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*“European Culture” as Soft Power: How Nazi Germany Rearranged the Assignment of Literary Capital*

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Beginning on October 24, 1941, thirty-seven writers from fifteen European countries took part as guests in the annual “German Poets’ Meeting” (*Deutscher Dichtertreffen*) at Weimar. Invited to the legendary city of Goethe and Schiller by the National Socialist Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, this group of writers included representatives from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Their stay in Weimar culminated with the enthusiastic agreement to found a new European Writer’s Union. Officially constituted in March 1942, this new pan-European cultural institution held another large-scale gathering, including forty-seven non-German writers, in Weimar in October.

These events were only one part of a massive “European” cultural campaign launched by Joseph Goebbels’s Propaganda Ministry in mid-1941. Then Goebbels and his staff created a web of new, German-dominated, trans-European institutions of cultural and intellectual exchange, founded during a burst of international meetings that one historian has called a “congress and convention mania.”<sup>1</sup> Bringing together intellectuals and cultural producers from across the continent, these institutions included the Union of National Journalists’ Associations, the International Film Chamber, the International Law Chamber, the European Youth Federation, the European Women’s Federation, and a European Chess Federation.

Taken together, these institutions, their meetings, and their publications represented a serious effort to reorder European cultural life, so as to establish Nazi Germany as the legitimate leader of a revived, authentic European culture. This campaign consisted practically of a major reorganization of the institutional mechanics of international cultural and intellectual exchange in Europe. Rhetorically, it was based on a consistent appeal to a model of “European culture,” characterized by spiritual depth and national rootedness, in contrast to the materialism and rootless cosmopolitanism of Western European civilization. The goal of this project was to complement Germany’s coercive power—the Nazis’ dominance in the military and economic fields—with the kind of power that is rooted in consent rather than coercion, based on the perception of shared values or interests, or what Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci famously called “hegemony.”<sup>2</sup> By creating a new European cultural system—one that would parallel and support the Nazi “New Order” in Europe—this kind of hegemony would support the effort to erect what Mark Mazower has called “Hitler’s Empire.”<sup>3</sup> It would also satisfy German elites’ long-standing desire for Germany to replace France at the center of European intellectual and cultural life, taking up a position of leadership in Europe that German elites sincerely believed their country alone deserved.

This article uses materials from the gatherings of European writers in Weimar in 1941 and 1942 to take seriously what might be called the “soft power” of the Nazi New Order, and to contribute to the work of analyzing this dark but crucial chapter in the history of the idea of “European culture.” These meetings recommend themselves for this task: they were among the most significant examples of the Axis Europeanist campaign, and they are by far the best-documented cases.<sup>4</sup> The article’s first part outlines the organizational and rhetorical strategies through which the Germans sought to create hegemony by reordering the field of literary exchange in Europe. This, I argue, was an effort fundamentally to reorganize the creation and

assignment of literary capital, forging a model of “European literature” of which Germany was the obvious, legitimate leader.<sup>5</sup> These strategies were based on a systematic effort to Europeanize the hitherto distinctly German concept of *Kultur*.

The article’s second part offers a longer-term history of the idea of European literature, arguing that it is only against this background, using scholarly tools derived from the sociology of literature, that we can most fully appreciate the true radicalism of the Nazis’ European literary campaign. Looking, finally, at a sample of non-German responses to these conferences reveals that the Nazi effort to embody the idea of “European literature”—attractive precisely because of its vagueness—in an actual group of living writers was a risky operation. These sources highlight the weaknesses of the Nazis’ European model, even while they also reveal the deep roots and substantial power of the kind of anti-Western Europeanism, rooted in the values of a self-styled *Kultur*, that the Nazis were offering.

This approach allows me to address important questions raised by efforts to reorder European cultural life during WWII: First, who had a legitimate claim to lead, organize, and speak for “European literature”? Second, what *is* European literature, anyway? Reconstructing the Nazi effort to force an answer to those questions illuminates key themes in the international cultural history of Europe’s twentieth century.

### *I. Making Kultur European: German Strategies at the European Writers’ Conference*

The writers brought together by the Nazis in Weimar in October 1941 presented, as a group, a particular vision of European literature, regarding nationalities, politics, and literary styles.<sup>6</sup> No Jews or political opponents of Nazism were included. Countries obliterated by the Nazis, like Poland or the Czech lands, were likewise not represented here. Authors of modernist literary experiments

were not invited. Thus, the writers now seen as the canonical authors of mid-twentieth-century Western European literature were far from this conference, in every sense. The writers present at Weimar represented countries and trends normally excluded from the upper echelons of European literary exchange, forming a rather eclectic group.<sup>7</sup> Authors of naturalistic novels and poetry that celebrated village and farming life met and mingled with urban, sophisticated, cosmopolitan writers and critics. The first group included, for example, children's writer Felix Timmermans, the most influential Flemish writer in Europe and a proud provincial who had no formal education after the age of fourteen, and Danish nature writer Svend Fleuron, whose vivid descriptions of the life of wild animals sold well in Germany.<sup>8</sup> The patron saint of this group of writers, Norwegian Nobel laureate Knut Hamsun—famous for his embrace of the values of his own poor rural background and for his harsh rejection of the modern world's obsession with technology and commercialism—communicated his support for the event via telegram.<sup>9</sup>

The second group included figures like Hungarian poet and translator Lőrinc Szabó, an admirer of Goethe who had translated classic works into Hungarian from English, French, Russian, and German;<sup>10</sup> Finnish poet, critic, and university professor Veikko Antero Koskenniemi, author of the lyrics to Sibelius's *Finlandia* hymn;<sup>11</sup> Croatian critic Antun Bonifacic', author of a 1940 study on Paul Valéry, and cultural director of the foreign office of Ante Pavelic's Ustasha regime;<sup>12</sup> and Bulgarian historical novelist Fani Popova-Mutafova, a leading figure of the intellectual life of interwar Bulgaria, who spoke French, Russian, Italian, and German.<sup>13</sup> The French national delegation was the conference's largest. Urban, sophisticated, and enthusiastically pro-Nazi, the group was led by Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, a prominent novelist and poet as well as a leading if eccentric voice of French radical conservative thought, and included Robert Brasillach, director of the collaborationist and anti-Semitic newspaper *Je suis partout*, but also several

ostensibly nonpolitical literary stylists, like novelists Marcel Jouhandeau and Jacques Chardonne.<sup>14</sup> Although quite different from one another in many respects, these writers were bound together by a concern with what they saw as their traditions, be they the local or national ones of the farming village, or the “European” ones of the bourgeois salon. Nearly all shared a sense that these traditions were in danger, threatened by the social, economic, and political transformations of modernity. At any rate, as writers from countries allied to or occupied by Nazi Germany, all seem to have been curious to see what a German-led “New Order” in European literature might look like.

From the moment they arrived in Weimar—and in some cases before even then—this group of writers was treated to a whirlwind of speeches, presentations, visits to historic sites, receptions, concerts, drinks, and dinners. These activities and the words that accompanied them together conveyed two messages. First, by celebrating the glories of Germany’s national cultural tradition, they both stated and demonstrated that Germany was the power with the most legitimate claim to lead the reorganization of international exchange in literature into a new, “European” form. Of course, the Nazis’ ability to make commanding claims about the future of European literature rested above all on their crushing military dominance. But officials of the Propaganda Ministry seem to have appreciated that what Pierre Bourdieu has called the “literary field” had its own rules, which could not simply be overwhelmed by force.<sup>15</sup> Thus the Nazis sought at Weimar to back up their claim to legitimate leadership in the field of European literature by calling their guests’ attention not to Germany’s military or economic power, but to Germany’s cultural and especially literary capital, which, after all, was also substantial. They undertook, that is, to deploy Germany’s legacy to establish its legitimacy. But the way the Nazis presented the German tradition made a second, more interesting argument, suggesting that the German tradition most thoroughly embodied a vision of culture

itself—as something spiritual and transcendent and yet rooted in national traditions—that was typical of Europe as a whole and unique to Europe alone. This claim made for a more radical operation than the simple celebration of German national greatness might suggest. For by placing this understanding of culture at the basis of a restructured, strictly delimited, and institutionally organized “European literature,” the Nazis were proposing a basic change in which writers and styles got to be called “European,” and in how this would be determined. In terms derived from Bourdieu, then, they were effecting a radical reorganization of the creation and distribution of “literary capital.” This operation would promote Germany’s leadership in the international literary field, at the expense above all of the field’s hitherto dominant power, France. But, importantly, this broader shift in how “European” literary capital would be assigned appealed to the interests of writers from across the continent.

Goebbels himself laid out this argument in the speech with which he officially opened the “Book Week” on Sunday, October 26. “Once again,” he declared, “the oldest and most valuable cultural peoples [*Kulturvölker*] of the European continent have stepped forward to defend that which they have built up over two millennia. Once again the bodies of our soldiers stand protecting an ancient cultural legacy [*Kulturerbe*] which, illuminated by the light of humanity, must be eternally maintained. What, in contrast, does the vacuous and insipid prattle of uncultivated [*ungebildeter*] writers mean, who defend a sterile *Zivilisation*, which is not worth living, much less dying for? ... From the height of a two-thousand-year history we look down with sovereign contempt on these anti-cultural powers, which only carry humanitarian words in their mouths, behind which stand no values.”<sup>16</sup> By using the terms *Kultur* and *Bildung* to distinguish the European legacy, defended by Germany and Italy, from what he called the *Zivilisation* of the continent’s enemies, Goebbels

pinpointed the rhetorical core of the Nazi model of European culture: the classic, vexed dichotomy between Culture and Civilization.

Only two years earlier, from his exile in London, German sociologist Norbert Elias had published his now canonical study of the emergence of the distinctive German concept of *Kultur*. Elias found that the antagonism between *Kultur*—a high, spiritualized kind of cultivation, rooted in laborious personal achievement—and *Zivilisation*—characterized by polished manners, but lacking personal or spiritual depth—emerged in early modern Germany as a set of concepts designed to legitimize the social aspirations of the growing German bourgeoisie.<sup>17</sup> While Germany's Francophile nobility had the manners and polish of "civilization," the intellectuals of the middle classes—politically powerless, economically relatively poor, and geographically dispersed—claimed distinction based on the profundity and authenticity of their mental and emotional life, which they developed through the rigorous aesthetic and moral self-cultivation known as *Bildung*. Elias then charted how, from an intra-German social distinction, this became a national one, through which nineteenth-century Germans pitted their nation's profound *Kultur* against the glittering but superficial *Zivilisation* of France.<sup>18</sup>

As a young man, Elias had experienced the intensely politicized way these concepts were deployed during World War I.<sup>19</sup> Then, Western European and especially French intellectuals portrayed the Entente's struggle against the Germans and Austrians as what philosopher Henri Bergson called the "struggle of civilization against barbarism."<sup>20</sup> German intellectuals responded by placing the prestige of the national cultural tradition, distinguished by the distinctly German ideal of *Kultur*, at the service of Germany's war.<sup>21</sup> This deep intra-European split survived into the interwar years, where it played a major role in the "crisis of European culture" that occupied the worried minds of so many intellectuals in the 1920s and 30s. While some former *Kultur*-warriors, like Thomas Mann, embraced a liberal Europeanism

based on Franco-German reconciliation, the notion of a deep, essential split between Germany and the West remained an article of faith for conservative political and intellectual circles, including those in which Nazism developed. The Nazis recast *Kultur* and *Bildung* in nationalist and racist terms, denying any connection to those concepts' liberal or individualist associations, while linking Civilization's purported materialism and cosmopolitanism to the nefarious workings of the Jews.<sup>22</sup> But as a means of distinguishing Nazi Germany from its Western enemies, prominent German intellectuals and Nazi officials continued to use the concepts in essentially traditional ways, contrasting Germany's *Kultur*, a spiritual sphere that was above politics and uncontaminated by market forces, but now backed up by technological-military power, with Western Europe's materialist *Zivilisation*, which had the features of technological progress alone, without any higher ideals to give it meaning.<sup>23</sup> Invocations of the *Kultur*-Civilization distinction had also accompanied the explosive growth of German-Italian cultural collaboration in the late 1930s. Based on arguments that Germany and Italy were Europe's most "central" cultures—superior, deeper, and closer to Europe's essential identity than those of the Western European democratic nations—Axis exchanges emphasized an understanding of culture that incorporated key elements of the concept of *Kultur*.<sup>24</sup>

By the summer of 1941, even though France was defeated, the gatherings of the European Writers' Union continued to deploy the *Kultur*-Civilization distinction. Now, however, the Nazis presented the profound, anti-materialist values of *Kultur* not as uniquely German, or even as German-Italian, but as characteristic of Europe as a whole. This rhetorical move was perhaps the central ideological strategy of wartime Nazi-Fascist cultural politics. Following the terms laid out by Elias, then, we can see a long history of the social-political deployment of the idea of *Kultur*: from an intra-German social distinction it became a national one; then, in the Axis, an intra-European one, with Italy and Germany together as *Kulturnationen* against the

French-led Civilization of Western Europe; and finally, under Hitler's New Order, an inter-continental one, in which a cultured Europe—now *including* a chastened, de-internationalized (and *Judenfrei*) France—was at odds with the empty *Zivilisation* of the continent's non-European enemies.

The events in Weimar presented this message through a variety of means but with striking consistency, inviting the foreign writers to see their own national traditions as linked to an idealist cultural legacy that was superior to, but needed defense from, its non-European enemies, Americanism, Bolshevism, and “world Jewry,” which were culturally crass but technologically powerful. The tone of the receptions no less than the content of the speeches enunciated or embodied aspects of a vision of *Kultur*—one which, while amenable to Nazi racism, was basically in line with a conservative understanding of the concept, and thus calibrated to appeal to the traditional, bourgeois concepts of culture shared by many non-German writers. The conference conveyed this message in four main ways.

The first was through events that celebrated Germany's national literary heritage while also proclaiming its European significance. This began even before the conference, as the Propaganda Ministry took twenty writers on a two-week, multi-city study-tour of Nazi Germany. Beginning with visits to the birthplaces of Beethoven, Stefan George, and Goethe, this lavish trip took its participants to Heidelberg, Munich, Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Dresden, and Berlin, before arriving at the tour's culmination in Weimar, just in time for these foreigners, now joined by many others, to participate in the writers' conference.<sup>25</sup> The city of Weimar was itself a powerful symbol of the German-European significance that the Nazis sought to convey. Its iconic status as the home of the “classical” period of German letters—the late-eighteen to early-nineteenth-century golden age associated above all with Goethe and Schiller—gave it a powerful claim to be the capital city of German *Kultur*, as well as a site of *European* cultural significance. Wilhelm Haegert, head of

the Literature Division of Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry, greeted the foreign writers by declaring that this gathering was "a manifestation of the new European spirit, of which the German Reich is the bearer and asserter. Just as," he said, "there once flowed from Weimar the rivulets of the German spirit which were to come together to form such a mighty river, so today from Weimar radiates the spiritual power of the Europe unified by Germany."<sup>26</sup> Bringing foreigners to Weimar emphasized a Germany not of industrial wealth or military might, but of rich traditions and quiet cultivation: the land, as the saying goes, of "thinkers and poets"—the land, above all, of Goethe. After being led on a pilgrimage to the museum in the great man's former home, the foreign writers were taken to a performance of Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* in Weimar's Nationaltheater.<sup>27</sup> This message reached its symbolic culmination on Sunday afternoon, when Goebbels laid wreaths on the tombs of Goethe and Schiller.<sup>28</sup>

Laying claim to Goethe in this way was a standard trope of the Nazi appropriation of the German classics, presented as expressions of the racial greatness of the German *Volk*.<sup>29</sup> At the international level, however, it represented a bold effort to reverse Goethe's symbolic valence as a "European" figure. The 1932 celebrations of the centenary of Goethe's death, which called forth a flood of pro-European essays by the continent's most prominent liberal intellectuals, had highlighted Goethe's status as a central symbol of liberal, democratic, and humanistic visions of European civilization and of pan-European cultural and political cooperation.<sup>30</sup> With this in mind, Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry had warned its newspaper service in 1939 that the phrase "Goethe, der Europäer" was to be avoided.<sup>31</sup> Now, with Europe under German control and victory in sight, Goebbels was ready to present the poet to Europe, but as a symbol of German greatness, not of generically European cosmopolitanism.

The presentation of Goethe as symbol of German national particularity stressed a second element of the German concept of *Kultur*, namely its emphasis on the incommensurate value of distinct national traditions, as opposed to international, cosmopolitan standards of taste. Addressing the foreign writers on Friday, October 24, North German dialect poet Moritz Jahn offered a justification for Germany's claim to lead European literature based on the Germans' unique appreciation of Europe's cultural diversity. It was, after all, German nationalist philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder who first broke with the universalist aesthetics of the French Enlightenment, which judged works of art according to their conformity to an abstract canon, to develop "a new concept of poetry and of art altogether, as a human endeavor that is conditioned by race, climate, and form of government." Ever since, the Germans had had a unique perspective on literature, judging as great any work that expressed "the most unique and inner law" of the people in whose language it was written.<sup>32</sup> Given this background, it was not surprising that "none of the great culture-nations of our continent have devoted themselves to the same degree to the knowledge of European literature as has the German [nation]."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, as bearer of this unique, philosophically grounded tradition of appreciation for literary expressions of cultural particularity, "the German" Jahn declared, "is in a real sense a *Philolog*, a friend of language... it has never been in his nature and will never be in his nature to put down or suppress a foreign language."<sup>34</sup>

Jahn used this background to reassure the writers about their autonomy in Hitler's new Europe. "We know," he told them, "that your work must be and is based on particular national (*völkisch*) and individual bases." But "Europe as a continent with isolated states will never again be capable of life." The stark choice, he declared, was between European unity and "the steppe-ification (*Versteppung*) of European man."<sup>35</sup> There was, however, no contradiction between German-led

European unity and the defense of the continent's national traditions. On the contrary, a common European front would help defeat the true enemies of Europe's distinctive national cultural diversity: plutocratic capitalism and rootless, profit-seeking Jewry. "Capitalism," he declared, "even in the realm of the spirit, thought in terms not of the national but of private economy," promoting "the debased, the shocking, the sick, the stimulating, or the wounding" in order to sell books, to the detriment of national cultures all over Europe. The culprit, in every case, was obvious: "The determining, direction-giving role of Jewry in these events is today clear in all countries."<sup>36</sup> Only Germany, then, with its mixture of military and economic power and its anti-universalist appreciation for cultural diversity, was suited to lead an anti-Semitic and anti-capitalist Europe that would free writers from their slavery to the forces of a non-national, Jewish-dominated market, and to allow for the rebirth of national cultures in the high-minded, transcendent spirit of *Kultur*.

The promise of good treatment in a Nazi-led Europe extended, in a third strategy, to the meals and receptions between the conference sessions. During these, the effort to present Germany's qualifications to reorganize European literary life was combined with an effort to highlight the city's German, or rather European, sophistication and good living. Participants in the Writers' Conference also enjoyed an experience of Germany and Europe that was calibrated to appeal to the *habitus* of the European bourgeois intellectual. The foreign writers stayed at the city's luxurious Hotel Erbprinze, whose list of guests boasted Schiller, Liszt, and Napoleon, or at the Hotel Elephant, which had been lavishly renovated on Hitler's orders.<sup>37</sup> Visits to historic sites, like their tour of the *Goethehaus*, were accompanied by extravagant receptions, teas, and candle-lit banquets in the Tiefurt and Großherzogin castles, while lunches and dinners were held in the elegant banquet hall of the Hotel Elephant. The conference's final evening included dinner, a

reception hosted by Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel in Weimar's castle, and then the performance of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* at the Nationaltheater.

The food, drink, entertainments and accommodations represented more than the “seduction” of the foreign writers.<sup>38</sup> Rather, all of these elements helped to maintain a decidedly traditional, bourgeois tone that flattered these writers' sense of their own significance, while implying a basic respect for the social status of the bourgeois intelligentsia outside of Germany. Precisely because the status of the national writer was in doubt across Europe, these events offered a complex appeal to the writers' self-perceptions as spokespersons or embodiments of their nations. Indeed these receptions and dinners were at the core of the very point of the event—gathering writers from across Europe into one place in Germany, where they could experience their fellow guests, and themselves, as “European” writers. In this sense, the foreign writers were the audience for the Nazis' spectacle, but also a crucial part of the spectacle itself. Indeed, each time European elites were given opportunities to interact with each other on a German-sponsored “European” basis, this strengthened the idea of a harmony of interests among European elites, gave positive content to the idea of Europe so frequently bandied about during the war, and thus suggested to participants that there really was a New Order that was European (and not just German) in conception. The conference thus illustrated a classic way in which international institutions build hegemony: it promoted linkages among subordinate powers so as to strengthen the structure overseen and guaranteed by the dominant power.<sup>39</sup>

It was during one of these dinners that the creation of a European Writers' Union was first proposed. The formation of a new, “European” institution had been behind the decision to invite foreigners to the German Writers' Meeting in the first place. Nonetheless, Propaganda Ministry officials used careful stagecraft to make it appear that the Writers' Union was the spontaneous suggestion of the foreign

writers—a frequently repeated falsehood that succeeded in convincing the Italian authorities.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, financial contributions to the new organization were also shown to have come from various German writers themselves, while the fact that they were given that money by the ministry for that purpose was deliberately obscured.<sup>41</sup> The care that went into this effort at masking the guiding hand of the Ministry of Propaganda reflected how important the organizers believed it was to keep the new institution from appearing to be “political.” This represented what I see as the conference’s fourth strategy: the way Nazi officials struggled to make the institution, its funding, and its leadership appear to come from *within* the literary field. While not hiding the role the Propaganda Ministry played in German cultural life, Goebbels and his staff still seemed to appreciate the degree to which literary prestige was tied to the appearance of relative autonomy from direct political control.

This (bogus) autonomy of the new European literature was embodied above all in the German writer whom the Nazi authorities selected as president of the European Writers’ Union: novelist and poet Hans Carossa. A sixty-three-year-old widower who lived quietly in rural Bavaria and maintained a small practice as a family doctor, Carossa was well known and respected outside of Germany for novels and poetry that shunned modernist stylistic vagaries for a measured classicism, and an understated, religious, nature-loving humanism, inspired by Goethe. A hero to the “unpolitical” school of German writers associated with the journal *Das Innere Reich*, Carossa was known to be distant from Nazi authorities. In 1933 he turned down his admission to the Nazified Prussian Poets’ Academy, and he had never joined the Nazi party.<sup>42</sup> The suggestion that Carossa serve as the body’s president, also apparently the spontaneous outcome of the meeting, had also been managed beforehand. As Carossa later recalled officials of the Propaganda Ministry offered him the presidency of the organization in a “half insistent, half threatening manner”

even before the institution's creation had been "suggested" by any of the event's guests.<sup>43</sup> Judging by the responses, it was an inspired choice. Italian ambassador in Berlin Dino Alfieri judged Carossa "beyond all suspicion," while the French delegation warmly encouraged him to accept the position.<sup>44</sup> Carossa himself sought to avoid the position by suggesting various writers who were party members. He came only later to understand that "I, as an unpolitical man, was precisely the most suitable for the political goal that they had in mind."<sup>45</sup>

With Carossa installed as the new institution's figurehead, the Propaganda Ministry now invited each participating country to send one representative to a smaller meeting in March 1942, at which the European Writers' Union (Europäischer Schriftstellerverein, or ESV) was officially founded. They also began work on plans for the body's first general meeting, to take place in Weimar in October 1942. At this point, the Germans' claim to leadership in European literature took on a strong institutional character. As research by historian Frank-Rutger Hausmann makes clear, the conferences in Weimar were only the beginning of the ESV's ambitious range of activities. The Union's General Secretary, Propaganda Ministry official Carl Rothe, traveled across the continent to direct the creation of the Union's various national groups. Several of these *Landesgruppen*, each of which was linked to the ESV through a bi-national agreement with the Germans, included many more writers than those who attended the conferences in Weimar.<sup>46</sup> Building on the Propaganda Ministry's web of contacts with German publishers, who attended the meetings of the Book Week and were invited to mingle with the visiting European writers, the Union also deployed the economic power of the German book market, rewarding its participants by giving their works preferred status for translation and publication in Germany, and punishing those who refused by barring new translations of their works.<sup>47</sup>

In these ways, the ESV aimed to create a lasting institutional structure that would cement German hegemony over an important aspect of European cultural life in the postwar order, but also provide cultural-propagandistic support for the German war effort. These goals were combined also in the pages of the journal created to accompany and publicize the Writers' Union: *Europäische Literatur*. Founded in May 1942, this monthly literary journal, edited by a Propaganda Ministry staffer, included ample photo-spreads, which showed the sophisticated, pan-European sociability of the Writers' Conferences in action, and highlighted the generosity and high-mindedness of the German hosts. No mere propaganda sheet, however, the journal's articles addressed the central concerns of the emerging field of comparative literature studies, including: "studies on one or several national literatures..., comparative views..., investigations on international influence and effects..., research on translation..., general and comparative literature as well as theory..., essays on intermediality and comparisons between the arts..., genre history..., motif studies..., travel literature... and reports on particular events..., along with reflections on how literature can function as a 'bridge' between nations."<sup>48</sup> In its very lay-out, the journal also reaffirmed a vision of relatively egalitarian collaboration among European nations, brought together on the basis of what the journal's mission statement called "the old German tradition of being, on the basis of its own creative powers, a connector among European neighbors."<sup>49</sup> Each month's issue included an "Overview in Europe," in which short reports on literary or publishing events in thirteen countries were laid out in such a way—each nation having its own space, more or less equal to the others, with Germany first and Italy second—so as to suggest the distinct and autonomous status of Europe's national languages and cultures, led but not crushed by the Axis powers.

In its modest way, the "Overview in Europe" section of *Europäische Literatur* highlighted two central parts of the appeal of the Nazi reorganization of European

literature. First, suggesting respect for Europe's national cultural diversity was a way of making a basic promise about the Nazi New Order: that the European nations invited to send writers to the conference Weimar would not be obliterated. This simple promise was one that Hitler notoriously refused to allow Nazi leaders to make with regard to the continent's political future.<sup>50</sup> As Foreign Ministry State Secretary von Weizsäcker wrote in his diary on May 2, 1943, "The Führer is saying confidentially that the reason we must not enter into discussions about the 'new order' in Europe is that the neighboring countries are all our enemies. We must get all we can out of them, but can and should promise them nothing."<sup>51</sup> For this reason, Hitler rejected all *political* initiatives related to the idea of European unity.<sup>52</sup> But the cultural realm served as an arena in which Goebbels and his collaborators could outline a Europeanist vision of the Nazi new order in the most promising manner. Even when, in November 1942, Hitler forbade "the planning, preparation and execution of demonstrations of a European or international kind," the decree specifically exempted Goebbels's ability to hold events in Germany.<sup>53</sup>

Second, through the European Writers' Union, the Germans offered provincial writers access to the heady ideal of "European literature," while also promising special protection for their national traditions. The significance of this appeal—at the heart of the Nazis' entire European cultural campaign—needs to be understood against the background of long-standing divisions that mark the history of the very idea of "European literature."

## II. "European Literature": A Clash of Models

Something similar to the clash between the concepts of Civilization and *Kultur* had for a long time marked discussions about the nature of "European literature." Versions of the phrase itself can first be found during the Enlightenment, in the titles of journals like the *Gazette littéraire de l'Europe* (1764), when some of

the era's greatest writers commented on the emergence of some new transnational space of literary exchange.<sup>54</sup> But the two most significant phrases coined to describe this sphere—Voltaire's *republique littéraire* and Goethe's *Weltliteratur*—made no reference to Europe.<sup>55</sup> This was probably because they felt no need to do so: as literary critic Fernando Cabo notes, *literature* as such was “a European concept...both in terms of its genealogy and in its fundamental link to the alphabetically written word and to the idea of the book.”<sup>56</sup> More significant was the question of how to understand this new multi-national literary space. What were its contours, its boundaries, its critical authorities? Above all, was it to be understood as a collection of national literary spheres, or as a single European one? That issue was well articulated by the time of the publication of the first major historical study on the subject, Henry Hallam's *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries* (four volumes, 1837-1839). This dealt with “European” literature by describing five national literatures in self-contained chapters, linking them only by noting their contemporaneity (“In Germany, meantime...”).<sup>57</sup> But this vision of Europe as “a mechanical sum of its separate parts, and nothing more”<sup>58</sup> was immediately countered by the complaint, made by one of the book's first reviewers, that “the history of European literature ought to be one work.”<sup>59</sup>

Here, in compact form, were two models of European literature, the outlines of which were still operative into the twentieth century. For by the early nineteenth century, in a process connected to the development of the idea of *Kultur*, a divide had likewise emerged between two opposed models: on one hand, a cosmopolitan vision of European letters, rooted in a “universal” set of aesthetic standards and moving according to a single time-scale; on the other hand, a model of Europe as composed of fundamentally distinct national literatures, each expressing the unique spirit of the people in whose language it was written, and each moving forward in a

historical frame of reference of its own. This divide of course reflected the basic split between Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment visions of culture: between a cosmopolitan aesthetics of timeless universalism and a nationalist aesthetics of historically determined particularism. The key symbol for the development of the first model was Voltaire, and the model of literature fundamentally associated with France. “The classical age,” as critic Paul Van Tieghem wrote in 1948, “coincides with the literary hegemony of France.”<sup>60</sup> The fundamental figure for the development of the second model was eighteenth-century German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder. His enormous importance in the history of European literary life has led sociologist Pascale Casanova to refer to the “Herder effect.” This was the electrifying effect that Herder’s theories had across Europe—above all his claim that every language-nation could produce a literature whose quality could only be judged according to the internal standard of its authenticity. During the long “Herderian revolution” that she dates from 1820 to 1920, “by establishing a necessary link between nation and language,” Herder’s ideas “encouraged all peoples who sought recognition on equal terms with the established nations of the world to stake their claim to literary and political existence.”<sup>61</sup>

What this meant, then, was the opposition of two models: a unitary and cosmopolitan model, linked to France, and a particularist-national model, linked first to Germany, but eagerly seized upon from Scandinavia to the Balkans and Russia (as well as in the Americas). Moreover, these two models corresponded broadly to two opposed clusters of meanings surrounding the word Europe in the romantic period: either a basically future-oriented notion of Europe, where the word itself symbolized reason, progress, and civilization, or an idea of Europe rooted in the past, where the word itself called forth medievalist visions about continental unity in Church and Empire (as for example in Novalis’s *Christianity, or Europe*, 1799) or models of chivalry and idealism (in Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*,

1791).<sup>62</sup> Significantly, these two models also posited opposed relationships with politics. The French model emphasized a literary sphere that was autonomous from political authorities and popular (or mass) social pressures—think of the vision, provided by Voltaire, of the writer as autonomous social and political critic. In contrast, the Herderian model, by emphasizing the link between literature, the national language, and “the people,” planted the life of literature firmly in the intensely political soil of the nation—think instead of the model of the writer as voice of his awakening nation, a model to be found in virtually all European nation-states east of the Rhine.<sup>63</sup>

But while the Herder effect offered “an alternative notion of literary legitimacy,” it did not supplant the power of the French model. First, the power of the French model was supported in the nineteenth century by the enormous prestige and commercial popularity of French literature, which was by far the most widely read across the continent, both in French and in innumerable translations.<sup>64</sup> Second, quite apart from the success of its own writers, France began to wield a different kind of literary power, rooted not so much in the production of French novelists as in that of French publishers and critics: namely, the power, as Casanova writes, to assign “literary capital”—to determine, through translations, prizes, and reviews, which works from Europe’s smaller literatures were to be considered “literature” at all. In this way, Paris came to occupy a special position as what Casanova calls the “denationalized capital of literature.”<sup>65</sup> Third, Paris was the great destination for nationalist intellectuals fleeing political repression, who worked toward the development of a national style precisely through their engagement with models derived from French literature. For the cosmopolitan-minded cultural nationalists of the mid-nineteenth century, the goal was to forge a national literature that was on the level of a “European” literature. In practice, this meant becoming “up to date” with “European” literary trends and achieving “European”

recognition—all of which took place in Paris. This pattern continued into the early twentieth century, when the age of nationalism, for much of central and Eastern Europe, coincided with the radical internationalization of cultural life that occurred in the early twentieth century.<sup>66</sup>

In advancing the careers of selected writers from the European periphery, now celebrated as members of the elite group of writers of international status, the Parisian literary establishment absorbed the blow of the rise of new national literatures, converting an apparent embrace of national difference into a renewed expression of the values of universalist cosmopolitanism.<sup>67</sup> But the European status thus conferred on writers from Europe's smaller language groups came at a price. As Casanova explains, writers from countries with "small" or "dominated" literatures "have to make an unavoidably painful choice: either to affirm their difference and so condemn themselves to the difficult and uncertain fate of national writers...writing in 'small' literary languages that are hardly, or not at all, recognized in the international literary world; or to betray their heritage and, denying their difference, assimilate the values of one of the great literary centers."<sup>68</sup> To be both national *and* European was something French writers had long since mastered. But the ability of Parisian intellectuals "to be at once nationally secure and effortlessly universal" was not shared by their counterparts in the rest of Europe, who found that their efforts to participate in international trends alienated them from their domestic readership and called forth harsh accusations of betrayal.<sup>69</sup> Writing in his diary in 1911, Franz Kafka noted the especially high stakes of literary debate in Europe's "small" literatures: "What in large literatures... provokes a brief flurry of interest, here brings down nothing less than a life or death decree."<sup>70</sup>

In the twentieth century, the tensions between the international literary sphere and the lives of "national writers" took on a more pronounced political character. The idea of European literature had been ritually linked to cosmopolitan-

type invocations of European unity since at least the 1830s.<sup>71</sup> But at the turn of the century, it came to be associated with the values of an internationalist liberalism. The foundational act here was French novelist Emile Zola's intervention into the Dreyfus affair, his legendary *J'accuse* (1898). Zola based his ability legitimately to intervene in the political field on the status he had acquired in the literary field: but in converting his cultural capital into political capital, he insisted also on his own autonomy from the sphere of the national, in order to offer political critique from a position of self-declared universality. By acting, that is, not as French writer, but as a writer *tout court*, Zola helped create "a sort of denationalized politicization of literature."<sup>72</sup> From then on, Casanova argues, the international literary space acquired a sharply political character, marked by allegiance to a quite specific package of political values: liberal, internationalist, and linked to Enlightenment-humanist ideals of reason, freedom of conscience, and the demand for limitations on the power of the society or state to curb the creative freedom of the individual. This is the background to the classic twentieth-century phenomenon, in which the utterances of great writers on the political issues of the day are (or, anyway, were) awarded such intense attention.<sup>73</sup> This was also the precise opposite of the nationalist-romantic model of *Kultur*, which envisioned a cultural space that was both firmly national and (perhaps paradoxically) essentially depoliticized—a vision that of course favored conservative politics.

WWI brought the conflict between these models to its clearest and harshest expression, between European nations but also within them. The denationalized and politicized literary sphere was the rhetorical space from which Heinrich Mann criticized Germany (and his brother Thomas) in his essay "Zola" of November 1915. And it was this that Thomas Mann, in the very act of sharpening the distinction between the ideas of *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*, attacked so viciously in 1918, insulting his brother with the label "Civilization's literary man" (*Zivilisationsliterat*).<sup>74</sup> When

Thomas Mann went on to place literature as such in the sphere of Civilization, as opposed to that of *Kultur* (where music was more at home), it was surely this very point that he had in mind: “Literature” had indeed come to stand for a set of values: internationalism, liberal democracy, and an anti-nationalist cosmopolitanism that were antithetical to cultural conservatives, not only in Germany.

In the aftermath of the war, the French model of European literary life became hegemonic: having defeated its German rival, it now acquired a solid institutional basis in the cultural institutions of the League of Nations (such as the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation) and in the PEN Club, founded on explicitly liberal and international premises in 1921.<sup>75</sup> It was in this period that the writers and critics linked to the French-based tradition of a unitary cosmopolitan model of literature began to seize the label “European” for themselves with new vigor, reflecting the 1920s vogue for all things European and the post-war mood of “cultural internationalism.” By this definition, the opposite of “European” was the national or provincial. In the 1920s, probably the most prominent arbiter of international standards in literature—the Swedish Academy, granters of the Nobel Prize for literature—systematically rejected authors whose work was seen as “too national” and instead celebrated writers who were committed anti-nationalists (like Anatole France, Nobel Laureate 1921).<sup>76</sup> French critic Valery Larbaud later gave voice to the dominant view within modernist literary circles: “All that which is ‘national’ is silly, archaic, disreputably patriotic...It served a purpose under certain circumstances, but that time has passed. There is now a country of Europe.”<sup>77</sup>

But the political and cultural values of nationalism were core to the literary production of many of Europe’s peoples, especially those which had just acquired national states and were busily struggling to articulate a national literary movement for which they wanted European recognition. To reject those values was effectively to exclude much of the literature of Europe from the sphere of “European

literature.” This was a problem even before the turn away from liberal democracy of so many European countries in the later 1920s and 1930s further alienated them from the liberal cosmopolitanism of the Western European powers. Finally, the ability of writers from smaller literatures to be both national and European was made even more difficult in the interwar years by the rise of literary modernism, cast in particular against the realist narrative techniques of the nineteenth century. While a writer could make his name as a great international or European writer precisely by breaking with tradition, writers in small literatures had a profound investment in realist literary styles, and felt an almost structurally determined hostility to modernist efforts to break with naturalism. For national writers, writes Casanova, “literary aesthetics (because they are connected with political questions) are necessarily neonaturalistic.”<sup>78</sup> They were thus hostile to those writers and critics who argued that realism was now not sufficiently modern – and, by the same token, no longer on the “European” level, where European seemed to have come to mean “modernist.” But in the increasingly global cultural landscape of the interwar years, modernism in literature was not, in fact, exclusively European: it was rather the core of a denationalized cosmopolitan sphere of what Casanova calls “world literary space.” This space had Paris at its center. But this was not Paris, as capital of the particular European nation France, but Paris as capital of an autonomous, non-national, universalistic domain of letters, strongly tied to liberal political values and pacifist internationalism.

### *European Literature in the Nazi New Order*

In June 1940, a month after the fall of France, Goebbels explained to his subordinates at the Propaganda Ministry his view of the cultural significance of Hitler’s recent military victory. Germany, he declared, would now seize the cultural power and position that France had held for the last 150 years. Berlin would take

the position of Paris, which would assume “the role and significance of a provincial town.”<sup>79</sup> Germany—with its major language, powerful literary legacy, mighty publishing and translating industry, and (not least) crushing military dominance—now found itself in a position to attempt an historic reorganization of cultural life in Europe, including the reorganization, or rather creation, of a “European” literary field. For as Goebbels knew, to demote Paris to the level of “provincial town” would be to decapitate the entire system of international modern literary life, taking its distinctive characteristics—its autonomy from political forces, its denationalized, cosmopolitan quality, its rewarding of formal experimentation in opposition to popular taste—and turn them on their heads. In its place would be a European literature that was nationalist, non-autonomous, tied to “the people,” and controlled by the state. This would be European—indeed, by explicitly excluding writers from the Americas or Asia, more *specifically* European than the interwar international literary world had been—but *not* “international.” Rather, by inviting the continents’ writers to see themselves in a “Europe” composed of sharply distinguished national cultures, all of which were to be freed from cosmopolitan (read: Jewish) “contamination,” the Nazi proposed what we might call an “inter-nationalist” vision of European literature. Along with nationalism, anti-Semitism was also central to this literary model, with the Jews—especially publishers and literary critics—seen as agents of the kind of international modernism that denied “European” status to national writers.

For most of us today, radical anti-Semitic nationalism and Europeanism seem necessarily antithetical. The whole point of interwar Europeanism, after all, was to fight nationalism, submerging this dangerous force into a vision of Europe based on trans-national commonality. This can make radical right-wing Europeanism seem confusing, if not simply contradictory. But the appeal of this Nazi model of European literature, especially (but not only) for writers from the continent’s smaller

language groups, rested precisely in its apparent ability to resolve the long-standing tension between the desire of European intellectuals to participate in international networks and movements, and their concerns about their national traditions and identities. These traditions, and the social hierarchies they embodied, seemed threatened precisely by trans-national flows of ideas and money, and by the growing power of “external” forces, like the US or the Jews. Through the European Writers’ Union, German promised to take the decision about which writers and trends qualified as “European” away from the de-nationalized, autonomous literary elite based in Paris, and place it firmly in the hands of national political and social elites—in the hands, that is, of the *ESV’s Landesgruppen*, each of which would itself (under close political oversight) nominate the writers it felt best represented its country on the European stage.

Moreover, by gathering nationalist and naturalist writers under the banner of “European literature,” the Nazis’ conference also redefined “European” away from “modernist.” Similarly, the Nazi model of European literature—by displacing Paris—effectively stopped the clock on what it meant to be “up to date.” Pursuing the needs of his (or, more rarely, her) national literature, rather than following the most up to date trends in Paris, would no longer exclude a writer from “European” status. By insisting that authors were European *through* being national, the European Writers’ Union promised the recognition (and the translation contracts) peripheral writers felt they deserved as *European* writers, while posing no threat to their status as unimpeachably national writers, too. Altogether, the Germans’ reconfiguration of the European literary space took pressure off writers from small literatures, who were freed from their worry about Parisian standards of modernity, or about those who brought those standards into their national context, like snobby modernists or the literary critics, often Jewish, whose awareness of international stylistic trends

led them to brand national writers' work as provincial, out of date, or of poor quality.

The package on offer at Weimar did not appeal to all writers equally of course. Even among those willing to accept an invitation from the Nazis at the height of the war, there was a range of responses. But all suggest a broad willingness to take seriously the prospect of a new European literary world under German leadership. Bulgarian novelist Fanny Popova-Mutafova, representing a Bulgaria that, as she wrote in a Nazi journal in September 1942, "has most painfully felt in its own body, equally to Germany and Italy, the lies and cruelty of the peace-Diktat of the Parisian Jewish-Masonic clique," attended the pre-conference study tour and both the 1941 and 1942 conferences. To the second of these she brought a larger Bulgarian contingent, including her husband.<sup>80</sup> French novelist Jacques Chardonne, also a participant in both the 1941 and 1942 conferences, was so impressed by his German hosts—by "that Germanic spirit, feudal and religious, which nothing purely material can satisfy"—that in 1943 he personally urged France's puppet dictator Marshal Pétain to enter WWII on the side of the Germans.<sup>81</sup> Finnish poet, critic, and university professor Veikko Antero Koskenniemi, the unofficial national poet of Finland, author of the lyrics to Sibelius's *Finlandia* hymn and translator of Goethe into Finnish, made a real investment in the Writers' Union: one of two vice presidents of the body, Koskenniemi had accepted the Germans' invitation to address the German and foreign authors at the Union's planned 1943 meeting, the only foreign writer to be so honored.<sup>82</sup>

We cannot of course know the deepest motivations and reflections of these European writers. Some may have shared the strong attachment to Germany's cultural legacy recorded by French novelist Marcel Jouhandeau, who on the night of October 5, 1941, asked himself in the pages of his journal, "Why am I here? Because since I have known how to read, understand, and feel, I have loved Germany, her

philosophers, her musicians, and I have thought that nothing would be more valuable to humanity than our accord with her." Although he insisted that his participation on this Nazi regime-sponsored trip did not reflect his thoughts on "la question juive," he hoped "to make of my body a fraternal bridge between Germany and us."<sup>83</sup> But Hungarian writer Josef Nyirö no doubt spoke for many more when he reflected on the way traveling in Germany made him feel about his own status as a Hungarian, and a European: "You make comparisons instinctively, out of concern for your own country. Conflicting feelings struggle with one another. One minute you come to the depressing conclusion that we still have a lot to learn at home, the next you start making plans to join in the great competition in which the European countries are engaged. You are filled with responsibility and concerned about your own country. The soul struggles and vacillates."<sup>84</sup> Still others must have shared the views of young Italian critic and translator Giaime Pintor. Having attended the 1942 conference, he wrote to his parents, "the European writers gathered in Weimar constituted the most numerous assemblage of idiots [*cretini*] that I have ever seen together, but the trip and the stay in Germany were equally interesting."<sup>85</sup> Although he had enjoyed the Thursday evening concert, at which legendary Austrian conductor Karl Böhm led renowned soloist Walter Gieseking in a performance of Richard Schumann's piano concerto in A-minor, his fellow conference participants "were at a very low level, mostly Scandinavians and people from the Balkans, with whom it was impossible to talk about literature."<sup>86</sup> Pintor's view of the delegations from France and Spain was not much better.

A particularly revealing assessment of the conference's broadest goals came from Mario Sertoli, another member of the Italian delegation to the 1942 writers' conference. Well equipped by his experience as both a journalist and a Foreign Ministry staffer, Sertoli filed a report with Italy's Foreign Ministry in which he correctly described the gathering in Weimar as an example of the Germans' larger

effort to solidify their hegemony through the creation of new international and European “super-academies” of writers, journalists, artists, and so on. Noting the failings of the conference, from the poor quality of the writers to the watery soup, he offered an overall indictment of the Germans’ pursuit of this project—but not of the project itself:

In conclusion, both for the type of people invited and for the evident discomfort of the hosts...the Conference of Weimar was not brilliant. In the certainty of reforming the world, Germany has been in a hurry to centralize many international institutes and initiatives [which] already had blossomed elsewhere with quite different means, men, preparation, and taste. [...]

But in fields like the arts, letters, journalism, etc., in which Germany has never enjoyed a position of primacy, she could have delegated to other countries, which have longer traditions in these fields, the task of supplanting France, which at least knew the art of hosting.<sup>87</sup>

Sertoli spoke for many Italian fascists in his continued embrace of the Germans’ goal of “supplanting France” in order to create a new European cultural order. But he also spoke for many in arguing that this goal would be better pursued through a kind of national division of labor, in which German arms would run the war, but “other countries”—meaning above all Italy—should manage the creation of a new cultural order to support the Axis-led political system. Like Pintor, he also objected to the literary “Europe” the Germans had in fact managed to assemble, specifically rejecting the Nazis’ effort to rebrand as “European” provincial or country writers from the continent’s periphery: “the conference,” he complained, “more than of people of art or of thought, had the look of a folkloristic or ethnographic gathering.”<sup>88</sup>

Even Giaime Pintor, although alternately bemused and scornful, seems to have been eager to see what kind of European literature Germany could offer, evidently equally ready to see the French-led international literary system come to an end. Pintor had already concluded that French civilization appeared “poor, weak,

and corrupt before the true forces that fight in Europe, before a single Russian or German soldier fallen on the Eastern fields for the defense of an order that might serve a future Europe.”<sup>89</sup> His description of the French delegation to Weimar in 1942—“vivacious and on the whole civilized people, even if of a civilization more of custom than of culture”—also revealed that his own scheme for evaluating cultural value in Europe was penetrated by the opposition between culture and civilization.<sup>90</sup>

The morning after the conference ended, before returning to Italy, Pintor had a chance to stroll through Weimar with fellow Italian delegate, novelist Elio Vittorini. The two friends walked through the city center, quiet and unadorned after the conclusion of the week’s events. As Pintor recalled, they talked “about those subjects that a conference on European literature cannot face: about literature as an honest vocation, and above all about Europe: something that seemed to us too great and uncertain and afflicted for three-hundred gentlemen gathered in Weimar in October 1942 to be able to speak in its name.”<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, Nazi Germany proved unable to speak in Europe’s name for very long. Although a third conference of the European Writers’ Union was planned for October 1943, the Union was crushed, along with the Nazis’ dreams of European empire, by the Soviet advance. As this short look at participants’ responses makes clear, the Union anyway already revealed that it was unable to deliver on its essential goal—forging a European literature under Nazi regime control that would still enjoy the legitimacy of the traditional “literary field.” Nonetheless, the Nazi effort to create institutions that would allow Germany to speak in Europe’s name had real power, because it touched on deeply rooted problems in European cultural life. The claim that *Kultur* was European, linked to a concrete project of displacing France and defending the development of Europe’s national literatures—and of a particular vision of *European* literature—from the challenges of modernity, spoke to

fears and concerns that were shared by writers across the continent. That the project failed does not mean that we can exclude it from our understanding of the history of the idea of European literature, and thus, of the ever troublesome concept of “European culture.”

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Edwin Herzstein, *When Nazi dreams come true: the Third Reich's internal struggle over the future of Europe after a German victory: a look at the Nazi mentality, 1939-45* (London, 1982), 159.

<sup>2</sup> On the application of Gramsci's concept of hegemony to understanding international institutions, see Robert W. Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: an Essay in Method," in *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, ed. Stephen Gill (Cambridge, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> This is true above all because of the extraordinary collection of materials in Frank-Rutger Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht! Die Europäische Schriftsteller-Vereinigung in Weimar 1941-1948* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004). Italian archival sources on these conferences, from the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, are published in Mirella Serri, *Il breve viaggio. Giaime Pintor nella Weimar nazista* (Venice, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> I base my use of this idea of international “literary capital” above all from Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004). Her work is in turn indebted to that of Pierre Bourdieu. See especially Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford University Press, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> I disagree here with Jan-Pieter Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im 'Dritten Reich'. Institutionen, Kompetenzen, Betätigungsfelder* (Frankfurt a. M., 1993), 193, who dismisses the writers as “applauding pieces of scenery, comparable to the participants in any number of Party and State functions.”

<sup>7</sup> The foreign guests at the 1941 meeting were: Finland: Arvi Kivimaa, V. A. Koskenniemi, and Gräfin (Countess) Magda Berquist von Mirbach; Sweden: Dr. Einar Malm; Norway: Kaare Bjoergen [Kåre Björger], Lars Hansen; Denmark: Svend Fleuron, Einar Hovald, Anders Thuborg; Holland: R. P. Sybesma, Henri Bruning, Emile Buysse, Jan H. Eekhout; Belgium: F. Vercnocke, Ernest Claes, Filip de Pillecijn, Felix Timmermans; France: Jacques Chardonne, Ramon Fernandez, Marcel Jouhandeau, Abel Bonnard, Robert Brasillach, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, André Fraigneau; Spain: Ernesto Giménez Caballero, E. Filipe Vivanco; Italy: Alfredo Acito, Arturo Farinelli; Croatia: Dr. Antun Bonifac'ic'; Romania: I. N. Herescu, Ion Sân-Giorgiu; Bulgaria: Frau Fanny Popova-Mutafova; Slovakia: Jozef Cíger Hronsky, Milo Urban; Switzerland: John Knittel; Hungary: Josef Nyirö, Lörinc Szabó. This list combines information from three sources: a list of participants sent with letter from RMVP to Reichsschrifttumskammer, January 28, 1942. BA R 56 I/102 (fiche 1); the list offered in Wilhem Haegert, “Zum Dichtertreffen 1941,” in *Die Dichtung in kommenden Europa. Weimarer Reden 1941*, (Hamburg, 1942). 6-7.; and a list located by Hausmann in the Staatsarchiv Weimar, cited in Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 53, n. 73. Hausmann concludes that a sure, complete listing is impossible, citing discrepancies among the sources.

<sup>8</sup> Fleuron had also been active in the Nordic Society (Nordische Gesellschaft), the Nazi's pan-Germanic cultural association. See Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 28, 275.

<sup>9</sup> Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 280. See also Robert Ferguson, *Enigma. The Life of Knut Hamsun* (London, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 320-326.

<sup>11</sup> See a short biography of Koskenniemi, and extensive bibliography, at [www.kirjasto.sci.fi/koskenni.htm](http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/koskenni.htm), and *Ibid.* 292.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 310.

<sup>13</sup> See Krassimira Daskalova, "Fani Popova-Mutafova," *Gender and History* 14 (August, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> On the French delegation, see François Dufay, *Le voyage d'automne. Octobre 1941, des écrivains français en Allemagne. Recit* (Paris, 2000).

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<sup>15</sup> See Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Goebbels, "Buch und Schwert. Rede zur Eröffnung der Woche des deutschen Buches," in Joseph Goebbels, *Das Eherne Herz. Reden und Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1941/42* (Munich, 1943). 64-65.

<sup>17</sup> Originally published separately in 1939, *The History of Manners* is published along with *State Formation and Civilization* in Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford England; Cambridge, Mass., 1994).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>19</sup> Hermann Kellermann, ed., *Der Krieg der Geister. Eine Auslese deutscher und ausländischer Stimmen zum Weltkriege 1914* (Dresden, 1915). See also Peter Hoeres, *Krieg der Philosophen. Die deutsche und britische Philosophie im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Paderborn, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Ute Frevert, *Eurovisionen* (Frankfurt a. M., 2003). 103. On Henri Bergson's use of this phrase see also Ernst Schulin, "Die Urkatastrophe des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts," in Wolfgang Michalka, ed., *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse* (Munich, 1994). 9. and Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect: French Schoars and Writers during the Great War* (Cambridge, MA, 1996).

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of the "intellectual mobilization" of German professors during World War I, see Hans Peter Herrmann, "German Professors and the Two World Wars," in *1914/1939: German Reflections of the Two World Wars*, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Madison, 1992). The literature on this topic grew dramatically in the 1990s. For only a few of the most important contributions, see: Jean-Jacques Becker, ed., *Guerre et cultures 1914-1918* (Paris, 1994), Helmut Fries, *Die grosse Katharsis. Der Erste Weltkrieg in der Sicht deutscher Dichter und Gelehrter*, 2 vols. (Konstanz, 1994-1995), Michalka, ed., *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, Wolfgang Mommsen, ed., *Kultur und Krieg: die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> See Michael Grüttner, "Wissenschaft," in *Enzyklopädie des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Wolfgang Benz, Hermann Graml, and Hermann Weiss (Stuttgart, 1997), 141-142.

<sup>23</sup> Bollenbeck, *Bildung und Kultur*. 297-301.

<sup>24</sup> On this theme, see Benjamin G. Martin, "A New Order for European Culture: the German-Italian Axis and the Reordering of International Cultural Relations, 1936-1943" (PhD thesis, New York: Columbia University, 2006).

<sup>25</sup> On the study-trip, see Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 107-141. On the French writers' participation on this trip and at the conference see Dufay, *Voyage d'automne*.

<sup>26</sup> As quoted by Alfieri in letter to MAE and MCP, November 15, 1941; in Serri, *Breve viaggio*. 204. The program of the meeting's events is reprinted in Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 130-131. On Haegert, see Barbian, *Literaturpolitik*. 390.

<sup>27</sup> See Conference program, in Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 131.

<sup>28</sup> Sauckel's speech is summarized, and Goebbels's wreath-laying reported in Alfieri's report of November 15, 1941, reprinted in Serri, *Breve viaggio*. 205.

<sup>29</sup> Bernhard Zeller, ed., *Klassiker in finsternen Zeiten, 1933-1945. Eine Ausstellung des deutschen Literaturarchivs im Schiller-Nationalmuseum, Marbach am Neckar*, 2 vols. (Marbach, 1983), Lothar Ehrlich et al., *Das Dritte Weimar: Klassik und Kultur im Nationalsozialismus* (Köln, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Paul Michael Lützel, "Europäischer Kosmopolitismus und Weltliteratur: Goethe und Europa -- Europa und Goethe," in *Kontinentalisierung. Das Europa der Schriftsteller*, ed. Paul Michael Lützel (Bielefeld, 2007). Lützel cites pro-European Goethe essays by Benn, Gide, Hesse, Thomas Mann, Ortega y Gasset, Romain, Croce, Rolland, Curtius, Suarès, Valéry, and Zweig.

<sup>31</sup> Gustave Mathieu, "A Nazi propaganda directive on Goethe," in *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 22 (1953), 129-137; quoted in *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>32</sup> Moritz Jahn, "Zukunftsaufgaben der europäischen Literaturen," in *Die Dichtung in kommenden Europa. Weimarer Reden 1941* (Hamburg, 1942), 53.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-57.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-50.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>37</sup> See Conference program, in Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 130. This lists the events mentioned below as well. On Hitler's involvement with the Hotel Elephant, see Peter Merseburger, *Mythos Weimar. Zwischen Geist und Macht* (Stuttgart, 1998). 347.; Merseburger gives a short description of the 1940, 1941, and 1942 Poets' Meetings on 347-348.

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<sup>38</sup> “Seduction” is the interpretative keyword in F. Dufay, *Le voyage d’automne. Octobre 1941, des écrivains français en Allemagne. Recit* (Paris: Plon, 2000). He stresses this point by suggesting Jouhandeau’s homosexual attraction to the German officer Karl Epting.

<sup>39</sup> Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: an Essay in Method,” 61.

<sup>40</sup> Alfieri reported that the decision to constitute such a Union was taken “on the initiative” of the foreign poets, “and in particular of Eccellenza Farinelli, of Prof. Koskenniemi (Finland), of the Flemish writer Pilleciyn, of the poet Arvi Kivimaa (Finland), of Jacques Chardonne (France), Svend Fleuron (Denmark), and of the Norwegian poet Byoergen.” Alfieri to MAE and MCP, November 15, 1941; in Serri, *Breve viaggio*. 204-205. This notion was supported in an article by Svend Fleuron, who reported that the Flemish poet de Pilleciyn, giving a toast at the meeting’s final dinner, had called for the creation of a European “Dichterclub” (Svend Fleuron, “Ich sah Deutschland,” *Europäische Literatur* I (May, 1942).), and in a report from Propaganda Ministry advisor Wilhelm Ruoff, editor of *Europäische Literatur*, who claimed instead that the “spontaneous act” of the Union’s foundation followed an initial suggestion, made before the meeting convened, by Norwegian Knut Hamsun, the Flemish writer Stijn Streuvels, and Maila Talvio of Finland. Wilhelm Ruoff, “Die Stunde des europäischen Geistes,” November 4, 1941, 381-382. Quoted in Barbian, *Literaturpolitik*. 190. Dufay repeats this claim in Dufay, *Die Herbstreise*. 91.

<sup>41</sup> Barbian, *Literaturpolitik*. 191. Barbian cites an “Aufzeichnung” by Paul Hövel of October 15, 1942, BA R 55/705, Bl. 254, which documents the Ministry’s efforts to obscure their own funding of the new institution, because of the “pressing propagandistic interest...not to allow the Ministry to be in evidence in this important federation,” since “doubtless a backlash could be expected if it were to come out that the Ministry financed the whole project.”

<sup>42</sup> Marino Freschi, *La letteratura del Terzo Reich* (Rome, 1997). 81. Gero von Wilpert, ed., *Lexikon der Weltliteratur*, 3rd ed., vol. I. Biographisch-bibliographisches Handwörterbuch (Stuttgart, 1988). 263.

<sup>43</sup> Hans Carossa, *Ungleiche Welten* (Wiesbaden, 1951). 117-140. Cited in Dufay, *Die Herbstreise*. 93.

<sup>44</sup> Alfieri, report to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) and the Ministry of Popular Culture (MCP), March 31, 1942, ACS MCP Gabinetto, busta 68, f. 446; reprinted in Serri, *Breve viaggio*. 217. Carossa reports on the encouragement of the French in his letter to Roger de Campagnolle, December 22, 1941: Hans Carossa, *Briefe, 1937-1956*, ed. Eva Kampmann-Carossa, vol. 3, Briefe (Frankfurt a. M., 1981). 167.

<sup>45</sup> Carossa, *Ungleiche Welten*. 119. Quoted in Barbian, *Literaturpolitik*. 191.

<sup>46</sup> Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!* 293, n. 311, 310-312.

<sup>47</sup> Hausmann offers details on this publishing program in *Ibid.* 73-80.

<sup>48</sup> Oliver Lubrich, “Comparative Literature -- in, from and beyond Germany,” *Comparative Critical Studies* 3 (2006): 53.

<sup>49</sup> *Europäische Literatur*, I, 1 (May, 1942), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Salewski, “National Socialist Ideas on Europe,” in *Documents on the History of European Integration*, ed. Walter Lipgens (1985), 50, n. 80.

<sup>52</sup> The best-known case is the draft “Declaration on Europe,” prepared in March 1943 by German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, but suppressed by Hitler. See M. Salewski, “National Socialist Ideas on Europe,” 53.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>54</sup> Adrian Marino, “Histoire de l’idée de ‘littérature européenne’ et des études européennes,” in *Précis de littérature européenne* (Paris: Editions Universitaires de France, 1998), 13.

<sup>55</sup> Voltaire first used the phrase in his *The Century of Louis XIV*, Chap XXXIV (1751). See Chabod, *Storia dell’idea d’Europa*, 45. Goethe’s use of the phrase *Weltliteratur* dates from 1827. See J.W.V. Goethe, “Goethe on Weltliteratur,” in *Comparative Literature: the Early Years. An Anthology of Essays*, ed. H.-J. Schulz and P.H. Rhein (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 3-11. We know from his journals that Goethe planned an article to be called “European, i.e., World Literature;” here, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Fernando Cabo Aseguinolaza, “Dead, or a Picture of Good Health? Comparatism, Europe, and World Literature,” *Comparative Literature* 58, no. 4 (2006): 419. For Cabo, then, “to talk about *European literature* is therefore, to some extent, redundant” (419).

<sup>57</sup> Hallam’s book (London, 1837-1839; New York, 1970) is discussed in Franco Moretti, “Modern European Literature: A Geographical Sketch,” *New Left Review*, no. 206 (August 1994): 93. Quotation from 93, n. 19.

<sup>58</sup> Moretti, in *Ibid.*

- <sup>59</sup> Quoted in John Rignall, "'One great Confederation?'" Europe in the Victorian Novel," in Francis O'Gorman, ed., *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Blackwell, 2004), 232.
- <sup>60</sup> Quoted in Moretti, "Modern European Literature: A Geographical Sketch," 94.
- <sup>61</sup> Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 75. See also 104: "Herder's identification of language with nation, and of poetry with the 'genius of the people,' supplied new weapons in the struggle for independence, with the further result that literary spaces shaped by his thinking were also the most heteronomous, which is to say the most dependent on political authority at the national level."
- <sup>62</sup> Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe: idea, identity, reality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 81-82.
- <sup>63</sup> Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 77.
- <sup>64</sup> See D. Sassoon, *The Culture of the Europeans. From 1800 to the Present* (London: Harper Collins, 2006).
- <sup>65</sup> Casanova, *World Republic of Letters*, 155.
- <sup>66</sup> Sassoon, *The Culture of the Europeans. From 1800 to the Present*, 647.
- <sup>67</sup> F. Brunetière, "European Literature -- 1900," in *Comparative Literature: the Early Years. An Anthology of Essays*, ed. H.-J. Schulz and P.H. Rhein (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 163. On the French academic appropriation of German-type concepts of national literatures, placed however "in the service of its own universalizing conception of literature," see Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 108.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.
- <sup>69</sup> T. Judt, *A Grand Illusion? An Essay on Europe* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 73.
- <sup>70</sup> Franz Kafka, Dairies, Dec 15, 1911, quoted in M. Kundera, *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts* (HarperCollins, 2007), 38.
- <sup>71</sup> Giuseppe Mazzini, *D'una letteratura europea*, 1829. and Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism in the Present Time" (1864). See John Rignall, "'One great Confederation?'" Europe in the Victorian Novel," in Francis O'Gorman, ed., *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Blackwell, 2004)
- <sup>72</sup> Casanova, *World Republic of Letters*, p. 363, n. 82. On Zola's conversion of literary capital into political capital, see also Sassoon, *Culture of the Europeans*, 658ff, and Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*, 129-131.
- <sup>73</sup> See J. Jennings and A. Kemp-Welch, *Intellectuals in politics: from the Dreyfus affair to Salman Rushdie* (London: Routledge, 1997).
- <sup>74</sup> See Koopmann, *Thomas Mann - Heinrich Mann* (2005)
- <sup>75</sup> See R. A. Wilford, "The PEN Club, 1930-1950," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, no. 1 (1979): 99-116.
- <sup>76</sup> Casanova, 149-150. On the close relationship between the Nobel Prize and Parisian literary institutions see pp. 146-153.
- <sup>77</sup> Quoted in Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 87.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.
- <sup>79</sup> Quoted in E. Michels, *Das Deutsche Institut in Paris 1940-1944: ein Beitrag zu den deutsch-französischen Kulturbeziehungen und zur auswärtigen Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 82.
- <sup>80</sup> Fanny Popowa-Mutafowa, "Bulgarien und das neue Europa," *Wille und Macht. Führerorgan der nationalsozialistischen Jugend* 10 (September, 1942): 14. Quoted in Hausmann, *Dichte, Dichter, tage nicht!*, 340.
- <sup>81</sup> Jacques Chardonne, "The Heaven of Niefelheim," in *Travels in the Reich, 1933-1945: Foreign Authors Report from Germany*, ed. Oliver Lubrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 266, 265.
- <sup>82</sup> His name appears in the program for the 1943 meeting, cited in *Ibid.*, 298.
- <sup>83</sup> Marcel Jouhandeau, "Journal sous l'Occupation," in *Journal sous l'Occupation suivi de La Courbe de nos angeisses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 83-84.
- <sup>84</sup> József Nyirö, "The Enemy is Listening," in *Travels in the Reich, 1933-1945: Foreign Authors Report from Germany*, ed. Oliver Lubrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 274.
- <sup>85</sup> Giaime Pintor, letter of October 16, 1942, in Giaime Pintor and Mirella Serri, *Doppio diario, 1936-1943* (Turin, 1978). 173-174.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 173.
- <sup>87</sup> Mario Sertoli, "Relazione sul convegno della Unione Europea degli scrittori in Weiar dal 7 al 15 ottobre corrente," in ACS MCP, Gab 68, here p. 4. Published in Serri, *Breve viaggio*, 239-246, here 240-241.
- <sup>88</sup> Sertoli, in Serri, *Breve viaggio*, 240.

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<sup>89</sup> Giaime Pintor, *Primato*, May 1, 1942; quoted in *Ibid.* 135, n. 62.

<sup>90</sup> Pintor, "Scrittori a Weimar," 195.

<sup>91</sup> Giaime Pintor, *Il Sangue d'Europa* (Turin, 1950). 198.