

**Hans Friedrich Blunck:
Poet and Nazi
Collaborator, 1888–1961**

W. Scott Hoerle

Peter Lang

Hans Friedrich Blunck

Studies in Modern German Literature

Peter D. G. Brown

General Editor

Vol. 97



PETER LANG

Oxford • Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt/M. • New York • Wien

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Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek

Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <<http://dnb.ddb.de>>.

British Library and Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data:

A catalogue record for this book is available from *The British Library*, Great Britain, and from *The Library of Congress*, USA

ISSN 0888-3904

ISBN 3-03910-023-8

US-ISBN 0-8204-6292-6

© Peter Lang AG, European Academic Publishers, Bern 2003

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Printed in Germany

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Acknowledgements

Numerous individuals have contributed to the development and completion of this book. I must first acknowledge my debt to my adviser at Georgetown University, Roger Chickering, who provided diligent and thoughtful guidance throughout the preparation of my PhD dissertation, from which this book matured. I must also acknowledge the help and support of the additional faculty who assisted me: James Shedel, David Goldfrank, and Aviel Roshwald. Each provided guidance at critical junctures during either the writing of the dissertation or my career as a graduate student. In addition, I must thank my close friend David Timberlake, who offered important suggestions in the closing days of the book's preparation and has always been a valuable intellectual confidant. A generous grant from the German Academic Exchange Service enabled me to spend the academic year 1999–2000 in Kiel, Germany, where I researched Blunck's extensive *Nachlaß* at the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek*. The kind staff at the library eased my work enormously and made me feel as if I were home. I owe a special debt to Frau Dr. Kornelia Küchmeister, the archivist in charge of Blunck's *Nachlaß*. She could not have been more helpful. I must also thank the Blunck family, which granted me access to the poet's files. Finally, I must thank my own family, which has supported me in all of my scholarly pursuits.

This book is dedicated to my beloved wife, Ilaria.



Hans Friedrich Blunck, 1888–1961

Introduction

This study examines the life and artistic career of a poet and writer who collaborated with the Nazis. Hans Friedrich Blunck was an influential Third Reich *Literatus*. He was president of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (“Reich Literary Chamber”; RSK) from late 1933 until 1935 and president of a hitherto-unknown cultural embassy of his own invention, *Die Stiftung des deutschen Auslandswerks* (“Foundation for German Foreign Work”; DAW), until 1940. These aspects of his life, along with his literary work, have established his legacy. The stain of his association with the Nazis has been indelible.

When the Nazis seized power, Blunck was a representative of neo-romantic, traditional folk-styles who had seen successes in the 1920s, but whose literary career was in general decline. Known for his semi-historical works about the early Germanic peoples and his native Schleswig-Holstein, he had also written ballads, fairy tales, and poems in the old heroic style, often with pastoral themes. In an exaggerated, often sentimental way, he represented genres that had reached their zenith sixty years earlier and were now falling out of favor with the reading public. On account of his nationalistic, *völkisch* bent, he was nonetheless an agreeable choice to head the RSK, which had been founded by Joseph Goebbels. Not surprisingly, the Propaganda Minister was more interested in propaganda than popularity. The RSK joined writers in one comprehensive organization. It “unionized” them by making it illegal to publish without being a member. After a slow estrangement from the RSK, Blunck left the organization and formed the DAW. This international propaganda organization endeavored, through informal ties, to help foreign countries “understand” both the culture and political interests of Nazi Germany.

In the years since 1945, historians have tended to neglect writers like Blunck who played leading roles in the Third Reich, as well as the organizations in which they were involved. Indeed, although once well known, many writers of this caliber – and, in particular, Blunck – have been buried in the ashes of their complicity in the murderous

regime. Some scholars have applauded this neglect, arguing that such writers, their work, and their affiliations are not worth remembering. However, as a result of this mindset, the cultural influences that propelled the Nazis remain unclear.

The following study seeks to help fill this gap in the historical literature. Its purpose is to examine Blunck's life and works and then relate them to his collaboration with the Nazis. As will become clear early on, Blunck's life and works were informed by a passionate love for his native region of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany. During his childhood, Blunck learned of Schleswig-Holstein's and Lower Germany's mystical traditions of "democracy" and "freedom." His parents raised him with an awareness of the prehistoric origins in the region of the Germanic peoples. They also depicted Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany as Germany's cultural fount. Many of these beliefs were exaggerated and, in some respects, false. Nonetheless, as Blunck matured, he embraced them. In his literature, he exalted Lower Germany as the embodiment of "true" Germanic traditions. Likewise, his engagement in cultural and political affairs focused on promoting his region's art and history. Accordingly, he developed a vigorous loathing, fired by his own literary disappointments, for Berlin and its "asphalt" literature. The city's modern artistic movements, particularly Expressionism, he believed, were polluting German and Germanic traditions and ignoring time-honored provincial genres like those of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany.

For Blunck, the Nazi seizure of power represented an opportunity. Guided by the romantic, fantastical images he had collected since childhood, he believed the new regime would end Berlin's hegemony of so-called "smut" and "dirt" (as traditionalists often referred to Weimar art) and, thus, restore provincial writers like himself to their proper place as Germany's cultural élite. He also believed the regime would reinvigorate the "old Reich" in the spirit of the mythical "Song of the Nibelungen" (*Nibelungenlied*), in which the provinces, particularly the Imperial Netherlands (*Reichsniederlande*), which had included Lower Germany, were dominant. Minimizing the barbarism of events, he conceived of the RSK as a "corporation" reminiscent of Lower Germany's and Schleswig-Holstein's medieval

guilds. He convinced himself that the chamber would protect the independence of writers, especially in the provinces. Furthermore, he created the DAW to foster European understanding based on his idyllic view, also learned from his parents, that medieval Europe had been united in prosperity and peace around a dominant, culturally vibrant German Reich, whose strength emanated from its northern regions.

That Blunck's concerns coincided, at least in part, with the Nazis' is an important aspect of the tale, for it speaks to the question of how the Nazis gained support among Germany's conservative provincial writers. Blunck's complicity also speaks to the question of how historical and cultural traditions – real or imaginary – in Germany's various provinces, in his case Schleswig-Holstein, engendered support for the movement. Indeed, according to the poet's experience, the Nazis rode to power, culturally speaking, a wave of provincial discontent.

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Chapter I: Blunck and the Historical Literature

Historians and specialists in German literature have begun to accept that, in the literature of the Third Reich, “there was some kind of idealism at work, and that writers and intellectuals did believe in what they were doing – reacting against the supposed corruption and ‘decadence’ of the modern age and reasserting traditional values.”¹ In other words, they have started taking the writers of the time seriously. Significant contributions have been made to the subject of Third Reich literature.² Yet important facets of the field remain obscure – Blunck, the RSK, and the DAW being among the most significant. No historian has written a monograph on Blunck. In historical surveys of German and Nazi literature, he is mentioned in passing as one of the “classic” authors of “blood and earth” (*Blut und Boden*) literature³ or as a writer of “bombastic” imagery that fused comfortably with the atmosphere and propaganda of the Third Reich.⁴ While true, these allusions neglect his multi-faceted career and the idiosyncrasies of his literary work. A number of studies have treated Blunck’s literature. Written by *Germanisten* or scholars of philosophy, they focus on aspects of his style or his worldview.⁵ They neglect Blunck’s biography and role in the RSK. Moreover, aside from one literary critique, all date from the Third Reich itself or the next twenty years.⁶ Many remain unpublished. A number of pieces published by the “Society for Promoting the Works of Hans Friedrich Blunck” (*Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Werkes von Hans Friedrich Blunck*) have narrated parts of the poet’s life.⁷ However, as their origin suggests, these essays are biased in his favor.

The RSK has also been absent from the scholarship. Two works have investigated institutions close to the RSK. Werner Mittenzwei’s *Der Untergang einer Akademie oder die Mentalität des ewigen deutschen* examines the Prussian Academy of Art’s Poetry Section during the Weimar and Nazi periods.⁸ Alan Steinweis’ *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany* considers the Reich chambers of music, theater, and the visual arts.⁹ Both studies are weak on Blunck and the RSK. In his section on the Third Reich, Mittenzwei concentrates on a specific

group of national-conservative (*volkskonservativ*) authors – notably Erwin Kolbenheyer, Hans Grimm, Emil Strauss, and Börries von Münchhausen. Blunck, who served in the Academy, appears as a shadowy figure, perceived through the thoughts and declarations of others. Steinweis' study is pioneering and informative, but its focus on three of the RSK's sister organizations underscores the omission of the literary chamber from the scholarship.

Likewise, historians have neglected the DAW. Its one mention appears in a guide to the Captured Berlin Document Center in Lichterfelde, Germany.¹⁰ The editor notes that Blunck's file contains information on an international organization called the DAW, but suggests that it had no real significance.¹¹ In *Nationalsozialistische Außenpolitik, 1933–1938*, Hans Adolf Jacobsen remarks upon the DAW's subsidiary, the *Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen* ("Union of Friendship Societies," VVE) and some of the international "friendship societies" that this organization sponsored.¹² However, he does so only briefly and never mentions Blunck, who served on the VVE's board of directors.¹³

Blunck's career is germane to efforts to situate the Third Reich's literary culture within Germany's broader cultural history. In *Dichtung im Dritten Reich? Zur Literatur in Deutschland, 1933–1945*, Christiane Cämmerer and Walter Delabar have emphasized that, in order to understand German literature during the first half of the twentieth century, one must consider the continuities among the literature of the Third Reich, Weimar, and Imperial Germany.¹⁴ A number of other historians and literary specialists have focused on modern elements in National Socialist literature and have underscored the milieu's connection to the "*neue Sächlichkeit*" (new objectivity; functionalism), Expressionism, and other early-twentieth-century literary movements.¹⁵ The literature of the Third Reich was not an aberration, these scholars emphasize, but the right-wing offspring of an evolving tradition.¹⁶

Literary historians have also tied the literature of the Third Reich to its social, economic, and political underpinnings. This approach reflects, in part, the influence of "*Rezeptionsästhetik*," which in the late 1970s challenged the "formalist" interpretation of the literary work as an autonomous, static document. As the historian Peter Paret has

noted, *Rezeptionsästhetik* “emphasize[s] the changeableness [*sic*] of the literary product and tr[ies] to break down the distinction between art and nonart and the separation of literature from its social, economic, and political context.”¹⁷ Adherents of the school situate literature within its historical circumstances, consider socioeconomic constraints and impulses, and review specific factors that influenced an author’s “social experience.”

The finest examples of *Rezeptionsästhetik* have focused on literary movements before 1933.¹⁸ However, the school has also energized studies of the Third Reich. Representative is Ronald Taylor’s *Literature and Society in Germany, 1918–1945*.¹⁹ According to Taylor, social conditions have their “dwelling within the artist’s mind and soul, and [are] as integral to his art as the religious, the aesthetic, the formal or any other dimension of his creativity which scholars may isolate for study.”²⁰ Taylor characterizes the literature of the Third Reich as the product of, or as a reaction against, broad economic, social, and political trends. A number of works approaching the topic from a comparable angle have reached similar determinations.²¹

The aspect of *Rezeptionsästhetik* most central to this study is “social experience.” According to the *Rezeptionsästhetik*, an author’s art reflects his or her social conditioning; upbringing, formal education, social position, expectations, and related anxieties influence the creative process. In Taylor’s words, personal background conveys what an author “found important to do in life and, given the closeness of his life to the things in which he believed, what values he sought to enshrine in his work.”²²

A number of studies have explored this proposition. Steven Nyole Fuller has produced a biography of the National Socialist writer Adolf Bartels, in which he argues that Bartels’ anti-semitism and ultra-reactionary tastes evolved from socioeconomic upheaval in his native Dithmarschen.²³ Another example is Jürgen Hillesheim’s “*Heil dir Führer! Führ uns an! ...,*” which compares the lives and works of two Augsburg writers – Richard Euringer, who was one of the most avid Nazi writers, and Bertolt Brecht, who was one of the regime’s greatest artistic opponents.²⁴ According to Hillesheim, Euringer retreated into ultra-conservatism and *völkisch* images because of threats to his family’s established, middle-class status. A number of works

have treated other writers active during the Nazi period, such as Kolbenheyer, Strauss, and Gottfried Benn.²⁵ Each ties the biography of its respective writer to his literary work.

Biographies of this kind risk apologizing and, possibly worse, stirring empathy for writers who were complicit in the Third Reich. However, the need to understand the intellectual and artistic origins of ideas that contributed to Nazi propaganda and helped legitimize the regime outweighs such concerns. In periods like youth, when parental influences are decisive, fundamentals of the personality and worldview form. By examining the life and works of Blunck, this study hopes to describe the origins of his ideas, then to relate how these ideas led him to support a criminal government.

A number of significant historiographical issues are addressed in the pages that follow. In *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany*, Steinweis argued that the Reich chambers of music, theater, and the visual arts arose from an already existing assemblage of artistic organizations that had begun centralization and incorporation before 1933. As Steinweis insists, “[t]he Nazi strategy for cultural administration entailed not the atomization of individuals but rather the consolidation of a nascent professional ‘estate’ system inherited from the Weimar Republic.”²⁶ Steinweis’ conclusions hold for Blunck and the RSK. During the 1920s, the poet joined two literary unions, the *Notgemeinschaft deutscher Kunst und Dichtung* and the *Schutzverband der deutschen Schriftsteller*, the second of which evolved directly into the RSK. The occupational outlook of the RSK’s first president thus formed within budding corporate “estates” similar to those described by Steinweis *vis-à-vis* the chambers of theater, music, and the visual arts.

Before the 1980s, historians asserted that Nazi culture emanated downward from the top leadership, and one *völkisch*, ultra-reactionary view dominated. Recently, a more nuanced interpretation has emerged. Writing in *Art as Politics in the Third Reich*, Jonathan Petropoulos has argued that the “taste of the Nazi leaders underwent a gradual transformation during their twelve years in power.”²⁷ During the early phase of the Third Reich, two camps vied for supremacy. On the one hand, Rosenberg and his *Kampfbund der deutschen Kultur* demanded complete censorship and the replacement of all modern influences by

neo-romantic and *völkisch* forms. On the other, Goebbels and his Propaganda Ministry tolerated some modern, *avant-garde* styles. According to Petropoulos, the Reich Chambers of Culture represented the victory of Goebbels over Rosenberg and of the *Reichsminister's* belief that "high-quality artists continue productive lives within the Reich."²⁸ During the two years that followed, however, Rosenberg reasserted himself. On account of Rosenberg's growing stature, Goebbels was forced to move to the neo-romantic, *völkisch* camp by 1935.

Petropoulos focused on the visual arts. According to Blunck's experience, literature, in contrast, exhibited a marked anti-modern bias immediately after the Nazi seizure of power. Nonetheless, Petropoulos's interpretation still holds for the RSK in terms of the struggle between Goebbels and Rosenberg, which plagued Blunck's presidency of the organization, and in terms of who was and was not admitted to the chamber. As Rosenberg's more radical ideas gained favor among leading Nazis, including Hitler, the admissions policy of the RSK evolved from relative moderation to exclusion.

In 1977, in his trailblazing refutation of David Irving's revisionist book, *Hitler's War*, Martin Broszat argued that the "final solution" evolved in an *ad hoc* way, according to the gradual institutionalization of practices originating in the occupied territories.²⁹ In other works, he focused this argument on Germany proper and argued that the Nazi regime was decentralized in structure, with decisions being made by lesser figures in a process of inter-departmental or ministerial squabbling.³⁰ Critical to Broszat's argument was that Hitler, while an evil and overhanging figure, played a minor role in day-to-day policy, preferring to approve policies that had emerged victorious, rather than mandate his views in a pyramid-like way.

Blunck's experience validates this "structuralist" interpretation. At the RSK, the poet negotiated a confusing obstacle course of struggles among competing Nazi figures, particularly Rosenberg and Goebbels, with major decisions being decided according to the results of these struggles. Hitler remained a distant, shadowy figure.

In *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy*, Marla Stone has argued that Fascist culture in Italy was synergic.³¹ The regime, artists, and the public responded to one another, and art was in-

fluenced from their interaction. According to Stone, fascist culture was an evolving medium, more complex than the once perceived dichotomy between “art” and “propaganda.”³² She also notes that “Italian fascism with its futurist, syndicalist, and modernist origins offered little of the *a priori* aesthetic anti-modernism and anti-avantgardism associated with Nazi Germany.”³³ After 1936, when the propaganda activities of the Fascist regime in Italy increased, the regime required a more imperial, monumental style, and art became more synchronized with its objectives.

As in Fascist Italy, the art of Nazi Germany had influences and antecedents in the modern movements, particularly Expressionism. A more tolerant attitude to art and artists also existed during the first three years of the regime. Furthermore, Blunck’s experience confirms Stone’s comment that fascist art differed from the once perceived dichotomy between “art” and “propaganda.” However, in his case this relationship seems to have been simpler, not more “complex,” than previously thought. In the atmosphere of the Third Reich, the poet’s art was propaganda; he did not alter his style significantly.

Already in 1933, there was a marked effort in Nazi Germany to promote traditional and provincial literary forms, of which Blunck’s work was representative. Rather than respond to the public’s tastes and tolerate modern writers, the regime attempted to force the German public back to earlier genres – confirming Stone’s assertion that, in contrast to Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany exhibited an anti-modern bias from the beginning. This effort failed, however, for the public remained true to its pre-1933 tastes. As in fascist Italy, the German public turned out to be an active cultural participant that could not be ignored.

In *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*, George Mosse has spoken of a “New Politics” that emerged in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Europe.³⁴ This “New Politics” constituted an alternative to bourgeois democracy: a mass, popular movement, in which people identified with the “national mystique” through rites, festivals, myths, and symbols – as represented in the Wartburg festival in 1817.³⁵ According to Mosse, this “new politics” was especially prevalent in Germany. By 1900, nationalism and de-

mocracy in Germany had become bound in a mystical, irrational, and quasi-religious way that had undemocratic implications, in contrast to the traditional parliamentarism of Great Britain.³⁶

Mosse's views are significant for understanding Blunck's life and works. The poet was himself swept up in a "New Politics" of sorts, replete with myths, symbols, and festivals. However, while Blunck exalted national legends like the Wartburg Festival and the uprisings of 1848, he viewed them through the "conservative-democratic" traditions of his native Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany. This idiosyncrasy lent a "provincial mystique" to his political outlook, in addition to Mosse's "national mystique."

In *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*, Celia Applegate has described how provincial patriotism informed German nationalism.³⁷ According to her:

the increasing, widening uses of *Heimat*, especially after 1871, reveal how the idea of the nation settled into people's minds. [...] In many German regions, the revived interest in local history, customs, and dialects, and the proliferation of songs and lyrical writings on the qualities of the locale [...] created a new mythology about the region's contribution to German nationhood. [...] *Heimat* bridged the gap between national aspiration and provincial reality.³⁸

Applegate based her findings on the Palatinate in the Rhineland. Nonetheless, Blunck's case confirms her conclusions, for he perceived Germany's national aspirations through the myths and aspirations of his native region. In the poet's thought, Lower Germany was a model for the German nation. His provincial patriotism worked in synergy, not in conflict, with his German nationalism.

In *the Crisis of Classical Modernity*, Detlev Peukert has argued that Germany succumbed in 1933 to the effects of too rapid modernization. Unlike England and France, which realized their identities over centuries through "normal" historical processes, Germany remained immature in 1919 and was, according to Peukert, vulnerable to the modern strife of cultural innovation, inflation, and depression.

When one attaches Blunck's provincial perspective to "modernization theory," his experience lends credence to Peukert. It can

be argued that the poet's Lower-German/German form of nationalism, in which his reaction to Weimar culture brewed, resulted from late modernization. Unlike in Britain and France, which incorporated provincialism and nationalism over centuries, Germany incorporated the two in a matter of decades. On account of the "Prussification" that had accompanied it, national unification had only accentuated provincialism. Between 1871 and 1919, provincialism was not diminished, but amalgamated with and vitalized nationalism of an especially potent kind – an eccentric process that Blunck's life exhibits. During Weimar's "crisis of classical modernity," the result was doubly problematic.

Chapter II: Blunck's Early Years

The story of Hans Friedrich Blunck begins with the story of his native region. Constituting the lower half of the Jutland peninsula and extending into the rolling hills to the south, Schleswig-Holstein composes the northeastern portion of legendary Lower Germany (*Niederdeutschland*), a broad swathe of lowlands roughly a hundred miles in width that, as the Imperial Netherlands (*Reichsniederlande Landschaft*) of the mythical “Song of the Nibelungen,” once straddled the north German coast from Flanders in the west to the Baltic Sea in the east. Schleswig-Holstein is famous for a rich, independent history. The province constitutes the southern birthplace of the Germanic peoples, that ethnic and racial stock that eventually migrated throughout Europe, forming the tribal foundation of the Germans, the English, the Dutch, not to mention the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, and components of the populations in most other European countries. According to archaeological evidence, the Germanic tribes settled in and north of Schleswig-Holstein some 10,000 years ago (the precise date is unclear). Theories abound as to their exact identity and origins. However, Germanic traits like blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin are adaptations, as anyone who has spent time in the region could surmise, to the dreary rain and sparse winter light that increases and diminishes, respectively, as one travels northwards through Schleswig-Holstein, up Jutland, across the Kattegat strait, and into Sweden’s bread basket.

The region of Schleswig-Holstein was the launching ground for the Germanic migrations of the fifth century BC into what is today Germany proper. In the period after 500 BC, three core tribes inhabited the area: the Saxons, the Angles, and the Jutes. Although primitive by contemporary western (i.e. Roman) standards, a complex society evolved over the centuries. The coastal tribes, particularly the Saxons, were skilled sailors and built sophisticated ships. They traded with Greece and Rome, but the region nonetheless escaped Roman acculturation. After Rome’s abandonment of Britain in 410, large numbers of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes migrated across the channel.

Over a period of two hundred years, they battled, forced west and north (into what is today Wales and Scotland), or settled amongst the indigenous Celtic peoples, the last scenario being probably the most common. It is for this reason that the English (after the Angles) are, originally, a Germanic people akin to the inhabitants of northern Germany and Denmark. It is also for this reason that the English language (again, after the Angles – a misnomer, since the tongue stems from the Saxon dialect spoken in Wessex) is Germanic at its roots.

Based on a modicum of evidence, mostly involving the account of an Anglo-Saxon missionary named Liufwin who visited northern Germany in the seventh century, some scholars – and, as we shall see, Blunck himself – have argued that the Saxons who remained behind in the region along the lower Elbe established a democracy of sorts. As can best be judged, this theory is tied to the “Republics” that historians have depicted among the early Germanic tribes. As J.B. Bury, one of the most famous scholars of early Germanic society, has noted:

All German states, so far as we know, had to all intents and purposes the same constitution [...]. In every German state, whether there was a king or not, the assembly of the freemen was sovran [*sic*] [...]. The king not only had no power to legislate or take any political decision without the consent of the assembly, but he had no power to hinder or check what seemed good to the assembly.¹

During times of crisis, particularly war, the king assumed dictatorial powers, but these were temporary.

While the tribes that conquered Roman territory – including those that colonized Great Britain – adopted orthodox monarchical forms of government, the Germanic tribes that remained outside of the dying Roman Empire – foremost among them the Saxons – allegedly continued and, indeed, refined their “Republican” system. According to this interpretation, in sixth-century Marklo, near the North Sea coast, Saxon representatives from the three classes of society – the nobility, peasantry, and *Laten* (old German for the “half free,” essentially laborers who owed certain obligations to nobles or freemen; Blunck himself sometimes referred to them as “*Kleinbauern*,”

farmers with minimal property) – gathered each year to enact new laws, decide on war or peace, and confirm or remove the elected king. According to the same theory, this “Saxon Republic” constituted “Europe’s first constitutional democracy,” for its “Constitution of Marklo,” as it has been called, originated in the year 612, six centuries before the *Magna Carta*.

In the late eighth century, the Frankish king Charlemagne conquered the Saxons after a series of brutal, bloody campaigns. The Carolingian biographer, Einhard, tells of thirty-three years of protracted conflict. At one point, Charlemagne ordered the execution of more than four thousand Saxon nobles and resettled thousands of Saxon men, women, and children in Gaul – acts that to this day inspire historical controversy. As a result of the conquest, the Saxons joined the “western tradition,” in the sense that they assimilated – or were forced to assimilate – Christianity and the residue of Greek and Roman civilization that had been adopted centuries earlier by the Franks. According to believers in Marklo, this was a great tragedy, because the “Saxon Republic” now died, to be replaced by the Frankish monarchy. That the “Republic” disappeared amidst bloody slaughter and forced resettlement only augmented the legend that Saxon “freedom” had been murdered at this point in history.

In later centuries, tradition-minded inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany remained ambivalent about the Greco-Roman heritage, preferring to herald their native Saxon and Germanic origins, which, they argued, had been suppressed since the Frankish conquest. This sentiment was given great impetus during the nineteenth century with the renewed interest in native folklore and traditions that accompanied Romanticism. Indeed, with the Romantic period came increasing calls among Germans, particularly northern Germans, for their countrymen to throw off the ostensibly “alien” heritage of Greece and Rome and embrace the “true” Germanic traditions native to their homeland. In more than a few cases, these calls were heeded – a phenomenon that was best exemplified by the enormous popularity of Wagner during the second half of the nineteenth century. Not coincidentally, Wagner exalted Lower Germany in the *Ring*, his operatic treatment of the “Song of the Nibelungen.”

In 1447, some six centuries after the Frankish conquest, descendants of the Angles and the Saxons in the Dithmarschen, a region along Schleswig-Holstein's western shores, overthrew the nobility. Here, they formed a "Farmer's Republic," with a diet (*Landesversammlung*) of elected representatives. For more than a century, the Dithmarschen farmers lived as freemen and chose their own leaders. However, in the late 1500s, they were conquered by the Danes and, once again, subjected to monarchy. In the minds of some inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein, the Dithmarschen nonetheless maintained the Lower-German democratic legacy, at least in spirit.

During the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, Schleswig-Holstein and surrounding Lower Germany were the heart of a vast trading network known as the Hanseatic League. The League composed some one hundred cities scattered from Bergen in Norway to the Hansa cities of Riga and Tallinn on the Eastern Baltic. The independent Hansa cities of Hamburg and Lübeck, the first bordering and the second in Schleswig-Holstein, led the Hanseatic League. They were the pride of German maritime commerce for two hundred years and, indeed, the originators of international trade law still in use today.

Blunck was born into these traditions on September 3, 1888. The poet's childhood and youth emerge principally via his memoirs. Aside from scarce mentions in later letters, saccharine biographies written about him during the late 1920s and 1930s, and the favorable accounts by his acquaintances and relatives, his memoirs are the only source for this period of his life. Given their apologetic nature and his penchant for romanticization, the poet's memoirs must be read with skepticism. Nonetheless, in light of his life-long preoccupation with certain themes in them, his account can serve as a tool for understanding his approach to the world. While the images in his memoirs are idealized, the fact that he viewed his early years in this way is significant. The following narrative should be considered a foundation for understanding the distinctively provincial nationalism that developed in Blunck and caused him to err so widely in the 1930s. Culled from the lengthy first volume of his autobiography, the aspects of his youth that are here discussed represent a selective pastel of those events and experiences that appear, according to his

later activities (which can be scrutinized more carefully on account of a broader source base), to have influenced his life most.

Although Blunck, in the same way most Nazi *Literati* asserted peasant ancestry, boasted that he came from “einer einfachen Ahnenreihe aus bäuerlichem Blut Holsteins und Dithmarschens” (a simple genealogical line from the peasant blood of Holstein and the Dithmarschen), his ancestors and immediate predecessors pursued a number of occupations.² Some were farmers; others were artisans, seamen, and merchants. Blunck’s paternal grandfather was a master turner. On his mother’s side, his grandfather was a country businessman and merchant. All of his ancestors came from Schleswig-Holstein, from the “kleinen Land zwischen den Meeren” (little land between the seas), as Blunck was fond of saying.

Until the 1860s, Schleswig and Holstein had been separate duchies under Danish rule. However, after Prussia’s defeat of Denmark in 1864 and then Austria in 1866, the duchies were annexed to the German Reich as the province of Schleswig-Holstein. The area was, therefore, a latecomer to Germany, at least formally and in terms of Germany’s modern composition. Although the two duchies had always had German majorities and been part of the German cultural and linguistic world, before the mid-1850s their attention had been as much directed northward, towards Denmark and Scandinavia, as towards Germany. To this day, the architecture in Schleswig-Holstein resembles Denmark’s more than Germany’s. The inhabitants of the region, particularly the Bluncks, believed that their position between Germany and Denmark gave them a unique identity, in the sense that they were special representatives of the ancient “Nordic” ties between Germany and Scandinavia. This sentiment was reinforced among many Schleswig-Holsteiners by the belief that Prussia was an upstart usurper, whose ancestry was shallow compared to that of ancient Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany.

Importantly, Blunck’s parents came from the Dithmarschen. On account of its sixteenth-century “Farmer’s Republic,” the region was one of Schleswig-Holstein’s historical and cultural centers.³ It had been the home of Theodor Storm, the area’s most famous nineteenth-century writer. After marrying, the Bluncks settled in a modest

house on a quiet street in Altona, a Prussian city adjacent to, but at the time politically independent from Hamburg. They were the first generation to make a permanent place for themselves in an urban setting.

Blunck's father had grown up in Wesselburen, a small village on the southern Dithmarschen coast. His background was not unlike that of the parents of other Nazi *Literati*, who were often teachers from the "educated *Mittelstand*."⁴ After years of study and a period of travel, he served as rector and taught languages at a girls' middle school (*Mittelschule*) in Altona. His professional status placed him among upwardly mobile *bourgeois* "newcomers," who entered Germany's towns and cities in increasing numbers during the Wilhelmine era. As Roger Chickering has argued, academics of this ilk experienced alienation on account of their newcomer status and new surroundings.⁵ In response, they sought refuge in tradition and myth. Considering themselves protectors of German authenticity on account of their recent immigration from the countryside, which they saw as Germany's "genuine" home, many became avid nationalists, particularly of the Pan-German kind.

Although Blunck's father received the necessary licensing and diploma, he never became a rector of a *Gymnasium*.⁶ As Blunck noted in his memoirs, this failure weighed on his father. It also seems to have helped lead him to resent the system of which he was part. Father Blunck had himself endured a classical-humanistic education. He nonetheless came to dislike the system's disregard for native traditions in Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany. In young Hans, he instilled a love for "true" Germanic traditions, in contrast to the Latin and Greek heritage that dominated the school program and, as Blunck complained years later, sought only to build a new Hellenic world in Germany's ancient forests.⁷

Blunck's mother, born Sophia Schrader, had grown up in Brunsbüttel, a small village also on the Dithmarschen coast, near the mouth of the Elbe. Her father had been an owner of a small business and had shipped goods between Brunsbüttel and Hamburg. He died when she and her sister were infants, and her mother raised the children. As was her mother's hope, the daughter became a teacher of English and French and spent five years in England and four in

France as a private tutor. Throughout her life, Blunck's mother felt strongly about friendship with England.⁸ She passed this concern on to her son. In Hans, it mixed with an exaggerated, mystical preoccupation, gleaned from both his mother and father, with the racial, linguistic, and cultural ties between the so-called "island" and "continental" Anglo-Saxons. According to Gerwin Strobl, among most Germans affection for Britain swelled after World War I, in the belief that the British had treated Germany more fairly than the French at and after Versailles. However, this affection preceded Weimar among the inhabitants of Northern Germany, who were educated in the historical ties between northern Germany and England and whose native dialect (i.e. *Plattdeutsch*) was closer to English than High German.⁹

According to his memoirs, Blunck's family life was characterized by love and devotion, family gatherings, picnics, and bedtime fairy tales. He described his childhood "wie einen einzigen leuchtenden Morgen" (like one bright morning).¹⁰ Tensions with his father were reportedly rare.¹¹ Upon marrying, his mother gave up her teaching career to raise a family, which, including first-born Hans, would comprise four sons and two daughters. The reality of Blunck's upbringing was likely not so quaint, especially since the family struggled to make ends meet financially. Nonetheless, in later life, he embraced this romantic, idyllic image. It became a haven from real frustrations, disappointments, and difficulties.

Blunck's perceived familial bliss mixed with an idyllic conception of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany. In his youth, his father and mother told of the region's "advanced" prehistoric culture. They exalted the sixth-century "Saxon Republic" with its "democratic" assembly (or *Landtag*, as they called it) at Marklo. Blunck's father and mother also enthralled their son with tales of the Dithmarschen's sixteenth-century "Free Republic of Farmers," which the family heroicized. Finally, his parents told of northern Germany's seafaring history, from the early Saxon mariners to the Hanseatic League:

Von diesem Boden [...] waren Vorfahren ausgefahren und hatten mit den Römern um die Wachttürme Britanniens gekämpft. Von hier aus waren die sächsischen Wikinger ausgezogen, hier, in Hamburg, Lübeck, und Bremen, waren die Schiffe gebaut, die einst an der Ostsee den Kranz der hundert

Städte gegründet, die des Kaisers Flagge aller Welt gewiesen hatten.¹² (From this earth [...] my forefathers traveled into the world. They fought with the Romans for the watchtowers of Britain. From here, the Saxon Vikings left. Here in Hamburg and Lübeck [...] they built the ships that circled the Baltic with a hundred cities, which would present the emperor's flag to all the world.)

As Blunck noted in his memoirs, he and his siblings had “ein hoch-gemutes Bewußtsein” (a proud consciousness) of their region, “für seine bäuerliche Verfassung und kühne Vergangenheit, das uns noch oft im späteren Leben einen festen Glauben an uns selbst gab [...]” (of its farmers’ constitution and its bold history, a consciousness that often in later life gave us a firm belief in ourselves).¹³ This “proud consciousness,” however, had the potential to manifest itself as an extravagant provincial patriotism, particularly when mixed with the broader German nationalism that was now burgeoning among people of the Blunck family’s status.

At a precocious age, Blunck espoused Pan-German nationalism. As he grew up, his parents taught him to love Germans everywhere, according to their common “Germanic” origins in northern Germany and regardless of religious differences. In this way, he developed a special fondness for Austrians, who had been left out of the Reich in 1871. His mother sometimes took him to a memorial to the Austrian soldiers who had died fighting for Schleswig and Holstein in 1848. As a boy, Blunck became an exponent of a “greater-German” Reich, as opposed to the “smaller-German” Prussian creation into which he had been born. He also came to believe that this greater-German Reich, which would be built on Lower Germany’s ostensible traditions of “freedom,” was Germany’s destiny. Similarly, he learned to love “ethnic Germans,” the German settlers who had colonized non-German parts of Europe (particularly eastern Europe and Russia) and the world in previous decades and centuries. He believed that these settlers, too, were part of the German nation. There is no evidence that Blunck’s father was affiliated with lobbying organizations like the Pan-German League, which attempted to translate such beliefs into imperial policy. Nonetheless, he, as well as his son when still a child (if children had been allowed to join), was a worthy candidate.

The Bluncks were Protestants. However, like many Germans of the time, they only attended church on special occasions. Their true religion mixed Christian and Nordic elements. During the “twelve days” between Christmas and the New Year, Blunck’s mother asked that nothing new be undertaken:

Es war die letzte Erinnerung an eine alte Zeit, in der man während der zwölf Feiertage, von der Sonnenwende an bis zu den “Drei Königen,” gut aß und trank, fröhlich und festlich miteinander lebte, recht auf Urlaub von aller Arbeit, und sich mit Andacht auf das Kommende rüstete.¹⁴ (It was the last vestige of an ancient time. During the twelve feast days, from the winter solstice to the period of the “Three Kings,” one ate and drank well, rejoiced and feasted with one another, abstained from work, and concentrated on preparing for the coming year.)

When Blunck and his siblings got warts, his mother uttered a few “magic” words under a full moon in order to make the warts disappear. In the midst of a fever at the age of fourteen, Blunck “saw” a world of fantasy: “weißbartige Könige und Fratzen, Riesen und Ströme winziger Gestalten, die an meinem Bett vorüberzogen” (white-bearded kings and demons, giants and streams of tiny creatures, which moved about my bed).¹⁵ These images, in addition to and sometimes in combination with Christianity, were the Bluncks’ faith. They placed the family in an old German tradition of “Pagan Christianity.” The residue of the original Christianization of the Germanic tribes, the attitude had revived during the Romantic era. On account of its emphasis upon Germany’s primeval, pre-Christian origins, at the turn of the century the heritage had rendered a “Nordic” gloss to German nationalism.¹⁶

The Bluncks were representative in this regard, for they glorified the pre-Christian era as a period of Germanic authenticity. At home, Blunck learned that Charlemagne’s murderous campaigns, the suppression of the “free” Saxon tribes, feudalism, and the undermining of Germanic culture had accompanied Christianity’s arrival in northern Germany. This synthesis of Christian and pagan motifs – which, as we shall see in Blunck’s case, also had pantheistic qualities – reflected many northern Germans’ confusion about their heritage and identity. In his popular “The German Christian Question” (1923),

which was read widely in Schleswig-Holstein, Wilhelm Schäfer argued that Christianity's repudiation of Germanic traditions had created self-hate and contradiction among Germans. Not coincidentally, Schäfer, a *völkischer* writer who was well known for his tales about peasant life in the Rhineland,¹⁷ became a close associate of Blunck in the late 1920s.

According to his memoirs, Blunck developed an interest in literature, poetry, and drama at the age of ten. From the beginning, he focused on traditional genres. Friends of the family introduced him to the German classics, particularly Schiller's ballads. His father's library contained all of the great German writers, and Blunck read them at home. His mother had a fondness for French and British writers. However, her collection was especially rich in the latter, and she read aloud English authors like Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Byron, the implication being that they too were "Lower German" on account of their "Anglo-Saxon" ancestry.¹⁸ Blunck's father read from northern German writers like Storm, Groth, and especially Liliencron. He also owned some of the great Scandinavian masterpieces, like the *The Poetic Edda*, which Blunck read in his free time. Significantly, at the height of the Romantic era the Eddic poems had been considered the "earliest emanations of the spirit of the Germanic North, if not of all German tribes,"¹⁹ a point that should be remembered when we consider the poet's quest for a union of all the "Germanic" peoples. Blunck also took an interest in Hebbel. Years later, he commented that, along with Schiller's works, Hebbel's dramas had influenced his youth most, for he came to identify personally with the great playwright.²⁰ Like Blunck's father, Hebbel had grown up in Wesselburen, in the Dithmarschen.²¹ Moreover, Hebbel had spent the last twenty years of his life in Austria, which lay at the heart of the Blunck family's greater-German sensibilities.

Young Hans had his first theater experience at the same age, when an uncle took him to a puppet show in Hamburg. Soon thereafter, he attended Schiller's *Wallenstein*, which exemplified his continuing interest in the great German classics. Finding money for books and the theater was not easy, for his father's salary was just adequate.²² He befriended a book merchant who allowed him to borrow books. During this period, Blunck also learned *Plattdeutsch*,

the major dialect of his region. Although his father generally avoided the various forms of *Plattdeutsch* spoken in northern Germany (known collectively as *Niederdeutsch*, or Lower German), his mother and his aunt spoke the dialect, as did many of the educated, middle-class inhabitants of Altona.²³ On the streets of Altona, storekeepers and dockworkers, too, spoke *Plattdeutsch*. Through these channels, Hans mastered the tongue. He went on to read the great northern German poets and writers, like Groth, who had composed in *Plattdeutsch*.

However, fairy tales influenced the young Blunck most. Before bed, his mother read stories about fairies, dwarves, and mermaids, in which good and evil were cast in stark terms. His father, similarly, told stories of heroes and villains: “[S]eine Helden waren männlich, opferbereit und edel, die Widersacher habgierig oder selbstsüchtig.”²⁴ (His heroes were manly, sacrificing, and noble; their opponents greedy and egotistical). The ethos in the tales was central to Blunck’s moral upbringing and coalesced with his religious views:

So wie in den Sagen und Märchen das Gute siegt und der Held dafür streitet, so lehrte er mich alles Niedrige und Widrige hassen. Von Erbsünde, Verdammung und Erlösung wußte er nichts, und auch Mutter schwieg [...]. Aber von Recht oder Unrecht sprachen sie und von Volk oder Feigheit und von Güte oder Niedertracht.²⁵ (As in fairy tales and legends, in which good was victorious and the hero fought for it, [father] taught me to hate everything low and adverse. Of original sin, damnation, and redemption, he knew nothing, and also mother was silent on this score [...]. But they spoke about right and wrong, of folk or cowardice, and of goodness and malice.)

Many of the fairy tales Blunck heard as a child were told by locals in Altona. A certain lighthouse keeper, for example, recounted stories “langsam und bedachtvoll” (slowly and carefully) about characters like “Schwarze Margret,”²⁶ die unterm Berg ihre Schätze zählte” (Black Margaret, who counted her treasures under a mountain) or “die edle ‘Weiße Frau,’ die den Menschen half und nachts zu ihnen kam [...]” (the noble “white lady,” who came and helped people at night).²⁷ Blunck’s parents tended to tell fairy tales in High German.²⁸ Locals, however, stuck to *Plattdeutsch* and thus reinforced the child’s interest in the tongue. Among fairy-tale writers, it was not the Grimm brothers who stood at the forefront in Blunck’s

developing mind, although he grew to appreciate their work too, but Wilhelm Wisser. In the mid-nineteenth century, Wisser had traveled throughout the region of the lower Elbe recording the stories peasants and laborers had told for generations.

As reported in his memoirs, Blunck composed his first verse when he was fourteen – “ein heimliches Gedichte” (a secret poem) that was the product of “ein heißes Glücksgefühl und ein Empfinden der Unabänderlichkeit [...]” (an impassioned feeling of happiness and a sense of unalterability).²⁹ During his first years of writing, he produced short, unformed lines. Fascinated with *Plattdeutsch*, he also scribbled the first lines of future *Plattdeutsch* works like *Hein Hoyer* (1920; later translated into High German, although, like a number of his works, maintaining some *Plattdeutsch* dialog). He then graduated to ballads and fairy tales. From the beginning, the natural world inspired his work. Like many Germans, the Bluncks rented a small plot on Altona’s outskirts, where they planted flowers, vegetables, shrubs, and small trees:

Die Eltern [...] gaben uns in jener Zeit an Blumen- und Gartenkunde mit, was sie aus ihrer Jugend mitgebracht hatten. [...] Wir säten und pflanzten jetzt mit Vater und Mutter; Freunde durften wir erst aufsuchen, wenn Schule und Garten ihr Recht gefunden hatten, das wuchs uns wie selbstverständlich zu. Wie viel schöner als fremdes Gut waren auch Lilien und blühende Kresse aus eigener Zucht. [...] Und war es nicht herrlich, mit Mutter ein Märchen um die “Winkwanderer” und “Liebschwestern” zu erfinden [...]?³⁰ (Our parents [...] taught us about gardening and cultivating flowers, which they had learned in their own youth. [...] We were only allowed to visit our friends if schoolwork and gardening were in order – that was considered self-explanatory. But how much more beautiful than foreign things were the lilies and blooming kresses that we had cultivated with our own discipline [...]. And was it not glorious to invent fairy tales with mother about the “*Winkwanderer*” and “*Liebschwestern*” [...]?)

Frequently, the family traveled further into Schleswig-Holstein for picnics and hikes. Blunck also spent summers on the farms of his many relatives who still lived on the land. Here, he developed respect for his “peasant” roots.

The poet’s love of nature thus formed between Hamburg-Altona and the countryside. He later romanticized the images of nature he

then saw on occasion in epic proportions in his poetry and literature. At the same time, his work would portray the modern trading metropolis in which he lived and which he experienced daily as he played along the banks of the bustling Elbe. The city–country mix proved unsettling. Confused as to where his roots lay, Blunck responded with dreams of harmonizing urban and country life. Such dreams likened him to the young Alfred Rosenberg, who was then growing up in a community of ethnic Germans in Russia. Blunck had the chance to discuss his ideas with Rosenberg some forty years later.

According to Blunck’s memoirs, he was first schooled at home by his father. Here, he learned the rudiments of punctuation and grammar, about which his father was strict. At the age of seven, he entered the Middle School (*Mittelschule*) run by his father, who still wanted “seinen Jungen unter den Augen zu behalten” (to keep his boy under his own eyes).³¹ Three years later, in 1898, he was accepted to the *Gymnasium* in Altona.

Blunck’s account of his experience at the *Gymnasium*, or at least his perception of this experience, is especially significant, for the items that troubled him at the *Gymnasium* tormented him throughout his life. He took an immediate dislike to Latin and Greek, instruction in which was required eight hours a week. As he noted, “das war mehr, als für unsere Muttersprache vorgesehen war” (that was more than was devoted to our mother language).³² He resented his teachers’ focus on classical rather than Nordic, Germanic traditions: “[W]enn manches anders klang, als ich es bei Vater gelernt hatte, so beschloß ich, zu schweigen, aber die Wahrheit nicht zu versäumen.”³³ ([I]f something sounded different than what father had taught me, I resolved to remain silent, but never to forget the truth.) He trusted his home schooling, and his father, rather than his instruction at the *Gymnasium*. Blunck also saw a Prussian bias in his coursework. As he noted in his memoirs, most of his teachers were “biedere Altpreußen” (conservative old Prussians) who

versuchten, uns zum Fleiß anzutreiben durch Hinweise auf schreckliche Urzustände unserer Vorfahren, die erst mit Gewalt zu Ordnung und Ehe, Eigentum und Staat angehalten worden seien (attempted to teach us discipline by demonstrating the horrible condition of our forefathers, who had to be forced to accept order and marriage, property and state).³⁴

This Prussocentrism contradicted everything Blunck had learned at home about the “free farmers on the sea,” as he knew Schleswig-Holstein’s inhabitants.

On account of their customary focus on Prussia, historians have tended to neglect the resentment for Prussia that existed among provincials like the Bluncks. Since Prussia was a latecomer to the German state system, without a tangible political presence until the Late Middle Ages, Germany is an historical anomaly, for a colonial region (i.e. Prussia) came to unite and dominate the rest of the country. Given that, in addition to the historical achievements noted above, Lower Germany had, more than a half millennium before Prussia’s star rose, provided the first German imperial family in the Saxon Ottonians and that settlers from Germany’s northwestern coastal regions had constituted the bulk of the immigrants to the region only later known as Prussia, the resentment of patriots like the Bluncks for Prussia’s influence was not surprising. Nor was it extraordinary. The belief that Prussia’s history and traditions were recent, shallow, and borrowed was widespread among Lower Germans, particularly intellectuals and artists.

Blunck’s education bothered him in other ways. He perceived neglect of Scandinavia and the Netherlands, as well as of England, which he considered part of the Lower-German world after its conquest in the fifth century by tribes from northern Germany.

Die Bücher über deutsche Kunst brachen jäh ab, wenn der Weg irgendwo über die Staatsgrenze nach dem Niederland wies, und wurden ohne Zusammenhang fortgesetzt, wenn die Wendung der Entwicklung wieder zu uns führte.³⁵ (The books about German art stopped when the way went over the border somewhere in the direction of the Netherlands, and continued on without correlation, when the path of artistic development returned to us.)

Blunck also saw mistreatment of Denmark. While Schleswig-Holstein had liberated itself with blood from the Danish king, he believed there was no reason to reinforce this enmity to his day. Blunck’s father had taught him of the common ethnic and racial identity of the Germanic peoples north and south of the Danish border. For Blunck, Klopstock, who had spent years in Copenhagen as the Danish king’s guest, embodied this unity.

Interest in the primeval cultural and “racial” ties (the latter of which were so confused as to make any definition of “race” dubious – a point that Blunck himself acknowledged more than once)³⁶ among all “Germanic” peoples, regardless of state borders, was increasingly common in turn-of-the-century Germany. However, this sentiment was accentuated among conservatives in Schleswig-Holstein, who considered themselves, on account of their births in the so-called “homeland” of the Germanic peoples, special representatives of this unity. In his popular *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890), which almost certainly graced the Blunck family’s bookshelves, Julius Langbehn had exalted Lower Germany, and Schleswig-Holstein in particular, as the fount of Germany’s Nordic origins: “The homeland is the ideal! In this sense the German and (if you prefer) the Low German is an especially ideal nature.”³⁷

In his memoirs, Blunck complained about how his *Gymnasium* curriculum also ignored German settlers living abroad. He believed that the settlers merited special recognition on account of the energy they devoted to cultivating the German language and culture. His teachers emblazoned Prussia’s victories at Königgrätz and Sedan as Germany’s greatest triumphs. In contrast, Blunck understood Germany’s apex to have been the Revolution of 1848, in which both of his grandfathers had fought. 1848 represented what 1871 did not – the union of all Germans. As his father taught him, 1848 also symbolized Lower Germany’s democratic legacy. The Marklo “Constitution” and the Dithmarschen Farmers’ Republic, Blunck thought, represented an evolving democratic tradition that had nearly triumphed at the St. Paul’s Church and on the barricades in Berlin.

Blunck and his father understood democracy to be the united will of a united people, rather than squabbling political parties. Blunck sometimes referred to their interpretation as “autoritäre Demokratie” (authoritarian democracy),³⁸ a paradox that can only be appreciated in the context of his views and the views of other national-conservatives like Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, who first coined the term in his infamous (and ominously named) work, *The Third Reich*. Through Blunck’s and his father’s eyes, Britain and the United States had borrowed their democratic traditions from Lower Germany, for the *Magna Carta* was an outgrowth of Marklo. Ac-

cording to this rationale, the eighth-century Saxon warrior Widukind had been “ein Präsident im Sinn der amerikanischen Verfassung” (a president in the sense of the American constitution).³⁹

Whatever logic lay behind such opinions was less significant than their emotional and ideological power. Still, the belief that democracy had originated in northern Germany among the ancient Germanic tribes was neither unique to the Bluncks, nor new in the late nineteenth century. As Jeffrey Sammons has commented, the view had been current during the *Vormärz* among the Young Germans and was held by their most democratic member, Ludolf Wienbarg.⁴⁰ Also from Altona, Wienbarg had, like Blunck’s father, trained in Latin and Greek. He, too, was nonetheless ambivalent about Classical influence in the German educational system. Indeed, Wienbarg had been forced out of the University of Kiel on account of his refusal to stick to the established curriculum. The view was also held by the American president, Thomas Jefferson, who even suggested placing images of the Jutish chiefs Hengist and Horsa on the Great Seal of the United States as a sign of America’s constitutional indebtedness to Germanic political traditions. Given that Blunck would later connect north-German democracy to National Socialism, concepts of this kind, particularly when spoken of in their “authoritarian” form, must be considered with caution. Nonetheless, as Professor Sammons has noted, in the period before 1848 they were considered liberal and even progressive. Only in the late nineteenth century, when German nationalism took on an increasingly vicious and racist tone, did such views assume a potentially darker guise.

According to one friend, at the *Gymnasium* Blunck also resented the absence of instruction in prehistory. Depicting the pre-Christian era as barbaric and evil, his teachers “tried over and over again to describe the [Lower-German] forefathers ‘as the most dreadful drunkards, bearskins, and pagans that there had ever been in the world.’”⁴¹ Guided by his father, who read Danish studies on the subject, Blunck disregarded these perceived insults and maintained that, in prehistoric times, northern Germany had witnessed significant achievements, particularly in the realm of law.⁴² After examining the archaeological research then being performed in Schleswig-Holstein, as a youth Blunck joined a small but growing

school of amateur archaeologists, who believed that in prehistoric Europe “Einheit” (unity) reigned among the “Weiße Völker” (white peoples) and the “Begriff Europas” (idea of Europe) flourished.⁴³ This viewpoint was no less potent for its mythical nature. Amateur “scholars” like Blunck and his father believed that their understanding, separate from the supposedly contained, biased, and “Jew-laden” academic forum, was closer to the truth. As George Mosse has noted, such amateurs, who composed the majority of those with an interest in prehistoric and racial history, “opposed present society, indeed all of modernity, and sought to connect their knowledge to the glorious future of the race to which they did belong (as many professors [i.e. Jews] did not).”⁴⁴

Based on stories that his father and mother told him and his own readings into medieval history, during the same period Blunck came to believe that the Middle Ages constituted a “golden age,” in which Europe was unified around a prosperous German Reich. This perception, also grounded in fantasy rather than fact, was taken up by many self-described German “Romantics” at the turn of the century. In the widely read *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1900), which was first published as Blunck passed into adolescence, the racist Germanophile Houston Stewart Chamberlain had argued that the traditional depiction of the Middle Ages was a pernicious lie:

It is nothing but a false conception of the Middle Ages, in conjunction with ignorance as to the significance of race, which is responsible for the regrettable delusion that the entry upon the scene of the rough Teutons meant the falling of a pall of night over Europe.⁴⁵

Given the confluence of Blunck’s and Chamberlain’s views, it is likely that this book crossed Blunck’s night table and desk more than once.⁴⁶

At the age of fifteen, Blunck was spending much of his time writing short poems and fairy tales about his native region. According to his memoirs, he expressed an interest in becoming a poet to his family. However, his father expected him to pursue a more lucrative, *bürgerliche* career. His thoughts wandered through numerous possibilities, including commerce, business, and, his father’s choice, education. Soon, he focused on being, at once, a poet, a farmer, and a

“man of state.” This eccentric fusing of career interests reflected his awkward position between Hamburg-Altona and the countryside, as well as the conflicting pressures of a *bourgeois* upbringing but still conscious (indeed, family promoted) peasant heritage. His literary work reflected this dichotomy. Although he honored the urban, port character of Altona-Hamburg, he also distrusted the greed and industrial stench that accompanied it.

Also at fifteen, Blunck joined the German youth movement, often referred to as the “*Wandervögel*.” Inspired with a rebellious, Nietzschean “will to power” but at the same time committed to the Reich, the young men who participated in the youth movement roamed the countryside, singing songs, sleeping on farms, and paying their way via odd jobs. According to Peter Gay, “the youth leaders hailed an idealized, romanticized medieval Germany as a refuge from commercialism and fragmentation.”⁴⁷ This point was true for Blunck and his friends, but their dream of German and “Germanic” unity went even further. They had a feeling “daß alle Deutschen eine Einheit im Geiste ihrer Dichtung seien [...]. Von Skandinavien und England, von gemeingermanischen Aufgaben ist darin die Rede [...].” (that all Germans are one in the spirit of their poetry [...]. When speaking of Scandinavia and England, the word is of a common Germanic mission).⁴⁸ During his experience in the youth movement, Blunck concluded that he was destined to play a leading role in uniting the German and “Germanic” peoples. Given the international and dynastic hurdles that stood in the way of such a unification, this was a foreboding aspiration. As one contemporary noted, “the facile irrationalism of the *Wandervögel*, their search for the soul and distrust of the mind, was bound to produce false ideals and lead to antisocial behavior.”⁴⁹

In the spring of 1903, Blunck organized his own youth group. He called it *die Germanen*, a name that revealed his Germanic interest in the movement. Immediately, *die Germanen* began marching across Schleswig-Holstein. Avoiding trains and other modern means of transportation, they went from town to town and gave speeches about the medieval Reich, Germanic unity, strict morals, and abstinence from alcohol. They helped farmers with repairs and slept in barns and fields. They read aloud before campfires, particularly

northern German writers like Klopstock, Storm, and Liliencron. They also read Shakespeare, who through their eyes was Lower German on account of his “Anglo-Saxon” heritage.

In 1904, *die Germanen* wandered beyond Schleswig-Holstein, to the Stuttgart Whitsun festival. Here, Blunck met Austrian students who recalled the “dream of the St. Paul’s Church” and appealed to his greater-German sensibilities. Blunck’s youth group also visited ethnic Germans in Bohemia and Hungary. These visits energized his Pan-German consciousness and confirmed his life-long preoccupation with Germans living abroad. At this time, he wrote his first short story, a fifty-page novella about neolithic Schleswig-Holstein. Conceived after a visit with *die Germanen* to an ancient Germanic burial site in the countryside near Schleswig, the story marked the literary birth of Blunck’s fascination with the early Germanic peoples.

In 1904, Blunck transferred to the *Realgymnasium* in Altona. Years later, a friend commented that Blunck had changed schools at this time in order to avoid instruction in Greek, which was not included in the *Realgymnasium* curriculum – an assertion that seems accurate.⁵⁰ Although a teacher inspired him with the works of Goethe, the “Prussian” curriculum at the *Realgymnasium* still bothered him.

He passed his *Abitur* exam in April 1907.⁵¹ Afterwards, he volunteered for one year of military service. According to one historian, “there was every incentive to qualify for the one-year period of service as a volunteer, an option only available to those who had attained a certain educational level.”⁵² Volunteers avoided the otherwise mandatory two years of service in the Prussian army, a fact that seems to have motivated Blunck. He joined a Marine-Infantry regiment in Kiel, which flew imperial colors.

During his service, he entered the law program at the University of Kiel. According to Konrad Jarausch, the answer to the ultra-nationalism that helped lift the Nazis to power lay in the “complex relationship between higher education, society, and politics in the Second Empire.”⁵³ Blunck’s case adds substance to this rather general point, with a provincial tinge. At the university, the political and social ideals he had gleaned in his youth crystallized and became intertwined with his career aspirations. According to Blunck, law was the best means to become a “man of state” (i.e. a leader who could

bring his ideas to the fore). Law had also been the discipline of Theodor Storm, who had, likewise, studied at Kiel and whom Blunck idolized as a writer and hero of 1848.⁵⁴ As a lawyer, Blunck aspired to a prominent position where he could proclaim Lower Germany's traditions of "democracy" and "freedom" to the German people. In this way, he would help guide Germany to its "genuine" destiny, rather than the false, fragmented fate that Prussia had bestowed upon it.

At the university, the old disappointments from the *Gymnasium* resurfaced. His curriculum focused on Roman law, so he studied early German law on his own. Through his eyes, Roman law emphasized private property, whereas German law, while not eschewing private property, paid more respect to communal holdings (particularly in assuring that all farmers were entitled to land) and thus represented an indigenous, "true" form of socialism. Traditional German law was more natural than, hence superior to Roman law. Like his other thoughts, these beliefs were common in turn-of-the-century Germany, where interest in old German customs was becoming increasingly widespread. In his *Foundations*, Chamberlain had argued that, for the Germans, Roman law was "the source of shocking violence and loss of freedom" – a viewpoint that Blunck shared.⁵⁵

In Imperial Germany, universities were havens for nationalist sympathies, and "the fraternities represented an organizational focus for these nationalist tendencies."⁵⁶ Significantly, Blunck joined "*die Teutonia*," a *Burschenschaft* (fraternity), which appealed more to middle-class university students like himself than did the aristocratic *Corps*. Like the youth movement, "*die Teutonia*" nourished his Pan-German sensibilities and exaltation of 1848. Its members had, in his words, "viel für das Reich gelitten – für den Traum der Einheit der Deutschen" (suffered much for the Reich – for the dream of German unity).⁵⁷ Blunck embodied *Burschenschaften* and their devotion to nationalism and dueling. He collected several scars from saber wounds, which, as Hans Ulrich Wehler has noted, "visibly identified the bearer as a member of the academic elite."⁵⁸ Blunck did not, however, succumb to the "prussification" that Wehler argues was inherent in the acculturation process promoted by the *Burschenschaften*. He came away from his *Burschenschaft* experience with a conservative, superior sense about him, but one focused on unifying all Germans in an imperial,

rather than a Prussian Reich. In the same sense, his heroes were not Bismarck and Frederick the Great, whom historians have called *Burschenschaften* idols,⁵⁹ but the leaders of 1848 and poets like Ernst Moritz Arndt, who had called for the unification of all Germans.

As a *Burschenschaftler*, Blunck took several trips that reinforced his “Germanic” and Pan-German sensibilities. In the summer of 1906, he traveled to Denmark and Norway with a few of his brothers from *die Teutonia*. In Denmark, he visited Hans Christian Andersen’s birthplace, where he pondered the ties between the Germanic peoples of the “north” and “south.”⁶⁰ In Oslo, he spoke with Norwegian students about cultural affinities between Schleswig-Holstein and Norway. However, the irredentism of his Norwegian contacts contradicted his hopes for Germanic union: “Wir hatten einen anderen Weg erhofft; wir hatten von einer geistigen Näherung der germanischen Völker zu träumen begonnen; die Einzelschicksale wogen wenig dabei.”⁶¹ (We had hoped for another way; we had begun to dream of a spiritual synthesis of the Germanic peoples. In this regard, the individual fates [of the Germanic states] meant little.)

In the spring of 1909, Blunck and three friends from *die Teutonen* journeyed to Prague, where they joined other German students in protesting against Czech moves to undermine the cultural and political rights of the city’s German minority. Afterwards, they traveled to Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Sofia, Istanbul, Greece, Alexandria, Cairo, and Rome. In each city, they visited colonies of ethnic Germans. Blunck was impressed by the settlers’ maintenance of German architecture, dress, and educational practices. These folk traditions, he believed, united the settlers with the Reich.

After completing his naval service, Blunck finished his legal studies. He remained another year in Kiel, then transferred to the University of Heidelberg, which was famous for its legal faculty and had also been the *Alma Mater* of Friedrich Hebbel, who had also studied law there.⁶² Heidelberg had a *Burschenschaft* sister to his Kiel group, “*Die Alemannia*,” which Blunck joined. In a photograph that still hangs on a wall at the present “*Teutonia*” house in Kiel, he bears proud blue and red stripes, which symbolized the respective houses and, for him, the unity of the Reich.

As a friend commented years later, Blunck's father was able to provide only a portion of his living expenses in Heidelberg.⁶³ He borrowed money in order to make ends meet. In 1910, he completed his *Doktorarbeit*, for which he received Cum Laude, in medieval German law. To prepare the dissertation, he spent several months during a visit home researching archival documents at the provincial high court in Hamburg. In the study, he focused on the degree to which traditional German law paid more respect to communal property than Roman law. Implicit in his argument was that Germany should discard Roman concepts in favor of "dem deutschen Besitzbegriff" (the German idea of private property).⁶⁴ Also implicit was that the supercession of German law by Roman law in the thirteenth century had been a tragedy, a thesis suggesting that the medieval *Sachsenspiegel* should replace, or at least influence, the German Civil Law Code. In December of the same year, he passed the state exams that allowed him, as a *Referendar*, to begin his period of legal traineeship.

Internationally, the years leading up to World War I were tense. After the Tangiers episode in 1905, the European powers stumbled from one crisis to the next. War was never far away. In Blunck's memoirs, the tension of the period was apparent. At least from hindsight, he realized that some major conflict was brewing. Indeed, although he did not say so, he may even have hoped for a war, given its potential to produce a "greater-German" Reich – a sentiment that was not uncommon, as Fritz Fischer has shown.⁶⁵ In the years before 1914, however, he spent most of his time pursuing his legal career and his literary endeavors. These efforts were in and of themselves tension ridden, for his professional, *bourgeois* aspirations vied with his literary work. Like his confusion between the city and the country, this conflict, and his attempts to find a solution, characterized his years to come.

After passing his *Referendar* examinations, he would have chosen an apprenticeship in Schleswig-Holstein's provincial government in Kiel. However, natives of the region were forbidden to work in the provincial government. Prussia feared them incapable of loyally instituting Prussian regulations and decrees. Instead, Blunck joined the district court in Blankenese, a village along the banks of the Elbe west of Altona and Hamburg. In this rural setting, he composed his

first published works. In 1910, he began a series of ballads and poems about Lower Germany and Schleswig-Holstein, many of them historical, which were released two years later as the collection *Nordmark*. Portraying Charlemagne's defeat of the Saxons, the title ballad revealed Blunck's affection for bloody imagery and the ferocious indignation with which he now viewed that ancient conquest:

König Karl von Franken und der Tod, (King Charles of the Franks and Death,)

Die schlugen das gute Schwert Saxnot. (They defeated the good sword Saxnot.)

Die heiligen Wälder wurden still, (The holy forests became silent,)

Rot rannen die Ströme zum Meere.⁶⁶ (The rivers ran red to the sea.)

With sea themes, the poem "*Rungholt*" suggested a coming "rebirth," presumably a revolution in the spirit of Lower Germany's "conservative democracy" led by the region's native population:

Es graut ein Tag der Wiederkehr, (A day of rebirth dawns,)

Ein riesig Volk steigt aus dem Meer. (A gigantic folk rises from the sea.)

Das Erdtier bäumt unter ihrem Schritt, (The earth animal rears beneath their step,)

Dumpf donnert und dampft der Riesen Ritt. (With a thud, the giant steed thunders and steams.)

Die Weltschlacht kommt, um die Zeit der Mahd, (The world battle arrives with the harvest,)

Jauchze, mein Volk, deine Heldenzeit naht! (Rejoice, my people, your time of heroism nears!)

Die Wälder brennen, das Meer erflammt [...]!⁶⁷ (The forests are burning, the sea catches fire [...]!)

As the tone in "*Rungholt*" suggested, Blunck did not foresee this "re-birth" as being peaceful.

As a *Referendar*, Blunck was expected to gain experience in a number of legal settings. In 1912, he transferred to the district court in Altona, which had jurisdiction over the region of Holstein south of Hamburg. His task was to draft legal judgments, which had to be written in a dry, legalistic style. As he noted in his memoirs, he disliked this work. His superior complained that his drafts were too poetic. At work, he reluctantly conformed to the rigid style, with its

“Schachtelsätzen” (complicated sentences), that the court required.⁶⁸ At night, however, he wrote poems and ballads. In 1912, some of these appeared under the pseudonym “Detlev Blunck,” after a painter of the same name whom Blunck considered a distant relative, in the volume *Gedichte*.⁶⁹ The pieces reflected his affection for Lower-German sea themes and also revealed his alienation from the *Landgericht*:

Leise wie bunte Fische (Softly like colorful fish)
Im Meeresabendkleid (Dressed in the sea at sunset)
Ziehen rot über die Fläche (Red over the surface)
Segel durch ferne Einsamkeit.⁷⁰ (Sails move through distant loneliness.)

That same year, *Nordmark* made enough of an impression to propel Blunck into literary circles, and he was invited to join a group of Hamburg *Literati* called the *Himmelsleiter*.⁷¹ Composed of musicians, painters, sculptors, and poets, the group met in a Hamburg beer cellar, where the artists drank and debated. The assemblage had a significant *Heimat* (“homeland”) character, an understanding of which is critical to understanding Blunck. The *Heimat* movement arose in the late-nineteenth-century as a reaction to the perceived over-influence, particularly but not only artistic, of Prussia. It asserted that Germany’s art was not only “*Berlinerisch*” (i.e. centered in Berlin). Each of Germany’s provinces had its own history, customs, culture, and character, and these aspects were best reflected in each province’s rural, farming communities. The *Heimat* movement was generally anti-urban. However, the *Himmelsleiter* exhibited a specifically Lower-German twist: Its members called for representations of the region’s farmers and countryside, which they treasured, but also of its merchants, sailors, ports, and seashore. These were all hallmarks of the Lower-German region. In Schleswig-Holstein, groups like the *Himmelsleiter* embodied the provincial patriotism about which Celia Applegate has written.⁷²

In 1913, after a stint working for Victor Schwenke, a private attorney whose offices abutted the district court in Altona, Blunck took a job with two lawyers in Stormarn, a suburb of forested hills and lakes centered on the town of Ahrensburg, northeast of Hamburg. He left Altona at this time because he had grown tired of its

urban environment. Although the poet had always known city life, pre-war Hamburg and Altona were now riding a wave of hyper industrialization. Giant cartels were absorbing small businesses. Large capitalists and banks were buying up farms and consolidating them into agro-industries. According to the idealized portrait in his memoirs, as a child he had seen only harmony among the region's businesses, ports, and ancient farming communities. This world was disappearing, a process that he credited to the spread of unrestrained industrial and banking practices from Prussia, Berlin, and abroad.

While in Stormarn, Blunck wrote a series of short stories that revealed his growing distrust of urbanization and industrialization. *Söhne der Erde* (1913), which first appeared in serial form in the *Neuen Hamburger Zeitung*, was representative.⁷³ The rather crude novella tells of a Jewish businessman who enters a small village in the Holstein countryside, seduces a farmer's young wife, and persuades the farmer to give up his farm and speculate in coffee. The farmer loses his money and must start anew as a settler. As Blunck noted some years later, the moral of the story was that a farmer should hold onto his farmstead at all costs and avoid speculating in financial markets, whose representatives trick peasants with promises of an easy, but meaningless pension in the city.⁷⁴ In the novella, Blunck targeted dupes for apparent changes in his idyllic world. His penchant for finding scapegoats did not end here. *Söhne der Erde's* depiction of the city dweller as a corrupt Jew, as opposed to the honest German farmer, and the story's disparagement of everything urban were stereotypes typical of the *Heimat* genre of literature. Indeed, the book's subtitle, "*Ein Heimatroman*," declared its embodiment of the style.

A collection of short stories, *Feuer im Nebel* (1913), followed. In one of them, Blunck depicted dusk:

Da brach langsam aus den grauen Abendwolken im Westen ein Licht. Brandige Risse sprangen in die grauen Nebeldeiche, und in gleißendem Spalt strahlte fern die untergehende Sonne, wie ein Tor aus rotem gleißenden Gold in einem unendlichen Zauberberg. Und langsam quoll eine starke brennende Flut aus der Höhle, rann über die Kimmung und überhellte noch einmal das Abendmeer, daß es wie in roter Schuppenbrünne erglühte.⁷⁵ (Slowly, a light broke through the evening clouds in the west. Burning fissures developed in

the gray bank of mist, and through a glistening opening the descending sun shone like a portal made of sparkling red gold into an infinite magic mountain. And slowly, a powerful, burning flood swelled from the cavity, rushed across the horizon and lit up the evening sea one last time, so that it glowed like red scales of gold.)

Flamboyant imagery of this kind, particularly in the context of sunshine, pervaded Blunck's literature throughout his life to a degree that cannot be overestimated.

The poet dreamed up a number of the stories in *Feuer im Nebel*, with their frequent references to nature, during afternoon walks through the forest. His training nonetheless required that he return to Altona. In late 1913, he found himself once again at Schwenke's firm. His thoughts remained elsewhere, however. Spurred on by his *Himmelsleiter* colleagues, he now questioned whether the practice of law allowed enough time for literary pursuits. He considered leaving the profession. His father dissuaded him from this hasty decision, and Blunck compromised. He would take a one-year sabbatical from the law, then make a firm decision as to his future.

In the years before World War I, many writers, on both the left and the right, spent a section of their lives as "bohemians," a rite of passage they deemed essential to their artistic education.⁷⁶ Blunck was too staid ever to be considered a true "bohemian." Nonetheless, over the following year, he lived a somewhat eccentric existence in a modest rental flat on a quiet corner in Hamburg. He had a small bedroom, a room for his files, and a study, where he wrote poetry, short plays, and novellas. He also read the newest research on the early Germanic peoples and studied Flemish, Swedish, Danish, and English. The latter pursuit enabled him to read the literature and poetry of these lands in the native tongues. This ability was important, for he considered the material part of his Germanic cultural world. To support himself, he wrote a number of short stories that appeared in the *Münchener "Jugend,"* a magazine read in *Burschenschaften* and youth movement circles.

When he began his respite from the law, Blunck hoped the free time would lead to artistic successes. According to his memoirs, the road was not so smooth. In the early summer of 1914, his first one-act play flopped upon its premier at the *Dramatische Gesellschaft* (later

called the *Niederdeutsche Bühne*) in Hamburg.⁷⁷ Thereafter, he was unable to complete his projects for lack of confidence.

Blunck's anxiety about his work dissipated in the outbreak of war in August 1914. He lamented war with England, which he considered fratricide on account of the historical, cultural, and so-called "blood" ties between Germany and England, but he was ready to sacrifice his life for his country. Like most patriots, he believed Germany had been attacked by Russia and France and denied its rightful place among the great powers. After the declaration of war, he reported to his Marine-Infantry regiment in Kiel and was shipped out to the western front by train.

Blunck's service on the battlefield was brief. In late September 1914, because of his training in law, he was appointed as a legal officer to the military government in Brussels. Here, he performed various administrative and legal duties, such as assuring sufficient food and medicine for the city, trying petty crimes, and prosecuting black marketeers. In free moments, he composed poems about his experience at the front. They appeared in 1916 as the volume *Sturm überm Land*:

Und, als am Rhein der Sommer im Land, (And, as along the Rhine it was
summer in the land,)
riefen Trompeten ins Feld. (trumpets called to the field.)
Fiel auf die betenden Hände der Schnitter (It fell upon the praying hands of
the reapers)
lastend wie Schatten ferner Gewitter, (oppressive like the shadows of distant
thunder storms,)
dunkel wurde die Welt.⁷⁸ (the world became dark.)

At times belligerent, the poems in the collection suggested a deep intellectual and artistic absorption in the conflict.

Blunck's most significant experience in Brussels came not in government service but from his work with the Flemish independence movement. According to the German argument, the Flemings were ethnically Germanic, with cultural ties to Germany going back before the Holy Roman Empire. Flemish was part of the Lower-German family of languages, just as Flanders, in the eyes of patriots like Blunck, was part of the Lower-German geographical

world. In 1914, the Flemings comprised a sizeable proportion of the population in Belgium and Brussels. However, they were oppressed culturally and politically by French-speakers. Flemish history and culture were proscribed at schools and universities. Throughout Belgium, it was illegal to name streets or post store signs in Flemish. The demand of the Flemings was for cultural autonomy. They wanted the legal right to post their language, to buy Flemish books and newspapers, and for schools to educate their children in their native language and history.

Flemish independence – and the likely unification with Germany that would follow – was an ideal cause to activate Blunck's Pan-Germanism. After arriving in Brussels, he met a group of Flemish poets in the vanguard of the movement. While he worked for the military government during the day, at night he met with his Flemish friends. Spurred on by their stories, he published "*Belgien und die niederdeutsche Frage*" (Belgium and the Lower-German Question) in early 1915.⁷⁹ Here, he described the plight of the Flemings, emphasized their ties to Lower Germany, and underscored the duty of Germans to assist Flemish independence. At the same time, he formed a "Lower-German Alliance" among his Flemish associates and friends in Holland, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hamburg. The Alliance called for the unification of Flanders, the Netherlands, and northern Germany in one cultural, if not political union, and its annexation to the Reich as a single Lower Germany. A leading newspaper columnist in Germany condemned the Alliance as "Rassefanatismus" (race fanaticism).⁸⁰ Blunck saw the criticism as another example of narrow-minded Prussian thinking, in which ideas that "über die Grenzen reichten [...] bedenklich waren" (reached over the border were [...]) dubious).⁸¹

However, the German military supported Flemish independence, albeit with caution. During the occupation, schools were permitted to teach Flemish, and the language reappeared on street signs and in store windows. The army even began preparing a Flemish unit to fight in Italy, although the preparations faltered as the war turned against Germany. According to Blunck's memoirs, in the last months of the occupation he helped write laws protecting Flemish culture and language. However, all was in vain. On September 30,

1918, as the front disintegrated, the German army evacuated Belgium. With the departure of German troops, the Flemish independence movement collapsed. After the war, the Belgian government imprisoned the movement's leaders.

Demobilized following the evacuation of Belgium, Blunck returned home a broken man. Seven of his *Himmelsleiter* friends had died in combat.⁸² Many other acquaintances had also been lost. In no small way on account of these deaths, the war was decisive for Blunck. In the decades that followed, he came to believe that defeat had strengthened his generation in a way that victory never could have:

Die eigentliche deutsche Revolution beginnt im August 1914, und einmalig wird wohl in unserem Leben jenes Geschehen sein, das in seiner Größe und in seinem Hingabewillen immer eine der feierlichsten Erinnerungen für uns bleiben wird.⁸³ (The real German revolution begins in August 1914, a once-in-a-life-time event that, in its greatness and will for devotion, will always remain one of the most celebrated memories for us.)

Comments of this kind resembled many made by German soldiers who would play a role during the Third Reich, most notably Hitler himself. As Mosse has argued, the war hardened its participants.⁸⁴ This point was true of Blunck.

After the armistice, the poet hoped that Wilson's fourteen points, particularly the right to self-determination, would lead to the unification of most Germanic peoples, including the Flemings.⁸⁵ He felt betrayed by the Treaty of Versailles. Interpreting the violation of Belgian neutrality to Germany's advantage, he, like most Germans, believed that the allies had caused the war and had now broken their promises. For Blunck, most disheartening was the separation from the Reich of Germans in eastern Prussia and Silesia, the loss of German minorities in the dissolving Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the allies' refusal to allow Austria to unify with Germany. For the rest of his life, Blunck condemned Versailles in his letters, diaries, and speeches.

Blunck was not against the democratic revolution that followed the war. After all, he was still a "democrat" in the mythical sense of Marklo, Dithmarschen, and 1848. However, as he explained in his

memoirs, the November revolution corrupted the national spirit evident in 1848 in favor of foreign socialism and party factionalism: “Man hätte sich zum Erbe von 1848 zurückfinden können, wie wir in Niederdeutschland es erwarteten. Gerade darin versagte die Führung.”⁸⁶ (The way back to the inheritance of 1848 could have been followed, as we had expected in Lower Germany. This was, however, where the leadership failed.) The fact that the revolution broke out in Kiel must have been heartening to the poet, but he was indignant that Lower Germany’s democratic heritage did not serve as its intellectual fount:

Da war endlich das sehr selbstbewußte Niederdeutschland, das mit seinen bäuerlichen Überlieferungen, etwa Dithmarschens und Frieslands, und in seiner Vergangenheit der hansischen Städte eine so starke und alteingewurzelte Demokratie darstellte, daß man gewiß keine Vorbilder vom Westen brauchte. War die früheste Form unserer Staatsauffassung nicht schon im Landtag von Marklo geschaffen, längst vor der englischen Magna Charta?⁸⁷ (Above all, there was self-confident Lower Germany, which, with its peasant heritage, like Dithmarschen’s and Friesland’s, and its history of the Hanseatic cities, contained so strong and rooted a democracy that we needed no examples from the West. Had the earliest form of our constitution not already been created in the *Landtag* at Marklo, long before the English Magna Carta?)

Embittered, the poet began the next period of his life interested in reawakening Germany’s Lower-German constitutional heritage and amending both the treaty and the revolution that had ignored this heritage. During Weimar and afterwards, the passions that he had gleaned during his early years – Pan-German unity, Lower-German patriotism, indigenous democracy, and neo-Romantic heroicism – remained his artistic and political *leitmotif*. These were not foundations for placidity.

Chapter III: The Post-War Period

In *Germany after the First World War*, Richard Bessel has related the disassociation Germans experienced after demobilization: “After the First World War, Germany never really made the transition from a ‘war society’ to a ‘peace society.’ Instead, it remained a post-war society.”¹ For a provincial romantic like Blunck, steeped in the heroicism of his native region, the perplexity was severe, and thoughts of the war remained with him throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The valiant images he had collected since childhood were now tarnished. However, Blunck was an idealist, not a cynic. Rather than diminish his heroic conception of the past, in the long run defeat fueled his desire for vindication.

Searching for direction, Blunck now returned to the law. On leave in 1917 and early 1918, he had prepared for and then passed the *Assessor* exam that qualified him for a permanent position in Hamburg’s city government. After returning from Brussels, he began work at the “Ship Inspection Committee” in Hamburg, but soon switched to the “Department of Trade and Shipping.”² Although the question of whether he would work as a full-time artist now retreated, poems, fairy tales, and novellas still filled his nights. During this period, he completed *Peter Ohles Schatten* (1919), a short novel about a twin who, upon returning to Hamburg from war in the German colonies, impersonates his deceased brother.³ In the end, he must acknowledge his true identity, for his personality, particularly his talent for the violin, outweighs his physical similarity to his brother. The story maintains a magical, fairy-tale-like atmosphere, which characterized most of Blunck’s yarns. It also revealed his weakness for the sentimental, as is demonstrated in the scene where the twin reveals himself to his beloved:

Zwei Menschen schritten unter den blühenden Fruchtbäumen den Hügel hinauf; die weißen Blüten rieselten im Winde leise auf sie hinab. Unten vom Fluß schrie eine verirrte Möwe, sonst war der Frühling traumstill, und was leise in den Ohren der beiden klang, war die Freude in ihrem Blut.⁴ (Under the blossoming fruit trees, two people strode up the hill; white blossoms

fluttered softly down upon them in the wind. From the river below a lost sea gull cried out. Otherwise, the springtime was still like a dream. What resounded quietly in the ears of both of them was the joy in their blood.)

At the same time, the tale was one of the poet's more introspective works. Depicting the alienation experienced upon coming home from a long, difficult ordeal, it reflected the soul-searching he endured during the war, as well as his own difficulties upon returning to civilian life.

At the "Department of Trade and Shipping," Blunck monitored Hamburg's export and import firms. As he observed the receipts and records, he glimpsed the vast distances traveled by Hamburg's traders. The occupation contributed to a life-long fascination with far-away places, an interest that was reflected in the geographical breadth of *Peter Obles Schatten* and would influence his future works.

In the late spring of 1919, with the royalty he received for *Peter Obles Schatten*, the poet purchased a cottage on a hill above the town of Ahrensburg, in the region of Stormarn, where he had served for a period as a *Referendar*. He called the home "*Vierbergen*," presumably after the surrounding hills. Now, "die Dichtung hatte ihren Garten gefunden" (poetry had found its garden).⁵ After the purchase, the poet went on to complete the first volume of *Werdendes Volk*, which proved one of his most characteristic works. This "Niederdeutsche Trilogie" (Lower-German trilogy), as he called it, included *Hein Hoyer* (1920), *Berend Fock* (1921), and *Stelling Rotkinnssohn* (1922). Quasi-historical in nature, the three books depicted Lower Germany during the Hanseatic period, the aftermath of the Thirty-Years' War, and the epoch following Charlemagne's conquest.

Stelling Rotkinnssohn is a Saxon rebel who defies the Franks in the waning days of Saxon independence. He embodies the resilience of Germanic traditions against Christianity and feudalism. With his death, however, his quest for a Nordic-Christian synthesis passes away, and his "Glaube blutet in die Erde" (faith bleeds into the Earth).⁶ The *Feldhauptmann* of the Senate in Hanseatic Hamburg, Hein Hoyer, is Blunck's ideal leader: "Er war Feldherr, er war der Unersättliche, der die halben Gewalten ausreißen wollte, um ein neues Lager für das Volk der Niederlande zu bauen."⁷ (He was field

commander; he was the inexhaustible, who sought to tear out the half powers, in order to build a new establishment for the people of the Netherlands). After breaking the hegemony of the Hamburg patricians, he assumes temporary dictatorial powers and leads Hamburg's "verwirrende Demokratie" (confusing democracy) onto "neue Wege" (new paths), establishing equal rights for the city's guilds.⁸ He then commands Hamburg and its allies in victories against the Danes, culminating in King Erich's defeat at Schleswig:

Und die Hamburger stürmten von Osten in die dänischen Stellungen ein, und die Holsteiner griffen von Süden her die Wälle an, ein blutiger Aufstand brach in den Gassen der Stadt gegen König Erich aus. Trommeln weckten die Bürger und wappneten sie, rot brannte der Sommerkampf um Schleswig, bis die Dänen die Straßen zu räumen begannen.⁹ (And from the East the Hamburgers stormed the Danish positions, and the Holsteiners attacked the ramparts from the south. A bloody revolt exploded in the streets of the city against King Erich. Drum rolls awoke the citizens and prepared them. The mid-summer struggle burned red, until the Danes began to vacate the streets.)

Dream-like in atmosphere and reminiscent of the old Anglo-Saxon tales "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer," *Berend Fock* is about a voyager – "proud like Nietzsche's superman"¹⁰ – who travels the world in search of "God." Having sailed to the Indian Ocean, he is lost at sea on account of "God's" trickery. He eventually lands on the Arabian coast, treks throughout the Middle East, and then returns, unsuccessful in his quest, to his native Hamburg, where the first German operas are playing. Along the way, he has fallen in love with the beautiful soprano Imme, whose voice, blessed with the charm of bird trills,¹¹ is unsurpassed and astounds audiences. In Hamburg, he helps finance the first opera house with treasure that he magically locates while wandering the Lower-German countryside after midnight. However, disillusioned with God's aloofness and the established clergy's opposition to the opera, he retreats with Imme to a farm in Blankenese. The story ends as the hero, conscious of his imminent death, sails off into the North Sea, where he "feels god's closeness in the endlessness of the water"¹²:

Der Himmel war bis zur Höhe mit rotbrandenden Wolken überpflügt; ein ungeheueres Leuchten stieg brausend weit über Wasser und Erde und

schmolz alles in eins. Es ist der Tag, dachte er, da mein Samen gegen Gott aufwacht [...].¹³ (The sky was ploughed to its height with burning red clouds. Thundering wide over the water and earth, an enormous light arose and melted everything in its glow. It is the day, thought [Fock], that my seed shall awaken to God [...].)

As the above citations from *Stelling Rotkinnsohn* (“Glaube blutet in die Erde”), *Hein Hoyer* (“rot brannte der Sommerkampf”), and *Berend Fock* (“[d]er Himmel [...] mit rotbrandenden Wolken überpflügt [...] ein ungeheueres Leuchten stieg brausend weit über Wasser und Erde”) suggest, Blunck’s attachment to “blood and earth” imagery was already evident in the early 1920s. His work demonstrates that these themes preceded in their most evocative form the Nazi seizure of power by more than a decade. At the same time, the three volumes in *Werdendes Volk* represented a heroic, fantastic image of Lower-German history. Depicting the region as the fount of the Reich, they suggested that Lower Germany had been destined to unite all Germans according to truly German traditions, only to be hindered by irredentism (as in *Hein Hoyer*), foreign invasion (as in *Stelling Rotkinnsohn*), or religious upheaval and an obstinate clergy (as in *Berend Fock*). The books were historical tragedies of sorts, about missed opportunities. Through their heroicism, they nonetheless exhibited a hopeful air and offered Germans a usable past, absent Prussia. In a population looking for answers to the calamity of 1918, the books struck a chord. Although they did not sell in large numbers, they were well received by literary circles in Schleswig-Holstein. The poet’s name appeared on northern Germany’s literary map.

In the summer of 1919, rumors swirled that Germans who had been associated during the war with Flemish independence would soon be arrested. That fall, Blunck went into “exile,” as he termed it, in Holland and remained there for several months. During his stay, he met Emmes Ruoff, the daughter of a prosperous coffee trader. Emmes had studied agricultural science, which rendered her an ideal companion if Blunck ever pursued his dream of becoming a farmer. As a Hollander, she also embodied Lower Germany and the old Reich, which, from Blunck’s point of view, were a racial and cultural unity. Blunck and Emmes were engaged six weeks after meeting.

They married two days before Christmas at the town hall in Rotterdam.

Blunck's name was not on the list of wanted conspirators. After returning home with his bride, he again took up work at the "Department of Trade and Shipping." His marriage, however, experienced difficulties early on. Only days after the wedding, Emmes fell ill with the flu that plagued Europe after the war, an ordeal that Blunck depicted a decade later in his semi-autobiographical novel, *Die Volkswende* (1930). Her recovery did not end the woe, for the illness had sown a tumor. Surgery saved Emmes' life, but the episode had so weakened her that she could no longer reproduce. The couple remained childless, a circumstance that cast a shadow but left Blunck with more time for his professional endeavors and literary pursuits. Although he generally targeted his stories at adults rather than young people, the circumstance may also, by way of proxy, have strengthened his life-long attachment to children's genres, especially fairy tales. Emmes' father died not long after her recovery. Much of his fortune, after being invested heavily in German currency, had been lost in the hyperinflation following the war.

From 1919 to 1928, Blunck had two occupations. During the day, he worked as a lawyer. In the evening, he wrote poems, fairy tales, and ballads. Although he received several promotions in the Hamburg bureaucracy, already in the early 1920s he considered leaving the department for full-time writing.¹⁴ However, his government income helped him to escape the ravages of inflation. It also financed his and his wife's bourgeois pursuits, like dining out and attending concerts. Blunck wanted to remain part of genteel, middle-class society, particularly in urban Hamburg, the atmosphere of which he deemed critical to his intellectual and artistic development. With his ever-present bow tie, dapper suit, and reserved manner, he presented himself as a "bourgeois poet," a writer who was passable in both artistic and professional circles. This dandified, somewhat eccentric image, however, contrasted with his demeanor, which, while not absent friendliness, had grown rather stern in the years following the war.

Instead of leaving the finance department, Blunck compromised between Hamburg and the countryside. In 1920, using part of the fortune that remained after the death of Emmes' father, the couple purchased a modest townhouse in the city. Blunck now lived in Hamburg for much of the week and spent his weekends and the better part of his summers at the cottage outside Ahrensburg. As Hans Grumbrecht has pointed out, he and his wife now "tried to lead a part-time existence as amateur peasants."¹⁵ Several years later, the poet described the virtues of this existence, which recalled elements of his upbringing between Altona-Hamburg and the countryside. For him, living exclusively in the countryside or the city was out of the question. His occupation as a poet required that he experience both aspects of his Lower-German homeland, the seafaring and the farming nation.¹⁶

The arrangement benefited his artistic pursuits. In the summer of 1921, he wrote the better part of *Von Klabautern und Rullerpuckern* (published in 1923), a collection of magical tales about peasants, giants, foxes, dwarves, princesses, kings, and invulnerable soldiers. He derived the stories from tales he had heard as a child and from his own research into northern German folklore. Followed by the collections, *Von klugen Frauen und Füchsen* (1926) and *Sprung über die Schwelle* (1932), this was the first volume of the series, *Märchen von der Niederelbe*. The tale "Der unterirdische Berg" (The Subterranean Mountain) exhibited Blunck's child-like delight in the supernatural:

Die armen Waisen hatten erst viel Angst vor der dunklen Treppe und sträubten sich, aber als sie einmal unten waren, sahen sie, es war gar kein Keller, in den sie hinabstiegen. Durch ein großes wunderschönes Haus ging es hindurch, wo alle Leute zusammenknickten, wenn sie vorbeischritten. Die Kinder wollten darüber lachen, aber der König blieb ernst, man sah ihm an, daß er viel Sorgen tragen mußte. Dann traten sie vor eine große Tür, und – sonderbar – es lag ein schöner grauer Garten vor ihnen, obgleich sie doch tief unter der Erde sein mußten. Alle Wege waren spiegelblank und hatten saubere Kanten gegen den schönsten duftenden Blumenrasen auf beiden Seiten. Viel Vögel sangen in den Büschen; purpurrote und blaue Finken huschten hin und her, Segelfalter fielen aus der Luft so bunt und farbig und vielfältig, wie man sie noch niemals in einem irdischen Garten gesehen hat.

Auf einmal, als der König ein Wort sprach, begann der Weg unter ihnen allen wie ein Wagen aufzustehen und von dannen zu rollen. Die Kinder

mußten sich rasch festhalten, sie fuhren flink durch den ganzen Garten, bis sie an sein Ende kamen.

Wie mußten sie da erst staunen! Ein großer Berg lag vor ihnen, mit Häusern und Höfen und Brunnen und Wiesen über und über bedeckt.¹⁷

(At first, the poor orphans were terribly scared by the dark steps, and they were not eager to go on. But, as they continued downwards, they realized that it was not a cellar into which they had descended. [...] They passed through a large, beautiful house where everybody curtsied, when they passed. The children wanted to laugh at that, but the king remained serious and it was obvious that he had many cares. Then they stood in front of a tremendous door, and – strangely – in front of them lay a beautiful, gray garden, although they were now deep under the earth. Mirror-like paths with sharp edges ran through the most beautifully smelling flowerbeds and lawns. Birds sang in the bushes; purple and blue finches darted here and there; butterflies, more colorful and diverse than one had ever seen above ground, were blown about by the breeze./ Suddenly, as the king spoke one word, the path rose up under them like a wagon and began to roll. The children had to hold on tight, as they traveled nimbly through the garden, until they came to its end./ And with what amazement did they view the sight! A giant mountain lay before them, covered with houses, farms, springs, and fields.)

With its depiction of a pastoral paradise buried just beneath the surface, “*Der unterirdische Berg*” also appears to have symbolized Blunck’s belief that a new, utopian Reich lay in Germany’s future.

On account of the popularity of realist novels, fairy tales had experienced a slump at the end of the nineteenth century. In the pre- and post-war periods, this decline was compounded by the popularity of mass-marketed “best-sellers” and the growing acceptance of *avant-garde* prose.¹⁸ However, as a friend noted some years later, Blunck believed that this slump was only an “apparent death.”¹⁹ With his fairy tales, he hoped to bring the genre back into vogue. From the perspective of *Von Klabautern und Rullerpuckern*, which sold well in Hamburg after the inflation subsided, he succeeded. However, the second and third volumes fared less well. The apparent death, although gradual, was real. In his fairy tales, Blunck nonetheless served the traditions and history of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany by chronicling folklore that would otherwise have been lost. The books were well regarded by literary critics²⁰ and stand as his most memorable literary achievement.²¹

Von Klabautern und Rullerpuckern and a few other works notwithstanding, the poet's books were generally not financial successes. For example, *Hein Hoyer*, which he considered one of his most important creations, was a commercial failure. However, his career in the Hamburg bureaucracy was on the rise and made up for these monetary disappointments. In 1921, he was promoted to the Department of Finance. Soon, his superiors offered a transfer to Berlin, to the new Ministry of Finance, but he refused, wishing to remain closer to home. The ample salary he earned as a civil servant, along with the royalties he did receive, provided him with a sizable income. He now had enough money to buy a larger piece of land and, in 1923, purchased several acres with a meadow in the forest east of Ahrensburg. The following year, he sold "Vierbergen" to his brother Walther and built a similar house on the new property. He named it "Immenhagen," after the heroine in *Berend Fock*.²² In the meadow, he cultivated an orchard.

In 1925, after six years as a city official, Blunck received the prestigious position of *Syndikus* (chief lawyer) of Hamburg University. This appointment constituted a significant advancement and helped satisfy his need for professional prestige, which he had gleaned from his father. Before Blunck joined the university, its reputation was local. Until 1913, the institution had not been a university, but a "Colonial Institute." According to the poet's memoirs, many Hamburgers were ambivalent about the school. The owners of the great trading houses feared that it would draw talent away from their companies, and they were less than forthcoming with donations. Blunck sought to help change this sentiment. He aimed to transform the university into an institution of international standing.

To this end, he walked a number of avenues. At Christmas, he and his wife hosted ethnic Germans from Poland, South Africa, the United States, and Norway for the holidays. In addition, he sponsored an increase in the number of ethnic Germans studying at the University. As a result of his work, their numbers grew from 100 to 250.²³ He also assisted in organizing a program for Asian students at the school. In his memoirs, he intimated that he had helped create a diverse student body. However, the majority of his recruits suggests that there was a Pan-German bias to his efforts. Indeed, according to

his view of cultural and historical bonds, this was, generally, not an international effort, but a means to reunite German students in their homeland.

To improve the university's international connections, Blunck joined the international PEN-Club. During the inter-war period, the PEN-Club was one of the most prominent cultural organizations in the world, boasting Europe's and the United States' preeminent writers. Inaugurated in London in 1921, the PEN-Club promoted contacts and organized congresses among poets, essayists, and novelists around the globe. Each of the major western powers – France, Britain, the United States, and Germany – had PEN-Club divisions. The Club served as a means towards international cultural understanding.²⁴ Given the PEN-Club's generally liberal (and, in the case of members like H.G. Wells, leftist) penchant, the organization was an odd venue for a Pan-German and "Germanic" nationalist like Blunck. His participation demonstrates how the "democratic" views of a conservative like Blunck – views that he made known at the PEN – could still be considered progressive in the period before 1933. For the poet, "international cultural understanding" also had a special meaning. On account of his belief, first learned from his father and mother, that the Middle Ages had constituted a "golden age" in which Europe was unified around a prosperous German Reich, he held that European power and peace could only be preserved if Germany regained a leading position on the continent. Reestablishing the international presence of German culture, which had weakened after the war, was critical to restoring German power as far as he was concerned, for the Holy Roman Empire had been Europe's cultural anchor during the Middle Ages. He saw the PEN as a means to this goal.

Blunck's formal participation in the Club began when he attended the Club's annual meeting in Paris in early 1925. The gathering pleased him, and he went on to attend each congress until 1931. He was decisive in bringing the PEN-Club's annual meeting to Berlin in 1926, which marked the first international cultural congress in Germany since the war.

Of the PEN-Club's many divisions, the English most interested the poet. In his mind, England was a natural partner for reviving

Lower Germany's traditions and democratic heritage on account of the island-nation's historical ties to the Lower-German world. He also believed that the University of Hamburg had a special relationship with Oxford on account of Hamburg's special, Hanseatic ties to London. Finally, since England was the most powerful "Germanic" nation, its alliance with the strongest "Germanic" power on the continent (i.e. Germany) was only natural. Like numerous figures who rose to Germany's cultural and diplomatic ranks in the 1930s, Blunck could imagine a world in which England ruled the seas via its navy and Germany the continent and the East via its army.

Of the English writers he befriended, Blunck was most devoted to the PEN-Club's president, the novelist and dramatist John Galsworthy, who received the Nobel Prize in literature in 1932 for his *Forsyte Saga*. Blunck and Galsworthy talked enthusiastically about history, music, and literature. In Blunck's own words, "Galsworthy seemed to me to be the perfect example of a well-balanced individual [...]. He was an Anglo-Saxon of the type that we, in this Hanseatic land, appreciate and love – not only from personal sympathy, but also for old-sake's sake."²⁵ The war, Blunck and Galsworthy concurred, was a stain on what should have been harmonious relations between the "continental" and "island" Anglo-Saxons.

During the international PEN-Club meeting in London in October 1926, Blunck visited Galsworthy at his home in Hampstead. Here, Blunck explained that he wanted to create a vacation course for English students at the University of Hamburg. The course would improve the students' understanding of their historical and cultural ties to northern Germany. Galsworthy applauded the idea and agreed to speak on the program's behalf at the Oxford Student Union. Upon returning to Hamburg, Blunck arranged for the course.²⁶ By April 1927, however, only four English students had registered for the summer session. In a note to Galsworthy, Blunck emphasized that the low enrollment concerned him, because English students planned nine visits to France that summer. The Hamburg course would not make up the difference, and for yet another year France would outpace Germany in bringing young Englishmen into its cultural orbit. Blunck asked Galsworthy to make a special effort to promote the project.²⁷ Galsworthy did so, but the course never attracted much

interest.²⁸ Blunck's relationship with Galsworthy nevertheless remained close until the Englishman's sudden death in 1933.

Second among Blunck's friends at the English PEN-Club was the organization's General Secretary, Hermon Ould. Blunck's relationship with Ould began in 1928, when the two attempted to have each other's works translated and published in their respective countries.²⁹ With logic similar to the courses for English students in Hamburg, Blunck promoted Ould in Germany in order to foster "Anglo-Saxon" literature as a weight against French literature, which he believed was too influential.³⁰ A few of the Englishman's works were translated and distributed in Germany.

Blunck felt that the publication of his own work in England would improve English understanding of the historical connections between Lower Germany and England (parts of both *Stelling Rotkinnsohn* and *Hein Hoyer*, for example, transpire in England). He also wanted to make sure that "serious" German literature was recognized in England, rather than the inferior popular literature that held the field.³¹ Unfortunately, English publishers considered his work inappropriate for their market, and none published one of his book-length works. Starting in the mid 1920s, such disappointments became the rule for Blunck. His desperation was measured in the increasing numbers of complimentary copies that he now began sending off to agents, writers, and friends for publicity.³²

After the English PEN-Club, Blunck's relationship to the French division was strongest. Although this attachment might seem surprising in light of his fear of French influence, France was the strongest power on the continent, and this was cause enough for his interest. However, Blunck also had a genuine interest in international friendships of all kinds, not least with France, where his mother had lived. Of course, this was especially the case, if these friendships were based on *his* Germanic-centered understanding of the world and helped achieve Germany's "rightful" place in Europe. Through the French PEN-Club, Blunck organized courses and trips for exchange students to the University of Hamburg similar to those for English students. Ironically, these courses attracted more attendees, and some two-dozen French students attended the program in the summer of 1928.

Of the French PEN-Club members, Blunck was closest to Jules Romains. Like Blunck, Romains was interested in prehistoric finds. In conversations at PEN-Club meetings, he discussed the origins of his racial stock, the Celts, and Blunck covered the Lower-German foundations of the Germanic peoples. Discussions of this kind demonstrated (as will a present-day visit to any of the numerous museums in Europe with prehistoric artifacts) that interests in prehistory were not in and of themselves unusual or sinister. Significant was what was done with the information – particularly to what degree it was manipulated, as it would be during the Third Reich, on behalf of ultra-nationalistic and racist ends.

Another Frenchman whom Blunck befriended was Maurice Boucher, a Parisian Germanist who also appreciated the historical significance of Lower Germany.³³ Beginning in 1930, the two collaborated as editors of the *Revue d'Allemagne*, along with Romains, Jean Giraudoux, and Thomas Mann. An additional colleague of Blunck was René Poupard, a young Germanist at the University of Bordeaux, whom Blunck befriended in 1928 when Poupard was working on his study, *Die Märchendichtung von Hans Friedrich Blunck*. Poupard became a disciple of Blunck – a French specialist in Lower-German fairy tales – and was his close comrade at PEN-Club gatherings.

From the start of his involvement in the PEN-Club, Blunck was frustrated by the influence of the official board of the German PEN division, which was headquartered in Berlin. The “Berlin Center,” as he called it, administered the German PEN-Club, and its regulations applied to all the division’s members. According to its rules, autonomous regional PEN groups in provinces like Schleswig-Holstein were impermissible. In order to balance the power of the “Berlin Center,” in 1926 the poet nonetheless helped establish an informal “Hamburg Group” (or “Hanseatic Circle,” as it was sometimes called) of PEN-Club members from northwest Germany and the Hansa cities, with Max Alexander Meumann, the dramatist and editor of the journal *Fremdenblatt*’s cultural pages, as president.³⁴ Additional members included Frank Thiess (from Riga), Börries von Münchhausen, and Hans Grimm.³⁵ The group was one among several regional PEN-Club organizations in Germany that arose

during this period, including the *Allemanisch* group and the *Rheinland* group.³⁶ Blunck hoped that the “Hamburg Group” would eventually include writers from all of historic Lower Germany, including Holland and Flanders, and thus represent, at least in a cultural sense, the Lower Germany of the *Nibelungenlied*. Together with Hamburg University, he used the “Hamburg Group” to bring foreign writers to Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein for speaking engagements, so Berlin would not be the only international venue in Germany.³⁷ In this way, he aimed, culturally, to help restore the “old Reich,” in which the provinces were dominant and Berlin was an insignificant backwater.

According to Blunck’s memoirs, critics on the right labeled him a *Judenknecht* (servant to the Jews) for participating in what they considered a liberal, Jew-ridden organization. Some of his erstwhile *Burschenschaften* and *Wandervögel* colleagues condemned him for a “lack of national feeling.”³⁸ Given the oddity of so traditional and nationalistic a poet’s involvement in the PEN-Club, such criticisms might well have come his way. If so, the critics missed the cunning of Blunck’s activities. Not unlike the Nazis, who used democratic means to destroy Weimar democracy, he was employing liberal means towards nationalistic – indeed, Pan-German – ends.

Some consideration of the poet’s personality helps in understanding his diverse affiliations. At middle age, Blunck was a serious man. Although he had an almost childlike *joie de vivre*, expressed in his magical fairy tales, he was plagued by a sense of the profundity, and burden, of life. He lauded existence, but could not laugh at its contradictions, absurdities, and occasional insignificance. He needed to affirm life, to prove its meaning and worth. His dreams, which he revealed in his diaries, were troubled and betrayed anxiety about the fragility of time. His frenetic activity – as demonstrated in his engagement in the PEN-Club, his increasing literary output, and his activities at the university – reflected his determination to make the most of his years.

Critics later suggested that his vigorous engagement in cultural affairs came from a need for “fame” and the “satisfaction of his ambition.”³⁹ Ambition was an important, and possibly the most decisive, part of the equation, for Blunck had a powerful ego and

desire for recognition. However, his activities also stemmed from a belief that he was working on behalf of just goals. In his life and art, just as in the fairy tales he had first heard as a child, the world appeared as a drama of good versus evil, heroic versus unheroic. The gray area, the realization that nothing is absolute, was foreign to him. Considering himself right about everything, he joined organizations that he felt espoused his views, or through which he believed he could make these views understood. In terms of recognition, there was a synergy here, for he believed his “wisdom” deserved a high pulpit. He was well liked by those whom he befriended and with whom he agreed, for he could be amiable and polite and was always forthcoming with his opinions. However, he was disliked just as much by those who disagreed with him, for his righteousness enflamed his convictions.

As a result of the frenetic energy he devoted to everything he did, by 1927 work at the university, literary endeavors, and international engagement had affected him. According to his own account, his health suffered, and a friend at Hamburg University’s Psychological Clinic, Weygandt, advised him to choose between life as a lawyer or a poet. The following year, the same friend diagnosed him, conveniently, as no longer fit for the stress of his position as *Syndikus*.⁴⁰ At the age of forty-one, the poet resigned his post and received a pension from Hamburg University. Years later, an antagonist suggested that Blunck had, in collaboration with Weygandt, fabricated his health problems in order to pursue an easy retirement.⁴¹ While it is impossible to determine the veracity of the charge, it could have been true, at least in the sense that Blunck wanted to abandon the legal world at this time. However, he was not looking for a relaxed retirement. On the contrary, he was now, more than ever, determined to pursue the deepest interests he had gathered since childhood. For this purpose, his health was excellent.

According to Celia Applegate, *Heimat* patriotism intensified during the Weimar period, for national motifs had been sullied and there was “no satisfactory national symbology.”⁴² Blunck’s case confirms this point. He called the next period of his life his “five years as a free writer.” During these years, in which he spent his winters in Hamburg and his summers at Immenhagen, his provincial passions

deepened. In 1928, he published *Gewalt über das Feuer*, a mystical tale (or epic, as he sometimes called the work) about prehistoric Lower Germany that he was inspired to write after a visit to a prehistoric site with field experts.⁴³ Set at the end of the last ice age, the book tells of Börr, the archetypal Germanic man, the “first person upon whom God’s favor rests.”⁴⁴ As Börr discovers fire and vanquishes the cave lions, he masters the natural world and thus symbolizes the birth of Germanic civilization.

Based on Blunck’s own research and readings of what he considered to be purely scientific material,⁴⁵ the work was meant to have application throughout the German and Germanic world, for it allegedly depicted the dawn of all Germanic peoples.⁴⁶ Through Hermon Ould, he tried unsuccessfully to have it translated and published in Britain, arguing that the book applied especially to the English, given their origins on Jutland.⁴⁷ *Gewalt über das Feuer* was re-released in 1933 along with two earlier works, *Streit mit den Göttern* (1925), about Bronze-Age Lower Germany, and *Kampf der Gestirne* (1926), about the neolithic period, as the one-volume trilogy, *Die Urvätersaga*.⁴⁸ Blunck sometimes referred to the books as a “Geschichte” (history) of, or “Schöpfungsgeschichte” (history of creation) in,⁴⁹ Lower Germany during the pre-historic era. In reality, however, their historical value was minimal. While the works were based in some archeological research, they more accurately represented Blunck’s imagination, with its penchant for heroicization exhibited in full form.

Between 1928 and 1929, Blunck wrote his semi-autobiographical novel, *Die Volkswende*.⁵⁰ His only major offering that can be placed in the realist genre and one of his few contemporary accounts, the book tells of the Brands, a Hamburg shipping family, during the period 1910 to 1928. The story represents various of Blunck’s views, including his wish to end factional bickering by instituting a *volkskonservativ* democracy in the image of Lower-German tradition, his antipathy for Weimar culture, and his interest in balancing Industrialization with the traditional farming economy. One member of the family finances a model village, where German soldiers “return to the land” and industrial workers retreat after factory work to tend small gardens – a concept that had been current since the Imperial era. The

central figure in the story, Erich Brand, sponsors the construction of a Lower-German cultural center in Hamburg, with a library, a school for adults, and a department for traditional artisanal crafts like gold working, weaving, typesetting, and pottery. Driven by patriotic thoughts – “Ich bin Teil eines großen Volkes, dachte Brand leidenschaftlich, eines Volkes, das mehr als je wissen will, daß es lebt” (I am part of a great people, Brand thought passionately, a people that, more than ever before, wants to know that it lives)⁵¹ – Brand is a predictable figure, who is representative of Blunck himself.

After completing *Die Volkswende*, Blunck published several collections of ballads, fairy tales, and poems that reflected his Lower-German consciousness.⁵² In the poem “*Nordischer Abend*” (1930), he depicted the Dithmarschen moors at dusk:

Im Erlendämmern ein roter Wind (At dusk a red wind)
 Läuft über die Moore in seufzender Hast, (Runs across the moors in great haste,)
 Im Abend lehnt ein Wolkentor (In the evening, an opening in the clouds permits)
 Weit offen seinem letzten Gast. (Wide open its last guest.)
 Die Brücke, die hinüber führt, (The bridge, which leads across,)
 Sinkt in des Flusses schwarzen Spahn. (Sinks into the dark span of the river.)
 Dunst steigt, als höb’ sich mühsam groß. (Mist rises, as if lifting an arduous weight.)
 Blind rudern vor dir ein grauer Kahn.⁵³ (Blindly, there passes in front of you a gray rowboat.)

With its personifying motifs, *Nordischer Abend* exhibited Blunck’s sense that nature was alive and participant in the world. This theme developed in his art throughout the 1920s, taking on the pantheistic qualities to which we have already pointed.

In his free time, Blunck visited local museums with Lower-German art and history. Here, he spent long hours viewing woodcuts and metal crafts, as well as artifacts from Medieval ships, dwellings, and churches. Based on his own observations, he challenged the interpretations of specialists. He was dismayed that a builder of traditional homes on the coast near Oldenburg believed that eighth-century sheep stables in the region had been primitive. According to Blunck, “[i]n Wirklichkeit sind um 800 große zweistöckige hölzerne

Häuser, vielleicht größer als die heutigen, jedenfalls reicher geschnitten beim Bauernadel vorhanden gewesen" (in reality around 800 there existed huge, two-floored, wooden houses, possibly larger than today's homes and certainly more richly sculpted by the farmer aristocracy).⁵⁴ As this evidence suggests, his romance with the "Saxon Republic" of the early Middle Ages now grew more passionate.

So did his romance with prehistory. In August 1929, he visited a 3,000-year-old site in Schleswig that impressed him as a monument to early sophistication in Germanic fortifications. He used such visits as bases for *Gewalt über das Feuer*, and he published essays on prehistory, such as an article entitled "*Folgerungen aus der Vorgeschichte*" that appeared in the *Revue d'Allemagne* in 1929.⁵⁵ During this period, he also traveled abroad extensively, giving readings from his works. Here, his fascination with Germanic history was also apparent, as he observed the Germanic racial and cultural legacy among indigenous peoples. While traveling in Scotland in December 1930, he pondered the degree to which the Scots exhibited Germanic features. He was pleased to learn that the Scottish language maintained Nordic influences⁵⁶ and that the dialect spoken in the borders region resembled *Plattdeutsch*. He made similar observations during a trip to Normandy the following year.

Blunck formalized his interest in Germanic history by joining the *Deutsch-Nordische Gesellschaft*. Founded in 1921 by Friedrich J. Domes, an eccentric Danish specialist in prehistory whom Blunck befriended, the "Nordic Society," as it was popularly called, promoted northern Germany's and Scandinavia's common history and traditions. Members included the Hamburg University professor Gustav Schwantes, an expert in early Germanic history and culture with whom the poet sometimes visited prehistoric sites. They also included Ernst Timm, a propagandist for German and Scandinavian unity who served as the organization's business manager.

Several times a year, writers from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland gathered with north-German writers in Lübeck, where the Society was headquartered, and discussed ways of promoting their common traditions. The organization also sponsored lecture tours by German authors to Scandinavia and vice versa. On the Society's behalf, Blunck traveled a number of times to Sweden,

Norway, and Denmark. He began his lectures with readings in the native tongues, a gesture that he felt paid tribute to his northern neighbors and underscored their common historical and linguistic ties to Germany.⁵⁷ The Nordic Society produced a quarterly journal, the *Nordische Aufseher* (Nordic Surveyor), and a *German-Nordic Yearbook*.

An additional theme during these years was the poet's association with ethnic Germans in Poland, Hungary, Russia, and the Sudetenland. During his trips abroad, he often visited colonies of German settlers. In southern Russia in 1930, for example, he came upon "ungewöhnlich hübsche Mädchen [...] wohl die schönsten Bäuerinnen unseres Volkstums" (extraordinarily beautiful girls [...] possibly the most beautiful farm girls of our folk). The women had "[s]chlanke Gestalten, schmale, fast zu männlich kühne Köpfe, leicht gewellt das helle Haar, eine Hoheit in Gebärden und Bewegung, wie sie nur ein wohlhabendes, ländliches Herrentum hervorbringt" ([s]lender bodies, willowy heads that were almost manly in their boldness, lightly waved, fair hair, a nobility in gestures and movement – characteristics that only a prosperous, rural patriarchy could produce).⁵⁸ After the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy, interest in the ethnic Germans had intensified among nationalist Germans, particularly Pan-Germans. However, Blunck took this interest further than most. As one Sudeten German later recalled, "he wrote us repeatedly, inspired us, and informed and fired our interest in history."⁵⁹ On account of its alleged depiction of the core development of all Germanic peoples, *Gewalt über das Feuer* had a cult following among ethnic Germans, who saw the book as a representation of their ancient ties to Germany.⁶⁰

Blunck's relationship to the ethnic Germans was not limited to literature, correspondence, and visits. While staying in Hungary in 1930, he met with Hungarian officials and emphasized that German-Hungarian relations depended on Hungary's treatment of its German minority. He demanded that the Hungarian government allow Germans to speak German at work, educate their children in German, and pursue German cultural traditions in public. Similarly, at the PEN-Club meeting in Warsaw in June 1930, Blunck threatened the Czech delegation with a formal protest if the Czechoslovakian government instituted further prohibitions against the German language.

In reminding one member of his threat, he highlighted the particular affront that prohibitions against Germany's mother tongue represented for the inhabitants of Lower Germany, since High German had originated in Lower Saxony, which was tied to Czechoslovakia via the Elbe River:

Ich machte Sie darauf aufmerksam [...] [daß] unser Stolz, der Stolz einer sehr unabhängig denkenden Landschaft durch die Behandlung ihrer Sprache tief getroffen wird und daß es außerordentlich schwer ist, jene enge Stimmung zwischen unseren Ländern wie wir sie wünschen, vor Aufhebung aller Einschränkungen zu erzielen.⁶¹ (I made it clear to you that [...] it affronted our pride, the pride of a very independent region, that its language was being poorly treated and that it is exceptionally difficult for us to have a close understanding between our lands before the removal of the restrictions.)

Blunck esteemed ethnic Germans who had preserved their native language and culture. He portrayed this affection in his "overseas" (sometimes referred to as his "*Auslandsdeutsche*") novels, *Die Weibsmühle* (1927) and *Land der Vulkane* (1929). These were about German settlers in Brazil and Central America, to which places he had traveled via cruise ship in 1925 and 1927, respectively. In preparation for the novels, he had taken notes on the numerous German communities he visited:

[H]ier waren es die Söhne und Enkel von Männern, die vor einem halben Jahrhundert als Kaufleute oder Pflanzer sesshaft geworden waren – die Sappers, Schlubachs, Nottebohms – und die immer mit den Büchern und den geistigen Strömungen der Heimat, um Kunst und Wissenschaften besorgt, die Beziehungen gewahrt hatten. Aufgewachsen in drei Kulturen, der deutschen, der spanischen, der angelsächsischen, haben sie in allen dreien das Beste aufgesucht, aber niemals das Heimatgefühl und die Verbundenheit mit dem hansischen oder schwäbischen, mit dem deutschen Ursprung, verloren.⁶² (Here were the sons and grandchildren of men who a half century before had settled as merchants or planters – the Sappers, Schlubachs, Nottebohms – and who always had maintained the relationships with Germany, through books and the intellectual streams that flowed from the homeland, through interest in its art and science. Having grown up in three cultures, the German, the Spanish, and the Anglo-Saxon, they took the best from all three, but never lost that longing for the homeland and their solidarity with the Hanseatic or Swabian, with their German origins.)

The poet's second cruise had produced controversy in Hamburg's literary circles. A number of writers claimed that he had manipulated the trip's sponsor into paying for both his and his wife's tickets.⁶³ It is impossible to establish the facts of the matter with clarity.

By underscoring the settlers' maintenance of German cultural traditions in exotic settings, *Die Weibsmühle* and *Land der Vulkane* implied that the colonists were part of a vast German nation, regardless of geographical dispersion. This latter theme stemmed at least in part from Blunck's apprehension about the numerical decline of Germans relative to other stock, especially Eastern peoples. As he commented at the time of *Land der Vulkane's* publication, if Asia and Russia maintained their population growth, western Europe would "eines Tages das Schicksal des entvölkerten Griechenlands erleiden [...]. Immer [...] haben sich übermäßige Ballungen in Asien durch Züge des Dschingis Khan entladen" (one day experience the fate of Greece after its population decline [...]. Excessive concentrations of people in Asia have always discharged themselves through the campaigns of Ghengis Khan).⁶⁴ By exalting the national unity of Germans and German settlers, Blunck reassured himself that the German nation was numerically strong. To formalize his concern for the ethnic Germans, in 1929 he joined the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*. At the organization's "book evening" in March of that year, he read from *Gewalt über das Feuer*.

During his "five years as a free writer," Blunck had affiliations in addition to the international PEN that were surprising, given his conservative sensibilities. For example, he had contacts with a club that was linked to the German Democratic Party, a liberal organization with a large number of Jews. During the Third Reich critics denounced him for this association.⁶⁵ Many right-wingers believed, erroneously, that he was a member of the Democratic Party itself. His participation in the Democratic Club should be considered in light of his Lower-German democratic views, which he hoped to popularize among liberals. Like the "Hamburg Group," the Democratic Party in his eyes also represented a bulwark against Berlin – a vehicle to register a "Protest gegen eine zentralistische und hochkapitalistische Reaktion" (protest against a centralizing and high-capitalist reaction) and a counterweight to the "Kampf gegen die niederdeutsche Tradi-

tion und die Diktatur der Plutokratie" (the fight against Lower-German tradition and the dictatorship of the Plutocracy).⁶⁶

In March 1929, the poet joined a number of leftist writers and intellectuals in attaching his name to an "anti-fascist" pact, "*Zustimmungen und Anschlüsse zum internationalen Antifaschisten-Kongress*."⁶⁷ Although he argued quite to the contrary after 1945, his signature did not represent a protest against dictatorship. As he noted in his diary after the signing,

gleichwie die Arbeiterschaft 1914 geschlossen gegen Russland stand, muss auch heute eine umfassende absondernde – und zugleich die germanischen Staaten zusammenziehende – Idee in den Vordergrund rücken. Dem deutschen Volk und zumal den Niederdeutschen ist der Faschismus fremd (just as the workers stood against Russia in 1914, so must our comprehensive but also geographic-specific – and at the same time for the Germanic states unifying – idea be brought to the fore. For the German nation and especially for the Lower Germans, fascism is foreign).⁶⁸

Throughout his life, Blunck avoided the term fascism, which he considered a "southern" movement originating in the home of Roman centralism.⁶⁹ He, like nationalists of a similar hue, exalted the rightist movement as a "Nordic Renaissance," with roots in Lower Germany. He believed his own writings embodied this "Nordic Renaissance," for they represented "truly" German, Nordic traditions, as opposed to "southern" Greco-Romanism.

In the late 1920s Blunck's work simultaneously appeared in the leftist press, such as *Vorwärts*, and in right-wing journals like the *Kreuzzeitung* and Goebbels' *Der Angriff*. Heterogeneous associations of this kind baffled liberal and leftist writers. In an acerbic note, the Expressionist publisher and fellow PEN-Club member Alfred Richard Meyer, who was known for his pugnacious temperament,⁷⁰ wondered how Blunck could "get his heart to beat in rhythm" as both a contributor to *Der Angriff* and a member of the international PEN-Club.⁷¹ With prescience, Meyer chided the poet that "should the 'Third Reich' one day really come into being, the German division of the PEN-Club would certainly be the first organization that Hitler and Goebbels would forbid."⁷² Blunck responded in a self-righteous tone: "Sind wir nicht auf einem Gebiet wenigstens alle

deutscher Zusammengehörigkeit?”⁷³ (Are we not in one area at least all Germans?)

The poet's diverse affiliations reflected his interest in expressing his views wherever possible, in liberal as well as in conservative circles. Throughout his life, however, he also tended to reject stereotypes like “conservative” or “liberal,” particularly when they applied to him. For example, he refused to acknowledge that he was part of the *Heimat* movement, even though numerous examples of his works fit comfortably therein. Similarly, he denied that any of his works were *völkisch* (preferring, in any case, the term “*volkhaft*”), even though numerous examples represented this school and conservative commentators who knew his work well noted the tie.⁷⁴ Finally, he avoided the term “Pan German,” which he considered a derogatory French import, and considered himself an upholder of “national traditions” (*Volkstum*) rather than a nationalist. There was a refreshing element to this approach, in that Blunck believed in dealing with and debating all types of people and refused to cage himself on any one side. At the same time, this attitude led to a misconception, still maintained by his defenders, that he represented no specific political interest, only “Germany.” Blunck overlooked where the fundamentals of his art and worldview lay, on the traditional, backward-looking side of the political spectrum. When participating in generally liberal organizations like the PEN, the poet promoted his Lower-German, neo-Romantic philosophy, which, even in light of its “democratic” pretensions, had genuinely conservative and nationalistic implications. This fact would be demonstrated only a few years later in his affiliation with the RSK, an organization very different from the PEN-Club.

Chapter IV: Blunck versus Berlin

Before the Great War, *avant-garde* writers had produced significant works, but had nonetheless remained a sub-culture. After the war, modern art came of age. The “outsiders,” as Peter Gay has written, became “insiders.”¹ And this was especially the case in Berlin. During the 1920s, the German capital exerted disproportionate cultural influence seen only before in Paris.² According to one Expressionist writer, Berlin was “where one [had to] go [...]. That’s where they recite poems in cabarets. That’s where they print anything that’s *avant-garde* and modern.”³ Some participants in the modern movements considered Hamburg, Frankfurt, Cologne, Munich, Dresden, and even Vienna suburbs of the capital.⁴

Provincial PEN-Club organizations like the “Hamburg Circle” and similar groups in the Rhineland and Baden-Württemberg were organizational reactions to this dominance. Provincial writers, of whom Blunck was one of the more engaged, believed a “modern” bias saturated the government and the media. The heavy influence of the “Berlin Center” was, in the eyes of such writers, but one example of this bias. In the same way, local PEN-Groups were but one manifestation of a broad provincial movement against the capital that intensified throughout the 1920s.

The lines between “modern” and “traditional/provincial” interests were never set in stone, and overlap was not unknown. The ultra-conservative and *völkisch* publisher, Eugen Diederichs, whom Blunck considered “den Vorbereiter der kommenden deutschen Romantik” (the pioneer of the coming era of German Romanticism),⁵ occasionally published leftists like Ernst Toller in his journal *Die Tat*.⁶ As Blunck himself demonstrated, leftist journals sometimes returned the gesture. Moreover, the poet’s diverse affiliations betrayed at least some juncture between conservatives and even leftists. Nonetheless, Germany, generally, had two opposing artistic camps during the 1920s. On the one hand were “traditional” writers, like Blunck, who were based in the provinces. On the other were the “modernist”

writers of movements like Expressionism, Surrealism, and Dadaism, which were centered in Berlin.

“Traditional” writers produced imitations, often mediocre and exaggerated, of genres first popularized in earlier epochs: fairy tales, ballads, and romantic poetry. The terms used to refer to them, and which they themselves used – such as “neo-Romantics,” in the sense that they were reproducing old forms from the Romantic era, or *völkisch* artists, in the sense that they evoked Germany’s ancient, soil-based racial and cultural origins – reflected their belief that German culture needed to be preserved or restored, not invented. In the image of the Romantics, “traditional” writers depicted an ideal world, which readers might imagine or aspire to, but could never experience first-hand. In this way, they offered an idyllic, heroic, and, in the case of *völkisch* writers like Blunck, mystical image.

In contrast, “modern” writers laid bare the human and social experience, particularly in its psychological and unconscious form. Expressionist writers sought to “express” as freshly and uninhibitedly as possible the reality behind social facades, the inner-self. The painter Max Beckmann defined the movement when describing his own work: “What I want to show in my work is the idea that hides itself behind so-called reality. I am seeking the bridge which leads from the visible to the invisible.”⁷ Through the frightening ordeals of his protagonists, Kafka portrayed his own experience that human beings were enslaved to a merciless, often illogical, and arbitrary system. Expressionist works like Bertolt Brecht’s play *Baal* were sexually charged, homoerotic, and, to many viewers, immoral. In turn, adherents of the *Neue Sächlichkeit* (“new objectivity,” or “functionalism,” some of which had a Marxist bent) revealed the world for all of its injustice, corruption, poverty, and death.

To Blunck, who aspired to an ideal, romantic world, filled with “lebensbejahend” (life-affirming) meaning, modern art was malignant. It undermined his heroic, Lower-German image, for it displayed aspects of life that could be deeply troubling. In what might be considered a form of self-censorship, he saw and read only bits and pieces of the new genres. However, these observations were enough to disturb his outlook. Self-criticism was something that, contrary to his own opinion, he rarely engaged in, outside of his own

mindset. As Harold Poor has noted, “Weimar conservatives regarded self-criticism only as a force for weakness.”⁸ For Blunck, “modernity” signified anything that challenged his backward-looking view of the world. He hated modern art, and he hated the artists in Berlin for promoting it.

As Blunck’s romance with medieval history, pre-history, Nordic traditions, and the ethnic Germans intensified, so did his ire over the “irrational,” “self-deprecating” modern culture that, in his eyes, ignored these interests. According to Blunck, Expressionist artists were arrogant. They only sought “Widernatürlichkeit, Spitzelinstinkt und Karikatur der Natürlichkeit [...]” (perversion, voyeurism, and satire of the normal).⁹ They showed no care for the nation. That the government in Berlin sponsored “psychoanalytic” art, as Blunck occasionally referred to the new movements, instead of provincial art – particularly Lower-German art – was incomprehensible to him:

[G]rauenhaft die staatliche Förderung und die Anbetung eines verrückten Modernismus, der schließlich eine Landschaft als schwarzen Klecks gesehen haben will. [...] Ich wehre mich gegen den Kult des Hässlichen.¹⁰ (The official sponsorship of and worship of this crazy modernism, which treats a landscape as a dark blot, is gruesome. [...] I will protect myself from this cult of ugliness).

In 1929, after visiting an exhibit of van Gogh, whom many contemporaries considered the father of Expressionism, the poet concluded that genius had become confused with mental illness.¹¹

The influence of American culture was also bothersome to him. In April 1929, Blunck saw the American motion picture “The Patriot.” In his mind, the film was “hundsgemein kitschig, sinnlos, flach und von einer Zuckersüße, die zehnmal gemeiner ist als offene Schuld” (shabbily kitschy, meaningless, flat, and of a sugar-sweetness that is ten times more contemptible than open sin).¹² As he left the theater, he complained so loudly that he felt embarrassed after he calmed down at home. What terrified him most was that the audience liked the film:

[D]as Publikum, das immer den schlechteren Geschmack wählt, läuft in diese Ausgeburten von Unsinn, Schleim und Dummheit, und wir bekommen

wirklich eine amerikanische Vergötzung, politisch hilflos wie wir heute sind.¹³ (The public, which always chooses poor taste, flocks to this product of meaninglessness, slime, and stupidity. Because we are politically helpless, we are truly experiencing a worship of Americanism.)

In 1927, Blunck had emblazoned his distaste for the new, Berlin-centered art by joining the *Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum*. Headquartered in Berlin, where it could directly confront its opposition, this was a conservative literary organization with the goal of fighting modernism and Americanism and thus promoting provincial art. Its platform lambasted the popular culture of the period. The organization was:

- 1) Against fashionable writing and all forms of mass production
- 2) Against indiscriminate translations
- 3) Against the foreign infiltration of cheap mass production, which no cultural nation should have to bear
- 4) Against the lost individuality of our traditional poets
- 5) Against the adulterating spread of Americanism [...].¹⁴

In addition to its president, Franz Alfonz Gayda, the *Gesellschaft* included Frank Thiess, Börries von Münchhausen, and Ernst Jünger. All were representatives of either traditional, nationalist, or militaristic genres, Jünger being the author of *In Stahlgewittern* (1920), the most famous (and bloodiest) account of the Great War. However, Thiess, to Blunck's disappointment, explored modern forms in his novel *Erziehung zur Freiheit* (1929). Characteristically, the poet sought a source for Thiess's waywardness and found it in his American wife.¹⁵ The *Gesellschaft* promoted Blunck's literary work and even nominated him for the Nobel Prize in 1929 and 1930.¹⁶ He gave regular readings at its gatherings. Inspired by the hope that the organization invigorated in him, he foresaw a sea change in the reading public's tastes, away from the art of Berlin and popular culture, back to the old forms and the art of the provinces: "Here was a literature which – though not ignoring the old forms – was rooted in the countryside [...]."¹⁷

In addition to the *Gesellschaft*, Blunck joined two conservative literary groups. The "Eutin Circle" gathered several times a year in Eutin, south of Kiel. It included writers and poets from the surrounding region of Holstein. The "Wartburg Circle" met annually at

the site of the famous festival of 1817 and comprised a broader, more prestigious group of writers, including Münchhausen, Will Vesper, Hermann Stehr, Hans Grimm, Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, Emil Strauss, and, later, Hanns Johst. All were nationalists and proponents of traditional or *völkisch* genres. Moreover, all would participate officially in one way or another in the literary life of the Third Reich. At meetings of both groups, members discussed their artistic endeavors, their efforts to promote their literature, and the on-going political situation, particularly the chances of a more conservative (though not necessarily “undemocratic” – at least in their terms) government’s achieving power.¹⁸

Blunck himself opposed the democratic system in Weimar Germany, and his views were not unique among traditionalists from his region. As a “conservative democrat” in the “spirit of 1848” and ancient Marklo, he considered democracy to be “Stolz, Gemeinfreiheit, Verknüpfung mit dem Volkstum und ungeheure Verantwortlichkeit jedes einzelnen für die Gesamtheit” (pride, common freedom, integration with the national traditions, and tremendous responsibility of each for the whole).¹⁹ Such “democratic” ideas, with their authoritarian implications, fit Mosse’s depiction (see pp. 11–12) of “undemocratic” democracy in a provincial way, for they were directed against Berlin.²⁰ In Berlin, Blunck saw the opposite of his ideal:

Was man in der Reichshauptstadt darunter versteht, ist nichts als unzensurierte Sucht der Sensation, maßloses, ungehemmtes Wühlen in den Tiefen und eine bannlose Ichsucht, die die Gemeinschaft nur um die eigene Wichtigkeit kreisen lässt.²¹ (What one in the capital of the Reich understands to be [democracy] is nothing other than uncensored pursuit of pleasure, without measure, unbarred rummaging in the depths. Moreover, it is an unbridled egotism, which has the community revolve around one’s own importance.)

The poet was against the messy compromises required by a democracy in the traditional western, as opposed to his idealistic, “Lower-German” sense. He was not alone. As Peter Gay has argued, idealism infused many Germans, and poetry, rather than reason, guided their political thoughts. As Gay has also argued, poetic idealism was not “a

mode calculated to prepare men for parliamentary compromises,” but for “something lower – barbarism.”²²

Between 1928 and 1933, Blunck’s friends and enemies coalesced around an axis that pitted the provinces and tradition against Berlin and modernity. Foremost among Blunck’s friends were Otto Ernst Hesse, Christian Jenssen, and Ernst Adolf Dreyer. Each played an important role in his literary career, writing reviews of his works, editing his books, helping to compile anthologies and collections, and serving as literary agents.

Blunck met Hesse in the mid 1920s through literary contacts. Hesse was a writer in his own right, with a string of early-Weimar novels that can be placed, broadly, in the Expressionist genre.²³ A member of the radical, Marxist “Cultural-Political Society” in Stuttgart at the end of World War I, he, like a number of future Nazi *Literati*, migrated to the nationalist camp during the 1920s. Beginning in 1921, he worked as a critic and editor in the cultural section of the *Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung*. In Königsberg, he, like Blunck, came to view the Versailles Treaty as a terrible injustice. In 1925, he received a prestigious position in the cultural section of Berlin’s *Vossische Zeitung* and, in 1932, he became editor-in-chief of the cultural section of the *B.Z. am Mittag* in Berlin. Through these positions, Hesse became one of Blunck’s few connections in the German capital. In the mid 1920s, he provided the poet with valuable publicity by writing positive reviews in the *Vossische Zeitung* about each of the books in the *Werdendes Volk* trilogy.²⁴ Because of Hesse’s assistance to his literary career and to Lower-German writing, Blunck saw Hesse as *the* critic of the “Nordic Renaissance.” Hesse reciprocated this sentiment in 1929 in his biographical and literary study *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Ein Beitrag zur nordischen Renaissance*, in which he described the poet as *the* writer of the “Nordic Renaissance.”²⁵

Blunck became acquainted with Ernst Adolf Dreyer in late 1928, while Dreyer was a philosophy student in Rostock, one of the Hansa cities in the Hamburg Group. Blunck responded to a positive review written by Dreyer in the *Rostocker Universitätszeitung*, and regular contacts began.²⁶ In addition to reviewing the poet’s work in publications like the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, Dreyer produced a series of extended essays about him.²⁷ In 1933,

Dreyer became publisher of the ultra-conservative journal, *Deutscher Geist: Kulturdokumente der Gegenwart*, and editor-in-chief of the *Schließen-Bücherei*.

Christian Jenssen, who was from the Rhineland but had roots in Schleswig-Holstein, was Blunck's closest professional associate and possibly his best friend. The two became acquainted in 1923, when the younger Jenssen, who had written a positive review of *Hein Hoyer*, visited Blunck at Vierbergen. In 1928, Jenssen served as Blunck's personal assistant. In the period thereafter, he continued to serve as his editor, helping to assemble collections and prepare the poet's works for publication. At the end of the decade, Jenssen took a position on the editorial staff of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, where he, like Hesse and Dreyer, helped promote Blunck's career.

Beyond this immediate ring, Blunck had a number of important friends in what might be called the "national-traditionalist" (or "national-conservative" [*volkskonservativ*] as most historians refer to writers of this kind²⁸) camp. Among them was Münchhausen, with whom Blunck collaborated in the Hamburg Group, the *Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum*, and the Wartburg Circle. Arguably the greatest German balladist of the twentieth century,²⁹ Münchhausen befriended Blunck in 1923, after Blunck sent him a copy of *Berend Fock*.³⁰ Like the poet, Münchhausen was of the *Heimat* school and believed that "in the soil of the Earth lie powers [...]. Only a race that remains in its native region will in the long run preserve its essence."³¹ Münchhausen viewed the younger Blunck as his protégé. He reviewed Blunck's works in publications as well as in private consultations, and he provided suggestions for improvement and future projects.³² Their relationship was direct and genuine, and Münchhausen sometimes criticized Blunck harshly:

In general, I can say that I do not consider you to be a verse poet, as little as I consider Gottfried Keller to be. *Frisia non cantat*. In your case, there is no sense of melody. The melody is lacking throughout and therefore the relationship between the sound of the words and the rhythm is lost. In reality, you are not writing verse, but only a type of prose divided into lines, in which you opportunistically rhyme words. Worse than this lack of music is a marked lack of tension. Most of the introductions to your tales are exceptionally boring.

The ballads lack, as we say, the watch spring, which should set all of the wheels in tension and movement.³³

After receiving opprobrium of this kind, Blunck sometimes sent examples of his work until the receiver, possibly tired of the harassment, said something positive.

Another of Blunck's friends was Rudolf Binding. Almost Kleistian in his detailed depiction of violence, Binding was famous for his war diary *Aus dem Krieg* (1925), which, among personal accounts of World War I in German literature, was second only to Jünger's in its bloodiness.³⁴ In their correspondence, Binding and Blunck engaged in substantive debates. In October 1930, Binding suggested that Blunck's literary work reflected not his own experience, but fantasies that he had collected during childhood. Binding mocked the degree to which Blunck continued to believe in a childhood "netherworld" and asked whether Blunck had been educated by his (Binding's) six-year-old son.³⁵ According to Binding, Blunck's writing would improve if he looked more realistically upon the world and employed his own "experienced poverty."³⁶ Blunck retorted that everyday experience was no more important for understanding the world than were myths, dreams, and childhood fantasies – a response that revealed the high degree to which romantic views informed his thinking and art.³⁷

Another of Blunck's friends was Friedrichkarl Roedemeyer, Professor of Linguistics at the University in Frankfurt. A poet and writer of ballads and fairy tales himself, Roedemeyer engaged Blunck in the late 1920s as an ally in his fight to defend German from foreign words and so-called "grammatical degeneration." In the years before 1933, Blunck and Roedemeyer often discussed plans to strengthen German and its dialects. Roedemeyer invited Blunck several times to Frankfurt, where Blunck gave radio interviews, as well as lectures and readings before Roedemeyer's classes. For Blunck, as for Roedemeyer, who joined the Nazi party before 1933, preserving Germany's linguistic integrity was fundamental to preserving Germany itself. The two men were most concerned about French words, which they called *Französelei*, a term that can be translated as "Frenchiness." In 1930, Blunck's fears were piqued

during a trip to Holland, when he realized that a significant amount of *Französelei* had sneaked into Dutch. Thereafter, he became more aware of the problem in Germany, especially in newspapers and advertising.

Not all of Blunck's friends were in the nationalist camp. This point is best evidenced by his rapport with Thomas Mann, who was a classic *Vernunftrepublikaner*, then a democrat during the Republic's last years. First established upon a meeting in Berlin in 1926, the poet's relationship to Mann was somewhat sycophantic. He coveted Mann's letters as prized possessions and maintained a fawning tone in his correspondence with the novelist. The two nonetheless established a regular and, at times, sincere discourse.

In 1927, Blunck became unsettled by a foreword Mann had written to a series of pop novels in which Mann had labeled Blunck's work "light fiction" (*Unterhaltungsliteratur*) and recommended it for the series. The poet considered his own work to be profound and genuine – indeed, a representation of the ancient history and traditions of northern Germany. Therefore, the label "light fiction," which placed his compositions in the same league as the cheap popular literature that he so detested, was frightening to him. Mann's foreword also triggered a literary storm, for a number of writers deduced, mistakenly, that Blunck had gone behind his own publisher's back and signed a deal with the series' publisher to include his work. The poet was barraged with criticism, but forgave Mann for any troubles that the incident caused him.

To change Mann's opinion, he sent him the first two volumes of his *Urvätersaga* trilogy and, upon its completion, the third. As one biographer has written, Mann often lauded books in his correspondence that he criticized in private.³⁸ Therefore, one cannot be sure of his true opinion of the works. Nonetheless, after being asked by Blunck to comment on *Gewalt über das Feuer*, Mann responded enthusiastically:

What you have accomplished here with this ancient material was certainly no coincidence or personal whim, but the result of a deep spiritual sense of the time, of an inquiry into the origins and the beginnings of humankind.³⁹

Mann added that “the further north one goes, the greater is the feeling for original myth, the breadth of sagas, and the ability to sing in prose,” an assertion that played directly into Blunck’s own views and seemed to put to rest the idea that his literature could in any way be considered “light fiction.”⁴⁰ In 1930, Blunck sent Mann *Die Volksvende*, which Mann also praised. In a letter, Mann noted that the “great novel” was the product of “noble ambition” and had been “mastered with a sure hand.”⁴¹

Blunck tried to win Mann over to the “Hamburg Group.” In his mind, the author of *Buddenbrooks* embodied the Lower-German tradition on account of his origins in and thematic concern with Lübeck. In his correspondence with Mann, Blunck frequently emphasized the special nature of Lower-German art. He also spoke of the region’s “democratic traditions,” with which he hoped to familiarize Mann. Garnering Mann for the Hamburg Group would have represented a coup, not only because of Mann’s fame but also because he was Germany’s “honorary” representative at the international PEN-Club. In 1928, Mann joined the “Hamburg Group” for an informal tea at Blunck’s townhouse in Hamburg, but he never became a member.

Blunck’s enemies were as numerous as his friends. At the top of this list was, ironically, Thomas Mann’s brother Heinrich, who, as president of the Prussian Academy’s Poetry Section, had clout in literary circles. In November 1930, the poet was “erregt” (roused) by the “Ungerechtigkeit” (unjustness) of something Mann had written, probably a journal article.⁴² Blunck commented: “Es ist alles nur Haß und Schmutz, was unter den führenden Kreisen umgeht.”⁴³ (It is all only hate and dirt that circulates in the leading circles.) He believed that Mann was attempting to suppress provincial literature in order to create more room for Berlin’s “city” writers. He also believed that Mann’s critiques of German society, with their rationalism and anti-establishment qualities, exemplified by *Der Untertan* (1918), lacked spiritual and Germanic flare.

Another prominent enemy was Alfred Döblin, the author of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929), a novel that is arguably the “most radically modernist work of the 1920s”⁴⁴ and an embodiment of the “city” genre that Blunck detested. The dichotomy between Döblin’s protag-

onist in *Alexanderplatz*, the alcoholic womanizer Franz Bieberkopf, and Blunck's nationally minded, optimistic hero in *Die Volkswende* (1930), Erich Brand, is revealing. The two characters embodied the divergent attitudes to art of Expressionist writers like Döblin, who underscored the moral and economic poverty of Berlin in the 1920s, and traditional, *völkisch* writers like Blunck, who provided a positive and hopeful but at the same time idyllic and arguably shallow image. In times of frustration, Blunck motivated himself by considering what might happen if he were to abandon literary politics and leave the field open to the whims of Döblin and his ilk. According to him, Döblin misunderstood "the Reich" and saw Germany only from the vantage of Berlin's concrete. He was particularly angered by an article in the journal *Vorgänge*, in which Döblin mocked Lower Germany as that "very flat land."⁴⁵

In November 1930, about the time that he read Heinrich Mann's piece that so annoyed him, Blunck heard rumors – never substantiated – that Döblin was preventing his nomination to the Poetry Section in the Prussian Academy. According to one member, the writer Walter von Molo, Blunck had been under consideration for two years. However, complaining that the poet was too nationalistic, Döblin reportedly blocked his nomination time and again.⁴⁶ In order to convince Döblin of his artistic prowess, Blunck sent him several of his works. However, Döblin never read them⁴⁷ (although his young son seems to have read and enjoyed a few of the poet's fairy tales).⁴⁸ In February 1931, as the literary realm began to mirror Germany's political move to the right, the Academy selected for membership the nationalists Gottfried Benn, Ina Seidel, Alfons Paquet, Rudolf Pannwitz, Max Mell, and Binding. According to Blunck, these selections demonstrated that "wenigstens einige Konzessionen" (at least some concessions) were being made to the right.⁴⁹ However, he did not think he would be chosen, so long as Döblin remained in his way.

Another writer whom Blunck disliked was the socialist critic, playwright, novelist, and Brecht-collaborator Lion Feuchtwanger, whose most significant work, *Jud Süß* (1925; later the title of one of the most notorious Nazi propaganda films), had dissected eighteenth-century German society and depicted the isolation of assimilated

Jews. During the poet's attendance at the international PEN-Club congress of 1930 in London, a friend in the English PEN-Club, W.E. Collison, described a "snotty" speech that Feuchtwanger had given, in which he had described the German literary situation as "unfortunate" on account of nationalist strides. The, in Blunck's words, "durchaus nicht antisemitische" (thoroughly un-antisemitic) Collison (a seeming contradiction in terms, in light of Collison's statement) concluded that the audience had thought that Feuchtwanger was "German, but in that [speech] he was a German Jew."⁵⁰

Blunck credited Feuchtwanger's behavior to "anti-Germanism." Nationalist and *völkisch* writers used this term widely in the 1920s to define writers who, they believed, disregarded, mocked, or polluted German traditions. As Blunck complained years later in an effort to justify his collaboration with the Nazis, does

das Geschlecht von heute wissen [...], wie unsere Lage damals war? Welche Briefe wir haben schreiben müssen [...] die vorgeschichtlichen Arbeiten zu schreiben, die Artikel vom Antigermanismus und vom kommenden Dritten Reich?⁵¹ (the race [the Jews] of today realize how our situation was back then? The letters we had to draft in order to [...] write prehistoric works, articles about anti-Germanism, and the coming Third Reich?)

"Anti-Germanism" delineated the artistic battle line in Weimar Germany. On one side were traditional, provincial writers, like Blunck, who considered their own art to be truly "German." On the other were the "new," modern writers, whom traditionalists considered to be "anti-German."

In his biography of Kurt Tucholsky, who was an avid critic of just about everything, tradition as well as the Republic, Harold Poor has considered whether conservatives' opprobrium of liberal and leftist writers was justified. After all, he notes, in their frequent satirization of tradition, leftists may have unwittingly contributed to the demise of the Republic, which needed symbols of legitimacy – an argument that a historian of no less stature than Golo Mann has affirmed.⁵² Poor concludes that such an argument is illegitimate:

A society is most vigorous and appealing, when both partisan and critic are legitimate voices in the permanent dialogue that is the testing of ideas and

experience. One can be a critic of one's country without being an enemy of its promise.⁵³

In Weimar Germany, criticism was a weakness, when it could have been a strength. Critics were "enemies," when they should have been opponents worthy of debate. It might be argued that Germany was not yet ready for vigorous debate; the legacy of defeat and the country's other problems rendered the nation too vulnerable. Regardless, the retreat of national-conservative writers into calling anyone who criticized so-called "German" and "Germanic" traditions as an "anti-German enemy" wrought more damage than the criticism itself.

Among Blunck's "enemies," representing this same "anti-Germanism" were the Expressionist and pacifist Franz Werfel, whose collection of poems, *Der Weltfreund* (1911), had signified the start of the Expressionist movement in poetry,⁵⁴ and the communist and pacifist Arnold Zweig, whose *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa* (1927) criticized the inhumanity of the military code of honor.⁵⁵ In Blunck's mind, Werfel and Zweig appeared "antigermanisch" (anti-German) in their "frostigen, fast feindseligen Gruß" (frosty, almost antagonistic greeting).⁵⁶ At a gathering of writers in Kassel in 1929, Blunck and Zweig got into a terrific argument over anti-Germanism.⁵⁷ Zweig presumably denied that he was "anti-German," but Blunck's opinion remained unchanged.

That Döblin, Feuchtwanger, Zweig, and Werfel were all Jewish, and that Heinrich Mann was married to a Jew, were not insignificant. In the "German Jewish Question," Wilhelm Schäfer had laid out the Jewish component to "anti-Germanism," as viewed by writers like Blunck. According to Schäfer, Jews had played an important role in Germany's cultural history since the eighteenth century. However, they had developed "a foreign love" for German culture, and Germany's "cultural treasures" had thus experienced "displacement."⁵⁸ In other words, he believed the Jews loved German culture too much and had polluted it with alien traditions. Through Schäfer's eyes, this "anti-German" trend had by the 1920s become so pronounced that "city" writers like Döblin, Feuchtwanger, and Zweig

could believe their own work to be truly German and the work of traditional, provincial writers to be peculiar.

In 1929, Otto Hesse introduced his biography of Blunck with a synopsis of Schäfer's "anti-Germanism." In this way, he implied that Blunck was leading the charge against the phenomenon. Blunck's own view of the Jews might be termed "selective anti-semitism." In general, he resented the vulgar racism of right-wing groups like the Nazis and the *Stahlhelm*. In an interview for Ernst Dreyer's book, *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Sicht des Werkes* (1930), the poet emphasized that, in Lower Germany, a thousand years had passed between Germans and German Jews without major outbreaks of anti-Semitism, which he considered a sign of poverty.⁵⁹ Moreover, in correspondence with Mann in 1928 Blunck repudiated the rabid Jew-baiter, Adolf Bartels, as well as the generally anti-semitic *völkisch* movement, of which Bartels was the most prominent representative.⁶⁰ However, assertions of this kind were deceptive, for Blunck was an anti-semite (and, as we have noted, a representative of the *völkisch* genre). Crucial to his meaning in Dreyer's book was his reference to "German-Jews," for the poet distinguished between "German" and "un-German" Jews. "German" Jews were people like Merton, a milk farmer he befriended who had served four years as an officer on the western front. Others included his old friend Hildesheim, a book merchant in Hamburg, and Ludwig Heilbronn, a nationalist writer and journalist whom Blunck nominated, unsuccessfully, to the *Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum* in 1932.⁶¹ They had assimilated and adopted "true" German ways.

In contrast, "un-German" Jews were people like Feuchtwanger, Döblin, Werfel, and Zweig. According to Blunck, these modernists had rejected German traditions in favor of "anti-German" trends. For him, "un-German" Jews also included the Jews from the East, whom he saw as the root of cultural, social, and economic degeneration. Through his eyes, Berlin was no longer culturally "German" but increasingly Jewish in the "un-German" sense. "Un-German" Jews were destroying the city's "Wesen als deutsche Hauptstadt" (essence as the German capital).⁶² Their ostensible decadence and corruption had fortified the Prussian influence he had loathed since childhood.

“Selective anti-semitism” was not limited to national-conservative and *völkisch* writers. Thomas Mann uttered similar views on more than one occasion.⁶³ After the Nazis’ seizure of power, he even suggested that the “reaction against Jewishness would be acceptable, if it were not for ‘the Germans stupid tendency’ to treat him personally the same way.”⁶⁴ Nonetheless, this form of anti-semitism was more malignant and dangerous among right-wing writers. Thomas Mann, after all, left Germany in 1933 and eventually condemned Nazi anti-semitism in public, whereas most national-conservative writers did not.

Hans Grimm, whom Blunck knew through the Hamburg Group and occasionally joined in the conservative “*Kogge*” literary circle in Lippoldsberg, termed his own view of the Jews “asemitism.” Grimm believed many Jews to be talented and that, in individual cases, this talent was positive. However, as a group Jews were so gifted that they wielded disproportionate influence and promoted the “judification” (*Judifizierung*) of culture. Writers like Blunck and Grimm did not desire the destruction of Jews, but the reduction of their influence to a level commensurate with their numbers. This was nonetheless a crude, portentous caveat. Such a reduction would have resulted in the elimination of thousands of Jews from Germany’s cultural ranks, for no fault of their own other than their ethnicity.

In his study on the literature of the Third Reich, J. M. Ritchie has pointed out that *völkisch*, traditionalist, and nationalist writers considered themselves part of a “Secret Germany” (after the poem of the same name by Stefan George) – separate from the city, hidden in the countryside, and neglected.⁶⁵ For some writers, this perception was inaccurate. Conservative “outcasts” like Grimm sold hundreds of thousands of books. Some leftist writers insisted that “right-wing novels [...] achieved larger printings during the 1920s,” an assertion that was true in more than a few cases.⁶⁶ However, perception was as important as reality, and for some *völkisch*, traditionalist, and nationalist writers the perception of being ignored was accurate.

Blunck’s literary career never achieved the heights he thought it should, and, during Weimar’s last years, it came to pieces.⁶⁷ After 1926, not one of his plays was performed, a circumstance that he blamed on a supposed denial of provincial playwrights like himself.⁶⁸

Tepid responses followed his recitals. After a reading of his fairy tales in Hungary, for example, “[d]er arme Buchhändler, der all meine Werke ausgestellt hatte, packte, ohne ein einziges verkauft zu haben, wieder ein” ([t]he poor bookseller, who had displayed all of my works, packed up his things without having sold a single copy).⁶⁹ This state of affairs worsened with the Depression. In 1929, *Land der Vulkane*, from which he had expected a good showing, failed to sell. He overheard a salesman mention to a customer that “Blunck gelte nun einmal als zu schwer, niemand nähme das Buch auch nur in die Hand” (Blunck is simply considered too difficult; no one even picks up his books).⁷⁰

While most artists desire public recognition, this was especially the case with Blunck. Motivated by the *bourgeois* aspirations he had garnered from his father, he needed success and acclamation. The fact that he lived in an era in which his favorite medium, fairy tales, was fading seems only to have reinforced this sentiment and, indeed, have made him more desperate. After meeting with the publisher of *Land der Vulkane*, Eugen Diederichs, he noted that, if the book “keinen Absatz findet” (doesn’t find a market), he would have to settle for being a writer who “nur in seinem Freundeskreis gelesen wird. Jener Einfluss auf die Zeit, den man so sehr wünscht, scheint mir versagt zu sein” (is only read in circles of his friends. The ability to influence the era, for which one longs so deeply, seems to be denied me).⁷¹ Berlin was Blunck’s nemesis. In 1930, not one bookstore in the capital ordered copies of *Die Volkswende*.⁷² The following year, *Sprung über die Schwelle*, the third installment of his *Märchen von der Niederelbe*, experienced a similar fate.⁷³ In need of sympathy, the poet wrote Will Vesper, a traditional lyric poet who would play a role in the book burnings and then work at the RSK, of the works merits, emphasizing that few books were so deeply imbedded in the countryside and so inimical to the “erstickend” (suffocating) enlightenment.⁷⁴

Not unlike Wagner (although, of course, Wagner was composing a half century earlier, in a more fitting era), Blunck had a gift for ostentatious imagery and moments of power. At the same time, his work was generally sentimental (particularly in the case of tales like *Peter Obles Schatten*), doctrinaire, and not infrequently monotonous. In addition to its increasingly outdated disposition and the related pro-

lification of inexpensive popular literature, these were the reasons it did not sell in large quantities. However, rather than acknowledge the truth of the matter, he sensed that, like the refusal to stage his plays, poor sales were due to “die allgemeine Ablehnung der Künste in Niederdeutschland” (the general rejection of the arts in Lower Germany).⁷⁵ He also thought that his name had been “bei der Linken ausgeschlossen” (banned by the left).⁷⁶ Finally, he held that a Jewish bias was involved. In a meeting with the poet in December 1929, the conservative publisher Elster complained that the *Literarische Welt* had refused to review any of his authors. In contrast, the *Berliner Tageblatt* had showcased a Jewish writer in each of its last five issues, while all of the recent theatrical premiers were by Jewish playwrights.⁷⁷ For Elster, this smattering of examples, viewed through the lens of his own prejudice, was evidence that Jews in Berlin had rigged the system against non-Jews, particularly provincial writers. Blunck’s perusal of the *Neue Literaturgeschichte* (1930), by the Jewish cultural historian Wiegler, confirmed the climate of bias as far as he was concerned. According to his diary, he found long descriptions about the newest literary crazes in Berlin and Vienna, but only a dozen lines for Lower-German literature. After perusing Wiegler’s work, Blunck concluded: “Wir sind als geistige Landschaft verloren, solange wir uns auf Berlin verlassen; die Hauptstadt wird sich immer zunächst selbst Größe und Versuch einer Weltbedeutung bleiben.”⁷⁸ (We are lost as a spiritual land, so long as we rely on Berlin; the capital will for the foreseeable future remain caught up in its own greatness and pursuit of world fame.)

Among writers of Blunck’s ilk, the belief that there was a “Jewish conspiracy” in the so-called “Jewish” publishing world in general and in Berlin publishing circles in particular was common. In Otto Autenrieth’s ultra-nationalistic tale *Bismarck II* (1921), which embodied the sentiments of many conservative writers, the hero, in a passage that is considered autobiographical, pursues a literary career, “but even though he is very talented, success eludes him in a corrupt capitalist-Jewish world of publishers.”⁷⁹ The sentiment, moreover, was not exclusive to writers. Although his watercolors lacked the depth and technical skill required by the institution (he was incapable, for example, of drawing people), Hitler himself alleged that he had

been rejected by the Academy of Arts in Vienna on account of a “Jewish bias.”

Some historians have asked whether there was, indeed, a bias against provincial writers in Weimar Germany. That Berlin was the crossroads of German culture during the 1920s is not controversial. According to contemporary accounts by modernists, meeting places in the city like the famous *Café des Westens* (where Blunck knew he was unwelcome⁸⁰) and the writers who congregated there, were legendary.⁸¹ Modernist writers believed they were participating in something great and important, that they were “the coming generation to which the future belonged.”⁸² It was common for artists to appreciate and promote their own genres over others, a reality that was exemplified in Blunck’s own preference for his chosen style. Among modernists, many of whom were Jews (though there were also Jewish nationalists and conservatives, as Blunck well knew) but many more of whom were not, some form of bias might thus have been at work. However, its cause was more neglect and disregard than conscious censorship. It is the nature of artistic evolution that one movement supersedes the next, and this was particularly so after the turn of the century with the rise of the *avant-garde*.

Satirical “city” journals like *Simplicissimus* (published in Munich) sometimes contained unflattering characterizations of country life.⁸³ However, although modernists spoke of “enemies,” the term typically referred to the unreformed bourgeoisie (so-called “Philistines” and “*Spiesser*”), not “provincial writers.” Indeed, in this regard, modernist wrath sometimes resembled that of the right wing. Blunck himself complained about *Spiesser*. In Weimar Germany, one of the most vicious satirists of bourgeois Jews was Tucholsky, a leftist Jew.⁸⁴ Furthermore, it was never radical works of the *avant-garde* that absorbed the reading public, but the “bestsellers” that proliferated after 1920, most of them thrillers and love stories.⁸⁵ Indeed, circulation of *Die Weltbühne*, which was the focus of vicious attacks from the right, never exceeded 15,000, a comparatively small number.⁸⁶ Blunck was aware of this point and betrayed his knowledge a few years later in his efforts to combat “mass books.” However, when searching for scapegoats, he tended to neglect the facts of the matter.

His ire, like that of many “provincial writers,” was misdirected. After World War II, when the modernist “enemies” about whom Blunck complained were called upon to testify about him, they hardly knew who he was – a reflection of the fact that they had rarely thought about his work, let alone seen him as an “enemy” who needed to be suppressed.⁸⁷

Nonetheless, in response to perceived bias, Blunck now allied himself more closely with the *Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum*. An advertisement for the society in 1929 betrayed its antipathy for Berlin: “the Society for German writing is a cultural *Kampfgemeinschaft* of German people, who belong to it because they are convinced that the hegemony of rubbish and dirt in the Reich capital must be combated in a practical way.”⁸⁸ In 1931, Blunck joined the Society’s board.

At the annual PEN meeting of 1925 in Paris, German delegates had given speeches in German. They had been the first to do so at a congress in the French capital since the War. The fact that the International PEN-Club met in Berlin the following year also represented a symbolic victory for German culture. However, Germany’s position at the PEN-Club remained weaker than that of England, whose representatives voted on Club matters *en bloc* with Wales, Scotland, and their dominions. If Germany were, through the PEN-Club, to achieve what many nationalist writers deemed cultural power commensurate with its artistic contributions and legacy, it had to find a way to strengthen its position.

More intriguing than the participation of a conservative like Blunck in the PEN-Club were his efforts here on behalf of this objective. He pursued the goal in a sophisticated, cunning way that, at first glance, appeared international and enlightened, but, upon closer examination, revealed his Pan-German nationalism and antipathy toward Berlin. Blunck aimed to convince the PEN-Club to allow minority groups and regional cultures to establish their own PEN divisions. These minority groups would encompass ethnicities like Yiddish groups and Roma gypsies, whose cultures Blunck genuinely wanted to promote.⁸⁹ However, they would, above all, include German-speaking entities like the “Germans of the Volga Basin,” the *Alemannisch*, the Lower Germans, and the German Swiss.⁹⁰ If PEN-

Club divisions reflected cultural, rather than political affinities, and minority and regional groups were allowed their own divisions, numerous PEN groups, like the “Sudeten Germans,” would spring up. The German PEN division could then vote *en bloc* with these new groups and, with the help of the Austrians, compete at the PEN-Club with France and Britain. Moreover, by allowing Germans outside the Reich to join with their brethren in a cultural bloc, this “cartel” would produce a “cultural” German nation not seen since the Middle Ages, which would span, as Ernst Moritz Arndt had once dreamed, wherever “the German language is spoken.” Versailles and other perceived injustices that had split Germans from their homeland would be undone, at least in a cultural sense. As Blunck noted in his diary, the plan would achieve in the spiritual realm what he later hoped would be solved in the political realm: a new division of the continent according to borders defined by *Volkestum*.

Blunck introduced his ideas in a speech in Vienna before the International PEN-Club in 1929. Criticizing the “*Staatprinzip*” (state principle) and the “*Machtbegriff*” (power principle), he argued that the Club should define nations in light of cultural bonds rather than state borders.⁹¹ He stressed that if they produced significant writers and works of art, regions and provinces – even ethnic minorities – should be permitted to send representatives to the Club’s congresses. Such a policy could only promote artistic freedom. To applause, Blunck asserted that the PEN-Club should recognize cultural ties, not the scribbles of politicians, statesmen, and generals. Later the same day, the delegates passed a resolution in support of his ideas.

Encouraged by this success, Blunck pushed on. At a PEN meeting in London the following year, he asked that the PEN-Club permit each of the five bastions of the German-speaking world – the Lower Germans (including the Flemings and the Dutch), *Alemmanisch*, Austrians, German-speaking Swiss, and the ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe – to have its own division. He made clear his desire for these “German” divisions to join in a determined and well-organized cartel.⁹² The response to his concrete plans was less positive. According to Blunck’s records, the Dutch were open to the idea of joining a Lower-German coalition. However, the Austrians and Swiss did not want their identities subsumed in a “greater-German” cultural

group, and they made their opposition known. Although Blunck received some sympathy from English friends like Galsworthy, most English PEN-Club representatives were opposed to a plan that would have undermined their influence.⁹³ They were not yet ready to join in a “Germanic” or “island-continental Anglo-Saxon” bloc, as Blunck would presumably have liked. The French, who also did not want to see their position weakened, were, likewise, against the plan.

However, the greatest disagreement came from Berlin. If culture were based on regional ties, rather than state borders, organizations like the “Hamburg Group” required *formal* independence. As was Blunck’s intention, this autonomy would have reduced the authority of the German division’s board-of-directors in Berlin. Not surprisingly, the “Berlin Center” balked. Blunck made repeated attempts to convince board members of the merits of regional autonomy. He offered them the leadership of his planned cartel. However, he was repeatedly rebuffed.⁹⁴ One of his greatest opponents was the “Halb-jude” (half-Jew) Kuhn:

Einen Austritt des niederdeutschen Penclub-Kreises, wie Tralow ihn plante, durch langes Gespräch mit Meumann verhindert. Zwischen mir und Holländer waren sämtliche Regeln der Zusammenarbeit ausgearbeitet. Der neue Berliner Zentralismus um Kuhn zerstörte das. (Kuhn ist Halbjude, daher die besondere Abneigung).⁹⁵ (After a long discussion with Meumann, the resignation of the Lower-German PEN-Club circle, as Tralow had planned, was prevented. A complete plan of cooperation had been worked out between me and Holländer. The new centralism in Berlin directed by Kuhn destroyed this cooperation. [Kuhn is a half-Jew, therefore this particular aversion].)

Kuhn believed that autonomous regional PEN divisions would only fragment German representation at the PEN-Club. Another opponent was the Expressionist publisher Meyer, who considered Blunck’s actions arrogant. In one letter, he mocked the poet’s references to the “Hamburg Division,” noting that “even your title is not correct, there is not a Berlin and a Hamburg division, but only one PEN-Club, German Group.”⁹⁶

Blunck believed that the reaction of members of the “Berlin Center” reflected their anti-provincial bias.⁹⁷ In letters to Ould, he compared the disagreements to those between England and Scotland

– a comparison with which Ould disagreed – and suggested that only fair distribution between Germany’s regional cultures and Berlin could reign in the “Center.”⁹⁸ The poet also considered the discord another product of Prussian *Machtstaat* centralism. As he noted to Meumann, the president of the “Hamburg Group,” Berlin “verschweigt, daß es die kleindeutsche zentralistische Idee gegen die großdeutsche Idee, wie Hamburg sie verteidigt, verfolgt” (is concealing the fact that it is pursuing the “smaller-German,” centralist idea against the idea of “Greater Germany,” which Hamburg defends).⁹⁹

Blunck’s statement to Meumann was ironic, for, not long afterwards, in Hamburg itself, Blunck faced resistance. In November 1931, his friend and former assistant, Christian Jenssen, published an article in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* praising the poet. While criticizing a number of prominent Hamburg writers, the piece lauded Blunck’s efforts at the PEN-Club and called for the poet to lead a Lower-German cultural renaissance. Overnight, rumors erupted that Blunck had asked Jenssen to write the article in order to promote himself as Lower Germany’s chief *Literatus*. The story was plausible, in light of Blunck’s close friendship with Jenssen. Indeed, the scenario would not have been surprising, as it is not unknown for writers to have friends in the media bolster their position. Nonetheless, the poet denied the charge, declaring that he had had absolutely nothing to do with Jenssen’s commentary. With meticulousness that was typical of him, he even wrote down his view of the situation, in case the incident went to court.¹⁰⁰

The story gained momentum. Two writers in particular – Johannes Tralow, secretary of the “Hamburg Group,” and another member of the organization, Robert Walter – led the attack.¹⁰¹ Walter, whom Blunck considered a crass opportunist, passed a letter among Hamburg *Literati* accusing the poet of practically writing Jenssen’s piece. Tralow called for a formal protest against Blunck, and some twenty prominent Hamburg writers criticized the poet in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*. Describing him as a “writer of the Third Rank” and a “creator of coffee substitutes,” their complaints appeared along with a damning article by Tralow.¹⁰² Several writers complained to Jenssen’s publisher. Others called on the University of

Hamburg to withdraw Blunck's pension. Through the poet's eyes, such an assemblage of authors united in condemnation was unprecedented and disproportionate to the crime, had it even been true.¹⁰³ He believed his high-profile activities at the PEN-Club had caused resentment among Hamburg writers, a conclusion that might well have been valid.

Blunck considered legal proceedings against Walter. However, Meumann, possibly guessing that the poet was guilty, persuaded him that a lawsuit was not in the interests of Lower-German literature. Instead, Blunck was promised that Walter would retract his words. However, Walter did not do so (at least not until Blunck became president of the RSK). On the contrary, a circle of writers around Walter continued to lambaste Blunck. Newspapers refused to review the poet's works, and some bookstores proscribed him. During a gathering of the "Nordic Society" in Lübeck in the winter of 1932, one writer declared that he would not have permitted Blunck in his home, had he known who he was.¹⁰⁴

The debacle isolated Blunck. On top of Berlin's opposition, the Hamburg attacks confirmed that his plans for regional autonomy at the PEN-Club and a "greater-German" cultural union were impossible, at least for the moment. At the end of 1931, he gave up his quest, deciding to wait for "eine Zeit, die reifer ist und will versuchen, die begreifliche Bitterkeit einzudämmen" (a time that is riper and wants to try to contain the understandable bitterness).¹⁰⁵ Having been virtually drummed out, he resigned from the Hamburg group in 1932. His contacts with the "Berlin Center" and also with the international PEN-Club for all intents and purposes¹⁰⁶ ended at this time. As he noted to Meumann, he found "die mehr und mehr einseitig orientierte Berliner Führung" (Berlin's increasingly biased leadership) unbearable and could "bestimmte örtliche Tendenzen [...] nicht mehr billigen [...]" (no longer approve of certain tendencies in that place).¹⁰⁷

Blunck's departure from the PEN-Club came during a period of increasing economic woe. Upon the death of her mother, Emmes and her siblings had inherited the remnants of their father's fortune. Most of it, on her brother's recommendation, had been invested in a coffee trading business. After Black Monday in October 1929, the

price of coffee plummeted nearly 50% and then continued to spiral downward. Soon, Emmes' brother reported that the last of her inheritance was lost. As Blunck noted in his diary, that was "unsere Altersversicherung" (our old-age insurance).¹⁰⁸ He wondered why he had not demanded that the money be invested more securely.¹⁰⁹

Many of Hamburg's biggest firms traded in coffee and found their purchases worthless. Bankruptcies were rampant. According to Blunck's diary, the insolvency of the firm Schlubach was particularly problematic, because it was a major contributor to the University of Hamburg. With the firm's collapse, the university's sponsorship of art declined. Throughout Hamburg, concerts, lectures, and other cultural events dwindled. In the area around the poet's town home on Parkallee, every fourth house was up for sale, most at less than half their taxable worth. "Die allgemeine wirtschaftliche Lage in Deutschland [war] trostlos."¹¹⁰ (The general economic situation in Germany was hopeless.)

In October 1930, Blunck's assets consisted of his residence on Parkallee, Immenhagen, and 8,000 marks in German equities. However, debts to the Diederichs publishing house and to a bank in Hamburg totaled 8,000 marks, which left his net assets at roughly the value of his properties, now worth only half of what they had been a year earlier. A poet, Blunck believed, should follow and suffer the fate of his countrymen. So he did. He and his wife rode third class on trains. They avoided dinner, the theater, and chamber-music concerts in Hamburg. Luxury was having a coffee together in the city. The "Wohligkeit bürgerlicher Lebensführung" (pleasantries of *bürgerlich* life) disappeared, although the poet believed he was better suited to the change than his wife, who had grown up accustomed to the accoutrements of wealth.¹¹¹

As was increasingly becoming his practice, Blunck blamed the difficulties on Jews, even though their representation in the economy was small relative to that of the rest of the German population. Following the collapse of the banks, he noted that "[i]n der Mehrzahl sind es Unternehmen, die, von jüdischen Kreisen geleitet, unerhört leichtsinnig mit den anvertrauten Geldern gespielt haben" (in the majority of cases they are firms that, led by Jewish circles, played in an unbelievably irresponsible way with the money that had been

entrusted to them).¹¹² His ire towards the Jews was reinforced when his brother-in-law, Will Ruoff, was bankrupted by a debt to a Jewish publishing firm. He concentrated his anger on Berlin and the Jews there, particularly after he read in the newspaper that two Jewish brothers had stolen several million marks from the city.¹¹³ “Warum hängt man nicht einige der Herren?” (Why don’t they hang some of these scoundrels?) he asked, referring to the city bureaucrats who had helped them. “Sie schaden dem Reichsgedanken, der eine vorbildliche Hauptstadt will, so unsäglich.”¹¹⁴ (They harm the idea of the Reich, which desires an exemplary capital, so unspeakably.) Upon learning that the Reich government had taken a 500-million-mark loan from foreigners in order to preserve the price of matches (a loan that may well have occurred, given the government’s huge foreign debt and its attempts to maintain price stability), the poet also blamed foreign capitalists: “[E]s ist doch die wirtschaftliche Versklavung eines ganzen Volkes an ausländisches Großkapital [...].”¹¹⁵ ([I]t is really the economic enslavement of a whole people to foreign big capital.)

Alan Steinweis’ commentary on the broad unionization movement that occurred among artists during the period of Weimar applies here. In the early 1920s, Blunck had joined the *Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller* (SDS). Among other things, this organization helped promote writers, provided them with legal services, and, according to the belief that they stole work from professional writers, attempted to disqualify amateurs (*Dilettanterei*) from working in the profession.¹¹⁶ Now, in the midst of the depression, he joined another, more conservative organization. This was the *Notgemeinschaft deutscher Kunst und Dichtung*, which had been founded recently by Wilhelm Schäfer. The *Notgemeinschaft* gave cash subsidies to needy writers and poets.¹¹⁷ Blunck’s association with the *Schutzverband* ended in frustration. He left it in 1932, because he believed the corporation was, like the German PEN Division, dominated by distasteful writers.¹¹⁸ Afterwards, he joined the racist, ultra-nationalist *Nationalverband der deutschen Schriftsteller* (“National Union of German Writers,” NDS). The NDS was founded in 1932 as a conservative alternative to the *Schutzverband* and as “a weight in opposition to Jewish, subversive

literature.”¹¹⁹ Blunck remained in the *Notgemeinschaft*, which he considered less political.

The bleak circumstances, economic and cultural, of the period embittered the poet. Throughout his life, he had viewed the countryside as a haven. Appropriately, he now retreated to his “peasant,” farming roots. In early February 1932, he purchased a working farm in the quiet village of Grebin, south of Kiel. Eighty acres in size, the property was in East-Holstein. To buy the farm, Blunck sold Immenhagen, took out a mortgage of 20,000 marks, and borrowed another 8,000 for farm animals, equipment, and seed. Although he planned to run the farm as a business, his ability to repay the loans was questionable, given erratic agricultural prices and his other financial problems. Fortunately, his economic situation would improve beginning in 1933, before the loans came due.

On February 17, Blunck and his wife christened the farm Mölenhoff. Having achieved his lifetime dream of becoming a farmer, the poet rejoiced:

[W]erde ich doch wieder mit dem Boden, mit dem Vieh und Ähren zusammen sein und das Auf und Ab der kleinen Dinge erleben. Ich kann wieder einmal den Pflug zur Hand nehmen, kann mit der Büchse über meinen Acker gehen und kann, wenn es not tut, auch die bäuerliche Arbeit selbst in die Hand nehmen und mich den Teufel um Politik und literarische Strömungen kümmern.¹²⁰ (I will again be with the soil, with the cattle and the crop, with the come and go of little things. I can once again take the plow in hand, can go over my acres with my rifle. When it is necessary, I can partake in the farm work myself and worry away the devil of politics and literary streams.)

On account of his vigorous need to assert his views and command respect, however, his reprieve from the “Teufel um Politik und literarische Strömungen” was brief.

Chapter V: *Weltanschauung*

In *We Men Who Feel Most German*, Roger Chickering investigated the psychological effects of “social or cultural upheavals or discontinuities.” Employing Fred Weinstein’s and Gerald Platt’s methodology, he described the “restitutional measures” that people take in order to adjust to turmoil, foremost among these measures “the codification of aggressive fantasies in ideology.”¹ In the aftermath of defeat in the Great War, and during the trying last years of Weimar, Blunck, it can be argued, took such “restitutional measures.” The images he had collected since childhood were magnified and systematized in his poetry, verse, ballads, and novels. The themes matured into a coherent ideology, a *Weltanschauung* that can be divided into its five principal components: blood, soil, Nordic Christianity, culture, and empire.

According to one historian, Blunck was the “literary representative of that ‘Nordic Racism’ of which the *Lebensborn* concept of breeding for a Nazi elite was the most sensational product.”² Although hyperbolic, this statement, which is indicative of references to the poet’s work in the secondary scholarship, reflects the poet’s “blood” motifs and thus points to an important facet of his literature. An example is his play *Die Frau im Tal* (1920), in which the heroine, Annke, comments that Wicholt’s “Haupt ist von unserm Blut” (head is of our blood) in an attempt to spare him from execution.³ In many of his tales, the poet referred irresistibly to the “Blut” of his protagonists. Thus, on two short pages in *Stelling Rotkinnsohn*, he describes the throbbing blood of the hero and his beloved three times: “Frisch ist die Luft, bunt ist der Himmel, rasch schlägt ihr Blut” (fresh is the wind, colorful the sky, rapid the pounding of their blood); “[d]er Himmel scheint zu beben, so sehr pocht ihr Blut” (their blood throbs so, that the sky appears to shake); “[d]as Blut dröhnt den beiden Gesellen in den Ohren, sie sehen sich an und wissen kein Wort für ihre atemlosen Münder” (blood roars in the ears of the two companions; they look at one another, and their

breathless mouths are speechless).⁴ The poet's numerous battle scenes were, similarly, drenched in blood:

Ein gelbhäutiger Riese [...] packte seine Axt mit beiden Fäusten, sprang vor Herrn Geerd von Holstein, der abwehrend die Hände hob, und spaltete ihm die Schulter bis zur Brust.⁵ (A yellow-skinned giant [...] gripped his ax with both fists, leaped in front of Lord Geerd of Holstein, who raised his hands in defense, and split him in half from the shoulder to the chest.)

Indeed, a certain redness colored some of Blunck's stories.⁶

In a number of his works, Blunck exalted blond hair, fair skin, and blue eyes – the supposed hallmarks of the Germanic race. Thus, in *Kampf der Gestirne*, King Ull's daughter has "schon bei der Geburt lange helle Haare. Da schien es [...] gewiß, daß sich von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht der irdische Abglanz der Himmlischen vererben würde" (long, light hair already at birth. It seemed [...] certain that from generation to generation the earthly reflection of heaven would pass itself on).⁷ Likewise, Stelling Rotkinnssohn is born with "langen hellen Haaren" (long, fair hair), which his mother considers a "besonderes Zeichen" (special sign).⁸ In *Die Frau im Tal*, Annke has a "weiches blondes Gesicht" (tender, fair face).⁹ In *Hein Hoyer*, one character has "wasserblaue Augen" (water-blue eyes).¹⁰ Additional works by Blunck that can be placed in the "blood" category include *Gewalt über das Feuer*, in which the hero, Börr, symbolizes the dawn of the Germanic race, and a number of his essays, like *Volkstum und Dichtung*, in which he underscored the degree to which German art and traditions emanated from the nation's "blood."¹¹

The "blood" elements in Blunck's thought were tied to his "Germanic" nationalism, which focused first on Germany and the Germans, but then on the "Germanic" (or "*Nordsee*" [North-Sea], as he sometimes described them) peoples, which he hoped would unify in a federation including England, Scandinavia, and all of the Holy Roman Empire at its height. Such aspirations were not unique among nationalists. In Montanus's *Die Rettung des Abendlandes*, the hero isolates France by convincing England to join a "Germanic Federation" composed of Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland.¹² The "blood" components in the poet's work symbolized, in literary form, the metamorphosis of traditional nation-

alism, which had been based on state borders, ideology, or religion, to nationalism centered on ostensible distinctions of “blood.” The risk in this “racial” (or racist) nationalism was that only people who could prove “purity” merited a place.

In addition to “blood,” the words “earth” and “soil” appeared frequently in the poet’s work. In his case, “soil” can best be explained by considering the two movements integral to it, *Heimatkunst* and the “Nordic Renaissance.” Building on the tradition of nineteenth-century provincial writers like Theodor Storm and Friedrich Hebbel, the *Heimat* movement originated at the *Jahrhundertwende* as part of the neo-romantic *los von Berlin* (“away from Berlin”) reaction against so-called “big-city” immorality. In accordance with their worship of the countryside, *Heimat* writers focused on the independent farm and farmer as Germany’s lifeblood. Blunck considered farmers the “Blüte“ (flower)¹³ of German history and believed that the best place for them to propagate was in their “Mutterboden” (mother soil) – “in einem Boden, der seit Jahrtausenden ihren Willen, ihre Hoffnungen, ihre Träume aufzog und zurückgibt” (in a soil that for thousands of years has cultivated and regenerated their will, hopes, and dreams).¹⁴

Unlike many writers in the “*Heimat*” genre, Blunck often depicted exotic settings and the sea. It was, in part, for this reason that he never situated himself within the *Heimat* school. In a letter to Thomas Mann in 1931, he noted that:

Schlimmer als das Literatentum der Hauptstadt, können die “Heimatliteraten” wirken, die nur sich selbst und nicht das Ganze, die nur ihren Kirchturm und nicht Deutschland sehen, noch den Blick in ein weiteres und größeres gerechtes Land, das durch Sprache und Kultur in eins gebunden ist.¹⁵ (The “*Heimat Literati*” can often appear worse than the literary establishment of the capital. They only think about themselves and fail to see the whole; they see only their church steeples and not Germany; they miss the view of a wider and greater land joined together through language and culture.)

Some readers have argued that Blunck did not belong to the “*Heimat*” school but was an internationalist.¹⁶ However, this assertion, as well as Blunck’s own reluctance to acknowledge the *Heimat* qualities in his work, only conceal his connection to the infamous *Blut und Boden* (“blood and soil,” sometimes referred to as “Blubo”) category.

As in Hans Grimm's *Volk ohne Raum*, which literary historians consider a quintessential *Blut und Boden* work, a deep "soil" quality informed Blunck's stories even when they took place overseas. Although *Land der Vulkane* and *Die Weibsmühle*, for example, occur in exotic settings, they exalt farming as the basis of German life. This focus gave them an "earthy" flare. The poet's sea and Hanseatic themes, particularly his attention to sea voyages, were idiosyncratic. The most comprehensive description of his work is "neo-traditional Lower-German literature," for the term incorporates the sea, port, trade, Hanseatic, as well as country/farming characteristics that informed his art. Nonetheless, the "soil" aspects of the poet's literature, along with the "blood" components in works like *Die Frau im Tal*, rendered him a clear representative of the *Blut und Boden* genre, which encapsulated the racial and pastoral elements that pervaded Lower-German literature itself. Indeed, the poet occasionally used both images together, as in "der Morgen stand blutrot über der Erde" (the morning hung blood red over the earth).¹⁷ Given his weighty positions in the Third Reich and the frequency with which he referred to "blood" and "earth," references in literary surveys of the period to Blunck as one of the "classic" representatives of *Blut und Boden* are appropriate.¹⁸

Blunck's semi-autobiographical *Ritt gegen Morgen* (1914) is a "soil" work. The novel tells of a young legal clerk from the Dithmarschen who joins the Navy in Kiel and sails to German Southwest Africa to suppress a native revolt. Upon returning home, he takes up legal work in Hamburg, only to find his life meaningless. The materialism of the city, with its buying, selling, and ever-growing industry, tires him. In the end, the clerk abandons the metropolis and escapes to the Dithmarschen countryside, where he takes up life as a farmer.¹⁹ The novella's exaltation of farm over city life and its morale that true solace can only be found in the countryside embodied *Blut und Boden* themes.

Other examples in the "soil" genre included Blunck's legends and fairy tales, many of which documented Germany's peasant folklore, and his numerous poems with agricultural and pastoral themes. With its mystical, spiritual treatment of the harvest, the poem "*Erntebeginn*" (1930) was representative:

Langsam, mein Wort, sinnvoll des Hauchs bewußt, (Slowly, my word,
 consciously aware of the breeze)
 Den dir der Baum, die reifenden Felder schenken, (That the tree and the
 maturing fields bestow upon you,
 Die, da du atmest, sich in dich einsenken, (Those [the tree and the fields],
 which you breathe in, sink into you,
 Wie du sie wachsen läßt, säen und ernten muß. (As you have grown them,
 you must sow and harvest.)²⁰

In his quasi-historical novels, Blunck frequently chose peasant characters and themes, which also rendered him comfortable in the “soil” genre. Thus, Stelling Rotkinnsohn of the ninth-century Lower-German epic is the son of the “Bauernherzog”²¹ (country duke) Abbo Rotkinn, a farmer who refuses to succumb to the Frankish conquerors. Hein Hoyer of the fifteenth-century epic leads the Dithmarschen farmers to victory against the counts of Holstein, who have been appropriating land for larger, rationalized farms.²² According to Blunck, Hoyer’s triumph enabled the Dithmarschers’ coming of age: “Die Dithmarscher haben statt sich dem Gesetz des Aussterbens zu unterwerfen, die See befahren, sie haben Dichter geboren, ein hohes Kunstgewerbe gehalten und dem deutschen Gesamtleben reiche Beiträge geschenkt.”²³ (Instead of submitting to the law of extermination, the Dithmarschers traveled over the sea, gave birth to poets, produced a high craft level and left rich contributions to the German heritage.)

Blunck appreciated technology. He delighted in air travel and, during a visit to New York City in 1927, in architectural triumphs like the Woolworth Building, which he depicted as a “Strahlender Händlerturm, der Wolken streift,/ Von hundert Zinnen seiner Kraft umbrüstet” (Gleaming tower of commerce, which touches the clouds/ Bolstered in its strength with a hundred battlements).²⁴ His utopia was nonetheless a world of peasants. In this sense, he was what Jeffrey Herf has termed a “reactionary modernist,” someone who simultaneously embraced technology and a backward-looking, pastoral ideology.²⁵ Similar to Nazi theorists like Rosenberg and Goebbels, the latter of whom described his own views as *stäblernde Romantik* (steel-like romanticism), Blunck believed that industry and technology should complement a world of small, independent farms.

Blunck wanted large farms broken up and replaced by villages, each with nine fifty-acre parcels.²⁶ He also called for laws to help farmers pass their holdings tax-free to descendants and for state subsidies to help city dwellers return to the land. At the same time, he realized that Germany needed technology in order to compete as a world power. According to Herf,

[t]he reactionary modernists recognized that anti-technological views were formulas for national impotence. The state could not be simultaneously strong and technologically backward. The reactionary modernists insisted that the *Kulturnation* could be both powerful and true to its soul.²⁷

Such logic combined reason and unreason – or Enlightenment and Romantic thought. As Thomas Mann commented after the war: “the really characteristic and dangerous aspect of National Socialism was its mixture of robust modernity and an affirmative stance toward progress with dreams of the past: a highly technological romanticism.”²⁸

Blunck’s worship of independent farmers influenced his political views. Accordingly, Charlemagne’s greatest crime had been to destroy the Germanic “freedom” characteristic of the old Saxon “Republic of Farmers.” Furthermore, the mythical assembly at Marklo, where a farmer aristocracy, yeoman farmers, and the “half-free” had allegedly gathered, embodied his conception of political perfection. Each of the volumes in the poet’s “Lower-German” trilogy, *Werdendes Volk*, underscored the synergy between an evolving democratic ideal and free, independent farmers. Hein Hoyer thus responds to a question about the inhabitants of the Dithmarschen: “Es ist ein reiches Bauernvolk mit achtundvierzig Herren an der Spitze [...]. Von Volkes Wahl!”²⁹ (It is a rich farming people with forty-eight men at the top [...]. [Chosen] by the people’s vote!) Blunck’s views did not lead inevitably to Nazism. They represented an extremity of a broader georgic mindset, enlivened during the Romantic era, which had varying political and artistic manifestations in Germany and the rest of the western world. Indeed, in Germany the city-versus-country dichotomy was as old as literature itself, it having been represented symbolically in *Beowulf*,³⁰ a tale that lay at the heart of the poet’s “Anglo-Saxon” affections and which he considered, in light of its geographical origins, to be the first work of Lower-German

literature. Nonetheless, Blunck's ideas harmonized well with those of the Nazi agricultural elite and rendered him an ally, when the regime came to power.

Like the *Heimat* movement, the "Nordic Renaissance" originated in late-nineteenth-century Germany in reaction to Berlin. However, it focused on the north, particularly Lower Germany, as the fount of Germanic tradition. Adherents of the "Nordic Renaissance" believed that the "Renaissance" of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries had not been a renaissance at all, but a demeaning stage in the classical-humanist corruption of Germanic traditions.³¹ According to this view, a truly "German" Renaissance signified the flowering of Nordic/Germanic traditions. In contrast, the Italian Renaissance had split Germany between two currents. On the one hand, the *völkisch*, Germanic tradition was represented by the masses; on the other, the "enlightened," humanist tradition was represented by the distant educated elites. According to Blunck, no nation had suffered more from this dichotomy than Germany, a circumstance that he blamed, above all, on the francophone Prussian, Frederick the Great.³²

Such beliefs were summed up in Julius Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890), the literary inspiration of the "Nordic Renaissance." In *Rembrandt*, Langbehn lauded the "north-German" painter as the embodiment of truly "Germanic," "nordic" art. Walther Linden has described the book's essence: "nordic, soil-rooted art, genuine spiritual character, Rembrandt instead of Raffael, Germanic instead of southern-classical ways of thinking."³³ Following Langbehn, "northern" writers like Blunck saw themselves, in Rembrandt's image, as custodians of Germanic authenticity. Nearly every book Blunck wrote can be placed in the "Nordic Renaissance" category – from *Werdendes Volk*, which hailed Lower-German history and political traditions as truly Germanic and Nordic, and his "overseas" novels, which exalted settlers' preservation of "northern" customs in "southern" environments, to his *Urvätersaga* and other pre-historic tales that exalted the Germanic peoples' "Nordic" origins.

The "Nordic Renaissance" also influenced Blunck's political beliefs. His understanding of "conservative democracy" stemmed from what he considered to be a "Nordic," specifically Lower-

German understanding of political freedom. Writing in his diary in 1929, he commented that democracy had to be taken

in unserem historischen Sinn [...] niemals als Parteischablone von heute. Es bedeutet nach unserer Überlieferung indirekte Wahl, es bedeutet Kampf gegen das geistig verödenende städtische und agrarische Großkapital und bedeutet Aufstiegsmöglichkeit für *jeden* Volksgenossen (in our historical sense, never as the party stereotypes of today. According to our [Lower-German] tradition, it means indirect voting; it means the fight against the spiritually stultifying big capital of the city and the countryside; it means the prospect of promotion for *each* national comrade).³⁴

In *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, Jost Hermand has argued that the *völkisch* “sense of community” underlying the political philosophy of a traditionalist like Blunck had a kernel of goodness, stemming from the early-modern origins of this “sense of community” in *petit-bourgeois* condemnation of aristocratic extravagance and exploitation.³⁵ According to Hermand, racist and megalomaniacal goals distorted and overwhelmed this kernel during the modern era.³⁶ His interpretation applies to Blunck, for the poet’s conception of an organic, “democratic” commonwealth of people “responsible” for one another had a veneer of charity. It was for this reason that such ideas could be taken up by broad swaths of the German population. However, racist and authoritarian components exposed and marred this veneer. The location of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany as ground zero for Blunck’s “conservative democracy” betrayed this point, for the people of the region were supposedly “purer” and, therefore, more suitable for establishing the polity.³⁷ As Blunck also wrote in his diary, democracy “ist in unserer Landschaft erlaubt, weil die Rasse einheitlich ist” (is allowed in our province, because the race is uniform).³⁸

In his work *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Ein Beitrag zur nordischen Renaissance* (1929), Otto Hesse explained the approach to religion of believers in the “Nordic Renaissance”: “The paganism of the Nordic being sets him apart from the Christian idea. A new synthesis is sought: One that does not escape to the next world, but searches for a fulfillment of life in the here and now.”³⁹ Hesse’s statement summed up Blunck’s theology. The poet mixed traditional Germanic mo-

tifs, particularly the deification of nature, with Christian emphasis on one almighty God.

Blunck's "Nordic Christianity" was reflected in his hero, Stelling Rotkinnsohn, who, in the novel of the same name, symbolized the synthesis of Germanic traditions and Christianity. In ninth-century Saxony, the Franks are forcing Christianity upon the native Saxons via threats of mutilation: "Die Strafen der heimlich Altgläubigen waren zu erbarmungslos; tausende von Verstümmelten bettelten mit furchtbaren Gebärden durchs Land."⁴⁰ (The penalties against those who secretly worshipped the old gods were too merciless; thousands of the mutilated begged throughout the land with dreadful gestures.) Rotkinnsohn's father remains true to the old Gods, like Woden and Thor. Stelling, in contrast, belatedly accepts the new religion after surviving a battle with the Danes and wintering with a pious Englishman in Mercia. However, while Christians proclaim that God's "Reich is not of this world," Rotkinnsohn insists that, like the Nordic gods, God remains in his creation – in the trees, the birds, the setting sun, the moon, man, woman, and the earth itself:

Der Sommer wanderte und neigte zum andermal dem Ende zu. Tau glänzte an den Früchten der Heckenrosen, goldene Spinnweben leuchteten in jedem Windzug. Auch der Herbst war noch voll von der Luft der Erde, voll von Rätseln, ja, auch voll von Widerhall der Seele, – das ist der Gedanke Gottes in uns.⁴¹ (The summer for a time wandered and then inclined towards its end. Dew shone on the fruits of the wild roses. Golden spider webs lit each gust of wind. Also the autumn was still full of the earth's atmosphere, full of riddles, yes, also full of the echo of the soul – that is God's reflection in us.)

For much of the novel, Rotkinnsohn preaches these pantheistic beliefs.⁴² He becomes famous in Lower Saxony as the "Weiß" (white) prophet on account of his astonishingly fair hair and brow. Soon, however, his love for the beautiful Thioda leads him to realize that he is nothing more than an imperfect preacher of God's word,⁴³ a "Bauer, der mit Haar und Blut aus dem Boden wuchs und von der Erde aus seinem übermenschlichen Gottesgesetz nachsuchte" (farmer, who with his hair and blood grew out of the soil and who sought from the earth his superhuman law of god).⁴⁴ Biological and

agricultural pursuits are also holy. In the end, Rotkinnssohn sacrifices his life to allow the Saxons to escape a Frankish assault:

Ein riesiger Knecht trat vor, er hatte bisher erwürgt, was unter den Gefangenen von Ansehen war. Einer der Gräflichen jedoch, der Stelling einmal hatte predigen hören, fand solches Ende unehrenhaft. Er nahm seinen Speer und warf ihn auf den Witten. Und der brach in die Knie und sank rückwärts, die Arme übers Land gebreitet, aus dem er aufgestanden war.

Ein Mönch nahte und machte drei Zeichen über den Sterbenden. “Der Spuk ist zu Ende,” sagte er ernst. Die Männer sahen ihn zweifelnd an, fast dünkte sie, dieser Tote sei Glied einer ewigen Kette und unausrottbar mit seinem Volk.⁴⁵

(A giant soldier approached. He had earlier strangled those of higher standing among the prisoners. One of the counts, however, who had once heard Stelling preach, found such an end dishonorable. He took his spear and hurled it at the holy man. [Stelling] collapsed to one knee and then fell backwards, his arms spread across the land, from which he arose.

A monk approached and made three signs over the dying man. “The trouble has now come to an end,” he said seriously. The men looked at him doubtfully. It almost seemed to them that the dead man was a link in an eternal chain and, like his people, indestructible.)

The implication here, as well as in the rest of the story, is that Rotkinnssohn is one in a long line of prophets, including Jesus Christ and the Nordic god Balder, who gives his life on behalf of mankind, the word of God, but particularly his Saxon *Volk* and Lower-German *Heimat*. The second and third volumes of Blunck’s “Lower-German” trilogy, *Hein Hoyer* and *Berend Fock*, continued pagan-Christian and pantheistic themes. For example, Hein Hoyer comes to believe, as an elder statesman teaches him, that “Gott ist in dir [...] Gott ist die Freude [...] du sollst die Erde heilen!” (God is in you [...] God is joy [...] you should worship the earth!)⁴⁶

Blunck’s prehistoric trilogy, *Die Urvätersaga*, exhibited similar motifs. In *Kampf der Gestirne*, King Ull hails the life-giving sun against the moon. He demands that his subjects serve the “ewigen Gott im Himmel und der von ihm geschenkten Helle bis zum Tod” (eternal God in heaven and the light that has been bestowed by him until death).⁴⁷ In *Gewalt über das Feuer*, fire itself – which “brannte in [Börre’s] Blut” (burned in Börre’s blood) – embodies the spiritual world: “Aufsässig spürte der Mensch den Ruf eines unter der Flamme

wartenden Geschehens [...]. Flammen schafften Träume hinter den Augenglidern, sie flackerten in Blut und Hirn [...].”⁴⁸ (Rebelliously, man felt the call of an event that waited beneath the flames [...]. The flames inspired dreams behind the eyelids; they flickered in blood and mind [...].) Imagery of this kind, as Karl-Heinz Schoeps has pointed out, encapsulated the Nazi cult of fire, as reflected in campfires, torch-lit parades, and pagan rituals like the midsummer and midwinter bonfires.⁴⁹

In the same volume of *Die Urvätersaga*, God is personified as a wandering hermit. Not coincidentally, it is “He” who grants Börr the secret of how to build a fire (as well as construct a house, defeat the cave lions, and till the soil). However, after Börr marries, his closeness to “God” wanes. In the end, God ends his contact with him: “So verlor der Mensch [...] die Nähe des Unirdischen, und Gott schreitet nicht mehr wie einst vor seinem Angesicht. Aber Er ist ewig und unendlich in Höhe und Tiefe und in unserer zu Ihm aufjauchzenden Seele.”⁵⁰ (So did man [...] lose his closeness to the unearthly, and God no longer walked before his countenance as he had once before. But He is eternal and infinite above and below and in our soul that cries out to him.) According to the poet, the German *Volk* had strayed from its spiritual origins and needed to return.

There was also a supernatural component to Blunck’s work. In *Streit mit den Göttern*, nature takes on a part, “a decisive collaborating strength and personification in the story.”⁵¹ Weland, who is the offspring of the god Dunnar and a giant, charms otters with his voice, and hares protect him from danger.⁵² Similar themes apply in the other two volumes of *Die Urvätersaga*: The trees speak to Börr, the birds to King Ull. Many of the poet’s works were populated with mermaids and “subterranean” dwarves and nymphs. Such supernatural themes, which pervaded his fairy tales, like *Märchen von der Niederelbe*, gave his work a magical luster reminiscent of fairy tales by Hoffmann, the Grimm brothers, and Tieck, not to mention Wagner’s operas.

Blunck did not believe he had fundamentally transformed Christianity. Through his eyes, his work portrayed God’s reflection in all living things – His direct impression – and created a vision that could be incorporated by all Christians. Nonetheless, he was an ene-

my of the churches. According to Blunck, established religion was a worldly mechanism intent on wealth, power, and division, not spiritual brotherhood. In the play *Land der Dämmerung* (1933), his hero, Diederich Pining, juxtaposes the settlement of North America with the conflicts of the Reformation and the lies of the Church. Pining calls for a land without priests.⁵³

Like most of his views, Blunck's synthesis of Nordic and Christian motifs was not new. Similar themes had pervaded the Grimms' tales, for example. Nor in the 1920s and 1930s was Blunck's "Nordic Christianity" unique among national-conservatives. Wilhelm Schäfer, who argued in "The German Christian Question" that Christianity's suppression of Germanic traditions had created self-hate and contradiction, speaks to this point. In *Die Rettung des Abendlandes*, Montanus depicted a "religion that rejects the clergy," but integrates notions of a Christian God with Germanic mythology.⁵⁴ Defeat in the Great War and the economic and social turmoil of Weimar intensified the search, already present in nineteenth-century Germany, for salvation in supposedly "true" Germanic beliefs, as opposed to orthodox Christianity and the established Church, which, Nietzsche had argued, only weakened the Germans.⁵⁵

According to Blunck's *Weltanschauung*, "blood," "soil," and "Nordic Christianity" were all intermixed with culture. In architecture, music, painting, crafts, language, tool making, and other technologies, Blunck perceived a distinctive German and Germanic character that he elevated to a religious level. Most of his works, from the *Urvätersaga* and *Werdendes Volk* to his "soil" and "overseas" novels, carried this emphasis.

Blunck wrote the *Urvätersaga* because he considered it critical to provide his German readers with a definitive sense of their ancient cultural unity.⁵⁶ The theme in *Gewalt über das Feuer* is the germination of Germanic culture and technology during the Stone Age. Börr paints the first painting:

Börr war berauscht von seinem Werk, noch lange zitterte ihm die Hand, als er das Bild geschaffen hatte. Aber als er es wagte, einen Löwen zu umreißen, heulten Frauen und Kinder und fürchteten, daß Börr ihn durch das Bild näher zaubern würde.⁵⁷ (Börr was exhilarated by his work; when he had

finished the picture, his hand trembled for a long time afterwards. But when he dared to sketch a lion, the women and children cried out, for they feared that Börr would summon it closer through the drawing.)

Likewise, Börr builds the first Germanic abode:

Börr und Mann bauten damals, um Firre zu gefallen, aus Bäumen einen Raum vor ihrer Höhle, ähnlich dem, den sie auf der Biberinsel über ihrer Grube errichtet hatten. Das war nicht leicht, man mußte die Pfosten hoch mit Felsblöcken umlagern, damit sie festständen, es war mehr Arbeit nötig als einst für das Spitzdach über der Grube. Aber der Herbst beeilte sich; gut war's, daß man eine Höhle mit Vorräten füllen und das Feuer in Steine einpacken konnte.⁵⁸ (In order to please Firre, at that time Börr and Mann were building a room made of trees in front of their cave, one that was similar to the one they had built over their hollow on the beaver island. The task was not easy; one had to surround the posts with boulders, so that they stood upright. It required more work than for the pointed roof over the hollow. But autumn was coming quickly; it was good that one filled the cave with supplies and could enclose the fire in stone.)

The second two volumes in the trilogy further depicted the cultural and technological evolution of the Germanic peoples. In *Kampf der Gestirne*, Blunck highlighted sailing technology in neolithic Lower Germany. *Streit mit den Göttern* begins as a lightning storm illuminates a traditional Nordic “thing festival” (“thing” being the old Norse word for an assembly of the people⁵⁹) at a bronze-age farmstead.⁶⁰ The book’s hero, Weland – the “smith of the Gods” – embodies bronze-age crafts, for he creates the most beautiful bronze, copper, and gold ornaments.

However, German and the Germanic languages were German-dom’s most precious cultural treasure. In *Gewalt über das Feuer*, Blunck depicted “Nordic” man’s first spoken words as an event of biblical proportions:

“Sprich,” verlangte Gott [...]. Da wurde Börrs Stammeln und Lallen zum lebendigen Wort [...]. Und alle Bäume, die zuhörten, schauerten vor dem Wunder; viele Tiere [...] wollten mitgewinnen. Aber [...] allein dem Menschen schenkte Gott, beseelte Worte zu sprechen.⁶¹ (“Speak,” demanded God [...] and Börr’s stammering and babbling became living words [...]. And all of the trees that were listening, were astounded by the wonder; many

animals [...] wanted too to have the ability, but [...] God gave man alone the gift of speaking with inspired words.)

Blunck believed that “God” had bestowed the Germanic languages as a special heritage to be protected.⁶² He also believed that common linguistic roots united all of the world’s Germanic peoples, regardless of state affiliations, particularly since each of the Germanic languages had cognates for love, devotion, God, and heaven.⁶³ Pretensions of this kind were not unusual. As Strobl has pointed out, “the notion of a Germanic family of nations was much more credible in linguistics than in recent history. An encounter with scraps of extinct languages in the course of studying Old High German, or indeed Old English, could bring the vanished Teutonic nations of antiquity back to life.”⁶⁴ After the turn of the century, interest in the old Germanic languages pervaded even the universities and thus legitimized the thoughts of amateur philologists like Blunck.⁶⁵

In *Die Weibsmühle* and *Land der Vulkane*, Blunck exalted the German settlers’ preservation of their native tongue. Through their cultivation of German, the settlers maintain the rest of their cultural identity; German architecture, crafts, schooling, and literature follow. In his essay *Volkstum und Dichtung* (1932), Blunck lamented a vote, purportedly taken in 1776 in America, to make English, rather than German, the new country’s official language.⁶⁶ According to Blunck, after this alleged defeat German Americans stopped schooling their children in German, building traditional German homes, wearing German garb, and reading German literature and poetry. Their German identity thus slipped away, and, culturally, the United States became English. In Blunck’s mind, this led to the US alliance with England (which had failed to acknowledge its “Germanic” ties to Germany) during the Great War. “Wir denken mit Bitterkeit an jene Abstimmung” (we look back on that vote with bitterness), he declared.⁶⁷ During Weimar, Blunck saw a similar danger in Europe in the decline of German at international conferences, congresses, and in the sciences. Blunck believed that Germany’s place as a great power could only be assured if the German language – and, thus, German culture – achieved equal footing with other languages.⁶⁸

In light of Blunck's focus on culture as fundamental to true Germanism and the high degree to which he viewed ethnicity through the lens of culture, it is tempting to assert that culture, rather than "blood," defined his view of race – a point that can be backed up by evidence. For example, he considered Konopath, the *Kulturwart* of the Nazi party, pigheaded because Konopath was "einer von denen, die den menschlichen Wert nach Blondheit, Langschädel und wasserblauen Augen messen" (one of those people who judges human worth according to blondness, long skulls, and water-blue eyes).⁶⁹ However, when the complete picture is drawn, this interpretation appears invalid. A *völkisch* traditionalist like Blunck, who could not have escaped the post-Darwinian biological constructs that suffused conservative intellectual circles in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, perceived individuals through the lens of *both* blood and culture, each of which was essential to true Germanism. If a German of authentic "blood" rejected "true" German culture, then he was not a "true" German. At the same time, if someone who was not of German "blood" – a Jew, for example – adopted German culture, the missing "blood" component still hindered absolute Germanism. Blunck viewed assimilated Jews as "German Jews" rather than Germans and was constantly aware of their different biological background.

Nonetheless, "blood" was not, as it was for died-in-the-wool Nazis, necessarily more important than culture. In his essay "*Volks-tum und Dichtung*," the poet declared that "der Kern der schöpferischen Kraft eines Volkes in der künstlerischen Leistung liegt, die aus Blut, Sprache, Landschaft und Überlieferung erwächst [...]" (the heart of a people's creative power lies in their artistic achievements, which arise from blood, language, the native countryside, and tradition), demonstrating the importance he tied to each of the elements in his *Weltanschauung*.⁷⁰ In other instances, he pointed to culture as of the utmost importance. Blunck's case exhibits the complexities of views on race in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s. The Nazis, with their acutely biological approach, did not have a monopoly on racial definitions and perceptions; and culture, it must be pointed out, was also important to the likes of a Hitler, Himmler, or Goebbels.

According to Blunck, Germans and the Germanic peoples required space in which to nurture “blood,” “soil,” “nordic Christianity,” and “culture.” For him, the required space pointed to an empire of two parts, the first in the heart of Europe and the second an overseas colonial empire.

Blunck considered the empire in the heart of Europe the more important. The wish for a “Greater Reich” – a “Third Reich,” a term that Blunck himself used – had a long history in Germany. First to herald a new golden age was Joachim de Floris, a thirteenth-century preacher who foretold of a coming “Third Kingdom.”⁷¹ In later centuries, the idea was pursued by a series of writers, poets, and philosophers. As J.M. Ritchie has pointed out, “Lessing developed the idea of the Third Kingdom from Herder and the whole concept was expanded philosophically by Kant, Fichte, and Schiller.”⁷² The belief informed late Classical and Romantic philosophy, as well as the Romantic poetry of masters like Novalis and Hölderin. After the failure of Bismarck’s “second Reich” to unite all Germans, turn-of-the-century *völkisch* writers and poets attached Nordic and pagan beliefs to the idea. Among writers like Blunck, the new Reich’s fountainhead was Lower Germany and Schleswig-Holstein. The bridge between the Germanic peoples living “north” and “south” of the Danish border, the region was ideally located for the rebirth.⁷³

In Blunck’s mind, the Holy Roman Empire had united Germans and simultaneously allowed the provinces cultural and linguistic autonomy. Therefore, the Empire had embodied Germanic “freedom” in contrast to Roman centralism, which Blunck believed was now embodied by Berlin and the Republic. For him, the Hanseatic League was the best representation of the Reich, for it had united a vast area under German cultural hegemony, without suppressing local independence. The problem with the Hansa, as with the Holy Roman Empire, was its inability to translate cultural unity into military strength. As Hein Hoyer laments, with “Sehnsucht zitternd in seinen Worten” (yearning trembling in his words): “Wenn das Reich stark wäre [...] [und es] einen Kaiser [...] [gäbe], der die Grenzen schützt.”⁷⁴ (If only the Reich were strong [...] [and there were] a *Kaiser* who protects the borders.) Hoyer was Blunck’s ideal *Kaiser*-like hero, for he was “der Sturm der Hanse und schlug viele Schlachten

zur See und festen Erde, dem niederdeutschen Land zum Schutz und Schirm” (the storm of the Hansa and waged many battles on sea and solid earth, [in order to provide] the Lower-German region with protection).⁷⁵ According to the poet, the Reich’s inability to coalesce militarily facilitated the entry of “foreign” humanism into the Empire and the Scandinavian countries’ loss of cultural ties to Germany in favor of England.

When power did come to the Reich, it came through irredentist, absolutist states. For Blunck, the Prussian “*Machtstaat*” signified not only the abandonment of innumerable Germans outside of the Reich, but also the Reich’s subjugation to Roman-style centralism. Rather than being satisfied with Bismarck’s “smaller-German” creation, Blunck sought a continental empire that would include not only all of the German states, including Austria, but also the ethnic Germans in Europe and Russia: “Der Staat Deutschland sei nur ein Torso des Volkstums, er habe nur die Aufgabe, die kommende großdeutsche Arbeit [...] einzuleiten und bis dahin den alten Zusammenhang zu wahren.”⁷⁶ (The state of Germany represents only a torso of the national traditions; its task is merely to initiate the coming work of Greater Germany [...] and until then to protect the old structure.) In pensive moments, he went further. As he noted in early 1931, if the socialist values inherent in “old German” law, with which he identified the “Third Reich,” were adopted, the transition would necessitate “einen Fünfjahresplan für die Besiedlung des Ostens” (a five-year plan for the settlement of the East).⁷⁷ Similarly, as he traveled to Danzig in the summer of 1932, the absence of farmers in the Polish Corridor moved him. The following winter, he commented that the “Ansiedlung der Millionen im dünn bevölkerten Ostraum” (settlement of millions in the thinly populated East) was part of the answer to Germany’s problems.⁷⁸ In light of future events, these were ominous views.

Since Blunck mythologized the Holy Roman Empire as a period in which German culture and religious authority had united Europe, he also wished for a Pan-European “Föderation” (federation) centered on Germany.⁷⁹ Significantly, this “Föderation” would have its roots in Schleswig-Holstein and be preceded, ideally, by the natural union of the “Germanic” states, like Germany, England, and the

Scandinavian countries. According to Blunck, anyone who thought about the matter carefully would realize that Europe required the unifying strength of the Germanic peoples, if it were ever to coalesce.⁸⁰ Upon the unification of the “Germanic” states, a “Selbstbewusstsein” (self-consciousness) would develop in northern Europe and serve as a counterweight to the Mediterranean world, helping to balance Europe’s different cultures.⁸¹ In the poet’s mind, this development would produce “die entscheidenden Leistungen unserer Rasse” (the decisive achievements of our race).⁸²

During his lifetime, Blunck asserted, as his defenders still do, that his vision for Europe was enlightened and peaceful. The problem with this standpoint is that his thoughts were strikingly similar to those of the leading Nazis, whose ideas led to history’s most destructive and deadly war, not to mention the Holocaust. Alfred Rosenberg, for instance, viewed “Nordic Europe” as “the solution of the future, with a German Central Europe, a racial and national state, as the central power on the continent, safeguarding the South and South-East; the Scandinavian states with Finland as a secondary alliance for safeguarding the North-East, and Great Britain safeguarding the West and overseas, at points where this is requisite in the interest of Nordic man.”⁸³ Hitler, too, spoke frequently of a Europe united “peacefully” around Germany and the so-called “Germanic” peoples. What lay beneath the contours of his vision, of course, goes without saying.

The second aspect of Blunck’s imperial interest, overseas empire, distinguished him from nationalist writers like Hans Grimm, who favored expansion in the East. Blunck’s “overseas” novels, *Die Weibsmühle* and *Land der Vulkane*, betrayed a longing for German colonies in Central and South America. *Ritt gegen Morgen* pointed to the value of African colonies, as did other stories with colonial themes. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the poet argued that the return of Germany’s colonies, particularly in Africa, was critical to a lasting peace. In Blunck’s mind, a world empire, which he hoped would be ruled in collaboration with “Anglo-Saxon” England, would globalize German culture and language. It would also provide space for the growth of the Germanic peoples against the ever-burgeoning populations of Asia and Africa. In the poet’s overseas empire, Lower

Germany was again the fountainhead. Hein Hoyer preaches that Lower Germany has two arms. One points to the north; the other to the sea and distant lands.⁸⁴

As far as the evidence reveals, Blunck never joined imperial organizations like the Navy League or the Pan-German League (which, in any case, had seen their heyday in pre-1914 Germany). His aspirations nonetheless represented aspects of their program, which “called for the consolidation of Germans throughout the world,” as well as a massive empire in continental Europe.⁸⁵ Blunck’s thoughts marked the continuity of Pan-German views in the Wilhelmine, Weimar, and Nazi periods among Germans who were not even affiliated with the imperial organizations. Moreover, his interest in tying the so-called “Germanic” nations to his empire demonstrated how racial and cultural ideology had compounded and fortified Pan-Germanism by 1933.

In Blunck’s own words, “blood,” “soil,” “spirit” (i.e. “Nordic Christianity”), and “culture” composed the German, and Germanic, “*Lebenshaltung*” (mode of life).⁸⁶ “Empire,” one might conclude, represented the cradle, the nurturing ground, for this *Lebenshaltung*. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the question for Blunck was how to restore a proper *Lebenshaltung* to the German and Germanic peoples. As Blunck explained to Christian Jenssen in 1930, “[d]er Dichter soll Kämpfer sein, auch Kämpfer in den Fällen, wo es sich um den Einfluß seines Namens handelt, weil mit dem Einfluß seines Namens sich Einfluß und Wert der von ihm verfochtenen Idee entscheidet” (the poet should be a fighter, also a fighter in cases where it has to do with the influence of his name. With the influence of his name, the influence and worth of the ideas that he champions become decisive).⁸⁷ With the revolutionary times that began on January 30, 1933, Blunck’s chance to realize his *Weltanschauung* arose, or so he thought.

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Chapter VI: First Nazi Years

The artists who populated the ranks of the Nazi *Literati* came from various backgrounds, and some were converts from modern movements like Expressionism. Indeed, the cult of the *Führer* resembled images cast in Expressionist plays like Ernst Toller's *Die Wandlung*, which depicted "a charismatic leader whose spiritual authority is exercised upon an undifferentiated, united, applauding crowd."¹ "Nazi culture" was never homogenous, and it evolved during the period of Nazi rule. Marla Stone's point that there was an "*a priori*" anti-modern bias in the art of Nazi Germany nonetheless applies, at least in the realm of literature.² As far as a majority of the writers involved were concerned, and especially from Blunck's perspective, the *Machtergreifung* was generally a victory of old traditions and "traditional" artists, some of them converts, against the *avant-garde*. In this sense, it was also the victory of a romantic view of Germany, of an ideal and imaginary Germany. In terms of literature, it was also a victory of the provinces, where the "traditional" writers were centered, over the German capital. In Blunck's own words:

[T]he movement of 1933 was nothing more nor less than a rising of the regional instinct against the exaggerated centralization in the capital. It is certainly true that literature very plainly revealed that its support was for the healthy movement, rooted and grounded in the people and the country, against the circles of eastern immigrants and undesirable groups in the capital.³

If one is to consider National Socialism a form of "reactionary modernism," as Jeffrey Herf has done, the literary realm demonstrates the traditional-modern fusing well, for the Nazis employed traditional literary symbols to legitimize what, in other respects (especially re-armament), was a distinctly modern movement.

During the year and a half leading up to the *Machtergreifung*, Blunck tended his farm:

Ich kaufte vor allem nach meinem Sinn einige besondere, rotbunte Zuchtkälber und ein eingetragenes Stutenfohlen Schleswiger Schlages, ich kaufte sogar gut. Die älteren Tiere wurden langsam ersetzt, die Gerätschaften ergänzt, die Drähne geöffnet, und die Felder bekamen den ersten Kunstdünger.⁴ (Using my best judgment, I purchased a few exceptional, red-spotted breeding calves and a registered Schleswig-bred filly. I bought well. The older animals were gradually replaced, the equipment supplemented, the *Drähne* opened, and the fields received their first fertilizer.)

Meanwhile, he devoted his afternoons and evenings to his literary work. Wedded to the Holstein countryside in which he now resided, in 1932 he reissued *hart warr ni möd*, *Nedderdütsche Balladen un Gedichte*, a collection of *Plattdeutsch* ballads that had first appeared in 1920.⁵

In this pastoral setting, political events were a distant thunder. Electoral records show that the Nazis garnered some of their earliest and strongest support in the countryside of Schleswig-Holstein.⁶ Moreover, Nazi campaigns had always favored rural areas, where the party believed its limited resources worked more efficiently, over the cities. According to his own testimony, however, Blunck never voted for the Nazis, but for the *Demokratische Partei* in November 1932 and the *Staatspartei* in March 1933.⁷ It is impossible to determine the veracity of these claims, and critics later questioned their truthfulness.⁸ In any case, Blunck soon became enthralled with the Nazis. He witnessed the seeming rejuvenation while in Hamburg, where he continued to spend his winters, and during visits to Berlin. Diary references to “Verbrüderung auf den Straßen” (avowals of friendship on the streets)⁹ and “der Morgenschein für ein junges Volk” (the morning glow of a young people)¹⁰ reflected his enthusiasm. In his own words, his voice was “einstimmig mit der Regierung” (in unison with the government), and he was “wie trunken über den großartigen Einsatz der Reichseinheit, die seit Jahrhunderten unser Traum war!” (almost drunk over the splendid show of imperial unity, which has been our dream for centuries!)¹¹ The tumult of the period, with its sporadic street fighting between Communists and Nazis, and the new regime’s gradual but sure appointment of party hacks to key posts did not leave Blunck untroubled. However, as he noted to Jenssen, it was critical to have an open mind with regard to the period’s annoyances, which were part and parcel of any “revolutionary” era.¹² Conciliatory

logic of this kind guided the poet's conduct throughout the period 1933 to 1945.

The regime's constitutional rise to power confirmed his support. At the Mölenhoff, Blunck saw harmony in the cycle of the seasons, the blossoming of spring flowers, and the rising sun. As he had revealed in *Die Volkswende* and elsewhere, in his utopia heavy industry was not eliminated, but brought into harmony with the farming economy. Workers lived in suburban villages, kept small plots of land, and commuted to work. Cooperatives replaced the employer-employee conflict. Small, independent farmers produced agricultural self-sufficiency. So-called "democratic" unanimity replaced squabbling, ineffective parties. The Nazi platform, with its emphasis on agricultural autarchy and its condemnation of "big capital," "big farming," and ineffective government, harmonized with his ideas.

George Mosse's argument regarding how symbols, rites, and myths employed by the Nazis captured supporters is relevant here. In the first months of 1933, Blunck fit his romantic image of German history to the Nazi regime. Building on his decades-old faith in a coming greater-German "Reich," he convinced himself that the new government would now restore German honor and reestablish the "old Reich." This view was spurred on by Nazi images of Medieval Germany (images that are visible today by virtue of Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of the Will*), complete with draped flags, triumphant music, and cascading flowers, which signified the blossoming of a new empire.

Blunck and his wife followed events via the radio and newspaper. Even experienced from afar, the Nazis' festivals and torch-lit parades conjured images of the Wartburg Festival of 1817 and the "heroism" of 1848. Blunck's hopes were also inspired when Hitler placed *Statthalter*, who were supposed to symbolize the princes of the Holy Roman Empire, in Germany's state governments. According to the poet, the "Nordic Renaissance" had arrived, for the Nazis would, he imagined, restore Nordic traditions – indeed, a "constitution" reminiscent of the "free" assembly at Marklo. As in his quasi-historical novel, *Hein Hoyer*, in which the hero assumes dictatorial powers and leads a "verwirrende Demokratie" onto "neuen Wegen,"¹³ he, similarly, imagined that Hitler's assumption of extra-

ordinary powers was a temporary measure designed to correct the Weimar Republic's perceived excesses and return Germany to a sound footing. The tradition that, among the old Germanic tribes, the chief assumed dictatorial authority during periods of crisis also influenced Blunck's perception that the dictatorship would be temporary. After the Enabling Act was passed, these views colored the poet's periodic comments that he trusted that the Nazis would soon restore a "democratic" constitution.¹⁴ The tenacity of Blunck's delusions, even when evidence contradicted them, was a testament to the power of the traditions and images he had collected since childhood, as well as to the Nazis' ability to transmit symbols long worshipped by Germany's disaffected provincial writers.

On March 6, the new government passed a law "depriving the German states of their traditional jurisdiction over cultural and educational affairs."¹⁵ Of interest was how Blunck, who supported provincial autonomy and hated the supposed "hegemony" of Berlin, could endorse a regime that was now centralizing cultural authority in the German capital. As expressed in March 1933, his logic was counter-intuitive:

[M]ich dünkt heute, daß der Weg zu einem guten Föderalismus über den Einheitsstaat führt. Erst wenn wir die dynastischen Provinz- und Staatsgrenzen aufgehoben haben [...] wird es möglich sein, eine Neuentfaltung des ganzen Niedersachsens vorzubereiten.¹⁶ (Today, me thinks that the way to an equitable federalism is through the centralized state. Once the borders of the dynastic provinces and states have been removed, [...] it will then be possible to prepare for a new unfolding of all of Lower Saxony [*Niedersachsen*; part of Lower Germany and the *Reichsniederlande*].)

His logic was also wishful. As Applegate has argued, rather than promote provincial autonomy, Nazi rule "destroyed the autonomy of local associational life."¹⁷ Through the lofty positions Blunck held during the period 1933–40, he fostered the culture of his region and had a number of successes in this regard. Nonetheless, these accomplishments were far outweighed by the loss of provincial autonomy that occurred in Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany during the same period, developments in which he was himself complicit. With his backing, for instance, the *Gesellschaft für deutsches*

Schrifttum, which was supposed to combat Berlin's "excesses," was dissolved in late 1933 in the belief that the new government had taken up its mantle.¹⁸ One reason Blunck ignored the reality of centralization might have had to do with his literary career, which suddenly improved. On March 11, 1933, Eugen Diederichs agreed to publish the three-volume trilogy, *Die Urvätersaga*.¹⁹ Although the original releases had sold poorly,²⁰ the poet received a generous royalty of 2,500 marks for the contract.²¹ Professor Mar Thalmann, a specialist in early Germanic history who would play a leading role in the *Ahnenerbe* school championed by Heinrich Himmler, provided Blunck with the old Germanic runes that appeared on the book's jacket.

Blunck had few reservations about the *Gleichschaltung*. Through his eyes, the purges had "eine schicksalhafte Gerechtigkeit" (a fateful justice).²² Nor was the Nazi destruction of the parties a crime; the factions had "allzu oft [...] sich für wichtiger gehalten als Staat und Volk, man weint ihnen nicht nach" (all too often considered themselves more important than the state and the people; one doesn't shed any tears over them).²³ The same went for liberal intellectuals:

[G]ut ist es, daß die Geister, die vierzehn Jahre über uns hausten – darin gebe ich Hitler recht – durch eine neue Zeit abgelöst werden, die wirklich Deutschland und deutsches Denken als erstes will und wieder den Weg zur inneren Frömmigkeit, zu Gemeinschaft und zum Opferwillen findet.²⁴ (It is good that the intellectuals who for fourteen years ruled over us – with regard to this, I am in agreement with Hitler – will be liquidated during a new period that truly desires Germany and German thinking first and once again finds the way to inner piety, community, and the will to sacrifice.)

Hypocritically, however, given the Nazis' unrestricted anti-Semitism, he felt pity for some Jews. True to his "selective anti-Semitism," he lamented the plight of Jewish friends like Hildesheim, who emigrated to Palestine after the Nazis seized power. He also felt badly for the Jewish milkman, Merton, whose milk business dried up. However, he was less concerned about Merton's eldest daughter, who, he thought, mirrored "alles Jüdisch-Snobistische der Berliner Kreise, in denen sie sich jahrelang aufgehalten hatte [...]. Sie ist von

den fünf Kindern die einzige, die jüdisch aussieht, es scheint aber auch, als ob in ihr aller unangenehme Hochmut jener Rasse gesammelt ist” (all that Jewish snobbishness of the Berlin circles in which she had gone for years. Of the five children, she is the only one who looks Jewish. It seems, however, as if all of the unpleasant arrogance of that race is amassed in her).²⁵ Blunck also complained about “Radauantisemitismus” (rowdy anti-semitism) and the barbarity of SA hooligans. Nonetheless, he generally believed that the Jews were reaping rewards for past indiscretions. Hence, he affirmed a statement supposedly made later by Merton regarding “die Notwendigkeit des Bruchs der jüdischen Vorherrschaft, des ‘Instrumentalen,’ die das Volk nicht habe ertragen können” (the necessity of breaking the Jewish hegemony, the supremacy of the “instrumental figures,” which the people could not endure).²⁶ In April 1933, the poet’s brother, Walther, who was a lawyer in Altona, became a candidate for a Nazi organization. Afterwards, Walther visited Blunck at the Mölenhoff. Worried about how his Jewish colleagues would view his decision, he noted the “grauenhaften Zustände” (terrible situation) that Jewish lawyers had created in Berlin, where they had purportedly constituted “die Mehrheit [...] und Rechtsprechung und Gesetz bestimmten” (the majority and determined the dispensation of justice and the law).²⁷ Targeting the Jews as scapegoats was, it seems, a weakness that affected more than one member of the Blunck family.

According to the existing evidence, Blunck did not participate in the book burnings that May.²⁸ At his denazification trial, he testified that he had found them vulgar and that *Die Volkswende* had fueled a few pyres.²⁹ If true, the destruction of *Die Volkswende* likely resulted from the book’s references to “democratic” forms of government, which were not acceptable among, and probably not understood by, younger party members. At the time of the burnings, however, Blunck believed that it was impossible to undergo a major transformation – a “Revolution,” as he considered the Nazi takeover – without such radical acts.³⁰

Soon enough, Blunck was himself called to participate in the *Gleichschaltung* – or the “Nordic Renaissance,” as he preferred to characterize events. On May 2, he traveled to Berlin at the invitation

of the new Prussian *Kultusminister*, Bernhard Rust. Rust was in the process of purging the Prussian Academy and had asked the poet to join the Academy's Poetry Section, from which Blunck had felt unfairly excluded. In February, Rust had removed the Section's president, Heinrich Mann, who left without a fight in order not to damage the institution. There followed what can best be described as a "self-cleansing," which was aided by the duplicitous Gottfried Benn, who drew up a pledge of allegiance to the new regime that each member had to sign.³¹ Rather than endorse the pledge, nine of the Poetry Section's twenty-seven members gave up their memberships – first Käthe Kollwitz, then Alfred Döblin, Rudolf Pannwitz, Thomas Mann (from Switzerland), Leonhard Frank, and other Weimar notables. Writers who signed the pledge, but whom Rust deemed racially, ideologically, or artistically unfit, were removed from the Academy in May according to the "Law for the Re-establishment of the Professional Bureaucracy."

As a writer of traditional genres and a member of the *völkisch* camp, Blunck was at the top of Rust's list of replacements for the Poetry Section. Along with him, attending the May meeting were members who remained after the purge: Benn, Wilhelm von Scholz, Walter von Molo, Rudolf Binding, Josef Ponten, Eduard Stucken, Max Halbe, Ina Seidel, and Hermann Stehr. Other nominees included Hans Grimm, Wilhelm Schäfer, Agnes Miegel, Börries von Münchhausen, Werner Beumelburg, Peter Dörfler, Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, Friedrich Griese, Emil Strauß, Hanns Johst, and Will Vesper.

At the meeting, Rust promised to transform the "Prussian" Academy into the "German" or Reich Academy as soon as possible. Henceforth, it was to promote the artists of Germany's provinces, including Lower Germany. The Academy would, he stated, eventually comprise artists from German Switzerland, Austria, and Belgium. It would thus embody the old Reich in a cultural sense. Finally, Rust pledged to promote pre-history, particularly in Germany's schools, and to use *Kultusministerium* funds for this purpose.

Rust's promises pleased Blunck. He believed the *Kultusminister* exhibited genuine character,³² an impression that was not diminished by his discovery several months later that Rust had a sizeable collection of his books.³³ But, according to Blunck's diary, Rust was "self-

sam” (strangely) unreasonable about the Jews. If one credits the poet’s account, he and some of the other writers present spoke on behalf of two Jewish writers whom they thought should be readmitted to the Academy. These were the former president of the German Pen Division, Ludwig Fulda, whom Blunck had considered one of the few reasonable personalities in the “Berlin Center,” and the lyricist Alfred Mombert, whose work he thought had a special Germanic flare.³⁴ “No!” replied Rust.³⁵ As for the poet, the engagement on the two writers’ behalves fit his “selective anti-semitism” and was not out of character. Nonetheless, he was, above all, concerned about transforming the Academy from its “zweihundert Jahre alten preußischen Gründung in eine deutsche Gegenwart” (two-hundred-year-old Prussian foundation into a German present) as soon as possible.³⁶ His worries about Fulda and Mombert, who were not readmitted, quickly dissipated. By helping to convert the “Prussian” into the “German” Academy, Blunck hoped to contribute to ending Prussian hegemony and culturally reuniting the old Reich.

On June 7, 1933, the new members of the Poetry Section were sworn in. At a gathering that morning, Rust promised to respect the Section’s autonomy, and he emphasized that anyone with complaints could go directly to him. However, he also asserted that freedom or autonomy were no longer the issue, only whether the Academy could inspire cultural renewal.³⁷ Blunck did not address this contradiction. That afternoon, votes for the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of the Section were held. Johst received the chairmanship. Blunck became vice-chairman. In his diary, Blunck wrote that the appointment came as a great surprise, a response that was typical of him during this period – as if his sudden notoriety were fortuitous!³⁸ Facetiously, the Section members nicknamed the poet the “candidate of the sinking bourgeoisie,” a reference to his career as a lawyer.³⁹ With his usual seriousness, that evening he noted that this point was not apt; he was now a farmer.⁴⁰ As vice-chairman of the Poetry Section, Blunck received a position in the Academy’s senate.

In his diary, the poet described events at the Academy as “dürftig” (wretched).⁴¹ Although one of the purge’s greatest beneficiaries, he was not unaffected by the opportunism. However, as he also

noted in his diary, he suddenly felt a little important.⁴² His new position was not his only blessing. On the afternoon of the swearing-in ceremony, Blunck learned that one of his plays, *Land der Dämmerung* (1933), had been chosen for performance the following spring at the *Städtisches Schauspielhaus* in Berlin.⁴³ This marked his first theatrical premier in eight years and his first ever, as far as the records show, in Berlin.

The Poetry Section's new chairman, Hanns Johst (1890–1978), had studied medicine and worked as a nurse before turning to philosophy and art history at the universities of Munich, Vienna, and Berlin. Like a number of Third Reich *Literati*, he began his career as an Expressionist and pacifist. His first literary success was the anti-war tirade, *Die Stunde der Sterbenden* (1914). Johst then made a name for himself with *Der junge Mensch: Ein ekstatisches Szenarium* (1916) and a number of other plays considered Expressionist classics. Disillusioned with the Republic, he turned abruptly to the right in the late 1920s.⁴⁴ His play *Thomas Paine* (1927) depicted the American patriot as a model of authority and exhibited clear fascist tendencies. His work thereafter embodied Nazi chauvinism. Johst's most infamous play, *Schlageter*, premiered on Hitler's birthday in 1933. It told of Leo Schlageter, the SA man who was executed for opposing the French occupation of the Ruhr. Johst portrayed Schlageter as *the* Nazi hero, who was willing to sacrifice everything for Germany. Because of his move "From Expressionism to National Socialism,"⁴⁵ Johst represented "the ways in which the apolitical aspirations of Expressionist intellectuals for sacrifice and belonging could be perverted by the frustrations of the Weimar Republic into cultural suicide."⁴⁶ In the 1920s, Johst had settled south of Hamburg, in Lower Saxony. For this reason, Blunck considered him a fellow representative of Lower Germany.

After Blunck joined the Poetry Section, he met regularly with Johst. In *Weimar Culture*, Peter Gay has spoken of the "old German combat between love of life and love of death."⁴⁷ Significantly, this combat influenced Blunck's and Johst's conversations. As Blunck noted in his diary, Johst spoke of how they were faced with "Tod und Leben" (life and death) and dwelled "fast zu sehr im Gedanken an den Tod als Opfer für sein Volk" (almost too much in thoughts of

death as a sacrifice for his people).⁴⁸ The poet himself had a distinctive outlook on death, noting in his memoirs, for example, that death was “nicht böse, er war sogar schön [...], man konnte fast gierig auf das Geheimnis um die Abgeschiedenen sein” (not evil, it was even beautiful [...], one could even be curious about the secret of the departed).⁴⁹ Nonetheless, Johst’s frequent talk of imminent demise worried him. Expecting a Nordic “rebirth,” he believed that not only death but life was needed, if the Reich were to blossom. This distinction separated the poet from the darkest of Nazis. For all of his mistakes and, as Thomas Mann once commented, “blindness to the horrors of the regime,”⁵⁰ Blunck believed in life, not the Nazi cult of death. His attitude exemplified how fantastic images of “rejuvenation” disguised and thus allowed the Nazi regime to pursue its murderous course.

On account of his new prestige, Blunck gained support for issues that were important to him. In early July, Rust earmarked funds for Lower-German theaters and writers. Blunck himself helped distribute this money in Schleswig-Holstein. On July 19, Blunck attended the excavation of a Bronze-Age grave near the Mölenhoff.⁵¹ Several days later, he secured 1,500 marks for the excavation of gravesites in Schönweide. Nazi officials agreed with Blunck that Schleswig-Holstein’s “especially rich” collection of pre-historic sites was crucial for understanding Germanic origins, and they provided funds to protect the sites, many of which were threatened by flooding. These officials also concurred on the importance of the prehistoric curriculum in Schleswig-Holstein’s schools, particularly when it came to “Theories of Nordic races.”⁵² This support was welcome to the poet, whose romantic notions about prehistory were evolving daily. He now became convinced that the early Germanic peoples had maintained a sophisticated religious system, the evidence for which lay in one archaeologist’s theory of a “prehistoric Germanic consecration center.”⁵³

Meanwhile, Blunck worked on *Die Große Fahrt* (1934). This “historical” novel, as he called it, told of the pirate-turned-Germanic-savior, Diderik Pining, a northern German living in Iceland, who wants to settle North America for Icelandic, Lower-German, and Scandinavian peasants. According to a few questionable documents

that a Danish librarian brought to Blunck's attention, as well as the research of Gunnar Gunnarsson, an Icelander with whom the poet was friends, Pining had discovered the New World five years before Columbus. However, his discovery had been forgotten:

Deutschland kämpfte nicht mehr um fremde Welten, es vergoß jahrhundertelang sein Blut im Krieg der Fürsten und der Bekenntnisse. Es bewunderte Christoph Columbus und vergaß die Namen der eigenen Söhne [...]. Aber – leben wir für den Ruhm? Die Tat war unser.⁵⁴ (Germany no longer fought for foreign worlds; it let its own blood for centuries in the wars of the princes and the confessions. It admired Christopher Columbus, and forgot the names of its own sons [...]. But – do we live for glory? The discovery was ours.)

As one historian has written, the novel revealed Blunck's conviction that "a nation can only be rich and powerful if it has a strong navy and colonies at its disposal."⁵⁵ The imperial implications were not lost on the poet's readers. Furthermore, the novel's focus on establishing a socialist "utopia in exile" (i.e. in North America), composed of Nordic peasants, represented the specifically "Nazi inflection" that characterized *Blut und Boden* works at this time. According to Jost Hermand, "notions of the peasant-based colonization of new lands or of the racial breeding of the specifically Nordic elements still present within the German population were the most common organizing forces in such fictional settlements."⁵⁶

A month after Blunck became vice-chairman of the Poetry Section, the Insel Verlag in Leipzig agreed to publish *Die Große Fahrt* upon the novel's completion. With the proceeds from the contract, Blunck lightened his debts from the purchase of the Mölenhoff. As a gift to himself, he also took out a new loan and purchased a small adjoining forest, where he could gather firewood and hunt. Along with the publication of *Die Urvätersaga* trilogy, this success marked a dramatic turn around from his *de facto* ban, as he termed it, of only a year before. In a letter to Hesse, Blunck expressed his satisfaction, noting that, while he had achieved some successes during the period of Weimar, the reading public and the libraries had ignored him. Now, however, he was gaining the recognition for which he had waited so many years.⁵⁷

On September 22, 1933, Goebbels announced his new cultural organization: the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture, RKK). Dedicated to protecting, promoting, and professionalizing the arts, the RKK comprised six chambers: the Reich Chamber of Music (*Reichsmusikkammer*; RMK), the Reich Chamber of the Visual Arts (*Reichskammer der bildende Kunst*; RbDK), the Reich Chamber of the Theater (*Reichstheaterkammer*; RTK), the Reich Chamber of Film (*Reichsfilmkammer*; RFK), the Reich Chamber of the Press (*Reichspressekammer*; RPK), and the Reich Chamber of Literature (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*; RSK). Each was a massive professional union. All artists – and all workers in related industries – had to join the appropriate chamber. The chambers were responsible to the RKK, the umbrella organization, which was a subsidiary of Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. Therefore, each chamber was an auxiliary of the Propaganda Ministry, and Goebbels was president of the RKK. According to the RKK law, the chambers followed a precise formula:

Primacy of the spiritual, suppression of the economic, subjection to the law of the people's community by filling the cultural professions with a definite sense of responsibility to the nation, assembly of a class of spiritual leaders dedicated to the task of overcoming a falsely understood freedom in the exercise of their professions.⁵⁸

As anyone who read the law should have realized, the individual chambers had nothing to do with “freedom,” at least not in the traditional sense of the word.

Blunck's journey into Goebbels' new fiefdom began a month later. On November 10, 1933, he received an invitation from the *Reichsminister* to become president of the RSK. That this invitation was a surprise, as Blunck claimed, is unlikely.⁵⁹ In what seems to have been the poet's only documentable encounter with a Nazi chief before 1933, Goebbels had commented some two years before, during a meeting in Berlin, that one “foresaw a high position for [him] [...] in the coming Third Reich.”⁶⁰ However, Blunck had not been fishing for the position.⁶¹ At the time he was busy with *Die Große Fahrt*, and his first diary entry regarding the appointment was “niemals, die Gedichte sind wichtiger!” (never, the poems are more important!)⁶² Other comments also showed reluctance.⁶³ Even so, he caught the early train to Berlin the next morning and arrived in time for breakfast.

In Berlin, Blunck met with Johst, who asserted that it was the poet's duty to take the position.⁶⁴ Other colleagues also urged him to accept. Blunck then met with *Ministerialrat* Schmidt-Leonhardt, a Nazi official involved in the drafting of the RKK law. Schmidt-Leonhardt emphasized that the presidency of the RSK constituted "the highest honorary position that there was" and that Richard Strauss had accepted the presidency of the RMK.⁶⁵ The poet's desire for recognition was inspired, and he soon accepted the appointment. The position was "honorary" (i.e. unpaid), and Blunck declined a salary when *Staatsekretär* Funk offered him one sometime later.⁶⁶ In the years since his death, Blunck's relatives and friends have emphasized these points, going so far as to note that Blunck paid for his hotel rooms when on official business for the chamber in Berlin⁶⁷ – a detail that it has been difficult to confirm, although records show that he was reimbursed for at least some of his expenses related to the chamber.

On November 14, Blunck attended the RKK induction ceremony. As the festivities began, he spoke with other chamber leaders, including the composers Strauss and Hans Pfitzner, the conductor Leonard Furtwängler, and the painter Karl Hönl, who was president of the RdbK. After Furtwängler directed Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture, Goebbels gave what Blunck considered a superb speech about the return of poetic freedom (a witticism, given the massive purge of the art world that had just taken place).⁶⁸ The *Reichsminister* emphasized that the new RKK presidents had been called to assist the "Revolution" by creating a new "Volksgeist" (national spirit).⁶⁹ During Goebbels' address, Blunck observed Hitler with interest. The *Führer's* expressions – hard and determined at one moment, contemplative at another – mirrored Goebbels' remarks.

As did each chamber with regard to its respective genre, the RSK integrated all participants in the literary world, from writers to publishers, book promoters, bookstore employees, and librarians, into one corporation. The chamber included the *Börsenverein deutscher Buchhändler*, a union of booksellers, and the *Vereine der Buchhandlungsgehilfen und Reisenden*, a union of bookstore employees and traveling salesmen. However, at its core was the *Reichsverband der deutschen Schriftsteller* (RDS), a union of German writers.

Alan Steinweis's assertion that national corporations of artists from the Weimar period served as foundations for the various RKK chambers is relevant here, for this was the case with the RSK. After the *Machtergreifung*, the *Schutzverband der deutschen Schriftsteller* (which Blunck had left in 1932) had, like the Prussian Academy, been purged. At a meeting in March 1933, a group of nationally minded writers, led by Hanns Heinz Ewers, demanded "that the better part of the board of directors immediately declare their resignations."⁷⁰ The members acquiesced and appointed the ultra-nationalist newspaper columnist and member of the NSDAP, Götz Otto Stoffregen, as chairman, along with a number of other nationalist writers as members of the board.⁷¹ Shortly thereafter, the SDS was incorporated, along with other writers' unions that had arisen during Weimar (the *Verband Deutscher Erzähler*, the *Kartell lyrischer Autoren*, and the NDS), into the RDS, which was founded on June 11, 1933.⁷² In September, Statute #1 of the RKK Law's "Executive Order" declared the RDS a "Corporation of Public Law" with the title "Reich Literary Chamber" (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*). Along with the *Börsenverein deutscher Buchhändler* and the *Vereine der Buchhandlungsgehilfen und Reisenden*, the RDS thus became the RSK.⁷³

The RSK was a *Zwangsorganisation*, and membership was mandatory for anyone who wished to publish in Germany.⁷⁴ To gain admission, writers endured a thorough application process that required information about their political background, publications, income, and race. In addition, they needed two sponsors to vouch for their character, political trustworthiness, and professional "devotion."⁷⁵

According to his belief that the Nazis were now restoring the "old Reich," Blunck perceived the RSK as a guild, reminiscent of the professional corporations in medieval Lower Germany and the Hansa cities. *Hein Hoyer* (1920), in which the hero liberates the guilds from the Hamburg patricians, is relevant here, for Blunck looked on the RSK in a similarly heroic (and erroneous) light. Disregarding the exclusionary environment in which the RSK arose, he believed that, through the chamber, writers and poets were being liberated. They would now govern themselves cooperatively and present "responsible" literature to the nation:

The Chamber of Culture raises the groups of artists from the ranks of the people, and makes them self-governing. The duty of self-observation is also laid upon them. [Each chamber] is entrusted with the task of ordering the professional relations between its members and of assuming responsibility for their professional affairs. Each is invested with full legislative power.⁷⁶

Blunck convinced himself that this new relationship was to result in the cultural flowering of Germany's provinces, for provincial artists would no longer see the government in the capital as the enemy, but, on account of the independence it had granted them through the RSK, as an ally.

The RSK had a *Präsidialrat* ("central advisory committee" or "board of directors") and an administrative office. On the *Präsidialrat* sat Hanns Johst and Hans Grimm, the nationalist publisher Friedrich Oldenbourg, and the anti-Semitic writer and nationalist publisher Theodor Fritsch. For the administrative office, Blunck appointed a bureaucrat from the Propaganda Ministry,⁷⁷ Heinz Wismann, as chief administrator, and an old business acquaintance, Günther Haupt, as managing director.⁷⁸ On account of his experience at the Propaganda Ministry, Wismann "guaranteed the close linking of chamber and ministry policy" and was a concession to Goebbels.⁷⁹ At the same time, he was married to a Jew.⁸⁰ Haupt drew resentment from two camps: on the one hand from a group of Munich writers, "for whom he was too National Socialist"; on the other from "a group of young party members" who felt he was not National Socialist enough.⁸¹ The attacks on Haupt reflected the politically confusing environment in which the RSK arose.

The RSK had local branches in each of Germany's newly established *Gauen*. True to his belief in provincial autonomy, Blunck hoped that local writers with experience, rather than party zealots, would be appointed to the respective jurisdictions.⁸² However, RSK regulations limited his control over local selections, and just the party hacks he feared were appointed. Blunck nonetheless achieved a personal victory when, upon his recommendation, North Hannover, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein were joined into one *Gau* and named "Anglo-Saxony" (*Angelsachsen*), which underscored the region's ties to England.⁸³

The first meetings of the RSK's administration and *Präsidialrat* focused on mundane matters like office remodeling and the budget. With regard to dues, Blunck and the *Präsidialrat* instituted a system whereby writers, booksellers, and publishers paid a rate equal to 5% of their income tax, in contrast to the 10% suggested by Wismann and instituted by other chambers.⁸⁴

During the months that followed, the RSK moved on to more substantive initiatives. At Christmas 1933, the RSK distributed 100,000 marks to elderly and needy writers and poets. It did so through the *Notgemeinschaft*, which had been incorporated into the chamber. Blunck reviewed the artistic merits of writers under consideration and recommended many awardees himself, a number of them from Schleswig-Holstein.⁸⁵ He also acquired one million marks from the *Rundfunk*, which the RSK distributed to radio writers, who had been hard hit by the depression.

Blunck and his colleagues also took steps to establish old-age, sickness, and disability insurance for writers. The poet wanted an old-age insurance program that was voluntary. Otherwise, there would be an equalization of writing reminiscent of communism.⁸⁶ Mandatory insurance would burden Germany's hardest working poets, who might not want to contribute to the fund on account of their own sound financial circumstances.⁸⁷ Blunck's *Leitmotif* was moderation – enough assistance to help writers, but not enough to enslave them to the system. He was searching for the uniquely German form of “socialism” he had been interested in since university.

Blunck and his colleagues also sought to aid writers by increasing book sales. For Blunck, the book trade was Germany's most important industry. It involved hundreds of thousands of workers – from writers and poets to laborers and employees in binderies, printing factories, publishing houses, and bookstores. It also served to establish a national discourse among writers, politicians, scientists, and readers.⁸⁸ In the many letters he wrote to officials requesting subsidies for the book trade, Blunck invoked the National-Socialist spirit, for which, he argued, books were the best medium.⁸⁹

To improve book sales, Blunck and his associates launched myriad initiatives. From November 27 to December 6, 1933, the RSK ran a book exhibition, entitled “Ten Days of the German

Book,” at the Europa House in Berlin. The poet opened the exhibition with a speech calling for the inclusion of book subsidies in the *Winterhilfswerk*, because books were as critical to everyday life as daily bread.⁹⁰ Goebbels attended the exhibition, and Blunck convinced him to buy a number of books written by acquaintances.

Ich denke noch oft an die Führung Goebbels durch die Buchmesse. Seine schwarzen, vergnügten Augen, die eigentlich immer etwas Listig-Lustiges an sich haben, stehen mir vorm Sinn. Ist es jene Schelmerei eines großen Jungen, oder ist es das bedächtig Höfliche, das ihm so viele Freunde geworben hat? Ich sehe nur diesen charmanten Menschen, der eifrig all die Bücher betrachtet und sich kaum losreißen kann.⁹¹ (I still think often about accompanying Goebbels through the book fair. His black, contented eyes, which genuinely exhibit something cunningly amusing, remain in front of me. Is it the mischievousness of a great youth, or is it a well-conceived politeness that has won him so many friends? I see only a charming person, who wanders with zeal through all of the books and can barely tear himself away.)

Although friction existed from the beginning on some issues, the poet initially believed that he and Goebbels had similar views on the literary world. He also respected the minister’s intelligence and oratorical skills and would continue to do so after 1945. Following the “Ten Days of the German Book,” the RSK organized an annual Book Week. During this period, every German was “asked to examine his books and to buy whatever he [could] afford to improve his library.”⁹²

The incorporation of the literary industry now extended to bookstores. In the winter of 1933–34, the RSK decreed that “subordinate and small book establishments [join] into a common business organization that would allow for the stabilization of prices.”⁹³ This move reduced competition and provided a price basis for books. Moreover, the RSK founded a “Department of Book Trade Matters” (*Amt für buchhändlerische Gemeinschaftsarbeit*) in the *Börsenverein deutscher Buchhändler*. The purpose of this organization was to coordinate book marketing throughout the Reich.⁹⁴

Additionally, the RSK promoted book exports. In meetings at the RSK, it was argued that Germany had lost the conflict of 1914–18 on account of defeat in the “cultural war” that had preceded military hostilities. Blunck and his colleagues wanted to halt other

countries' cultural offensives before it was too late. In Swedish, Dutch, and Japanese universities, English had replaced German. In light of the language's Lower-German roots and of Blunck's hopes for a Germanic "federation," the spread of English was presumably not as bothersome as the spread of other languages. The problem was that England was not yet interested in this "federation," and therefore the English and German languages could not yet join in a Germanic partnership. In the Balkans, France and Italy were gaining cultural ground. Officials believed that a book-export offensive would revive German literature and the German language and pave the way for Germany's diplomatic return as a world power.⁹⁵ The offensive would also diminish the influence of emigré literature, which had gained the upper hand abroad since the *Machtergreifung*. Increased exports of contemporary German literature would demonstrate to the world that emigré literature was not "truly German" and that Germany's present literature was of unprecedented quality. Finally, Blunck and his associates argued that increased book exports would improve Germany's relationship with the ethnic Germans. As one RSK report noted:

It is essential for us, right away and on account of their resilient blood and spiritual bonds to the reawakening nation, to influence [Germans settlers] and to preserve them and their future generations. What can revive this tie more than a German book and their joy as a result of it!⁹⁶

Accordingly, Germany's two largest book-export institutions, the "German Book Exporter Cooperative" in Hamburg and the "German Publishers' Cooperative" in Berlin, formed an alliance with the RSK. With their help, Blunck persuaded the Foreign Ministry to institute an aggressive program: an across-the-board rebate of 25% on book exports to all European countries except France, which received an even higher discount of 30%.⁹⁷

Partnered with these programs was an effort to "educate" booksellers. Blunck believed that German literature had declined during Weimar because of "economic liberalism." Rather than sell "true" German culture, particularly provincial literature, booksellers had preferred the "best-seller" and the "mass book" – in other words, books that people enjoyed.⁹⁸ In order to remedy this ostensible

problem, Blunck proposed a *Schule des Jungbuchhandels* (School of the Young Booktrade), in which young booksellers would acquire an appreciation for traditional genres, a nationalist mindset, and a conservative worldview.⁹⁹ The plan moved quickly. In February 1934, Leipzig donated a building. Soon thereafter additional cities, the Reich government, and the book industry itself contributed funds. On April 11, 1934 Blunck inaugurated the school in Leipzig. The *Schule des Jungbuchhandels* demonstrated that not only writers, but also the literary industry itself had to reflect Germany's new spirit.¹⁰⁰ The school's curriculum emphasized "present-day literature" (meaning the works of acceptable writers still in Germany, like Blunck), the literature of the Middle Ages, the Classical period, and the Romantic era,¹⁰¹ and provincial literature, including that of Lower Germany and Schleswig-Holstein.

The reading public also had to cultivate a better understanding of "good" German literature. According to the chamber's records, the RSK reduced the number of "immoral," "anti-German," and "tastefully poor" books in circulation. In addition to pacifist, Marxist, and emigrant literature, books of the "city" genre, like Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, were targeted. So were "cheap," "mass" books, which often had erotic themes and lacked a "positive" (i.e. nationalist) message.

The elimination process was multifaceted. Prior to the RSK's inauguration, officials at the *Börsenverein deutscher Buchhändler* had removed books deemed objectionable from circulation. As Wismann commented, "we sought the service of the *Börsenverein deutscher Buchhändler* and had it simply take the books in question out of the market place [...]. It happened so thoroughly that thousands of books – it involves literally thousands – simply disappeared from the market place, without the public even realizing what had happened."¹⁰² Beginning in December 1933, the RSK participated in what was euphemized as a "revitalization" of German libraries, in which public libraries were taken "out of the liberal era" and "transformed into educational institutions for the nation."¹⁰³ First, library employees were enrolled in the RSK, but only those "who were pure [*sauber*]" and had demonstrated a clear, loyal inclination to work on behalf of the cultural aims of the new government were accepted."¹⁰⁴

In order to provide “a hygienic, unobjectionable condition of book material,”¹⁰⁵ the RSK then submitted lists to libraries of “undesirable books” that were to be removed.¹⁰⁶ Other government and party agencies issued lists of their own, resulting in confusing situations in which borrowers were able to acquire a book in one town but not in the next.¹⁰⁷ By April 1934, the process had become so chaotic that the RSK called a temporary halt to the so-called “revitalization,” so that “an educational and cultural factor of the greatest importance [i.e. libraries] would not be allowed to collapse.”¹⁰⁸ For Blunck, these secretive processes of elimination were, presumably, more acceptable than the book burnings in 1933, which, according to his testimony, had impugned his sensibilities.¹⁰⁹

Where necessary, the RSK helped replace the books that had been eliminated with traditional and provincial genres. “Good classic literature” meant works by Classicists and Romantics, like Schiller, Kleist, Herder, Goethe, Hoffmann, Tieck, and the Brothers Grimm. Classical and Romantic writers experienced a renaissance in Nazi Germany, although scholars tended to pick and choose among authors’ works, emphasizing those that fit best with National Socialist ideology.¹¹⁰ “Good contemporary German literature” meant works by neo-Romantic and provincial writers like Münchhausen and Blunck. According to testimony at his denazification trial, Blunck’s books were stocked in large numbers in libraries throughout Germany, which helped increase his book sales dramatically during this period.¹¹¹

In early 1934, Blunck introduced plans to open a small library in every German village, also to be filled with good “classic” and “contemporary” literature.¹¹² According to him, village libraries would allow farmers to fill their winter months with study and thus produce an educated class of farmers reminiscent of the farmer aristocracy in the sixteenth-century Dithmarschen. This new elite would form the backbone of his “conservative democracy,” based in the countryside rather than the cities.

In January 1934, Blunck also proposed a *Sprachpflegeteamt* (“Department of Language Cultivation”) to purify German by eliminating foreign words and strengthening traditional usage. He interested enough officials to gain funds for the department, and it

began work on December 3, 1934.¹¹³ Blunck's old friend Friedrichkarl Roedemeyer headed the department's advisory board (*Vertrauensrat*). As Roedemeyer had emphasized a year before:

I see my work in the professional field that has been granted to me to replace the completely degraded spoken language of the German people with the highest-quality language, that of the poet.¹¹⁴

Blunck himself believed that the "wirkliche Reinheit und Eigenwüchsigkeit unseres Volkes" (true purity and original growth of our *Volk*) demanded the protection of the German language, because "unsere Sprache [...] ist der Klang unserer Seele, sie ist der Widerklang unseres Blutes [...]" (our language [...] is the sound of our soul; it is the resonance of our blood [...]).¹¹⁵

The office's chief responsibility was to create German substitutes for foreign words. Representative was its recommendation that writers employ the word "*Verfasser*" instead of "*Autor*," which was a Latin/French derivation. In a memorandum, Blunck noted that, although "*Dichter*" (poet) and "*Schriftsteller*" (writer) were sometimes inaccurate, "*Autor*" was a poor substitute. "*Verfasser*," on the other hand, corresponded with the Scandinavian (i.e. Germanic) usage and was therefore appropriate.¹¹⁶ In addition, the *Sprachpflegeamt* compiled language guidelines for engineers, philosophers, philologists, musicians, the army, and the merchant marine.¹¹⁷ It also answered inquiries from ministries and departments about appropriate language for legislation, as well as from private businesses about words for advertising and publications. Blunck used the department himself to promote dialects, particularly in Lower Germany. In 1936, the office completed a series of dictionaries that for the first time established one written form of *Plattdeutsch* from among the various versions spoken in Lower Germany.¹¹⁸

Additional RSK projects included a special court to settle disagreements between writers and publishers, the creation of a standard contract between writers and publishers, and a four-week limit on how long publishing houses could review writers' manuscripts.¹¹⁹ If there were positive aspects to the RSK, they comprised these and other attempts to improve the status of writers who were willing to

toe the regime's ideological line and collaborate in the purging of their "racially" and ideologically unacceptable colleagues. However, as one historian has pointed out, in the end "it was hardly better for writers economically under National-Socialism than it was under the Weimar Republic."¹²⁰ With the drive towards rearmament that began in 1934, money for the RSK's projects grew increasingly scarce. The effort to provide insurance for writers disintegrated after Blunck left the RSK in 1935. So did subsidies and other assistance projects. As Werner Mittenzwei has noted, in the Third Reich there were organizations with tremendous influence, but "the Reich Literary Chamber was not one of them."¹²¹ By 1938, the chamber was a weak institution at best.

Blunck's own works sold in large numbers during the Third Reich. He experienced a substantial increase in income between 1933 and 1944, earning 98,585 marks in 1936 and just under 200,000 in 1943.¹²² His own memoirs underscore a poignant dichotomy between poor sales before 1933 and dramatic successes thereafter – a change in fortune that could not have been coincidental. Indeed, according to his own account, one evening in 1936 he received two generous offers for the publication of his complete works within the same hour.¹²³

Years later, Heinrich Mann noted that during the Third Reich "a massive propaganda was instituted on behalf of [Blunck's] works, and Mr. Blunck was able to sell colossal numbers of copies, which brought him huge sums, although his books were rarely actually read."¹²⁴ Some of the promotion seems to have stemmed directly from Blunck's official posts. After the poet gave a reading on behalf of the *Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler* in January 1934, for example, the guests, among whom were undoubtedly book merchants, were invited to view an exhibit of his works and purchase signed copies. As an official at the *Börsenverein* explained to Blunck, "we want [...] to show the development of your creativity from its beginning in the year 1912 to the present."¹²⁵ Other aspects of the promotion, however, were more indirect. In June 1933, before the poet became president of the RSK, Roedemeyer wrote from the University of Frankfurt that the "Rector of the students and others are now promoting [...] your work in an enormous way."¹²⁶ He added that an

effort was being made to bring contemporary writers, particularly “nationalist poets,” to the university for lectures and readings.¹²⁷

One would think that the poet’s successes were also tied, as Roedemeyer’s latter comment suggests, to the neo-romantic, nationalist atmosphere of the period, which served constantly to advertise the works of a Blunck. The problem with this conclusion is that Blunck’s literary triumphs, as well as those of other national-conservative writers who made similarly large sums, like Johst and Vesper, were the exception. In general, book sales declined during the Third Reich. As one historian has pointed out, the “production of first editions experienced a dramatic falling off” after 1933, the reason for which “lay in the increasing suppression of authors, which gradually destroyed literary fertility in the country.”¹²⁸ The repeated re-releases of the poet’s trilogies between 1933 and 1939 speak to this point, although he published no less than six new major works during the period.¹²⁹ Similarly, the types of books that the RSK promoted never achieved desired sales. As Theodor Fritsch of the *Präsidialrat* lamented in late 1934:

Over the last year it is true that we have forbidden and suppressed the books of Jews and liberals, but we have not succeeded in increasing the sales of good German books! That is a fact that cannot be denied. [...] [T]he German book finds fewer and fewer readers.¹³⁰

Fritsch’s comment supports the conclusion that during the Third Reich reading tastes remained consistent with Weimar patterns and that the literature of Nazi Germany never took hold among the reading public.¹³¹ His comment also confirms Marla Stone’s view of the reading public as an active participant in literary culture, no matter how dictatorial the regime.¹³² Reading tastes could not be forced upon the German masses. Furthermore, while exports of German books increased somewhat in 1934 and 1935, aside from scientific and technical works they stagnated thereafter. Foreign audiences had more appetite for *émigré* works than for those by Germany’s “contemporary” writers.

Similarly, Blunck’s plan for village libraries failed. In February 1934, the agricultural minister, Walther Darré, agreed in principle to establish village libraries with “good classic and modern German

literature.”¹³³ However, the promise remained unfulfilled. The *Sprachpflegeamt* also faltered. While Nazi officials banned books and publications of all kinds, they generally opposed eliminating foreign words. Doing so, they believed, would hinder the marketability of magazines and newspapers, which depended on ordinary German readers, not language purists like Blunck and Roedemeyer. The educational level and linguistic proficiency of most Nazis was poor. In officials’ eyes, improving the German language stank of reactionary elitism. Hitler himself grew angry at rumors that functionaries at the *Sprachpflegeamt* were mocking his German. As Blunck noted in his diary, the *Führer* smelled “Schulmeisterei” (schoolmaster snobbery) in the department.¹³⁴ Realizing that Hitler was not supportive, Goebbels turned against the *Sprachpflegeamt*.¹³⁵ The organization was transferred to the Ministry of the Interior but then dissolved.

Throughout 1934, there were also problems at the Academy. As Mittenzwei has pointed out, with the calling of Blunck to the RSK presidency, “Goebbels delivered a blow to the Academy,” because the poet “now held his membership in the Academy as a secondary position (i.e. subordinate to his post at the RSK).”¹³⁶ After accepting his position at the RSK, Blunck resigned as the Academy’s second chairman in order, as he explained to Goebbels, to be able to devote himself to the Literary Chamber.¹³⁷ However, he remained a senator in the Academy.

With self-justifying logic, Blunck believed that he was looking after the Academy’s interests:

Daß man den zweiten Vorsitzenden der Akademie [zu der Kammer] berief, war meines Erachtens als Ehrung der Akademie gedacht. Niemals hat man Gegensätze schaffen wollen [...]. Was von meiner Seite aus zu tun war, um die Interessen der Akademie wahrzunehmen, ist geschehen.¹³⁸ (The fact that the second chairman of the Academy was called to the chamber was, in my opinion, conceived out of respect for the Academy. Never did one want to create conflicts [...]. What I should have done to protect the interests of the Academy, I have done.)

Members of the Poetry Section disagreed. During 1934, they were experiencing increasing constraints on their literary freedom. The

Gestapo, for example, confiscated a collection by Gottfried Benn (who, on account of his *avant-garde* sympathies and radically Expressionist past, was never comfortable among Nazi *Literati*) from bookstores and prevented him from giving a speech.¹³⁹ A number of other members also were banned from giving speeches and readings.¹⁴⁰ In May 1934, Blunck complained to Goebbels' deputy at the RKK, Hans Hinkel, that obstinate officials without proper understanding of the new cultural environment were threatening Academy writers with censorship.¹⁴¹ According to Blunck, actions of this kind were inappropriate against the writers who had provided the cultural foundation for Germany's rebirth and thus spearheaded the "Revolution."¹⁴² However, the problems continued.

In his history of the Poetry Section, Mittenzwei has portrayed Blunck as an "unconditional party loyalist," who was antagonistic to the interests of the Academy.¹⁴³ Blunck did sympathize more with the Nazis than most, if not all, of his nationalist colleagues in the Poetry Section. Nonetheless, he was sensitive about having his tent in both the RSK and Academy. In February 1934, for example, he refused to hold a birthday celebration at the RSK in honor of one of the Poetry Section's members, Hermann Stehr, for fear that it would overshadow the Section's own festivities.¹⁴⁴ Blunck was in the last analysis a compromiser. In his own words, Johst and he were "einig darin, daß es nur das eine gibt: Reich und Führer und daß, wo sachliche Auseinandersetzungen einmal nötig sind, niemals anders als mit größter Ritterlichkeit diese Meinungsverschiedenheiten ausgeglichen werden dürfen" (firmly agreed that there is only one thing of importance, Reich and *Führer*, and that, where substantive disagreements are unavoidable, these differences in opinion could only be worked out with the highest chivalry).¹⁴⁵ Deluding himself on behalf of his fantasies about the "old Reich," the poet was the consummate collaborator.

The Academy itself was not immune to the consolidation process taking place in the cultural world. In 1934, members of the Poetry Section were presented with two options. First, the Academy could remain under Rust and the *Kultusministerium*; second, it could be transferred to the RKK and thus to Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. By 1934, Rust's promise had gone unfulfilled, and the "Prussian"

Academy had not been transformed into the “German” Academy. Nevertheless, most members still hoped, like Blunck, that it would be. Hence, there was a conundrum. A national Academy could not very well remain under the *Prussian* Cultural Ministry, which was the most prominent Prussian cultural holdover.¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, transfer to the Propaganda Ministry, a *Reich* organization, meant granting power to Goebbels, whom most Academy members disliked and feared.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, according to the second option, the Academy would be subordinate to the RKK and the RSK. If this alternative were chosen, a novice organization led by a novice member of the Academy (i.e. Blunck, whom most Academy members considered an opportunist¹⁴⁸) would rule.

Goebbels had a special interest in the Poetry Section. He considered himself a writer, as demonstrated in his novel *Michael* and his play *Der Wanderer*, both composed in the 1920s. However, he found it difficult to handle the established *Literati* of the Academy, who considered themselves superior to him and were not shy about letting him know it.¹⁴⁹ By subsuming the Poetry Section within the Propaganda Ministry, he planned to enfeeble this threat to his self-esteem. In contrast, Rust was eager to keep the Section under his own authority, for he needed the organization if he were to maintain his influence in literary affairs.

A three-year struggle between Rust and Goebbels unfolded in February 1934. During this period, complaints about censorship dominated meetings of the Poetry Section. Ever the conciliator, Blunck tried to alleviate his colleagues’ concerns. The problem was that Rust was weak. He had been appointed *Kultusminister* in 1933, principally because Hitler liked him and because he had briefly studied German literature, philosophy, and classical philology. In May 1934, at Hitler’s request, Rust became *Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung, und Volksbildung* (Reich Minister of Science and Education). Since this was a national post, Rust hoped that it would allow him to keep the Academy under his control. However, his position was still weaker than Goebbels’, and he was unable to turn the commission to his advantage. As the months wore on, Goebbels gradually took the upper hand.¹⁵⁰ However, rather than give in, Rust used his remaining

influence to delay a decision, much to the dismay of Blunck and other members who wanted the matter settled quickly.¹⁵¹

For the poet, however, problems at the Academy were secondary. Clinging to his illusion that the RSK was a professional corporation in the image of Lower Germany's ancient guilds, he was in the midst of a futile fight on behalf of the "self-government" that he believed he had been promised. The struggle centered on the chamber's ability to decide who could and could not join it.

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Chapter VII: Blunck's Troubles at the Chamber

At the RSK, a special department was responsible for admitting writers. Run by the former chairman of the RDS, Götz Otto Stoffregen, it constituted the residue of the RDS following the union's transformation into the RSK.¹ Blunck and his colleagues could recommend writers to the department's officials. However, at least in theory, these officials were the final arbiters on acceptances.² Every functionary close to the process, not least Blunck, was aware of the enormous significance of acceptance or denial by the chamber. As the poet emphasized in an early memo to the RSK's *Präsidialrat*, for the writers concerned rejection meant forced emigration, economic catastrophe, and the destruction of civic life.³

After the *Machtergreifung*, expulsions and imprisonments of German Jews had occurred. Many of Germany's greatest Jewish authors had left the country. Nonetheless, when Blunck became RSK president, there was no "Aryan paragraph" in the RKK statutes, and Jews were still permitted in the chamber, at least in limited numbers. As the poet advised admissions officials, "[d]er Anteil der nicht-aryischen Schriftsteller, der [...] auf 5–7% eingeschätzt wird, soll sich ungefähr im gleichen Verhältnis halten" (the number of non-aryan writers, which has been estimated to be 5–7%, should be held approximately to the same proportion) in the RSK.⁴ However, the absence of an Aryan paragraph in the RKK law had been a gesture to chamber luminaries like Richard Strauss, who worked with Jewish artists. The omission was also based on international considerations. In a speech before the *Kulturkammer* in February 1934, little more than two months after the RSK's inauguration, Goebbels suggested a change in policy. He asserted that "Jewish contemporaries [*Zeitgenossen*] are in general incapable of managing Germany's cultural riches."⁵ Because there was still no "Aryan-paragraph" in the RKK law, Jews could still, theoretically, be admitted after this speech. However, as Goebbels had suggested, Jewish admission contradicted his hardening line. Afterwards, Blunck and his colleagues recommended only select Jews, whom they deemed exceptional on account

of “special (i.e. nationalist) service” to German writing or bravery in the war, and Jews who were in dire straits on account of their extended age.

In Blunck’s RSK records, there are at least a dozen discernible examples of his engagement on behalf of such Jews. Three should suffice as evidence. The first involved the Jewish writer and journalist Ludwig Heilbronn. Two weeks after the RSK’s inauguration, Heilbronn wrote Blunck explaining that his articles and essays were being turned down for publication because he was a half-Jew. Heilbronn emphasized that he had always “breathed true Germanism” and, in 1919, had been “beaten half dead” by a group of Social Democrats on account of his nationalist sympathies. He had considered applying to the RSK, but did not want to submit himself to a degrading, futile process.⁶ Believing that Heilbronn was worthy, Blunck asked to review his literary work and career. In late February 1934, he recommended Heilbronn to admissions officials as an exemplary nationalist, whose work he knew personally.⁷ Presumably with the help of this recommendation, Heilbronn soon received membership in the RSK. Afterwards, he thanked Blunck for his “compassionate engagement in my case.”⁸

A second example involved the writer and music critic Oscar Bie. At the end of June 1934, Richard Strauss wrote Blunck explaining that Bie was a “fighter on behalf of serious music.”⁹ Nonetheless, the seventy-year-old Bie, whose wife was sick, had been forced out of his job as a magazine critic. Strauss explained that Bie had applied for membership in the RSK, but remained without an answer. The composer asked Blunck “to do something for him, either to give him a little pension of 299 marks per month or a worthy occupation that could provide his necessary livelihood.”¹⁰ On account of Strauss’s recommendation, Blunck advised admission officials to grant Bie at least provisional membership.¹¹ According to a notation he made on Strauss’s letter, Dr. Bie was immediately accepted into the RSK.¹²

The final example occurred in July 1935, when Rudolf Binding asked Blunck to help the Jewish writer Anton Mayer gain entry to the RSK. In his appeal, Binding engaged Blunck’s literary tastes:

First of all, this Anton Mayer is capable of something that we recognize: he can write, namely, accessible books that express strong national feeling. His *Reiterroman* about Seydlitz, his presentation of the history of German sea faring, also his novel about Mozart belong among these. They are not written out of opportunistic reasons on account of the new atmosphere, but out of a completely natural, honorably German way of thinking, as one would expect from someone who had fought on the front line and was once an active officer.¹³

Blunck spoke about Mayer with Haupt and Wismann, who agreed that the writer was worth helping. He then met with Binding to learn more about the case. After Blunck interceded with admissions officials, Mayer was accepted to the chamber.

The poet's assistance to select Jews was not unique. During the same period, the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler helped a number of Jewish musicians he considered exceptionally talented, as did Strauss. In the first months following Hitler's appointment as chancellor, President Hindenburg himself had famously condemned Nazi treatment of Jews when it came to war veterans, forcing a retreat by the Nazis. While there were numerous Germans willing to complain about the treatment of certain "acceptable" Jews, there were, however, far fewer willing to condemn Nazi anti-semitic policies *in toto*. On the contrary, as Robert Gellately has shown in his recent work *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*, many Germans, not least artists, proved receptive to the Nazis' exclusionary policies when it came to the Jews.¹⁴

Needless to say, since Blunck was now tied to arguably the most egregious purge of writers in history, he was unwilling to help many more Jewish writers than he was willing to assist. In April 1935, for example, he turned his back on the Jewish writer Reuss Löwenstein. Although Löwenstein had served in the war, he had never written books of value.¹⁵ Only a few weeks before, Hans Grimm and Börries von Münchhausen asked Blunck to help their friend Paul Landau. The poet responded curtly, noting only that officials had denied Landau's application and that he could not further elaborate because he was in a hurry.¹⁶ Although he had misgivings about the treatment of certain nationalist and elderly writers, Blunck generally condoned the cleansing of the cultural realm when it came to the Jews. After at-

tending a play in Hamburg in November 1934, he commented that, since the departure of the

im übrigen nicht unsympathischen jüdischen Kräfte in der Leitung des Stadttheaters doch ein wesentlich höheres Niveau erreicht wurde. Eine Aufführung, wie ich sie in Hamburg noch nicht gesehen habe (otherwise not unpleasant Jewish forces in the management of the *Stadttheater*, an essentially higher level was reached. The performance was of a quality that I have never seen before).¹⁷

Several years later, after viewing a performance in Berlin of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, he contemplated the supposed richness of Germany's new cultural life: "Welcher Unterschied gegenüber der einst jüdisch-bunten Theatergesellschaft!"¹⁸ (What a difference compared with the once Jewish-colorful theater society!)

The attitude of Blunck and his colleagues to the admission of "Aryan" writers was more generous, though not dissimilar. As the poet wrote with regard to non-Jews in January 1934:

In der Präsidialratsitzung [...] ist die Frage der Aufnahme sehr eingehend behandelt worden. Die Herren haben sich auf den Standpunkt gestellt, [...] daß die Kammer, solange keine besondere gesetzliche Regelung eintritt, als ständische Vertretung Ausschuß nur bei unehrenhafter Gesinnung habe.¹⁹ (The question of acceptances was carefully discussed at the gathering of the central advisory committee. The members have agreed on this position: that the chamber, so long as there are no changes in the law, should only regard dishonorable behavior as preventing acceptance.)

The question, of course, was what constituted "dishonorable" behavior.

The divergent cases of Waldemar von Grumbkow, a poet and lyricist who had been honored for bravery in the War, and Otto Bernhard Wendler, a playwright, novelist, and writer of childrens' books who, in contrast to Grumbkow, had been a pacifist, were instructive. In December 1933, Grumbkow was removed from the RSK on account of his former ties to the Social Democrats. In response, Grumbkow's publisher, Kühnemann, assured Blunck that Grumbkow was a lyricist of the highest quality and could be trusted to support Germany's new literary environment. Convinced that

Grumbkow could be rehabilitated, Blunck asked Stoffregen to reconsider the case. He stressed that prior membership in the SPD did not necessarily signify rejection from the RSK, only anti-state work after Hitler's appointment as chancellor or "truly dishonorable" behavior before 1933.²⁰ Soon thereafter, Grumbkow was re-admitted to the RSK.

The following month, Wendler was dismissed from the chamber. He too appealed to Blunck and emphasized that, if the poet considered his complete literary work, he would understand that there "could be a meaningful place for him in the contemporary literary scene."²¹ Wendler requested a personal meeting with Blunck to discuss his case. However, the poet never responded, and Wendler was never re-admitted to the RSK. Wendler's pacifism presumably rendered him beyond the pale. In a similar case a month later, Blunck began helping the writer Josef Breitbach gain entry, but stopped when he learned that Breitbach was connected to French propaganda and had written books friendly to the French position on the War.²² In the poet's mind, pacifism or connection to French propaganda were "dishonorable." In contrast, bravery in the War merited assistance.

There were borderline (Blunck used the term "zweifelhaft") cases. Here, the writer in question served a term of probation. Over a one-year period, he or she was allowed to continue publishing, even in the press. However, since final acceptance into the chamber was in doubt, the writer would, Blunck assured his colleagues, take the "höchster Sorgfalt" (utmost care) with his or her work, aware that he or she was under constant observation. At the end of the trial period, a decision regarding final acceptance would be made.²³ The hope, of course, was that the writer in question would have begun producing genuinely "honorable" work by this time.

In the long run, however, it was neither up to Blunck nor anyone else at the RSK, including its own admissions officials, to decide who could remain in the chamber, for the chamber was never, as Blunck imagined, "self-governing."²⁴ The "functionalist" interpretation of the Nazi government as decentralized applies here. Within the Third Reich, a web – or "jungle," as one historian has referred to the literary environment – of ministries, ministers, newspapers, journals, and

low-level functionaries vied for control over writers and literary policy.²⁵ Blunck's tenure at the RSK represented a vain attempt to spin in this web.

From the outset, low-level functionaries, or "little Hitlers," as Blunck referred to them, attacked the political credentials of Blunck and his colleagues. Many of the attacks came from local RSK agencies, which, in about a half of cases, were run by avid Nazis loyal to Alfred Rosenberg or Goebbels.²⁶ Even when local RSK units were loyal to Blunck, they were weak. As Mittenzwei has noted, local agencies "functioned practically not at all."²⁷ Will Vesper, who ran the RSK branches in Saxony, considered them only organizations on paper.²⁸ Funds were insufficient and communication poor. One writer commented to Blunck that he and his colleagues felt like they had been "left hanging in the wind."²⁹

In collecting dues, organizing the insurance program, and instituting regulations for departments like the *Sprachpflegeamt*, the RSK's "central authority" was ineffective outside of Berlin. This was especially the case in Blunck's hometown of Hamburg, where the enmity of the 1931 "anti-Blunck" episode remained strong. After the poet became president of the RSK, Robert Walter prostrated himself and apologized effusively for his earlier behavior – a sign that Blunck's judgment of his character was accurate.³⁰ Moreover, Johannes Tralow was imprisoned shortly after the Nazi seizure of power.³¹ However, other participants in the cabal remained active. They were irreverent and avoided Blunck when he visited Hamburg. To this extent, Blunck paradoxically got his wish for Lower-German autonomy.

There were also problems with journals, newspapers, and publishers. In letters to Blunck, one writer complained that, even though he was a member of the RSK, he could not publish, because various magazines and newspapers, particularly the *Völkischer Beobachter*, had designated him as "undesirable."³² A month after being admitted to the RSK, Ludwig Heilbronn griped that "my membership in the RSK has done almost nothing for me. I am receiving denials, returns of my work based on my so-called non-aryan origin. Despite the fact that I have clearly noted my membership in the RSK on all my correspondence, my field of work is growing smaller and smaller, my

income less and less.”³³ As these cases demonstrated, the publishing world produced *de facto* bans of writers, regardless of whether they were members of the RSK.

The Gestapo also constituted a problem. In January 1934, agents in Hamburg impounded copies of the journal, *Die literarische Welt*, on account of a few loose words by its editor, Karl Rauch, with whom Blunck was friendly. On Rauch’s behalf, the poet complained to Goebbels. He emphasized that RKK regulations granted the RSK full autonomy in literary matters; therefore, the Gestapo was acting unlawfully. He also stressed that *Die literarische Welt* was a vital international medium:

[D]urch die Zeitschrift und zwar gerade durch ihre scheinbar kritische Stellung drüben eine offene Stimmung für die Bücher des neuen Deutschland und ein Erstaunen über die Meinungsfreiheit im neuen Deutschland wachgerufen wurde, die wir nicht unterschätzen dürfen.³⁴ ([T]hrough the magazine and directly through its apparently critical position abroad, an open climate for the books of the new Germany and astonishment about the independence of opinion in the new Germany were created, which we should not undervalue.)

Whether Goebbels acted upon Blunck’s complaint cannot be ascertained. However, the *Reichsminister* could probably not have halted the Gestapo even had he wanted to, since the secret police was under the jurisdiction of other Nazi cronies like Hermann Goering and Heinrich Himmler.

The conflicts continued. Early the next year, the Gestapo confiscated copies of *American Tragedy* and *The Genius* by the American writer Theodore Dreiser. The novels’ brothel scenes had disturbed certain agents.³⁵ The following spring, Blunck was about to appoint Jules Romains as a judge for the German-French prize, when the Gestapo banned Romains’ *Le Dieu des Corps*, which had recently been published in German, on “moral grounds.”³⁶ At Blunck’s request, officials at the RSK compared the French and German versions to see if the translation could be manipulated to assuage the Gestapo’s concerns. However, “removal of the ‘dangerous’ passages,” they concluded, “would ruin the whole novel.”³⁷ Blunck politely explained the situation to Romains and appointed another judge.

The non-political police also interfered in RSK matters. In January 1934, Blunck complained to Goebbels that the book trade was being hindered by local police authorities, who were making decisions of their own with regard to political and moral content.³⁸ In this instance, Goebbels acted:

Through a decree of the Reich Minister for Enlightenment and Propaganda of March 7, 1934, the Reich Literary Chamber was given the prerogative of being consulted about book censorship and confiscation by the Police President and the State Police. The work that goes along with this new duty is a great burden on the business of the chamber, but was unavoidable if we are going to institute a cultural politics of decisiveness. In a slew of cases, it was demonstrated that the ideas of police bureaus ran contrary to the views that have been promoted in the political and cultural fight of the new Germany for a change in way of life and our common morality. Negotiations with the chamber over book prohibitions will lead to firm policies that will be made clear to the police bureaus.³⁹

At the end of 1934, the RSK was being consulted in some 75% of police confiscations.⁴⁰ Still, a large number of confiscations were left to local police whims. As Wismann complained,

we continue to be amazed by confiscations that occur here and there in the country, without us being able to take a position on the matter [...]. The instances are in many cases exceptionally laughable.⁴¹

Difficulties with the “little Hitlers,” publications, the *Gestapo*, and the non-political police paled in comparison to Blunck’s struggle with the true denizens of the Nazi literary world, Rosenberg and Goebbels. Jonathan Petropoulos’s argument regarding the hardening of attitudes to art during the period of Nazi rule is pertinent here. During Blunck’s presidency of the RSK, as Rosenberg and Goebbels vied for literary hegemony, views of “acceptable” writers and literature experienced corresponding changes.

A vehement promoter of *völkisch* genres, Rosenberg was, among leading Nazis, the most radical in his approach to censorship. The idea that writing would be left to writers, as Blunck fantasized, was anathema to him.⁴² Rosenberg had a number of organizations with which to defend his position. Through negative reviews, the refusal

of articles, and scathing editorials against publishers who dispersed “undesirable” literature, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, which he edited, prevented unwanted writers from reaching a wide audience. More meddlesome was the *Kampfbund der deutschen Kultur* (KfdK; *Kampfbund*), a Nazi, *völkisch* organization with appendages for all of the major arts, which Rosenberg had formed in the late 1920s to spearhead the cultural “revolution.” Blunck had been invited to join the organization in 1932, but had not completed the application process. He did not necessarily disagree with the organization’s aims; on the contrary, in a letter explaining his decision not to follow through, he insisted that his novella “*Ritt gegen Morgen*” had been “eines der ersten nationalsozialistischen Bücher” (one of the first National Socialist books) and that his and the party’s goals had been the same for twenty years.⁴³ For him, however, the *Kampfbund* was too political. This decision was typical of Blunck, who liked to think of himself as a “non-political” poet, even when he was engaged in politically charged cultural affairs. As long as a cultural organization had no *formal* political affiliation, Blunck convinced himself that it was “unpolitical.” The problem with the *Kampfbund* was that it was associated with the Nazi party.

In the 1920s and the 1930s, the line between cultural and political affairs was blurred. Blunck was nonetheless not alone in his refusal to acknowledge this point. Furtwängler, who conducted throughout the 1930s, even at Hitler’s birthday, refused to heed the admonitions of his colleagues abroad that he cease conducting in Germany, and supported Nazi artistic policies when it came to eliminating “trash” from the musical world, also considered himself apolitical.⁴⁴ In Furtwängler’s own words, “[a]rt has nothing to do with power politics, with war, with anything that arises from hatred among nations and spreads it. Art stands above these conflicts.”⁴⁵ However, it was pushing the bounds of naiveté to believe that remaining the foremost conductor of Wagner, himself a wicked anti-semitic and political activist, in the atmosphere of Nazi Germany was empty of political implications. Art was politics in the Third Reich, as it had been during the period of German unification when Wagner’s Bayreuth celebrations became symbols of German unity. Traditional art – and particularly the great German classicists and romantics

preferred and emulated by the likes of a Blunck or Furtwängler – were used by the regime to improve its image among the public and win support for radical policies. Therefore, those artists, like Blunck and Furtwängler, who continued to promote, perform, or produce traditional genres were involved in politics, regardless of whether “formal” ties to political organizations existed or not.

From the beginning of the Third Reich, Rosenberg used the *Kampfbund* to destroy literary institutions from the Weimar period, a path of destruction that intensified after the RSK’s inauguration. As Will Vesper complained to Blunck, “the old organizations, literary societies, and so on are almost all destroyed, some with justice, some without justice. The *Kampfbund*, which throws its influence everywhere, achieves almost nowhere anything of worth.”⁴⁶ By early 1934, the *Kampfbund* had limited the old lecture circuit, which had been writers’ bread and butter, to schools, the *Nationalsozialistischer Lehrer Bund*, the Hitler Youth, and workers’ organizations – hardly enough venues to support writers.

The *Kampfbund*’s literary power was centered in its subsidiary, the *Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums* (“Reich Department for the Advancement of German Writing”). Along with the *Kampfbund*, the *Reichsstelle* had originated in the late 1920s, when Rosenberg assembled *völkisch* writers and poets in the *Kampfbund*. Through its infamous “black lists” of forbidden books, which had first been distributed in the spring of 1933, the *Reichsstelle* had played a major role in the book burnings that May.

Blunck’s struggle with the *Reichsstelle* began little more than a week after he became president of the RSK. At the end of November 1933, the *Reichsstelle* prevented the East Prussian novelist Ernst Wiechert, who was a member of the “Nordic Society” and famous for his *völkisch* tales, from making a lecture trip to his home in Königsberg. His “statements about the Third Reich” were allegedly “anything but convincing and precise.”⁴⁷ Then, the *Reichsstelle* began closing bookstores that sold works by “decadent writers” like Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, and Gerhart Hauptmann, all of whom, on account of their world renown, Blunck deemed essential to Germany’s international literary standing. Peter Suhrkamp – the new “Aryan” president of the famous Fischer Verlag (he had re-

placed the Jewish chief) – complained to Blunck about the effort to ban writers like Mann. The poet advised Suhrkamp to be patient and stomach the vulgarities; “in einigen Jahren werde manches anders aussehen” (a lot will appear different in a few years), he assured the publisher.⁴⁸ At the same time, Blunck did his best to ensure that Mann’s works continued to be sold in Germany and, to this end, eased Mann’s enrollment into the RSK from Switzerland.⁴⁹ The poet was nonetheless disappointed when Mann refused to declare his loyalty to the chamber. He hoped that Mann “zu seinen alten Freunden wieder Vertrauen faßte” (would again establish trust with his old friends).⁵⁰

In February 1934, the *Reichsstelle* published another “black list” and demanded that the RSK endorse the roster.⁵¹ Since 1945, Blunck’s defenders have made much of his “considerable opposition” to Rosenberg’s black lists.⁵² At this time, the poet and his administration did deny Rosenberg’s request. However, according to RSK minutes, they did so first and foremost according to the conviction that the list only “provided new nourishment to foreign propaganda” and infringed on RSK autonomy, not that the list was wrong in and of itself.⁵³ The *Reichsstelle* published the list anyway. Bookstores, booksellers, and publishers removed writers on the list from circulation, regardless of whether the writers were members of the RSK.

At the end of January 1934, Hitler endowed Rosenberg with responsibility for “the intellectual and ideological formation and education of the party.”⁵⁴ This appointment acknowledged Rosenberg’s rightful authority over political literature and fired his ego.⁵⁵ In the *Völkischer Beobachter*, he planted articles highlighting Blunck’s “democratic” past. In addition, he removed the poet, along with Goebbels, from the *Reichsstelle*’s list of recommended writers.⁵⁶ Rosenberg’s deputy at the *Reichsstelle*, Hans Hagemeyer, also made a nuisance of himself. He got into shouting matches with Wismann and campaigned against the RSK behind Blunck’s back.⁵⁷ The poet complained that Hagemeyer could not be trusted.⁵⁸

Characteristically, Blunck nonetheless sought rapprochement. One compromise he envisioned would have divided the *Reichsstelle* into two independent organizations, the first to deal with creative writ-

ing and be led by an appointee from the RSK, the second to deal with “political literature” and be led by an appointee from the *Reichsstelle*.⁵⁹ However, before negotiations bore fruit, Rosenberg asserted in the *Völkischer Beobachter* that the *Reichsstelle* was responsible for all forms of literature and that RSK membership in no way guaranteed publishing rights.⁶⁰ In response, Blunck begged Goebbels to reign in Rosenberg and clarify the matter:

Einer der drei Grundgedanken des Kulturkammer-Gesetzes war die Auflage an das Schrifttum, im Rahmen der ständischen Gliederung selbst weitergehend als bisher Aufsicht und Beobachtung des Schaffens der Mitglieder zu übernehmen.⁶¹ (One of the three basic ways of thinking in the RKK law was to require writing, in the realm of corporate membership, more than ever before to take responsibility itself for the supervision and observation of its members’ work.)

Goebbels did nothing. Hitler’s endowment of Rosenberg with responsibility for “the intellectual and ideological formation and education of the party” had signaled the strengthening of Rosenberg’s hand. Over the next year, the *Reichsstelle* grew in stature. In mid-1934, Wismann received a position on the *Reichsstelle*’s board, but this appointment had no real meaning. By 1937, the *Reichsstelle* had a staff of more than 1,400 professional “readers” at the *Reich*, *Gau*, and *Kreis* levels.⁶² These censors denied publication rights to members of the RSK at an increasing rate, and the RSK became subordinate.⁶³

Blunck’s troubles with Goebbels also began early in his presidency. A week after the RSK’s inauguration, the *Reichsminister* warned that Blunck “should behave like a representative of literature; one should receive the impression of the essentiality of your art from you. Where you appear and how you appear is decisive for the appearance of literature.”⁶⁴ Shortly thereafter, Blunck reminded himself that he had to maintain discipline in his speeches and make sure that they closely followed Goebbels’ and Hitler’s addresses.⁶⁵ Such comments stemmed at least in part from the poet’s tendency to be loose with his words. During an interview in Denmark shortly after his appointment to the RSK, for example, he noted that the RSK recommended deserving books regardless of whether they were written by National Socialists or Communists.⁶⁶ The reference to Communists was unac-

ceptable to Nazi censors. In an official report describing the visit, the statement was credited to the Danish translator's insufficient command of German.

Goebbels' concerns were also inspired by rumors first raised by the *Heimat* literat Adolf Bartels and promoted by Rosenberg. Among the rumors were stories that Blunck was a Jew-lover, a democrat, and a freemason.⁶⁷ In January 1934, news of the poet's endorsement of the "anti-fascist" pact in 1929 also made the rounds. There is no record of a meeting between Goebbels and Blunck where the rumors were addressed. Nonetheless, it can be presumed that one took place. Since he had recently articulated this stance in his lecture and essay "*Deutsche Kulturpolitik*," the poet would have explained to Goebbels that he had seen the "anti-fascist" pact as a demonstration against Italian fascism, not National Socialism, which he deemed a northern form of conservative government. He also would have protested against the other rumors, emphasizing that he had never been a member of the Democratic Party.

Accusations like those against Blunck were commonplace in the political feeding frenzy that was the early years of the Third Reich. Goebbels appears to have recognized this point, but he nonetheless let the poet know that he was watching him. In June 1934, the *Reichsminister* also organized a literary department of his own in the Propaganda Ministry. This was the *Schrifttumsstelle* ("Literary Department"). The agency's ostensible purpose was to deal with political books. In this sense, it represented a response to the activities of Rosenberg and his *Reichsstelle*. As a concession to Blunck, Goebbels appointed Wismann as head of the department. However, Goebbels otherwise filled the *Schrifttumsstelle* with party stalwarts.⁶⁸ Within weeks of its establishment, the department began banning literature of all kinds. Wismann claimed that the organization was ignoring him.

At a meeting in November 1934, Goebbels invited Blunck to join the party. He explained that membership would immunize him against further attacks. Blunck refused.⁶⁹ However, as with regard to the *Kampfbund*, the poet did so not because he necessarily disagreed with the principles of the party, but because direct political affiliations were unsuitable, as far as he was concerned, for a poet. Later the

same day, Blunck and Goebbels addressed a giant celebration “commemorating the German book” at the Berlin *Sportpalast*. Their speeches illuminated the growing rift between them. Blunck praised the “Bedeutung der Dichtung für die innere Läuterung und Füllung der Feierstunde hin” (meaning of poetry for inner purification and the fulfillment of the evening hours). He also stressed “die völkerverbindende Aufgabe der Künste, die Aufgabe des Wettbewerbs der Geister und das Größte, was sie den Menschen zu geben hätten: Erschütterung und Erhebung” (the task of art to promote national unification, as well as the goal of competition among intellectuals, so that they could give the greatest thing they had to the people: emotion and encouragement).⁷⁰ According to his diary, he received applause throughout his speech and thought he had been a success.

However, in remarks that followed, Goebbels suggested that accomplishments in the literary world were unsatisfactory. Contending that more political writers were needed to guide the German people to National Socialism, he emphasized that Germany’s poets needed to be “born” before they could achieve true success, an apparent reference to the poet’s refusal to join the party.⁷¹ The applause for Goebbels’ speech dwarfed that for Blunck’s. The next day, the poet asked Goebbels “höflich aber sehr aufrichtig” (politely, but very directly) about their differences in opinion.⁷² Goebbels responded that Blunck should think nothing of the day before, but hinted that “whether the poets of today are suitable or not will be seen in the future.”⁷³

According to his memoirs, which seem accurate here since his actions were self-defeating, Blunck now changed course. At the end of 1934, in response to an order from the Propaganda Ministry that called for a “reshuffling” of RSK personnel, he hired a number of party loyalists. To the post of business manager, held by Dr. Haupt, he added an old party stalwart, the Austrian historian Richard Suchenwirth.⁷⁴ Although Suchenwirth was a passionate speaker, he was a hopeless administrator.⁷⁵ However, he brightened the RSK’s image among party members, and attacks on Blunck grew less frequent. Christian Jenssen complained that the appointments reeked of opportunism and party cronyism.⁷⁶ The poet replied that the party fear-

ed reactionaries, which justified placing trusted fighters in the ranks of the RSK.⁷⁷

At the same time, local RSK branches instituted purges at the behest of the Propaganda Ministry, although Blunck had little to do with this process on account of his powerlessness outside of Berlin. Applegate's point regarding how Nazi rule destroyed local autonomy applies here, for with the local purges the Nazis' centralization campaign went into high gear.⁷⁸ The process caused much dismay among local officials. As one local representative lamented, "it has not been easy for me to pass on this order, because of the four leaders in our *Gau*, three are not party members. The order, which notes repeatedly that as many posts as possible should be held by party members, can only be injurious to non-party members, who have worked so very hard in their positions."⁷⁹ In light of the fact that Blunck had spent the better part of his life fighting for provincial autonomy, his passive complicity as local officials were purged was hypocritical. Ordered by the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin, the purges smacked of the "Berlin Center's" refusal to acknowledge regional independence during the late 1920s. It was now clear that the regional cultural freedom for which the poet hoped was not going to materialize. He disregarded this fact. Indeed, at the end of 1934 he published an abbreviated, decorative retelling of the *Nibelungenlied*, which symbolized the dawn of a "heroic" Reich in the image of medieval lore.⁸⁰

Although Blunck's image improved in Goebbels' eyes after the purges, the improvement was only temporary. During the next nine months, three issues combined to render the poet's presidency unacceptable to the *Reichsminister*. In December 1934, as if driven by guilt at his complicity in the local purges, Blunck framed a plan for "writers' parliaments" in each *Gau*, in which writers would help formulate local literary policy.⁸¹ To this end, he appointed Will Vesper as head of the RSK's *Landesleitung*. He also had Wismann make preparations to place an RSK representative in each *Gau* to improve communications between Berlin and local RSK offices. Directly responsible to the RSK president, this representative was to help Blunck circumvent the "little Hitlers," who now staffed RSK units in large numbers. However, the poet's plan was anathema to Goebbels;

so-called “democratic” assemblies (though one can hardly be sure they would have been such, at least not in the traditional sense of the word, given Blunck’s peculiar understanding of “democracy”) would have undermined the local purges the minister had just instituted. Citing RKK guidelines, he told the poet to forget the idea. Blunck obeyed. In publications, the poet continued to exalt the RSK’s supposed freedom,⁸² and colleagues like Hans Grimm criticized him for this lie. In his diaries, however, he noted that he was very depressed: “die Hemmungen, die sich mir entgegenstellen, die Enttäuschungen sind oft nicht mehr erträglich” (the restraints that are being forced upon me, the disappointments are often no longer bearable).⁸³ Meanwhile, the increasing and (at least formally) unpaid time Blunck was devoting to the RSK was grating on him. A disconnect between private gripes and public adulation of the regime characterized his behavior, beginning at this time.

The second issue involved RSK finances, which were in a shambles. Day-to-day operations were supposed to be funded by writers’ contributions. However, the dues were insufficient.⁸⁴ Since a rise in fees violated Blunck’s conception of the RSK as a financial aid to writers, he wanted to cut costs.⁸⁵ In contrast, Goebbels wanted to raise the RSK’s dues to levels commensurate with those of other RKK chambers.⁸⁶ In the spring of 1935, without consulting Blunck, Goebbels had Wismann triple the dues.⁸⁷ The increase forced some members to resign, and the RSK’s offices were inundated with disgruntled writers. Blunck was thus placed in a difficult position, for he had condemned the *Schutzverband* in 1931 for raising its dues. As he noted to Wismann, the words he had used against the *Schutzverband* resembled those being hurled against the RSK.⁸⁸

Blunck now considered leaving the chamber. However, he convinced himself that his resignation would be an “undisziplinierte Handlung” (undisciplined move) and appear “im Ausland als Demonstration gegen die Regierung” (abroad as a demonstration against the government).⁸⁹ Although frustrated, he clung to his romantic notions and remained, publicly, steadfast in his support of the regime. In the aftermath of the dues increase, he secured amendments to the payment scale that rendered the system fairer for lower-income writers.⁹⁰

The third issue involved Blunck's treatment of select Jews. Although Goebbels' call in February 1934 for the elimination of Jews from the cultural world had been earnest, the *Reichsminister* tended to ignore the occasional Jewish writer who appeared at the RSK's activities. However, Rosenberg's growing stature radicalized literary politics. As the *Reichsstelle's* power increased, complaints about Blunck's "anti-German" treatment of certain Jews reached Goebbels' office. Most of the complaints came from Rosenberg, who was on the alert for negative information about Blunck, or from the Gestapo and SD, which monitored some of Blunck's mail and telephone conversations.⁹¹ Goebbels' attitude darkened. In February 1935 he assumed informal oversight over RSK admissions himself.⁹² The poet realized the seriousness of the situation and, according to his diary, requested special treatment for Jewish war veterans and the elderly.⁹³ However, it was to no avail:

Ich hatte unter Schonung der mehrfach im Krieg verwundeten oder ausgezeichneten Kriegsteilnehmer und unter Schonung einiger verdienstvoller oder sehr alter Leute einen erträglichen Übergangszustand geschaffen. Durch die Verfügung, die zunächst einmal alles hinausweist, [...] entsteht nicht nur eine unheilvolle Zeit für die Betroffenen, sondern auch ein Gefühl der Unsicherheit gegen meine Maßnahmen. Vor den Betroffenen, deren Geschick mitunter wirklich tragisch ist, stehe ich als ein unentschlossener schwankender Mensch da.⁹⁴ (Through the protection of war veterans who had been wounded several times or especially decorated and through the protection of a few commendable or very old people, I had created a tolerable transitional state. Through the decree that presently asks everyone to leave [...] there develops not only a disastrous time for the afflicted, but also a feeling of insecurity with regard to my measures. Before the afflicted, whose fate sometimes is truly tragic, I stand as an irresolute, wavering human being.)

Blunck, now suffering a sinus infection, returned home at the end of March. Upon examination, his doctor concluded that he was under too much stress and asked him to take a vacation.⁹⁵ The poet remained away from the chamber for a month and a half. During his absence, events in the capital worsened.⁹⁶ Numerous Jewish authors were dismissed from the RSK.⁹⁷ In May, Ludwig Heilbronn wrote Blunck and begged to be made an exception to the "apparent measures to remove non-aryan personalities from the Reich Literary

Chamber.”⁹⁸ Although Blunck contacted RSK officials on his behalf, on June 18, 1935, Heilbronn received the following notification from admissions officials:

Herr Heilbronn,

To my regret, I am forced to remove you from the Reich Union of German Writers according to the cleansing of non-Aryan writers from the Reich Cultural Chambers [...]. You are therefore forbidden the ability to publish literary works within the sphere of the Reich Literary Chamber. Disobedience of this decree will result in punishment.⁹⁹

A rejection letter from Suchenwirth to the Jewish writer Engelmann exemplified the degree to which strictures on race and so-called “purity” now determined membership in the chamber:

Herr Engelmann,

To my regret, I must inform you that your acceptance into the RDS and therefore into the RSK has been denied. As per the will of the *Führer* and the Reich Chancellor, the management of German cultural goods should only be entrusted to pure and trustworthy national comrades in the sense of Decree # 10 of the first release for the administration of the RKK law. On account of the high significance of spiritual and cultural work for the life and future development of the German nation, only personalities can, of course, be allowed to practice such an activity in Germany, who are not only citizens of the German nation, but who are also joined with the nation through the deep connection [...] of blood. Only he who feels himself connected racially to the nation and indebted by blood to the nation can undertake so deep and influential work as that of intellectual and cultural creation and have an influence on the inner life of the nation. On account of your nature as a non-aryan, you are incapable of embracing or even recognizing such a duty.¹⁰⁰

While Blunck rested at the Mölenhoff, an official at the Propaganda Ministry suggested that he could resign his post. The poet nevertheless returned to Berlin in May, amid the growing discrimination. He persevered in the belief that things would turn for the better, that the current problems were side effects of “revolution.” He also believed that the benefits of the government’s cultural policies outweighed their drawbacks, including censorship. In a statement credited to Blunck by Ernst Wiechert, the poet maintained that “der neue Staat zum ersten Mal seit Jahrhunderten, ja

vielleicht seit den Zeiten Walthers von der Vogelweide die Würde der deutschen Kunst wiederhergestellt habe” (for the first time in centuries, indeed possibly since the era of Walther von der Vogelweide, the new state has restored the dignity of German art).¹⁰¹ After the war, Blunck vigorously denied that he had ever made this statement. However, it resembled others from the period. In a letter to Hermon Ould in late 1934, for example, he lauded the ostensible empowerment that art was experiencing in Germany – an empowerment that, he alleged, enabled writers to check the state and prevent censorship.¹⁰² Four years later, in 1938, he could still announce that “[t]he culture policy of the State has shown clearly enough that the debt of gratitude to creative artists has not been forgotten.”¹⁰³

Blunck also blamed the Jews for their own victimization, regarding their plight as a “begreifliche Reaktion gegen jene Spanne [...] als jüdische Gruppen alle entscheidenden Posten besetzen und das geistige Leben des Volkes bestimmten – und so sehr verarmten” (understandable reaction against the period in which Jewish groups held all of the decisive posts and determined the intellectual life of the nation – and degraded it enormously).¹⁰⁴ While it was difficult to witness and be identified with them, the measures against many Jewish writers were in his deluded mind somehow justifiable.

Several weeks after returning to Berlin, Blunck attended a meeting of the Nordic Society in Lübeck. Here, he met with Rosenberg, who had taken a leading position in the organization on account of his own interest in Germanic origins. The two discussed their jurisdictional problems. Although they did not resolve their differences, their conversation was cordial. They traveled together to the Mölenhoff the next day and had a “sehr lebhaftes Schlussunterhaltung über verständnisvolle Zusammenarbeit und Ausschaltung von Verärgerungsmaßnahmen” (very lively conclusive talk about sympathetic collaboration and an end to annoying measures).¹⁰⁵ Impressed by Blunck’s life in the countryside, Rosenberg noted that he hoped to buy a farm similar to the Mölenhoff. They parted from one another “[i]n recht lebhafter, fast freundschaftlicher Wärme” (with a very vivid, almost friendly warmth).¹⁰⁶ On the train back to Berlin a few days later, Blunck happened upon Rosenberg’s assistant, Hage-

meyer, who was also eager for *détente*. Hagemeyer excused himself for the annoyances he had caused, but he had been under tremendous pressure and faced much opposition within the *Reichsstelle*. Blunck's response is worth quoting, for it revealed his attitude towards the *Reichsstelle*:

Ich sagte ihm, daß von unserer Seite niemals persönliche, sondern stets nur sachlich bestimmte autokratische und parteiliche Arbeitsrichtungen der Reichsstelle bekämpft worden seien und daß auch weiterhin mein Standpunkt der Reichsstelle gegenüber durch eine Reihe von sehr schwerwiegenden Einwendungen umschränkt sei. Im übrigen hätte ich immer das Sachliche vom Persönlichen unterschieden und [...] das, was mir an der Reichsstelle gefiel, anerkannt. Ich sei unter Aufrechterhaltung meines sachlich abweichenden Standpunktes – die Reichsstelle versucht dem Schrifttum sozusagen eine Weltanschauung vorzuschreiben – gern bereit, Wege der Zusammenarbeit auf diesem und jenem Gebiet zu suchen.¹⁰⁷ (I told him that from our side there is nothing personal. We have only fought certain relevant autocratic and party ordinances of the *Reichsstelle*. My opposition to the *Reichsstelle* is focused on only a few very serious objections. Otherwise, I have always separated the professional from the personal and [...] also have recognized what pleased me at the *Reichsstelle*. I will continue to stand up for my professionally divergent opinions – my belief that the *Reichsstelle* is attempting to force a specific, as it were, *Weltanschauung* upon literature – but am eager to look for ways of working with the *Reichsstelle* on this or any other subject.)

Although the poet cited his differences, his words were conciliatory and emblematic of his collaborative tone. During the Third Reich, there were many of the Blunck type, people who questioned the darkest aspects of the regime, but never acted, substantively, upon their complaints – speaking out, for example, publicly and in unambiguous terms. Without collaborators like Blunck, the Nazis could not have gotten as far as they did. Such complicity was especially important in the realm of high culture, which lent respectability to the regime.

Years later, Blunck pondered Rosenberg's and Hagemeyer's change of heart.¹⁰⁸ He guessed that Rosenberg knew that he and Goebbels were on bad terms. Rosenberg wanted to improve his leverage against the propaganda minister and must have decided that a better relationship with Blunck was a means to this goal. The poet's

interpretation is convincing. Until this point, neither Rosenberg nor Hagemeyer had shown any interest in cooperating with Blunck. According to the poet's experience, the motive among leading Nazi cultural figures was almost always power, a reading that fits Martin Broszat's "structuralist" interpretation.

Rosenberg's stronger position meant Goebbels' hardening attitude. In early September, news spread of Blunck's publication the previous December of "*Rede an die Jugend der Westländer*" (1934).¹⁰⁹ Here, Blunck had noted that German writing was striving "zwischen der im Reich verbliebenen jüdischen Bevölkerung und der Regierung ein Konkordat zu erzielen" (to conclude a concordat between the Jewish population still in the Reich and the government).¹¹⁰ The speech condemned the "jüdisch geleiteten Presse des Auslandes" (the foreign, Jewish-led press) and did not denounce anti-Jewish measures in Germany. Upon its publication, the British journalist and writer George Bernard had described the piece as an attempt to inspire understanding for the "Third Reich's ideas of hatred."¹¹¹ While the speech was therefore not a protest against Nazi anti-Semitic policy, it was nonetheless not without potential significance. According to Karl Schleunes, it may, indeed, have been tied to an effort by the anti-Zionist organization *Deutscher Vortrupp Gefolgschaft deutscher Juden* and certain Nazis, possibly Goebbels, to establish a corporate (*ständisch*) status for Jews in Germany.¹¹² Inside Germany, the speech had, at the very least, gone unnoticed by concerned Nazi officials when it was first published. However, amid the hardening circumstances of 1935 the word "concordat" struck a discordant note, and Goebbels was no longer in a position to defend such a viewpoint. After getting word of the essay, Gestapo and SD officials in Berlin requested that Blunck be silenced.¹¹³

On August 30, 1935, Goebbels' deputy at the RKK, Hans Hinkel, called Blunck into his office and announced that the *Reichsminister* believed the time had come for Blunck to "resign." Blunck agreed. He asserted that "die Innenaufgaben der Kammer abgeschlossen seien" (the domestic tasks of the chamber had been completed) and that there was no reason for him to remain as president.¹¹⁴ Blunck and Hinkel agreed on Johst as a successor. In his history of the Poetry Section, Mittenzwei suggested that Blunck's readiness to leave

the chamber at this time stemmed principally from the fact that he was tired of working without formal compensation.¹¹⁵ The lack of a salary was a factor, for the poet had grown weary of the “honorary” nature of the time-consuming position and often complained about the lack of compensation. However, this frustration was one among the others.

Blunck retained the title of “Honorary President” (*Altpräsident*) of the RSK, which limited the appearance of a crisis. The formal transfer of power to Johst occurred a month later, on October 2. Goebbels postponed the announcement of Blunck’s “new assignment” until the day before, so it could be published along with a list of additional “promotions.”¹¹⁶ The morning of the transfer, Blunck spoke before an assembly of RSK functionaries. He urged them to give their new president the same trust and hard work they had given him.¹¹⁷ Afterwards, he advised Johst about the RSK presidency, particularly about the booksellers school, the *Sprachpflegeamt*, and export promotion. According to his records, Blunck believed that Johst would have an easier time at the RSK, given his party affiliations. However, he feared that his own priorities were now doomed, for Johst did not have presentiment in these matters.¹¹⁸ This last thought regarding “presentiment” was wishful and exaggerated Blunck’s own influence. Whether the poet remained at the RSK or not, his romantic aspirations were doomed and always had been.

In his memoirs, the poet asserted that it was only too easy, from hindsight, to assert that he should have known better.¹¹⁹ Certainly, retrospection has tremendous advantages, a point that the historian need always take into consideration. Nonetheless, from the beginning there were signs of the true nature of National Socialism. In certain cases, Blunck recognized these signs, but tended to interpret them in as positive a light as possible. His penchant for construing issues and words in unique ways and to his own advantage did him a disservice during this period, as did his anti-Semitism.

After the poet left the RSK, Germany’s literary environment deteriorated. As Rosenberg’s *Reichsstelle* and Goebbels’ *Schrifttumsstelle* vied for power, censorship increased. In November 1935, the RSK began publishing its own list of “harmful and undesirable literature.”¹²⁰ Requirements for RSK membership grew more stringent.

Not only was every Jew disqualified from the chamber, but remaining writers had to provide “proof of aryanism” for both themselves and their spouses back to 1800.¹²¹ Blunck himself was astounded when he heard of the impending plan to research the genealogical trees of all writers back to their great grand parents.¹²² In late 1936, Thomas Mann was stripped of his German citizenship, and the Gestapo ordered the confiscation of his works throughout Germany.¹²³

In *Das Amt Rosenberg und Seine Gegner*, Reinhard Bollmus has argued that Rosenberg’s institutions and departments were among the less powerful in the Third Reich, but just strong enough to force other institutions and figures in policy directions Rosenberg wanted.¹²⁴ Bollmus neglected and, thus, under-estimated the power of the *Reichsstelle*. Blunck’s experience nonetheless confirms Bollmus’s point of view, in so far as Rosenberg resembled a thorn rather than a dagger. Never able to deal a blow, he pricked and needled until he got his way. Blunck himself blamed the *Kampfbund*’s destructive nature on its awkward position among Goebbels’ Propaganda Ministry, Rust’s *Kultusministerium*, and other departments. As Will Vesper commented to the poet, the *Kampfbund* had “enough authority to destroy,” but “not enough authority to construct.”¹²⁵

Although he maintained a small office and a secretary at the chamber, Blunck’s connection to the RSK now dwindled. He attended occasional ceremonies for appearance’s sake. The sobriquet *Altpräsident* was but a symbol. His participation in the Poetry Section also declined. In 1937, Goebbels nearly succeeded in submerging the Academy in the Propaganda Ministry. However, Hermann Goering, in a move resembling a *Deus ex Machina*, assumed the title of “Protector of the Academy” on July first of that year and retained the institution within the Prussian *Kultusministerium*, which was now within his sphere of influence.¹²⁶ The Academy remained “Prussian,” and Blunck’s dream of its transformation into a “Reich” institution went unfulfilled.¹²⁷ Meanwhile, the Poetry Section became a skeleton of its previous self. Run by Beumelburg, its duties and financing were meager. The Academy never regained its stature and was dismantled in 1945.¹²⁸

Only a few months before Blunck’s departure from the RSK, Richard Strauss had also “resigned” his presidency at the RMK. Like

Blunck's, his decision was made for him when the SD discovered a letter to his Jewish lyricist, Stefan Zweig, in which he had written that he was doing everything in his power to minimize Nazi cultural policies, especially anti-Jewish measures.¹²⁹ Unlike Blunck, Strauss discontinued his engagement with the Nazis.

Chapter VIII: The DAW

Except for a few formal exchanges, Blunck had never spoken with Hitler during his first two years of service. In Blunck's records, Hitler appears rarely. The poet considered him an enigma. Although Hitler loved music, above all Wagner, he never showed the same appreciation for poetry and literature. This lack of sensibility frustrated Blunck, who considered his own work, particularly *Die Urvätersaga*, a literary complement to Wagner's music. After leaving the RSK, Blunck made gestures designed to help Hitler appreciate the literature of the "Nordic Renaissance." In March 1937 he invited the *Führer* to visit the Mölenhoff.¹ However, Hitler declined. In September 1938, he wrote Hitler of the ancient fairy tales and legends of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany, emphasizing that they were "Reste eines älteren naturnahen Glaubens" (remnants of an old belief that was close to nature) and that their themes paralleled Wagner's operas.² Hitler never responded, and it is impossible to establish whether he read the letter.

Although Lower-German literature often exalted the Germanic and Nordic themes of which the *Führer* was so fond, Hitler's disinterest in the genre was not surprising. As a number of historians have noted, Hitler never read a book through, only picking and choosing passages that supported convictions that he already held.³ He lacked the solitary patience and attention needed for true literary appreciation. In this sense, Blunck's frustrations, even in light of his clear thematic affinities with Wagner, were inevitable. A Wagner overture, with its monumentalism and power, was more accessible to a music lover like Hitler than a ballad or fairy tale. Moreover, a hero like the *Ring's* Siegfried, cast in the flamboyance with which Wagner was so adept, was more grandiose and evocative than a Börr or Weland and therefore more suitable to Hitler's tastes, which coveted heroicism and ostentation of the highest caliber.

After leaving the RSK, Blunck returned to the Mölenhoff. In his diary, he pondered his freedom from bureaucratic responsibilities:

Köstlich der Morgenweg in den Garten und das erste Gefühl der Unabhängigkeit von Büro und Kammersorgen. Ein schöner Lebensabschnitt jene zwei Jahre, aber glücklicherweise doch nur eine umschränkte Zeit, die wieder zu Gunsten der Ballade und vielleicht auch der Märe zu Ende geht.⁴ (How priceless the morning walk in the gardens is, as well as the first feeling of independence from the office and the cares of the chamber. Those two years were a splendid phase in my life, but, all the same, thankfully only a brief period, which has ended in favor of my return to ballads and possibly also fairy tales.)

This, however, was an ambiguous comment that symbolized the poet's recurring, and sometimes self-deluding, struggle between his literary and his professional/*bourgeois* aspirations, for he had also seen the chamber as a venue for his legal training. Had the comment been true, the poet might, like a number of other nationalistic writers, have drifted off the political stage.

He did not. During the months that followed, he nonetheless attended to various literary endeavors. He began preliminary work on the play, *Kampf um New York* (completed two years later and published in 1938).⁵ The composition depicts the mythical efforts of Jakob Leisler, a German colonist in New York, to defend the American colonies against the French and liberate them from the British during the period of the Glorious Revolution (1688). Leisler is a heroic, *Führer*-like figure. When he addresses the colonists from his terrace, he is greeted by applause – “*Sturm*,” as Blunck described it – reminiscent of the hysterical responses to Hitler. The poet's difficulties at the chamber notwithstanding, *Kampf um New York* demonstrated that he was still fascinated with Hitler. With its colonial setting, aggressive tone, and claim that a German thwarted France's conquest of New England, the work also exhibited his persistent wish for an overseas empire. The play premiered in 1939 at numerous theaters, just in time to fan the flames of war that began to engulf Europe that August.

Also after leaving the chamber, Blunck composed a short book of prayers, *Das Andachtbüchlein* (written in 1936, published six years later, in 1942). Here, the poet spoke in markedly Christian, though still Pantheistic, terms. In the prayer “*Ostern*” he wrote:

Nun sind die Tage glückhafter Auferstehung über unser Land gekommen, und wir wandern und suchen Dich, Gott, in allen Knospen und Blüten und spüren Dich so stark wie nie in unsern Herzen brennen. Und wir treten zur Andacht und freuen uns der Gemeinsamkeit der Feier zu Deinen Ehren und gedenken Deiner und des Heilands und der heiligen Geister, da wir zu Dir beten.⁶ (Now the days of the happy resurrection have come over our land, and we wander in search of you, God, in all the buds and blossoms. We feel you burning in our hearts as never before. And we retreat to prayer and celebrate the community of celebration in your honor. And we think of you, the Saviour, and the Holy Ghost.)

Other prayers in the collection reflected soul searching and doubt:

Ja, darum bitte ich Dich, daß ich nicht blind nach diesem und jenem trachte, weil ich zu gering für Deine Ziele bin, sondern daß Du mir eingibst, den Weg zu finden, den Du von mir willst.⁷ (Yes, I beg of You, so that I do not desire blindly this and that, because I know too little of your goal, show me how to find the path that you want me to take.)

After its publication, *Das Andachtbüchlein* found its way onto Rosenberg's list of forbidden books. If the poet wrote anything that could be considered representative of an "Inner Emigration," it was this book.

During these months Blunck, in addition, helped compile and edit a collection of essays on Nordic themes, many of which were written by members of the Nordic Society. The purpose of the collection was to relate "was den Ländern nördlich und südlich unserer Meere gemeinsam ist und was sie trennt, vorallem aber doch dessen, was sie bindet" (what is common to and what separates the lands north and south of our seas – above all, however, what unites them).⁸ He also completed *König Geiserich* (1936), a quasi-historical tale about the fifth-century king of the Vandals, which he had begun in 1932. Depicting Geiserich as a just and honorable leader, the book glorified the Vandals' warpath through the Roman Empire:

Sein [Geiserichs] Weg war übermenschliche Tat, Pflicht, Opfer und Einsamkeit der Großen. Er hörte Gottes Ruf und den seines armen Volkes; er wirkte die Freiheit und Macht seines Reichs; er verlor darüber, was das Leben der andern hell und köstlich macht. Aber kann man Besseres über einen Mann berichten?⁹ (Geiserich's path was superhuman deed, duty, and sacrifice.)

It was loneliness of the great. He heard God's call and that of his suffering *Volk*. He established the freedom and power of his Reich. In the process, he lost what brightens and makes life magnificent for the others. But, what can one report better about a man?)

In contrast to the traditional interpretation of the Vandals, which sees them as destroyers of civilization (hence the English word "vandal"), the book also suggested that Geiserich had brought order to North Africa.

Along with *Hein Hoyer* and *Die Große Fahrt*, *Geiserich* was one of Blunck's classic *Führerromane*, in the sense that its hero embodied the poet's ideal of authority. Applegate has argued that "Nazi rule intensified the nationalism of *Heimat* sentiment."¹⁰ The fact that Blunck completed two of his *Führerromane* during the Third Reich might seem to confirm her point, since the "cult of the leader" represented in these novels had national implications. However, these works, as well as the others the poet produced during the period 1933–45, remained bound to Lower Germany. Although *Geiserich*, for example, takes place in Spain and North Africa, the North-German Saxons play a leading role, repeatedly rescuing the Vandals with their navy. A more nationalistic tone crept into works like *Kampf um Neu York*, with its wild "*Sturm*." However, one must look for distinctions of this kind. Relative to the ardor of the Third Reich, Blunck remained, artistically, true to his Lower-German sensibilities, which nonetheless fused well with the period's extreme nationalism.

The multiplicity of Blunck's literary endeavors at this time, particularly the thematic and attitudinal contrast between *Das Andachtbüchlein* and *Kampf um Neu York* and *Geiserich*, reflected the poet's contradictions. While he complained in private about the Nazi regime, a viewpoint that found mild expression in *Das Andachtbüchlein*, in public his support remained firm. His heroic sensibilities, which were exhibited in *Kampf um Neu York* and *Geiserich*, continued to fuel his hopes that the Nazis would secure European and world power for Germany. On behalf of this dream, Blunck was already working on his next project.

Conceptually, the *Deutsche Auslandswerke* (DAW) originated in the poet's involvement in the PEN-Club. Following the Nazi seizure of power, the German PEN-Club had alienated itself from the rest of

the Club. In March 1933, the "Berlin Center" was purged and taken over by members of Rosenberg's *Kampfbund*. Hans Hinkel, Hanns Johst, and Rainer Schlösser, the last of whom edited the *Völkischer Beobachter's* cultural pages, all joined the organization.¹¹ At the General Assembly of the German-PEN Club that April, the delegates released a statement expressing "unanimous desire" in proceeding "in harmony [*im Gleichklang*]" with the national rebirth."¹² In response, the International PEN-Club's executive committee in London issued a resolution condemning literary oppression in Germany. The German delegate to the international PEN-Club, Edgar Schmidt-Pauli, then declared the German division's withdrawal.¹³

Following the book burnings in May 1933, almost every PEN-Club writer of international repute left Germany (Gottfried Benn and Gerhart Hauptmann were the two exceptions), including the German Division's honorary member, Thomas Mann. In exile, the emigrants portrayed themselves as the true representatives of German culture. The full PEN-Club, particularly the English division, invited them to speak at gatherings and hosted benefits in their honor. At the PEN congress in 1934, the Club permitted the emigrants to form a PEN division of their own. According to the official record, the old German division had violated the organization's first principles, "international friendship regardless of race, religion, color and creed."¹⁴

Thereafter, the emigrants attacked the international connections of Third Reich writers. For some years, Blunck had written a column for the British newspaper, *The Listener*.¹⁵ In October 1933, on account of his responsibilities in the Prussian Academy, he had attempted to transfer the assignment to Christian Jenssen. However, the emigrants captured the position for one of their own.¹⁶ As Blunck explained to Jenssen, cooperation with the *Listener* was no longer possible on account of the emigrants and their allies in Great Britain.¹⁷ For Blunck, such actions by the emigrants represented a provocation.¹⁸ The remnants of the German division were now transformed into the *Bund für die Pflege persönlicher Freundschaft mit dem Ausland* (League for the Cultivation of Personal Friendship Abroad), an organization designed to take up the German PEN division's mantle and, through "Union Clubs," build international cultural links outside of the PEN-

Club.¹⁹ Blunck did not take a leading role in the organization, but provided advice.²⁰

The “League” notwithstanding, Germany’s cultural presence abroad declined. In late 1934, Blunck complained that the Italian literary magazine “*Pan*” had published an article about “German literature” that mentioned only emigrant writers in Amsterdam.²¹ In response to ostensible distortions of this kind, a special department at the RSK, “Department C,” was organized to monitor emigrant writers. The department documented comments by the emigrants, and it collected articles and literary reviews from publications like the *London Times* and *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.²² Upon finding an article deemed erroneous or offensive, its officials attempted to publish a reply in the periodical in question.²³ Occasionally, Blunck himself responded – for example, in a letter to the *London Times* contesting an article that had unmasked the RSK as an instrument of state control.²⁴

Blunck also fought the emigrants in a personal way. In the autumn of 1934, for instance, he visited Hermon Ould in London. He refused to call upon the PEN-Club offices, so they met at the German embassy. According to Ould’s memory of the meeting, here Blunck “urgently pleaded with [Ould] not to continue to receive refugees from Nazi Germany into the PEN-Club.”²⁵ Ould retorted that it was “one of the PEN-Club’s unchangeable rules that it only looked at quality with regard to writing and that Germany was required by duty to take writers of all political directions, if it were once again to become a member of the PEN-Club.”²⁶ Their disagreement festered over the next year and a half through a number of fiery exchanges. In response to a letter in which Blunck again complained about the International PEN-Club’s acceptance of the emigrants,²⁷ Ould lashed out at the poet:

You are quite wrong, when you assume that there is any official anti-German feeling in the PEN. In so far as Germany is concerned, the PEN has acted entirely according to the principles for which it was founded fifteen years ago. [...] As soon as the German Center admitted that it was excluding from membership writers of a certain race [or political orientation] the only honorable thing for the German PEN Center to do was to withdraw [...]. You are also mistaken in identifying the London PEN with the emigrant German

Group. This group was founded at the International Congress in Scotland, and was no more the work of the London Center than of any other. It was the general opinion that, as a number of German writers, for reasons which were not our concern, found it impossible to live in Germany, but yet wished to be linked to the International PEN, a reasonable temporary solution would be the formation of a group of German writers outside Germany [...]. In conclusion, [...] it is not the PEN which has changed during the last four years but Germany, and I am sure that if you will look at the matter objectively you will come to the same conclusion.²⁸

Disagreements of this kind did not dishearten Blunck, for he had more than one Pen-Club acquaintance on whom to work. In November 1934, he visited with Jules Romains in Hamburg and discussed the importance of improving German-French relations. Afterwards, he wrote a letter to Goebbels describing the meeting:

Hatte trotz Erkrankung mehre Stunden kollegiale Unterhaltung Jules Romains Hamburg. Behauptet nach Fühlung mit allen französischen Frontverbänden zu sprechen. Sehr positive Einstellung zum Führer und Ihnen [...]. Will raschen Vergleich über Saar sofort nach Abstimmung, die er zu Gunsten Deutschlands erwartet. Erhofft danach große Massenpropaganda für Frieden beiderseits und Einigung auf Selbstbestimmungsrecht in Europa, selbst wenn dies auf lange Sicht Veränderung zu unseren Gunsten bringt. Erklärt zunehmendes Desinteressement Frankreichs am Balkan, will Teile Afrikas gemeinsam verwalten. Empfehle Erwägung kurzen Empfangs.²⁹ (Despite being ill, I had a friendly discussion, several hours long, with Jules Romains in Hamburg. He said that he spoke on behalf of all of the French *Frontverbänden*. A very positive attitude to the Führer and to you [...]. Wants as quickly as possible an agreement over the Saar using a plebiscite, which he expects will work out to Germany's benefit. He hopes through this to inspire mass propaganda for peace on both sides of the border and for unification based on the principle of self-determination in Europe, even if this produces a long-term outcome in Germany's favor. He declared France's growing disinterest in the Balkans, wants to administer parts of Africa in collaboration [with Germany]. I recommend that you immediately invite him to meet with you.)

Goebbels followed Blunck's advice and met with Romains soon thereafter.

The poet's international contacts must have pleased the minister. At a gathering in January 1935, he suggested that Blunck find a way to protect the chamber's interests abroad, once he left the organ-

ization.³⁰ Hinkel voiced similar thoughts upon the poet's "resignation," and Blunck began to imagine a network of "friendship societies" across Europe. However, it was not until several months after his departure from the RSK that the details of the plan crystallized. While at home in December 1935, the poet was visited by Robert Holthöfer, a friend and editor from the Rhineland with an interest in international matters. Together, the two conceived of the DAW and, as an adjunct, the *Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen* ("Union of Friendship Societies," VVE).

In the winter of 1936, the construction of the two organizations commenced.³¹ The "structuralist" interpretation of Nazi Germany applies here. Goebbels, Ribbentrop, and Rosenberg (who headed *die Außenpolitische Stelle*, an international organization of his own tied to the Nazi Party), as well as officials from the Ministry of the Interior and other agencies, vied for influence in the formation of the two organizations. Indeed, although the poet was directly involved in their formation, he viewed himself "als Beobachter nicht als Bestimmer" (as an observer not a decision maker).³² Each interested party had to agree on statutes for the departments, and the endorsements came with strings attached.³³ Blunck was specified as the founder and chairman of the DAW and VVE. This stipulation prevented any single department from appearing to gain a victory via the organizations. Moreover, he was allowed to name the DAW's board members, but the Propaganda Ministry, the Foreign Office, and the Ministry of the Interior had to confirm them. He secured each appointment only after each of these three departments agreed to it.³⁴ Blunck was also permitted to name the chairmen of the individual friendship societies, but he had to choose from a pool of "recommended" cultural figures and businessmen – candidates who were not necessarily his preferred selections.³⁵ Finally, when forming the committees of the friendship societies, he went out of his way to avoid favoring candidates supported by any single department, so as to avoid upsetting the other officials.³⁶

In June 1936, the DAW and the VVE were inaugurated. Several months before the inauguration, Ribbentrop informed the poet that Hitler himself had signaled his approval of the arrangements.³⁷ This constituted one of the rare moments in which Hitler (and in this case

through an intermediary) engaged himself in Blunck's affairs. The *Führer's* sanction gave the poet hope that the DAW and VVE might rise above the infighting that had plagued him at the RSK. This thinking, too, was wishful. Hitler's ostensible endorsement represented the height of his involvement in the organizations.

According to the evidence, Blunck believed that the goal of both the DAW and the VVE was to preserve peace. However, this "peace" was based on his own particular, and imperialistic, sense of culture, fairness, Germanic unity, and German interests. Unless the European powers were prepared to allow Germany a leading role in Europe and the world, not to mention a complete dissolution of the Versailles Treaty, this so-called "peace" was bound to result in war.

Along with the poet, the DAW's board was composed of Holthöfer and Hermann von Raumer, an ally of Ribbentrop, whom Goebbels and Rosenberg had accepted. The DAW's objectives resembled those of Department C in the RSK. According to Blunck, its purpose was to collect the names of foreign writers, to "observe" their various factions and cliques, and to document their attitudes towards Germany.³⁸ Domestically, this "observation" included monitoring, hosting, and chaperoning foreign writers in Germany. In this sense, the DAW was a "cultural SD" of sorts. Internationally, the DAW's purpose was, in Blunck's euphemistic wording, "Aufklärungsarbeit im Ausland" (educational work abroad).³⁹ This meant propaganda, for the DAW endeavored to convince foreign circles that Nazi Germany was free and open, particularly in the realm of culture.

Like functionaries in the RSK's Department C, officials at the DAW compiled journal and newspaper articles about the international cultural scene and the emigrants. Similarly, they responded with "Questions of Fact" to articles critical of German policy, such as to a supposedly distorting essay about Danzig in the British *Listener* in 1936.⁴⁰ In addition, the DAW compiled information from foreign agents (*Vertrauensmänner*), who reported on the emigrants, foreign dignitaries, and the international mood toward Germany. The DAW also organized lecture tours by German writers to foreign universities and libraries.⁴¹ Finally, through the assistance of Germany's foreign embassies, the DAW promoted Germany's

contemporary culture through book fairs, donations of books to foreign libraries (including Blunck's own works), and vacation courses that were reminiscent of Blunck's summer courses at the University of Hamburg.⁴²

As president of the DAW, Blunck himself gave readings and lectures throughout Europe between 1936 and 1939.⁴³ Although his engagements generally took place at cultural forums like universities, libraries, and book fairs, they were not, as he argued later, purely cultural. For example, his lecture, *Deutschland und der Norden*, which he gave on numerous occasions during this period, was about the cultural, racial, and historical affinities between Scandinavia and Germany.⁴⁴ It thus promoted an alliance between Germany and the "North." Moreover, during numerous visits abroad Blunck met with political officials, visiting Stonehenge in the late 1930s, for instance, with a number of British MPs.⁴⁵ Finally, during many of his trips Blunck spoke before German settlers.⁴⁶ While touring German book fairs in Turkey and Greece in 1937, he read before hundreds of ethnic Germans in Istanbul, Ankara, Smyrna, Athens, and other cities. Among his selections was "*Dichtung und neuer Staat*" (Poetry and the New State), in which he related the literary flowering supposedly occurring back in Germany.⁴⁷ After gathering with colonists in Ankara, he commented that the German diplomats in Turkey understood the "geeignete Verbindung von Politik und Kulturpolitik" (unified connection between politics and cultural politics) – a self-admission of the political significance of his "cultural" work.⁴⁸ Given the interest of the German government and Blunck himself in uniting the ethnic Germans with Germany, his regular meetings with the settlers had inherent political meaning.

Dr. Offergeld, a dry, non-party bureaucrat, was president of the VVE and served with Blunck and Holthöfer on its board. By 1939, the VVE sponsored a diverse group of some fifty "friendship societies," from the German-English and German-French societies to the Organization of the Far East, the German-Japan Society, and the German-Indian Society. So many groups sought affiliation with the VVE, and the accompanying financing, that, beginning in 1937, the organization had to turn new societies away.

Hans Adolf Jacobsen has described the “friendship societies” as “para-diplomatic” in nature:

[The societies] sought to promote an improved international climate and good “public relations.” Their most important activities included cultural programs designed to build bridges between the nations, improving contacts with embassy officials and the international press, the hosting and accompaniment of foreign guests, the cultivation of trusted contacts with friends and acquaintances from the diplomatic corps, and the discussion of economic and scientific issues.⁴⁹

The “societies” might also be described as “para-propagandistic” in nature. Like the DAW itself, they endeavored to communicate a rose-colored view of Germany, as determined by some of the most powerful departments and figures in the government.

In a 1937 report, Offergeld demonstrated how political considerations guided appointments to the “friendship societies”: “[t]he committees of the individual friendship institutions were, as far as possible, considered with regard to their friendly attitude to the government and a few organizations had, in extraordinary cases, to be brought into line by the Gestapo.”⁵⁰ Moreover, a 1938 memorandum from Offergeld to the “Friendship Societies” demonstrated how the VVE and interested departments monitored the societies’ activities:

In collaboration with the Foreign Ministry, the Reich Ministry for Enlightenment and Propaganda, and the Department for Special Duties for International Issues involving the NSDAP in the Staff of the *Führer’s* Representative, we ask you before the 28 of May [...] to provide us with a comprehensive report on the activities of your society for the period from 1 January 1937 to 31 March 1938. The report should provide, besides the relationship of the political, cultural, and economic goals of the society, a clear overview of what has been achieved during the aforementioned period of time.⁵¹

The “Department for Special Duties for International Issues involving the NSDAP” was a department run by Heinrich Himmler and thus betrayed the multiplicity of Nazi bosses who had their hands in German foreign policy.

For Blunck, the “German-English,” “German-French,” and “Nordic” Societies were the most significant of the “friendship societies.” From its headquarters in Berlin, the German-English Society monitored English writers who were visiting or living in Germany, and it arranged reading tours for writers who were friendly to Nazi Germany.⁵² Blunck himself recruited a number of English writers for the Society. In late 1936, he engaged Arnold Wilson, whose work “Walks and Talks Abroad” contained an allegedly fair treatment of the Versailles Treaty.⁵³ During trips to England on behalf of the German-English Society, Blunck avoided the emigrants, many of whom lived in London.⁵⁴ As a “Continental Anglo-Saxon,” he considered it his duty to “restore the bridge” between England and Germany.⁵⁵ In speeches before English audiences, he emphasized historical, cultural, and commercial links between the two nations, particularly between Lower Germany and England.

English on his mother’s side, schooled in England, and German ambassador to Britain from 1936 to 1938, Ribbentrop had a keen interest in the German-English Society. Although much scholarship has focused on Ribbentrop’s attachments to England, no works have considered his connections to the German-English Society, which embodied his anglophilic pretensions and was in part his inspiration. According to Blunck’s memoirs, Ribbentrop initially took the lead in building the organization and requested the Society’s chairmanship. Although Blunck persuaded him that his appointment would bias the organization’s international image and instead appointed the Duke of Coburg, a relative of the Windsors, Ribbentrop gave in reluctantly. In his mind, the key to building an Anglo-German alliance was to assure Britain of Germany’s unrelenting opposition to communism. A wine salesman by trade, Ribbentrop was no intellectual. Believing that Blunck was too interested in the historical and cultural ties among England, Schleswig-Holstein, and Lower Germany, rather than in *Realpolitik*, he distrusted the poet. Blunck constantly had to reassure Ribbentrop of his interest in improving relations between the two nations.⁵⁶

Blunck’s closest English associate in the Society was its vice-chairman, Barry Domville. A former submarine captain, Domville led a vigorous cell of the German-English Society, called the “Anglo-

German Link,” and converted a few members of Parliament to the cause of Anglo-German friendship.⁵⁷ Another friend of Blunck was Professor Convel Evans, who believed he had secured a parliamentary majority in favor of a declaration of peace between Germany and England.⁵⁸ In 1937, Evans attended a banquet, where Lord Lothian commented that Britain had “either to allow Germany to buy back its colonies and spread to the east or be prepared to fight another deadly war.”⁵⁹ According to Blunck’s diary, at least half of the attendees, many of whom were MPs, agreed.⁶⁰ At a dinner party in London hosted by Ribbentrop and Domville in June 1937, Ribbentrop stressed that he had “done [his] best and suggested some sort of formal demonstration whereby the four great powers could provide a show of good will. Nothing helped.”⁶¹ An English guest complained that the press was the biggest threat to peace between Germany and England, because “three-quarters” of the media were in the “hands of Jews” and “without the press” one could “make no politics even in England.”⁶² After retiring to his hotel room, Blunck noted that the situation regarding the media was “[a]uch hier wie in Paris” (the same here as in Paris).⁶³

Members of the Society, including Blunck, were frustrated by their inability to persuade the British of their point of view. The poet’s experience in the German-English Society nonetheless demonstrated that there were Britons with pro-German sympathies. Blunck appealed to appeasers. His gentlemanly, intellectual air contrasted with the vulgarity of most Nazi officials. Able to speak some English, he passed well in polite society. He also had had friends in England for many years, who were interested in “fair play” and “removing misunderstanding of Germany.”⁶⁴ When he appeared at gatherings, Englishmen already favorable towards Germany could assure themselves that here, in this serious, but amiable poet was the country’s true face. The media headlines about violence and anti-Jewish pogroms and the photos of black-booted storm troopers were but propaganda. Blunck, and others like him, were the façade behind which the regime hid.

Considering him a tough negotiator, the poet initially respected and admired Ribbentrop:

Er gibt keine Position auf und beginnt immer wieder von neuem mit Dingen, die noch nicht ganz gelungen sind. Dabei persönlich der Eindruck eines Mannes, der besonders auch über die innerpolitische Gesamtlage [...] vorzüglich unterrichtet ist. Ein Mensch mit sehr jungem Herzen, mit einem klugen und sehr eigenwilligen Kopf.⁶⁵ (He won't give up his position and always begins again with new items that have not yet been resolved. Personally, he conveys the impression of a man who is very well informed [...] also especially about the domestic situation. A man with a very young heart, with an intelligent and very original mind.)

According to Blunck's memoirs, however, the English representatives who visited the Society's Berlin headquarters or hosted the Germans in London manipulated Ribbentrop. All Ribbentrop wanted to hear was that Anglo-German relations were improving and that Britain realized Germany's importance as an ally against Bolshevism. The truth – that Britain was growing ever more wary of Germany – was never told.⁶⁶

Headquartered on *Hildebrandstrasse* in Berlin, the German-French Society aimed, in the words of one German member, to move French public opinion "to the advantage of Germany."⁶⁷ At the Society's inaugural celebration, a journalist from the French newspaper *Les Temps* asked Blunck to urge Hitler to eliminate a few lines from *Mein Kampf* regarding the physical degeneration of the French population. Although Blunck passed the suggestion on, Hitler declined to remove the offending lines. His response was unapologetic: "[O]ne had to see his book as his opinion at the time when he wrote it."⁶⁸

The largest of all the friendship societies, the German-French Society had divisions in each major Hansa city (Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck) and branches in Baden, the Rhineland, Württemberg, Hessen-Nassau, and, after the *Anschluss*, Austria.⁶⁹ Blunck traveled numerous times to France on behalf of the Society. Several of these trips were to Alsace-Lorraine, where German sympathizers were abundant. In 1938, he visited two Germanists, Fuchs and Heydet, in Strasbourg. However, he did not call upon Spiesser, the publisher of the *Strassburger Monatshefte*, because Spiesser was under attack for being too friendly to Germany – too "*Heimatsstreu*," as the German-French Society's business manager put it.⁷⁰

As in the case of the German-English Society, Blunck recommended a number of French writers who were sympathetic to Nazi Germany for speaking trips. One of them was the Parisian journalist and novelist Georges Duhamel, who had spoken positively of Germany in the journal *Deutsches Volkstum*. Blunck had also had a positive conversation with him a year and a half earlier and convinced officials at the German-French Society to invite Duhamel for a series of lectures.⁷¹ By doing so, the Society confirmed “his German-friendly attitude” and brought “him into closer contact with Germany.”⁷²

The German-French Society published a journal, the *Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte*. With articles portraying Nazi Germany in a positive light, the *Monatshefte* aimed to serve as a weight against the “Marxist and Jewish press.”⁷³ The journal offered positive reviews of and advertisements for French writers who were deemed appropriate for the German market, like Professor Pitrou, whose translations of Nietzsche appeared in 1938,⁷⁴ and Alphonse de Chateaubriant, whose *Die deutsche Erneuerung von einem Franzosen gesehen* lauded Nazi achievements.⁷⁵ The Society also published articles similar to the “Questions of Fact” produced by the DAW itself. Only weeks before the outbreak of World War II, Blunck persuaded the Parisian journal *Illustration* to include an article contesting Polish claims to Danzig.⁷⁶

In 1937, at the invitation of the *Comité France-Allemand*, a “German-French Congress” took place in Paris. Here, like-minded French and German figures lectured on cultural and political issues. In his own speech, Blunck criticized French “Hetzbücher” (agitation literature) and asked that his listeners refrain from disseminating it. He also called for increased sales of German books in France, because contemporary German literature was a seemingly objective bulwark against anti-German propaganda. In a notable coincidence, the international PEN-Club was having its annual meeting across town. Some of Nazi Germany’s keenest antagonists, including Klaus Mann, Feuchtwanger, and Brecht, were attending. A few of the “emigrants” were staying at Blunck’s hotel. The PEN-Club lambasted the “Nazi” Congress in its midst, and the French press ran stories exposing the German-French Society as an arm of the Nazi propaganda machine. Blunck and his colleagues now found Paris

staring down at them as a cabal of Nazi henchmen. In response, Blunck declared before a gathering of the Congress that “Wir waren wegen der französischen Emigranten einst nach Valmy marschiert. Ob Frankreich wegen unserer Emigranten den gleichen Fehler machen wolle?”⁷⁷ (We once marched on Valmy because of the French emigrants. Does France want to make the same mistake on account of our emigrants?)

Opposition of this kind was not unusual. After the *Anschluss* with Austria, France’s Foreign Minister, Paul Boncour, suppressed French organizations, like the *Comité France-Allemand*, that collaborated with the German-French Society. In 1938, Communist delegates in the French National Assembly succeeded in having the *Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte* banned from public libraries and universities. In 1939, the French government prevented another “German-French Congress” from taking place in France.⁷⁸

Blunck proved a liability to the French writers whom he befriended. Shunned because “he was promoting a Nazi poet,”⁷⁹ his young friend from the French PEN-Club, René Poupard, who was active in the Society, was transferred to a lesser teaching position. Another friend from the PEN-Club and member of the Society, Maurice Boucher, who was a publisher and Germanist at the University of Paris, dropped a plan to translate Blunck’s fairy tales, after his publisher complained that there was a “Nazi who hides behind the poet [i.e. Blunck].”⁸⁰ Such phenomena angered Blunck, since French bookstores were filled, as he complained, with emigrant works like Heinrich Mann’s “sinnloses Hassbuch” (meaningless hate-book) *Der Tag kommt*, which lambasted Nazi Germany and predicted war.⁸¹

Because of its relatively long history and financial strength, the Nordic Society retained more independence from the DAW and the VVE than the typical Society, but it nonetheless appears periodically in the records of both departments. After the *Machtergreifung*, funds flowed into the organization, and key Party ideologists – Rosenberg, Walther Darré, Heinrich Himmler, and Hinrich Lohse – joined the Society’s board.⁸² Friedrich Domes, with whom Blunck had now worked since the mid-1920s, continued to play a prominent role in the group.

The Nordic Society monitored British and French influence, attitudes toward contemporary German culture, and the influence of Jewish and emigrant journalists in the Scandinavian countries.⁸³ After reading a report on the influence of the *Alliance Française* in Iceland,⁸⁴ Domes stressed to Blunck that it was essential to institute “plans for quiet, but important culture propaganda.”⁸⁵ Upon reading a report on the attitude of Danish journalists to German literature, Blunck was astounded by their audacity. Danish newspapers suggested that there was no real literature in Germany, only abroad among the émigrés, such as Feuchtwanger and Heinrich Mann.⁸⁶ To combat this alleged bias, the Nordic Society’s monthly journal, *Der Norden*, publicized Germany’s “new writers.” It also included essays about folk culture and politics, as well as articles underscoring the historical, cultural, and blood ties between Germany and Scandinavia.⁸⁷ A piece in 1939 described “pure” Germanic peoples in Norway and Sweden and the degree to which “southern” Germanic peoples had degenerated from their Nordic origins.⁸⁸ Blunck himself contributed articles to the journal, including the essay “*Kunst und Landschaft*” in 1935 and an article about Diderik Pining, the hero in *Die Große Fahrt*, in 1937.⁸⁹ At the Nordic Society’s annual *Reichstagungen* in Lübeck, which achieved a tremendous scale during the Third Reich, there were assemblies of German and Scandinavian artists, folk dances of peasants from the Faroe Islands and Iceland, and traditional Nordic “Thing” plays by Scandinavian and German writers.

The Nordic Society recruited Scandinavian writers sympathetic to Germany like the Norwegian journalist Lyder Ramsad, who had fought for Germany in World War I. His work *Mit den Deutschen an der Westfront* (1929) had exalted the German war effort and demonstrated “a great love for Germany.”⁹⁰ In contrast, the Society turned away writers like the Danish novelist, Frau Schneider de Witt of Copenhagen, who asked the Society to sponsor her for a reading tour in Germany in 1937. While Blunck acknowledged that de Witt had helped foster the relationship between German and Danish poetry, there were rumors that she was Jewish.⁹¹ A spy in Copenhagen had observed that she did “not appear very Aryan.”⁹² After Blunck left the RSK, he ceased to exert himself on behalf of Jews, regardless of their cultural merits. His diaries, which once revealed sporadic dis-

tress regarding individual Jews, now became relatively silent on the subject. This circumstance demonstrated the degree to which racial politics had hardened by 1937, after the victory of Rosenberg's hard-line racism. Now, even the most "German" Jews, to use Blunck's own perspective, were unacceptable. The transformation of the poet's attitude showed how he compromised his own scruples, never praiseworthy in the first place, on behalf of National Socialism.

Blunck enjoyed his work in the DAW and the "friendship societies." He saw himself as a cultural ambassador, whose purpose was to convince foreigners of Germany's just grievances.⁹³ At the same time, his literary career continued to bring successes, which contributed to his mood. In 1937, in honor of his approaching fiftieth birthday, the *Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt* in Hamburg published his complete works in a ten-volume series.⁹⁴ Since Blunck was unusually young for such a distinction, a number of older writers who had not been so honored, like Lulu Strauss and Hermann Stehr, complained. Convincing himself that he had labored for years without recognition, Blunck considered their feelings unwarranted – a circumlocution of the truth that allowed him to bask in the notoriety:

Aber soll ich deshalb warten? Die Emigranten hatten mit fünfzig Jahren ihre Gesamtausgabe; sie steht in den Büchereien der ganzen Welt. Soll ich uns⁹⁵ den Schaden tun und eine Gelegenheit guten Wettbewerbs da draußen ausschlagen, nur um zu warten, bis die Älteren eine Gesamtausgabe hätten?⁹⁶ (But should I therefore wait? The emigrants already had their complete works when they were fifty years old; they sit in the libraries of the entire world. Should I do us a disservice and turn down an opportunity for good publicity abroad, only to wait for those who are older than me to have complete works?)

In a generous and unique gesture, the *Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt* pegged Blunck's fee for his complete works directly to the cost of building a new, larger house on the hill above the Mölenhoff.⁹⁷ Construction had begun in 1936, shortly after the original signing of the contract. In the village of Grebin, there were rumors that the poet was erecting a veritable castle with thirty-five rooms. Although these stories were exaggerated, the new house was impressive and can still be viewed by anyone willing to travel the few miles to Grebin from

the train station in Plön. Blunck and Emmes once again dined out as they pleased. The “Wohligkeit bürgerlicher Lebensführung,” which had disappeared in 1929, returned.

In the years since the poet's death, Blunck's defenders have argued that the financial rewards he received after 1935 should not be held against him.⁹⁸ Through their eyes, he, like numerous other artists and luminati, was simply doing what he had to do – making a living – and, in the process, submitted to the “structurally determined opportunism” of the time.⁹⁹ The problem with such logic is that Blunck's ties to the regime remained strong. Moreover, he used these ties to promote his work, as letters to Nazi officials demonstrate.¹⁰⁰ A number of other writers who had maintained significant connections early on, like Hans Grimm, distanced themselves after 1935. Others, like Ernst Jünger, refused formal attachments from the beginning and went on to write books, like Jünger's *Auf den Marmorklippen*, that were lightly veiled attacks on the regime. To these writers, “structurally determined opportunism,” although a euphemism, might be applied. In Blunck's case, the term appears inappropriate. If he had come by the end of 1935 to realize the oppressive and corrupt nature of the regime, as his defenders assert, then why did he spend the next four years trying to build international support for a Germany under this regime's control?

Blunck was himself wary of his continued ties to the regime. His enthusiasm and literary successes accompanied frustrations and a gradual disempowerment at the DAW similar to his experience in the RSK. Between 1936 and 1939, Blunck and Holthöfer often griped about poor relations with Rosenberg and “his circle.”¹⁰¹ In general, Rosenberg and his associates at the *Außenpolitische Stelle* believed that the “friendship societies” neglected party interests.¹⁰² Goebbels and his officials at the Propaganda Ministry became indignant if they were not informed of minor decision-making in the DAW and often griped about the organization.¹⁰³

On account of such complaints, in late 1937 Rosenberg, Goebbels, and Ribbentrop demanded that Blunck join the party. Even Hitler chimed in on the matter.¹⁰⁴ Months later, Blunck pondered how Hitler's seeming hostility reflected a lack of appreciation for literature and poetry:

Ist es so, daß der Führer, bei dem immer noch der Hass gegen das alte Literarientum durchbricht, auch gegen das Schrifttum von heute, das er nicht kennt, noch kennenlernen kann, jene alte Einstellung fortsetzt? Ist es, weil jemand, der die Musik liebt, unsere Sprache nicht versteht? [...] Aber der Führer liebt doch Wagner! Was verschüttet ihm den Weg zu der sicherlich klareren Wortführung von heute, zu dem außerkirchlichen "Traum der Götter"?¹⁰⁵ (Can it be true that the *Führer*, who always reveals himself to be hateful of the old *Literati*, who is also against the writing of today, which he does not know and cannot get to know, continues in his old position? Can it be because someone who loves music does not understand our language? [...] But the Führer loves Wagner! What in him buries the path to the certainly clearer literary wording of today, to the non-ecclesiastical "Dream of the Gods"?)

Hitler, Blunck believed, demanded "crystal clarity" in art. Fairy tales, ballads, and poetry were too amorphous, too intangible for him.

On June 25, 1937 Blunck joined the party, but the move did not end his difficulties. The same year, funding for the DAW reached a crisis. In order to protect the VVE's and the DAW's formal independence, Blunck and Holthöfer sought private financing. At meetings with industrial leaders, including Krupp von Bohlen-Halbach of the *Hitlerspende*, an industrial foundation,¹⁰⁶ Blunck argued as he had for book exports: "Nötiger als ein neues Artillerieregiment, nötiger als der gefüllte Säckel der an der Gegenwart gewinnenden Industrie sei die Gegenwirkung gegen die Kreuzzugströmungen im Ausland."¹⁰⁷ (More important than a new artillery regiment, more important than the full money bag of today's industry, profiting from present times, is the counteraction to the international crusade [against Germany].) Eventually, *Hitlerspende* representatives pledged several million marks, but on the condition that the foundation control the organization's political goals. According to his diaries, Blunck declined the proposal. His refusal was confirmed several months later, when Offergeld acknowledged the failure to acquire financing: "The DAW and the Friendship Societies that work in collaboration with it at present cannot continue to fulfill the significant duties with which they have been endowed."¹⁰⁸

Ribbentrop had helped finance the German-English Society from the beginning.¹⁰⁹ He now offered funding to the DAW, but only if he received greater authority over the organization. As Holthöfer explained to Blunck,

I have the impression that the Foreign Ministry wants absolute control and that [should it provide the funding] we, as the board of directors, will probably play a laughable role, which will consist of our constructing only a façade for the true arrangements. We will be excluded from all participation and decision making.¹¹⁰

In Nazi Germany funding never came without strings. In late 1938, Blunck and Holthöfer admitted the futility of their effort. Exasperated, the VVE's president, Offergeld, resigned. Holthöfer left shortly thereafter.¹¹¹ In August 1938, under pressure, Blunck expanded the DAW's board from three to five members. Party loyalists assumed the new posts.¹¹² In October, two SS men, Werner Lorenz and Hermann Behrends, joined the board of the VVE.¹¹³ The two were from the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* ("Department for Relations with Ethnic Germans"; VOMI) at the Foreign Ministry.¹¹⁴ They thereby revealed the DAW's and VVE's clear connection to the issue of the ethnic Germans.¹¹⁵ Both men were Ribbentrop appointees and reflected the increasing influence accorded the minister as foreign policy took center stage.

In November 1938, as Ribbentrop prepared for negotiations with the French government, he asked Blunck for the assistance of the DAW. In this case, however, he wanted absolute control over the department's involvement in the matter. The disagreement that arose therefrom further underscores the "structuralist" interpretation of Nazi Germany. Since the DAW's statutes specifically forbade the exclusive jurisdiction of any single ministry over the department, the poet told Ribbentrop that he could not oblige him without a change in the statutes, and this would require negotiations with Goebbels. Moreover, Goebbels, who still coveted his influence over the organization, would never agree to the change. As Blunck noted in his diary, as president of the DAW he could "ein bindendes Statut nicht außer Acht lassen" (not disregard a binding statute); he was a "Jurist – 'Rechtswahrer'" (jurist – "protector of laws").¹¹⁶ Ribbentrop became exasperated at the poet's stubbornness and demanded that Blunck join the SS, appoint an SS-man as president of the VVE, or submit his resignation. Although Blunck refused to join the SS, he designated Lorenz as president of the VVE. Lorenz had no experi-

ence in international affairs. Taking his orders from Ribbentrop, he refused to listen to Blunck.¹¹⁷

The poet's attention to legal details, as demonstrated here, was characteristic of his meticulous nature and helped him claim his innocence after the war. Like many collaborators, he could argue that he had followed "rules" to the letter and had therefore done nothing "illegal." At least in a literal sense, this assertion may have been truer in his case than in others, although the circumstance in no way excused his complicity.

After Lorenz's new appointment, Blunck's enthusiasm for the cause evaporated. Only weeks before the outbreak of war, he declined to organize a gathering between Estonian representatives and the Nordic Society, because the Foreign Ministry was unequivocally opposed to the idea and a meeting would only raise Ribbentrop's ire.¹¹⁸ Unbeknownst to Blunck, Ribbentrop was about to write Estonia off in the secret protocols to the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939. The year before, the poet had published *Wolter von Plettenberg: Deutschordensmeister in Livland*, about Plettenberg's heroic defense of the eastern Baltic region against Ivan the Terrible. Honoring the German *Drang nach Osten* and Plettenberg's arrest of the Russian menace, this "historical" novel signaled the poet's opposition to any treaty that would appease Communist Russia, let alone leave Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to the whims of the Red Army:

Der Ausbreitung Rußlands war die erste Schranke gesetzt! [...]

[...] Alle siegreichen Namen vergangener Kriege, alle großen Führer der zarischen Heere hatte Iwan gegen Plettenberg eingesetzt; seine besten Truppen, die Nowgorod, die Litauer und Polen, die Tartaren und Kosaken in des Zartums Macht gezwungen hatten, waren an einem einzigen Tag einem kleinen Häuflein deutscher Ritter erlegen. Iwan selbst hatte die Heere gesammelt, zum erstenmal hatte auch ihn das Glück verlassen. Die beiden Unüberwindlichen hatten sich miteinander gemessen, und der Deutsche hatte gesiegt.

Die Schlacht bei Pleskau bedeutete zugleich, daß, anders als in den übrigen vom Zaren unterjochten Ländern, Esten, Liven, Letten, Litauer und Deutsche ihr Volkstum zu bewahren vermochten.¹¹⁹

(The first barrier was placed on Russia's expansion! [...] Against Plettenberg, Ivan had deployed all of the victorious names of past wars, all of the

great leaders of the Czarist armies. On one single day, his best troops, who had subjugated Novgorod, the Lithuanians and Poles, the Tartars and Cossacks to the Czar's rule, were defeated by a small contingent of German knights. Ivan had assembled the armies himself; for the first time luck had deserted him. The two invincible [i.e. Ivan and Plettenberg] had matched themselves against one another, and the German had won. [...] At the same time, the battle of Pleskau signified that, in contrast to the other lands that the Czar had subdued, Estonians, Livonians, Letts, Lithuanians, and Germans would be able to defend their national traditions.)

War was imminent. In *Nationalsozialistische Außenpolitik, 1933–1938*, Jacobsen argued that historians must examine the expansive web of both formal and informal international organizations in the Third Reich, if they are properly to understand National Socialist foreign policy in the period before World War II. The DAW and the VVE underscore this point. Both organizations were components of an extensive matrix of organizations that – often operating in an informal way and below the traditional radar screen of foreign policy, as both the DAW and VVE did – sought to sway international sentiment on Nazi Germany's behalf. As a result, Blunck was an unofficial ambassador of Nazi foreign policy during the period 1936 to 1939.

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Chapter IX: World War II and the Aftermath

After the outbreak of war in September 1939, the German-English Society closed and handed its headquarters in Berlin over to the Foreign Ministry's Press Club. In Britain, Domville was imprisoned as a traitor. In contrast, after France's fall the German-French Society expanded to forty-two branches¹ and commenced propaganda activities, like stocking prisoner-of-war libraries with classic and contemporary German literature to "bring the prisoners closer" to Germany.² Dedicated to building a "new" Europe "against corrupting Jewish, Bolshevik influence, in favor of a true future for workers," the Society also helped German institutions work with collaborating French industries and businesses.³

For the Nordic Society, war with Norway represented fratricide. In his wartime edition of *Deutschland und der Norden*, Blunck asserted that the Norwegians had fought reluctantly, as if with lumps in their throats.⁴ He neglected the truth, which was that the Scandinavian countries, particularly Norway and Denmark, had drawn closer not to Germany, but to the West, especially England. At the outbreak of war, *Der Norden's* leading editorial betrayed reality:

The North did not want to hear Germany's call. Its answer was: "The border of the North lies in southern Denmark!" [...] We on the other hand looked across the banks of the Baltic and perceived in the lands around the North and Baltic seas a space of fate, which is determined by the law of blood and race.⁵

Like the German-French Society, the Nordic Society increased its propaganda activities during the war. It hosted Scandinavian *Wehrmacht* volunteers – the "Viking Battalions" – on excursions into the countryside, in order to demonstrate the "beauties" of the "fatherland."⁶ In collaboration with the Hitler Youth, the Nordic Society also ran a camp in Husum for German, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish adolescents.

Blunck believed that Germany was justified in going to war over Danzig and the Polish Corridor. In his eyes, the situation reflected yet

another example of Wilson's forgotten promise of "self-determination." Nevertheless, since the DAW's and VVE's purpose, at least from his point of view, had been to preserve peace, the war's outbreak represented a personal failure. In the summer of 1940, Blunck announced his desire to leave the DAW. Ribbentrop responded that it was impossible for the poet to leave "at the present moment, when culture propaganda" was "so powerfully important," and he asked him to remain until the "victorious end of the war."⁷ For appearance's sake, they reached a compromise. As he had been at the RSK, Blunck was "promoted" to the position of "honorary president" of the DAW. *SS-Obergruppenführer* Lorenz, from the VVE, became the organization's new president.

After the *Wehrmacht* ground to a halt outside Moscow, events turned against Blunck. In 1942, Rosenberg's *Reichsstelle* blacklisted his *Andachtbüchlein*. In 1944, it blacklisted his *Sage vom Reich* (1940). In this collection of heroic tales about the Holy Roman Empire, Blunck had interwoven references to Christ with allusions to Nordic gods like Thor and Woden.⁸ According to his diary, the Christian aspects upset "die jungen Herren der Parteikanzlei" (the young *Herren* at the party chancellery).⁹ As the war intensified, the DAW's budget dwindled and, one by one, its employees were lost to Russia's battlefields. In 1943, the headquarters of the DAW and VVE in Berlin were bombed out, along with the headquarters of five friendship societies. The DAW and the VVE moved to the headquarters of the "German-Greek Society," but, in late 1944, allied bombs decimated this building too.

Blunck served part of the war in an army battalion as what can best be described as a "literary officer," attempting to lift troop morale with lectures, poetry, and fairy tales. His speeches and literary work, particularly *Deutschland und der Norden*, were distributed in special editions to troops at the front.¹⁰ With its exaltation of Nordic unity, *Deutschland und der Norden* assured soldiers that they were supported by a vast Germanic hinterland that included the Scandinavian countries. In addition, he traveled throughout Germany and occupied Europe on reading tours, visiting Oslo in October 1942, for example, under the auspices of the Nordic Society. His reading tours continued well into 1944, until train travel became difficult. During

intervals when he was not serving with his battalion or giving readings, Blunck minded his farm. By 1943, one Polish and two Yugoslavian prisoners-of-war labored at the Mölenhoff.

During the last period of the war, seed and other materials became scarce. As the allies bombed Kiel, errant projectiles fell on Blunck's fields. Train travel between nearby Plön, Kiel, and Hamburg came to a halt. Electricity disappeared, and Blunck awoke to his daily chores in darkness. As hopes for a German victory disappeared, he became increasingly melancholy.¹¹ His diary reads as if a dark thundercloud, reminiscent of an image in one of his poems from the first world war, were falling upon him: "[L]astend wie Schatten ferner Gewitter, dunkel wurde die Welt" (Oppressive like the shadows of distant thunder storms, the world became dark).¹² His one consolation was that the British – his "Anglo-Saxon" cousins – would occupy Schleswig-Holstein and much of Lower Germany.

According to Blunck's own account, the prisoners laboring at the Mölenhoff and the other farms in the village of Grebin began deserting after they learned of the German surrender. Soon, British soldiers appeared and ordered them back to work, but a number of the Poles refused.¹³ Meanwhile, the Mölenhoffhuus became a boardinghouse of sorts for twenty refugee families from the East. For want of space, Blunck turned a number of German soldiers away who sought food and shelter.

His first inkling that he was not going to escape the war blameless came on May 12. Two British soldiers visited the Mölenhoff and asked a series of pointed questions about his role during the Third Reich.¹⁴ One of them wanted to know if he were the famed paragon of "Blood and Earth" literature, an insinuation that irked Blunck, because he had never considered himself a representative of the genre. While Blunck's sea themes rendered him somewhat unique within the movement, his inability to acknowledge that his literature nevertheless represented the genre in critical respects reflected, like his failure to acknowledge the criminality of the Nazi regime, an inability to admit simple truths. Since Blunck is sometimes cited as *the* representative of *Blut und Boden* literature in surveys of the period, his fame in the genre has stuck with him.¹⁵

The British soldiers forbade Blunck to leave the area. In the days that followed, he was further questioned. With the arrogant naiveté that typified his opinions after the war, he suggested that he had done nothing wrong and unabashedly described his institutional affiliations. He asserted that, through the DAW, he had done his best to preserve peace. He also defended the German decision to go to war. The encounters ended not with his arrest, but with a request for an autographed volume of his fairy tales.¹⁶

About the same time, stories of concentration camp atrocities reached Grebin. Initially, Blunck dismissed the reports as exaggeration and propaganda. However, influenced by his wife, he soon became convinced of the stories' veracity. His diary comments on the issue are worth quoting at length, because they illuminate how one *Literatus* close to the Nazi establishment learned of and viewed the crimes. There is little reason to question the earnestness of these diary entries. They were typed out by the poet's secretary, who often took dictation from him. Contemporary letters to his friends demonstrated similar attitudes.¹⁷

Until the end of his life, Blunck asserted that knowledge of the offenses was limited:

Ich kann es nicht fassen, kann es besonders deshalb nicht verstehen, weil nichts von all dem zu uns gedrungen war [...]. Zuweilen drang dies und jenes einem ans Ohr, man begehrte auf und erfuhr beruhigt, daß alles schlimme Ausstreungen seien. Man wurde von einer Mauer des Verschweigens umgeben.¹⁸ (I cannot figure it out; I can especially not really understand it, because nothing about all of it got through to us [...]. Occasionally, one heard this or that, one revolted against it and learned, reassuringly, that all of it was but terrible rumors. One was surrounded by a wall of concealment.)

In self-absolution, he blamed the crimes on the legacy of the cultural and moral degeneration that had originated in the Weimar Republic:

Wir hatten zwischen 1920 and 1930 nach einem verlorenen Krieg, der [...] nicht durch unsere Schuld [...] entstanden war, [...] eine Gesinnungsart bei uns zugelassen, die jede Überlieferung und jedes Selbstgefühl zerstörte. Die geduldeten Veröffentlichungen von Christus mit einer Gasmaske, den die deutschen Soldaten ans Kreuz schlugen [...] die unsäglichen, immer wieder

ätzenden und herabziehenden Bermerkungen über das eigene Volk unter Anpreisung der Nachbarn, sind gleich wie bei Kindern so auch bei Völkern eine falsche Erziehung. Die Völker halten sich schließlich wirklich für so schlecht, wie sie sich dargestellt sehen, verlieren die Selbstzucht, das Bewußtsein ihres Adels, die Kraft der Seele und verrohen in einer Weise, die zu den Entsetzlichkeiten führen, die geschehen sind.¹⁹ (Between 1920 and 1930, after a lost war, [...] for which we were not to blame, [...] we developed a way of thinking that destroyed every tradition and sense of ourselves. The tolerated publications of Christ with a gas mask,²⁰ whom the German soldiers beat on the cross [...] the unspeakable and again and again corrosive remarks about our own people, while glorifying our neighbors, are – as for children, so for nations – a false upbringing. The people eventually hold themselves to be truly so bad, as they see themselves portrayed, lose their self-discipline, the consciousness of their nobility, the strength of the soul, and become brutalized in a way that leads to the atrocities that have occurred.)

He also historicized the misdeeds in the terror surrounding “all revolutions”:

Alle Revolutionen führen zu Entsetzlichkeiten, ich glaubte, daß die unsere davon frei gewesen wäre. Russland, England, Frankreich haben ihre Jahre des Umsturzes mit furchtbaren Erinnerungen belastet. Daß mein eigenes Volk zu einem gleichen fähig wäre, wußte man zwar seit den Bauernkriegen, man hatte aber für die Gegenwart Wiederholungen nicht für möglich gehalten.²¹ (All revolutions lead to appalling occurrences; I believed that ours had been free of them. Russia, England, and France burdened their years of transformation with dreadful memories. That my own folk were capable of the same, one had known since the Peasants' Wars, but one had thought similar repetitions were no longer possible in the present.)

Blunck lamented the deaths of Jews whom he had known, like Benjamin Crémieux, former president of the French Pen-Club:

Es ist furchtbar für mich und erfüllt mit einer kaum tragbaren Bitterkeit, daß diese Menschen, mit denen man Jahre hindurch gewirkt hatte, von einigen Wahnsinnigen hingeopfert wurden. Wie belastet das uns und auf wie lange! Auch wenn ich oftmals Crémieux' Gegner war, [...] er war [...] ein Kamerad, dessen furchtbares Ende mich nicht ruhen läßt.²² (It is terrible for me and fills me with an almost unbearable bitterness, that these people, with whom one had worked for years, were sacrificed by a few crazy people. How deeply that weighs down on us and for how long! Even if I were often Crémieux's op-

ponent, [...] he was [...] a comrade, whose terrible end will not give me any peace.)

However, the poet also pointed to the “Jews from the East” as the source of the anti-semitism that produced the murders: “Eine schwere Schuld haben die auf sich geladen, die von 1920/30 die polnischen Juden in Massen über die Grenze zogen, bis man sie schloß.”²³ (Heavy guilt have they invited upon themselves – those who between 1920 and 1930 brought the Polish Jews over the border in masses until one closed it.) From the corridors of his mind, the poet could not extinguish the spiteful thought that certain “bad” Jews, or their helpers, were responsible for the genocide, a point that exhibited his persistent weakness for scapegoating.

After pondering the atrocities, Blunck acknowledged the criminal nature of the Nazi regime. His anger was reflected in statements he made in the months and years that followed like “[r]assisch hatte die Führung der NSDAP nichts mit den Germanen zu tun, weder Hitler noch Himmler” (racially the leadership of the NSDAP had nothing to do with the Germanic peoples, neither Hitler nor Himmler) – presumably a reference to the fact that both men lacked the blond hair and blue eyes characteristic of the “Germanic” race.²⁴ Blunck refused to let the “Nazis’ crimes” taint his heroic image of the Germanic peoples. His greatest complaint was that “einige Wahnsinnige” (a few crazy people)²⁵ – or “einige Gruppen von Narren und Verbrechern” (a few groups of fools and criminals), as he once referred to the Nazis²⁶ – had permanently stained German, and Germanic, history.

The poet never included himself in the “Nazi” category. Until the end of his life, his sense of his own culpability remained limited to the belief that he had used poor judgement in allying himself with the Nazis. He also asserted that his decisions were understandable in light of the regime’s constitutional rise to power, Nazi achievements in the 1930s, which, he argued, even leading figures in the West had applauded, and the secrecy with which the Nazis had pursued their most horrible acts. As he noted several years later, if one were to judge him a criminal, one would have to denazify half of Europe, including the Holy See and Churchill.²⁷ He refused to acknowledge

any guilt. On the contrary, he believed that he deserved gratitude for his efforts to protect German literature during the period 1933–35.²⁸

At the Mölenhoff, news of the arrests of people who had collaborated during the Third Reich darkened the mood. As Blunck commented, “fühlt sich niemand sicher, der sich für sein Vaterland in diesen Jahren eingesetzt hat” (no one feels secure who worked on behalf of his fatherland during these years).²⁹ On July 12, 1945 British soldiers arrested the poet and took him to the *Internierungslager* at Neumünster-Gadeland, near Kiel. Blunck was arrested according to Order #52 of the Occupation Government, which interned significant Third Reich cultural notables. Although he did not know it at the time, the same order spared from imprisonment presidents of the chambers who had left their positions before 1937 – a provision that may have been included in order to spare Richard Strauss from imprisonment and prosecution.³⁰ Forgetting his other posts, the poet later surmised that he was imprisoned because an old woman in Grebin, who cleaned for a British officer, betrayed his involvement in the RSK and “ein Beamter des Secret Service davon hört und sofort und auf Grund des Gesetzes 52 verhaftet, ohne es zu Ende gelesen zu haben” (a secret Service official hears of it and on account of law 52 immediately seeks the arrest, without having read [the law] in its entirety).³¹

Blunck was not interrogated until September 19, 1945, seven weeks into his internment. By this time, he was aware of Order #52's clause excepting pre-1937 presidents, so he emphasized that, following disagreements with Goebbels and Rosenberg, he had left the RSK in 1935. Although the officials promised to investigate his case, they never followed through. The poet remained at the camp for another four-and-a-half months. During this period he remained true to his sensibilities and contemplated the possibility, in the aftermath of the “Auseinandersetzung zwischen den beiden führenden germanischen Staaten” (conflict between the two leading Germanic states [i.e. England and Germany]), of a Germanic alliance (*Bund*). The alliance would include “nicht nur die Vorstufe Europas sondern auch die der vereinigten germanischen Völker bis USA” (not only the preliminary stage of Europe, but also the united Germanic peoples up to the USA).³² Also during this period, Rosenberg wrote Blunck

from his own confinement that he had left his wife and daughter, Irene, in Flensburg without any housing. He wondered if Blunck “could learn something about what had happened to them, even help Irene get a job.”³³ Blunck was in no position to help.

In early January 1946, Blunck was released. He had suffered from weakness and heart palpitations throughout his confinement and was in poor health upon his return home. According to his diary, the Mölenhoff still harbored some twenty refugee families. Badly managed by one of Blunck’s hands, it was in disrepair, and equipment had been stolen. Moreover, villagers in Grebin were now aware that the poet had been enriched during the Third Reich. They were vying to parcel his farm.³⁴ There were rumors that the party, even Hitler himself, had presented the Mölenhoff as a gift.³⁵

Meanwhile, his literature was under scrutiny. A local book merchant refused to sell *König Geiserich* (1936), because he believed its hero symbolized Hitler.³⁶ The physical contrast between Hitler and the tall, brawny Geiserich could not have been starker. Nonetheless, in light of the fact that Geiserich represented the poet’s ideal of authority and Blunck had supported Hitler throughout the Third Reich, this was a reasonable interpretation. In this way, Blunck became aware of the book’s infamy as one of his archetypal “*Führer*” novels. Kiel and Hamburg newspapers depicted his books as Nazi classics.

Blunck was soon stripped of his publishing rights.³⁷ In April 1946, his books were prohibited from bookstores in Hannover. Shortly thereafter, they were banned in Berlin and Vienna. In 1947, British occupation authorities destroyed 30,000 volumes of his works being stored in warehouses and banned him from publishing in their zone. Blunck was also forbidden to give lectures or readings. In his own eyes, the ban was hypocritical:

Ich selbst sehe, daß ich während des Dritten Reichs kein einziges Buch vernichtet habe und die Werke der Kommunisten wie der jüdischen Schriftsteller auch durch das vergangene Jahrzwölft erhalten habe.³⁸ (I myself am aware that I did not destroy one single book during the Third Reich and also preserved the works of communists as well as Jewish writers during the past dozen years.)

While he did not personally destroy any books, Blunck seemed to forget the basic truth that, under his watch, the RSK was complicit in a massive purge of the book world and the professional disenfranchisement of thousands of writers.

An exchange between Blunck and Thomas Mann was revealing. During Blunck's imprisonment at Neumünster, his brother, Rudolf, who lived in New York City, had sought Mann's assistance in the poet's case. Mann had refused, however, and, in reply to Rudolf, condemned Blunck's conduct during the Third Reich. Mann was misinformed about the length of Blunck's tenure at the RSK, which he believed was twelve years. Upon his release from the internment camp, Blunck used this error as a pretext to write Mann and defend himself. With his letter, he included a memorandum detailing how he had believed that Hitler would restore a democratic constitution and how he had worked on behalf of "Unterricht in deutscher Sprache im Auslande" (foreign education in the German language) at the German Academy in Munich.³⁹ Mann's response was scathing:

Is so much blindness possible? Is such a lack of perspective and feeling for the atrociousness that was going on permissible to an intellectual person? Did Hitler's magic consist therein, that he made people believe that he would be the protector of the Weimar constitution? Before he even granted a new constitution? And the "Teaching of German Abroad"? Every child in the wide world knew what was meant by the euphemism, namely the undermining everywhere of the strength of the democratic opposition, its demoralization through Nazi Propaganda. Only the German writer did not know this.⁴⁰

After receiving the letter, Blunck declined to acknowledge Mann's criticism:

Es ist schade daß er emigriert ist, er kennt sein Volk nicht mehr, sieht in der Zeit von 1933/45 das absolut Böse und meint, jeder hätte es erkennen müssen. Er ist ein alter Mann, ich will versuchen, höflich zu antworten; es ist besser, in guten Erinnerungen voneinander zu gehen.⁴¹ (It is a shame that he emigrated. He doesn't know his people any more, sees in the period 1933–1945 absolute evil, and believes that each person must have recognized it. He is an old man; I want to attempt to answer politely. It is better to part amiably.)

Two years later, in August 1948, Mann wrote Blunck an amicable note in which he denied that he had ever “‘been filled with wrath’ (*gegrollt*) against anyone in Germany (except for the rogues in power).”⁴² Blunck’s defenders have argued that this was a “correcting (*berichtigende*) letter,” through which Mann withdrew his earlier conviction. However, while the note was strikingly conciliatory, a sign of the friendship between the two men, and evidence that Mann’s ire regarding collaborators was diminishing, it did not rescind the novelist’s earlier judgment.

Blunck’s dismissal of Mann’s criticism was not unique. The idea of an “inner emigration,” which Frank Thiess popularized through his public declaration, also in reply to Mann, that only those writers who had endured events could speak on the country’s behalf, was espoused by myriad writers who had stayed in Nazi Germany.⁴³ Even those, like Blunck, who benefited from the regime and whose complicity rendered the term’s application difficult, believed that their participation in the literary world had alleviated the harshest aspects of Nazi policies. Indeed, to this day Blunck’s defenders have described his actions during the Third Reich as praiseworthy, even though the record shows this assertion to be highly suspect.

The ban on the poet remained in force until his denazification trial in 1949. In the process leading up to the proceedings, his personal and professional files went from Plön to Eutin, then to Kiel, where he came before a “special committee” (*Sonderausschuß*) of literary experts on March 16, 1949. The official complaint stated that Blunck had “through his attitude, position, and activities, significantly promoted and strengthened the National Socialist rule of terror” and “through his poetic work” had “contributed to the destruction of traditional cultural life.”⁴⁴ To support this claim, the prosecution brought before the court a series of witnesses who accused Blunck of misdeeds ranging from book burnings to anti-Jewish pogroms. In an almost comic turn of events, the prosecution’s star witness was Blunck’s old enemy, Robert Walter. Unlike other witnesses for the prosecution, Walter eagerly engaged himself in the trial. In the months leading up to the proceedings, he submitted himself to repeated interviews about Blunck and wrote numerous letters to the prosecution.

At the trial itself, he emphasized that Blunck had

out of racist and other reasons, stripped numerous writers of their pens and made them desperate, so that they had to emigrate, were arrested and tortured, pushed into the waste heap, or submitted to the gas spigot.⁴⁵

A number of writers, including Alfred Döblin, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, and Thiess, sent written testimonies to the court. In contrast to Walter, they generally agreed that the poet was not a genuine Nazi but “one who profited” (*Nutznießler*) from the regime. Alfred Döblin commented that Blunck was “a profiteer, someone who used the situation, as it offered itself, to its fullest.”⁴⁶ When Thiess had heard that Blunck had become president of the RSK, he had thought it had something to do with his “poor financial situation” at the time.⁴⁷ These interpretations overlooked the genuine harmony between Blunck’s art and the atmosphere of the period. In light of the financial benefits he reaped, opportunism was certainly an important motivator. However, his traditionalist, provincial, and imperial outlook found much to please it in the regime. Therefore, this opportunism in no small way involved the opportunity for Blunck to assert his provincial *Weltanschauung*. Financial and intellectual self-interest went hand in hand.

In Blunck’s defense, his lawyer, Max Emcke, asserted that the poet had only accepted the presidency of the RSK reluctantly and because respected artists like Strauss had taken positions in other chambers. He exalted his client’s recommendations of Jews and socialists to the RSK, as well as his “concordat” essay, *Rede an die Jugend der Westländer*, in which Blunck had stated that he was working towards an understanding with the Jews in Germany. He even claimed that Blunck was an “anti-fascist” president of the Reich Literary Chamber – a perverse reference to the fact that Blunck was a “democrat” in the image of Lower-German tradition and believed in a “Nordic Renaissance” rather than fascism in the Italian sense.

More than a hundred written testimonies by professors and other notables throughout Europe, some of them Jews, vouched for Blunck’s character, international efforts, and supposedly “non-political” activities.⁴⁸ W. E. Collinson, an old English friend, testified,

for example, that “with regard to all of your contact with me, I found you genuinely eager to create a better understanding between our peoples.”⁴⁹ Most significantly, Emcke undermined Walter’s testimony by explaining his earlier relationship to the poet. Moreover, an affidavit from a former Gestapo agent suggested that Walter had worked for the SD.⁵⁰ Blunck himself testified that Walter “war mein absoluter Gegner. Immer wenn Herr Walter irgendwo war, wurde von mir gesprochen” (was my absolute opponent. Whenever Walter was somewhere, the conversation was about me).⁵¹ Walter was obsessed with the poet. Nonetheless, the essence of his accusations – that Blunck was complicit in ruining the lives of innumerable writers – was true.

After two-and-a-half days of proceedings, the court reached a verdict.⁵² Blunck had sought classification to “Group Five,” which would have signified that his connection to the Nazis merited censure, but not more serious punishment. However, the court sentenced him to “Group Four,” that of *Mitläufer* (“fellow traveler”). This category indicated the opinion that, although Blunck did not, in the sense of a committed Nazi, “significantly promote” the regime, he had approved of National Socialism, attached his name to it, and benefited by his association. The court had accepted the testimony of Döblin, Thiess, and the Manns, rather than that of Walter, whose declarations pointed to categories two or three – those reserved for died-in-the-wool Nazis. Damning for the poet were the records demonstrating a sizeable increase in his income between 1933 and 1944, particularly the nearly 200,000 marks he had earned in 1943.⁵³ With stubbornness that was typical of him, Blunck refused to acknowledge the financial benefits he had gleaned during the period and claimed that most of this money had gone towards war taxes.⁵⁴

The court also criticized Blunck for combining propaganda with his work at the DAW and the “friendship societies.” Blunck disagreed with this accusation as well. His refusal to accept the court’s verdict revealed the degree to which his *Weltanschauung* and artistic tastes influenced him. If Blunck were to admit his literature’s political implications, he had first to distinguish the political from the artistic in it. However, he seemed incapable of doing so – a point that was

best reflected in his conviction that essays like “*Deutschland und der Norden*” or “*Dichtung und neuer Staat*” were purely cultural.

As punishment, Blunck was fined 10,000 marks,⁵⁵ to be paid towards Germany’s reconstruction, and 500 marks for court costs.⁵⁶ According to one commentator, he got off scott-free, because the majority of his assets and beloved Mölenhoff were left intact.⁵⁷ The poet, however, considered his treatment unfair, since Strauss, who had been a chamber president for a comparable length of time, had received no punishment at all (although the composer’s death in 1949 rendered the point mute). The fact that Strauss’s name is rarely connected with the Third Reich is notable, and a question of fairness does arise. Nonetheless, Blunck continued to forget that his collusion had lasted ten years longer than the composer’s. Because he refused to acknowledge that there was anything political about his work at the DAW, other than the pursuit of so-called “peace,” he refused to admit any wrongdoing whatsoever after 1935.⁵⁸ Now that the murderous effects of Nazi rule were clear, the poet’s inability to acknowledge his collaboration in the regime only underscored his persona as a quintessential collaborator, for he was incapable of recognizing the error in such behavior. Although his ideological and artistic affinity to the Nazis suggested a more profound connection to the regime, his conviction as a *Mitläufer* was in this sense fitting.

Surprisingly to Blunck’s critics, the court restored his publishing and lecturing rights.⁵⁹ This decision was helped by the testimony of even the poet’s “enemies” that, although his books were used by the regime for political purposes, there was nothing necessarily political about them. According to Alfred Döblin, Blunck was

not a theoretical molder and was never a true activist [...]. He lacked the intellectual energy. It is unlikely that he sought a true political goal, and that he fought in a serious political way.⁶⁰

Statements of this kind, which confirmed Blunck’s status as a *Mitläufer*, played to his own depiction of himself as “non-political.” However, these opinions missed the point that during the Third Reich, as during Weimar, tradition and provincialism had political implications. Since the Nazis legitimized the *Weltanschauung* inscribed

in Blunck's work through his numerous appointments and thus bolstered their regime, Blunck was, whether he liked it or not, a political artist and even an activist of sorts.

After the trial, doors did not immediately open for him.⁶¹ Newspapers that carried positive reviews of his books received barrages of complaints. Protests interrupted the few readings he was invited to give. As he noted in the unpublished third volume of his memoirs, "das große Verschweigen, der andere Teil der 'Entnazifizierung' begann" (the great secrecy, the other side of "denazification," began).⁶² He focused his irritation at this circumstance on the emigrants, who dominated the German literary scene in the immediate post-war period. He looked forward to the day when the influence of the emigrants would dissipate.⁶³ After 1945, his enemies were the same people they had been before and during the Third Reich.

According to literary historians, it was representative of the "Cold War reorientation and rapid rehabilitation" that took place around 1950 that writers who had collaborated with the Nazis reestablished their careers.⁶⁴ In these circumstances, Blunck returned to the literary stage. In 1951, he reworked *Kampf um New York*, and it appeared as a novel. Shortly thereafter, the first two volumes of his memoirs appeared, the second of which related his role in the Third Reich in an unremorseful and self-absolving way.⁶⁵ Among other publications was a slightly revised version of *Deutsche Heldensagen* (1952),⁶⁶ which had first appeared in 1938.⁶⁷ Containing the poet's retelling of medieval stories like Beowulf, Tannhäuser, and Jung Siegfried, this collection of heroic folk tales demonstrated that his interests (as well as his publisher's) remained unchanged. In the original version, the last page had displayed an illustration of a Hitler Youth leader educating his charges near the ruins of a medieval castle. This was removed from the re-edition.

Sometime during the period following the war,⁶⁸ Blunck asked his friend Gustav Schwantes, the expert in early Germanic history at Hamburg University, about reports that a church in New York City had been built on a thirteenth-century Viking foundation. Schwantes responded that it was too soon to speak of such things; he himself was no longer doing his earlier investigations, but was now a hobby

botanist. In contrast, the Nazis' use of Nordic themes towards murderous ends had left Blunck's passion for the subject unaffected.

While not in the numbers they had reached during the Third Reich, Blunck's books sold. As he commented to Maurice Boucher, his old readership was more faithful than the literary critics, who continued to lambaste his work.⁶⁹ Of greatest success were his legends and fairy tales, some of which are still in print.⁷⁰ As Germanists have indicated, public interest in neo-romantic and heroic folk styles did not dissipate until the mid-1960s, after Blunck's death.⁷¹

Blunck's fading appeal might have reflected an attempt among tradition-minded Germans to salvage something from the Third Reich and thus to build continuity into the *Bundesrepublik*. At the same time, his comeback might also have represented a refusal among these same Germans to admit mistakes and acknowledge that traditional genres, when synthesized with ultra-nationalism, had helped bring Germany to catastrophe. A complete break with the conservative literature of the 1920s and 1930s was probably too much to expect from a population in need of a usable past. While never enormously popular, Blunck's literature was a representation of German culture during the first half of the twentieth century, and it struck a chord among segments of the German population. The continuity of such literature from the late nineteenth century into the *Bundesrepublik* suggests continuities in the nationalist, traditionalist mindset during the same periods. The rapid onset of the Cold War and the demonization of the Soviet Union might well have excused some Germans from facing these perpetuities.

Celia Applegate has argued that "in the postwar, *Heimat* has meant forgiving and also a measure of forgetting."⁷² In light of the persevering Lower-German character of Blunck's works, his continued appeal may also have been tied to this point. Through the works of a writer like Blunck, Germans focused on their provincial traditions and history, which had putatively not been tainted by events. In this way, they lessened the trauma of the recent national catastrophe. As Applegate has also pointed out, after the war supporters of *Heimat* have "mostly subscribed to the interpretation of

Nazism as centralized power gone mad.”⁷³ Blunck was one of these subscribers.

After 1951, Blunck returned to his international work and traveled on reading tours to many of the countries he had previously visited.⁷⁴ In 1954, he served as “honorary president,” a sobriquet that seems to have followed him throughout his life, in Schleswig-Holstein’s delegation to a conference on European unity. Later that same year, he traveled to Bonn and spoke with representatives of the CSU about European unity. According to Blunck, the movement evolved from his own vision, and he had been right to start talking about the international order in 1935.⁷⁵ Almost amusingly, however, given his staunch support for a regime that had sought to dominate Europe, he refused to understand why he was being denied a larger role in the new era: “Im dritten Reich hat man uns, sehr zögernd, das Wort gelassen; im Vierten nahm man vielen von uns die offene Rede.”⁷⁶ (In the Third Reich one let us, very reluctantly, speak; in the Fourth, one has taken free speech away from many of us.) The poet’s thoughts regarding the European Union were self-congratulatory and self-justifying. Nonetheless, the similarities between the formation and Hitler’s dream of a Europe federated around Germany are not insignificant.

In a similar light, Blunck lamented Adenauer’s accommodation of the United States. Maintaining his dream that Germany would one day serve as an independent middle, around which Europe would unite, he believed that Germany should accommodate neither the Soviet Union nor America. He also wished that Germany would build its democracy based on the Lower-German heritage. In 1951, he exalted his region’s democratic foundations in his essay *Verfassung und Untergang der Altsächsische Republik*:

Ein echtes Parlament gewählter Vertreter besteht bei den Altsachsen [...]. [W]ählt [...] jeder Gau je dreimal zwölf Abgeordnete aus Adel, Freibauerntum und Laten – der Kleinbauern also. Aus allen Gauen kommen diese Volksvertreter einmal jährlich in der Mitte des Landes zusammen und bestimmen den Richter oder Herzog für das nächste Jahr. – Längst vor der Magna Charta Englands haben wir also bei den Altsachsen ein, wie wir heute sagen würden, aus allgemeinen Wahlen hervorgegangenes Parlament.⁷⁷ (A true parliament of chosen representatives existed among the ancient Saxons

[...]. Each tribal district chose twelve representatives from the nobility, free peasantry, and the “half-free” – meaning the small farmers. From all of the regions these representatives of the people met annually in the middle of the country and decided upon judges or dukes for the next year. – Therefore, long before England’s Great Charter, among the ancient Saxons there existed, as we would say today, a parliament chosen via a broad-based vote.)

Through Blunck’s eyes, the Basic Law, like the Weimar constitution, would only produce further turmoil. Other than the “Scandinavian”⁷⁸ and Swiss constitutions, to which he referred vaguely as appropriate models, he seems to have had no specific document in mind as a replacement. He simply believed it would be better to resurrect the Lower-German “spirit of freedom” that had originated in Marklo some 1,500 years earlier.

In 1956, Emmes died. Her death weighed on Blunck, but he remained active until his last days, planning new tales and another edition of his complete works. In 1959 he gave up the Mölenhoff and moved, along with his sister, into a small house in Hamburg, near the water. As his nephew commented,

he wanted to be close to his relatives and to take part in the cultural life of the city. It was not a move into foreign territory, but a return to the banks of the Elbe, where in his youth he had conceived his first fairy tales.⁷⁹

At the same time, Blunck’s physical strength was waning. He passed away in the spring of 1961, after a brief illness.

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Conclusion

Blunck's return to Hamburg in his last days was fitting. Throughout his life, he had been torn between Hamburg and the countryside. Now, in the twilight of his years, he had returned to his origins, to his place of birth. (Altona was now part of Greater Hamburg.) Through his life's vicissitudes, his attachment to Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany, whether in their Hanseatic, seaside, or countryside qualities, remained his siren.

The literary tide that helped sweep the National Socialists to power flowed, in no small way, from the provinces. Furthermore, the Third Reich was, some qualifications notwithstanding, a victory of "traditional" against "modern" culture. During the 1920s, cultural battle lines foreshadowed the political upheaval of 1933. On the one hand were traditional, provincial writers, like Blunck, who viewed Berlin and the new movements in art as offensive to German and Germanic values. On the other were modern artists, who, frequently based in the cities, particularly in Berlin, saw their own work as Germany's cultural flower and future. According to Blunck's experience, the Nazis' seizure of power represented a victory, though Pyrrhic, for the former group.

The poet's case thus points to continuities in provincial and traditional genres between the 1920s and 1930s. While other artistic forms, such as the visual arts, maintained some facets of the *avant garde* during the first years of the Third Reich, literature took on a strikingly traditional guise from the beginning. This circumstance seems to have been purposefully promoted by the Nazi hierarchy in order to assure the German public of the regime's tradition-rooted goals. It was for this reason that a neo-romantic poet like Blunck, with roots in one of the most tradition-bound regions of Germany, could experience a revival – though shallow and state driven – after 1933.

In a broader sense, Blunck's career validates the contention that, in order to understand German literature during the first half of the twentieth century, one must consider links among the literature of

the Third Reich, Weimar, and the *Kaiserreich*.¹ Blunck wrote during all three periods, and his fairy tales, ballads, poems, and quasi-historic novels represented genres that had been alive since the Classic and Romantic periods. As Blunck himself noted, traditional artists like himself were the vanguard of the new state and had provided the cultural foundation for Germany's rebirth, not vice versa.² In speaking of a "Nordic Renaissance," he expressed his belief that, culturally, the period represented the resurgence of old, even ancient traditions.

Following this logic, the Third Reich was not a "*Betriebsunfall*." Nor was it a "centralized power gone mad," as some provincial writers asserted after 1945.³ On the contrary, in the sense that 1933 represented a reaction of traditional and provincial writers against historical eclipse, it represented a reaction of traditional against modern Germany.⁴ In their drive to power and centralization, the National Socialists consumed and manipulated these provincial and traditional energies. The more deeply National Socialism was grounded in German traditions, provincial and national, the more weighty the picture becomes, for the interpretation raises the question of whether the years after 1945 could ever have eradicated these roots – a point that is underscored by Blunck's recovery, though tenuous, after 1950.

From the perspective of provincial art, Blunck's career supports the contention that in the literature of the period, "there was some kind of idealism at work, and that writers and intellectuals did believe in what they were doing – reacting against the supposed corruption and 'decadence' of the modern age and reasserting traditional values."⁵ "Acceptable" art evolved during the Third Reich and was influenced by competition among Goebbels, Rosenberg, and other Nazi figures. Nonetheless, Blunck fit in, not because he molded his art to the period, but because his art harmonized with the atmosphere evoked and the propaganda employed by the Nazis. He believed deeply in his literature.

By centralizing power in Berlin, the Nazis betrayed their provincial support. One aspect of Blunck's guilt lay in his contention, long after the evidence showed otherwise, that the Nazis would restore the "old Reich" in the spirit of the *Nibelungenlied* and respect

provincial autonomy. True, the pan-German aspects of Nazi policy, particularly the Nazis' determination to undo Versailles and reunite ethnic Germans with Germany, fueled his delusions. However, he maintained wild fantasies, like the idea that the Nazis would restore a "constitution" in the image of "old Marklo," long after it was clear that this would not be the case. In pensive moments, Blunck realized the poverty of his hopes. However, he rarely let on to disillusionment in his diaries or letters. Ignoring or playing down signs of evil, he clung to his fairy-tale image, even when truth stared him in the face. The émigré writers, like Heinrich Mann and Feuchtwanger, threatened to break this spell, and Blunck hated them for doing so.

Over the last three decades, much has been made of the so-called German "*Sonderweg*" – the idea that Germany followed an inherently authoritarian political path that differed from the "normative" routes taken by France, Britain, and the United States. However, little has been made of the "democratic" views held by Lower-Germans like Blunck, views that can be seen as part of a German, or at least northern German, *Sonderweg*. That Blunck could carry such views, which had been considered liberal and even enlightened in the middle of the nineteenth century, into the 1920s and 1930s, express them in progressive circles like the PEN-Club, and then fit them to National Socialism is not insignificant. While historians like Mosse have contributed to our understanding of National Socialism by relating the increasingly "authoritarian" character of German democratic notions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such historians have not tied these views to inherently German "democratic" traditions, like those in Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany – traditions that had inherently conservative implications and sanctioned dictatorship in times of crisis and war. Although more work needs to be done on the topic, Blunck's case points to a possible reassessment of the *Sonderweg* in light of provincial customs. Indeed, scholarly over-emphasis on Prussia has possibly obscured critical aspects of Germany's political heritage.

In a similar sense, Blunck's case adds substance to the eternal "German problem," the enigma of trying to equate the tremendous accomplishments and failures of Germany, and Germans themselves,

in the modern period. Among academics, it has become almost a cliché that German thinkers and artists embraced Romanticism rather than the Enlightenment and therefore emotion rather than reason. Blunck's case affirms this characterization, for he was in the last analysis a *Träumer* (dreamer) who let romantic views determine his political ideas and distort his judgment. Examining Blunck confronts the unsettling conundrum of a man whose views and actions, particularly his anti-Semitism, arouse frequent loathing, but whose idiosyncratic contradictions and penchant for the idyllic provide just enough room for occasional pity. This may be the conundrum of German history itself. Over the last century, hate, bigotry, and violence have accompanied the intellectual mystery and passion that the world has always respected among the Germans. The poet's case cautions that one cannot generalize about the "German problem" but must heed its manifestations in the country's various historical regions. Indeed, Blunck's case might be termed the "Lower-German problem."

Regionalism is not in and of itself sinister, as a present-day visit to any of Germany's and the other European countries' culturally rich provinces will demonstrate. However, when taken to the level of a poet like Blunck, and given the right circumstances, it can be. Enmeshed in the traditions and history of his native region, the poet erred. Together, provincial and national patriotism were doubly intoxicating. Indeed, according to Blunck's experience, Lower-German patriotism rendered believers especially susceptible to extreme nationalism of the Pan-German and "Germanic" kind. Blunck's experience was not unique, for there were other writers conjuring provincial visions at the same time. However, aside from Applegate's study of the Palatinate, the synergy between regional and national aspirations has not been systematically studied. Like the reassessment of the *Sonderweg* and the "German Problem" in light of provincial traditions, this subject, too, constitutes a fertile field for future inquiry.

Blunck's stubborn belief after 1945 that he had done nothing wrong, that he was a good German who had simply supported his country, was revealing in terms of his *Mitläufer* sentence. Although the Nazis eventually made a sham of legality, they came to power

constitutionally. This caveat allowed Germans like Blunck to found their complicity in claims of legitimacy and patriotic necessity. Indeed, the fact that Blunck maintained his innocence until the end of his life demonstrates the depth of such sentiment among Germans like him. So-called “legitimacy” was the tragedy of the period; a criminal regime could point to its “legal” acquisition of power. Had the state of affairs been otherwise – had the Nazis, for example, gained power in a *coup* – Blunck would have had a more difficult time justifying his collaboration. The poet might nonetheless still have colluded. His depiction of events as a “revolution” allowed him to defend circumstances incapable of being hidden behind the façade of “legality.” The Nazis and those who supported them pointed to a “constitutional revolution,” a circumstance that could justify anything.

Blunck’s “selective anti-Semitism” represented sentiment among a broad group of provincial and conservative writers. Among these writers, cultural identification was at least as important as race, and they identified the modern art of the 1920s, which they detested and resented, with so-called “anti-German,” “city” Jews in Berlin. This resentment made them ripe for Nazi propaganda, which embraced both cultural and racial anti-Semitism. After the radicalization of cultural politics during the first years of the Third Reich, questions of race dominated. As Blunck proved, provincial writers were not beyond dropping culturally based scruples for racial anti-Semitism.

That Jews constituted a significant proportion of *avant-garde* artists and were some of the movement’s most talented representatives is not controversial. However, they were far outnumbered by “aryans,” like Bertolt Brecht or, in Schleswig-Holstein, Emil Nolde. Moreover, there were many Jews in the nationalist camp. To characterize the *avant-garde* as a “Jewish” movement, to blame this movement for the Third Reich and even the Holocaust, and to criticize the Jews for artistic successes – all of which Blunck did – represented scapegoating of the most vicious kind. Blunck’s case exemplifies how easy it was, amid the troublesome circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s, to blame the Jews for the difficulties. In targeting dupes, the poet was not alone. The cultural anti-Semitism that he exemplified played a significant role in carrying the Nazis to power.

In the height of irony, by supporting the Nazis the poet supported, according to the morality of his fairy tales, the side of the villains. Blunck's most serious offense lay in his legitimization of the National Socialist regime. His poetic, bourgeois demeanor, which distinguished him from a Hitler, Rosenberg, and Himmler, lent respectability to a ruthless government. He depicted the RSK as a corporation that, in the image of Schleswig-Holstein's and Lower Germany's ancient guilds, would "leave writing to the writers." But it was clear from his first days that the organization was nothing of the sort. The DAW and "friendship societies" were supposed to pursue "peace." But this "peace" was dependent on a corrupt regime desirous of European mastery. It was also based on Blunck's own mystical vision, founded in his heroic image of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany, that Germany was destined, in league with "Anglo-Saxon" England, to play a leading role in Europe and the world.

Although artists of a similar hue, like Hans Grimm, acknowledged the corrupt nature of the regime and distanced themselves during the 1930s, Blunck maintained his romantic image of Nazi Germany until the end of World War II. Moreover, he never acknowledged the profundity of his mistake in allying with the Nazis, arguing to the end of his life that he had hoped for a "rejuvenated democratic fatherland, and one in the tradition of his ancestors."⁶ These circumstances demonstrated his weakness for self-deception, but also the tenacity of his views. From childhood through adulthood, he embraced an idyllic past and believed in a glorious Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Germany that would one day present their traditions to the world. He clung to this image, and it led him astray.

Notes

Chapter I: Blunck and the Historical Literature

- 1 J. M. Ritchie, *German Literature under National Socialism* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. i.
- 2 An excellent bibliography can be found in Uwe-K. Ketelsen's *Literatur und Drittes Reich* (Schernfeld: SH-Verlag, 1992).
- 3 See, for example, Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, eds., *A Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 207.
- 4 See Karl-Heinz Joachim Schoeps' *Literatur im Dritten Reich*, 2nd edn (Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2000) (originally published by Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 79–83. Schoeps' work is the best recent survey on the literature of the Third Reich.
- 5 See Luis Crespo Fabian, "Das Technische der Märchen von H. F. Blunck" (D. Phil., Coimbra, 1954); Ernst Adolf Dreyer, *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Sicht des Werkes*. (Berlin: Volksverb. d. Bücherfreunde, Wegweiser-Verl. [1934]); Lisel Etscheid, *Das Gotteselebnis des germanischen Menschen. Weltschauliches in der Dichtung von Hans Friedrich Blunck* (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1932); Aristedes Goncaloes, "Sprung über die Schwelle" (Maschinenschr. Examensarbeit, Coimbra, 1935); Renate Häcker, "Die Märchen von Hans Friedrich Blunck" (Maschinenschr., 1954); Otto Ernst Hesse, *Hans Friedrich Blunck. Ein Beitrag zur nordischen Renaissance* (Jena: E. Diederichs 1929); Xavier Heydet, *Le 50e anniversaire de Hans Friedrich Blunck* (Sonderdruck); Christian Jenssen, *Die Blumenmärchen von Hans Friedrich Blunck* (Sonderdruck); Christian Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck. Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Buch und Tiefdruck GmbH, 1935); Elisabeth Jovanovic, "Hans Friedrich Bluncks Balladen und Gedichte" (D. Phil., Wien, 1940); Wilhelm Meyer-Voigtländer, "Das Gottesbewußtsein Hans Friedrich Bluncks" (Sonderdruck); Maria Navarro de Olibeira, "Elementos sobrenaturais na obra de Blunck" (D. Phil., Coimbra, 1940); Gertrude Patt, "Das Eigenartige in Stil und Motiven der Märchen Hans Friedrich Bluncks" (D. Phil., Münster, 1941); René Poupert, "Hans Friedrich Bluncks Märchendichtung" (Diplome d'études supérieures d'allemand, Bourdeaux, 1937); Gerard Schneilin, "Die Wiedergeburt des deutschen Volksmärchens bei Hans Friedrich Blunck" (Diplome d'études supérieures, Faculté des lettres, Univ. de Paris, 1956); Maria Lidia de Sousa Ferreira Donas-Botto, "O fantastico nos 'Mären' de Hans Friedrich Blunck" (D. Phil., Coimbra, 1950); L. Taccola, "Urvätersaga" (D. Phil., Pisa, 1942); Aloisia Tomecek, "Hans Friedrich Bluncks Roman Berend Fock" (D. Phil., Wien, 1941); Arne Voss, *Nordisk Orientering i nyere tyske Litteratur: Ein Studie over Bluncks Historieromaner* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1939); Winarz, "Die geschichtlichen Romane

- Hans Friedrich Blunck's" (D. Phil., Genua). For a list of essays on Blunck, see *Bibliographie Hans Friedrich Blunck: Mit einem Anhang, Schriften von und über Barthold Blunck* [brother of Hans Friedrich]. Bearbeitet von Jürgen Blunck (Hamburg: Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Werkes von Hans Friedrich Blunck, 1981). This bibliography also lists Blunck's own works, of which there were more than two hundred.
- 6 Walter Rix, *Blunck und England: Englische Einflüsse auf das Literarische Werk H.F. Bluncks* (Kiel: Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Werkes von Hans Friedrich Blunck, 1992). Rix is a professor of English who lives in Kiel. Although detailed and informative, due to personal connections to Blunck's family his work is less than objective.
 - 7 The best example is Jürgen Blunck, ed., *Beseelte brüderliche Welt: Gedenkschrift für Hans Friedrich Blunck, 1888–1988* (Husum: Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988).
 - 8 Werner Mittenzwei, *Der Untergang einer Akademie oder die Mentalität des ewigen Deutschen* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1992).
 - 9 Alan Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
 - 10 Friedrich Facius, Hans Booms, Heinz Boberach, eds, *Das Bundesarchiv und seine Bestände* (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1977. Edition 3., erg. u. neubearb. Aufl. / von Gerhard Granier, Josef Henke, Klaus Oldenhave).
 - 11 Facius, Booms, Boberach, eds.
 - 12 Hans Adolf Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Außenpolitik* (Frankfurt: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1968).
 - 13 Jacobsen, pp. 289–90.
 - 14 Christiane Cämmerer and Walter Delabar, *Dichtung im Dritten Reich? Zur Literatur in Deutschland, 1933–1945* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996). See also Wilhelm Voßkamp, *Kontinuität und Diskontinuität: Zur deutschen Literaturwissenschaft im Dritten Reich*. In Peter Lundgreen (Hrsg.), *Wissenschaft im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1985, pp. 140–62); Hans Wagener, hrsg., *Gegenwartsliteratur und Drittes Reich: Deutsche Autoren in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977).
 - 15 See Sebastian Graeb-Koenneker, *Autochthone Modernität: Eine Untersuchung der vom Nationalsozialismus geförderten Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996).
 - 16 Also see chapter VIII in Mittenzwei, "Die Literaturkoalition gegen die Republik und die geistige Konstellation zu Beginn der dreißiger Jahre" (pp. 185–243).
 - 17 Peter Paret, Review of Peter Uwe Hohendahl's *Literarische Kultur im Zeitalter des Liberalismus, 1830–1870*. In *JMH* (October 1986).
 - 18 See Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Literarische Kultur im Zeitalter des Liberalismus* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1985) and Roy Pascal, *From Naturalism to Expressionism* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

- 19 Ronald Taylor, *Literature and Society in Germany, 1918–1945* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980).
- 20 Taylor, p. ix.
- 21 See Friedhelm Kron, *Schriftsteller und Schriftstellerverbände, Schriftstellerberuf, und Interessenpolitik, 1842–1973* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976); Gerda Liebchen, *Ernst Jünger. Seine literarischen Arbeiten in den 20er Jahren. Eine Untersuchung zur gesellschaftlichen Funktion von Literatur* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1977); Hubert Orłowski, “Die Herausbildung der faschistischen Literatur in den Jahren 1925–1933,” *Studia Germanica Posnaniensia* 2, 1972, S. 99–118; Lutz Winckler, *Studie zur gesellschaftlichen Funktion faschistischer Sprache* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1970). In recent years, there has been a reaction to such works. Uwe-K. Ketelsen, possibly the foremost historian of the literature of the Third Reich, has attempted to separate the literature of the Third Reich from its historical setting (Uwe-K. Ketelsen, *Literatur und Drittes Reich* [Scherfeld: SH-Verlag, 1992]). But, as he himself admits, he has done so only to form a better understanding of the function of literature (i.e. to pinpoint the discrepancy between image and reality). As Ketelsen emphasizes in his introduction, “common to all of the essays in this work is still a focus on the specific function of literary structures and the attempt to place them in a social network” (p. 27).
- 22 Taylor.
- 23 Steven Nyole Fuller, *The Nazis’ Literary Grandfather: Adolf Bartels and Cultural Extremism, 1871–1945* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).
- 24 Jürgen Hillesheim, “Heil dir Führer! Führ uns an! ...” (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann GmbH, 1995).
- 25 With regard to Emil Strauss, see “Wahr sein kann man”: *Dokumentation zu Leben und Werk von Emil Strauss (1866–1960): Ausstellung der Stadt Pforzheim 8. Mai bis 14. Juni, 1987* (Stadt Pforzheim, 1990). With regard to Erwin Kolbenheyer, see *Der metaphysische Naturalismus E.G. Kolbenheyers* (Nürnberg: Kolbenheyer-Gesellschaft; Orion-Heimreiter-Verlag, 1971). With regard to Gottfried Benn, see Werner Küne, *Provoziertes Leben: Gottfried Benn* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1993); Mark William Roche, *Gottfried Benn’s Static Poetry: Aesthetic and Intellectual-historical Interpretations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Gerlinde F. Miller, *Die Bedeutung des Entwicklungsbegriffs für Menschenbild und Dichtungstheorie bei Gottfried Benn* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990); Hugh Ridley, *Gottfried Benn: Ein Schriftsteller zwischen Erneuerung und Reaktion* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990); Thilo Koch, *Gottfried Benn. Ein biogr.* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-verl., 1970).
- 26 Steinweis, p. 2.
- 27 Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 24.
- 28 Petropoulos, p. 26.
- 29 Martin Broszat, “Hitler und die Genesis der ‘Endlösung,’” *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1977.

- 30 Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State*. Trans. John W. Hiden (London: Longman, 1981 [first published in German, 1969]).
- 31 Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
- 32 Stone, p. 14.
- 33 Stone, p. 4.
- 34 George Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975).
- 35 Mosse, p. 4.
- 36 Mosse, p. 4.
- 37 Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
- 38 Applegate, p. 13.

Chapter II: Blunck's Early Years

- 1 J. B. Bury, *The Invasion of Europe by the Barbarians* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967).
- 2 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 10.
- 3 Alexander Scharff, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins* (Würzburg: Verlag Ploetz Freiburg, 1984), pp. 38–39.
- 4 See Günther Hartung, *Literatur und Ästhetik des deutschen Faschismus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1983), p. 28.
- 5 Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886–1914* (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984).
- 6 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 75.
- 7 Blunck to Rudolf Binding. 12 June, 1937. Blunck-Binding Correspondence, # 6.
- 8 During later visits to England, Blunck visited the home where his mother had worked as a family tutor.
- 9 Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 10 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 110.
- 11 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 109.
- 12 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 83.
- 13 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 32.
- 14 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 60.
- 15 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 61.
- 16 See Uriel Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).
- 17 Furness and Humble, p. 253.

- 18 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 25.
- 19 Lee M. Hollander, trans., *The Poetic Edda* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), p. xvii.
- 20 Blunck to Christian Janssen. 28 February, 1938. Blunck–Janssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 21 Egon Schwarz, ed., *Grillparzer, Nestroy, Hebbel: Nineteenth-Century German Plays* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1990).
- 22 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 160.
- 23 The *Plattdeutsch* Blunck learned was a synthesis of the different variants of Lower German spoken in Hamburg, the Dithmarschen, and East Holstein.
- 24 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 28.
- 25 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 28.
- 26 Possibly named after “black Margaret” who ruled Scandinavia during the period of the Hansa.
- 27 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 35.
- 28 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 54.
- 29 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 72–3.
- 30 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 66.
- 31 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 26.
- 32 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 53.
- 33 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 53.
- 34 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 71.
- 35 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 121–2.
- 36 See, for example, “Zur Rassenbildungsfrage.” In *Die Tat* (jg. 19, H.1. April 1927), pp. 47–50. Also *Tagebuch*, November 27, 1930. According to anthropologists, there is only one human race, *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* (“wise wise man”). What are frequently referred to as different “races” are, more accurately, evolutionary variations (of small biological consequence) on a single species.
- 37 Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*. Cited in Ritchie, p. 9.
- 38 For example, Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 15, 1933; also *Lebensbericht*, 2: 326.
- 39 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 125.
- 40 References to Sammons have been gleaned from a letter he wrote to the author on March 10, 2002. For further insight into this topic, see Jeffrey Sammons, “Ludolf Wienbarg and Norway.” In *Imagination and History: Selected Papers on Nineteenth-Century German Literature*. Also see Sammons, *Six Essays on the Young German Novel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).
- 41 Ernst Adolf Dreyer, *Hans Friedrich Blunck* (Berlin: Volksverb. d. Bücherfreunde, Wegweiser-Verl., 1934), p. 47.
- 42 Dreyer, p. 47.
- 43 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 221.
- 44 George Mosse, introduction to Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), p. x.

- 45 Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 322.
- 46 Blunck mentions Chamberlain in his memoirs (*Lebensbericht*, 1: 81, 98).
- 47 Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture* (New York: Crown Books, 1973), p. 78.
- 48 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 100.
- 49 Paul Natorp. Paraphrased in Gay, p. 79.
- 50 Otto Ernst Hesse, *Hans Friedrich Blunck* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1929), p. 21.
- 51 Military Government of Germany, *Fragebogen*. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 826). National Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 52 David A. Jackson, *Theodor Storm: The Life and Works of a Democratic Humanitarian* (New York: Berg, 1992), p. 145.
- 53 Konrad Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 12.
- 54 Jackson, p. 31.
- 55 Chamberlain, p. 212.
- 56 Volker R. Berghahn, *Imperial Germany, 1871–1914: Economy, Society, Culture, and Politics* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1994), p. 95.
- 57 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 138–39.
- 58 Hans Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire* (New York: Berg Publishers, 1989), p. 126.
- 59 See, for example, Gay, p. 87.
- 60 Blunck speaks about “Deutschland und Dänemark.” CNB Berlin, 25 August. Nordische Gesellschaft Correspondence. *Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek*, Kiel (CB 92, 255).
- 61 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 135.
- 62 Egon Schwarz, ed., *Grillparzer, Nestroy, Hebbel*, p. xii.
- 63 Hesse, p. 22.
- 64 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 141, 166.
- 65 Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1961).
- 66 Blunck, *Nordmark* (Hamburg: Richard Hermes, 1912), p. 6.
- 67 Quoted in Christian Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Buch- und Tiefdruck Gesellschaft, 1934), p. 38.
- 68 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 183.
- 69 Blunck, *Gedichte* (Berlin: Modernes Verlagsbureau Curt Wiegand, 1912).
- 70 “Meerabend.” In *Gedichte*, p. 15.
- 71 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 199.
- 72 Applegate, pp. 13–15.
- 73 Blunck, *Söhne der Erde. Ein Heimatroman*. In the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung* (Nr. 312 v. 7/7/1913–Nr. 380 v. 15/8/1913). A bit of confusion surrounds the title of this novella. In his work *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Leben und Werk*, Christian Jenssen tells of a strikingly similar novella entitled “*Die an der Scholle hafften*” (pp. 43–4). I have concluded that both stories, *Söhne der Erde* and *Die an der Scholle hafften*, are one and the same.

- 74 Blunck to Jenssen. 16 October, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 75 Quoted in Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Leben und Werk*, p. 41.
- 76 Elisabeth Kleeman, *Zwischen symbolischer Rebellion und politischer Revolution: Studien zur deutschen Bohème zwischen Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik*. Else Lasker-Schüler, Franziska Gräfin Reventlow, Frank Wedekind, Ludwig Derleth, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Hanns Jobst, Erich Mühsam (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Lang, 1985).
- 77 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 220.
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- 80 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 279.
- 81 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 279.
- 82 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 289.
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- 84 George Mosse, Paper and Discussion, Standing Seminar with Roger Chickering, Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University (fall 1994).
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- 86 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 289.
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Chapter III: The Post-War Period

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- 2 Military Government of Germany, *Fragebogen*. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 828). National Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 3 *Peter Ohles Schatten* (Berlin: Scherl., 1919); Neue Ausgabe (München: G. Müller, 1925).
- 4 *Peter Ohles Schatten*, p. 151.
- 5 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 293.
- 6 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 213.
- 7 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937, edn), p. 272.
- 8 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 27, 1946.
- 9 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 416.
- 10 Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 90.
- 11 Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 93.
- 12 Jenssen, p. 95.
- 13 In *Werdende volk* (1937 edn), p. 604.

- 14 Military Government of Germany, *Fragebogen*. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 828). National Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 15 Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In 1926: Living at the Edge of Time* (Harvard University Press, 1997).
- 16 Blunck to Christian Jenssen. 13 October, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 17 Blunck, “*Der unterirdische Berge*.” In *Märchen von der Niederelbe* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1923), pp. 76–77.
- 18 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ed., *The Cambridge History of German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 19 Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 102.
- 20 Mittenzwei, p. 196.
- 21 This opinion is also held by Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine in *A Companion to German Literature*, p. 207.
- 22 In the first volume of his memoirs, Blunck claimed that the cottage was dubbed “Immenhagen” after his wife Emmes, “der bienenhaft Emsigen” (*Lebensbericht*, 1: 386). I am yet to understand the connection, although it may have something to do with the Lower-German roots of the name “Emmes.”
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- 25 Blunck, “German Culture and Literature.” Reprinted from *Germany Speaks* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1937), p. 4.
- 26 Blunck to Galsworthy. 20 April, 1927. Blunck–Galsworthy Correspondence, # 26.
- 27 Blunck to Galsworthy. 20 April, 1927. Blunck–Galsworthy Correspondence, # 26.
- 28 Galsworthy to Blunck. 30 May, 1927. Blunck–Galsworthy Correspondence, # 26.
- 29 Hermon Ould to Blunck. 13 January, 1931. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65.
- 30 Blunck to Ould. 28 August, 1928. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65.
- 31 Blunck to Ould. 7 January, 1931. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65.
- 32 See Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence, for example (CB 92, 107).
- 33 Maurice Boucher. Testimonial. Blunck’s Denazification Trial, 1949. In Blunck–Boucher Correspondence, # 10.
- 34 Blunck to Ould. 27 August, 1926. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 35 Blunck to Siemers. 22 December, 1926. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 36 Blunck to Siemers. 22 December, 1926. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 37 Blunck to Ould. 7 November, 1927. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).

- 38 Cited in Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 405.
- 39 Alfred Döblin an den öffentlichen Kläger bei der Spruchkammer Eutin, Herrn Amtsgerichtsrat Bauer. 21 September 1948. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 792). National Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 40 According to a letter from Robert Walter to *Amtsgerichtsrat* Bauer. 12 August 1948. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 954).
- 41 According to the same letter from Robert Walter to *Amtsgerichtsrat* Bauer.
- 42 Applegate, p. 17.
- 43 Blunck, *Gewalt über das Feuer* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1928).
- 44 Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 117.
- 45 Blunck to Münchhausen. 26 September, 1925. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 46 Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 114.
- 47 Blunck to Ould. 13 May, 1929. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65.
- 48 Blunck, *Die Urvätersaga* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1934).
- 49 Blunck to Thomas Mann. 24 April, 1928.
- 50 Blunck, *Die Volkswende. Ein Roman dieser zwei Jahrzehnte, zugleich Versuch einer Chronik* (Bremen: C. Schünemann, 1930).
- 51 *Die Volkswende*, p. 321.
- 52 For example: *Erwartung: Neue Gedichte* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1930); *Lügenwette. Komödie* (Berlin: Alb Langen/G. Müller, 1930); *Neue Balladen* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1931).
- 53 In *Erwartung: Neue Gedichte*, p. 39.
- 54 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 8, 1929.
- 55 “*Folgerungen aus der Vorgeschichte.*” In *Revue d’Allemagne* (December 1929).
- 56 Norwegian Viking’s ruled Northern Scotland from the 10th through the 13th centuries.
- 57 Blunck to Dr. Timm, Syndikus der “*Nordische Gesellschaft.*” 15 October, 1927. *Korporationen. Nordische Gesellschaft Korrespondenz* (CB 92, 255).
- 58 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 140.
- 59 See Reinhard Pozorny, “Ein Weg zu Hans Friedrich Blunck.” In *Beseelte Brüderliche Welt*, p. 290.
- 60 Pozorny, pp. 288–300.
- 61 Blunck to Herr Dr. Pick. 12 November, 1930. Pen-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 62 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 26. In his speech, *Volkstum und Dichtung*, he noted: “Aber wer in Südbrazilien die deutsche Stadt Blumenau durchwandert, die Menschen in den Schenken hört, die Meinungen in den Zeitungen liest, zweifelt keinen Augenblick, daß er sich in mitten reinen deutschen Volkstums befindet.” In Heinz Kindermann, hrsg., *Des deutschen Dichters Sendung in der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Verlag von Philipp Reclam, 1933), p. 185.

- 63 According to a letter from Robert Walter to *Amtsgerichtsrat* Bauer. 12 August 1948. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 954).
- 64 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 17, 1929.
- 65 See, for example, Blunck to Adolf Bartels; Adolf Bartels to Blunck. November, 1933. Blunck–Bartels Correspondence, # 3.
- 66 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 5, 1929.
- 67 “Zustimmungen und Anschlüsse zum internationalen Antifaschisten-Kongreß.” 7 March, 1929. *Deutsche Ausgabe*, nr. 5. Cited in Walther Blunck, ed., p. 40.
- 68 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 2, 1929.
- 69 See Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 15, 1933.
- 70 See Alfred Richard Meyer, “Alfred Lichtenstein and Gottfried Benn.” In Paul Raabe, ed., *The Era of German Expressionism* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1985), pp. 49–52.
- 71 Meyer to Blunck. 19 April, 1931. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 72 Meyer to Blunck. 19 April, 1931. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 73 Blunck to Meyer. 21 April, 1931. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 74 See, for example, Jenssen, p. 132.

Chapter IV: Blunck versus Berlin

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- 2 Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, pp. 158–59.
- 3 Hans Flesch von Brunningen, “*Die Aktion* in Vienna.” In Raabe, p. 129.
- 4 Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, p. 159.
- 5 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, September 12, 1930.
- 6 Istvan Deak, *Weimar Germany’s Left-Wing Intellectuals: A Political History of the Weltbühne and Its Circle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 286.
- 7 Quoted in John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe*. Vol. II (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), p. 1174.
- 8 Harold Poor, *Kurt Tucholsky and the Ordeal of Germany* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1968), p. 82.
- 9 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 4, 1929.
- 10 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 11, 1929.
- 11 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 25, 1929. For thoughts on the connection of van Gogh to Expressionism, see Heinrich Eduard Jacob, “Pre-war writing and the atmosphere in Berlin.” In Raabe, ed., pp. 17–22.

- 12 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 15, 1929.
- 13 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 15, 1929.
- 14 Pflege des deutschen Schrifttums auf volkstümlicher Grundlage unter ausschliessung aller parteiichen und konfessionellen Tendenzen. Aufgabe. Der Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum, p. 1. Korporationen. Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum, 1926–1933 (CB 92, 243).
- 15 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 18, 1929.
- 16 See Franz Alfonz Gayda to Blunck. 5 May, 1928. Korporationen. Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum, 1926–1933 (CB 92, 243).
- 17 Blunck, "German Culture and Literature," p. 6 (original in English).
- 18 For a discussion of the "Wartburg Circle," see Mittenzwei, chapter VII, "Der heimliche Gegenspieler: Der Wartburgkrieg gegen die Akademie," pp. 157–84.
- 19 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 4, 1929.
- 20 Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, p. 4.
- 21 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 4, 1929.
- 22 Gay, p. 69.
- 23 *Mörderin und Mutter Zeit*, 1915; *Zweisamkeit*, 1918; *Elegien der Gellassenheit*, G. 1920; *Kämpfe mit Gott*, 1920; *Das Privileg*, 1921; *Regina spielt Fagott*, 1942; *Die Panne*, 1943.
- 24 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 352.
- 25 Otto Ernst Hesse, *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Ein Beitrag zur nordischen Renaissance* (Jena: E. Diederichs Verlag, 1929).
- 26 Blunck to E. A. Dreyer. 24 December, 1928. Blunck–Dreyer Correspondence (CB 92, 105).
- 27 *Der Dichter Hans Friedrich Blunck*. In Rostocker Universitäts-Zeitung, December 1928; *Bluncks frühgeschichtliche Trilogie*. In Rostocker Universitäts-Zeitung, April 1929; *Blunck's Land der Vulkane*. In *Revue d'Allemagne*, Paris, January 1930; *Hans Friedrich Blunck*. In *Freie Welt*, 9 April, 1930; *Hans Friedrich Blunck*. In *Revue d'Allemagne*, Paris, August 1930; *Eine Landschaft dichtet*. In *Ostdeutsche Monatshefte*, January 1931; *Hans Friedrich Blunck – Von der Gestalt seiner Dichtungen*. In *Das Wort*, March 1931; *Niederdeutsche Dichtung*. In *Revue d'Allemagne*, Paris, April 1931; *Hans Friedrich Bluncks Balladen*. In *Freie Welt*, 27 October, 1931; *Neue Märchen-Dichtungen: "Bluncks Sprung über die Schwelle."* In *Berliner-Börsen-Zeitung*, Kritische Gänge, 15 November, 1931; *Hans Friedrich Bluncks Dichtungen*. In *Die Westfälische Heimat*, November–December 1931; *Hans Friedrich Bluncks Märchendichtungen*. In *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, November–December 1931; *Hans Friedrich Bluncks Märchendichtungen*. In *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 13 December 1931; *Blunck's "Sprung über die Schwelle."* In *Die Neue Literatur*, February 1932; *Hans Friedrich Blunck: Von der Gestalt seiner Dichtungen*. In Einleiter Essay zu Bluncks Brasilienroman "Die Weibsmühl" (Verlag Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, Berlin, February 1932); *Bluncks Märchendichtungen*. In *Hamburger Fremdenblatt, Literarische Rundschau*, 2 April 1932.

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- 30 Münchhausen to Blunck. 3 December, 1923. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 31 Cited in Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 50.
- 32 Blunck to Münchhausen. 13 July, 1931. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 33 Münchhausen to Blunck. 17 July, 1931. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 34 Furness and Humble, *A Companion to Twentieth-Century German Literature* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 30–1.
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- 37 Blunck to Binding. 17 October, 1930. Blunck–Binding Correspondence, # 6.
- 38 Donald Prater, *Thomas Mann: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
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- 40 Walther Blunck, ed., p. 23.
- 41 Thomas Mann to Blunck. December 2, 1930. Blunck–Mann Correspondence, # 54.
- 42 He did not cite the title.
- 43 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 2, 1930.
- 44 Furness and Humble, p. 62.
- 45 Cited in Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 151.
- 46 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 17, 1930.
- 47 Alfred Döblin an den öffentlichen Kläger bei der Spruchkammer Eutin, Herrn Amtsgerichtsrat Bauer. 21 September 1948. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 790). National Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 48 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 151.
- 49 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 1, 1932.
- 50 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 4, 1930 (p. 78).
- 51 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 26, 1935.
- 52 Poor, pp. 81–2.
- 53 Poor, p. 83.
- 54 Furness and Humble, eds.
- 55 Furness and Humble, eds.
- 56 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 23, 1929.
- 57 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 1, 1929.
- 58 Hesse, p. 10.
- 59 Dreyer, p. 32.
- 60 Blunck to Mann. 22 December 1928. Cited in Walther Blunck, ed., p. 37.

- 61 Korporationen. Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum, 1926–1933 (CB 92, 243).
- 62 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 1, 1931 (p. 21).
- 63 See Ritchie Robertson, *The “Jewish Question” in German Literature, 1749–1939: Emancipation and its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 218–32. This book delves into the question of attitudes to Jews in literary circles and addresses the issue in the work of Mann extensively.
- 64 Prater, p. 208.
- 65 Ritchie, p. 3.
- 66 Henry Pachter, *Weimar Études* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 125.
- 67 See Blunck to Wegner. 2 May, 1927. Blunck–Wegner Correspondence, # 98.
- 68 Blunck to Jenssen. 25 April, 1934. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 69 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 123.
- 70 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 7, 1929.
- 71 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 7, 1929.
- 72 Blunck to Hesse. No date. Blunck–Hesse Correspondence, # 35.
- 73 See Blunck to Will Vesper. 6 November, 1931. Blunck–Vesper Correspondence, # 95.
- 74 Blunck to Will Vesper. 6 November, 1931. Vesper–Blunck Correspondence, # 95.
- 75 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 26, 1931.
- 76 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 1, 1929.
- 77 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 1, 1929.
- 78 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 19, 1930.
- 79 Peter S. Fisher, *Fantasy and Politics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 40.
- 80 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 103.
- 81 See Raabe, ed.; see also Pachter.
- 82 Pachter, p. 99.
- 83 See Stanley Appelbaum, ed., *Simplicissimus: 180 Satirical Drawings from the Famous German Weekly* (New York: Dover Publications, 1975), especially pp. 38, 95, 100.
- 84 In his “Wedriner sketches.” Poor, p. 92.
- 85 Pachter, p. 125.
- 86 Poor, p. 65.
- 87 See sworn testimonies for Blunck’s denazification trial by Heinrich Mann, Alfred Döblin, and others. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (ca. p. 790).
- 88 From a 1929 advertisement for the organization. Korporationen. Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum, 1926–1933 (CB 92, 243).
- 89 See, for example, Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 19, 1930 (p. 112). “Sehr rege ist die Tätigkeit der Jidden, die uns aufklärenden Schriften schicken und geschickt

auf die Nähe der Jiddischen und altdeutschen Sprachform aufmerksam machen. [...] Schalom Asch fragte, ob man nicht einen Kreis für Forschungen aller Art innerhalb der deutschen Sprachgruppen im Penclub bilden könnte. Ich sagte freundlich zu. Was kann uns lieber sein, als diese nicht auf Durchsäuerung ausgehende jiddische Volksgruppe.”

- 90 See Blunck to Schmidt-Pauli. 31 March, 1933. Blunck–Schmidt-Pauli Correspondence, # 83. Also see Blunck to Dr. Hänsel. 27 March, 1933. Abschrift in Schmidt-Pauli Correspondence, # 83. Here, the poet explained his earlier aims at the PEN-Club: “Es hat sich seinerzeit nicht um eine Abspaltung der niederdeutschen Gruppe gehandelt. Wir hatten vielmehr ursprünglich im Augen, den Schweizern, Österreichern und den außerhalb des Reichs stehenden deutschen sprachlichen Minderheiten innerhalb eines gut gefügten Kartells die Möglichkeit zu geben, sich mit uns zu vereinen und zugleich bei Vertretung der deutschen Sprache und den Interessen unseres Volkstums auf den internationalen Kongressen (durch Hinzuschaltung einer niederdeutschen oder alemannischen Gruppe) jene Stimmenzahl zu erreichen und zu erhalten, die England mit seinen Kolonien und Frankreich aus der regelamäßigen Unterstützung durch sein Trabanten erhielt. Wäre die ursprünglich geplante Form fortgeführt worden, so hätten sämtlichen deutschsprachige Gruppen ein festes Kartell gebildet, das nach außen hin in allen uns gemeinsam angehenden Fragen geschlossen gestimmt und eine Macht wie die Englands und Frankreichs dargestellt hätte.”
- 91 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 25, 1929.
- 92 See Blunck to Dr. Hänsel. 27 March, 1933. Blunck–Schmidt-Pauli Correspondence, # 83.
- 93 See Blunck Correspondence with Hermon Ould in PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 94 Blunck to Meumann. 9 May, 1931. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 95 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, August 1, 1930.
- 96 Meyer to Blunck. 21 April, 1931. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 97 Blunck to Ould. 2 September, 1932. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 98 Blunck to Ould. 2 September, 1932. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 99 Blunck to Meumann. 9 May, 1931. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 100 Blunck, “Rückblick und Abschluss,” Anlage to Jahrbuch, 1931.
- 101 Blunck, “Rückblick und Abschluss,” Anlage to Jahrbuch, 1931.
- 102 Blunck, “Rückblick und Abschluss,” Anlage to Jahrbuch, 1931, p. 10.
- 103 Blunck, “Rückblick und Abschluss,” Anlage to Jahrbuch, 1931, p. 12.
- 104 Blunck, “Rückblick und Abschluss,” Anlage to Jahrbuch, 1931, p. 13.
- 105 Blunck, “Rückblick und Abschluss,” Anlage to Jahrbuch, 1931, p. 14.

- 106 A letter to Meumann of January 26, 1933 suggests that the poet maintained at least nominal membership in the international PEN Club.
- 107 Blunck to Meumann. 18 August, 1932. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 108 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 8, 1929.
- 109 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 19, 1929.
- 110 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 27, 1929.
- 111 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 14, 1929.
- 112 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 27, 1929.
- 113 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 7, 1929 (p. 156).
- 114 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 7, 1929.
- 115 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 22, 1929.
- 116 See Blunck. Nachlaß. Korporationen. Schutzverband der deutschen Schriftsteller (CB 92, 292).
- 117 See Blunck. Nachlaß. Korporationen. Notgemeinschaft (CB 92, 287).
- 118 Will Vesper to Blunck. 15 August, 1932. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 119 Schmidt-Pauli to Blunck. 9 November, 1932. Blunck–Schmidt-Pauli Correspondence, #108. See also Work Report for the Reich Literary Chamber. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 11 (CB 92, Blunck).
- 120 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 17, 1932.

Chapter V: *Weltanschauung*

- 1 Chickering, p. 126.
- 2 Ritchie, p. 73.
- 3 Blunck, *Die Frau im Tal* (Berlin: Theaterverlag Albert Langen, 1920), p. 111 (p. 139 in the Verlag Konrad Hanf, ed., also 1920).
- 4 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), pp. 62–3. The individual books of the trilogy or the 1937 edition of *Werdendes Volk* (all three books in one volume) have been used here, as noted. In the 1930s Blunck's trilogies were released in multiple editions. Since the editions varied in format, page references can occasionally be confusing. This situation is especially the case with *Die Urvätersaga* and *Werdendes Volk*, the individual components of which were released singly during the 1920s, but then published later as trilogies.
- 5 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 278.
- 6 Here, I am thinking particularly of *Stelling Rotkinnsohn*.
- 7 In *Die Urvätersaga*, p. 181. The edition used here, unless otherwise noted, is the 1934 edition.
- 8 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 20.
- 9 *Die Frau im Tal*, p. 5 (p. 1 in the Hanf edn).
- 10 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 269.

- 11 Blunck, "Volkstum und Dichtung." In *Des deutschen Dichters Sendung in der Gegenwart*. See, for example, pp. 180, 184–5.
- 12 Fisher, p. 31.
- 13 Blunck, "Diktatur der Tatsache?," p. 2. Anlage to *Tagebuch*, December 1, 1932.
- 14 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 15, 1929.
- 15 Blunck to Mann. 7 December, 1931. Cited from Walther Blunck, ed., p. 47.
- 16 Rix, "Elbe und Themse strömen einander entgegen: Hans Friedrich Blunck und England." In *Beseelte brüderliche Welt*.
- 17 Berend Fock. In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 534.
- 18 Sagarra and Skrine, eds, p. 207.
- 19 As related to Christian Jenssen in Blunck to Jenssen, 16 October, 1933. Blunck-Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107). Also in Christian Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 44. As Jenssen was preparing this book, Blunck recounted many of his tales to him in a series of letters.
- 20 In *Erwartung: Neue Gedichte*, p. 33.
- 21 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 ed.), p. 14.
- 22 Hein Hoyer (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt [volume used published in 1940]).
- 23 Blunck, "Diktatur der Tatsache?," p. 6.
- 24 From the poem "New York" (1930). In *Erwartung: Neue Gedichte*, p. 93.
- 25 Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- 26 Blunck, "Diktatur der Tatsache?," p. 3.
- 27 Herf, p. 3.
- 28 Herf, p. 2.
- 29 Hein Hoyer, p. 65 (p. 235 in the 1937 *Werdendes Volk* edn).
- 30 John Fleming, Lecture on "Beowulf and Old English Poetry," Princeton University (Springfield, VA: The Teaching Company, 1997).
- 31 Hesse, pp. 7–8.
- 32 Blunck, *Deutsche Kulturpolitik: Eine Rede* (München: Albert Langen Verlag, 1934), p. 12.
- 33 Walther Linden, *Literarische Geschichte* (1937), p. 107. Quoted in Uwe-K. Ketelsen, *Literatur und Drittes Reich* (Scherfeld: SH-Verlag, 1992), p. 146.
- 34 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 22, 1929 (p. 171).
- 35 Jost Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).
- 36 Hermand, p. xiv.
- 37 Hermand, p. 110.
- 38 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 22, 1929 (p. 171).
- 39 Hesse, p. 106.
- 40 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 ed.), p. 17.
- 41 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 ed.), p. 109.
- 42 Blunck himself felt that his beliefs were not pantheistic. In his study on Blunck, Jenssen commented: "Andererseits sieht er im ausgesprochenen Ge-

gensatz zum Pantheisten in der Welt nicht Gottes unmittelbare Verwirklichung. Sie ist vielmehr Gottes Schöpfung und Spiegel, den er sich und den Menschen zur Freude schuf..." (Jenssen, p. 73). The "contrast" of which Jenssen speaks seems one of semantics rather than substance. Moreover, Pantheism is generally viewed as a belief in which God is equated with the laws and forces of nature, a doctrine that is clearly reflected in Blunck's philosophy.

- 43 Jenssen, p. 83.
- 44 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 201.
- 45 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 213.
- 46 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 238.
- 47 *Kampf der Gestirne*. In *Die Urvätersaga* (1938 edn), p. 231.
- 48 These lines are cited in Karl-Heinz Joachim Schoeps, *Literatur im dritten Reich* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 80. I have cited them from *Die Urvätersaga* (1938 edn), pp. 25, 29, and 34.
- 49 Schoeps, p. 80.
- 50 *Gewalt über das Feuer*. In *Die Urvätersaga*, p. 119 (p. 121 in the 1938 edn).
- 51 Jenssen, p. 123.
- 52 *Streit mit den Göttern*. In *Die Urvätersaga*, p. 315.
- 53 Blunck, *Land in der Dämmerung* (Berlin: Theater Verlag Albert Langen, 1934), p. 94.
- 54 Fisher, p. 37.
- 55 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).
- 56 Blunck to Münchhausen. 26 September, 1925. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 57 *Gewalt über das Feuer*. In *Die Urvätersaga* (1938 edn), p. 74.
- 58 In *Die Urvätersaga* (1938 edn), p. 115.
- 59 Sagarra and Skrine, p. 207.
- 60 In *Die Urvätersaga*, p. 241 (243 in the 1938 edn).
- 61 *Die Urvätersaga* (1938 edn), p. 44.
- 62 Blunck to Binding. 21 October, 1930. Blunck–Binding Correspondence, # 6.
- 63 Blunck, *Deutschland und den Norden*, p. 37.
- 64 Strobl, pp. 37–8.
- 65 Strobl, pp. 37–8.
- 66 In reality, the vote took place in the 1820s (not in 1776, as Blunck believed) and concerned a motion to publish certain legislation in both German and English, so that new German immigrants in selected parts of the country could understand it. The motion was rejected.
- 67 Blunck, "Volkstum und Dichtung," p. 170.
- 68 Blunck, "Volkstum und Dichtung," p. 173.
- 69 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 2, 1931.
- 70 "Volkstum und Dichtung." Cited here from Blunck's "Deutsche Kulturpolitik" (München: Albert Langen, 1934), p. 10.
- 71 J. M. Ritchie, *German Literature under National Socialism*, p. 4.

- 72 Ritchie, p. 4.
- 73 Blunck, Anlage to *Tagebuch*, 1931, pp. 1–3.
- 74 *Hein Hoyer*, pp. 20–21 (p. 233 in the 1937 *Werdendes Volk* edn). Also quoted in Wolfgang Wippermann, “Geschichte und Ideologie im historischen Roman.” In Denkler and Prümm, eds, *Die deutsche Literatur im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1976), p. 190.
- 75 In *Werdendes Volk* (1937 edn), p. 416.
- 76 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 4, 1929.
- 77 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 4, 1931.
- 78 Blunck, “Aufruf zum Hilfswerk,” p. 3. Anlage to *Tagebuch*, December 1, 1932.
- 79 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 4, 1932.
- 80 Blunck, *Deutschland und der Norden* (Verlagsgesellschaft Ostland MBH, RIGA. Feldpost und Ost/Heft 1, A), p. 55. In his memoirs, published five years after World War II, the poet could still speak frankly about his vision: “Von der Heimat zur Landschaft, von der Landschaft zum Raum der Deutschen, von ihm zur Gruppe der germanischen Völker, die doch, ob sie wollen oder nicht und ob sie einander oft Todfeinde sein möchten, in Sprache, Gebärde und Kultur eine Nachbarschaft wie die Slawen und Romanen sind. Von dort zur europäischen oder kaukasischen Einheit, die sich vielleicht dereinst mit den Kontinenten zusammenfügen wird. Es sind alles doch nur die gleichen Erscheinungen und Entwicklungen und Kreise der großen Weisheit Gottes im Menschen” (Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 109).
- 81 Blunck, Anlage to *Tagebuch*, 1931, p 1.
- 82 Blunck, Anlage to *Tagebuch*, 1931, p 1.
- 83 As articulated by Rosenberg’s associate Hermann Rauschning. Quoted in Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1972), p. 167.
- 84 *Hein Hoyer*, p. 187.
- 85 Chickering, p. 1.
- 86 Blunck, “*Volkstum und Dichtung*,” p. 73.
- 87 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, August 1, 1930.

Chapter VI: First Nazi Years

- 1 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ed., *The Cambridge History of German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 365.
- 2 Stone, p. 4.
- 3 Blunck, “German Culture and Literature,” p. 20 (original in English).
- 4 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 66.
- 5 Blunck, *Hart warr ni möd’, Nedderdütsche Balladen un Gedichte* (1st edn: Hamburg: K. Hanf, 1920; 2nd: Hamburg: Quickborn-Verlag, 1932).
- 6 Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race*, p. 166.

- 7 Military Government of Germany, Fragebogen. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 837). National Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 8 Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel. National Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 9 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 18, 1933.
- 10 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 1, 1933.
- 11 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 18, 1933.
- 12 Blunck to Christian Jenssen. 23 May, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 13 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 27, 1946.
- 14 Blunck makes statements of this kind several times in his diaries in 1934 and 1935. He reinforced this point at his denazification trial in 1949. He also makes the comment repeatedly in his memoirs (for example, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 365).
- 15 Marta L. Dosa, *Libraries in the Political Scene* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), p. 35.
- 16 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 15, 1933.
- 17 Applegate, p. 18.
- 18 See, for example, Gayda to Blunck. 5 July 1933. Gesellschaft für deutsches Schrifttum, 1926–1933 (CB 92, 243). Gayda speaks of his desire to dissolve the organization.
- 19 Blunck to Christian Jenssen. 11 March, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 20 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 446.
- 21 Blunck to Dreyer. 25 March, 1933. Blunck–Dreyer Correspondence (CB 92, 105).
- 22 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 2, 1933.
- 23 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, July 1, 1933.
- 24 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 13, 1933.
- 25 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 13, 1933.
- 26 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 2, 1934.
- 27 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 7, 1933.
- 28 At Blunck's denazification trial, witnesses for the prosecution, including one Herr "A." (his name was excluded from court records) asserted that Blunck had participated in the book burnings. Blunck's lawyer refuted these charges. Sitzungsprotokoll. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1262).
- 29 Sitzungsprotokoll. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1262).
- 30 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 24, 1933; also *Lebensbericht*, 2: 186.
- 31 Mittenzwei, p. 224.
- 32 Blunck to Christian Jenssen. 23 May, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).

- 33 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 18, 1934.
- 34 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 2, 1933; see also Blunck to Christian Jenssen. 26 May, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 35 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 2, 1933.
- 36 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 192.
- 37 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 7, 1933.
- 38 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 7, 1933.
- 39 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 7, 1933.
- 40 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 7, 1933.
- 41 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 7, 1933.
- 42 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 7, 1933.
- 43 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 7, 1933. There is also an earlier reference to the play's candidacy in *Tagebuch*, April 18, 1933.
- 44 Helmut F. Pfanner, *Hanns Johst: Vom Expressionismus zum Nationalsozialismus* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970).
- 45 Pfanner, from his subtitle.
- 46 Ritchie, p. 62.
- 47 Gay, p. 125.
- 48 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, July 3, 1933.
- 49 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 1: 48.
- 50 Paraphrased from Donald Prater, *Thomas Mann: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 393.
- 51 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, July 20, 1933.
- 52 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, July 26, 1933.
- 53 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 3, 1933.
- 54 Blunck, *Die Große Fahrt* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1939), p. 338.
- 55 Wippermann. In Denkler and Prümm, eds, p. 191.
- 56 Hermand, p. 108.
- 57 Blunck to Hesse. 10 November, 1933. Blunck–Hesse Correspondence, # 35.
- 58 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 1 (CB 92, 176A); Excerpts of K. F. Schreiber's *Deutsches Kulturrecht* (Hamburg, 1936), p. 18. Cited in Robert Brady, "The National Chamber of Culture (*Reichskulturkammer*).” In Brandon Taylor and Wilfried Van der Will, eds, *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich* (Winchester: Winchester Press, 1990), p. 80.
- 59 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 205.
- 60 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 4, 1931 (p. 86).
- 61 Mittenzwei, p. 310.
- 62 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 10, 1933.
- 63 In a letter to Jenssen that morning, Blunck noted that he hoped his duties at the Academy would soon end, because he was not finding enough time for his own work (Blunck to Christian Jenssen. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence [CB 92, 107]).
- 64 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 11, 1933.

- 65 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 11, 1933.
- 66 See Blunck to Richard Strauss. 6 January, 1934. Also Strauss to Blunck. 30 June, 1934. Blunck–Strauss Correspondence, # 165.
- 67 See, for example, the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Werkes von Hans Friedrich Blunck's* Web Site (www.blunck-gesellschaft.de). See also Walther Blunck, ed. *Thomas Mann und Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 68.
- 68 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 15, 1933.
- 69 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 15, 1933.
- 70 Jan Peter Barbian, "Institutionen der Literatur Politik im dritten Reich." In Günther Rüther, hrsg., *Literatur in der Diktatur: Schreiben im Nationalsozialismus und DDR-Sozialismus* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997), p. 101.
- 71 Barbian, p. 101.
- 72 See Hans Richter to Goetz Otto Stoffregen. 11 June, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287).
- 73 Barbian, p. 106.
- 74 Barbian, p. 100.
- 75 Barbian, p. 112.
- 76 Blunck, "German Culture and Literature," p. 14 (original in English).
- 77 Barbian, p. 108.
- 78 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 11, 1933. Blunck's appointments were as follows: The administration: *Stellvertretender Präsident*: Dr. Heinz Wismann; Business Manager: Dr. Gunther Haupt. Advisers [*Referenten*]: Writers' Interests, questions of the RSK's foundation: Heinz Wismann; Library questions: Karl Heinl; Observation of the German book abroad: Werner Schlegel; Booktrade, publishing, lending libraries: Eberhard Hasper; new development of booktrade, observation of new publications: Gunther Haupt; office manager: Kurt Hardt. The RSK was divided into six divisions, after the presidency: Department A: Wismann, representative of the president, Supervision of subordinate groups, cooperation with other Reich Organizations, questions of formation. Department B: Dr. Haupt: Business administration, observation of writing, responsibility for new book trade development and lecturing, personal advisor to the president. Department C: Ing. Schlegel observation of the German book abroad. Department D: Heinl, public libraries, *Sprachpflege*; Department E: Heinl, observation of publishing, the book trade, and lending libraries; Department F: Dr. Reichstein: Legal expert, control of decrees (editing and so on). (From Reichsschrifttumskammer, Allgemeines [CB 92, 276]).
- 79 Barbian, p. 100.
- 80 Barbian. p. 110.
- 81 Unknown writer to Blunck. 12 February, 1937. Blunck–Haupt Correspondence, # 33.
- 82 Blunck to Wismann. 11 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 83 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 23, 1945.

- 84 Blunck to Wismann. 6 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 85 See, for example, Blunck to Wismann. 17 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 86 Blunck to Fiedler. 11 November, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 279).
- 87 Blunck. Addendum to Letter to Wismann. 5 March, 1935, p. 4. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 279).
- 88 Blunck an den Herrn Präsidenten der RKK. 11 May, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 292).
- 89 Blunck an den Herrn Präsidenten der RKK. 11 May, 1934 (p. 2). RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 292).
- 90 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 5 (CB 92, 276A).
- 91 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 7, 1933.
- 92 Blunck, "German Culture and Literature," p. 21 (original in English).
- 93 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 6 (CB 92, 276A).
- 94 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 7 (CB 92, 276A).
- 95 Denkschrift für die Vorbereitung eines Gesetzes für die zentrale Leitung der deutschen Kulturpolitik und für die Förderung des deutschen Buchexports. Reichsschrifttumskammer. Abteilung C. Referent Werner Schlegel, p. 1. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 276A).
- 96 Hamburg-Bremer Denkschrift über die kulturpolitische Sicherung und Stärkung des deutschen Buchexports. January, 1934, p. 4. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 276A).
- 97 Denkschrift I der Reichsschrifttumskammer. Massnahmen zur Förderung des Exportes des deutschen Buches. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 276).
- 98 Blunck an den Herrn Präsidenten der Reichsschrifttumskammer. 11 May, 1934 (p. 2). RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 292).
- 99 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 10 (CB 92, 276).
- 100 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 296.
- 101 Blunck, "German Culture and Literature." In *Germany Speaks*, p. 247 (original in English).
- 102 See RSK minutes. September, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Anlagen (CB 92, 276).
- 103 Wismann to Blunck. 9 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 104 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 8 (CB 92, 276).
- 105 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 8 (CB 92, 276).
- 106 Dosa, p. 47.

- 107 Dosa, p. 47.
- 108 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 8 (CB 92, 276).
- 109 Sitzungsprotokoll. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1262).
- 110 See Claudia Albert, *Deutsche Klassiker im Nationalsozialismus: Schiller-Kleist-Hölderlin* (Stuttgart: Metzler Studienausgabe, 1994). A notable field of inquiry has explored the experience of the great German Classic and Romantic writers during the Third Reich. In her study, Albert has investigated the rise in popularity during the Third Reich of Schiller, Kleist, and Hölderlin. She concludes that *Germanisten* used the patriotic climate, and especially the literary festivals, of the Third Reich to extol Germany's conservative literary heritage. In this way, they quashed their "modern" enemies and strengthened the *Germanistik* field, which "presently established the Classicists as a reservoir of exceptional depth and as a defined sphere of study" (pp. 10–11). Her conclusion highlights the congruent interests of the Nazis and *Germanisten*.
- Other studies have considered the Nazi literary establishment's distortion and manipulation of Germany's literary giants. As a recent collection of essays shows, Büchner's works were deformed in a particularly disfiguring way. What were once monuments to liberation like *Woyzeck* became embodiments of Germany's *Geist* and an all-powerful state – the rejection of oppression, in other words, transformed into its ennoblement. Büchner was, of course, open to different interpretations. (See *Büchner im "Dritten Reich."* *Mystifikation – Gleichschaltung – Exil. Eine Dokumentation*. Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Dietmar Goltschnigg. Kommentar von Gerhard Fuchs, 1990.) Another recent collection focuses on the dissection of Herder. (See *Herder im "Dritten Reich."* Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 1994.) While the *Germanisten* of the Third Reich celebrated the chauvinistic Herder of *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* and the *Volkslieder*, treating him as their literary exemplar, they rejected the compassionate, intellectual Herder of the *Humanitätsbriefe* and the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* as temporarily wayward.
- 111 Written and oral testimony. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel.
- 112 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 17 (CB 92, 276).
- 113 See Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. November 15, 1933 to April 1, 1934, p. 18 (CB 92, 276); see also Zwischenbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer über die Arbeiten vom 1 April–30 Juni, 1934 (CB 92, 276).
- 114 Friedrichkarl Roedemeyer to Blunck. 7 May, 1933. Blunck–Roedemeyer Correspondence, # 74.
- 115 "Deutsche Kulturpolitik" (München: Albert Langen, 1934), p. 35.
- 116 Blunck, "Zum Umlauf." RSK Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 276B).
- 117 See, for example, Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 20, 1936.
- 118 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 307.

- 119 See, for example, Blunck, "German Culture and Literature," p. 20.
- 120 Barbian, p. 115.
- 121 Mittenzwei, p. 319.
- 122 Military Government of Germany, Fragebogen. Blunck's Einkommen, Vermögen, und Besitz, 1933–1944. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 837).
- 123 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 428.
- 124 Heinrich Mann an den öffentlichen Kläger, Eutin. 5 August 1948. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 966).
- 125 Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler an Blunck. 22 January, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel IV (CB 92, 281).
- 126 Friedrichkarl Roedemeyer to Blunck. 20 June, 1933. Blunck–Roedemeyer Correspondence, # 74.
- 127 Friedrichkarl Roedemeyer to Blunck. 31 June, 1933. Blunck–Roedemeyer Correspondence, # 74.
- 128 Dosa, p. 51.
- 129 Here, I am thinking of *Die Große Fahrt*, *Geiserich*, *Wolter von Plettenberg*, *Kampf um New York*, *Deutsche Heldensagen*, and *Sage vom Reich*.
- 130 Theodor Fritsch to Blunck. 19 October, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel VIII (CB 92, 285).
- 131 See Gisela Berglund, *Der Kampf um den Leser im Dritten Reich* (Worms: Verlag Georg Heintz, 1980).
- 132 Stone, p. 14.
- 133 See Blunck to Herrn Staatskommissar Metzner im Reichsministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft. 17 April, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286).
- 134 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 2, 1935.
- 135 Sitzungsprotokoll of Blunck's denazification trial. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1264).
- 136 Mittenzwei, p. 308.
- 137 Blunck to Josef Goebbels. 20 February, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 292). See also Blunck to Beumelburg. 15 February, 1934. Blunck–Beumelburg Correspondence, # 5.
- 138 Blunck to Münchhausen. 8 December, 1933. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286).
- 139 Mittenzwei, pp. 362–65.
- 140 Kolbenheyer, for example. Mittenzwei, p. 324.
- 141 Blunck to the Hans Hinkel. 11 May, 1934, p. 7. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 292).
- 142 Blunck to the Hans Hinkel. 11 May, 1934, p. 7. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 292).
- 143 Mittenzwei, pp. 338 and 421.

- 144 Blunck to Beumelburg. 10 Hornung, 1934. Blunck–Beumelburg Correspondence, # 5.
- 145 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 17, 1934.
- 146 Mittenzwei, p. 344.
- 147 See Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 18, 1934; also Mittenzwei, p. 344.
- 148 Mittenzwei, p. 422.
- 149 Mittenzwei, pp. 305–10, 348.
- 150 Mittenzwei, Chapter IV: “Die Akademie zwischen Rust und Goebbels.”
- 151 See, for example, Blunck to Beumelburg. 1 March, 1934. Blunck–Beumelburg Correspondence, # 5; see also Blunck to Binding. 9 Ostermond [April], 1934. Blunck–Binding Correspondence, # 6.

Chapter VII: Blunck’s Troubles at the Chamber

- 1 Contemporaries often referred to the admissions department as the RDS, and the department’s stationary frequently maintained the RDS title.
- 2 Blunck to Theodor Fritzch, member of the Präsidialrat. 6 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel V (CB 92, 282). The way this system worked is well outlined in a letter from Blunck to an applicant to the RDS, H. Flemming. See Blunck to Flemming. 25 June, 1935. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel V (CB 92, 282).
- 3 Declaration to the Präsidialrat. 6 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 4 Blunck an den Reichsverband deutscher Schriftsteller. 19 January, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287). The number 5% is corroborated by Karl Schleunes in his book *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 41.
- 5 Barbian, p. 119.
- 6 Heilbronn to Blunck. 3 December, 1933. RSK Briefwechsel V (CB 92, 282).
- 7 Blunck to Richter. 22 February, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286).
- 8 Heilbronn to Blunck. 12 March, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel V (CB 92, 282).
- 9 Richard Strauss to Blunck. 30 June, 1934. Blunck–Strauss Correspondence, # 165.
- 10 Richard Strauss to Blunck. 30 June, 1934. Blunck–Strauss Correspondence, # 165.
- 11 See Blunck to the RDS. 3 July, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287). Blunck wrote: “Ich übersende beiliegend Auszug aus einem Brief von Herrn Dr. Richard Strauss zur Kenntnisnahme und bitte, Herrn Dr. Bie den Empfang seiner Anmeldung vorläufig zu bestätigen und im übrigen vom dem Entscheid hierher Mitteilung zu machen, damit ich Herrn Dr. Strauss unterrichten kann.”

- 12 Blunck. Notation on Strauss' Letter. 30 June, 1934. Blunck–Strauss Correspondence, # 165.
- 13 Binding to Blunck. 17 July, 1935. Binding–Blunck Correspondence, # 6.
- 14 Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 15 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 6, 1935. "Immerhin ist er Kriegsteilnehmer. Werke von Wert hat er nicht geschaffen."
- 16 Blunck to Münchhausen. 11 March, 1935. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 17 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 9, 1934.
- 18 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, August 25, 1938.
- 19 Blunck an den Reichsverband deutscher Schriftsteller. 19 January, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287).
- 20 Blunck to Stoffregen. 4 May, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287).
- 21 Wendler to Blunck. 2 June, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286).
- 22 See Blunck to the RDS. 20 July, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287).
- 23 Blunck an den Reichsverband deutscher Schriftsteller. 19 January, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287).
- 24 He depicted the RSK as "self-governing" in his autobiographical work, *My Life* (Berlin: Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, 1934). In a stinging letter to Blunck, Hans Grimm complained that Blunck's depiction of RSK "autonomy" in *My Life* was a complete lie and Blunck knew it.
- 25 Uwe-K. Ketelsen, *Literatur und Drittes Reich* (Schernfeld: Sh-Verlag, 1992), p. 298.
- 26 See, in particular, Blunck's correspondence with Wismann. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 27 Mittenzwei, p. 319.
- 28 Mittenzwei, p. 319.
- 29 Stellvertretender Verbandsleiter Nordwestgau Hamburg an den RDS. 26 March, 1935. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92).
- 30 Robert Walter. Declaration. Hamburg, December 1933. In Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 31 Blunck to Schmidt-Pauli. 6 April, 1933. Blunck–Schmidt-Pauli Correspondence, # 83.
- 32 Schweynert to Blunck. 4 February, 1936. Reichsschrifttumskammer Allgemeines (CB 92, 276).
- 33 Ludwig Heilbronn to Blunck. 22 April, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel V (CB 92, 282).
- 34 Blunck to Minister Goebbels. 22 January, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 35 Blunck to Jenssen. 2 February, 1935. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 36 Dr. Kurt Fiedler to Blunck. 16 April, 1935, p. 1. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 279).

- 37 Dr. Kurt Fiedler to Blunck. 16 April, 1935, p. 2. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 279).
- 38 Blunck to Minister Goebbels. 19 January, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 39 Arbeitsbericht der Reichsschrifttumskammer. June 30, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Anlagen (CB 92, 276A).
- 40 See minutes from meeting of the RSK. September, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Anlagen (CB 92, 276A).
- 41 See minutes from meeting of the RSK. September, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Anlagen (CB 92, 276A).
- 42 Ketelsen, p. 295. In late 1933, just after the RSK's inauguration, Rosenberg published an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, in which he complained about "different thinking" on the question of art and about "a growing unracist artistic stream."
- 43 See Blunck-Schmidt-Pauli Exchange. 20 March, 1933. Blunck-Schmidt-Pauli Correspondence, # 83. Also Anlage to Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 24, 1933 (p. 51).
- 44 John Ardoin, *The Furtwängler Record* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), pp. 42–46.
- 45 Cited in Elliott Galkin, *The History of Orchestral Conducting* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1988), p. 676. Cited here from Ardoin.
- 46 Vesper to Blunck. 26 March, 1934. Vesper-Blunck Correspondence, # 95.
- 47 Hagemeyer to the "Nordic Society." 28 November, 1933. Nordische Gesellschaft Briefwechsel (CB 92, 255). See also Domes to Blunck. 14 December, 1933. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286).
- 48 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 9, 1933.
- 49 Thomas Mann to Julius Meyer-Graefe. Th. Mann, Briefe I. Bd., S. IX. See also Peter Suhrkamp to Blunck. 4 January, 1934. In Walther Blunck, ed., pp. 74–6.
- 50 Blunck to Suhrkamp. 6 January, 1934. In Walther Blunck, ed., p. 77. According to testimony given by Suhrkamp at Blunck's denazification trial, the poet also endeavored to protect the publications of Hauptmann and Hesse (Testimony of Heinrich Peter Suhrkamp to the Spruchkammer. 19 November, 1946. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer [T580]. Also cited in Walther Blunck, ed., p. 82).
- 51 Gustav Kiepenheuer of Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag to Blunck. 8 February, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (CB 92, 281).
- 52 See, for example, "Hans Friedrich Blunck: Lebensdaten" (www.blunck-gesellschaft.de).
- 53 See RSK minutes, 1934. Specific date not noted. Reichsschrifttumskammer Anlagen (CB 92, 276A).
- 54 See Ketelsen, p. 291.
- 55 Blunck to Wismann. 6 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).

- 56 Carl Schünemann-Verlag, Bremen. 6 December, 1934. In Dr. Brenner, Dokumente. Cited in Walther Blunck, ed., p. 93.
- 57 See, for example, Wismann to Blunck. 1 March, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 58 Blunck to Wismann. 18 January, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 59 Blunck an den Herrn Präsidenten der Reichskulturkammer. 30 April, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 60 See "*Prüfung des Schrifttums*." Excerpt from the *Völkischer Beobachter*. 28 April, 1934. In Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 61 Blunck an den Herrn Präsidenten der Reichskulturkammer. 30 April, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 62 Barbian, p. 110.
- 63 See Blunck to Johst. 9 December, 1935. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel I (CB 92, 278).
- 64 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 23, 1933.
- 65 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 29, 1933.
- 66 Bericht über die Reise des Präsidenten der Reichsschrifttumskammer, Dr. Hans Friedrich Blunck, nach Dänemark und über dessen Vorträge in Kopenhagen und Odesne am 7. Und 8. 1934. In Nordische Gesellschaft Correspondence (CB 92, 255).
- 67 Blunck to Adolf Bartels. 17 November, 1933. Blunck–Bartels Correspondence, # 3.
- 68 See Blunck to Staatssekretär Funk. 13 September, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 69 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2. This account is backed up in Blunck's diaries, as well as in various letters he wrote to friends. See, for example, Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 70 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 277. Also in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 5, 1934.
- 71 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 5, 1934.
- 72 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 6, 1934.
- 73 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 6, 1934.
- 74 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 296. In his memoirs, Blunck noted that Haupt resigned at this time (*Lebensbericht*, 2: 271). RSK records, however, suggest that Haupt still remained at his post.
- 75 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 13, 1934.
- 76 Christian Jenssen to Blunck. 25 October, 1934. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 77 Blunck to Jenssen. 27 October, 1934. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 78 Applegate, p. 18.
- 79 Ludwig Tügel to the RDS. 21 November, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel X (CB 92, 287).

- 80 *Das Nibelungenlied*. Mit Bildern aus der Hundeshagenschen Sandschrift erzählt und begleitet von Hans Friedrich Blunck (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1934).
- 81 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 13, 1934.
- 82 See, for example, Blunck, *Mein Leben. Einige Aufzeichnungen* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt Verlag, 1934).
- 83 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 14, 1934.
- 84 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 13, 1934.
- 85 Blunck to Münchhausen. 21 March, 1935. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 86 Blunck to Münchhausen. 11 March, 1935. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 87 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 5, 1935.
- 88 Blunck to Wismann. 5 March, 1935 (CB 92).
- 89 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 5, 1935.
- 90 Blunck to Münchhausen. 21 March, 1935. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 91 Blunck to Binding. 21 July, 1935. Blunck–Binding Correspondence, # 6. Blunck preferred to talk about matters concerning the RSK in person, rather than via mail. See also Blunck–Suhrkamp correspondence.
- 92 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 5 and 6, 1935.
- 93 See Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 5 and 6, 1935.
- 94 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 26, 1935.
- 95 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 26, 1935.
- 96 See Münchhausen to Blunck. 25 March, 1935. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 97 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 26, 1935. Ludwig Fulda was the one exception. Some Jewish writers who had fought in the war heard about the exception of Fulda and wrote to Blunck asking that they be restored to the RSK too. See R. E. Schutster to Blunck. Münchener Zeitung. Redaktion. 28 March, 1935. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel IV (CB 92, 281).
- 98 Heilbronn to Blunck. 26 May, 1935. RSK Briefwechsel V (CB 92, 282).
- 99 RSK to Heilbronn. 18 June, 1935. RSK Briefwechsel V (CB 92, 282).
- 100 Suchenwirth (as the representative of the president of the RSK, Blunck) to Peter Engelmann. 17 March, 1935. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (CB 92, 281).
- 101 Cited in a letter from Thomas Mann to Rudolf Blunck. 19 November 1945. Blunck–Mann Correspondence.
- 102 Blunck to Hermann Ould. 10 October, 1934. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 103 Blunck, “German Culture and Literature.” In *Germany Speaks*, p. 233 (original in English).
- 104 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 26, 1935.
- 105 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 23, 1935.

- 106 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 23, 1935.
- 107 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 30, 1935.
- 108 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 342.
- 109 Blunck, "Rede an die Jugend der Westländer." In *Europäische Revue* (j.g. 10 [December 1934]), pp. 765–86.
- 110 Excerpt from "Rede an die Jugend der Westländer." Quoted in the *Stuttgarter neuen Tageblatt*. January 4, 1935. Submitted as evidence at Blunck's denazification trial. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1140).
- 111 George Bernard, "Der Blunck." In the "Pariser Tageblatt," January 15, 1935.
- 112 Karl Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz* (University of Illinois Press, 1970), pp. 189–90.
- 113 See "Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt" an den Geschäftsführer der Reichskulturkammer Herrn Staatskommissar Hans Hinkel. 20 August, 1935. See also Blunck to Maurice Boucher. 7 May, 1949. Blunck–Boucher Correspondence, # 10.
- 114 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, August 30, 1935.
- 115 Mittenzwei, p. 316.
- 116 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, September 2, 1935.
- 117 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 3, 1935.
- 118 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 345.
- 119 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 343.
- 120 Barbian, p. 125.
- 121 Barbian, p. 119.
- 122 Blunck to Wismann. 9 September, 1935. RSK Briefwechsel VIII (CB 92, 285).
- 123 Dokument Nr. 34 bei Dr. Brenner. In Walther Blunck, ed., p. 97.
- 124 Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und Seine Gegner* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1970).
- 125 Vesper to Blunck. 26 March, 1934. Vesper–Blunck Correspondence, # 95.
- 126 Mittenzwei, chapter XVI: "Goebbels: Die Preußische Akademie soll ganz verschwinden. Aber: Göring wird ihr Protektor," pp. 385–408.
- 127 Blunck talks about this failure in his memoirs (*Lebensbericht*, 2: 568)
- 128 Mittenzwei. See chapter XIX, "Der Untergang," pp. 463–90.
- 129 Michael Kater, *The Twisted Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 208.

Chapter VIII: The DAW

- 1 Blunck to Herrn Brückner (Hitler's aide). March 1937. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 734).

- 2 Blunck to Hitler. 8 September 1938. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 750).
- 3 See, for example, Alan Bullock, *Hitler*.
- 4 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, September 12, 1935.
- 5 Blunck, *Kampf um Neu York* (Berlin: Theaterverlag. A. Langen / G. Müller, 1938).
- 6 Blunck, *Das Andachtbüchlein* (Leipzig: Druck der Spamer A.-G, 1942. Writen 1936), p. 37.
- 7 From "Bitte um den rechten Weg." In *Das Andachtbüchlein*, p. 17.
- 8 Blunck, hrsg., Einleitung to *Die nordische Welt: Geschichte, Wesen und Bedeutung der nordischen Völker* (Berlin: Im Propyläen Verlag, 1937), p. xi.
- 9 *König Geiserich: Eine Erzählung von Geiserich und dem Zug der Wandalen* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1936), p. 399.
- 10 Applegate, p. 18.
- 11 Barbian, p. 100.
- 12 Barbian, p. 100.
- 13 Barbian. p. 100.
- 14 Hermon Ould to Blunck. 13 December, 1934. PEN-Club Correspondence, M–Z (CB 92, 239).
- 15 For example, "German Literature of Today: Einige Bücher des Sommers." In *The Listener*, vol. 10, no. 247, 4 October, 1933, p. 520.
- 16 Blunck to Jenssen. 30 October, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence, (CB 92, 107).
- 17 Blunck to Jenssen. 20 October, 1933. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 18 Blunck to the Reichskulturkammer. 1 February, 1934. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (intern) (CB 92, 277).
- 19 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 12, 1934.
- 20 Blunck to Schmidt-Pauli. 31 March, 1933. Blunck–Schmidt-Pauli Correspondence, # 83.
- 21 Blunck to Will Vesper. 9 Nebelmond, 1934. Blunck–Vesper Correspondence, # 95.
- 22 See, for example, "Thomas Mann in 'einer französischen Tageszeitung.'" December 1933. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286); see also Blunck to Schlegel. 22 December, 1933. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel (CB 92, 277).
- 23 See, for example, Rauch to Blunck. 21 July, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286); also see Blunck to Schlegel. 26 November, 1935. Reichsschrifttumskammer Briefwechsel I (CB 92, 278).
- 24 Blunck to the Editorial Staff of the London *Times*. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286); also see Blunck to the Editorial Staff of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. 29 May, 1934. RSK Briefwechsel IX (CB 92, 286).
- 25 Cited in Ould to Blunck. 26 August, 1946. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65 (original in English).
- 26 Ould to Blunck. October, 1934. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65.

- 27 Blunck to Hermon Ould. 24 December, 1935. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65.
- 28 Hermon Ould to Blunck. 16 January, 1936. Blunck–Ould Correspondence, # 65.
- 29 Blunck. Telegram from Blunck to Goebbels, November 11, 1934.
- 30 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 18, 1935 (p. 10).
- 31 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 342.
- 32 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 20, 1936.
- 33 For an examination of the web of departments involved in foreign policy in Nazi Germany, see Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Außenpolitik*.
- 34 Blunck. Akten-Notiz. 21 November, 1938. Blunck–Seyss-Inquart Correspondence, # 77.
- 35 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 363.
- 36 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 20, 1936.
- 37 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 20, 1936.
- 38 Blunck to Offergeld. 27 January, 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).
- 39 Blunck to Börries von Münchhausen. 14 July, 1937. Blunck–Münchhausen Correspondence, # 61.
- 40 See Blunck to von Wussow. 1 August, 1936. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936 (CB 92, 265).
- 41 Blunck to Bürgermeister Winkler. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1937/38 (CB 92, 267).
- 42 Akademische Auslandsstelle der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität to Blunck. 5 July, 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).
- 43 Blunck to Nedoma. 17 November, 1938. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1938 I (CB 92, 268); Hasenöhl to Blunck. 26 February, 1936. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936 (CB 92, 265).
- 44 *Deutschland und der Norden*. In *Deutsche Zukunft* (jg. 2, 1934, Nr. 2), p. 5.
- 45 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 468.
- 46 See, for example, Blunck, “Vortragsfahrt in Anatolien und im Balken gelegentlich der Buchausstellungen” (1937). Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (pp. 112–22). Also “Kurzer Bericht über die Vortragsfahrt nach Jugoslawien und Bulgarien” (pp. 130–42).
- 47 “*Dichtung und neuer Staat*.” First published in essay form in the *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, vol. 7 (February 1934).
- 48 “Vortragsfahrt in Anatolien und im Balken gelegentlich der Buchausstellungen,” p. 5 (p. 120 on T580).
- 49 Jacobsen, pp. 289–90.
- 50 Offergeld to Blunck. 12 October, 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).

- 51 Entwurf eines Rundschreibens der Vereinigung zwischen staatlicher Verbände an ihre Mitglieder verbände. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1937/38 (CB 92, 267).
- 52 Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft to Blunck. 9 September, 1936. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel 1936 (CB 92, 265).
- 53 Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft to Blunck. 9 September, 1936. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel 1936 (CB 92, 265).
- 54 Blunck to Graf Dürckheim. 17 June, 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).
- 55 Blunck, "German Culture and Literature," p. 10 (original in English); also see testimonial of W. E. Collinson for the *Spruchkammer*. 30 January, 1947. Berlin Document Center (T580). Blunck reel.
- 56 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 370.
- 57 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 371–2.
- 58 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 372.
- 59 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 30, 1937.
- 60 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 30, 1937.
- 61 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 30, 1937.
- 62 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 30, 1937.
- 63 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 30, 1937.
- 64 Collison to Blunck. 31 May, 1934. Blunck–Collison Correspondence, # 14.
- 65 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, February 20, 1936.
- 66 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 370–1.
- 67 Protokoll über die Sitzung der erweiterten Vorstandes der Deutsch-Französischen Gesellschaft. 19 January, 1938. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 68 Cited in Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 375.
- 69 Protokoll über die Sitzung der erweiterten Vorstandes der Deutsch-Französischen Gesellschaft. 19 January, 1938. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 70 Abetz to Blunck. Undated. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 71 Blunck to Abetz. 10 March, 1939. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 72 Blunck to Abetz. 10 March, 1937. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 73 Vorstandssitzung of the German-French Society. 26 January, 1939. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 74 See Blunck to Marcel Berger. 6 April, 1937. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251). Blunck's correspondence includes many mentions to French writers that he will or has delivered copies of writers' books to the *Monatshefte* for review.
- 75 Abetz to Blunck. 1 February, 1937. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).

- 76 Westrick to Blunck. 29 July, 1939. French-German Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 77 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 23, 1937.
- 78 Vorstandssitzung of the German-French Society. 26 January, 1939. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 79 Quote of Poupart. Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 26, 1936.
- 80 Cited in Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 26, 1936.
- 81 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, October 26, 1936.
- 82 *Presse Dienst Nord*. NR. 32. Lübeck–Berlin, 12 September, 1941. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 83 See Nordische Gesellschaft Reich-Kontor Lübeck Jessen to Blunck. 9 October, 1934. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 84 Auskunft über die Alliance Française. February 1935. Nordic-Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255). The report documented the number of members in the *Alliance Française* in Iceland, the amount of money that the Icelandic government gave the organization, and the number of participants in its language courses.
- 85 Domes to Blunck. 6 February, 1935. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 86 Blunck to Jessen. 18 March, 1938. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 87 A large selection of *Der Norden* is held at the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek* in Kiel.
- 88 *Der Norden*. July 1939.
- 89 “Kunst und Landschaft.” In *Der Norden*, 1935, pp. 388–90; “Diderik Pining kämpft um Island.” In *Der Norden*, jg. 14, 1937, p. 342.
- 90 Domes to Blunck. 6 February, 1936. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 91 Blunck to the German Ambassador in Denmark. 22 October, 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).
- 92 Jessen to Blunck. 24 June, 1937. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 93 Blunck to Jenssen. 28 February, 1938. Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence (CB 92, 107).
- 94 *Gesammelte Werke*, 10 bde. (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1937).
- 95 Presumably the writers of the new Germany or Germany itself.
- 96 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 16, 1937.
- 97 Blunck to Will Vesper. 24 March, 1936. Blunck–Vesper Correspondence, # 95. In his memoirs, the poet asserts the opposite – that his contractor pegged the cost of building the house to the amount of the contract (*Lebenbericht*, 2: 402). Given the circumstances of the evidence, the letter to Vesper is more reliable.
- 98 See, for example, Walther Blunck, ed., *Thomas Mann und Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 107.

- 99 Walther Blunck, ed., *Thomas Mann und Hans Friedrich Blunck*, p. 107.
- 100 In April 1937, for example, Blunck wrote Rust and commented that his works had not been included in a list of books recommended for school bookstores. As he noted to Rust, *Gewalt über das Feuer, Von Geistern unter und über die Erde, König Geiserich*, and a few other works were particularly suitable for young readers, who had already shown great attachment to the works. Blunck explained to Rust that he did not want to criticize the current list. However, as he had been told that the list was to be supplemented, he suggested that Rust at least have an official examine the three works and consider their suitability for the audience in question (Blunck to Rust. 23 April, 1937. Blunck–Rust Correspondence, # 175).
- 101 Holthöfer to Blunck. 4 April, 1938. Blunck–Holthöfer Correspondence, # 39.
- 102 See Holthöfer to Blunck. 11 October, 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).
- 103 See Blunck to Holthöfer. 14 September, 1936. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936 (CB 92, 265).
- 104 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 364.
- 105 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, September 7, 1938.
- 106 See Offergeld to the Board of the DAW. 12 October 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).
- 107 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 28, 1937.
- 108 Offergeld to the Board of the DAW. 12 October, 1937. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1936/37 (CB 92, 266).
- 109 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 370.
- 110 Holthöfer to Blunck. 4 April, 1938; Blunck to Holthöfer. 6 April, 1938. Blunck–Holthöfer Correspondence, # 39.
- 111 Regarding Holthöfer's departure, see Blunck to Holthöfer. 28 April, 1951. Blunck–Holthöfer Correspondence, # 39.
- 112 Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen an Blunck. 8 August, 1938. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1938 I (CB 92, 268).
- 113 Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen an Blunck. 8 August, 1938. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel, 1938 I (CB 92, 268).
- 114 Jacobsen, pp. 234–8.
- 115 The DAW's and the VVE's involvement in building relations with the ethnic Germans needs to be further explored. I intend to pursue this topic in a future essay or book.
- 116 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November 30, 1938.
- 117 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2: 397–9.
- 118 Blunck to Jessen, Secretary of the Nordic Society. 29 July, 1939. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 119 *Wolter von Plettenberg* (Hamburg: Deutsche Hausbücherei, 1938), p. 273.

Chapter IX: World War II and the Aftermath

- 1 An die Mitglieder und Freunde der Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft.
4 October, 1939. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 2 Rundschreiben. 29 November, 1939. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 3 German-French Society Leaflet. 1 July, 1943. German-French Society Correspondence (CB 92, 251).
- 4 See *Deutschland und der Norden: Ein Vortrag* (Sonderdruck des Wien-Kontors der Nordischen Gesellschaft 1943. 16 S. 8. Also, hrsg. in Zusammenarbeit ... vom Reichskontor d. Nord. Gesellschaft, Lübeck. Riga: Verlagsges. Ostland (1944). S. 5–61. = *Feldpost Nord u. Ost* 1).
- 5 *Der Norden: Monatsschrift der Nordischen Gesellschaft*, nr. 117 (Jahrgang der Ostsee-Rundschau und des Nordischen Aufsehers, January 1940).
- 6 Nordische Gesellschaft. Brandenburgisches Kontor. Berlin. September, 1944. Nordic Society Correspondence, 1927–1939 (CB 92, 255).
- 7 Ribbentrop to Blunck. 12 August, 1940. Deutsches Auslandswerk Briefwechsel 1939/40 (CB 92, 272).
- 8 See *Sage vom Reich*, vol. 2, pp. 29 and 32.
- 9 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, July 25, 1944.
- 10 See *Deutschland und der Norden* (note # 4).
- 11 For example, Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 3, 1945.
- 12 From *Sturm überm Land*, p. 3.
- 13 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 30, 1945.
- 14 There are no British sources for this encounter.
- 15 Sagarra and Skrine, p. 207.
- 16 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 12, 1945.
- 17 See, for example, Blunck–Jenssen Correspondence in 1945 (CB 92, 107). Blunck never revised his diaries after the war, which, in any case, would have been out of character for him. Although he interpreted events to his own advantage and was prone to exaggeration, he never saw the error in his ways and, therefore, never hid his complicity. In June 1945, Blunck briefly considered destroying his records from the RSK and the DAW. However, he concluded that all of his actions stemmed from his duty as a German to support his country (Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 11, 1945). He also considered destroying his diaries. With less defiance, he determined that it was important to leave his record to the judgement of future generations (Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 11, 1945).
- 18 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 29, 1945.
- 19 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 2, 1946.
- 20 A reference to George Grosz’s “Christ with a gas mask,” of which Grosz made several versions (1927–28). Grosz was prosecuted and fined for these drawings.
- 21 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 1, 1945.

- 22 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 23, 1946.
- 23 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 5, 1946.
- 24 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, December 16, 1946.
- 25 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 23, 1946.
- 26 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 18, 1946.
- 27 Blunck to Alfred Domes. 25 March, 1949. Blunck–Domes Correspondence, # 160.
- 28 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, April 30, 1946. “Ein Brief von Reuß-Löwenstein, der mich in seiner völligen Ahnungslosigkeit über das, was wir als Präsidenten der Kulturkammer zu leisten versuchten, tief erschütterte. Wenn die Unwissenheit über jene Zeit und wenn die Urteile und Verbohrtheiten einen solchen Weg nehmen, wäre es doch besser gewesen, daß ich wie Richard Strauss nach der Schweiz oder nach dem Norden ausgewichen wäre. Das wäre der Dank für das, was einem an tausendfältigem Dank versprochen wurde?”
- 29 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, June 15, 1945.
- 30 See Blunck to Strauss. 25 March, 1946; Karl Rosen (Strauss’s lawyer) to Blunck. 8 April, 1946. Blunck–Strauss Correspondence.
- 31 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 25, 1946.
- 32 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, November, 1945 (p. 16).
- 33 Rosenberg to Blunck. 6 September, 1945. Prisoner-of-War Post Card. In Blunck–Rosenberg Correspondence, # 74.
- 34 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 10, 1946.
- 35 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 23, 1946.
- 36 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, January 10, 1946.
- 37 Actions against Blunck’s books and publication rights were reported at his denazification trial. Sitzungsprotokoll. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1262).
- 38 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, May 20, 1946.
- 39 Blunck to Mann. 28 May, 1946. Blunck–Mann Correspondence.
- 40 Mann to Blunck. 22 July, 1946. Blunck–Mann Correspondence.
- 41 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, August 22, 1946.
- 42 Mann to Blunck. 1 August, 1948. Cited in Walther Blunck, ed., p. 136.
- 43 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ed., p. 443.
- 44 Sitzungsprotokoll. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1262).
- 45 According to a letter from Robert Walter to Amtsgerichtsrat Bauer. 12 August, 1948. The letter was submitted at trial, and Walter also testified in person. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 954).
- 46 Alfred Döblin an den öffentlichen Kläger bei der Spruchkammer Eutin, Herrn Amtsgerichtsrat Bauer. 21 September, 1948. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 790).
- 47 Dr. Frank Thiess. “Erklärung.” 16 December, 1948. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 790).

- 48 These testimonies are contained on the Blunck Reel (ca. pp. 1116–200).
Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580).
- 49 Testimony of W. E. Collinson. *Spruchkammer*. 30 January, 1947. Captured
German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580).
- 50 Dr. Hans Rössner. “Eidesstattliche Erklärung.” Captured German Docu-
ments Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 910).
- 51 Sitzungsprotokoll. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichs-
kulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1270).
- 52 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 3 (unpublished): 510.
- 53 Military Government of Germany, Fragebogen. Blunck’s Einkommen,
Vermögen, und Besitz, 1933–1944. Captured German Documents Filmed at
Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 837).
- 54 *Sitzungsprotokoll*. Captured German Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichs-
kulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1270).
- 55 Following the trial, Emcke succeeded in reducing the fine by 3,000 Marks.
- 56 “Mit Politik Wenig beschäftigt: Hans Friedrich Blunck vor der Entnazifizier-
ungskammer.” In *Die Welt*, March 16, 1949. Captured German Documents
Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1250). National
Archives. College Park, Maryland.
- 57 Mittenzwei, p. 504.
- 58 Blunck to Alfred Domes. 25 March, 1949. Blunck–Domes Correspondence,
160.
- 59 “Mitläufer Blunck.” In the *Telegraf*, undated. Captured German Documents
Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1254).
- 60 Alfred Döblin an den öffentlichen Kläger bei der Spruchkammer Eutin,
Herrn Amtsgerichtsrat Bauer. 21 September, 1948. Captured German
Documents Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel
(pp. 791–92).
- 61 After the verdict, newspapers lambasted him. Under a trial portrait, one
exposition noted: “as president of the ‘Reichsschrifttumskammer,’ Blunck over-
saw the expulsion of the best German writers from Germany. As ‘poet,’ he
distorted history and used these distortions as propaganda for National
Socialist ideology” (in *Tagespiegel*. 27 March, 1949. Captured German Docu-
ments Filmed at Berlin. Reichskulturkammer (T580). Blunck Reel (p. 1250).
- 62 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 3 (unpublished): 513, 529.
- 63 Blunck to Maurice Boucher. 28 July, 1950. Blunck–Boucher Correspondence,
10.
- 64 Watanabe-O’Kelly, ed., p. 452.
- 65 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 2.
- 66 Berlin: Knauer, 1952.
- 67 Berlin: Knauer, 1938.
- 68 Gustav Schwantes to Blunck. Blunck–Schwantes Correspondence, # 106. I
neglected to record the exact date of this correspondence.

- 69 Blunck to Maurice Boucher. 19 December, 1951. Blunck–Boucher Correspondence, # 10.
- 70 Blunck, *Odersagen; Ostseesagen* (Husum: Husum Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft, 1994).
- 71 Conversation with Herr Dr. Zander. Archivist at the Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek. November, 1999.
- 72 Applegate, p. 19.
- 73 Applegate, p. 18.
- 74 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 3 (unpublished): 534.
- 75 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 3 (unpublished): 561.
- 76 Blunck, *Lebensbericht*, 3 (unpublished): 561.
- 77 Blunck, *Verfassung und Untergang der Altsächsischen Republik* (Westphal: Wolfshagen-Scharbeutz, 1951), p. 4.
- 78 Blunck, *Tagebuch*, March 15, 1946.
- 79 Jürgen Blunck, “Streiflichter: Bekannte und Verwandte erinnern sich an Hans Friedrich Blunck.” In *Beseelte Brüderliche Welt*, p. 350.

Conclusion

- 1 Cämmerer and Delabar.
- 2 Blunck to Hans Hinkel. 11 May, 1934, p. 7. RSK Briefwechsel (CB 92, 292).
- 3 Applegate, p. 18.
- 4 Georg Bollenbeck, *Tradition Avantgarde Reaktion: Deutsche Kontroversen um die kulturelle Moderne, 1880–1945* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1999).
- 5 Ritchie, p. i.
- 6 Jürgen Blunck, “Streiflichter.” In *Beseelte Brüderliche Welt*, p. 345.

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