

Stephen Parker / Peter Davies / Matthew Philpotts
The Modern Restoration



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Re-thinking
German Literary History
1930–1960

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Foreword

This study is the product of a three-year, collaborative research project undertaken by colleagues from the University of Manchester and the University of Edinburgh with the generous support of the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB). The origins of the project go back to my work as a doctoral student, when, following publications in the 1970s by Frank Trommler and Hans Dieter Schäfer, the issue of continuities in German literature across the political caesurae of 1933 and 1945 was, for the first time, the subject of serious debate. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the questions these issues were never far from my own research and from the projects undertaken by my research students at Manchester. Following the establishment of the AHRB, the opportunity arose to conceive projects on the scale that those questions demanded. I was fortunate to be working in the mid- to late 1990s with such talented young researchers as Peter Davies and Matthew Philpotts. It was a relatively easy task to form with them a team to tackle those issues afresh. And it has been a rare pleasure to develop our discussions in the manner that such a project requires and the AHRB's support has permitted. We should like to acknowledge the excellent support that we have received from librarians and archivists at the Academy of Arts and *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin, and at the libraries of the Universities of Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds. Research for the chapter on Johannes R. Becher was carried out under the terms of a Leverhulme Trust Special Research Fellowship. The chapter on Huchel benefited from a fellowship awarded by the John Rylands Research Institute, and the section on *Sinn und Form* from a fellowship awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. We have tested our ideas in a number of forums. Our thanks go to colleagues whose stimulating suggestions have helped to shape our thinking. We are, however, particularly indebted to our good friend in Berlin, Justus Fetscher, who read our drafts and provided expert comment on them.

Stephen Parker, Manchester, March 2004.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout in the main body of the text:

<i>Aufbau</i>	<i>Aufbau: Kulturpolitische Monatsschrift</i>
<i>DiR</i>	<i>Das innere Reich: Zeitschrift für Dichtung, Kunst und deutsches Leben</i>
<i>DiW</i>	<i>Die literarische Welt: Unabhängiges Organ für das deutsche Schrifttum</i>
<i>Kolonne</i>	<i>Die Kolonne: Zeitschrift für Dichtung</i>
<i>Lkv</i>	<i>Die Linkskurve</i>
<i>Merkur</i>	<i>Merkur: Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken</i>
<i>MuW</i>	<i>Maß und Wert: Zweimonatsschrift für freie deutsche Kultur</i>
<i>Ruf</i> (Munich)	<i>Der Ruf: Unabhängige Blätter der jungen Generation</i>
<i>Ruf</i> (US)	<i>Der Ruf: Zeitung der Deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in den USA</i>
<i>SuF</i>	<i>Sinn und Form: Beiträge zur Literatur</i>
<i>Wort</i>	<i>Das Wort: Literarische Monatsschrift</i>

BB	Bertolt Brecht, <i>Werke: Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe</i> , ed. by Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei, and Klaus-Detlef Müller, 30 vols (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau; Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1988–1998)
GB	Gottfried Benn, <i>Gesammelte Werke in der Fassung der Erstdrucke</i> , ed. by Bruno Hillebrand, 4 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1982)
GE	Günter Eich, <i>Gesammelte Werke in vier Bänden</i> , ed. by Karl Karst and Axel Viereg, 4 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991)
JRB	Johannes R. Becher, <i>Gesammelte Werke</i> , 18 vols (Berlin and Weimar: Johannes-R.-Becher-Archiv der Akademie der Künste, 1966–1981)
PH	Peter Huchel, <i>Gesammelte Werke</i> , ed. by Axel Viereg, 2 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1984)

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Introduction

This study was born out of a dissatisfaction with the capacity of existing accounts of twentieth-century German literature to provide an adequate underpinning for research and teaching. For decades, the reliance on the emotional force of key political date brackets, rather than on aesthetic criteria, has hampered the conceptualisation of German literary historiography. The latter have been subsumed within a political paradigm which, despite a measure of re-appraisal, not only continues to stress rupture at the expense of continuity but also to some extent replicates the ideological antagonisms and crass binary oppositions in the official discourse of the Nazi and Cold War years. The result has been that the developmental dynamics of German literature across the twentieth century, the mechanisms underlying these developments and, not least, the literariness of this literature has suffered some significant neglect. The present study has been undertaken with a view to initiating a corrective to conventional historiography. Without losing sight of political contexts, it pursues the investigation of literary continuities that cut across the political boundaries of 1933 and 1945.

That it is still necessary to undertake such a corrective is surprising given the research impetus which developed in German studies in the 1970s. The landmark *Germanistentag* in Munich in 1966, at which Eberhard Lämmert and Karl Otto Conrady called for a serious engagement with National Socialism, gave rise to concerted efforts to re-align the terms of German literary history in the mid-twentieth century.¹ The renewed emphasis on socio-political approaches to literary study helped to overcome the evasiveness of much post-war *Germanistik* on the subject of National Socialism: the construction of the 'Weimar Republic' as a literary-historical period, resting on the firm foundation of political and sociological models, provided a renewed impetus to the discussion of German literary culture in the mid-century. The 1933–1945 periodisation that emerged from this serious engagement with National Socialism proved immensely fruitful in the development of 'exile literature', 'inner emigration' and 'post-war literature' as key literary-historical categories, but the same engagement also gave rise to doubts about the usefulness of such political date-boundaries in accounts of literary culture. Two scholars in particular, Hans Dieter Schäfer and Frank

1 See Eberhard Lämmert, 'Germanistik: Eine deutsche Wissenschaft' and Carl Otto Conrady, 'Deutsche Literaturwissenschaft und Drittes Reich', in Benno von Wiese and Rudolf Henß (eds), *Nationalismus in Germanistik und Dichtung: Dokumentation des Germanistentages in München vom 17.–22. Oktober 1966* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1967), pp. 15–36 and pp. 37–60.

Trommler, who had worked on exile and 'inner emigrant' literature, sought in a number of essays to relativise the significance attributed to the political caesurae of 1933 and 1945 in accounts of German literary development, shifting the emphasis instead to 1930 and 1960 as the start and end points of a stylistically distinct literary period.² In Schäfer's words:

Die z.T. emotionale, aber stets moralisierende Fixierung auf den Nationalsozialismus hatte bis dahin zu einer Überbetonung der Zäsuren von 1933 und 1945 geführt und eine literaturgeschichtlich differenzierte Darstellung der verschiedenen Zeitstile sowie die Bestimmung der wirklichen Epocheninheit über diese Daten hinaus verhindert.³

Schäfer in particular, drawing on the methodologies developed by the social historians of the Bavaria Project around Martin Broszat and on the re-evaluation of the literary styles and genres of the period 1815–1848 undertaken by Friedrich Sengle, marked out the territory for a fundamental re-appraisal of the literary production of the 'restorative' middle decades of the twentieth century.⁴ And yet, despite repeated acknowledgements of the significance of this work and no little constructive, and often provocative, criticism, no full-scale development of this field of study has been forthcoming in the intervening 25 years.

As such, the approach we are proposing retains its potential to challenge our assumptions about the literary production of the mid-twentieth century. Even today, it is difficult to escape the convenient and reassuring boundaries provided by political date brackets. In the periodisations which underpin literary histories and academic conferences, text books and university courses, it is the political paradigm which continues to hold sway; we continue to refer to the literature of the Weimar Republic or of the GDR, to exile literature and to the literature of inner emigration.⁵ Alternatively, many accounts of twentieth-century German literary history remain wedded to a narrative which has cast avant-gardism as its hero and which is constructed around a dichotomy between modernist and anti-modernist forms of representation. Here, the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s have a marginalised role to play, the 'dark decades' during which the privileged centre of modernism was smashed and suppressed by totalitarian ideology. Our aim in this book is to build on and develop the insights offered by the pioneering work of Schäfer and others, as a starting-point for a re-appraisal of these mid-decades of the twentieth century which is able to shed light on this perceived darkness. As

2 See Hans Dieter Schäfer, 'Zur Periodisierung der deutschen Literatur seit 1930' and Frank Trommler, 'Nachkriegsliteratur: Eine neue deutsche Literatur?', in Nicolas Born and Jürgen Manthey (eds), *Literaturmagazin 7: Nachkriegsliteratur* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1977), pp. 95–115 and pp. 167–86.

3 Schäfer, 'Periodisierung', p. 96.

4 See Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich, A. Grossmann (eds), *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, 6 vols (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1977–1983) and Friedrich Sengle, *Biedermeierzeit: Deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld von Restauration und Revolution 1815–1848*, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971–1980).

5 See, for example, Neil H. Donahue and Doris Kirchner (eds), *Flight of Fantasy: New perspectives on inner emigration in German literature 1933–1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2003).

we shall see, considering this period in its own right – in terms of a characteristic and shared set of aesthetic practices, assumptions, and discourses employed by writers, editors, and critics – illuminates processes of literary continuity and change which run across the twentieth century as a whole and which build up a more complete and differentiated picture of long-term cultural and literary development than has been permitted thus far. Before we are able to set out the precise nature of these defining characteristics, a more detailed consideration is necessary of the research put forward by Schäfer and Trommler, which we subsume under the label ‘the 1930 paradigm’ and in dialogue with which we have developed our own position.

The 1930 paradigm

A number of key arguments shape the 1930 paradigm as it is enunciated by Schäfer and Trommler. First and foremost, the posited ‘restorative’ period depends on a loosening of the causal ties between aesthetic and political developments, so that the apparent triumph of more conservative aesthetic tendencies in the German literature of the 1930s is not merely a reflection of the triumph of conservative political forces. As Schäfer writes in his periodisation essay:

Unsere Zeit vergißt meistens, daß eines der Hauptziele der faschistischen Kulturpolitik, nämlich die Identifikation der extremen Formzertrümmerung mit der Krise der Gesellschaft, damals in zahlreichen nichtnationalsozialistischen Kreisen erstaunlich populär war. Die historischen Stile wie Romantik und Biedermeier, der Realismus des 19. Jahrhunderts und vor allem der Klassizismus gewannen auch als Ordnungsfaktoren überall an Boden, denn die Tendenz, in der Kunst Altes und Bewährtes wiederherzustellen, ist kein Ergebnis der Kulturpolitik Hitlers, sondern Produkt ein und derselben geschichtlichen Krise, die auch den Nationalsozialismus zum Sieg geführt hatte.⁶

As a consequence, the significance of the political date-boundaries of 1933 and 1945 is substantially relativised. Or as Trommler writes with reference to the post-1945 situation:

Festzuhalten ist jedoch, daß die jungen Nachkriegsschriftsteller wie selbstverständlich einer Poetik folgten, die der überwiegende Teil des Bürgertums nicht erst 1945 und nicht erst 1933 als verbindlich akzeptiert hatte, sondern bereits vor 1933, als die Emigranten in Deutschland selbst noch hatten kämpfen können. Wo Hitler die physische Verfolgung einsetzen ließ, standen bereits vor 1933 Verbotstafeln der

6 Schäfer, ‘Periodisierung’, p. 98.

Republik gegen linksbürgerliche Publizisten und sozial engagierte Autoren. [...] Die meisten Entscheidungen über diese Literatur [fielen] bereits vor 1933.⁷

In these accounts, the erosion of these political caesurae shifts attention away from 1933 and on to what Trommler terms 'jene Restauration, die sich Ende der zwanziger Jahre in vielen Bereichen anbahnte' and, in turn, to 'die Kontinuitäten im Zeitraum zwischen 1930 und 1960'.⁸ In particular, Schäfer identifies a widespread sense of chaos, confusion, and impotence engendered by the economic and political crises of 1929–1932.⁹ These crises are seen, against the backcloth of (post-)Expressionist experimentation which had run out of steam, to have been the catalysts for 'den Durchbruch einer breiten Revision der modernen Stile seit der Jahrhundertwende'. Characterised by 'einem Siegeszug metaphysischer Wertvorstellungen', and 'einer rasch anwachsenden Distanz zu geistigen und künstlerischen Experimenten', this cultural climate is seen to be confirmed or radicalised by the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. Significantly, however, it is not initiated by the horrors of the Third Reich. In Schäfer's words: 'Zweifelloos verstärkten die Schrecken der Diktatur, die Not der Ausbürgerung und des Krieges die Restauration, doch die Krise von 1930 ist – übrigens auch international – das entscheidende Ereignis, das der antimodernen Bewegung die Bahn öffnete.'

Significantly, Schäfer and Trommler draw on comparable contemporary sources as attestations of the literary developments to which they refer. In particular, both make much of the nature poetry and literary programmatics of the *Kolonne* Circle of young writers in the journal of the same name between 1929 and 1932, such writers as Martin Raschke, Günter Eich and Peter Huchel providing an important strand of continuity across 1933 and/or 1945 as manifestations of an aesthetic approach which crosses conventional political and geographical boundaries. This approach is perceptible at 1930 amongst the politically committed writers of Left and Right, is manifested after 1933 amongst those who went into exile as well as those who remained in Germany, and persists into the Federal Republic and the GDR in the 1950s. As Trommler puts it, for example: 'Diese Wende – das sei hier vorweggenommen – blieb angesichts der kommunistischen Politik unter Stalin keineswegs ein bürgerliches Phänomen.'¹⁰ Only after 1960 does Schäfer see renewed prosperity and optimism lifting the crisis consciousness of the mid-decades, a change represented in cultural terms by the rise of pop-art, by a re-appraisal of Dada and *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and by the arrival of a new literary generation. To quote Trommler

7 Frank Trommler, 'Emigration und Nachkriegsliteratur: Zum Problem der geschichtlichen Kontinuität', in Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (eds), *Exil und innere Emigration: Third Wisconsin Workshop* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1972), pp. 173–97 (pp. 191–92).

8 Trommler, 'Emigration und Nachkriegsliteratur', p. 184 and p. 185.

9 Schäfer, 'Periodisierung', pp. 95–97.

10 Trommler, 'Emigration und Nachkriegsliteratur', p. 183.

again: 'Seit etwa 1960 bezieht sich die Literatur immer deutlicher auf eine Welt, in der der Zweite Weltkrieg nicht mehr alles überschattet. Die Wohlstandsgesellschaft ist etabliert [...]. Ausgedehnte Sprachexperimente laufen mit strengem ideologischem Engagement parallel, und beiden Tendenzen entspricht neuer Zweifel an den Aussagemöglichkeiten von Literatur.'¹¹

The Trommler thesis: from *Sachlichkeit* to *Innerlichkeit*

If the Schäfer and Trommler accounts of the 1930 paradigm can be bracketed together in their broad outlines, and much critical literature has tended to conflate the two, a slightly more differentiated picture emerges if we seek to define the precise nature of the '1930 shift' which they seek to describe. Above all, we need to ask ourselves in what particular respects this development can be considered aesthetically 'conservative' or 'restorative'. As far as Trommler is concerned, the answer to this question lies in Herbert Ihering's 1930 essay, *Die getarnte Reaktion*, in which Trommler identifies the description of a common aesthetic approach which bridges differences in theme, form, and political views for a whole generation of writers:

Sie haben Anteil an der Reaktion gegen die Literatur der Dokumentation, des Parteiengagements und der Massenagitation, jener Reaktion, die der Theaterkritiker Herbert Ihering 1930 ausführlich in ihrer Tendenz zum Individualismus, zur Idylle, zum Mythos diagnostizierte. Sie haben Anteil an einer zunehmend mythisch orientierten Konzeption der Wirklichkeit, einer Rückkehr zum Platonismus, wie er sich um die Jahrhundertwende bei Hofmannsthal, Rilke und anderen Dichtern manifestierte, die mit ihrer Literatur zu den Urbildern des Seins, zum Eigentlichen der Wirklichkeit vorzudringen suchten gegen Naturalismus und 'Oberflächen-Dokumentation' gewandt, im Bestreben, die Entfremdung des Ich von den Dingen zu erfassen und zu überwinden.¹²

Writing elsewhere of the absence of a new literary beginning at 1945, Trommler further clarifies his view of what the 1930 shift represents:

Dazu gehörte, was die Literatur betraf, die Wiederaufnahme und teilweise Fortführung des um 1930 aufgehenden Rilke- und späteren Benn-Kults, die Weiterführung der um dieselbe Zeit von der Zeitschrift *Die Kolonne* geförderten Naturlyrik und der im *Inneren Reich* gefestigten Vorliebe für Gedicht und Metapher, sowie die Ablehnung einer der Neuen Sachlichkeit entsprechenden Reportageliteratur.¹³

Described explicitly as the 'Abkehr von Sachlichkeitsdichtung und sozialem Engagement' and manifested above all in the Benn and Rilke cults and in the literary journals *Die Kolonne* and *Das innere Reich*, the dynamic at the centre of

11 Frank Trommler, 'Der "Nullpunkt 1945" und seine Verbindlichkeit für die Literaturgeschichte', *Basis: Jahrbuch für deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur*, 1 (1970), 9–25 (p. 24).

12 Trommler, 'Nachkriegsliteratur: Eine neue deutsche Literatur?', p. 171.

13 Trommler, 'Emigration und Nachkriegsliteratur', p. 174. Subsequent reference, p. 185.

Trommler's version of the 1930 paradigm allows itself to be summarised in relatively straightforward fashion: it is in essence a shift in the dominant aesthetic category away from *Sachlichkeit* and towards *Innerlichkeit*.

This core conceptualisation runs through not only Trommler's own contributions to the field but also those of a trio of scholars working with Trommler in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Anton Kaes's documentation of Weimar literary manifestos, for example, clearly bears the hallmarks of Trommler's approach, both in the organisation and selection of material and in the methodology underpinning the editorial introduction. The contemporary essays cited by Trommler as the justification of his thesis all appear, as do programmatic statements published in *Die Kolonne*. As Kaes summarises: 'Im Literarischen setzte sich um 1930 ein im Formalen wie Thematischen rückwärtsgewandter Traditionalismus durch, der vor allem der Lyrik zugute kam.'¹⁴ Two doctoral projects supervised by Trommler at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1970s confirm the fruitfulness of this approach. In his 1976 doctoral thesis and an essay of the following year, Joseph Dolan details the theory and practice of the avowedly apolitical stance of lyric inwardness maintained by the contributors to *Die Kolonne*.¹⁵ The wider significance of this work lies in its capacity to reveal what is conventionally seen as a direct, post-1933 response to the Nazi dictatorship as a tendency with its roots located before that key political date: 'As a response to history [...] such inward leave-taking was not the original creation of the Third Reich but was already a well-defined phenomenon even in the decade preceding 1933.'¹⁶ In Trommler's words:

Spricht man von der inneren Emigration, sollte man demnach die Entwicklung um 1930 nicht übergehen. [...] Sowenig das literarische Phänomen der inneren Emigration an das Jahr 1933 gebunden ist, so wenig löste es sich 1945 abrupt auf, und man muß auch hinzufügen, daß es auch mit den geographischen Grenzen des Dritten Reiches nicht allein bestimmbar ist.¹⁷

In a similar vein, Jeanette Atkinson's 1978 dissertation focuses on the predominance of traditional forms and language in German poetry between 1930 and 1945, seeking to break down the boundaries between exile and inner-German literature by comparing for example, the work of Johannes R. Becher and Joseph Weinheber: 'The simple fact that both exiles and the writers who remained in Germany after the establishment of the Nazi regime wrote poetry in traditional

14 Anton Kaes, *Weimarer Republik: Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur 1918–1933* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1983), p. xlv.

15 Joseph P. Dolan, *Die Rolle der 'Kolonne' in der Entwicklung der modernen deutschen Naturlyrik* (Ann Arbor: Xerox University Microfilms, 1976); Joseph P. Dolan, 'The Theory and Practice of Apolitical Literature: *Die Kolonne* 1929–1932', *Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature*, 1 (1977), 157–71.

16 Dolan, 'The Theory and Practice of Apolitical Literature', p. 157.

17 Trommler, 'Nachkriegsliteratur: Eine neue deutsche Literatur?', p. 173.

forms indicates that the roots of this conservative, at times regressive, style lie farther back than 1933.¹⁸

Re-thinking 1930: *Innerlichkeit* and *Sachlichkeit*

Clearly Schäfer's notion of an aesthetic 'restoration' initiated around 1930 is readily compatible with these approaches, and the essays collected in 1981 in *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein* serve to reinforce the point. In particular, the juxtaposition of essays on Oskar Loerke and Johannes R. Becher alongside a slightly amended version of his periodisation essay is a telling indicator of Schäfer's approach and of the proximity of that approach to that developed by Trommler, Dolan, and Atkinson.¹⁹ Indeed, Schäfer's essay on Becher, first published in 1973, clearly anticipates Atkinson: 'Bechers Interesse am Sonett entspricht den Versuchen von Weinheber, Britting und vielen anderen, diese Form während der NS-Zeit zu beleben. Die feste Form erschien den Daheimgebliebenen als zuverlässiger Kordon vor dem anstürmenden Gefühl.'²⁰ As such, Schäfer founds his thesis on a comparable, widespread retreat into the security of aesthetic introspection. At the same time, Schäfer's more direct, detailed, and systematic account of the 1930 periodisation opens up a more complex conceptualisation of what constitutes the aesthetic conservatism of the period. Consider, for example, the aesthetic features which Schäfer lists as characteristic of the 1930s and 1940s:

1. Krisenbewußtsein.
2. Metaphysische Grundeinstellung; allgemeines Ordnungsdenken.
3. Leserorientierung.
4. Kritik an der Aufklärungstradition des Weimarer Staates.
5. Distanz zu aktuellen Stoffen; Bevorzugung historischer, mythischer oder landschaftlicher Themen.
6. Wiederaufleben von vormodernen Stilen (Realismus des 19. Jahrhunderts, Romantik, Klassik u.s.w.).
7. Rückgriff auf ältere Gattungsarten (Sonett, Ode, Elegie, Hymnus, Lied; Novellistik; historischer Roman, Dorfgeschichte u.s.w.).
8. Dominanz der Gebrauchsliteratur (Kriegsbericht, Reisebeschreibung, Tagebuch, Essay; Predigt, Legende; Rede, Tendenzdichtung).

18 Jeanette Atkinson, *Traditional Forms in German Poetry 1930–1945* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983), p. 3.

19 Hans Dieter Schäfer, 'Zur Periodisierung der deutschen Literatur seit 1930'; 'Oskar Loerke, "Winterliches Vogelfüttern"'; 'Johannes R. Becher im Exil', in Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein: Über deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945* (Munich: Hanser, 1981), pp. 55–71; pp. 91–95; pp. 96–106.

20 Schäfer, 'Becher im Exil', p. 101, first published as 'Stilgeschichtlicher Ort und historische Zeit in Johannes R. Bechers Exildichtungen', in Manfred Durzak (ed.), *Die deutsche Exilliteratur 1933–1945* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1973), pp. 358–72.

9. Erneuerung dualistischer Darbietungsweisen, wie z.B. Allegorie und Parabel.
10. Vordringen klassizistischer Stilnormen.²¹

The 1930 shift which Schäfer seeks to define is most accurately described as a dual turn: thematically a turn away from social and political engagement towards more metaphysical, historical and mythological concerns (points 2, 4, 5); and stylistically a turn away from experimentation towards traditional, conventional, and classical styles and forms (points 6, 7, 9). Both are undertaken against the background of a profound and consistent mood of crisis (point 1) which helps to define the period.

And yet, if these elements remain readily compatible with Trommler's thesis, Schäfer's eighth characteristic, 'Dominanz der Gebrauchsliteratur', sits rather less comfortably in a paradigm which is essentially defined as a turn towards *Innerlichkeit*. Expressly functional forms of literature and, above all, politically committed *Tendenzdichtung* are precisely the kind of *sachlich* writing, the rejection of which defines Trommler's thesis. Indeed, Schäfer too considers the programmatic rejection by the *Kolonne* Circle of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the first issue of their journal as a paradigmatic manifestation of the 1930 shift. Clearly this generates a troubling tension, particularly for a thesis which seeks to account for a literary-historical period which, through the Third Reich and GDR, encompasses the unparalleled political instrumentalisation of German literature. For this reason, room must be made to accommodate functional writing of this nature, and in this respect an alternative perspective is offered by Schäfer's own 1974 essay, 'Naturdichtung und Neue Sachlichkeit'.²² Here, away from the rhetorical excesses of the periodisation debates, Schäfer presents nature poetry and *Neue Sachlichkeit* not as the two elements which are so starkly contrasted in Trommler's model and, to a lesser degree, in his own periodisation essay, but rather as complementary developments of the mid- to late 1920s. Following this logic, the turn towards nature poetry symbolised by *Die Kolonne* at 1930 is less an abrupt rupture with *Neue Sachlichkeit* than an incremental development out of the documentary literature of the 1920s, and this insight provides us with a much more sophisticated means of conceptualising the 1930 paradigm. Indeed, if we ask ourselves what it is that the two apparent poles of nature poetry and documentary literature share, then we find ourselves an important step closer to understanding precisely what it is that characterises the prevailing literary mood of the mid-decades. Again, it is Schäfer's 1974 essay, we would argue, which provides the key here:

Im Laufe der zwanziger Jahre kam es zu einer deutlichen Aufwertung der Zweckformen wie Lehrstück, Dokumentartheater, Reportage, historischer Roman,

²¹ Schäfer, 'Periodisierung', p. 103.

²² Hans Dieter Schäfer, 'Naturdichtung und Neue Sachlichkeit', in Wolfgang Rothe (ed.), *Die deutsche Literatur in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1974), pp. 359–81. Subsequent reference, p. 359.

Satire, Feuilleton, Biographie, Memoiren usw. Der Zug zum Authentischen war bei Konservativen wie Fortschrittlichen allgemein. Das empirisch gesammelte Wissen erschien als das verlässlichste.

Both forms of writing provide in their different ways a much-needed source of authenticity, reliability, and stability. In contrast to the formal and stylistic experimentation of Expressionism, both forms of writing no longer seek to problematise the relationships between reality and text and between text and reader. Although profoundly different in terms of approach and in terms of conventional notions of literary genre and creativity, the documentary writing of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the conventional lyric poetry of the post-1930 climate share substantial common ground in terms of what we might call the 'stability of meaning', and this is an insight which is central to our own conceptualisation of the 1930 paradigm.

Reactions and responses

Schäfer's work has proved enormously influential, in particular in relation to the Third Reich where it has begun to open up the study of literature and culture to the kind of methodological approaches pioneered by the social historians of the period.²³ In terms of the periodisation thesis itself, response has been rather more mixed. On the one hand, some form of 1930–1960 periodisation continues to be advanced as an antidote to the conventional political periodisation for twentieth-century German lyric poetry. Both Leonard Olschner and Hermann Korte, for example, deploy many of the same examples as Trommler and Schäfer in support of a thesis which views the middle decades of the twentieth century as a disinctive period during which traditional forms of lyric poetry enjoyed a notable resurgence.²⁴ On the other hand, a number of scholars addressing issues of literary and cultural change at 1945 have expressed considerable doubts about the value of the 1930 paradigm as it was defined by Schäfer in his 1977 essay. In essence, these doubts surround two key elements. Firstly, the empirical basis of the periodisation is perceived to be too narrow and Schäfer over-reliant on the strand of continuity provided by his young 'non-Nazi' generation of writers. Christoph Kleßmann, for instance, does not consider continuities in personnel to be sufficient to constitute genuine literary-historical continuity:

23 See, for example, Wolfram Wessels, *Hörspiele im Dritten Reich: Zur Institutionen-, Theorie- und Literaturgeschichte* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1985), p. 12.

24 Leonard Olschner, 'Fractured Continuities: Pressures on lyrical tradition at mid-century', *German Studies Review*, 13 (1990), 417–40; Hermann Korte, 'Lyrik am Ende der Weimarer Republik', in Rolf Grimminger (ed.), *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, 12 vols, VIII: *Literatur der Weimarer Republik 1918–1933*, ed. by Bernhard Weyergraf (Munich: Hanser, 1995), pp. 601–35.

Auf diese Weise wird auch ein Bogen der Kontinuität über die Brüche von 1933 und 1945 hinweg geschlagen. So interessant die Befunde über Schriftsteller sein mögen, die bereits im 'Dritten Reich' veröffentlichten, so wenig zwingend sind sie als Argument für eine literaturgeschichtliche Kontinuität.²⁵

Wiegand Lange is similarly sceptical: 'Das Verfahren überzeugt, solange es auf bestimmte Stoffe, Autoren, Stile, Formen und genau abgegrenzte Zeiträume beschränkt bleibt.'²⁶ Secondly, for all the importance of emphasising continuities across moments of political rupture, Schäfer is seen to have gone too far in erasing altogether the significance of 1933 and 1945. Consider once more Kleßmann's observations:

Bei aller Berechtigung, Kontinuitäten zu betonen, sollte daher nicht das tatsächliche Gewicht der Zäsur von 1945 verschoben werden. Der Maßstab können nicht die hochgespannten Erwartungen der kulturellen Elite der ersten Nachkriegsjahre sein, sondern das, was möglich war. [...] Insofern könnte man für eine 'Historisierung' der Kontinuitätsdiskussion plädieren, die zwar auf die zeitgenössische Metapher der 'Stunde Null' verzichtet, aber auch auf Kontinuitätsthese, die kaum noch erkennen lassen, daß 1945 eine Epochenzäsur war, die in Deutschland vieles schlagartig veränderte.

In the polemical drive to counteract the ingrained reliance on 1933 and 1945, it might be argued that Schäfer is guilty of having somewhat over-stated the case for 1930 and 1960.

Both of these principal objections to the 1930 thesis are also raised by Bernd Hüppauf in what amounts to the most detailed and methodologically sophisticated criticism of Schäfer's periodisation thesis. Indeed, in some respects Hüppauf's verdict is damning:

Der Versuch, die 'faschistische' von einer 'nicht-faschistischen', zwar während der Herrschaft des Faschismus produzierten, aber von ihm weitgehend unberührt gebliebenen Literatur zu trennen, und allein auf ihr die Epocheninheit aufzubauen, ist wenig überzeugend.²⁷

Above all, Hüppauf queries the inter-relationship between literary and political criteria in determining that restorative epoch and the mechanisms of cultural change which such an approach presupposes but fails to thematise explicitly:

Das Staunen über eine Literatur, die den Zusammenbruch der sie tragenden Gesellschaft überstehen kann, läßt sich jedoch nicht durch die überzeugendste

25 Christoph Kleßmann, "Das Haus wurde gebaut aus den Steinen, die vorhanden waren": Zur kulturgeschichtlichen Kontinuität nach 1945', *Tel Aviv Jahrbuch für deutsche Zeitgeschichte*, 29 (1990), 159–77 (p. 171). Subsequent reference, p. 176.

26 Wiegand Lange, 'Die Schaubühne als politische Umerziehungsanstalt betrachtet: Theater in den Westzonen', in Jost Hermand, Helmut Peitsch, Klaus R. Scherpe (eds), *Nachkriegsliteratur in Westdeutschland 1945–49: Schreibweisen, Gattungen, Institutionen* (Berlin: Argument, 1983), pp. 6–35 (pp. 8–9).

27 Bernd Hüppauf, 'Krise ohne Wandel: Die kulturelle Situation 1945–1949', in Bernd Hüppauf (ed.), *Die Mühen der Ebenen: Kontinuität und Wandel in der deutschen Literatur und Gesellschaft 1945–1949* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), pp. 47–112 (p. 56). Subsequent reference, pp. 50–51.

Aufzählung personeller Identitäten oder programmatischer und formaler Kontinuitäten beruhigen. Wie läßt sich die Behauptung verstehen, daß die literarische 'Epocheneinheit' über den Zusammenbruch des gesellschaftlichen Kommunikationssystems, der Medien, aller Institutionen der Kulturpolitik, des Erziehungssystems, des dominierenden Wertsystems hinwegreiche, da die Literatur doch Teil dieser Strukturen und Institutionen ist?

In marking out 1930–1960 as a stylistically distinct literary period, Schäfer is seen to assume an extreme autonomy of literary development as compared to political development. From the over-privileging of political discontinuity at the expense of the aesthetic continuity, Schäfer runs the risk of moving to the opposite extreme where aesthetic and stylistic continuities are sufficient to constitute a period irrespective of political ruptures, what Hüppauf refers to in the introduction to his volume as the 'leicht kritisierbare[n] Rückzug auf rein stilistisch literarische Kategorien'.²⁸ While Hüppauf's criticism overlooks Schäfer's own explicit disclaimer – 'Um Mißverständnissen vorzubeugen: Es geht um keine Beschreibung eines autonomen Stilwandels, sondern um die politisch-ökonomische und geistesgeschichtliche Begründung einer neuen Literaturperiode'²⁹ – Schäfer serves only to highlight here the tension in his work between a periodisation seemingly founded on purely aesthetic criteria (at the expense of the political) and his explicit recourse to socio-economic explanations for these aesthetic manifestations of change. Leaving aside this explicit tension in the conceptualisation of cause and effect, the revised emphasis on 1930 and 1960 as turning-points, even as a perhaps understandable reaction against the perceived over-emphasis on 1933 and 1945, risks itself substituting one fixed periodisation for another.³⁰ In this sense, it can be argued with some justification that Schäfer's periodisation obscures both the dynamics of cultural change within the posited period of restoration and any continuities across the boundary dates of 1930 and 1960, much as a political periodisation obscures both continuities across 1933 and 1945 and cultural heterogeneity between those dates.

It is here that the value of Hüppauf's critique lies, since he is able to move Schäfer's periodisation forward by proposing a model of cultural change which seeks to overcome the conventional dichotomy between continuity and change, thereby shifting the emphasis away from sudden ruptures in development, be they related to literary (1930) or political (1933) factors:

Will man die Periodisierung von der Gefahr des unfruchtbaren literarischen Kästchensystems ebenso fernhalten wie von der, kulturelle Strukturen auf abhängige Variable der politischen, sozialen, ökonomischen Verhältnisse zu reduzieren, so wird sich die

28 Bernd Hüppauf, 'Einleitung: Schwierigkeiten mit der Nachkriegszeit', in Bernd Hüppauf (ed.) *Die Mühen der Ebenen: Kontinuität und Wandel in der deutschen Literatur und Gesellschaft 1945–1949* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), pp. 7–20 (p. 10).

29 Schäfer, 'Periodisierung', p. 96.

30 As do, for example, Wulf Koepke and Michael Winkler, *Deutschsprachige Exalliteratur: Studien zu ihrer Bestimmung im Kontext der Epoche 1930 bis 1960* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1984).

Untersuchung eher auf die komplexen Strukturen von Veränderungsprozessen als auf die Bestimmung von Periodenhomogenitäten richten. Die im konkreten Geschichtsprozeß sich aufbauenden Ansätze von Alternativen zum Bestehenden, deren Konstellationen, Veränderungen und Funktionen in der gesamtgesellschaftlichen Entwicklung, können dabei von zentraler Bedeutung sein. Periodisierung wird dann eher zu einer Frage der Übergänge als der Abgrenzungen.³¹

Here, cultural development is perceived as an on-going process, analogous to social modernisation, where the on-going change only becomes perceptible at particular moments of accelerated development. Hüppauf introduces the notion of 'Kulturkrise' to describe those moments of accelerated cultural development where a shift in the on-going tendency may come about.³² Hüppauf's notion of *Kulturkrise* serves two useful purposes. Firstly, Hüppauf provides a typology of these threshold moments which allows for their empirical study through a process of what Hüppauf terms 'reconstruction'. In particular, he highlights the active role played by participants in shaping cultural change at these moments through an intensification of debate in cultural journals, and lays down a series of factors which play a role in determining the outcome of these threshold moments. Secondly, the emphasis on a number of threshold moments, where cultural change may or may not be effected, relativises the significance of any one perceived moment of rupture. In this analysis, the period around 1930, the political break of 1933, the immediate post-war situation, and the mid-1960s all acquire an equal status on a continuum of cultural change, as threshold moments of accelerated cultural activity where at least the potential for change existed. As we intend to set out in the following section, Hüppauf's reconstruction method and his view of cultural change which seeks to escape the arbitrariness and artificiality of hard date boundaries are central planks of our own methodology.

The Modern Restoration

Our principal aim in this study is to demonstrate that during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, for all its political dislocations, the German literary sphere is characterised by a common set of aesthetic concerns which, notwithstanding significant continuities both back into the 1920s and forward into the 1960s, are sufficient to distinguish these decades in their own right as a recognisable, discrete, and significant phase in the development of twentieth-century German literary history. More specifically, we have formulated our thesis as follows:

The prevailing literary mood in the middle three decades of the twentieth century is characterised by a re-assertion of the conventional bourgeois institution of literature,

31 Hüppauf, 'Einleitung', pp. 15–16.

32 See Hüppauf, 'Krise ohne Wandel', pp. 59–82.

allied to a search for stability of meaning, against the background of successive and on-going crisis.

Deriving in part from the work of Schäfer and Trommler and synthesising the insights developed in the course of our own research, this concise definition does not seek to rigidly prescribe the nature of literary production in a homogenous period between 1930 and 1960. Rather, it seeks to distil at an ideal-typical level a common core of which the literary culture of these mid-decades, in all its plurality, is the concrete manifestation. Or, to put it another way, this definition seeks to specify the dominant aesthetic climate which shaped individual literary production and against which individual writers had to define themselves even if that self-definition entailed substantial negotiation and partial rejection. In this respect, we have identified three key elements – the conventional bourgeois institution of literature; stability of meaning; and crisis – the last of which also occupies a central position in Schäfer's thesis. Indeed, the very tangible sense of crisis which emerges above all from the literary journals of the period seems to transcend the successive crises of the Wall Street Crash, the Nazi seizure of power, exile and dictatorship, and the catastrophe of 1945. Often it is a longer-term narrative of crisis, a crisis of modernity, into which intellectuals position these individual crises in an attempt to come to terms with them. This sense of crisis is clearly not a new phenomenon at 1930, although thereafter it acquires a remarkable new intensity, but what is new and distinctive in the period we are analysing is the prevailing response to this crisis.

Our definition of this response as at once a re-assertion of the conventional bourgeois institution of literature and a search for stability of meaning seeks to escape the often unhelpful terminology of 'modernism' and 'anti-modernism'. Instead, and with a loosely conceived debt to structuralist literary history, we conceptualise the literary sphere in terms of contrasting poles of 'innovation' and 'conservation' operating along two tightly defined parameters.³³ The first of these is the institution of literature which entails particular notions of authorship, of the writing process, of literary product and genre. What we are seeking to describe in the mid-decades of the twentieth century is a re-assertion of conservation, rather than innovation, in these notions, so that the author begins to be perceived again as an inspired *Dichter*, an elitist, creative genius, rather than a mere *Schriftsteller* or *Journalist*. The conventional writing process which is re-asserted is the spontaneous, creative process of *Schöpfung* or *Gestaltung*, deriving from the inner self, rather than willed and functional writing which derives from superficial external factors. The book is re-asserted as the dominant literary product, re-establishing itself against new, mass-orientated media; quality and prestige emerge again as the dominant categories associated with this literary product. In genre terms, 1930 witnesses a retreat inside conventional, clearly demarcated genre

33 See Yuri Tynyanov, 'On Literary Evolution', in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (eds), *Readings in Russian Poetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1971), pp. 66–81.

boundaries, typified above all by a resurgence in lyric poetry as the epitome of *Dichtung*. This conservation of conventional bourgeois notions of literature also extends to theme, so that the *innerlich*, *zeitfremd*, anti-modern, rural, and apolitical are typically favoured over the *sachlich*, *zeitnah*, pro-modern, urban, and political. Finally, the notion of the literary tradition has a key role to play here too, so that the importance of the German bourgeois tradition, epitomised of course by such figures as Goethe, Schiller, and Hölderlin is also re-asserted. A useful notion which informs our discussion in this regard is that of the 'Bildungsdialekt' deployed by Wolfgang Frühwald to describe the codification of this bourgeois tradition in the nineteenth century.³⁴ Against the background of crisis, this *Bildungsdialekt* is re-invoked as a source of authority and stability.

This in turn highlights the second parameter along which conservation comes to dominate after 1930, that is a stability of meaning, the search for which comes to constitute an overwhelmingly common gesture amongst German intellectuals. This stability typically assumes a clarity and certainty in the relationship between the writer and the real world depicted in the text and accessed by the reader. Rather than innovating in this relationship, seeking to disrupt and problematise meaning, the characteristic procedure after 1930 is an attempt, not always realised or realisable, to re-secure author-text and text-reader relationships. Of course, this is the procedure which we noted as the connection between *Neue Sachlichkeit* and *Naturdichtung*, and the framework which we have constructed here provides us with a means of conceptualising both the similarity and difference between these two forms of literature. Although both are manifestations of conservation along the parameter of meaning, *Neue Sachlichkeit* clearly constitutes radical innovation along our first parameter, the institution of literature, seeking to redefine conventional notions of authorship, creativity and the literary work, whereas nature poetry typically reinforces these notions. Through this contrast, it becomes clear that it is this *dual* 'conservation', both of the institution of literature and of a stability of meaning, which is the defining feature of the prevailing climate after 1930. This dual conservation is specifically what we mean when we describe the mid-decades of the twentieth century as aesthetically 'conservative' or 'restorative'.

Methodology

This identification of a common stability of meaning between *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the paradigmatic manifestations of our 1930 paradigm clearly points up the need to soften the initial date boundary of 1930, so that the mid-1920s become an

34 Wolfgang Frühwald, 'Büchmann und die Folgen: Zur sozialen Funktion des Bildungszitates in der deutschen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts', in Reinhart Koselleck (ed.), *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert, Teil II: Bildungsgüter und Bildungswissen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), pp. 197–219.

important transitional phase in the development of the restorative dominant. It is here that Hüpfauf's model of cultural change reinforces our conceptualisation of the literary developments we are describing. An understanding of literary-historical change predicated not on abrupt rupture, but on long-term continuities, on *Übergänge* rather than *Abgrenzungen*, opens up the date-boundaries 1930 and 1960, so that these dates can only ever be thought of as a convenient shorthand for on-going processes stretching back into the 1920s and forward into the 1960s. Equally, we do not seek to erase the importance of key political dates within the decades of modern restoration, but view them rather as threshold moments of potential cultural change. Around 1930, after 1933, and then in the years of occupation between 1945 and 1949, existing cultural assumptions were questioned and debated, typically through the forum of literary journals, with an intensity characteristic of what Hüpfauf terms the *Kulturkrise*. As such, these threshold moments are susceptible to analysis by a method of synchronic 'reconstruction' through a corpus of literary journals which offers a snapshot of the prevailing literary and cultural climate and of the assumptions which were being contested and confirmed by intellectuals in these debates.³⁵

For these reasons, the first part of this study is made up of a 'synchronic' analysis of three sets of literary journals as follows: (i) at 1930: *Die Kolonne*, *Die Linkskurve*, *Die literarische Welt*, (ii) 1933–1945: *Das innere Reich*, *Maß und Wert*, *Das Wort*, (iii) post-1945: *Der Ruf*, *Merkur*, *Sinn und Form*, *Aufbau*. Bound by the institutional circumstances of their foundation to precisely those political and social ruptures which shape the conventional writing of twentieth-century German literary history, these journals function at the same time as purveyors of cultural continuity, sometimes through shared personnel, but more often, and more importantly, through common aesthetic assumptions. In each case, the editors of these journals act as key figures, seeking to position the journals strategically within the public literary sphere through programmatic essays and editorials, while at the same time reflecting contemporary German literary life in the selection of contributions and reviews, albeit through the lens of a specific ideological and/or literary standpoint. The editorial programme and practice of these journals is analysed in the first three chapters of this study which provide a compelling picture of the establishment and persistence of the restorative mood from the late 1920s to the late 1950s, and of the manner in which literary journals not only reflect the prevailing literary climate but also act as agents in shaping that climate. In this way, we seek to avoid the methodological criticisms justifiably levelled at Schäfer and others. We do not seek to replace a politically determined periodisation with an analysis founded only on literary-immanent factors; nor do

35 This synchronic methodology finds notable parallels in a number of recent publications looking at these key years in the late 1920s: Ernest Wichner and Herbert Wiesner (eds), *1929 – Ein Jahr im Fokus der Zeit: Ausstellung des Literaturhauses Berlin* (Berlin: Literaturhaus Berlin, 2001); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *1926: Ein Jahr am Rande der Zeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2001).

we seek to justify a thesis of continuity on a single literary grouping. Instead, the journal corpus provides sound empirical foundations across a range of ideological positions for an analysis which finds room for both socio-political and 'discourse-internal' factors, for both continuity and change between 1930 and 1960.

A diachronic dimension begins to emerge from these first three chapters through the inter-relationships between the historically specific sections of the journal corpus. This dimension is formalised in the second part of the study through the investigation of five writers – Gottfried Benn; Johannes R. Becher; Bertolt Brecht; Günter Eich; and Peter Huchel – all of whom were active from 1930 until at least the mid-1950s and who represent a band of stylistic orientations, from Expressionist to post-Expressionist, which undergo change within the restorative climate that prevailed from the late 1920s. As we have seen, Benn and Becher stand as central figures in the existing literature which advocates some form of 1930–1960 periodisation: Benn both as an authority for the young *Kolonne* writers and as a figure whose rehabilitation in the early 1950s is representative of cultural restoration in the West; Becher as a poet who undertook a turn towards traditional forms, as a founder of *Die Linkskurve* and *Sinn und Form*, and as one of the leading cultural politicians of German communism. Brecht, on the other hand, acts primarily as a counter-example in existing accounts of the 1930 paradigm, his reception dominated by an anti-restorative narrative which stretches all the way from his early interventions in Weimar literary culture to his unorthodox position within GDR cultural debates. Huchel and Eich, meanwhile, feature as representatives of Schäfer's young generation of post-Expressionist, 'non-Nazi' writers who made their mark in *Die Kolonne* at the key turning-point of 1930, remained active in the Third Reich, and who helped to shape the prevailing literary climate of the 1950s. These five writers represent a range of ideological and political trajectories too, from the Weimar Republic into the Third Reich or exile and then into the Federal Republic or the GDR.

Clearly, each methodological approach brings with it its own dangers, and, in a literary-historical study of this type which seeks to describe a common literary mood across historically, geographically, and ideologically disparate circumstances, these dangers are particularly acute.³⁶ Any literary-historical corpus is necessarily selective, any claims to representativity necessarily subjective. In particular, attempts to generalise findings from the individual trajectories of a relatively small group of writers must remain fraught with difficulty. Can the very particular path of Brecht's intellectual and cultural development in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, for example, really tell us anything about the development of other German writers in these decades? How can the fate of five male bourgeois writers, known principally for their lyric poetry, help our understanding of the

36 For an illuminating discussion of the methodological issues involved, see David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

plurality of German literary production in the mid-twentieth century? These are legitimate concerns, but we seek to write with an awareness of the difficulties of an undertaking of this nature, seeking to do justice to the individual trajectories – personal, aesthetic and ideological – of our writers, rather than distorting them to fit a single, rigid pattern. For these reasons, we have not sought to impose a restrictive and uniform approach to the chapters on individual authors in the second part of the book. In each case, we have focused primarily on those aspects of the individual writer which most benefit from the fresh perspective provided by our overarching thesis concerning literary continuities in the mid-twentieth century. The first two author chapters focus on Benn and Becher, the two writers whose literary development furthest pre-dates the restorative turn of 1930: for Benn we offer a close reading of his poetry and prose with, and against, the restorative reception which has often dominated that literary practice; for Becher we trace his aesthetic development out of avant-gardism alongside his attempts to position his own fragile and fragmented self-image in a stable autobiographical narrative. In the next chapter, we examine Brecht's complex position in relation to our restorative thesis, looking forward at his poetry from the perspective of the radical positions he adopted in the 1920s and back at his use of literary institutions from the perspective of his increasingly prestigious institutional status in the 1950s. In the final two chapters we consider Eich and Huchel, the two writers whose initiation into the literary public sphere coincides most closely with the onset of our restorative mood. For both Eich and Huchel, the notion of the *Dichter* re-asserted so strongly at 1930 acts as a point of reference with which they seek to reconcile their literary output in the face of the compromises forced upon them by the political and social upheavals of these mid-decades of the twentieth century.

As such, we hope that these individual chapters, together with the sections on individual journals, will be of value to readers in isolation, as well as in the context of the study as a whole. It is in the same spirit that we have indicated the identity of the authors of each of these sections in the table of contents, in order to alert readers to differences in style and approach and also to highlight connections between sections written by the same individual. At the same time, this book remains a single, multi-authored volume, rather than a collection of individual essays. Each chapter derives from a closely collaborative research process, the insights offered inconceivable without those joint, and often divergent, perspectives. And ultimately, it is the coherence and persuasiveness of our central thesis, consistently challenged and re-formulated in that process, which lends this study its importance, we believe, in re-thinking the terms of twentieth-century German literary history.

Part One: Literary Journals

Literary Journals at 1930

Die Kolonne, Die Linkskurve, Die literarische Welt

Introduction

This first section of the journal corpus is conceived as a means of gauging the literary climate in Germany around 1930 through the examination of three contemporary literary journals. Two of these journals – *Die Kolonne: Zeitschrift für Dichtung*, the periodical of the *Kolonne* Circle of young nature poets published by Jess in Dresden; and *Die Linkskurve*, the Berlin-based official organ of the *Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller* (BPRS) – feature prominently and consistently in existing accounts of the 1930 paradigm. As we have seen, in the approach first proposed by Frank Trommler and taken up by Anton Kaes, *Die Kolonne* functions as a paradigmatic example of the widespread shift towards *Innerlichkeit* perceptible in the final years of the Weimar Republic.¹ The journal plays a similar role in the more recent accounts provided by Olschner and Korte of the predominantly conservative direction of German lyric output in the late 1920s.² In both cases, the thesis of aesthetic conservatism is supported primarily through reference to programmatic essays published by Martin Raschke and Günter Eich. A connection between this *Kolonne* position and that of *Die Linkskurve* begins to be established by Atkinson and Korte, both of whom invoke the lyric production of Johannes R. Becher – president of the BPRS and editor of, and prominent contributor to, *Die Linkskurve* – as further evidence of the aesthetic conservatism of the German lyric across the middle decades of the twentieth century.³ More

1 See Frank Trommler, 'Emigration und Nachkriegsliteratur: Zum Problem der geschichtlichen Kontinuität', in Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (eds), *Exil und innere Emigration: Third Wisconsin Workshop* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1972), pp. 173–97; Anton Kaes, *Weimarer Republik: Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur 1918–1933* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1983).

2 See Leonard Olschner, 'Fractured Continuities: Pressures on lyrical tradition at mid-century', *German Studies Review*, 13 (1990), 417–40; Hermann Korte, 'Lyrik am Ende der Weimarer Republik', in Rolf Grimminger (ed.), *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, 12 vols, VIII: *Literatur der Weimarer Republik 1918–1933*, ed. by Bernhard Weyergraf (Munich: Hanser, 1995), pp. 601–35.

3 Korte, pp. 617–18. See also Jeanette Atkinson, *Traditional Forms in German Poetry 1930–1945* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983).

directly, Helmut Kreuzer cites both Lukács in *Die Linkskurve* and Raschke in *Die Kolonne* as evidence of a final phase in Weimar culture between 1929 and 1933 whose dominant characteristic he identifies as ‘ein Anwachsen des Traditionalismus im kulturellen Leben’.⁴ Schäfer too makes explicit reference to *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve* in his periodisation essay. Writing of the influence *Die Kolonne* would exercise on German literary culture, for example, Schäfer writes as follows:

Die Rolle der *Kolonne* kann dabei nicht hoch genug eingeschätzt werden. Auf das Bemühen des Kreises, moderne Stile abzumildern und eine metaphysisch-meditative Literatur einzuschmelzen, ist schon vereinzelt hingewiesen worden, übersehen wurde bisher, daß auch nach Einstellung der Zeitschrift Ende 1932 der Freundeskreis erhalten blieb und daß einzelne Mitglieder wie Eich, Huchel, Lange und Elisabeth Langgässer unter der Diktatur ihre Konzeptionen konsequent weiterentwickelten.⁵

As far as *Die Linkskurve* is concerned, Schäfer maintains that the conservative aesthetic programme of the German Left, consolidated in the mid-1930s through the *Volksfront* initiatives and the Expressionism Debate, had already succeeded in asserting itself as dominant by 1932: ‘Kennzeichnend für diese Entwicklung ist, daß Georg Lukács in der *Linkskurve* heftig die Reportageromane von Bredel und Ottwald [sic] angriff und nicht minder scharf mit Brechts Theorie des epischen Theaters ins Gericht ging.’ In this way, establishing a substantial degree of congruence between the aesthetic programmes of *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve* proves to be central to existing accounts of the 1930 paradigm.

As such, the first task of this chapter must be to test these claims, made only on the basis of a small number of programmatic pieces, against the make-up of these journals as a whole. For this reason, a detailed examination of the editorial programme and practice of these two journals across their full publication run will constitute the first two sections of this chapter. These analyses will draw on the full range of contributions, from editorial statements to contemporary poetry and prose, from review articles to special editions, from the award of literary prizes to the selection of works from the tradition. The central question here is whether the explicit programme set out in editorials matches the implicit programme constituted by the selection and arrangement of other contributions. For *Die Kolonne*, important questions surround the way in which Raschke and his colleagues sought, in Schäfer’s words, ‘moderne Stile abzumildern’ and the manner in which remnants of modernism lingered in their literary practice. Two aspects are of significance here in relation to what we have termed the search for stability of meaning: firstly the extent to which elements of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, notwithstanding its programmatic rejection by Raschke, continued to provide a

4 Helmut Kreuzer, ‘Kultur und Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik: Ein Vortrag’, in Helmut Kreuzer, *Aufklärung über Literatur: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 2 vols, 1: *Epochen, Probleme, Tendenzen*, ed. by Peter Siebert, Rolf Bäumer, Georg Bollenbeck (Winter: Heidelberg, 1992), pp. 100–17 (p. 115).

5 Hans Dieter Schäfer, ‘Zur Periodisierung der deutschen Literatur seit 1930’, in Nicolas Born and Jürgen Manthey (eds), *Literaturmagazin 7: Nachkriegsliteratur* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1977), pp. 95–115 (p. 99). Subsequent reference, pp. 97–98.

source of that stability; and secondly the extent to which the more troubled nature of meaning exploited by the Expressionist poets continued to make its disruptive presence felt. As far as *Die Linkskurve* is concerned, attention must be focused on the emergence of Lukács's aesthetic position as dominant in the final phase of the journal's existence and above all the location of this aesthetic within the contradictory impulses which informed factional conflict in the BPRS. The Lukács pieces, published only in the last few months of the journal's existence, stand in direct opposition to the kind of proletarian writing the promotion of which had, at least in theory, been the journal's *raison d'être* since its foundation three years earlier. As such the *Linkskurve* programme picked out by proponents of a 1930 periodisation constitutes a shift from the editorial programme which held for the majority of the journal's existence. Disentangling the parameters on which this shift took place – ideological, factional, or aesthetic – in relation to contested definitions of proletarian writing and Marxist aesthetics is the central task in this context.

These observations highlight the importance of the differing institutional positions of these two journals, the influence of which suggests the aesthetic congruence constructed between *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve* to be potentially very fragile in nature. As the official organ of the BPRS, *Die Linkskurve* rested on institutional links to the KPD and also to Soviet cultural institutions such as the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP). This self-definition of the journal, through not only its overt ideological function but also its very narrow party-political constituency, seems impossible to reconcile with the institutional context of *Die Kolonne*, the purely literary enterprise of an informal group of bourgeois nature poets supported by a small Dresden publishing house. Indeed, the political and social function of literature advocated by *Die Linkskurve*, together with its promotion of documentary and reportage literature from figures such as Egon Erwin Kisch and Hans Marchwitza, often set the journal in direct opposition to *Die Kolonne*. Symptomatic in this respect is the opening issue of *Die Kolonne* in which Raschke rejected a 'Sachlichkeit [...], die den Dichter zum Reporter erniedrigte und die Umgebung des proletarischen Menschen als Gefühlsstandard modernen Dichtens propagierte' (*Kolonne*, 1, 1) and in which Eich's pointedly refused 'auf mein "soziales Empfinden" hinzuweisen, selbst auf die Gefahr hin, die Sympathie von *Linksblättern* nicht zu erringen' (*Kolonne*, 1, 7). While Becher in the opening issue of *Die Linkskurve* was polemically rejecting the failure of bourgeois writers to engage with society – 'Wir umgeben uns nicht mit einem Dunst von Ewigkeit wie die bürgerlichen Literaten, die ausschließlich damit beschäftigt sind, die vorhandenen Tatsachen geistreich als Schicksal zu beschwatzen' (*Lkr*, 1.1, 1) – in *Die Kolonne* Eich was polemically rejecting any notion of social responsibility for the writer: 'Und Verantwortung vor der Zeit? Nicht im geringsten. Nur vor mir selber' (*Kolonne*, 1, 7). This direct antagonism between the journals within the ever radicalising political climate of the Weimar

Republic also finds its expression in the public controversies which surrounded the figure of Gottfried Benn. Whereas Raschke attached an iconic status to Benn on behalf of the *Kolonne* writers – ‘Gottfried Benn sind auch wir’ (*Kolonne*, 1, 35) – it was an article in which Benn had been held up as ‘das Beispiel des unabhängigen und überlegenen Weltdichters’ and Kisch and Becher written off as ‘literarische Lieferanten politischer Propagandamaterialien’ which earlier in 1929 had ended the collaboration of *Bund* members with Conrad Pohl on the editorial board of *Die neue Bücherschau* and which continued to inform the content of *Die Linkskurve* in its early issues.⁶ As the radio discussion held between Benn and Becher in 1930 makes clear, Becher’s approach to literature, and by extension that of *Die Linkskurve*, appears to have been diametrically opposed to that of Benn, and by extension that of *Die Kolonne*.⁷

In this sense, there is a convincing logic to starting our examination of the synchronic journal corpus with analyses of *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve*. On the one hand, both journals have already been positioned within a restorative 1930 paradigm. Schäfer and others have identified specific contributions to the two journals which act as evidence for their role in that shift. Furthermore, as small-circulation, monthly journals representing narrow-interest literary groupings, the two journals lend themselves to ready comparison. Even the publication runs of the two journals coincide pointedly, not only with one another but also with the crisis period 1929–1932 which Schäfer highlights as the catalyst for his shift. On the other hand, attempts to find common ground between two such divergent journals offer a rigorous test of Schäfer’s thesis. In particular, it remains to be seen how far the journals, and in particular *Die Linkskurve*, conform to the 1930 paradigm beyond the specific programmatic essays already picked out by Schäfer and others. If evidence of restorative aesthetic programmes and practice can be identified in these narrow-interest journals, further questions surround the significance of that evidence within the context of what is posited to be a much more wide-ranging cultural shift. Central here will be the possible causal factors in the emergence of restorative aesthetics evinced by *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve*. How far are these the product of narrow, journal-specific factors? How far the product of more generalised factors which may have applicability to other literary groupings? How far do the journals demonstrate evidence of a broader threshold moment of cultural change, triggered either by socio-contextual factors – namely the political and economic crises of 1929–1932 – or by what we have termed discourse-internal factors?

It is here that the significance of the third journal in the corpus becomes apparent. Willy Haas’s Berlin literary weekly, *Die literarische Welt: Unabhängiges*

6 Max Herrmann-Neiße, ‘Über Gottfried Benns Prosa’, *Die Neue Bücherschau*, 7 (1929), 376.

7 See Johannes R. Becher and Gottfried Benn, ‘Rundfunk-Gespräch’, in Deutsche Akademie der Künste (ed.), *Zur Tradition der sozialistischen Literatur in Deutschland: Eine Auswahl von Dokumenten* (Aufbau: Berlin, 1967), pp. 148–52.

Organ für das deutsche Schrifttum, initially owned and published by Ernst Rowohlt, differs starkly from *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve* in terms of institutional factors such as circulation, frequency of publication, and breadth of contributions and contributors. While circulation of *Die Linkskurve* seems to have been somewhere between 3,500 and 5,000 copies per month and that of *Die Kolonne* smaller still, *Die literarische Welt* could claim a weekly circulation of around 20,000.⁸ Similarly, while *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve* each drew on a relatively narrow and discrete base of largely unknown contributors, *Die literarische Welt*, confined neither by self-imposed ideological nor poetological restrictions, was able to call on a remarkable breadth of contributors, both German and international, both established names and emerging talents. As Haas himself stressed in retrospect, ideological diversity characterised his editorial practice: 'Die Vertreter aller geistigen Weltanschauungen veröffentlichten gelegentlich Artikel bei uns, von Ernst Jünger und den hervorragenden Jesuitenvätern Przywara und Muckermann bis zu dem führenden kommunistischen Dichter Johannes R. Becher.'⁹ By the same token, Valentini identifies a breadth of opinion as the hallmark of Haas's editorial staff:

Die Redaktion der Zeitschrift bestand aus einer Gruppe, um die größtmögliche Objektivität der Aussagen über die aktuellen Probleme voll und ganz zu wahren, um ein möglichst breit gefächertes Panorama zu erzielen, die verschiedenen Alternativen zur Diskussion zu stellen und das Urteil dem Leser selbst zu überlassen.¹⁰

Conceived as a weekly literary newspaper, *Die literarische Welt* sought to reflect contemporary literary life in Berlin, as Haas pursued what he later termed his 'Plan des Universalismus und, soweit es menschenmöglich war, völliger Objektivität'.¹¹ The journal functioned, in Valentini's words, as 'ein "objektiver" Zeuge (zumindest ihren Absichten nach) des kulturellen Lebens jener Epoche', and in this, its 'unbezwelfelbaren repräsentativen Wert', *Die literarische Welt* contrasts starkly with *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve*.¹²

In this way, Willy Haas's journal provides a representativity absent from *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve*, and this clear distinction from the narrow ideological agenda of the BPRS – Becher notably criticised Haas's editorial practice as a 'Standpunkt der Standpunktlosigkeit'¹³ – and also from the narrow poetological agenda of the *Kolonne* Circle enables us to assign to *Die literarische Welt* a specific function within the 1930 journal corpus. As a relatively more objective

8 See Helga Gallas, *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1971), and Fritz Schlawe, *Literarische Zeitschriften 1910–1933* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1962), p. 19.

9 Willy Haas, 'Nachwort', in Willy Haas (ed.), *Zeitgemäßes aus 'Der literarischen Welt'* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1963), pp. 477–90 (p. 485).

10 Luisa Valentini, *Willy Haas: Der Zeuge einer Epoche* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1986), pp. 102–03.

11 Haas, 'Nachwort', p. 487.

12 Valentini, p. 12. Haas, 'Nachwort', p. 483.

13 Johannes R. Becher, 'Der tote Punkt: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart', *Die rote Fahne*, 28 August 1926.

and wide-ranging reflection of German literary life, *Die literarische Welt* offers an invaluable source of empirical evidence to test the findings of the analyses of *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve*. Haas's journal is further set apart from the two other journals by the length of its publication run, from 1925–1933. While *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve* were both founded in the immediate context of the crisis identified by Schäfer as the primary causal factor in his posited shift, the founding of Haas's journal in 1925 offers the opportunity to trace literary and cultural developments in Germany in the years in advance of the shocks of 1929–1930. Here, the possibility exists to study the effects of these shocks on what was an already established editorial practice and to construct a broader cultural context for the specific aesthetic programmes of *Die Kolonne* and *Die Linkskurve*. For these reasons, the third section of this chapter will submit *Die literarische Welt* to the same kind of detailed examination undertaken on *Die Linkskurve* and *Die Kolonne*. In this case, it will not only be the specific aesthetic programme promoted prescriptively by Haas through his journal which will be of interest, but also the capacity of the journal to reflect descriptively the dominant mood and trends in German literary life around 1930. Significantly, Haas's journal will also offer the opportunity to examine the development of restorative aesthetic strands in advance of 1930, so that developments around that key date can be considered as a question of continuity as much as one of change.

Die Kolonne

Opening programme

Following its launch in December 1929, *Die Kolonne* rapidly attracted a number of talented young authors, among whom Günter Eich and Peter Huchel would in the coming decades achieve the greatest prominence. In the final years of the Weimar Republic, they helped the journal to gain recognition for its contribution to intellectual life, particularly as a forum for new nature poetry.¹⁴ The journal's title, certainly not directly militaristic, suggests solidarity amongst a group of individuals forming a united front against opposing forces. Martin Raschke was markedly more vigorous than his co-editor A. Artur Kuhnert in promoting a distinctive agenda that struck a chord with like-minded individuals. He positioned *Die Kolonne* as the arbiter of a new mood in the arts, restating the claims of tradition and drawing together intellectual currents of a broadly Romantic revival in order to challenge the, as he saw it, artistic orthodoxy of political 'progressives'

¹⁴ See Joseph P. Dolan, *Die Rolle der 'Kolonne' in der Entwicklung der modernen deutschen Naturlyrik* (Ann Arbor: Xerox University Microfilms, 1976). Dolan notes (p. 64) that of some 200 poems published in *Die Kolonne*, 150 are by contemporary poets and of those 80 are nature poems.

in the 1920s. The opening editorial sets out a number of programmatic concerns. Raschke and his collaborators amplify upon them throughout the journal's three-year existence by means of editorial comment and literary practice.¹⁵ While indisputably a distinctive *Kolonne* programme emerges, it is, as would be expected, not without its tensions both as programme and in the relationship between programme and literary practice. Principal amongst the journal's concerns is the following view:

Aber noch immer leben wir von Acker und Meer, und die Himmel, sie reichen auch über die Stadt. Noch immer lebt ein großer Teil der Menschen in ländlichen Verhältnissen, und es entspringt nicht müssiger Traditionsfreude, wenn ihm Regen und Kälte wichtiger sind als ein Dynamo, der nie das Korn reifte. (*Kolonne*, 1, 1)

This insistence on the continuing primacy of nature over the city as a site for the formation and regeneration of a human sensibility attuned to the eternal cycle of birth and death, reverses the hierarchy of values found in the two most significant artistic trends of recent decades within German modernism, Expressionism and *Neue Sachlichkeit*. If nature figures in Expressionism, it is, in Kurt Pinthus's words, 'ganz vermensch't'.¹⁶ Expressionism is a soft target for Raschke's satire, stylistic gymnastics having fuelled its descent into self-parody. Gottfried Benn is judged one of the few not to have succumbed to 'billigen Expressionismen [...], für die ein Schornstein nicht stand, sondern steilte' (*Kolonne*, 1, 36).

The principal target for the journal's sustained polemic is, however, the immediately contemporary trend of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. From there, the attack is broadened out against 'progressive' forces in recent German literature, including not only writing of the Marxist Left, but also the socially critical depiction of the working-class urban milieu. The opening editorial attacks left-wing documentary writing and reportage about urban, working-class life promoted by journals such as *Die Linkskurve*, edited by Johannes R. Becher. Such publications are satirised on account of their ideology-driven aesthetic which claims to be 'im Besitz eines sauber ausgearbeiteten Zukunftsschemas' and which takes the 'proletarischen Menschen als Gefühlsstandard modernen Dichtens' (*Kolonne*, 1, 1). Raschke's mockery of a 'Sachlichkeit [...], die den Dichter zum Reporter erniedrigte' is echoed in subsequent issues, for example, in his laudatory review of Benn's prose: 'Mit einem Kniefall vor der Reportage schreien Pseudodichter allerorten das Dichten als leicht erlernbaren Beruf aus' (*Kolonne*, 1, 35). Under the pseudonym Otto Merz, Raschke attacks Ernst Glaeser's Marxist assumptions (*Kolonne*, 2, 46;

15 *Kolonne*, 1, 1. The opening editorial statement is unsigned but has generally been ascribed to Raschke in the light of the fact that the text draws heavily on his piece 'Dank eines Jungen an den alten Hamsun', which appeared in *Die literarische Welt* in August 1929 (*DAW*, 5.31, 5).

16 See Kurt Pinthus, "Zuvor (Einleitung zur *Menschheitsdämmerung*) 1920", in Thomas Anz and Michael Stark (eds), *Expressionismus: Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur 1910–1920* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1982), pp. 55–60 (p. 58).

3, 65). Eich, who under his own name and the pseudonym Georg Winter is the most frequent contributor after Raschke, curtly rejects left-wing assumptions:

Ich [...] werde immer darauf verzichten, auf mein 'soziales Empfinden' hinzuweisen, selbst auf die Gefahr hin, die Sympathie von Linksblättern nicht zu erringen und selbst auf die noch furchtbarere Gefahr hin, nicht für 'heutig' gehalten zu werden. Und Verantwortung vor der Zeit? Nicht im geringsten. Nur vor mir selber. (*Kolonne*, 1, 7)

Similarly, Raschke gives short shrift to poetry about working-class life as 'gereimte Reportagen zumeist [...]. Die Berichte des Instituts für Konjunkturforschung übertreffen an politischer Wirksamkeit die gesamte proletarische Literatur, soweit sie auf eine politische Wirkung rechnet' (*Kolonne*, 2, 47–48).

Exceptionally, an early issue includes a piece of *neusachlich* theatre which treats illegal abortion, Willi Schäferdiek's *Das Wartezimmer*. However, it prompts decidedly mixed editorial feelings over the 'sentimental' treatment of a topic perceived to be of limited artistic value: 'Viel dienlicher der sozialen Entwicklung, viel mutiger wäre die bescheidene Mitteilung, wie man eine solche Tragik wie die Dargestellte vermeiden kann. Der beste Kampf gegen dieses Gesetz ist noch immer der: es überflüssig zu machen' (*Kolonne*, 1, 21–22). The editorial comment stops short of proposing measures to curb the masses' sexual excesses. In the second issue, a reader suggests that the journal's language indicates 'wohin der Kurs geht und wie weit Sie schon, bewußt oder unbewußt, korumpiert sind. Solche "sozialbewußten" Dichter braucht die deutsche Bourgeoisie' (*Kolonne*, 1, 14). Where that reader senses a corrupt vision of the relationship between the artist and society, Raschke would see unflinching clarity of purpose in ensuring that art is not corrupted by political *Tendenz* in the representation of a social situation.

Essays and reviews of contemporary works flesh out the emerging pattern of the editor's aesthetic and political preferences. Like his political enemy, Georg Lukács, Raschke employs established categories of literary criticism rooted in psychological realism. He praises Rilke's 'Gestaltung' of 'das ganze Paris der Jahrhundertwende' through the inner life of his protagonist in *Malte Laurids Brigge* (*Kolonne*, 2, 34). For Raschke, *Malte* is the work of a true 'Dichter'. On the other hand, he derides the gimmickry of formal experimentation rife in the contemporary novel. He cites Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* in order to argue that it was 'keine revolutionäre Tat, Franz Biberkopf aus der Requisitenkammer des Naturalismus zu holen, ein wenig abzustauben und mit einer Balladenmoral auf der Stirne um den Alexanderplatz herum erneut in Marsch zu setzen' (*Kolonne*, 2, 33). Raschke and Eich see dangers of amoral relativism in Brecht, commenting sceptically on his achievement in an issue in which Brecht's nihilistic 'Großer Dankchoral' is juxtaposed with Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's 'Choral' in praise of God (*Kolonne*, 1, 65). Similarly, verses 7 and 8 from 'Vom armen B.B.' are juxtaposed with Gryphius's 'Es ist alles eitel', the former ending 'nach uns wird

kommen: nichts Nennenswertes' and the latter 'Noch will, was ewig ist, kein einzig Mensch betrachten' (*Kolonne*, 3, 25).

An essential point for Raschke is that even though Christian values have lost their power to bind together individual and society, the search for universal truths should not be abandoned. Eich and Raschke follow Benn and many others at that time in their belief that a biological teleology provides the bridge between the individual and the social whole, between the immediate present and the universal, a view clearly not shared by Brecht. Eich questions Brecht's capacity to emulate the achievements, in their time, of the great anarchic individualists Villon and Rimbaud: 'Denn die Lockung der Zivilisation scheint stärker zu sein, als die Stimme des Bluts' (*Kolonne*, 1, 65). Viewed in these terms, *Die Dreigroschenoper* is simply not a serious work of art (*Kolonne*, 2, 62). Brecht is too wedded to the trappings of contemporary civilisation to grasp the fundamental challenges that Raschke sees ahead: 'Die Gestalt der Zukunft wird davon abhängen, welchen Sinn (Sinn, sage ich) man dem entwurzelten Einzelleben wieder zu geben vermag. Hier kann kein Einzelner antworten. Hier muß ein Volk antworten' (*Kolonne*, 1, 60).

References to 'Blut' and 'Volk' have an ominous ring in the light of National Socialism. Yet Raschke and Eich's use of such terms does not warrant placing them in the *völkisch* literary camp. Indeed, there is ample evidence of Raschke's opposition to that camp. In the opening editorial, Raschke expresses his dissatisfaction with another contemporary fashion, the peasant novel predominantly cultivated by *völkisch* authors. His discussion of them demonstrates that, like many middle-class intellectuals at the time who draw their values from the established canon, he objects to the overtly political in art *per se*. The language that he uses about the peasant novel echoes his criticism of Schäferdick's 'sentimental' *neusachlich* drama. In similar vein, he identifies an inauthentic strain in the peasant novel: 'Niemand will einer literarischen Mode das Wort reden, die sich mitten in einer Stadt ländlich gebärdet und nicht genug von einer Rückkehr zum Geheimnis sprechen kann' (*Kolonne*, 1, 1). Raschke develops his criticism of *völkisch* fashion in his essay 'Man trägt wieder Erde' (*Kolonne*, 2, 47–48), while in another, 'Die verratene Dichtung' (*Kolonne*, 2, 73), he claims, as Otto Merz, 'nichts [...] ist peinlicher als die Literarisierung des völkischen Fühlens'. And he continues: 'Ach, diese heute so beliebte Stimme der Landschaft, auch die wird von vielen Dichtern schon vom Blatt gesungen, von den Blättern des vorigen Jahrhunderts nach leicht angejahrten Melodien.' Like the politicised works of the Left, those of the *völkisch* Right are manifestations of an inauthentic plebeian culture, manufactured to woo the masses, in this case through pale imitations of familiar classics. Engaging quite unusually in direct political comment, Raschke argues that the calls from writers on the Right, among them Hanns Johst, for the dissolution of the Prussian *Landtag* show that there is no real difference between Nazi and Communist writers. Although those on the Right claim to preserve a

traditional image of the poet, in reality it has been reduced to the mechanical and functional one of serving a political agenda.

Raschke's biological metaphysics: *Sachlichkeit* plus *Wunder*

Raschke constructs his intellectual position through reference not only to the biological but also to the metaphysical, forming what has been persuasively termed a 'biological metaphysics'.¹⁷ This was not such a strange hybrid for those intellectuals who were seeking a renewal of meaning through an amalgam of ideas other than the economic materialism of Marxism or the Nazis' *völkisch* populism. Indeed, in the 1920s the search for a greater stability of meaning was manifesting itself in virtually all new artistic and intellectual groupings, however fraught that undertaking. Raschke and his fellow contributors, for the most part born between 1895 and 1905, whose seminal years of development coincided with the upheavals in German life around the First World War, belong to a generation without the security of the Wilhelmine middle classes that had spawned the Expressionist rebellion. The artistic and intellectual nostrums of Expressionist aesthetic and political revolt are without appeal for Raschke and those of his generation who join him.

That is not to say that Raschke and his collaborators can be simply dismissed as 'anti-modernist' opponents to political and aesthetic modernists and avant-gardists. Rather, he questions some of the premisses of modernism with arguments inconceivable without modernism, which has become a historical phenomenon with its own crises. In his search for a renewal of meaning, Raschke cites two contemporaries, Friedrich Markus Huebner and Edgar Dacqué (*Kolonne*, 1, 60). In the mid- to-late 1920s, both contributed to the revival of an essentially Romantic conception of the world, which sought to synthesise biology and metaphysics, science and aesthetics, through the observation of matter and the appreciation of form that, in the German tradition, ultimately draws upon Goethe. Huebner was the author of, among other things, works of popular astrophysics. In 1929 he published the neo-Romantic work *Zugang zur Welt: Magische Deutungen*, which at the very least parallels the articulation of a *Naturmagie* in the renewal of nature poetry in *Die Kolonne*. The paleontologist Dacqué's revival of Romantic natural philosophy in *Urwelt, Sage und Menschheit* of 1924 was accompanied by a rejection of Darwin's theory of evolution. In *Das Leben als Symbol: Metaphysik einer Entwicklungslehre* of 1928, Dacqué proposed a teleological theory of evolution, according to which human beings contain the ideal prototype

17 See Walther Killy, 'Martin Raschke', in Walther Killy (ed.), *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie*, 12 vols (Munich: Saur, 1995–2000), VIII, p. 145: 'In mehreren Essays propagierte er eine an neoromantischen Idealen orientierte "biologische Metaphysik".'

and are simultaneously the end of all biological evolution. Dacqué's work prompts the following reflection from Raschke:

Nur dann, wenn der Einzelne sich als Gleichnis des Ganzen begreifen lernt und sich derart rettet aus seiner erdrückenden Isolierung in das Allgemeine, wenn der Mensch im Sinne Dacqués sein Leben als Symbol zu verstehen sucht und damit alle Unterschiede innerhalb der Welt nur zu Unterschieden zwischen Intensitäten werden, kann es gelingen, die Stagnation in einer gültigen Form zu überwinden. (*Kolonne*, 1, 60)

With its insistence on the continuing relevance of metaphysics, the opening editorial reveals Raschke's indebtedness to the Romantic revival. But it also shows that his search for universal truths was by no means divorced from the 1920s' emphasis on 'Sachlichkeit', if not the predominantly anti-metaphysical attitude of *Neue Sachlichkeit*:

Wer nur einmal in der Zeitlupe sich entfaltende Blumen sehen durfte, wird hinfort hinterlassen, Wunder und Sachlichkeit deutlich gegeneinander abzugrenzen. So kann auch im Bereich der Dichtung ein Wille zur Sachlichkeit nur dann Berechtigung erlangen, wenn er nicht von Unvermögen, sondern durch die Furcht bedingt wurde, mit allzuviel Worten das Wunderbare zu verdecken. (*Kolonne*, 1, 1)

The emphasis on *Sachlichkeit* and conciseness is further evidence of a post-Expressionist sensibility mistrustful not only of rhetorical excess but also of the ritualised disruption of subject-object relations in Expressionism and Dadaism. Rilke's subtle probing of the world of objects through refined subjectivity in poems such as 'Wendung' (*Kolonne*, 1, 60) is much more congenial.

Sachlichkeit thus remains a key category, when in 1929 Raschke articulates his programme for like-minded young artists. The shift from the urban to the natural world makes perfect sense for those who had experienced the cult of nature in the *Jugendbewegung*, nature providing a more attractive and seemingly more stable alternative to the chaos of social and economic life. Raschke, the follower of Benn and also of Nietzsche, undertakes a revalorisation of *Sachlichkeit*. Not only does he remove the term from the urban and social context and align it with the precise observation of the natural world, a phenomenon that can be observed in the works of other authors from the late 1920s not directly associated with *Die Kolonne*.¹⁸ What is more, in his combination of 'Sachlichkeit' with 'Wunder', he follows the synthesising vision of Dacqué and Huebner, who seek to overcome the conventional opposition between the rational and the non-rational. Raschke was by no means isolated in his espousal of a 'biological metaphysics', which he buttressed through the discussion of further scientific material. *Die Kolonne* reproduces photographs from Robert Henseling's *Der neu entdeckte Himmel*, a work

18 For a discussion of scientific work in *Die Kolonne* see Dolan, pp. 106–17. For a discussion of literary works that in the late 1920s deviated from the norms of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in their treatment of nature, including work by Döblin, Jahn, Lehmann and Loerke, see Hans Dieter Schäfer, 'Naturdichtung und Neue Sachlichkeit', in Wolfgang Rothe (ed.), *Die deutsche Literatur in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1974), pp. 359–81 (p. 375). None of these writers figure in *Die Kolonne*, although Lehmann and Loerke were both admired by contributors to the journal.

of astrophysics, and from Ernst Fuhrmann's *Die Pflanze als Lebewesen*. The latter work is reviewed by Peter Anders, who follows Fuhrmann and Dacqué in viewing all material things as analogous: 'Steine, Pflanzen und Tiere stehen unter dem gleichen Gesetze des Lebens, dessen Gleichnisse wir alle sind. Alles ist sich im Fernen einig, wenn es sich auch vor unseren Augen trennt zu verschiedenen Erscheinungen' (*Kolonne*, 2, 42). Anders cites Goethe's 'Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen' to demonstrate the fundamental compatibility between Fuhrmann's project and the work of the figure in the German tradition who, beyond all others, embodies the synthesis of science and poetry through his observation of nature.

Goethe: Raschke's *Bildungsdialekt*

For Raschke, like so many other German intellectuals schooled in the traditions of German culture, Goethe is the key figure the *Bildungsdialekt* by means of which Raschke articulates his value system. The holistic view of all organic life is developed by Raschke with quite deliberate echoes of Goethe. In his essay 'Reisen des Auges', for example, Raschke calls for a detailed, alert and empathetic perception of botanical phenomena in order to recover the sense of wonder that nature can awaken in the beholder:

Wer nicht die Schönheit eines Baumes liebend begreift, nicht mit wachen Augen die dunklere oder hellere Tönung der Ansatzstellen von Blütenblättern, wer nicht gespannt das Wässrigwerden und langsame Umsinken einer Hyazinthe verfolgen kann, [...] wer diese Aufmerksamkeit gegenüber dem Kleinen nicht besitzt, wird auch im Großen nicht zu erleben vermögen. (*Kolonne*, 2, 13)

Goethe is prominent as the journal substantiates its synthesis of science and nature poetry through the reproduction of further works from the tradition. Goethe's 'Über die Natur' opens the double issue 4/5 in year one that establishes *Die Kolonne* as more than a mere *Flugblatt*. 'Über den Granit' follows (*Kolonne*, 2, 29). Goethe is joined by a number of canonical poets whose treatment of nature is accorded a strategic position. They include Eichendorff, Mörike and Hölderlin. Issue six in 1931 contains a selection of Brockes's *Vornehmste Gedichte aus dem irdischen Vergnügen in Gott*. Brockes's significance for *Die Kolonne* is underscored in the editorial comment: 'Ein unerschöpfbares Wunder ist ihm die Welt, und dem Dichter bleibt nichts, als in möglichst genauen Beschreibungen ihren Reichtum zu erfassen' (*Kolonne*, 2, 65).

Brockes provides a point of reference for the discussion in that same issue of two contemporary works, Johannes R. Becher's Marxist epic, *Der Große Plan*, and Benn's response, *Das Unaufhörliche*, composed for Paul Hindemith. The confrontations between Becher and Benn, representative figures of the Left and the Right, fuelled some of the most explosive debates in literary journals during the final

years of the Weimar Republic. Becher's work is the target for a familiar polemic. Goethe's authority is invoked – 'es bildet | nur das Leben den Mann, und wenig bedeuten die Worte' – to introduce the discussion. A section of the epic, 'Gesang der Kommune "Internationale"', is reproduced, which includes lines such as the following: 'Gebt dem Wind den Befehl, | Kräftig die Bäume zu schütteln – | Großes Äpfelfallen' and 'Als der Mensch die Knechtschaft abtat, | Wurde frei | Auch die Erde' (*Kolonne*, 2, 69). The determinist claims of Becher's 'scientific' Marxism are called into question through a typical editorial juxtaposition with a short newspaper report that, again typically, presents contemporary scientific theory, namely Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle of 1927. Fuelling that strong trend towards metaphysical speculation among the scientific community that, as we have seen, impacted more widely on intellectual life, Heisenberg maintains that either the position or the momentum of a particle in motion can be determined with precision, but not both at once. For Raschke, who is joined in his criticism of Becher by his friends Horst Lange and Eich, Marxist economics has drained the relationship between the individual and the people of its earlier, binding, metaphysical quality. Raschke's position is that it is the task of the intellectual is to address the need to re-establish that relationship, the first step towards repairing the cracks that had opened so alarmingly in contemporary life.

Benn is seen as virtually alone amongst contemporary artists in understanding the nature of the task. His iconic status for *Die Kolonne* is spelt out in Raschke's essay on *Das Unaufhörliche*. In contrast to the ready optimism that flows from Becher's ideological premiss, *Das Unaufhörliche* depicts a universal human condition of suffering that is defined through the eternal cycle of birth and death, with particular emphasis on the problem of death. Benn's penetrating and wholly unsentimental analysis of the human condition devoid of religious consolation is placed by Raschke in a lineage of writers and artists, including Villon, Brueghel, Hofmannswaldau, Savonarola, Brockes, Goethe, and, now, Elisabeth Langgässer, who have struggled with the problem of death in exemplary fashion. This emerges as the major theme for the whole issue and the platform for quite rare, direct comment on the journal's stance towards the crisis gripping German life:

Als die Aufklärung unsere Welt die beste aller möglichen Welten nannte, schrieb Voltaire seinen *Candide*, eine Attacke gegen diese logisch erschlichenen Glücksgefühle, Schopenhauer antwortete Hegel, und der billige Optimismus marxistischer Utopisten endete im Gelächter Nietzsches. War es nicht immer der Weg des europäischen Geistes, in stetem Wandel auf Optimismus tragisch zu antworten, und selbst die heiteren Gefühle Griechenlands, spielten sie nicht über einem tragischen Grund? Und nun die Jetztzeit und ihre Sehnsucht nach dem happy end, gläubig an die Hygiene, an die Segnungen der Technik und an die unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten einer individual-psychologischen Pädagogik; fast drohte es wiederum, daß wir für immer aus einem tieferen Wissen entwurzelt wurden, und wieder hören wir Stimmen der Umkehr, wie sie immer laut wurden, wenn sich das europäische Denken in einer billigen Wohnung genügsam einrichten wollte. (*Kolonne*, 2, 63)