

“SPORT IST DER NERV DER ZEIT”:
THE POLITICS OF SPORT IN GERMAN LITERATURE, 1918-1962

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ABSTRACT

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“Sport ist der Nerv der Zeit”: The Politics of Sport in German Literature, 1918-1962

(Under the direction of Dr. Richard Langston)

This dissertation investigates the political role ascribed to sport in German literature and mass media during three radically different periods of German history: the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and the young Federal Republic of Germany. In this project, sport in literature and film is shown to play an integral role in communicating contemporary social critique and reinforcing cultural ideology. During each of these eras, sport figured into central cultural debates about the organization of German society. In Weimar Germany, sport became a medium through which to discuss problems of class stratification, while the Third Reich saw it play into ideologies about creating and upholding the ethical Aryan subject. In the FRG, sport became entrenched in debates about memories of these bygone German social experiments. By examining canonical and non-canonical literary texts and films, this project queries how sport has persisted as a constant topos in the German literary imagination. Examinations of Bertolt Brecht’s “Der Kinnhaken” and *Das Renommee* and Melchior Vischer’s *Fußballspieler und Indianer* reveal how commodified sport in Weimar literature engaged with the limits of class stratification. During the Hitler regime, Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia* and Ludwig Barthel’s *Schinovelle* employ sport to idealize German bodies and instill an embodied sense of Aryan morality. Emerging from the shadow of Nazism, sport in young West Germany—as evidenced by Siegfried Lenz’s *Brot und Spiele* and Ludwig

Harig's short story and *Hörspiel* "Das Fußballspiel"— filter out memories of fascism and therewith confront the latent ghosts of Germany's past. In order to unlock the political logic of sport in German literature, I employ theories of sport from each respective period, including those of Brecht, Rosenberg and Adorno. What becomes clear through the analysis of these literary and cinematic discourses is the continuity of sport; just as German regimes and societies changed, so too did sport. And yet sport in all its manifestations persisted as a foil for German media's political and social imagination. This dissertation thus bridges a gap in the paucity of scholarship by identifying the politicized role German literature and film awarded sport throughout the most tumultuous years of Germany's twentieth century.

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Introduction

Rally Cries: Sport in German Literature and Culture

I. “Die Religion des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts”¹

In 1928, journalist Willy Meisl declared sport key in understanding German culture, proclaiming: “Im Sport ist der Nerv der Zeit selber zu spüren.”² Whether in print or on the field, sport was ubiquitous in the Weimar Republic. Breaking away from the *Körperkultur* movement spearheaded by Ludwig “Turnvater” Jahn that ruled German sport during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, sport in the Weimar Republic departed from an emphasis on the body in favor of sporting leagues. In the 1920s, competitive sport assumed the reigns atop an athletically obsessed society. Sports like boxing, cycling and soccer revealed a cultural shift away from the romantic *Körperkultur* ideals of the late nineteenth century, and the rise of popular athletic events aided in molding the new modern era in society. Indeed, Jost Hermand and Frank Trommler view sport in their work on culture in the Weimar Republic as paramount to society at the time, explaining: “Fast noch typischer als die Vergnügungsindustrie [...] ist für den Geist der aufkommenden Sachlichkeit jener mächtig anschwellende Sportenthusiasmus: Sport bildet Öffentlichkeit, Sport integriere, Sport beseitige

¹ Hans Seiffert, “Weltreligion des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts: aus einem Werk des 120. Jahrhunderts,” *Der Querschnitt* 12.6 (1932) 385.

² Willy Meisl, “Der Sport am Scheidewege,” *Der Sport am Scheidewege*, ed. Willy Meisl (Heidelberg: Iris, 1928) 20.

Klassenschranken, Sport trage zur steigenden Homogenisierung der Gesellschaft bei.”³ While this is a quote that describes sport in the Weimar Republic, it is one applicable to all of the twentieth century. In spite of sport’s importance in understanding Germany’s tumultuous history, it has yet to be explored in any great depth or as a connected entity in German literature. This dissertation contributes to scholarship by doing just that. Indeed, in the aesthetic field, sport has been allotted a central position in German literature of the early twentieth century by engaging in social debates of Weimar class stratification, Aryan ideology and postwar memory politics.

From viewing sport as a means to overcome patriarchal norms⁴ to seeing it as key in fostering nationalism and national-identity,⁵ it is clear that athletics have been popular fodder for academics of varying disciplines. While there have been countless sociological, media based, historical, psychological and medical studies dealing with sport and its vital role in understanding Germany in every era of the twentieth century, the subject has been all but ignored by German literary scholars. Presently, the stages of athletic importance are understood in relation to the cultural and historical developments achieved in the different eras in which they reside. For instance, film and cultural historians, like Anton Kaes, overwhelmingly view sport in relation to its appeal and accessibility to all classes of society during the Weimar Republic.⁶ Sport provided an outlet through which the masses attempted

³ Jost Hermand and Frank Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1978) 75.

⁴ See Margaret Talbot, “Playing with Patriarchy: The Gendered Dynamics of Sports Organizations,” *Gender and Sport: A Reader*, eds. Sheila Scanton and Anne Flinthoff (New York: Routledge, 2002) 277-291.

⁵ See John Hargreaves, “Globalization Theory, Global Sport, and Nations and Nationalism,” *Power Games: A Critical Sociology of Sport*, eds. John Peter Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (London: Routledge, 2002) 25-43.

⁶ Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg, eds. *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). See also Bernd Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch: Körperkultur im*

to redefine themselves in the wake of the First World War.⁷ On the other hand, sport in the Third Reich is almost exclusively linked to the dominating role it played in the influential politics of the Hitler regime. Sport was implemented in propaganda films and magazines not only to disseminate the National Socialist ideal of a healthy and aesthetically specific Aryan race but also to facilitate a victorious and glorious image of Germany and its fearless leader on the world stage.⁸ What is more, scholars agree that athletic endeavors facilitated “an active, positive enjoyment of [daily] activities,” and provided a release for the German people amid the travesties of World War II.⁹ Moreover, scholars immediately associate sport in the post World War II period with the revitalization of national identity, if only for a brief moment, linked to the victorious German national soccer team in the World Cup of 1954.¹⁰ Thus, though sport’s cultural role in society has morphed over time, it has overwhelmingly been understood as reflective of the historical progress and advancement of contemporary society at the time. This is unsurprising when one considers the rising popularity sport has

Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004), Hermand and Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* and Anne Fleig, *Körperkultur und Moderne* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2008) for further insight into this association.

⁷ See Lincoln Allison, “Sport and Nationalism,” *The Handbook of Sport Studies*, eds. Jay J. Coakley and Eric Dunning (London: Sage, 2000) and Mary Duquin, “Sport and Emotions,” *The Handbook of Sport Studies*, eds. Jay J. Coakley and Eric Dunning (London: Sage, 2000).

⁸ While Hitler was notorious for capitalizing on the popularity of sports for his own political purposes, the fact remains that sporting events were extremely popular amongst the masses during his time in power. Hitler, for instance, used soccer matches for precisely the rationale that he could conjure support *because* the sport itself had already gained such notoriety. (Nils Havemann, *Fußball unter ’m Hakenkreuz: der DFB zwischen Sport, Politik und Kommerz* [Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005] 132). See also William Joseph Baker, “Testing the Super Race,” *Sports in the Western World*, ed. William Joseph Baker (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988) 246.

⁹ Ramsay Burt, *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, “Race” and Nation in Early Modern Dance* (London: Routledge, 1998) 101.

¹⁰ Arthur Heinrich, “The 1954 World Cup and the Federal Republic of Germany’s Self-Discovery,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 46.11 (2003) 1491-1505.

enjoyed in German society over the past century.¹¹ By focusing not only on cultural accounts of sport but also viewing the cultural development of sport as a continually changing cultural influence in three drastically different historical eras, “Sport ist der Nerv der Zeit” will depart from current scholarship by examining the politics of sport in the literature of each period. This dissertation contends that sport has maintained an unrecognized yet valid aesthetic value in literature for cultural debate in Germany during the early twentieth century. In analyzing sport as a theme in literary and mass media works from three radically different regimes, I reveal the ways in which German literature politicized athletics to both critique and reinforce cultural ideologies and social developments. Furthermore, it will reveal an interconnectedness in the manner in which sport is approached and appropriated by authors and directors during the three periods.

During the early twentieth century, sport in literature inevitably becomes a signifier, and more often a critique, for larger social and political conflicts. The importance of the literary rendering of sport as a tool through which to influence cultural and political ideas has been massively underestimated in literary scholarship to date. This project explores the appropriation of sport for political gain, as will be examined in the literature and film of the Third Reich, as well as social critique, as evidenced by literature and mass media in both the Weimar Republic and the young Federal Republic of Germany. Despite the dramatically different political and social landscapes of these periods, sport is taken up as a stage upon which to voice opinions in social and cultural debate, both supportive and defiant, in each era.

¹¹ Klaus Heinemann and Manfred Schubert, “Sport Clubs in Germany,” *Sport Clubs In European Countries* vol. 1, ed. Klaus Heinemann (Cologne: Schattaer, 1999) 143-167.

II. Running the Course: The Evolution of Popular Sport in Germany

In order to highlight sport's importance in literature during each of the historical and cultural eras, it is important to assess its societal change in the periods discussed. Although sporting events had long existed as a prominent activity for the leisure class, it was during the Weimar Republic that sport filtered into the lives of the masses. Hermand and Trommler make note of this shift, stating: "[Anfang der zwanziger Jahren] wurde der Sport zum wirklichen Massenphänomen. Was dabei in den Mittelpunkt des Interesses trat, waren vor allem Sportarten, die aufgrund ihrer enormen Spannungselemente als massenhafte Zuschauererlebnisse genossen werden konnten: also Fußballspiele, Boxkämpfe oder Sechstagerennen."¹² Put simply, sport transitioned from a privilege of the elite to an experience to be had by all levels of society. What is more, sporting events became mass phenomena particularly for lower class participation and spectatorship. As an example, one need only look at the enthusiasm amongst worker's groups throughout Germany. Associations such as the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* and the *Turn- und Sportbund* co-existed and accumulated over one million members collectively.¹³ Sport's newfound popularity amongst the working class held a political dimension in that the workers were taken from a state of exploitation and alienation to one of dignity.¹⁴ Athletic victory conjured not only a sense of individual pride and accomplishment, but furthermore was a means of revitalizing national confidence on all levels of society.

¹² Hermand and Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* 75.

¹³ W. L. Guttsman, *Workers' Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment* (Munich: Berg, 1990) 136. See also Benjamin David Lieberman, *From Recovery to Catastrophe: Municipal Stabilization and Political Crisis in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn, 1998).

¹⁴ Fritz Wildung, a popular politician and sport official of the Weimar Republic, voiced this sentiment in an article "Sport ist Kulturwille" published in 1926 (Fritz Wildung, "Sport ist Kulturwille," *Kulturwille* 3.5 [May 1926] 85).

Considering sport's monumental rise in popularity and the fascination with athletics amongst the masses, the surge in the number of amateur and professional athletes in the Weimar Republic is unsurprising. While amateur sports had been on the rise since the turn of the twentieth century, the number of professional athletes rose dramatically during the 1920s. Though a handful of leagues were founded earlier in the century, such as the *Deutsche Bundesliga* founded in 1900, the number of teams continued to increase in correlation with the amount of spectators desiring to see the matches first hand.¹⁵ With this rise in popularity, however, also came hesitation from many intellectuals in society, who feared that the obsession with sport could lead to social and cultural catastrophe. While sporting events were, on the one hand, seen as a boost to German morale, intellectuals feared the consequences such fascination could inflict on the masses.

Some critics like journalist Frank Thieß thought sport a healthy outlet in the main but were highly skeptical of its effects on the worker. Thieß feared extreme professionalization would be detrimental to society. He writes of the danger that sport could potential lose its cultural and educational value for the sake of “eine Art großindustrielles Unternehmen, das vorzüglich mit zwei Attraktionen arbeitet, mit Rekordsucht und Starsystem.”¹⁶ Thieß goes on to argue that while sport can provide a positive influence on society (health-benefits, class-structure, national image, etc), it can likewise be transformed into a manipulative instrument for those seeking power. Thieß was not alone in these sentiments. Bertolt Brecht, for instance, voiced concern regarding the vulnerability of the masses when sport becomes a corruptive tool of the upper classes in his article “Die Krise des Sportes” (1928). Author

¹⁵ By the mid 1920s, as Udo Merkel notes, the spectators following *Bundesliga* games consistently exceeded the capacity of stadiums. See Udo Merkel, “Sport, Power and the State in Weimar Germany,” *Power Games: A Critical Sociology of Sport*, eds. John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (London: Routledge, 2002) 151.

¹⁶ Frank Thieß, “Die Geistigen und der Sport,” *Neue Rundschau* 1.38 (1927) 295.

Egon Erwin Kisch likewise argued that any sport practiced as a means to an end—whether for a record or collecting a public following—lacks the essence of sport found in “jene Freude am Kampf [...], die sich selbst genügt.”¹⁷ This supposed development of sport into an instrument of manipulation during the late 1920s resulted in the crisis of sport that emerged at the conclusion of the decade. Such arguments proclaimed that sport practiced for any means other than in and of itself risked exposing sport as a corrosive element in society when utilized by those seeking power.

The fears of Weimar intellectuals came to fruition with the rise of the Third Reich in the early 1930s. Owing to the immense popularity sport gained during the 1920s, it was transformed into a tool of manipulation for the newly installed regime. Sport was no longer the cultural outlet it had become during the years of the Weimar Republic but was controlled directly by the governing political party to propagate National Socialist cultural aims. After first disbanding independent athletic leagues, the government founded the *Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Leibesübung* in 1933, which became the *Nationalsozialistischer Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* (NSRL) in 1938, as the umbrella organization responsible for dictating and overseeing all activities relating to sport. What is more, *Sturmabteilung* leader Hans von Tschammer und Osten was appointed *Reichssportführer* and utilized the organization to heavily promote sport throughout Germany.¹⁸ The influence of sport,

¹⁷ Egon Erwin Kisch, “Ein Sportsmann als Schiedsrichter seiner Selbst,” *Der Sport am Scheidewege*, ed. Willy Meisl (Heidelberg: Iris, 1928) 18.

¹⁸ There have been countless historical accounts of the influential role of sport and the political stronghold over athletic institutions in Nazi Germany. For further and more detailed analyses, see Hajo Bernett, *Der Weg des Sports in die nationalsozialistische Diktatur* (Schorndorf: Hofmann, 1983), Barbara Key, *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), Arnd Krüger and William J. Murray, *The Nazi Olympics: Sport, Politics and Appeasement in the 1930s* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003), Markwart Herzog and Andreas Bode, *Fußball zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus: Alltag, Medien, Künste, Stars* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008) and Havemann, *Fußball unter'm Hakenkreuz*.

according to von Tschammer und Osten, would not only rid the athletic world of what the National Socialists saw as inferior Jewish athletes and replace them with the powerful Aryan prototype, but it would also reinvigorate the German spirit and conjure pride befitting the strong German nation.¹⁹ In this endeavor and under the jurisdiction of the NSRL, free and spontaneous sport was forbidden, and all professional and amateur athletic leagues were subsumed under governmental control. Sport was only to be practiced under the guidance of those in power who could see to it that it was done properly and by those deemed worthy. Lisa Pine notes the rationale for such control, stating: “Physical training was very closely linked to health and to racial-biological ideas. To this extent, sport was not an end in itself, but a means of training soldiers and the youth of the future in accordance with National Socialist ideals. Its goal was inner discipline.”²⁰ To be sure, sport was a means through which the Nazi party sought to propagate not only pride in their newly instilled regime, but likewise foster athletically based military training beginning with young boys in the *Hitlerjugend*.

Unlike the Weimar Republic where sport was viewed as a leisure activity, athletics were made a mandatory aspect of cultural education for the *Hitlerjugend*. Sport was implemented as a required course in the school curriculum and became a cornerstone of discipline and indoctrination for the younger generations of the Third Reich.²¹ As a propagation of cultural ideology for the Hitler regime, sport was a means, as Gerhard Rempel argues, through which young boys were taught German superiority over inferior races, served as an outlet through which to train athletically gifted and disciplined young men for future

¹⁹ Hajo Bernett, *Der Weg des Sports in die nationalsozialistische Diktatur* 54-57.

²⁰ Lisa Pine, *Nazi Family Policy: 1933-1945* (Oxford: Berg, 1999) 51.

²¹ Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2011) 62.

military service and was necessary to keep the *Volk* healthy.²² Posters and magazines of the period featured *Hitlerjugend* athletes saluting the *Führer*, emphasizing the significant role sport held in upholding the Aryan cultural ideals and dedication to the Fatherland espoused by the new regime. Sport was likewise utilized in advertisements for the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, the female sector of the *Hitlerjugend* designed to train girls to become future mothers and homemakers for strong German men. Indeed, as the years of the Third Reich ensued, the associations between the Hitler regime and sport grew stronger. Propaganda films, posters and magazines featured athletes and utilized sport's popularity as a means to strengthen support of the Nazi party.

When World War II ended in 1945, the connection between sport and Nazism remained so stark that the disbanding of all German sporting associations and clubs was amongst the first tasks in all four German sectors. Ken Hardman and Roland Naul elaborate on the rationale for such dismantling, stating:

The total collapse of the Third Reich and the subsequent chaos, coupled with a rejection of everything Nazi, were dominant factors in developments in sport and physical education. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, physical activity had enjoyed some pre-eminent status in assisting the *Führer*'s aims of a fit and superior Aryan race, and so it was entirely consistent with post-war anti-fascist attitudes that sporting activity was officially disregarded.²³

In the years that followed, sport battled to situate itself in the new cultural landscape of West Germany. Because of the occupational zones, each German sector received athletic permission dependant on the occupying forces. While the Americans allowed sporting privileges comparatively early in 1946, others, for instance the French, maintained strict rules

²² Gerhard Rempel, *Hitler's Children: The Hitler Youth and the SS* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) 174. See also Michael H. Kater, *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) 30-35.

²³ Ken Hardman and Roland Naul, *Sport and Physical Education in Germany* (New York: Routledge, 2002) 29.

and regulations for sport groups until the end of 1948.²⁴ In 1949, however, the three Western Allies formed the first umbrella organization allowing both amateur and professional, as well as national leagues, to re-establish themselves. Until then, players turned to more rudimentary forms of play by organizing games in open fields or even amongst the rubble within the destroyed cityscape.²⁵ In the early 1950s, the professional leagues and national teams were officially reinstated and garnered popularity through their victories on the world stage. One of the lingering repercussions of the Second World War was that West Germany was not invited to participate in international events, such as the 1948 Olympic Games in London and the 1950 World Cup soccer tournament in Brazil. The most notable event of postwar sport came with the West German soccer team's invitation to the 1954 World Cup tournament in Bern. With the unanticipated victory of the team, West German sport experienced a re-birth of popularity in society both domestically and internationally that carried through to the immediate postwar period.

III. Verisimilitudes of Victory: Cultural Investigations of German Sport

In addition to the manner in which sport became a part of Germany's historical make-up, one need also consider its critical cultural relevance in order to fully understand how it was utilized as a societal critique in literature. As will be seen, the majority of scholarship on sport is particularly interested in body, race and identity. There are however a multitude of critical references that appear as an undercurrent in relation to individual authors' more popular literary works. Bertolt Brecht's three articles dealing with sport, for instance, have

²⁴ Hardman and Naul, *Sport and Physical Education in Germany* 28-34.

²⁵ Hardman and Naul, *Sport and Physical Education in Germany* 30.

yet to be discussed in depth in relation to his larger works but are typically briefly mentioned in conjunction with his theory on Epic Theater,²⁶ or in relation to his numerous appearances at boxing matches in Berlin.²⁷ Though Melchior Vischer's drama *Fuballspieler und Indianer* has been consistently performed since its premiere in 1927 (most recently in 2003), it remains confined to a glorified footnote in accounts of his friendship with Brecht during the 1920s.²⁸ Moreover, Ludwig Harig's love of soccer is constantly referenced as influential to his literary oeuvre; however, no analysis exists that delves into the deeper meaning these pieces can reveal regarding society at the time.²⁹ With the exception of a handful of scholars, sport has predominantly been disregarded as a valid theme through which to view discussions on societal and political change in literature. Aside from Mario Leis' and Stefan Jacob's larger literary investigations, the role of athletics has hitherto been typically evaluated in relation to its historical and cultural implications.

Herman and Trommler, for instance, use sporting events and athletes as a lens through which Weimar modernity can be understood. Through a closer examination of the dynamics of popular sports in the Weimar Republic, the scholars argue that the death of Romanticism, and correspondingly the birth of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, is reflected by the rise in

²⁶ Willett discusses how Brecht introduced the association of the sporting arena to his idea of the ideal theater by minimizing the emphasis on set and costumes and making the stage as bare as a boxing ring. According to Willett, the actors should only rely on their theatrical abilities to illustrate greater meaning, keeping the audience from getting carried away by superfluous distractions. These aspects of the theater likewise speak strongly towards the desired *Verfremdungseffekt* Brecht wished to achieve in his dramas – distancing the audience to a point that they would not be swept into the occurrences onstage, but rather that they could step back and understand the larger meaning portrayed in the piece playing out in front of them (John Willett, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* [London: Methuen, 1959] 72).

²⁷ “Das Theater als Sport” (1920), “Mehr guten Sport” (1926), “Die Krise des Sports” (1926).

²⁸ See Manfred Voigts, *Brechts Theaterkonzeptionen: Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1931* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1977).

²⁹ See Heinz Ludwig Arnold, *Ludwig Harig* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1997).

popularity of team sport. Moreover, these scholars elaborate on the correlation between mass modernity and the rise in popularity of spectator sports and professional sports clubs during the Weimar era. While Hermand and Trommler credit sport with a revitalization of Weimar society, they also posit that the most integral association with sport was “vor allem die vitalistische Komponente.”³⁰ The new, stronger body image related to sport was one that was able to produce a more confident society as a whole. Like many other theorists,³¹ Hermand and Trommler argue that the image of the healthy, strong and victorious athletic body, which feasibly any male could achieve, common to sport during not only the Weimar Republic was one that carried with it a positive identification as well as a pathway for creating renewed national and self-identity. Indeed, Theodor F. Rippey extrapolates on Hermand and Trommler, arguing that sport in the Weimar Republic has been overwhelming understood as an attempt by the German population to revitalize itself through identification with the image of the strong, virile male athlete.³² Moreover, scholars like Jon Hughes credit this popular and victorious understanding of athletic males as “*the* [sic] means by which a damaged generation was seeking to ‘heal’ itself from the lasting trauma inflicted by a static, destructive war.”³³ To be sure, sport played a role at every level of society, and any athletic

³⁰ Hermand and Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* 74-78.

³¹ See Bernd Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch* and Andrew Hewitt, “From Romanticism to *Neue Sachlichkeit*: Sport and the Discourse of Mass Modernity in Weimar Germany,” *A View in the Rear-Mirror: Romantic Aesthetics, Culture, and Science Seen from Today: Festschrift for Frederick Burwick on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. W. Pape (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2006) 223-253.

³² Theodor F. Rippey, “Athletics, Aesthetics, and Politics in the Weimar Press,” *German Studies Review* 28.1 (February 2005) 91.

³³ Jon Hughes, “Sport and the Cultural Debate in the Weimar Republic,” *German as a Foreign Language* 2 (2007) 28.

male could achieve glory, providing this new pride on both the individual and national front.³⁴

Much like the Weimar Republic, the role of sport also continued to expand within German culture in the Third Reich through the dictated athletic politics of the Nazi regime. Indeed, the German people defined themselves, with heavy political persuasion, in direct accordance with the desired Aryan aesthetic. Moreover, the popularity sport held amongst the masses became a platform for the National Socialists to not only spread confidence in the new regime within German borders, but also create a victorious image “representing the triumph of Nazi will and efficiency”³⁵ to foreign powers. This was, in part, accomplished through rigorous athletic training and discipline. Sport was even implemented as a requirement for adolescents in the *Hilferjugend* in an effort to create ideal German citizens. Thus, the Nazi party capitalized on the popularity of sport by linking it to the new form of German identity specifically associated with the pure Aryan body and its superior accomplishments. Resistance during this period to the political power the Nazi party wielded over sport proved futile. Unable to achieve victory without political support, athletes became dependant, according to scholars like Nils Havemann, on political power in order to achieve any sort of success.

Wishing to shed its fascist past, sport re-established itself in the postwar period. After the 1954 World Cup in Bern, Germans felt a common positive bond and a reason for which

³⁴ Dan Streible traces the accessibility of boxing matches in relation to class structure in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Viewing boxing, he posits, slowly became fodder for the masses—accessible to every class in society, and even to women. During this period, the boxers themselves rarely stemmed from the upper class, as was the previous trend. Using boxing as his prime medium, Streible elucidates how sport worked to break down class barriers in the early twentieth century (Dan Streible, *Fight Pictures: A History of Boxing and Early Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

³⁵ William Joseph Baker, “Testing the Super Race” 245.

they could be proud of their country, if even momentarily. The victory of the national team on the world stage is predominantly understood not only as the moment when West Germany “could pinpoint exactly when their nation had formed,”³⁶ but also as one of the first moments German citizens could display a “momentary national sentiment and pride in their newly formed country.”³⁷ The cultural and political significance of this victory has been widely discussed by scholars. Paul Betts, for instance, argues that the accomplishments of the national team offered a source of “renewal and accomplishment” for West Germany as well as “an opportunity for the expression of pride.”³⁸ In other words, this advantageous depiction of German sport allowed West Germans to forget the horrific past and begin anew, fostering a positive and victorious image through sport. Much like the athletes in the Weimar Republic, sport during the 1950s in West Germany provided an outlet from the massive destruction surrounding the citizens and the possibility to re-vitalize German society. In short, beginning with the Weimar Republic sport has consistently been employed to produce an advantageous depiction of the German nation.

IV. Keeping Score: The Body of Sport Literary Scholarship

While cultural studies have divided the history of these three eras according to the tropes of identity, body and race, literary historians have been far less methodical. The few pieces written exclusively on the overarching theme of athletics in the twentieth century,

³⁶ Gregg Gethard, “How Soccer Explains Post-War Germany,” *Soccer and Society* 7.1 (2006) 53.

³⁷ Hans-Joachim Winkler, *Sport und politische Bildung: Modellfall Olympia* (Leske: Opladen, 1972) 103.

³⁸ Paul Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 259. See also Arthur Heinrich, “Tor! Tor! Tor! Vierzig Jahre 3:2” (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1994) and “The 1954 World Cup” as well as Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football* (London: WSC Books, 2003).

such as Mario Leis' *Sport in der Literatur: Einblicke in das 20. Jahrhundert* (2000) and Stefan Jacob's *Sport im 20. Jahrhundert: Sport, Kultur und Veränderungen* (1994), serve mainly as a catalogue and summary of works rather than elucidating the significance of such pieces from specific investigations. Leis and Jacob divulge a handful of common arguments posited regarding sport over the past century, placing the athlete in a heroic role able to overcome all obstacles through athletic dominance. Both authors trace the development of sport in literature using a cultural backdrop through which to view the pieces. Thus, these works provide a starting point for this project. While both Leis and Jacob provide ample rationale for the significance of literary works dealing with athletics, they fail to offer a detailed analysis of literary texts. This project builds on such existing work by adding detailed analyses of individual texts to show how literature singles sport out as the crux integral in revealing both social degeneration and regeneration in Germany during the early twentieth century.

Jacob navigates his way briefly through twentieth century literature and illuminates the correlation and significance of cultural and historical events on the theme of sport in literary texts. For Jacob, however, the true significance of sport in literature begins in the divided Germany. Though briefly mentioning authors such as Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka and Bertolt Brecht, he contends that the true surge of sport in German literature occurred with the construction of the Berlin Wall and has continued to gain momentum from that point. Setting his sights on authors such as Peter Handke, Ror Wolf and Bodo Kirchhoff, he posits that while sport has consistently been a part of German literature, the true cultural and historical reflections of sport are best witnessed in the literature of latter half of the century.

Like Jacob, Leis similarly maps his literary analysis onto a historical background. However, Leis' examination of sport does not concentrate on one particular time frame but analyzes the advantageous influence of sport through numerous yet sporadic periods and focuses on various yet seemingly unrelated themes, such as work, heroism, love and *Turnen*. As a whole, however, this text lacks a common thread linking each of these categories together. On the contrary, Leis' text reads more as a detailed summary of each literary work and cites only isolated themes.

Aside from Leis' and Jacob's analyses of sport's role in German literature, only a handful of essays deal with various broad athletic themes. One such examination offered by Allen Guttman looks at the "Faustian traits" stemming from the German sports novel. In his essay "Faustian Athletics? Sports as a Theme in Modern German Literature" (1987), Guttman examines five "forgotten" sport novels of the twentieth century³⁹ and credits victory as the cause for each athlete's fall from glory. He coins these sportsmen "Faustian Athletes," as the failure of their athletic quests associate each with the "Faustian prototype, an association strengthened by the fact that most of the athletes of German sports fiction are morally flawed."⁴⁰ While the analysis is indeed valid, the article itself remains superficial in that it presents only a broad analysis of each work rather than devoting a close and thorough investigation to the deep-rooted significance posed by sport in each of the texts.

Though these literary scholars focus on a variety of athletic depictions in German literature, the most prevalent theme in recent scholarship is the interpretation of the body in

³⁹ Guttman claims that each of these novels *should* be viewed as canonical pieces; however, history has caused them to be forgotten. He expresses his dismay that such works are unknown even amongst most German literary scholars (Allen Guttman, "Faustian Athletes? Sports as a Theme in Modern German Literature," *Modern Fiction Studies* 3.1 [Spring 1987] 22).

⁴⁰ Guttman, "Faustian Athletes?" 22.

relation to sport. Many critics focus specifically on descriptions of the athletic body in literary works as a reflection of one's identity. For instance, Nanda Fischer's work *Sport als Literatur: Traumhelden, Sportgirls und Geschlechterspiele* (1998) analyzes the formation of gender identity through the empowering literary rendering of female athletes in the late twentieth century. Michael Kane's *Modern Men* (1999) elaborates on athletics in relation to men, national identity and patriarchy in literature between 1880 and 1930, ultimately illuminating the struggle men faced in distancing themselves through sport against what they understood as femininity. In the same vein as Kane's masculine synopsis, Annette Müller provides insight into the problematic position of women within sport in late twentieth century literature in her article "Women in Sport and Society" (2005). Furthermore, Lyn Marven's book *Body and Narrative in Contemporary Literatures in German* (2005) examines the relationship between representations of the female sporting body and the grotesque. More recently, Anne Fleig examines the historical phenomenon of representations of the athletic body in relation to morphing identities in modern Austrian literature, focusing predominantly on Robert Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, in her book *Körperkultur und Moderne* (2008). Each of these inquiries focuses purely on the use of the athletic body in literature as a means through which to understand changing concepts of identity.

Considering the extensive attention to sport by historical, cultural and, to a lesser extent, literary scholars, there is no doubt that it has played a monumental role in the development of German society and culture. Yet, in this extensive amount of critical literature utilizing the theme of sport in culture, none delve into the revelations its *literary* depiction can shed on the social debates of each era. Thus, while sport has held a prominent role in much academic scholarship, there remains a dearth in discussion on its literary

significance that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, the connections between literary and cultural discourses analyzing the centrality of sport in societal development over time still remain to be examined. It is precisely this gap in scholarship my project seeks to fill by exposing the continuities and discontinuities in the politicized athletic renderings in literature and film from the Weimar to the immediate post World War II period. Utilizing the scholarship that has come before in order to ground my project, I will evaluate cultural accounts in juxtaposition with contemporary renderings of sport in literature and mass media.

V. Athletic Poetics

This dissertation looks at three radically different historical eras to elucidate the ways in which the politics of sport in literature and mass media influenced debates in German society and culture. Such examinations provide us with an understanding of the malleability of sport in each period and how these changes uncover how politicized sport both enforced and sublimated societal critique. As previously discussed, the cultural impact of sport underwent dramatic changes during each of these three periods of German history. From the outset of the twentieth century, the rising popularity of sporting cultures has remained constant in German society—continuing well into the twenty-first century. As such, it is unsurprising that historians have turned towards sport as a lens through which to view the changing social landscape of the German nation, as the rise in popularity of sport also led to an influx of literature dealing with the theme. Thus, the literature of these three periods offers an extended insight into the cultural interworking in society not offered through a purely sociological or historical lens.

One could argue that the beginning of this project should revert to the first appearance of sport in the literary scene. Literary scholars credit the German author John Henry McKay with what is considered the first true sport novel: *Der Schwimmer* (1902).⁴¹ The novel follows the swimming career of Franz Felder, the son of a poor laborer living in Berlin. However, while it is of note that McKay's work marks the introduction of sport as a central theme in German literature, the first true surge of sporting themes in literature corresponded with the sport boom in the social life of the early Weimar Republic. Authors like Thomas Mann and Georg Kaiser highlighted sport as a leisure activity for their characters in works like *Der Zauberberg* (1924) and *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (1917). In such works, however, sport merely appears in a few scenes and is not seen as the primary focus. It is not until the late 1920s—which coincides with the perceived crisis of sport posited by intellectuals of the age, that the role of the athlete truly becomes a consistent and central aspect of literature.

The three chapters of this dissertation examine representative literature dealing with the appropriation and manipulation of sport during three eras of German history. Though each period differs dramatically both historically and socially, sport remains a constant politicized means to comment on cultural and social debates through literature and media. While it is used in each era for different purposes, the incorporation of sport as a cultural voice remains steadfast. Chapter One investigates the crisis of the proletariat in bourgeois society in relation to the rise of *Neue Sachlichkeit* via depictions of the commodified athlete in Bertolt Brecht's "Der Kinnhaken" and *Das Renommee* as well as Melchior Vischer's *Fußballspieler und Indianer*. Turning to Brecht's theories on the danger of sport, I show how

⁴¹ Thomas A. Riley, *Germany's Poet-Anarchist: John Henry Mackay* (New York: Revisionist Press, 1972) 5.

these three works use sport in literature to navigate the growing concern with the corruption of Weimar society and the impending dangers of sustaining such bourgeois ideals. Though Brecht contends that sport has the capability for the proletariat to revolutionize society, these goals cannot come to fruition due to the bourgeois stronghold over society. Vischer's play takes this theme one step further to expose the volatile repercussions of allowing such societal norms to remain in place. Indeed, sport is utilized by these authors in literature as a means through which engage in debates of social stratification and the commodification of sport through literary critique. Chapter Two moves forward to reveal sport once again utilized to propagate a cultural stance. However, unlike the Weimar Republic, where the audience was required to question the use of sport, in the National Socialist period, sport becomes an extended arm of the Nazi propaganda machine. Rather than utilizing literature and film to critique society, here we see sport firmly supporting the cultural ideal of the perfect Aryan. By examining the cinematic and literary renderings of the athlete in light of the desired physical and moral qualities of the Aryan male posited by philosophers of the Third Reich, this chapter reveals the crux of the associations between fascism and sport in Leni Riefenstahl's iconic documentary *Olympia* and Ludwig Friedrich Barthel's immensely popular short story *Schinovelle*. Rather than the voice of criticism for the masses, my examination poses sport as instrumental in both creating the ideal Aryan body and maintaining his ethical morality. It is exactly this association that writers after 1945 that writers tackle through sport in order to unveil the problem in West German society of dealing with the ghosts of the Nazi past. Much like the Weimar Republic, sport is employed by the writers of Chapter Three to present their arguments on society through literature and mass media in order to create an audience realization of the danger that lies in the survival of

totalitarian structures. Furthermore, this chapter illuminates the tension that emerges in creating a new form of literary realism after 1945 between Germany's elite literary salon *Gruppe 47* and the so-called *Kölner Schule des neuen Realismus*. While both groups highlight sport as a means through which to view society's neglect of its fascist past, the investigation likewise reveals the dramatically different literary attempts that emerge after the fall of the Third Reich. Turning to Theodor W. Adorno's philosophies on sport's innate fascist make-up, I show how athletics in Siegfried Lenz's *Brot und Spiele* and Ludwig Harig's short story and *Hörspiel* versions of "Das Fußballspiel" reveal the necessary confrontation with the Nazi past neglected by society and the dire repercussions such denial can produce. Like Brecht and Vischer, the literature of the immediate postwar period sought to question the state of society and furthermore ensure that the totalitarian mentality warned of in the Weimar Republic never resurfaced.

"Sport ist der Nerv der Zeit" traces the politics of sport in literature that began around 1918 with the foundations of the Weimar Republic. This project hinges on the development towards and the subsequent escape from Germany's fascist history. The appropriation of sport in literature provides a lens through which to view the corruption of society by the elite, its transformation into a totalitarian state as well as the desired need to exorcise the ghosts of the Nazi past. In order to understand the poignant cultural significance the individual pieces held during the time of production, this project also makes use of the varying theoretical lenses generated during each specific period. In turning to such theories, an elevated understanding of the influence of these literary and mass-media works in society during the time of production can be revealed.

Chapter One

How Bombers Became Gentlemen: Brecht, Vischer and the Crisis of Sport in Literature of the Weimar Republic

I. *Sachlicher Sport*: Sport, *Neue Sachlichkeit* and Weimar Society

After World War I, German intellectuals faced the problem of creating new art appropriate for the fractured mindset that resulted from the shock of the Great War. *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or New Objectivity, established itself in the early 1920s and sought to create literature and art in realistic and somber forms in reaction to the politics of the existing avant-garde movements. In the years immediately preceding and following World War I, a plethora of artistic genres—Futurism, Cubism, Cubo-Futurism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Constructivism and the Dada movement, amongst others—populated German culture. While many of the recognized artistic spheres, such as Expressionism and Dada, debatably remained intact through the war, its end witnessed the eventual decline and extinction of such movements during the 1920s. John Willett elaborates by stating: “Apart from Surrealism, which to some extent represented a reaction against the renaissance rather than an extension of it, each of the major –Isms had been effectively established by the end of the First World War; indeed most, like Futurism, Cubism and Expressionism, were already on the decline.”⁴² In the wake of the demise of such anti-representational art forms, *Neue Sachlichkeit* launched

⁴² John Willett, *The New Sobriety 1917-1933: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) 11.

itself as a reigning artistic form in the early years of the Weimar Republic in contrast to the optimistic and emotional values of the Expressionists.

Rejecting the emotionally charged vision of previous eras like Expressionism and Romanticism, the artists of *Neue Sachlichkeit* were born “out of Dada and the disillusionments of the war and the German Revolution; it is in effect cooler and more skeptical”⁴³ than the previous artistic inclinations. This new “objectivity,” according to Fritz Schmalenbach, was set to fill the bankruptcy left by Expressionism and renew it “in a less utopian, and so to speak more *sachlich* expressionism, an expressionism which has become more objective in its artistic production.”⁴⁴ The movement sought to highlight the crude reality in art rather than the optimistic possibilities of life. Peter Gay aptly describes the era as follows:

Whatever its ultimate meaning—and that meaning differed from artist to artist—in substance the *Neue Sachlichkeit* was a search for reality, for a place to stand in the actual world; it was the struggle for objectivity that has characterized German culture since Goethe. It called for realism in setting, accurate reportage, return to naturalistic speech, and, if there had to be idealism, sober idealism. It was a movement toward simplicity and clarity, toward objectivity, matter-of-factness, sobriety.⁴⁵

Indeed, this novel perspective took hold not only in the world of art and architecture but in the literary realm as well. Authors advocated literature boasting the harsh ugliness of real life rather than the sentimental rants of Romanticism.

In order to accommodate this abrupt change in literary discourse, the material incorporated into literary musings likewise expanded culturally. Rather than catering only to the intellectual elite to produce so-called “high art,” the Weimar Republic saw a broadening

⁴³ Willett, *The New Sobriety* 11.

⁴⁴ Fritz Schmalenbach, “The Term *Neue Sachlichkeit*,” *The Art Bulletin* 22.3 (September 1940) 163.

⁴⁵ Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001) 122.

of the artistic world into that of mass popular culture.⁴⁶ Blurring the lines between what was considered high and low art waned during this period, and the writers associated with *Neue Sachlichkeit* actively sought to subvert this high-low conflict. As Andreas Huyssen argues:

From [Gustave] Courbet's appropriation of popular iconography to [Bertolt] Brecht's immersion in the vernacular of popular culture, from Madison Avenue's conscious exploitation of avantgardist pictorial strategies to postmodernism uninhibited learning from Las Vegas, there has been a plethora of strategic moves tending to destabilize the high/low opposition from within.⁴⁷

Thus, the writers and artists of the Weimar Republic overwhelmingly struggled with the distinction between what was considered high or low art forms.

The introduction of so-called low art forms of popular culture into the realm of high art populated the cultural scene during the 1920s in Germany. Kaes notes: "A swiftly expanding urban mass culture of film, radio, illustrated press, sports, and entertainment challenged the notion of a literary domain isolated from public life."⁴⁸ In short, the emergence of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the literary world corresponded to the cohesion of low art forms, in this instance mass culture, with the domain of high arts. By utilizing popular culture, art and literature could more accurately portray a somber reality accessible to a larger public.⁴⁹ This attempt to eliminate the borders between high and low art, and essentially use

⁴⁶ Kaes, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* 507.

⁴⁷ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 16.

⁴⁸ Kaes, *Weimar Republic Sourcebook* 507.

⁴⁹ Likewise during this period, the reading public expanded greatly, resulting in a broader reader base in society. According to Kaes: "By the mid-1920s, a new reading public had emerged and demands were met by innovative marketing and distribution strategies" (Kaes, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* 508). Indeed, book clubs expanded and best-seller lists were implemented, reflecting the growth in the population of the reading public. Moreover, the types of literature produced during the 1920s broadened in order to cater to the widespread literary tastes of the expanded reading public. The so-called popular fiction genre—books not considered to be "literary" in genre—overwhelmingly dominated readership. For further information, see Kaes, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* 505-515.

literature and art for social and political causes, “challenges the belief in the necessary separation of high art from mass culture, politics, and the everyday.”⁵⁰ To be sure, literature began incorporating unique aspects of mass and popular culture in an attempt to depict a more accurate reality in the artistic world. When literature and arts engaged in this dramatic overhaul and renovation, one outlet harnessed by the authors of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement was the world of sports. The professionalization of athletics combined with the popularity of the athletic participation in all levels of society appealed not only to the spectating public but also to intellectuals of the period. Indeed, authors and artists alike turned towards athletes and sport themes as inspiration for their work. Wolfgang Rothe rightly argues that both artists and authors viewed sport as representing the true “Lebensgefühl” of the 1920s.⁵¹ The transition from the individual nature of *Körperkultur* at the turn of the twentieth century towards a team-oriented communal structure provided the arts with a method through which to access and address the state of society with popular culture.⁵²

Considering the great popularity athletics obtained amongst the German public during the 1920s, sport is commonly viewed as one of the great cultural phenomena that brought

⁵⁰ Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* x.

⁵¹ Wolfgang Rothe, “Sport und Literatur in den Zwanzigerjahren: Eine ideologiekritische Anmerkung,” *Stadion: Eine Geschichte des Sports und der Körperkultur* VII.1 (1981) 132.

⁵² Beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, and most particularly the 1920s, athletics shifted from the *Körperkultur* movement steered in large part by Friedrich Ludwig “Turnvater” Jahn. Flourishing at the dawn of the twentieth century, *Körperkultur* advocates cropped up throughout Germany demanding a new relationship between the body and nature, which would free the body from the restrictive conditions of modern city life. The shift away from *Körperkultur* to modern sports in the 1920s was received with hostility by such reformers. However, according to Udo Merkel the “contemporary [and modern] spirit of energetic competition” proved an unstoppable force, bringing the reign of *Körperkultur* to an end (Udo Merkel, “Sport, Power and the State in Weimar Germany” 141). For further information on this trend in early twentieth century society, see Bernd Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch* and Hermand and Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik*.

forth a new and powerful image to German society.⁵³ Though the country was beleaguered by inflation, unemployment and political turmoil, the development and expansion of sport had a powerful impact on the country's postwar morale. Athletes such as swimming star Erich Rademacher, track and field sensations Otto Peltzer and Helmut Körnig, tennis champions Cilly Aussem and Gottfried von Cramm and boxing stars Paul Samson-Körner, Hans Breitensträter and Max Schmeling are credited by countless cultural scholars for placing Germany on top of the world stage of athleticism. The victories and strength demonstrated by these popular and renowned athletes could be transposed onto individuals in society, spreading a sense of accomplishment and national pride. Even those not talented enough to compete could cheer on the victors and thus become an integral part of the pursuit of success. Unlike such victorious and virile understandings of the sport star, the literary depiction of the male athlete reveals a more complex picture fraught with despair and, ultimately, athletic failure. This then begs the question: what can such distinctly negative renderings of athletes reveal about the state of Weimar culture and society? Why in a society that praised sport for its cultural accomplishments is the athlete in literature plagued by failure?

By looking closer at two specific authors of the age, this chapter examines sport as the revolutionary activity in literature intended to overturn rampant bourgeois ideals and divulge the staunch social critique posed by *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Like many writers of the period, both Bertolt Brecht and Melchior Vischer recognized the inherent revolutionary value

⁵³ Hermand and Trommler, for instance, describe Weimar Germany's society as one that thrived on the popularity of sporting events and admired male athletes. Weimar society facilitated a new value for sport, in which a greater homogenization of society proved possible (Hermand and Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* 76-78). Film and cultural historian Anton Kaes likewise relates sport's appeal to its accessibility to all classes of society during the Weimar Republic. (Kaes, *The Weimar Sourcebook* 674-7). For further examination of this theme, see Anne Fleig *Körperkultur und Moderne* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2008).

athletes could provide in literature. I investigate how these authors turn to sport in order to foster *Neue Sachlichkeit*, while simultaneously proffering a staunch societal critique of bourgeois ideals in their works. Through the athlete in literature, Brecht and Vischer posit an inescapable society overrun by elitist ideals and entrenched in bourgeois ideology. The authors critique the status quo of Weimar society and call for a revolution to overthrow the bourgeois capitalist nature embedded in German culture. In this chapter, I turn first to Brecht's short story "Der Kinnhaken" (1925) and unfinished novel *Das Renommee* (1926) to reveal the increasingly corrupted state of society rendered in the athletic careers of both protagonists. While there is hope in fostering a critical and revolutionary proletariat in athletic form in "Der Kinnhaken," *Das Renommee* advances to unveil the hopelessness of overturning an already corrupted elitist society through sport. The pessimistic athletic society unveiled in Brecht's stories, however, offers no solution to this socio-political problem of the Weimar Republic. While Vischer's play *Fußballspieler und Indianer* (1927) likewise questions the corrosive influence of elitist society, it subsequently takes this theme further by imagining the solution in returning sport to a pre-commercial, primitive state. In order to elucidate this point fully, I will first address the cultural state of sport during the Weimar Republic. Then, I will illuminate Brecht's theories on sport as posed in a series of articles addressing the crisis of sport in Weimar society. Subsequently, I examine how the fusion of the characteristic traits of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and Marxist proletariat ideals demonstrated by the athlete in literature reveal an ever-increasing corruption of society in both Brecht's short story and novel as well as Vischer's drama. Ultimately, I show that the only possible solution, as posed by Vischer, lies in the unattainable abolishment of the ruling bourgeois influence in the hopes of a classless society. Through the interaction between athletes and the

surrounding society illustrated in each successive piece, both authors pose an increasingly searing critique of the bourgeois state of the Weimar society. While Vischer imagines the solution as a return to primitive and pre-commercialized sport, his work culminates with the impossibility of such attempts and thus reveals the explicit danger and corruption of society ruled by the elite.

II. KOs, Careers and Culture: Sport in the Works of Bertolt Brecht

In the early 1920s, the popularity of sport intersected with both the lives and works of Weimar artists. Numerous intellectuals, for instance, frequented boxing matches, which were favored not only for the sport's robustness and connection to America⁵⁴ but also because it highlighted a new individual physical awareness.⁵⁵ Prominent writers, such as Bertolt Brecht, even fostered friendships with leading German boxing stars, for instance Paul Samson-Körner, Max Schmeling and Hans Breitensträter, and used their professional experiences as a basis for literary works. Indeed, the interest and participation in athletics throughout the decade in Germany was a mode through which the population was able to begin founding a new, stronger identity at all levels of society. The commonality of famous athletes who originated chiefly from the lower levels of society, as well as the popularity of

⁵⁴ Boxing is commonly associated with America in early twentieth century historical and cultural investigations. John Sugden elaborates on the connection between America and boxing: "Just as a hundred years before in Regency England, bare-knuckle prize fighting had experienced its most profitable decade—its 'golden era'—in the 1920s its gloved progeny enjoyed a period of unprecedented success. New York City was established as the sport's capital, and Madison Square Garden [...] became boxing's epicenter" (John Sugden, *Boxing and Society: An International Analysis* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996] 35). Not only did America provide a boost in boxing's popularity on its soil, it also produced numerous boxing champions, such as Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney, who ruled the boxing scene throughout the 1920s. In short, when one spoke of boxing, it was in some way related back to the United States (Sugden, *Boxing and Society* 29-36).

⁵⁵ Kaes, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* 674.

sporting events, provided inspiration for the arts, fostering a spike in artistic endeavors based in sport.

With the widespread popularity of sport in Weimar society on the rise, it is no surprise that the effect of athletics penetrated all aspects of German art in the 1920s. For instance, artists like Georg Grosz, Anton Räderscheidt and John Heartfield incorporated athletic themes like tennis, gymnastics and boxing into their paintings. Indeed, “Grosz and Heartfield were photographed sparring with one another, [...] and Anton Rädenscheidt painted his big blonde nudes toying with a tennis racket or swinging on the parallel bars.”⁵⁶ Not limited to painting and photography, sport arose in other artistic venues: architects like Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius were flooded by requests to incorporate fitness studios into modern apartment designs. Erwin Piscator, for instance, had a miniature gymnasium in his flat designed by Gropius. Moreover, athletics began to infiltrate the literary scene with sport magazines like *Die Szene*, *Die Arena* and *Der Querschnitt* popping up all over Germany.

Sport additionally grew as a popular topic on the literary scene, appearing in poetry, short stories, novels and plays. Joachim Ringelnatz, for example, penned a collection of poetry entitled “Turngedichte” (1920-1923), which described the beauty of athletics in wide-ranging topics such as throwing a boomerang, boxing, running and soccer. Playwrights likewise created dramas revolving around cycling races, for instance Georg Kaiser’s *Von morgen bis mitternacht* (1920), and soccer, like Vischer’s *Fußballspieler und Indianer* (1927), and magazines and newspapers were pregnant with short stories and novellas depicting sport in all forms. To be sure, sport penetrated the arts almost ubiquitously and provided material for artistic creation and imagination. Moreover, the mass appeal of

⁵⁶ Willett, *The New Sobriety* 102-4.

athletics provided a realistic depiction of the society these artists wished to portray during the 1920s.

Of all writers during the Weimar Republic who engaged with sport as a theme, the most prominent author associated with sport, and more specifically boxing, is undoubtedly Bertolt Brecht. As stated by James K. Lyon: “Brecht was not the only literary figure who used sport as a literary subject, of course, but he was certainly the most notorious one.”⁵⁷ A regular spectator at boxing matches in Berlin, Brecht implemented sport as a theme in his early works. As early as 1920, Brecht published his first article on athletics in the *Berliner Zeitung* entitled “Das Theater als Sport,” which was soon followed by “Mehr guten Sport” in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* in 1926. Indeed, sport began to permeate various aspects of Brecht’s writing, and he incorporated sport, and more particularly boxing, as both an undercurrent and central theme of his literary endeavors in the early and mid-1920s. To be sure, Brecht’s association with the sporting world has been well documented and predominately referenced as corresponding to a heightened popularity of sports in the Weimar Republic.⁵⁸ Considering the prominent role athletics assumed in Weimar culture, Brecht’s heightened interest in boxing is of particular interest for this work. Though left to the wayside of Brecht’s literary oeuvre,⁵⁹ his fictional texts dealing with sport are vital in examining the role of sport in a new and socially relevant form of art during the 1920s.

⁵⁷ Karl-Heinz Schoeps, “Bertolt Brecht and the Weimar Republic: Rebel with a Cause, or Between Bacchant and Bolshevik,” *Brecht Unbound*, eds. James K. Lyon and Hans-Peter Breuer (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995) 51.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Wolf von Eckardt and Sander L. Gilman, *Bertolt Brecht’s Berlin: A Scrapbook of the Twenties* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975) 137-138, Tony Meech, “Brecht’s earlier plays,” *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, ed. Peter Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 43-55 as well as John Willett, *Brecht in Context* (London: Methuen, 1998) 71-75 and *The New Sobriety* 103-106.

⁵⁹ See Klaus Völker, *Brecht: Eine Biographie* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1976).

Brecht's developing and increasing interest in sport corresponded to a period of political exploration in his literary career. Though his work was previously essentially apolitical, Brecht began to embrace Marxism and its anti-bourgeois attitude during the early 1920s. His literature correspondingly mutated into an overall critique of the societal status quo in Weimar Germany. The ground workings of his Marxist beliefs arguably began during the early 1920s, while wholly solidifying themselves later in the decade. Ronald Gray argues that Brecht fluctuated with his wholehearted commitment to Marxism throughout the 1920s, stating: "Up to the time of *Mahagonny*, Brecht was unsure where his allegiance should lie. By 1929, however, he had made up his mind: only Marxism could provide a solution [for society's problems], and the propagandistic works of the early 1930s were the result."⁶⁰

Brecht believed eliminating the stronghold of the elite over the working class could solve the cultural and social crisis of Weimar Germany. In order to achieve this feat, a proletariat revolution was critical. As Eugene Lunn notes:

Born into a world of war and revolution, Brecht stressed the necessity to start afresh, the imperative to radically transform traditional culture. Insisting that an emergent collectivist and proletarian world would have to make major departures from the nineteenth-century bourgeois heritage, Brecht developed a sharply leftist perspective, focusing upon class struggle.⁶¹

Indeed, Brecht's desired proletariat revolution is further emphasized by Douglas Kellner, who explains that Brecht acted as "a force of opposition to bourgeois society and its principles. [Brecht's work] aims at the revolutionary transformation of bourgeois society, investigating the tendencies visible in the present development of society, which could lead

⁶⁰ Ronald Gray, *Brecht: The Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 41.

⁶¹ Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) 105.

to its overthrow.”⁶² By eliminating class boundaries, bourgeois power would dissolve to create a classless society constructed of the proletariat. Though it has been argued that Brecht first showed his Marxist beliefs in literature during the early 1930s, I contend the seeds of Brecht’s Marxist loyalty germinate in his works of the early and mid-1920s.

Utilizing his newfound Marxist worldview, Brecht focused his writing in the 1920s on the proletariat, as was common for writers of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement.⁶³ He demanded a re-conceptualization of art, and more specifically theater, in Weimar Germany. According to Schoeps, the playwright believed:

[...] the contemporary world, as [Brecht] saw it, could not longer be captured in traditional forms of drama, the drama had to be changed—the turn to Marxism also marked a turn in his career: it was the beginning of his epic or dialectic theater. With the same vigor he displayed in his attacks on contemporary poetry, he continued to rail against contemporary theater and contemporary literature in general.⁶⁴

In order to reinstate the critical ability of patrons in viewing a play, Brecht stripped the theater of the superfluous accoutrements. For Brecht, this would help members of the audience to distance themselves from the action on stage. This detachment would, in turn, allow each spectator to fully comprehend the meaning behind each scene. According to Brecht, the “Aristotelian” drama, as he called it, strove to evoke pity and fear in the spectator in order to experience an emotional catharsis. This theater, however, leaves the spectator uninstructed and uninspired.⁶⁵

⁶² Douglas Kellner, “Brecht’s Marxist Aesthetic,” *A Bertolt Brecht Reference Companion*, ed. Siegfried Mews (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997) 283.

⁶³ Matthew Philpotts, *Margins of Dictatorship: Assent and Dissent in the Work of Günter Eich and Bertolt Brecht* (Oxford: Lang, 2003) 275.

⁶⁴ Schoeps, “Bertolt Brecht and the Weimar Republic” 52.

⁶⁵ Martin Esslin, *Brecht: The Man and His Work* (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1960) 129-154.

Critical of the complacent state of both performers and spectators, Brecht used the sport stadium as a basis for his conceptualization of the theater-going experience. For Brecht, the solution to theatrical problems could be found in the athletic arena. Brecht believed “sport was a form of entertainment whose principles ought to be taken over by the theatre, with the stage as a brightly lit ring devoid of all mystique, demanding a critical, irreverent attitude on the part of the audience.”⁶⁶ In other words, for Brecht, sport represented an aspect of society that should not be dismissed as purely lowbrow culture; it was a model of spectatorship that facilitated the essential and detached critical standpoint imperative for the theater. Brecht explains in “Das Theater als Sport” (1920) that in watching a boxing match, for instance, the audience does not identify with one boxer, but rather one analyzes the match in its entirety.⁶⁷ Fully aware the engagement will end in victory for one and defeat for the other, the spectator is able to detach himself from the action and critically analyze the events before him. This *Verfremdungseffekt* lies at the center of Brecht’s Epic Theater and calls for literature to use all means at its disposal to “keep the audience separate, estranged, [and] alienated from the action”⁶⁸ in order to foster a critical detachment. This allows the theater audience, like boxing spectators, to fully understand the greater meaning of the actions before them.

For Brecht, sport did not end simply with its association with the stage. Following the publication of “Das Theater als Sport” (1920) and “Mehr guten Sport” (1926), Brecht progressed to discuss the cultural value of sport in society outside of the theater. “Die

⁶⁶ Willett, *The New Sobriety* 102-3. For Brecht, this included every aspect of the sport arena, such as the prerogative to smoke cigars while observing a boxing match (Willett, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* 174).

⁶⁷ Bertolt Brecht, “Das Theater als Sport,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 23-24.

⁶⁸ Esslin, *Brecht: The Man and His Work* 134.

Todfeinde des Sportes” and “Die Krise des Sportes,” which were both published in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* in 1928, describe the influence and use value of sport as a cultural commodity and simultaneously warn against the impending danger the sport world poses if mishandled by the elite. Indeed, Brecht approved of and enjoyed exercise but, crucially, only as a non-instrumental end to itself.

While Brecht focuses on sport’s role in society and culture in his series of articles, he likewise incorporates sport as a basis for his literature as well. The anthology entitled *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, though published well after his death, boasts some thirty-three pieces and texts published or written between 1920 and 1930. Including songs, poetry, letters, dramas and short stories, the collection renders sport in different capacities and further reflects the merit Brecht placed on the literary value of sport.⁶⁹ While some pieces like the poem “Gedenktafel für zwölf Weltmeister (1927)” channel the specifics of the sporting world, other texts bring in athletics only as an undercurrent. The short drama *Der Impotente: Eine Komödie* (1922), for instance, incorporates boxing only in the background of the action.⁷⁰ Likewise, a short scene in the play *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (originally staged in 1927) takes place in a boxing arena, and the characters Alaska Wolf Joe and Trinity Moses are based on boxing

⁶⁹ Though not published in his lifetime, this 1995 anthology shows the variegated themes of sport within Brecht’s literary career. The collection offers pieces as early as 1920 and spans throughout his career, including texts where sport surfaces in only small scenes or references. For instance, editor Günter Berg notes that in Brecht’s 1954 piece *Turandot oder Der Kongreß der Weißwäscher*, the main character is depicted as an avid boxing fan (Günter Berg, “Nachwort,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995] 164). Indeed, each of these references and texts speak towards Brecht’s ongoing literary fascination with sport.

⁷⁰ While two men box in the opening scene in the lettuce garden, athletics do not play a major role in the play *Der Impotente*. Though referenced later, boxing does not, as it does in other pieces by Brecht, play a centralized role imperative to understanding of the overarching plot (Bertolt Brecht, “Der Impotente,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995] 25-29).

legends Jack Dempsey and Paul Samson Körner.⁷¹ Such pieces, however, do not center on the social value of sport. Brecht works such as “Der Kinnhaken” and *Das Renommee*, however, focus on athletic careers in society and reflect the corruptive dangers he associated with sport in his articles.

While Brecht’s four short articles on sport are referenced throughout secondary literature, scholars to date have failed to analyze the significance of Brechtian athletics in relation to the author’s fictional texts dealing with sport. Though many of his pieces incorporate some unique aspect of sport, only a handful deal exclusively with the career of an athlete. One such tale is the short story “Der Kinnhaken” (1925), which recalls the tragic story of a boxing phenomenon named Freddy Meinkes.⁷² Moreover, his novel *Das Renommee* (1927), though never completed, likewise centers on athletic society by following the rise and fall of fictional boxing legend George Carrare and his ultimate departure from the athletic world. Unlike the infamous boxing legends of the time, idolized as the new wave of German masculinity,⁷³ these stories decisively depict a tragic retreat from the spotlight.

Though both pieces are, at best, briefly footnoted in literary criticism in relation to Brecht’s

⁷¹ Siegfried Gehrman, “Symbol of National Resurrection: Max Schmeling,” *International Journal of the History of Sport* 13.1 (March 1996) 101-113.

⁷² “Der Kinnhaken” is based loosely on the life and career of Brecht’s friend and German boxing champion, Paul Samson-Körner. Not only did Brecht frequent Samson-Körner’s matches, he interacted with the boxer in a social setting and often used the champion’s boxing expertise while writing his own stories. (Eckardt and Gilman, *Bertolt Brecht’s Berlin* 136).

⁷³ David Bathrick elaborates on the iconic status of the boxers of the Weimar Republic stating: “[E]ven prominent members of the intelligentsia sought to identify themselves with the event as spectacle, with boxing as an attitude, and with Max Schmeling as a particularly powerful exemplification of this rapidly growing sport: not as a person, as he himself already seems aware, but as an icon” (David Bathrick, “Max Schmeling on Canvas: Boxing as an Icon of Weimar Culture,” *New German Critique* 51 [Autumn 1990] 119). Likewise John Hoberman further elucidates this point in stating: “In Europe during the interwar period, sport emerged as nothing less than a modern style in which an ideologically diverse collection of temperaments found an issue of sociological significance.” Hoberman goes on to describe how sport, and boxing in particular, became emblematic of cultural and political transformations in post-Wilhemian modernity and eventually signified a new era of masculine identity (John Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984] 123-145).

love of boxing, upon closer examination, each demonstrates the imagined revolutionary possibility of sport in literature and conversely the failure of such revolution to come to fruition. Indeed, the two texts critique the bourgeois stronghold over Weimar society. What is more, they reflect the ground workings of Brecht's Marxist ideology in his support of a proletariat revolution against such elitist mentality.

Written at approximately the same time as Brecht's iconic articles regarding sport, "Der Kinnhaken" and *Das Renommee* can be viewed as extensions of the desired, uncorrupted role of the athlete in society. Both Freddy Meinkes and George Carrare epitomize the possibility of the modern sportsman for the Weimar Republic: Freddy is brutal yet detached from bourgeois influence in the boxing arena, while George provides a public figure behind whom the spectators can rally and admire. Likewise, each figure seemingly embodies the characteristics of the proletariat class ready for revolution. However, due to the influence of the professional sporting world, and therewith the bourgeois influence on society, these two athletes fail to achieve the societal upheaval needed to revolutionize Weimar society. By bringing Brecht's articles on sport to bear on each piece, I examine how the fictional texts portray the inevitable commodification of the athletic protagonist as well as sport's subsequent abuse by bourgeois society. Such corrosion results in the failure to produce a proletariat class ready for social revolution. By implementing a somber artistic outlook typical of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in his work, Brecht suggests sport as possessing the potential for producing a classless society through the proletariat. While this possibility is shown to exist, the attempt to dismantle the power of the bourgeois elite is ultimately proven to be futile. Thus, Brecht posits a volatile critique of the state of Weimar society and the far-reaching corruptive influence of its elitist infrastructure. It is only when the proletariat

mindset flourishes and maintains a critical mentality that sport, and likewise society, can escape the crisis in which modernity finds itself.

a. “Es sind feinere Raufereien”⁷⁴: Bertolt Brecht and the Crisis of Sport

Though traditionally a part of what was considered low-class culture, Brecht viewed athletics as a metaphor for the problematic state of culture and arts of Weimar society. Indeed, Michael Gamper elaborates: “Das Versagen der bürgerlichen Tugenden im Sport hat Brechts Interesse sicherlich gefördert. Um diese Eigenschaft des Sports aufrechtzuerhalten, sah er als notwendig an, auf eine Beliebtheitsstruktur zu verzichten, wie sie unter bürgerlichen Gesichtspunkten herausgebildet hatte.”⁷⁵ Expounding on the possible benefits of athletics in renovating bourgeois theater, Brecht set forth the foundations for a new theater in “Das Theater als Sport.” In the article, Brecht relies on sport as the method through which the theatrical and artistic realms can be saved. “Wenn man ins Theater geht wie in die Kirche oder in den Gerichtssaal, oder in die Schule, das ist schon falsch. Man muß ins Theater gehen wie zu einem Sportfest. Es handelt sich hier nicht um Ringkämpfe mit dem Bizeps. Es sind feinere Raufereien.”⁷⁶ In other words, the theater had become too similar to other aspects of bourgeois society and no longer held any critical capacity for the audience. As previously mentioned, Brecht believed this critical attitude could be achieved by viewing

⁷⁴ Brecht, “Das Theater als Sport” 23-24.

⁷⁵ Michael Gamper, “Im Kampf um die Gunst der Masse: über das Verhältnis von Sport und Literatur in der Weimarer Republik,” *Popularität: zum Problem von Esoterik und Exoterik in Literatur und Philosophie*, eds. Hans-Georg von Arburg, Michael Gamper and Dominik Müller (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1999) 158.

⁷⁶ Brecht, “Das Theater als Sport” 23-24.

a play as one would a boxing match. Sport proved to be the perfect lens through which one could truly understand the ultimate theater experience.

Following “Das Theater als Sport,” Brecht’s article “Mehr guten Sport” further elaborates on the benefit of athletics not only for theater but also for society as a whole. In this text, Brecht again laments the current state of the theater in Germany and emphasizes that the entire experience should, like sport, incorporate more “fun.”⁷⁷ This can be achieved, Brecht argues, by implementing athletic characteristics into a play’s performance. He proclaims: “Es ist nicht einzusehen, warum das Theater nicht auch seinen ‘guten Sport’ haben sollte.”⁷⁸ Indeed, he believed that theater in the Expressionist era lost the excitement it once promised. Theater during the Weimar Republic had likewise become predictable and boring. Furthermore, it produced a passive and uninvolved audience viewing passionless actors. By incorporating an athletic framework, the theater could once again become pleasurable and create an educational and critical social engagement. Applying the dynamics

⁷⁷ Brecht’s concept of “fun” associated with sport here can be linked to that of fun in play, which Herbert Marcuse proffers in his text *Eros und Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Sigmund Freud* (1955). Marcuse posits the act of play in direct opposition to labor. He advocates it as an emancipatory quality in life. Drawing from Marx and Freud, Marcuse sees play as a liberating function for man entirely separate from work. In *Eros und Civilization*, Marcuse argues that man’s sexual desires are repressed by society in order to maintain a productive working mentality. He suggests that libidinal gratification, however, should not be suppressed but rather embraced in order to produce contented workers, who will in turn labor more productively. Indeed, for Marcuse the concepts of fun and play are key in achieving liberation from restraint from repression. Furthermore, play and fun are wholly separated from work and labor. This concept holds true for Brecht as well. By bringing “fun” into theater and sport, Brecht likewise suggests that these concepts should be separated from labor and operate without societal influence. See Herbert Marcuse, *Eros und Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Sigmund Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). For further discussions on Marcuse’s conceptualization of play and fun, see William S. Wilkerson and Jeffrey Paris, *New Critical Theory Essays On Liberation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), David Cohen, *The Development of Play* (New York: New York University Press, 2006) and Michael Oriard, *Sporting with the Gods: The Rhetoric of Play and Game in American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁷⁸ Bertolt Brecht, “Mehr guten Sport,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 32.

of sporting matches to performances in the theater could bring “fun” back onto the stage and allow the theater to again create critical and inspired patrons.

But sport alone was not a solution in Brecht’s opinion. In his article “Die Krise des Sportes” (1928), Brecht posits the dangers produced when sport becomes a commercialized cultural product manipulated by the elite. According to Brecht:

Kurz: ich bin gegen alle Bemühungen, den Sport zu einem Kulturgut zu machen, schon darum, weil ich weiß, was diese Gesellschaft mit Kulturträgern alles treibt, und der Sport dazu wirklich zu schade ist. Ich bin für den Sport, weil und solange er riskant (ungesund), unkultiviert (also nicht gesellschaftsfähig) und Selbstzweck ist.⁷⁹

That is to say that sport plays an important role in society because it is innately a part of low culture and must remain so. It must maintain its pure form, lest it be corrupted by high culture. The moment athletics are taken too seriously and elevated to the height of elite culture or used for an ulterior purpose, it ceases to be sport and takes on a different affirmative within society and manipulates the masses.

With this article, Brecht likewise critiques the stronghold of bourgeois society during the Weimar Republic. Disenchanted by the social stratification of Weimar society and bourgeois privilege, Brecht saw, according to Lev Kreft: “[T]he bourgeois theater and physical culture as being responsible for the decadence of civilization and the decline of the West.”⁸⁰ Kreft argues that Brecht believed one must turn to an aspect of culture completely distinguished from the old in order to break this cycle and create a new cultural understanding: “Society was in such a state that socially useful cultural goods could not help it; on the contrary, only those activities, which are socially unacceptable may produce a

⁷⁹ Bertolt Brecht, “Die Krise des Sportes,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 98.

⁸⁰ Lev Kreft, “Hook to Chin,” *Physical Culture and Sport Studies Research* XL.VI (2009) 73-74.

healthy shock. It is not for sport or theater to please society.”⁸¹ In short, sport was an activity not necessitating excessive analysis and best suited for the lower classes. Both athlete and spectator, according to Brecht, should enjoy sport, regardless of social class and without intricate analysis.

Similarly, in “Die Todfeinde des Sportes” (1928), Brecht poses high bourgeois culture and hygiene as the two mortal enemies of sport. Unless properly checked, these two phenomena would likely be the downfall of any possible benefit sport could offer. “Sie verstehen mich,” he writes, “je ‘vernünftiger,’ ‘feiner’ und ‘gesellschaftsfähiger’ der Sport wird, und er hat heute eine starke Tendenz dazu, desto schlechter wird er.”⁸² Much like his article “Die Krise des Sportes,” Brecht warns against the implementation and elevation of sport for cultural ends outside of the athletic realm. The two main enemies Brecht defines here are members of society who wish to turn sport into a hygienic movement used to provide a healthy body alongside a healthy mind and those who wish to confine sport to a rule-bound, “sensible” and precisely-tuned noble art for their own purposes. Should the latter occur, sport would return to a privilege of the nobility and become an activity reliant not on natural ability but a means of corruption based on class standing. Sport practiced for “fun,” that is without any ulterior motive aside from engaging in the sport itself, would produce neither of these results. It is precisely this corruption of sport by bourgeois ideals that plagues the athletes of Brecht’s short story and novel and halts any hope of overturning the existing societal structure.

⁸¹ Kreft, “Hook to Chin” 75.

⁸² Bertolt Brecht, “Die Todfeinde des Sportes,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 99.

b. “Vorsicht ist die Mutter des k.o.”⁸³: Bertolt Brecht’s “Der Kinnhaken”

Based loosely on the career of Paul Samson-Körner, Brecht’s parable entitled “Der Kinnhaken,” published in 1925, recounts the fall of heavyweight boxer Freddy Meinkes from the perspective of a good friend and fellow boxer. The story focuses, however, not on actions within the ring during Freddy’s highly anticipated match in Germany but on the series of events that lead to his dismal fall from fame prior to the start of the boxing bout. As a group of men sit in a crowded and smoky Berlin bar, the narrator describes the heroic boxer’s return to Germany from a career in America.⁸⁴ The boxing star, however, does not encounter triumph in his native ring but an embarrassing and brutal defeat after strategic planning in a nearby bar before the contest. As the narrator details of Freddy’s final moments before leaving for the fight, he correspondingly describes the fatal steps the boxer reached that cemented his downfall in the European arena. The story recounts Freddy’s downfall in the bar before he enters the ring. It ends as the baffled bar patrons listen to the events of the hero’s self-inflicted demise.

When the story begins, Freddy is described as invincible and capable of demolishing any opponent he encounters without strategy or conscious movement. It is his objective

⁸³ Bertolt Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 11.

⁸⁴ Early in his writing career, Brecht chose America as the setting for various works, such as *Im Dickicht der Städte* (1921-23) and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1927-1929). Richard Ruland notes that: “America serves as setting [in Brecht’s works], a boundless, unfamiliar land where anything is possible. Unlike Brecht’s Europe, its future stretches before it with promise, and its people if not already giants, can yet easily be drawn oversized and over simplified, for their lives and aspirations suffer no limitation” (Richard Ruland, “The American Plays of Bertolt Brecht,” *American Quarterly* 15.3 [1963] 371). That is to say that America offered an alternative for Brecht that could replace what he saw as the dreary and boring Germany he perceived his society to be. In fact, in his journal, Brecht wrote his thoughts regarding contemporary Weimar Germany in 1920: “Wie mich dieses Deutschland langweilt! [...] Ein verkommender Bauernstand, [...] ein verfetteter Mittelstand und eine matte Intellektuelle! Bleibt: Amerika!” (Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke XX* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982] 10). Though not specifically used as the backdrop for the entirety of this particular piece, America creates the landscape where Freddy can successfully forges his career before returning to Germany.

fighting style, according to the narrator, that makes him great. Considering Brecht's respect for Samson-Körner, whose "sachlich" fighting style Brecht greatly admired,⁸⁵ the boxer's ability and desire to ignore all aspects of life outside of the sporting arena comes as no surprise. However, before Freddy's killer instinct in the ring presents itself, the boxer's first impression seemingly misleads spectators and fellow boxers alike. The narrator describes one such match, stating: "Als wir ihn hier zum ersten Male in Sicht bekamen, grinsten wir zuerst nicht wenig über die Art, wie er seinen Start aufzog, sich fotografieren ließ und ein direktes Damenhöschen anhatte, lila. Es war das Koketteste, was Sie je in einem Ring sehen konnten."⁸⁶ Indeed, Freddy is a boxer unconcerned with the world outside of the ring or its impression of him. Despite his almost laughable appearance and demeanor, he does not notice the scoffs and humor his appearance conjures amongst the spectators.

Indeed, Freddy's demeanor remains detached from the world outside the match and recognizes no pressure to perform for another's benefit. In the ring, the narrator describes his movements before each fight as incredibly relaxed, as if he were not even in the boxing ring preparing for violence. While most boxers must first assume an aggressive mindset in order to achieve a brutal persona in the ring, "[Freddy] ging herum wie auf dem Theater."⁸⁷ Though he is poised for a violent boxing match, Freddy calmly walks around as if in a theater rather than strategizing. While he prepares to, and does indeed, quickly knock out his opponent, Freddy is not perturbed by the task set before him and does not consciously change

⁸⁵ According to Tony Meech, Brecht's admiration of the heavyweight boxer Samson-Körner stemmed originally from his objective, or "sachlich," fighting style. As the two became better acquainted, Brecht's respect for the boxer, as well as desire to use him as inspiration in his literary works, grew due to Samson-Körner's "renunciation of everything outside the ring" (Meech, "Brecht's early plays" 52).

⁸⁶ Brecht, "Der Kinnhaken" 8.

⁸⁷ Brecht, "Der Kinnhaken" 8.

his mindset in order to win the match. He does not alter his demeanor to intimidate his opponent before the fight merely for the satisfaction of the spectators. For those watching such a match, the objectivity of these actions in the ring (acting as if in a theater in purple shorts prior to fighting) serves only to discount his abilities.

One would be remiss to overlook that Freddy's surroundings are specifically likened to that of a theater. Indeed, this can be understood as a direct reference to Brecht's desire to turn the theater into an athletic arena, as he describes in "Das Theater als Sport." The boxing ring here reflects Brecht's ideal preconceptions for a new style of theater. Rather than distracted by the actions before him, Freddy appears detached from the ring in his atypical and relaxed approach to his opponent. Furthermore, Freddy resembles the ideal sportsman as described in his article "Die Krise des Sportes." When Freddy boxes, he is far from a commercialized cultural commodity controlled by the upper echelons of the athletic world. On the contrary, he boxes for himself using his own unconventional methods and epitomizes the inherent hazardous and brutal nature of sport Brecht deems as "Selbstzweck." That is to say that Freddy has no ulterior motives for his actions in the ring—he acts as he pleases and even wears feminine clothes while loafing around the ring. He fights each match using only his own methods and is not influenced by spectators. Freddy has not allowed his career to become "'sensible,' 'refined' or 'suitable for society,'"⁸⁸ thus following Brecht's warning as laid out in his article "Die Todfeinde des Sportes." His capabilities are precisely those, according to Brecht, which have issued his success, for he has not allowed society to contaminate his athletic career.

⁸⁸ Brecht, "Die Todfeinde des Sportes" 99.

Though his detached fighting mentality creates doubt in the spectators, the start of the match reveals the dramatic fighter in Freddy. While he begins each round relaxed, his danger within the ring is exposed in his ability to independently transition smoothly into a fighting machine. “Aber dann machte er seinen Mann in der ersten Runde k.o., und zwar vermittels eines Kinnhakens, der sich gewaschen hatte.”⁸⁹ Regardless of initial impressions, Freddy transforms into a fighting machine without hesitation, as if he becomes the corporeal incarnate of an uppercut and eliminates his opponent in the first round. In fact, his strength surprises the spectators, for such extremes were unheard of in his weight class. “Sie wissen übrigens doch, daß er Bantam war? Diese Leute haben im allgemeinen keinen Schlag und Freddy war noch dazu eine ganz besonders windige Erscheinung, wenn man ihn so sah.”⁹⁰ Not only does he produce a punch unheard of for his weight class, he does so demonstrating little effort in his objective stance in the ring. With such power, one may anticipate a strong manager or team to train him, but Freddy, at this point, boxes simply to enjoy the sport—to evoke “fun.” It is his talent and not advertising or ulterior motivation that fuels his career and success. He remains detached from the reality outside of the ring and is furthermore praised for victories produced by his objective boxing.

However slender and nonchalant Freddy appears at first glance, he easily transforms into a serious contender feared by his opponents. As if turning a switch, the seemingly delicate boxer changes into an aggressive fighter. The narrator describes Freddy’s demeanor in the arena, stating: “Aber dann hatte er plötzlich ein Tempo wie ein Propeller und dazu ein Hineingehen wie mit fünfzig Pferdekraften, und am Schluß war der ganze Mann wirklich ein

⁸⁹ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 8.

⁹⁰ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 8.

einziger Kinnhaken.”⁹¹ The significance of this comparison is two fold: first that he is compared to a machine and secondly that Freddy essentially becomes an uppercut himself. Indeed, like a mechanized propeller, there is no conscious thought involved in Freddy’s actions, but rather he reacts and immediately changes into a vicious fighter. For Freddy, there is no added agenda for him to appease, and he is able to fight in a manner with no outside incentives aside from sheer victory itself. It is this quality in his fighting that allows him an objective stance in the ring and, in the end, results in success. Such a description harkens to the core essentials of the somber detachment of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. By disavowing the influences outside of the ring, Freddy creates a somber and realistic yet brutal nature within the ring. As if there is no end to his energy, the machine-like fighting ability Freddy displays ensures victory in each of his matches. Moreover, Freddy’s description evokes a distinct description of the proletariat. In the ring, he is presented as entirely body and muscle with no reflection of strategy in the mind. Thus, Freddy’s machine-like transformation can be viewed as a representative of the working class rather than the intellectually based bourgeois society.

Furthermore, Freddy’s boxing transformation- from mechanical to uppercut- reveals his complete embodiment of sport. Indeed, boxing becomes such an unconscious and natural act that his given name disappears altogether. During the height of his career, he is no longer referred to as Freddy, or even Friedrich, but “dann hieß er plötzlich ‘der Kinnhaken’ und hatte einen erstklassigen Namen.”⁹² There is no distinction between Freddy’s life in- and outside of the ring. Sport is so ingrained in his very being that his name reflects his natural

⁹¹ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 8.

⁹² Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 7-8.

capabilities as a boxer, and he adopts the nickname “Kinnhaken.” Moreover, not only is Freddy associated with a boxing move, he becomes synonymous with one of the most dangerous and vicious moves a boxer can implement in a fight. If delivered with enough force, such a move can end a match within a matter of seconds. Freddy is not simply coupled with this athletic move; it comes to form the entirety of his being.

That he is compared to a machine carries an added significance in regard to Brecht’s stance on ideal athletics in relation to society. For Brecht, the spectators watching a boxing match, like those in the theater house, are as much a part of the action as those in the ring. In collectively watching a sporting event such as boxing, each member is exposed to the same actions. This eliminates any privilege of rank in the masses and does away with the individual organization.⁹³ Likewise, the athletes in Brechtian sporting aesthetics do not adhere to any form of social stratification—there is no correlation between class rank and ability for any athlete. It is precisely this characteristic that *Neue Sachlichkeit* writers like Brecht associated with the concept of mechanization during the 1920s. Frank Becker further elaborates on this in stating: “Die Maschinierung des Menschen, vorzüglich am Sportler zu demonstrieren, bestreitet seine Individualität. ‘Charakter’ und ‘Seele’, die beiden Größen, mit denen traditionell eine solche Individualität begründen wird, haben in der Menschen-Maschine keinen Platz mehr.”⁹⁴ In other words, though Freddy is an individual fighter, the

⁹³ For Brecht, the individual was, much like sport, subject to corruption by society. In modern Weimar society, there could be no individual, for the individual was always a product of societal norms and influence. An entry from Brecht’s *Arbeitsjournal* further emphasizes this notion, “das Individuum [sic] bleibt Individuum, wird aber ein gesellschaftliches Phänomen, seine Leidenschaften etwa werden gesellschaftliche Angelegenheiten und auch seine Schicksale. Die Stellung des Individuums in der Gesellschaft verliert ihre ‘naturgegebenheit’ und kommt in den Brennpunkt des Interesses” (Bertolt Brecht, *Das Arbeitsjournal*, ed. Werner Hecht [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973] 112). Reflecting his Marxist outlook, Brecht praises athletics for its ability to spare the individual from societal intervention.

⁹⁴ Frank Becker, *Amerikanismus in Weimar: Sportsymbole und politische Kultur 1918-1933* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 1993) 297.

comparison to a propeller on an airplane—a part of a machine—reveals the denial of individualism and the tendency toward communal reaction. The mechanized version of Freddy’s athletic abilities allows the proletariat in this instance to remain untainted by modern society. Indeed, elite culture has not yet spoiled the athletic authenticity of the boxing ring and a communal attitude still exists without bourgeois intervention.

This mechanized rendering of Freddy not only speaks towards Brecht’s affinity for the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, but it also reflects his then-blossoming Marxist tendencies. Freddy’s description at the start of Brecht’s short story can be viewed as adhering to that of Brecht’s idea of the proletariat. Freddy is depicted as a boxer composed entirely of body with no description of an intentional thought process. This mental void combined with the purely physical characteristics of his description suggests that he belongs entirely to the working class rather than the intellectually based bourgeois society. Furthermore, he is portrayed as a machine and produces moves and ability as if from an assembly line, much like the daily routine of the proletariat worker. Indeed, as Schoeps notes: “For Brecht there is no room for an in-between class. People either belong to the capitalist class of owners of the means of production or to the proletariat whose only possession is labor.”⁹⁵ Because he does not possess this capitalistic power, Freddy resides in the working class, relying purely on his body.

Freddy’s instinctual power and uncorrupted fighting mentality within the ring does not survive long after his return to Germany. The narrator recounts that Freddy freely honed his craft in America and competed not for monetary reward but rather for the sake of the

⁹⁵ Schoeps, “Bertolt Brecht and the Weimar Republic” 64.

experience itself and no other ulterior motive.⁹⁶ Upon his return to Germany, Freddy realizes the advantages to the lucrative athletic career. He arrives in Germany with “nur zwei bis drei Dollarnote,”⁹⁷ however this quickly grows to much more than Freddy expected.⁹⁸ Though the reader never specifically discovers how much Freddy earns, the boxer soon splurges on material possessions, which take him away from boxing. For instance, the narrator describes Freddy after his first victories in Germany, stating: “[Ihm] war wichtig aber, daß er überhaupt so viel Sums machte. Es ging mich natürlich nichts an, wenn er sich ein Motorrad [kaufte] und ausgerechnet in diesen Tagen das Motorradfahren lernen wollte. Ich dachte mir, er hätte damit noch ruhig warten können.”⁹⁹ Freddy’s sudden interest in motorcycles seemingly goes against his base instincts as a boxer. Rather than satisfaction with the victory itself, Freddy focuses on the monetary rewards boxing produces. While the decision may appear trivial, it can be seen here as an indication of a new motivation in Freddy’s boxing. It is at this juncture that Freddy’s career focuses on the advantages gained by victory rather than the “fun” sport produces and reflects a distinct change in his boxing career.

This change is further pronounced in Freddy’s new demeanor as he sits in the bar preceding his final match. Rather than entering the ring without any apparent thought or preparation as he had before, the boxer sits in a bar with his trainer Kampe, and the two discuss the strengths and weaknesses of his upcoming opponent. As they strategize, Freddy wants nothing more than to quench his thirst with a beer. However, when Freddy calls the

⁹⁶ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 7.

⁹⁷ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 7.

⁹⁸ Until Freddy’s arrival in Germany, he boxed successfully for little money in America. That is to say that the monetary value placed on his athletic talent was insignificant, for he entered the ring and achieved victory not for monetary gain or social status but for the sake of boxing itself.

⁹⁹ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 8-9.

waiter, “da fuhr Kampe dazwischen und sagte energisch, das sei heller Wahnsinn, jetzt vor dem Kampf, er könne eher Schuhnägel essen als Bier trinken.”¹⁰⁰ Disgruntled, Freddy dismisses the waiter. The narrator, however, describes an immediate change in the boxer’s behavior at the table. Rather than the relaxed athlete presented in the ring earlier in the story, Freddy assumes a more serious and miserable demeanor. The narrator describes:

Freddy murmelte ‘Unsinn’, ließ aber den Ober wieder weggehen. Für Kampe war damit die Sache erledigt, aber für Freddy war sie es nicht. Kampe sprach noch einmal alles, was er über Freddys Gegner Ungünstiges und Günstiges wußte, durch. Freddy las in einem Abendblatt. Ich hatte den Eindruck, daß er hinter seinem Anzeigenteil sich immer noch mit dem Bier beschäftigte, genauer gesagt, mit seinem Wunsch nach Bier.¹⁰¹

While Kampe returns to discussing Freddy’s opponent, the boxer occupies his time reading the newspaper, though he allows Kampe to continue strategizing. It is at this moment, however, that the boxer’s demeanor reflects a distraction caused by his denied craving.

Gleich darauf stand [Freddy] auf und schlenderte an den Schenktisch hinter. Kampe bemerkte es gar nicht. Dort stand er eine Zeitlang ohne sich übermäßig vorzudrängen, ein-, zweimal ließ er einen anderen und einmal einen Kellner vor. [...] Als er an den Tisch zurückkam, sah er irgendwie verändert aus. [...] Ich glaube, er war mit seinem Kampf gegen sich selbst ziemlich zu Ende.¹⁰²

Instead of the detached mindset he previously demonstrated before each match, Freddy is consumed with and distracted by his desire.

Rather than give in to his baser desires as he had continuously done in his previous boxing matches, Freddy denies himself in accordance with another’s orders. Put simply, the boxer has fallen into the system of strategy and reason. His career and actions are no longer his own; they are dictated by an outside force to other ends. Though he wishes to have a beer,

¹⁰⁰ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 9.

¹⁰¹ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 9.

¹⁰² Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 10.

it is forbidden to him. With this denial comes conscious thought in each action, which was noticeably absent in his boxing career prior to that night. Furthermore, the situation in the bar reveals that Freddy no longer embodies the machine that he once did. Indeed, the interaction with Kampe spawns both thoughts of strategy regarding the match as well as the realization of outside forces at work in his life. Thus, the society surrounding Freddy has transformed him from the embodiment of proletariat ideals to a strategizing, thinking and reasoning being associated with the bourgeois.

For Freddy, his realization of the control that Kampe, in this case an external perspective, holds over his athletics and a new consciousness delivers the tragic and career-ending blow. After the narrator reveals that Freddy was easily knocked out early in the fight, a man in the bar asks him why it happened. The narrator simply responds: “Ganz einfach. Als wir das Lokal verließen, wußte ich, daß Freddy eine schlechte Meinung von sich bekommen hatte. [...] Ein Mann soll immer das tun, wozu er Lust hat. Nach meiner Ansicht. Wissen Sie, Vorsicht ist die Mutter des k.o.”¹⁰³ Indeed, there is little doubt in the mind of the narrator when blames the boxer’s newfound caution and consciousness for his demise.

Thus, Freddy no longer disregards all life outside of the ring. On the contrary, his life surrounding boxing now dictates his athletic actions. Instead of relying on Freddy’s bodily instinct to win, Kampe sets out an analysis of the opponent and dictates Freddy’s behavior by structuring his career with rules and regulations. In short, Freddy’s sport has become strategic and planned in every imaginable aspect. The instinct and bodily desire to box ceases to exist, and Freddy’s career is infiltrated by cognition. Boxing no longer resembles Freddy’s

¹⁰³ Brecht, “Der Kinnhaken” 11.

actions, but rather what a boxer should and should not do. It is precisely this cognition, which causes Freddy's defeat.

The demise of Freddy's career coincides with Brecht's theory on the ideal state of athletics. The danger, according to Brecht, in athletics comes the moment outside forces control the instinct and talent facilitated by sport. Though he complains, Freddy no longer has the strength to fight such powers and falls victim to the elite society that has overtaken and annihilated the athletic world. While Freddy previously fulfilled Brecht's athletic proletariat ideal in his objective boxing style, his entrance into the German sport world has obliterated any instincts the boxer once had. His new strategized boxing mentality is no longer "riskant (ungesund), unkultiviert (also nicht gesellschaftsfähig) und Selbstzweck,"¹⁰⁴ as Brecht demands and fails to be a means-unto-itself. Freddy concedes to the will of those around him and follows a specific regiment. Indeed, when sport becomes rational, according to Brecht, it ceases to truly be sport and begins to morph into a manipulative instrument wielded by the elite to manipulate society. By implementing a methodical practice to his skills, Freddy adds rationale and thought to his actions and, in turn, causes his own defeat. It is this same problem that Brecht sees with society in general during the Weimar Republic. Rather than viewing art from a distanced standpoint and critically analyzing the greater meaning of each piece, society has become entrenched in what one should understand and how one should act. Moreover, the introduction of thought and reason into Freddy's boxing speaks towards the corruption of the proletariat ideals he initially embodied. Indeed, Freddy begins the story as an instinctual boxer representative of the proletariat working class. The transition from bodily boxer to subject of managerial strategies and reason signifies the

¹⁰⁴ Brecht, "Die Krise des Sportes" 98.

failure of the proletariat to achieve any revolutionary stance in society. Rather than revolt and overcome the orders of those above him, Freddy folds to their desires and transforms into human capital for the sporting world. While Brecht posits the hope of a working class revolt in Freddy's somber and uncorrupted boxing, it inevitably succumbs to the capitalist pressures of the bourgeois.

In a society plagued by the ubiquitous and mechanical adulation of the sport star, Brecht posits the dangers that arise when sport transforms from its basest instinctual form in his story "Der Kinnhaken." The start of the story reveals a boxing body and strength rivaled by no other. Moreover, Freddy can be seen as the capitulation of the ideal depiction of sport as objective art, in that he is able to withstand societal pressure and erase the distinction between high and low art forms. Indeed, Freddy's somber and objective approach to fighting reflects the brutal nature of reality desired by *Neue Sachlichkeit* artists. Moreover, Freddy is also the epitome of the corporeal proletariat class ripe for societal revolution. However, the hope of proletariat power cannot, according to Brecht, come to fruition, due to the overwhelming corruptive power of the bourgeois elite. According to Eugene Lunn, Brecht "stressed the necessity that an emergent collectivist and proletarian world would have to make major departures from and overthrow the nineteenth-century bourgeois heritage."¹⁰⁵ The fact that Freddy fails to maintain his original boxing strengths reflects the continued strength of the bourgeois power.

For Brecht, the crisis of athleticism depicted in literature reveals the dire state in which the Weimar Republic found itself in the 1920s. Unable to view society and culture objectively, Brecht feared the masses would fall prey to the hostile political and societal

¹⁰⁵ Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism* 105.

intervention of bourgeois manipulation. The danger in such capitalistic control, as Brecht saw it, was the extreme society could reach if left unchecked. Klaus M. Schmidt elaborates in writing: “One of Brecht’s most prominent concerns during his lifetime was the ascent of fascism to power. Fascism, in his eyes, was the final and most perverted stage of capitalism. [...] However, the fight that rages at the center of this struggle is that of the petite bourgeoisie striving for power and self-assertion.”¹⁰⁶ In order to avoid such catastrophic results, Brecht believed class struggle must be eliminated. By utilizing the somber and detached talent of boxing phenomenon Freddy Meinkes, Brecht offers the possibility of societal revolt through Freddy’s initial refusal to adhere to athletic norms. His failure to remain immune to the influence of elite society and subsequent disappearance emphasizes Brecht’s critique of the capitalistic, bourgeois hold on society. Unable to overcome such corruption, Brecht takes this pessimistic theme one step further in his novel *Das Renommee* to reveal a hopeless society already consumed by elitist ideals and utterly incapable of inciting societal change.

c. “Von primitive Keilerei zu raffinierter Boxkunst”¹⁰⁷: Bertolt Brecht’s *Das Renommee: Ein Boxerroman*

While Brecht uses Freddy Meinkes’ transformation and tragic defeat as the basis for social commentary in “Der Kinnhaken,” it is by no means the only instance revealing his disdain for the state of modern society through sport in his literature. In the years following

¹⁰⁶ Klaus M. Schmidt, “‘The Little House in Louisiana’: The Role of the Petite Bourgeoisie in Brecht’s Concept of Nazism,” *Brecht Unbound*, eds. James K. Lyons and Hans-Peter Breuer (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995) 63-64.

¹⁰⁷ Bertolt Brecht, “Einige Punkte aus dem Boxerroman,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 72. Though the novel was never published, Brecht’s extensive notes provide a detailed analysis of the occurrences of the story.

“Der Kinnhaken,” Brecht began to pen the storyline for the novel *Das Renommee*, which was also based on German boxers of the age. Building on the foundations cemented in “Der Kinnhaken,” Brecht takes his critique further in *Das Renommee* by relinquishing any initial hope of overcoming the stronghold of the elite. While there was the hope of revolutionizing bourgeois society present in “Der Kinnhaken,” I contend that in *Das Renommee*, Brecht reveals a society entrenched in elitist mentality and its utter inability to achieve the revolutionary possibilities athletics once offered a society in crisis. Indeed, through the athlete in his novel, Brecht unveils a society entirely consumed by bourgeois ideals with no hope of change and the resulting dangers such corruption poses.

Based loosely on the 1921 Jack Dempsey/Georges Carpentier heavyweight title fight, *Das Renommee* follows the career of George Carrare, who Brecht proclaims to be “ein Typ wie Carpentier.”¹⁰⁸ Carrare does not, however, build his career on talent or desire to box like Freddy Meinkes, but rather he boxes on the recommendation of his future manager. The manager rationalizes that, though he is not a talented athlete, he can gain popularity because he is a “guter Geschäftsmann,”¹⁰⁹ who can craft a successful image. Though Carrare attains worldwide fame as a boxer, he hides a secret from all those involved with his career: “Nur George weiß, daß er kein Boxer erster Klasse ist. Dies ist sein Geschäftsgeheimnis.”¹¹⁰ With his best clandestine efforts, George achieves fame in the European sporting world and is eventually slotted for international heavyweight fights in New York and Cuba. Before his match in Cuba, George reveals his façade to his new wife Gloria, who convinces him to

¹⁰⁸ Bertolt Brecht, “Das Renommee: Ein Boxerroman,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1995) 72.

¹⁰⁹ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 73.

¹¹⁰ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 73.

announce an early retirement from boxing. Though supportive of his departure from the athletic world, Gloria stipulates that George take care to protect his nose, as she has arranged a new film career for her husband.

The individual matches of this superstar career and George's boxing style, however, are not elaborated on in Brecht's novel. While "Der Kinnhaken" describes Freddy in the ring and focuses on his incredible boxing talent, *Das Renommee* posits a dramatically different world of boxing and athletic society, where talent is superfluous. According to Brecht:

Bei diesem Boxerroman ist das Boxen nicht die Hauptsache. [...] Aber interessanter ist schon zu sehen, wie ein Mann durch Boxen Geld und Ruhm verdient, und wie er es macht, daß er den Ruhm noch einmal zu Geld macht. Und was einzelne Leute darin treiben, wenn sie aus einem Mann einen Helden machen müssen.¹¹¹

That is to say that the story does not follow a boxer of extraordinary talent, as is the case in "Der Kinnhaken," but rather George's career *begins* as a corrupted product of athletic society. Indeed, boxing is not a passion for George but a method through which to create a lucrative life. At the end of the story, George has not been corrupted by elitist society wishing to profit from his victory like Freddy, for he has been a tool of the bourgeois throughout his entire career. Rather than holding any inherent talent like Freddy, sport is only used as a means towards a larger end for George. This, in turn, reveals a society that has overrun any base athleticism. As an extension of the bourgeois elite, George reflects a progression in the state of corruption in athletic society from Brecht's "Der Kinnhaken." Whereas Freddy reveals superior and detached natural talent through his mechanical body at the beginning of his career, George's athletic fame reflects nothing of the sort. Though he demonstrates one self-admitted lucky act of athleticism, his career is not built upon risky, uncultured actions but rather is meticulously planned out to achieve the best results. Indeed,

¹¹¹ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 77.

the bourgeois corruption of sport Brecht vehemently opposed reflects the increasing deterioration of sport as a possible mode of proletariat revolution for Weimar culture and art. The lack of athletic talent, and furthermore the true motivation in George's career, critique the losing battle of a new art form against old and steadfast bourgeois ideals.

Unlike Freddy, Brecht presents George as a boxer reliant purely on his intellectual capabilities and void of any physical presence in the ring. He is not, as opposed to Freddy, a machine-like fighter displaying distinct proletariat qualities. On the contrary, George's presence in the athletic community is that of a capitalistic bourgeois citizen. He engages not in the physical capacities of sport but in its capitalistic, mental aspects. Indeed, George focuses on the rewards facilitated by sport. In order to make something of himself in society, George uses sport to achieve a higher goal of status in society. He begins as a reasoning and thinking athlete already corrupted by capitalistic tendencies and reveals a complete departure from the proletariat lower-class. In other words, this gentleman boxer embodies the crisis of sport present in the Weimar Republic. According to Brecht, sport possesses all of the characteristics necessary to incite a proletariat revolution. This capability, however, is stifled by the bourgeois hold on society. George's character reveals the perversion of the base-athlete by society and extinction of any possibility of a proletariat revolution.

To be sure, Brecht's main agenda for this novel was not to reveal the grandeur sports like boxing represented in Weimar society but rather the ways in which a man can market himself in society—creating a name for himself in society through athletics in order to gain fame and fortune.¹¹² Furthermore, Brecht elucidates how others manipulate such fame for their own purposes and agendas. By implementing boxing, perhaps the most popular and

¹¹² Brecht, *Das Renommee* 77.

appealing sport in the Weimar Republic supported by the working class, Brecht illuminates how the bourgeois capitalism successfully infiltrates and commands the proletariat. To be sure, George achieves great success, but it is not based on athletic talent. As Brecht himself notes: “George Carrare ist ein Star und ein großer Boxer, aber nicht erste Klasse. Er hat eine natürliche Eleganz, einen Haufen gesunden Menschenverstand und alle Eigenschaften, die einen Mann populär machen können. [...] Seine Stärke ist, daß er seine Grenzen genau kennt und als kluger Geschäftsmann so viel als möglich aus sich herausholt, als er kann.”¹¹³ The first impressions of the boxer divulge to the reader that although he is not a great boxer, George knowingly markets himself as a star commodity. Thus, boxing is solely a capitalistic endeavor for George rather than an activity independent from cultivated societal norms.

George Carrare begins *Das Renommee* as a “socially acceptable” and “safe” athlete rather than the “uncultivated” and “risky” sportsman Brecht advocates. “Der schöne George,” as Brecht refers to him, is not a first class boxer; he is “ein Gentleman erster Klasse.”¹¹⁴ That is to say that the two categories, a first class boxer and a gentleman, cannot coexist in one man. Thus, Brecht’s description of George illuminates a separation of social class. These two categories reflect the distinction between high and low-class societal norms. Indeed, Brecht specifies that boxers are not considered part of the elite social class of gentlemen. It is the brutal, detached, proletariat nature of the boxer that Brecht admires in the athletic world and envisions as key to dismantling the bourgeois hold over culture and art. In explicitly emphasizing this distinction in George’s demeanor, Brecht immediately positions George as representative of bourgeois ideals and not of a first class boxer. That is to say that the societal levels are still in place and distinguishes athletes and gentleman as two

¹¹³ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 79.

¹¹⁴ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 78.

different social categories. Moreover, this suggests that there is no hope for the proletariat athlete in society, for it no longer even exists at the beginning of an athletic career.

Though not a first class athlete, George is indeed able to foster a successful athletic career precisely because of his gentleman status.¹¹⁵ The first impression the reader gains of George, then, is that he has no talent, but is, above all, a gentleman with cultivated elegance. He is “von Natur ein Gentleman.”¹¹⁶ He not only rationally understands his audience, but he succeeds in the sport community because he strategizes every imaginable way to make himself popular and help him succeed. In short, he is the opposite of Brecht’s ideal athlete and reflects the sharp tendency in society to manipulate sport as a cultural good.

Though he appears to the audience to be a gentleman-boxer, George does not truly mix the two categories of athlete and gentleman but only acts a part in the athletic world. Sport, then, develops in this text as a capitalistic marketing tool and highlights the commercial value sport has come to play in Weimar society. Not only does George market himself as a boxing hero, but he becomes a meal ticket for his manager as well. Rather than advise George on his best career options, the manager attempts only to produce the best and most exciting fight possible for the spectators, regardless of the effect on the boxer. Brecht specifically comments on this theme, stating: “Mich interessiert zum Beispiel, wie der Manager aus seinem Mann einen anständigen Kampf herausholt, denn sein Mann ist sein Kapital, und wenn der Boxer schlecht boxt, dann werden für den Manager die Rumpsteaks rar. Und dasselbe geschieht sogar, wenn sein Mann heiratet, denn dann wird er schlecht

¹¹⁵ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 78-79.

¹¹⁶ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 81.

boxen.”¹¹⁷ It is of no interest to the manager why George boxes, so long as he does. George’s success, then, translates into the manager’s victory as well. Thus, the boxer has literally become the source of income for the manager’s livelihood. George is no longer viewed as a person who should box for the sake of sport; he is only as qualified as the income he produces.

For Brecht, this epitomizes the dire status of the sporting world in the Weimar Republic. The situation described in *Das Renommee* can likewise be seen in “Die Todfeinde des Sportes,” which relays the deadly enemies of sport:

Der zweite Hauptgegner des Sportes ist der Fimmel. Im Boxsport äußert sich diese sportsfeindliche Tendenz in der Propagierung des Punktverfahrens. Je weiter der Boxsport vom k.o. entfernt, desto weniger hat er mit wirklichem Sport zu tun. [...] Die Haupttodfeinde des natürlichen naiven und volkstümlichen Boxsportes sind jene Gelehrten, die an den Seilen sitzen und in ihre Hüte hinein Punkte sammeln.¹¹⁸

That is to say that those who create rules and value-scores in sport like George’s manager ruin the intended capabilities sport offers society. When athletics become corrupted by an added agenda, like for instance counting points or following rules, one loses the overall critical perspective of the match. By reverting to a basic and raw display of athleticism, where the goal is to have “fun” rather than to profit, a somber and distanced view of society can be achieved. George offers the opposite of such a mentality and reveals an athlete actively used for others’ personal gain.

Though George is by no means Brecht’s boxing ideal, the one instinctual boxer present in the novel is an American amateur boxer, Billie Mike. Billie is described as a much

¹¹⁷ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 77-78.

¹¹⁸ Brecht, “Die Todfeinde des Sportes” 99.

smaller boxer, “ein New York Amateur von nur halb so großem Gewicht.”¹¹⁹ While George represents the perverted art of athletics in Europe from the start, Billie can be viewed as the idealistic sportsman America offers. Considering George is “ein großer Boxer, aber nicht erste Klasse,” Billie easily beats George in an impromptu and unofficial match in Paris at the start of George’s career. In fact, Brecht credits Billie with George’s realization that he is not a first class boxer. “Von Anfang an hat [George] gewußt, daß er nicht siegen könnte: außer ihm wußte es noch Billie Mike, der Amateurleichtgewichtsmeister der Welt, der ihn, ziemlich zu Anfang des Romans, im Hinterzimmer eines Restaurants nach einem kleinen Zank ausgeknockt hat.”¹²⁰ Indeed, Billie effortlessly knocks out the great champion boxer and therewith reveals his weakness within the ring. Though George appears to represent the invincible athlete, the amateur athlete shows no trouble his ability to swiftly dismantle George’s mounting career.

To be sure, Billie represents the instinctual athlete in Brecht’s novel and furthermore embodies the true threat to George’s staged career. Billie is an amateur boxer, which means he fights for no ulterior motives aside from engaging in the sport itself. Thus, Billie embodies an athlete independent of capital gain. George, on the other hand, engages in fighting matches to gain wealth and prestige. Moreover, Billie beats George effortlessly in a private engagement for no public notoriety. Each of these aspects of Billie’s career reinforces Brecht’s opinion of the desired characteristics of a boxer. Billie does not box to become a rational, fine and socially acceptable athlete, rather he represents the opposite and becomes an ally to the boxing world as Brecht views it. Indeed, Billie is described as a boxing “Genie,

¹¹⁹ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 73.

¹²⁰ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 73.

aber überhaupt kein landläufiger Gentleman [wie George].”¹²¹ In other words, Billie and George are polar opposites and lie on dramatically different ends of the sporting spectrum. Billie does not fake his talent in the ring; he represents the true, natural and raw talent Brecht desires. Furthermore, Billie encompasses an athlete separated from the capitalistic influence of the bourgeois class. His motivations differ dramatically from those of George and suggest that Billie embodies an athlete independent from capitalistic gain. The fact that Billie brutally defeats George reveals the fleeting possibility of such a society succeeding outside of Europe. The match, however, was not in a public arena and entertained no spectators aside from the two boxers. Thus, Brecht presents the hope of change in power in society, but seemingly concludes that it is not a transition that can as yet be publically achieved in Europe. While Brecht offers such social revolution through Billie, his instinctive fighting ability is only publically available in America and does not cross the German border. In other words, a public display of Billie’s athleticism remains only a fantasy for Weimar society.

That Billie is an American comes as no coincidence in Brecht’s story. Not only is America associated with the rise of a classless boxing system,¹²² it serves Brecht’s purposes of posing a land of limitless possibility and simplicity. As Richard Ruland notes: “America serves as setting [in Brecht’s works]: a boundless, unfamiliar land where anything is possible. Unlike Brecht’s Europe, its future stretches before it with promise, and its people if

¹²¹ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 82.

¹²² The intense rise in popularity of boxing as a sport, which was practiced and fostered most specifically in the lower class ghettos, is overwhelmingly credited as an American phenomenon. While boxing has its roots in European society, the existence of boxing across all levels of society began in the so-called farm-leagues and boxing ghettos of America, most intensely during the 1920s (Sugden, *Boxing and Society* 8-28, 56-62). For a more detailed history of boxing, see also Dan Streible, *Fight Pictures*, Peter Arnold, *History of Boxing* (Edison: Chartwell, 1985) or Ian Welch and Michael Heatley, *History of Boxing* (New York: Select Editions, 1997).

not already giants, can yet easily be drawn oversized and over simplified, for their lives and aspirations suffer no limitation.”¹²³ Thus, America offers a lower class uncomplicated by high-class virtues and bourgeois society that Brecht viewed as rampant in Europe.

Furthermore, for Brecht, America was a society representative of low culture as opposed to Europe’s so-called high culture.¹²⁴ As an American, Billie fulfills this role, not only separating himself from the elitist society that George is a part of but also ultimately defeating it.

Because of George’s loss to Billie in Paris, only Billie is privy to George’s façade in the boxing ring and can thus expose his lack of talent. Upon arrival in New York, Billie joins George and his wife Gloria in the hotel for a drink. When Billie shows an interest in Gloria, whom George introduces as his sister in order to avoid unwanted publicity, George must avoid angering Billie for fear of his own exposure. In order to evade such a situation, George intentionally picks a fight with Billie “angeblich wegen eines ruinierten Möbelstückes”¹²⁵ and leaves early for his highly publicized match in Cuba.

This contrived confrontation with Billie juxtaposes the two opposing sides of Brecht’s athletic aesthetic: on the one hand is Billie, the somber and independent American fighter and on the other is the manufactured façade of a German athletic star. Rather than risk losing a fight to Billie and in doing so exposing himself as a fraud, George chooses instead to remove himself from the situation completely in order to disguise his true rationale. This

¹²³ Ruland, “The American Plays of Bertolt Brecht” 371.

¹²⁴ Ruland, “The American Plays of Bertolt Brecht” 371. See also Patti Lee Parmalee, *Brecht’s America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1981), Joy Halsom Calico, *Brecht at the Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) and Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand *High and Low Cultures: German Attempts at Mediation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

¹²⁵ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 74.

suggests that George, and the athleticism he represents, cannot survive in America where boxing is an art form vacant of societal boundaries. Instead of conforming to such an athletic community, George leaves for his final fight in Cuba, for he would be revealed as an utter failure in such a system due to his inherent lack of talent and non-existent objective fighting style.

Though he has facilitated a successful athletic career with no talent, George decides to end his athletic stardom following his match in Cuba. While his athletic façade could feasibly continue, Gloria arranges a lucrative film career for him. His passion neither lies in sport nor filmmaking; however, as Gloria tells him: “[D]a steckt mehr Geld drin als im Boxen.”¹²⁶ Thus, an external source much like the trainer who first suggested a boxing career once again dictates George’s decisions. Indeed, while his trainer may have first created his boxing career, Gloria now decides the next step in his fate. George remains a pawn for others to use for their own gain and continues to exist as a human commodity that fails to make decisions for himself.

To be sure, George illuminates sport’s manipulation by the elite against which Brecht warns. Throughout the entirety of the novel, the boxing-gentleman strategizes to become a more refined member of society rather than adapt an anti-cognitive boxing demeanor in the ring like Freddy’s. Even in his last match, Gloria gives him permission to fight, telling him: “Er könne sich ihrentwegen alles kaputt schlagen lassen, nur nicht seine hübsche Nase, denn sonst sei es mit dem Filmen aus.”¹²⁷ That is to say that his profession, even in its waning moments, must follow rules and regulations that dictate specific actions of his life and career.

¹²⁶ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 75.

¹²⁷ Brecht, *Das Renommee* 75.

While boxing, he does not disregard every aspect outside of the ring as Brecht advocates when he explains sport is neither for personal gain nor academic achievement but rather “weil es ihnen Spaß macht, und sie sollen es auch tun, wenn es sie körperlich ruinieren würden.”¹²⁸ At no point in his career is he willing to risk his health or gentlemanly qualities nor does he engage in boxing matches for any apparent “fun.” Thus, George begins and ends Brecht’s novel as the antithesis of Brecht’s desired athlete.

Furthermore, unlike “Der Kinnhaken,” which is recounted by a fellow boxer and spectator at Freddy’s final match, there is no mention of spectators in the layout of *Das Renommee*. That is to say that the story offers no possibility for the critical detachment of the audience Brecht advocates as essential to sport. Aside from mentioning the 30,000-spectator capacity of the arena in Cuba, there is no reference to fans or viewers at the stadium to witness the fight first hand. Because the international match is highly publicized and held in such a large venue, it can be assumed that the crowd is sizable; however, there is no reflection of the outcome of the match through the eyes of those watching. Moreover, there is no critical distance for the spectator in the text, as there was in “Der Kinnhaken.” The lack of observer interaction with the boxing match in *Das Renommee* suggests the further distancing of the athletic system from the objective standpoint Brecht viewed as vital for performance and engagement. Moreover, while the career of George Carrare is one of apparent success, it reflects the constraints and authoritarianism of the stranglehold of bourgeois culture over the commercialized and commodified state of sport.

Indeed, *Das Renommee* posits a society void of the possibility for a revolt against bourgeois ideals. While Freddy initially posits a boxer based on bodily rather than mental

¹²⁸ Bertolt Brecht, “Sport und geistiges Schaffen,” *Der Kinnhaken und andere Box- und Sportgeschichten*, ed. Günter Berg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) 35.

proWess, George knowingly uses boxing to achieve an elevated social status and monetary gain. Though athletes like Billie compete independent of the influence of the elite, they do not achieve victory or fame in the public arena in Germany. Rather than find release from the restraints of bourgeois culture, George, in fact, reinforces them. This, in turn, suggests that though sport holds the potential for inciting cultural renovation in America, it becomes corrupted and loses this prospect in the European arena due to its elitist characteristics. With George's submission to the perversion of the upper class, the political and artistic revolution facilitated by the working class has likewise evaporated. Thus, George reflects the negative and corrupted aspects of the sporting world Brecht posits in his articles.

While Brecht continued to draw in part from boxing in his later works, *Das Renommee* is his last effort at producing a novel based entirely in sport. Though he wrote detailed notes as to the plot line of the text, it was never completely finished or published. Of the plausible reasons, Elisabeth Hauptmann, Brecht's colleague and purported lover, noted in 1926 that Brecht had moved on from the individual boxer in his pieces, opting instead for "das Leitthema 'Einzug der Menschheit in die großen Städte zu Beginn des dritten Jahrtausend. Er behauptete, die *Praktiken* mit Geld seien sehr undurchsichtig. Er müsse jetzt sehen, wie es mit den *Theorien* über Geld stehe."¹²⁹ In other words, though Brecht retains sport in aspects of his pieces like *Mahagonny* (1927) and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1930), which both incorporate scenes and songs in a boxing ring, he began to lose confidence in the potential of sport as a means to critique bourgeois society.

With his growing dedication to Marxism, Brecht shied from focusing on an individual athlete. As Günter Berg notes: "Brecht befragte Fachleute und Börsianer, studiert unter

¹²⁹ Elisabeth Hauptmann, "Notizen über Brechts Arbeit 1926," *Julia ohne Romeo*, ed. Rosemarie Eggert (Berlin/GDR: Aufbau Verlag, 1977) 171.

anderem Marx's *Kapital* und bekennt sich immer offener dazu, ein Kommunist zu sein.—Der individuelle Kampf, der an einem Boxer gezeigt werden könnte, verliert für ihn an Faszination.”¹³⁰ Indeed, society's problems, from Brecht's viewpoint, did not lie simply with the individual's struggle against bourgeois capitalistic ideals. As emphasized with his essay “Der Dreigroschenprozeß: Ein soziologisches Experiment” (1932), which deals with Brecht and collaborator Kurt Weill's unsuccessful lawsuit against the Nero company regarding the cinematic adaptation of *Die Dreigroschenoper* in 1930, Brecht began to focus on the revolutionary possibilities of society as a whole. To be sure, while he still maintained that bourgeois society “must be *actively* destroyed at all costs,”¹³¹ his focus shifted in the early 1930s to the nature of social relationships and collective action and stringently criticizing the capitalistic nature of society.¹³²

While Brecht detached his texts from the individual athlete, his influence over contemporary writers in the implementation of athletics in literature can still be seen in the late 1920s. Though straying from the theme of boxing, Melchior Vischer, one such colleague of Brecht, continues in the tradition of athletically themed literature with his 1927 drama *Fußballspieler und Indianer*. Like Brecht, Vischer queries the corruptive influence of bourgeois capitalism over the artistic realm through the metaphor of sport. Using the soccer field rather than a boxing ring, Vischer probes the problematic state of late Weimar culture and questions the existence of a feasible solution. Rather than expound on the pessimism

¹³⁰ Günter Berg, “Nachwort” 148.

¹³¹ Steve Giles, *Bertolt Brecht and Critical Theory: Marxism, Modernity and the “Threepenny” Lawsuit* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998) 105.

¹³² See Bertolt Brecht, “Der Dreigroschenprozeß: Ein soziologisches Experiment,” *Bertolt Brecht: Gesammelte Werke 18: Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967) 139-209.

present in Brecht's works, Vischer imagines a possible solution to the corruptive influence of bourgeois society in reverting to a primitive, pre-capitalistic athletic arena.

III. “Der Tod am Fußballplatz ist heldischer als der am Schlachtfeld”¹³³: Melchior Vischer's *Fußballspieler und Indianer*

Considering the fascination with sport demonstrated in Brecht's texts of the mid-1920s, it comes as no surprise that the works of his contemporaries and colleagues would likewise be affected by such a theme. Indeed, Brecht's colleague and friend Melchior Vischer joined two themes not commonly related in the world of competitive athletics in a play he began writing in 1924 and first staged in 1927—namely *Fußballspieler und Indianer*. Though sport takes center stage in this drama by Vischer, it was not a particularly common theme in his literary oeuvre. In fact, prior to this athletic involvement in the mid-1920s, Vischer was a prominent Dada writer and artist in Czechoslovakia before arriving on the artistic scene in Berlin in 1925. Upon completing military service in the First World War, Melchior Vischer, born Emil Walter Kurt Fischer, began his literary career as a journalist in Prague. After publishing his debut novel *Sekunde durch Hirn* in 1920, which is commonly considered to be the first and only Dada novel,¹³⁴ his work grew to become one of the cornerstones of Dadaism. During this time, he worked among some of the great names in literature, including Franz Kafka, Ernst Weiß, Alfred Döblin and Robert Musil. While his early works, such as *Strolch und Kaiserin* (1921) and *Chaplin* (1924) received critical acclaim, his later career failed to recapture the success he originally achieved in the Dada

¹³³ Melchior Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer: Für die alte Welt eine Tragödie und für die neue Welt eine Komödie und umgekehrt* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1984) 22.

¹³⁴ Jindřich Toman, “Now You See It, Now You Don't: Dada in Czechoslovakia, With Notes on High and Low,” *Crisis and the Arts: The History of Dada*, ed. Gerald Janeek vol. 4 *The Eastern Dada Orbit* (New York: G. K. Hall & Co, 1998) 11.

movement. With Dada facing harsh criticism, Vischer left Prague for Berlin with the hope of discovering a new artistic venue. It was after his arrival in Berlin in 1926 that Vischer met and began working with Brecht. Though his theatrical career did not excel to any great extent on the Berlin circuit, his play *Fußballspieler und Indianer* became an instant success and is still performed in theaters around Germany.¹³⁵

Though there are very few critical references to *Fußballspieler und Indianer* in secondary literature, the vital Brechtian athletic aesthetics of the piece come as a direct result of Vischer's relationship with the playwright. The handful of citations that do appear are typically in conjunction not with Vischer's own body of work but also in association with his relationship to Brecht. Inspired by this friendship, Vischer explored the newfound admiration for the theme of athletics prominent in Brecht's pieces of the time. Indeed, it was during production of Brecht's play *Die Hochzeit* that the dramatist inspired Vischer to write and stage a piece combining soccer and Indians.¹³⁶ This admiration for athletics is reflected in an interview in *Die Szene* in 1926, in which Vischer stated: "Mir ist der Sport Mittel-, Sammel- und Anziehungspunkt der Bühne, einer neuen Bühne."¹³⁷ Harnessing Brecht's confidence in sport as a method of creating an improved theatrical and spectating experience, Vischer joined Brecht in his quest to create a new artistic movement grounded in the characteristics of sport with *Fußballspieler und Indianer*.

It is impossible to deny Brecht's athletic influence on Vischer's drama. That Vischer envisions sport as a new possibility for the stage echoes Brecht's own sentiments from his

¹³⁵ Though the play did not reach the same success of Vischer's earlier pieces, it was produced throughout Germany during the late 1920s and even resurfaces in the Berlin theater circuit in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

¹³⁶ Schoeps, "Bertolt Brecht and the Weimar Republic" 51-52.

¹³⁷ Melchior Vischer in *100 Texte zu Brecht*, ed. Manfred Voigts (Munich: Fink, 1980) 60.

articles “Das Theater als Sport,” “Mehr guten Sport,” “Die Todfeinde des Sportes” and “Die Krise des Sportes.” The new stage to which Vischer refers above can be interpreted here as reflecting the ideals of Brecht’s new Epic Theater, in which audiences are meant to detach themselves from the action of the play in order to critically analyze the greater meaning of the drama. Moreover, a large part of this new artistic venture was grounded in the somber characteristics of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement. As reflected in multiple theatrical collaborations, Vischer, like Brecht, believed it was the somber and realistic features of sport that set it apart as an ideal method in inciting social revolution.¹³⁸ Furthermore, both Vischer and Brecht advocate sport in literature as the means through which to achieve this critical mindset. Entering the theater in the same mentality as entering the sport arena provides the critically detached and sober approach Brecht necessitated for the audience. Thus, the link between Brecht and Vischer’s literary endeavors is starkly reflected in Vischer’s choice of presenting a play revolving around Indians and soccer.

However, while Brecht’s social critique of the state of Weimar society at first reveals the possibility for future social revolution through proletariat resistance, he ultimately concludes the power of bourgeois capital proves too strong to overcome at the present time. Vischer’s play likewise echoes Brecht’s pessimistic sentiments regarding the corrupted capitalistic nature of sport in Weimar society. In his piece however, Vischer progresses to offer a feasible solution to the desperation sport encounters in literature. Vischer does not look to the future to resolve the social stratification in society but rather imagines the possibility that revolution can still occur if the process of elitist power is reversed. That is to say that Vischer attempts to implement sport as a lens through which to reveal the path to

¹³⁸ Monika Wyss and Helmut Kindler, *Brecht in der Kritik: Rezensionen aller Brecht-Uraufführungen sowie ausgewählter deutsch- und fremdsprachiger Premieren: Eine Dokumentation* (Hamburg: Kindlers, 1977) 207-215.

overcoming bourgeois society by returning to the primitive state of the proletariat before such elitist corruption occurred. In his dramatic attempt, Vischer combines East and West, modern and primitive and high and low culture in an attempt to arrive at a society void of bourgeois power. As I will show, though Vischer poses a viable solution to the problem, the corrosive influence of the bourgeois grows so strong it engulfs any attempt at escape and reveals the perilous state of society through the literary sporting world.

Vischer's play *Fußballspieler und Indianer* does not concentrate solely on soccer-playing Indians. It initially follows the exploits of German soccer midfielder Bill Week as he begins his professional soccer career. After signing a contract with an affluent team, Bill assumes the nickname of the "Bomber" due to his prowess on the soccer field. After only a few games, however, Bill suffers a foot injury that sidelines his promising career. Upon realizing he is no longer the magnificent player he once was, Bill ventures into the West and works as a stoker on a locomotive. During this time, he stumbles upon an Indian tribe while playing soccer with his co-workers. Narrowly escaping execution, Bill returns to the city, only to discover two Indians, Opito and Waya, hidden on the train. Bill befriends the two and teaches Opito to play soccer. He eventually secures positions on his old team both for himself and his new Indian friend. His fate, however, does not lie on the soccer field, and he ultimately returns to the Indian village with Waya, rising to become chief of the tribe. Bill's reign amongst the Indians, however, is short lived. When Opito and Schimsa, the team's recruiter, approach the tribe to enlist new Indians as players in the league, Bill challenges Opito to a battle to the death in the forest. When Opito returns victorious, the men of the Indian tribe follow him and Schimsa to join the ranks of the soccer stars in the city.

In following the basic layout of the play's events, the absurd nature of the drama becomes utterly apparent. Not only are the events geographically nonsensical, in that a German player named Bill Week leaves on a locomotive and suddenly appears on a South American river, but also that Indians who have never been exposed to a city landscape or population embrace and immediately display play soccer talent is ridiculous. Indeed, even individual scenes, such as that of the Indian elders worshipping a soccer ball and relying on it to dictate warriors' fates, only further support the absurdity Vischer no doubt intended to be portrayed on stage. The extent to which the play pushes the envelope can arguably be interpreted as Vischer's incorporation of Brecht's theatrical ideals. Indeed, in order to ensure a true experience of Epic Theater, Brecht advocated the absurd as a theatrical device in dramas.¹³⁹ In Vischer's play, the absurd content and character layout alienates audience members, forcing them to step back and critically analyze the actions occurring before them. At the same time, Vischer's Dada and avant-garde tendencies could arguably be responsible for such ridiculousness on stage.¹⁴⁰ The primitive and absurd nature of the play, two key characteristics in the Dada movement, could be attributed to Vischer's literary background. Regardless of the source, the absurdity prominent in the groundwork of Vischer's play worked to achieve the desired *Verfremdung* of the audience.

To be sure, athletics play a vital role in the establishment of the critical mindset Brecht demanded from the spectator. Furthermore, much like Brecht's two pieces discussed earlier, the athletic world depicted in literature serves as a representation of the stronghold German bourgeois held on society during the 1920s. Taking Brecht's idea a step further, I

¹³⁹ Gray, *Brecht the Dramatist* 170.

¹⁴⁰ See Steve Plumb, *Neue Sachlichkeit 1918-1933: Unity and Diversity of an Art Movement* (New York: Rodopi, 2006) 25-35 and Robert Laurence Barry, *Breaking the Thread of Life: On Rational Suicide* (Piscataway: Transaction, 1994) 77-80.

argue here that Vischer's play demonstrates how the ideals of bourgeois city society contaminate athletics, inevitably producing a capitalistic athletic world used explicitly for personal, monetary and societal gain. The drama further illuminates how the instinctual, bodily nature of sport based in its proletariat following is lost in contemporary German society. In fact, this ideal has not only vanished, but sport has become hopelessly contaminated by society. Whereas Brecht initially voices a certain amount of hope for the capability of sport to unite culture, the hope for a critically detached society has failed. Sport is spoiled not only for the cultures within the city but also for pre-modern people like the Indian tribe when exposed to its lure. By viewing Vischer's play in light of Brecht's articles on sport, I examine how Vischer critiques the bourgeois hold on society in Weimar Germany through the athlete in his play. Like Brecht, Vischer's play suggests that while sport at one point may have held the potential to create a critically engaged audience capable of political revolt, the contaminating influence of modern society overruns any such possibility. Unlike Brecht, I argue, Vischer poses a solution to this problem: namely an attempt to return to the primitive society that embodies the proletariat state before such corruption occurred and void of bourgeois influence.

While the play predominantly focuses on the introduction of Indians to the white society of the German city, Vischer's drama begins in the bourgeois landscape of the *Fußballbörse*, or players' auction, where soccer players are literally sold to the highest bidder. Coinciding with Brecht's idea of Epic Theater, the play begins with a lengthy description of the actions of the scene and stage directions.¹⁴¹ The players are portrayed

¹⁴¹ As a method of inducing a desired alienation of the audience from the actors on stage, Brecht used a multitude of devices to achieve this didactic interruption, including descriptive stage directions and plot summaries prior to each scene in his dramas (Eric Bentley, *Bentley on Brecht* [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008] 284-286).

standing on an auction block while managers and trainers haggle over them. In the center of the stage directly before the audience, Chester and Townly, the managers for a professional team, sit with the talent scout Schimsa and discuss their desire to sign a star player. As the men converse, players are bought in groups of three, while others are sold alone as their statistics are announced to the crowd. “Tummy! Fündundzwanzig Jahre alt, linker Verteidiger. Gediegene Klasse. Siebzehn Cupspiele mitgemacht.”¹⁴² As each player is displayed, their attributes are proclaimed for the bidding crowd. Though Schimsa, Townly and Chester listen apprehensively, none of the men fit their specific criteria and are bought by opposing teams.

As opposed to the initial hopes for sport discussed earlier in this chapter, soccer, much like boxing in “Der Kinnhaken” and *Das Renommee*, no longer revolves around those who instinctually know how to play or who play for “fun”—that is with no added agenda. Sport has become an industry in itself. Players are treated like commodities sold to the highest bidder. In fact, managers like Chester and Townly even go so far as to hire an outside talent agent to help them purchase the best players possible. In short, the industry surrounding soccer eradicates any primal “fun” found in its execution as a game. There are no longer any traces of playing sport, as Brecht states, “als Selbstzweck.”¹⁴³ Moreover, Schimsa describes the most important attribute for a star player on their team:

Goals schießen! Das ist die einzige Produktivität, die berauscht, begeistert. Goals schießen, das ist die Produktivität unseres Jahrhunderts. – Ein kräftiger Goalschütze: Aus dem Nichts schafft er Punkte, die Punkte blasen sich auf und werden zu Kugeln, zu Fußbällen, die wieder zu Goalen werden – – – Aus dem Nichts: Goals!¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 12.

¹⁴³ Brecht, “Die Krise des Sportes” 98.

¹⁴⁴ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 30.

That is to say the manner of play is of no importance here, rather it is only a product that can be marketed. So long as the player is able to put goals in the record book, the style or motivation for playing is disregarded. Thus, athletics cease in this landscape to be unhealthy and uncultured, as Brecht advocated. Indeed, sport has become a mainstay in culture to the extent that teams utilize any means in order to produce the most talented lineup on the field. To the club owners, athletes are no longer humans but capital through which to bolster business.

In keeping with Brecht's viewpoint on the hazards of sport in modern society, Vischer's opening scene in *Fußballspieler und Indianer* displays a soccer society already engulfed by capitalistic corruption. The coaches and managers present at the auction are interested only in the commercial value the players can bring the team, and furthermore what the player can do for their popularity and reputation. Rather than listing the positive and negative skills the players can provide on the field, each athlete is introduced only by their position and statistics. Moreover, Schimsa reflects the damaging attribute of the athletic world in his "Tendenz in der Propagierung des Punktverfahrens," which Brecht notes as one of the mortal enemies of sport. Schimsa's main concern is finding a player capable of putting goals in the net to elevate a team's standing. For Schimsa, athletes are nothing more than material to be sold. He tells Townly and Chester: "Hier sind Menschen Kaufobjekte [...] Ich habe schon einen [Mittelfeldspieler]: Er wird sogar sehr billig sein. Denn er ist sich seines Wertes noch nicht bewusst; er weiß noch nicht, daß seine Qualität für andere – – (*zeigt auf sich*) eine Ware bedeutet."¹⁴⁵ That is to say that Schimsa and the managers seek players who can be enticed for a cheap price and thus exploited for talent. Sport, then, has become

¹⁴⁵ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 20.

meticulously planned out and analyzed rather than left simply to natural talent. This suggests that the true meaning of soccer to those involved in the league has all but vanished and reveals that sport has become “vernünftiger,” “feiner,” and “gesellschaftsfähiger,” to use Brecht’s terminology. The player Schimsa, Chester and Townley desire is not one who enjoys and relishes the game, but rather one that can foster revenue and make their product more marketable. The initial insight into the athletic world of the drama is one already relegated by the desires of those in power in society.

Though they do not find their new star player on the auction block, Townly and Chester hesitantly accept Schimsa’s choice for a new midfielder when Bill Week enters the stage. Schimsa does not bid on Bill, a blue-collar worker; however, he spots Bill standing in the corner of the room speaking with the waiter. He neither arrives at the auction through the door nor stands on the platform, rather Bill enters the room through a window he punches open. When asked by the waiter why he chose this path, he responds: “Weil die Tür offen stand!”¹⁴⁶ His entrance immediately marks Bill as an outsider, who does not conform to the capitalistic format the soccer league has adopted. Rather than follow the rules—even those as simple as how to enter a room—he opts to go against the norms of society. His introduction in the play, however, displays not only his distinction from the demeanor of the other players but also foreshadows problems he will encounter during his time in the league due to this rebellious nature.

As intimated in his initial entrance onstage, Bill does not conform to the traditional rules in place in the soccer league. While Schimsa views him only through the lens of profit, Bill joins the team simply as a result of his desire to play. When Schimsa offers him a

¹⁴⁶ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 15.

position on the team, he confidently states, “Ich kann Fußball spielen. Mit acht Jahren habe ich schon gespielt. Bekomme ich den Ball richtig vor meine Füße, dann muß sein Leder dran glauben! Aber ehe er zerplatzt, reißt er dem Goalmann noch alle Eingeweide mit.”¹⁴⁷ For Bill, much like Freddy, sport has always been a distinct part of his nature rather than a job. In other words, for Bill soccer was never played for gain, but rather his skill and power is a natural part of his make-up. Upon accepting the position on the team, Bill tells the three men: “Was ein richtiger Goalmann ist, gibt freudig, ohne mit der Gusche zu wackeln, seine Eingeweide her; denn der Tod am Fußballplatz ist heldischer als der am Schlachtfeld [...] Wißt ihr, was das heißt: Fußball spielen? – Die eigene Seele wird zur Fußballseele, das Herz und die Haut zum Leder!”¹⁴⁸ In short, soccer exists as a life force for Bill, and it allows for no ulterior motives from those around him.

Indeed, Bill embodies the ideal athlete from Brecht’s articles. He remains untarnished by the state of soccer in the city’s society, where culture has contaminated the very hope of fostering a game free from bourgeois influence. This view is further supported when one considers Bills behavior off the field. While Bill displays athletic prowess as a midfielder, he does not conform to the image of the perfect gentleman the club seeks: he drinks alcohol, he does not follow the curfew and he constantly copulates with his girlfriend, Milly, amongst other indiscretions. In other words, Bill encompasses a crass member of low-class society. Regardless of such recklessness, Bill is undoubtedly a successful player with devoted fans. This suggests then that sporting success comes not from making it suitable for upper-class society but rather from fostering this crass low-class mentality.

¹⁴⁷ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 22.

¹⁴⁸ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 22-23.

To be sure, Bill's initial behavior in the league mirrors the athletic norms Brecht deems as key to attaining "good sport." As Brecht proffers in his articles "Die Krise des Sportes" and "Die Todfeinde des Sportes," sport can play an important role in revolutionizing society, lest it conform to modern cultural norms. The initial impression of Bill in Vischer's play reveals an athlete who conforms to precisely these criteria: he engages in risky behavior that deems him unfit for high-class society and plays soccer with no ulterior motive. Furthermore, Bill, much like Freddy at the start of "Der Kinnhaken," can be viewed as representative of the proletariat class. He has no mental investment in the game and plays using only his bodily strength and skill. His success, then, suggests the victorious possibilities the proletariat can achieve against the capitalistic elite. However, while Bill enters the league in such a mindset and is able to maintain his inherent nature on the soccer field, the athletic community soon attempts to alter his behavior off the field, while reaping the benefits of his talent on the pitch.

In an attempt to change Bill's attitude, Schimsa pulls Bill aside before the final match of the league tournament to remind him of his sworn obligations to the team. Schimsa tells Bill: "Lesen Sie doch die gedruckten Hausregeln des Klubs – alles Gedruckte ist verräterisch und heuchlerisch! – die Sie mit unterschrieben haben: Alkohol verboten!"¹⁴⁹ Though Bill holds no regard for such rules, Schimsa's reminder that he signed his name to the stipulations on the contract binds Bill to leading such an athletic life. In other words, he has signed over his ideals in order to professionally play for a team and must conform to these new athletic norms. After Schimsa's chastisement, Bill injures his foot in one of the first plays of the match. Too injured to play, Schimsa, Townly and Chester inform Bill that his absence on the

¹⁴⁹ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 28.

field is unacceptable. Because Bill is unwilling to play and risk further injury, Schimsa suggests that Bill's girlfriend Milly take over his position as midfielder. Angered at this prospect, Bill storms from the clubhouse when Milly dons a uniform and enters the match. Milly's popularity on the soccer circuit combined with the severity of his injury convinces Bill to leave the team and venture to South America where "Fußball kein Geschäft mehr [ist]".¹⁵⁰ Bill believes he can live "ein ehrliches Leben" and play "ehrliches Fußball" while working as a "Kohlenschipper auf dem Güterexpress. Quer über die Landkarte bis zum Orinoko."¹⁵¹ Indeed, it is only by removing himself from the contaminated state of soccer in the city that there is any possibility of rediscovering honest sport.

Rather than cave to the demands of those in power above him, Bill remains steadfast in his decision not to further injure himself and leave the team. This suggests that Bill does not compromise the characteristics of a true Brechtian athlete. He refuses to allow his athletic career to be dictated by those who have little regard for his own well-being. In this light, Bill denies any attempt to culture his style of play. Instead of struggling to retain the honor of athletics stripped away by the league, he chooses to travel through an unsettled area still untouched by the city's sporting society. The greed and ambition present in the city league has overridden any desire and will to play the game simply in-and-of-itself. As such, sport has become more suitable for society and less barbaric. The sole solution for Bill is to venture abroad in order to resurrect the novelty of the game necessary for innocent passion. In order to achieve such a feat, he must first escape the corrupted society that attempts to capitalize on his ability and success.

¹⁵⁰ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 79.

¹⁵¹ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 65-66.

Indeed, Bill uncovers this realm void of bourgeois society working as a proletariat stoker on the locomotive—a job that requires nothing but bodily strength. During a game with co-workers, Bill loses his soccer ball when it lands in the middle of a circle of Indian elders. Angering the tribesmen with his request to retrieve the ball, he is sentenced to die, only to be saved by an Indian woman named Waya moments before death. After narrowly escaping execution by the Indian tribe, Bill returns to the city. In this instance, however, he is armed with what he believes will alter the state of athletic society in the city: the Indian warrior Opito, who has stowed away on the train. By bringing a player completely unassociated with not only the soccer league specifically but also bourgeois life in general, Bill is in essence introducing a primitive and untarnished talent to the athletic system. In other words, Opito’s talent is not a product of the athletic system implemented in the city but represents the possibilities of inherent and instinctive talent. Furthermore, he begins to play out of curiosity and continues because of the “fun” he discovers on the field. Indeed, he travels with Bill back to city and vows to remain true to the “Bleichgesicht”¹⁵² who has introduced this new form of life outside of the *Urwald* of his tribe. “Wer bei uns ist, muß bei uns bleiben!”¹⁵³ he states as the train approaches the cityscape. Indeed, Opito epitomizes the idea of a pre-modern society—one untouched by the modern ideals found in the city. Once exposed to the temptations of the city soccer league, however, does not uphold his loyalty to Bill and the untarnished game.

The introduction of the Indian tribe in Vischer’s play immediately reveals a society untouched by the fervor of the urban athletic world. As the elders of the tribe sit discussing Opito’s fate as a warrior, Bill’s soccer ball, the first introduction of organized sport to the

¹⁵² Vischer, *Fuballspieler und Indianer* 119.

¹⁵³ Vischer, *Fuballspieler und Indianer* 121.

tribe, falls in the middle of the circle. Rather than pick up the ball to throw it back, the elders begin to worship it, as they believe it is the incarnation of their god Manitu. Completely unaware of the actual usage of the leather ball, the Indians reveal the novelty of sport in their reaction. To be sure, there is no history of organized athletic endeavors in this tribe. In other words, the tribe can be viewed as a primitive and pre-modern society. Opito is the only member of the tribe who refuses to believe the ball is indeed the god Manitu and begins to learn its true function. He takes a natural interest in the sport and immediately reveals his innate talent, which is further demonstrated upon his arrival in the city and performance in the first game of his career.

As Opito plays on the field, Schimsa praises the player's strengths, which simultaneously emphasizes and describes his primitive nature. He exclaims:

Das sind die Leute aus dem *Urwald*! Sie bestehen aus Sehnen und Kraft! – Was heißt Fußball! Spielen mit Kraft und Sehnen! – Die Leute haben auch gute Lungen; Kleinigkeit: Urwaldluft! Was heißt Luft? Sturm. – Gibt es in unseren Städten Stürme? Nein! – Hier ahne ich schon Großes Kommendes: Der Urwald wird uns in Zukunft das Spielermaterial liefern. Nur Indianer werden noch gute Fußballer sein, weil sie Lungen haben – (*wendet sich schnell nach allen Seiten, einen Ton hier sprechende*) Haben wir Lungen?¹⁵⁴

Thus, Schimsa praises the implementation of the primitive society into the modern world. In essence, an Indian is an ideal athlete to mold into a successful and obedient player in the soccer league. Thus, rather than the *Urwald* transforming the bourgeois world of athletics in the city, the urban league engulfs and dismantles the Indian mentality. Instead of remaining true to his background, Opito quickly falls completely into the new system of sport in the city, leaving Bill and quickly abandoning his loyalty to both Bill and his tribe.

¹⁵⁴ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 130-131.

Indeed, rather than fostering a new form of soccer apart from the existent status quo of the league, Opito immediately separates from Bill and willingly falls into line with the rules and regulations of the league. While Bill continues to anger the team administrators, Opito emerges as an ideal player both on and off the field. In fact, after a short time in the league, Opito renounces his Indian heritage entirely and embraces his new life in the soccer club. He proclaims:

Das Gras der Prärie macht die Füße weich und die Hände schwermütig. Benzin und Fußballtraining vertrieben mir alle Schwermut. Ihr seht alle nicht, daß Asphalt hart macht und glücklich! [...] Meine Kraft lebt jetzt, weil wir hier alle leben und kämpfen, sogar im Spiel. – Der Kampf mit Jaguaren und Indianern ist lächerlich und dumm! – Ich bin kein Indianer mehr!¹⁵⁵

To be sure, Opito no longer retains his link to the *Urwald*, and his primitive mindset quickly vanishes. He now admires the capitalistic aspects of the city such as gasoline and asphalt rather than the untouched nature of the prairie landscape.

Opito's speedy transition from Indian *Urwald* warrior to upstanding soccer star reflects the power the elite in sport hold over society. Though he enters as an outsider, the wheels of the system quickly convert him to an exploited and lucrative commodity in the league. The athletic world has, indeed, become a microcosm of capitalism that creates and molds players for profit, power and prestige. Even a player like Opito—one previously untouched by city life—falls victim to the elitist tendencies of bourgeois culture in the urban sporting world. What is more, the athletic world in the city has become precisely that which Brecht feared: a cultural good that is no longer uncultivated, unhealthy and a means in-and-of itself and therewith loses any capability of overthrowing such a societal order.

¹⁵⁵ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 140.

Not only does Opito embrace the ideals of the athletic world in the city lifestyle, but he also joins Schimsa in his quest to recruit other Indians for the league. The athletic world of the city has become so strong and powerful that it not only corrupts those players within the league but now also extends its borders into the areas untouched by modern civilization: namely the *Urwald*. Excited by the marketability of the Indians, Schimsa proclaims: “Jedenfalls weiß ich, daß ich bald Expeditionen in die Urwälder ausrüsten werde – dort ist noch Material! – Dort wird euch Schimsa Spieler finden, Spieler herbeischaffen! Schimsa bringt euch eine neue, bessere Rasse!”¹⁵⁶ Schimsa’s desire to harness a new type of athlete further emphasizes the role of the player in the athletic league as a cultural commodity. The players are not human for Schimsa but rather material with which to create a team.

Instead of dissuading Schimsa from recruiting his Indian tribesmen, Opito welcomes the act and embarks on the journey. Opito, then, further cements the utter disavowal of his Indian heritage by not only adapting to the athletic lifestyle in the city but also in welcoming the opportunity to gain prestige by helping with the recruitment trip. Unlike the ideal athlete Opito once represented in regard to Brecht’s athleticism, the Indian player has lost the detached and critical viewpoint he once held after exposure to the city’s athletic society. While sport has the capability to produce an alert, detached and critical mindset, Opito no longer demonstrates any of these imperative qualities. Instead, he reflects an athlete societal conformity. Furthermore, Opito becomes lost in the politics of recruiting new players and embraces the opportunity to harness the talent of the primitive players of the *Urwald* without hesitation.

¹⁵⁶ Vischer, *Fußballspieler und Indianer* 131-132.

The two opposing sides of the athletic community, Bill and Opito, face one another again in the final act of the play, whereby Opito and Schimsa approach Bill, the new chief of the tribe, to enlist new players for their team. Unwilling to accept their terms, Bill does not allow Schimsa and Opito to meet his tribesmen. Though almost unrecognizable in his three-piece suit and bowler hat, Opito challenges Bill to a fight in order to determine control of the members of the tribe. After disappearing in the forest and killing Bill, Opito emerges victorious and the Indian men follow Schimsa and Opito to the train to begin their new career in the city soccer league far from the *Urwald*.

That Opito and Bill are pitted against one another in the *Urwald* is especially poignant, in that it sets the two sides of the athletic world against one another in a landscape far from the city soccer field. While Opito conforms both physically and mentally to the ways of the white athletic world, Bill resigns himself to a life lived away from sport in the *Urwald*. In fact, Bill literally leaves the city with Waya specifically out of frustration caused by Opito, Schimsa, Townly and Chester. Indeed, the soccer league rejects Bill and his method of play while fully integrating Opito into society and likewise destroying any form of exoticism and primitivism he once exuded. The fight that ensues in the *Urwald*, then, parallels the future of athletics in the city. Opito's victory solidifies the death of any hope in reversing the athletic mentality of the league. In fact, in the end it appears as if soccer itself kills Bill and suggests that such a primitive mentality—one that goes against the desires of those in power and remains “riskant (ungesund), unkultiviert (also nicht gesellschaftsfähig),” to use Brecht's wording—cannot survive in an elitist athletic society.

What is more, the play's male protagonists embody the duality of the proletariat and bourgeois athletic worlds in the German society of the 1920s. That Opito physically and

mentally transforms into such a malleable player without any prior contact speaks towards the power that the upper echelons of a capitalistic society wield. Unable to escape the influence of such a world, Bill eventually dies as a result of the very sport he once loved and honed. Opito's murder of Bill also sees the ideal of the proletariat player perish with him and cements the unbreakable grasp of the bourgeois. At the same time, the hope of proletariat success over elitist society is likewise dashed. In the end, there is no question that the idyllic portrayal of sport Vischer's imagined solution proffers is unattainable, as the strength of bourgeois society overpowers any attempt to dismantle it.

Vischer's play *Fußballspieler und Indianer*, then, ends without hope for the athletic world to overcome the barriers of traditional bourgeois society, as evidenced in Opito's victory over Bill. What this arguably reflects is the dire state Vischer perceives as Weimar culture at the close of the 1920s. In fact, bourgeois society has become so strong, it moves beyond its borders and entices a culture previous unexposed to its allure of power and social standing. Vischer's depiction of sport reveals one of a capitalist society complete with distinct class borders where power resides only with the upper strata. It is this type of society that Vischer, and furthermore Brecht, wish to dismantle through low-class art forms like uncorrupted sport. Bill's inability to escape the athletic society in the city and Opito's immediate corruption both underpin the vice-like bourgeois grip in which society is trapped. Furthermore, the strength of such a system not only influences those within the society itself, but it likewise reaches out into new pastures. It has the ability to engulf primitive locations and exterminate any entity attempting to alter it, as evidenced by Bill's death at the hands of Opito in the *Urwald*. Brecht posits the thesis that sport holds the potential to achieve a new and somber approach to art void of elite influence—a society where class structure is

likewise non-existent and the distinction between high and low art disintegrates to create the possibility for social revolution. Vischer's work, however, suggests that even with a return to primitive and classless roots, such a revolt cannot come to fruition. Indeed, the bureaucracy and manipulative power of high-class society continually corrupts such an ideal society. By using sport as an allegory through which to view society and its flaws in literature, Brecht and Vischer not only offer refuge from the bureaucratic traditional bourgeois stronghold over the arts but also unveil the futility of attempting such a feat.

IV. Conclusion

As elucidated in his series of articles on athletics and literary texts centered on athletics, Brecht utilizes sport in literature as a means to question the elitist state of Weimar society. The author proclaims sport as the aspect of society that when uncorrupted could achieve a detached and critical standpoint in society capable of societal revolt. Furthermore, sport holds the potential to overturn social barriers and eliminate the existence of a class-based capitalist society through this proletariat revolution. When athletes in Brecht's pieces are examined closely, it becomes clear that, though a detached proletariat athlete may exist in society, he cannot survive or succeed. Indeed, the lure of elitist and capitalistic ideals becomes too strong and eventually eliminates any possibility of revolutionary upheaval in society. Though Freddy begins the "Der Kinnhaken" as an independent and somber proletariat force in the ring, he succumbs to capitalistic pressures as well as the consciousness associated with bourgeois high-culture. Brecht further emphasizes the corruption of the athletic world in *Das Renommee*, revealing a boxer hopelessly entrenched in bourgeois and capitalistic ideals. In an attempt to salvage any sort of revolutionary

possibility, Vischer suggests that the solution in achieving this social revolution lies in reverting to a primitive societal structure in *Fußballspieler und Indianer*. Like Brecht, Vischer reveals that while the proletariat ideals are present in society, bourgeois capitalism proves so great that revolution is impossible. Indeed, its power is so strong it even eliminates any form of opposition wishing to escape it.

Not only do Brecht and Vischer critique the existent class structure in Weimar society through their literary works but they also address the increasingly powerful bourgeois capitalistic mindset present during the 1920s. Attacking the increased professionalization of athletics, both Brecht and Vischer question the overpowering and negative draw of capitalism in Germany. Each of the athletes of these three pieces in some way becomes a product of the capitalistic athletic realm. Freddy's career becomes corrupted at the commands of his manager, who hopes for success through Freddy's victory. Taken a step further, Brecht specifically notes in *Das Renommee* that the piece is about how a man can use sport to make a name for himself in upper-class society. Even the managers are described as solely interested in athletics as a means to create a lucrative and successful lifestyle. Vischer, likewise, turns sport into a capitalistic venture, as evidenced by the auction in the opening sequence to the drama, which highlights each player's material value. Just as athletes who evoke the promise of societal change like Freddy and Bill perish, so too will art forms that reveal the corrupted nature of society.

Throughout the 1920s, Brecht and Vischer implement sport in literature as a means through which to elucidate a social critique against Weimar society and suggest athletics, a low-class art form, as the key in inciting proletariat upheaval. Sport's failure to maintain Brecht's athletic aesthetics suggests that the power of the class-based capitalist society has

become so powerful that it engulfs any form of pure art. The progression yielded from analyzing Brecht and Vischer's works reveals the increasing danger inherent in allowing such a society to continue. By allowing the traditional bourgeois norms to remain in power, Brecht and Vischer warn of the impending death of any method of art untainted by elitist attitudes.

The corruption of sport by bourgeois elitist ideals sits at the core of Brecht's articles on sport in Weimar society. To be sure, Brecht feared the power sport could wield when utilized for means other than its own "Selbstzweck." The crisis of sport Weimar society encountered at the end of the 1920s was precisely this perversion of sport's revolutionary capabilities. Rather than act as a force of revolt for the proletariat, sport fell in the hands of those in power and assumed capitalistic and elitist goals that paved the way for fascism. Indeed, for Brecht: "Fascism was the final and most perverted stage of capitalism."¹⁵⁷ The state of sport of Weimar society—that is one corrupted by bourgeois ideals and riddled with capitalistic characteristics—was primed for a hostile fascist takeover by the end of the decade.

¹⁵⁷ Schmidt, "The Little House in Louisiana" 63.

Chapter Two

Blood on the Snow: Riefenstahl, Barthel and the Politics of Sport in the Third Reich

I. “Above all, the young, healthy body must also learn to suffer blows.”¹⁵⁸

After Hitler’s rise to power in 1933, sport became a vital cog in the National Socialist political and cultural dictatorship. Unlike sport in the Weimar Republic, whereby it was plagued by commercialization, sport in the Third Reich became a mechanism through which political mobilization was ensured, not least in literature. The instrumentalization of sport was not simply established within the masses, but it appeared throughout all ranks of the Nazi regime. Though Hitler was by no means “a sportsman himself,”¹⁵⁹ he viewed sport as an integral role in maintaining the National Socialist grip on the German people as well as developing strong, agile soldiers ready to unquestioningly serve their leader.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, sport became a vital tool through which the Nazi dictatorship sought to mold young men into the perfect Aryan citizen and soldier. In fact, new physical education curriculum was employed in schools by the *Nationalsozialistischer Reichsbund für Leibesübung* in order to “develop a hygienic Aryan race, to foster the mentality of a soldier and to build strong leadership

¹⁵⁸ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans Ralph Manheim (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001) 410.

¹⁵⁹ Peter J. Beck, *Scoring for Britain: International Football and International Politics, 1900-1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1999) 176.

¹⁶⁰ Hajo Bernett, *Der Weg des Sports in die Nationalsozialistische Diktatur* 54-57.

qualities.”¹⁶¹ To be sure, the National Socialist regime utilized sport as key means in establishing and fostering the image of the ideal Aryan citizen.

Through all of the many values ascribed to sport, from leadership to militarism to physical dominance, the creation of a fascist body politics was achieved through the propagation of the fit and healthy Aryan man. Indeed, athletic merit was considered an essential attribute in maintaining the ideal and superior Aryan race and fostering a commanding military strength. While all sport that enhanced bodily physique was considered imperative for the German people, Hitler proclaimed sport a necessary element of German life specifically for its combination of healthy and militaristic advantage. He explores this theme in *Mein Kampf*, stating:

Not a day should go by in which the young man does not receive one hour's physical training in the morning and one in the afternoon, covering every type of sport and gymnastics. [...] But above all, the young, healthy body must also learn to suffer blows. [...] It is not the function of the folkish state to breed a colony of peaceful athletes and physical degenerates.¹⁶²

Thus, the merit of sport for the Nazis was two-fold: it helped not only in keeping the German people healthy while likewise honing their mental agility, but it also defined the importance of sport as unique to the Aryan race. The race doctrine propagated by the Hitler regime proclaimed the superiority of the Nordic Aryan race, which “embodied the strongest and highest racial qualities.”¹⁶³ Sport became one channel through which the National Socialist party was able to propagate such racially pure norms.

¹⁶¹ Roland Naul, “History of Sport and Physical Education in Germany,” *Sport and Physical Education in Germany*, eds. Ken Hardman and Roland Naul (New York: Routledge, 2002) 25.

¹⁶² Hitler, *Mein Kampf* 410.

¹⁶³ I. Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010) 159.

The idea of a sport-infused body politic under National Socialism was anything but a new invention. The Nazi party culled the annals of western history in order to find the foundations on which to erect the myth of the strong, racially pure athletic body. In a regime centered on the quest for and glorification of the Aryan, it is perhaps unsurprising that sport and the image of the athlete was appropriated to propagate the physical aesthetic of the ideal Aryan male. In Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's *In Praise of Athletic Beauty* (2006), he affords sport a crucial role in transforming public opinion stating that "Complexifying the present and recharging the past with a glorifying and sometimes sobering aura—these are the two aspects of a transfiguration that only sports can produce."¹⁶⁴ This quote is one that perfectly describes not only the Nazi approach to sport as a means to establish cultural norms but also their success in this endeavor as evidenced in the work of Leni Riefenstahl and Ludwig Friedrich Barthel. Indeed, in evoking the putative connection between the Aryan race and its Hellenic heritage, as well as the inherited link between the Aryan and nature, the National Socialist regime used sport as a means to glorify National Socialist culture through invoking athletic associations from its past.

Of all the cultural domains, the philosophy of the Third Reich articulated most clearly the carefully crafted image of the perfected Aryan body, which was propagated thereafter by the National Socialist regime. As an example of such philosophical groundwork, I turn to the official Nazi philosopher Alfred Rosenberg, who in 1930 laid down the first step in establishing the discourse on sport and fascist aesthetics in the *Blut und Boden* ideology of his *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*.¹⁶⁵ From this point onwards a carefully crafted

¹⁶⁴ Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In Praise of Athletic Beauty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006) 15.

image of the perfect Aryan was born and propagated thereafter by the Nazi regime through the image of sport. This chapter will first demonstrate the veneer athletics became under National Socialism through Leni Riefenstahl's visual creation of the ideal Aryan athlete in *Olympia* (1938). Conversely, I will show how this superficial adoration of the Aryan athletic body falls short of truly showing the core function of sport as the stabilizing moral force in fascist society as posited in Ludwig Friedrich Barthel's *Schinovelle* (1938). I contend that Riefenstahl furthers the discourse on Aryan aesthetics first espoused by the Nazi regime by instrumentalizing the athletic body in order to craft the fantasy of the ideal Aryan athlete for public consumption. This vision, however, inevitably fails to establish how such sport could be integrated into the social fabric of the regime. Pushing past the mere image of the ideal Aryan athlete, Barthel's *Schinovelle* narrativizes athletics and takes it beyond the image of athletic beauty to establish the morality sport offers the individual in everyday National Socialist culture. To elucidate this point fully, I begin by discussing Rosenberg as a prime example of theory regarding Nazi racial superiority. Then, by discussing the cultural and literary scene of the Third Reich and the central role of sport within it, I reveal how this sporting method was transmitted. Subsequently, I examine how the image itself was made manifest for the German public first through Riefenstahl's iconic 1935 documentary *Triumph des Willens* and then became more concrete as well as culturally refined in 1938 through *Olympia*. Ultimately, I discuss Barthel's *Schinovelle* to reveal how the image of Aryan athletic beauty depicted in the sportsman—a crux of Nazi ideology—became flesh to demonstrate the utilitarian function of sport in re-establishing the moral core of the fascist aesthetic project through the main character of the Hüttendoktor.

¹⁶⁵ The spelling of *Mythus* in Rosenberg's title, while rarely used today, was standard during the 1930s and originates from the Latin *mythus*. (Helmut Koopmann, *Mythos und Mythologie* [Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979] 11).

II. *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts: Alfred Rosenberg, Sport and Culture in the Third Reich*

Through the propagation of the *Blut und Boden* ideology—one that praised the superiority of the German race through the Aryan connection to nature, peasant life in the country and Greek Antiquity as well as the honor associated with the Aryan war hero—the National Socialist Party created a discourse on the embodiment of Aryan ideals. As aforementioned, philosophy of the Third Reich most clearly posits the qualities of the superior Aryan race. By propagating the unique virtues of the Aryan race, the Hitler regime was able to give Nazi culture a foundation in German tradition and garner support for the newly instilled government. In short, the *Blut und Boden* movement sought to establish a positive image of Germany that its people would protect and encourage. Manifold doctrines were put forth by governmental philosophers that disseminated the ideology of the *Herrenvolk*, and it was likewise taught in schools and social organizations.¹⁶⁶ Aside from Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Alfred Rosenberg's *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (1930) ranks among the works most revered by party ideologues and proffered a historical base for the superior Aryan race as well as its modern qualities. As such, his manifesto provides a basis in establishing the foundation of the discourse on athletics and the ideally constructed Aryan body, which Riefenstahl furthers in *Olympia*. Expounding on the associations between the Aryan body and its heritage, connection to nature and the glory of the *Herrenvolk*, Rosenberg's book *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* certainly ranks

¹⁶⁶ Naturally, there were many texts published by members of the National Socialist Party supporting the ideology of the Third Reich. One of the more notable philosophers, Richard Walther Darré, a top advocate of the *Blut und Boden* ideology and NSDAP *Reichsminister* for Food and Agriculture, focused mainly on the reversion of the German *Volk* to peasant roots that bound them to nature in his texts *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquelle der nordischen Rasse* (1928) and his 1930 *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden*. See Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Walther Darré and Hitler's Green Party* (Buckinghamshire: Kensal, 1985) 4-8.

as one of the most influential doctrines of the Third Reich.¹⁶⁷ Though Rosenberg's work represents only one part of the larger philosophical whole, it espouses in precise detail the concept of the superior Aryan proto-type and its historical development, which was glorified by the entire regime.

Building on the philosophies of Stewart Chamberlain, Arthur de Gobieau and naturally Hitler himself, Rosenberg sought to trace the history of the German people and create a manifesto highlighting the noble qualities the Aryan race offers society as well as the negative contributions of lesser degenerate races.¹⁶⁸ In his work, which spans more than 700 pages and is comprised of three large segments entitled “Das Ringen der Werte,” “Das Wesen der germanischen Kunst” and “Das kommende Reich,” Rosenberg elaborately and intricately discusses the philosophy of Germanic superiority in incredible detail relating to both Aryan heritage and physical characteristics. In the first section, the roots of the Nordic race are traced to ancient civilizations, most notably Ancient Greece and Rome, while the second section discusses the importance of the distinctive features of German art and creative achievement. The third and by far the longest section discusses the characteristics of the

¹⁶⁷ Rosenberg was an outspoken advocate on the racial purity essential for the survival of the Germanic ideals of the Nazi regime. Indeed, he writes at length on the necessity for a racial purification in his works *Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei: Judentum, Jusuitsmus, Deutsches Christentum* (1921) and *Die Protokolle der Wesen von Zion und die jüdische Weltpolitik* (1923). Moreover, he argued for a new form of Christianity—a new “Religion des Blutes”—based on a racial metaphysic stemming from the pure blood of the Aryan to replace what was viewed as a corrupted form of Christianity practiced in Germany in both *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* and *Dietrich Eckhart* (1935). See Claus-Ekkehard Bärsch, *Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998) 253.

¹⁶⁸ Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (Munich: Hoheneichen Verlag, 1933).

ideal Aryan-Nordic race,¹⁶⁹ the need for racial hygiene and a new Aryan religion as well as the responsibilities of the members of the new Reich.

By first tracing the lineage of the Nordic-German people throughout history, Rosenberg turns to the past to elucidate the greatness of the German people in the present. He expounds on the notion of the Aryan's Greek heritage and proclaims the German race as the rightful heir to the corporeal beauty first produced by the Hellenic spirit. Connecting the beauty found in Nordic Germans to that of Ancient Greece, Rosenberg states:

Am schönsten geträumt wurde der Traum des nordischen Menschentums in Hellas. [...] Eine echte aristokratische Verfassung verhinderte die Blutmischung. Die sich durch Kampf verringernden nordischen Kräfte wurden durch neue Einwanderungen gestärkt. Die Dorer, dann die Mazedonier schützten das schöpferische blonde Blut. [...] Auf ewig hat der Hellene die Erde verlassen, [...], nur wenige Einzelne zeugen noch für jene herrlichste Rassenseele. [...] Die hochfrommen griechischen Seelenschöpfungen zeigen das gerade gewachsene innere, noch reinen Leben des nordischen Menschen.¹⁷⁰

In other words, the German people's pureblooded roots can be traced back to those of the noble Greeks, who likewise displayed countless Nordic characteristics. Rosenberg later explicitly states: "Vom Tage, vom Leben trat nunmehr der Mensch ans Leben heran, von den Gesetzen des Lichts und des Himmels, vom Geist und Willen des Vaters aus entstand alles, was wir griechische Kultur als jenes größte Erbe des Altertums für unser Selbst nennen."¹⁷¹ To be sure, Rosenberg harnesses the past in the honorable lineage bestowed upon the Aryan race in its link to Greek Antiquity.

¹⁶⁹ It has been widely accepted that in his masterwork Rosenberg habitually uses the terms Nordic, German and Aryan interchangeably. See Ronald J. Finch, "Heroes in Germany ancient and modern" (Inaugural Lecture, Queen's University of Belfast. 17 November 1971).

¹⁷⁰ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 34-35.

¹⁷¹ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 39.

Rosenberg not only details the historical roots of the German people in association to the Greek past but also the superior physical traits of such Nordic people in contemporary society. Rosenberg extols “ein neuer deutscher Menschentyp, geradewinklig an Leib” and declares it “die Aufgabe des 20. Jahrhunderts ihn zu bilden.”¹⁷² Specifically sketching the corporal traits of this new German man, he refers to the Aryan as “das germanische Schönheitsideal” constructed by those who are “weißhäutig, schlank und blond.”¹⁷³ Furthermore, this blond ideal is complimented “mit einer hohen schlanken Gestalt, mit blitzenden hellen Augen, hoher Stirn, und kraftvoller Muskulatur.”¹⁷⁴ Indeed, the new German man Rosenberg and the Nazi party sought to propagate in National Socialist society illuminated and idolized the blond-haired, blue-eyed and fair-skinned features of the Nordic race. Furthermore, Rosenberg details the Aryan’s muscular body, stating that the strength of the body corresponds to the wisdom of the Aryan mind.¹⁷⁵ To be sure, the Nazi idea of the Aryan male was one fit for athletic events and able to fight for the Fatherland. The intricate detail of this idea conjured a concept of the Aryan male, which, as will be shown, was propagated through sport.

The final trait Rosenberg details in his work connects the Aryan to aspects of nature surrounding him. Indeed, the philosopher propagated the unique connection the German people held in relation to the elements of German nature. Rosenberg proclaimed that the Aryan race maintained a mystical and unique bond to nature, which was inaccessible to other

¹⁷² Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 531.

¹⁷³ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 531.

¹⁷⁴ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 291.

¹⁷⁵ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 577.

corrupted, degenerate races. According to Rosenberg, the Nordic man was intrinsically linked to the native landscape around him: “Auch der nordische Mensch glaubt tief an eine ewige Gesetzlichkeit der Natur; auch er weiß, daß er an diese Natur gebunden ist. Er verachtet sie auch nicht, sondern nimmt sie als Gleichnis eines Übernatürlichen.”¹⁷⁶ Indeed, Rosenberg elaborates that the Aryan held an innate and mystical communion with all aspects of nature, stating: “Von keinem Volk ist der mystisch-naturhafte, willenhafte Zug großartiger gestaltet worden als von [den Deutschen]. [...] Die Natur ist das heutige große Epos des nordischen Willens in seiner ewigen Urform.”¹⁷⁷ To be sure, Rosenberg’s philosophy of the Nordic man incorporated an organic union between nature and the Aryan race that reached beyond simply the earth on which the peasants toiled. Indeed, the “pure nature” associated with this connection spread to the waters of a marine landscape and the sky above German soil.¹⁷⁸ To be sure, the serene nature with which the Nordic man was bound was an innate link accessible only the privileged members of the Aryan race.

The concepts of Rosenberg’s work describe the unique characteristics of the Aryan race the Nazi regime harnessed to propagate the superiority of its Aryan people and their rightful place of honor above all races. The philosopher focused on the ideas of people and homeland, emphasizing the vital importance of German heritage, *Heimatkultur*—most particularly the link between German nature and citizens, the beauty and strength of the Aryan male, the glory of the warrior hero as well as the Nordic origins in Ancient Greece. Through each of these separate attributes, the manifesto sought to strengthen the ideology of

¹⁷⁶ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 266.

¹⁷⁷ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 438.

¹⁷⁸ Eric Michaud and Janet Lloyd, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) 115.

Blut und Boden culture within German borders and illuminate traditional German virtues and nobility. Owing to its enormous influence during the time of National Socialism in Germany, it can be viewed as a typical example encompassing the beliefs the Hitler regime sought to espouse to the public. Considering that Rosenberg was viewed as the official philosopher of the Third Reich, it is unsurprising that the themes highlighted in his work soon found their way into the politically manufactured culture of Nazi Germany.

With the implementation of the *Gleichschaltung*—a policy designed to bring all aspects of German culture under strict political control in an effort “to achieve racial and cultural harmony”¹⁷⁹—the National Socialist party assumed control over all areas of culture. The extension of the *Gleichschaltung* policy was all-encompassing and permeated all social and cultural institutions. With it, the Hitler regime was able to carefully craft the image of the Aryan dispersed into the cultural realm. In 1933, for example, the artistic realm in Germany fell under the control of the National Socialist regime with the establishment of the *Propagandaministerium*. Under the leadership of Josef Goebbels, “Germany entered a new phase of state-enforced discipline, regimentation, and censorship in all areas [of the arts]. Thereafter, the Nazis could control the flow of most information to the German people and manipulate the minds of millions.”¹⁸⁰ The art and literature produced within Nazi Germany was required to conform to certain specifications to support party ideology: above all else to propagate *völkisch* art, which praised the German Aryan race and supported the eradication of all Jewish, modernist elements.¹⁸¹ In the years that followed, authors were strictly

¹⁷⁹ David Nicholls, *Adolf Hitler* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2000) 101.

¹⁸⁰ Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany: 1919-1945* (Chicago: Burnham, 2000) 137.

forbidden from speaking out against the party, and only those with the correct political ideology supporting the Aryan ideals were published.

One vehicle through which the Nazi party sought to disseminate the idea of the superior Aryan race surfaced in the utilization of sport and athletes as a theme in art and media produced in the Third Reich. While modernist artistic endeavors were labeled and discarded by the Nazi Party as “degenerate art,” sport became a theme that displayed the regime’s idea of Aryan power and bodily perfection. Indeed, paintings featuring athletes like Albert Janesch’s “Wassersport” (1936), which displays four boats with incredibly large Aryan men rowing together with intricately detailed arm and leg muscles, served to highlight the strength of the idyllic German race and its athletic prowess. Furthermore, classically inspired sculptures of athletic youths, like those created in 1936 by Arno Breker and Josef Nackerle for the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, as well as Karl Albiker’s *Der Diskuswerfer* and *Die Staffelläuferin* (1935), began surfacing all over Germany. Such works reflect the perceived Hellenic roots of the Aryan race in combination with sport. Indeed, the sculptures were obviously inspired by Greek Antiquity in form and depict young, strong, nude athletes engaged in track and field events. Moreover, official regime newspapers, such as the *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Der Angriff*, regularly featured articles glorifying the German athletic hero.

This emphasis placed on sport in the arts was further showcased in the official art competitions and theater productions of the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. Indeed, the events were given added currency by the Olympic Publicity Commission and the Ministry of

¹⁸¹ Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 54-55, 241-243.

Culture in the hopes of promoting Germany as a leading cultural nation.¹⁸² Moreover, they served as a propelling force in the integration of the artistic and athletic worlds. Medals were awarded in five categories for sport inspired works: literature, music, painting, architecture and sculpture. In the events, German competitors well surpassed other nations and earned a total of twelve medals (ten of which were gold or silver).¹⁸³ Further still, Hitler commissioned a series of theater pieces to commemorate the opening ceremony of the Games. Organized by Carl Diem, the Secretary General of the Organizing Committee for the 1936 Games and *Reichssportführer*, the plays were performed in Berlin immediately following the opening ceremonies. The first in the series, a play written by Diem himself entitled *Olympische Jugend* (1936), was viewed as a tribute to the greatness the National Socialist regime offered the world of sport.¹⁸⁴ To be sure, National Socialism utilized athletics as a method through which to promote not only the perceived greatness of Germany but also the power of its master race.

Though athletic themes ran rampant in artwork of the Third Reich, the presence of actual sporting events in literary works is not as prominently represented. While there was an elevated production of juvenile literature dealing with athletic themes, the majority of so-

¹⁸² Reinhard Rürup, *1936, die Olympischen Spiele und der Nationalsozialismus: eine Dokumentation* (Berlin: Argon, 1996) 201.

¹⁸³ Italy, the only country to come close to German victories in these competitions, earned only five medals overall—one gold and four silver. Critics like Carol Gallucci have argued in recent years that these competitions were fixed in favor of fascist countries; however, the fact remains that Nazi Germany emerged as the pronounced victors in these artistically based athletic competition. (Carole C. Gallucci, “Father, Son, and Fascism,” *Writing Beyond Fascism*, eds. Carole C. Gallucci and Ellen Nerenberg [Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2000] 59-84). See also David Clay Large, *The Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

¹⁸⁴ See Hedwig Müller, *Mary Wigman: Leben und Werk der großen Tänzerin* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1986) 239 and Albrecht Dümmling, “Von Weltoffenheit zur Idee der NS-Volksgemeinschaft: Werner Egk, Carl Orff und das Festspiel *Olympische Jugend*,” *Werner Egk: eine Debatte zwischen Ästhetik und Politik*, ed. Jürgen Schläder (Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2008) 32.

called high literature featuring sporting themes predominantly centered on soldiers and pilots rather than athletes. Many critics, like Mario Leis and Stefan Jacob, include these works in the genre of “sport literature,” though the basis of such inclusion is questionable.¹⁸⁵ The rationale for such a dramatic fall in the literature dealing with sport can be attributed in part to the overall lack of literature produced due to the amount of able bodies fighting on the war front.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, many prominent authors retreated into exile, composing literary works abroad rather than in the confines of Nazi Germany, for example Friedrich Torberg’s *Die Mannschaft: Roman eines Sport-Lebens* (1935) and Horvath von Ödon’s *Jugend ohne Gott* (1937). Such works are the main focus of scholars dealing with sport literature during the time of the Second World War and are important for our understanding of exile literature’s engagement with sport. As point of comparison, however, they do little to explain the contemporary situation within German borders. As such, those few works produced within the regime are invaluable in highlighting the politicized nature and influence of the athlete in German literature between 1933 and 1945.

Though there was an overall lack of sport as a theme in the literary realm, sport was consistently relayed as a victorious occasion in propaganda films and celebrated German athletic strength. Recognizing media as a powerful tool in influencing a widespread audience, the Nazi Party capitalized on the medium of film as a prime instrument for dispersing propaganda. Robert Stemmler’s film *Das große Spiel* (1942), based on Richard Kirn’s book of the same name published in 1942, glorifies the Nazi nation and attempts to bolster moral amongst the German *Volk* through soccer victory. Rather than the war, death

¹⁸⁵ For a more thorough bibliography of literature dealing with sport during the Third Reich, see Leis, *Sport in der Literatur*, Jacob, *Sport im 20. Jahrhundert* and Nanda Fischer, *Sport als Literatur. Zur Theorie und Praxis einer Inszenierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Eching: F&B-Verlag, 1999).

¹⁸⁶ James MacPherson Ritchie, *German Literature Under National Socialism* (London: Croom Helm, 1983) 55.

and destruction that was the German reality at the time, the film displays the triumph of a fictitious German soccer team named Gloria 03 led by the blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryan forward Werner Fehling and was based on the reigning German champions of the time, FC Schalke 04.¹⁸⁷ Despite numerous obstacles along the way, the film ends with the team happily exiting the stadium after an incredible comeback and eventual victory.¹⁸⁸ That is to say that *Das große Spiel* sought to reassure the German nation in the face of the failures the regime was experiencing both politically and on the war front.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, the team is led by an athletically virile Aryan male, which further highlights the triumph of the German athlete and therewith the German nation. Furthermore, official films produced by the *Propagandaministerium* likewise utilized sport to highlight the greatness of Germany. Films like *Theresienstadt oder Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* (1944) portrayed the putative superb ghetto lifestyle and protection Hitler facilitated for Jews forced into labor camps. For instance, the central scene of *Theresienstadt oder Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* features a soccer match played in the main square of the camp and relays the plethora of happy faces cheering on their favorite team.

While these films speak towards the use of sport by the National Socialist party to bolster morale amongst the masses, sport was likewise utilized in films like *Leni*

¹⁸⁷ Kirn's book, and thus Stemmlé's film, was based on the real championship game between Schalke 04 and Rapid Wien. To be sure, the victory of FC Schalke 04 was popular knowledge amongst the athletic community. The significance of a German team conquering an Austrian team on the soccer field posed a strong parallel to that of a victorious German military on the foreign fronts. See Uwe Wick, "Der Spielfilm *Das große Spiel*: Ein Beispiel für NS-Propaganda im Film?" *Fussball zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus: Alltag, Medien, Künste, Stars*, eds. Markwart Herzog and Andreas Bode (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008).

¹⁸⁸ Stemmlé even returned actual German national team players from the war front to give it a more realistic feel. For further facts on the film, see Wick, "Der Spielfilm *Das große Spiel*: Ein Beispiel für NS-Propaganda im Film?"

¹⁸⁹ For further analysis of the film, see Bernhard Wetzstein, *Die nationalsozialistische Instrumentalisierung des Sports* (Norderstedt: GRIN Verlag, 2008) 51-55.

Riefenstahl's iconic documentary *Olympia* to glorify the German nation. Though not viewed by scholars as the same propagandistic vehicle as *Theresienstadt*, critics agree that *Olympia* sought to depict Germany in a positive light during the 1936 Olympics. In her portrayal of the Olympic Games, Riefenstahl "intended to achieve the specific propaganda goals of depicting international sportsmanship on German soil, [...] reinforcing the idea that Germany was a peaceful and friendly nation. The film's impressive production arrangements in themselves provided positive publicity for Germany at a time when it needed it."¹⁹⁰ Indeed, *Olympia* has proven to be popular fodder for scholarly investigations.¹⁹¹ In addition to the positive image of Germany portrayed in *Olympia*, scholars have likewise focused on the eroticism of the athletic body in Riefenstahl's documentary and its link to fascism. Susan Sontag, for instance, argues that the dance sequences of *Olympia* reveal a repressed sexuality that creates the fascist body.¹⁹² I contend, however, that Riefenstahl's rendering of athletic bodies does not necessarily expose an erotic endeavor, but rather that the utilization of beautiful athletic bodies in her film constructs the image of the perfect Aryan ideal made manifest for the German public. What is more, owing to the fact that this was not intended as overt propaganda,¹⁹³ it is a very real instance of the success the Nazis achieved in

¹⁹⁰ Richard Meran Barsam, *Nonfiction Film: A Critical History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) 132.

¹⁹¹ See Taylor Downing, *Olympia* (London: British Film Institute, 1992) and Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1972) for further insight into this theme.

¹⁹² See Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Anchor Books, 1980) 73-105.

¹⁹³ Scholars such as Jürgen Trimborn have continually argued against *Olympia* as an overtly propagandistic film. Though they note that it cannot be considered entirely harmless considering its funding, critics are overwhelmingly opposed to *Olympia* as having a heightened propagandistic intent (Jürgen Trimborn, *Leni Riefenstahl: A Life*, trans. Edna McCown [New York: Faber and Faber, 2002]). See also Hilmar Hoffmann, *The Triumph of Propaganda: Film and National Socialism, 1933-1945*, trans. John Broadwin and Volker R.

implementing a standard Aryan image. While Rosenberg offers the language describing the ideal Aryan male, his philosophy falls short of revealing what the ideal Aryan actually looked like. Riefenstahl's film furthers the discourse espoused by the National Socialist regime by visually constructing this Aryan fantasy for public consumption in the form of the athlete. By demonstrating the Aryan's connection to Greek Antiquity and furthermore the reunion of nature and the Aryan male through sport, Riefenstahl crafts the image of the ideal Aryan espoused philosophically by the National Socialist regime. The film utilizes sport as a means through which the connection between German athletes and nature, and furthermore in the link between Germany and Greek Antiquity, can be accessed.

III. The Quest for the Aryan: Leni Riefenstahl and the Olympian Influence

In her film *Olympia*, Riefenstahl taps into the same discourse advocated by Rosenberg in utilizing the athletic body as a means to propagate the Aryan ideal praised by the National Socialist regime. Indeed, sport in the project offers the canvas on which to visually construct the fantasy of the Aryan male in athletic form. Riefenstahl materializes and historicizes the linguistically described body posed in Nazi philosophy. The combination of nature and sport in Riefenstahl's work, however, does not first appear in *Olympia*. The connection between the German athlete and nature surfaces briefly in her first feature film for the National Socialist party: *Triumph des Willens* (1935). While the film is devoted to the events of the 1934 Party Congress in Nuremberg, it likewise establishes the organic union of the Aryan athletic body and nature. While scholarship unequivocally understands the documentary film as a staunchly political propaganda film intended to mobilize support in

Berghahn (New York: Berghahn, 1997) and Glenn B. Infield, *Leni Riefenstahl: The Fallen Film Goddess* (New York: Crowell, 1976) for further discussions on this theme.

glorifying Hitler,¹⁹⁴ the instrumental use of the athletic body and its association to nature posited in the film has gone unnoticed by scholars. Though Riefenstahl's fame regarding sport is later cemented in her 1938 film *Olympia*, the seeds for the German connection to nature through sport first germinate in this highly propagandistic film. While the majority of the film centers on Hitler's speech in Nuremberg and the jubilant spectators, the early scenes depict the athletically engaged *Hitlerjugend* awaiting Hitler's arrival in their camp. In this brief moment of athleticism, the picture of the athletically beautiful Aryan youth is carefully crafted to demonstrate a unique connection between the German body and nature.

While the first segment of *Triumph des Willens* is riddled with scenes of dark smoke filled views of the cityscape of Nuremberg accompanied by morose music, the camera enters a dark tunnel only to cut to a bright light accompanied by upbeat marching music. The light fades slightly to reveal the first frame of the *Hitlerjugend* camp littered with white tents and completely encased by countryside. This transition from dark to light suggests the changed positive atmosphere of the *Hitlerjugend* awaiting their leader in the beauty of nature. The next scenes present throngs of young, shirtless, lithe boys preparing for Hitler's arrival. Rows of boys pound drums in unison, while others are shown shaving and washing. Each of the males portrayed displays a distinct happiness. Each smiles and laughs in the individual, closely cropped frames. Following this sequence of events, the film interchanges images of Aryan youths smiling and laughing with shots of sport. In the first such image, two youths are seen wrestling shirtless while encircled by rows of other half-nude boys cheering. The film follows the wrestling match with a close-up shot of a blond-haired boy laughing at the

¹⁹⁴ See Mary Devereaux, "Beauty and Evil: The Case of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*," *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 240.

surrounding scene. This display then cuts to rows of boys in brown Hitler Youth uniforms racing through a gauntlet of other cheering youths in a foot race.



Figure 1. Aryan boys wrestle in the *Hitlerjugend* camp while awaiting Hitler's arrival in *Triumph des Willens* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1935). (video still)



Figure 2. Members of the *Hitlerjugend* race through camp in *Triumph des Willens* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1935). (video still)

Both athletic images—that is the healthy, strong, blond-haired Aryan youths wrestling half-naked in the earth surrounded by other shirtless young men as well as the

group of uniformed boys racing—evoke a strong connection between agile Aryan athletes and nature. As the boys wrestle, their perfected muscular forms are revealed and cheered on enthusiastically by the crowd. In addition to exposing their lithe, athletic Aryan bodies, the shirtless bodies also highlight the lack of distance between the Aryan and nature. Indeed, not even clothing appears to separate the Aryan athlete from his communion with nature. This sentiment is further mirrored by the camera angle capturing the action. The camera is positioned amongst the spectators and offers a carefully crafted view of the actions that frames only the crowd and the athletes' interactions in their natural setting. Moreover, the foot race is also displayed at close-quarters. The athleticism of the youths is explicit as they run away from the camera. Much like the shot of the wrestling match, the scene of the runners seemingly merges the boys with the nature around them as the brown shirts meld with the ground below them. To be sure, it is while engaging with athletics that both sets of boys are truly seen surrounded by nature away from any form of cityscape or urban civilization. Furthermore, close-ups of blond, light-eyed boys separate the two scenes and suggest the positive association evoked by the athletes in their natural setting.

Indeed, Riefenstahl initially proffers a connection between Aryan athletes and nature as early as 1935 in *Triumph des Willens*. In the documentary, however, sport by no means provides an overarching force within the film as a whole. This overt connection—specifically in a movie that sought to glorify Nazi culture and the regime's leader—nevertheless points to the vital role sport played in presenting the carefully crafted Nazi Aryan ideal. Moreover, it highlights the Nazi success as early as 1935 in placing this image in the public mindset. In a film that from the outset has little to do with sport, the images crafted by Riefenstahl are perfect examples of the Aryan ideal as espoused by the Nazi party. The release of *Olympia* in

1938, however, a two-part documentary chronicling the events of the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, truly refines and brings forth the connection between the Aryan athlete and nature first addressed in *Triumph des Willens*, thus furthering the discourse on the Aryan body and sport in the Third Reich. Through crafted poses, camera angles, shadows and other cinematic techniques, Riefenstahl carefully creates the image of the Aryan in athletic grandeur and beauty that links this ideal not only with nature but also the Germanic Hellenic past. *Olympia* takes the associations hinted at in *Triumph des Willens* and propagates the Aryan ideal man by highlighting the athletic German body's exclusive connection to nature in the film as well as its unique connection to Greek Antiquity. As such, the image of the beautiful Aryan athlete becomes manifest for the public and the cultural ideals of the superior Aryan race successfully propagated.

Even while filming *Olympia*, Riefenstahl openly expressed her desire to highlight the beauty and grace of the athletic body. In her book *Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf* (1937), which describes the filming of *Olympia* with corresponding pictures from the Games, Riefenstahl comments on her goal for the film: namely that of capturing the “Schönheit, Kraft und Anmut des Olympischen Spieles”¹⁹⁵ in her depiction of the competing athletes. Indeed, there is no doubt that Riefenstahl desired to portray beautiful bodies in her films. Scholars unanimously agree that Riefenstahl intentionally chose to display the glory of the human body in her films, most particularly in her documentary *Olympia*. Sarah Nuttal rightly argues that: “The work of Riefenstahl involves an admiration for the structure, strength and beauty of the human body. Riefenstahl became fascinated by the aesthetics of the beauty of

¹⁹⁵ Leni Riefenstahl, *Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf* (Berlin: Im Deutschen Verlag, 1937) 193.

the ‘perfect body.’”¹⁹⁶ The director herself openly proclaimed her love for beautiful bodies in a 1991 interview, stating that in her films, she was “not only interested in bodies, but in [their] beauty.”¹⁹⁷ Thus, it comes as no surprise that Riefenstahl chose to depict beautiful athletic bodies in her documentary centered on the 1936 Olympics. While these scholars rightly point out Riefenstahl’s affinity for beautiful bodies, I contend that Riefenstahl’s film produces the beauty of the athletic Aryan body contingent upon the athlete’s re-introduction to nature and its association with Germany’s Greek past. Indeed, Riefenstahl crafts the image of the ideal Aryan athlete that stems from the discourse of Aryan superiority through the materialization of the strong, racially pure athletic body, which is made manifest for the masses in her film.

From its outset, Riefenstahl’s documentary establishes a connection between the German people and that of Ancient Greece in the prologue to the first film, *Fest der Völker*. While the bond between Germany and Greek Antiquity is by no means a novel concept, as it was first discussed as early as the eighteenth century,¹⁹⁸ it is nevertheless a poignant connection to the discourse of the perfected Aryan prototype espoused by Rosenberg.

¹⁹⁶ Sarah Nuttal, *Beautiful Ugly* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 192. See also Mary G. Hurd *Woman Directors and Their Films* (Wesport: Praeger, 2007) and Trimborn, *Leni Riefenstahl* for further elaboration on Riefenstahl and her obsession with beautiful bodies.

¹⁹⁷ Leni Riefenstahl, Interview with George Hickenlooper, Greg D’Elia and Jordan Mechner (Personal Interview. 25 May 1991).

¹⁹⁸ The supposed Greek heritage of the German race is by no means a concept originally introduced by the Nazi party. On the contrary, German writers and philosophers wrote of the connection between Ancient Greece and Germany dating back to the works of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who first illuminated the perceived connection between Germany and its Hellenic past. David Littlejohn elaborates on this point, additionally highlighting Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller as symbolically linking Greece and Germany through their works. Littlejohn explains that like Hitler, these authors “regarded the ancient Greeks as the only cultural equal to the pure German.” (David Littlejohn, *The Ultimate Art: Essays Around and About Opera* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992] 197-198). Indeed, while the fascination with Greek Antiquity was not novel to the Nazi regime, the theme of the interconnectivity of Nordic and Hellenic roots runs strong in the literature, art and films of the Third Reich.

Scholars have rightly argued the desired connection Riefenstahl attempts to solidify with the film's opening landscape and cite the Greek ruins in the film's prologue as an "intensely romantic evocation of Greek culture" in relation to Germany's role as heir of ancient Greece.¹⁹⁹ While the Greek ruins offer the first link to Germany in Riefenstahl's project, I argue that this connection goes beyond the landscape of the initial scene to visually craft the athlete as a the embodiment of this Hellenic inheritance.

While the opening sequence moves over misty fields, Riefenstahl's corporal depiction of Greek beauty begins first as sculptures in the fields of ancient Greece. After panning over the misty ruins, images of Medusa, Apollo, Achilles, Aphrodite and Paris appear and culminate with a shot of Myron's Discobolos. What differentiates Myron's statue from the others, however, is that the camera holds the frame longer, only to watch as the form dissolves into the human body of the athlete Erwin Huber, the German decathlon champion, who then spins and throws the discus as the camera rotates past.²⁰⁰ Thus, the beauty associated with the statues of Ancient Greece is put in direct connection with those of the German Aryan athlete. Furthermore, Riefenstahl progresses from Rosenberg's discourse regarding Germany and Ancient Greece. Whereas Rosenberg praised the beauty associated with Ancient Greece and its re-birth in Nazi culture, he refers to it as a "statisches, nicht dynamisches Wesen."²⁰¹ To be sure, Rosenberg credits the German people with maintaining a unique connection to the beauty of Ancient Greece, though he refers only to the static beauty contained in the artwork stemming from the time. The transformation from Greek

¹⁹⁹ Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006) 74.

²⁰⁰ *Olympia*, dir. Leni Riefenstahl (Olympia GmbH, 1938).

²⁰¹ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* 305.

statue to German athlete, however, produces a dynamic, human version of the beauty to which Rosenberg refers. This view is cemented when one considers the athlete was chosen for his embodiment of the perfect Aryan as opposed to his sporting prowess. (The German decathlon champion failed to even place at the 1936 Olympic Games.) In other words, Riefenstahl chooses the German athlete as the means through which to modernize the Greek idea of beauty in Nazi society. Indeed, she creates the image of the Aryan superior athlete from a Greek statue of the past.



Figure 3. Myron's Discobolos transforms into Erwin Huber in *Olympia: Fest der Völker* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). (video still)

The relationship between the German Aryan athlete and the ideals of Greek beauty are further solidified in the subsequent scenes of the prologue, whereby the Olympic flame is brought from Greece through Eastern Europe to its putative home in Berlin—a custom implemented by Carl Diem for the 1936 Olympic Games.²⁰² While the flame is lit by what appears to be a naked Greek youth, a German runner receives the torch before crossing the

²⁰² Tomlinson and Young, *National Identity and Global Sports Events* 74.

Nazi border. Riefenstahl intersperses close-up shots of the Greek runner's face with scenes of him running through the landscape. Eventually, the film follows the transference of the flame from the original Greek runner to that of his German counterpart, handpicked—much like the decathlete—by Riefenstahl because he possessed the physical qualities she desired for the role.²⁰³ The two runners look almost identical: they are dressed in the same pair of shorts and carry similar slender yet muscular builds. The striking dissimilarity between the two appears only in a few facial features: the first runner prominently displays dark hair, while the German runner's hair is noticeably lighter. Moreover, the German runner initially stands in the shadows, only to have the Olympic torch illuminate the surrounding area as he embarks on his journey towards Berlin.²⁰⁴ That is to say that the runner physically transfers the light associated with the Olympics, and therewith synonymous with sport, to the German racer. Once in possession of the torch, the illuminated German runner is shown frame by frame traveling through the darkened, shadowy countries to Germany. Displayed to the viewer through his path on a map, he arrives in Berlin to ignite the Olympic torch. Thus, the film poses a carefully crafted image of the German athlete that not only fulfills the standards of the Aryan male but also juxtaposes such ideals with those of the Hellenic heritage of the Nordic race. The significance of this is two-fold. Firstly, the Olympic flame transference from its Greek origin to Germany suggests the honor associated with the original Olympic Games, and thus sport itself, belongs in the superior German empire. Secondly, the flame is willingly transferred from the Greek runner to the Aryan male, which reveals the Nordic man as the rightful heir to the praised Hellenic past.

²⁰³ Tomlinson and Young, *National Identity and Global Sports Events* 74.

²⁰⁴ *Olympia*, dir Leni Riefenstahl.



Figure 4. The Greek runner passes the Olympic torch to his German counterpart (*Olympia: Fest der Völker*, dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). (video still)

In the opening scenes of *Fest der Völker*, Riefenstahl establishes the unique connection between Greek Antiquity and Germany through the dynamic depiction of the athlete. Indeed, it is this link between Germany and its Hellenic heritage the Nazi party propagated in creating the idea of the ideal Aryan man, as evidenced by Rosenberg's Aryan philosophy. By looking towards the past, the Nazi party idolized the superior race in the present through its Greek origins. While this is a prominent point in the National Socialist party's description of the superiority of the German race, it is only one aspect of a larger whole. Indeed, Rosenberg elaborates in detail on the wonder of the Aryan race as well as the German connection to nature and Ancient Greece. While these each lie as separate points in Rosenberg's discourse, Riefenstahl's documentary takes these themes further by combining them and presents the strong Aryan athlete as the link through which its illustrious past can be crafted and displayed. Moreover, Riefenstahl juxtaposes this image of the Aryan athlete with nature to create the beautiful body at one with its natural surroundings. Indeed, the

documentary posits not only the image of the ideal German Aryan man in the form of the athlete but also creates an image this of Aryan athlete's reunion with nature through sport.

While the marathon runner in the prologue to *Fest der Völker* conjures a poignant link between Germany and Ancient Greece, the scene likewise offers the first example of the German Aryan athlete's bond with nature. After receiving the flame from his Greek counterpart, the marathon runner journeys through Europe; each country is depicted only in shadows on a map. Upon arriving in Germany, he lights the torch with nothing but sky behind him. In this space encased by nature, bright flames engulf the screen and fade slightly to reveal the outline of the runner behind it. The camera angle is positioned directly in front of the flames, allowing only for the head and bare upper torso of the athlete as he watches the fire before him. That the runner travels through the darkness only to be greeted with an illuminating flame upon arrival in Germany suggests the power and hope of Germany as well as its role as the rightful bearer of the Olympic flame. What is more, the scene inextricably binds the German athlete with one of the four primary elements of nature: fire. The shot literally combines the seemingly naked athlete with fire in that there is little definition as to where the flames end and the man begins. As the flames dissolve, a close-up of a swinging bell with a pronounced German eagle in the middle appears slowly on-screen to ring in the start of the Olympic Games. Once the flames disappear, the background transforms into the Olympia Stadium in Berlin. Thus, three images are brought together in this sequence—nature, the German athlete and a symbol of the Nazi regime superimposed over the German Olympic stadium—all blend together in this series of fading cinematic shots.²⁰⁵ That the three images are intertwined suggests that all three belong together as a whole and highlights

²⁰⁵ *Olympia*, dir Leni Riefenstahl.

the connection between the German people and nature through the image of the athlete as he lights the Olympic flame.



Figure 5. The German runner ignites the Olympic flame in *Olympia: Fest der Völker* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). (video still)

While the opening scenes of *Fest der Völker* reveal a distinct union between the Aryan race and nature, the association between the Nordic man and nature is further solidified in the prologue to the second film, *Fest der Schönheit*. The first scene opens, much like the initial scene of *Fest der Völker*, with a misty landscape; however the setting is obviously no longer in Greece but in the Olympic Village in Berlin. As the camera pans through the trees, the viewer discovers healthy, muscular nude athletes running through the forest playfully hitting each other with birch branches and eventually plunging into a lake. As

the bodies run through the woods and dive into the lake, the viewer is made acutely aware from the light skin and features that the athletes are of Nordic descent.²⁰⁶

Rather than the fire of the first film, *Fest der Schönheit* offers an additional elemental connection between the German and nature through the athletes' interaction with the earth itself. The image of the male running through the woods boasts those who are exclusively lean and muscular with obvious Nordic traits such as blond hair and strong facial features. Likewise, the scene displays each athlete's taut muscular build. Indeed, the bodies the director chose to utilize in this scene fulfill the physical Aryan mold, which signified the strength of the Aryan race. Although filmed from a distance, the forms are distinctly defined while running through the forest. What's more, the nude Aryan athletes are seen surrounded solely by nature with only sparse rays of sunlight piercing the trees to provide a lit path. Much like the shirtless boys presented in *Triumph des Willens*, there is no barrier between the Aryan and nature. In fact, unlike the boys in the film, these athletes are not wearing any clothing; their entire body is exposed to the elements of nature. The sun illuminates the men as they run through the trees, revealing the toned physique of the naked body the National Socialist party sought to associate with the German race. Riefenstahl not only addresses this ideal in the athlete's bodily form, but she furthermore evokes the union between nature and this Nordic athletic body. As the men run through the woods, they physically hold the tree branches in their hands and playfully strike each other with nature itself. The branches become an extension of the body, and the athletes no longer simply merge with the scenery around them but also interact with the nature itself. To be sure, Riefenstahl does not exclude other athletes in the prologue, however this union with nature only exists in relation to the

²⁰⁶ *Olympia*, dir Leni Riefenstahl.

Aryan athletes. The film proceeds to show athletes from competing nations; however, they are fully clothed and surrounded by buildings in the landscape of the Olympic village itself. Thus, the connection between nature and the Aryan race is posited through the image of the ideal Nordic male athlete in the woods.



Figure 6. Aryan athletes run through the forest in *Olympia: Fest der Schönheit* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). (video still)



Figure 7. Athletes playfully strike one another with birch branches in *Olympia: Fest der Schönheit* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). (video still)

Not only does Riefenstahl's film connect the Aryan athlete to fire and earth, she also evokes a union of the image of the Aryan athlete and nature through the famed diving

sequence in *Fest der Schönheit*. While scholars have commented on the beauty of the divers' form in the scene in relation to dancing, arguing that Riefenstahl sought to "create something independent and new—a kind of 'ballet' from the succession of individual images,"²⁰⁷ the clips of the Nordic divers in the sequence cast a distinct relationship to nature in the form of air and water. Riefenstahl presents the iconic diving sequence as the last athletic event in the film before the closing ceremonies. While at first divers are shown in real time springing from the board, the sequence slows and the camera angle moves below as the first German diver, his swastika prominently shown in the original version of the film,²⁰⁸ before leaping into the air. With this diver in particular, the camera follows in slow motion, leaving him to linger alone in the sky before returning to the pool below. As he soars through the air, there is no sign of the surrounding arena or pool. The viewer is left only with the picture of the athlete's defined muscles slowly moving through the clear sky. Riefenstahl's use of camera angle, editing and slow motion crafts the diver as if flying through the sky and at one with the nature surrounding him with no additional reference points to distract from this union.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Rainer Rother, *Leni Riefenstahl: The Seduction of Genius*, trans Martin H. Bott (Berlin: Continuum, 2002) 88. See also Ken Dancyger, *The Technique of Film and Video Editing: History Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2007) 61.

²⁰⁸ This particular segment was shortened for the 1955 re-release, editing the initial view of the diver's uniform from the scene.

²⁰⁹ *Olympia*, dir Leni Riefenstahl.



Figure 8. An Aryan diver floats in the air in *Olympia: Fest der Schönheit* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). (video still)

At the peak of the athlete's dive, he appears to be floating in the air, his taut muscles displayed to the camera before he soars down to the water. The slow motion of the athlete's majestic actions can be no coincidence. The diver is displayed before his leap in true Aryan form: a large yet slender, muscular build with pale and blond features—precisely those of the superior Aryan race. However, the image crafted by Riefenstahl follows the diver in the air and merges this Aryan athlete with nature. That is to say, it is in the act of engaging in athletics that the diver melds with the sky around him, thanks in large part to the cinematic tools Riefenstahl chose to implement for this particular diving sequence. There are no surrounding elements to distract from the diver in the air, for the stadium and spectators have disappeared, leaving only the blue sky as the diver's backdrop. To be sure, Riefenstahl filmed various athletes using this slow-motion technology; however, this diver is the lone athlete filmed using a tilt shot that is angled upright, which allows the diver alone to fill the frame. He then enters the water, at which point Riefenstahl cuts from the sequence of divers for the first time to display a single spectator nodding in approval of the feat. He smiles, nods and then gazes to the sky. The spectator is presented up-close, showing only his head

and shoulders, which prominently display light blond hair as well as light eyes and skin. Thus, Riefenstahl links the diver with the Nordic spectator at the stadium, the man nodding in approval at the union between sky and athlete before him. That the film cuts to the spectator at precisely this moment, then, signifies the approval of the superior connection between the German diver and the nature around him.

The link between the diver and nature does not, however, end with the dive itself but is furthered by the athlete's reunion with the water below. Indeed, Riefenstahl used special underwater cameras to document the descent into the water by capturing the athlete's entrance into the pool. One such scene displays the start of the dive, as another blond-haired, slender athlete jumps from the board. The shot then moves to just below the water's surface to capture the diver as he enters the pool. In order to achieve such a cinematic feat, Riefenstahl made use of new-age underwater cameras—a first in the cinematic world.²¹⁰ The advantage of this is revealed as the diver enters the water, and the camera captures in close-up the disruption of the water upon entrance and his graceful underwater turn. Much like the sequence in the air, the diver begins his feat in real-time only to penetrate the water in slow motion. However, as the camera captures the entrance into the water, the body of the diver is indecipherable from the water around him. Bubbles emerge as he cuts through the pool, and the viewer watches as he then reaches the surface.²¹¹

²¹⁰ Guido Knopp, *Hitler's Women* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 137.

²¹¹ *Olympia*, dir Leni Riefenstahl.



Figure 9. A diver enters the water during the diving sequence of *Olympia: Fest der Schönheit* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). (video still)

While the diving sequence features athletes of all nations, it is of particular note that Riefenstahl chose precisely this Aryan diver to capture upon entrance into the pool. Like the dive discussed above, Riefenstahl again chooses to follow a diver with distinctly displayed Aryan features in this slow motion sequence of events. While the film has merged the images of fire, earth and air with Aryan athletes, this depiction of the Aryan athlete in the diving sequence unites him with the final element of nature: water. Indeed, as the diver enters the pool, there is no deciphering where the water ends and the athlete begins, which is reminiscent of the marathon runner and the Olympic flame from the first film. It is as if the diver has become a part of nature itself. Thus, Riefenstahl poses an organic mixture of athlete and nature and, what is more, uses the slow-motion sequence to elongate the moment of this union. The viewer is left only to admire the beauty of the athlete as he enters the water and search for the distinction between the water and the diver. To be sure, Riefenstahl crafts a

distinct image of the Aryan athlete in combination with his natural surroundings in *Olympia* by merging the Nordic ideal with the major elements of nature.

The unification of the Aryan athlete and nature grows progressively stronger in each sequence presented in Riefenstahl's film. Indeed, the diving sequence marks not only the last athletic scene of the film but also one confined to a stadium. The other scenes depicting the Aryan athlete's relationship to nature occur in an open landscape (Ancient Greece, lighting the torch with no sign of the surrounding city and deep in the forest), but the diving scene brings the athlete into the confines of a constructed, non-natural, man-made space. Through her cinematic techniques, however, Riefenstahl is able to erase the façade of this artificial construct and still craft the Aryan image at one with nature. That is to say that even in a distinctly man-made surrounding, the union between nature and the Aryan body is still achieved through sport. Furthermore, this strong connection is the last event depicted in the film, as the next scene shows the closing ceremonies of the Games. That is to say that the film leaves the viewer with the remnants of athletic beauty created by the diver re-unified with nature as the ultimate vision of the Olympic Games.

Riefenstahl's documentary *Olympia* builds on the image of the Aryan male as athlete in *Triumph des Willens* and produces a carefully sculpted fantasy of the athletic Aryan male at one with nature and his Greek heritage. While the appearance of the healthy, lithe Aryan male first appears in conjunction with nature in the 1935 propaganda film, the association between nature and the German race is honed and strengthened in *Olympia*. While both seemingly appropriate the superior characteristics of the Nordic German race, *Triumph des Willens* gives only a glimpse at this association, revealing only two brief encounters between the athlete and his association with the nature surrounding him. By the time of *Olympia*,

Hitler's propagandistic machine had taken full hold over German culture, as evidenced by the demi-god portrayal of Aryan athletes in relation to each aspect of nature. Not only does the image of the Aryan body relate to the Greek roots in the opening sequence, Riefenstahl goes further in positing the strong organic relationship the body holds with the environment—both in the natural world and in non-natural space. By creating a poignant link between distinctly Aryan athletes and the natural elements of fire, earth, air and water through skillful camera-angles and editing, Riefenstahl plays on the National Socialist description of the ideal Aryan race. Indeed, Riefenstahl visually creates the ideal depiction of the Aryan athlete at one with nature for public consumption. The immense success of *Olympia* upon its initial release highlights the achievement of the National Socialist regime in propagating the racist doctrine of Aryan supremacy. To be sure, *Olympia* premiered on Hitler's 49th birthday in 1938 to rave reviews in both Europe and America. Moreover it earned multiple awards and garnered unanimous worldwide praise.²¹² In fact, the film earned more money in Germany at the box-office than all other films of that year combined.²¹³ While the Hitler regime began utilizing the athlete in the cultural realm for its own propagandistic advantage, for example in artwork and films like *Das große Spiel* and *Theresienstadt*, *Olympia*'s success illuminates the achievement of the Nazi party in exploiting sport. As I have shown, Riefenstahl sculpts the athlete as the epitome of the Aryan male in conjunction with both Ancient Greece and nature,

²¹² *Olympia* received several awards and was praised by critics upon its premiere. Within the first year of its release, the film won the Venice International Film Festival's Coppa Mussolini (Best Film) Award, the Swedish Polar Prize, The Greek Sports Prize, The Olympic Gold Medal of the Comité International Olympique and the German National Film Prize. Even ten years later in 1948, Riefenstahl's film won the Olympic Diploma at the Lausanne International Film Festival (Trimborn, *Leni Riefenstahl* 144). As late as 1960, fellow filmmakers voted it to be on the ten best films of all time. As recent as 2010, it remained on the Time Magazine List of the "All-Time 100 Greatest Movies" (Richard Corliss, "Olympia, Parts 1 & 2: All-Time 100 Greatest Movies," *Time Magazine* [12 February 2005. 5 October 2010. <<http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/0,28757,1953094,00.html>>]). See also Knopp, *Hitler's Women* 103-151 and Hilmar Hoffmann, *Mythos Olympia* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1993) for further elaboration on the film's international cinematic success.

²¹³ Trimborn, *Leni Riefenstahl* 149.

which in turn fostered the aims of the Hitler regime to glorify the present through an innate link to the past. By crafting a deliberate image of the athlete in connection with the Hellenic past and the forces of nature, the Aryan athlete emerges as a pronounced godlike and unyielding force in the sport world. However, while Riefenstahl is successful in her attempt to meld the German athlete with its ancient origins as well as with nature, the documentary fails to relay the core function of this athletic adoration within the fabric of German society. By turning to the literature of this period, more specifically to Ludwig Friedrich Barthel's *Schinovelle*, I examine how the utilitarian function of the Aryan athlete pushes beyond the superficial adoration displayed in *Olympia* and evokes the moral core of the Aryan man that falls apart with the introduction of war. Through the main character's interaction with sport in nature, the working model of this crux of Nazi ideology is revealed and the role of sport in evoking the moral fiber of the authentic German elucidated.

IV. "Siegedanken aus Blut und Glauben"²¹⁴: Ludwig Friedrich Barthel's *Schinovelle* and the Glorification of German Nature

If one understands Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* as the visual embodiment of the ideals of Aryan superiority first espoused by National Socialist regime, then Ludwig Friedrich Barthel's narrativized athletics in *Schinovelle* (1938) progresses beyond the mere image of the athlete to demonstrate the use of sport in nature in re-establishing morality in German society faced by war. Considering Barthel's support of the National Socialist Party, it is no surprise that his writing would integrate the Nazi morality propagated by the political regime during the Third Reich. Indeed, *Schinovelle* garnered much attention upon publication at the end of 1938; some critics even referred to it as "eines der eigenartigsten und schönsten

²¹⁴ Renate Just, "Die ersten tausend Jahre: Bummel durch die Epochen. Mit einer spektakulären Ausstellung begeht Bamberg sein Bistumsjubiläum," *Die Zeit* (10 November 2007) 71.

Bücher im jüngeren Schrifttum. Als Dichtung ist das Ganze eine meisterliche Leistung, welche stillen Menschen den Genuß eines hohen Kunstwerkes gewährt.”²¹⁵ To be sure, the overarching support in National Socialist literary society of Barthel’s text was prominent. However, while his work garnered much attention at publication, its importance in contemporary literary scholarship has been usurped by his poetry produced during the period of National Socialism.²¹⁶

As a “true nationalistic writer [and] a strong supporter of National Socialism,”²¹⁷ Barthel first gained notoriety in the Third Reich with poems such as “Dem inneren Vaterlande” (1933), “Tannenberg. Ruf und Requiem,” (1934) “Dom aller Deutschen,” (1938) and “Komm, o Knabenherrlichkeit” (1941), which feature heroic and militaristic themes supportive of Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*.²¹⁸ Barthel’s novels, which also incorporate themes of *Vaterland*, heroic loyalty and religion likewise received national acclaim, such as his *Das Leben ruft* (1935), *Zwischen Krieg und Frieden* (1943) and *Kameraden* (1944). After achieving such literary success, Barthel was soon inducted into the *Bamberger Dichterkreis*, a highly selective group of writers nominated by the regime for their dedication to praising the greatness of Hitler and the Third Reich. Indeed, the *Bamberger Dichterkreis* was said to be composed of “einer sinistren Runde hitlertreuer Skribenten” who sought to glorify

²¹⁵ “Ludwig Friedrich Barthels *Schinovelle*,” orig in *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* qtd. in Ludwig Friedrich Barthel, *Schinovelle* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1938) 56.

²¹⁶ See Jay W. Baird, *Hitler’s War Poets: Literature and Politics in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²¹⁷ Baird, *Hitler’s War Poets* 36.

²¹⁸ Josef Wulf, *Literatur im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1983) 215.

“Siegedanken aus Blut und Glauben.”²¹⁹ Barthel was awarded the *München Dichterpreis* in 1942, reflecting the elevated status his literature achieved during the Third Reich. Indeed, these works propagate the heroic glory the Nazi regime sought to associate with the German race.

While the vast majority of Barthel’s work, both poetry and prose, has been analyzed in regard to his focus on the “alte und neue Wege zur Heimatkultur und Heroismus,”²²⁰ his text *Schinovelle* utilizes the connection between the Aryan race and nature made possible through sport as a vital moralizing element of Nazi culture. Considering the fame that the author achieved through his literary works, as well as the notoriety the novella itself achieved during the Third Reich, the secondary criticism has seemingly unjustly ignored this importance aspect of Barthel’s text.²²¹ Aside from appearing in each list of his successful and canonical works,²²² the short text has as of yet lacked the serious examination of which it proves worthy. Indeed, by examining sport in Barthel’s text, I elucidate how the work brings forth a facet of athletics lacking in *Olympia*: namely that of demonstrating the ultimate function of the association between the Aryan and athletics in re-establishing fascist

²¹⁹ Just, “Die ersten tausend Jahre” 71.

²²⁰ Ulla Britta Vollhardt, *Staatliche Heimatpolitik und Heimatdiskurse in Bayern, 1945-1970* (Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2008) 139.

²²¹ Some scholars, like for instance Waldemar Fromm and Wolfram Göbel, attribute the lack of literary criticism pertaining to Barthel’s complete works to his lack of continued success after the Second World War. While his poetry and novels were widely read during the period between 1930 and 1945, his literary attempts after the World War II fell well short of those accumulated throughout his career during the period of National Socialism. (Waldemar Fromm and Wolfram Göbel, *Freude der Monacensia e.V.: Jahrbuch 2009* [Munich: Allitera, 2009] 117).

²²² See Karl-Heinz Joachim Schoeps, *Deutsche Literatur zwischen den Weltkriegen III: Literatur im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1992), Wulf, *Literatur im Dritten Reich*, Ingo Roland Stoehr, *German Literature of the Twentieth Century: From Aestheticism to Postmodernism* (New York: Camden House, 2001), Ernst Jockers, *Ludwig Friedrich Barthel: Ein Lyriker in unserer Zeit* (Heidelberg: Druck des Kreises der Freunde, 1960) and Stephen R. Parker, Peter J. Davies and Matthew Philpotts, *The Modern Restoration: Re-thinking German Literary History, 1930-1960* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004).

“morality attributed to the *Volk*’s past”²²³ lost in the turmoil of war. I examine how the union of sport and body in nature re-connects the Aryan with the propagated moral values innate to the German race through an uninterrupted immersive athletic experience in nature.

Though Barthel’s story begins with a corrupted scene of debauched soldiers on leave, it ends with the reunion of the main character, der Hüttendoktor, with his family after re-connecting with nature while skiing the mountain slopes. *Schinovelle* tells the story of a group of friends at a winter cabin while on leave during what can now be understood as the Second World War. The group of friends, comprised of the Hüttendoktor, the Hauptmann, the fliegender Hamburger, Stümpfling and the Festungskommandant—all of whom are never referred to by their actual names—spend time relaxing, drinking and having extramarital affairs while on a ski vacation away from the war-front and their families. The novella covers the span of two days and nights and reveals the affair of the Hüttendoktor with the barmaid Peterchen as well as his solitary cross-country skiing expedition. After a night of drinking and games in the bar, the Hüttendoktor sneaks away in the early morning alone to the most dangerous part of the mountain. The others are left watching him in fear from the cabin through binoculars. Upon his return from skiing on the mountain, the Hüttendoktor realizes his error in judgment, immediately packs his things and travels home to his family. The last scene of the novella recounts the blissful family reunion at the train station.

While Riefenstahl’s *Olympia* was originally filmed in 1936, well before the actual outbreak of war, the publication of Barthel’s *Schinovelle* came on the heels of Hitler’s annexation of Austria, Czechoslovakia and the Sudetenland in 1938. Thus, rather than the positively crafted spectacle of the Berlin Olympics in 1936, Barthel’s depiction of sport

²²³ David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2001) 81.

comes enveloped in the ravages of war imminent to Germany society. Throughout examinations of war in German literature, scholars agree that it is inevitably shown as a corruptive influence on society. Elizabeth Krimmer rightly argues that war is continually depicted in German literature as a de-moralizing phenomenon that causes men to abandon the values they normally hold in life. Indeed, in wartime society, the ills of war are unavoidable and permeate all areas of life, causing the virtuous man to turn on his moral fiber.²²⁴ This theory holds true in Barthel's text, where the soldiers escape the war-front briefly not for time at home with their families but rather for a debauchorous interlude in the mountains. In addition to a heroic light-haired, blue-eyed soldier, the German man was propagated in the Third Reich as maintaining true Aryan virtues in his life, most particularly the "typical Germanic morality [advocating] the sanctity of family, of marriage, one dedicated to the *Volk*."²²⁵ Indeed, he was viewed as staunchly honorable and loyal to family and fatherland, creating the backbone of moral fiber that distinguishes Germans from the lesser, degenerate races.²²⁶ However, it is utterly apparent by the actions of the soldiers in Barthel's text that these traditional values are corrupted in the midst of war, as the soldiers openly drink and betray the very foundations of family by cheating with the women in the tavern.

The initial scene of the text describes the five men insanely drunk in the tavern, climbing on furniture and flirtatiously interacting with the barmaids. Indeed, the story begins by describing the bar: "Die Tische hatte man zur Seite gerückt, damit sich der

²²⁴ Elizabeth Krimmer, *The Representations of War in German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

²²⁵ George Lachmann Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life of the Third Reich* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003) xxvi.

²²⁶ Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscious* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) 144.

Festungskommandant auf seinem Stuhl in der Mitte des niedrigen, von zwei Petroleumlampen rotgelb erleuchteten Raumes nach Belieben fühlen könne.”²²⁷ With the furniture strewn around the dimly lit room, the scene is set for betrayal. The first descriptions of the main characters are posed in tandem with either drinking or sex. While the Festungskommandant stands upon the table looking for pleasure, Stümpfling grabs hold of the barmaid’s skirt, pulls her toward him “und roch daran, soviel er nur mochte.”²²⁸ At the same time, the Hüttendoktor sits in the dark corner of the tavern kissing Peterchen, another barmaid, while running his fingers through her hair. Eventually, the two leave together for his bedroom.²²⁹ To be sure, the chaotic scene facilitates the first impression of the soldiers, who appear to uphold the exact opposite of the morality and family values upheld by the National Socialist party. The Hüttendoktor betrays his family with his affair with Peterchen, Stümpfling accosts and begins an affair with the other barmaid, while they all dissipate. The characters epitomize the amoral virtues the Third Reich sought to eradicate from society.

Indeed, the scene at the ski-lodge begins as one that has strayed dramatically from the wants of the Third Reich’s ideal values. However, while his actions at the tavern may speak to the contrary, the Hüttendoktor’s physical description adheres to the superior physical attributes of the National Socialist regime. His friends refer to him as “ein Held des Schlachtfeldes,”²³⁰ while the narration deliberately describes his light complexion and “seine

²²⁷ Ludwig Friedrich Barthel, *Schinovelle* (Leipzig: Eugen Dietrichs, 1938) 5.

²²⁸ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 14.

²²⁹ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 40.

²³⁰ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 36.

hellen graugrünen Augen.”²³¹ Furthermore, his hair is specifically described as “gleich Honig, gleich Flachs, gleich silbrigem Gold.”²³² The narrator makes note not only of his facial features but also the Hüttendoktor’s stature, stating: “Er maß nach seiner eigenen, glaubhaften Versicherung einen Meter und siebenundachtzig Zentimeter. Wenn er mitten in der Stube stand und schrie war das weder zu übersehen noch zu überhören.”²³³ That is to say that the Hüttendoktor conforms to the ideal image portrayed by the National Socialist Party regarding the Aryan man. His light skin, bright eyes and physically dominating stature reveal him to be the epitome of the Aryan physical ideal. Furthermore, his presence in the tavern is so great that he cannot be overlooked or ignored. However, while the hero-like image is notably described, his actions defy the morality of ideal image he represents.

The nature outside of the cabin likewise reflects the moral downfall the Hüttendoktor displays. Rather than a serene winter landscape, the Hüttendoktor views a treacherous night as he steps out onto the porch of the tavern with Peterchen. As he stands with his arm around the barmaid, the narrator describes what lies before the Hüttendoktor: “Die Nacht war jedoch kalt geworden, der Schnee, wieder hartgefroren, [...] es zuckten die Sterne aus einem schwarzen, abweisenden Himmel. Von [dem oberen Rande des Steilhangs] konnte man durch eine breite Scharte in das jenseitige Tal sehen.”²³⁴ The darkness of the night intensified by the disappearance of the stars leaves the Hüttendoktor in shadows and unable to make out the natural setting in front of him. The only visible form in the distance is the

²³¹ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 9.

²³² Barthel, *Schinovelle* 36.

²³³ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 9.

²³⁴ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 14-15.

jagged form of the mountain. The description of nature here reflects the state of morality present in the Hüttendoktor's life. Though in the mountains on a supposed ski-trip, he has yet to venture from the cabin onto the mountain to actually ski. Instead, he stands frozen in front of the cabin—the coldness freezing the snow to ice at his feet—with no light to guide his path and only the treacherous jagged cliff visible before him. Rather than revealing the picture of the happy home and dedicated, faithful husband espoused by Nazi culture, he strays and becomes cold, frozen and jagged like the mountain outside his door. In order to battle the ill judgment the Hüttendoktor displays, Barthel employs the theme of sport as a means through which to shed the debauched lifestyle that has overtaken the soldier. This athletic engagement in nature facilitates a re-calibration of his authentic moral character.

Indeed, after the night of dissipation with his male companions and mistress, the Hüttendoktor leaves early for the jagged cliff he viewed from the porch the previous night. He exits, however, before the others awake, and they discover him, visible only as a black dot skiing on the most dangerous slope, upon looking out of the window. Though the terrain is perilous, the Hüttendoktor slowly skis the mountain showing little fear. In fact, he seemingly melds, as we have seen with Riefenstahl's athletes, with the environment around him. As the others watch from the cabin, the narrator describes the Hüttendoktor's path on the mountain as a lone black dot surrounded by white snow:

Das Schneefeld hatte die Form eines großen Dreiecks, war vierhundert Meter hoch. [Der Hüttendoktor] kam aus einer lockeren Waldgruppe—und lief, wie mit dem Lineale ausgerichtet, über das Schneefeld in Steilheit auf [...]. Immerzu kroch der schwarze Punkt vorwärts: in feiner Höhe, nach seinem Willen. [...] Er hatte die höchste Freiheit des Lebens: so nahe dem Tode für eine Jagd von Sekunden über dem Tode zu sein—jetzt noch des Blutes, der Glut, des Gedankens teilhaftig.²³⁵

²³⁵ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 49-50.

That is to say that the Hüttendoktor emerges from the woods and skis into the open landscape using both body and mind and becomes almost indecipherable from the icy, snowy landscape surrounding him. While others may have perished in the icy ravine, the Hüttendoktor labors towards his goal—indeed this is no leisurely jaunt through the woods but rather a slow and challenging athletic endeavor, whereby he “kroch vorwärts. Immer hob sich Schi für Schi zur letzten, äußersten Versuchung und endlich war er bei den Wächten.”²³⁶ It is through this laboring athleticism that he reaches not only his goal on the jagged cliff but also re-connects with the morality and authentic values he sacrificed as a soldier of war.

His description on the mountain merges the Hüttendoktor with the nature around him and produces the freedom he had neglected in his actions from the previous night. To be sure, the Hüttendoktor does not fear for his life in this landscape, but rather he feels an intense freedom, which joins his mind and body together through this interaction of sport in nature despite the fight to reach his goal. His friends follow his movements closely, for the dot moving across the mountain seemingly disappears in the snow—one barmaid cannot even locate him. That is to say that while skiing, the Hüttendoktor is nearly indecipherable from his natural surroundings, symbolizing the communion between man and nature on the mountain. This is in distinct contrast to the previous night’s antics where descriptions of him are offered that show the precise physical detail of his amoral acts. While the Hüttendoktor is seen only as a spot slowly but steadily reaching his objective, the others in the ski-lodge watch with anticipation as he slowly advances. As if watching an athlete on a screen, the other soldiers view him through the window frame from afar. It is no coincidence that his cohorts only view the Hüttendoktor’s transformation in nature from a distance, for they

²³⁶ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 51.

persist in their lifestyle of corruption and do not partake in the organic synthesis of athlete and nature before them. Though the Hüttendoktor's fusion with nature is witnessed from afar, the effects of this combination are exposed upon his arrival back at the lodge.

After reaching the summit, the Hüttendoktor returns to the cabin intent on leaving to rejoin his family. As he enters, he refuses the beer the bartender pours him and announces: "Ich will nach Hause, zum Kind, zur Mutter."²³⁷ In this moment, the bartender offers him a letter that has arrived, which only confirms his decision. Proclaiming their longing for him, the letter reveals: "Mutter und Kind (der Knabe durch krause Zeichnerien) schrieben von ihrer Sehnsucht."²³⁸ The decision already made, he returns to his room for his things: "[Der Hüttendoktor] stolperte in den Schlafrum, warf den Rucksack über, der sich wie eine halbe Weltkugel aufblähte, zahlte dem Wirt die Rechnung—and war wenige Sekunde später jener kleine, schwarze Punkt, der, wie dort oben auf dem Steilhang, seine eigenen Gedanken auch sein eigenes Schicksal hatte."²³⁹ Indeed, he arrives from the mountain with a new path before him produced by his athletic interaction with nature: that of protecting and honoring the house and home, which highlights the true German values as depicted by the Third Reich. He no longer desires to remain in the lodge with the other soldiers and women but immediately packs his bags to leave, reassured by the letter from his wife and son.

Thus, it is precisely after this prototypical Aryan body athletically engages with the forces of nature on the mountain that he returns a new, morally refined man. This suggests that it is through sport that the German, who has been corrupted by the barbaric forces of

²³⁷ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 52.

²³⁸ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 52.

²³⁹ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 54.

war, can re-connect with his Aryan roots and return to traditional values. Sport, then, acts as a catalyst for a communion with nature and the raw natural force it radiates. What is more, sport allows for the ill effects of war to be rehabilitated. The arrival of the letter from the Hüttendoktor's family and his refusal to drink both signify the resistance towards returning to his corrupted existence. Furthermore, they reflect the resurrection of the previously ignored familial values, for it is only after his engagement with sport and nature that this mentality returns. This is not to say, however, that temptations no longer exist in the world. To be sure, as he enters the room, his backpack, presumably his military rucksack considering his leave from the war front, still weighs heavily on his back. As he puts it on, it seems to expand, placing the weight of the world on his shoulders. Unperturbed, the Hüttendoktor marches on to the train station, and once again becomes only a dot to be seen from the cabin. Regardless of the challenges to his moral fiber, the Hüttendoktor exhibits the moral compass only accessible through the athlete's commune with nature upon his departure.

To be sure, the Hüttendoktor has achieved the moral quality expected of the superior Aryan race and happily returns to his family—becoming only a dot in the distance, just as he had been while skiing on the mountain. The satisfaction and approval of his decision and transformation can be understood through the rendering of the Hüttendoktor on his trip home: “Und der Zug trug den Hüttendoktor mit hastigen Rädern nach Hause: zum Kind, zur Mutter, die überhell aufleuchteten als er vor sie hintrat, leicht gebräuntes Gesicht und ein unverstelltes Lachen in seinen Augen.”²⁴⁰ There is little doubt when reading the description of this reunion that any regret lingers in the Hüttendoktor's mind.

²⁴⁰ Barthel, *Schinovelle* 53.

Though his actions at the start of the novella reflect the barbaric corruption of war, the Hüttendoktor is able to re-calibrate his traditional Aryan morals by reuniting with nature through sport. Indeed, it seems he cannot reach his family fast enough, as the train brings him with “*hastigen Rädern*” to join them. Both the family and the Hüttendoktor reflect an almost illuminated composure at the station, producing a picturesque family portrait. Furthermore, the Hüttendoktor’s light skin described in his initial appearance has been altered, and he now wears a “*leicht gebräuntes Gesicht*,” presumably from the sun beaming down on the mountain. Indeed, his arrival uncovers a physical reminder of his transformation. His tanned skin represents a physical reminder of nature on his body and reflects the conversion he underwent while skiing. To be sure, the Hüttendoktor returns from the mountain reformed and relishes his reunion. Though the temptations will continue to exist, most particularly during times of war, he is able to revive the authentic moral German character in the face of nature through sport.

Thus, the Hüttendoktor emerges in Barthel’s story as the Aryan hero happily returning to his moral obligations after the corruption of the evils of war. In order to achieve such a transformation, Barthel employs the act of sport as the means through which this transition is made possible. At the start of the novel, the reader is confronted with the Aryan prototype proffered by the Nazi party and visually brought to realization in Riefenstahl’s documentary. However, while the Hüttendoktor fulfills the physical attributes of the ideal Nordic man, the introduction of war tarnishes the essential morality and virtues associated with the German race. However, from the whoring, immoral and debauched soldier produced by war, the Aryan hero reconnects with the morality that makes the German race superior through athletics in nature. Indeed, it is sport that allows for this communion

between nature and body, as evidenced by the fact that it is only after his athletic actions on the mountain that the soldier realizes his dishonor and gladly returns to hearth and home. Thus, sport enables the connection to nature that rejuvenates the upstanding loyalty, honor and morality the Nazi party attributed to the Aryan family and home. Barthel's story reveals the progression of the Aryan ideal from the dictated image, or even the godlike deity, of the Olympic athlete in Riefenstahl's film to that of a thinking, feeling character communing with nature in order to re-establish the innate German morality stripped away by war.

V. Conclusion

Sport became a vital cog in the National Socialist political and cultural dictatorship beginning first with the philosophies of Aryan heritage, progressing next into the image of the Aryan ideal and eventually exposing a utilitarian function in the foundation of Aryan morality. Indeed, Alfred Rosenberg's philosophical manifesto can be viewed here as a prime example of the precisely detailed description of Aryan traits supported by the National Socialist regime. The political regime subsequently capitalized on the popularity of sport amongst the people and its embodiment of such Aryan characteristics to conjure pride and faith in the new government. While the discourse on sport and the Aryan body begins with a linguistic description by philosophers like Rosenberg, the athlete soon progressed into the visual image of the superior Aryan in cinematic detail with Riefenstahl's *Olympia*. Indeed, Riefenstahl's carefully crafted image of the Aryan athlete unified with nature fulfilled the regime's cultural aims of establishing a strong, victorious Aryan race. Furthermore, the success of such images in the public domain can be seen through the rampant success of Riefenstahl's film at its premiere. Though first evoked by the combination of nature and

joyful, fit Aryan youths in *Triumph des Willens*, the godlike creation of the athlete in *Olympia* made a refined ideal image of the German Aryan bonded with nature through sport manifest for the viewing public. Rather than reference sport as an undercurrent, as it was rendered in *Triumph des Willens*, Riefenstahl carefully crafts the athlete in relation to the perceived Hellenic history and likewise to the communion between Germany and nature through a series of strategic camera angles and cinematic technology. This ultimately culminates in the union of athlete and nature that is so strong it erases the man-made confines of the athletic stadium. Even in such a construct, Riefenstahl makes the athletic re-entry of the distinctly Aryan athlete into nature beautiful in the film's final event. Indeed, Riefenstahl continues the discourse started by Rosenberg by crafting and refining a visual image of the Aryan in *Olympia*, whereby the athlete is presented and celebrated as *the* depiction of the Aryan mold. Cemented through these precisely concocted images, the athlete cements the desired Aryan ideal.

However, Riefenstahl's image of the Aryan athlete bound with nature provides only a superficial adoration in the confines of the Olympic Games. This image does not address the role sport offers German social life: namely that of re-establishing the Aryan moral fiber eradicated in the bloody battle of making the Third Reich. With the corruptive and pervasive effects of war, Riefenstahl's projection of the Aryan associated with nature and Greece falls apart, and the athletic beauty in *Olympia* can no longer survive. Barthel's text reveals why the association between sport and nature posed in Riefenstahl's project is relevant in the lives of the German public. Like Riefenstahl's athletes, the Hüttendoktor appears as the image of the ideal Aryan hero in his outward appearance. His inner state, however, has suffered from effects of war, causing him to neglect the instinctive German values associated with the

home and Fatherland. In order to balance the centrality of violence and war in the logic of the *Lebensraum*, the Hüttendoktor evokes the Aryan ethical force through sport in nature. It is only through nature that this imbalance can be rectified, and furthermore, the connection to nature can only be accessed through the Aryan's engagement with sport. While Riefesntahl's *Olympia* provides the image of the Aryan athlete in unison with nature, Barthel's text reveals the utilitarian social value as a working model.

Indeed, each work evidences the truth to Gumbrecht's notion of the capabilities of athletic beauty, most particularly in relation to the aims of the cultural regime of the Third Reich in propagating the ideal Aryan race. Rosenberg first turns to the past in order to trace the heritage of glory of the Aryan race, in order to detail the characteristics of the new German man. Riefenstahl furthers this discourse in *Olympia* by creating the visual image of the beautiful athlete at one with nature as well as in connection with Germany's Hellenic past. After carefully crafting the image of the athlete first in *Triumph des Willens* and refining it in *Olympia*, the image of the prototypical Nordic male is made manifest in the beauty of the athlete and furthermore readily idolized by the German public. Breaking beyond Riefenstahl's visual embodiment, Barthel's text offers sport as the means through which the moral being of the German race can be restored in the turbulence of war. In viewing the works of Riefenstahl and Barthel and their subsequent successes, it becomes apparent the extent to which the National Socialist party was able to capitalize on the nature of sport amongst the masses. Indeed, these works elucidate sport's ability, according to Gumbrecht, to recharge the past as a means to glorify the present.

This chapter has elucidated not only the utterly politicized nature of sport in film and literature of the Third Reich but also the stark fascist mentality such renderings provided the

National Socialist masses. Indeed, the characteristics, image and social function of the athlete became hallmarks of the fascist Aryan male. With the collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945, how could a new German society faced with departing from totalitarian norms approach the fascist connections of sport established during the Third Reich? What becomes of the image of the fascist athlete in a society wishing to depart from any hint of National Socialism? Does the athlete in literature lie abandoned in a totalitarian grave in an attempt to escape such fascist embodiments? The discourse of athletics and the Aryan body set in motion by Rosenberg and the National Socialist regime and furthered by Riefenstahl and Barthel solidified a union between fascism and sport. As I will argue in Chapter 3, this alliance was not neglected by the authors in the immediate postwar period but rather embraced and appropriated in literature to question the problematic state of society following fascism.

Chapter Three

“Der Sieg ist nicht mehr genug”²⁴¹: Lenz, Harig and the Critical Realism of Sport

I. Re-inventing the Game: Sport and West German Literature

At the end of the Second World War, sport faced the problem of disassociating itself from National Socialism. Adamantly opposed to any remaining fascist tendencies, the Allies in each of the four German sectors immediately disbanded any organization associated with sport. The revival of sport in West German culture and the subsequent victories of national teams in the early 1950s provided a means through which Germans realized the foundation of their new nation. Cultural accounts, for instance, describe the 1954 World Cup in Bern as the first moment Germans could celebrate the official existence of the Federal Republic of Germany.²⁴² Moreover, the victory of national teams and individual athletes on the world stage offered West Germans the chance to celebrate international victories—a rare opportunity in the desolate postwar landscape. As such, sport arguably becomes a lens through which to understand the cultural re-birth of a new West Germany and disregard the fascist associations sport held during the Third Reich. The celebration of athletic victories of the new FRG, however, likewise reflects Germany’s desire to forget the troubled connection

²⁴¹ Siegfried Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1964) 47.

²⁴² Joachim Fest, “German Soccer Legend Fritz Walter Passes Away,” *Deutsche Welle* (18 June 2002. 03 June 2009. <<http://www.dw-world.de/article/0,1564,578974,00.html>>), Gregg Gethard, “How Soccer Explains Post-War Germany” 51-61, Heinrich, “The 1954 World Cup and the Federal Republic of Germany’s Self-Discovery” and *Tor! Tor! Tor! Vierzig Jahre 3:2* as well as Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*.

sport held to the fascist dictatorship. Klaus Theweleit equates the ecstasy of the country surrounding the World Cup victory in Bern with the desire to forget the Nazi-past. He writes: “Heute steht in allen Büchern, der WM-Sieg der deutschen Kicker 1954 in Bern sei so etwas wie die Auslöschung der Kriegsniederlage gewesen. [...] Deutschland war wieder aufgenommen in den Kreis der anständigen Völker. [...] Die Nazi-Schande war einfach gelöscht.”²⁴³ That is to say that with such national victories, the German people readily advanced into the postwar period by forgetting the association sport held in the past. Indeed, the problem of coming to terms with the atrocities committed in the previous regime is a highly pervasive theme in postwar-West German culture and is evidenced in sport’s popular role in West German social life.

The resurgence of sport surfaced not only through the national victories of West German teams but in the arts as well. However, while organized sports garnered much attention during the early 1950s, the use of sport as a theme only began cropping up in artwork and literature of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Herbert Burschik’s sculpture “Mädchen auf dem Schwebebalken” (1959), Senta Baldamus’s bronze statue entitled “Stabwechsel” (1960) and Gerhard Richter’s painting “Gymnastik” (1967) signify the reintroduction of the athlete to the visual arts. Sport was additionally used as a theme in films during the 1950s, as evidenced by the movie *Der Platz an der Halde* (1954) directed by Frank Leberecht and Herbert Fischer and Sammy Drechsel’s 1958 feature film *Hinein!*, while authors of all genres implemented the sportsman into literary works. Athletic characters were widespread in juvenile books of the 1950s and 1960s in West Germany, like Hans Briedback-Bernau’s *Der Läufer* (1955) and Werner Bergenrön’s *Lanze für das*

²⁴³ Klaus Theweleit, *Tor zur Welt: Fußball als Realitätsmodell* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2004) 46.

Fahrrad (1956). Likewise, sport was, albeit sparsely, utilized in poetry, for example Günter Grass' "Zwischen Marathon und Athen" and "Tour de France," both published in 1960.

Starting in the late 1950s, sport began to permeate various genres of German literature.

Sport as a theme, however, was not confined to juvenile novels and poetry. The emerging literary groups of postwar West Germany likewise began to sparingly employ sport in the 1950s as a small theme in their works. Members of the elite postwar literary salon *Gruppe 47* like Alfred Andersch (*Biologie und Tennis*, 1951) and Martin Walser (*Ein grenzloser Nachmittag*, 1955) utilized sport in radio plays, though it fails to play a proper role in these pieces. Neither Andersch nor Walser engage exclusively with athletics in their texts but only reveal sport briefly in relation to characters' backgrounds. Though it plays a small part in each of the texts, sport as a central theme does not reappear in German literature until the end of the 1950s. Siegfried Lenz, also a member of *Gruppe 47*, marks the start of literature centered on sport in West Germany with his 1959 novel *Brot und Spiele* and 1958 short story "Der Läufer." *Gruppe 47*, however, was not the only group to make use of sport in literature. Shortly after Lenz's *Brot und Spiele*, the *Kölner Schule*'s Ludwig Harig penned the short story "Das Fußballspiel" (1960) and returned to the theme in 1962 with the radio play "Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel." While both *Gruppe 47* and the *Kölner Schule*, two drastically different literary groups dedicated to creating a new "critical realism" after the Second World War, embraced sport in their works, their use of it exposes the competing visions of realism each sought to produce.

Literature after 1945 struggled to develop a literary aesthetic capable of achieving socio-political relevance. A common thread woven through the diverse landscapes of postwar literature was a shared claim to realism, though many of these claims were radically different

in both form and content.²⁴⁴ Both *Gruppe 47* and the *Kölner Schule* attempted to deal with the problem of confronting the Nazi past in the postwar present, however they do so using drastically dissimilar methods of realism. The common ground in this endeavor was the practice of realism that—although much varied in form and content—formed the basis of both of the main approaches. As I will elucidate in this chapter, *Gruppe 47* sought to produce a socially-realized surface realism invested in political democracy. The *Kölner Schule*, on the other hand, questioned the dictates and presuppositions of *Gruppe 47* and favored action against a depth realism of effects. To be sure, the *Kölner Schule* sought to challenge the medium of literature and language and eventually abandoned the pages of literature in favor of cinema and radio-plays in order to establish what they understood as true “critical

²⁴⁴ There has been much debate amongst literary scholars regarding the span realism after World War II in West Germany. Within postwar West German literature, the resurgence of realism arguably arose within the *Nachkriegsrealismus*, exemplified by the *Kahlschlagliteratur* (coined by Wolfgang Weyrauch) and *Trümmerliteratur* (epitomized by Heinrich Böll) of the immediate postwar period before 1950, whereby authors attempted to revive literature in a brutally accurate and unromanticized manner. Works were meant to be reflective of the radical alterations society endured both during and immediately following the Second World War. The rhetoric of this so-called “strict realism” sought to reveal the dire state of society and dealt with themes such as cold, hunger, war camps and destruction. Amongst the groups that grew from the *Kahlschlag*- and *Trümmerliteratur* were the realist writers of the *Gruppe 47* (See Friedhelm Kröll, “Die konzeptbildende Funktion der Gruppe 47,” *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Ludwig Fischer vol. 10 *Literatur in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland bis 1967* [Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986] 368-379). Scholars like Keith Bullivant argue that the realism offered in the 1950s did not represent the true start of realism in postwar West Germany, in that it was “kein politischer Realismus.” He elaborates that the turn to a true critical realism was ushered in during the 1960s by writers of the *Kölner Schule* (Keith Bullivant, “Politischer Realismus heute?” *Kontroversen, alte und neue*, ed. Albrecht Schöne [Tübingen: Internationale Vereinigung für Germanische Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, 1985] 178-185). The 1960s likewise witnessed the emergence of other realist groups like *Gruppe 61*, which consisted of writers whose work focused on the lives of the working-class and authors portraying what they considered realism through *Dokumentarismus* literature. This project, however, deals with only two postwar literary groups that both deployed what they viewed as “critical realism”: namely the realism of *Gruppe 47* and that of the *Kölner Schule des neuen Realismus*. There has likewise been debate as to the span of realism in West German literature, with some scholars placing its demise in the 1970s alongside the putative birth of postmodernism. The question of realism’s death, and for that matter the inception of postmodernism, is not one I wish to address in this work. However, the so-called Realism-Debate of the postwar period is integral in understanding the variegated approaches to critical realism discussed in this chapter. For further information, see Karl Esselborn, “Neuer Realismus,” *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Ludwig Fischer vol. 10 *Literatur in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland bis 1967*, ed. Ludwig Fischer (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986) 460-469 and Ludwig Fischer, “Die Zeit von 1945 bis 1967 als Phase der Gesellschafts- und Literaturentwicklung,” *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Ludwig Fischer vol. 10 *Literatur in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland bis 1967* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986) 29-98 and Keith Bullivant, *After the Death of Literature: West German Literature of the 1970s* (Oxford: Berg, 1989).

realism.” While these literary groups facilitated opposing approaches to achieving what each considered critical realism, each strategically turns to sport as a means through which to reach their literary goals. Indeed, athletics once more took on great significance as a tool through which to facilitate the desired change in literature after 1945 and found itself at the center of this aesthetic debate of the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, sport in literature provides an example of how these competing approaches were realized.

Looking specifically at the realism of one representative from *Gruppe 47* and another form that later developed in the so-called *Kölner Schule des neuen Realismus*, this chapter argues that sport reveals the means through which to view the problematic relationship between postwar society and its totalitarian past. To be sure, both Siegfried Lenz and Ludwig Harig envision athletics as a realist critique of post-fascist West German society posed in literature. I argue that while both Lenz and Harig posit sport in relation to its fascist connection in dramatically different ways in their literary pieces, both authors critique the postwar society’s rejection of this past. Thus, sport reveals not only the problematic relationship with the past present in West Germany, but it also evokes the tensions between competing forms of literary realism that sought to establish themselves on the early postwar literary scene. Conversely, I show that Harig’s literary endeavor falls short of achieving an all-encompassing realism the *Kölner Schule* sought to establish after 1945. Leaving the media-specificity of literature, Harig’s *Hörspiel* “Das Fußballspiel” takes realism beyond the perceived limitations of the written word. The *Hörspiel* establishes realism stereophonically to reveal not only the latent fascism in society but also the violent dangers neglecting Germany’s fascist history can impart on the fledgling postwar society.

In order to examine my claims fully, for each analysis I will first inspect the methods used to achieve the so-called critical realism *Gruppe 47* and the *Kölner Schule* sought to establish. Subsequently, I examine Adorno's theories on the surviving fascist mentality in postwar West Germany and its association with sport—turning to *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) in addition to the associations between sport and fascism in both *Prisms* (1955) and “Education after Auschwitz” (1966). Finally, I analyze the role of sport in Siegfried Lenz's *Brot und Spiele* and Ludwig Harig's short story “Das Fußballspiel” as a means to elucidate not only the tensions between the two groups but also the competing literary attempts to illuminate the ghost of fascism still present in postwar society. Conversely, I reveal that Harig's short story falls short of achieving the *Kölner Schule*'s desired critical realism and leaves the limitations of sport in literature to find a solution in the audible qualities of the *Hörspiel*. Ultimately, these two schools use sport, albeit in dramatically different literary forms, to inspect and question the problematic relationship of West German society in confronting this Nazi past.

II. Crossing the Line: The Critical Realism of *Gruppe 47*

Before analyzing Lenz's *Brot und Spiele*, an important work belonging to *Gruppe 47* fixated on sport, I must first substantiate the realism established by *Gruppe 47* after 1945. Demanding a realism that truly reflected the desperate state of postwar literature, *Gruppe 47* proclaimed literature the means through which to depart from, and furthermore reveal, the fresh wounds left by the Nazi regime. The authors of the group fought against the attempts of German society to forget the past and “promoted a democratic Germany, a renewal of German literature, and an existential change in their fellow citizens. Confronting the past was

an important part of their writing.”²⁴⁵ Hans Werner Richter, one of the founders of the group, explains that literature “war für uns ein Instrument zur Bewältigung der Vergangenheit, zur Überwindung einer trostlosen Gegenwart und zur Gestaltung der Zukunft.”²⁴⁶ To be sure, *Gruppe 47* marks for some scholars, like Klaus Briegleb, the true start of postwar West German literature.²⁴⁷ Though they never produced a published manifesto, the group sought to voice a socio-political critique of West Germany. It acted as “a forum for liberal-Left authors to try out their new work [and] served as a forum for emerging writers, whose work made a direct political impact.”²⁴⁸ The foundations of the group stressed the shortfalls National Socialist literature and the necessity for a new beginning in literature through critical realism.

Hans Werner Richter proclaimed a need for literature that was “realitätsnah, realitätsbezogen”²⁴⁹ to the new generation of writers. He explains: “Aus der Verschiebung des Lebensgefühls, aus der Gewalt der Erlebnisse, die der jungen Generation zuteil wurden und die sie erschütterten, erscheint ihr heute die einzige Ausgangsmöglichkeit einer geistigen Wiedergeburt in dem absoluten und radikalen Beginn von vorn zu liegen.”²⁵⁰ That is to say that postwar society cannot simply ignore the ghosts of the past, for the turbulent history

²⁴⁵ Jennifer E. Michaels, “Confronting the Nazi Past,” *Beyond 1989: Re-reading German Literary History After 1945*, ed. Keith Bullivant (Oxford: Berghahn, 1997) 2.

²⁴⁶ Hans Werner Richter, “Vom Kahlschlag zur neuen Poesie,” *Hans Werner Richter und die Gruppe 47*, ed. Hans A. Neunzig (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1979) 76.

²⁴⁷ Klaus Briegleb, *Mißachtung und Tabu: Eine Streitschrift zur Frage: “Wie antisemitisch war die Gruppe 47?”* (Berlin: Philo, 2003).

²⁴⁸ M. Keith Booker, *Encyclopedia of Literature and Politics: A-G* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2005) 296.

²⁴⁹ Richter, “Vom Kahlschlag zur neuen Poesie” 77.

²⁵⁰ Hans Werner Richter, “Warum schweigt die Junge Generation?,” *Der Ruf. Eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*, ed. Hans Schwab-Felisch (Munich: dtv, 1962) 32.

provides the ideal point from which to start anew. In creating this literature, one common theme common was that of a new generation coming to terms with the problems of the past and its lingering memory in contemporary society. In order to achieve this desired break from the past, members of *Gruppe 47* demanded that the new generations must not ignore history—a trait common to postwar society, as noted by philosopher Theodor W. Adorno²⁵¹—but confront and come to terms with Germany’s history. Above all, the group upheld the belief that: “Mit Literatur sollte die moralische Veränderung des Einzelnen und eine Überprüfung der eigene Rolle während der NS-Zeit erreicht werden, um das Bewußtsein von Selbstverantwortung in der Geschichte neu zu erfinden.”²⁵² The generation of authors that emerged on the German literary scene in the early postwar period embraced realism (most notably in novels and short stories),²⁵³ in order to break away from the molds of the past and elucidate the problematic relationship of society to its history. Using a “Realismus des Unmittelbaren,”²⁵⁴ narratives focused on individual lives affected by the atrocities experienced during World War II as well as the desperate state of the population in the 1940s and 1950s. Common themes meant to pronounce this brutal realism centered

²⁵¹ Amongst others, Theodor W. Adorno criticizes the neglect in postwar West Germany to realize and speak of the Nazi past in his essay “What Does Working Through The Past Mean?”. Of the newly founded West Germany, he states: “The refusal to speak of the genocide and the repression of guilt became the systematic building block of post-war German society. No one wanted to know anything about the past, no one spoke of the suffering of victims and, just shortly after the war, no one in the land of the Nazis was perceived as a perpetrator” (Theodor W. Adorno, “What Does Working Through The Past Mean?” *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, ed. Rolf Tiedemann [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003] 3).

²⁵² Volker Christian Wehdeking, *Der Nullpunkt: Über die Konstituierung der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur (1945-1948)* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1971) 45.

²⁵³ Heinrich Vormweg, “Deutsche Literatur 1945-1960: Keine Stunde Null,” *Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Ausgangspositionen und aktuelle Entwicklungen*, ed. Manfred Durzak (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1981) 27.

²⁵⁴ Wolfgang Weyrauch, “Realismus des Unmittelbaren,” *Aufbau* 2.7 (1946) 702.

predominantly on the failure to truly denazify the population, war injuries, hunger, cold, homelessness and disease.²⁵⁵

The writers of postwar West Germany found the heroic literary themes and propagandistic language of previous era lacked the ability to describe the new conditions of society. Critical of postwar society's denial of the recent past, the authors of *Gruppe 47* focused on what was proclaimed a "critical realism" of the current socio-political sphere through "neuartiger Formen, mit denen Schriftsteller zeitgebundene Themen wie Entnazifizierung und Wiederaufbau, Kollektivschuld und Besatzungspolitik aufgriffen."²⁵⁶ The group of writers sought to instill a new beginning in society, politics and language, all of which they perceived as corrupted by National Socialism. Standing in opposition to the cultural destruction of the Third Reich,²⁵⁷ writers of *Gruppe 47* maintained that society must face the demons of history and realize the plausible "Renazifizierung"²⁵⁸ as a product of neglecting Germany's horrific past.²⁵⁹ By utilizing themes they believed rendered the reality of postwar life through "die Koppelung der Kriegs- und Nachkriegserlebnisse, des Bedürfnisses nach Wahrheit,"²⁶⁰ the authors attempted above all else to critique the Nazi past through the desolate state of postwar society. In an effort to come to terms with the

²⁵⁵ Heinz Ludwig Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47: Ein kritischer Grundriß* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1980) 170.

²⁵⁶ Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47* 172-173.

²⁵⁷ Rudolf Walter Leonhardt, *Zeitnotizen* (Munich: Piper, 1963) 184. See also Rudolf Walter Leonhardt, "Aufstieg und Niedergang der Gruppe 47," *Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Ausgangspositionen und aktuelle Entwicklungen*, ed. Manfred Durzak (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1981) 61-76.

²⁵⁸ Reinhard Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47: Bericht, Kritik, Polemik. Ein Handbuch* (Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand, 1967) 486.

²⁵⁹ Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47* 486.

²⁶⁰ Vormweg, "Deutsche Literatur 1945-1960: Keine Stunde Null" 27.

treacheries of the National Socialistic era, the literary group proffered a “condemnation of fascist ideals”²⁶¹ and warned of the dangers of “präfaschistisches Gebilde” in postwar society.

To be sure, the writers of *Gruppe 47* were openly and outwardly critical of the new West German society. The group believed that West Germany had not entirely seized the opportunity to start anew after the war and left fascist roots viable for further growth. Not willing to accept this historical neglect, *Gruppe 47* became known on the postwar literary scene for their attempts to “explore the Nazi past and the postwar condition of Germany.”²⁶² Though controversial at the time, *Gruppe 47* fostered some of the most canonical writers of the twentieth century, such as Heinrich Böll, Ingeborg Bachmann, Günter Grass, Martin Walser and Siegfried Lenz. In fact, Lenz is commonly noted amongst the most significant young German authors of the postwar period. Scholars have heaped praise on the author, citing him as “neben Günter Grass nicht nur der bedeutendste, sondern auch der meistgelesene deutsche Romanschriftsteller der Nachkriegszeit.”²⁶³ Indeed, there is little doubt of Siegfried Lenz’s prominent association with *Gruppe 47*’s critical realism in postwar West Germany.

Associated primarily with his 1968 novel *Deutschstunde*, Lenz’s body of work focuses predominantly on the problem of coping with and explaining the guilt associated with the Second World War. Though *Deutschstunde* and his short story “Das Feuerschiff”

²⁶¹ Katja Garloff, *Words from Abroad: Trauma and Displacement in Postwar German Jewish Writers* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005) 59.

²⁶² Susanne Veas-Gulani, “Confronting the Past? The Role of Guilt and Shame in Postwar Germany,” *Trauma and Guilt: Literature of Wartime Bombing in Germany*, ed. Susanne Veas-Gulani (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003) 51.

²⁶³ Klaus Günther Just, “Die Romane von Siegfried Lenz,” *Der Schriftsteller Siegfried Lenz: Urteile und Standpunkte*, ed. Colin Russ Hoffmann (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1973) 29.

(1960) are perhaps Lenz's most noted works within secondary scholarship, his literary career began in 1951 with the publication of his first novel *Es waren Habichte in der Luft* and gained notoriety in the decades that followed. Lenz continued to find literary success throughout the twentieth century with novels such as *Das Vorbild* (1973), *Der Verlust* (1981), *Die Klangprobe* (1990) and *Fundbüro* (2003). Though not as prominent in secondary scholarship as *Die Deutschstunde*, his 1959 novel *Brot und Spiele* is widely considered to be one of the foremost sport novels produced in the twentieth century.²⁶⁴ Lenz, an avid follower of sporting events, believed that sport was an essential lens through which to analyze contemporary society. In an interview with the *Münchener Abendzeitung* in 1971, the author explained that sport was in fact *the* method through which society could be understood: "Wer zum Verständnis der modernen Gesellschaft gelangen will, kommt—scheint mir—ohne Berücksichtigung des Sports nicht mehr aus; denn die Arenen der Welt sind zu Spiegeln geworden."²⁶⁵ In other words, for Lenz, realism through sport perfectly mirrors personality tendencies evident in society. To be sure, Lenz centers his novel *Brot und Spiele* around the athlete in order to establish the critical realism necessary to accurately depict the turmoil of postwar society in West Germany.

²⁶⁴ Brian Murdoch and Malcolm Read, *Siegfried Lenz* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1978) 15.

²⁶⁵ Siegfried Lenz qtd in Corinna Cramon, "Lenz für den roten Jochen: Interview mit Siegfried Lenz," *Münchener Abendzeitung* (24. April 1971).

III. “Groß ist dieser Sieg”²⁶⁶: The Career of Fascism in Siegfried Lenz’s *Brot und Spiele*

Brot und Spiele follows the life and career of long distance runner Bert Buchner as he rises from a prisoner of war in Northern Germany to a national athletic hero and, likewise, his fall from the spotlight as a famous sports star. However, rather than transcribe Buchner’s perspective directly, Lenz presents the runner’s life from the viewpoint of an old friend: a newspaper sports reporter who first meets Buchner while detained in the aforementioned prisoner of war camp. Though never named explicitly, the narrator appears throughout Buchner’s life and relays interactions with him as well as the information he hears about him in the news to the reader. By intertwining narration of contemporary events with recalled memories, the reporter provides a glimpse into the struggles and achievements of Buchner’s career. The story culminates with Buchner’s return from injury only to collapse and end his career only meters from the finish line of his final race.

While critiques have by no means ignored Lenz’s novel, the link between *Brot und Spiele* and the ideals of *Gruppe 47* in dealing with the Germany’s fascist past has yet to be addressed in secondary literature. Instead, scholars have focused on a variety of social and political themes present in the novel. Hans Wagener, for instance, contends that the work acts as a critique of the transformation of the main character into an economic commodity by the public.²⁶⁷ The audience’s favor is another aspect of the sport star’s professional life scholars explore in the novel. Klaus Günther Just, Hans Wagener and Allen Guttmann examine the “Faustian” character displayed by Lenz’s athlete and explain that it is precisely

²⁶⁶ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 112.

²⁶⁷ Hans Wagener, *Siegfried Lenz* (Munich: C.H. Beck’sche, 1985) 32.

Buchner's desire for unending fame that causes his downfall.²⁶⁸ Likewise, scholar Kenneth Eltis further extrapolates on this concept by arguing that Buchner falls victim to the commodification of fame and becomes obsessed with victory at any price, which leads to his tragic failure.²⁶⁹ Buchner's obsession with athletic notoriety, however, is only one aspect of Lenz's work discussed in secondary literature. Other critics proffer arguments pertaining to the depiction of the worker-athlete²⁷⁰, the commodification of the athlete²⁷¹, the role of animalistic symbolism²⁷² and even the significance of sound and silence in the stadium.²⁷³

Though these scholars present valid interpretations of Lenz's work, none address the novel's critical realism and its ability to engage in anti-fascist politics through the realm of sport. This chapter brings the theme of sport in *Brot und Spiele* into dialogue with both the ideals of *Gruppe 47* and its desire to criticize and depart from the fascist ideology of the past. I show how the critical realism implemented by Lenz, and furthermore *Gruppe 47*, exposes the fascist character of postwar society through the lens of sport. In order to achieve this goal, I turn to Theodor Adorno's characteristics of fascism posed in *The Authoritarian Personality* to illuminate the main character of the work, the athlete Bert Buchner, as the proto-fascist past

²⁶⁸ See Klaus Just, "Die Romane von Siegfried Lenz" 32-41, Hans Wagener, *Siegfried Lenz* 32-42 and Allen Guttman, "Faustian Athletes? Sports as a Theme in Modern German Literature" 21-33.

²⁶⁹ Kenneth Eltis, "Siegfried Lenz und die Politik," *Der Schriftsteller Siegfried Lenz: Urteile und Standpunkte*, ed. Colin Russ Hoffmann (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1973) 83-84. See also Wagener, *Siegfried Lenz* and Just, "Die Romane von Siegfried Lenz."

²⁷⁰ Wagener, *Siegfried Lenz* 35-36.

²⁷¹ Eltis, "Siegfried Lenz und die Politik" 83-84.

²⁷² Herbert Lehnert, "Die Form des Experiments als Gleichnis. Einiges über Siegfried Lenz," *Frankfurter Hefte* 18 (1963) 474-482.

²⁷³ Karl Ludwig Pfeiffer, *The Protoliterary: Steps Toward An Anthropology of Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002) 316-320.

ignored by West German society.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, I reveal how the narrative form of the text (characteristic of *Gruppe 47*'s critical realism) elucidates the work's intention of denouncing the existence of such characteristics in society. Lenz's work presents the crypto-fascist athlete only to denounce the possibility for such an athlete's existence. Buchner's road to fame is plagued by the precise Nazi authoritarian ideological traits that *Gruppe 47* opposed. By bringing Adorno's account of this personality to bear on Buchner's career, I analyze how Lenz employs sport in the text to identify and critique the latent fascist tendencies of postwar society. Buchner represents these distinctly negative aspects of society and unveils an individual possessing precisely the fascist aspects of the past the newly formed society desperately sought to shed.

In order to gain a more conclusive understanding of the perceived fascist qualities present in postwar society, one must turn to Adorno's theories on the markings of totalitarianism in society after 1945 as presented in his work *The Authoritarian Personality*. Produced during his time in exile in America, Theodor Adorno's sociological work, which was published in 1950 with collaborators Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson and Nevitt Sanford, explores the tendency of any given society to succumb to the draws of a fascist mentality, producing the "potentially fascistic individual—one whose structure renders him particularly susceptible to anti-democratic propaganda."²⁷⁵ Self-admittedly based

²⁷⁴ By bringing in Adorno's fascist personality, I realize this likewise conjures a distinct aesthetic problematic. Though many authors of *Gruppe 47* considered themselves modernists, Adorno would have likely opposed the realism of *Gruppe 47* considering his theories on what constitutes "bad" art. This project, however, does not specifically engage with Adorno's understanding of "good" vs "bad" art, but rather it relies solely on Adorno's argument regarding the qualities of fascism in postwar society. His study allows this project to ground the fascist tendencies exhibited by Buchner in light of the fascist personality posed in the postwar period.

²⁷⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson and Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950) 1.

primarily on Sigmund Freud's theories on social interaction,²⁷⁶ Adorno et al. utilize his theories on personality development to identify fascist potential in society. Indeed, Adorno maintained that the end of fascism by no means perished with the demise of the Third Reich in 1945, but rather fascist authoritarian tendencies lie dormant in members of society and pose a continual threat of fascist resurgence.²⁷⁷ In order to counter such susceptibility, *The Authoritarian Personality* proffered a set of characteristics designed to determine any person's proclivity towards assuming an authoritarian, fascist mentality. Well after the experiment concluded, Adorno explained the rationale behind the project, stating:

Our intention was to determine present opinions and dispositions. We are interested in the fascist *potential* [sic]. In order to be able to work against that potential, we also incorporated into the investigation, as far as was possible, the emerging of the authoritarian personality.²⁷⁸

To be sure, the sociological experiment sought to chart the personality structure of individuals susceptible to fascism as well as create a set of indicators capable of detecting such inclinations.

²⁷⁶ The basis for *The Authoritarian Personality* reflects and expounds upon Freud's psychoanalysis of social learning. Freud viewed aggression as an innate force. The development of one's personality, including a aggressive tendencies, is influenced by the individual's interactions with others in society. One major factor in the individual's personality development, according to Freud, is a child's early family experience. Parents are responsible for instilling a balance between self-conscious actions (ego) and driving impulses (id). This balance will, after much time and struggle, foster a new personality (superego), which is to create equilibrium between societal norms and instinctual urges. According to Freud, the superego is never satisfied, and there is a constant struggle between these two opposing forces. The impulses of aggression and sex in this theory must find a release in some capacity (Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* [Vienna: Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1930] 80). While Adorno et al. based much of their sociological experiment on these theories of a socially influenced personality, their work in the *Authoritarian Personality* delves beyond Freud's initial findings in order to root out the problematic elements present in a fascistic persona (Stephen Crook, "Adorno and Authoritarian Irrationalism," *The Stars Down To Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook [London: Routledge, 1994] 1-45).

²⁷⁷ See Adorno, "What Does Working Through The Past Mean?" 3.

²⁷⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 235.

The Authoritarian Personality outlines nine main characteristics that reveal totalitarian fascist tendencies using what the theorists referred to as the “F-Scale,” or “Fascist-Scale”: aggression, blind submission to authority and a lack of creative and independent thinking, anti-intellectualism, conventionalism, concern with power and toughness, cynicism, projectivity and an aversion to sex. Though all are important indicators for the F-Scale, not all characteristics must be present to create a latent authoritarian personality in society. Indeed, of the nine traits, aggressiveness, blind submission/lack of individual thoughts or ideas, anti-intellectualism and conventionalism proved to be the most compelling for the researchers. Though the methods of conducting the experiment have come under fire, the resulting character traits maintain an elaborate description of the inherent traits associated ideals that could facilitate a fascist resurgence.

Though Bert Buchner escapes the war free from injury, he exhibits to exhibit the fascist traits outlined in *The Authoritarian Personality* throughout the course of the novel. Through the theme of sport, Lenz utilizes the athlete to confront society with its fascist past and continued presence in postwar Germany. It also goes further, however, to proclaim the dangerous possibility of the resurgence of a fascist mentality. Through the actions and decisions of his career, I contend that Buchner exhibits strong F-Scale traits, including aggression, blind submission, aversion to sex and anti-intellectualism—all of which Adorno et al. considered the strongest indicators of an inherently fascist personality. By establishing the fascist qualities posed through Buchner, Lenz uses sport as a barometer of the lingering fascist personality in society. Furthermore, through the narrative structure, Lenz elucidates the problematic relationship between society and its fascist legacy.

Perhaps the most prominent feature associated with the fascist population highlighted by Adorno is the blind and total submission to an authoritative power. That is say that a person conducive to a fascist mindset is one that follows the orders and beliefs dictated to him without hesitation. In the case of Bert Buchner, this character trait proves to be a repeated quality displayed by the runner throughout the course of his career. Most notably, Buchner's immediate and willing submission to the athletic regiment set forth to him by the running club signals his blind submission to a larger group. After Buchner joins the running club, he is faced with a harsh and stringent training regiment demanded by his coach, Giese. His submission to and admiration for the new program set forth by Giese is revealed after the first months on the team in a conversation with the narrator. Buchner describes not only the strict running drills intended to strengthen and improve the athletes but also the mindset Giese imparts on the runners: "Wenn sie von unserem Verein in ganz Europa sprechen; sie werden sagen, es ist der Verein der großen Läufer. [...] [Eure] größte Disziplin im Leben wird immer der Lauf bleiben. Alles andere soll euch nicht interessieren."²⁷⁹ In other words, the coach promises glory through disciplined training. The only priority, according to Giese, should be victory achieved through discipline. He demands complete and total dedication from the runners towards attaining their goal as a European running power. Indeed, Giese promotes a team that willingly and without hesitation submits to his disciplined system and neglects all other aspects of life.

While many runners would not subject themselves to such a dictated lifestyle, Buchner readily conforms to the stipulated rules. In fact, when the narrator joins him on a cool-down walk, which was regularly demanded by Giese to relax muscles after training,

²⁷⁹ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 54.

Buchner excitedly discusses his admiration for the program. Though the narrator refers to the training as “brutale Trainingmethoden,”²⁸⁰ the runner counters this sentiment by excitedly explaining Giese’s successful program:

Welch ein Training! Es war nicht zufällig entstanden. [...] Gieses Trainingsprogramm war mühevoll komponiert: Der organische Befund spielte in dieser Komposition eine Rolle, eine von ihm entwickelte Typenlehre, und sogar die Psychologie war nicht vernachlässigt. Alles, was den Läufer als Menschen und den Menschen als Läufer betreffen könnte, war in Gieses Komposition berücksichtigt.²⁸¹

As Buchner describes it, Giese’s training methods not only mold the body for racing but also utilize a psychological component as well. According to Buchner, any and every aspect of the runner’s life was considered in the conception of Giese’s regiment. In other words, Giese dictates to each runner every detail regarding both physical and mental life, leaving no room for individual and creative thought. Following this logic, the secret of the success in the athletic club lies in unquestioning submission to the mindset dictated by authority. That Buchner not only adheres to such a lifestyle but also praises it signifies his susceptibility to such powerful authoritarian leaders.

Buchner’s self-proclaimed admiration combined with his capitulation to the system set before him undeniably fulfills the blind submission trait integral to the fascist mentality as laid out by Adorno. Buchner does not protest against the training methods dictated to him by Giese, and he praises them when the narrator professes doubt. This form of blind obedience to powerful athletic leadership is reminiscent of the regiment enforced by the Nazi regime within the *Hitlerjugend*. Strict athletic training, most particularly in the form of long distance running and sprints, was a common technique intended to strengthen Nazi youth both

²⁸⁰ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 70.

²⁸¹ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 71.

mentally and physically.²⁸² That Buchner excels in such a system, and furthermore holds it in such high esteem, highlights one integral aspect of what Adorno credits as an inherent fascist tendency.

Buchner's submission to the lifestyle of the running club marks only one aspect of this blind obedience. Indeed, another example is highlighted in his participation in the sports film *Marathon an der Lübecker Bucht*. The director approaches Buchner to star in the project not because of his acting ability but rather because they wish to have an actual athlete play the leading role. The movie is set outside of Lübeck, as the title suggests, and the opening sequence features Buchner as a Greek marathon runner jogging down the beach. The narrator relays to the reader how Buchner repeatedly runs down the beach in his Greek costume for the director to obtain the precise shot he desires.

The description of Buchner's role in the film is strongly reminiscent of Leni Riefenstahl's documentary film *Olympia*. As discussed in the previous chapter, the opening sequence of Riefenstahl's work depicts a runner leaving Greece with the Olympic torch and transferring it to his German counterpart. Following the German runner through various countries, *Olympia* reveals the goal of the runner's journey to be Nazi Germany. To be sure, Riefenstahl's film is pregnant with connections between the German athlete and the ancient Greeks.²⁸³ As Buchner's movie was not filmed in Greece, the costume is used to provide authenticity. Thus, rather than the non-existent shorts worn by Riefenstahl's runner, which consisted of little more than a cloth covering the runner's waist, Buchner is given ancient Greek armor borrowed from a museum: "Aus einem Museum hatten sie eine griechische

²⁸² See Alan Dearn and Elizabeth Sharp, *The Hitler Youth: 1933-45* (Oxford: Osprey, 2006).

²⁸³ See Chapter Two for a more detailed analysis of the connections between Germany and Greek Antiquity as it relates to the Aryan athletic aesthetic in the Third Reich.

Rüstung ausgeliehen, Beinschienen, Brustpanzer, helmbuschbewehrte Kopfbedeckung, und einer rollte das Zeug Bert zu.”²⁸⁴ As he walks with the narrator across the sand to the shoot, his role harkens back to the honored Aryan inheritance of the Hellenic past posited by National Socialist philosophers like Alfred Rosenberg.²⁸⁵

Buchner, then, chooses to resurrect the association between Ancient Greece and Germany through sport, a connection heavily implemented in the previous era of National Socialism. With a few adaptations—setting and costume—the run is strikingly similar to that posed in the prologue of Riefenstahl’s film *Fest der Völker*. That Buchner’s film harkens back to Riefenstahl’s work cannot be overlooked. This similarity creates a strong link to the ideals of fascism considering *Olympia*’s popularity upon release in 1938 as well as the totalitarian characteristics existent in the piece. Furthermore, that Buchner chooses to participate in a cinematic endeavor, an aspect of propaganda of utmost importance to the Hitler regime, likewise highlights an unrealized repetition of Nazi values. Moreover, the adaptation of the film combines this putative Greek legacy with a poignant link between sport and militarization. Rather than simply glorifying the past, his role as a runner crafts an additional militaristic image considering the full armor Buchner is assigned to wear. Thus, Buchner personifies the militaristic past synonymous with Germany’s role in the Second World War. As the marathon runner, he combines two strong associations between athletics and its role in the Third Reich.

Indeed, that Buchner portrays the same role featured in Riefenstahl’s film further reflects his obedience to an authoritarian mentality. Adorno et al. proffered an understanding

²⁸⁴ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 112.

²⁸⁵ Stephen Gaylord Miller, *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) ix.

of blind submission as also maintaining and enforcing the attitude and productions of the reigning order. The sociological parameters of one's submissive tendency and fascist potential as outlined in *The Authoritarian Personality* also include obedience to "a historical backing and indisputable elements of tradition [...] showing itself largely in the maintenance of traditional ideas."²⁸⁶ One aspect of blind submission cited in Adorno's text is the reinforcement of "isolated elements of [the authority's] content, like patriotism or traditional art, which are to be preserved."²⁸⁷ To be sure, Buchner's portrayal of the marathon runner mirrors the traditions of the Third Reich propagated by Riefenstahl's art, in that both films relay the honored German connection to Greek Antiquity. Rather than question the subject matter of the film, Buchner enthusiastically supports it and highlights his success in working with the project. In fact, when asked by the narrator how he felt about the film, Buchner simply smiles and responds "Groß ist dieser Sieg."²⁸⁸ Buchner's satisfaction and unwavering desire to revive the themes of a film incredibly popular during the period of National Socialism only further enforces the dangerous fascist tendencies lurking in his personality.

Though the film does not adhere to Riefenstahl's *Olympia* in exact detail, the slight adaptations made in production further emphasize the tradition of noble blood stemming from the Third Reich. While he completes his journey in Lübeck instead of Berlin, Buchner's role as a marathon runner brings him to the same concluding nation as Riefenstahl's athlete. Furthermore, as mentioned above, Buchner is given a suit of Greek armor to wear during his scenes rather than the trunks worn in Riefenstahl's film. As he is putting the multiple pieces of armor on, Buchner rationalizes the need for such an extravagant costume by stating that

²⁸⁶ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 57.

²⁸⁷ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 298.

²⁸⁸ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 112.

the film follows the precise historical stipulations of the original marathon runner. “Ich muß in Rüstung laufen, denn auch der Mann von Marathon war in voller Rüstung gelaufen, als er die Botschaft des Sieges nach Athen brachte.”²⁸⁹ That his role maintains historical accuracy reflects Buchner’s loyalty to upholding what he views as tradition. Considering the perceived ties to Greek Antiquity prevalent in the Third Reich, the addition of authentic Greek characteristics to the film enforces Buchner’s expression of a fascist personality. Through his role as the marathon runner, Buchner’s fascist tendencies are revealed through his blind obedience to not only the authoritarian presence but also to the unquestioning willingness to uphold the traditional artistic ideals postulated in the past.

The inclination towards blind obedience, however, is not the only fascist tendency marked in Adorno et al.’s theory. A further trait emphasized in their analysis on authoritarian personalities is a distinct hostility towards sex. According to *The Authoritarian Personality*, this sexual resentment can surface in varying magnitudes and is generally related to an additional personality indicator, such as aggression or blind obedience. For example, a common conception of a strong fascist persuasion could be expressed by the sentiment that: “Homosexuality is a particularly rotten form of delinquency and ought to be severely punished.”²⁹⁰ Likewise, this sexual aversion could take the form of an elevated concern of the after-effects of sexual relationships, as displayed through an “exaggerated concern with [and reaction to] with the distractions of sexual ‘goings-on.’”²⁹¹ That is to say that sexual acts could detract from the obedience desired from an authoritarian regime and is

²⁸⁹ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 112.

²⁹⁰ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 54.

²⁹¹ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 48.

thus frowned upon outside of the traditional familial norms. Gauging one's reaction to sexual interactions or orientation is a key contributor to measuring the susceptibility to a fascist mindset according to Adorno et al.'s work.

Though Buchner spends nearly all of his time dedicated to athletics in some form, whether on the track or portraying a runner on film, he briefly dates a girl named Thea, who happens to be the Giese's daughter. However, the relationship does not last long, as Buchner ends it to concentrate on his running career without distraction. Buchner recounted the final interaction with Thea to the narrator, explaining that when asked why he no longer wished to be with her, he responded with the sentiment Thea's father instilled in him: "Meine größte Disziplin im Leben wird immer der Lauf bleiben."²⁹² Not willing to end the relationship, Thea asks: "Woran liegt das? Liegt das an mir?"²⁹³ while unbuttoning her shirt. This action suggests that Thea is willing to save her relationship by seducing Buchner rather than simply letting him go. At that point, Buchner explains, he became enraged and screamed so loudly Thea shrank in fear: "Woran kann es liegen!/? Auf einmal stellt man fest, daß etwas nicht da ist. [...] Auf einmal ist es einfach vorbei!"²⁹⁴ To be sure, Buchner's reaction to Thea's sexual advances and his rationale for ending the relationship are telling personality traits.

Buchner's interactions with Thea illuminate his hostile attitude towards sex and its corruptive influence. Firstly, that Buchner refuses to compromise his allegiance to his running club, stating that his only discipline and commitment lie in running, highlights Buchner's blind obedience to the dictating power. Considering Giese's strict and regimented

²⁹² Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 91.

²⁹³ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 91.

²⁹⁴ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 91.

schedule that hinges on discipline and commitment, Buchner cannot allow his dedication to be distracted by sex. In short, Buchner believes that a sexual relationship will be detrimental to his athletic career and eliminates it. Additionally, his hostile reaction to Thea's desperate sexual advances reveals the aggressive nature Adorno likewise associates with sexual hostility as a fascist characteristic. The sight of her unbuttoned blouse instigates an immediate and extreme bout of anger, as demonstrated by his sudden and fear inducing screams. To be sure, Buchner's resistance towards a sexual relationship for the sake of a greater victory demonstrates the "overconcern with the effects of supposed sexual 'goings-on' in society"²⁹⁵ described by Adorno.

In addition to blind obedience and sexual aversion, Buchner's discussions on the merit of education reveal the anti-intellectualism rampant in his fascist personality. When the narrator meets him for the first time after his escape from the POW camp—that is before he begins his official training—Bucher has taken a job at a vinegar factory and entertains the idea of studying to earn a professional veterinary degree. Though the thought is fleeting, it is apparent that Buchner has not yet resolved himself to the uselessness of intellectualism. After he joins Giese's training regime, however, the successful athlete declares that he has no need for the intellect facilitated by a university. Indeed, when the narrator contends that running is not a job, Buchner responds by stating: "Hör doch auf, Alter! Zum Studium braucht man Lust, und gerade daran bin ich im Augenblick ziemlich knapp. Dort ist nichts für mich. Ich lerne hier [im Stadion]. Gib dir keine Mühe, Alter; ich weiß schon, was ich zu tun habe."²⁹⁶ Thus, since joining the club and following the orders of Giese, Buchner ascertains that he no

²⁹⁵ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 91.

²⁹⁶ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 74.

longer needs the intellectualism associated with university. Instead, he confidently informs the narrator that he is educated by the real world experiences he attains in the stadium.

The aversion to individual, critical thought and intellectualism was a key contribution to the construction of fascist proclivity. As argued in *The Authoritarian Personality*, those innately susceptible to totalitarian thought believe: “There is too much emphasis on colleges and intellectual and theoretical topics, not enough emphasis on practical matters and on the homely virtues of living.”²⁹⁷ That is to say, these individuals believe they can learn more from experiences outside of the classroom than by expanding their own creative and intellectual capabilities. This point is further extrapolated in Adorno et al.’s notion of fascist thinking:

The extremely anti-intellectual individual is afraid of thinking about human, intellectual phenomena because he might, as it were, think the wrong thoughts. He is therefore against concern with what people think and create, against unnecessary ‘talk’; instead he would keep busy, devote himself to practical pursuits instead of creating and examining an inner conflict. An important feature of the Nazi program, it will be recalled, was the defamation of everything that tended to make the individual aware of himself.²⁹⁸

The authoritarian character, as posited by Adorno, is one that holds real-life pursuits above intellectual or creative ones. This point, as Adorno notes, was of particular importance to the survival of the Nazi regime, in that individual thought was highly discouraged. Indeed, Hitler discouraged any education that would work against the overarching goals of establishing his power in the Third Reich. Indeed, Hitler considered intellectual education “the most corrosive and disintegrating poison that liberalism has ever invented. [...] It is the

²⁹⁷ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 56.

²⁹⁸ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 57.

disease of life.”²⁹⁹ This resistance to intellectual advancement was a concept highly valued by Adorno et al. in their identification of the authoritarian personality after World War II.

That Buchner adopts a new opinion regarding intellectualism and university education after officially becoming a runner suggests that he adopts this new mentality while fostering his athletic skills. That he now disregards a veterinary career, one based on scientific learning, likewise highlights Buchner’s fascist proclivity. Indeed, according to Adorno, the anti-intellectual fascist-minded person contends that: “Science has carried man very far, but there are many more important things”³⁰⁰ that cannot be understood through a rigid scientific lens. Rather than pursue a degree, Buchner disregards such learning, proclaiming to the narrator that he has discovered all necessary education through his job. Demonstrating this anti-intellectualism, Buchner chooses to harness the information gained from experiences and actions in the athletic arena, which he views as both his workplace and school. Though the narrator expresses doubt, Buchner assures him that everything he needs to know can be found in his life rather than in education. Indeed, his antagonism towards intellectualism surfaces as a key indicator of the fascist potential in Buchner. When engaged in athletic competitions and training, Buchner explicitly follows dictated orders and has no need for independent thought. To be sure, Buchner sees no gain in becoming a veterinarian with his success and advancement in the athletic endeavors.

Of the nine categories Adorno et al. credit as characteristic of a fascist susceptibility, Buchner’s aggressive and violent actions towards Dohrn, another runner at his club, at the end of the novel are the most persuasive for understanding his inherent fascist tendencies.

²⁹⁹ Adolf Hitler, *Hitler Speaks: A Series of Political Conversations with Adolf Hitler On His Real Aims*, ed. Hermann Rauschning (London: T. Butterworth, 1939) 102.

³⁰⁰ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 77.

While racing shortly before the renowned international tournament, Buchner sustains a muscle injury while running. Unable to participate in the next tournament, his teammate Dohrn must take his place representing the team. While not as strong of a runner as Buchner—in fact the general contention at the club is that Dohrn is a rather mediocre athlete—he is celebrated after his victory in the long distance event. In order to re-attain his former status, Buchner trains with Dohrn to strengthen his injured leg for the event he sees as his comeback. As the race nears, it becomes apparent he will not defeat Dohrn in his present state and must resort to drastic measures. Rather than admit defeat, he violently injures his teammate in order to attain the first place position on his team's roster for the tournament.

The narrator describes Buchner's aggressive attack on Dohrn:

Dann das Finish: [ich] sah, wie [Dohrn] vor Bert zurückscherte an die Innenkante der Bahn, sich umdrehte und in derselben Sekunde, als ob ihn ein furchtbarer Schlag getroffen hatte, flach aus der Bahn flog mit blitzschnell vorgestreckten Händen, die den Sturz abfangen sollten. Doch bevor er aus der Bahn flog, sah ich auch, wie Berts Nagelschuh sich auf die linke Ferse von Dohrn setzte, nein, nicht setzte, sondern aus einem verlängerten Schritt berechnet auf sie herabstieß und die Ferse hart und nachdrücklich traf- so, als wollte er sie an den Boden nageln-, was zur Folge hatte, daß Dohrns linkes Bein in langer, verzweifelter Streckung war, während sich sein Körper bereits zum flachen Sturz neigte.³⁰¹

This violent attack on Dohrn during their training illuminates the fascist tendency encapsulated in Buchner's personality. To be sure, Buchner implements such tactics to eliminate the danger he perceives embodied by Dohrn in order to maintain his athletic power on the team.

The aggressive nature against perceived enemies was, for Adorno et al., the most threatening characteristic of the authoritarian personality. Adorno and his collaborators partially credit this to the correlation between aggression and obedience but also to physical

³⁰¹ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 151.

violence inflicted as a result of activated aggressive urges. Indeed, the glorification and widespread violence in the Third Reich is a popular topic for scholarly examinations.³⁰² For example, Roger Dale Petersen elaborates on this aggression, stating: “The perceived dramatic danger in the authoritarian personality’s aggressiveness comes from seeing out-groups and enemies as threatening and hostile. Adorno et al. believed that a new type of ‘anthropological species’ [had formed], an individual with a generalized destructive urge that could be targeted against almost any group [...] through the key element of rage.”³⁰³ To be sure, Adorno credits the authoritarian personality as “an antidemocratic individual who harbors strong underlying aggressive impulses that are aroused by a distinct threat to his existence.”³⁰⁴ This violent aggression, however, remains for the most part hidden in such individuals until “a hostile threat provokes an aggressive nature to preserve the structure of his authoritarian power.”³⁰⁵ That is to say that a distinct threat or perceived enemy releases the aggressive desire for violence in a fascist-prone individual.

Buchner’s actions on the track most certainly coincide with those described by Adorno et al. For Buchner, Dohrn’s victory would compromise what he views as his comeback. Should Dohrn win the race, Buchner’s career would cease to exist. As such, Buchner cannot tolerate a threat to his own success and makes Dohrn the target of his

³⁰² See Martin Kitchen, *The Third Reich: Charisma and Community* (Harlow: Pearson, 2008), Richard Etlin, *Art, Culture and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), Uwe-Karsten Ketelsen, *Literatur und Drittes Reich* (Cologne: SH- Verlag, 1992), Tim Kirk and Anthony McElligott, *Opposing Fascism: Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Martyn Housden, *Hitler: Study of a Revolutionary?* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

³⁰³ Roger Dale Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 77.

³⁰⁴ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 62.

³⁰⁵ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 62.

hostility and rage. Indeed, Buchner's actions are rationalized by his own desire to survive. This likewise parallels Adorno's explanation that the "accepted rationalization for aggressiveness [for an authoritarian personality] is the idea of 'survival of the fittest.'" ³⁰⁶ If Buchner simply lets Dohrn defeat him, he would display weakness and a threat to his own survival. Thus, Buchner unleashes his fury on Dohrn and releases an aggressive reaction aroused by frustration and fear.

The actual act of violence as described by the narrator demonstrates the severity Buchner's aggression. That Buchner does not only simply injures Dohrn but quite literally nails his foot, the precise instrument Dohrn needs to compete, to the ground shows that Buchner aims to remove him entirely from the sporting world. Indeed, it is revealed later that Dohrn cannot finish the race and must also resign from the sport altogether. Thus, Buchner eliminates him from the competition and exterminates him from the sport world. The brutality with which Dohrn's collapse is described likewise highlights the extreme violence expounded by Buchner in order to eliminate his putative threat.

[Dohrn flog aus der Bahn] als ob ihn ein furchtbarer Schlag getroffen hatte. [...] Die spitzen Dornen drangen in die Ferse ein. Sie durchstießen die Sehnen, bohrten sich in den Ballen mit der Gewalt, die in Berts verlängertem Schritt lag, und Dohrn flog aus der Bahn und fiel mit der Gesicht auf dem Rasen.³⁰⁷

Dohrn's tendons are pierced, and the spikes of Buchner's track shoe penetrate his heel and drill into the ball of his foot. Buchner's callous and hostile nature is exposed in that he continues the race without hesitation or backward glance while his teammate lies facedown in agony. The narrator relays that: "Er gewann den Lauf; er unterbrach ihn nicht, er lief weiter und zerriß als erster das Band, und nur dann guckte er auf Dohrn zurück, den er für

³⁰⁶ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* 77.

³⁰⁷ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 151.

immer besiegt hat.”³⁰⁸ In short, Buchner’s violent tendencies expose his innate aggression towards his enemy. The brutal attack on Dohrn allows for Buchner’s victory. Indeed, rather than simply removing him from the race, Buchner’s released hostility conquers his opponent through a devastating and career-ending blow. Finally, Buchner shows no regret for his innate violent aggression and displays only a smug smirk when he locks eyes with the narrator following the race.

That Buchner imparts such violence while engaging in athletics suggests that it is indeed sport that opens the pathway for fascist tendencies to be released into society. Buchner does not stop to inflict injury, but rather he seamlessly incorporates the movement into his stride without attracting the attention of the crowd. However, the narrator deciphers the aggressive motion of Buchner’s gait and the devastating blow he inflicts. The spectators, however, naively celebrate Buchner’s victory. “Mag sein, daß wirklich niemand bemerkt hatte, wie Bert seinen Schritt verlängerte, um die Ferse des Gegners zu treffen; sie [nannten es] einen ‘bedauerlichen Unglücksfall.’”³⁰⁹ While he apparently creates the injury in one swift undetected motion, he uses the arena of sport to facilitate his aggressive reaction. This suggests that the public present at the race simply ignores this fascist personality, symbolizing the overall neglect in realizing the Nazi past in postwar society. Thus, it is first in the athletic arena that Buchner physically displays the fascist mentality prescribed to the aggression manifested through violence.

It is only the narrator that notices the brutality inflicted by Buchner at the end of the training race. Throughout the story, the reporter acts as the reader’s lens into the fascist

³⁰⁸ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 151.

³⁰⁹ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 151.

tendencies at work in Buchner's athletic career. In this manner, the narrative form of the novel diverges from that of the traditional novel in the role of the reporter. While he indeed recounts the story for the reader, the entire work is presented as one paragraph with ellipses linking past memories with the reality of the present. The framework of Lenz's text, then, reflects the recent past as a part of the present in postwar society. Indeed, the two—past and present—blend together seamlessly through the voice of the reporter. Moreover, the narrator constantly reminds the reader that Buchner's success cannot and must not continue.

Throughout the course of the work, the reporter warns of his friend's impending failure by stating: "Diesmal wird er nicht gewinnen;"³¹⁰ "Er wird, er *muß* [sic] verlieren;"³¹¹ "Nein, Bert darf nicht siegen, denn er wäre ein schlechter Sieger"³¹² and "Doch Buchner wird verlieren. Buchner hat bereits verloren."³¹³ With this, the narrator tells the reader how the story must end. Buchner, and the fascist ghost he represents, cannot succeed and thrive in postwar society. To be sure, the narrator's role as judge and storyteller is an intimate detail of Lenz's work that is not to be overlooked. It is through the reporter that the reader gains access to the characteristic traits that dominate Buchner's career and the immanent failure he is doomed to achieve.

There is, however, hope posed at the end of *Brot und Spiele*. Just as the narrator relays the existence and success of the fascist qualities in Buchner's athletic career, he likewise acts as the window through which the reader witnesses his demise. Rather than

³¹⁰ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 7.

³¹¹ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 110.

³¹² Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 150.

³¹³ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 167.

allow the misdeeds of Buchner's authoritarian personality to continue collecting victories in the society, the champion runner does not emerge victorious in the world championships. In fact, he does not even finish the race, as his body collapses without warning a mere seventy meters from the finish line. Though he leads the majority of the race, Buchner's journey is halted, and he topples to the side of the track as his competitors pass him by without notice towards the finish line:

[Buchners] Hände greifen in die Luft, er stolpert, nur noch siebzig Meter bis zum Ziel. Er stürzt, wird nach vorn gerissen, fällt aus der Drehung auf die Schulter, schlägt mit dem Gesicht auf und bleibt liegen. Er hebt nun wieder das Gesicht, Hellström und Seaborne vorbei- lächelt irr zum Ziel, wo Seaborne [...] das Band wegrißt und ausläuft. [...] [er] versucht [...] wie ein schwerer Käfer zu kriechen [...] knickt ein und fällt nach vorn.³¹⁴

In other words, Buchner's body does not allow him to finish. He has no visible injuries and there is no indication of physical distress, yet he collapses and is overtaken by other runners who complete the race and seal his defeat.

Indeed, though he tries to finish the race and even attempts to crawl to the finish line, Buchner cannot physically muster the strength to move. As he desperately tries to revive his athletic abilities, both Seaborne and Hellström, racers without authoritarian personalities, easily pass the helpless athlete. To be sure, Buchner's physical demise at the end of the novel reveals the inability of the authoritarian personality to compete in society. The narrator's comments suggest that though Germany's fascist past is ignored by society, this neglect cannot be accepted. As the narrator constantly reminds to the reader: "[Buchner] wird, er *muß* [sic] verlieren."³¹⁵ Lenz utilizes sport in the text as an instance where society can confront this past. What is more, Buchner's failure suggests that the resurgence of the past

³¹⁴ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 173.

³¹⁵ Lenz, *Brot und Spiele* 110.

must be avoided. In the vein of the ideology of *Gruppe 47*, Lenz confronts the ghosts of fascism, which, though ignored, are still present in postwar society. Not only does the novel reveal the existence of such traits, the narrator openly speaks against the survival of the authoritarian personality. Rather than ignoring such characteristics, Lenz boldly points out the fascism at work in Buchner's career and uses the narrator to denounce the survival of an authoritarian personality.

Adorno et al. sought to study and establish a reliable method through which to gauge the individual's psychological susceptibility to fascism in a democratic society. In other words, they sought to determine the fascist characteristics that posed a threat of resurging after the fall of National Socialism. Indeed, Adorno believed that the authoritarian personality did not perish in 1945 but lay dormant in the individuals of postwar society. Drawing on the past in their study, *The Authoritarian Personality* collected key traits they believed revealed surviving fascist tendencies. Much in the same vein, Lenz and the members of *Gruppe 47* contended that the resurgence of a fascist dictatorship was a distinct possibility in the years following *Stunde Null*. By realizing these traits reminiscent of the horrific past, a resurrection of such norms could be avoided. To be sure, the group critiqued the remaining totalitarian qualities in society they feared could reinvigorate a fascist dictatorship.

In his novel *Brot und Spiele*, Lenz reveals Germany's past in the fascist characteristics of Buchner's athletic career. Indeed, during his development as a champion runner, Buchner strongly exhibits the qualities highlighted in *The Authoritarian Personality*. That Buchner achieves such fame and success in his career—multiple tournament wins, a starring film role, sponsored trips abroad to race for Germany, a chance to compete in the

world championships—suggests that such personalities not only exist but also flourish in society. These traits, however, are not acknowledged as a negative force by society. This is most prominently displayed in the crowd’s refusal to accept Buchner’s violence towards Dohrn as an intentional act. Rather than see the destruction inflicted by Buchner and the fascist traits he embodies, society chooses instead to ignore such hostilities. As such, the author decidedly confronts the neglected recognition of Germany’s past. Indeed, “die Arenen der Welt sind zu Spiegeln [der modernen Gesellschaft] geworden”³¹⁶ in Lenz’s text, in that sport acts as the critical realism that realizes the true state of society. Though society in postwar West Germany wished to completely distance itself from any association with its Nazi past, Lenz reveals through athletics that these fascist ideals remain and must be dealt with. With this, Lenz’s inclusion of history into the literary work openly engages with the abandoned associations of the fascist era. In this way, the subject is brought to the forefront as an attempt to make West German society face the fall out from the Third Reich.

Critical of those who neglected Germany’s Nazi past, Lenz utilizes sport in literature to critique society and the dangers in acclimating to life after fascism. The mentality of *Gruppe 47*, however, was by no means the only literary persuasion to adopt sport as a window in understanding the reality that was postwar West Germany. Indeed, Ludwig Harig’s “Das Fußballspiel” likewise turns to sport in literature to witness the imagined infiltration of Nazi behaviors in postwar society. However, unlike Lenz’s novel, Harig, a proponent of the *Kölner Schule*, turns towards a radically new form of realism in his use of sport. While Lenz’s story relies heavily on the function of the narrator to relay the text’s overarching social critique, Harig’s text makes use of another form of so-called critical

³¹⁶ Cramon, “Lenz für den roten Jochen” (24 April 1971).

realism—unmediated realism—characteristic of the *Kölner Schule*. This was a radical departure in both form and content from Lenz and *Gruppe 47*'s surface realism and was one that shaped Harig's "Das Fußballspiel" both as a short story and radio play. Perhaps the starkest differentiation in these two forms of realism is clear in the role of the reader and his responsibility as an individual. While the reporter is the lens through which the reader is made aware of the latent fascist tendencies, the responsibility lies with the readers of Harig's narrative technique to become aware of the dangerous fascist past.

IV. *Das Spiel mit dem Fußball: The Kölner Schule's New Realism*

Though his literary interaction with sport first appeared in his short story "Das Fußballspiel" (1960), Ludwig Harig, an integral author of the *Kölner Schule*, continued to utilize the theme of soccer in the critical realism of his literary endeavors. Indeed, Harig composed and published a wide array of texts centered on sport, including essays, short stories, radio plays and poetry. While "Das Fußballspiel" emerged as his first work centered upon sport, his 1974 collection *Netzer kam aus der Tiefe des Raumes*, written in collaboration with Dieter Kühn, and *Die Wahrheit ist auf dem Platz: Fußballsonnette* (2006)³¹⁷ are considered his most notable contributions to athletically focused publications. There is no doubt that Harig fostered a love for all things associated with soccer and recognized the merit in implementing it as an overall theme in literary works. However, his short story "Das Fußballspiel" and furthermore the transformed *Hörspiel* version of the piece are both vital examples of the critical realism the author executes through sport.

³¹⁷ Both of the above listed works contain poetry focused on soccer and were written in honor of Germany, or West Germany as is the case in 1974, acting as host for the World Cup tournament.

While he has since produced collections of poetry focused on sport, his initial work centered on soccer was published in *Ein Tag in der Stadt* (1962), an iconic collection of texts promoting the style of *Neuer Realismus* embraced by the *Kölner Schule*, an avant-garde literary movement founded by Dieter Wellershoff in 1962. Included amongst iconic writers of the postwar period like Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and Dieter Wellershoff, Harig's text represents the first appearance of *Neuer Realismus* in Germany. Indeed, the roots of Harig's literary career grew from the school's attempt to found a new critical realism grounded in everyday experiences rather than "modernism's penchant for metaphysical transcendence and the universalization of a singular human ontology."³¹⁸ Dieter Wellershoff's notion of a new form of realism is self-admittedly indebted to the French *nouveau roman* pioneered by novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet in the late 1950s. Rather than follow the traditional form of the novel, Robbe-Grillet proffered that literature should foster a realism based on individual experiences of the everyday rather than the traditional plot, narrative and character constellation.³¹⁹

Though this desire for a new realism in literature was realized and acted upon in France as early as 1956, Wellershoff first introduced the concept into his literature in 1960 (in his text "Während")³²⁰ and first addressed the specific intentions of the genre in 1965 in his article "Neuer Realismus." In the text, Wellershoff declares new realism as standing in direct opposition to fantastic, grotesque and satirical postwar modernism, as epitomized in

³¹⁸ Richard Langston, *Visions of Violence: German Avant-Gardes After Fascism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008) 105.

³¹⁹ Ann Jefferson, *The "Nouveau Roman" and the Poetics of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 6.

³²⁰ The first reading of this text occurred at the annual meeting of *Gruppe 47* in 1960. Indeed, Wellershoff initially belonged to *Gruppe 47* before forming the *Kölner Schule* in 1962 (Lettau, *Die Gruppe 47* 215).

the works by Günter Grass.³²¹ Indeed, opponents of the *Kölner Schule* rejected the so-called critical realism of *Gruppe 47*, referring to their modernist style as seeped in “Beschreibungsimpotenz.”³²² While the school agreed that the postwar generation desperately needed a new form of realism, they saw *Gruppe 47* lacking the “signifikante literarische Techniken, um die Mängel, die für das Entstehen des Dilemmas [in der Gesellschaft] verantwortlich waren, zu verdeutlichen und beheben.”³²³ The perceived new reality in the years following World War II could no longer be expressed with the traditional mode of modernism the *Kölner Schule* viewed the works of *Gruppe 47* and desperately needed a new outlet. In order to achieve this, the members of the school stray from the omnipotent narrator as present in *Brot und Spiele* and turn to radical new forms of narration and structural framework, in addition to anti-grammatical and anti-syntactic language, which centered on the chaotic events of the everyday.³²⁴

Christa Merkes rightly notes: “Der ‘neue’ Mensch in dieser Literatur sucht seine Identität, die ihm nicht mehr vom allwissenden Autor zustanden wird und in dem Maß, in dem seine feste Welt als Bezugspunkt zerfällt und sein Innenleben die äußere Realität bestimmt, bestimmt sein Bewußtseinsstrom auch die Romanform.”³²⁵ That is to say that this new trend turned to the inner workings of the individual rather than the narrative form of the

³²¹ Dieter Wellershoff, “Neuer Realismus,” *Werke* vol 4, eds. Keith Bullivant and Manfred Durzak (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1997) 843-844.

³²² Peter Handke, “Zur Tagung der Gruppe 47 in USA,” *Ich bin ein Bewohner des Elfenbeinturms* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999) 30. Peter Handke, like Wellershoff, was a member of *Gruppe 47* until the early 1960s, when he argued their particular form of realism lacked the ability to accurately describe the contemporary reality of West Germany.

³²³ Arnold, *Die Gruppe 47* 118.

³²⁴ Christa Merkes, *Wahrnehmungsstrukturen in Werken des Neuen Realismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983) 8.

³²⁵ Merkes, *Wahrnehmungsstrukturen in Werken des Neuen Realismus* 8.

novel adopted by schools like *Gruppe 47*. By relaying “eine Tendenz zum Alltäglichen”³²⁶ in their works, the school’s writers created a “critical realism seeped in the sensual and concrete, the quotidian and present-day.”³²⁷ Furthermore, the texts produced in this literary group differed greatly in form from other attempts at new realism. Authors turned to “schizoide Bewußtseinsstrukturen, Textkollagen, verschiedene Textsorten, anti-grammatische und anti-syntaktische Strukturen [...], deren formale Problematisierung jedoch einer äußeren Realität eher entspricht, als eine kohärente, die Welt absiegelnde und interpretierende Version.”³²⁸ The form of writing produced by these writers thus sought to reflect the fragmented state of society through the themes implanted in each work as well as formal structure. Works did not follow long periods in a character’s life as Lenz does in *Brot und Spiele*, but rather texts revealed a veritable snapshot of one day. It is no coincidence that the title of Wellershoff collection of stories is *Ein Tag in der Stadt*.

By turning to everyday experiences of the individual: “[Wellershoff] griff ausdrücklich auf die Tradition realistischen Erzählens zurück in der Überzeugung, daß Literatur Erkenntnis in Gang setzen und gesellschaftliche Veränderung initiieren könne. Dies weist auf eine neue Aufmerksamkeit für das Alltägliche, scheinbar Bekannte und Geläufige hin.”³²⁹ Mirroring the viewpoint of a cinematic camera, the authors of the *Neuer Realismus* relayed a series of literary images capturing the chaotic and elusive nature of the everyday. Indeed, Wellershoff elaborates: “Der Schriftsteller will nicht mehr [...] eine abgeschlossene

³²⁶ Merkes, *Wahrnehmungsstrukturen in Werken des Neues Realismus* 7.

³²⁷ Langston, *Visions of Violence* 105.

³²⁸ Merkes, *Wahrnehmungsstrukturen in Werken des Neuen Realismus* 8.

³²⁹ Wolfgang Powroslo, *Erkenntnis durch Literatur: Realismus in der westdeutschen Literaturtheorie der Gegenwart* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1976) 11, 19.

Geschichte Allgemeingültigkeit und beispielhafte Bedeutung erreichen, sondern versucht möglichst realitätsnah zu schreiben, mit Aufmerksamkeit für die Störungen, Abweichungen, das Unauffällige, die Umwege, also den Widerstand der Realität gegen das vorschnelle Sinnbedürfnis.”³³⁰ Wellershoff’s *Neuer Realismus* sought to reflect the chaotic and confusing incomprehensibility of postwar West Germany through radical form and language. Furthermore, the hallmarks of this competing critical realism allowed the authors of the *Neuer Realismus* to voice the perceived problems and desired changes in society. According to Wellershoff, the school used avant-garde literary techniques as a method “die Gesellschaft immanent durch genaues Hinsehen [zu kritisieren]. Es ist eine Kritik, die im Produzieren der Erfahrung entsteht.”³³¹ That is to say that by creating a realism seeped in the everyday, the school sought to highlight societal problems in postwar society through critical realism in literature.

Indeed, Harig utilizes the key characteristics of text-collages and anti-grammatical, anti-syntactical language emphasized in Wellershoff’s poetics of *Neuer Realismus* to reveal the chaos of reality in post-fascist Germany through sport in his text. Harig’s participation in Wellershoff’s poetics can be best understood through the publication of “Das Fußballspiel” in *Ein Tag in der Stadt*. Its appearance on the literary scene in 1962 signified the spread of the ideas of *Neuer Realismus* as an attempt to portray the shortcomings of postwar society. I contend that Harig uses soccer as the everyday where the violent fascist past of West German society can be accessed and confronted through critical realism. Indeed, Harig questions of state of society after 1945 and its inability to come to terms with its horrific past, and it is

³³⁰ Wellershoff, “Neuer Realismus” 843-844.

³³¹ Wellershoff, “Neuer Realismus” 843-844.

through sport that the possibility for this interaction can come to fruition. The problem posed in Harig's text, however, is the indifference of society in recognizing and confronting its fascist past. By utilizing Adorno's theories on sport and fascism while mapping Wellershoff's conception of critical realism onto the structure of Harig text, I elucidate how sport unveils the resistance of society to recognize the ghosts of fascism still present in society. Furthermore, I illuminate how this reluctance reflects the refusal of society to reconcile with the horrific and violent recent past.

V. *kanonen kicken köpfen*: Violent Fascism in Ludwig Harig's "Das Fußballspiel"

Though society as a whole sought to avoid the atrocious memories of the Third Reich, theorists like Adorno viewed society as littered with characteristics of totalitarian behavior. In his 1955 work *Prisms*, the philosopher elaborates on postwar society's surviving fascist traits and highlights sport as a prime example in postwar society. Adorno initially focuses on sport as a massively negative aspect of society by drawing a parallel between sporting events and fascist rallies: "[A]thletic events were the models for totalitarian mass rallies. As tolerated excesses, they combine cruelty and aggression with an authoritarian moment, the disciplined observance of the rules—legality, as in the pogroms of Nazi Germany and the people's republics."³³² Thus, Adorno reinforces the existence of totalitarian characteristics in postwar society and pinpoints this surviving mentality in sporting events. In addition to sport's excessive totalitarian attributes in the stadium, Adorno criticizes athletes' propensity towards violence, which he sees as a key fascist trait. His essay "Education after Auschwitz" likewise draws parallels between sport and fascist brutality by citing athletes as

³³² Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms: Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen and Samuel Weber (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983) 80.

the ideal example of the hostile and violent traits of fascism. “In many of [sport’s] varieties and practices it can promote aggression, brutality, and sadism, [also] in people who do not expose themselves to the exertion and discipline required by sports but instead merely watch: that is, those who regularly shout from the sidelines.”³³³ In his critique of sport, then, Adorno links both the athlete and the spectator to the fascist ideals of Nazi Germany, which can be identified through sport in postwar society.

Finally, Adorno describes athletic competition as the reincarnation of fascist ideals. In training, according to Adorno, the athlete displays the blind obedience characteristic of totalitarian regimes. Those who excel and succeed in both competitions and training are those “who are so utterly compliant with the expected behavior [...] as they no longer feel resistance in themselves.”³³⁴ Indeed, sport is capable of stripping one’s freedom. What is more, it can transform the individual to a submissive entity to be molded and “proclaim the undisguised law of the strongest which arises so naturally from the competitive domain.”³³⁵ In other words, Adorno views sport not only a gateway to fascist hostility and violence through athletic competition, but the desire to succeed in such competitions culls submission and obedience prevalent in a totalitarian mindset.³³⁶ Indeed, Adorno’s view of sport is rife with connections to the aggression and mass mentality of the fascist German past.

³³³ Theodor W. Adorno, “Education after Auschwitz,” *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) 25.

³³⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, “The Schema of Mass Culture,” *Theodor W. Adorno: The Culture Industry and Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 2002) 89.

³³⁵ Adorno, “The Schema of Mass Culture” 90.

³³⁶ Though he offers a critique of the traits associated with sport, Adorno provides no apparent solution to this problem in *Prisms* or “Education after Auschwitz.” He merely uses sport as a lens through which to witness the residual corruptive and violent totalitarian tendencies of sport in contemporary society.

It is precisely these poignant connections that elucidate the remnants of fascism society is faced with overcoming in Harig's text. With his use of anti-grammatical and anti-syntactical language, Harig evokes the violent and fascist nature of sport as it relates to the totalitarian regime and brings forth the ghosts of the past in the present stadium. In order to understand the emphasis of these associations fully, the framework of Harig's text must first be addressed, for the separation of sport and everyday life brings to light the difficulty in accepting the violent fascist ghosts of the past. The soccer game in Harig's text, however, constitutes only one portion of the whole. The story is divided into three separate sections, each distinctively set apart and numerically labeled. While sport constructs the entirety of Section II, it plays no role in either Section I or III. That is to say that sport remains an entirely separate category disassociated from the remaining aspects of the main character's everyday life. Indeed, the man (he is given no actual name) arrives at the game alone and does not even mention the game or team when outside of the stadium.

The atmosphere created around the game evokes the mundane yet meticulously prescribed nature of the man's everyday life outside of sport. The description of the man's activities before the game suggests such a feel. "der mann [sic] hat schon seit einer geraumen weile seine brötchen gebrochen, den frühstückskaffee geschlürft, seinen mund abgewischt, ein frisches taschentuch in die rechte hosentasche gesteckt, hosen- und jackentascken nach streichholzsachtel, zigarettenpaket, brille und geldbeutel abgeklopft und sitzt nun seit sechs minuten hinter dem steuer seines wagen auf dem weg."³³⁷ The man's actions appear almost systematic and boring. The language used to describe the man's actions can be understood as outwardly docile and pacifist and thus representative of the societal outlook following World

³³⁷ Harig, "Das Fußballspiel" 119.

War II. Indeed, societal reaction following the Second World War involved a desire to break from the violent tendencies of the past and progress to a peaceful and docile existence. Coinciding with this mentality, the man's demeanor and actions are almost boring in the mundane details of the everyday. Even before the game begins, the man follows this docile approach in his life. "darin der mann [sic], nachdem er seine krawatte wiederzurechtgerückt und mit einem grabbüschel den staub von den schuhen gewischt hat, schließlich seinen gewohnten platz einnimmt, in die innere rocktasche faßt, mit geübtem griff seine brille aus dem in der tasche verbleibenden futteral befördert, aus der rechten hosentasche das zu einem akkuraten rechteck gefaltete und gebügelte taschentuch zieht, die gläser abwischt, und auf die nase setzt."³³⁸ The concentration on such everyday actions reflects the desired normalcy in postwar society after the catastrophes and violence synonymous with the Third Reich. Such descriptions are not only used at the beginning of the story but in the third section as well.

After the game, the man visits a bar before going home with no mention of the athletic event he has just attended. Even after the actions of the match, the man returns to the same type of actions he engaged in before the match. When drinking at the bar, he "sucht sein taschentuch [sic] in der linken rocktasche, findet es beim brillenfuttral, [...]holt es hervor, wischt die gläser ab und steckt es in die linke hosentasche."³³⁹ Not only does the non-violent nature of the text return after the game, the man engages in the exact same action as before. Although he has just been to an action-filled soccer match, there is no mention of the game afterwards. Indeed, his night is further detailed with such descriptions and fails to incorporate the athletic scene he just witnessed. Reflecting the desire to move away from the

³³⁸ Harig, "Das Fußballspiel" 136.

³³⁹ Harig, "Das Fußballspiel" 157.

violent and war-driven mentality of the period of National Socialism, the events of the man's day are calm and emphasize the routine and repeated acts of the everyday.

This mentality, however, is dramatically different in both form and content from the actions in the soccer arena. In fact, the events of the man's day are even posited separately in the text's structure from those of the game. Indeed, the integration of sport only appears in the second section, with the rest of the man's day serving as bookends. Moreover, the man's exploits, both before and after the game, are presented in a collected style in standard font differentiated by those on the soccer field, which are described in italics. Additionally, while the first and third sections describe the man's day in complete sentences, the actions in the sport arena are presented in anti-grammatical and anti-syntactical form using phrases and words rather than sentences. This change in style and form first occurs at the beginning of the match in the stadium. Indeed, while the majority of the text reflects the passive, non-violent state of present society without interruption from the remnants of the past, sport in the text reveals the ghosts of violent fascism still present in society.

The descriptions of both the stadium and the engagement with soccer itself emphasize sport's innate link to fascism. Sport, then, becomes the activity where the effects of the surviving totalitarian mentality in postwar society can be encountered. This is first highlighted with the initial description of both the stadium and the players at the start of the match. Though Harig describes athletes arriving on a playing field, the connection he draws is that of impending violence and war: *“die heerschau [sic] struppiger gladiatoren [...] aufmarschiert im schlachtfeld zehntausendachthundert quadratmeter geebnet liniert auf gedieh und verdarb zwischen den eckfahnen paralleler vernichtung, schwarz die prätoeren*

*netze und strafraum geprüft [...].*³⁴⁰ The game is cast as an act of war from the onset of the story. Indeed, the players are never even referred to as athletes, but rather they are gladiators set to fight each other in the stadium before the higher levels of society. The words of Harig's text likewise reveal the violent nature of the sporting event in the arena. The players march onto a "*schlachtfeld*," transforming the field itself into a battlefield and the players into marching soldiers. The athletes are later referred to as "*stürmer*" and move in "*flanken*."³⁴¹ While these terms can indeed be used to describe soccer, they carry a dual meaning here in their reference to war. To be sure, the initial description of the athletic game conjures strong notions of war and violence associated with the fascist Nazi dictatorship.

The description of the players on the field is not only reminiscent of Adorno's connection between modern sport and its violent fascist personality, but the stadium itself also draws a parallel between sport and the fascist rallies of the Third Reich. Indeed, the opening ceremony includes masses of fans cheering wildly while trumpets and instruments interspersed throughout the crowd sound loudly: "*alles drin, die zehntausende auf den rängen [sic] mit trommelfellmienen trompeten am schulterband falschgoldene hymneninstrumente, schützenkönigliche triumphoren in der arena aufgepflanzt die heerzeichen schwarzblau ausstaffiert die kulisse [...].*"³⁴² The players enter the stadium surrounded by thousands of fans cheering and clad in the team colors, while accompanied by the sound of drumbeats and trumpets. Both trumpets and drums, instruments associated with war and the battlefield, comprised a distinct musical component of Nazi rallies. Indeed, the image of eager and cheering onlookers surrounded by these instruments mirrors the image of

³⁴⁰ Harig, "Das Fußballspiel" 135-136.

³⁴¹ Harig, "Das Fußballspiel" 142.

³⁴² Harig, "Das Fußballspiel" 135.

countless Nazi rallies. Scholars such as Linda Jacobs Altman have produced accounts documenting such rallies and their musical accompaniment. She concludes: “[Hitler’s enormous rallies] were grand, showy events with blaring trumpets, pounding drums, waving banners, and thousands of uniformed Nazis marching in close-order drill.”³⁴³ Describing one such event, Joachim Köhler characterizes the model of Hitler’s Nuremberg rallies in the 1930s as littered with “flags and banners, trumpets and drums [and] brightly dressed citizens” cheering in unison for their leader.³⁴⁴ To be sure, the stadium prepared for the start of the soccer match is not described in athletic terms but rather in those reminiscent of a Nazi mass rally complete with trumpets, drums and the dedicated followers dressed in the same bright color displaying their loyalty.

The connection between the fascist rally and sport is one documented in *Prisms*. Adorno argues that modern sporting events are “the models for totalitarian mass rallies. As tolerated excesses, they combine cruelty and aggression with an authoritarian moment [...]”³⁴⁵ This description of sport parallels that produced in Harig’s text, linking the match to the barbarity and aggression of fascist mass rallies. Thus, with the stage set for the match to begin, the introduction of the sporting arena has already culled a stark connection between the characteristics of modern sport and those of fascism. The stadium thus becomes the space where fascism and war are exposed in postwar society, with spectators and players alike cheering in support.

³⁴³ Linda Jacobs Altman, *Holocaust, Hitler, and Nazi Germany* (Berkeley Heights: Enslow, 1999) 59.

³⁴⁴ Joachim Köhler, *Wagner’s Hitler: The Prophet and His Disciple*, trans Ronald Taylor (Cambridge: Polity, 2001) 260.

³⁴⁵ Adorno, *Prisms* 80.

The atmosphere and introduction of the game within the walls of the stadium is not the only link to fascism posited in Harig's text. The actions of the game itself likewise draw an association to sport's violent and aggressive nature in relation to totalitarianism. Harig does not, however, describe the actions of the players in narrative form, rather he uses a list of words and short phrases to relay the moves of the players of the match. What is of particular note in this description is the nature of the words used to convey the action. As the man watches, it is as if a slaughter transpires before him as the ball moves around the field. *“vorgeschoben die attacke feld [sic] erobert tank im mittelabschnitt überrollt die barrikaden rempeln stoßen werfen foulern [...] meistern schlagen treten hetzen kicken schieben scheibeln flanken schneiden köpfen schießen bomben feuern aufgebrochen in die mauer und die bombe auf das tor kanone abgezogen die granate [...] kampf mit kalten waffen [...]*” Harig's choice of words reveals the violent and war-like nature of sport. Indeed, many of the words offer a double meaning, such as *foulern, schlagen, kicken, köpfen, schießen*, in that they pertain to both soccer as well as battle. While these actions are suitable on the soccer field, they purvey a distinct connotation of violence when read in relation to those words surrounding them. Indeed, the author's wordplay mirrors the violence and terror of fascism.

The severity of violence implied in the action in the game highlights Adorno's direct association between sport and fascist violence. Indeed, the game is not described in full narrative detail, but the violence is the *only* reference to the action on the field. No players are individually named, and the actions are not assigned to one player, revealing that these violent acts are not confined to one player on the field but to the athletic group as a whole. This, then, suggests that brutality and aggression are synonymous with the game of soccer as well as the participants. Indeed, Adorno maintains this mindset in his essay “Education after

Auschwitz” where he argues that sport’s many forms and practices produce “aggression, brutality, and sadism” identical to those promoted during the Hitler regime.³⁴⁶ This suggests then that the violence associated with war is not only a reference to the hostile aggression of fascism, but it is also present in the athlete’s actions in the stadium. In viewing the violent actions of the players on the field, it appears that aggression, brutality and sadism are the only aspects of the sport portrayed to the crowd. Indeed, the actions on the field do little to dissuade the connection between sport and fascism contained in the athletic stadium.

Considering the visions of war and violence associated with the soccer match the man attends, the association between sport and violence provides the outlet through which Germany’s fascist past can be accessed in postwar society. That is to say that the totalitarian tendencies in society can be viewed through athletic engagement. The position of the soccer game within the overall framework of Harig’s text, however, reveals that, while this aspect of postwar society indeed still exists, it is kept entirely separate from the remaining aspects of everyday life. In fact, it is even posed in an entirely different writing style and form as compared to the first and third sections. This, then, suggests that while the possibility to confront the terrors of the past presents itself, the individuals in society neglect to realize it in their lives. If sport can be viewed, according to Adorno, as a link to a totalitarian mentality then the refusal of the man to implement—or even refer to or think about—the game he just attended outside of the stadium implies that he cannot connect these two aspects of his life.

Even within the soccer section itself, the separate nature of sport and society is illuminated through the structure, stylistic grammatical changes and font utilized by the author. Not only are the sections dealing directly with the game separated into block portions

³⁴⁶ Adorno, “Education after Auschwitz” 25.

of text set apart from the story's main narration, they are also written in italics, which likewise distinguishes them from the rest of the text. Moreover, unlike the narrative structure seen in Lenz's text, the actions in the stadium are described in short phrases and individual words that lack any resemblance of sentence structure. What is more, the phrases are reduced to violent verbs as the section progresses. Thus, the most violent actions are revealed in the greatest fragmentation of the text. Indeed, structural form and fragmented grammatical structure are common characteristics of the writings of the *Kölner Schule*. To be sure, Wellershoff proposed that structure and language in literature reflects "der Widerstand, an dem das Allgemeine konkret wird und zwar zugleich als Zeugnis und Kritik. [...] Das gegen die Ordnung und Schemata gerichtetes Schreiben [gibt] die Komplexität der Welt heute am besten wieder."³⁴⁷ Such characteristics are likewise found in Harig's narrative and reflect the influence of *Neuer Realismus* on his text. Werner Jung discusses the ramifications of the author's writing style and argues that the differentiation in text font, as well as the overall structure of the text, is significant attributes when interpreting Harig's work as it relates to the *Kölner Schule*.³⁴⁸ The distinction in style and the separation from the main narration distinguishes the portions of the text associated with athletics as entirely separate from the actions of everyday life. The portions between the soccer excerpts reveal the typical actions of the man on a daily basis and illuminate the desire in society to ignore the violence of the past.

³⁴⁷ Dieter Wellershoff, *Literatur und Veränderung: Versuche zu einer Metakritik der Literatur* (Cologne: dtv, 1969) 85.

³⁴⁸ Werner Jung, "Brot fürs Ohr?," *Du fragst, was Wahrheit sei?: Ludwig Harigs Spiel mit Möglichkeiten* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2002) 60-90. See also Karl Riha, "Ludwig Harig," *Kritisches Lexikon zur deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur: Band 5*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1994) 1-17 and "Ach, Ludwig, wie faß' ich Dich...?" *Harig Lesen*, eds. Gerhard Sauder and Gerhard Schmidt-Henkel (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1987) 11-24.

The man does not, however, engage with the exploits occurring on the field in front of him, as reflected in the drastically different writing style and language used to distinguish the two parts. The segments dealing with sport remain entirely distanced from the man in both structure and language. While he does in fact attend the game, which suggests that a confrontation with such totalitarian ideals is possible, he refuses to acknowledge them. Indeed, the text reveals a categorical shift in narration between the two scenarios, keeping them entirely separate from each other in both form and style. The words of the game are described in short choppy phrases or verbs, while the remaining narration, though not in entirely grammatically correct form considering the lack of capitalization, contains sentences rather than the one or two word phrases. The variation in text font likewise reinforces this distinction, as do the individual and distinct paragraphs separated from the main portions of the text. Thus, the *Neuer Realismus* inspired writing style that Harig utilizes in his text reveals a drastic dissimilarity between these two areas of life and separates the violent actions of the sporting activities from the calculated passivity of the man's everyday life and thoughts.

In identifying the fascist tendencies of sport described by Adorno, lingering aspects of Germany's totalitarian past are brought to light in postwar German society with the critical realism of the *Kölner Schule*. The containment of such values within the walls of the stadium reflects the presence of such a past in the lives of West Germans after the fall of National Socialism in 1945. This neglect and inability to realize the presence of the past in postwar society "became the systematic building block of post-war German society."³⁴⁹ Indeed, by understanding the fascist past's violent role in the present within the confines of the stadium,

³⁴⁹ Adorno, "What Does Working Through The Past Mean?" 3.

Harig reveals that the sports arena serves as the place where the man could confront and come to terms with the connotations and repercussions of the past. It is as if the stadium is a theater offering the screen through which the violent fascist characteristics of society can be viewed. That is to say that the certain media effects theory this separation conjures reveals the game as the arena through which the man can clearly see the reality surrounding him. This, however, does not happen. The man leaves the stadium exactly as he entered and fails to incorporate sport into other aspects of his life. Even the location of the soccer stadium, in that it is explicitly revealed to be outside of the city, highlights the separation of the past from the present. The division between the two aspects of the man's life is likewise revealed in the structure of the text through the author's framework as well as linguistic and grammatical form.

Thus, "Das Fußballspiel" posits a society unwilling to identify and combine the associations of its lingering past into the continuous actions of the present. Though the possibility presents itself, as the man attends the soccer game alone every Sunday, there is no incorporation or even mention of the game in his other activities. In this instance, Harig highlights the violent presence of fascist ideals through sport to unveil society's neglected past and its refusal to confront and come to terms with a warring and aggressive history. The task of realizing this specter of aggression, however, lies solely with the reader, as opposed to Lenz's omnipotent narrator. While it is the narrator in *Brot und Spiele* who consistently questions the fascist foundations of Buchner's career, the narrative structure in Harig's text requires such action from the reader. It is the recipient of the work, who, through viewing the separation of narrative action and the grammatical textual composition, is required to question both this separation and the rationale for it. This view is further cemented when one

considers the even greater onus placed on the listener in Harig's *Hörspiel* version of the short story. For the members of the *Kölner Schule*, the limitations of literature fail to truly question the problem of language and structure in its realistic endeavor. In order to fully understand the critical realism of the *Kölner Schule*, one must turn to the audible advantages the author offers with the production of the *Hörspiel*. Indeed, while Harig's short story attempts to move beyond the limits of the realism crafted by *Gruppe 47*, his *Hörspiel* progresses even further to exceed the limitations of the literature of the *Kölner Schule*.

VI. The New “Hearing Game”: Ludwig Harig’s “Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel”

In his radical use of language and structure in the short story “Das Fußballspiel,” Harig attempts to free both language and structure in literature from the traditional norms of previous literary trends. In doing this, the text is able to reveal a critically realistic reflection of postwar society sonically accessible to the listener. Karl Riha credits Harig as mastering this linguistic freedom, stating: “Der poetologischen Kategorie nach handelt es sich [in Harigs Werken] um Mischtexte, also um literarische Produktionen, die von einem vorgefundenen Textstil ausgehen, wobei einzelne Textmomente wie Bilder, Sätze, etc herausgelöst und—aus ihrer ursprünglichen Kontextfunktion befreit—neu arrangiert, poetisch mobil gemacht werden.”³⁵⁰ Taking this concept a step further, the genre of the *Neues Hörspiel* was viewed by writers such as Harig as an even stronger means through which to depict such reality, in that it frees linguistic attempts entirely from paper. Rather than reading words on paper, the radio play allows the listener to experience the action through monologues as well as added sound effects. Indeed, the *Neues Hörspiel* allowed

³⁵⁰ Riha, “Ludwig Harig” 3-4.

authors to “unlock the literary text. It is a medium necessary in writing that allows one to *do* [sic] things that can only be *described* [sic] in prose.”³⁵¹ To be sure, the new radio plays that emerged in the 1960s from authors of the *Kölner Schule* sought to create an even more accurate and innovative depiction of society than was possible in literature.

Harig’s “Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel” (1962), as Max Bense notes, concentrates “vor allem auf die nicht Eindeutigkeit semantischer Bezüge des gesprochenen Wortes und des Höreindrucks.”³⁵² The listener is left only to concentrated on the tone, sounds and words spoken, which, when focused on completely, would resonate in each listener differently.³⁵³ For writers attempting to establish a novel form of realism, the listener is transformed into “ein neues Wahrnehmungsorgan sobald er zum Zuhörer wird, der aufgreift, was die anderen sagen, und wie sie es sagen.”³⁵⁴ This intense experience of hearing the play’s mixture of voices and sounds was intended to create an experience inimitable to each listener, thus creating a uniquely processed understanding. Klaus Schöning proclaims this to be one of the most profound effects of the *Neues Hörspiel*, elaborating that: “Erst indem [der Zuhörer] sich einläßt auf seine eigenen Geschichten, seine eigenen Erfahrungen, Assoziationen, Emotionen, die im vorgeführten Spiel wiederentdeckt,

³⁵¹ Birgit Lermen, *Das Traditionelle und Neue Hörspiel*, trans. Everett Frost (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöning, 1975) 209.

³⁵² Max Bense, “Nachwort,” *Ludwig Harigs “Ein Blumenstück,”* ed. Johann Maria Kamps (Wiesbaden: Limes, 1969) 243.

³⁵³ Johann M. Kamps, “Aspekte des Hörspiels,” *Tendenzen der deutschen Literatur seit 1945*, ed. Thomas Koebner (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1971) 499.

³⁵⁴ Bense, “Nachwort” 243.

stellt *er* [sic] die *Geschichte* her.”³⁵⁵ The listener was to deduce his own meaning and interpretation from the play and use it to analyze and reflect inwardly on the world around him. In this respect, the new realism produced by the writers of the *Kölner Schule* was harnessed and produced not only in literary endeavors but also audio form for the radio.

The writers of the genre saw this as an opportunity to create social change, according to Wellershoff, through “die imaginativen Fähigkeiten” of the listeners.³⁵⁶ Indeed, the radio play’s new form appealed to members of the *Neuer Realismus* in its ability, as Norbert Otto Eke posits, to act “als eigenständiger Wirklichkeits- und (Selbst-) Erfahrungsraum.”³⁵⁷ Furthermore, this open space was intended to “mobiliz[e] the imagination of the audience, who would thus engage in the process of coming to terms with the Nazi past.”³⁵⁸ Indeed, one of the main intentions of the new radio plays for the members of the *Kölner Schule* was to question the validity and state of societal norms.³⁵⁹

While the short story version of Harig’s text highlights the innate fascist of sport and its exclusion from one’s everyday experiences, the radio play focuses almost exclusively on the action occurring within the stadium. However, rather than a stream of consciousness form of narration from the man (he is again given no actual name), the play is relayed through individual monologues by the man and the crowd at the stadium. The actions that occur are

³⁵⁵ Klaus Schöning, “Anmerkungen und Zitate zu Franz Mons Hörstücken,” *Franz Mon: Text und Kritik*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1978) 66.

³⁵⁶ Dieter Wellershoff, “Bemerkung zum Hörspiel,” *Akzente* 8 (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1969) 339.

³⁵⁷ Norbert Otto Eke, *Wort / Spiele: Drama - Film – Literatur* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2007) 148.

³⁵⁸ Bernhard Siegert, “March 26 1953: Coming to Terms with the Past,” *A New History of German Literature*, ed. David Wellbery (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) 863.

³⁵⁹ Wilfried Barner, “Von der Rollenrede zum Originalton: Das Hörspiel der Sechziger Jahre,” *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Wilfried Barner (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1994) 452-453.

reinforced by additional sound effects, such as the cheering crowd or the sound of a chain-link fence. While the majority of the game's description remains the same, the major modifications in the radio play take shape in the introduction of a chorus of spectators in the stadium, the so-called "Stimmen," and the fate of the man. While in the short story, he leaves the stadium, has a few beers at the bar and returns home to his wife, the man in the *Hörspiel* suffers a violent death at the hands of a mob while leaving the stadium. The aggressive acts in the game now voiced by the spectators and the transference of this violence to the outside with the man's death reveals an escalated violence as compared to the short story. By viewing the role of sport in Harig's radio play in light of these differences from the short story—most specifically in the role of the spectators at the game—illuminates the dangers and ramifications produced by neglecting society's fascist past. Indeed, Harig's *Hörspiel* elucidates through sport the elevated fascist violence that can plague a society unwilling to come to terms with the ghosts of its turbulent history.

Harig's "Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel" implements prominent *Neues Hörspiel* characteristics, most particularly word play and repetition by the spectators as well as background sounds meant to intensify the listening experience. Rather than written in a narrative form that juxtaposes the relayed action from the soccer game with the thoughts and discourse of the man, the play fluctuates between the man's isolated monologues, in which he thinks about other parts of his day, and the mass of spectators, who recount the action of the game in the soccer stadium. However, while the focus of the man's thoughts remains on issues outside of the soccer stadium, his part is understated in comparison to the original version of the text. The role of the soccer game, however, dominates the entirety of the piece. In the short story "Das Fußballspiel," the spectators are confined mainly to a few references

in the overall description of the stadium at the start of the text. While the fans are described, we do not hear them speak in the story. In the *Hörspiel*, however, the spectators are given a voice that relays the actions in the stadium to the reader. Additionally, drums, trumpets, cheers and screams are added as background sounds to augment the role of the spectators both inside and outside the stadium.

Indeed, the first sounds the listener hears are not in the form of dialogue, rather, the stage directions calls for a mixture of sounds: “*aufblenden: massengeräusch [sic] und aufschrei der masse, bedrohlich aufebbend. hinzu kommen blechtrommeln und trompteten.*”³⁶⁰ Much like the scene described in the short story, the stadium is filled with the noise of the masses in addition to drums and trumpets. The opening scene of the radio play, then, harkens the fascist connotations of sport proclaimed in Adorno’s essay “Education after Auschwitz.” Indeed, the stadium brings across the feeling of being in the middle of a Nazi rally. The combination of sounds literally brings forth the unique qualities associated with those of the mass rallies of the Third Reich. Furthermore, the cheers from the crowd and the instruments are repeated throughout the entirety of the play. While the chorus of spectators speaks, they are continually followed by an “*aufschrei der masse*” as well as the sounds of the drums and trumpets.³⁶¹ That is to say that with each utterance of the spectators, the listener is greeted with fascist associations to National Socialism. That the noises are produced rather than read, however, gives the listener the feeling of being in the stadium itself amongst the masses and creates a sonic representation linking the stadium to fascism.

³⁶⁰ Ludwig Harig, “Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel,” *fußball literarisch oder Der Ball spielt mit dem Menschen*, ed. Karl Riha (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1982) 161.

³⁶¹ Harig, “Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel” 161-170.

Following these sounds, reporters recount the staging of the soccer players on the field, which is identical to text of the short story and is read as if meant to be actual sport commentary accompanying a game. The spectators transmit the action of the game by chanting in unison, alternating only with the monologue voiced by the man. Indeed, as the match progresses, the spectators chant the actions occurring on the field and repeat the words with an increasing intensity until they are screaming. “rempeln / stoßen / werfen / foulern / meistern / schlagen / treten / hetzen / jagen / kicken / schieben / schneiden / köpfen / schießen / bomben / feuern /.”³⁶² After each thought the man voices, the listener is met with this chorus of words. While the chorus chants the succession of verbs above, they alternate this list with the repetition of “schießen / schießen / schießen/.”³⁶³ Like the short story, these words hold dual meaning in their reference to both the game and the violence of combat. Unlike the written text of the short story where this string of words is generated only once, the crowd continually repeats the same combination of words.

To be sure, any fan at a soccer match has used these words in the context of describing the game. In this regard, the listener identifies with the game and spectators with each word spoken. The repetition of the series, as was common for the *Neues Hörspiel*, defamiliarizes the words from their original meaning, in this case, with the plays on the soccer field. That is to say that while these words may commonly be used in conjunction with soccer, they produce, when repeated, a novel and increasingly violent meaning for the listener. Indeed, rather than simply denoting the action on the game, the increased intensity and individual repetition of the verbs crafts an audible representation of violence. While the

³⁶² Harig, “Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel” 169-170.

³⁶³ Harig, “Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel” 169.

verbs are listed in a paragraph in the short story, each is given its own line in the radio play, and each word is independently with only a brief silence between words. As the tempo quickens, the intensity of the voices likewise rises. Moreover, the radio play adds the emphasized repetition of “schießen,” singling out a blatantly violent world reminiscent of war. The auditory component of the piece, then, sonically represents the increasing violence of the game. Harig presents the words on their own and therewith singles out the violence of the actions in order to relay a new and intensified connotation with each aside from the mere athletic implication. Thus, the play is able to reveal the barbaric and aggressive fascist nature Adorno argues as innate in sport.

The connection between sport and violence is poignant in the multiple meanings of the spoken text of Harig’s *Hörspiel*. Mario Leis comments on the brutal associations of the language used in relation to sport, stating: “In dem Stück wird vor allem die Nichteindeutigkeit semantischer Bezüge thematisiert. Es kommt immer wieder vor, daß Gewaltsemantik für die Sportsemantik in Anspruch genommen wird.”³⁶⁴ The resulting understanding of sport in an increasingly aggressive light only further enforces the connection Adorno makes between sport and fascism. Moreover, the intensity and volume with which the words are spoken during the play reiterates Adorno’s connection between sporting events and fascist rallies of Germany’s not-so-distant past. As the spectators chant, the association between the violence and the image of a totalitarian rally likewise only increases for the active listener. The actions are not put forth by individual voices but rather many voices together chanting in unison to create the force experienced at a mass rally. The listener is left only with the chanting aggressive words and rally sounds separating the

³⁶⁴ Leis, *Sport in der Literatur* 65.

thoughts of the man, which highlight the violence still prominent in postwar society.

Scholars understand the extreme use of wording in Harig's radio play as an attempt "auch die Extreme [des Hörers] zur Berührung zu bringen, indem er in der kollektiven Sprache die Spuren einer bestimmtem Geisteshaltung aufzeigt."³⁶⁵ In identifying the aggressive violence and reflection of totalitarian rallies in the stadium, and therewith the fascist tendencies harbored in the sporting world, the listener is confronted with the lingering totalitarian past ignored by postwar society.

Much like the short story, the role of the man reveals a society wishing to ignore the totalitarian ghosts mirrored in the soccer stadium. He does indeed attend the match, as evidenced by his entrance into the studio and the sounds of him climbing over the spectators. However, after arriving in the stadium, the thoughts of the man during the game are expressed in monologue form and kept entirely separate from those of the spectators. Indeed, when he speaks, the sounds of the stadium fall from the background to leave only silence surrounding his voice. Moreover, his thoughts do not follow the game, but rather his mind wanders to other aspects of his life. For example, the man reflects on a day earlier in the week: "das war / ein herrlicher tag [sic] / da im grünen / du wolltest kinder [...]"³⁶⁶ Additionally, the man thinks of a walk from his apartment: "eine wohnung in der stadt im elften stock / und ich liebe so die rosen / und die nelkenbeete die so duften / und die wälder und die vögel [...]" Indeed, the thoughts of the man stray to his life outside of the stadium and reflect a peaceful area filled with a happiness in the things he sees every day. While he thinks of the flowers and aspects of nature he appreciates near his apartment, the man's

³⁶⁵ Barner, "Von der Rollenrede zum Originalton" 461.

³⁶⁶ Harig, "Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel" 166.

thoughts are kept entirely separate from the noise of the stadium and the spectators, reflecting the separation of the man from the events immediately around him. That is to say that though he exposes himself to the stadium, he refuses to acknowledge the sporting event or its fascist meaning. Thus, the man likewise ignores the blatantly violent and totalitarian tendencies of sport as illuminated through the spectator's chants as well as the atmosphere portrayed in the stadium.

The last portion of the text, however, brings these two perspectives together, whereby the man is killed by the violent mob of spectators outside of the stadium. Indeed, in addition to the war-like connotations of the soccer game established with the listener inside the arena, the fans transport this violence outside the walls of the stadium. In a drastically different ending than the short story, the radio play ends with the brutal death of the man as he exits the arena by the savage mass of spectators. While no rationale is given for his death, the chorus of voices again chants in unison as the man is killed. "schlagen ihn tot / schlagen ihn tot / treten ihn tot / treten ihn tot / treten / tot / treten / tottreten / tottreten/ [...]"³⁶⁷ Considering that the beating occurs outside the confines of the athletic arena, the spectators from the stadium have unleashed the contained violence into society. However, unlike the chanting in the stadium, the chorus maintains a monotone and somber voice while describing the man's death. Moreover, the words used change as the chorus repeats them. The multiple forms and sequence of the actions of the man's death bring forth a vivid sound of the violence used in his killing.

The fact that the chorus does not change its tone throughout the series of actions suggests the indifference of the crowd towards their brutality. In the moments following the

³⁶⁷ Harig, "Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel" 179.

game, the crowd appears to be apathetic in their actions, revealing the common and perhaps even normalcy of such violence in society. This, then, suggests that the violence associated with the fascist past has likewise become commonplace. As the man dies, the radio play ends with the chorus simply stating in steady, somber unison: “vorüber / und vorbei / verloren,”³⁶⁸ which concludes the play. The words of the chorus reveal multiple meanings at this point in the piece, signifying at once the death of the man, the end of the game as well as the conclusion of the play. If the spectators of Harig’s *Hörspiel* can be understood as mirroring the fascist past Germany continues to ignore in the present, the death of the man outside of the stadium reveals the dangers in ignoring society’s history. The apathetic voice of the spectators during the killing and the report of the end suggest the disillusion the spectators reveal in inflicting violence. Furthermore, the murder does not occur inside of the stadium, where the athletic war takes place, but rather it follows the man outside of the stadium and refuses his departure. This added dimension of the spectators’ actions emphasizes the dangers in disregarding the violent past and its lingering effects in the present outside of the stadium walls.

The added auditory element of Harig’s *Hörspiel* deepens the associations between fascism and sport as well as the increasing violence both inside and outside of the stadium. Rather than reading the text, the listener is exposed to a barrage of sounds from the stadium, almost transporting the listener into the stadium alongside the chorus of spectators. Furthermore, the *Hörspiel* relays the extent of the violence transferred from sport to the spectators as they murder the man leaving the stadium—an aspect both Harig’s short story and Lenz’s novel fail to achieve. In hearing the sounds of the stadium, the listener is

³⁶⁸ Harig, “Das Fußballspiel: Ein stereophones Hörspiel” 181.

transferred to the realm of a totalitarian rally. Moreover, the escalation of violence the listener experiences is reflected in the structure and intensity of the violent verbs in the text. This aggression is transposed onto the spectators themselves, as is revealed in the active violence inflicted on the man. That is to say that while the aspects of sport within the stadium provide access to the fascist past, the transference of the violence into the hands of the spectators reveals the presence of sport's fascist traits outside of the arena. The death of the man suggests that one cannot escape the totalitarian tendencies elucidated by sport. Indeed, the man does not recognize the qualities presented in the stadium through the fans or the violence of the game. In ignoring and attempting to retreat, the man is consumed and destroyed by the mob in an escalation of outward aggression.

The introduction of the *Neues Hörspiel* in the 1960s emphasized the listener's auditory exposure to the characters' internal thoughts and experiences rather than a literary focus on the narrative and external surroundings as bound by the written form. In fact, Bernhard Siegert argues that the defining element of this new form of *Hörspiel* was precisely the exposure of the audience to an imaginary inner space prompted by what was heard. This was achieved in an effort to "mobilize the imagination of the audience, who would thus engage in the process of coming to terms with the Nazi past."³⁶⁹ In the case of Harig's radio play, the listener is freed from written language and sonically exposed to the violence and hostility mirrored in sport that cannot be read but rather is heard in sounds and strategic use of individual words and phrases. What is more, unlike *Brot und Spiele* where the reader is told where the violence is and why it is there, the onus is firmly on the listener in the *Hörspiel* to experience this violence and ponder its meaning. Indeed, through the auditory

³⁶⁹ Siegert, "March 26 1953" 863.

stimulation of the radio play, the listener sonically experiences the ghosts of fascism in the present, which postwar society sought to ignore. Furthermore, the listener is presented with the ramifications of ignoring the latent fascism, namely the death of the man at the hands of the cheering crowd. Thus, the listener is presented with a cautionary tale of the consequences in denying society's fascist past.

VII. Conclusion

Both Siegfried Lenz and Ludwig Harig elucidate the struggle West German society encountered in recognizing and dealing with its recent fascist past through sport in their literary works. While both produced their texts in the years following the Second World War, each author implements radically different methods of realism in achieving this societal critique. These dissimilar forms reveal the literary tensions in creating a new school of realism after 1945. While Lenz pinpoints the fascist tendencies in sport in the athlete's career through the narrator of his story, Harig pulls from the totalitarian associations of soccer within the stadium and its effects on the spectators through the language and structure typical of *Neuer Realismus* in both his short story and *Hörspiel*.

The distinctions between these two pieces in structure, narrative and language bring to light the distinctive forms of realism established by two respective literary groups. Lenz's narrative structure uses the voice and thoughts of the narrator to construct Buchner as a fascist athlete and proclaim the necessity for the reader to denounce his success. Though the spectators refuse to acknowledge Buchner's authoritarian traits, the narrator not only recognizes them but also demands that Buchner cannot be allowed to win his final race. Thus, the link between the reader and Buchner's life relays the adamant message that such a

fascist mentality cannot be tolerated. This moral denouncement in society is achieved by following the span of Buchner's career. Indeed, Lenz's novel divulges Buchner's latent fascist qualities over the development of time. The narrator's third-person omniscient voice epitomizes the realist clarity in exposing fascism proffered by *Gruppe 47*. In highlighting the totalitarian tendencies of the athlete through the narrative voice, the text seeks to reveal and question the existence of fascism in postwar Germany and society's inability to come to terms with this horrid past.

Unlike Lenz's text, Harig's "Das Fußballspiel," in both short story and *Hörspiel* form, focuses not on the overarching revelations throughout an athlete's career but rather on one day's experience at a soccer match. Furthermore, there is no narrator to relay the message of the story. The reader and listener are exposed to the thoughts of the man and the actions of the game without additional mediation, which leaves the recipient to experience the day and draw an individual conclusion. In Harig's short story, this is divulged through the choice of language as well as the structure of the text and words. While Lenz's story follows a narrative trajectory, Harig's text is composed of a text-collage that physically distinguishes the man from sport through framework and language structure. The font of the text, shifting between standard and italics, distinguishes the action of the game from those of the man. The change in grammatical structure and syntax likewise reveals the schism between society and the realization of the fascist and violent associations of sport. The utilization of structure and language points to the characteristics of the *Kölner Schule's* attempt at achieving a new critical realism. These radical forms in writing were an attempt to mirror the reality of postwar society. The characteristics of Harig's writing not only invoke

Germany's fascist history, but the structure and form of the writing reflects the inability of postwar society to realize and accept the ghosts of the Nazi past.

While Harig's short story makes use of such literary devices to promote the critical lens through which to call out postwar Germany's fascist tendencies, it fails to unveil the full extent of the repercussions this past can wreak on society. For members of the *Kölner Schule*, the confines of literature itself did not suffice in achieving the critique of society they sought to deploy with critical realism. Taking the fascist pronouncement of his short story a step further, Harig's *Hörspiel* transcends the medium of literature in order to unveil the violent damages lingering fascist ghosts can generate in society. Focusing solely on the soccer match in audible form, the *Hörspiel* sonically intensifies the fascist associations and violence through sport to a further extent through the listener. While the change in font is eliminated, the anti-grammatical structure and emphasis on violent language works to emphasize the violence associated with the fascist past. This suggests that the battle of realism initiated in 1945 finds a solution with the *Kölner Schule* by departing from the limits of the literary realm entirely. In this sense, Harig's *Hörspiel* can be understood as a precursor to the so-called death of literature that erupted with the Student Revolt of 1968, which "rejected the moral claims of literature as a tired substitute for direct action."³⁷⁰ With this audible form of critical realism, Harig utilizes sport to expose the fascist tendencies still existent in society and furthermore emphasize the violent consequences society's denial of history can facilitate.

To be sure, both Lenz and Harig sought a critical realism in literature that produced an enlightening function for society. The two authors, however, implemented drastically

³⁷⁰ David Roberts, "From the 1960s to the 1970s: The Changing Contexts of German Literature," *After the Death of Literature: West German Writing of the 1970s*, ed. Keith Bullivant (Oxford: Berg, 1989) xiv. See Keith Bullivant, *After the Death of Literature* for further elaboration on this topic.

different narrative and structural means to achieve this goal. Likewise, while both authors ultimately attempt to criticize society's neglect of history, the texts themselves come to different ends. By following the life and career of Buchner, Lenz inevitably reveals the continued existence of fascism in postwar society. Moreover, he expresses the need to realize and extinguish the possibility of a re-birth of totalitarianism. While Harig's short story highlights society's inability to cope with its existent fascist traits, his *Hörspiel* ultimately purveys the imminent dangers of rejecting the ghosts of Germany's Nazi past. Though Harig's short story offers a critique of society in its failure to realize the fascist past as presented in sport, his *Hörspiel* progresses to reveal the violent effects this denial can provoke. The radio play likewise conjures the fascist connotations associated with sport; however, the escalated violence serves as a warning of the ramifications of ignoring these lingering fascist norms in society. Indeed, while both Harig and Lenz attempt to critique society through neo-realism, the enlightening effects of their works come to different societal critiques.

While the problem of dealing with society's past surfaced as a major literary theme in the 1950s and 1960s, Lenz and Harig illuminate this societal critique using the athlete and sport in literature. During a time when sport was celebrated in society for its ability to supply the means to rebuild a society void of its totalitarian history, the literary and audible renderings of sport harness the innate link of sport to this fascist past. The possibility of joining sport and fascism as a connection to the past, however, does not proceed in German literature and media in any sustained fashion after Harig's short story and *Hörspiel* until after Reunification in 1990. Indeed, after Harig's *Hörspiel*, sport disappears until after the 1968 student movement, appearing then only in a minimalist capacity in works like Peter Handke's

Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter (1970). However, in a time when the writers of West Germany sought to re-establish the literary world apart from the norms of their Nazi forbearers, sport provided an outlet through which a brutal critique on postwar mentality was posed in literature and the building blocks of life after fascism could be realized. Moreover, both *Gruppe 47* and the *Kölner Schule* used the theme of sport to ground their distinctly different attempts of critical realism in literature and media. While both authors are wedded to realism, their implementation of it could not be more different. It is through sport that the tensions between the forms of new realism after 1945 can be unveiled and society's problematic relationship with the past illuminated.

Conclusion

The Comeback Kids: Sport in German Literature and Film after 1962

I. Settling the Score

What becomes apparent in examining German literature and mass media discussed in this project is the politicization of sporting themes during each of the three eras. Despite the dramatically different social, political and historical constructs, sport is consistently taken up in ideological and cultural debates. There are, however, similarities to be drawn between these three epochs, in that each hinges on that which precedes it. In the Weimar period, literature is largely invested in the exposure of social stratification through the imagined associations with sport in the literary realm. While both Brecht and Vischer question perceived societal problems through the commodified athlete in literature, the bourgeois corruption against which they warn becomes a reality upon the rise of the Hitler regime. However, during the Third Reich, sport no longer becomes the means through which to critique society, but rather it becomes a key extension of the corruption itself. In opposition to the Weimar Republic, sport in the literature and film of the Third Reich does not question the capitalistic status quo of society. Instead, the popularity sport attained during the previous decade is harnessed in film to reinforce the dictated political and cultural aims in creating the perfected Aryan man. Furthermore, literature of the National Socialist period reveals a utopian moment, whereby sport acts as the moral grounding in German life. Having established sport as an imperative aspect of cultural dictatorship, the existence of sport in

film and literature highlights the success of the Nazi propaganda machine. With the demise of National Socialism, authors of the immediate postwar period revitalized the theme of sport and ultimately used it to question the validity of the medium of literature itself. Mindful of the fascist connection established in the period of National Socialism, sport returned in literature and mass media as a means to pose a social critique of totalitarian memory. Much like Brecht and Vischer, Lenz and Harig utilize sport in an attempt to question the latent fascist state of society; however they do so through dramatically different forms of realism. In this way, sport arguably comes full circle. In Weimar literature, sport was viewed as having inherently proletariat revolutionary capabilities and was implemented by authors as a proclamation of the impending elitist corruption and commercialization of society. The Third Reich demonstrated precisely this distortion against which Weimar authors argued and created a fascist utopia by narrativizing the image of the Aryan athlete. In the years following the totalitarian takeover, authors returned to the methods once espoused in the Weimar Republic, however, with one vital change. Not only is sport a means through which to question the fascism still present in society through literature, it furthermore attempts to reverse the corruption inflicted by fascism by addressing the memory politics of the West German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

Although the scope of this project only extends to the period immediately following World War II, my approach to sport has much to offer scholarship during the eras that follow it. Subsequent to the dramatically different attempts at critical realism by Lenz and Harig, sport arguably all but disappears from German literary and cinematic landscapes in any sustained form until after Reunification in 1990.³⁷¹ It is at this juncture, however, that my

³⁷¹ I make this claim based on the extensive research undertaken for this project. Literary scholars likewise agree that there is a lack of fictional literature focusing solely on sport throughout the 1970s and 1980s in West

approach to sport as a means with which to critically engage with cultural debates becomes ever more important. While a handful of authors turned to sport, such as Uwe Johnson's *Das Dritte Buch über Achim* (1969) and Peter Handke's *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* (1970), sport fails to emerge as the main premise in literature and film. Though both Johnson and Handke do make use of sport in their works, it remains at best only an undertone. In both Johnson and Handke's works, the main characters are former athletes, who no longer engage with sport. Indeed both Achim and Joseph Bloch, the protagonist of Handke's work, are described as former athletes—Achim a famous cyclist who has disappeared after his retirement and Bloch a professional and well-known goalkeeper turned murderer. The majority of secondary literature dealing with both works fails to focus on the emphasis of sport, or lack thereof, in the novels. Regarding Handke's text, scholars overwhelmingly focus on the protagonist's schizophrenia³⁷² and reality-language problems.³⁷³ Critics like Russell E. Brown argue that sport marks one of the many identities Bloch struggles with throughout the story. Indeed, Brown maintains that Handke's story "is not about football as the title suggests, [...] it is about identity—who am I—and through what means, legitimate or otherwise, identity can be achieved."³⁷⁴ Brown, like most literary scholars, downplays the

Germany. While there are choice pieces that integrate athletic themes, like the works of Handke and Johnson works, only one or two pieces exist in each decade relating to sport. In the 1980s, for example, Ror Wolf's *Das nächste Spiel ist immer das schwerste* (1982), a collage work of pictures and interviews relating to soccer, represents a rare reference to sport during the 1980s. This piece, however, is not commonly considered a part of fictional literature. For further information, see Leis, *Sport in der Literatur*, Jacob, *Sport im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* and Fischer, *Sport als Literatur*.

³⁷² Manfred Durzak, *Peter Handke und die deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982) offers an extensive summary of this theme.

³⁷³ Manfred Mixner, *Peter Handke* (Königstein im Taunus: Athenäum, 1977) elaborates on the story's portrayal of modern identity and perception crisis.

³⁷⁴ Russell E. Brown, "Peter Handke's *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter*," *Modern Language Studies* 16.3 (Summer 1986) 299-300.

role of sport in Handke's work. The same is true of scholarship dealing with Johnson's novel *Das dritte Buch über Achim*. Scholars overwhelmingly understand the work as questioning the tension and conflict between East and West Germany after the Second World War, though there is little to no mention of sport in such analyses.³⁷⁵ Though it does not play the central role in either text, an investigation into the significance of each character as an athletic spectator would indeed prove worthwhile, as both Achim and Bloch return to sport by watching a cycling race and a soccer match respectively. As such, an examination of sport's role in these works, particularly an exploration of each character in relation to spectatorship and the spectacle, would prove a rich endeavor.

The tangential theme of sport can likewise be witnessed in film following the immediate postwar period, as evidenced by sport's minimal appearance in both Wim Wenders' and Peter Handke's cinematic adaptation of *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* (1972) and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* (1979). In much the same manner as the novel, cinema scholars have downplayed the role of sport in the film by Handke and Wenders, citing Bloch's former profession as representative of "the loss of meaning for the individual and a lost ability to convey either an inner or outer reality."³⁷⁶ Much like the original literary version, the role of soccer is attributed as one aspect of the greater problem Bloch experiences in creating his own identity. Fassbinder's film, on the other hand, is overwhelmingly understood as portraying the problems of Germany society after the Second World War that culminated with the student revolts of 1968. Sport only appears in the final scene of the film, whereby the radio plays commentary from the 1954

³⁷⁵ Gary Lee Baker, *Understanding Uwe Johnson* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999) 71.

³⁷⁶ David N. Coury, *The Return of Storytelling In Contemporary German Literature and Film: Peter Handke and Wim Wenders* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon, 1980) 60.

World Cup in Bern just before Maria's house explodes. To be sure, scholars have viewed the combination of the infamous soccer match in Bern and violence as one method through which the film "cinematizes the trope of victimization [in postwar Germany]. The use of the championship game [marks] the destruction of a troubled postwar household."³⁷⁷ Its role is arguably much bigger, however, if one considers the use of athletics by Lenz and the soccer match by Harig in relation to the question of fascist violence posed to both reader and listener. However, while sport does indeed exist in both the literature and cinema of the late 1960s and early 1970s, it has overwhelmingly been disregarded as an integral aspect of characters' lives. Following the Reunification of Germany in 1990, sport once again takes on a vital role in literature and film. Indeed, authors not only rejuvenated sport as a premise in fictional literature, they once again revitalized it as a means through which to question society by harnessing the themes established in the first half of the century.

II. "Aus, aus, aus! Das Spiel ist aus!"³⁷⁸

While my analysis has focused on the centrality of sport in literature and film of the early twentieth century, much can be garnered by examining literature of the late twentieth century in light of the themes addressed in this project. The complexities of sport persist in three tropes central to German literary imagination in the first half of the twentieth century: namely the complex of the commercialization of sport and upward mobility, sport and fascist utopia and sport involved in West German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. The complexes of sport revealed in this project establish themselves as subsequent themes in German literature

³⁷⁷ Elizabeth Heineman, "Gender, Sexuality, and Coming to Terms with the Nazi Past," *Central European History* 38.1 (2005) 44.

³⁷⁸ Hans Zimmermann, *Das Endspiel von Bern. Fussballweltmeisterschaft 1954*. (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2004).

after Reunification. Turning to the sport-centered literature of F.C. Delius and Elfriede Jelinek, I show the indelible centrality of the athletic literary themes I have addressed in this project. While Delius' *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* (1994) reworks to the problem of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* through sport first espoused by Lenz and Harig, Jelinek's *Ein Sportstück* transposes both the critique of commodified sport in Weimar literature and sport's fascist associations from literature and film of the Third Reich onto the contemporary stage.

Delius' *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* arguably represents the first German fictional piece to revolve around sport since Harig's "Das Fußballspiel" in 1962. The autobiographical narrative centers upon a young boy in the Cold War 1950s in Hessen as he experiences the 1954 World Cup victory of the German national soccer team. Delius' text has proven popular fodder for scholars and is most often understood as an attempt to "address and ultimately confound questions of national belonging"³⁷⁹ after Germany's reunification. To be sure, critical examinations credit the soccer match as a therapeutic means through which the boy is able to create his own identity.³⁸⁰ Such investigations likewise cite the match as a vehicle through which "the conservative restoration of [identity in] the 1950s"³⁸¹ can be understood. The connection between the boy and the game as posed in the novel, according to scholars like Stuart Taberner, represents the boy's victory in establishing

³⁷⁹ Brigitte Rossbacher "Unity and Imagined Community: F.C. Delius's *Die Birnen von Ribbeck* and *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde*," *The German Quarterly* 70.2 (Spring 1997) 151.

³⁸⁰ Leszek Żyliński, "Zwei Autobiographie als erlebte Zeitgeschichte: Zu zwei Erzählungen von Friedrich Christian Delius," *Das "Prinzip Erinnerung" in der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur nach 1989*, eds. Carsten Gansel and Pawel Zimniak (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2010) 94.

³⁸¹ Stuart Taberner, "'West German Writing' in the Berlin Republic," *Contemporary German Fiction: Writing in the Berlin Republic*, ed. Stuart Taberner (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) 75-6.

his own identity and furthermore the success and struggles of West German democracy after World War II.³⁸²

To be sure, Delius' text certainly returns to 1954 in an effort to address the fledgling democracy of West Germany in the wake of the Second World War. However, if, as this project has shown with the texts of Lenz and Harig, sport can be a tool in literature through which postwar society questioned the imminent existence of fascism in Germany, Delius' text seemingly re-conceptualizes this connotation after its abandonment in 1962. By returning to the iconic victory of 1954, Delius' work addresses the problem of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that plagued West German society in the years following National Socialism. The distinction in Delius' text, however, is that sport no longer solely represents the fascist aspects of the Nazi past, but rather it becomes the event through which the reconciliation with these ghosts is possible. While his work re-addresses the themes exposed by Lenz and Harig, Delius' nostalgic memories of sport offer a romantic vision of the past that ultimately strays from the hard politics presented in the immediate postwar period.

Delius' story engages with the theme of Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* through the boy's interactions with both sport and religion. The text begins as the young narrator, a pastor's son, awakes on Sunday morning. The description of the day's events relays the strict routine through the father's religious stringency. Indeed, the duties of the boy's day include being forcefully awakened by the nearby church bells,³⁸³ breaking bread by eating a moderate breakfast, being reminded of the child's duties of "Silltsitzen und

³⁸² Taberner, "West German Writing' in the Berlin Republic" 76.

³⁸³ Friedrich Christian Delius, *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1994) 8.

Bravsein”³⁸⁴ and the father’s refusal to allow him to play soccer “vormittags wegen der Sonntagsruhe und nachmittags wegen der Sonntagskleidung.”³⁸⁵ As Andrew Plowman rightly argues, the boy’s family life creates the image of the strict society facilitated by the desire to flee the memories of World War II. In analyzing the work, Plowman explains: “The text offers a vision [through religious imagery] of the stifling conformity of provincial restoration in the early Federal Republic. Indeed, Delius mobilizes a discourse of *Heimat* to set the small village in Hessen in relation to the state, fixing it as a microcosm of a Federal Republic shaped by prewar traditions and by war and its legacy.”³⁸⁶ That is to say that the society surrounding the boy exposes the ramifications left behind by the totalitarian regime. What is more, Plowman elaborates, the sentiment associated with the rigid pastor’s household represents the unwillingness of postwar society to diverge from their course away from the Nazi era and come to terms with its recent fascist past.³⁸⁷

Rather than utilized as an extension of Germany’s totalitarian past as sport was imagined in literature of the immediate postwar period, Delius’s text posits soccer as the means through which this negotiation with the past can be achieved. Sport in the text, as scholars have argued, provides the means for the boy to escape the strictly enforced society as portrayed by the boy’s religious family life.³⁸⁸ As the boy listens to the commentary from

³⁸⁴ Delius, *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* 20.

³⁸⁵ Delius, *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* 14.

³⁸⁶ Andrew Plowman, “Between ‘Restoration’ and ‘Nierentisch’: The 1950s in Ludwig Harig, F.C. Delius and Thomas Hettche,” *German Memory Contests: The Quest for Identity in Literature, Film and Discourse Since 1990*, eds. Anne Fuchs, Mary Cosgrove and Georg Grote (New York: Camden House, 2006) 261. See also Joachim Garbe, *Deutsche Geschichte in deutschen Geschichten der neunziger Jahre* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002) 111-126.

³⁸⁷ Plowman, “Between ‘Restoration’ and ‘Nierentisch’ 260-262.

the game in Bern, the religious connotations associated with his father's house and those of sport merge together, culminating in the production of athletic-religious-vocabulary. For example, the commentator continually exclaims: "Was für ein Wunder! [...] Gott sei dank!"³⁸⁹ when the German team nearly allows a goal. Furthermore, the commentator praises the goalkeeper Toni Turek for his performance, exclaiming: "Turek, du bist ein Teufelskerl! Turek, du bist ein Fußballgott!"³⁹⁰ Thus, the language of religion, which represents the framework for the strict society in which the boy lives, combines with that of sport to allow for the boy's release from the strict norms of his everyday. Indeed, the religious terminology and athletic vocabulary conjoin and exist simultaneously in the commentary. The realization of the fascist past in postwar society comes to a head upon the German team's victory. The boy listens as the two versions of the German national anthem are sung simultaneously—the forbidden verse of "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" can be heard, though it is overwhelmed by the new "Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit."³⁹¹ Indeed, both the past and postwar versions of the song are concurrently sung in the stadium. However, while the forbidden verse is voiced, it is overrun by the new anthem of West Germany as sung by both the national team and fans. Taking this into consideration, sport can be viewed as facilitating the West German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. While Delius, Lenz and Harig each engage with sport as a means through which to address West Germany's totalitarian history, Delius' text, unlike the work of Lenz and Harig, affords sport the role of negotiating the

³⁸⁸ Taberner, "West German Writing' in the Berlin Republic" 76.

³⁸⁹ Delius, *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* 93.

³⁹⁰ Delius, *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* 96.

³⁹¹ Delius, *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde* 116.

confrontation and acceptance of the past. Though the utilization of sport as a means to address Germany's totalitarian history begins with the literature of the postwar period, its restoration in literature after Reunification casts sport in a more adapted role.

Resurrecting the victory in Bern is a common trend in both German literature and film of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. One need only think of Sönke Wortmann's *Das Wunder von Bern* (2003) to be reminded of the prominent role of the 1954 World Cup in contemporary German cinema. The film follows the life of a young boy whose father, whom the boy has never met, returns from a POW camp after World War II. The struggles in family dynamic, most particularly between the boy and his father, offer insight into the problematic relationship between West Germany and its torrid past as well as the attempt at historical reconciliation. Jennifer Kapczynski explains the general understanding of the film in stating that it "ultimately aimed to make nostalgia normal again, that is, to overcome the postwar legacy of German guilt and the discrediting of the national ideal and to reactivate structures of positive national sentiment."³⁹² While scholars have argued that the return to the 1954 World Cup as a form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* begins with Wortmann's 2003 film,³⁹³ I argue that this German reconciliation with the past can first be seen through sport in Delius 1994 *Der Sonntag, an dem ich Weltmeister wurde*, which owes much to Lenz's novel and Harig's short story and *Hörspiel*.

While the athletic themes of the postwar period are re-addressed in Delius' text, the two remaining tropes of sport in literature discussed in this project come to light in analyzing

³⁹² Jennifer M. Kapczynski, "Imitation of Life: The Aesthetics of Agfacolor in Recent Historical Cinema," *The Collapse of the Conventional: German Film and its Politics at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Jaimey Fisher and Brag Prager (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010) 41.

³⁹³ See Kapczynski, "Imitation of Life," Alexandra Ludewig, "'Heimat, Heimat, über alles': Heimat in Two Contemporary German Films," *Studies in European Cinema* 5.3 (January 2009) 219-232 and Heineman, "Gender, Sexuality, and Coming to Terms with the Nazi Past" for more insight into this theme.

Jelinek's *Ein Sportstück* (1998). The play invokes the critique of capitalistic society through sport first espoused in Weimar literature and furthermore once more fuses sport with the National Socialist connections to Greek Antiquity and violent war. This totalitarian connection conjures a forceful link between fascism and sport reminiscent of Riefenstahl and Barthel and places it in contemporary society. Indeed, scholars like Allyson Fiddler have taken note of the totalitarian tendencies in Jelinek's play, citing the author's description of sport "not as a civilizing force, as some sociologists have theorized it, but as the embodiment of war in peacetime and, ultimately, as a symptom of proto-fascist enthusiasm for the strong, healthy body."³⁹⁴ What is more, the piece critiques the capitalistic state of contemporary society through its obvious abhorrence of "mass phenomena and [fascist] behavior as typified in sports today."³⁹⁵ Indeed, Jelinek's link between violent war and fascism as viewed through sport has not gone unnoticed by literary critics.

A forceful aspect of Jelinek's drama that rejuvenates the connection between fascism and sport in the present that has been omitted by secondary research is its utilization of Greek Antiquity, which harkens back to the carefully crafted ideal Aryan images first cemented by Riefenstahl. To be sure, the culture of the Third Reich promoted the unique Hellenic inheritance granted to the German race. It cannot be pure coincidence that Jelinek invokes the characters of Hector and Achilles playing tennis³⁹⁶ and narrates the play using an

³⁹⁴ Allyson Fiddler, "Sport and National Identity: Sports Plays by Elfriede Jelinek, Franzobel and Marlene Streeruwitz," *Blueprints for No-Man's Land: Connections in Contemporary Austrian Culture*, eds. Janet Stewart & Simon Ward (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005) 118. See also Maria-Regina Kecht, "The Polyphony of Remembrance," *Elfriede Jelinek: Writing Woman, Nation and Identity: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Matthias Konzett and Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007).

³⁹⁵ Linda C. DeMeritt, "Staging Superficiality: Elfriede Jelinek's *Ein Sportstück*," *Postwar Austrian Theater: Text and Performance*, eds. Linda DeMeritt and Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger (Riverside: Ariadne, 2002) 265.

³⁹⁶ Elfriede Jelinek, *Ein Sportstück* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1998) 123-130.

athletically clad Greek chorus. These key features of the work create a stark link between sport and its warring fascist past as well as between Nazi sport and its supposed Hellenic heritage. The play, however, transposes these ideals of Greek culture—the Greek warrior athletes and the chorus relaying the events of the play—into contemporary society. For example, the Greek chorus dresses in fashionable warm-up suits and tennis shoes (which prominently feature popular logos: “[...] adidas oder Nike oder wie sie alle heißen, Reebok oder Puma oder Fila oder so.”³⁹⁷) and Hector and Achilles discuss corporate strategies while dressed in fashionable and expensive tennis garb. In these scenes, the author juxtaposes the classic Greek ideals heralded by the Nazi party, and furthermore extolled by Riefenstahl in *Olympia*, with the rampant commodification and commercialization of the contemporary athletic world.

While the Greek warriors and chorus revive the role of fascism associated with sport in the Third Reich, the actions and appearance of these characters transpose this totalitarian history onto the capitalist society in the present. That is to say that these Greek figures likewise pose a stark critique of the commercialization and capitalization of sport in contemporary society. The two Greek heroes, for instance, intersperse themes of gruesome war alongside everyday topics in conversation, evoking the commonality of fascist violence in contemporary capitalistic society. For instance, Hector comments: “In unserer Nähe sind die Opfer gehäuft, wir steigen über sie drüber und gehen in den Umkleideraum. Nachher, wie gesagt, Sauna, Duschen, Umziehen.”³⁹⁸ Hector proceeds to discuss swimming, the Gulf War, jogging and the Trojan War as possible reasons for daring to leave one’s home, while

³⁹⁷ Jelinek, *Ein Sportstück* 7.

³⁹⁸ Jelinek, *Ein Sportstück* 135.

Achilles compares his most passionate desires with renewing one's parking permit.³⁹⁹ While Hector draws an obvious parallel between sport and violent war, Achilles poses a connection between contemporary life and social commercialization. War, death and capitalism, then, are not only conjoined but also considered commonplace by the two athletes, who simply ignore the violence in society surrounding them while engaging in sport. Expendability becomes the norm, suggesting that in today's society war and capitalism are as common as exercising.

Even the chorus has become a propagation tool for commercialization and blind obedience. It no longer simply narrates the story but is specifically clad in name-brand athletic gear, revealing the overpowering influence of capitalistic athletic society. The adaptation of these Greek references into contemporary situations divulges not only the commercializing and mass mentality sport fosters in society but also its blatant and rampant fascist tendencies. Indeed, through the combination of Greek characteristics and blind obedience, Jelinek warns of the resurgence of a totalitarian state through contemporary sport. What is more, these associations with fascism are combined with the experience of capitalism in the present, creating a stark connection to the corruption of sport in Weimar literature. To be sure, Jelinek's reprisal of sport in *Ein Sportstück* capitalizes on the associations set in motion between sport, fascism and Greek Antiquity initially crafted by Riefenstahl and Barthel during the Hitler regime as well as the corruptive dangers of commodified sport attacked in the literature of Brecht and Vischer. Revealing a continued relevance in contemporary society, sport is not only implemented in literature to connect issues of violence, war and fascism still surviving in society, but the author likewise criticizes

³⁹⁹ Jelinek, *Ein Sportstück* 124-125.

society's ever increasing capitalistic and commodified mindset through the mass appeal of sport. As such, an examination of these themes utilizing the resulting examinations of the works addressed earlier in this project can yield much as an aid in understanding not only this complex text but the athletic themes present in German literature of the late twentieth century.

III. "Nach dem Spiel ist vor dem Spiel"⁴⁰⁰

In each chapter of this project, I have examined how authors and directors attuned to the centrality of sport use literature and mass media to politicize sport. Though instrumentalized in radically different forms during each of the three periods discussed, literature's investment in exposing turmoil in society through sport continues to play a role in literary production today. "Sport ist der Nerv der Zeit" has explored the centrality of sport as a stage through which to both communicate critiques—as I have shown in the Weimar Republic and the immediate postwar period—as well as reinforce cultural ideology, as evidenced by the politicized literature and film of the Third Reich. The literature and culture of these three historical epochs expose the value of politicized sport in enabling, or furthermore hindering, societal critique. What begins as a form of battle cry against the sublimation of sport by elite powers in Weimar literature becomes reality during the Third Reich in that the political control of the upper classes corrupts the cultural value of sport as a revolutionary means. During this period, sport is employed to create the ideal Aryan image and reinforce morality in German citizens. In order to revive sport as a critical lens after fascism, it had to be re-implemented into literary culture after 1945 and reflect a desire to

⁴⁰⁰ Sepp Herberger qtd in Jürgen Heinemann, *Sepp Herberger: Ein Leben. Eine Legende* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1997) 102.

depart from the fascist past in an effort to begin anew. By studying such athletic themes, I reveal how literature sought to be politically relevant throughout the course of three radically different regimes by inciting or dismantling (as is the case in the Third Reich) social critique. While sport seemingly loses its literary place after 1962, literature after 1990 reinstates these established athletic themes in an effort to continue where previous athletic dialogues evaporated. As a tool in negotiating *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, sport continues in the vein Lenz and Harig first posited in literature after 1945. What is more, sport continues to serve as a means for societal and cultural critique in contemporary society, as evidenced by Jelinek's reinstatement of associations made in literature of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich in *Ein Sportstück*. To be sure, sport is not to be discarded as a second-class consideration, but rather its role in German literature acts as an essential lens in understanding social upheaval throughout the twentieth century.

This dissertation looks to sport in literature in three closely linked epochs in German history to reveal the politicized function literature attempted to achieve. While Weimar literature utilized sport to critique the societal landscape and question corruptive capitalistic norms, literature and film of the Third Reich harnessed sport to posit a totalitarian Aryan utopia. Moreover, the literary re-implementation of sport after 1945 was allotted the burden of creating a critical pedagogy of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Indeed, the literature of the postwar period divulges the memory politics of West Germany's struggle to confront the fascist ghosts of the past. By studying the discourse of athletics across these three distinct periods, each of which defines itself in terms of its discontinuities with the past, I have brought to light the unexamined continuities in the politics and aesthetics of German literature and mass media during the first half of the twentieth century through the centrality

of the theme of sport. In today's culture—an era obsessed by all things athletic—sport will continue to litter the pages of fictional literature. In order to realize its influence in the German literature of today, however, the centrality and progression of sport as a politicized tool in the past is imperative for understanding its future.

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