

Conclusion

In its exploration of the evolution of the literary trope of the Nazi, *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* has identified different applications of Nazi characters as ideological signifiers in the context of different political settings between 1920 and 1950. The adaptability of Nazi figures has become obvious, as well as their constructedness, which allows them to be introduced in a wide variety of plots and scenarios. Simultaneously, their adaptability reveals that they are disconnected from “reality,” events and historical facts, and instead are part of the scientific and literary imagination from which they originated in the first place. Through text analyses and discussions, this book establishes a paradigm for the production and use of Nazi figures and other literary stereotypes. The discussions revolve around a set of identifiable and predictable textual constructs and a typology that involves physical descriptions, fictional mental and emotional profiles, behavior patterns, and attire. For example, the blue- or grey-eyed, blond- or brown-haired male Nazi constructs are envisioned wearing either conservative clothes, regional costumes, or uniforms, complete with pins, medals, boots, and party and military regalia. Descriptions of their blond- or brown-haired female counterparts include plain hairstyles, simple dress, or regional attire. The ideal female Nazi characters wear no make-up and only simple, if any, jewelry, with the exception of the imposing blond companions of powerful Nazi males in antifascist writing; these women are adorned with flashy jewelry, wear expensive perfume, and occasionally dye their hair. Literary Nazi figures in Nazi texts as well as antifascist literature are constructed to evoke the Aryan profile referenced in racial science, *Rassenkunde*.

Since their emergence in the 1920s, Nazi figures have stirred the cultural imagination in positive and negative terms, depending on the specific political environment. They were shaped and reshaped in the ideological contests that raged in the interwar republics and continued beyond the defeat of the Third Reich when the Allied forces outlawed Nazi organizations and started re-education programs. Further disputes about National Socialism and the Nazis were fueled by the conflicts between the Western Allies and Russia, and during the Cold War, in the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, which endorsed divergent interpretations of the “recent past,” Nazi mentality, and the Shoah. At the turn of the millennium, only a few contemporaries of the Nazi era were still alive, while there was renewed interest in Nazi themes and characters. Thus, more recent literary Nazi stereotypes have been constructed on the basis of the earlier models, in the absence of an actual Nazi

regime. The thriving Nazi lore ensured that literary Nazi characters retain their appeal to this day.

The analyses presented here begin in political texts, where the aspirational Nazi ideal of the Nordic or “Aryan” male, originated. The program of the National Socialist Party from 1920 identifies the racial boundaries this decisive document draws in defining German nationhood and Nazi requirements for German citizenship. The concepts the party program presents in the abstract are fleshed out in a variety of texts, including anti-Semitic fiction, racial theory, propagandistic self-writing, and racialized cultural history. Artur Dinter’s anti-Semitic novel *Die Sünde wider das Blut* is presented as an example of the manner in which the notions of racial purity and the *Volk* (nation) are concretized. Dinter thematizes the struggle between Aryans and Jews in personal, historical, and cosmic dimensions, extending the concept of race beyond the human sphere to include racially defined angels and demons, and casts Jesus as Aryan. Referencing familiar nineteenth-century stereotypes, Dinter’s novel operates with a racialized typology of Germans and Jews and individual characters that served to concretize Nazi stereotypes in the decades to come. Concurrent with Dinter’s racist novels, the discourse of *Rassenkunde* (racial science) gained traction. Implied in its directions for the identification of racial types was a program of ethnic cleansing that would extend beyond the borders of Germany.¹ Insignificant typological and terminological deviations notwithstanding, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* by anthropologist Hans F.K. Günther complements and confirms the racial models Dinter embedded in his literary format. An examination of Günther’s work sheds light on the concept and function of race in the envisioned Nazi society. Dinter’s book includes illustrations, photographs “documenting” racial types, references to other racial theorists, and measurements of skulls and bones, all of which were intended to create the impression that the theory of race and culture was derived from scientific data. The human types that Günther qualifies as being fit for German citizenship coincide with the Aryans described by Dinter, with the exception that *Rassenkunde* casts a wider net to include an array of lesser Aryan “races” that do not measure up to the ideal Nordic type. Dinter and Günther are in complete agreement about the exclusion of Jews from German nationhood. Both authors define Jews as a separate race and describe them in the vilest terms as the physical and spiritual enemies of the Aryan. In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler blends the genres of autobiography and political propaganda in a narrative that personalizes political precepts. Like Dinter and Günther, Hitler references ultra-nationalist and racist sources

1 Martin, *Nazi-Fascist New Order*, 2–5.