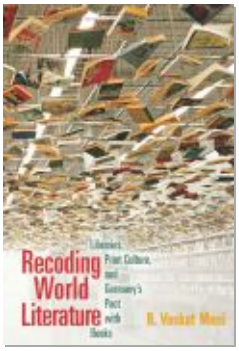
Chapter 3 The Shadow of Empty Shelves: Two World Wars and the Riseand Fall of World Literature



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CHAPTER 3

The Shadow of Empty Shelves: Two World Wars and the Rise and Fall of World Literature

Before the masterworks seek to prove their worth to
us, we must have proven our worth to them.

—HERMANN HESSE, "A Library of World Literature" (1929)[1]

To pursue world literature is to honor the masters.
To honor the masters is to mobilize that which is
most powerful in the world for oneself.

—LIEUTENANT SIGMUND GRAFF, "Germanness
and World Literature" (1940)[2]

In Thomas Mann's novella *Tonio Kröger* (1903), the protagonist Tonio Kröger, son of a wealthy industrialist northern German father and a mother of "foreign origins" decides to move to Italy, away from the stifling lifestyle of his bourgeois family in northern Germany. Later in life, as a successful author, he is overcome by the desire to travel back to his hometown. Upon his arrival, Kröger finds his way to his parents' home. He enters the house, walks up the once familiar staircase, and then stops on the landing, because he sees a sign that says "Public Library." He is astonished, for he feels "that neither the public nor literature had any business being here."[3] Kröger's interaction with the librarian amplifies his bewilderment: "'So this is the public library? Would you permit me to have a look at the collection?' . . . 'Certainly; it is open to everyone.'"[4]

Tonio Kröger was published at the beginning of the twentieth century when Germany, united as a nation-state in 1871, had already experienced two decades of the Second Reich. At the time of the story's publication, the Third Reich—one of the darkest hours of human history—was still thirty years away. While power imbalances in Europe had already rendered the political fabric of Europe fragile in the late nineteenth century, the idea

of the world coming together and being divided and destroyed under the aegis of war—not once, but twice, in which Germany would play a central role—might have appeared unthinkable even to the most stringent *Realpolitiker*. And no one had imagined that a return to one's home, not just for an author, but for anyone forced into exile—not for art, but for race, ethnicity, religion, politics, or sexual orientation—would be a return to a drastically transformed space. Through a culture of political domination and control, what was once intimate and private would turn into a public spectacle. The manipulation of books and other print media, as well as libraries, to serve the ideological purposes of a totalitarian regime would turn the returnee's former life into a public space "open to everyone."

The homecoming scene from Mann's *Tonio Kröger* captures the time around 1900, when book culture in Germany undergoes a renewal: book production, magazine and newspaper publishing, and the establishment of public libraries is on the rise. Further advancements in print technology, the cheap availability of paper, and the rise of literacy rates during a period of political and financial stability reinvigorate a culture of reading whereby the printed material becomes the creator and facilitator of many cultural movements.[5] The thriving book culture was also instrumental in the increase in the number of private libraries, not only among the intellectual elite but also among the bourgeoisie. In addition, the Kaiserreich's investment in public access to knowledge resulted in the rise of the public libraries (*Volksbibliotheken*).

This scene also uncannily anticipates the time when the word *Volk* would cease to signify collective residents of a national terrain; it would move closer to meaning a discriminating collective defined primarily by race and religion. This would be a time when the term *Volksbibliothek* would be fractured, when Germany would become a space where the association of the public with a library, or the public with literature, would be subject to extreme state scrutiny. There would be no unsupervised room for people or literature; the idea of the world and world literature would be appropriated by the Nazis in the shadow of the *Lebensraum*, massive book burnings would be organized to destroy the culture of books, and the stature of the political nation would assume new meaning in the compound noun *Büchernation*.

What was the face of world literature in Germany during the first half of the twentieth century? How did the pre- and interwar periods correspond to an awareness of books and world literature? What was the effect of the establishment of the Nobel Prize on the perception of world literature in Europe in general, and Germany in particular? How did National Socialist literary politics mobilize the concept of world literature to promote its

own agenda? To what extent was literature and literary recognition renationalized by the Nazis? What role did the Nazi policies on institutions of disseminating world literature—books, libraries, publishers, and the translation enterprise—play in transforming the shape of world literature from the beginning of the twentieth century to the third and fourth decades?

These questions are central to this chapter and would be best approached if located within the following historical markers: the period of internal stability and prosperity in the unified nation-state of Germany, which also leads to the establishment of a German national library (Die deutsche Bücherei) in Leipzig in 1913; the inflation and insecurity during the Weimar Republic, which does not necessarily prevent efforts to internationalize the literary space, especially beyond the borders of Europe; and the rise of National Socialism, which reinstates a nationalism of German literature with the censoring of ideas and the burning of books, especially by German-Jewish authors. Before we arrive at an examination of the idea of world literature, it would be beneficial to look at how the very mediality of the book is constructed and perceived in the German-speaking world in the early twentieth century. Walter Benjamin, who apart from being a journalist and essayist was a translator and book collector, serves as an excellent interlocutor.

Order and Chaos: Walter Benjamin on Books and Libraries

Walter Benjamin's writings on the many new media in the twentieth century covered a wide range of topics: film, advertisement, radio plays, newspapers, magazines, and even the telephone. But it is in his writings on books that his understanding of the medium appears with quintessential wit and playfulness. From commentaries on bestsellers and masterpieces, to renowned French authors such as Charles Baudelaire and André Gide, to classical European authors from Cervantes to Goethe, Benjamin was very aware of the media through which literature is accessed. Especially in the last years of the Weimar Republic (1928–1932), he published several essays on books. Apart from his essays on the dime novels of the nineteenth century, children's books, and reading trends among Germans during the time of the writing of German classics, Benjamin wrote two very intimate reflections on books: "No. 13: Books and Prostitutes" (1928) and the better-known essay "Unpacking My Library" (1931).[6]

"Books and Prostitutes" is a collection of thirteen "theses"—provocations would be the best word to describe them, due to their satirical and playful nature. Benjamin starts with citations from Marcel Proust and Stéphane Mallarmé and proceeds to establish relationships among three

sets of entities: the book and its reader, the prostitute and the customer, and books and prostitutes. The opening thesis: "One can take books and prostitutes in bed" (1) illustrates this intimacy; books and prostitutes become agents of the shrinkage of time (2); they have an unfortunate relationship with each other (due to the lack of literacy) (4); they have their own specific (male) clientele (5); they live in public houses for students (6); they tend to disappear before they are over (7); they love to turn their backs toward their readers or customers (9); they rejuvenate their users (10); they carry their trials and tribulations in public (12); and what is a footnote for one, is a money bill in the stocking for the other (13).[7] Thesis 8, the longest of all, explains the narrative qualities of books and prostitutes: "Books and prostitutes narrate as eagerly and insincerely, as [eager and insincere] they have become. In fact, they often do not notice it all. One follows them for years 'out of love' and one day one stands like a large body in the red-light district, which, 'for the purpose of studying' hangs about only for that [love]."[8] With the personification of books and their comparison to prostitutes, Benjamin establishes the transactional nature of book acquisition and reading: the cost of entertainment, the possibility of addiction, a predilection for falling in love, and a guaranteed self-manipulation of the reader or client through surrender to the object of his desire. Yet, it is not merely the subject that chooses the object of his entertainment who defines the objectivity and utility of the object. The object itself exerts pressure and influence over the subject to transform the subject's subjectivity. The material and the intellectual dimensions of the object of desire thus inform a reader's relationship to the book, much as a client's to a prostitute; and although for the prostitute or book, the interaction with the client or reader might not always be a matter of choice, for the client or reader it is.

Benjamin's playful reflections on books and prostitutes acquire a more serious intimacy in his essay "Unpacking My Library." Written on the occasion of moving into a new, partially furnished apartment due to his divorce from his wife Dora,[9] Benjamin's essay on the library extends the spirit of mutual transformation of the consumer and the consumed, the subject and the object, the collector and the collected. And Benjamin locates such transformative forces between the tedious agony of organization and collation, and the euphoric ecstasy of acquiring books. Benjamin begins his essay with a declaration of an act: the act of unpacking his books before they find their places on bookshelves. He invites his readers to join the chaos of a library that is dispersed in crates and on the floor, a library that has not taken the form of what is associated with the word: an orderly arrangement of books on display. Benjamin associates this dispersed, strewn about disor-

derliness with the chaotic energy of the passion for book collecting. Benjamin's essay is thus not about the collection itself; he states: "Would it not be presumptuous of me if, in order to appear convincingly objective and down-to-earth, I enumerated for you the main sections or the prize pieces of a library, if I presented you with their history or even their usefulness to a writer? . . . ; what I am really concerned with is giving you some insight into the relationship of a book collector to his possessions, to collecting, rather than the collection."[10]

Arbitrary modes, rather than exact knowledge, randomness of passion, rather than the programmatic energy of rationalism thus set the tone for Benjamin's reflections. Citing Anatole France, Benjamin attests that the "only exact knowledge there is, is the knowledge of the date of publication and the format of the books." The collector exists in a "dialectical tension between the poles of order and disorder." What informs his own text, his own recounting of the act of collecting books, as they stay strewn around in his apartment, is a distinct dialectical tension between "fate" and "freedom." Counterbalancing this tension, as Benjamin further proposes, is the torque of "memory" that resounds in the very act of collecting. Benjamin draws a direct connection between remembering and book collecting: "Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories." Immediately following this line is a comment on fate: "More than that, the chance, the fate that has suffused the past before my eyes is conspicuously present in the accustomed confusion of these books." To collect is to reconstruct the past, "to renew the old age." But that renewal is dependent on the fate of an object as it is taken from one's collection and becomes part of someone else's. The person who acquires it accumulates a sense of freedom in receiving, borrowing, or even purloining a work from someone else's collection, in order to give a new meaning to the object in the new collection. This is where the art of collecting books becomes a question of accessibility to them, which Benjamin further connects with the act of writing. Having declared earlier that "Collectors are physiognomists of objects,"[11] Benjamin states—drawing on the example of Jean Paul's protagonist in *Schulmeisterlein Wutz* (1790), who wrote books that he could not afford—"Writers are really people who write books not because they are poor, but because they are dissatisfied with books they could buy but do not like."[12] This is a remarkable shift in Benjamin's essay. His recollection of cities where he acquired specific books, catalogues that informed him of particular books, and memories of coming across those catalogues all become part of the action of collection. In the specific kind of physiognomic exercise carried out by collectors, many moments of

chance are involved: the chance of coming across a particularly treasured object, the chance of having that object available for purchase, the chance that the object will actually be acquired by the collector. Benjamin's reflections on fate and memory culminate in a sense of a peculiar kind of freedom that for him is associated with the act of collecting: "One of the finest memories of a collector is the moment when he rescued a book to which he might never have given a thought, much less a wishful look, because he found it lonely and abandoned on the market place and bought it and gave it its freedom—the way the prince bought a beautiful slave-girl in the Arabian Nights. To a book collector, you see, the true freedom of all books is somewhere on his shelf."[13]

It is hard to miss the gendered political tension that is part of Benjamin's imagination of the freedom that involves the particular "rescuing" of books. The personal library—a confined space—can hardly be seen as a site of freedom from the openness of a market; the condescension invoked by the emancipation of a beautiful slave girl by a prince similarly implies a further exploitation of sexualized labor. Acknowledging these tensions actually helps in identifying the ineluctable power dynamic that is an essential part of any library, private or public. Libraries are founded upon the collector's sense of an epistemic privilege, a desire to grant an object a new meaning, function, and ambition. It is hardly a surprise that in Benjamin's essay, the thrill of collecting, the excitement of acquiring a new and less-circulated item, the heroic sense of purchasing "freedom" for an "enslaved" book and granting it emancipation on one's own shelf, is also accompanied toward the end by the sense that a collector's work might never really be recognized during his lifetime, "but, as Hegel put it, only when it is dark does the owl of Minerva begin its flight, only in extinction is the collector comprehended."[14]

Benjamin's essay calls upon its readers to focus on many issues, especially on the dialectical relationship between order and chaos. But what the reader cannot miss is the dialectical tension between dissemination (*Zerstreuung*) and accumulation (*Sammlung*). The entire act of collection simultaneously becomes an act of de-collection, of anticipating a collection. At the center of Benjamin's essay is a personal library, which becomes a reflection of the collector's inclinations, proclivities, and even idiosyncrasies. And the freedom of books, as well as the freedom of the collector, lies precisely in the personal nature of this collection.

What Benjamin does for a book collector of precious and rare volumes is what Hermann Hesse would do for a potential collector of world literary works. While there are differences in the aim and scope of these essays,

considering the two together provide wonderful insights into the culture of books as medium, as well as world literature as a collection and recollection. Before discussing Hesse's essay, however, it might be worthwhile to start with the establishment of the Nobel Prize and the popularization of world literature through literary magazines. This will assist in charting the networks of ideas that contributed to the proliferation of world literature in Europe and help to locate Hesse's essay within this network.

The Nobel Prize and the Failed World Library

As is well known, the Nobel Prize in Literature was the fourth of the prize categories established by Alfred Nobel in his will (1895). Nobel intended the award for someone who "had produced the most outstanding work in an ideal direction."[15] While a circulation of literary works from the non-European world into Europe—mostly from antiquity to the early modern period—was already in place, the task of evaluating contemporary non-European literatures became a source of anxiety for the Nobel Committee set up in Stockholm. The committee found itself woefully inadequate to judge literatures from around the world; two members of the Swedish Academy reportedly "spoke strongly against accepting Nobel's legacy, for fear that the obligation would detract from the Academy's proper concerns and turn it into 'a cosmopolitan tribunal of literature.'"[16] Nonetheless, the Committee was indeed convinced, following the intervention of the Permanent Secretary Carl David af Wirsén, who commented that working against Nobel's will would deny recognition to "the great figures of continental literature" and asked the committee to "acquire an influential position in world literature."[17] And the committee did acquire an influential position in world literature, even if its beginnings were largely limited to "continental literature."

With two Scandinavian, one Spanish, one Italian, one English, and one German author as Nobel Prize recipients for the first decade of the twentieth century, the watershed event came in 1913 when Rabindranath Tagore became the first non-European Nobel Laureate for literature. Admittedly, Tagore's reception of world literature cannot be seen as having provoked an instant surge of interest in Bengali or other contemporary Indian literatures; Tagore was as much a British Indian subject as Rudyard Kipling—who was also born and brought up in India—the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. Nonetheless, the recognition of *Gitanjali* in Tagore's own English translation by the Swedish academy was in fact an acknowledgment of a writer from a geoculturally distant space.

The Academy's prize motivation for Tagore reinscribed Goethe's idea of poetry as the shared property of humans: "[Tagore receives the prize] because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West."[18] While this statement could easily be criticized for its inherent Orientalism or for its lack of recognition of Tagore's writings as part of the literature of the East, what is more important here is the recognition of Tagore's English words as his own: the first recognition of creation of English verse by a person of non-European ethnic origin, who nonetheless was a British subject. In his "Banquet Speech"—a telegraphically sent message that was read by Robert Clive, the British Charges d'Affaires in Sweden—Tagore reciprocated with cosmopolitan humanism: "I beg to convey to the Swedish Academy my grateful appreciation of the breadth of understanding which has brought the distant near, and has made a stranger a brother."[19]

The overcoming of distances toward a creation of intimacy and fraternity through literature soon found resonances within European literary circles, especially through the renowned French novelist and 1915 Nobel Laureate, Romain Rolland. Along with Tagore, Rolland, with his Zürich- and Leipzig-based German-language publisher Rotapfel Verlag, had an important albeit unfulfilled role in the proposed establishment of a *Weltbibliothek* (world library).

As the first exercise in mass destruction that had repercussions on a global scale, World War I becomes the harbinger of a new idea of understanding the world and worldliness. The fragile alliances between nations, Germany's ambitions of territorial and political dominance, and a world that was no longer held by the rules of the nineteenth century all come to a head in 1914. The idea of a collection of knowledge sources about the world in the form of subject-headed, cross-listed bibliographies and catalogs—think of it as the print equivalent of Google, housed today in the Mundaneum in Mons, Belgium—was already conceived by Paul Otlet and Henri de la Fontain during their collaboration from 1895–1934.[20] The idea of a world library focusing on world literature, which would bring together knowledge from the East and the West, was conceived for the first time by Rolland.[21] As an established public intellectual and artist, Rolland was well connected with many important literary figures in Europe and kept a keen eye on political developments in Asia. When approached by Emil Roniger, owner of the Rotapfel Verlag, Rolland translated his biographical essay on Mahatma Gandhi from French to German, which was then published by Rotapfel in 1923. Rolland was well acquainted with the Bern-based Her-

mann Hesse, whose *Siddhartha* had become a best seller in 1922; Hesse even dedicated the first section of *Siddhartha*, "Der Sohn des Brahmanen," to Rolland.[22] In 1923, Rolland came upon the idea of a world library—a collection of the most important literary works from the Orient as well as the Occident—as well as a "House of Friendship" (*Haus der Freundschaft*), which would serve as a meeting space for the exchange of ideas among influential intellectuals from around the world. The inspiration for the "House of Friendship" was reportedly Santiniketan,[23] the university outside of Calcutta that Tagore founded in 1918 with the motto: "Yatra Vishwam Bhavatekyanidam" (where the world becomes home in one nest).

While the spirit and grand ambition of the plan was commendable, several factors made its execution impossible. If Roniger's overcommitment to many projects—including his publication house—made fundraising an issue, the hyperinflation in Germany during the early Weimar Republic added further complications to the plan. Despite initial difficulties, Rolland and Roniger's plan enjoyed a brief period of optimism when it found resonance with Tagore, who visited Rolland in 1926, and with Mahatma Gandhi, whose visit followed in 1931. To show support, Tagore and Gandhi gave German translation rights for their works to Rotapfel Verlag.[24] However, Rolland's own lack of confidence in Roniger to execute the project as a collaboration and a lack of understanding between Ganesa Publishing House, Calcutta, and Rotapfel Verlag led to the slow death of the project. By the beginning of the 1930s, with the changed financial realities and the political climate of Europe, the world library with the best works of East and West proved to be a pipe dream. As Jean-Pierre Meylan aptly comments in his essay, "When seen retrospectively, their [Rolland and Roniger's] plan of an Indo-European bridging was visionary, they just came half a century and a world war too early."[25]

The *Weltbibliothek* was a failed idea. Political instability, hyperinflation, and a sinking book market characterized the new German Republic, especially in the first five years of the 1920s. However, around World War I, there was massive rise in publications on world literature. Book series like Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek and a literary magazine called *Die Welt-Literatur* played an important role in creating world literary readership and personal world libraries.

Book Series, Anthologies, and Die Welt-Literatur

As discussed in the previous chapter, on November 9, 1867, Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek series was launched with Goethe's *Faust: Eine Tragödie*

(*Faust Part I*).[26] From translations of first Spanish, then Scandinavian and Russian literatures in the 1870s—Henrik Ibsen, Jens Peter Jacobsen, August Strindberg, Ivan Turgenev, and Fyodor Dostoevsky—the Universal-Bibliothek quickly moved into publishing translations of classical Sanskrit, Chinese, and Japanese texts. The Reclam catalog from 1904 contains over fifty titles of works from *Altisländisch* (Old Icelandic) to *Ungarisch* (Hungarian). By 1917, Reclam officially declared an agenda of publishing world literature, "wie sie Goethe gehofft hat" ("as hoped for by Goethe").[27]

While the philosophical idealism that informed Goethe's concept might have inspired this declaration, market realities facilitated them. Between 1852 and 1900, German book production had tripled: from 8,857 works to 24,792 works respectively.[28] In addition, the establishment of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1901 further energized the circulation of world literature. Many handbooks and anthologies were published right at the beginning of the twentieth century and in the period leading up to World War I. Apart from Alexander Baumgartner's four-volume anthology that showcased literary works in German translations from antiquity,[29] many important, multivolume works were being published, such as Eduard Naschér's *Handbuch der Geschichte der Weltliteratur* (1900), Carl Busse's *Die Geschichte der Weltliteratur* (1910), Eduard Bertz's *Spemanns goldenes Buch der Weltliteratur* (1912), Karl Holtermann's *Kurze Geschichte der Weltliteratur: Mit 82 Bildern* (1912), Adolf Bartels' *Einführung in die Weltliteratur* (1913), and Paul Wiegler's *Geschichte der Weltliteratur: Dichtung fremder Völker* (1920).

In addition, between 1912 and 1920, Diedrichs Verlag in Jena brought to fruition its ambitious plan of publishing multiple volumes of folk- and fairy tales from Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, and the South Pacific/Oceania.[30] As Meike Werner points out in her essay on modern Jena, "Influenced by Goethe's understanding of the relationship between world literature and world culture, Diedrichs especially after 1910 buttressed his phalanx of books with broadly conceived publication series."[31]

During this high tide of world literature and activity among the publishing industry, the first-ever dissertation on the subject was submitted to the University of Leipzig by a student called Else Beil (1886–1965), who as Else Ulich-Beil would go on to become one of the most important political activists for women's rights. In *Zur Entwicklung des Begriffs der Weltliteratur*, Beil credits the rise in the discussion and use of the term *Weltliteratur* as the main reason for writing her dissertation. She traces the history of the concept from the early to late nineteenth century, drawing a genealogy of the term through discussions of the world and world cultures by Kant,

Herder, Schlegel, and Humboldt, bringing her dissertation to focus on the literary and translation activities of Goethe, which prepare the ground for the construction of the term *Weltliteratur*. Beil ends with the resistance to world literature in the mid-nineteenth century with Ernst Moritz Arndt. While Beil's study remains fairly centered on European literary connections, and she makes no attempt to connect the massive amounts of translations from non-European languages into German or other European languages, the dissertation remains one of the first in the field.

In addition to the publication of anthologies before and after World War I, the very first magazine dedicated to world literature (in the twentieth century) was established during the war in 1915. The magazine is significant for a number of reasons: first, because it gives an account of the reception and circulation of world literature, to which Hesse pays attention in his essay; second, because the publication history of the magazine, including its pricing and location, is symptomatic of the financially volatile period in Germany during the war and the Weimar Republic; and third, because the magazine would be revived, in a drastically transformed way, by the Nazi Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (Ministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda) in 1935, becoming an important historical document on the Nazi definition of world literature.

Entitled *Die Welt-Literatur: Die besten Romane und Novellen aller Zeiten und Völker*, the magazine was published by Verlag Die Weltliteratur in Munich, in folio format with around sixteen pages per issue; its banner promised its readers "a work every Saturday" (changed in 1917 to "a work every week").[32] Costing 10 pfennig per issue or 1.20 mark for a quarterly subscription, the magazine aimed to provide world literary works at a reasonable price for its readers. The works published were rarely commissioned especially for the magazine; they were reprinted with permission from major publishers in Munich, Leipzig, Berlin, Stuttgart, and other cities. Each issue was published with a very brief introduction to the author and his or her intellectual biography and contained short prose, poems, or excerpts from novels.

Primarily showcasing works by German authors such as Kleist (1/1915, 4/1916), Eichendorff (2/1915, 1/1916), Hoffmann (3/1915, 1/1916), Goethe (2/1916), Heine (6/1916), and Schiller (10/1916), the magazine initially included three foreign authors: the Russians Turgenev (9/1916) and Dostoevsky (15/1916), and the American Edgar Allen Poe (13/1916). With a few issues dedicated to classic authors such as Shakespeare (27/1916), Cervantes (31/1916), and Cellini (21/1921), the magazine mostly published eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors from Europe, such as

Voltaire, Balzac, Gogol, Maupassant, Andersen, Flaubert, Chekhov, Gorki, Björnson, Pushkin, Strindberg, Merimeé, Tolstoy, Zola, Jokai, and many more. It would be impossible to list here the large number of German authors published in the magazine. Suffice it to say that most of the canonical authors from the nineteenth century as well as contemporary authors such as Thomas Mann (250th issue) and Heinrich Mann were published in the magazine. Nobel Laureates did not go unnoticed by the magazine; Knut Hamsun (3/1917, 50/1919), Selma Lagerlöff (7/1917), and Rudyard Kipling (39/1919) also featured in the magazine, and so did Rabindranath Tagore (49/1920), who became the first non-European author to be featured in the magazine.

But it is not merely the number of authors, languages, or regions covered that made *Die Welt-Literatur* important. While there is no explicit editorial statement in the issues of the magazine available today (starting with 13/1916),[33] the brief introductions to authors and their works and the advertisements published in the magazine provide a rich picture of the magazine's purpose and its clientele. Together they provide information on the kind of readers and reading habits that *Die Welt-Literatur* aimed to create. The repeated publication of advertisements, such as "Send 'Die Welt-Literatur' to the field: It brings the best novels and short-stories of all times and peoples" or "Die Welt-Literatur: As Present for Soldiers and Officers"[34]—along with many other advertisements for war bonds (*Kriegsanleihe*) as well as donations for the submarine war (*U-Boot Kampf*)—clearly demonstrate that the magazine was directed to both civil and military readerships. An advertisement inviting private subscriptions to the magazine states its purpose:

> "Die Welt-Literatur" wants to work against pulp-fiction and the easy, but often really expensive light-fiction. "Die Welt-Literatur" appeals to the entire nation! By building enjoyment, "Die Welt-Literatur" wants to work to educate without [a sense of] school-mastery. Because of its inexpensive price, "Die Welt-Literatur" stays open to all classes of the German people! All hotels, cafés, pensions, sanatoria should display "Die Welt-Literatur"; for all of those living in the countryside it is a valuable diversion and stimulation. During travels it is the favorite and the most inexpensive reading, and for our soldiers in the trenches as well as in the communications zones it is a welcome greeting from the homeland![35]

Such a program for the creation of a world literature readership—one that pitched itself beyond hierarchies in the civil and military spheres of society, in urban and rural areas and in all institutions of rest and recovery,

and that made the idea of world literature through the magazine a greeting from the homeland—is truly unique and ambitious. But the magazine derived its unique character and appeal not merely through its all-encompassing target readership but also through a specific take on reading habits. While the advertisement promises an educational experience beyond a pedantic, formal pedagogy, the sections introducing the authors carried explicit, and sometimes indirect, modes of educating the audience. They provided tips to connect authors and works across periods and languages, the vocabulary to express one's understanding of a particular reader or work, and through a comparative aesthetic evaluation, they made a case for their choice of literary materials to be published in the magazine. Introductions to authors often contained comments on the universal values, cosmopolitan stature, and global humanity that were to find expression through their writings—thus framing the texts and the authors for the readers in a language of Enlightenment and Universalism. For example, in the introduction to E. T. A. Hoffmann (37/1916), the biographical notes about the author are interrupted by a detour to the content of the magazine, working in the spirit of both improving the taste of the masses through a magazine such as *Die Welt-Literatur* as well as decrying any criticism of the selection of demanding prose:

> One would suggest to "Die Welt-Literatur" to not publish such valuable and serious works. They are (supposedly) not for the masses. Their instincts demand easier goods. We believe this is a mistake. For the masses, even here the best appears good enough to us. And to anyone with an unspoiled taste, so we hope, E. T. A Hoffmann and Kleist will not only appear as more pleasant than the diet of our oh-how-modern light-fiction writers, but they will also appear as more lively and exciting. Yes, they will perhaps even be capable of captivating the reader more than some odd family saga.[36]

A year later, in a special issue on François Gayot de Pitaval, the introduction cites Schiller's praise for Pitaval in times of what he (Schiller) saw as the effect of "mediocre writings and profit-oriented publishers" on the cultures and manners of the people, to state that precisely this awareness of mediocrity led to the rise of the idea within *Die Welt-Literatur* "to counter the mediocre with the valuable and to offer the people [*Volk*] none of the diluted or harmful surrogate, but only the best for intellectual nourishment."[37]

But was the magazine consistent with its idea of world literature as a philosophical ideal and a pedagogical tool for the aesthetic education of

its readers? An analysis of the available issues of the magazine suggests the following: (1) the decision regarding what counted as world literature was culturally determined and historically based, meaning the most important German-language authors from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century were featured in the magazine; (2) the magazine did not discriminate against authors from nations against whom Germany was fighting during World War I, and Russian and French authors continue to be published repeatedly during the war (one can say, however, that British authors are, by comparison, underrepresented); (3) while the magazine never really worked in tandem with any "official" program of presenting world literature—something that would categorically take place when the Nazis revived the magazine in 1935—there is no doubt that in the selection of works to publish, the magazine pitched texts that might have been interesting to soldiers: Goethe's *Kampagne in Frankreich 1792* (2/1916); Turgenev's *Das Abenteuer des Leutnants Jergunow* and *Der Brigadier* (9/1916); Flaubert's *Oberst Chabert* (18/1916); Schiller's *Prozess und Hinrichtung der Grafen Egmont und von Hoorne* and *Belagerung von Antwerpen* (28/1916) to name just a few from the first full year of its publication. That the effort was also focused on establishing German authors within the larger world literary canon is evident not merely in the selection of iconic authors such as Goethe, Heine, Schiller, among others, but also those who today are considered lesser known among the general reading public, even in Germany. Notable names among them would be Karl Immerman (8/1918), William Blumenhagen (37/1918), Joseph Ruederer (14/1918), and Paul Scheerbart (28/1919). Keeping in mind their military readership, the magazine published stories pertaining to military cultures, but they also included many love stories (Dostoevksy's *Die fremde Frau und der Mann unter dem Bett*, 13/1917), those with women at the center (Cervantes, *Die beiden Mädchen* 3/1918) or, starting in 1919, those authored by women. While Selma Lagerlöff was published as early as 1917, Lena Christ becomes the first German-language woman author (23/1919), followed by Isolde Kurz (34/1919), Clara Viebig (37/1919), Elisabeth Dauthendey (20/1920), and Sophie Hoechstaetter (29/1920), among others. The gender targeting of the magazine was also reflected in the advertisement section: starting in 1917, in advertisements for personal effects, leather accessories, cosmetic products, procedures for skin-improvement, and sewing machines for women increased. World literature is thus also institutionalized through a middle-class consumership. In addition, the magazine creates a sexualized body of readers, who, during the height of the war, seek contacts for

pen-friendships or even marriages. These include soldiers seeking contacts with women and vice versa or, in rare cases, even men seeking friendship with other men. In addition, advertisements for the growing market for target-driven readerships—self-help books, "teach yourself" foreign language books (especially English and French), books on (hetero)sexuality and sex—reveal that by 1917, the magazine had indeed established itself and was generating revenue.[38] Praise for the magazine came from regional and urban presses in Germany, which hailed it as one of the most important contributions to readership.[39]

Important changes come to the magazine in the year 1920. On the one hand, the magazine publishes its first issue on a non-European author, Tagore. On the other hand, the pressures of an increasingly hyperinflating economy are clearly reflected in the magazine too. In January 1920, the magazine moved its office to Berlin, and then moved back to Munich in June 1921.[40] While the price had been increasing over the years, from 10 pfennig per issue from 1915 to 1917 to 25 pfennig in 1919, and then 80 pfennig in 1920, the magazine declared in 1921 that it would no longer be published weekly but only biweekly.[41] The price went up to 1.50 mark per issue, and, in a quick succession of a few months, to 6 marks (16/1922), then to 9 marks (18/1922), and finally to 30 marks an issue (22/1922). From 1921, the magazine also demonstrated a theme-based, rather than an author-based approach to world literature, with special issues on African Folktales (26/1921), India (30/1921), and Hungary (12/1922), all the way to "Exotische Frauen" (Exotic women, 1/1922), "Heilige Legenden" (Holy legends, 8/1922), and even "Wilde Völker" (Savage nations, 11/1922). Despite its new bi-chrome cover, the magazine showed signs of decline. The advertisements became few and far between, and with a combined issue (23/24 1922) on new German writers, the magazine published its last biweekly edition.

The magazine was revived by the Regensburg-based (and later Regensburg and Leipzig–based) Habbel und Naumann Verlag. Published under the new imprint "Verlag der Weltliteratur," the magazine was relaunched in 1923 under its old name: *Die Welt-Literatur: Die besten Romane und Novellen aller Zeiten und Völker* (figure 3-1). With a special issue on "Spanische Novellen," which included E. T. A. Hoffmann's translation of Don Juan Manuel's *Der Graf Lucanor* and Ludwig Tieck's translation of Miguel de Cervantes's *Die Novelle von der unziemlichen Neugier*.[42] In the foreword to the issue, the publishers address their potential readers and ask them to help with publicizing the new series, thus constructing new readers from

Figure 3-1. Poster for *Die Welt-Literatur* magazine, 1923. (Courtesy of Deutsche Nationalbibliothek and Buch- und Schriftmuseum Leipzig.)

old to help with the survival of the series.[43] The first series was followed by others including "Ungarische Erzähler," "Orientalische Novellen: indische Liebesgeschichten," and "Arabische Erzählungen."[44] These issues were published biweekly and priced at one mark each (or a *Buchmark*: a prepaid "forever stamp" costing sixty pfennig). In December 1924, the series published Hugo von Hoffmanthal's *Augenblicke in Griechenland* and declared the discontinuation of the biweekly, small-book format publication to be replaced by large novels. The explanation provided some interesting insights into the changing market for volumes of world literature:

> We took over *Die Welt-Literatur* two years ago to create a German Home Library with it, and therefore gave it a handy book-format. Literary developments and the desires of the circle of readers prevail upon us to execute a fundamental and meaningful change in the design and publication form of *Die Welt-Literatur* starting with the new year. . . . Since the necessary splitting of long works in half-monthly issues leads to a lot of disadvantages, and since the unprotected name "Weltliteratur" has often come to be used so varyingly in recent times, starting January 1, 1925, out of our magazine, we are forming: *Die Sammlung: New Sequel to Die Welt-Literatur*.[45]

It is in this transformative book market in which world literature is used by many series and an affordable small-format book, rather than a magazine, is privileged by readers, that Reclam tries to pitch its Universal-Bibliothek. And it does so with Hesse's name recognition. The geographical and linguistic expansion of world literature in Reclam's publishing agenda in 1904—three years after the establishment of the Nobel Prize in Literature—or its categorical revitalization in 1917, during World War I, can hardly be read as a mere coincidence. The programmatic publication of "masterpieces" from the gamut of world literary works—not just by Reclam but by other publishers—is very much in line with the phrasing of the award's purpose in Alfred Nobel's will. *Die Welt-Literatur* (1915–1919) already published advertisements from many publishing houses (Kurt Wolff, Langenscheidtische Bibliothek, Diederiechs, etc.) for collected works on world literature. Slowly but surely, the evaluation and recognition of an author's work on a global scale was influencing publishers' agendas, and Reclam did not remain untouched.

Hesse and the Private Library of World Literature

In 1927, on its sixtieth anniversary, the Universal-Bibliothek commissioned Hermann Hesse to write a short essay on book collection for smaller, private libraries for their *Lexikon des praktischen Wissens* (Lexicon of practical knowledge, 1927). Reclam had vested financial interests in publishing this essay. In 1925, Germany led the list of the top five publishing nations in the world (Britain, France, the United States, and Italy were the other four) with 31,595 titles; of these, 6,338 were classified under "belles lettres."[46] Hesse could not have been a better choice of an author for this essay; he enjoyed wide name recognition as the best-selling German author of novels such as *Demian* (1919) and *Siddhartha* (1922). From Hermann Gundert,

his maternal grandfather—a publisher and a Christian missionary in Kerala, India, in the mid-nineteenth century—Hesse had inherited a huge private library. This library contained over 3,000 works of German and European literature, many of them priceless first editions as well as scores of English and German translations of Sanskrit, Chinese, Sinhali, Persian, and Arabic texts that Hesse himself had added to the library. As a book-lover, collector, author, and reader, Hesse himself wanted his essay to be a medium of propaganda (*Propagandamittel*) for the book and discussed it with Reclam. In a letter to Hesse written on July 8, 1929, Ernst Reclam agreed to Hesse's vision, asking him to expand the manuscript by at least thirty pages in order to be published as a Reclam Universal-Bibliothek volume.[47] If Walter Benjamin emphasized the significance of books as a medium of knowledge and as an object for personal collectors, Hermann Hesse took book collection for private libraries to the next level by linking it directly to world literature. Spending some time with this essay is fruitful, because it not only democratizes world literature for a public interested in engaging with literature but also marks a moment of transition after which literature will soon become a prerogative of a totalitarian state. In the years following the publication of the essay, a strong sense of the book as one of the most important media in state propaganda and as a weapon of war will develop. Personal libraries will be destroyed, the fate of public libraries will be decided by book bannings and book burnings, and a grim era for world literature will begin.

Hesse also deserves a special mention because he has been entirely overlooked in genealogies of theories of world literature, which generally skip from Goethe and Marx to Erich Auerbach or René Wellek and Austin Warren, to the publishing and pedagogical ventures of the twentieth century. Hesse is important to the theorization of the library as a mediator of world literature: he is the first author to discuss world literature as a problem of libraries. And he is somehow the one who makes Rolland's idea of a world library accessible for a general reader in the privacy of his or her home.

Hesse's conceptualization of a library of world literature draws its inspiration from a private collection rather than the public library and most strongly emphasizes purchasing rather than borrowing. Yet it is by no means an elite venture. Hesse imagines an accessibility that crosses classes and income levels, and he thinks carefully about how an ordinary person should amass a library of world literature. He urges readers to create individualized collections, choosing for themselves what counts as world literature. In this way he democratizes the practice of making libraries,

suggesting that every reader can create such a collection. He emphasizes borrowing from distant traditions while endorsing ownership as a way to forge an intimate relationship with the abstraction of world literature.

Hesse's essay, *Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur*, was in fact partly a response to the success of European publishers printing inexpensive series of classic literature from around the world, many in translation. If the essay had immediate ties to the book market, Hesse had also been consistently engaged in bridging the gap between national literatures and world literature. In 1913, he was commissioned by Die deutsche Bibliothek—a prominent publishing house in Leipzig that produced well-designed and affordable hardcovers—to edit an anthology of German texts from 1700 to 1900. In his afterword to the anthology, he refers to Goethe's term *Weltliteratur* to endorse world literature's mass accessibility, which was growing in the German-speaking world through the translation, editing, and popularization of world-literary works.[48]

In *Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur*, the library becomes an agent of the idea of world literature, which it in turn both contains and disseminates. What counts as world literature for Hesse is not a quick list of authors, titles, and their linguistic, geographic, or, as in his case, "national" (*völkisch*) origins—in the essay Hesse lists roughly seven hundred works from nearly twenty languages—but the basic tenets of human existence that find aesthetic expression through language. The study of world literature becomes a process, a slow familiarization ("allmählich sich vertrautmachen") with such thoughts, experiences, symbols, and so on.[49] The first definition of world literature that Hesse offers is the "enormous treasure of thoughts, experiences, symbols, fantasies, and desired images, which the past has left in the works of authors and thinkers of numerous peoples" (*BW*, 3).[50] "Real education," for Hesse, is a consistent state of itinerancy toward the unending and timeless universe. The purpose of such a *Bildung*, therefore, lies not in the advancement of specific capabilities or achievements but in the granting of meaning to life, which in turn is to "explain the past and to stay open to the future with fearless readiness" (*BW*, 3).[51] Given that it is difficult enough to undertake an in-depth study of literary works of one people, Hesse states that the study of literature of the "whole of humanity" seems impossible. However, highlighting the enabling prospect of this otherwise intimidating, even debilitating challenge, Hesse asserts that it is precisely because of the impossible, unreachable nature of this enterprise that every single engagement with a literary work or an author becomes a mode of realizing genuine *Bildung*, a joyous experience. What counts as world literature for him is the extensiveness ("Weite") and the abundance

("Fülle") of what humanity has thought and what it strives for (*BW*, 4). In short, world literature surfaces as the totality of human aesthetic, experiential, and intellectual expression; it then becomes the source of a reader's personal formation. While this fulfillment seems to locate Hesse among the idealists and the sentimentalists, the essay is distinguished by its emphasis on democratization. Hesse quickly undoes the burden of implying that world literature means access to works of literature in the original languages; in the context of the library, he displays sympathies to readers' varied financial backgrounds, busting the myth that acquiring books is all about commodified objects and therefore necessitates obtaining the most expensive editions (*BW*, 7–8). While Hesse often imagines the vastness of world literature, he also theorizes *a* library ("eine Bibliothek") and not *the* library ("die Bibliothek"). And the narrative of such a collection remains directive rather than instructive; suggestive rather than prescriptive; indeed, democratic rather than pedantic.

In turning to the model of a personal library, Hesse dramatically individualizes the ideal of world literature. What counts as world literature will be a matter of individual choices and preferences, of time restrictions that govern the business of everyday life, and, naturally, of pecuniary concerns (*BW*, 4, 8). In listing these challenges and restrictions, what remains important for Hesse is a lively relationship ("lebendiges Verständnis") with the idea of world literature, in which a reader lets a particular work have an effect on him or her rather than acquiescing to the master status of a particular work (*BW*, 5). In a mode very different from the university courses and anthologies that were emerging around the same time, Hesse does not encourage his readers to undertake a *Bildungsprogramm*. "The key to a living relationship with world literature on the reader's part is . . . to follow the way of love, not of duty" (*BW*, 5–6).[52] In fact, Hesse categorically rejects a forced reading of a masterpiece based on its fame or on the reader's sense of shame of not having read it. There is no single library, Hesse tells us; rather, there are a thousand ways of collecting books ("der Wege sind tausend") (*BW*, 6). Hesse draws attention to the multifaceted nature of the book as a material-cultural artifact, encouraging readers to think about how they choose among books. He provides details on distinguishing between editions and on the various modes of acquiring books so that one might build a library of world literature even on a limited budget (*BW*, 8–10). Hesse accepts that there is no simple recipe for selecting editions—which works by which publishers are best and therefore worth acquiring. Some acquisitions, he states, stem from the love of a particular work or author; others, from admiration for the format or the layout of the edition;

and still others, from a penchant for price or binding (*BW*, 9). There are many ways to decide which books count as world literature: from luxurious gold-embossed and leather-bound special editions that might fire one's imagination, to reasonably priced editions for readers on a tight budget. Books thus become much more than vessels of texts dispersed ("zerstreut") around the world; they become the instruments of collecting ("sammeln") these texts (*BW*, 10). While the context may remain the same, the medium that grants a reader access to that text can acquire different forms.

In a similarly democratic fashion, Hesse welcomes texts in translation as integral to the act of collecting. He recognizes the culturally embedded nature of a literary work, the special character that it acquires by virtue of its creation in a specific language. Instead of fetishizing the original, however, Hesse celebrates the idea of translation, because only in translation does a work of literature become accessible to readers who are ignorant of the original language. He defines translation as approximation ("Annäherung") and highlights the significance not just of translations of foreign works but also of multiple translations of works in a particular language (*BW*, 11). In another novel moment in the European literary space, Hesse transforms the perception of world literature when he champions the inclusion of works from Farsi, Arabic, Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Pali literatures (*BW*, 12). But he does not claim complete access to them (*BW*, 30–31, 40), decrying a kind of idealization of these works expected of him after the publication of *Siddhartha*. Hesse thus redefines the European bourgeois library. He embraces the ordinary reader, the cheap edition, the material artifact of the book, the act of reading in translation, and, most of all, the democratizing of the act of selection. For him, a library of world literature will always already be incomplete ("unvollkommen"): distinct from a university education, it must reflect the collector's desire for reading ("Lesetrieb") and the pleasure of engaging with books ("Bücherfreude") (*BW*, 34). Finally, Hesse democratizes world literature by noting that it would acquire different meanings in different historical moments: "What appears to me today as the embodiment of world literature will one day appear as one-sided and insufficient to my sons as it would have appeared laughable to my father or grandfather" (*BW*, 43).[53] World literature in the Goethean sense is thus *aufgehoben*—preserved but also canceled.

What Hesse implied with the changing definition of world literature for each epoch came to fruition very quickly in Germany, in fact, within four years of the first publication of Hesse's essay. The epochal change came about with the Nazi ascension to power in 1933. The Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung

und Propaganda), headed by Joseph Goebbels, was established on March 13, 1933, and on July 30, 1933, through a special ordinance, all cultural institutions, including the German National Library (Die Deutsche Bücherei) in Leipzig and the entire book industry was brought under its precinct.[54] On September 22, 1933, a special plan was announced to set up a Cultural Chamber (Reichskulturkammer),[55] which would lay the groundwork for the management of all cultural institutions, including literature. This chamber would oversee not just belletristic works but all kinds of published works, including professional manuals and help books. To understand the drastic redefinition that world literature went through in Germany between 1933 and 1945, it would be best to situate the world literary politics of the Nazis within their literary politics, which in turn are strongly connected to their vision of books, libraries, and translations.

National Socialist Book Politics

As Dietrich Strothmann underlines in his groundbreaking study *Nationalsozialistische Literaturpolitik* (1960; National-Socialist literary politics), the Nazi strategy of controlling and reorientating the book market was not merely due to the success of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925) but also due to a very early acceptance of the book as an important social medium, therefore making it worthy of scrutiny and control to achieve political goals. While radio and film really emerged as the favored media for propaganda, "the book" was nonetheless acknowledged by the Nazis as an essential medium to establish a totalitarian system of publicity.[56] Following Hitler's pronouncement of hygienic requirements ("hygienischen Erfordernissen") and a sanitization of the public/national corpus ("Sanierung des Völkerkörpers") at the Nuremberg Rally in 1933,[57] the idea of mobilizing all cultural products in the interest of ideology was fast taking shape. In order to instrumentalize culture in the life-essential self-assertion and self-realization ("lebensnotwendige Selbstbehauptung und Selbstverwirklichung") of the nation, on March 23, 1933, in front of the Reichstag, Hitler took away the right to control the domains of culture and education from the states and entrusted the federal government (Reichsregierung) with the "highest leadership and management of German cultural life."[58]

The cultural policy of domination through discrimination and elimination became manifest on November 15, 1935, when Goebbels declared the completion of the two-year process of establishing the Reichskulturkammer and the founding of the cultural senate (*Kultursenat*), which consisted of representatives of all artistic media. In his inaugural speech, Goebbels

stated: "The Reichskulturkammer is today free of Jews. In the cultural life of our people no Jew is employed any more. A Jew can therefore not be a member of the chamber."[59] To promote such a "Jew-Free" cultural life of the nation, Goebbels also announced "practical, political measures" for all the arts. In the field of literature, prize money for 250,000 reichsmarks per year, a financial support fund for authors with the sum of 100,000 reichsmarks, and another fund for 500,000 reichsmarks for promotion and publicity were established.[60]

Such "practical and political measures" were not limited to the establishment of funds and prizes. The Supervising Offices (*Aufsichtsämter*) of the Reichskulturkammer and the Chamber of Literature (*Reichsschrifttumkammer*) included close surveillance of authors, publishers, libraries, literary societies, literary publicity, and book reviews.[61] While a detailed discussion of all these institutions is impossible, suffice it to say that the foremost form of discrimination was against authors of Jewish origins and affiliations. The "Juden" section of the *Handbuch der Reichsschrifttumskammer* listed the citizenship law (Reichsbürgergesetz) and the Law of the Protection of German Blood and Honor (Gesetz zum Schutz des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre) of September 15, 1935, as the preface to all the other ordinances related to treatment of books by publishers, booksellers, and librarians.[62] The following four groups were earmarked for discrimination:

1. Jews and "privileged non-Aryans."
2. Those related to Jews by marriage.
3. Cronies of Jews ("Judengenossen") or "Jews in spirit," to which also belonged the "Salon Bolshevists."
4. Among religious writers, those who constantly lived in the past ("ewig Gestrigen") and world citizens ("Weltbürger").[63]

There were 2,634 publishing houses in Germany in 1933, a number that had drastically decreased from the 3,380 in 1925; this number would go up again to 3,253 in 1939, just around the onset of the war. These publishing houses were considered to be in the service of the state and were scrutinized as needed. Apart from financial control, there were measures taken for the "cleansing of the state of the book trade from unsuitable elements," as declared by Goebbels at the annual conference of the German book trader's association in Leipzig (1936).[64] The policies for public libraries, therefore, were in the service of the cleansing (*Säuberung*) and the state-controlled propagandistic measures. After shutting down union libraries (*Gewerkschaftsbibliotheken*), the bid to expand control over state-run

public libraries became central to library management. The Nazis established public libraries in the thousands; their numbers rose from 6,000 in 1933, to 10,000 in 1938, and by 1942 there were 25,000 public libraries in Germany. There were also plans to have a Deutsche Bücherei in every big city.[65] The idea behind these libraries was education (*Bildung*), albeit of a very special kind. Walter Rumpf, one of the members of the Verband deutscher Bibliothekare e.V. considered libraries the "bearers, realizers, and protectors of the idea of National Socialism." Their main purpose was not just knowledge, but the "construction of a political will."[66] For libraries who would not comply to these policies and guidelines, the idea was to set up a weapons chamber ("Waffenkammer") that would dismantle them as a burden ("Ballast"), or even as a devil's workshop ("Giftküche").[67] According to the guidelines published in the journal *Die Bücherei* (1935), the official magazine of the Office of Public Libraries, the following kinds of works were to be exterminated:

> Works by people who commit treason, emigrants, and authors of foreign countries who believe in fighting the new Germany and disparaging the new Germany (e.g., works by H. G. Wells and Romain Rolland).
>
> Marxist, Communist, and Bolshevist literature.
>
> Pacifist literature.
>
> Literature of a liberal democratic tendency and attitude, and works by the propagandists of the Weimar state (e.g., works by Walther Rathenau and Heinrich Mann).
>
> All historical works that are structured toward disparaging the origin, existence, and culture of the German people, toward the dissolution of the order of the German people, toward denying the power and meaning of great leading figures in the favor of the masses in the wake of egalitarian thought, and [in favor of] casting a slur on their greatness (e.g., works by Emil Ludwig).
>
> Writings that communicate a world-view (*weltanschaulich*) and life skills (*lebenskundlich*) whose content are the false natural scientific enlightenment of primitive Darwinism and Monism (e.g., works by Haeckel).
>
> Books on the arts, whose representatives consider degenerate, bloodless, pure constructive art positively as "art."
>
> Writings about sexual pedagogy and sexual enlightenment that take a position in the service of pleasurable egotism and thus greatly appear as disturbing to race and nation.

Decadent, subversive, and publically harmful literature of "civilizational literati."
Literature by Jewish authors, regardless of field or genre.
Social- or entertainment literature, in which life and the purpose of life are represented in a superficial, untrue, and ingratiating way on the basis of a bourgeois or a feudal point of view.[68]

Translated literature was to be handled with special care, out of fear of wrongly influencing German youth and those vulnerable to a liberal-democratic propaganda.[69] With such absolutist policies, control over the book market, the authors, the booksellers, the libraries, indeed the entire existence of book publishing, a decided discrimination against not just German-Jewish authors, but also German authors of "foreign-sounding names," not to mention all the content-based objections listed in the directives against books, the idea of a world literature with the Nazis sounds like an absolute impossibility. And yet, it existed, once again, as we shall see, in line with the larger controlling and state-oriented agenda of the Ministry for Culture and Public Enlightenment. The irony with the Nazis—who denounced literature written by *Weltbürger* with a *Weltanschauung*—is that instead of completely denouncing world literature, they redefined, redesigned, and reinvented it to fit their ideological program. Much as they appropriated books and libraries as "weapons" in the service of state ideology, so did they deploy world literature in the creation of a very specific political world for the German reader. The manifestation of this weapon came in the form of two magazines, *Weltliteratur* (1935–1939), and *Die Weltliteratur* (1940–1944).

Against Weltanschauung: *Nazi Appropriations of Goethe's* Weltliteratur

As discussed earlier, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, there was a proliferation of publications on world literary works in German translations. In 1934, Franz Ludwig Habbel merged Habbel und Naumann into the Wiking Verlag in Berlin, and in October 1935, under the editorial leadership of Hellmuth Langenbucher, the magazine *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker* (Weltliteratur: Novels, stories, and poems of all times and peoples) was launched.[70] Langenbucher's Nazi sympathies had assisted him in becoming the most famous Nazi Germanist; he was even mocked as a self-appointed "pope" for literature during the Nazi era. Hellmuth, along with his younger brother Erich, had important positions in the Nazi administration.[71] Hellmuth

Langenbucher became a member of the Nazi party in 1929 while he was finishing his dissertation on the German Minnesang at the University of Heidelberg. His entry into the upper echelons of the National Socialist Party was made possible by his friendship with Gerhard Schumann at the University of Tübingen, where he had enrolled after Heidelberg. Schumann was already active within the cultural politics of the Nazi party, and through this friendship emerged Langenbucher's first anti-Semitic writings in 1930. From here, after a short stint with the Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt (HAVA) in Hamburg (1931–1932) followed by his association with Alfred Rosenberg's "Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur" (War-League for German Culture), Langenbucher quickly rose through the ranks; within a month of the famous book burning on May 10, 1934, Langenbucher was appointed editor-in-chief (*Chefredakteur*) of the *Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel*,[72] the most important trade magazine for the publishing industry, a position he used to publish many pieces declaring books as cultural objects that provide meaning to the German folk, as weapons that can be used in the process of German renaissance and rejuvenation, as commercial commodities that are vulnerable to be manipulated by those intending to do harm to the German public (implying Jews, British, and French), and as a "public" medium with a very strong potential for manipulative capacities.[73] Langenbucher was also behind the idea of "volkhafte Dichtung"—a seemingly "people-oriented" but actually politically nationalist/race-based literature, populist (*volkstümlich*), though not described as such—which he presented in his third monograph, *Volkhafte Dichtung der Zeit* (1933). Locating his idea of the *Volk* between that of Wilhelm Grimm's (the *Volk* as "highest form of intellectual life") and Richard Wagner's ("the epitome of all that feel the same hardship"), Langenbucher proposed: "We call people-oriented writing [*volkhafte Dichtung*] every literary statement which stays in the life-space [*Lebensraum*] of the German people, which arises out of its reality, the reason of its being, its fate . . . the depth of an inner connection of the author with the life of its people is a natural requirement, which only humans of our blood, the knowers of our being, the designers of our fate, the makers of our people can aspire to be."[74]

With a well worked-out position that would credit him with literary and cultural offices, Langenbucher became the person of choice to spearhead the Nazi appropriation of world literature: as an idea, a phenomenon, a pedagogical plan, and most importantly, an ideological tool. To understand the direction that the idea of world literature will take in the magazine *Weltliteratur* under his direction, it might be worthwile to cast a

glimpse at the following quote from his foreword to the second, expanded edition of *Volkhafte Dichtung* (1935):

> At that time [in 1933] it was valid to work one's way out of the big trends of a new evaluation and representation of the phenomenon of literary lives; it was valid to clearly mark the non-German phenomenon of a bygone time, which claimed an improper dominance in the intellectual lives of the German people, and it came in the first place through a general understanding to prepare the way for those writers, in whose work the lives of German people became the symbol and metaphor in all its radiance. . . . This development, for which we thank the unstoppable progression and what has today become the definitive purging of German cultural life from all uncharacteristic distortions, has also managed clear, healthy conditions in the area of literary life, which will again enable meaningful work for those who work creatively or with the media.[75]

The definitive purging of German cultural life from all uncharacteristic distortions becomes central to the Nazi construction and dissemination of world literature, and Langenbucher becomes the foremost purveyor of this idea through the magazine *Weltliteratur*. The magazine reveals a story of circulation, reception, and creation of world literature for a public that was militantly nationalized through every propaganda tool available. The very first issue (October 1935) carries the spirit of the times: it evinces a world literature that is strategically inserted within the ethnic, religious, and border politics that was central to the Nazi government after Hitler's Nuremberg rally of 1933. The October 1935 issue had as its leading piece a short excerpt from an anti-Semitic novel, *Kamraden an der Memel* (Comrades at the Memel) by Heinz Gerhard. Set in Memelland—the part of northern East Prussia over which Germany lost control between 1920 and 1939 to Lithuania—the novel emphasizes the yearning of the German ethnic group settled by the river Memel to be one with mainland Germany. The introduction to the excerpt, published under the title "Schicksal an der Memel" (Fate at the Memel) begins with an explanation of the Führer's position on the situation in Lithuania, especially against the mishandling of the "Memeldeutschen" by the local administration.[76] Through the use of strong language, the introduction makes the *Reichsdeutsche* (those residing within the boundaries of the Third Reich) aware of the "hate-psychosis" ("Haß-Psychose") instigated by Lithuanian bureaucrats against that German ethnic group ("Volksgruppe") in Lithuania and other borderlands of

Germany.[77] The "novel" is therefore not merely a work of fiction, as the introduction states:

> There appears at the right moment a book, in which the fate of the Memel-Germans has found a horrifying form, especially horrifying because from every line of this book, which the author calls a "novel," and even more from what we experience from what we read between the lines, that only the naked report of cruel facts is present here. . . . The entire book is a tremendous denunciation of the system of Versailles, which in the end is also at fault for the innocent fate of the Memelland.[78]

The introduction ends by outlining the plot of the novel: the story of the (German) farmer Feldmann and a Jewish businessman, "who has no relationship to the soil and is only obsessed with his greed for money" and tries to bring him (Feldmann) down.[79] The general tone of world literature is established with the idea of an ever-expanding *Lebensraum* and explicit anti-Semitism. Langenbucher's note following the novel excerpt, entitled "Zwischen zwei Völkern" (In-between two peoples), extends and reemphasizes the border-politics, this time in the context of the reading interests of Germans, which lie increasingly, Langenbucher observes, in the writings of Germans living abroad and in German borderlands. The current (and future) borders of a potentially expansive Germany become the borders of world literature. Langenbucher cites at length Heinz Kindermann's essay "Von den Toren des Reichs" (1835; From the gates of the Reich)—published in the special issue of the journal *Buch und Volk*—to underline that the "Germans in border- and foreign lands are our bridges to other nations and races . . . if we win them for our perspectives, we will be successful in convincing other nations and races of the greatness and unfolding power of the new Germany. . . . Here it is about values that go far beyond the literary into the people's political [sphere]."[80] Langenbucher ends with stating the need for a united Germany and German people ("Volk"), asking for a disavowal of the division carried out in 1923.

The readers of the magazine would have to wait a few months for an overview of the program and purpose of the magazine. In the "News from the Publisher," Langenbucher briefly reports on the success of the magazine and promises—in line with his "volkhafte Dichtung"—that the purpose of the magazine is to give its readers works that are of a high literary value and high entertainment power and to accomplish that, in the new year, the magazine will switch between German and foreign authors.[81] This section also announces a publication of special focus on Poland and England in the

coming months. The publishing agenda of *Weltliteratur* thus extends the foreign policy of Nazi Germany with regards to its neighbors. Polish literature becomes the focus of the March 1936 issue ("Polnische Literatur"), Southern Slavic literature is featured in June 1936 ("Südslavisches Schrifttum"), with excerpts from writers from Croatia, Serbia, Southern Serbia, and Slovenia, and an essay on Yugoslavian literature, and Hungarian literature is the focus of the March 1937 issue ("Ungarische Dichtung"). The March 1938 issue is dedicated to Benito Mussolini, with a long excerpt from his book *Vita di Arnaldo* accompanied by an essay on contemporary Italian literature.[82] The April 1938 issue has as one of its lead articles an essay on "German-French Intersections" in the contemporary novel;[83] the May and June 1938 issues ("Deutsche Dichtung in Österreich 1" and "Deutsche Dichtung in Österreich 2") focus on "German writings in Austria" (and not Austrian literature); and the August 1938 issue ("Sudetendeutsche Dichtung") on Sudeten-German Writings. April 1939 is a special issue on Robinson Crusoe.

German writers were also exploited and appropriated, especially with the assistance of the beautiful woodcut illustrations that were printed on the covers of the magazine. The May 1939 issue features excerpts from Grillparzer's *Der arme Spielmann* (1848), a story set in the provincial Brigittenau near Vienna. The lead article on Grillparzer, authored by Robert Hohlbaum, ends with a plea for "Großes Deutschland" and the need to recognize the spirit of an expanded Germany through the works of Grillparzer. The September 1939 issue features an excerpt from Herybert Menzel's "Umstrittene Erde" (Divided earth). The woodcut by Alfred Zacharias depicts a borderland with barbed wires around wooden poles and a solder in a helmet in the foreground. In the introduction, Menzel is described as writer of the German Eastland ("Dichter des deutschen Ostlands").

Through its strategically timed special foci on significant languages and literatures, the magazine acted as an organ of the Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. But was there a specific position on world literature or the politics of the world literary enterprise, which also found space in *Weltliteratur*? Three articles in particular—two specifically on world literature and one on the alleged Anglo-American invasion of Scandinavia through translated works—deserve special discussion.

The June 1936 issue on Southern Slavic literatures carries an editorial note about foreign issues of *Die Weltliteratur* titled "Zu den Auslandsheften der *Weltliteratur*." Identifying this issue as the third issue (after the Norwegian and Polish literature ones) that deals with the literature of another people ("Dichtung eines anderen Volkes"), the editor underlines that the

issue will once again acquaint its readers with the folklore (*Volkstum*) of the peoples of Yugoslavia:

> With these issues, *Weltliteratur* fulfills an essential part of its purpose. It offers people-oriented [*volkhaftes*] intellectual goods of other nations and should contribute thereby to the understanding of national life [*völkisches Leben*] of other kinds. It is natural that such literature requires a different consideration than works of our own German literature. It is not so readily accessible and often not immediately "appealing." Because *Weltliteratur* can after all select little from foreign commodity as compared to German writings, something of an easy, internationally accessible caliber, like the social novels that are to be found everywhere. It [*Weltliteratur*] will only draw from sources of real literature.[84]

In opposition to the program of the previous version, *Die Welt-Literatur*, which tried to bring the best literature to the readers, the Nazi magazine redefines world literature for its readers. It is no longer the most famous and well-known works of the "high" canon, but popular works, selected on the basis of their ability to provide glimpses into the lives of other societies. However, to speculate that this was some kind of a move for the democratization of the canon would be an obvious fallacy. Much like in Hesse's conception, for the Nazis too (via Langenbucher), world literature appears as the source of understanding the customs, traditions, indeed the intellectual wealth of other nations. But world literature is no longer defined by language; it is now also ethnically and racially defined. It is another source of the *Völkerkunde* (race studies) that the Nazis so actively promoted. Admittedly, even here, the particularity of literatures from elsewhere, the reader's limited access to such literature, and, last but not least, a different reading experience that does not render the work of literature immediately accessible do become part of *Weltliteratur*'s framing of other literatures for its German readers. However, there is an underlying political urgency to understand other nations, especially those in which the current political ideology is most directly invested. Moreover, it is not the poetry, but social novels in different languages, that become the sources of real literature; only they would offer a picture of the everyday lives of the people. World literature, in other words, acquires a sociological and anthropological function. This was reflected by the choice of texts, which swung between the popular and the canonical. While the Sudeten-German and Slavic literature issues focus on lesser-known authors, the German issues swing between Nazi-sympathizing, nationalist authors, or classical authors such as Goethe (October 1937) and Heinrich von Kleist (October 1938).

An extension of the above-mentioned idea: reader's accessibility, foreignness of world literature, and a sense of communication of national particularities characterizes Langenbucher's further engagement with the term, especially in the twenty-fifth issue of *Weltliteratur* (October 1937), which was dedicated to Goethe. In that issue the magazine made the first explicit reference to Goethe's concept of world literature. Langenbucher's editorial "Weltliteratur?" bears the interrogative tone of the title and appears as a public clarification of the magazine's task, as if the magazine had been reprimanded for its focus on foreign works. The article starts by directly addressing the readers and, in an uncanny fashion, bears the same sentiment about a common reader's fear of world literature that Hesse refers to in his essay, albeit by referring to food consumption: "It is likely that some people have not been able to win access to our magazine, because they are afraid of the term *world literature*. They confuse [*verwechseln*] the term with the case [of] 'literature of the entire world' [*Allerweltsliteratur*] and believe that in this magazine they will be offered a literary salad, which could have no other effect than upsetting their stomachs."[85]

The piece further provides comparative numbers for issues on German and foreign literatures; the former by far outweighs the latter. The article also states that the non-German literatures featured in the magazine are from nations with Germanic heritages (Nordic and Flemish) or of nations with whom Germany enjoys good diplomatic relationships (Spain, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia). The editorial distinguishes its idea of *Weltliteratur* from *Allerweltsliteratur*:

> We nurture world literature not as literature of the entire world, to restate our position, but as literature which is a characteristic expression of its people, from whom it has developed. We do not want a literary world language, rather we are more concerned with getting to know nations [*Völker*] as they really are, and with that no international literary hodgepodge can help us, but only the literature that grows from the life-soil of its people. . . . Only in this way and shape do we promote the mutual understanding of individual peoples. The name of Goethe, with whom we and the whole world . . . associate everlastingly valid accomplishment . . . , should grant us the duty to carry out our work in such a way, that it is in the service of a relationship of cultural collaboration between nations that is determined by mutual respect.[86]

Apart from the distinction between "world literature" and "literature of the entire world," what is remarkable about Langenbucher's position is the rejection of any common, or even intersecting, deployment of language

in the creation of world literature. The outright aversion to a "literary world language" stands in exact opposition to the sense in which Goethe was trying to conceptualize poesy as the *Gemeingut*, as the shared property of human beings. That sense of shared property is of no concern to the magazine, for it purportedly creates a literary hodgepodge ("literarischer Kauderwelsch") and prevents the acquisition of knowledge of individual nations and peoples, a knowledge that undoubtedly has its own social purpose and political goals. Despite the invocation of Goethe's name and the lavish praise bestowed on him, the idea of "cultural collaboration between peoples" remains bound to the life-soil ("Lebensboden") of nations. The translation of works from foreign languages and literatures into German for the German reading public is hardly a concern here. What is of utmost importance is the rootedness of works of literature. Once again, the cosmopolitan notion of world literature, one that transcends literary boundaries, one that renders national literatures meaningless (Goethe), one that emerges out of the literatures of many nations (Marx and Engels), or one that gives us a glimpse of the intersection of one society with the rest of the world (Hesse), is rejected. What works, what functions best, is world literature as a tree rooted in German soil, a notion that will continue as the magazine changes its name and its editorial leadership after 1939.

Wiking Verlag's *Weltliteratur*, edited by Langenbucher, lasted until 1939. In 1940, Schwerter Verlag with Friedhelm Kaiser as editor took over and gave the magazine a new name, *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung* (World literature: Reports, excerpts, and evaluation") and a new font, Antiqua (figure 3-2).[87] As Strothmann contends, with the new editorial leadership, the magazine passed from the Ministry for Culture and Propaganda into the hands of the SS, and the funding for the magazine now came from the extreme right-wing Ahnenerbe Stiftung.[88] As Kater mentions in his study, starting in 1940, the magazine was to become a cultural-political organ of the SS.[89]

In his first editorial to *Die Weltliteratur*, "Die Waffen des Geistes" (The weapons of the intellect), Kaiser set the tone for the magazine: nationalist, jingoistic, selectively and strategically worldly, and in the service of the dominant Nazi ideology. The editorial extends the values of the magazine's predecessor, albeit with an amplified urgency of the decisive year ("Jahr der Entscheidung") of the English War in which Germany found itself since 1939. There is no exception for literature in this deciding moment for Germany, Kaiser states: "In this moment we experience again that also in the domain of the 'literary,' there is no space that stands outside of this: the Decision."[90] Along with weapons of steel and iron, there are "weapons

Figure 3-2. Cover of *Die Weltliteratur* magazine, May 1940. (Courtesy of Deutsche Nationalbibliothek and Buch- und Schriftmuseum Leipzig.)

of the intellect," and the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) are part of the weapons that strengthen the soul and the feelings ("Seele und Gemüt") of the people. This despite the global struggle in which Germany—a nation of Western culture with Indo-Germanic imprint ("abendländische Kultur indogermanischer Prägung")—reportedly finds itself in; it remains true to its predicament: to collect and to radiate ("zu sammeln und auszustrahlen"). The establishment of the new Faculty of Foreign Studies ("Auslandswissenschaftliche Fakultät") at the University of Berlin thus becomes a symptom of this collection and dissemination of knowledge about the world. It is in this context that Kaiser locates the concept of world literature and the new (version of the) magazine, which includes the most important reader: the soldier. Glossing over the complicated history of the magazine, Kaiser establishes a direct link between the current magazine and its first predecessor, *Die Weltliteratur* (1915–1924), a magazine that "emanated during the war" and brought novels, novellas, and stories to the soldiers on the front.[91] The purpose of the current magazine as the "old and new" voice of world literature is thus twofold, states Kaiser: "first to acknowledge from German literature and to represent what was made with a worldwide approach; something that found a 'world' format, and next, to bring literature of the world to the German readers, which is useful or even necessary for them."[92] The key to this statement is of course the mention of the "useful" or the "necessary" works of world literature for the German people, the authority for which rests with the editors of the magazine as well as the officials of the Ministry for Culture and Propaganda and the SS.

According to Kaiser, the condition of war unfolded a new problem of a German engagement with the world, the world spirit (*Weltgeist*), and world literature. To illustrate his point about the "useful" and the "necessary" world literature, Kaiser quickly mentions his own piece on the flood of translations ("Übersetzungsflut") in the *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie* (1939). His self-citation is telling of his own position on the selective engagement with foreign literatures but also on the shape that the magazine will take under his leadership. At its core is the struggle between national and foreign literatures. He warns against newspapers that continue to direct readers to foreign literature by discussing them in great detail while the advancement of German literature falls behind. Criticizing such "Weltblätter" and their satellites, Kaiser complains that these papers nurture the "ill-fated German tendency to consider all that is foreign already as good and refined, and the engagement with it [the foreign] to be 'intellectual,' 'cosmopolitan,' and splendid."[93] Distancing the current magazine from such news media, Kaiser states categorically: "One would notice in

this that for us nothing is more distant than to 'foreignize' [the readers]. In the spirit consonant with the intellectual exchange between peoples, the magazine considers world literature as a 'conversation beyond the borders,' to include all the 'great and meaningful' literature."[94] However, Kaiser also warms that it must be taken for granted that the place for such conversations is a "national socialist Germany," and "for us there is no other 'literary' world view than the political [view] of Adolf Hitler, according to which the collective arrangement of peoples can only be based on the arrangement of specific peoples [*Einzelvolk*] as per their individuality." Ultimately, world literature becomes an "intellectual weapon," that provides a perspective on the world and, in turn, gives the world a perspective on Germany. Kaiser promises to "take it to the battle field" as the "German Volk marches in the double step of world history."[95]

An extension of this militarized form of world literature, as a weapon in the service of a nation at war, is reiterated in a statement on world literature from the battlefield. Despite its brevity, Lieutenant Siegmund Graff's note "Deutschheit und Weltliteratur" (Germanness and world literature) offers one of the most potent manipulations of Goethe's idea of world literature and a complete reversal of Hermann Hesse's notion of a masterpiece. The interrogative note that marked the beginning of Langenbucher's article from *Weltliteratur*, October 1937, is now replaced with a confident exclamation mark: "World literature! Goethe coined the word."[96] Graff sets out to establish the connection between Goethe's concept of world literature and Adolf Hitler's notion of Germany. Having credited Goethe at the beginning of the essay with the coinage of the term, Graff briefly explains the difference between the term and its use by Goethe, which for him is "something that we became used to understanding . . . the concept and sum of those literary creations of all peoples and languages, which through their human reality and their artistic form and—not in the least—their national fundamental content have become worthy for the entire world of the educated."[97] Almost as if in a rushed bid to change "what one became used to understanding," Graff reminds his readers that for Goethe, the concept of the valid was one that was timelessly worthy and influential. Goethe, according to Graff, was not interested in school-level ("schulmäßige") rubrics. Paraphrasing and selectively citing Eckermann, Graff goes on to claim that for Goethe, it made no difference if poetry were classified as romantic or classical, as long as it was through and through ("durch und durch") literature. Graff then presents his interpretation of Goethe's understanding of the classical, something that is complete and perfected ("vollendet"). If Goethe's conceptualization of the term world literature

had any value in a country during World War II, it is through the fact that perfection is a value typical of Germans, it is a German conceptualization.[98] Graff moves to emphasize the significance and justification of Goethe's concept for his contemporaries. Graff references the most difficult deciding battle ("schwerste Entscheidungskampf") in which Germany finds itself at the time, where a concept such as Goethe's leads to knowledge of the spirit that recognizes the spirit of others, out of which emanates a transnational power that becomes beneficial for all. This militarization of Goethe's concept of world literature comes to completion with Graff's establishment of a direct connection between Hitler and Goethe: "Adolf Hitler once used the beautiful image of the tree that stretches out its branches farthest in all sides, because it is most deeply rooted in the mother-ground of one's own earth. This image expresses most meaningfully, what we—in Goethe's sense—despite struggle and war, understand under *Weltliteratur*."[99] The last section of the short article illustrates this extension of the ever-expanding tree in all directions through the example of Shakespeare. Despite the war against England, Graff claims, Shakespeare would remain the most respected figure for Germans. Shakespeare becomes part of the German "idea" of perfection that must be protected, as much as the cathedral in Cologne or the statue of the Bamberg Rider. Graff's essay ends with the proclamation that masters and masterpieces ought to be honored for one's own good, as stated in the lines that form the epigraph to this chapter.

One cannot find an explicit reference to Goethe's concept of world literature even in the many writings of Goebbels, considered to be the most well-read of all Nazi officials. However, the discussion of the magazines *Weltliteratur* and *Die Weltliteratur* reveals the appropriation of Goethe's concept, as well as the figure of Goethe himself, for serving the political ideology of the Nazis. While the conceptualization of world literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century relies heavily on the circulation of literatures from Asia and Africa, there is hardly any discussion of non-European literatures in the two magazines. World literature remains either literature written by Germans in foreign countries or in the borderlands of Germany, or literature written by authors in countries most beneficial to Germany in its politics of the *Lebensraum*. The *Lebensraum* of Germany becomes the *Lebensraum* of *Weltliteratur*, stifled under the politics of tyranny, one-sidedness, discrimination, and, if the article by Graff bears any testimony, to populism. During the Nazi era, world literature becomes a conduit in the larger militarization of the Nazi polity. A smug sense of ownership—not borrowing—prevails, whereby the Nazis show openness

to all masterpieces and all worldly cultural heritage, only if to indulge in the strengthening of their own prowess over literature. Even in the selection and showcasing of national literatures, it is none of the German Nobel Laureates—Theodor Mommsen (1902), Gerhart Hauptmann (1912), or Thomas Mann (1929)—but as per the guidelines, a host of Nazi-sympathizing nationalists, or at best provincially domestic and locally acclaimed jingoistic authors, who would be presented as if they were in dialogue with the larger world of literature beyond the borders of Germany. Classic German authors such as Heinrich von Kleist or Goethe, or Austrian authors such as Grillparzer, would be exploited for obvious reasons. However, in this undulating focus on what is populist (*volkshaft*) and has a transnational appeal, the ultimate authority would rest with the Nazis and their idea of which literatures might be allowed for circulation.

The significance of books and other forms of printed materials to the propaganda machine was clear to the Nazis. However, it is not as if a systematic effort to translate German literature into other European languages was necessarily part of the Nazi strategy for winning "soft" power. Their aim was militaristic expansion, and through that it seems that the expansion of German language as the dominating language even for literature had been taken for granted by the Nazis. While the Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda kept a keen eye on the use of books for the ideologization of the masses, as for German literature—populist or high—the effect tended more in the direction of banning rather than publishing new texts, especially in translation. The use of literary translations as a weapon of war, and potentially as a medium for anti-German propaganda, came as a revelation to the Nazis, especially in the first year of the war and in the case of non-German-speaking "Germanic" territories in Scandinavia.

The May 1940 issue of *Die Weltliteratur* carried a three-page article (about five thousand words) titled "Die englisch-amerikanische Invasion" (The English-American invasion) of Scandinavian countries through translated literature. Kaiser's introductory editorial note to the article carries the following banner:

> About the Self-Sufficiency of Nordic Countries
> English, American, and French Cultural Propaganda in Scandinavia / Preparation for War through Books / Translated literature stronger than Scandinavia's own Production[100]

The urgency and sensationalism of the banner is carried through the highly ideologized register of the introduction. Kaiser frames the popularity of

English and American authors in translation as a problem of the "neutrality of Scandinavian countries." He presents the entry of Hitler's army in Denmark and Norway on April 1, 1940, as a question of the "security and neutrality" of these countries, and calls the move essential due to the situation of the war ("Kriegslage"). He is quick to justify the military action as an offering from the Germans "against the brutality and scrupulousness of the English and the French." The great Germanic commonality ("Gemeinsamkeit") is thus supposed to have realized itself selflessly. It is in this historical framework that Kaiser situates the article by Schlösser, which reveals how cultural propaganda had gained firm ground in Scandinavia, and, until the German entry, which cultural-political direction the Scandinavian countries were either taking or "let themselves be taken in." Kaiser describes the overview of conditions of the book market and the "deep-seated" precursors to the event (i.e., popularity of translations) as two among the greatest contributions to the intellectual struggles of Europe and of humanity! As an attestation of superior German capabilities in protecting and promoting Scandinavian literature, Kaiser cites the Icelandic author Gunnar Gunnarson: "There is no other country in the world in which one finds more knowledge and a fine understanding of Nordic literatures as in Germany. There exists a feeling for Nordic literary treasures in Germany, which lies in the disposition [*Gemüt*] of the people, and that naturally has not been changed by what is happening in Europe politically."[101]

The article by Schlösser illustrates the overwhelming number of translations abundant in the Scandinavian book market in three ways: (1) through facts from the book market; (2) through trends in popular authors; and (3) through warnings about a forthcoming cultural political disaster if these translations and their readers are not held in check. The language of the entire article is stark and bombastic. Schlösser starts with stressing that "not much that is meaningful [*bedeutendes*] [in literature]" was published in the Nordic countries in 1939, and even book production declined; the growing number of English and American translations is turning Nordic countries into a "cultural dominion" of England and the United States. Schlösser mentiones over ninety books from England and over one hundred from American literature translated almost simultaneously in all three Nordic languages, with Sweden serving as the center for publications.

Citing bestseller lists in the *Swenska Dagblatt*—the leading national daily in Sweden—which are primarily led by English and American authors, Schlösser complains that the rise of foreign influence is the reason for a disproportionate decrease in national productivity. While Kaiser

couches his arguments against translations in the spirit of protecting Scandinavian national and linguistic particularities and the spirit of Germanic commonality, for Schlösser, the availability of translations from another country thus becomes a reason for a lack of national cultural production, a reason for national cultural decline. What Schlösser draws is an interesting picture of the reception of English and American novels in Scandinavia, especially in the interwar period. British authors such as John Galsworthy and A. J. Cronin led the bestseller lists; Americans such as Edna Ferber (Schlösser makes sure that he uses the word *Jüdin* as a qualifier for this author), Hervey Allen, and John Steinbeck reportedly found great resonance in Scandinavia. The reasons for the grandiose success of these authors lies for Schlösser in the general fashionable trends in Europe, which do not have much explanation, the comfort ("Bequemlichkeit") of publishing houses in publishing these works, and the rise of "Literatursnobs" who then encourage the uncritical reception of any work produced in England or America. While Schlösser acknowledges the cultural connections between Scandinavia and the United States due to the mass-migration of Scandinavians, he categorically states that contemporary literature produced in America is "not based on the national [*völkisch*] relationship between Scandinavia and the US, and does not promote [*fortsetzt*] any real traditions, but rather it is overwhelmingly in the service of a Western democratic propaganda against Germany."[102] As for English dominance, the British Council emerges as the supreme agent of English imperialism; not only did council members change the patterns of the old relationships between Norway, Sweden, and England—which were primarily economic—according to Schlösser they also forged relationships with the "Anglophiles" and influenced the reform of the foreign-langauge classroom. As a consequence, English is the most common second language in Norway and enjoys an increase in Sweden. So in the entire business of world literature and English imperialism around the world, the countries that become of most sensitive concern are Norway and Sweden. Through the foreign-langauge classroom, the British and the Americans are supposedly making their way into the publishing industry, duping the publishers and the reading publics into printing and reading books about a "barbaric" Germany. Schlösser names the "Jewish publicist and sociologist" Walter Lippman as one of those who advances the anti-German agenda.

Apart from more famous authors such as Galsworthy or Steinbeck, the article mentions a series of authors of popular thrillers, which Schlösser claims are decidedly anti-German. These include Leon G. Torrou and Joseph Gallomb (*Armies of Spies*), pamphleteers such as Hendrik van Loon

("Our Battle"), Pierre van Passen's *Days of our Years* and Conrad Heiden's *The Eleventh Hour*. Books by Chamberlain, Churchill, and Eden translated into Norwegian are reportedly part of the conspiracy for the preparation of war, and so are the many criminal novels as well as English novels set in various British colonies around the world. Schlösser compares the impoverished state of German translations, especially historical novels that were published in Germany, which stand in no competition with British novels. From Graham Greene, James Hilton, P. G. Wodehouse, J. B. Priestly, Richard Hughes, all the way to D. H. Lawrence, the Nazi position on this circulating world literature in Scandinavia is that it is allegedly leading to the decline of traditional Scandinavian values.

As a coda to this long article, the author reports on the uneven playing field of literary translation that is affecting the course of European politics. Apart from explicitly political books, such as biographies of Churchill, world circulation of literature, especially in translation, has become a siren of Western democratic propaganda, jeopardizing the beautiful spirit of Scandinavian home-grown fiction. The article ends on a hopeful note: "Maybe one day a new political constellation in Europe and the world will reconstruct the balance destroyed through no fault of the North, and this will lead to a cultural healing in Scandinavia."[103] The inset to the article, a poem with the title "Ode auf Hamsun" (Ode to Hamsun) seals this hope.

The concern for the domination of an intellectually "sick" Scandinavia through translated books from England and the United States was in fact part of a well worked-out control of translations through National Socialist policies. What Kaiser, and then Schlösser, refer to in 1940 was part of a larger process that had started in 1939. The Nazi control of translations of literary works into German is particularly important in the context of world literature, as it operated parallel to, and often through, magazines such as *Die Weltliteratur*. A complete control of translations of works into German from the enemy states ("Feindstaaten") was impossible, simply considering the translation contracts that were signed before the beginning of the war. Already in May 1938 the Nazis had issued an ordinance requiring prior approval to publish works in translation.[104] However, a memo from the Ministry of People's Enlightenment and Propaganda on September 20, 1939, instructed the newspapers "preferably not to touch upon the topic of translation."[105] A close scrutiny of translated literature was to become an important part of the Nazi policy on books, especially after 1941.[106] Friedhelm Kaiser himself suggested the establishment of an agency that would examine and control the influx of foreign-language literature in Germany (Prüfstelle zur Einfuhr ausländischer Literatur in Deutschland). As men-

tioned earlier, Kaiser was concerned about what he saw as the flooding ("Überflut") of the book market with translated works. Kaiser's concerns were not directly pitched against the ideological influence of the works, rather, on the neglect of homegrown writing through the consumption of foreign literature. The control of translations fell under the propriety of the Reichsschrifttumskammer (RSK). As Goebbels brought all the offices of the book market under his control in 1938, it became mandatory for publishing houses to inform the officer-in-charge at the RSK of their translation plans ahead of the proposed date of publication.[107]

Given the detailed list of the various categories of books banned for public circulation, the publishers were already aware of the financial losses they might have to suffer if they invested money in the production of a questionable book by an author of non-Aryan, Jewish, foreign, or even foreign-sounding name. Slowly but surely, the number of translated works published in German declined. Already in September 1939, through the language ordinance (Sprachreglung 20, September 1939), about 60 to 70 percent of the translation contracts were declared invalid.[108] Starting in 1941 with the state rationing of paper allotments to publishing companies, more publishers came under pressure to select translated works judiciously. Nonetheless, through various clauses and subclauses the control of translated literatures was brought to fruition: classical Russian literature was banned in 1941, North-American literature was banned in 1942, and in both cases, the rules followed those that were behind the ban of English and French literatures. Holland, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries were the only "translation-free" states, although even here the works of some authors were permitted in translation on a case-by-case basis. For example, Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw could continue to exist on the German stage; Heinrich Heine's "Lorelei" was included as a poem by an "unknown" author in a collection of poems, and so on. Works by foreign authors that were critical of their contemporary societies or were anti-Semitic were beyond the restrictions of the ban. Archibald Joseph Cronin's *The Stars Look Down* (1935)—a critique of the medical profession in England—could be published as *Die Sterne blicken herab*;[109] Henry Ford's four-volume *The International Jew* (1920–1922) was published as *Der internationale Jude* (1935); Sinclar Lewis's *Babbitt* (1922), a tale of the pressure to conform in American society, was accepted, and John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) was published as *Früchte des Zorns* (1940). Among the most favored Nordic literatures, Sigrid Undset, who openly criticized the entry of the German Wehrmacht into Norway, was banned from circulation in libraries.[110] From German literature, the effort was directed toward

translating pro-Nazi German writings into foreign languages, in order to break the hegemony of emigrated authors.[111]

In addition to various categories established by the RSK, the Buchkommision (Book Commission) worked in tandem with Alfred Rosenberg's war against ideological ("weltanschauliche") writings. Thus works were to be tested on the basis of their ideological ("politisch-weltanschaulich"), artistic ("künstlerisch"), and national-educational ("volkserzieherischen") qualities. The evaluation system followed the following criteria:

1. positive
2. negative
3. restricted circle of interest
4. irrelevant
5. outdated—with limitations
6. qualified positive
7. qualified negative

These categories were often arbitrary and depended upon Germany's relationship with the country at the time of the specific ordinance's passing. In the case of British and American writings, for example, according to an ordinance from 1940, works by authors who died before 1904 were allowed to be published, but in 1942, they were completely banned, at least for the duration of the war.[112] Such authors included Bacon, Carlyle, Chaucer, Defoe, Dickens, Marlowe, Milton, Macpherson, Shakespeare, Swift, and Wilde. In addition, the handbook of the Reichsschrifttumskammer included Chesterton, Conrad, Forster, Maugham, Maurier, Mansfield, and Woolf among those who could not be published anymore. Among American authors, Emerson, Longfellow, Melville, Poe, and Whitman were published, while Bromfield, Buck, Disney, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Saroyan, Wilder, and Wolfe were banned.

For a government that outlawed its own most famous authors, including Heine, it could hardly be expected that foreign authors would be allowed. Nexö, Balzac, Boccaccio, Diderot, Huxley, Proust, and Zola were all among the banned authors. And so were the two that were dreaming of a world library in the 1920s: Romain Rolland (all works) and Rabindranath Tagore (one work). The classified communications to the book industry from the Reichskulturkammer—*Liste verbotener und nicht erwünschter Schriften* (1934–1943; List of banned and unwanted books), which was published monthly;[113] *Jahresliste des schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums* (1939–1943; Annual list of harmful and unwanted books), complied annually;[114] *Liste der in der Deutschen Bücherei unter Verschluß gestellten Druckschriften*

(1939–1943; List of locked case books in the German national library), published monthly;[115] and *Vertrauliche Mitteilungen der Fachschaft Verlag* (1935–1943; Confidential reports of the department of publishing)[116]—stipulated organizations, institutions, and individuals who were one by one being banned by the Nazis.

In 1941, Hans Ernst Schneider took over as editor-in-chief of *Die Weltliteratur*. The last years of the magazine (1941–1944) reflect the slow emptying out of shelves from all German libraries. The issues reveal an emptiness, a lack of agenda, a "why bother at all" attitude. The magazine loses its militant defense of world literature, or even German literature. The contributions are now almost exclusively focused on the idea of the Reich, and the magazine turns into a platform for justifying and explaning all the policies that were communicated through the confidential reports and lists of unwanted and harmful books. Literary works published in the magazine are mostly poems written by soldiers, either about the Vaterland or odes to the Führer. The essay section becomes limited to a few authors such as Hans Hagen, Bernhard Pyr, and the editor Schneider; most of the essays are about the glory of the Reich. In addition, the magazine started publishing citations from Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels in big insets, as if to cover space. With most of the German authors and non-German authors in translation banned, the idea of world literature becomes either regional within territories occupied or "reclaimed" by Germany (such as Swabia, Silesia, Lorraine) or Eastern Europe, with a few features on Bulgarian, Romanian, and Croatian literatures. British and American novels are reduced to one article each, only to highlight the social discrepancies within the respective nations.[117] The Netherlands, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries receive the most coverage. The entire business of world literature—in the original language or in translation—is cast in the vocabulary of enemies and friends, allies and opposers, or just racial kinship. An article about translations of Nordic literatures succinctly communicates the party's stand on translation. Explaining the wider accessibility of Nordic literatures in German translations, when compared to other (unnamed) literatures, the author states:

> The purpose of translated literature lies in that it shows other people in their deepest and most characteristic particularity. . . . And especially the countries of the North are especially close to us in this respect, because from the racial and people-oriented [*volkhaft*] kinship or similarity certain connections must arise, which are stronger than those with any other people, understandings that are necessary in the

> Germanic space. . . . And it is not only of significance for us, rather for this greater decision, who is with us or against us. To be sure this is no more an artistic decision . . . than when a victim invites his robber to dinner, and therefore we do not want any feasts for our enemies; even if we have to renounce artistic values because of this, so for us the larger assignment is more important than a concession that is not essential to life. . . . We reject authors who work against us.[118]

This passage precisely captures the militarization of the magazine and in some ways also its further compromise of artistic values. The division of the world into allies and enemies of the German nation, long established by Langenbucher in the founding of the magazine, acquires a specifically distinct character here. The magazine seems less and less interested in any contributions to the world outside what is deemed "friendly" by the National Socialists. What receives amplification is race. The Germanic connection, that is, the racial kinship and similarity, acquires a specifically Aryan/Indo-Germanic dimension in another piece, especially in the context of literary accomplishments. A long article on "Indo-German Confessions" ("Indogermanische Bekenntnisse")—an excerpt from a book by Walther Wüst—establishes a "glorious" geneology of Aryan achievements from emperors Asoka to Harsha in India, to Kaiser Maximilian in Germany, to the philosophers Plato and Kant; he then states:

> It is no false arrogance, but a certainty stemming from the sharpest awareness for distinctive independence and unique valency, when we detect that it is hard to find a Kalidasa, Firdausi, Goethe, Dante or Shakespeare among the Eskimos or the [American] Indians, to establish proof of a music of the highest rank from a Johann Sebastian Bach, Beethoven, Bruckner, or Richard Wagner among the Negros, or to track down a Dürer, Rembrandt, or Phidias among the Jews. There is only one Indo-German symphony, one Indo-German tragedy, one Indo-German Epic.[119]

Thus very clearly the magazine—by virtue of providing a platform to a pro-Aryan, anti-Semitic, and racist writer—establishes world literature as a prerogative of the Indo-Germanic race. The history of world literature, world music, world art is reduced to the history of a handful of names, all Aryans. No wonder, that *Die Weltliteratur* ran out of steam in March 1944!

The Nazis knew what they were doing to world literature and to the world of books. With over five hundred authors on the list of "Schädliche und unerwünschte Bücher," a rationing of paper supplies to publish-

ing companies, and the increasing investment in the war, which was depleting the nation of its resources—not to mention the closing of all the Jewish-owned publishing companies—the effect on the book market was devastating. In "Ein Blick in den Buchhandel" (1943), Gottfried Lindener accepted the lack of books in book stores and the fact that many titles were out of print ("vergriffen"). In the article he blamed it on the high-demand of books and printed materials in the great nation of readers (*Lesenation*) and promised that the book publishers, binders, and sellers were doing their best in the service of the "German book."[120] But the reality, as would be clear, was very different. Hermann Hesse's essay from 1929, a call for the democratization of world literature and a pamphlet for the medium of the book, had become completely insignificant within a few years.

Following the Nazi ascension to power in 1933, editions of *Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur* disappeared from the market.[121] Like most publishers, Reclam was increasingly nationalistic and propagandistic, assuring its existence by acceding to the Nazi discrimination against Jewish authors. Hesse was pressured to release a "contemporized" version of his essay from which the works of Jewish authors such as Martin Buber were deleted. Hesse's essay thus witnessed its own prophecy of the changing definition of world literature. On December 13, 1934, Hesse informed Reclam that he would not honor its request for a new edition. Using the dimunitive, Hesse characterizes his little book ("Büchlein") as a confession ("Bekenntnis") of what has grown from his own reading experience ("Lese-Erlebnis und Lese-Erfahrung") during his fifty-seven years. Asserting that *Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur* is no objective or study guide ("schulmäßiger Führer") to literature, he categorically states that he will make "no other changes, such as the deletion of Jewish authors." He gives Reclam two options: give back his publication rights or publish the essay as is, unchanged.[122] He received a vituperative response on his sixtieth birthday in 1937. Within weeks the Nazi Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda released a sham document asking for "no more future assaults on Hermann Hesse"; however, the 1937 essay "Hermann Hesse und der deutsche Buchhandel," published in *Der Buchhändler* (The booktrader), the journal of the German Book Trader's Association, declared that Hesse had proved to be "someone who did not belong to the German Reich but was merely Swiss."[123]

Hesse understood very well the dangerous game that the Nazis were playing with literature and libraries—real and imaginary. Writing from Montagnola in 1945 for the 1946 edition of *Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur* (published by Werner Classen in Zürich), Hesse reminds his readers of the recent destruction of book culture and private libraries through terror

and war and puts great hope in the idea that a few public libraries will give people access to world literature, which he now simply designates as the world of books ("Bücherwelt"):

> This attempt at an introduction to world literature was written at a time when procuring a book was easy and less expensive. Meanwhile, terror and war have done away with the world of books, especially German books: there is almost nothing left. Much of what has been destroyed will stay destroyed forever, or at least for a long time. When my little book first appeared, anyone who was interested could order the books it recommended at any bookstore. That will not happen for a good while now. But at least in our country, public libraries have stayed intact, and our publishers are rapidly issuing new editions. However, to a large extent they are only first editions. Nonetheless, even today serious readers will find the books that are most important to them.[124]

Shadows of Empty Shelves

In 1913, the German scholar Richard Meyer published an important volume, *Die Weltliteratur im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert: Vom deutschen Standpunkt aus betrachtet* (World literature in the twentieth century: from the German perspective). Meyer, too, distinguished between *Weltliteratur* and "Literatur aus aller Welt," favoring the best and the most representative of all literary traditions. Citing Goethe's words from the magazine *Kunst und Altertum*, Meyer explored the possibility of building "a general world literature, in which the Germans have an honorable role reserved for themselves."[125] The first half of the twentieth century displays both the claiming of that honorable role, not merely through reception of the works of some of the best German authors in the international literary space but also through the recognition of international authors in the German-speaking space through translations. During World War I, magazines like *Die Welt-Literatur*, publishing houses, translators, and the proliferation of cheap editions, as well as the formation of private libraries of world literature all contributed to the semblance of an important role that Germany might have played in the construction of world literature. And yet this role transformed at an alarming rate as the nation completely insulated itself from all foreign influences, purged its own cultural heritage, and marched to a racist beat into the darkest hour of history. As a philosophical ideal, world literature became an instrument of pedantic arrogance rather than a way out of it. As a pedagogical strategy, world literature became an instrument

of political propaganda. As a strategy of affiliation, world literature turned into a mode of affiliation with nations subservient to, conquered by, or about to be captured by the Nazis. As a unit of aesthetic evaluation, world literature changes from the best and most representative, to the mediocre and therefore the most accessible: from *vorzüglichst* to *volkhaft*. From an acquired world literature, the picture switched to an inherited world literature, where the world was only formed by those related by blood or race.

One of the most disconcerting memorials to the destruction of books and libraries in the world is the Monument in Memory of the Burning of Books (Denkmal zur Erinnerung an Bücherverbrennung) in Berlin. Designed by the famous Israeli sculptor Micha Ullman, the monument is just off the popular boulevard Unter den Linden, in the middle of Bebelplatz—named after the famous German Social Democrat August Bebel (1840–1913)—in front of what used to be the Alte Bibliothek (old library) of the Humoldt Universität. A stone's throw from the Museum Insel and Alexanderplatz, the memorial occupies a central spot in the heart of Berlin's tourist center.

The momument is empty! It commemorates the Nazi book burnings of works by Jewish intellectuals, liberals, and communists on May 10, 1933, and consists of a glass lid on top of subterranean pit (of about 175 cubic feet) lined with empty bookshelves painted white—the emptiness exacerbated by the naked rods of glowing fluorescent light. The viewer has a top-down perspective of the bookshelves through the glass lid—there is no other form of access. All one sees are stark empty bookshelves, inviting the visitor to imagine the names of authors and titles of books—national and foreign—included on the yearly lists of "unwanted books" that might have filled this pit of a library. But it is hard to imagine a book on a shelf from where it was forcefully removed and burned. As Heine had already reminded us in *Almansor*, "where one burns books, in the end human beings are burned." Akin to the experience of Mann's Tonio Kröger, the monument reminds of a space where the intimate has gone public; and yet there is a total disconnect between public and literature. As Hesse reminds us, the library of world literature remains a dream and an idea, it exists in the imagination. And no ownership or private libraries, or even the staying intact of public libraries, will provide an easy recourse. Because the rest of history will not forget, that five years after the book burnings, by a special order of the Reichsschrifttumskammer on November 1, 1938, Jews were banned from all public libraries and robbed of their borrowing privileges.


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Madison
New Haven
Rome
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