

REPRESENTING THE UNREPRESENTABLE Victor Klemperer's Holocaust Diaries

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One of the interesting by-products of the Goldhagen debate in Germany was that another book was occasionally mentioned as illustrating a counter argument to the thesis of "eliminationist antisemitism."¹ This book was cited to extricate Germans from the charge of eternal and categorical anti-Semitism as something ingrained and endemic to German culture or even the German mentality.² It was supposed to offer a discriminating view (*differenzierte Betrachtungsweise*) or at least a balanced view (*Ausgewogenheit*) – two arguments frequently used to define *Wissenschaftlichkeit* in Germany – of how Germans really perceived Jews.³ The book was supposed to prove that anti-Semitism was not a significant ideology or an epochal notion, but rather an aberration that found little resonance among ordinary Germans. Countless examples in this work indeed illustrate how German Christians offered assistance or showed compassion to the plight of a fellow citizen – a German professor – who had been systematically deprived of his civil rights and who was now threatened with extinction. Yet upon reading the diaries more closely, another paradigm emerges – that of the alienation of the intellectual, living each day as it might be his last, almost completely cut off from any support or solidarity of people he had grown up with and learned to trust, not knowing when and how he would finally be liquidated. Victor Klemperer's *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten: Tagebücher 1942–45* presents a historical account ensconced in a mythic narrative. The concrete details of everyday life in the Third Reich only serve to highlight the plight of the besieged poet writing at the end of the days, not knowing whether he will complete his masterpiece or whether he will be executed beforehand. To add to the mythic structure of the

work is the motif of blindness. Will the poet be able to complete his masterpiece not only before the executioners come, but also before his own blindness condemns him to silence? These are the strands that hold the narrative together that keep the discrete details of despair and brutality from becoming a monotonous compilation of meaningless oppression. The mythic terrain of the besieged poet is given an almost unbearable historical urgency by our realization that the poet is threatened with a double cataclysm. Not only might he at any moment be deported to Auschwitz to the gas chambers, but also if he stays among those German Christians who have defined him as sub-human, he is going to be faced, unknown to himself, with another catastrophe – the firebombing of Dresden. In other words, Auschwitz or Dresden is the alternative the poet *in extremis* is confronted with. The reader of course is in the privileged yet helpless position of knowing, in contrast to the keeper of the diaries, that not only will Dresden be transformed into an inferno and that the Third Reich will also dissolve into one of those nightmares of history, but also that the narrator will somehow ultimately survive. Privy to special knowledge, the reader, however, cannot warn the narrator that he has erred – that Dresden awaits a worse fate than the narrator has ever imagined.

In this mythic tale of the fate of the blind poet and his opus, the holocaust as myth plays a subordinate role, undergoing a transformation that returns it to its historicity. Whereas Goldhagen's work *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996) once again attempts to transform the holocaust from history into myth, the myth of the archetypal German and his inveterate hatred of the Jew, Klemperer's book, because it contains a much more significant myth for the narrator, frees the holocaust from its mythic sanctum and reveals it in all its misery and banality. After all, despite the narrator's position of not knowing whether he will survive these horrors (in some part of his being he must harbor an intuitive faith that he will survive), he hopes nothing less than to become "der Kulturgeschichtsschreiber der gegenwärtigen Katastrophe" (K, 2, 12).

From this almost grandiose standpoint – remember holocaust literature, in general, is the literature of *ex post facto* recollection, since most of the would-be writers were either too busy struggling to save their lives in hiding or wasting away like Primo Levi in death camps to even think about literature – we learn that the position of Jews in the Third Reich was not solely that of the archetypal victim, confined to the ghetto, awaiting deportation to the death camps or summary execution by the *Einsatzkommandos* or being subject to selection on the ramp awaiting death by gas or death by brutalizing labor and malnutrition and epidemic.⁴ In Klemperer's diaries the Jew becomes a complex bureaucratic category, encompassing an array of different meanings and

nuances. In addition to "Volljude" Klemperer mentions various gradations of "Mischlinge" (people reputed to be of mixed race). Other categories also abound, e.g., the so-called "nichtarischen Christen" (non-Aryan-Christians) – those scores of German-Jews who had gladly embraced Christianity in the belief that they would finally be given the blessing of being acknowledged as being fully German. There were also various types of what Klemperer calls "privilegierte Juden." One in particular, Klemperer remembers as a "Genosse der Gestapo, Nutznießer des Regimes" – astonishingly enough, a Jewish person who could walk the streets of the Third Reich without persecution, until his patrons decided to sentence him to death.⁵ Furthermore, ad hoc definitions of Jewishness fitting specific occasions appear to be legion. For example, in one evacuation order, people over sixty-five, or persons possessing the Iron Cross First Class, or living in mixed marriage, or those persons who were childless were spared. As a result Klemperer begins to wonder whether there is a certain confusion in policy in the Third Reich towards Jews, prompting him to ask, "Nach welchem Prinzip verfahren wird, ist vollkommen dunkel, wahrscheinlich wird aufs wildeste, partikularistischste, chaotischste durcheinanderregiert" (K, 2, 179). Klemperer cites yet another example of the SS wanting to deport all the Jewish workers at Zeiss-Ikon and meeting with resistance from the company officials who argue that the Jewish workers were necessary for the war effort. This familiar issue in the historiography of the Third Reich of the conflict between institutions that acted in strict accordance with the ideological agenda of the regime and those that based their decisions on more pragmatic concerns was resolved in this case – temporarily – in favor of pragmatism. This once again undercuts the belief that ideology invariably prevailed in the Third Reich, the belief that despite the pressures of total war, the imperative to exterminate the Jews was still an all powerful obsession.⁶

Adding to the demythologization process of the holocaust is the meticulous description of the everyday life of Jews in the Third Reich. Klemperer notes, "Freitag ist z. B. sehr gefährlich ..." (K, 2, 215). This is the day when the Gestapo preferred to make house calls. On this day everything could be a provocation. Smoking a pipe with tea leaves, keeping a diary, reading a tabloid, possessing "Aryan" ration cards – all these were serious transgressions for Jews and punishable, as Klemperer notes, by internment and eventually execution. Sunday afternoon, by contrast – the narrator avails himself of language that is redolent of his own pilloried Nazi argot – is the only time when one feels "gestapofrei" (K, 2, 155). One is forced to live in a so-called "Judenhaus," but at least the narrator makes it clear that this is still a house where all the daily routines and rituals occur, even if the narrator refers to these houses as "winzigen Ghettoforts" (K, 2, 198). Thus, Klemperer com-

plains of the tedium of peeling potatoes and carrying coal and tidying the apartment. Like any ambitious writer, he also complains of the difficulties preventing him from finishing his manuscript. But then in the midst of this general despair, normality suddenly breaks through the narrative fabric of the holocaust. He is invited to the Seliksohns, another couple defined by the Nazis as being of mixed descent, where he eats a very typically German specialty – rhubarb pie – and smokes a good cigar.

Interestingly enough, in Klemperer's diaries normality and horror are continually juxtaposed with one another. The holocaust is thus transformed from a small repertoire of horrifying narratives to a seemingly countless number of actions and movements, some conforming to the principal narratives and others, curiously enough, defying the well known narratives of Auschwitz and extermination. For example, Seliksohn is in a concentration camp because of his associations with the *Vorwärts* and the Social Democrats, but, instead of being murdered, according to the expected narrative, is then released and allowed to remain in Dresden with his "Aryan" wife. Klemperer himself is interrogated at Gestapo headquarters in Dresden. One of his interrogators turns out to be the proverbial Nazi, venting all the classic anti-Semitic stereotypes and motifs shared by the Nazis and by the society at large, i.e., circumcision, deceitful conversion, tricksterism, exploitation, while his other interrogator behaves like a proper civil servant, using the "Sie" form and expressing no explicitly anti-Semitic animus. At the end of the interrogation, contrary to the expected narrative of torture and deportation, Klemperer is allowed to return home, realizing that, like so many, he could have disappeared (K, 7-8).

The apparently systematic infringement of the rights of Jews in the Third Reich is coupled with a Prussian-like meticulousness of oppression. The legal machinery of the state, Klemperer shows, intrudes into the little nooks and crannies of everyday life.⁷ Thus, Jews wearing the Star of David are forbidden to buy flowers. Shopping is only permitted for Jews from three to four in the afternoon. A higher education is prohibited for people who are classified as being of fifty percent mixed blood. Jews are forbidden to use Aryan laundries. Jews are not forbidden to listen to the radio, but cannot own radios. Jews are only allowed to go shopping for one hour and are not permitted to use the tram. Jews are not allowed to own shaving cream. These and other regulations show that Jews were not merely a useful scapegoat, but rather a national project comprising countless rules and regulations, ordinances and statutes, that attempted not only to confine the movements of a dangerous enemy, but also to define such categories as race, nationhood, civil society, capitalism, sexual purity, ethics, beauty – in other words, the essential categories that structure our individual and societal reality.

In the above-mentioned interrogation by the Gestapo, for example, Klemperer is immediately ordered to assume the identity of the Other. "Setz den Hut auf. Das ist doch bei euch so" (K, 2, 7). Klemperer as the assimilated German-Jewish professor is virtually ordered in what seems to be a stage play to become the heinous Jew for his Gestapo interrogator. Then the Gestapo officer defines his own identity: "Ich bin Protestant. Was bist du? Getauft? Das ist doch bloß getarnt." (K, 2, 7). The posing of the question, providing one's own answer, and then once again inventing the absolute dividing line between two mutually exclusive forms of being is the predictable solution to the anxiety caused by the apparent similarity of the two Germans. The use of the word "getarnt" is of course a staple topos in the lexicon of anti-Semitism. The Jew is metamorphosed into a threatening trickster figure, capable of assuming any form and committing any type of treachery. The interrogation almost resembles a catechism affirming truth and value. His Gestapo interrogator asks, "Du als Professor mußt doch das Buch kennen von (...) einem Levysohn, da steht das alles drin" (K, 2, 7). Again the imputation of a tribal category – "Levysohn" – and the reference to the Talmud as the repository of occult and hence demonic wisdom suggests a carefully worked out scheme of identity building, based on what Richard Hofstadter in another context calls a "paranoid style of thought."⁸ This is not difficult to comprehend when we remember the long tortuous process of German unification and the fragility of the German national identity. As Norbert Elias argues in a modern rendition of the *Sonderweg* argument,

However, the image which Germans had of themselves as Germans was profoundly affected by this centuries-long powerlessness of their country. Between them, their continuing identification as Germans and the relative weakness of Germany strengthened the dream-like character of the German self-image and the aura of unreality which often surrounded it. In this way, the tendency to build up an ideal picture of Germany was promoted, a we-ideal that was more idealistic and more divorced from sordid reality than in the case of practically every other country.⁹

To sustain this fantasy world, it was necessary to invest it with a Manichean structure, and what better figure was there to stand alongside the noble, heroic German apotheosized in Romanticism, than the Jew, demonized in Christian societies for centuries.

It is certainly not a new insight that apparently innocuous discourse harbors the central myths and belief systems of a given culture. In the interrogation between the German Gestapo officer and the German-Jewish professor of Romance languages, an entire cultural inventory is revealed. In

addition to establishing religious and tribal categories, sexual otherness is also established: "Bist du beschnitten? Es ist nicht wahr, daß das eine hygienische Vorschrift ist" (K, 2, 7). That circumcision might have a rational, medical explanation is summarily rejected. Instead, it is the castrated, maimed enemy that stands before him, who, if he has his way, will introduce a regimen of castration into the pure, sacral world of heroes. Tribal and sexual categories notwithstanding, moral otherness is also invoked: "Was war das für eine Bewegung mit deinen Pfoten? Du hast doch eben was gemaust" (K, 2, 8). The verb "mausen" – a slang word for underhandedness, trickery, and mischievousness – is a convenient projection of abject motives and impulses upon the enemy. The lofty motives are then allowed to reside with the speaker.¹⁰

The Gestapo officer's fantasy construction reaches its pinnacle when he asks the professor, "Wer wird nun den Krieg gewinnen? Wir oder ihr?" (K, 2, 8). To ask a member of one's own culture such a question, who has been raised in the same language and socialization norms, who has fought in the First World War for Germany, as the professor did, who has been a civil servant and a scholar of distinction in German cultural life, is a delusion that suggests a collective psychosis. Psychiatry – or at least psychoanalysis – has recognized the ubiquity of neurosis, but perhaps neither of these disciplines has ever found a term for a delusion that is universal or majoritarian. Certainly the variant of anti-Semitism that appeared in Germany on such a large and virulent scale between the two World Wars resembles in many ways a collective psychosis.¹¹ In closing the interrogation, the Gestapo officer exclaims, "Nu, ihr betet doch täglich um unsere Niederlage – zu Jahwe, so heißt es ja wohl. Das ist doch der jüdische Krieg. Adolf Hitler hat's gesagt – (pathetisch schreiend:) Und was Adolf Hitler sagt, das ist auch so" (K, 2, 8).

"Der jüdische Krieg" is a recurrent motif throughout the diaries. This is perhaps the diarist's most original insight into the daily horrors that envelop him. In the first volume of his diaries in April 1933, he already notes ingenuously, "Das Schicksal der Hitlerbewegung liegt fraglos in der Judensache. Ich begreife nicht, warum sie diesen Programmpunkt so zentral gestellt haben. an ihnen gehen sie zugrunde. Wir aber wahrscheinlich mit ihnen" (K, 1, 25). Eleven years later in July 1944, almost at the end of the diaries, after the diarist reads an article in the *Dresdener Zeitung* "Juden in der Normandie," he comes to what is for him a profound realization: "Sosehr ich mich dagegen gesträubt habe, der Jude ist in jeder Hinsicht Zentralpunkt der LTI, [the language of the Third Reich] der ganzen Epochen-Betrachtung" (K, 2, 547). Klemperer comes to this conclusion by noting that the first decree the victorious allies enact in liberated France is the abolition of the anti-Jewish laws. The second point that Klemperer notes is that as the war draws to a

close, the anti-Semitic animus of the regime increases, as if he recognizes the Sartreian insight that if the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would have to invent him. Certainly at this point in the fortunes of National Socialism one would have to ask why the Nazis kept returning to the propagandistic ploy of the eternal Jew. The simple answer is that they had nothing else. This was the driving idea, the prime mover that held their ideology, even more importantly, their world view together. The depredations of capitalism, the violent excesses of Bolshevism, the anxiety engendered by modernism – all these could be subsumed under the symbol of Judah. This is ultimately what Klemperer realizes at the end of the diaries in his entry of January 1945: “Jeder Tag predigt aufs neue, daß dieser Krieg für das 3. Reich wirklich der jüdische Krieg ist, daß ihn niemand zentraler und tragischer erleben kann als der in Deutschland festgehaltene und seiner Erziehung, Bildung, und Empfindung nach wirklich deutsche Sternjude” (K, 2, 638).

The thesis that anti-Semitism was a smokescreen for the machinations of capital or the imperatives of German imperialism is contradicted by the sheer intensity of experience contained in the diaries. As Norbert Elias astutely recognizes, “Sometimes, however, a course of action [the destruction of European Jewry] is determined by nothing stronger than a goal derived from a set of professed beliefs. The beliefs in question may, as we say, be extremely ‘unrealistic’ and irrational.’ They may, in other words, have a high fantasy content so that the fulfilment of aims demanded by them promises the acting group a high degree of immediate emotional satisfaction. As a result – at the level of social reality and in the longer term – such a fulfilment bring the carrier group no advantages other than the realization of their belief.”¹² In this sense National Socialism was a belief system, fulfilling all the criteria of a successful sect: the charismatic leader, the obedient cadres, the absolutist doctrine of belief, the well orchestrated set of rituals, the complete regimentation of its adherents, and the simplified, ultimate conspiracy, embodied in a well known enemy. All of these or most of these criteria conform to what we normally associate with a sect, with, however, one principal difference. National Socialism successfully became a mass sect that actually seized power over a nation-state. In discussing the “singularity” of National Socialism this should not be forgotten, since we can find various examples of mass sects, but nowhere do we find a sect actually taking over the reins of state. The discussion of National Socialism has often centered around the issue of whether it was a party or a *Bewegung* (movement), but it seems to defy the imagination of most historians that a sect, with a bizarre doctrine, could, to use Max Weber’s famous definition, gain a monopoly of force over a given territory.

One emendation could be made here. The doctrinal bizarreness charac-

teristic of most sects was missing in the case of National Socialism; in other words, the doctrine was not fundamentally alien to the normal everyday experience of Central Europeans. The Jew was identified in popular prejudice with the devil, with capital, with unsettling revolutionary movements. As Ernst Nolte has pointed out, the trauma that descended upon Europeans in the interregnum between the two world wars was Bolshevism.¹³ Even if we cannot accept the fanciful notion underlying the *Historikerstreit* that the holocaust initiated by the National Socialists was a preemptive strike against the genocide practiced by the Bolsheviks on the Kulaks and other class enemies, what was certain was that the fear of class revolution was all-pervasive. Who should be behind these unsettling developments in the popular mentality but the Jew!

Another difference between National Socialism and the traditional sect was its explicit will to power. Not content with serving as a model community in microcosm for other groups in society to eventually emulate or fostering a posture of exclusivity as a chosen elite, National Socialists actually entered the political arena, employing the methods of the radical parties of the time, borrowing from the Italian Fascists and the Bolsheviks the techniques and paraphernalia of mass appeal. Once the National Socialists were in power, they exploited the possibilities of theatre and other forms of public ritual to consolidate their faith. As George Mosse writes,

The theater was, in fact, an integral part of Nazi ideology, serving to reinforce the political liturgy of the movement. Mass meetings and the theater were intended to supplement each other. For this reason the liturgical Weihebühne, the 'Thing theater on which the volkish ideology was acted out, assumed special significance, presenting the liturgy of the movement through cultish plays meant to create a living community of faith. The National Socialist myth was acted out in dramatic and visual form as an act of religious worship in which masses of people participated.¹⁴

Klemperer recognizes the sect element in National Socialism in his memoirs and language study, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (1957). He recalls one female colleague at the German department in Dresden, who immediately after the *Machtergreifung* underwent a profound metamorphosis. Klemperer at first thinks that she must be in love, but when he asks, the reply is, "Sie müssen begreifen, daß ich ganz zum Führer gehöre."¹⁵ Klemperer attempts to grasp how someone so well versed in Enlightenment thought and the German classics could make such a commitment. His colleague's reply is again redolent of a religious sect: "Wo alle Gewißheit herkommt: aus dem Glauben.

Und wenn Ihnen das nichts sagt, dann – ja dann hat ja unser Führer doch recht, wenn er sich gegen die ... (sie schluckte die Juden noch gerade herunter und fuhr fort) gegen die sterile Intelligenz wendet” (LTI, 114).

After the total defeat and unconditional surrender of Germany Klemperer meets an old student, who greets him in a friendly way and tells Klemperer that he is glad that his former professor has managed to save himself. Klemperer remembers that the student was an ardent Nazi, who wore the party pin to class. When Klemperer asks him whether he has been rehabilitated, his former student answers that he has never applied for rehabilitation because, “Ich kann das nicht ableugnen, ich habe an ihn geglaubt” (LTI, 127). Bemused, Klemperer asks why he does not apply now after so many years and receives the answer: “Die anderen haben ihn mißverstanden, haben ihn verraten. Aber an ihn, an IHN glaube ich noch immer” (LTI, 127).

Klemperer discovers the cultic devotion to Adolf Hitler in what he refers to as “beide Volksschichten” – the intellectuals and the so-called person on the street. He also finds these convictions both at the beginning of the new regime as well as after the demise of the regime when, to use Friedrich Meinicke words, the “German catastrophe” was an established fact amid the ruins and the grisly images everywhere of European genocide (LTI, 117). Klemperer’s explanation is surprisingly modern. Instead of focusing his attention on socioeconomic or psychosocial factors, he examines the language of National Socialism, or better, its discourses. Curiously enough, he finds that “sie [the language of National Socialism] eng an das Christentum, genauer: an den Catholizismus lehnt ...” (LTI, 117). His examples are very persuasive. The sixteen men killed in the November putsch of 1923 are represented as martyrs. The flag they carried, Klemperer notes, is the “Blutfahne.” New initiates to the SS have to behold and touch the banner in order to be ordained (“geweiht”). On November 24 1935, the twelfth anniversary of the abortive putsch, Klemperer noted that Hitler referred to the sixteen who died as his “apostles” and at the funeral ceremony the topos was invoked: “Ihr seid auferstanden im Dritten Reich” (LTI, 119).¹⁶

Hitler himself, Klemperer argues, actively propagated his role and mission as redeemer, or as his followers were never weary of celebrating him as “der deutsche Heiland.”¹⁷ In July 1937 in Würzburg, Klemperer notes that Hitler proclaims, “Die Vorsehung führt uns, wir handeln nach dem Willen des Allmächtigen. Es kann niemand Völker- und Weltgeschichte machen, wenn er nicht den Segen dieser Vorsehung hat” (LTI, 119). “Vorsehung” und “ewig” are topos frequently used by the National Socialists. Hitler’s person is indelibly linked with the idea of providence, and his deeds are invariably hailed as eternal (LTI, 118-19). Another word frequently invoked in referring to Hit-

ler during this period is the word "heilig." Thus, *Mein Kampf* is a "holy work." The war against the Soviet Union is a "holy war" (LTI, 122). Even the word "Reich," Klemperer argues, is shrouded in mystical transcendence. It is not an ordinary body politic, but a political form that contains intimations of immortality. Especially the topos "Third Reich" is laden with religious connotations. Klemperer notes that this topos is an expression of a profound longing for redemption and unity:

Kirchen- und Religionsreiniger des Mittelalters, schwärmende Menschheitsreformer späterer Zeiten, Männer verschiedenster Richtung träumten von einer Ära, die auf Heidentum und Christentum, oder auf verderbtes Gegenwartschristentum, als vollkommenes Drittes Reich folgen soll, und sie hofften auf den Messias, der es heraufführen wird. (LTI, 125)¹⁸

What began as a small group of inspired followers gathered around a few occult societies, which was later to establish links with disaffected craftsmen and members of the lower middle class, burgeoned into a mass movement and political party. This is, however, not the end of the story. The narrative of the Third Reich is a religious and prophetic one, employed by the National Socialists not only to bring forth a new society, but also to engender a new species of man. This narrative was carefully embodied in a set of discourses. Klemperer poses the question that later becomes a central one in the history of discourse theory: "Ist dieses Netz wissentlich geknüpft, beruht es, um den Ausdruck des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts zu gebrauchen, auf Priestertrug?" (LTI, 126) Klemperer answers the question akin to the way discourse analysts today describe the phenomenon of hegemony and consent in modern societies: "Aber die Wirkung des einmal vorhandenen Netzes von sich aus scheint mir völlig gewiß; Der Nazismus wurde von Millionen als Evangelium hingenommen, weil er sich der Sprache des Evangeliums bediente" (LTI, 126). Discourse, in other words, is the primary building block of legitimation.

The origins of this sect began in the febrile atmosphere of *fin de siècle* Vienna. After a generation of stability for Jews in the Empire, the Jewish question once again was used by demagogues to mobilize disadvantaged groups in the Empire and provide them with what appeared to be a convincing reason for their malaise. All of the popular prejudices against Jews were uttered during this period, including the charge of ritual murder.¹⁹ In fact what we find at this time was that popular discourse was to a large extent defined by anti-Semitic tirades. As Hannah Decker writes of the most important of these demagogues Georg von Schönerer,

By 1882 Schönerer had fashioned anti-Semitism as a major disruptive force in Austrian political life. Threats, name-calling, character assassination and physical attacks were integral parts of his political style. He was a continually disruptive influence in Parliament. The deputies heard his invectives against 'finance Jews, Northern Railway Jews, Jew peddlers, press Jews, Jew swindlers' so often that debate at a crude level became customary. It is a measure of the latent anti-Jewish feeling in Austria that Schönerer, an obvious fanatic, was influential in setting the tone rather than the established forces turning their back on him.²⁰

Of course we know that Adolf Hitler was influenced by Schönerer as he was by the successful Social Democratic mayor of Vienna Karl Lueger, who employed anti-Semitism as a seemingly irresistible campaign weapon to defeat the Liberals at the turn of the century. Probably what we do not know enough about were the effect on popular opinion of the innumerable anti-Semitic pamphlets sold at newsstands in Vienna at this time, depicting in pornographic terms the heinous crimes of Jews against Aryan racial purity and morality.²¹ Since biological anti-Semitism came into vogue during this period and achieved considerable respectability at universities and among the scientific community in general, it would not be difficult to imagine that these paranoid fantasies of debauchery and corruption, such as were found in the regnant anti-Semitic press would have gained some nourishment from the dominant scientific discourse. How else could we explain the success of Otto Weininger's work, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903), whose main argument is Jewish effeminacy and inferiority and whose explicit message is that only by exterminating the Jew within ourselves can we achieve transcendence. Such strange figures as Guido von List (1865-1919) and Jörg Lanz v. Liebenfels (1874-1954) also made their appearance in public life at this time, combining esoteric theosophy with racial anti-Semitism and the superiority and salvation of the Germanic race.

All of these individuals and currents of thought would have remained pathological symptoms of the epoch if the underlying discontent in Vienna had not suddenly found on the other side of the border in Munich and in the Weimar Republic in general after the First World War a society in trauma, ready to respond to any ideology, regardless of how macabre, as long as it promised the resurrection of German national identity. Joachim C. Fest states trenchantly, "In der Tat hat selten eine Epoche ein so bestimmtes Bewußtsein ihres eigenen Untergangs gehabt."²² In this atmosphere of dislocation and turmoil, it is not surprising then that sects like the Guido von List Society and the Thule Society sprang up in Munich. These societies published books and pamphlets and established the underpinnings of the National Socialist

ideology.²³ The latter society preached a mythical belief quite prevalent in Germany after the Great War that a *Führer* or *Retter* (savior) would come and lead his enslaved people to wholeness and unity. The Thule Society, as it turned out, also boasted some of the most important figures in the National Socialist hierarchy as members.²⁴

Most of this is already familiar to the diarist, who is an intellectual and as a result of his background in Romance languages and his work on Diderot, is also an encyclopedist.²⁵ In July 1942 he notes in an entry to his diary when his friend Katz remarks that "Hitler sei von spezifisch österreichischer Politik, von Schönerer und Lueger ausgegangen" (K, 2, 181). Klemperer also refers to the writings of Count Gobineau, Houston Stuart Chamberlain, Alfred Rosenberg, as well as a whole array of now forgotten literary luminaries in the Third Reich. One of the fascinating curiosities of the diaries is that the diarist is strictly confined in his reading choices to only those works which he detests and which have contributed to his persecution. Because of the unavailability of other literature, Klemperer is compelled to read *Mein Kampf*, *Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, as well as Nazi fiction and countless newspaper articles by leading National Socialist spokesmen. This is one of the rare anomalies revealed by the diaries that a non-National Socialist intellectual actually becomes involved with Nazi literature.²⁶ Axel Eggebrecht's comment is probably representative of the non-Nazi intelligentsia of the Weimar Republic when he writes, "Although we perceived the great danger of Hitler, we did not take the man seriously. For aesthetic reasons, we found the man inferior. After all, such a character could not rule over Germany, nothing could come of this."²⁷

The diarist of course does not have the luxury of rejecting Hitler on aesthetic grounds, since the only literature available to him is Nazi literature. Reading the Nazi journal *Reich*, the diarist comments on a feature article by Goebbels appropriately entitled "Der Führer" from December 31, 1945: "Der Führer' so maßlos verherrlichend, daß die Überschrift ebensogut heißen könnte: "Der Heiland"" (K, 2, 635). Just as Hitler is increasingly deified as the war draws to a close, so is the Jew in Nazi literature increasingly lurking behind every enemy and every obstacle to Germany's victory. The narrator appears to relish giving examples of the incessant preoccupation with the Jew. Klemperer cites the *Dresdener Zeitung* from January 11, 1945 in which Churchill's works are allegedly to be translated into Hebrew, where they will be "best understood" (K, 2, 639). The Sunday edition from January 13/14 of the *Dresdener Zeitung* has as its feature article: "Juden-Lord zahlt riesige Schmiergelder. Ungeheurer Bestechungsskandal um Henry Melchett-Mond" (K, 2, 639). Further, the *Dresdener Zeitung* of January 25, 1945 features

an article about Walter Lippmann: "Jud Lippmanns zynisches Bekenntnis' namlich 'Auslieferung Europas an die Bolschewisten.'" Not having heard of the famous journalist and political analyst, the diarist comments, "Er ist wohl der Leitartikler der 'New York Herald Tribune'" (K, 2, 647).

In reading Nazi literature, the diarist also becomes aware of Nazi *Wissenschaft*. The implications are horrifying. The entire machinery and resources of the state create and legitimate their own areas of research, methodologies, and research institutions. Professorships and departments are created. Scholarships and research grants are given, all illustrating the Foucaultian maxim that it is power and ideology that ultimately determine intellectual endeavor, which in turn generates its own forms of discourse. The diarist notes this on several occasions when he remarks, "Man ist artfremd oder Jude bei 25 Prozent jüdischen Blutes, wenn ein Teil der Großeltern Jude war. Wie im Spanien des 15. Jahrhunderts, aber damals ging es um den Glauben. Heute ist es Zoologie + Geschäft" (K, 1, 21). Just as the "Kulturwissenschaften" have established themselves as the dominant paradigm in the humanities today, so did "Rassenkunde" or "Völkerpsychologie" become the dominant paradigm in Germany in the 1930s.²⁸ This is easily explainable, since, once again, as Elias notes, the majority in the Nazi hierarchy comprised semi-educated men, frustrated in their career ambitions, blaming their failures on the "system" that had refused to recognize their genius.²⁹ In short, Nationalist Socialist scholarship had persisted in defending an approach that had for the most part been seriously questioned by the academic community a generation earlier.³⁰ However, consistent with the practices and ideology of National Socialism, defending raciology (*Rassenkunde*) became not only an objective search for truth, according to established scholarly conventions, but also a "struggle" (*Kampf*) to establish raciology as the dominant paradigm against the intellectual hegemony of Jews and leftists. Thus, the various institutions in Nazi Germany had their own academic and scholarly units (*wissenschaftliche Einrichtungen*). Publications were frequent and expeditions were launched to study other races in places that were regarded at the time as exotic, such as Palestine and Tibet. Scholars like H. F. K. Günther made names for themselves with countless publications on race and character, phrenology and personality. As Bodo Mrozek notes,

Das Ausmaß dieses nationalsozialistischen Wissenschaftsnetzes sei nicht zu unterschätzen: Die mit einem äußerst großzügigen Etat ausgestatteten Forschungsverbände (1944 fast 1,6 Millionen Reichsmark) hätten zeitweilig 800 Mitarbeiter beschäftigt.³¹

What is disturbing is that scholars could attempt or even succeed in making a so-called paradigm shift after the defeat and discrediting of

National Socialist scholarship and reestablish their intellectual credentials. Hence not only could the persecuted diarist Klemperer return to the academic world but also famous theoreticians in raciology like Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss could also now claim that racial anti-Semitism was humbug and that he was basically interested – even after having joined the SS – in the “psychology” of cultures the whole time.³² Even more disturbing, as the recent *Historikerstreit* in Germany shows, is how established left-wing or liberal historians in the Federal Republic were intimately linked with National Socialist ideologies or even practical politics, and after the war merely changed color and became established leftist or liberal historians.³³

An even more interesting question raised by the narrator is the influence of the mass media upon popular consciousness. Carefully, almost pedantically, the diarist cites articles from the *Reich* and the *Dresdener Zeitung* to illustrate the systematic attempt by the Nazis to convince the German citizenry of the universal guilt of Jewry and its responsibility for the Second World War. But does controlling the machinery of popular discourse necessarily mean that popular discourse will invariably succumb?³⁴ The narrator continually asks questions like “Wie tief haftet der Antisemitismus im Volke?” (K, 2, 372) or “Wie weit wirkt der Rundfunk?” (K, 2, 388). On one of these occasions he approvingly quotes someone else’s programmatic answer to this question: “Wäre das Volk wirklich judenfeindlich, dann wäre bei dieser Hetze längst kein einziger von uns mehr am Leben” (K, 2, 379). This is probably one of the passages that enabled the book to become a bestseller in Germany. In reality, the diarist never really comes to a secure conclusion about this question. On one occasion he goes as far as to say, “Deutschland müsse von vorn anfangen, in kleinen Verhältnissen, und mit dem Abc der Moral, ohne die Macht, zu schaden” (K, 2, 325). Still on another occasion he can flatly assert, “Es wird mir immer deutlicher, daß der Nationalsozialismus im Kern ein deutsches Gewächs ist, soviel Fremdes er auch übernimmt” (K, 2, 209). On the other hand, he states the contrary thesis, revealing a more sophisticated notion of National Socialism as a synthesis of modernity and tradition: “Der Nationalsozialismus adaptiert Faschismus, Bolschewismus, Amerikanismus, verarbeitet alles in teutsche Romantik” (K, 2, 210).³⁵

The diarist vacillates between pronouncements like “Wo bleibt die instinktive Rassenfeindschaft? Nirgends unter den männlichen und weiblichen Bureau- und Fabrikleuten des Betriebes ist Antisemitismus zu spüren” (K, 2, 381) and then quotes his housing agent, “Unschuldig ist niemand in Deutschland” (K, 2, 241). It is important for the critical reader that Klemperer inadvertently relativizes his standpoint by citing other positions and arguments. The difficulty with the popular reception of the diaries was that Klemperer’s

pronouncements were taken at face value. It is flattering to read from the work of a German Jew who suffered horribly during the Third Reich that not all Germans were fanatical anti-Semites. On the other hand, who would be obtuse enough to propose such an argument? Nevertheless, it is undeniable that anti-Semitism was a potent force in German politics and society in general. The diarist's point of view sometimes resembles that of the outsider who for a while was allowed to become a tolerated insider only to be expelled again in the cruelest imaginable way.³⁶ How else could we explain the obsequious remark to his housing agent, "Sie sind ganz unschuldig" only to receive the previously quoted statement of the collective guilt thesis. Even the examples that the diarist offers to show that not every single German is a rabid anti-Semite are questionable. For example, in one passage he reports frequently passing a schoolyard and having the same experience: the older pupils pass him without insulting him while the younger pupils shout anti-Semitic barbs. The diarist's interpretation is interestingly problematic: "In die Kleinen also ist es hineingetrichtert worden – bei den größeren wirkt es schon nicht mehr" (K, 2, 313).

This optimistic and simplistic explanation is contradicted by too many other accounts depicting the widespread effect of anti-Semitism on the minds of children in Germany. Who can forget Ernst Toller's moving account of his childhood at the beginning of the century:

Ich habe ein Kleidchen an. Ich stehe auf dem Hofe unseres Hauses an einem Leiterwagen. Er ist groß, größer als Marie, so groß wie ein Haus. Marie ist das Kindermädchen, sie trägt rote Korallen um den Hals, runde, rote Korallen. Jetzt sitzt Marie auf der Deichsel und schaukelt. Durchs Hoftor kommt Ilse mit ihrem Kindermädchen. Ilse läuft auf mich zu und reicht mir die Hand. Wir stehen eine Weile so und sehen uns neugierig an. Das fremde Kindermädchen unterhält sich mit Marie. Nun ruft sie Ilse: 'Bleib da nicht stehen, das ist ein Jude.' Ilse läßt meine Hand los und läuft fort. Ich begreife den Sinn der Worte nicht, aber ich beginne zu weinen, hemmungslos.. Das fremde Mädchen ist längst mit Ilse davongegangen. Marie spricht auf mich ein, sie nimmt mich auf den Arm, sie zeigt mir die Korallen, ich mag nicht die Korallen, ich zereiß die Kette.³⁷

This bitter recollection is coupled with the irony that, as Toller says, "Die Juden fühlten sich als Pioniere deutscher Kultur" in the border areas populated by both Germans and Poles.³⁸

Even a stronger indictment of German anti-Semitism can be found in Hermann Glaser's memoirs, which record the response to the *Kristallnacht* in Franconia and the jubilant response to attend a rally called by Julius Streicher,

celebrating the atrocities the following day. Glaser makes an important connection, which Klemperer refuses to make, writing,

The National Socialist crimes were possible only because the perpetrators found incredible support for their ideology and propaganda, their actions and plans; because the enthusiasm for the *Führer* and the Nationalist Socialist regime could not be shaken, not even by undisguised barbarism. The aura of mass murder was hardly scratched until the end of the war; the violation of civilization was not a mere collapse, it was total devastation.³⁹

What Glaser the memoirist is capable of doing and Klemperer the diarist cannot is to find time for the power of reflection, since of course Glaser is writing retrospectively and Klemperer is writing under the pressure of daily events without the luxury of retrospection. This is of course only part of the story. Both chroniclers are limited by their position in German society and their relationship to the holocaust. Glaser is a German-Christian intellectual and literary scholar who condemns National Socialism for its crimes against what he refers to as "an ethical culture" as well as "the concept of enlightenment."⁴⁰ In this endeavor he is influenced by the international opprobrium and feeling of collective guilt and shame entertained by German intellectuals after the war. Klemperer's, on the other hand, is the response of the German Jew who identified with Germany and believed up to the *Machtergreifung* in the so-called "German-Jewish symbiosis," or even more accurately that Jews could be accepted as good Germans, since Klemperer's own Jewish identity, as recorded in the diaries, is profoundly ambivalent.⁴¹

What Klemperer does not grasp in his diaries is the disparity between belief and act. It is undeniable that anti-Semitism was a highly developed belief system actively or tacitly adhered to by vast sections of German society. This does not overlook the fact that this belief system was highly intricate, encompassing a variety of strands and levels from everyday anti-Semitism to "dem Antisemitismus der Vernichtung."⁴² For most people there was an unbreachable barrier between harboring anti-Semitic prejudices and outright mass murder. For many, however, the barrier was permeable, and one could easily move into the final stage of "eliminationist antisemitism" when the occasion arose or when the regimen rewarded or permitted it with impunity. The holocaust, as Christopher R. Browning astutely notes, depended upon a variety of factors, none of which provides a complete explanation in itself. Perhaps what unleashed all these factors, Browning remarks, is the fact that the final solution was conducted as a "race war" against a dangerous, unappeasable enemy.⁴³ Still, railing against the machinations of world Jewry and actually

meeting an individual Jew was a fundamentally different experience. For a variety of reasons it is not so easy for most human beings to harm another human being, but at the level of ideology and fantasy every kind of crime is possible. The historian Walter Grab recalls the *Anschluss* in 1938 when he was rounded up with other Austrians of Jewish descent in Vienna and humiliated by cleaning up the feces of his Nazi persecutors in a "Jewish gymnasium." When he suddenly notices a former classmate among his Nazi tormentors, he discovers a very important insight:

I felt that he did not want to lower me, the Jew who he knew, but the anonymous Jew, the Jewish stereotype of Nazi racial madness. 'The Jew' is vermin which needs to be squashed, destroyed, but the classmate Grab who he knew as a fellow human being was excluded from this rule.⁴⁴

For most people the intrusion of an individual reality into a stereotype, regardless of how abhorrent the stereotype may be, makes it difficult to sustain the stereotype. Thus, Klemperer, the Jewish professor, publicly humiliated and persecuted, presumably presented a picture at variance with the established stereotype of "the eternal Jew." Hence the positive response by many of his fellow Dresdeners. On the other hand, as Christopher R. Browning explains, the opposite process can also occur. What made it possible for Police Battalion 101 to commit atrocities in Poland was a "distancing" effect, based on the following ideological premise: "Als Kampf zwischen 'unserem Volk' und 'dem Feind' schafft der Krieg eine polarisierte Welt, in der 'der Feind' leicht verdinglicht und aus der menschlichen Gemeinschaft ausgestoßen wird."⁴⁵

As a source illuminating the holocaust, Klemperer's diaries must be approached with caution. Not only does his specific point of view as a German-Jewish professor, caught between contradictory impulses of assimilation and the preservation of his Jewish identity obviously color his judgments, but also his perceptions of reality in the Third Reich are molded by currents of belief and feeling that do not permit the diarist the possibility of verifying his impressions or experiences by having recourse to other sources or areas of knowledge. This becomes especially evident with regard to the influence and power of the Gestapo. Throughout the diaries, one encounters such statements as "Es gibt nichts Grauenhafteres als die jüdische Angst vor der Gestapo" (K, 2, 584). Indeed, the fear of the Gestapo was real and shared by nearly all members of German society at this time. Jews, of course, were understandably terrified of the secret police. However, recent studies have shown that the omnipotence of the Gestapo was a mere myth, propagated by perpetrators and victims alike: "The aura of a perfectly operating secret police was pre-

eminently an image created by means of propaganda, which was meant to intimidate but also to conceal its own structural defects."⁴⁶

The Gestapo, according to the most recent findings, was short on personnel and resources. Most of its members were either from the old Weimar regime or young careerists, intent on rising in the administration. The ideological commitment of the secret police varied, from the opportunism entertained by young, ambitious academics to the bureaucratic indifference of the Weimar civil servants. As with many aspects of National Socialist society, efforts were made to construct "a carefully staged representation of the secret police."⁴⁷ In all fairness to Klemperer and his horrible predicament, the atmosphere in the Third Reich lent itself to all kinds of paranoid projections and fears. More horrifying, however, was the fact that the Gestapo depended for its success on "large numbers of voluntary informers."⁴⁸ This, of course, meant that not only Jews were denounced, but any person who aroused the envy or ire of another fellow citizen. Revenge and self-enrichment were two of the most frequent motives for denunciations.

What we find then – and this is reflected in the diaries – is that a culture of fear emerged in Germany, however not only from the top down, as Klemperer repeatedly claims, but also from the bottom up, based on the collaboration of groups and individuals in society. Civil society, in other words, had become corrupted and demoralized. It is then a small step after the war to offer the following rationalization of all the misery and corruption that such a society could engender.

The model of the SS – or Gestapo – State as an unscrupulous clique dominating the German people, although a historical representation, provided absolution and so become a founding myth of both German states which managed to establish that Germans had been absolutely overpowered by their criminal rulers, that they had been completely helpless against the Nazi Socialist tyranny of violence, and thus able to conjure away the Gestapo and the SS as some kind of social enclave not really part of German society.⁴⁹

Klemperer repeatedly returns to this theme throughout the diaries. He is incapable of making the connection between his Nazis persecutors and Germans in general. Such remarks as, "Irgendwo müssen die Anhänger des Regimes doch wohl sitzen, irgendwo muß die nationalsozialistische Propaganda doch wirken" (K, 2, 186) establish the tenor of the diaries and contribute to their favorable reception in Germany. This is not to argue that anti-Semitism was a one-dimensional phenomenon, easily explicable by pointing to German history and drawing the simplistic conclusion that all Germans were more or

less anti-Semites. As David Bankier tells us in perhaps the most penetrating study of anti-Semitism from the point of view of everyday attitudes and behavior, that anti-Semitism was not a homogeneous mission for the German public. Bankier argues persuasively that in order to understand the phenomenon of anti-Semitism more deeply, one has to examine such categories as class, region, degree of urbanization, as well as religious denomination. Further, anti-Semitism has to be looked at as a historical process rather than as an indissoluble category in the twelve years of National Socialist rule. The responses of the German public to anti-Semitic measures varied in different places at different periods of the history of the Third Reich. For example, Bankier writes regarding the violence against Jews in the summer of 1935 that "the violent disturbances contradict two widespread images: the one of a terrorized German population whose silence enabled the Nazis to pursue antisemitic persecution; the other of a brainwashed society mobilized to endorse unconditionally any sort of Nazi policy."⁵⁰ The motives and behavior of the citizenry assumed a complexity that comprised both utilitarian and ideological factors. While most Germans condemned outright violence and persecution, they did not disapprove of measures to remove Jews from public office. Bankier sums up by writing, "We rarely find rejection of Nazi antisemitism on ethical principles, or indignation based on humanitarian values."⁵¹

Probably it is fair to say is that Klemperer's diaries lend themselves to the revisionist interpretation of the holocaust that has emerged since reunification, which attempts to exonerate Germans from their collective guilt and permit them to return to what some German historians have called a "normal" nation.⁵² The fact that the diaries have been composed by a Jew adds special credence to this claim. Since the tendency in German historiography even before reunification has been to relativize the holocaust and National Socialism, works that support these arguments immediately find public and scholarly acceptance.⁵³ Klemperer's thesis of creating a dichotomy between Nazis and Germans, however, does not only belong to revisionist historiography, but also to the traditional wishes and longings of German Jews. The Germany of Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment, which promised an end to exclusion as well as an entry to the blessings of *Kultur* to those people who have been declared incapable of appreciating it, is the ideal Germany which Klemperer refuses to renounce.⁵⁴ Thus, the absolute divide between Goldhagen's and Klemperer's thought exists only in popular polemics. In reality, both writers are linked by their principal thesis and their style of analysis. Both claim that "the Jewish war" was the prime mover of the holocaust, and both ultimately invoke a mythical perpetrator – in Goldhagen's case, the German, and in Klemperer's case, the Nazi.

NOTES

1. This term is coined by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996), 1996.
2. 1996. Volker Ullrich, "Hitlers willige Mordgesellen" in *Ein Volk von Mördern*, ed. Julius H. Schoeps (Hamburg: Campe, 1996). Ullrich's reference to Klemperer as "dieses genauesten aller Beobachter des NS-Alltags, zum Vergleich heranzieht, dann wird man gegenüber dem Bild einer durch und durch antisemitisch infizierten Gesellschaft selbst für die Jahre der Diktatur Zweifel anmelden" (91). The reception of Klemperer and his diaries have not been unequivocally positive in Germany. Rafael Seligmann, for example, writes sarcastically, "Je länger Hitler tot ist, desto mehr lieben die Deutschen ihre toten Juden. Jüngster Hebräer-Darling ist der Dresdner Romanist Victor Klemperer. Der Tote wird mit Preisen überhäuft, seine Tagebücher werden gekauft und zelebriert. Der Klemperer-Nostalgie kommt nicht von ungefähr. Denn seine heutigen Jünger teilen die politische Unbedarftheit ihres dahingegangenen Meisters" in *Der Spiegel* 15 April 7, 1997: n. pag. Online. Internet. 1 March 1998.. Even more damning is Bernd Henningsen's assessment of Klemperer: "Der Romanist und monomanische Tagebuchschreiber Victor Klemperer, der nur dank seiner 'arischen' Ehefrau überleben konnte, wird nach 1945 zu einem blinden Gefolgsmann Stalins und übersieht die Wiederkehr des Totalitären um ihn herum – in Dresden, Berlin und Greifswald. Weder die akademische Sozialisation durch die deutsche Universität noch die eigene Erfahrung des Totalitären selbst hat ihn gegen totalitäre Politik immunisiert" in "Von der Einsamkeit und Freiheit des Wissenschaftlers (Part 2)" *Die Neue Gesellschaft. Frankfurter Hefte*. December 1996: n. pag. Online. Internet. 25 February 1998.
3. Norbert Frei, "Ein Volk von 'Endlösern'" in *Ein Volk von Mördern*, 97. Frei's reference is to Klemperer's description of the varied response by ordinary Germans to the edict that all Jews in Germany had to wear the Star of David.
4. The diary of Anne Frank is, of course, a notable exception. The pathos and horror are enhanced here, since the holocaust is seen through the prism of a young teen-age girl.
5. Victor Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten: Tagebücher 1942–1945* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1995), 154. All references will be taken from this edition and designated (K + page no.).
6. This narrative ultimately does prove the thesis referred to above that ideology prevailed over more pragmatic concerns in the Third Reich, because at the end of the diary, the Jewish workers, despite the protestations of the managers at Zeiss-Ikon, are sent to extermination camps.
7. This is in fact a recrudescence of earlier practices in the nineteenth century against Jews. As Hannah S. Decker shows, anti-Jewish laws and regulations were commonly implemented in Austro-Hungary in the nineteenth century before the liberal reforms of 1867 and were not invented by the National Socialists. Even the address form *der Jude so und so* was a part of public discourse during this period. See *Freud, Dora, and Vienna 1900* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 19.
8. Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage, 1967).
9. Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford: Polity, 1996), 320.
10. It also has interesting sexual connotations regarding the male genitalia and sexual intercourse, something for Neo-Freudians to ponder on.
11. Eric L. Santer comments on this aspect of National Socialism in his study of Daniel Paul Schreber: "It was obvious that paranoia had played a crucial role in the ideology of National Socialism, that it had enjoyed the status of a quasi-official state ideology, even

religion" in *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), IX.

12. Elias, *The Germans*, 313. See also on the cultic dimensions of National Socialism, Sabine Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden: Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten und Symbole* (Greifswald: SH-Verlag, 1996).

13. Ernst Nolte, *Die faschistischen Bewegungen* (Munich: DTV, 1966). In his gnomic style, Nolte asserts, "Es gibt keinen Faschismus ohne die Herausforderung des Bolschewismus" (11). Fest goes much further than Nolte, characterizing the period after the First World War as that of "die grosse Angst." The great and all pervasive fear was not only rooted in frightening visions of the Bolshevization of Europe, but also in the violent, well nigh hysterical response to modernity among certain segments of society in Germany. See Fest, *Hitler: Eine Biographie* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1973), 129-151.

14. George L. Mosse, "Nazi Polemical Theater: The Kampfbühne," in *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 214.

15. Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1975), 113. All further citations will be designated (LTI, page no.).

16. For an analysis of the cultic elements of National Socialism, see Saul Friedlander, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden: Die Jahre der Verfolgung 1933-1939* (Munich: Beck, 1997). Friedlander coins the very suggestive phrase "Erlösungsantisemitismus" to explain the profound animus against German and European Jewry, an animus he argues which was originally cultivated in the Bayseuth Circle around Richard Wagner. See 87-128.

17. Klemperer cites a telling example of the Nazi youth leader Baldur von Schirach, who labelled Hitler's birthplace in Braunau "Wallfahrtsort der deutschen Jugend." (LTI, 121).

18. George L. Mosse discusses the intellectual antecedents of the Third Reich symbolism in "Death, Time, and History: Volkish Utopia and its Transcendence." Mosse sketches the following development: "In the fourteenth century, Joachim of Fiore had set the tone for the eschatological counting of time, but even during the nineteenth century Fiore's three universal empires had been replaced by a more restrictive German interpretation: the First Empire of the Middle Ages and the Second Empire of Bismarck's state would lead into a Third Reich, which would finally begin to fulfill of the Germanic spirit that had been kept intact, if underground, throughout the ages." See *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality*, 81. Mosse's significant contribution – and here he complements Klemperer's work – is to discuss, among others, such forgotten figures as Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, Ernst Wiechert, Paul Ernst, all of whom were widely read and who, according to Mosse, were part of "an apocalyptic tradition," a utopian blueprint that emphasized the immortality of the Volk.

19. Decker, *Freud, Dora, and Vienna 1900*, 36.

20. Decker, *Freud, Dora, and Vienna 1900*, 35.

21. Alan Bullock notes this influence on Hitler's thought in his biography of the Nazi leader, but gives no further documentation. See *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (New York: Bantam, 1961), 16. Joachim C. Fest also cites the Ostara pamphlets, published by Jörg Lanz v. Liebenfels, which, according to Fest, had a circulation of around a hundred thousand. See *Hitler: Eine Biographie*, 59. In addition, there was also the magazine published by the movement led by Schönerer, entitled *Der Scherer*, first published in May of 1899, as well as an array of other pamphlets and magazines circulating in Austria during this period. See Fest, 62.

22. Fest, *Hitler: Eine Biographie*, 134.

23. Mosse, "The Mystical Origins of National Socialism," in *Masses and Man*, 197-213.

24. Wilhelm Frick, Alfred Rosenberg, Rudolf Hess, Julius Streicher, and Hans Frank

were all members of the Thule Society. All of these figures were fanatical National Socialists who occupied key positions in the National Socialist leadership, exercising in varying degrees a pernicious influence upon the devastation and genocidal activities from 1933 to 1945. Thule was actually mythically related to the lost continent of Atlantis, the principal difference being that Thule was populated by a race of Germanic super beings who, after the decline of Thule, fled to Tibet. When the German fatherland was in danger, they were supposed to return, led by a new messiah, to save the German people. See for a detailed bibliography and summary of the Thule Society and its relationships to the *Deutsche Arbeiter Partei* and other groups in Munich, Regina Zoller, "Die Thule Gesellschaft: Nationalsozialismus und Okkultismus," Internet. 1 March 1998. Available <http://www.ref.ch/zh/infokst/thule.html>.

25. Klemperer writes in his study of the language of National Socialism, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (1957), that after he had lost his chair in Dresden he began working on a book on the French Enlightenment: "Die so unmodernen und längst von jedem, der etwas auf sich hielt, geschmähten Aufklärer, die Voltaire, Montesquieu und Diderot, waren immer meine Lieblinge gewesen." See *LTI* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1975), 17.

26. In *LTI* Klemperer describes vividly the resistance he had to overcome to read these works, once again suggesting the difficulties intellectuals had in confronting National Socialism and assessing its appeal (17).

27. Axel Eggebrecht, "In Berlin There Were People Who Were Willing to Help," in Jörg Wollenberg, ed., *The German Public and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1945: "No One Participated, No One Knew"* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1996), trans. Rado Pribic, 46.

28. This may also seem misleading or simplistic, since, as Verena Stolcke insightfully shows, the concept of culture and how it is used in practical politics is embedded in the same chauvinist categories as race. See "Talking Culture: New Boundaries, New Rhetorics of Exclusion in Europe," *Current Anthropology* 36 (No 1, February 1995): 1-24.

29. Elias, *The Germans*, 315.

30. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. notes that the concept of race still exerted an influence over the academic community in the 1930s, but was already through the efforts of the fledgling discipline of cultural anthropology, i. e., the efforts of Franz Boas and his colleagues, under siege. Nonetheless, confusion still existed between such relationships as race and nationality and race and culture during this period. It is also important to remember that race as a paradigm held sway from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and only at the beginning of the twentieth century was severely challenged. A work like Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* seemed at the time of its publication in 1916 to be a swan song to the decline of traditional elites and their values and did not gain the acceptance of the academic community. See for an able synopsis of these intellectual currents, Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 55-69.

31. Bodo Mrozek, "Hitlers willige Wissenschaftler," *Die Weltwoche* July 3, 1997: n. pag. Online. Internet. 15 February 1998.

32. A more complicated case of divided loyalties and ambivalent motives of academics and intellectuals in the Third Reich can hardly be found than in Peter Weingart's study of Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss: *Doppel-Leben: Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss: Zwischen Rassenforschung und Widerstand* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1995).

33. This was possible, because the accepted approach used by historians in the Third Reich – "Volksgeschichte" – was "inhaltlich völkisch und antisemitisch, aber methodisch 'innovativ.'" See Bodo Mrozek, "Hitlers willige Wissenschaftler." Detlev Peukert advances a more comprehensive explanation, arguing that National Socialist scholarship and its

lethal applications did not constitute a paradigm shift, but merely involved an extension of preceding methods in the sciences that had been applied in the 1920s. In fact, Peukert goes so far as to argue that the final solution marked the failure of previous attempts by the social sciences to solve the problems of modernization in "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science," David F. Crew, *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945* (London: Routledge, 1994), 274–299. Peukert presents a provocative thesis: "Rather, what was new about the 'final solution' in world-historical terms was the fact that it resulted from a fatal racist dynamism present with the human and social sciences" (278).

34. David Bankier argues that the Nazis took draconic steps in the form of rallies and festivities to inculcate in the German public an anti-Semitic animus, but this did not reap the desired benefits. Soon after the *Machtergreifung* interest and participation waned. Bankier explains that "people became satiated with political activity and lost interest." See David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 16.

35. It is accurate to say that Klemperer's view of Germany is that of Lessing and Schiller – the Germany of the Enlightenment, a period that contained many contradictory cultural strands, but, nevertheless, stands for Klemperer in opposition to what he believes is the irrationality of Romanticism.

36. Klemperer's own academic career exemplifies the thesis of partial acceptance, since, although he published prolifically, never received a university chair, but instead had to settle for a chair at a polytechnic.

37. Ernst Toller, "Eine Kindheit in Deutschland," in *Selbstzeugnisse des deutschen Judentums 1861–1945*, ed. Achim von Borries (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1988), 32.

38. Toller, "Eine Kindheit in Deutschland," 31.

39. Hermann Glaser, "The Majority Could Have Stayed Away," in *The German Public and the Persecution of the Jews*, 18.

40. Glaser, 21.

41. Klemperer's countless utterances on the subject of Jewish identity would be the subject of another essay. Suffice it to say, that Klemperer reiterates many of the attitudes, often ambivalent, of the supposedly assimilated German-Jew regarding his Jewishness. For example, remarking on the Jewish identity, Klemperer writes in his diaries: "Vielleicht wollen wir Juden immer etwas anderes sein – die einen Zionisten, die anderen Deutsche. Aber was sind wir wirklich? Ich weiß es nicht. Und auch das ist eine Frage, auf die ich nie Antwort bekommen werde" (K, 2, 626).

42. The British historian, John C. G. Röhl, classifies anti-Semitism according to five categories: "Der Salon-Antisemitismus," "gesetzlicher Ausschaltung der Juden," "Der Pogrom-Antisemitismus," "Der Antisemitismus der Ausweisung," and "Der Antisemitismus der Vernichtung." See "Wilhelm II: 'Das Beste wäre Gas!'" in *Die Zeit* (No. 48): 13.

43. Christopher R. Browning, *Ganz Normale Männer: Das Reserve-Polizeibattalion 101 und die Endlösung in Polen*, trans. Jürgen Peter Krause (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1996). See also Karl Heinz Janssen, "Die Juden sind am Krieg schuld," in Menetekel: *Das Gesicht des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, eds., Peter Schönlein (Krakow: Bildungszentrum der Stadt Nürnberg, 1991), 369–83.

44. Walter Grab, "The Jews are Vermin, except for Grab," in *The German Public and the Persecution of the Jews*, 33.

45. Browning, 211.

46. Klaus Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, "Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society and Resistance," in Crew, *Nazism and German Society*, 167.

47. Mallmann, 167.

48. Mallmann, 168.

49. Mallmann, 169.
50. Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution*, 73.
51. Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution*, 73. This statement is valid, according to Bankier, in the years 1933 to 1938.
52. For a different interpretation of Klemperer's work as leading to a genuine and more honest normalization process, see Andreas Kunze, "Ordinary Germans: Notes on the Reception of Hitler's Willing Executioners in Germany" *Perspectives* (March 1998): 39. Kunze posits a suggestive thesis, looking for the roots of German anti-Semitism in German idealism in what Kunze calls "its purist (Reinheit-purity) and purificationist dimension in particular" (40).
53. For a more recent comprehensive treatment of German historiography, especially that of the New Right, see Stefan Berger, *The Search for Normality: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (Providence, R. I.: Berghahn, 1997).
54. David Sorkin writes, regarding the specific condition of German-Jewish culture on the eve of emancipation in 1780 that "The ideology of emancipation perpetuated specifically *Aufklärung* modes of thought well into the nineteenth-century" (8). Sorkin also adds that regeneration, realized through *Bildung*, formed the prerequisite for emancipation. In other words, one had to be worthy in the bourgeois sense of the word, in order to earn one's freedoms. See David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

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SUMMERING

I detta arbete undersöks hur minnet struktureras utgående från Victor Klemperers dagböcker. I dagböckerna beskriver Klemperer sitt eget öde tillika med ödet av andra judar som inte emigrerade under perioden 1933-1945.

Det som gör dagböckerna så betydelsefulla är deras så levande beskrivning av vardagen för ett av offren av förföljelserna. Klemperers dagböcker beskriver nämligen verkligheten utanför koncentrationslägrens fasor, i en europeisk storstad: Dresden, vars hela arsenal av antisemitism utförligt beskrivs och analyseras. Klemperer befriar detta, 1900-talets värsta fasa, från tabuns värld, där återgivning är omöjlig, och sätter in det i vardagens erfarenhetsvärld. Läsaren får en inblick i förföljelsens ansikte i och med att Klemperer beskriver hur den tar sig uttryck i offrens vardag. Detta utgör Klemperers bestående insats.

Med Klemperers minne som prisma får vi se förföljelserna inte enbart som en räkka illdåd och banaliteter, utan också som en livsstil – som en kultur av förtryck. Trots frånvaron av alla fasta livsramar består i denna kultur medborgarsamhället och finner tillräcklig styrka för att tro på hoppet som en allestädes närvarande princip. Mitt i detta krigstillstånd, där både samhället och staten står emot individen, förekommer fortfarande strukturering av minnet. Rikligt förekommande är beskrivningarna av individens strävan till att finna mening i en tillvaro där denna strävan monopoliseras av staten. Dagböckerna vittnar också om att gamla berättelser lever kvar i tider av extrem kris och dessutom att nya berättelser ständigt föds. Dessa berättelser utgör centralt källmaterial för en beskrivning av mentaliteten i den judiska identiteten i Tyskland.