die Erde, but the most popular Expressionist periodicals, Sturm and Die Aktion, sold approximately 30,000 and anywhere from 2,000 to 7,000 copies respectively (Anz, Literatur des Expressionismus 41; Kolinsky, Engagierter 78; Pirsich 13). Other prominent magazines such as Die weißen Blätter, Das neue Pathos, and Das Forum had sales about 3,000 each (Anz, Literatur des Expressionismus 41). Expressionist poems, one of the preeminent genres in these periodicals, provided the basis for the anthology Menschheitsdämmerung which quickly sold out after its publication in November 1919 (Sharp 137).

The number of Expressionist plays published and their editions was also significant. After one year, Reinhard Goering’s Seeschlacht had sold six to eight editions, and in 1926, it reached its thirteenth edition (Otten, Introduction 8; Raabe,

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56 For a work about Expressionism in Thuringia, see Nowak, Schierz, and Ulbricht.
In 1917, Walter Hasenclever’s *Sohn* had sold at least six thousand copies (Otten, Introduction 8), and by 1927, it was in its sixteenth edition (Pirsich 25). Four years after its first publication, Ernst Toller’s *Masse Mensch* had sold over nineteen thousand copies, and in five years, his *Die Wandlung* had reached over twenty-five thousand copies in sales (Pirsich 25). One of the most popular Expressionist playwrights of the postwar era was Fritz von Unruh. His 1918 published play *Ein Geschlecht* had by 1922 sold over twenty-eight thousand copies (Pirsich 25), but paled in comparison with Leonhard Frank’s *Der Mensch ist gut* for which he won the Kleist Prize in 1920 and which was printed over 500,000 times (Kolinsky, *Engagierter* 55; Weyrauch 176). Germans were not only reading Expressionist works, but were also watching them on stage as their number, the different locations of their performances, and the importance of theaters in which they were staged show. In Hamburg, plays from Hans Henny Jahn, Hans Johst, and Ernst Barlach were performed, and in Düsseldorf, Friedrich Koffka’s *Kain* premiered. In Frankfurt, dramas by Paul Kornfeld, Oskar Kokoschka, Carl Sternheim, Schickele, Unruh, Friedrich Wolf, Goering, Georg Kaiser, and Walter Hasenclever (Laqueur, *Weimar* 28) were stage-managed. Darmstadt and Mannheim’s *National Theater* staged plays by Sternheim, Kasimir Edschmid (Pirsich 25), Carl Sternheim (Pirsich 25), Unruh, and Hasenclever (Pirsich 25). In Berlin, the capital of German theater, Expressionist plays were staged in the postwar period with regularity.

The *Deutsche Theater* and its studio theaters staged plays by Arnolt Bronnen, Goering

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57 *Die Wandlung* was staged one hundred times by 1920 (Dove 95).
58 Kolinsky reports that the Social Democrats printed 500,000 copies of the series of novellen on newspaper and delivered them to the war front (*Engagierter* 55). Frank was one of the most popular writers whose *Der Bürger* from 1924 had sold 94,000 copies by 1929.
59 Unless otherwise stated, all citations in this paragraph refer back to Raabe’s *Die Autoren und Bücher des literarischen Expressionismus*. The entries for Raabe’s work are according to author and alphabetical.
60 With no less than ten large productions between 1917 and 1925, Kaiser’s play *Von morgens bis mitternachts* one of the most successful plays of the era (Patterson 60).
(Pirsich 25), Koffka, Reinhard Johannes Sorge, Sternheim, August Stramm (Pirsich 25),
and Unruhe; the Große Schauspielhaus staged plays from Kaiser and Toller. The
Volksbühne showed plays by Toller (Pirsich 25) and Stramm and the Staatstheater and
Junge Bühne from Jahn (Pirsich 25), Barlach (Pirsich 25), and Hasenclever. In the time
period from 1918/1919 until 1922/1923, there were over eighty premieres of
Expressionist plays (Pirsich 25), and further stagings occurred in cities such as Aachen,
Baden-Baden, Bochum, Brünn, Breslau, Gera, Kiel, Königsberg, Leipzig, Nuremberg,
Oldenburg, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, and Wurzburg. However as a whole, all
abovementioned productions represent only a fraction of the total Expressionist works
performed during the era.

Further evidence of Expressionism’s “popularity” are the statements of several
early Expressionists and other intellectuals during the late 1910s and early 1920s that
Expressionism was “fashionable,” “habit,” “epigonic,” “empty,” “businesslike,” and
“dead” (Edschmid, dichterischen Expressionismus 72-3; Pinthus, “Zuvor“ 30).61 One of
the foremost theoreticians of Expressionism, Paul Hatvani wrote in 1921 with some
sarcasm about the establishment of Expressionist art in Berlin: “‘Expressionistisch’ ist
ein Berliner Adjektiv, das der Reihe nach die Ausrufe ‘Gott, wie doll!’ und ‘Sich mal,
wie niedlich!’ verdrängt hat. Was doll war, wird mit der Zeit niedlich und ist heute
Expressionism, Kasimir Edschmid attacked late Expressionism in the opening speech of
the first Expressionist exhibition in Darmstadt in 1920 and claimed that the uniqueness of
the movement is gone: “Was vor zehn Jahren anfing, den Bürger auf das Hirn zu

61 Lothar Schreyer stated much the same in his article “Franz Marc und der Expressionismus“: “Nicht nur
die Werke des Expressionismus wurden in der Folgezeit Objekte der Spekulation. Die Idee des
Expressionismus selbst wurde zur marktgängigen Phrase“ (281).
trommeln, hat in der weniger gottgesegneten Gegenwart des Jahres Neunzehnhundertzwanzig nicht einmal das Rührende mehr der Sensation...Was damals als Gebärd e kühn schien, ist heut Gewohnheit. Der Vorstoß von vorgestern ist die Allüre von gestern und das Gähnen von heute geworden“ (Edschmid, “Stand“ 205). Others concurred with Edschmid’s statements around the time of Expressionism’s popularity. The Expressionist writer Ivan Goll stated in 1921 that Expressionism was dying (“Expressionismus stirbt” 108), and in the same year, Hatvani trumped Goll saying that Expressionism was already dead (“Zeitbild” 104). However, Expressionism’s alleged “demise” came from some disenchanted Expressionists pronouncing it dead because it became acceptable to larger portions of the German populace and a too familiar part of Weimar’s culture.62 Although in decline artistically in the early 1920s and at its nadir during mid-1920s, the movement was in reality at the height of its “popularity” during these same time periods.63 In many instances, these same critics’ had at one time propagated many of the signifiers that had entered the public discourse, but they did not find the ability to reach more people beneficial.

This work does not want to suggest that Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives were the only ones using these structures in Weimar Germany. Although Führer for both groups must guide common human beings to the correct content,

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62 One must remember that Expressionism was not just a literary phenomenon during Weimar. It was also established in numerous visual arts such as paintings, sculpture, film, and dance and influenced philosophical thought as well (Durst 4). There was actually close interaction between some Expressionist visual artists and writers. Artists sketched portraits and illustrated the works of author-friends, and the sculptor Barlach and the painter Kokoschka wrote literary works.

63 Many scholars speak of an Expressionist decade from 1910 until 1920 (Allen 26; Anz and Stark; Donahue 23; Erhart 314). Their limitation of Expressionist literature to this time period is based on many Expressionists’ stating that the artistic movement was over and unintentionally divorces Expressionism from much of Weimar and from the National Socialist seizure of power. In reality, Expressionism did extend into the mid-1920s for the reasons mentioned above. Thus, talk of an “Expressionist decade” is misleading at best.
Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives suggest this task is difficult because of other groups and individuals that disseminate theories of intoxication, the New Human Being, or Gemeinschaft. Disparate artistic, political, and social groups embraced Tat, the New Human Being, Wandlung, and the Gemeinschaft: bourgeois women’s groups, communist movements, and Social Democrats called for the community, many promoters of New Objectivity endorsed the technological New Human Being, women of a more liberal bent frequently espoused the New Woman, and youth movements often sought intoxication, the irrational, and a Führertum. Because there were several choices associated with these signifiers, the common and highly traumatized human being could easily be led astray so that Führer must not only lead him or her from his quotidian existence through intoxication, but also guide him or her to the correct form of the transformation and the community. In addition, as the number of adherents increase, these individuals also become leaders in their own right trying to convince others of the merits of their community.

Just as many of the abovementioned groups, extreme conservatives of the Weimar Republic benefited from Expressionists’ earlier uses of the same structures. Although the artistic movement was not the sole or even a main influence on radical Weimar conservatives – among others, Nietzsche, Lagarde, Langbehn and the experience of the war years hold this distinction –, Expressionism served as a model for Weimar conservatives. The extreme conservative Moeller van den Bruck, who had translated Dostoyevsky’s works along with the Expressionist Theodor Däubler earlier in his life, 64 The Bund deutscher Frauenvereine called for the community (Kolinsky, Women 60); Gay, Eyckmann, and Waite mention youth groups (Gay 78; Eykman, “Sozialphilosophie” 460-1; Waite 208). Schüddekopf and Eykman discuss communist organizations (Schüddekopf 168; Eykman, “Sozialphilosophie” 461-3). “Volksgemeinschaft” did not begin with the National Socialists, but rather the Social Democrats called for it after the First World War (Mühlberger 109).
was friends with another Expressionist Ernst Barlach, and spoke favorably of Expressionist paintings, echoed the above statement when he wrote that radical conservatives learned from the artistic left the revolutionary tactics that they needed to reach their conservative goals. According to Moeller, modernism introduced conservatives to the “radical/extreme” in their teachings: “Konservatismus und Modernität sich nicht notwendig ausschließen, daß Konservatismus Anschluß an die Vergangenheit, Modernität dagegen Entwicklung zur Zukunft verbürgt” (qtd. in Petzold 94). Moreover, conservatives learned from Expressionists the importance of intoxication, rebirth, the New Human Being, the Gemeinschaft, and leadership’s resonance among Germans during times of crisis. They realized that these methods and certain combinations of these methods were excellent means to articulate and find solutions to the intense and sometimes catastrophic changes occurring in the world around them, especially with respect to the war experience. In addition, Expressionists contributed greatly to the establishment of these signifiers in postwar Germany simply through their redundancy and, thus, unwittingly aided the growth of right-wing conservatives in their use of these structures in later years. For instance, because it becomes widespread later in the republic, radical Weimar conservatives’ community builds upon and simultaneously negates Expressionists’ liberal version of the community. This negation is consistent with right-wingers’ distancing themselves from the artistic movement: ultraconservatives would never admit to liberal Expressionism being one of

65 In 1906, Barlach, Däubler, and Moeller undertook a trip to Italy for almost one year (Schwierskott 18).
66 Hietala even speaks of “direkten Anleihen bei der antagonistischen Theorie“ between liberal and conservative theories, but cautions that “die Größe des jeweiligen Einflusses [lässt sich] nicht mit Sicherheit feststellen“ (69).
their role models, but the palpable similarities between both groups preclude arguments to the contrary.

One can also argue that Expressionists and Weimar ultraconservatives’ relationship was to a certain degree competitive. The frantic nature and prolificness of Expressionists and extreme conservatives’ literary production signaled their belief that they were in a race against time not only to save Germany or humanity from its demise but also to triumph over other groups, movements, and individuals propagating “incorrect” beliefs, especially those who used the same structures. Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives’ assailments of each other’s convictions usually came within the context of general criticisms against conservatism and leftist socialism. Expressionists especially cautioned against the slow rise of right-wing conservatism during the republic’s early to medial years. In an open letter to Friedrich Ebert, Kasimir Edschmid warned him to guard against young people’s corruption by conservative forces. He specifically emphasized their ability to guide youth’s intoxication for their own right-wing ends: “Halten Sie [die Jugend] die Größe der zukünftigen Ideen vor, damit nicht ihr Rausch abgelenkt werde und nationalistische Piraten sie mit den Leuchtfuern der Kaisermymthen und der Schlachtlenker-Legenden in ihre Häfen locken” (“Brief” 116).

Written in 1923 during runaway inflation, Ernst Toller’s play Der entfesselte Wotan warns of the impending rise of a right-wing conservatism that uses many of the same structures as Expressionism. Various figures representing differing social groups such as nobility, retired military, and business leaders seek their own transformation from social and personal despair into a utopian and primitive community. They swoon for the

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67 In her study on Gender and Nation, Yuval-Davis’ supports this idea of competition although she does not use the same term. With respect to the nation, Yuval-Dais mentions its diachronic nature and construction through different groups which compete for power during a specific historical period (4).
charisma of a former barber who turns leader and ultimately declares his desire to found a dictatorship in Germany and declare war on the world. Indeed, many Expressionist criticisms of radical conservative nationalists revolved around ultraconservatives’ unwavering support for the First World War. For instance, the Expressionist Kurt Hiller demanded the transformation of many right-wingers’ vision of the ideal man or of the “kernigsten, wetterhärtesten Armintypus, der die berühmten Schlachten gewann” (“Ortsbetimmung” 372). However, Walter Hasenclever’s *Der Retter* best exemplifies the antithetical relationship between these two groups. In this play, the poet confronts his nemesis, the general and states “Wir sind Gegner von alters her. Die Kaste des Schwerts gegen den Geist. Nie war diese Trennung größer als in unserer Zeit. Der Sieg des Einen wird das Andre knechten” (2: 335).

Radical Weimar conservatives wrote about many of the same issues, but did not always attack Expressionism directly since a significant portion of their writings came after the end of the artistic movement. In many ways, it was Expressionism’s humanistic, pacifistic, communist, and international identification which Expressionism had promoted, which had persevered throughout the republic, and that needed to be divorced from the several abovementioned significations. The identicalness of signifiers and confusion of different content among several groups was why Hans Freyer warned Germans in 1932 that in “solchen Lagen, die für die Umwälzungen reif sind, muß man sehr genau hinhören, um unter den vielen Gegenstimmen und Gegenkräften die wahrhaft revolutionären Kräfte zu erkennen” (*Revolution* 14), and likeswise, Hans Zehrer wrote that today “macht jede Gruppe den absoluten Anspruch für sich geltend, das Ganze zu

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68 There are notable conservative exceptions such as Ernst Jünger, Franz Schauwecker, Oswald Spengler, and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck who wrote major works before 1925. This work will discuss their criticisms of Expressionism in chapter four.
verkörpern. Jede behauptet, daß nur sie, und sie allein, die wahre Volksgemeinschaft verkörpere“ („Sinn“ 937). Exploitative of the difficulty in differentiation, Ernst Jünger spoke positively of determination, action, and structures over content: “Daher kommt es, daß diese Zeit eine Tugend vor allem anderen verlangt: die der *Entschiedenheit*...ganz abgesehen von den Inhalten...So finden sich heute die Gemeinschaften; die Extremen berühren sich heftiger als sonst“ (7: 128). Antithetical to Jünger’s abovementioned statement and far from abandoning the significations of the New Man and the community, Ernst von Salomon highlighted this problem of differentiation by stressing the necessity of clarity of content as the means to distinguish between a similar Right and Left: “es konnte uns[Links und Rechts] nicht mehr genügen, einander an der Haltung zu erkennen....Wir fragten nach dem Warum. Und da wir wußten, daß diese Frage nun in allen Lagern der Jugend aus der Wirre aufsprang, glaubten wir, sie schärfer stellen zu müssen“ (*Geächteten* 345). Thus, how one achieved this contrast was open to debate.

Extreme conservatives and Expressionists’ opposition becomes more apparent with closer examinations of both groups. These two groups’ theories deserve more exploration because they are much more complex than to subscribe them just to the signifiers and their general meanings that this chapter mentions, and historical contextualization may be imperative in understanding both groups, but it only advances the goals of this work until a certain point. The groups themselves need thorough examination. The next two chapters will scrutinize both groups and the complex and radically diverse meanings of these signifiers. While this chapter has given a picture of Germans’ sense perceptions, their causes, and Germans’ responses to them, this work’s ensuing chapter will look in greater detail how Expressionists appealed to the psyche of
Germans and gave them a new type of expression, abstractionism, in response to the modern world.

This chapter began with a discussion of sense perception and film, and in particular, this concluding statement will focus on the film audience’s emotional connectedness with the characters in the film. Spectators’ identification and substitution with the figures in the film could have created an emotional response that leads them to morally praiseworthy or condemnable thoughts and actions. While the thinking and behavior of the former are to be espoused, a possible counter to the latter is viewers’ opportunity for reflection after the film: such a chance affords them the prospect of learning from injustice, cruelty, and the characters and their virtues, vices, errors, and sound judgments. This emotion-laden response to and subsequent possibility for retrospection and learning from films was similar to Germans’ ability for emotional identification with, reflection on, and learning from Expressionists and ultraconservatives’ characters, plots, and teachings. As later chapters will prove, the opportunities for reflection and learning among their audiences were especially vital for Expressionists, but the examination of Expressionists and extreme conservatives’ beliefs will in general better illustrate the relationship of emotion, reflection, and learning among Germans in early twentieth-century Germany and which of these three from this relationship Germans did and did not experience or apply.

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Chapter 3

Eine neue Seelenlage der Menschheit, die mit der bürgerlichen und ihren Prinzipien: Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit, Bildung, Optimismus, Fortschrittsglaube, nichts mehr zu schaffen haben sollte, wurde proklamiert und drückte sich künstlerisch im expressionistischen Seelenschrei... aus – Thomas Mann, “Deutsche Ansprache: Ein Appell an die Vernunft“ 540

Der Expressionismus, eine verhältnismäßig enge Zirkelbewegung der ‘radikalen’ Intellektuellenkreise in den letzten Vorkriegsjahren, erwuchs während des Krieges, insbesondere während der letzten Kriegsjahre, zu einem ideologisch nicht unwesentlichen Bestandteil der deutschen Antikriegsbewegung... – Georg Lukács, “Größe und Verfall“ 21

Entscheidet Euch! – Ludwig Rubiner, “Die Änderung der Welt“ 102; “Legende vom Orient“ 258

Literary Expressionism: Peace and Internationalism within the Utopian Community

The alleged “death” of Expressionism mentioned in the last chapter was partly a reflection of some early Expressionists’ inability to cope with the growing extinction of an oppositional attitude, or their standing outside of and against society. The movement’s increasing acceptance and commercialization among the German populace threatened its autonomy, especially with regard to signifiers and to a lesser extent aesthetics. The last chapter discussed, and much of this work will discuss, Weimar ultraconservatives’ application of signifiers such as “community” and “transformation” which Expressionists had used earlier, but less of this work will focus on Germans’ increasing sense of normalcy with Expressionist aesthetics. Late Expressionism, this study’s overwhelming focus, still tried to negate “bourgeois” reality much as early Expressionism, but to a lesser extent through aesthetic otherness so that it can hardly be called a radical or avant-garde art form that early Expressionism was. This difference between late and early Expressionists with regards to artistic apartness or lack thereof
reflected a dispute within the transitions from early to late Expressionism: some Expressionists wanted to remain more autonomous while others wanted Expressionism to reach the largest possible audience. In aesthetic terms, one can view this disagreement as those who argued for Expressionism as a movement with greater aesthetic tendencies and innovation and those as a movement with a more overt political and social message. This conflict is not surprising considering the relationship between aesthetic modernity or modernism and historical modernity. Although modernism may want independence from historical modernity to distance itself from or even cancel its events and tendencies, it is simultaneously a product of historical modernity making its autonomy difficult (Anz, “Fünf Thesen” 3; Anz, Literatur des Expressionismus 18). For instance, although many Expressionists criticized the historical crises of early twentieth-century Germany, they depended on them in reality and remained to a large extent powerless to affect them. It is true that aesthetic modernity also contributes to historical modernity through an attempt to influence it, and although its effectiveness in this regard is difficult to determine as chapter two has shown through its discussion on both groups’ “popularity,” its influence on historical modernity is usually much less than historical modernity’s sway on it. That being said, the Expressionist theoretician Friedrich Markus Huebner expressed his belief – and a belief that corresponded to that of several late Expressionists – in aesthetic modernity’s extensive influence on historical modernity when he wrote that

69 Later theorists wrote on the phenomenon of autonomy in art. In his essay, “Die Moderne – ein unvollendetes Projekt,” Jürgen Habermas asserts that the more autonomous art became, the further it separated itself from real life and praxis (184-91). Likewise, Peter Bürger’s Theorie der Avantgarde mentions the difficulty of art in trying to overcome the contradiction of wanting to become more autonomous from the bourgeoisie, but at the same time the importance of its message needing to be understood by bourgeois society to change society for the better (32-3).
Expressionism was more than just an artistic movement; it was a “Norm des Erlebens, des Handelns, umfassend also der Weltanschauung” (“in Deutschland” 80).

Expressionists commented that their movement was historically attuned to their epoch, knew its ills, or could provide solutions to them. Kurt Pinthus calls his Expressionist poetry anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung* a “Sammlung der Erschütterungen und Leidenschaften, Sammlung von Sehnsucht, Glück und Qual einer Epoche – unserer Epoche” and continues that Expressionist writers have a feel for the period with their “gereizten und überempfindlichen Nerven und Seelen” and that Expressionism was a “barometer“ of the great upheavals of his generation (“Nach 40 Jahren” 16; “Zuvor” 22, 26). Thus, literary Expressionists had a talent for historical prognostication. In his play *Die Gewaltlosen*, the Expressionist dramatist Ludwig Rubiner’s comments were similar to those of Pinthus. Rubiner posited that Expressionist theater not only shows his generation’s experiences with tumultuous, unspeakable world events, but also interprets and gives meaning to these events (53). Much like Pinthus and Rubiner, the Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn admits that he cannot divorce himself – and one would think this opinion would include his works as well – from the time period. In his essay “Über die Rolle des Schriftstellers,” Benn states that he examines what he would consider the great question of the time:

Natürlich höre ich die große Frage der Zeit: Ich oder Gemeinschaft, Hingabe an den sozialen Verband oder Selbstgestaltung, Politisierung oder Sublimierung, wie weit ist es erlaubt sich abzusondern, sich zurückzuziehen, seiner Aristokratie zu leben, sich auf die Spitze zu treiben... (3: 223)

Although Expressionism may have an understanding of, originate in, and be intricately connected with early twentieth-century Germany, it still opposes early twentieth-century Germany. Expressionists’ reaction to the historical present, to time as
a measured quantity in general, and to other historical limitations is to overcome them in favor of a future, “eternal” solution, namely the Gemeinschaft. In the Expressionist magazine Neue Erde, Martin Buber wrote that “[e]ine große Begierde nach Gemeinschaft geht durch alle Seelen seelenhafter Menschen in diesem Lebensaugenblick der abendländischen Kultur“ (6), and in the periodical Zeitecho, Rubiner stated that “[e]s ist wahr, daß heute unter allen Menschen die Idee der Gemeinschaft klarer und ersehnter wird“ (“Schar“ 3). These declarations from Buber and Rubiner about aspects of life in early twentieth century Germany show Expressionists’ hope that their ideas would become an upcoming collective truth.

The explication of Expressionists’ Gemeinschaft is of course one of this chapter’s goals, but they define it in most instances according to what it is not; thus, the next section will explicate the Expressionist view of cultural problems in early twentieth-century Germany. This chapter’s second segment will explore the various stimuli to the New Human Being: namely fear, pain, suffering, chaos, catastrophe, nerves, horror, and lastly despair. Scholars have commented on and explicated many of these stimuli (See Anz “Entfremdung und Angst”; Anz Existenz; Eykman Denk- und Stilformen 108-24; Vietta und Kemper, Expressionismus 30-40; Vietta, “Erkenntniszweifel” 47-8), but they have neither given them as important a role as this work will nor indicated that Expressionists desired them as necessities to the New Human Being. The last section documents the various forms of the Expressionist transformation and community. Some Expressionists desired a primitive regression while others sought political and social revolution. Still others wanted a more radical transformation that would lead to a more

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70 In his essay Rede für die Zukunft, Kurt Pinthus argues that the past is the past and the present is the soon-to-be past in a moment; hence, the future is the time which one can change the greatest (398-400). This Expressionist critique is of the “historical present” or the present that is really the past.
loving and humane community of people and eventually a European or international community. On the whole, however, most Expressionists desired a hybrid of these differing forms of the community, but even this hybrid varied from writer to writer. This examination of late Expressionism’s structures provides a basis for a comparison and contrast with the following chapter which explicates the signifiers and signified of radical Weimar conservatives.

The Problems in Reality

The desire for humanity’s transformation prerequires the existence of a degenerate world. According to Expressionists, the space that your body inhabits contributes mightily to the condition of your mental well-being as well as the corporeal body per se; the transformation enables an opportunity for the enhancement in the quality of the space that you occupy to the point of perfection. An understanding of this improvement necessitates an examination of the realities which were antithetical to the transformation and to be eliminated. This section will study these important realities beginning with the bourgeoisie.71

For the duration of their entire literary epoch, a chief focus of Expressionist ridicule was the bourgeoisie and their values in German society. Beginning in the upper social strata, many of these values spread to and solidified in the middle and the lower classes during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century because Germans felt security from practicing these norms. Economic, political, and social upheaval among

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71 The word “realities” is used from an Expressionist perspective: it is their view of “reality” – in other words, the ills of the world which they believed existed – that I am trying to relay to the reader. This entire section communicates part of the Expressionist vision or essence, which the next section will discuss in more detail.
the German populace in Weimar Germany may have weakened faith in this petty bourgeois ethos so that late Expressionism did not concentrate as much on this motif as in early Expressionism, but burghers and their oppressive values still remained topics of abundant criticism by late Expressionists who viewed these values as red herrings for materialism, greed, cowardice, and despicable behavior. These conservative social norms revolved greatly around what Expressionists would consider contemporary false conceptions of “fatherland,” “wealth,” “family,” “school,” “morality,” “religion,” and “authority.” Expressionists objected to these concepts in their existing form comprising or contributing to one’s worth or reputation and giving one unfair advantage, for instance, in business dealings or in the courts under the law. Naturally, these standards’ perpetuation was beneficial to the bourgeois class, but Expressionists also believed that some burghers were truly oblivious to their harm and continued these norms because of a dearth of consideration for or exposure to any superior alternative. Paul Hatvani accuses the tradition of perpetuating this thoughtlessness through panoptic control: “...die Tradition ist ein Panoptikum, darin verstaubte Figuren ein verträumtes Dasein führen. Sie sind Klischee...“ (“Zeitbild“ 107). Bourgeois values produce human beings’ mechanization, contentment, narrow-mindedness, isolation, and the passivity which bourgeois institutions such as jurisprudence and morality continue.\footnote{Although a characteristic of the bourgeoisie is order, they are paradoxically the main purveyors of chaos according to Expressionists because their ideals lead to war, modern capitalism, and other turmoil-producing situations. This chapter will discuss chaos in its second section.} Despite their perpetuation of monotony and the \textit{status quo}, an uncanny attraction to the sensational among espousers of these values make them hypocritical. For instance, Reinhard Sorge’s play \textit{Der Bettler} demonstrates Germans’ fascination with spectacular events. Several
men reading a newspaper are excited to learn the casualty figures from an earthquake instead of showing empathy for the victims:

ZWEITER VORLESENDER: Hören Sie: Erdbeben in Mittelamerika!
STIMMEN: Hallo! Wieviel Tote?
ZWEITER VORLESENDER: Fünftausend.
DRITTER ZUHÖRER: Puh Teufel!...

At this juncture, this chapter should also mention that while Sorge’s example does not demonstrate this point, that important institutions in the public sphere could contribute to some Expressionists’ unease with globalization because of their sudden introduction to the vast expanse of the world (Pinthus, “Überfülle” 130-2). This feeling is compounded through the dizzying array of mass media such as newspapers, movies, magazines, and radio; however, their bourgeois content was the genuine problem to which most Expressionists objected. In Der neue Mensch, Lothar Schreyer vehemently attacks the press for this reason: “Diese Gesellschaft hat sich einen ununterbrochenen redenden Anwalt gemacht: die Presse. Die Presse erzeugt die öffentliche Meinung des Hasses, der Betriebsamkeit, der Oberflächlichkeit... Sie lebt von Haß...“ (18). This overabundance of information instead of quality information added greatly to human beings’ mass existence, which is essentially an issue of quantity over quality.

According to Expressionists, the massification of human beings producing the mass could either consist of passive human beings conforming to bourgeois norms – more or less tantamount to much of current society, according to Expressionists –, or in the upheaval of the postwar era, they could also be an aggressive, violent collection of

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73 The concept “public sphere” is associated with Jürgen Habermas’ well-known work Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Habermas accuses modern civilization of lacking a “public sphere,” or a forum for rational-critical public debate, which by contrast was more prevalent during earlier epochs, particularly the Renaissance. For the most part, current peoples only know the commodification of a public sphere and thus it is not a true public debate, but rather people are given information without debate. Expressionists criticized the institutions within the public sphere and attempted to create a new and/or opposing public sphere with entirely different norms.
people. In their mass production, the mass’ members were devoid of criticalness, leadership, individuality, aestheticism, and any form of exceptionality. Expressionists like Kurt Hiller thought a bourgeois mass represented “das Prinzip der Beharrung, träge, gefräßig, geil, flach und frech, ohne jegliches Gefühl von Verantwortung” (“Philosophie des Ziels“ 205). In addition, they believed that it imposed its will on the individual. In many Expressionist plays, the characters’ names can reveal this problem of a domineering mass. Instead of using real fore- and surnames, Expressionist playwrights branded on many occasions their figures through the mass’ definition of them such as through their sex, profession, familial relationship, social group, or even social situation. The protagonist in Reinhard Sorge’s play Der Bettler best demonstrates this form of the mass in that his name is sometimes “poet” in scenes with his patron, “son” in familial situations, and “youth” when he is spending time with a young girl (Murphy 161). In another example, a character with the nomenclature “wife” can be meant to reflect all wives and their societal problems. Several other Expressionist Typen or “types” are more one-dimensional appellations representing only a general idea or problem. For instance, the “first seaman” out of seven total seamen in Reinhard Goering’s play Seeschlacht represents the idea of “unquestioning obedience to authority” in their conversations in the turret of a ship on their way to the Battle of Jutland.74 This seaman represents yet another characteristic of the mass because an Expressionist would assert that he has been indoctrinated with this unquestioning respect for duty. He is just as other members of the mass who are easily manipulated because of their inability to discern. Ernst Toller’s

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74 In German, it is known as the Skagerrackschlacht, which pitted the German Navy against the British Royal Navy and lasted from 31 May until 1 June 1916. The Battle of Jutland was the largest naval conflict of the First World War, and although the British lost more men and ships, they could afford to lose more. The battle did not change the British blockade of the German coast.
Masse Mensch demonstrates this indiscriminateness as well as the fickleness of Masse. With his play, Toller questions whether a human being (Mensch) wanting a pacifist revolution can persuade capricious revolutionaries to abstain from violent rebellion. Unfortunately, the revolutionaries reveal themselves in the play as Masse because they reject the female protagonist’s pleas for nonviolence instead embracing the arguments of her male antagonist. These mobbish masses employ violence to revenge their depressed social situation against those whom they deem responsible for their distress (Rubiner, “Änderung” 101).\footnote{In Preußentum und Sozialismus, the extreme conservative Spengler wrote about the power struggle between the individual’s desire and the Gesamtwille in revolutions. The English Revolution resulted in individualism, liberalism, and inequality while the French Revolution stressed equality. Although I find it hard to agree with Spengler’s assessments, his dichotomy between person and the whole in revolutions is interesting for this dissertation in a comparison and contrast with Toller’s Masse Mensch.}

Late Expressionists repugned both the passive and aggressive forms of the mass, but early Expressionists, who wrote exclusively about the bourgeois Masse, would have most likely embraced this postwar violent throng. This approval would have occurred because some early Expressionists glorified violence as a type of radically abnormal and immoral behavior to overthrow current political and social structures, including the norms and morals of the bourgeois mass. Early Expressionists praised parricide, rape, or even murder.\footnote{These violent means of early Expressionism had the same goals as late Expressionism. They were all designed to provide what Expressionists would consider a “positive” foil to reality, a topic which this section will deal with in greater detail later.} Georg Heym’s “Der Irre” exhibits the murdering acts of a discharged madman as a foil to the bourgeois world, and Benn’s one-act play “Ithaka” shows university students rebelling against the positivistic ideals and authority of their pathology professor by beating him to death. These depictions demonstrate characters full of rage and hate, which Expressionist authors’ dovetail with rush. Some early Expressionists embraced technology as an intoxicating and ecstasy-inducing instrument
as evidenced through the several Futurist manifests and articles in Expressionist periodicals. In 1912, Oskar Loerke captured some early Expressionists’ allure to technology when he stated that “[w]ir wollen die Sinfonien des Stahls, des Eisens und aller schnellen Kräfte hören, die fast noch jünger sind als wir. Wir wollen das moderne Tempo wiederschaffen, weil es uns schafft. Wir wollen unsere feinen, kranken Nerven singen, sie werden davon gesund werden“ (93). The most prominent example of Expressionist exaltation of the machine is perhaps Ernst Stadler’s “Fahrt über die Kölner Rheinbrücke bei Nacht” in which the “lyrical I” treats riding on a train over the Hohenzollern Bridge surrounded by lights as an ecstatic, sexual, and liberating experience (Pinthus, Menschheitsdämmerung 179).77 Other adherents of early Expressionism dovetailed sexual fantasies and manliness with violence (Reif 94, 124, 128, 135-41). Although it is not clear if he viewed such actions as a masculine right or he simply wanted to give an “accurate” and albeit abstract picture of male-female relations’ terribleness, Oskar Kokoschka made male sadism one of his themes in Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen. At the end of the short play, the Man kills one Woman only after having “branded” her flesh with his sign and after she rebels against him. At the very least, such depictions were meant to shock and defamiliarize the bourgeoisie and the mass; however, calls from early Expressionists for apocalyptic destruction of social and political institutions had a much more comprehensive function. They were a chance to create a tabula rasa and begin anew. Many of Georg Heym and Jakob van Hoddis’ poems were exemplary of this yearning Weltuntergang which would extinguish Wilhelminian Germany, its cultural conservatism, militarism, its monarchical ostentation, and political

77 Began in 1907 and finished in 1911, the Hohenzollern Bridge, was an impressive structure for its age. German Pioneers destroyed it in 1945, but it was rebuilt in 1948.
and cultural authoritarianism. An apathetic Heym described Germany during this time period as boring, stifling, hopeless, rotting, empty, and dying and wrote in 1911 in his diary that he was “choking” on the “banal time period” and that he wished that he had been born during the French Revolution (3: 164). There was no chance for greatness under the stagnancy of the Second Empire under Wilhelm II. The most frequent means beseeched by early Expressionists to experience eminence and realize this cathartic apocalypse was war.

Hence, the majority of Expressionists felt an adventurous, rapturous mood when war began in August 1914. Several volunteered for service and fought at the front including Franz Jung, Oskar Kokoschka, Rudolf Leonhard, Hans Leybold, Alfred Lichtenstein, Ernst Wilhelm Lotz, August Macke, Franz Marc, Gustav Sack, Johannes Sorge, Ernst Stadler, August Stramm, Ernst Toller, Georg Trackl, Franz Werfel, and Fritz von Unruh. For them, war would be adventurous, heroic, intoxicating, Tat, and Aufbruch; however, for those who survived, this view of war changed with the horrors and deaths of millions during World War I. A few other Expressionists had been pacifists from the very beginning of the war. Wilhelm Herzog openly opposed the armed conflict for a short time in his periodical, Das Forum, until the war censors forbade its publication in 1915. Likewise, the conscientious objector Franz Pfemfert attacked the war from its outset as editor of one of the more popular Expressionist organs, Die Aktion. Even before the war in 1912, he lambasted the people who were prepared “zu schlachten oder geschlachtet zu werden” and politicians who were “Kriegslüstlinge“ and who celebrated “‘mit bewegter, vor patriotischer Rührung oft bebender Stimme’ den das Menschengeschlecht schändenden methodischen Mord” (‘Wahnverwandten‘ 1317;
“Wahnsinn“ 257). Along with Pfemfert, other exiled writers such as Leonhard Frank, Johannes Becher, and Albert Ehrenstein gathered in Switzerland in protest to the war.

The war was a turning point for Expressionists and became a focus for the transformation of society. Sometime during and certainly after the war, the majority of Expressionists considered modern warfare senseless and felt their responsibility to ensure that war – and violence in general – never occurs again. To this end, the Expressionist poet and political activist Kurt Hiller stated that no one has the right to kill anyone because of an idea because “keine Idee ist erhabener als das Lebendige” (“Logokratie” 232; also “Anti-Kain” 32), and in his autobiography Eine Jugend in Deutschland, Ernst Toller relates his war experience of killing the enemy in which he does not believe that he has killed a French soldier, but rather a human being. In yet another of Toller’s works, his antiwar play Die Wandlung, the prologue contains an army of war invalids and skeleton soldiers who are the primary victims in the conflict and whose in-place step satirizes the military march (2: 14-5, 30-1). Many Expressionists faulted militaristic attitudes for the war, but others continued a step further by criticizing general humanity for not rejecting war over the many ages that preceded World War I. Adversative to the dutiful and unquestioning front soldier, Iwan Goll faults human beings for not critically examining their violent actions. No doubt unpopular among the majority of Germans was his accusation of the entire German nation’s culpability for the war: “Ihr selber seid plötzlich die Schuldigen! Geht in euch! Die Toten klagen euch an! Denkt darüber nach!...Ihr alle seid Schuld an diesem Massenmord! Nicht nur ein Minister, nicht nur ein Geschichtsprofessor oder ein Kanonenlieferant: auch du, Krämer im schmaligen Hinterladen, auch du, armseliger Bureukrat! Ihr Zeitgenossen, die ihr keine Menschen
waret, sondern Ziffern einer Statistik und Nummern einer Organisation!“

(“Menschenleben” 21). The Expressionist poet and prosayist Klabund paralleled Goll’s opinion, but emphasized intellectuals’ roles in the promotion of the war (”Buspredigt” 106). This accusation could easily apply to and be a self-reflection of early Expressionists’ support for war.

Late Expressionists maintained that German cultural attitudes were also greatly responsible for the war. Their rejection of religion may have stemmed partially from their belief in God’s permittance of the slaughter (Toller, 2: 32-3), but Expressionists also blamed organized religion’s unqualified support for the state in the war. Its defence of belligerence was a perversion of the Christian teachings of love and non-violence.

Educators also sustained the war, according to Expressionists, indoctrinating youth about the virtues of defending the fatherland. In Toller’s Wandlung, professors justify the war through obfuscatory theories (2: 39, 47). However, formal education and religion played less of a role in the war’s culmination and continuation than nationalism which disturbed relationships among humans by placing one in opposition to other nations and ethnicities.

Paul Kornfeld attacked divisive concepts such as “’Nationalitätenprinzip’ und ‘Interessensphäre’” (“Der beseelte“ 5), and Franz Pfemfert hated chauvinism which he saw as a danger to humanity (“Bessessenen” 672). Much as Goll’s opinion in the last paragraph, Becher’s poem “An Deutschland” contains caustic criticism of the home country and would have certainly been unpopular among many Germans: “Deutschland, Reich der breigestampften Knechte! / Reich Barbaren, stinkend Blut-Kot-Reich! / Weh aus Poren eurer Fluren wimmeln Schlächter. / Eiterrinnsal gurgelnd Haut beschleicht“ (Kameraden 58). Expressionists accused the jingoism of early-twentieth-century
Germany of concealing problems such as capitalism and materialism that were occurring during its existence.

While Becher and Goll’s opinions may have been unpopular among the preponderance of Germans, the questioning of capitalism’s role in the war and voiced resentment against profiteers certainly were not. According to Expressionists, modern warfare made the industrialists, investors, and other capitalists rich, and Expressionists charged that they fomented and perpetuated war to make profits. Thus, war was not solely territorial imperialism but also economic imperialism. Expressionism tried to battle against these “Kriegs- und Revolutionsgewinnler” according to Karl Otten (Introduction 11), and the Expressionist Gustav Sack wrote about the role of capitalism in war in his play Der Refraktair through the protagonist writer Egon:

…glaubt nicht, daß ich es nicht weiß, daß nicht die Völker die Herren über ihre Politik sind, sondern kleine Cliques einer absatz-, anleihe-, konzessionen- und was weiß ich! hungrigen Großindustrie; schmutzige Exporteure sind die Herren der Welt, und die bunterockten Botschafter ihre handlungenden Agenten. Nichts weiß das Volk, von dem, was geschieht, was mit ihm geschieht, wozu man es gebraucht, weiß nicht, daß das Blut einiger Millionen nichts ist als die ultima ratio für den Absatz von Schienen, Wolle, Alkohol und Geld; weiß nicht, daß man ihm mit den blut- und fluchbeladenen Phrasen Ehre, Vaterland, Zivilisation und Kultur dieses Blut abzapft; weiß nicht, daß es nur um der Dividenden von Krupp und Kreuzot willen in den Tod marschiert… (2: 94)

Kornfeld supports the assertion about the power of money in war when he suggests that the only good that could come out of war is when all countries had spent their money so that it could never happen again (“Der beseelte” 12). In his Ballade des Vergessens,

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78 The Krupp industrial family made their fortune in several products relating to steel including railroad wheels, locomotives, and heavy-industry and transport trucks. They are known for being friendly and welcomed in government circles and were armaments producers in World War I and II. In the former, which is the time period on which this work concentrates, they made handsome profits. Also well-known for its heavy industrial products, the French firm Schneider-Creuzot, or Schneider-Creusot, supplied armaments during the nineteenth century and in World War I. The family Schneider ran the firm while Le Creusot was the name of the town in which it was located.
Klabund contrasts these profiteers with the sufferings of soldiers at the front making their greed all the more despicable:

Millionen krepierten in diesem Krieg,  
Den nur ein paar Tausend gewannen.  
Sie schlichen nach ihrem teuflischen Sieg  
Mit vollen Säcken von dannen.  
Im Hauptquartier bei Wein und Sekt,  
Tat mancher sein Liebchen pressen.  
An der Front lag der Kerl, verlaust und verdreckt  
Und vergessen, vergessen, vergessen. ([Sämtliche Werke 653])

A scene from Ernst Toller’s play *Masse Mensch* typifies many Germans’ feelings about the riches that speculators earned by investing in war industries while soldiers either died at the front or returned to indigent lives in peacetime. The scene takes place on the stock market where bankers are buying stock in armament plants. Toller portrays them as the true commanders behind the war who callously weigh the number of reservists, whom they call “Menschenmaterial,” and foodstuffs left to perpetuate armed conflict (2: 73).

By their own admission, war is the realm of capitalist: “Krieg als unser Instrument, Das mächtige gewaltige Instrument” (2: 75). The protagonist, simply entitled “the Woman,” summates the stockbrokers’ excess while other Germans sacrifice and suffer:

Der Moloch frißt das sechste Jahr die Leiber,  
Auf Straßen brechen Schwangere zusammen,  
Vor Hunger sind sie nicht mehr fähig,  
Zu tragen Last der Ungeborenen.  
In euren Stuben stiert die Not,  
Stiert Seuche, Wahnsinn, Hunger, grüner Hunger.  
Dort aber, schaut nach dort:  
Die Börse speien Bacchanalien,  
Sekt überströmt errungene Siege,  
Wollüstig Prickeln tanzt Geschehen  
Um goldene Altäre... (2: 83)

A short while later, when their native armies at the front are in retreat, the speculators say they need an offensive to continue the war for the purpose of making more money. After
they realize the war is totally lost, the bankers concentrate on and successfully manage to preserve the capitalistic system into the postwar era: “Wie können Sie nur zweifeln? / Mechanik alles Lebens / … Das Wesentliche: Mechanisches Gesetz stabil. / Die Folge: Das System gerettet” (2: 78). The moral of these scenes is clear: capitalism would and did perpetuate the loss of life for profits.

Whether in war or peace, many Expressionists believed that violence was the kernel of modern capitalism and, in turn, modern capitalism reflected an increase of violence in society as a whole. A skewed exchange-value system imposed itself to such a degree so that it came to dominate nearly all life (Benn, 4: 80). For instance, the freedom and possibilities of matter became limited through matter’s increasing designation for the purposes of private ownership and profit. The desire to possess also contributed to a class-based divisiveness or as Lothar Schreyer wrote “[d]as Wort Mein und Dein trennt Mensch von Mensch...So wird Reich und Arm, so wird Glück und Unglück“ (“neue Mensch” 19): more than ever, economics determined relationships between people. For this reason, Eckart von Sydow claimed there was no peace in the modern world because of capitalism (194). Greater chaos and uncertainty came from competition, which the bourgeoisie promoted: especially in modern capitalism, people were trying constantly to surpass their competitor contributing to what Gottfried Benn called the “neue menschliche Typ,…der Montagetyp…” (3: 397) and Toller named “Zersplitterung” and “Zerrissenheit” in the modern world (2: 17). Some Expressionists criticized Germans’

79 The use of the word “system” was prevalent among many groups and individuals in early twentieth-century Germany as a criticism for capitalism or democracy. This study will encounter the term again in this pejorative sense when examining Weimar right-wingers, and the National Socialists used it to describe Weimar democracy (Mühlberger 21-51).
80 In its original state, no one possessed matter. For instance, a tree was free in nature so that anyone could do with that tree what they pleased. In capitalism, a person with the most money buys that tree and can produce paper products or furniture for example. This person will continually buy more trees to produce more products limiting possibilities of tree use for other creative purposes or even just to remain a tree.
fascination with records and success, and Alfred Döblin condemned humans’ fixation on goal-oriented behavior: “Sie sagen: leisten, leisten. Ich frage, habe immer gefragt, schon auf der Schule, ohne es klar zu wissen: für wen leisten, für was sind diese Leistungen?... Sie wollten mich, dieses Ich, mit Haut und Haaren zu Ihrer Sache machen” (“Erster Rückblick“ 73). Within and actually a part of this social and economic control was the growth and nurturing of selfish individualism, divisiveness, and consumption. The competitive, cutthroat environment had made people become more materialistic so that they had absolutely no scruples about using other people or about the sufferings of others. Capitalists egotistically viewed the world as an object of their own interests and denied their responsibility for other human beings’ welfare (Hohendahl 165). Early Weimar’s hyperinflation – an example of capitalism’s ingrained problems, instability, and eventual failure – only exacerbated some Germans’ adoption of social and economic survival of the fittest out of sheer necessity. By default, money had become the center of people’s lives, but during the hyperinflation only a few profiteers really knew how to exploit the “system” to their financial benefit.

The hyperinflation also aggravated feelings of the multiplicity and abstraction with regard to money. Expressionists protested that “capital,” and indeed money in general, in its abstract value is given more value than real life or concreteness. According to the theorist Max Picard in his essay Expressionism written in 1919 during inflationary times, Expressionism had nothing to do with the Georg Simmel’s “tausend Assoziationen des Begriffes Geld” because Expressionism wanted to stay “mit dem Begriff bei dem einzelnem Ding” (335). In this sense, Expressionism is a simplification

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81 At the turn of the twentieth century, philosopher Georg Simmel wrote Philosophie des Geldes in which he discussed the influence of money and, among many topics, its increasing use to determine the worth of
indeed, an oversimplification – over the multiplicity of numbers and money during the inflation. In *Der Neue Mensch*, Lothar Schreyer oversimplifies and gives a laughable attempt to clarify the concept of “trade”: “[d]er Handel erzielt einen Gewinn durch die Vermittlung der Güter. Wenn einer gewinnt, muß ein anderer verlieren“ (19). Schreyer’s simplistic critique is typical for some of Expressionism’s criticisms of capitalism, but had the upshot of appealing to many Germans who felt lost in the complexity of the inflation and of Germany’s larger economic troubles and sought generalization.

Much as modern capitalism upon which it heavily depended, and just as equally as insidious an evil and as complex, was current industrialism according to Expressionists. As capitalist mainstays, industrialists denied their responsibility for other human beings’ welfare. In the latter regard, Expressionists criticized factory owners who reaped huge profits at the expense of the worker’s psychological, physical, and financial well-being and despite the worker having created the product (Rubiner, *Afterword to “Die Gemeinschaft”* 329; Schreyer “neue Mensch” 19). Although certainly pertinent but not limited to industrial workers who worked long hours for trifling sums, Döblin determines that most people do not have time for reflection on their existences because they are too busy or exhausted from overlaboring to earn money (“Freiheit” 27; See also “Geist”). Paltry pay in manufacturing also forced women into prostitution to survive (Toller, 2: 137-8), and Werfel’s poem “Ich bin ja noch ein Kind,“ shows that child labor in factories was not an unknown topic of protest to Expressionists (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 209). However, for Paul Zech, it was the work milieu of the plant – “Nichts als Mauern,” “Ohne Gras und Glas,” and “Streift ein Mensch dich,

objects, people, and their actions in the modern world. An example of the latter would be a laborer’s productivity and how much it was worth to the industrialist.
trifft sein Blick dich kalt” – that oppressed and pressurized the worker (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 55). Toller, in his play *Masse Mensch*, also shows laborers under stress. A group of agricultural workers lament that rich bankers have thrown them off their lands and they must leave for work in the cities to produce weapons for the war. They now live a “rootless” existence away from the soil:

Verstoßen hat man uns von unsrer Mutter Erde,  
Die reichen Herren kaufen Erde sich wie feile Dirnen,  
Belustgen sich mit unsrer gnadenreichen Mutter Erde,  
Stoßen unsre rauen Arme in Rüstungsfabriken.  
Wir aber siechen, von Scholle entwurzelt,  
Die freudenlosen Städte zerbrechen unsre Kraft.  
Wir wollen Erde!  
Allen die Erde! (2: 82)

In addition to physical and psychological brokenness, current industry contributed to the massification of human beings because it coldly viewed people as abstract material and exposed them to a joyless and emotionless rote of workers’ assembly-line labor.

Expressionists berated the systematized, regimented, and rationalized labor of Taylorism and Manchesterism with particular fervor. For instance, Gottfried Benn rhetorically questioned if the most-elevated use of humanity was “Pferdekräfte, Brauchbarkeiten, Arbeitskalorien, Kaldauenreflexen, Drüsengenuß” and firmly stated that science, a major catalyst of this rationalization, produced an “ergebnislos und nicht existent” modern man

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82 “Taylorism” was a scientific factory management system developed by the American Frederick Taylor (1856-1915). It regulated workers’ movements for maximum efficiency and calculated wages according to their productivity. This form of labor began before the First World War, but became more widespread during the Weimar Republic. Manchesterism, named for the city of Manchester, England which was the capital of the textile industry in the nineteenth century, has both positive and negative meanings. Manchester capitalism advocates free trade as opposed to the policies of merchantilism, which promotes as many exports as possible while at the same time curbing imports. Its connection with the city Manchester lies in the British Empire’s desire to promote the export of as many textiles as possible while limiting many food imports. This action raised food prices for consumers such as textile workers as well as for producers such as the landed aristocracy in England. Expressionist criticisms of and the term itself “Manchesterism” originate with Ferdinand de Lassalle, the founder of the Social Democratic Party in Germany, and encompass only this negative latter meaning.
These piece work forms of labor caused individuals to no longer exert their whole bodies into their work, but rather only one appendage of the body so that they are unwhole beings in their labor. In his play *Die Maschinenstürmer*, Ernst Toller shows this extreme alienation of the worker:

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Du Charles wirst Bein: Du trittst..
Du trittst…Du trittst dein ganzes Leben…
Und deine Arme werden schlaff,
Die Augen blind, der Rücken krumm…
Du Georges wirst Hand und knüpfst…und knüpfst…und knüpfst…
Und deine Ohren werden taub…Dein Hirn verdorrt…
Dein Blut gerinnt… (2: 140)
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In this toil, there is absolutely no firsthand experience through learning (“Dein Hirn verdorrt”), and the body is forced to be subject to the principles of the objective world: such observations lead Expressionists like Ernst Blass to posit that objects were coming to dominate people (“Geist” 64). This phenomenon was occurring not only in industry, but also Expressionists maintained that rationalization was disseminating – or had already disseminated – to other types of work and aspects of life. The patriarchal father leads his household with Tayloristic efficiency: every family member soberingly completed their roles. As further evidence of this trend, Pinthus cited the increased use of statistics to analyze many situations and problems in modern society (“Zuvor” 26), and Benn protested the increasing indifference to the “analytische Konzernatmosphäre“ (4: 83).

His use of medical vocabulary in his poems demonstrated humans’ specialization through lexical specialization and showed categorization which divides and defines life limiting possibilities. Expressionists believed that increasing bureaucracy in society also testified to spreading mechanization because the persons completing it become like cogs in a much larger machine. Human beings were becoming objects themselves and losing their
soul and humanness in attempts to master the natural world (Bahr 110). Thus, in this world, one had lost control of and become alienated from him- or herself.

From the abovementioned examples, one can ascertain that playing a salient role in human beings’ objectification, loss of preeminence in industry, and reduction of free motion was their enslavement to technology. The metal of machines could transfer to human beings making them cold, unfeeling, and inhuman. In these cases of extreme dehumanization, modern human beings were unprotected and their freedom constrained as machines imposed their motion on them. Thus, whether in personal or industrial life, technology contributed to violence against human beings; however, technology’s limitless possibility for violence during the First World War is what really led to late Expressionists’ earnest disaffection with technology. Technology’s use in modern warfare only made it deadlier and murdered more people.

Unfortunately, people neither realize their roles in perpetuating ills such as the growth and misuse of technology nor how injurious the ills are to them according to Expressionists. Power structures are exemplary of this problem because despite the overwhelming majority working to uphold them, they only benefit a few in society. In Ludwig Rubiner’s Die Gewaltlosen, the advocate of the community, simply entitled “the man,” comments on individual power to the detriment of all when he tells a burgher that “Ihr seid Einzelne, ihr wollt die ruchlose Macht für den Einzelnen” (134). Lothar Schreyer’s opinion in his essay Der neue Mensch would not be atypical for other Expressionists when he wrote that human beings lust for power is due to materialism and selfishness. All of these vices contribute to suppression and divisions in society: “Die Ursache des Leidens ist der Machtwille, der die Erde und ihre Güter erfaßt. Jeder will
alles haben. Der maßlose Daseinskampf hat uns Menschen schlecht gemacht. Alle kämpfen gegen alle“ (19). The powerful enslave the less powerful through their dominance. The First World War had been a struggle for power and the fruit of “Machtpolitik” among European nations (Rubiner, “Schar” 6), and Germany’s industrial growth had led to its rise to power as a nation and allowed it to prey on other, less wealthy countries. Power leads to hegemony whether it be on a national or an individual level.

Power, and the other problems which this section has detailed, collectively compose a degenerate, current reality. In a quotation that is reminiscent of the message in extreme conservative Oswald Spengler’s work Untergang des Abendlandes, Pinthus echoes many Expressionists’ beliefs in the decadence of the time period: “Aus der strotzenden Blüte der Zivilisation stank ihnen der Hauch des Verfalls entgegen, und ihre ...Augen sahen bereits als Ruinen eine wesenlos aufgedunsene Kultur und eine ganz auf dem Mechanischen und Konventionellen aufgetürmte Menschheitsordnung ” (“Zuvor“ 26-7). Expressionists desired a complete change of reality because it was rotten, empty, and so much infested with these ills that it could not be salvaged. In their works, Expressionists first expose these tremendous problems educating the public about their harmful qualities and then demonstrate radical solutions to become well again. Between their exposure and correction still lies a sometimes complicated but always essential process to the New Human Being and the Gemeinschaft, and it will be the focus of the next section. Current reality had led to crises in the modern subject, but Expressionists would provide the opportunity for their correction through an intense emotional and psychological response.
The Process to the New Human Being: Existential Crises, Abstraction, and New Perception

In many ways, there was a seamless transition from early to late Expressionism; late Expressionism, the more recognized form of Expressionism among the German public, built on early Expressionism. Writers such as Toller, von Unruh, and Reinhard Goering came during or slightly after the war to the movement and helped prolong it. Despite their pacifist stance, these and other late Expressionists did not disregard some early Expressionists’ constructs such as intoxication and transformation that were often initially used to justify war and violence, but rather modified them to fit their postwar needs (Cysarz 84; Korte, *Der Krieg* 225-6). Although they had differences, early and late Expressionists were still part of Expressionism. For instance, the goals of the humanitarian socialist Ernst Toller and the young, warmongering Georg Heym are for the most part drastically different. Yet, their desire for radical changes to society, their dislike for the bourgeoisie and conservative socio-political norms, their embrace of dynamism and a New Human Being, and their use of a shock process to realize the New Human Being identify both of them as Expressionists.

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83 A chapter from Eykman’s excellent study *Denk- und Stilformen des Expressionismus* discusses cursorily this process (108-24), but this section gives a more detailed explanation of it. For instance, Eykman discusses a threatening or negative world and *das Wesenhafte* or positive hidden reality, but he never elaborates in great detail on the connections between the two on the path to the New Human Being (108-24). In a short summary at the end of the chapter, he articulates well the entire process of *Wesenschau*, but without discussing most of the process in the chapter. In addition, I wish to examine more of the existential emotions – Eykman only mentions reality as being “fremd, dunkel, chaotisch und phantomhaft” (124) – that contribute to the abstraction of an individual. Eykman elaborates on these threats sparsely because he mainly views the threat posed by the outer world to the individual as the existential angst of concrete objects in the real world. Thus, the emotions and situations that lead to abstraction are not really real world problems such as poverty, worker exploitation, or modernity. This work will take a decidedly different position.
This last similarity, the process by which the individual experiences shock – or as Expressionists call it “Aufbruch” –, will be the topic of this section. The previous chapter discussed this process cursorily, but its importance for this work requires that it receive a more thorough examination. *Aufbruch* means “departure” in English as on a trip or march; in this sense, it means “embarking on a new course,” and yet, looking at the root verb “aufbrechen,” it denotes “breaking out,” “breaking open,” or even “breaking up” as in “disintegration.” In other words, it is a departure from a current state from which one “breaks out” or which “disintegrates” on the way to a better condition. Ernst Toller’s introductory poem “Die Aufrüttelung” to his drama *Die Wandlung* shows the beginnings of human beings’ disintegration through the sudden emergence of the monsters of war:

Wir schritten durch die Dämmerwelt der Wunder,  
Verträumte pflückten Märchen wir mit weichen Händen,  
...  
Von hochgewölbten Toren fielen Rosenspenden.  
Da! Mordend krochen ekle Tiere  
Flammenspritzend auf der Erde!  
Wir blickten traumschwer blinzelnd auf  
Und hörten neben uns den Menschen schreien! (2: 9)

The unexpected terribleness of the real world eventually leads to the *Aufbruch* of persons from their lethargy and culminates in an Expressionist scream. This *Schrei* is often an “expression” of the physical and spiritual fear, pain, and anguish in which many Germans found themselves and which many Expressionists tried to communicate. In another example, Toller writes that the rotting bodies of the battle field create a “grauenvoller Wahnsinsschrei” in the individual (Vietta, *Lyrik des Expressionismus* 135). The scream

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84 Throughout this chapter, there will be references to “expression” (“pressing out” or “ex-pression) from which the nomenclature “Expressionism” derives. Most scholars would maintain that “Expressionism” refers to individuals “pressing out” their inner vision on the the outer world, but in reality, there are several instances of Expressionist expression. In this section, the expression lies mainly with the “pressing out” of existential emotions of an individual under stress.
is often meant to and can engender *Aufbruch* in other human beings by showing them the suffering of fellow humanity: it penetrates onlookers demanding their help in correcting injustice and agony.

Thus, the very feelings such as suffering and agony that are necessary to engender *Aufbruch* in human beings are those that Expressionists ultimately wanted to eliminate. Expressionists wanted to create catastrophe in the real world that would lead to existential catastrophe and extreme stress within the human being. Along with suffering, Expressionists especially emphasized chaos, nervousness, loneliness, despair, estrangement, pain, fear, and horror as means to shock the human being. A person reaches a head from the plethora of physical and mental crises and exhausts from these states and emotions. There is of course averseness to these states and situations on the part of the individual – for instance, pain and suffering are signs of something wrong and avoided by many human beings; however, this shock would allow for the creation of the New Human Being and the *Gemeinschaft* which would release the human being from these distresses of modern life and cure political, social, and economic ills. Kurt Pinthus comments that Expressionism encouraged and exploited the chaos, anguish, and the destruction of civilization during the time period to provide humanity with more possibilities through the New Human Being’s establishment: “Zusammenbruch, Revolution, Neuaufrichtung ward nicht von der Dichtung dieser Generation verursacht; aber sie ahnte, wußte, forderte dies Geschehen. Das Chaotische der Zeit, das Zerbrechen der alten Gemeinschaftsformen, Verzweiflung und Sehnsucht, gierig fanatisches Suchen nach neuen Möglichkeiten des Menschheitslebens offenbart sich in der Dichtung dieser

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85 This section will list several of the main stressors that can lead to the New Human Being, but it is by no means a comprehensive list. For instance, chapter five will show sexual lust in Georg Kaiser’s *Von morgens bis mitternachts* as the stimulant that throws the protagonist.

Likewise, an anonymous writer in the *Aktion* wrote that “[n]ur das scheinbar zügellose verwirrte Chaos der Aufstände kann Neues schaffen“ (“Möglichkeiten, Wege“ 145). 86

As the above quotations indicate, an individual’s transformation results often in part from chaos within the individual. Franz Werfel describes a particular feeling of chaos in which the person is often bombarded with occurrences and objects so that he or she is unable to register connections between these very same objects because of the frequency of exposure and the world becomes fragmentary. The material world controls the confused individual with this type of existential anarchy: “...wir stehen machtlos den Einzelheiten gegenüber, die keine Ordnung zur Einheit macht, es scheint, das ‘Und’ zwischen den Dingen ist rebellisch geworden, alles liegt unverbindbar auf dem Haufen“ (Werfel, “Aphorismus“ 903). The following quotation from Kurt Pinthus’ 1925 article “Die Überfülle des Erlebens” intimates the origins of this chaos within the German city and describes its effects on German urbanites’ nerves over the course of the previous decade:

> Welch ein Trommelfeuer von bisher ungeahnten Ungeheuerlichkeiten prasselt seit einem Jahrzehnt auf unsere Nerven nieder! ...durch welche Mengen von Lärm, Erregungen, Anregungen heute jeder Durchschnittsmensch täglich sich durchzukämpfen hat, mit der Hin- und Rückfahrt zur Arbeitsstätte, mit dem gefährlichen Tumult der von Verkehrsmitteln wimmelnden Straßen, mit Telephon, Lichtreklame, tausendfachen Geräuschen and Aufmerksamkeitsablenkungen.... Wie ungeheuer hat sich der Bewußtseinskreis jedes einzelnen erweitert durch die Erschließungen der Erdoberfläche und die neuen Mitteilungsmöglichkeiten: Schnellpresse, Kino, Radio, Grammophon,

86 Their ambivalent attitude towards existential feelings and situations is evident in the statements of Rubiner who acknowledges that “[u]nter Erschütterungen, Schrecknissen, Bedrohungen das Verantwortlichkeitsgefühl des Einzelnen in der Gemeinschaft bewußt machen!” (“Der Dichter“ 252), Hermann Kasack who writes about the negative feeling of loneliness that “nur in Einsamkeit ist ewiges Gefühl“ (76), and Franz Werfel who writes “[w]er die Träne erkennt, weiß der Gemeinschaft Stoff.” (*Menschheitsdämmerung* 185).
Funktelegraphie.... Das Geld, einziger Maßstab realen Besitzes, verlor seinen Wert und eroberte ihn wieder. (130-1)

Pinthus partly faults the rapidity of economic and cultural changes such as technological advance, globalization, and hyperinflation for affecting Germans’ nerves, but his descriptions of the personal stirring of the senses – indicative through words and phrases in the text such as Mengen von Lärm, Anregungen, Erregungen, gefährliche Tumult, tausendfachen Geräuschen, and Aufmerksamkeitsablenkungen – show the heightening and excitant effects of ubiquitous stimuli on metropolitan subjects and their nerves. Paul Hatvani wrote similarly about urban sensations and experiences such as utility, tempo, civilization, and nervousness (“Zeitbild” 107); however, the metropolitan experience of early twentieth-century Germany included not only unique city sensitivities and pressures but also increased freedoms and cosmopolitanism which partly allowed for the creation and acceptance of Expressionism and its radical beliefs. For this reason, Oskar Loerke wrote in 1912 that modern poets should try to use the newness of the cities to promote their poetry and its message (92-3).

According to several Expressionists, uncertainty and doubt – Franz Werfel wrote the poem “Zweifel” – are also central components of chaos in the modern world. Kurt Hiller summated this point when he wrote in the magazine Die Weißen Blätter that people’s sole certainty (sicheren Besitz) in the modern world was uncertainty (die Unsicherheit) and anomie (Hiller. “Prologue“ 61). Some of this chaos from uncertainty resulted from loss of structures which had provided some of Germans’ socio-cultural backbone until this time. In 1917, Hugo Ball described the nihilistic chaos and the existential crisis that this loss had caused in Germans. He stresses especially the disappearance of religion, time-honored morals, and anthropocentrism:

The lack of existential solidity and definability added to the disorientation and confusion that already taxed the individual through the blitz of occurrences and objects.

According to Expressionists, “confusing,” coupled with the descriptor “agonizing,” aptly depict modern human relations for many people because in reality there are no truly intimate relations between people in early twentieth-century Germany. Humanity is paradoxically connected through their isolation (Kuhns 40). Expressionists posited war as one of its main contributors to feelings of loneliness. In his poem “Einsamer Wächter,” Alfred Lichtenstein shows the front soldier as misplaced and forlorn in the trenches (“Einsame Wächter“ 152). However, loneliness is not limited to warring combatants, but rather it is also a common feeling in alienating and divisive society. In his poem “Menschliches Elend,” Trakl writes about loneliness and dread of the modern world, and Grete, a character in Toller’s play Hinkemann, exemplifies the Expressionists’ view of pain, fear, and loneliness’ interconnectedness in modern society when she begs her husband not to leave her alone: “(wie ein hilfloses Kind weinend): Laß mich nicht allein...Ich gehe irre im Dunkeln...Alles wund an mir...Wie es schmerzt! Wie es schmerzt!...Oh...Oh...Ich habe solche Angst vorm Leben! Denk doch! allein! Im Leben allein! Im einem Wald voll wilder Tiere allein!...Keiner ist gut. Jeder nagt an Deinem
Herzen...Nicht allein lassen!! Nicht allein!!“ (Trakl 1: 8, 60; Toller 2: 245).\(^{87}\) Franz Werfel’s 1914 statements that “eine entsetzliche Einsamkeit macht das Leben stumm” further indicate Expressionist beliefs of the connection between dread, loneliness, and alienation (Werfel, “Aphorismus“ 903).\(^{88}\) Indeed, humans’ estrangement from each other is partly the result from the lack of communication and society’s balkanization. René Schickele’s novel Der Fremde communicates such divisions among people as well as existential homelessness, and in yet another example, Franz Werfel writes that “Fremde sind wir auf der Erde alle, / Und es stirbt, womit uns verbinden” (Pinthus, Menschheitsdämmerung 73).\(^{89}\) Finally, in Paul Kornfeld’s play Die Verführung, the protagonist, Bitterlich, hates living in the real world. In long, solitary monologues – typical of lonesomeness, the protagonist complains about his distress (11-2, 22, 31, 42-3, 61, 65-7, 127-8, 157-9).

The lonely person suffers, and as the second chapter and Expressionists have already indicated, early twentieth-century Germans’ thoughts and the contemporary world are full of suffering or related feelings such as misery, pain, and despair. Lothar Schreyer and Kurt Heynicke wrote that humanity desires release from this suffering (Leid) (neue Kunst 5; Pinthus, Menschheitsdämmerung 76), and Expressionists believed that this release could occur by addressing a number of factors within a contentious world, one of the foremost being once again war. For example, Friedrich, the

\(^{87}\) Trakl’s poem “Menschliche Trauer” was originally published under the title “Menschliches Elend” (Die Dichtungen 8).

\(^{88}\) Thus, they not only suffer alienation from machines as previously mentioned in this chapter, but also humanity rejects them.

\(^{89}\) Schickele’s Fremde has a sparseness of dialogue, and the protagonist, Paul Merkel, has loyalties to Germany and France and travels on the ocean, in France, and Italy. He really does not know where he belongs. The beginning of the novel takes place in Alsace after the Franco-Prussian War and the Treaty of Frankfurt, and the divisions between French and Germans in this area were particularly salient. As an example of the poor relations between the two peoples, his teacher calls the native-born French “Feinde” (1: 1019).
transformed protagonist in Ernst Toller’s play *Die Wandlung*, calls for humanity in which there is “[k]ein Elend mehr, nicht Krieg, nicht Haß” (2: 51). Rudolf Hartig’s poem “Stimme aus der Höhe” unites all warring soldiers regardless of nationality through the common bond of suffering (448-9), and Kurt Pinthus writes that youth, the generation who fought in the trenches, “am schmerzlichsten an dieser Zeit litt” (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 23). Pain, whether it be physical – for instance, hunger or wounding during the war – or mental such as trauma or anxiety, can contribute mightily towards Germans’ transformation. On the way to the New Human Being, the individual could be filled with so much despair because of the life’s traumas that the individual could no longer bear them and be devoid of hope. For this reason, Karl Otten wrote about the “Verzweiflung Ungläubiger” (“Adam” 80), and Franz Werfel stated that exposure to the real world can cause anguish (*Verzweiflung*) and madness in human beings (“Aphorismus“ 903). Indeed, Expressionist views of openness to the elements of a cruel world are summated in the title of the Albert Ehrenstein poem “Ausgesetzt“ (“Exposed”) (Vietta, *Lyrik des Expressionismus* 109). Feelings of exposure make a person not only insecure and isolated but also helpless and afraid.

Fear and horror are two of the most common existential feelings among Expressionist writings. The titles of several Expressionist works such as Alfred Wolfenstein’s poem “Furcht,” August Stramm’s poem “Angststurm,” Georg Trakl’s sonette “Das Grauen,” and Robert Müller’s short story “Das Grauen,” and Franz Werfel,

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90 Testifying to the effect of traumatic events such as the war and revolution to effect despair in the individual, Ludwig Rubiner wrote *Die Gewaltlosen* between January 1917 and Fall 1918 or, as he put it, “[i]nmitten der härtesten Verzweiflungsjahre” (51). In the abovementioned play, the governor states that “Die Verzweiflung muss über uns sein – Wir haben zu viel Hoffnung, noch schlafen wir! – Verzweiflung über die ganze Welt” (103). Albert Ehrenstein and Wilhelm Klemm also wrote the poems “Verzweiflung“ (Vietta, *Lyrik des Expressionismus* 108-9).
Max Brod, and Alfred Lichtenstein’s poems “Angst,” testify to the importance of fear and dreadfulness in their writings (Brod 340; Lichtenstein 655; Müller 243-56; Stramm, Werk 98; Tral 2: 54; Werfel, lyrische Werk 369; Wolfenstein 1645). These works portray a lonely, hectic, overwhelming, numbing, and existential fear. Indeed, Expressionists believed that the world was full of fear so that one cannot escape it. Such is the case with August Stramm’s female character Maruschka who feels something “Entsetzliches” that she cannot avoid. She “(bäumt sich gegen Unsichtbares und schreit in furchtbarer Angst) ... es saust...und rauscht...sonst...es rührt sich nicht...der Quell...(sie beugt sich)...er spiegelt nicht...der Himmel...sieh... starr... stumm...sie sprachen sonst... die Wolken...oh...(sie kauert nieder und verhüllt ihr Gesicht)“ (Werk 174-5). In Carl Einstein’s Bebuquin oder die Dilettanten des Wunders, the protagonist Nebukadnezer Böhm likewise feels horror in the world of objects which always want to “suck him up“ (196). The depiction of such a feeling, in conjunction with statements such as from Kasimir Edschmid that this horror could demonstrate the bareness of the current world on the way to the New Human Being and Pinthus that the artist’s vision “schwelt als allgemeines Grauen, dehnt sich als unmenschlichstes Übel, das nur durch den Sieg der Idee vom brüderlichen Menschen aus der Welt zu schaffen ist,” show that both emotions and solutions would have appealed to Germans who felt helpless in and controlled by an outside world (Edschmid, dichterischen Expressionismus 40; Pinthus,

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91 This chapter has already discussed technology’s role in the person’s lack of control in the outer world. Although it may not be as prominent, the feelings of being offered up to and fear of technology can also be a contemporary phenomenon. One needs only to consider movies such as Maximum Overdrive, Christine, and the Terminator trilogy, which may demonstrate hyperbole of this phenomenon, but still show human fear. Not only in these films, but also in contemporary life, there is also the dread of being injured or maimed through machines. This fear and unfamiliarity with machines was even more present in early twentieth-century Germany due to lack of safety regulations.
However, the question still persists how horror, fear, or any other existential “expressions” could lead to the community?

In a short prose piece Angst appearing in the Expressionist periodical Die Aktion, Rudolf Börsch answers by demonstrating this intricate process to the New Human Being through the abovementioned stimuli, most notably fear as the title indicates. The narrator is alone, constrained, confused, tortured, horrified, and pained; yet, he or she experiences a timeless rush that transcends normal reality. As the narrator’s defenses dissipate, his or her “fear” challenges standard representations of life: the ceiling of the room explodes exposing blond and red colors, a transcendence of the home-abroad dichotomy occurs, waves become asphalt, and the hardness of the asphalt dissipates:


This excerpt demonstrates the chaotic process necessary to disassociate oneself from reality – known as abstraction – on the path to the New Human Being, but his work is of course not the only Expressionist writing to exhibit this phenomenon. To express

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92 For this reason, several Expressionist works have an eerie, dark, fearful atmosphere. They want to show that the world is a terrible place and move the audience to feel fear. Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari is an excellent example of this atmosphere. Night and darkness are also related to deepness and primitivism (Strohmeyer 244). Some Expressionists’ interest in primitive peoples came partly from the Expressionist belief in primitives’ inordinate fear. Edschmid writes that Expressionists were always there and that by the “ganz tiefen Völkern...wurde er [der Expressionismus] anonymer Ausdruck der Angst und Ehrfurcht“ (dichterischen Expressionismus 71). Expressionism existed long ago, but became increasingly lost through civilization.
abstraction, Expressionists also sometimes used simultaneity which depicts a person digesting actions and events concurrently. This person is overwhelmed and begins to change and perceive the world in a different manner (Vietta and Kemper, *Expressionismus* 218); in other words, the abstracted person experiences a novel sensibility. Although not as potent examples as Börsch’s *Angst*, Alfred Lichtenstein’s “Die Dämmerung” and a short prose section from Benn’s short story “Die Eroberung” exemplify this progression to a new sensory perception by the speaker:

An einem Fenster klebt ein fetter Mann.
Ein Jüngling will ein weiches Weib besuchen.
Ein grauer Clown zieht sich die Stiefel an.
Ein Kinderwagen schreit und Hunde fluchen. (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 47)


Normal spatiality, visualization, and temporality are all compressed in both writings: the senses reach a point in which they are overwhelmed and the speaker begins to question current reality such as in the fourth line of the poem when the “baby carriage screams” and “dogs curse.” In the excerpt from Benn, this doubt in and inability to represent reality occurs most saliently in the final line in which someone “chews on a landscape.” In both instances, the subject gains distance from standard perception and becomes unstable. The uncertainty that the stressed individual experiences becomes useful in the

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93 Hugo Ball describes the plethora of stimuli in the following statement: “Komplektisch drängten die Gedanken und Wahrnehmungen auf die Gehirne ein” (“Kandinsky” 42).
94 Hasenclever’s character states in reference to abstraction that “[i]ch entfernte mich, während ich reiste, immermehr von dem, was man die Welt nennt. Es gelang mir, in einen Zustand der Entrücktheit zu kommen” (2: 472). In this sense, this process of abstraction is a similar feeling that one would have on a
dissipation of the traditional dialectic between subject and outer reality. As Lichtenstein’s poem’s title indicates, this period encapsulates the “Dämmerung” or the ending of the old period and the beginning of a new life. The person begins to abstract from superficial reality preparing him for a vision – an important term in Expressionist terminology – of a new reality.

...humanity needed this vision to deal with bourgeois modes of thinking, false social values, a repressive industrial system, capitalism, and an unjust political order that had inundated society to such an uncompromising degree so that the only hope was their transcendence. The abstracting individual is destroying outer reality – which opposes the transformation – in a positive process so that he can embrace a new world: “Ein Haus ist nicht mehr Gegenstand, nicht mehr nur Stein, nur Anblick…Es steigt darüber hinaus. Es wird so lange gesucht in seinem eigentlichten Wesen, bis seine tiefere Form sich ergibt, bis das Haus aufsteht, das befreit ist von dem dumpfem Zwang der falschen Wirklichkeit…bis endlich alles erfüllt ist, das an Möglichkeiten in ihm schläft“ (Edschmid, dichterischen Expressionismus 55-6)[emphasis mine]. As Edschmid states and antithetical to the constrainment that many Germans felt in the modern world, this viewing presents more possibilities for the individual. In addition, his use of the adjective “tief“ is common among Expressionists indicating the existence of the “deeper,” hidden Wesen or “essence,” which is an essential concept in their beliefs and tantamount to the vision. Much as Edschmid, Kurt Pinthus references this important term when he writes that the new art “erstrebt nicht die Wiedergabe der durch die

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trip to an exotic country. Edschmid also writes about the importance of distance: “Um gerecht zu sein, bedürfen wir vieler Distanz….Nur so verschwindet das gorgonische Haupt der Bewegung, das die Zeit umspielt, und wir greifen ihr ins Herz…. Sein Ausschlag, seine Zuckung weist in Vergangenes, weist in das Kommende“ (Edschmid, dichterischen Expressionismus 40-1).
Determinanten entstellten Erscheinungen und Konstellationen, sondern sie will die Zufälligkeiten abreissen, so daß das Wesen hervorbreche” (“Rede“ 417)[emphasis mine].

95 Objects, events, and problems should become more comprehensible, simpler, and closer through this process of distillation from the morass of daily objectivity to the vision or Wesen.  Hence, Edschmid states that the human being exposed to this new type of seeing experiences the world “direct” (Edschmid, *dichterischen Expressionismus* 60). In his play *Masse Mensch*, Toller portrays this Wesen in the protagonist’s *Traumbilder* or “dream visions” that stress the truth occurring behind the actions of everyday life. No doubt influenced by Freud, Toller shows the profiteering occurring during the war through these deep, dream visions. At the end of another of Toller’s plays, *Die Maschinenstürmer*, the intoxicated weaver Albert is infused with the true vision, or a seeing of a new epistomology, of technological advance:

ALBERT (visionär): …
Ich aber sage euch, die Maschine ist nicht tot…
Sie lebt! Sie lebt!…Ausgestreckt sie die Pranken,
Menschen umklammernd…

..................
Und es wachsen die steinernen Wüsten, die kindermordenden,
Und es leitet ein grausames Uhrwerk die Menschen
In freudlosem Takte….

..................
Aufstehen werden die Völker wider die Völker...
Getrieben vom gierigen Rachen, dem erzelechzenden! (2: 184-5)

According to the author, the Engineer’s vision is the reality behind the fasade of machines.

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95 The literary critic Oswald Herzog who wrote articles in Expressionist periodicals commented that “Zufälligkeit ist das Chaos – die Unordnung – das Fehlen organischen Lebens” (108)[emphasis mine].

96 In this point, Expressionism corresponds to the philosophy of essentialism. In very general terms, essentialists propose *essentia* or *Sosein* which are none other than *Wesen* behind reality. They are less concerned with *Dasein* or existence or humans’ being in the real world. Of course, Expressionists did concern themselves with the real world as this work argues.
Gottfried Benn discussed the methodology to this new reality stating that “inner reality” or “truth” contrasted normal ocular reality (4: 80-1). In other words, the true reality begins in human beings – specifically in the mind which can engender a radical attitudinal change to values that are a paradise that lies behind the world of objects.

Because current reality is a construction of the subject, it can and must be negated by him or her (Edschmid, *dichterischen Expressionismus* 53-4). According to Edschmid, Expressionism allows “inner tendencies” application to the outer world: “nichts weiter besagt, als daß so innerliche Tendenzen und so ins Äußere und weit sichtbar greifende neue *Formgefühle* sich einer Linie genähert haben...“ (Edschmid, “Stand” 205-6).[emphasis mine].

The last quotation from Edschmid – as well as an earlier one regarding the viewing of the essence of a house – demonstrates that the term “form” had a special meaning for Expressionists. Indeed, they frequently used “form” to describe the modern world’s economic, political, and social structures that needed to be challenged and overcome. They accused these structures of either providing too much or too little form. For instance, on the one hand, Expressionists equated form with constraint, stultification, and even the crushing of human beings who were imprisoned in current reality. In this

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97 Without in-text tautology but in an effort to reinforce this crucial point about Expressionist subjectivism in the creation of their community, I want to offer further evidence. Theodor Däubler elaborates on the potential of each self to change society and his visions to become reality when he states that the “Mittelpunkt der Welt ist in jedem Ich” (“Expressionismus” 180). Otto Flake echoed Däubler’s statement when he wrote that “das, was real heißt, die Umwelt, die Tatsachen außer mir existiert in meinem Hirn nur, soweit ich es anerkenne und will, daß es sei” (342). I would also like to mention that a short section of Flake’s essay gives an excellent summation of the process to the transformation. In attempting to explain the first stage of the process to the transformation, Flake defines it against all other stages to the *Wandlung* by describing what it is not:

Alle Fäden, auf denen die Eindrücke von Außen in mein Hirn gelangen, vereinigen sich in diesem Hirn. Dieser Punkt des Zusammenlaufens ist noch nicht gestaltet worden, noch nicht die Schlachten, die im Hirn gegen jene Eindringlinge geschlagen werden, noch nicht der vorläufige Sieg des Eindringlings (Gefühl, Sentimentalität, Abhängigkeit), noch nicht seine Niederlage (wenn er verarbeitet und auf seine Relativität reduziert worden ist), nicht die Abwägungen und die Transformation in Entschiuß, Idee und Willen. (343)
regard, Ernst Stadler’s well-known Expressionist poem “Form ist Wollust” comes immediately to mind:

Form will mich verschnüren und verengen,  
Doch ich will mein Sein in alle Weiten drängen –  
Form ist klare Härte ohn’ Erbarmen,  
Doch mich treibt es zu den Dumpfen, zu den Armen. (Pinthus, Menschheitsdämmerung 312)

The destruction of restricting structures would help enable human beings’ free development to the utmost, and to indicate the possibility of the destruction of economic, political, and social forms, many late Expressionists pointed to Wilhelminian Germany, the ruling government form, which had fallen. On the other hand, Expressionists battled against the lack of form, or in other words the chaos, during 1910s and the Weimar Republic. Wilhelm Michel writes that “Form ist Schutzwehr, die unser Leben gegen das Chaotische verteidigt. Form ist Waffe, die das Dunkle angreift und zurücktreibt“ (“Tathafte Form“ 127). The new reality provides a mold for life, and it is a joy to view the world in this manner: their molds provide an enduring succor. As their paradoxical statements on “form” indicate, they wanted to give people a type of form to those who wanted it, but also a type of freedom to others who hated the constraints of society. In its diversity and attempt to appeal to all people, Expressionism tried to be in so far as possible all things to everyone.

In a desire to create a new form, Expressionists posited supplanting old casts with movement (Hatvani, “Versuch” 148). As previously stated, early Expressionists connoted the term “movement” (Bewegung) with the dynamistic characteristics and growth of technology before the First World War; however, late Expressionists such as Kurt Heynicke divorced the concept of “movement” from its connotations with
technology focusing instead on its meaning of activity or experience (105). This concept of “movement” included the aforementioned existential emotions and situations so that it could throw the human being from his or her sheltered world and bring about change.

Much as Heynicke, Ludwig Rubiner in his essay Der Dichter greift in die Politik advocated “movement” to promote the widespread destruction that he believed was necessary for the later development of a new type of society: “In Deutschland...gilt [es] nun, daß wir schreiten. Es gilt jetzt Bewegung. Die Intensität, und den Willen zur Katastrophe” (264).

As indicated by the title of Rubiner’s essay, the artist must desire catastrophe to destroy the old. Although they were negative experiences and to be eliminated within the community, the catastrophic events and suffering of Germans in war and the postwar period in Germany were necessary to realize Expressionist teachings. For Paul Hatvani, the same catastrophic, chaotic era during and after World War I with its speed of modernity and national upheaval was an intoxicating experience: “die Vehemenz des expressionistischen Zeitalters. Dazu kommt noch die Rapidität des Erlebens während der Kriegsjahre; die nationale Spaltung; die soziale Idee in den Untertönen der aktivistischen Bewegung.... Das Zeitgefühl hat uns berauscht...“ (“Zeitbild“ 104)[emphasis mine].

Indeed, the Expressionist concept “intoxication” contains two seemingly contradictory meanings: its much more commonly known form of joyful vitality and its overlooked denotation of crisis, chaos, and suffering in the individual. The terse, staccato replies of Expressionist characters in their plays show the dialectic of delight and distress that constitute the Expressionist concept “intoxication.” Their parataxis and telegraphese reflect characters whose existences are devastated through the abovementioned emotions
and situations and who are at the end of their rope. At the same time, along with a host of exclamation points, they are the vitality which occur from being thrown from their current, dull existences. The key is subjects’ recognition of the superiority of a vitalistic existence and hate for his previous existence. Recognition enables a mental turn from the subjects’ intoxicating suffering to a joyful intoxication; this turn occurs as the individual realizes that his previous existence was in some way false. When viewed as a whole, intoxication is the process towards the New Human Being relayed in this section. It is the distressing states and misery needed to throw a person from his old reality and the joy of knowing one is going to begin an undetermined, new reality.98

**The Solutions of the New Human Being and the Community**

The massive disruption of their existences during the war and in the postwar period forced many Germans to reflect on the failures of their current existences and attempt to find solutions to them. The last section demonstrated that intoxication is the process towards an end, which is the rupture with the real world and its bureaucracy, mechanization of life, capitalism, stagnant social values, and militarism. The thrown individual has experienced the *first form of Tat* or “action,” which was an appraisal and then dismissal of the *status quo* in old reality. In his short essay *Der Neue Mensch*, Lothar Schreyer calls for the first Tat of the “becoming” of the new human being: “Wir erkennen den neuen werdenden Menschen an seiner Tat. Seine erste Tat ist Abkehr von

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98 Scholars accuse Expressionist characters and the movement in general of suffering manic depression: they vascillate between feelings of doom and ecstatic joy (Carey 201; Willet 9). This vascillation could be in reality a character on the precipice of embracing the intoxication or a transformed individual whose ideas society has rejected.
der alten Welt“ (19). In the short term, stress stifles critical thinking and eliminates negative feelings such as chaos, fear, and horror so that the thrown person becomes unaware of true surroundings. It allows temporary “expression” (“pressing out”=expression) or release from subjective pent-up emotions occurring from modern life and its states of being. It relieves the psychological pressure originating in the outside world and the work associated with normal cognitive processes. Despite this release, the collapse of barriers, abstraction from the real world, and rejection of current reality, the individual is only amorphous at his juncture and made open to a whole new world; there is still much work to be done to become a transformed individual. The following passage from Carlo Mierendorf supports this assertion:

Im Erblicken erlebte die Welt eine Wandlung. Sie begann sich aufzulösen. Sie zerrief vor dem Beschauer. Sie bestand nicht mehr aus in sich Ruhehendem, Gesetztem und Gefügtem. (Das rührt nicht bloß von den Autos, den Films, den Trambahnen und den Lifts her). Die Dinge rückten sehr heran, wurden problematisch und enthüllten sich aus der Nähe als endlose Bewegungen in sich. Sie noch in statischem Übereinander zu reproduzieren, war fürderhin unmöglich. Das Problem, sie in ihrem Schwingen darzustellen, wurde brennend. (279)

Mierendorf documents abstraction’s relationship and importance to the transformation. The person “erblickt” or “perceives” a changing world during its disintegration. Thus, among other characteristics, the intoxicated individual has a change of sight, but the world has only become “problematic.” On the one hand, it has become uncertain, and on the other, it is capable of supporting a possibility, but the type of possibility is yet to be determined.

99 Schreyer’s reference to the first Tat implies that there are more yet to come.
100 In 1920, the literary historian, Friedrich Markus Huebner, wrote about this “expression” or the relief of suppressed tension that occurred at the end of the war: “Der Abschluß des Krieges brachte in Deutschland einen fast tumultarischen Ausbruch der zu lange zwanghaft zurückgehaltenen Kräfte...” (90). One should also mention that this cathartic release of intense emotional pressure also occurs in some of the Expressionist screams.
101 The process to abstraction is often known as “Ich –Zerfall” (Anz, Existenz 106; Thomas, “Ich und die Welt“ 35) or “Ichdissoziation” (Vietta und Kemper 21-2).
Thus, although the person undergoing these changes questions the present world, the person must still make a choice for the Expressionist community just as he or she has decided that the current workings of the physical world create suffering, pain, fear, and other intense feelings. Such a choice is evident in Expressionists’ concept of the word “Wille,” which is an internal and unyielding determination from an individual. According to Expressionists, human beings determine reality through their actions, which are a reflection of their will so that the adoption of a new will could create a new reality. Thus, Rubiner writes that there must be a “Wille zur Gemeinschaft” (“Schar“ 3), and Kurt Hiller and others call for this Wille or “Wollen” to determine future reality (Pinthus, “Rede” 400; Hiller, “Überlegungen” 214; Hiller, “Philosophie des Ziels” 195, 203). Hiller and other Expressionists propagated voluntarism, or the belief that the will was the dominant factor in the world, but the individual’s choice for content establishes the direction of the will. Equally evidential of the importance of an individual’s choice of the Expressionist transformation are statements such as those from Ludwig Rubiner whose call to action in his essay Aktualismus demands direction: “Sie muß…heißen: Handeln! Und: Selbst Handeln! Und Gemeinsam handeln! Zu fordern ist noch mehr: die Bestimmung...“ (“Aktualismus“ 71). Thus, scholars’ assertions that Expressionists desired an intoxicating chaos as the community or even an “‘objectless’” activity as an alternative to current society are misleading (Kahler 16; Wright, “Sublime Ambition”

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102 In another example from Rubiner, a character from his play Die Gewaltlosen echoes the abovementioned statement when he says that “Du nahmst unsere Worte – aber ohne unser Ziel sind sie Leichenhüllen” (136). This quotation is also interesting because of the signifiers and different signified between right-wingers and Expressionists.
To become the Expressionist New Human Being, a person must focus rush towards an Expressionist end so that this energy is given the correct direction.

This choice for Expressionist beliefs requires a new type of criticalness. The conscious decision for the Expressionist life may seem irrational based upon the former manner of thinking, but is, in reality, not without reason or understanding. Contrary to popular belief, intoxication does not mean that the individual does not continue to think after its occurrence, but rather intoxication throws or shocks an individual out of his normal, faulty thought processes to make way for a heightened and novel criticalness that is necessary to epistemologically question current reality according to literary Expressionists. This probing of an ill-riddled currentness and search for solutions necessitate analysis to realize the correct life. For instance, Leonhard writes that the antithesis to activism is the bourgeois world, but to reach this conclusion, one needs to “view” in the sense of to “scrutinize“ the issue: “[Die Aktivisten] hatten, ihrer Herkunft aus den Bezirken des Betrachtens zufolge und in notwendigem zugehörigem Gegenklang gegen eine alles andre als aktive Umwelt, die Welt des deutschen Bürgers, der zwar handelt und verhandelt, aber nichts tut, die Tat entproblematisieren zu müssen”

Rubiner also states that “Wenn wir handeln, begehen wir oft Unrecht. Es ist falsch, darum vom Handeln abzulassen. Unsere Vereinzelung, die des Nichthandelnden, begeht viel größeres Unrecht” (“Aktualismus” 71). Such statements remind one that Expressionists were searching for the best way to reach their community and knew they would be prone to error. In this chapter’s ultimate section, the short excerpt from Becher’s poem “Vorbereitung” also supports this point. Wright’s claim that some Expressionists believed in a “‘objectless’” activity – in other words, it was directionless – as superior to ideational contents is misleading (“Sublime Ambition” 87). A few Expressionists did support such an idea because it meant that individuals had become thrown or shocked. Expressionists devoted so much of their effort to ensuring Germans reached this intoxicated status that they praised those who had reached it. However, it was certainly not their end goal.

For instance, a transformed individual’s rejection of capitalism may have seemed irrational to the overwhelming majority of Germans because capitalism was the dominant economic system and they believed in it.

Madness further demonstrates Expressionist assertions about human beings’ incorrect thinking. When examining works that intricately show the process to the New Human Being such as Rudolf Börsch’s Angst from earlier in this chapter, it is in many cases easy to see why many people might consider these Expressionist figures “mad.”
(Literarischer Aktivismus 141)[emphasis mine]. This observation during the process of becoming the New Human Being trains thrown individuals for the critical awareness possessed by the transformed person who is aware of the injustices of and solutions for humanity. Paul Kornfeld states that “wir suchen eines, in dem er bewusßer ist” (“Der beseelte“ 6), and in his review of Ernst Bloch’s book Geist der Utopie, Ernst Blass suggests that “unser Treiben erhält Richtung und Bewußtsein” (“Geist“ 66)[emphasis mine]. Through this awareness, Expressionism brings some type of fixation and concreteness to life. The earlier nervousness and other negative existential emotions completely subside and the individual becomes empowered over his environment (Flake 340). According to the commentator Max Picard, Expressionism defines to create order in society: “…aus diesem namentlosen Chaos ruft der neue, expressionistische Mensch das Ding heraus zu sich. Er ruft die Dinge bei ihrem Namen an: Du Wald, sagt er, und du Stadt, damit der Wald und die Stadt sich aus dem Chaos wieder auseinander ordnen“ (332). Unlike his or her former massified existence in which bourgeois society named him or her, the transformed individual is rooted (Toller, 2: 57) and in a position of control because he or she does the naming: through the Wesen, Expressionists posit a method of dealing with the chaos. The world had dominated the subject earlier, but now the rejuvenated person comes to control the world through their inner vision, or expression of his vision on the outer world. Much as many Expressionists, Ernst Toller wrote that “Nur aus innerlicher Mensch-Wandlung kann die Gemeinschaft, die wir erstreben, erwachsen” (1: 32)[emphasis mine]. First, the individual should undergo an

106 Intoxication may give momentary relief from these emotions, but Expressionist beliefs correct them fully by eliminating the issues which cause these emotions.
attitudinal transformation by becoming convinced of the Expressionist vision, and then, he should facilitate the transmutations of others as well.

This point leads to the second part of the concept “Tat.” The first was mentioned in the initial paragraph of this section and denotes being thrown from current reality, but the second entails working on behalf of others promoting Expressionist content. In other words, Tat is action with content. In *Rede für die Zukunft*, Kurt Pinthus wrote “Nicht Mächte der Vergangenheit und Konstellationen der Gegenwart sind die Wegweiser in die Zukunft, sondern allein die Idee, welche die Tat zeugt und für welche die Tat zeugt. Die geistentsprungene Idee ist die einzige Determinante, die den Menschen beherrschen und führen darf, weil sie ihn von allen Determinanten befreit” (404). In Rubiner’s *Die Gewaltlosen*, the character Klotz, a rejuvenated ex-criminal, proclaims that sacrifice for fellow humanity – an Expressionist requirement for their community – is the last truth and the first Tat of the reborn human being (123). After the acceptance of Expressionist ideals, the transformed individual becomes ecstatic or exhibits a joyful and infinite frenziedness working for the Expressionist cause and that opposes bourgeois passiveness and stasis.  

Within this vein of constantly and fanatically working towards the community, Theodor Däubler writes that “[d]ie Lebensechtheit kann sich nur ekstatisch fassen” (*Menscheitsdämmerung* 163).

Ecstasy is also a characteristic that many Expressionists linked with some type of return to primitive life. This use of intense emotion and energy, according to some Expressionists, is the result of New Human Beings reaching a concealed source of their inner beings which had finally resurfaced after generations of suppression, but ecstasy

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107 Ecstasy is a state beyond reason or “beyond the former way of thinking.” It is “tremendous excitement and joy” to be living in this new life and working for this cause. Intensity is also another concept that appears to be similar to ecstasy (Rubiner, “Intensität” 290-1).
was not Expressionist primitivism’s only feature that indicated a purported reoccurrence of a former existence. Several late Expressionists believed that the adoption of the humane, loving attributes of the Gemeinschaft, which this section will discuss later, was a return to humanity’s origins, and a few other Expressionists desired other regressions such as facets of a primeval tribal ethos, the simplicity of primitive organisms, or mental or physical flights to exotic milieus. As a whole, all of these primitivist Expressionists viewed rebirth as a chance at cultural, social, political, economic, and personal rejuvenation; they wanted to address current society and its problems by undergoing a temporal, spatial, and/or psychological regression to a romanticized, mythic, or fictional past. This invented nostalgia for a lost sense of being was a return to an improved stage and condition of humanity, or as close as people could come in the modern world; it purportedly promised a totality and stabilization of a person’s inner self. Much as other Expressionist Wandlungen, it countered modern life’s fragmentation, complexity, constrictions, uniformity, and pressure which would be non-existent in this primitive world.

Current civilization, Expressionists contended, was the reckless result of humanity’s development, and they offered the crises of Weimar as evidence to support this assertion. A step towards correcting this misfortune and a regressive stance towards modern life was for some Expressionists to advocate machines’ destruction. This regression was to a large degree a means to overcome the human objectification in and the general oppressiveness of modern factory labor. Karl Otten (“Fifth Ode to Martinet”), Franz Werfel (“Geistige Freude”), and Johannes Becher all wrote poems depicting the demise of factories or machines in the capitalist system (“Martinet,”
Menschheitsdämmerung 241; “Freude,” expressionistischen Jahrzehnts 63; Becher, ”An die Dichter,” Werke 1: 473; See also Becher, Werke 2: 269-370), and Ernst Toller penned the play the *Maschinenstürmer*, or as the title is known as in English, the *Machine Wreckers*. In 1920, the Expressionist documenter Hermann Bahr typified many Expressionists’ feelings about machines when he wrote that “[a]lles, was wir erleben, ist nur dieser ungeheure Kampf um den Menschen, Kampf der Seele mit der Maschine. ...wir sind dahin, der Mensch ist entseelt, die Natur entmenscht“ (101). Indeed, while criticizing technology, many Expressionists simultaneously praised nature’s virtues. In his poetry, Paul Zech posited forests and mountains (“Der Wald”) as freedom in which the human being becomes one with nature (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 159). Much as Zech, the Expressionist Theodor Däubler in his poem “Der Atem der Natur” associates natural landscapes with freedom from strictures, but he also discusses liberty in conjunction with fraternal love and what he views as true forms of human nature (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 154). This return to nature is the going back to the roots of one’s existence, which exudes organic and simplistic values.

Some early Expressionists enthusiastically viewed primitivism as restoration of a robust chauvinist masculinity, but such a position increasingly dissipated within the movement as time progressed. Expressionists, such as Paul Hatvani and Alfred Wolfenstein, even associated primitive rebirth with femininity. In his essay *Versuch über den Expressionismus*, Hatvani advocates the elemental as a response to complicated modern life, and it most closely resembles muliebrity. He tries to transvalue masculinity so that it becomes more feminine:

Nichts ist reiner, moralischer, ethischer als die Darstellung des Elementaren....so erfüllt es sich in einer Idee der Weiblichkeit.... So erhält – das Element einen
geistigen Reflex von Weibe, und der Expressionismus eine sinnliche Bezüglichkeit zum Geschlecht. Und da der Künstler doch im ewigen Gegensatz zum Stoffe lebt, wird dieser weibliche Stoff des expressionistischen Künstlers ein Urquell seiner erhöhten Männlichkeit. (146)

Fritz von Unruh and Ernst Toller also supported femininity through their favorable depictions of female protagonists in their works. In particular, von Unruh’s drama *Ein Geschlecht* shows a protagonist mother who undergoes a transformation after the death of her oldest son, in which she disregards her earlier patriotism and embraces revolution against the antagonist Soldatenführer. Although her rebellion is ultimately unsuccessful, Unruh wants to show the barbarity of war and the patriarchal system which has led to it and espouses motherhood as its antithesis (Durzak, *Barlach* 181).

Although many Expressionists’ primitivism was unrealistic, a few Expressionists engaged in hyperbole with their primitive responses to modern life. For instance, a small number wrote favorably about rebirths to the drives of animal and plant organisms. In his essay *Der Neue Mensch*, Lothar Schreyer states that the new beginning will be a “Trieb des Werdens. Trieb wie Tier und Pflanze, Sturm und Licht. Wir erheben uns nicht über unsere Schwester Blume, über unseren Bruder Tier” (20). For Theodor Däubler, “die Rückkehr zum Tier durch die Kunst ist unsre Entscheidung zum Expressionismus” (“Munch” 100). The primitivist par excellence Gottfried Benn espoused regeneration through escapes to simpler forms of life as well. Benn’s famous poem “Gesänge” is one of the clearer examples of atavism in his writing: “O daß wir unsere Ururahnen wären. / Ein Klümppchen Schleim in einem warmen Moor” (1: 23). These embracments of animal and plant regressions have for the most part the goals of a radical reduction to more simplistic thinking and ethos in current society. Benn’s poems on exotic lands also

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108 In his play *Masse Mensch*, Sonja Irene L. is the pacifist protagonist. Although she fails to halt a violent revolution, she is the heroine of the work.
have these goals. In Benn’s poem “Palau” from 1921, the South Seas’ tropic environment allows the mental regression of the speaker:

Heiße Riffe. Aus Eukalypten geht Tropik und Palmung, was sich noch hält und steht, will auch Zermalmung bis in das Gliederlos, bis in die Leere, tief in den Schöpfungsschoß dämmrnder Meere ...

...Dein Meer belebt Sepien, Korallen, was sich noch hält und hebt, will auch zerschollen.... (1: 58-9)

The speaker regresses until he is simpler, empty, without limbs, and in the womb. In short, he enjoys nothingness. The tranquility of the milieu impresses internal calm and harmony on the human being. Sense of time and pressure play no roles, and the individual is spatially, or at the very least psychologically free, in the exotic other away from early-twentieth-century Germany’s economics, society, hecticness, worries, and political affairs.

This last topic, politics, was infrequently broached by Benn and other exaggeratory primitivists who indited Expressionist works in early-twentieth-century Germany. To a large degree, their attitude was apolitical, but this point was not the rule among late literary Expressionists whose writings during the war and the Revolution of 1918/1919 became on the whole more politically charged. At this time, Expressionists

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109 Benn probably would not have objected to actual physical escape to exotic lands, but the possibility of flight was remote for most Germans. One should also remember that Benn himself never resettled from Germany although he had the financial means as a doctor. The poem itself should cause psychological change in the civilized reader to embrace the fruits of the exotic other within Germany.

110 In his Rönne short stories, Benn also wrote about the southern Europe, especially Italy, which he associated with rush while the north, inclusive Germany, corresponded to rationality (Wodtke 318, 323).
such as Friedrich Wolf and Franz Jung abandoned views of war as a viable method for the creation of a new society in Germany and, along with many other Expressionists who were either part of or sympathetic to the political left in Germany, embraced revolution in this role. Because of its success, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was initially a motivating model for these Expressionists; the following excerpt from a 1918 poem by Johannes Becher illustrates this point:

Im Osten wächst das Licht. Der Dichter streue Sich schwellend dir entgegen...

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Die goldne Sichel und der goldene Hammer!
O Ozean-Röte! Morgen! Ährenkranz. Der feiste Bürger schrumpft in sich zusammen. Nun windet er sich eure Knie umklammernd, Geblendet von zu unerhörtem Glanz. (Werke 2: 18)

With this general, affirmative view of revolution, the German Revolution of 1918/19 was for Expressionists at its outset a positive and exhilarating experience to which they contributed with speeches, excerpts from their latest works, staged plays, the formation of intellectual organizations, and even their own participation as rebels and leaders in revolutionary government. Pinthus was chairman of the intellectual revolutionary council in Berlin. In 1918, Johannes Becher and Franz Pfemfert were members of the Spartacist League or German Communist Party (KPD) as was Rudolf Leonhard who was a functionary for the Spartacists during the January 1918 uprising in Berlin. Becher, Alfred Henschke, Hasenclever, Hiller, Leonhard, Rubiner, Pinthus, Wolfenstein, Otten, Leonhard Frank, and Schickele were all supporters of the Independent Socialist Party of Germany (USPD) for a time. In 1917, Toller helped found the pacifist and socialist Kulturpolitischen Bund der Jugend in Deutschland and acted as a delegate for the strike

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111 Ludwig Rubiner actually met with Lenin while they were in exile in Switzerland. It would not be surprising if other Expressionist exiles had contact with Lenin as well.
committee of the January Strike of 1918 (Dove 34-5, 45).\textsuperscript{112} Toller and Klabund were officials in the Bavarian Räterepublik with Toller becoming leader of the Räterepublik in Bavaria after Kurt Eisner’s assassination. Both men were sentenced to prison terms for their actions, and while in prison, Toller was nominated to the Bavarian parliament as a member of the USPD.

Along with Toller, Kurt Hiller was a main Expressionist participant in the Revolution of 1918/1919 and supporter of revolutionary ideals. In 1917, Hiller tried organizing intellectual opposition to the state in the Bund zum Ziel group, in 1919 he formed a “Goal-Alliance” and an “Activist Party,” and he tried yet again one year thereafter to found another organization, the Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft.\textsuperscript{113} He wrote on policies of peace after the First World War, the dispensation of justice, and the importance of education; the realization of these ideas had the avowed goal of making the individual happier (Habereder 75), but he is most known for his 1918 founding and chairmanship of the Berlin Rat der geistigen Arbeiter. Intellectuals soon formed other geistige Räte in Munich, Vienna, Leipzig, Dresden, Breslau, Hannover, and Marburg. Although the workers and soldiers’ councils rejected the Räte der geistigen Arbeiter which dissolved in June 1919, some of their ideas that they espoused are not without merit and even are at present a reality: for instance, Hiller’s Berlin council demanded a League of Nations and world legislative body, the elimination of the draft among all

\textsuperscript{112} I do not want to mislead readers about the effectiveness of this organization. Dove states that the league had only twelve members (35).
\textsuperscript{113} Wright indicates that the Friedensgesellschaft was fruitless (“Sublime Ambition” 91). Indeed, all of these organizations with regard to effectiveness came to nought.
nations, economic penalties for warmongering nations, just allocation of surplus property and wealth, and the abolition of the death penalty (“Dokumente” 218-23).\textsuperscript{114}

Many Expressionists’ initial affinity for communism and the Russian Revolution demonstrated that a revolution’s events were a chance for the application of the signified which they desired. For instance, in reaction to the Revolution of 1918/1919, René Schickele wrote that “Jetzt, jetzt. Endlich. Jetzt! Die neue Welt hat begonnen. Das ist sie, die befreite Menschheit” (“Der neunte November“ 21). On another occasion, Schickele summarized many Expressionists’ feelings of companionship and community on 9 November 1918 as the republic was declared: “Ich glaubte, von nun an nie mehr allein zu sein, nie mehr an mir und an den andern zu verzweifeln” (“Der neunte November“ 87).

However, one must realize an important point: revolution was the opportunity for the realization of their Erneuerung and ultimately of their community of radical social, economic, and political equality and participation. In other words, most left-wing Expressionists viewed the communism associated with revolution as fulfilling the objectives of Expressionism and not vice versa.\textsuperscript{115} For example, although not all Expressionists were enthusiasts of the Revolution of 1918/1919, all espoused revolutionary ideals in their writing through the major changes that they envisaged in

\textsuperscript{114} Toller’s kulturpolitische Bund der deutschen Jugend also had several healthy ideas in their program such as peaceful solutions to all conflicts, the elimination of all poverty, equality under the law, the lowering of the voting age, protection of mothers, humane shelter for all, and battle against the militarization of youth (1: 32-3).

\textsuperscript{115} Another example of the “revolution” in Expressionist terms are the statements of Toller’s protagonist Friedrich who calls for a revolution of compassion and freedom to destroy power which is only a perception. He calls for the destruction of war in favor of things that grow:

Nun geht hin zu den Machthabern und kündet ihnen mit brausenden Orgelstimmen, daß ihre Macht ein Truggebiilde sei. Geht hin zu den Soldaten, sie sollen ihre Schwerter zu Pflugscharen schmieden. Geht hin zu den Reichen und zeigt ihnen ihr Herz, das ein Schutthaufen ward...Brüder recket zermarterte Hand, / Flammender, freudiger Ton! Schreite durch unser freies Land! / Revolution! Revolution! (2: 60-1)
society. A revolutionary situation was a chance for a new beginning destroying the ills that had plagued German society.\footnote{The following paragraphs will list several reasons which distance left-wing Expressionists from pure theoretical communism. One of the more childish pieces of evidence demonstrating this difference is Rudolf Leonhard’s threat that the poet might turn around and stick his tongue out at those with him at the barricades (“Politik der Dichter” 815). Obviously he did not find the Spartacists beyond reproach or abandonment.}

Representative of this old-new dichotomy and of the application of Expressionist meanings to the structure “revolution” is their critical examination and promotion of generational conflicts. Expressionists couched the rebellion of youths against fathers, their values, and their authority foremost as change in reality in which the political is subsumed.\footnote{Politics certainly played a role in Expressionist depictions of generational conflicts: for example, in Hasenclever’s \textit{Sohn}, the Friend equates the French monarchy’s abuses to the wielding of political power by their father in their current generation. Much as during that time period, rebellion is the answer: “der Kampf gegen den Vater das Gleiche ist, was vor hundert Jahren die Rache and den Fürsten war. Heute sind wir im Recht!...Heute singen wir die Marseillaise!” (2: 301).} The criticism of their progenitors in immensely successful Expressionist plays such as Walter Hasenclever’s \textit{Der Sohn} and Reinhard Sorge’s \textit{Der Bettler} do not primarily broach political overthrow, but rather social, psychological, and cultural transformation.\footnote{\textit{Der Bettler} and \textit{Der Sohn} were both huge successes when they were staged. During this time period and shortly thereafter, the conflict of generations became a salient problem in German society (see Peukert).} For instance, in \textit{Der Sohn}, the protagonist suffers from authoritarianism; he feels as if he is choking under the weight of his father’s desires for him. His father attempts to discipline him by hitting him and by threatening to whip him (2: 263, 316). The Friend tells him that patriarchal familial relations are to blame that the father feels the need to flog him: “Die Tyrannei der Familie zu zerstören, dieses mittelalterliche Blutgeschwür; diesen Hexensabbat und die Folterkammer mit Schwefel! Aufheben die Gesetze – wiederherstellen die Freiheit“ (2: 301). Much as in \textit{Der Sohn}, von Unruh’s \textit{Ein Geschlecht} attacked the role of the patriarchal family. In this play, the oldest son states that his father’s domineering behavior drove him to such \textit{Zweifel} which
woke the Urtrotz in him and he overthrew him (3: 26). Expressionists may have criticized the centralization of political power among their father’s generation, but a solution addressing political patriarchy could only provide for them peripheral results. Thus, they tried to find the origins of the lack of freedoms that must begin somewhere in society. They found them, as Franz Werfel states, in patriarchy in general: “Die Patria potestas, die Autorität, ist eine Unnatur, das verderbliche Prinzip an sich. Sie ist der Ursprung aller Morde, Kriege, Untaten, Verbrechen, Haßlaster und Verdammnisse...” (Werfel, Nicht der Mörder 101).\textsuperscript{119} Such lines of thought led many Expressionists to revolt against authority in all forms. Schools oppressed young people through their overbearing authority according to Expressionists, and characters like Friedrich in Toller’s Wandlung accused the populace of infusing their children with hatred because they no longer know what love is (2: 59). Considering radical Weimar conservatives’ embracement of youth in early twentieth-century Germany, Expressionists concerns about false teachings were only all too real.

Other evidence of the ideological schism between Expressionism and communism was Expressionists’ direct criticisms of political socialism. Although the large majority of Expressionists were at least sympathetic to the plight of the proletariat if not openly siding with them, many authors also had the same opinion as Ludwig Rubiner who stated that in communist socialism “alles [war] um Ding statt um Geist” (“Änderung” 116). Thus, many Expressionists did not limit the term “socialism” to Marxist significations, but rather the word incorporated and transcended many Marxist concerns such as unjust accumulation of wealth and power through that wealth. Kurt Hiller defined it best within

\textsuperscript{119} The patria potestas is the Roman right of the father as head of the household over the children, grandchildren, and their descendents (Long 873).
the Expressionist lexicon: “Sozialismus ist keine Parteilehre, sondern eine Gesinnung; es ist das Eingestellsein der Seele auf Brüderlichkeit” (“Ortsbestimmung” 363). Kurt Pinthus echoed Hiller’s statement in 1919: for him socialism was “die Idee vom Menschen, der gut und frei und glücklich lebt in der brüderlichen Gemeinschaft seiner Mitmenschen“ (qtd. in Denkler 148). Fritz von Unruh used the term “Kommunionismus” to play on the German words “Kommunismus” and “Kommunion” to suggest a fellowship that should become like a religion (Flügel 199).120 Unruh highlighted the spiritual solidarity of the community instead of focusing just on monetary interests and economic equality. Instead of considering their social share of responsibility through the construction of welfare programs, humans should create the community. The community’s realization requires a more radical rejection of all previous elements of reality.

The assertion of revolution as a means to advance Expressionist structures is further strengthened through their condemnation of the violence from the Soviets’ Revolution of 1917. Many Expressionists, such as Iwan Goll, distanced themselves from the violence of the October Revolution after first embracing the revolution’s goals: “Im April 1917 hat die russische Revolution die Todesstrafe abgeschafft. Im Juli wurde sie wieder eingeführt“ (“Menschenleben“ 20). René Schickele protested the violent intimidation of the Red-Terror in Russia; according to Schickele, the Bolsheviks are against humanity: “Nein, tausendmal nein! Ich bin Sozialist, aber wenn man mich überzeugte, daß der Sozialismus nur mit der bolschewistischen Methode zu verwirklichen sei, so würde ich, und nicht nur ich, auf seine Verwirklichung verzichten...ich will, daß

120 These instances demonstrate Expressionists’ ability to co-opt ideas from other economic, political, and social systems and use them for their own purposes. The same could be said of radical Weimar conservatives.
der *Komplex der Gewalt* aus der Welt verschwinde*" ("Der neunte November" 75).

Schickele, Toller, and Unruh left the communist party because they opposed that party’s violence, and like several other Expressionists, Ludwig Rubiner envisioned a bloodless revolution to realize the *Gemeinschaft* in his play *Die Gewaltlosen*. Torn by the violence of the revolution with which he was involved, Toller penned the play *Masse Mensch* in which the Woman protests against the values of her antagonist, the Nameless One, who desires a violent revolution to secure power. She exposes him as the progression of war, hate, and desire for vengeance and instead foments peaceful rebellion against those who sanctioned technology in war and industry.

As the statements from the last paragraph divulge, this late Expressionist stance on violent revolution exhibits a fixed characteristic of their community, namely nonviolence. Much of this attitude is attributable to the horrors of the First World War. As this chapter has already indicated, the war and its concomitant feelings are major incitements to intoxication, but war is also critical in convincing intoxicated individuals of Expressionist teachings. After dreadful experiences from exposure to the war, Ernst Toller, Klabund, Rudolf Leonhard, René Schickele, and Fritz von Unruh became fervent pacifists in which they posed their adoption of nonviolence as a *Wandlung* (Anz, *Literatur des Expressionismus* 137; Dove 49-59). Expressionist beliefs in *Tat* and ecstasy indicate Expressionist pacifism should not be passive, but rather vigorous and aggressive; their writings are current and future acts of sabotage against war. Typical of their proactive stances as conscientious objectors, the Expressionist Kurt Hiller called the Expressionist “activist” the “Feind des Krieges” (“Ortsbestimmung” 372), and because front soldiers were the most immediate examples of the war, they became a frequent
subject and target of late Expressionist works. In his play *Kain* from 1917, Friedrich Koffka relates the biblical story of the two siblings to the *Brudermord* of humanity in the First World War, and in his “An die Soldaten des großen Krieges,” Gerrit Engelke pleaded for a fraternity of humanity among all frontline warriors:

Herauf aus Gräben, Lehmhöhlen, Betonkellern, Steinbrüchen!
Herbei! Kameraden! Denn von Front zu Front, von Feld zu Feld
Komme euch allen der neue Feiertag der Welt!

........................
Der Psalm des Friedens, der Versöhnung, der Erhebung!
Und das meerrauschende, dampfende Lied,
Das hinreißende, brüderumarmende,
Das wilde und heilig erbarmende,
Der tausendfachen Liebe laut um alle Erden! (130-2)

These latter two examples demonstrate Expressionists’ wish for European and international reconciliation among troops which was necessary for their community to form.

However, the construction of a European or international community to prevent extensive violence such as that which had occurred during the First World War, required Expressionists to appeal not only to frontline soldiers, but also to petition the larger German population as well. Not to be overlooked in their pursuit of a multinational community is that Expressionists wrote their works in German and were heavily reliant on German crises, which contributed to a “success” among mainly a German audience; hence, the adoption of their message in Germany was the logical first step towards the European or international *Gemeinschaft*.¹²¹ Germany would begin the disintegration of national identities among a disjunctive Europe or world and the embracement of a unified fraternity without ethnic, national, and racial discrimination. Works such as Rudolf

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¹²¹ The last chapter commented on Expressionism as an international phenomenon, but German Expressionists affected mainly a German audience.
Leonhard’s poetry collection from 1918 entitled *Polnische Gedichte* focused on this task by attempting to decenter German nationalism by arguing in German for Polish emancipation at the expense of German territory, population, and prestige.\(^1\)

Expressionists’ clear pleas for an European or international public for their community such as the Johannes Becher’s appeal to Europe to create a “neue, heilige Staat” in his poetry collection *An Europa* or Toller’s confident claim that his play *Die Wandlung spielt in Europa vor Anbruch der Wiedergeburt* also attempted to disestablish German nationalism (*An Europa* 1; Toller, 2: 12). Indeed, the sheer volume of Expressionists calling for a nonnational community is impressive. For instance, Friedrich Markus Huebner posited Expressionism leading warring powers together after years of conflict to create a “Gefühlszone” for a unified Europe (“in Deutschland“ 90). In his poem “An Tolstoj,” Johannes Becher extoled humanity to create the “Geläuterten Gemeinschaft“ and eradicate “Krieg, Raub, Tumult, zerstörerische Vergewaltigung” (*Werke* 2: 53). In his poem “Der Panamakanal” from 1912, Iwan Goll pleads for an international fraternity among human beings beyond Europe; the peoples who are separated by two oceans would come together in an embrace so that all peoples of the world would begin to cry (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 292-4). At his trial for participating in the Bavarian *Räte*-Republic, Ernst Toller’s apologia was that all he truly desired was a “Weltgemeinschaft…äußerlich gebunden durch ein Minimum von Gewalt, innerlich gebunden...durch den Geist der Liebe“ and that would fight “den Krieg, die Armut und

\(^1\) Although Germany and Austria formally recognized an independent Poland in 1916, Poland became truly independent in November 1918. Poland was created from German and Russian territorial losses after World War I and, thus, Rubiner’s poems supporting Polish emancipation would have been highly unpopular among a German populace but consistent with Expressionist teachings.
den Staat” which only knew “Gewalt“ (1: 50, 36). These examples are by no means exhaustive of the Expressionists calling for the multinational community.

As the preceding quotations indicate and intimate, Expressionists implored humanity to begin a community of love and to sacrifice for fellow humanity. Exemplary of the Expressionist fraternity of love, but without disavowing revolutionary action, is an excerpt of a publicly published letter from Ernst Toller written to fellow revolutionary Gustav Landauer: “Ich will [das Lebendige]…mit Liebe umpfüügen, aber ich will auch das Erstarnte, wenn es sein muß, umstürzen, um des Geistes willen“ (1: 35). In Der Mensch ist gut, Leonard Frank wrote a series of stories about the decency of humanity and his book concludes with officials sending notices to the tormented masses about the rise of freedom and love (171). In his poem “Über die Erde geht der Mensch,” Oskar Kanehl wrote that the human being should be “Gut. Liebend. Umarmend” (10). However, this fraternity of love would necessitate human beings changing their ethos to reflect an uninhibited willingness for reciprocal sacrifice for each other. In this sense, late Expressionists attempted to channel Germans’ tremendous willingness to sacrifice for their nation as shown mostly in war to their humane cause. In an earlier essay, Der Mensch in der Mitte, Rubiner proclaimed the “Anbruch der neuen Zeit: das humanozentrische Bewußtsein. Epoche des Brudergefühls; Gemeinschaftsidee...der Mensch ist um des Menschen Willen da“ (Rubiner, “Neuer Beginn“ 191). In their community, all human beings become ends instead of being just means promoting a warm connectedness between human beings; for example, if one member of humanity suffers, then communal members suffer out of compassion for another’s distress. This

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123 Ludwig Rubiner’s play Die Gewaltlosen concludes in the same manner with news of the community disseminating around the globe by telegraph (148).
interconnectedness also demands a heterosocial environment so that Expressionists’ openly identified with fringe social groups such as prostitutes, the infirm, Jews, the mentally ill, prisoners, and the poor. Indeed, this new anthropocentrism encapsulates the “Human” in the New Human Being. Kurt Pinthus’ declaration is not atypical for Expressionists’ concern for this humanness of people when he writes that “[m]an versuchte, das Menschliche in Menschen zu erkennen, zu retten und zu erwecken...Immer deutlicher wusste man: der Mensch kann nur gerettet werden durch den Menschen“ (“Zuvor” 27).

Distrust characterizes people in society and scuttles this humanness, but trust is established in the community through greater openness. There is a publicness about the community that attacks people’s preponderance for only private concerns so that in 1918, Leonhard wrote “da war...Offenheit unter Kameraden...denn Gemeinschaft ist die volle, die vorbehaltlose, die religiöse gegenseitige Offenheit aller Individuen...“ (Leonhard, “Verkehr und Gemeinschaft“ 292). Some Expressionists believed that this lack of concealment would create the unfettered atmosphere necessary for the air of mutual grievances and lay bare all private ambitions as the individual thinks communally. For these reasons, Ludwig Rubiner attacked human beings’ self-imposed seclusion and privateness as selfishness and self-interest (“Der Kampf“ 226; “Der Dichter“ 263). Thus, some Expresssionists promoted the disintegration of individuality as a means to scuttle separateness and strengthen sense of belonging. One such interesting loss of individuality is in Friedrich Wolf’s play Der Unbedingte, in which in the introduction of characters, the author states that the characters fade into each other (Hinck 22). However, most late Expressionists wanted to find a happy medium between the
individual and collectivism (Samuel and Thomas 115; Werfel, “Brief” 94). There is the loss of “bourgeois” individuality, but on the other hand, individual autonomy is kept. Individualism does not cease to exist in the community, but rather a person’s desire for betterment at the expense of others and other vices desist. The class differences between rich and poor, bourgeoisie and worker, and nobility and non-nobility of the ephemeral Gesellschaft become non-existent in the organic and eternal Gemeinschaft, in which all members are equal economically, legally, and socially (Schreyer, “neue Mensch” 19).

With the dawning of a new time period, Walter Hasenclever’s protagonist in his play Antigone states that determinants of traditional power structures such as economy, wealth, and birth would end: “Die Macht ist zu Ende. / Wer groß war, stürzt in den Abgrund /...Wer alles besaß, hat alles verloren ... die neue Welt bricht an” (2: 415). Humanistic qualities would be the measuring stick of a society’s worth (Edschmid, “Jugend“ 28), and members would enjoy a mutual recognition and respect for each other so that they are able to interact with other people who accept both their degree of likeness and difference.

The Expressionist Gemeinschaft is also indefinite for the most part. On the one hand, it remains indefinable partly because it is challenging to describe using current language and next to impossible to fathom using “bourgeois” thought processes. On the other hand, its indistinctness is also purposefully meant to promote diversity which would positively affect equality, fairness, humanism, and, for some Expressionists, individual self-determination. These qualities were superior alternatives to and corrections of the experience of suffering, pain, and other feelings on the part of the human being and occurred with the rejuvenation and in the community (Pinthus, “Zuvor“ 28). Thus, the
community is without fear and other terrible emotions and situations that were so central to throwing the individual (Toller, 5: 117). This lack of fear is evident at the end of Walter Hasenclever’s play *Die Menschen* in which human beings begin to sentence themselves impartially and others sacrifice for others in a utopian world. Consideration for other human beings, and not fear of punishment, motivates these characters’ actions. There is the anarchical absence of governmental authority within the *Gemeinschaft* because members finally take responsibility for their own actions by condemning themselves. The community’s decentralization distributes power equally eliminating privileges so that Rubiner wrote that “Gemeinschaft ist höchste Freiheit des Einzelnen und Raum für alle andern,” and René Schickele thought that the community was “freegrowing“ (”freiwachsenden“) (“Schar“ 2; 3: 281). To help realize its unboundedness, late Expressionists tried to practice tolerance among themselves and towards others. For example, Expressionists permitted a plurality of debate within their journals and accepted contributions for such diverse writers such as the Futurist Marinetti, Heinrich Mann, Bronnen, the conservative publisher Eugen Diederichs and Johst. In the *Weißen Blätter*, Schickele allowed not only Germans but also American, Belgian, Czechoslovakian, Danish, English, French, and Hungarian authors to publish pieces (Kolinsky, *Engagierter* 36). This embracement of foreignness is also inherent in the diverse ethnicities of literary Expressionists themselves: Werfel, Ehrenstein, and Toller were Jewish while Benn’s mother was French, Schickele’s mother was Swiss-French (Sokel 180), Kandinsky was Russian, and Iwan Goll was both Jewish and French. This diversity undoubtedly exposed Expressionism to different perspectives promulgating a variety of artistic norms within the movement (Edschmid, “Stand” 205). However,
even within this aesthetic plurality, there should be a unity. Expressionist

Stationendramen consist of several equal scenes, each of which usually concentrates on
one single moral, but come together to construct the whole of the drama. In addition, the
Expressionist prosaist Alfred Döblin wrote about the novel that “[w]enn ein Roman nicht
wie ein Regenwurm in zehn Stücke geschnitten werden kann und jeder Teil bewegt sich
selbst, dann taugt er nicht“ ("Bemerkungen“ 21). On a small scale, this aestheticism
reflected Expressionist desire for humanity to experience “absolute freedom” whose chief
characteristic was a unified plurality.

Additionally, this pluralistic freedom stems from ethnic, national, and racial
heterogeneity and the unregulated nature of a utopian, and in many cases anarchistic
freedom that exists in the community, but communal members also enjoy the safety and
control of a unified existence. This ultimate freedom rejected all ills that Expressionists
believed had fragmented and restricted one’s liberty. In as much as possible,
Expressionists rebuffed limits, borders, and constraints for the rejuvenated human being.
For this reason, at the end of the Walter Hasenclever’s play Der Sohn, the Son praises his
new, absolute freedom gained through a rejuvenation, which was primarily his liberation
from patriarchal repression: “Jetzt höchste Kraft in Menschen zu verkünden, / zur
höchsten Freiheit, ist mein Herz erneut!“ (2: 322)[emphasis mine]. There is no
permanent top-down structure in the Expressionist community, but rather a horizontal
relationship among participants to maintain egalitarianism. At the same time, there is no
compulsion allowing members to maintain difference and dignity. In 1918, Leonhard
wrote that in the community, “da war Freiheit, Austausch, Hin und Her“ (Leonhard,
“Verkehr und Gemeinschaft“ 292). True freedom was autonomy for the subject within
the Gemeinschaft’s broad, defining principles and control and safety: control and safety because of the unity in the comm-unity and because of the new existence gained in the dismissal of current reality’s negative elements which previously dominated the individual.

In concluding this segment, this paragraph examines a further meaning to a term that this work has already discussed. The characteristics of Expressionist solutions mentioned in this section – unity, freedom, nonviolence, love, internationality, and humanitarianism to name a few – must materialize through the human being answering the Expressionist author’s Schrei to community. This “call” is none other than the Expressionist writer’s work, which may consist of not only solutions, but very often also the problems of current reality and the process to these solutions. An individual’s embracement of Expressionists’ assertions in their Schrei brings about salvational release for and the cry in the individual. This “scream” causes the individual to become vitalistic, liberate, and empower himself by accepting the Expressionist community. According to Expressionists, the correct aestheticism was undoubtedly important in the realization of this Schrei, but the author remained the most seminal ingredient. His leadership was absolutely necessary to realize a new humanity as this chapter’s concluding section will demonstrate.

Conclusion: Art and the Artist

The Expressionist Johannes Becher, who later became Minister of Culture in the German Democratic Republic, wrote in the poem “Vorbereitung” that the public should first experience the artistic work leading to its transformation, reach the conclusion of the
Expressionist teachings, and ecstatically propagate this message causing *Wandlungen* in others: “Der Dichter meldet strahlende Akkorde,… / O Trinität des Werks: Erlebnis, Formulierung, Tat… / Laßt und die Schlagwetter-Atmosphäre verbreiten! - / Lernt! Vorbereitet! Übt euch!“ (Pinthus, *Menschheitsdämmerung* 213).124 As Becher’s poem states, the artist, art, and literature enjoyed a special role in Expressionist beliefs. New art forms and a new aestheticism were necessary to realize the new ideals of a future epoch. Classical aesthetics were in general too established, and realism, the preceeding dominant literary movement, gave mimetic interpretations of life, but Expressionists were not interested in verisimilitude of a world that they thought was lost. Their goal was to transcend the world and not to repeat it; therein lay the failure of realists to effect any positive change (Edschmid, “Jugend” 17). With verve, Expressionists criticized Naturalism’s superficiality which failed to reach inside the individual where one could find the true origins and solutions to societal problems. Naturalists wanted to reform society through science and positivistic methods, most notably causality and psychology. However, causality’s neverending chain of causes and effects failed to solve the roots of the problem because it dealt solely with a phenomenon of the true problem while the problem still lurked under the surface. Likewise, psychology meant long explanations, calculation, and inaction. The scientific observation and analysis in psychology was devoid of the intense emotion that Expressionists maintained was sorely needed to throw the individual and realize the community.

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124 Becher’s poem also indicates that there is no default acceptance of Expressionist teachings because of competition from others so that there must be a constant cycle of reevaluation and preparation of means to the New Human Being and the community. Although I have written a great deal about their methodology in a comprehensive manner in this chapter, the several components (i.e. signifiers) of Expressionists’ methods were developed by them gradually as a result of learning not unlike the one described by Becher in the poem. The radical conservative Franz Schauwecker wrote a similar statement: “Dieser Weg: Erlebnis, Erkenntnis, Glaube, Arbeit, Bewährung des Glaubens ist unumgänglich” (“Dichter” 224).
On the other hand, Expressionists believed that their aesthetics – much as the intoxication, the New Human Being, and the community – were the best way to appeal to and, hence, reach people. Thus, art should guide the individual and be effective in transforming the world (Koffka, “Vom ‘tätigen’” 158). Pinthus stated that in particular the newest art, or Expressionism, frees one from current reality and can access the true reality beyond human recognition. Through this process, art can bring form to life:

...Wirklichkeit, von der wir nicht wissen, was eigentlich an sich sie ist, jenes uns ganz Fremde, das außer uns, ohne uns ist...und jene Kunst, die ganz und gar aus uns selbst strömt, die ganz in der Idee, in der von uns gegebenen Form lebt...was eigentlich haben sie miteinander gemein?...Was anderes, als daß wir Kunst Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten, Requisiten wie eine Haut abnehmen von den Erscheinungen, welche die Wirklichkeit unseren Sinnen darbietet...Die Wirklichkeit vom Umriß ihrer Erscheinung zu befreien, uns selbst von ihr zu befreien, sie zu überwinden nicht mit ihren eigenen Mitteln, nicht indem wir ihr entfliehen, sondern, sie um so inbrünstiger umfassend, durch des Geists Bohrkraft, Beweglichkeit, Klärungssehnsucht, durch des Gefühls Intensität und Explosivkraft sie besiegen und beherrschen...das ist der gemeinsamste Wille der jüngsten Dichtung. (Pinthus, “jüngsten Dichtung“ 232-3)

Pinthus’ statements about the intensity of feeling necessary to view the Wesen highlight one of Expressionist art’s primary means for the realization of its effects: the readers or spectators’ experience of the artwork. Of the two preeminent forms of literature – namely poetry and drama – which communicate the Expressionist transformation, poetry better conveys the subjective feelings of suffering, transforming, and transformed selves and forms of perception: these characteristics of Expressionist poetry make the experience shared between speaker and reader. Poetry can engender especially well the same feelings of loneliness, fear, chaos, and nervousness in the reader that the speaker experiences. It estranges through content and language much as the several examples of existential emotions and Lichtenstein’s “Die Dämmerung” from this chapter
demonstrate.\textsuperscript{125} In the latter, the author disintegrates normal syntax and semantics to unbalance the reader. By attacking traditional language, he and other Expressionists attack one of the powers which help define human beings and their reality. In 1923, Becher discussed this point: “Alogische Bomben unterminieren den traditionellen akademischen Satzbau, die bürgerliche Spracharchitektur; Rhythmik, Melodik, Metaphorik schwankt; die Sprache selbst produziert unabhängig von ihrem Schöpfer…eigengesetzlich gegeneinander sich bewegende, anarchische, gegenseitig explosivartig sich pressende Verknotungen“ (“Brief Bechers“ 58). Despite its own abstractness and arbitrariness, language could be used on a small scale to create the abstraction of an individual. However, it was not always neologisms, “incorrect” punctuation, and other “ungrammatical” rules that served this function in language. In his famous essay “Über das Geistige in der Kunst,” Kandinsky argues that the phonetic worth of a word supercedes its importance of meaning. Primarily through a word’s elusive “innerer Klang,” but also in conjunction with visual and aural elements such as color, form, action, tones, and music, the artist could engender existential strife within the listener (Kandinsky 5, 25, 38, 45, 91).

\textsuperscript{125} There are several Expressionist examples similar to Lichtenstein’s poem which use language to question reality through intoxication. One example is Max Hermann-Neisse’s poem “Notturno”: “Wind würgt den Wald. Wie totgeschlagen liegt / ein dunkler Teich...” (\textit{Lyrik des expressionistischen Jahrzehnts 118}). Another is Lichtenstein’s “Punkt”:

\begin{verbatim}
Die wüsten Straßen fließen lichterloh
durch den erloschnen Kopf. Und tun mir weh.
Ich fühle deutlich, daß ich bald vergeh –
Dornrosen meines Fleisches, stecht nicht so.

Die Nacht verschimmelt. Gif tlaternenschein
hat, kriechend, sie mit grünem Dreck beschmiert.
Das Herz ist wie ein Sack. Das Blut erfrrie.
Die Welt fällt um. Die Augen stürzen ein. (\textit{Lyrik des expressionistischen Jahrzehnts 90})
\end{verbatim}
With its visual stimuli, aural spurs, and possibilities of stress, Kandinsky’s theory resembles Expressionist theories of drama. Expressionist stage backgrounds were often three-dimensional, and the plays themselves should be choppy and morbid for the audience to overcome current real life through abstraction. In this regard, Iwan Goll wanted masks, stilts, posters, and bullhorns; in 1920, he wrote in reference to going behind reality that “Wir wollen Theater. Wir wollen unwirklichste Wahrheit” (“Überdrama“ 267). In “Der beseelte und der psychologische Mensch,” Paul Kornfeld states that even acting must be unrealistic (11). In portraying authors’ inner projection or vision of transformed individuals, the actors should appear “ekstatisch und wahnsinnig…befreit von den Launen eines Charakters und den Zufälligkeiten einer Individualität, unabhängig von ihrem Körper und ungestört von allem, was nicht ihres wahren Wesens ist” (Otten, Introduction 13). The stage actor could also appeal directly to the audience, sometimes even with their physical involvement, to cause their abstraction. Conversely, the novel was often too long and complex to communicate the intoxication necessary for the transformation of human beings. Novelists focused too much on character development, a topic for which Expressionist dramatists cared little so that the short duration of plays was then perfect for their figures’ presentation (Koffka “Über die Zeit“ 371). Much as poetry, theater was an ideal medium to communicate the pathos and intensity of literary Expressionism (Goll, “Überdrama“ 266). However, while poetry expressed well the inner feelings of human beings, an Expressionist play could

126 A good example of the actor’s portrayal in relationship to the playwright’s vision is the son in Hasenclever’s Der Sohn. Although the artist’s vision is the injustice of patriarchal relations, the hyperbolic portrayal of the son’s suffering and his extreme pathos are the intense feelings of the author who wrote for the original staging of the play that “[d]ieses Stück…hat den Zweck, die Welt zu ändern. Es ist die Darstellung des Kampfes durch die Geburt des Lebens, der Aufruhr des Geistes gegen die Wirklichkeit…Dieses Drama ist die Menschwerdung” (5: 272-3). The actor should communicate the intensity of the artist’s vision. Other unrealistic depictions could show the world through the eyes of a thrown individual.
better show the complete, objective development – from the problems of current reality to the solutions of the community – of the transformation. Thus, although their goal is to transcend reality through their plays, Expressionist writers must first show reality. For instance, Expressionist characters are often disoriented much as humanity is disoriented, and Expressionist drama shows real-life conflicts – such as between mid-life crises, poverty, war and the human being – and the resolution of those conflicts on stage. In this sense, their plays deal with real life through the poet’s explication of reality and communicate meaning in addition to throwing the individual.

However, as this chapter has documented, their exposition of the earthly phenomena for fellow humanity was only a prelude to their preaching and promulgation of their values. Kurt Hiller mentioned both these points, but also posited Expressionists as prophets in the latter: “Es gibt zweierlei: zu den Ereignissen Worte machen, und durch Worte Ereignisse machen. Reportage und Prophetie; nichts Drittes” (Hiller, “Philosophie des Ziels“ 211). Also maintaining the propheticness of Expressionism, Lothar Schreyer wrote that Expressionist writers had a grasp of the absolute that the average human being could not see (“Bühnenkunstwerk” 42). They claimed that their vision had the weight of messianic authority resembling a religion. The Expressionist prophet feels the fear and pain of the world heaped upon him because he is the savior of humanity; he sacrifices for all human beings and mediates between the earthly and the heavenly (Wolfenstein, “Über Lebendigkeit” 290). Along with their divine status, they were “warrior artists” who could through their leadership draw “Waffen...wie von einem gewaltigen Magneten“ and remove them from chaotic hands (Wolfenstein, “Kämpfer“ 179).

127 Several Expressionists endured many of the same emotions that caused Aufbruch; many suffered nervous breakdowns, crises of identity, psychological illnesses, and committed suicide (Zimmermann 176).
The idea of “leadership” or *Führertum*, which was mentioned in the last sentence, was one of the most critical elements in the entire process to the Expressionist *Wandlung* of humanity: Expressionist writers were the *Führer* in disseminating their vision.\(^{128}\) Artists, writers, and intellectuals had a mission to help throw and lead human beings to the bounty of the utopian community, and several Expressionists unwaveringly believed in their superiority for this task.\(^{129}\) Once the *Gemeinschaft* had been formed, they would no longer lead, but rather would become equal to all New Human Beings in the community (Rubiner, *Gewaltlosen* 122). That Germans were desperate for leadership to combat the array of problems confronting them made charismatic leaders and their belief attractive.\(^{130}\) Because Expressionist writers are the only people to promote their ideals, they must communicate their “correct” vision to humanity of economic, political, and social problems and of the community through their works and channel the energy of *Tat*. Most Expressionists were hopeful that in the near future, their community could become reality, but Expressionists were under no delusions about the difficulty in realizing their community and several of their own statements portended their failure. In some Expressionist plays, leaderless, thrown individuals make false decisions (Rubiner, *Gewaltlosen*) while in others, a false leader appears and successfully challenges the

\(^{128}\) Although this essay has already mentioned several of these characteristics in the formation of the community, it is interesting to see that leaders also encompass them. According to Hiller, this leadership constituted the diametric combinations of fire and coolness, Caesar and the soul of Jesus Christ, destructor and constructor, and a weaponless Bonaparte (“Logokratie” 240). Thus, the community becomes a reflection of the leader.

\(^{129}\) Even oral statements of other leaders are sanctioned through Expressionist writings. In his poem “Engel,” Ludwig Rubiner writes about and defines charismatic, oral leadership: “*Führer*, du stehst klein, eine zuckende Blutsäule auf der schmalen Tribüne / ... *Führer* sprich! Um dich ringen die Engel auf die kristallenen Bergen hochstrahlend und heiß” (*Menschheitsdämmerung* 248-9)[emphasis mine].

\(^{130}\) This work does not base the word “charisma” on a modern, loose sense of the word that has much to do with personality and likeability, but rather on the perceptions of a group of believers about the messianic and prophetic message, mission, and authority of a leader. This concept originally derives from Max Weber (See *Economy and Society*).
Expressionist leader (Hohendahl 136-8; Rubiner, *Gewaltlosen* 116-9). Expressionist authors also acknowledged the possibility that a thrown individual might not accept their leadership and could remain in this extremely agitated state eventually breaking down from constant pressure. For instance, Grete Hinkemann in Toller’s play *Hinkemann* commits suicide because of the buildup of existential fear she has in her life. In addition, Expressionist authors’ comments about their own isolation, loneliness, homelessness, fear, and confusion in modern life may be an attempt to demonstrate to Germans Expressionists’ comprehension of current reality, Germans’ distress, and solutions; however, at the same time, these emotions also show humanity’s rebuff of their ideas.

René Schickele wrote an autobiographical novel entitled *Der Fremde*, and the Expressionist authors entitled poetry anthologies *Der Weltfreund*, *Wir sind*, *An Europa*, *Verbrüderung*, and *Einander*, which hint at the desired brotherhood that Expressionist authors wanted with humanity but that did not occur. In another example, the necessity of proclamations, such as those from Alfred Wolfenstein in 1917 before the war even ended warning Germans “Vergesset den Krieg nicht! Wir rufen allen Gegenwärtigen und Kommenden zu: Behaltet den Krieg im Gedächtnis!,” indicates the Expressionist concern with the German populace’s possible rejection of their values.

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131 In Unruh’s play *Das Geschlecht*, two Soldatenführer murder the Mother who attempts to convince the Volk to reject the soldiers’ values. Unruh’s play *Platz* has a similar story. The protagonist Dietrich fails to convince a team of soldiers of a community based on love, and they instead choose the conservative leader Schleich.

132 By depicting their own isolation in their works, Expressionists hoped that readers and audiences would theoretically identify with their feelings and then embrace their utopian community. Reflexivity in Expressionist writing – for instance, “Ich fühle mich isoliert” – can indicate their desire for other human beings to trust their judgement and direction because they are expressing many of the same subjective thoughts and feelings as other distressed human beings (Anz, *Existenz* 146).

133 In his poem “An den Leser,” Franz Werfel tried to communicate his desire for acceptance among the German populace: “Mein einziger Wunsch ist, Dir, o Mensch, verwandt zu sein” (*Menschheitsdämmerung* 279), and in his first novel while still in school, Alfred Döblin wrote: “Ich will jetzt zu den Menschen, meinen Brüdern, meinen Schwestern und Geliebten. Mich verlangt es so nach meinen Menschen” (“Stille Bewohner” 357).
(“Gedächtnis” 22). Germans would not easily forget the First World War as this work’s second chapter has already stated, but on the whole, it would not be for the humanistic reasons that Wolfenstein listed in the rest of his essay. Much like Wolfenstein, Rubiner was also apprehensive about Germans’ memory and their “mit gewaltsam herbeigewünschtem Vergessen” (Rubiner, “Vorbemerkungen” 7). According to Rubiner, part of this possible collective amnesia is due to the apathy to real change on the part of the person who, according to Rubiner, lives in a world that is like “jene gemalten Wandelpanoramamen, die im vorgetäuschten Eisenbahnwagen die Illusion des Reisens erregen“ (Rubiner, “Vorbemerkungen” 7).134 People must be constantly reminded of the reality of the world’s horrors if communal Wandlung is to occur.

Memory is important for Expressionists as well as radical Weimar conservatives but for entirely different reasons. The commercialization of late Expressionist literature was to an extent the result of attempting to combat the misremembrance of the war and the issues that Expressionists believed caused it.135 They were trying to reach as wide an audience as possible to give thrown Germans the opportunity to choose the Expressionist community. However, it remains to be seen if an individual would make this “correct” choice for the Expressionist Gemeinschaft or even how their vision of reality was not open to adaption just as they suggest that “bourgeois” reality was open to adaption.136 The Expressionist theoritician and prosaist Kasimir Edschmid stresses the necessity of finding the correct form of life once the human being begins to see the world differently:

134 Rubiner’s statement is also interesting for its reality is much like film in that it is an illusion; that is why Expressionists took to film so well: reality is arbitrary for them.
135 For both groups, the war is what you make it. Hence, memory is the presentness of the past.
136 The transformation of the individual does not necessarily occur instantly after the intoxication and the individual may be searching for the correct form of life for a long period of time necessitating a pacification of the shocked individual and return to normal life. Although the intoxication is enjoyable for short periods of time, a person can only remain in this state so long before exhaustion.
“Allein die andere Art des Blickpunkts verwirrt den Menschen oft das Dargestellte. Da beschaut und nicht gesehen wird, täuscht der neue Umriß“ (dichterischen Expressionismus 62). Expressionist leadership was the only means to successfully channel the intoxicated individual’s energy to the Gemeinschaft and dispel rivals who propagated similar ideas. Edschmid maintains that writers must be the avant-garde in combatting the violence and unjust wielding of power that is occurring in this generation: “Bewußtsein der Verantwortung bringt die Verpflichtung. Ahnen, Vorhut zu sein kommender Menschheit, großen Marschtritts ähnlichen Wollens Vortreter zu sein nur in einer Epoche der glatten Macht, des Militärs, der Knebelung gegen die Freiheit und den Geist der Zeit, zwischen tausend Schlachten der Völker...“ (“Jugend” 30). His and other Expressionists’ protest against the curbing of freedoms and the use of power in the military dictatorship during and after the First World War opposed the content of Weimar right-wingers’ structures. However, the success of radical Weimar conservatives’ ideology demonstrates that the decision for an Expressionist community depends wholly on the intoxicated individual; he or she must decide for a possibility. Unfortunately, too few chose to embrace the Expressionist community and too many espoused radical Weimar conservatives’ Gemeinschaft.

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Chapter 4

Und da wir einen der größten der Weltgeschichte, einen Krieg verloren, in dem die ganze stoffliche und geistige Substanz des Volkes gebunden war, so mag man er messen, was dieser Verlust bedeutet. – Walter Benjamin, “Theorien des deutschen Fascismus“ 3: 243


Da die Bewegung [der Expressionismus] kein Privateigentum ist, kann sich jeder von ihr aneignen, was er will und wie viel er will – Alfred Döblin, “Von der Freiheit eines Dichtermenschen“ 251

Radical Weimar Conservatives: Violence and Nationalism within the Utopian Community

Applicable As Rubiner and Wolfenstein’s comments at the end of the last chapter indicate, Expressionists were concerned about Germans’ memory of past events, most notably the war. Radical Weimar conservatives had the identical concern so that both groups used the war’s commemoration in postwar Germany as a means to advocate their interpretation of this monumental event. It is within this vein that scholars have criticized the mythization of the war experience within ultraconservatives’ accounts of war. Wolfgang Natter claimed that conservatives distorted Germans’ memory of the war, and the social and cultural historian Georg L. Mosse wrote that “[o]ut of the Great War evolved a myth of the war experience…” (“Appropriation of Nature” 102; Natter 6). In

137The farther the temporal distance from an event, usually the greater this event’s importance for present memory when used as material for fictional literature. For instance, Brecht’s message in his historical drama Leben des Galilei is more applicable to the 1940s than to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Brecht’s play was not meant as an exercise in historiography. Natter broaches the subject of “belatedness” (Nachträglichkeit) from Freud, which helps explain the ability of distortion of memory by radical Weimar conservatives (5). After some temporal distance, the event is able to be reinterpreted and reinvested with new meaning at a later date. Although Freud never gave any long explanation on the term, it is found scattered throughout his writings (See for instance, Traumdeutungen 142).
the first volume of his well-known, two-volume work, Klaus Theweleit argues that the perceived “multitude of impulses” by front soldiers leads to automatic “snap” fictionality in their war writings (88). Although Natter and Mosse’s declarations are true at face value, Theweleit’s interpretation is debatable because such an assertion dismisses the deliberateness and calculatedness of extreme conservatives’ message in their pieces.

Another and better way to explain the truth, or lack thereof, in radical Weimar conservatives’ war accounts may be to examine their writings’ reliance on memory and experience.

Ultraconservatives use these two interrelated and yet distinctly different concepts in such a way that the reader’s viewpoint may be clouded, and he thinks that they are the same. Memory is not only a possible factual recollection of the event (in other words, recollection of the experience of the event), but can also incorporate an interpretative meaning of the event because it occurs at a later date. Many ultraconservatives’ inhuman and persistently brutal descriptions of violence, battle, and postwar life and events as well as much of the accompanying emotional experience of suffering, pain, and chaos are plausible, but their interpretations of and meanings given to these narratives and emotions are the true problems. In the war’s case, memory is unreliable because its ideational content – the discrediting of Weimar and the construction of the dictatorship – has become intertwined with war events. Weimar right-wingers’ writings ensure that Germans will not forget the war, but that which Germans remember is not accurate: the

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138 Weimar right-wingers’ writings are almost exclusively for a male audience, hence, the reference to “he” here and throughout this chapter.

139 An example could be the American Civil War which undoubtedly had several meanings for citizens from varying geographical regions as well as different ethnicities after its end. The Northerners attributed a different meaning to war than Southerners, and recently emancipated slaves probably had yet another take on it.
war myth is extreme conservatives’ exegesis of these events and these events’ application to the postwar period.

A primary means for radical conservatives to obscure memory is an attempt to persuade readers of their writings’ authenticity. As chapter two has already stated, ultraconservatives’ works were largely essays, novels, treatises, op-ed articles, doctored diaries, and sometimes loosely-based autobiographies. Several extreme conservatives’ diaries and autobiographical works were supposedly their own actions whether in war, in the Freikorps, in terrorist organizations, or simply within Weimar and, thus, supported themselves to their claims of veracity and the dismissal of others’ “inauthentic” claims, including Expressionists’ assertions. In addition, a realistic style of narrative in these works and novels bolsters assertions of authority and trustworthiness, and in comparison to Expressionists, many Weimar right-wingers did not concentrate greatly on aesthetic form as seen in the genres that they favored. In this sense, they did not oppose society through aestheticism as much as Expressionists: content was more important than any ambiguous aestheticism so that the largest possible audience could understand the work (Linder 117). The only widespread exceptions to this rule of lack of aesthetic tendencies were among some novelists and völkisch writers. For instance, according to the völkisch writer Erwin Kolbenheyer, writing should create a “Gefühlserlebnis” through which “Inhalt, Rhythmus, Wortwahl, Satzbau zu einer Spannung [steigert]…daß mit der Lösung der Spannung ein Ordnungsimpuls auf den Teil der Gefühlswelt ausgeübt wird, der durch die Dichtung inhaltlich berührt wurde” (Kolbenheyer, “Befreiungskampf“ 23; See also Kolbenheyer, “Lebenswert” 91, 93). Kolbenheyer states that the author creates tension

\[140\] In many of their novels, their writing is supposedly historical account; yet, they often give few dates or place names in their works showing that they wanted to transcend time and place.
through structure, words, and other factors and bestows activity on readers much as in Expressionist works. Some radical Weimar conservatives also used an aesthetic of horror in their novels to try to shock their audiences. However, as Kolbenheyer stated previously and Hermann Stehr indicates, it was not only the aestheticism but also the topical content of their works that “in unseren Seelenraum treffen,…daß wir aus [diesen Werken] eine neue Welt – oder Lebensanschauung empfangen” (Stehr 12).

This chapter will focus on the novel because of its prevalence among all extreme conservatives’ writings, and early-twentieth-century Germans’ predeliction for the novel as a genre. These works could be called “transformation novels” (Wandlungsromane) because they often revolve around one man’s overcoming countless obstacles to achieve personal rejuvenation. For instance, in Beumelburg’s Gruppe Bosemüller, the protagonist, Siewers, is a green recruit who is thrown through battle just as many members of group Bosemüller, but unlike the others, he is able to discover war events’ meaning, namely in the communal bonds with all others in the group. Novels give a totality – a concept throughout Weimar right-wingers’ writings – that drama or poetry could not demonstrate because the novelist relays in greater detail characters’ actions, dialogue, and thoughts, or in other words their inner and outer worlds. At the same time and in conjunction with their realistic style and authenticity which makes their writings seem to be truth, they practice strict authorial control giving closed interpretations of events, motives, and thoughts. Conversely, a play, for instance, could be subject to revision by director, producer, or actors and, thus, allow more democratic participation.

Extreme conservatives did not want to promote genuine democratic experiences with their novels because the experiences to which their protagonists are exposed are
meant to be applicable to their readers. Ultraconservatives want to reach both readers who have and have not undergone occurrences and emotions which are depicted in their novels. Both can adopt the events and feelings as their own through construction in their imagination, and in enduring them again, the former would rely on a false total recall for their reconstruction in the mind.\footnote{The reading experience blurs, distorts, and even supplants the earlier war experience by adding ultraconservatives’ interpretations of the war.} For instance, a reader who was a former soldier is horrified again through the literary depictions of war’s brutality, or the citizen feels perhaps insecurity in recollecting postwar revolutionary chaos. In this regard, Werner Beumelburg’s war novel \textit{Gruppe Bosemüller} comes to mind because it often uses stream of consciousness and onomatopoetic devices – “Rrummm,” “bautz,” “bummm,” “rrreng,” “wumm” of exploding artillery – which attempt to convey thoughts in combat and the war itself to his readership (Beumelburg, \textit{Bosemüller} 32, 40, 42, 43). In such instances, the distinctions between central character and reader should lessen or even the reader theoretically enters and becomes part of the protagonist. This intertwinement was to have future resonance, importance, and potency according to radical Weimar conservatives.

Much as late Expressionists, Weimar right-wingers wrote confidently about their prospects for future success in periodicals such as \textit{Die Kommenden}, in advertisements which discuss the “kommenden Neuen” (Tat Advertisement \textit{Revolution}), or in works such as Moeller van den Bruck’s treatise \textit{Das dritte Reich} in which he writes that “es kommt eine neue Generation herauf, von der…die \textit{Wandlung} bejaht wird...“ (160; See also Ernst 23; Stoffregen 11)[emphasis mine]. Despite these many declarations, the best example for their confidence in their teachings was the claim that Germans were fated to
fulfill ultraconservatives’ community. “Fate” or Schicksal is nationally, generationally, and historically specific; for instance, Weimar Germans were born German and into this time period, in which because of their historical situation, they could best experience the German completeness in comparison to other generations of Germans. They are chosen people struggling among difficult circumstances to realize their fate which requires selflessness, intoxication, action, and tremendous responsibility (Moeller, Reich 26; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 11, 213). Such Schicksalen are intensity and the precipice, but also offer the most potential because they demand giving up one’s life for a cause. Hartmut Plaas writes that…

*[h]ier war…keine Berechnung von Vorteil und Möglichkeit, hier war nur Wille zum Handeln, Wille, den Sprung nach dem letzten zu tun. Hier reiste die erste Schicksalsgemeinschaft des kommenden deutschen Tages…Hier handelt es sich nicht mehr um Amt oder Stellung, um Gehorsamspflicht und Dienstauffassung, erst recht nicht um Patriotenpflichten ‘freier, vaterlandsliebender’ Bürger…denn in ihrem Kämpfenmüssen lebte der schicksalhafte Zwang, mit eigenen Fäusten dem Rad der Geschichte in die Speichen zu greifen“ (171)[emphasis mine].

Fate is an unalterable, predetermined, and innate situation which one can, momentarily evade or hinder in ultraconservatives’ opinion but which one must eventually accept (Moeller, Reich 121; Spengler, Preußentum 4). The crises of Weimar and the continuance of Germans’ hardships were proof of their avoidance of their fate after World War I. Realization of fate requires a decision for right-wingers’ beliefs, and with this choice, a person finally chooses to exhibit a historical will, or in other words a firm

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142 During Weimar, Germans showed a fascination with the future whether it be in the increased interest in science fiction writings about futurity from Hans Dominik, in films such as Metropolis and Die Frau im Mond, or even in nebulous prognostications of an approaching great age such as those from literary Expressionists and Weimar right-wingers. Germans’ interest in the future occurred to a large extent because of their miserable present.
determination to play a role in history (Freyer, *Revolution* 54, 61; See also Plaas 178). By default, this desire for transformation requires that the person become historically conscious of reality’s current problems and the correct solutions to this situation (Freyer, *Revolution* 52).

Extreme conservatives truly thought that they had a feel for the dynamic of the time period, but beneath this show of confidence was the reality that the future is difficult to predict, and their community had not come to fruition during the republic. Much as with Expressionists, this point is reflected in right-wingers’ consideration of themselves as outsiders on the fringes of society. Excellent examples are the title and dedication – *Die Geächteten* or “The Outcasts” and the *Versprengten* or the “scattered” – to Ernst von Salomon’s 1930 autobiographical novel about his “communal” experiences within small cadres of like-minded individuals. The community’s lack of realization was due to powerful and problematic deterrents in decadent, constraining, and dystopic Germany. This chapter begins with an examination of ultraconservatives’ view of the “problems” in early-twentieth-century Germany.

**“Problems?” or Oppositions to the Community**

Weimar’s destruction was a fundamental and common goal among extreme conservatives: almost all economic, social, or other national problems were the result of its existence according to ultraconservatives. Weimar was the end result from a “lost”

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143 Paradoxically, a person realizes this *Wandlung* and becomes relevant for their time period because they have transcended time by accepting their true fate, namely the community, which represents eternal values. Once within the community, members live completely in the utopian present so that the community is both the present and the future and has negated a false past (Schauwecker, *Aufbruch* 107).

144 In an alteration of one’s normal conception of fate’s often adverse results, radical Weimar conservatives posit from their perspective a positive utopian solution in acceptance of *Schicksal*. 
war and had signed the unacceptable peace treaty at Versailles. It was then associated with not only defeat but also defeatism, and, hence from right-wingers’ perspective, bred an attitude that ensured its failure. Further evidence of its approaching demise as well as its terrible deficiencies was the constant crises during its existence. Right-wingers argued that Germans had become enslaved to outer events such as inflation, economic crisis, or the treaty of Versailles, and these calamities led to a Scheinfrieden. Contributing to Germans’ catastrophic situation and Weimar’s destruction were too many anarchical liberties, which Weimar guaranteed through its espousal of political, economic, cultural, and social liberalism. A product of Enlightenment faith in the individual, liberalism was an old, defunct, and unfeasible freedom as Weimar showed. This individualism disintegrated collectivities such as religions, fatherlands, and humanity, and, thus, was cultural decomposition (Boehm, “Bindung” 35; Gleichen 382; Moeller, Reich 100; Schauwecker, “Verwandlung” 29). For this reason, Moeller referenced Tönnies Gesellschaft-Gemeinschaft dichotomy and wrote that “[d]er Liberalismus ist der Ausdruck einer Gesellschaft, die nicht Gemeinschaft ist...Jeder Mensch, der sich nicht mehr in der Gemeinschaft fühlt, ist irgendwie liberaler Mensch” (Reich 82-3).

Dovetailing with right-wingers’ critique of liberalism was democracy. As a republic, Weimar was a utilitarian, rational, and abstract governmental form that was not German. With the advent of Weimar democracy, the massification of society was soon to follow. A parliament reflected the will of “die Ziffer, die Summierung, die wurzellose Wählermasse,” and with several mediocre members engaging in endless discussion, parliaments did not inspire greatness in Germans (Moeller, Reich 114; See also Boehm, Kleines 16; Höhn 66, 104). Thus, democracy was rule of the inferior (Jung, Herrschaft
der Minderwertigen; Moeller “Außenseiter” 71), pluralistic, and stagnant. Because of its passivity, it could not solve Germany’s most pressing problems at the country’s greatest time of need. Moeller writes that “Revolution und Republik haben kein Genie hervorgebracht, sondern...Geduldmenschen, nicht Tätmenschen: Gestoßene, nicht Stoßende: Langmut, nicht Wagemut: Gehenlassen, nicht Inangriffsannahme” (Reich 26).

Although the tumult of Weimar may not have allowed it, democracy theoretically represented contentment, comfort, and peace, but peacetime only offered emasculation, moderation, and weakness according to radical Weimar conservatives.

Even taking these abovementioned faults into consideration, the best evidence for democracy’s inadequacies were the political parties. On the one hand, individual parties were part of a lifeless parliamentary mechanization (F. Jünger, Aufmarsch 42), but on the other hand, there were so many parties fighting for their own ideals that Weimar democracy – a necessity of democracy is the ability to reach compromises for success (Metzner 195; Moeller, Reich 26) – suffered from balkanization. As Leopold Dingräve states, they work “nebeneinander” instead of with each other (32); the parties were especially divisive through the promotion of class warfare between Germans (Stadtler 420).

The failure of elected officials to solve the problems of Weimar led many to view politicians’ statements as empty proclamations which they mouthed to be elected but then failed to deliver. Through their equivocations, outright deceptions, and tricks, they fail to represent Germans, but conversely, they represented their own and large corporations’ interests well (Spengler, Preußententum 58). According to Schauwecker, Social Democracy is an “umgekehrten Kapitalismus“ (Aufbruch 227), and in his essay

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145 Georg Kaiser promotes the same idea in his work Nebeneinander. Volkstück 1923, which this work will analyze in its next chapter.
Volk und Führer in der Jugendbewegung, Hans Blüher writes that the elected leader is an “Interessenvertreter” (4). Democratic rule yielded true control of Germany to capitalism by making the country beholden to a strong economy from which only capitalists really benefit (Höhn 40-52).

As indicated in the abovementioned statements, Weimar conservatives abhorred the capitalist economy. Capitalists exuded power in Weimar because of their wealth, but ultraconservatives believed that they did not deserve power because money, and thus wealth, is abstract and does not determine the worth of a man (Spengler, Untergang 1: 46-7, 2: 599-618). However, money is only one facet of a large, daunting, and complicated modern economy according to right-wingers who wanted a clear understanding between an action and its results. To exacerbate matters, according to Hans Freyer, the values that humans hold most dear – although subjective, contestible concepts – are being defined and trumped by the economy: “was man nicht kaufen kann – zum Beispiel die Wahrheit, der Staat, der Mensch – muß so lange von sich selbst abstrahiert, so lange zu gesellschaftlichem Interesse oder zu bloßer Technik neutralisiert werden, bis es auf Ökonomie reduziert ist” (Freyer, Revolution 23, 19). Industrial concerns, cartels, and joint-stock companies represent anonymous power and international high finance (Freyer, Revolution 48). They signaled the growth of unfettered mass consumption, consumerism, and competitively disadvantaged and financially squeezed small businessmen (Boehm, “Bindung” 42; Freyer 48; Peukert 176). Small businesses, storekeepers, and laborers were “schaffende” or “creating/working” persons as opposed to industrialists, bankers, and investors who were part of “raffende”

146 Despite preaching against the coziness between politics and industry, many conservative groups such as the Juni-Klub and the deutsche Herrenklub had industrialists as members who financially supported their activities. Their help was a great boost to the dissemination of conservative ideas.
or “hoarding” members of society (Niemann 215-6; Schauwecker, “Wesen des Nationalismus” 369). The latter’s work was parasitic and symbolic of the capitalistic order which promoted underhanded methods of acquiring wealth, brazen materialism, and cupidity. The First World War came to signify these damaging and selfish qualities of capitalism because the war had become a business for investors, armaments manufacturers, and other profiteers (Hesse 163, 208; Moeller, Reich 98; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 227, 276; Metzner 195). Extreme conservatives also applied these criticisms to German trade unions, which they accused of caring too much for only their interests leading to atomization and class differences among Germans (Jung 458-63).¹⁴⁷

Two main purveyors of capitalism in Weimar right-wingers’ views were the bourgeoisie and its mass. Salomon watches with disgust a fat burgher, a representative of this class, with “goldener Kettchen” and leafing “schmatzend” through the business section of the newspaper (Geächteten 384). This man illustrates the bourgeoisie’s gluttony and economic liberalism, but extreme conservatives also thought the bourgeoisie weak, rational, civil, peaceful, democratic, effeminate, and representative of contractual society: “wir haben einen abgründigen Haß...gegen die Klasse, die nicht opfern kann und will, weil sie zu feige ist, ihre Haut zu Markte zu tragen, gegen die Klasse, die durch liberale, weichliche und weibische Gesinnungslosigkeit der Aussatz der Nation...ist“ (Techow 578; See also Hesse 79). The bourgeois mass is also powerful as evidenced

¹⁴⁷The importance of the Stinnes-Legien agreement which created the Zentralarbeitsgemeinschaft in November 1918 also reinforced the potency of trade unions and portrayed major decisions that affected the entire nation as being made behind closed doors by a few individuals. In addition, labor thwarted radical Weimar conservatives’ goals such as the Kapp Putsch through their powerful influence in early-twentieth-century Germany so that Friedrich Georg Jünger attacked strikes and work stoppages (Aufmarsch 39) and Spengler called Weimar the “Diktatur der Gewerkschaften” (Spengler, Jahre 114). The Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch was planned by the East Prussian Agriculture minister Wolfgang Kapp and General Walter von Lüttwitz. The Freikorps Ehrhardt Brigade marched from Döberitz, 25 kilometers outside of Berlin, to the capital city on 12 March 1920 while the Ebert government fled to Dresden and then Stuttgart. The putsch failed because of a general strike by trade unions.
through the growing bureaucracy in modern Germany. At Salomon’s trial for giving support to the assassins of Walter Rathenau, Salomon calls the justice system and court proceedings a “Machine” because of their pedantry and monotony (Geächteten 403, 404). 

Salomon’s subsequent prison incarceration becomes a metaphor for the bourgeoisie’s compulsion of men to conform their lives to its rules. His prison life is controlled through rules and punishment from their violation; prison binds his activity, emotion, and freedom so that upon his release from jail, he has a fear of freedom reflecting real society in that people have difficulty overcoming inhibitions to experience the transformation: “Im Grunde hatte ich Furcht. Furcht vor der Freiheit? Furcht vor dem Wandel, vor der Erlösung aus der Starre?” (Geächteten 409, 501, 548)[emphasis mine]. After he leaves prison, Salomon describes the stagnation of the masses, their capitalist bent, and his incorporation into their body:

Was mich erschreckte und durchkältete, das waren die Menschen. Sie hatten keine Gesichter! Oder sie hatten alle dasselbe Gesicht. Diese Menschen schienen wie gefesselt, sie schienen sich nicht des Raumes und der Weite bewußt zu sein. Sie gingen stur, freudlos und ohne Ausdruck, beinahe wie Maschinen...bebend von Vitalität, aber keinesfalls lebendig...Ich fügte mich ein in die strömende Zeilen, und...ich wußte, daß mein Gesicht plötzlich den gleichen kalten und geschäftigen Ausdruck trug. (Geächteten 553)

As Salomon intimates, the mass is tedium, listlessness, multiplicity, unawareness, patience, and devoid of accountability (See also Freyer, Revolution 30, 57). Although the bourgeois mass has compelled Salomon to conform to its rules through the prison, this lack of accountability allows some individuals to hide within the expanse of the mass and evade – very often unknown to themselves – their responsibilities. Such a proposition makes the mass hard to resist because it requires so little effort to become affiliated with
it; one must just become a follower and adopt bourgeois values. Unfortunately, current society has become dead under these values.

Reflective of this massified existence was their father’s generation and its staid conservatism to which extreme conservatives did not want to return. Early radical conservatives had to deal with the problem of the *Stände*: most early extreme conservatives objected to the Wilhelminian monarchy’s rigid social classes, which were products of a bygone era. Although they may have consorted with monarchists, especially at the beginning of the republic when they and monarchists were trying to find their way during times of increased democratic and leftist activity, they overwhelmingly did not want its reinstatement: “Uns blendete nie mals der fahle Glanz des wilhelminischen Zeitalters; der kleine Wille oder die schlaffe Sehnsucht nach Restauration dünkt uns lächerlich in einer Stunde, die wir wahrhaftig als die ungeheure Wende der Zeiten sehen” (Boehm, “Bindung” 46).148 Defunct pre-1914 nationalism was found to a large extent in symbols of national unity such as the monarchy and first and foremost in the emperor himself who came to represent the Second Reich in many Germans’ views (Moeller, *Reich* 213-4). This Wilhelminian nationalism was based on continuation, tradition, and stability which translated into citizens who were “Menschen eines mechanisierten und paragraphierten und gleichzeitig renommierenden Lebens” (Moeller, *Reich* 19, 170).

This view of imperial Germany helped lead some ultraconservatives to embrace the Revolution of 1918/1919 as an epoch-changing event (Klemperer 76; Schwierskott

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148 The most notable exception was Oswald Spengler who in *Preußentum und Sozialismus* advocated old Prussianism as the most feasible form of socialism. During this monarchy, everyone was an equal servant of the state: “Der deutsche, genauer preußische Instinkt war: die Macht gehört dem Ganzen. Der einzelne dient ihm. Das Ganze ist souverän. Der König ist nur der erste Diener seines Staates (Friedrich der Große). Jeder erhält seinen Platz. Es wird befohlen und gehorcht” (15).
77-9; Sontheimer, Antidemokratisches Denken 30). The editor of the Tat, one of the foremost conservative magazines in the Weimar Germany, welcomed the fall of the monarchy and the chance for “Erneuerung” that the revolution brought (Diederichs, “Revolution” 726). Writing in 1922, Moeller states that the German Revolution of 1918/1919 had had great possibilities (Reich 25). Some of this affinity for the revolution is a reflection of many ultraconservatives’ moderate sympathy for workers and their plight. Dingräve writes that the proletariat in Berlin North does not have any feelings for Heimat (49; See also Hesse 209). Indeed, they feel no loyalty to their country because their country has failed to provide for them. Ernst von Salomon initially believed that as a militiaman, he was defending Western values against the mass during the Revolution of 1918/1919; however, it is only by viewing workers and their families’ squalor that he realizes he is protecting the ruling class which had created this indigence (Geächteten 45-62). Harum Plaas wrote much the same as Salomon: “unrecht hatte [der Freikorpsmann] darin, daß er zum Verteidiger des privatkapitalistischen Systems wurde...Es wird in den gesamten Freikorps wohl kaum einen Mann gegeben haben, der an sich arbeiterfeindlich gewesen wäre“ (174). Despite their initial support for the revolution, no extreme conservatives fought with revolutionary forces to my knowledge, and this work could only find evidence of Max Hildebert Boehm calling for conservatives to support the Rätesystem (“Rechtsparteien” 71-3).

Some Weimar right-wingers’ hope in the Revolution of 1918/1919 soon gave way to downright condemnation by nearly all (Spengler, Introduction VII; Stoffregen 9-10). They maintained that only profiteers, parliamentarians, speculators, swindlers, bankers and black marketeers had benefitted from the revolution while common Germans’ lives
worsened (Stoffregen 9-10; Franke 12). Indeed, the same pre-revolutionary powers ruled in post-revolutionary Germany:

Kirche, Schule, Markt, Gesellschaft, es ist noch alles da, genau so, wie es früher war. Nur das Heer ist futsch, und das war noch das Beste an der ganzen Vorkriegsepoche. Und die Fürsten – na ja. Sieh dir mal die Namen und die Gesichter der Parlamentarier und Minister an...Es ist schon richtig, was die Kommunisten sagen, nämlich, daß dieselbe Bourgeoisie heute öffentlich herrscht, die bis zum November 18 unter der Oberfläche herrschte. Also haben wir keine Revolution gehabt. (Salomon, Geächteten 219)

Much as other leftist revolutions and socialism in general, it was worldly and ephemeral and, thus, half-hearted and partial (Moeller, Reich 38, 129; See also Spengler, Preußentum 13). The Revolution of 1918/1919 did not inspire any high-minded ideas, but rather was a revolution of desperation, divisiveness, hunger, exhaustion, jealousy, and a falling apart. It was largely the result of proletarian Masse which desired only revenge for their social situation, but most importantly, it ultimately led to a “Notgemeinschaft” that was Weimar (Salomon, Geächteten 11; Moeller, Reich 155; Heinz 31). This mass differed from Expressionists’ concepts of Masse in that it was not its destructive violence, which right-wingers opposed but rather its outcomes.

Equally detrimental in some right-wingers’ view was technology’s use during Weimar although it must be stated that radical Weimar conservatives were not wholly adverse to machines, but rather rejected, similar to Expressionist criticisms, technology’s role in stunting men’s true and natural development. An example of this stunting is Nikolaus Götz’s (Ernst Niekisch) strong protest against technology’s dominace of natural landscapes and human beings: “Technik ist Vergewaltigung der Natur; sie setzt sich über die Natur hinweg...Indem die Technik Schritt für Schritt die Grenzen, die die Natur gesetzt hat, niederlegt, mordet sie das Leben...Die Technik frißt Menschen und
Menschliches“ (58). Another way in which technology was injuring humanity was that despite machines being linked with rationality, the pace of their dissemination in German society was rapid and experienced chaotically by many human beings (Freyer, Revolution 45). This problem was only compounded through machines’ growing necessity, which led them to rob human beings of their ability to be robust individuals. Especially in industry, radical Weimar conservatives complained much as Expressionists that the worker suffers from abstraction, impersonality, and alienation on account of machines (Freyer, Revolution 29, 47). Indeed in some cases, the modern worker had even become “l’homme machine,...einen Automaten…, einen lebenden Automaten” or a reified appendage or “Anhängsel” of machines (Moeller, Reich 41; Freyer 23). This stultification, automization of humans, and in other cases very often exhaustion occurs as machines attack the nerves and senses of workers (Goote 134). Germans cannot become energized because of this attack and because too much effort is dissipated in onerous work. Despite the arduousness and constancy of work, there was no true advance in life from labor, and yet, Germans still exhibited remarkable devotion to their occupations. For instance, upon learning about the Revolution of 1918/1919, a young Ernst von Salomon, runs madly through the streets, but most people just continue to go to their jobs and about their affairs (Salomon, Geächteten 26). Weimar right-wingers were adamant that work should not have the goal of acquiring wealth, but rather one should toil towards the realization of a noble goal.

149 In a quotation eerily reminiscent of Toller in the preceeding chapter, Freyer writes that “der lebendige Arm, der den Hebel umlegt, der lebendige Finger, der auf den Knopf drückt. Bauen wir also, wohl oder übel, den Menschen doch unsern Mechanismus ein: möglichst nur als Arm, der den Hebel umlegt, nur als Finger, der den Knopf drückt“ (Revolution 21). Freyer was obviously well-read in Expressionist theater. See the motto to the beginning of chapter five on Georg Kaiser.
Despite labor’s many major shortcomings in Weimar, one of work’s greatest injustices was that the most deserving Germans of jobs, like former soldiers, had extreme difficulty finding any employment. It was but one of the wrongs that soldiers suffered both before and after the war. In Schauwecker’s Aufbruch der Nation, soldiers are reading a newspaper in which the leading articles are about a bank clerk who stole 10,000 marks, a department store burning down, a banker becoming a member of the chamber of commerce, a magistrate shortening businesses’ hours, and a speech on submarine warfare, but only later is there a report about fighting on the western front showing Schauweckers’ feelings that Germans care very little about the war or fighting soldiers (373). From radical Weimar conservatives’ perspective, because much of the home populace treated German soldiers poorly during the war, it stood to reason that they would be treated just as badly, if not worse, in the postwar period. Returning soldiers experienced indigence and wide-spread hunger instead of recompense for their sacrifices, and even maimed soldiers begged in the streets. According to right-wingers, the home populace overlooked the hero-worship that most soldiers deserved. They received no love from the republic (Heinz 163); thus, ultraconservatives urged them to fight it.

Former soldiers’ pitiable treatment only contrasted Weimar culture, which is replete with the bourgeoisie, Schieber, corruption, their courtesans, jazz music, and unnerving dancing (Gleichen 383; Salomon, Geächteten 43). For right-wingers, Berlin, Germany’s political and cultural capital, was “Nervenhaftigkeit,” “geistiger Impotenz,” and “Gehirntrümmer” (Stapel, “Geistige“ 8). While in Berlin, Salomon and other

150 Part of conservatives’ disdain for the press comes from their belief that journalists were hacks disseminating information instead of truth. Schauwecker’s reference to a clerk who stole 10,000 marks is reminiscent of Georg Kaiser’s protagonist in Von morgens bis mittenachts. We will discuss this work in the next chapter.
Freikorps are solicited by thieves with stolen goods, peddlers, drug dealers, prostitutes, and pornography merchants (Geächteten 44-5). These last two occupations belong to one of three main female groups in radical Weimar conservatives’ literature, if women appear in their literature at all. Extreme conservatives’ works portray women either as immoral, irresponsible, seducing, or distracting (Geächteten 44-5; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 276), as part of the mass or communism (Salomon, Geächteten 58-9), or as motherly figures (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 75-7; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 46, 145). Within these roles, women are even further limited in these roles because they remain often nameless or as minor characters, but even in their inferiority, they are still hindrances which constrain, oppose, dominate, domesticate, and enfeeble men. For instance, the communist women oppose the Freikorpsmann violently and the female soulmate distracts from his warring and thereby pacifying him. For radical Weimar conservatives, passivity was the natural feminine mind-set and did not agree with masculine attributes; yet despite their supposed innate meekness and as the communist female shows, women were becoming increasingly independent in political and social environs, a development to which extreme conservatives adamently objected. Their growing activity, strength, and confidence came at the expense of male power. Some extreme conservatives believed that these changes in the opposite sex stemmed from American models. American women had not only influenced some German “New Women” with their short hair, risqué clothing, smoking, and even in their desire for a job, but also in their sexual habits, promiscuity, and morality. Radical

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151 See Theweleit’s first volume for further views on women in this literature.  
152 The increasing power of women and the waning authority of men is typical for right-wingers’ belief in the limits in the amount of power. There is only so much dominion in existence: if someone’s power is growing, then another person’s power is decreasing.
Weimar conservatives viewed this cultural phenomenon as exemplary of the West’s – in particular, the United States’ – increasing sway and virulence and a general German decline (Schauwecker, “Verwandlung” 29-30). Many Germans were becoming massified in the American spirit through capitalism, technological advance, rationalization, the high pace of living, finance, and degenerate popular culture, and Americans had been the enemy just a few years earlier. The loss of jobs and the inundation of German markets with Western goods contributed to the economic woes of Weimar Germany (Gleichen 384), and Germans partly associated “Americanization” with the matter-of-factness and egoism with which industrialists and investors attempted to turn profits at all costs. According to extreme conservatives, democracy was another un-German import which the West had imposed on Germany, and therefore, Germans should vehemently repudiate it.

Capitalism, democracy, technology, metropolitan growth, feminization, and other alleged Western influences were part of “civilization,” against which radical Weimar conservatives strongly protested. For instance, Oswald Spengler argued that civilization was destroying German culture so that he and other radical Weimar conservatives wanted the death of civil society to undermine Germany’s etiolation and resistance to upheaval (Untergang 1: 43-57). Thus, Weimar right-wingers were naturally dismissive of any attempts to propagate a civil community, especially European nationalism or internationalism (Boehm, Kleines 26; Franke 138). Radical Weimar conservatives argued that the First World War showed that there could be no unification internationally or in Europe. In the middle of battle with English advancing soldiers, Schauwecker’s narrator responds sarcastically to soldiers who say that they are communists and who call
for the republic: “Ein neues Zeitalter brach herein, ein Zeitalter der Liebe und Wonne…Da habt ihr den Salat, die Verbrüderung, den Frieden, die Gerechtigkeit, das Glück, die Liebe!” (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 322). Likewise, Salomon accuses revolutionaries of speaking of love and brotherhood but then of committing violent acts (Geächteten 466). A harsh Treaty of Versailles – which was feminization, castration, “Käfigdasein,” and even the ravishment of Germany (Moeller, Reich 23; Salomon, Geächteten 274; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 396) – only further supported the assertion that European fraternity could not occur because Germany would not be equal with other nations (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 396). Because of German inferiority and Western superiority, peace could ensue, but Germans could and should not be peaceful, patient, cozy, or compliant in their junior position (Gleichen 384-5; Hielscher, “Imperialismus” 292; Jung 98-9; Salomon, Geächteten 406; Stapel, “Staat” 29). Since the Second Reich’s beginning, Germans have relied too much on pacifism, utilitarianism, equality, reason, bourgeois values, negotiations, and diplomacy, but these “vices” had failed to provide success and security. Weimar not only continued these “depravities,” but also advanced them among its citizenry, most notably through a progressive constitution and allowing pacifistic slander of the war.

Among all the topics broached in this section, perhaps the most vile are radical Weimar conservatives’ views on Jews and other races; indeed, race was a defining characteristic of a person according to ultraconservatives. Although most ultraconservatives spoke ill of Jews, a few exhibited the rabid and scientific anti-Semitism of völkisch groups. Most detrimental in metropolitan areas, in which they were more often found, Jews were a state within a state and rootless as in the myth of Ahasvar,
the wandering Jew, and, thus, are part of the restlessness of Weimar culture. A few other common slurs against Jews included democracy and capitalism as Jewish machinations or phenomena. Indeed, democracy guaranteed equal participation of Jews in government, and modern capitalism allowed them even more success in finance. At the same time, some right-wingers’ accusations towards Jews paradoxically occupied a polar end of the political and economic spectrum, namely that communism is Jewish because atheistic Jews such as Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky, and above all Marx had preeminent roles in its establishment. However, Jews were not the sole butt of many Weimar right-wingers’ racism. Stapel lamented those who promoted the mixing of races as the “New Human Being,” and Salomon’s description of French Africans marching into the Ruhr demonstrates not only his racial bigotry, but also, in his opinion, their intricate connection with democracy. Black Africans are the defenders of the Weimar Republic: “[Afrikaner] grinsten unter den flachen Helmen mit großen, leuchtenden Zähnen, drehten sich unbekümmert um und kosteten sichtlich das Gefühl einer unvermuteten Überlegenheit. Hier also marschierten die Vertreter der Humanität und Demokratie...“ (“Märchen“ 127; Geächteten 233). From radical Weimar conservatives’ perspective, Africans and the republic are both foreign impurities threatening to colonize the “German” identity through alien political, economic, and social principles and making Germans feel as strangers in their own fatherland (See also Hielscher, “Imperialismus” 292; Schauwecker, “Verwandlung” 29).

153 The “Wandering Jew” has been a familiar myth since its inception during the Middle Ages. Only since the seventeenth century has the name “Ahasver” been applied to the “Ewiger Jude.” According to legend, he mocked Jesus on the latter’s way to Golgotha and crucifixion. For this ridicule, Jesus cursed him to wander the earth until the savior’s return.
The Process to the New Man: Existential Crises, Abstraction, and New Sense Perception

The last chapter discussed the Expressionist scream and its communication of the process as well as the call to the New Human Being. Radical Weimar conservatives’ scream had much the same goals. For instance, during his first contact with battle, Siewers, the protagonist in Beumelburg’s *Gruppe Bosemüller*, screams from the horror, suffering, fear, and the bleakness of his own situation: “Zwiebelmeier ohne Kopf…Casdorp mit Zwiebelmeiers Gehirn im Gesicht…er wird nicht los…Das Feuer brüllt von allen Seiten…Ein unterdrückter Schrei steckt [Siewers] in der Kehle“ (38).

Later in the novel, Siewers gives what is described as a “wild” and “despairing” cry before he recklessly attacks a French machine gun himself which is shooting at him and his compatriots (49). This scream is a release of tension from a pressurized situation much as Ernst von Salomon’s cry and the cry of a fellow inmate in prison. Salomon writes that while in prison’s solitary confinement, his lone comfort was a fellow inmate’s scream and his own screaming as well. In addition to being a comfort, this scream is also a protest against what he considers the injustice of the prison and his imprisonment:


*(Geächteten 473)*

As the example shows, the scream is a catalyst whose spread affects others’ nerves by reaching in the deepest, primordial recesses of one’s being. Through this shout, his
physical situation may not have changed, but his mental situation has dramatically improved and enabled his “salvation” (Erlösung).

The scream, battle, and other existential situations can function as launch points for Anstoß, Aufbruch, and Erwachen to the New Human Being. Indeed, the greater the strenuousness, violence, hardships, obstacles and shock are, the better the chance for these developments. For this reason, the most shocking deeds of Salomon and his like-minded compatriots would most endanger the established and systemic order (Geächteten 338-9). For instance, their assassination of Walter Rathenau would give Germans Anstoß:

“Die Entwicklung soll sich selber weiterpeitschen, bis zu ihrem höchsten Grade, mit einer Überstürzung, die kein Überlegen zuläßt, die aus der Not des Augenblickes zu den Mitteln greifen läßt, die das ursprünglichst Leben selbst diktiert...Unsere Aufgabe ist der Anstoß...“ (Geächteten 356)[emphasis mine]. Salomon also claims that he experienced Aufbruch – a similar term to Anstoß – in the Baltic (Geächteten 79), and Moeller wrote an essay entitled “Aufbruch nach Osten” in 1918 and called for the banner of Aufbruch to be carried by Germans (Reich 230). 154 Much as Expressionists’ meaning of the term, Aufbruch signifies departure from dominant norms and values and hopefully the beginning of a process to the community such as the title of Schauwecker’s novel “Aufbruch der Nation“ reveals or Spengler’s claim of Aufbruch with the beginning of war in 1914 (Spengler, Introduction VIII; See also Freyer, Revolution 53). In this sense, “departure“ is like “Erwachen” that indicates a slumbering, narcotic state in current reality, from which one awakes so that one can pursue new goals (Freyer, Revolution 64).

A major step in the realization of Anstoß, Aufbruch, or Erwachen would be disintegration/destruction. Although ultraconservatives desired the elimination of the

154 In the next section, this chapter will discuss some Weimar right-wingers’ affections for the East.
communal fragmentation in Weimar just as other problems or oppositions to their community, their embracement of dissipation showed that they approved of Germans’ bombardment with negative external stimuli: there must be extreme disquietude in the human being to reconstruct the human being’s relationship to the material world.\footnote{Referring to collective German atomization, Schauwecker thinks that the “Auflösung” or “dissipation/disintegration” began during the war with Schieber and Kriegsgewinnler (Aufbruch 276-8), but extreme conservatives would not dispute extending this Auflösung to much of the entire home front populace and beyond the war’s cessation (Metzner 195). In the foreword to Ernst Jünger’s war novel Feuer und Blut, Schauwecker writes that life in Weimar is “in Atome geschmettert, ins Leere” (Schauwecker 3), and liberalism causes “eine aufgelöste Gesellschaft” according to Moeller van den Bruck (Reich 82-4). Much as other disseminators of ultraconservatives’ beliefs, the Tat, a chief right-wing magazine during Weimar, boasted that it worked to correct the “auflösenden Tendenzen der Gegenwart” (Tat Advertisement junge Generation).}

Despite humans averseness to chaos, pain, suffering, fear, danger, madness, and stress which cause this disquietude, radical Weimar conservatives view these negative emotions and states and the problems which engender them as necessities that free individuals from their existence. For instance, Hans Freyer welcomed modernity and modernization as disintegrators of the status quo in Weimar: the middle classes were decaying, farmers threatened, the self-employed destroyed, and businesses drowning in red tape (Revolution 52). Moeller and Salomon embraced revolution and putsches partly because they could break down Weimar much as the Revolution of 1918/1919 helped dissipate Wilhelminian Germany (Reich 21, 31, 242; Geächteten 356). Salomon’s animated description of anarchic separatists on killing rampages in the Ruhr in 1923 demonstrates the disintegration of order and is reminiscent of farmer’s rebellions during the Late Middle Ages: “Die Glocken heulten zum Sturm, auf den Hügeln loderten die Brände und wir brachen aus den Wäldern, tolle Haufen mit Sensen, Mistgabeln und Dreschflegeln. Auf einmal war das ganze Tal lebendig, die Bauern, schweißig, blutbespritzt, rasten in den fechtenden Knäuel, schlugen tot, jagten, toben...“ (Geächteten 439). This atrocity leads
to another point, namely that physical violence or even the threat of aggression can disintegrate some of the problems listed in the last section. For example, during a substantial socialist protest in Berlin, Salomon and other soldiers’ weapons are pointed at a gathering of the mass which soon dissolves from this possible violence (Geächteten 48-9). Such instances of aggression’s success made right-wingers revel in Weimar’s violent atmosphere of revolution, Freikorps, putsches, and paramilitary organizations. Indeed, violent and in some other cases apocalyptic destruction, which is an act of strength, power, and domination, is the physical dematerialization that also contributes to the more important psychological dematerialization of reality in the individual. The individual’s former, trusted inner life is ruptured through chaos, fear, horror, and powerlessness, and at its height, this rupture culminates in a feeling akin to the disintegration of the entire body: “Er fühlte es plötzlich mit seinem Leibe aus Lehm, mit seinen Adern aus Quellen und Nerven aus Vulkanröhren. Gleich mußte es ihn ergreifen und wolkenhoch schleudern und atomklein zerfetzen, ihn und alle anderen neben ihm, die Klumpen aus Lehm mit dem glutflüssigen Punkt des Herzens mitten drin, mit dem Keimpunkt des Kommenden” (Aufbruch 197). Indeed, this person becomes one with the physical destruction occurring around him.

Further evidence of this unity between a person’s outer and inner worlds are the statements of the narrator in Schauwecker’s Aufbruch der Nation about the chaos experienced in battle. He states that at first, the chaos was physically there, but it eventually causes emotional tumult and changes: “…es war eine innere Erweckung im donnernden Stichflammenschlag der Granate, die nicht nur die Erde völlig umwälzte, sondern die zugleich ihre Herzen und Seelen umpflügte. Da wuchs zuerst nichts, und es
war ein Chaos, vor dem sie standen“ (Schauwecker, *Aufbruch* 237; See also Schauwecker, *Weg* 16). Indeed, chaos is an important stimulant to Wandlung or related terms. Salomon writes that when he and other Freikorps returned to the homeland from battle in the Baltic regions, they wanted turmoil in Germany for this very reason (*Geächteten* 172). This tumult was in addition to the anarchy already existent in democratic Weimar through unemployment, stock market crashes, hunger protests, and mass demonstrations which all created despair (*Vezweißlung*) among Germans (Salomon, *Geächteten* 179; Zehrer, “Parole” 61). One also gains further understanding of disarray, disappointment, balkanization, and impending doom from the following passage about inflationary times: “Das Reich war völlig aufgewirbelt. Was es zusammenhielt, war nichts als die Furcht von dem letzten harten und dynamischen Zwang des Chaos...Bald stand jeder für sich allein, eine pulverisierte Masse bildete das Reich, Rohstoff für den Aufbruch...“ (Salomon, *Geächteten* 437-8)[emphasis mine]. The chaotic and panicked mass, a terrible ill, occurs from hardship, and yet, this form of the mass provided the opportunity for departure and contact with the primitive, deeper aspects of life and even rebirth (Hesse 82; Salomon, *Geächteten* 246; Stadtler 413).

To radical Weimar conservatives’ boon, many Germans also shared experiences of suffering, pain, danger, and uncertainty. According to Hans Freyer, no better example of the ubiquitousness of Germans’ anguish is industrial labor, in which the worker “verelende[t],“ undergoes “Leiden,“ and is enslaved (*Revolution* 12, 49). In *Der feurige Weg*, Franz Schauwecker also recalls the suffering, doom, hardships, worries, and pain of the postwar period (90). Many of these and other related situations and emotions such as want, desperation, and anxiety are part of this “elendes Heute“ which civilian Germans
experienced after the war (Gleichen 380-7; Moeller *Reich* 52, 229), but the war period for many soldiers was also full of these and similar emotions. In one scene, a troop of soldiers who are low on ammunition and under attack move into buildings to hide in “ein Gewimmel von Schmerz und Verzweiflung“ (Schauwecker, *Aufbruch* 127), and experiencing a wound is a combination of several stimuli such as shock and pain that could lead to *Aufbruch*. Indeed, Salomon stresses that the transformative process is painful: “Wir empfanden den Prozeß der *Wandlung* wie einen körperlichen Schmerz, dem die Luft der tiefen Mitternacht nicht mangelte“ (*Geächteten* 402)[emphasis mine]. However, even the potential for pain, harm, or any type of danger can exact psychological demands from the endangered (Heinz 74). In the postwar period, Germany is in danger from foreign powers, or in the war, as a troop enters a forest and makes its way toward a village, Schauwecker writes that “die Gefahr lauerte im Wald ” (Schauwecker, *Aufbruch* 104). In the latter example, the opponent is unknown bringing greater insecurity, a disturbance in equilibrium, and anxiety to the target.\footnote{156} Indeed, the unknown and foreign elements are threats, mysterious, and dangerous according to radical Weimar conservatives (Salomon, *Geächteten* 239).

In addition to danger and uncertainty, fear can help transform human beings (Linder 104). For instance, the creation of fear was a goal of the secret terrorist organization in Weimar, the O. C., as well as *Freikorps*, who were known as the “white terror;” however, according to Hans Freyer, even unemployment and job loss were

\footnote{156 The following statement reminds one of the danger from the protagonist in the Expressionist August Stramm’s poems. For instance, Stramm writes in his poem “Patrouille”:

\begin{verbatim}
Die Steine feinden
Fenster grinst Verrat
Äste würgen
Berge Sträucher blättern raschlig
Gellen
Tod. (*Werk* 86)
\end{verbatim}
“grausam” and an “Angsttraum” to Germans (Freyer, Revolution 28). Indeed, ultraconservatives sought to promote an enormous fear, which could be induced in war and is closely related to intense horror. For example, one Russian soldier plays with his own leg which has been severed from his body in battle (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 134). The horrifying image shocks the protagonist, Albrecht, who can only stand up “und taumelte weiter, beinah betrunken von diesem Augenblick“ (135). Another soldier’s body is exposed to a series of bombs each decimating his body a little more. Schauwecker compares his grotesque movements to an acrobat, in which his legs lay over his head, then his arm wraps around his head “like a scarf,” and lastly his body completely disappears with a direct hit (Aufbruch 178-9). These dreadful encounters were too much “des Erschreckenden, zuviel des Neuen – des so ganz anderen” (Hesse 30) and could drive one to a “Bodenlose” state (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 98, 183).

In addition, such experiences could create a feeling of absolute powerlessness. In Beumelburg’s Gruppe Bosemüller, the bombardment of an abandoned house, in whose cellar the members of Group Bosemüller are hunkering, causes not only fear, but also powerlessness in the group. Their helpless and weak position juxtaposes the powerfulness of explosions which cause a “Zittern” in Siewers (113). In another instance, Siewers watches helplessly and in horror as two French planes methodically machine gun a group of German soldiers who are running across bombed landscapes (227-8). According to radical Weimar conservatives, Germany’s loss in the war and

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157 In addition to creating the existential situations and emotions necessary to realize their goals, terrorist agents’ infiltration and disturbance of the mass through assassination, feme murders, and bombings had the added advantage of eliminating democratic and socialist leaders (Salomon, Geächteten 295, 305).
158 In an attempt to created horror in the individual and purge Germany of civilization, radical Weimar conservatives’ create imagery and narrated acts of destruction whether it be city blocks on fire, pestilence in the water, and factory machines, trains, and ocean liners smashing out of control (Geächteten 386-7). The creation of horror was the purpose of several picture books edited by Weimar right-wingers such as Edmund Schulzt and Ernst Jünger.
subsequent punishments at Versailles were greatly responsible for Germans’ feelings of powerlessness. Intensifying these feelings was individuality among Germans: the singular individual is weak and exposed in the modern world. However, the greatest purveyor of powerlessness was catastrophe, from which one also is unable to practice any control (Moeller, Reich 223).

Whether they are catastrophe, feelings of helplessness, or enormous fear, these situations and emotions contributed to the emotional stress and constant pressure in the subject, hopefully from radical Weimar conservatives’ perspective to the point of convulsion (Salomon, “Hexenkessel” 36). Extreme conservatives’ use of the words “ballen” and “Ballungen” indicates this intense pressurization: according to Freyer, “[m]echanischer Druck erzeugt Ballung” (8), and the energies “ballen sich” in the current industrial system (37) while Salomon states that overwhelming stress causes “geballte Ereignisse” (Salomon, “Versprengten” 114). In reference to the crises of Weimar, the Tat magazine also speaks of “die aus den Tatbeständen der Gegenwart erwachsenden Spannungen,” and Rudolf Pechel discusses the unbearable tensions of his time period (Tat Advertisement Revolution; Pechel 72). In one particular incidence of pressurization, Salomon suffers extreme stress after being captured and placed for firing-squad execution on a wall. In this state, he suffers so much physical and nervous exhaustion in this state that he cannot recognize pain, fear, or despair: “Die schwarzen Löcher [Mündungen der Waffen] aber werden größer, immer größer, jetzt fangen sie an zu kreisen, werden runde, schwarze Scheiben. Die Scheiben aber werden rot, nein gelb, und weiß und blau und grün. Sie teilen sich plötzlich und alles fängt an, sich langsam zu drehen” (Geächteten 96). The stress – or as Schauwecker calls it “Nervenchok” (Frontbuch 231-8) – throws
him causing the loss of concentration and inhibitions (See also Salomon, “Hexenkessel” 36; Salomon, “Versprengten” 114).

The abovementioned quotation from Salomon demonstrates the abstraction of the individual. Although radical Weimar conservatives wanted to thwart reality’s abstractness or its impersonality and detachedness from one’s true being (the New Human Being), they, much as Expressionists, promoted abstraction, or separation from society, its ills, and the status quo through the aforementioned stress and pressure. The new experience of the abstraction allowed for the first inklings of this world’s falseness and its mere appearance as the following quotation from Ernst von Salomon indicates.

The day of a putsch, as the existential intensity begins to grow, Salomon feels that “[d]er Boden hielt den Atem an, die dunklen Lieder summten sich in ihn hinein und schwebten lange noch in den Gesträuch en, indes der Zug vorüberstapften. Und alles in der Welt war Schein, ja, selbst das Dunkel, das sich nun samten senkte, war ein trügerischer Schleier...“ (Geächteten 186). References to the ground beginning to “hold” the air and songs “floating” in the bushes show the abstraction and questioning of former reality. Although these examples of normal sense perception’s transcendence probably relies on touch and hearing, abstraction is most often expressed visually through the yielding of a new sight because sight contributes most out of all other senses towards realism and belief. For instance, Beumelburg writes about the fragmented, indistinct pictures of the montage in the twilight: “Es ist wie ein Dämmerzustand, von merkwürdigen, fremden

159 This chapter will mention the amount of stimulus needed to transform an individual later when discussing the decision necessary to accept Weimar right-wingers’ goals. This section has mentioned some of the most existentially shocking emotions, states, and situations because they were fundamental to radical Weimar conservatives’ goal, namely the transformation of Germans en masse, but the stimuli did not always need to be this severe.

160 This belief is reflected in the phrases “Seeing is believing” and “I saw it with my own eyes.” In addition, one could say “I see” meaning “I understand.” Kurt Hesse is an exception to the rule: he recalls a greater acoustical than visual sense perception (180).
Bilden erfüllt, die mit der Örtlichkeit kaum etwas zu tun haben” (Bosemüller 96).

Schauwecker also has unique descriptions of his sight during abstraction showing his difficulty fathoming this new development: his protagonist “sah alle Dinge anders und doch genau so. Die Landschaft taumelte haarscharf vorbei...Alles fuhr flammend durch sie hindurch und blieb zurück...Alles war eins in ihnen.” (Aufbruch 325). In addition, this new type of seeing is sometimes reflected in a man’s eyes indicating his chargedness.161 For instance, in Gruppe Bosemüller, the major leading the attack “ist wie im Fieber. Seine Augen flackern“ (Beumelburg 181), and Dwinger mentions the “ecstatic eyes” of his fellow soldiers (qtd in Theweleit 2: 132).

This new visual perception comes from a loss of boundaries which allow men free play of the imagination (Salomon, Geächteten 296): it is a disclosure of a new creativity, but at the same time, abstraction lacks revelation or vision because the new perception in abstraction is nonsensical. Conversely, “vision” is a distinctly male, comprehensive, revolutionary, and titanic type of seeing, from which they cannot escape, and most importantly has comprehensible content.162 In his novel Aufbruch der Nation, Schauwecker gives a good example of vision in that artillery fire, which is destructive and life-threatening, is for him divinely sanctioned: “…ich irre mich, ja, ich habe eine maßlose Halluzination...dies alles...es ist ja kein Feuer, nein, nein...es senkt sich der Himmel gnädig herab mit seinen flammenden Wolken und Genien und Posaunen, die schmetternd rufen und funkeln...jajaja...herrliche Wahrheit...noch eine Sekunde, und es klärt sich alles, er wird alles offenbar, bei Gott, eine beseligende Offenbarung...“ (356).

161 It would seem possible for “ecstatic eyes” to also signal the vision and the transformation; however, these situations indicate thrown individuals because they are not yet transformed according to the text. The next section will discuss the domination of others through a leader’s eyes.

162 Radical Weimar conservatives’ vision resembles Theweleit’s assertion of “male fantasies” in early twentieth-century Germany.
In other instances, Schauwecker portrays in dream-like visions the battles at Verdun and Somme as apocalyptic wars on the Day of Judgement preparing for a new reality: the ground begins to move under their feet, the bombs are portrayed as trumpets of the apocalypse, riders come out of the sky, and the dead seem to come alive again (Aufbruch 203, 204, 253). In characters’ visions in his novel, Beumelburg emphasizes the difficulty telling between the living and the dead in battle showing that dead warriors are part of the living because their exploits will bear fruit in the postwar period (Bosemüller 42-3). However, the importance and meaning of these visions remain hidden from most characters such as the lieutenant who has visions of dead soldiers coming to life to defend a fort, which is a metaphor for the goals of the community. The lieutenant does not understand these visions, and his companions consider the lieutenant mad. Likewise, although he still does not understand the full importance of his visions, Schauwecker’s bewildered protagonist states that he will to tell others about “Dinge einer neuen Welt” (Aufbruch 146). Much like the lieutenant, he is only an intoxicated individual.

Like late Expressionist notions of intoxication, radical Weimar conservatives’ concept encompasses the negative emotions and the eventual joy at moving away from or “purification” (“Läuterung”) of previous life to an undetermined reality and thus, much as its Expressionist form, it contains the same antithetical duality (Salomon, Geächteten 310; Salomon, “Versprengten“ 114; Schauwecker, “Wesen des Nationalismus” 368).164

163 The lieutenant is not the only mad visionary. Salomon finds work in the psyche ward of a prison where he feels stimulation working with other “madmen” (Salomon, Geächteten 484). However, the general population also considers the stressed individual many times mad as well. Tension leads to a bloodied, half-dead lieutenant entering into a group of soldiers in “wahnsinniger Aufregung” (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 232). Siewers is driven mad – “sinnlos” – from his position so that another soldier must run to and save him (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 183-4).

164 According to Salomon, the “Erregung” or “arousal” caused by horrifying acts was infamous to many Germans, but at the same time, Germans had an attraction to it that allowed them to come into touch with their deeper being: “Die Erregung wuchs, mit ihr der Abscheu. Aber es wuchs zugleich eine unbegreifliche
Equally like with late Expressionists, there is a momentary discharge of pressure – “das rücksichtslose Abwerfen jeden Ballasts” and “gehäufte Spannungen entladen sich” – when intoxication occurs (Salomon, “Versprengten” 113-4; Stadtler 413). However, unlike in Expressionism, there are two types of thrown individuals. The first intoxicated individual on the path to the New Man can be at the very least partially – and in some cases greatly – attracted to and desires the intoxication or dangerous, fearful, horrorifying, powerless, chaotic, and nerve-racking situations and its momentary release of tension. For instance instead of creating fear, explosions and shots in war can stimulate this soldier’s nerves to the point of ecstasy (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 212), or some in general simply find “einen unheimlichen Spaß an der Gefahr, ein herrliches Vergnügen daran...“ (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 339). He is no longer a constantly fearful, exposed victim, but rather becomes more confident over these emotions which have tested him to the limits of his physical and psychological well-being. While this individual is at the very least partially attracted to the intoxicating situations and feelings, the second type of thrown person wants to be free of these oppressive emotions and situations to enjoy a better life. He must reach agreement that these ills, which extreme conservatives mention, cause his pressure and suffering, and for this reason, he hates them and wants to eliminate them; however, as the next section will show, the tension can never completely disappear because the ills are never truly eliminated.

magnetische Kraft, die immer größere Teile des Volkes in der verbrecherischen Strudel sog. der sich unterhalb der Oberfläche gebildet hatte“ (Geächteten 296).
Solutions?

As mentioned in the last paragraph, all intoxicated individuals never truly overcome these emotions or dismiss all of them fully, but rather several thrown individuals cope with them through an alleged understanding, a partial acclimatization, and even sometimes by transvaluing them into a positive experience. In fact, their increasing entrenchment in the community provides them with more opportunity to experience stressful intoxication because extreme conservatives’ Gemeinschaft fails to surmount stressful situations and emotions. Thus, these emotions and situations become to a large extent part of the solutions themselves. As stated previously, some of extreme conservatives’ thrown persons enjoy continual intoxication, and according to ultraconservatives, all intoxicated individuals have little chance of returning to their previous existence after being thrown.

This last assertion is bolstered by the constant searching by intoxicated characters and ultraconservatives themselves for the significance of their traumatic experiences, actions, and the momentous events of the war and the postwar period. This searching parallels many Germans’ looking for some type of Gemeinschaft that would give succor to their inner being during early Weimar’s divisiveness and after the loss of the war (F. Jünger, Aufmarsch 8). In the chaos and confusion of his experiences, Salomon searches for concreteness, or “Boden, der uns die Kraft geben sollte...wir suchten die neue, die letzte Möglichkeit, für Deutschland und für uns...” (Salomon, Geächteten 75). In Thor Goote’s post-war novel Wir tragen das Leben, two decommissioned soldiers contemplate the sudden adrenaline bursts experienced previously under great stress as compared to their current industrial work: “‘Hier [In Industrie] gibt es wieder Uhren, – hier gibt es
wieder einen unumstößlichen Takt der Arbeit. – Bei uns [Im Krieg] gab es einen ganz
eiligen Rhythmus und dann wieder ein zähes Kriechen von Stunden, – dann wieder eine
Sensation.’ ‘Ja’ sagte ich. ‘Sensation, unberechenbar, plötzlich und unberechenbar in
ihrer Größe. Auf einmal zitterte sie wie eine Entladung flammend durch alles hindurch!’”
(134). They have been thrown, have an idea of the falseness of their peacetime
existences, and enjoy the superiority of an intoxicated life; although reflection has led to
these conclusions, they still seek the complete meaning of their previous experiences and,
therefore, have yet to experience an inner rejuvenation.

This inner rejuvenation occurs when one goes beyond superficiality into recesses
of humans’ inner beings to reach natural, organic values (F. Jünger Aufmarsch 16-7;
Kolbenheyer, “Lebenswert” 90; Freyer, Revolution 31). This chapter has already shown
that a man’s traumatic inner state is a reflection of his location in a terrible outer world,
but the situation could, and radical Weimar conservatives hoped that it would be,
reversed so that positive inner reality’s projection would supplant outer reality. Inner
changes are not sufficient to produce “solutions,” but rather these changes must be
applied to the outer world. Hans Schwarz states that the inner vision must “break
through” current reality: “die innere Welt behielt den Willen zur Freiheit und den
Glauben an das Unvorhergehene, das jeden Augenblick durchbrechen mußte. Dieser
Durchbruch bedingte, was sich dem Wissen verschließt: ’Entstehen’“ (10)[emphasis

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165 The disintegration previously highlighted in the last section in no way fully dissipates a potent
economic, political, and social reality. The vision’s realization in outer life is needed to completely “break
through” and conquer problems.
Only their visions could create an “inneres Verbundensein” in the community ("Der Ring” 5).

The adoption of this community is the only true solution to Germany’s ailments. Much as late Expressionists, extreme conservatives’ communities stem from three main directions whose content differs markedly from literary Expressionists. War novelists, nationalist authors, and primitive völkisch writers are difficult to pigeonhole – also a quality of their Expressionist counterparts – because their theories overlap and intertwine with each other (Sontheimer, Antidemokratisches Denken 15-6). Whereas several of these writers and groups would agree with a large preponderance of characteristics listed in this section, others may have espoused some, but not all characteristics, and yet others may have thought highly of different attributes. However, among various ultraconservatives, admittance into their communities demands an overwhelming acceptance of their assertions and values. Once they have become proselytes, they zealously try to realize the community through crisis and gaining converts.

Partly for these reasons, radical Weimar conservatives opposed stagnancy, peace, theory, inactivity, and civilization, but also because they feared the disintegration of the community, which needed to appear constantly dynamic to be effective. Their desire for dynamism and crisis is found in their concept “movement.” With increased movement comes greater danger, uncertainty, and possible chaos so that movement is sometimes a change away from a bourgeois life. However, movement also could indicate goal-oriented change, namely towards the community. Friedrich Georg Jünger’s statement that the “Bewegte gewinnt in uns einen höheren Wert als das Ruhende” reflects not only the emotions necessary for initial intoxication but also, when understood in conjunction with the title of his work, indicates a movement towards the Gemeinschaft (Aufmarsch 1). Jünger desires the “marching up” (movement) or the coming of nationalism, but other right-wingers also exalted the march as a type of movement. The modern review march, which transcends old forms in the festiveness and pipe and drum corps of the military parade, can communicate danger and death and, thus, intoxication to the marcher or spectator (Salomon, Geächteten 22; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 353). However,
extreme conservatives maintain that activity – denoted in terms such as Leben, Tat, Energie, or Jugend – from stressed or transformed human beings is a constant necessity (Freyer, Revolution 67; Salomon, Geächteten 356). Indeed, the word “life” communicates the meaning of vitality distinguishing a functional human being from a corpse (Bley 178). Indicating the desire to destroy old values and rebuild new values, Kolbenheyer writes that “eine lebendige Person will aufbauen und einreißen” (“Lebenswert” 82; See also Franke 27-42; Goote, Wir tragen das Leben; Hesse 127, 131, 207; Plaas 178; Schauwecker, Frontbuch 59-60; Stapel, Staatsmann 174; Zehrer, “Parole” 61, 63)[emphasis mine]. Much as “life” and literary Expressionists’ views on the term, ultraconservatives’ concept “Tat” can be applied to pre- and post-transformation actions. For instance, just before the beginning of battle, the narrator in Aufbruch der Nation writes that “[i]hr Inneres krempelte sich um. Eine Explosion schoß flammend in ihnen auf und überschüttete sie siedend mit Wut und endlosem Grimm, bitter und schartig. Jetzt waren sie erst richtig, jetzt waren sie total auf der Höhe, zum Bersten geladen mit Ausbruch und Tat“ (Schauwecker 260). Although he experiences the war which in extreme conservatives’ view communicates positive meaning such as hate, anger, and destruction of the enemy, the text indicates that there is no willful embracement of this direction by the intoxicated person as the ideal life. 168 This willful

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168 If there are pauses, they cannot be too long or dissolve the community. For instance, breaks from the front lines are absolutely necessary for soldiers as coping mechanisms (see Jünger chapter for more information on breaks) or even Beumelburg’s war novel Gruppe Bosemüller contains levity intended to give the reader a pause for reflection after experiencing the stress of brutal descriptions of front warfare. In one example, two soldiers are building a bridge away from the front lines, and one soldier picks up a large piece of wood while the other refuses. The process is repeated three times with the laboring soldier calling the other the laziest soldier ever to serve the Prussians (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 132). In another situation, a hornery commander has uncontrollable bowel movement before battle causing one unsympathetic soldier to comment that it is fine that the commander cannot come along because where they are going smells bad
choice corresponds to Moeller van den Bruck’s view of “understanding” (Verstand) as a mental grasp of truth (Reich 198-9) and to the protagonist Albrecht’s statements in Schauwecker’s Aufbruch der Nation as when the “Blut in den Geist hinüberschlage, damit es ins Bewußtsein eingehe” and as the “Transformation des Bewußtseins” (406, 163; See also Hesse 203-4; Hielscher, “Zweitausend Jahre“ 54). The intoxication would at some point hopefully lead to conscious adoption of concrete ideology and a “neues Menschentum,” which according to Jung, should be heroic, “von Grund auf politisch, nützlichkeitsfeindlich, tatbereit, gefühlsbewegt und tragisch” (Moeller, Reich 160; Herrschaft 281).[empasis mine] “Action,” or “energy” as some ultraconservatives have also termed it, becomes concentrated into one powerful push to realize their teachings and grow the community (Freyer, Revolution 67). Salomon wrote that there were many feigned energies “wo keine Energie mehr waren“ such as the Revolution of 1918/1919 (Geächteten 179), but radical Weimar conservatives’ energy would allegedly be genuine as well as novel. To define themselves as something new, they posited themselves as separated from something old or established (Dinggrave 9); hence, radical Weimar conservatives promised Germans individual, national, and cultural youth with a rebirth and rejuvenation: “Ein Volk wird jung, indem es jung wirkt: indem es aus der Welt, die es vorfindet, in die Welt wirkt, die es selbst schafft…Jugend ist ein Entschluß“ (Moeller, “Recht” 155; See also Moeller, “Generationen” 40-1). Thus, all ages could participate and become young again through the return to a youthful state of mind. Even a character in Beumelburg’s Gruppe Bosemüller states that the transformation incorporates “einem enough. Yet another comments that he should not talk because he doesn’t exactly smell like a bed of roses (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 110).
neuen Kindsein, einem höheren Kindsein“ (207). Through this “childlike” experience, 
one is learning values anew and reaching a new, simpler level of existence (Linder 103).

Although not usually associated with childhood, one quality of many radical 
Weimar conservatives’ communities is war. In a great deal of right-wingers’ literature, 
war dominates the protagonists’ lives causing a transformation to new, superior values 
which are intrinsic to war. These new values had and could solve problems according to 
Friedrich Hilscher in his article “Die große Verwandlung” (129). For instance, 
Weimar right-wingers thought that war had rescued a directionless German youth from 
lives of mediocrity by providing them with action towards a utopian goal and by 
appealing to young males’ ambitions for masculine tests and greatness (Theweleit 2: 
351). Indeed, Franz Schauwecker viewed the front soldier in war as a “neue Art von 
Mensch, ein Mann in höchster Steigerung aller männlichen Eigenschaften“ (Todesrachen 
282-3). Alleged masculine qualities, which were supposedly instinctual to men, such as 
strength and agility, male chauvinism, violence, and emotional and physiological 

Because front soldiers’ intense war experiences on the way to the transformation 
are shared, there is a greater chance of multiple transformations of combatants who then 
form a *Frontgemeinschaft* or “front-line community” (Linder 156; Natter 3; 
Stickelberger-Eder 162). This *Gemeinschaft* at the front is then not only a spatial, but 
also a novel experiential area – Natter calls it a ““sacred space”” (12) – revered by many 
German combatants; however, entry into this community requires more than just front 
service and experiences: it requires embracement of ultraconservatives’ teachings, whose 
main purpose lies in a complete overhaul and correction of the postwar era. For example,

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169 Salomon dubs it the “große Verwandlung an sich” that men experienced during war (*Geächteten* 121).
the lack of difference between rich and poor or nobility and the common German in front soldiers – all undergo the same afflictions and can all die at any time – produces an alleged equality, which was absent in Weimar Germany. (Salomon, Geächteten 37; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 230; Schauwecker, Foreword zum Frontbuch VIII). In another instance, criticisms and problems of the home front in novels taking place during World War I such as democratic issues, mammonism, and socialism to name a few (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 181, 227-8, 235, 309, 322) – mirror criticisms and ills of the civilian postwar era so that contemporary readers in Weimar feel a disdain for these ills within their own time period.  

In an illustration of the front community’s superiority to the postwar era, war is a reduction of responsibilities to warring through the transvaluation of the reborn human being’s relationship to objects and accepted standards, and therefore, simplicity compared to the complexities of civilian life (Salomon, Geächteten 118; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 108-9; Schauwecker, Frontbuch 16-7). For instance, money, property, employment, and other civilian matters have no importance for the soldier in the trenches. According to Franz Schauwecker, war is order, straightforwardness, fullness, and substance, and each action of the soldier is disciplined and purposeful:

Das Kleinlich-Planlos-Schlendernde des Friedensalltags ist weg. Plötzlich ist das Leben auf seine schlichteste Form zurückgeführt. Jede Wendung ist peinlich genau, jeder Griff geschieht bestimmt, jede Handlung packt sinnvoll und entschlossen ihr Ziel an. Alles geht unmittelbar vor sich. Und alles hat seinen fassbaren, klaren Sinn. Das früher so verworrene, unklare Dasein ist nun zusammengerafftes Leben, das kristallen und hart widerspruchslos in der gedrängten Fülle der Sekunde sich abrollt. (Schauwecker, Weg 21-2)  

170 Such claims also make the home front guilty for the war’s loss and relieve soldiers’ responsibility for defeat.
Battle was originally chaotic contributing to the disintegration of the individual, but if the individual comprehends, becomes accustomed to, accepts the confusion during combat, he has overcome a major hurdle on the way to the transformation. Even though he in reality does not in his physical situation overcome the chaos and all existential emotions that occur in war and that engendered the transformation, many emotions, if not all, are psychologically muted or even cease through mental suppression during the rebirth.

For instance, in Beumelburg’s *Gruppe Bosemüller*, Siewers reflects on the change that he has undergone in trench combat and in which, exposed to the incessant dangers of war, he feels undaunted by potent fears: “Es ist mir, als könnte ich jetzt im meinem ganzen Leben keine Angst mehr haben. Auch nicht vor dem Tode” (206). The reborn soldier does not dwell on death because he does not know when he is going to die so that there is no use ruminating on it. This attitude supposedly trumps apprehension about death giving the transformed soldier power over one of his foremost fears. Indeed, once attained and understood, the transformation is a type of existential peacefulness and clarity (Beumelburg, *Bosemüller* 206).

To achieve this lucidity in war, there must be a rejection of current civilian morality. As an officer states to the protagonist Siewers in *Gruppe Bosemüller*, “[d]ie ganze sogenannte Moralphilosophie zerplatzt vor einem wohlgezielten Maschinengewehrschuß” (Beumelberg 74). A bourgeois conscience has no chance for

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171 In other words, there must be an “Erkenntnis” or recognition/realization of the chaos. Schauwecker states that recognition (*Erkenntnis*) came for him at a date which is later than events or “als alles vorbei war” (“Dichter” 224).

172 This paper would like to stress a crucial point. Readers should not think that these existential emotions automatically disappear or lessen in war or even after the war in all cases. Many soldiers are haunted by these emotions during and long after the war.
survival in the trenches requiring new and supposedly superior moral behavior. For instance, murder of the enemy and destruction become sanctioned in combat, but are punishable in civilian life (“Hexenkessel” 36; “Versprengten” 114). In another example, a lieutenant uses his leave from the front to frequent bars with women of ill-repute looking for a release from the war pressure. A commander of the local garrison writes the lieutenant’s front superior to complain about the lieutenant’s “lewd” conduct, but this commander sees no purpose to disciplinary action because the morals that define bourgeois behavior are not applicable at the front which has created the lieutenant’s morality (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 128). Such instances may offer an apologia for soldier’s conduct, but their true meaning lies in providing a blueprint for bourgeois morality’s disposal.

Also detrimental to the front solider, the domesticating and oppressing bourgeois norms of spousal and familial obligations are solved through the dearth of women in war. Indeed, front soldiers prefer masculine companionship instead of male-female interactions (Franke 94-5, 173-4). From a biological and emotional standpoint, an attraction to war allegedly calls men beyond the love between a man and a woman; from a practical standpoint, a soldier cannot love a woman because his full attention must be devoted to warmaking, which women should fully support. According to extreme conservatives, this female assistance for male belligerency is difficult for women to comprehend because their absence from the front means that they understand neither the

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173 Freud also wrote about the lifting of all cultural prohibitions in war (See Zeitgemäßes über Krieg und Tod).
174 Although extreme conservatives’ literature gives few insights into the function of women in the community, women did contribute to men’s domestication in their view. One interesting perspective is that some believed that the bonds of matrimony and having children at home was certainly a distraction for soldiers at the front (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 22; 75-84; Schauwecker, Aufbruch 36-43, 242-5). As this paragraph shows, these latter right-wingers promoted complete autonomy for the New Man.
experiences nor the feelings of front soldiers. Women’s nonexistence in the trenches also precludes much mention of heterosexual experiences among front soldiers and can lead to homoerotic tendencies – or even sexual acts (Franke 94-5) – among a few front soldiers. For instance, in one example, Salomon and others are sunbathing in the nude when they are suddenly attacked by the enemy; they manage to find their weapons, but have no time to dress (Geächteten 286). Their nakedness contributes to this combat being the most invigorating attack of Salomon’s life (287).

Deep-seated affection among members also helps cause great loyalty in and dismisses loneliness from the community. Wammsch, an elder soldier of Group Bosemüller, acts as a surrogate mother for all the group’s younger members who have survived the collapse of a house. He attends to the pains and whimpers of a young soldier who was buried underneath the rubble crying “mother…mother”, brings something to eat to another adolescent who only regurgitates it, and calms another who is simply distressed over the occurrence (Beumelburg, Bosemüller 118-9). This care contrasts the inattention Wammsch gives to his own family which he even refuses to visit and whose feelings he disregards when he rejects a noncombat post (21-2; 68). His behavior is not atypical for the front soldier who radical conservatives sometimes portray as having opportunities to stay home, but who rejects them in favor of obligations to the front community. Front soldiers’ relationships within the community transcend mere camaraderie; it is supposedly an unavoidable and yet free-flowing, natural obligation to each other and stronger than any paternal, maternal, and imperial bonds or loyalties. The pressure and life-and-death situations, which foster the community through reliance on each other at the front, are not easily forgotten by front soldiers. In the unsettled world of
the front – or even in Weimar’s turbulence for that matter –, soldiers experience rootedness, solidarity, and belonging in which one person is part of a much larger group. Indeed, after being captured by the enemy, Salomon feels lonely when readied for execution; however, a group of his own men liberate him in a *deus ex machina* fashion reinforcing that he is never really alone (*Geächteten* 96-7). Aloneness translates into powerlessness: only in the unity of the community can all good Germans be powerful.

For espousers of the front generation as the *Gemeinschaft*, their assertion weakened with the war’s end and the war front community’s disintegration. The dissolution of the unified community in stagnant and fragmenting civilian life was truly an event that these espousers had feared because (1) the *Gemeinschaft* was the chief reason for radical Weimar conservatives’ declaration of the war’s success and (2) its perfection meant that it should never have dissipated.\footnote{Wolfgang Natter challenges the origins of some significations – “front community,” “national community,” and “rebirth” in war – by stating that the German armed forces used some of them during World War I. At this point, a reminder of one of this work’s assertions is necessary, namely that Expressionists showed ultraconservatives the *effectiveness* of terms such as “*Gemeinschaft*,” “the New Man,” and intoxication in a chaotic postwar environment. For the origins of the actual terms themselves, right-wingers had several sources – including Expressionism –, many of which this dissertation has already listed in chapter two.} In other words, if it was a utopia, participants would have never allowed it to breakdown. Supporters countered this point by claiming that the community did not disintegrate because the war had never ended, but rather continued against Weimar or because a new war was to occur against the democratic state and its culture (*Zöberlein, Glaube* Conclusion; Metzner, 194, 196).\footnote{This war against Weimar had also the convenient upshot of coping with national humiliation and the pain of a lost war and of amending the diminishment of Germans’ worship of soldiers’ efforts. In a war against Weimar, radical conservatives could attempt to gain the rightful recognition of heroism after being unable to attain it after World War I.} They maintained that the *Frontgemeinschaft* did not dissipate because it remained latent and even unknown to its members, waiting to be harnessed at a later date.
and spur Germany to national perfection. In the foreword to his novel Sperrfeuer um Deutschland, Werner Beumelburg elaborates on the conditions which are necessary in war to originally create this perpetual community: “Es soll unternommen werden, die kriegerischen Vorgänge mit den seelischen Vorgängen zu verschmelzen. So soll ein Gemälde entstehen, das, begründet auf den Ergebnissen zuverlässiger Forschung, das lebendige Gesicht des Krieges festhält“ (7). The war must melt with the soul so that former soldiers never become free from the war allowing the front community the possibility of forming in the postwar era and of introducing war into peacetime.

The Freikorps are representative of trying to correct Germany’s defeat on the western front. Possibly numbering as many as 400,000, Freikorps, or independent militias under the authority of a sole Führer, were active in Germany after the war in putsches, the quelling of socialist revolts, or were just plain roving bands of men with weapons (Bullivant 60; Ehrenreich x; Noske 167). Some militiamen wanted to expand Germany’s glory or correct a lost war, and others wanted to fight for the first time feeling that they had been cheated from that right in World War I. Still others were World War I-soldiers who could not adjust to aspects of postwar, civilian life such as its monotony or civilian proscriptions on their behavior. Some Freikörpsler simply wanted to escape postwar tumult in a community. Regardless of their service or lack thereof in the First World War, the Freikorps viewed themselves as the legitimate heirs to or as being members of the World War I front generation because in Silesia, in the Baltic, or in Germany proper, they had had similar experiences as World-War-I front soldiers. Their continuance of the war meant for many militiamen that they were equivalent to, if not having surpassed the West front generation. The following two examples show either
this equivalency or superiority of the *Freikorps*. Salomon, a sixteen-year-old *Freikorps* member in the Baltic region, maintains that their battle, “in dieser kleinen gehärteten *Gemeinschaft*, das Schicksal des Frontherees von 1918 wiederholte” (*Geächteten* 172).[emphasis] Conversely, Plaas gives Kapp Putschists, and not World War I-front soldiers, the first true break with the past: “was hier wurde, war das erste Wagen großer Form eines neuen Zeitabschnittes, den hier wurde nach dem Höchsten gegriffen“ (171; See also Franke 25).177

Equally certain of their importance in the postwar period was the terrorist group the *Organisation Consul* (O. C.).178 In reality, the organization’s actions such as intimidation, money laundering, bogus businesses, arms traffic, assassinations, and prison breaks resemble those of the mafiosi, but according to extreme conservatives, these means justify the end, which was the overthrow of the Weimar Republic.179 Toward this goal, the group of men who form the O. C. are a coherent, yet small “*Gemeinschaft*” according to Salomon (*Geächteten* 326). These terrorists are fully committed to each

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177 This chapter has used quotations from Salomon to demonstrate defining aspects of the radical Weimar conservative war community even though Salomon fought in militias after the war. Since he considers his service in the Baltic an extension of the World War I front community and several of his battle descriptions correspond with front soldiers’ war accounts, this work is justified in assigning aspects of *Die Geächteten* dealing with his combat in the Baltic and Silesia to the war community. Franke’s citation is from a chapter which he entitles “Frontsoldaten” but discusses the development of *Freikorps*: “Übergang zu einem neuen deutschen Heere, zu neuer Manneszucht: das Freikorps” (25).

178 Salomon uses the same word “Aktivisten” as Kurt Hiller on several occasions to describe these terrorists (*Geächteten* 308, 354, 367, 389), and Paul Alverdes wrote that…


179 Several of these actions allowed the organization to gain desperately needed money to fund their operations. *Femgericht* murders, originally used during the Middle Ages as a form of vigilante justice when there was none, occurred under this group as well. The National Minister of Justice estimated that 354 such murders took place from 1919 until 1923 (Waite 216).
other so that there is a replication of emotions, goals, and even racial qualities among them. This reproduction of individuals gives one a sense of security and belonging: “Um sie schlang sich ein Band, das fester war, als es Treuschwüre und Organisationsstatuten sein könnten, sie fesselte der gleiche Rythmus, der in ihren Adern schlug...Sie hielten sich wie Menschen von einer Rasse, sie spürten die gleichen Wehen in sich und die gleiche Ströme“ (Salomon, *Geächteten* 305). Beyond this importance, Salomon shows his belief in the genealogy of the front generation to the Freikorps to – what he would believe would be, but this paper has dubbed terrorism – a form of guerilla warfare in the O. C. (See also Heinz 190-1).\footnote{180} This statement being made, he details throughout his work regardless of the group the rejection of their ideals by Germans and the shrinking of the community. The cadre of men in the O. C. is the only active component of the nation left at that time.

By engendering traumatic national events such as bombings and political murders, the O. C. was trying to provoke a larger nationalistic response, but even as far back as 1914, the war spirit and the Burgfrieden created the nation, or a German community, according to some ultraconservatives. The “national reconciliation” was the true revolution that had provided the German people with a rebirth. Promoters of the Burgfrieden claimed that the start of the First World War had fused all Germans –

\footnote{180 Although the O. C. thought themselves engaged in “military operations” and their actions “warfare,” they were terrorists attempting to intimidate and create terror among Weimar’s citizens and their government. The O. C. is a terrorist organization and not guerilla fighters. Without extrapolating a great deal on the differences between guerilla warfare and terrorism, a guerilla fighter would represent a political unit with some broad sort of public support. Although radical Weimar conservatives’ works were widely read, it was not because of support for the O.C.’s criminal activities, which the German public for the most part condemned.}
including soldiers, politicians, and civilians – into one body in a war spirit. At the beginning of the war, Germans had rallied to Emperor Wilhelm II’s words “I know no parties, I know only Germans” so that, as Friedrich Wilhelm Heinz writes, on this day “wurden Heer und Volk eines, und der Durchbruch des Nationalismus als Wille und Anspruch einer zur Führung berufenen Minderheit begann” (Heinz 12-13). According to Wilhelm von Schramm, the war began “mit einem besonderen Aufschwung unseres Volkes, mit einer starken, idealistischen Hoffnung auf eine national-geistige Wiedergeburt” (36).

Although some right-wingers extolled the Burgfrieden as a national community, Schramm’s statement and ultraconservatives’ later actions at nation-building indicate that either it did not really come to full fruition or was not permanent. The war’s loss, revolution, and the establishment of democracy led Schramm, the O. C., and other ultraconservatives to hope for a more enduring national community. One of this nation’s defining characteristics would be German unity; indeed, Hans Freyer preaches that national or Germany’s whole transformation is the ultimate goal or “Entscheidend ist allein, worum der Kampf geht: um die Erneuerung des Ganzen” (17; See also Boehm “Bindung”; Höhn 132; Kames 89)[emphasis mine], and the Tat claims to work towards the “Wiedergeburt des deutschen Volkes“ (Tat Advertisement “junge Generation”).

In addition, the national community is solidarity, belonging, homeliness, structure, rootedness, and salvation as opposed to the divisiveness, complicatedness, individualism,

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181 Peter Fritzsche’s Germans into Nazis and Jeffrey Verhey’s The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth, and Mobilization in Germany expose the spirit of 1914 and war enthusiasm as myths. Wolfgang Mommsen also argues that zeal for the war among the German populace was limited (28).

182 In Weimar right-wingers’ view, the definition of “Germany” or a “German” is much narrower than citizenship. Radical Weimar conservatives did not think German Jews, communists, or democrats as part of Germany. In addition, only those who agreed with extreme conservatives’ teachings were Germans.
and isolation that was found in society and the masses. Nationalism is investment in your own people; it is belief in their greatness and, thus, gives them confidence (Schauwecker, “Wesen des Nationalismus” 366). As one commentator states, only out of these “echten Gemeinschaftsgedanken erwächst uns die Erfüllung des sozialen und des nationalen Ideals, die allein die Rettung und den Neuaufbau Deutschlands sichert“ (“Der Ring” 5). Hans Zehrer, the editor of the conservative periodical the Tat, wrote that the Volksgemeinschaft was none other than “einen deutschen Sozialismus“ (“Sinn der Krise” 940-1; See also Stadtler 418-19). Many ultraconservatives supported some form of a “German” or national socialism as an essential quality of the nation. They attempted to co-opt leftist communist structures by preaching the destruction of capitalism, the fomenting of revolution, and the construction of a classless state, but also distanced themselves from communism, its internationalism, and its overwhelming focus on economic matters. Nationalism, rather than the economy, should be the basis of socialism because the nation could more easily make economic, political, and social differences vanish. Within the nation, there would be a cooperative and equal relationship among Germans because all allegedly have collective ownership: “Gedanken aus ältester Überlieferung und Gedanken der jüngsten Zielerfassung weisen auf diesen deutschen Sozialismus hin. Der Gedanke der Gemeinwirtschaft weist auf ihn hin....Dieser Sozialismus ist nicht atomistisch. Er ist organisch“ (Moeller, Reich 67).

According to Friedrich Wilhelm Heinz and Moeller van den Bruck, the Ruhr crisis led to a national socialism in which German workers protested along with conservatives the reparations payments as required by the Versailles Treaty (Heinz 203; Moeller, “An Heinrich von Gleichen” 8). This example demonstrates that this “German”
socialism could show solidarity with proletarians and their goals. Indeed, several radical Weimar conservatives expressed the opinion that the lower classes had been treated unfairly (Zehrer, “Rechts oder Links?” 535). The proletariat is, according to Moeller who devotes a whole section of Das dritte Reich towards analyzing it, primitive because it is simplistic (148-9) and, thus, more amenable to right-wingers’ ideas than many realize. For instance, the proletariat does not scrutinize economic data like the capitalist. Despite their disinterest in macroeconomics, workers’ weakness is that they focus too much on their present material condition instead of considering the superior nonmaterial future of the community: “In der Nation findet [Proletarier] sein Ich als Gemeinschaft wieder. Sie ist ihm der Inbegriff alles dessen,...wofür er im Leben tätig sein kann. Es wird für das Proletariat nur dann eine Erlösung geben, wenn es sein Denken zu diesem überwirtschaftlichen Denken erhebt...“ (Reich 150). As a member of the Gemeinschaft, the worker would cease being a victim and representative of industrial society because he has overcome the capitalist economy through his rejection of current industrial life (Freyer, Bewertung 153).

This nationalism is also necessary to deal with Germany’s encirclement on an international level by various unfriendly powers (Moeller, “Ideen” 124-5; Moeller, Reich 24). The first step to Germany acquiring national sovereignty – in other words, freedom from external control – is from the creation of German nationalism or the conceptualization of Germany’s superiority by defining it against all other peoples. These other nations are to be not only distrusted and avoided but also disliked or even
hated.\textsuperscript{183} As stated earlier in this section, hate is a preferred result because it can create the intense emotion necessary to drive an individual behind a goal. Because the transformed individual acknowledges the Western powers as a problem which causes feelings of powerlessness, pain, fear, and other emotions, he detests them. His hate has direction, namely towards other countries, and as the solution, nationalism allegedly corrects the problem. By becoming united in this spirit, other countries would no longer oppose, threaten, attack, corrupt, or prey on Germany.

This freedom from dominion requires fervency for the nation. Indeed, ultraconservatives’ nationalism fills a void which was not only left by the loss of religious spirituality in modern Germany but also the emperor’s abdication. Focusing on the latter, extreme conservatives’ nationalism transcends its Wilhelminian predecessor:

Verändert in seinem Wesen, seinen Formen, seinen Zielen, ist [der Nationalismus] aus dem Zusammenbruche des wilhelminischen Staates entstanden, nicht mehr durch den Thron gebunden und durch ihn gehemmt, infolgedessen befreiter in sich, angriffslustiger und gefährlicher als je zuvor. Er ist in einem Maß gewandelt, daß man ihn nicht mehr mit dem zu vergleichen vermag, was vor 1918, vor 1914 als nationalistisch bezeichnet wurde. (F. Jünger, Aufmarsch 5-6)[emphasis mine]

As Jünger states, his national transformations embrace “dangerousness” and “joy for the attack.” In these and other emotions’ transvaluation, reborn men are no longer enslaved to, but rather allegedly conquer them in a heroic and ecstatic fashion just as they conquer other aspects of the outside world (Freyer, Revolution 67). Their change occurs because they embrace the nation and its goals with fanaticism. In their fervor, they are aggressors so that they feel safe in comparison to the passive individual or victim. Their zealousness for the nation orginates in “Bewußtsein blutmäßiger Gemeinschaft” because “[der

\textsuperscript{183} As this chapter mentioned at the beginning of this section, several radical Weimar conservatives embraced a hodgepodge of ideologies. This being said, war was effective in the creation of nationalism because it can create hate for other nationalities against which one is warring.
Nationalismus] ist fanatisch, denn alles Blutmäßige ist fanatisch...“ (F. Jünger, Aufmarsch 22, 28). The intoxicated individual must become aware (bewußt) of blood’s role in the community, which is largely, but not exclusively, based on males’ *jus sanguinis* or “the law of blood” and not on established national borders.¹⁸⁴ For instance, German males in Poland and Sudetenland can become part of the community, but this national lifeblood does not accept women and socialists into its ranks although they may be German.

This concept of blood and the surpassing of national boundaries also played a central role in völkisch groups and among their supporters whose “Volksgemeinschaft” greatly emphasized race and genetic purity (Welch 217). According to these espousers, each race has a culture unique to it with Germans’ culture being superior to all others. Indeed, Germans have a genetic and spiritual predisposition towards völkisch values because they are inherent in the German Volk (“people/nation”). An “Erneuerung Deutschlands auf nationaler und völkischer Grundlage“ would mean the adoption of and the service for an active and alive Volk (qtd. in Schüddekopf 207). In this sense, the Volk is not the fatherland, but rather a living organism of male Germans.

Another important component of völkisch teachings was their espousal of primitive solutions to the issues that plagued Germany. One of the most important journals for völkisch groups was J. F. Lehmann’s *Deutschlands Erneuerung* whose title hints at the desire to make new again or to return to an earlier and better existence. For Expressionists, their introduction to primitivism sometimes occurred from contact with primitive, non-German art forms; however, völkisch groups differed from Expressionism in that they advocated folk art and ethos. Völkisch supporters championed German

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¹⁸⁴ Weimar right-wingers were not far from established law. The Reich Citizenship Law of 1913 already stated that the *jus sanguinis* defined German citizenship as opposed to the *jus sola*, which based citizenship on a person’s place of birth.
peasants, country life, forests, farming, nature, and medieval economic and political systems (Bormann 316-7; Midgley 261-3). While the concept of blood was significant in völkisch groups’ Blut and Boden theories, one should not overlook the latter concept, namely earth or land. The soil or land is some type of eternal, elemental life force which feeds and nourishes through the food that it produces, and its history extends beyond the history of man. In a bout of romanticism, Hans Freyer stresses that the “alte Volk” lived like farmers on their plots of land, and their economy was “concrete” and more humane in comparison to the abstract modern economy (Freyer, Revolution 48). In comparison to contemporary economic, political, and social systems, some völkisch writers submitted that feudalism, manorialism, and guilds provided a more rigid, concrete system, in which all knew their roles. There were no debates, no strikes over wages, no exploitation, and no alienation through modern labor practices in the Dark Ages. Workers could become artisans again enjoying not only the peacefulness of medieval life but also social harmony with the upper classes.\(^{185}\) In general according to Hermann Stehr, the medieval man lived “in einer Welt, die er noch so ziemlich überschauen und sich geistig zu eigen machen konnte” (Stehr 11). Others promoted what were in their opinion returns to the starting point of their time or the beginning of the beginnings for Germany and its golden age, namely the Germanic tribes which were early-twentieth-century Germans’ alleged genealogy and national legacy (Höhn 33-40).

In the writings of other right-wingers, there are statements which show primitive tendencies and solutions but, on the whole, they were far less romantic and more practical in their approaches to regressions than völkisch supporters. For instance, while some

\(^{185}\) Feudalism consisted of a classed society. Regardless of their ideological directions, many espousers of Gemeinschaft tried to justify equality within their vision of the community whether they were truly equal or not within their community. However, völkisch writers only strove for harmony.
right-wingers such as Wilhelm Stapel implored the countryside to rise up against Berlin as some völkisch authors might, another extreme conservative, Ernst von Salomon promulgated other regressions to deal with the city (“Geistige” 8). Salomon claims that the New Man must master the city innerly: “Es wird aber der neue Mensch weder dieser Zeit, noch diesem Volke entstehen, wenn er die Stadt nicht besiegt hat von innen heraus“ (Bronnen 131). Salomon was also typical for many war proponents who, in a realistic approach, refused to disassociate completely from technology in warring. Salomon’s application of technology through the use of a machine gun to cut down advancing English and Latvian soldiers shows technology could be a positive experience: “bin ich nicht eins mit dem Gewehr? Bin ich nicht Maschine – kaltes Metall?” (Geächteten 114). For these right-wingers, technology’s role within the community was not to financially benefit industrial leaders or stultify workers but rather to enable radical Weimar conservatives’ goals.

Regardless of the variances in different radical Weimar conservatives’ regressivity, their primitivism does have common objectives. Their psychological or even physical remoteness from a modern present permits supposedly natural values to occur. Their naturalness led Weimar right-wingers to believe them to be infinite and instinctual. According to Moeller van den Bruck, primitive characteristics were the “urgründe Lebensbewegungen” or ancient forms of life and that Germans only have the primitive left because they are at their wit’s end with modern crises in the republic (qdt. in Herzinger 118). Indeed, contrasting primitive naturalness and infinity was the temporal boundedness of the Weimar state and its problems.

186 This remoteness occurs often through the sense of loss of time.
In an attempt to escape Weimar’s ills and experience the organic and the endless, Salomon, eastern Freikorps, and some other radical Weimar conservatives sought primitive, eastern lands. For them, the East is the direction of the sunrise or the beginning of a new day symbolizing it as a novel experiential area conducive to transformation. They felt an instinctual hope in the uncivilized, embryonic East after being foiled during the First World War in the rational West: “Wo immer nach dem Niederbruch sich Männer fanden, die nicht verzichten wollten, erwachte eine unbestimmte Hoffnung auf den Osten. Die ersten, die das kommende Reich zu denken wagten, ahnten mit lebendigem Instinkt, daß der Ausgang des Krieges jede Bindung nach dem Westen hart zerstören mußte“ (Salomon, Geächteten 123; See also Moeller, “Aufbruch” 154-5; Esebeck 84). Archetypal of the primordial East’s ability for a transformational experience was Russia which belonged to Asia and this continent’s barbarian hordes. Born from violent revolution, Russia and socialism were dynamic, unstable, and full of vitality, and Bolshevism was ”östlich-diktatorisch-terroristisch” (Moeller, Reich 25): the Gegner journal complained that while a New Man was occurring in Russia, Germany was beset by “cramps” (qtd. in Schüddekopf 353). These radical Weimar conservatives’ admiration for Russia and Bolshevism because of these qualities contrasted their opposition to Russian Communism’s ideology, whose penetration into Germany they overwhelmingly wanted to prevent. If Germany was to become dynamic, young again, and ecstatic for the correct goals, and if this “Leben” was to endure, Germany must have Lebens-raum. When he and other Freikorps deploy for battle in the East, Salomon escapes from a stagnant, bourgeois Germany to “Germany’s borders” to

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187 Many Germans fear the barbarian hordes coming from the East, and right-wingers see the positive of a young, revolutionary East because the East gave them room to become intoxicated and practice their values.
experience psychological *Lebensraum* (“space for life”) or, in other words, the environment to develop to the New Man (*Geächteten* 72, 75). After battle in the East and return to Germany, he realizes that there are no defined physical borders to the land except for those that the soldiers determine: “Die Grenzen aber waren flüssig. Heere bildeten die Grenzen, Gewehre und Geschütze...“ (Salomon, *Geächteten* 179). Fluid boundaries enable the acquisition of physical *Lebensraum* and imperialism – in other words, possession of land – so that although there may be numerical, biological, and ideological constraints, there is no physical spatial constraint to their community (Stapel, *Staatsman* 253-6). As the physical borders and land of the community increase to the east, the East itself becomes conducive to German-communal life.

However, before the German community can expand eastward, this knowledge on and experience of psychological *Lebens-raum* – in other words, mental development in the chaotic atmosphere of the “primeval” East – must be applied to the fatherland and the political realm upon eastern militiamen’s return to Germany where they can engender mass transformation and the community. However, even if a militiaman did not serve in the Baltics and Silesia, his goal was the same as those who had served in the East, namely the *Wandlung* through the linking of politics and war. According to Harmut Plaas, the Kapp Putsch for the first time created political troops: “Hier wurde zum ersten Mal das Wesen der politischen Truppe empfunden...Hier wurde etwas Neues, etwas Ungekanntes gefühlt, in dem sich irgendwie der Dämon eines neugeborenen und

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188 Salomon’s psychological development to the New Human Being occurs through battle and violent acts. Although Loesch argues the necessity of *Binnendeutschen*’s psychological development to that of *Grenzdeutschen* who are always under threat from foreign influences and although many ultraconservatives’s belief in Germany being under threat from foreign powers, Salomon believes that this psychological development is not possible in rational Germany at this time because war and violence are not tolerated enough there; thus, he must travel east where the environment does make it possible. Eduard Stadtiler calls this psychological development to the New Man the “innerdeutschen Osten” (418).

189 In this sense, the Baltics are only a test case for the creation of “room for life” in Germany.
stärkeren Machtwillens offenbarte“ (178; See also Heinz 28-30, 49). A successful political troop causes political rebirth in which the community becomes the state so that the state can become the community’s instrument.

This community-as-state is none other than a dictatorship, which has several advantages according to radical Weimar conservatives. It is strong, utopian, and rigid, and in comparison to the mechanistic, law-abiding, and compromise-reaching parliamentary process, decisions could be made quicker within the dictatorial state. A relic of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, democracy also contrasted the dictatorship’s life-bringing energies and currentness: this authoritarian regime was more youthful than parliamentarianism according to ultraconservatives who offered as evidence new dictatorial governments’ emergence in Russia, Poland, and Italy. Friedrich Georg Jünger concurred that the dictatorship has a “absolute Dynamik” and the “Rüstung im elementarsten Sinne,” and the dictatorship’s dynamism and drive led him to claim that “[d]er diktatorische Wille ist wesentlich und von höchster Zukunft“ (Introduction 24; *Aufmarsch* 48).

The dictatorship was also the whole (das Ganze) or, in other words, totalitarian and, thus, infested every aspect of life or, as Hans Freyer stated “sinks itself” into all people (*Revolution* 70; See also Schauwecker, “Wesen des Nationalismus” 367). Because its supporters would gain political power, they would affect not only political, but also economic, social, and other forms of life so that these forms become subservient to the dictatorial state. Whether the models of economic regulation resemble the war economy or medieval guild and manorial systems, they must be controlled in some manner and subordinate to national interests or “Germanized” (Spengler, *Preußentum*
91). In these simplistic socio-economic models, the state and industry had close ties, but capitalists would no longer control government, and parliamentary and capitalistic systems and their concomitant divisiveness, balkanization, disorder, and pluralism would cease to exist. In the dictatorship’s totalitarianism, public organizations such as clubs and political parties come under the umbrella of the state, and every person is part of a machine in that they know their position and job; they were one body with each having responsibility to each other (Schauwecker, Aufbruch 107, 305; Moeller, “Generationen” 42). These metaphors communicate structure and the import of all members in that the machine and body cannot function fully, or possibly at all for that matter, without all their parts.

Although many Germans would turn to the dictatorship because they were looking for some type of borders, form, rootedness, hierarchy, authority, and homogeneity in Weimar’s plurality, freedom, fragmentation, chaos, and heterogeneity, conservatives also portrayed the dictatorship as freedom. It was a release from everyday, banal life making the populace comfortable within these authoritative structures and purportedly substantive again (Spengler, Preußentum 32). Their battle against the community’s enemies was also national freedom in which the German nation would cast off the yoke of their foreign oppressors and exert power over them (Günther 51).

Through these and other means, radical Weimar conservatives would have power over conditions and constructions permanently and power over someone or something allegedly means freedom from that someone or something.

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190 In reference to fighting on the Eastern front, Salomon writes that the largely autonomous Freikorps broke free of spatial and psychological borders of everyday life and became existentially limitless: “Uns brach die Kruste auch, die uns gefangen hielt. Die Bindung brach, wir waren frei” (Geächteten 82-3). Constituent to the Frei-korps is the word “free,” in which the troops are not beholden to any governmental power but also personal liberty allegedly occurs through individual intoxication and rebirth.
The continual emphasis by radical Weimar conservatives of the dictatorship’s emancipating qualities indicates that ultraconservatives wanted to convince Germans of this idea through its constant reiteration. Within this community, this freedom is an imagined liberty.¹⁹¹ Such is the case with Moeller van den Bruck’s puzzling assertion that force should not confine, but rather must emancipate (Reich 122), or with commonsense reflection on the totalitarian state’s dependence on coercion and domination. Unlike constitutional democracy, which attempts to balance personal liberties and the public good, private life and autonomy exist little under a totalitarian regime as the state eliminates much individuality. In addition, the community surveils itself for what extreme conservatives would consider “antagonisms,” “threats,” and “contagions.” Dissenters and other fragmenting dangers – including non-Germans, pacifists, internationalists, parliamentarians, social democrats, and democrats – would either conform to the radical Weimar conservative identity, be suppressed, or even be eradicated (Salomon, Geächteten 438; Spengler, Preußentum 9). Friedrich Georg Jünger writes that “[d]enn dieser von Begeisterung getragene, die Fülle der Macht in sich sammelnde Staat ist es, der allein die Zukunft der völkischen Gemeinschaft verbirgt. Er allein ist Panzer und Waffe zugleich, Erhalter des Eigenen und Vernichter des Fremden, das sich anmaßend gegen ihn drängt“ (Aufmarsch 5). This intolerance and selfishness help entrench the dictatorship so that each individual often displays little or no compassion even for others inside the community.

Although the dictatorship’s supporters may vocally espouse freedom, a person’s divestiture of liberty in the dictatorship must occur to a large degree so that he or she

¹⁹¹ Extreme conservatives’ freedom and rejection of limits is psychological. It occurs only in the mind; injustice is still present, but this mental occurrence can be in and of itself convincing for the individual. As I have stated earlier, both groups’ transformations require “attitudinal” or mental change.
subordinates him- or herself to the needs of the nation. For this reason, extreme conservatives often demand some type of sacrifice (Metzner 195), but if all must sacrifice, then there are different types of sacrifice because several extreme conservatives distinguish, much as Expressionists, between leaders and followers or “politischer Führung und Gefolgschaft“ (Jünger, Introduction 24; See also Dingräve 34; Heinz 87; Plaas 171, 178; Salomon, Geächteten 181).192 The follower is obligated to obey the leader and work to realize his goals and, in turn, the Führer is the “echten Diener der Volksgemeinschaft, der das Wollen unseres Volkes zur Tat werden läßt“ (“Der Ring” 5; Wirths 175). In addition, for the dictatorship to function, there must be a hierarchy of leaders although Spengler calls for a “Minderheit von Führern und einer gewaltigen Mehrheit von Geführten” (Spengler, Untergang 2: 614; See also Höhn 110). However, in accepting the leader’s teachings, even the most toady follower gains leadership qualities becoming more leader-like to convert others. This point blurs the distinction between leaders and followers for many in the community.

While this haziness in most of the community’s top-down structure exists, there is no confusion about the supreme leader in charge of the community. This unquestioned leader destroys all resistance, rejects egalitarianism, calms people’s fear, wants to seize and practice power, demands struggle and discipline from his followers, and transcends political parties and programs. Front officers are one group from which this leader could come (Salomon, Geächteten 353), and others spoke of Caesarism or leaders in the mold of a conquering and autocratic man of action (Spengler, Untergang 2: 537-43, 578-9, 628-30). Regardless of type, the leader can force others to submit to his will just through

192 The ultimate sacrifice is death. Several radical Weimar conservatives glorified and heroicized the dead cultishly whether it be perished soldiers, militiamen, terrorists, or other nationalists; their sacrifices and contributions to the utopian life are made immemorial to others through their stories.
his own power; he elects the people (Blüher 4). One of the heroes in Salomon’s work, Kern, shows true leadership by forcing Walter Rathenau, who is giving a speech, through the power of his eyes: “Ich sah, wie Kern, halb vorgebeugt, nicht ganz drei Schritt von Rathenau entfernt, ihn in den Bannkreis seiner Augen zwang...Der Minister aber wandte sich zögernd, sah flüchtig erst, verwirrt sodann nach jener Säule, stockte, suchte mühsam, fand sich dann...“ (Geächteten 315). Kern’s gaze is depicted by Salomon as controlling and invasive; it keeps and yet collapses distance. Although he is an important figure in Germany, Rathenau’s reaction proves that he is not the true leader as Kern. After Rathenau’s assassination, his supporters become a lost, panicked mass. They have no direction or comfort without their leader (Salomon, Geächteten 366-7; See also Heinz 37-8, 106): Rathenau’s death has driven them to the brink of disintegration, and at that time, a leader with the “proper” ideational content and power could will the control of the mass and transform it into a unified Volk (Theweleit 2: 110-17). From Salomon’s perspective, the true leader, namely Kern, could have tamed the mass, but he is on the lam for masterminding Rathenau’s murder. Despite the chaos that is occurring around him and because of the strength of the bond between leader and follower, Salomon can only think of Kern’s well-being and of locating him because he is his leader, mentor, and visionary (Geächteten 367, 373).

Indeed, this leader is a prophet with divine revelation, superior communicative skills, and advanced persuasive abilities (Ernst 21; Sontheimer, Antidemokratisches Denken 119; Theweleit 2: 113). In his book Der christliche Staatsmann, Wilhelm Stapel

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193 Erwin Kern was a navy officer who later joined the Erhardt Brigade, fought in Upper Silesia, ran arms, and became a member of the Organisation Consul. He, Hermann Fischer, and Ernst Werner Techow assassinated Walter Rathenau in Berlin on 24 June 1924 with a hand grenade and shots from a machine gun. 194 For more information on the use of eyes in some radical Weimar conservative texts, see Theweleit, volume 2, pages 130-41.
writes that “[s]o ist der wahre Staatsmann Herrscher, Krieger und Priester zugleich,” and in *Volk und Führer in der Jugendbewegung*, Hans Blüher compares the leader to Michelangelo’s Adam, extending “den halbschlaffen Arm Gottvater…, um den göttlichen Funken zu empfangen“ (Blüher 3; Stapel, *Staatsmann* 190). This prophetic Führer is most often a writer who allegedly has a predisposition to more quickly and better see what the normal man could not view (Ernst 19-20; Moeller, “Vorspiel” 2; Schauwecker, “Dichter“ 218), and thus, communicates his divine vision mostly through literature in comparison to the spoken word. A literary Führer can bind a man to his ideals through the persuasive power of writings and instruct him how to transcend temporal conditions. For instance, literary leaders help the intoxicated cope with stresses that would cause people to “scheiden und wandeln, wachsen oder zugrunde gehen” (Schauwecker, *Weg* 16). Although the Führer could engender crises, he must guide and persuade thrown individuals in constant crisis to the “correct” rebirth of radical Weimar conservative ideals (Hesse 207; Schwarz 12), and once they have reached the community, the leader must maintain his followers in the Gemeinschaft. According to Moeller van den Bruck, a vacuum of this leadership had led the front community’s soldiers to return immediately to their homes after the armistice declaration or, worse yet, to participate in the Revolution of 1918/1919 (*Reich* 126).

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195 Wilhelm Erbt describes the person on the precipice of rebirth. The leader’s job would be to give him the last direction to the community: “Wenn der innere Halt bricht, wenn der Rausch über das Herz kommt, über das Greifbare hinauszudringen,…jenes Geheimnisvolle Reich anzuschlagen und von jener wilden Glut zu schöpfen, um zu sagen, was sich nicht aussagen läßt, um zu fassen, was nicht erfassen läßt – dann kommt Umsturz und Untergang, die Qual zerrissener Seele; – wir zerflattern in Angst, wie die Nachteule, die sich in die grüle Mittagsstunde verflogen” (qtd. in Theweleit 1: 242, 305).

Conservative war novelists often write about inadequate soldiers who refuse to continue to a fort where other soldiers are fighting (Beumelburg, *Bosemüller* 37), and others fall to several temptations such as women and false political ideologies (Schauwecker, *Aufbruch* 243-5, 300, 398-9). Still others are so emotionally scarred from fighting that they never recover (Beumelburg, *Bosemüller* 41, 75-89, 125-6).
False leadership – or no leadership at all – and a dearth of critical thinking were the reasons that these massified existences supported the revolution according to radical Weimar conservatives. However in reality, their own communal populace is and needs to be an imperceptive flock of sheep that blindly follows: “Sie flüsterten das Zauberwort ‘Befehl vom Chef’, und niemand wagte, nachzuforschen, und die Gefolgschaft war gesichert” (Geächteten 296-7). Salomon’s quotation shows the dictatorial community’s decisional hierarchy between a Führer (“leader”) and his followers. The follower purportedly enjoys security in his defined and narrow role within the community and is one in a larger body with other communal members (Plaas 178). However, the leader represents the head in this body metaphor and controls all other appendages. The follower does not have to think for himself, but rather the leader, who controls, practices authority, and commands, does it for him and makes all major decisions except one, namely a person’s choice to continue in the community. If the community has become the state, then this decision to leave the dictatorial Gemeinschaft can have dire consequences for the individual because he is now outside this community, considered a “threat” to it, and open to persecution or even death. This factor is a powerful motivation for a member to stay so that the best possibilities to thwart radical Weimar conservatives’ dictatorial community are to prevent its construction (1) through the persuasion of people to leave the community or (2) to dissuade people from joining it and in both cases before it becomes the state. With regard to the first proposal, members may find comfort, belonging, and male camaraderie in the community regardless of its several terrible

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196 Boehm states that “Gemeinschaft ist ohne Autorität nicht denkbar” (Kleines 12). Authority perequires legitimacy from people and power. The formation of the dictatorship, or the community becoming the state, needs members. The more adherents who enter its ranks, the greater is its chance to become a reality; conversely, the less people who join in, the greater is its chance of failure.
features so that their departure from this *Gemeinschaft* would be more remote. Thus, although both strategies should be pursued, the foremost prevention of the dictatorial state’s formation is most likely a disturbance of an individual’s decision to adopt radical Weimar conservatives’ values before the dictatorship forms. From ultraconservatives’ perspective, this decision, or a conscious choice for their community, is essential for its functioning because it must be overwhelmingly a *Glaubensgemeinschaft*: most members must believe without demur in its teachings (F. Jünger, *Aufmarsch* 35; Moeller, *Reich* 122). Although acquiescing members were generally fine in ultraconservatives’ view after the dictatorship’s formation because of their complacent acceptance of its goals, “believing” members – in other words, “reborn persons” – are more loyal and ecstatic followers who realize and work for the state’s goals.  

Radical Weimar conservatives sought to change economic, political, and social life by dismissing the “problems” of Weimar and promising individuals what they had purportedly lacked in Weimar whether the premises of these dismissals and promises were valid or not. For instance, although extreme conservatives would be loath to admit it, the grounds for their objections to liberalism and democracy – namely, that they limit freedom – are farces in comparison to their claims that their community engenders

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197 Neutral members were not acceptable unless they acquiesce to the dictatorial community (F. Jünger, *Aufmarsch* 2). Of course, they are then no longer neutral although there may be coercive circumstances causing their tacit approval of the dictatorship.

All members must go through some major or minor stimuli, which cause them to join the community. One person could choose extreme conservatives’ community with lesser or maybe even little existential stress than another; however, all communal members must experience something – however large or small – that causes them to change; otherwise, they would remain in their status quo. *At this point, I would like to stress that catastrophe and great instability in individuals were overwhelmingly necessary for the growth of not only ultraconservatives but also Expressionists’ communities as the apexes of their “success” during economic, political, and social crises showed.*
Yet another fiction was that Germans’ fate improves in right-wingers’ community. The alleged ills, which Germans were to hate and abandon and which had caused the fear, the chaos, the powerlessness, and other existential feelings, actually remain instead of cease. Because these feelings continue in all situations but the alleged ills that caused them cease, either some ills such as democracy, internationalism, and Jews and other races must not be truly ills at all or their community supplanted them with other ills – ubiquitous violence, aggression, and ethnic and national superiority –, which produced these same existential feelings. The continuing abovementioned existential pressure drives transformed Germans to violently eliminate the “irritant” allegedly causing the emotion, but the elimination of the irritant without liberation from stress drives them to eliminate new “problems.” Experiencing this constant stress simply does not provide better possibilities, fewer hardships, or utopian bliss for its citizens.

In addition, although they opposed aspects of traditional conservatism as their opinions on Wilhelminian Germany, petty bourgeois values, and capitalism show, radical Weimar conservatives were in some cases not as novel as they seemed, relying at times for support on old antisemites or conservatives such as monarchists who threw their lot with extreme conservatives’ teachings because they had several corresponding core

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198 As communicated in the last chapter, late Expressionists for the most took part pains to ensure freedom for the individual and communal diversity, but conversely, one is limited to a specific culture when one embraces radical Weimar conservatives’ nation. In comparison with the Expressionist Gemeinschaft, which attempts to be more inclusive, the nation is an arbitrary cut-off for a community; for instance, most extreme conservatives’ subtraction of assimilated and loyal German Jews’ from the community cannot be logically explained.

199 The war demonstrates this fallacy of Weimar right-wingers’ problems. If the problems which allegedly cause these emotions must be eliminated, why should war not also be eliminated? Why is it also not a problem? One could state that the enemy whose bullets and bombs cause German soldiers to transform, but radical Weimar conservatives actually show in general little enmity for their opponents who are just soldiers much like them. Jews, lax social values, and capitalism do not explain the chaos, fear, horror, and powerlessness in war, but rather thrownness in war can only be explained by war in and of itself.

200 For this reason, Moeller states that “Aber Sendung ist: die Welt nicht zur Ruhe kommen zu lassen...Und unser Wunder wird sein...aus unserem revolutionären Selbstmord unsere politische Wiedergeburt vollziehen“ (“unheimliche“ 3). Höhn also states that there must be constant Erneuerung (101, 126).
values (W. Bussmann 67). Despite Theweleit’s statements that radical Weimar conservatives’ literature is written by sons and from their perspective against their father’s generation, their conflict is not a rebellion against patriarchy because (1) their fathers would agree with many of their positions and (2) male hegemony continues (1: 107-8). At least Expressionists sought to overthrow and eliminate militarism, nationalism, authoritarianism, and feelings of racial and ethnic superiority, which were not new in German society. Extreme conservatives’ reestablishment of these recognized qualities under new structures or signifiers is reflected to an extent in Moeller’s concept of the “Third Reich,” which is an improvement over the intermediary Second Reich, a final community, and based upon a dialectic of time and space or action and conservatism. 201 This allegedly vitalistic, new conservatism or “third Standpoint,” whose main quality is permanent vitalism, appeals to both (1) change in which new ideas are absolutely necessary in an ailing society and (2) stability in total chaos (Moeller, Reich 33, 181). 202 His “third Standpoint“ deals with “Probleme des Staates, der Gemeinschaft,

201 The term “Third Reich” stemmed from two different sources. First, several medieval religious figures and groups proclaimed a coming Third Reich. In this belief, the “Third” originates in the Trinity of Father (empire in heaven), Son (Ruler of the Church), and Holy Ghost (Empire of the Holy Ghost or coming Third Reich) (Schwierskott 103-4). Second, two empires dominate German history before 1933: the first was the Holy Roman Empire which lasted from 800 with the crowning of Charlemagne emperor until 1806 when Napoleon abolished the loose union of German states and the second being much shorter from 1871 until the end of the First World War.

202 Moeller’s concept of the “Third Reich,” or a permanent conservative activity corresponds to the idea of a conservative revolution although he never used the term. According to Moeller, conservatism continues into infinity in that it is undisturbed by and eliminates the disruptions, radical changes, and new beginnings occurring around it (Reich 180-1, 206, 210). Because conservatism is not temporal or constantly changing as time does but rather endures, it corresponds to space in Moeller’s view (Reich 180, 210); only in Raum, which is eternal, do things nurture and develop so that the person and the state can become immortal. The republic is the manifestation of a revolutionary government in that it has no staying power to persist indefinitely. According to Moeller, the goal of revolutions is the creation of a new strength and drive (Reich 138); however, their limitation is their ephemerality: because of their dependence on time, they cannot last (Reich 182). As stated previously, radical Weimar conservatives did not oppose the Revolution of 1918/1919 because of its chaos or dissipating effects, but rather they despised its outcomes. With results that reflected their values, “revolution“ was fine according to ultraconservatives. For instance, the right-wing professor Hans Freyer desired a “Revolution from the Right“ or a revolution with right-wing values. Using the same term as the Expressionist Kurt Hiller (Aktivismus), Detlev Luerßen echoes Freyer’s belief
des Zusammenlebens der Menschen, mit denen [der dritter Standpunkt] sich einst in der Tiefe auseinandergesetzt hat…“ (Reich 221, 194); Moeller’s transformation is political change (the dictatorship) to force utopian and finish social and cultural change. As many of the statements of this section indicate, Moeller and other radical Weimar conservatives filled this third way, this enduring vitality or in other words the community, with their own goals - whether it be the front, the nation, primitivism, or some blend of these three – which all culminate in a dictatorial state.

**Conclusion – Expressionists and Weimar Right-Wingers**

Once a champion of the movement, the Expressionist poet and theorist Ivan Goll wrote in 1921 a disavowal of Expressionism which can be explained by his statement “...ihr Deutschen, was gleichbedeutend ist mit: ihr Expressionisten. Denn wetten: auch Ludendorff ist schließlich ein Expressionist?” (“Expressionismus stirbt“ 108).

Although the reader may be tempted to consider Goll’s declaration sarcasm or emotional hyperbole, Goll was so serious that he went so far as to plead for Expressionism’s end in the same writing. The movement’s structures were in step not only with Germans themselves but also – as Goll’s reference to the former general and völkisch supporter Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff indicates – with Weimar right-wingers and their ultraconservatives’ “revolutionary” nature is necessary to attack the democratic order of Weimar.

This work has already mentioned the failure of the term “Conservative Revolution” to describe these writers. The concept “revolution” implies organization and even majority support among a citizenry for a revolution’s goals: this support and organization never occurred. Radical Weimar conservatives may have wanted their own “revolution” and have broached a similar concept, but they did not create a revolution.  

Only two years earlier than Goll’s statement, Ludwig Rubiner had finished writing his Expressionist play *Die Gewaltlosen*, in which the author conceptualized a communal “Volk” with freedom and love or, in other words, with completely different meanings than ultraconservative counterparts (123, 134). Although not at their height early in the republic, radical Weimar conservatives became an active group soon after 1918.
signifiers. Because of these same signifiers, numerous right-wingers condemned Expressionists and their ideas, but at the same time, some also hoped that Expressionists could be won for their ideas.

Instances of condemnations would be Edgar Jung’s criticism of Expressionism as “utopisch,” “Vergewaltigung,” and a “losgelöster und außerkosmishe Geist” which culminates in “ohnmächtigen Aufrufen und Programmen,” (385) and Wulf Bley’s label of his age’s literature as a perplexing hodge podge of deified matter, mind, phallus, and vagina perpetuating a Masse Mensch.204 Bley gave particular attention to individual culprits – “die Rehfisch, Toller, Hasenclever, Brecht und dergleichen” – and their choice genre, the stage, which had fallen into dangerous disrepute and decomposition among these “östlicher Einwanderer” (170-1).205 Nearly a decade earlier, Franz Schauwecker had ranted against the “Gehirnekstasen der Expressionisten vom Schlage Becher, Hasenclever, Wolfenstein, Trakl usw.“ and their “Besoffenheit aus Morphium, Veronal, Opium“ (qtd in Fröschle 119). Their poetic verses are “Epilepsien“ and babbles out of “krampfigen Hirn und Verstand.” In a confusing contradiction of these statements, Schauwecker later admits that literary Expressionism has had some technical success, but he is disgusted when he sees “diese Leute in der Masse ihre Brüder umarmen” (qtd. in Fröschle 119). He was equally irked by the alleged business of Expressionism – “Sternheim u. Co. G. m. b. H.” – (qtd. in Frösche 122), much as Walter Dettmar who stated that the former Expressionist well-wisher and publisher Kurt Wolff was motivated by profits instead of providing good literature (582). Even Moeller writes that the early literature of the 1920s was a business and dominated the “Schlagwortmarkt“ of early

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204 Masse Mensch is the title to a play by Ernst Toller.
205 Many Jews like Toller and Hasenclever were of course active in literary Expressionism although Toller was born in Samotschin near Bromberg in present-day Poland and Hasenclever in Aachen.
Weimar (*Reich* 202; See also Pechel 72); this mention of “the market of key words” was a reference to the ubiquity of Expressionist meanings for signifiers, especially during early-to-mid postwar and revolutionary Germany.

Ultraconservatives’ roundabout criticisms of many literary Expressionists’ activity during the Revolution of 1918/1919 and in the Independent Socialist Party – they often do not mention Expressionists by name – are meant to discredit Expressionists’ teachings. Salomon writes that the influencers of the Revolution of 1918/1919 were madmen, spies, criminals, sadists and Literaten (“Hexenkessel” 33). Spengler stated that part of the Spartacists consisted of “Winkelliteratur“ (*Briefe* 112), and according to Moeller, the USPD embodied the radicalism “einer literarisch-proletarisch Halbintelligenz” whose attempt at “politische Erneuerung” had failed (*Reich* 130, 211, 243). Moeller questions if the masses had ever wanted the principles “[v]on diesen Revolutionsliteraten…: Weltdemokratie, Völkerbund und zwischenstaatliche Regelung, das Ende aller Kriege und Friede auf Erden…” (*Reich* 22, See also 131). In his forward to *Feuriger Weg*, Franz Schauwecker states his desire for a correction of these “Weltverbesserer” (qtd. in Prümm 154), F. G. Jünger wanted to eradicate the idea of “eine abstrakte, vage Gemeinschaft von Europäern und müden Geistern“ (*Aufmarsch* XVII), and Harmut Plaas disdainfully wrote about the feminine pacifism of the revolutionary Toller (174). Heinz was also particularly disgusted by the “slime” of many pacifistic and degenerate literati who defiled hale and hearty German culture (Heinz 105).

Despite these insults and as previously mentioned, Weimar right-wingers thought that a union could be reached between right and left because of their common disdain for

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206 The communist theorist Georg Lukács wrote about Expressionism’s role in the German Independent Socialist Party in the early 1920 (see Motto to chapter three). This work will discuss Lukács’ opinions on Expressionism in its concluding chapter.
current reality, similar signifiers, and their alike process to the New Human Being. To construct the Gemeinschaft during the Weimar Republic, the differences of divisive groups in German society must disappear, and during his incarceration, Salomon and a communist with the name Edi do find the common goal of fighting the power of the prison which wants to reeducate them in society’s image. Salomon also notes the dynamism of young revolutionaries who captured all fragmented Germans during the early republic but lacked leadership and laments that the two most active parts of the revolution – the left (Sparticists) and the right (Freikorps) – cancelled each other out leaving the passive republicans to gain power (“Hexenkessel” 37; Geächteten 21, 219).

Although the Burgfrieden and alleged Spirit of 1914 brought left and right together and Max Hildebert Boehm wrote that the “Jugend von rechts und links trifft sich in der Ablehnung des bourgeoisen Westlertums,” Hans Zehrer, Boehm, and Moeller bemoaned that the right and left still fought with each other despite their uncanny alikeness (Boehm, Kleines 79; See also Moeller, “Ideen” 120-1; Stadtler 418-9; Zehrer, “Parole” 65; Zehrer, “Rechts oder Links?”). Moeller van den Bruck also supported a collaboration of both groups because of the right’s need for some of the surplus of talented writers who, he thought, existed on the left (qtd in F. Stern 256; also F. Jünger, Aufmarsch 29).

Some Expressionists also considered a united political and social agenda and cultivated contacts with radical Weimar conservatives, but were much more wary of ultraconservatives’ advances. Ernst Toller wrote articles in one of the most popular conservative organs, the Tat and befriended the conservative Ernst Niekisch during the revolution of 1918/1919 and later in prison (Dove 67, 71, 102; Klemperer 99). Right-wingers approached Kurt Hiller who had actively promoted workers’ rights during the
November Revolution (Schüddekopf 334-5, 338-9; Woods, *Conservative Revolution* 71).

Hiller refused a merger citing that the differences in ideology between both groups were too great. In September 1917 at Lauenstein Castle in Thuringia, the aforementioned Ernst Toller attended a meeting of intellectuals such as the right-wing writer Paul Ernst, the conservative sociologist Werner Sombart, and the conference organizer and conservative publisher Eugen Diederichs. Referencing this conference, Diederichs discussed the problematic of the New Man’s cultivation in a letter to Max Weber from 1917: “Das erste Lauensteiner Tagung hat mich insofern nicht befriedigt…Dazu freilich der neue Mensch, der in den Gesetzen der Seele seine Orientierung findet, und der sich darum nicht von den wirtschaftlichen Gesetzen des Lebens imponieren läßt, sondern mehr platonisch schauend den Geist auch als Gestalter des wirtschaftlichen und Staatslebens ist. Das hat nichts mit Moralgerede zu tun, desto mehr aber mit ritterlichem Menschentum, das das Leben als Tragik empfindet und doch bejaht. So ist das eigentliche Problem: wie entwickelt sich im Staat dieser Typus, wie gelangt er zur Führerschaft…Es ist meine feste Überzeugung, ein neues intensives Staatsleben kommt nur herauf mit neuen Menschen, einem neuen Lebensgefühl” (*Selbstzeugnisse* 243-4). At this time, definite parallels existed between Diederichs and Expressionism in their critique of capitalism, rejection of moral norms, and embracement of the New Human Being. In addition, Diederichs’ uncertainty about the means to achieve leadership is exemplary for both groups’ larger uncertainty how to achieve their ultimate communal goals and, thus, it helps explain some variances (1) between Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives’ communities and also (2) between the individual members’ communities within both groups. Focusing on the former, the New Man must lead to
political rebirth for radical conservatives of the Weimar Republic; conversely, although Expressionists did overwhelmingly want to effect political change, it was not always the means to their ends.

While this and preceding chapters gave a broad picture of the similarities and differences between the two groups, the following chapters will give a better picture of the aforementioned differentiation among individual writers of each group and political transformation or lack thereof. The studies of singular authors among Expressionists and Weimar right-wingers such as Georg Kaiser and Ernst Jünger will make salient their digressions from each group’s main characteristics which this work has given in the preceding two chapters. Likewise, these later chapters will highlight the disparity in the importance of political rebirth between many Expressionists and radical Weimar conservatives. The following chapter on the Expressionist playwright Georg Kaiser’s writings and beliefs will demonstrate this point. His methods to realize fraternity are not concerned with political transformation or the gaining of political power as in radical Weimar conservatives’ desire to construct a dictatorship. Instead, Kaiser supported a rebirth in human ethos to engender social transformation, a community, and real-life change.

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---. *Der Sinn der Krise. Die Tat. Unabhängige Monatszeitschrift zur Gestaltung neuer*
Chapter 5

[Die industrielle Gesellschaft] ist Ingenieurwerk, also das schiere Risiko. Wenn die Formel nicht stimmt, explodiert das Gas. Wenn die kritische Schwelle überschritten wird, zerreiβt das System. –völkisch writer Hans Freyer, Die Revolution von Rechts 21

**Georg Kaiser’s Rejuvenation of Humanity as Social Transformation**

The most famous examples of Expressionist *Wandlungsdrämen*, or dramas in which *Wandlungen* occur, are the works of Georg Kaiser. His plays *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Die Koralle*, *Gas I* and *Gas II*, *Nebeneinander*. *Volksstück* 1923, and *Hölle Weg Erde* deal with the *Erneuerung* of human beings. In the above-mentioned plays, the protagonists’ *Wandlungen* typically come from actions or events which throw these protagonists from their boring, everyday existences. An important component these *Wandlungen* is very often the central characters’ ecstasy, which is antithetical to their earlier, stagnant life. This transformation also requires the protagonists’ admission of guilt that their former actions, synonymous with conventional society, were wrong and a willingness to do penitence for this guilt (Kuxdorf 117). Seminal to this admission, and simultaneously the main characteristic of Kaiser’s *Erneuerung*, is the protagonists’ new-found realization that they are responsible and should sacrifice for fellow human beings (Kuxdorf 132). Indeed, these New Human Beings reject a pitiless society by unselfishly exhibiting care for and helping others at the expense of their own well-being. They attempt to create a *Gemeinschaft* by instilling humanistic teachings in others, but typically these other people rebuff these overtures leading to the protagonists’ tragic deaths.
Many scholars either minimize or reject the assertion that Kaiser’s Erneuerung was directed at social and cultural issues. Kuxdorf claims that Kaiser does not see social structure as “das Übel,” and his Erneuerung is not a social or ideological transformation (85, 127), and Paulsen stresses the importance of spirituality in Kaiser’s works while downplaying material themes (13). Hugo F. Garten contends that Kaiser’s rejuvenation aims at “spiritual, not material change” (41), and Petersen thinks that one should not overestimate his preoccupation with social and political questions (Künstlerbild 73).

While not disregarding the spiritual changes that one undergoes during the rejuvenation, this chapter will argue that they are secondary to the social transformation, which Kaiser wishes to realize. Kaiser’s Wandlungsdramen not only scrupulously outline social realities that are formidable hindrances to the Erneuerung but also that this transformation’s main goal is the purging the world of these social ills. Kaiser does not often show the utopian Gemeinschaft in his works and had little idea how it would function (Kenworthy 40), but rather communicates almost exclusively the daunting obstacles to its realization. The fulfillment of the New Human Being requires complete independence from existing ideological, economic, and social norms. Kaiser attacks the time period in which he wrote and shows its problems, and thus, although his writings are abstract, they are far from reclusive or rhetorical (Kellner 5).

In his essay Formung von Drama, Kaiser even stresses that the “Dichter ist nicht Lebensfremd” (4: 573).

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207 Garten contrasts Kaiser with Brecht when he states that Kaiser aims at spiritual and not material change. Certainly, he does not aim at the type of material reform as Brecht, but rather takes a much more radical position which calls for a tabula rasa of all societal norms. However, Kaiser does furiously attack materialism and the power of money in society as this chapter will show.

208 For further evidence of Kaiser’s concern for reality, see Robert Kauf’s article in which he finds theoretical similarities between Kaiser and the pragmatist Walter Rathenau who was a businessman, an intellectual, and a politician. See also R. Bussmann (152), Durzak (124), and Kuxdorf (16) for more information on the similarities in both men’s theories.
Unfortunately, the average human being experienced life and the modern world as complete chaos according to Kaiser. His works often show this chaos by expressing psychologically an existential instability in dramatic personae that stems, for instance, from money and the capitalistic system (Durzak, *Sternheim Georg Kaiser* 110; Paulsen 13). A direct result of this chaos was people’s wish to in someway constantly find order. In his essay “Historientreue,” Kaiser argues that history is humanity’s desire to create a clear picture of all of humanity’s errors: “[man] muß...mit beiden Händen zugreifen, um halbwegs Ordnung in das angebotene Chaos zu schaffen” (4: 576, 578).

In general, the human being “muß dem Gesetz nach, das jede Verwirrung ordnet. Er braucht diese vitale Sicherung, um mit dem Leben auszukommen“ (4: 581-2).

Human beings had not always suffered from chaos, but rather were originally “whole” and had a “combined strength”; unfortunately, through the modern world, they have suffered fragmentation. Contemporary labor methods were the main culprit of this fragmentation because they oppose “die Allheit des Menschen und verstümmeln[die] Universalität zur Spezialität“ (4: 570). The increasing specialization of employment within modern society had lead to the “shattering” of human beings, but they really had no choice. Specialization was necessary if they wanted to survive in society because the economy demanded that a person use only one of his many “possibilities” (4: 568).

In his essay “Der kommende Mensch,” Kaiser writes that the “Mensch ist nicht nur Hand...”

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209 This technique lends itself well to Expressionism as an art form which “expresses” inner feelings.

210 Scholars have commented little on Kaiser’s relationship to historical events in the era in which he was writing. One reason is the paucity of essays and letters from Kaiser dealing with intellectual topics, and another would be the lack of his comments on contemporary events within these essays and letters. As mentioned in chapter one with many Expressionists, Kaiser did not want to expound on single events, but rather viewed general economic and social modes of thinking as the true sources of humanity’s dysfunction. Single events were mere phenomena of larger problems in society.

211 I have kept the original word “possibilities” in this citation – originally “Möglichkeiten” in German – because Ernst Jünger also used this word to indicate the increased number of possibilities available to the individual who accepts his ideology as opposed to the specialized existence in current life.
oder Fuß oder Auge oder Kopf – er gebraucht allerdings nur Kopf oder Auge, um sich zu ernähren in diesem Zeitalter“ (4: 570). He asserts “[w]ir haben uns unter Gewalt und gottgewollter Ordnung spezialisiert. Diener die einen, Herr der andre. Aber niemand ist erschaffen, lediglich Bausteine zu tragen, während der andere wohnt. Das Auto zu führen, in dem der andere sitzt. In Bergwerk zu fördern, während der andere sich einheizen lässt“ (4: 565). The multilayered, universal human being is the positive antithesis to the specialist, but it is difficult for him to realize himself in the modern world. He falls prey to the temptation of becoming a specialist. Only the “abled human being” could restore the totality of people, and unlike in the abovementioned statement, he would be both master and servant (4: 571, 565).

A method of combating the fragmentation of people is for them to become Menschen or adopt the humane and human characteristics which people originally possessed but had lost in the modern world. In Kaiser’s plays, the term “Mensch” encompasses a rejection of money, impersonal and alienating work, industry, war, and technology. In statements meant to communicate menschliche ideals and directed at the divisiveness of his contemporary society, Kaiser asserts emphatically that the “Mensch ist ganz!” and “[d]er Mensch ist All...allseien, allgegenwärtig“ (4: 568-9). In Der Kommende Mensch, he stresses that the concept “Mensch“ should be the goal of human beings’ existences: “Ohne den Menschen ist nichts: weil der Mensch ist – ist alles von Menschen für den Menschen“ (4: 569). The only enemy of the Mensch was current human beings, and the Mensch was infinity that trumped the present.

Closely related to his concept of “Menschen” is Kaiser’s nebulous term “energy.” According to Kaiser, the “Mensch“ is a powerful disseminator of energy (4: 567, 572,
and its visibility in the concrete world should be the ultimate purpose of human beings (4: 573, 574). However, humans’ ability to attain energy is difficult in the modern world; the problem is the initial hurdle of becoming energized. Just as human beings were whole before the beginnings of the modern world, so too was energy then existent and would someday ultimately return: “An allem Anfang war Energie. Sie wird sich auch ins unendliche Ende durchsetzen” (4: 572). Although the term is related to intoxication, one should not equate energy solely with intoxication, but rather for Kaiser, energy enables the realization of an idea in the real world: “Energie um der Energie willen – da fällt Tun und Sein des Tuns in eins” (4: 573). He echoes the above statement when he asserts that “[d]as Mittel der Energie verbindet Idee und Vitalität zur Einheit” and “Darstellung von Energie ist dem Menschen aufgegeben – mit dem natürlichen Gebot seiner Vitalität. Die befehlt allein und einzig. So gelingt endlich die Sichtung von Zweck des Seins…” (4: 569, 573). Energy then gives the correct idea or ideas life by combining it or them with vitality and, thus, is equivalent to the rejuvenated Tat. According to Kaiser, literature provides the form for energy or, in other words, is a means to disseminate energy in the real world (4: 570).

Thus, the writer was responsible for communicating energy to readers and the audience. In general, art attempts to order confusion, and the artist is an organizer of the coincidental (das Zufällige) and the scattered (das Verstreute) (4: 572, 581). Through his works, the writer is a bulwark against current chaos because he can provide

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212 Petersen makes the mistake of equating energy with pure intoxication (Künstlerbild 20; “Mythos” 268). Kaiser’s use of the term “energy” for this action hints at his desire to stress the dynamism of his beliefs. Activity and action were popular concepts to convey to Germans during this time period for reasons already mentioned in this work.

213 Das Zufällige plays an important role in other Expressionists and Weimar right-wingers’ works as this essay has already stated. See especially Ernst Jünger’s criticism of modern life in the following chapter.

He communicated the salvational vision of the New Human Being which is “whole” and thus contests the fragmentation of the individual (4: 547-8). Literature, of course, had a special role in revealing and disseminating this vision: “Von allen Künsten kann allein die Dichtung propagieren...Es gibt zweifellos eine Dichtform, die propagiert und Kunst ist. Ich suche sie“ (Briefe 108).

As the last statement conveys, Kaiser felt his writings had a special role in attempting to transform the world. He believed that he was compelled to write about the unjust treatment of others and that his plays were an attempt to remove obstacles to a new, better, happier, and more benevolent humanity and then lay the foundations for a better world (4: 592, 565). To accomplish this goal, Kaiser challenges an entrenched current reality by attempting to provide an alternative reality for the audience through his plays. As a writer, he is in the position to create a reality to supercede the real world: “Fehlte mir ein Stern – ein Erdteil: ich würde ihn entdecken” (4: 578). He believed that he could personally guide the public through the chaos of modern society (Briefe 761), and liberate humanity from the specialization and return to the totality (4: 571). In a letter to his friend Blanche Dergan from January 1921, he discusses the Anstoß or “impulse” that he must impart on humanity:

heisst mich suchen nach Helfern am Werk. Denn niemals kann der Mensch aus
sich bewegt werden – der Anstoß und die Ausnutzung des Anstosses muß von
Aussen geschehen, (denn man will verwandeln und stiessse ohne Stoff ins Leere)“
(Briefe 228)

In his essay “Der kommende Mensch,” Kaiser asserts his desire to show people an ethos
that transcended the time period and prepare them for the coming humanity: “Es ist feige:
seine Gegenwart zu verteidigen...Wir wissen, daß wir heute nur Leitung des
hochgespannten Funkens sind, der in entfernter Zukunft erst zündet“ (4: 567).

With these statements in mind, this chapter will begin to examine several of the
Expressionist plays of Georg Kaiser. The above-mentioned theoretical evidence portrays
Kaiser as unwaveringly committed to his mission to radically transform a chaotic society
which continues to injure a fragmented humanity. This social Erneuerung is essential to
reach the utopian Gemeinschaft. Considering its entrenchment and importance not only
in early twentieth-century German society but also in contemporary life, it is not
surprising that this work will continue by focusing on Georg Kaiser’s criticism of
money’s role in modern society.

**Von morgens bis mitternachts – Can money buy existence?**

Although he was one of the most-staged dramatists during the Weimar period,
Georg Kaiser had extreme financial difficulties because of lavish spending habits so that
his family, and very often he himself, lacked basic necessities. He forfeited both of his
villas in Weimar and Seeheim despite a substantial dowry from his wife, a large income
from the sale of works, and considerable loans from his brothers and other relatives. The
topic of money dominates many of his letters; in a correspondence with his wife from
1920, he calls himself a “Jäger nach Geld” (Sachen Georg Kaiser 165). In one letter, he
also describes the feeling of a lack of money as an angst (Sachen Georg Kaiser 165) and, in another, labels himself a “Hungerkünstler,” a statement reminiscent of Kafka’s short story with the same title (Briefe 990). In 1921, he was convicted of larceny and sentenced to one year in prison. At his trial, his apologia was that as an artist, he had suffered so much and his responsibilities were so oppressive that he did not deserve incarceration, but rather was entitled to privileges such as personal wealth (Fabian 243, 244). Although he stole partially because he desperately needed money to care for his family, he named the successful staging of Gas II, whose message superceded the mere importance of money in society, as a reason for the thefts. Money was then necessary to propagate his message of the New Human Being, but in all other situations, it had no importance according to Kaiser. It is not surprising that he would criticize human beings' overdependence on and love of money or that it is a theme that constantly runs through his plays such as Von morgens bis mitternachts which is particularly critical of capitalistic fundamentals.

The play questions if money can buy genuine existence or the essence of life or if money already is the essence of life for many people. Throughout Von morgens bis mitternachts, the protagonist, a bank clerk, tries to purchase transformation and the

214 On 13 October 1920, the police arrested Kaiser in Hotel Esplanade in Berlin and charged him with pawning furniture from his hotel apartment in 1919 as well as jewelry and art works that a rich businessman had entrusted to him in his Munich villa because of the unrest in the early Weimar Republic. In total, he hocked anywhere from 200,000 to 300,000 marks of others’ property (Breloer 139). He was later incarcerated in the Munich prison am Neudeck and paroled on 16 April 1921 after six months internment.

215 These assertions of Kaiser stem from his psychiatric evaluation by Dr. Eugen Kahn who the court ordered to examine Kaiser after the thefts. Dr. Kahn pronounced him sane.

216 As Rhys Williams maintains, the composition date of Von morgens bis mitternachts is difficult to determine (365). Most scholars believe Kaiser wrote it in 1912; however, the earliest version of the manuscript is from 1916 or the same year Kaiser first published the play. Kaiser tended to predate his materials to give the impression that he was a neglected genius (Fritze 39; Williams 365). The Salvation Army girl who asks for donations for the war also leads one to believe that Kaiser could have written the play at least after 1914.
vitality associated with *Wandlung* with 60,000 marks that he purloined from his employer. In the private room of a dance house, he attempts to experience rebirth by consuming champagne and exquisite food and by buying prostitutes and having them dance for him to satisfy his voyeurism. At a velodrome, he finances six-day races with large monitory sums to hear the mass ecstasy of the spectators when the sums are broadcast over the loudspeakers. He offers an Italian lady who he met at the bank to become his lover and travel with him using the stolen money because he believes that his life with her will be a better existence. However in each attempt, the bank clerk fails to purchase true life. This hedonistic lifestyle is a mordant criticism of the inability of consumerism and materialism to solve humanity’s ills and make it happy: “(*die Arme auswerfend*) ich muß bezahlen!! – – Ich habe das Geld bar!! – – Wo ist die Ware, die man mit dem vollen Einsatz kauft?! Mit sechzigtausend – und dem ganzen Käufer mit Haut und Knochen?! – (Schreien.) Ihr müsst mir doch liefern – – ihr müßt doch Wert und Gegenwert in Einklang bringen“ (1: 483).

The bank clerk is not the only one who tries to buy vitality. The Italian lady’s son allegedly sees “ecstasy” in the “eroticism” of a Lucas Cranach painting that he wishes to procure from a wine dealer who had been hiding the painting behind his own photograph for many years (1: 475). The concealment of the painting behind his own image is an attempt to hoard the art work’s purported “ecstasy” through an ego-like barrier. It is a narcissistic act typical for that which Kaiser is trying to combat in society. However, the willingness by the wine dealer to sell the painting demonstrates his conclusion – which was also reached by the clerk later in the play – that eroticism cannot bring ecstasy or be

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217 The following quote shows the paratactic language and host of exclamation points, which are typical traits of many of Kaiser’s Expressionist characters and reflect their intoxication and ecstasy.
the fundamentals for the New Human Being. Because he wants to buy the painting, the son has obviously not reached this conclusion: he self-centeredly desires to acquire the painting in an attempt to possess the supposed “ecstasy” associated with it, probably much as the wine dealer had wanted many years earlier. He desperately covets 3,000 marks to purchase the work and asks his mother pressingly for the money even though he can see that she is agitated after her conversation with the bank clerk: “Die Unterhaltung hat mich angestrengt. Geldsachen, Jungchen. Du weißt, es reizt mich immer etwas” (1: 480). Money also infatuates the lady as one can ascertain through her appearance: she is wearing a precious fur and silk. Although she realizes that sexuality cannot be the basis of life because she calls the painting and her son who extols it “naïve” (1: 475), the capitalistic system is fully ingrained in the lady.

In general, the bank represents capitalism and modern finance, which Kaiser depicts overflowing with problems. For the clerk, it is a “dungeon,” and the stage properties in the first scene reinforce this view because there are several barriers by the entrance and exit of the bank that make entry and escape arduous. The clerk states that at the bank, people are like a flock of wethers who hop “in die Fleischbank. Das Gewühl ist dicht. Kein Entrinnen – oder mit keckem Satz über den Rücken“ (1: 486-7). The bank clerk has silently and mindlessly continued to complete a small function everyday as a mere automaton in the much larger capitalistic system without even questioning his role, but in filching the money, the clerk clearly rejects his job at the bank or as Kaiser himself candidly states, he rejects “daß der Mensch Bankkassierer von morgens bis mitternachts, daß er Roboten, Sklave, Diener, Tier sein muß und höhere Ordnung über sich zu wähnen

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218 The dealer could also be searching for ecstasy much as the clerk: he procures the painting for its eroticism and sells wine, both of which are to experience ecstasy and become the New Human Being.
hat, während er im Rinnsal verreckt“ (4: 565). The bank director and fat bourgeois customer, on the other hand, have no qualms about being capitalists. When the director asks him how it is going, the fat man hits his stomach saying “[e]s kugelt sich” (1: 466). The fat man lets the Italian lady go before him: apparently, he feels right at home in the bank and has nothing to do but laze on a couch for long periods of time and, yet, has a “bulging leather wallet” enforcing the idea that capitalists profit from others without really working themselves (1: 465). He buttresses this idea and intimates that he has plenty of money by stating that it always lasts longer for him and other obese bank customers. Another indication of the fat man’s excess wealth is that it does not matter if he has his money “draußen” or if he collects interest on it at the bank (1: 479). On the other hand, a poor man in winter clothing who enters the bank contrasts the fat bourgeoisie because he closely examines each coin that he has withdrawn and places them carefully into his pocket even though he only has forty-five cents. The bank director and clerk ignore him when he enters the bank so that he angrily slams his fist on the counter. The people with little money are not treated well at the bank.

He is not the only one treated poorly there. The bank director’s chauvinistic handling of the Italian lady demonstrates women as underprivileged in finance. In an allusion to the social treatment of woman and their lack of financial power, the lady has difficulty overcoming the barriers when entering the bank. When she does enter the bank, its director goes silent during his first sight of her because he is stunned to observe a woman in a bank, a place typically dominated by men. He treats the fat man with respect and as an old friend, but handles the woman like a child and “macht sich ein Publikum” when denying her 3,000 marks (1: 467). When she comments that she
desperately needs the money, he ironically says that the Elephant Hotel, her
accommodations, would no doubt be happy to contribute to her cause. She asks if the
owner of the hotel can vouch for her legitimacy, and, making a suggestive allusion, the
director asks her if she knows the barkeeper even closer. After she has left, the director
discusses her chauvinistically with the fat bourgeoisie when he says that she has the
“sämtliche Wohlgerüche Italiens” and that she would possibly make a cheaper offer than
3000 marks in her hotel room (1: 468). The fat man can only fan himself with his hand
and hastily drink a glass of water in an attempt to control himself because the girl and the
director have aroused him with their sexual and pecuniary talk. The bank director openly
talks about the lady’s “fur” and the adventure of it: “Pelz – parfümiert. Das riecht
nachträglich, man zieht mit der Luft Abenteuer ein! – – Das ist die große
Aufmachung....Dann schäumend in Pelz und Seide. Weiber!...Bis auf die nackte Haut –
die nackte, nackte Haut!” (1: 471). The same scene contains latent erotocism when the
Italian lady inadvertently brushes against the clerk’s arm. She offers to give the bank her
jewelry as collateral until the Florentine bank confirms the transfer of money that she
desires and unintentionally puts her hand in his after being startled by a noise from the
maid sitting behind her on a couch. She turns quickly to see what is behind her, and
when she turns to face the clerk again, she “trifft in sein Gesicht” and states “[i]ch will
die Bank nicht zu Leistungen veranlassen, die sie nicht verantworten kann“ (1: 472). The
clerk’s sexual attraction to the exotic Italian lady – on his part, an egotistical act which
the lady does not reciprocate – culminates in the unexpected touching of his hand by her
and leads to Anstoß. In an earlier scene, the bank director states that women are modern
Sirens in reference to their seductiveness and power to deceive (1: 471). As the errand
boy stares at the lady and runs into the fat man, the latter snatches his wallet and warns him not to fall for any ladies: “Ja, mein Junge, das kostet was – schöne Mädchen angaffen…Merk’ dir das für dein Leben. Du bist der erste nicht, dem die Augen durchgehen – und der ganze Mensch rollt nach” (1: 469). The bank clerk can attest to the fat man’s comment since he destroys his former existence because he covets the lady (Durzak, Sternheim Georg Kaiser 128).

From the abovementioned statements and actions, eroticism appears to be a dangerous threat to the capitalistic system (Wilke 206), but on closer review, it is inadequate to separate it from money. Indeed, the clerk’s lust in the last paragraph occurs within a bank, a bastion of capitalism. In a reference meant to stress both characters’ infatuation with money, the clerk connects the bank director with the lady sexually: “Er [der Direktor] hat eine neue Mätresse auf dem Korn. Italienerin – Pelz – Seide…Brillianten” (1: 486). Upon her egress from the bank, the lady asks the clerk for help overcoming a queue barrier. Her trouble exiting is a sign of the potent obstacles that one encounters when leaving the capitalistic system. The maid, another woman, must help her, but the lady screams because the barrier to exiting the capitalistic system “[sticht] ja in [ihr] offenes Fleisch” (1: 472). At the velodrome, the clerk spots a lady who has become roused by the race and gives a description which satisfies his egotistical sexual fantasies: “Ihr Busen entwickelt breite Schwielen. Schöne Dame, du mußt hier an die Brüstung und deine Büste brandmarken. Du mußt unweigerlich. Es ist sinnlos sich zu sträuben. Mitten im Knäuel verkrallt wirst du an die Wand gepreßt und mußt hergebe, was du bist. Was du bist – ohne Winseln!” (1: 495). Even in this example, the eroticism stems from the donation by the clerk and, thus, cannot escape the realm of money. In the
private room of a dance hall, the clerk feels sexual vigor after egotistically viewing a call
girl who is inebriated after drinking too much champagne, but he buys these prostitutes
and the alcohol to intoxicate them (1: 501). Because uncontrollable sexual lust engenders
the clerk’s intoxication, Kaiser views it as a problem that money and the capitalistic
system allow him to further satisfy.

Closely related to capitalism and wealth is the time period’s petty bourgeois
morality which allows men to exploit women not only sexually but also patriarchally.
The director suggests to the fat man that maybe he would like to have some type of
sexual relationship with the Italian lady who the director speculates is a prostitute. The
rich, upright member of society quickly rejects this idea for fear of a scandal tarnishing
his image, but the director states in reference to his wealth that he has nothing to fear
legally because we “sind mit unserem moralischen Bauch gesetzlich geschützt” (1: 468).
The best example of petite bourgeois morals in the play is the clerk’s family who
demonstrate the alleged *Gemütlichkeit* or “coziness” of familial life. The first daughter is
practicing socially acceptable Wagner on the piano, and the other daughter is
embroidering. The clerk’s wife and mother discuss when the wife should begin to fry the
cutlets that the husband will eat for lunch, and the old mother later snoozes in her chair.
However, the entire family greets him in a scene when the clerk arrives which shows the
importance of the man in this patriarchal society, and in the rest of the scene, family life
revolves around him. He uses terse commands such as “Nein, geblieben,” “Spiel,”
“Steck an,” and “Die Küche” (“Go to the kitchen”) to order his family around (1: 487-8).
He demands that they fetch his jacket, slippers, hat, and pipe which are all symbols of the
small middle class. The first daughter is “atemlos” when he asks her what she is playing
on the piano, the second daughter, “sich rasch hinsetzend,” begins knitting when he asks her what she is doing, and the old mother is “von der allgemeinen Angst angesteckt” when he asks her what she has planned for the day (1: 488). He is authoritarian and rules his family through fear, yet his dominance is based on money. The family members depend on him for financial survival, and, thus, they obey and absurdly fawn over him.

At one point, the clerk tries to convey to his family the radical transformation he has undergone, but they do not understand. Any break in routine for the family is too great a shock. When the clerk abstains from eating cutlets on that day, the grandmother falls over dead. He is incapable of mourning her death because he is egotistically consumed by his mission to find the correct Erneuerung:


He has attempted to locate the ideal existence in the family, but rejects family life which is only “[m]orgens Kaffee, mittags Koteletts…Betten hinein, – hinaus” and then you die (1: 488). In this former stagnant existence, he was in dreadful dungeons, without concreteness, blind, and buried deep under mountains of garbage, but his new life has given him reason “auf die wichtigsten Entdeckungen gefaßt zu machen” and is suddenly the establishment of possibilities and active with momentum (1: 481–2).

Because he is still seeking the correct form of the Erneuerung and the Gemeinschaft, he is constantly visiting several stations such as the velodrome, the private room of a dance house, and the Salvation Army meeting. For instance, the bank clerk revels in the velodrome audience’s “Galerie der Leidenschaft” with their “[f]anatisiertes
“Geschrei” and “[b]rüllende Nacktheit” and continually promises to donate more money to hear their “[b]etäubendes Schreien,” “[g]esteigertes Schreien,” and finally “Ekstase” (1: 495, 498). The ecstatic spectators are allegedly returning to their original human impulses and embracing Kaiser’s concept of Mensch: they are becoming “[h]och und tief – Mensch…” and entering the “[u]ndernliche schweifende Entlassenheit aus Fron und Lohn in Leidenschaft” (1: 498). The clerk nods with approval at the crowd’s purported community and liberty as well: “Vom ersten Rang bis in die Galerie Verschmelzung. Aus seidener Auflösung des einzelnen geballt der Kern: Leidenschaft! Beherrschungen – Unterschiede rinnen ab” and “ wogender Menschheitsstrom. Entkettet – frei. Vorhänge hoch – Vorwände nieder. Menschheit. Freie Menschheit...Keine Ringe – Keine Schichten – keine Klassen“ (1: 498, 496). He falsely believes that he has found the Gemeinschaft in the crowd in which everyone is “unterschiedslos” (1: 495), but the ecstasy is short-lived. The presence of royalty in a spectator box quells the audience and reinstates the monarchical hierarchy of society (Wilke 210). Germans must overcome their loyalty to and respect for general establishment which is a potent hinderance to the Erneuerung. The community at the velodrome is nothing more than a swindle because it is temporary.

The Salvation Army meeting also deeply disappoints the clerk: it inadequately rejuvenates human beings. At the beginning of the scene, the audience laughs at the organization and the meeting. They soon stop poking fun of the group when they realize that many of its members have the same problems as they do. The Salvation Army is popular among unlucky, unhappy, suffering, traumatized, and downtrodden urbanites, many of whom are disenchanted with some aspect of modern life. For example, the Salvation Army officer disapproves of the city because it is a place of moral turpitude
and rejects the massification and alienation of society: “Warum bleibt ihr unten, wo ihr drängen und drücken müßt? Ist es nicht widerwärtig, so im Gedränge zu sitzen? Wer kennt sein Nachbar?“ (1: 507). At the meeting, one man relays the story of his bourgeois existence and the Gemütlichkeit of his small middle-class family before he received Anstoß and abandoned them. After hearing this story, another can relate to his transformation: “Es ist urgemütlich bei uns. Es ist Gemütlichkeit selbst. Es ist herrlich bei uns – großartig – vorbildlich – praktisch – musterhaft – – (Verändert.) Es ist ekelhaft – entsetzlich – es stinkt da – es ist armselig mit dem Klavierspielen...” (1: 513). The prostitute at the meeting has been exploited sexually, and another girl had a dysfunctional family with a prostitute for a mother and an abusive alcoholic father. One former world champion cyclist had a minor accident and then turned soldier. Another rider hears his story and also joins the Salvation Army so that he can finally have peace: “Das Rennen rast weiter – ich habe Ruhe. Ich kann mich auf alles in Ruhe besinnen (1: 510). These dramatis personae want to escape from their daily lives and want “Zufriedenheit” or “Ruhe” for their soul, want to love their ”Seele” like the girl from the dysfunctional family, or simply want to feel like they have “eine Seele ” such as the bourgeois family man (1: 509, 511, 512, 513). In general, the Salvation Army scene shows the attempt of religion to administer the Wiedergeburt, but people have not solved their problems because they have not rebuffed the root problem of these issues, namely capitalism and money which contribute in some way to the growth of the metropolis, the massification of human beings, economic and sexual exploitation, dysfunctional families, and the pressure for excellence and the depression that accompanies failure.219

219 In his essay “Der Mensch im Tunnel,” Kaiser writes about striving for the “record” in modern society (4: 580). The record is the pressure to become the best in the capitalistic society and thus has much to do
their continual worship of money, they quickly shed the religious *Gemeinschaft* formed through their common suffering and scramble and scrap for the mark bills when the clerk heaves them into the air. Although the Salvation Army girl promises always to “stand by” the clerk, she delivers him to the police to collect the reward money for his capture. Humans are too weak and too infected with capitalism so that they continually revert to their ravenous desire for money.

Indeed, selfishness plays a central role in the play. After her husband abandons her – a self-centered act in and of itself –, the clerk’s wife screams at her children to leave her alone and excessively uses the first person showing her vanity: “Kreischt *mir* nicht in die Ohren. Glotzt *mich* nicht an. Was wollt ihr [Kinder] von *mir*? Wer seid ihr? Fratzen – Affengesichter – was geht ihr *mich* an?...*Mich* hat mein Mann verlassen“ (1: 490)[emphasis mine]. Several repenters also use first-person pronouns in the exact same manner as the wife showing their inability to overcome concern for only themselves (1: 510). In the dance hall, the men pocket the money the clerk has left to pay the bill; they will stick the waiter with the cost of the dinner despite his indigence. The scene ends with the waiter’s threat of suicide, but the men still show no compassion for the waiter. The clerk is the most blatant example of self-fulfillment through materialistic pursuits and lack of pity. He orders expensive drinks and delicacies in the private room of a dance hall and shows no pity for one girl, but rather is shocked and disgusted by her wooden leg. During the alleged ecstasy of the six-day race, a man plunges from the upper balcony into lower-lying crowds and a rider who has fallen from his horse is trampled. The clerk only responds “[e]s geht nicht ohne Tote ab, wo andre fiebernd

with excellence and failure.
leben” (1: 496). He twice rejects the Salvation Army girl who asks him for a ten-penny donation for the needy because of the war, but at the Salvation Army meeting, he comes closest to being able to have compassion for his fellow humanity. Only when others speak of incidents that mirror or resemble his own experiences, does he finally realize that others suffer in the same manner as he. In this scene, several persons’ confessions and conversions demonstrate their yearning to atone for their sins in this scene, but many do not know what their sins are and need to be shown the way. On one occasion, a man shouts “[w]as ist meine Sünde? Ich will meine Sünde hören” and on another, everyone shouts “[i]ch will meine Sünde hören!! Meine Sünde!! Meine Sünde!! Meine Sünde!!” (1: 513, 514). They illustrate humanity’s loss of orientation and tremendous desire to repent and to experience the Wiedergeburt. It is a matter of channeling this desire with the correct beliefs that is the task of the New Human Being. At the Salvation Army meeting, the clerk realizes that he should reject hedonism and mammonism and discovers the need to admit these mistakes and atone for them.

*Von morgens bis mitternachts* shows the learning process of the bank clerk as he strives to become the New Human Being. Like many people, he spends money in an attempt to solve his problems; however, human beings’ inability to overcome money’s ingrained societal importance is one of their greatest threats. Only at the end of the play does the clerk reject wealth as a means to experience rebirth: “Mit keinem Geld aus allen Bankkassen der Welt kann man sich irgendwas von Wert kaufen. Man kauft immer weniger, als man bezahlt, um so geringer wird die Ware. Das Geld verschlechtert den Wert. Das Geld verhüllt das Echte – das Geld ist der armseligste Schwindel unter allem Betrug“ (1: 515). He has attempted to rejuvenate himself, an act which requires care and
compassion for other human beings and realizes that it is possible only through rejection of his selfishness which he can in turn only achieve through the spurn of money. At the end of the play, the clerk’s suicide is, on the one hand, the recognition of materialism’s entrenchment in society and of the tremendous difficulty in battling against it. He is without hope and totally alone in his rejection of money: “Einsamkeit ist Raum. Raum ist Einsamkeit” (1: 516). On the other hand, his suicide is allegedly an attempt at sacrifice. In an allusion to Christ, he dies at the play’s end with arms extended over the Salvation Army cross in a crucifix pose and groans the words that Pontius Pilate once uttered about the savior of man when he presented him to the Jews wearing a crown of thorns, namely “Ecce Homo” or “behold the man.” However, unlike Christ, his story does not seem to have any resonance for his posterity making his death through suicide to have been a futile act. Directly after the clerk’s passing, the policeman states that there is a short circuit in the main and, thereby, intimates that the bank clerk successfully disturbed the normal workings of the capitalistic world through his despairing story, but in reality, this short circuit was nothing more than a minor impediment that someone will soon repair and never consider again (Huder 86).

*Die Koralle – The Second Industrial Revolution*

If *Von morgens bis mitternachts* demonstrates money’s entrenchment in modern society, *Die Koralle* examines its connections to modern industry. Kaiser names the protagonist of the play who is a coal tycoon, “billionaire,” and hence, money is his

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220 The phrase stems from John 19:5. In general, the play is full of Chrstain references and allusions such as Lucas Cranach’s painting of Adam and Eve, the messianic nature of the New Human Being, and the several stations the clerk must traverse resembling the stations of Christ’s journey to crucification (Williams 370). Other scholars also mention that Kaiser’s plays contain much Christain symbolism (Bailey 18, 98; Lämmert 305-24; Schürer, “Gas” 108; Viviani 501).
defining characteristic. Much as money, Kaiser believes that manufacturing contributes
to the suffering of and the lack of concern for other human beings. *Die Koralle* also
shows the inner feelings of human beings as a reflection of their outer life: people’s
despondency and suffering result from the wretchedness of the world that they inhabit
and to which industry contributes mightily.

Indeed, in *Die Koralle* and not insignificant for Expressionist desires to realize
humanity’s rejuvenation, Kaiser portrays modern life as nothing less than torture. The
prostitute says that there is misery all over the earth and her life is hell. The son states
that life is “das Grauen…mit seiner Peinigung und Unterdrückung” (1: 677)[emphasis
mine], and the clergyman compares life to a house with black windows. Despite his
wealth, even the billionaire describes life as “terrible” (1: 687). Indeed, all characters
have had a miserable existence except for the secretary who enjoyed a happy childhood
which was coincidently free from industrial centers and work.

Much as in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, capitalism plays a significant role in
the creation and spread of misery. According to Kaiser, it creates chaos within the
individual because in reality, it is little more than chaos (R. Bussmann 123-33). After a
meeting with the billionaire in his office, the man in grey, a socialist, is unable to
continually believe in socialism because it has no chance for success. The billionaire, a
self-made man with at least twenty-four factories, has convinced him that his entire
ideology is an ineffective alternative to the capitalistic world. Divesting the world of
capitalism and the construction of a socialist state are impossible to realize as long as
human beings continue to flee the misery of life. When the man in grey asks him if that
is his “world order,” he retorts that is the order of the world (1: 664). This revelation devastates the man in grey and begins to engender an existential chaos within him:

**DER HERR IN GRAU:** Das Chaos tut sich auf!
**MILLIARDÄR:** Es ist aufgetan – darum rette sich auf einen festen Fleck, wer kann. ...
**DER HERR IN GRAU:** Lassen Sie mich weg. Schellen Sie nach Ihren Dienern. Ich sehe die Tür nicht. Schellen Sie doch!
**MILLIARDÄR:** drückt den Taster. **Die beiden Diener kommen.**
**DER HERR IM GRAU:** mit drohender Gebärde nach dem Milliardär. Sie haben meine Welt zertrümmert – noch unter dem Schutt begraben verfluche ich Sie – – verfluche ich Sie! **Die Diener packen ihn hart an und führen ihn hinaus.** (1: 667)

He later adopts capitalism and becomes a thriving businessman in an ad hoc attempt to cope with the chaos. Instead of accepting an Expressionist type of rejuvenation in response to his existential tumult, he is now putting as much distance as possible between himself and the chaos that capitalism has caused: “Voran – Voran! – Hinter uns das Chaos!” (1: 705). In this same scene, the man in grey states that his outer person reflects his inner structure and that he is “fleeing” (1: 705). Indeed, Kaiser constantly stresses that capitalism is an attempt to create distance between the capitalist and the objects or situations that the capitalists fear, in this instance poverty and misery. It is a failure to come to terms and deal with the real world which is little more than “[j]eder gegen jeden schonungslos” (1: 705) and is also typical of how lack creates fear, mistrust, and domination.

The acquisition of wealth as an escapism is a frequent theme throughout *Die Koralle*. At the end of the play, the man in grey tells the billionaire that his “Gesetz herrscht: wir fliehen!” (1: 705). In another, a mine shaft has collapsed and killed many miners, but according to the secretary, those who survived the three-day containment must have experienced terrible trauma in the mine because the miners came to the surface
screaming and shaking. The billionaire admits that this incident will haunt the miners, and they will have to “flee” it for the rest of their lives. He adds “man kann es nicht wegblasen – die Macht hat keiner” (1: 683). The “es” to which he is referring is “the terrible.” At one juncture of the play, he views a Chinese stoker who has collapsed from exhaustion while working on his yacht, and the billionaire can only utter the words “[d]as Furchtbare!” (1: 679). The billionaire’s acquisition of wealth is only a method of coping with his fear of the “terrible” which is nothing more than indigence and the dreadful conditions and circumstances that accompany it.

In one scene, the man in grey tells the billionaire that the coal baron had no choice but to try to acquire wealth. The billionaire’s destitute childhood in grey factories and narrow court yards motivated him to gain wealth: he dreaded the privation and distress that he endured as a child. His father, a blue-collar worker, was exhausted through his job and then fired because of his industrial uselessness. He abandoned his family and took what little money they had, and the billionaire’s mother commits suicide on the very same day when he is only eight years old. A life of poverty in a capitalistic society “hat..Mutter und Vater verschlungen” (1: 687). Machines “haben [s]einen Vater ausgesaugt” and “Mutter an den Türhaken geschnürt”; he had to avoid the machines that destroyed his father and caused the death of his mother if he also does not want to be destroyed by them (1: 663).

For the billionaire, another type of escape from and a defense mechanism against his fear of wretchedness is work. The billionaire climbs his way up the ladder in the company with constant labor and surrounds his office with pictures to remind him of his wretched origins. After his conversion to capitalism, work also dominates the man in
Ungeheure Energien sind entwickelt... Man rennt noch im Schlafe und mit fertigen Projekten springt man morgens vom Bett. Es ist die wilde Jagd“ (1: 705). The man in blue, a reference to workers’ blue clothing, complains that he is relatively young, but still looks like an old man and the outfit that he once filled out now hangs loose about his person because he has toiled so arduously at the billionaire’s plant. He is a victim of the rationality of the factory system: “Jeden ruiniert das System – die unmenschliche Ausnützung der Leistungsfähigkeit” (1: 656).

He is not the only worker who the billionaire treats abominably. Despite their psychological state, he threatens the miners who were trapped in the mine with the loss of their jobs if they do not show up for work the next day. The billionaire orders other demonstrating workers to stop their protest, or he will close the factory leaving thousands unemployed. Later, the son accuses his father of overlooking the workers’ torment, but at one point in the play, the billionaire already stated that “[w]er flieht, will nicht sehen, über wen er tritt!” (1: 663). After his espousal of capitalism, the man in grey confirms his motto: “Wehe dem, der strauchelt. Zertreten wird er – und über ihn weg tobt die Flucht. Da gibt es keine Gnade und Erbarmen” (1: 705). The capitalism of the billionaire causes violence that begets further violence. The billionaire’s external violence is a reflection of his internal desire to avoid violence against himself by avoiding toilsome labor. The son tells his father, who the son thinks is his father’s secretary, that the father shot the secretary because the violence of the capitalistic system sanctioned by his father compelled him to take his life: “Erst der Anblick von Gewalt riß Sie [the secretary] hin. Das Beispiel hatte Ihnen meinen Vater, der immer rücksichtslos handelte, gegeben – und
In an attempt to placate his own conscience that is tormented by the atrocities that he commits, the billionaire has his secretary bestow favors on poorer, suffering members of society who beg him for help during his monthly office hours. He does not want to encounter the destitution that enters his office in person for fear it will recall his own experiences with “das Furchtbare.” The secretary is his mirror image and can only be distinguished from the billionaire by a small piece of coral that the secretary wears on his wrist. One attendee of his office hours is a prostitute who wants to live a better life, but for the moment, she is obliged financially to buy her “Brot mit meinem Leib” (1: 655). He sponsors her stay in a home for two years to think about a new existence for herself, and she now thinks that she is a “neuer Mensch” (1: 656). This conclusion is false because her Wandlung is transient: she is transcending her present societal strictures for a mere two years. Another visitor to his office hours, the man in blue, was originally going to leave his family because he is unable to continue working, but the secretary provides him with the money to leave the metropolis and travel with his family to a rural settlement. The lady in black, whose daughter the billionaire finances to attend a special music school, is astounded that in a society full of selfishness that there is someone who cares about other people. However, the billionaire’s charities are really token gifts. The prostitute’s supposed rejuvenation is a meager gesture in comparison to the squalor he creates through his factories. The man in grey states that the billionaire’s charities are
only “Tropfen, die [er] in das Meer von Jammer schütten” and that his wealth actually disgusts him (1: 661).

The billionaire’s power, which stems from his wealth, is also evident during his office hours. After the secretary tells the lady in black that he will finance her daughter’s education, she tells her daughter to kiss his hand in a sign of thankfulness and fealty. The prostitute kneels before the secretary saying that “Gott selbst geht wieder unter uns” when she learns that he will finance her stay in a home (1: 656). In the third act, he is accused of using his power to suppress reports of the collapsed mine in newspapers.

Capitalists are then the revered gods of the earth because of their wealth and power, which also, and not surprisingly, lead them to have close allies in government. The state sends soldiers to protect the secretary as he addresses a gathering of irate workers, but cannot provide the lady in black with adequate social support so that she can financially sustain herself let alone send her daughter by her own means to a special music school.

Meanwhile, affluent members of society enjoy profusion and show no concern for others’ well-being. In a microcosm of society, rich guests enjoy themselves on the top deck of the billionaire’s yacht as black waiters bring them ice-cold drinks and “yellow” men slave below in the boiler room (Arnold 480). Much like all passengers on the billionaire’s yacht, the daughter epitomizes selfishness. She suggests a race between the yacht and the steam ship in which the loser will be rammed and the crew has five minutes to climb into the launches. Later, she complains about the oppressive heat, but does not think about the high temperatures which the coal shoveler must endure. Another

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222 This phrase is reminiscent of King Herod’s death as recounted in the biblical book of Acts 12:20-22. Herod gave a speech to the representatives Sidon and Tyre, and after giving this oration, the people exclaimed that Herod’s voice was “of a god and not of a man” (12:22). Herod was struck down immediately and worms devoured his body because he did not give glory to God.
passenger, the singer, takes pictures and admits the secret to professional advancement in capitalism is to make others “brotlos” (1: 669). She lamely attempts to aestheticize her pictures by calling them works of art, but she fails to see the misery and squalor in the pictures. She photographs a Chinese boilerman who has collapsed under the stress of fueling the billionaire’s ship, and instead of helping the gravely ill man, she comments that she has never before taken such pictures. The doctor recommends to the son, who is covered in soot, that he change into white clothes because of the heat, but when the son asks him if he recommends the same for the coal shovelers, he states “hardly” because of the coal dust (1: 675). The museum director arrogantly mimics the son when he ironically states “[s]chonen Sie doch die Heizer” (1: 676).

The poor attitudes of the ship’s passengers reflect their refusal to accept responsibility for fellow humanity. According to Kaiser, they claim to want change, but repudiate their guilt as the museum director on the billionaire’s yacht demonstrates. He rejects the billionaire’s gift of Tintoretto’s “Bearing of the Cross” to his museum because he wants to manage a new museum devoid of any artworks. Its empty walls will be a “Verlockung zu neuen Leistungen” and a “betoner Anfang” which will be a separation from the past which “quält uns” and “von der wir nicht weckommen ohne Gewalt und Verbrechen” (1: 671). He emphasizes that he is not rejecting criticism of the past: “die Anerkennung ist sogar maßlos” (1: 671). However, his refusal to “take up the cross” demonstrates his unwillingness to be responsible for humanity and, thus, makes his offer of a “new beginning” useless because it would only start a recapitulation of the past (1: 671). As the billionaire’s private doctor indicates when criticizing the museum director’s

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223 Jacopo Robusti, also known as “Tinterreto,” was an Italian Renaissance painter who was born in 1518 and died in 1594. He is known for his sequence of paintings in the Scuola di San Roco, a Venitian church. Tintoretto completed the “Bearing of the Cross” in 1566/67.
idea, “die Kreuztragung ist unabwendbar” and “[i]m Leben, denke ich, wird niemand über seinen Schatten springen können” (1: 671). The goal of art is then to communicate the “bearing of the cross.” It is not surprising that the billionaire, who has suffered a miserable past and flees his responsibilities in the present, suggests to his daughter that she marry the museum director because he has an “innere Unabhängigkeit”: “daß es für ihn nur die Zukunft gibt” (1: 672).

The billionaire also tries to protect his own son from experiencing the horrors of factories and industry by sending him to a primitive paradise with sunny beaches so that he can have a happy life. In comparison with his daughter, the billionaire has a more meaningful and deeper relationship with his son so that he becomes his father’s inner doppelganger through which he lives vicariously. However, the son is a rejuvenated human being and, thus, rejects his father’s wealth and his escapist ethos:


He has compassion for fellow human beings and, in a sacrificial act, chooses instead to seek penitence for entire humanity’s trangressions: “Die Buße wählt man sich selbst. Ich will sie mir so schwer machen, daß ich am letzten Tage vielleicht die Augen wieder aufschlagen kann“ (1: 686). He refuses to ride on his father’s yacht, but rather works as a boilerman on a steam ship. As the Chinese stoker collapses, the son pleads with his father’s doctor to try to save his life, but the doctor refuses. He finally convinces his sister to lay her hands in ice water and place them on the stoker’s chest. This action causes the daughter to experience a Wandlung in which she now feels responsible for
other human beings: “Auf der Jacht gab es mir den Anstoß...Als ich meine Hände von der kochenden Brust des gelben Heizers aufhob, waren sie gezeichnet...Ich habe nicht mehr eine Wahl. Ich fühle die Bestimmung...Schicke mich zu den Elendsten, die krank liegen. Die in Deinen Fabriken verunglückten. Ich will sie pflegen“ (1: 682). In a sign of solidarity with other human beings, she states that she will go to her “Schwestern und Brüdern“ (1: 682), and after she leaves, the billionaire disowns her. Once the son rejects his father’s wealth and flight from squalor and accepts responsibility for other human beings, the billionaire’s inner life is in turmoil. Hence, external circumstances revolving around his son cause tumult in his inner life, and in envy, he shoots the secretary and ultimately assumes his identity to gain his happy childhood and inner stability. The billionaire’s adoption of the secretary’s childhood is his rebirth in which he relinquishes capitalism and his entire wealth for happiness. When investigating the crime, the first judge states that he must be given a new life because he thinks that he has adopted the life of the billionaire. He tells him the happy childhood of the secretary, and the billionaire espouses it immediately. The judges sound almost as if it is self-evident that one’s earlier life determines later actions: “Selbstverständliche Erkundigungen nach seinem früheren Leben – die Grundlage jeder Untersuchung!” (1: 691). In addition, a simpler life becomes the most desired life.

At the end of the play, coral becomes an antithetic symbol to turmoil as well as the capitalistic “fever of work” and the “frenzy of purchases” because it resembles a primitive and uncomplicated existence (Schürer, “Gas” 98). The billionaire describes it

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224 The billionaire is meant to be a tragic figure in capitalistic society. Kaiser is certainly not advocating murder as a means to rebirth. In Kaiser’s view, the billionaire’s adoption would allow a new beginning away from das Furchtbare and the difficult beginnings of his life.

225 Again, it is a case of mistaken identity. The judge believes he is talking to the secretary when in reality he is talking to the billionaire.
as a type of peace and calm “geformt und immer verbunden in Dichtigkeit des Meeres…Nicht aufzutauchen und in den Sturm verschleppt zu werden, der an die Küsten fährt. Da brüllt Tumult und zerrt uns in die Raserei des Lebens” (1: 711). Coral grows “[b]is an die Fläche des Wassers – höher reckt sie sich nicht. Da steht sie, von Strömen umspült...Fische sind kleine Ereignisse, die milde toben” (1: 711). According to the billionaire, modern human beings are all “losgebrochene Stücke vom dämmernden Korallenbaum” (1: 711). Coral eventually becomes associated with the happy childhood of the billionaire’s secretary because of the piece of coral on his wrist. Externally, it is the only characteristic that distinguishes the two men, and internally, it symbolizes the immense difference between them because the secretary had no fear of life. The billionaire’s murder of him is an attempt to gain his existence and to live vicariously through him. Naturally, the secretary’s blissful and harmonious childhood leads to his later happiness in life which he compares with “Wellen, die über einen See streichen, der klar den blauen Himmel spiegelt” (1: 689). This idyllic description is the antithesis of the gloomy, smoke-filled factory-scenes such as the view from the billionaire’s office of his factories’ smoke stacks and pollution (1: 680). Indeed, idyllic scenery throughout the play is an antithesis to factory surroundings. After both of his children have left him, the billionaire contemplates suicide by taking the pistol that his son has left on his desk, but wants to do it in a natural setting away from factories (1: 688). At his murder trial, the first judge states that the youthful past of his new life consists of “Licht,” “Sonne,” “kein Schatten,” a small city “in Grün gebettet” and “Paradiese” (1: 700-1). An hour before his execution, the billionaire sits in a courtyard and is content being in its green environment.
Although the billionaire dies at the end of *Die Koralle*, his son endures and establishes a more egalitarian division of wealth in society in *Gas I*. In *Koralle*, the man in grey originally wants to resolve the struggle that is occurring between rich and poor, or in other words between industrialists and the proletariat. He states that parties and slogans will not solve the problem although they are across from each other “bis an die Zähne bewaffnet” (1: 661). According to him, the only solution is a “fraternal” one (1: 662). He blames capitalism for this divisiveness and asks the billionaire to renounce his wealth as a rejection of capitalism. Ultimately, the man in grey abandons his desire to create the *Gemeinschaft* and adopts capitalism replacing the billionaire’s capitalist role in society. Capitalism is then a never-ending cycle in which there are always others to assume the roles of those who relinquish power and money: the great ones are like “Schaurige Meteore…, die grell aufflammen – und fallen” (1: 664). The man in grey admits that the entire capitalistic system has no purpose. The money hoarding, immoral treatment of workers, and the spread of indigence and pain are all for nought, and thus, these actions have no real purpose:

**MILLIADÄR:** Und sehen Sie ein Ziel, nach dem Sie stürmen?  
**DER HERR IN GRAU:** Lächerlich, es gibt keins. (1: 705)

Much as the man in grey, the billionaire unfortunately sees no hope for the *Gemeinschaft* in current society; their resignations do not bode well for his son’s desire to create the community. As the billionaire states in *Koralle*, and Kaiser writes as the motto on the title page of *Gas I*: “Aber die tiefste Wahrheit wird nicht von Ihnen und den Tausenden Ihresgleichen verkündet – die findet immer nur ein einzelner. Dann ist sie so ungeheuer, daß sie ohnmächtig zu jeder Wirkung wird!” (1: 710).
Gas I and Gas II – Technology and Its Consequences

In Die Koralle, Kaiser portrays industry in early twentieth-century Germany; however, both Gas plays are sequels to Koralle in which Gas I takes place approximately forty years, and Gas II occurs seventy years after Koralle.226 Coal is no longer the primary energy source of the world, but rather gas is extracted from the ground, processed into a productive energy form through an unstable scientific formula, and used to power industry. The son from Koralle is now the billionaire son and owns a monopoly on gas’ manufacture. Unlike his father, he does not financially exploit his workers, but applies the socialistic humanism that he preached in Die Koralle to the workings of the gas plant so that each worker receives a share of the profits based upon his/her tenure at the factory. However, the future does not provide a utopia, but rather humanity in general has failed to deal with many of the problems that plagued it in earlier years. Extreme rationalization and impersonalization of work, avarice, and the close collaboration between industry and government that were so palpable in Die Koralle continue in Gas I and Gas II. Kaiser also warns about the twin dangers of science and technology and suggests a more primitive existence as an alternative to technological progress.

The foundation for these problems is once again industry. Much as in Koralle, the Gas plays show industry dominating people’s lives, most notably through constant and alienating work (Durzak, Sternheim Georg Kaiser 165). The socialistic equality of the factory leads to workers’ financial prosperity, but also causes them to toil relentlessly. In the fourth act, a girl discusses her brother who had one hand that was larger than the other...

226 In Gas, the billionaire son is in his sixties (2: 14) after appearing to be in his early twenties in Koralle. The billionaire worker is in his middle twenties in Gas II (2: 65) and was born just after the end of Gas I.
because it was always operating a lever: “In der Arbeit stürzte er. Die brauchte er nur die eine Hand von ihm – die den Hebel drückte und hob – Minute um Minute auf und nieder – auf die Sekunde gezählt!... Das blieb von meinem Bruder!” (2: 39). Her brother became an automaton completing alienating labor, but she ignores this basic problem and instead exacts the dismissal of the engineer who she and the workers believe is culpable for gas’ explosion. Likewise, a woman laments that she was married to her husband for only one day before he died in an explosion: “Der Mann könnte leben – aber sein Fuß hält ihn auf dem Triebwagen, der vorwärts und rückwärts rollt – tagein tagaus mit dem Manne am Fuß!” (2: 41). She regrets not having more memories and the missed opportunity of spending a lifetime with him. Although she describes his impersonalizing labor at length, the woman fails to grasp that her husband’s existence revolved around work and instead blames the engineer for his death and insists on his firing. Both these examples demonstrate personal lives as subordinate to industry. This theme resurfaces at the wedding party of the billionaire son’s daughter because the first signs of problems at the gas factory disperse the celebration.

Characters’ inability to overcome ingrained socio-economic attitudes is one of their greatest problems and mirrors people’s failures to do the same in everyday society according to Kaiser. The clerk, who is always in a rush, states that at the plant, work does not halt for a moment and that the gas-plant employees labor more than any other workers on the face of the earth. Later in the play, he cannot overcome his work, namely writing, because it dominates his life. His responses to the billionaire son’s entreaties to quit his work are “ich habe meinen Beruf,” “Ich brauche den Erwerb,” “Ich – bin Schreiber,” “Ich – schreibe,” “Es ist – mein Beruf,” and “ich finde nichts wieder zu
The clerk becomes so infatuated with his work that he goes mad in the fourth act: “Rennt!! – – Rennt!! – – Ich renne voran!! – – an meinen Tisch!! – – ich schreibe!! – – ich schreibe!! – – ich schreibe!!“ (2: 45). The engineer also states “[i]ch bin Ingenieur,” and the workers say “[w]ir sind Arbeiter” (2: 27, 23). As types, they are either “clerk,” “worker,” “engineer,” or “government representative” which show their dehumanization because capitalistic society defines them solely through their professions and social functions which are sadly also the essences of their existences.  

The workers substantially contribute to and thus are guilty of propagating industry’s monopolization of life. After gas’ first explosion, the rejuvenated billionaire son struggles to communicate to workers the need to overcome their incessant work and their professions: “da wird Arbeit um der Arbeit willen getan. Fieber bricht aus und nebelt um die Sinne: Arbeit – Arbeit – ein Keil, der sich weitertreibt...Wo hinaus? Ich bohre, weil ich bohre – ich war ein Bohrer – ich bin ein Bohrer – und bleibe Bohrer! – – Graut euch nicht?” (2: 23). He calls their work “Höhlung aller Lohn,” the schematic tables of the plant a “Hetzjagd,” and the plant itself is a “Kerker” (2: 23, 23, 50). Workers’ failure to surmount their labor is one of the main reasons that they cannot accept the billionaire son’s idea of an agricultural community.

*Gas II* illustrates an intensification of the impersonalization and amount of work even though at the beginning of *Gas I* the clerk had maintained workers could not toil any harder or longer. In an example of extreme rationalization and alienation of work, blue

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227 In German, Kaiser calls the clerk “Schreiber” which literally translates as “writer.” However, he is not a writer in the sense of a novelist or poet, but rather an employee. Hence, the statement “Ich schreibe” makes sense in its original German context, and his moniker “Schreiber” delineates his work as his defining characteristic.

228 For additional information showing the mechanization and alienation in the play see Schürer’s article “Die Gas-Dramen” (102-4). He aptly demonstrates the mechanization of its language and form which mirrors the mechanization shown in the worker’s lives.
figures resemble machines as they shuffle workers around to reinforce jaded laborers in different areas of the plant. The chief engineer, aged from decades of constant labor, describes workers’ dehumanizing work as nothing more than mechanical movement in *Gas II*:

Bewegung wurde Gesetzt aus sich. Übermaß von Dauer der einen Handlung stumpft den Ansporn aus Willen zum Werk. Gas ist nicht mehr Ziel – in kleine Handreichung verstoßt sich Zweck, der wiederholt und wiederholt, was zwecklos wird im Teil ohne Ganzes. Planlos schafft der Mann am Werkzeug – das Werk entzog sich der Übersicht wie der Mann durch Tag und Tag tiefer ins gleichförmige Einerlei glitt. (2: 63-4)

Work and money no longer have any importance for the workers when they are toiling so arduously, and yet, the blue figures demand still more work from the laborers: “Schicht schiebt sich in Schicht ohne Entlassung nach Stunden…Keine Frist von Rast länger! Absinkt die letzte Hand von Hebel – abgeleitet der letzte tote Fuß vom Schaltblock – abblincket das letzte glasige Auge vom Sichtglas“ (2: 65). The workers strike to end gas’ production and, at this point and time, are blissful because they no longer must manufacture the energy source. This revolutionary act causes the rebirth of the workers which the billionaire worker, the grandson of the billionaire son, calls the “Bestimmung von Ursprung” (2: 74). After yellow figures quell the strike through the threat of violence, they unscrupulously employ children and old men in the plants because they cannot find any more robust adult laborers. Because the workers have no desire to work under such oppressive conditions, the plant cannot meet consumer demand. The chief engineer reports what he is hearing at the plant: “Nicht für mich: dieser Hand Hub am Hebel. Nicht für mich: dieses Fußes Stoß auf den Schaltblock. Nicht für mich: dieses Auges Blick nach dem Sichtglas. Mein Fleiß schafft – nicht für mich. Mein Schweiß ätzt – nicht für mich. Mein Fron zinst – nicht für mich“ (2: 80).
The workers’ fixation on work resembles their fetish with money. In *Gas II*, the billionaire worker pleads with workers to renounce their passion for money and to donate their wealth to others (2: 74). In reality, worker’s thirst for money rivals industry’s lust for profits; as Kauf states, they are materially richer, but humanly poorer (314). They want to rebuild the plant because they can earn more money working there than they could performing other types of menial labor, and thus, their mammonism outweighs the danger of gas’ production. In the fourth act, two workers give speeches that are full of capitalistic jargon which they absurdly use to communicate the familial losses of the girl, the lady, and a mother whose son died in the explosion. They use terms such as “Gewinn,” “zählt,” “kauf,” “bezahlt,” “wertlos,” “Lohn,” “Geld,” “Gewinn verteilen,” “rechnet mit Quoten,” and “Verlust,” which show the infiltration of capitalism and cupidity among the workers’ ranks (2: 42-4).

Money also plays a central role in the suicide of the officer who married the billionaire son’s daughter. This marriage could propel the billionaire family into new social and possibly political circles that could be advantageous for the firm. However, the billionaire son wants nothing to do with the officer’s noble surname and connections because he considers himself a simple worker. Although the officer received a large dowry, he has foolishly gambled it away and seeks more money from his father-in-law to pay his debts. However, the billionaire son, who has never thought money to be important, refuses to help him and, instead, replies philosophically “[s]oll ich dich mit Geld betrügen – um dich selbst?” and “[e]in Schuldiger bist du – wie ich schuldig bin. Und unschuldig sind wir beide” (2: 30). He encourages the officer to surmount his dependence on money by rejecting its societal importance, but it has become too
ingrained in the soldier’s mind. This rejection would require that he become indifferent to the disgrace of being discharged from the military ignominiously because he cannot pay his arrears. However, the officer cannot overcome these norms and shoots himself in the chest (2: 32). Money and social criteria have become so critical that they determine a man’s life.

The military along with industry and government conspire against the billionaire son and his vision of an agricultural community. In *Gas I*, the black men, or industrial leaders, meet to discuss the future of the gas plant. This meeting portrays business leaders as manipulative plotters who make decisions behind closed doors in an attempt to monopolize wealth and power. The men criticize the plant’s socialism, but the first black man realizes that the workers toil harder because they have more incentive to work. The result of their drudgery is more gas for the black men and their industries so they begrudgingly accept the system. In a sign of solidarity with the gas workers, their employees are striking to demand the firing of the engineer. The first black man suggests that they oppose the engineer’s firing just because the workers desire it, but the others reject this idea because the engineer is not one of them. Ultimately, they also insist on the engineer’s dismissal, but the billionaire son rebuffs their demands. Instead, he leaves the black men flabbergasted by his decision not to rebuild the gas plant. The first black man states exasperatedly that “die Technik der Welt [kann] nicht stillstehen!” because, as the third black man states, “[d]ie vollständig abhängig ist von Gas!” (2: 35). They also cannot fathom how he will subsist because money is indispensible in the world. The black men ironically say that the billionaire son should never have invented gas if he is
going to discontinue its delivery and that they really do not care if their industries operate on another energy source, but the switch would be their financial ruin.

In addition, Kaiser portrays industry as controlling, or at the very least as possessing, a close relationship with government. The billionaire son pressures the black men to accept his decision, but they respond by threatening to compel him through the government to rebuild his plant and resume producing gas even though it has proved incapable of being controlled. They give this warning as if there is no chance of the government rejecting it: “Wir stellen eine Frist – bis Abend: ist uns die Entlassung des Ingenieurs bis dahin nicht mitgeteilt – wenden wir uns an die Regierung! – Wir gehen!” (2: 38). The billionaire son is indeed powerless to stop them. The state depends on gas to fight wars and dispatches the military with machine guns to protect the billionaire son from angry workers. A short while later a government representative informs the billionaire son that the state has exercised its “power” and seized the plant so that it will continue to manufacture gas in the interest of national security (2: 55). The black men’s threat has become a reality. When the billionaire son questions how the regime will prevent future explosions, the government representative responds that the state can only consider the current facts and the government is preparing an announcement to honor the workers who perished in the first explosion (2: 53-4). In reality, the nation is on the cusp of war, and the entire armaments’ industry is reliant on gas. The first scene from *Gas II* reveals gas’ role in this war as blue government figures control its flow to the war front. A reduction in gas’ production translates into gains for the enemy. A halt of gas’ flow to the front would mean the capitulation of the home country. Since the beginning of hostilities, the state has cared little for the welfare of the workers. Yellow figures,
employed by the government, force striking workers to return to their jobs for even less pay and more hours than the workers had before their strike. Indeed, they are little more than slaves: “Der Gewinn verschüttet sich nicht mehr in alle Hände – Lohn nach Maß der Notwendigkeit für Erhaltung der Kräfte von euch [die Arbeiter] wird Gesetz...Der Großingenieur übt Macht über euch mit Befehl und Strafe” (2: 77). In the final scene, the yellow figures threaten to shoot the building if the workers do not come out and do fire as the billionaire worker drops the ball of poison gas and causes the second apocalyptic explosion.

Gas’ first catastrophic explosion, in which thousands were burned to death, baffles the engineer who calculates the formula for its production. As he states, the formula “stimmt” but also “stimmt nicht” and “rechnet mit Menschenverstand” (2: 16, 25). His inability to understand the problems in gas’ manufacture illustrates the limits of human beings’ knowledge and of technology. The billionaire son states that the engineer calculated to the utmost of his ability, but the “Fehler wird von Jensseits diktiert” and “[ging] über Menschenmaß...hinaus” (2: 22). He attributes gas’ invention to the constant work which “wütete blindlings und stieß nach Grenzen vor” (2: 36). Closely identified with this description is the engineer because he represents reason and progress and is the promulgator of technology and mechanization. He believes in the necessity of technology at all costs. Machines, steel, engines, and the city dominate his vision for the future:

Eure Leistung schafft die Wunder in Stahl. Kraft stößt in Maschinen, die ihre treibt – Gas!! – Ihr bewegt die Eile der Bahnen, die euren Triumph über Brücken donnern, die ihr nietet! – Ihr schiebt Dampferkolosse ins Meer das ihr

229 This characterization of the engineer is well within stereotypes of the profession in early twentieth-century Germany. See Herf’s Reactionary Modernism for a more detailed analysis of engineers during Weimar (152-88).
zerschneidet in Linien, die euer Kompaß bestimmt! – Türme von zitternder Steile baut ihr in die pfefifende Luft, die die Drähte bedroht, in die der Funken spricht! – ihr hebt Motoren vom Bode, die oben heulen vor Wut der Vernichtung ihres Gewichts, das in Wolken hinfliegt!...ihr seid Sieger im Weltreich!! (2: 48-9)

He describes the workers as heroes and attempts to communicate to them the power they possess as producers of gas because the whole world depends on it: “Herrscher seid ihr hier – im Werk von allmächtiger Leistung...Eure Herrschaft ist das – die ihr gründet in Schicht um Schicht – in Tag und Nacht – voll fiebernder Arbeit” (2: 49). Although the engineer claims gas’ production empowers the workers, the entire play shows their true powerlessness against modern capitalism and technology. The machines dominate human beings instead of human beings controlling them for their own benefit.

Technology becomes so dominant in the Gas plays that it is more essential than humanity’s fate at Gas II’s conclusion.

The billionaire son and worker are the rejuvenated antagonists to all that the engineer represents. After gas’ explosion, the son attacks the engineer’s vision of technological advance because it is at the expense of human beings. He envisages an agricultural area emerging from the rubble of the old gas plant (2: 19):


This scene illustrates a rebuke of industrial technology and embracement of nature (Hinck 46; Petersen, “Mythos” 270). A return to this primitive, agricultural environment is a regression from modern life, the Industrial Revolution’s labor methods, its means of production, and their future forms as industry continues to evolve. The smokestacks and machines of the factory would be a distant memory (2: 35-6), and the workers would
become agricultural settlers. The engineer, a proponent of progress, naturally refuses to help him and wants to maintain gas’ production at all costs: “Nein – nicht Rückkehr zu einem schwächeren Grad der Bewegung” (2: 37). He counters the billionaire son’s arguments by saying to the workers that they will be little more than farmers and thus unprogressive, but the billionaire son views the agricultural colony as an improvement for humanity (2: 50). The implementation of the billionaire son’s vision would require a radical transformation in the attitudes of humanity and thus, necessitates an Erneuerung. In the second act, the billionaire son cautions the clerk that the explosion was a warning and tells the engineer he is blind to gas’ dangers. He also rebukes the three workers who demand the engineer’s dismissal and tries to convince them to become “Menschen“ (2: 47).

Indeed, Kaiser especially underscores the term “Mensch” in his Gas plays. When the engineer rebuffs his pre-industrial society, the billionaire son touches him and asks where he is, if he is warm, and if he has a pulse. When the second black man asks if he is going to stop gas’ production, he responds that “[d]as Maß ist der Mensch, der ihn [der Mensch] erhält” (2: 37). In other words, becoming more “menschlich” is the remedy to end gas’ inhumane production, and likewise through ceasing its manufacture, more human beings will also become more “menschlich.” The girl who demands the dismissal of the engineer appeals to the workers by stating twice that her brother was a “Mensch,” but fails to realize his work at the factory was inhumane. The billionaire son pleads with workers or the mass to become “Menschen” on several occasions (2: 37-58), and directly after the explosion, his last word at the end of the first act is “Menschen.” As he proposes his agricultural community, he tells workers that they must no longer worry about toil
and profits but that they will be settlers and finally “Menschen.” The billionaire worker also beseeches the workers to become more “human,” and in a sign of Gemeinschaft, young, middle-aged, and old people demand “mehr für uns” or more for human beings (2: 71-3). They have experienced the Erneuerung much as the billionaire son experienced earlier. The first explosion, or as it is sometimes named in the play “das weiße Entsetzen,” gives the billionaire son Anstoß so that he believes that it can spur others to accept the teachings of the New Human Being as well: “das weiße Entsetzen – das mußte uns den Stoß geben...um uns über ein Jahrtausend vorwärts zu schleudern” (2: 19). Out of catastrophe, the impetus for the transformation occurs. In Gas II, the billionaire worker views the Erneuerung as less time for work and more time for the Gemeinschaft: “Hände ab von Fron für Verrichtung – Hände sind frei für Druck aller Hände in unsern, die rasten“ (2: 75). He suggests international fraternity instead of gas’ production which powers industry and war: “Dringt um Erwiderung: Land wuchs in Land – Grenze stob ins All – Nachbar wird noch der Fernste – in Sammlung zu uns sind wir verteilt an euch und ein Ganzes” (2: 76). Likewise in Gas, the billionaire son tells the workers that he has been “screaming” in the hall with them in a sign of solidarity and asks them to become a Gemeinschaft: “Fließende Vielheit aus euch zu jedem um euch. Keiner ist Teil – in Gemeinschaft vollkommen der einzelne. Wie ein Leib ist das Ganze“ (2: 47)[emphasis mine]. However at the end of the play, he states that he is alone like all others who try instill the message of the New Human Being in humanity.

In despair, he asks if there is someone who can bring hope for the future. His expectant daughter states that she will bear this person and, thus, begins the story of the billionaire worker and second New Human Being. The billionaire worker tries to make
the best of an impossible situation in *Gas II* by attempting to convince the gas laborers to return to their jobs and accept a religious inner spirituality: “*nicht von dieser Welt ist das Reich!!*” (2: 86). In this instance, it is the only possibility to save humanity. The chief engineer counters by giving the workers power because they will control their fate and the fate of others on the earth: “Überschlagt den Tribut, der euch anfällt. Keine Zone des Erdrunds, die euch mit Eintrag nicht gefügig…Eures Willens Bestimmung übt Herrschaft, die alles benötigt” (2: 87). In an act of revenge against those who allegedly made them suffer, the workers reject the billionaire worker’s idea and instead embrace the engineer’s wish to unleash “hate,” “shame,” “anger,” and “poison” through the use of explosive poison gas (2: 83). The apocalypse that follows stresses the workers and human beings’ wasted opportunity to accept the billionaire son’s primitive agricultural community which was the only solution to save humanity. A yellow figure compares the explosion to the “*dies irae*” or the Day of Last Judgement.

*Nebeneinander. Volkstück 1923 – The Weimar Republic, Inflation, and the Capitalist ‘Neu-mann’*

In the *Gas* plays, the failure of characters to seize the billionaire son’s vision is due primarily to their pecuniary greed. Money also plays an important role in Kaiser’s *Nebeneinander. Volkstück 1923*, one of the more popular plays of the 1920s (Moninger 150). As the title states, the play examines the year 1923 in which Germany suffered from hyperinflation. Kaiser portrays profiteers and the dispossessed and identifies the city with inflationary effects and a loss of morals. The country, on the other hand, is the positive antithesis to the decadent metropolis, in which the New Human Being – in *Nebeneinander*, it is the pawnbroker – cannot realize cultural *Erneuerung*. 
The hyperinflation is omnipresent throughout the play. In one instance, a man buys a newspaper with a 5,000 mark bill, and in another, a proletarian woman must pawn her bed and protests that she will only receive ten thousand marks for it which is roughly enough for her to purchase a kilogram of margarine or “[w]enn’s klettert die Hälfte” (2: 279). In response to her grievance, the pawnbroker only shrugs his shoulders. It is not surprising that Kaiser would choose a pawnbroker as one of Nebeneinander’s main characters; pawnbroking was one of the few businesses that profited from the inflation. With the fixed rate of pensions and savings, people’s necessity for money caused them to often hock concrete objects. However, during the hyperinflation, the prices were rising quickly so that the hocker had little chance of repurchasing his pledged items. If he could, then the broker had made a sizable profit albeit with devalued money, and if not, he retained useful objects rather than money which had increasingly no value.

In another example of the inflation, the proletarian woman says to Neumann as he enters the pawnshop “Da tanzen die Millionäre an. Achtung – jetzt weiß man, wer die Preise drückt” (2: 279). She accuses the pawnbroker of sinking the prices that he pays for pledged goods and of being one of the “millionaires” because of his gains during the inflationary period. When she flirtatiously asks Neumann to swing by her apartment sometime, he states that he sees no reason when she has pawned her bed. She naively claims that she will just buy it back from the pawnbroker, but shrewd Neumann replies “da haben Sie allerdings keine Ahnung von Preisen” (2: 280). Her example demonstrates how Kaiser’s play appealed to Germans’ feelings of dispossession which occurred during the hyperinflation.
Much like the pawnbroker, several other characters either exploit the inflationary situation or engage in morally questionable or illegal actions such as the thieving errand boy in the casino or the dishonest lady who pawns a pipe. The boy is typical for the infatuation with time and speed during Weimar. He asks a dawdling cloakroom attendant who is fetching a cigarette box from a jacket if she “nicht ein bißchen mehr Gas geben [kann]” (2: 308). When she cannot find it, he asks her if she pilfered it already. In another scene, the cloakroom lady warns him to steal less than 5,000 marks worth of gamblers’ belongings so that she does not have trouble with the management; he retorts impudently to just give him the number for the clothing he brought. After he gives her a ball of clothing, she tells him to lay out the garments “Stück für Stück” or piece by piece (2: 304). He impatiently responds “[h]ier ist Betrieb. Tempo – Tempo!” (2: 304). In the first act, when the pawnbroker gives the proleterian woman a price of 10,000 marks for her bed, she makes a similar statement demanding he pay 10,000 marks “stückweise” for the bed (2: 279). These references point to Kaiser’s cynical criticism of German attitudes during this time period in which they only think in larger terms and specifically with respect to money. This mind-set reflects modern Germans’ sprint to gain as much money as quickly as possible.

The old woman who tries to pledge her husband’s pipe states at first that he is sick and not allowed to smoke it. After the pawnbroker refuses her hock, she says that her husband and she have pawned everything and are still desperate for money. In an act of empathy, the pawnbroker takes the pipe for 10,000 marks. The woman guffaws as he tells her he will accept it and as she leaves the shop because she has just swindled him with a fictitious story. She has preyed on the pawnbroker’s compassion for her.
Both the errand boy and the old woman demonstrate a crisis in capitalism and how it leads to the loss of morals that Kaiser espouses. Capitalism foments a ruthless, exploitative attitude in which human beings are indifferent to the plight of others because they only care that they themselves gain money. The second scene involving the pawnbroker in Nebeneinander demonstrates the hotel owner lying to protect her business, the third shows the self-indulgence of the casino while others suffer, and the fourth illustrates the indifference of law enforcement to Lu’s fate. Indeed, the scene at the police precinct is the crassest of the three. The police inspector is more concerned about discussing boxing on the telephone than about assisting people. A young girl named Lu could be about to commit suicide, and he does not undertake anything to prevent it. The pawnbroker pleads with him to call other police stations and use everything in his power to help Lu, but the police inspector retorts angrily “[w]ozu ich mein Telephone gebrauche, ist mein Vergnügen” (2: 325). His “pleasure” is boxing of course. The pawnbroker accuses the commissioner of inhumanity and of failing to fulfill the police’s public mandate: “Mich schoflen Trödler packt es – sind Sie nicht vom gleichen Fleisch und Blut? Ermangelt es also des allgemeinen Interesses?!...Sie sollen die Verfolgung aufnehmen. Es ist doch Gesetz, daß das Opfer geschützt wird“ (2: 326). The preceding statement shows law enforcement as insufficient when dealing with the true problems confronting humanity.

Neumann and his friend Borsig, two characters who exude the negative characteristics of modernity, are drinking and talking in Borsig’s modern apartment at a late hour. In these conversations, their use of Americanisms is contemporary much as the boxing in the last paragraph. However, their exchange also shows Neumann as a
diabolical character. For example, he has no intentions of being faithful to women and leaves them often:

   BORSIG: Stramm in Weibern?

In reference to Luise, who is none other than Lu, and with an allusion to Gretchen whom Faust seduces with the help of Mephistopheles in Goethe’s tragedy of the same name, he states that “jede Stadt hat ihr Gretchen” (2: 289). He also comments about Luise that “[d]ie letzte Achtung verliert man vor dem bessern Geschlecht, wenn man die schiere Hure in jedem Weibsbild entdeckt. Pfui Pfennig!” (2: 290). He did not formally end the relationship with Luise, but rather just ignored her until she finally sent him a letter in which she threatens to kill herself if he does not sincerely tell her if he loves her. He responds with his own letter which tackles the problem “objectively” resembling a business letter rather than a personal correspondence (2: 290). He sleeps with Borsig’s sister as well and uses her in business dealings. However, sober objectivity is his defining and most loathful characteristic according to Kaiser. When he suggests that Borsig, he, and Borsig’s sister establish a movie business, he states “[i]ch schlage vor alle schönen Gefühle beiseite zu lassen und Geschäfte zu behandeln. Später kann ja jeder wieder in verstärktem Maß von seinen Emotionen Gebrauch machen“ (2: 302). When Kracht, a businessman, negotiates the funding for the movie theater, he talks “objectively” to Neumann and Borsig, and Borsig’s sister notes Neumann’s “objectivity” (2: 316, 302). This detachment from feelings demonstrates the expansion of cold, rational capitalism, much as the inflation itself, so that they both control and suppress one’s emotions.
Neumann wants to invest in a wave of the future, namely movie theaters, but he has no money. Borsig owns an insolvent cinema in the inner city where there are none, but like Neumann is also penniless. He must somehow raise twenty percent of the total debt to appease the creditors who have seized all the furnishings of the theater: “Mensch, das ist doch Senf! Ich sitze mit minus in der Tasche – und soll Barzahlung verheißen” (2: 301). The name “Borsig” closely resembles “Börse” and, thus, fits the many Germans’ negative views on stock market’s actions perfectly. In a morally indefensible act, they engage Borsig’s sister to raise the money by enticing men through sexual favors. She convinces her wealthy lover, Kracht, to furnish her with money to invest in the theater and then ditches him after he has proposed to her. In a business meeting between Kracht and Neumann, she feigns ignorance in business matters and has portrayed herself as an artist to Kracht, but is actually a clever and able woman. During the business meeting between Kracht and Neumann, she makes dumb jokes that further portray her to Kracht as naïve to business dealings. In trying to convince Kracht of their business proposal, Neumann tells him that “mit Sentimentalitäten schieben wir den Karren keinen Zoll weiter,” but the sister retorts jokingly “[w]ir wollen aber schieben!” (2: 316). Earlier in the play, Neumann openly states that “[d]ie Welt schiebt nach dem Krieg mit Gott und dem Einmaleins” (2: 288). Schieben is illegal or immoral business dealings of profiteers, especially during times of penury such as the inflation; the trio of Neumann, Borsig, and his sister are of course doing just that by swindling Kracht. Neumann cleverly makes Borsig’s sister receive the check from Kracht so that they are not responsible when Kracht exposes the fraud. It functions as a gift to his girlfriend rather than a business dealing with two other men; to ask for the money back from the lady would be
ignominious and too testing for Kracht’s ego. They use Kracht and plan to use others like him in the future: “Das Gründungskapital ist bei geschickter Ausnützung potenter Beziehungen zu haben” (2: 332). Borsig expresses moral misgivings about using his sister, but Neumann states “hier wird nicht mit Gefühlen gearbeitet – in Geschäften eiskalt!” (2: 303). They typify the profiteers and chislers of the inflation who have no money, but know how to exploit the system and selfishly seek their own interests to secure large sums of money.\(^{230}\)

Neumann is a modern person, and in keeping with Kaiser’s rejection of the modern world, he is the type of person audiences would despise. He is selfish, indifferent to morals, cynical, and shows no respect for other human beings (Grimm 28). He travels from city to city and has no real occupation, but always makes money. Neumann thinks only about business: “Es wird nur von Geschäften gesprochen – und ausschließlich” (2: 340). His attitude is a reflection of a new, selfish way of thinking that the hyperinflation has engendered. Elsasser, a fat stock broker, who is the next victim of Neumann and Borsig’s sister, states that Neumann “hat Ellbogen” or is active and energetic but at the same time reckless and that “[d]as ist der Typ, der durchkommt. Wenn wir alle in Dreck und Speck verrecken, pfeift das noch die Wacht am Rhein mit vollen Backen“ (2: 342). Neumann is the “New Man,” but one should not mistake him for the reborn human being because he is merely a new social phenomenon and the New Human Being transcends current society. Neumann is actually a “Niemann” or “niemand” which is the alias he gives to the pawnbroker when he hocks his tuxedo.

\(^{230}\) This portrayal of capitalism as maniputable is typical for the time period. One need only to consider Fritz Lang’s film *Dr. Mabuse, Der Spielmacher* in which the villain, Dr. Mabuse, manipulates the stock market in the opening scene of the film when he steals insider information about a company to gain a fortune. In another similarity to *Nebeneinander*, he sends his female accomplice who deeply loves him to become intimate with the district attorney and learn information about his investigation against him.
Kaiser also identifies Neumann with the city which the playwright considers the negative antithesis to the countryside. Indeed, the three plots of *Nebeneinander*, which show all actions and movements happening simultaneously and interconnecting, demonstrate the opposition between city and country. The idyllic rural scene contrasts the two plots that occur in the city because it shows nature as a dominant force. The technology of the countryside has merit because it augments the lock inspector’s labor. It has entered into nature in a more constructive and measured manner such as through locks and a motorboat in comparison to the city where technology and industry have conquered nature and dominate human beings. The lockkeeper’s wife states that “[h]ier [auf dem Land] hat sich nichts verändert. Der Weg durch die Heide ist auch derselbe geblieben,” and the people in the city “spürt nicht die Natur, wenn sie ernst macht“ (2: 285). For Luise, everything is so “beautiful,” “clear,” and “simple” in the country while the metropolis is “black”; no one should send human beings to the cities “wo Asphalt der Grund und Häuser der Wald sind. Keine Kreatur kennt sich mehr aus in der Schöpfung!” (2: 285-6). She was lonely in the city, where “man keinen Anschluß ans Leben mehr [hat]” and has come to the country to receive “Rettung – und Ruhe – und Frieden” (2: 287). Franz, a university student, states that millions in the city are jealous of those in the country. His actions best reflect how to cope with work because he has just passed his exams and traveled to the country to relax. When Luise wants to return to Berlin and begin working again, the lockkeeper states reproachfully that “[e]s wird vielzuviel in der Welt gearbeitet – da ist jeder Mensch entbehrlich. Wer die Schreibmaschine erfunden hat…Als ob es nicht genug Elend gegeben hat…Dieser Hundsfott – dieser Moloch – dieser Mädchenhändler” (2: 329).\(^\text{231}\) The country plot has the only happy ending of the

\(^{231}\) Moloch was a Babylonian god in the Old Testament to which children were sacrificed. Its reference is
three plots because Franz and Luise marry. Luise has time to ruminate on her actions in the city, enjoys the support of her family, and falls in love with Franz. Their love exemplifies a lack of selfishness and demonstrates the surmounting of stringent social norms that would punish Luise for her previous sexual relations. Luise’s sister tells Franz that she heard with her own ears how Luise said she loved him: “Ich glaube nicht, daß es tiefere Liebe gibt. Das ist selbstlos und groß” (2: 328). Franz takes her to be his wife because of his healthy attitude toward human beings and life: “Gott sei Dank, daß man sich einmal einem Menschen widmen kann. Dem Menschen in sich am meisten.” (2: 314). According to Kaiser, the cupidity and capitalism of the metropolis has not yet affected these rural areas, but it could one day as the city along with its ills continues to expand into the countryside.

The two plots which occur in the city show the success of the ruthless and exploitative capitalist Neumann and the failure of the compassionate and humanistic pawnbroker. His inability to save Lu’s life shows care for human beings cannot function in the city as it does in the countryside because of urbanites’ cupidity. The pawnbroker represents the Expressionist Erneuerung, and just like many Expressionists, he is jaded by the failure of people to show concern for other human beings such as Lu. Kaiser, the author whose prophetic message society would not accept, compares himself to the pawnbroker in a letter to Hans Theodor Joel from March 1924:


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232 Hans Georg Knobloch does not consider the pawnbroker an Expressionist New Human Being as Reinhold Grimm does (29), but rather sees Kaiser portraying him as an anachronistic, ridiculous figure reminiscent of Fritz Lang’s film Metropolis in which Freder sees a machine transform into a giant Moloch that would devour the workers of his father’s factory.
A letter that the pawnbroker finds in the pocket of a tuxedo that Herr Niemann has hocked originally gives him Anstoß and shocks him into a new existence: “So kann es einen Menschen überfallen – mitten im Alltag – – man weiß nicht wozu...” (2: 285). The pawnbroker sees the multitude of possibilities that lie before him (4: 583). He has previously not cared for others’ troubles, but the letter states that a woman, Lu, will commit suicide. He decides that his business can wait until he finds N. or Herr Neumann or Lu, and for the play’s entirety, he and his daughter frantically try to locate them. His care trumps financial gain in a time when he could make substantial profits: “Es wird alles ohne Sinn, wenn nicht alles jederzeit bereit ist, um einen einzigen Mensch das Leben zu retten!!!“ (4: 325). Just as many of Kaiser’s rejuvenated characters, his later failure makes him question the efficacy of this ethos:


The pawnbroker would gladly forget the entire matter, but he just cannot. Rejected by society, he and his daughter commit suicide by trapping themselves in their shop and turning on the gas. He breaks off the key to the front door that he has locked as a means of detaching himself from society with which he has become so disenchanted. Human beings have treated him as a fool, which reflects his relationship to the other two plots in

(“Krieg, Revolution, Inflation” 198). To modern theater-goers, the pawnbroker’s pathos may seem like hyperbole, but to Kaiser and other Expressionists, it was not. His altruistic motives contrast Neumann’s selfish actions and make him a tragic figure in comparison with the cold-hearted Neumann.
the play. He tried to rescue the girl, but has lost his business in the process and now faces prison incarceration; he even states his choices in life are now prison or begging. He has experienced a rejuvenated life and cannot return to his previous existence; people who care about other people do not survive in this urban society which they find revolting: “Ich schlucke die Luft mit Mühe…Riecht es giftig? Riecht es nach Menschen?” (2: 336).

The “Volksstück” in the play’s title is not only a literary Volksstück that contains simple language and folksy humor designed for an urban audience, but rather stresses das Volk or “the people” from 1923 (Schürer, Afterword 79). The three simultaneously running plots show many groups of people in 1923 Germany such as unaffected rural inhabitants, urbanites, cheats, the destitute, materialists, exploiters, and the few humanitarians of early twentieth-century Germany. They all lack fraternity, but are in some way connected to each other. Unfortunately, they do not realize their interconnectedness; these people do not live “miteinander, sondern ‘nebeneinander,’” as the title states (Fivian 40; Kuxdorf 132; Schürer, Afterword 79). The police commissioner best illustrates the lack of Gemeinschaft. After a resounding rejection of the pawn broker’s plea to aid Lu, the police inspector resumes his boxing conversation on the telephone and states “[w]issen Sie, das ist der einzige Sieg, für den ich mich erwärmen kann. Es sollte überhaupt die Parole werden: jeder gegen jeden – knock-out!” (2: 327). He embraces the competition of the match because it resembles capitalism’s competitive atmosphere, but he does not consider those who are the knock outs. No one is there to lift those people up from the mat. The Gemeinschaft that Kaiser desires is

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233 In an attempt to find Lu, the pawnbroker wore Neumann’s pawned tuxedo to the casino where he thought he could find her. Using hocked items for personal use is illegal and after being subsequently arrested, his shop was closed and he could face jailtime.
impossible in this balkanized state. The two men who report the pawnbroker to the police for thievery obsequiously offer to be witnesses to the pawnbroker’s libel of the inspector, but he refuses. Bowing and striking their heels together as reminiscent of soldiers in the dismembered German Imperial Army, they state that his attitude is the only way to create order in the state. The men’s reminiscent actions of a bygone era and comments about the lack of order are directed at the inflation and in general the Weimar Republic even though the men with their gambling and materialism contribute to this disorder.

**Hölle Weg Erde – A Utopia**

In the previous plays examined in this chapter, Kaiser shows the problems of current reality that obstruct the Gemeinschaft. Human beings must first overcome these formidable obstacles and realize their suffering in society to ultimately achieve a brotherly community, and thus, Kaiser directed many efforts to this first stage of the process. In *Hölle Weg Erde* from 1919, he once again shows these hindrances, but for the first time, he also portrays their surmounting to realize the Gemeinschaft. The play shows the regeneration of society through the rejuvenation of the individual. Indeed, the title of the work, *Hölle Weg Erde*, communicates the rejuvenation in the process of realizing the community. “Hölle” or “hell” is the first section in which Kaiser shows egotistical human beings before their transformation. “Weg,” or “way” as is in “means” or “path,” is the second part and demonstrates Aufbruch from old societal values, and
“Erde” or “earth/world” is the third section of the play in which characters finally reach the blissful utopian community on the entire earth.\(^{234}\)

Just as other protagonists in Kaiser’s Expressionist plays, the painter Spazierer in *Hölle Weg Erde* feels responsibility for fellow human beings. He feels obligated to save “Ein Freund, ein Bekannter, ein Jemand” who will take his life if he does not receive 1000 marks by evening. He beseeches Lili, a wealthy lady, to aid this individual by purchasing Spazierer’s oeuvre for 1000 marks, but she elects instead to fritter away her money on pearl earrings. Spazierer is outraged by her egotism and insensitivity for the fate of this person: “Zweitausendvierhundert für Perlen, die Sie zum Spiel in die Ohren knüpfen -- und tausend nicht für einen Menschen, der leben kann?!!” (2: 98). Lilly retorts that “[m]ich geht das nichts an” and “[i]ch kenne den Menschen nicht“ (2: 98). Her arguments are typical for conventional society, but Kaiser wants to emphasize the necessity of a radical transformation that transcends normal society. The problem with human beings is that they refuse, as the lawyer in the play later states about himself, to look behind “den Boden der Tatsachen” (2: 106).

The prison lieutenant corresponds to this description flawlessly because he functions as a mere automaton mindlessly completing his work. He instructs a prison guard to fetch an inmate after a red signal lamp comes on and later confirms that the inmate’s name appears on a red sheet of paper but only after asking him three times. He completes this rote operation for three prisoners. The scene in the lawyer’s office also resembles assembly line production methods as clients shuffle in and out of the office after talking to the attorney. They give the lawyer terse statements, and he replies with

\(^{234}\) In this instance, Kaiser borrows the term “earth” from the Bible. Isaiah chapters 65 and 66, 2 Peter 3, and Revelation 21 mention the creation of a “new earth.”
even shorter answers. A prerequisite for legal work is an advance payment, and clients pay the clerk on their way out the door. As one client is seated with the clerk, the next enters the lawyer’s office, and when he/she is done, they move to the clerk, and the next enters the office from a waiting room so that there is always a circular rationalization to the actions at the practice. Even the lawyer admits that he is little more than an “Automat, der die vorhandenen Gesetze anwendet” (2: 107). Rationalization has spread from industrial production to other areas of work.

Spazierer visits the lawyer’s office because he wants to sue Lili for the lack of care she has exhibited for humanity. However, the lawyer refuses to take his case not because of the claim’s absurdity but rather because Spazierer is penniless. The events at the lawyer’s office revolve around money: characters wish to recover money lawfully and pay the lawyer large sums for his legal services. Even Spazierer states that the lawyer’s cashier “rechnet die strömenden Vorschüsse” (2: 119). Money infests jurisprudence to the point in which only the rich have access to legal counsel.

Other instances in the play also portray the legal system in a poor light. Much as the pawnbroker in Nebeneinander, the law does not help Spazierer who wants to save an acquaintance’s life, but rather the system imposes a sentence on him, in Spazierer’s case, for thievery of jewelry. In a scene at the prison, a young man, a lady with the hat, a lady with a headscarf, and a bareheaded man are all from the lower classes and are susceptible to imprisonment while the legal system allows the wealthy like Lili to continually “commit murder” according to Kaiser. Spazierer wants to press charges against Lili for the intent to murder and have the police prevent the homicide, but the prison lieutenant states that “[k]einer tötet, der nicht Hand anlegt oder anstiftet” (2: 102). Spazierer
responds with an idealistic answer: “Sie tötet hier – und tötet dort...Es ist nicht möglich?? – Mord nicht möglich – über Dächer – über Städte – über Bahnhöfe – um den Erdball Mord nicht möglich – – von jedem Fleck der Welt aus” (2: 102). Looking in the window of a jewelry store, Spazierer also claims the store’s charms lure people to commit murder, and thus, he steals them to deny others the temptation. Overindulgence and excess when others are suffering is unacceptable.

After his release from prison for the theft, Spazierer returns to the jewelry store and the law firm to spread the message that the meaning of life is responsibility for one’s own actions and for fellow humanity. After reflection on Spazierer’s accusations and his general humanistic attitude, the jeweler and lawyer begin to question the present legal system. The jeweler believes that jurisprudence is incomplete and, thus, insufficient: “das Gesetz war noch nicht erfunden, das die Gesetze überflüssig macht“ (2: 116). The lawyer later concurs with the jeweler’s revelation. Although Spazierer’s trial was unambiguous in a legal sense, there are still contradictions within the artist’s legal files that the lawyer cannot clarify even when he pores over them repeatedly. There is still “Unrecht, gegen das kein Recht sprach,” but through the disposal of the current legal system, Spazierer is bringing “die Wahrheit an den Tag” (2: 120). He even later calls for “ein besonderer Gerichtshof...Vielleicht muß ein neuer Justizpalast aufgeführt werden” (2: 121). Only in the play’s last section have all members of society transcended the current legal system with the adoption of the Gemeinschaft.

Spazierer’s concern for a little-known acquaintance, his arguments against the inhumanity of society, and his acceptance of his prison incarceration without maintaining

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235 In his own defense before the Munich district court, Kaiser argued that “[d]ie Pflicht gegen sich selbst ist das Primäre, höhere als die Pflicht gegen das Recht” (4: 562).
his innocence lead the lawyer, the jeweler, the prison lieutenant, and Lili to reconsider their everyday existences. The lawyer’s questioning of current society’s function is a typical reaction for figures who Spazierer had previously visited. He has been so consumed with Spazierer’s case for robbery, which he lost at trial, that he turned away all clients from his practice so that he could then devote himself fully to Spazierer’s case. Consequently, in a rejection of money’s importance, his cashier does not collect any fees. The lawyer ultimately concludes that there is an accomplice involved in Spazierer’s case, namely society.

Much like the lawyer, the jeweler has reflected on the insignificance of his profession. He refuses to enter his store or even to sign for the packages of gold that arrive although customers wait for finished jewelry and the store’s windows are almost empty. In contemplating his existence, the jeweler feels that he has lost “control” over himself and what others do with him in the capitalistic system (2: 116). After Spazierer asks if a cut that he gave him during the robbery was “paralyzing,” the jeweler responds that the gash left a wound on which he cannot put his finger and that Spazierer “[ihm] den Stich in den Hals versetzte” or “cut him to the quick” (2: 117). As if he wants to flee to his former capitalistic manner of thinking as a comfortable refuge, the jeweler hastily invites Spazierer to plunder his store again. However, the artist has no desire for money and states that although he is culpable for injuring the jeweler when he robbed his store, the jeweler is also a “perpetrator” and has “guilt” because he has fulfilled his social function in an unjust society these many years (2: 115-6). The jeweler ultimately decides to close his store.
The prison lieutenant can also no longer perform his social function. His bureaucratic labor routine is finally revealed to him as petty and mechanistic: “ich könnte mir keine Rechenschaft geben, wie es began” (2: 123). Hence, the system does not function any more: prison guards do not relieve others at the end of their shifts and as the prison lieutenant states, “[s]ehen Sie die Signallampe. Alle brennen und melden an. Ich nehme die Patronen nicht heraus und öffne die Rotzettel nicht...Meine Bedienung des Blocktisches schlief langsam ein...Sie erkennen die vollkommene Stilllegung des Hafthausbetriebs” (2: 123). After departing from the town, Lili returns because she cannot forget Spazierer. His humanistic teachings have caused her Wandlung so that she finally realizes her guilt: “Bin ich verantwortlich? – Ja, es wühlt mich auf. Mit wachsender Erregung. Stachel, der unaufhaltsam langsam vordringt. Furcht vor dem endlichen Ergebnis hemmt die Forschung. Ich hätte tun können, was getan werden konnte“ (2: 127). However, Spazierer stresses that the entire society is guilty for such actions, and thus, all members of society are both perpetrators and victims. On the one hand, they are innocent because they knew no other existence; on the other hand, they are guilty because their deeds caused the suffering of other human beings.

After the recognition of guilt, characters must be willing to demonstrate penitence in jail. Exemplary for this act is the scene between Spazierer, a prostitute, and an absconding convict. Both the prostitute and the prisoner want to be liberated from their previous existences. The prostitute wants to experience freedom from her hellish life through suicide, and the prisoner wants to flee the prison. Spazierer advises the prostitute, who murdered her last customer, that she can only turn her act of revenge into justice in the prison. He tells the prisoner that only through inner freedom will he truly
nicht mehr – beklopfe die Stahltür nicht mehr: du bist frei“ (2: 113). In prison, their
punishment would not be oppressive but rather an advance over current life because
victuals and drink are provided and labor is not onerous. Repentance then engenders an
existential freedom and inner peace which occur when one considers the true importance
of life, namely care for fellow human beings, and in Hölle Weg Erde, this development
transpires symbolically in the jail: “Menschen sind bemüht um Menschen…Wie
Menschen einander Befreiung gewähren können, gelingt es im Strafhaus” (2: 113).
Spazierer ultimately convinces the prostitute and the convict to turn themselves in to the
police.

Other characters such as hotel owners, prison guards, the jeweler, and the lawyer
also want to enter the jail because they all consider themselves culpable. The jeweler
wants to assume the entire guilt of society on himself, but so does everyone else
according to Spazierer. The prison lieutenant wants to wait for the prison guards before
he travels over the bridge on the way to the prison in case they need instructions, but
Spazierer questions his reasoning because the difference between superiors and workers
is now superfluous in this egalitarian community. The prison master and the warden are
no longer necessary to surveil prisoners because the prisoners repent voluntarily. People
feel compelled to act out of their own free will (2: 136); it is the era of voluntary
confessions. Present society had only existed to protect the privileges of the powerful (2:
133). Possessing beyond what is essential for survival while others live from hand to
mouth is unacceptable. The jeweler states that “[m]an arbeitet auf Lager, das ist eine
lähmende Beschäftigung,” and the hotel owner echos this sentiment: “ich [habe]
zweihundert Betten im Grand-Hotel stehen...Betten für alle Welt” (2: 140). People have begun to think of others first instead of themselves.

When the prison lieutenant asks where they should direct the masses of people, Spazierer responds “[i]m Aufbruch [ist] das Ziel” (2: 125). According to the prison warden, the Aufbruch will “Abgründe aufreissen, die nicht zu überbrücken wären...Die Gelegenheit wird sich geben” (2: 134). Early in the play, Spazierer thinks that Lili’s initial impulse will come from her concern for his acquaintance: “Sie weiß und wartet auf den schärferen Anstoß. Sie weiß um ihr Wissen von der Gefahr um den Jemand...im aufgelockerten Gefühl von Verantwortung drängt sie nach eindeutiger Anweisung“ (2: 103) [emphasis mine]. In addition, the Aufbruch is far removed from a violent revolution. The prison lieutenant, for instance, insists that all prison guards surrender their weapons and fetters. As scores of people journey to the Grand-Hotel, Spazierer describes a peaceful Aufbruch: “Hört das: unendliche Stille donnert. Das ist tobender Aufbruch geräuschlos” (2: 130).

The Aufbruch of society leads to the Gemeinschaft among the masses because they have transcended all points of contention. Spazierer compares the characters who are marching toward the prison to “Tropfen [die] im Strom rinnt” and mentions that “[a]lle sind los in allen” (2: 141, 139). During the realization of the Gemeinschaft at the very end of the play, Spazierer states that “[w]ie ich in allen vergehe – seid ihr schon Teil von mir” (2: 143). The period previous to utopian fraternity is, as the prison master states, a dawn. Echoing his statement, the warden calls it a “Tagesanbruch,“ and the stage directions describe the light as “Zwielichtend” (2: 134, 132).236 Only in the last scene’s final stages does the daybreak ultimately arrive showering dramatis personae

236 There is again reference to “das Zwielicht” or “die Dämmerung” from an Expressionist writer.
with “silver bars” and “white flames” (2: 141). The Erneuerung and the Gemeinschaft are also temporally and spatially boundless. When the prison warden asks if he has returned to the prison to confess a crime after being released just yesterday, Spazierer responds that he was *endlessly* released yesterday and returned *endlessly* today with the masses. In one scene, Spazierer comments that “[e]s zählt nicht mehr nach Minuten“ and “[e]s bleibt nicht Zeit, wie sonst Zeit war“ (2: 121). According to the first prison master’s watch, prisoners should be entering the prison, but the second prison master stresses that one cannot live one’s life according to a watch. In the last scene, Spazierer states that the Gemeinschaft’s future borders should reach until the earth’s extremities.

In the Gemeinschaft, there is no differentiation between human beings. The various individual scenes at the beginning of the play with personae such as Lily, the lawyer, and the prison lieutenant pursuing their own selfish interests are the antitheses of later scenes which show the Gemeinschaft’s togetherness. Because everyone is equal and part of the community, Spazierer states to the prostitute that he is her victim that she strangled last night and tells the prisoner that he is his comrade. There is no further need for leaders, and hence, Spazierer vanishes into the crowd to become one with them.237 The final words of the play reflect an almost völkisch regression which opposes industrialization and in which the rejuvenated figures of the Gemeinschaft have now become one with the earth and the community on earth in an enduring relationship: “Eurer Blut braust –– denn ihr seid die Erde!!” (2: 143).

Spazierer has lead people to the utopian community. Other than his guidance, no other leadership is necessary. According to the people, he is their “Führer” and the

“Anlaß, durch den die Erschütterung rollt” (2: 141, 137). The prison lieutenant stresses the profound effect that he had on everyone: their transformation “kommt hier auf die Initiative des einzelnen Mannes an” (2: 124)[emphasis mine]. In the *Erde* section of the play, Spazierer guides people over the bridge, which is a symbol of the transition to a new existence (Riedel 35). It is not surprising that Spazierer, much like Kaiser himself, was an artist.

**Conclusion – The Audience’s Transformation**

In its last scene, *Hölle Weg Erde* communicates directly to the audience. On their way to the prison, characters become disoriented when they deviate from the correct path. They find themselves in an uncultivated, stony field which is difficult to maneuver, but under which there is rich humus. The soil is then suitable for yielding new growth, but one must first rid it of its rock-strewn surface. Spazierer eventually finds the disoriented figures and tells them that that they will reap from the land what they sow. He entreats them several times to “Baut die Schöpfung” (2: 142). The play’s utopian *Gemeinschaft* may seem odd and an unusual plea for the radical transformation of society, but one must keep in mind Kaiser’s goals. According to Renate Benson, the destructive ending of *Gas II* shows Kaiser’s scepticism that the New Human Being would be able to overcome a technological and industrial world (240-1). While *Gas*’ conclusion does demonstrate the New Human Being’s opposition to technology and industry, it is not meant to exhibit the futility of the *Erneuerung* in modern society. With the play, Kaiser wanted to prophetically illustrate a future catastrophe if humanity continued along the capitalistic path that it was currently traversing (Riedel 33). In all of Kaiser’s Expressionist plays,
the New Human Beings’ tragic fates are appeals to the audience to strive for *Erneuerung* in society and for the creation of a *Gemeinschaft*. Although the New Human Beings’ fellow characters usually have little sympathy for the protagonists’ goals, spectators should feel pity for them because they tried to instill a superior life in other dramatis personae and died in the process. The goal of their deaths is then to enact a response by the audience to embrace the writer’s vision before it is too late. The rejection of the *Gemeinschaft* by other characters demonstrates a contemporary rebuff of Kaiser’s teachings by humanity, but does not portend the resignation that social and cultural rejuvenation is unrealizable.

Kaiser’s bouyant optimism and dramatic theory support this assertion. At the height of the inflation, he was convinced that human beings would overcome the economic difficulties that now plagued them (4: 569). The title of his 1922 essay “Der Kommende Mensch” indicates his confidence in the future realization of the New Human Being. He also believed that theater would facilitate this change because it could best motivate an audience to action. Plays allow for the accumulation and powerful expulsion of energy which should then envelope the audience (4: 573). In “Formung von Drama,” he stresses the importance of drama in communicating the concepts “*Menschen*” and “energy”: “Was ist Dramadichter? Bestimmt heute die kräftigste Art Mensch. Der heute vollendbarste Typus Mensch. Formung von Drama stellt den unerhörtesten Vorgang von Ballung Energie dar...Dramadichter – der verdichtendste Träger von Energie, die zur Entladung drängt“ (4: 573). For him, drama is “Durchgang,” “Aufbruch in neuen Bezirk,” “Sprungbrett direkt ins Komplette,” (4: 579-81). Drama, and especially vitality within drama, is a threat to the status quo and thus leads him to write for the theater (4:
564, 575). In a conversation with Karl Marilaun from 1921, Kaiser states that people know nothing of possibilities in modern society, but the writer could show them these possibilities best through theater: “Menschenbeglückende Weisheiten seiend aufgestapelt in Büchern. Wenige lesen sie. Ins Theater aber strömen alle“ (4: 565). Indeed, it was Kaiser’s goal to present the human being with more possibilities than he/she possessed in the modern world: “Der schöpferische Mensch – kann zusehen und zuhören und im Gleichnis des Helden den Dichter – und sich selbst am stärksten erleben...Man geht aus dem Theater – und weiß mehr von der Möglichkeit des Menschen“ (4: 574).

Georg Kaiser’s rejection of petty bourgeois values, capitalism, rationalization, materialism, alienation through technology, corruption, and his quest for regeneration were intellectual concerns of the author’s time (Kauf 311). The prolific number of plays he wrote, the sensation of his trial for thievery, and that he was one of the most staged playwrights of early twentieth-century Germany lend credence to the attractiveness of his theories among many discontented Germans during the Weimar Republic (Diebold 28; Durzak, Sternheim Georg Kaiser 108). Georg Kaiser desired the complete regeneration of society along the morals that he propagated. The radical Weimar conservative Ernst Jünger used similar theories to disseminate entirely different beliefs.

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Chapter 6

Der Grund ist, daß sie den Krieg nicht überwunden haben; er beherrscht sie weiter, und für ihr Gefühl hat er niemals aufgehört. – Heinrich Mann, “Die deutsche Entscheidung,” 102

Durch das berüchtigte Manifest der Literaten ist weder der Krieg abgeschafft, noch das, was der Krieg geschaffen hat. – Ernst Jünger, Introduction to Aufmarsch des Nationalismus IX

Eure Opfer und Taten sind ohne Beispiel. Kein Feind hat Euch überwunden. Erst als die Übermacht der Gegner an Menschen und Material immer drückender wurde, haben wir den Kampf aufgegeben...Allen Schrecken habt ihr manhaft widerstanden – Mannschaft und Führer...Nie haben Menschen Größeres geleistet und gelitten als Ihr...Aber aus dem Zusammenbruch wollen wir uns ein neues Deutschland zimmern, mit der rüstigen Kraft und dem unerschütterlichen Mut, den Ihr tausendfach bewährt habt. Wetteifernd haben Angehörige aller deutschen Stämme draußen im Kampfe gestanden, angehörige alle deutschen Stämme stehen vor uns...Nun liegt Deutschlands Einheit in Eurer Hand...Rettet die deutsche Nation, die Ihr nun Bürger werdet der einen, der untrennbaren Deutschen Republik.

– 10 December 1918, President Friedrich Ebert in a speech to troops returning from the First World War, 127

Political and Social Transformation: Ernst Jünger’s Totalitarian Ethos

Ernst Jünger, a highly decorated World War I soldier, was one of the leading radical conservative writers of the Weimar Republic. From 1920 until 1933, Jünger wrote several loosely autobiographical and for the most part well-received war works entitled In Stahlgewittern, Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis, Sturm, Wäldchen 125, and Feuer und Blut, which in each case revolve primarily around one soldier’s personal war experiences and, thus, in this regard resemble Expressionist Wandlungsdrämen. His

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238 Jünger was wounded seven times and awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, the Knight’s Cross of the Hohenzollerns, and the pour le mérite. Jünger was one of eleven company commanders to win this last honor, the highest in the imperial German military (Liebchen 18-9).
239 This work has already relayed the sales of In Stahlgewittern in its second chapter. Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis sold circa 18,000 copies (Liebchen 263). Wäldchen 125 and Feuer und Blut reached sales of 16,000 and 12,000 respectively during Weimar (Dempewolf 207-9). Sturm was largely unknown during this early period.
other writings of the Weimar period – *Das abenteuerliche Herz, Der Arbeiter*, and his several essays written for right-wing periodicals – are largely indebted to his war experience as well; however, these latter works more overtly demonstrate Jünger’s economic, social, and political theories. That is not to say that his war novels are devoid of these same theories. On the contrary, they discuss them to such a large degree that war becomes intertwined with and even dominates Germany’s economy, society, and politics. Indeed, this militarization of and war’s penetration into all forms of life are the primary goals of Jünger’s writings during Weimar. Jünger wants to foist war on peacetime life and structures so that there is in actuality never peace, and to realize this idea, he wages war against everything that opposes his ideas. He battles the mass, the bourgeoisie, democracy, capitalism, attitudes toward and in industry, and modern forms of labor, but first and foremost, he wars against and wants to destroy the Weimar Republic which he believes is the lynchpin to all the abovementioned issues. To obliterate and simultaneously replace Weimar, Jünger posits a totalitarian ethos and dictatorship which mobilizes Germans to war and helps them regain power, an important concept if Germany is to survive among other nations.

Ernst Jünger attempted to impart this militant ideology to male Germans during the Weimar Republic through his literature. He thought that it could best communicate his beliefs which would bestow human beings’ existences with meaning and order in current, divisive life, and German men “müssen glauben, daß alles sinnvoll geordnet ist, 

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240 It is astonishing and confusing the number times that Jünger revised his works, especially his Weimar writings (see Des Coudres and Mühleisen). For the sake of consistency, this chapter will try to use one edition from the Weimar time period for each work with the exceptions being *Das abenteuerliche Herz* and *Sturm*. This chapter took the former from his 1960-1965 collected works and the novella *Sturm* from a special edition from 1978 because there are so few existent copies from the time period between 1922 and 1932. In addition, this chapter will use *In Stahlgewittern*’s more political version which is found in its fifth through thirteenth editions or from 1924 until 1931 (Des Coudres and Mühleisen 28; Volmert 8).
sonst stranden [sie] bei den Scharen der innerlich Unterdrückten, der Entmutigten oder der Weltverbesserer” (“Der Wille“ 201). In contrast to the abovementioned humanitarians, Jünger believed that writers such as himself had the power to radically alter the world. In his essay Revolution und Idee, which he first published in the National Socialist newspaper Der Völkische Beobachter in 1923, Jünger makes clear that great communicators were essential for truly revolutionary changes in history to occur. These men’s literature was part of the lengthy work and sacrifice necessary for momentous ideas to become reality (34). They possessed not only an intuitive grasp of the present situation, but could also foresee future events. Jünger prefaced In Stahlgewittern by saying that he wrote his work for a time in the future when Germany would avenge herself (IX). Because of his forward-looking and perceptive talents, the writer, much as an officer at the front, provided direction for a disorientated man (Schwarz 46). His writing should become a martial mission in which he sacrifices himself to help all German men. Indeed, Jünger’s own works are a substitute for his need to sacrifice for something, a position that the war had previously occupied, and also a manifestation of his disenchantment with the selfish modern world in which there is no sacrifice. In Jünger’s ideology, the writer boasts such an elevated status that he is hallowed as a savior who is in direct relationship to God and the infinite. His power is so great that he can move against and subsequently control all contemporary happenings: “Und über allen als Sonne, unbeweglich, stand der Dichter, der Künstler, schleuderte Strahlen gegen das Geschehen und ließ es in gewollter Bahn um seine Achse schwingen. Er war ein Begnadeter...ein Auge Gottes...im Dichter fanden alle und alles Erlösung und Verständnis. Er war das große Bewußtsein der Menschheit...“ (Sturm 69).
Thus, on the one hand, Jünger argues that proper literature, as well as art generally, can help expose readers and the audience to a whole new, divine world. On the other hand, despite such praise for literature and poets, Jünger’s early writings bear the mark of a political author and conservative intellectual rather than an artist or great novelist. Jünger may aestheticize the war experience in his writings, but the artistic value and use of poetic devices in his early works is limited making his message much more direct than that of his Expressionist counterparts. He concentrates to a large extent on communicating his ideology and criticizes other literature’s indistinctness (“Wille zur Gestalt” 493). In the foreword to In Stahlgewittern’s eleventh edition, Jünger comments on his blunt literary style: “Das ist tatsächlicher Stil, einfacher Rhythmus, ohne Skrupel und Schnörkel... Diese unmittelbare und rohe Kristallisation des Erlebnisses würde schon in kurzer Zeit rätselhaft vor dem Leser stehen wie das Knochengerüst eines ausgestorbenen Tieres“ (XIII).

In spite of its directness, Jünger’s literary style of the early 1920s still bears stark resemblances with Expressionism in some instances so that the few scholars who have cursorily broached the relationship between Expressionism and Jünger concentrate predominantly on their stylistic affinities (Arnold 18; Bohrer 76; Fröschle 105-44; Kindt und Müller 193; Müller 252; Prümm 135-43). The writer and friend, Franz Schauwecker, also commented on Jünger’s “technisch, verstechnisch gebildet u. zwar an

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241 Schwarz calls Jünger a “Dichter” (48), and Herf states that he was a member of the avante-garde (71, 97). While I feel that Schwarz’ label of Jünger is misleading, I decidedly disagree with Herf’s opinion.
242 It is not the goal of this work to focus and elaborate on Jünger’s aestheticism. For more information and differing aspects of Jünger’s aesthetics, see all of Bohrer; Herf 99; Kaempfer 60-97; Kunicki 46; Prümm 165-70; Ridley 33; Volmert 46-71; Woods, “new theory” 82.
243 Jünger’s use of Expressionist style does not equate to as elevated a literature as in Expressionist works. The Expressionist technique is merely a convenient form that propagates Jünger’s ideology well and is appealing to a German audience.

Schauwecker’s remarks point eerily to descriptions of Expressionist emotionalism and parataxis. One such example of this style occurs in his war novel Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis: “O Leben du! Noch einmal, einmal noch, vielleicht das letzte! Raubbau treiben, prassen, vergeuden, das ganze Feuerwerk in tausend Sonnen und kreisenden Flammenrädern verspritzen, die gespeicherte Kraft, verbrennen vorm Gang in die eisige Wüste“ (Kampf 31). After making contact with the Expressionist writers Kurt Schwitters and Klabund in 1920 and before he became popular as a conservative writer, Jünger even admitted in Fall 1921 that he wrote “gemäßt Expressionistisches,” but “unter Überwindung des Mitleid-Menschheitsschwärms” (Volmert 122; qtd in Fröschle 119).

Parallels between Jünger and Expressionism other than style also exist. Jünger claimed that literature can infuse the reader with activity, and much as his Expressionist counterparts, he criticized the scientification of life and literature during the nineteenth century through Naturalism, Darwinism, and historical materialism (7: 155). Much like the Ich-dramen of Expressionists, his war novels usually revolve around a single protagonist who is nameless resembling Expressionist types. However, the greatest similarities between Jünger and Expressionists occurred, not surprisingly for the thesis of this work, in the use of the same signifiers. According to Jünger, the First World War

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244 In an attempt to distance himself from the Expressionist dramatist Carl Sternheim, Jünger later called him “abgeschmackt,” international, and without substance (Wäldchen 155). This essay will discuss Jünger’s ambivalent position towards Expressionism in the next few paragraphs.

245 In 1920, he published the first edition of In Stahlgewittern, his first war novel, with his own funds. At this point and time, he was unknown and still formulating his ideas. Once he became established among right-wing readers, he would not be seen with Expressionists with whom he did not agree in content.
transformed front soldiers so that they became infused with intoxication and animalism. During the war, these “New Men” united to form a Gemeinschaft at the front. Upon returning to postwar society, many of these front soldiers will engender the German nation’s rebirth and the establishment of a community around a nationalistic and military hierarchy, or in other words, around the aforementioned totalitarian ethos and dictatorship.

Despite using and propagating many of the same structures, criticisms, and in some instances literary style as Expressionists, Jünger distanced himself from late Expressionism and its humanism as much as possible. In Sturm, which conveniently has the same name as Herwarth Walden’s Expressionist periodical, Jünger wrote about the dull literary directions that the novella’s protagonist had espoused prior to 1914. This prewar literature, which has many of the characteristics of early Expressionism in this quotation, had little purpose: “Als Student hatte er die Boheme gestreift, befreundeten Malern kleine, von Baudelaire beeinflußte Kunstkritiken geschrieben und Beiträge an jene Zeitschriften geliefert, die zuweilen wie abenteuerliche Blumen aus dem Verfall der Großstädte wachsen, um nach drei Nummern wieder zu verwelken, weil niemand sie liest“ (Sturm 31). After the war, Expressionists deviated from the unpopular, bohemian lifestyle of the artist and engaged themselves more readily for the transformation of society. Jünger thought this engagement a nobler goal because he stated in 1922 that the newest literary journals of the era contained much that was moving and that reflected this transformation, but added that it was only a minute fraction of the true ideology (Kampf 82). Jünger claimed that young, pacifist artists dominated many of these periodicals, and he criticized them for trying to make sense of the war when they had never been at the
front (Kampf'92). Although Jünger admits that antiwar writers have had some influence on the public since the end of the First World War – including the Revolution of 1918/1919 which he adamantly maintained was “kein Schauspiel der Wiedergeburt” (“Revolution” 34) and linked with a “geistiges Zuhältertum und geschäftmäßiges Literatenpack” (Wäldchen 184) –, he asserts in 1926 that their manifests have “weder der Krieg abgeschafft, noch das, was der Krieg geschaffen hat” (Introduction to Aufmarsch des Nationalismus IX). According to Jünger, these writers were simply not sufficiently effective to realize their ideals: “[Wir] sehen…[den Schriftsteller] mit Mitteln von mikroskopischer Feinheit am Werke, in der Schilderung von Krankheit und Verwesungsprozessen, von Verirrungen und gespenstischen Traumlandschaften vollzieht er einen Vorgang, den man als Vernichtung durch Politur bezeichnen kann“ (Arbeiter 103). In a 1925 article from Die Standarte, he attacks literary Expressionism’s transitoriness and emptiness:

Es kann nichts Bleibendes [aus der Revolution] werden, auch wenn sich die Schwäche in rauschhafter Steigerung und mit einem gewissen expressionistischen Pathos geäußert hat. Die Kunst jener Tage, wenn man sie als Kunst bezeichnen will, die Reden, die gehalten wurden, die Politik, das Treiben in unseren großen Städten, die Dramen eines Toller – alles hat einen undefinierbaren ekstatischen Steckrübengeschmack, man merkt das nichts dahinter steckt. (“Reaktion“ 123)

At the same time, Jünger charges that Expressionists have become predictable and trendy because they are bourgeois. Their modest success is only a sign of their dependence on this dominant economic class for money and, thus, they write to the bourgeoisie’s liking. They had become too civilized according to Jünger; they show the decline of the Western world rather than herald a new world.

This ambivalent display towards Expressionism on the part of Jünger has partly the purpose of combating and even disestablishing Expressionist humanism’s association
with a certain style and structures. For instance, on the one hand, Jünger praises the “Ekstase…des großen Dichters” (Kampf 53) and, on the other, censures the emptiness of Expressionist ecstasy in the following quotation. Although he admits that primitivist art movements possess a notion of the primitivism that is absolutely necessary for human beings, it remains to be seen if it is the correct form of primitivism:

Das ist der horror vacui, das Entsetzen vor der Zivilisation...Das ist die Erkenntnis, die Leere in sich zu tragen...Man fröstelt beim Lesen dieser künstlichen Gehirnekstasen, deren Ja und Nein gleich wenig überzeugend klingt. Zuweilen groteske Gedankenunzucht. Unfruchtbarkeit, zynische Tertiärscheinungen und das Irrenhaus zum Schluß. Manche winden sich im Krampf der Worte und Farben oder Schleudern ihr Inneres in Form vom bunten Klexen, von Konservenbüchsen und Straßenbahnbillets auf die Leinwand hinaus. Man muß gestehen, sie wissen sich gut zu treffen. Andere merken, was ihnen fehlt, und greifen zum Infantilen oder zur Kunst der Wilden zurück. (Kampf 115)

The emptiness of Expressionist language and ecstasy surfaces in his novel Sturm, in which the character Lieutenant Döhring concentrates too much on the superficial form rather than on content in his conversations according to the narrator (15, 32). It is not surprising that he describes the lieutenant’s language as “bunt und schwerflüssig wie ein Erzähler in einem arabischen Kaffeehaus oder [er] hackte sie expressionistisch hervor“ (15). On the other hand, as this chapter has already stated and as the next quotation shows further, Jünger sometimes uses and even extols a telegraphic economy of language that is extraordinarily similar to Expressionist style: “...so die Trennung der Worte und Satz fetzen durch Gedankenstriche...so das endlose Aneinanderreihen synonymer Worte für Handlungen und Gegenstände, die dadurch immer sinnfälliger und gieriger er tastet werden sollen – die Sprache bohrt sich mit glühenden Stacheln ins Fleisch” (7: 158). However, its formal likeness with Expressionist paratactic writing only heightens its contrast to Expressionist language with regards to content because the chaos and tension
of battle enter into Jünger’s language. In battle, warriors’ speech most resembled machine gun fire and was effective because it communicated strength, manliness, and simplicity: “Ihre Sprache war kurz, von Schlagworten beherrscht, zerhackt und zerrissen wie die Feuerstöße ihrer Maschinengewehre, die Worte geprägt und voll Erdkraft“ (*Kampf* 57). This language of war should convey dominance and power; much as a gun or saber in war, it becomes a weapon to change current reality: “Das Klappern der Webstühle von Manchester, das Rasseln der Maschinengewehre von Langemarck, – dies sind Zeichen, Worte und Sätze einer Prosa, die von uns gedeutet und beherrscht werden will...Es kommt darauf an, daß man der Sprache mächtig ist“ (*Arbeiter* 131). This potent language, infested with militarism and violence, should break through the surface and plunge into a man’s “deeper” being forcing him into a form of action and revolution which opposes internationality, compromise, and debate, or in other words, this language battles against everything for which Weimar democracy stands (*Kampf* 104).

Some modern German writers espouse democracy and internationalism, and thus, have lost connection with reality and the nation according to Jünger. They are located on the periphery of life while nationalist authors, on the other hand, comprehend the time period’s tempo and, therefore, are in the center (*Sturm* 40). These true writers are above party politics, petty bourgeois ethics, and a confusing literary aestheticism (“Soldaten und Literaten” 313) and instead, communicate unity, emotion, and concreteness (*Wäldchen* 156); however, their defining characteristic is their war experience (Schwarz 46).

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246 Jünger’s statement is reminiscent of an excerpt from the Expressionist Wilhelm Klemm’s poem “Stellung”:

Die Maschinengewehre repetieren ihre nächtliche Rollen.  
Manche gurgeln hastig ihren Vers herunter.  
Perlen rein, oder verhallen dunkel  
Über riesige Bahnen. Knattern ein rasches Terzett.
convenient for his own background, Jünger accentuates that the writer’s intellectual beliefs must be intertwined with the warrior’s mental constitution for him to possess and propagate the correct beliefs. In *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, a conversation between front soldiers suggests a warrior-writer such as D’Annunzio as a paradigm for a prophet (*Kampf* 91-2). This combination of warrior-writer allows the author to focus his works on the conveyance of war as an unharnessed power to his audience. Indeed, Jünger states that his literature should ultimately motivate others to supplant “die Feder durch das Schwert, die Tinte durch das Blut, das Wort durch die Tat, die Empfinsamkeit durch das Opfer” (*Stahlgewittern* XIV). The front experience can become a bulwark against the mendacity and weak arguments of modern literature (*Wäldchen* 6), but only when this front writer creates temporal and spatial distance between himself and the war so that he can reflect on and assess his war experiences (“Krieg als inneres Erlebnis” 102). In *Der Arbeiter*, Jünger comments on the advantages of viewing at a distance: “Auf eine so große Entfernung schmilzt die Verschiedenheit der Ziele und Zwecke ineinander ein...Was vielleicht gesehen wird, ist das Bild einer besonderen Struktur, von der aus mannigfaltigen Anzeichen zu erraten ist, daß sie sich aus den Säften eines großen Lebens ernährt... Einem Blicke...kann es nicht entgehen, daß hier eine Einheit ihr räumliches Abbild geschaffen hat“ (62). The distance allegedly allows the author to see through the morass of opinions, happenings, differences, and interests to produce the correct, unifying form of literature opposing divisiveness. During the war, Sturm, the protagonist

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247 Gabriele D’Annunzio was an Italian World War I hero, writer, nationalist, and fascist although not directly linked to Mussolini. He led a revolt seizing power in the present-day Croatian port city of Rijeka (Italian “Fuime”) protesting the Paris Peace Accords of 1919 which were debating the national fate of the city whose population was largely Italian. He built a dictatorial city-state, “The Italian Regency of Carnas,” with himself as Duce. He subsequently declared war on Italy leading to the city’s bombardment and surrender to Italian forces in 1920.
poet of the novella of the same name, requires distance for his writing because although he ascertains an inkling of literature’s one true form, he knows that it is too early to write the most complete novel.²⁴⁸ However, he tries to come as close to it as possible, and interestingly this writing reflects typical Expressionist characteristics such as types, the unrest of the historical era, and an attempt to locate humanity’s ultimate form (Sturm 31). Jünger’s own writings are a manifestation of this distance because he composed them after the First World War and, thus, has created spatial and temporal expanse between himself and this event. His rebirth may have occurred in war, and he may have had a hint of his Wandlung during war (Feuer und Blut 29), but through this same distance, he is able to confront the fear, pain, and horror in war and eventually realizes that those strong emotions during war were utopian. He now tries to communicate them to all German men through his literature so that readers will not forget war events which now can be recalled at will and memorialized in the present (Arbeiter 58). In reality, his appeal for distance operating in tandem with his literature either in some cases interprets authentic portrayals of war events to his own ideological advantage as many radical Weimar conservatives or in others enables memory distortion of war events. In either case, Jünger can misrepresent the war experience to help to create the dictatorship because the war becomes inextricably linked with his content.

According to Jünger, a major impediment to the dictatorship and totalitarian ethos was the current, bourgeois order of early twentieth-century Germany. Its alleged structure constrains and dominates men by prohibiting vitality’s development within them. Jünger often calls bourgeois society “museal” because it attempts to conserve the

²⁴⁸ According to Jünger, the one true form of literature would be any writing communicating the teachings that he espouses.
status quo: “Es war der vielen jungen Herzen wohlbekannte Zustand der Heimatlosigkeit inmitten einer engen, durch Erziehung und bürgerliche Gewohnheiten mit mancherlei Stoffblenden künstlich verspannten Welt” (7: 59). Much as Kaiser, Jünger criticizes the simple burgher’s uneventful life by stating that the deduction of family, food, and sleep from his existence leaves him with almost nothing else (Sturm 30). His world is based on contracts and a sobering legality which is a submission to bourgeois legal and social form because of his fear of violence, insecurity, chaos, and pain (Sturm 37-8).

However, Jünger claims that this bourgeois form in reality possesses no form because it constitutes a hodgepodge of money, classes, ideologies, and parties that attempt to function as a nation. The bourgeoisie are the masses that are “ungeordnet und wirr und gar nicht oft nur durch das Interesse vereint” (“Zum Geleit“ 370). The masses or mass’ chief characteristic was its Zufälligkeit which made it devoid of purpose and, thus, senseless and chaotic. A zufälliges life is without responsiblity, aggressiveness, and true values (“andere Seite“ 463). According to Jünger, death is not so bad; it is the Zufällige in which one cannot control one’s own destiny that causes one fear. Indeed, man has no control over modern life: “Nicht der Tod schreckte ihn [Sturm] – der war bestimmt – sondern dieses Zufällige, diese taumelnde Bewegung durch Zeit und Raum“ (Sturm 49)[emphasis mine]. He is without power and intoxication because he has become common, soft, and egalitarian; within the mass, he only follows the dominant trends in modern society without questioning their motives and is at ease in his powerless situation:

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249 It makes one feel unheimlich in the Freudian sense with the “home” consisting of the nation and war. Jünger’s Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis has much more information on his view of Heimat (87).
Den starken Räuschen entwöhnt, sind Macht und Männer uns zum Greuel geworden. Masse und Gleichheit heißen unsere neuen Götter. Kann die Masse nicht werden wie die Wenigen, so sollen die Wenigen doch werden wie die Masse. Politik, Drama, Künstler, Café, Lackschuh, Plakate, Zeitung, Moral, Europa von morgen, Welt von übermorgen: donnernde Masse. Tausendköpfige Bestie liegt sie am Weg, zertritt, was sich nicht verschlucken läßt, neidisch, parvenühaf, gemein. *Kampf* 54

Democracy was the primary reason for the massification of Germans, mainly because it bred equality. Jünger accuses democratic politics of being a spectacle for the masses, a mere “Schaufensterdekoration“ (“Zum Jahreswechsel” 412), and writing in 1932, Jünger states with reference to the World Economic Crisis that “[ü]berall, wo die Welt leidet, hat sie eine Verfassung erreicht…” (*Arbeiter* 271). Democracy theoretically ensures everyone’s desires, freedom of choice, and the rule of all, but these guarantees are in reality impossible to fulfill and lead to a chaos of conflicts between all citizens. This freedom provides insecurity, especially for Germans who feel lost without the safety of the old, hierarchical class structures (*Arbeiter* 94, 111). Political parties, a reflection of rule of all and diverse opinions, exist only because of the social and financial divisions in society; thus, according to Jünger, political parties cannot unite Germans in this chaotic time period. Instead of working for the nation, they are actually only interested in themselves and “Geschäftigkeit“ which places them at the whim of big business (Introduction to *Der Kampf um das Reich* 8). Democracy, which had its heyday in mid-nineteenth-century Germany, promises security and control to Germans, an essential idea for Jünger, but fails to deliver in this endeavor.

Jünger dovetails democracy and economic liberalism with the manifoldness of numbers. According to Jünger, numbers “hetzen [Kaufmänner] zwischen zwei Kontoren hin und her, auf ihren Gesichtszügen zuckte die Kalkulation“ (*Sturm* 37). Many Germans associated numbers with duplication and monetary inflation. They are beyond
comprehension for the normal German because of their complexity and impersonality. In the democratic realm, the participation of great numbers of people in government by means of the electoral process showed the dominance of numerics:

Der späte Liberalismus, der Parlamentarismus, die Demokratie als Herrschaft der Zahl, ein geistiges Franzosentum, und ein Europäertum, dessen Metaphysik die des Speisewagens ist, ein Amerikanismus mit der Gleichsetzung von Fortschritt und Komfort, eine östliche Orientierung unter dem Gesichtswinkel der inneren Politik, – dieses ganze Gewirr von überalterten und überfremdeten Dingen gleicht einem dichten Telefonnetz, zu dem der Deutsche keinen Anschluß hat. (Foreword to Der Kampf um das Reich 9)

The above quotation posits democracy as a foreign element. It is a product of French Enlightenment rationality and morality which preaches tolerance among human beings. Thus, democracy must view war as a last resort of diplomacy or even as senseless because of its humanistic origins, and according to Jünger, such an opinion was antithetical to Germandom. Jünger believed that the type of government which an ethnic people practices must match their social and existential make-up. A republican government may be fine for the Americans and the French, but German men were more animalistic and warlike in character than other races. Their inherent animalism made them suited for other forms of government: “Nicht auf unsere Figur war das Gewand zugeschnitten,…unter dessen Fetzen bereits eine wildere und unschuldigere Natur erscheint als die, deren empfindsame Töne schon früh den Vorhang erzittern ließen, hinter dem die Zeit das große Schauspiel der Demokratie verbarg ” (Arbeiter 11).

Like several other Germans, Jünger refused to separate Weimar democracy from Weimar ethos and culture. According to Jünger, the bourgeoisie, a relatively small section of the populace, had produced a bourgeoisie state with the creation of the Weimar Republic. This construction had led to a much larger portion of the German populace
espousing deleterious values. Thus, the un-German comportment of many Weimar citizens was to a large extent a result of their political system. Jünger asserted that evidence for this development was both society and democracy allowing pacifism to flourish and the promotion of materialism. Indeed, to these two issues, Jünger devoted special hostility. For instance, Weimar’s democratic government made peace and thus sanctioned pacifism, but pacifists, according to Jünger, attack war because they ultimately fear the possibility of pain:

Die Gegner des Krieges werden nicht müde, das Abschreckende und Grausige hervorzuheben, zu betonen, daß Menschen lebendig verbrennen, in Stücke gerissen und verstümmelt werden, daß Gehirne spritzen und Eingeweide aus den Leibern hängen. Es ist damit zu rechnen, daß eine solche Beweisführung, die sich auf die Furcht vor dem Schmerz (natürlich auch vor dem, den man zufügt) und die Sicherheit des Körpers gründet, immer zahlreiche Anhänger finden wird. (Wäldchen 140)

Pacifists are selfish, bloodless, and weak cowards who embraced all humanity and had riddled the working class and leftist intellectual groups.

In the case of materialism, Jünger called it a “crime“ to have more than other Germans (Kampf 54). Because Germans were too concerned with making money and acquiring possessions, war stimulants such as nationalism and militarism were too far removed from the minds of too many Weimar citizens. Democracy was at fault for Germans’ failure to espouse these alleged high-minded ideals and their increasing investment in mammon; democracy had to ensure economic growth because they no longer had any ideas to inspire the populace. Thus, Jünger could claim that they continually promoted avarice through economic advancement creating a balkanizing environment in which each German or group represented their own interests. In addition, Weimar democracy was a product of defeat and its egalitarianism was devoid of
opportunities for heroism and adventure. According to Jünger, Germany’s youth were buried and choking in this environment: “Aber ich weiß, daß doch irgendwo, überall unter euch verstreut, unter der krustigen, schmutzigen Decke, die gesprengt werden muß, wenn es Luft geben soll, eine stolzere, kühnere und noblere Jugend steckt...Dies sind die unbekannten Soldaten von heute, die einsam fallen, von den Giftgasen der Gemeinheit, der Routine, der Korruption zu Boden gestreckt“ (“‘Nationalismus’ und Nationalismus“ 482).

Several other factors also contributed to Jünger’s loathing of Weimar. Much as Kaiser, Jünger rejects the specialization and fragmentation occurring during the republic that occurred from life’s increasing complexity. In this environment, men are forced to limit themselves and concentrate solely on a few aspects of their lives because of modern life’s expanse and, hence, do not reach their full potential. Even during Wilhelminian Germany but especially during Weimar, the state perpetuated the specialization and fragmentation of existences through their promotion of increased industrial production and technological advance without any type of structure or control: “Es läßt sich genau verfolgen, wie diese Bedeutung allmählich übergegangen ist auf den Organismus des Staates, der die Funktionen des Einzelnen immer rücksichtsloser auf die einer spezialisierten Zelle beschränkt“ (Sturm 10)[emphasis mine]. This statement further supports Jünger’s arguments of a close relationship between the Weimar state and society. However, it was not solely the industrial realm which promoted Germans’ specialization and fragmentation, but rather they became generally applicable to life in historical modernity. In the following quotation, Jünger’s comments on Germans’ prewar

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250 In several instances, Jünger equates the front generation with youth. One should also mention that Kaiser uses the same imagery of the suffocating, buried individual from modern life in Von morgens bis mitternachts. See the previous chapter.
business-oriented, hedonistic, and fragmented lives which, considering Jünger wrote
during Weimar to influence the present and future, unsurprisingly mirror their lives in the
postwar period: “Im Schoße verspommener Kultur lebten wir zusammen, enger als
Menschen zuvor, in Geschäften und Lüste zersplittert...in Cafés vom Glanze der Spiegel
umstellt, Straßen Bänder farbigen Lichtes, Bars voll schillernder Liköre, Konferenztische
und letzter Schrei...eine große überdröhnte Unzufriedenheit am Grund“ (Kampf
2)[emphasis mine].

A capitalistic form of industry greatly contributed to a German’s specialization
and fragmentation according to Jünger. Capitalism advances the idea of men’s
irrelevance outside the economic realm. Jünger believed that in Weimar, capitalism and
the economy dominated modern life as evidenced through the pervasiveness of the
hyperinflation, which trumped the war’s import and the community that it could
engender. The effects of the war should have been much more enduring according to
Jünger. In addition, the economy has engendered indifference and exploitation among
Germans: “Die Kälte der Beziehungen zwischen den Einzelnen, den Passanten, ist
außerordentlich. Es gibt hier den Erwerb, das Vergnügen, den Verkehr, den Kampf um
die wirtschaftliche und politische Macht“ (Arbeiter 61). According to Jünger, the
capitalist does not care about the nation, but rather would sell weapons to both parties in
a war if he could (Arbeiter 136). Because they also focused solely on profits, German
industrialists exploit German laborers, a reality that Jünger can in no way accept. He also
bemoans that within Germany’s factories, work is no longer creative for the laborer, but
rather has become mechanistic: “Diese Auffassung der Arbeit als einer sittlichen Tat und

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251 Conventional thought argues that the war and its effects did dominate the post-war period although it
may not have been exactly the effects which Jünger desired.
nicht als einer mechanischen Leistung, die mit dem Taylor-System zu messen und deren Wert in Geld seinen adäquaten Ausdruck finden kann, vermittelt dem Arbeiter auch einzig und allein das, was für ihn wichtiger als jede Lohnerhöhung ist, nämlich das Gefühl der Würde des schaffenden Menschen, das in der marxistisch-kapitalistischen Welt verlorengegangen ist” (“Kampfstellung“ 333). Jünger believes that industrial machines contributed greatly to the alienation and impersonality of modern labor. Previous to war, industrial technology controlled and objectified workers and, much as a Moloch, consumed many victims each year (Arbeiter 95). However, for many Germans outside the realm of menial factory labor, technology could have another pernicious effect. The use of machines such as automobiles or household appliances could bring comfort and luxury to Germans. Jünger stresses the importance of Germans liberating technology from its associations with progress, science, and the bourgeois world.

Thus, despite their problems, Jünger’s beliefs do not abandon industry and factory labor, but rather he uses them to support a war economy which, he believes, will supplant Weimar capitalism. The goals of industry should change so that war and the nation become its purpose instead of financial gain: “Wirtschaft ist [dem Nationalismus] keine mechanische, sondern eine organische Leistung innerhalb der Nation und für die Nation” (“Kampfstellung“ 332). Likewise, in Jünger’s beliefs, the goal of work becomes central and not the work in itself. To resist mechanistic attitudes, factory and other laborers must become infused with the importance of their actions as contributions to the nation and war. They should view their work as potential energy that is stored in the materials they produce. When these goods are shipped to the front, their energy imparts war combatants with energy: “Ja, dort hinten wird es[das Material] fabriziert...und dann rollt es auf den
großen Verkehrswegen an die Front als eine Summe von Leistung, als eine gespeicherte potentielle Energie, die sich als kinetische vernichtend gegen den Menschen entlädt“ (*Feuer und Blut* 25). Laborers on the home front must believe that they are unified through the same goal, namely war: “…jeder Handgriff an einer Maschine ist wie ein abgefeuerter Schuß, jeder vollbrachte Werktag wie der Marschtag eines einzelnen im Heeresverband” (“Kampfstellung” 333).

As the above-mentioned quotation demonstrates, Jünger embraced machines much as industry and work because of their essentialness in waging modern warfare (Midgley 339). Technology is an instrument of power only when it is used for war (*Arbeiter* 158); indeed, the accomplishment of war goals should be technology’s sole purpose. It is used as a means to challenge other nations militarily, subjugate them, and gain power over them. Thus, in *Das abenteuerliche Herz*, Jünger entreats Germans to bring material from all corners of the world to fuel the fire of war (7: 112). However, Jünger clearly believes that machines have power only when they are subservient to human beings who are themselves infused with power: “Und so ist auch die Maschine gesteigerte Macht – doch nur so lange, wie wir selber mächtig sind” (*Wäldchen* 127). Technology should complement the elemental focus of the warrior rather than infringe on men’s vitality as was occurring in current industry. Hence, Jünger constructs the concept “machines” so that they become instruments of intoxication and *Tat*. The title of one of Jünger’s war novels, “*Feuer und Blut,*** hints at the coupling of the technological and intoxication in Jünger’s beliefs (Prümm 302). Through their dynamism and their necessity in modern warfare, machines can contribute to the rejuvenation of human

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252 Jünger states that the mind becomes saturated with blood in battle quelling rational thinking (*Sturm* 43-4; *Wäldchen* 210).
beings. Because of their essential role in making war, Jünger states that machines are beautiful:

Erst unsere Generation beginnt sich mit der Maschine zu versöhnen, und in ihr nicht nur das Nützliche, sondern auch das Schöne zu sehen. Das ist ein bedeutsamer Schritt, vielleicht der erste aus jener grauen, fürchterlichen Welt des Utilitarismus heraus und aus jener Landschaft von Manchester, deren Kohlendunst alle Werte verschleiört, und die den Menschen mit teuflischer Folgerichtigkeit bis in die Hölle der Materialschlacht getrieben hat. Es muß einen Ausweg geben, schon deutet er sich dem fühlenden Herzen an, wo der Verstand noch alle Schranken geschlossen sieht, und vielleicht ist dieser Krieg unsere große Möglichkeit. Und eine Möglichkeit ist mit Millionen von Toten noch billig bezahlt. (Feuer und Blut 66)

In war, he continues, machines become beautiful because they are part of the violence (Feuer und Blut 66). Fighter planes’ movements from dodging anti-aircraft fire are elegant and graceful according to Jünger (Wäldchen 62). They are typical of the movement in war machines because they are beautiful and yet dangerous and intoxicating. Their movement could instill movement – or in other words action and dynamism – in warring men and yet, in Der Arbeiter, Jünger discusses this movement’s serenity: “Je mehr wir uns der Bewegung widmen, desto inniger müssen wir davon überzeugt sein, daß ein ruhendes Sein sich unter ihr verbirgt...“ (Arbeiter 34). This tranquility of movement is not a form of peace because peace brings passivity, but movement, on the other hand, is infinity because change is constantly occurring. In addition, Jünger advocates that men see the wholeness of the machine to free themselves from the view of machines as threatening, convoluted contraptions of multifarious parts (Feuer und Blut 67). According to Jünger, it is important that one be able to see a whole from several particulars much as in a machine or when one creates distance because this manner of thinking can help combat feelings of overwhelming complexity and fragmentation.
Although soldiers can die horrifyingly and en masse in total war because of modern technologies, Jünger claims that they can never be conquered in an attempt to alleviate the horrors of battle and bestow the deaths of almost two million Germans with meaning. Indeed, he idealizes death and injury: being hit with a bullet or piece of shrapnel is, according to Jünger, like leaving a storm and entering a peaceful harbor (Wäldchen 138). Warriors can be “zermalmt, nicht aber besiegt...In solchen Augenblicken triumphiert der menschliche Geist über die gewaltigsten Äußerungen der Materie“ (Stahlgewittern 91). In his work Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis, Jünger states that death for a conviction is “das höchste Vollbringen. Er ist Bekenntnis, Tat, Erfüllung, Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung und Ziel; er ist auf dieser unvollkommenen Welt ein Vollkommenes und Vollendung schlechthin“ (Kampf 112). The front soldier lives life to the fullest because he knows that he can die at any moment. In comparison to the finite actions of the worldly burgher, the dead warrior and his accomplishments live in perpetuity even though he may have orginally fought for finite objectives such as the monarchy. Echoing topically the poems of Gottfried Benn, Jünger writes that the decayed creatures of the jungle are full of “living strength“ because their death and decomposition give potency to their posterity (Kampf 5). At the trenches, dead soldiers become one with the earth. Of course, a soldier’s death is an acceptable, but not a welcomed event; survivors are happy to continue their existence and to experience a new type of life. In short, soldiers should love life and accept death when it comes.

In war and very often within the modern world, there are several stimuli that may act alone or in concert to engender a man’s Wiedergeburt according to Jünger. Much as Expressionists and other radical conservatives, Jünger maintains that these stimulants
allow men to sever themselves from soporific modern-day consciousness and become fully aware. They break him down, cause changes within him, and build him back up.

Blood is one such type of trigger. In his autobiographical war novel *Sturm*, Jünger demonstrates blood throwing the warrior from this world and urging him to battle.

Through blood, he begins to see the world in a different manner:


As the above quotation implies, this transformation also occurs in chaotic environments. Only then are people more conducive to a new beginning because chaos has destroyed their safety net with countless agitations: “Das Chaos ist dem Werden günstiger als die Form” (“‘Nationalismus’ und Nationalismus” 482). Jünger thinks that war is the preeminent means to engender the intense chaos needed for a man’s *Wiedergeburt*. The hectic events of war such as nightly battles, thundering bombardments, screams, shots, and close range combat create existential confusion in the soldier. This condition also exists within the disarray of the Weimar Republic although it is not as efficacious in producing the transformation as war. Jünger relished the instability of Weimar and offered it as evidence of democracy’s inherent disorder. Too many democratic freedoms led to a loss of structure necessary in men’s lives and of control over their environs. In the *Arbeiter*, he writes that the individual and the mass

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253 For other explanations about this seeing, read Jünger’s essay “Die andere Seite.”

254 The postwar crises, which engender chaos as well as other existential modes and emotions, are essential to the worker’s transformation. This chapter will discuss the *Arbeiter* in greater detail later.
combine to form an anarchy which was the “nuchternen Geschäftsordnung der Demokratie“ (21).

In these chaotic environments, there is often suffering, loneliness, and pain which also help to provoke change in men. In Der Arbeiter, Jünger writes that the time period “besitzt eine Tiefe des Leidens” (170), and in Das abenteuerliche Herz, Jünger maintains that “[a]llerdings muß heute wohl immer wieder betont werden, daß das Leiden ein seelischer Zustand von hoher Notwendigkeit ist...“ (7: 171). Jünger refers to the war scenery, the trenches, and death as lonely so that he constantly seeks human beings’ company in this environment. Creeping towards the enemy trenches, Jünger states that he feels pain all over his body because he is exposed to possible injury and even death (Wäldchen 104). In another incidence, the thundering of artillery bombardments cause head- and earaches so that logical thinking is impossible (Stahlgewittern 87). One wounded, rasping soldier who is unable to speak and can only stare with frightened eyes is especially painful for Jünger to observe. In such situations, the sufferings of another affect a man (Stahlgewittern 48), but these pains are necessary according to Jünger who believed that the modern world would provide and was providing pain and suffering which would lead to the realization of his beliefs.

Much as these emotions and states of being, danger contributes to man’s rebirth. The dangers of battle are often unknown and numerous so that the soldier constantly feels confused and vulnerable (Wäldchen 206). However, feelings of danger are by no means negative: Jünger claims that dangerousness is beautiful and the transformed soldier

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255 Jünger’s essay “Über den Schmerz” contains interesting information on the importance of pain and modern society’s attempts to quell it such as through anesthesia in medical practice or safety in the workplace. This work will not deal with this essay because Jünger published it in 1934 or beyond our historical scope.
eventually craves these dangers. He enjoys the heightened thrill of battle’s hazards in which he continuously stands on the edge between life and death.\footnote{Mirroring the billionaire’s statement from \textit{Die Koralle} but with decidedly different message, Jünger writes that “Besser ist es, unterzugehen wie zersprühender Meteore, als zitternd verlöschen” (\textit{Kampf} 60).} According to Jünger, insecurity, tensions, and inner and outer pressures of the time period can also cause peacetime Germans to embrace extreme danger: “Bei allen Spannungen dieser Zeit liegen die Wetterwinkel, die die ersten Blitze erzeugen...Nunmehr aber flammen die gesicherten Bezirke der Ordnung selbst wie Schießpulver auf, das lange trocken gelegen hat, und das Unbekannte, das Außerordentliche, das Gefährliche wird nicht nur das Gewöhnliche, – es wird auch das Bleibende“ (\textit{Arbeiter} 54-5). In the tumultuous later years of the republic, Jünger believed that feelings of danger had come to dominate the present despite leaders’ desires to suppress it. Jünger maintains that this same danger will ultimately provide order and safety in a chaotic world because men will be able to accept it after the transformation:

\begin{quote}
Dennoch ist die Gefahr immer vorhanden; sie sucht ewig, wie ein Element, die Dämme zu durchbrechen, mit denen die Ordnung sich umringt...Denn die Gefahr will nicht nur Anteil an jener Ordnung haben, sondern sie ist auch die Mutter jener höchsten Sicherheit, deren der Bürger niemals teilhaftig werden kann...Der Akt, in dem dies geschieht, ist eben der, daß das Gefährliche sich im Scheine der Vernunft als das Sinnlose offenbart und damit seines Anspruches auf Wirklichkeit verlustig geht. (Arbeiter 48-9)
\end{quote}

The pusillanimous and weak bourgeoisie seek to avoid danger and insecurity because they fear it and instead desire safety in progress and democracy. Their attitudes hinder their transformation.

When confronted with stark danger, man originally shows acute fear and even horror which, much as many of the existential emotions and states described in this chapter, can shock him from his original existence. At the war front, Jünger and his
fellow soldiers coined the phrase “‘In Ängsten findet manches statt, / Was sonst nicht stattgefunden hat’ (Stahlgewittern 245). Very often in this environment, a man’s fear reaches a point beyond his control and contributes mightily to his transformation (Linder 104). For instance, when the soldier thinks he is about to die, Jünger maintains that he experiences an “inneres Geschehen” (Wäldchen 137). Much as is the case with danger, Jünger accuses bourgeois life and democracy of suppressing even modest modicums of fear; however, Jünger claims that intense fear can be a much greater release from their woes than democratic freedom. In Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis, Jünger devotes a whole chapter to das Grauen, which mainly occurs through the individual viewing or intuitively sensing some type of death, destruction, or the decay of bodies (Kampf 11-18).257 Thus, on the one hand, war presents the perfect atmosphere to experience das Grauen. For example, Jünger states that the lonely, uncanny, and annihilated frontline landscape of the trenches with its decomposing corpses causes him to feel horror. On the other hand, Jünger associates physical decay with cultural decline in the modern world so that Germans should have an inkling of horror in the modern world even if they had not been exposed to it in war which makes cultural decline overt.258 A passage highlights this cultural decline by comparing women’s tawdry finery, associated with civilization’s senselessness, with the war experience: “Trotzdem hat mich dieses Erlebnis [eine fressende Ratte in einer Gruppe von zerrissenen Leichen] nicht so gepackt wie der

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257 Horror occurs from the distinct sense of seeing or from foreboding death, decay, and destruction because Jünger enjoys smelling decaying bodies describing their odor as “sweet” (Kampf 14; Stahlgewittern 89). In actuality, Jünger sees himself – his Ebenbild – in the dead body causing him intense anxiety. Thus, das Grauen is a type of realization or thoughtful recognition of one’s own possibility for a gruesome death in war (Kampf 11).

258 Much like his contemporaries, Jünger overstates Germany’s cultural demise, which is in actuality a myth. German culture was in no way declining, but rather simply was. Any culture is not a stagnant entity. Regardless of the lack of veracity of Jünger’s and countless other contemporaries’ proclamations about the death of German culture, he has certainly convinced himself of it and, thus, mourns its pseudo-demise.
geisterhafte Kontrast zwischen der verödeten Straße und dem glänzenden Flitter aus lackiertem Stroh, Seide und bunte Federn, der so an Frauenhände und an die tausend Überflüssigkeiten erinnerte, die unser Leben erst farbig machen” (Kampf 17). Because of his newfound abilities of judgment through his exposure to war, he is able to more easily disclose civilization’s triviality, in this case symbolized in the trumpery, and to reduce gruesome war scenes to a highly desired norm.259 War is able to challenge and even destroy a culture that is ostensibly in decline anyway. 260

Frightening sensations terrorize a normal human being, and the soldier is no different. His attempts to survive battle and the war environment in general stress him to an enormous degree. At the height of fighting, the warrior can become exhausted; in anticipation of meeting, battling, and killing the enemy or destroying some object, his senses can only endure such a heightened level for a finite amount of time so that his consciousness fails: “Schon beginnen sich die Sinne zu verwirren unter der Überlast der Reize, die ihnen zugemutet wird. Schon ist niemand mehr imstande zu kontrollieren, was er fühlt, denkt oder tut” (Feuer und Blut 105). Indeed, the soldier is subjected to such terrible battles and shocks that at some point, he can no longer think or hear and is dominated by outer happenings: “die Gedanken, die von einer erstaunlichen Fremdheit

259 In an inverted application of Freud’s theories (Totem und Tabu 107-12), Jünger’s horror and fear surrounding death is his inability to come to terms with it in war and in cultural spheres. His conscious satisfaction in killing the enemy, one of the necessary actions in war, suppresses his unconscious inability to overcome his guilt associated with killing a human being: “man erfaßt den Menschen, dem man als Freund oder Feind gegenübersteht, wie ein anderes Ich. Deshalb empfindet auch derjenige Angst, der auf den Menschen schießt” (Wäldchen 108). In other situations, he wants to kill others but seems unable to control his emotions and begins to cry, which is a sign of his inner discontent: “Der übermächtige Wunsch zu töten, beflügelte meine Schritte. Die Wut entpreßte mir bittere Tränen” (Stahlgewittern 227) and “Ich fühle,wie sich meine rechte Hand wie ein Schraubstock um den Pistolenkolben spannt…Ich fühle…wie die helle Tränen unaufhaltsam über das Gesicht hinunterfließen” (Feuer und Blut 114). Likewise, his conscious satisfaction at warring as an antithesis for a German culture teeming with materialism and frivolities represses his unconscious guilt of making war. Both suppressions enable him eventually to register an ambivalent attitude towards death on the conscious level that is typical for his transformation.
260 Bohrer devotes much more time and effort expounding on and categorizing terrifying sensations in Jünger’s works (75-125).
sind, scheinen von außen zu kommen…” (Wäldchen 250). His nerves are no longer able to endure the “stimulation” (Feuer und Blut 85).\footnote{There is a play on the word “stimulation.” Jünger often states that his nerves are “erregt” or experience “Überreizung” from constant stresses. On the one hand, he is under intense pressure, but on the other hand, he enjoys the stimulation.} His mind no longer registers pain, fear, or horror; even death has no meaning when his nerves are this irritated: “Der Schlachtendonner war so fürchterlich geworden, daß keiner mehr bei klarem Verstande war. Die Nerven konnten keine Angst mehr empfinden. Jeder war rasend und unberechenbar, in übermenschliche Landschaften verschlagen, der Tod hatte seine Bedeutung verloren“ (Stahlgewittern 227). Hence, Jünger is able to claim that war is a means of coping with fear through its transcendence.\footnote{As mentioned in chapter four, only in these intensely terrifying situations does the soldier completely lose his fear. In other situations, he has learned to cope psychologically with it so that it no longer dominates him and he enjoys it. To constantly reach situations in which he experiences the much-desired intoxication and animalism, he must be persistently exposed to dangerous situations which cause him to feel fear. See Wäldchen 125 for another quotation about the disappearance of fear in intense battle (243).} Jünger has been able to turn fear, a negative quality, into a strength by maintaining that it contributes to a soldier’s transformation.

However, living in such a restless and heightened state for long periods of time is impossible so that there is a demand for the release of pressures. When the warrior meets his opponent in battle, an infrequent occurrence in the artillery bombardments and long-range shooting of modern warfare, there is a momentary deliverance from unbearable pressure, and killing is an even greater ecstasy and salvational release (Feuer und Blut 113, 140; Kampf 9, 43; Stahlgewittern 229).\footnote{Theweleit claims that the soldier is “absent” when he kills (203), but this opinion makes the soldier into too much of a victim if he is “absent” from his actions.} However, the greatest expulsion of tensions comes after battle when the warrior feels the tremendous challenge he has overcome. At this time, an appreciative expression of his continued existence away from the front functions as an imperative discharge of tension: “Da fühle ich, daß Dasein
Rausch ist und Leben, wildes, tolles, heißes Leben ein brünstiges Gebet. Ich muß mich äußern, äußern um jeden Preis, damit ich erschauernd erkenne: ich lebe, noch lebe ich” (Kampf 67). The soldier must recover mentally and physically away from the front for a short time, but according to Jünger, extended periods of rest and not warring per se are the most difficult for the warrior because he is eager to reenter battle and undergo the same cycle again. In many ways, “expression” from the release of tensions purifies the individual and can be applied to the tensions of Weimar society. In a defense of his belligerent ideology, Jünger claims that without war, modern life could fray nerves because there is no release for tensions. In war, nerves eventually become more resistant to stresses: “Zerbrechen die Waffen, so schafft der Körper Rat; der kranke Körper wird dem Zwange der Nerven unterstellt...“ (7: 155). Jünger’s focus on nerves and pressures in war is a sign of their importance for Germans living under similar pressures in the modern world.

For Jünger, the city is also a place of this nervous energy which can help men’s transmutation. For instance, Jünger may criticize the splintering of life in Weimar, but splintering is also a potential means of energy: “Wir modernen Menschen sind auf große Spannungen gestimmt, es ist dieselbe Energie, die in den tosenden Städten unser Leben in tausend Farben zersplittert und unsere Schlachten so furchtbar macht“ (Wäldchen 81-2). For him, the city is an anarchy of production, consumption, exploitation, crime, interests, opinions, contrasts, differences, architectures, wires, steam,

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264 Jünger’s thoughts on nerves in the city is reminiscent of Georg Simmel’s comments in his essay Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben: “Die psychologische Grundlage, auf der der Typus großstädtischer Individualitäten sich erhebt, ist die Steigerung des Nervenlebens, die aus dem raschen und ununterbrochenen Wechsel äußerer und innerer Eindrücke hervorgeht” (Simmel 192).

265 Not surprisingly Jünger also sees fragmentation’s potential in war. He calls the trenches and no-man’s-land “zersplitterte Landschaften” (Kampf 32).
noise, and dust (Arbeiter 61, 165). Metropolitan areas seek to demonstrate form on a superficial level through laws, technology, and economic advancement, but in reality, they have no form. The modern urbanite constantly experiences insecurity, loneliness, oppression, pain, and fear (7: 76, 112, 148). Out of a threat to their existences, urban living will produce a crisis in men and eventually provoke their animalization: “Der Mensch in den Städten beginnt einfacher, das heißt in jenem gewissen Sinne tiefer zu werden. Er wird zivilisierter, das heißt barbarischer” (7: 86).

However, metropolitans need guidance to the preeminent form of life because Weimar still contains elements that can mislead the thrown individual. In his war novels, which are narrated during but written and published after the war, Jünger beseeches returning, transformed warriors to flood the cities spreading their militant values and transforming urbanites. Although it is not as effective as the war front for man’s transformation, the city is also a belligerent, energy-laden environment: “Wir müssen eindringen in die Kräfte der Großstadt, in die Kräfte unserer Zeit, die Maschine, die Masse, den Arbeiter. Denn hier liegt die potentielle Energie, die für die nationale Erscheinung von morgen in Frage kommt...“ (Jünger, “Großstadt und Land“ 579).

Nervousness, chaos, frightening sensations, danger, suffering, and pain help to stimulate the transformation because men experience an important “seelische Verbindung

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266 In this regard, Jünger often discusses civilian catastrophes which engender all the feelings that Jünger espouses: danger, fear, pain, horror, and suffering. In Das abenteuerliche Herz, Jünger writes that “[d]aher besitzen Katastrophen innerhalb der Zivilisation etwas so unendlich Bedrückendes, weil hier alle tieferen Quellen der Hilfe verschüttet sind” (7: 148).

267 Jünger uses the term “tief” to designate “deeper“ emotions such as intoxication and animalism. In Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis, Jünger writes that “[a]ber gerade, daß wir so vieles empfänglich sind, deutet das nicht auf eine Tiefe, von der man sich gar keine Vorstellung machen, die man nur ahnen kann? Auf ein Verhältnis zu allen Dingen auf tiefstem Grund heraus?” (88). In Das abenteuerliche Herz, Jünger writes that the war was not fought for acquisition of “Besitz und Bestand, [sondern] nämlich um ein tieferes Sein, mit einem Wort um Läuterung“ (7: 119), and on another occasion, he writes that “[o]hne Zweifel ist der Mensch viel tiefer als er sich träumen läßt, vielleicht sogar ebenso tief wie das Tier” (7: 96).
The soldier becomes one with the war and the abovementioned characteristics that it engenders: the outer world (i.e. war) has caused an inner change in the individual. The title to Jünger’s war book *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* testifies to war’s transformation of men’s inner being. Even violence, so central to Jünger’s ideology, becomes useless without the correct inner change: “Und daß wir die Welt nicht mit Gewalt allein, sondern auch mit dem Innern in eine möglichste Vollendung prägen können…” (*Kampf* 111). In the first stages of this inner transformation, the soldier feels a small loss of balance until this feeling becomes more potent at a later juncture. Countless agitations have broken his ability to chain together sequential thoughts. At a critical moment, the individual is unable to consciously perceive reality: “Dieser Moment…reißt dem Bewußtsein plötzlich den Boden unter den Füßen weg...Ein neuer, ungewohnter Raum tut sich auf, in den der Mensch wie durch eine plötzliche in den Boden gerissene Spalte stürzt“ (7: 143). He has abstracted from the customary perceptions of life and, according to Jünger, entered into a higher order.

This abstraction allows the transformed man to disregard an imperfect, decaying, and inane world. In *Sturm*, the narrator discusses the writer Sturm’s ability to abstract from the norm: “Das eigentliche Fesselnde an ihm war wohl, daß er in ganz ungewöhnlichem Maße vom Geschehen der Zeit abstrahieren konnte. So gab er den Freunden durch seinen Verkehr das, was sie unbewußt in Trunke, in ihren literarischen und erotischen Gesprächen suchten: die Flucht aus der Zeit“ (*Sturm* 17). This temporal “flight” – a rejection of the time period – is not a negative quality, but rather is essential if the transformation that Jünger is propagating is to take place. It allows men to
transcend bourgeois time so that time in general becomes infinite, and possibilities likewise become endless (*Sturm* 77). In addition to temporal flight, Jünger’s abstraction promotes that one must be “abstrahiert von allem Persönlichen” so that he becomes malleable and servile (*Feuer und Blut* 111). Indeed, Jünger believes that individuality is a passe concept of nineteenth-century democratic movements, and men must, instead, become a type of war: “Es ist dies das Gesicht einer Rasse, die sich unter den eigenartigen Anforderungen einer neuen Landschaft zu entwickeln beginnt und die der Einzelne nicht als Person...sondern als Typus repräsentiert“ (*Arbeiter* 108).

Much as Expressionists but without the Expressionist humanism, Jünger seeks das *Wesen* concealed in superficiality. Abstraction from current reality gives one the opportunity to access the *Wesentliche* behind reality: “Es kann dem aufmerksamen Auge doch nicht verborgen bleiben...daß die Wirtschaft noch etwas anderes als Wirtschaft, die Politik noch etwas anderes als Politik, die Reklame noch etwas anderes als Reklame, die Technik noch etwas anderes als Technik ist – kurz, daß jede unserer vertrautesten und alltäglichsten Erscheinungen sich gleichzeitig als Symbol eines wesentlicheren Lebens erfassen läßt“ (7: 96)[emphasis mine]. Through abstraction, “bourgeois reality” becomes questionable, but the acceptance of Jünger’s teachings allows reality to receive the correct content or das *Wesentliche*. For example, he stresses that the soldier perceives war landscapes actions positively when he undergoes his transformation. In *Feuer und Blut*, he sees a “magical light” appearing from a crater that is actually machine gun fire and calls heavy artillery bombardments the “lebendige Energie des modernen Industriestaaten” (81). He compares the several explosions from bombs to the notes of a

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268Jünger calls the front reality “traumhaft” (*Kampf* 102), and *Das abenteuerliche Herz* contains several dreams, which support his militant and ultraconservative ideology and encourage men to look behind the superficial world.
song, and planes are butterflies which float between flowers of fire (Wäldchen 7, 9). In these examples, acts of war a viewed positively. Acceptance of Jünger’s goals also allows one to claim that the war’s goal is simply warring. In this view, the loss of the war, its chaos, its senselessness, ethics, compassion, regret, or the material objects of battle like bullets and bombs cease to have import once the warrior accesses the Wesentliche.

The transformed soldier’s viewing of das Wesen coincides with his enjoyment of the intoxication of the fighting experience at the front. Members of western culture, Jünger argues, have lost the benefit of the rush that they once possessed, but he wants to restore this vitality to man and believes war is the ultimate method that can achieve this objective. Before he even arrives at the battle front he is overcome with a youthful, romantic rush from the desire to fight for the fatherland, but this pre-war intoxication is nothing compared to the much more potent ecstasy he experiences during actual battle which he terms the “Steigerung des Lebens” (Sturm 61; Feuer und Blut 112), “berauschendes Morphium“ (Stahlgewittern 187), “geballten Räuschen (Kampf 25), and “des Explodierens von Gedanken im Hirn” (Sturm 61). When he stands constantly on the verge of death or when “Leben heißt töten,” the air in battle becomes charged with intoxication (Kampf 12, 39). This intoxication liberates the soldier from all bonds and strictures of the outer world: “Da reißt Begeisterung die Männlichkeit so über sich hinaus...Das ist ein Rausch über allen Räuschen, Entfesselung, die alle Bande sprengt. Es ist eine Raserei ohne Rücksicht und Grenzen, nur den Gewalten der Natur vergleichbar“

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269 This statement shows that the warrior, who has abstracted, cannot distinguish between destruction, violence, and brutality, and the beautiful.
270 For Jünger, intoxication is a positive experience necessary in war, and war is a utopian experience. All problems that oppose war or weaken one’s ability to war – Weimar, democracy, materialism, bourgeois life, etc. – are to be eliminated.
(Kampf 53). It shows the soldier’s absolute confidence because he now desires to enter battle and does not fear death. Intoxication contributes to the warrior’s ability to feel indifference towards his actions; it enables him to feel salvation and beloved oblivion: “die Flucht in das Dickicht der Räusche, um Vergessen und Erlösung zu finden” (Kampf 32). Indeed, intoxication propels a rebirth of the animal within the warrior.

According to Jünger, these feral values were allegedly latent in and instinctual to every man. He claims that men are animals of the fiercest brutality, violence, and primitivism lurking underneath and wanting to penetrate through a civilized surface. The animal in war requires anger and thirst for blood, which Jünger transvaluates into heroism and divinity: “In einer Mischung von Gefühlen, hervorgerufen durch Blutdurst, Wut und Alkoholgenuß, gingen wir im Schritt schwerfällig, doch unaufhaltbar auf die feindlichen Linien los. Daneben schlug das Heroische – Göttliches und Tierisches unentwirrbar vermischt“ (Stahlgewittern 227). Animality is an antithetical, instinctual protest against the mechanical rote, intellectualism, and scientific advancement of the time period. In Jünger’s novel Sturm, soldiers, who were former students in a stifling, rotting atmosphere, undergo a rebirth in war whose main characteristics are animality, totality, and intoxication:

die Herzen sprangen gegen die Rippen wie rote Raubtiere gegen Käfiggitter und stießen immer stärkere, immer heißere Blutwellen durch die Gehirne...So entzündeten sich die verborgenen Kräfte des Blutes zur Wiedergeburt von Zuständen, die schon sehr fern im Dämmern lagen. Das Ungeteilte, der Ursprung, wurde lebendig und schrie nach Entladung, nach einfacher und wilder Tat. Das war ein schönes, kräftigeres Gefühl, ein Sichwiederfinden aus dem qualvollen Unsinn der Vernunft. (77)[emphasis mine]

In a similar quotation from Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis, war functions as a rebirth from urbanites’ quotidian existence to barbarism: “Als der Krieg wie Fackel über das
graue Gemäuer der Städte lohte, fühlte sich jeder jäh aus der Kette seiner Tage gerissen. Taumelnd, verstört durchfluteten die Massen die Straßen unter dem Kamme der ungeheuren Blutwelle...Verfeinerung des Geistes, der zärtlicher Kultus des Hirns gingen unter in klirrender Wiedergeburt des Barbarentums“ (Kampf 30)[emphasis mine].

Barbarian plunderers are models for Jünger because they raze and kill without second thoughts and are the antitheses to effeminate metropolitan men.

Jünger claims that modern men possess an inkling of and long for this primitive animalism because they engage in feeble attempts to escape or stem modernity. As evidence for this development, Jünger cites Germans’ desire for modern institutions such as the post office and train stations that are housed in antiquated architectural structures which resemble Romanesque castles and Gothic fortresses (Feuer und Blut 41).

However, these architectural structures only conceal an unsound time period’s problems that a true intoxicated animality would resolve. This increasing affinity of Germans for even modest forms of regression is partly their desire for simpler lives. Hence, Jünger extols life forms such as animals or even plants as paradigms of utmost simplicity to which human beings should aspire. He also claims that these simpler forms allow more diverse and starker forms of intoxication: “Manchmal wünschte er ein ganz einfaches Tier zu sein, eine Pflanze, Leben schlechthin, noch nicht im mindesten verzweigt. Er haßte den Gedanken einer Entwicklung...Gewiß, je vielfacher und feiner ein Wesen seine

271 The following quotation is reminiscent of the imagery found in Georg Heym’s Expressionist poem “Der Krieg”:

In den Abendlärm der Städte fällt es weit,  
Frost und Schatten einer fremden Dunkelheit.  
Und der Märkte rund Wirbel stockt es zu Eis.  
Es wird still. Sie seh’n sich um. Und keiner weiß.  
[…]
Auf den Bergen hebt er schon zu tanzen an,  
Und er schreit: ihr Krieger alle, auf an! (Pinthus, Menschheitsdämmerung 79)
Wurzeln in die Erde senkte, um so vielfacher und seltsamer wurden seine Räusche (Sturm 72). This regression to simplicity is better than the terrible fear that one encounters in life: “War es nicht besser, man lebte wie ein Tier oder wie eine Pflanze im Tal als immer mit dieser furchtbaren Angst unter allem, was man auf der Oberfläche handelte und sprach?” (Sturm 49).

Paralleling Kaiser’s term but with decidedly different content, Jünger maintains that combat cultivates the Mensch as opposed to the mechanistic person by empowering him with this primitive animality. Indeed, Jünger asks “wo bleibt denn hier der Mensch?” within the chaos of industry, finance, the mass, science, transportation, and education (Wäldchen 126). He echoes this statement when he states that in this time period, “in der die Gemeinheit sich mit der Maske eines höheren Menschentums schminkt, [existiert] der Zweifel an der Wirklichkeit der Träume, am Vorhandensein einer Zone, in der die Wertungen eines kühneren, vornehmeren Lebens Gültigkeit besitzen – kurzum der Zweifel, ob es Menschen gibt” (7: 175-6). Jünger’s concept of the “Mensch“ entails an active human being who is characterized through his lust to kill, destroy, and be violent, which is simultaneously an elemental joy: “den Menschen aber treibt der Wille zu töten,...und wenn zwei Menschen im Taumel des Kampfes aufeinanderprallen,...haben [sie] sich zueinander in ein Urverhältnis gesetzt, in den Kampf ums Dasein in seiner nacktesten Form“ (Kampf 8)[emphasis mine]. In embracing these values, Jünger argues that the common person finally feels significant, and much as Kaiser, Jünger stresses that the reason for men regaining their human qualities is ultimately their Wandlungen: “Das alles hatte der Mensch gemacht. In seiner Seele ging
This transformed soldier in the trenches is the New Man. He is a *Landsknecht* who practices and exudes war at every opportunity (*Kampf* 54-61). A lack of criticalness characterizes this new race of men: “Die Rasse fragt nie, warum es so ist, und ob es nicht anders sein könnte, sie sieht, daß es so ist und wirft sich mit mächtiger Gestaltungskraft in die ganze Fülle des Lebens hinein” (*Feuer und Blut* 70). Sameness of appearance, indifference to their situation, and taciturnity also typify front soldiers. They are the antitheses of soft and domesticated modern life because the constant existential threats which helped engender their transformation have eventually made them harder and tougher. The front soldier “ist metallischer geworden, auf seiner Oberfläche gleichsam galvanisiert, der Knochenbau tritt deutlich hervor, die Züge sind ausgespart und angespannt. Der Blick ist ruhig und fixiert, geschult an Betrachtung von Gegenständen, die in Zuständen hoher Geschwindigkeit zu erfassen sind” (*Arbeiter* 107-8). From the above statement, one can follow Jünger’s assertion that there is a connection between technology or “der Gleichzeitigkeit neuer Mittel und eines neuen Menschentums” (*Arbeiter* 124). Man becomes more machine-like in his use of technology in war so that the machine becomes almost a part of him. The New Man will dominate machines using them as a skilled craftsman so that they submit to his will. He recognizes and employs war machines as instruments of power:

Und so sehe ich ein neues, führendes Geschlecht im alten Europa auftauchen, ein Geschlecht furchtlos und fabelhaft, ohne Blutschau und rücksichtslos, gewohnt, Furchtbares zu erdulden und Furchtbares zu tun und das Höchste an seine Ziele zu setzen. Ein Geschlecht, das Maschinen baut und Maschinen trotzt, dem Maschinen nicht totes Eisen sind, sondern Organe der Macht...Das gibt der Welt ein neues Gesicht. (*Wäldchen* 19)
These front soldiers formed a manly *community* during the First World War (Herf 71; H. Kaiser 40-1; Prümm 202). Because of front soldiers’ shared inner and outer experiences in war, “die Front ist...fester, als jede andere Bindung es vermöchte” (Wäldchen 94). They become like rooted plants “in die Gemeinschaft hineingewachsen wie in einen festen Ring. Das sind Augenblicke, in denen man sich des unvergleichlichen Glückes bewußt wird” (Feuer und Blut 177).[emphasis mine] 272 This community purportedly solves all issues that are divisive or that could appear to be divisive primarily because it is the highest form of equality. Social and political questions do not matter at the front; they are suppressed in favor of the war which dominates soldiers’ lives. Front soldiers consist of differing social and professional castes which are united under the goal of warring. They transcend political parties: “Der deutsche Frontsoldat marschiert auf, rechts, links und in der Mitte. Lassen wir den Kolonnen Zeit, sich über die Marschrichtung klar werden, jeder für sich. Es wird sich herausstellen, daß wir uns alle demselben Punkte zubewegen“ (Introduction to Aufmarsch des Nationalismus XIII). In addition, Jünger’s war novels demonstrate the lonely finally experiencing at the front a feeling of belonging to a larger group which, according to Jünger, resembles a family that only dissolves at death (Sturm 6-7). This sense of belonging allows the front warrior to cope with isolation; he becomes inwardly content being physically alone because he knows that he is never truly separated from his front brothers. For example, when he is wounded and abandoned behind enemy lines, Jünger maintains that he is not alone as long as one man still survived in his company (Stahlgewittern 278). These close, soldierly bonds of the front community allow for a common understanding between

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272 Jünger again references a plant. He is trying to stress the simplicity of the community.
warriors in which any type of normal communication is unnecessary (Kampf 26; Wäldchen 212). This intimate understanding is advantageous in the attack when coordination between different groups of front soldiers must be exact and regulated. Jünger asserts that war as a chaotic event ceases to exist after the warrior’s transformation because he now understands and embraces the chaos of battle so that it becomes natural and thus orderly. Jünger also maintains that the army contributes to the orderliness and discipline of the front community through its regimentation. In this structuredness, the warrior experiences the feeling of being a cell in one much larger body. They are no longer individual human beings, but rather are “ein zur Einheit verschmolzenes Wesen“ (Wäldchen 212), in which “das Persönliche sich auflösen fühlte“ (Stahlgewittern 226). This uniformity contributes to front soldiers’ communality. When one soldier is wounded at the front, his pain becomes a shared event. When one member of his company dies, it feels as if a piece of Jünger and his personality has died also. Because they are regimented and solid unities, troops also function as bulwarks against foreign elements and threatening feelings (Theweleit 98-107; Volmert 20).

The front community is a German community. Nationalism helps unite not only German front soldiers but also Germans on the home front. On the one hand, any war is often an important tool in provoking nationalism because during war, the will to live moves “vom Einzelnen auf die Nation…” (Feuer und Blut 111). On the other hand, nationalism can help produce war and, thus, Jünger claims that “im Nationalen liegt unsere Wiedergeburt” (Wäldchen 190)[emphasis mine]. The nation can also help to surmount schismatic entities such as Social Democracy, Marxism, and democracy, which

\[273\text{ In reality, intoxicating and animalistic battle at the front is not a structured event. It is chaotic even though the soldier perceives it as order through his new ability to view the world.}\]
Jünger accuses of being narcotics that dull pain through social programs. Adherents of social programs view society as the community because they accept working within this reality (7: 170). Conversely, fervent nationalism’s ability to unify contributes to a true form of socialism, which could solve Germany’s social ills by simply trumping them: “Der Nationalismus allerdings [kämpft]...der für die auch von Herrn Hiller gepriesene klassenlose Gesellschaft” (“Das Ziel” 350). In his essay “Schliesst euch zusammen,” Jünger maintains that nationalism will provide the “victory over the machines“ that workers have always wanted, but Marxism could never realize. It could also bestow on workers an eternal gift that would transcend the historicalness of Marxism (220).

Although he was not a National Socialist party member, Jünger obviously maintained that there was no conflict between nationalism and socialism.

Nationalism was also intricately linked with blood, which binds Germans so that they form a “Blutgemeinschaft“ to combat a “freches und zynisches Literatentum“ (“Das Blut“ 194). The pacifist artist and burgher dread blood and associate it with some type of accident. Coldness, the antithesis of blood’s warmth and the Gemeinschaft, is associated with the modern world:

die Wärme des Herzens das untrügliche Kennzeichen der neuen Gemeinschaft ist, der wir vorläufig den Namen der nationalistischen gegeben haben...wovon sie sich abwendet, ist immer und überall dasselbe: die eisige Kälte, die noch die alten Formen beherrscht. Ob wir diese Kälte in der Politik als Liberalismus, in der Wissenschaft als mechanistischen Betrieb, in der Kunst als Artistik...es ist überall derselbe Mangel an Anteilnahme, Begeisterung und Opferwilligkeit, der uns abschreckt und entsetzt. (“Zum Geleit“ 371)

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274 Kurt Hiller was an Expressionist poet and political activist was active in the communist party. He was discussed in chapter three.

275 This chapter has already discussed Jünger’s belief that solving workers’ dehumanizing industrial labor comes from infusing them with its importance for the nation.

276 Although Jünger’s concept of “blood” had many similarities with the Blut-und-Boden ideology of the National Socialists, it did not have any biologically racist connotations.
Jünger also tries to communicate the simplicity of the front community. War at the front is a reduction of life’s complexities to only the tasks at hand, namely warring and surviving. The goals of warring are simple according to Jünger: the soldier’s transformation and the destruction of the enemy. Most people would characterize war as an unsure time period, but for Jünger, it ultimately provides security by imparting form in a formless world. Because of its straightforwardness, war heals the specialization that is partly a result of modern life’s complicatedness (*Feuer und Blut* 16-7). War allows no intricate negotiations or compromises such as in democracy. In an attack against democratic politicians’ verbosity, Jünger comments about directness and lack of rhetoric at the front: “[An der Front] wird jede Phrase weggefegt, wie alles Unnötige, Lackierte...“ (*Wäldchen* 29). In the trenches, the soldier is closer to the earth, the symbol of simplicity, and safely severed from bourgeois constraints and worries.²⁷⁷ Jünger states that everything in war is provided for the soldier so that he can do nothing more except fight:

...obwohl ich ja nie große Sorgen gehabt habe, so habe ich doch nie so sorgenlos gelebt wie im Felde. Alles ist klar und einfach, meine Rechte und Pflichten sind militärisch geregelt, ich brauche kein Geld zu verdienen, Verpflegung wird geliefert, wenn es mir schlecht geht, habe ich tausend Leidensgefährten, und vor allem löst sich unter dem Schatten des Todes jede Frage in eine angenehme Bedeutungslosigkeit auf. (*Wäldchen* 6)

As the above quotation cites, one of the main anxieties of life, money, is unimportant in the front community. Jünger donates his entire savings, 3,000 marks, as a loan to prolong the war; this act contrasts the selfishness of Weimar’s millionaires and profiteers (1: 115).

In Weimar, these socialites have power, but in battle at the front, the New Man exudes power and control. War is an empowering phenomenon for the front soldier

²⁷⁷ Jünger calls the trenches the “Schoß der Erde” to communicate their role in his rebirth (*Kampf* 27).
because he is armed with weapons which make him feel potent. Through his actions and decisions, he has a hand in whether others, or even himself, live or die so that in comparison to his situation in the republic, he finally feels as if he is in control. For this reason, Jünger stresses that “[e]s entsteht ein neuer Mensch…Mächtig sieht man ihn aufwachsen” (Feuer und Blut 31). Because a soldier must also learn to obey his superiors so that the war functions effectively, Jünger maintains that an individual within his community who is dominated by leaders finds happiness and power in being a victim for the proper ends. He enjoys an inner power that results from the contentment of knowing and completing his role for others within the community: “Jede Haltung, der ein wirkliches Verhältnis zur Macht gegeben ist, läßt sich auch daran erkennen, daß sie den Menschen nicht als das Ziel, sondern als Mittel...begreift. Der Mensch entfaltet seine höchste Kraft, entfaltet Herrschaft überall dort, wo er im Dienste steht“ (Arbeiter 71). Indeed, unquestioning obligation is a vital component of Jünger’s teachings. Even though the republic tried to appear as Germany’s legitimate governmental power and maintain order, the interwar years were a time without norms because there was no authoritative standard according to Jünger (7: 70). Weimar did not exude the true power that was inherent in it (Wäldchen 89). Too few craved power in the ease of egalitarian democracy and massification. Men have become powerless; however, they can regain this power by adopting Jünger’s militant beliefs. Wars between nations generate lust for power because they are by definition attempts to subjugate other peoples and, thus, enter into a position of power over them. The front soldier’s hunger for power, which he first experienced in the First World War, will fill Germans with the need for a war of the same magnitude in the postbellum era; he will show them the fruits of desiring power as well.
This new, power-engendering war is nothing more than the old war. In an attempt to rehabilitate his country’s loss during the First World War, Jünger posits that Germany did not possess the necessary strength or toughness for victory in 1918, but also that Germany has not lost the war because it persists in the postwar period through battle against the republic (“Unsere Politiker” 64; “Professorales und Nicht Professorales” 368). Because they have difficulty isolating the war from a contentious, postbellum environment, front soldiers first lead this fight. Thus, their inner transformation through war (in other words, the outer world) is seminal because they can then apply it to transform their outer world in the postwar period: “Die Werte, welche vom Inneren in Ruhe gesichtet, gewogen und anerkannt wurden, werden nach außen in Bewegung gesetzt, um sich im Kampfe zu verwirklichen. Aus Gefühle sollen Taten wachsen, aus Überzeugung Waffen...“ (“Der Wille“ 198). These reborn fighters must coerce the external world to conform to the life and visions, which they experienced during war (Feuer und Blut 30-1). Destruction, a by-product of war, will facilitate the creation of this new world. Jünger compares war with a storm in the tropics which creates new life through devastation (Sturm 53). He describes utterly bombarded no-man’s-land as merely tilled soil before the planting of a new generation (Stahlgewittern 282). Destruction will help realize postwar Germans’ rebirth.

War’s entry into the postwar period through reborn front soldiers becomes the means for the German nation’s economic, social, and political transformation (Weitin 393). The New Men bring a new type of revolutionary dynamism, which they use to battle against stagnant political and social life and eventually construct a world whose basis is violence and Tat:
Wenn ich beobachte, wie [die Frontsoldaten] geräuschlos Gassen in das Drahtverhau schneiden...erstahlt mir die Erkenntnis: Das ist der neue Mensch...Was hier im Kampfe als Erscheinung sich offenbart, wird morgen die Achse sein, um die das Leben schneller und schneller schwirrt. Über ihren großen Städten wird tausendfach brausende Tat sich wölben, wenn sie über die Asphalte schreiten, geschmeidige Raubtiere, von Kräften überspannt. Baumeister werden sie sein auf den zertrümmerten Fundamenten der Welt. Dieser Krieg ist nicht das Ende, sondern der Auftakt der Gewalt. Er ist die Hammerschmiede, die die Welt in neue Grenzen und neue Gemeinschaften zerschlägt. Er ist das glühende Abendrot einer versinkenden Zeit und zugleich Morgenrot, in dem man zu neuem, größerem Kampfe rüstet... (Kampf 74-75)[emphasis mine]

A sentence of this citation is reminiscent of the Expressionist Dämmerung: it is the ending of an era in Germany and, at the same time, the beginning of a new period. The postbellum, male generation will finally enjoy succor from Weimar by embracing the militant goals of the front soldier. They will resemble the youth like Jünger himself who escaped a vacuous, “uncertain” existence in Wilhelminian Germany by entering the First World War to enjoy a new type of security (Feuer und Blut 41). War pledges refuge by attacking the allegedly negative characteristics of Weimar: “Gewaltig wie ein Antikes Drama ragte [der Krieg] hinein in dieses Zeitalter der kleinen bürgerlichen Interessen, des Geldes und der spezialisierten Existenz. Er versprach, daß man wieder des Ganzen teilhaftig würde, der einfachen und doch vollendeten Tat...“ (Feuer und Blut 17). The antithesis of fragmenting and alienating Weimar will be the wholeness of a community in the postwar period. This militant world will supposedly incorporate the individual instead of being hostile to and isolating him as is the case with current reality (Arbeiter 141). The superficiality of this reality from which Jünger is trying to liberate himself dovetails with the superficiality of democracy. Hence, the republican system does not matter because it is not wesentlich; the New Men can destroy democratic reality and erect perfection, namely a totalitarian ethos and dictatorship.
Jünger and other young Germans like himself who crave structures that are “eisern, diktatorisch und absolut“ (Waldchen 74) can only locate them in the “nationalen, sozialen, wehrhaften und autoritativ gegliederten Staat“ (‘Nationalismus’ und Nationalismus” 481). The toughness of front soldiers should create and continually reinforce the “hard” type of politics necessary for the dictatorship (“Unsere Politiker” 64). The suffering, pain, chaos, and fear that Germans experienced since the beginning of World War I were essential not only to realize their transformation but also to indurate them for a dictatorship revolving around manliness, hierarchy, order, discipline, power, domination, blood, and the nation. This dictatorial state strives for the unification of all Germans regardless of their nationality and bestows no freedom on non-Germans and those who resist it (Wäldchen 186). On the one hand, Jünger believes that he can convince many of his militant beliefs; on the other hand, because not everyone will willingly accept his ideology, the dictatorship must either force integration or destroy adversaries who are reluctant to follow its “new” laws (7: 139; “Untergang oder neue Ordnung?” 415, 418). For instance, according to Jünger, the bourgeoisie are inherently antithetical to the dictatorship and too passive, irresolute, and weak to battle against it. The burgher knows only “den Verteidigungskrieg, das heißt, er kennt den Krieg überhaupt nicht...“ (Arbeiter 20). Along with all other unwanted elements such as democrats, weaklings, and pacifist literary figures, he will become a casualty to the unavoidable brutality and violence that will soon envelop Germany with the implementation of a new authoritarian government. According to Junger, “jeder anders Fühlende muß mit dem Brandmal der Ketzers behaftet und ausgerottet werden“ (Wäldchen 185).
The dictatorial state legitimates and forcefully maintains a totalitarian ethos. To realize this totalitarianism and for it to endure, war’s entry into and control over life and all actions must be even more total than it was during the First World War; thus, Jünger states that war must become the father of all things (*Stahlgewittern* XI). For instance, Jünger claims that the war can be applied to the economy, cities, factories, and labor; in short, each object and person gains militaristic value: “Die Gesetze des Krieges gelten auch für die Wirtschaft und für jedes andere Gebiet: es gibt keinen Unterschied zwischen Kombattanten und Nichtkombattanten mehr” (*Arbeiter* 144). Exemplary for Jünger’s vision of war’s encroachments into and domination over all aspects of life is its relationship to femininity and sexuality. To escape a society bestowing women with more rights, Jünger posits a postwar front community which can disregard women’s advances by simply forbidding them as at the war front.\(^{278}\) For Jünger, there is nothing tantamount to war which shows women their inferior status and strengthens male bonds. However, a community devoid of women and wanting male solidarity presents other conundrums as indicated in chapter four. Because these soldiers desire greater male solidarity, the war community can create sexual attraction between them, but whether male or female, sexual relations are strictly tabu for front soldiers so that war becomes their lover and spouse. For Jünger, war co-opts and channels the rush associated with love-making giving it its own meaning. For instance, Jünger describes “[w]enn das Blut durch Hirn und Adern wirbelt wie vor einer ersehnten Liebesnacht und noch viel heißer und toller [im Kampf]...“ (*Kampf* 12). In another example out of Jünger’s war novels, the myriad of ejaculating phalli symbols are the bombs exploding and guns firing during the

\(^{278}\) See Theweleit for more information on male views on and responses to women in German World-War-I literature.
zenith of battle: “warf eine kirchturmhohe Fontane hoch” (Stahlgewittern 227), “[d]as Maschinengewehr spritzt” (Kampf 105), “vulkanischen Explosionen” (Kampf 76), and “die spritzende Wand der schweren Minen” (Feuer und Blut 112-3). When the transformed soldier in his totalitarian mindset does engage in sexual relations away from the front – even the most mundane –, it also becomes infested with war.

In Sturm, Jünner has the protagonist relate the story of Kiel, a World War I veteran in Weimar Germany: “Wie früher zu dieser Stunde das Abenteuer ihn über klickenden Draht in das wüste Niemandsland getrieben, jagte auch jetzt Hang zum Erlebnis ihn in die wirbelnde Brandung nächtlicher Großstadt...Er nahm die Jagd hinter dem Weibe als etwas dem Körper Gegebenenes, das Unbehagen als Wellentaler das Rausches” (Sturm 63). In this account, the New Man treats the “hunting” for women as a military objective. He tries to use circuitous, “bourgeois” methods such as trivial conversation and flirtation when meeting women, but after five minutes, his erotic desires demand manliness and directness because he has experienced only intense, goal-oriented behavior for years at the front.

With this and other examples of war’s entry into every aspect of life through the dictatorship, it may seem surprising that Jünner claims that freedom of the individual occurs and trumps Weimar’s democratic, economic, and bourgeois liberties which have brought Germans nothing but suffering. Jünner posits freedom as an inner, existential feeling which consists of certainty, possibilites, and “Anteil an einem einheitlichen und sinnvollen Leben” (Arbeiter 296). This type of life occurs when a person has embraced the cause of war and the dictatorship. Within the dictatorship, each person is allegedly capable of existing as an individual center and as part of the Gemeinschaft’s

279 In Der Kampt als inneres Erlebnis, Jünner devotes an entire chapter to “Eros” (30-35).
collectiveness: “Im totalen Raume gibt es ebenso wenig einen Mittelpunkt...Hier besitzt vielmehr jeder Punkt zugleich die potentielle Bedeutung eines Mittelpunkts“ (Arbeiter 266). Weimar’s plethora of freedoms brought a lack of form to life, but within the dictatorship, there would be obedience and structure, which Jünger believes are important in realizing existential freedom. The dictatorial state, according to Jünger, will be an “imperium et libertas” (Arbeiter 190), and in a bout of imperialistic fantasy, Jünger states that this empire will stretch to the borders of the known world and that each German will enjoy unchallenged dominance (Arbeiter 218). Without confines, each German will be able to engage in the imperialism, which they deserve making their power just: “Den Drang ins Weite und Grenzenlose, wir tragen ihn als unser germanisches Erbteil im Blut, und wir hoffen, daß es sich dereinst zu einem Imperialismus gestalten wird, sich nicht wie jener kümmerliche von gestern auf einige Vorrechte, Grenzprovinzen und Südseeinseln richtet, sondern der wirklich aufs Ganze geht” (Feuer und Blut 53). To dominate other nations, he must foment a new and more terrible war than the First World War.\footnote{Jünger may claim that the First World War continues against Weimar and logically extends into the dictatorship, but this essay has taken the position that the war ended in 1918, and a new war must form after the installation of the totalitarian ethos and dictatorship.} To help him make this war and to prepare Germans for combat, he urges the totalitarian ethos and dictatorship.

Despite these assertions by Jünger, human beings’ possibilities and freedom cease to exist in his community just as in those of his extreme conservative counterparts. The state becomes omnipotent and forces the citizen to adhere to its rules: the individual does not really gain power, but rather is dominated. He only gains a pseudo-power over his pseudo-oppressors such as democrats, Socialists, foreigners, and other nations. The alleged safety and security of Jünger’s dictatorship is a farce: because of a perpetual state
of war and the state’s omnipotence, conflicts and life become worse for the individual. The community’s highly structured order is mechanistic in that everyone completes their role resembling all the cogs of a machine. Criticism is not allowed: a free press and artists, according to Jünger, must become subservient to and support the dictatorship’s goals. Rather than eradicating mechanistic industrial labor, it continues in Jünger’s ideology as his theories on the Arbeiter demonstrate.

According to Jünger, a successful totalitarian culture and state require the Arbeiter toiling for their goals. Jünger’s theories on the worker are extremely important because many Germans had not served at the front and could not experience its transformation, but through the adaption of the worker’s ideals one could experience a regeneration without front service according to Jünger. In addition, modern warfare requires much more than just front soldiers. Without home front labor, any war effort would collapse.

Provoking the individual’s transformation into the worker – as this paper has already indicated – is a threatening postwar environment. The worker is a yield of the front soldier’s ideology, which has spread in post-1918 German society, because he contains many of the same characteristics as the front soldier. The worker was originally a common man who was lost in Weimar’s superficiality until he underwent a transmutation that required the militarization of everyday life and the joyful embracement of a future war. Thus, as Jünger clearly states, the Arbeiter becomes a New Man in his own right (“Untergang oder neue Ordnung?” 415, 417-8; Arbeiter 71, 82, 85). Much as the front soldier, the worker’s transformation requires his abstraction from the real world,

281 Although Jünger would be loath to admit it, the front transformation is the primus inter pares when compared to the worker’s Wandlung. Jünger devotes much more effort to the explication of the regeneration at the front than the worker, indicating that the postwar environment is not as potent transformatively as the front environment, and places front leadership ahead of the worker.
but it is this same hard world which caused his transformation. Through the modern world and its crises, he becomes hard and metallic like the front soldier, but this toughness is useless without his adoption of the front warrior’s intoxication and animalism. He demonstrates discipline, diligence, dynamism, love of danger, a sense of hierarchy, stability, preparedness, and sacrifice.\(^2\) Even though he may not be in the army or at the front lines, the worker understands and gladly fulfills his role within the regime and for the war such as in industry, agriculture, and logistics.\(^3\) This New Man of the totalitarian ethos will be a mere “Typus” or function of the totalitarian Gemeinschaft because, much as the front soldier, he has shunned individuality, personality, and diversity (Arbeiter 113). As a type, the worker allegedly possesses dominance and power and is an “eigentümlichen, nach eigenen Gesetzen handelnden, einer eigenen Berufung folgenden und einer besonderen Freiheit teilhaftigen Gestalt” (Arbeiter 64)[emphasis mine]. This Gestalt is the attainment by a person of an external form or contours in comparison to a former complicated existence. Jünger claims that the Gestalt makes the worker organic and infinite because he is supposedly whole as opposed to the chaos of too many divisive parts: “In der Gestalt ruht das Ganze, das mehr als die Summe seiner Teile umfaßt, und das einem anatomischen Zeitalter unerreichbar war“ (Arbeiter 31). This point – embodying contours of the whole self and yet being whole – may seem a contradiction, but the Arbeiter’s wholeness comes from a reduction of complexities to a limited few according to Jünger. Because workers are functions of the totalitarian state as Gestalten and types, a leader must be present to direct and conduct

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\(^2\) Jünger comments that the amount of victims does not matter because the goal is paramount (Feuer und Blut 128)

\(^3\) Jünger additionally claims that specialization of labor ceases to exist for the Arbeiter because it is infused with and enthused by clear goals.
workers’ toil toward the correct goals. It is not surprising that Jünger chooses front leadership as one type of guidance for the worker.

Military leaders at the front must organize, motivate, and guide their front troops. They drill their troops so that they become a well-functioning machine that can react instinctively to any threats (Stahlgewittern 268). The job of these front leaders, who are often front officers, is also to direct the attack from the front lines so that working together “Führer und Mannschaft sich aneinander zu gewaltiger Energieentfaltung entzünden“ (Stahlgewittern 136). The Führer always leads the attack, a courageous action that fills his soldiers with intoxication. Without a leader, front soldiers can wander lost and approach dangerously close to enemy lines according to Jünger (Wäldchen 10). In some cases, a bad Führer loses the correct sense of direction (Stahlgewittern 88; Feuer und Blut 77-8). Military planners and generals are not true leaders because they are not at the front and require privileges over the common soldier (Wäldchen 74). They are part of the “starre Maschenwerk des Systems” and the “Papierkrieg”, which are also present during war and can derail the warrior’s rebirth (Wäldchen 91-2, 113; Stahlgewittern 253-4); however, Führer try to overcome this system by demonstrating and instilling in their troops war’s intoxicating and animalistic characteristics.

This relationship between front leader and soldier during war should be the model for leadership in the postwar period, but even front soldiers need guidance and thus require a Führer themselves. The task of the front soldier is this “[Führer] jedoch die Wege zu bahnen“ (“Wesen des Frontsoldatentums“ 70). In the definite hierarchy of the totalitarian state, he must obey this absolute leader and become an instrument of power for him to use. The Führer further channels and molds the front soldier’s dynamism and
rebirth to his ends. He creates complete agreement between himself and his followers by infusing them with a sense of purpose so that national unity would occur. Although he serves his followers, he also stands above them: “Jeder und jedes steht in der Lehensordnung, und der Führer wird daran erkannt, daß er der erste Diener, der erste Soldat, der erste Arbeiter ist” (Arbeiter 13). Jünger thought that this great personality would seize power in Germany when the time was right and guide the totalitarian community. If he belongs to a party, he will transcend their intellectual and spiritual bounds because the “Vorrechte des Führers” is that he “in dieser Zeit der Massenbewegung allein gehen darf” (Wäldchen 82). He would “ein moderner Machtmensch sein von einer gewaltigen Energie, die mit den unermesslichen Kräften unserer Zeit als mit etwas Selbstverständlichem zu rechnen versteht” (“Unsere Politiker“ 65).

In late Weimar, Jünger believed that his goal of a dictatorship was becoming reality. Germany was undergoing a rebirth that espoused totalitarian values and war. In 1930, he further attempted to rally front soldiers to his beliefs and mobilize all of Germany’s resources for war by writing his essay Die totale Mobilmachung. Out of that work, Jünger wrote that no sign is “mehr zu begrüßen, als daß die deutsche Jugend sich der symbolischen Erscheinung des Frontsoldaten als ihrem Vorbilde zuzuwenden beginnt“ (“Mobilmachung“ 29).

This statement coincided with National Socialism’s growth during the late 1920s and early 1930s, but it was early in his literary career that Jünger was favorably disposed to the Nazis and praised them now and then early in the party’s history. In 1923, Jünger wrote in the Völkischer Beobachter that the “echte Revolution hat noch gar nicht
stattgefunden, sie marschiert unaufhaltsam heran. Sie ist keine Reaktion, sondern eine
wirkliche Revolution mit all ihren Kennzeichen und Äußerungen...ihr Banner das
Hakenkreuz“ (“Revolution“ 36). In 1925, Jünger wrote that he thought Hitler awoke the
“Vorahnung eines neuen Führertypus” (“Abgrenzung und Verbindung“ 77) and even sent
Hitler an autographed copy of one of his war books.284 It was such acts and the
ideological parallels between Jünger and the National Socialists that led Hitler to offer
Jünger a seat of the National Socialist Party in the German parliament in 1927 and 1933,
but despite his flirtations with the Nazis, Jünger did not want to identify with any political
party or with practical politics which he thought was a dirty business. The National
Socialists would fail to gain power because they had no “literary talents” (qtd. in
Syndram 105), but rather relied too heavily on speakers who could engender ephemeral
mass appeal, whereas writing could create the infinite. In addition, Jünger objected to
National Socialists’ scientific antisemitism even though he himself made racist comments
about Jews occasionally.285 In the periodical Standarte, Jünger stated that he did not
want to hear about chemical reactions, blood-injections, skull shapes, and Aryan profiles
(“Das Blut” 193). Because he questioned the party’s antisemitism, Jünger suffered
attacks from Der Angriff, a Nazi newspaper in Berlin (Schwarz 114). Even after the
National Socialists gained power, Jünger refused to join the National Socialist Akademie

284 The book is now located in the Library of Congress (Schwarz 117). According to Jünger’s diary from
1946, he heard Hitler speak early in Hitler’s career in Munich and was enthused from his talk calling it an
“Elementarereignis” (Jahre der Okkupation 249).
285 In 1930, Jünger stated that he recognized the “zerstörerische Qualitäten dieser Rasse [Judens] an“ and
liberalism is “dem Juden ein günstiges Element“ (“Schlusswort zu einem Aufsatz“ 544). Jünger
mentioned that once the national state comes to power, they will “die eiserne Faust an der Gurgel spüren”
(“antinationale Mächte“ 293-4).
der Künste, but that did not stop him from publishing during the Third Reich although his works are sometimes considered antifascist during this time period.  

Jünger’s refusal to fully espouse National Socialism was due in part to his view of his own superiority. He believed that he was the prophet and chosen one whose message could liberate Germans from the misery of their democratic and capitalistic existences. Expressionists also suffered from exaggerated glorifications of their importance, but in the overwhelmingly majority of cases, opposed National Socialism publicly and in their beliefs, and hence, they did not meet with the same forbearance from the National Socialists during the Third Reich as Jünger.

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286 In 1933 and 1940, the secret police of the National Socialist state searched his house. Frenzel states that Jünger was suspected of working with the assasins from 20 July 1944 and only through Hitler’s personal intervention saved from trial (581). As an example of antifascist literature, Jünger’s novel Auf den Marmorklippen contains condemnatory references to Hitler in the character the Oberforster.
1961: 151-98.


Chapter 7: Conclusion

_Neunzehn Monate nach dem Beginn der deutschen Wiedergeburt_ – The beginning of Leni Riefenstahl’s ‘Triumph of the Will’ (1934)


_Sie haben alles das, was mir fehlt. Sie erarbeiten das geistige Rüstzeug Deutschlands zu einer Erneuerung Deutschlands. Ich bin nichts als ein Trommler und ein Sammler. Lassen Sie uns zusammenarbeiten!_ – Hitler in conversation with leading members of the Juni-Klub. They declined. (Petzold, 141; Schwierskott 144)

_Ich hatte einst den Krieg als elementares Ereignis positiv gewertet und nahm nun nicht an ihm teil, wie ich einst die nationale Revolution positiv gewertet hatte... Es war absurd zu sagen, daß dies nicht mein Krieg war_ – Ernst von Salomon, _Der Fragebogen_, 1951, 360 in reference to the Second World War

*Precursors to National Socialism? And Faults, Failures, and Successes*

As the end of the preceding chapter showed, Ernst Jünger’s lack of support for National Socialism was surprising considering the theoretical similarities between the two. It is also surprising to learn that his relationship to National Socialism is not unique among many radical Weimar conservatives (Herzinger 108). As the opening quotation indicates, Moeller van den Bruck and the group of conservative intellectuals around him refused to join forces with Hitler even when solicited by Hitler himself. Ernst Niekisch, who wrote the pamphlet _Hitler – Ein deutsches Verhängnis_ in 1930 (Alker 63) and who was later sentenced to life in prison for plotting Hitler’s assassination, called National Socialism an “escape” from the current economic and political situation in Germany (Herzinger 122).²⁸⁷ Friedrich Georg Jünger anonymously worked on nationalistic

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²⁸⁷ Niekisch was released from prison blind in 1945. Although he gives no names, Bullivant asserts that several of those involved in the July plot to kill Hitler were associated with radical Weimar conservatives (63).
magazines attacking Hitler (Alker 63), and Edgar Julius Jung, who absurdly thought himself a “Gegengewicht” to Hitler at the end of Weimar, was killed on the Night of the Long Knives (Bullivant 66; qtd in Peztold 219, Prümm 388). Hans Blüher disliked National Socialism because it was a mass movement (Mosse 212); likewise, Oswald Spengler expressed reservation about the Nazis’ appeal to the multitudes and added their scientific racism and romanticism to his misgivings about them (Klemperer 208; Laqueur, Weimar 93; Petzold 304; J. P. Stern 92). After active engagement for National Socialism, Hans Freyer and Hans Zehrer both distanced themselves from the Nazis (Petzold, 296-7; Herzinger 121) while von Salomon never joined and was even arrested by the National Socialists on multiple occasions (Klein 220). Beyond those abovementioned reasons, there are other explanations for several radical Weimar conservatives’ rejection of National Socialism. For example, they thought that National Socialists had a low intellectual level and objected to their attempts to gain power through legal means. In addition, although radical conservatives had desperately wanted an authoritarian government like the National Socialist dictatorship, they, much as Jünger, thought themselves leaders and were too independent to become members of the Nazi party. However, as soon as the National Socialists gained power, they did not

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288 Spengler did speak positively about the “nationale Umwälzung” and early excitement of 1933 when the National Socialists gained power, but wondered where it would lead after the excitement dissipated (Introduction. VII-IX).

289 It is ironic that radical Weimar conservatives told Germans that they were empowered with the acceptance of their beliefs – in reality, ordinary Germans had little power in their community –, but when their theories came closest to realization in the gaining of power by the National Socialists, they protested their own loss of freedom. They rejected authority when practiced on themselves, but had no scruples about volunteering others for suppression.
allow any rivals or share power whether these counterparts were had similar beliefs or not.290

Even if many extreme conservatives did not join the National Socialist party or embrace the Nazis before or after their seizure of power, this work has proven that their writings had already greatly helped the National Socialists.291 Radical Weimar conservatives are protofascists for having helped realize the National Socialist dictatorship through their overtly racist, sexist, militant, nationalist, and dictatorial beliefs. Indeed, the National Socialists were in most respects like extreme Weimar conservatives except in three key ways: greater organization, hierarchy, and entry into practical politics. Radical Weimar conservatives would have been largely ineffective with their teachings just as Expressionists except that the National Socialists organized themselves and sought political power through legal means. Based on this information and the close similarities between these groups, one can state that the National Socialists relied heavily on radical Weimar conservatives for several theories to their beliefs. Weimar right-wingers’ colloquy in various writings on conservative intellectual theories contributed greatly to the formation of National Socialists’ thought. Because so many of their teachings correspond to those of the National Socialists, radical Weimar conservatives succeeded in paving the way for a radical new government in Germany.

In comparison to radical Weimar conservatives, the relationship of late Expressionist writers to National Socialism is not as easy to determine and will be the

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290 The Nazis left nothing to chance: each threat, regardless of how great or small was to be eliminated. Beyond their structural similarities, Expressionism was in many ways a threat to National Socialism in the same way that each rival intellectual and artistic movement threatened National Socialism’s supremacy, and the Nazis persecuted them all.

291 Although some secondary literature maintains that Weimar conservatives or factions thereof were not “Wegbereiter” of National Socialism (Gablentz 152; Schüddekopf 10), the majority of radical Weimar conservatives undoubtedly paved the way for the National Socialists’ gaining of power (Bracher 156; Elm 6; Petzold; Prümm 81; Sontheimer, Antidemokratisches Denken 288).
impetus for discussion in this chapter. Although most scholars dismiss the idea of Expressionism as a forerunner to National Socialism, some literature sees affinities between not only Expressionism and National Socialism but also Expressionists and ultraconservatives. Sontheimer writes that ultraconservatives created a “Parallelbewegung” to the “expressionistischen ‘Lebenschrei’” (“Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik“ 57). Samuel thinks that the group of Expressionists, who he dubs patriotic – Fritz von Unruh, Kurt Heynicke, Hans Johst, Kurt Hiller –, was “only one step to a New Nationalism which replaced the cosmopolitan ideals” (Samuel and Thomas 118), and Samuel and Thomas state that “the spirit bequeathed by Expressionism has been alive, and each of [New Nationalism and National Socialism] has in varying degrees been in debt of Expressionism” (185). Theweleit claims that fascists use a “language of expression” (2: 348), and Camus also writes about the affinities of modern literature and totalitarianism (Sokel 2). Lado Kralj believes that Expressionism has the psychological temperament of terrorism (95-105), and Expressionist scholar Walter Sokel declares that “Expressionism can be considered the antithesis (and principal cultural victim) of Nazism as well as its forerunner and kin“ (2). Literary historian Walter Muschg also writes that “[b]esonders fatal wirkt, daß die Botschaft vom neuen Menschen ungewollt den Führerkult des Dritten Reiches vorbereitete” (39). However, the most outspoken intellectual of Expressionism is Georg Lukács who stated in his 1934 essay “Größe und Verfall des Expressionismus” that although its intentions were meant to positively change reality, Expressionism “münde[te] im Fascismus” (33; See also 65). According to Lukács, the increasing

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292 This chapter will discuss later Lukács’ ideas on Expressionism at greater length. His essay from 1934 sparked several apologias and condemnations of Expressionism in Das Wort, a literary magazine founded
popularity of Expressionism was a symbol of the degeneration (*Verfall*) of society which led to fascism; Expressionists used the same means – abstraction and gross distortion of reality (63) – as fascism and thus indicated the slide of bourgeois society, of which Expressionism was a part, into fascism.

These condemnations and linkings with National Socialism and protofascism are only exacerbated considering Joseph Goebbels’s affinity for Expressionism (Barnet 162; Krause 45; Steinkamp 56). In 1937 during the opening of the *Degenerate Art* exhibition in Munich, Goebbels uttered that “[d]em Expressionismus hatte gesunde Ansätze, denn die Zeit hatte etwas Expressionistisches an sich” (qtd. in Leschnitzer 61; Lukács 63). In his novel *Michael* from 1929, Goebbels was even more specific about the reasons for his attraction to Expressionism: “Wir heutigen sind alle Expressionisten. Menschen, die von innen heraus die Welt draußen gestalten wollen. Der Expressionist baut in sich eine neue Welt. Sein Geheimnis und seine Macht ist die Inbrunst. Seine Gedankenwelt zerbricht meist an der Wirklichkeit. Die Seele des Impressionisten: mikrokosmisches Bild des Makrokosmos. Die Seele des Expressionisten: neuer Makrokosmos. Eine Welt für sich. Expressionistisches Weltgefühl ist explosiv. Es ist ein autokratisches Gefühl des Selbstseins” (77).

Despite these statements from the National Socialist Minister of Propaganda and from some of the abovementioned scholars, Expressionists were persecuted under National Socialism’s reign in Germany. The Nazis’ literature was *Blut und Boden*, *völkisch*, and idyllic, and Expressionism stood for everything wrong with Weimar among German exiles in the Soviet Union more than twenty years after Expressionism had begun. One such condemnation was Bernhard Ziegler’s essay “‘Nun ist dies Erbe zuende...’”; Ziegler made the famous comment that “[e]rstens läßt sich heute klar erkennen, wes Geistes Kind der Expressionismus war, und wohin dieser Geist, ganz befolgt, führt: in den Faschismus” (50).
culture; it was “Kulturbolshevismus,” “Asphaltliteratur,” “Entartung,” and “amorales Kosmopolitientum” (Grützmacher 509; Hitler 283).  

Hitler called the “Verpestung der großstädtischen 'Kultur,’” to which Expressionism certainly belonged, the “langsamen Prostituierung unserer Zukunft” (279).  Their “degenerate” books were burned and the artistic movement’s authors were chased into exile or incarcerated in concentration camps.  

The National Socialist regime forced Expressionist authors such as Fritz von Unruh, Johannes Becher, Kasimir Edschmid, Albert Ehrenstein, Frank Leonhard, Max Hermann-Neise, and Ernst Toller into exile, and Toller, Hasenclever, Einstein, and Wolfenstein committed suicide.  That so many Jews were Expressionists – Ernst Toller, Alfred Ehrenstein, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Kokoschka, Jakob van Hoddis, Ludwig Rubiner, Alfred Lichtenstein, Else Lasker-Schüler, Friedrich Wolf, Franz Werfel, Kurt Pinthus, Alfred Wolfenstein, Kurt Hiller, Alfred Döblin, and Iwan Goll – helps scuttle the arguments that Expressionism led to National Socialism.  

Former Expressionists such as Toller, Becher, and Hiller spoke out vociferously against the fascist regime, and Georg Kaiser wrote anti-fascist pamphlets (Kaiser 4: 743).  Out of several hundreds of well-known Expressionists, there were to my knowledge a handful – Gottfried Benn, Arnolt Bronnen, Otto Flake, Kurt Heynicke, Wilhelm Klemm, Lothar Schreyer, and Hans Johst – who showed such terrible moral judgment and joined the National Socialists even if only for a short duration in some cases (Kolinsky, Engagierter 121; Sokel 159).  

Indeed, the völkisch art of National Socialism was closer to Soviet deification of the peasant.  

Exile is the opposite of nationalism whatever that nationalism may be (Brennan 61); Expressionists were abandoning the National Socialist nation because they were not part of this nation.  

This list is by no means comprehensive.  Krause estimates that anywhere from 33% to 50% of all Expressionists were Jews (128).  

Although one cannot determine a definitive number of Expressionist writers, Raabe in his Die Autoren und Bücher des literarischen Expressionismus lists 347.  

Johst actually became president of the National Socialist Chamber of Literature, but some Expressionist authors espoused disparate ideological positions before and after the end of Expressionism.
only such a small percentage of greater Germany’s population had supported the National Socialists, they would have never come to power.

One must also consider that a plethora of economic, political, psychological, and social problems beyond Expressionists’ control in Germany helped lead to National Socialists’ gaining power. Although a criticism of Expressionism – that it created an atmosphere that contributed to the National Socialists being able to gain power – is true because they were part of the general atmosphere of catastrophe during Weimar, such a theory is superficial and sweeping in that it lumps them together with other groups such as radical Weimar conservatives with which they should not have company. Expressionism certainly does not equate to fascism and, as a group, did not sanction it. National Socialists used some of the same signifiers as Expressionists – charismatic leadership, vitality, abstraction, dynamism, the New Human Being, and the term “Gemeinschaft” – to attack social and political reality. Expressionists may have made these signifiers more acceptable among the German populace, but their humanism behind these signifiers, or late Expressionism’s deeper, overarching message of peace, love, and internationalism, had nothing to do with National Socialism. Indeed, if Germans had accepted many Expressionists’ humanitarian ideas, there would not have been a Second World War and the discussion of their relationship towards fascism would be superfluous because Expressionists’ community would have looked much different than the National Socialist community. Expressionists’ failure to realize several worthwhile ideas in German society and politics begs the question why they were unsuccessful in this endeavor, and thus, the rest of this closing chapter will concentrate on this question. The

The work has already mentioned several Expressionists’ affinity for socialism, but Sorge and Schreyer became Catholics, von Unruh was a German Democrat, and Reinhard Goering dabbled in Buddhism.
choice for Expressionist beliefs by Germans was the key to them becoming reality, but too many factors prevented Germans from choosing these beliefs.

One such factor was the ease with which a few Expressionists made the transition from being supporters of war to pacifism without abandoning signifiers and which shows the ease with which the ideational content of signifiers can be modified. For instance, Fritz von Unruh made the transition from a family with a long line of Prussian officers and from supporting the First World War to pacifism. His early plays such as Offiziere and Louis Ferdinand, published in 1911 and 1913 respectively, show characters overcome with boredom, yearning for war and the heroism that would come from it, and then charging intoxicated into battle when it does occur. For these protagonists, war is Aufbruch, Tat, greatness, and salvation. Although his later plays such as Ein Geschlecht and Platz were more abstract than Offiziere and Louis Ferdinand, he maintains the intoxication and Wandlung in these plays. As one can imagine, the very conceptual contestability of these signifiers presents some difficulty in distinguishing their meanings between groups. Expressionists’ employment of these structures during economic, political, and social unrest served as a model for subsequent groups and people with different content, and as these groups and people who used these structures increased in number, Expressionists’ meaning, which was associated with these signifiers, eroded more and more. Indicative of these structures’ popularization and detachment from Expressionist meaning is a scene from Ernst Toller’s play Hinkemann in which a businessman uses the word “Gemeinschaft” as a brand name for shoe wax (2: 232), and writing almost fifteen years after the end of Expressionism, Herwarth Walden commented that “[a]lle lebenden Maler, Dichter, Schriftsteller, Journalisten, Verleger,
Kunsthändler, Großbürger, Kleinbürger, Konservative, Demokraten, Katholiken, Sozialdemokraten: alle waren Expressionisten, indem sie sich einfach dazu ernannten” (79). A few Expressionists or former supporters such as Edschmid, Goll, and Paul Hatvani correctly ascertained in the late 1910s and early 1920s that these signifiers’ use by other groups with antithetical ideas rendered their employment unreliable. However, because these structures’ popularity appealed to Germans’ disenchantment with early twentieth-century Weimar, it is difficult to criticize Expressionists’ use of them, and although Expressionists showed Weimar conservatives and National Socialists the methods for exploiting crises, but they had no means to prevent them from using these structures which became inextricably associated with German fascism because the National Socialists are by far the most popular group to have used them. When considering Weimar conservatives and Expressionists’ disparate messages and the horrible results of the National Socialist ideology, these signifiers were not as important as the inner meanings applied to them: these structures truly became evil when individuals and groups applied them for evil purposes.

These signifiers’ contestability was exacerbated by historical crises and their attendant stress. Expressionists needed Germans to affirm Expressionist teachings, and unbearable tension and stress could accomplish this goal, but promoting tension, stress, and catastrophe to produce change is a morally a risky proposition. One could argue that despite their desire for a nonviolent community and although these tensions were overwhelmingly the result of historical crises and not Expressionists’ doing, their need

297 Expressionists needed growth in their community for it to become a reality. In this regard, if one states that Expressionists should completely abandon signifiers such as “community” and “the New Human Being” because of their mutability, they probably lose some appeal among Germans. This chapter will discuss possible enhancements of Expressionist methods later.
and in some cases desire for upheaval and emotions in intoxication are forms of psychological, if not physical violence against human beings. Their support for this violence was a chance to lead to more violence and other unwanted or appalling reactions and results.\textsuperscript{298} For instance, the person may feel like destroying out of hate or anger as in a mob mentality, suffer madness permanently, or even commit suicide while under intense pressure.\textsuperscript{299} Such stressed persons are not in a position to judge because their circumstances are engendering unclear thinking making the discernment and solving of problems difficult. Their desperate desire to escape the pressurized situation would undoubtedly lead several stressed individuals to make a hasty and possibly wrong decision. Thus, stress could result in a failure to deal with issues or even lead to a new reality which is devoid of any healthy ideas. Because of these possibilities, welcoming crises and great tension in human beings is not the best method to realize Expressionist ideas, but rather one should attempt to contain stress and crises.

These statements being made, Germans overwhelmingly embraced a conservative version of the community because they felt that they had a better connection to and sharedness with it and thought that it could better solve their problems. Although the contributions of nationalism to the First World War and suffering during and after the war made some Germans question its role, nationalism was for the most part established and trusted among a deeply nationalistic German nation. Radical Weimar conservatives

\textsuperscript{298} As previously stated in chapter three, some Expressionists embraced and then disavowed the Soviet Revolution’s violence. This embrace and disavowal is typical for Expressionists’ lack of understanding about the possible outcomes of crisis and stress on human beings. Expressionists gave much effort towards realizing that first step towards their community. Supporting this assertion is the huge number of Expressionist plays and poems showing a suffering person in the current world with its many deficiencies and only a few plays showing the erection of the community.

\textsuperscript{299} These last results – lasting madness and suicide – indicate that although Expressionists and ultraconservatives stress that the power to abstract is within each person, not all suffering Germans will reach the community. These individuals become collateral damage to the intoxication and community.
found it easier than Expressionists to rally Germans because ultraconservatives used already transpired events, formed organizations, or known and proven unifying structures such as coups, militias, terrorist groups, the war, and nationalism in which all together countless Germans had invested much. Conversely, Germans had difficulty finding intimacy with an international community whose creation introduced a new, unfamiliar, and uncertain proposition. Many Germans’ apprehensions about globalization – nationalism plays on fears of globalization – and the recent loss of a major international war militated against Expressionists’ arguments for an international community. Just as many of their teachings, the Expressionist community demanded a more radical identity change for Germans, and yet, the lack of friendly relations among other nations contributed to Germany’s turn inward toward nationalism: in other words, the very lack of internationalism was a contributing factor to their nationalism. Nevertheless, it was difficult at that time to criticize German nationalism because many Germans perceived criticism of nationalism as opposition to Germany and because some Germans felt psychological comfort in assuming their alleged superiority to other nationalities and ethnicities.

Dovetailing with this comfort was many Germans’ desire to soothe the stinging loss of the war. Appealing to this desire was radical Weimar conservatives’ overall teachings, but in particular, their defiance toward victorious powers and, to a lesser extent, their longing for vengeance. Moeller van den Bruck called for a foreign policy that would rectify social problems at home by punishing other countries which had allegedly caused these problems (F. Stern 243), and according to Salomon, German youth who had fought in the war and as Freikorps had the right to revenge because they

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300 In German, the word “unsicher” means both “uncertain” and “insecure.”
deserved justice against those abroad but also against the Weimar government which had betrayed them and Germany (*Geächteten* 277). Although the majority of Germans did not believe in their guilt for the war and needed little encouragement, extreme conservatives propagated victimization and anger for their lot instead of soberingly examining Germany’s responsibility in the First World War as Expressionists attempted to do. In the short run, it may have been psychologically comforting to be the victim, deny one’s own guilt, and transfer culpability to others, but the consequences were both psychologically and physically damaging. Germans’ difficult lot after the First World War was too much of their own doing, and radical Weimar conservatives nurtured Germans’ failure to examine their own responsibility for the war through the war’s defiant reinterpretation in their writings.

Although structures were important in influencing some Germans during this time of crisis, this abovementioned information shows that the content – in this instance, nationalism, conservatism, defiance, and even revenge –, and not the signifiers of radical Weimar conservatives, caused the majority of Germans to support ultraconservatives’ beliefs. This point can be applied to their acceptance of National Socialism as well: many Germans’ choice for National Socialism was based upon the problems and solutions which the National Socialists provided. The Nazis did not just appeal to feelings, but rather they appealed to Germans’ conservative and nationalist tendencies. However, just as radical Weimar conservatives, the National Socialists failed to solve problems which caused Germans’ pressure, and their teachings led to even worse crises.

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301 Fascists’ attempt to aestheticize politics was harmful to Expressionism’s legacy because, as previously indicated, the signifiers they used were the same as Expressionist structures. These signifiers’ appeal among Germans and diverse groups indicates that they had some kind of resonance; however, it is predominantly not the structures themselves that are beautiful, but rather the content of the structures.
Members of the National Socialist community are responsible for their decision to support National Socialism regardless of the crises and stress and are not victims. The gaining of power by the National Socialists and the ensuing Second World War indicates that too many Germans were willing to embrace radical conservatives and National Socialists’ belligerent and nationalistic principles.

There are few scholars who would doubt that the National Socialists at the very least had principles; however, according to some critics, Expressionists lacked even minimal content in their works. R. Bussmann maintains that Expressionists replaced “fehlende Inhaltlichkeit durch Intensität” (214), and Brecht, who praised individual Expressionists such as Georg Kaiser and Alfred Döblin (Best 229; Meyer 279), stated that Expressionism has “die Freude an der Idee, aber keine Ideen” (44). In his 1934 essay “‘Größe und Verfall’ des Expressionismus,” Lukács criticizes Expressionism as empty and chaotic: “[der Expressionismus’] schöpferische Methode geht in die Richtung des pathetisch-leeren, deklamatorischen Manifestes, der Proklamierung eines Scheinaktivismus“ (65). According to Lukács, although Expressionists are realistic in that the chaotic surface of their works mirrored a chaotic time period, they were too far away from reality and the problems facing it (26-7). Even Expressionists’ pacifist ideology, anticapitalism, and their revolutionary activity are mere “appearance” (Schein) (Lukács 50, 65). However, as the chapter on Expressionism shows, Expressionists’ community cannot be accused of glossing over or even repressing real problems. Indeed, the philosopher Ernst Bloch maintains that Lukács sees “in einer Kunst, die reale Zersetzungen des Oberflächenzusammenhangs auswertet und Neues in den Hohlräumen zu entdecken versucht, selbst nur subjektivistische Zersetzung; darum setzt er das
Experiment des Zerfällens mit dem Zustand des Verfalls entgegen (4: 270).

Expressionists did not fail to grasp or concern themselves with social reality, but rather as previously stated in this work, Expressionists’ community made for greater opportunity for national health despite its imperfections, and in comparison to extreme conservatives or many other groups, because they found solutions to many of the ills that caused their existential emotions.\(^{302}\)

In addition to its dearth of content, critics of Expressionism attack it for its irrationalism. According to Max Weber, Expressionism was a “geistig[e] Narkotika” (483), and Thomas Mann linked it with “Abkehr vom Vernunftglauben“ (Mann, “Deutsche Ansprache“ 540). Lukács called it “Fluchtideologie” (35), “Ablenkungsideologie” (39), and “irrational-mythologisch” (65). However, Expressionists wanted people to reflect on their existences and make a choice for the Expressionist community.\(^{303}\) Expressionists may have opposed current and engrained thought processes revolving around capitalism, materialism, and war, but as previously mentioned, they supported a new criticalness, which was superior to current thought

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\(^{302}\) Not all of late literary Expressionism’s goals can be considered admirable. For example, an uninformed nostalgia for a fabricated past led Expressionists to falsely claim that humanity was better off at the “utopian” beginnings of their history, and some of Expressionism’s more radical primitive regressions are withdrawals from real-world issues and from technological, political, and economic progress. Although radical Weimar conservatives did a better job of appealing to a common and often false history and myths such as the golden age of the Germanic tribes or Middle Ages, both groups did not see any advantages, for instance through economic advancement to better a person’s standard of living. In their opinion, there was no advantage to increased productivity and cheaper goods or that a growing economy could translate into more or better jobs and welfare programs. They saw no advantage to labor issues such as increased pay, job security, or unemployment which were dear to the working class. For ultraconservatives, common views of “progress” such as liberalism and materialism were in reality symbols of decline (Moeller, Reich 85). Likewise, according to Georg Kaiser and other Expressionists, scientific, technological, and economic progress was nothing but flight, and compassion and care for fellow humanity should be the measure of human advancement. Indeed, Weimar’s social and economic crises called “progress” into question and bolstered both groups skewed views of advance.

\(^{303}\) At the end of chapter two, this work argued for reflection and patience which admittedly do not guarantee success but do give one a better opportunity for success. Reflection does not guarantee that a person will make the correct decision. Ernst Jünger also argued for distance so that a person will decide for his conclusions.
processes in its love, nonviolence, openness, and internationalism. Expressionists did not conceive the process to, as well as rejuvenation and Gemeinschaft themselves, as mindless experiences without careful thought, but rather Expressionist teachings did call for Germans to use critical reasoning skills. For instance, there were logical connections between the problems which Expressionists opposed and the solutions to these problems. It seems logical that if the First World War has caused your suffering, you should avoid war or that reconciliation between European nations would reduce tension and hate between various nations. Thus, Expressionists did not misunderstand or neglect many of the daunting problems in Germany and humanity at large, but rather remained ineffectual in solving them in the real world. Their failure to correct these problems in German society was the main issue.

Most accusations of irrationalism and all accusations of lack of content should be understood as failures by Expressionists to realize their community. Indeed, their inability to bring the Gemeinschaft to fruition led to their teachings remaining within the realm of subjectivity. Late Expressionists' subjectivism was meant to transcend the objectivism of the real world: they believed that the changing of people’s attitudes towards several issues such as racism, poverty, and hate begins in their minds.

Unfortunately, the Wandlung of the community – the application of their vision – never took place and the subjectivity remained disconnecting Expressionists from the practical

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304 One could argue that Expressionists promoted “irrational behavior” in their promotion of crises which did not lead to clear thinking. In addition, a utopian and complete substitution for reality is unrealistic. Radical Weimar conservatives’ solutions relied on irrational mindsets to a greater degree than Expressionists. One must only think of war which could not provide Germans with a better life.  
305 Walter Benjamin criticized the “inwardness” of Expressionism according to Rumold (xvi). Because the goals of many late Expressionists failed to become reality, Expressionism achievements remained mainly aesthetic or stayed within the realm of art. While at least acknowledging its attempt at social and existential change, Walter Erhart argues correctly that Expressionism ultimately amounted to an aesthetic transformation in human beings (305-6).
world. Their action remained a mental act that did not dissolve reality allowing scholars and intellectuals such as Dahlström and Kuhns to call Expressionism “solipsistic” (Dahlström 51; Kuhns 37). Rumold to state that Expressionism typically amounts to an “absurdist dystopian vision” because of Expressionist visions of the world’s terribleness, (Rumold 175), and Lukács to label Expressionism “relativistisch,” “agnostizistisch,” and an “übersteigerter Subjektivismus” (34, 58). To be sure, most Expressionists’ visions seemed ridiculous because their ideas did not become reality. After Expressionists’ failure, Edschmid’s statements, that the “Kette der Tatsachen: Fabriken, Häuser, Krankheit, Huren, Geschrei, Hunger“ does not exist but rather only the “Vision” of them exists, seem absurd fantasies because Expressionists did not change the world (dichterischen Expressionismus 54). 306 However, in reality, Expressionists, extreme conservatives, and National Socialists all had communal fantasies of the postwar development to a community. 307 Considering the similarities between radical Weimar conservatives and National Socialists’ beliefs, it is negligent to call these solutions “fantasies” because it makes them seem unrealistic or caprice. Such a position only cheapens the real horrors caused by the National Socialists. The German fascist “fantasy” or this “imaginative fiction” became reality. Perhaps it would be better to take all constructs of the mind seriously because they all have – some more and others less – the potential to become reality. Irregardless of aestheticism, the question still persists

306 Edschmid had nothing against houses, but rather opposed how many humans viewed a house. Instead of being a place of inhabitation, people view a house as an investment. People finally realize the vision, for example, of a factory as a place of exploitation, and prostitutes as women who are sexually exploited. All these views of these objects change.

307 These groups do not allow the free play of the imagination because their fantasies are carefully scripted to conform to their beliefs. In addition, radical conservatives’ fantasies are not “male fantasies” as late Expressionist teachings show. Expressionists are for the most part men as well and their content had little to do with radical Weimar conservatives’ beliefs.
why late Expressionists were unsuccessful in achieving their social and political objectives. As the following paragraphs will show, there were several factors in their lack of success.

The reasons for Expressionists’ failure and continued subjectivism are many, including their utopianism, rigid idealism, unbridled optimism, lack of compromise, and arrogance. Brecht, the proponent of concrete theater instead of abstraction, pathos, and viewers’ Aristotelian identification with characters, rejected the “Übertreibung…des Ideellen” in Expressionism (44), and Murphy calls the less avant-garde Expressionists and their theories of the New Human Being “hopelessly idealistic” (159). The realization of a utopia requires that the great divide between the utopian ideals and the practical world be negotiated completely in favor of the utopian ideals. The fulfillment of such a one-sided dialectic would require such new forms of dominance and loss of individual freedoms that it is probably impossible to realize. Therefore, Expressionists’ goals were foiled by exaggerated expectations and by their refusal to compromise their principles.  

Because they demanded society’s complete acceptance of their utopian solution to society’s problems, their goal – namely, humanity’s utter transformation to their community – and all its nonnegotiable tenets became unattainable and unrealizable. Expressionists’ idealism and uncompromising optimism extended to their belief that only they could save the world. Expressionists’ all-or-nothing attitude was fueled by their high opinion of themselves and of their talents. As previously stated, they believed

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308 Much as radical Weimar conservatives, Friedrich Mark wrote in a rallying call to Hiller’s Ziel Group that there should be no “Kompomische” in their program and warned against bogging down “die Karre wieder im alten Dreck der Kompomisse” (Mark 171). Likewise, an anonymous writer in Die Aktion viewed “Kompomiss als Verrat” (“Möglichkeiten, Wege” 148).

309 Many Expressionist playwrights demanded total commitment from their protagonists. For Georg Kasier, it was all-or-nothing in that his New Human Beings often and sadly died, sometimes by committing suicide.
themselves messianic leaders and divine prophets who moved in elevated circles and had superior visionary capabilities so that everyone should adhere to their ideals. In an issue of the *Aktion* from 1918, Kurt Hiller wrote that mediocrity offends when one is a “Besonderer” and not of the “Pöbel” (“Journalismus” 80), and Karl Otten called other human beings “auf gescheite Weise dumm” (Otten, Introduction 12). This self-proclaimed elitism did not endear Expressionist writers to Germans and is all the more embarrassing because these same writers, who needed to lead Germans to their community, failed.

Equally reflective of Expressionists’ egoism and perpetuating their subjectivity was their aesthetics. They saw no limit to their effectiveness through art, and thus, as artists, they thought themselves and their teachings more powerful than they actually were.³¹⁰ Paul Hatvani underscores the power of literature: “Da war, in der Maske einer vitalen Kunstform, das soziale Problem dynamisch gelöst. Lyrik ist, was im Straßenlärm des Alltags noch Herzenstöne hören lässt. Episch breitet sich der Sinn der Demokratie durch die bewegte Stadt. Dramatisch beherrschten Zwischenfälle, schicksalhaft, dein Leben, das dem Rausch der Stadt verfallen ist“ (Hatvani 107). Whereas Expressionist literature may have communicated intoxication to a few Germans, it failed to communicate their view of problems and solutions on an understandable level to the German populace. Although they believed that their art was the best means to realize their message of radical cultural, economic, political, and social change, their sometimes

³¹⁰ German literature has always stressed its importance for larger society. Art is an education that should change the existence of the human being. Lessing thought it important to construct a theater for the middle class, and Friedrich Schiller stressed the importance of theater as a moral institution. Nietzsche stressed the influence of theatrical works in his *Geburt der Tragödie*. It was from this tradition that Expressionists drew their beliefs that artists could make the most powerful transformation in society.
confusing aestheticism hurt the propagation of their ideas.\textsuperscript{311} To grasp this difficulty, one needs only to read (or even try to watch on stage) Kokoschka’s \textit{Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen}, Carl Einstein’s dance pantomime \textit{Nuronihar}, or similar abstract works and attempt to interpretively find their meaning and apply them to life. In another instance, to communicate artists’ visions of a terrible or a new world, the works of many Expressionists can employ a grotesqueness, or an absurd incongruity between reality and irreality, that can confuse not only current readers, but also did confuse Expressionists’ contemporaries sometimes (Dimić 4-6; Kabel 40-5). I am not suggesting that Expressionism should have become crudely simplistic, but rather, in hindsight of Expressionism’s failure, easier to comprehend to appeal to larger numbers of Germans.\textsuperscript{312} The opportunity for greater accessibility, and thus exposure, would lead to a better chance for social and political effectiveness.

All abovementioned issues – complex and abstract aestheticism, utopianism, idealism, optimism, arrogance, and an unwillingness to compromise – were strong contributors to Expressionists’ ineffectiveness. In considering the National Socialists’ success in preaching dynamism, action, community, and rebirth, one realizes that it is the failure of Expressionists to compete with these movements that led to Expressionists’ downfall. Expressionists’ problem lies in their lack of effectiveness and ability to reach their goals, and at the heart of their ineffectiveness is the need to convince more people of their beliefs. To a certain extent, they realized that strength lies in numbers in that they

\textsuperscript{311} Despite criticisms of the real world’s abstractness, most notably through the modern economy and money, Expressionists’ own literature had become too abstract in many instances because of its complex aesthetics.

\textsuperscript{312} Walter Benjamin’s accusation that the National Socialists aestheticized politics or, as Leitch has defined it, used “[s]heer technical brilliance and beauty [to] mask a pernicious political program” (1165) can be reversed so that it applies to Expressionists’ aesthetics masking of their positive political and social teachings. Expressionists exhibited too much of a “fascination with aesthetic qualities” (Leitch 1165) and should have more clearly politicized aesthetics or transparently foregrounded political action in the work.
wanted to form a community – the New Human Being is ineffectual unless he joins with others to form a group –, and in the growth of any communal idea, there must be popular sentiments. Signifiers such as “community” and “New Human Being” appealed to Germans helping Expressionists gain more converts, but in considering their failure, Expressionists needed to find additional methods and means to realize the ideas behind these structures. Declarations of fraternity, love, and justice in artistic works were important statements of belief, but Expressionists needed to show more concrete and practical actions to realize these declarations.

One method to increase Expressionists’ profile among Germans would have been a more robust presence in practical media such as periodicals, magazines, newspaper publications, and radio. Although it may reduce a fine artwork’s artistic uniqueness, the further commercialization of their art could have also provided a better opportunity to propagate their message. Yet another option to cause more engagement from greater numbers of people would have been to create more realistic and understandable works and aestheticism. This advocacy for more realistic and understandable literature is not

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313 The ideational openness within the avant-garde – Murphy calls it putting objects “under erasure” or in the borrowing of a Freudian term “desublimation” – is a positive attribute as long as its ideational goals are transparent enough to reach (286). Despite its artistic innovativeness and worth, it remains hard to imagine the Expressionist avant-garde achieving the goal of community because the Gemeinschaft requires increasing membership to become a reality. “Avant-garde” art is per definition “new” and “tentative”; if it becomes more established and gains more members, it loses its “newness” and avant-garde status becoming passé.

314 This conclusion’s retrospective call for a more realistic Expressionist literature is not similar to Lukács’ argument for realism in literature. Lukács’ plea for realism demands the embracement of Marxist-communist principles. For instance, Lukács criticizes Expressionism as imperialism and laments its influence over Germany’s Independent Socialist Party (Unabhängige Sozialistische Partie Deutschlands - USPD), but these criticisms result from the USPD’s failure, National Socialism’s success, and Lukács ideological narrow-mindedness in his loyalty to Marxist communism. In Lukács’ for-us-or-against-us attitude, if they did not accept Marxist-socialist theories, which revealed the objective, capitalistic reality which most readers did not understand, they were imperialist: “Da sie aber diese ihre Kritik ohne Überprüfung der allgemeinen ökonomischen, sozialen und weltanschaulichen Grundlagen der Epoche ausüben zu können vermeinten, was ja nur die ideologische Widerspiegelung der Tatsache ist, daß sie mit der imperialistischen Bourgeoisie nicht gebrochen haben, bewegt sich auch diese Kritik auf dem gemeinsamen weltanschaulichen Boden des deutschen Imperialismus” (27).
a default return to nineteenth-century Realism or Naturalism, but rather an attempt to make Expressionism more accessible through greater transparency of ideas. In looking at radical Weimar conservatives’ literature, their ability to provide a simpler aestheticism in comparison to Expressionists contributed to their greater popularity.

Other means, which extreme conservatives adopted and Expressionists could have adopted to facilitate greater praxis, would have been increased organization and willingness to compromise. While they appealed to the emotions of some Germans during the early postwar years, there was simply not sufficient unification or centralization among Expressionists to build an adequate base to transform German politics and society (Erhart 306). In general, Expressionists were too independent and individualistic to commit fully to other organizations or form a grass roots campaign of their own. Although they were also fractious and fiercely independent, extreme conservatives were more organized into groups, and this organization paid greater dividends for the propagation of their beliefs in comparison to Expressionists. Radical Weimar conservatives were members in or affiliated with völkisch organizations, die Jungkonservativen, Stahlhelm, and combat leagues just to name a few. Increased organization could have forced Expressionists to seek more realistic goals to combat the ills of reality. Instead of dealing with the problems of the modern world in a piecemeal fashion, Expressionists sought to condense them into one term, namely reality, and transcend them through the utopian Gemeinschaft. Because of their all-or-nothing belief in the community, its realization became unfeasible so that reform and compromise on
some of the solutions that they proposed would have been more effective.\textsuperscript{315} That is not to say that evil has disappeared from the world through social or political reform, and violence, inequality, racism, and war have not ceased to exist through laws, conventions, and treaties. However, Expressionists’ utopian alternative resulted in utter failure of their social and political values, and some success is better than no success.

An instance of more reform, organization, and praxis in early-twentieth century life for Expressionists would have been greater entry into practical politics. However, they did not have positive views of the Weimar political system which they found to be a continuation of Wilhelminian Germany. In his essay \textit{Der Expressionismus stirbt}, Iwan Goll stated that “Expressionismus war eine schöne, gute, große Sache...Aber das Resultat ist leider, und ohne Schuld der Expressionist, die deutsche Republik 1920“ (Goll 108).\textsuperscript{316} Social Democrats and other parties had voted for war credits in the German parliament, and Weimar was dominated by Social Democrats in its initial years.\textsuperscript{317} Traditional politics, in general, were only a flight from the true methods of dealing with the world’s injustices and had led mankind into the morass that was industrial society, Wilhelminian Germany, and the First World War. Expressionists thought politics was a dirty business with selfish, vacillating, and duplicitous politicians who constantly wrangled and horse traded in small cadres behind closed doors. They were beholden to party hierarchies and, thus unlike the writer, concessional in their ideals and ethical purity. In \textit{Brief an einen}

\textsuperscript{315} Reform also helps control catastrophic situations and violence by progressing gradually to goals. During the process of reform, disagreements, difference, contradictions, and paradoxes keep balance and allow one to obtain various opinions creating the possibility for a better crafted end result.

\textsuperscript{316} Radical Weimar conservatives made the same point. Dingräve protests that “die Republik ja nur der weiter bestehende Staat der Vorkriegszeit war” (46), and Stapel wrote that “Aber das neue Deutschland werden sie nicht schaffen, sondern nur das alte in andrer Form. Denn sie selbst sind die Alten geblieben” (Stapel, “Wohin” 1). Zehrer in his essay “Parole für die Wahlen” makes the same argument that the same people who were in parliament during the Second Reich are in it in later years.

\textsuperscript{317} To my knowledge, only the Expressionist Paul Zech joined the SPD for a short while (Gehrke 365).
Staatsmann, Franz Werfel wrote that an ordinary politician was weak and compromising because the politician is “der deutlichste aller Realisten ... Über ihn triumphiert die Bosheit der Macht” (95-6). Franz Pfemfert, as well as other late Expressionists, believed a National Congress was “eine Sicherung der alten Gewaltherrschaft” and planned by capitalists (Pfemfert, “Nationalrevolution” 612), and in phrases which just as easily could be attributed to extreme conservatives, Kurt Hiller called Weimar democracy “Schläue des Kapitals,” “Diktatur der bürgerlichen Mittelmäßigkeit,” “Scheindemokratie,” “zynische Diktatur des Säbels,” and “Diktatur der Tradition und des Geisthasses” (“Überlegungen“ 212, 214). In 1919, Johannes Becher was just as dismissive of Western democracy calling on the newly formed Soviet Union to “[z]ertrümmert westliche Demokratien!” (2: 19).

Despite these comments, one can ascertain that some Expressionists were not against some form of republicanism – whatever it might be –, but rather against Weimar republicanism. In Walter Hasenclever’s 1917 poem “Der politische Dichter,” the poet tries to guide the masses from violence-filled orgies during the revolution to an international and fraternal republic:

Der Dichter träumt nicht mehr in blauen Buchten.

... Sein Haupt erhebt sich, Völker zu begeiten.
Er wird ihr Führer sein. Er wird verkünden
Die Flamme seines Wortes wird Musik.
Er wird den großen Bund der Staaten gründen.
Das Recht des Menschentums. Die Republik” (1: 217).

Thus, many late Expressionists did not view themselves as “politicians” in that word’s modern sense. In his book Literarischer Aktivismus, Rudolf Leonhard wrote about the failure of most politicians to commit to Tat and who instead flounder “zwischen den Tat-sachen und hinter ihnen her zu irrliechen” (144). Leonhard stressed that politics was “Energie” and “Gesinnung” (“Die Politik” 814), and Pinthus stated that “die Verkündung der Ideen durch die Männer des Geistes von jeher größere Wirkungen und Änderungen in der Menschheit erzielte als alle Anstrengungen der Politiker und alle Reden der Parlamentarier“ (“Rede“ 413). To distinguish themselves from common politicians, some politically-oriented Expressionists termed themselves “Literatur-Politiker,” “Polites,” or “Politerat” (qtd. in Wright, “Sublime Ambition” 93; Rubiner, “Der Dichter greift” 261, 262). Johannes Becher wrote that there was only one possible way left to write, namely “political,” but for him, “political” meant the ability to inspire others for the politics of mankind and humanity through the use of language (“Einleitung” 563). Indeed, Becher believes that his literature will form the communal state:

...bald werden sich die Sturzwellen meiner Sätze zu einer unerhörten Figur verfügen.
Reden. Manifeste. Parlament...Der Experimentalroman.
Gesänge von Tribünen herab vorzutragen.
Menschheit! Freiheit! Liebe!
Der neue, der heilige Staat
Regardless of the verity or fiction of these assertions about democracy and Weimar’s political system, Expressionists’ failure forces a reevaluation of their attitudes. Although this work has shown the social and political nature of late Expressionist writings, they could have been helped by greater work within ordinary parties. As previously mentioned, Expressionists such as Hiller, Toller, Becher, Rubiner, and others had clear political tendencies and joined political parties, which they later abandoned after short-lived associations. The most direct participation of Expressionists in politics was the Revolution of 1918/1919, but a revolution cannot be considered an ordinary political event. Hiller’s aforementioned *Rat der geistigen Arbeiter* was on the political margins with no real power beyond moral authority, and although the *Rat der geistigen Arbeiter* had a political program, Expressionists may have benefited from organizing their own political program and party. One must consider that if Expressionists had participated in Weimar democracy and democratic politics in general, their ideas would have been more efficacious simply because the republic – regardless of Germans’ disenchantment with it – was an established government and Expressionists’ legitimization would have occurred with Expressionist participation in this government. Thus, a much more effective position would have been to operate within the system and propose less ambitious changes and not a wholesale abandoning of the entire economic and political systems. If Expressionists had become more active in politics, they definitely would not have become associated with National Socialism because the content of their ideas contradicted those of National Socialism. However, their refusal of and

... restlos sei er gestaltet.
Paradies setzt ein. *(Menschheitsdämmerung* 213)
lack of faith in the Weimar Republic contributed to Weimar’s end because the republic’s democracy, politics, and diplomacy were great hindrances to right-wingers’ teachings (Theweleit 2: 361). Even though Expressionists criticized Weimar for many of the same reasons as radical Weimar conservatives, one cannot find fault with Expressionists for condemning Weimar’s problems because several were serious faults, but their failure to recognize its virtues such as less authoritarianism or to give it the slightest support by trying to reform its faults were errors. A further entry into practical politics by no means guarantees, but rather increases chances for success, and perhaps a successful person such as Walter Rathenau, who entered the practical realm as inventor, industrialist, and political statesman and yet was also an intellectual could be a model for Expressionists.319

Yet another, frightening model for effectiveness would be the National Socialists’ engagement of the world through their entry into everyday politics. The National Socialists took their case in understandable terms to ordinary Germans through elections. Much as Expressionists, the National Socialists began as a small group with far-fetched ideals, albeit racial and conservative, but unlike Expressionists, they grew into a mass following. To reach political power, they learned how to organize themselves and used media such as cinematography, newspapers, and radio. Although their first attempt at seizure of power failed, they continued – as did ultraconservatives whose message persisted throughout Weimar reaching its high point during the World Economic Crisis – in their efforts to reach power and endured the period of economic stability. Their entrance into practical politics forced them to take stands on real issues and, when they came to power, they were obligated to implement policies to curb unemployment and

319 Rathenau criticized rationalization and aspects of technology and implored humanity to a return to metaphysical thinking and responsibility for one’s fellow man (Joll 51-3).
economic depression. Unfortunately, they also allowed them to realize in as far as possible their core, idealistic issues, namely construction of their national community, war, Lebensraum, and eradication of the Jews. One can accuse Expressionists of trying to make unrealistic ideals real, but National Socialists were unfortunately able to make frightening and far-fetched ideals real. To highlight the difference between theoretical and practical fascism, National Socialists were just as unsure of how to realize their Jewless community as evidenced by the Madagascar Plan as the Expressionists were with their community. For the most part, the National Socialists were not theorists but rather men who set terrible theories into motion as best they could. Although they did so through force, National Socialists recognized their “utopian” Gemeinschaft in as far as could be recognized: the National Socialist regime was possibly as close to absolute authority and totalitarianism as a political structure can become. Where the Expressionists failed, the National Socialists succeeded.

Indeed, seldom has a group of artists tried so fantastically to alter society as in Expressionism and failed so miserably. Kurt Heynicke wrote in reference to Expressionism’s demise that the “Ekstase dauert nicht” (title; See also Knobloch 8).

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320 Much as National Socialism, Russian Communism was an idealistic venture made into reality.
321 The Madagascar Plan was the fantastical proposal to force the evacuation of Jews from National-Socialist-controlled areas of Europe to the island of Madagascar off the coast of western Africa. National Socialist officials made detailed plans in 1940, but eventually abandoned it after their defeat in the Battle of Britain. The National Socialists had planned on using the British navy to transport Jews to Madagascar (Browning 88).
322 Absolute authority requires the elimination of all freedoms; it is much like absolute freedom in that it is unattainable.
323 This conclusion does not want to stress that Expressionists scuttle Weimar democracy to realize their community, but rather it wishes to stress the compromises and methods that National Socialists made to reach power. Expressionists could have also made compromises to become more effective and realize their ideas, but within the democratic system.
324 Much like Expressionism, Ernst Jünger was concerned that the ecstasy would not last that long. Jünger also worried about the duration of his own theories on fervent nationalism, which could eventually lose their appeal and become normal and stagnant: “Je länger die Zwischenzeit dauert, in der der Nationalismus nach dem großen Erlebnis des Krieges… und auf der Oberfläche die Demokratie mit ihren eigenen Mitteln
Germany’s economic stabilization of the mid 1920s was a blow to the Expressionist campaign against reality and to the propagation of their theories. At that time, Expressionist writings and theatrical productions fell out of favor with German audiences. Economic stability meant Germans had less desire for spiritual, messianic messages of salvation; Expressionists could no longer exploit economic and social instability. Yet, radical Weimar conservatives’ activity continued and even reached its apex at the end of the republic or when economic problems resurfaced. This continued activity was most likely the result of perseverance while many Expressionists succumbed to disappointment. Kurt Pinthus writes that “Die Zersplitterung [des Expressionismus]...war eine Folge der Enttäuschung als...der Expressionismus nicht die erhoffte Wirkung erzielte und die ersehnte Wandlung zur Erneuerung des Menschen und der Gesellschaft nicht eintrat, wie auch des Einflusses der rapide erstarkenden Parteien rechts und links“ (“Nach 40 Jahren“ 19). Pinthus highlights the rise of both left- and right-wing parties, but for the focus of this dissertation, it is interesting to note that the National Socialists survived these periods of stability, mostly because they had entered the practical side of life. Expressionist experiences should motivate future generations to become active in the practical side of life and politics.

The relationship of the post-World-War-II period to late Expressionism reminds us that identity is relative to a time and a space (Gillis 3). Productions were limited in communist East Germany where the government associated Expressionists with the raging and unpredictable capitalism of the Weimar Republic. During the 1960s and bekämpfen muß, desto mehr wächst die Gefahr, daß der Typ solcher Meister der Phrase und unverantwortlicher Schwätzer sich auch in seinen Reihen einzunisten beginnt. Diese Gefahr ist umso größer, als das Pathos keine Grenzen kennt und das Außergewöhnliche rasch zum Gewöhnlichen degradiert“ (“Student sein“ 346).
1970s in the backdrop of student unrest, scholars began to more intensively research Expressionism, but it never relived a revival on stage or among the larger German populace, and modern scholars and audiences remain to this day unreceptive to the intense pathos of Expressionists. Much like the reasons for Expressionism’s demise in the mid 1920s, a great deal of this current disinterest lies in the lack of momentous crises to which Expressionists spoke and had occurred during Weimar. Indeed, National Socialists, ultraconservatives of Weimar, and Expressionists used the same signifiers to appeal to Germans because these terms were successful during these crises. The rush, the community, the cult of the leader, and primitivism seem anachronistic and laughable today. These methods of communication do not find resonance at present, but many of the ideas in late Expressionist works – love, nonviolence, equality,humaneness, freedom – are not anachronistic.

A purpose of this work was to inform readers about and help them overcome the difficulties in finding indications and the characteristics of potential authoritarian, belligerent, and racist regimes. Economic, political, and social crises, existential feelings such as chaos, fear, horror, danger, suffering, pain, nervousness, and worry, destruction, beliefs of national and racial superiority, large discrepancies in wealth, injustice, positive affirmation of and threats of violence and war, and movements towards and desires for dictatorial or autocratic rule are a few of these indications and characteristics. It would be unfortunate if humanity did not look at others’ mistakes in an effort to learn from them. In this regard, it would behoove us not to view fascism as a past phenomenon because aspects of it have the potential to occur in any country at any time and in daily relationships between people. On the national level, it is without question that disparate
countries of the world should help to prevent these atrocities in the future. The creation of the United Nations, the European Union, and multilateral organizations and closer work between nations have been for the most part positive preventive measures, but war and genocide still exist and can transpire at any time. More international cooperation is certainly desirable and needed to prevent these atrocities. Humanity has cultivated its intellectual capabilities mightily in the last century, but as evidenced through this work’s study on early twentieth-century Germany, its emotional and psychological development has not always kept pace. Among other issues, increased globalization, nuclear weapons, and terrorism present new challenges to people’s consciousness and the world at large. Attempts to deal with these and other problems through peaceful before they become crises could forestall many later violent encounters.

Bibliography


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