

DRUDGERY, DREAMLAND AND DIONYSUS:
THE POPULAR NOVELS OF INA SEIDEL AND VICKI BAUM

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any degree

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Abstract

The novels, poems and journalism of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum were part of that everyday popular literature read and enjoyed by an international audience throughout the years of the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and beyond. Their wide distribution and popular themes ensured that they reached a diverse public, but their publishers aimed their attentions at that female readership whose buying-power and literary tastes were now acknowledged as a significant market-factor.

Both authors recognised their powerful position and took upon themselves the responsibilities, with which they believed they were thus endowed, to enlighten, educate and inform. They wrote from a view of themselves as creative artists with particular literary skills but, above all, as women. Understanding 'womanhood' as their primeval inheritance, they saw a woman's physical powers of generation and nurture as part of the order of the natural universe, uniting them with other female beings. But 'womanhood' also had symbolic and transcendent implications, linking humanity not only with the earth from which it sprung and to which it would return but also with the infinite cosmos beyond.

The present thesis argues that this viewpoint was encouraged by personal and family histories but also by the social climate of Weimar. Choosing political irresponsibility and creative freedom, both women were content to consider themselves as alienated from a contemporary world they found in many ways distasteful, while continuing to exploit the advantages and opportunities it offered for career-success.

They turned popular intellectual currents to their advantage, making domestic narratives and theatrical melodramas from a diversity of sources, exploiting current enthusiasms for the dramatic arts to demonstrate their views of the world which surrounded them. They also offered their readerships ideas of better, even utopian, social orders with historical, philosophical or anthropological antecedents. Their ideas of a better world and a woman's place within it, shared with their vast and diverse popular, and international, readership, eased rather than challenged the ideological rise to dominance of National Socialism.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

In the Epilogue to his book *Writing Weimar*, David Midgeley comments:

the intellectual utopianism of both left and right under the Weimar Republic is characterised by a revolt against the conception of modernity entailed in Max Weber's description of modern knowledge as inescapably 'disenchanted' and fragmented. It would be worth establishing precisely how novels of the period relate to the same issue.¹

While the popular novelist Vicki Baum would have been unwilling to publicly accept that her novels were either intellectual, utopian or in revolt against modernity, the equally popular novelist Ina Seidel, her contemporary, might have accepted all of those designations. The women shared, however, a will to re-enchant the world for their readers, both in day-dreams of what it might be like to be rich and famous, or equally fanciful visions of rural idylls and domestic fire-sides. Their fictional heroines generally find their beautiful illusions smashed by the careless or malevolent world. Utopia, both authors believed, is not to be achieved through planned re-organisation of the circumstances of individual lives or communities but remained an idea to be illustrated, cherished and pursued, more a philosophic or quasi-religious concept, akin to a Christian heaven, than a sociological or political theory.

This study, which declares its subject-matter to be the writings of two novelists, brings the authors and their work together in the hope that the friction of apparent opposites, according to the majority of current critical opinion, might generate original sparks. The confrontation inevitably generates a series of comparisons in which the authors and their work are set against each other and put in the context of their contemporary society. The different ways in which the authors saw themselves and the way in which they were seen by their readerships, and by those who chose not to read their work, brings the subjective and autobiographical up against the public roles. This engenders identification of those areas in which each author, personally

¹ Midgeley, D. (2000). *Writing Weimar: Critical Realism in German Literature 1918-1933*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p.248.

and in their writing, complies with, or diverges from, the ideas contained in widely used descriptive phrases such as 'völkisch', 'bourgeois' or 'traditional'. The differing, and similar, ways in which both authors established personal and literary interactions with the world which surrounded them creates further grounds for comparison. Their lives, and their literature, are sited in the contested groups defined by 'Popular Author', 'Modern Woman', 'Exile Writer' and 'Inner Emigrant' to show congruence with or deviation from each other and from the clichés of a Weimar society concerned with re-defining Germany after the First World War. This places both women within the context of a national cultural vulnerability which soon gave way to the impositions of a National Socialist state.

In the retrospective hierarchy of ethnicity imposed by Nazism, any similarities in the biographies of the two women could be considered to be annulled by major factor of Baum's Jewish ethnicity and Seidel's non-Jewish (putative 'Aryan') position. However, the biographical chapter stresses that, while ethnicity was of considerable interest to both even before the Nazi years, there were other factors defining groups to which they belonged. Both their lives diverged from the expectations of those apparently stable, prosperous, bourgeois families which defined their early youth. Baum's Jewish family had arrived comparatively recently in Vienna to become part of its thriving Jewish business community. Seidel's family belonged firmly within German middle-class intelligentsia. However, both girls gained an early awareness of death and suffering as family lives were disrupted by the loss of a parent. Personal talents also distinguished them both from their peers and their later literary careers brought the two women into the professional proximity of common publishers and publications.

The common ground on which both authors, then as now, are critically situated is that of women writers whose work sold in vast numbers for many years throughout the Weimar Republic and beyond. The gulf which widened between their public and private lives as the century progressed resulted in Seidel's enduring reputation as a deeply conservative and

religious writer with warlike nationalist leanings whose sympathies with National Socialism led to active collaboration. Baum emerges as a representative of female and literary modernity, effective manipulator of the new mass media and a Hollywood exile of Jewish ethnicity. The classification process was, as Lynne Frame points out,² part of the social and intellectual climate within which they wrote and was fostered by publishers, making both authors and their works readily identifiable in a growing market for popular literature.

The introduction of Nazism to the discussion, when aligning two women within groupings, immediately generates the primary moral distinction, between those who were able and willing to support a regime based on extremes of violent racism and those who were not. The present thesis maintains that, while that moral judgement should dominate all others, the writings of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum blur a clear differentiation. Seidel was able, sometimes willing, and did, after 1933, effectively contribute to the maintenance of a system which she finally found distasteful on many levels. Vicki Baum was disqualified by her Jewish ethnicity from offering systematic support and her exile was inevitable, if not actually forced. But both prior to, and after, the Nazi years, she continued to hold and publicise views which had initially made National Socialism attractive to many and which had allowed the party to build sufficient support to allow its later domination by terror.

To define the relative importance of both authors within the group of Weimar popular novelists, both authors are considered with that degree of objectivity provided by quantitative judgements of sales and readers.

Popular also implies a positive readership response, a qualitative judgement on the writing of both authors, and the nature of the relationship between the authors and their readership is examined through contemporary reviews. Analogous attitudes direct and inform the tone and

² Frame, L. (1999). 'Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne? Auf der Suche nach der idealen neuen Frau'. In: Ankum, K. v. (ed.) *Frauen in der Großstadt. Herausforderung der Moderne?* Dortmund: Edition Ebersbach. p.22.

the content of writings by two authors who both claim superior knowledge and wisdom. Seidel and Baum suppose a wish on the part of their audience to be informed and are confident of their own right to lead and educate.

Gender was the primary factor which unified them with each other, the wider society and, they believed, with the natural world beyond. The current thesis aims to establish the shared influences which shaped their ideas on sex and gender, both defining features of their authorship. As women, they felt they could represent, comment on, and possibly improve, the lives of other women. For their own views and ideas to be recognised at a time when empirical objectivity was the recognised standard of validity, they also needed to make clear to their readership that, while sharing their lives as fellow-women, they also stood apart from them.

They postulate an existential or geographical exile as the doom and the blessing of all creative artists. Their separate relationships to the concept of exile, in both experiential and literary terms, forms a major area in which the authors' self-definition, as individuals distanced from contemporary events, becomes part of the way in which each woman perceives and reacts to the changes in her external world, generating both unifying and separating factors. The writings of both authors expresses their preoccupation with the exiled state while their lives manifest the results of this intellectual involvement.

Personal and social conflicts were forced upon both women by the oppositions they identified in their own lives and which they generalised as an inevitable part of the national life, for women in particular. Home and work, individuality and communality, the dictates of biology and the demands of intellect, empirical truth and transcendental ideal, literary realism and fantasy preoccupy the authors and their fictional characters.

Exploring the dilemmas through their fiction, for themselves and for others, they express both the problems and their possible resolutions through the theatrical trope. Theatre and the dramatic arts offered a means through which they, and many of their contemporaries, could

relate to, and come to terms with, the dislocations they viewed in both the natural order and human society.

Seidel and Baum sought to act upon their contemporary world through their creative skills, shaped, as they both impressed upon their readers, by sensory interaction with a natural world, which they transmitted through the emotional and descriptive detail of their writings. Life-experience was central to their literature and autobiography their means of conveying this to their readers. Baum did not write her ‘factual’ autobiography until 1964 but autobiographical material is evident in her fiction from the earliest novel *Frühe Schatten* (1919).

Current criticism continues to elaborate on the theme of the relationship between autobiographical writing and fiction. In his essay *Der Dichter und das Phantasieren*, Freud had proposed that creative writing is directly related to memory. Powerful impressions in the present stimulate memories of an earlier experience (frequently in childhood), prompting a wish to recreate or reflect on the initial event, which finds its fulfilment in the creative work.³ Gilmore’s (2001) question, ‘Where does autobiography end and fiction begin?’⁴ concludes a survey of how autobiographical texts combine elements of fiction, history, and literary theory, to reveal trauma as both a subjective and a representative experience. The minor pleasure of identifying elements in fiction which can be interpreted as autobiographical and determining their relevance as an expression of authorial intent is one that Chapter 2 begins to negotiate, stimulated by Chaney’s *Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*⁵ and Neale’s work on ‘the intriguing and increasingly prominent borderland between fiction and life

³ See: Freud, S. (1908). ‘Der Dichter und das Phantasieren’. In: *Kleine Schriften I*, Kapitel 12. [Online]. <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/kleine-schriften-i-7123/12>. [Accessed 29.6.15].

⁴ Gilmore, L. (2001). *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. p.4.

⁵ Chaney, M. A. (2011). *Graphic Subjects: Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

writing.⁶ Baum's autobiography, in particular, approaches stylistically her fictional narratives, becoming 'just another way of telling a story [...] and it uses facts as a strategy'⁷, which, as Chapter 2 indicates was part of a conscious intent. As Lloyd suggested, 'the self, however, is neither a mere object nor entirely objective. It is also a subject and consequently subjective.'⁸ Seidel's fictional '*Osel, Urd und Schlummei*', becomes also an autobiographical text, overstepping the bounds of fiction by its references to verifiable external facts of the author's childhood. The short novel illustrates Adams' statement that 'fictions and the fiction-making process are a central constituent of the truth of any life as it is lived and of any art devoted to the presentation of that life.'⁹

The flurry of critical writing on the links between autobiography and fiction published primarily in the 1980-90 has now reduced, suggesting that contention has declined into acceptance. Gudmundsdottir's (2003) *Autobiography and Fiction in Postmodern Life Writing*¹⁰, Ireton's (2008) *Between Autobiography and Fiction: Thomas Mann's Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus: Roman eines Romans*¹¹ and Maftai's *The Fiction of Autobiography*,¹² which offers a historical perspective on the vexed question in a variety of texts from the last century, all confirm that the merging of autobiographical and fictional genres evident in parts of the current thesis continues to have critical currency.

⁶ Neale, D. (2011). 'Writing and Remembering: Paradoxes of Memory, Imagination and Fiction in Stories about Lives', *Literature Compass*, 8(12), The Open University [Online]. <http://oro.open.ac.uk/id/eprint/30853>. [Accessed 4.7.15].

⁷ Collett, A. (1989). 'Literature, Fiction and Autobiography', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 29, 341-351.

⁸ Lloyd, G. (1986). 'The Self as Fiction: Philosophy and Autobiography', *Philosophy and Literature*, 18, 168-185.

⁹ Adams, T.D. (1994). 'Introduction: Life Writing and Light Writing, Autobiography and Photography', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 40, 459-491.

¹⁰ Gudmundsdottir, G. (2003). *Borderlines: Autobiography and Fiction in Postmodern Life Writing* (Postmodern Studies) Amsterdam: Rodopi.

¹¹ Ireton, S. (2008). 'Between Autobiography and Fiction: Thomas Mann's Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus: Roman eines Romans', *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*, 44(2), 210-225.

¹² Maftai, M. (2013). [Online]. <http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/the-fiction-of-autobiography-9781623561758/#sthash.TgnfGXx8.dpuf>. [Accessed 24.6.15].

Viewing themselves as members of an intellectual, and esoteric, elite, some of their writings¹³ also take on the quasi-priestly role of interpreter of the mysteries of life. Harmon¹⁴ emphasises the therapeutic effects of popular culture in putting its readers 'in touch with [their] repressed selves', mediating 'between the unwelcome contradictions of [their] lives', providing a 'guilt-free release of [their] repressed aggressions' and as an 'aid to emotional and social growth.' Both authors acknowledge the therapeutic effects of writing for themselves and aspire to writing with a similar beneficent effect on the lives of others.

Ina Seidel stresses the didactic and democratic nature of the writer's task in *Frau und Wort*:

das Erlebnis ins Wort zu heben und warnend, mahnend, preisend, anfeuernd in seinem Werk dem Volk den Spiegel vorzuhalten, den wahrhaft magischen Spiegel, in dem das Geschehen zu Gestalt gerinnt.¹⁵

Although Vicki Baum refused any such explicit mission, she wrote articles as well as short stories advising women on how to deal with the problems of modernity¹⁶ and wrote fiction with overtly political implications which received wide distribution.¹⁷ Neither woman underestimated the influence of her work on its readers. Ina Seidel meets that responsibility with homilies directed mainly at women and mothers, or girls like those of the Luizenschule,¹⁸ Vicki Baum by *Uhu* magazine articles such as 'Entlarvte Liebe: Die Chemie der Gefühle',¹⁹ or 'Welches Buch soll ich schenken? Ein Gang durch den Büchermarkt'.²⁰

Popularity, as the chapter indicates, is determined by the objective measure of the volume of sales generated as well as the subjective one of the nature of reader response, insofar as that

¹³ Seidel's (1923) *Sterne der Heimkehr* for instance, or Baum's (1937) *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*.

¹⁴ Harman, G. (2006). 'On the nature and functions of popular culture'. In: Hinds, H. E., Motz, M. F. & Nelson, A. M. S. *Popular Culture Theory and Methodology: A Basic Introduction*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press. p.71.

¹⁵ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.63.

¹⁶ Baum, V. (1931/2). 'Unglücklich in Hollywood - Das Leben der grossen und kleinen Sterne'. *Uhu Das neue Monats-Magazin*, 8, 105.

¹⁷ Baum, V. (1944). *Hotel Berlin 43*. New York: Doubleday Doran & Co. Inc.

¹⁸ Notizbuch von 1932, *Rede in der Luizenschule*, März 1933. DLA Marbach, 0199.1075.

¹⁹ Baum, V. (1926/7). *Uhu*, 2, 86-91.

²⁰ Baum, V. (1926/7). *Uhu*, 3, 118-124.

can be evidenced by contemporary published reviews. Seen in magazines and public bookstands as well as in bookshops and libraries, Seidel and Baum's writings bridge the categories of 'Trivilliteratur' and 'Unterhaltungsliteratur'. Both terms of critical disdain were applied by predominantly, but not exclusively, male critics. The objects of their criticism were often publications by female writers, targetting, according to Soares, 'the space assigned to female creativity'²¹ within the publishing market. The large readership was also, at least according to critical prejudice,²² predominantly women. Canning²³ suggests that, in the eyes of the Weimar establishment 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' included 'entwined discourses of femininity, consumption and mass culture,' threatening existing institutions by manifestations of choice and power amongst the formerly powerless, female, section of the national community. But class also influenced critical judgement. Critics, whose position as published authors generally indicated middle-class origins, or at least pretensions, made judgements from what they considered to be their superior level of taste and education on the literature that 'the masses' read and purchased.

As King records,²⁴ the attention paid to 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' by left-wing political groupings, who hoped to engage and educate the proletariat, only increased the fears of the traditional middle-classes.

Soares²⁵ adopts Thomas Mann's definition of 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' as occupying an intermediate place between the inferior Trivilliteratur and the superior realms of High Culture. It also constituted the literary space that Seidel's work occupied by virtue of the author's gender

²¹ Soares, L.A. (2006). 'Vicky Baum and Gina Kaus: Female Creativity on the Margins'. In: Schönfeld, C. (ed.) *Practising Modernity: Female Creativity in the Weimar Republic*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.326.

²² For example, Kracauer's comments on popular culture in general in *Die kleinen Ladenmädchen gehen ins Kino*.

²³ Canning, K., Barndt, K. & McGuire, K. (2013). *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*. New York: Berghahn Books. p.10.

²⁴ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. p.44.

²⁵ Soares, L.A. (2006). 'Vicky Baum and Gina Kaus: Female Creativity on the Margins'. In: Schönfeld, C. (ed.) *Practising Modernity: Female Creativity in the Weimar Republic*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.326.

and the domestic tone, even of her more serious novels. These fell within Soltau's definition of *Frauenliteratur* as 'writing which thematises the problems within the context of women's lives.'²⁶ 'Trivilliteratur', on the other hand, was taken to be a purely commercial product of negligible literary value, reproducing clichés of plot and character to provide unchallenging reading. It confirmed readers in their existing ideas, offering escape, diversion and relaxation. Both genres were regarded as comparatively ephemeral, the products of a historical moment, which, when that time had passed, would become outdated and unread. Being thus acknowledged as a reflection of its time and of its mass-readership such literary work offers a direct, if partial, view of the ideas and opinions of a readership who would otherwise remain unrepresented in literary discourse.

Julia Bertschik's²⁷ discussion of Vicki Baum's novels in the context of feminist studies and popular culture relates the contribution that her fictional portrayals of modern working women made to the ideas and attitudes of her readership, and the wider society, concluding that her novels cannot therefore be consigned to the field of *Trivilliteratur*. Baum's fictional heroines, however, like those of Seidel, are self-possessed and competent but, never pose any serious opposition to male hegemonies. They avoid confrontations and, like the authors themselves apparently, are content with achieving their personal goals by any available means.

King's work, further examined in Chapter 3, illustrates the influence of the publishing industry on the writing as well as the production and distribution of literature falling into the category of 'popular'. Popularity was not simply a matter of enthusiastic readers who chose to buy books. King details how the reading public responded to the attractions of low purchase price, exciting advertising, attractive presentation and the simplicity of choice offered by standardised fictional formats in uniform covers. Authors, she suggests, also wrote to readers' expectations

²⁶ Soltau, H. (1989). *Trennungs-Spuren. Frauenliteratur der zwanziger Jahre*. Frankfurt: Extrabuch Verlag.

²⁷ Bertschik, J. (2005). 'Kolportageroman Roman mit Hintergründen, Zur Problematik literarische Wertung am Beispiel Vicki Baum'. In: Enklaar, J., Ester, H., Tax, E. (eds.). *Im Schatten der Literaturgeschichte: Autoren, die keiner mehr kennt*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

of such formats, adapting style and content to conform to the publishers' editorial requirements. A 'popular novel' thus became a literary genre before either public approval or sales confirmed the accuracy of the description.

Writing literature which described the lives of the masses, was published by mass-publishers, and aimed at a mass readership, both authors fall within the even broader category of mass-literature, itself part of the amorphous field of mass-culture. The 'respectable' styles and content of *Unterhaltungsliteratur*, the more doubtful subjects and inferior styles of *Trivalliteratur*, the readership approval and commercial successes of popular literature, all shade into the definition of mass literature, defined most simply as that which is not the reading matter nominally approved by intellectual élites.

Hinds, however, refuses the 'separation of mass culture from popular culture'²⁸ seeing popular culture in its broadest sense as reflecting all aspects of the world its readers inhabit. It offers a vision that is not that narrower, more élitist vision of High Culture but one in which readers can imagine themselves, either in the actual circumstances of their lives or in their fantasies of what life might be. He quotes the Cambridge University Press: 'The phrase 'popular culture' [...] can be applied indiscriminately to folk culture, mass culture and working class culture'²⁹ and concludes that 'in general [...] the definition of popular culture as mass or mainstream culture is a useful one.'³⁰ King's (1988) suggestion that 'popular literature' was the categorisation of choice for 'modern scholars'³¹ has therefore endured some years and remains appropriate to discuss the wide range of writing produced in a variety of formats by Seidel and Baum.

²⁸ Hinds, H. E., Motz, M. F. & Nelson, A. M. S. (2006). *Popular Culture Theory and Methodology: A Basic Introduction*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press. p.256.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.360.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.362.

³¹ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. p.225.

The influence of popular literature on its readership is, like the genre itself, difficult to define. Contemporary reviews and publication figures offer some partial indication of distribution and public approval but Peter Fritzsche questions the adequacy of historical interpretations of influence which focus on the definable and measurable qualities of a literary market. He emphasises the immaterial agencies at work, pointing out what Ziemann³² calls ‘symbolic politics and mythological fantasies’ which readers carried from literary texts into their everyday lives. The ‘linguistic turn’ of historical thought which Fritzsche identifies, has indicated the extent to which subjects think about the external, social, world in ways that are not accurate reflections of social reality. These representations bear the traces of past traditions, linguistic conventions, and cultural media, and they became constituent parts of contemporary view.³³ Popular novelists contribute to, and exist within, that verbal universe of meaning and myth, both in the ways they define and describe the minutiae of daily experience and in shared fantasies through which they and their readership compensate for the perceived deficiencies of what they knew as real-life. The present thesis attempts to offer the objective information obtainable through publication figures and tables, but, more importantly to consider the images and symbolic significances which Seidel and Baum made available to fuel the imaginations of their readers and modify their thoughts on life, the universe and everything.

Seidel and Baum had their own ideas on mass or popular culture and their place within it. Baum’s rueful self-appraisal as ‘eine erstklassige Schriftstellerin, zweiter Güte’³⁴ and Ina Seidel’s numerous comments on the role of the poet and author in society³⁵ show their mutual awareness of a critical public. As prolific journalists (both women wrote for Ullstein’s *Uhu*, a

³² Ziemann, B. (2010). ‘Weimar was Weimar: Politics, Culture and the Emplotment of the German Republic’, *German History*, 28, 542-571.

³³ Fritzsche, P. (1996). ‘Did Weimar Fail?’ *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, 629-656.

³⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*, Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.386.

³⁵ Seidel, I. (1933-4). ‘Der Dichter und sein Volk’, *Die Literatur : Monatsschrift für Literaturfreunde*, 36, 369-374, Seidel, I. (1934). *Dichter, Volkstum und Sprache. Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Stuttgart/Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

cultural and literary magazine aimed at ‘die besten Schichten des Deutschen Publikums’³⁶) as well as novelists, poets and writers for broadcast media, their overriding concerns centred on the working quality of their writings, their content and distribution rather than its classification within the literary forms of the day. There is no dearth of criticism on Vicki Baum’s contribution to Weimar literary culture. King points out Baum’s ‘advanced narrative techniques’, ‘carefully-constructed [...] characterization’, and ‘experimental stylistic devices’,³⁷ although acknowledging the melodrama and sensationalism associated with Trivalliteratur. Nottelmann places Baum’s novels within the genre of *Zeitroman*,³⁸ using the detached, unsentimental narrative voice to display and investigate the workings of contemporary society. Soares³⁹ identifies an ‘affinity with the goals, themes, techniques and problems of the New Objectivity and the metropolitan novel’. Stories of everyday city lives in which realistically explain the daily dissatisfactions of poverty, but also of wealth, Baum’s novels range across the social classes and even the countries of her contemporary world.⁴⁰

The provisional and fragmentary nature of the city,⁴¹ portrayed as dominated by commerce and industry, destroying the human bonds of home, family and community to create relationships which were temporary and contingent, appears in the work of both writers. Seidel’s short stories show an unsentimental familiarity with lives lived in solitary rooms and apartment blocks of industrial towns. Her novelistic excursions describe the afflictions and inflictions of city life, the physical oppression of dazzle, noise and confusion in the apparently endless maze

³⁶ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

³⁸ Nottelmann, N. (2002). *Strategien des Erfolgs. Narratologische Analysen exemplarischer Romane Vicki Baums*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.34

³⁹ Soares, L.A. (2006). ‘Vicky Baum and Gina Kaus: Female Creativity on the Margins’ In Schönfeld, C. (ed.) *Practising Modernity: Female Creativity in the Weimar Republic*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.331.

⁴⁰ For example, Baum’s *Menschen im Hotel*, *Kristall in Lehm*, *Ulle der Zwerg*, among others.

⁴¹ Fritzsche, P. (1994). ‘The Vagabond in the City’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29, 385-402.

of streets,⁴² the violent gaudiness of cinema posters in Alexanderplatz⁴³ and the class or racial aggression arising from poverty and the ghetto.⁴⁴ The masses of Seidel's novels, however, step outside the contemporary Zeitroman to become part of a longer view of the German nation in her historical novels.

While realism is a vaunted technique for both Seidel and Baum, neither is content to remain within its straitjacket. Weimar Modernism embraced euphoric irrationalism as well as Neue Sachlichkeit. Von Steinaecker⁴⁵ recognises an ambiguity in Vicki Baum's novels, which parallels the disparity between the appearances and the inner significances of the social world of modernity. Nottelmann⁴⁶ and Schönfeld⁴⁷ also acknowledge the 'other worldliness' which threads through Baum's novels.

The present thesis is concerned to expose those elements of Baum's writings which do not fit conveniently into claims of cool realism and the inconsistent, unrealistic, romantic, even reactionary attitudes which her writings also evidence. In *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, *Kristall in Lehm* and other texts, realism gives way to mysticism and melodrama. Wishes for literary recognition run contrary to a firm belief in the superiority of traditional and non-verbal cultures. The contrarities of her writings resist categorisation. The realities to which the novels of both women claim an authorial sense of responsibility extend beyond those of the here and now. For Ina Seidel this included the supernatural, for Vicki Baum the violent and sordid exploitations lying behind glamorous exteriors and the forces, beyond rational control, which motivated these acts. Ghosts, apparitions, ecstasies of drugs and alcohol, and easy, almost incidental,

⁴² Seidel, I. (1952). *Das Tor der Frühe*. Bochum: Deutscher Buchklub.p.148.

⁴³ Ibid., p.145.

⁴⁴ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.p.68.

⁴⁵ von Steinaecker, S. (2011). *A Little Lower than the Angels*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press. p.25.

⁴⁶ Nottelmann, N. (2002). *Strategien des Erfolgs. Narratologische Analysen exemplarischer Romane Vicki Baums*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.34.

⁴⁷ Schönfeld, C. (ed.) (2006). *Practising Modernity: Female Creativity in the Weimar Republic*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

deaths, are ranged alongside gardening and cooking as daily and inevitable areas of female experience.

As Jameson (1979) insists, mass culture does not only peddle inferior art with commercial intent. The assumption that it is 'sold' to its audience, rather than being sought, suggests that some incentive is being offered to tempt the purchase, 'they cannot manipulate unless they offer some genuine shred of content as a fantasy bribe to the public about to be so manipulated'.⁴⁸ Jameson acknowledges a coincidence of ideas central to the current thesis: 'Even the "false consciousness" of so monstrous a phenomenon of Nazism was nourished by collective fantasies of a Utopian type, in "socialist" as well as in nationalist guises.'⁴⁹ This statement, falling within the scope of Petersen's comments on the 'monolithic and totalizing pronouncement about the prehistory of fascist culture'⁵⁰ points the need to specify what fantasies, what guises and which mass, or popular culture can confirm the interpretation.

Methodology

The published novels, stories and journalism of the two authors constitute the primary resources for the current thesis. These are the works which were available to their contemporary readership and through which they built their respective public profiles. Through their writings they disseminated ideas which could shape the way in which their readership interpreted the world around them. While their personal archives can reveal additional details on the manner of their writings and publication, it remains the published texts which are of greatest importance for a study that considers the readership as well as the authors of the works.

A latter-day reading cannot capture contemporary impressions but reading with goodwill towards the work of both authors remains possible, despite their subsequent actions and current

⁴⁸ Jameson, F. (1979). *Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture*. [Online]. <http://www.english.ufl.edu/mrg/readings/Jameson,%20Reification%20and%20Utopia.pdf> [Accessed 27.6.15].

⁴⁹ Ibid.,

⁵⁰ Petersen, V.R. (2001). *Women and Modernity in Weimar Germany: reality and its representation in popular fiction*. Oxford/London: Berghahn. p.7.

reputations. If Klemperer, suffering as a slave-labourer, could muster intellectual wonder and judge Seidel's novels as 'wärmer, menschlicher, näher, natürlicher' than those of Ricarda Huch,⁵¹ concluding: 'wenn ein Wälzer von über 1000 Seiten, 1930 erschienen, es auf 350,000 Exemplare gebracht habe, dann müsse er irgendwie charakteristisch für das Denken seiner Zeit sein,'⁵² then a current reading appears justifiable and valid.

Close reading of sections of text forms a comparatively minor part of the thesis, used to illustrate points originating in the work as a whole rather than deriving fresh insights from detailed analyses of smaller sections. Popular literature is more often read to follow the narrative and enjoy the emotions it generates rather than with the critical attention paid to more serious works, which are assumed to reward a detailed and critical approach. In distinguishing those aspects of Seidel and Baum's work which could form the opinions of their contemporary readerships, it was determined that they should be those which made a vivid impression even on a casual and superficial reading. Broad sweeps rather than fine detail appeared to be the most appropriate level of analysis.

References are made within the current thesis to literary influences on the two writers which originated in the intellectual spheres of high culture but which were mediated by the authors for a broad readership until they also became part of popular culture. Pre-eminent among these is Nietzsche, whose ideas are echoed directly or indirectly throughout their work. Through the mediation and selective editing of his sister, they later became part of the ideological backdrop to Nazism and a name conjured to justify its ideologies. Where possible, the specific areas of his writings referenced, usually indirectly, by the novelists are indicated in order to point the sources, and the specificity, of his influence on the two women's writings, rather than accepting the reductive effects of a generalised comment. Secondary literature abounds on Nietzsche's

⁵¹ Ricarda Huch's very public rejection of National Socialism had placed her in a much stronger moral position, than Ina Seidel, from the point of view of a Jewish academic.

⁵² Nowojski, W. (ed.) (2007) Viktor Klemperer, *Die Tagebücher (1933–1945): Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe..* Berlin: Directmedia. Mittwoch 28 Juni 44 Mittags.

place in the intellectual, and popular, history of Weimar and the Third Reich and is acknowledged in the current thesis. The philosopher's powerful presence in Seidel's work is less surprising in the light of her lengthy correspondence with Ernst Bertram, whose (1918) *Nietzsche, Versuch einer Mythologie* substantially defined the image of Nietzsche throughout the Weimar years.

Archival material on Ina Seidel from the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach, was selected on the basis of the additional contribution it could make to themes already identified from readily available published work. Journalistic writing for popular magazines, stories whose publication was short term and personal notebooks, not intended for publication at all, reveal aspects of the author's reflections not accessible in the more considered forms of books. In the case of Vicki Baum, the major archives in California were not consulted, but the small archive in Marbach was investigated using the same criteria as those applied to the Seidel archive. The letters to Elizabeth Lyons, an anthropologist employed by the Penn Museum, Philadelphia, which have not as yet been published or researched, are considered as a resource of less relevance to the current thesis. Written at the end of Baum's life, they show the mature woman's daily concerns, ring with the vibrant tones of her personal, and authorial voice and confirm rather than reveal the persona also evident in her letters to Carl Ostertag (Carlito) from the Leo Baeck Institute, New York.

The current thesis rests on the assumption that popular literature creates a dialogue between text and reader, whatever the means by which the text arrived before them. The text reflects the manners and mores of the society in which it was produced, for which it was intended and who justified its designation as popular by approving and purchasing the product. Recognising the relationship between text and their own lives, the reader gains confirmation of herself and

her place in the world and, as Petersen recognises, is thereby empowered to think and act.⁵³

The reader reflects on, and responds to, the images, symbols and concepts presented to her by the narrative and her ideas are modified in the process. The recurring panics which prompt analyses of the possible harmful effects of popular culture in all media recognise the functional efficacy of this broad theory.

The question which runs throughout all chapters of the thesis is: Which concepts or ideas, derived from the life and literature of Weimar Germany and made visible and vivid in the writings of Seidel and Baum were vulnerable to ideological appropriation by National Socialism? Questioning the authors' literary status is relevant in establishing the nature of their writings and the possible extent of their influence. Attempts to elucidate what that influence might have been, and on whom it was exerted, query current critical polarisations which would suggest that their readerships were as dissimilar as the presentations of the authors themselves. But were Baum and Seidel indeed poles apart in all aspects of their lives and literature? Were they eccentric individuals with difficult family backgrounds, which manifest themselves in a skewed perception of their contemporary world or were they representative figures, whose experiences and traumas were shared by their peers and whose responses were also common to many of their contemporaries? Were they, as current criticism implicitly suggests, simply clever opportunists willing to write to order, driven by circumstances as well as choice into opposing camps. As popular female novelists, did they also consider themselves as serious creative writers who were seeking to elucidate or define responses to the contemporary world and its pressing dilemmas both for themselves and their readers? Is there any justification for the popular post-war appreciation of Vicki Baum as a plucky little working woman who chose

⁵³ Petersen, V.R. (2001). *Women and Modernity in Weimar Germany: reality and its representation in popular fiction*. Oxford/London: Berghahn.

exile and won fame and fortune, while Ina Seidel is seen as a middle-class lady of leisure and Nazi-collaborator, who also wrote turgid prose and patriotic poetry?

Literature Review

A thesis which aims to cover major themes of two prolific writers' work in order to expose the idealism which underlies them, inevitably involves a wide range of reference. A single critical review of relevant literature is impracticable and unwieldy with the research-direction becoming obscured by sheer volume. The short literature review which follows indicates only those main lines of criticism necessary to introduce the thesis and is supplemented by an overview, at the beginning of each chapter, of those works seen as pertinent to that chapter.

There was international critical interest in Ina Seidel's work before it was honoured in the Third Reich. The contemporary articles 'What Do the Germans Read?'⁵⁴ or 'Literature in the Third Reich'⁵⁵ show the English-speaking world's interest in the literary background to the political and social phenomena they were observing in Germany and identify Seidel's novels within a German book-market with an international outlook. Even the mainstream Deutsche Buch-Club published many foreign authors⁵⁶ and Seidel's own reading and translations confirm a similar European consciousness. As Novara's summary of early critical work details, it was her portrayals of women and their role in society which gained initial attention. The American scholars Kinney (1937)⁵⁷ and McKittrick (1937),⁵⁸ as well as Schulenburg⁵⁹ see a 'Klarstellung des deutschen Frauenideals'⁶⁰ in Seidel's women. Thöns⁶¹ cites early critiques interpreting Seidel's writings as reflecting the essence of the German soul and standing as a beacon for

⁵⁴ Vowles, G. R. (1935). 'What Do the Germans Read?', *The German Quarterly*, 8, 106-109

⁵⁵ Douglass, P. (1934). 'Literature in the Third Reich', *Books Abroad*, 8, 384-386.

⁵⁶ See chap 5.

⁵⁷ Kinney, C. (1937). *Die Verhältnisse zwischen Kindern und Eltern in den Werken von Ina Seidel*. PhD Thesis. South Hadley, MA: Mount Holyoke College.

⁵⁸ McKittrick, M. (1937). *Woman in the work and thought of Ina Seidel*. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

⁵⁹ Schulenburg, M. (1938). *Stellung und Bedeutung der Frau in den Romanen Ina Seidels*. Würzburg: Tritsch

⁶⁰ Novara, N. (2008). *Frauenbilder im Prosawerk Ina Seidels*. PhD Thesis. Slaski University, Katowice.

⁶¹ Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz.

German society as a whole.⁶² San Lazzarro's (1938) thesis, published in, then Fascist, Italy, references Bachofen's theories of 'Mutterrecht' in her analysis of Seidel's work, an approach which Horst's *Ina Seidel, Wesen und Werk* (1956)⁶³ develops to consider women's aesthetic creativity as an extension of the biological. Gabriele Thöns⁶⁴ indicates that extravagant praise of the spirit, as well as the form, of Seidel's work recurred in reviews from the 1920s, through to 1968, with a particular blooming of interest in the 1950s in the studies of Hertha Westermann,⁶⁵ Mary Christina Chrichton⁶⁶ and David Grubbs.⁶⁷ She assigns later critical enthusiasm to the feminist debate and to Seidel's view of materialism and rationalism as primary causes of social dysfunction. This, Thöns considers, is a standpoint which continued to find new and sympathetic ears.

As Novara shows,⁶⁸ throughout the 1990s a series of studies, often of Polish origin, variously interpreted Seidel's view of women and motherhood. Seidel's portrayals of women as powerful, independent and rebelling against male authority, therefore appealing to a feminist interpretation, are countered by those in which the same characters' final submission conforms to the Nazi myth. By the next century, studies concentrate increasingly on the wider context of Seidel's work. Like the earlier studies by Grubbs (1993) and Determann, Hammer and Kiesel (1991),⁶⁹ Döpfer-Henrich (2002)⁷⁰ adopts a socio-historical approach, emphasising the

⁶² Ibid., pp.9–32.

⁶³ Horst, K.A. (1956). *Ina Seidel: Wesen und Werk*. Stuttgart: Verlag DVA.

⁶⁴ Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz.

⁶⁵ Westermann, H. (1947). *Ina Seidel, Novelist and Interpreter of "Muttertum"*. Buffalo: State University of New York.

⁶⁶ Chrichton, M. C. (1950). *Problems in the Novels of Ina Seidel*. PhD thesis. University of Toronto.

⁶⁷ Grubbs, D. L. (1993). *'Dies Barbarische in ihr': the construction of femininity in Ina Seidel's Das Wunschkind*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University.

⁶⁸ Novara, N. (2008). *Frauenbilder im Prosawerk Ina Seidels*. PhD Thesis. Slaski University, Katowice. pp.10-12.

⁶⁹ Determann, B., Hammer, U., Kiesel, D. (eds.). (1991). *Verdeckte Überlieferungen. Weiblichkeitsbilder zwischen Weimarer Republik, Nationalsozialismus und Fünfziger Jahren*. Frankfurt am Main: Herchen.

⁷⁰ Döpfer-Henrich, A. (2002). *Es war eine trügerische Zwischenzeit: Schriftstellerin der Weimar Republik und ihr Verhältnis zu den gesellschaftlich-politischen Umgestaltung ihrer Zeit*. PhD thesis. Frankfurt am Main: Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität,

increasing recognition of the contribution to literature made by women authors and comparing Seidel with other female novelists of the period. She summarises Seidel's aspirations for a regeneration of German society, comparing her vague idealistic stance with Agnes Miegel's enthusiastic support for National Socialism. Novara's (2008) critique.⁷¹ While acknowledging the political and sociological influences of Modernity in Seidel's acknowledgement that the modern world can demand public and professional exercise of women's urge to protect, nurture and educate, she returns to the influence of Bachofen on Seidel's work. Adding biographical detail, she also interprets Seidel's fictional characters as drawn from direct experience.

Despite early condemnation of Seidel's compliant role under Nazism, as time passed she found her defenders. Agnes Cardinal (2001)⁷² asserts that Ina Seidel's work should not be misjudged and sees in *Das Wunschkind* as an 'uneasy oscillation' of attitudes to the destiny of the German nation. She interprets Cornelie's independence of thought as the author's gesture of social defiance, a 'deliberate literary strategy', a minor act of subversion which reflected the author's equivocations with authority. Czesław Karolak (2003)⁷³ offers a similar view of the novel's subversive intent. Hiltrud Häntzschel⁷⁴ (2004) suggests that Seidel's novel *Michaela* and other works offered post-WW2 Germany a new identity as themselves victims of Nazism, while Sommerfeld's⁷⁵ (2004) analysis shows the political animosity which informed the debate, as the PDS party demanded that a street named after Seidel, who he named unequivocally as a Nazi, should be replaced by that of a murdered left-wing activist. The recent critical work of

⁷¹ Novara, N. (2008). *Frauenbilder im Prosawerk Ina Seidels*. PhD Thesis. Slaski University, Katowice.

⁷² Cardinal, A. (2001). 'From *Das Wunschkind* to *Lennacker*: Strategies of Dissimulation, a re-examination of Ina Seidel's novels *Das Wunschkind* and *Lennacker*'. In: Durrani, O. (ed.) *Travellers in Time and Space: The German Historical Novel*. New York: Rodopi.

⁷³ Karolak, C. (2003). 'In die Geschichte hinabgraben... Ina Seidels erzählerische Selbstdarstellung.' In: Sellmer, I. (Hrsg.) *Die biographische Illusion im 20. Jahrhundert: (Auto-) Biographien unter Legitimierungszwang*. Frankfurt: P. Lang. p.371.

⁷⁴ Häntzschel, H. (2004). 'Deutsches Verhängnis. Ina Seidels Roman *Michaela* aus dem Jahr 1959 und seine Rezeption'. In: Hummel, A., Nieberle, S. (Hg.): *Weiter schreiben, wieder schreiben. Deutschsprachige Literatur der 50er Jahre. Festschrift für Günter Häntzschel*. München 2004. p.56-72.

⁷⁵ Sommerfeld, U. (2004). 'Ina Seidel. Die unendliche Geschichte der Bagatelisierung einer NS-Dichterin.' In: *Braunschweig konkret* (PDS Braunschweig). pp. 10-12.

Gehler,⁷⁶ Sarkowicz and Mentzer,⁷⁷ and the 2004 Stadt Braunschweig Congress *Ina Seidel und die Literaten im Nationalsozialismus*,⁷⁸ emphasises the need for individual judgements on those authors who stayed in Germany. While not evading or blurring the moral and political considerations, the contributions to the Congress outline the events of Ina Seidel's life, and reflect changing attitudes as the process of reflection on Germany's past, and those who played a prominent part in it, continues up to the present. When towns questioned the allegiances displayed in street-names, Stadt Oldenburg (2012) decided that she was 'ein Teil des literarischen Mainstreams des NS-Regimes'.⁷⁹

Braunschweig's extensive published discussions reached more qualified conclusions. The cliché of Seidel as the prototype of a homely Nazi woman writer extolling housewives and mothers is challenged in Krusche's essay.⁸⁰ Putting the author in her historical context, she stresses the breadth of Seidel's vision and the contemporary responses which recognised intellectual and philosophical sources in her serious novels, referring to Gabriele Reuter's (1931) praise of Seidel as 'weibliches Pendant zu Thomas Mann'.⁸¹ Even within the major themes of women and war, Krusche shows that Seidel's fictional women are also unconventional, take initiatives, act as men⁸² and lead revolutions.⁸³ She mentions the author's contacts with the women's movements and her hopes for women's education while stressing Seidel's view that a woman's duty was to educate the young, stem the tide of scientific rationalism and maintain the moral and religious standards of private life. Christian images of

⁷⁶ Gehler, E.-M.(2010). *NS-Affinitäten: Grade der Systemaffinität von Schriftstellerinnen im Dritten Reich*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

⁷⁷ Sarkowicz, H., Mentzer, A. (2011). *Schreiben in schwierigen Zeiten, Ein Lexikon*. Insel Verlag, Berlin.

⁷⁸ Published as Hesse, A. (ed.) (2011). *Ina Seidel: Eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kadmos.

⁷⁹ Stadt Oldenburg. (2012). *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchung der Straßennamen der Stadt Oldenburg*. Oldenburg: Carl von Ossietzky Universität.

⁸⁰ Krusche, D. (2011). 'Frau und Krieg'. In: Hesse, A. (ed.) *Ina Seidel: Eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kadmos.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.16.

⁸² Krusche quotes Seidel's *Die Fürstin reitet*, in which Fürstin Daschkoff rides to save Russia. In: Ibid., p 15.

⁸³ Krusche quotes Seidel's *Der Tod einer Frau* on the death of Rosa Luxembourg. In: Ibid., p.13.

woman as triumphant and sacrificial mother are set against revolutionary zeal and violent action, which inevitably lead to destruction,⁸⁴ to show where a woman's vocation should lie. Acknowledging that Seidel interpreted Nazism initially as offering women the protection and dignity they deserved, Krusche also notes her public pronouncements which found disfavour in Nazi ranks. Her pacifism, her published dislike of political control of the arts⁸⁵ and deep religiosity distanced her from the State. Adverse Nazi reactions to the novel *Lennacker* Krusche considers as unjustified⁸⁶ since here, as elsewhere, Seidel avoided confrontation and managed to keep sufficiently in favour to maintain publication and increase sales of her work. The success of the post-war novel *Michaela*, Krusche attributes to the author's willingness to acknowledge the failures and anomalies of her own accommodations to Nazism, partly through the fictional writer Einmann in whom Krusche sees Seidel herself. The novel's readership found comfort and satisfaction, she suggests, from an author who recognised and acknowledged the sufferings of the German population before, during and after the war. Sarkowicz quotes the novel *Michaela* as an autobiographical text⁸⁷ in which Seidel attempted to explain, individually and emotionally, the factors which had governed her actions, and those of many of her contemporaries, during the Third Reich rather than analysing their social and political effects.⁸⁸

Sarkowicz' article offers a counter weight to Barbian's contribution, which stresses Seidel's public admissions of guilt. Barbian counts Seidel's sense of loyalty to her ideal of Germany, to the intellectual ideas of her youth and education and to her long-term friends, as determining factors in her behaviour after 1933. He suggests she did not sufficiently acknowledge the effect of her public life in support of National Socialism, quoting the numerous editions of her books

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.13.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.20-21.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.23.

⁸⁷ Sarkowicz, H. (2011). 'Apologie statt Selbstkritik? In: Ibid., p.167.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.169.

that appeared 1933-45.⁸⁹ Even *Lennacker*, which had received Nazi criticism, appeared in three editions and Seidel continued to actively participate in public life, even after the family retreat to Starnberg. To illustrate her attitudes during the Nazi years, Barbian quotes personal family letters in which her doubts on current events, awareness of political surveillance⁹⁰ and potential threats to livelihood are expressed. Her absolute certainty that she would never join a political party, her Führer worship, identifying Hitler with Germany,⁹¹ and blindness to political realities he attributes to naiveté.⁹² He emphasises Seidel's unease, as political pressures overwhelmed literary institutions and artistic freedoms. This was qualified by her distaste for left-wing political manifestations and personal sympathies with some committed Nazi supporters. Writing which appeared in publications recognised as Nazi, and on propagandist themes are, Barbian admits, undeniable⁹³ proofs of how far a Nazi ideology had permeated her own ideas. The genuine remorse she suffered in later recognising her faults and seeing them reflected in the views of respected contemporaries are illustrated by citations of correspondence. The isolation this engendered is brought forward as lasting evidence of her acknowledgement of personal failure. Barbian concludes that her initial idealism and final acknowledgements of guilt, are, in the prevailing historical circumstances, sufficient mitigation.

Goebel's study of the correspondence of Heinrich Wolfgang Seidel, the author's husband, whose religious convictions made a public life under National Socialism untenable, also stresses the political naiveté of the Seidel household.⁹⁴ Goebel suggests that their retreat to Starnberg isolated the couple from some awareness of present evils and that their respect for Germany and its elected rulers encouraged obedience even to laws they disliked, while their

⁸⁹ Barbian, J.P. (2011). 'Ich gehörte zu diesen Idioten'. In: *Ibid.*, p.64.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.41.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.71.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.53-54.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.74-6.

⁹⁴ Goebel, K. (2011). 'Das große Brandungsgebrüll ist nicht das Meer'. In: *Ibid.*, p.85.

personal moralities created constant internal conflicts. In response, they retreated into the literature of earlier times, which embodied literary values they regarded as higher and eternal, beyond political strife. Schnell⁹⁵ asserts that even some ‘völkisch’ writers, who have become thoroughly identified with National Socialism, perceived a clear delineation between the cultural and the political worlds. They persisted in assuming that their writings could be read as an embodiment of pure ideas which the practice of Nazism outraged. Seidel’s own written appeals to a mystic, eternal cosmic world beyond daily realities are framed in this context and Schnell’s criticism of writers who, like her, chose to accept rather than oppose political inflictions on the arts, is measured against the oppression they also suffered. Finally, however, he questions their persistence in refusing to acknowledge that, by continuing to write and cooperate, their work could only be construed as supporting National Socialism.⁹⁶ The condemnation of Seidel in Zuckmayer’s *Geheimreport* on Seidel, Rotermund considers as imposing higher moral demands on and allowing less literary credibility to, a female author. Zuckmayer’s judgement, he suggests, is not an entirely balanced assessment of the whole range of her literary work.⁹⁷

In Schütz’ conclusion, the guilt of Seidel’s personal involvements with the Third Reich and the support it derived from her publications is acknowledged. However, in the national context, he suggests that it is important that a nation is reminded of the failures of its past as exemplified by such representative figures as Seidel.⁹⁸

Gehler (2010)⁹⁹ approaches criticisms of Seidel through her fiction, giving a detailed account of the major themes of Seidel’s work and stressing their overall difference from those ideas of

⁹⁵ Schnell, R. (2011). ‘Schreiben im Dritten Reich: Ina Seidel im Kontext’. In: *Ibid.*, p.140.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁹⁷ Rotermund, E. (2011). ‘Charaktere und Verräter’. In: *Ibid.*, p.160.

⁹⁸ Schütz, E. (2011). In: *Ibid.*, p.181.

⁹⁹ Gehler, E.-M.(2010). *NS-Affinitäten: Grade der Systemaffinität von Schriftstellerinnen im Dritten Reich*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

women, aggressive nationalism and anti-Semitism which marked the Third Reich. She stresses the cosmopolitan outlook and the democratic ideas of *Das Labyrinth*¹⁰⁰ and the effective and powerful women figures who appear throughout the novels.¹⁰¹ While she acknowledges that Seidel recurs to the themes of sacrifice and martyrdom in the service of the nation, so exploited by Nazism, she makes a very clear distinction between the idealistic and utopian visions which motivate Seidel's writings and their later exploitation. She quotes Seidel's (1933) letter to her mother stating love of Fatherland and gratitude to the figure of Adolf Hitler, whom she at that point regarded uncritically, but points out that Seidel adamantly refused any allegiance to the party or any suggestion that she could be a 'Mitläufer'.¹⁰² Seidel's later account of her attraction to Hitler as the charismatic leader who would free Germany from the humiliations inflicted by the Versailles treaty and restore a Fatherland for her children are quoted at length.¹⁰³ While Gehler does not minimise the extent of Seidel's complicity, she details those factors which personally, socially and politically modify accusations of complicity with National Socialism. Barbian (2103)¹⁰⁴ remarks the brutal intimidation of writers under the Third Reich, naming Seidel's friend, Hans Grimm.¹⁰⁵ He provides quotations from the letters of Annemarie Suhrkamp to her sister Ina Seidel which confirm his analysis of the Fischer Press's efforts, then run by Peter Suhrkamp, Annemarie's husband, to continue to publish works outside the Nazi remit. The affection and goodwill between the sisters at this critical time undermine ideas of Seidel as a fervent Nazi supporter. Barbian finally repeats his earlier comment that Seidel was one of the few authors who after the war acknowledged the idiocy of her earlier idealistic assumptions

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.199.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.195.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.201.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.205.

¹⁰⁴ Barbian, J.P. (2013). *Literaturpolitik im NS Staat*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.215.

Petropoulos' (2014)¹⁰⁶ work investigates the complex personal and moral decisions made by, mainly Modernist artists in their accommodations to or rejections of National Socialism. Gottfried Benn's initial enthusiasm for National Socialism, shared with his friend Seidel, and his comparatively early revulsion at the effects of those ideas he had himself found appealing is considered and his letters to Seidel quoted to illustrate his rejection of Nazism and his decision to go into military service into defence of an eternal German ideal rather than abandon his country.

The current thesis proposes that Seidel was established within the tradition of an educated middle class who considered themselves above the mundanity of everyday politics. After 1918 she was against the war but antagonistic to the Versailles Treaty and keenly aware of Germany's humiliation. As Nazism gained power, she remained caught up in ideas of pantheism, reincarnation, myths of an eternal Germany and cosmic womanhood, and vulnerable to the attractions of a charismatic leader. She regarded daily events, even the appalling and outrageous ones of Nazi violence, as temporary and comparatively insignificant aberrations, a necessary step on the road to Germanic Utopia. Driven by financial considerations, family concerns and fear of consequences, she preferred not to look at, or think about, what was happening in Germany. Among friends and correspondents, some of Jewish ethnicity, she found reinforcement of her stance, an approval which continued into the post-war years as Germany reconsidered its past. While she never sought to excuse herself, she attempted to explain the response of herself, other women and the German intelligentsia through the novel *Michaela* whose popularity was rather a response to its exculpatory intent than literary quality.

¹⁰⁶ Petropoulos, J. (2014). *Artists under Hitler: Collaboration and Survival in Nazi Germany*. London: Yale University Press. pp.126-130.

The importance of theatre and the dramatic arts to Seidel's interpretations of human nature, society, and hopes for the future, forms the penultimate chapter of the current thesis. Theatre offers expression of her transcendental aspirations for national renewal and, she believes, a means of attaining them. Theatrical performance can return humanity to its place in the natural order and relate past to present to generate a harmonious future. The physical gestures of everyday life reveal an instinctive knowledge of these truths, as Seidel sees them. Nazi organisations understood and exploited the emotional effects of theatre on the mass audience, and their propaganda effectively exploited the performance arts, entertaining, inspiring and instructing, to attract and retain followers. Gentile's (1995) account of Italian fascism's 'art of mass ceremonies'¹⁰⁷ exposes the theatricality of Fascist brutality, its celebrations of martyrdom and parades of symbols associating ancient with modern to justify present unpalatable actions. Griffin (2007)¹⁰⁸ defines Fascism as a modernising ideology based on utopian aspirations and tending, in its public expression, towards charismatic politics and the aestheticisation of political ideas.¹⁰⁹ Theatre provided the tools for creating symbolic associations and ritual practices. Ceremonies with overtly political intent, but also the apparently apolitical recasting of Christian festivals, strengthened national unity under the swastika. Berghaus' analysis of the 'ritual core of fascist theatre'¹¹⁰ shows ritual as a way of coping with the stress of change while maintaining group integrity, providing support, reassurance and a sense of continuity. Crook's (1994)¹¹¹ work on the place of ritual in a fascist system interprets the euphoric effects of ritual activity as an initiator of violence, a 'sanctioned expression of affect' and 'merging of one's

¹⁰⁷ Gentile, E. (1995). 'The rites of communion of Fascist action squads'. In: Berghaus, G. (ed.) (1995). *Fascism and Theatre: Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925-1945*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books. p.76.

¹⁰⁸ Griffin, R. (2007). *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning Under Mussolini and Hitler*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.14-15.

¹¹⁰ Berghaus, G. (ed.) (1995). *Fascism and Theatre: Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925-1945*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books. pp. 39-40.

¹¹¹ Crook, S. (ed.) (1994). *The stars down to earth*. London/ New York: Routledge. p.13.

impulses with a ritual scheme.’ Seidel’s *Sterne der Heimkehr* illustrates the effect of fire, dance and myth to awake the latent powers of youth in a midsummer celebration of proto-fascist purification, with the predictable result, following Crook, of murderous violence. In Seidel’s narrative, this effect remains almost casual as she stresses instead the ‘metaphysical substance of the world’ and ‘dream represented as truth’ in the communal dramatic experience.¹¹²

Strobl illustrates the blatant propagandist intent of Nazi popular theatre, stressing the activity of a censorship that promoted racism on the stage as elsewhere.¹¹³ Performers, producers and writers were confronted with the ultimatum which faced every artist in the Third Reich: ‘The individual had a choice: but it was a stark one between professional withdrawal and political complicity.’¹¹⁴ The ‘cultural window dressing’¹¹⁵ of staging reputable plays with star performers was supported by a large audience of educated Germans to whom the cruder products of the Culture Ministry were anathema. Theatre, as Goebbels said, ‘had found in German culture its deepest and truest expression,’¹¹⁶ and the German public were ‘theatre obsessed.’¹¹⁷ No wonder, then, that popular authors used theatre to frame their fiction.

Vicki Baum, former musician, enthusiastic dancer and writer of both film and stage scripts would seem the more likely source of a theatrical approach to problems of her time. Many of her novels use the people, the interiors, the scripts and libretti of drama and musical drama as backdrop to the narrative. Current criticism has paid little attention to the significance of theatre in her work, preferring instead to concentrate on her better-publicised figure as a representative of female modernity.

¹¹² Ibid., p.52.

¹¹³ Strobl, G. (2007). *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society 1933-45*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p.113.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 113.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 210.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 210.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 210.

As popular, or mass, literature became the subject of academic research Baum's novels provided material to illustrate theories of classification, under sub-headings¹¹⁸ of 'Trivilliteratur' or 'Unterhaltungsliteratur, as discussed in Chapter 3. Holzner's (1984)¹¹⁹ detailed account of *Kristall im Lehm* finds a deeper level of social analysis at work than such genres would suggest and, linking autobiographical detail to fictional portrayals, identifies a personal investment in the characters of her fiction. King (1988)¹²⁰ followed Holzner's more serious evaluation of Baum's work, by recognition of Baum's mastery of style, concern with social issues and psychological authenticity which supported Holzner's viewpoint. Her extensive writing on Baum also emphasises the importance of the publishing market and the author's professional cooperation with publishers which, King asserts, both shaped her writing and contributed to her commercial success. Cappovilla (2000)¹²¹ recognises not only Baum's sophisticated style but a determined cosmopolitan and anti-nationalist intent in her novels and, like Becker (2000),¹²² questions the worth of contemporary literary categorisations which fail to acknowledge the qualities of Baum's authorship. Becker acknowledges Baum's *Menschen im Hotel* as the first major German *Großstadtroman* showing the city through the lifestyles of its inhabitants, the nihilistic tones of Otternschlag and the unsentimental diction of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The hotel as liminal space, representing both rootlessness, anonymity and freedom becomes, as Tallack (2002)¹²³ relates, an image of a fractured modern world which

¹¹⁸ Bayer, D. (1963). *Der triviale Familien- und Liebesroman im 20. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen: Ludwig Uhland-Institut der Universität Tübingen, Skreb, Z. & Baur, U. (eds.). (1984). *Erzählgattungen der Trivilliteratur*, Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft.

¹¹⁹ Holzner, J. (1963). 'Literarische Verfahrensweisen und Botschaften der Vicki Baum': In: *Ibid.*, pp. 223-250.

¹²⁰ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

¹²¹ Capovilla, A. (2000). 'Kosmopolitisches Heimweh, Anregungen zu einer neuen Lektüre Vicki Baums'. In: Kirkbright, S. (ed.) *Cosmopolitans in the Modern World. Studies on a Theme in German and Austrian Literary Culture*. München: ludicium.

¹²² Becker, S. (2000). 'Großstädtische Metamorphosen. Vicki Baums Roman Menschen im Hotel'. In: *Jahrbuch zur Literatur der Weimarer Republik. Frauen in der Literatur der Weimarer Republik*, No.5. pp.167-194.

¹²³ Tallack, D. (2002). *Waiting, waiting: the hotel lobby, in the modern city*. New York: Routledge.

offered, nevertheless, the opportunities for putting the old life behind to experiment with the new.

Nottelmann's¹²⁴ recognition of Baum's literary merit attributes a double structure to her fiction, with a realistic sub-text for the consumers of Trivialliteratur and a more subtle level of criticism available for the more discerning, fusing saleability with literary refinement. Barndt's (2003)¹²⁵ *Sentiment und Sachlichkeit: der Roman der Neuen Frau in der Weimarer Republik* implicitly accepts the dual nature of Baum's fiction, setting melodrama and easy affectivity against detached reportage and attempting to define what picture of the New Woman would be constructed in the dialogue between text and reader, a problematic judgement. Barndt considers that the typology of the New Woman that Frame¹²⁶ distinguishes in Baum's novel *stud. chem. Helene Wilfüer* was an inadequate summary of the myriad of shifting identities that were available to the New Women of Weimar. She outlines instead a more stable and primal womanhood in the character of Helene, closer to the Bachofian influences on Seidel's characters. Soares¹²⁷ also questions the images of modern women Baum creates in *Helene Wilfüer*. She stresses the tension between the then-startling sympathy with the trials of a young unmarried woman building a career who then becomes pregnant, and the traditional distinctions between 'fast' and 'nice' girls, 'normal' heterosexuality and 'perverse' lesbianism. Soares claims that these distinctions had to be maintained in order to ensure publication in the popular market. Frame's typologising endeavour receives a new rationale in the relationship between the author and her publishers.

¹²⁴Nottelmann, N. (2002). *Strategien des Erfolgs. Narratologische Analysen exemplarischer Romane Vicki Baums*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

¹²⁵ Barndt, K. (2003). *Sentiment und Sachlichkeit: der Roman der Neuen Frau in der Weimarer Republik* Köln /Weimar: Böhlau Verlag.

¹²⁶ Frame, L. (1997). Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne. In: von Ankum, K. (ed.) *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹²⁷ Soares, L.A. (2006). 'Vicky Baum and Gina Kaus: Female Creativity on the Margins.' In: Schönfeld, C. (ed.) *Practising Modernity: Female Creativity in the Weimar Republic*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.330.

Baum's 'other life' as exile author receives critical attention, with questions as to whether her early and voluntary emigration excludes her from that designation. Nottelmann concludes that her work after 1932/3 certainly fits within exile writing.

Bahr (2007)¹²⁸ puts Baum in the context of a German speaking exile community in Los Angeles that recreated, in many ways, the salon life of pre-war European cities, with star-exiles being perceived as latter-day Goethes, maintaining the culture of an idealised Germany. Baum's autobiography ruefully mentions the expense of such entertainments rather than their intellectual stimulation. Blubacher (2011)¹²⁹ also mentions the Baum soirées and the exiles' will to maintain the old life, their vicious gossip, acrimonious financial comparisons and complaints about the lack of coffee-houses. The sprawling city of Los Angeles inhibited flânerie and Baum lamented: 'nicht zu Fuß gehen zu könne, ohne sich verdächtig zu machen'.¹³⁰ *Pacific Palisades*¹³¹ notes that many exiles were shocked by the ignorance of Americans about European culture, disturbed by the pressure to adopt a different lifestyle and found the American dream an illusion. Palmier¹³² repeats Blubacher's summary of the exile life in Hollywood, emphasising the gulf, and the acrimony, between the prosperous exiles and those humiliated by menial jobs in harsh conditions. Even for the successful, however, compromises of artistic integrity demanded by linguistic problems and the expectations of a new literary market created distress.¹³³ Kater¹³⁴ cites a contemporary comment: 'Amerikanisches Brot konnte das „Bei-unski“ Syndrom auslösen. 'Bei uns zu Hause war alles besser.'

¹²⁸ Bahr, E. (2007). *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹²⁹ Blubacher, T. (2011). *Paradies in schwerer Zeit*. Munich: Elisabeth Sandmann Verlag.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.13,

¹³¹ Author unknown (2006) *Pacific Palisades*. Edition DAH. Hamburg: Marebuchverlag. p.18.

¹³² Palmier, Jean-Michel (2006). *Weimar in Exile: The Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America*. New York: Verso.

¹³³ Ibid., p.507.

¹³⁴ Kater, M. H. (2004). 'Die vertriebenen Musen'. In: Lehmann, H., Oexle, O.G. [eds.]. *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.p.502.

Baum declared early the voluntary emigrant's wholehearted adoption of the new country, with no intent to return to that left behind. She continued to criticise America harshly through her fiction. Very occasionally, she admitted the homesickness of forced exile and the urge to recreate the lost home in a new land.

After 1933, Seidel and Baum were definitively separated by ethnicity, geography, careers and national allegiances. The ideas they shared from the Weimar days were expressed in different languages and through different fictional scenarios. Post-war judgements on both women concentrated on political difference, although Carl Zuckmayer's comments on Seidel in a Geheimreport of 1943/44 for the US intelligence services, focussed, charitably or not, on the inevitable foolishness of her age and gender to exonerate her of evil intent. Rust's recent (2012) thesis *Fashioning Women Under Totalitarian Regimes: 'New Women' of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia*¹³⁵ introduces both Vicki Baum and Ina Seidel as examples of Modern Women but continues to distinguish clearly New Woman and the Nazi. She places both as representative women who expressed widely-held views as to the appropriate roles of women in society but with no suggestion that these views may have influenced attitudes to later political events.

Century's recent thesis¹³⁶ documenting the jobs of women during the Third Reich, relates individual lives through which the voices of New Women are heard. Romantic entanglements chance encounters, search for excitement, adventure and financial advantage, all the factors displayed in the lives of Baum's heroines, resulted in real women aiding atrocities. These women administered and implemented the policies of the Third Reich, with varying degrees of enthusiasm and resistance. Rather than demonising this great number of women, Century

¹³⁵ Vygodskaia Rust, V. (2012). *Fashioning Women Under Totalitarian Regimes: "New Women" of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia*. PhD thesis. Washington University.

¹³⁶ Century, R. (2013). *Dictating the Holocaust: Female administrators of the Third Reich*. PhD thesis, Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London.
<https://repository.royalholloway.ac.uk/file/365470eb3db-4c3b-91b0-7c590d50e344/1/2013CenturyRphd.pdf>

seeks the individual stories. Her work suggests that there is not a simple 'black-and-white ideological pattern of those who see the situation as polarized between Nazi villains and anti-Fascist heroes.'¹³⁷ She quotes Primo Levi's term, a 'sphere of ambiguity and compromise'¹³⁸ to describe the working lives of her female subjects.

Passmore (2003)¹³⁹ had brought the discussion to a pan-European perspective, pointing a difference, expressed in political terms, between group who had adopted, as did Seidel and Baum, 'idealised motherhood as the ethos of a morally-superior women's sphere.' The most significant factor differentiating the right from the left was the Nazi emphasis on who should be excluded from the benefits of such respect, therefore condemning and withdrawing reproductive rights from, those who did not conform to the Nazi standard of desirable, healthy, Germanness.¹⁴⁰

Recent work on women in the Third Reich draws upon earlier debates among feminist historians of Nazi Germany as to the extent to which German women in the Third Reich were perpetrators or victims. Studies in the 1980s considered women's active roles under National Socialism. Did possibilities of employment outside the home improve their lives? Did the emphatic separation of the sexes empower women in allowing them autonomous self-regulation, with compliance and collaboration becoming therefore a choice deliberately made or did the state assume total power over their private as well as public lives turning all women, willingly or unwillingly, into its victims? Stephenson's (1975) investigation¹⁴¹ and following publications continue to present the multiplicity of women's roles under Nazism

¹³⁷ Ibid, p.34.

¹³⁸ Levi, P. (1989). *The Drowned and the Saved*. Visalia, CA: Vintage International. p.67.

¹³⁹ Passmore, K. (2003). *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p.2.

¹⁴⁰ Heinsohn, K. (2003). 'Germany'. In: Passmore, K. (ed.) (2003). *Women, Gender, and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p.35.

¹⁴¹ Stephenson, J. (1975). *Mittäterschaft von Frauen: Die Komplizenschaft mit der Unterdrückung*. Orlanda Frauenverlag; Auflage: 2. (1. Februar 1990) [Online]. http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-531-91972-0_11#page-2 [Accessed 12.7.15].

and resist over-simplification of critical responses. Bridenthal, Grossmann and Kaplan's *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (1984) is referred to throughout the current chapter, being of particular relevance to two authors who strongly supported biological gender definition. Koonz's (1988) study¹⁴² documented the sexual, racial, genetic and public/private polarisations encouraged by Nazism which allowed women to be exploited by the state and were apparently internalised by those women who became enthusiastic supporters of the regime and even direct perpetrators of its crimes. She showed many German women as perpetrators within that role of caring housewife and mother, which society allotted to them, fully supporting male family members and thus furthering their activities. Gisela Bock's (1986) research¹⁴³ had led her to conclude that all German women were simply victims of the state, valued only for their reproductive ability. Nazi politics, she concluded, ensured that women were more sinned against than sinners. Margarete Mitscherlich¹⁴⁴ was also of the opinion that 'women were themselves victims who shared the anti-Semitic and racist views only out of an urge to conform and had no motives of their own for taking part in the criminal system.' Robin Morgan¹⁴⁵ took the contention further, claiming that women who participate in hate crimes are also victims of these crimes, since they must have been forced into them, a view elaborated by his contention that a misogynistic coalition between the Nazi party and the religious establishment ensured that all women became victims. He repeats the assertion in his 2014 publication *The Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism*.

¹⁴² Koonz, C. (1988). *Mothers in the Fatherland, Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

¹⁴³ Bock, G. (1986). *Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag. p.9.

¹⁴⁴ Kompisch, K. (2008). *Täterinnen: Frauen im Nationalsozialismus*. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag.

¹⁴⁵ Morgan, R. (2004). writing in Ms. Magazine in 1991, cited in Susannah Heschel, "Does Atrocity Have a Gender? Feminist Interpretations of Women in the SS" in Jeffrey Diefendorf, (ed.) *Lessons and Legacies. New Currents in Holocaust Research*. p.314.

Christina Thürmer Rohr¹⁴⁶ returned the power of choice and discrimination to the female population, viewing women as joint perpetrators of Nazi crimes. identifying ‘both the complementarity of man and woman (difference) and conformity by women to make male strategies (equality) ultimately form the basis of joint perpetration’ Kathrin Kompisch¹⁴⁷ asserted that many ‘ordinary’ women willingly accepted the measures and methods of the state, illustrating through case studies, as does Heschel,¹⁴⁸ that some women in the Nazi state were as brutal as their male counterparts.

As in Bock’s earlier work, Herkommer¹⁴⁹ finally concludes that the ‘issue of women as victims or perpetrators under National Socialism [is] largely resolved by emphasizing the multiple roles of women’.¹⁵⁰

The contribution made by popular culture to women’s contribution to the rise and maintenance of National Socialism is illustrated by Alexandra’s (2004)¹⁵¹ *Die wussten was uns gefällt“: ästhetische Manipulation und Verführung im Dritten Reich*. Her analysis of the intrusion of Nazi ideology in every cultural activity. Expressionist dance was replaced by folk-dance, but the principles of Eurythmy and gymnastics were channelled into group exercises to unite, entertain, discipline and improve female fitness.

¹⁴⁶ Stephenson, J. (1975). *Mittäterschaft von Frauen: Die Komplizenschaft mit der Unterdrückung*. Orlanda Frauenverlag; Auflage: 2. (1. 2.90) [Online]. http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-531-91972-0_11#page-2 [Accessed 12.7.15].

¹⁴⁷ Kompisch, K. (2008). *Täterinnen: Frauen im Nationalsozialismus*. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag.

¹⁴⁸ Heschel, S. (2004). ‘Does Atrocity Have a Gender? Feminist Interpretations of Women in the SS’. In: Diefendorf, J. (ed.) *Lessons and Legacies. New Currents in Holocaust Research*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. p.314.

¹⁴⁹ Herkommer, C. (2008). ‘Women under National Socialism: Women’s Scope for Action and the Issue of Gender’, trans. Littlejohn, R. In Jensen, O. and Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, C.-C.W. (eds.) *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p.108.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.110.

¹⁵¹ Alexandra, O. (2004). *‘Die wussten was uns gefällt“: ästhetische Manipulation und Verführung im Dritten Reich*. Münster. LIY Verlag.

The achievements of Nazi cinema examined in a multiplicity of recent publications, including Hake's (2001) *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich*,¹⁵² or O'Brien's (2006) *Nazi cinema as enchantment: the politics of entertainment in the Third Reich* are only peripherally relevant to the current thesis, emphasising political control of popular film culture. Nazism did not only achieve its influence through terror but actively won and maintained support through delighting and encouraging the nation as well as unequivocally damning those to be regarded as enemies of the state. Vicki Baum, exiled to Hollywood and blacklisted was not implicated and her film *Grand Hotel* premiered in Berlin in February 1933,¹⁵³ was closed shortly thereafter. Urwand¹⁵⁴ condemns Hollywood studios in the 30s, not only for submitting to the commercial pressures of being excluded from any international market under German control but choosing to actively collaborate with the Nazi regime. They sacked Jewish staff abroad (despite the Jewish ethnicity of Louis B. Mayer, the Brothers Warner, Harry Cohn, Adolph Zukor and many other studio artists and workers in Hollywood itself) and, he alleges, cut filmed material to comply with Nazi propaganda interests. Although the bias of his work, as indicated in its aggressively direct title, has since been questioned, particularly by those supporting Doherty's more muted version of events¹⁵⁵ it does reveal widespread American anti-Semitism. Doherty and Urwand agree on the cowardice of studio bosses but Doherty finds no direct evidence to support the accusation of active collaboration or pro-Nazi intent. Baum told her own experience of the callous disregard studios displayed.¹⁵⁶ Her fictional critique¹⁵⁷ of the moral turpitude of the industry, and the town which it dominated, expresses personal animosity. Her own anti-Nazi film *Hotel*

¹⁵² Hake, S. (2001). *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

¹⁵³ King, L.J. (2000). 'Menschen Im Hotel/Grand Hotel: Seventy Years of a Popular Culture Classic', *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures*, 23(2), 56-72.

¹⁵⁴ Urwand, B. (2013). *The Collaboration, Hollywood's Pact with Hitler*. Harvard/London: The Bellknap Press of Harvard University Press.

¹⁵⁵ Dick, B. (2014). Review 'Hollywood and Hitler: 1933-39 by Thomas Doherty', *American Studies*, 53(1), 208-209 (Review).

¹⁵⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*, Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.439.

¹⁵⁷ Baum, V. (1953). *The Mustard Seed*. New York: Sun Dial Press. As *Kristall im Lehm*: Berlin/Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch.

Berlin was a rushed production and release, timed to coincide with the Allied advance on Berlin and afterwards updated to include the latest war news with clear propagandist intent. The popular culture of the film industry was exploited by both warring parties with political intent made clear through censorship and propagandist themes and images.

Too often dismissed as escapist entertainment or vilified as mass manipulation, popular cinema in the Third Reich was in fact sustained by well-established generic conventions, cultural traditions, aesthetic sensibilities, social practices, and a highly developed star system which was not unlike its Hollywood counterpart in the 1930s. Popular music and radio contributed to the development of an emotional attachment to an imagined Germany, promoting a sense of comradeship and national solidarity based on sentiment rather than rationalism.¹⁵⁸ Seidel's (1942) broadcast 'Im Kreise der Familie',¹⁵⁹ musing on the German landscape and the consolations of home and children was interspersed with excerpts from Bizet's *Jeux d'Enfants*. Light music, from a serious composer, reinforced the cheering and comforting effect of a talk and readings delivered, according to the text, from her home study with the grandchildren playing in the background. The cultural association of the home fireside, where books were traditionally read for personal, and family, entertainment was not spared from political interference. Perry's (2005) *Nazifying Christmas: Political Culture and Popular Celebration in the Third Reich* relates the conflicts over the Christmas celebration, the high point of family and religious life in a Christian country. Attempts to recast Christmas as a neo-pagan winter festival, imbuing the family with 'a German and völkisch sense of purpose'¹⁶⁰ in the swastika-adorned home were comparatively ineffective. Perry notes, however, the Nazi success of

¹⁵⁸ Curris, B. (2006). *A National Acoustics: Music and Mass Publicity in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁵⁹ Seidel, I. (1942). Einleitung und Zwischentexte für die Sendung des NWDR "Im Kreise der Familie" . DLA 75.1043.

¹⁶⁰ Perry, J. (2014). *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History*. Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press. p.195.

blending sentimental pastiches of a rural Germany with traditional imagery, robbed of its religious significance, and invested with the nationalist, and racist, concepts of Volksgemeinschaft.¹⁶¹ Heinrich Seidel, as one who continued to oppose Nazi domination of church life, was determined to keep the Seidel's home Christmas one of peaceful Christian family enjoyment, as his letters guardedly state.¹⁶²

Seidel's writings contributed to the maintenance of nostalgia, as did, in America, Baum's reminiscences of Christmas past and home-cooking. However, to reduce the former to positive support for fascism and the latter to action for a free world ignores the complexities of the authors, their writings and their society. The work of the present thesis, in this as in the other areas studied, is to distinguish the sources from which they gained those ideas propagated through their popular fiction. It aims to show the common ground on which their divergent fictions and personal images stand, while acknowledging the very different developments of their ideas. A retrospective vision was not available to their large contemporary readerships and, in concentrating on the contemporary expression of the authors, on what their readers could read, see and hear of the two women, the thesis aims to modify the present critical polarity which afflicts the authors and their work.

¹⁶¹ Perry, J. (2005). 'Nazifying Christmas: Political Culture and Popular Celebration in the Third Reich.' *Central European History*, 38, 572-605.

¹⁶² Seidel, H.W.(1964). *Briefe 1934-1944*. Berlin: Eckart-Verlag. p.69.

Chapter 2

Lives in Parallel – A biographical outline

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Chapter 2 **Lives in Parallel – A biographical outline**

2.1 Chalk and Cheese?

Biographies of Seidel and Baum show women whose remarkable lives set them apart from the majority of their female contemporaries, even though the experience of instabilities and disasters was not uncommon for a generation of women who lived through two World Wars. Both women started their literary careers from the comparatively sheltered and privileged position of educated middle-class girls but both chose to address their work to a popular audience, both male and female, whose lives were often very different from their own. Looking outwards, towards this larger social world, both women nevertheless understood their work as voicing the interests and concerns of their readership. The nature and extent of their readership is the subject of a later chapter. The biographical outline aims to indicate the nature of those life-experiences which enabled, and prompted, the authors to write work which achieved such popularity. The differences in the progress of their lives, which are emphasised by current critical writing, to the detriment of attitudes to both authors, are thereby put into a wider social context, which allows underlying similarities to emerge. Baum was more serious in both her life and literature and Seidel more frivolous and open-minded than present criticism immediately suggests and both drew on their wide range of personal experience to produce both the popular writing and the sympathetic public personalities which ensured their best-seller status. The ‘compare and contrast’ biographical process, awkward though it is, is necessary to express the sharing of crucial, formative experiences. It shows how each woman related to the general historical conditions to which their readership was also subjected, and indicates those contemporary cultural influences which affected the way in which both the writers and their readers interpreted the events which were happening around them.

The selection and ordering of life-events, which is evident in the autobiographical writings of Seidel and Baum, shows how the authors themselves chose to regard, interpret and communicate the incidents and influences of their own lives. They present histories which diverge from each other sufficiently, in both the events narrated and the tone of narration, to prompt the present general critical stance defining them as poles apart. Nevertheless, their interpretations of the significance of their respective life-events also highlight shared analyses of dystopia which generated similar utopian visions, given substance and emotional force by lived experience.

Baum showed no great inclination to overtly analyse her own life at length for the benefit of the public gaze but her correspondence with Lisa Lyons¹⁶³ suggests that the autobiography, begun in her final years, had progressed further towards completion than Wolfgang Lert suggests in the Preface to the book,¹⁶⁴ edited by his wife in the year following the author's death and published in 1962.

Seidel wrote and re-wrote aspects of her life-story in at least eleven publications,¹⁶⁵ as well as using it as source-material for fictional accounts with identifiable autobiographical parallels. The fascination with her own life was not a manifestation of self-obsession any more than Baum's failure to complete an autobiographical work was modest withdrawal. Both women

¹⁶³ Elizabeth Lyons Collection, Box 6, Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia.

¹⁶⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

¹⁶⁵ Seidel, I. (1921). *Lebensweg*. Chemnitz: Gesellschaft der Bücherfreunde.

Seidel, I. (1935). 'Kurzer Lebensbericht' [zu ihrem 50.Geburtstag]. *Das Deutsche Wort*, 11, 1-3.

Seidel, I. (1935). *Meine Kindheit und Jugend. Ursprung, Erbteil und Weg*. Stuttgart/Berlin:Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

Seidel, I. (1950). 'Stationen meines Lebens'. *Niederdeutsche Zeitung*. Hannover: 15.09.50.

Seidel, I. (1951). *Osel, Urd und Schumme.*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Verlag.

Seidel, I. (ed.) (1955). *Dank an Bayern : Lesung anlässlich der Feier ihres 70. Geburtstages / Ina Seidel. – Jägerhuber*. Starnberg: Starnberger Kunstkreis Buzentaur.

Seidel, I. (1960). *Drei Städte meiner Jugend*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

Seidel, I. (1962). *Berlin, ich vergesse dich nicht! Erinnerungen*. Berlin: Staneck.

Seidel, I. (1962). *Vor Tau und Tag*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

Seidel, I. (1966). 'Gelingen einer Sache sind'. In: Kalinowski, A. v. (ed.) *Als wir noch Lausbuben waren:Berühmte und Prominente erzählen*. Köln und München: F. Schneider.

Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

view their own lives as specks within the great movement of the universe, with eternity as the time-frame and the cosmos as geographical context. Both claimed to be primarily interested in their lives as examples of the generality of life itself, ‘am Leben überhaupt’,¹⁶⁶ rather than analysing their individual psychologies according to the then-modern Freudian system. They both aim to deduce and illustrate conclusions relative to the collective experience of humanity from the individual narratives of their lives.

Baum was later able to widen the human frame of reference, travelling to those places which allowed her to experience at first hand the more ‘primitive’ cultures on which some of her later novels depend. The relocation from Austria to Germany and then to the USA, then excursions to the South Seas, Asia, and North Africa, allowed her to judge her own life as a performance against many different backcloths¹⁶⁷ and from the standpoint of popular anthropology, as further explored in chapter six on theatre and ritual. The highly-individual experiences of her home, family and working-life enabled her to cross social and class boundaries as well as geographical ones and to write autobiographically-based work with popular appeal.

Seidel was limited to the second-hand reports of her brother Willy and others to make her intellectual and imaginative contacts with the history and practices of more exotic lands and belief systems. Her preoccupation with autobiography, however, reflects a similar need to ground her literary work in personal, physical, sensual, observation of the world around her rather than being content with the testimony of others. But Baum’s unusual freedom contrasted with an early constriction of life-opportunities for Seidel, enforced first by family circumstances then illness. While Baum continued to widen her perspectives, Seidel found her

¹⁶⁶ ‘Sie haben recht mit Ihrer Vermutung, daß ich an meinem eigenen Leben stets weniger interessiert war als *am Leben überhaupt*: also vor allem am Menschlichen und an den Schicksalen, die sich im Bereich des Menschlichen ergehen.’ Ferber.C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.p189.

¹⁶⁷ Descriptions of her own small figure and the clothes she wore for the occasion are set against detailed descriptions, like a theatrical scene-setting. Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.423.

world getting bleaker and narrower. Poor health and family duties, then the restrictions of life in a totalitarian state, were followed by condemnation and a greater withdrawal from public life as a result of her support of National Socialism. Autobiography remained a source of interest to the author and, apparently, to her readership. The post-war lives of both women thus serve as examples of those of many of their compatriots, while their authorial status allowed them both to publicise, and offer narrative explanations for, the stances which they adopted or had forced upon them.

Writing their life-histories, whether in fictional or autobiographical form, was, for both women, an effort of self-discovery rather than an accurate narration of history. Baum emphasises that she never wished to record the facts and dates of her life, details which had the literary function of establishing the impression of realism in a fictional work,¹⁶⁸ but which were of lesser relevance than the interpretation of events for both author and reader. Seidel emphasises that

die dichterische Durchdringung und Darstellung der Welt für mich der einzig mögliche Weg zur Bewußtwerdung nicht nur dieser Welt, sondern auch meiner selbst war.¹⁶⁹

The imaginative reconstruction of earlier experience, which enabled both women to create a vision of themselves and their place in the world, was also aimed at informing and enlightening their readership,¹⁷⁰ transmitting the wisdom both authors believed themselves to have acquired in the course of their lives. The emotion generated by memories ‘recollected in tranquillity’¹⁷¹ and transmitted through a text with a ‘colouring of imagination’,¹⁷² could, they thought, lead

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.168.

¹⁶⁹ Ferber, C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.102.

¹⁷⁰ ‘eine Form der Weltgreifung und Weltdurchdringung, als ein Mittel der Bildung und der Erkenntnis. Ibid., p.131.

¹⁷¹ ‘to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature:’ Wordsworth, W. (1800). *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*.

[Online]. <http://www.bartleby.com/39/36.html> [Accessed 23.8.14].

¹⁷² Ibid.

their readers through a similar reflective process. This would be educative, enabling them to see and understand their own lives through those of other women. The ‘truth’ of the autobiographical statement thus lies primarily in its emotional effect on the reader rather than its factual substance. Seidel’s rapturous evocations of the German landscape in *Die Flöte*, with the burning smells of autumn potato-fields mingling with sweet aromas and cheerful sounds of fairtime¹⁷³ or Baum’s accounts of the manners and modes of court life¹⁷⁴ both use the autobiographical form to move the reader beyond her present-time to an imaginative world. The interaction between the writers, as protagonists, and events in the outside world is used to reveal the factors, historical, psychological, social, or spiritual which the writers have identified for themselves and which, they believe, underlie the surface realities of everyday life. Both women regarded the recognition of a spiritual dimension as necessary to mitigate the effects of a scientific and materialist culture to which they attributed many of the very obvious evils of the modern world. The distinction between fictionalised autobiography and ‘factual’ was not therefore the yardstick against which either author considered autobiographical realism should be judged and both obfuscated the boundaries. In this chapter, the ‘fictional’ autobiographies of *Marion, Osel Urdd und Schlummei* or *Michaela* are referred to, alongside the nominally factual autobiographical works, as the authors’ meditations on aspects of their own lives, even when the fictional circumstances may differ in detail from the factual.¹⁷⁵

2.2 Lives in progress

The shifts in emphasis between their various autobiographical writings show the effect of the author’s literary intentions on the selection of autobiographical content. Seidel’s first autobiography *Lebensweg* (1921), written at the age of 36, was published when the national humiliation of defeat, hyper-inflation as a result of war reparations, internal revolts from

¹⁷³ Seidel, I. (1931). *Die Flöte*. DLA Marbach. 75.1052.

¹⁷⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*, Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. pp. 154-9.

¹⁷⁵ In Seidel’s (1962). *Vor Tau und Tag* both mother, then father, die young but the family, household and reactions to parental death are recognisably autobiographical.

Communists and external ones from Polish patriot groups were perceived as threatening the German nation. The time was right for publication of a book which celebrated the German family and the German countryside and the account of Seidel's childhood, with its memories of the landscapes, the seasonal and rural festivals of a picture-book *Heimat*¹⁷⁶ offered brightly-coloured images into which to escape from present misery and captured that spirit of an eternal German landscape and soul so appealing to a demoralised nation. This picture of Germany recurs throughout her autobiographical reminiscences and is central to her definition of *Heimat*. Throughout her life, a succession of specifically autobiographical narratives¹⁷⁷ offered stories of a German past, and family histories, to a general readership maintaining the flow of published work and a necessary income. But the autobiographical form also allowed more serious analyses, while retaining a popular readership. The subdued tone and very limited action of *Osel Urdd und Schlummei* (1930) express a very personal reminiscence and an exploration of the effect of parental death on a child. Written from the viewpoint of the eldest daughter of three siblings, with a doctor-father and an aunt who keeps the household running following a mother's death, elements of the Seidel family-history are immediately recognisable. The fictional death of the mother expresses the author's musings on how it could have been if her own mother, rather than her father, had died. Seidel identifies the strong, protective affection which she identifies as the ideal father's contribution to the family's emotional structure, offering an alternative to her generally mother-centred accounts. By contrast, memory becomes a public affair in *Erinnerungen [an den Kriegsausbruch 1914]*,¹⁷⁸ as a past wartime is evoked to renew a sense of history and national solidarity in the Germany of 1934 and the family is subordinated to the communal reminiscence. After the second war,

¹⁷⁶ Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels : Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.149.

¹⁷⁷ Seidel, I. (1935). *Meine Kindheit und Jugend. Ursprung, Erbe und Weg*. Stuttgart, Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart, Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Seidel, I. (1921). *Lebensweg*, Chemnitz: Gesellschaft der Bücherfreunde, Seidel, I. (1960). *Drei Städte meiner Jugend*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

¹⁷⁸ Seidel, I. (1934) 'Erinnerungen [an den Kriegsausbruch 1914]' *Das Deutsche Wort*, 10,13.

the sufferings of families like hers and their friends and colleagues, the moral dilemmas of the German intelligentsia under National Socialism, are dramatised in the comparatively action-packed and geographically wide-ranging novel *Michaela* (1959). Although the story is clearly not autobiographical, the theme of national guilt, possibly identifiable characters and the strident exculpatory intent gave the work an autobiographical resonance impossible to ignore at the time of publication. Widespread public interest ensured another best-seller despite critical condemnation. The shift towards fiction and away from strictly autobiographical detail ensured that many readers could see themselves, their friends and families in the characters, while Seidel's long-established reputation as a respected writer of biographies, autobiographies and reminiscences lent the work an air of authenticity.

Baum's imaginative exploitation of a home, family and working-life, which crossed social and class boundaries as well as geographical ones, is also directed towards commercial publication. A teenage account of being accosted in the park launched her public literary career,¹⁷⁹ followed by the many novels of theatrical life. Within the apparent frivolity and glamour of the theatrical context she does express serious ideas. In the facile early novel *Eingang zur Bühne*,¹⁸⁰ a young girl's introduction to love-affairs and opera, she introduces the sculptor working on a massive male figure of a fighter, as he retreats from the realities of a dying wife and fragile daughter. Reflections on German masculinity, contemporary sculpture and war memorials, as well as on her own father and family, become part of the melodramatic story.

When she wrote her, clearly highly subjective, novel *Marion* in 1942, which was frequently understood to be autobiographical, as she well knew,¹⁸¹ and which she calls in her correspondence with Elizabeth Lyons, 'my most subjective and personal book [...] Not an

¹⁷⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.169.

¹⁸⁰ Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*. Berlin: Ullstein. First published 1920.

¹⁸¹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.273.

autobiography but still more of myself than I like to tell in general',¹⁸² she had been a naturalised American for four years. As a resident of California since 1932, she could write about Europe with some detachment. At a time when anti-German propaganda was being officially organised,¹⁸³ Baum's financial success and social acceptance as a 'liberated' woman and exile writer, free of any taint of Nazism, allowed her some latitude. Certain later scenes of the novel criticise Nazis and the effects of the repressive regime on life in Germany but, in general, she presents a story of a European life from a perspective little changed since the earlier years of Weimar. She introduces many of the same themes as Seidel's autobiographies - attachment to the culture and landscape of Heimat and the romanticising of its past, dislike of modern industrial rationalism and mass culture and the unique relationship of women with family, the natural world and with artistic creation. The decision to finally write an autobiography and to write it in German, despite the difficulty she found in reviving the formalities of the written language and avoiding the tone and vocabulary it had acquired during the Nazi years,¹⁸⁴ is an interesting one which invites further research.

2.3 Common experience

The influence of family circumstances on the life histories and the literary work of both women had certain similarities. Family backgrounds would not immediately suggest parallels between Ina, eldest daughter of the intellectual Seidel family, firmly ensconced in the European higher-bourgeoisie with its rigid conventions and expectations and Vicki, sole child of the Jewish, nouveau-riche, recently immigrant, Baums. The common themes which emerge in their writings are related however to life-stories, in many respects typical for women of their nationalities, class and generation.

¹⁸² Baum, V. (1956). Elizabeth Lyons collection, Box 6, Penn Museum, Philadelphia.

¹⁸³ In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of War Information for the dissemination of war information and propaganda.

¹⁸⁴ Baum, V. (1958). Elizabeth Lyons collection, Box 6, Penn Museum, Philadelphia.

The city lives of European capitals, the common fate of Austria and Germany in the First World War,¹⁸⁵ and the suffering of its aftermath affected both women. Family life also had certain significant similarities. The utopian aspirations of their novels are projected from a personal analysis of familial dystopias. Both childhoods were shadowed by paternal failures. Hermann Seidel's dutiful and diligent pursuit of a medical career, not of his own choice, was made tolerable by studies of natural history and local anthropology, which marked him out from his medical peers. Antagonism from colleagues, professional jealousy and accusations of negligence, later proved in court to be false, resulted in his suicide when Ina was twelve. Hermann Baum's familial and sexual failures were less public but equally blighted the lives of his dependent wife, whose psychological, and finally physical illnesses, he was unable to contemplate. He first consigned her to a sanatorium, and finally abandoned her care to his teenage daughter. Both girls were confronted by a parent who was unable to deal with external pressures and retreated into mental breakdown and death. A sense of the threatening mental and emotional forces which lurked behind the surface appearances of stability and security was experienced early. Their destructive power was evident in both families and expressed in parental absence, and disrupted lives. The intense affection for the lost parent was allied to a deep sense of shame at the 'weakness' of the parent responsible for the social humiliation of the family. Even when Hermann Seidel was cleared of professional misconduct through the energetic efforts of his brothers, the stain of suicide remained. Like the mental illness of Baum's mother, such an allegedly genetic inheritance reflected on the whole family and its children. The commercial capitalism, with which Hermann Baum identified himself, and the scientific establishment which carried the blame, as Seidel saw it, for her father's death, both became the targets of post First World War, anti-rationalist criticism. For girls who could blame

¹⁸⁵ 1.7 million German dead and 1.2 million Austrians, with both countries suffering roughly 7 million casualties – [Online]. <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/FWWcasualties.htm>. [Accessed 3.02.12].

the same institutions for a parent's suffering and death, the criticism, and its anti-rationalist bases had a personal attraction.

Both girls were given an education with a thorough grounding in the languages and culture of Europe. Their personal talents and family connections maintained their involvement with intellectual circles despite, and throughout, their comparatively early marriages, presenting opportunities to develop a public career. They thus ensured that they would not become financially reliant on husbands or male relatives, having seen the difficulties that this dependency had caused for their mothers. They were both finally able to provide the major financial support for their families. Seidel chose to remain ostensibly within the conventions of class, gender and family and Baum to step outside them, but their experiences come together in novelistic portraits of effective and capable women, suffering within the framework of a paternalistic society, who adopt a number of survival, or self-sacrificial, techniques in order to accommodate themselves to its demands.

2.4 Shared disillusion

Although both women's social background was that of the Wilhelmine Bürgertum, they, along with the majority of their contemporaries, defined its structural and ethical failings in the years after the First World War and sought to be amongst those initiating new ways of building the future. Seidel identified her youthful enthusiasm for the war with a systematic, if inadvertent, deceit.¹⁸⁶ Baum describes her first reading Ibsen's *Ghosts* as a revelation of what she calls 'der ganze Betrug, die Lügen, die Falschheit der Welt'.¹⁸⁷ Seidel looked for solutions in the esoteric and utopian ideologies she encountered through the George Kreis and her brother's contacts with the Steiner movement, astrology and brushes with Eastern religions. Baum personalises

¹⁸⁶ Auf [...] die Achtzehn- bis Vierzigjährigen, die Realität eines Krieges nie erlebt hatten.[...]von der Regierung in der Überzeugung bestärkt, einen gerechten Krieg zu führen, und in dem Vertrauen auf Heer und Flotte rückte die Armee aus.' Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. pp.269-70.

¹⁸⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p172.

her disgust, embodying the dilemmas of the Kaiserreich in the person of her father, the tyrannical petty business-man, permanently misogynistic and dissatisfied. Dispassionate Prussian efficiency, which she regarded as failing in humanity, is inscribed in the Spartan regime, ostensibly based on the Kaiser's own habits, which Hermann Baum imposed on her upbringing.

Always seeking the melodramatic and the physical, investing her Jewish father with characteristics of moral and aesthetic brutality and insisting on his ethnicity, she turns the political into the personal, familial and anti-Semitic. 'Er wäre als erster Hitlers bücherverbrennenden Brigaden beigetreten, hätte er nicht zufällig jüdische Eltern gehabt'.¹⁸⁸

2.5 All girls together

Family influences and ethnicity are significant influences on the writings of both women but sex and gender were pivotal to the way in which both authors approached their own lives and those of their fictional characters. They contemplated the incidents of their lives from this perspective as child became girl, then woman, finally reaching ultimate fulfilment, as they write, in motherhood. They saw themselves as following a biological course common to all women, and they judged the events of their lives as in harmony with, or inimical to, the natural laws which, they believed, governed the process. Women who failed to achieve a personal equilibrium were a burden on their families and on society. Portraits of mothers whose failings were responsible for the social alienation of one of their fictional protagonists¹⁸⁹ reflect the conditions of the authors' own lives.

But gender had for them a spiritual as well as a physical dimension. The way women related to human society and the natural world was, they considered, essentially different from that male pattern of relationships which was socially dominant. What it meant to be a woman in

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.91.

¹⁸⁹ Falling in this category are Ulle's mother in Baum's *Ulle der Zwerg* or Elsabe of *Das Tor der Frühe* who caused Wolfgang's alienation in Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr*.

contemporary society had long been part of a lively contemporary debate, but for Seidel and Baum, like many of their contemporaries, it was more a philosophical than a social, political or economic concept. From their chosen viewpoint of womanhood as eternal and universal, the times and places of an individual life were of minor importance, source matter appropriate for entertainment, for contemplation as examples of greater truths or as sources of later revelations. Seidel later interprets childhood delight in lying on the grass, or floating in the lake as affirmations of an instinctive, sensual relationship with the earth as mother-spirit. Contact with the land and its creatures forged a deep and lasting bond with the physical elements of *Heimat*. Baum develops a philosophy from her childish observation of anthills: ‘Ameisen werden niemals wissen und könnten mit diesem Wissen gar nicht leben, wie klein und unbedeutend sie innerhalb eines derart unermesslichen Ameisenuniversums sind’¹⁹⁰

Reviews and publicity which presented Baum as a popular novelist who nevertheless fulfilled with devotion her familial role and Seidel as a literary pastor’s wife, gave their readership a conventional view of the authors’ family relationships. Seidel’s extended family followed the paternalist ethos of the previous century with paid employment and independent lives considered generally unnecessary or inappropriate for women of their class. However, the Seidel men were frequently dogged by ill-health, becoming heavily dependent on female relatives and, in her generation, Ina herself, to maintain their daily lives and households. Grandmothers, Mother and aunts were real-life examples for her self-sacrificing and nurturing fictional women. The Romantic association of love and death was, in Seidel’s introduction to the world, a physical as well as a literary reality. The conjunction of sex, birth and death, already deduced from her family observations, experiences with the family’s many pet animals and her father’s hospital-patients, was confirmed in gossip with servants and fellow schoolgirls.

¹⁹⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.23.

Images from childhood embody the idea. The sight of a mother nursing her baby¹⁹¹ coalesced in her childish imagination with that of a recently-served steak ‘à l’Anglais’, rare and bloody.¹⁹² The fluids of milk and blood, both life-sustaining and mother-generated¹⁹³ are brought into a context of death as dead meat becomes nourishment alongside the living milk.¹⁹⁴ Blood as ‘Lebensquelle’¹⁹⁵ recurs in other incidents. Minor injuries to brother and mother startle the child, as blood starts from wounds and that fluid, which should be contained within the hidden recesses of the body, projects its primordial presence into the domestic space.¹⁹⁶

The generally urban and more restricted experience of the young Baum generates no accounts of similar direct encounters with blood and suffering but other children told her the tales. She recounts gleeful games of bloody childbirth¹⁹⁷ with her dolls, where the same association between sex and death was established. Later, a servant’s abortion¹⁹⁸ as a result of an affair with a faithless Catholic lover, occurred in the flat Baum shared with Max Prels, the dilettante writer who was her first husband from 1906-1910. ‘Sie war ohne Bewußtsein und schwamm in ihrem Blut.’¹⁹⁹ This incident brought the child’s play of sex and death into the adult’s married life, The faithless lover confirmed her increasing suspicions that unreliability, deceit and

¹⁹¹ ‘an der Mutterbrust trinkenden Kindes’ - Seidel, I. (1935). *Meine Kindheit und Jugend. Ursprung, Erbteil und Weg*. Stuttgart/ Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.25.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹⁹³ An image also related to Catholic dogma on the Virgin Mary. ‘The Holy Eucharist is the Bread that comes from our Heavenly Mother. It is Bread produced by Mary from the flour of Her immaculate flesh, kneaded into dough with her virginal milk.’ [Online]. <http://www.catholictradition.org/Mary/virgin-eucharist.htm>. [Accessed 22.10.14].

¹⁹⁴ Adding the black of death, as in the first chapter of *Das Wunschkind*, creates the colour symbolism of the German flag. In 1866, the Prussian-dominated [North German Confederation](#) adopted a tricolour of black-white-red as its flag, which became the flag of the [German Empire](#) in 1871, and was used until 1918. Black, white, and red were reintroduced as the German national colours with the establishment of [Nazi Germany](#) in 1933, until the end of World War II.

¹⁹⁵ Seidel, I. (1935). *Meine Kindheit und Jugend. Ursprung, Erbteil und Weg*. Stuttgart, Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.25.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.25

¹⁹⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.184

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.252

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.252.

evasion were not unusual in sexual or marital relationships and that the rituals of organised religion could abet the duplicity.

2.6 Love and Marriage

The novels of both Baum and Seidel express the wider, more primal view of sexual and marital relationships which they had both developed by the time they came to write and which their autobiographies only sketch in outline. Brockhaus summarises the introductory pages of Seidel's *Das Wunschkind* in Von der Decken's words: 'The man becomes a sexual object, who surrenders his healthy semen in order to make possible for the woman the ancient feminine experience of motherhood.'²⁰⁰ The tone of their autobiographical writings, if not the detail, suggests that this was not far from the truth for both women. Seidel was confined by illness after the first child's birth then added authorship to household duties, while her husband remained aloof, occupied with parish concerns and his own writing. Baum asserted that her own marriage survived because they had separate lives and spent long periods apart.²⁰¹ Both women chose men who were actual or virtual family-members, since Baum had long looked to Richard Lert's (non-Jewish) family, particularly his mother, to compensate for the deficiencies of her own. Richard Lert changed from friend to lover when she recognised his potential as 'der Vater meiner ungeborenen Kinder'.²⁰² Their marriages offered stability, security and family life and both women chose men from ethnic-German families to father their children. The fictional Marion's refusal to admit a Jew fathered her son²⁰³ suggests that this was not a random choice for Baum. Seidel followed, whether consciously or not, Turnvater Jahn's recommendation of a partner 'aus eigenem Volke [...]. Jede andere Ehe ist tierische Paarung ohne Gatten.'²⁰⁴ In her *Rede in der Luizenschule* of March, 1933, she instructs her schoolgirl-

²⁰⁰ Brockhaus, (1996). 'Male Images and Female Desire'. *Modernism/Modernity*, 3,81.

²⁰¹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.328.

²⁰² Ibid., p.297

²⁰³ Baum, V. (1978). *Marion*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag.

²⁰⁴ Kohn, H. (1949), 'Father Jahn's Nationalism', *The Review of Politics*, 11, 419-432.

audience in their duty to preserve the purity of their heritage,²⁰⁵ with an ethnic/genetic as well as a cultural implication. Baum rejected her own ethnic heritage in this, as in most other matters, favouring the manners and mores of the Austro-German middle class in descriptions of her own life, after the brief foray into literary Bohemia with Max Prels. Her letters, as well as her autobiography, suggest, nevertheless, a different life-story²⁰⁶ of fierce independence, travel and love-affairs, more akin to her racy fictional heroines, than the happy housewife, mother and grandmother of the photographs chosen for her autobiography. She acknowledges the divergence to Carlito, defining herself as ‘schizophrenic’ [sic] and admitting the difficulties of reconciling roles. The inconsistencies and contradictions of her ideologies, personal as well as literary, were replicated in the disparate events of her colourful life.

2.7 Nietzscheanerin

Young women who were both voracious readers and who moved in circles which promoted direct contacts with the intelligentsia of the modern world were influenced by contemporary cultural movements as well as personal experience. The Vienna of Baum’s relationship with Prels (1906-10) offered, at that time, ‘a symbiosis of coffeehouse and literati’.²⁰⁷ A major topic of discussion among that intellectual scene was, as Segel shows, the writings of Nietzsche. Seidel’s fascination with, and second-hand knowledge of, the George Kreis in Munich (1897-1906) brought her also directly into a literary environment strongly influenced by his philosophy. As a wide body of work confirms,²⁰⁸ the philosophical writings of Nietzsche, and particularly his short and memorable aphorisms, were disseminated in various forms throughout Weimar culture. With their vivid imagery and challenging ideas, they provided a

²⁰⁵ ‘Die verpflichtung das Erbe zu pflegen.’ *Rede in der Luizenschule*, März, 1933. DLA Marbach, 0199.1075.

²⁰⁶ Baum, V. *Letters to Carl Ostertag*. [Online]. <http://archive.org/stream/vickibaumf002#page/n135/mode/2up> [Accessed 5.04.13]

²⁰⁷ Segel, H. B. (1993). *The Vienna Coffeehouse Wits, 1890-1938*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press. p.4.

²⁰⁸ Krummel, R. F. (1998). *Nietzsche und der Deutsche Geist*. Berlin : de Gruyter, Aschheim, S. E. (1992). *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Helm, B. (2004).

‘Combating Misogyny? Responses to Nietzsche by Turn-of-the-Century German Feminists’, *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 4. 64-84.

convenient, if not always thoroughly understood, intellectual reference point. Both women mention Nietzsche as a writer that ‘everyone’ read in their youth.²⁰⁹ A thought-system which offered personal as well as social salvation as the reward for endless struggles with adversity had obvious personal appeal to both young women.

Throughout the diverse events of their long lives the influence of Nietzsche on the world-view of both Seidel and Baum remained a unifying ideology. It formed a basis for Baum’s refusal to commit herself to any single and linear portrayal of her life as well as her preoccupation with masks, and performances discussed in chapter six. For an author always keen to assert the quality and importance of her literary work (yet also denying that it mattered to her), such references chimed with popular taste, and showed her intellectual interests. More importantly, for a woman whose boundless physical energy expressed itself in boxing lessons with the ruthless trainer Sabri Mahir as well as dance classes with Mary Wigman whose personal life, outside her marriage, was unconventional and whose belief-system was spiritual rather than religious, Nietzsche offered a sympathetic frame of reference. His philosophy, or at least selections from it, defied bourgeois materialism, acknowledged the redemptive powers of music and the dramatic arts, and added a godless, but nevertheless transcendental, dimension to the intense sensual and physical apprehension of life. Baum even brought what she understood from Nietzsche into the daily formats of her life. Anthropology and theatre were united in a collection of tribal masks which decorated her Hollywood home: ‘Alles, was tief ist, liebt die Maske; die allertiefsten Dinge haben sogar einen Hass auf Bild und Gleichnis’.²¹⁰ A holiday photograph of herself with her husband on a mountain-walking tour²¹¹ carries the Nietzschean into the domestic arena. A mask, mounted on a staff, held firmly in the woman’s

²⁰⁹ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.171. Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.171.

²¹⁰ Nietzsche, F.W. (pub.1886). *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* [Online]. Project Gutenberg. http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?pageno=22&fk_files=1466172 [Accessed 27.1. 2014]. para.40.

²¹¹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. opp. p.71.

grasp, stands between the couple, a statement which the none-too-subtle writer appears to enjoy. The mountain scenery, later used as the locus of the novel *Marion*, adds Baum's fiction to that association of ideas 'which nestles Nietzsche so comfortably with the mountain aberrations of Romanticism, and its heir, the Third Reich'.²¹² In *Marion*, the heroine relives her life in revelatory flashbacks as she awaits death or salvation trapped in the crystalline depths of the mountain, isolated from human confusion and now clear-sighted. The Nietzschean vision was integral to Baum's interpretation of her own life as well as her fiction.

Seidel's acknowledgement of Nietzsche is a less personal one, apparent in her novels rather than in autobiographical statements. His Labyrinth image, with the threatening Minotaur at its centre, recurs throughout the novels. Earlier work, in particular,²¹³ is influenced by *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (1872) with its rejection of militaristic nationalism, emphasis on cultural rebirth and the central position of art, particularly theatre in maintaining the psychic balance of society. Nietzsche's deliberations on the importance of history for the present²¹⁴ and the role of heroes, both highly significant to the George Kreis, are also crucial to *Das Wunschkind*, *Lennacker* and *Das Labyrinth*.

The doctrine of eternal recurrence, fundamental to *Also Sprach Zarathustra* appears in both authors' work, with accounts of reincarnation and metempsychosis occurring in locations as different as Bali²¹⁵ and the domestic spaces of German homes.²¹⁶ The Wagnerian references of Baum's theatrical novels,²¹⁷ or the architectural ones of Seidel²¹⁸ are immediately traceable

²¹² Bolland, M. E. (1996). *Nietzsche and mountains*. PhD, Durham University. [Online]. <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1579/1/1579.pdf?ETHOS%20%28BL%29> [Accessed 26.5.15]. p.137.

²¹³ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

²¹⁴ Nietzsche, F.W. (1874). *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben*. Project Gutenberg.

²¹⁵ Baum, V. (1964) *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein, Seidel, I. (1952). *Das Tor der Frühe*. Bochum: Deutscher Buchklub.

²¹⁶ Ibid.,

²¹⁷ Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*. Berlin: Ullstein.

²¹⁸ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

from a Nietzschean source,²¹⁹ while the quotation ‘Was mich nicht umbringt, macht mich starker,’²²⁰ frequently quoted and misquoted by themselves and their characters is the leitmotif of their literary work.

There are, however, significant inconsistencies in the authors’ allegiance to any single thought-system. Seidel’s wartime praise of German manhood – ‘Eisenfaust nach aussen geballt, des Reiches Grenzen schirmend’²²¹ develops into a post-war rejection of militarism, and expansionism, but she continues to create the blonde heroes who incorporate the traditional virtues she sees as German, or, more specifically, Prussian. In *Das Wunschkind*, her most commercially, and critically, successful version of the theme, heroism and virtue do not ensure triumph or long life but the hero and his noble mother achieve the moral victory. Her earlier emphasis on a European consciousness has already waned, with the novel actively supporting ‘German nationalism, the Reich in particular, and showing a degree of anti-Semitism’.²²² She falls from the Nietzschean of ‘Wir ‘guten Europäer’²²³ into what he reviles as ‘Stunden nationaler Wallungen, patriotischer Beklemmungen und allerhand anderer alterthümlicher Gefühls-Überschwemmungen.’²²⁴

In the retrospective view of her autobiography, Baum expresses the same distaste for patriotic enthusiasm, dating her protest back to her school-years. By then, she also claims an early rejection of the hero-cult:

²¹⁹ Nietzsche, F. (*Der Fall Wagner*. Turiner Brief vom Mai 1888, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, 218. Project Gutenberg.

²²⁰ Nietzsche, F. ‘Sprüche und Pfeile’ 8. *Götzen-Dämmerung*. [Online] www.google.co.uk/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&rlz=1C1SKPC_enGB340GB369&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=g%C3%B6tzen-d%C3%A4mmerung%20spr%C3%BChe%20und%20pfeile [Accessed 12.7.15].

²²¹ Seidel, I. (1916). ‘Organisierte Mütterlichkeit’ , *Die Tat* : *Monatsschrift für die Zukunft deutscher Kultur*. 7.2. DLA 75.1101. 25.

²²² See note 17.

²²³ Nietzsche, F., W.. (pub.1886). *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* [Online]. Project Gutenberg. http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?pageno=22&fk_files=1466172 [Accessed 27.1. 2014].para 241.

²²⁴ As note 20.

Ich hatte diese wunderbaren Germanen und ihrer Tugenden genau angesehen, und ich fand, daß sie alle, einschließlich ihres verdammten Helden Siegfried, eine schäbige, korrupte, lügenhafte, betrügerische Gesellschaft waren.²²⁵

Nevertheless, her earlier novels show admiration of the fearless sacrifices, female as well as male, of *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. As the bereft character Marion,²²⁶ she acknowledges the appropriateness of the patriotic response to war which takes her lover away to fight for King and Country and, in her own name, transfers her nationalism to the USA in portraits of heroic all-American boys fighting the Fascist foe.²²⁷

The uncertainties, inconsistencies and plain contradictions in both women's commandeering of Nietzsche do not make the reference less important. They illustrate rather their identification with a generation who were looking beyond the beliefs, social and religious, of their youth and seeking elsewhere for inspiration. The individual life stories of the two women set the background against, and through which, they developed those ideas which their writings explore, define and develop.

2.8 The Seidels and the idea of Germany

The Seidel family, at the turn of the nineteenth century represented a German Empire in which rationalism, technological expertise and international influence were held in check by a strong national culture and deep spiritual beliefs. Their close social and intellectual involvement with the modern world and the leading figures in art²²⁸ as well as science, went alongside the commitment to the heritage of the German past, as they understood it. The pastoral roots,²²⁹ of the family were, Ina claimed, thoroughly German. She traced a maternal heritage 'aus fast allen deutschen Stämmen',²³⁰ but nevertheless insisted that her family, like the nation itself, was part

²²⁵ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*, Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.179.

²²⁶ Baum, V. (1978). *Marion*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag.

²²⁷ Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch.

²²⁸ Edvard Munch drew a portrait of Hermann Seidel. Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels : Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.192.

²²⁹ Ferber, C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.p.13.

²³⁰ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.p.19.

of a wider European scene. Swedish, Russian and English blood mixed with that of an Italian doctor who, like Buzzini in *Das Wunschkind*, peddled his skills throughout the continent.²³¹ Her childish admiration of the Braunschweig and Munich²³² statues of Heinrich der Löwe,²³³ a military hero identified, then as now, with ambitions of extending his reign to the East, and her consistent lyrical,²³⁴ fictional²³⁵ and non-fictional²³⁶ glorification of military power confirm, however, a nationalist and militaristic vision of Germany in Europe. Heinrich was identified, then as now, with ambitions of extending his reign to the East, and Heimat, for the Seidel family, was a land which stretched beyond the contemporary borders of the German nation. Christianity was an integral part of the belief system that they regarded as essentially German and a religious education in the Protestant evangelical tradition encouraged an unmediated and emotional relationship with God rather than a formal one. *Lennacker* (1938) and *Das Wunschkind* (1930) both reveal Seidel's comparatively detached stance as she portrays the battle between Protestant and Catholic churches for the soul of the German nation. Her liberal and intellectual father embraced Pantheism, brother Willy made forays into mysticism and Eastern religions and step-grandfather George Ebers, a renowned archaeologist, wrote academic as well as popular books on Egyptian culture and mythology. The more esoteric spiritual avenues widely explored during the Weimar years were familiar areas of serious intellectual pursuit in the household of the young Seidel.

The brutality of nature, as well as its wonders, were learnt at first-hand. A menagerie of exotic pets was cared for by the children. The suffering and deaths of patients in her father's clinic, in the poverty-stricken homes of industrial areas and on rural farms were observed by the child

²³¹ Ibid., p.19.

²³² Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.p.55.

²³³ Heinrich, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria 1129-1195.

²³⁴ Seidel, I. (1915). *Neben der Trommel her*, Berlin: Egon Fleischel & Co.

²³⁵ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*, Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

²³⁶ Seidel, I. (1916). 'Organisierte Mütterlichkeit', *Die Tat : Monatsschrift für die Zukunft deutscher Kultur*. 7.2.5. DLA 75.1101

Seidel²³⁷ before she came to read their literary expositions in the novels of Zola. In the direct family, the pregnant Emmy Seidel lost her first two sons in a diphtheria epidemic in 1885 and found consolation in the birth of her daughter Ina.²³⁸ The fictional Cornelia, recently widowed, experiences a similar renewal of hope and purpose through her pregnancy with, and the birth of, the son Christophe.²³⁹ The autobiographical interpretation can be developed further. The family pride on the birth of another son and heir is compared to the disgrace attendant on the birth of a cousin and foster-sister, Delphine conceived outside wedlock with a French (therefore enemy) father. Delphine herself later compounds the family shame, bearing and abandoning the illegitimate child of a touring actor. The contumely attendant on the births of female children in Seidel's most notable novel seems perilously like a display of survival-guilt from the author, whose birth was overshadowed by the recent loss of sons. The Seidel family ethos encouraged active rather than theoretic involvement with all the forms of the animate and inanimate universe which surrounded them but also encouraged recognition of a significance lying beyond the physical properties of the natural world. Klemperer calls it 'der Weg der vollen Bejahung des Naturhaften und der gleichzeitigen Erkenntnis seiner gleichnishaften Bedeutung, seiner elementaren Stofflichkeit in dem Sinne'.²⁴⁰ The landscape and its inhabitants were invested with a sense of their place in a universal scheme of things extending into the future and also bearing traces of the past. Their history was written in the father's collection of traditional peasant costumes, often taken in lieu of his physician's fees. Seidel's favourite story book *Elfenreigen*, with its annotated sources in sagas and folk tales, endowed and animated the contemporary world with cultural references from a historic past. She developed a

²³⁷ Seidel, I. (1935). *Meine Kindheit und Jugend. Ursprung, Erbteil und Weg*. Stuttgart/ Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.18.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.22.

²³⁹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.p.44.

²⁴⁰ Klemperer, V. *Über Ina Seidel*. [Online]. http://images.fembio.net/Viktor_Klemperer_ueber_Ina_Seidel.pdf [Accessed 09.11. 2012].

consciousness of belonging, not only to the intellectual middle-class of her family but also to ‘das Volk’, the people of Germany and the land they occupied.

The children’s encounters with their physical and social environments were nevertheless immediate and emotional rather than analytic. Neither parent was given to philosophising and the family firmly believed: ‘Politische Details blieben in Deutschland den Politikern überlassen.’²⁴¹ Seidel’s later enthusiasm for a National Socialism, which she understood as the way to national renewal, is rooted in notions of the spirit of Germany as she understood it from her early family years.

2.8.1 Munich and Modernism

Moving to Munich in 1897-8, following their father’s suicide, the Seidel family came up against a more modern Germany. Seidel’s last two school-years in the professional and academic atmosphere of a newly-formed *Mädchenlyzeum* were ‘ganz unbürgerlich,’²⁴² honing her language skills for a modern world, but the ‘finishing school’ ethos of her next educational establishment aimed to fit her for the domestic duties to come. The social world of the Seidel children was equally diverse. While Ina could only watch the Bohemian life of Schwabing over the balcony²⁴³ brother Willy brought Maximilian Kronberger, Stefan George’s muse, to the home and made acquaintances within the George Kreis.²⁴⁴ Olga and Marfa, daughters of the popular writer and campaigner against anti-Semitism, Leopold Ritter von Sacher-Masoch,²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels : Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein.p.101.

²⁴² Klemperer, V. Über Ina Seidel. [Online] [http://images.fembio.net/Viktor Klemperer über Ina Seidel.pdf](http://images.fembio.net/Viktor_Klemperer_über_Ina_Seidel.pdf), [Accessed 2.2.12].

²⁴³ ‘Wenn wir am Nikolaiplatz unter den Bäumen saßen, blickte ein junges Mädchen zu uns hinunter, Ina Seidel, gleichaltrig mit mir. Sie war genau wie Thomas Mann mit der verwitweten Mutter hergezogen, ward aber von ihr nicht losgelassen in die angeblich so gefährliche Lust Schwabings. Sie bog sich über das Gitter des Balkons, sehnsüchtig nach den jungen Dichtern spähend.’ Brandenburg, H. (1966). ‘Denk ich an München’. In.: Ude, P.H. & K.(eds.) *München*. Munich: Neuner.

²⁴⁴ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.165.

²⁴⁵ Sacher-Masoch’s name was used by Krafft-Ebbing to define the condition of ‘masochism’ which he exemplified.

were Ina's school-friends, sharing with her an unconventional family life blighted through the fathers' failures.

Rolf von Hoerschelmann,²⁴⁶ a contemporary observer, emphasises the ebullient idealism of Schwabing with artists and writers heavily influenced by Nietzsche, aiming, through their art, to build a new model of society.²⁴⁷ Amongst this group, Fasching was taken seriously, according to Brandenburg,²⁴⁸ and practised as a Dionysian festival of license and creativity. The Seidel's circle of acquaintances included the Symbolist artist Max Klinger, the Expressionist, Franz Marc, but also the traditional monumental sculptor Harro Magnussen (who sculpted a bust of her uncle) and the genre painter Toby Edward Rosenthal - an eclectic mix for a teenager with intellectual interests. At the family-homes of their neighbours the Ganghofers²⁴⁹ and Harfstaengels, Seidel met those writers and theatre-people who dominated the cultural life of Munich. Ludwig Ganghofer, a writer of 'Völkisch' novels who later became a founder member of the nationalistic, anti-Semitic, 'Völkisch' Deutsche Vaterlandspartei was also a dramaturge and journalist, a friend of the lyric poet Rilke and the satirical Wedekind, both of whom were critical, rather than representative of, the bourgeois establishment. Seidel's close contemporary, the musician Ernst Hanfstaengl, son of the publisher and gallery-owner Edgar Hanfstaengl was educated at Harvard, and through his American mother, at ease on both sides of the Atlantic. On his return to Munich, however, it was he who introduced Hitler to the social élites of the town. Hitler profited from the friendship, gaining social graces as well as

²⁴⁶ von Hoerschelmann, R. (1947). *Leben ohne Alltag*. Berlin: Wedding-Verlag.

²⁴⁷ 'Die Schwabinger, von denen ich sprechen möchte, machten sich anheischig, die Welt zu ändern, jedes Ideal im täglichen Leben zu verwirklichen, nach ihren Grundsätzen zu leben. Sie waren Schüler Nietzsches. Und einer ihrer Grundsätze lautete, wie es der große Schwabinger Ludwig Klages ausdrückt: ‚Nicht im Dasein und in der Behauptung des Daseins offenbart sich das Leben sondern allein in den Augenblicken jener überströmenden Fülle, die selbst mit Zerstörung des Leibes noch nicht zu teuer erstanden wäre.‘ Brandenburg, H. (1953). *Schwabing nach der Jahrhundertwende* [Online]. <http://www.koinae.de/Reventlow.htm>. [Accessed 14.3.14]

²⁴⁸ 'Schwabing war die Euphorie vor den Weltkriegen, der dionysische Rausch, wie ihn Gottfried Benn Jahrzehnte später als das uns Mangelnde erklärte, als die notwendige Rückkehr zu archaischen Zuständen, für die er sogar Rauschgifte empfahl. Hier in In Schwabing war der Fasching ernst und auch in Humor und toller Laune kein Ulk, kein Prinz Karneval, sondern beinahe eine Gottheit.' Brandenburg, H. (1953). *Schwabing nach der Jahrhundertwende* [Online]. <http://www.koinae.de/Reventlow.htm>. [Accessed 14.3.14]

²⁴⁹ The writer and editor Ludwig Ganghofer founded the Münchner Literarische Gesellschaft.

useful connections. Giving more substantial help, Hanfstaengl also helped to finance the publication of *Mein Kampf* and the NSDAP newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. He wrote march-tunes for the Party and claimed later to have originated the ritual of ‘Sieg Heil’ as greeting.

Seidel’s view of Modernism was thus a mixture of the Utopian, the Avant-Garde, the Nationalist, the Nietzschean and the Völkisch. This intoxicating mixture is traceable throughout her writings, in journalism as well as in stories²⁵⁰ where the charismatic hero, poet rather than soldier, leads his followers to Enlightenment.²⁵¹ It is evident in her reaction against rationalism, interest in the mystical and supernatural and in views of the present in cosmic as well as national terms. Her utopias were formed from this melting-pot of ideologies with their links to the later cults of Nazism and its more esoteric tendencies.

2.8.2 A literary career

After her marriage to her cousin Heinrich Wolfgang Seidel in 1907, Seidel’s renunciation of career-ambitions for the duties of a pastor’s wife was thwarted by the severe illness, resulting from puerperal fever, which followed the birth of her first child, Heilwig, in 1908. The consequent lameness remained a life-long affliction. Writing was a suitable occupation for an invalid but the Seidel family’s literary connections also invited publication of her works in such magazines as *Zeit-Echo*²⁵² *Der Buchführer* and *Licht und Schatten : Monatsschrift für Schwarz-Weiß-Kunst und Dichtung*, magazines concerned with all aspects of the contemporary literary and artistic scene Encouraged by Agnes Miegel, Loulou von Strauß und Torney, and Borries von Münchhausen, all then published authors and old friends from her Munich days, she

²⁵⁰ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. The "Bohemian Countess", Fanny zu Reventlow, is sketched in the character of Mathilde and Stefan George (or Wolfskehl) is roughly identifiable as Rubruk.

²⁵¹ Seidel, I. *Ibid.*, and *Unser Freund Peregrin*, (no date in edition). Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

²⁵² *Zeit Echo*, a magazine primarily concerned with literary responses to the First World War, published her poem ‘Klage des Mädchens’, condemning a man’s world which sacrificed a woman’s future to war, alongside both anti-war and pacifist articles.

published the book of poems, *Gedichte* (1914), which confirmed her professional literary career.

Her books of poems *Neben der Trommel her* (1915) and *Weltinnigkeit* (1918), reflected the progress of the War from confidence in victory through loss and devastation to the demoralisation of defeat and a search for ideological alternatives. Now living in the industrial area of Eberswalde, the impact of wartime food-shortages and general deprivation resulted in the death of her infant daughter Ulrike, reinforcing on a personal level the connections between birth, death and war, which are a central theme of *Das Wunschkind*.

In 1923 the Seidels moved back to central Berlin, when Heinrich Wolfgang was appointed Pastor at the Neue Kirche on the Gendarmenmarkt, where he stayed until his retirement.²⁵³ In that year, Seidel analysed what she saw as the degenerate state of contemporary Germany in terms which reveal a conservative response, far from the diverse and often eccentric influences of her Munich years. She castigates the decline of ‘die Heiligkeit der Ehe, der Familie, Unschuld der Kindheit, der Jungfräulichkeit, des Vaterlandes, der humanistischen Bildung usw., der Offizierkreise [sic], der Professorenkreise, kurz der Gesellschaft.’²⁵⁴ She now considered it her duty as a writer to counteract the decline. Notwithstanding this burst of reactionary disgust, her novels continue to express the impact of the complex and multivalent intellectual world of her youth and a distinctly apolitical inclination.

As the world changed around the Seidels, it became increasingly difficult to maintain such a stance. The writing of *Das Wunschkind* continued from 1914 until its publication in 1930 when it was approved and adopted by National Socialism. *Weg ohne Wahl*, criticised by Erika Mitterer on its publication in 1933²⁵⁵ as an opportunist work, was sketched out in 1924,²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Heinrich Wolfgang Seidel retired from his post and from Berlin in 1934.

²⁵⁴ Seidel, Ina. (1932-3). ‘Für M&M’, *Notizbuch von 1932-33*. DLA 75.1150.

²⁵⁵ From: Erika Mitterer. *Tagebuch* 14.11.1933. ‘Nein – ich kann nur “nein” sagen – eben las ich den neuen Roman Inas, der mit Unrecht “Weg ohne Wahl” heißt... sie es schnell schreiben mußte, weil sie Geld braucht’, Nachlass Mitterer, DLA. BF000125054.

²⁵⁶ Novara, N. (2008). *Frauenbilder im Prosawerk Ina Seidels*. PhD Thesis., Slaski University, Katowice. p.32.

before National Socialism had become a force which demanded a response from such public figures as Seidel²⁵⁷ but nevertheless lent itself to an interpretation which glorified war and sacrifice in defence of Germany and bid women to contribute their sons to the cause.²⁵⁸ By 1932, the article *Über Preußen: Sinn und Berechtigung des Preußentum im deutschen geistigen Raum*²⁵⁹ appears to have a political intent. Nevertheless, as in *Das Wunschkind*, she removes the statement from the present, postulating a Prussian soul which will perfect the chaotic, creative German spirit rather than using the overtly political terms of expansionism or racial purity. Judgements on her motives and the extent of her desire to curry favour with National Socialist authorities by such publications require further research which is beyond the scope of the current thesis.

As members of the P.E.N. Club and the Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller, the Seidels were active literary figures and Seidel's continued acquaintance with Thomas Mann, Albrecht Schaeffer, Julius Bab, Max Tau, Carl Zuckmayer and Ernst Lissauer, together with the sustained friendships of her earlier literary friends, ensured exposure to a wide range of political opinions, including from those Jewish writers directly threatened by political developments. Her contact with Gertrud Kolmar, a writer of Jewish ethnicity who perished in Auschwitz is revealing. Seidel, together with Elisabeth Langgässer had collected an anthology of poetry by women - *Herz zum Hafen. Frauengedichte der Gegenwart* - which included four key poems by Gertrud Kolmar. The book was finally published in 1933, just after the Nazi seizure of power in Berlin. Seidel chose to break off all contact with Kolmar (as well as with Langgässer who was also of Jewish ethnicity) and Kolmar's bitterness was expressed in a letter to her friend

²⁵⁷ Seidel, Ina. (1932-3). 'Für M&M', *Notizbuch von 1932-33*. DLA 75.1150.

²⁵⁸ 'Ein Zug aus dem Osten rollte durch die Halle, Fenster an Fenster mit jungen Menschen besetzt, die winkten, riefen und sangen. „Söhne!“ dachte Rasmus erschüttert, „Söhne! Ja – es war an der Zeit, neue Söhne zu zeugen jetzt, da bald jeder europäische Tag soviel tote Männer sehen würde, als er Minuten zählte.“ Seidel, I. *Weg ohne Wahl*. Berlin: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt. p.285.

²⁵⁹ Seidel, I. (1932). *Über Preußen*, DLA 75.1146, published as 'Sinn und Berechtigung des Preußentums im deutschen geistigen Raum.' In: *Deutsche Rundschau*, No. 58, 8, 83.

Karl Josef Keller.²⁶⁰ According to Joanne Woltmann, ‘Seidel war in all diesen Jahren keinesfalls apolitisch, wie sie es selbst später sehen mochte.’²⁶¹ Zuckmayer’s later *Geheimreport* on Seidel was condemnatory, although the Stadt Braunschweig Congress in its *Abschlussbericht zu Seidel* of 17.1.06²⁶² finally judged that report along with other information, as offering insufficient grounds to strip Seidel of her honourable status in the town.

In 1932 she was elected to the Preußische Akademie der Künste. Throughout 1933, Jewish authors and those critical of the regime were forced out of that body. In May 1933 the book-burning of works nominated by the National Socialists as against the ‘deutschen Geist’ took place on the Opernplatz, not very far from the Seidel’s home. In July 1933 the Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller became co-opted as the Reichsverband deutscher Schriftsteller and limited to authors classified as Aryan. The Seidels remained members. In October 1933 Ina, her husband Heinrich Wolfgang and brother Willy Seidel along with 86 other members of the Akademie, including those who had first encouraged her literary efforts, Agnes Miegel, Loulou von Strauß und Torney, and Borries von Münchhausen signed the ‘Gelöbnis treuester Gefolgschaft’, effectively confirming allegiance to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist party. Her admiration of Adolph Hitler evidently continued at least until 1939 when she published the poem *Lichtdom* on the occasion of his birthday, hailing him as the light and life of the German nation.

Heinrich Wolfgang’s discomfort with the German Protestant Church’s compliance with a National Socialist politics which castigated and excluded Jews and his declining health, expedited the family’s retirement from Berlin to Starnberg (an early stronghold of the

²⁶⁰ Keller, K.J. (c.2008). G.K.beklagte sich auch bei mir über den plötzlichen Gesinnungswechsel ihrer 'arischen' Bekannten, die zuvor für ihre Arbeiten eingetreten waren. In diesem Zusammenhang nannte sie u.a. eine der bekanntesten deutschen Schriftstellerinnen – [Online].

.http://www.dialoginternational.com/dialog_international/2008/04/ina-seidel-and.html, [Accessed 13.06.14].

²⁶¹ Woltmann, J. (1995). *Gertrud Kolmar*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag. p.174.

²⁶² [Online]. <https://ratsinfo.braunschweig.de>, [Accessed 11.6.14].

NSDAP²⁶³) near the childhood retreat of Tützing. Ina's brother Willy died in 1934 after some years of emotional and financial dependence on his sister. An increasingly ill husband, an ageing mother, a son in military service, eventually on the Russian Front and a daughter whose failed marriage to Ernst Schulte-Strathaus, formerly Amtsleiter für Kunst- und Kulturfragen on the staff of Rudolf Heß but disgraced following Heß' flight to Scotland, had left her with four dependent children, all of whom depended to varying degrees on Seidel's earning-capacity and her response was pragmatic. The renaissance of Germany which she had hoped might be realised under National Socialism had evidently failed but by continuing to write and publish she was fulfilling her feminine role, as she saw it, of protecting and nurturing the family. Talks, lectures, morale-raising broadcasts and publications maintained her position and offered no explicit criticism of the Nazis or their followers. Her influence shortened the Gestapo-incarcerations of son-in-law Ernst Schulte-Strathaus²⁶⁴ and brother-in-law Peter Suhrkamp but nevertheless Suhrkamp was only freed from KZ Sachsenhausen when acutely ill.

In a diary entry in 1945 Seidel explains her position at that time in words which deny the Hitler-enthusiasm of *Lichtdom* but acknowledge no complicity, no sense of having failed the nation or feeling any personal guilt for her part in the public life of National Socialism.

Eine [...] Forderung versiegelte seit 1939 Unzähligen unter uns die Lippen gegenüber den Verbrechen, die aus der Korruption der Regierenden, der schleichenden Machtergreifung der Gestapo kamen: es hätte bedeutet, dem Heer in den Rücken zu fallen, solange die Schlacht noch im Gange war. So empfand der „anständige deutsche Mensch“ [...]. Dieser Mensch wollte nicht den Sieg, aber doch einen Frieden auf Grund der Unbesiegbarkeit der deutschen Waffen und die Erhaltung des deutschen Selbstbestimmungsrechts. Und danach, so träumte dieser *Idiot*, sollte die *innere* Reinigung kommen. Ich gehörte zu diesen Idioten.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Buchner, F. (1938). *Kamerad! Halt aus! Aus der Geschichte des Kreises Starnberg der NSDAP*. (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1938). German Propaganda Archive, Calvin College, [Online]. <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/buchner1.htm> [Accessed 3.12.12].

²⁶⁴ Schulte-Strathaus, as close adviser, was accused of treason following the flight of Rudolf Heß. Suhrkamp's links with and support of Jewish authors, when possible, led to his disfavour.

²⁶⁵ Ferber, C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.96.

The precarious balance between the apolitical utopian visions of her earlier years and a wish to maintain an active part in contemporary literature throughout the 1920s and 30s overbalanced into an acquiescence which amounted to support of the National Socialist party. It had long been clear that the ideology she supported was disappearing in the general thuggery and political ambitions of the party and its leader. A belief in Hitler as the saviour who would cleanse the nation of undesirable elements, including those within his own party, finally faded. After that time, pressure of family circumstances and personal prevarication ensured an opportunistic compliance with the status quo.

2.9 The Baum family

Baum's Jewish paternal family had moved to Vienna from the borders of Hungary in the 1870s to become successful business people. The Donath's, her mother's family, also Jewish, moved to Vienna at that time from Bisenz in Moravia, near the Hungarian border. They were wealthy landowners and timber merchants who had educated their daughter in the style of the affluent bourgeoisie and marriage united two prosperous families who refuted the then very negative perception of Eastern Jews as poor and barbaric. Baum's generally unenthusiastic and frequently derogatory responses to her Jewishness are not of primary importance to this study, although the mention of them is unavoidable. Despite her strong affection for him, she writes flippantly of her paternal grandfather as 'der liebe häßliche, schielende, kleine, alte Jude'. The Jewish Raffael Halevy in the short story '*Der Knabe und die Tänzerin*' (1920-21) is seen through sympathetic eyes although mainly as an innocent, and an outsider in the cruel world of contemporary dance. An outright condemnation of Jewish society is evident in the story Rafael Gutmann published in 1922 in the *Leipziger Illustrirte*, although Brenner (1997) claims that the publication of the same story in the Jewish cultural magazine *Ost und West* in January and February of 1911 amounts to an early acknowledgement of Baum's Jewish identity. A 1943 letter to Manfred George, editor of the German-Jewish exile magazine *Aufbau* attacks a

critique of a book by the Jewish author Rosie Waldek. ‘Ich fand es skandalös dass ein jüdisches Blatt den Ausdruck “jüdische Bankierstochter“ als Beleidigung gebraucht. Es klang wie ein Zitat aus einer Nazi Zeitung.’ She ends a friendship with Niedekken-Gebhardt since he continued to work in Germany, ignoring, she says, the cries from Auschwitz and Dachau.²⁶⁶This is counterbalanced by her 1955 letter to Carl Ostertag after a private showing of Zuckmeyer’s *Teufels General* – ‘I thought not much of it while the heavily teutonic-semitic audience was enthusiastic’ [sic.] or the 6 July 1953 comment on ‘all sorts of nasty little troubles with nasty little Jewish kids, respectively their jiddische mammas’ [sic]. Her shifts from anti-Semitism to fellow-feeling may be taken as sporadic manifestations of a Jewish self-hatred²⁶⁷ but the persistence of the theme certainly confirms a fundamental unease in her relationship with her own ethnicity. A rejection of ethnic origins, and the life-expectations accompanying it, is confirmed by a personal life in which she even altered her appearance to conform to a blonde European stereotype of Hollywood glamour. The many dominant positions held by Jews in the worlds of music, theatre and film did not qualify the desirable star-image. Geography distanced her from her wider Jewish family, although her autobiography acknowledges a transatlantic visit, but she apparently made no attempt to contact, warn or support family-members as the Nazi threat increased. She had derived her own distaste for what she identified as Jewishness from the direct experiences of her childhood and the ethnic threat failed to significantly change her attitude.

The mental illness of her mother, which became evident when the child was four, had contributed to her sense of the repressive structures of family life. The illness originated, Baum suggests, in the sexual trauma of a relationship with a boorish and ignorant husband who was

²⁶⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.324. Niedekken-Gebhardt had worked with Baum’s husband Richard Lert in Hanover, producing and directing opera but had also been instrumental in the development of the NS influenced ‘Thingspiel’ productions as well as 1936-9 mounting monumental theatrical displays and working 1941-5 in the theatre in Leipzig.

²⁶⁷ Gilman, S. L. (1990). *Jewish self-hatred: anti-Semitism and the hidden language of the Jew*. Baltimore/London : Johns Hopkins University Press.

probably homosexual by inclination. On her deathbed, her mother offered a final comment on the world – ‘an Stelle von segnenden Worten kam aus ihrem Mund eine obszöne Persiflage, die dem Inferno des Wahnsinns entstammte.’²⁶⁸ The suspicion, contempt or fear of women which Alison Rose²⁶⁹ shows as a powerful force within the Jewish community in Vienna, and which had condemned her mother to such a marriage, resulted in her father’s extreme disappointment on the birth of a daughter. The mother’s increasing inability to fulfil her familial role as wife, mother, protector and transmitter of cultural values was a matter of deep shame to the child, who was led to regard herself as in some way guilty for the situation. This resulted, she recalls, in the anxious affection ‘of a lover’²⁷⁰ for the erratic woman and provided her with a pattern of female dysfunction against which to react in her own life. She continued to be haunted by what she interpreted as the loss of a mother. Autobiographical references to the temptations of addiction inspire, nevertheless a forceful rejection of psychological interventions, both personal psychoanalysis and the social will to define individual and societal malfunction in terms of mental disorders requiring professional treatment.²⁷¹ In her fiction she creates female characters who frequently teeter on the brink of mental breakdown, writing their sufferings with that detailed awareness which can be traced back to this childhood contact with mental illness.

As both Rose and Kaplan show,²⁷² even in more favourable circumstances, life for a Jewish woman was constrained by religious and familial expectations. Jews in general were regarded with suspicion in the wider society, particularly those, like the Baums, who came from the East. Jewish women attracted both racial and sexual criticism. Baum’s own autobiographic portrayal

²⁶⁸ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.215.

²⁶⁹ Rose, A. (2009). Introduction, *Jewish Women in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

²⁷⁰ ‘nicht wie eine Tochter, sondern fast wie ein Liebhaber’ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.29.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.396.

²⁷² Rose, A. (2009). *Jewish Women in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. Austin: University of Texas Press, Kaplan, M. (1994). *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial German*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

of her aunt Cora as a minor actress of doubtful morals ‘die Verkörperung der Sünde’ as she calls her,²⁷³ as well as the flippant ambivalence with which she writes accounts of her own sexual relationships, play to a stereotype. As Rose points out, ‘Each segment of the Jewish population created its own stereotype of the Jewish woman in order to deal with its own dilemmas.’²⁷⁴ In her own life, the Jewish religion, along with its moral codes and social restrictions, appears to be implicated in her general dislike of both Jewry and religion. She shows Cora and herself as dominating their unorthodox circumstances by both talent and a strong survival instinct. This interpretation gains ideological stature through her espousal of theories which define women as driven by the irresistible force of their nature towards motherhood. With engendering children, and nurturing in general, defined as women’s most powerful inclinations, it is inevitable that the lesser moralities of conventional behaviour will occasionally be transgressed.

Baum’s father clearly outraged her concept of manhood. Her dislike, which occasionally manifests as hatred, was confused by the recognition of shared heritage. His genuine love of theatre and dance is admitted grudgingly, and caricatured, as is his appreciation of a good public profile. His capacity to respond, as if telepathically, to his daughter when hunger, cold and deprivation were seriously threatening her and the children, is interpreted as the manifestation of a deep instinctive relationship. The spontaneous ability to feel and act upon an essentially physical and subconscious communication with an external world is, she feels, a mutual strength and one which feeds into her own creative powers. The business-acumen which she mentions, usually disparagingly, as a Baum characteristic, is also a quality which she acknowledges in herself, transforming it however into a positive virtue by reformulating it as part of those necessary strategies through which women are enabled to care for others.

²⁷³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*, Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.53.

²⁷⁴ Rose, A. (2009). *Jewish Women in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. Austin: University of Texas Press. p.3.

2.9.1 The Baums' Austria

In the early twentieth century, the Baum family's public manifestations of identification with the adopted country of Austria and the lifestyle of its *Bürgertum* were typical of recent immigrant families. Such behaviour aimed at social integration and commercial success. On the death of the Kaiser 'wir weinten alle herzerreißend in loyalem Schmerz'²⁷⁵ and Hermann Baum justified his harsh child-rearing on the example of the royal household. Yet the culture of Austria and Germany, their literature, music and drama, was banned in the Baum family.²⁷⁶ Hermann Baum regarded such pursuits as impractical, bringing no profit and possibly leading to that mental degeneration which had affected Vicki's mother. Resistance to paternal authority enhanced Vicki's determination to acquire the culture her father forbade. She taught herself to read and borrowed, bought or stole books but, in her autobiographical notes, omits all specific mention of her attendance at the progressive Schwarzwald school.²⁷⁷ Two thirds of the students were Jewish, lessons in the Jewish religion formed part of the curriculum²⁷⁸ and Baum was, in many respects, a typical pupil.²⁷⁹ However, Hermann Baum's insistence, and her mother's mental illness, ensured Vicki's comparative alienation from her companions.²⁸⁰ Autobiographical claims of general scholarly ignorance²⁸¹ and a self-acquired education are nevertheless clearly another mask adopted as convenient in the development of her own narrative, removing the need for coherence, accuracy or knowledge to allow contradictions, changes of direction and a certain moral irresponsibility in her racial and political attitudes.

²⁷⁵ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.13.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.45.

²⁷⁷ Holmes, D. (2012). *Langeweile ist Gift*. Vienna: Residenz Verlag.

²⁷⁸ Schwarzwald, E. (1902). *Jahresbericht des Privat-Mädchen-Lyzeums. Schuljahr 1901/1902* [Online]. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

<http://www.literature.at/viewer.alo?viewmode=overview&page=1&objid=12010> [Accessed 1.11 2012].

²⁷⁹ In 1890/91, 53.5 percent were merchants or salesmen (Kaufleute), 18.6 percent factory owners, 14 percent self-employed and 3.5 percent artisans.

²⁸⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.93.

²⁸¹ Baum, V. 'Ich lese mir nie einen Vertrag durch, und es würde mir auch nichts nützen, denn ich verstehe sowieso kein Wort davon.' *Ibid.*, p.395.

2.9.2 Visions of Heimat

When her uncle leased the eleventh-century Schloss Peigarten near Vienna to run as a weaving-mill, (thus confirming the contemporary prejudice which viewed Jews as alien, urban, and exploitative), it became the family's summer retreat. Unlike Seidel's close physical contact with the animals and landscapes of her family homes in Braunschweig, Munich and Tützing, Baum's encounters were those of the city-dweller, centred on the aesthetically pleasing sights of stabled horses and ripe fruit orchards. Exposure to folk-culture was limited to occasional games with local children who resented the incomers. Holidays were, like a visit to the theatre,²⁸² an escape from the 'real life' of towns, an opportunity for individual freedom, and rebellion against authority. The characters of her novels enthusiastically visit land, sea and mountains, turning them into idyllic images of a better and purer life but, like their creator, return to the city. For Baum, utopia is always an escape to somewhere else rather than a transformation of existing circumstances, as this thesis aims to establish.

As she summarised in her autobiography, her later happy days in the principedom of Darmstadt gave her a vision for Germany which was more tribal than national.²⁸³ Her ideal of city-states, or principedoms, with a beloved hereditary ruler identified by the population as 'blood of their blood'²⁸⁴ ran counter to the nation- and empire-building of the last century. European colonialism, she thought, destroyed those more ancient forms of social organisation with family and tribe at their heart. Harmonious relationships between regional neighbours with families of hereditary rulers could resolve racial and cultural differences through peaceful cultural competition and economic co-operation. The ruler should be at one with *Das Volk* who are his subjects and she applauded the effectiveness of the system. Later, she attributes the popular attraction of National Socialism to a similar imagined relationship of mutual understanding

²⁸² Ibid., p.261.

²⁸³ Ibid., p.273.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p.274.

between ruler and ruled - ‘Hitler, ein Kind des Volkes, wußte, was das Volk wollte; und gab es ihm,²⁸⁵ maintaining her customary indifference to political realities.

2.9.3 Encounter with modernity

Her mother’s miserable experience of dependency and her determination to spare her daughter from such a life resulted in Baum’s rigorous musical training as harpist from 1898-1910 at the Vienna Conservatoire and the Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst. The Vienna Secession of 1897 had the motto ‘Der Zeit ihre Kunst. Der Kunst ihre Freiheit’ above the doors of its building and when Baum made her first appearance as harpist with the Vienna Konzertverein in 1907, she found herself at the forefront of modernity. Working with Mahler and Schönberg under the direction of Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer and with a performer’s access to the life of Vienna High Society discussing art, literature and philosophy in the coffee-houses of Vienna, she was part of an exciting and unconventional²⁸⁶ world. Widespread anti-semitism did not hinder her fascination with the louche lifestyles of her aristocratic employees, whose generosity compensated for parental parsimony.²⁸⁷ But Baum was aware that the hectic thrills of this social world had a more sombre dimension. ‘Wir Wiener [...] taumelten immer halzbrecherisch am Abgrund des Selbstmords dahin.’²⁸⁸ Her own direct encounter with the attractions of oblivion and death occurred as she nursed her mother through a final illness in 1906/7. The morphine syringe was a temptation she resisted but its allure and the relief it offered are graphically described in *Eingang zur Bühne*.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p.360.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p.158.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p.155.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p.238.

After the death, Baum describes a feverish mental companionship with the dead woman, from which her first book *Frühe Schatten* (1914)²⁸⁹ the ‘totgeborene Kind’,²⁹⁰ was created. As in Seidel’s autobiography, death becomes linked with both birth and literary creation. She describes a similar, later, depressive state as a haunting in which characters appeared in imagination ‘wie auf einer Bühne’²⁹¹ speaking, singing and celebrating suicide. The ‘death and the maiden’ plot of *Eingang zur Bühne* (1920) is the casting-out of personal ghosts as the young singer with a dying mother and largely absent father gives in to the temptation of the morphine syringe. The protagonist mixes real-life with fantasy in her love-relationship with an operatic tenor and finally commits suicide to the strains of the *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*.

Baum’s short war-service increased her familiarity with the conjunctions of love and death. Nursing the less visible casualties of war, pregnant women, women with sexual diseases and the sick children born in those circumstances, added the private dimension to the public one of military deaths and maimings. War was inglorious and she sums it up in a phrase overheard from a soldier, ‘Mir schieße auf die, und die schieße auf uns. Des [sic] is alles.’²⁹² As the disbanded army moved back into civilian life, Baum notes the general increase in homosexuality. In the light of her convictions regarding gender-based familial and reproductive roles,²⁹³ she has no doubt that this is an unnatural state, another side-effect of standing armies, inflicted alongside dirt, lice and brothels, on the suffering population.

The tumults of the 1920s, whose improving living conditions then degenerated into inflation and financial despair, are interpreted by Baum as a period of moral deterioration in which

²⁸⁹ The author received a copy of the initial publication of *Frühe Schatten* by Verlag Reiß, but was not informed of the number published or their fate. She was notified that publication would cease with the advent of the First World War but would probably be resumed. Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*, Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p. 296. Egon Fleischel published the work again in 1919.

²⁹⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.282.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p.305.

²⁹² Ibid., p.294.

²⁹³ Ibid., She classes homosexuality along with ‘Rauschgiftsüchtigen, [...] Trinksucht, Blutschande, hysterische Epilepsie.’ p.396.

serial-murderers flourished.²⁹⁴ During the good times however, the destruction of the old order through war appeared to her to have generated a new and clearer vision of reality in which art took its rightful place ‘Kunst war nicht mehr ein bloßer Schmuck des Lebens sondern dessen unmittelbarer Ausdruck’.²⁹⁵ The Ausdrucks-Tanz of Mary Wigman, embodied the spirit of contemporary art, ‘ekstatisch, erregt und erregend’.²⁹⁶ Seidel was an enthusiastic observer and writes in extravagant praise of Mary Wigman’s interpretation of Talhoff’s *Totenmal*.²⁹⁷ Talhoff’s *Der Heilige Symbol*,²⁹⁸ a related work, carries a dedication to Seidel, whom he much admired. The ever-energetic Baum joined in classes at the Wigman school, whose popularity even attracted students from the provincial Bürgertum.²⁹⁹ Baum’s novel *Die Tänze der Ina Raffay: Ein Leben*, with an Expressionist dancer as its heroine, narrates the personal highs and lows of those public characters who, like the dancer Anita Berber, ‘die wildeste Frau der Weimarer Republik’,³⁰⁰ lived hard and died young.

2.9.4 A literary career

Publication of her first story at thirteen years old³⁰¹ in the satirical newspaper *Die Muskete* is recalled as a comic interlude in Baum’s autobiography. Her short marriage to the dilettante, and alcoholic, writer Max Prels in 1906 and their life of indulgence and indigence launched a professional career, as her work met his literary deadlines.³⁰² Her striving for respectability within the ‘Eierschalen unserer bürgerlichen Erziehung’³⁰³ was not at odds with her wish to be modern, serious and part of intellectual circles, as Rose’s work on Jewish women in Vienna

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p.314.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p.322.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p.330.

²⁹⁷ Seidel, I. ‘Albert Talhoffs „Totenmal“. Zur Münchener Uraufführung’, in: *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, July 1930.

²⁹⁸ Talhoff, A. (1931) *Der Heilige Symbol und Scenenkreis rings um die Maske*.

²⁹⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.331.

³⁰⁰ Adorján, J. (2006). Anita Berber: Das nackte Leben. *Der Spiegel*. 06.08.2006.

³⁰¹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.169.

³⁰² Ibid., p.234.

³⁰³ Ibid., p.225.

shows.³⁰⁴ Following divorce from Prels in 1913 she made a definitive bid for respectability, rejecting the prospect of a career as ‘*femme fatale*, als *grande cocotte*’.³⁰⁵ In 1914 she moved to Darmstadt to play in the Staatstheater orchestra conducted by her old friend Richard Lert and finally married him in 1916. Career was abandoned for family life and children but winning a literary competition in the *Kölnische Zeitung*,³⁰⁶ judged by Thomas Mann, with a 5000 Mark prize, alleviated family financial problems and gave her the confidence to initiate discussions with the Ullstein Press who offered her an editorship and an assured income. In 1926 she moved alone to Berlin, although maintaining her marriage, and began the ‘happiest, most interesting and fruitful’³⁰⁷ years of her life, working on Ullstein publications, including the *Berliner Illustrierte*, *Die Dame* and *Uhu*, at the centre of the popular press and modern city life. She was marketed as the ‘chic, cultivated, mundane woman’,³⁰⁸ combining business success with devotion to family and thus able to advise other women on how to deal with the modern world. The commercial successes of her novels only partially compensated for what she perceived as lack of serious recognition, as expressed in her oft-quoted ‘Ich bin eine erstklassige Schriftstellerin zweiter Güte’.³⁰⁹ The novel *Menschen im Hotel* was rewritten into the Hollywood classic film *Grand Hotel* and, in 1931, influenced by the increasingly hostile political climate in Germany, she and her family moved to America. With the new status of exile writer, her public utterances attest to an admiration for her adopted country and a distancing from her European past. She records her involuntary thoughts on the Reichspräsident elections in 1932 as: ‘Wenn der Sieg eines müden, senilen, nicht übermäßig gescheiterten alten Soldaten wie Hindenburg über einen widerlichen, hysterischen

³⁰⁴ Rose, A. (2009). *Jewish Women in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

³⁰⁵ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.255.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.335.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.345.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.389.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.377.

Emporkömmling das Beste ist, was wir erreichen können – dann, Deutschland, gute Nacht!’³¹⁰

Claiming intellectual and political ignorance, she attributed her response to an unerring instinct which superseded the rational response of the foreign correspondent she was accompanying at the time. He enthused over the event and she is clear that she made no specific comment on his exuberance. Despite the changing political circumstances, she continues to write of Europe as a lost Heimat in reminiscences of a pre-war world of stability, security and culture.

2.10 Conclusion

The outward circumstances of the two authors’ adult lives obscured the parallels of life-experiences, which influenced their fictional work. Mutual acquaintances show the interchange between their social worlds. Carl Zuckmayer, Anne-Marie Seidel’s lover,³¹¹ moved in the Baum circle both in Germany and California. Mary Wigman and her devotees were admired and patronised by both authors and their friends and both women were enchanted by Wigman’s performances as expressing a deep and cosmic realism. The two women, educated in the same culture, shared friendships, knowledge and influences and the subsequent social, geographical, cultural and literary separation of both the women and their work did not expunge the ideas of how life was and how it should be which they had formed before the great dividing years of the early 1930s. Their writings expressed these ideas, ambivalent, contradictory, often confused but nevertheless conveyed with conviction to a readership looking for guidance along with entertainment.

There are notable thematic differences in their literary work. Seidel’s preoccupation with the German nation, past and future, forms only the occasional aside in Baum’s fictional work. The latter’s frothy interest in the worlds of fashion, cosmetics, fast cars and film stars is alien to the serious domestic authoress. Seidel’s lectures, readings and broadcasts show a woman less

³¹⁰ Ibid., p.447.

³¹¹ Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels : Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.217.

fascinated by the modern urban world, who turned to the past and the more stable values of a rural society. Baum attended film-premières in New York and partied with the stars, but she also made sure that she was photographed with her boys and cooking in a frilled pinafore. Her story *Omuna geht auf den Maskenball: Eine Faschingsgeschichte*,³¹² parodies the attractions of modernity and shows the relief of the return home. Both women managed to negotiate a successful path between a past they questioned, a present that both interested but in some ways repelled them and a very uncertain future in which they were determined to play a significant part. The ideas which sustained them throughout this process, and which had striking similarities, are the subject of this thesis.

Both have a Rousseauesque belief in the health-giving effects of primal physical experience. ‘Natives’ as both Baum and Seidel perceive the members of pre-industrial societies, like children, are integrated within a cosmic order that ‘educated’ European adults have lost. They look backward to an imagined time, before Freud and state education had allegedly destroyed both the joyful passions and creative self-discovery of the young. Education, they both insist, should be a matter of being and doing rather than the formalised practice of ‘stuffing turkeys for Thanksgiving’ as Baum puts it.³¹³ They trace in their own lives the effects of their early encounters with people and with external nature in forming their adult selves and the moral framework within which they lived. Praising the instinctive and incidental acquisition of culture in her own life, Seidel creates the character of Muriel Maynard in *Michaela*,³¹⁴ whose Steiner-like school is taken-over by the Nazis.³¹⁵ Baum equates the random acquisition of knowledge with ‘common sense’ and slips into a denigration of the literate and literary world³¹⁶ to which she belonged. She joins with Seidel (and Nietzsche and the George Kreis) in

³¹² Baum, V. (1926-7). ‘Omuna geht auf den Maskenball’, In: *Uhu: das neue Ullsteinmagazin*, No. 3(5), 18-28, 125-128. DLA Marbach. 0673_1111_1.tif.

³¹³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.162.

³¹⁴ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.

³¹⁵ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft. p.94.

³¹⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.181.

imagining a past cultural utopia before the explosion of literacy and the popular press gave the half-educated the claim to opinions. Neither woman professed to be a pedagogue and both libertarian and authoritarian ideas of education appear in their novels and are variously approved. Relentless and enforced practice creates Baum's musicians,³¹⁷ while her Balinese and Mexican infants learn by observation, practice and story-telling.³¹⁸ Seidel's soldier-boys are drilled to obedience³¹⁹ but Nature is the educator in the Maynard school³²⁰ and in Erdmuthe's rural idyll.³²¹

For Seidel, religion offered a means of transcendental understanding which meant little to Baum. The latter's Jewish ethnicity, and what she thinks of as a limited formal education, engendered no orthodox religious sentiments, despite some early writing for a specifically Jewish audience.³²² Seidel's educated family were generally united in the confident assertion of a shared religious culture, despite the unfortunate event of her father's suicide, which could be, and was, blamed on external circumstances. Her writing, with its emphasis on German and family histories reflects this background. Baum regards her own literary life as the lonely endeavour of the creative artist,³²³ who had to forge her own imaginative and spiritual path with little support or understanding from close family. Her fictions centre correspondingly on the individual making her way through the trials presented by the outside world.

The novelists shared a firm belief in an existence beyond the present life, a spirit-presence which could nevertheless intervene in the physical world.³²⁴ Death and the deceased are a constant presence in both their fictional and non-fictional writings. Like Seidel in her broadcast

³¹⁷ Baum, V. (1985). *Schloßtheater*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag.

³¹⁸ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein, Baum, V. (1956). *Flut und Flamme*. Köln: Kiepenheuer u. Witsch.

³¹⁹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

³²⁰ Baum, V. (1978). *Marion*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag.

³²¹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

³²² Petersen, V. R. (1995). 'The Best of Both Worlds? Jewish Representations of Assimilation, Self, and Other in Weimar Popular Fiction', *German Quarterly*, 68(2),163.

³²³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.324.

³²⁴ Seidel's *Das Tor der Frühe* and Baum's *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* both use this concept.

‘Im Kreise der Familie’,³²⁵ Baum admits carrying around her ‘private cemetery’ watching it fill with newer graves.³²⁶ They, and the characters of their novels, see themselves as part of a natural order with a cosmic dimension ‘beyond the veil’³²⁷ which guides and governs everyday life and their present life-stories are presented within the framework of eternity. For both, access to the ‘world beyond’ where the unconscious is liberated to dominate the rational, conscious mind, is achieved through the euphorias of alcohol and narcotics, but also through the medium of theatrical performance, particularly music and dance. This aspect of their work is examined in the chapter on myth, theatre and the esoteric. The embrace of the irrational is, for both women, not only an evasion of conscious physical suffering in the present life but also a means of contacting the personal or collective human unconscious³²⁸ to achieve an equilibrium within the natural order.

³²⁵ Seidel, I. (1942). Einleitung und Zwischentexte für die Sendung des NWDR ‘*Im Kreise der Familie.*’ DLA 75.1043.

³²⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen.* Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.139.

³²⁷ Blavatsky, H.P. (1877). *Isis Unveiled.* [Online]. <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/isis/iu1-00in.htm> [Accessed 3.5.15].

³²⁸ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen.* Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.262.

Chapter 3

Popular novelists, creative women

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Chapter 3 Popular Novelists, Creative women

3.1 Introduction

The present thesis is concerned not only with the writers themselves and their work but also with the possible influence both may have had on the public. Without the direct testimonies of their contemporaries, it is not possible to ascertain how their readership understood and reacted to what they read, heard or saw of the two authors. It is possible, however, to indicate the size and nature of their readership and define more clearly what ‘best-seller’ meant within the publishing contexts of their time. The literary status of both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum during the Weimar period and the years following, enabled their ideas and attitudes to make a significant and enduring contribution to a cultural climate which spread beyond Austria and Germany through Europe and America. Their manifest success confirms that both were astute women with their eyes on the contemporary market, who understood what people were reading, what they wanted to read and what they would buy. The way in which two women, whose personal styles and whose writings were apparently so different, interpreted their positions and responsibilities as writers within the contemporary literary scene, offers some indication of the influence they believed themselves to have. Both women wrote directly about their own authorship but also gave fictional portraits of creative women who made an impact upon the society which surrounded them. Their novels thus reveal the authors’ emotional as well as analytic response to their own position as mediators of knowledge and public opinion.

The long writing careers of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, along with their ability to tap into, and mould, the changes in popular taste resulted in book-sales which put both into the category of best-selling authors. There is very little current acknowledgement of Ina Seidel’s place in the popular literature of Germany. Criticism concentrates on her contribution to the literary effort which, according to many critics, helped establish, authenticate and justify the Third Reich. Vicki Baum’s best-seller status is also conflated with interest in her later exile-years and the

literary and sociological fascination with her as a representative of the New Woman. This chapter aims to confirm the status of both women as professional popular authors during the Weimar years and under the changed conditions of National Socialism. Before the Reichskulturkammer published its list of disapproved authors in 1933, which put Vicki Baum firmly in the category of those whose works were to be consigned to the flames, antithetical pictures of both authors were already current. Ina Seidel was portrayed as conservative, possibly völkisch, Vicki Baum as a thoroughly modern woman, but both were popular. Mila Ganeva emphasises that the superior commercial speed and acumen of the powerful Ullstein press, for whom both authors published, ensured a range and quality of published articles which appealed to both the traditional and the 'new' women, levelling the distinctions between modernist and mass, high and low, masculine and feminine, literature.

Despite the many differences of their writings, the fictional portrayals created by both women of female writers and other artists are strikingly similar. Both authors make a distinction between what they define as the truly creative woman and the dilettante. The former derives a powerful inner stability from a female nature which she is also able to express through artistic creation. The dilettante, typified as lacking the secure balance afforded by recognition of her female condition, is shown as socially inept and artistically ineffective. In the character of Doris Hart, Vicki Baum spells out the particular pressures on the popular artist which Ina Seidel hints at in her character Mathilde Mackens. Through these and other characters both authors give insights into their own authorial lives which are at odds with the way they portray themselves in their autobiographical works. This chapter will suggest that their literary portrayals deny the realism which they so stridently claim for themselves and are, in the case of Vicki Baum as well as Ina Seidel, looking back to a romantic image of the artist as set-apart from her fellows and peculiarly gifted with superhuman or transcendental powers, which also condemn her to suffering and often early death.

3.2 What was a Best-Selling Author?

In defining the categories of authorship to which Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum might be supposed to belong, that of 'Best-Seller' is a shared denotation which implies a standard of commercial success and an extensive readership. Hinds' examination of the definitions of mass and popular culture concludes that the definition of 'popularity demands numerical data,'³²⁹ and this chapter goes on to consider the size and nature of these novelists' readership and define more clearly what 'best-seller' meant within the publishing contexts of their time. The 'numerical data'³³⁰ requested by Hinds as a measure of popularity, is not precise. Publication figures were not necessarily an indicator of readership, as Richards emphasised,³³¹ relying as they did upon the publishers' claims and advertising as well as the *Deutsches Bücherverzeichnis* with its sources in the bookselling trade. Conditions of distribution and sale significantly skewed figures as did international economics and political policy. The wide range of the best-sellers in Richards' ranking confirms that the German population during the Third Reich, as in the previous Weimar years, chose, and was able to read, a wide variety of literature in which the modern gossip of Vicki Baum and the historical novels of Ina Seidel both had their place.

The significance of publication figures lies rather in the generalisations to be drawn from them regarding the comparative status of the authors and their works. As Richards mentions, books continued to be owned, circulated and read by new readers long after their publication date and, where previously published in serial-form in magazines, also long before their publication in book-form. Bridging both magazine- and book-readerships and, presumably, also filtering down through economic levels as the publications became worn and outdated, these factors ensured a breadth and complexity of readership not evident in publication data alone.

³²⁹ Hinds, H. E., Motz, M. F. & Nelson, A. M. S. (2006). *Popular Culture Theory and Methodology: A Basic Introduction*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press. p.364.

³³⁰ Ibid., p.364.

³³¹ Richards, D. R. (1968). *The German Bestseller in the Twentieth Century. A complete bibliography and analysis 1915-1940*. Berne: Herbert Lang. pp 2-12.

In studies of publication figures, the timespan studied frequently stretches over both the Weimar Republic and the period of National Socialism, in order to demonstrate the influence of turbulent social forces at work on both the types and numbers of books sold. Marianne Weil's edited work: *Wehrwolf und die Biene Maja. Der deutsche Bücherschrank zwischen den Kriegen*³³² aims to give an overview of the nature of popular inter-war literature (1918-1939) through a survey of a dozen novels by popular authors. She mentions however only one woman-author, Margarete Böhme, whose *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* (1905), the putative autobiography of a woman forced by circumstances into prostitution, was a literary sensation, while Agnes Sapper, a clear best-seller in other lists³³³ and an early twentieth-century writer of family tales, is relegated to the Appendix. The omission of the wider field of literature by, and largely written for, women may well reflect the bookcase of many German homes but limits the relevance of her study for this thesis.

Donald Ray Richards³³⁴ provides the statistics which confirm the best-selling status of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum insofar as publication figures can be established. He chooses to consider German prose fiction first published between 1899 and 1940, conveniently spanning the most significant part of both authors' writing careers, with figures quoted for sales from 1915-1940. The limited sources of his statistics, the time-frame of 1915-40, the limited choice of novels listed and some inaccuracies in figures, are criticised by Schneider³³⁵ but, as Schneider acknowledges, Richards' study remains a primary reference point for many later investigations. Schneider concentrates specifically on the period of the Third Reich, giving a list of 50

³³² Marianne Weil (ed.) (1986). *Wehrwolf und die Biene Maja. Der deutsche Bücherschrank zwischen den Kriegen*. Berlin: Edition Mythos.

³³³ Richards, D. R. (1968). *The German Bestseller in the Twentieth Century. A complete bibliography and analysis 1915-1940*. Berne: Herbert Lang. pp.56-68.

³³⁴ Ibid.,

³³⁵ Schneider, T. (2004). 'Bestseller im Dritten Reich Ermittlung und Analyse der meistverkauften Romane in Deutschland 1933-1944', *Vierteljahresschrift für Zeitgeschichte*, 52, 77-98. [Online] http://www.ifz-muenchen.de/heftarchiv/2004_1_2_schneider.pdf [Accessed 26.10.14].

bestsellers and referring to the studies by Sarkowicz and Mentzer³³⁶ and Schoeps.³³⁷ For this period, there are notable inconsistencies between the figures given by D.R. Richards and Tobias Schneider, even allowing for the different time-scales. Schneider estimates that K.A. Schenziger's *Anilin, Roman der deutsche Farben-Industrie* topped the bestseller list for 1933-1945 with a total publication of 920,000 copies,³³⁸ with his *Metal, Roman einer neuen Zeit* (1939) at number 8, while Richards places *Anilin* at number 14.³³⁹ Coming second in Schneider's List is Kuni Tremel-Eggert's (1934) *Barb, Der Roman einer deutschen Frau*, published by the NSDAP Zentralverlag. The publication figures of this partly autobiographical work with vehemently anti-Semitic passages are estimated by Richards to be lower than 50,000. Third in Schneider's list is Ehm Welk's (1937) *Die Heiden von Kummerov*. Ehm Welk wrote against the NSDAP, was temporarily imprisoned in KZ Oranienburg and was subsequently forbidden to write and publish during the Third Reich. Richards lists neither author nor novel. Unsurprisingly, given the black-listing of her work in 1933, which prevented publication in Germany during the Third Reich, Vicki Baum does not appear in Schneider while Ina Seidel's *Das Wunschkind* is at number 16, compared with number 57 in Richards' list. While accepting there may be inaccuracies in Richards' statistics, the coincidence of his time-scale with the careers of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum and his generally acknowledged authority, justify the primary use of his bestselling list for the purposes of this chapter.

Both writers' novels were sold in a well-established market in which a female readership was now a significant factor. The identification of a 'typically feminine' literature, as proposed by

³³⁶ Sarkowicz, H. & Mentzer, A. (2000). *Literatur in Nazi-Deutschland. Ein biografisches Lexikon*. Hamburg: Europa Verlag.

³³⁷ Schoeps, K. H. (1992). *Literatur Im Dritten Reich*. Berne: Herbert Lang.

³³⁸ Schneider, T. (2004). 'Bestseller im Dritten Reich Ermittlung und Analyse der meistverkauften Romane in Deutschland 1933-1944', *Vierteljahresschrift für Zeitgeschichte*, 52, 77-98.

³³⁹ Richards, D. R. (1968). *The German Bestseller in the Twentieth Century. A complete bibliography and analysis 1915-1940*. Berne: Herbert Lang. p.55.

Walter Hofmann,³⁴⁰ was challenged by the variety of books praised in entries for the 1931 competition for girls and young women, with the title ‘Was wir vom Buch erwarten’, organised in conjunction with the 1931 *Tag des Buches*. Nevertheless, Hofmann’s analysis, acknowledged by Barndt as a ‘milestone of German book market research’³⁴¹ provides contemporary empirically-based acknowledgement of the importance of women readers to Weimar publishing.

Richards’ work offers numerical analysis of the book market and opportunities for reflecting on Hofmann’s conclusions regarding gendered reading choices. Margarete Böhme’s *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen*, whose title would invite a mixed-gender readership, is in the top 1% of Richards’ list. Other single works of now-forgotten women-authors³⁴² are ranked as best-sellers but the romantic novels of Hedwig Courths-Mahler were overall the most popular. She published 122 novels in total with an average circulation of 145,000.³⁴³ The family-centred novels of Agnes Sapper also appear frequently in Richards’ list, confirming Nottelmann’s conclusion that the circulation of novels by female novelists of the pre-Weimar period, writing on traditional ‘women’s’ themes, far exceeded that of the modern city novelists. Both Courths-Mahler and Sapper were essentially conservative in their attitudes to women, favouring romance culminating in stable and enduring marriages while acknowledging, with some compassion, the difficulties faced by women forced by social circumstances into deprivation and crime.

³⁴⁰ Barndt quotes from his 1930 book *Die Lektüre der Frau*, concerned with policies to encourage public libraries to stock appropriate books for a female readership, to illustrate his conservative view of women readers. *Ibid.*, p.101.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.101.

³⁴² The list includes Margot v. Simpson, Sophie Charlotte v. Sell.

³⁴³ Nottelmann, N. (2002). *Strategien des Erfolgs. Narratologische Analysen exemplarischer Romane Vicki Baums*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.30.

3.3 German Publication figures of novels by Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum

Richards is careful to emphasise the limitations of his figures and provides an estimate of both the numbers published and the timescale in which this figure was achieved. Sales varied considerably from year to year and the average in the final column, as quoted in the table below, is calculated solely for the purpose of comparison between titles and does not reflect the true number sold in any one historical year.

Ina Seidel

	Years published	Total published	yearly average
<i>Das Wunschkind</i>	1930-40	310,000 ³⁴⁴	31,000
<i>Lennacker</i>	1938-40	120,000 ³⁴⁵	60,000
<i>Unser Freund Peregrin</i>	1940	30,000 ³⁴⁶	30,000
<i>Der Weg ohne Wahl</i>	1933-40	30,000 ³⁴⁷	4,285
<i>Die Fürstin reitet</i>	1929-40	22,000 ³⁴⁸	2,000

Vicki Baum

The 1926 to 1931 novels (with the exception of *Ferne*) were first published in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (BIZ) and subsequently in book form:

<i>Der Eingang zur Bühne</i> ³⁴⁹	1920-31	146,000 ³⁵⁰	13,272
<i>Ferne</i>	1926 -31	30,000	6,000
<i>Stud. chem. Helene Wilfürer</i>	1929-32	105,000 ³⁵¹	35,000

³⁴⁴ Richards, D. R. (1968). *The German Bestseller in the Twentieth Century. A complete bibliography and analysis 1915-1940*. Berne: Herbert Lang. p.57.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p.66.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., p.217.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., p.217.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., p.217.

³⁴⁹ Vicki Baum claims 160,000, Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.305.

³⁵⁰ Richards, D. R. (1968). *The German Bestseller in the Twentieth Century. A complete bibliography and analysis 1915-1940*. Berne: Herbert Lang. p.63.

³⁵¹ Ibid., p.69.

<i>Menschen im Hotel</i>	1929-31	56,000 ³⁵²	28,000
<i>Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel</i>	1930-31	30,000 ³⁵³	30,000
<i>Hell in Frauensee</i>	1927-31	141,000 ³⁵⁴	35,250

The above figures place both authors regularly in the bestseller lists, which Richards categorises as works with a publication figure of between 50,000 and 500,000.

In the following paragraph and in order to suggest a ranking system which also takes into account the possible inaccuracy of the source, Richards' figures have been transposed to approximate percentages, thus giving some indication of the comparative place of individual novels within the total bestseller list.

Ina Seidel's *Das Wunschkind* (1930) appears in the top 6% of his list and *Lennacker* (1938) in the top 36% of a total list of more than 850 books. The position of *Lennacker* is anomalous in that it achieved its total sales over a comparatively short period, making it the best average yearly seller of the Seidel/Baum novels listed. As late as 1955, Ina Seidel still had seven titles in publication.³⁵⁵ In 1959, Ina Seidel's novel *Michaela* was a best-seller in East and West Germany,³⁵⁶ reflecting contemporary concern on both sides of the border with questions of national guilt and personal innocence. Vicki Baum first appears in Richards' rankings with *Eingang zur Bühne* (1920) which, along with *Hell in Frauensee* (1927), is in the top 23% of the total. *Stud. chem. Helene Wilfürer* (1929), frequently judged, on both literary and ideological grounds, as one of Vicki Baum's better and most influential novels, is in the top 41% although, like the later *Lennacker*, it sold large numbers over a short period. The commercially triumphant *Menschen im Hotel* is relegated to the bottom 16%, which confirms

³⁵² Ibid., p.86.

³⁵³ Ibid., p.102.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., p.64.

³⁵⁵ Häntzschel, G. (2009). 'Ein Überblick, Die deutschsprachige Literatur des Jahres 1959.' In: Häntzschel, G., Hanuschek, S., Leuschner, U. (eds.). *Das Treibhaus. Jahrbuch für die Literatur der fünfziger Jahre: Die Anfänge der DDR-Literatur*. 6.55-62.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 59.

the problem of estimating readership solely through Richards' statistics. The novel had appeared first in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, with its large circulation, and was then printed immediately after in July 1929 with an initial edition of 25,000. In 1930, a stage-version was performed in Berlin and an English translation of the novel published in London. By 1931, 56,000 copies of the German original had been sold in hardcover. In 1932, after the film was made with Greta Garbo as the star, a special edition was produced selling at 3 Marks and, of this edition, over 100,000 copies were sold. In later years, it was on the lists of at least seven book-clubs. The book's position on Richards' list is therefore no realistic indication of its cumulative readership numbers.

As educated women, the literary interests of both authors were common to their class rather than their gender. Publication figures offer no indication of class-bias, although comparative sales-prices, if available, would do so. Contemporary diaries, however, provide another source of information and one which is used extensively by Adams³⁵⁷ in his investigation of reading habits before and during the Third Reich. The diaries of Goebbels, who had written a doctoral thesis on Romantic drama, and the university-educated Himmler, detailed reading-lists which were typical of their class. They both record many books which also appeared on the Seidel family bookshelves, indicating an approved European literary heritage which now also admitted the occasional American author.³⁵⁸ The younger Ina Seidel was entertained by the monthly illustrated magazine *Monatsheften*,³⁵⁹ but her favourite book, *Elfenreigen*, told stories derived from ancient Germanic sagas and folktales.³⁶⁰ She mentions her fascination with its

³⁵⁷ Adam, C. (2010). *Lesen unter Hitler. Autoren, Bestseller, Leser im Dritten Reich*. Berlin: Galliani.

³⁵⁸ From 1919 to 1934, Himmler reports the reading of 346 books, including not only the classics such as Dostoyevski, Dumas, Ibsen, Gogol and even Wilde, but also Hesse, Kellermann, Jack London and Thomas Mann. Goebbels' record of books read, lists Thomas Carlyle, Busch, Fallada, Hamsun, Hasenclever, Ibsen, Kaiser, Thomas Mann, Meyrink, Strindberg, and Tolstoi. The Seidel household was similarly international in its tastes with Ina taking advantage of her parents' bookshelves to read Poe, Defoe, Harte and Mark Twain, as well as the works of Brentano, Keller, Storm, Stifter, Ibsen, Tolstoi, Gorki, Thomas Mann, Hesse und Ricarda Huch.

³⁵⁹ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.65.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.66.

Appendix, giving sources for the tales. The Seidel book-shelves were available to the child Ina and she ignored the parental advice that certain works were probably unsuitable for a young lady.

The enthusiasm for ‘Bildung’ among middle-class Jewish families³⁶¹ was not shared by Vicki Baum’s father, who kept the home book-free, fearing that fostering imagination might increase the child’s supposedly incipient tendency to the same nervous disorder as her mother. She nevertheless borrowed, stole and concealed books and visits to the Hassreiter family allowed her to read while the daughters played tennis (which would have spoiled her harp-playing hands). Here she encountered Ibsen’s plays and confirmation of her own view of bourgeois life as ‘Bigotterie, hohler Patriotismus, Humbug, Schwindel’.³⁶² At home she read Heine, in defiance of her father and family conservatism,³⁶³ indirectly strengthening the later ideological influence of Nietzsche as well as that technique of self-conscious literary presentation which informs her own work.³⁶⁴ Her early literary experience was however constrained by the demands of her musical career as well as her father’s philistinism and she fails to mention any other literary influences before her own excursion into popular authorship, at the age of fourteen, with her story for the newspaper *Die Muskete*.³⁶⁵

3.4 The market for popular literature

The nature of the Weimar literature market and of the publishers who supplied it, is analysed by Lynda J. King,³⁶⁶ who traces the development of the bestseller format from the early days

³⁶¹ Divnur, A. (2014). 'Jewish-German-Universal Judaism in the thought of Hannah Arendt and Hans Jonas', 4(5) [Online] <http://hsf.bgu.ac.il/cjt/files/electures/Jewish-German-Universal4.htm>. [Accessed 7.2.13].

³⁶² Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.172.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.34.

³⁶⁴ ‘Nietzsche, who emphasised the Slavic source of his family, isolates himself, with the Jew Heine, from the stylistically banal camp of the Germans [...] Nietzsche sought and found in Heine a poet whose prime consideration was the presentation of the internal self-image of the writer in a self-consciously linguistic form’. Golomb, J. (2002). *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis.p.93.

³⁶⁵ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.169.

³⁶⁶ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

when serialised novels appeared in the daily press to attract a wide readership for later book-issues. She makes clear that Baum's massive popularity was the result of a fortuitous combination of the contemporary book-market, the skill of her publishers and her personal talent for recognising and being able to create a marketable literary product. Heather Valencia considers the extent to which saleability influences the style and nature of the work itself.³⁶⁷ She points out Ullstein's refusal to publish *stud. chem. Helene Wilfüer* for two years (1926-8) in order to establish the name of Vicki Baum and develop her image as a woman with a specific knowledge of contemporary social and scientific issues through articles published in Ullstein magazines.³⁶⁸

Ullstein was one of the four major presses, which Kaes et al. assert influenced public opinion throughout Germany.³⁶⁹ Such publishers could use their multiple publications and commercial acumen to market both authors and their works and their large circulation figures appealed to advertisers who, in turn, gave their financial support. Ullstein's *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, BIZ, claimed publication figures of 1.2 million³⁷⁰ and by 1931, the combined circulation of all illustrated magazines hit 5.3 million.³⁷¹ New media accelerated the process: in 1929, only two years after its development for the mass-market, 3 million Germans owned a radio, creating a listening-public of approximately 9 million for which both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum broadcasted, raising awareness of their personae and presumably increasing their readership. Petersen³⁷² posits a cross-over from the popular media of film and photography to that of illustrated literature, photo-journalism and advertising which was distributed through the mass-

³⁶⁷ Valencia, H. (2006). 'Vicki Baum: A first rate second-rate writer', In: Leydecker, K. (ed.) *German Novelists of the Weimar Republic*. London: Camden House.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p.238.

³⁶⁹ Kaes, A. M. (1995). *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Berkeley: University of California Press.p.641.

³⁷⁰ Bachleitner, N. (2010). *Der deutschsprachige Feuilletonroman in der Weimarer Republik und in der NS Zeit* [Online] http://complit.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/abt_complit/VOFeurom08.pdf. [Accessed 6.8.13].

³⁷¹ Lynn, J. M. (2008). *Contesting Images: Representations of the Modern Woman in the German Illustrated Press, 1924-1933*. M.A. dissertation. University of North Carolina. p.25

³⁷² Petersen, V. R. (2001). *Women and modernity in Weimar Germany: reality and its representation in popular fiction*. Oxford/London: Berghahn

publishing industry. Glamour in exotic situations and locations, as well as the grim realism of such films as G.W. Pabst's *Die freudlose Gasse* (1925) or *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (1927) became a visible standard against which Weimar women could measure themselves and their lives. Vicki Baum's (1936) *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* follows in the more gloomy tradition, as do women's lives in most of the episodes in Ina Seidel's *Lennacker* (1938). On the brighter side, South Sea islands,^{373,374} their flora, fauna and indigenous cultures, furnish colourful backdrops for the stories of both authors. In reflecting popular taste for both realism and escape their novels also bridge the gap between the popular and the serious – the Ullstein cover of the 1964 paperback of *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* advertises 'Das Ewig-Menschliche in exotischer Szenerie', suggesting that a more intellectual readership may find some interesting thoughts between the lurid covers. Ina Seidel's books have generally a more dignified presentation, although the 1966 Verlag Herder Edition does its best to hint at a historical romance rather than a statement on the transmigration of souls and the persistence of blood-heritage.

The voracious appetite for entertainment of 'the masses'³⁷⁵ who now had spare time and money to enjoy it, raised concern and alarm among the intelligentsia and those middle and upper-classes who had previously been able to control the means of production and therefore dictate what was produced. Wholesale methods of publication and distribution evoked other perceived threats - the modern metropolis, as a promiscuous conglomeration of peoples and industries, with mechanisation implying depersonalisation of production and debasement of literature. Cheap editions, such as the Yellow Ullstein Book series³⁷⁶ were sold at newsstands and on stations as well as in traditional bookshops. Lynda J. King suggests that the standardisation of such a series prompted the public to buy books because they recognised a familiar format, with

³⁷³ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein.

³⁷⁴ Seidel, I. (1920-21). 'Menuett auf Tahiti : Erzählung'. In: *Wieland : Zeitschrift für Kunst u. Dichtung*, 6, 2-8.

³⁷⁵ See later references to Kracauer's social and literary analyses, p.60, p.266.

³⁷⁶ Yellow was recognised as the colour of sun, a gesture of modernity, but was also reminiscent of the British Yellow Books of the 1890s with their reputation for decadence.

publishers then demanding that their authors wrote to fulfil the readers' expectations.³⁷⁷ However, Valencia's contention, that conventional plots with happy endings were desirable for popular success, appears to be contradicted by such novels as *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* or *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* where the ends are neither cheerful nor optimistic. The singularly serious, even gloomy, nature of many of the works in Richards' best-seller list, including those of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, would confirm that happy-endings were only a part of the popular taste. Catering for a perceived appetite for 'entertainment' was a more complex business than sometimes supposed, as Tatar's work³⁷⁸ on the numerous *Lustmord* images in Weimar art and literature supports. Seidel and Baum were successful in achieving that balance between entertainment and enlightenment which continued to ensure the sales of their writings. Bookclubs also tailored their lists to stereotypical readership groups and Ina Seidel's novels, as well as Vicki Baum's appeared on the lists of the Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, Bertelsmann Lesering and the Deutscher Buchklub.³⁷⁹ These all claimed to offer quality literature in an attractive format, aiming at the book's appearance on the bookshelves of the aspirational, as well as the interested, reader.

Vicki Baum protested ruefully against the fate of her novel *Menschen im Hotel*:

Was ich als Gleichnis oder Symbol des kurzen Aufenthalts, den wir Leben nennen, gesehen hatte, die innere Einsamkeit hinter all den Türen, die flüchtige Begegnungen und Berührungen, das unausweichliche Scheiden und Meiden: das alles wurde rasch zum mechanischen Spielzeug. Ein Rezept auf allen Märkten verkauft und gekauft.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. p.32.

³⁷⁸ Herzog, T. (1995). Review of *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany* by Maria Tatar. *MLN (Modern Language Notes)*, 110, 989-992.

³⁷⁹ Ina Seidel's *Das Wunschkind* was the only two-volume work offered.

³⁸⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.394.

Gabriele Thöns quotes Ina Seidel on the ‘Stänkereien der Journaille’ and the ‘ganze stagnierende schillernde Sumpf unseres Kulturlebens’.³⁸¹ Friedrich v.d.Leyen’s critique of Ina Seidel’s poetry in Diederich’s magazine *Das neue Reich* makes an emphatic distinction between ‘die Wunderblume dieser Dichtung’ and the corrupted, urban, popular literature of the time.³⁸² While embracing sales, neither author wished to be considered as a debased talent or one who would willingly sacrifice authenticity of style and content to the profit motive.

Ullstein was probably the largest publishing house in Europe in 1929,³⁸³ competing with Fischer’s Insel-Verlag and the Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt for the better authors and more-demanding texts.³⁸⁴ In 1921 and 1922 the Egon Fleischel press, who had published Vicki Baum’s first novel *Frühe Schatten* (1921), became part of the Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt and several of their authors, including Ina Seidel, moved with them. Vicki Baum’s novels *Schloßtheater* (1921), *Die anderen Tage* (1922, 1931), *Die Welt ohne Sünde* (1923), *Ulle, der Zwerg* (1924, 1925, 1931) and *Der Weg* (1925), were published by the Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt but Ullstein’s offer of editorial employment in 1926 secured her loyalty to them. According to Lynda J. King, Ullstein’s editorial decisions prioritised commercial success over the liberal ideology they claimed.³⁸⁵ She quotes Vicki Baum’s account of being asked in 1926 by Korff the Editor-in-Chief of the *Berliner Illustrirte* to reject the work of Skowronnek which he called ‘Blut und Boden und Vaterland und Kuhmist’³⁸⁶ literature, but points out that Skowronnek’s work continued to be published in the magazine through the early 1930s.

³⁸¹ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch. In: Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. p.259.

³⁸² Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. p.13.

³⁸³ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press .p.50.

³⁸⁴ Ina Seidel appreciated the relative standards of her publishers - ‘Unter den Deutschen Verlagen hatte der Eugen Diederichs Verlag neben dem Insel Verlag und dem S. Fischer Verlag das höchste und vornehmste Niveau’ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.313

³⁸⁵ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. p.49.

³⁸⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.353.

3.5 The predominance of Berlin in contemporary publishing

As the centre of publishing and the literary capital of Germany, Berlin attracted numbers of authors, with 36% of authors, including Vicki Baum and Ina Seidel, having their main home in the city. The provincial readership, however, retained a significance which both the urban publishers and their authors were forced to acknowledge. The figures Linda J. King provides for the cost of advertising in the various Ullstein publications indicates the direct influence these publications were assumed to have on an audience who found their contents and ideological bases sympathetic. The highest figure (12,646 marks) was for a full-page advertisement in the *Berliner Illustrirte* the second (8,000 marks) for a page in *Der Grüne Post*,³⁸⁷ the weekly magazine for rural areas. This was followed by the, equally conservative, *Der Blatt der Hausfrau* (3,820 marks). The urban readership, though influential, did not dominate Ullstein to the extent that Vicki Baum herself suggests. A page advertisement in *Die Dame* cost only 2,200 marks.³⁸⁸ In the later years of the twentieth century Ullstein took over publication of some of Ina Seidel's novels from the Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt - *Lennacker* (1982), *Dunkle Erzählungen* (1981), *Vor Tau und Tag* (1967), *Das Wunschkind* (1987), showing a continuing commitment to the public taste for popular pre-war fiction whose themes and subjects were out-of-step with postwar literature.

3.6 Self-education through literature – popular education and popular culture

Seidel and Baum were best-selling authors who resisted classification within the contentious genre of 'mass' literature although they aspired to be widely read and to become significant influences on the life of their readers. Seidel's, 'Ich will Menschen etwas sein',³⁸⁹ is echoed in

³⁸⁷ For whom Vicki Baum wrote a gardening column under the pseudonym 'Der alte Gärtner'. [Online] <http://www.univie.ac.at/biografiA/daten/text/bio/baum.htm> .[Accessed 21.10.14].

³⁸⁸ King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. p.69.

³⁸⁹ Ferber, C. (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.14.

Baum's summary of her own, and her generation's, wish to construct a better future for all:

‘Wir taten gleichzeitig alles, was wir konnten, um etwas Besseres zu schaffen.’³⁹⁰

The relationship of both authors to their readers was equivocal, despite the defining role of the readership in determining ‘popularity’. Interest in, and approval of, their writings,³⁹¹ as expressed in fan-letters and academic works, was a matter of satisfaction which both record, yet both claim that public acclaim of their work is irrelevant, ‘lässt mir kalt’ Baum writes,³⁹² ‘gleichgültig ob Bücher erscheinen – es gilt nur zu arbeiten,’³⁹³ Seidel asserts. Baum denigrates the taste and discrimination of her readership,³⁹⁴ while also complaining about the lack of literary recognition.³⁹⁵ Autobiographical, and other, statements show that both women recognised their own social and intellectual positions as superior to, or at least different from, that of their mass readership yet both regarded themselves as part of the female masses as well as the intellectual élites.

Seidel and Baum both asserted the biology of gender,³⁹⁶ which they regarded as uniting them to the world of women in an organic solidarity. Their writings were therefore intended as an acknowledgement of shared common experience, which, for Brown,³⁹⁷ is a fundamental requirement of any culture which claims to be popular.

Every woman and mother, they thought, was an instinctive cultivator, of nature, of children and of the children's ideas. First words were learnt at the mother's knee, and she transmitted the nation's folk culture through tales, rhymes and nursery-songs.³⁹⁸ As mothers who were

³⁹⁰ *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.187.

³⁹¹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.341.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p.380.

³⁹³ Ferber, C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.49.

³⁹⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.455.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.377.

³⁹⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.463.

³⁹⁷ Browne, R. & Fishwick M.W. (1988). ‘Symbiosis: Popular Culture and Other Fields’. In: Hinds, H. E., Motz, M. F. & Nelson, A. M. S. (2006) *Popular Culture Theory and Methodology: A Basic Introduction*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press. pp.359-62.

³⁹⁸ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. pp. 14-15.

writers, they were expanding their role as cultural transmitters beyond the domestic and into the public arena. They were, they believed, ‘speaking the voice of the [female] people’ and therefore contributing to a culture of, and for, the people.

Despite their commercial success, their books were not, they felt, marked by the ‘inauthentic, formulaic, simplistic or banal’³⁹⁹ styles attributed to literature of inferior quality aimed at the commercial demands of the mass market. Baum stresses her authorial technique,⁴⁰⁰ intellectual awareness and the effort put into even the most commercial of her books. Seidel emphasises high moral tone,⁴⁰¹ feeling no need to assert or justify her literary status.

Certainly, the writings of Seidel and Baum fall within ‘mass culture’ as defined by the means of its production. The enormous wholesale production and distribution of their writings⁴⁰² encouraged by contemporary technological development, ‘political democracy and popular education’,⁴⁰³ projected them both into the public role of popular authors.

Both women castigate what they perceive as the products of mass commercial culture, regarding them as having deleterious effects on both the intellectual and physical lives of the nation. They also indicate, through the characters of their novels, an implicit link between the education of the female masses and their cultural choices. An education which fitted girls for typists or shopgirls, the Flämmchen of *Menschen im Hotel* or Seidel’s Loulou, as the novels show, divorced women from the natural pleasures of domesticity without allowing them to achieve compensatory intellectual benefits. Both Loulou and Flämmchen devote their attention to the transitory frivolities of fashion and decoration while ‘good’ women, with no commercial skills, concern themselves with food and families. Baum criticises the clichés of the education

³⁹⁹ Guins, R. & Cruz, O. (2005). ‘Entangling the Popular: Introduction’. In: *Popular Culture: A Reader*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press. p.5.

⁴⁰⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.464.

⁴⁰¹ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.142.

⁴⁰² Industrial publication on the large scale is, Hinds insists, a yardstick for objects of ‘mass culture’ p.39.

⁴⁰³ Macdonald, D. (1957). ‘A theory of mass culture’. In: Guins, R. & Cruz, O. (2005). *Popular Culture: A Reader*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press. p.39.

system⁴⁰⁴ and images of modern life peddled by an increasingly dominant film-industry which undermine what she regards as womanliness.⁴⁰⁵ Seidel's *Eine Frau in der Bahn* brings technology, mass culture and female public employment together in the sad tale of a woman whose life they ruined.⁴⁰⁶ The incessant noise, commercial activity and the glare of city lights and shop windows are, for both authors, the demonstrations of a manufactured culture, devoid of spiritual significance which generates dissatisfaction and disillusion.⁴⁰⁷ Widdig⁴⁰⁸ confirms the widespread contemporary currency of these authors' supposition that popular culture was concerned with instant gratification and consumption rather than offering any lasting value.

Their concerns with the nature of popular culture, and their own roles within it, reflect contemporary preoccupations. 'Kracauer and Benjamin virtually invented the criticism of popular culture'⁴⁰⁹ in the 1920s, linking it to the modern life of the metropolis and both, as Kosta points out, welcomed its democratising function as 'a practical critique of the remnants of bourgeois high culture.'⁴¹⁰ Seidel's and Baum's characters also wander through city streets,⁴¹¹ with that flâneur's gaze attributed to Kracauer and Benjamin, and echo the serious observations of contemporary social critics.

Kracauer's (1925) *Die Reise und der Tanz*, suggests that both travel and dance, then forms of popular bourgeois entertainment, were 'the false or abusive translation into physical terms of metaphysical longings'.⁴¹² The recurrence of the themes throughout the writings of Seidel and

⁴⁰⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.455.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p.306.

⁴⁰⁶ Seidel, I. (1944). *Eine Frau in der Bahn*. DLA75.1054.

⁴⁰⁷ See p.255.

⁴⁰⁸ Widdig, B. (2001). *Culture and Inflation in Weimar Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.191.

⁴⁰⁹ Jennings, W. (2013). 'Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer, and Weimar Criticism'. In: Gordon, P.E. & McCormick, J.P. (2013). *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p.10.

⁴¹⁰ Kosta, B. (2013). *Willing Seduction: The Blue Angel, Marlene Dietrich, and Mass Culture*. New York: Berghahn Books. Introduction.

⁴¹¹ *Doris Hart's* night-time homeward treks through New York or Wolfgang and Aage's Berlin peregrinations in *Das Tor der Frühe*.

⁴¹² Hewitt, A. (2005). *Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. p.196.

Baum confirms their serious importance to both of these bourgeois women. Forster's fictional world travels,⁴¹³ like Doris Hart's⁴¹⁴ or those real journeys of Vicki Baum herself, express the will to discover more meaningful ways of life, to illustrate the follies of contemporary society and to sketch possible alternatives for their readerships. Both authors invest contemporary dance with the spiritual depths that Kracauer denies, regarding dance as a means of accessing a spontaneous, purer (because non-verbal), means of human communication.

Contemporary denigration of mass culture was directed not only at its products but also at the cultural tastes of its consumers, by definition a large proportion of the population. Petro quotes the Spartacist poet Bruno Schönlink to illustrate the gendered bias of such social criticism, which attributes harmful susceptibility primarily to the female audience

They gladly let themselves be led astray
by that which enchants their souls
Drunk with the glitter they return home⁴¹⁵

Dismal voices, among them Seidel⁴¹⁶ and Baum,⁴¹⁷ equated mass culture with a significant deterioration in moral values. Petersen⁴¹⁸ notes Schulz's (1909) criticism of popular literature as a threat to public morals while Mommsen indicates the link between vitriolic attacks on 'the "asphalt press", the earliest manifestations of "mass culture" the rapid growth of a consumer society' and 'a subliminal anti-Semitism.'⁴¹⁹ Reuveni,⁴²⁰ like Barndt, notes the widespread horror, particularly among middle-class men who feared the degradation of national culture through the proliferation of inferior literature, and particularly that written by and for women.

⁴¹³ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch.

⁴¹⁴ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁴¹⁵ Petro, P. (1987). 'Modernity and Mass Culture in Weimar: Contours of a Discourse on Sexuality in Early Theories of Perception and Representation', *New German Critique*, 40.119

⁴¹⁶ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.133.

⁴¹⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.162.

⁴¹⁸ Petersen, V. R. (2001). *Women and modernity in Weimar Germany: reality and its representation in popular fiction*, Oxford/London: Berghahn. p.4.

⁴¹⁹ Mommsen, H. (1998). *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books. p.303.

⁴²⁰ Reuveni, G. (2006). *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany Before 1933*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn. p. 241.

Such critics are portrayed with some venom in the fictions of both Baum and Seidel as mediocre, vain and self-opinionated.⁴²¹

Williams suggests that, despite their distaste for its forms, contemporary critics of all political persuasions saw mass culture as a means of influencing a large and naïve audience for their own ideological ends.⁴²² But, as Macdonald pointed out, the substitution of an élite, nominally high, culture by one of inferior quality also raised cultural aspirations independent of political intent: ‘Mass Culture breaks down the wall, integrating the masses into a debased form of High Culture’.⁴²³ Baum’s theatrical novels with their dramatic narrations of operatic plots and theatrical events, offering the ‘insider’s view’ of an élite cultural world, conveniently fulfilled both educative, entertaining and aspirational cultural functions. The assured status of the Seidel family within the cultural life of Germany lent her writing the same gloss of cultural prestige. The idea that the populace, emboldened by a new-found understanding, might then also claim social, economic and political equality was a threat which both Seidel and Baum acknowledge in their fiction and in autobiographical writings. For themselves, they vehemently opposed personal identification with any mass organisation, whether political or cultural. Barndt comments⁴²⁴ that the 1931 ‘Tag des Buches’, which Seidel was instrumental in organising, was conceived of as ‘a day of battle against the influence of mass culture.’ The event stressed the important influence of women’s reading habits on the moral health of the nation. Its participants, female authors and readers, hoped to claim recognition as serious and thoughtful individuals, a will that the then-exiled Baum frequently asserted throughout her writing career.

⁴²¹ Notably Palmer in Seidel’s *Sterne der Heimkehr* or Baum’s theatre critic Born in *Schicksalsflug*.

⁴²² Williams, J.A. (2011). *Weimar Culture Revisited*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. p.51.

⁴²³ Macdonald, D. (1957). ‘A theory of mass culture’. In: Guins, R. & Cruz, O. (2005). *Popular Culture: A Reader*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press. p.40.

⁴²⁴ Barndt, K. (2010). ‘Female Readers in Weimar Germany’. In: *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn. p.101

Perhaps even worse than the perceived lowering of cultural, and moral, standards in the eyes of both Seidel and Baum, was their interpretation that widespread literacy had also divorced ‘the masses’ from their native, traditional, folk-culture, which had been largely based on oral or physical transmission through dance, drama and ritual. Restoring the less fortunate to their cultural heritage as citizens⁴²⁵ and Germans⁴²⁶ was therefore a worthy cause for novelists like themselves.

The contentious relationship between education and culture in Weimar was tested empirically in contemporary surveys of literary tastes. Reuveni reproduces several surveys of Weimar reading habits based on the class, gender and education of participants which aimed to provide data confirming or refuting contemporary cultural pessimism. Hofmann’s library-readership data investigated the literary tastes of women as determined by the books they read, distinguishing between educated women, whose tastes were allegedly closer to those of men, and ‘undifferentiated women’,⁴²⁷ yet he concluded, as did Seidel and Baum, that ‘sexual solidarity’⁴²⁸ rather than education was the dominant factor in determining reading preferences. The direct responses of those readers who collectively demonstrated their approval of Seidel and Baum’s work by purchasing or reading it, are more difficult to locate, since the majority of ordinary readers found little opportunity to record their views for public record. Hofmann’s data provides no information on reader-response to the works of Seidel and Baum, who do not appear on his lists. According to the surveys mentioned by Reuveni, their books were not classified among the ‘Heimaterzählungen, Dorfgeschichten and Bauernromane’ that women preferred.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁵ Seidel’s *Organisierte Mütterlichkeit* explains citizenship for working-class women.

⁴²⁶ Baum’s theatre novels, particularly *Die Große Pause* (1941), initiate the reader into the themes, plots and personalities of German music and theatre.

⁴²⁷ Reuveni, G. (2006). *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany Before 1933*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn. p. 241. p.226.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., p.226.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p.227.

Barndt suggests that contemporary readers viewed Seidel's work as 'positive examples of "female prose," supposedly free of the decadence of the contemporary "mannish" literature of the New Woman'.⁴³⁰ Her writings received early laudatory reviews from male critics. Thöns notes their common identification of Seidel's simplicity and emotional understanding of the natural world and deep human sympathies which, according to her critics, confirmed her as a true representative of the feminine ideal, unsullied by intellectualism.⁴³¹ A woman critic, Eva Keßler (1927) praised Seidel's understanding of the 'Geheimnisse des Lebens'⁴³² while Frau Einhauser-Heer (1929) expressed a similar sentiment as 'Alle Dinge haben ihr ihre Namen gesagt, ihr tiefdringender ruhiger Blick durchbricht alle Hüllen'.⁴³³ For these and later critics, and Thöns lists many, it was the instinctive understanding of a woman, and a mother, which gave Seidel such insights. After the publication of *Das Wunschkind* (1930-31) Seidel's alleged nationalism, her status as 'ein Stück nordische Rasse'⁴³⁴ and the 'Verwurzelung des weiblichen Menschen in Familie und Volk'⁴³⁵ are critically significant. Writing in the 1931 edition of the Protestant publication *Eckart*, Elisabeth von Randenborgh described *Das Wunschkind* as:

Das Buch der deutschen Frau, in vollendeter dichterischer Form ohne Pathos und ohne Geist; [das Buch, das] in scheinbar sachlicher Distanz und beherrschter glutvoller Innigkeit ein Bekenntnis zu Frauentum, Deutschtum und Religion, in der Krise unserer Zeit eine befreiende Tat [ist].⁴³⁶

The Bertelsmann Lesering (1951) edition of the book quotes Julius Bab's (1931) critique:⁴³⁷

⁴³⁰ Barndt, K. (2010). 'Female Readers in Weimar Germany'. In: *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn. p.100.

⁴³¹ Thöns, G. (1984) *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. pp.9-11.

⁴³² Keßler, E. (1927). 'Ina Seidel'. *Der Kunstwart*, 41.128. In: Thöns, G. (1984) *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz.p.11.

⁴³³ Einhauser-Heer, T. (1929). 'Ina Seidel'. In: *Die Scholle: Blätter für Kunst und Leben*.5. 58. In:Thöns, G. (1984) *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz.p.11.

⁴³⁴ Thöns, G. *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.14.

⁴³⁶ von Randenborgh, E. (1931) Cited: Dackweiler, R. (1991). 'Rezeptionsgeschichte von Ina Seidels Roman 'Das Wunschkind'. In: Determann, Hammer & Kiesel, *Verdeckte Überlieferungen: Weiblichkeitsbilder zwischen Weimarer Republik, Nationalsozialismus und Fünfziger Jahren*. Frankfurt: Haag + Herchen. p.86.

⁴³⁷ Also cited by Dackweiler, *Ibid.*, p.88.

Ein zeitloses Buch, ein Buch, das von den ewigen Dingen spricht, von denen, die in Geburt und Tod den Kreislauf des Lebens umfassen. Das ewige Schicksal aller Mütter wird hier in eine sinnbildliche Höhe gehoben. Das Buch einer ganz starken Künstlerin, die uns den unendlichen Humor wie das furchtbare Pathos der Dinge im Einklang ihrer Worte erleben lässt.⁴³⁸

During the Nazi years, *Das Wunschkind* became a standard work on the school curriculum and, after the publication of her essays '*Dichter, Volkstum und Sprache*' in 1934, her recognition as 'mitleidender, mitkämpfender deutscher Kamerad'⁴³⁹ was established.

The 1950s brought another wave of critical acclaim, as Thöns documents and 70th Birthday tributes affectionately confirm:

Das unverwesliche Erbe" enthält eine Summe nicht nur alles dessen, was diese Dichterin kann und äußerlich-thematisch anrührte, als vielmehr dessen, was sie ist und was sie für uns bedeutet. was man nicht anders denn als "große Dichtung" bezeichnen kann. Dennoch liegen ihre Bücher in vielen hunderttausend Exemplaren vor, und ihre Leserschaft scheint nicht ab-, sondern zuzunehmen.⁴⁴⁰

Thöns' work concludes that such critical views, recognising Seidel as a model for German womanhood, did in fact reflect the opinions of a large middle-class readership for whom such ideas had a resonance throughout the whole of Seidel's writing career.⁴⁴¹ The critiques mentioned, published in conservative journals but also general-circulation newspapers indicate that Seidel's work was popular, the product of mass-publication, but also regarded as serious literature with moral intent. The favourable recognition of both the author and her writings accorded by the Nazi regime, although no doubt increasing sales, as this chapter indicates, only confirmed existing public approval.

⁴³⁸ Bab, J. (1931) Cited: Ibid., p.88.

⁴³⁹ Biermer, L.(1935). 'Ina Seidel'. *Deutsches Volkstum*. 2. 706. In: Thöns, G. (1984) *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. p.22.

⁴⁴⁰ Gehrke, M.M.(1955) 'Eine deutsche Dichterin' Zum 70. Geburtstag von Ina Seidel. Frankfurt: FAZ 15.9.1955.

⁴⁴¹ Thöns, G. 1984) *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. p.24.

The opinions of Vicki Baum's readership are less discernible. As King states, to find empirically-verifiable data on actual general-public response to work more than fifty years old is almost a matter of luck.⁴⁴² Failing in the endeavour to find data from a readership whose personal views on literature failed to reach the public arena, King turns to literary reviewers while acknowledging that 'Critical response cannot be equated with general-reader response.'⁴⁴³ She quotes from a variety of contemporary reviews of Baum's novels to demonstrate the control Ullstein imposed on both the publishing market and the image of those authors whose work it published. She clarifies the processes by which Ullstein ensured that the reading public would be informed and their appreciation of the novels directed, even before the novels were published⁴⁴⁴ and shows how Ullstein used reader's testimonies for advertising purposes, printing them (and possibly even writing them she suggests) in their publications. The voices of the 'ordinary readership' which thus found publication are not therefore trustworthy sources of reference. In its own 1940 Book Club advertisement the American Book League named Baum's *Shanghai 37* as a 'great new book' that 'everyone is reading', offering it free, along with *Jane Eyre*, to readers who would sign up.⁴⁴⁵

King also demonstrates the wide-reaching influence of Ullstein, detailing advertising/reviews in the magazines and newspapers of other presses, including feminist sources⁴⁴⁶ which gave reactions and opinions favourable to the Ullstein author's work. King shows how, by deliberately mixing fact with fiction and using 'informed readers' views' to authenticate the

⁴⁴² King, L. J. (1988). *Best-sellers by design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. p.98.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., p.98.

⁴⁴⁴ The political content of the novel *Ferne* (1926), published in instalments in *BIZ* ensured, King suggests, that no very extensive publicity was offered to raise the book's profile. (King. Ibid., pp.84-88). For *stud. chem. Helene Wilfüer* however, Ullstein mounted a two-year campaign, directing the author's ancillary writing and producing advertisements for the author and her work which were published in *Die Dame*, *Uhu* and *BIZ* to ensure that those readers who sought a lively story of modern life and those who sought informed statements on serious topics of contemporary interest could hope to find satisfaction in the work when serialisation began in *BIZ* in 1928.

⁴⁴⁵ *The Rotarian*, February 1940. p.65.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, pp.100-101.

statements, Ullstein ensured that authorial status and fictional characters merged, presenting Baum as a having scientific knowledge⁴⁴⁷ and Helene Wilfürer as a ‘real life’ research chemist, adding to the piquancy of Baum’s story. Despite such difficulties with the commercial bias of contemporary criticism, King uses reviews from *Die Literarische Welt*, a serious literary magazine, and the review by Gina Kaus (later best friend of Baum) for the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* to show that ‘usually the reviewers downplayed literary value’⁴⁴⁸ claiming instead that Baum’s books captured ‘the essence of the era’,⁴⁴⁹ in accordance with Ullstein’s mass-advertising policy. Even reviews of her major novel *Menschen im Hotel*, in English as well as German, were more concerned with commercialism than literary content,⁴⁵⁰ whatever the author’s hopes and intentions. Ullstein used putative sales-figures to advertise the popularity of their novels, prioritising mass-appeal over quality or content. When *Frau und Gegenwart* magazine published a literary review, it was deemed necessary to direct readers’ attention to the academic status of the reviewer:

‘Unseren Leserinnen wird es willkommen sein, daß hier einmal eine kluge und literar-historisch fein gebildete Frau den aufsehenerregenden einer unfassenden ästhetischen künstlerischen Kritik unterzieht.’⁴⁵¹

The 1928 competition organised by the German Book Sellers’ Association⁴⁵² produced entrants, from a wide range of educational backgrounds, who enthusiastically referred to modern and traditional novels, non-fiction and educational texts, with girls reading more intensively and over a wider range of titles than boys. Fronemann’s analysis⁴⁵³ interpreted this

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p.11.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, p.99.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., p.100.

⁴⁵⁰ King quotes Hugh Walpole and J.B. Priestley (whose reviews were also chosen by Ullstein for advertising purposes)

⁴⁵¹ *Frau und Gegenwart* 15.8.29. cited: King, A.R. ‘The Pedagogy of Pulp: Liberated Sexuality and its Consequences through the eyes of Vicki Baum’s *stud. chem. Helene Wilfürer*’. In: *Detectives, Dystopias and Poplit: Studies in Modern German Genre Fiction*. Campbell, B., Guenther-Pal, A., Rützou Petersen, V.(2014). Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer. p.183.

⁴⁵² Reuveni, G. (2006). *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany Before 1933*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn. p.240.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p. 241.

result as an attempt by girls to remedy the deficiencies of their education as well as boys' unwillingness to read anything that could be construed as 'girls' books'. Despite the high rise in overall literacy rates through the industrialising years, less than 1% of the population, and many fewer women, received a university education⁴⁵⁴ and their reading-powers were limited.⁴⁵⁵ Helmut Lethen⁴⁵⁶ postulates that most readers, whose education was sketchy, limited their perception of literature to a scanning process which picked up broad trends and outlines with little further discrimination or enquiry. But the notion of poorly-educated readers as helpless victims of capitalist publishers is not conclusive.

Barndt's work concludes that a readership, with sufficient critical abilities, made effective literary choices:

Female readers at the end of the Weimar Republic became roaming subjects, occupying multiple subject positions simultaneously and assuming responsibility for their own emotional and cognitive development'.⁴⁵⁷

Best-selling status was therefore based on the approval of a reading public who were able to choose and discriminate and who returned to those authors they enjoyed. Their choice was, nevertheless, influenced by factors other than their literary tastes. The dominant role King ascribes to Ullstein in the public relationship between Baum and her readers, a responsibility assumed by Doubleday and Hollywood studios after Vicki Baum's move to the USA, or the support given to Seidel's work in a book market manipulated by National Socialism, also influenced the reputation, and the sales, of both authors.

As contemporary reading surveys showed, popularity was not solely based on the entertainment value of literature. For women with a basic formal education, some curiosity and a will to learn about the modern world, popular books and magazines were additional sources of information.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p.21.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., p.22.

⁴⁵⁶ Lethen, Helmut. (2002). *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*. Trans. Reneau, D. Berkeley: University of California.

⁴⁵⁷ Barndt, K., Canning, K., McGuire, K. (eds.) (2010). *Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn.

A superficial knowledge of contemporary ideas also enhanced their image, improved their employment prospects and made an advantageous marriage more possible.

Vicki Baum raised the contentious questions of the day in fictional form and offered interpretations, drawn from popular psychology and social theory, which enabled her readership to feel at least in contact with the modern world and its new ideas. Ina Seidel's historical novels⁴⁵⁸ provide an emotive and easily-memorable trip through the German past, highlighting religious and military conflicts with heroes from among the ordinary people. Both novelists thus fulfilled an educative function for their aspirational readers.

Lynne Frame's essay *Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne*⁴⁵⁹ suggests that Weimar women turned to popular literature looking for those solutions to their daily problems that they were unable to find in the traditional systems of state education and religion. If women hoped for answers in novels, both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum were willing to oblige. To avoid any doubt, their authorial voices intervene to clarify the message and deliver advice. Vicki Baum explains the beginning of an affair:

Und damit fing es an, wie jedes Männerabenteuer anfängt: mit Neugierde. Mit eine Frage: wie ist diese Frau innen, wie ist sie wenn sie geküßt wird, wie wenn sie nackt ist, wie, wenn sie sich hingibt⁴⁶⁰

Ina Seidel describes the later point at which a relationship becomes a sexual encounter from the woman's viewpoint:

Und sie, nichts wissend und fühlend als die Hand, die ihre festhielt, als den unnennbaren süßen, schmerzlichen Rausch des Opferwollens, der besinnungslosen Demut – sie beugte sich fast taumelnd nieder und zog diese feste, sichere Hand an ihre Lippen⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁸ Hardtwig points out that works of history and historical novels were generally popular genres, Hardtwig, W. (ed.) (2005). *Geschichte für Leser*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag. p.4.

⁴⁵⁹ Frame, L. (1999). 'Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne? Auf der Suche nach der idealen neuen Frau'. In: Ankum, K. v. (ed.) *Frauen in der Großstadt. Herausforderung der Moderne?* Dortmund: Edition Ebersbach. p.22.

⁴⁶⁰ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.7.

⁴⁶¹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.p.119.

Vicki Baum's summary, reducing female romance to male sexual curiosity and Ina Seidel's melodramatic shift from sexuality to the 'Rausch des Opferwollens', differ widely in tone and intention but convey the same information to a female reader. Men make sexual demands, women respond with compliance or self-sacrifice and in that act of submission they find their reward, regardless of their personal inclinations.

3.7 The later influence of National Socialism

Ina Seidel

Ina Seidel's romantic, rather than masochistic, feel for the notion of 'Opferwollens' took on a political implication as the influence of National Socialism increased. Christian Adam⁴⁶² includes her work in his attempt to define the types of book which were sold and read with official approval during the Third Reich. Explaining the limitations on publishing enforced by the *Reichskulturkammer*, the purging of authors and their works considered inappropriate and degenerate by the authorities (for example, Vicki Baum) he examines the social and political conditions which dominated choice, purchase and readership of books. The presence of nominally 'undesirable' authors and books within his most-read list indicates the inefficiencies, ambiguities and internecine rivalries which eroded central control over publishing. Barbian⁴⁶³ emphasises the direct personal influence of Goebbels and other individuals which also undermined the system which they themselves had created.

Barbian and Hesse⁴⁶⁴ stress the complexity of the relationship between literature and politics during the Third Reich and, while Barbian is less critical of Ina Seidel, Krusche⁴⁶⁵ details the financial success⁴⁶⁶ of her dealings with the system. Ralf Schnell similarly records a

⁴⁶² Adam, C. (2010). *Lesen unter Hitler. Autoren, Bestseller, Leser im Dritten Reich*. Berlin: Galliani.p.304.

⁴⁶³ Barbian, J.-P. (2008). *Die vollendete Ohnmacht? Schriftsteller, Verleger und Buchhändler im NS-Staat*. Essen: Klartext Verlag.

⁴⁶⁴ Barbian, J.-P., Hesse, A. (2011). *Ina Seidel : eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos.

⁴⁶⁵ Krusche, D. (2011). 'Frau und Krieg. Etappen einer Werkgeschichte Ina Seidels'. In: Hesse, A. (ed.) *Ina Seidel. Eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos.p.26.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p.22.

compliance which ensured that her works were never blacklisted⁴⁶⁷ and that she herself was eulogised as the ‘zweite große Dichterin unserer Tage’,⁴⁶⁸ despite some NS controversy over the religious tone of *Lennacker*. Initial military successes by the Third Reich also generated financial rewards.⁴⁶⁹ Translations of approved novels, like Ina Seidel’s *Das Wunschkind* (translated into eight languages between 1933 and 1942) were produced and sold in German-occupied territories, increasing circulation figures further. Barbian quotes Ina Seidel:

Wir deutschen Frauen zwischen dem nordischen Meer und den südlichen Schneebergen reichen uns heute die Hände, und der heilige Funke, der durch diese lebendige Kette läuft, soll mit Flammenschrift am großdeutschen Himmel aufleuchten als unser eigenes, begeistertes, dankbares und verantwortungsbewusstes Ja!⁴⁷⁰

A personal financial interest underlies the verbal heroics.

The American, Paul Douglass, writing in 1934,⁴⁷¹ praises the beneficial effects of National Socialism on the German book market. He emphasises the ‘flood of cheap books of a very substantial nature’ which had been achieved partly by a law calling for a universal reduction of 10% in retail prices.⁴⁷² These now ranged downward in price ‘from the well-known "zwei Mark fünfzig" volumes to those costing forty, twenty, ten and even five cents’.⁴⁷³ This enabled the wide distribution of books which Douglass interpreted as manifesting ‘the depth of the German soul and its out-reaching for its salvation.’ He quotes Ina Seidel’s *Das Wunschkind*

⁴⁶⁷ Schnell, R. (2011). Schreiben im Dritten Reich. Ina Seidel im Kontext. In: Hesse, A. (ed.) *Ina Seidel: Eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos.p.146.

⁴⁶⁸ Linden, W. (1937). *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* c. Ibid., p.147.

⁴⁶⁹ Barbian, J.-P. (2008). *Die vollendete Ohnmacht? Schriftsteller, Verleger und Buchhändler im NS-Staat*. Essen: Klartext Verlag.

⁴⁷⁰ The ‘Anschluss’ with Austria, the annexation of the Sudetenland and the taking-over of the remaining areas of Czechoslovakia, as Triebel points out, increased the power of German culture-bureaucracy, with the political aim of achieving cross-border German unity. In order to pressure Austrian booksellers to bring their catalogues into conformity with the desired publications of the Reichsschriftumskammer, publishers within the former German borders were recommended to offer Austrian purchasers a 3% reduction - Barbian, J.-P. (2011a). ‘Ich gehörte zu diesen Idioten. Ina Seidel im Dritten Reich’. In: Hesse, A. (ed.) *Ina Seidel. Eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos.p.69.

⁴⁷¹ Douglass, P. (1934). ‘Literature in the Third Reich’, *Books Abroad*, 8, 384-386.

⁴⁷² Ibid., p.385.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., p.384.

alongside Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and his comments on both sold and borrowed books⁴⁷⁴ conclude: 'That the interest in the ideas of the leaders should be of first importance is natural,'⁴⁷⁵ and that in the Germany of the Third Reich, 'Profit then is a secondary motive to the political office of literature'.⁴⁷⁶ However, despite all political attempts to control and direct reading habits, Ina Seidel, and the blacklisted Vicki Baum, both benefited from the eclectic choice of the German-reading public and were able to maintain their popular status of the Weimar years throughout National Socialism and into post-war German society. Vicki Baum's novels continued to be published in Germany until 1932. After that date, the Querido Press in Amsterdam published *Der Eingang zur Bühne* (1936), *Das große Einmaleins* (1935/ 1936), *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* (1936), *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* (1937), *Der große Ausverkauf* (1937), *Hotel Shanghai* (1939), *Hier stand ein Hotel* (1943). *Die große Pause* was published in Stockholm, (Bermann-Fischer, 1941).⁴⁷⁷ Since distribution of her work was forbidden in Nazi territories, exiles and residents abroad maintained her German-speaking readership. *Menschen im Hotel* had already been published in English in 1930 and throughout the thirties the Querido novels were published in English translation on almost a yearly basis.⁴⁷⁸

3.8 A specifically female notion of creativity

The writers of *Practising Modernity*⁴⁷⁹ suggest that changes in the social and political status of Weimar women also allowed them to increasingly question the male dominance of modern culture. Kerstin Barndt cites Vicki Baum as an example of a woman-author who used the

⁴⁷⁴ 'The three books in greatest demand at Berlin libraries begin with Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and descend through Alfred Rosenberg's *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, and Hans Günther's *Rassentypen des deutschen Volkes*'. Ibid., p.385.

⁴⁷⁵ Douglass, P. (1934). 'Literature in the Third Reich', *Books Abroad*, 8, 384-386.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.,

⁴⁷⁷ Würzner, H. (1986). *Österreichische Exilliteratur in den Niederlanden, 1934-1940*. New York: Rodopi. p.189.

⁴⁷⁸ *Falling Star*, Doubleday (1934), *Men Never Know*, Doubleday (1935), *Career*, Bles (1936), *Tale of Bali*, Bles (1937), *Central Stores*, Bles (1940), *Shanghai 37/Nanking Road*, Doubleday (1939), *Grand Opera*, Bles (1942).

⁴⁷⁹ Schönfeld, C. (ed.) (2006). *Practising Modernity: Female Creativity in the Weimar Republic*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

allegedly male techniques of New Objectivity to tell her stories, thereby raising her audience's level of appreciation rather than compromising her writing. This latter-day view of women writers was not shared by the majority of the authors' contemporaries. The distinction between 'women's writing' and men's was a commonplace, with Kurt Pinthus distinguishing a manly style as one which is 'unpathetisch, unsentimental, schmucklos und knapp'.⁴⁸⁰ Delabar characterises Weimar women's writing style as often 'behäbig' and the text as 'strukturell schwach und wenig konsequent [...] auch wenn Anklage, Enthüllung oder Geständnis im Vordergrund stehen'.⁴⁸¹ He later qualifies the judgement – 'Sie sind engagiert, in einigen Fällen stilistisch brillant, formal teilweise höchst innovativ'.⁴⁸² Women writers themselves acknowledged a stereotype to which Erika Mann presents an exception:

Sie bekennt nicht, sie schreibt sich nicht die Seele aus dem Leib, ihr eigenes Schicksal steht still beiseite, die Frau berichtet, statt zu beichten. Sie kennt die Welt, sie weiß Bescheid, sie hat Humor und Klugheit, und sie hat die Kraft, sich auszuschalten⁴⁸³

As the influence of National Socialism increased, public discussions of a specifically female style of creativity turned from stylistic to explicitly ideological considerations. Women's place in the Nazi state was discussed and Hitler defined his viewpoint to the NS-Frauenschaft in 1936:

Man sagt mir oft: Sie wollen die Frau aus allen Berufen drücken. Ich will ihr nur die Möglichkeit im weitesten Ausmaß verschaffen, heiraten zu können, und eine eigene Familie mitgründen helfen zu können und Kinder bekommen zu können, weil sie DANN, und das ist nun meine Überzeugung, unserem Volk natürlich am allermeisten nützt.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸⁰ Kurt Pinthus, 'Männliche Literatur'. In: Das Tage-Buch 10 (1929), Nr. 1, S. 903–911. Becker, S. (2000). *Neue Sachlichkeit*, Bd. 2. Koeln/ Weimar/Wien.p. 38,

⁴⁸¹ Delabar, W. (2011). 'Hedonistische Revolutionärinnen', *JUNI, Magazin für Literatur und Politik*. p.12

⁴⁸² Ibid., p.13.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p.19.

⁴⁸⁴ 'Die Rede des Führers vom 11. September 1936 vor der NS-Frauenschaft auf dem Reichsparteitag in Nürnberg über die Stellung der Frau im nationalsozialistischen Staat.' [Online] [http://de.metapedia.org/wiki/Rede_vom_11._September_1936_\(Adolf_Hitler\)](http://de.metapedia.org/wiki/Rede_vom_11._September_1936_(Adolf_Hitler))[Accessed 15.10.14].

As Vicki Baum and Ina Seidel propose in their own female characters and autobiographical writings, the female creative act of embodiment through gestation was her supreme and exclusive prerogative and hindered the creation of an art linked to intellect as well as imagination. Women's 'natural' creativity, so the work of the reputable and influential scientists Lenz and Reinöhl on genetics and eugenics apparently confirmed, was directed towards children and home, with only 'failed' women being creative artists in the public sphere. This theory, along with their wider research, fed into the National Socialist racial and gender ideology and received political support.

Die sogenannte Gleichberechtigung der Frau, [...] sei in Wirklichkeit keine Gleichberechtigung, sondern eine Entrechtung der Frau, denn sie ziehe die Frau auf ein Gebiet, auf dem sie zwangsläufig unterlegen sein werde, weil sie die Frau in Situationen bringe, die nicht ihre Stellung, weder dem Manne noch der Gesellschaft gegenüber, festigen, sondern nur schwächen könnte.⁴⁸⁵

Vicki Baum, whose successful career manifestly contradicted Hitler's opinions as expressed in that speech, had already left Germany when, in 1932-3, Agnes Bluhm, the most prominent female geneticist, contacted Ina Seidel. As a wife, mother and recognised writer, Ina Seidel was an example Bluhm could use to mitigate a doctrine which vilified those who failed to conform, through blood or behaviour, to the Nazi definition of true German womanhood. In this enterprise she had the co-operation and support of the author who, as Klemperer points out⁴⁸⁶ viewed the mixed blood of the Seidels as a positive feature. Bluhm chose to indicate the admixture of other European blood in the family, testifying also to the cultural contribution of Ina Seidel's (Jewish) step-grandfather George Ebers to the development of Ina's abilities. Finally, under pressure from her publishers, Stahnisch⁴⁸⁷ asserts, Bluhm classified the Seidel

⁴⁸⁵ Hitler Rede, Bei der Tagung der NS-Frauenschaft, 13. 9. 1935. [Online] <http://www.wintersonnenwende.com/scriptorium/deutsch/archiv/parteitag1935/pt193509.html> [Accessed 15.10.14.].

⁴⁸⁶ Klemperer, V. (ed.) (2007). *Die Tagebücher (1933–1945): Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*. Berlin: Directmedia Publishing (Digitale Bibliothek).

⁴⁸⁷ Stahnisch, F. & Steger, F. (2005). *Medizin, Geschichte und Geschlecht: körperhistorische Rekonstruktionen von Identitäten und Differenzen*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH.

family as 'urdeutsch'. Extreme racial purity was obviously considered necessary to counterbalance a public career which appeared to challenge ideas of woman's sphere being home and family. The connections of the Seidel family were also less than desirable in Nazi eyes. Sister Annemarie enjoyed a close lifelong relationship with Carl Zuckmayer,⁴⁸⁸ a notable critic of National Socialism, which continued by letter when their physical partnership broke. She then married, and worked alongside, the publisher Peter Suhrkamp, who retained contact with authors opposing Nazism and continued to publish books by Jewish authors, using pseudonyms to hide their identities. These activities brought him into KZ Sachsenhausen in 1944. Ina Seidel's daughter Hedwig married Ernst Schulte-Strathaus, formerly Amtsleiter für Kunst- und Kulturfragen on the staff of Rudolf Heß. Suspected of treason following Heß' flight, he was never rehabilitated in the Nazi hierarchy. Such family-relationships were all difficulties in the path of an author seeking official approval. Nevertheless, a primeval purity of German blood could wash away such contemporary stains and Ina Seidel could rightly point out her own maternal role in supporting her sister's children and the wider family, including a son serving on the Russian Front.

3.9 The writer's work

While both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum are careful to claim that their public success originated in the female imperative to care for and nurture the family rather than in personal ambition, they both had a clear view of their authorial roles. For Ina Seidel, writing was the communication of beliefs and ideology in a way which would engage her audience. Vicki Baum's magazine articles deliver information aimed at improving the understanding of her readers,⁴⁸⁹ and her novels provide examples of behaviour and show what results are likely to

⁴⁸⁸ Zuckmayer also had a Jewish grandfather and was criticised by Goebbels for his pacifism and mocking of German peasant-life - Plunka, G. A. (2012). *Staging Holocaust Resistance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Notes. 2.6.

⁴⁸⁹ Baum, V. (1931/2). 'Unglücklich in Hollywood - Das Leben der grossen und kleinen Sterne'. In: *Uhu Das neue Monats-Magazin*. Berlin: Ullstein.

ensue from the choices made by her fictional characters.⁴⁹⁰ She has, apparently, no impulse of duty or responsibility to contemporaries beyond that of providing a realistic portrayal of life as she saw it, an obligation she is also prepared to abrogate if it makes for a better story.

Ina Seidel assumed a wide-ranging accountability which was served by her authorial work. She considered herself a member of *das Volk*, a social union of eternal duration based on racial and cultural relationships which extended beyond, and superseded, contemporary national borders and which sustained the physical and spiritual life of each individual through shared experience. The ideological framework within which *das Volk* flourished, she deemed to spring from a deep-rooted, pre-Enlightenment relationship with each other and the natural world. As a woman, she felt responsible for the transmission of the oral culture of her people, particularly that part of it which originated in intuition or the manifestations of dreams and lent itself to poetic interpretation.⁴⁹¹ The true voice of popular literature, for her, was that which expressed the experience of the mass of people who form *das Volk* on this deep level. Recognising themselves in the story, they would also be receptive to the ideas and intuitions it propagated. Despite her frequent attacks on ideologies of all political, philosophical or scientific shades in favour of what she describes as realistic common sense, Vicki Baum expresses a similar view, criticising the readers of newspapers, illustrated magazines and book club-members, and elevating the oral culture of illiterate societies:

Der Märchenerzähler auf dem Marktplatz, die umherziehenden Schauspieler, die ihre Bühne auf dem Dorfplatz aufschlagen, alle die zahllosen Götter- und Heldendarstellungen auf den Wänden der Tempel und Kirchen – sie halten das angesammelte Wissen und die Weisheit eines Volkes lebendig, damit sie von Generation zu Generation weitergegeben werden können.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹⁰ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁴⁹¹ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.p.14.

⁴⁹² Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.181.

For both authors, then, Grimm's fairy tales,⁴⁹³ universal myths and German tales and sagas⁴⁹⁴ demonstrate the qualities for which an author should aim. Taking on the role of the popular author is an assumption of responsibility for the welfare of society and demands, according to Seidel, a corresponding devotion and level of sacrifice: 'es mag sogar eine Verpflichtung für ihn bestehen, empfangend, leidend und arbeitend als Mensch und als Schaffender'.⁴⁹⁵ Vicki Baum was willing to admit that she occasionally failed in such duties under the higher moral imperative of providing for her own family, but the ideal remained.

While their novels show women of high artistic achievement in the characters of Doris Hart,⁴⁹⁶ opera diva, Marianne,⁴⁹⁷ modern architect, Yvonne Pastouri,⁴⁹⁸ international violinist, and Mathilde,⁴⁹⁹ successful painter, none of these bear children and their love-affairs are variously unconventional, unstable and only partially rewarding. The creative women of the artistic commune in Ina Seidel's *Michaela* are described mockingly as 'Sibyllen, Vestalinnen, Dichterinnen und Künstlerinnen'.⁵⁰⁰ The actress Delphine's choice of creative independence over dutiful motherhood proves to be a betrayal of a biological imperative which can only end in misery and death. In both authors, only those women with the capabilities for a public role but who choose otherwise are shown as completely admirable. In Vicki Baum's *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*, Teragia,⁵⁰¹ wise-woman and healer, sacrifices everything, including the company of her child,⁵⁰² to go with her leper-husband into seclusion. Doris Hart repeatedly gives up career

⁴⁹³ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.p.14.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., p.13.

⁴⁹⁵ Seidel, I. (1934). *Dichter, Volkstum und Sprache. Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Stuttgart/Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. In: Gehler, E.-M. (2010). *Weibliche NS-Affinitäten: Grade der Systemaffinität von Schriftstellerin im "Dritten Reich"*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.15.

⁴⁹⁶ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁴⁹⁷ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁴⁹⁸ Baum, V. (1939). *Helene*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

⁴⁹⁹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

⁵⁰⁰ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.p.20.

⁵⁰¹ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁵⁰² She ensures the child's health and well-being in the care of the wider family

advantages to spend time with the murderous Basil. The Princess Daschkoff rapidly regains her position as court-lady after her daring adventure.⁵⁰³

Both authors were unwilling to accept the professionalization of female creativity:

Ich sehe im Schreiben keinen Beruf. Da könnte man ebensogut Leben als Beruf bezeichnen. Oder Kinder haben [...] auf jeden Fall ist es etwas, was man eben tun muß.⁵⁰⁴

Gina Kaus, a close friend and colleague of Vicki Baum, acknowledges the contemporary (late 1920-30) status of female authorship but also describes its limitations: 'Frauen können sich zwar in einer phantastischen, aber nicht in einer fiktiven Welt zurechtfinden.'⁵⁰⁵ Other critiques of women's writing centred on its limited themes and only grudgingly admitted the wide range of quality, genre and styles on offer. Ina Seidel refutes the criticism of thematic narrowness and concentration on themes of personal relevance to women's lives in such novels as *Lennacker* and *Das Labyrinth*, while Vicki Baum, whose work is the typical object of such critical approaches as those mentioned, also expands the frame, to make comments on human nature itself in such novels as *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* and *Cahuchu*.⁵⁰⁶ Nevertheless, they both create a stylistic divergence between a male and female use of language, with prose or reported speech from a male source being significantly different stylistically from that of female characters.

In Vicki Baum's novel *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, the heroine's interview with a lawyer has the practical aim of arranging a prison visit. The male presence is expressed in pared-down and strictly-balanced phrases which express that predominance of rational, calculated control

⁵⁰³ Seidel, I. (no date given in edition). *Die Fürstin reitet*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

⁵⁰⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.462.

⁵⁰⁵ Kaus, G. In: Delabar, W. (2011). 'Hedonistische Revolutionärinnen'. In: *JUNI, Magazin für Literatur und Politik*. [Online] <http://www.aisthesis.de/leseprobe/9783895288579.pdf> [Accessed 26.10.14]

⁵⁰⁶ Baum, V. (1943). *Cahuchu: Ström der Tränen*. Köln-Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

which the author regards as a particularly male attribute: ‘Seine Welt war einfaches Schwarz-Weiß. Die Armen – die Reichen [...]. Er behandelt sie wie ein Feind.’⁵⁰⁷

The report of Doris’ conversation is hectic, with panting repetitions, and a shower of qualifying adjectives to express her emotional turmoil. She experiences physically, rather than intellectually or imaginatively, and the depth of sensation shortens her breath, impairing the fundamental act of staying alive:

Es war eine ungeheure Erleichterung, über Basil reden zu können, endlich über ihn reden zu können und angehört zu werden. Es war ein beinahe körperliches Glück, etwas, das sie ganz tief in sich spürte und das übrigens ihren Atem wieder schwer und schmerzhaft macht.⁵⁰⁸

Passive verbs express her subordinate state and the lawyer, who has actively provided the environment in which she is able to talk and to be listened to, makes clear the price – ‘Er nahm ihre Hand und tätschelte sie’.⁵⁰⁹ In this interview, as in many of Vicki Baum’s fictional interactions between male and female characters,⁵¹⁰ the author is asserting her own superior authorial ability to overcome the limitations to which her female characters are subject. Her corresponding willingness to play the ‘little woman’ in autobiographical writing leads to the conclusion that she regards herself as constrained by gender and sympathetic to her sisters but nevertheless as the possessor of exceptional powers, which enable her to understand and analyse male behaviour as well as female, rather than remain a victim.

In *Michaela* (1959) Ina Seidel offers a similar diversity of male and female utterance, writing a dialogue between the male narrator and Dr. med. Doris Einmann, a representative female figure. He analyses, reasons, generalises, and fluently expresses the subterfuges with which the

⁵⁰⁷ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.70.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., p.70.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., p.70

⁵¹⁰ Particularly the interlocking chapters of *Rendezvous in Paris*, where the viewpoint switches from male to female protagonists. Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

masculine 'we' gains some self-control over the climactic fear and doubt, while the women referred to by 'Innen' are driven to forms of flight.

Wir alle ohne Ausnahme sind in den letzten sieben Jahren Veränderungen unterzogen worden, ob wir uns dessen bewußt wurden oder nicht – ob unser Haltung sich gleich blieb, ob sie den Stempel auswegloser Schwermut annahm oder ob sie die Kennzeichen der Flucht in übersteigerte Geschäftigkeit trägt, wie – verzeihen Sie! – zum Beispiel bei Ihnen. Wir tragen Masken, wir spielen Rollen was dahinter vorgeht, wissen wir ja genau: es ist Angst – es ist Verzweiflung.⁵¹¹

The woman's response is, like that of Vicki Baum's Doris, a physical gesture and broken phrases of weakness and resignation:

Doris hatte sich zurückgelehnt und die Hand über die Augen gelegt. „Ja“ flüsterte sie – „ja – was mich betrifft, haben Sie recht – ich habe Angst! Die nahe und deutliche Angst, die ich begründen kann, eben um ihn – um die Kinder – jetzt um den Jungen. Nicht davon reden! Und dahinter steht die andere, die dunkle, die undurchdringliche Angst, die kein Gesicht hat, die wie ein beständiger atembenehmender Alpdruck ist.“⁵¹²

Doris immediately personalises and makes physical the situation in term of husband and children. Her lack of rational control culminates in subjection to nightmare, linking the woman's experience to the intangible and unconscious world of terrors.

For Ina Seidel, artistic creation is always the result of a conversation between two poles, a 'ständigen inneren Zwiegespräch'⁵¹³ of mind and body, male and female, innocence and experience, a dialectic out of which confrontation the harmonious truth is generated. *Sterne der Heimkehr* frames the dialogue in the Nietzschean terms of Apollonian and Dionysic,⁵¹⁴ *Das Wunschkind* is constructed around a series of dualities – Northern and Southern Germany, Protestant and Catholic, French and German and the over-riding gulf between a male and female consciousness. In the terms of her own life, she considers that a writer must have strengths that she attributes on a biological basis, the sensitivity and receptivity of women, the

⁵¹¹ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.p.306.

⁵¹² Ibid., p.306

⁵¹³ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.p.12.

⁵¹⁴ Both are embodied in Rubruk

rational analysis, orderly form and style of men, in order to fulfil the writer's role of elevating the human condition.⁵¹⁵ Like Vicki Baum, she sees herself as set-apart from women of lesser abilities, capable of managing that equivocal gift of a creative nature.

3.10 The artistic temperament

She illustrates the plight of creative women like herself through the character of Mathilde Mackens, a successful painter. Mathilde is introduced in the novel *Das Tor der Frühe* where she is employed, at the age of twenty, to give drawing lessons to the son of a dilettante art-collector who later commits suicide as a result of false accusations of fraud. Already an established artist, Mathilde is an independent woman, whose failure to observe provincial convention causes consternation and excitement. She carries, rather than wears, her straw hat⁵¹⁶ and both clothes and movement express that freedom of thought and behaviour that the narrating author would have seen in the young women of her Schwabing days:

So war sie eine hochgewachsene junge Dame von federnden Gang, die sich sehr aufrecht hielt und ein helles loses Kleid trug, das den schönen starken Hals frei ließ.⁵¹⁷

The hint of bohemian freedom is set against her simple envy of what she perceives as the rural and maternal idyll of the boys' mother Brigitte:

So ein Leben! Mit den drei lieben, schönen Buben, dem braven Mädels und dem lieben, guten, gescheiterten Mann! Und die schöne Erde heraußen, und nichts wie liebe Arbeit mit Viehzeug und Obst und Gemüs.⁵¹⁸

In answer to Brigitte's reply that painting pictures is easier than housework, Mathilde claims that, for a woman, nothing can be harder than a career in art.⁵¹⁹ Independence is also vulnerability, as Ina Seidel portrays it, and the outsider's vision, which art demands, also means stepping outside the protection of convention and a sheltering male presence. This leaves

⁵¹⁵ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.16.

⁵¹⁶ Seidel, I. (1952). *Das Tor der Frühe*. Bochum: Deutscher Buchklub. p.163.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., p.163.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., p.169.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., p.170.

Mathilde open to public comments and the unwelcome advances of the older brother. The artist's suffering is personal, its effects socially beneficial, generating new ways of looking at the world. Through her work and her personal charisma, Mathilde conveys a vision which makes the lives of others better and happier. She enables them to see nature, themselves and the lives of others in ways they could not achieve alone. Brigitte, the simple, honest, 'true to nature' woman voices her instinctive response to the vision of the artist Mathilde:

Nie war der Garten so voller Wunder, nie war auch das Haus so heimlich und schön gewesen [...] als in diesem Jahr, da es gleichsam neugeboren und verklärt aus Thildas dankbaren Augen widerspiegelt wurde.⁵²⁰

Her works, the paintings, are a permanent record of this creative and benevolent vision but the cost is a fractured female life. The theme of a sacrifice offered up to placate unseen powers and allow new creation is as much part of the artistic as the religious or military endeavour in Ina Seidel's novels.

Mathilde's relationship to her environment, the landscapes, people and objects, both natural and man-made, which surround her, is founded in an intense sensory perception of their substance.⁵²¹ She feels instinctively the coherent and discrete existence of the natural world outside herself, recognising in it a life force which she shares and which has an equal claim to existence with herself. Ina Seidel considers this intuitive awareness as deriving from a woman's closeness to the heritage of primeval human experience. Contact with the 'ziellose Lebendigkeit'⁵²² of tree-bark or the dog's warm fur⁵²³ returns her from the over-intellectualisation, over-sophistication which Ina Seidel attributes to modernity, to the sensible world of natural things in which she can find her equilibrium. The tension between her artist's will to express her own time, to achieve a distanced, and selective, vision of the external world

⁵²⁰ Ibid., p.168.

⁵²¹ Ibid., p.168.

⁵²² Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.88.

⁵²³ Ibid., p.103.

and the recognition of her woman's place within that same natural order, is a discomfort shared by both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum. While the comparatively uneducated Brigitte can simply delight in sensual experience, Mathilde is subject to an artist's self-consciousness, which burst upon her when, following the death of her father and sudden access to independence, she went to Florence:

Jener Rausch der Farbe und der Linie dort in der wundervollen toskanischen Klarheit, der Rausch eines ersten starken und ursprünglichen Kunsterlebnisses in der Sälen der Uffizien.⁵²⁴

Ten years later, the now successful Mathilde meets her earlier pupils, Aage is attempting to escape from the clutches of Loulou, an older woman. Loulou's wealth, based on a car-factory, supports a lifestyle which is urban, dissolute and foreign in its points of reference.⁵²⁵ Through the name, tastes and behaviour Loulou, the 'unwomanly' widow, patron of the avant-garde, Seidel foreshadows Nazi judgements on that art world⁵²⁶ to become nominated as 'Entartete Kunst'. Creating parallels between her childhoods and that of her male character Aage, (a father who commits suicide, a mother who turns to her children for support), Ina Seidel shades her own life into that of the physically weak but emotionally powerful male character in the dramatic portrayal of his fluctuating passions and despair. Aage is enthralled by the exotic luxury of Loulou and her surroundings,⁵²⁷ avid for the thrills of the modern world - Loulou's Mercedes car, the railway,⁵²⁸ the bohemian world of the Press Ball,⁵²⁹ but nevertheless repelled by their attraction. His desire to escape encompasses the world that Loulou represents, as much as the woman herself. The alternative to this small, full-figured, dark city woman, primitive in her purely sexual appeal, with no admixture of intellect or creative urge, even that most basic

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p.109.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., p.12.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., p.21.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., p.12.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., p.165.

one, in Ina Seidel's eyes, of bearing children is first presented by Tatjana. The wild dancing of the androgynous,⁵³⁰ nominally Russian, dancer, appearing in blue and silver like a Chiparus statuette, is, for Aage the embodiment of the steppes, eternal, powerful and unpredictable.⁵³¹ The social reality is that of an exile dancing for a living⁵³² under the financial protection of a pretentious, would-be critic. Rootless both geographically and morally, Tatjana rejects that motherhood which, for the author, is the defining role of a woman – 'kleine Kinder! Man sollte sie totschiagen',⁵³³ and finds her temporary mate in the charismatic wandering poet Rubruk. In the convoluted love-relationships of the novel, Rubruk seduces Loulou as well as Tatjana. In Mathilde, Rubruk recognises a fellow-artist and confronts her with the need to define her own stance as both artist and woman, forcing upon her his male vision of the artist's life and evoking the determined response that her womanhood demands different conditions. In him she sees a 'hohe Einfachheit', a simple, idealistic, fanatic's devotion⁵³⁴ to Art which denies any other claims and which, despite the physical and emotional wanderings of his gypsy lifestyle, gives him a central core of peace.

As a woman, and a character whose ambiguities shadow those Ina Seidel discusses in her theoretical and autobiographical writings, Mathilde never achieves a similar state of stasis. Throughout the novel she oscillates between the opposing forces of a ten-year unspoken engagement to Wendelin Oberhof⁵³⁵ and the pursuance of her artistic career. Oberhof, the romanticist of earlier years, has become the model of a German landowner. Marriage to him offers the idyll of home, family and garden she saw in Brigitte's life. But the active male physicality of Wendelin Oberhof, despite the sexual, and aesthetic, appeal of his health and

⁵³⁰ Not only a contemporary fashion statement in the novel but also a statement of the dual-sex nature of creativity.

⁵³¹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.11.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, p.103.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, p.103.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.101

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.84.

vigour⁵³⁶, demands a commitment to a shared physical life which her individualist, artistic self is unwilling to meet.

Rubruk appears at the midsummer crisis of her personal and artistic identity. Through the verse of his solstice-celebration, Rubruk shows her that the true artist, lives in, and is finally only accessible through, the immaterial, the imagination and the world of dreams.⁵³⁷ Despite the frantic painting, in a semi-conscious, dreamwalking state,⁵³⁸ of a self-portrait, she fails to resolve the dissonance between her womanly need, as she sees it, for the sexual partnership of marriage from which children would be born and the isolation which her art requires for its fulfilment: ‘Ist Selbsterkenntnis nicht Reife and Geburt and hatte sie ihr eigenes Antlitz nicht heut, nicht in dieser Stunde zum erstenmal erkannt?’⁵³⁹

Nevertheless she feels committed to the old intention of marriage to Wendelin Oberhof, understood by both families, believing, as she does, that sacrifice of personal inclinations and dutiful adherence to vows, even unspoken ones, is a woman’s lot. The promise of marriage is, she believes, fundamental to a stable society, even when submission to the vow becomes an act of renunciation. The author maintains her personal creed through the character.

The tension between the roles of woman and artist is made a matter for public debate in the newspaper critique of Mathilde’s exhibition by her ‘androgynous’,⁵⁴⁰ friend Flips. Male critics and artists, representatives of the intellectual life, are in Ina Seidel’s novels usually small and dark, (Rubruk, Flips) unlike the tall blonde heroes although no anti-Semitic racial connotations are made more specific.

For Ina Seidel, as for Flips, a woman is ‘die Erdgebundene’, inextricably at one with natural forces which are materially and instinctually creative. Art, on the other hand, is the

⁵³⁶ When Mathilde looked at him, she ‘sah als Künstler und empfand als Frau.’ Ibid., p.91.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., p.127.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., p.110.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., p.110.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., p.108,

representation of an idea, which demands physical skills but which springs primarily from intellect and spirit. A ‘real man’, like Wendelin Oberhof, is shown as simple and uncomplicated,⁵⁴¹ lacking the emotional sensitivity of women and capable of entire devotion to the intellectual abstraction of an ideal. The artistic man who, of necessity in her opinion, shares some of a woman’s direct relationship with universal forces and her urge towards physical creation, is subject to the mind/spirit dialogue but more capable of suppressing the uncertainties through activity. Rubruk acknowledges no claims of a morality he disdains as ‘bürgerlich’,⁵⁴² and insists on freedom to exert a will freed from the Labyrinth⁵⁴³ of fixed ideas. Art demands passion and ecstasy,⁵⁴⁴ carrying the individual beyond the rational into a higher consciousness of eternity, the ‘Immerdar und ewig’ as Rubruk’s verse ritually repeats.⁵⁴⁵ Mathilde, like Ina Seidel herself, claims rationalism but is led by Rubruk into the dark labyrinth of the wild garden, where physical passion, as a human manifestation of the primitive forces which govern the universe, is let loose. But Mathilde is also an artist and observes her own passion, unable to surrender self-awareness as Rubruk,⁵⁴⁶ and her female self, demand. Mathilde as woman as well as artist, analyses the swiftly changing directions of her devotion from Wendelin Oberhof to Rubruk, acknowledging the social conventions Rubruk is able to discard:

Sie war sich auf einmal klar darüber, daß sie innerhalb weniger Stunden zweimal sich selbst mit Leib und Seele verschenkt habe, mit einem Anerbieten, ja mit einem Versprechen, das eine – mit der Tat, bis an die Grenzen körperlicher Hingabe gehend, das andere Mal.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., p.108.

⁵⁴² Ibid., p.98.

⁵⁴³ ‘um sich aus diesem Labyrinth von »fixen Ideen« ein für alle Mal den Ausweg abzuschneiden, sein Wille, ein Ideal aufzurichten’, Nietzsche, F.W. (1887). *Zur Genealogie der Moral*. Kapitel 4, 22.

⁵⁴⁴ Nietzsche, F.W. (1888). *Zur Psychologie des Künstlers. Götzen-Dämmerung*. Kapitel 11, Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemäßen.– ‘Damit es Kunst giebt, damit es irgend ein ästhetisches Thun und Schauen giebt, dazu ist eine physiologische Vorbedingung unumgänglich: der Rausch.’ [Online].

<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/7203/pg7203.html> [Accessed 4.12.14].

⁵⁴⁵ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. pp.122-3.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., p.134.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., p.138.

She seeks to free herself from the internal conflict, and finally succeeds, by abrogating responsibility, ‘wie ein Kind, das sich ohne eigene Verantwortlichkeit fügt.’⁵⁴⁸ Mathilde is saved from the fate of marriage by Oberhof’s decision that the virginal and housewifely Erdmuthe would be a more suitable bride than an artist whose personality as well as her artworks are a matter of public discussion and whose future devotion to home and estate is uncertain. Ina Seidel allows the fate of her woman-artist to be decided by the men who refuse to accept her attempts at self-sacrifice.

The character of Mathilde Mackens, a popular artist, is a statement about creativity, ‘womanliness’ and fame which coincides with the theoretical statements of Ina Seidel herself in non-fictional contexts. The novel *Sterne der Heimkehr* reflects the contemporary preoccupations with city versus country, industrial and agrarian lifestyles and definitions of ‘Heimat’. Its characters revel in the intoxication of speed and technology,⁵⁴⁹ they fall victim to the ‘star’ cult surrounding performers like Tatjana⁵⁵⁰ and the power of the press to influence attitudes towards artists and performers. Finally, the novel emphasises the artist as set apart, trapped in individuality, unable to become one of the collectivity of society or the fellowship of families. Rubruk embodies the artist whose personal attractions and the power of whose ideas will lead the youth of the nation to a better future. Mathilde, trapped within the demands of her female body, can show them through her work the beautiful visions for which they will fight and sacrifice. Addressing her self-portrait, Mathilde asserts her personal decision: ‘*Du bist mir Schicksal, Wahl und Weg – und du allein.*’⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., p.138.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., p.28.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., p.104.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., p.172.

3.11 Popular novelist versus creative artist

As the character of Mathilde affirms, for Ina Seidel, the artist remains primarily an observer of, rather than a committed participant in, the active lives which surround her - a viewpoint which is particularly relevant to her later political stance:

Dies alles sei ihr unerreichbar wie hinter Glas und sie selbst heute nicht anders wie alle Zeit in sich selbst gebannt und unfähig, die warme Hand des Lebens zu ergreifen und festzuhalten⁵⁵²

Vicki Baum's view of the woman as popular novelist is less idealistic but no less complex. She writes from her own experience as an employee, constrained not only by the popular author's need to successfully identify and provide for public taste but also by the daily confrontations with the demands of both publishing and film industries. Withdrawal from these market-places, even when it became a financially viable option, was not an option she chose to take. Closely identified with the characters and plots of many of her novels, she moves in and out of the text, fictional as well as non-fictional, refusing to retain the neutral authorial figure, or the observing narrator or the distanced in Ina Seidel's literary fashion but laying trails of circumstance or stylistic parallels with non-fiction writings to suggest that she is infusing fictional characters with her own personal and creative conflicts.

Her theatrical characters are musicians, actors, dancers, designers and producers, in general, interpreters rather than originators of artwork, in accordance with her own earlier musical career. Other creative personalities are remote presences, although the sculptor Nemiroff,⁵⁵³ parades his intensely egoistic and brutal talent for a few pages before he disappears into gaol and the sculptor-father of Elis in *Eingang zur Bühne* personally reveals his mighty statue of violent masculinity before his daughter's suicide.

⁵⁵² Ibid., p.125.

⁵⁵³ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.6.

Vicki Baum's autobiography gives an account of a woman avid for experiences, both conscious and unconscious, as befits her idea of her female self. Recalling, and to some extent re-experiencing the original events in sensory detail (and in accordance with Ina Seidel's views of literary creation) she makes the new work from the remembered encounters with the world around her. She clearly finds writing about the character of Vicki Baum, popular novelist, an engrossing subject and engages in the autobiographical work in the same spirit as the fictional, prioritising entertainment over accuracy. She invokes the presence and voices of her numerous and curious fans⁵⁵⁴ to add an aura of authenticity and confirm the details of her public role while denying the importance of both fans and popular authorship.⁵⁵⁵ Maintaining the autobiographical narrative, she also comments on it with statements about the work and the motivations of a popular novelist which are inconsistent, often conflicting. Vicki Baum as musician, author, and creative artist and Vicki Baum the best-selling novelist and public figure play against each other. The popular acclaim manifest in the sales of her work is belittled as the author makes an implicit reference to judgements based on literary quality rather than sales-figures.

Ina Seidel's assumption of her own significance in the cultural history of Germany, despite a diction which now often sounds overblown and pompous, carries an honesty, a sense of responsibility and commitment which Vicki Baum's vacillations between self-importance and self-denigration⁵⁵⁶ determinedly evade. While more specifically factual than Ina Seidel's artistic women, and more directly relevant to the field of popular literature, the autobiographical Vicki Baum, in all her diverting story-telling, can be approached in the same relation to veracity and authenticity as Ina Seidel's fictional creative women, who were also drawn from close contact, observation and shared experience.

⁵⁵⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. pp.460-462.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 464.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 281.

Like Ina Seidel's character Mathilde, whose reported exhibitions show the organisational skills and public persona of a popular artist, Vicki Baum insists on the discipline required to acquire technique and achieve publication. In her autobiography, she stresses the labour of writing, a concern with accuracy of punctuation and vocabulary, but also with the tone and movement of her prose, claiming that, in her case, a finely-developed musical ear contributed to the literary enterprise.⁵⁵⁷ She asserts, like Mathilde, that the popularity of her work does not inevitably imply its inferiority, classing herself stylistically within literary movements. She calls *Menschen im Hotel* variously Impressionist, Expressionist, but also Realist in its concern with the detail of everyday life gained from observation.⁵⁵⁸ As an example of the literary worth of a popular novel she puts forward the novel *Kristall im Lehm*, which she attempted to publish under a pseudonym in order to free herself from the prejudice she sees as surrounding best-selling authorship. The book offers, she claims, an analysis of the contemporary American lifestyle based on careful preparation, research and writing, resulting in a novel which she calls one of her best books.⁵⁵⁹ The earlier books *Ulle der Zwerg* (1924) and *Die anderen Tage* (1922) she also proudly assigns to the field of 'Literatur'.⁵⁶⁰

She insisted that her popular novels were worthy of continued publication, despite statements denying a personal wish for eternity – 'Die Glühwürmchenillusionen von Unsterblichkeit sind mir fremd'.⁵⁶¹ Their readership is, she claims 'serious men, from scientists, from students, sometimes from a woman doctor or psychiatrist [...] in all other countries that count my books have much higher editions. They are never let go out of print because they represent an integral part of contemporary literature.'⁵⁶² Her contrary claim, that novels such as hers which offer an

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 462-3.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 395.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 396.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 325.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., p. 377.

⁵⁶² Letter to Don Elder 14.9.1951. In: Nottelmann, N. (2002). *Strategien des Erfolgs. Narratologische Analysen exemplarischer Romane Vicki Baums*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.47.

accurate picture of their period date, and become less popular as times change, as she learnt from her experiences at Ullstein,⁵⁶³ shows a persistent defensive stance. She rancorously accuses publishers, critics and the public of a failure to recognise the literary value of her work and generalises the statement to one about bestselling novelists in general, giving it a particularly female emphasis by 'entjungfert': 'Nach meiner Erfahrung kann man seinen Namen, wenn man einmal durch Bestseller-Erfolge als literarisch entjungfert abgestempelt ist, nie mehr reinigen.'⁵⁶⁴ Turning on the attack, she claims that the distinguishing feature of serious literature is the paucity of its sales,⁵⁶⁵ only to revile Paramount studio for its commercial judgements. The annulling of her film-contract with Paramount, she abstracts to a confrontation between her conscientious innocence and their ruthless experience. The financial imperative had, she said, overwhelmed aesthetic values and transformed Los Angeles into a stinking, congested, smog-ridden urban sprawl.⁵⁶⁶ Statements which expose her business acumen while denying it and fall back on a wholesale rejection of cities and capitalism reinforce an interpretation of her authorial judgement as similar to that professed by Ina Seidel. A serious novel should be governed by no commercial aims. It should be timeless, with historical or temporally indefinite settings. It should concentrate on universal themes and eternal truths rather than ephemera. The changing directions of Vicki Baum's critique show a force of personal emotion, based largely on the artist's disdain for bestselling authorship, the position which she had adopted in the autobiography as, mostly, in life. The popular-novelist-persona - cynical, worldly but also deeply rooted in a female identity which over-rides the trivia of worldly considerations is finally inseparable from the personality of Vicki Baum, artist. Like Ina Seidel's Mathilde Mackens, she is aware of, and yet unable to resolve, the conflicting

⁵⁶³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.353.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., p.464.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., p.305. She nevertheless claims *Ulle der Zwerg* as 'Literatur' Ibid., p.325, despite its success.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., p.438.

demands.

Alongside the description of a popular novelist's career she offers an alternative picture. The business-sense of the popular artist, so evident in Doris Hart's negotiations is lacking in the naïve indifference to success, money⁵⁶⁷ and fame with which Vicki Baum endows her autobiographical self. This carelessness aided her, she claims, to negotiate successful contracts with Ullstein.⁵⁶⁸ A lack of interest in popular taste and an independence of thought were, she asserts, apparent in a choice of novelistic themes which were not currently in favour.⁵⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Vicki Baum's theatre and hotel stories, like Ina Seidel's frequent autobiographies, are repeats of a best-selling format and she enthusiastically fulfilled Ullstein's specific requirements for subject-matter when called for.⁵⁷⁰ Her ability to function as an editor of mass-circulation magazines in a Berlin office, employing the most sophisticated and hard-headed of contemporary journalists,⁵⁷¹ refutes her claims to naïveté.

The dust-covers in which Vicki Baum's books were often sold, with highly-coloured illustrations of their more obvious themes, dressed the works, as well as their author, for the market. The rational and calculating mind of the popular novelist clearly played its part in maintaining the number of Vicki Baum's publications, as her 1941 novel *Die Große Pause* demonstrates. The central character, the opera singer Kati Lanik, is a scarcely-altered rewriting of the ballerina Grusinskaya⁵⁷², ageing, deceived by and enamoured of a confidence-trickster and thief, losing the performance-skills, and the beauty, which had brought her to the top of her profession. Simplifying plot to allow for a unity of time, place and action during a performance of the opera *Carmen*, the novel also utilises the stock-characters of the tough

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., p.316.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., p.316, p. 344.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., p.396.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., p.340.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., p.351.

⁵⁷² Baum, V. (1957). *Menschen im Hotel*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

business-man, the aspiring but naïve young lover, the elderly dresser (herself once a star) and the seductive tenor-character who appear in her other theatrical novels. The formulaic plot, characters and style deny any claim to inspiration or originality, casting into doubt her frequent assertion that she never sank below the level of good workmanship⁵⁷³ and confirming the negative stereotype of popular authorship which Vicki Baum so strenuously resists.

The implicit scorn of best-selling authorship evident from the preceding paragraphs also implies disparagement of the judgement of those readers who purchased the works in such large numbers. While never overtly claiming the peculiar and romantic status of creative artist, one of a misunderstood creative élite, Vicki Baum's belief that she herself falls into that category, can nevertheless be inferred. Her derogatory judgements⁵⁷⁴ on fans of popular literature appear to be motivated by aesthetic judgement rather than the cynical attitudes of an astute businesswoman, and her distance from such a crowd is expressed in such statements as: 'Wenn es mich kalt läßt, wie das Publikum meine Bücher aufnimmt, so werde ich völlig arktisch, wenn es sich um Theateraufführungen handelt.'⁵⁷⁵

Ina Seidel's idealistic description of the relationship between the creative artist and the turmoil of life and human relationships around her – 'Dies alles sei ihr unerreichbar wie hinter Glas'⁵⁷⁶ is rephrased by Vicki Baum to suggest her own superiority:

Es ist ein großes Glück für mich, daß ich gegenüber Intrigen, Klatsch, Antipathien, Eifersüchteleien und verwandten Charakteristika des Paviankäfigs von Natur völlig blind und taub bin.⁵⁷⁷

Although she partially blames the publicity machine of the popular book-market for the public's failure of understanding and appreciation, she herself showed a zealous willingness to comply with the demands for billboard photographs. Like her character Doris Hart, who dyes

⁵⁷³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.463.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.371, p.395.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.380.

⁵⁷⁶ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.125.

⁵⁷⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.440.

her hair to attract Dr Sardi and wears eye-shadow and dark red lipstick for the agent Mosse,⁵⁷⁸ Vicki Baum also submitted to the expert treatment of Elizabeth Arden,⁵⁷⁹ leading cosmetician, as well as knocking several years off her nominal age.⁵⁸⁰

The 'real world'⁵⁸¹ of international cities, of exotic peoples and locations are the sources from which Vicki Baum advises the aspirant popular novelist to gain inspiration, rejecting the cultural and intellectual value of formal education.⁵⁸² She stresses her own comparative lack of schooling,⁵⁸³ despite, in fact, being one of the few women of her generation to have received a higher education,⁵⁸⁴ and worked hard to exploit the opportunity, as she also consistently confirms.⁵⁸⁵ It is clear that her own development was thoroughly influenced by contemporary culture: she calls herself 'hochkultiviert genährt an Rilke und an Baudelaire's 'Fleurs du Mal'⁵⁸⁶ and admits: 'Ich führte ein Dasein im verborgenen, in einem Fuchsbau aus Musik, Studien, Gedanken, [...] Büchern.'⁵⁸⁷ She nevertheless persists in a denial of this background, elevating instead what she distinguishes as the innate culture of the illiterate.⁵⁸⁸ Like Ina Seidel, she advances the claims of a pre-civilised, pre-verbal, culture in which irrational physical sensation acts as a creative force. In describing her own writing, she emphasises the involuntary production of images, and the formation of the novel as the passive watching of an imaginary play. The conscious act of choosing characters and situations is followed by observation of how the action unfolds under its own dynamic.⁵⁸⁹ The unconscious and beyond-rational areas of her writer's mind operate in the created space and she interprets this as a therapeutic practice

⁵⁷⁸ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. pp.95, 107.

⁵⁷⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.426. p.423.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.423

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.162.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, p.162.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.185.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.153, p.187.

⁵⁸⁵ 'Seiben-Tage-Woche und Achtzehn-Stunden-Tagen', *Ibid.*, p.162.

⁵⁸⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.296.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.181

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.181.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.393.

– ‘Mir dient Schreiben dazu, eine drängende Frage, eine Erinnerung oder ein Problem loszuwerden.’⁵⁹⁰

The female urge to create, protect and nurture she presents as both a spur to creativity and the acceptable face of her opportunistic business deals. Financial necessity, she says, liberates stress-hormones which, in their turn, activate creative mental processes.⁵⁹¹ The ability to make compromises, which the career of the popular artist demands, is favoured by a woman’s natural ability to manage the conflicting demands of family- and work-lives:

Nichts fällt ihnen leichter, als in künstlerischen Dingen, wenn es der Familie, dem Haushalt, den Kindern zugute kommt, Kompromisse zu schließen. Dank unserer Natur und biologische Bestimmung sind wir Frauen anpassungsfähig und realistisch.⁵⁹²

Vicki Baum’s fictional creative women, who are generally either struggling up the career path or desperately trying to delay their decline, both of which entail financial outlay as her own Hollywood experiences showed her,⁵⁹³ are pragmatic. Usually childless, they nevertheless care for a male companion, and, when more affluent, a pet animal, both of whom are both dependent on her income. Doris Hart⁵⁹⁴ takes responsibility for Nemiroff and a desert-fox, Kati Lanik⁵⁹⁵ is about to marry ‘der alte Bhakaroff’, whose increasing blindness is bringing his career to an end.

3.12 The creative process

Both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum emphasise the importance of the subconscious in the creative process but also their personal labours to gain the skills and techniques on which effective communication depends. Mathilde Mackens’ creative frenzy⁵⁹⁶ is followed by the work of

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., p.152.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., p.235.

⁵⁹² Ibid., p.463.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., p.449.

⁵⁹⁴ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁵⁹⁵ Baum, V. (1957). *Die Große Pause*. Hamburg - Berlin: Deutsche Hausbücherei.

⁵⁹⁶ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

finishing the painting. Vicki Baum describes the process which unites necessity, technique and the power of the unconscious in the fictional Doris Hart's preparation for the aria which will win her success. The supra-rational, or ecstatic state, channels that creative force, which both authors see as emanating from some universal source, through the body of the individual:

Doris schloß die Augen und trieb sich selbst in die Szene hinein. [...] Sie wußte schon, das Othello kommen und sie in einem Kuß ermorden würde, aber es war auch, weil sie nicht nach Amerika fahren konnte, weil sie eine Narbe in der Brust und kein Geld hatte und weil der einzige Mensch, der sie etwas anging, im Gefängnis saß. Sie dachte dies nicht klar und geordnet. Es war nur immer da, es war die Substanz, aus der sich der Ausdruck ihres Singens bildete, es war wie ein schweres, schwarzes Wasser, das durch alles floß, was sie tat und sang.⁵⁹⁷

The element of sacrifice and martyrdom, as the singer with damaged heart and lungs makes the supreme demand on her exhausted body is, for both authors, an integral part of their concept of the practice of art. The physical endeavour of Vicki Baum's eighteen-hour practice-days at the Vienna Conservatory and her years of leukaemia or Ina Seidel's mastery of pain and isolation at the beginning of her writing career, continuing through the difficulties of age and social ignominy, are a necessary offering to the Muses. They mirror those virtues which drive Seidel's soldiers to victory (and Vicki Baum's rare military heroes Hunch and Libussa). Through the trials of their fictional artistic women, the authors tell the readers about their own sacrifices and suggest that the readers themselves have duties which they should perform courageously, despite personal cost.

3.13 Conclusion

In their descriptions of fictional artists, male or female, neither Ina Seidel nor Vicki Baum insists on the motivational powers of fame and fortune. They rather deny their effectiveness, compared with what they write as the necessity of self-expression demanded by the creative personality. While this is clearly how they interpret their own position, both women are

⁵⁹⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.116.

temporising with that will to success which caused them both to seek the public eye in displays of their novelist-persona in print, on radio, records, television and film. The historical sales-figures of their novels confirm a popularity which still manifests in narrative reminiscences of, usually, grandparents' bookshelves. Ina Seidel's critical and political recognition and Vicki Baum's popular appeal and later Hollywood profile ensured continued publication and sales of their novels. But both were also prolific journalists, and their short stories, serialised novels and comments on contemporary society reached their readership through those numerous channels, handed on and re-read to an international readership whose massive numbers thus far exceeded the estimates of the book-trade. The current chapter indicates the breadth of their popular appeal, although both women acknowledged the gendered bias of both their own writing and their readership. From their own fictional portrayals of the popular artist, it is possible to deduce how they saw themselves and, probably, how they also appeared to a good proportion of their readership and to contemporary society.

The successful women of their novels are, above all, charismatic characters, as others' immediate responses to their appearances reveals. But, seeing them from within, as the novelists allow the reader to do, it becomes clear that their lives are not simple. They are all forced to balance the conflicting demands of art and daily life and dominated by the gender-imperative. A man, they show, can remain free of all earthly ties and thus attain a higher form of art (although Vicki Baum is very equivocal in her portrayals of male stars). A woman, on the other hand, is the victim of her sex, forced by her art to actively reject marriage and children and suffering from the resultant conflict. To extrapolate from this that, in the view of both authors, women are more fitted for the creation of popular art than fine art would seem reasonable. Whichever path is followed, creative work demands passionate participation in the physical universe as well as the techniques which transform instinctive response into a work which communicates to many others. Sympathy with those beings who are the subjects of their

work must be balanced with that distance from them which enables clear vision. The contest between isolation and familiarity is endless.

The artist has, they believe, a duty to lead and educate, to represent the present world accurately and analyse its workings but also to give a sense of an ideal and eternal world beyond the present. They show the dedication and sacrifice of personal comfort which a writer's or performer's life entails and the substantial financial or social rewards which can be achieved. They also show the comparative insignificance of such gains when set against the greater human satisfactions of family relationships.

Both women, then, exhibit an ambivalence of response to the life on which their livelihood largely depended and which defined them to a wide public. While personally managing the multiple demands of a professional career and a family as well as coping with the political and economic demands of public life, they create women-characters who are intrinsically unable to achieve these adjustments. Vicki Baum and Ina Seidel refer back to a Romantic utopia in which they as artists will lead the soul of the people to a higher plane, yet their fictional counterparts remain mired in the damaged lives of women who fail both in the achievement of their womanliness and in the pursuit of their art.

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Chapter 4 Worldly Women

4.1 Introduction

Previous studies of the work of Seidel and Baum have acknowledged the primacy of gender in the subject-matter of their writing. The preceding chapter of the present thesis examined the popular status of both authors and showed how contemporary attitudes to mass culture, popular literature and women writers were mediated through the novels of both authors. This chapter is concerned with the way in which both sought to define the nature, the appropriate nurture and the roles of women themselves, in the family and the larger society, and how they represented their conclusions for the benefit of their audiences. It aims to place both writers in the context of female experience of the Weimar era, illustrating how both took advantage of popular clichés in their representation of women. The chapter aims to demonstrate that the coincidence of their views, on this crucial aspect of their work, is more remarkable than the divergence.

The disparate public images of the authors themselves, that of the traditional as opposed to the modern woman, which were perpetuated in critical responses to their work, became increasingly relevant when, after 1933, National Socialism began to definitively assert its own propagandist interpretation of the ideal German woman and her activities. These representations damned Baum and elevated Seidel to iconic status. The debate on the position of women under National Socialism outlined in Chapter 1 remains current, although Christina Herkommer's recent work concludes that the 'issue of women as victims or perpetrators under National Socialism [is] largely resolved by emphasizing the multiple roles of women'.⁵⁹⁸ Recently, Rachel Century⁵⁹⁹ returned to the theme in 2013 with her thesis on *Dictating the*

⁵⁹⁸ Herkommer, C. (2014). 'Women'. In: Jensen, O. & Szejnmann, C.C.W. *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.104,110.

⁵⁹⁹ Century, R. (2013). *Dictating the Holocaust: Female administrators of the Third Reich*. PhD Thesis. Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London. [Online]. <https://repository.royalholloway.ac.uk/file/365470eb-d3db-4c3b-91b0-7c590d50e344/1/2013CenturyRphd.pdf>. [Accessed 20.6.15.]

Holocaust: Female administrators of the Third Reich. She documents the roles through which women implemented the policies of the Reich with varying degrees of enthusiasm and resistance. The personal histories of love affairs, and Hitler-adoration⁶⁰⁰ which also motivated women's lives are brought into play and her quotations from the personal documents of the *Nachrichtenhelferinnen des Heeres*⁶⁰¹ confirm that Seidel's (1942) publication *Dienende Herzen. Kriegsbriefe von Nachrichtenhelferinnen des Heeres*⁶⁰² had a sound basis in the experience and opinions of the girls themselves, despite its propagandist aims. By 1942, the young women who formed the majority of those assisting the army, mainly in its media services, had already gained a poor reputation for behaviour which was hindering both recruitment and the marriage-prospects of current members. Seidel's book was aimed at re-establishing their moral credibility with the concomitant effect of boosting recruits to the service.

Century also stresses the importance of those ideas formed in the years before 1933 which predisposed girls and women to view Nazism favourably. A common thread running through academic controversies, and of particular relevance to the current thesis, is the credibility gap between the sentimental pictures of happy and contented women at the heart of the family, as portrayed in propaganda posters,⁶⁰³ and the realities of daily life under Nazism for most women, whether party members or not. But Nazi propaganda was using images of women already current in the popular culture of the nation before 1933. The way in which girls and

⁶⁰⁰ She cites: Eberle, H. (ed.) (2007). *Briefe an Hitler. Ein Volk schreibt seinem Führer. Unbekannte Dokumente aus Moskauer Archiven*. Gladbach: Verlagsgruppe Lübbe, Ulshöfer, H. (ed.) (1994). *Liebesbriefe an Adolf Hitler: Briefe in den Tod*. Frankfurt am Main: VAS, 1994) Geppert, A.C.T. (2010). 'Dear Adolf!': *Locating Love in Nazi Germany*. In: Passerini, L., Ellena, L. and Geppert, A.C.T. (eds.) *New Dangerous Liaisons. Discourses on Europe and Love in the Twentieth Century*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

⁶⁰¹ Century, R. (2013). *Dictating the Holocaust: Female administrators of the Third Reich*. PhD Thesis. Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London. [Online]. <https://repository.royalholloway.ac.uk/file/365470eb-d3db-4c3b-91b0-7c590d50e344/1/2013CenturyRphd.pdf>. [Accessed 20.6.15.] p.87.

⁶⁰² See p.159 of this thesis.

⁶⁰³ See [Online]. www.gvsvd.org/cms/lib02/PA01001045/.../Nazi_Propaganda_slides.ppt. [Accessed 16.6.15.].

women formed their ideas of themselves is considered in Marion De Ras' (2008/12)⁶⁰⁴ analysis of youth movements in Germany with predominantly or exclusively female memberships. She charts the progress of the youth movements throughout the Weimar period, with regard to their formative role in the establishment of their members' identity. In the more middle-class and elite groups she notes the concept of a 'sacred island', an inner Reich, of womanhood to be shared and nurtured in groups of women, comparing their ideas to the Männerbund of the George Kreis which influenced Seidel's youth. These more esoteric groupings did have a material existence in the rural female communes of Schwarzerden and Loheland as well as in more secret or cloistered groups.⁶⁰⁵ Henriette Schmitz' (2000) dissertation⁶⁰⁶ cites Marie Buchhold, founder of Schwarzerden, giving the source of the notion:

Wie eine Insel ist in jedem Weib ein Reich, das nur von ihrem Weiblichen ausgefüllt wird und das der Mann nicht verstehen kann. [...] Und Mädchen! Spüret ihr nicht schon alle dieses reine Frauenreich in euch?

The Lermoser community portrayed in Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr* puts forward just such an ideal of woman. Seidel's Erdmüthe⁶⁰⁷ floats like a holy image through the German landscape in her loose white dress. Her young companions, who join the midsummer dance, image the girls de Ras describes as profiting from the physical liberation promoted by Buchhold's theories:

Der weibliche Körper, der durch die doppelte Moral der Bürger und durch kirchliche Ideologie missbraucht worden war, soll wieder den Wert bekommen, den er verdient. Gymnastik, Sonnen- und Luftbaden, Tanzen und Wandern sollen zu einem neuen weiblichen Körperbewusstsein führen. Eine neue Körperkultur sollte zur Versöhnung von Körper, Geist und Seele führen.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁴ de Ras, M.E.P. (2008/2012). *Body, Femininity and Nationalism. Girls in the German Youth Movement 1900-1934*. New York: Routledge.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., p.4.

⁶⁰⁶ Schmitz, H. (2000). *Gedankenwelten (Ambivalenzen und Konstanten) Vorbereitung, Aufbau und Entwicklung der Schule Schwarzerden in den pädagogisch-theoretischen Schriften (1915-1940) der Marie Buchhold*. PhD dissertation. J.W. Goethe Uni. Frankfurt am Main. p.13.

⁶⁰⁷ See p. 282 of this thesis.

⁶⁰⁸ Schmitz, H. (2000). *Gedankenwelten (Ambivalenzen und Konstanten) Vorbereitung, Aufbau und Entwicklung der Schule Schwarzerden in den pädagogisch-theoretischen Schriften (1915-1940) der Marie Buchhold*. PhD dissertation. J.W. Goethe Uni. Frankfurt am Main. p.14.

Seidel's lively group of revellers mirrors de Ras' 'Wandervogel girls'⁶⁰⁹ who were, like their male counterparts, a more eclectic collection than the fictional Lermoser's elite. Baum's heroines, like herself as photographs in her autobiography show, also enjoy the outdoor life, hiking in the mountains and swimming in the lake.⁶¹⁰ Lacking in her novels, and refuted autobiographically in Baum's writing is that commonality which de Ras points out between gender identity and the identity of the nation. Although both authors show women as living more instinctively and closer to nature than men, Seidel's vision that girls should be educated to therefore identify with a spirit of Germanness inherent in the land itself, as later advocated by Nazism, is lacking in Baum's writing.

De Ras' work examines how, by the 1930s, the professedly unpolitical organisations of the Wandervogel girls and similar groups were merging into those serving the political agenda of Nazism. In looking at the ideas expressed through the writing of Seidel, both fictional and non-fictional, a similar progression can be observed. The virginal Erdmuthé of 1923 becomes, by 1930, the Cornélie of *Das Wunschkind*, wife and mother of soldiers, cultivator of the German soil and finally educator and protector of military orphans, 'stubborn, simpleminded and self righteous'⁶¹¹ as Koonz characterises the Nazi ideal. As contemporary critical reviews indicated, Seidel's novels had already shown how the ideal German woman should think and act. The novels of Baum, the modern woman, provide more parallels with, than oppositions to, that picture. She, like Seidel and Koonz's Nazi women, saw herself as a 'strong-minded member[s] of an elite'⁶¹² whose views on women and their lives demanded attention.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., p.2.

⁶¹⁰ See images 10,12, 21 of: Baum, V. (1985). *Es war alles ganz anders*, and the novels *Marion*, *Hell in Frauensee*, *Flut und Flamme*.

⁶¹¹ Koonz, C. (1988). *Mothers in the Fatherland, Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin. p.xxxx1.

⁶¹² Koonz, C. (1988). *Mothers in the Fatherland, Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin. p.11.

On the widest level, both authors insisted on the primary importance of biology rather than social conditioning in shaping and determining the lives of women in society. Being born female dictated a woman's 'nature', by implication an indeterminate mix of physical and psychological imperatives, which experience might influence but could not ultimately change. They predicated a female state of being, essentially different from the 'male nature', in accordance with the later Nazi emphases on distinct gendered imperatives. A woman whose attitudes and behaviour did not fall within the, admittedly wide, boundaries of a 'woman's nature' they both regarded as anomalous, possibly perverse. While individual women are free to choose whether to follow the dictates of their 'nature', their future health and that of their children and families, according to both authors, depends on compliance with, and acceptance of, the fundamental dictates of their female sex. The following chapter illustrates how both authors set men against women, 'normal women' against 'deviant women', German against non-German, city women against country girls, successful and courageous women against cowardly and failing women. Both authors thus contributed to an acceptance of the polarised views of Nazism which finally allowed all those who did not belong to the favoured group to be first excluded then destroyed.

Both authors' conclusions on women and their families seem to diverge very little from those of a National Socialist ideal of women, dominant in the home as mothers and homemakers but subordinate in both public and private spheres to men. Alleged male superiority, mental as well as physical, fitted men for the maintenance, defence and protection of home and nation while, as Koonz' work shows, women should be the bearers and nurturers of the state's children and provide the haven of home for its defenders. Protestant women, she notes (like Seidel) 'embraced a state which 'promised to support their talents as mothers and organisers' and the

Nazis and Protestants ‘cooperated together around a shared concern for motherhood.’⁶¹³ Ina Seidel’s female characters display similar tensions and resolutions. Her housewives effectively strive to overcome domestic problems and raise families despite the inflictions of the external society but rarely seek to influence that world. They occasionally⁶¹⁴ play active roles in those caring and educative professions Seidel considers womanly. Later, when working women were necessary for the war effort, her propagandist work *Dienende Herzen. Kriegsbriefe von Nachrichtenhelferinnen des Heeres* (1942)⁶¹⁵ emphasised the mother-like dedication to their own and the national family shown by the women, extending the boundaries of motherhood to serve political necessity.

Baum’s novel *Zwischenfall in Lohwinkel* contrasts most forcibly the moral joys of mothering and dutiful, hard-working housewifery and the specious allure of the public modern world of work and glamour, imaging that ‘idealised motherhood as the ethos of a morally-superior women’s sphere’ which Passmore considers typical of National Socialism.⁶¹⁶ Unlike the doctor’s wife of this novel, however, who rejects the offer of prosperity and modernity in favour of home, Baum’s heroines frequently leave, or are forced out of, that protected space. Their male companions are more frequently liabilities than assets. The courageous military hero of *Flut und Flamme* (1928) only becomes a steady husband when blinded, as does the elderly husband of *Stud. chem. Helene Wilfüer* (1928). As in Seidel’s novels, her successful wives are protective and motherly, implying that mothering alone is permanent while the conjugal relationship is insecure and temporary. The ambivalent attitudes Nazism later displayed, in asserting the national priority of childbearing whether within or outside marriage, are evident, as this chapter will show, in Baum’s work as well as Seidel’s. Both novelists

⁶¹³ Koonz, C. (1988). *Mothers in the Fatherland, Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin’s Griffin. p.240-41.

⁶¹⁴ For example, Muriel Maynard the pedagogue or Dr. Doris Einmann in *Michaela*.

⁶¹⁵ See p.159 of current thesis.

⁶¹⁶ Passmore, K. (2003). *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p.2.

sympathise with ‘fallen women’ acknowledging the forces that compelled them to that state, although Seidel’s Nazi-like condemnations of those women who reject, abandon or prevent children are not evident in Baum’s writings.

Unlike Seidel’s fictional women, Baum’s actresses, singers, architects, scientists, aviators and musicians achieve public success, but, as this chapter shows, they also finally either conform to the domestic stereotype, accept eternal dissatisfaction or die. Her vision of the ideal life for women and the supreme joys of motherhood is little different from that elaborated by Seidel. In *Das große Einmaleins* (1935), *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* (1936), *Menschen im Hotel* (1929) and the theatrical novels, she demonstrates the commodification of love and sex and the disastrous effects on women’s health and happiness when they choose to defy the conventions of domesticity. Women in the public workplace are invariably damaged in her novels. While Seidel does show men who, within their own areas of operation – science, medicine, the military and religion, are effective despite their domestic inadequacies, Baum has few similarly compensatory accounts of men’s successes. The harmonious and united families of Nazi propaganda posters are rare in both women’s work. Instead, they show women at their happiest and most fulfilled within a ‘woman’s world’ of home, family and the natural environment, the inner Reich of Marie Buchhold’s vision.⁶¹⁷

The lifestyles of the novelists themselves, however, continued in sharp contrast to the fictional women of their novels and to their public utterances on the role of women. The authors’ classification as female popular authors expresses not only the messages of their publishers’ publicity machines but, more significantly, the terms on which they themselves chose to negotiate their identities. This chapter initially surveys contemporary writing on gender as a defining aspect of the Weimar years, examines how the two authors viewed their authorial position within this context and then goes on to relate this positioning to their writings about

⁶¹⁷ See p. 140 of this thesis.

themselves and other women, both factual and fictional. Despite Mila Ganeva's⁶¹⁸ insistence that, in order to determine women's experience of Weimar, it is necessary to move away from the opinions of male professional élites, the present work follows Iris Marion Young's position,⁶¹⁹ considering that women also define themselves in relation to other social groups. The male critics who were influential in forming the opinions of their contemporaries, both male and female, are not excluded on gender grounds, an approach that Brockhaus⁶²⁰ emphatically endorses.

Seidel and Baum both assert the realism of their novels which they claim to be demonstrations of 'real life' as they have seen it for themselves and now wish to show and explain to their readers. Neither author seeks to distance herself, or claim detachment, from the fictional text but rather intervenes and speaks directly to the readership. Moral judgements on the actions of their characters are clearly delineated through both the diction and plots of their stories. Female characters set out both positive visions of womanhood as it could and should be, as well as negative ones which illustrate the degradation of this ideal image through the trials of most women's lives.

The authors are a felt presence in their fictional texts, heard in the tones of Baum's descriptions of music practice⁶²¹ which reflect the tones of her autobiographical statements,⁶²² or hinting coyly at future plot developments with a tone of sexual innuendo— 'Doris wußte nur zu genau, was dieser Osterbesuch bedeutete.'⁶²³ Seidel's heartfelt, 'Ich habe einmal gedacht, ich will Deutsche machen, wie einst Christen gemacht wurden,'⁶²⁴ is spoken through her character

⁶¹⁸ Ganeva, M. (2008). *Women in Weimar fashion: discourses and displays in German culture, 1918-1933*. Rochester, N.Y: Camden House.

⁶¹⁹ Young, I. M. (1997). *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender Political Philosophy and Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁶²⁰ Brockhaus, G. (1993). 'Männerbilder und weibliche Sehnsüchte. Beispiele aus der NS-Literatur von Frauen', *Die Philosophin*, 4, 8-23.

⁶²¹ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.20.

⁶²² Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.143.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, p.36.

⁶²⁴ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.192.

Mathilde's soliloquies. They act as contemporary commentators, blurring distinctions between the fiction of the novel and their journalistic or non-fiction writings. The historically real women of Seidel's *Deutsche Frauen* and the fictional ones of Baum's *Eingang zur Bühne* take on an equal veracity for the reader. *Helene Wilfürer's* career in industry appears as firmly asserted, and as credible, as the assumed historical accuracy of *Das Wunschkind*. For the more naïve member of a newly-educated, comparatively unsophisticated Weimar reading public, this impression was yet stronger. The authors themselves use both fiction and fact indiscriminately to illustrate the world around them, with near-equal significance being attributed to both as witnesses of the human condition.

4.2 Changing definitions of women's role in Weimar society

Current critical opinion shows the importance of the Weimar years in the development of the way in which women thought of, and understood, their own position. Definitions of 'womanhood' and 'femaleness' were offered to women in sociological, empirical and philosophical terms, but were also present in the images and models of women presented through literature and, more excitingly, in the new media of advertising, film and radio.

Women's experience of modernity and its manifestations was subject to their economic, social and political status, all of which had been changing even before the First World War. The economic position of many women had been altered by urbanisation and the production-line development of German industry, the increasing mechanisation and scale of office-work and the advent of larger shops and department stores reliant on female labour. The economic decline of the middle-class, encouraged employment of a wider range of women outside the home⁶²⁵ and women became active participants in the production process rather than merely its passive consumers. This was widely perceived as a threat to male control and the popular

⁶²⁵ von Ankum quotes a rise of 'Angestellte' from 6.5% in 1907 to 12.6% in 1925, Von Ankum, K. (ed.) (1997). *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.163.

image of the 'New Woman' was used indiscriminately, as much to express reactions against, as to define the nature of, the female working population. Ute Frevert⁶²⁶ offers a demographic definition of the Weimar New Woman⁶²⁷ which roughly confirms the accuracy of such descriptions in Baum's novels,⁶²⁸ and the occasional mentions of working women in the writings of Seidel.⁶²⁹ Both authors' retaliatory insistence on the importance of the domestic role and duties of women was typical of many. As Falk indicates, the liberating effects of employment were limited:

Sexismus am Arbeitsplatz und Doppelbelastung gehören ebenfalls zu den neuen Erfahrungen. Der für die Frauen bis heute ungelöste Konflikt zwischen Berufstätigkeit und Mutterschaft entsteht zum ersten Mal in der Geschichte für einen großen Teil der Frauen⁶³⁰.

For younger women, a job was often understood by both the woman and her family to be a temporary area of controlled activity before marriage at an average age of around twenty-five.⁶³¹ The workplace also offered opportunities for finding a marriage-partner, as advertisements for clothes and cosmetics picturing the secretary's efforts to attract her boss made clear.⁶³²

⁶²⁶ Frevert, U. (1990). *Women in German History from Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*. London: Berg Publishers. p.177.

⁶²⁷ The New Women were generally young, of working or lower-class origins with little education and minimal training, spending her earnings to survive, look fashionable, and access popular entertainments, particularly the cinema. Simpler clothing enabled active participation in sport, while her sexual mores changed through the availability of more reliable contraception.

⁶²⁸ For example, Doris Hart in Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. or Flämmchen, Baum, V. (1957). *Menschen im Hotel*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

⁶²⁹ Seidel, I. (1916). *Organisierte Mütterlichkeit*, DLA 75.1101 and *Eine Frau in der Bahn* (1944). DLA 75.1054.

⁶³⁰ Falk, S. (1988). 'Aufbruch und Stagnation: Zum Frauenbild der 20er und 30er Jahre und seiner literarischen Bearbeitung durch Irmgard Keun.' *Frauenalltag, Frauenforschung: Beiträge zur 2. Tagung der Kommission Frauenforschung in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*, Freiburg 22.-25. Mai 1988: pp. 65-170. p.167.

⁶³¹ Walla, W. (2006). *Der demographische Wandel: Herausforderung für Politik und Wirtschaft*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer. p.84, Federspiel, R. (1999). *Soziale Mobilität im Berlin des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts: Frauen und Männer in Berlin-Neukölln 1905-1957*. Berlin: De Gruyter. p.117.

⁶³² Ferber, C. (1980). *Die Dame: ein deutsches Journal für den verwöhnten Geschmack 1912 bis 1943 / Zusammengestellt und herausgegeben von Christian Ferber*. Berlin: Ullstein.

4.3 Literature aimed at a new readership

The new female beneficiaries of a work-income created a target audience for popular literature and women were employed both as journalists and fiction-writers to cater for the market. The typical plots of Baum's novels conform to the clichés critiqued by Siegfried Kracauer in *Die kleinen Ladenmädchen gehen ins Kino*, and she herself is dismissive of both the taste and the morals of the newly-empowered female-market. Juddy Bryant's *arriviste* aesthetic⁶³³ and the tantrums of the successful Doris Hart are, like the female characters in Kracauer's novels, as Fleischer illustrates,⁶³⁴ the embodiment of the supposedly materialistic and ruthless character of modern society. Baum's criticism of the men who exploit her heroines, and they are almost invariably exploited both sexually and financially, is balanced by portrayals of women characters who, when they achieve fame, become equally unscrupulous. However, she writes her own successful personal career in such public worlds with pride rather than any element of self-loathing. This suggests that she sees her fictional heroines' response as the natural, reasonable and largely inevitable, result of commercial mores which outrage womanhood and thereby damage the sufferer on a profound level. Doris' petulance, like Delphine's⁶³⁵ frivolity, is a measure of social, as much as individual, decadence. The fictional opera-singer⁶³⁶ seeks revenge on a world which had demanded she trade her body for commercial success, just as the fictional actress, a century earlier,⁶³⁷ had realised that the only way she could exercise her theatrical talent was by an appeal to the male audience who paid to enjoy her performances of subjugated femininity.

⁶³³ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁶³⁴ Fleischer, U. (2001). *Siegfried Kracauer and Weimar Culture: Modernity, Flanerie, and Literature*. [Online] <http://theses.nottingham.ac.uk/2045/1/246481.pdf>. [Accessed 2.3.13].

⁶³⁵ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

⁶³⁶ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. pp.167-8.

⁶³⁷ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.712.

4.4 The woman question

The 'Frauenfrage' was a major social issue, phrased in the socio-political terms of women's suffrage (which was granted, at the moment of extreme national crisis, in 1918) and in discussions of class-identity, as well as the scientific, and pseudo-scientific, determinations of what constituted human nature itself in a world which Nietzsche had popularly proclaimed as godless.⁶³⁸ Katharina Von Ankum⁶³⁹ outlines the major thematic approaches in contemporary criticism: the 'scientific' with women as objects of interpretation and regulation by (mainly male) others, women's own subjective responses as they worked in and walked through the urban environment and the influence of fashion and the consumer culture on women's images of themselves. Both Petersen⁶⁴⁰ and McCormick⁶⁴¹ approach the question of whether the Weimar period enhanced or diminished the social and personal experience of women and both favour the emancipatory definition, noting political and cultural advances, while recording those forces which continued to confine women's activity and determinedly trivialise their physical and intellectual capabilities. Roos' study of Weimar 'through the lens of Gender'⁶⁴² emphasises the achievements of the bourgeois women's movement, which, despite its anti-individualist and maternalist approach, was effective alongside left-wing social reformers in achieving positive changes. Seidel's hope for social improvement through the education of lower-class women to the egalitarian status of 'bewusste Staatsbürgerinnen'⁶⁴³ bears witness

⁶³⁸ 'Gott ist tot! Gott bleibt tot! Und wir haben ihn getötet!' Nietzsche, F. *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: Aph. 125 - Der tolle Mensch. Erste Veröff. 10/09/1882, [Online] <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/FW>. [Accessed 10.11.14.].

⁶³⁹ Von Ankum, K. (ed.) (1997). *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁶⁴⁰ Petersen, V. R. (2001). *Women and modernity in Weimar Germany: reality and its representation in popular fiction*. Oxford/London: Berghahn.

⁶⁴¹ McCormick, R. W. (2001). *Gender and sexuality in Weimar modernity*. Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁶⁴² Roos, J. (2010). *Weimar through the Lens of Gender: Prostitution Reform, Woman's Emancipation, and German Democracy, 1919-33*. Ann Arbor University of Michigan Press.

⁶⁴³ Seidel, I. (1916). 'Organisierte Mütterlichkeit'. In: *Die Tat : Monatsschrift für die Zukunft deutscher Kultur*. 7.2.5. DLA 75.1101.

to the dissemination of such ideas. But, the women's movement as a political force was less attractive to her than the visionary ideas of womanhood peddled by the exclusively-male George Kreis. Hearing Gertrud Bäumer, speaking in 1903 at a Frauentagung⁶⁴⁴ she, and her schoolgirl-friends were uninterested and responded only peripherally to the charismatic Ika Freudenberg, a leader of the Women's Movement in Bavaria.⁶⁴⁵

Both Baum and Seidel consistently refused to acknowledge any political interest in or responsibility for, their part in forming women's ideas. In the artistic circles of Vienna, as in the Seidel's social environment, 'Es lag unter der Würde eines Künstlers, sich mit Politik oder mit Geld zu befassen'.⁶⁴⁶ Seidel goes so far as to express an early withdrawal from public concerns altogether – an 'Außenseiterhaltung, einer Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber dem öffentlichen Leben'.⁶⁴⁷ Their attitude to politics was informed by their general sceptical approach to rationalist thought, both preferring the emotional and intuitive as guides. The long-term success of both women in the commercial field of popular literature shows, however, a social acumen that would be ineffective without a tactical, if not theoretical, political awareness. At various times, they express and publish opinions which it is difficult not to regard as political.^{648,649} Denial of political awareness was by then a positive choice rather than an inevitability for educated and opinionated middle-class women. It identifies them both with conservative rather than modernist views of the position of women despite Baum's public image and her modern fictional heroines. Conservative public reaction against reforms, including those advocated by the Women's Movement, later contributed to those antidemocratic sentiments that weakened the Weimar Republic and facilitated the rise of

⁶⁴⁴ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.170.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.170.

⁶⁴⁶ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.p.230.

⁶⁴⁷ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.125.

⁶⁴⁸ Seidel, I. (1933). *Rede in der Luizenschule*. DLA Marbach, 0199.1075.

⁶⁴⁹ Baum took part in the overtly propaganda series *Words at War* (1943) broadcast under the auspices of the United States Office of War Information.

National Socialism. The connection between Weimar women's conservatism and later political developments is discerned in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*.⁶⁵⁰ As Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann and Marion Kaplan explain in a later interview,⁶⁵¹ their initial intention in writing the book was to revise the view 'Frauen haben Hitler an die Macht gebracht' but in fact the study revealed 'something quite different and more challenging': women's enthusiasm for the National Socialist regime and 'especially the sense of participation and efficacy offered by the Bund deutscher Mädel and the women's organizations'.⁶⁵² Their analysis of the political development of the German women's movements, both from the political left and from the right shows that there was shared commitment to women's traditional roles in the family. Gudrun Brockhaus⁶⁵³ uses Seidel's *Das Wunschkind* to illustrate the type of literature which supported that view. Quoting Godele von der Decken's *Emanzipation auf Abwegen*⁶⁵⁴ and autobiographical accounts of women who lived through Weimar and beyond, she places the work as a typical example of women's literature under National Socialism. The ideas in that book which were appealing to a Nazi ideology had been developed by Seidel over the years 1914-30. Its ideals of female duty, service, and self-sacrifice are those which Baum recognises and applauds in the lives of her fictional characters.

4.5 Self-image and public image: Weimar women's idea of themselves

As successful authors, already reaping the rewards of financial and social recognition from the early days of the Weimar Republic, Seidel and Baum had a certain control over their way of

⁶⁵⁰ Bridenthal, R., Grossmann, A., Kaplan, M. (eds.). (1984). *When Biology Became Destiny. Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. New York: New York, Monthly Review Press.

⁶⁵¹ Grossman, A. (2004). 'When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany: Twentieth Anniversary Retrospective', *German History*, 22. 600-612.

⁶⁵² Ibid., p.601.

⁶⁵³ Brockhaus, G. (1993). 'Männerbilder und weibliche Sehnsüchte. Beispiele aus der NS-Literatur von Frauen'. *Die Philosophin*, 4, 8-23.

⁶⁵⁴ von der Decken, G. (1988). *Emanzipation auf Abwegen. Zur Frauenliteratur im Umkreis des Nationalsozialismus*. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum.

life and the personal identity they wished to develop and to publicise. For most women, choices were more constrained, subject to family circumstances but also influenced by, and responsive to, perceived attacks and counter-attacks on national and male identities, as social crises destabilised previous certitudes. McCormick⁶⁵⁵ considers that the diversity of images of women offered through Weimar culture, which blurred gender roles and encouraged male anxieties, was also problematic for the majority of women themselves. Sabina Hake views this in a more positive light. Showing fashion as an area of activity with women both as subjects and objects of its production, she illustrates the triumph of consumerism as cheaper manufacturing processes and powerful publicity made the latest styles available even to the office and shopgirls. New clothes gave women the opportunity to experiment with their appearance, to try out looks ranging from the practical and boyish to the glamorous vamp. The public revision of desirable attributes of femininity, as girls turned away from curvaceous concealment to exposed athleticism, raised the possibility of gender as a social construct as well as a biological imperative, thus questioning the established order of social relationships and suggesting opportunities and choices previously unavailable.

The dominant cultural models of the New Objectivity,⁶⁵⁶ despite its many images of ‘New Women’, were as Richard McCormick states ‘definitely masculine [...] typified by engineers, technicians, scientists, journalists, boxers, athletes’,⁶⁵⁷ all of whom appear as protagonists, if not heroes, in Baum’s novels. But, as a 1914 edition of the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁵ McCormick, R. W. (2001). *Gender and sexuality in Weimar modernity*. Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁶⁵⁶ That art movement of the 1920s in which Hartlaub distinguishes both a left-wing determination to display the true face of modern life and a right-wing concern with ‘objects of eternal validity’ and ‘the eternal laws of existence’ Cardinal, A. (2001). ‘From Das Wunschkind to Lennacker: Strategies of Dissimulation re-examination of Seidel’s novels Das Wunschkind and Lennacker’. In: Durrani, O. (ed.) *Travellers in Time and Space: The German Historical Novel*. New York: Rodopi, Plumb, S. (2006). *Neue Sachlichkeit 1918-33: Unity and Diversity of an Art Movement*. New York: Rodopi. p.12.

⁶⁵⁷ McCormick, R. W. (2001). *Gender and sexuality in Weimar modernity*. Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan. p.47

⁶⁵⁸ ‘Die Gesamtzahl der Studierenden an den 11 Technischen Hochschulen in Deutschland [...] 12150 im 1912/13; darunter sind 78 Frauen. Von den 78 Frauen studieren allgemein bildende Fächer 34, Architektur 20, Chemie und Pharmacie 21 und Bauingenieures, Maschinenbau und Elektrotechnik’ *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, No. 12, March 1914, http://archive.org/stream/deuscheliteratu35berluoft/deuscheliteratu35berluoft_djvu.txt

confirmed, women were already being educated for professional jobs, making their names as athletes and going to Sabri Mahir's boxing-gym.⁶⁵⁹ Baum's heroine *Helene Wilfüer* (1928)⁶⁶⁰ shows the struggle, as Lynne Frame points out, when a masculine typology of the feminine conflicts with a woman's interpretation of her own experiences. The novel shows a contemporary view of Weimar popular culture as predominantly urban, Americanised, eroticised but above all trivial. The female novelist confirms an opposition in which the popular is set against the higher, purer, more intellectual, more specifically European,⁶⁶¹ cultural spheres, considered as essentially male.⁶⁶² The representation of women in popular culture is determinedly negative and the author implies that cultural utopia is a male preserve with women relegated to its outskirts.

In her fiction, Baum concurs essentially with that Weimar appraisal of women's intellectual contribution to culture as inferior – Helene Wilfüer's research contributes to the cosmetic industry rather than medicine or technology. She admits a view of her own popular novels, as of transitory interest and importance, compared to the 'verdammte Zeitromane jeglicher Art'^{663,664} accepting that 'Von Frauen geschriebene Romane – das ist nichts für Männer'.⁶⁶⁵ She portrays women's cultural achievement as temporary through characters like Doris Hart or Ina Raffay who, although they achieve great performances, become victims of physical frailty, or those, like Helene Wilfüer or Tracey Cowles,⁶⁶⁶ withdraw from public activity to find their final satisfaction in marriage. Petersen's analysis of Weimar modernity points to 'the notion of

⁶⁵⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.203.

⁶⁶⁰ Baum, V. (1928). *Stud. chem. Helene Wilfüer*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁶⁶¹ This spilled over into contemporary anti-Semitic prejudice which questioned the virility of Jewish men and, consequently, named the artworks that they generated as not only inferior but perverse.

⁶⁶² When the literary scholar Eugen Wolff introduced the term Modernism to the German critical vocabulary. In his lecture 'Die Moderne. Zur 'Revolution' und 'Reform' der Literatur' given in Berlin in 1886 to the literary circle named 'Durch!' he criticised the literary work of 'dilettantische Blaustrumpfwesen' and 'Tagesdirnen beiderlei Geschlechts' thus claiming literary Modernism for male writers.

⁶⁶³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.460.

⁶⁶⁴ 'eine erstklassige Schriftstellerin, zweiter Güte' Ibid., p. 377..

⁶⁶⁵ Baum, V. (1987). Ibid., p.329.

⁶⁶⁶ Baum, V. (1956). *Flut und Flamme*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

woman as the embodiment of the darker sides of modernity in its irrational, threatening and decadent aspects,⁶⁶⁷ which generated a reaction of fear in both men and more conservative women. Baum contributed willingly to the creation of this image in much of her work, through characters such as Evelyn Droste⁶⁶⁸ or Leore Lania,⁶⁶⁹ the former being persuaded into an adulterous affair despite babies at home, the latter faithless, merciless and promiscuous. Leore is at home in the city of Berlin which, as Dorothy Rowe⁶⁷⁰ indicates, was the personification of female and modern – the city, like the character herself is alluring but insidiously destructive, drawing health and innocence into her clutches. But the city is also a ‘man’s world’ dominated by business and commercial interests and its feminine image expresses that perversion of what both authors write as a woman’s ‘true’ nature. When a woman seeks to become part of the industrial and urban world she risks both health and virtue in the novels of both Seidel and Baum. The family conflicts of Mathilde Baum’s determination to ensure her daughter’s independence and Vicki’s distaste for her father’s crass business-ethic are mirrored in an ambivalence of attitudes which was not exclusive to her, as Godela Weiss-Sussex points out⁶⁷¹ with reference to Else Croner’s ‘*Die Moderne Jüdin*’. Baum, the ‘new’ Jewish woman exploited contemporary negative attitudes to women in employment and to those in the theatre or the arts in particular, as exciting plot-material for her novels. The frequent coincidences between her fictions and her life-story suggested by her musical heroines and in the details of the plot of *Marion*, fuelled the publicity which sold her works and obscured that personal,

⁶⁶⁷ Petersen, V. R. (2001). *Women and modernity in Weimar Germany: reality and its representation in popular fiction*. Oxford/London: Berghahn. p.3.

⁶⁶⁸ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁶⁶⁹ Baum, V. (1954). *Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel*. München: Verlag Kurt Desch.

⁶⁷⁰ Rowe, D. (1995). 'Desiring Berlin: Gender and modernity in Weimar Germany'. In: Meskimmon, M. & West, S. (eds.) *Visions of the "Neue Frau": Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany* Menston, England: Scolar Press. pp.143 – 164.

⁶⁷¹ Hammel, A., Weiss-Sussex, G. (ed.) (2009). *'Not an essence but a positioning' German-Jewish Women Writers (1900-1938)*. München: Martin Meidenbauer. p.55.

essentially conservative, view of her gendered role which persisted throughout the factual and fictional dramas of her life.

Seidel succeeded, albeit on a more local level, without such a piquant public image and managed to maintain her success. Gabriele Thöns lists the laudatory statements and comparatively uncritical support published throughout the author's career, which presented Seidel as an example of womanhood, Germanness and authorship, in that order. As Thöns points out, the doubts as to the aesthetic abilities of women were not confined to the earlier twentieth century and Karl Beyer's (1940) 'das Weibliche und das Männliche, das sind die Gegensätze. Natur und Weib, das ist das Nährende, Hegende, Pflegende, Bildende. Geist und Mann ist das Planende, Schaffende, Kämpfende',⁶⁷² was echoed in Horst's (1956) work on Seidel:

Es gibt keine ausgesprochen weibliche Ästhetik, weil die Frau nicht im gleichen Sinne an 'die Kunst' glaubt wie der Mann. Darum ist die künstlerische Aufgabe der Frau, die ihrem Wesen als Frau entspricht, die Vergeistigung des Natürlichen.⁶⁷³

Their ideas on what it meant to be a woman are thus central to the way in which both the authors and their respective works were, and are, perceived and the distinction made between Seidel and Baum reflected contemporary, often opposing, views of what a woman should be and how she should conduct her life. Nevertheless, both authors viewed themselves as women whose private and family lives were the well-spring from which their literary work flowed and whose privileged position as intelligent, educated, cultured and creative women allowed them to lead others.

They had, apparently, few doubts about their considerable influence on their audience and their role as mediators of reality and transmitters of contemporary thought. In direct addresses, newspaper articles, radio broadcasts and authorial interjections in their fictional work, they

⁶⁷² Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. p.37.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., p.37.

guide their readers' responses whether for moral and educational reasons or simply to heighten entertainment. Regardless of inconsistencies and instabilities in their authorial stance, they demand attention and impose personalities on a readership whose contribution to the literary process is intended to be receptive rather than collaborative.

They bolster their own opinions with those of other writers, hoping to gain a gloss from the association. Seidel's evocation of Ricarda Huch, in defence of her own position during the Nazi years, hectors the reader:

Deutschland darf nie vergessen, was Ricarda Huch ihm dadurch geschenkt hat, daß sie in den Jahren der Verblendung und schließlich während aller Angst und Verzweiflung des furchtbaren Erwachens und des Ringens um die nackte Existenz in seiner Mitte blieb, gelassen den Zumutungen des Ungeistes widerstehend, Not und Entbehrung mit ihrem Volk teilend⁶⁷⁴

Baum's later celebrity friends were the subjects of gossip columns but Baum's own insistence on her early literary recognition by Thomas Mann⁶⁷⁵ and the Vienna intelligentsia⁶⁷⁶ accentuates her reiterated claims to skilled authorship⁶⁷⁷ which appealed to an international audience of all classes.

4.6 Narrating women

Both women acknowledge the superiority of male cultural models by adopting male characters in pursuit of an authoritative literary role. In novels with some externally verifiable historical background particularly, the dominant points of reference are male. The male colonial administrator in Baum's *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* observes and narrates Balinese society as the Dutch assert dominance in the slaughter of 1906. Brook, the male academic of Seidel's *Michaela*, analyses the social effects of National Socialism and the trials of the individual within a totalitarian state. In *Das Wunschkind*, although Cornelia is the central character, her

⁶⁷⁴ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.47.

⁶⁷⁵ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.337.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., p.241.

⁶⁷⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.463, p.434.

narrative is reactive rather than dynamic and it is through the voices of father, husband, son and lovers that the story develops as Cornelia, the mother, maintains the steady and quiet centre around which their lives revolve. Cornelia, like Doris Hart⁶⁷⁸ or Evelyn⁶⁷⁹ maintains silent monologues which give the reader a privileged view of how these fictional women think. The authors' woman-to woman, 'dear reader'⁶⁸⁰, interjections draw the reader into the private, emotionalised and internalised circle which these female novelists show as a woman's significant life. Men of all classes and historical periods are, in both writers' novels, less subject to social constraints and judgements. Men initiate events, make decisions, choose self-sacrifice and impose it on their families in pursuit of abstract ideals such as duty and honour, rather than, like women, having it forced upon them by the events and decisions of the public world of men. Soldiers like Hans-Adam and Christoph win public honour and remembrance, Cornelia's losses are to be borne in private silence⁶⁸¹ Rakah chooses to die alongside his Radjah and friend to expunge sin and win reincarnation. Lambon, abandoned by her lover follows the order of immolation in despair of any other future as do the wives sacrificed on their husband's funeral pyre.⁶⁸² In both writers' novels, men gain glory in death, women seek death as escape from wretchedness. That juxtaposition was particularly acute in wartime, as the authors had seen for themselves and rewrote in their novels.

4.7 Women in war

The First World War, initiated by male politicians serving the interests of class, empire and capitalism had forced the real women of Weimar into those dilemmas later fictionalised by the two authors. Women had not been spared the physical and mental traumas of wartime and post-war deprivation. Seidel writes from personal observations in describing the experience of

⁶⁷⁸ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁶⁷⁹ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁶⁸⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.246.

⁶⁸¹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

⁶⁸² Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein.

Cornelie in *Das Wunschkind* or Anna, the wife of Philippus Sebastian Lennacker, widowed when her husband was slain by the invading Swedish army in 1637.⁶⁸³ For many of the novelists' post-First-World-War readerships, separation from, or the death of, men on military service had forced re-definition of responsibilities, of social position and of expectations for the future. Like her characters, Cornelie⁶⁸⁴ or Ulrike Lennacker,⁶⁸⁵ Seidel was protected from the worst effects through family, class and established income, as was Baum, but the fleeing refugees in *Lennacker*⁶⁸⁶ mirror other contemporary women's experience. During the War, married women, like her fictional Bürger's wives,⁶⁸⁷ gained some practical as well as moral recognition through their role as 'Kriegerfrauen', but those working-class women receiving financial help were also often condemned by neighbours as shiftless and lazy, with the sort of neighbourly disdain extended in *Lennacker* to 'die Grünklerin'.⁶⁸⁸ On the other hand, those left on the home-front were now financially independent, in charge of the home and children and, according to Ute Daniel,⁶⁸⁹ conscious of their status. In the same novel, Anna, wife of Philippus Lennacker takes moral charge of the remnants of her husband's pastoral flock as he would have done⁶⁹⁰ and Cornelie,⁶⁹¹ while acknowledging her mother-in-law as head of the household, is its effective manager. The pre-war norms of marriage and family life were destabilised as unmarried girls, widows and mothers deprived of sons were all collateral victims of the massive male casualty figures. Like Anna and her children, families had to build new independent lives from the ruins once the armies had moved on and Seidel uses historical

⁶⁸³ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p. 219.

⁶⁸⁴ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

⁶⁸⁵ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.34.

⁶⁸⁶ Cardinal, A. (2001). 'From Das Wunschkind to Lennacker: Strategies of Dissimulation re-examination of Seidel's novels Das Wunschkind and Lennacker'. In: Durrani, O. (ed.). *Travellers in Time and Space: The German Historical Novel*. New York: Rodopi. p.197.

⁶⁸⁷ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.168.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., p 200.

⁶⁸⁹ http://www.erster-weltkrieg.clio-Online.de/_Rainbow/documents/keiner%20f%C3%BChlt%20sich%20/daniel.pdf p.143 [Accessed 1.9.14].

⁶⁹⁰ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.210.

⁶⁹¹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

precedents to underline contemporary realities.⁶⁹² Showing the effects of historical necessity on the biological determinism which is central to her view of women's behaviour in no way qualifies her ideological standpoint. The accommodation between a biological imperative and the urgent demands of present wartime is turned to good account in her 1942 publication *Dienende Herzen: Kriegsbriefe von Nachrichtenhelferinnen des Heeres*. According to Jutta Mühlenberg,⁶⁹³ women often joined the Nachrichtenhelferinnen in search of travel, excitement, escape from parental control and a personal income – all defining features of the then-reviled New Womanhood. By 1942, they had already gained a poor reputation for behaviour which was hindering both recruitment and the marriage-prospects of current members.⁶⁹⁴ Seidel's book was therefore a contribution to their rehabilitation, stressing duty, devotion to home, parents and country and mutual comradeship: 'Das beste Kennzeichen deutschen Soldatentums war immer Ritterlichkeit gewesen'.⁶⁹⁵

Such direct experience of a society at war is not generally a theme of Baum's work, although it does appear as an element in the later novels in a necessary response to the Second World War. The plot of *Flut und Flamme* (1956) is resolved by the blinding of the hero in battle, thus making possible an enduring married relationship. Only such physical dependency can awaken the caring instincts of the dynamic and otherwise mercurial character of the wealthy Tracey Cowles. As in *Helene Wilfürer*, Baum suggests that the stability of marriage is only certain when the charismatic male hero is disabled, thus tying him forcibly to home and family and placing the wife, whose family-feeling is more reliable, in the dominant role. Her deep cynicism

⁶⁹² Loulou in *Sterne der Heimkehr* is a war-widow.

⁶⁹³ Mühlenberg, J. (2011). *Das SS-Helferinnenkorps: Ausbildung, Einsatz und Entnazifizierung der weiblichen Angehörigen der Waffen-SS 1942-1949*. Hamburg: Perfect Paperbacks. p.80.

⁶⁹⁴ Himmler, *Rede*, SS-Gruppenführertagung, Posen, Autumn 1943. 'Es muss so sein, dass ein Mann, der eines diese Mädels heiraten will und erfährt, dass sie SS-Nachrichtenhelferin war, sagt: Die kann ich heiraten. Die ist in Ordnung.' *Ibid.*, p.81.

⁶⁹⁵ Seidel, Ina (1942) *Dienende Herzen Kriegsbriefe von Nachrichtenhelferinnen des Heeres* [Online] <http://www.zeughaus-braun.de/catalog/product/gallery/image/35507/id/7170/> [Accessed 18.10.14.]

contrasts with Seidel's optimistic hope that at least some men⁶⁹⁶ are capable of benevolent, and beneficial, idealism.

Liebe und Tod auf Bali shows the immediate effects of a battle rather than a war but, in writing the novel as a sympathetic reminiscence from a representative of the victorious forces, Baum is able to both report events and indicate their lasting effects for the community, including the women and children. Her view appears to be that the traditional island society was betrayed by an effete aristocracy and corrupt court. The peasants maintained an ancestral value-system, identifying themselves with the creatures and the natural world which surrounded them and responsive to its rhythms. Religious rituals, most importantly dance-narratives asserting the presence of a spirit-world, still fulfilled their moral and historical purposes for the peasantry. For an aristocracy who had retreated into opium and arcane pursuits or who were looking outward towards trade and profit, such observances were becoming drained of their significance. The final battle was essentially a cleansing process, removing the corruption which was weakening the island society. The overturning of the old feudal system achieved mainly positive results for majority of the folk. The political power of an arrogant feudal system with a penchant for war was dismantled. Dictatorship and theocracy were replaced by a largely beneficent colonialism while the peasants themselves were left undisturbed, retaining that awareness of nature and cosmic order that the author interprets as a spiritual equilibrium. She is no more critical of military aggression than Seidel, making both armies slightly ridiculous victims of circumstance. She replaces uniformed Prussian heroes with flower-decked, half-naked men carrying ceremonial daggers but women, children and the aged are the ancillary victims, as in Seidel's violent confrontations.

⁶⁹⁶ The patriarchal Lermoser of *Sterne der Heimkehr* or Philippus Lennacker of *Lennacker* are fictional examples.

The authors' fictional depictions of women in war situations only heighten and dramatise the general definitions of a woman's role to be gained from their writings. The female characters of both novelists suffer from the demands of a male-dominated world and are offered no possibility of successful resolution through their own efforts. Instead, the writers offer fantastical diversions, the possibility of a love-affair or a new frock for Baum's struggling secretaries,⁶⁹⁷ or a chance encounter with a father's friend who can ensure a permanent and sufficient income for the indigent, but highly respectable, family of Martinus Johannes Lennacker.⁶⁹⁸ In the blackest and most hopeless cases, death under torture suspected of witchcraft⁶⁹⁹ or mown down by the bullets of the Colonial forces,⁷⁰⁰ women are apparently supposed to take comfort in having died piously with sure hope of eternal life in the appropriate heaven. Those women who do succeed in manipulating their own circumstances and pursuing their chosen path, pay the price, through loss of family, lover and self-respect. Doris knows the depths to which she has sunk, prostituting herself for an audition with the Metropolitan Opera – 'da wußte Doris, daß sie nicht tiefer kommen dürfte'⁷⁰¹ and while talent enables her to profit from the occasion, she can never again, in the novel's terms, achieve the peaceful satisfaction of a woman's life fulfilled by husband and children.

Women's lives are written as governed by men's decisions which diminish their social status and their autonomy, often confining their activity within home and family. Although both authors see the domestic arena as a fit and proper site for the exercise of a woman's talents, they also demand full recognition of the status of women as the bearers and maintainers of life itself. Women's own ability to comply with the demands of this naturally-defined role, as the authors see it, is challenged in the novels, as in real life, by the incursions of external, or

⁶⁹⁷ Baum, V. (1957). *Menschen im Hotel*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, Baum, V. (1944). *Hotel Berlin 43*. New York: Doubleday Doran & Co. Inc.

⁶⁹⁸ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁷⁰⁰ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁷⁰¹ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.158.

historical, events. The effective responses of their protagonists to such trials are written as confirmation of the female power to endure adversity and continue to fulfil their ordained purpose. Seidel's home-bound women show that their limited sphere of operation was in no way a diminution of work or responsibility. They keep the home fires burning while husbands and sons pursue their active life outside and recklessly ignore its impacts on their families. The dilettante Monsieur Bastian abandons his dependant wife and children,⁷⁰² George Forster's father⁷⁰³ satisfies an inordinate appetite for both food and adventure at the expense of his family,⁷⁰⁴ while Michael Matthias Lennacker⁷⁰⁵ sacrifices domestic happiness for doctrinal purity. Women rise to the constrained occasion, surpassing their previous passivity, and actively managing events to ensure survival and continuity for the family. The domestic trials of a pastor's wife on an insufficient income,⁷⁰⁶ like those of Doris Hart when the Wall Street Crash suddenly removed her pension, echo a common experience in a society where the majority of women remained financially-dependent on male family-members and violent economic change engendered social instability.

4.8 Changed social mores

The first major world crisis of the twentieth century, the First World War, had redefined gender relationships in a way that became increasingly obvious as European society came under yet more external pressures as the century progressed. The War had created 3.6 million wounded in Austria/Hungary and 4.2 million in Germany. Maimed veterans were visible on the streets as well as concealed within family homes. Increasing numbers of women, including middle-class ladies, had been called upon to 'do their duty' as nurses. The men came back to households where mothers, wives and sisters were forced to care for them and domestic labour

⁷⁰² Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.396

⁷⁰³ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch. p.11.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁷⁰⁵ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.129

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.96.

was in short supply. Such casualties of war brought many women, previously protected by home and servants, into direct contact with male bodies. Anna Carden-Coyne's⁷⁰⁷ examination of the reversal of gender-relations in military hospitals, shows that wounded soldiers were forced into not only passive, but also suffering roles, by the women caring for them. Some nursing and rehabilitatory activities, both in hospitals and the home, were active inflictions of severe pain on the comparatively helpless male patients. Although her examples are from English and American military hospitals, there is every reason to suppose that therapeutic methods in Germany were similarly vigorous. Female innocence could no longer be equated with ignorance, nor femininity with helpless gentleness. Both Helene Wilfüer and Cornelia⁷⁰⁸ are shown as thoroughly positive examples of women in medical working relationships with men. Neither is reticent in her approach and both acknowledge and deal with the physical manifestations of maleness as they see it. The sheltered world in which Baum's grandmother, or Seidel's mother, could preserve their childlike and naïve qualities throughout their lives, protected and cherished by male relatives, was gone for the majority of women. Even before the war, Seidel's scientifically-minded father had seen no need to protect her from medical procedures on hospital patients and, after it, as she shows in *Lennacker* the elderly celibate women of the Sisterhood are unabashed in providing for the physical and intimate comforts of the homecoming soldier.

4.9 Women's physicality/sexuality

The increased openness in middle-class circles as to the functioning of male bodies echoed a recognition of female physicality which the social nature of childbearing and childbirth had always fostered. The coyness of Cläre Breithardt in *Das Wunschkind*, hoping to conceal pregnancies by her ample fichu was an acceptable family joke, showing both her silliness and

⁷⁰⁷ Carden-Coyne, A. (2008). 'Painful bodies and brutal women: remedial massage, gender relations and cultural agency in military hospitals, 1914-18', *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1, 139-158.

⁷⁰⁸ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

providing a foil for Cornelia's more forthright style of motherhood. The nature of the sexual relationship between men and women had been a matter of research in academic circles for some time before the war⁷⁰⁹ as casual chat in Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr* confirms,⁷¹⁰ as well as Baum's autobiography.⁷¹¹ The 1914-18 War had disturbed established patterns of sexual behaviour and exacerbated the questions. Armies massed men together in groups largely separated from women's society. The absence of husbands and lovers from home caused strains on relationships which were sexual as well as social and financial. Notable increases in prostitution occurred both during the war, and in the economic collapses throughout the following decade. Faced with financial ruin, sexual favours were a source of income even among middle-class women, although Roos⁷¹² indicates that contemporary reactions magnified the actual rise in numbers of prostitutes. The interface between gender, the capitalist economy and class is, however, not of central importance to the present thesis. The prominent representation of the prostitute in Weimar culture is often interpreted as a manifestation of the Republic's overt sexual dissipation or its economic instability but it was also an illustration of the wider recognition of women's bodies for sale in the modern market-place of the mass-media, an awareness which had found its way into women's literature of all types, including the novels of Baum and Seidel. The prostitute, who helps the boys in the Berlin of *Das Tor der Frühe*,⁷¹³ is the 'tart with a heart,' while in the Dresden of Tobias Laurentius Lennacker,⁷¹⁴ the actress-courtesan is shown as a victim, protecting a younger brother. Baum's portrayals of

⁷⁰⁹ Bloch's *Das Sexualleben unserer Zeit in seinen Beziehungen zur modernen Kultur* published in 1907, introduced the term Sexualwissenschaft to a public whose willingness to accept this making-respectable of the topic by an author whose titles included work on the Marquis de Sade and Fetishism, is evident in the six editions which appeared in the first nine months.

⁷¹⁰ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.35.

⁷¹¹ 'diese neuen Namen, von denen so viel geredet wurde: Krafft-Ebing! Der Professor! Dr Breuer! Dr. Freud!' Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.29.

⁷¹² Roos, J. (2010). *Weimar through the Lens of Gender: Prostitution Reform, Woman's Emancipation, and German Democracy, 1919-3*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

⁷¹³ Seidel, I. (1952). *Das Tor der Frühe*. Bochum: Deutscher Buchklub. p.149.

⁷¹⁴ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.326.

women who offer or sell sex for money or career advantage⁷¹⁵ are similarly shaded and varied. The attitude of both authors to the ‘fallen’ woman, like that of social reformers of their time and class, is sympathetic to what could often be interpreted as a temporary aberration rather than moral turpitude or a challenge to dominant social values.

Bloch’s early research, which had included work on prostitution, gained contemporary relevance in its study of the effects of sexually-transmitted disease on both the armed forces and the civilian population. At a time when war had decreased populations and birth-rates were falling, the effect of disease on the fertility and child-bearing potential of women was a matter for alarm. It was accepted wisdom in official as well as public circles that the male sex-drive necessitated the service of prostitutes when taken out of the familial context.⁷¹⁶ In 1928 Baum takes up the theme - Helene Wilfür helps out her fellow- student Marx by explaining to his virginal fiancée the nature of the intolerable sexual frustration which has driven him to a prostitute, where he has contracted venereal disease. Helene pleads for his forgiveness and succeeds in her endeavour to reinstate the engagement.

Bloch’s research-method was, he claimed, a union of ‘die allgemeine Biologie, die Anthropologie und Völkerkunde, die Philosophie und Psychologie, die Medizin, die Geschichte der Literatur und diejenige der Kultur in ihrem ganzen Umfang,’⁷¹⁷ thus sympathetic to those who, like Seidel and Baum always rejected the purely empirical approach. His conclusion that ‘normal’ women were sexually passive, with children rather than pleasure as

⁷¹⁵ Doris Hart, Leore Lania, Ina Raffay, Flämmchen all fall within this category.

⁷¹⁶ The ‘Gesetz zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten’ was passed in 1927 with the aim of reducing the spread of sexual infection. § 2 ‘Wer an einer mit Ansteckungsgefahr verbundenen Geschlechtskrankheit leidet und dies weiß oder den Umständen nach annehmen muß, 'hat die Pflicht, sich von einem für das-Deutsche Reich approbierten Arzte behandeln zu lassen. Eltern, Vormünder und sonstige Erziehungsberechtigte sind verpflichtet, für die ärztliche Behandlung ihrer geschlechtskranken Pflegebefohlenen zu sorgen.’ [Online] http://www.zaoerv.de/01_1929/1_1929_2_b_536_2_541.pdf. [Accessed 2.06.15].

⁷¹⁷ Bloch, Iwan, *Ausschweifungen im Sexuellen, 1906?* [Online] <http://www.pharmacon.net/2010/12/bloch/> [Accessed 3.5.13].

motivation is, in general terms, the message of their writings.⁷¹⁸ What Baum calls the ‘Drängen des Geschlechts, seine Ekstasen und Mysterien’⁷¹⁹ becomes, in Seidel’s *Das Wunschkind* the hectic scene of Christoph’s conception, expressing the event in the cosmic terms of seed-time and harvest rather than human bodies. This is not entirely euphemistic evasion. The melodramatic circumstances of the event in the proximity of a child’s corpse, the woman’s sexual determination and the powerful intimation of the soldier’s imminent death stress an unsentimental physicality. The author’s predilection for blood becomes sexual ‘Ein Tropfen Blut hing an Corneliens Brust [...] seine Lippen tranken diesen Tropfen Blut.’⁷²⁰ Bringing together the elements of blood-sacrifice, blood as sacrament and nourishment and the generative role of the mother Seidel inflates rather than evades the sexual act, asserting the woman’s primary role as bearer of children and thus the creative link between humanity and the natural world and the creators of its own future. The ‘Rausch [des] Blutes’⁷²¹ is, in both authors, a male rather than female emotion, whether experienced by Seidel’s nineteenth-century Prussians or Baum’s twentieth-century Americans.

Baum, the author who wrote popular articles on scientific themes for Ullstein in the period leading up to the publication of *stud. chem. Helene Wilfüer*, nonetheless comes down explicitly on the side of ‘romance’ in her autobiographical analysis. She equates both ‘wohlanalysiert’ and ‘rohe’ sex in a negative comparison with the ‘altmodische, lächerliche, sentimentale romantische Liebe’⁷²² of her youth.⁷²³ Her novels (and her own life) show very different

⁷¹⁸ Although this is difficult to reconcile with Vick Baum’s autobiographical delight in ‘muskulöse, einfache Männer,’ p.49 and ‘Ich lebe intensive, indem ich fühle, schmecke, berühre’. Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.69.

⁷¹⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Ibid.*, p.167.

⁷²⁰ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.14.

⁷²¹ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch. p.170.

⁷²² Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.195

⁷²³ In *Die Ärztin im Hause*, a book aimed at housewives which remained a bestseller well into the 1930s, Springer explains that girls’ and women’s attitudes to their male companions are idealistic rather than sexual and any divergence from this norm is aberrant. [Online] http://home.arcor.de/trouby-media/slr_cdr/lyrics/th_w-poppen_vor_100_jahren.pdf. [Accessed 4.12.12].

relationships. Both Flämmchen and Doris Hart understand and practise sex in both ‘raw’ and ‘calculated’ contexts but fail to achieve stable happiness. Helene Wilfür’s triumphant research career leads to the discovery of ‘Vitalin’ which, the text implies rather than states, has a positive effect in reversing the effects of age on both appearance and sexual performance. Her older lover, Ambrosius, and their future relationship will be a beneficiary of her pharmaceutical success in both financial and personal terms. The times, she is showing, have changed, affecting the lives of men as well as women and the benefits are equivocal.

Seidel’s characters also present sexual experience in the same recognisably contemporary context - sex as trade,⁷²⁴ as rejection of boring conformity,⁷²⁵ as an exploitative act,⁷²⁶ as a temporary thrill,⁷²⁷ or within marriage,⁷²⁸ reflecting, like Baum, the options available to women often newly freed from the reproductive and moral restraints of pre-war days.

Male unease with the changed sexual norms is sketched by both authors, in the character of the swimming instructor pursued by the portly matron of *Hell in Frauensee*⁷²⁹ or Aage, unable to free himself from the trammels of a relationship with the assertive Loulou in *Sterne der Heimkehr*.⁷³⁰ Both novels are written by women who could well consider themselves middle-aged and the humorous cliché of the ‘older woman’ plays no part in either. Aage is saved by his brother Wolfgang who understands from his sailor-days the dynamics and the deceits of the relationship between the older woman and his young and innocent brother.

Both authors make more insidious links between sexuality, theatre, trade, and Jewishness. In her autobiography, Baum writes, with affectionate scorn, of her aunt Cora, the touring actress of doubtful morality.⁷³¹ Seidel’s fictional representation of the perils of the theatrical life in

⁷²⁴ Aage and Loulou in Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

⁷²⁵ Charlotte in Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

⁷²⁶ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.326

⁷²⁷ Delphine in Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

⁷²⁸ Cornelia in *Ibid.*,

⁷²⁹ Baum, V. (1955). *Hell in Frauensee*. Darmstadt-Berlin: Deutsche Buch Gemeinschaft.

⁷³⁰ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

⁷³¹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.52.

Das Wunschkind invokes the salon of the Jewish banker Kalischer in Berlin. It is here that Delphine,⁷³² meets characters from the theatre world and it is the Jewish family, who encourage her to join them. The Kalischer women are shown as unfitted for their role as protectors of the girl who has been left in their care by her French father. Their moral status is thus inferior even to those French principles so suspect in the eyes of the Prussian Cornelia. The Kalischer household is also the meeting-place of spies and traitors. Delphine betrays her German blood, the family name and her own womanly nature and all the betrayals are expressed in her play-acting. The Jew is the go-between and pander, willing to sell his own integrity: ‘Herr Kalischer sagt auch, wer Napoleon unterstützt, arbeitet dem lieben Gott in die Hände!’⁷³³ - the Jew trades on the name of the Christian god. The very name Delphine, as the French-speaking author well knew, unites the girl with mermaids who lure men to their doom. More disturbing, in its context of a trivial short-story, is Baum’s Jakob Fisch,⁷³⁴ the wily and elusive fishmonger with a mysterious power over fish and female customers, who himself claims to be ‘fishy’ by nature. Sexual implications are underplayed, but the character is uncanny, mysterious and therefore threatening. Ashkenazi⁷³⁵ shows how images of Jewish ethnicity were amalgamated with promiscuity and homosexuality in the Weimar popular imagination, along with the alleged trading instinct. Theleweit’s enquiry into the dreams and fantasies of Freikorps men evidences fear of water and fluidity. The soft and flowing is set against the fixed and steely and becomes a threat to be repelled in all its forms, be it women, the proletariat, Slavs or Jews.⁷³⁶

4.10 Homosexuality

⁷³² Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

⁷³³ Ibid., p.702.

⁷³⁴ Baum, V. (1993). *Der Weihnachtskarpfen*. Köln/Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

⁷³⁵ Ashkenazi, O. (2007). *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.96-100.

⁷³⁶ Durrani, O. (ed.) (2001). *Travellers in Time and Space: The German Historical Novel. Reisende durch Zeit und Raum: Der deutschsprachige historische Roman*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. p.311.

Both authors claimed to show the realities of modern life, at a time when androgyny was a fashion-statement and homosexuality an acknowledged element of urban European culture. Baum attributed the alleged rise in homosexuality and its more obvious social manifestations quite simply to the effects of war.⁷³⁷ In exceptional circumstances, finding some comfort and warmth in same-sex relationships is presented as unsurprising but nevertheless perverse. The lesbian characters in her novels are always marginalised. The sad and awkward lesbian representative of an impoverished aristocracy in *Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel* can only find understanding in the gay clubs of Berlin. Gudula Rapp in *stud. chem. Helene Wilfürer* is not only lesbian but, as Lynne Frame indicates,⁷³⁸ embodies the cliché of lesbian, Jewish and intellectual. After years of dismal deprivation and hopeless longing she also leaves to find obscurity and a job in Berlin. She is unattractive both in appearance and behaviour, with her sexuality condemned as an ‘abseits kranke Neigung’.⁷³⁹ Baum makes no suggestion that a fixed homosexual orientation could be redirected or that such a step would be desirable. Her references to the homosexual ‘Carlito’ are sympathetic but even when speaking, as in this instance, of a personal friend, she clearly regards his sexuality as unfortunate, even risible writing in a similar tone to that used with reference to other personal contacts with homosexuality.⁷⁴⁰

Lesbians, like women who sell their sexual favours such as Flämmchen⁷⁴¹ and Doris Hart⁷⁴², or those who are apparently promiscuous by inclination, like Ambrosius’ wife Yvonne⁷⁴³ or Juddy [sic] Bryant,⁷⁴⁴ usually appear in Baum’s novels as a foil to marriage or at least a

⁷³⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.313.

⁷³⁸ Frame, Lynne, ‘Gretchen, Girl, Garconne?’ in Von Ankum, K. (ed.) (1997). *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.27.

⁷³⁹ Baum, Vicki, *stud. chem. Helene Wilfürer*. p.168.

⁷⁴⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.446 and Letter to E. Lyons of 16.3.59. Elizabeth Lyons Collection, Box 6, Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia.

⁷⁴¹ Baum, V. (1957). *Menschen im Hotel*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann .

⁷⁴² Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁷⁴³ Baum, V. (1939). *Helene*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

⁷⁴⁴ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

heterosexual relationship with some firm emotional commitment from one of the parties. The committed, monogamous, heterosexual relationship is shown as a desirable norm, despite the boredom and frustration experienced within its often monotonous routines. Ambrosius' eternally dissatisfied violinist wife Yvonne seeks sexual diversions as does Evelyn Droste hankering after her American lover.⁷⁴⁵ Yvonne is unfavourably compared to the steady and devoted Helene Wilfür, happy with the simple pleasures of a day in the country, while Yvonne enjoys a hectic evening, backed by the city syncopation and the charming decadence of the black jazz-pianist.

Healthy and well-balanced women, as the authors portray them, like Cornelia or Helene Wilfür, are conscious of their own sexuality and willing to acknowledge its demands but never lose sexual control. It is this same innate restraint that allows Baum's more louche characters to make a distinction between sex as business transaction and sex for love, the latter apparently receiving no taint from the former. Men, on the contrary, are generally unable to govern a sexuality which overwhelms their reason. Cornelia's father ruins a Prussian court and military career for the charms of a French actress, Rakah is unable to resist the attractions of Lambon despite the sanctions for touching a Radjah's wife.⁷⁴⁶ Seidel's condemnations of predatory women who exploit male sexual vulnerability, undermining duty to faith, nation and family is unequivocal. Baum retains a sense of the susceptibility of the women themselves. Nevertheless, in both authors, men are diminished by the transaction, and the women who thus betray their inherent (or God-given) nature, inevitably suffer a premature death.

As Atina Grossman summarises, the Weimar Sex Reform Movement's recognition and encouragement of female sexuality, was formulated, in male heterosexual terms, as an attribute to be exploited in defence of the family. She postulates that 'women were never given the

⁷⁴⁵ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁷⁴⁶ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein.

chance to define, envision, and experience their own sexuality-this, despite the fact that the movement prided itself on its humanity and progressivism.’⁷⁴⁷ A powerful coalition of psychology and natural science was presented as indisputable fact replacing antiquated ideas and religious beliefs about how women felt and how they should behave. Baum and Seidel acknowledge modern science and support its conclusions, acknowledging the importance of sexuality in ensuring family unity. They also recognise it as a potent force which can lead women astray, but the generative force of female sexuality is part of the eternal qualities of womanhood, as they see it, and shared with the rest of animal creation. The fates of their fictional women show the failure of the male world to duly acknowledge and protect women as sexual partners. The lack of self-respect and self-knowledge in those women who do go astray in their novels are judged as the unfortunate result of male offences, not only against the women themselves, but against the life-sustaining values that they represent on a symbolic level. Both Seidel and Baum accept that there is no living salvation for the erring woman, only mitigation of her faults, repentance and the final cleansing act of physical death.

4.11 Motherhood

For both authors, the natural and appropriate aim of sexuality was motherhood. Helene’s affair with Rainer is motherly rather than passionate and, as she becomes physically, rather than theoretically, aware of the child she is carrying, she defies convention and devotes her life, and her intellectual powers to ensuring his successful nurture. Despite her academic and commercial success, Helene is, above all, motherly. This is the spirit of Seidel’s 1916 article ‘organisierte Mütterlichkeit’, an appeal to wartime-women to use their instinctive caring abilities both to improve the life-chances and circumstances of their less-privileged counterparts and as a complement to the male defensive role: ‘Eisenfaust nach aussen geballt,

⁷⁴⁷ Grossman, A. (1983). 'The New Woman and the rationalization of sexuality in Weimar Germany'. In: Barr Snitow, A. (ed.) *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. London: Virago Press. p.164.

des Reiches Grenzen schirmend – Mutterhand waltend im Inneren, hegend, pflegend, erhaltend.⁷⁴⁸

For Baum's Helene Wilfür, a career, begun under the aegis of her father and following in his professional footsteps, became a financial necessity to support her child. Helene's determination to succeed in the male-dominated, and nominally rational, world of science, gains her independence and finally business success. Yet, as Katharine Ankum points out,⁷⁴⁹ the conflict between career and motherhood culminates with her gratefully putting herself under the protection of a husband, thus promoting a thoroughly traditional view of women. Even her first appearance in the novel, holding the sleeping baby,⁷⁵⁰ she is closer to Seidel's picture of Cornelia nursing her sister's child⁷⁵¹ than the New Woman image, peddled by Ullstein, of both the character and her creator. Helene is 'like a piece of wholesome black bread',⁷⁵² a nourishing image shared with the description of Cornelia - 'im Blut hatte sie die schwere Zärtlichkeit ihrer mecklenburgischen Mutter, die warme Wucht des Bodens der Weizen trägt.'⁷⁵³

4.12 Women in the modern world

Helene could thus serve as model for both career-women and motherly wives and Baum and Seidel consistently created women characters with whom, and with whose problems, many women could identify. Helene had taken advantage of the improved educational opportunities which were available to girls, and risen to the challenge of an unplanned pregnancy. Wolfgang and Aage's mother⁷⁵⁴ sat at home worrying about one son in the temptations of the city and

⁷⁴⁸ Seidel, I. (1916). 'Organisierte Mütterlichkeit'. In: *Die Tat : Monatsschrift für die Zukunft deutscher Kultur*. 7.2.6. DLA 75.1101.

⁷⁴⁹ von Ankum, K. (1995). 'Motherhood and the "New Woman": Baum's stud. chem. Helene Wilfür and Irmgard Keun's Gilgi, eine von uns'. *Women in German Yearbook*, 11, 171-188.

⁷⁵⁰ Baum, V. (1939). *Helene*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. p.7.

⁷⁵¹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.51.

⁷⁵² Baum, V. (1939). *Helene*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. p.42.

⁷⁵³ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.23.

⁷⁵⁴ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

pined for the lost sailor-boy. The city girl and the country mother could see themselves in the stories but while, as suggested in Chapter 3 on popular literature, there was some overlap of publishers and readerships, the readership for the writings of Baum and Seidel differed. The appearance of much of Seidel's work in the conservative publications of Diederich in which Baum's writings did not appear, the very different physical formats of their work and the public images of the authors themselves indicate a disparity between those readers prepared to attempt the lengthy historical novels of Seidel and those picking up the shorter contemporary stories of Baum.

However, Seidel's short story *Eine Frau in der Bahn* (1944) tells of the dangers to which modern girls like the fictional Helene were exposed. Travelling from home to work, and the train makes this possible, releases a girl from the moral stability of family. She has the money and the opportunity to see films which nurture romantic illusions. The young secretary's seduction by her married employer has now become the older woman's resignation to moral degradation. She now acknowledges the sad truths behind the promised glamour. Her stay-at-home mother, dutifully providing a haven and protecting her child, dies without final knowledge of her daughter's irredeemable fall from grace - 'Mein Leben – wenn ich so denke: mein Leben...Als ob ich im Kino sitze, ein Film, genau wie ein Film so läuft das in meinem Kopf. Meine Mutter wusste es nicht. Das ist das Beste daran.'⁷⁵⁵

Charlotte and Delphine, the historical, and unrepentant, fallen women of *Das Wunschkind* abandon family and moral conventions, suffer and die young. The modern girl is encouraged to consider the moral, and presumably also the financial, penalties of such defiance, minimising vicarious thrills and maximising their sorrowful results.

Baum's story of Doris Hart's career as she sleeps her way to the top on the casting couches of the opera has sufficient parallels with her own life to titillate the readership with guesses as to

⁷⁵⁵ Seidel, I. (1944). *Eine Frau in der Bahn*. DLA 75.1054.

its autobiographical status. In the novel, however, Doris's deceased parents, like those of Helene Wilfür, are spared the knowledge of their daughter's lifestyle, and the deliberate choices made by an ambitious single girl with no protecting parent or assured source of income. Even as the contented wife of a rich and respectable man, Doris is forced to choose between virtue and Basil's release from prison, which depends on her sexual humiliation by the lawyer Vandervelt. For this epitome of the New Woman, financially independent, with a triumphant international career achieved through years of grinding hard work and self-sacrifice, sexual exploitation is a norm to be negotiated and an acceptable price to pay. At the other end of the employment scale, Flämmchen, the efficient personal secretary, also depends on polite prostitution to pay the rent and buy the necessary clothes and small pleasures. The business world of the city is directed by men. It deals in artifice and deceit, with a veneer of rationalism which denies, defies and controls the women's irrational, emotional, but more honest inclinations. In the rural societies of Seidel's novels, as in *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*, women have greater dignity and recognition within their severely restricted area of Kinder, Kirche, Küche. While Baum's characters appear as architects and aviators, as well as actresses, dancers, singers and secretaries, the heroines of Seidel's novels are generally limited to domestic, nursing or educational spheres -their natural areas of operation in her eyes. Those who appear in other occupations, the performers and artists, are disconnected from general society, homeless and rootless. The very few women living urban, independent lives, like Loulou in *Sterne der Heimkehr* or Mathilde Mackens are never happy. Their flexible approach to sexual behaviour distances them from those men whose innate decency they recognise and seek, and material success is unsatisfactory compensation. Despite the legal recognition accorded to independent women,⁷⁵⁶ their personal identity as well as their social position remained largely defined by

⁷⁵⁶The Weimar Reichsverfassung of 1919, Artikel 109 – 'Alle Deutschen sind vor dem Gesetze gleich. Männer und Frauen haben grundsätzlich dieselben staatsbürgerlichen Rechte und Pflichten.', Artikel 3 Absatz 2: 'Männer und Frauen sind gleichberechtigt.' [Online] http://egora.uni-muenster.de/pbnetz/verfassung/frames/gleich_sach04.htm. [Accessed 19.10.14].

men, as both authors recognise and rarely challenge. Baum's Leore Lania⁷⁵⁷ changes names to suit her lovers – Leore for the comradely equality with Peter,⁷⁵⁸ Lala as the dependent baby-woman kept by a rich admirer, even Rack when temporary dominance allows her to torture the present lover. Helene Wilfür's initial modest self-effacement is shown as appropriate for the orphaned daughter of an academic father, her total commitment to work essential if she is to achieve recognition in a male environment. Only when success has transformed her from the threadbare homely swot and, more importantly, she has achieved self-realisation through her happy and healthy son, can she meet Ambrosius on something like equal terms.

4.13 Women and public life

Both authors acclaim women's sensitivity to the irrational, emotional, psychological and 'cosmic' dimensions of their surroundings to the detriment of analytic thought. This results in a refusal to pay serious attention to other factors which may influence the public good, notably economics and politics. Baum claims to be a 'dumme, kurzsichtige, weltpolitische Null, [...] Die jeder war'⁷⁵⁹ but nevertheless re-casts *Menschen im Hotel* as *Hotel Berlin 43*,⁷⁶⁰ willing to exploit the political situation for her personal literary gain. Her denial of political commitment has fictional implications. In her novels, Jewish impresarios and American businessmen are hardly less vicious than the Nazis and, from her prosperous home in Hollywood, she refers to Nazi oppression⁷⁶¹ and 'der Judengreuel'⁷⁶² in Germany with some detachment, as she does to the murders of her father and his relatives at Novi Sad. One of the, comparatively rare, very positive women in her novels is presented in terms which have specific literary but also political implications. It is Tante Mali, the woman of steel, the Prussian warror of a matron who, amid

⁷⁵⁷ Baum, V. (1954). *Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel*. München: Verlag Kurt Desch.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., p.62.

⁷⁵⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.286.

⁷⁶⁰ Baum, V. (1944). *Hotel Berlin 43*. New York: Doubleday Doran.

⁷⁶¹ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein and *Hotel Berlin ,43* (1943) New York: Doubleday Doran.

⁷⁶² Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.324.

the sentimentality of *Der Weihnachtskarpfen* (1941) provides the stable moral point through wartime deprivation as well as in peace and plenty. Her valour maintains family and national rituals and she utters the disillusionment of ‘Wozu haben wir ihn getötet?’ when the weakness of others negates both her strength and the carp’s sacrifice. Her breakdown is the climactic event after which the family retreats into hopelessness and disunity. *Flut und Flamme*, *Schicksalsflug* and *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* show a similar admiration for those allegedly Prussian virtues of strength, endurance and sacrifice with which Baum identifies herself - ‘ein verruchter Spartaner, ein Stoiker; beinahe hätte ich gesagt ein Preuße’⁷⁶³

Seidel’s allegiance to the Prussian military ideal of the previous century is evident and explicit throughout her work, whether the fiction of *Das Wunschkind* or the argument of *Über Preußen*. Both women represent the views of much of their readership. Scheck’s (2004) *Mothers of the Nation: Right Wing Women in Weimar Germany*⁷⁶⁴, stresses the significance of the conservative views in a population where the losses of the First World War had increased the majority of women in the German population from over one million to over two million. The bourgeois background of most women politicians ensured a ‘relative homogeneity’⁷⁶⁵ of viewpoints with their female electorate having a statistical preference for right-wing parties’.⁷⁶⁶ The idolisation of Queen Luise of Prussia⁷⁶⁷ and her resistance to Napoleonic domination in face of her weaker husband’s acquiescence, which merits a chapter in Seidel’s *Deutsche Frauen*,⁷⁶⁸ is fictionalised in her appearance to an adoring Christophe in *Das Wunschkind* as ‘Gemisch von Kriegsgöttin und Dame’.⁷⁶⁹ The other icon of female political power, the

⁷⁶³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.238.

⁷⁶⁴ Scheck, R. (2004). *Mothers of the Nation: Right Wing Women in Weimar Germany*. New York: Berg.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5

⁷⁶⁷ The *Deutsche Volkspartei* and the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* with members from a predominantly bourgeois, nationalist and Protestant milieu organised events in conjunction with the *Bund Königin Luise* and veterans of the *Stahlhelm*.

⁷⁶⁸ Seidel, I. (ed.) *Deutsche Frauen : Bildnisse und Lebensbeschreibungen*. Berlin: Steiniger-Verlag.

⁷⁶⁹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.533

German-born Catherine the Great of Russia is introduced through the story of her faithful Maid of Honour the Fürstin Daschkow.⁷⁷⁰ Like Baum's Tante Mali, women save the day when betrayed by men incapable of, or unwilling to, shoulder their responsibilities but they return willingly to the shadows of home once their duty is completed. Their strength is that of a 'strong combative mother love,'⁷⁷¹ aimed at stability and continuity, which Marie Bernays summarised at the DVP national conference in October 1919 as 'The German women see their main task as the preservation and strengthening of the German family. It is for us a positive moral value, the basic form of an ethical community, and the basic unit of all cultural life'.⁷⁷² Bernays' public and political statements posit the feminine ideal shown throughout the works of Seidel and Baum. In their female characters, as in autobiographical statements, both authors set the New Woman against the traditional housewife and mother and show home and family as the better choice.

4.14 Gender as biology

Baum and Seidel aim to explain that the factors which should determine a woman's life-path are physiological rather than cultural. The authors both accept an essentialised 'womanhood'. This is a condition which dictates emotional and intellectual proclivities and the success or failure of subsequent forms of behaviour, showing women, like rats or pigeons, as organic systems within a Skinnerian, post-Darwinian natural world. Their insistence that this identity flows within the wider context of universal nature takes the definition from the mechanistic to the esoteric. Superior male physical strength makes victims of women, as do the social, religious or legal systems, established under the name of male rationality. These fail to recognise the vital female role and, under their aegis, outrages are committed against not only the individual woman but the life-force she represents. The drugged and drunken party guests

⁷⁷⁰ Seidel, I. (no date given in edition). *Die Fürstin reitet*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

⁷⁷¹ Scheck, R. (2004). *Mothers of the Nation: Right Wing Women in Weimar Germany*. New York: Berg. p .12.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, p.85.

whose pet-names give them the anonymity of dolls,⁷⁷³ are disposable objects. The ‘witch’ tortured to death⁷⁷⁴ or the court-lady threatened by her forced disposition⁷⁷⁵ are women robbed of a life in which they were trusted carers for children, who thus suffer alongside them. The war years had made such suffering a familiar theme for the women of Europe and scientific rationalism was an easy, and impersonal, scapegoat. Seidel is more coherent and moderate in her recognition of its benefits, when the rational can be harmonised with what she calls the forces of nature. In *Das Wunschkind*, Buzzini, the herbal healer, also uses hypnosis to treat Beate’s blindness, diagnosing its cause as psychological trauma indefinably related to family life. The loving, but narrow-minded, parents refuse to acknowledge a psychological cause which they neither recognise nor understand. Normality would be a marriageable girl,⁷⁷⁶ fit for the wife- and mother-hood which would maintain family status in a peasant society. Seidel’s sympathies lie with the outraged sensibilities of the sufferer, whose psychosis blocks the sensory interaction of sight and thus access to a wider world of experience. Treatment and diagnosis are written as recognition and therapeutic support of the girl within the healing influences of the natural world.

More tentatively, in Baum’s autobiography the origins of Mathilde Baum’s mental, and finally physical, illness are presented as a response to a married life which she found deeply traumatic, particularly in its sexual aspect. Both the fictional Beate and Mathilde Baum are written as aberrant, failing as wives and mothers. They are sent away to be cured, but also to hide the shame which falls upon a family with such women. Baum’s ‘Der weibliche Zyklus besteht aus Reifen, Empfangen, Gebären und Nähren’,⁷⁷⁷ implies more than the simple functioning of the reproductive process. The repression of female sexuality in the nineteenth century, the

⁷⁷³ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁷⁷⁴ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.255.

⁷⁷⁶ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

⁷⁷⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.306.

manifold abuses of wartime⁷⁷⁸ and the deceptive images of women in contemporary film and advertising⁷⁷⁹ are, she writes, the causes of the female neuroses she sees around her. The violent end of Seidel's promiscuous war-widow Loulou in *Sterne der Heimkehr* also illustrates the destructive effect of a promiscuously misdirected sexuality while, after such a career of sexual abuse, voluntarily accepted in many instances, Baum's Doris Hart could never be a happy wife and mother.

4.15 Nietzsche and a better life for women

Hwomen of the Bürgertum (like Seidel) to whom the elitism of an 'aristocracy of the spirit' and the revelation of 'self transcendence' appealed.

4.16 Childbirth

Nietzschean women felt a privileged connection to the wellsprings of life itself through a female body, whose mysteries placed it, in theory, beyond the rational (male) systems of law and social morality. The physicality of giving birth is, for both women, the central defining act of being a woman. The symbolic status of women as eternal creators of life is made manifest and each woman becomes the 'große Urmutter des Mythos.'⁷⁸⁰ **Baum recalls her personal** euphoria: 'nehmt mir alle Reichtümer der Erde, alle Ekstase der Liebe [...] aber laßt mir diesen glücklichsten Augenblick meines Lebens'.⁷⁸¹ She recalls her childish pre-figuring of the event in doll-games⁷⁸² as well as her adult recognition of its reality on finding the housemaid Mali unconscious in a pool of blood following a back-street abortion.⁷⁸³ The interlocking of blood, which is central to the latter descriptions of childbirth, with ecstasy, also hinted at in the child's gleeful games, puts Baum's interpretation of childbirth firmly within the constellation of *Blut und Boden* and Dionysian ecstatic violence which Seidel dramatises in *Sterne der Heimkehr*.

⁷⁷⁸ 'nach jedem Krieg blühte die gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe [...] bei den Mädchen und Frauen' Ibid., p.313.

⁷⁷⁹ Die weibliche Brust [...] in Film und Fernsehen [...] ihrem wichtigsten Zweck entfremdet wird' Ibid., p.306.

⁷⁸⁰ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.264.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., p.261.

⁷⁸² Ibid., p.184.

⁷⁸³ Ibid., p.252.

The outpouring of blood, whether animal or human in the Dionysus rites, is the necessary sacrifice to ensure regrowth in springtime. Childbirth makes visible and tangible the body created in the unseen moment of conception, which is written by Seidel in *Das Wunschkind* as a cosmic as much as a personal event.⁷⁸⁴ The maternal blood is spilled to realise the male genetic inheritance in the child. The nursing of the infant is given a similar depth of symbolic significance by both Seidel and Baum. Cornelia nurses her sister's half-French child, conceived outside marriage, alongside her own Christophe, whose legitimate claim to an all-German heritage the author established in the first pages. Through nursing Christophe, Cornelia continues, physically as well as symbolically, the relationship with her dead husband –

Daß sie noch ganz vereint mit Hans Adams fühlte, besonders da sie das Kind noch nährte und dem von Gatten geweckte Quell in sich spürte wie ein ihr vererbtes Teil seines Blutes, heiß und lebendig.⁷⁸⁵

She transposes the sober reality of rearing the children of fathers killed in war into a romantic mixture of sexual pleasure and moral satisfaction - an image particularly useful to a belligerent political regime. While Baum's autobiographical insistence on the physical delights of motherhood and nursing infants is less bloody and sacrificial, it exists within the same context of the primary physical experience as the source of universal truths and revelations.

4.17 Fictional images of motherhood

In the two women's novels, men are largely excluded from this women's world. They turn aside for work or military service with a gesture which affirms the necessary separation but which can be also an actual, or potential, denial of responsibility.⁷⁸⁶ Rainer, father of Helene Wilfür's child, rhapsodises 'es ist ein unbeschreiblich schöne Gedanke, daß du ein Kind in dir trägst',⁷⁸⁷ but this fails to deter him from seeking Helene's suicide and achieving his own.

⁷⁸⁴ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.16.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.104.

⁷⁸⁶ For example, it is significant that Vesperi in *Das Wunschkind* is also a liar and traitor, motivated by self-interest.

⁷⁸⁷ Baum, V. (1960). *stud. chem. Helene Wilfür*. München: Heyne. p.173.

Motherly women are less critically-acclaimed in Baum's novels, despite her autobiographical insistence on the importance of motherhood. Motherless daughters, like Helene or Doris Hart are left to find their own way in the world, absent mothers have little influence on struggling girls like Flämmchen. But the manipulative and callous mother Angelina of *Vor Rehen wird gewarnt*⁷⁸⁸ is balanced by the sacrificial Frau Zienkann,⁷⁸⁹ wearing herself to death for the family or the domestic successes of Frau Lanner in *Der Weihnachtskarpfen*.⁷⁹⁰ Evelyn in *Rendezvous in Paris* naïvely turns her back on the delights of motherhood to learn, painfully, the error of her ways⁷⁹¹ and die alone in a plane-crash. She is quickly replaced in her home and family-life by the best-friend who understood all along that career and lovers were no substitute for a happy family. In Seidel's novels too, women ensure survival of the species despite the evils inflicted upon them, even in situations of extreme hopelessness – Cornelia is already perpetuated in the child conceived before Christoph's death in battle, the newly-delivered woman carried on the bier⁷⁹² as they flee the oncoming Swedish army, expresses not only the extremity of the threat, the vulnerability of women and the ruthlessness of war but also their hope and the will to survive.

Their heroines reflect the lives of women who were familiar with family-tragedies, poverty insecurity and deprivation and whose memories of the past were dominated by anxieties. Most of them were originally middle-class, but of limited higher-education. Their real-life equivalents were, according to Koonz,⁷⁹³ frequently supporters of National Socialism. Rust⁷⁹⁴ examines how the Women's Movement during Weimar supported women in defining

⁷⁸⁸ Baum, V. (1962). *Vor Rehen wird gewarnt*. Berlin: Buchergilde Gutenberg.

⁷⁸⁹ Baum, V. (1993). *Der Weihnachtskarpfen*. Köln/Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.53.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., p.112.

⁷⁹¹ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁷⁹² Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.187.

⁷⁹³ Koonz, C. (1988). *Mothers in in Fatherland, Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin. p.61.

⁷⁹⁴ Vygodskaia Rust, V. (2012). *Fashioning Women Under Totalitarian Regimes: "New Women" of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia*. PhD thesis. Washington University.

themselves in terms which easily fed into a Nazi ideology by way of Nietzsche. The novels of Seidel and Baum also encouraged women of all classes and political or apolitical groupings to see gender as determining their fate. Gabriele Thöns points out the recommendation of *Das Wunschkind* to the young girls of the Bund Deutscher Mädel, to illustrate a woman's duty to the *Völkskorper*. Helm claims that 'Maternalism as a means of changing society was almost universally accepted'⁷⁹⁵ with Bachofen's Mutterrecht regarded as a fairly recent statement of ancient 'truths.' When girls of the BDM sang 'Mütter, tief in euren Herzen, Schlägt das Herz der weiten Welt'⁷⁹⁶ or 'Wir hüten die deutsche Glaubigkeit'⁷⁹⁷ their affirmation of a gendered future was similar to that of these two authors.

4.18 Conclusion

Both authors write about themselves, and about other women, factual and fictional, and offer a specifically female view of their time. They intrude authorial comments and include details which their readers could assume were gained from personal experience, whether in Dr. med. Doris Einmann's desperate attempts to reconcile excessive work-demands with home and husband⁷⁹⁸ or Doris Hart's dismissal of dressing-room sycophants.⁷⁹⁹ Neither author lived in a protected world where their ideas of womanhood could be put into practice without compromise and neither creates fictional characters who pursue a path leading to perfection. It is in the equivocations and ambiguities of their characters that the authors seem to reveal their own complexities and contradictions as well as the paradoxes of Weimar thought and society. The very inconsistencies make the authors themselves attractive to a readership who recognised

⁷⁹⁵ Helm, B. (2004). 'Combating Misogyny? Responses to Nietzsche by Turn-of-the-Century German Feminists', *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 27, 64-84,75-76.

⁷⁹⁶ 'Hohe Nacht Der Klaren Sterne', BDM songbook – [Online] *Wir Mädel singen* <http://www.volksliederarchiv.de/modules.php?name=Encyclopedia&file=blaettern&op=content&tid=475> [Accessed 4.11.13].

⁷⁹⁷ 'Wir schauen die Erben von unserem Slut, in denen Wille und Zukunft ruht und schauen auf ihre Saaten. Wir hüten die deutsche Glaubigkeit. Denn über unsre Verganglichkeit wachsen neue Taten. *Ernte lied* for the Summer solstice - National Day of German Youth repertoire. Written by Hermann Roth

⁷⁹⁸ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michael*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.

⁷⁹⁹ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

their own frailties and preferred the assumed recognition of 'someone like me', to the more elevated productions of 'Literature'. The invitation to readers to see themselves in a story, or to respond to a direct address from the author, gives the writers and their work an influence which extends beyond simply diversion and entertainment.

Their characters show the changing status and roles of women, their increasing educational and employment opportunities and the intensification of their commodification through a popular mass culture of advertising, fashion, film and radio. The significant influence of catastrophic political and social events forced Baum and Seidel, like their contemporaries, to reassess and reorder their lives and they write this trauma into their novels. Faced with the general problems of modernity, but also the more pressing ones of feeding, clothing and housing themselves and their families, Seidel and Baum exploited contemporary concepts of gender in its performative, imagistic and biological aspects, to form the basis for their fictions. They projected a shared ideology of Womanhood as primarily a physical state dominated by the reproductive process in which their fictional women find bliss and completion. They portray Motherhood as a most desirable and sanctified state and, where this is unattainable, the general exercise of its sheltering and protecting functions in order to ensure stability and continuity are a reasonable substitute. Alternative definitions of the lives of women are shown through their fictions to be inferior and unsatisfactory for both the individual and her society. Although neither woman offers or claims any philosophical coherence, the influence of Nietzsche is evident. Seidel consistently adopts his complex and multivalent definitions of a womanhood in which women are linked metaphorically with nature, myth, tragedy, music and art. Blood sacrifice in menstruation and childbirth is the price paid for renewal and rebirth as a woman's body asserts its primal unity with organic nature. Women's central role of creator and life-bearer demanded greater recognition than that afforded by a paternalist religion in which she waited at the foot of the cross. Her sacrifice of autonomy and self-determination in conception, childbirth and

rearing should also be written as part of the same ecstasy of sacrifice. The suffering as well as the drudgery of a woman's life becomes more bearable when interpreted as an offering on the altar of family and nation in order to win a greater good. Only in recognition and acceptance of the almost sacred nature of her role and its place in the cosmic order do Seidel's characters achieve any degree of personal harmony.

Baum appears to have a similar intellectual allegiance, although from a more nihilistic position, and her characters, as well as her expressed personal ideas, give no hope that an imagined utopia can ever be attained. An indistinct hope of escape into stability and comfort is the best she can envisage, with occasional halcyon days being finally superseded by the ultimate peace of death. In the meantime of mortal life, Seidel does show a general concern with elevating the condition of uneducated and poorer women⁸⁰⁰ and both authors make clear the grinding demoralisation of domestic work,^{801.802} but neither suggests any social or political action by or on behalf of women which would ameliorate their general lot. Criticising the exploitation of women's work and their sexual objectification through such characters as Doris Hart and Evelyn, Baum fails to offer any picture of a satisfactory future which does not include the traditional roles of wife and mother in the home, apart from in those rare cases where individual talent, beauty or sheer will-power can elevate the superwoman above the mass. Seidel's views, based essentially on Bachofen's theories of ancient matriarchies, also offer no convincing suggestions for women in a modern society. Instead they lend themselves very well to incorporation in a political system which, while elevating the status of certain women in a symbolic context, savagely attacked their effective role, aiming at female exclusion from public governance while demanding women's unquestioning allegiance to a state and nation as defined by masculine élites. The picture of contented women exercising their natural caring

⁸⁰⁰ Seidel, I. (1916). 'Organisierte Mütterlichkeit', In: *Die Tat : Monatschrift für die Zukunft deutscher Kultur*. 7.2.5. DLA 75.1101

⁸⁰¹ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁸⁰² Baum, V. (1993). *Der Weihnachtskarpfen*. Köln-Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.53.

and supportive abilities in the seclusion of home and closed institutions, promulgated by both Seidel and Baum, offers no opposition to a system where women were removed en masse from the visibility of public power, thus increasing their vulnerability while depriving them of means of opposition. Attributing women's primary value to the biological creation of children, which was also understood as a transmission of mystic and transcendental powers within a Teutonic cultural framework, excluded those women who could not perform that function, robbing them of the rights and respect accorded to those who could. Neither Seidel nor Baum offer any effective views of women which oppose such an end result.

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Chapter 5 Not-at-Home

5.1 Introduction

The autobiographies of Seidel and Baum show writers who, despite their fictional concerns with women at the centre of the home, were themselves rarely in that stable, contented relationship with their surroundings which could be called ‘homely’. National disasters and instabilities challenged their ideas of how life should be for women and their own public careers partially contradicted their gendered visions. Despite the personal compromises and the determined pursuit of a public image which combined popular novelist with domestic bliss, their novels, if not their autobiographies, expose the women’s inability to reconcile the roles. In their private lives, both women had serious physical problems,⁸⁰³ which enter very little into their writings. Their own health, and that of their close, and largely dependent, families, as well as external social, political and economic threats were constant reminders of vulnerability and any ‘home’ which they report in their own lives always seems alarmingly precarious, as indeed it often was. In response, they adopt, and apparently become trapped in, other personae, other histories and other geographies, with Baum’s Hollywood fantasies and Seidel’s historical epics both dependent on dreamlike, or transcendental ‘other worlds’ to resolve extant problems. Both women cherished utopian ideals of a *Heimat* which offered escape from, and compensation for, the failures of the present. The *Heimat* of their dreams and their philosophising was a vague emotional concept, an aspiration rather than a theory, but nevertheless they both felt that everyday life was a constant state of exile from that wished-for ideal. Their novels display the exile’s alienation and offer insubstantial hopes for a homecoming, although this may be deferred to a spiritual rebirth or hopes of reincarnation.

⁸⁰³ Seidel’s lameness caused her lasting pain while Baum suffered from leukaemia for many years.

Baum emigrated from Europe in the years 1931-2 while Seidel remained in Germany but this chapter will argue that, wherever the location and conditions of their nominal home, both women had been aware of the intellectual and emotional state of exile from their youth. Seidel's familiarity with the German Evangelical Bible and Baum's school-education in the Jewish religion would have taught both that exile was a godly state and a purgatorial one,⁸⁰⁴ while encounters with modernity indicated that separation from the known, familiar and established was a necessary stage in the development of a modern consciousness. They recognised women's displacement and liminality in a patriarchal and modernist world, of which the concept of exile was both a philosophical and metaphorical expression. As writers with a feel for the Romantic, the romantic and the melodramatic, as well as the popular, they also understood exile as the ordained state of the creative artist and embraced the idea accordingly. Their fiction inscribes the fates of the alienated, the wanderers and the dispossessed, with spirits exiled from their bodily homes appearing as part of the 'real life' of city and countryside.⁸⁰⁵ Before any practical considerations for their own lives, or observation of others' emigration, raised the question of physical exile, both women already interpreted themselves as psychologically alienated from a society they regarded as deeply flawed. The conditions of their own lives in the early 1930s made the disparity between ideal and reality, utopia and dystopia a matter which now demanded definitive action from both women. For them both, as

⁸⁰⁴ Diese alle sind gestorben im Glauben und haben die Verheißung nicht empfangen, sondern sie von ferne gesehen und sich ihrer getröstet und wohl genügen lassen und bekannt, daß sie Gäste und Fremdlinge auf Erden wären. Denn die solches sagen, die geben zu verstehen, daß sie ein Vaterland suchen. Und zwar, wo sie das gemeint hätten, von welchem sie waren ausgezogen, hatten sie ja Zeit, wieder umzukehren. Nun aber begehren sie eines bessern, nämlich eines himmlischen. Darum schämt sich Gott ihrer nicht, zu heißen ihr Gott; denn er hat ihnen eine Stadt zubereitet. *Lutheran Bible* (1912). Book of Hebrews 13:14. [Online].http://www.bibelnet/buch/luther_1912/hebraeer/11/A. [Accessed: 12.7.13].

'Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land.' *Tanach, Hebräische Bibel*. Ezekiel 39:28. [Online] <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Bible/jpstoc.html>. [Accessed 6.7.13]

⁸⁰⁵ Novalis as lightning bolt in *Unser Freund Peregrin*, Elsabe ten Mann controlling Wolfgang from beyond the grave, the reincarnated characters of *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*.

for many of their contemporaries, it seemed that a change of society was not only desirable but inevitable.

It is unclear whether, as Baum later claimed, political rather than financial motives prompted the move to the USA,⁸⁰⁶ but during her 1931 stay in New York City, contract-negotiations with American studios had taken place and, following her return to Germany, she accepted the terms. Hollywood offered Baum a share in that glamorous life peddled in the Weimar cinema and in her own novels. She enthusiastically embraced the opportunity, and moved her family to California, becoming an American Citizen at the earliest opportunity, in 1938.

5.2 Ina Seidel and ‘Inner Emigration’

Seidel’s choices during the Nazi years were not driven by any political adherence to the National Socialist party and its violent racist ideology. Her usually tacit, but occasionally active, literary support of the Party was driven by her allegiance to esoteric ideas and romantic visions of Germany and, in the early days, family compliance. From their first meeting in 1931, she has been impressed by Ernst Schulte-Strathaus, an energetic, amusing, cultured man, enthusiastic supporter of the Steiner movement, and published author, slightly older than herself.⁸⁰⁷ He finally married her, then pregnant, daughter Heilwig in 1933. His commitment to National Socialism was manifest in his appointment by Hess in April 1934 to the Culture Ministry where, that same year, he wrote a report quoting from *Mein Kampf* to assure Hess that the aims of Steiner’s Waldorf schooling were in harmony with National Socialism.⁸⁰⁸ Seidel’s

⁸⁰⁶ ‘Was sich in Deutschland vorbereitete, sah ich nach meinen sieben Monaten in den USA viel klarer [...] In Amerika nahm man ihn ernst. In Amerika hielt man Hitler für eine Gefahr.’ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.445.

⁸⁰⁷ ‘von 1932 an durch Heilwigs späteren Mann, den wir im Sommer dieses Jahres kennen lernten, zum erstenmal über Hitlers Ziele, wie sie sich in einem idealistisch begeisterten Anhänger spiegelten, unterrichtet wurden. Da wir ihn zunächst ernstnahmen – er war ja kein jugendlicher Schwärmer, sondern stand im Alter zwischen meinem Mann u. mir – machten seine Ansichten Eindruck auf uns, und so waren wir allmählich bereit, von Hitler die Herbeiführung einer besseren Zukunft für Deutschland zu erwarten und sahen während der ersten Jahre in allem, was uns nicht gefiel, und das war nicht wenig, Begleiterscheinungen, wie sie jede Revolution mit sich bringt, mit denen H. allmählich ein Ende machen würde.’ – Letter, Seidel an Erika Mitterer, 2.8.1962, Nachlass Mitterer. DLA 74.2038,8-74.2038,45.

⁸⁰⁸ Werner, U. & Lindenberg, C. (1999). *Anthroposophen in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus(1933-1945)*. München: Oldenbourg Verlag. p.113.

fictional educationalist Muriel Maynard⁸⁰⁹ shows, however, the author's later recognition that the Steiner ideology and Nazism were fundamentally incompatible.

Despite her close ties to the party, Seidel made few, if any, specifically anti-Jewish statements in her work. But very positive pictures of the 'Stadtjude Isaak Bär' and Rahel Levin in *Das Wunschkind* are set against a tacit acceptance of anti-Semitism, expressed in the moral corruption of the banker Kalischer's household. She was also willing to make tactical anti-Semitic responses to political pressure. When she became a member of the Preußischen Akademie der Künste in 1932, Jewish members were already being squeezed out. In 1933, she ceased all contact with her former Jewish colleague Gertrud Kolmar⁸¹⁰ and, after the exclusion of Jewish authors and book-burnings of May, signed the 'Gelöbnis treuester Gefolgschaft' to Adolf Hitler.

Her notorious 1939 poem *Lichtdom*, published to celebrate Hitler's 50th birthday, is contextualised by Schulte-Strathaus' gift to Hitler of his own book, *50 Briefe des Königs Friedrichs des Großen an seinen Geheimen Kämmerer aus den Jahren 1747 bis 1755*,⁸¹¹ accompanied by the original letters as a gift from the NSDAP. All publications of the poem *Lichtdom* after 1939 were, she later wrote, issued without her permission.⁸¹² Nevertheless, publications of exhortation and advice along politically compliant lines continued, with such works as *Was soll ich lesen: Werktätige aus allen Stellungen und aus allen Gauen Deutschlands empfehlen ihren Arbeitskameraden gute Bücher und die Dichter schreiben Briefe an ihre Leser in den Fabriken* (1939) and in 1942 she published *Dienende Herzen*, a collection

⁸⁰⁹ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.

⁸¹⁰ 'Nach 1933 hat sich Seidel allerdings von Gertrud Kolmar abgesetzt und sich nach 1945 dann wieder ihrer Freundschaft mit der jüdischen Dichterin geröhmt.' [Online] http://publikationen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/opus4/files/12146/Wer_war.pdf. [Accessed 24.3.14].

⁸¹¹ Schulte-Strathaus, E. (1939). *Friedrich der Grosse und Michael Gabriel Fredersdorf: Fünfzig Briefe des Königs an seinen Geheimen Kämmerer aus den Jahren 1747 bis 1755*. Berlin: Wolf.

⁸¹² Vygodskaja Rust, V. (2012). *Fashioning Women Under Totalitarian Regimes: "New Women" of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia*. PhD thesis. Washington University. p.175.

of letters from women serving as ‘Nachrichtenhelferinnen’⁸¹³ with the army. Between 1933 and 1941, under the auspices of the NS-Kulturgemeinde,⁸¹⁴ she continued to lecture to schools⁸¹⁵ and universities, and to participate in conferences. As National Socialism had moved from a minor political movement to a repressive and violent daily reality, she had continued to claim political ignorance. Nevertheless, she identified the need to move her family from Berlin, the city at the centre of the new political order. In 1932, the year Baum moved with her family to California, Seidel had the house in Starnberg built, ostensibly as a holiday retreat, although her son asserts that she always intended it as a permanent home. Like Baum, she had ensured the conditions for her escape from Berlin before the NSDAP’s seizure of power in 1933.

The Seidel family finally moved in 1934 from the centre of Berlin, where her husband was already coming under political pressure, ‘nach einem Jahr ständiger Auseinandersetzung mit den sogenannten “Deutschen Christen.”⁸¹⁶ As his son later wrote: ‘Heinrich Wolfgang war überzeugt, daß es Judenchristen gebe und Heidenchristen, doch so etwas wie ‘deutsche Christen’ ganz gewiß nicht.’⁸¹⁷

With such beliefs, and a pulpit in central Berlin to proclaim them, the family’s move was, in some sense, a flight from impending persecution.⁸¹⁸ Her son-in-law Ernst Schulte-Strathaus’ 1941 arrest and imprisonment in the Sachsenhausen camp, accused of treason, followed by her

⁸¹³ Nachrichtenhelferinnen des Heeres assisted in the army’s media and intelligence services as telephonists, telegraph operators, radio-operators etc.

⁸¹⁴ Vygodskaia Rust, V. (2012). *Fashioning Women Under Totalitarian Regimes: "New Women" of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia*. PhD thesis. Washington University. p.174.

⁸¹⁵ Seidel, I. (1933, March). ‘Rede in der Luizenschule’. DLA Marbach, 0199.1075..

⁸¹⁶ Ferber, C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstuchheften*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.83.

⁸¹⁷ Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels: Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.270.

⁸¹⁸ The Deutsche Christen influence, originating in the völkisch and nationalist movements of the late nineteenth century appealed to what Heinrich Wolfgang labels as ‘der kleine bürgerlicher Spießler’. The movement was supported by the NSDAP, recognised Hitler as God-given Führer and aimed to expunge not only Jews but all traces of ‘Jewish’ beliefs, stressing heroism and self-sacrifice as Christian virtues. Its members as well as its policies were an anathema to the cultured and intellectual Heinrich Wolfgang.

brother-in-law Peter Suhrkamp's imprisonment in the same camp, on the same charge, in 1944 confirm the validity of the family's fears.

The peaceful retreat for Heinrich Wolfgang implied, for Seidel, financial responsibility, management of conflicting views within the family⁸¹⁹ and negotiation of their diverse relationships with external political forces. A frivolous comment on Seidel's emotional situation is offered in a letter that her long-time friend and even more enthusiastic Nazi-supporter Agnes Miegel⁸²⁰ wrote to the author in 1932:

“I do not like complications!” schrieb die Josephine Baker an einen Lord, dem sie ein Perlenhalsband zurückschickte. Ich denke so ungefähr werde ich antworten wenn ich mich in meinem Fall zu einer Antwort aufraffe. [...] Ich hoffe, wenn ich wieder auf die Welt muß, daß die Menschheit um mich sich dann nicht mehr ganz so brennend für Politik interessiert, mir genügt das Maß davon in dieser Existenz für vier Inkarnationen.⁸²¹

The lack of seriousness, on a topic which urgently demanded it, confirms her conviction that politics was separable from, and inferior to,⁸²² the intellectual world to which she belonged. Her sure confidence that the recipient of her correspondence would share her views is evident. Peter Gay's analysis of Weimar attitudes to politics⁸²³ establishes that the withdrawal of intellectuals from political involvement had deep cultural roots and for families like the Seidels and the Miegels was an accepted position.⁸²⁴ Seidel also regarded it as morally reprehensible to distance herself from her obligations to family.⁸²⁵ Despite the considerable support she offered them,

⁸¹⁹ Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels: Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. pp.317-8.

⁸²⁰ The archive of Seidel's correspondence has more letters from A. Miegel (65) than any other correspondent, covering the period 1911-1964.

⁸²¹ Letter Agnes Miegel to Seidel 13.9.1932. DLA 74.2035/89.

⁸²² ‘Durch ein Hinauszögern und ein Grauen dafür, mit mir Ungleichen als Gelegenheitsjäger zu scheinen, stehe ich ausserhalb der Partei [...]. - Letter, Agnes Miegel to Hans Friedrich Blunck, September 1934, [Online] <http://www.muenster.de/stadt/strassennamen/agnes-miegel-strasse.html>. [Accessed 14.5.13].

⁸²³ Gay, P. (1968). Chap IV, ‘The Hunger for Wholeness’. In: *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*. New York: Harper & Row.

⁸²⁴ Seidel points out that Ricarda Huch, whose anti-Nazi stance was well-known, also chose to stay in Germany – ‘Die Liebe zum Vaterland als einem dem Menschen zutiefst ingeborene Gefühl, von dem ein Volk sich nicht lösen könne, ohne sich einer innersten Kraftquelle zu berauben.’ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.47.

⁸²⁵ Lepenies, writing of Gottfried Benn, points out that for the German intellectual middle-classes, there was no tradition which enabled them to consider exile as anything other than a dereliction of their national duty.

she later expresses guilt that the financial rewards of her public efforts had been insufficient to maintain the comfort of her dying mother and husband. Das schlimmste ist, [...] daß ich Mama und Heinrich [...] kein besseres Leben schaffen können.⁸²⁶ (1945)

Like Benn, she also recognised a duty to support her country at war, despite its present rulers. From Heinrich Seidel's letters and her son's biography it is clear that she sought to find relief from the moral and physical dilemmas of her life in what Blickle calls 'verräumlichte Innerlichkeit',⁸²⁷ withdrawing into an imagined *Heimat* to escape the conflicts of daily life.

The much fought-over definition of 'inner emigration' to distinguish between exile writers and those with an authorial presence in Germany during the Third Reich has, by now, a historical progression, as indicated in Chapter 1. The work of those who stayed can be subdivided into that which is considered, explicitly or implicitly, to abet the regime and that which can be interpreted as covert criticism. Schoeps (2004) notes Rheinhold Grimm's suggestion of a sliding scale of assent extending from 'active resistance to passive refusal'⁸²⁸ and concludes that only recognisable opposition or resistance qualified a writer to be called an inner emigrant. Brekle's (1985) distinction between non-fascist and anti-fascist literature is cited to moderate that view, indicating that writing which was not in opposition to Nazism could be still be non-supportive of its ideologies and their implementation. Under the conditions of a violent totalitarian regime, even hidden criticism could be counted as resistance and be therefore anti-fascist.⁸²⁹

In such a contentious critical climate, the individual assessment of writers' work and activities under Nazism continues to exercise critical attention. 'In the light of the often politically

Lepenes, W. (1999). *The End of "German Culture"*. *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*. Harvard University, November 3–5.

⁸²⁶ Ferber, C. (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachtuchheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.97.

⁸²⁷ Blickle, P. (2004). *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. p.18.

⁸²⁸ Schoeps, K.H. (2004). *Literature and Film in the Third Reich*. New York: Camden House. p.227.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.228.

exploited discussion of inner emigration, it becomes apparent that a generalised approach to the concept of inner emigration is insufficient. Therefore it is necessary, as Beate Marks-Hanßen already stated, to take the personal situation and circumstances of the individual artist into consideration in the determination of his/her status as an inner emigrant.⁸³⁰

Brekle is not indulgent in his judgements. He questions Bergengruen's,⁸³¹ 'inner emigration' and his assertions of resistance. Bergengruen's writing, he claims, shows a 'mythicising of war', a refusal to consider the economic and social causes of the rise of fascism and a hope 'for salvation from divine forces' to conquer the Hitler dictatorship, all of which, in Brekle's judgement were effectively supportive of National Socialism. Such strictures can undoubtedly be applied to Seidel's writings during that period.

Bergengruen, himself a contemporary witness, was decided in describing the 'Braunfarbigkeit' of the Seidel household in Starnberg.⁸³² He points out, with an apparent lack of humour, the coincidences between her birthplace Braunschweig, the street of her childhood games Adolfstraße, her school nickname of Nazi from her supposed name Ignatia and brown as symbolic colour of National Socialism.⁸³³ Despite some indirect advances from Seidel during his exile in Switzerland, he preferred to remain aloof from what he called the 'Adolfstraßenkinder' with whom he shared distant family relatives and a drinking-companionship with Seidel's brother Willy. Bergengruen considered Seidel's position to be one of wilful self-deception, refusing to acknowledge the impossibility of maintaining the German cultural heritage while in collusion with Nazism. He identified a personal vanity, a childish rejection of the authority figures of her youth and pleasure in her public success, which led her to avoid any confrontation with the regime. Poems exalting war and sacrifice, the

⁸³⁰ Wenke, M. (2010). *Aspects of Inner Emigration in Hannah Höch 1933 – 1945*. PhD Dissertation. University of Cambridge.

⁸³¹ Schoeps, K.H. (2004). *Literature and Film in the Third Reich*. New York: Camden House. p.236.

⁸³² Bergengruen, W. (2005). *Schriftstellerexistenz in der Diktatur*. München:Verlag Oldenbourg. pp.133-139.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, p.133.

Lichtdom poem for Hitler and what he considered the uneven literary achievement of *Das Wunschkind* placed her, in his opinion, within the third or fourth rank of literary competence. However, his approval of the ‘masculine’ qualities of *Das Labyrinth* and criticism of the over-concentration on ‘feminine’ values in *Das Wunschkind* cast some doubts on the unbiased nature of his judgements. In the novel *Lennacker*, which he acknowledged as being unpopular in Nazi circles, he remarked signs of the author’s mental torment, recognising the immorality of her support for Nazism while being unwilling to lose the benefits it brought.

The historical novel, the autobiography, and lyric nature poetry are acknowledged in the literature of ‘inner emigration’ as the forms in which a writer could still hope to publish, retain some personal moral integrity and yet avoid conflict with the censors. But the nature of Seidel’s literary output during those years was equivocal. Her (1934) *Tröstliche Begegnung* (1937) *Gesammelte Gedichte* and (1941) *Gedichte* contain lyric poetry a genre which, according to Schäfer, was an escape for both author and reader from present misery, offering ‘not merely distracting genre imagery, but rather a longing for nature of which despair is the constant source’.⁸³⁴ Her poems express that ‘neo-Romantic longing for the infinite, together with the suggestion of timeless calm in the midst of turmoil’ which, according to Williams, characterise the literature of ‘inner emigration’.⁸³⁵ In comment, Schnell quotes Benjamin’s bitter words: ‘Angesichte der total mobil gemachten Landschaft hat das deutsche Naturgefühl einen ungeahnten Aufschwung bekommen.’⁸³⁶ In Seidel’s collections, sitting among her mystical nature poetry is: ‘In Gold und Scharlach, feierlich mit Schweigen, ziehn die Standarten vor

⁸³⁴ Schäfer, H.D. (2005). ‘Young Generation’s Non-National Socialist Literature.’ In: Donahue, N.H. & Kirchner, D. (2005). *Flight of fantasy: new perspectives on inner emigration in German literature, 1933-45*. Oxford/London: Berghahn. p.26.

⁸³⁵ Williams, R. (2005). ‘Survival without compromise?’ In: Donahue, N.H. & Kirchner, D. (2005). *Flight of fantasy: new perspectives on inner emigration in German literature, 1933-45*. Oxford/London: Berghahn. p.67

⁸³⁶ Schnell, R. (1976). *Literarische Innere Emigration*. Stuttgart: Metzler. p.67.

dem Führer auf',⁸³⁷ with other poems urging military engagement and personal sacrifice. In her case, at least, Benjamin's doubts have some substance. Her biographies of Achim von Arnim (1944) and Clemens Brentano (1941) express her convictions on the role of the poet as cultural leader. Efforts to resurrect the role of the 'Dichter' in German literature, which Trommler identifies⁸³⁸ lead, in Seidel's work, into manifestations of the Führer cult which haunted her later reputation. Her historical accounts of *Deutsche Frauen* and *Luise, Königin von Preußen. Bericht über ihr Leben* (1932/1934) suggest a politically compliant approach to biography. Her pictures of the ideal German women in the latter works largely comply with those Nazi definitions sketched in Chapter 4 of the present thesis. Sims quotes a National Socialist stance, illustrated by such biographical work, that 'History must not be impartial, but didactic and ideological because its main purpose was to validate the Nazi world view.'⁸³⁹

The historical novel could offer a utopian 'Gegenbild' to the present⁸⁴⁰ but Seidel's *Das Wunschkind* offers a narrative which condones Nazi strategies, asserting the military and moral superiority of Germany and emphasising heroism, and sacrifice under the authority of a charismatic leader, to whom all would subject their political wills. Her (1933) *Der Weg ohne Wahl* similarly expressed patriotic resignation to the necessity of war. However, Orendi⁸⁴¹ quotes Seidel's *Unser Freund Peregrin* (1940) unequivocally as a work of inner emigration, citing it as an example of the inner emigrant's 'need to descend into the lonely internal landscape of a long past youth'.⁸⁴² Seidel's autobiographical works repeat the themes of love,

⁸³⁷ Seidel, I. 'Lichtdom', published in the Anthology; *Dem Führer. Worte deutscher Dichter. Ausgewählt von August Friedrich Velmede. Tornisterschrift des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht.* (Abteilung Inland) (1941). p. 15.

⁸³⁸ Trommler, F. (2005). 'Targeting the Reader, Entering History.' In: Donahue, N. H. & Kirchner, D. *Flight of fantasy: new perspectives on inner emigration in German literature, 1933-1945.* Oxford/London: Berghahn Books. p.124.

⁸³⁹ Sims, A.R. (2005). 'Unsettling History of German Historians.' In: Donahue, N.H. & Kirchner, D. *Flight of fantasy: new perspectives on inner emigration in German literature, 1933-45.* Oxford/London,: Berghahn. p.285.

⁸⁴⁰ Durrani, O. (ed.) *Travellers in Time and Space: The German Historical Novel.* New York: Rodopi. p.302.

⁸⁴¹ Orendi, D. (2005). 'Luise Rinser's Escape into Inner Emigration'. In: *Ibid.*, p.206.

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, p.209.

loss and the natural world within the landscape of an archaic German countryside. They express the yearning for the lost ‘other’ Germany and its soul, which, according to Thiess,⁸⁴³ continued to exist within Hitler’s Germany for inner emigrants. Seidel used such autobiographical material as *Meine Kindheit und Jugend. Ursprung, Erbteil und Weg*⁸⁴⁴ (1935 and 1941) to offer comforting pictures of a settled world to support a national morale suffering under a distressing present, a positive contribution, then, to the war-effort.

Not only Seidel’s work but also her public life under National Socialism exclude her from that select group recognised as undisputed ‘inner emigrants’. Her literary reputation was officially sanctioned and her public activities were supportive of the National Socialist state and its ideological education policies. Perhaps because of these incontrovertible manifestations of NS allegiance, there remains comparatively little detailed consideration, even within general works, of Seidel’s literary positioning during those years.

In Donahue and Kirchner’s collection of essays, the writers are effectively non-committal about Seidel’s contribution to National Socialism. Her name does not appear in the list of founding members of the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung, founded in 1949 that Trommler puts forward as a measure of those writers who had stayed in Germany but were recognised in the post-war period as inner emigrants.⁸⁴⁵ She is, however, mentioned as a helpful colleague rather than opponent of the poet Brobowski, who Schäfer names definitively as a non National Socialist writer.⁸⁴⁶

⁸⁴³ Brockmann, S. (2009). *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*. New York: Camden House. p.98.

⁸⁴⁴ Seidel, I. (1935). *Meine Kindheit und Jugend. Ursprung, Erbteil und Weg*. Stuttgart/Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

⁸⁴⁵ Trommler, F. (2005). ‘Targeting the Reader, Entering History.’ In: Donahue, N.H. & Kirchner, D. *Flight of fantasy: new perspectives on inner emigration in German literature, 1933-45*. Oxford/London, Berghahn. p.116.

⁸⁴⁶ Schäfer, H.D. (2005). ‘Young Generation’s Non-National Socialist Literature.’ In: *Ibid.*, p.70.

Gelbin's study of 'Elisabeth Langgässer and Inner Emigration' illustrates the ambivalent situation of a Jewish writer who, in close collaboration with Ina Seidel in 1931-2, had edited *Herz zum Hafen - Frauengedichte der Gegenwart*. Gelbin's account quotes Langgässer's reaction to *Das Wunschkind*, in which she stresses her approval of a woman's writing which arose from a mystical relationship with 'a soil imprinted by cultural hybridity.'⁸⁴⁷ Her flight into the esoteric potentially, but unsuccessfully, evaded that definition of a German Volk from which she was excluded by her Jewishness. She was writing 'German women's poetry fuelled by a mystical knowledge of the origins of human cultural history [...which] arose from a soil [...] that shaped the nature of the human community living on it today.'⁸⁴⁸ The ideological parallel with Seidel's literary work is clear. Gelbin also refers to Langgässer's speech to the first German writers' congress in 1947. Despite her own suffering as a 'first degree Jewish *Mischling*'⁸⁴⁹ and, even more significantly, that of her 'full-Jewish' daughter, who survived the concentration camps, Langgässer announced that she was grateful to have been dismissed from the Reichskulturkammer at an early date because she was Jewish. This had saved her from the temptation of 'making peace with the rabble,' emphasising her understanding of those who, like Seidel, had succumbed to the temptation. She hinted that only her exclusion on grounds of ethnicity prevented her also, like writers of impeccable 'Aryan' status, compromising with Nazism. In his (1972) work *Exil und Innere Emigration*, Grimm had quoted Langgässer's aggressive comments on exile writers: 'Wer vor Bluthunden flieht, kann bedauert und getröstet und verbunden werden, aber er braucht nicht gerühmt zu werden.'⁸⁵⁰

Grimm repeatedly classes Seidel as an inner emigrant, while allowing the nationalism of *Das Wunschkind* and criticising the monarchic ideal of *Die Fürstin Reitet*.⁸⁵¹ Like Thies,

⁸⁴⁷ Gelbin, C.S. (2005). 'Elisabeth Langgässer and Inner Emigration'. In: Ibid., p.272.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., p.270.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., p.270.

⁸⁵⁰ Grimm, R.H.J. (ed.) (1972). *Exil und Innere Emigration*. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag. p.38.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid., p.118.

Walter von Molo and Langgässer, Grimm qualified his own, and other Germans', responsibility for the evils of the Nazi state by casting critical eyes on the lack of support exile writers had offered to Germany in her time of need under Nazism and on those, like Mann, who were not immediately willing to leave their new homes to aid the rebuilding of the nation.

Gelbin comments on Langgässer's position as a representative of an 'idealized image of writers of *inner emigration*'.⁸⁵² She was, Gelbin suggests, 'a racially persecuted writer' who nevertheless employed 'ideologically tainted metaphors',⁸⁵³ recalling Langgässer's use of those *völkisch* themes which had prepared the ground for Nazism. Nevertheless, once again, the figure of Seidel herself becomes allied to that of one with some reputable status as an inner emigrant.

Williams quotes Andersch (1947) who 'managed to rehabilitate much of the writing under the Third Reich' by a definition of 'subjective integrity' and, while questioning Andersch' overall judgement, Williams acknowledges the significance of personal survival factors which could prompt the ambivalent decisions on writing during the Third Reich.

The most thorough investigation of Seidel's own position was undertaken by the Braunschweig Congress of 2004. Its contributors concluded, as did Klemperer,⁸⁵⁴ Donahue and Kirchner (2005),⁸⁵⁵ Brekle (1985),⁸⁵⁶ Humble (2001)⁸⁵⁷ and Gehler (2010),⁸⁵⁸ that no

⁸⁵² Ibid., p.274.

⁸⁵³ Ibid., p.274.

⁸⁵⁴ Klemperer, V. *Über Seidel*. [Online] http://images.fembio.net/Viktor_Klemperer_ueber_Ina_Seidel.pdf. [Accessed 09.10.12].

⁸⁵⁵ Donahue, N. H. & Kirchner, D. (2005). *Flight of fantasy: new perspectives on inner emigration in German literature, 1933-1945*. Oxford/London: Berghahn Books.

⁸⁵⁶ Brekle, W. (1985). *Schriftsteller im antifaschistischen Widerstand, 1933-1945 in Deutschland*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag.

⁸⁵⁷ Humble, M. (2001). 'The Renegade in German Exile Literature', *Orbis Litterarum*, 56.

⁸⁵⁸ Gehler, E.-M. (2010). *Weibliche NS-Affinitäten: Grade der Systemaffinität von Schriftstellerin im "Dritten Reich"*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.199.

simple line could be drawn separating literary ‘collaborators’ from ‘inner emigrants’. Authors who continued to work within Germany demand individual consideration and although Seidel does not escape all responsibility, there is little serious critical condemnation of her personal morality or ideological allegiances.

Seidel’s considerable unease with her own position in a Fascist state had been privately expressed for some time. Her 1934 publication *Wege zu Gott: Kontemplation und Meditation im Osten und Westen* is a eulogy to the ideas of Friedrich Heiler and the Eranos Kreis,⁸⁵⁹ which held its first meeting in Ancona seven months after the NSDAP seizure of power. The members and visitors to the group’s meetings form a link with the George Kreis of Seidel’s Munich years, while her enthusiasm for the religious and esoteric nature of their publications remained comparatively unaffected by current politics. It was in this intellectual world that she felt truly at home.

By 1942, her sense of a threatening outside world impinged on her home peace:

‘Es geht nicht so weiter [...] Ich fühle mit Grauen, wie wehrlos man allmählich gegen gewisse Gewalten der Auflösung wird, die das ganze vergangene Leben und das Ich in Frage stellen.’⁸⁶⁰

In 1943 Seidel confirms the long-standing feeling of alienation from the Germany she saw around her and the corresponding disintegration of her own social and personal life:

‘Seit dem Herbst 1938 – also seit fünf vollen Jahren – lasse ich alles über mich hinweg oder an mir vorübergehen, ohne etwas festhalten oder in eigenes Leben verwandeln zu können.’⁸⁶¹

The generous interpretation of Seidel’s moral position which Barbian⁸⁶² promotes, pointing out her post-war willingness to admit her own failings as well as those of her class and society in

⁸⁵⁹ Whose associates are noted as, among others, Martin Buber, Annie Besant, Krishnamurti, Hermann Graf Keyserling, Ludwig Derleth, C.G. Jung [Online] http://www.erasos-ascona.ch/abenteuer_erasos.html. [Accessed 6.8.14].

⁸⁶⁰ Ferber, C. (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstuchheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.94.

⁸⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁸⁶² Barbian, J.-P., Hesse, A. (2011). *Seidel: eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos. p.83.

the novel *Michaela*, is confirmed by an entry in her personal notebooks, which were not intended for, and were not, published in her lifetime. She reflects:

‘Deutschland kann nicht untergehen – denn es war noch nie da. Nur als Fiktion, als Traum.’⁸⁶³

In unserem Fall ist es wohl Mangel am Selbsterkenntnis, wenn wir die Macht des Bösen unterschätzten, nicht glauben wollten, daß „so etwas“, die ungeheuerlichen Verbrechen in den Konzentrationslagern, „bei uns möglich sei“.⁸⁶⁴

After the war, Seidel was emphatic in placing the blame for the offences of Nazism on groups to which she, and those like her, did not belong, pointing to the ‘Korruption der Regierenden, der schleichenden Machtergreifung der Gestapo’.⁸⁶⁵ She also made some efforts to claim the position of one who had been an inner emigrant alongside those whose withdrawal from public life was complete and whose work could in no way have been considered supportive of Nazism.

In 1951, she analysed her earlier collaboration with Nazism as:

Ich habe diese schweren Irrtümer von 1940 an überwunden gehabt, da sie aber aus meiner Liebe zu Deutschland entstanden waren und ihre Erkenntnis eben diese Liebe auf die Probe stellte, geriet ich in ein Dilemma, so daß ich gleichsam weder vor- noch rückwärts konnte.’⁸⁶⁶

Seidel’s recognition by other contemporary writers as one of the band of inner emigrants was reinforced by the publication of the novel *Michaela* in 1959. Her protagonist Jürgen Brooks represents that middle-class intelligentsia who claimed ignorance and distaste of politics, and hoped to maintain their personal integrity within the Nazi state. Like Seidel, he continued to work, to avoid confrontation and to accept unhappily the violent abuses that came to his notice, although finally drifting into acts of resistance. The degree of collaboration implied by his initial passivity was not unlike that of the real-life historians who are the subject of Sims’ article ‘Unsettling History of German Historians’⁸⁶⁷ and Sims also is content to refer to them as *inner*

⁸⁶³ Ferber, C. (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.96.

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.97.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.96.

⁸⁶⁶ Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels: Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.347.

⁸⁶⁷ Sims, A.R. (2005). ‘Unsettling History of German Historians’. In: Donahue, N.H. & Kirchner, D. *Flight of fantasy: new perspectives on inner emigration in German literature, 1933-45*. Oxford/London: Berghahn. p. 285.

emigrants despite their manifest passivity under Nazi intrusions into scholarly matters and the violent abuses of the Gleichschaltung. Seidel acknowledges the personal, and class, failure to foresee or to react effectively to the Nazi threat before it became established: ‘Und danach, so träumte dieser *Idiot*, sollte die *innere* Reinigung kommen. Ich gehörte zu diesen Idioten.’⁸⁶⁸

The ideology of ‘cleansing’, then already heavily tainted by its associations with Nazism, still remains, and regret for failed dreams substitutes for acknowledgement of responsibility.

For both Seidel and Baum, little change in attitude is identifiable between the pre- and post-war fictional portrayals of the subjective experience of exile although both make some acknowledgement of its acquired social and political dimensions.⁸⁶⁹ Neither woman chose exile for ideological reasons, but was rather swept along by events, and neither saw reason later to revise their choices.

5.3 The place of both writers in Exile Studies

The serious work of exile studies initially appears to be advanced little by the comparison of Seidel and Baum. Although both lived through and observed the exile-movements of the twentieth-century, their work was never intended to bear witness to the fate of those exiled, or to seriously analyse the actualities of exile. They did, however, create heroes and heroines who lived in existential exile, as well as political and religious banishment and their stories of liminality and displacement gave a large popular readership pictures of what it meant to be excluded, alienated and cast out from the society of home. Their fiction addresses the dialectics considered by MacClennen⁸⁷⁰ as basic to the discussion of exile: nation, as experienced by those ejected from it;⁸⁷¹ time, when the daily order is fragmented, the past negated or obliterated

⁸⁶⁸ Ferber, C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.96.

⁸⁶⁹ Baum heads the membership list of the German PEN Club in Exile, 18 November 1938. Deutsches Exilarchiv 1933-1945, Deutschen Nationalbibliothek, *Unterlagen des Deutschen PEN-Clubs im Exil* (Exil-PEN): 1933-1940, EB 75/175-787.

⁸⁷⁰ MacClennen, S. A. (2004). *The Dialectics of Exile: Nation, Time, Language, and Space in Hispanic Literatures*. Lafayette: Purdue University Press.

⁸⁷¹ Baum’s *Schicksalsflug*, Seidel’s *Lennacker*.

and the future indefinable;⁸⁷² language, which often defines the exile and shapes the form of her life;⁸⁷³ and space, both the real space which liberates, or confines the exile but also the imagined utopian or dystopian landscapes⁸⁷⁴ through which the exile interprets her new surroundings.

As far as her readership were concerned, Baum's status as an international star, living successfully despite national borders, obscured the consideration of her as exile. As a prominent escapee from Nazism, she typifies those who were the initial focus of exile studies, 'weil es vorerst darum ging, einen Beitrag zur deutschen Selbsterkenntnis zu geben – auf der Suche nach einer Neuorientierung'.⁸⁷⁵ The politically-irreproachable Austrian appeared to bring with her all the pleasant clichés of her European origins, cultured, knowledgeable, a good cook and hostess, and unite those with an enthusiasm for America which improved the tarnished images of Anschluss.

The characters of her novels tell the story from a less exalted standpoint. The closely-observed lives of her fictional exiles contribute details to the more recent emphasis on the exile of ordinary people, and, in particular, the exile experiences of women forced to reconstruct fragmented lives and identities. Her exiled heroines live in the rooms and wear the clothes her readers recognised. They worked as the waitresses and maids they saw around them. She describes their successes and failures in emotional terms which convince the reader that the characters are drawn from life. As an Austrian national, she exemplifies the distinction between the Austrian and German responses to exile investigated by Holzner⁸⁷⁶ and others. As a woman of Jewish ethnicity, who alternated between acceptance and rejection of that affiliation and

⁸⁷² Baum's *Fräulein Chrysanther*, Seidel's *Das Labyrinth*.

⁸⁷³ Baum's *Der Karriere der Doris Hart*, Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr*.

⁸⁷⁴ Baum's *Schicksalsflug*, Seidel's *Lennacker*.

⁸⁷⁵ Bertold, W. (1996). *Exilliteratur und Exilforschung. Ausgewählte Aufsätze, Vorträge und Rezensionen*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. p.191.

⁸⁷⁶ Holzner, J. (1985). 'Zur Ästhetik der Unterhaltungsliteratur im Exil am Beispiel Baum.' In: Stephan, A. W. (ed.) *Schreiben im Exil. Zur Ästhetik der deutschen Exilliteratur 1933-1945*. Bonn: Bouvier. pp.236-248.

took up residence in other cultures, she is a subject for research on Jewish identity and the concept of diaspora. Her career as successful author and script-writer, places her at the centre of those European exiles who influenced, and were influenced by, the Hollywood film-industry⁸⁷⁷ and whose lives illustrate the paradoxes of such titles as *Exiled in Paradise*.⁸⁷⁸

Seidel's doubtful claim to inner-emigration, while resident in the Nazi stronghold of Starnberg,⁸⁷⁹ makes a less clear case for representation in exile-studies although Pekar's work⁸⁸⁰ offers the precedent for a comparison of exile writers⁸⁸¹ and immer emigrants.⁸⁸² Seidel's long-term popular status and position of literary influence in Germany throughout Weimar and the Third Reich provides the rationale for considering her specifically exile-related novels as relevant to the current study. She uses the historical formats of *Das Labyrinth* and *Lennacker* to develop the esoteric ideas of the earlier exile-novel *Sterne der Heimkehr* into a statement of the problems, and the causes, of banishment and exclusion.⁸⁸³

The forced flight, the involuntary escape, economic migration, colonial expatriation, the concepts of 'diaspora, otherness, delocalization estrangement, border-crossing, and displacement'⁸⁸⁴ all found a place in the pre-1939 writings of Baum and Seidel. Hilzinger identifies the typical post-1933 Exilroman themes - bearing witness to fascism,⁸⁸⁵ then to

⁸⁷⁷ Lebrecht, N. (2009). 'Genius in Exile'. *Wall Street Journal*, 3.March, p.13. Moeller, H.-B. (1985). 'German Hollywood Presence and Parnassus: Central European Exiles and American Filmmaking', *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature on Jstor*, 39, Urwand, B. (2013). *The Collaboration, Hollywood's Pact with Hitler*. Harvard/ London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

⁸⁷⁸ Heilbut, A. (1997). *Exiled in Paradise*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Merrill-Mirsky, C. (1991). *Exiles in Paradise*. Los Angeles: Hollywood Bowl Museum, Blubacher, T. (2011). *Paradies in schwerer Zeit: Künstler und Denker im Exil in Pacific Palisades*, München: Elisabeth Sandmann Verlag.

⁸⁷⁹ Mühlberger, D. (2003). *The Social Bases of Nazism, 1919-1933*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.44.

⁸⁸⁰ Pekar, T. (2005). 'Experiences of Delocalization and Katabasis in the Literature of Exile and the early post-war period in Germany'. In: *Exile and Otherness, new Approaches to the Experience of the Nazi Refugees*. Berne: Peter Lang. p.49.

⁸⁸¹ Anna Seghers and Thomas Mann.

⁸⁸² Hermann Kasack and Elisabeth Langgässer.

⁸⁸³ As Hilzinger notes, the historical novel form itself was primarily a male preserve. Hilzinger, S. (2000). 'Writing in Exile'. In: Catling, J. (ed.) (2000). *A history of women's writing in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.149.

⁸⁸⁴ Stephan, A. (2005). *Exile and Otherness: New Approaches to the Experience of the Nazi Refugees*. New York: Peter Lang. p.14.

⁸⁸⁵ Seghers, A. (1933). *Der Kopflohn*, (1937) *Die Rettung*, Gmeyner, A. (1938). *Manja*.

exile⁸⁸⁶ and finally giving autobiographical reflections on exile and its effects on successive generations,⁸⁸⁷ all of which themes appear in Seidel's *Michaela*. Baum's *Hotel Berlin '43*⁸⁸⁸ / *Hier stand ein Hotel* can take its place alongside others written by German exiles in California.⁸⁸⁹ The dates of their publications are, however, less convincing. After the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, 'enemy aliens', even famous ones like Baum, were under personal and social pressure to publicise their allegiances and novels criticising Nazism by other exiled writers had been *published well before that date*.⁸⁹⁰ It was not until 1959 that Seidel published *Michaela*, in which the evils of National Socialism are brought under scrutiny from differing sections of contemporary society. The significant delays, by both Seidel and Baum, suggest that criticism of National Socialism was rather more a response to market demands on the popular author than a primary motivation.

Said defines exile as 'the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home'⁸⁹¹ and stresses the continual, ongoing, comparison between an exiled present and a conceptual 'true home'. As Tillich observed,⁸⁹² age determines the clarity of, and attachment to, the idea of 'home' and Seidel (aged 48 in 1933) and Baum (aged 45 in 1933) had distinct ideas of what should constitute a physical and a spiritual resting-place. The disparity between the actual and the idealised home, between the geographical homeland and the idea of *Heimat* dictated the manner in which they both describe the life of the exile. Both authors were more interested in social estrangement, itself a paradigm of psychological

⁸⁸⁶ Thomas, A. (1939). *Reisen Sie ab Mademoiselle*, Ruehle-Gerstel, A. (1984). *Der Umbruch oder Hanna und die Freiheit*, Anna Seghers (1944). *Transit*.

⁸⁸⁷ Seghers, A. (1949). *Die Toten bleiben Jung*.

⁸⁸⁸ Baum, V. (1944). *Hotel Berlin 43*. New York: Doubleday Doran & Co. Inc.

⁸⁸⁹ Berglund, G. (1976) *Deutsche Opposition gegen Hitler in Presse und Roman des Exils: Eine Darstellung und ein Vergleich mit der historischen Wirklichkeit*. Review by: Roden, J. *The German Quarterly*, 49(1), 99-101.

⁸⁹⁰ Glaeser, E. (1935). *Der letzte Zivilist*, Feuchtwanger, L (1933). *Die Geschwister Oppermann*, Weiskopf, F.C. (1937). *Die Versuchung*, Mann, K. (1939). *Der Vulkan*.

⁸⁹¹ Said, E. (2000). *Reflections on Exile and other Essays*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p.173.

⁸⁹² 'Emigration at the age of forty-seven means that one belongs to two worlds: to the Old as well as to the New', Tillich, P. (1987). *The essential Tillich. An Anthology of the writings of Paul Tillich*. New York: Macmillan. p.267.

exile, rather than in the contemporary social and political reality and told stories which impressed this interpretation on a huge readership.

5.4 Vicki Baum as Exile Writer

Geographical exile as a space of anguish and loss is a notion quickly repressed in Baum's writings and current criticism deals accordingly with Baum as the international author who was able to use her exiled position to establish international success. As an Austrian, she was, as Holzner makes clear,⁸⁹³ in a different position from those German exiles who also surrounded her in California, although her own affinity for life in Berlin and respect for nominally 'Prussian' virtues may have led her to question that distinction.⁸⁹⁴ A general silence regarding Austrian culture as distinct from German, her refusal to envisage a 'new' Austria or to seek to return after the war, largely remove her from Holzner's grouping. Her family had been one of those assimilated, secularized and middle-class Jewish families that Grenville defines as 'wedded to the German-speaking culture' of Vienna.⁸⁹⁵ She shared the anti-Semitism Grenville identifies⁸⁹⁶ and showed some of the same 'surprising indifference to fellow-Jews who were victims of Nazi persecution.'⁸⁹⁷ The detachment is less surprising in a writer whose fictional attempts to portray any type of commitment are always unconvincing. The frivolity of her historical novel *Clarinda* is the very opposite of the serious statements 'which can be used to imagine a brighter future for a post-Second World War Europe',⁸⁹⁸ in historical novels by fellow Austrian exiles. It tells the story of a bored aristocratic housewife whose elopement with

⁸⁹³ Holzner, J. (1991). *Eine schwierige Heimkehr : Österreichische Literatur im Exil 1938-1945*. Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik,

⁸⁹⁴ A tribute to Professor Hans Joachim Schoeps elaborates the concept. Rosenstock, W. (July 1957). A Prussian Jew. *AJR Information*. [Online] http://www.ajr.org.uk/journalpdf/1957_july.pdf. [Accessed 19.10.14].

⁸⁹⁵ Grenville, A. (2010). *Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970: their image in AJR information*. London: Vallentine Mitchell. p.10.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.94.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.198. She did support financially the European Film Fund and Nottelmann notes other examples of support for exiled authors and artists, Nottelmann, N. (2002). *Strategien des Erfolgs. Narratologische Analysen exemplarischer Romane Baums*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.43.

⁸⁹⁸ Hammel, A. (2007). 'Austrian Women Exile Writers and the Historical Novel'. In: Brinson, C., Dove, R. Taylor, J. (eds.). *Immortal Austria? Austrians in Exile in Britain*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi. p.163.

a passionate Mexican ends with his gory death on a South American scaffold, as the reward for political idealism. When Clarinda eventually finds her way home to Weimar, after several more dramatic encounters, she explains to Goethe ‘Wenn Hidalgo in Weimar gelebt hätte [...] so wäre er ein Mann wie Sie gewesen, Herr von Goethe.’⁸⁹⁹ The novel’s ending mocks, yet also acknowledges, the piety of Seidel’s *Das Wunschkind* –

Manchmal denke ich, der Herr sieht mich gnädig an; [...] Denn wäre es nicht so, warum würde der Herr die größten und süßesten und reichsten Beeren von ganz Sachsen-Weimar in meinem eigenen bescheidenen Erdbeerbeet wachsen lassen?⁹⁰⁰

The reluctance to submit to definitions of political, social or personal morality evident in much of her work, alongside a preference for an inchoate and inconsistent set of ideas of Nietzschean origin, casts doubt on autobiographical accounts of her own move into exile. Her motivations for leaving Europe, and her subsequent exile-status, remain problematic. Dogramaci⁹⁰¹ clearly differentiates between migrants to California (who moved before 1933) and emigrants (who moved after 1933) despite recognition that many migrants became involuntary exiles. He asserts that the psychic and economic state of ‘emigrants’ usually deteriorated unlike that of ‘migrants’, such as Baum, who established themselves and prospered in the host country, despite competition within the film industry and the specific conditions of language.⁹⁰² Nicole Nottelman⁹⁰³ takes a similar view, emphasising both the premeditation and the tangible success of Baum’s social and financial negotiations with the new country. She points out Robert F. Bell’s assessment of the fortunate development of a personal relationship between Baum and her publisher Nelson Doubleday⁹⁰⁴ as a significant factor in mitigating both financial stress and

⁸⁹⁹ Baum, V. (1961). *Clarinda*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann. p.428.

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.446.

⁹⁰¹ Dogramaci, B., Henrike, W., Gall, J.C., Schuetze, L. Bock, H-M. (eds.) (2011). ‘Exil und Transnationalität: Ein Forschungsprojekt zur Kooperation der Exilanten in der Filmmetropole Hollywood.’ In: *Exil: Forschung, Erkenntnisse, Ergebnisse*, 31, 34-45.

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.41.

⁹⁰³ Nottelmann, N. (2002). *Strategien des Erfolgs. Narratologische Analysen exemplarischer Romane Baums*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.57.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.60.

the exile's customary lack of appropriate contacts and local market experience. Holzner's discussion of Baum's motivations⁹⁰⁵ also emphasises her voluntary rather than forced emigration. He remains unconvinced by her autobiographical recognition of the threat of National Socialism, distinguishing instead a lack of authenticity in her reporting. Drawing her literary fact and fiction together, he finds an underlying acceptance of, and resignation to, the random impositions of fate, which manifest in blatantly melodramatic and fantastic plots, at odds with the literary realism and personal rationality she continually asserts. Her primary concern, he suggests, was to maintain the image of a cynical and analytical observer determined to be unsparing in the depiction of life as it really is. Always pragmatic and opportunist, it appears that Baum finally chose to present the timing of her fortuitous move as a deliberate and informed choice rather than accepting the victimhood implicit in political exile.

Barbara Lube's 'Nirgends mehr zu Hause. Baums ungestilltes Heimweh'⁹⁰⁶ affirms that, despite her expressions of allegiance to America, Baum continued to experience unease, dissatisfaction and a longing for home. The writer herself qualifies Lube's title in her *Rückblick einer geborenen Realistin* (1962) where she writes: 'Seit Pearl Harbor bin ich nirgends mehr zu Hause',⁹⁰⁷ dating the unease to America's involvement in the European war with its inevitable questioning of her own national affiliations. She dismisses the feeling of homelessness as an inevitable characteristic of increasing age,⁹⁰⁸ which does not diminish her lively and enduring commitment to the United States.

Ich liebe Amerika nicht nur als meine Wahlheimat, in der ich länger gelebt habe als irgendwo anders, als das Land, das über alles Erwarten freundlich und großzügig zu mir war und ist. Ich liebe es, wie man wohl sein eigen Kind liebt.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁵ Holzner, J. (1985). 'Zur Ästhetik der Unterhaltungsliteratur im Exil am Beispiel Baum.' In: Stephan, A. W., Hans (ed.) *Schreiben im Exil. Zur Ästhetik der deutschen Exilliteratur 1933-1945*. Bonn: Bouvier.

⁹⁰⁶ Lube, B. (1990). 'Nirgends mehr zu Hause. Baums ungestilltes Heimweh'. In: Koebner, T. E. R. (ed.) *Rückkehr aus dem Exil: Emigranten aus dem Dritten Reich in Deutschland nach 1945. Essays zu Ehren von Ernst Loewy*. Marburg: Wenzel.

⁹⁰⁷ Baum, V. (1962). 'Rückblick einer geborenen Realistin'. In: *Welt und Wort: literarische Monatschrift*. 17. 22.

⁹⁰⁸ 'Altwerden ist in keinem Fall ein reines Vergnügen. [...] auf einem anderen, einem fremden und feindseligen Planeten zu altern – das ist ein bißchen hart.' *Ibid.*, p.344.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.343.

Exile, in Baum's novels, is a gender-issue. The novels express a very female, and very physical, definition of exile through the characters of Libussa⁹¹⁰ in *Schicksalsflug*⁹¹¹ or Doris Hart,⁹¹² for both of whom exile is, above all, a bodily experience, a matter of physical well-being first and then psychological adjustment. The word 'experience' itself, as Barbara Einhorn points out,⁹¹³ has since been appropriated as a female concept, implying a more holistic and personal response, as opposed to the theoretical or intellectual understanding which is accordingly interpreted, both positively and negatively, as typically male.⁹¹⁴ Using Marian Kaplan's work,⁹¹⁵ Einhorn suggests that, in the earlier years of National Socialism women were quicker to read the signals of danger posed by its anti-Semitism, possibly because of family activities⁹¹⁶ which brought them into familiar contact with other women's lives and allowed them to see the effects of political policy. On the evidence of memoirs and documents, Kaplan maintains that women were often the driving force behind the ultimate decision to emigrate,⁹¹⁷ although this is modified by Unger's suggestion that women were less willing to leave family members for whom they felt responsible.⁹¹⁸ Baum, a Jewish mother of two boys, working in a publishing office in central Berlin did indeed initiate the emigration of her immediate family but denied the impetus came from home contacts. Her very limited expressions of concern for her wider

⁹¹⁰ A legendary Czech heroine – 'Libussa wird durch den Tod ihres Vaters zu einem neuen Leben gezwungen und muss sich von ihren Schwestern entfernen, um ein Reich führen können.' Bartz, S. 2005. *Gewalt und Weiblichkeit. Eine vergleichende Betrachtung von Kleists „Penthesilea“ und Grillparzers „Libussa“*. MA. Dissertation. Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn. p.1.

⁹¹¹ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁹¹² Ibid.,

⁹¹³ Einhorn, B. (2000). 'Gender, nation, landscape and identity in narratives of exile and return', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23, 701-13.

⁹¹⁴ Burke, C. (1990). 'Women's Writing in Exile, and: Gender & Theory, Dialogues on Feminist Criticism', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 36, 662.

⁹¹⁵ Bridenthal, R., Grossmann, A., Kaplan M. (eds.) (1984). *When Biology Became Destiny. Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

⁹¹⁶ Einhorn, B. (2000). 'Gender, nation, landscape and identity in narratives of exile and return', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23, 701-13.

⁹¹⁷ Ibid., p.702.

⁹¹⁸ Unger, C. (2009). *Reise ohne Wiederkehr: Leben im Exil 1933-1945*. Darmstadt: Primus Verlag. p.19.

Jewish family modify Unger's expectations, showing that any definition of family interdependence was neither uniform nor inevitable.

Jewish ethnicity, often the very cause of exile, also helped to define its conditions. Having effectively distanced herself from her Jewish roots and moved to California, Baum was little implicated in European events throughout the 1930s. After 1933, the numbers of Jews fleeing the worsening situation in Germany and Austria eroded the distinction between emigration and forced exile and Baum found herself one of a group she frequently found unsympathetic. Urwand's work⁹¹⁹ suggests that anti-Semitism was not an uncommon attitude in the Hollywood film-industry, despite the strong Jewish connections of many film-studios. Tolerance, rather than condemnation of Nazism, was widespread and such attitudes were often motivated by market-concerns rather than by racialised politics, a blurring of attitudes which reflects Baum's own concerns.

For a woman of Jewish origin, the term 'exile' was closely, and ambiguously, linked with that more positive interpretation of 'diaspora', as Allatson and MacCormack point out.⁹²⁰ The Jewish diaspora maintained a racial unity of history, culture and belief across geographical separation but it was also related to economic success. This, at least, influences Baum's view of exile. She does reckon the exile's hardships in quantitative terms, while denying that measure, and judges from the superior standpoint of her own success, conflating homesickness with career-failure. In her comments on Hollywood failures, the disdain expressed by descriptive clichés, along with the acknowledgement of fellow-feeling, reinforces the image of herself as an astute woman who negotiated, in advance, the favourable conditions of her own exile.

⁹¹⁹ Urwand, B. (2013). *The Collaboration, Hollywood's Pact with Hitler*. Harvard, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

⁹²⁰ Allatson, P. & MacCormack, J. (2008). *Exile Cultures, Misplaced Identities*. New York: Rodopi B.V. Editions. p.13.

Wenn man Heimweh nach Pfunde wiegen könnte – man kann es nicht, so schwer es auch im Herzen drückt – tausend Tonnenladungen von Heimweh werden von lächelnden Platinumblonden, von Apollos mit kleinen koketten Schnurrbärtchen über die Boulevards von Hollywood geschleppt.⁹²¹

The casualties of the battle for survival in Hollywood⁹²² are also interpreted as victims of the age, having traded the authentic values of ‘home’ for the illusory world of the film studio. They thus expose themselves to that trope of modernity, as she conceives of it, the perpetually exiled state.

For a modern Jew, the definition of what constituted exile was contentious. To the more radical Jewish modernists, the ‘exile’ was Europe, ‘the place where the vast majority of Hebrew writers were born and reared’.⁹²³ But the Baums had aspired to assimilation and acculturation in Vienna and, for such a Jewish family, the result was usually one of ‘in-betweenness’ as Lee puts it,⁹²⁴ at home in neither culture, even when they had no particularly developed Jewish identity. Baum, child of immigrants who demonstrated their integration in the new country by a rejection of ethnicity and origins, had learned to interpret her parents, and her Jewish heritage, as shameful. A move to California offered the possibility of re-defining herself in a new land and a consequent escape from the European past, as well as career opportunities for herself and a desirable education for her boys. The earlier shift, from concert-musician to writer and editor, had already confirmed her ability to engage creatively and intellectually with the disruption of career and family-life. By the 1930s, Baum had transcended the usual gender restrictions and was, economically and socially, able to take decisions for her husband and sons. While

⁹²¹ Baum, V. (1931/2). ‘Unglücklich in Hollywood - Das Leben der grossen und kleinen Sterne’. In: *Uhu Das neue Monats-Magazin*. 32(8), Berlin: Ullstein. p.106.

⁹²² ‘Hollywood ist ein Schlachtfeld, das im Paradies liegt. Kein Tag ohne Kampf. Kein Tag, ohne daß so und so viele fallen’ Baum, V. (1931/2). ‘Unglücklich in Hollywood - Das Leben der grossen und kleinen Sterne’. In: *Uhu, Das neue Monats-Magazin*. 32 (8), Berlin: Ullstein. p.106.

⁹²³ Biale, D., Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel, eds. (1998). *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁹²⁴ Lee, C. (2014). ‘The Problem of Home in German-Jewish narratives of the Nineteenth Century’. *Kings German Seminars*. Kings College London.

California offered more examples and acceptance of successful women, it did not represent a completely new experience of liberation and opportunity. Nevertheless, exile forced her to master English to the level of her authorial language, opening doors to a wider and fully international market. This successful control, not only of a new social but also linguistic environment, was not unique. Einhorn, like Heike Klapdor⁹²⁵ proposes that, on arrival in exile, women were more flexible and adaptable in seeking employment, less subject to the prejudices and predispositions of previous, and now unattainable, professional careers and correspondingly able to achieve success in ways which would have been difficult or impossible in their homeland. The 'exile' novels published after her arrival in America confirm Baum's successful accommodation to the new culture but also her understanding of what exile meant for other, less fortunate, Europeans.

Despite the many benefits of exile, for Baum herself, as for her characters, separation from whatever constitutes home was painful – 'eine Sturzwelle von Einsamkeit und Traurigkeit, unerträgliches Heimweh'⁹²⁶ but her response is unequivocal – 'Gefühle [...] müssen getötet werden, damit das Leben in der Fremde erträglich ist.'⁹²⁷

5.5 Looking backwards

In the company of other Europeans exiled to America for political reasons Baum was forced to look back at a Europe where Nazi power was increasing. To assume that she, as a Jewish exile-writer, provides an easy antithesis to Seidel's manifest tolerance of National Socialism, relies on the simple identification of exile-writer with opposition to Nazism. Baum's attitude to Fascism, as to Capitalism or Communism, was a mockery or condemnation of its specific or particular manifestations rather than any systematic response. She persists in random anti-

⁹²⁵ Klapdor, H. (ed.) (1993). *Überlebensstrategie statt Lebensentwurf. Frauen in der Emigration*. Munich: edition text+kritik. pp.23-4.

⁹²⁶ Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch. p.70/1.

⁹²⁷ Ibid., p.79.

Semitism both at home and in exile. Her statements of opposition to National Socialism centre on those who aided its rise to power and then implemented its work.⁹²⁸ She shares a class-consciousness with Ina and Heinrich Seidel in her definitions of the rabble, as she saw it, who formed the ‘Schlägerkolonnen bei Versammlungen, Saalschlachten, Straßen- demonstrationen und Krawallen’⁹²⁹ and whose individual members she found offensive on a personal as much as an ideological level.⁹³⁰

Klaus Mann’s summary, written in California, confirms that Baum was not alone in a stance which rated the ideological continuity of class and nationality above both the ethnicity and the politics which had prompted their exile:

Die Majorität, unserer Emigration bestand eben doch aus braven Bürgern, die sich in erster Linie als „gute Deutsche“, erst in zweiter Linie als Juden und zu allerletz oder überhaupt nicht, als Antifaschisten empfanden.⁹³¹

Baum shows no signs of that anti-fascist enthusiasm of those exile writers who ignored the daily realities of Nazi oppression (and who are labelled by Bergengruen⁹³² as therefore fanatical and naïve), nor any will to support resistance on an international level. She satirises both the Fascist and the Communist thugs who forgot their differences, as she entertained them one evening, in impromptu homosexual encounters.⁹³³ Berglund⁹³⁴ however uses Baum’s *Hotel Berlin 43/Hier stand ein Hotel* as representative of the generally fair representation by exile writers, of the situation in Nazi Germany. She concludes that the novel, like others, dwells rather on the hounding of Germans by Germans than the persecution of Jews. In mentioning

⁹²⁸ DAH (ed.) (2006). *Wege deutschsprachiger Schriftsteller ins kalifornische Exil 1932-1941. Pacific Palisades*. Hamburg: Marebuchverlag. p.37.

⁹²⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.446.

⁹³⁰ DAH (ed.) (2006). *Wege deutschsprachiger Schriftsteller ins kalifornische Exil 1932-1941. Pacific Palisades*. Hamburg: Marebuchverlag. p.37.

⁹³¹ Hermand, J. (2010). *Kultur in finsternen Zeiten*. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau Verlag. p.214.

⁹³² Bergengruen, W. (2005). *Schriftstellerexistenz in der Diktatur*. München: Verlag Oldenbourg. p.13.

⁹³³ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.446.

⁹³⁴ Berglund, G. (1972). *Deutsche Opposition gegen Hitler in Presse und Roman des Exils. Eine Darstellung und ein Vergleich mit der historischen Wirklichkeit*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell. p.101.

resistance at all levels, by ordinary citizens as well as political activists, Baum avoids demonising Germany or attributing national guilt but also evades the mention of atrocities.

5.6 Personal alienation as exile – expulsion from the Mother

By the time Baum wrote *Ulle der Zwerg*,⁹³⁵ published in 1925, she had also long considered herself as standing apart from her contemporaries. Belief in a secure future and a sense of belonging to a particular place, society or nation was notably absent in Baum's life even before her exodus from Europe. Changing careers and domiciles, a reliance on a publisher-generated public image and the successes which had distanced her from the majority of her contemporaries, aggravated an instability of identity which placed her, in her own view, as a social exile:

Give me a good soundly drunk streetwalker, a colony of lepers, a bunch of head hunters (who are the most formal and polite people, as you know) or a ward full of madmen – I'll get along fine.⁹³⁶

The hectic combination of flippancy, satire, and self-deprecation exposes her insecurity.⁹³⁷

But her attitude to exile was also informed by the belief that the mother should be the stable centre around which home revolved, according to the popular literature as well as the more esoteric theorising of the time. Her own statements place motherhood as the culmination of a female life and separation from her mother as the first and formative trial. Her personal sense of loss remained: 'In mir ist ein überwältigendes Heimweh nach dieser meiner Mutter, die ich verloren habe.'⁹³⁸

In her writings, the figure of the Mother metonymically represents the domestic space of home but also takes on the deeper significance of the channel through which the child is linked to Mother Earth, the terrestrial home. The exile which begins in the severing of the umbilical

⁹³⁵ Baum, V. (1925). *Ulle der Zwerg*. Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

⁹³⁶ Baum, V. Letter to Lisa Lyons 1.4.1960, Lisa Lyons Collection.Box 6. Penn Museum Archive, Philadelphia.

⁹³⁷ E.g. her misunderstandings in the Doubleday home, and public lectures Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. pp.407-412.

⁹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.37.

cord, through which the pulse of maternal blood flows, is interpreted as the initial disruption of the relationship between the, now-autonomous, child and the sustaining forces of the natural universe.

Seidel's fictional accounts of the alienated state⁹³⁹ place a similar emphasis on the absent mother and can be linked to her personal past. Following the suicide of her father in 1895, uncles and the wider family took on the organising role for the gentle and dependent mother. The sheltering bond which, she felt, parents should provide for the children was impaired, circumstances were increasingly unpredictable and both sisters and brother could no longer regard their fatherless home as a protected space. Annemarie and Willy finally adopted the unconventional paths of actress and peripatetic dilettante writer, very much like the characters of Seidel's 'exile' novel *Sterne der Heimkehr*. She herself became progressively more reliant on her own emotional resources and was confirmed in her inclination to escape into an idealistic and imaginative world of literature.⁹⁴⁰

She dates the abrupt dislocation of her adult life to the war years of 1914-18 when she experienced 'Das völlige Scheitern meines harmlosen Lebensglaube'.⁹⁴¹ The realities of war and defeat dismantled many of her fixed beliefs, as they did for many of her contemporaries, and her own mothering failed to prevent the death of her daughter in the subsequent flu epidemic. The hopes for her own life, already hampered by her crippling illness in 1908 ('man als Krüppel eigentlich nur die Wahl hat, ein Heiliger zu werden oder ein Hexer')⁹⁴² were further frustrated by national events. She was unable to take her brother's escape route, abandoning failed dreams of self-realisation within a triumphant nation, for the perceived thrills of an expatriate life. As a housewife and mother she, like Baum, came to terms with, and

⁹³⁹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

⁹⁴⁰ Seidel, I. (1970). *Lebensbericht 1885-1923*. Stuttgart/ Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.125.

⁹⁴¹ Ferber, C. (ed.) (1980). *Aus den schwarzen Wachstumheften*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.17.

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.88.

reconstructed, her life through literature. She wrote novels about travellers, explorers, touring players and the forced migrations of wartime, projecting herself into the lives of those, mainly but not exclusively, men, who could physically achieve the flights she could only fantasise. Both women therefore had endured, in an emotional and intellectual sense if not a geographical one, some of those conditions of exile which Harlem, following Akhtar,⁹⁴³ defines as typical - 'precipitously forced from her homeland by trauma or catastrophe, [...] without the ability to return home.'⁹⁴⁴ Marked by personal experience, they both recreated and examined the exile experience through their novels.

5.7 The idea of *Heimat*

The cluster of ideas around Mother, Home and Mother Earth, the fertile soil itself as well as the landscape, contributed to the picture of *Heimat*, against which the two authors defined exile. Blickle identifies the multiple developments of the notion; *Heimat* as a feminised idea, the woman and home of a peasant culture largely ignored by intellectuals;⁹⁴⁵ an idea registered in Herder's anti-Enlightenment discourse;⁹⁴⁶ a concept lauded by Nietzsche in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* as the state to which humanity would return when the Apollonian and Dionysian were in equilibrium,⁹⁴⁷ but which later became the place which Zarathustra must leave to gain enlightenment. The 'Volk' reclaimed their pastoral *Heimat* in the Nazi *Blut and Boden* mythology which cast discredit on its forerunners, but the symbolic force of *Heimat* remained (and, according to Hüppauf,⁹⁴⁸ is reviving in an age of globalisation).

⁹⁴³ Akhtar, S. (1999). *Immigration and Identity*. Lanham, Maryland: Jason Aronson Inc.

⁹⁴⁴ Harlem, A. (2010). 'Exile as a dissociative state: When the self is lost in transit', *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 27, 460-474.

⁹⁴⁵ Blickle, P. (2004). *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. p.82.

⁹⁴⁶ Gebhard, G., Geisler, O., Schröter, S. (eds.). (2007). *Heimat: Konturen und Konjunkturen eines umstrittenen Konzept*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag. p.109.

⁹⁴⁷ As Seidel attempts to show in *Sterne der Heimkehr*.

⁹⁴⁸ Hüppauf, B. (2007). 'Heimat - die Wiederkehr eines verpönten Wortes'. In: Gebhard, G., Oliver Geisler, O., Schröter, S. (eds.). *Heimat: Konturen und Konjunkturen eines umstrittenen Konzepts*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

For Seidel and Baum, *Heimat* was the place in which the individual recognises her affinities to those who share the same home-ground, whether on a domestic or national scale. It encompassed human history as well as geography, referring back to an indefinite past but also containing hopes for the future. But while the defining features of the home-landscape are a recurring theme in their visions of *Heimat*, the earth itself, that soil which nurtures and bears the weight of home, is more a symbolic than a physical reality. For these women, *Heimat* was also the counterpart of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (1919) in which, uniting literary criticism with psychoanalysis, Freud claims that the *Unheimlich* is the return of that which has been repressed,⁹⁴⁹ which must reclaim a presence to allow return to the psychic home, ('der Eingang zur alten Heimat des Menschenkinds, zur Örtlichkeit, in der jeder einmal und zuerst gewohnt hat').⁹⁵⁰ In the reference-frame of Seidel and Baum, *Heimat* is an external physical concept and also a deep psychological reality, the opposite, in that sense of an abstracted utopian ideal. However, 'if we compare this notion of 'Heimat' with empirical reality it will become utopian, the object of our desires'⁹⁵¹ and the tension between the real and the idealised marks their personal, and their fictional, dealings with Home.

The personal *Heimat* to which both authors refer is the happy land of childhood holidays in the country, the Starnberger See of the Ebers household for Seidel or the Schloss Peigarten of the Baum family's summers. Both landscapes contribute to definitions of *Heimat* expressed in the poems the women published in Ullstein's popular *Uhu* magazine in 1927:

Bäume, Gemäuer und Berg, mir wie ein Antlitz erschlossen,
 Birkenweg, Wiesenland, Beete am Zaun voll Reseden,
 -Alle Straßen von Mutterlächchen umflossen:
 Hundertfaltige Erde, wie süß kannst du reden!⁹⁵²

and:

⁹⁴⁹ Also the Freudian *Heimat* of the female genitalia - Eigler, F. & Kugele, J. *'Heimat': At the Intersection of Memory and Space*. New York: De Gruyter. p.58.

⁹⁵⁰ Beutner, E. & Rosbacher, K. (2008). *Ferne Heimat, nahe Fremde: bei Dichtern und Nachdenkern*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.294.

⁹⁵¹ Blickle, P. (2004). *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. p.82.

⁹⁵² Seidel, I (1927). 'Heimat- Gedicht', *Uhu*, 3, 15.

Im kleinen Rahmen liegt die große Welt:
 Getürmte Berge, Wolken, dunkler Wälder Rand,
 Mittag zirpt über Wiesen, und es fällt
 Ein weißes Stummsein von der Gletscherwand.
 [...]Und Welt schläft ein, gewiegt in Gottes Hand.⁹⁵³

For the Seidel family, with its long history in the land-owning intellectual Bürgertum, the German countryside was a family-affair, a mother's laughter is also the voice of the earth which bore and nourished them. The Baums had bought the Austrian heritage cut-price to turn it into a factory, and Baum sees the landscape of her poem through the built human perspective of a window-frame. The poem rings false, with the pious image of a transcendental Father cradling the globe, running counter to the images of the mother as protector and nurturer which thread through her novels. For Baum, Home and *Heimat* was not an environment in which she passively recognised her own place but one which she actively imagined, created and possessed for herself, which she asserted rather than accepted. She imposed her own pictures of utopia on the scenery of exile, planting a garden, cooking the dishes of the Austrian homeland and writing its scenic and culinary delights.⁹⁵⁴

5.8 Reconstructing the lost *Heimat*

Distanced by time and space from the past-remembered or the future-utopian vision of *Heimat*, the exile can hope to either relocate the concept to the new land or return to the former site of *Heimat*. Both Seidel and Baum were clear that Germany and Austria under National Socialism were no longer the homes of their dreams but, in the post-war period, neither Seidel, the one who remained, nor the exiled Baum, show any zeal to contribute to a new European *Heimat* freed from the errors of the past. They both chose to look backward rather than forward. Baum's exiled characters make hopeful plans for the construction of a new *Heimat*⁹⁵⁵ which are never

⁹⁵³ Baum, V. (1927). 'Blick aus dem Fenster', *Uhu*, 4, 17.

⁹⁵⁴ Baum, V. (1993). *Der Weihnachtskarpfen*. Köln-Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

⁹⁵⁵ Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch, Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

realised and she continued to write popular novels with cynical heroines who, when they build castles in the air, expect them to collapse, as they invariably do. Seidel, in the comparative seclusion of the Bavarian countryside, spent her time revising autobiographies, editing earlier works and writing some short fictions.

The home territory, like other landscapes, as Simon Schama points out, is ‘the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock’⁹⁵⁶ and both writers construct their idea of home from the green, blue and white of the meadows, lakes and mountains which form the iconic Austro-German landscape.

Their choices of retreat (Baum in 1932 and Seidel in 1934) are coloured in these familiar tones.

Baum’s often-quoted reaction to California:

A gentian-blue sky above us, filled with glittering stars and the perfume of jasmine in the cold nights; hillsides and gardens sparkling with dew each morning, with all the colors of a wild Van Gogh palette as the sun rose, the air so clear you didn’t want to breathe but drink it. I think I stayed drunk for weeks with this sun and air and the beauty of the hills.⁹⁵⁷

is a rapturous recognition that the landscape of exile can share features of home (‘gentian blue’, ‘sparkling’, ‘cold’ ‘clear’ but can add its own delights (‘perfume of jasmine’, ‘wild Van Gogh palette’). When she buys a family home, thereby establishing ownership of the new land, as Seidel also did in Starnberg, she also takes possession and control of the landscape and obsessively attempts to foster the growth of plants, unsuited to the Californian climate. She was passionately attached to a garden which Kevin Starr compares to the ‘hortus conclusus’ the enclosed garden of a European ‘medieval imagination recreated on the shores of the Pacific’⁹⁵⁸ where green, blue and white are echoed in the brilliance of sun on luxuriant

⁹⁵⁶ Schama, S. (1995). *Landscape And Memory*. London: Vintage Books. p.7.

⁹⁵⁷ Crawford, D. L. (2009). *A Windfall of Musicians: Hitler's Emigrés and Exiles in Southern California*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press. p.24.

⁹⁵⁸ Starr, K. (1997). *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940's*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.378.

vegetation, white buildings, sea and swimming pools – ‘a jacaranda tree, a blue cloud when in bloom, and through it all twists the gray and silver snake⁹⁵⁹ of a sycamore tree.’⁹⁶⁰

Seidel’s home in Starnberg, where she remained until her death in 1974, was also a return to that archetypal lake and mountain countryside of Germany, central to the Nietzschean,⁹⁶¹ and National Socialist, landscape of *Heimat*.⁹⁶² Reimer⁹⁶³ notes the recurrence of the image in the cinema of the Third Reich, von Moltke comments on the ‘militant pastoralism’ of the *Bergfilm*⁹⁶⁴ while Boa and Palfreyman⁹⁶⁵ also confirm its continuing post-war appeal. Seidel’s obituary⁹⁶⁶ quotes her: ‘nannte sie ihr Herz zur Hälfte weiß-blau’ the heraldic colours of Bavaria and the white of Prussia (ignoring its deathly black) are also those of the idealised landscape.

A selfhood established within a distinct national landscape, or at least the idea of such a landscape, is threatened in exile. This is particularly true for Baum, a woman who emphasised a female biological determinism also responsive to environmental forces. Akhtar (2005) suggests that difficulties in establishing and maintaining personal identity, when confronted by the multiple cultural challenges of exile, encourage the subject to place a greater stress on the sensory experience of inanimate objects. In both autobiography and personal letters, Baum returns to descriptions, even sketches, of acquired artefacts,⁹⁶⁷ described in all the sensory

⁹⁵⁹ Every Garden of Eden needs the snake to complete the reference.

⁹⁶⁰ Baum, V. (1964). *It was all quite different: the memoirs of Vicki Baum*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. p.347.

⁹⁶¹ Bolland, M. E. (1996). *Nietzsche and mountains*. PhD thesis, Durham University.

⁹⁶² E.g. Hitler’s Berghof photographs. [Online]. <http://www.uncommon-travel-germany.com/berghof.html>. [Accessed 5.12.14].

⁹⁶³ Reimer, R. (2002). *Cultural History Through a National Socialist Lens: Essays on the Cinema of the Third Reich*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. p110.

⁹⁶⁴ Von Moltke, J. (2005). *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*. University of California Press. He names the 1929: *Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü*, 1931: *Berge in Flammen*, 1932: *Das blaue Licht* as examples.

⁹⁶⁵ Boa, E. & Palfreyman, R. (2000). *Heimat - A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁹⁶⁶ [Online] <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41667201.html>. [Accessed 3.9.14]. Curiously enough, her obituary is followed by that of ‘Arnold Fanck, 85. Der Ski- und Bergfilm-Spezialist,’

⁹⁶⁷ ‘three little Japanese dolls [...] crawled onto my lap’ 1.10.59, ‘Little Buddha from Siam has joined little terracotta man from Mexico and they seem to get along together quite well. I wish I had the courage to take my

detail of her physical encounters with them. She continued throughout her life to find and collect but also become actively involved with her acquisitions,⁹⁶⁸ repainting, re-siting, carrying them around the home-space and talking to them. She invests them with gender, histories, personalities and transcendental powers. They become talismans and good-luck charms, acquiring ritual powers to ward-off hostilities.⁹⁶⁹ In her novels she demonstrates her concern with the minutiae of daily life, emphasising sensory details, the feel and colour of fabrics⁹⁷⁰ or fur⁹⁷¹ which can be interpreted in Akhtar's terms as the exile's determination to ground events in a context which is personal, and therefore known and understood.

As Akhtar points out, a literary concentration on detail cannot always be regarded as trivialisation or a failure to transmit the significance of the events and lives concerned⁹⁷² nor is it simply a technique marking realism. The novels of both Baum and Seidel lend themselves to an interpretation which confirms the authors' own view of their novels as a therapeutic enactment of personal dilemmas. The personal estrangement to which both were subject becomes instrumental in the detailed settings of their fiction. The repeated opening and closing of the padded practice-room doors of Baum's *Eingang zur Bühne*,⁹⁷³ marks the inclusions and exclusions of the theatrical hierarchy. Soloists, performers, those who may have a successful career, are enclosed in the muffled space. The room takes on a magical aspect for those excluded, becoming the site of secret rites for chosen initiates, from which the rest are banished. In Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr*,⁹⁷⁴ clothing marks the chosen ones and the ostracised.

trouvaille – the thing that might or mightn't be a Chou chalice to an expert' 11.1.58, both letters from Baum to Elizabeth Lyons. Elizabeth Lyons Collection, Box 6, Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia.

⁹⁶⁸ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.457.

⁹⁶⁹ Vicki sent Lisa a 'magic' ring she received from a Balinese priest for good luck; 'My dear, of course you may wear the ring wherever you wish, through your nose, if you're in the mood' Baum, V. Letter of 4/22/1959, Lisa Lyons Collection. Box 6. Penn Museum Archive. Philadelphia.

⁹⁷⁰ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.176, p.173, p.31.

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁹⁷² Quack, S. (2002). *Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.371.

⁹⁷³ Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.6.

⁹⁷⁴ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.25.

Wolfgang's chance wearing of a pale-blue linen jacket marks the beginning of his return to brotherhood with Aage (in a similar jacket), and shows them both on the path to enlightenment which Lermoser and Erdmuthe (in white robes) have already achieved. Those outside the charmed circle are condemned to the ephemera of fashion. Both novelists have an elitist scorn for the mediocrity manifest in such characters as Elis⁹⁷⁵ and Loulou,⁹⁷⁶ the one immaculate, the other impure, but both constitutionally unable to attain the spiritual heights of stronger characters. Both are literally earthbound, as their premature deaths return them to its regenerative depths. The soil will take up the women's bodies which have failed to fruitfully sustain the spirits which the authors understand as inhabiting them and, in their decay, they feed the earth, itself the body of the greater spirit forces of the natural world. In this spiritualisation of the earth, as well as of humanity, both Seidel and Baum clearly distance themselves from the notions of earth as an economic or political commodity. It is the mystical quality of earth as a manifestation of a universal spirit, therefore not limited to physical geography, which allows them to distance themselves from a 'Blut und Boden' vision of earth as a land to be fought for and symbolically significant only in its relation to humanity.

The utopian *Heimat* represented by Lermoser and Erdmuthe is present, in different forms, in the novels of both authors. Patikale⁹⁷⁷ is the island paradise of Doris Hart's American dreams, the Johannishof⁹⁷⁸ an idyllic future home for Erdmuthe and Oberhof, where the virgin bride will become mother of sons for Germany, watched over by Lermoser, the philosopher and guide.

⁹⁷⁵ Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*. Berlin: Ullstein.

⁹⁷⁶ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

⁹⁷⁷ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.184.

⁹⁷⁸ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.43.

5.9 Fictional Exiles

Seidel had made no attempt to remove herself or her family from Germany and remained a central figure in the cultural life of National Socialism. Compared with Jewish former colleagues, forced into exile, into hiding or arrested and often killed, Seidel profited financially and in terms of prestige and international recognition from her cooperation with the ruling élite. She was not ousted from any post, but rather acquired public positions, she could choose her place of residence, could continue to write and publish in her native language and live in comparative proximity to most of her friends and family. Nevertheless, the sense of dislocation, the exclusion from the known and understood framework in which a previous life progressed, accords with Michael Seidel's definition of exile as: 'Without a native place (or possibly a government) recognized as secure, home territory itself is invalidated for those forced to remain behind in it'.⁹⁷⁹ After 1938 at the latest, Seidel, along with many of her contemporaries, was no longer 'at home' in Germany. Her literary efforts to maintain and transmit the ideals of her earlier years independent of political involvement were, she finally realised, irreconcilable with the totalitarian state in which she had found herself. Instances of zealous collaboration directed, in her opinion, at securing the welfare of her family, were in conflict with a distaste for the regime and discomfort with current events. The ideological collision produced an unease which was far from a state of exile but which exacerbated the author's sense of estrangement and disaffection from the world she saw around her.

The literary voices raised in favour of those writers who had stayed in Germany, and their rehabilitation by a German public who found it comfortable to accept their moral equivocations, validated her self-estimation as one who had suffered mental and emotional exile. Early declarations of independence from political involvement and the covert criticism

⁹⁷⁹ Seidel, M. (1986). *Exile and the Narrative Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.p.7.

of *Lennacker* allowed definition as one of Schnell's 'unassimilated intellectuals'. Dolan⁹⁸⁰ quotes Schnell: 'inner emigrants as well as exiles, regardless of wide variations in their political persuasions, conceived of the situation under a fascist regime in Germany as certainly not identical to exile, but at least comparable to it.'⁹⁸¹

Vicki Baum's exile was, however, geographical as well as existential. Although her immediate family were safe, prosperous and protected she was aware of the precarious, finally fatal, position of her Jewish extended family, friends and colleagues. Facing the multiple problems of a new land, an unfamiliar language and social customs and unable to return to Europe, she chose to utilise her practical experience, as Seidel did her imaginative exile, in fictions which illustrate the exile's fate.

Seidel's exiled characters

Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr* (1922) and her other major exile novel, *Das Labyrinth* (1922) were both written before National Socialism was a major political influence in Germany. In the later *Lennacker* (1938), when the implications of National Socialism for Germany were inescapable, she puts forward more nuanced opinions whose publication, her son maintained, was hindered by the Nazi authorities.⁹⁸² None of her exile novels can therefore be considered as directly proposing any political agenda.

Das Labyrinth is the Nietzsche-based image⁹⁸³ for an exiled life which starts in childhood, as George Forster, compelled by his father, leaves Mother and home to travel the world.

⁹⁸⁰ Dolan, J.P. (1977). 'The Theory and Practice of Apolitical Literature: Die Kolonne, 1929-32', *Studies in 20th Century Literature*, 1(4), [Online] <http://newprairiepress.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=sttcl>. [Accessed: 5.7.15].

⁹⁸¹ Schnell, R. (1976). *Literarische Innere Emigration. 1933-1945*. Stuttgart: Metzler. p. 3. Translation from German by Dolan. In: Dolan, J.P. (1977) 'The Theory and Practice of Apolitical Literature: Die Kolonne, 1929-32', *Studies in 20th Century Literature*, 1(4), [Online] <http://newprairiepress.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=sttcl>. [Accessed: 5.7.15.] p. 157.

⁹⁸² Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels: Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.299, p.308.

⁹⁸³ 'Es ist die Sache der Wenigsten, unabhängig zu sein: - es ist ein Vorrecht der Starken. Und wer es versucht, auch mit dem besten Rechte dazu, aber ohne es zu müssen, beweist damit, dass er wahrscheinlich nicht nur stark, sondern bis zur Ausgelassenheit verwegen ist. Er begiebt sich in ein Labyrinth, er vertausendfältigt die

Helplessness and incomprehension combine with terror as the child envisions his life as imprisonment in a labyrinth, with the deadly Minotaur at its heart. The father who exploits and abandons the family rather than protects, remains a potent threat, a brutal presence standing between son and mother. As paternal control becomes internalised, Forster's adult relationships remain profoundly disturbed. For Seidel's fictional exiles, a tyrannical authority figure, who dictates the narrative of their lives, lurks at the centre of a labyrinthine world of disorientation. But exile is also the condition of progress and development, as Forster takes part in Cooke's voyages, the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, transcending fear by courage, gaining intellectual mastery and a semi-mystical sense of universal union through his personal exile.

As Klemperer summarises:

Forster bekennt sich als Kosmopolit u. Maurer: Europa sei sein Vaterland, die Menschheit sein Volk, er sei keiner Kirche hörig, vielmehr durchdrungen u. geleitet von der königlichen Kunst, mit dem Maßstab der Wahrheit.⁹⁸⁴

A final, fulfilling revelation of redemption through sacrifice, frees him from the Nietzschean Labyrinth,⁹⁸⁵ a transcendence achievable only by his death: 'Wenn wir Geopferten werden zu Opfernden, so haben wir heimgefunden ins Herz der Dinge und Gottes.'⁹⁸⁶

The slighter novel *Sterne der Heimkehr* (1922) is concerned with those exiles still striving to return to a terrestrial home. Modern city-dwellers, variously discontented, and alienated from their 'true' selves (as Seidel sees it), from each other, and from their families, by the aberrations of city life, are returned to psychic and social harmony through the ecstasies of a midsummer-

Gefahren, welche das Leben an sich schon mit sich bringt; von denen es nicht die kleinste ist, dass Keiner mit Augen sieht, wie und wo er sich verirrt, vereinsamt und stückweise von irgend einem Höhlen-Minotaurus des Gewissens zerrissen wird.' Nietzsche, F. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Aphorism 29.[Online] <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/jenseits-von-gut-und-b-3250/1>[Accessed 6.12.14].

⁹⁸⁴ Klemperer, V. *Über Seidel* [Online]. http://images.fembio.net/Viktor_Klemperer_ueber_Ina_Seidel.pdf [Accessed 09.11. 2012].

⁹⁸⁵ 'Wer nur einigermaßen zur Freiheit der Vernunft gekommen ist, kann sich auf Erden nicht anders fühlen denn als Wanderer, - wenn auch nicht als Reisender *nach* einem letzten Ziele; denn dieses gibt es nicht.' Nietzsche, F. *Menschliches allzu Menschliches*, 638.

[Online]<http://www.zeno.org/Lesesaal/N/9781489548993?page=281&ps=%21>[Accessed 7.4.14].

⁹⁸⁶ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch. p.327.

night's celebration. The novel is further elucidated by the *Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnennwende* (1924-5),⁹⁸⁷ a masque of the planets, with declaimed poetry accompanying a circle-dance. The astrological sub-plot of the novel⁹⁸⁸ is spelled out in the declamations of *Planetenspiel* as planet-dancers, roughly equating to the novel's characters, proclaim a cosmic order, of which human lives are a part. At the beginning of the novel, Wolfgang ten Mann ('mankind') has returned to his homeland after years in exile, claiming a different identity, stranded between past and present. Through the influences and interventions of the other characters (representing astrological forces) and, finally, in the ritual dance, which brings planetary influences into correct alignment under the rule of the sun,⁹⁸⁹ he achieves the necessary reconciliation with himself, after which the process of return to family and nation can begin. Exile and return from exile are shown to be part of a cyclical, cosmic movement over which the individual has limited control. For the other characters of the novel, who congregate for the Bacchic revelry of midsummer, a night of euphoria strips off inhibitions and brings revelations as men are returned to the embodied *Heimat* of women through sexual encounters. The Appollonian/Dionysic balance central to Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie*⁹⁹⁰ is restored and the human society of the novel cleansed for a healthier future. Forster's resignation to death in the old, corrupt world of Paris⁹⁹¹ is replaced by an assertion of the vigorous power of youth and an instinct-for-life which humanity shares with the natural world. The text of *Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnennwende* (1924-5) was offered to youth- and folk-groups for public performances as Seidel and her publisher-friend Eugen Diederich

⁹⁸⁷ Seidel, I. (1924). 'Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende'. In: *Die Tat*. Leipzig: Eugen Diederich. 16.3.166.

⁹⁸⁸ Seidel's brother and son-in-law were involved in Weimar astrological groups.

⁹⁸⁹ The sun is named as 'Der Führer' with obvious reference to the mythical significance of the swastika

⁹⁹⁰ See p. 156.

⁹⁹¹ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch.

preached their convictions that country-life, constructive activities, artistic endeavours and ritual observances could be combined to create a more hopeful future for Germany.

Lennacker: Das Buch einer Heimkehr (1938), written when exile had already become desirable, or necessary, for many Germans, confronts its common causes – war and racial, political or religious persecution. Like *Sterne der Heimkehr*, it considers how the exile can return when the ordeal ceases. Both novels make the statement that the intent to return home is a condition of exile, although in practice the displacement may be permanent. Lennacker captures the state of the military exile, irrevocably and involuntarily separated from a former civilian life by the trauma of war. His twelve fevered visions, of the Lennacker family's progress through German history, express the complexity of choices between greater and lesser evils, the forced compromises, the sacrifices of innocents as well as of heroes, demanded by historical events.

When Seidel came back to the subjects of war, duty and exile in her post-war novel *Michaela*,⁹⁹² she had been forced to recognise, at first hand, the effect of those concepts on daily life in Germany. *Michaela* is, as Sarkowicz reasons,⁹⁹³ partly an autobiographical text. Through the fictional events, Seidel claims implicitly that she herself, like the character Brook, chose 'inner emigration' and the story gives her rationale for the decision. The novel emphasises the suffering of ordinary Germans and asserts that there were valid reasons, only clear to the individuals concerned, for outward compliance. Despite the current rulers, duty to the nation⁹⁹⁴ remained, she insists, showing liberal intellectuals returning to Germany to fight, only to be persecuted by Nazis.

⁹⁹² Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.

⁹⁹³ Sarkowicz, H. (2011). 'Apologie statt Selbstkritik?'. In: Hesse, A. (ed.) *Seidel: Eine Literatin im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos. p.166.

⁹⁹⁴ Deutschland im höchsten und weitesten Sinn,' Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft. p.407

In contrast, for fictional families like that of Muriel Maynard, an educationalist exiled to England for progressive views, Seidel shows geographical exile as a beneficial relief from oppression. She emphasises opportunity rather than suffering and reduces mention of coercion and persecution to a mention of terrified faces on a train, presumably being deported to an unknown fate.⁹⁹⁵

The female characters who are presented in Seidel's novel *Michaela* as representing an idealism untainted by Nazism can be considered as manifestations of the author's own post-war position since the whole tone of the novel is one of explanation and excuse for past German errors. The fictional Maynard's exile-school,⁹⁹⁶ with children hand-chosen from the exiled hordes of Europe,⁹⁹⁷ aspires to a future within the German borders, and carries over, with little perceptible difference, the esoteric ideologies⁹⁹⁸ of Seidel's early years. The heroine, Michaela, defines her position as; 'meine geistige Heimat [liegt] in einem überzeitlichen und auch übernationalen Bereich'.⁹⁹⁹ 'Exile', like 'nation' continues to be portrayed as a spiritual concept, not bounded by empirical experience or markedly influenced by observation of the evils of the National Socialist past.

Baum's exiled characters

Baum's attitudes to exile show a similar continuity of attitude across her literary output. The 'alienation' theme appears from her first novels; solitary suffering drives Elis¹⁰⁰⁰ to morphine

⁹⁹⁵ 'Es war das Gesicht eines sehr alten Mannes – tauchten andere Gesichter auf, undeutlich zu erkennen-Gesichter von Menschen jeden Alters, von Frauen, auch von Kindern. Dicht gedrängt saßen sie, einige standen auch zwischen den Bänken: alle starteten herüber, alle trugen den gleichen Ausdruck vollkommener tödlicher Resignation [...] bleiche Gesichter, Augen wehrloser Opfer.' Ibid.,p.262.

⁹⁹⁶ Feidel-Mertz examines such schools, in the German progressive educational reform tradition, set up in England by redoubtable women with a similar mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish staff and children. Feidel-Mertz, H. (2004). 'Integration and Formation of Identity: Exile Schools in Great Britain'. *Shofar: An interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 23, 71-84.

⁹⁹⁷ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.p.712.

⁹⁹⁸ The George Kreis of her Munich years and the Steiner influence of Schulte-Strathaus are part of the vague grouping – see Parr, R. (2000). *Interdiskursive As-Sociation: Studien zu literarisch-kulturellen Gruppierungen zwischen Vormärz und Weimarer Republik*. New York: De Gruyter. p.355, Ruffing, R. *Einführung in die Philosophie der Gegenwart*: (2005). Munich: Wilhelm Fink. p.164.

⁹⁹⁹ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft. p.422.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*. Berlin: Ullstein.

and death; after the homeless life of a touring artist, Ina¹⁰⁰¹ returns to the rural utopia of Amrun to die. The trivial tales of *Schloßtheater* (1921) express the wanderer's loss and longing for home, concluding that an earthly home is an illusion and death the only certainty. 'Sterben ist kein Wort. Sterben ist etwas wirkliches.'¹⁰⁰²

Time has irrevocably exiled the heroine of 'Fräulein Chrysanther'¹⁰⁰³ from her past, now viewed as the idyllic home, and 'Die blinde Spielleute' shows the folly of flight into fantasies,¹⁰⁰⁴ which Baum also insisted upon in her journalism.¹⁰⁰⁵ The vulnerability of exile and the moral dangers of freedom are dramatised in 'Der Knabe und die Tänzerin', where, once again, suicide¹⁰⁰⁶ becomes the solution to intractable problems.

Central to her major Weimar novels is the involuntary departure from the protected space of home. The orphaned and penniless Helene Wilfür is forced to make her own way in the masculine world of chemistry and represents the 'displacement and liminality' of Carolyn Burke's¹⁰⁰⁷ definition of exile as a gendered state. *Ulle der Zwerg* (1924)¹⁰⁰⁸ explores modern alienation and despair through a figure who, despite social and financial success, remains defined as monstrous and returns to the home-doorstep to die. Baum recognised that certain conditions of exile are immutable and deny the possibility of return.

The lives of the characters in *Menschen im Hotel* (1929) are also, if less irretrievably, blighted. Home and *Heimat* are shown as bourgeois fantasies, now replaced by nihilism, disillusion and

¹⁰⁰¹ Baum, V. (1921). *Die Tänze der Ina Raffay*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.370-375.

¹⁰⁰² Baum, V. (1985). *Schloßtheater*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag. p.61.

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.62.

¹⁰⁰⁴ As was realised when many exiles were disappointed in their expectations of welcome and assistance in their host countries - Unger, C. (2009). *Reise ohne Wiederkehr: Leben im Exil 1933-1945*. Darmstadt: Primus Verlag. p.43.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Baum, V. (1931/2). 'Unglücklich in Hollywood - Das Leben der grossen und kleinen Sterne'. In: *Uhu: Das neue Monats-Magazin*, 32(8), Berlin: Ullstein.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Föllmer, amongst others, comments on the prevalence of suicide in the Weimar Republic. Föllmer, M. (2009). 'Suicide and Crisis in Weimar Berlin', *Central European History*, 42(2), 195-221.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Burke, C. (1990). 'Women's Writing in Exile, and: Gender & Theory, Dialogues on Feminist Criticism.' *Modern Fiction Studies*, 36, 662-664.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Baum, V. (1925). *Ulle der Zwerg*. Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

escape into the euphorias of morphine or the hectic thrills of modernity. But homelessness is also freedom with at least a chance of temporary happiness, as the sympathetic, but doomed, character of Kringelein shows.

For Baum 'in real life', exile offered literary advantages as well as professional ones. Kristen Mahlis' analysis of defiance and escape through story-telling¹⁰⁰⁹ in exile suggests that distance promotes the transformation of lived into aesthetic experience, permitting a renegotiation of the image of self. Baum's novel *Marion* (1942) experiments with a bewildering variety of lifestyles¹⁰¹⁰ and although the extent of the autobiographical reference remains unclear, it is confirmed in the intimate correspondence with Elizabeth Lyons.¹⁰¹¹

By 1936, five years after her own arrival in the USA, Baum published an explicitly exile-novel in *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, showing the more typical fate of those who landed on Ellis Island laden with the random relics of home in search of a better future. In it, she writes her own evaluation of America and her own defiance, giving a voice and a dream to those exiled readers who were struggling in a strange world and offering a balance to rival propagandist portrayals of exile and immigration on both sides of the Atlantic. Doris, first children's nurse, then waitress, nude model and occasional prostitute finally attains fame and fortune in the USA through opportunism, willpower and operatic talent. An imaginary island, to be shared with the man she loves, is the dream which carries her through the bad times. As in the earlier stories, illusions of escape vanish, the American Dream proves undesirable, and, despite all Doris' efforts, only death can return her to a peaceful home.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Mahlis, K. (1998). 'Gender and Exile: Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 44, 164-183.

¹⁰¹⁰ 'One reviewer amused Baum by suggesting that nobody in one lifetime could do and see all the things that her heroine Marion Sommer did and saw. The facts are that even at 586 pages this novel is scarcely half its original length, and that Miss Baum was trying merely to set down the average experience of a European woman of her own generation.' *Time Magazine*, Books: 'All in a Lifetime', Mar. 16, 1942. [Online] <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,801430,00.html>. [Accessed 21.10.14].

¹⁰¹¹ Baum, V. letter to Elizabeth Lyons, 10.1.59, Elizabeth Lyons Collection, Box 6, Penn Museum, Archive, Philadelphia.

In the post-war *Schicksalsflug* (1947), another Doris¹⁰¹² repeats Baum's 'nirgendwo zu Hause',¹⁰¹³ and expresses the anonymity of exile even in the most benevolent circumstances. 'Eigentlich bin ich nirgendwo geboren, Mademoiselle. Das heißt – ich kam auf einem Schiff zur Welt - Zwischen Kobe und Shanghai....Ach, ich bin überall und nirgends zu Hause.'¹⁰¹⁴

The more strident tone and a happy-ending differentiate *Schicksalsflug* from the earlier and less contrived exile-novels. Exile has now become a positive force, disseminating ideas, encouraging epiphanies, and strengthening individual consciousness, and consciences, to promote communication and better relationships. She confirms the connection from her own experience of Hollywood: '– so ist es auch der Ort, an dem am meisten Güte und Kollegialität inmitten der härtesten Konkurrenz zu treffen ist.'¹⁰¹⁵

Doris, the innocent, ignorant woman, enlightened by her contact with the exiled Czech patriot Libussa, can move into a future as wife of a war-hero and mother of his children. Her fate is sealed under the signs of the zodiac:

er sie in die Halle führte, wo ein globus...ruhte, unter einem blauen, silbrig
besten Firmament, das von den Zeichen des Tierkreises umringt war.¹⁰¹⁶

Baum echoes Seidel in proposing an esoteric resolution as exiles find their fate-ordained homes within the eternal cosmic order. To suggest that this is a pandering to public taste for a happy ending, or indulgence in personal wish-fulfilment, is to ignore the greater number, and popularity, of those of her novels where death is the final answer. Blue and silver are the colours

¹⁰¹² Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch.p19.

¹⁰¹³ Lube, B. (1990). 'Nirgends mehr zu Hause. Baums ungestilltes Heimweh'. In: Koebner, T. E. R. (ed.) *Rückkehr aus dem Exil: Emigranten aus dem Dritten Reich in Deutschland nach1945. Essays zu Ehren von Ernst Loewy*. Marburg: Wenzel.

¹⁰¹⁴ Für ihren Vater war sie Dot gewesen und für ihre Mutter, die in Peking starb, als sie selbst noch ein Baby war, Dolly. Ihre Amme hatte sie Do gerufen und ihr Fräulein in München Dorchen. Für ihre britischen Freunde war sie Doris, in Frankreich Dora, in Rom Dorina, in Spanien Dorita; und Dodo war sie in verspielt-verliebten Momenten ihre Ehe Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.15.

¹⁰¹⁵ Baum, V. (1931/2). 'Unglücklich in Hollywood - Das Leben der grossen und kleinen Sterne'. In: *Uhu Das neue Monats-Magazin*. 32(8). Berlin: Ullstein. p.108.

¹⁰¹⁶ Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch. p.316.

the author uses to paint utopias and *Heimats*¹⁰¹⁷ and in this, the most overt and unequivocal of her exile novels, the exile's home remains a transcendental one.

5.10 Conclusion

For both women, accustomed from childhood to a sense of isolation and separation, exile was a familiar friend. They regarded alienation as a state which distinguished the creative artist and stimulated their writings. Exile which was forced upon the individual by threatening circumstances, they understood as challenging and often uncomfortable but only one of many unpredictable blows dealt out to the individual in the course of a life. Like all other events in the Vale of Tears¹⁰¹⁸ which was human life, it called for strength and the will to survive and overcome, qualities which they practised for themselves and advocated for others.

Their novels illustrate international élites, leaders of business (J.P. Ross)¹⁰¹⁹ or of knowledge (George Forster),¹⁰²⁰ of art (Mathilde Mackens) or music (Schubert),¹⁰²¹ who interpret exile as a dynamic force for their work. Their characters claim world-vision as the attribute of vigorous and successful individualism.¹⁰²² Seidel's soldiers and explorers erase borders through domination, while the 'healthy human-understanding'¹⁰²³ of Baum's American capitalist, H.P. Ross, judges that: 'in unserer Welt existieren keine Grenzen. Wir sehen keine Länder. Wir sehen nur Öl und Gummi und Zinn und Stahl'.¹⁰²⁴ Other characters are 'natural' wanderers, who are never, and always, exiles: 'Der Mann, gehörte zu der Sorte Menschen, die ihren

¹⁰¹⁷ See p.159.

¹⁰¹⁸ Both mention Heine as a favourite poet :
 'Sie sang vom irdischen Jammertal,
 Von Freuden, die bald zerronnen,
 Vom jenseits, wo die Seele schwelgt
 Verklärt in ew'gen Wonnen.'

Heine, Heinrich , *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen*. Chap. 2, Leipzig, 1974

¹⁰¹⁹ Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch.

¹⁰²⁰ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch.

¹⁰²¹ Baum, V. (1985). *Schloßtheater*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag.p.51.

¹⁰²² Seidel's Forster, Wolfgang ten Mann, Lermoser, Rubruk and many others. Baum's Ross, Wilfür, Libussa and many of her theatre-people.

¹⁰²³ 'mit viel gesundem Menschenverstand,' Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch.p.51.

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.51.

Hunger nur stillen können, indem sie den Erdball auffressen.¹⁰²⁵

They are driven, as Seidel's Wolfgang ten Mann¹⁰²⁶ or Baum's theatre critic Born,¹⁰²⁷ to seek more intense, more novel, experience for themselves, with little commercial or political aims and minimal claim to the artist-as-wanderer status. They promote an optimistic view of exile, as the ability to move freely between cultures, seizing the new opportunities offered by cultural integration, creating 'new transnational, sociocultural and discursive transformations'¹⁰²⁸ as Allatson and MacCormack express¹⁰²⁹ the 'heterogeneity, diversity, constant renewal' of modern diasporas.

In the chaotic fluidity of the post-war world, both Seidel and Baum wrote novels which, while acknowledging recent history, fetishized exile, distorting and magnifying its symbolic role with the result of manipulating it away from material reality. The trauma of exile is minimised through descriptions of those who survive and prosper.

They show contemporary social dislocation as an expression of the fragmented communion between humanity and the transcendental, a mass-exile with disastrous consequences. These can be mitigated, they write, by a realignment of the cosmic relationship through ritual acts in which the participants regain contact with their primeval, unconscious, 'natural' selves.

The true and significant exile, they consider, occurs when the individual becomes separated from this 'inner self' and the cultural and ideological framework within which it nestles. Excursions into alien territory, whether through physical displacement or the mental manipulation achieved by drugs or aberrant mental states (all of which are illustrated in their

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid., p.256.

¹⁰²⁶ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

¹⁰²⁷ Seidel, I. (1962). *Michaela*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.

¹⁰²⁸ Allatson, P. & MacCormack, J. (2008). *Exile Cultures, Mislplaced Identities*. New York: Rodopi B.V. Editions. p.14

¹⁰²⁹ This is, however, viewed with more scepticism by the naïve and decidedly unintellectual Doris: 'Das ist die kosmopolitische Gesellschaft...Sie sind überall gewesen, sie sind so höflich, so gewöhnt, viel zu sprechen und nichts zu sagen...sie..verbergen ihr eigenes Leben und ihre Geheimnisse geschickt hinter einer glatten Fassade.' Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch. p.23.

novels) can however be revelatory. Continued alienation from the psychological *Heimat*, as in the case of Wolfgang ten Mann,¹⁰³⁰ or even Charlotte in *Das Wunschkind*, ultimately becomes a loss of self and descent into physical illness and emotional chaos.

Heimat, for them both, is the territory of ideas and ideals. The shapes and colours of physical landscapes act as shadows and reminders of the ideal, giving a sense of physical harmony and consolation. But *Heimat* also defines the relationship between the individual and the earth and, beyond that, with the universe whose seasons and rhythms find their counterpart in those of the human world and the female body. A woman is thus firmly rooted in an earthly *Heimat*¹⁰³¹ of no specific geography. While Baum dismissed Freudian psychoanalysis, both women acknowledge the womb as the home to which men, and sons, wish to return.¹⁰³² The womb of the mother, which shares its darkness and mystery with a grave for the dead, similarly protected within Mother Earth, unites birth, death and rebirth, in a relationship which is universal and eternal, resisting the idea of exile as loss, offering instead the eternal home of the spirit.

The esoteric belief in a utopian *Heimat* which is nowhere, and everywhere, continues from their earliest novels to their later writings. Personal experiences of war and exile failed significantly to alter the authors' trust in ideas which had proved so vulnerable to political exploitation and so convenient for a regime demanding expatriation, suffering and death on a continental scale.

¹⁰³⁰ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

¹⁰³¹ See also p.156

¹⁰³² Particularly the striking images in *Das Wunschkind* – 'wieder Kind zu werden, nichts als ihr Kind [...] Ganz in den wunderbaren Hellschlaf des Weibes hineingezogen, der nichts ist als der Zustand der Erde' Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*, Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.p.14.

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Chapter 6 Salvation through Theatre, the Arcane Arts of the novelists

6.1 Introduction

In their autobiographical writings, magazine articles and in their novels, both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum describe their personal histories and their participation in the common experiences of contemporary women. Their lives, they felt, had endowed them with insights and understanding which could be exploited for their own commercial benefit but also for the information and education of a wider public. Writing about exceptional women, public figures like themselves, and about ordinary women, like the majority of their readership, they achieved a best-selling status which gave them influence as well as affluence.

Both authors felt that, as creative artists, they were part of an elect group who understood the realities behind the appearances of the modern world and that it was their duty to expose the truth to lead and guide others. Seidel and Baum had grown up in a time when ‘the interest in drama, theatre and performance intersected with a desire for religious experience and spiritual knowledge that exists outside of the bounds of traditional religions.’¹⁰³³ The links between the rituals of religious mysteries and tragedy were proposed in Nietzsche’s *Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* and popularised in Frazer’s highly-influential work *The Golden Bough* of 1896, published in German by Hirschfeld, Leipzig as *Der goldene Zweig. Das Geheimnis von Glauben und Sitten der Völker* in 1928. The George Kreis, a major influence on the young Seidel, hoped to reform drama to further their spiritual and cultural mission¹⁰³⁴ of reinvigorating the nation. Steiner was convinced that drama could achieve ‘a radical inner transformation through aesthetic means’¹⁰³⁵ and extended his ideas into educational theories. A constellation of ideas therefore related contemporary dramatic culture to history and

¹⁰³³ Ligan, E.B. (2014). *The Theatre of the Occult Revival: Alternative Spiritual Performance from 1875 to the Present*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. p.186.

¹⁰³⁴ Goldsmith, U. K. (1951). ‘Stefan George and the Theatre’, *PMLA*, 66(2), 85-95.

¹⁰³⁵ Clement, C. ‘Weimar Classicism and Modern Spiritual Drama: Rudolf Steiner's Theatre of Spiritual Realism’. In. Gallagher, D. (ed.) *Weimar Classicism*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press (2010). p.144.

anthropology but also to the rituals of esoteric and cultish mystiques. Ritual is essentially performative, manipulated by an initiated elite who aim to reorientate the internal experience of the participating audience through emotional experience. It allows a community to act out collective fears and dreams otherwise repressed or inhibited, uniting the group in face of stress and change. The role of ritual as dynamic agent of social change was confirmed as fascist states seized the opportunity to initiate and install social rituals and performances dependent on the charismatic leader and his initiates. The esoteric claims of a Nazi Valhalla underlay celebrations of martyrdom for party and country, ensuring exploitation of the many by the few. The following chapter shows both authors' awareness of the exploitation of the dramatic arts as well as their therapeutic functions. It also shows how Seidel and Baum site themselves within the performing elite who act for, and upon, the emotions of their popular audience.

The exploration of the ritual roots of dramatic performance found powerful expression in the music, dance and theatre of Weimar, in manifestations as various as Wagner operas, Expressionist dance or Mahler's music. Such works referenced theatre as 'sacred art that could spiritually transmute the human being'.¹⁰³⁶ Seidel expresses her own belief in dramatic art 'aus dem unergründlichen, orphischen Urelement von Künsten wie der Lyrik, der Musik, des Tanzes und letztlich der Tragödie'¹⁰³⁷ which could elevate and inspire. Baum autobiographically acknowledges the crucial formative role of Mahler¹⁰³⁸ on her career but also her ideas. She describes a fascination which culminated in her success as lead-harp in the first performance of his *Lied von der Erde*: 'als ich aufwuchs war alles in der Musik Gärung und Wiedergeburt, mit Gustav Mahler als Mittelpunkt',¹⁰³⁹ His music professed to originate 'da wo

¹⁰³⁶ Ligan, E.B. (2014). *The Theatre of the Occult Revival: Alternative Spiritual Performance from 1875 to the Present*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. p.184-5.

¹⁰³⁷ Seidel, I. (1965). *Frau und Wort*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. p.169.

¹⁰³⁸ 'als ich aufwuchs war alles in der Musik Gärung und Wiedergeburt, mit Gustav Mahler als Mittelpunkt', Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.149

¹⁰³⁹ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch .p.149.

die dunkeln Empfindungen walten, an der Pforte, die in die ‘andere Welt’ hineinführt’¹⁰⁴⁰ and his pantheism is reflected in her own writings, particularly *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* and the Elizabeth Lyons letters which infuse the inanimate with spiritual presences. Acknowledging the power of the dramatic arts for themselves, both authors recognised the effect of performance on an audience. Writing of *Hexentänze* by Mary Wigman, a dancer both Seidel and Baum admired and patronised, as their biographies relate, a contemporary critic claims:

Der heisse, schaffende Künstlerinstinkt reisst alles mit sich fort. [...] Nichts Geistreiches, Interessantes, Virtuoses, Raffiniertes gibt es mehr. Keine Anpassung, keine Maskeraden, keine Schauspielerei. Das Element redet unmittelbar, der Mensch selber, wie er seit Tausenden von Jahren immer wieder nach Körpersprache ringt.¹⁰⁴¹

Rejection of verbal, rational thought and a questioning of the nature of civilisation, both expressed through the unmediated physical communication of dance are themes which continued to preoccupy both novelists and which are examined further in the following chapter. In their preoccupation with the dramatic arts both novelists aim to both understand and exploit their effective and affective powers to provide revelations for their own audiences.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum understood theatre, music and the dramatic arts as a source of personal and of national redemption. In their fictions, they used the exclusive nature of theatrical performance, its physicality, the interplay between performer and audience and the devices of theatre, costumes, sets and masks, to investigate and to image contemporary society but also to suggest how it might be changed for the better. The utopian ideas of what that better state might be give theatre a central role in the maintenance of psychic and social equilibrium and the authors indicate both the use and the abuse of the dramatic arts in everyday life. The ideas of theatre and the theatrical life disseminated by two

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., p.2.

¹⁰⁴¹ Delius R. (1914) cited Song, Jiyun. (2007) ‘Mary Wigman and German Modern Dance: A Modernist Witch?’ *Forum Modern Language Studies*, 43(4), 427-437.

of the period's most popular authors becomes significant in the light of the rise of Fascism. Gadberry's (1995)¹⁰⁴² work demonstrated the importance of theatre under National Socialism, claiming that Hitler's aesthetic aims and theories shaped his political views and were implemented by Goebbels and Rosenberg. All three agreed that art was vital for the nation.¹⁰⁴³ Gadberry's later essay 'An Ancient Germany Rediscovered' in Rennert's (2004) *Essays on Twentieth-century German Drama and Theater: An American Reception*¹⁰⁴⁴ stresses the racism which dominated Nazi theatre. Strobl's (2007) *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933-1945*¹⁰⁴⁵ proposes that theatre, in which the Nazis 'invested lavishly'¹⁰⁴⁶ was widely regarded as a central pillar of German national identity. The first Nazi Thingspiel, the Deutsche Passion of 1933, aimed to unite the audience in emotional celebration of a shared racial past leading into a glorious national future. In writing on themes of the dramatic arts both authors were, as this chapter elaborates, making statements about human nature, human society and the nature of German culture.

A theatre for performance of the dramatic arts is a privileged space, the site of embodied creative energy and thus the ideal expression of both authors' interpretation of the nature of human life. The actor's, or performer's, temporary assumption of another role and another mode of physical appearance or utterance mirrors that process which both authors see as the playing-out of an individual life. Writing about dramatic performances allows the fictional development and narrative exploration of that body/spirit duality central to the authors' world-views.

¹⁰⁴² Gadberry, G. W. (1995). *Theatre in the Third Reich, the Prewar Years: Essays on Theatre in Nazi Germany*: London: Greenwood Press.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid., p.122.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Rennert, H. H. (2004). *Essays on Twentieth-century German Drama and Theater: An American Reception, 1977-1999*: P. Lang.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Strobl, G. (2007). *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933-1945*. Cambridge Series in Modern Theatre. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Review of above. Ross, C. (2009) In: *The Journal of Modern History*, 81(4),1004-1007. [Online] Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/65068> . [Accessed: 14/06/2015].

Their own analysis of the spiritual, as well as the social, condition of their contemporary society was an essential element of the insights and creative knowledge, gained from personal experience, which they hoped to communicate to the widest possible audience. They shared a fundamental belief in the body as the vehicle for an eternal spirit which directs its operations. Reconciling the conflicting demands of the temporal body which demands maintenance, pleasure and replication with the idealist aspirations of an eternal spirit besets the daily lives of their characters. The bored housewife looking for the perfect lover who will fulfill her every need and most fanciful visions is tortured by the awareness of her failures to fulfill the competing ideals of wife and mother. The spirit of Elsabe, frustrated by the constraints of being a woman, wife and mother, achieves the ultimate release, abandoning her female body through death and taking up her abode in that of a boy, who can wander the world freely. 'Being human' is thus presented as a performance of the embodied spirit in the constantly-changing space and time of the physical world.

Vicki Baum was a musician and theatre-practitioner and Ina Seidel, a philosophically-inclined and enthusiastic audience-member, whose younger sister Annemarie and whose daughter Heilwig both became professional actresses. Both authors use ideas and images derived from theatre and the dramatic arts to scrutinise and suggest solutions to the human dilemmas arising from what they identified as the cosmic imbalance of an over-rationalised contemporary society. Their joint allegiance to the theatrical trope unifies their, otherwise divergent, work at its most significant level. Theatre is introduced as background to novels, as instrumental in plot and character development and finally as an image of their esoteric world-view.

Reacting against the values of rationality and materialism the authors propose, not the traditional spirituality of Christianity or Jewish religious practice, but a more ecstatic experience, accessed through the sensations of the body rather than through their denial. Ina Seidel reinterprets German Protestantism as a potent spiritual force while, like Vicki Baum,

preaching a sensuality which produces both euphoria and delirium. Vicki Baum's characters express their physicality through labour, as Marion takes up mountain smallholding and wood carving¹⁰⁴⁷ or sport. Tennis playing,¹⁰⁴⁸ swimming¹⁰⁴⁹ and hiking exercise her characters and reflect not only the fashionable pastimes of the age¹⁰⁵⁰ but also that preoccupation of with fit bodies as a moral duty to the nation accompanied by the classical associations with religion, war and the theatre, whose performance-space sport shared)¹⁰⁵¹ but, above all through stage-performances.

Both authors show the act of performance as a means of liberation from the impositions placed on the spirit by the daily demands of the physical body. In Vicki Baum's novels, her performing characters transcend physical boundaries through song and dance, moving into ecstatic states. This allows the manifestation and communication of the spirit which is, in the authors' terms, their essential self, transmitting its pure power to the attentive audiences.

Such an accession to the free world of the spirit is shown also to dissolve the separation between the individual, as defined by the parameters of the body, and that infinite spirit-world incorporated in animals, plants or perhaps even artefacts. The affinities between human and non-human spirits, recognised unconsciously, are made specific through performance, whether on a theatrical stage or in the multiplicity of performance-spaces which the authors create to exhibit the acting-out of their theories. The drawing-room and the public street both offer opportunities for conscious expression, and unconscious dramatising, of the spiritual self.

But, as writers devoted to the seriousness of their craft, they recognised the effort involved in the act of creative performance. In the novels of both women, theatrical triumph, like every

¹⁰⁴⁷ Baum, V. (1978). *Marion*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag. chap.6.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Baum, V. (1947). *Schicksalsflug*. Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Baum, V. (1955). *Hell in Frauensee*. Darmstadt: Deutsche Buch Gemeinschaft.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ferber, C. (1980). *Die Dame : ein deutsches Journal für den verwöhnten Geschmack 1912 bis 1943*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹⁰⁵¹ Easterling, P.E. ed. (1997). *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.14.

other success the authors consider worthwhile, whether the running of a household or military victory, is only achieved through unremitting and painful practice, to achieve physical mastery. Easy performance equates with triviality in their judgement, both as applied to their own work and shown on their fictional stages. In the theatre, as on Ina Seidel's battlefields or Vicki Baum's workplaces, transitory mortal sufferings, while not negligible, are the price to be paid for revelations of truths beyond those of everyday experience. Those who wish to belong to the élites which will lead society, and the nation, into a glorious future will willingly accept the necessity of sacrifice. In the novels of both authors, the theatre as site, as practise and as metaphor is used to examine and articulate an esoteric view of humanity, and the hopes for its future, which were shared by both authors.

6.2 Rejection of rationalism through theatre

Literature on the role of theatre, that supreme expression of anti-rationalism in the novels of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, is sparse. Gabriele Thöns' explores¹⁰⁵² Ina Seidel's relationship to irrationalism but with little analysis of the theatrical aspects of its expression. Vicki Baum's theatrical superstitions extending into mysticism receive even less attention, with her own claim to be a pragmatic and sensible woman being frequently accepted, despite plenty of contrary evidence.

Vicki Baum confirms Mosse's view that the rejection of rationalism was not the sole prerogative of reactionary and conservative groups. Corinna Treitel's¹⁰⁵³ analysis of German modernity shows how occult movements occupied the void filled previously by organised religious observance. The novels of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum show spirits responding to the calls of the medium,¹⁰⁵⁴ the stars proclaiming their influence¹⁰⁵⁵ and a universal life force which

¹⁰⁵² Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz.

¹⁰⁵³ Treitel, C. (2004). *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*. Baltimore: JHU Press.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Seidel, I. (no date in edition). *Unser Freund Peregrin*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

united organic, and possibly even inorganic,¹⁰⁵⁶ matter. Barbara Hales¹⁰⁵⁷ also unites modernity with the renewed interest in the occult, pointing out that discoveries such as radio and X-rays had, in the popular imagination, eroded the boundaries between a transcendental, and the physical world. The manifest failure of rationality and the destructive triumph of scientific materialism over humanity, within which terms the First World War was soon framed, prompted the search for an alternative. Freud, and later Jung, had offered theories which asserted the power of the unconscious, relating contemporary to primeval experience. The writings of Nietzsche also illuminated the mass-consciousness, offering dramatic analyses of the human condition in images which evoked imaginative responses.

Ina Seidel's intellectual encounters intensified her Nietzschean awareness. Dörr's¹⁰⁵⁸ account of the influence of Nietzsche on Stefan George and the Munich Kosmiker also mentions his impact on Rudolf Steiner, educational theorist and early environmentalist, whose utopian visions of societal renewal through spiritual progress were brought into the Seidel family by Ina's son-in-law, Schulte-Strathaus.¹⁰⁵⁹ Steiner's own belief in the redemptive powers of drama and movement resulted in the development and promotion of Eurythmy, a predecessor of modern dance, and the four Mystery Dramas that were staged for the first time in Munich between 1910 and 1913. Goodrick-Clarke¹⁰⁶⁰ traces a connection between Steiner and Wotanism, with its racial emphasis on the 'Aryan' and the Northern myths which had

¹⁰⁵⁶ Baum, V. (1978). *Marion*. München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag. p.275.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Hales, B. (2010). Mediating Worlds: The Occult as Projection of the New Woman in Weimar Culture. *The German Quarterly*, 83, 317-332.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Dörr, G. (2007). *Muttermythos und Herrschaftsmythos: Zur Dialektik der Aufklärung um die Jahrhundertwende bei den Kosmikern, Stefan George und in der Frankfurter Schule*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. pp.11-12.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Werner, U. & Lindenberger, C. (1999). *Anthroposophen in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (1933-1945)*. München: Oldenbourg Verlag. Schulte-Strathaus's commitment to the Steiner educational system was such that, following his appointment in April 1934 by Hess to Culture Ministry, he wrote a report quoting from *Mein Kampf* to assure Hess that the aims of Waldorf schooling were in harmony with National Socialism and thereby gained a short reprieve for those schools that the Nazi Party finally took over, as described in her novel *Michaela*

¹⁰⁶⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, N. (2004). *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults And Their Influence on Nazi Ideology*. London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks. pp.49-50.

fascinated the young Ina Seidel's. Contributing a mystical element to this heady mixture, Guido von List's books *Das Geheimnis der Runen*, *Die Armanenschaft der Ario-Germanen* and *Die Rita der Ario-Germanen* claimed to reveal the belief-systems of Germanic tribes. Their emphasis on the charismatic leader, gaining strength and authority from the cosmic force of the Sun, and his willing warrior-martyrs were made to blend into the Christian concept of redemption of sin through the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ. The Sun, Der Führer,¹⁰⁶¹ is re-embodied in Christ, in spiritual union with the eternal and universal power of God.

Ina Seidel added the power of the popular novelist to the mystic ideological crusades of George and Steiner invoking the Romantic poet Novalis as guide and prophet.¹⁰⁶² Writing characters who traverse the border between life and death with regularity, if not always composure,¹⁰⁶³ she entwines contemporary mystical movements with mainstream Protestantism and a romantic affinity for death and sacrifice. This confluence of ideas made Ina Seidel's work palatable to the National Socialist system with which it has become identified. Vicki Baum sites her stories in a modernised version of this mixture of worldly and other-worldly. Neither author pretends to intellectual rigour. Ina Seidel, like Steiner and Novalis, claims scientific realism while writing spiritual apparitions and primeval affinities with the planets. Vicki Baum affirms down-to-earth common-sense while melding superstition and the sub-conscious borders of physical experience to produce melodrama and deathly unions.

For both authors, theatre reconciles the perceived reality of that which they and their readers knew as everyday life and the transcendental notions of religion, mysticism or the occult which they believed lay behind it. The nature of the transcendental is clearly defined by Ina Seidel as

¹⁰⁶¹ Seidel, I. (1924). 'Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende'. In: *Die Tat*. Leipzig: Eugen Diederich. 16.3.166.

¹⁰⁶² Seidel, I. (no date in edition). *Unser Freund Peregrin*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

¹⁰⁶³ Novalis appears as a ball of lightening, *Ibid.*, p.70.

spiritual, even divine, while Vicki Baum is unwilling to admit anything more specific than an operative realm of powerful, unconscious, primeval and usually destructive forces.

Ina Seidel's analysis of contemporary society is essentially popular-Nietzschean and the solutions she offers are in the same spirit. Taking a general theme from Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik*, she suggests that the dramatic arts are both an image of the contemporary age and a solution to its problems. She echoes other voices¹⁰⁶⁴ in seeing much of contemporary popular theatre as undermining the moral health of the nation and she advocates a return to the communal and ritual experience of classical drama or the morality plays of medieval Europe. Vicki Baum is similarly critical of aspects of contemporary theatre, parodying both Expressionism¹⁰⁶⁵ and traditionalism¹⁰⁶⁶ and depicting with Nietzschean enthusiasm the Dionysian aspects of performance and its purifying effects.¹⁰⁶⁷

Both writers present the will to escape into euphoria as the result of the disillusion of modernity, extending the cliché to suggest that 'desperation and despair are the points of departure for many kinds of unbridled or violent ritual behaviour in many cultures'.¹⁰⁶⁸ Aage's inability to escape from his Berlin adventures with Loulou,¹⁰⁶⁹ or the Wall Street lives and disintegrating marriages of Bryant's companions,¹⁰⁷⁰ initiate those parties which become invested with ritual significance. During the course of these events, euphoria is shown as having positive as well

¹⁰⁶⁴ 'the sacred site of modernity where it is possible to work most popularly with the tools of language, of human culture, and of ideas, is the theatre. Theatre today has sunk to lower depths than every', Johst, Hanns, 'Das Drama und die nationale Idee', *Berliner Tageblatt*, October 25 1922), Kaes, A. (1995). *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.535.

¹⁰⁶⁵ 'Er kam auf die Probe in einem schwarzen hochgeschlossenen Hemd und einer schwarzen Leinenhose, die um die Hüften unglaublich eng saß und um seinen nackten Füße weit und schwingen flattertete wie ein Rock. Spannen – Entspannen – Spannen – Entspannen, beschwor er die erstaunte Truppe', Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.118.

¹⁰⁶⁶ 'Linden war der Direktor, der Dirigent, der Regisseur der Truppe. Er finanzierte das Unternehmen, [...] Er war der Ansicht, daß Erotik zuviel von der Spannung raube' Ibid., p.118.

¹⁰⁶⁷ 'Der empfindliche und unerklärliche Vorgang hatte stattgefunden, bei dem ihr eigenes Wesen ausgelöscht und sie in eine neue Kreatur verwandelt wurde'. Baum, V. (1957). *Die Große Pause*. Hamburg - Berlin: Deutsche Hausbücherei. p.65.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Thomsen, B. M. S. (2009). 'Antichrist - Chaos Reigns: the event of violence and the haptic image in Lars von Trier's film', *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, 1. [Online]. <http://www.aestheticsandculture.net/index.php/jac/article/view/3668> {Accessed 20.6.15.}.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

as negative effects. The liberation of the pure, or primitive, self from the chains of rationalism, as in *Sterne der Heimkehr* or the predatory loosing of girls from their protective inhibitions in *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, both result in orgies which make a decisive shift in the lives of those central characters who participate. The characters, as actors and chorus in the rites, abandon personal responsibility, rational thought and conventional controls. In *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* they act out the notorious¹⁰⁷¹ excesses of city living but when the naked Doris takes up the model's pose on the outdoor site planned for a statue, her nakedness in the landscape becomes the aesthetic purity of classical sculpture, the birth of a new Venus amid the froth of underwear and abandoned garments. In Ina Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr* the city is left behind and the climactic masque takes place against a rural backcloth, in an indeterminate time between sunset and dawn. Stripping off clothes and orchestrating proceedings through a shamanic (male) figure,¹⁰⁷² the wild party becomes a rite of purification and enlightenment. Characters return to the everyday world carrying the knowledge of the time apart, to lead better, more balanced, lives within the wider society.

6.3 Numinous images – the silent pictures

When the two women began their writing careers, new media, particularly film, were perceived as threatening the enduring contribution of theatre and theatrical practice to the cultural life of the nation. The dialogue with reality represented by a dramatic performance in a theatrical setting was radically redefined when a mass audience could experience in comfort and safety the sights, and eventually the sounds, of faraway places, exotic peoples and exciting events apparently happening in real time before their very eyes. Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum reacted by adapting the attractions of cinema to their literary ends. By parodying the exotic¹⁰⁷³ to make

¹⁰⁷¹ Such images were familiar from accounts of the Berlin cabaret scene or the works of George Grosz. Otto Dix, Alfred Döblin, and Fritz Lang.

¹⁰⁷² Lermoser in *Sterne der Heimkehr*, the priests in *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* or Bryant's companion in *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*.

¹⁰⁷³ Seidel, I. (1920-21). 'Menuett auf Tahiti. In: : *eine dt. Monatsschr.; Zeitschr. für Kunst u. Dichtung*, 6, 2-8.

a serious point or adopting its scenery and its drama¹⁰⁷⁴ to explore the human condition, these novelists offered popular entertainment with suspense, intrigue, mystery and occasionally even humour,¹⁰⁷⁵ while maintaining their cultural élitism.

The mistrust of words as adequate vehicles of authentic communication, common to both women and with its origins in Nietzsche,¹⁰⁷⁶ makes the task of the novelist peculiarly difficult.

The success of silent film confirmed that mass audiences responded powerfully to minimal verbal stimuli and Ina Seidel could profit from Hollywood's example. Philippus Sebastian Lennacker's defence of his parishioners from the attacking Swedish army is staged on a river-bank with the safe haven of the opposite bank accessible only by one small ferry-boat. Looking back over the plain, the fallen city is burning on the horizon, attackers on horseback are speeding towards the fleeing group and the boat is loading its helpless cargo of women and children.¹⁰⁷⁷ With the lame and elderly at his feet preparing for inevitable death with prayers on their lips and the atheist-turned-hero battling at his side, the Good Shepherd Lennacker is cut down as the boat reaches mid-stream and safety. The drama of action replaces dialogue.

Authorial disdain of verbal communication results in dramatic, almost pantomime, characterisations. That tension between the self-projection of character through words and appearance and the contradictory effects of their subsequent actions, which is so effective in visual media, becomes a literary technique. The most fluent speakers are inevitably the most ignorant, deceitful¹⁰⁷⁸ and manipulative.¹⁰⁷⁹ The immaculate travelling suit of the dilettante Palmer and his loud audience-seeking clichés, claim a moral, intellectual and social status

¹⁰⁷⁴ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹⁰⁷⁵ The dancing 'natives' ape the manners of a dressmaker-turned-valet' - Seidel, I. (1920-21). 'Menuett auf Tahiti. In: *Wieland : eine dt. Monatsschr. ; Zeitschr. für Kunst u. Dichtung*, 6, 2-8.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Die Sprache, scheint es, ist nur für Durchschnittliches, Mittleres, Mittheilsames erfunden. Nietzsche, F. *Götzen-Dämmerung* - Kapitel 11 – 'Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemäßen', [Online] <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/g-6185/1> [Accessed 02.01.15].

¹⁰⁷⁷ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.214-219.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Vespery in Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.,

¹⁰⁷⁹ Sixtus Walbrun in *Ibid.*,

which his patronage of Tatjana contradicts. The affectionate concern of that smooth-talking epitome of modernity, the American travelling salesman, in *Rendezvous in Paris*, snares the affections of Evelyn, luring her away from home and infants to panic and death.

The effective voices of the authors' novels are primarily doers and creators. Lermoser, architect and builder, speaks little and his daughter Erdmuthe even less. Helene Wilfür¹⁰⁸⁰ and Doris Hart¹⁰⁸¹ express their strength through work. They win lost loves back through personal achievement, and the financial power which it gives, rather than lovers' vows.

6.4 The saving grace of theatre

In their acknowledgement of the power of the theatrical medium, both women mirror a contemporary preoccupation. Bronnen writes, 'theatre has always styled itself the centre of all the arts, and in fact nowhere does the lever of artistic creation work more powerfully than here.'¹⁰⁸² Hans Ostwald's *Großstadt-Dokumente. Metropolenforschung im Berlin der Jahrhundertwende* or Julius Bab's (1904) *Die Berliner Bohème*, attributed great importance to the role of theatre in both the public and private lives of the denizens of the modern city.¹⁰⁸³ Jazbinsek points to Bab's definition of 'Kulturzigeunertum' of which theatre-people were a part, drawing the paradoxical parallel between the performances of the marginalised theatrical Bohème and those of everyday metropolitan life:

Der Mimikry-Begriff ist jedoch keine rein kriminologische Kategorie, sondern charakterisiert das allgemeine Lebensgefühl in der modernen Metropole. "Der finstere Bürokrat ist nach Dienstscluß ein ganz anderer Mensch. Er treibt in seiner Kanzlei nur eine Art Mimikry, um nicht aufzufallen. [...] Daß es ein solches Mimikry gibt, weiß jeder. Die Großstadt, in der der private Mensch leichter verschwindet, begünstigt es."¹⁰⁸⁴

¹⁰⁸⁰ Baum, V. (1939). *Helene*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

¹⁰⁸¹ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹⁰⁸² Arnolt Bronnen on theatre in Weimar c. Kaes, A. (1995). *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.345.

¹⁰⁸³ Jazbinsek Dietmar, R. T. (1996). 'Großstadt-Dokumente'. *Metropolenforschung im Berlin der Jahrhundertwende*. [Online] <http://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/1996/ii96-501.pdf> [Accessed 29.12.12] pp.38-41.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.52.

Actors and performers epitomised what was envisaged as the existential homelessness of the metropolis, free of convention but also of certainties or security. The cast of Vicki Baum's *Grand Hotel*, Ina Seidel's families in the turmoil of war and social crisis, the travelling salesman Frank Davis¹⁰⁸⁵ and the wandering healer Buzzini,¹⁰⁸⁶ all reflect contemporary concern with those loosed from their roots in a traditional social order. When Delphine¹⁰⁸⁷ becomes involved with what Bab calls the 'korrumpierenden Mitläufer' of the Bohemian world of the theatre, she loses home and family but, as both authors assert, it is the severance from the 'natural' female behaviour of caring and nurturing that is finally damning for theatre-women.

The conventional theatre offered entertainment to a society in need of diversion but was also seen as preserving the vitality of German culture and promoting hopes for a better future. In a report on the burning down of the theatre in Wiesbaden (after a performance of Wagner's opera *Rienzi* in 1924, an incident which, in his novel *Georg*, becomes emblematic of social collapse and the loss of hope), Kracauer emphasised the ideological damage that the fire had caused to the soul of the nation:

Wir hungern, wir frieren, wir haben kein Licht. Nie wird der Krieg aufhören, und nie wieder werde ich selig in einem Theater sitzen können, denn es gibt keine Feen mehr, die uns trösten, die Feen in ihren weißen Gewandern sind auch unter dem Schutthaufen begraben.¹⁰⁸⁸

But Nietzsche had attributed the greatest significance to the redemptive potential of the dramatic art, 'Ihn rettet die Kunst, und durch die Kunst rettet ihm sich - das Leben.'¹⁰⁸⁹ Theatre is the realm of fantasy, where utopian aspirations can be realised, lives redeemed, humanity liberated from the chains of rationalism and false gods to be saved for a better future. Through

¹⁰⁸⁵ Baum, V. (1961). *Rendezvous in Paris*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁸⁸ Kracauer, S. (2013). *Georg*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Insel Verlag. p.51.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Welberry, D. (2007). 'Form und Funktion der Tragödie nach Nietzsche'. In: Menke, B. (ed.) *Tragödie - Trauerspiel - Spektakel*. [Online] : <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/transatlantik/downloads/welberry%2520formundfunktion.doc> [Accessed 15.09.2013].

their references to its techniques and theories, their descriptions of theatre-life and emotional accounts of performances, in the writing of theatrical scripts within novels,¹⁰⁹⁰ and independently,¹⁰⁹¹ the fiction of both novelists takes on that moral endeavour.

6.5 Literary dramas

For novelists attempting to maintain the precarious balance between serious intentions and popularity, the general agreement that the theatrical performance and, by extension, the world of theatre and its inhabitants, is not real life, allows social analysis in a form which will not inevitably disturb the sensibilities of their readership.¹⁰⁹² Conventional women with conservative values could read about Doris Hart's excesses or Mathilde Mackens' bohemian lifestyle and indulge in the authors' overt sympathy for both while ignoring any reflections on their own lives. Doris' casting-couch entrée to a stage career and Mathilde's midsummer madness are both sited in a theatrical unreality which frees the reader from moral judgements. The theatre as a show and imitation of life is also the crucible for experiments with passion, both for performers and audience, and novels which re-tell the theatrical story evoke, at one more remove, the emotions of the original drama.

Within the theatrical space, masks and costumes make visible and tangible the intellectual and emotional themes that drive the performance. Outside the theatre, the masks, make-up and fashions of social life entail manipulation, concealment, deceit, or even treachery. The contrived manipulation of appearance is generally used by Ina Seidel as an indicator of the flawed personality which needs such camouflage, or a critique of the situation which has placed such a demand on the protagonist.¹⁰⁹³ Vicki Baum's characters, on the other hand, employ all

¹⁰⁹⁰ Vicki Baum's recounting of ritual dance in *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*, or Ina Seidel's dramatic verse in *Sterne der Heimkehr*.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ina Seidel's *Planetenspiel*, and radio broadcasts, Vicki Baum's Hollywood script-writing.

¹⁰⁹² Seidel, I. (1920-21). 'Menuett auf Tahiti'. In: *Wieland: eine dt. Monatschr.; Zeitschr. für Kunst u. Dichtung*, 6, 2-8.

¹⁰⁹³ The deceitful Vespery in *Das Wunschkind* or the superficialities of a bourgeois society that demands a woman conceal her pregnancy as in the case of Cläre Breithardt in the same novel.

the resources of fashion and cosmetics as well as the subtler arts of performance to negotiate the embarrassments of their lives.

To match the attractions of cinema, shop windows and the theatre for their, predominantly female, audience,¹⁰⁹⁴ and maintain their critical stance towards contemporary society, stories had to excite or intrigue as well as winning the sympathies of their readers. Locating action in romantic places¹⁰⁹⁵ or turbulent times¹⁰⁹⁶ was an immediate attraction. The perennially intriguing world of the theatre and its inhabitants provided both advantages and indicated the techniques which won and held the audience. Both authors stage stories, or incidents within larger novels, with the devices of dramatic performance. The narratorial presence directs and explains, costumes, masks and scenery create physical contexts and contrasts, allowing the shifting ground between the spiritual and physical, rational and irrational, real and unreal to be traversed.

Vicki Baum explains the peculiar usefulness of a theatrical theme for the novel-writer: 'In der Welt des Theaters nimmt ja jedes Malheur gleich kosmische Dimensionen an.'¹⁰⁹⁷ A story enacted within the closed world of the theatre allows the writer to accelerate events and intensify reactions to them, to concentrate attention on a single theme without losing the realistic effect of the narrative.

Im übrigen, ist das Theater ein hermetisch abgeschlossener Mikrokosmos, in dem man die Stimmen der Außenwelt nur also verschwommenes, bedeutungsloses fernes Gemurmel hört.¹⁰⁹⁸

¹⁰⁹⁴ The size of this audience is not ascertainable. As Hempel confirms this specific aspect is little-researched. Hempel, D. (2010). *Kritische Frauenliteratur im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik : Konturen eines Forschungsfelds*. Hamburg: University Inst. für Germanistik II. p.5.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*, Berlin: Ullstein. Seidel, I. (1920-21). 'Menuett auf Tahiti. In: *Wieland: eine dt. Monatsschr.; Zeitschr. für Kunst u. Dichtung*, 6, 2-8.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. Baum, V. (1943). *Cahuchu Strom der Tränen*. Berlin: Kiepenhauer, Witsch & Co.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenhauer & Witsch. p.317.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.286.

The audience, and the reader, understand the privileged relationship with everyday life enjoyed by the theatre. It is a place set-apart for performances which represent the lived human experience beyond its walls but for those who people the theatrical space itself it is a transitory area. The brief and speedy path of the girl Elis¹⁰⁹⁹ moves from innocence to world-weariness, from hopeful anticipation of a future to a rejection of life altogether – ‘Man hat sich schmutzig gemacht an Gedanken, Wünschen, Träumen, man hatte einen Ekel und eine große Müdigkeit vor sich selber und den wirklichen Dingen.’¹¹⁰⁰ This is credible within the heightened atmosphere of the Conservatoire where the distinction between the individuals and the roles they perform on and off-stage is eroded. Elis watches the performance of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* with its hopeless love-affair which can only find fulfilment in death (“*O sink’ hernieder, Nacht der Liebe*”), and, re-enacting the opera below takes the morphine which is her own poisoned love-potion, echoing Tristan’s aria “*Wo ich erwacht’ Weilt ich nicht*”. She renounces the world of suffering in her own refrain ‘Und immer, immer wieder: nie erwachen, nie erwachen.’ From her personal stage of the opera-box she sees the audience for her own drama: ‘Euch da unten, Menschen, kommt der Morgen mir nicht mehr’ and for them her suicide becomes part of the evening’s performance. Subject and object, the interior and exterior worlds of self and others, of sensory and imaginative experience blend and interweave but also collide to produce that moment of shock which, in a theatrical context, Benjamin interpreted as a demand that the audience considers and thinks about the situation.¹¹⁰¹ Vicki Baum is hoping for a similar thoughtful response from her readership.

Dima, singing Isolde, has also experienced, and will continue to experience the novel posits, the blending of subjective self and objective role but temperament, experience and fierce

¹⁰⁹⁹ Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.57.

¹¹⁰¹ Ferris, David. (2008). *The Cambridge Introduction to Walter Benjamin*. Cambridge: CUP. p.101.

ambition allow her to master the emotional turmoil and play the lover in both spheres without sacrificing one to the other.

6.6 Propagandist tales and theatre for the masses

But if both authors use the theatrical context to make social comments in a form acceptable to their readership, like their contemporaries, they understood the political force of drama¹¹⁰² and were prepared to use it. They realised the power of theatre to emancipate performer and observer from the apparent certainties of the present, to create alternative possibilities. While recognising the potential of theatre as a subversive activity, these women were primarily interested in its emotional and allegedly spiritual effects on the individual and relied on their explicit rejection of political responsibility to absolve them of any serious political intent.¹¹⁰³

Political theatre for the masses becomes the object of Ina Seidel's criticism in *Das Wunschkind*. The Breithardts epitomise the hypocrisy of German officialdom seeking peace and stability at all costs and willing to use the theatrical occasion as propaganda which will appease the conquering French. A public procession to celebrate marriage, inspired by the Napoleonic, secular, post-revolutionary zeal to replace former religious festivals, ('was nun dem Volk Ersatz für die Kirche sein soll.')¹¹⁰⁴ is evidence that Prussia has lost its soul, as Ina Seidel shows it through the eyes of Cornelia. Finding her own son Christophe, with the Breithardts, walking behind the banner 'Glückliche Früchte der Ehe – Hoffnung des Vaterlandes – Ruhm der Ehegatten',¹¹⁰⁵ Cornelia recalls the fierce physical conflicts of conception and childbirth, his father's death and the stark realities of marriage as she has known it, setting these against the 'hohlen Klimbim'¹¹⁰⁶ of the procession. Emotive slogans successfully excite the crowds but

¹¹⁰² Ina Seidel who had been, effectively, Carl Zuckmayer's sister-in-law, Vicki Baum as editor for Ullstein and both resident in central Berlin could hardly miss the point.

¹¹⁰³ Despite such inevitable interpretations of some of their work (see comments above on *Menuett auf Tahiti* p.15).

¹¹⁰⁴ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.352.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.351.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.351.

words devoid of any authentic significance for the participants, create ‘schlechtes Theater’, arousing passions while presenting untruths. True theatre, that which frees and enlightens, has its roots in the primal experiences of humanity:

Ein großes Drama wächst nur aus einer großen, ursprünglichen Weltanschauung
[...] Über den zerfallenen Formen recke sich der befreite, von Urgefühlen trunkene
Mensch empor, der Mensch schlechthin, der sich eins weiß mit seinen Brüdern,
nach Seele, nach Gott, nach einer neuen wahren Gemeinschaft des Geistes.¹¹⁰⁷

Within the one-mark format of *Wieland's Deutsche Monatsschrift* Ina Seidel writes a satire on the military establishment, exploiting current enthusiasm for dance as an expression of a human spirit unsullied by civilisation. Her short story *Menuett auf Tahiti*¹¹⁰⁸ writes the ‘good theatre’ of everyday life, as the military organisation of a naval ship comes up against a pre-industrial, island society. The indigenous culture and what is portrayed as its healthy instinctive morality, (pre-dating *Coming of Age in Samoa*¹¹⁰⁹ by several years) confront the male society of discipline and repression. Boorish and violent sailors compare unfavourably with the polite and graceful islanders. A girl-dancer in sailor’s uniform mocks a coercive system which generates opposition and perversion. Through dance, the islanders critique the manners and morals of the heavily-armed visitors, amusing those criticised as well as themselves, while avoiding an aggressive response from the superior force. Ina Seidel is, in effect, giving an account of dance as political theatre, although in a distinctly innocuous form.

Vicki Baum’s *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*, with its portrayal of the effects of colonial rule on a feudal society is a similar expression of quasi-political commentary through dance, the ‘good theatre’ which guides and edifies. On Bali, what Dörr summarises as Bachofen’s vision of a

¹¹⁰⁷ In 1922 Witkop assembled leading academics to deliver a summary of contemporary German culture which moved beyond the destruction and demoralisation of the present to deliver hopes for the future. Witkop’s own chapter on contemporary literature uses the same literary reference points as Seidel, among them Novalis and Nietzsche, to indicate sources for, and the direction of such renewal and concludes, like Seidel, that the dramatic arts will play their part. Witkop, P. (ed.) (1922). *Deutsches Leben der Gegenwart*. Berlin: Volksverband der Bücherfreunde.

¹¹⁰⁸ Seidel, I. (1920-21). ‘Menuett auf Tahiti. In: *Wieland: eine dt. Monatsschr.; Zeitschr. für Kunst u. Dichtung*, 6, 2-8.

¹¹⁰⁹ Mead, M. (1928). *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: William Morrow Paperbacks; Reprint 2001.

trinity of the erotic, death and religion¹¹¹⁰ dominates a daily life in close contact with the soil and the elements, the cycles of growth and decay. Verbal communication is minimal when the shared behaviours and shared value-systems of inter-related family groups assure understanding. The histories and ideologies underlying the group experience are transmitted through dances with the dancers as the channel through which spirit-voices are made manifest.¹¹¹¹ Dance unites the contemporary island society, as the novel explains, with its past and its ancestors, whose examples established the behaviour to be expected in front of the great challenges of life, death and eternity. When the peasants obeyed the feudal voice of the Rajah and trooped towards the invader to be mown down helplessly by his guns, they knew, from the stories told in the dance, that heroic sacrifice brings eternal honour and that their lives would be renewed, cleared of the offences of their present incarnation. The message of implicit obedience and rewarding sacrifice in face of the enemy lends itself to political exploitation. However, the ethnicity, public reputation as shockingly modern and, eventually, the exiled status of Vicki Baum protected her novel from the fate of *Das Wunschkind* when National Socialism was attempting to direct the literary tastes of the nation

Ina Seidel's criticism of the Bürgertum, as represented by the conservative Breithardts is echoed in Vicki Baum's autobiographical critiques¹¹¹² of establishment cultural clichés, directed at those who challenged her husband's radical new stagings of Wagner. She asserts that even as a child she understood the political message implicit in 'diese wunderbaren Germanen und ihre Tugenden [...] ich fand, daß sie alle, einschließlich ihres verdammten Helden Siegfried, eine schäbige, korrupte, lügenhafte, betrügerische Gesellschaft waren'.¹¹¹³

But the light operetta and popular dance forms of Doris Hart's or Ina Raffay's disillusioned

¹¹¹⁰ Dörr, G. (2007). *Muttermythos und Herrschaftsmythos: Zur Dialektik der Aufklärung um die Jahrhundertwende bei den Kosmikern, Stefan George und in der Frankfurter Schule*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.56.

¹¹¹¹ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.56.

¹¹¹² Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.179.

¹¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.179.

experiences also expose the author's aversion to popular theatre and dissatisfaction with audiences eager for display and unthinking entertainment. For Ina Seidel too, women who act, or sing, light and frivolous works become marionettes who move to the words of the playwright. Theatre, for both authors, should be a serious business, undertaken with commitment, if not reverence, as a rite through which humanity recognises itself and its place in a universal order and the performer honours that significance through giving of their best. For Ina Seidel, reflecting the later Nietzsche, the popular play-actor was the image of a culture which had turned to the masses rather than the élites for its definition of success:

Der große Erfolg, der Massen-Erfolg ist nicht mehr auf Seite der Echten, - man muss Schauspieler sein, ihn zu haben! [...] Nur der Schauspieler weckt noch die große Begeisterung. – Damit kommt für den Schauspieler das goldene Zeitalter herauf – für ihn und für Alles, was seiner Art verwandt ist.¹¹¹⁴

Delphine's first professional stage-appearance in *Das Wunschkind*, is light popular entertainment, funded by Jewish bankers, patronised by young officers, but also by the respectable middle-classes. Her adoption of the military-aristocratic Prussian name 'von Bülow', in front of such an audience, proclaims the shocking depths to which she has sunk, betraying national pride along with her own upbringing. Her performance as the sparkling ingénue, frivolous and flirtatious, is the antithesis of the dignity of the assumed name and her Prussian origins. Stepping outside the rational and ordered moral world of family into the disreputable circles of the theatre and its hangers-on, she has moved into a world in which disorder and passions rule. The audience's approval of her display proclaims their own moral turpitude. The chance love-affair with a fellow-actor and the shameful life of a touring actress leads, inevitably, to her early death. Blood-heritage will out, Ina Seidel reiterates, as the spectre

¹¹¹⁴ Nietzsche, F., *Der Fall Wagner*. Turiner Brief vom Mai 1888. [Online] <http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Nietzsche,+Friedrich/Der+Fall+Wagner/Der+Fall+Wagner> [Accessed 7.7.13].

of Delphine's French actress-grandmother manifests in the current generation and the Franco-Prussian antagonism continues through familial conflict.

For Vicki Baum's Doris Hart,¹¹¹⁵ the time spent in a musical show with similar financial backing was one of a love affair, a touring car and parties rather than strenuous artistic endeavour. In both cases, the women are tainted by the characters they play, and their stage-characters publicise and disseminate what both authors understand as a life which undermines and disgraces women. Doris understands her lapse and returns to the rigours of an operatic career and her responsibilities towards the imprisoned Basil. Delphine continues in her state of laxity, abandons her child and dies prematurely. The message from both novels is that popular theatre, (shown as dominated by men and frequently Jewish men) is an entertaining but deceitful pretence of life. It projects its own immorality onto both performers and spectators, particularly women, and fatally destroys that innate moral sense which should guide their lives

6.7 The dramaturgical metaphor - the stage-sets and performances of social life

Long before Erving Goffmann¹¹¹⁶ offered the dramaturgical metaphor as a description of human social interaction, Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum were keen to show their readerships that 'All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players.'¹¹¹⁷ The actors in the social drama, like their theatrical counterparts, mediate reality through selective dialogue, gestures, props and costumes. The novels make evident the manipulations through which characters define roles for themselves and others in the small incidents of daily lives, creating scenery and costumes which flaunt their own persona and confine, or conflate, that of their fellow-actors.

The over-stuffed armchairs and red-plush of the study in *Der Vergrabene Schatz*, created for the writer and academic Richard Solger, act like a padded cell, insulating its inhabitant from

¹¹¹⁵ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹¹¹⁶ Goffman, E. (1969). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Allen Lane.

¹¹¹⁷ Shakespeare, W. *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 7.

those physical collisions with the life around him which, Ina Seidel asserts, are the necessary inspiration for the creative temperament: ‘Mit Klubsesseln hatte man es bombardiert, mit Perserteppichen, mit einem Diplomatenschreibtisch, mit Tizian und Giorgione, mit antiken Kaiserbüsten.’¹¹¹⁸

The American millionairess, that privileged cliché of a modern world which measures worth by wealth, a character who also appears in Vicki Baum’s *Schicksalsflug* and *Flut und Flamme*, directs the performance of Solger, European academic and writer. Naming his room the ‘Tuskulum’¹¹¹⁹ thus uniting intellectual status and landed wealth, both sought-after by the newly-wealthy on both sides of the Atlantic, the wife acknowledges the qualities her husband brings to their union. But the cerebral activity which takes place within the created scene is incomprehensible to one who values success in financial terms.

The armchairs of a gentleman’s club, the fairytale luxury of Persian carpets and the massivity of the desk confirm that their owner is intended to play a substantial and serious part in a society which recognises beauty as well as quality. Renaissance paintings shout wealth rather than a cultivated modern taste and busts of Caesars emphasise the powerful company in which the room’s occupant is expected to play his part. The furnishings which dictate the appropriate behaviour for the millionaire-husband are an anathema to the refined European taste and habits of Richard Solger. The fragile wings of his imagination and intellect cannot lift him free of the encumbrance of objects and expectations. Fortunately, his wife’s early death allows him to escape and reformulate his life in more congenial surroundings. The contrast with the operating theatre, in which the surgeon-father of Osel, Urd and Schlummei, or, in real-life, Hermann

¹¹¹⁸ Seidel, I. (1949). *Der vergrabene Schatz*. München: Piper & Co. Verlag.

¹¹¹⁹ Tuskula or Tuskulum (singular) refers to the ancient Roman town and to Cicero’s estate there. At the turn of the previous century, erudite speakers still used the term as a synonym for “landed estate.” [Online]http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/217_Consumerism_Berlin%20Dept%20Stores_30.pdf [Accessed 1.11.14].

Seidel, plays out the scenes of the battle between life and death is extreme.¹¹²⁰ Here, furniture is reduced to its elements in simple structures of wood and steel, blank bare surfaces promote sterility and also insulate from the infection of the outside world, while the drama is performed by the surgeon on the body of the patient.¹¹²¹ Assistants play the role of a chorus, implicated in the event but not central to it, forming the channel of communication between the procedure and the concerned public. The autobiographical detail of Seidel's victimisation by his own assistants confirms the interpretation.¹¹²²

Unlike the stark veracity of the operating theatre, the spurious ceremony of Ina Seidel's Napoleonic-era procession¹¹²³ and the stage-set decoration of Solger's study are both 'bad theatre'. The disjunction between appearance and significance discomforts both the actors within the novel and the reading-observer outside it. Ina Seidel's sense of theatre overcomes the overt didacticism and pious, or pompous, rhetoric of much of her writings.

Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum regard the performances of everyday life as the necessary adaptation or concealment of an essential self to accommodate to social demands rather than a formative process during which the self comes into being. Emerging from the primordial cultural mists, constructed from the biological imperative of 'blood' and shaped by the native culture of *Heimat*, individual autonomy is limited. The fundamental decisions are those of acceptance or rejection of the personal 'nature' and the choices of behaviour within the parameters thus established.

¹¹²⁰ Perhaps it could serve as a measure of the relative authenticity of the authors' writings – a generalisation not to be further developed at this point.

¹¹²¹ Seidel, I. (1951). *Osel, Urd und Schummei*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Verlag. p.12.

¹¹²² Ferber, C. (1982). *Die Seidels: Geschichte einer Bürgerlichen Familie 1811-1977*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.120.

¹¹²³ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

For Vicki Baum, disguise is an indispensable principle of social life, as her autobiographical and epistolary play-acting show:¹¹²⁴ ‘Gott segne Suggestion und Kosmetik. Denn es gibt Dinge in unserer Zeit, die ohne Schminke nicht auszuhalten wären’.¹¹²⁵

Clothes become the costume of a performance and a weapon of both defence and attack in the battle to maintain the self. They expose the self-consciousness,¹¹²⁶ and the self-definition¹¹²⁷ of their wearers and their accommodations to circumstance. Women in ‘unfeminine’ occupations suppress personal appearance in a performance of gender-neutrality which removes the perceived threat of their female presence. The white lab. coat of the student Helene Wilfür¹¹²⁸ reduces her to a welcome scientific anonymity. With the gloss of academic and commercial success she can bear public exposure as a bathing-suit-Venus, rising from the waves of the Mediterranean to be recognised as a desirable woman by the man of her dreams. But Vicki Baum’s Leore Lanya,¹¹²⁹ defies gendered dress-codes, wearing mechanic’s overalls as at titillating statement of androgyny. Doris Hart makes statements of sexual availability through scarlet lipstick and short skirts, then married to a wealthy husband and pictured in *Vogue* she adopts the conservative chic of black, white and grey with Oxford shoes.

While clothes are less importance in Ina Seidel’s delineation of character, their mention is loaded with significance. Henriette von Echter, always in black, haunts the living present like the wraith of the past world where her values as well as her affections lie. The character of General Lieutenant von Tracht is dark, violent and implacable, expressed in the black of his Hussars uniform¹¹³⁰ with its death’s-head emblem. Through these representatives, the older

¹¹²⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Baum, V. *Letters to Carl Ostertag* [Online]. Leo Baeck Institute Archives. [Accessed 22.06.13].

¹¹²⁵ Baum, V. (1930). ‘Das kosmetische Zeitalter’. In: *Der Freihafen: Blätter der Kammerspiel im Lustspielhaus*. Berlin. 13.116. DLA 0673_1112_1.tif .

¹¹²⁶ Seidel, I. (1921). Maskenspiel : Novelle. In: *Die Stillen: Dichtungen. gesammelt von Max Tau*. – Trier. DLA 0835_0323_1.tif.

¹¹²⁷ Baum, V. (1939). *Helene*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. p.7.

¹¹²⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹¹²⁹ Baum, V. (1954). *Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel*. München: Verlag Kurt Desch.

¹¹³⁰ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.p.8 - ‘schwarzseher’, ‘galligen Temperaments’

generation is linked more closely to death and a dead world than the life of the present and future. Cornelia as maiden and bride in silk and jewels, – like peaches and roses,¹¹³¹ or the tripping child Delphine as she dances for her admiring audience, epitomise youth and brilliant life, as do the officers in their bright dress uniforms. But costume is also seen as an unconscious revelation of the nature of the self.¹¹³² The housewife is identified by her apron and at home in its protection, the country widow Brigitte von Rungström has boots ‘wie ein Stallknecht’.¹¹³³ They are concerned with the healthful products of their labours, free of vanity and pursuing the appropriately ‘womanly’ behaviour of caring and nurturing.

While certain costumes express what Ina Seidel considers as womanly attributes, her novels show men’s clothes as physically liberating. Wearing trousers allows a woman realise the deeds already present in her imagination, as the New Women of the time had discovered. The essentially theatrical act of disguising gender¹¹³⁴ carries no automatic condemnation from either author, with moral judgement being attached to the end rather than the means. The Fürstin Daschkoff, riding to save Russia,¹¹³⁵ Tatjana finding release from exploitation in the wild frenzy of Tartar dances,¹¹³⁶ or even the little Parisian dressmaker driven by love to accompany her naval officer dressed as his male valet,¹¹³⁷ all receive a sympathetic portrayal from Ina Seidel. Vicki Baum’s heroines are, however, occasionally more concerned with enhancing their femininity through dress than liberating themselves from its restraints, and when they adopt trousers for work or sport it is either a provocative contrast with, or a straightforward denial of, their gender.¹¹³⁸ Her portrayals of gender-flexibility are mainly male

¹¹³¹ Ibid., p.11.

¹¹³² Baum, V. (1939). *Helene*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. p.7.

¹¹³³ Seidel, I. (1952). *Das Tor der Frühe*. Bochum: Deutscher Buchklub. p.13.

¹¹³⁴ Both authors regard gender, as so frequently asserted in this thesis, as an immutable quality.

¹¹³⁵ Seidel, I. (no date given in edition). *Die Fürstin Reitet*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann. p.108.

¹¹³⁶ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.10.

¹¹³⁷ Seidel, I. (1920-21). 'Menuett auf Tahiti'. In: *Wieland eine dt. Monatsschr.; Zeitschr. für Kunst u. Dichtung*, 6. 2-8.

¹¹³⁸ The pre-pubescent child and the lesbian woman in *Zwischenfall auf Lohwinckel* habitually wear overalls.

dancers, who are willing to dress and act as women.¹¹³⁹ Their ill-defined sexuality offers no threat to the stability or moral order of society, although the close homoerotic relationship between the Rajah and the dancer Raka in *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* contributes to the childlessness of the Rajah and signals the extinction of the island's feudal government. Both authors are emphasising that, while occasional dressing-up gives women licence, it does not widen that definition of 'womanhood' or 'manhood' which must be maintained intact for healthy individuals within a healthy society.

The transformation of identity achieved by wearing masks, physical or metaphorical, is used by both authors, primarily to express the deceits and concealments of everyday life. It distinguishes those characters who choose to betray their 'true' self in pursuit of an end which the authors identify as unworthy, not only the traitorous betrayals of Vesper¹¹⁴⁰ but the secretive and disciplined restraint of Sixtus Walbrun, diplomat and Jesuit, who only reveals himself as he confronts his death.¹¹⁴¹

Ina Seidel's novella *Maskenspiel*, written in the same year as *Das Labyrinth* discusses the nature of literature and its symbolic function as well as the relationship between the author and her audience. The lyrical writer, Gabriel Zoller, performs the artist, even when alone: 'Der Schauspieler, der Mime, der Tänzer, der Musiker, der Lyriker sind in ihren Instinkten grundverwandt und an sich Eins.'¹¹⁴²

Gabriel, who seeks to discover the secrets of men's souls and transmit the knowledge, adopts what he considers a romantic coat and views his poet's face in the mirror with approval. Changing to a walking suit, he sees himself as, 'Elegante, Sorglose, Aristokratische,

¹¹³⁹ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.85.

¹¹⁴⁰ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.p.155.

¹¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.174.

¹¹⁴² Nietzsche F. *Götzen-Dämmerung - Kapitel 11, Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemäßen* [Online]. <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/7203/pg7203.html> [Accessed 4.12.14].

Welterfahrene¹¹⁴³ and his study is the tasteful scenery for his role. Success has made the public dramatisation of self for publicity no longer necessary but he feels that the performance is integral to the nature of any artist: ‘Das Spiel aufgeben, - die Maske nicht mehr brauchen, - hieß das nicht aufhören, Künstler zu sein?’¹¹⁴⁴

The passion of his youth was directed at Katharina Forstner, a heroine with the androgynous appeal of Tatjana¹¹⁴⁵ or Fürstin Daschkoff,¹¹⁴⁶ educated, and often dressed, as a boy. Her father’s study contained ‘ein Beispiel von jedem Gebilde, in dem Religion, Kultur und Natur greifbar geworden waren’¹¹⁴⁷ and her wild-animal¹¹⁴⁸ shyness unites her with these works of nature. She represents the unmasked, the unbounded spontaneity of physical and sensual experience as opposed to the symbolic and intellectual control of his own male world. Even in recounting his meeting with her, he experiences again its effect: ‘Es riß ihn fort, es war wie ein Rausch, er erzählte gut’¹¹⁴⁹ and the memory inspires a novella which becomes the foundation of his literary fame. His present fiancée, Eleonore, offers a bourgeois life with a touch of romance, in Vicki Baum’s terms, ‘eine Durchschnittsfrau mit einer Durchschnittsliebe’¹¹⁵⁰ compared to the ‘magisches Spiegelbild’ of Katharina Forstner. Katharina reappears in his life disguised as the boy-student Anselm, a disguise which Eleonore, rather than he, finally discovers. Both Katharina and Eleonore realise in the course of the meeting that Gabriel’s greatest work sprang from his recognition of the force of nature in Katharina rather than his own intellect. Ina Seidel references the Kabbalah in interpreting the raptures, addressed to

¹¹⁴³ Seidel, I. (1921). Maskenspiel : Novelle. In: *Die Stillen: Dichtungen. gesammelt von Max Tau*. Trier. DLA 0835_0323_1.tif. p.6.

¹¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹¹⁴⁵ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

¹¹⁴⁶ Seidel, I. (no date given in edition). *Die Fürstin Reitet*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

¹¹⁴⁷ Seidel, I. (1921). Maskenspiel : Novelle. In: *Die Stillen: Dichtungen. gesammelt von Max Tau*. – Trier. DLA 0835_0323_1.tif. p.4.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.5.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.15.

¹¹⁵⁰ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.80.

Katharina's name, as parasitism of her spirit¹¹⁵¹ – 'Sie haben ihren Namen gebraucht... und das war arge Magie, die Sie ausübten'.¹¹⁵² Anselm returns to her life as Katharina, having forced the revelation of Gabriel's essential mediocrity through her play-acting. Eleonore, freed from any illusions she may have had, is content to accept the benefits of marriage and offer a clear-sighted sympathy. Masks representing the illusions and deceits of social stereotypes are assumed and laid down by Gabriel and Katharina during the course of the novella to illustrate that the source of authentic art is beyond the conventional behaviours of human society. The, largely wordless, first encounter of Katharina and Gabriel was a meeting of souls, Ina Seidel is saying, and only through the contrived drama of their later encounter could the contrast between this and Gabriel's present good-natured but indifferent personal and literary personae be forced upon himself and Eleonore. Katharina voices the ideal unattainable for her creator as well as her fictional lover - 'Finden sie nicht auch eigentlich, daß es richtiger ist zu leben, - anstatt zu schreiben?'¹¹⁵³

Masks offer escape from the social self as well as concealment of it. As Vicki Baum's Balinese dancers put on their masks they drift from the everyday world to the symbolic space of the dance and fall into trance, to become identified with those eternal characters they represent. The masks and their associated costumes promote transformation along a continuum, progressing from named to anonymous person, to human animal, to animal per se and beyond into the demonic presences which dominate the daily routines of the farming community and demand daily placation through sacrifice. The transition affirms a unity of natural life on which the ideology of the community is based.

¹¹⁵¹ As Vicki Baum does in her emphasis on the significance of names – see p.175.

¹¹⁵² Seidel, I. (1921). Maskenspiel : Novelle. In: *Die Stillen: Dichtungen. gesammelt von Max Tau.* – Trier. DLA 0835_0323_1.tif. p.17.

¹¹⁵³ Ibid., pp.11-12.

6.8 Everyday Rituals

In the novels of both authors, the theatre is not simply a space for entertainment, social criticism or even therapeutic expression. They make explicit the ritual roots of drama, as they understood them from Nietzsche, from Ibsen whose plays they both read eagerly,¹¹⁵⁴ and other contemporary authors. Anthropological research informs Vicki Baum's accounts of dance and music in Bali.¹¹⁵⁵ The more literary and esoteric approach of the George Circle inspired Ina Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr*. The significance of ritual observance in Ina Seidel's midsummer festival¹¹⁵⁶ or Vicki Baum's Balinese dances is explained and made comprehensible to their readership through events and characters which they can interpret from their own observations and experience.

The everyday acts of home and work are presented as a studied performance of necessary gestures and behaviours which, like the quasi-sacerdotal rituals of Bali and midsummer, either maintain or dismantle social and familial structures. Characters deliberately dress to impress or to mislead, manipulating and redefining social relationships. The repeated actions of household tasks, the procedures of dressing, feeding and cleaning are closely observed and reported, with their symbolic functions of purification and spiritual nurturing giving dignity and power to the mundane and ordinary. Putting children to bed becomes an expression of the parental role and its contribution to social stability. Protection and love merge with control and responsibility to present the firm structure of a matriarchal order which both authors believe maintains family-life. This is set within a divine framework in the evening prayers of *Das*

¹¹⁵⁴ Witt, M. A. F. (2007). *Nietzsche and the Rebirth of the Tragic*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p.30.

¹¹⁵⁵ Baum, V. (1935). Bali (OC-94.18.1: BALI). 45 mins. Smithsonian Institute – a film directed by Vicki Baum.

¹¹⁵⁶ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

Wunschkind and a general but unspecified sense of what is right and good¹¹⁵⁷ in the grace before meals of Vicki Baum's godless households.¹¹⁵⁸

The more profound social rituals of birth and marriage are presented in both authors mainly in relationship to the overwhelming presence of the rituals of death. In *Das Wunschkind*, conception becomes part of a blood-rite and the births of both Christoph and Delphine are linked to the deaths of brother and mother. As Christ's crucifixion is contained within the Christmas Nativity, Christoph's death is prefigured in his conception and death is welcomed as a sacrificial performance in which the individual achieves the status of hero, putting the ideal above the corporeal and the perceived good of the majority over personal interests. The cyclical working of nature demands death to achieve renewal, and in the dissolution of death the individual is restored to unity with the elements of the natural world, relinquishing the individuality of bodily form.

Manifestations of the theatrical metaphor are not confined to accounts of performances of plays, dances and operas. Ina Seidel's clergymen characters are aware of the theatricality of preaching from a public pulpit. Even in a Northern Protestant context, with its historical objections to elaborate ritual, the relationship between religion and theatre is acknowledged, if reluctantly - 'ein Kommödiant könnt einen Pfarrer lehren' [...] 'Ja, wenn der Pfarrer ein Komödiant ist!'¹¹⁵⁹ The embodiment of ideas, which is the business of theatre, is replicated in the transubstantiation of bread and wine into body and blood, whether that is understood as a real or symbolic transformation. The priestly performance mediates to channel a spiritual presence into the physical communion. Ina Seidel's priests transmit the divine, the arcane or even the dramatic Word with some aplomb. Her pastors are actors in the drama of religion, that

¹¹⁵⁷ Sie trug den Knaben zum Bettchen und legte ihn nieder. "Es ist nun Zeit," sagte sie, "Zeit ist es, daß er lernt zu beten." Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.137.

¹¹⁵⁸ Baum, V. (1993). *Der Weihnachtsskarpfen: Erzählungen*. Köln: Kiepenheuer u. Witsch. p.119.

¹¹⁵⁹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.641.

organised structure of concepts, beliefs and rituals through which humanity intends to establish its place in a transcendental world order.

The doctrine of the incarnation of God in Christ and the performance of the divine as human which is thus displayed is crucial to the novel *Lennacker* with its recurrent theme of the conflicts between the spiritual and the physical demands of being human. The twelve nights of Lennacker's dreams, which have some parallels with the Stations of the Cross, leading up to the crucifixion,¹¹⁶⁰ produce dramatic scenes with a melodramatic, filmic quality and a simple Christian message transmitted through described action. The witch-torture and trial followed by Jakobus Johannes Lennacker's ruse to save more innocents from a similar fate,¹¹⁶¹ or Johannes Jakobus Lennacker's forgiveness of his brother's murderer during the Peasant's Revolt¹¹⁶² are suspense-full and visual scenes. Like parables or the episodes of a medieval morality play,¹¹⁶³ protagonists with near-caricatured features speak simple dialogue and perform vivid actions. The cosmic subjugation of the earth to the sun danced in her work *Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende*, overtly referenced in Diederich's footnote as a mystery or morality play,¹¹⁶⁴ has become the human subjection to a divine order which demands selfless and heroic sacrifice.

But the classical origins of *Planetenspiel* and the notions of ecstatic suffering and death as precursors to renewal are not lost in their transposition to a Christian ethic. The Nietzschean parallel between the Greek and Christian drama is explicit:

Auch im deutschen Mittelalter wälzten sich unter der gleichen dionysischen Gewalt immer wachsende Schaaren, singend und tanzend, von Ort zu Ort: in diesen Sanct-

¹¹⁶⁰ The Stations of the Cross generate their own dramatic ritual as the congregation follow the priest along the path of each representation on Good Friday.

¹¹⁶¹ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.273.

¹¹⁶² Cardinal, A. (2001). 'From Das Wunschkind to Lennacker: Strategies of Dissimulation re-examination of Ina Seidel's novels Das Wunschkind and Lennacker'. In: Durani, O. (ed.) *Travellers in Time and Space: The German Historical Novel*. New York: Rodopi. p.92.

¹¹⁶³ Oberamtagau with its famous Passion Plays was not far from the Seidel's final home in Starnberg and the Nazi hierarchy, including Hitler, visited the plays in 1933.

¹¹⁶⁴ Seidel, I. (1924). 'Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende'. In: *Die Tat*. Leipzig: Eugen Diederich. 16.3.161. 'Dies Planetenspiel ist gleichsam eine Wiederaufnahme des mittelalterlichen Mysterien' - Diederich

Johann- und Sanct-Veittänzern erkennen wir die bacchischen Chöre der Griechen wieder.¹¹⁶⁵

Like her character Cornelia in *Das Wunschkind*, or the generations of *Das unverwesliche Erbe*,¹¹⁶⁶ Ina Seidel seems to acknowledge both the virtues of a Prussian Protestantism demanding individual self-mastery, rigour and repression and that more delirious, colourful and sociable religious experience of a Catholic church where inevitable sin was followed by ready absolution

6.9 Performing the human animal

The oppositional nature of the belief-systems is minimised by the author's recognition that the physical universe is a single indivisible whole in which every entity has a being inseparably connected with every other, in a unity dominated by a transcendental power. It is that unity of existence,¹¹⁶⁷ which is expressed by the animal imagery that Gabriel Thöns identifies in Ina Seidel's work.¹¹⁶⁸ People take on animal characteristics in an unwitting and wordless performance which reveals their 'true nature'¹¹⁶⁹ and emphasises the performative element of the persona they maintain for society. The most sophisticated of characters in *Das Wunschkind*, are described in animal terms, the Abbé who danced 'wie eine Dohle im Schnee'¹¹⁷⁰ and Maximiliane who was enamoured 'wie eine Katze'.¹¹⁷¹ Corinne's father expresses his fury of frustration 'wie ein Raubtier im Käfig',¹¹⁷² Loriot will defend Charlotte 'wie ein Löwe'.¹¹⁷³ Complex images layer animal, human and social behaviours: 'Der Herr General Custine sei

¹¹⁶⁵ Nietzsche, F.W.: *Die Geburt der Tragödie* - Kapitel 10, [Online] <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/3261/10> [Accessed 23.1.14].

¹¹⁶⁶ Seidel, I. (1959). *Das Unverwesliche Erbe*. Darmstadt: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft.

¹¹⁶⁷ Dörr, G. (2007b). *Muttermythos und Herrschaftsmythos: Zur Dialektik der Aufklärung um die Jahrhundertwende bei den Kosmikern, Stefan George und in der Frankfurter Schule*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.46.

¹¹⁶⁸ Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos: die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. p.135.

¹¹⁶⁹ In Ina Seidel's estimation.

¹¹⁷⁰ Thöns, G. (1984). *Ibid.*, p.136.

¹¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.136.

¹¹⁷² Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.33.

¹¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.32.

eine ridicule Erscheinung, à la chien frisiert und anzusehen wie ein großer Wauwau.¹¹⁷⁴ The endearing and fragile charm of women is bird-like – Delphine pecks at her food ‘wählerisch wie ein Vögelchen’,¹¹⁷⁵ the voice of her mother Charlotte is described as a trilling like a bird.¹¹⁷⁶ But birds are also predators and carrion-eaters, Loulou smells like ‘Raubtierdunst’.¹¹⁷⁷ Raptors complete the cycle of birth, death, decay and renewal on which the earth and its inhabitants depend.

The mother’s relationship to her children is an instinctive, animal, one in both writers. The ‘fast tierhafter Mutterliebe’¹¹⁷⁸ of Brigitte ten Maan is common to their ‘good’ mothers whose entire devotion to their children is an idyllic expression of cosmic harmony. Even plants share human characteristics in these novels:

‘Die Pflanze verkörpert das Unproblematische einer Existenz ohne Wunsch – und damit ohne die Gefahr des Scheitens...Die Pflanze steht als Paradigma ursprünglichen Daseins.’¹¹⁷⁹

Women bloom like flowers. In Vicki Baum’s *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*, Raka remarks the progress of the young girl Lambon - ‘ihre Brüste zu knospen begonnen hatte’,¹¹⁸⁰ then seeing her again as wife of the Rajah - ‘die Blume ist aufgeblüht’.¹¹⁸¹ The image of motherhood, Brigitte ten Maan, expresses her arid life in vegetable terms – ‘Sieben Jahre hatte sie nicht geblüht, nicht Frucht getragen’.¹¹⁸²

¹¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.29.

¹¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.662.

¹¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.23.

¹¹⁷⁷ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.p.117.

¹¹⁷⁸ Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz.. p.139.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.143.

¹¹⁸⁰ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.55.

¹¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.134

¹¹⁸² Seidel, I. (1952). *Das Tor der Frühe*. Bochum: Deutscher Buchklub. p.78.

Yet flowers conceal putrefaction, not only masking the smell of death by their perfume but the thickened ears of Raka the dancer, newly infected by the death-in-life of leprosy – ‘Zwei Hibiskusblüten hingen mit ihren schweren Staubgefäßen über seine Ohren.’¹¹⁸³

The drooping weight of the heavy-scented flowers, whose shape mirrors and becomes one with the infected ear, images the dull lassitude of the beautiful, but leprous, dancer.

Agrarian and nomadic peoples, living in respectful familiarity with other organic life, make little distinction of species, according to both authors. In Ina Seidel’s *Das Labyrinth* - ‘hier auf Huahaine säugten die Weiber, weiß Gott, Hündchen und Ferkelchen’.¹¹⁸⁴ On Vicki Baum’s Bali: ‘die Kuh machte Schwierigkeiten, Pak nannte sie Schwester und Mutter’¹¹⁸⁵ Humanity itself is, by implication, a matter of performance, the acting out of a social life which overlays a universal organic unity. To make this clear, the two authors create images which transcend species-barriers, making fluid the rigid human/animal distinctions of first Christianity then scientific rationalism, in order to stress relatedness. They also show that the theatrical performance, which temporarily suspends that order, may be made to embody the rhythmic, ritualistic qualities of that more profound unity which, they allege, is the ‘truth’ of the human situation.

Ina Seidel’s *Sterne der Heimkehr* takes the definition of reality to a more esoteric level in a novel of masks and epiphanies. Wolfgang ten Maan enjoys for seven years the freedom offered by the mask of an assumed identity. As Peter Steenbock, sharing the astrological significance of Capricorn,¹¹⁸⁶ he is depersonalised, fulfilling but also escaping from, his individual fate of reincarnating Elsabe’s spirit.¹¹⁸⁷ The characters of the novel and their roles in its dramatic performance interweave throughout the midsummer night when the border between the

¹¹⁸³ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.196.

¹¹⁸⁴ Seidel, I. (1978). *Das Labyrinth*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch. p.104.

¹¹⁸⁵ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.23.

¹¹⁸⁶ Capricorn is Der Steinbock.

¹¹⁸⁷ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.160.

physical and the spirit worlds is suspended. The human/animal duality of Vicki Seidel's Barong dancers is echoed in the androgynous¹¹⁸⁸ character Tatjana who, when she dances, seems more animal than human –

Er dröhnte der Boden plötzlich unter stampfenden Sohlen, schollen kurze rauhe Schreie, flog dort oben der Tänzer auf die Bühne [...] er stand auf einem Bein, auf der äußersten Spitze der Zehen, und verharrte vibrierend beim Gesurr der Saiten wie ein in der Luft stehender Nachtschmetterling über einer Blüte.¹¹⁸⁹

The distinction between the two life-forms erodes under her influence: 'Menschen bekommen Tiergesichter – Tiere werden menschlich'.¹¹⁹⁰

The potency of the wild world outside the city intrudes into the Berlin night-club and, initiates Aage's release from the urban Loulou. For both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, it is dance, which displays the animality of the human in the movement of head and limbs, and the pre-verbal sounds of breath, feet and cries. Rubruk's midsummer ritual dance excites 'Schwindel' and 'Rausch'¹¹⁹¹ and, in overcoming barriers of thought and reason, frees that which is normally repressed in human society. Red Alois, inflamed by sex and jealousy through the agency of Loulou, who is always presented as an animal presence, is driven to murder. The theatrical art of dance, which prompts interpretation of Vicki Baum's Balinese Barong creature as threatening, and a pantomime horse as comedic, despite their similarities, depends on the audience's ability to identify with, anthropomorphise perhaps, the animal form. It suggests a communication between animal and human which, for Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, confirmed a universal organic unity central to their interpretation of life and to their personal living.¹¹⁹²

¹¹⁸⁸ The male pronoun conveys the observers' confusion as to the sex of the performer.

¹¹⁸⁹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.9.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.102.

¹¹⁹¹ Thöns, G. (1984). *Aufklärungskritik und Weiblichkeitsmythos : die Krise der Rationalität im Werk Ina Seidels*. PhD thesis. Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br. Aachen: Fotodruck J. Mainz. p.137.

¹¹⁹² Both talk about pets as near-human, Vicki Baum's dogs and desert-fox or Ina Seidel's St. Bernard dog.

6.10 The play-actor – the performer as embodier

While Ina Seidel's novels are less concerned with the professional theatre than the relationship of theatre to life, both she and Vicki Baum insist on the power of the dramatic performance. A performed work, whether musical, dramatic or liturgical, releases both observer and performer from the immediate concerns of everyday life. Theatre is an act of communion with what both authors see as a higher force of spirit or intellect. In a religious context, the priest is the medium through which the divine Creator speaks. The author, composer or painter, in the lesser creations of art, will provide the stimulus which allows audience and performer to soar above earthly matters or sink below them to reach the deep-flowing unconscious heritage of humanity.

Every performance is significant to the performer, elevating or degrading them according to the mores of their environment. Even in the home-reading of plays, Delphine becomes the victim of her French and theatrical heritage, which Cornelié's education of the girl had aimed to suppress:

Allmählich ein neuer Geist von dem Mädchen Besitz zu ergreifen schien und ihr Wesen immer freier und sicherer zu machen, ihre Schönheit zu durchstrahlen begann.¹¹⁹³

The girl is possessed by the spirits of her ancestry but also by the drama, freed from the acquired civilising habits of her present family and delivered up to that unconscious self dictated by blood. When she becomes a professional play-actor, her abandonment is complete and she betrays both womanhood and upbringing.¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁹³ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.640.

¹¹⁹⁴ 'Der Schauspieler, der seinem Körper fortwährend zum Instrument fremder Charakter macht, wird der eigene Charakter schließlich selber zur Rolle, und zu der am wenigsten beherrschten.' p.642. 'Und dann war da dieser fahle Bursche – dieser Hidalgo, der sie behext hatte – dieser Lantz.. Er sie – aber sie wohl auch ihn!' p.763.Ibid., Interesting that Lantz is characterised as Hidalgo – who also appears as a similar character in Heine's *Der Heimkehr*.

The theatre-actor, like the priest,¹¹⁹⁵ is the vehicle through which ideas are made physical and must surrender self during the performance to become a medium between the physical and the transcendental.¹¹⁹⁶

Der Schauspieler aber muß sich den Gewalten überlassen, aus deren Zusammenwirken das Verhalten der Gestalt des Dramas, die er verkörpert, erst möglich wird; er sagt nicht nur Worte, er rezitiert nicht nur Verse, nein, er wird zu einem Menschen, dessen Charakter es ist, so zu handeln, wie er zu agieren hat, so zu sprechen, wie es der Dichter ihm vorschreibt.¹¹⁹⁷

Both authors are concerned to portray how the transformation from self to other is achieved, to what end and with what effect. Their work is based on an understanding of the individual as the physical carrier of a complex heritage, that of universal organic matter, of humanity itself, of the subdivisions of sex and race and, finally, subject to the accumulation of past and present social conventions. The male actor, with his greater rational powers, can dominate the roles. The female actor, is, as they see it, bound tightly by her womanhood to the physical world and the physical creation of new life and is therefore unable to break loose with impunity. A successful actress is necessarily an unsuccessful representative of womanhood – as Annemarie Seidel's inability to adequately support her own four children would prove for the sister who did take on that responsibility. The broader suggestion remains, that the public performance of art is inevitably compromised by a female constitution whose creative achievements are best realised within home and family.

The novels of both authors emphasise the ambiguous nature of performance. Voice and limbs impose their own limitations but the imagination of both performer and audience transform the physical presence into a vehicle for the disembodied, and therefore immense, power of imaginative, intellectual and emotional experience in present time. For the performer, tight

¹¹⁹⁵ And both are male in these novels, thus confirming women's inability to manage the performance of these roles.

¹¹⁹⁶ The priest, who claims the power to incarnate spiritual forces, relies on the pre-existent belief of his congregation, reinforced by the structures of the religion, to overcome empirical doubts.

¹¹⁹⁷ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.642.

throats and damaged lungs are overcome by the dramatic 'Rausch'. The transformation of the stage-performer is beyond the conscious alteration of appearance and style that Doris Hart adopts in her ordinary life.¹¹⁹⁸ It is a change of physical state, equivalent to the priestess-like Teragia's invocation of trance.¹¹⁹⁹ The performance and the performing space become temporarily more real than the real-world.

Wenn man in der Oper drinnen ist, dann glaubt man, daß es überhaupt nicht anderes gibt. Wenn man draußen ist, dann sieht man erst, was für ein Hundeleben man gehabt hat.¹²⁰⁰

The revelatory function of theatre works on the performer as well as the audience. In *Eingang zur Bühne* the operatic tragedy of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*¹²⁰¹ produces its cathartic effect on an audience of which the girl Elis is a part, (although, as a singer, intimately involved with the real-life personae). The emotional effect of the opera acts to intensify and clarify her reasoning and confirm the decision which results in her suicide.

For the individual actor, fellow-performers exist in an intermediary position. They too are involved in the physical and emotional space of the stage but they are also a primary audience for each performer, responding both within and outside their allotted roles to the stage-work of the other, to invoke an imaginative reverberation in the audience beyond. Real-life relationships between performers exist in this area between reality and fantasy. In the performance of her role as the tragic Isolde, Dima realises the triviality of her real-life relationship with Rassiem, the tenor singing Tristan and makes her opportunistic decisions in

¹¹⁹⁸ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.95.

¹¹⁹⁹ This is invoked for healing, not to transmit the wisdom of the ages. - Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.157.

¹²⁰⁰ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.192.

¹²⁰¹ 'ich suche heute noch nach einem Werke von gleich gefährlicher Faszination, von einer gleich schauerlichen und süßen Unendlichkeit, wie der Tristan ist – ich suche in allen Künsten vergebens ... Dies Werk ist durchaus das non plus ultra Wagners ... Ich nehme es als Glück ersten Rangs, zur rechten Zeit gelebt und gerade unter Deutschen gelebt zu haben, um reif für dies Werk zu sein.' - Nietzsche, F. *Ecce homo*:6, <http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Nietzsche,+Friedrich/Ecce+Homo/Warum+ich+so+klug+bin>

the light of her now-clear knowledge.¹²⁰² Other theatrical liaisons, Doris Hart and Delmonte¹²⁰³ or Delphine and Lantz¹²⁰⁴ are subject to the confusion of realities and thus inevitably shatter. According to both authors, a sexual relationship implies, for a woman at least, a degree of self-commitment through which ‘womanhood’ (including pregnancy) asserts itself. Faced with the unwanted recognition of a female self which challenges her professional role, and unable to maintain the conflict, the woman abandons either the relationship or the ‘womanhood’ and occasionally dies in the process. Once again, the authors are displaying the Nietzschean analysis for their popular readership:

Jede Verachtung des geschlechtlichen Lebens, jede Verunreinigung desselben durch den Begriff `unrein` ist das Verbrechen selbst am Leben, - ist die eigentliche Sünde wider den heiligen Geist des Lebens.¹²⁰⁵

The theatre-audience, as character in the works of these authors, is an additional commentator on events, offering that public judgement which the author wishes to bring to the attention of the reader without implicating themselves in its direction. The author remains distanced from horrified condemnation of Corinne and Christophe as they watch Delphine, since her critical eye also falls on them as part of the popular audience. The raucous shouts of the brown-shirts booing the Jewish impresario off the stage during Doris Hart’s European tour echo some of the author’s own critiques. Stage performance provokes that immediate response which a writer lacks. Vicki Baum and Ina Seidel appear to revel in the vicarious experience of performance through their characters, giving physical presence to that reading-audience of which they are apparently always aware as they write.

¹²⁰² Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹²⁰³ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹²⁰⁴ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

¹²⁰⁵ Nietzsche, F. *Ecce Homo*,

[Online].http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=1466164&pageno=21[Accessed 30. 6.14].

6.11 Melodramatic interludes

Despite both authors' criticism of populism and mass-culture, with the predictable late-Nietzschean origins, they both embraced those works that Nietzsche damned as melodramatic and inauthentic:

Victor Hugo und Richard Wagner – sie bedeuten Ein und Dasselbe: dass in Niedergangs-Culturen, dass überall, wo den Massen die Entscheidung in die Hände fällt, die Echtheit überflüssig, nachtheilig, zurücksetzend wird.¹²⁰⁶

They retain their allegiance to the Wagner and Victor Hugo of Nietzsche's earlier enthusiasm,¹²⁰⁷ referencing them directly and indirectly¹²⁰⁸ as offering eternal truths and accurate portrayals of the human condition. Ina Seidel's account of the Fürstin Romanovna's ride across the steppes, or Tatjana's wild dancing, owe much to the poetic fury of Hugo's *Mazeppa*. Her street-rabbles¹²⁰⁹ echo those of Hugo's Paris. Vicki Baum continually rewrites the *Liebestod*¹²¹⁰ in the climactic conclusions of theatrical plots.¹²¹¹ Melodrama continues to dominate novels whose broad and indistinct outlines sweep across all nations of the globe. The military actions of *Das Wunschkind* march over the map of Europe and one Prussian officer becomes much the same as another as uniforms ride into view to create climactic moments. Peripheral characters become representatives of psychic, emotional or moral states, subordinated in the text to descriptions of physical drama. Vicki Baum's procession of neurotic Prima Donnas are equally supported by battalions of pretty failed maids and plain hopeless secretaries, both acting as foils for the tumultuous melodramas of the star's life.

The work of both authors maintains Gledhill's suggestion¹²¹² that melodrama arises from a demand for a mythic dimension to coexist with the real world when the moral and social order

¹²⁰⁶ Der Fall Wagner, Turiner Brief vom Mai 1888. <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/autor/442>.

¹²⁰⁷ Rejected by 1881 as inauthentic and melodramatic.

¹²⁰⁸ Seidel, I. (no date given in edition). *Die Fürstin Reitet*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

¹²⁰⁹ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann.

¹²¹⁰ The final aria from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* setting a romantic association of death and the erotic.

¹²¹¹ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein. Baum, V. (1965). *Der Eingang zur Bühne*.

Berlin: Ullstein, Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein.

¹²¹² Gledhill, C. (1991). *Stardom, Industry of Desire*. London: Routledge. p.211.

has become drained of the sacred. Petro locates sources of melodrama in the late medieval mystery or morality play, (which Ina Seidel references in *Planetenspiel*) and the relationship-dramas of Hollywood, Vicki Baum's familiar territory, indicating that 'melodrama puts pressure on the real so as to allow the unrepresented or the repressed to achieve material presence'.¹²¹³ The recognisable tones of popular Freudianism reverberate through the techniques as well as the plots of their novels as both authors attempt to reveal the unconscious sources of dramatic action. Seidel illustrates the transition between conscious and unconscious wish-fulfilment in *Das Wunschkind* as Cristophe questions the effective power of his imagination, while Elsabe in *Das Tor der Frühe* appears to achieve her will to masculine freedoms in an assumption of the male body of Wolfgang – a melodramatic questioning of physical realities which Seidel leaves in suspension through this and the subsequent book *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Vicki Baum's questioning of assumptions of reality through melodrama are most evident in Doris' call upon an unconscious strength which will transcend the weakness of her damaged body¹²¹⁴ or the murder which ends the incestuous relationship of *Kristall im Lehm* (1953) when.....finally confront the Oedipal roots of their sexual difficulties.

Both Seidel and Baum write melodrama as a response to the social condition of fragmented and de-sacralised urban societies, setting cosmopolitan disharmony against representations of the communal values and belief-systems of smaller and more cohesive rural communities. The confrontations between the two, depicted in the car-accident of *Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel*¹²¹⁵ or Aage and Wolfgang's wanderings through the night-time streets of Berlin,¹²¹⁶ generate the transition from corrupt urban to purer rural moralities. Both incidents reveal the city-dwellers' conscious loss of shared lives and values, and their residual longing to feel and experience as

¹²¹³ Petro, P. (1989). *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p.30.

¹²¹⁴ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.116.

¹²¹⁵ Baum, V. (1954). *Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel*. München: Verlag Kurt Desch.

¹²¹⁶ Seidel, I. (1952). *Das Tor der Frühe*. Bochum: Deutscher Buchklub.

part of a greater moral community. The melodramatic incidents offer the reader, like the film-audience, an insight into the conflict of good and evil, re-imagined for modern-times. The emotional intensity of both scenes carries the singular event over into the universal. The communal response to a fatal accident and lost and vulnerable children overwhelms the individual reaction to the particular circumstances of the novels.

Contemporary film-melodramas¹²¹⁷ expressed the dormant spirituality lurking behind the urban facades, what Brooks calls the 'moral occult; the domain of operative spiritual values which is both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality'.¹²¹⁸ The high-melodrama which threads through Vicki Baum's *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*, *Kristall im Lehm* or Ina Seidel's *Das Wunschkind* reinforce the esoteric sentiments of their authors. That conviction, which Petro suggests as a source of melodramatic expression, that realist depictions may be inadequate, 'may no longer possess truth and epistemological value'¹²¹⁹ is evident. The party at the Bryants' house in *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* has all the elements identified in Linda Williams' analysis of filmic melodrama.¹²²⁰ Doris, ignorant of the nature of the event, victim of poverty, isolation and hopelessness, goes to a party epitomising the conservative vision of wealthy debauchery. Pathos and action coincide¹²²¹ as Basil, personification of jealousy, arrives in the nick of time to save her from rape, shooting both Doris and her attacker. Good and evil are juxtaposed as Doris and the other helpless but misguided girls, who are victims, if not entirely good, face their nameless and faceless exploiters who are definitely evil. The scene ends in a renewal of innocence when Doris, almost miraculously returns to life. She wakes up

¹²¹⁷ Petro cites *Dirnentragödie*, *Hintertreppe*, *Zuflucht*, and *Die freudlose Gasse*. p. 200.

¹²¹⁸ Brooks, P. (1976). *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. London: Yale University Press.

¹²¹⁹ Petro, P. (1989). *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar*. Princeton: Princeton UNIVERSITY PRESS p.30.

¹²²⁰ Bold type indicates Williams' definitions of elements of melodrama in film.

¹²²¹ Williams, L. (1998). 'Melodrama Revised'. In: Browne, N. (ed.) *Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 42-88. Web-page *Elements of melodramatic cinema* [Online] <http://www.umsl.edu/~gradyf/film/Melodrama.htm> [Accessed 11.1.14].

cleansed and purified, surrounded by the calm white order of the hospital bed, ready to start the new stage of life which will lead her to self-realisation, fame and fortune. The concept of a dissipated party, initially described through simple realism, is developed through the melodrama of the shooting, to expose the moral dilemmas of capitalist excess and female oppression. The climactic event initiates Doris' salvation through drama.

6.12 Dionysian Rausch

Loulou's murder in Ina Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr*¹²²² or the violent verse of *Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende* fulfils the same melodramatic intent. The Nietzschean interpretation of both works as manifestations of the Dionysian spirit been mentioned previously (p.249). In the abbreviated poetic diversion of *Planetenspiel* performed in *Sterne der Heimkehr*, flaming torches illuminate the clearing in the woods around the ruined castle, 'Joie d'été'. The spirits of the dead lovers who met there are reanimated in the performances of Rubruk and Tatjana to proclaim the eternal renewal of their loves and their beings. The explanatory epilogue comes outside the performance, when Rubruk meets Mathilde, the woman to whom his verse was directed. He asserts the immortality of love and art, defining the oppositions between body and spirit, man and woman and time and eternity. The wordless physical dialogue of jealousy and abandonment between Doris and Basil in Vicki Baum's novel¹²²³ becomes an abstruse intellectual statement. Rubruk disappears into the landscape creating the climactic moment of rebirth to a new life for Mathilde. Loulou, also discarded by Rubruk, invites Red Alois' violence and thus her own melodramatic murder.

The melodrama of *Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende* is equally grandiloquent, with its melodrama lying in words rather than the slow-turning of the concentric circles of dancers. A creation myth with astrological connotations for the life of man expresses the eternal

¹²²² Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

¹²²³ Baum, V. (1967). *Die Karriere der Doris Hart*. Berlin: Ullstein.

unity of all life and its total dependence on the sun, the masculine *Führer*. The equivalent character in the novel *Sterne der Heimkehr* is the paternal character of Lermoser, the Master, the Architect¹²²⁴ around whose paternal wisdom all other characters revolve and whose guidance points their way forward.

The declamatory language of the masque is energetic, its images impassioned. The dark sphere of Mother Earth is penetrated (raped?) in her sleep by the light of the planet Uranus,¹²²⁵ who sows in her 'Erzen, Metallen, blühend Kristallen'.¹²²⁶ All the planets bring their elemental contribution to the dark Earth until the sun shines upon her and in his light she celebrates: Ja, ich blühe, ja, ich blühe, \ Und ich blühe ganz durch dich! \ Brausend reck ich meine Bäume \ Zu dir auf und grüße dich.¹²²⁷

The circling of the dancers and steady rhythm of the verse, like the Gamelan music Vicki Baum writes as accompanying the ritual dances of Bali, is meditative and trance-inducing while the images of the text itself are active, even savage in their implications.

Bedrängt ungeheuer \ Von zeugenden Feuer \ Von dehnender Kraft.

Es drohen die Glieder \ Der Kinder mir wieder \ Den Schoß zu zerreißen, - O tobendes Kreisen \ In alter und neuer Gestirnschwangerschaft.¹²²⁸

The violence of an unseen world of powerful forces, warring amongst themselves, beyond human understanding or control but nevertheless impinging on the human lives below, which the Barong dance acted out in Vicki Baum's *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* is made verbal for a literate

¹²²⁴ Der Architekt stellt weder einen dionysischen, noch einen apollinischen Zustand dar: hier ist es der große Willensakt, der Wille, der Berge versetzt, der Rausch des großen Willens, der zur Kunst verlangt. Die mächtigsten Menschen haben immer die Architekten inspiriert; der Architekt war stets unter der Suggestion der Macht. Im Bauwerk soll sich der Stolz, der Sieg über die Schwere, der Wille zur Macht versichtbaren; Architektur ist eine Art Macht-Beredsamkeit in Formen, bald überredend, selbst schmeichelnd, bald bloß befehlend. Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung* - Kapitel 11, 'Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemäßen.' [Online]. <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/7203/pg7203.html> [Accessed 4.12.14].

¹²²⁵In astrological circles, Uranus is the Awakener, the planet governing discoveries, revolutions, technologies and intellectual matters.

¹²²⁶ Seidel, I. (1924). 'Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende'. In: *Die Tat*. Leipzig: Eugen Diederich. 16.3.165.

¹²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.167.

¹²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.162.

and literary society. Like the eager watchers of the Barong dance, and even those Westerners who initially resist its gamelan accompaniment, the dances of *Planetenspiel* and *Sterne der Heimkehr* are calculated to impel participants and observers into a state of exaltation or *Rausch*. In Ina Seidel's novel, the characters, freed by the ecstatic experience gain access to a new life. Forgetting the modernity of the present, they become part of ancient rituals and Bacchic rites. The middle-aged landowner Wendelin, flushed with exhilaration (and wine) seizes the hand of the virgin Erdmuthé and their future union is promised in a bound over the fire. Aage snatches at the dark eroticism of Loulou 'ein kleines böses Inselweib',¹²²⁹ closely followed by his aroused brother 'in Satyrssprüngen'.¹²³⁰ Rubruk, dancing like the angular figures on Grecian urns, carries Tatjana over the fire in Dionysian ecstasy.

Rubruk folgte der Musik mit wilden und eckigen Gebärden, jetzt stieß er einen Schrei aus, und mit einem kurzen wuchtigen Anlauf sprang er über das herabgesunkene Feuer, seine Tänzerin mit sich reißend.¹²³¹

As orchestrator of the event, Rubruk with his whistling¹²³² and his mouth-organ¹²³³ is the charismatic leader, fascinating both men and women. He is the Pan of the Grecian urns, the Pied Piper of fairy-stories or Zarathustra, the dancer, Nietzsche's visionary. He leads his young disciples in the dance that will reveal to them that the instinctual passions of the body are the source of truth while constructions of the intellect deceive. He demonstrates a utopian 'ethic of conviction' which fails to acknowledge a social responsibility for the weak, whom he ruthlessly uses, abuses and abandons in pursuit of his own way and his own art.

Realities interweave as the urbanites play pagan nature-folk and in doing so become caught up in the symbolic significance of the rite. Mathilde realises that the license of an artist's life and marriage to a German landowner are incompatible, Wendelin finds his virgin bride, Loulou

¹²²⁹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.131.

¹²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.131.

¹²³¹ *Ibid.*, p.131.

¹²³² *Ibid.*, p.98.

¹²³³ *Ibid.*, p.81.

plays off her several temporary lovers against each other until her indiscriminate sexuality culminates in her death at the hand of Red Alois. Mars, the red planet, God of War, drives renewal by purification through violence. But Loulou's murder is real, as well as symbolic and is followed by the real-life consequence of lawful arrest.

The symbolic intent of the evening's celebrations is the assertion of the Nietzschean cycles of eternal renewal within a cosmic dimension which suspends all preconceptions of human time and moralities and which the midsummer night calls into being. The barriers between time and eternity, like those between body and spirit become porous and the wraiths absorb their performers. Rubruk and Tatjana leave together after the night's celebrations, sharing the amorality of art and the detachment of the artist from earthly concerns. The terrestrial lovers Erdmuthe and Wendelin promise their future marriage, to establish a dynasty rooted in, nurtured by, and custodians of, the local German soil.

The performers of the recitation and dance, a chorus of youths and girls, on a voyage of discovery and return to nature, slip off into the woods. A night of euphoria strips inhibitions and brings revelations as men are returned to the embodied Heimat of women through sexual encounters and the Appollonian/Dionysic balance central to Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie*¹²³⁴ is restored.

If Rubruk and Tatjana represent the triumph of art over nature, and Aage and Wolfgang personify that youthful potential which can be led back from its mistakes to the true values of mother and home, then Loulou and Red Alois embody forces which resist integration within a reformed social order. The symbolic significance of Red Alois as Mars overwhelms his characterisation. He works on the borders of the farming society, closer to his animals than the people. As Mars, he demands sacrifice to prevent the natural wilderness, which is also the

¹²³⁴ See p. 156.

primitive wildness of the human animal, overwhelming cultivation¹²³⁵ and civilisation. His potential aggression is ambivalent, protective as well as destructive. The familiar spirit of the astrological Mars is the wolf and the raging sexual jealousy for possession of Loulou between red Alois/Mars and Wolfgang ten Maan, the spirit-possessed loner who goes the way of the wolf, is that of wild and predatory beasts. It is also the dramatisation of the conflict between the the animal and the socialised natures of humanity. Red Alois is a remnant of a pre-verbal, pre-rational, time, unable to dissipate passion through words. There is an instinctive kinship between him and that primitive sexuality which persists in Loulou, and is latent in Wolfgang, all three alienated in this respect from the civilised society of the others. Loulou has left behind the fashions of her city life to become, in terms of the novel, the essential female, who encourages the violent conflict of Alois and Wolfgang and is finally complicit in her subjugation to the essential male. The theatrical event, Ina Seidel believes, has exposed truths which lie hidden beneath the costumes and conventions of polite social life.

The astrological sub-plot of the novel¹²³⁶ is spelled out in the declamations of *Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnennwende* (1924), a companion work to the novel, which was published in Diederich's monthly-magazine *Die Tat*. A masque, elaborating on that central event of *Sterne der Heimkehr* is given stage directions, costumes, choreography and a declaimed text. The textual parallels are striking: the Mars of *Planetenspiel* declares his intentions with regard to Earth:

Sturm und Streit will ich ihr bringen,
 Das verjüngt ihr das Geblüt.
 Gib sie her, ich will sie schwingen,
 Bis gleich mir sie rötlich glüht!¹²³⁷

¹²³⁵ Cato's book on farming proposes a ritual invoking Mars Silvanus in his protective role. [Online] <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/iedocctr/ie-texts/Mars-prayer.html> [Accessed 21.9.13].

¹²³⁶ Ina Seidel's brother and son-in-law were involved in Weimar astrological groups.

¹²³⁷ Seidel, I. (1924). 'Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnennwende'. In: *Die Tat*. Leipzig: Eugen Diederich. 16.3.166.

In the violence of the *Sterne der Heimkehr* dance, the flushed and helpless Loulou hangs in Alois' arms like a wilted flower: 'Loulou [...] die, aufgeblättert wie roter Mohn, in den Armen des Alois hing.'¹²³⁸ She is a very willing victim of the whirling fury ('Da fühlt man doch noch, daß man einem Mann in die Hände geraten ist.')1239 and the increasing ferocity is welcomed rather than repulsed:

[er begann] sie ein-, zwei-, dreimal in die Luft zu heben, daß sie über seinem Haupte schwebte, als sollte sie in die Flamme geschleudert werden oder gegen den Erdboden – nur zerbrochen, nur vernichtet.¹²⁴⁰

She invites her extermination, assenting to her removal as that of a noxious influence on a youthful society which is claiming its right to leave the corruption of an old order behind and move towards a purer future. Ina Seidel is not writing with any political intent, rather following a literary fashion,¹²⁴¹ asserting the voluptuousness of tragedy in cruelty and the triumph that represents over the absurdity of life. The scene of Loulou, she of the red kimono, Japanese wood sandals, silk scarves and perfumed cushions,¹²⁴² revelling in the arms of a 'Stallknecht', stinking from his duties on the farm and fields is absurd and, to the fictional observers with their personal and class morality, deeply distasteful. But the text shows a bizarre beauty in its atmospheric evocation of the dance itself as Alois takes the stage: 'Ein Dämon chien sich aus den sommerlichen Wäldern her verrirrt zu haben, angelockt vom Klang der Zithern und vom Schein des Feuers.'¹²⁴³ The reaction of Mathilde stresses the fluid ecstasy which is the counterpart of the fiery euphoria, both resulting in the same elemental fusion: 'fühlte sie ihren

¹²³⁸ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.128.

¹²³⁹ Ibid., p.129.

¹²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.129.

¹²⁴¹ It is fascinating that a performance of the Balinese Legong Dance, which so inspired Vicki Baum also encouraged Antonin Artaud in the development of his theories of theatre: 'Le théâtre qui n'est dans rien, mais se sert de tous les langages : gestes, sons, paroles, feu, cris, se retrouve exactement au point où l'esprit a besoin d'un langage pour produire ses manifestations. - Briser le langage pour toucher la vie, c'est faire ou refaire le théâtre'. Artaud, A. *Le Théâtre et son double* [Online]

<http://enseignerpartager.free.fr/documents/certification/lectureartaud.pdf>. [Accessed 6.11.14].

¹²⁴² Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei. p.12.

¹²⁴³ Ibid., p.130.

Körper kaum noch unterschieden vom Leib, vom Duft, von der Süße der sommerlichen Erde;¹²⁴⁴

Lermoser, the paternal figure, announces the end of the evening and the return to a normality which acknowledges the evening's revelations while re-asserting the protection of home: 'Das Fest ist vorüber, Kinder', sagt er endlich, ohne jemand anzureden, 'Das Feuer erlischt, der Morgenwind kommt – wollt ihr noch nach Hause gehen?' Loulou's body is found next day, killed by the wild man who, unable to dissipate jealous fury and sexual frustration in words, used fire and violence to destroy the woman whose whole cynical exploitative life, reflecting national disillusion and hopelessness, is shown as an enduring outrage against that genuine, truthful emotion which will regenerate the nation. Aage is released from her clutches, brotherly strife, which threatens Wolfgang's return to home and family is resolved and Red Alois, as Mars, fulfils his cosmic destiny. The new world can start again with the innocence of Erdmuthe in the German utopia of Wendelin's home. Mathilde, now sure of her artist's isolation, but consoled by a belief in Rubruk's eternal spiritual companionship, can commit herself wholeheartedly to her painting. Aage and Wolfgang return in brotherly love to mother and home. Ina Seidel writes her utopian vision for Germany in the renewed lives of the vigorous, and youthful, characters led by the paternal visionary Lermoser and illuminated by the pure art of Rubruk.

While the ritual violence, the insistence on blood sacrifice on German soil to redeem the past and purify the future under charismatic leadership read now as clear manifestations of Nazism, the Jewish Klemperer, reading *Sterne der Heimkehr* in an air-raid shelter during a bombing raid, was able to write: 'trotzdem das Buch 1922 in München ausgearbeitet sein dürfte, fehlt jede Spur von Hitlerismus. Im Grunde auch jede Spur von Politik. Nur der Aufbauwille, wie

¹²⁴⁴ Ibid., p.129.

man heute sagen würde, ist vorhanden'.¹²⁴⁵ The book's wider popular readership, during the very early days of the National Socialist organisation, were unlikely to have made a more political response than this academic philologist in 1944, but rather appreciated the novel in a context of 'Aufbruch' literature, showing the efforts of youth to lead the nation into the future.

6.13 The immortality of art

Sterne der Heimkehr written after the social collapse of First World War and *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* written in 1937, as the exiled Vicki Baum watched European events, are attempts to find positive responses to disillusionment. The Christianity of the Lennacker-generations, now denying 'Das Gesetz des Körpers'¹²⁴⁶ is inadequate in face of the physical imperatives imposed by war. Hansjakob Lennacker's response 'er eben Arzt werden *mußte*,¹²⁴⁷ denies the transcendence which Ina Seidel considers as vital.

Vicki Baum, voice of modernity, summarises her own stance:

Doch bitte ich, mich nicht mit den Mode-Existenzialisten zu verwechseln, deren schwärzeste Philosophie nur darin gipfelt, daß wir existieren – weiter nichts.

Ich bin gar nicht so sicher meine Herren.[...]Solange ich zurückdenken kann, ist es mir versagt geblieben, an die Existenz von Raum und Zeit zu glauben [...]. Ich glaube, daß die Zeit – wie wir dieses Etwas zu benennen belieben – keine Kette ist, in der einiges vorher geschehen ist und anderes später geschehen wird. Ich meine, es ist ein Ganzes, in dem es kein Vorher und Nachher gibt, ebensowenig, wie es im Weltall, in der Unendlichkeit des Universums ein Oben und Unten gibt. So daß alles, was geschehen wird, schon geschehen ist. Jenseits unserer winzigen menschlichen Realität¹²⁴⁸

Confident that human definitions of reality are insignificant and the claims of rationalism are folly and vanity, she proposes a fatalistic acceptance of the random afflictions of a timeless world order.

¹²⁴⁵ Klemperer, V. (ed.) (2007). *Die Tagebücher (1933–1945)*. Sonnabend Vorm. 30 September 44. *Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe* Berlin: Directmedia Publishing (Digitale Bibliothek). [Online] http://images.fembio.net/Viktor_Klemperer_ueber_Ina_Seidel.pdf. [Accessed 14.7.15].

¹²⁴⁶ Seidel, I. (1982). *Lennacker*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.624.

¹²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.614.

¹²⁴⁸ Baum, V. (1987). *Es war alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen*. Darmstadt: Kiepenheuer & Witsch. p.471-2.

Facing their fictional mountains of corpses, and the actual ones of the nation's recent history, Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum create visions of eternity achieved through art. The Rausch engendered by theatre merges the being-human into being-part-of-nature, allowing the individual to experience the timeless and spaceless existence that is fundamental to the authors' hope for salvation, both personal and social. In their vision of theatre, the serious performer is both artist and work of art, thus achieving immortality and allowing the audience visions of a world beyond the everyday. In *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*, the dancer Raka is reincarnated in the child, who already images 'the radiant, shining Raka of earlier times'.¹²⁴⁹ The appearance of Delphine on the Berlin stage is described without the explicit mention of reincarnation but the strange impression she makes on Christophe and Cornelia prompts that interpretation:

die Stimme! Das war Delphines Stimme; jedoch was tat sie mit ihr! Als spielte sie ein Instrument, so ließ sie die Worte aus diesem Element der Stimme hervohblühen; die Stimme konnte gebrochen, fast rauh, als sei die Kehle von Tränen beebgt, sie konnte von klagender Süße – von lockender Zartlichkeit sein – immer aber waren die Worte, denen sie Klang gab, makellos, rund und voll, Blumen die in Farben erblühten, Vögel, die selig ins Licht stiegen, - Bälle, silbern und leicht gegen kristallene Wände geworfen und Hall auf Hall Widerhall weckend in den tausend Herzen, die der Bühne zugewandt waren.¹²⁵⁰

The performer is depersonalised, speaks through a voice which is no longer hers and which no longer bears her name but a stolen one. From under a mask of make-up,¹²⁵¹ she delivers words that bloom like flowers and fly like birds. She has become a force of nature, part of the eternal spiritual universe into which her dead mother and play-acting grandmother have now dissolved. The spectators are bewitched¹²⁵² by a performance which opens up for them, too, a wider consciousness of their share in a spiritual life which surpasses the limits of their temporal and human existence by uniting them with the elemental universe.

¹²⁴⁹ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.10.

¹²⁵⁰ Seidel, I. (1953). *Das Wunschkind*. Stuttgart: Bertelsmann. p.713.

¹²⁵¹ Ibid., p.713.

¹²⁵² 'im Bann' Ibid., p.713.

6.14 Conclusion

The theatrical trope expresses the authors' view of the nature of life and how it can best be lived, in terms aimed at a popular readership. In the performance-spaces of their novels, time is suspended, norms are subverted, people metamorphose and all utopias or dystopias are realisable. They show their characters performing on the varying stages of their lives, creating some comedic moments and many tragic ones, with catharses which cleanse their fictional worlds. The reader, like the theatre-audience is invited to share the cathartic experience or simply enjoy the story.

For both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, music and drama overcome the passive and cerebral response of other art forms. Drama dissolves barriers between the bodily, intellectual and spiritual worlds and promotes a transcendental relationship with the universe. The novelists show musical theatre, uniting narrative, poetry, music and danced sequences, and dance itself, particularly the fashionable Expressionist dance. These media both exploit bodily sensation, allowing performer and audience to experience what the two women interpret as the earliest and most fundamental forms of human expression. Ina Seidel affirms the ritual roots of the theatre-arts in a masque to celebrate the summer solstice¹²⁵³ and the masque-within-the-novel of *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Vicki Baum's descriptions of dance in Bali and its significance for both performers and audience, expose the functions of ritual performance in the political as well as the social and ethical life of the island community. Through descriptions of music, dance and the rhythmic diction of the chorus, or narrator, the theatrical events of the novels of both writers aim to appeal directly to the sensual imagination of the reader. They invoke the concept of a universal heritage which allows theatre and dance to transmit messages across time, race, language, gender and species, preaching a cosmic unity.

¹²⁵³ Seidel, I. (1924). 'Planetenspiel zur Ehrenfeier der Sonnenwende'. In: *Die Tat*. Leipzig: Eugen Diederich. 16.3.166.

The use of the Nietzschean analysis and terminology to define contemporary conditions was in tune with mainstream thoughts about society. After the chaos of the 1920s Walter Friedrich Otto, a contemporary of the two authors, wrote:

The world man knows, the world in which he has settled himself so securely and snugly — that world is no more. The turbulence which accompanied the arrival of Dionysus has swept it away. Everything has been transformed. But it has not been transformed into a charming fairy story or into an ingenuous child's paradise. The primeval world has stepped into the foreground, the depths of reality have been opened, [revealing] the elemental forms of everything that is creative, everything that is destructive.¹²⁵⁴

Theatre, as expressing a reality beyond and superior to that observable in everyday life, and offering a link with powers which might intervene, was an accessible image for a popular audience.

For our fragmented mechanistic thinking knows nothing of such realms of [spiritual] Being, nothing of their unity¹²⁵⁵ [...] the dances and evolutions of the cultus were set into motion and given form by a contact with the Divine. They were so filled with its presence, so transported, that they often no longer expressed the human condition but the reality and activity of the god, himself.¹²⁵⁶

As Strobl suggests,¹²⁵⁷ theatre was widely regarded as a central pillar of German national identity and its potential agency in the work of national renewal was recognised from both sides of the political spectrum. While Brecht was pursuing a Marxist path, Bronnen could write:

‘the only relaxation known to the hero is activity...Nationalism recognizes the theatre only as a site of cultic rites. Only in long stages stretched over many years

¹²⁵⁴ Otto, W. F. & Palmer, R. B. (1965). *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p.93.

¹²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹²⁵⁷ Strobl, G. (2007). *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

can work proceed which creates once again a cultic theatre for the people—a theatre of ideas and godly service'¹²⁵⁸

While Vicki Baum's many works for film and theatre are aimed at popularity and entertainment rather than thoughtful and 'godly service'. The theatre people of her novels show a clear recognition of the role of theatre in society and a will to invest at least her fictional theatre with ritual power. Ina Seidel's criticisms of contemporary theatre,¹²⁵⁹ her praise of Talhoff¹²⁶⁰ and the tone of her attempt at script-writing¹²⁶¹ imply that the 'cultic theatre' was her decided preference.

The basis on which the new German theatre should be built in order to achieve this end was then clear:

Ein großes Drama wächst nur aus einer großen, ursprünglichen Weltanschauung. Wie die Lebensformen der Mutterboden der epischen, so sind die Weltanschauungsformen der Wurzelgrund der dramatischen Kunst. Mit dem Weltkrieg brachen die Lebens- und Anschauungsformen des materialistischen und rationalistischen Zeitalters zusammen. Aus seinem Chaos schrie die gemarterte Seele nach ihrem Recht.¹²⁶²

It should reference the primal experience of the German peoples and a world-view which was rooted in the German soil as source of creation and physical well-being.

It is from this understanding of the role of theatre that Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum write their own dramas. The final scenes of *Liebe und Tod auf Bali* and *Das Wunschkind* are dramatic soliloquies in which the leading character sums up the preceding tragedy and puts forward a personal vision for the future which is also the author's message to her readers and, beyond them, the wider society. Cornelia, as Madonna figure, mourns her dead, fallen in the military service of the country. Her hopes for peace are qualified, recognising that, in the flawed world

¹²⁵⁸ Arnolt Bronnen on theatre in Weimar c. Kaes, A. (1995). *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.345.

¹²⁵⁹ Possibly influenced by the severe difficulties experienced by actress-sister and actress-daughter.

¹²⁶⁰ Talhoff, A. (1931). *Der Heilige Symbol und Scenenkreis rings um die Maske*.

¹²⁶¹ Seidel, I. (1961). *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei.

¹²⁶² Witkop, D. P. (ed.) (1922). *Deutsches Leben der Gegenwart*. Berlin: Volksverband der Bücherfreunde.

of humanity, the only sure peace is that of an honourable death. At the end of Vicki Baum's Bali novel, Pak considers the 'Bergen von Toten',¹²⁶³ while the peasants look with resignation and some curiosity for the corpses of family and friends, more concerned with the virtues conveyed by stories of their death than the fact of it. Women wait with baskets of fruit to placate the victors, the chorus of peasants abandon the unclaimed dead to the victors and continue with the more important business of ploughing, temporarily suspended while battle raged. Pak concludes the drama: 'Seine Kinder waren gestorben und sein Vater gefallen. Aber sein Herz war zufrieden mit einer Zufriedenheit, die der weiße Mann nicht kennt.'¹²⁶⁴

In both authors, there is little sense of human suffering or loss, no outrage at superabundant violence, simply the comfort of problems resolved as turbulent physical and emotional activity stops and peace is regained

In the context of their own lives, Vicki Baum, writes autobiography as a series of scenes in which she plays the dashing heroine and Ina Seidel selects personal incidents to point their universal implications but both write dramas with themselves as principal character. Their writings express their ideals of the artist's role, a woman's place in the world and how both should be accommodated within a culture which sustains the individual within the protective shelter of the nation's collective strength and wisdom. While resignation and fatalistic or valiant acceptance is their most usual fictional response to unmanageable lives, both women also provide a glimmer of light in a dark world through the theatrical experience. They illustrate its roots in myth and ritual, write classical tragedy in modern clothes and show how the dramatic arts can define and illuminate the present while also offering escape from it. Bronnen and Witkopf's vision of the regenerative powers of the dramatic arts is played out in their novels repeatedly, in Vicki Baum's heroines who achieve self-knowledge through stage-

¹²⁶³ Baum, V. (1964). *Liebe und Tod auf Bali*. Berlin: Ullstein. p.290.

¹²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.294.

performances or the revelatory renewals of Ina Seidel's *Sterne der Heimkehr*. Betrayal of the serious intent of drama through the 'degenerate' entertainment of Delphine's shows or Doris Hart's ventures into light-opera are condemned as unworthy and damaging for both player and audience. In their novels, they set scenes, direct action, manipulate audience response and orchestrate themes, in series of dramatic incidents which aim to demonstrate the relationship between the artifice of theatre and the concealments and performances of ordinary life. By telling stories about theatre, using the dramatic techniques of theatre in their story-telling they are aiming to re-create the emotional impact of theatre for their literary audience. Their mutual fascination with physical violence and sacrifice lends itself particularly well to melodramatic plots and exciting episodes which suspend, or confuse, any demand for rationality or consistency, claiming that the visceral response is always more true than the intellectual.

Chapter 7 Shared visions and splintered circumstances

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Chapter 7 Shared visions and splintered circumstances

7.1 Introduction - Comparison and juxtaposition

In the introductory chapter of the current thesis, Midgeley's observations on the 'intellectual utopianism' of the Weimar era indicate an aspect of the response to modernity which was shared by both ends of the political spectrum. Weber's analysis of 'modern knowledge as inescapably 'disenchanted' and 'fragmented' motivated a diversity of responses and Midgeley raises the question of 'how novels of the period relate to the same issue.' This thesis approaches that question through the novels of women who would generally be considered to exemplify, if not the left and right of the political spectrum, at least very different responses to the modern world.

The thesis proceeds, therefore, to consider both women and their writings, not only in relationship to each other but, and more significantly, as representative figures of their time. The criteria on which difference and similarity are judged have a hierarchy of significance, starting with the biographical factors which impacted on the writings of both women. Their professional careers as popular novelist during turbulent historical times are considered, emphasising the effects of mass publication and mass readerships on literary production. Gender was, they both considered, dictated the conditions of their authorship, imposing the demand that they should support their families when necessary, aid other women through informing them, as well as influencing the styles and subject-matter of their writings. Despite the political situation in Europe as National Socialism gained power and the dramatic changes this effected for both women, there remained shared experiences which are reflected in their writings during and after this period. The existential ideas of exile which they both acknowledged became increasingly significant in their mutual interpretation of their own lives and those of family, friends and colleagues whose lives were disrupted, even terminated, by

the forces of Nazism. Finally, the theatrical trope which draws both their writings closely together is explored in the wider context of contemporary ideas on the relationship between theatre and the life of the individual and society. In pursuing a comparison between these two authors, the critical clichés which persist in relation to their literary legacy are undermined and new light cast on the writings of both women.

The comparative dearth of attention paid to Ina Seidel in the last fifty years and the persistent recurrence of critical works on Vicki Baum confirm a shift of interest since the period during which they were both considered popular novelists. This does not rest on the literary value of their writings. Both could justifiably lay claims to literary skills and techniques and they demonstrated their accomplishments in a variety of forms, from journalism and libretti to novels of considerable length and weighty content. It does not relate to the subject-matter of their work, since Baum's novels and tales, dealing with the fashions and manners of her time, have endured as objects of academic attention despite the inevitable out-dating of both action and diction while Seidel's historical novels remain fashion-neutral.

Nor does it entirely reflect their popular status during their writing lives since both were best-sellers with some international prestige. Vicki Baum began to publish novels in English and German virtually simultaneously after the success of *Menschen im Hotel* in 1929. At that point, she also became a very public figure in the English-speaking world, as the publishing might of Doubleday in America added to the publicity power the Ullstein Press had exerted in Germany. Ina Seidel's dependence on the more limited advertising power of the prestigious Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt prevented a similar degree of international success. Despite the multi-lingual translations of *Das Wunschkind* in particular, its evocations of a German national spirit sympathetic to followers of National Socialism ensured oblivion for the book and its writer in English-speaking territories once hostilities commenced. For English-speakers, Baum became an ally who also spoke German and Seidel an enemy with unpleasant friends and no obvious

redeeming features. It is therefore unsurprising that her popularity was limited to German-dominated territories. There, her writings gained the added opprobrium of being inflicted on conquered nations with propagandist intent by the Nazi victors, as cheap and suitable fiction. Within Germany, Seidel and her writings were also identified with those who set the cultural curriculum for a Nazi state.

The historical conditions which ensured such radical changes in both women's immediate home and career circumstances and in the size and nature of their respective readerships also influenced the future development of their writing. The conditions of publishing within a totalitarian state constrained the literary possibilities for an author like Seidel. She felt responsibilities, financial and social, to an extended family, eventually directly supporting many of its members. Close relations were working within Germany in the vulnerable public positions of the church (her ailing husband), a publishing firm (her sister and brother in law), cultural affairs (her daughter and son in law) and finally the army (her only son). Initially, As National Socialism gained power, and influenced by her son in law Schulte Strathaus, she recognised ideas like her own - the German nation coming together to regain national pride and regenerate social relationships which had fallen victim to the exploitations of industrial capitalism. A letter written from Starnberg in 1966 to Elazar Benyoetz¹²⁶⁵ in response to his research on her meetings with the Jewish Karl Wolfskehl expresses, by implication, not only his reactions to current events in Germany but also those of that esoteric group around Stefan George which she had herself found sympathetic. She had met Wolfskehl for the last time in Florence in 1935 following an acquaintance begun during the Munich years of her youth.

Sein Schmerz war um so tiefer, als er die nat.-soz. „Bewegung“ bis 1933 ganz im Licht des George'schen Idealismus als eine heldische Wiedergeburt alter Reichsherrlichkeit gesehen hatte.

¹²⁶⁵ Seidel, I. (1966). Starnberg am See, 22.7.1966. DLA. SUA:Suhrkamp/03 Lektorate SU.2010.0002.

She continued, apparently, to regard Hitler as the charismatic leader who would save the day well beyond the date of this meeting and after witnessing Wolfskehl's sad physical and mental degeneration in exile. Later, according to family accounts, her own notebooks and the explanatory fictional text *Michaela*, she realised her error in refusing to acknowledge political realities and continuing in blind optimism despite all external evidence.

Fears for the welfare of the family do not however explain away an early acceptance of literary honours, bestowed as Jewish colleagues were hounded out of public office, deprived of private wealth and publically aggressed in ways that could not be ignored. Her fictional portrayals of Jews, as the present thesis affirms, are equivocal, showing sympathetic portraits of individuals but also a distaste for the scientific and business acumen which she attributes to the race. Her anti-Semitism therefore focusses on Jews as representing the forces which she considered had led to the military and cultural degradation of German life. As Gehler concludes in her analysis of *Das Labyrinth*, the world-travels of the scientist Forster are equated with a questing Enlightenment spirit which elevated scientific rationalism at the expense of the Christian virtue of peaceful resignation and acceptance as she wrote 'Jeder Heimatlose wird zum Juden'¹²⁶⁶ The sentence is ambiguous, when uttered by one who professes a religion based on a Jewish Christ born and dying homeless on earth, whose life, like that of the disciples who followed him, was a wandering one. The distinguishing feature, which includes or excludes the individual from Seidel's chosen ones is the belief in an ultimate heavenly home and the existence of a spirit world denied by the rational and empirical mind. Ethnicity or nationality are secondary factors and the current thesis demonstrates, through biographical and literary-critical examples, that Seidel's anti-Semitism was that prejudice which Heilbronner¹²⁶⁷ judges

¹²⁶⁶ Gehler, E.M. (2010). *Weibliche NS-Affinitäten: Grade der Systemaffinität von Schriftstellerinnen im "Dritten Reich"*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p.166.

¹²⁶⁷ Heilbronner, O. (2004). 'German or Nazi Antisemitism' In: Stone, D. (ed.) *The Historiography of the Holocaust*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

as a ‘national phenomenon’ in the post-war Germany of the 1920s. It is undeniable that she dropped the acquaintance of the Jewish Kolmar when it became socially expedient to do so and that, even in the novel *Michaela* or her notebooks her condemnation of the Holocaust was extremely muted. Rachel Century ends her (2013) thesis on the female administrators of the Third Reich: ‘The vast majority of the women knew about the Holocaust, contributed towards its outcome, and took no action to prevent it occurring.’¹²⁶⁸ Even in this most morally-significant area of her public life, Ina Seidel was a representative rather than anomalous figure. The degree of acceptance, tolerance, affection even, extended to her by Jewish friends and colleagues after 1939 indicates that they also exercised a similar judgement.

The degree of anti-Semitism admitted by Vicki Baum is, this thesis suggests, on a similar level of automatic prejudice although, in her case, tinged by the personal animosities of her childhood. Her family was determined to establish its place in an Austrian bourgeois society, which during her youth in Vienna was under the sway of the rabid anti-Semite Karl Lueger, Mayor of Vienna until his death in 1910. Her occasional gestures of Jewish solidarity are less remarkable than her casual verbal gestures of anti-Semitism and, since direct family as well as friends and colleagues suffered extermination at Nazi hands, her silences are perhaps even more morally dubious than those of Seidel. That she was also a representative figure of Vienna Jewry is clear in Strauss’ work on Lueger. This details the Vienna Mayor’s many links with that Jewish upper-bourgeois cultural élite amongst which Baum herself moved. Just as Lueger put aside his anti-Semitic ideas to further cultural, educational and economic ends,¹²⁶⁹ she suspended judgement on her patrons for social and financial advantage, aware of their strong

¹²⁶⁸ Century, R. (2013). *Dictating the Holocaust: Female administrators of the Third Reich*. PhD thesis, Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London.
<https://repository.royalholloway.ac.uk/file/365470eb3db-4c3b-91b0-7c590d50e344/1/2013CenturyRphd.pdf>.
 p.266.

¹²⁶⁹ Strauss, H.A. (1993). *Current Research on Anti-Semitism: Hostages of Modernization, Volumes 2-3*. Berlin: de Gruyter. p.778.

anti-Semitism, as she remarks in her autobiography, but accepting their affection and gifts on an individual level. The biographical chapter of the present thesis aims to show the ambivalencies and ambiguities of both women's positions as the Weimar Republic moved into the Third Reich. The thesis finally claims that the moral classification into Jewish exile writer and Nazi collaborator is a facile differentiation when applied to the work they both produced. Both denied any personal responsibility which could be called political while recognising a higher moral imperative which they ascribed to eternal womanhood and which overwhelmed lesser temporal considerations.

Contemporary classifications of both women, stressing superficial difference and ignoring similarities, cast them both as approximating to the stock characters of popular fiction. Baum was presented as the entertaining, lively and well-informed modern career woman and Seidel as the serious and literary pastor's wife of irreproachable moral status, from an intellectual family. The advertisers' technique of easily recognisable authorial characterisations, with appropriate visual representations, aimed at the appropriate readerships has become the basis for subsequent criticism. Strengthening the polarisation through the moral dimension of their positions as sympathetic exile and blameworthy collaborator after 1933 has only added to the bias. The current thesis lays out those areas of their lives and their writing which cast considerable doubt on this convenient dichotomy. 'The capacity for evil is a sliding scale, and we are all on it somewhere', Rachel Century's thesis on collaborative work with the Third Reich suggests, and it is the work of the current thesis to place both authors on the scale of contributions made to an ideological climate which accepted, even welcomed, the rise of the Third Reich.

Their earlier lives had, to some extent overlapped socially through shared acquaintances although Baum's avant-garde musical circles and Seidel's conservative literary ones did not encourage interaction. They shared, however, the popular intellectual icons of their time, and

from such sources developed their ideas of a better future. Austria and Germany were to be resurrected from the bourgeois past whose ideas they both claimed to reject while maintaining its forms in their public domestic arrangements. The pride with which both women claimed the allegedly 'Prussian' virtues of courage, hardihood and self-sacrifice for themselves qualifies both their stances. The challenge they did aim at contemporary society on behalf of their readerships was expressed in stories of the suffering imposed upon the lives of women by a male world which refused to acknowledge the spiritual, intellectual and physical strengths of women and habitually degraded and humiliated them. In belittling women who, both authors believed, were tied in to the universal pulse by the rhythms of the female body, society was thus increasingly distanced from any possibility of that harmonious existence which is the basis for their utopias.

Their fictional musings on the nature of utopia, on how it might be achieved and how its absence can be made tolerable are considered in the current thesis in relationship to the intellectual and social climates in which both women lived and wrote. But it is also proposed that the writings of both women, the finally-exiled Vicki Baum as well as Ina Seidel, contributed to popular acceptance of ideas which prepared the ground for National Socialism. Their vaunted political ignorance amounted to deliberate refusals to acknowledge the potential social consequences when those romantic ideas, which both found attractive, were translated into political actions.

In the endeavour to define their views on present society and their ideas for possible futures, it became necessary to use references with considerable intellectual histories. Concepts such as 'utopian visions', 'transcendental philosophies', or 'charismatic leader' - the 'big ideas' of the time, sit uneasily with popular fiction, not infrequently aimed at the commercial market rather than the literary one. However, both authors shared a thoroughgoing awareness of the contemporary world, its intellectual as well as its social movements, and their selective analysis

was transmitted to their wide readership and can be assumed to have had some influence upon them.

The extent and persistence of Seidel and Baum's popularity indicates that their readership enjoyed, accepted, and agreed with the views of life they found in the novels sufficiently to maintain the authors' reputations and sales. The thesis establishes that both novelists utilised the theories of modern psychology, philosophy and sociology to underpin their novels and, in the case of Vicki Baum, to give that impression of knowledge that her publishers promoted. Major intellectual theories are generally referenced indirectly by the writers and may well have remained largely irrelevant for many of their readers. Identifying the sources of the novelists' ideas from the references of their texts does however establish them both within a literary context which extends beyond 'Trivialliteratur' and supports their claims of serious intent.

7.2 Life Histories

Within the current thesis, the biographical chapter is concerned to locate the two women along the social continuum that Midgeley indicates by the political implications of 'left and right.' Current critical opinion suggests quite clearly that the Seidels occupy the 'right' wing and the Baums an indeterminate area which is definitely not that of the Seidels, particularly in the case of Vicki Baum, a modern woman who challenged some conservative viewpoints. As the introduction of the thesis insists, and the chapters proceed to elaborate, attributing any radical political differences to the two women is simplistic and denies their clear personal statements. The account of their lives clarifies their mutual political (in)experience and their shared rejection of any overt political allegiances. It also stresses their many points of contact and agreement on what may be interpreted as political matters. The thesis thus contributes to the definition of the Weimar revolt against modernity and indicates that utopian visions were part of the shared experience of two of the period's most popular novelists.

The parallels between the education, upbringing and family lives of the women, born in great cultural centres of Europe within three years of each other indicate the shared cultural reference points of a bourgeois environment. Both women were born into a nineteenth-century world of European Empires and burgeoning industrial states, part of a thriving middle-class asserting its political and economic powers and claiming cultural legitimacy. The biographical chapter examines how their families reflected the values and aspirations of that class. Vienna, the Baum family's home, held a dominant position in the politics of Europe and, more importantly for Vicki Baum herself, in its cultural life, while Ina Seidel's early provincial years in Prussia were enriched by the connections of a family who stood at the centre of German bourgeois society. The thesis acknowledges the wide gulf between the Seidels and the parvenu Jewish commercial family of Vicki Baum who could claim no cultural status, beyond that of their newly-acquired wealth and the education it had recently enabled them to acquire.

The personal instabilities of parents and the radical disruptions to family life caused by death and illness are identified as sufferings which affected both girls and also their subsequent writings.

7.2.1 Ethnicity

Born a Prussian, Ina Seidel could, and did, lay claim to the culture and history of that state which had gained military and political dominance in Europe in the course of the nineteenth century. For her, ethnicity was not a pressing personal issue during her youth, although her school years in Munich prompted her to consider the questions of belonging to land and nation. The differences she then recognised between southern and northern Germany, Protestantism and Catholicism reverberate through her fiction.

Although the wealth of the Baum family enabled them to enjoy the life of the Austrian middle-classes, the anti-Semitism which pervaded Viennese society made Vicki Baum's recognition

of her own ethnicity unavoidable. Identifying Jewishness with everything she disliked in her father and her wider family, her ambivalent attitudes to her own ethnicity, as the biographical chapter shows, began during her childhood. The family efforts at assimilation were embraced by the adult Vicki Baum, who triumphantly achieved acceptance in the USA for herself and her sons, as the later chapter on her exiled years confirms.

The current thesis concludes that the differences in ethnicity between the Prussian Ina Seidel and the Jewish Vicki Baum, which became ever more relevant as Germany moved towards National Socialism, were less divisive than later critical opinion suggests. Rather than insisting on any purity of German heritage, Ina Seidel stated, and continued to stress, the wider national origins of her family. They may have had German origins but also came from Switzerland and Italy as well as the Baltic coast. Vicki Baum preferred to show her cultural assimilation than her ethnicity. While her later writings manifest some defence of Jews and accusations of those who persecuted them, she was never able to free herself from the anti-Semitic attitudes which had surrounded her youth. As the chapter relates, both women were the victims of early family lives blighted by illness and premature death, events which were later represented in their writings. In the immediate post-First World War period, these familial losses were increased by the deaths of their own infants. By then, however, the traumas and casualties of war and fatal illness were a national matter. When the women began to publish novels which were shadowed by their personal adversities, a large readership could relate at first hand to the fictional tragedies. The thesis establishes that the total disruption of many lives which the First World War imposed on Europe, melded any anomalies in the early lives of the two authors into the abnormalities and aberrations of a warring land, thus increasing the representative nature of the themes of their fiction.

7.2.2 The nation as family

The weaknesses and failures of their individual families and the wartime collapse of the nation moved both authors to extrapolate an image of the ideal social structure and depict it through imaginative constructions of other times and other places. The separate chapters of the current thesis demonstrate the essential features of this utopian social vision which were common to both authors. The people were to be united by the common ties of a geographical home, and of a (mythical) blood-relationship. Their lives would be interdependent, sharing responsibilities according to their innate, and gendered, abilities. They should be guided and led by a ruler with the same loyalties, the same interests, and a will to enhance the prosperity and well-being of the whole large family which was the state. The people would reciprocate, supporting and defending their ruler and their national family, as well as the land which was its dwelling-place. The parallels between both authors' visions and the 'Volksgemeinschaft' beloved of the Third Reich are unmistakable.

The contemporary interest in utopian communities, evident in architecture and design as well as cultish philosophies, was aimed at enabling all to lead a better life. Plot analysis of the writers' novels shows their contribution to the endeavour, imaginative, theoretical but, above all, popularised. Visions of sexual liberation, nature-worship and cultural renewal in the style of the contemporary Monte Verita community, as well as the city-luxuries of Hollywood fantasies appear in both writers' work. They depict the allure, but also what the authors consider the inevitable failure, of such idealist dreams.

7.3 The facts and fictions of two female popular novelists

It is in the chapter 'Popular Novelists, Creative Women' that the ambivalent positions in which Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum found themselves is best illustrated. This thesis shows that they, like many of their contemporaries, were compelled by external circumstances, to take a public

role and adapt both behaviour and ideas accordingly, negotiating for themselves the definitions of 'being-a-woman' and 'being-a-famous-writer'.

Their own careers militated against the imperatives of their 'womanhood' but they were both able to interpret their public activity as the realisation of the female role of protector and educator of first her own, and then the national, family. They bemoan nevertheless the 'unnatural' demands of a contemporary society moving remorselessly away from what they understood as the natural order of life.

The first sections of the chapter are concerned to identify what it meant, in public terms, to be a female popular novelist. The comparative nature of the current thesis is validated by the compilation of statistics which show the relative popularity of the two authors. The critical obscurity which currently rests on Ina Seidel's writing looks unjustifiable when her estimated readership is compared with that of Vicki Baum, widely recognised as a major influence on the popular literature of the first half of the twentieth century. Only by such basic comparisons against what has become an acknowledged standard, (Vicki Baum's popular status) can a reader now be prompted to recognise Ina Seidel's contemporary prominence. The recourse to a numerical analysis of likely readerships sets both authors in the wider context of a reading public who gained information and views of life, from the mass-media as well as from the formal education systems of church and state. National Socialism recognised early the necessity to control dissemination of information through frivolous as well as serious art forms.

Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum sought to pass on their ideas through journalism and the popular novel, those forms of literature which were available to the maximum number of people. Ina Seidel did not attain the degree of international recognition accorded to the Hollywood-icon Vicki Baum, but she was lauded and honoured by those who initiated and engineered the Third Reich. She was recommended to their followers, and read by them, but also gained a readership

among those who bitterly opposed the ruling order and she was not immediately reduced to silence when the Reich fell. Her readership was more limited but, in terms of European politics and society, a very significant one.

Despite their dependence on the mass-circulation presses to publish their work, both authors were vociferous in condemnation of the degradation of mass-culture. Even worse, in their eyes, was the growing European attraction to American popular culture as evidenced in the lives of cities, the apotheosis of modernity. Neon lights, shop windows, flickering film, jazz music and factory-produced goods, aimed at speed, efficiency and mass-distribution, appear in both their novels as exciting but destructive images. They foment discontent with that domestic life in which a woman should find her deepest satisfaction and a man his refuge. Their temptations lead women into the dangerous world of public employment. Ignoring the economic realities and ideological imperatives which determined female employment, they both popularised and made desirable images which placed women firmly within the domestic space.

While this thesis steers away, as did the writers, from detailed engagement with political theory, the impact of contemporary politics on their work is an unavoidable theme. For these non-political authors, the capitalist system, as manifest in the modern city, was a scapegoat for many of the ills of the present. The financial capital which underpinned industrial enterprises was then a burning political issue and the grounds for racial prejudice. Jewish representation in commerce, banking and the structures of capitalism was disproportionately great, mainly due to their historical disqualification from land-ownership. Images of Jews as urban usurers persisted behind the acceptance of assimilated upper and middle-class Jews like the Baums and the respectable position of those shopkeepers and tradesmen with whom everyone did business. It surfaces in that casual prejudice with which Ina Seidel writes her Jewish characters as well as in the more virulent anti-Semitic statements of Vicki Baum.

Capitalism, a monstrous figure, identifiable in Seidel's banking Kalischers and Baum's Wall Street entrepreneurs, is rootless, an international organisation of exploitation, degrading natural resources and populations. The leaders of industry and commerce are remote presences, their mercenary interests in standing opposition to those of the workers. The emotional and psychic wholeness, and, frequently the physical health, especially of women employees, was threatened and undermined, according to these authors, by mass-production and mass-culture. The current thesis demonstrates how both authors transmitted such social criticism of modernity to their readers through the domestic lives of fictional characters who were its victims. The targets of their criticism and the Jewish ethnicity attached directly to at least some of them reflected, but also supported and justified anti-Semitism.

7.3.1 Writing utopia in an age of mass culture

The distinction between serious and popular literature which condemned her work to the latter category remained a life-long irritation to Vicki Baum. For Ina Seidel with a grandfather famous for his popular novel 'Leberecht Hühnchen, 'the incarnation of the Biedermeier man' and sure of her own position, it was less significant. However, in their fictional artistic characters, both writers defend themselves against critiques of trivialisation. They condemn work driven by vanity and self-glorification, elevating the power of an art which was truthful and genuine, which could lead the people into the realms of the ideal and transcendent through its emotive power. Art and literature are shown to be part of a utopian vision, which they shared, but which was obscured by their critical status as popular authors and therefore remains largely unexplored. Writing was, for them, not only an individual expression but a statement about the nation itself and the peoples' place within it. It was a definition of what it meant to be German (or Austrian). For Fichte, 'being truly German [...] also meant being authentically creative, that is, in obedience to a primary irresistible impulse, and not by way of deliberate contrivance.' Both women make clear that they wrote in accordance with such an impulse and had done so

from an early age, despite the later financial imperative. As the chapter stresses, their novels constantly return to the problems of the artist, the performer or the intellectual truth-seeker forced to temporise with the demands of publishers, directors and promoters.

A fundamental unease with the nature of language itself as a vehicle for the transmission of truth unites the two writers. Both authors identify language as a force which dominates and deforms spontaneous physical experience, imposing rational forms on irrational sensations. The process of writing is therefore one of layering untruths which take the listener (or reader) further away from, rather than into, more intimate communication with, that which is being made verbal. It would be interesting to consider if this judgement, which seems to be made with genuine conviction by two women who lived through words, contributed to the pessimism, the will to sacrifice and death which ends so much of their serious fiction.

Nevertheless, both women continued to write and publish throughout their lives and engage successfully with that modern world and popular mass culture which they criticised but in which they found many of the images which they used to sketch their fictional utopias. Jameson's account of the work of Ernst Bloch – one of Weimar's 'most insightful intellectuals' list similar sources of reference:

Bloch applies his utopian hermeneutics to the wish pictures found in the mirror of ordinary life: to the utopian aura which surrounds a new dress, advertisements, beautiful masks, illustrated magazines, the costumes of the Ku Klux Klan, the festive excess of the annual market and the circus, fairy tales and colportage, the mythology and literature of travel, antique furniture, ruins and museums, and the utopian imagination present in dance, pantomime, the cinema and the theatre.

The list summarises not only the major themes in the novels of both women, but also in those incidental articles published in mass-circulation magazines and journals. The part played by

popular fantasy and science-fiction novels as outlets for dreams of more perfect worlds during the Weimar years has received academic attention for some time. This thesis emphasises that such novels as those of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, both mainly centred on the domestic and personal lives of women, also contributed to the definition of what that ‘better life’ may be. Milner cites Davin’s observation that there was a distinct ‘tradition of socialist and feminist utopias which appeared in the pulps—and nowhere else—between 1920 and 1950.’ Through their popular writings, these women were projecting a view of possible futures which was less easy to categorise and contain but which the present thesis goes some way towards elucidating.

7.4 The reality of women’s lives

The fourth chapter relates the authors’ lives and works to the changing definitions of women’s role in Weimar society. Their popular fiction passes on contemporary clichés of women but also displays the two novelists’ reflections on their own lives, fictionalising their personal dilemmas for their readers’ entertainment and edification. It is in this area of their writings that the differences between the two women appear most clearly. Ina Seidel’s major novels concentrate on women whose lives played out in the context of Germany’s historical past. Vicki Baum’s heroines usually inhabit the contemporary world on both sides of the Atlantic. The current thesis demonstrates that, despite these most obvious differences, there was a significant overlap of ideologies that realigns critical assessments of both novelists.

Their autobiographical writings indicate that the relationship of both women to their mothers was predictably close, in the case of Vicki Baum it could be described as intense. The present thesis argues that neither the gentle and childlike Emmy Seidel nor the neurotic Mathilde Baum could provide that nurturing protection which both girls identified as the maternal role. Their substitutes for the sheltering parental figure were found in imagination. Ina Seidel writes strong women who step into the role of the man who is lost to them, or who fails in his responsibilities.

Vicki Baum's heroines develop their own strengths to atone for the weakness or harshness of the men who surround them. As is emphasised in the introductory chapter, criticism of Ina Seidel's work, when not directly concerned with arguing her relationship to National Socialism, mainly centres on her representation of women and mothers in a traditional patriarchal social hierarchy. While, in terms of words written, this is undoubtedly the case, it undervalues those many female characters who choose, or are forced by external events, to step outside the shelter of home and family to take on a dynamic role, shaping their world rather than being subject to it. Both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum have a clear vision of the biological state of womanhood and a fundamental unease with the alignment of this state with the demands of the modern world. For such novelists, the fictional development of enterprising women offers a way in which both the authors and their readers can seek to examine the conflicting demands to which, as contemporary women, they are subject.

In a society increasingly dominated, as they saw it, by science and rationalism they felt it necessary to voice their 'women's wisdom', but, as this chapter shows, considering themselves as creative artists, they also credited their personal vision with an analytic power which enhanced the instinctive capacities they both attributed to women. A vivid 'insider knowledge' of all classes and types of families gained from direct experience informed their fiction. Undeterred by the unprepossessing appearances and reputations of the industrial classes, they could see the difficulties of lives very different from their own. Such familiarity removed any prevailing sense of a threatening horde waiting at the middle-class gates. For the youthful Ina Seidel, as well as Vicki Baum, working women were subjects to be educated and elevated by the cultured bourgeoisie like themselves, to be shown how to take on the responsibilities of citizenship and cope with the demands of the modern world. Education was necessary to explain, enlighten and strengthen those native virtues proposed as characteristic of the peoples of a German-speaking Reich, whose borders were imagined rather than political. As authors

and concerned modern women, both authors felt it their duty to awaken the repressed or dormant talents of their readership and win their trust. They shared the common predicaments of their sex and gender, knew their weaknesses and their deceptions and wrote them into sympathetic characters. But they could also see and admire the underlying strength and courage which enabled women, despite all odds, to protect and nurture families and embody the future.

If secretaries and shopgirls embodied the modern present, rural workers, the peasantry, were glamorised by images of a pastoral past, as portrayed through the literary and artistic tastes of the bourgeoisie. The traces of history remained in their homes and their traditional dress, admired as tokens of a spontaneous aesthetic sense, with its roots in the earth which they worked daily. For Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, they represented that ancient Germany which was now under threat from industrial progress and their routines reflected that seasonal life of home, family and the earth that both authors concluded was most appropriate for the womanly body.

But these representatives of *Das Volk* required a leader worthy of them and, as the thesis makes clear, both authors proposed a hierarchical social model, headed by a leader whose personal qualities would animate traditional forms of governance to win the trust and allegiance of his subjects. When men are perceived as inadequate for the duties of command, as in the novels of these two writers they frequently are, a strong woman could harness the power of her womanhood to step into the role. The female leader was, however, a substitute, or secondary figure, until appropriate paternal authority was reasserted, allowing the woman to resume her rightful position of power in the private realm of the family. While their criticism of male authority-figures is in opposition to Nazi ideas of manhood, they both create male characters who are valiant soldiers, some are natural leaders and many are dutiful operatives who sacrifice themselves for the greater good. While criticism of men who blatantly fail nation or family are clear, the tone is rather female exasperation and resignation than comments demanding serious

attention. Their comparatively few references to contemporary women's political movements and generally dismissive mentions of political women confirm no serious intent to disrupt the existing gendered power structures.

Instead of aiming to change the conditions of women's lives, Seidel and Baum choose to write emotive accounts of characters such as Vicki Baum's aging ballerina Grusinskaya, or Ina Seidel's artist Mathilde Mickens through whom they show public working life as particularly destructive. In their journalism, they display its effects on the lives of ordinary working women, like their readers, echoing other contemporary analyses: 'die neue Zeit reißt zahllose Frauen aus dem Frieden der Familie und stößt sie in den Kampf des persönlichen Schicksals.'

Fantasies of a social system which would value and support all women for the creative strength of their 'womanhood' alone are central to the utopian vision of both women. Their fiction presents the triumphs, and denials, of the generative and nurturing functions of the human female body. These powers, which are, they stress, shared with female animals of all species, are shown as the great forces which unite women with the earth itself. Through her feet a woman feels the pulse of universal rhythms. The analyses of their work presented in the current thesis, and references to the sources of their ideas on women, confirm that they considered the figure of the Mother as metonymically representing the domestic space of home, but also taking on the deeper significance of the channel through which the child, and later the adult, is linked to Mother Earth, the terrestrial home. The confluence of universal rhythms and the female body ensured, they believed, that a woman's earthly Heimat is cosmic rather than geographical and, through their writing, Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum believed that they could lead other women to this liberating realisation.

7.5 Strangers in their own lands

Following their esoteric definitions of a female Heimat, the thesis challenges the polarisation of exile writer and stay-at-home Nazi supporter as applied to Baum and Seidel. The current thesis considers how their own lives related to the exile-experiences which are the subject of their writings. Familial disruption had initially caused the two girls to feel alienated from their contemporaries, later, the state of disaffection became habitual and welcome as a condition in which their personal independence and literary creativity could flourish. The destructive effects of the First World War on Germany and Austria created a gulf between the certainties and aspirations of past prosperity and the insecurities of present devastation. The personal estrangement felt by Baum and Seidel became a national phenomenon and a popular readership could identify their own problems in the authors' characters.

By the 1930s, any hopes of a better life in Germany were looking increasingly delusive and both women were seeking fictional alternatives to the modern European society they saw around them. As both women began to distance themselves physically and intellectually from Nazism, Vicki Baum carried an idealistic, if not specifically utopian, picture of her Heimat into exile, while Ina Seidel initially attempted to retain an equally optimistic view of the Germany she had believed in and hoped to regenerate. While the more benevolent definition of Ina Seidel as Inner Emigrant is invalidated by her public life under National Socialism, the simple nomination of Vicki Baum as Exile Writer, fleeing the homeland and opposed to all it currently represented, should also be nuanced. Neither woman can be considered to have written resistance to, or firmly opposed National Socialism. Baum's fictional Nazis are caricatures in which, like Seidel's, National Socialism is as much a manifestation of the brutality of the proletariat as that of a Fascist regime which also oppresses the honourable and, generally admirable, aristocratic military characters such as von Stetten in *Hotel Berlin*.

Their evasion of political circumstances in Europe was matched by fictional flights. Baum transported herself and her readers to foreign climes, Seidel sought refuge in historical references to a distant, or archaic, past. Both locations presented different models of social mores and allowed the dream, at least, of transferring lessons from such remote sources to create utopian futures.

Baum's own life, as well as that of her displaced fictional characters, exemplified many of the responses to exile later identified in Exile Studies. The current thesis proposes, however, that, finally, she promotes a more benevolent picture of banishment from home than the connotations of 'exile-writer' suggest. Her novels, journalism and autobiographical writings extoll the suppression of homesickness, the benefits of new opportunities and the renewed vigour derived from sloughing off the accretions of the past.

Acknowledging Seidel's ambivalent stance, the current thesis limits its enquiry to the bare outlines of her explicit relationship to National Socialism. It concludes that, along with many of her contemporaries, including the safely-exiled Vicki Baum, she had not opposed National Socialism during its early days, recognising some of her own ideas within its 'Blut und Boden' ideology. By 1940, however, she also felt herself estranged from the national home as her illusions were destroyed. Expressions of warlike fervour, like those she wrote in response to the First World War, are absent and, along with her fellow-countrymen, she suffered the common material losses and insecurities of wartime, which mirrored in many ways those of exile. The chapter does not compare the position of a comparatively prosperous, established and safe Ina Seidel with those desperate, threatened and impoverished exiles fleeing Germany. It does however use the example of Ina Seidel to consider exile as the image of psychological alienation and gendered disaffection from societal norms. Her novels provide literary expositions of exile including, in *Michaela*, political exile.

Pursuing the theme of their idealist visions, the Not-at-Home chapter relates the qualities of the imagined Heimat to which they both looked for consolation, imaging it in their work and in the physical conditions of their lives. The congruence of their later, fanciful, Heimats with those of their earlier years is detailed. The effect of National Socialism on European society allowed them both to envision more clearly the social impact of those esoteric ideas which had looked attractive to them both in earlier times. Earth-motherhood, along with ideas of self-sacrifice and martyrdom which had been reanimated by Nazism after the humiliation of the First World War, lost glamour when associated with extermination of women and civilian atrocities. The chapter concludes that, as might be expected from writers of popular fiction, in these adverse circumstances, they preferred evasion to active intellectual participation in European affairs and any constructive involvement in post-Nazi reconstruction.

Vicki Baum's enduring belief in the immaterial companionship of a universal spirit-world, and confidence in her own powers of endurance allowed her to present a picture of exile as a temporary challenge rather than a perpetual anguish. Ina Seidel's equally firm religious beliefs allowed her regard exile as a purgatorial state to be borne alongside the many other earthly afflictions. Both saw themselves as artists, part of an élite condemned to suffer and sacrifice for their work, with a duty to show other women exemplary conduct in face of misfortunes, including exile.

From their writings on exile, the present thesis draws the conclusion that, for both Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, exile is a challenge to be overcome rather than bewailed. In the optimistic, even utopian, view of these two authors, history itself is a cycle of rebirth and regeneration and geographical locations are comparatively insignificant within the universal unity. A woman's duty, and her joy, according to both authors, should be the realisation of an enveloping, protective and sustaining refuge in the material and emotional conditions of a family-home.

Heimat is where the heart is, according to their popular novels and this domestic vision supersedes all political, economic or even moral considerations.

7.6 Idealist visions and theatrical deliverances

The penultimate chapter investigates the more recondite aspects of the authors' writings, demonstrating their use of theatre and the dramatic arts to analyse the present and suggest a way forward into the future. The chapter shows that both women acknowledged theatre as the well-spring of creative responses to the perceived evils of contemporary society. Like many of their contemporaries, they interpreted drama as the channel through which elements of an idealised past could be accessed and revived, to rescue the present from its moral destruction. They also acknowledged the abuse of the transformative powers of theatre. Baum's impresarios consistently exploit the talents of their performers, driving them to physical and moral breakdown. Seidel shows theatre used as light entertainment, political propaganda and destroyer of morals but both authors also show how participation in theatre arts reveals hidden truths in the relationships between people themselves and between humanity and the universal forces within which both authors believed they lived.

The current thesis suggests that the belief in theatre as the generative source of a new mythology which will save the nation has been undervalued in critical approaches to Vicki Baum's novels and ignored in assessments of Ina Seidel. The theatrical trope offers a fusion of realism and fantasy, rational exchange and emotional immersion, daily habits and esoteric philosophies. It unites the work of both women and contributes to their significance as interpreters of their contemporary society. The social and economic collapse of Germany after the First World War demanded new solutions:

Heute hinter der zerstörten und zersetzten deutschen Außenwelt seelische und geistige Kräfte keimen -- in heiligem Trotz dem Elend und Leid der Gegenwart entkeimen -- die eine Verjüngung und Vertiefung, eine Erneuerung Deutschlands verheißen.

The writings of Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum suggested alternatives to the pre-war order which were many and various. Their acknowledgements of Gestalt theory, Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian psychology emphasised the role of the unconscious, Nietzschean references acknowledge a classical ideal. Steiner's theories combined pastoral myths with other exotica for Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum's Hollywood phantoms introduced both the dreams and the nightmares of capitalist democracy. These women were among those who reflected 'the general hostility to positivism, abstract rationalism and egoistic materialism, the widespread enthusiasm for Eckhart, Böhme, Dostoevsky.' The inspirational fervour of new disciples to the cause is echoed in their fiction, through that multitude of recondite ideas which flourished in opposition to scientism. The present thesis proposes that, in providing more readily comprehensible statements of such mysteries for their readership, both novelists promote aesthetic experience as the means of overcoming 'the embittered nihilism of contemporary values.' They show their contemporary world in terms of urban sprawl, rural poverty, voracious industrial progress and exploitation of overseas resources, accompanied by nationalistic military aggression. Art, through its appeal to the deep springs of human nature could, both novelists thought, lead their generation away from this desolate present into a new and better future. This is the attractive and allegedly apolitical message they pass on to their readers, encouraging them too to ignore the implications of the changing political climate, accept its impositions and escape into personal dramas and literary fantasies.

While other critics have referred to the esoteric aspects of Ina Seidel's work, as noted in the introduction to the current thesis, Vicki Baum is critically acknowledged as a slick and cynical purveyor of very worldly matters. The letters to Elizabeth Lyons recently discovered in the Penn Museum confirm the centrality and the persistence of superstition in Vicki Baum's personal life. Her fiction elevates the irrational and mystical, attributing real-life effects to unseen powers lurking in the universal human sub-conscious as her fashionable heroines

struggle through afflictions which her readership might reasonably assume were those of the author herself.

The dramatic arts were, for both women, the means of accessing and channelling the unseen forces of the human spirit. Faced with a Germany in ruins after the War, Witkop calls for a new theatre to rise, informed by the native soul of Germany.

Ein großes Drama wächst nur aus einer großen, ursprünglichen Weltanschauung [...]. Über den zerfallenen Formen recke sich der befreite, von Urgefühlen trunkene Mensch empor, der Mensch schlechthin, der sich eins weiß mit seinen Brüdern, nach Seele, nach Gott, nach einer neuen wahren Gemeinschaft des Geistes.

Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum turned to the compelling power of theatre to animate their novels and, through them, their readership.

Narrating the devices of theatrical performance both on and off-stage, the two authors present the performative nature of social relationships, the masks and disguises which conceal and pervert the nature of events and of characters. The stripping-off of such concealments in course of the narrative expresses the authors' conviction that their novels could also achieve revelations which were the necessary precursors of positive change. The novel is the stage on which both authors perform, balancing imitation and original, fiction and fact, to expose underlying realities for the enlightenment, but also the entertainment of their readers.

Dance was, in the opinion of both authors, the art which provided the purest communication of universal truths for the observers and allowed the performers to experience the bodily dynamics subsumed in the intellectual demands of an over-rationalised society. Its rhythmic qualities were, for them, the clear expression of a deep human unity with organic nature and cosmic patterns. In their wholehearted espousal of the contemporary passion for dance and their admiration of dancers, both authors show their appreciation of the physical aspects of modern popular culture.

Performance itself, as the physical realisation of ideas and imagination, they regarded as peculiarly feminine in its creative function of embodiment. For Ina Seidel particularly, it was the commercial exploitation of this profound potential which damned women in professional theatre. The position of male performers was, for both authors, equivocal and ambiguous, with sexual, moral, even racial implications. They both confirm contemporary prejudices against Jews in a series of powerful businessmen with no national allegiances and questionable morals who exploit both the talents of artists and the labour of their helpless employees.

However, the status of the charismatic male figure points one of the significant differences between the two authors. Ina Seidel's enthusiastic willingness to submit to the will of charismatic others, suggested by the notorious *Lichtdom* poem, is incarnated in a series of male protagonists with uncanny powers of attraction. Despite their very obvious failings, they retain a dominant force. Vicki Baum's alluring characters are the popular icons of the modern world, film stars, song-writers and sportsmen but the portraits are subversive, undermining the conventions of hero-worship through exposing the weaknesses of those worshipped. Star-heroes and heroines show their fatal weaknesses to maintain the tension between idealism and cynicism that threads through all her novels.

For both novelists, the road towards perfection is one of self-realisation followed by sacrifice and renunciation. Their protagonists learn to perceive the masks, costumes and props which maintain the performances, and the illusions, of self, of others, and of society. They are forced to recognise their true place in the organic systems of nature and a remorseless cosmic and eternal order. The greater human society can flourish only when the individual is freed from the pursuit of the false gods and attains this realisation. Neither author manifests any clear conviction that this is materially achievable.

7.7 Conclusion

The current thesis explores the relationship between the popular novels of Vicki Baum and Ina Seidel and contemporary ideas of European renewal founded on past idealist visions rather than present technological progress. The comparison between two such diverse figures has proved useful in pointing concerns which ran throughout a Weimar society to which Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum were presented as examples of how to unite fame and fortune with domestic virtues. The views of the two authors on contemporary matters, on women's roles and the message of salvation through art, was thus publicly validated.

For Ina Seidel and Vicki Baum, as for many of their contemporaries, the dream that Germany would become a state in which politics and culture would no longer be separated, was a serious one and both women espoused it. They borrow from what Thomas Mann called Nietzsche's 'immortal European drama of self-conquest, self-discipline and self-crucifixion with the intellectual sacrificial death as a heart-and-brain-rending conclusion' for the moral tone of their work. The unspecified fantasy of an imaginary Reich in which the theatrical dream can be realised runs through their pre-1939 work. Regret for the failure of the illusion remains in Ina Seidel's post-war writings and heightens the hopeless cynicism of Vicki Baum's. Relating the texts of their writings to the wider cultural context of Weimar, the thesis shows that both the deeply religious, German, Ina Seidel and the sophisticated American business-woman that Vicki Baum became, expressed the ambivalencies, contradictions and pessimisms of their time and its hopeless longings for a better world.

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