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Letters into Exile: narratological strategies and identity-forming storytelling in the post-war correspondence of the Ernst Levin Collection (1946-1962)

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of epistolary research, research on ego-documents as well as cultural and literary studies of the fin de siècle, the interbellum period and the post-World War Two era in Germany.

In my thesis I conduct a textual analysis of a lengthy correspondence and thus aim to further fill this gap in working with letters. I examine the correspondence of painter Max Unold (1885-1964) and writer Reinhard Koester (1885-1956) with the Jewish neurologist Ernst Levin (1887-1975) and his wife Anicuta Belau (1886-1965) who emigrated to Edinburgh in 1933 and 1938.

The approach of undertaking a close reading analysis of letters has been undervalued in research. Letters have often been conceptualised as historical documents. While there is considerable merit to such work, it neglects the carefully crafted linguistic properties of such texts. Whilst a small number of previous works have taken on the approach of analysing the language of letters in order to gain insights into the writers' communicative goals, their sentiments and cultural frames, this thesis aims to further map out the use of linguistic tools.

I develop a new way of working with letters that provides insights into the writing patterns, literary devices, and linguistic strategies that letter writers use and what they seek to achieve by this. As I work with letters sent to those in exile by those who were not persecuted in the Third Reich and remained in Germany, I further make an original contribution to research by offering a different perspective on 'migrant letters'.

A close reading of the letter corpus identifies the strategies used by the letter writers and additionally discloses where these are borrowed from stylistically. My analysis illustrates how the letters function as platform for identity performances. With the thematic orientation of the individual chapters on spaces, the body, and the process of ageing, I also contribute to the linguistic discourse on these themes. Moreover, the focus on these topoi is valuable in further refining the dynamic and linguistic construction of the postwar friendship between Jewish émigrés and their friends who participated in the perpetuation of the Third Reich.

Lay Summary

I am investigating letters collected by Ernst Levin, a Jewish neurologist who emigrated from Germany to Scotland in 1933. I am particularly interested in the postwar correspondence of Ernst Levin and his wife Anicuta Belau with two of their friends who remained in Germany through the Third Reich, painter Max Unold and writer Reinhard Koester.

This thesis provides three analytical chapters in which I give the letters written to the Belau-Levins between 1946 and 1962 a close reading. Although a lot of scholars have worked on private letters, often they did so by approaching the letters as historical documents. My method points out the various features of the letters' texts and interprets the different tones, literary elements and writing styles, in summary, the strategies the letter writers used to create an image of themselves. My work with the letters of the non-Jewish friends who were not persecuted shows that in their correspondence with their emigrant friends they frequently used strategies that created distance to the narrated events. By closely analysing these strategies, my thesis demonstrates how the letter writers used the correspondence as a platform for identity performances. It therefore illustrates how enlightening and important a close reading analysis of private letters is and what valuable contributions this approach can make to (literary) history and research on letter-writing more generally.

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Introduction

Letter collections have proven to be valuable documents for historical research for many decades. This thesis builds on the richness of such ego-documents[1] and looks at identity-forming storytelling in the postwar correspondence of painter Max Unold (1885-1964) and writer Reinhard Koester (1885-1956) with their emigrated friends, the couple Anicuta Belau (1886-1965) and Ernst Levin (1887-1975). Using a methodology of close reading analysis, I will examine the letter writers' writing patterns, literary devices, and narratological strategies when the revival of their correspondence forced them to narrate their lives as witnesses of persecution, the Holocaust, wartime, and postwar Germany.

The approach of undertaking a close reading analysis of letters has been undervalued in research. My textual analyses of their linguistic qualities aim to fill this gap in working with letters and further to amplify thinking about different themes of cultural and literary history. Furthermore, by applying close reading methods to the epistolary text, I provide a new tool for any researcher interested in the linguistic properties of letters.

By exposing the narrative techniques of the writers in Germany, I also offer another perspective on an often-discussed topic: the correspondence of postwar émigrés who had been persecuted during the Third Reich. By focusing on the letters written to those in exile by those who were not persecuted and remained in Germany, by evaluating how they positioned themselves in their letters to their emigrated friends, I make an original contribution to this field and propose a new and different perspective on 'migrant letters'.

The analytical chapters approach the corpus from different vantage points by examining the narration of the body, spaces, as well as age and the process of ageing. My analysis can

[1] Defined as the following by Mary Fulbrook: "a source or 'document'—understood in the widest sense—providing an account of, or revealing privileged information about, the 'self ' who produced it." Mary Fulbrook and Ulinka Rublack, 'In Relation: The "Social Self" and Ego-Documents', *German History*, 28.3 (2010), 263–72, p. 263.

identify the letter writers' use of narrating personae which employ linguistic and narratological tools. I argue, these tools lead to an avoidance of certain topics and show the writers' unease regarding a narrating of their past.

The following introductory chapter is structured as follows: after indicating the significance of this thesis and the insights it provides, I will introduce its content and the corpus of letters I work with. I will then further specify my research aims and the questions I pose throughout the close reading analyses; following this, I give an overview of the field of epistolary research and the specific theories which have influenced my work. At the end of this introduction, I will outline the structure of the thesis.

Significance, focus, and contribution

The analyses in this thesis undertaken by means of a close reading approach will contribute to a broader understanding of the possibilities of letter writing, in particular, the linguistic strategies that can be employed in letter writing. By identifying the patterns in style through the analysis, I will offer an interpretation of how the studied individuals narrated the events of their lives, their friendship, and more generally the turbulent first half of the twentieth century within the frame of letter writing.

The letters provide not only insightful commentary on developments in culture, literature, and politics; they are, in their representation of a friendship, themselves part of history and, as texts, I understand them to be a deliberate game with literary movements. Such playing with literary movements and modes of expression are, I argue, part of the letters' function as platforms for identity performances.

This thesis works with a selection of letters sent to the country of exile to Ernst and Anicuta Levin by their friends Max Unold and Reinhard Koester who, of non-Jewish descent, were not persecuted and remained in Germany throughout the years of Fascist rule. My decision to

examine the 'non-persecuted' side of the correspondence originates in an aim to contribute to an underrepresented field.

Numerous scholars have successfully re-told the stories of those who were persecuted by the Nazi government, like the Jewish family of Ernst Levin who collected the correspondence discussed here. When I set my focus on the letters written by those who were able to stay in Germany through the Third Reich, I decided to scope the letters for different information. My work builds on what the academics who have worked on such 'micro-histories' have accomplished regarding the stories of how to 'get out' of Germany and subsequently how to 'get on' in the new exile home. It is due to their achievements that I can ask different questions in regard to the letters of the Ernst Levin Collection. This makes my project new as it examines the narratives of those who were not persecuted but eventually forced to narrate this identity postwar in their correspondence with persecuted friends.

I furthermore provide a new approach by using methods drawn from literary analysis and thus reveal the strategies employed by the letter writers, which sometimes draw on the literary discourse of the time (or of their formative years) as part of the performance of their relationship. The close reading method allows an identification of all features of the texts, such as rhetorical figures, structural elements, cultural references, narratological strategies and stylistic devices and thus enables the researcher to draw various conclusions regarding the writer's communicative goal.

This thesis therefore contributes methodologically and theoretically to epistolary research as it confirms prior findings, such as that letters can be carefully crafted texts, and provides another tool to use when working with letters as a source.

Insights

The analytical chapters are viewed from different vantage points (the body, spaces, age, and the process of ageing) and the kaleidoscopic synopsis of these provides important insights. I

will discuss the implications of my interpretations in the conclusion of this thesis but introduce the following overview here.

One of the overarching results that this thesis brings to light is that the letter writers created narrating personae which employed linguistic devices. This narrative strategy allows a tailored curation of their identities through the letters' texts and the whole correspondence. According to Liz Stanley an absence of face-to-face communication, as is the case with the corpus examined here, is not only a rarity, but it also enhances such construction and performance of the self.[2] In my thesis I confirm this and interpret the identity performing processes as deliberately curated. I further argue that this results in a manipulation of the readers' perception of the letter writers.

These arguments, the creation of a letter-writing persona and the performances of identities, build the foundation for the analysis undertaken in this dissertation. My identification of these narrative strategies produces valuable insights. The fact that the writers created a letter-writing persona reveals how all letters are carefully crafted pieces of writing and how such a creation enabled the writers to maintain control over their own performances.

I will refer to the letter writers' performance of identity in their correspondence throughout this thesis, therefore it is necessary to set out which definition or understanding of performance of identity I build on. Several disciplines of the humanities have been concerned with the matter of 'performance'. These disciplines range from linguistics as a first field to study the power of language regarding the performance of human practices with John Austin's lecture series *How to Do things with words* delivered in 1955 to history, cultural studies and, most recently, gender studies.[3] Before stating which analytical approach to the concept of performance I base my analysis on, it might be helpful to look at the *Oxford English*

[2] "Correspondences also typically exist in parallel with, rather than being an extension or echo of a face-to-face relationship. And while suggesting that a correspondence has 'a life of its own' is too strong a claim, apart from in exceptional circumstances where a relationship is confined to the epistolary, letter exchanges can express an important dimension absent from face-to-face encounters." Liz Stanley, 'The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences', *Auto/Biography*, 12 (2004), 201–235, p. 210.

[3] In these lecture series, Austin made the distinction between perlocutionary and illocutionary (speech) acts. He defines Illocutionary speech acts, which he also calls performative utterances as speech acts that *perform* an action by saying it whereas perlocutionary acts, also called constative utterances, merely report on actions. Cf. John Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 6.

Dictionary and its definition of the noun 'performance'. The dictionary offers the following interpretations:

> 1) the act of performing a play, concert, or some other form of entertainment, 2) the way a person performs in a play or concert, 3) how well or badly you do something; how well or badly something works, 4) the act or process of performing a task, an action, etc., 5) an act that involves a lot of effort or trouble, sometimes when it is not necessary.[4]

This shows the different readings of the term, but it is the definition listed under 4) that the theorists discussing the matter of 'performance' are mostly concerned with for it captures the assumption that all human practices, including daily life actions and tasks, are 'performed'. This understanding expands the term from its first meaning of acting in the context of an orchestrated event, like a play or concert, to the acting out and *performing* of tasks in everyday life. Postmodernist theorists have further examined the qualities of such performances and, within this context of how society creates identities and how social life is constructed, Judith Butler has introduced the further differentiation between performance and performativity.[5] With the term 'performativity' Butler aims to describe that there are categories of performance that are acted out without a performer, referring here to Nietzsche's concept of 'no doer behind the deed'.[6]

Butler emphasizes the importance of this distinction; she defines performance as executed by a "pre-existing subject" whereas performativity "contests the very notion of the subject".[7] According to Butler's understanding, performativity is the citing repetition of norms and not deliberately managed whereas performance is a controlled act. She argues that performance can undermine or criticize stereotypes, but it does not always do so. When I use the term performance of identity in the context of the analysed correspondence, I build on Butler's understanding of performance as acted out consciously by a subject. Whilst I argue that both letter writers use their letters as a 'stage' to perform their identity, I do, however, not ascribe

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[4] 'Performance', in *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, ed. by S. Wehmeier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 1123.

[5] For more on Butler's concept of 'performance': Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2011); Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[6] These observations are stated in Nietzsche's essay 'On the Genealogy of Morals' from 1887.

[7] Cf. Sara Salih, *Judith Butler* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 56.

to them a deliberately critical approach or one that subversively undermines or deconstructs the subject of their performance. My close reading analysis, however, makes the argument that their writing can be read as a playing with certain stereotypes (regarding old age or the identities of, for example, victim and perpetrator or artist and bourgeois). As I will show, such playing with stereotypes is inscribed by Koester and Unold in their correspondence throughout the decades.

I also build on and confirm Butler's argument that identities are performative in that they are constructed by language; Butler of course applies this to gender when she argues that it is not (gender) identity that 'does' language but language that 'does' gender.[8] While Butler makes her argument in regard to how cultural discourse ascribes identity, in my analysis I argue that language and narrative positioning construct, and therefore, *perform* a certain identity. My analysis shows a deliberate play with the power that language has in this regard and how the texts exhibit citations of normative, established identities or types. Interestingly, although in her studies Butler's performance theory is applied on the discourse of gender identities, Butler also argues that gender identities, for example femininity, are a (sometimes forcible) citation of a norm. In the analytical chapters of this thesis, I also interpret the identities performed in the correspondence as citations of normative or culturally manifested types: the ever-striving artist, the ridicule (or wise) old, the neurasthenic young lover, the distant intellectual and the uninvolved but suffering defeated German.

My analysis will show that the detected performances enhance a silence that, to a researcher of the twenty-first century, is one of the most noticeable and astonishing features of their postwar correspondence. Further, I will show how I interpret numerous letters as strongly influenced first by Expressionist and then by 'neusachliche' literature. Reasons for this phenomenon, I argue, lie in the letter writers' formative years but also the cold tone of 'Neue Sachlichkeit' (New Objectivity) which, as I will show, is ideally equipped to narrate times of crises. A discussion of my interpretations will initiate alternative possible readings and thus offer more possible contextualisations of the analysed materials. Furthermore, this thesis will demonstrate how both letter writers performed their identities as victims (of war) and as passive, uninvolved citizens (during the years of Nazi rule). Included in these performances is

[8] Cf. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 145.

the narration of postwar Germany as a space of sacrifice and the process of ageing as part of this enhanced collective misery, as well as the presentation of a successful career in the Bundesrepublik as an active form of moving on from the topic of German guilt.

The individual nuances of the letter writers' employing of literary genres and trends in their writing as well as more specific results gained through close reading analysis are discussed in the analytical chapters.

Corpus of letters

My research is motivated by the linguistic possibilities that letters provide. I build on the assumption that letter writers often perform deliberate identities through their narration to gain control of the created image of their selves. To orchestrate these performances, they use specific linguistic tools. In my analyses I am going to detect these tools and identify the topoi employed and features of certain literary trends. This will lead to a comprehensive understanding of:

1) The letter writers' executed performances.
2) How subjecting letters to a literary reading can map out and give further insight into the use of narratological tools and elements of established literary trends in epistolary texts.

My thematic focus in this thesis involves identifying writing that is based on particular topoi, which enables the mapping of literary developments and cultural perceptions that underpin the letters. In this way, the thesis additionally contributes to research on the representation of spaces (Chapter II), the epistolary figuration of the body (Chapter III), as well as the narrating of old age and the process of ageing (Chapter IV).

This thesis works with a selected corpus from the Ernst Levin Collection, held in the Lothian Health Services Archive in Edinburgh, which will be introduced further in Chapter I. All letters discussed in this thesis were sent to the same couple, Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin. The couple did not keep copies of their responses sent to Germany and so these were not part of the Ernst Levin Collection. For this reason, they do not form part of the analysis in this thesis. To further focus my research, I have selected the long-term correspondence of two of their close friends: painter Max Unold and writer Reinhard Koester. Both these men did, of course, maintain personal and professional correspondence with many other friends, colleagues, and publishers, but this thesis will look exclusively at their correspondence with the Belau-Levins.[9]

Several reasons led to my decision to select the letters of Max Unold and Reinhard Koester for analysis. Both men's correspondence with the couple spans one of the longest time frames (around forty to fifty years) of the entire collection, hence it allows insights into the entirety of their adult lives. Furthermore, their postwar letter exchange is regular, with twenty-one letters sent by Max Unold and twelve by Reinhard Koester in the examined time frame – the ten to sixteen years respectively, after the gap in correspondence during World War Two.[10]

The two men both converse with their former lover Anicuta Belau, but Max Unold was a close friend of both Belau and Ernst Levin, and therefore addresses them both. In contrast to some of Anicuta Belau's correspondence with female friends (that she maintained equally long and equally regularly) the two men offer more content on their perception of themselves and the 'times' they live(d) in and less on their relationships with partners or children. Such topics are equally interesting for research but not as revealing for the question I seek to answer. This specific question aims at how both letter writers deal with their own roles during the Third Reich and the ways in which they articulated the political situation within their friendship with the Belau-Levins.

[9] More of Max Unold's correspondences and personal papers are held in his hometown's archive 'Stadtarchiv Memmingen' and the 'MEWO Kunsthalle Memmingen' as well as the 'Literaturarchiv Stadtbibliothek. München', the 'Bayerische Staatsarchiv' and 'Literaturarchiv Marbach'. None of these collections contain any letters written by Ernst Levin or Anicuta Belau. Hardly any of Reinhard Koester's personal papers can be located; as little as five letters are kept in the 'Literaturarchiv.Marbach'. These are part of his correspondence with his publisher 'Suhrkamp' in 1953 and a correspondence with a female friend, Maria Krause, in 1919.
[10] Abbreviated to 'WWII' from here on.

Furthermore, both men are intellectuals and, while this does not differentiate them from most other correspondents in the collection, it is, however, their professions as artist and writer that do. Due to their education, they include elements of different literary tendencies in their texts which, in an analysis, offers precious insights into their cultural mindset.

Importantly, my examination of their postwar correspondence further expands our knowledge of the lives and work of painter Max Unold and writer Reinhard Koester. Research on both men has significant gaps regarding their creative periods as very young men and details on their lives during and after WWII and some of these gaps will be closed in this thesis.[11] Since both Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin as well as Max Unold and Reinhard Koester were deeply intertwined with the artistic and intellectual group of the 'Schwabinger Bohème' this thesis additionally provides insights into the dynamics and mentalities of this heterogeneous group.[12] Further gaps in various fields are filled through the analytical chapters, which look at the letters through different lenses. The section on research aims and questions in this introduction will address these different perspectives in detail.

This thesis is interested in the postwar relationship; therefore, the scope is deliberately defined by a set time frame. I examine a corpus of letters sent from Reinhard Koester and Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin from 1946 until 1956 and 1962 respectively. I consider four additional letters from the Wilhelminian era (from 1911 and 1912) as well as three letters written to the Levins during the Third Reich (from 1935, 1936 and 1938). These serve as context for some of the comments made in the postwar correspondence and allow me to refer to their younger years.

[11] These gaps regarding biographical knowledge on the two writers concern Reinhard Koester's early years in Munich–Schwabing and his later years in Berlin (1943-1956) and Max Unold's postwar years in Munich and the romantic connection between him and Anicuta Belau – with the identification of her as the woman frequently painted in his early paintings.

[12] The 'Schwabinger Bohème' emerged during the years of the fin de siècle, the correspondents of this thesis belong to a 'second generation' that met mostly around the years shortly before World War One and during the years of the early Weimar Republic. Munich, and especially its central district 'Schwabing' attracted around 3000 artists from all over Europe in the years around 1890. This was partially due to the comparably cheap rents and the great supply of art studios and partially due to the renowned 'Akademie der Schönen Künste'. Cf. Tanja Praske, 'Franziska zu Reventlow und ihr Sohn Rolf: Das Liebste auf der Welt in Gefahr', *Münchner Stadtbibliothek*, 2021 <https://blog.muenchner-stadtbibliothek.de/franziska-zu-reventlow-und-ihr-sohn-rolf/> [accessed 6 January 2022]. For a prominent, first person account of the times, read Erich Mühsam's autobiographic reportage from 1931: Erich Mühsam, *Namen und Menschen: Unpolitische Erinnerungen*, ed. Fritz Adolf Hünich (Leipzig: Volk und Buch Verlag, 1949).

The reason for the set time frame lies in an intriguing phenomenon. Although the four friends had been close since the 1910s, they did not see one another in person again after the Levins left Germany and emigrated to Scotland. This means that their correspondence from 1946 onwards is, as Liz Stanley would call it, an 'extension or an echo of a face-to-face relationship'[13] and thus it constitutes and represents their friendship throughout the postwar years until their deaths, which makes the letters themselves even more conclusive and meaningful. The questions I pose when analysing the letters as well as the different themes that emerge in them will be introduced in the following section.

Research aims and questions

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of epistolary research, research on ego-documents as well as cultural and literary studies of the fin de siècle, the interbellum period, and the post-WWII era in Germany. The principal aim is to illustrate the dynamics of a decades-long friendship that had been tested by the political turbulences of the first half of the twentieth century. I will particularly investigate the framing of these friends' postwar correspondence that forced them to deal with their own agency – past and present. Specifically, I will provide insights into the writing patterns, literary devices, and linguistic strategies that the letter writers used when portraying their lives during the Third Reich and in postwar Germany.

Building on my archival research, in the first chapter I primarily fill the gaps that had existed for decades in the biographies of the letter writers. I also introduce them as people and set out the dynamics of their relationships. In the subsequent three analytical chapters, I undertake a close reading analysis of the letters using different thematic lenses. As a result, the thesis will contribute to the general research on epistolary correspondence, literary tendencies of the early twentieth century and the cultural history of postwar Germany, through a focus on three themes and their associated topoi: the narratological representation of spaces, the figuration of the body (in texts), and the narrating of old age and the process

[13] Stanley, 'The Epistolarium', p. 210.

of ageing. This enriches the perspective on the general matter, which can be put in a nutshell as:

How did the correspondents who, for decades, had been bound in close friendship revive their communication after the long gap in correspondence between 1938 and 1946? What stories did they tell and how did they tell them to form their own identities? The thesis aims to enlighten exactly this matter by posing the following research questions when reading the letters:

1) What writing patterns, stylistic devices and narratological strategies do the letter writers employ when narrating life as witnesses of forced emigration, wartime, the Holocaust, and postwar Germany? How were they influenced by the cultural frame they were brought up in?
2) Within these patterns, what literary movements can be identified? In other words, what features of literary trends are used in the letter writers' texts?
3) What is the function of the letters within the writer-addressee relationship?
4) How do they serve as a platform for identity performances?
5) In what ways do the narrated themes dealt with in the analyses – spaces, the body and age(ing) – frame those performances?

Once my thesis has satisfactorarily answered this set of questions, it will also provide an answer to a more general question of interest: to what extent has the necessity of narrative positioning, initiated by the revival of their correspondence, forced the writers to deal with their own lives and actions during the years of Fascist rule in Germany? What are the writers' linguistic reactions to these forced (self-)reflections? This thesis, as a first foray into this correspondence, interprets these linguistic reactions as deliberate identity performances and a playing with certain stereotypes of literary history. The corpus of letters, however, offers other opportunities to engage the correspondence, and it would be good to see further interpretations in the context of different references of cultural history. Beyond the scope of the selected corpus, the methods and results of this thesis will prove to be relevant for other researchers of letters or ego-documents as they serve as an example of how to work with letters as sources of language and interpersonal relationships.

Publication background

Letters have been, and still often are, primarily conceptualised as reflections of moments in time that are later defined to be of historical significance. Many research projects work with letters in order to uncover valuable insights into the biographical paths of important figures and explore their interpretation of historical events.[14] However, the aim of this thesis is not to contribute to this discourse on prominent figures and their assessment of historically significant events.

The corpus of letters under examination was written by two men whose reflections on the events of their lifetimes are not of importance due to their prominence but due to the relationship maintained through the correspondence. Although both men made a contribution to art and literature, they have not been canonised like the famous or significant artists whose writings are the subject of scholarly discourse, as mentioned above.
To me, they are a hybrid of these more prominent figures and merely 'private' persons. The correspondence of both those who are feted and individuals who are unknown have received great attention in research. I have, to an extent, borrowed methods that have been well established in research on epistolary output.

The scholarly research on private persons' letters, however, is often aimed at gaining different insights than I am seeking in this thesis. Many scholars have gained precious insights into individuals' experiences during events of historical importance. The correspondence, diary entries or personal photographs of, for example, persecuted Jews in Europe, have received great attention over recent decades. The primary goal of most scholars in this area was to recreate the (often last) traces and journeys of the persecuted individuals or families. These studies have uncovered valuable information about the experiences of European refugees,

[14] To mention a few: *Ian Fairweather: A Life in Letters*, ed. Claire Roberts and John Thompson (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2019); Maija. Jansson, *Art and Diplomacy: Seventeenth-Century English Decorated Royal Letters to Russia and the Far East* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); John Rodden, *Becoming George Orwell: Life and Letters, Legend and Legacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020); Daniel R. Schwartz, *Between Jewish Posen and Scholarly Berlin: The Life and Letters of Philipp Jaffé* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

their journeys of flight and, for those who survived Nazi persecution, their lives in their new exile countries after the war.[15]

This thesis, although dealing with the same genre of text, does not contribute to this field of recreating the paths and experiences of refugees from the Nazis but illustrates the writing patterns of those who remained in Germany but maintained correspondence with their exiled friends. In other words, not only do the letter writers examined here belong to a different group with very different experiences, but my focus is on their language and ways of expressing past events, rather than on the particular course of events itself.

This means that the following analysis aims to pin down the discourse and linguistic techniques used in the correspondence under consideration. The illumination of certain biographical and historical aspects is, in a way, a bonus finding of this study, as the search for such biographical details is not the impetus of this research project.

Moreover, the letter writers in question have not merely been 'private', a term often used to refer to 'unknown' or 'ordinary' people, as they both pursued careers closely linked to the fine arts, something that comes to the surface in their written accounts.

This thesis therefore profits from and builds on prior research on ego-documents although not directly contributing to the much-studied field of biographies of prominent writers or the flight and exile experience of private persons persecuted by the Nazi government in Germany.

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[15] For research on such fates that has profited from 'ego-documents' see the following: Gur Alroey, *Bread to Eat and Clothes to Wear: Letters from Jewish Migrants in the Early Twentieth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011); Mark M. Anderson, *Hitler's Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight from Nazi Germany to America* (New York: New Pr, 1998); Nick Barlay, *Scattered Ghosts: One Family's Survival through War, Holocaust and Revolution* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); Rebecca L. Boehling and Uta Larkey, *Life and Loss in the Shadow of the Holocaust: A Jewish Family's Untold Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); *Every Day Lasts a Year: A Jewish Family's Correspondence from Poland*, ed. by Christopher R. Browning, Richard S. Hollander, and Nechama Tec (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Oliver Doetzer, *'Aus Menschen werden Briefe': die Korrespondenz einer jüdischen Familie zwischen Verfolgung und Emigration 1933 - 1947* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002); Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber, and Suzanne M. Sinke, *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Alexandra Garbarini, *Numbered Days: Diaries and the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Shirli Gilbert, *From Things Lost: Forgotten Letters and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017); Maiken Umbach, *Photography, Migration and Identity: A German-Jewish-American Story* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

Rather, it contributes to research on the little considered group of those people who remained in Germany and gave accounts of their lives during these and the postwar years in their letters sent to those in exile.

I aim to position my research within the context of literary analysis and epistolary research, and in the following chapters I will apply literary close reading analysis to the epistolary texts. For that reason, I will briefly sketch in the following the scholarly concepts developed within the field of epistolary research that have inspired and influenced this thesis and to which I aim to contribute.

Relevant works of epistolary research

In the past three to four decades, scholars not only from the humanities but from other disciplines, especially the social sciences, have focused on the textual, rhetorical, and performative aspects of letters. The scholarly efforts in this field are focused on the theoretical aspects of letters. The theoretical aspects of letters were sketched in detail as early as 1982, in a study by Janet Altman, in which she explores the properties of the letter in epistolary fiction.[16] Her work, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, is pioneering in its statements that letter novels have certain features and are influenced by a "coherent structure".[17]

Although Altman considers only fictional letters from epistolary novels,[18] her book provides a first examination of letters as texts: she states their temporal aspects, their inherent internal writer-reader relationship, as well as the content-shaping factor of the addressee. *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* lays the foundation for a serious study of epistolary literature as a genre. Albeit that Altman's book is limited in its study only of fictional letters, any later research on factual letters builds on its arguments.

[16] Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982).
[17] Cf. Altman.
[18] Her book examines epistolary novels of the western world with a focus on French novels and the eighteenth century– the most flourishing century for letter novels. On the whole Altman presents six features of letter novels that constitute a distinct genre as such (that of epistolary literature).

Another important contribution that my work profited from was presented by Elizabeth MacArthur in 1990. The author expanded the research on epistolary texts and combined factual and fictional letters for the corpus of her analysis on closure in the epistolary form.[19] In *Extravagant Narratives: Closure and Dynamics in the Epistolary Form*, MacArthur introduces an analysis of real letter correspondence and fictional epistolary works,[20] and proposes scholarship that is less focused on the closure inherent in narratives but looks at, what she names "epistolary openness".[21] As letters or epistolary novels are often without closure and written in present tense, MacArthur works with these sources to develop her alternative 'narrative model'.

It is, however, not specifically this aspect of closure or non-closure dealt with in the book that my research has profited from, but MacArthur's statements regarding the general approach of giving letters a literary reading. By literary, I mean the critical studying, evaluating, and interpreting of epistolary texts. MacArthur's analysis justifies this approach as she states that both fictional and real letters are carefully constructed and thus the latter cannot be classified as strictly non-literary.[22] This thesis takes this approach in its endeavour to analyse letters not as mere reflections but as deliberate constructions and, in so doing, considers, confirms, and elaborates on some of MacArthur's general theses on the epistolary form. Her statements such as the use of a letter-writing persona and the creation of plots for the story of their relationship[23] are confirmed in this thesis and the linguistic strategies embedded in these creations, an aspect that has received little attention so far, is further explored. MacArthur criticises that not many scholars have written "prolonged literary analyses of real correspondences"[24] which made her project, she argues, both uncertain and important.[25] This statement remains true to the day, and with my thesis I am contributing to a further filling of this gap in lengthy literary analyses of letter correspondences.

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[19] Elizabeth Jane MacArthur, *Extravagant Narratives: Closure and Dynamics in the Epistolary Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
[20] The discussed corpus comprises two early modern French novels (*Lettres Portugaises* and Rousseau's *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*) and the real letter correspondence between Horace Walpole and Mme du Deffand.
[21] MacArthur, p. 15.
[22] Cf. MacArthur, p. 117f.
[23] Cf. MacArthur, p. 119.
[24] Ibid., p. 118.
[25] Cf. ibid.

Few scholars have taken up the task of undertaking such a prolonged analysis since the publication of *Extravagant Narratives: Closure and Dynamics in the Epistolary Form* in 1990. Other academic contributions to the field since MacArthur's work have often been published in anthologies or as essays; of note is the anthology edited by David Barton and Nigel Hall[26] as well as the large-scale compendium of letter writers from 1600-1945, edited by Rebecca Earle.[27]

These works have made important contributions to research on letters; however, their aim is often to explore the social significance of letter writing and its developments or to reconstruct the realities of the letter writers' worlds. Lengthy close readings of the linguistic properties of letter correspondence remain a rarity, and some of the published essays provide not a single direct citation from the letter corpus they focus on.[28] Therefore, it remains true that, whilst there is a great interest in what research can gain from letters, the possibilities of lengthy literary close readings of correspondences have not been sufficiently utilised.

Among the few scholars who have worked on lengthy analyses of letter correspondences and whose works have influenced my work are Liz Stanley and Els Andringa. Liz Stanley's contribution to the development of this approach is so immense that the theorising of letters as texts has become a research field of its own[29] and in her essay on the subject, 'The Epistolarium',[30] she expresses her academic interests in letters and what one can find in their texts. Stanley proposes new themes to look for in letters. It is these theoretical aspects of letters – their dialogical and perspectival nature[31] (as their content changes with the

[26] *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, ed. by David Barton and Nigel Hall, Studies in Written Language & Literacy (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000).
[27] *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600 - 1945*, ed. by Rebecca Earle (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).
[28] For example in: David A Gerber, 'Acts of Deceiving and Withholding in Immigrant Letters: Personal Identity and Self-Presentation in Personal Correspondence', *Journal of Social History*, 39.2 (2005), 315–30. Albeit indicating that it has now become more common to look at letters not as documents but as texts and a source for use of written language more than a source for the actual events, Gerber does not provide a literary analysis of letters; his essay is a study of how communication in letters developed with the British immigrants of the nineteenth century and what they told and did not tell in letters. However, the author does not go into the analytical depths of showing their commonly used tropes or literary devices and their associated functions.
[29] Cf. Stanley, 'The Epistolarium', p. 202.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Cf. ibid., p. 203.

addressee), their eternal representation of the moment of writing,[32] their signifying qualities (as they signify the writer-reader-relationship and the letter writer herself)[33] – to name just a few, which my analyses build on. In my research I am interested in the same aspects and therefore have drawn extensively from the insights that Stanley's work provides into the properties of letters. Stanley's specifications on the complex textual structures of letters have provided comprehensive ways of understanding these materials prior to my analytical work and are useful to anyone working with epistolary texts.

In the analytical chapters of this thesis, I follow Stanley's statement that letters can be performances of the self by the writer. Stanley furthermore confirms Janet Altman's statements on the content-shaping factor of the addressee, who she names "a writing self in waiting".[34]

Stanley establishes further that all correspondence and especially if over a long time, involves textual construction of a distinctive 'world' with internal features, typical consistencies, characteristic modes of expression, certain figures or things and persons known in common.[35] Herewith she gives another reason for dealing with lengthy correspondence as I do in this thesis. Furthermore, my research examines letters as constructs of relationships not just reflections of these, something that is, according, to Stanley, relatively unique. I am building on her work when I state that I look at the way letters frame relationships and how this develops, and when I aim to identify a specific voice of a letter writer, his or her "characteristic style (…) and how all of these things develop and change over time".[36] Liz Stanley has since developed her thoughts on letter correspondences and written numerous essays[37] on her extensive work on the letter correspondence of Olive Schreiner,[38] South African writer and

[32] Cf. ibid., p. 208.
[33] Cf. ibid., p. 209.
[34] Ibid., p. 212.
[35] Cf. ibid., p. 214.
[36] Stanley, 'The Epistolarium', p. 224.
[37] To name just a few, the most influential for my research in addition to 'The Epistolarium': Margaretta Jolly and Liz Stanley, 'Letters as / Not a Genre', *Life Writing*, 2.2 (2005), 91–118; Liz Stanley, 'The Epistolary Gift, the Editorial Third-Party, Counter-Epistolaria: Rethinking the Epistolarium', *Life Writing*, 8.2 (2011), 135–152; Liz Stanley, Andrea Salter and Helen Dampier, 'The Epistolary Pact, Letterness: And the Schreiner Epistolarium', *A/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, 27.2 (2012), 262–293; Liz Stanley, 'The Death of the Letter? Epistolary Intent, Letterness and the Many Ends of Letter-Writing', *Cultural Sociology*, 9.2 (2015), 240–255.
[38] For more information on Liz Stanley's work and publications or for access to the Olive Schreiner Collection see : https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?page=318 [last accessed 14 February 2022].

women's rights activist, which marks a milestone in the academic treatment of long letter correspondences.

Els Andringa has contributed further to this discourse with one essay[39] and a book[40] on the literary output and letter correspondences of German writers in Dutch exile. Although her book offers a lengthier analysis, her essay 'Poetics of Emotion in Times of Agony: Letters from Exile: 1933–1940', has provided additional fruitful inspiration for this thesis. The essay explores the expression of emotional experiences in private letters. Andringa's examination stands out because it provides linguistic, stylistic, and narrative studies of the epistolary corpus. This approach is very similar to the point of origin of my work and confirms how fruitful a linguistic analysis of letter correspondences can be.[41] Additionally, this thesis has profited from Andringa's observations on the "communicative goal",[42] which, she states, is often the motivational factor to tell a story in a certain way. In the following analytical chapters I build on this statement. My research furthermore illustrates and thus confirms Andringa's thesis that professional writers (and, I would argue, intellectuals with a humanistic education) are capable "of reconstructing and transforming their personal experience into an affective 'drama' in accord with their communicative goal."[43] Whilst Andringa focuses on letter writing during "times of agony", my thesis examines the letter writing of what could be named 'times of recreation' following such times.[44]

As mentioned, I follow the same approach of close reading analysis to identify possible linguistic strategies of the letter writers (undertaken to achieve a certain "communicative goal");[45] however, the nature of the corpus I work with differs drastically from Andringa's. As she is interested not only in the letters but also in the literary output of the writers in exile,

[39] Els Andringa, 'Poetics of Emotion in Times of Agony: Letters from Exile, 1933–1940', *Poetics Today*, 32.1 (2011), 129–169.
[40] Els Andringa, *Deutsche Exilliteratur im niederländisch-deutschen Beziehungsgeflecht: Eine Geschichte der Kommunikation und Rezeption 1933 - 2013* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).
[41] Andringa states such an importance of literary analysis of epistolary texts as follows: "In their own right, they [the letters] all show the individual craftsmanship of their authors in the way they transform the experience into words and match emotional expressiveness with communicative intention." Andringa, 'Poetics of Emotion in Times of Agony: Letters from Exile, 1933–1940', p. 165.
[42] Cf. ibid., p. 152.
[43] Ibid., p. 152.
[44] Of course, this refers to the moment of writing, the content of the letters discussed here often displays those 'times of agony'.
[45] Andringa, 'Poetics of Emotion in Times of Agony: Letters from Exile, 1933–1940', p. 152.

she focuses strictly on renowned and, in their day, already well-known authors. In her article from 2011,[46] her focus is on letters by Hermann Broch, Alfred Döblin, Annette Kolb, René Schickele, Joseph Roth and Stefan Zweig.[47] As she says herself, these prominent and literary authors' writing skills exceeded the average letter writer's skills, [48] a factor similarly applicable to the letter writers considered in this thesis. A distinction, however, needs to be made here that shows how the insights provided on the following pages are even more authentic and thus insightful.

As Andringa elaborates, letter writing was a recognised genre in twentieth century Germany (inspired by the iconic letter correspondence of the 'Weimarer Klassik' between Goethe and Schiller). Thus, the author comes to the conclusion that some of her selected letter writers not only deliberately started up certain correspondences to ensure posthumous fame but also preserved the received letters and copies of their own to ensure they would enrich posterity.[49] Such behaviour has an effect on the correspondence's content as the letter writer envisions an audience beyond the letters' intended first reader (addressee) during the process of writing and accordingly shapes their content deliberately with outside and later readers in mind.

As neither of the letter writers examined here fall into the category of 'prominent person', meaning they were not famous or significant to a certain degree at a certain time, it is to be assumed that neither of them wrote their letters sincerely hoping for posthumous fame[50] deriving from their written account – on the contrary, both men must have expected their letters never to be read again after the reading by their intended recipients. In my opinion this is one of the enchanting features of private correspondence between 'ordinary' people, albeit literary and intellectual ones. Thus, in the following examination I confirm some of

[46] Her book from three years later also deals with the correspondence of merely famous literati and their publishers, Cf. Andringa, *Deutsche Exilliteratur im niederländisch-deutschen Beziehungsgeflecht: Eine Geschichte der Kommunikation und Rezeption 1933 - 2013*.
[47] Further examples are from Thomas Mann, Kurt Schwitters, Irmgard Keun, Klaus Mann, Arnold and Beatrice Zweig and Helene Weyl, Walter Benjamin, and Anna Seghers.
[48] Cf. Andringa, 'Poetics of Emotion in Times of Agony: Letters from Exile, 1933–1940', p. 135.
[49] Cf. ibid., p. 136.
[50] Of course, this statement bears some speculation; both men, and especially Max Unold, as their letters show, trusted in their own artistic abilities and were self-confident enough to think their output was 'worth' being conserved after their deaths. It is, however, highly unlikely that they truly believed their letters were going to be archived.

Andringa's points (e.g., the deliberately crafted nature of the letters and their inherent devices "deployed to fulfil certain communicative functions and goals"[51]) but additionally prove that these features do not merely apply to famous novelists but also to literary people who had little reason to imagine posthumous attention. Therefore, these individuals' correspondences promise a more intimate insight into their reflections whilst their texts demonstrate equally constructed linguistic properties, as I will show in the following analysis.

Structure of thesis

Chapter I of this thesis lays the foundation for all following chapters. It provides the justification for why a close reading analysis of this particular letter correspondence is valuable and enlightening. Furthermore, it fills biographical gaps in the research on the two artists, especially regarding Reinhard Koester's early years in Schwabing and his later years in Berlin (1943-1956), Max Unold's postwar years in Munich and the romantic connection between Max Unold and Anicuta Belau – with the identification of her as the woman frequently painted in his early paintings.

In Chapter II, the first of the analytical chapters, I conduct a textual analysis of the representations of spaces in the postwar letters of Koester and Unold. In this chapter I first identify a letter-writing persona in the texts and then explore their creation of certain narratives as well as their shaping of identity performances. This crucially reveals the inscribed metaphorical and metonymical function the narrated spaces demonstrate in the context of both wartime and postwar life in Berlin and Munich.

In Chapter III, letters from prewar and postwar years are examined from the vantage point of narrating the body, illness, and injuries. Whilst Chapter II and IV exclude the letters from earlier years (before World War One),[52] this chapter takes their representations into account.

[51] Andringa, 'Poetics of Emotion in Times of Agony: Letters from Exile: 1933–1940', p. 163.
[52] Abbreviated to WWI in the following.

In addition to developing my arguments from Chapter I this chapter argues that the material shows a continuity in the use of both Expressionist and 'neusachliche' elements and exemplifies the letter writers' emphasis of a cold and distant tonality. The chapter additionally increases our knowledge of the two men's (romantic) relationships with Belau and how they developed, which is reflected in the portrayal of their bodies.

Chapter IV investigates the narrating of old age and the process of ageing in the postwar correspondence. I argue that the writers employ topoi that often link back to established stereotypical depictions of age in literature. I further interpret their narrating of age as a reference to elements of Expressionism, Naturalism, and 'Neue Sachlichkeit'. The performance of a deliberate identity, which is, I argue, inscribed in all the analysed letters, gains a different urgency with older age, which interestingly has been classified before as a textual feature of 'old-age style'[53] in what has been called 'life review'.[54] The writing strategies detected in the previous chapters, such as the use of a distant tonality and other distancing tools, are confirmend and further illustrated in this chapter.

In the conclusion I draw the analysis of the topics represented in the four chapters to a close and summarise how they, collectively, contribute to a profound understanding of these figures' epistolary representations of their biographies, their decades-lasting friendship, and of their (performed) identities against the backdrop of war and postwar realities during the first half of the twentieth century. The conclusion further outlines how this thesis' contribution filled an existing gap in working with letters and, at the same time, suggests directions for further research on the Ernst Levin Collection's materials and on private correspondence more generally.

[53] Cf. Stuart Taberner, *Aging and Old-Age Style in Günter Grass, Ruth Klüger, Christa Wolf, and Martin Walser: The Mannerism of a Late Period* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2013).
[54] Cf. ibid., p. 15.

Chapter I: Introducing the Ernst Levin Collection and the letter writers Max Unold and Reinhard Koester

Aim of the chapter

In this chapter, I will introduce Ernst Levin and Anicuta Belau and their friends Reinhard Koester and Max Unold whose post-WWII correspondence with the Levins serves as the primary source for the research undertaken in this thesis.

It is the aim of the following chapter to give an overview of the letter writers discussed in this thesis. An understanding of their relationships with one another and their letters' recipients (the Belau-Levins) builds the base for the close reading of their epistolary output that I undertake. I will begin this chapter by introducing the Ernst Levin Collection. Subsequently, I will portray the letters' recipients and collectors of the correspondence, Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, their upbringing, and formative years as well as their emigration to Edinburgh in 1933 and 1938 respectively.

In the main part of this chapter, I will discuss the lives and relationships of both letter writers Reinhard Koester (1885-1956) and Max Unold (1885-1964). I will introduce both separately and provide an overview of secondary literature used in addition to the knowledge I gained from my own archival research.

The Ernst Levin Collection

The Ernst Levin Collection contains personal papers created and collected by Jewish neurologist Ernst Levin, who emigrated from Germany to Scotland in 1933.[55] He and his non-Jewish wife Anicuta Belau, who eventually followed him and their, then teenage, daughter Anne-Kathrin[56] into exile in 1938, had both assiduously collected their personal correspondence, with the earliest letters dating as far back as the 1890s. These personal documents had been moving with Ernst and Anicuta from Berlin and Bucharest where they grew up, to Heidelberg, where Ernst first went to university, to several different apartments in Munich and eventually to Edinburgh where they both lived for the last thirty years of their lives after their emigration. After Ernst Levin's death in 1975, their daughter Anne-Kathrin inherited her parents' belongings.

The various letters had been preserved by Anne-Kathrin Levin and her husband Arnold Myers, Professor for Brass Instruments at the University of Edinburgh since Ernst Levin's death in 1975. The couple had married in Edinburgh, when Anne-Kathrin was over 50 years of age, shortly before her father's death. Anne-Kathrin Levin, who died in a car crash in April 1979, left her family's extensive letter collection to her British husband, who, in 2015, donated Ernst Levin's personal papers to the Lothian Health Services Archive,[57] Centre for Research Collection at the University of Edinburgh. These personal papers were kept in numerous boxes including letter correspondences and photographs. The documents of the Belau and the Levin family originate from Berlin, Cambridge, and Edinburgh, as well as to places as far away as Haifa and New York.[58] The LHSA recognized the significance of these personal papers and consequently preserved them, too.

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[55] Abbreviated to EL Collection from here on.

[56] Anne-Kathrin Levin (1919- 1979) remained in Germany with her Catholic mother, when her Jewish father, Ernst Levin, emigrated to Scotland in 1933. In the spring of 1936, after she had been classified as what the Nazis called 'Halbjüdin' with the Nuremberg laws of 1935, she followed her father into exile. Anicuta Belau herself stayed in Munich until 1938 and then joined her family in exile.

[57] Abbreviated to LHSA from here on.

[58] The Ernst Levin Collections holds material in German, English and French. It spans a period from the 1890s to 1975. Numerous letter writers can be discovered in the EL Collection, it thus provides many opportunities for ongoing research beyond the scope of this thesis. Other materials kept in the EL Collection that remain uninvestigated in this thesis are outlined below.
Ernst Levin's correspondence with siblings and other relatives, which reveals the Levin family's attitude towards Zionism and emigration to Palestine where the youngest brother Walter had emigrated in the interbellum period. More of Levin's relatives emigrated to Palestine (who carried the last name 'Treidel') during the Third Reich. Not all of Levin's relatives survived the Holocaust. His sister Margot Levin (married

The four friends whose correspondence is up for examination here – Belau, Levin, Unold and Koester – met during their different career paths at universities in Munich at the beginning of the twentieth century. All three men went to universities – Ernst Levin studied medicine, Koester law, and Unold began to study philosophy but later changed to art at the renowned Kunstakademie in Munich. Anicuta Belau studied art in Utrecht and, as her name in a student list of the 'Münchner Fotoschule' proves, took more art classes during the winter semester 1916/1917.[59] Their lifelong friendship takes branched paths, often tangled up in complex love triangles, disrupted by the three men's WWI stationing, temporarily estranged after the Levins' forced emigration during the Third Reich and eventually reunited through, at first cautious, epistolary correspondence after WWII between their new homes: Munich, Berlin and Edinburgh.

name Kantorowicz), who still resided in Berlin in the late 1930s to look after their frail mother Nathalie Levin, began making attempts to leave from 1938 onwards. The collection contains many letters exchanged between Margot and Ernst, especially from the period after she was not permitted to emigrate to Palestine to stay with her daughter Ruth Treidel, and between Ernst and his niece Ruth, who discuss the increasingly hopeless situation of Margot and Nathalie in Berlin. Levin's mother Nathalie died in a Jewish hospital in Berlin in 1942, while his sister Margot was deported and killed in Riga in 1942.
Furthermore, the collection reveals Ernst Levin's experiences in his own emigration to Scotland. These are recounted in many letters back to Germany and in his professional correspondence with medical colleagues in Edinburgh. His emigration, the organisation of moving his belongings to Scotland, his first months in Edinburgh without an income, his time without his family and his struggles to thrive in his profession as a neurologist in a different country can all be traced in the available materials. With the start of the war, Levin was interned at Douglas in the Isle of Man from 5 May until 5 September 1940. The friends he made during his internment and his reintegration into work after his release are documented in his letters to his family in Edinburgh and correspondence with other interns, which he maintained in the years to follow.
Other sets of correspondence that have merely been touched on in my thesis but certainly deserve more in-depth analysis are, for example, the (love) letters exchanged between Anicuta Belau and several men and women during the 1910s but also during her separation from Levin from 1928 until her emigration in 1938. Furthermore, any researcher interested in WWI letters will find many of these sent to Anicuta Belau but also exchanged between Levin and his brother and parents.

[59] A list of all students from 1900 to 2000 is included in: Rudolf Scheutle, *Lehrjahre, Lichtjahre: Die Münchner Fotoschule 1900-2000* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2000) Anicuta is listed as "Anna Belan" (instead of her correct name Belau) as a student in the autumn/winter of 1916/17.

Both Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin were friends with many artists and other intellectuals before and after WWI, including the poet Joachim Ringelnatz,[60] Erich Mühsam,[61] and the two men discussed in this thesis, Max Unold and Reinhard Koester.

Joachim Ringelnatz and Erich Mühsam both died as early as 1934 (Mühsam was killed in the concentration camp Oranienburg)[62] but Ernst Levin maintained a regular correspondence with Ringelnatz's widow Lona Boetticher (also known as 'Muschelkalk') until the 1960s. By then Boetticher had made her own career as a translator for renowned publishing houses Rowohlt and Suhrkamp.[63] This correspondence is also kept in the EL Collection.

This Bohemian friendship circle in fin de siècle Munich was part of the more progressive aspirations positioning themselves against the bourgeois conventions, which were perceived as too restrictive by the young intellectuals. Such sentiments are for example expressed in the discourse of the 'Lebensreform';[64] the group that the correspondents belonged to is now referred to as *Schwabinger Bohème*. In the next section I will briefly introduce the letters' recipients and collectors of the correspondence, Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, before moving on to the biographies of the letter writers.

[60] Joachim Ringelnatz (1883-1943), born as Hans Bötticher, was a writer and painter. He is famous for his Expressionist humoristic and grotesque writing. Ringelnatz was banned from writing by the Nazis shortly after 1933 and died of tuberculosis in 1934. Ringelnatz's widow Lona 'Muschelkalk' Bötticher, who later married medical doctor Julius Gescher, a friend of Koester, Levin and Unold, remained in contact with all correspondents discussed in this thesis beyond her husband's death and until the 1960s.

[61] Erich Mühsam (1878-1934) was a German-Jewish essayist and anarchist. Mühsam supported ideas of a 'social revolution' of the 'Lumpenproletariat' ('the proletarian subclass'). Mühsam, who had spent his young years in Berlin, moved to Munich in 1908. He played a vital role in the revolutionary movements after 1918 and was one of the rulers of the 'Bayerische Räterepublik' ('Bavarian Soviet Republic'). Mühsam was arrested in February 1933 and imprisoned in several concentration camps. He was killed in the Oranienburg concentration camp in July 1934.

[62] The Oranienburg concentration camp, in which mostly political dissidents were imprisoned, was closed in 1934 and reopened as *Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen* in 1936.

[63] Lona 'Muschelkalk' Gescher (born as Leonharda Pieper 6.11.1898), the widow of Joachim Ringelnatz who gave her the nickname 'Muschelkalk'- an expression often used in his texts- was also living in Berlin after WWII and was a close friend of Reinhard Koester until his death. Lona Gescher died in Berlin on 26.2.1977.

[64] For more research on the *Lebensreform* movement and more generally on topics such as sexuality in the 20th century see: *Die Lebensreform: Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, ed. by Kai Buchholz, Ritag Latocha, and Hilke Peckmann (Ausstellung, Darmstadt: Häusser, 21.10.2001 - 27.2.2002); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Wolfgang R Krabbe, *Gesellschaftsveränderung durch Lebensreform: Strukturmerkmale einer sozialreformerischen Bewegung im Deutschland der Industrialisierungsperiode*, Studien zum Wandel von Gesellschaft und Bildung im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, vol. 9 (Göttingen: Brill, 1974); John A Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism, and Conservation, 1900 - 1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin

The exchange with their friends had been important to Anicuta and Ernst Levin during their younger years in Munich but Levin's later letters, written by him as a man of over seventy years, are also proof of his humanist education and wide interest in arts and literature. Such a 'Geisteshaltung' had certainly been rooted in Ernst Levin by his upbringing in the Levin household. Levin's father, Willy Levin,[65] was a successful and well-known man in Berlin at the turn of the century, a businessman and patron of the fine arts. Willy Levin had established the Levin household, then located on Lützowufer[66] in the 'großbürgerliche' area of Berlin-Tiergarten, as a salon for intellectual exchange. All five children were granted piano lessons by the renowned composer Hans Pfitzner, and, amongst many others, composer Richard Strauss was a frequent guest.

Ernst Levin was born in 1887 in Berlin to his wealthy bourgeois parents Natalie (b. Harff 1861-1942) and Willy Levin (1860-1926). Willy Levin's prosperity resulted from a successful textile firm and his wife Natalie contributed considerably to the family wealth, with, as Levin notes in 1956, 3 million Mark (ca. 1880).

The Jewish family was well known in fin de siècle Berlin and entertained relationships with many reputable friends. Richard Strauss dedicated his opera 'Elektra'[67] to his friends Willy and Natalie Levin.

During the restitution claim process, sixty-nine-year-old Ernst Levin was asked to describe to a lawyer in Berlin, who had been commissioned to value the Levin's inheritance, the level of affluence his family had lived in during the years of his upbringing. Levin describes not only

[65] For further reading on Willy Levin (1860-1926): Christian Coester, *Richard Strauss im Briefwechsel mit Hans Sommer, Hermann Bahr und Willy Levin: mit ergänzenden Korrespondenzen von Pauline de Ahna-Strauss, Antonie Sommer, Anna Bahr-Mildenburg und Franz Strauss* (Mainz: Schott Music, 2019); Dietrich Kröncke, *Richard Strauss und die Juden: Jüdische Freunde, Dichter und Musiker*, vol 1 (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2021).
[66] The Levins lived in Lützowufer 25 at the time of Ernst Levin's birth and until 1900. In 1900 the family moved to a grand villa in Hohenzollernstraße 7 in Berlin-Zehlendorf.
[67] Richard Strauss' opera *Elektra* was first performed at the 'Königliches Opernhaus' in Dresden in 1909. The libretto is written by Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

their luxurious lifestyle but confirms their home as being a meeting point for artists and intellectuals of the fin de siècle. He writes:

> Das neue Heim wurde der Treffpunkt von Kuenstlern [sic], Schriftstellern, Komponisten, Superintendanten der kgl. Opernhaeusern von Berlin, München, Dresden, Wien und Stuttgart, wenn die Erstauffuehrunge der Werke seiner [Willy's] Freunde besprochen wurden.[68]

Willy Levin financially supported very renowned figures of the fine arts, as his son sums up in the letter to lawyer Karl Leonhard from 1956:

> Zu jener Zeit entstand die lebenslaengliche Freundschaft mit RICHARD STRAUSS, HANS PFITZNER und MAX REINHARD [sic] die damals alle noch schwer zu kämpfen hatten und von meinem Vater unterstuetzt wurden. Dies sind historische Tatsachen, die sie jederzeit in Buechern wie dem Briefwechsel STRAUSS-HOFFMANNSTHAL und der PFITZNER Biographie von ABENDROT, oder den Erinnerungen von BRUNO WALTER entnehmen koennen.[69]

These passages refer to Ernst Levin's father's role as an important patron of the fine arts and their home in Berlin as a prominent salon at the turn of the century. The most prosperous years of the Levin family can be defined as those from 1900 to 1914 when they lived in a grand villa in the city's elegant west side.[70] When Ernst Levin married Anicuta Belau in 1917 he was granted 200.000 Reichsmark and the event made the occasion to distribute part of the inheritance between the five siblings. Willy Levin's business and wealth suffered from the rising inflation after WWI and, although the Levins managed to maintain their grand home until 1926, the years after his death in November 1926 were characterized by continuing adjustments to a more modest lifestyle.

Ernst Levin had four siblings; his youngest brother Walter, who suffered from Polio, committed suicide in 1923 in Palestine where he had emigrated to shortly after WWI. Levin's sister Gertrude died as a young mother of two children in 1932, his second sister Margot was killed by the Nazis in Riga in 1942 after she had stayed in Berlin with their elderly mother Natalie.

[68] Ernst Levin to Karl Leohnhard, 28.6.1956, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 20 (ii).
[69] Ibid.
[70] Hohenzollernstraße 7 in Berlin-Zehlendorf.

Natalie Levin died after years of poverty in a hospital in Berlin 1942. She is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin-Weissensee.[71]

Ernst Levin's brother Kurt was the only one of his siblings who lived beyond the war. Kurt and his family emigrated to Cambridge, England in 1934, shortly after Ernst Levin had emigrated to Edinburgh. After his emigration to Britain, Kurt (who spelled his last name 'Lewin') worked as a chemist and died in England in 1957.

After having qualified as medical doctor in 1911, Ernst Levin lived and worked in Munich. He met Anicuta Belau shortly before WWI, which he spent stationed at the Western Front. According to the letters preserved in the EL Collection, the couple met during the time of Anicuta Belau's relationship with painter Max Unold between 1910 and 1915. Several 'Feldpostbriefe' during WWI were sent to Belau by both Levin and Unold and even by a third man, her former lover Reinhard Koester, who was stationed in Cologne and Bonn during most of the war. Levin's almost daily letters to Anicuta Belau eventually won her love and Belau, the daughter of successful architect Paul Belau and of German-Romanian origin, decided to break off her engagement with Unold. She married Levin in August 1917.

Belau's mother Laura had, together with her young daughter, moved from Bucharest to Munich in 1907. Belau's parents were Catholic, her father Paul appears to not have lived with the family very much, his letters to wife and daughter often place him in South America where he oversaw many architectural projects. He supported his daughter in her eager plans to become an artist. During the early years, when she lived in Munich and moved in Bohemian circles, Paul Belau sent her generous payments, which she sometimes requested several times a month until she married Ernst Levin in 1917 and her father's payments came to an end. As an adult, Belau did not have any siblings, her mother had had three more children but none of them survived early childhood.[72]

After her and her mother's move to Munich in 1907, Belau attended the Münchner Fotoschule during the winter semester 1916/1917. The young woman soon became familiar

[71] The Jewish address book in Berlin has Natalie registered as resident in Pariser Str. 30/31 in 1931, five years after her husband's death. Cf. Kröncke, p. 98.
[72] The EL Collection holds three birth certificates of two boys and one girl who were born to Anicuta's parents after her birth. LHSA, EL Collection, Box 16.

with many other artists and intellectuals. Whilst producing some art herself, mostly drawings, she frequently posed for her then lover, the painter Max Unold. Unold considered her his closest adviser, his muse and best friend for the years of their relationship until 1915. Belau smoked cigars her whole life, a habit that her friends often refer to in their letters. The LHSA houses many photographs that show her posing confidently and dressed up in extravagant and costly fashion. These photographs represent what her friends endorse in letters, that Belau was an extravagant woman who enjoyed a free and independent lifestyle and took great care of her appearance.

Her relationships with several men, before her marriage with Levin and during their separation from 1928 until 1938, and the letters exchanged during these relationships, suggest she often held the role of the admired, the longed after, the elusive. It was not only her male acquaintances who worshipped her – many of her and Ernst's female friends continuously mention her beauty and uniqueness in their letters.

When Belau and Levin separated in 1928, or rather, when Ernst Levin left her for a colleague, with whom he had fallen in love, she found herself to be suffering greatly, a role she had not been accustomed to before.[73] It was then that she drew on the counsel of her former lover Reinhard Koester, who had by then moved from Bavaria to Berlin and who, having been divorced twice, had already gained some experience in the subject of crumbling marriages. In March 1932 he sends his advice from Berlin to Munich:

> Ich glaube je ruhiger du bist und je weniger du gegen sie und ihn ankämpfst- kurzum, je mehr du die beiden einfach gewähren lässt, umso eher wird er sie wirklich mal satt kriegen und ehrlich zu dir zurückkehren, wenn das noch möglich ist. Wenn er spürt, du sagst: ich lasse dir die Frau, dafür will ich das Kind für mich und das immer mehr, so wird er vielleicht zur Einsicht kommen.[74]

The former lovers' relationship had now been altered and they had become close friends. At the time of the letter cited above, Belau had moved out of the apartment with Ernst Levin,

[73] "Anicuta, dein Gespür hat dich nicht getäuscht: Frau Dr. Perls liebt mich, und ich habe mich in sie verliebt.", Levin admits in a letter to Belau who had left their home to stay with her friend in Switzerland during the first months of their separation. Ernst Levin to Anicuta Belau, 03.03.1929, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 15 1/5.
[74] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 26.3.1932, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 15 1/5.

first to Dachau and then again into a more central flat in Munich and was eager to have her daughter Anne-Kathrin, who had been born in 1919, with her. When her friend in Berlin debated a reunion for the couple ("Nur eins musst du dir täglich sagen: wenn ihr noch einmal zusammenkommt, muss alles, was geschehen ist, vergessen und ausgelöscht sein."[75]) he could not anticipate that only one year later, after the Nazi seizure of power in January 1933, Ernst Levin's medical practice would lose all revenue and, alarmed by this experience and with no way to earn a living, he would have to decide (against his wishes, as he would often state in his later letters) to leave Germany and emigrate to Scotland.[76] Consequently, a romantic reunion of the married couple had to be postponed. After the family had been torn apart with Ernst Levin's forced emigration in 1933 and Anne-Kathrin Levin's emigration in 1936, Belau joined husband and daughter in early 1938, and the family was reunited. Ernst Levin succeeded in continuing his medical career in his new home in exile, together with renowned neurosurgeon Norman Dott (1897-1973) who offered him great support in his first months and years in Edinburgh, where he worked as a neurologist at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. Levin later expanded his expertise and became a lecturer at the Edinburgh School of Speech Therapy. According to the letter correspondence that has been preserved, Levin was well integrated into society, with many friends and acquaintances made through his work and the Edinburgh Rotary Club. Levin and Belau were able to buy a house in Edinburgh, but money and how to live economically remained a topic in the family's correspondence throughout the years; holidays in continental Europe were impossible and they never again achieved the lifestyle they had led during their time in Munich. Anicuta Belau died of a lung condition in 1965 and was outlived by her husband who died aged eighty-eight in 1975.

To illuminate the lives and relations of Belau and Levin further and to introduce the two letter writers I work on in this thesis, I will elaborate on Reinhard Koester's and Max Unold's life paths. In the following illustration of their lives, their work and personal experiences I have drawn on the insights I gained through my own archival work in the EL collection and some research already undertaken on the two artists.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Anicuta Belau's letters to the Dutch 'Schaepman-Stiftung' that supported her financially from 1933 on give insights; in a letter to the "Erzbischöfliche Sekretariat Utrecht" she writes on 22 August 1933: "Trotzdem er 52 Monate an der Front stand und im Besitze hoher militärischer Auszeichnungen ist, hat er durch die bekannte Zeitumstände seine Praxis fast völlig eingebüsst." Anicuta Belau to Schaepman-Stiftung, 22.08.1933, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 4/4.

Introducing Reinhard Koester

Research on Reinhard Koester

Literary research has not given much attention to Westphalian born writer Reinhard Koester (1885-1956). Despite this, literary scholar Dieter Sudhoff, the only researcher eager to investigate Koester's creative work, accredits him extraordinary talent and praises his storytelling as "kuriose und querdenkerische Einfälle"[77] still delightful to any reader. In his monograph *Die literarische Moderne und Westfalen*,[78] published in 2002, Sudhoff dedicates a chapter to Koester. In addition, his efforts in collecting and bringing together numerous Koester novellas resulted in the *Reinhard Koester Lesebuch* published in 2004 by the Nyland Stiftung in cooperation with the Westfälische Literaturmuseum Haus Nottbeck. In the same year, Sudhoff published the essay, 'Über Reinhard Koester alias Karl Kinndt: Erinnerung an einen Vergessenen' in an anthology on Westphalia's literature[79] and with that and a short note on him in the online encyclopedia *Lexikon Westfälischer Autorinnen und Autoren 1750-1950*, one has exhausted all scholarly research on the Belau-Levins' close friend. It is therefore unsurprising that Sudhoff calls him "einen der vergessensten Schriftsteller aus Westfalen".[80] He goes on to say:

> Dabei hat er mehr als ein Dutzend Bücher veröffentlicht, Gedichte, Dramen, Romane und Grotesken, war viele Jahre Mitarbeiter des Simplicissimus, schrieb für Film und Rundfunk und war mit bekannten Zeitgenossen wie Carl Georg von Maassen, Erich Mühsam oder Joachim Ringelnatz befreundet.[81]

This, indeed, quite manageable corpus of secondary literature, is still lacking significant information on the writer's life. Whilst it is common knowledge that Koester left for Munich around the beginning of the twentieth century, his social circle and especially his connections

[77] Reinhard Koester, *Reinhard-Koester-Lesebuch*, ed. by Dieter Sudhoff, Nylands kleine westfälische Bibliothek, vol 5 (Cologne: Nyland-Stiftung, 2004).
[78] Dieter Sudhoff, *Die literarische Moderne und Westfalen. Besichtigung einer vernachlässigten Kulturlandschaft* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis-Verlag, 2002).
[79] Dieter Sudhoff, 'Über Reinhard Koester alias Karl Kinndt: Erinnerung an einen Vergessenen', in *Literatur in Westfalen. Beiträge zur Forschung*, ed. by Walter Gödden (Bielefeld: Aisthesis-Verlag, 2004), pp. 111–64.
[80] Sudhoff, VII, p. 112.
[81] Ibid., p. 111.

to striving artists of the time can only be presumed by Sudhoff, who speculates that Koester might have had connections to "Schwabinger Künstlerkreise".[82]

These early times in Munich, the then "Schmelztiegel der Moderne",[83] which Sudhoff is lacking information on, are precisely those years of Koester's romantic relationship with Anicuta Belau and are therefore well documented in the EL Collection. Thus, the EL Collection provides formerly unknown information on the young Reinhard Koester and gives insight into the lives of members of the intellectual and artistic circle often referred to as the *Schwabinger Bohème*. Research on Koester shows another significant gap as Sudhoff, the most eager researcher on the forgotten writer, admits in his essay from 2004. In addition, until now, Koester's life circumstances from the last years of WWII (ca. 1943/1944) onwards, but especially after he stopped working completely in 1948 up until his death in 1956, was undocumented.[84]

Research has generally not been able to gain much information about Koester from any of his private correspondence; Sudhoff's research relies mostly on a short autobiography, which Koester prefixed to one of his texts in 1919,[85] on his literary oeuvre, and mentions of the writer in autobiographies and letters of some of his friends, such as Erich Mühsam and Hermann Sinsheimer.[86]

[82] Sudhoff states: "Über literarische Begegnungen aus dieser frühen Zeit wissen wir nichts, es ist aber wahrscheinlich, dass Koester bereits als Student Beziehungen zu Schwabinger Künstlerkreisen knüpfte. In jedem Fall war München schon lange vor dem Weltkrieg ein Schmelztiegel der Moderne, der jungen, aufstrebenden Künstlern aus der Provinz alle Möglichkeiten offen zu halten schien, und Koester war fest entschlossen, sie zu nutzen." Sudhoff, VII, p. 113.
[83] Ibid.
[84] "Während des II. Weltkriegs schrieb Koester nur noch in den ersten Jahren gelegentlich für den Simplicissimus, der 1944 »aus Papiermangel« eingestellt wurde. Über seine Lebensumstände in dieser Zeit und nach 1945 ist nur wenig bekannt." Sudhoff, VII, p. 127.
[85] Koester, Reinhard: Biographie: Typoskript [Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Kopie im Deutschen Literaturarchiv, Marbach].
[86] Hermann Sinsheimer, *Gelebt im Paradies: Erinnerungen und Begegnungen* (Munich: Pflaum, 1953); Erich Mühsam, *Namen und Menschen.*

Fin de siècle – the writer Reinhard Koester

Before I undertake a proper textual analysis of his epistolary output in Chapters II-IV, in this chapter I will set out Reinhard Koester's background, his mindset, his sorrows, and desires. I shall follow the path he takes, starting as a young adult in prewar Munich in the early 1900s. This chapter does not intend to give a comprehensive biography of the writer, because this has been done by Dieter Sudhoff in the essay cited above. However, I will add the new information that I have gained from the letters in the EL Collection and thus fill the gaps that Sudhoff's work on Koester has left. My primary aim is to summarise both letter writers' experiences, whilst I consider their lifelong friendship with the Belau-Levins, its continuities and ruptures.

Reinhard Koester was born in Hagen in 1885 but left his Westphalian home when his parents relocated to Bonn. He later went on to study law in Freiburg and Munich where he met Anicuta Belau as early as 1908. At this time Belau entertained romantic relationships with both Koester and painter Max Unold. After they had ended their romantic relationship, they remained close friends for almost five decades until Koester's death.

Koester became well connected with several figures of the *Schwabinger Boheme* and he soon began to follow his true calling and devoted all his time to writing. Some of Koester's later written pieces for 'Simplicissimus'[87] and, in post-war times, other journals (such as *Berliner Hefte für geistiges Leben*[88]) give an impression of his (and Max Unold's) pre-WWI years in Munich.

[87] 'Simplicissimus' was a German satirical magazine, published from its headquarters in Munich from 1896-1944. It was revived in 1954. During the Weimar Republic it took a strong stand against extremists, on the left and on the right. Although many of its writers were, soon after Hitler's assumption of power in 1933, forced to leave the country, it agreed to publish in line with the new political system and thus secured its publication until 1944. The satirical aspect of course made way for light literature, novellas and short stories devoted to the home (country) and trivial everyday life. Cf. *Simplicissimus 1896-1933: die satirische Wochenzeitschrift*, ed. by Reinhard Klimmt and Hans Zimmermann (Stuttgart: Langen-Müller, 2018); *Simplicissimus: Glanz und Elend der Satire in Deutschland*, ed. by Getrud Maria Rösch, Universität Regensburg: Schriftenreihe der Universität Regensburg (Regensburg: Univ.-Verl., 1996).

[88] This literary journal was brought to life in the French Sector of Berlin WWII; it had issues from 1946-1949. Cf. Ursula Heukenkamp, *Unterm Notdach: Nachkriegsliteratur in Berlin 1945-1949* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1996).

During this time, Reinhard Koester was, alongside his friend Max Unold, part of the 'Hermetische Gesellschaft', a mystical union of only men which, very much in line with an almost 'Schnitzlerisch'- decadent fin-de-siècle fashion, met regularly for secret "halb-okkulte[s], halb geistreich-sinnenfrohe[s] Treiben"[89] in a wine restaurant in Munich. Koester's description of the atmosphere mirrors some of the features of his literature and letters – "das bis zur unlöslichen Verkettung sich steigernde Ineinanderspielen von Scherz und Ernst, von bewußtem Ulk und unbewußtem Ahnen tieferer Bedeutung (…) ".[90] During the years of these regular meetings of the 'Hermetische Gesellschaft', Koester became friends with Erich Mühsam, Carl Georg von Maassen[91] and Joachim Ringelnatz, for whom in 1920 Koester gave a speech at his wedding with Leonharda Pieper, later called 'Muschelkalk'.[92]

Koester's summary of the meetings of the 'Hermetische Gesellschaft', which he published in 1946, reveal the men's spiritual, even mystical views of the time, merging attitudes of the Lebensreform[93] movement with ideas of decadent dandyism and the worship of the occult.[94]

After having completed his law degree, Koester rejected a career in this field and instead turned to writing. Determined to write his first novel, Koester travelled across Southern Europe and his stays in France in 1911 and 1912 are documented in the letters sent back to

[89] Sudhoff, VII, p. 118.
[90] Reinhard Koester, 'Die Hermetische Gesellschaft', *Berliner Hefte für geistiges Leben*, 4 (1949), 441–450, p. 442.
[91] Carl Georg von Maassen (1880-1940) literary critic and E.T.A. Hoffmann expert – von Maassen was founder of the Hermetische Gesellschaft and is known for his generally Bohemian and decadent lifestyle. Koester describes him as follows: "Carl-Georg von Maaßen, eine der skurrilsten Erscheinungen des alten München, bekannt als unermüdlicher und besessener E. T. A. Hoffmann-Forscher und -Herausgeber, war der Gründer und »Großvater« dieser geheimen Gesellschaft, die vielleicht das letzte Glied in der sich bis ins graue Mittelalter hinziehenden Kette mystischer Narrenbünde war, und als deren Urväter der »Gespenster-Hoffmann« und der Alchimist Leonhard Thurnheysser von uns verehrt wurden." Koester, *Reinhard-Koester-Lesebuch*, p. 119.
[92] Cf. Sudhoff, VII, p. 117.
[93] Of course, the indulging in alcohol and cigarettes etc., counteracted principal ideas of the Lebensreform, which was generally committed to physical health. The libertine attitudes towards body culture and (open) relationships as well as the closeness to nature propagated by the members nevertheless take up its ideas.
[94] In his essay published in the *Berliner Hefte* in 1946, Koester writes on the Hermetische Gesellschaft: "Wir schieden Menschen und Dinge streng in »sulfurische«, d. h. gemeine, alltägliche, niedrige und deshalb für uns verabscheuungswürdige und häßliche, und in »phosphorische«, d. h. höhere, geistige, wesentliche und deshalb für uns erstrebenswerte und verwandte, kurzum: hermetische. Unter den Begriff »sulfur« (= Schwefel) fielen Geld, Nahrung, Bier, Lohnarbeit, Spießertum, Sport, Frauen und alle moderne Technik. »Phosphorisch« dagegen waren Wein, der von uns als aurum potabile (trinkbares Gold) geschätzt wurde, alle Künste und jede Äußerung des menschlichen Geistes, die nicht profan-alltäglichen Zwecken diente." Koester, *Reinhard-Koester-Lesebuch*, p. 121.

Belau in Munich, which often include testimony of his love for her and show his ardent jealousy regarding her polyamorous attitude.

These letters from 1908 on, show a young man who is a passionate and almost obsessively jealous partner, who is not quite at ease with the progressive attitude of his peer group.
This side of Koester is one that has not been acknowledged by research so far – interestingly in his essay on Koester's life, Sudhoff paints a different picture of Koester, more that of a ladies' man, as he refers to his closeness with other Bohemian figures of the time and his two failed marriages between 1917 and 1925, which both ended due to "Verschulden des Ehemannes".[95] Sudhoff goes so far as to state that Koester's second wife, who he describes as "die wesentlich jüngere Erika Sander"[96] might have been the "mögliche Scheidungsgrund",[97] when Koester married her only six months after he had divorced his first wife, Mechthildis Castenholz. This is of course mere speculation by the researcher, who might have been led more by Koester's progressive friendship circle and its zeitgeist than by facts about Koester's love life. However, Koester's letters sent to Belau in the pre-WWI years, admittedly equally inconclusive regarding Koester's general dealing with the women in his life, reveal a different picture. In these he often takes up the role of the hurt, suffering, and lovesick, constantly provoked and rejected by Belau's polyamorous lifestyle.

Whereas his friend and rival Max Unold, who I will introduce at a later point in this chapter, seems to have been more comfortable with being only one of Anicuta Belau's lovers, Koester could not quite bring himself to accept this lifestyle and he fills his letters with long passages expressing his jealousy in a rather conventional, neo-romantic style. Koester's self-understanding as being the one struggling with modern ideas is interestingly presented in his novel *Der Gang des Gottlosen*,[98] which he published at the peak of Expressionism in 1919.[99] Koester wrote this novel, which Sudhoff classifies as his magnum opus (at least regarding his epic work),[100] between 1911-1914 and whilst Sudhoff recognizes the strongly

[95] As Sudhoff cites the documents of the *Stadtarchiv München*. Sudhoff, VII, p. 122.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Reinhard Koester, *Der Gang des Gottlosen.*(Munich: Delphin-Verlag, 1919).
[99] Cf. Sudhoff, VII, p. 130.
[100] Cf. ibid.

autobiographically influenced character of the portrayal of the "Großstadtboheme"[101] and the Schwabinger art scene of the time, the researcher lacks knowledge of Koester's entanglements with Unold and Belau when he sums up the main plot of the novel: a love triangle in a classical sense.

After having read Koester's (and Unold's) correspondence with Belau it is easy to recognise the figures of the novel as our three letter writers: these are the "Bürgersohn Walter Overkamp"[102] who falls for the fascinating "Halbslawin Nasta"[103] who herself lives "in einer Art 'wilden Ehe'[104] mit dem Kunstmaler Klaus Stumm".[105] Whilst the novel itself, mostly conventionally written with an auctorial narrator and plenty of lively dialogue,[106] is not up for close analysis here, I want to mention how Koester's portrayal of the figures clearly inspired by himself, Belau and Unold reveal what he would, by and large, describe as the most crucial difference between him and his rival. In the following scene Koester lets "Kunstmaler Stumm" sum up the identities that the author inscribes in the three romantically involved people: "Er ist der Bürger – und wir sind Zigeuner."[107] It must have been this difficulty in adapting to the truly 'Bohemian' lifestyle which ultimately divided Koester not only from his lover, Anicuta Belau, but also from his friend and rival Max Unold. It was also this difficulty that led to his flight to Paris and the Bretagne in France – a trip Koester also sends his protagonist 'Overkamp' on,[108] and of which he sends numerous letters back to Belau in Munich.

Koester's letters also show a young writer anxious to express the art he believes that he carries in himself, a young man, always poor and in debt with his friends, a man, however not too proud to accept money from Max Unold who seems to have been financially better off than Koester. Many of his 1911 letters from Paris to Munich describe his anxiety about his

[101] Ibid., p. 132.
[102] Sudhoff, VII, p. 132.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Sudhoff goes on to summarise: "Nach der ersten Liebesnacht glaubt Walter sich glücklich, bis er einige Zeit später erfahren muss, das Nasta die Beziehung mit Stumm nicht abgebrochen hat. Während der libertinäre Maler mit dieser Dreierkonstellation leben kann und Nastas Entscheidungunsfähigkeit (resp. ihre naive Sehnsucht, sich vielen zu «schenken«) akzeptiert, fühlt Walter sich «betrogen«, will sie aufgeben und flieht über Paris an die Küste der Bretagne." Ibid., p. 133.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p. 131.
[107] Koester, *Der Gang des Gottlosen,* p. 141.
[108] Cf. Koester, *Der Gang des Gottlosen.*

creative work and his attempts to write. Some contain short anecdotes, such as his emotional reaction after a visit to see Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* or a scene of a "blonder Bube"[109] at the train station, which, he reports without further explanations, has left him sad.

Possibly referring to his difficulty to adapt to the life lived by most of his peers (including Unold and Belau) his letters of this time also express the, slowly increasing, desire to leave the city, his tiredness with the continuous "sich Berauschen".[110] He calls their life in Munich "wahnsinnig" and begins to blame the city and its dullness for his own, according to himself insufficient spirit ("Ich arbeite ziemlich viel und bin doch oft verzweifelt, denn an allem, was ich schreibe hängt noch München. (…) Etwas davon [Leidenschaften] war in mir als ich dich kennenlernte- und dies elende München hat es vernichtet (...)".[111]

Such "wahnsinnig[es], sich berauschen[des]"[112] life might refer to the frequent festivities organised by Koester himself, but also by many of the friends mentioned in the EL Collection, Max Unold, Joachim Ringelnatz, Erich Mühsam. The friends were not only all part of the 'Hermetische Gesellschaft' (which, as illustrated, held frequent and always bacchic gatherings) – they also held parties where plays, equipped with dolls and costumes made by the artists themselves, were performed in a small circle. Moreover, they celebrated the 'Münchner Fasching' in their ateliers, enthusiastic about drinking as much as about their, often very lavish costumes. Although criticising much of it in his letters to Anicuta Belau, Koester continues to take part or even host such festivities. Erich Mühsam remembers the 'Faschingsfest' at Reinhard Koester's flat in 1914 as "der wildeste, bewegteste und lustigste Fasching"[113] and describes the efforts the host had put into the decoration and the guests into their dresses.

[109] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 20.7.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 14 1/4.
[110] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 3.8.1912, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 12 1/6.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Erich Mühsam remembers as follows: "Ich denke vor allem an unser abenteuerliches „Gespensterfest" bei Köster, dessen Wohnung zu einer wahren Spukkammer hergerichtet war. (…) Die Männer wischten sich die Malerei aus den Gesichtern, die Frauen aber wurden in dem bleichen Licht immer schöner, je mehr der Tanz, die Bowle und die Tollheit der Laune ihnen Farbe gab. Weisgerber, Unold und Körting war ein Meisterwerk gelungen. Es war eine der letzten Veranstaltungen jenes Faschings, des Münchner Faschings überhaupt. Wenige Monate später begann ein anderes Gespensterfest, von dem viele unserer Freunde, Weisgerber, Jacobi, Franz Marc nicht zurückkehren, für uns andere ist eine andere Welt geworden." Mühsam, p. 208f.

Koester's extensive writing on the topic of fleeing the city in favour of the countryside might have partially been an expression of his struggles with the Bohemian lifestyle, which is generally connotated with the 'Großstadt', chiming in with the debate on the opposition of culture versus nature. On the other hand, one could read these passages as attempts to persuade Belau to follow him into a more tranquil life in the countryside. An additional reading of it could be that he, as a writer, simply sought peace and tranquillity in the countryside in order to finish his work, as he writes in retrospect in the following commentary from 1949:

> Das war im Frühjahr des Schicksalsjahres 1914, und die Sommermonate über zog ich mich mit meinem Hund Florian auf die Fraueninsel im Chiemsee zurück, um meinen ersten Roman, der durch den alle Kräfte verzehrenden Fasching wieder einmal wochenlang liegengeblieben war, zu Ende zu schreiben.[114]

However, his attempts were in vain, Belau stayed in Munich where she had become a popular and well-known member of the *Schwabinger Bohème*. Unold's portrait of her, 'Die Dame im blauen Kleid', had won the gold medal at the exhibition of the *Münchner Neue Secession*[115] in 1913 and made her known to all those eager to belong to the Neue Secession. The new movement was progressive and independent and with plenty of aspirations for the future – a future never gained in the way imagined due to the brutal caesura, that the world war of 1914-1918 meant for this generation.

The EL Collection contains numerous letters by Reinhard Koester. The writer continued to write to Belau throughout his service during WWI, when he was mostly stationed in Cologne and Bonn and later in Freiburg and his letters continue after he married his first wife Mechthildis Castenholz, whom he had met in a military hospital in 1917. In the years between

[114]He continues: "Der Ausbruch des ersten Weltkrieges machte diese Hoffnung auf Ruhm und Erfolg zunichte. Am Tag vor der deutschen Mobilmachung kehrte ich, meinen Wehrpaß als ungedienter Ersatzreservist mit der Gestellungsorder zum 11. August in der Tasche, nach München zurück. Noch gellt mir der Trommelwirbel ins Ohr, mit dem auf dem Platz vor der Feldherrnhalle Schweigen geboten wurde zur Verlesung des Mobilmachungsbefehls. (Vielleicht habe ich damals dicht neben dem unbekannten »Maler« aus Braunau gestanden und sein bellendes Hurrageschrei gehört.)" Koester, 'Die Hermetische Gesellschaft', p. 447.

[115]The Secession was founded at the End of the nineteenth century in Vienna as counterpart to state supported, traditional art. The Munich Secession followed in 1892, and the New Munich Secession in 1913. For more information on the Münchner Neue Secession: Markus Harzenetter, 'Zur Münchner Secession: Genese, Ursachen und Zielsetzungen dieser intentionell neuartigen Münchner Künstlervereinigung' (Bamberg University, 1992); Jochen Meister, *Münchener Secession: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: Prestel, 2007); Maria M Makela, *The Munich Secession: Art and Artists in Turn-of-the-Century Munich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

1910 and 1919 Koester produced numerous poems, several novellas and three theatre plays.[116]

The year 1908 marks Koester's first literary successes, when several of his neo-romantic poems were accepted for publication in the 'Jugend',[117] for which Koester wrote regularly until 1912.[118] Koester's oeuvre, which, although mostly overlooked by literary research, shows laudable features such as the successful "satirischen Entlarvung menschlicher Schwächen"[119] and a remarkable "burlesque Phantastik".[120] It can generally be divided into early work (1910-1919) and later work (from 1920 onwards).[121]

After WWI, Koester left the big city and moved to Bad Heilbrunn, a region in the picturesque alpine upland to the south of Munich. His plays published in 1919, *Peregrinus*[122] and *Komödie der Lüge*,[123] as well as his first novel *Der Gang des Gottlosen*,[124] mentioned above, which he had worked on during his years in France, could not, albeit their positive reviews, leverage his literary success, and Koester did not publish another novel or drama for the next decade.

A modern writer- 'Tagesschriftstellerei' of the 1920s and 1930s

To secure a stable income, Koester eventually turned to 'Tagesschriftstellerei' at the beginning of the 1920s and adopted the pseudonym 'Karl Kinndt'. From 1924 on, he regularly wrote for 'Simplicissimus', first while living in Munich and later from Berlin, where he moved in 1926.[125]

[116] One of them, called *Dymphe*, is considered to be lost and the other two, *Peregrinus* and *Komödie der Lüge* were both published by the Kurt Wolff Verlag and gained positive reviews in 1919. Cf. Sudhoff, VII, p. 122.
[117] The 'Jugend' was a German art magazine publishing mostly young writers and artists devoted to 'Jugendstil' and 'Art Nouveau'. Its headquarters were in Munich and, as it published during 1896-1940, it was a competitor of the 'Simplicissimus'.
[118] Cf. Sudhoff, VII, p. 113.
[119] Sudhoff, VII, p. 122.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Sudhoff adds here that whereas the late work "gelesen werden will", as it was produced to entertain the masses, it is his early work that is worth closer literary analysis. Cf. ibid.
[122] Reinhard Koester, *Peregrinus: Drama in neun Bildern* (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1919).
[123] Reinhard Koester, *Komödie der Lüge: Ein Spiel in vier Aufzügen* (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1919).
[124] Koester, *Der Gang des Gottlosen.*
[125] Max Unold also contributes to 'Simplicissimus': five drawings by him in 1923 and 1925, a drawing from 1926 frames one of Koester texts, and a story called 'Dr. Zwirbel erwacht'.

These texts are then often set in a Berliner environment and have a less polished tone, enhanced by use of the 'Berliner' dialect. [126]

I have scoped the material available, and it shows that Reinhard Koester was a very active writer for 'Simplicissimus' in from 1924 to 1941. Not all texts are published in his actual name – only those from 1933 on – because all texts published from 1924 to 1933 are under his pseudonyms Karl Kinndt and Benedikt, while other texts from 1925 to early 1939 run under his third alias, Kaki. His output is impressive: he is one of the most prolific writers for the magazine. He is especially productive between 1926 and 1933, under all three aliases, with 456 contributions, mostly in the form of satirical short stories, commentaries, and grotesques.[127] The year after the Nazi rise to power, Koester dropped his pseudonyms Karl Kinndt and Benedikt, and the contributions, which are published under his real name and the third alias Kaki, decrease to a total of fifty-seven by 1941.[128]

This period of Koester's life, beginning with his active work for 'Simplicissimus' until the beginning of the war, is the time that has been most successfully recreated by research. This is due to the extensive research undertaken on 'Simplicissimus', its development during the Weimar Republic and its role since 1933 as well as research on individual players involved, for example, Hermann Sinsheimer, who as editor-in-chief until 1929. Reinhard Koester had a close relationship with Sinsheimer,[129] who was of Jewish descent and fled Germany in 1938. In

[126] A cooperation of the 'Herzogin-Anna-Amalia-Bibliothek' in Weimar, the 'RWTH Aachen' and the 'Deutsche Literaturarchiv Marbach' has made the editions of 'Simplicissimus' available online: Simplicissimus, *Simplicissimus Info* <http://www.simplicissimus.info/index.php?id=7&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi2%5Bletter%5D=B&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi2%5Baction%5D=index&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi2%5Bcontroller%5D=PersonRegister&cHash=bd93ff4d8e7002e650104304db1c6899> [accessed 15 September 2021].

[127] An issue from 19 March 1933 contains a poem by Koester (Kinndt) named 'Nie wieder Krieg' in which he openly criticises warfare and the greed of the defence industry.

[128] In 1941, Koester published the short story ' "Auch Einer" ist Schuld' under his real name. The narrator illustrates a typical "Fest im kleinen Kreis" in Munich at the fin de siècle and the figures mentioned are most probably his friends Unold and Belau (he refers to them as "Maler U." and "Dame(n) der Bohème"). This information has been drawn from the 'Simplicissimus' online archive, available at: Simplicissimus, *Simplicissimus Info* <http://www.simplicissimus.info/index.php?id=7&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi2%5Bletter%5D=B&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi2%5Baction%5D=index&tx_lombkswjournaldb_pi2%5Bcontroller%5D=PersonRegister&cHash=bd93ff4d8e7002e650104304db1c6899> [accessed 15 September 2021].

[129] Cf. Koester, *Reinhard-Koester-Lesebuch*, p. 144.

Sinshemier's memoirs,[130] he remembered Koester as a "für das aktuelle satirische Gedicht hervorragend begabten Menschen nicht bloß gemachter, sondern gelebter Opposition".[131]

Such a statement could be questioned. Was Koester really practising "gelebte Opposition" with the beginning of the National Socialist Government? The aim of this thesis is not to find a definite answer to this, but to analyse Koester's representation of his role during the Third Reich in the frame of his (epistolary) postwar friendship with the Belau-Levins. His professional activities during those years are therefore of interest for my research. Knowing about this will form a basis for the following chapters in which I will probe his stylistic articulation of his own agency. In the following section I will therefore provide a brief overview of Koester's life in Third Reich Germany – the years that mark the biggest gap in his correspondence with Anicuta Belau.

'Inner Emigration'? The years of the Third Reich

After Koester had moved to Berlin in 1926, he and Belau corresponded the most regularly after her separation from Ernst Levin in 1928. Apart from the correspondence on the subject of her separation, the years after Koester's move to Berlin in 1926 are not documented very well in the EL Collection – of course, this does not mean that the two friends were not in contact; it is possible that they saw each other in person as the Levins regularly visited Ernst's family in Berlin and Koester might have also travelled to Munich. In any case, the letters preserved in the collection show that they kept each other updated: Belau informed Koester about the (temporary) end of her marriage and, just before her emigration to Edinburgh in 1938, she visited him and his third wife, Ellen Hambach,[132] in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. After the war and the long gap in their correspondence, this visit is warmly remembered in the letters

[130] Hermann Sinsheimer, *Gelebt m Paradies: Erinnerungen und Begegnungen* (Munich, 1953).
[131] As cited in: Koester, *Reinhard-Koester-Lesebuch*, p. 144.
[132] Ellen Hambach (ca.1904-3.2.1981), sister of actress Herta Hambach. Herta Hambach's daughter is Bettina Moissi (b. 1923), actress and wife of famous art collector Heinz Berggruen (1914-2007).

of Reinhard Koester and his younger wife Ellen, who, from 1950 on and beyond Koester's death, also becomes Belau's letter correspondent.

In 1933, a year after he had written the letter in which he counselled Belau on her marriage, Reinhard Koester was forty-eight years old. He had been divorced twice, had spent more than twenty years trying to become a successful and renowned writer, and, to secure a stable income had become the writer of journalistic, satirical texts to entertain the masses. Berlin had, after Munich, become his new permanent home and with the beginning of the new decade he had completely turned to popular literature and mass media production.

Was Koester really practising 'gelebte Opposition' from the beginning of the National Socialist Government as Hermann Sinsheimer suggested in his memoirs in 1953? From a twenty-first century perspective, Koester, with his contributions to the film productions of the Third Reich could hardly claim to have understood himself to be member of the active opposition.[133] He might have thought of himself as being a follower of the 'inner emigration' philosophy by rejecting Nazi ideology and consequently merely producing light and mainly irrelevant texts with the simple aim of entertaining people.[134] However, the term 'inner emigration' has proven to be problematic itself. Interestingly, as early as 1934, the term was used to describe those who understood themselves to be opponents of the new Nazi government and decided to stay in their home country.[135] The general public's understanding of those subsumed under the term changed throughout the decades. Whilst those in 'inner emigration' were uncritically understood to belong to the 'righteous' Germans during the 1950s and 1960s, the public of

[133] In 1932, together with director Philip Lothar Mayring, Koester wrote his first screenplay for the film production 'Lachende Erben'. More screenplay commissions followed: the 1939 production 'Der Stammbaum des Dr. Pistorius' and the 1940 film 'Leidenschaft' were both based on Koester's screenplays. The 1939 'Dr. Pistorius' is today categorized as strongly propagandistic and permeated by National Socialist racist political ideas. Cf. Dieter Sudhoff, 'Nachwort', in *Reinhard Koester Lesebuch*, 5 vols (Cologne: Nyland-Stiftung, 2004), pp. 134–149, p. 148.

[134] Like how, for example, Erich Kästner justified his prolific writing during the Third Reich. Cf. Stern, Guy, Kirchner, Doris and Donahue, Neil H. 'Exile Honoris Causa: The Image of Erich Kästner among Writers in Exile', in *Flight of Fantasy: New Perspectives on Inner Emigration in German Literature 1933-1945* (New York: Beghahn Books, 2003), pp. 223-235.

[135] Cf. Hans Dieter Zimmermann, '"Innere Emigration": Ein historischer Begriff und seine Problematik', in *Schriftsteller und Widerstand: Facetten und Probleme der Inneren Emigration*, ed. by Frank-Lothar Kroll and Rüdiger von Voss (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), pp. 45–63, p. 56.

the 1970s sweepingly condemned them as Nazi affirmative artists; only during the 1990s did it became clearer that those in 'inner emigration' were not at all a homogeneous group.[136]

Academics have debated the matter of how to classify German guilt extensively, nuanced distinctions have been created to defend the behaviour of some, or clearly condemn that of others; the terms range from the neutral distinctions of 'assent' or 'dissent' to the direct 'perpetrator' versus 'active political opposition'[137] and the more complex 'ideological dissent'[138] or 'societal refusal'[139] to the passive category of 'bystanders'.[140] I do not aim to contribute to this much-researched field, however, the topic of German guilt reappears throughout my analysis of the letter corpus and it is therefore necessary that I provide brief statements whenever the topic arises. Specifically related to the letter writers discussed here, I am using the term 'participant' to do justice to the fact that both men were not persecuted throughout the twelve years of the dictatorship, remained in Germany, and continued to work in their respective professions in and with the (authorities of the) Third Reich.

As mentioned, Reinhard Koester continued to publish in the 'gleichgeschalteten' 'Simplicissimus', and his texts refrain from articulating his opposition towards the new totalitarian state, and although his works had never been highly political, this silence must have been difficult to maintain and yet, as Frank-Lothar Kroll puts it, this was "der Preis, den alle deutschen Autoren zu zahlen haben, die ihre Heimat nicht verlassen wollten oder konnten".[141] It is not too speculative to say that Koester can be classified as an 'ideological dissident' but it should also be mentioned that, by taking on several screenplay offers from

[136] Cf. Frank-Lothar Kroll, 'Intellektueller Widerstand im Dritten Reich. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen', in *Schrifsteller und Widerstand: Facetten und Probleme der Inneren Emigration*, ed. by Frank-Lothar Kroll and Rüdiger von Voss (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), pp. 13–45, p. 15

[137] This approach was, as is widely known, shockingly underrepresented in Third Reich Germany. A prominent example of such active opposition was, amongst few others, 'Die weiße Rose' group in Munich.

[138] Kroll, p. 15.

[139] Zimmermann, p. 52.

[140] Mary Fulbrook, *Bystanders to Nazi Violence? The Transformation of German Society in the 1930s* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2019); Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933 - 1945* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1995); Matthew Philpotts, *The Margins of Dictatorship: Assent and Dissent in the Work of Günter Eich and Bertolt Brecht* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003).

[141] Kroll, p. 27.

the 'Ufa' and executing them as prescribed,[142] Koester did not act out an active refusal or indeed make use of other possibilities of non-conformist writing.[143]

Dieter Sudhoff has formed his opinion of Koester's decision to stay in Germany while not only his close friends the Levins, but many of his close colleagues,[144] were forced to leave. Sudhoff interprets the fact that Koester buried his alias, Karl Kinndt, and began writing under his actual name from 1933 onwards as a deliberate decision to elude any 'real' collaboration with the Nazi government and its literature industry.[145] He defends Koester's continuous employment and publishing as follows:

> Angesichts einer Zeit, in der jede offene Opposition das eigene Todesurteil bedeutet hätte, wird man niemandem vorwerfen dürfen, dass er sich am Leben zu erhalten suchte und weiter seinem Beruf nachging oder seiner Berufung folgte.[146]

Koester's novels of the 1930s[147] are politically indifferent and portray experiences of private individuals which Sudhoff interprets as another proof of Koester's political opposition;[148] this assumption regarding his political beliefs might be true but, as Koester's prior literary work had also primarily dealt with the life circumstances and daily life matters of individuals, does not serve as a strong argument for Koester's 'gelebte' opposition.

As I will show, although Koester's correspondence with Belau excludes any direct justification for his remaining in Germany, some of his statements reveal his general sense of unease

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[142] The case of Koester's screenplay for the 1939 film "Der Stammbaum des Dr. Pistorius" (categorized as permeated by Nazi propaganda) serves as an inglorious example here.

[143] Possibilities of non-conformist writing were strategies like "doppelbödiges Schreiben" and the transferring of a story to a different (historical, geographical) setting. These strategies were used by many, as Kroll states in the following: "die inhaltlichen Nischen und institutionellen Freiräume für nonkonformes Schreiben in Deutschland nach 1933 waren beträchtlich, und sie wurden von zahlreichen Autoren und Autorinnen genutzt (…) " Kroll, p. 42.

[144] Thomas Theodor Heine (1867-1948), Hermann Sinsheimer (1883-1950), Franz Schoenberner (1892-1970) to name just a few.

[145] "Heine musste ebenso wie sein Chefredakteur Schoenberner emigrieren; Koester, weniger exponiert und gefährdet, konnte sich trotz seiner Antipathie gegen die »braunen Horden« nicht zu diesem Schritt entschließen. Welch tiefen Einschnitt aber auch für ihn die Machtergreifung bedeutete, zeigt sich daran, dass er fortan bis zum Untergang der Nazidiktatur seine Pseudonyme und damit einen Teil seiner bisherigen Identität aufgab. Auch im Simplicissimus veröffentlichte er in diesen Jahren nur noch unter seinem eigentlichen Namen. Den Texten ist anzumerken, dass ihr Autor sich unter dem Zwang der Verhältnisse in eine private Existenz zurückgezogen hatte." Sudhoff, Reinhard-Koester-Lesebuch, p. 146f.

[146] Sudhoff, VII, p. 125

[147] *Lampen an – Lampen aus!* (1935), *Und alles um einen Hund –!* (1935), *Jeder geht seinen Weg* (1937).

[148] Cf. Sudhoff, Reinhard-Koester-Lesebuch, p. 147.

regarding the topic of the Third Reich. By simply not mentioning any of his professional activities during the years of Fascist rule, the letter writer leaves no room for his friend in Scotland to judge his decision or actions.

In fact, his letters reveal a different picture of his life during the Third Reich. As they fail to mention any of his commissions for the Ufa or his continuous employment with 'Simplicissimus' they give the impression of a life that contained many sacrifices due to the Fascist government. Koester states that he had been banned from writing since 1938 ("Wir haben viel Schweres durchgemacht. Die Wohnung, (…) mussten wir kurz darauf aufgeben, weil mir jede Verdienstmöglichkeit abgeschnitten worden war")[149] and describes the hardship that he and his wife went through, carefully emphasizing his own emotional distress about the developments in his country:

> Aber was für Jahre sind seitdem vergangen! Die scheusslichen Nazi-Jahre, die mich tief in Not brachten und oft vor innerer Wut, die sich nicht entladen konnte, fast zum Platzen brachten- die furchtbaren Kriegsjahre und die trostlose Nachkriegs-Hungerzeit.[150]

These two passages illustrate what I notice throughout both men's correspondence after WWII: Based on their correspondence and research undertaken before this thesis I was able to recreate their 'Schaffenszeit' and involvement with Nazi-organised institutions. Their own portrayal of how they had spent the years of the Third Reich in Germany, however, differs drastically from this. This exclusion of the topic of their own complicity in the Nazi system is a striking feature of their correspondence. It is, however, not verifiable whether or to what extent the letter writers were aware of their own complicity, at the time, or at the time of writing their letters to the Belau- Levins.[151] Although the EL Collection does not provide evidence for their subjective awareness of complicity or an explicit feeling of guilt, the writers' postwar correspondence with their emigrated friends shows noticeable signs of a sense of unease. My analysis of their texts will discuss what topics are written about, and what matters are excluded by those who stayed in Germany. This will be most revealing for the analysis of this friendship and the individuals' strategies of dealing with their sense of unease.

[149] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 07.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[150] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[151] With one exception: Koester's last letter before his death, in February 1956, which I analyse and discuss in Chapter IV.

Postwar life: Berlin 1945-1956

In the ten years following the war until Koester's death (from 1946-1956), he sent about fifteen letters to Anicuta Belau, most of which were written between 1950 and 1955.[152] Koester, his wife, and young daughter (born 1938) had spent the last years of WWII in the countryside in a town called Guben in Silesia. They returned to Berlin in June 1945 and went on to live in their flat in a house in Berlin-Grunewald, which had been unscathed, until Koester's death.

Koester became chief editor of the *Puck* magazine,[153] which was stopped in 1948 due to a paper shortage in Berlin and was revived from October 1949 until September 1950.[154] In 1949, Koester experienced the first painful symptoms of his illness – he suffered, among other things, from paralysed extremities – this was the first appearance of what became a lengthy, and eventually fatal, uncurable medical condition.

As I will show in the following analytical chapters, our writer who, in this thesis is examined as a *letter* writer, inscribes in his letters a great wit and intelligence. He employs ironic, almost cynical language in his texts, and it becomes apparent in his letters from the 1950s that Koester does not (or no longer) take himself very seriously. He writes his letters from a garret in his flat in Berlin-Grunewald, an area where one grand house from the prior century lines up to the next, and describes his misery to his friends in Scotland: how his clothes have grown too big for him, how he has no money to buy new ones, and how, when he does have some, he spends it on things for his daughter. He portrays his young daughter Katharina[155] as the source of every joy and happiness during the last decade of his life.

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[152] Before he died in June 1956, Koester sent the last letters from a hospital in Berlin on 28 and 29 February 1956 to Belau and one to Ernst Levin.

[153] *Puck*, which Koester claims to have founded himself, was a satirical magazine in postwar Berlin belonging to the British 'Telegraf' to "durch Satire und Humor Mißstände zu geißeln(…)". Susanne Grebner, *Der Telegraf: Entstehung einer SPD-Nahen Lizenzzeitung in Berlin 1946-1950*, 13 vols (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2002), p. 227.

[154] Grebner, *Der Telegraf*, p. 227f.

[155] Katharina Koester (often called Kathrin or Kathrinchen by her father) was born on 30 May 1938 in Berlin; a wedding announcement sent to the Levins in 1961 notes her marriage to Michel Roger Lang in Paris. I have followed up this lead and found the following on Katharina Koester and her life's journey. Her first husband Lang, who was born to German-Jewish parents in France (who had emigrated and, after the German occupation, were interned in concentration camps) would later gain fame as a journalist for the *St. Pauli Nachrichten* in Hamburg, the magazine *konkret* and as writer of books on the Holocaust, as well as German antisemitism in the Bundesrepublik. Lang wrote the autobiographical novel *Die Treppe zur Hölle* published by Piper in 1982 and, together with Henryk M. Broder, *Fremd im eigenen Land- Juden in der Bundesrepublik*

Koester's life came to an end on 6 June 1956. In his letters, he portrayed his body's decay, his medical treatments, and his sadness about having to leave his young daughter, all disguised in the humoristic manner resembling the style he so frequently employed in his literary oeuvre.

As he faced death, our letter writer struck a graver note and this development reveals Koester as a person eager to be a man of integrity and a person who has scrutinised his own agency in life. Through the close reading analysis of his letter correspondence with the Levins, I will show this process of scrutiny in Koester's writing over the years.

The letter Koester sent to Belau's husband Ernst Levin, the only letter directly addressing the topic of the Holocaust, Levin's personal fate and the losses his family experienced, serves as a particular incentive for reading Koester's letters. Koester had, as early as 1948, asked Belau about possible losses that Levin might have suffered, but merged the question with other superficialities:

> Aber nun möchte ich erst einmal wissen, wie es Euch ergangen ist. Hat Ernst Verwandte verloren durch die Nazi- Barbarei? Seid ihr nun Engländer geworden? Ist Ernst in seinem Beruf gut vorwärts gekommen? Hoffentlich kannst du deine Schreibfaulheit mal überwinden. Es wäre an der Zeit, finde ich.[156]

Only in his last letter before he dies, as we will see in an in-depth analysis of it in Chapter IV, does he address the topic again, and in a more sincere way. His writing breaks with the ironic tonality employed elsewhere; it creates a sincere representation of Koester's sentiments. Therefore, an analysis of the Koester-Belau-correspondence is indispensable and fruitful as it illustrates the two identities that had been imposed on Koester and Belau throughout the years. In 1956, not only the North Sea lies between the two individuals, once in love and so close, once young and living in the same conditions and with the same possibilities in life, but also something else, perhaps unspeakable. The gap that has emerged between them is filled with stirring emotions. The materials available of do not provide unfiltered access to Koester's

published by Fischer in 1979. Michel R. Lang died in Berlin in 2004. Katharina Koester divorced Michel Lang soon after their wedding; they had one son, Pascal Lang. She later married 'Schlagerstar' (popstar) Gerhard Wendland who died in 1996. Katharina Wendland currently lives in Munich. She claims to have no personal papers of her father due to flooding in the basement of her mother's apartment where they had kept some of Koester's written materials.

[156] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

emotions but the striking difference between letter writer and recipient is manifested by the writer's sense of unease when he refers to WWII and the Third Reich and his envy for the 'better' life in exile Britain. The dichotomy between participant and persecuted is never so clearly referred to in the EL Collection as in this letter from Reinhard Koester to Ernst Levin.

Up until now, there had not been much information available on Koester's life after WWII. Based on the EL Collection, this thesis will close this gap in research on the Westphalian writer. The years following WWII up until Koester's death in 1956, his daily life in Berlin, his struggle to find employment and how he dealt with the German past are portrayed in detail in the letters examined in the following chapters. Although his wife and daughter, Ellen Koester and Katharina Wendland,[157] did not preserve Koester's letters or personal papers after he died, the letters he sent to Anicuta Belau were kept by her and her husband. Thus, I am able to fill the following gaps in biographical research on Reinhard Koester: the writer's early pre-WWI years in Munich, when he first connected with literature, other writers and artists, his actions during the last years of WWII and his life and eventually death in post-WWII Berlin.

Before I begin the analysis of Koester's correspondence in Chapters II to IV, I will introduce the second very regular correspondent of the Levins in the years from 1946 to 1962, painter Max Unold.

[157] Ellen Koester (b. Hambach ca.1904-3.2.1981) and Katharina Wendland (1938-).

Introducing Max Unold

Research on Max Unold

For the introduction of Max Unold, I am drawing on several sources. First, Unold's letters sent to the Belau-Levins preserved in the EL Collection and secondly, previous work on the artist's life and work. Similar to the literature on Reinhard Koester, the body of work on Unold is very manageable, although not quite as limited.

In her dissertation from 1992 on Unold's art, which until today remains the only extensive monograph on the artist, Germaid Ruck provides a clear outline of Unold's most important stages as an artist and teacher of art as well as a public figure.[158] Further previously published books dealing with Max Unold are the catalogue of an exhibition of his paintings in his hometown in 1985, also edited by Ruck, as well as memories of Unold written down by his friend Richard Seewald.[159]

Ruck's dissertation lays the focus on Unold in the context of the art of painting in Munich in the 1910s and 1920s, the two decades that mark Unold's most productive time. A crucial part of Ruck's academic work was the cataloguing of his oil paintings for which she had scoped his archived materials,[160] consisting of drafts, drawings etc., diaries and some letters. The work catalogue shows that, on the publication of her book in 1992, Ruck had identified 600 oil paintings, of which 300 could not be located. With the creation of the EL Collection, the connection between Max Unold and the Levins came to light and with it some of Unold's, until then untraceable, paintings, now in possession of the Levins' son in law, Arnold Myers.[161]

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[158] Germaid Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde* (Memmingen: Edition Curt Visel, 1992). Art critic Wilhelm Hausenstein published a small book of 16 pages with illustrations by Max Unold in 1921, this book contains a short autobiography: 'Selbstbiographie', in *Max Unold*, ed. by Wilhelm Hausenstein (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1921).

[159] Germaid Ruck, *Max Unold, 1885-1964, Ausstellung in Memmingen, 18. September- 13.Oktober 1985* (Memmingen: Stadt Memmingen, 1985); Richard Seewald, 'Erinnerungen an Max Unold', *Illustration 63. Zeitschrift für Buchillustration unserer Zeit* (Memmingen: Visel, 1977), 2-7.

[160] Unold's personal papers are archived in Munich in 'Bayerische Staatsarchiv' and in his hometown Memmingen, distributed between the 'MEWO Kunsthalle' and the 'Stadtmuseum Memmingen'.

[161] These paintings have not yet been catalogued but are now located.

The most recent work dealing with Unold's art is a dissertation from 2015 by Kathrin Baumeister, in which the author analyses and compares several artists' illustrations of Voltaire's *Candide*. Max Unold's illustrations, alongside those of Alfred Kubin, Paul Klee, and others, are under examination in her book. [162]

Unold's early years around the fin de siècle have been reconstructed well, with however one crucial lack of information regarding the identity of his most frequently painted model of the time. With the donation of the EL Collection to the LHSA in 2015 this model has now been revealed as his lover and friend, Anicuta Belau. The EL Collection and the letter analysis I am conducting in this thesis will furthermore contribute to a closing the gap in knowledge of Unold's experiences in Munich and in the Bavarian countryside during WWII. These experiences and how he dealt with them during the postwar era had thus far only been reconstructed in fragments.

The early years – from Memmingen to Munich

As I stated regarding the prior section on Reinhard Koester, this chapter will not aim to give a comprehensive biography of Max Unold, for this has been done in Ruck's dissertation. However, it will fill the gaps that I established above and, provide further insights into Unold's life at the time of the *Schwabinger Bohème* as well as during the years of the Third Reich and eventually in postwar West Germany.

Ruck, and as a result Baumeister, too, emphasize Unold's passion not only for drawing and art but also for literature, and connect it with the often-conjured topos of the 'double talent' of some artists.[163] Both scholars refer to Unold's discontinued studies of philology in favour

[162] Kathrin Baumeister, *Die beste aller Welten: Künstler illustrieren Voltaires Candide; Chodowiecki, Monnet, Moreau, Unold, Klee, Kubin* (Berlin: Reimer, 2015). Within the context of these woodcuts by Max Unold, published in a 1913 edition of Voltaire's *Candide*, the following essay also acknowledges, Unold's work amongst that of other artists: Robert Vilain, 'Images of Optimism? German Illustrated Editions of Voltaire's Candide in the Context of the First World War', *Oxford German Studies*, 37.2 (2008), 223–252.

[163] Many (art) historians have discussed the 'double talent' or 'Doppelbegabung' of some artists, and research has concluded that its occurrence was especially high at the fin de siècle and amongst artists of Expressionism

of a career as an artist and interpret this development as his early, inner diremption, his own personal 'paragone'.[164] Of course, three semesters of studying philology alone would not support such a presumption, hence I assume this was endorsed further by Unold's lifelong engagement with literature and his continuous writing of essays and articles as well as three books in the years from 1939 to 1948.[165]

The aim of Ruck's dissertation is a categorization of Max Unold as a painter and artist within the context of the 'Münchner Malerei' and the New Secession movements. Ruck describes Unold as one of the "typischsten Vertreter"[166] of Munich's art, which she classifies as overpoweringly traditional.[167] She summarises what led to the rejection of Munich's conservative cultural policy of the nineteenth century, which increasingly banned foreign art from exhibitions, and she depicts the first Munich secession movement, founded in 1892 by Hugo von Habermann (1849-1929) who was Unold's teacher at the 'Münchner Akademie'. Ruck introduces Unold's path from his hometown Memmingen, where according to the correspondence with his art teacher, Unold's talent was discovered and encouraged, to university in Munich and the private drawing school of Moritz von Heymann and Johannes Brochhoff and eventually to the renowned Hugo von Habermann at the 'Münchner Akademie'.[168] Unold was a member of the second Secession movement, the 'Münchner Neue Secession', founded in 1913.

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and decadence. 'Doppelbegabung' means the artist is especially skilled in more than one art including literature, sculpture, painting, architecture, music etc. Often cited artists in this context are Oskar Kokoschka and Alfred Kubin. For further reading see for example: Anja Göbel, *Der Blaue Reiter - Schönberg und Kandinsky im Wandel der Zeit: Berührungspunkt zwischen Musik und Malerei zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (2013); Dorle Meyer, *Doppelbegabung im Expressionismus: zur Beziehung von Kunst und Literatur bei Oskar Kokoschka und Ludwig Meidner* (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2013).

[164] 'Paragone' describes the competitive relation of the fine arts; this was heatedly debated during the Italian Renaissance but revived through Lessing's much acclaimed essay on the statue of the 'Laookon-group' from 1766 in which he analysed the matter on particularly the comparison of poetry and visual arts. See: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, ed. by Friedrich Vollhardt (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2012).

[165] Unold wrote the following books: Max Unold, *Zwischen Atelier und Kegelbahn: Besinnliche Betrachtungen* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1939); Max Unold, *Alfred Kubin. Abenteuer einer Zeichenfeder* (Munich: Piper, 1941); Max Unold, *Über die Malerei* (Hamburg: Claassen&Goverts, 1948).

[166] Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 9.

[167] Cf. ibid.

[168] Cf. ibid., p. 18.

Around the time of the *Münchner Neue Secession*'s beginnings, Unold had been romantically involved with Anicuta Belau for five years. The pair met in Munich as early as 1908, when they were twenty-three and twenty-two years old. Their relationship lasted until 1915 but, as the letters in the EL Collection suggest, it was never an exclusive relationship.

As mentioned before, Belau also entertained a relationship with Reinhard Koester during those years. Both men, although in all probability also seeing other women, documented their jealousy in their letters to Belau. Unold had been Anicuta's lover first, with Koester coming into the picture only a little later, and one of Max Unold's letters in 1912 documents this development as follows:

> Meine liebe Anicuta, verzeih dass ich nicht früher geschrieben habe- aber was sollte ich schreiben? Einerseits wurmte mich's innerlich, daß s [sic] jetzt auch Koester können sollte und mit dir feiern, andererseits weiß ich aber, dass ich dir nicht helfen kann, wenn ich s so sagen täte. (...)[169]

Reinhard Koester, who, as established, struggled with the situation, even states in a letter from France in 1911 that he will never return to Munich should Unold be there: "Ich komme nicht mehr nach München, solange Unold da ist und Du. Ich denke an Dich und habe dich lieb."[170]

Scholars knew about Max Unold's Bohemian lifestyle, his participation in festivities of the 'Hermetische Gesellschaft' and his wide friendship circle.[171] The evidence of his sustained love triangle with Anicuta Belau and Reinhard Koester is, however, undocumented elsewhere and revealed through my analysis of their letters.

[169] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau, 1912, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 12 1/6.
[170] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 27.07.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13.
[171] His friends include numerous well-known artists such as Oskar Coester, Edwin Scharff, Walter Teutsch, Richard Seewald, and Hugo Troendle. Most of these could be classified as Expressionist artists, however, the time frame from ca. 1900-1945 is characterized not by one tendency following the other but rather by a "'simultaneity of the non-simultaneous', in other words, a temporal overlap of various new currents with older modes of representation" and thus, like Unold himself, many of his artistic friends are not easily assigned to one style. *The Art of Society 1900-1945: The Nationalgalerie Collection, 22 August 2021- 2 July 2023, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Neue Nationalgalerie*, ed. by Dieter Scholz, Irina Hiebert Grun, and Joachim Jäger (Berlin: DCV, 2021), p. 13.

Because Belau had often posed for Unold's portraits, research showed that this woman, recognisable through her unique look and haircut, had been Unold's lover but since only her first name was noted in Unold's materials, her identity remained undiscovered. Germaid Ruck, who worked extensively on creating a catalogue of his works, lacked the knowledge now obtained, when cataloguing a painting from 1908 called "Unold und Anicuta".[172] She states:

> Anicuta, eine gebürtige Rumänin, deren Nachname bisher nicht ermittelt werden konnte, war die damalige Lebensgefährtin Unolds- spätestens seit 1908 bis mindestens 1915. Unold hat sie häufig als Modell benutzt (…).[173]

As we now learn from the letters exchanged between Anicuta and Ernst Levin from 1915 on, Belau and Unold had even planned to marry in 1915 and only after many, almost daily letters written by Ernst Levin, stationed in France at the time, to Belau, in which he begged her to leave Unold, had she ended the relationship.[174]

Unold had also been stationed at the Western Front from July until October 1916, before which time he had been exempted from service due to his work on a mosaic commission for the museum in Wiesbaden. After a severe leg wound and a stay in a military hospital,[175] he was sent to the Eastern Front and from 1918 on to Austria, both times to work as a supervisor in a quarry producing headstones for fallen soldiers.[176]

When he returned to Munich at the end of the war, his oil paintings received even more attention. Before the war he had mostly been praised for his fine woodcut illustrations for several celebrated books, another reason for Baumeister to emphasize his passion for

[172] Interestingly not Max and Anicuta or Unold and Belau – Unold here already stages himself as the successful artist, signing off with his last name, whereas the 'muse' is listed with her first name.
[173] Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 240.
[174] On 09.11.1915 Ernst Levin writes in a letter to Anicuta Belau: "Dass du mit dem Andren verlobt bist, hat für mich einen [illegible] Beigeschmack. (…) Du musst ihm sagen, dass du ihn nicht liebst, dass du einen Andren liebst."(Ernst Levin to Anicuta Belau, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 12 2/6). Anicuta answers Levin's letters from war frequently and against her usual laziness in writing. Many of his letters sent to her show their intellectual exchange, e.g., he would end letters as follows:"Leb wohl Anicuta, ich küsse dich. Ernst. Bitte lies „Niels Lyhne""(Ernst Levin to Anicuta Belau, 30.11.1915, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 12 3/6.).
[175] On 1 October 1916, his 31st birthday, Unold was moved to a lazarette due to an infection in the leg.
[176] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 355.

literature, although she concedes that a certain knowledge of belles lettres as generally instilled in those with a humanist education.[177]

Furthermore, woodcut illustrations, as Baumeister adds, offered a good opportunity to secure an income during those first, often insecure years as an artist.[178] Unold's woodcuts were, in the beginning, strongly influenced by 'Jugendstil',[179] and later developed into being Expressionist but with a "folkloristisch-naturhafter[n] Tendenz".[180]

Unold's early paintings however, influenced by his various travels to France, show strong Impressionist elements. Unold, like Koester, had regularly spent part of each summer in Paris, Bordeaux, and the South of France in the years from 1908 until 1913 – experiences that are also documented in the EL Collection with plenty of letters sent back to Anicuta Belau in Munich. When his portrait of Belau, 'Dame im blauen Kleid', won the gold medal at the *Munich Secession* exhibition in 1913, it meant a stepping-stone for future success for the young artist.[181]

According to Ruck's assessment, Unold's work constantly oscillated between the two poles of progression and tradition, a leaning that was mirrored in the *Secession*'s foundations. The years 1900-1945 are characterised not by a clear succession of tendencies but rather by a "'simultaneity of the non-simultaneous', (…) a temporal overlap of various new currents with older modes of representation"[182] and this can also be identified in Unold's art. However, he and most like-minded artists in Bavaria (and members of the *Neue Secession* with their conservative education at the *Münchner Akademie*) strived to expand the borders of such

[177] "Die Auseinandersetzung mit der Buchillustration ergibt sich aus unterschiedlichen Motivationen heraus. Bei einem ehemaligen Philologen ist eine Affinität zur Literatur und zum Medium des Buches und zu philosophisch konnotierten Themen zu erwarten. Dies sollte allerdings nicht überbewertet werden, da die Kenntnis von Belletristik gewissermaßen zur Allgemeinbildung der Mittel-und Oberschicht gehört, aus der die meisten Künstler stammen." Baumeister, p. 166.
[178] Cf. ibid.
[179] 'Jugendstil' means Art Nouveau style, developed between 1890 and 1910, its followers applied imagery of youth and beauty, its characteristics are playfulness and exaggerated floral ornaments.
[180] Cf. Baumeister, p. 168.
[181] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 41.
[182] Scholz, Hiebert Grun, and Jäger, p. 13.

conservatism but struggled to do so, which, according to Ruck, resulted in a concept of its own kind, ambivalently eager to connect local tradition with international modernism.[183]

The years of the Weimar Republic – Munich 1920s

Max Unold had already been part of such a 'Künstlerszene' before the beginning of WWI and became more known to other artist and critics after his success at the Secession exhibition in 1913 and especially after his first solo exhibition at the renowned Gallerie Tannhauser in Munich in 1921.[184]

Art historians today mostly mention Unold's work in connection with 'Nachexpressionismus'[185] and, as Baumeister notes, adding to Ruck's statements, "Realismus, Magischem Realismus oder Nachimpressionismus"[186] or in in the context of the "Münchner Künstlerszene".[187]

In addition to these influences, Unold increasingly used elements of *Neue Sachlichkeit* during the 1920s. The new movement, also emerging in the literature of the second decade of the new century is characterised by its rational, often cold depiction of reality.[188] The perception of anything is of course never objective and the dimensions of what that meant for the reproducibility of reality concerned many artists and literati and also Max Unold.

Kathrin Baumeister makes an interesting observation on Unold's style of this time as she elaborates that many of his paintings show an eagerness to present a "realistische

[183] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 44.
[184] The Gallerie Tannhauser had exhibited members of the 'Blaue Reiter' movement in 1909/1910 as well as Max Beckmann. Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold, 1885-1964, Ausstellung in Memmingen, 18. September- 13.Oktober 1985*, p. 9.
[185] Cf. ibid., p. 10.
[186] Baumeister, p. 163.
[187] Ibid.
[188] The *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) movement counteracts the over-emotional basis of Expressionism with a new objective style and the aspiration to offer a precise account of reality. It established "a painting style in the Weimar Republic that brought its subject matter into razor-sharp focus. Embodying a new sobriety its artists produced sober portraits, still lifes and landscapes precisely reflecting social developments of the times." Scholz, Hiebert Grun, and Jäger, p. 207.

Darstellung",[189] which she connects with the painter's emotional coldness.[190] I argue that this coldness also resonates in his letters. As I will show in the following analytical chapters, many of Unold's postwar letters show his eagerness to create a rational and allegedly authentic tone. It is evident from Baumeister's observations on Unold's art, that his remarkably unaffected and neutral style that features in his letters of the 1950s had already been inherent in his paintings three decades prior. In Chapter III of this thesis, I will elaborate further on concepts of emotional coldness and discuss the origins of this style beyond the obvious fact that Unold included *neusachliche* approaches in his art from the early 1920s.

Regarding his social activities, the 1920s mark the decade in which Max Unold and the couple Ernst and Anicuta Levin saw each other the most regularly. Unold had married the Austrian professional dancer Margarete Heinzel in 1924, [191] seven years after the Levins' wedding in 1917. Their marriage remained childless, and the Unolds and the Levins – or the two men – met almost daily during the second decade of the twentieth century. Ernst Levin describes this time of their lives in his letter of condolence to Grete Unold after Unold's death in 1964 as follows:

> (…) Erst seit der Heimkehr 1918 haben wir uns fast täglich gesehen beim Abendessen in der Akropolis oder der Osteria Bavaria des Herrn Deutlmoser die später Adolf Hitlers Stammlokal wurde, oder beim Strich der nun mit der Marta verheiratet war. Zu der Zeit war ich auch mit der Anicuta verheiratet, dann kam die Anne-kathrin, und wir befreundeten uns mit dem Ringelnatz den wir oft bei der Kati Kobus aufsuchten wo wir auch die gute alte Marietta kennenlernten.
> Es war eine wilde, aufgeregte und angeregte Zeit, und der Unold und ich haben nächtelang miteinander diskutiert über Gott und die Welt, über Martin Luther, Kommunismus und Christentum, Literatur und Malerei und Theater. Wir sind uns oft sehr nahe gekommen so verschieden wir nach unserer Herkunft, unserer Erziehung und unseren Interessensphaeren auch waren.[192]

[189] Baumeister, p. 182.
[190] "Wenn er [Unold] in seiner Selbstdarstellung (…) schreibt , dass „die Sachen" gemalt werden wollen, um dann unter anderem Kinder auf der Straße aufzuzählen, so schwingt in dieser Bezeichnung eine emotionale Kälte mit, die vielen seiner Werke anhaftet und diese unheimlich erscheinen lässt. Unold sieht diese Stilistik darin begründet, dass die Erfassung und Darstellung von Wirklichkeit eine solche Distanz erfordert, die emotional und künstlerisch gedacht ist." Ibid.
[191] In his letters to the Levins always referred to as 'Grete'. Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 355.
[192] Ernst Levin to Grete Unold, 27.5.1964, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 1 3/5.

This passage of Levin's letter is a rarity in the EL Collection since of most other letters sent from Edinburgh to the Unolds in Munich there are no copies, and it documents several things. For one, it supports what Germaid Ruck indicates at several points in her works on Unold, that the painter was known for his conviviality and intellectual mind. In addition to that, it gives a glimpse into those Weimar years which the friends (and former lovers) shared, the places they went to, and the debates they had. This is especially interesting as there are not many letters of that time between Unold and the Levins contained in the EL Collection, as the 1920s mark the period where they were all resident in Munich and therefore had not as much reason to write to one another as in earlier (or later) times. Levin's lines in his letter of condolence to Grete Unold encapsulate the atmosphere of those Weimar years – the years that meant the foundation of their friendship. The love triangle of the fin de siècle was no longer, Belau was married to Levin and had had a child (born in 1919), Unold had settled down too, and Koester, whether momentarily married, divorced, or remarried, had left Munich by 1924. However, the two couples, Unold and Belau-Levin, met regularly and cherished each other for the intellectual (and likely cheerful) exchange.

In addition to these joyful evenings this decade was characterised by Unold's many trips to the Bavarian countryside, Switzerland, and Italy, always undertaken to inspire his painting. In 1927, Unold was made professor, a position he had long desired and applied for more than once. Big commissions, such as the mosaic in the interior of the luxury cruise ship 'Europa' in 1929/1930 contributed to his financial stability towards the end of the decade.[193]

In a similar way to Koester who discovered the 'Tagesschriftstellerei', written to please a wide audience, to secure a stable income, Unold had become a modern artist, not in his art itself, but in the way in which he earned his living. He did not rely on selling his exhibited paintings alone, but always took on bigger commissions, for which he also produced what others had designed. This approach is in line with the idea of the artist as a producer for the masses, as a producer of something purposeful, rather than merely creating art for the sake of art. Baumeister, however, argues quite the contrary regarding Unold's style and his urge to, as I mentioned above, depict reality as it is. She describes his paintings as close to the *l'art pour*

[193] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 356.

l'art movement and states: "Die Forderung seiner Kunst könnte als zunehmend perfektes Kopieren und als eine Ästhetisierung der Umwelt beschrieben werden."[194] In all probability, Baumeister here refers to his art but it is helpful to differentiate between the way Unold made a living from his art (commissioned works not necessarily in his own signature style) and the style of his paintings which he produced for exhibitions. This difference was certainly most explicit in the decade from 1920-1930.

The caesura of 1933 – commissions under Nazi rule

Unold's approach of taking on commissions to secure his income does not alter with the assumption of power by the Nazis in 1933. Amongst these commissions are his mosaic interiors and church frescoes in 1935 for Bavarian villages and the museum in Saarbrücken.[195] His continuous acceptance of commissions even after the Secession had been dissolved in 1936 following a Gestapo raid at Unold's home, prove the artist's definite attitude of favouring participation over the idea of any form of 'inner emigration'.

These works, the ones that research knows of, include two mosaic pieces for military airports in Bavaria in 1937 and the mosaic commission for the German Pavilion at the world exhibition in Paris in 1937, designed by Albert Speer.[196] Speer's design, which Unold executed showed a tessellated eagle on a large swastika; another piece worthy of mention is a portrait Unold finished of his hometown's mayor, Heinrich Berndl, which shows him wearing his *Wehrmacht* uniform.[197] The new professional situation Max Unold was facing under the new government is described in short by Ruck as follows:

> Dem Charakter seiner Kunst aus den 30er Jahren entsprechend, die zwischen einer starken Anpassung an die Kunstideologie des Nationalsozialismus und einer

[194] Baumeister, p. 185.
[195] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 356.
[196] Cf. ibid.
[197] Max Unold, *Porträt Heinrich Berndl*, 1941. Part of the following exhibition: Max Unold: Kunstgeschichten. 8.6.-23.9.2018. Mewo Kunsthalle Memmingen. For more information on Heinrich Berndl's role as mayor of Memmingen during the Third Reich see: Paul Hoser, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Memmingen: Vom Neubeginn im Königreich Bayern bis 1945*, ed. by Hans-Wolfgang Bayer and Uli Braun, 2 vols (Aalen: Theiss, 2001), pp. 203-285.

> freieren, die Prinzipien der Neuen Sachlichkeit in abgeschwächter Form fortsetzenden Richtung schwankt, wurde Unold von den neuen Machthabern nicht gerade überreichlich, aber doch ausreichend mit Aufträgen und Austellungsmöglichkeiten bedacht.[198]

While Ruck employs a defensive tone to outline Unold's involvement with contracting authorities of the Third Reich, in her book published seven years after the exhibition catalogue edited by her, Ruck defines the artist's attitude as that of what was later referred to as 'stiller Mitläufer'.[199] This classification seems rather unsuitable given that Unold's works directly contributed to Nazi propaganda (Heinrich Berndl's portrait, the mosaics in military airports, the mosaic swastika for the 1937 German Pavilion) and the uncritical use of the term 'Mitläufer' – so often dismissed as inadequate to do justice to most Germans' involvement with and complicity in the Nazi system – astonishingly naïve.[200] Her uncritical classification of Unold as an uninvolved and silent citizen who rejected the Nazi ideology seems even more shocking as, only five pages earlier, under a section on monumental art, Ruck reports that he had actively sent in a draft for the German Pavilion at the world exhibition in 1936 to apply for the commission. His draft had been selected by Adolf Hitler personally, information that she has drawn from a diary entry by Unold where he wrote triumphantly "Monumentalentwurf Paris v. Führer gewählt!".[201]

The author's urge to defend Unold's commissions[202] is almost as disconcerting as the indifference Unold showed in his participation with the Fascist government and his correspondence with his Jewish friend Levin, persecuted by these same rulers.

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[198] Ruck, *Max Unold, 1885-1964, Ausstellung in Memmingen, 18. September- 13.Oktober 1985*, p. 10.
[199] Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 132.
[200] I will discuss the term and its implications in more detail in Chapter III.
[201] Max Unold, diary entry, 11.12.1936. As cited in Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 127.
[202] The following statement is the only time Ruck mentions Unold's commission for Albert Speer in detail, and it neglects his commissions for Bavarian military airports in 1937, and the glass windows for a museum in Saarbrücken in 1935 merely because they had been destroyed during WWII. The portrait of Mayor Berndl in Wehrmacht uniform is not mentioned at all. "Der einzige hochoffizielle Auftrag Unolds war das riesige Mosaik mit dem deutschen Adler, der den deutschen Pavilion Speers auf der Pariser Weltausstellung 1937 zierte." Ibid.

Around the same time of Unold's discussed diary entry on the commission for the Nazi government, just a year earlier, in November of 1935, he had written to his friend Ernst Levin in Edinburgh. In this letter he stated the difficulties of his career, not in the context of life in a dictatorship but as a general observation about the artistic profession. Levin had already lived in Edinburgh for two years at the time and the two friends had not been corresponding much after his emigration. This letter in November 1935 is Unold's reply to Levin's first letter sent from Scotland and shows astonishingly little acknowledgment of Levin's own professional difficulties after the Nazis had cut off his income potential as a medical doctor and he had to leave his family and relocate to a foreign country. It also shows that the unease regarding the Third Reich and the topic of the Levins' forced emigration arose only after the war and the gap in correspondence. The letter exposes the writer's general contentment, insiffuciently disguised by, what seems to be, insincere lamenting:

> (…) wenn ich einen ruhigen Abend vor mir habe, schriftstellere ich! Weder Gedichte noch Romane, sondern kleine Aufsätze, Bücherbesprechungen etc.- eine erwünschte Nebeneinnahme, die mich schrecklich viel Zeit kostet. Die Herren von der Presse und von der Literatur schätzen meine Erzeugnisse, die jedoch so langsam entstehen, Resultate unzähliger Überarbeitungen sind, daß ich immer mal wieder beschließe es aufzugeben. Nun möchte sogar ein Verlag ein Buch von mir über Malerei- das werde ich mir sehr überlegen, denn diese grausame Dilettanten-Mühseligkeit misst einem halt doch Kräfte und wenn man schon mit einem kleinen bisschen auf die Nachwelt schauen sollte, so wären mir einige anständige Bilder doch lieber als ein paar Feuilleton-Artikel.(…) Es ist nicht ganz so, wie wir in unserer Jugend glaubten. Ich wenigstens dachte, wenn man einen Weg geradeausgeht, kommt man eines Tages zum Ziel: stattdessen ist es zickzackig und spiralig dahingegangen, in der Kunst und im Leben, und manchmal sieht man überhaupt kein Ziel mehr – ein abscheulicher Zustand, in den ich hie und da verfalle und den ich Dir nicht wünsche- du hast wenigstens eine konkretere Aufgabe vor Dir als unsereiner. (…) Aber, wenn ich so weiter sinnieren wollte, käme ich geradezu ins Jammern, und das wäre gerade Dir gegenüber abscheulich ungerecht. Denn, ich glaub's Dir gern, daß das Münchner Klima immerhin schöner ist als das schottische, das wohl nicht einmal den Reiz des Exotischen in irgendeinem Sinne hat: wenn man nämlich dort ist. (…) wünsche dir, dass dir deine Arbeit recht lieb sein soll und ein guter Ersatz für manches Verlorene, und dass du manchmal daran denken mögest, dass man dich nicht vergisst. In treuer Freundschaft und Liebe dein alter U.[203]

[203] Max Unold to Ernst Levin, November 1935 (no day indicated), LHSA, EL Collection, Box 1 4/5.

Unold acknowledges Levin's losses of the past years and concedes that Levin has generally more to moan about than Unold himself; however, this does not prevent the letter writer from outlining his own (professional) struggles and generally philosophizing about what to leave for posterity ("wenn man schon mit einem kleinen bisschen auf die Nachwelt schauen sollte"). His lamentations on the lack of a specific task in his profession, which he finds especially noticeable in contrast to Levin's career as a neurologist appear as a general bemoaning of life as an artist. This is most likely not a depiction of suffering as a result of the dogmatic concept of art propagated by the new regime. The art of the *Münchner Neue Secession* was, until it was eventually dissolved in 1937, accepted and valued by the Nazi authorities. This was due to an orientation towards more traditionalist 'Heimatkunst' amongst the Neue Secession artists since the late 1920s.[204] As Unold tells his friend in the letter cited above, he decided to start writing, something that likely had to do with the need for an additional income and not as we know, with the artist trying to find other ways of being creative without working with the Nazi government. Rather, he did both, and in his letter to Levin he tries to disguise his boasts about literary successes and instead re-tells the topos of 'the artist's eternal struggle'.

As one would expect, the decade from 1930-1940 is underrepresented in the letters preserved in the EL Collection. Max Unold and Anicuta Belau still both lived in Munich for most of the decade, meaning there was not much need for extensive corresponding. Their writing to each other is often of an organisational nature.[205] Daily life in Munich remained, to a great extent, unchanged for the two non-Jewish Germans, Unold and Belau, even in 1936. A postcard by Anicuta Belau sent to her daughter, who, by then was already living in Edinburgh with her father, supports this thesis. In it, Belau praises the celebrations for the 'Tag der deutschen Kunst' as the most beautiful thing she has ever witnessed:

> Liebe Anneka, der Festzug war wunderschön und nun sitze ich im englischen Garten, der zauberhaft beleuchtet ist. So was schönes habe ich noch nie erlebt. Überall Tanzplätze (…) ich denke viel an dich mein liebes Putzerl.[206]

[204] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 129.
[205] "Da wir am Dienstag in den Bayerischen Wald reisen, würden wir uns freuen, Dich am Montag 17 Uhr bei Steinicke zu treffen, so um 10 h abends." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau, 15.2.1936, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13.
[206] Anicuta Belau to Anne-Kathrin Levin, 16.07.1937, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/2.

Hitler gave the opening speech on 18 July 1937 to the first of the annual exhibitions that went on until 1944 and, although Unold never participated in these with his art, as I have confirmed by consulting each of the exhibition catalogues from 1937-1944,[207] he was involved in the organising of the event and it is highly likely that he joined Belau for the celebrations. [208]

According to Ruck, Unold participated only in the "hochoffiziellen Events",[209] as she calls it, meaning he exhibited his work at only three of the bigger exhibitions in the years from 1935-1938.[210] However, several of the official magazines published in the Third Reich showed depictions of his paintings, for example the 'Jugendlust', 'Kunst für Alle', 'Die Kunst im Dritten Reich' and 'Daheim'.[211]

Ruck dedicates six pages to Unold and his art during the Third Reich. This does not seem very much, but for any art historian, Unold's best creative period was no doubt that of his early years (roughly 1917-1925) and the art of the Nazi period seems to be, from an artistic vantage point, somewhat minor. However, for a better understanding of Max Unold and his friendship with the Belau-Levins, a reconstruction of his actions during the 1930s, divided into two parts, one, when only Ernst Levin had left Munich, and a second, from 1938 on, when both the Levins were no longer in Germany, is important. It is after all one of the aims of this thesis to analyse Unold's postwar exchange of letters with the Levins and how they work as a frame for the deliberate depiction of himself and his own agency during these years. As I will show in detail, Max Unold does not mention his professional activities of the 1930s and 1940s and his links to the Nazi system in his postwar letters. Where his friend Reinhard Koester partially disrupts this silence in two of his postwar letters, Unold limits his account to experiences of war (the bombing of Munich and his flight to the countryside).

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[207] See: Kataloge der Großen Deutschen Kunstausstellung. https://www.arthistoricum.net/themen/textquellen/kataloge-der-grossen-deutschen-kunstaustellung [accessed 22 October 2021].

[208] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 127.

[209] Ruck, *Max Unold, 1885-1964, Ausstellung in Memmingen, 18. September- 13.Oktober 1985*, p. 10.

[210] These are the following: 'Sonderausstellung der Münchner Kunst' in the 'Neue Pinakothek' in 1935, at the 'Haus der Kunst' in 1936 and at the 'Maximilianaeum' in 1938. Cf. Ibid.

[211] "Die Bilder, in denen das Volkstümliche und Heimatverbundene forciert wird– eine Tendenz, die bereits in der zweiten Hälfte der 20er Jahre gelegentlich spürbar ist– werden darin als gelungene Beispiele der neuen 'Blut-und Bodenkunst' gefeiert". Ibid., p. 10.

The following letter was written by Unold as early as 1938 and therefore falls within the second time frame referred to above when the whole Levin family had emigrated to Edinburgh. In it, Unold allows himself a blackly humorous remark on Hitler's photographer Heinrich Hoffmann,[212] who had been 'given' the title of a 'professor' by Adolf Hitler in 1937. With his remark that only he knows "wie ein Deutscher zu malen hat", Unold clearly cynically refers to Hoffmann's role as organiser and selector of pieces that aligned with the National Socialist 'concept of art', for the 'Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung'[213] that was held for the first time in Munich one year prior to the letter. As mentioned, Max Unold's art was not exhibited at any of the exhibitions of the 'Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung' and it is difficult to say whether his unfavourable tone when mentioning Hoffmann originated truly in his dislike of the National Socialist government or is also expression of his personal resentment about no longer playing a role in Munich's art scene.

> Mit Bleistift schreibe ich euch, weil ich hier an einem italienischen Strand liege und der Füllfederhalter in M. zurück blieb. Noch vor wenigen Tagen war es unsicher, ob ein Brief an euch befördert würde. Und unser bisheriger Aufenthalt war auch bei schönem Wetter immer wieder von bösen Sorgen verdüstert. Nun wollen wir den Rest der Zeit besser genießen und die Sonne möge das Ihrige dazu tun! (…) Ich kann es schwer in Worte fassen: im Bayerischen Wald oder im Alpenvorland, selbst an der fernen Ostsee fühle ich mich sichtlich besser am Platz, besser berechtigt, die Natur zu formen und wieder zu geben. Aber von der Malerei wollen wir lieber schweigen: erstens weiß nur Herr Photograph Professor H. Hoffmann wie ein Deutscher zu malen hat; zweitens ist es für euch ein Problem nicht gerade aktueller Art. Ja, meine Lieben, wenn man einmal erfahren könnte, wie es euch geht, was ihr treibt und wie ihr haust. Aber wer kann das verlangen, dass z.B. Einer von euch jetzt gleich antworten würde, noch lieber, weil man da doch ungenierter schreiben kann (zu Haus fühle ich mich einfach innerlich gehemmt, wenn ich bei jedem Ausdruck daran denken muss, ob oder ob nicht).[214]

[212] Heinrich Hoffmann (1885-1957), contemporary of Unold, Koester and the Levins. Even before the NSDAP had moved the party office to Schellingstrasse in Munich-Schwabing, Hoffmann had long been a party member and close confidant of Adolf Hitler. He had opened his photography studio on Schellingstraße in the 1910s. It is therefore likely the letter writers crossed paths with him as early as then. Surely since he had been entrusted with the task of selecting the pieces for the first 'Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung' in 1937, the four friends would be familiar with his name.

[213] The 'Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung' recurred eight times from 1937 to 1944 in the 'Haus der deutschen Kunst' which had been specifically built for this purpose in Munich. The festivities were held from 16 July until 18 July 1937; Belau refers to them in the letter to her daughter Anne-Kathrin quoted above.

[214] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau & Ernst Levin, 03.10.1938. LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 4/4.

This letter is interesting for it marks the second and last of Unold's letters sent to Scotland during the 1930s and because in it he expresses his criticism of the Fascist rule in Germany during the years of the Third Reich as opposed to his retrospective narration of WWII (the years of the Third Reich are not mentioned) in his postwar letters. Unold refers to the censorship prevalent in Germany when he admits he is "innerlich gehemmt" when writing from Munich and therefore asks them to send a prompt reply directly to Italy. Whilst he expresses his displeasure with the new authorities in the Nazi art scene, he stops short of mentioning his own involvement in institutional commissions, such as his work for Albert Speer and the German pavilion at the world exhibition in 1937. This applies to the correspondence of the 1930s and that of the postwar era and can certainly be read as a deliberate exclusion of facts as well as proof of the artist's opportunist attitude.

Regarding this matter, art historian Germaid Ruck explains that Unold did adjust his work to the favoured standards of the National Socialist rulers but adds that she was able to detect an adjustment in themes as early as the mid-twenties, when Unold quite clearly served a concept of art popular at the time, most probably as it brought in money.[215] This discovery of development in Unold's art, from progressive to more conventional themes, can also be detected in the literature of the 1920s. Themes such as 'Heimat', 'Natur' and 'Volk' experienced a renaissance with the caesura in 1933 but had already emerged in the 1920s.

Unold's intellectualism and his classical education, both also foundational parts of his friendship with the Belau-Levins, may at first glance appear in contrast to a decision to stay in Germany and work under a Fascist regime. Ruck even mentions this in connection with his situation concerning commissions, and writes:

> (…) obwohl er sich nie in Verkennung der tatsächlichen Situation wie etwa Kanoldt, der in die Partei eintrat, zur Politik der Nationalsozialisten bekannte, obwohl seine politische Einstellung stets die des gebildeten Humanisten blieb, war er dennoch künstlerisch – und das heißt beruflich – zu einer Reihe von Konzessionen an die Vorstellungen der neuen Machthaber bereit, um sich seine Existenz einigermaßen zu sichern.[216]

[215] Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 130.
[216] Ibid., p. 132.

The dichotomy that Ruck introduces in this passage, between being a man with a humanist background and someone considering his own needs and financial situation, bears some naivety. I argue that those two characteristics are not mutually exclusive. Ruck stops short of mentioning that many intellectuals with a 'humanist background', as she calls it, continued to work with the authorities of the Third Reich. The fact that they were educated does not exonerate them from their participation in an unjust and inhuman regime. Max Unold was never forced to leave Germany, but it is arguable that, had his ideals been more important to him than his eagerness to live comfortably, he could have followed the example of others known to him, such as his close friend Richard Seewald[217] or, of course, Anicuta Belau herself. It is important to remember that the educated, humanist individuals who decided to continue to earn a living in Nazi Germany, like Unold, knew not only people who had emigrated to do justice to their ideologies, but also several of those who were forced to leave. Max Unold made his decision to stay and participate deliberately and with the knowledge of the state's persecution of its citizens.

Therefore, Ruck's statement ("obwohl seine politische Einstellung stets die des gebildeten Humanisten blieb …") is imprecise, as to classify someone as educated does not determine their political beliefs. In other words, it is entirely possible for an educated person not to be a humanist; Ruck therefore makes a causal connection where there is none. Of course, Unold could understand himself to be educated and a humanist, but what his actions show is that he had disregarded moral concerns when he continuously took on commissions from the Nazi government and thus contributed to its propaganda.

I argue that Unold's primary concern about his financial situation and societal status crucially hindered him in taking any actual opposition to the Nazi authorities; he chose the most convenient way and adjusted his art in order to be able to participate in the new state. Ruck cites two letters sent to Unold's parents that support my assumption. In 1939, at the beginning of the war, he writes: "Im letzten Krieg (schrecklich genug, daß man so schreiben muß) haben die Maler, die zuhause waren, gut verdient; wir werden sehen, wie sich alles

[217] Seewald (1889-1976), painter and member of the Neue Secession, was a friend of Max Unold. He decided to emigrate to Switzerland as early as 1931 due to the increasingly repressive cultural climate and only returned to Germany in 1948.

entwickelt".[218] Bearing in mind that, in this letter, Unold may have been eager to soothe his parents' possible concerns, it nevertheless shows the focus on financial stability. Two years later into the war, he addresses the focus on his own, personal situation even more directly: "Auch weiterhin bestehen gute Aussichten [for art sales] und so lassen wir es uns wohl gehen in unserer Einsamkeit trotz den aufregenden Zeiten."[219]

Both passages show a man concerned about his financial comforts and eager to uphold such comforts, despite, as he euphemistically calls, it the "aufregenden Zeiten". This letter sent to the Unolds in Memmingen reveals their son's opportunism. The analysis of Unold's postwar letters to the Belau-Levins, which I will undertake in the following, will show that these do not contain such a positive portrayal of his daily life during the years of Nazi rule. This of course stems from two things: first, one must consider that the addressee of a letter shapes its content, in other words the letter writer's description cannot simply be believed to represent the actual course of events (Unold might have presented his situation in a brighter light to his parents, and, as I will show, he emphasized his hardship to the Levins); and secondly, the moment of writing crucially influences the letter writer's perception of his own experience. In the letter cited above, the letter writer describes his financial situation at the moment of writing, in October 1941, three years before British and American air raids on the city of Munich began and with them Unold's personal 'Kriegserfahrung'. It is therefore not surprising that Unold's perception of, what he calls "aufregende Zeiten" in 1941, has changed in his postwar letters and, in addition to the different addressees, this results in a contrasting presentation of the same years.

In the close reading analyses in Chapters II-IV, I will point out further insights regarding Unold's self-justifying narratological strategies regarding his active participation in the Third Reich and furthermore take into consideration how the addressee of a letter is a constant content-shaping factor.

[218] Letter from Max Unold to his parents, 15.9.1939, as cited in: Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 132.
[219] Letter from Max Unold to his parents, 14.10.1941, as cited in: Ibid.

A statesman and artist – Unold's postwar years in Bavaria 1945-1964

There is no correspondence between the Belau-Levins and Unold in the years of the war. Unold writes his first letter to Edinburgh on 3 December 1946, although he had sent some postcards before that, which remained unanswered. Unold's last letter to Edinburgh is written on 30 October 1962, one and a half years before the artist's death. His output is of a similar frequency to Reinhard Koester's, but as he lives eight years longer than Koester, there are around twenty-one letters by him in the EL Collection for the time frame named above. Additionally, Max Unold sent numerous postcards from his holidays in Italy or the Bavarian countryside as well as some from Munich.

Unold's life in the new Bundesrepublik appears to have been pleasant: he is appointed to several positions (for the Bavarian senate and artist associations), and he has become a respected person of the cultural public. His public engagement in cultural and political institutions in Bavaria were dominant in Unold's postwar years up until his death in 1964.

Although Unold, according to his statements in some of the letters to the Belau-Levins, continued to paint during these years, he did not have the same productivity he had had in the years between 1944 and 1948. This period, initiated by his and his wife's move to the countryside in the last year of the war,[220] is declared by Ruck as his most productive period, only rivalled by the years 1910-1913.[221] Unold is one of the founding members of the 'Neue Gruppe' (founded in 1946), a group of artists that is today mostly mentioned in connection with its many members who were forced to emigrate or whose art was classified as 'degenerate' during the Third Reich, for example Otto Dix, Oskar Kokoschka or Max Pechstein.

In the Bavarian countryside,[222] the artist returned to themes he had employed in the years prior to the mid-1920s: the Mediterranean, fishermen and port scenes. True to her prior

[220] Unold's studio had been destroyed during a bombing in January 1945 and with it around 50 oil paintings and 700 books, as he tells the Belau-Levins in a letter on 03.12.1946. (LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13). Germaid Ruck assumes the studio had been destroyed in 1944 and deplores the destruction of so many of Unold's (early) paintings. Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 138.
[221] Cf. ibid., p. 138.
[222] Unold stayed in Holzen, Isartal until 1951.

defensive attitude regarding the artist, Germaid Ruck interprets this development as a liberation from the "Fesseln nationalsozialistischer Kunstideologie".[223]

These paintings are by no means an attempt to create something new – Unold reuses the aforementioned themes of the 1920s and thus his art of the 1940s and 1950s simply means a "anachronistische Neuauflage seines eigenen Werks".[224] Not only did Unold continue to paint figuratively, his themes remained the same, although some of his contemporaries had begun to employ new motifs and paint contemporary postwar themes such as refugees in (destroyed) cities, and the ongoing poverty.[225]

Rather than adopting such new creative approaches, Unold continued to paint the urban space as he had painted it in the 1920s,[226] with masses of people roaming the streets as well as coffee house scenes and general depictions of life-at-leisure, most probably inspired by his frequent trips to the emerging mass holiday destinations of the Adriatic coast in Italy. Unold's "völlig überholte[s] Spätwerk",[227] which today makes about a third of his whole oeuvre, and its little recognition in postwar Germany can today be seen as a reason for the comparably little interest in his, qualitatively much better, earlier work, as Ruck suggests.

This understanding of Unold as a man who stuck to what was familiar to him also resonates in the correspondence discussed in this thesis. Unold, who after WWII was almost sixty years old, admitted to his incomprehension of the young 'Nachkriegskunst', not only in his book *Über die Malerei*,[228] published in 1948, but also in some of his letters to the Belau-Levins.[229]

It becomes obvious that the biggest successes in Unold's last two decades after 1945 are to be found in his role in public cultural work and not in his creative output. The several different

[223] Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*, p. 138.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Cf. ibid.
[226] Cf. ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Unold, *Über die Malerei*. Unold mentions the success of this book and that it had been translated into Italian and 'Jugoslawisch' numerous times in his letters to the Belau-Levins. It was clearly one of his proudest achievements of postwar times.
[229] " (…) Sein [Willi Geiger] Sohn Rupprecht malt ganz abstrakte, aber auch in dieser Art schlechte Bilder." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 16.4.1950, LHSA, EL 18 ii 1/3.

positions he holds[230] and, what must have felt like the ultimate accolade, the awarding of the 'Große Verdienstkreuz des Verdienstordens der BRD' in 1955, contributed to a self-confident attitude, albeit he reached a creative dead end. Interestingly, the artist himself argues otherwise and emphasize his consistent quest for artistic expression, as I will show in Chapter IV.

On the occasion of his seventieth birthday he writes to his friends with an overview of his awards and newly gained popularity:

> Obwohl ich zu meinem 70. gar viele Ehren entgegennehmen durfte- eine Einladung der Stadt M., das Große Verdienstkreuz etc.- hat mich kaum etwas so gefreut wie eure Briefe. Das warme Gedenken nach so langer Zeit, die Herzlichkeit der Empfindung, ich war richtig beglückt davon. Und drum gehe ich heut erst daran zu antworten, nachdem ich mit wochenlangem Adressenschreiben all das Offizielle erledigt habe. (Außerdem war ich allerdings acht Tage in Bonn, wo ich den Auftrag hatte, den Bundespräsidenten Heuß zu porträtieren).[231]

This passage displays Unold's usual lack of modesty: although he assures the addressees of his deep gratitude for their well wishes, the letter writer manages to include his achievements. Particularly striking is the commission he was granted by the government to portray Bundespräsident Heuss, this marks a seamless transition from working with the Nazi government to completing portraits for the 'bundesrepublikanische' authorities, a phenomenon so often deplored by those who had categorised the denazification as utterly failed.[232]

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[230] As mentioned in his letter, he is the president of the 'Berufsverband bildender Künstler' as well as a founding member of the 'Neue Gruppe', Member of the 'Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste' and member of the Bavarian Senate.

[231] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 09.12.1955, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 3/4.

[232] The following summary of Unold's biography in an article on the occasion of Unold's awarding of the Bayerischer Verdienstorden' in 1959 in the 'Memminger Zeitung' enlightens on the matter of silencing any Nazi involvement of public figures in the BRD of the 1950s. Two things are notable here. First, the narrative blank ('Leerstelle') for the years 1927-1946 and secondly, the choice of the word 'Zusammenbruch' when referring to the end of the Third Reich: "Prof. Max Unold, der am 1. Oktober 1885 in Memmingen als Sohn des Spitalverwalters Leonhard Unold geboren wurde, wuchs in seiner Vaterstadt auf, besuchte hier das Progymnasium und absolvierte anschließend das Humanistische Gymnasium St.Anna in Augsburg. An der Universität München studierte er zunächst zwei Jahre lang Altphilologie, um ins Lehrfach zu gehen. Aber der malerisch begabte junge Mann fühlte selbst, daß er unmöglich als 'Professor' vorzustellen wäre, weshalb er 1906 an der Akademie in München in die Malklasse von Hugo von Habermann eintrat. Er war Gründungsmitlglied der 'Neuen Secession' in München. Schließlich erreichte er doch den 'Professorentitel', als er 1927 zum Professor der bildenen Künste ernannt wurde. Nach dem Zusammenbruch wurde Unold bis zum

Max Unold, once one of the founders of the *Neue Secession* and eager to drive forward independent art, had now become part of the Bavarian establishment. Unold invests much in creating and maintaining the image of the influential, indispensable counsellor and connoisseur, and this development leads to an ever-growing distance between the two former rivals, Unold and Koester. Reinhard Koester touches upon this phenomenon in a letter sent to Anicua Belau in 1952. Belau's former lover calls Unold a "Großkopfeten",[233] a derogatory, dialect expression for an influential man involved with (political or economic) authorities, and reports:

> (…) habe ich dir berichtet, dass Unold im vorigen Herbst mal bei uns zu Besuch war? Der Herr Kunst-Senator hatte allerdings nur anderthalb Stunden Zeit für uns.[234]

This bitter remark about the "Herr Kunst-Senator" points to something remarkable. Not only have the Belau-Levins and their friends who stayed in Germany grown apart, but the two men, Koester and Unold, had become more oppositional than ever. Their differences had always been rooted in their personalities, with Koester being melancholic, self-critical, and anxious, and Unold confident, jolly and determined. When they met again in Berlin in 1955, both seventy years old, those opposite personalities were more apparent than ever, emphasized of course by one being in good health, financially stable and influential and one being terminally ill, poor, and isolated.

Max Unold died on 18 May 1964 and his wife informs the Levins about his death in a letter of the same year. He himself had sent his last letter to Edinburgh in October 1962 in which he had not given his friends any reason to believe he was in bad health.

In this chapter, I have outlined the biographies and personalities of the letter writers whose texts I will examine in this thesis. The lives and the relationships of both letter writers Reinhard Koester (1885-1956) and Max Unold (1885-1964) with the addressees have now been illustrated and the knowledge gained on the two men and their experiences form the

heutigen Tag Präsident des Berufsverbandes bildender Künstler in der Bundesrepublik." Newspaper article, *Memminger Zeitung*, 1959, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 3/4.

[233] He writes in Bavarian dialect: "So san's halt, die Großkopfeten." Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 09.05.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 ii 1/3.

[234] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 09.05.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

basis for the upcoming analysis of their (self)-representations in their postwar correspondence with the Belau-Levins in Edinburgh. The following chapters will explore their methods of epistolary (self-) representation from the perspectives of spaces (Chapter II), the body (Chapter III) and the process of age(ing) (Chapter IV).

Chapter II: Spaces in the epistolary text – a narratological analysis of the postwar letters

Aim of the chapter and framework

In this chapter I will undertake an analysis of how spaces are narrated in the discussed letter correspondence. The term 'space' will include three forms of spaces in the letter-writing process. First, the spaces within which the stories that are told in the letters take place, secondly, spaces as any locations referred to in the letters, and thirdly, the space within which the letter writer exists, while writing the letter – we will call this the 'narrating space'.

An extensive analysis of narrated space in a correspondence has not been undertaken yet. In this chapter I will carry out such an analysis, using a narratological approach with a focus on how space is narrated in non-fictional texts – in this case, letters. Such an analysis of the presentation of spaces proves, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, to be a fruitful approach aimed at finding answers on first, how the necessity of narrative positioning forced the writers to confront and deal with their own agency and secondly, which narratological devices they used to do that.

The analysis of the portrayal of spaces has revealed that the letter writers employ the narration of spaces both metaphorically and metonymically. The metaphorical use of spaces becomes apparent in the way the presentation of the spaces (often buildings) is representative of other, unspoken, elements in the correspondence. It brings to light how the narration of spaces often functions as representative of time frames, emotions, fears, and desires. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that this representative function is most apparent in the narration of war. Through the analysis of the portrayal of spaces connected with the topic of the war, I will reveal the authors' eagerness to appear as neutral and passive, rather than participating subjects, when it comes to all events connected to National Socialist rule.

Additionally, through this analysis I will map out the metonymical narrating of space for postwar Germany. Such narrating demonstrates the ever-present fact that, in their postwar correspondence, the spaces had become the ultimate differentiating parameter between the former friends. I will show how the letter writers narrate their living space (postwar-Germany) as a metonymy for hardship and suffering. This difference in their living spaces is emphasized by both letter writers and I demonstrate this in the last section of the chapter when I show this opposing staging of Germany as a space of sacrifice and Britain, (or quite possibly other exiles) as a space characterised by safety and calm.

In addition to its contribution to how space is narrated, this chapter will further foreground the writing techniques employed by the letter writers in their varying functions as author of text (letter writer) and narrating persona (homodiegetic narrator). The aim of this chapter is to present a narratological analysis of the correspondence of Reinhard Koester and Max Unold with the Belau-Levins. The focus of the narratological analysis in this chapter is the narrating of space. This approach will contribute to a broader understanding of letter writing as a narratological as well as cultural technique. By revealing the patterns in style through the analysis, I will demonstrate how the letter writers realized their witnessing function as they approached the events of their lives, their friendship, and more generally the turbulent first half of the twentieth century within the frame of letter writing.

Before introducing Marie-Laure Ryan's narrative space-theory whose terms I work with, I will give an overview of the developments in theories on spatiality of the last decades that are often subsumed under the term 'spatial turn'. This brief genealogy will elaborate on how the focus on spaces and places, which has its origins in human geography, had an impact on several disciplines, amongst them fields relevant for this thesis: 'narratological space theory' as well as 'geographies of exile' and 'geographies of the Holocaust'. I will synthesize the most influential works published in this context, then I will introduce the terms I will be working with in this chapter.

The term 'spatial turn' refers to the turn from a focus on time to a focus on space in several disciplines. It was first used by Edward Soja in his book *Thirdspace* in 1996 but the development it describes has its roots in the 1980s. Scholars across the humanities had paid

more attention to the interpretation of spaces and spatiality of human perception and thus shifted the focus of research to these subjects and away from time and history. In addition, and as a reaction to these developments in human geography, which had always dealt with matters of spatiality, several disciplines increasingly explored the interpretation of spaces and places including history, sociology, philosophy, literary studies as well as film and media studies. These different disciplines often refer to their increased interest in the discussion of spaces and places under different terms, literary studies for example also uses the term 'topographical turn'[235] and philosophy prefers to call it 'topological turn', some geographers simply use 'geographical turn'.[236]

In the late 1980s, the fall of the Berlin Wall and ongoing globalization triggered a turn from time to space. The growing global interconnections and its links made it more necessary to think in the category of space which led historian Karl Schlögel to speak of not only a spatial turn but a 'spatial revolution' after the Cold War.[237]

The developments now summarised as 'spatial turn' started with the studies of postmodern geographers with seminal publications by Yi-Fu Tuan, Edward Soja, David Harvey, and Doreen Massey.[238] Postmodern geography gave the impetus for the interdisciplinary interest in examining spatiality in different contexts and across the humanities. While some political geographers like Soja were interested in geopolitics and the dealing with spaces in social theory, feminist geographer Massey considered concepts of gender when challenging the place-space binary and criticizing mainstream approaches and the resistance to locality in her

[235]Sigrid Weigel, 'Zum 'Topographical Turn': Kartographie, Topographie und Raumkonzepte in den Kulturwissenschaften', *KulturPoetik*, 2.2 (2002), 151-165.
[236] For example, the geographer John Agnew. His work contributed immensely to first the distinguishing of spaces and places and ultimately to geopolitics in Europe and the US. Cf. John Agnew, *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Boston/London: Allen & Unwin, 1987); John Agnew, *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2003).
[237] Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (Munich/Vienna: Hanser, 2003), p. 25.
[238] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London/New York: Verso, 1989); Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

discipline.[239] She, and other geographers[240], argue that spaces and places are a construct of social relations and thus represent multiple identities that can experience change over time.[241] Her book *Space, Place and Gender* is a collection of her essays of fifteen years in which the scholar worked on her considerations of gender as part of her examinations of place-space constellations.[242] Massey defines space as a product of relations that is never finished and this definition is also valid for the representation of spaces and places in the examined correspondence. Equally interesting for the analysis in this chapter are Harvey's observations on the way memories are not only made of time but that time is 'always memorialized not as flow, but as memories of experienced places and spaces'.[243] As I will demonstrate, both letter writers narrate their memories as a memory of places and spaces where they had made their most influential experiences.

The articulation of multiple social relations which, according to Massey, is identity-forming for places as localities, is apparent in texts that represent spaces and places and thus are in need to pin down their features and qualities. The letters analysed here show the ways in which social relations are experienced through places and how they simultaneously ascribe certain identities to places.

In addition to these statements, which are relevant for analysing texts representing spaces, it is important to understand that the spatial turn of the past decades is highly politicized and changes the prior thinking of spaces in nations. The increasingly 'deterritorialized spatial relations and networks'[244] have altered our perception of space. With the conception of space no longer rooted in the nation-state, it has become easier to grasp the links and

[239] Massey demands a more progressive sense of place, one that links 'places to places beyond' and thus develops a 'global sense of the local, a global sense of place.' Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, p. 156.
[240] For example, Yi-Fu Tuan who argues that space can be transformed into place via social relations in his seminal book from 1977. Cf. Tuan.
[241] "It reinforces the idea, moreover, that those identities will be multiple (since the various social groups in a place will be differently located in relation to the overall complexity of social relations and since the reading of those relations and what they make of them will also be distinct). And this in turn implies that what is to be the dominant image of any place will be a matter of contestation and will change over time." Massey, p. 121.
[242] Cf. Friederike Ursula Eigler, *Heimat, Space, Narrative: Toward a Transnational Approach to Flight and Expulsion* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014), p. 24.
[243] Harvey, p. 218.
[244] Doris Bachmann-Medick, 'Spatial Turn', in: *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*, ed. by Doris Bachmann-Medick (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 211-245, p. 219.

connectedness of dispersed groups. The spatial turn has also contributed to further developments in mapping and so-called mental maps which I will refer to in more detail in the introduction of the terms of narratological space theory used in this chapter.[245] The method of mapping is not only interesting to those analysing geographies in texts but also to historians who aim at grasping historical events by categorizing and reading the spaces and places where these took place – the historical sites. Digital humanities and geographical information systems (GIS) offer new ways to explore, view and present historical data and have allowed interesting fields like geographies of exile or geographies of the Holocaust to take shape. The experience of spaces and places became an experience of displacement with the beginning of the Third Reich and WWII. Ernst Levin and Anicuta Belau had been displaced, they were forced to leave their familiar place and it is this place (Munich, Schwabing, the localities they visited, streets they walked) that receives much attention in Max Unold's postwar letters sent to the Levins' new 'place' – Edinburgh. The research on such geographies of exile or geographies of the Holocaust provides important new perspectives on the subjects of flight and persecution and additionally contributes to memory studies.[246]

One of the scholars who contributes immensely to a writing of history from a spatial perspective is Tim Cole who examines the landscapes of the Holocaust. His studies on the spatiality of, for example, ghettoization and survival are only one example that shows how history, social history and historical geography have profited from the spatial turn and GIS tools.[247]

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[245] Historian Karl Schlögel contributed further to the spatial turn in history with his already mentioned book on the matter in 2003 (Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit)* and in a text published in 2004, he follows a spatial focus that is based on map reading: Karl Schlögel 'Kartenlesen, Augenarbeit: Über die Fälligkeit des spatial turn in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften', in: *Was sind Kulturwissenschaften? 13 Antworten,* ed. by. Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner (Munich: Fink, 2004), pp. 261-283.

[246] The city of Berlin for example has frequently been an object of research regarding such studies of places as memorial sites: Karen Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Irmy Schweiger et.al., *In-Visible Palimpsest: Memory, Space and Modernity in Berlin and Shanghai* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2016); Jonathan Bach, 'Memory Landscapes and the Labor of the Negative in Berlin', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 26.1 (2013), 31-40; Paul Stangl, 'Revolutionaries' Cemeteries in Berlin: Memory, History, Place and Space', *Urban History*, 34.3 (2007), 407-426.

[247] Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Tim Cole, 'Holocaust Landscapes: Mapping Ghettoization in Hungary', *S:I.M.O.N* (Online), no. 3 (2014), 92-104; Cole further published the following article in which he proposes a model to identify and visualize family structures across a database of Jews living in Budapest immediately after 1945 with: Alberto Giordano et.al. 'Spatial Social Networks for the Humanities: a Visualization and Analytical Model', *Transactions in GIS*, 26.4 (2022), 1638-1702.

The spatial turn, which had started out as a geographical matter, became inspiring and important for other disciplines – with its effect on literary studies and history being of particular interest for this chapter. In literary studies narrative spaces have been examined before the interest in space as an analytical category sparked. However, the spatial turn generated interest in literary research that went beyond the examining of narrative spaces; scholars have worked on real spaces as the 'determinative environment'[248] of texts and literary topography produced atlases of literary texts.[249] In addition to this, literary studies have, triggered by and simultaneously contributing to a spatial turn, paid increased attention to the spatial descriptions in texts. This has brought to light interesting features in for example migrants' literature and its representation of cultural identity and national territory and the ways how memory is often inscribed in spaces and places.[250] These ways of a spatialised memory and thus spatialised history are inherent in the letter corpus that is up for examination in this thesis. In this chapter I will show how a dealing with the represented spaces sheds light on the writers' ways of narrating their memory. Such an analysis is of course an analysis of narrative spaces, spaces inherent in the text, and has been undertaken in literary analysis even before the spatial turn. Nevertheless, an increased publishing of works with a focus on spaces and places can be noted for the past decades. In the following I will give a brief overview of some of these works, then I will introduce an approach taken by literary scholar Marie-Laure Ryan and her terms, which I have found most useful for the analysis in this chapter.

Different works on theorizing spaces in narratives have been published in the last ten to fifteen years with Katrin Dennerlein's book *Narratologie des Raumes*[251], Robert T. Tally's *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*[252] and Marie-Laure Ryan's, Kenneth Foote's and Maoz Azaryahu's *Narrating Space/Spatializing Narrative: Where Narrative Theory and Geography Meet*[253] being the most recent

[248] Bachmann-Medick, p. 231.
[249] See for example: Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800 – 1900* (London: Verso, 1998).
[250] Cf. Bachmann-Medick, p. 233.
[251] Katrin Dennerlein, *Narratologie des Raumes* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2009).
[252] Robert T. Tally, *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
[253] Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrating Space/Spatializing Narrative: Where Narrative Theory and Geography Meet* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2016).

monographic works. All of these have in common that they look at fictional narratives with a focus on the spaces they create through the producing act of narrating.

With her book *Narratologie des Raumes*, Dennerlein contributes mainly to the field of narratology. She claims to close the research gap on how space is written in fictional narratives. To do so, she provides a thorough analysis of the linguistic realization of space through the narrating of events, perception and displays of space structuring.[254] In her work the concrete space, where the (fictional) characters exist and act, is understood to be a mind model ('mentales Modell') created by a model reader in an interplay between the text's structure and knowledge.

Many other scholars have moved towards a geocritical approach, and some other recent projects combine geography and storytelling where the reader also becomes a 'flaneur at site'. The role of museums and an exhibition's audio guide, which forms a narrative with the listener while he or she moves in the space narrated and relates to the objects narrated in the story, has also been examined in further studies. With projects like the 'Murmur-Project' in Toronto and scholars interested in the real-world space that serves as 'context and containers' for narratives, there seems to be a cautious additional considering of non-fictional narratives and their analysis regarding spaces.

In Marie-Laure Ryan's and her co-editors' book, they examine the relationship between narrative and maps, they study maps of spatial context and the geographic locations of plots as well as the location of texts (books in places in libraries) as well as maps of narrative space, both extra- and intradiegetic. The authors' goal is to not only connect maps and narratives and a general focus on the geographical aspect of narratives but also to explore the role of space in narrative. This is especially interesting for it shows the impact of the 'spatial turn' in the humanities and on narratology. The book gives insights into narrative geography and spatial narratology and the two disciplines are reflected in the book's authors with Ryan as a narratologist and Foote and Azaryahu as geographers.

[254] Cf. Dennerlein.

Marie-Laure Ryan has undertaken further detailed research on the field of space narratology, her essay on 'space' in the *Handbook of Narratology*,[255] published in 2014 explores the "laminations of narrative space"[256] and establishes helpful terms in doing so. Marie-Laure Ryan uses specific terms for clarity, and I will work with these terms on the following pages.

Whilst in her essay Ryan introduces different ways to analyse space and narratives and emphasizes the importance of the relation between narrative and real-life spaces, her terms seem to me most helpful for the analysis of the representation of spaces *in* texts. Therefore, in this chapter I will apply these terms on the corpus of letters under discussion to expand their usability by showing how they also work with epistolary, non-fictional texts.

As I mentioned above, I will differentiate between three forms of spaces in the letter-writing process: spaces within which the stories that are told in the letters take place, locations referred to in the texts and lastly the 'narrating space' of the letter writer at the moment of writing. The first two categories of 'space' deserve further division and Ryan has outlined the following helpful terms to do so: 1) *spatial frames*, that is the immediate surroundings of the events shown by the narrative discourse,[257] 2) the *setting*, a general socio-historico-geographical environment,[258] 3) *story space*, the space relevant to the plot (mainly all the spatial frames and all references to other spaces made in the text)[259] as well as 4) *narrative world*, the story space "completed by the reader's imagination based on their cultural knowledge and real world experience"[260] and 5) *narrative universe*: "the world (in the spatio-temporal sense of the term) presented as actual by the text". [261]

[255] Marie-Laure Ryan, 'Space', in *Handbook of Narratology* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 796–811. The book provides a systematic overview of the present state of international research in narratology. The editors have additionally created an online version called 'The Living Handbook of Narratology' which has been reviewed and updated continuously until 2019. For more see: The Living Handbook of Narratology (2019). https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/index.html [accessed 7 April 2022].
[256] Ibid., p. 797.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Cf. Ryan, 'Space', p. 798.
[260] Ibid. In the context of our corpus this means that, if for example a trip from Bavaria to Italy is mentioned, the reader (addressee) would 'fill' this experience of a journey with her knowledge that one has to cross the Alps to do so.
[261] Ryan, 'Space', p. 798f.

Scholars have used the first four terms in the analysis of fictional narratives, but they can be similarly applied to letters and factual texts. The term *narrative universe* may, in the context of an analysis of letters, become redundant, as the world presented in the letter in fact *is* the actual world. Of course, the very act of presenting something means that it is not neutral or impartial and the writers' subjectivity must be considered, but generally we can assume that the letters in the EL Collection present the world as the actual world they lived in, in terms of the laws of nature and other regularities. Although the subjectivity of each writer can, however, lead to different assumptions about what is natural and lawful in the world, the following analysis considers merely the terms 1 to 4, introduced above.

Spaces as shelters in the narratives of WWII

The first few letters written by Reinhard Koester and Max Unold after the gap in correspondence from 1938-1946 deal with the immense changes faced by both of them with the beginning of the bombings of German cities. In the narration of these experiences, the changes are often linked to their living and working environments. Unold and Koester fled Munich and Berlin, respectively, in the last years of the war. [262] Upon their return after 1945 only Koester found his flat in Berlin- Grunewald to be undamaged, Unold's studio had suffered serious damage in 1942, before being destroyed completely during the final bombings in January 1945. Consequently, the topic of destruction and life within these destroyed spaces and objects is very prominent in the letters sent to Edinburgh immediately after the war. The observation of the extent to which the letter writers focus on their own suffering, rather than discussing the involvement of ordinary Germans in the atroctities of the Third Reich is in line with observations made by numerous scholars about 'guilt and suffering in German Memory'[263] in the immediate postwar years and the decades following.

[262] Reinhard Koester's wife Ellen and their young daughter left Berlin for Silesia in 1942, he himself followed in 1944. Max and Grete Unold left Munich and lived in the countryside south of Munich from 1944 until 1951.
[263] For a statement on a new shift in German memory as well as more on the dealing with these issues immediately postwar see : Aleida Assmann, 'On the (In)Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory', *German Life and Letters*, 59.2 (2006), 187–200.

Hannah Arendt's statements on this matter made in her essay *The Aftermath of Nazi Rule*[264] published as early as 1950 are, amongst many others, confirmed by Robert Moeller's book *War Stories*[265] on postwar Germany. Arendt had detected a German heartlessness, an absence of an acknowledgement of German guilt and an escape from responsibility as well as the disturbing habit of "treating facts as though they were mere opinions".[266] Moeller subsequently delivers a convincing account of how the Germans had created room for memory and trauma, but only their own and not the trauma that they had caused for others. He concludes that "in the rhetoric of the 1950s, Jews and others have suffered extraordinary losses, but so too had Germans."[267] Mary Fulbrook equally asserts that "the most significant biographical fracture for most non-Jewish Germans had to do with the personal consequences of war, defeat, and occupation" and she explains that it took time for these individuals to create "ways of reframing this past to accommodate recognition of victims other than themselves".[268]

As Atina Grossmann reflects in her seminal book examining the same time frame in occupied Germany, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*,[269] this idea of the cold Germans who did not bemoan or speak during the 'silent fifties' is a thesis that has been challenged many times but has ultimately proved to be a fitting term for the decade after the immediate postwar years of chaos.

This alleged German 'heartlessness' has concerned historians for decades and to assess its truthfulness, many scholars have examined the different roles amongst the German population during the years of fascist rule and the attitudes most Germans took on with the end of the war.[270] Research has dealt with the atmosphere amongst ordinary Germans in the

[264] Hannah Arendt, 'The Aftermath of Nazi Rule', *Commentary (New York)*, 10.4 (1950), 342–353.
[265] Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
[266] Arendt, p. 343f.
[267] Ibid., p. 3f.
[268] Mary Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism', *Central European History*, 53.2 (2020), 294–313, p. 300.
[269] Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).
[270] The Holocaust and how it had been made possible, how much the population knew about it, and how ordinary Germans reacted to this knowledge was at the centre of this research. Raul Hilberg made a landmark contribution to the field with his three-volume book *The Destruction of the European Jews* in 1961 and he offered new approaches dividing German Nazi society in three categories in his book from 1993: *Perpetrators,*

Third Reich to determine whether most Germans approved of, were indifferent to or opposed to the organised persecution and eventually murder of the Jewish population of Europe. While most of the publications on the topic come to the conclusion that the German population was widely indifferent to the undertaken actions to segregate, discredit, and persecute Jews, opinions diverge when it comes to interpreting such indifference as consent to mass murder.[271] The 1990s saw further engagement with the topic with for example Daniel Goldhagen's controversial book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* in which the scholar strengthened the thesis of passive complicity amongst German society.[272]

Other publications were more cautious in their conclusions, David Bankier, who takes into account private memoirs, diaries, and correspondences rather than the so-called 'Stimmungsberichte'[273] for the Gestapo whose reliability as a source had been criticised, admits there is much room for interpretation when examining the primary sources. However,

Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945. Cf. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961) & *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).

[271] The following are examples of this debate in the 1980s. Ian Kershaw interprets the German indifference as mere lack of interest and Otto Dov Kulka reads it as consent and passive complicity: Ian Kershaw 'Antisemitismus und Volksmeinung: Reaktionen auf die Judenverfolgung', in *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, vol. 2, *Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im Konflikt*, ed. by Martin Broszat and Elke Fröhlich (Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 1979), 281-348; Kershaw, 'The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich', in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, no. 26 (1981), 261-289; Otto Dov Kulka, 'Die Nürnberger Rassegesetze und die deutsche Bevölkerung im Lichte geheimer NS- Lage- und Stimmungsberichte', in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, no. 32 (1984), 582-624; Kulka, '"Public Opinion" in Nazi Germany and the "Jewish Question"', in *The Nazi Holocaust. Historical Articles on the Destruction of European Jews*, vol. 5/1: *Public Opinion and Relations to the Jews in Nazi Europe*, ed. by Michael Marrus (London: Meckler, 1989), pp. 115-138.

[272] Goldhagen's book was initially written as a response to Christopher Browning's study on the 'Reserve Police Battalion 101' (*Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in* Poland (New York: Harper & Collins, 1992) and intensified the debate on the extent of German antisemitism and guilt in the 1990s: Daniel Jonah Goldhagen *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996). The following are to be mentioned in the context of the 'Goldhagen Controversy': Christopher Browning, 'Afterword', in *Ordinary Men* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998); Inga Clendinnean, 'The Men in the Green Tunics', in *Reading the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 114-132; Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Arnold, 2000); Norman G. Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn, *A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998); Fritz Stern, 'The Goldhagen Controversy: The Past Distorted', in *Einstein's German World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 272-288.

[273] Such 'Stimmungs- und Lageberichte' were filed by offices of the Nazi regime and their authenticity must therefore be questioned. Cf. Peter Longerich, "Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!" Die Deutschen und die Judenverfolgung 1933-1945 (Munich: Siedler, 2006), p. 19.

he also states that there was broad and general consent regarding the politics of the fascist regime.[274]

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Peter Longerich examined the extent of knowledge of the Holocaust amongst ordinary Germans in his book *"Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!" Die Deutschen und die Judenverfolgung 1933–1945*.[275] The often recited not having known of *that* stated by the majority of Germans[276] is the originator of Longerich's study and, although he cannot prove precisely what the Germans knew of, his contribution is important and initiates further studies on the subject and on the role of the 'bystander'.[277] In the same year of 2006, Frank Bajohr and Dieter Pohl published a similar study that presents in more detail the knowledge the German population had access to and that, especially since 1942, an increasing number of ordinary Germans knew about the murder of the Jews. This book is, furthermore, interested in the ways the Germans dealt with this knowledge and brings to light most Germans' reactions as a denial of responsibility rather than an expressing of feelings of guilt or shame.[278]

These publications did not concern themselves with the matter of a sense of German victimhood and while the books by Bajohr and Pohl and by Longerich are studying the time frame of the years of the Third Reich, my thesis analyses texts of the years immediately after WWII and thus focuses on the ways individual Germans reflected on and narrated their past.

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[274] David Bankier, *Die öffentliche Meinung im Hitler-Staat: Die "Endlösung" und die Deutschen: Eine Berichtigung* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1995). Also worth mentioning here are the following: Hans Mommsen and Dieter Obst, 'Die Reaktion der deutschen Bevölkerung auf die Verfolgung der Juden 1933-1945', in *Herrschaftsalltag im Dritten Reich: Studien und Texte*, ed. by Hans Mommsen and Susanne Willems (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1988), pp. 374-485; Wolfgang Benz, 'Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Bewusstsein der Deutschen', in *Juden in Deutschland, Emanzipation, Integration, Verfolgung und Vernichtung: 25 Jahre Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden*, ed. by Peter Freimark (Hamburg: Christians, 1991), pp. 435-449; Frank Bajohr, 'Über die Entwicklung eines schlechten Gewissens: Die deutsche Bevölkerung und die Deportationen 1941-1945', in *Die Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland: Pläne – Praxis – Reaktionen 1938 bis 1945*, ed. by Birthe Kundrus and Beate Meyer (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), pp. 180-195.

[275] Longerich, "Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!".

[276] Mary Fulbrook describes this phenomenon as follows: "A significant proportion of Germans who were adults during the Third Reich had therefore been variously knowledgeable about, beneficiaries of, complicit, or actively involved in Nazi crimes. Yet after the war, the refrain was commonly heard among Germans that they had "known nothing about it" (davon nichts gewusst) — with the implication that, by virtue of ignorance, they must also be innocent of any sins of commission or omission." Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past', p. 297.

[277] The increased research on the 'bystander' at the turn of the millennium has motivated some scholars to even speak of a 'bystander boom'. Cf. Kunt Gergely 'Review of Morina, Christina and Thijs, Krijn. Probing the Limits of Categorization: The Bystander in Holocaust History', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 55.4 (2020), 920-922, p. 920.

[278] Frank Bajohr and Dieter Pohl, *Der Holocaust als offenes Geheimnis* (Munich: Beck, 2006).

The academic engagement of recent years with the 'bystander' as a considerable part of the Nazi system has led to further observations on how individuals, who would later be classified as bystanders, remembered, and presented their own role during the years of 1933-1945 which leads to the important issue of the Germans' sense of victimhood.

In a way, providing insights to this matter can create a 'Stimmungsbericht' of the *Nachkrieg*, and part of this thesis seeks to contribute to such efforts. The books by Grossmann and Moeller mentioned earlier examined this time frame to assess the thesis of the 'silent fifties' and found a striking representation of Germans as victims. In his contribution to Bill Niven's *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* Robert Moeller describes the eagerness of many Germans in the years of 1945-1955 to assess their losses and incorporate "their victim status into public memory and politics".[279] This phenomenon of how German suffering was emphasized after WWII has been observed also by Gilad Margalit in his book *Guilt, Suffering, and Memory: Germany Remembers its Dead of World War II* as well as by Monica Black whose book *A Demon-Haunted Land: Witches, Wonder Doctors, and the Ghosts of the Past in Post-WWII Germany* I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Three.[280]

Different aspects of German victimhood have been discussed in the past two decades, some, like the German refugees from the East or the postwar rape of German women are less relevant for this correspondence, but the representations of Germans as victims of the Nazis or the Allied bombing campaign (emphasized by German nationalists and by SED leadership in the GDR) are also inherent in the postwar letters written by Unold and Koester. As I will show in the following the experiences of air raids find their way into the correspondence to emphasize a 'victim identity'. Included in the discourse of Germans as victims of Allied bombings is the important debate about Jörg Friedrich's book *Der Brand: Deutschland im*

[279] Robert Moeller, 'The Politics of the Past in the 1950s: Rhetorics of Victimization in East and West Germany, in *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany*, ed. by Bill Niven (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[280] Gilad Margalit, *Guilt, Suffering, and Memory: Germany Remembers its Dead of World War II* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Monica Black, *A Demon-Haunted Land: Witches, Wonder Doctors, and the Ghosts of the Past in Post-WWII Germany* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020). Further recent studies on the Holocaust and societies are Andrea Löw and Frank Bajohr, *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Susanna Schrafstetter and Alan E. Steinweis, *The Germans and the Holocaust: Popular Responses to the Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016); Bernward Dörner, *Die Deutschen und der Holocaust: Was niemand wissen wollte, aber jeder wissen konnte* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 2007).

Bombenkrieg 1940-1945 which dealt with the firebombing of German cities and was criticised for using vocabulary that was reminiscent of the Holocaust and for making accusations against the Allied forces instead of providing objective historical work.[281] This was preceded by a debate about W.G. Sebald's thoughts on the alleged lack of German literature on the air war and its destruction of German cities. The author's statements on what he saw as a failure of German literati to write about the impressions of air war were published in the book *Luftkrieg und Literatur* in 1999 and intensified the debate on representations of German experiences during WWII.[282] This topic of representations of German victimhood at the turn of the millennium is resumed and discussed further in Bill Niven's prior mentioned book *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* from 2006.[283]

Adding to the discourse of German victimhood, memory studies have named a shift in German memory around the millennium towards a return of the discourse on German suffering and discussed the polarity between a memory of German suffering and a memory of German guilt.[284] This debate is concerned with the cultural and political trends and developments in Germany and especially after the reunification of East and West Germany, which are only marginally relevant for the examination in this thesis. Interestingly, however, the polarity between remembering suffering or remembering guilt is apparent in the sources analysed here. Both letter writers, Koester more so than Unold, at points show an ambivalence regarding the representations of their past. It is, however, the framing of it as a past of suffering and loss that predominates their narration. This framing of their past, which I understand as a positioning of their past actions in a widely accepted discourse as a way of escaping a more specific scrutiny, is identified, and examined in my close reading analysis.

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[281] Jörg Friedrich, *Der Brand: Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940-1945* (Munich: Propyläen Verlag, 2002).
[282] W.G. Sebald, *Luftkrieg und Literatur: Mit einem Essay zu Alfred Andersch* (Munich: Hanser, 1999). In the context of this 'victimhood boom' at the turn of the millennium, the success of the book *Eine Frau in Berlin* should also be mentioned. This book by Marta Hiller, who later wished to be published under the synonym 'Anonyma' was first published in 1959 and then reissued in 2003. The book is a literary version of her diary entries from April to June in 1945 and describes the extent of sexual violence against women in these months. It was made into a film in 2008. Cf. Anonyma, *Eine Frau in Berlin: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen vom 20. April bis 22. Juni 1945: Mit einem Nachwort von Kurt. W. Marek* (Frankfurt: Eichborn Verlag, 2003).
[283] Cf. Niven, *Germans as Victims.*
[284] See for example Aleida Assmann, 'On the (In)Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory', *German Life and Letters*, 59.2 (2006), 187-200.

The various approaches to a reframing of the Nazi past have been studied in detail by Mary Fulbrook, for example in her essay 'Reframing the past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism' and the relatively new field of 'Bystander studies' also seeks to provide insights into this subject. Christina Morina and Krijn Thijs for example have presented several perspectives on the role of the 'bystander' and the ways these individuals remembered and narrated their past in their book from 2018.[285] Arguing that Holocaust historiography[286] is ongoing throughout European countries, Morina and Thijs emphasize the importance of bystander studies as follows:

> Derived from Hilberg, the impact of the bystander concept can thus be observed in virtually every national context as the proximity or distance of the non-Jewish populations are being measured vis-à-vis processes of exclusion, segregation, expropriation, and murder.[287]

They further state that the ambiguity of the term bystander is in fact its advantage for it "captures this hybrid spectrum between indirect and direct involvement rather well."[288] The essays in this book confirm this as they provide manifold insights into the ongoing discourses on bystanders and their roles and attitudes across several nations. It is important to state that the sense of and representation of German victimhood is a different issue than that of the 'bystander'. Recent publications on the matter of the bystander, however, show not only the topicality of the debate but also that the figure of the bystander serves as a fruitful point of origin for any research on complicity during the Third Reich and the entailing attitude towards this role and the emphasis of German victimhood postwar.[289] The sources from the EL Collection additionally provide interesting access to a coming to terms with the past and

[285] Christina Morina and Krijn Thijs, *Probing the Limits of Categorization: The Bystander in Holocaust History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018).
[286] For a comprehensive overview of Holocaust historiography see the voluminous writings of Dan Stone. For example: Dan Stone, *Fascism, Nazism, and the Holocaust: Challenging* Histories (New York: Routledge, 2021); *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and its Aftermath* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[287] Morina and Thijs, *Probing the Limits of Categorization*, p. 4.
[288] Ibid., p. 3.
[289] Mary Fulbrook, *Bystanders to Nazi Violence? The Transformation of German Society in the 1930s* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2019) & 'Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism', *Central European History*, 53.2 (2020), 294–313; Henrik Edgren, *Looking at the Onlookers and Bystanders: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Causes and Consequences of Passivity* (Stockholm: Forum för levande histori, 2012); Tim Cole, 'Writing "Bystanders" into Holocaust History in More Active Ways: "Non-Jewish" Engagement with Ghettoization, Hungary 1944' *Holocaust Studies*, vol.11 no.1 (2005), 55-74.

reckonings 'in the private sphere', a part that has been neglected for the better documented sphere of public confrontations, and thus provide access to yet another representation of Germans as victims.[290] With its analysis of Koester's and Unold's correspondence with their persecuted friends, I position parts of my thesis within a social history of complicity, guilt and indifference. By interpreting the letter writers' patterns of communication regarding their own reframing of their past, the following analysis in this chapter contributes to a further understanding of "the legacies of Nazism for the postwar German states"[291] and to the interesting field of bystander studies.

Both letter writers here discussed could be categorized as 'bystanders' and the outlined observations on those individuals' later representations of a time of suffering and sacrifice are in line with the content of the letters that I examine in this thesis. Both Unold and Koester pay great attention to narrating in detail their experiences and suffering during the time of war in Germany. The topic of how the letter writers spent the last years of the war is over-represented in those first letters written to the Levins, when the correspondence was picked up again.

Given the gap in correspondence (between 1938-1946) a need to re-tell and sum up the previous years is understandable, but it is remarkable how much the focus of the narrative is on those very last years of war, rather than on the immediate years after Anicuta Belau's emigration in 1938 and their pastimes in those two remaining years of peace. Reinhard Koester writes a little about these years, although not as extensively as he writes about the years of wartime. Max Unold does not mention how he spent his time while peace remained, and, furthermore, he does not write about those years of war before the bombings of Munich. This might be due to a natural tendency to prioritise the recent past in the process of narrating, and it can be assumed that the experiences of bombings and food shortages from 1942-1947 overwrote the memories of the years before.

[290] Cf. Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past', p. 294.
[291] Cf. ibid., p. 313.

As this analysis will show, instead of justifications for his professional activities (his works for the German Pavilion at the world exhibition in Paris in 1937[292] and the mosaic projects for the interior of two military airports in Bavaria in 1936),[293] lengthy passages about the state of Munich and Memmingen as well as recurrent descriptions of his material losses during the war find their way into Unold's letters.

Three years after WWII, the suffering it brought for the German civilians, amongst them Unold and his wife, remains an important topic for the letter writer and one that he picks up in a letter from May 1948. This topic is often narrated through different narrative units, as I will call them. In the following example I observe such a division into several units. Although the narrator here begins his letter with his thoughts on possible reasons for the Belau-Levins not having replied to his prior letter, he soon creates an insertion disconnected from these initial considerations.

The narrator in these letters can often also be called a 'letter-writing or narrating persona', developed by a writer using specific rhetorical devices to produce an effect in his readers. The identification of such a letter-writing persona is the first finding of this analysis and enables the necessary distinction between letter writer (that is, the author of the text) and the letter-writing persona (the narrator or narrating voice). This letter-writing persona is developed through their communication – whether deliberately or subconsciously remains uncertain – and is, in other words, a writer using specific rhetorical devices to produce an effect on his readers. This can be observed in the following passage from Unold's letter from May 1948:

> Oder solltet ihr meinen ausführlichen Brief (…) nicht bekommen haben? (…) doch ich nehme, wie erwähnt, an, daß die 'Sekretärin' eben 'nicht dazu kommt', deshalb sollen ein paar Zeilen ein Lebenszeichen bringen und einen gelinden Anstoß für eine Antwort.- Draußen in der Abendluft dröhnt es wie dereinst, wenn ganze Geschwader sich zum Angriff auf München ein Stelldichein gaben, jetzt sind's aber nur die Maikäfer, die um die Wipfel der Kastanienbäume schwirren, obwohl es

[292] For more information on Albert Speer's design of the German Pavilion see: Fiss, Karen A., 'In Hitler's Salon: The German Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale', in *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*, ed. by Richard Etlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 316–342.
[293] 'Fliegerhorst' Memmingerberg and Kitzingen.

> eigentlich noch recht kühl ist (ich sitze in der geschlossenen Veranda mit Filzpantoffeln und Pulswärmern.)[294]

The narrating persona here creates a pause when referring to the very moment and space of writing. The pause creates, as characteristic for the pause as a stylistic device, a time frame within which the narrating persona adds information to the story. To be more specific, the pause in this letter is both a descriptive and a narrative pause. The created pause is descriptive in that it is used to describe the letter writer's surroundings and elements of his 'narrating space' ("geschlossene Veranda, Wipfel, der. Kastanienbäume" etc.). Additionally, the pause gains narrative character because it interrupts one topic to insert another.

Generally, during the pause the narrating time is longer than the narrated time, for the latter is zero. In the cited passage however, I find it helpful to identify two different narrative units. *Unit I* is the one narrated before the pause (Unold's latest successes and taking up of representative positions in postwar Bavaria), and *unit II* refers to the narrator's *narrating space* as well as an internal analepsis used within the pause (the reference to attacks on Munich during WWII). With this insertion of a second narrative unit, the narrated time can no longer be defined as zero. The internal analepsis contributes to the 'story' and thus it has a 'narrated time' as, in its narrative unit, it claims to provide information on the letter writer's wartime experiences and thus narrates another 'story'.

This demonstrates that the narrator in the passage above tells two stories, as well as providing information on two different levels. He describes his *narrating space*, the "geschlossene Veranda" and adds that he is wearing "Filzpantoffeln" and "Pulswärmer" to include the still cool temperatures despite the "Maikäfer" whirring around the trees in his garden. With these descriptions, the reader now knows that the writer of the letter wrote these lines in a space resembling an outhouse with glass doors and windows overlooking a garden or a leafy street with tall chestnut trees. The description of this space is introduced by an implied trigger, the buzzing of the bugs that the narrator *hears.* The spaces narrated in the passage build on this

[294] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 6.5.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

sensory perception, and it is this trigger that also marks the narrator's internal focalisation. The space introduced as *narrating space* now becomes a *story space,* as it serves as a *spatial frame*, which had surrounded the event described (military planes in the sky outside the narrator's veranda, preparing to bomb Munich city centre).

The narrator himself is part of the story world (= real world) of the letters and is thus limited in his perspective and knowledge. This of course represents every real person's perspective and horizon. The experience of natural limits of perception and knowledge is common to any human being. This phenomenon becomes apparent when the narrator in Unold's letter pauses his narrative for this insertion. The narrative unit in this letter is told from an auto-diegetic perspective, where the narrator is part of the events narrated which consequently creates a more immediate atmosphere and thus intensifies the claim of authenticity the letter writer makes with this passage.

By mentioning the sound of the buzzing 'Maikäfer' the narrator implies that this sound first interrupted him and then took him back to another time and event that took place in the same *story space*. The reader of this letter cannot be sure whether this is truly what had occurred. The narrator might be unreliable in this respect and may have only mentioned the sound of the bugs whirring in order to speak about the sound he still remembers hearing when the Allies' air force approached the city. The narrating of the sound as a trigger for involuntary memories can be understood as a deliberate tactic to emphasize the writer's hardship during the bombings.

The carefully structured narrating of space makes the use of such a strategy evident. It follows a sequence from outside and infinite to inside and restricted. The narration begins with the memory of clusters of military planes in the air, transporting their fatal load closer to Munich. The space narrated is the evening sky and its vastness is contoured only by the planes. This spectacle was observed by the narrator from a window, where he stood inside and in safety, due to the suburban location of the house.

The narration moves on and out of the retrospect into the present of the moment of writing the letter and the airplanes become 'Maikäfer' whirring around the trees in front of the

spectator's house. The narration then transitions from the outside to the inside space. The mention of the cool weather leads us to the narrator's writing space, a veranda with glass windows, and further to his clothes, thus displaying him not only as the object within the space but also the subject from where all prior description originates.

It can be noted that, in this short passage, the narrating of space in Unold's letter shows many similarities with fictional texts. The narration is limited to the perspective of the homodiegetic[295] narrator, as it follows his sensory perceptions, first what he hears then to what he sees. It presents the spaces narrated through the narrator's eyes moving from general observations and memories to remarks made about his writing space inside. This narration offers an identification with the narrator as the object inside the space and thus enables a reader to emotionally engage with the idea of the inside space as a space of safety. The role of this reader has of course developed over time, beginning with the intended readers, Ernst and Anicuta Levin, and expanding to academic researchers with the archiving of the letter collection. Unlike the intended readers of the letters, such academic readers do not have a direct relationship with the writer and thus add new perspectives on, for example, the narratological features of the letters, as shown here. This points to the analytical gain that can be achieved by the academic reader perspective, reading the letters as a literary critic brings to light new information that had been overlooked by, or not been of interest to the intended first readers.

In particular, the cited passage reveals the following: the bombings of the nearby city might lie three years in the past but with the memory that the narrator evokes in the present of his *narrating space*, he achieves an association of the outside space with danger and the locked up inside (the "geschlossene(n) Veranda") and the "Pulswärmer" underline this character) with safety. The two spaces also represent two different spaces of time – the outside space represents the life-threatening past whereas the inside space, because of its second identity as the *narrating space* of the letter writer, stands for the calm and tranquil present.

[295] Referring to the narrator as homodiegetic marks him/her as part of the diegesis; with the context of letter-writing the term should be understood as its Greek etymology indicates – as a narrative told through a narrator, for this also applies to letters.

This presentation of the two spaces corresponds with the concept of 'Innerlichkeit' – often employed as an attitude and philosophical concept by German intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The focus on the inside (of the home, the mind etc.) served many well as a protection against the outside world of politics and potential danger.

The separation of spaces, on the level of the narrative, into an outside and an inside has a striking effect on the reader's perception of the narrator, who claims to be part of the story. When the letter writer here employs the perspective of looking out from the veranda, he creates a speaking authority that can claim to be an observer that is not involved in the events narrated. As suggested above, this chimes with the attitude often propagated by artists who were eager to remain uninvolved in political matters. Such tendencies, with which all our correspondents were familiar, were famously displayed in the twentieth century by Thomas Mann and his emphasis on the concept of 'machtgeschützte Innerlichkeit'.[296]

It is Unold's narratological methods of portraying such beliefs that are of interest in this thesis and, as proven, the use of spaces in their separating qualities (e.g., inside vs. outside) produces a notable effect on the reader. I suggest that Unold's narratological strategies here result in the portrayal of a narrator that is isolated from any political happenings surrounding him.

Therefore, spaces can, as expounded above, have different functions in the narrative. In addition to separating and thus ascribing certain identities, they can represent time frames or can stand for emotions and sometimes the description of spaces and their qualities (e.g., damp, dark, spacious, bright, quiet, or noisy) functions as representative of the narrating persona's mental state or his desires or fears.

[296] The term 'Innerlichkeit' originally ties back to a sentiment propagated in German literature of 'Romantik' and 'Empfindsamkeit' (prominently so in Goethe's *Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774), when Werther states he finds a world *within himself*) and further developed and discussed by the philosophers of the nineteenth century. Thomas Mann picks up the desire, which he names as a typical feature of the Germans, to separate the arts from politics and consequently abstain from any political opinion as an artist; he attempted to address such in his ambivalently discussed and in the end quite political book *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (1918) and he repeats the attitude of 'Innerlichkeit', albeit then more critically, as a truly German feature in his famous speech from 1945: 'Deutschland und die Deutschen'. See hereto: Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: Wandlungen der Gesellschaft: Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Zivilisation*, vol 2 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990); Thomas Mann, *Deutschland und die Deutschen* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1947); Helmuth Plessner, *Die verspätete Nation: Über die politische Verfügbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes* (Frankfurt Suhrkamp, 1988).

To exemplify this last statement of the function of spaces as representative, I want to adduce Reinhard Koester's first letter to Anicuta Belau after 1945. He receives no answer from Belau to this letter written in 1948 until she sends him a postcard in 1950, which then initiates a more regular correspondence.

At the beginning of this letter from 1948, Koester explains that Unold gave him Belau's Scottish address after having received a long letter from her. He admits his hurt feelings, writes that he had waited for this to happen for such a long time and that he had not heard of her since she left Germany in 1938.[297] The letter then contains a succession of different space narratives, which portray Koester's experiences during the Third Reich and his suffering during the last years of the war. Koester narrates these events by narrating the different stages of his life as spaces. The following passage sums up the years between 1937 and 1942, and Koester narrates these years by describing the spaces where he and his wife lived when certain events took place:

> Zunächst mal ein kurzer Bericht: Wir haben viel Schweres durchgemacht. Die Wohnung, in der Du damals bei uns gewohnt hast, mussten wir kurz darauf aufgeben, weil mir jede Verdienstmöglichkeit abgeschnitten worden war. Ellen zog zu ihren Eltern, und ich trieb mich einige Zeit lang bei alten Bekannten und in einer Pension herum. Schließlich fanden wir ein ganz billiges und ebenso scheußliches Atelier mit kleinem Nebenraum und einer Kochstelle, aber ohne Ausguss und Wasser, das wir über den Speicher beim Hausmeister holen mussten. Und da bekam Ellen ihr Kind. Es ging uns scheußlich schlecht. Die meisten Möbel und den Teppich hatten wir schon vorher verkaufen müssen.[298]

Two life-changing events are narrated in the cited passage, the first being that Koester had initially lost every income opportunity and thus became severely poor. The second event narrated is that Ellen Koester gave birth to their daughter Katharina in May 1938. The fact that Koester states here that his increasing poverty towards the end of the 1930s had its origins in the undermining of his work by the Nazi authorities (indicated by the passive

[297] "Ellen und ich haben viel an dich gedacht- sowohl in den grausigen Hitlerjahren, wie auch nachher. Oft wollte ich an dich schreiben- aber ich konnte ja nicht hoffen, dass ein Brief ohne nähere Adresse ankommen würde, zumal ich ja gar nicht wusste, ob du überhaupt noch in Edinburgh wohntest. Denn du hast ja seit deiner Abreise nichts von dir hören lassen. " Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL 18 (ii) 1/3.
[298] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

construction “abgeschnitten worden war”) is another interesting example of a letter-writing persona creating an unreliable narrator. As demonstrated in Chapter I, we know that Koester continued to write for ‘Simplicissimus’ until 1941 and for the Ufa until 1940. Such irregularities endorse the importance of a distinction between letter writer and letter-writing persona.

Both the events are narrated with a link to their *spatial frames*, as Ryan defines the immediate surroundings of the events shown, at the time. First, Koester’s alleged loss of income and the subsequent impact on his finances are merely narrated in a subordinate clause, as if mentioned only to explain the need for the couple to move out of the flat that Belau had visited in 1937. The narrator then goes on to describe the next flat he and his wife lived in. The living spaces of the years described represent their moving on. This marks a deliberate choice on the level of the narrative, as it is to be assumed that more than simply moving from one space to another happened in those years. Nevertheless, the narrator focuses here on the spaces experienced and thus signals the ‘driven nature’ of these years, the “grausige Hitlerjahre”.[299]

In the passage cited above, the narrator uses more words to describe the flat they lived in, and its (poor) qualities, than to describe his first child’s birth (the narrator uses “ihr Kind” as if, through the concrete mentioning of the act of giving birth, anything other than a third person female possessive pronoun were unthinkable) or indeed life after that as a family of three.

The description of the space where Ellen Koester gave birth encompasses the event itself. The information given through the narrating of this space, that it was “billig und ebenso scheußlich”, that it had no water supply and that it was poorly furnished, merges into a more general statement that the letter writer himself had not been doing well around the time of his child’s birth.

[299] Cf. Reinhard Koester an Anicuta Belau, 7.1.48, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

As his story continues, the narration is strongly oriented towards geographical references (street names, local areas, and town names) as it progresses through the different living spaces that the three Koesters passed through until the very last years of the war.

> Schliesslich [sic] bekam ich eine Anstellung als Dramaturg in einem Theaterverlag und dann vom Atlantisverlag Zürich-Berlin einen Auftrag für eine neue Moliere-Übersetzung- und daraufhin konnten wir uns dann wieder eine kleine nette Wohnung hier am Roseneck (Grunewald) nehmen. Ellen und das Kind hatte ich schon 1942 nach Schlesien in Sicherheit gebracht, später nach Guben, und dorthin zog ich dann auch im letzten Kriegsjahr, nachdem ich meine Wohnung vermietet hatte.[300]

The narrative thus creates a *story space*, which according to Ryan is all the *spatial frames* and any other geographical *references*, with one of these spatial frames gaining another function. The town Guben (*reference*) and the basement where the narrator spent the last weeks of the war (*spatial frame*) become a proxy for war "in seiner grausigsten Form", when he writes:

> In Guben[301] erlebten wir das Kriegsende in seiner grausigsten Form. Vierzehn Tage mit dem Kind im Keller ohne Wasser und Licht bei schwerstem Beschuss von beiden Seiten. Dann wurden wir ostwärts getrieben, und konnten erst Mitte Juni nach Fussmärschen von insgesamt 300km wieder nach Berlin kommen. Dafür fanden wir wenigstens unsere Wohnung unbeschädigt wieder.[302]

The striking use of spaces as representative for war's brutality becomes most obvious in the elliptical sentence "Vierzehn Tage mit dem Kind im Keller ohne Wasser und Licht bei schwerstem Beschuss von beiden Seiten." There is no verb to signal the tense of this sentence, although marked as a matter of 14 days, it appears as an on-going, everlasting event for, unlike all other sentences, it is not indicated as being in the past. In its incantation-like character, the sentence resembles a line in a poem. Its style strangely alienates it from the rest of the text, and it is this alienation that indicates its significance. I contend that this line serves as a part that signifies or represents the most important topic of Koester's letter: his wartime experience.

[300] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[301] Town in Brandenburg (then Silesia), 150 km southeast from Berlin.
[302] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

The previous sentence introduces this description of the writer's experience as 'war in its most gruesome form' and what is subsequently portrayed is the space the narrator remembers from those 14 days. The lack of a verb means the subject of the sentence remains indefinite. By not further emphasizing that it was he and his wife who had to endure in this dark and isolated space, the sentence not only offers the reader a sense of identification with those who suffered, it also suggests that theirs was one of numerous similar experiences. The suffering becomes interchangeable, and the boundlessness of their miseries is expressed in the (partially alliterated) enumeration of the space's features ("(…) mit dem Kind im Keller ohne Wasser und Licht bei schwerstem Beschuss von beiden Seiten").

Apart from the qualities of the space, either a room in a basement or a bunker which had to serve as a shelter during the invasion of the Red Army, the narrator does not portray anything about these weeks. Whether he and his family were alone in the basement or whether more people had access to it, what they did to stay hydrated, how they managed to eat and how often they could leave their hiding spot, is not described at all in this narrative. It appears that the narrator is eager to present events in a way that corresponds with his perspective at the time, his perception of the space, where all occurred with the limited knowledge that he had at that time about political or military developments. Although narrated as retrospection, with a wider horizon about the events that took place in the spring of 1945, the narrating persona employs an immediate mode and sticks with the observations that the protagonist of the story (then sixty-year-old Reinhard Koester) was able to make in 1945. He thus creates an atmosphere of simultaneous narrating albeit the retrospective reporting which this letter contains.

The narrating of space plays a vital role in this plain writing style. Through the mentioning of a space's simple characteristics and the family's moving from one to the other, the story of their past progresses, although the narrator abstains from portraying anything but spaces and avoids narrating other possible topics linked to for example emotions, politics, or nationality.

The narration of the experiences made after this crucial period "unter Beschuss", their involuntary march eastwards and the final march back towards Berlin several months later, is again structured mainly by geographical references ("ostwärts", "300 km wieder nach Berlin"). Space is narrated as movement; for example, the "Fussmärsche(n) von insgesamt 300km"

portrays not the specific nature or order of a space, but a space covered, such that it appears almost 'conquered' through the physical act of walking. Any inward perspective or summary of the emotional or physical state the narrator experienced remains unrealised, and it is the spaces and their depiction that represent the family's state of mind, fears, and exhaustion here.

These first textual analyses of spaces have shown the following: the topic of spaces, which I have unravelled with Ryan's terms of *spatial frames*, *story space*, and *geographical references*, are a prominent and recurring theme in the letters of both writers after the gap in correspondence. The description of these spaces is often intertwined with a representation of war, destruction, and their own suffering.

The terms established by Ryan have proven to be helpful tools in identifying the narratological strategies used by the letter writers, including the identification of a letter-writing persona. This identification has facilitated a distinction between the author of the text/letter (the letter writer) and the narrating voice of the story told (the letter-writing persona).

Having made this distinction, the analysis further reveals the agenda behind the writers' narrative style, their staging of their own roles and identities in an attempt to appear as passive and politically uninvolved (uninformed even) observers. Max Unold uses the spaces (both his *narrating space* as the *story space*) to emphasize this impression and Reinhard Koester additionally inscribes representative functions into his narrated spaces. As I have shown, the descriptions of the spaces in his narrative reveal information of unspoken elements within the *story* told. Such unspoken elements can be the letter-writer's emotions, his state in life (being rich or poor, healthy, or unhealthy, active or passive) and opinions on political developments.

In the following section, I will show how the use of the identification of a letter-writing persona can elucidate the narration of cityscapes as spaces forming the postwar reality in Munich and Berlin.

Cityscapes as spaces in the narratives of WWII

In the following section I will examine two of Max Unold's letters written shortly after WWII. The stories they contain show the temporal proximity to the war. An interplay of postwar present portrayal and retrospective insertions characterize many of the letters in the years between 1946 and 1950. As shown above in Reinhard Koester's first postwar letter, one way of narrating the time of the gap in correspondence is to narrate the different spaces visited and lived in.

Max Unold uses additional techniques to describe the years of the Third Reich and beyond. He gives informative summaries of mutual friends' destinies and their professional developments as well as offering detailed and frequent descriptions of his own career path. The narrating of space as a narratological technique to refer to an experience made, can, however, also be found in his narration.

In Unold's first letter after the long gap, on 3 December 1946, he tells Belau and Levin about the destruction of his art studio during the final bombings of Munich. Unold writes about the loss of his studio along with several paintings and other belongings in more than one letter.[303] This repetition of one event is a recurring pattern in both our writers' writing, and it reveals a feature of letter writing. The letters written are sent off and, if they are handwritten without a copy, the letter writer must rely on his memory if he wishes to avoid repeating himself.

Whether one considers it as a feature of letter writing or a deliberate narrative technique, the repetitions in the correspondence demonstrate the events that were of importance to the letter writer. The difference between letter writer and narrator or narrating persona becomes most obvious in the example of repetitive narrating and it can be exemplified as follows: the letter writer is the one whose memory may fail to remind him that he has written about a certain event before, whereas the narrator is the letter writer carrying out the function of a narrating persona and is thus deliberately narrating repetitively (or indeed

[303] The destruction of Unold's art studio is part of the following letters: Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 3.12.1946, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13; Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

choosing iterative or singular narration). The following passage shows one of the repeatedly narrated events, the destruction of Unold's studio, which first appears in a letter from 1946:

> Mein schönes Atelier in der Beethovenstr. existiert freilich nicht mehr. Es hatte schon 42 was abbekommen, aber beim letzten großen Angriff Jan. 45 ist das Haus bis auf den Keller ausgebrannt. 50 Ölbilder dabei, etwa 700 Bücher und der größte Teil der Einrichtung. Was einem am wertvollsten schien, hatten wir glücklicherweise vorher weggebracht, & eine kleine Wohnstätte war uns dadurch auch gesichert, nahe bei Ebenhausen im Isartal. (….) [304]

This passage continues with the frequent topic of how the letter writer(s) spent the years of the war. The space narrated here documents what the narrator considers as his losses during the war. It is narrated through the objects in the studio and from a retrospective perspective. The narrator refers to a subsequent living space outside of Munich, as the growing danger in the city centre forced Unold and his wife to seek shelter in the countryside. As shown in the preceding analysis of Koester's letters, the experience of war is once more narrated as an experience of spaces.

The same narration of a space as a way to narrate WWII can be found in another of Unold's letters, in which he again employs the repeated narration of the same event, the destruction of his studio:

> (…) Im übrigen hat Mem.[305] wenig gelitten in seinen alten Partien und sieht jetzt im Schnee reizend aus (nur in Bahnhofsnähe wurde einiges zerstört, was nebenbei an die hundert Menschen das Leben kostete!) München dagegen ist bös mitgenommen, man kann das nicht schildern, auch ist manches erstaunlich intakt, eben neulich fand ich am hellen Tag den Weg nicht von der Augustenstraße in die Schellingstraße, und die Gegend ist mir doch wohl bekannt (Die Osteria steht dennoch, der Deutelmoser bemühte mich vor ein paar Tagen & bat um ein Entlastungszeugnis für die Spruchkammer).
> Daß auch ihr den Luftkrieg eine Zeitlang über den Köpfen hattet, daran hat unsereins kaum gedacht, und gar ohne Keller! Bei uns war eben alles viel besser organisiert! Geradezu wohnlich unsere „Luftschutzräume", auch die privaten, und daß man sie auch unter Trümmern noch finden konnte (zum Ausgraben der Verschütteten) stand an jedem Haus mit Pfeilen bezeichnet LSR -> was der Volksmund so von 1944 an deutete: Lernt Schnell Russisch![306]

[304] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 3.12.1946, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13.
[305] Unold's hometown Memmingen.
[306] Underlined initial letters to explain the abbreviation- copied from original.

> Aber als Grete 1942 mit einer schweren Lungenentzündung lag & wir sie auf der Tragbahre ins Souterrain tragen mußten beim Alarm, & als dann die Fenster hereinflogen & und die Mauern wackelten, danach war das kein Spaß. Das recht beschädigte Atelier wurde dann nochmal tadellos hergerichtet, aber im Jan. 1945 mußte es doch dran glauben. Ja, was könnte man da alles noch erzählen! (…) [307]

Prior to the cited passage, Unold mentions he is writing this letter in his late parents' house in Memmingen,[308] which both Belau and Levin had visited with him in the 1920s.[309] According to other remarks in their correspondence, the town held fond memories of their shared youth for the friends. These shared memories explain why the letter writer here mentions his *narrating space* and provides the reader with information about the town's state after the war.

This letter contains two *stories* and subsequently two different times and *settings*. As outlined by Ryan, the *setting* is the 'socio-historico-geographical environment'[310] of a story. In this passage, the narrator changes between the initial setting of postwar West Germany to Third Reich wartime and back again. When he introduces the narrative of postwar Germany, which marks his present, spaces again take on a representative function in the narrative.

In order to convey what had happened in Memmingen during the war, the narrator makes use of its buildings and their destruction. He mentions the people who died during the bombings in a relative clause, introduced with the adverb "nebenbei". The state of the buildings is narrated in the setting of his present, but through their portrayal, the letter-writing persona creates a narrative of events that took place in the past (the buildings' destruction during the air raids).

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[307] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

[308] "Ich schreibe diesen Antwort Brief in -Memmingen! Sitze neben dem Kachelofen in dem das Wasser im Topf gemütlich singt. Grete habe ich ins Kino geschickt und nachher treffen wir uns noch für ein halbes Stündchen in einer Weinstube, wo es aber natürlich keinen Wein gibt, doch immerhin für Stammgäste Apfelmost, im Teeglas serviert, dass niemand neidisch wird. Von Zeit zu Zeit sind wir nämlich hier in der Vaterstadt (unter anderem um auch einmal ohne Schwiegermutter zu sein), wo uns in der elterlichen Wohnung, die ihr ja kennt, noch 1 Zimmerchen eingeräumt ist (…) " Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

[309] There might have been prior visits to Memmingen in the 1910s when Belau's mother Laura stayed in Bad Wörishofen 'zur Kur'. Belau and Unold both signed the letters written to her during that time period and it is likely they spent time with Unold's parents in Memmingen after having paid her a visit in Wörishofen.

[310] Cf. Ryan, 'Space', p. 797.

The story in this letter continuously focuses on the destruction of the places and cities the letter writer and his addressees know. He goes on to describe Munich's devastated city centre and refers to street names, thus creating a *narrative world* (of spaces), for the *story space* relevant to the story, which is completed by a reader who has the cultural knowledge of how short the distance between the two named streets really is.

With this continuous narrating of war as a story of destroyed buildings, Unold's letter-writing persona follows a technique that could be named 'phenotypical' narration. The term phenotype (in biology) includes all observable features (in an organism) as opposed to its genotype, which is the set of non-observable genes that are responsible for the phenotype. As Unold narrates the events of WWII through narrating the destroyed, formerly familiar spaces, he narrates what can be *seen* from the war in Germany's postwar cityscapes and therefore delivers a *phenotype* of war, and of German suffering. His narration stays immediate and personal, and the destruction of the buildings in Memmingen as well as the deaths of its citizens[311] serve to create an image of suffering. One possible reason for this immediate and phenotypical narrative technique might lie, yet again, in the writer's desire to remain unpolitical. By using this technique, he avoids describing how he (as a German in Germany) perceived the years that led the way into war and the deportation and murder of fellow citizens – in other words, the domestic policies driving forward the developments he now portrays. To continue with the biological analogy, he obscures the genotype behind the, now (present of the moment of writing) destroyed cityscapes of Memmingen and Munich, which led to and formed the phenotype of the immediate postwar years in Germany.

Once more, the spaces here serve as representatives for other truths, somewhat inconvenient to the narrator and, again, this letter is typical for the postwar period in that it narrates the experience of the closing months of the war as if it was the whole experience of the Third Reich.

[311] Around 300 citizens (of whom ninety were soldiers) of Memmingen lost their lives in the bombing described in Unold's letter. Cf. Hoser, p. 284f.

Before I further elaborate on this avoidance strategy, I will consider the way Max Unold describes the cityscape of his daily life: Munich-Schwabing.

By narrating how he moves, the narrator in a way *walks* the reader through these destroyed spaces as he mentions the two streets[312] in central Munich and ends his description with the Osteria Bavaria, which is located at the end of the journey from Augustenstraße to Schellingstraße.[313] The Bavarian-Italian restaurant marks another space associated with shared memories for the two readers, who during the first three decades of the twentieth century, spent much time in the popular restaurant, amongst students and intellectuals.

The narrator's technique of showing the city from a homodiegetic, walking figure's perspective challenges the reader to again form a *narrative world* with her geographical knowledge of Munich as well as drawing on cultural knowledge about a certain Joseph Deutelmoser, who, in the *story*, appears once the narrating persona has reached Schellingstrasse and the Osteria Bavaria.

Joseph Deutelmoser, the owner of the Osteria Bavaria, which later became one of Adolf Hitler's favourite venues, and Deutelmoser's need for exoneration exemplify the meaning of spaces once more. Although the Osteria's building is still intact, its presence in Unold's narrative offers an unarticulated comment on the relationship between the Third Reich and postwar Germany, as it implicitly refers to the restaurant's owner, whose relations with the Nazi leadership caused him difficulties in the new postwar reality.

This example shows how the narrating of space has a representative function, for not all meaning associated with the spaces narrated is also raised in the narrative. The narrator, created by Unold, gives a plain report of the status quo, again, a phenotypical portrayal, which relies on the reader's cultural knowledge to fill in the gaps in the narrative and allows for the avoidance of detailed depiction of compromising topics.

[312] Both streets are located in Munich-Maxvorstadt.
[313] The Osteria Bavaria is, to this day, an Italian restaurant located at Schellingstrasse 62 in Munich.

The passage above moves from *narrative unit I*, the portrayal of postwar Munich, to *unit II,* the everyday routine of war experienced by the narrator and his wife. The narrator builds on his acknowledgement that civilians in Britain had to endure the cities' bombings without basements and continues his narrative with the description of the German "Luftschutzraum" – space, in its most original form.

The mode of narration changes from indirect reporting to a much more immediate and almost scenic portrayal of an air raid. This presentation includes the qualities of the German "Luftschutzraum" and the narrator, quite possibly bringing some irony to bear, emphasizes their comfort and the 'successful' organisation of such spaces in Germany. The word "unsereins", a colloquial expression usually referring to a group of people initiates a juxtaposition of 'we' and 'you'. In the letter, "unsereins" means the small group of the letter writer and his wife Grete Unold, as it is often used to refer to one's family. However, it can also include anyone in the same position described in the context. Therefore, this small word quite possibly reveals a deliberate separation between the letter writer and his 'we', which, in that context, is the German civilian population, and the 'you' of his addressees, who are the opposing civilians in Britain.

This juxtaposition is further emphasized with the exclamation "Bei uns war eben alles viel besser organisiert!" This statement can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, one could argue that the letter writer plays with irony here, as he goes on to describe the bunker as "geradezu wohnlich", a remark that clearly shows satirical elements. The further elaborations on how the directive "LSR" on buildings had been reinterpreted with signs of black humour by the German population, also chimes with the use of irony in this passage. On the other hand, it may be that the separation of the narration into two paragraphs indicates a switch from positive to negative memories. The first paragraph employs a positive attitude when describing the war in Munich (as "besser organisiert") and the subsequent change in tone is marked by the conjunction "aber als", introducing the second paragraph that narrates less pleasant experiences.

Although both interpretations remain as possible readings of this passage, the close reading analysis reveals once more the carefully orchestrated narratological structure of the text with

the important role of the letter-writing persona who influences the tone throughout the narratives. It also confirms that this control of different tones allows for a deliberate performance of an identity, in this case the narrating persona performs the identity of a victim of war.

Moreover, in the portrayal of the air raid, it is the conjunctions of "aber als…und als dann.." that create greater immediacy. The narrator describes Unold's risky endeavour of moving his sick wife into the basement during an air raid and, once more, the violence of war is described as violence executed on buildings. The bursting and shaking of windows appear to function as representatives of other incidents implicit in the text (e.g. the fearful shaking of bodies etc). The euphemism which constitutes the sentence ("Aber als dann…danach war das kein Spaß."), shows the letter writer's speechlessness or even lack of vocabulary to describe the experienced, a phenomenon I will discuss further in Chapter III. The quick transition to the narration of the studio's destruction in 1942 and 1945 furthermore underlines the focus on spaces, understood to be narrative-forming elements.

Overall, there is a striking continuity to be observed in the way that war is narrated through spaces in the letters that I have examined so far by both letter writers, Reinhard Koester and Max Unold. As proven above, spaces serve as narratological representatives of war and its violence. Both the letter writers employ the device of narrating their experiences of the impeded working conditions, the air raids and taking shelter as well as the postwar poverty by narrating the qualities of the spaces (rooms, buildings, streets, ruins) they lived in, fled to and walked in during this time.
Such a technique allows them to create a tailored narrative that provides the reader of the letters with a depiction of what is *seen* at the very moment of the events narrated and without any context or subsequently gained knowledge of these incidents. This exclusion of political positioning as well as affectivity is a feature of the correspondence after 1945 that recurs in the letters that I discuss in this thesis.

As seen so far, both letter writers create a letter-writing persona, which performs a deliberate identity. For the description of war in the form of space, this persona narrates in a tone that

aligns them with the distant coldness of the 'intellectual reporter', albeit one who repeatedly laments their own suffering.

This mentality of rationality over affectivity combined with an underlining of the 'Innerlichkeit' of each figure in the narrative leads to an interesting creation of such an implied narrator. The claim of authenticity achieved through the rational depiction of real-world spaces emphasizes the role of the 'oberserver', which the narrator takes over.

The frequent placing of such a narrator *inside* a space from which he narrates events underlines the intellectual 'Innerlichkeit' and thus excludes all (political, moral, national) debates from the discourse. This has a remarkable effect on the (implied and intended, first) readers. As demonstrated, the narrating (letter-writing) persona appears as an uninvolved observer, who reports rationally and allegedly on the basis of facts, and, most importantly, this narrating voice creates an image in which the "I" is always uninvolved in the *outside* world's entanglements. The lack of affectivity and of a comprehensive classification or evaluation of the events described ensures the narrator's neutrality in all events and denies any participation and thus moral accountability.

The plain telling of merely what the figures experienced without enriching such storytelling with any additionally gained background information at the time of writing can appear to deliver a genuine portrayal whilst, at the same time, counteracting such a claim for authenticity through the concealing of events that are unpleasant to the letter writer. Through the creation of a narrator who maintains the horizon of the experiencing figure, the letter writer and author of the text can claim to have borne witness whilst evading giving an account of his actions or a moral classification of the past.

Overall, through the analysis of cityscapes as spaces in the narratives of WWII, I have shown Max Unold often pursued a certain agenda when deciding what and what not to include. His letter-writing persona, and its portrayal of war as a narrative of spaces, (passing through spaces, enduring in spaces, or observing the damaged spaces in postwar city ruins), is therefore a substantive part of the author's desire to follow his own interests.

Often these deliberate approaches of how to include different presentations of life's events in the letters to the Belau-Levins may have corresponded with a general way of dealing with those very topics, such as war trauma, guilt or indeed any involvement or the passive arrangement with the Third Reich. My argument that the letter writers created narrators or letter-writing personae, who then employ narratological devices to influence the readers' perception of their agency is the foundation for the further analysis of their portrayal of WWII.

An analysis of the portrayal of spaces connected with the topic of the war has revealed the authors' eagerness to appear as objectively neutral rather than participating subjects, when it comes to all events connected to National Socialist rule.

The analysis of the narrating voice, once defined as such, reveals the writers' – especially Max Unold's – efforts to give the impression of an uninvolved observer of all events. The identification of the narrating persona furthermore shows the inevitability of employing tropes and narrative structures. It is important to note that this inevitability does not necessarily result in a falsification, but that the necessity of narrative positioning and structure forces the writers (and readers) to confront and deal with their own involvement. Finding and deploying explicit narrative devices, as both letter writers did, allowed them to avoid several topics and perform tailored identities of their selves.

In the following section, I will move on from the narration of war and examine further portrayals of spaces related to daily life. I will illustrate how these spaces further refined the letter writers' shaping of their own identity.

Dimensions of separation – the living environment as origin of all spaces

The following section will examine additional functions of spaces in the narratives of the letters. I studied the narration of spaces in the context of WWII prior to this, this section is dedicated to the contexts of each writer's living space in postwar Germany.

Letter writers always display an awareness of spaces in their texts, often because a letter is written in a certain space and read in a different one, after having travelled through other spaces. It is very common for the writer of a letter to refer to the space where they sit when writing the letter and consequently to create their own narrating space. After all, the reason for writing a letter is, in many cases, a separation of letter writer and addressee and this circumstance leads to the two parties experiencing different spaces and sometimes also different 'settings', meaning different socio-historico-geographical environments.[314]

All the letters that I examine in this thesis are written due to spatial separation. The letters exchanged after 1945 constitute the only communication between the friends and there were no face-to-face meetings to interrupt the correspondence preserved in the EL Collection. The discussion of space and the accompanying creation of *narrative worlds* therefore is of high significance in those later letters. The description of the *story space* and its qualities is therefore always perceived in opposition to the foreign, unknown space the letter will arrive in – and a comparison of those spaces is inescapable, as I will show.

The fact that the friends were now living in different countries and the Belau-Levins', mostly unspoken, unwillingness to travel to Germany, determines much of the atmosphere of the correspondence of the 1950s. A letter sent to celebrate Belau's seventieth birthday by Max Unold closes with the letter writer's hope for a reunion in Germany, as he writes: "Und richtig feiern wollen wir, wenn ihr hierher kommt und wir gemütlich zusammensitzen nach so langer Zeit."[315]

Ernst Levin and Anicuta Belau never returned to Germany after their emigration in 1933 and 1938 respectively. Some letters of the late 1950s and especially those of the summer of 1959 contain organizational details for a stay in Munich and Unold's wife, Grete, makes several suggestions about accommodation. Whether the Levins had given the Unolds and other friends in Bavaria real reason to believe they would visit their former home country and then

[314] Cf. Ryan, 'Space'.
[315] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau, 14.2.1956, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/3.

decided against it, or whether some wishful thinking and persuasion on the side of their German friends formed the basis for such travel guidance is difficult to say without the complete correspondence.

However, as mentioned before, the correspondence often subtly contains the topic of the friends' physical distance and thus possible estrangement. Therefore, the description of spaces and locations in Germany, important to all of them as memories of their shared youth, is not merely informative but carries a manipulative nuance. When Koester describes his house and *narrating space* in a letter to Belau in 1952, he does so with the explicit wish for a reunion in Berlin:

> Schade, daß wir euch alle drei nicht einmal zum Sonne-schlucken für ein paar Wochen einladen können! Denn gerade jetzt ist es wundervoll hier und die Luft ringsum schwer von Fliederduft. Wir haben unten im Garten ein hübsches Plätzchen zur Straße hin, wohin ich auch manchmal herunterhumple, und in fünf Minuten ist man im Grunewald. Aber wir haben nur eine größere Dachkammer mit einer Luke, in der jemand mal übernachten kann, aber nur eine alte baufällige Couch, auf der nur Fakire schlafen können, die sonst ein Nagelbrett als Ruhestatt gewohnt sind. Ja, das sind böse Zeiten![316]

One crucial difference in how this letter is written, as opposed to the letters discussed in the section on WWII narratives, is the moment of narrating. Whereas all events of wartime were narrated from a retrospective perspective this way of narrating has been classified as 'subsequent' by Genette.[317] In the passage cited above, the letter writer even employs simultaneous narration, when he praises the springtime in Berlin. He describes the smell of the blossoming bushes and thus evokes the image of him smelling them at the very moment of writing. As he goes on to describe the space he lives in, the narration seems to have its origin in the writers' *narrating space,* his study. A similar technique of referring to the narrating space whilst making it the story space was identified in my earlier analysis of Unold's

[316] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 9.5.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[317] This is a term proposed by Gérard Genette, who differs between four types of narrating time, of which the subsequent one marks the common, past tense narrative. The four types are *subsequent*, *prior*, *simultaneous, and interpolated* narrating time. Cf. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, repr. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

writing and is achieved by the use of directive adverbs such as “unten” and “herunter,” as this marks the narrator as the starting point of the narrative path.

The reader is thus able to follow the narrator’s walk, down the staircase and into the garden facing the street, which leads to the forest. The space of Koester’s home is narrated dynamically, the narrator guides the reader through his perspective. Once again, Koester’s narration is limited by the perception of the narrator, but it is also this limitation that generates such scenic access to the space described. In his description of the space, he includes his desire for a visit and, at the same time, declares it to be impossible due to his simple living situation and lack of a proper guest room. The exclamation “Ja, das sind böse Zeiten!” seems to reflect on and mock a general attitude the letter writer has taken on in his always financially unstable life.

This attitude of whining and lamenting had dominated the tone of Koester’s narratorial voice before, although, in the letters written in the Bundesrepublik, he provides more political context. Whereas the immediate postwar letters, created with little temporal distance from the events told, were defined by a narrating of spaces detached from any political context, the letters written in the 1950s are constructed by a narrator who is more involved in the discourse of his present and past.

The fact that the correspondents lived in different spaces is the origin of their letter writing, and it is the only reason for them to be corresponding in that way once they revived their relationship after 1945. Therefore, and because spaces define the *setting* of daily life, all four letter writers, including the Belau-Levins, showed great interest in the spaces in which each of their correspondents lived. One of the living spaces that aroused the addressee’s interest was the British sector of Berlin, which, after WWII, included Koester’s home in Berlin-Grunewald. Writing about the spaces, which the four friends now called their homes, therefore also meant positioning their selves within these spaces, and such positioning could entail political contextualizing as, for example, performed by Reinhard Koester in the following passage:

> Und in welcher 'Zone' wir wohnen? In gar keiner, sondern im britischen Sektor von Berlin. Hoffentlich nicht bald in der russischen Zone, denn wir leben hier ja in einer großen Mausefalle, die jeden Tag zuklappen kann. (Toi-toi-toi!) Von ' innerer Ruhe' ist bei uns seit 1933 keine Rede mehr. Die Hitler gehen und die Stalins kommen, und vom deutschen Volke sind nur die ewigen Raffkes, Konjunkturritter und politischen Schwätzer bestehen geblieben. Wie sagte doch der alte Liebermann in der Nazizeit-: 'Ich kann gar nicht so viel essen wie ich kotzen möchte.' Darum esse ich möglichst wenig und trinke lieber etwas mehr (wenn ich's habe). Das wäre das über die 'Zone'.[318]

This passage repeats a question about the four occupied sectors in Berlin that Belau must have posed in her letter prior to this. By repeating the question, the narrator emphasizes the dialogical character of the letter, so the following answer appears as if it were a spoken word conversation. The comments on the British sector of Berlin, the inhabitants' fear of becoming part of the Russian "Zone" and the subsequent summary of fascism and communism ("die Hitler (…) und die Stalins (…) "), both equally overrunning countries as if they were forces of nature, is, however, carefully phrased, and shows how a letter's text is never a spontaneous reply. The space discussed here is no longer just the home as house or garden, it has now expanded to the city, and in this unique historical case of divided Berlin: "die Zone".

It is apparent that spaces have now become the parameter defining the differences between the correspondents. It is their living spaces that ultimately divide them. Such difference had been made apparent in the descriptions of the destroyed cities and flats, the air raids and the poor living conditions, the forced flight and moving into new spaces on the German side in the immediate postwar years, and it is continued in the narrative of the divided city of Berlin.

The narrating of these different spaces results in a presentation of Germany as a space that is suffering from the so-called "böse Zeiten". It emphasizes the 'hardship' of those who remained in Germany with an almost envious glance over to those who once had to leave. The juxtaposition of the spaces of Germany as 'hardship' and the spaces of the addressees in Britain as 'safe haven' is upheld by Reinhard Koester until shortly before his death in 1956, often reinforced by care packages (containing clothes, coffee, cigars etc.) sent from Edinburgh

[318] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 9.5.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

to Berlin.[319] The packages sent to Koester and his family mostly contained clothes that had formerly belonged to the Belau-Levins, as well as other goods that were difficult or expensive to come by during the postwar years in Berlin.[320]

Remarkably, any reasons for such differences in the daily lives of the correspondents, including the food shortage and the heavily destroyed cities on the German side are never reflected upon by any of the letter writers. Whereas both Unold and Koester had to cope with the reality of living in a country that had lost an aggressively waged world war and committed genocide, the Belau-Levins had found a new home in a country which, although also suffering from economic hardship after the war, had been victorious in defeating Nazism, and was therefore not under occupation or facing responsibility for such unprecedented human rights violations.

As the other analyses in this thesis confirm, this chapter also shows that our letter writer in Berlin is often concerned with matters of his own very personal suffering, and any mention of the broader, political context is usually linked back to how it is affecting his own existence. When focusing on the narratological aspects of writing spaces, as I am in this chapter, such narration remains very personal, although at first glance embedded in a political context. The political developments are, however, then staged as a powerful force overrunning a narrator who appears to be passive when the narrating voice creates a parody on Josef Stalin's famous speech from 1942 and writes: "Die Hitler gehen und die Stalins kommen, und vom deutschen Volke sind nur die ewigen Raffkes, Konjunkturritter und politischen Schwätzer bestehen geblieben".[321]

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[319] The following should only be briefly mentioned here as it confirms the increased political contextualization of Koester's later letters: " (…) Hoffentlich sieht es bei euch anders aus. Die Hoffnung, dass wir uns noch mal fröhlich wieder sehen, muss allmählich wohl abgeschrieben werden. Es ist nur noch ein Zipfelchen da – und daran klammere ich mich. Dass die Atom-Fritzen uns auch noch das Klima versauen, ehe sie uns und diesen ganzen traurigen Erdball zu Staub werden lassen, ist widerlich. Und das einzig Gute an allem Zeitgeschehen ist nur, dass sie mich nicht mehr zur neuen Wehrmacht einberufen können. Wie sie ohne mich Krieg führen wollen, bleibt mir freilich schleierhaft. Wie du siehst, schreitet die Vertrottelung rasch fort. Darum schließe ich lieber den Brief ab. Sag deiner lieben Aneca schönen Dank für Ihr Paket, grüß deinen Mann und schreib mal Deinem alten Reinhard Koester". Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 4.11.1954, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

[320] Koester's daughter Katharina received many of Anne-Kathrin Levin's clothes.

[321] "Die Erfahrungen der Geschichte besagen, dass die Hitlers kommen und gehen, das deutsche Volk, der deutsche Staat aber bleibt" reads Stalin's original comment from 1942. Cf. Bogdan Musial. Kampfplatz Deutschland – Stalins Deutschlandpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg. (2008) <https://www.uni-

As I have previously shown, post-1945, the spaces have now become the differentiating parameter and the narrator in the passage cited above creates a dichotomy between "uns" and "ihr" when he speaks about the years following Hitler's coming to power ("Von 'innerer Ruhe' ist bei uns seit 1933 keine Rede mehr"). As I have shown in the preceding section, a similar narrative technique, emphasizing the distinction between 'us in Germany' and 'you (emigrants) elsewhere' is used in Max Unold's letters, but in this letter by Reinhard Koester, the dichotomy is somewhat illogical. The narrator here excludes the addressee, Anicuta Belau, from the story told through the prepositional insertion "bei uns"; although he could have also phrased his statement as 'in Deutschland' or 'hierzulande', he chose the strongly limiting emphasis of 'us'. This choice proves to be illogical, considering that Belau only left Germany to join her family in Edinburgh in 1938 (five years after the beginning of the *story* in Koester's letter, which started in 1933) and given that her family had in fact suffered from such a lack of "innerer Ruhe" first-hand and with consequences that, in comparison, had a far greater impact on her life.

This narration of a whole country as a space where one belonged or not, reveals a certain perspective on the part of the letter writer. It again evidences the existence of a narrating persona that, in this passage, narrates the events ("die Hitler (…) die Stalins (…) ") subsequently and as a summary. Moreover, the forming of such a nation-narrative ascribes different identities to the letter writer and the addressee.

As explored above, this forming of identities draws on the perception the letter writer has of the different spaces of their daily lives, a perception that neglects the fact that from 1933 to 1938 the addressee had shared the same space. An explanation for such narration could lie in the way that individuals perceive events that are later determined to have been of pathbreaking quality. In the letter cited above, Reinhard Koester mentions the lack of 'inner peace' in the space of those years from 1933 to 1952 and thus the space – in this case, the

hildesheim.de/fb1/institute/geschichte/erasmus-und-europagespraeche/europa-gespraeche/wintersemester-200809/kampfplatz-deutschland-stalins-deutschlandpolitik-im-zweiten-weltkrieg/> [accessed 1 June 2022].

country – is staged as being the same space throughout the Third Reich, the years of the war and the postwar era up until 1952, when the letter was written.

This shows that the letter writer (behind the narrator) understands that the period, which, according to him, began with the year 1933, is not yet finished, even in 1952. Such classification (or rather lack of), at first seems surprising to any researcher, naturally used to thinking in caesuras (such as 1933, 1939 or 1945), but it underlines the importance of continuities unaffected by such political turning points and as detected in the literary tendencies of the mid-twentieth century by literary scholars.
I argue that what I show with the analysis of Koester's portrayal of the years 1933 to 1938 emphasizes what literary research has already brought to light: that historical events, in retrospect often the most obvious anchors that researchers use to reconstruct a perception of the world, have a much smaller impact on the way individuals remember and narrate.[322]

As already mentioned, such an approach reveals the writer's perception of belonging. Even though, for five years, Belau had continued to live in the space, which is the basis for the comment about the lack of "innere Ruhe" in Germany, and has therefore herself experienced the increasingly stirred-up atmosphere that allowed the systematic exclusion and eventual persecution of Jews and dissidents, and despite the fact that Belau's husband, Ernst Levin, and her daughter were forced to leave the country due to the imposition of such measures, the narrator in Koester's letter does not include her in such an experiencing 'we'.

[322] In recent decades, many German Studies scholars have emphasized continuities over the focus on fixed, often political dates and turning points. Whilst some of them disregard the formation of specific genre during the Third Reich completely, others do not negate the impact that Fascism had on literary production and merely welcome the idea of continuities in German literature for the three mid-century decades (1930s, 1940s, 1950s) with a turning point from innovation back to conservation at the end of the 1920s. See: Peter Davies, Stephen Parker and Matthew Philpotts, *The Modern Restoration: Re-Thinking German Literary History 1930-1960* (Berlin; De Gruyter, 2004); Bernd Hüppauf, 'Krise ohne Wandel: Die kulturelle Situation 1945-1949', in *Die Mühen der Ebenen: Kontinuität und Wandel in der deutschen Literatur und Gesellschaft 1945-1949* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), pp. 47–112; Frank Trommler, 'Der "Nullpunkt 1945" und seine Verbindlichkeit für die deutsche Literaturgeschichte', in *Basis. Jahrbuch für deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur*, 1, ed. by Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), pp. 9–25; Frank Trommler, 'Emigration und Nachkriegsliteratur: Zum Problem der geschichtlichen Kontinuität', in *Exil und Innere Emigration: Third Wisconsin Workshop*, ed. by Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1972), pp. 173–197.

Just before Anicuta Belau left Germany at the turn of the year 1937/1938, she had spent several days with Reinhard Koester and his wife Ellen in Berlin, and the couple was therefore well informed about the preparations for her emigration. Nevertheless, the narrative technique that creates the dichotomy of 'us' and 'you' in this letter denies Belau and her family their experience of distress, which was the consequence of such a lack of "innere Ruhe", a euphemism for everything that occurred during these years and in the narrated space.

Although Koester names the year 1933 as his starting point, his exclusion of Belau as an experiencing party involuntarily reveals his true perception of the starting point to be much later, and possibly only with the beginning of WWII. The sense of belonging, which is generated by having lived in the same space (Germany), seems to be evoked not by having witnessed the establishment of an inhuman state and dictatorship and the subsequent exclusion and persecution of millions of its citizens, but by having experienced life during wartime, defeat, and the postwar era in Germany. Therefore, Koester's writing here confirms a phenomenon that historians are very conscious of, namely the fact that because most non-Jewish Germans experienced the most recognisable consequences of life in the dictatorship of the Third Reich during the years of the war, Germany's defeat and the occupation, they cast themselves as victims until some were able to "accommodate recognition of victims other than themselves".[323] For Koester and his wife, the most drastic experiences of those 19 years between 1933 and 1952 were not the persecution and killing of their fellow humans but the war with its air raids and the destruction they brought, as well as the poverty and starvation of the immediate postwar years.[324]

This behaviour, that had caused outrage or at least astonishment immediately after the war among the occupiers as well as Jewish Germans who had survived concentration camps and returned to German soil, has been stated and discussed frequently in research. In her book

[323] Mary Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism', p. 300.

[324] Monica Black confirms what is widely acknowledged amongst scholars but elucidates the point with her focus on physical illnesses and trauma after WWII, as she describes only the very last years of the war as traumatic for the un-persecuted Germans, rather than the years 1933-1939, possibly not even until the year of 1941. Cf. Monica Black, *A Demon-Haunted Land: Witches, Wonder Doctors, and the Ghosts of the Past in Post-WWII Germany* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020), p. 89.

Jews, Germans,and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany, Atina Grossmann states that victimization had been a solution for most Germans in defining the chaotic postwar years,[325] and Robert Moeller in his book *War Stories* convincingly illustrates how a focus on war experiences allowed Germans to "talk about the end of the Third Reich without assuming responsibility for its origins".[326] Through close reading of the passage cited above, I successfully identified Reinhard Koester's strategy to display Germany as a space where he and his family had been made victims of war and thus confirm this widely acknowledged phenomenon of German behaviour immediately after the war.

Through the created dichotomy, the narrator reveals that the letter does not give neutral information on the qualities of the space, "die Zone", and that any manifestation of such space, even such a politically charged space as a country, carries the letter writer's personal story. The narrator's embedding of the space in the political discourse does not enable him to hide his inevitably self-centred perspective in the act of remembering. His exclusion of Belau and her family in this narrative gives away how he has experienced the past years as something connected to his living space, making it a German experience and his narrator seem oblivious to the emigrants' distress and sacrifice.

This example demonstrates the limits of the congruence of the letter writer and the narrator. The creator of the narrating voice in the letters can often be detected through a narratological analysis and it reveals the intended function of the letter-writing persona positioned between the correspondents. The functions of the letter-writing persona vary. So far, we have observed a general eagerness on the part of both letter writers to appear as passive when narrating spaces. This eagerness results in a narrator with a neutral tone that claims authenticity. The distancing tone is disrupted by the dichotomy explored above, which leads to an *experiencing* 'I' rather than an *observing* one. It is, however, still in line with what I previously stated on Koester's and Unold's portrayal of themselves as suffering figures, which although not necessarily deliberately aimed at denying the friends who had emigrated their

[325] Cf. Grossmann, p. 8.
[326] Moeller, p. 3.

own suffering, but nevertheless, and certainly when read by a twenty-first century researcher, contributes to such a reading.

Such a description of events establishes Germany as the equivalent of 'hardship' and the country emigrated to (here it is Britain, but this sentiment can be applied to North America, Australia, South Africa etc.) as 'prosperity' and this effect can be detected in all postwar correspondence examined in this thesis.

The narration of spaces and the manifestation of two separate *story worlds* can also be found in the following paragraph that Max Unold writes on postwar Munich:

> Beide Stammtische bei 'Kaufmann' am Rotkreuzplatz, aber ihr dürft nicht denken, dass ich da jedes mal hingehe. Die Osteria hat der gute Deutelmoser verpachten müssen, scheint eine Art Pärchenlokal zu sein, in das man nicht mehr geht. In Schwabing gibts viele Neugründungen, auf Boheme aufgezogen, aber wir kommen nie dorthin. Aber vom Fasching der wieder in vollem Glanz gefeiert wurde, haben wir die letzten paar Tage recht munter mitgemacht. Schwarzwälder ist wieder ganz groß, aber so hundsteuer, dass ich bloß hingehe, wenn eingeladen. (nicht 'ufjefordert').[327]

This passage is included in a letter from 1950. It is one of the more extensive ones sent to Edinburgh by Max Unold and its focus lies on the letter writer's daily life in postwar Munich as well as their mutual friends' occupations. In the passage cited, the text is replete with references to spaces familiar to the intended readers. The narrator uses the mention of many *spatial frames* (defined by Ryan as the "immediate surroundings of the events shown by the narrative discourse"[328]) to create a *story space*, defined as everything that is relevant to the events narrated in the letter.

The locations he names, are meaningful to their mutual recollections: "die Osteria", "Schwarzwälder"[329] and the district of Schwabing are all spaces visited frequently in the years after WWI and are therefore filled with memories of their friendship. We can conclude that

[327] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 16.4.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[328] Cf. Ryan, 'Space'.
[329] At the time, an upscale Bavarian restaurant in Munich's old town.

the text here relies on the knowledge of the addressees to create a *narrative world* in the process of reading.

The frequent mention of streets and restaurants in Munich as *spatial frames* forms a remarkable feature of the postwar letters written by Max Unold and the question therefore arises what function the creation of such story spaces and narrative worlds had. This letter was written in the spring of 1950 and the living space of the letter writer, formerly described as a space of destroyed buildings, is now narrated as a space of enjoyment. The narrative cited above contains only a single word that indicates a past less pleasant or that something had been overcome. When the letter writer informs his friends that he and his wife had participated in that year's carnival, he phrases such happening as "vom Fasching der wieder in vollem Glanz gefeiert wurde". The adverb "wieder" in this sentence is the sole reference to the consequences of WWII, and the downfall of Fascism in Germany. All other spaces are narrated without such references: the "Stammtische" are narrated as pleasant activities and the aforementioned Joseph Deutelmoser, the narratological representative of the space of the "Osteria", who, in 1947, needed support for the "Spruchkammerverfahren"[330], is now referred to as "der gute Deutelmoser". The "viele Neugründungen" in Schwabing are portrayed as a fact completely detached from the reason for such a reorganization of space in the heavily bombed district of Munich.

The narrating of spaces as a *story space* familiar to the addressees therefore has several functions. One lies in the simple nature of letter writing and its dialogic character. The description of spaces familiar to the correspondent integrates them into the narrative and provides them with information that is assumed to be of interest. The second function, which contributes more specifically to the questions posed by this analysis, is that the letter writer uses his narrator to create an atmosphere filled with memories of happier times. As I noted before, every location that is named represents their friendship in times when spaces were not yet the separating parameter but the uniting aspect. A re-telling of these spaces as places

[330] "der Deutelmoser bemühte mich vor ein paar Tagen & bat um ein Entlastungszeugnis für die Spruchkammer", writes Unold in December 1947 as discussed in Chapter II 'Cityscapes as spaces in the narratives of WWII'. Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

of leisure and entertainment reclaims Munich as a place of happiness, inspiration, leisure, and levity.

As shown, Max Unold thus breaks with the previously established narration of Munich (as a representative of Germany) as a space of hardship earlier than Reinhard Koester does. While the retrospective summary in Unold's immediate postwar letters still aligns with this portrayal, this approach comes to an end at the beginning of the 1950s, which is when Unold moved back to Munich and his letter writing no longer summarises the past but narrates his present, constituted by several important positions, "Stammtische" and the resumption of holidays in Italy.

Through the repeated narration of Munich as a pleasant space, achieved through an absolute exclusion of the events that occurred there after Levin had had to leave his homeland in 1933, the narrating persona here executes a manipulative manoeuvre, which is intended to distract and to persuade at the same time. The letter writer, Max Unold, as proven before, was dedicated to keeping silent on any involvement with the Third Reich's authorities, and his narrator supports such silencing through the narrating of spaces as observed above, first as spaces of (German) victimhood and, by the beginning of the 1950s, as spaces of leisure.

Unold and his wife were to make many attempts to convince their old friends to visit Germany again in the letters that followed 1950 and passages like the one above can be understood as one of the first of such attempts, strongly supported by the use of a deliberately created letter-writing persona.

This section, which has dealt with the narrating of space originating from the writers' living environment, built on the arguments made in the previous sections regarding the identification and function of a letter-writing persona, as well as the representational role that spaces take on. In addition, I have shown that, after WWII, the *narrating spaces* of the different letter writers became a recurring topic in the correspondence. The physical distance between the friends and particularly the different *settings* of their living environments, forms an omnipresent theme in their presentation of daily postwar life in Munich and Berlin. As the spaces of their homes, often extended to garden, city, country, become their differentiating

parameter, the analysis has shown that the narration of German spaces functions as a performance of a war victim's identity. This identity performance is achieved by a presentation of Germany as a space of hardship (as the years move on it gains the additional character of a space of mutual memories). In the letter writers' narration of war and the postwar period, the general dichotomy of identities of those who stayed in the home country and those who were forced to leave is narrated as paradoxically interchanged and the latter ones are depicted as the 'lucky ones' who live and have lived in a 'safer and calmer space'.

Synopsis of insights

This chapter consisted of two parts in which I examined the narration of spaces. In the first part, I examined the narrating of space in the narratives of WWII with the subdivision of spaces into shelters and cityscapes. The second part of the chapter focused on the living space as the origin of all spaces and the related dimensions of separation as an aspect of the correspondence.

Through the analyses in both parts I revealed that the letter writers made use of a narrating persona, which took on the narrative function in order to create a version of the events narrated that was in line with the letter writer's intentions. The identification of the narratological techniques used has brought to light not only the effect that these strategies might have on a reader but also how the necessity of narrative positioning forced them to confront and deal with their own agency and involvement and how this demanded an explicit narrative device for presenting the story. Given that it is inevitable that writers will employ tropes and narrative structures when giving an epistolary account of their past, I was able to map out and identify their narratological strategies and the functions of those strategies in the writers' narration of spaces.

In this chapter, I have brought to light how the narrating of spaces often takes on a metaphorical function. By this I mean that the narrated spaces are representative of time frames, emotions, fears, and desires. The most remarkable form of such a narratological

feature I have identified in the narrating of war through spaces (buildings, cityscapes etc.) and its strategic avoidance of narrating other aspects. The immediate mode serving this strategy (as opposed to a retrospective summary, which is frequently employed at other points in the correspondence) produces a narrator who presents a version of events that claims to be authentic whilst the author of the text evades any closer scrutiny of his own role. This tendency to avoid accounting for one's own role during the years narrated can also be found in the eagerness to emphasize an intellectual 'Innerlichkeit' (often achieved through the literal positioning of the 'I' *inside* a space) that denies any political involvement and thus moral accountability of the letter writer.

The first two sections of this chapter interpreted both letter writers' texts as a self-staging as victims when narrating the (experienced) spaces in Germany – the analysis in the last section furthered this and identified a metonymical narration of Germany. This metonymy (Germany equates with suffering) is created through the presentation of Germany as a space of hardship and sacrifice in opposition to Britain (or quite possibly other countries of exile) as a space characterised by safety and calm. Such comparative positioning of the writers' and the addressees' *narrating spaces* and thus the embodiment of the German side as the more sacrificial one, forms one function in the narration of German spaces shown in this section.

Another feature I have identified is the increasing political contextualisation of space coinciding with the longer temporal distance, which marks a crucial difference to the complete exclusion of politics in the previously analysed narration of wartime spaces in the immediate postwar letters. Whereas those letters written immediately after 1945 contained a narration of space characterized by an immediate mode that limited the narrator to the letter writers' horizon at the moment of the events told, those of the 1950s contain a more objective narration of events, in their commentary on the past as well as in their descriptions of the writer's present.

It is therefore not merely a question of what kind of space is narrated but *when*. This suggests that the phenotypical narration, as I call it, identified in the analyses of spaces in the narratives on WWII, is modified to a more politically embedded portrayal, once more time had passed between the events that formed the *story* and the moment of the *narrating act*.

Furthermore, the additional discovery of how Reinhard Koester excluded Anicuta Belau and her own experience of the years of National Socialist rule from his narrative has shown two things: first, that he narrates space as a whole country and thus describes the experiences of the past as if they had been limited to those who had chosen to stay in Germany during the years of Nazi rule, which results in him denying those who left Germany a similar experience and trauma; and secondly, the events most traumatizing to him have occurred not in the time frame he claims to narrate (from 1933 onwards) but beginning with the outbreak of WWII. He thus discloses his 'Germany-limited' assessment of the situation: for Koester (and most unpersecuted Germans) the true horrors began with the start of the war and especially with the bombings and the eventual defeat. Consequently, those who had left earlier (like Levin in 1933 or Belau in 1938) were paradoxically perceived as 'the lucky ones', for they had made it 'out' to countries that eventually ended the war victoriously. That such forced emigration nevertheless meant horrors of a different kind for the people affected is neglected in the epistolary texts of the writers who remained in Germany. As I will further show in this thesis, Max Unold leaves this topic untouched, and Reinhard Koester refers to it only in the very last letter before his death, when he breaks the silence that had characterized the friends' postwar correspondence for a decade.[331]

Having highlighted the narrative strategies used by Max Unold, my analysis in this chapter demonstrates that he breaks with the presentation of Germany as a space of suffering from the early 1950s on and transitions to a narration of German spaces as places of joy and a desirable life. I have thus shown that the evocation of mutual memories through comments on familiar *spatial frames* and *references* and the increasing eagerness to display the city of Munich as a place of leisure and carelessness consequently asks the (intended) reader to create their own *story world* with the aim of changing the previous image of Germany and persuading the distant friends to visit.

Such insights have proven the enlightening character of letter-based communication as objects of research. Letters are particularly interesting on the level of content for they portray

[331] I discuss this letter in Chapter IV.

‘real-life’ experiences alongside emotions, opinions, and anxieties. In addition to that and as I have shown in this chapter, they are, however, never spontaneous or completely emotional. They are always crafted into a narrative form, with all the functions, levels and devices that serve the writer’s intention.

Furthermore, I have shown that a narratological analysis of letter-based correspondence can reveal that, although such texts give precious insights into historical worlds and provide unique access to history, their content is always designed by the very personal perception of an experiencing individual, who, although eager to diligently craft the experiences into a narrative, always remains limited in their account. Nevertheless, their ways of creating that narrative and the results their attempts reveal, once identified by means of a close-reading approach, are of exceptional value. In the subsequent chapters, the examination of representations of the body and the process of ageing in their correspondence will further identify the narratological methods of Max Unold and Reinhard Koester.

Chapter III: Narrating (from) the body

Aim of the chapter

In this chapter I will analyse the letters of Max Unold and Reinhard Koester written to Ernst and Anicuta Levin with a focus on their portrayal of the body and its decay. Eroticism, as well as health and illness, medical treatment, and injuries are strongly connected with any mention of the body. Illness and disease are more frequently discussed with the increasing age of the letter writers.

The body is entangled with a person's identity, skills, and talents. With a close reading of the numerous portrayals of the body in the correspondence I examine, I will reveal more about the writers' use of language when writing about their perception of themselves and their bodies in daily life as well as during extraordinary events. Such events can be situations where the body is violated or falls ill and thus prevents the writer (or indeed other individuals that are written about) from maintaining their sense of identity. The linguistic techniques used to do justice to such events, ordinary or extraordinary, will be examined below.

This chapter will explore the narratological strategies and tone that Max Unold and Reinhard Koester create in their letters written after a long gap in correspondence and following WWII. Through the close-reading approach, it will furthermore explain the effect of such strategies. The analysis of the language choice and choice of narratological devices will take into account the influence of three parameters: biography (general, personal developments as simple as growing old, falling ill, or becoming a parent), cultural and political discourse, and the dynamics of the writer-addressee relationship.

As mentioned before, Max Unold and Reinhard Koester (as well as the Belau-Levins) serve as an interesting example regarding the epistolary output of their generation in Germany. Their friendship is fertile ground for research as it was interrupted frequently by the catastrophes

of the twentieth century – first by WWI and ultimately by Nazism, the Holocaust, and WWII, entailing persecution and flight across Europe.

This chapter will explore whether these earth-shattering events forced the writers to create a new narrative system and construct a new tone that would allow them to meet one other in the letter. I have already indicated in Chapter II that the letter-writers' perception of the world was sparsely affected by the the caesura caused by the historical events they witnessed.

My analysis of their techniques that they use to narrate the body – young and old, healthy, and ill, in love or estranged – will sharpen our understanding of them as human beings, thinkers and artists, and as lovers as well as friends. This chapter will bring to light that, throughout the decades, the writer Reinhard Koester modified his writing style from expressive to neutral and that Max Unold mostly uses a rational tone to emphasize his claim to be narrating facts rather than verbalizing emotional outbreaks. His clear and objective writing style, however, also intensifies after WWII – so that both writers' texts then resemble *neusachliche* narrating. In this chapter I will argue that this development originates from the writers' aim to narrate their own and German society's hardship, and that narrating bodily malaise serves as a distraction from unspoken elements. This avoidance of other topics can be detected throughout the correspondence and, on a whole, contributes to the impression of, not exactly guilt, but a sense of unease the letter writers evince. The term 'guilt', and especially German guilt regarding the involvement in Nazi crimes, has been defined more specifically by Mary Fulbrook. According to Fulbrook, it is important to distinguish between the subjective 'knowing' of being or 'feeling' guilty and the "external attribution of guilt to a person or wider group by relevant authorities".[332] She explains further that individuals in postwar Germany learnt how to remain distant to their actions by arguing that they had not become involved in Nazi crimes by personal choice.[333] I notice that the letter writers discussed here show precisely this perpetuated distance to cope with an inconvenient topic that resonates throughout their whole correspondence.

[332] Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism', p. 296.
[333] Cf. ibid.

The following section contains a brief digression to outline a basis for the analysis to come. It should be read as a classification of the letter writers' formative years which influenced their mentalities, and it is these mentalities that need to be considered when working with the textual content of the letters.

The formative years: a classification of sentiments

As described in Chapter I, the four friends met during the beginning of their careers at the turn of the century at universities in Munich. Their lifelong friendship takes branched paths, often tangled up in complex love triangles, disrupted by the three men's WWI service, temporarily estranged after the Levins' forced emigration during the Third Reich and eventually reunited through, at first cautious, correspondence after WWII between their new homes in Munich, Berlin, and Edinburgh.

All four of them share the same formative years, those pre-war years of the *Kaiserreich* and their letters of the time are often marked by a gradual discontent, often stated as common amongst the young of the time, the desire for new ways not only to express oneself in the arts, where certainly Unold and Koester were situated, but also to thoroughly *feel* oneself. The numbness and alienation in connection with urban life often complained about in those years are also what our letter-writers dwell on and they often seek to escape it by long stays abroad. As the pre-war-letters' analysis will show, the fin de siècle discourse of 'the nerves', on which much research has been undertaken, has left its mark on our letter writers. [334]

The topic of their complex love affairs and swapping of partners, or rather Anicuta Belau's swapping of them, makes up a large part of the correspondence of this time, along with both

[334] The following ground-breaking book and a preceding essay discuss this at length: Joachim Radkau, *Das Zeitalter der Nervosität: Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler* (Munich [u.a.]: Hanser, 1998); Joachim Radkau, 'Die wilhelminische Ära als nervöses Zeitalter, oder: Die Nerven als Netz zwischen Tempo- und Körpergeschichte', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft (Göttingen)*, 20.2 (1994), 211–241.

Unold and Koester's career aspirations and attempts to find their profession. These topics, which mark nothing less than life itself with its daily struggles for everyone, serve as a distraction from the restlessness and unease of these years.

These uneasy years mark an era in which the initial delight at the new, much longed-for German 'Nationalstaat' and its corresponding economic boom had ceased, only to be replaced by a tension between what was seen as excessive optimism, and a pessimism about the decadence of modernity. The resulting atmosphere was one characterised by a sense of both ennui and apocalypse.

Particularly in nationalist circles, the desire for a military conflict to solve the growing 'innenpolitische' tension in the 'Kaiserreich' became clear.[335] The 'äußere Krisis'[336] was favoured by many and was in some way seen as a tool to mend the inner crisis as Walter Flex, contemporary of our letter-writers, writes in a letter to a friend in 1912. [337]

When WWI broke out in the summer of 1914 it satisfied the longing of many who, following a topos already established in the nineteenth century, believed that war was necessary after long periods of peace to save society from "Verweichlichung und Kulturverfall".[338] War as catharsis was a popular idea also amongst the intellectuals who, like the nationalists, joined the euphoric excitement at Wilhelm II's declaration of war on 1 August 1914, a sentiment often referred to as the 'Augusterlebnis'.[339]

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[335] Cf. Modris Ekstein, *Tanz über Gräben: Die Geburt der Moderne und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990); Wolfgang J Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und politische Ordnung: Künstler, Schriftsteller und Intellektuelle in der deutschen Geschichte 1830 - 1933* (Frankfurt, 2002); Sven-Oliver Müller, *Die Nation als Waffe und Vorstellung: Nationalismus in Deutschland und Großbritannien im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

[336] As cited in: Lars Koch, *Der Erste Weltkrieg als Medium der Gegenmoderne: Zu den Werken von Walter Flex und Ernst Jünger* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), p. 106.

[337] Walter Flex (1887-1917), contemporary of Unold, Levin and Co., was a poet and writer. His short novel, *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten*, was published in 1916 and remains the most read war novel in Germany of those published during the war. Its text unites romantic idealism and 'Naturlyrik' with Expressionist onomatopoeia and homoerotic passages describing the comrades and their bodies. Flex was injured and killed at the Eastern front in 1917. The Nazis later praised his literature and established him as a significant figure in the commemoration and creation of the propagated war values of 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Kameradschaft' that were called on before and during WWI.

[338] Again, Walter Flex in the letter to his friend in 1912. As cited in: Koch., p. 107.

[339] Cf. Wolfgang J Mommsen, *Kultur und Krieg: die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: De Gruyter, 1996); Matthias Schöning, *Versprengte Gemeinschaft: Kriegsroman und intellektuelle Mobilmachung in Deutschland 1914 - 1933* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009); *Bereit*

Amongst those renowned intellectuals, who, only after a few months into the war, revoked their initial support of war as a political medium, were for example, Stefan Zweig and Thomas Mann. Mann, another contemporary of Unold, the Levins and Koester and, at the time, also an enthusiastic 'Münchner', was very sympathetic to the topos of war as a cathartic experience for society. In a manner typical for the fin de siècle atmosphere and its literature, he sees war as a possibility to end the "Stagnation und Fäulnis des kulturellen Lebens der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft".[340] He writes: "Wie hätte der Künstler, der Soldat im Künstler, nicht Gott loben sollen für den Zusammenbruch einer Welt, die er so satt, so überaus satt hatte. Krieg! Es war heilige Reinigung, Befreiung, was wir empfanden und eine ungeheure Hoffnung."[341] Mann mentions the artist and "the soldier within him" and thereby describes a feeling widespread amongst many German artists at the outbreak of the war. Millions of poems (not all written by already established artists but also by enthusiastic young men) praising war, flooded the newspapers in those few very first days of war in 1914[342] and formed the very first literary output triggered by WWI that entailed a huge production of war literature in Germany[343] but also in other European countries like Great Britain, France, and Italy.[344] The enthusiasm about the outbreak of the war amongst some artists and intellectuals

zum Krieg: Kriegsmentalität im wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890 - 1914, ed. by Jost Dülffer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

[340] As cited in: Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und politische Ordnung: Künstler, Schriftsteller und Intellektuelle in der deutschen Geschichte 1830 - 1933*, p. 197.

[341] As cited in: ibid., p. 204f.

[342] 'Kriegsliteratur', in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur: Begriffe und Definitionen* ed. by Dieter Burdorf, Christoph Fasbender, and Burkhard Moennighoff (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), p. 403.

[343] Researchers have identified two different waves of WWI war literature output in Germany. The first wave of publication of war literature can be framed from 1914-1919, whilst the war was still ongoing and shortly after its end. The already mentioned *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten* (1916) by Walter Flex belonged to those early texts that had little to no temporal distance to the events, so did Fritz von Unruh's *Opfergang* (1918) as well as the world-renowned and ambivalently discussed *In Stahlgewittern* by Ernst Jünger. The publication trajectory of war novels temporarily flattened during the stable years of the Weimar Republic (1923-1928) and the subject gained new popularity as the republic was heading for a new 'Krisenjahre' with Erich Maria Remaque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* (1928) as well as Arnold Zweig's *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa* (1927), *Soldat Suhren* (1927) by Georg von der Vring, Egon Erwin Kisch's *Schreib das auf, Kisch* (1929) and Ludwig Renn's *Krieg* (1928).

[344] "So finden wir, im Grundsatz in allen kriegführenden Ländern Europas, eine breite Phalanx von Schriftstellern (…) , die den Krieg als Mittel zur Revitalisierung der Kultur begrüßen, nicht selten untermischt mit nationalen und religiösen Emotionen (…) besonders ausgeprägt und bis in die stilistische Struktur des eigenen literarischen oder poetischen Werkes hinein findet sich die Bejahung des Krieges, als einer Konstellation der Gewalt und des Außeralltäglichem im Vitalismus, in Deutschland exemplarisch bei August Stramm, in Frankreich mit souveräner Meisterschaft bei Apollinaire, und in Italien bei Gabriele D'Annunzio." Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und politische Ordnung: Künstler, Schriftsteller und Intellektuelle in der deutschen Geschichte 1830 - 1933*, p. 205.

is explained by most historians as "a sense of relief"[345] as the years of insecurities (personal and political ones) came to an end with the "visible threat"[346] that the war meant to the nation as a whole. Joachim Radkau, who contributed eminently to the field of the interbellum 'Nervendiskurs' with his book *Das Zeitalter der Nervosität*,[347] amongst others, names these reasons for the initial German 'Kriegsbegeisterung'. The findings he presents in his book on the body-related sentiments in Germany are confirmed with the analysis of the following chapter.

I have undertaken this brief attempt to trace the dynamics of the first decade of the twentieth century as it marks the years our letter writers met, in their twenties, and their first encounter with intellectual thinking, ideas and hopes. In the following textual analysis, I will survey early letters written to Anicuta Belau during the years of 1911 and 1912. These letters provide an insight into the portrayal of the (young) body closely linked to the letter writers' romantic relationship and the thus the connected emotions including jealousy, desire, and vulnerability. The analysis then continues with the revived correspondence after the years of the Third Reich and WWII. The second part of this chapter provides an analysis of the representations of the body, mostly the sick or injured body, in the letters written to Belau and Levin. The letters examined in this section date from 1950 to 1961.

The reason for the big gap in years lies in the natural gap in the collection from 1937 to 1950 and the comparatively small number of letters exchanged between the three figures in the years from 1918 leading up to Belau's emigration in 1938.[348]

[345] Dick van Lente, 'Review of Radkau, Joachim. Das Zeitalter der Nervosität: Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler', *International Review of Social History*, 45.3 (2000), 487–512, p. 494.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Radkau, *Das Zeitalter der Nervosität: Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler*.
[348] There are a few letters sent to Belau by Unold and Koester during their stationing in WWI but these are neglected in this chapter to avoid confusion due to a wild mix of genres – war letters are a whole genre of their own: the epistolary category of 'Feldpost' has a different context, different conditions of writing, the letter written in the war is determined by the war, the arrival of the letter bears the meaning of the writing soldier still being alive, the gender balance is different to the one of a regular letter during peaceful times as it is often of a 'male soldier narrates-female addressee listens' type, just to name a few characteristic differences.

The body – fin de siècle portrayals

This first section of the chapter contains very early letters written to Anicuta Belau by her two lovers, Max Unold and Reinhard Koester. The discussion of these letters lays the groundwork for the analysis of the postwar correspondence in the final sections of this chapter. A classification of the representation of the body in the early letters contributes to a holistic comprehension of the continuous dynamic in the letter writers' relationship.

The body is a widely discussed and researched topic in cultural and scholarly discourse.[349] During Koester's and Unold's years of early adulthood, the idea of the absolute body emerged as a response to the overwhelming processes of modernity, one's engagement with it as a reaction to civilization's rigidity are often praised in late nineteenth century literature and poetry as well as in the Nationalist or Expressionist war poetry of the twentieth century.

In the spring of 1911, shortly after Anicuta Belau and Reinhard Koester met in Munich, Koester travelled to France. Koester and Belau had been lovers since 1910, with Anicuta insisting on her independence and freedom to see other men besides him. Koester, who was twenty-six years old, went to Paris to seek inspiration. In his letters, he describes walks through Paris and is enthusiastic about having seen Edouard Manet's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, reports back to Anicuta about his progress with speaking and understanding French, but most of all he writes about the love and desire he feels for her. Those early Parisian letters are almost all characterized by swift alternations between cheerful descriptions of a possible visit Belau might pay him and passages where he laments his jealousy and heartache. On 11 May 1911 he writes:

> Schreib mir doch ob Du bald kommen kannst, es ist so schön hier und zu zweien kann man alles doppelt geniessen. (…) Jetzt ist die schönste Zeit, nicht kalt nicht heiß. Hier wird dein Teint sicher so schön, daß ich furchtbar lieb zu dir sein muss, damit Du mir nicht davonläufst. Aber schreib mir doch, ob ich mich

[349] A comprehensive overview of the discourse and cultural history of the body is provided by Philipp Sarasin in: Philipp Sarasin, *Reizbare Maschinen: Eine Geschichte des Körpers: 1765-1914* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001); Philipp Sarasin, 'Mapping the Body: Körpergeschichte zwischen Konstruktivismus, Politik und Erfahrung', *Historische Anthropologie*, 7.3 (1999), 437–451; Philipp Sarasin, 'Subjekte, Diskurse, Körper: Überlegungen zu einer diskursanalytischen Kulturgeschichte', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft. Sonderheft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 131–164.

> freuen kann, oder ob ich allein bleibe, die Ungewissheit ist schrecklich. Nun warst du sicher viel bei Unold, ich kann mir das gar nicht ausdenken. Ich soll dich nicht quälen -? meinst du nun, ich quäle mich ja auch, aber es soll das letzte Mal gewesen sein, dass ich davon schreibe. (…) [350]

Joy and suffering are portrayed in quick succession, which represents Koester's state of mind and altering emotions. The body – never precisely mentioned in this letter, but as an object of his desire the backdrop to these lines – is the female body, and more specifically, Anicuta Belau's. Her body represents her presence, which is what he longs for the most. Many of his descriptions are linked to it, for example, when referring to the Parisian weather that would improve her complexion. Nevertheless, Koester does not simply desire her presence for her beauty as indicated in his mention of everything being more enjoyable "zu zweien". This 'enjoying of' includes all senses but also her intellectual abilities, for Koester knows Belau would be inspired by Paris, its art and fashion, in a similar way to him.

His rapid interchange between positive and negative emotions mirrors the symptoms of those who were described as neurasthenics around the turn of the century. As Joachim Radkau describes in an essay published only a few years before his significant book, neurasthenia was understood to contain elements of melancholia, hypochondria, and hysteria but, most relatable to our letter writer of those 'nervous years' are the characteristic "Hin und Her von Niedergeschlagenheit und Hoffnung, von Dekadenzangst und Begehrlichkeit". [351] Reinhard Koester therefore creates the image of a neurasthenic with the recurring expressive articulation of his many and often counteracting sensitivities. The letter was written in 1911 and it is precisely those last years leading up to WWI that Radkau makes out to be the years when neurasthenia cases reached a significant high.[352] He proves this with numerous patients' records of the 'Nervenheilanstalten', but Reinhard Koester did not have to visit one of these establishments himself to know about the phenomenon –neurasthenia as 'the

[350] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 11.5.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 14 1/4.
[351] Cf. Radkau, 'Die wilhelminische Ära als nervöses Zeitalter, oder: Die Nerven als Netz zwischen Tempo- und Körpergeschichte', p. 214.
[352] Ibid.

nervous condition' had long been debated within the discourse of the time, and as a cultural 'event' it had found its way into the fin de siècle literature.[353]

The physical component becomes apparent again in Koester's next letter only three days later when he begs Belau to come visit and writes: "Komm rasch, damit mir anders wird!"[354] By choosing the term "anders werden", Koester offers multiple readings of this. One could interpret it simply as "anders" as in "different", in his case "better" – for being with Belau means an improvement to the lonely young man. It could, however, also point to a physical state of malaise and thus allow the alternative interpretation "übel", "schwindelig" and indeed the possible adjunct of "(schwindelig) vor Lust". This would prove once more how the young Reinhard Koester links his speech to a physical state, this time a positive one, for most of the body's sensations, especially when associated with the company of his lover, are pleasant. In the same letter responding to Belau's answer, he elaborates as follows:

> Die papiernen Küsse schmecken mir gar nicht. Mein berühmtes Grübchen fängt an zu verschwinden, weil es gar nicht mehr geküsst wird. Dann komm! Immer Dein Reiner[355]

With the personification "papierne Küsse", Koester creates a self-referentiality within his letter writing. By including a letter's material in his writing, he emphasizes the limitedness of their relationship, he again draws attention to the lack of physical contact. With the humorous remark that his dimples are going to vanish as they are not kissed any more, he furthers his desire of physical contact. As the narrator of the text, he creates his own figure (who is about to lose his dimples) as a technique to evoke Belau's desire to be near him again. With the comparably passionate exclamation "Dann komm!", he lets this narrating persona speak and, as letter writer, makes another attempt to convince Belau to visit him in France.

In his Parisian letters, Koester constantly emphasizes their dialogical character. Of course, all letters are dialogical, but the emphasis on this feature can vary. Some letters can resemble

[353] Thinking about the increasingly popular genre of 'Sanatoriumsroman' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as decadent literature emphasizing an interplay of joie de vivre and weariness of life.
[354] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 14.5.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 14 1/4.
[355] Ibid.

the very opposite, a monologue, but in this example the letter writer engages the addressee in his text. With his lament about Belau's elusiveness, he addresses her directly in an almost defiant tone. He takes up the role of a sulky child and thus tries to manipulate Belau to visit him, or to at least reply.

He often completes such a strategy by a swift alteration to joyful descriptions of possible time spent together, by no means less manipulative, but through a different, more cheerful tone:

> Komm und lass uns gemeinsam fröhlich sein! Die Uhr ist abgestellt, wenn Du kommst, es gibt keine Zeit mehr: kurz oder lang. Komm, mein Liebling, ich warte auf Dich. Es küsst Dich Dein Reinhard.[356]

Koester knows he needs to persuade his lover to visit him. Her letters to him arrive less frequently than do his in Munich, and, according to his letters in response they must have contained little assurances of a visit to Paris. Often Belau does not answer one or several of Koester's letters at all until he writes to her again. If she has not answered within three to four days Koester sends her another letter to elaborate on his increasingly negative sentiments.

This includes reports about the sensations and emotions that torture him. In contrast to the pain, he experiences many decades later in Berlin, the squalor he writes about from Paris in 1911 is emotional pain triggered by jealousy. He shares in detail with the reader how he wakes up at night, tormented by thoughts about his lover and the other man, who, as we know, is Max Unold. He describes very vividly where in his body he feels this pain and how:

> Manchmal in der Nacht, wenn ich aufwache, oder am Morgen denke ich daran, dass Du nun bei dem anderen bist und ihm allerlei tust, wie du mir getan hast. Dann packt mich ein Gedanke, der langsam heraufsteigt und mir die Kehle zudrücken will. Ich kann es nicht so begreifen, wie du es willst. Und nicht einmal dein Bild soll ich auf dem Schreibtisch stehen haben- gut, ich tue es also weg. (…)[357]

[356] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 11.5.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 14 1/4.
[357] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 18.5.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 14 1/4.

In this passage Koester's language uses strong visual elements, evoking physical sensations, both pleasant and unpleasant but of great intensity, which is reflected in his writing. All is perceived by the figure's body, origin of his existence and emotions ("Gedanke…langsam heraufsteigt"), the thought is not *thought* with the brain as it does not originate from the I's head, but felt from a lower point in his body, the stomach, and it is narrated as rising higher towards the throat.

The trigger for the emotions is the thought which he perceives more physically than intellectually, of Belau with Unold in Munich. The choice of language here indicates Belau's predominance in the matter and Koester's own powerlessness. She is the subject that *does*, as he suggests when saying "und ihm allerlei *tust*, wie du mir getan hast" and he extends the statement beyond the intimate act, when he mentions, at the end of this paragraph, that, as she requests, he will remove her photograph from his desk. Her photograph of course, is a photograph of *her* body and by requesting it to be removed from *his* desk, she destroys all his hopes for a commitment that would make them 'belong' to each other, or for her body to 'belong' to him. This is again stated in a sentence that emphasizes the dialogical character of epistolary texts as he paraphrases her wish and subsequently adds his answer "gut- ich tue es also weg."

In his letter Koester goes on to speak about his body's reaction to the very thought of her being intimate with Unold. Like Belau before, now the thought becomes the acting subject, personified as it grasps him ("packt mich ein Gedanke") and threatens to suffocate him ("mir die Kehle zudrücken will"). By using the German word 'Kehle' he emphasizes the severity of his state. Unlike the English translation of 'throat', the word 'Kehle' carries a different meaning than for example 'Hals', as its chain of associations is quite morbid and often used in a life-threatening context, as in "jemandem die Kehle durchschneiden" or "jemandem die Kehle zudrücken", both actions ending in the death of the object.

With this style of writing the narrator therefore underlines the horrors he is facing. He describes his emotional pain with physical symptoms, as if describing a state of health or unhealthiness. His reaction, when in this state, is also a physical one, or at least an imagined physical one, when he adds:

> Manchmal ist mir, als müsste ich fortlaufen- immer weiter. Wie es in einer Novelle Eulenburgs[358] heisst: »—und er lief weiter in die Dunkelheit, immer weiter, bis ihm das Herz zersprang. « Aber meins soll nicht zerspringen, eher rette ich es durch ein grausames Auflachen- spöttisch und grell wie das eines Wahnsinnigen (…) [359]

Like the figure in the novella he is citing, he thinks of running and unlike the fictional character he does not want his heart to shatter but imagines laughing out scornfully to save it from such violence. By referring to a novella by Eulenburg, the letter writer emphasizes the fragile emotional state he is in. Eulenburg's novella, as one can draw from the cited passage, narrates the sensitivities of a very emotionally affected protagonist but the mention of Karl zu Eulenburg as the author himself makes an additional statement. Eulenburg was, at the time, one of the most prominent names in the *Kaiserreich*. Karl zu Eulenburg's father, Philipp zu Eulenburg, who had already fallen from grace due to the 'Eulenburg- Affair'[360] at the time of Koester's letter, was a prominent figure of the 'Nervendiskurs' of the fin de siècle – he understood himself to be 'Neurastheniker' and represented the 'soft' part amongst Kaiser Wilhelm II's cabinet (Radkau even goes so far as to describe 'die Nerven' as one of Eulenburg's favourite topics).[361] The contemporary reader of the letter will have known about these facts to do with Eulenburg at the peak of the scandal in 1911 and it is to be assumed that Koester drew this image of himself as the neurasthenic deliberately.

I argue that this works as a substantiation of the writer's peformance of the identity of a driven and restless individual. As Radkau states, the nervous condition itself was often

[358] Refers to Karl zu Eulenburg (1885- 1975), writer and contemporary of the letter writers. Like Koester he had begun to study law in Munich at the turn of the century – the possibility of the two men knowing each other is therefore not to be ruled out. Karl zu Eulenburg was the youngest son of Prussian diplomat Philipp zu Eulenburg (1847-1921) and he had left his home after his father's fall from grace with the 'Eulenburg affair' in 1906.

[359] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 18.5.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 14 1/4.

[360] Eulenburg was among those of Kaiser Wilhelm II's cabinet who had been accused of homosexual conduct entailing a series of courts-martial and civil trials. See: Norman Domeier, *Der Eulenburg-Skandal: Eine politische Kulturgeschichte des Kaiserreichs* (Frankfurt: Campus-Verlag, 2010).

[361] "Die 'Nerven' sind in Selbstzeugnissen der wilhelminischen Führung ein beliebtes Motiv; sie waren geradezu ein Lieblingsthema Philipp Eulenburgs, des engsten und einflussreichsten Freundes Wilhelms II., der mit seinem Aufstieg und Fall wie kein anderer das Schicksal der 'weichen' Seite des Wilhelminismus verkörpert. 'Phili', der dem Kaiser versicherte, aus eigener Erfahrung den 'entsetzlichen Zustand der Nervenkrise' zu kennen, gab ihm immer wieder zu verstehen, dass er auch bei ihm die bedenklichen Anzeichen einer fortschreitenden Nervenzerrüttung feststellen müsse. 'Der arme Kaiser macht die ganze Welt nervös', notierte er 1894, wobei er voraussetzte, daß die Nervosität ein ansteckendes Leiden sei.": Radkau, 'Die wilhelminische Ära als nervöses Zeitalter, oder: Die Nerven als Netz zwischen Tempo- und Körpergeschichte', p. 239.

nourished by a toxic interplay of "Belastungen und Wünschen",[362] the increase of a hectic back and forth in connection with sensual aspects and a never-ending "Reizsuche"[363] – all very much picked up by Koester's narrating persona.

These observations suggest that Koester used epistolary communication to deliberately form an image of his identity as well once again manifesting his own anchoring in the discourse of his time – his formative years of the *Kaiserreich*, which, as proven here, influenced his artistic and linguistic socialization greatly. The letter writer draws on the topos of neurasthenia to perform his identity in the doubtless interesting colours of a 'frenetic traveller', and thus fulfils the characteristic image of a neurasthenic as "an energetic person, whose nervous breakdown and 'lack of energy' was simply the dark side, or the consequence, of their desire to live life to the full".[364] The same letter continues with the image of his heart as he ends the passage with the following lines:

> Und doch freue ich mich auf dein Kommen und will die kleinen Katzenkrallen küssen, die in der wildesten Wollust ganz heimlich mein Herz zereissen. Das ist die wildeste Wollust, die sich selbst zerfleischt. Ich weiss, du lächelst nun nur begreifst das alles recht wenig- (…) [365]

Interestingly, these passages now fulfil some aspects of the dictum of Expressionist literature, as he describes the feelings he experiences, when confronted with a certain situation or a certain thought. A striking emphasis lies on what is *felt*, fitted with hyperbole and a merging of opposing emotions. It is easy to imagine these lines as an unrhymed poem, perhaps as an impassioned and, in its woe, energetic lament. Koester now merges into one sentence what he had kept separated before: lust and pain. He imagines kissing her fingers and when calling them "kleine Katzenkrallen" which 'secretly tear open his heart' and not his skin, he not only evokes the very vivid image of the actual organ ("mein Herz") but also, again, attributes her to be the active and, in fact, harming subject in their relationship. His emotions are now described as originating from his heart.

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[362] Ibid., p. 232.
[363] Radkau, 'Die wilhelminische Ära als nervöses Zeitalter, oder: Die Nerven als Netz zwischen Tempo- und Körpergeschichte', p. 232.
[364] van Lente, p. 493.
[365] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 18.5.1911, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 14 1/4.

As proven above, Koester made use of a remarkably expressive language in his very early letters to Belau. The emotions he experiences during their separation are narrated from the vantage point of his body; it is his body that serves as the source of all that is narrated in his letters. This is in line with a lack of intellect or rationality in the tone created, it is rather dominated by dramatic and often exaggerating tropes and images mirroring his emotional agony.

I understand Koester to have been experimenting with such writing styles. He attempted to resemble Expressionist writing, which was blossoming at the time and represented in the literary work he was producing at the time of writing these letters. I argue additionally that this exact style serves his aspiration to manipulate Belau, in other words it supports his 'communicative goal'[366] of winning Belau's attention and love. The identification of Koester's use of neurasthenic elements developed above furthermore shows how not only the literary discourse of the time but also topoi drawn from other fields such as medicine and psychology strongly influenced his writing.

As I will show in this thesis, the expressive language to describe pain and squalor transforms into more blunt and rational storytelling of such events in Koester's later days. This development has its cause in the shift from young to old as well as the shift in the relationship between writer and addressee. However, it might also be connected to a professional shift as a writer – a shift towards a more rational writing style in line with the changes in literary styles at the beginning of the 1920s.[367] I address this under the section on post-1945 bodies, later in this chapter.

The early letters discussed above are a representation of the peak in passion in Koester's and Belau's relationship. She eventually does visit him in Paris for a few weeks in July 1911 and writes back to her mother how wonderful the fashion is and that she is noticed, even in Paris

[366] Cf. Els Andringa, 'Poetics of Emotion in Times of Agony: Letters from Exile, 1933–1940', *Poetics Today*, 32.1 (2011), 129–169.

[367] With the peak of Expressionist writing just after WWI, a new style of writing emerges during the years of the Weimar Republic. The *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement counteracts the over-emotional Expressionism with a new objective style and the aspiration to offer a precise account of reality. More features of *Neue Sachlichkeit* are discussed at a later point in this chapter.

("(…) sogar in Paris falle ich auf!").[368] After this visit, Belau returns to Germany only to become elusive as ever as a correspondent, but Koester keeps their letter writing alive.

Belau maintains the correspondence with Reinhard Koester but also with Max Unold, who also travels to France frequently in the years between 1911 and 1914. Max Unold describes a similar dilemma to Koester, when he is away from Munich and knows that he is not the only man writing to Belau, when he writes in May 1912:

> Meine liebe Anicuta,
> verzeih dass ich nicht früher geschrieben habe- aber was sollte ich schreiben? Einerseits wurmte mich's innerlich, dass s [sic] jetzt auch Koester können sollte und mit dir feiern, andererseits weiß ich aber, dass ich dir nicht helfen kann, wenn ich s [sic] so sagen täte. (…) [369]

Unold employs a different writing style to Koester when expressing his jealousy. He appears to remain clear-headed and, in a stark contrast to his rival's expressive language, he is simply stating the facts that lead to him feeling uneasy. This rational and neutral language as opposed to Koester's expressive descriptions of his body's agony tells us more about Unold's style as a writer and man.

In 1912 he has already turned towards a style that favours factual reporting over excessive emotional narration. All literary genre categorization aside, this letter also contains many of the characteristics that letters commonly show: it is reciprocal, her prior letter triggered this one and he refers to his late response in the first sentence, and it is purposeful. The neutral tone serves the purpose of drawing a certain image of its author, performing a certain identity. Unold follows a completely different strategy to Koester although his communicative goal is the same: to win over Belau. His writing clearly attempts to appear unaffected and independent – by simply saying 'how things are'.

Unold tries to avoid a tone that would give away his hurt and almost completely leaves aside his body as a receiver of such pain. Where Koester draws a lot of attention to staging his body as the aching and suffocating object, which Belau is torturing, Unold draws away from such

[368] Anicuta Belau to Laura Belau, July 1911, LHSA, EL Collection Box, 12 1/6.
[369] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau, 1912, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 12 1/6.

images. The farthest he goes is to admit that her actions bother him “innerlich” and thus he acknowledges the emotional degree of the matter and its connection to a physical reaction. His priority lies, however, in remaining rational. When he explains his late response with the almost provocative question “aber was sollte ich schreiben” he risks a sulky tone but also emphasizes his self-respect – if she is with Koester, he sees no reason in writing to her.

His strategy to resist subjection may not have worked completely, as he continues to write to her as a lover who hopes for her commitment. But for Belau, the intended reader, it quite possibly meant a welcome change to her other admirer’s constant lamentations.

Overall, Belau seems to have been unimpressed by the two men’s jealousy and their continuous struggle. According to the letters in the EL Collection, Belau maintains relationships with both until shortly before she begins a romantic relationship with Ernst Levin (c. 1915) and marries him in 1917.

This brief comparison of the two letter writers as young men serves as a first interpretation of their personalities and the dynamic of their friendship with Belau.

My preceding analysis, based on their linguistic strategies, demonstrated the different approaches of the two letter writers. Whilst Koester narrates his emotional struggles as a physical experience, for which the body functions as primary receiver, Unold avoids including the physical aspect of his rejection in his narration. Koester takes on the submissive role in the relationship with Belau whereas as Unold attempts to remain clear-headed and thus refuses to accept any hierarchical structure.

I have furthermore shown how Unold opposes his rivals’ expressive portrayals, as his language remains neutral and rational, already showing the most crucial aspects of the tone of his 1950s letters, which will be examined in the main section of this chapter. Koester’s letters of the same era show a similar distanced tone, leaving his unrestrained, expressive narration to the era of the last years of the Kaiserreich.

By giving these early letters a close reading, I have additionally confirmed my thesis of a narrating persona who takes on the identity-performing narration. As I have shown, Koester’s

narration borrows elements from Expressionist literature and, in so doing, includes elements discussed in the contemporary discourse on neurasthenia in the performance of his identity.

Post-1945 bodies: Irony as strategic tool

The following section examines Reinhard Koester's letters from the years after 1945. In Chapter II, I examined the letters of this time frame, from the first letters after the long gap in correspondence to the last ones before his death, and in the following section I explore the linguistic representation of the body in this same set of letters.

After the prior investigation of both men's earlier letters, this upcoming analysis not only reveals a new narrating of the body against the backdrop of a different era, but a narrating *from* an older body – after all, the gap in correspondence has made sixty-year-old men out of Koester and Unold, which demands a different approach to the topic.

Thus, in the following sections, I illustrate the transition from young to old and healthy to ill on the level of biographical influence on the text, from lovers to (estranged) friends on that of the writer-addressee relationship and from pre-war *Kaiserreich* to postwar *Bundesrepublik* on the level of political discourse.

As mentioned in Chapter I, Belau had visited Koester and his wife Ellen in their flat in Berlin-Wilmersdorf in March 1937 before her emigration to Edinburgh several months later. After she left Germany, the couple did not hear of her again until she sent them a postcard fourteen years later.[370] It is this postcard that Koester refers to in his letter in response:

> Ich war gerade allein zu Haus, als ich Deine Karte durch den Briefschlitz plumpsen hörte, und wankte mühsam die paar Schritte hinaus mit meinen bandagierten gelähmten Füßen und hielt mich mit der halb gelähmten rechten Hand fest, um

[370] Koester sums up these years as follows: "Aber was für Jahre sind seitdem vergangen! Die scheußlichen Nazi-Jahre, die mich tief in Not brachten und oft vor innerer Wut, die sich nicht entladen konnte, fast zum Platzen brachten- die furchtbaren Kriegsjahre und die trostlose Nachkriegs-Hungerzeit." Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

> die Karte mit den noch beweglichen drei Fingern der linken aufheben zu können- und dann lachte ich. Damit weißt du nun auch schon um mein elendes Krüppeldasein: im vorigen Sommer habe ich eine schwere Nervenentzündung (Polyneuritis) bekommen, habe über sechs Monate als Sozialfürsorgepatient im Kranken(zucht)haus gelegen und seit über einem Jahr keine Minute gehabt, in der ich ohne Schmerzen war. Im Krankenhaus hat man mich von oben bis unten durchleuchtet, geröngt, hat mir Blut abgezapft und Nervensaft aus dem Rückenmark, um zu der Feststellung zu gelangen, daß ich vollkommen gesund sei. Das ärgerte die Ärzte sehr. Daß wahrscheinlich eine nicht ausgeheilte infektiöse Gelbsucht, die die Leber angegriffen hatte, an allem schuld sei, entdeckte man erst später.[371]

With the Kaiserreich letters and their dramatic expressiveness in mind, I would like to draw attention to the letter writer's plain and descriptive tone in this passage from 1950. This passage contains a comprehensive and naturalistic portrayal of his physical health. Belau and Koester's relationship began as a physical one and by examining the early letters to Belau I demonstrated that the body was primarily narrated as the root of desire and emotional pain and heartache.

This letter from 1950 now tells a different story of the body. Koester is now sixty-five years old; his body is weakened and suffering from chronic paralysis and pain. This physical state is very different to the one he described in his early letters but the way in which he perceives and portrays situations has nevertheless remained similar. His focus remains on himself, the basis of his former letters was his longing and passion for Belau, and now, in his daily life of the 1950s, it is his frailty.

A continuity in Koester's choosing of 'a story to be narrated' in his letters, can therefore be identified as his own sensitivities. His style, however, has developed into a much more objective reporting of facts, it is now a *sachliche* description of the status quo.

Koester begins the letter with isochronous narration (the story told takes about the same time as the time it takes to tell the story) as he describes precisely where he was when Belau's postcard arrived and how he walked to the postcard and picked it up. By starting with the act of picking up the postcard he allows a smooth insertion of his illness directly at the beginning

[371] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

of his letter. He describes how he limped towards the letter box and tried to grasp the postcard with his paralyzed fingers. The description of his physique follows the postulate of *neusachlicher* literature, Koester provides a precise description of what one would *see*, when observing him walking to his letter box. He focuses on the state of what *is* instead of what he *feels* when he mentions exactly how many fingers are paralyzed and how many are not (" (…) um die Karte mit den noch beweglichen drei Fingern der linken aufheben zu können") and thus creates a tone which counteracts his past, very expressive account of his own emotionality.

I argue that I have identified elements of the literary movement subsumed under the term *Neue Sachlichkeit* in Koester's and Unold's writing. It is important to mention that, when I use the terms *Neue Sachlichkeit* in connection with their writing, I refer to the literary style and aesthetical concept that dominated the decade from 1920 on. The *Neue Sachlichkeit* as a general cultural attitude can be seen as "die Modernebewegung, die die nachhaltigsten Spuren in der Literatur und Ästhetik des 20. Jahrhunderts hinterlassen hat" as Sabina Becker states in her comprehensive book on *neusachliche* literature. [372]

In this book Becker presents an extensive study on the literary *Neue Sachlichkeit* with the aim to define terms that can grasp the qualities of these texts. While other scholars had previously concerned themselves with *Neue Sachlichkeit* primarily as a cultural attitude and phenomenon of the interbellum period, like Helmut Lethen, whom I will refer to in more detail at a later point in this chapter, or with *neusachliche* art, its representation in literature had often been neglected or dismissed as a 'failed' concept of the 'unfortunate' Weimar Republic.[373] Similar to how the comparative analysis of Reinhard Koester's pre-WWI letters with those of the 1940s and 1950s shows that the letter writer developed a more rational tone, the literature of *Neue Sachlichkeit* sought to counteract the over-emotional Expressionism with a new objective and neutral style. Becker explores whether *Neue Sachlichkeit* was primarily a theory, a movement, or an aesthetic agenda and concludes it is

[372] The *Neue Sachlichkeit* as a literary movement and programmatic had long been neglected by research for studies on *Neue Sachlichkeit* as an art movement or a cultural attitude of the years of the Weimar Republic. Its literary aesthetic, however, also deserves exclusive attention as proven by Sabina Becker. Sabina Becker, *Neue Sachlichkeit: Die Ästhetik der neusachlichen Literatur*, vol. 1 *(1920 - 1933)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000), p. 56.
[373] For a detailed overview of such texts see Sabina Becker, *Neue Sachlichkeit*, pp. 14-16.

best described as an aesthetic concept that dominated the literature of the 1920s up until the caesura of 1933.[374] Its *Sachlichkeit*, which, I argue, appears in the letters discussed in this thesis, is *sachlich* in the sense that it aims to be loyal to the subject (*Gegenstand*) it describes; it aims to provide a precise account of reality. This strict concept of realism (*Realismuskonzept*) further includes the demand of pragmatism and aesthetic guidelines such as "Objektivität, Neutralität, Klarheit, Einfachheit und Nüchternheit".[375] As the analyses of this and the following chapter will show, all these demands are represented in the tone of the examined postwar correspondence.[376] Both writers show a striking objective and neutral unaffectedness when describing (often distressing) events. This is especially interesting as it does not weaken their performance of a victim identity but emphasizes it. The documentary quality of the texts with their simple (*einfach*, *klar*) stating of facts underlines the aim of the texts to appear as an authentic and truthful portrayal of reality.[377]

Another crucial characteristic of *neusachliche* literature is a "Präferenz für eine beobachtende, auf introspektive Beschreibungen verzichtende Schreibweise" – a postulate that applies to almost all examined letters and especially to those cited in this section in which Koester elaborates on his illness and medical treatment.[378]

Reinhard Koester's texts on illness do not only show this exclusion of any introspective, but they also feature elements of Naturalism, a movement authors of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* built upon, in the way that nature, as 'nature of things' also responsible for his sickness, is acknowledged as the overpowering force. The description of his paralyzed fingers follows the

[374] Cf. ibid., p. 51.
[375] *Neusachliche* literature employs techniques such as "Dokumentarismus, Montage, Berichtstil, Reportage" Becker, *Neue Sachlichkeit*, p. 39.
[376] A look at the second volume of Becker's work on *Neue Sachlichkeit* gives more insights into the demands and concepts of what is considered to be *neusachliches Schreiben*. Its table of contents lists the primary sources under the following headers which, seen together, provide a conclusive overview of the features of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in literature: "Sachlichkeit, Antiexpressionismus, Naturalismus, Präzisionsästhetik/Klarheit/Nüchternheit, Realitätsbezug, Neutralität, Tatsachenpoetik, Antipsychologismus, Reportagestil/Publizistik, Bericht, Gebrauchwert, Dokumentarismus, Aktualität, Antiindividualismus/ Entsubjektivierung, Entsentimentalisierung, Entromantisierung." Cf. Sabina Becker, *Neue Sachlichkeit. Quellen und Dokumente*, vol 2 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000).
[377] Both the 'dokumentarische Schreibweise' and a claim for authenticity are features of *neusachliche* literature. Cf. ibid., p. 21.
[378] Ibid., p. 23.

paradigm of "einer von der Wissenschaft determinierten Literatur",[379] one of the characteristics of Naturalism. Such "Szientifizierung"[380] of art, in this case his writing, can be found frequently in Koester's reports. It mirrors, alongside the methodological approach of observing and describing, the meticulously observed tendencies propagated by the early Naturalists of the late nineteenth century.[381] The aforementioned isochronous narration, which achieves a congruency of narrat*ed* and narrat*ing* time, is a feature so frequently used by Naturalist writers that they created their own term for it: "Sekundenstil".[382] This technique achieves not only a claim of authenticity but, and especially in a letter, intensifies the engagement of the reader with the story told.

The letter discussed above marks one of the first of many letters that Koester writes to Belau until his death in 1956 and it serves as an introduction of what he will be writing about. In line with his generally self-centred focus, he introduces the topic that will occupy him the most in the years to follow, his poor health. In the naturalistic manner identified above, he continues to describe his medical state and treatment as follows:

> Jetzt bin ich bei einem Homöopathen in Behandlung, einem Bekannten des seligen Gescher, an den ich durch Muschelkalk gekommen bin, die ja- wie du wohl weißt- später mit Gescher[383] verheiratet war und von ihm einen sehr netten Jungen von elf Jahren hat. Jetzt schlucke ich Tröpfchen und Pülverchen, die auch nicht mehr schaden als die 3-400 Spritzen aller Art, die man mir vorher hereingejagt hat. Immerhin habe ich mich allgemein etwas erholt und sehe blühender aus als je vorher, denn als ich ins Krankenhaus eingeliefert wurde, war ich nur noch ein Skelett von 94 Pfund, an dem die Schwestern nur mühsam eine Stelle entdecken konnten, wo unter der Lederhaut noch ein bisschen Fleisch war, worin sie ihre Spritzen bohren konnten. Nun aber genug von dem Elend. Die Ärzte sind sehr zufrieden mit meinem Zustand und hoffen, daß ich in zwei Jahren wieder laufen

[379] 'Naturalismus', in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur: Begriffe und Definitionen* ed. by Dieter Burdorf, Christoph Fasbender, and Burkhard Moennighoff (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2007), p. 532.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Naturalism aims to view the writer as analyst of man's doings – the writer's profession is therefore and, in the function of a scientist, to reveal the determinism of human behaviour. Such behaviour is seen as determined by heredity and milieu. Cf. Burdorf, Fasbender, and Moennighoff, 'Naturalismus', p. 532.
[382] Cf. Burdorf, Fasbender, and Moennighoff, 'Naturalismus', p. 532.
[383] Dr Julius Gescher, medical doctor and friend of Joachim Ringelnatz and second husband of Lona Pieper after Ringelnatz' death. According to Unold's description, Gescher died of scarlet fever while working in a military hospital in Berlin in 1944. Koester refers to Gescher because of a connection to a homeopathic doctor; Gescher himself published a book on homeopathic medicine as early as 1935: Julius Gescher, *Wege zur praktischen Homöopathie* (Stuttgart: Hippokrates-Verlag, 1935).

> kann. Vielleicht bin ich dann wieder so weit, daß ich wenigstens zu meinem Begräbnis keine Wagen brauche.[384]

Koester's body, here described as a "Skelett von 94 Pfund", is narrated as a medical object that needs continuous treatment. Again, I identify that Koester uses naturalistic language to emphasize such scientific measures here. The use of diminutives ("Tröpfchen", "Pülverchen") and hyperbole ("3-400 Spritzen"), however, ironizes the doctors' attempts at the same time.

Furthermore, the presentation of his sick body features graphic descriptions of wounds and medical procedures and thus also resembles the *Neue Sachlichkeit,* which built on many of the paradigms of Naturalism:. The subject of wounded and suffering bodies is often portrayed in the journalistic and monotonous storytelling of the anti-war literature of the late 1920s. Koester's display of his sick and medically treated body borrowed its tonality from those, often *neusachliche* novels,[385] which so many were published of, when WWI had been distant enough to become 'Romansujet' once more.[386]

After the hospital scene, Koester adds, quite dryly: "Das ärgerte die Ärzte sehr." This sentence very clearly serves as a distancing tool: the doctors' reported frustration is to be read as representative for Koester's own state of mind. He thus avoids narrating any introspective or

[384] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[385] Exemplary for such unaltered reports of injuries, violence and death are for example: Alexander M Frey, *Die Pflasterkästen: ein Feldsanitätsroman* (Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1929); Ludwig Renn, *Krieg* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1929); Edlef Köppen, *Heeresbericht* (Berlin: Horen-Verl., 1930).
[386] Research debates the reason for this second 'wave' of production for war literature. For a long time, German literary scholars were of the opinion that the worldwide success of the 1929 novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* by E.M. Remarque served as main trigger for many other literati to make their war experience the subject of their next novel but other research on war literature in Great Britain has made out the temporal distance and the psychological aspect of that to also be a reason for the delay in the production of WWI war novels. All authors of this generation were deeply traumatised by their experience of war. They had undergone problems reintegrating into civilian life and some of the writers amongst them used the process of bringing their trauma into a literary form as a therapeutic measure (both Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon expressed such). To accept not only their physical but also their psychological injuries from war, those men needed the temporal distance and some form of normality in the societies they lived in and therefore only started writing and publishing roughly ten years later, at the end of the 1920s. See: Randall Stevenson, *Literature and the Great War: 1914 - 1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); *Intimate Enemies: English and German Literary Reactions to the Great War 1914 - 1918*, ed. by Franz Karl Stanzel, 2nd edn (Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 1994).

emotionality regarding the matter of his undiagnosed sick body and introduces irony as a narratological strategy, one that is conspicuous throughout his writing in the years to come.

The irony is intensified in the last sentence of the passage cited above when the letter writer morbidly refers to his own funeral and his hope to be able to walk again when it comes to him being buried at the graveyard. The tones and tropes found in Koester's text are not necessarily a deliberate borrowing of literary genres but can be understood as a turn towards a new writing style. As already stated, this writing style resembles that of *Neue Sachlichkeit* which developed during the interbellum period when most novelists favored more cosmopolitan, daily life portrayals often characterized by neutrality over previously praised experimental forms, which had come to an end with the end of Expressionism.[387] As elaborated in Chapter I, Reinhard Koester's literary career reflects these developments: after his early Expressionist works in prose and drama,[388] he turns to entertaining the masses in the 1920s and beyond. The analysis of his 1950s letters suggests that Koester's personal correspondence is in line with this development. In particular, the direct comparison of his *Kaiserreich* letters with those post-1945, shows such a shift from expressiveness to *Sachlichkeit* in detail. The numerous portrayals of his medical treatment are therefore to be viewed as congruent with the general shift in his writing style towards objective observations. As I will elaborate further in this chapter in the section 'Der kalte Blick and its renaissance in the 1950s', this originates not only in the literary genre of *Neue Sachlichkeit* but in a general cultural attitude which, I argue, both Koester and Unold have adapted and made use of in their post-1945 correspondence.

In the following letter, written three years after Koester and Belau revived their correspondence, the letter writer's frequent use of irony as a distancing tool when narrating his illness again becomes apparent. The following passage refuses to narrate seriously what is a very serious topic:

> Eben war der Masseur da, der meine Füße und Hände bearbeitet hat, und heute Mittag habe ich eine Vitamin B-Spritze mit allerlei Teufelszeug gemicht [sic], bekommen. Und nun soll ich auch ein Hormon- Implantat in den Bauch kriegen. Danach wird man wieder ganz jung und quicklebendig. Darum versuche ich jetzt

[387] Cf. Sudhoff, VII, p. 145f.
[388] Koester, *Peregrinus: Drama in neun Bildern*.

> schon vorsorglich, meinen Schlafrock gegen eine [sic] Matrosenanzug einzutauschen, und dann muß Ellen mit Kathrinchen und mir- einen rechts, eine links an der Hand- auf den Buddelplatz gehen. Sandformen zum Kuchenbacken habe ich mir schon zurechtgelegt. Wenn das nur meiner väterlichen Authorität nicht zuviel Abbruch tut! Jedenfalls siehst du, liebe Anicuta, wie stark altersverblödet ich bin, und daß es ohne Hormonzufuhr nicht mehr geht.[389]

Irony and sarcasm determine this passage entirely. Only the first two sentences are descriptive and give an insight into Koester's treatment, but all following narration is a mocking of the medical treatment of his body as such. "Da wird man wieder ganz jung und quicklebendig", Koester writes and by suggesting this disproportionate promise of youth he insinuates the improbability of such. The ongoing irony in his text climaxes when it becomes morbid in his comment about the local graveyard that will spare him the car to his own funeral – an image and a joke he has already employed in the letter discussed above:

> Sonst ist leider nicht viel Erfreuliches zu berichten. Außer, dass es,- wie ich jetzt erst erfahren habe- in unserer Straße einen Friedhof gibt. Da kann man evt. Den teuren Wagen sparen, denn so weit kann ich zur Not noch gehen.[390]

This marks another example of repetitive narrating in letter-writing, and it seems not only the content repeats itself in the letters, but also the stylistic devices which the letter writer uses to entertain the reader are used repetitively. This cold and objective style, which Koester has picked up in his postwar letters, contrasts with his expressive and affected emotional presentations of his earlier letters. This development can be explained with the cultural discourse of the time, which is one of the prior mentioned parameters that influenced the tone of the correspondence. One of the socio-cultural and philosophical roots of such plain postwar writing style can be found in the time between the wars. As elaborated in Helmut Lethen's book on the anthropology and cultural theory of the interbellum period, the style of *Neue Sachlichkeit* can also be interpreted as a fundamental attitude[391] of German intellectuals of this time. Many intellectuals then adapted a mindset not only in their arts but also in their interpersonal communication that favoured coldness over warmth, distance over closeness and disguise over candour.[392] Such "Verhaltenslehren der Kälte" can also be found in theories

[389] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 14.1.1953, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[390] Ibid.
[391] Cf. Bernd Hüppauf, 'Literatur und kalte Anthropologie. Zu Helmut Lethen: Verhaltenslehren der Kälte. Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen', *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, 5.2 (1995), 396–401, p. 396.
[392] Cf. ibid.

of the seventeenth century and Lethen here cites Gracian's doctrine. [393] In its maxims, although from 300 years prior, it describes very well a change from expressive thinking and writing to objective and plain reporting and demands an unaffected, astute attitude at all times.[394] This shows an interesting dynamic in the way cultural discourse, language and literature collude. Koester's postwar writing shows that he favours unaffected language to describe his bodily experience of crisis (the chronic illness). My analyses have illustrated that Koester's language resembles *neusachliche* literature but also the claims of, for example, 'Trümmerliteratur' and any mode of written expression after 1945 when authors aimed at an unadorned narrative of the status quo of their time. This once more proves the fruitfulness of a close reading analysis of letter correspondences; not only does it detect certain methods of communication and how those were influenced by discoursal principles, but in doing so it also gives insight into the emergence of literary trends.

On the level of both biography and relationship, I suggest that the comparative representation of the body in letters of the 1910s and the 1950s constitutes the transition from flesh to bones. The body in the early letters is a subject, capable of intense emotions. The body in Koester's later letters seems no longer capable of such outbreaks, it no longer desires others, the writer himself is engrossed with his own body, a skeleton more than flesh, of which he emphasizes more than anything its utter uselessness. Through using irony and witty word plays in his texts, Koester emphasizes that his mind is disconnected from his frail body: it is independent and performs as it has always and yet, his obsessive use of such stylistics, translates as a desperate attempt to gain control over his own body, which has become substitutional for his own fate.

As explicated in this analysis the postwar letters narrate only the sick body and, whilst the letter writer pays great attention to this matter, he needs certain tools to distance himself from the events that are narrated. I have detected this to be the constant use of irony and sarcasm as well as the adapting of features of established literary styles (Naturalism, *Neue*

[393] Baltasar Gracian (1601-1658), Spanish writer of the seventeenth century, most famous for his book, *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*.
[394] Helmut Lethen, *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte: Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2014), p. 55.

Sachlichkeit) and a cold attitude, propagated throughout his formative years, and picked up in the postwar era, favouring rationality over affect.

Koester's letters written after 1945 are exemplary of the described patterns. All affect and all expressive portrayal of physical sensations represented so strongly in the letters written by him as a young man, has been removed. He is now the unaffected narrator literary styles like *Neue Sachlichkeit* demand, one that knows how to "anatomisch zerlegen"[395] with his intellect and eventually with his narrating techniques that have improved during his professional career. Consequently, the postwar letters show several things: a more skilled writer influenced by the past dynamics of literary genre conventions on the level of cultural discourse, an aged man disguising his bitterness and potential trauma with those very literary tools on the level of biography, and a more distanced letter writer on the level of the friendship determining the correspondence's tone.

In the preceding analyses I have pinned down the way that the letter writer writes about his body. The question remains why the topic of his physical illness made up such an extensive amount of the postwar correspondence. Koester's underlying illness remains undiagnosed[396] or at least unnamed in the correspondence with the Levins until his death. However, it has become the main topic in his letters to his former lover.

As Monica Black has revealed in her book on postwar German society's fascination with so-called 'wonder doctors', such diffuse clinical patterns and inexplicable symptoms mark a phenomenon of the years discussed in this thesis, the first one and a half decades after the end of the war.[397] The many fates summarised in Black's book tell of the figures' suffering from various chronic pains or paralyses after WWII. With this knowledge, I can classify Reinhard Koester's suffering narrated in his letters as part of this development illustrated by Black and her research on his contemporaries. Several of the individuals discussed in Black's book suggested their suffering had its roots in "conscious or unconscious *seelische* shocks".[398]

[395] Cf. Lethen, p. 55.
[396] Interestingly, when speaking to Reinhard Koester's only grandson, he assured me his grandfather's malaise originated "from the war and the years of hardship" but could not name his grandfather's disease or cause of death. ("vom Krieg und den harten Jahren schwer geschädigt." Pascal Lang, 20.05.2021).
[397] Cf. Black.
[398] Ibid., p. 86f.

For most doctors in the immediate postwar years, only physical proof of an illness made an illness[399] and this indifference can, according to Black, be seen as one reason for the Germans' fascination with 'Wunderheiler' Bruno Göring,[400] who offered healing no matter the root of the disease.[401] Two theses developed in Black's book are, in my opinion, most interesting and highly relevant for the analysis of writing the body in this chapter.

A first discovery Black makes, based on letters written to magazines and newspapers as well as surveys undertaken in the years following the end of the war, is that a great part of German society had no access to a language of individual trauma, but people knew how to write about physical sickness. Secondly, this reporting about bodily experiences was discovered as a way of escaping the silence, which had been the dominant arrangement followed by most Germans and noted by contemporaries[402] and many historians in the decades to follow,[403] or as Black puts it: "in this era of curious elisions and roaring silences, it's interesting how much West Germans wanted to talk to Bruno Göring."[404]

Reinhard Koester did not seek the help of a 'wonder doctor', but Monica Black's study shows the Germans' struggle for means of expression regarding their experiences during the Third Reich and the war and thus provides a helpful reading of Koester's representation of the body. My observation that the letter writer borrows elements from established literary tendencies to narrate his unnamed illness chimes with her discoveries of German 'speechlessness' when it came to finding words for trauma or depression.

I have previously argued that Koester's writing is mimicking an affirmation of the cold, unaffected storytelling of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, the literary style that most of his work would be subsumed under today. As mentioned earlier, the extent to which he elaborates on the topic of his physical state is remarkable and this has led me to assert that Koester strategically distracts from other unspoken elements.

[399] Cf. ibid.
[400] Monica Black specifically examines the postwar society's interaction with Bruno Göring whose name gained recognition in the late 1940s and 1950s.
[401] Cf. Black, p. 88.
[402] Cf. Stanzel.
[403] Cf. Grossmann; cf. Moeller.
[404] Black, p. 91.

In my opinion two factors coincide here. Koester deliberately avoids narrating his emotional mindset in relation to the experiences he has undergone. Koester's narration of the bodily sickness also serves, similarly to what has been identified in Chapter II regarding narrating of spaces, as a distraction that is representative of unspoken elements, such as bitterness about his physical state or his uneasiness regarding his passive role during the years of Fascist rule.

As a second factor and based on Black's findings, the possible inability to write about these elements should furthermore be considered. Whether Koester really lacked access to the theoretical register and language to express the experiences or whether his exclusion of such narratives is purposeful must remain speculative. The analysis undertaken so far has, however, shown that the narrative tools that the letter writer uses (the constant use of irony and sarcasm, the adapting of established literary features -a cold attitude favouring rationality over affect) successfully enhance a silence that, to a twenty-first century researcher, is one of the most noticeable features of their postwar correspondence.

By identifying their narrative tools, the analyses of this letter correspondence continuously bring to light how the writers use the letter writing to perform certain ideas of identities. A narratological examination of the speaking authority regarding such performances shows that they are created by the *author*, brought to life by the *narrator* and serve the ideas of the figure (*letter writer)*. The following section focuses on features of reporting the bodies of others. In its analyses it considers the important distinctions to be made between author, narrator, and letter writer.

Post-1945 bodies: Body Reports

At the end of the letter written in August 1950, cited above, Koester describes his and his wife's ongoing poverty since, according to him, the Nazis banned him from working and since the birth of their daughter Katharina in 1938. He concludes that it is astonishing how his daughter turned out a cheerful and healthy girl, a statement remarkably connected to her body:

> (…) Umso erstaunlicher ist es, daß mein Töchterchen, mein Kathrinchen, trotz allem ein bildhübsches, gesundes und ewig vergnügtes Mädel von 12 Jahren geworden ist mit einem Körperchen wie aus Stahl.[405]

He uses the expression "wie aus Stahl", which was often employed in speeches by Adolf Hitler,[406] slightly trivialised by using the diminutive "Körperchen" and thus conveys the important – to him – information that his daughter is healthy despite the shortages during and after the war. The expression that a body is 'as if it were made of steel' carries the attributes of being indestructible, robust, strong – all martial expressions – and provides insight into how wartime and Nazi propaganda left its traces on German society and its language. The view of the body having to be to be functional above all, however, goes back further than Nazi Propaganda. After all, the language developed in the 1930s builds on that established during the previous decade. This continuity in speech can be observed in the, often technical, expressions for non-technical objects. When Koester describes his daughter's fit and healthy body as a "Körperchen wie aus Stahl ", he might ironically adapt martial speech employed by the Nazis, but he is also building on a language dedicated to the 'Technikkult' and 'Körperkult'[407] developed with WWI and during the 1920s.

Similar observations regarding linguistic legacies of the *neusachliche* era to Germany's young federal republic can be made in one of Max Unold's letters of the same year, written on 16 April 1950. This letter was intended for both Anicuta and Ernst Levin, as the salutation indicates. It is an answer to the couple's Christmas wishes of the year 1949 and the first letter written to them in 1950. The Unolds and the Levins had slowly picked up correspondence again from 1946 on. By 1950 they had overcome the stage of informing each other how they had spent the years of the war and how they suffered from it. The letter writer in Munich is

[405] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[406] Adolf Hitler claimed in a speech on 14 September 1935, during the 'Reichsparteitag' in Nuremberg and in front of thousands of members of the 'Hitlerjugend', that the German physique especially of the young ought to be "flink wie Windhunde, zäh wie Leder und hart wie Kruppstahl" and thus manifested an attitude, a mindset and a linguistic frame to express such in the German population. 'Adolf Hitler zu den Erziehungszielen der NSDAP'. Pädagogik und NS-Zeit. https://paedagogikundns.wordpress.com/ns-ideologie-uberblick/. [last accessed 22 March 2022].
[407] An account of 'Körperkult' and the 'absolute (male) body' can be found in an exemplary text of WWI literature by Walter Flex: Walter Flex, *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten: ein Kriegserlebnis* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1919).

now more focused on reporting mutual acquaintances' fates. Unold himself states this as a 'berichtende' feature of the letter in one of the first sentences:

> Liebe Anicuta, lieber Ernst Levin (…) Diesen Brief fang' ich heut einmal an, ich weiß noch nicht, wann er fertig wird, denn er soll recht viel Berichtendes enthalten, und da fällt einem immer nachträglich etwas ein. (Drum schreib' ich auf meiner alten Maschine, daß mehr auf die Seite geht). Um mit Traurigem anzufangen: von Reinhard Koester, mit dem ich immer in Korrespondenz stand- mit allen andern ist er ja verkracht- kam schlechte Nachricht: er ist total gelähmt, nur ein paar Finger der linken Hand sind noch beweglich, mit denen er einen unlesbaren Schnörkel unter den im übrigen diktierten Brief machte. Er sei lang in Klinik und Krankenhaus gewesen, die Ärzte hätten aber feststellen müssen, daß ihm gar nichts fehle: ich fürchte, daß sich dahinter eine sehr bedenkliche Diagnose verbirgt, selbst der Galgenhumor, der ausseinem [sic] Schreiben sprach, könnte ein Symptom sein. Jedenfalls ist es schrecklich, ich weiß auch gar nicht, wovon er mit Frau und Kind lebt, besonders nachdem er schon vor längerer Zeit eine gute Redakteurstelle aufgegeben hatte, natürlich mit dem herkömmlichen Krach. (dass A. Ihm nie geantwortet hat, darüber beklagte er sich auch in seinem letzten Brief).[408]

As witnessed when reading Unold's and Koester's earlier letters, they frequently include points of contact and substantive recurrences. Both men refer to one another in their letters, always knowing that the other one also belongs to the circle of Belau's closest male correspondents. Although seeking a neutral tone to describe the former rival, they never quite achieve avoiding a critical rating completely.

In the passage cited above, Unold reports Koester's illness, at first neutrally, but then dares the proposition that even Koester's black humour could be part of his undiagnosed disease. After he describes Koester's physical state using similarly graphic and plain expressions as the invalid himself, he comments impersonally: "Jedenfalls ist es schrecklich, ich weiß auch gar nicht, wovon er mit Frau und Kind lebt, besonders nachdem er schon vor längerer Zeit eine gute Redakteursstelle aufgegeben hatte, natürlich mit dem herkömmlichen Krach." The attempt of sympathy with Koester is quickly destroyed by the immediate connection with the report about his professional failure and Unold's unambiguous hint that this had been self-imposed.

[408] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 16.4.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

The remark about Koester's lamentations about Belau's laziness when it comes to letter writing tells the researcher two things. One, that Koester had written to Belau before he received her postcard in the summer of 1950 and two, that Unold, after almost 40 post-amorous years, still takes pride in the fact that Belau maintains correspondence with him and does so, he hints, more regularly than with Koester. In the same letter from spring 1950, Unold provides further reports on mutual acquaintances:

> Den alten dürrbeinigen Balten Bartels traf ich mal am Stachus, er ist so mager wie immer. Frau Dr. Perls begegnete uns auf einem Faschingsfest. Harburger ist auch irgendwo auf dem Land, für uns ganz verschollen. (…) Teutsch[409] ist auch wieder Professor in M., Nesie ist viel krank, die Tochter macht einen sehr netten Eindruck, der Sohn kam aus Gefangenschaft zurück und dichtet. Willi Geiger[410] hatte gleichfalls einen Lehrauftrag an der Akademie, vor 2 Jahren haben wir seinen 70. gefeiert. Sein Sohn Rupprecht malt ganz abstrakte, aber auch in dieser Art schlechte Bilder (…) [411]

The letter writer here creates a quick pace in his storytelling through the use of many short sentences, and he also evokes tension through merging opposing content in one sentence. The impression of a swift pace is generated by a lack of details, the simple mention of their mutual friend being ill a lot is sufficient to the writer – no elaborations on body and illness are to be found here. Furthermore, with his rapid enumerating of fates, Unold mocks postwar developments with his style of writing - such as the 'dichtenden Soldaten'. This strategy of mocking emphasizes the role of the uninvolved narrator and thus eventually creates a conspicuous distance between himself (as a figure in this postwar world) and the events told.

As shown, Unold's narration of illness, death, and the body is remarkably *sachlich* here. He chooses an especially precise description when he sums up the old friend's physique ("Den alten dürrbeinigen Balten Bartels (…) ist so mager wie immer."). The subsequently mentioned encounter with Frau Dr. Perls is narrated without any further information about her. Ernst Levin's affection for Dr. Perls, a former colleague of his in Munich, was the reason for the

[409] Walter Teutsch (1883-1964). Like Max Unold he studied painting with Hugo von Habermann at the Münchner Akademie and was a painter and illustrator who worked for 'Simplicissimus' and 'Die Jugend'; 'Ausstellungsverbot' from 1939 on, professor at the Münchner Akademie 1946-1952.
[410] Willi Geiger (1878-1971), painter and professor for painting and art at the Münchner Akademie.
[411] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 16.4.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

Levins' separation in 1928. Unold forgoes any elaborations on her physique or war-experience of the past years, perhaps to avoid what he knows was once a topic of conflict. This means that not all figures in Unold's letters are narrated through their bodies (e.g., the soldier who returned from captivity is not narrated through his body at all), and in a strong opposition to Koester's narration, Unold in fact avoids narrating his own body completely in these immediate postwar times.

The texts do, however, also show a similar cold and rational tonality and a strong emphasis on the text being a 'Tatsachenreport'. This remarkably distanced narration of his fellow human beings' fates and experiences, often inscribed in their bodies, continues in Unold's letters of the 1960s, as the following section will reveal.

Injured (war) bodies

Ten years later, on 2 May 1960, one of Unold's letters contains a remarkably precise presentation of an injured body. The ten years between 1950 and 1960 mark a decade that changed the reality of most Germans completely. At the moment of writing the letter cited below, Unold enjoys the privileges of living in a stable democracy with a well-established economy.[412] Debates on German Fascism and especially on the complicity of the German people had changed.[413] While the immediate postwar years with the trials in local courts revealed the individual complicity and guilt of many Germans and their crimes committed on German soil [414] the public debate shifted towards a focus on crimes committed in camps and

[412] On the development of West Germany in the decades after the war see: Georg Bollenbeck, *Die janusköpfigen 50er Jahre*, Kulturelle Moderne und bildungsbürgerliche Semantik (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000); Gunilla Budde, *Bürgertum nach dem bürgerlichen Zeitalter: Leitbilder und Praxis seit 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Hermann Korte, *Eine Gesellschaft im Aufbruch: die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den sechziger Jahren* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwiss., 2009).
[413] Recent research on the topic of German guilt and associated developments in the Bundesrepublik includes: Assmann, 'On the (In)Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory'; Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism'; Mary Fulbrook, *Reckonings: Legacies of Nazi Persecution and the Quest for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Fulbrook, *Bystanders to Nazi Violence? The Transformation of German Society in the 1930s;* Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[414] As has been well observed and re-stated in her latest book and an essay from 2020 by Fulbrook, these very early trials dealt not with the major crimes committed in the ghettos and camps in Eastern Europe, which have become the most infamous representative of Nazi crimes and atrocities, but they attempted a prosecution of

ghettos in Eastern Europe with the Eichmann and Auschwitz trials in the early 1960s.[415] As Mary Fulbrook shows, the decade after 1945 saw the vast majority of trials against Nazi crimes in Germany, but it was predominantly in the immediate postwar period that debates about violence and unjust actions of the German population during the years of the Third Reich were held. [416] The shift in focus caused by the trials of the 1960s and 1970s took place over several decades and made it possible for many Germans to claim that they had known nothing about the crimes against humanity commited in the far away places in the East. With the shift in focus to the Holocaust, the 'ordinary Germans' were able to distance themselves from the therewith connected crimes and move from "confrontation to evasion".[417] This phenomenon leads back to Max Unold's life circumstances at the moment of writing the letter in 1962, when a substantial number of German perpetrators and bystanders had been reintegrated in the society of the Federal Republic and were going about their way. For example, by the late 1950s and based on a yet again flourishing economy, going on holiday to other European countries had become possible again for many West Germans. Max and Grete Unold regularly travelled to (mostly) Northern Italy, as many postcards from Italy around this time in the EL collection indicate. In 1960, Unold's letters deal with ordinary life such as these holidays and, as ever, exclude important societal debates.

Now, whenever violated bodies connected to war are mentioned in Unold's letters, these wars are fought elsewhere in the world. The descriptions of those injuries still align with Unold's, now identified as cold and distant, writing style, when he reports the following:

> (…) Eine Überraschung war es auch, dass ich voriges Jahr einen Brief von Frau Hoepfle, der Wittwe [sic] von Karl Hopf erhielt, aus Israel. Ich habe natürlich geantwortet und kürzlich schrieb sie ein zweitesmal. Sie betreibt dort eine Hühnerfarm, ihrem Sohn wurde im Krieg gegen Ägypten das Gesicht zerschossen, doch offenbar recht gut zurechtgeflickt, er war bis vor kurzem in Amerika. Vor

the 'ordinary people' in German society who had, for example, denounced their friends and neighbours and thus or through other actions contributed to the construction of the German 'Unrechtsstaat' from the very beginning. Cf. Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism', p. 301f.

[415] These trials triggered a subsequent confrontation with the Nazi past in West Germany "(…)with major trials in the 1960s and 1970s, alongside a continued political instrumentalization of the Nazi past in East Germany". Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt, and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism', p. 301.

[416] Cf. Fulbrook, 'Reframing the Past', p. 301.

[417] Cf. ibid., p. 296.

> einiger Zeit ist Nesie Teutsch gestorben, die ja schon seit vielen Jahren gelähmt war. Er wurde nach 45 wieder Akademieprofessor, ist nun pensioniert und malt u.a. gelegentlich einen seiner Enkel. Willi Geiger, 80 vorbei arbeitet auch noch fleißig, obwohl er neulich schwer krank war, seiner Frau Klara ist von der Trambahn ein Fuß abgefahren worden.[418]

This paragraph shows how yet another war, now the Suez Crisis 1956, and its consequences, here the physical injuries, are narrated with the same linguistic patterns as any other injured or ill bodies. The language is unadorned; Unold uses words that evoke a brutal image when describing the young man's face as "zerschossen" and now "offenbar recht gut zurechtgeflickt". The adverb "offenbar" refers to the information being a citation and not described in Unold's own words, he himself has never seen Frau Hoepfle's son's face and he simply repeats or paraphrases the mother's report, in which the descriptions might have been of similarly brutal quality. Again, what is interesting is not only Unold's precise language choice here but the overall order he gives his several narrated stories. Again, he merges ordinary events with unsettling content, only separated by a comma. Unold creates no hierarchy within the content, the mutual friend's chicken farm, her son's severe war injuries and his stay in America are all portrayed on the same syntactic level. This hierarchy- free reporting conveys an attitude lacking a hierarchy of value, an effect of war[419] and postwar that is unsettling for todays' readers.

He continues with the news about a friend's death, which to him seems unsurprising as she had been "seit vielen Jahren gelähmt", stated by him as if this fact alone justified someone's death. He repeats what he wrote ten years prior about the woman's husband, their mutual friend Walter Teutsch, (simply referred to as '*Er*', here meaning *her* husband) and his career after 1945. The hierarchy-free syntactic order can be observed again in the last sentence cited above, when the letter writer does not change the tone, in fact does not even start a new sentence to proclaim that the foot of one of their mutual friends had been 'taken off' by the tram.

[418] Max Unold an Anicuta Belau und Ernst Levin, 2.5.1960, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 2/3.
[419] The aforementioned 'Tatsachenreport' of anti-war-literature on WWI follows the same emphasis of a lack of any sort of value system.

A letter written by Unold over one year later, on 12 November 1961, contains the exact same scene of an injured body, Willi Geiger's wife Klara and her tram accident. The repetitive narration of the same incident is of course not a deliberate stylistic device but a characteristic of letter writing as such. The letter writer, who has not made copies of his letters, simply cannot be sure whether he has written about a certain event before, so he writes about it again, and sometimes this happens multiple times. This repeated narration, however, gives insight into what, to the letter writer, seemed worth narrating or which events came to his mind prominently. Again, Unold shows a remarkably unaffected manner with his plain style of short sentences when describing what must have been a painful injury, for the second time:

> Willi Geiger geht an Krücken, malt aber mit dem alten Temperament, der Klara hat die Trambahn die Zehen abgefahren, der Sohn Rupprecht ist ein ganz berühmter Abstrakter, seine Bilder sind meist ganz schwarz, nur irgendwo ein Strich in roter Leuchtfarbe.[420]

The letter writer repeats his style of a graphic description, plain words and a syntax that merges content without distinction.[421] He simply changes from "Fuß" to "Zehen", a correction worth making, especially as the Bavarian expression "Fuß" can also include the whole leg. Bavarian dialect also appears in the use of the definite article which consequently changes the entire syntax of the sentence ("der Klara hat die Trambahn die Zehen abgefahren"). The Bavarian dialect used in this section makes the text appear like spoken word, the short sentences in rapid succession evoke the image of a news report and this emphasizes Unold's orientation on very *neusachliche* claims: the reporting of facts, clearly and rationally. The

[420] Max Unold an Anicuta Belau und Ernst Levin, 12.11.1961, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 1 5/5.

[421] Unold mentions the Geigers three times: in 1950, 1960 and 1961. The letters from 1960 and 1961 are cited above and we have already established the similarities and sole change from foot to toes, that had been taken off by the tram. Klara Geiger's tram accident is not mentioned in a letter from 1950, it seems likely that it had not happened yet at the time, but the information about father and son follows the same succession: "Willi Geiger hatte gleichfalls einen Lehrauftrag an der Akademie, vor 2 Jahren haben wir seinen 70. gefeiert. Sein Sohn Rupprecht malt ganz abstrakte, aber auch in dieser Art schlechte Bilder." (Max Unold to Anicuta Belau und Ernst Levin, 16.04.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 ii 1/3). The identical way in which the letter writer tells their stories (husband, wife, and son) leads to the assumption he follows a natural chain of associations. Unold is forced to change his opinion of Rupprecht Geiger's (1908-2009) art 11 years later, after the 1950s proved to be a successful decade for the abstract painter and he then remarks in a less derogatory manner: "(…) der Sohn Rupprecht ist ein ganz berühmter Abstrakter, seine Bilder sind meist ganz schwarz, nur irgendwo ein Strich in roter Leuchtfarbe." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau und Ernst Levin, 12.11.1961, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 1 5/5.

portrayal of an injured face, leg or foot does not deprive the letter writer of his "Freude am Gegenständlichen", perhaps the main feature of *neusachlicher* literature.[422]

In general, through this analysis I confirm two of my previously made claims. First, that Unold as well as Koester uses *neusachliche* writing to maintain an unaffected attitude. Secondly, that his writing displays an absence of hierarchical structure of content. Such narratives that get by without the foundation of a value system to categorizes the narrated can also be found in the 'Trümmerliteratur' of the immediate postwar years in Germany and are commonly seen as a result of the impossibility of an articulated value system after the events of genocide and war.[423] I argue this proves once more that the letter writers borrow their stylistic devices from established literature and that they carefully craft their letter's texts.

The crises dealt with in the letter above are a war and traffic injury and the narrator, like Koester's narrator, avoids depicting the possible trauma or realities behind the physical injuries. Verbalisations of physical injuries and illnesses are found frequently in both letter writers' texts, while attempts to portray the psychological effects of such are not.[424] Again, it becomes apparent that features of *neusachlich* writing serve as useful tools to narrate times of crises.

The aestheticization of the sick body,[425] especially as executed in Koester's depictions, is therefore not only to be understood as an attempt to 'literalise' the epistolary nature of the

[422] "Die Überwindung der expressionistischen Vergeistigungstendenzen als Ziel vor Augen, verspürt man eine Freude am Gegenständlichen", writes Bertolt Brecht in 1920 about the newly discovered writing style. As cited in: 'Neue Sachlichkeit', in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur: Begriffe und Definitionen* ed. by Dieter Burdorf, Christoph Fasbender, and Burkhard Moennighoff (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), p. 539.
[423] Members of the 'Gruppe 47' such as Günter Eich (1907-1972) or Heinrich Böll (1917-1985) published texts following this paradigm that had been mastered by Wolfgang Borchert (1921-1947) who had had a great influence on the group.
[424] Aleida Assmann uses the term 'trauma' for example as "eine körperliche Einschreibung (…), die der Überführung in Sprache und Reflexion unzugänglich ist". Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2018), p. 278.
[425] More on the aestheticization of the injured or mutilated body in postwar literature: Thomas W. Kniesche, 'Krieg as Body Sculpting: Die Metamorphosen des männlichen Körpers in den frühen Texten Heinrich Bölls', in *Nachkriegskörper: Prekäre Korporealitäten in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2013), pp. 33–45.

text, but a turn away from depicting the emotional (psychological), possibly out of the incapability to verbalise such, and towards depicting the figurative ('Gegenständliche').

In this analysis of Max Unold's postwar portrayals of the body, I argue that bodies (injured, sick, or starved) were a prominent theme in postwar Germany – even in the relatively small corpus which was up for analysis regarding this matter. I state that Unold deliberately narrates in an unadorned, unaffected style. As I have shown, Unold excludes his own body from his epistolary narrative. This enables an exclusion of his own person from the postwar reality he describes. This reality is primarily narrated by the descriptions of bodies of others. In his portrayals of mutual friends' sick or emaciated bodies but also injured and even war-injured bodies, I have identified a language consistently mirroring a *neusachliche* reporting style, that enables the letter writer to achieve an absolute absence of any affect or dramatic elements.

Koester, as proven, writes about himself and his body and not of the bodies of those disconnected from him or his family. However, he employs a similar, objective language; his representations borrow elements from Naturalism and *Neue Sachlichkeit* with a remarkable precision of reporting the body, its failings and medical treatment. Both letter writers share one narratological element in that their narrating personae take on the narrating role rationally and neutrally, continuously presenting the attitude of the cold and, remarkably uninvolved observer.

Letter-writing dynamics

The gap in correspondence had a substantial effect on the friendship between Koester and Belau. Not only because of the silence and lack of exchange but also in terms of their adopted roles. Belau had been the superior figure in the Koester-Belau relationship: she was admired by him and longed for. When she decided to leave the country in 1938 due to the persecution of her child, Koester, for the first time, seemed to be in a better place than his former lover. After WWII, the roles changed again and suddenly Belau, now part of a nation that had won the war, found herself in the position of caregiver. It became common practice for the Belau-

Levins to send packages to West Berlin containing goods such as clothes, coffee, and books. Koester had fallen ill, and he and his wife had little to eat, no access to special goods (such as coffee, cigars, or wine) and no money to buy new clothes for their young daughter. The care packages are therefore closely linked to the body in many ways. They are about the well-being of their recipients as they offer the possibility to go beyond the daily pragmatism the Koesters had become accustomed to. Under these circumstances an assimilation in tone to do justice to the changed roles seems logical and hardly surprising.

In 1956, the extreme situation of facing death that Koester sees himself in of course also demands a writing style of its own. Koester's role in the relationship has been weakened as has his body. With nothing left but his intellect, he undertakes a last attempt of writing about his experiences maintaining the previously propagated cold distance:

> Dazu kommt, dass ich seit November 55 im Krankenhaus liege. Meine Luft zum Atmen beziehe ich ja seit Juni vorigen Jahres schon durch eine Kanüle, aber traten Schluckbeschwerden auf – bis ich nur noch Flüssignahrung zu mir nehmen konnte und schliesslich wurde ich durch die Vene im Arm mit flüssigem Traubenzucker ernährt, da es unmöglich war einen Schlauch bis zum Magen einzuführen. Schliesslich wurde mir kurz vor Weihnachten der Korb aufgeschnitten und eine Magen-Fistel angelegt. Seitdem schüttet man mir 6-7 mal am Tage besonders kräftige Süppchen, geschlagene rohe Eier nebst Rotwein und Cognac durch Trichter und Schlauch in den Magen. Dabei habe ich schon 5 Pfund zugenommen- zu den 100 Pfund, die mir geblieben waren. Aber ich schmecke nichts- auch nichts von Wein und Cognac – und das ist bitter. In dieser Woche findet eine große Untersuchung statt – und die entscheidet ob man mich durch eine 3. Operation soweit kriegen kann, dass ich wieder schlucken und ohne Kanüle atmen kann, quod deus bene vertat[426]! (auf deum hoffen wir, lieber Leser.)[427]

This passage is again characterized by an unembellished report of his medical treatment, and the narrative focuses on the mechanical procedure. Several concatenated sequences contain naturalistic descriptions of such things ("durch die Vene im Arm (…) Schlauch bis zum Magen (…) der Korb aufgeschnitten (…) schüttet (…) durch Trichter und Schlauch in den Magen") and, when viewed as isolated elements they convey the impression of an Expressionist poem. Although the letter-writing persona forgoes any emotional outbreaks in this passage, the

[426] Latin for 'What God may turn for the better'.
[427] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 20.2.1956, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

combination of unadorned descriptions and the topic of decay and transience evokes such Expressionist ideas, an exception to the otherwise plain writing style of the postwar era. The continuous discussion of the progressing decay emphasizes the inevitability of death. This and the description of his body as a composition of mere "Fleisch", "Haut" and "Knochen"[428] stages the narrating of Koester's body as a 'memento mori'[429] within the correspondence and by thus narrating death as a constant part of life it contributes to the Expressionist character of some passages in Koester's letters.

In the letter above, Koester provides a detailed description of all his body's frailties and allows himself only one humorous expression when he writes: "Meine Luft zum Atmen beziehe ich ja seit Juni vorigen Jahres schon durch eine Kanüle", an odd, almost business-like way of describing the life-threatening deficiency of his lung activity. At the end of this letter, when he employs a Latin saying ("quod deus bene vertat") and thus admits to God's mercy being all he has got left, for the first time in this correspondence, he allows the demonstration of an emotion – his hope for recovery.

In addition, when directly addressing a reader at the end ("auf deum hoffen wir, lieber Leser"), he plays with the genre of his text. By not directly addressing Belau (or he would have written "liebe Anicuta") as the reader of his letter but using the general vocative, Koester stages his letter writing as fictional writing, possibly in another attempt to distance himself from the events taking place as well as a reflection of himself as a writer of fiction.

In his last letter, eight days after the one discussed above, the letter writer returns to the morbid tone of previous letters as he calls himself 'the living corpse Koester', again evoking a 'memento mori' in anticipation of his inevitable death. This letter is a rarity in the Ernst Levin Collection, as it is the only letter Koester sends to Levin and not to Belau and I will discuss it in detail in Chapter IV. The following passage shows the morbid narrating of Koester's dying body:

[428] See for example my discussion of Reinhard Koester's letter from 30.08.1950 on page 136 under the section 'Post-1945 bodies: irony as strategical tool'.
[429] An aesthetic concept or trope used in arts and literature to emphasize the inevitability of death. It was frequently used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but revived in the arts of the fin des siècle. Its effect is often achieved by motifs such as a skull or bones.

> Ihr sagt nichts davon, dass Ihr im Sommer nach Deutschland kommen wollt, wie Unold mir das schrieb!? Stimmt das, so kommt ihr hoffentlich auch nach Berlin, um Euch den „lebenden Leichnam“ namens Koester anzuschauen. (…) Ich hoffe nun, lieber Levin, dass das Eis zwischen uns jetzt gebrochen ist. (…) Wie schön wärs, wenn ich sagen könnte: „Auf Wiedersehen im Sommer“. Bis dahin herzliche Grüße und alles Gute[430]

His knowledge about the poor state he is in becomes apparent, when he writes in the subjunctive about a possible reunion in the summer of the same year. The Belau-Levins had given Unold and Koester reason to believe they might pay Germany a visit in the summer of 1956, however, a reunion remained unrealized. Reinhard Koester died in on 6 June 1956, and the Levins never set foot in Germany again.

‘Der kalte Blick’ and its renaissance in the 1950s

By giving Max Unold’s and Reinhard Koester’s postwar letters (1946-61) a close reading, I have identified a remarkable cold indifference regarding the themes of illness, injuries, and the postwar realities of others. Reinhard Koester writes about his own body’s decay, and, as I have illustrated, he uses journalistic, often scientific language in order to achieve the impression of an indifferent mindset. Even if some of the tropes and expressions mirror literary movements of the fin de siècle, the mentality shown in the correspondence of the 1950s and 1960s was most probably amplified in the interbellum period of the Weimar years.

As briefly sketched before, this mentality of the 1920s propagated the “kalte Blick”.[431] This mindset favours a cold and uninvolved presentation of facts and was represented widely in the decade after WWI, a time in which death, (mental) illness, and war injuries were omnipresent in German society.[432] Both our letter writers’ texts show this approach and such

[430] Reinhard Koester to Ernst Levin, 28.2.1956, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.
[431] Cf. Lethen.
[432] The following anthology gives an overview of such postwar bodies and their representation in literature, discussing works of Wolfgang Koeppen, Peter Weiss, Ilse Aichinger, Vicki Baum just to name a few :

a perception of the world – a distant coldness, a proud claim to be (emotionally) unimpressed by life's brutality. The analogy between twentieth and seventeenth century anthropologies discussed in Helmut Lethen's informative book indicates that such mentalities are likely to develop in societies facing times of crises and upheaval[433] – a reality for the young generation of intellectuals after WWI. Lethen further explicates how the propagated identity features can be aligned with symptoms of Freud's theories on neurosis; these features resemble the attempts undertaken in our letter writers' texts: "das Lob der Kälte, das Einverständnis mit der Entfremdung, der Kult der Distanz und der Mut zur Entscheidung".[434] A reading of these features of the 1920s' mentality as illness symptoms leads to the interesting conclusion that it is a reaction to abnormal, crisis-ridden, or in other words 'unhealthy' times. In this light, a comparison of the 1920s and the 1950s seems promising, and the resemblance of Unold's and Koester's post-WWII- texts with those of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* underline the plausibility of such a comparison. For both letter writers the reality of post-WWII- Germany, although also a time of crisis, was inarguably different to the decade they experienced after WWI. My analysis, however, shows how the uninvolved and cold persona, which has its socio-cultural and philosophical roots in the interbellum period, is recreated in the letter writers' unaffected and rational accounts of their experiences with fascism, war and postwar.[435]

Does the explanation for the continuities in mentalities, in this thesis the 1920s and 1950s, lie in the realities of postwar societies, or societies in times of crisis in general? Does this explain the continuity in these two writers who use the same tropes from their formative years later in life? Can postwar Weimar be compared with post-1945 Germany in such a simple fashion? This must be negated, given that the two wars are too different, the political status quo at

Nachkriegskörper: Prekäre Korporealitäten in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts, ed. by Sarah Mohi-von Känel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2013).

[433] "Carl Schmitt, der sich auf Hobbes beruft, betont, daß der Rückgriff auf die schwarze Anthropologie des 17. Jahrhunderts keinem Exotismus und keiner Lust an der Grausamkeit entspringt. Er entspringt vielmehr, so Schmitt, der 'seinsmäßigen Wirklichkeit' des 20. Jahrhunderts. Mag das als einen Rückgang auf den 'atavistischen Rest barbarischer Zeit' denunziert werden, die Nachkriegswirklichkeit lässt keinen anderen Schluss zu." Lethen, p. 73.

[434] Lethen, p. 70.

[435] This recreation of a 'kalte persona' after the experiences of WWII and in the immediate postwar era seems even more plausible when one recalls Lethen's explanation for the emergence of a cold and *sachliche* attitude which eventually found its way into literary representations; Lethen reads the political developments of the end of WWI and the collapse of the *Kaiserreich* as generating of an atmosphere of social desorganisation and the loss of moral obligations which triggered the "Verhaltenslehren der Kälte"and could, as symptomatics, also be recorded for the immediate postwar era (ca. 1945-1949). Cf. Lethen, p. 53.

the end of the two wars too distinct, and the extent of guilt that remained with the German civilians after WWII and the Holocaust too incomparable.

The mindset established in the 1920s does, however, prove useful when the generation to which our letter writers belong, then young and in the process of finding a 'voice', faces another postwar era with its hardships. The 'Typus der kalten persona'[436] is, so to say, optimally equipped for times of crises. This typus, which emerged in the years from 1920 to 1930, the *neusachliche* decade, is described by Lethen as a figure "die den Hut tief in die Stirn gezogen hat, weil ihre Ausdrucksdimension uninteressant geworden ist".[437] The analysed letters show an emphasis of this interbellum paradigm of indifference towards modes of expression, the narrators' view very often remains unimpressed by the events described.

The post-1945 letters analysed in this chapter describe disease, poverty, (war) injuries, all of which are events strongly connected with the bodies of the writers. As shown above, the priority of the narrative is, however, the "Panzerung des Ich"[438] to enable a silencing of some themes. Koester's effective 'Panzerung' is one based on his main strategy, the use of borrowed literary styles that often gives his narrative a fictional form, as well as excessive use of irony. Despite all his self-centredness, he thus avoids revealing his true emotions. His self remains the technical assembly of his body, frail and weak, but no longer sensitive and expressive, as represented in his Kaiserreich letters.

Unold's way of remaining unaffected works differently but follows the same paradigm of "Psychologie von außen".[439] He describes the observations, which he, as the rational, 'präzisionsästhetische' observer makes of others – his most frequent subjects are friends and acquaintances and he always sticks to a journalistic, reporting tone and an emphasis on the reports' authenticity throughout these letters.

[436] Cf. Lethen.
[437] Ibid., p. 50.
[438] Lethen, p. 57.
[439] Ibid., p. 98.

On the rare occasion of portraying his own calamities, his doctrine loses its validity and a modification in writing style comes into place. This topic-dependant change can be observed in the following passages. When Anicuta Belau became ill with pneunomia in 1957 and had to undergo surgery, Ernst Levin reports back to the Unolds in Munich about his wife's condition. In his response, Unold writes about his own body for the first time:

> (…) Wir sind ja auch ein altes Paar und wissen wie es ist, wenn eines um das andere bangen muß, drum hätte ich auch bälder geantwortet, wenn nicht bei uns gleichfalls allerlei losgewesen wäre. (…) mußte ich daran denken, auch mein linkes Auge staroperieren zu lassen, weil ich damit schon fast gar nichts mehr sah. (…) So war ich denn in der Vaterstadt, wo mein Augenarzt wohnt, z. drei Wochen im Krankenhaus, und es scheint gut gelungen zu sein, doch kann er mir erst in etwa 3 Wochen die endgültig passenden Gläser verschreiben. Bis dahin muss ich mich behelfen, das Maschinenschreiben geht, wie Ihr merkt, aber ein Gang durch abendliche Straßen bei dem gräßlichen Autoverkehr ist nicht gerade angenehm. Ob ich wieder einmal zeichnen und malen kann, wird sich zeigen, zuerst muß ich das Sehen mit zwei Augen wieder lernen, jetzt sehe ich doppelte Bilder, die sich unangenehm überschneiden, statt sich zu einem räumlichen Eindruck zu vereinigen. Aber man gewöhnt sich mit der Zeit an alles in der Hoffnung, daß es besser wird.[440]

Unold excuses the late reply and takes the opportunity to speak about his own health issues. He provides a detailed description of his state and emphasizes the eye as a crucial organ. When Unold goes on about his sight being of the utmost importance to him and especially when debating whether he will ever be able to paint again, his writing shows, in contrast to his earlier detached reports on illnesses and injuries, a surprisingly dramatic tone.

His cataract is an event that Unold tends to dwell on, his narrative takes its time, and he adopts a more dramatic, novel-like narrative style when he elaborates: "So war ich denn in der Vaterstadt, wo mein Augenarzt wohnt, z. drei Wochen im Krankenhaus, und es scheint gut gelungen zu sein, doch kann er mir erst in etwa 3 Wochen die endgültig passenden Gläser verschreiben. " This slow narrating of one event with the weight-bearing introduction "so war ich denn" stands in strong contrast to his staccato narration of incidents and the fates of others in many of his other letters.

[440] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 21.2.1959, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

My reading of Unold's writing shows that his eyes, along with his hands, are parts of his body that are incredibly important to him. He uses his hands to paint and his eyes to observe the world he eventually depicts. As we have seen in his letters, it is by *observing* that he is able to paint and to write. The fact that he could call himself a 'good observer' most probably meant a huge part of his identity. The shock of losing his sight leading to a loss of this identity-determining feature is expressed in these letters, not so much by a long and emotional lament, but simply by his more expressive and dramatic style.

In the previous analysis I have found that Unold chooses a different style to describe his own fate and that of others. His style in many of his letters favours enumeration and is cold in its tone. He does so, as a method to sum up the lives and bodies of others. In these cases, he remains the unaffected intellectual that he has proudly claimed to be for decades following a doctrine summed up by Helmuth Lethen as an accumulation of "(…) Disziplinierung der Affekte, Kunstgriffe der Manipulation, (…) , die Panzerung des Ich".[441]

In this letter however, the façade of the distant and cool observer crumbles. Unold must observe himself, his own actions or frailty and he cannot quite report it as rationally. The tone loses its otherwise so significant detachment. The indifference with which Unold has reported injuries and illnesses before, now makes way for a traditional narrative style that shows the emotional effect this physical experience has had on the writer.

This phenomenon, where the letter writer's voice of a "kalte persona"[442] no longer exists in the same way when it comes to portraying its own body, cannot be said to apply to Reinhard Koester. This practice forms a crucial difference in the narrating styles of Unold and Koester. Interestingly, both demonstrate an approach modelled on the *neusachliche* rationality developed in the 1920s. I argue that they both do this because it is a mindset they favour in general and because it serves them as a distancing tool. Koester, however, sticks with the objective writing style that he has adopted as an older man, even when portraying his own body (and its medical treatment). When portraying his own body, Koester's texts do not experience the same modification from neutral to affected, that Unold's texts do. Unold gives

[441] Lethen, p. 57.
[442] Ibid.

up the otherwise performed “Panzerung des Ich”, whereas Koester maintains it through all his narration for it has long become his linguistic survival strategy.

Despite these differences when it comes to the here discussed accounts of their bodies, it remains interesting that both writers employ the interbellum paradigms of coldness and indifference in their narration and that they both show *neusachlichle* elements in their body reports post-1945. Both men appear to draw from the mindset of their formative years when they revive the ‘kalte Blick’ in their writing of the 1950s.

Synopsis of Insights

This chapter examined the representations of the body – the healthy body, the sick and the injured – in Max Unold and Reinhard Koester’s early (1910-1912) and late letters (1950-1961). The focus of this chapter’s analyses was on the later letters as they contain the post-WWII portrayals of the body and therefore provide further answers regarding the question of what tones and narratological strategies the friends created after 1945 and the long gap in correspondence.

The examination of the earlier letters in the first section of this chapter was, however, fruitful for it allowed a comparative approach. I have shown that Koester’s pre-WWI letters contain a striking use of strong visual elements and expressive language. The emotions he experiences, are narrated from the vantage point of his body; his body serves as the source of all that is narrated in his letters and the narrator describes his emotional pain with physical symptoms which achieves the performance of an almost ‘neurasthenic’ identity.

Additionally, I identified Koester’s style of writing in these early letters as a mirroring of Expressionist work, the literary movement that Koester’s fictional work of the time is subsumed under. This proves the influence of contemporary literary trends on Koester’s writing and his deliberate application of devices to control his own narrative and identity

performance. The effect this writing technique has on the addressee is of a manipulative nature; the exaggerated tropes and expressive lamentations can be read as an attempt to convince the addressee of Koester's love and devotion.

Whilst Koester narrates his emotional struggles as a physical experience, for which the body functions as primary receiver, Max Unold avoids including the physical aspect of his rejection in his narration of the 1910s. Unold's language remains objective and rational, already showing the most crucial aspects of his 1950s letters' tone and a crucial part of his (performed) identity: his rational perceptiveness.

The last three sections of this chapter explored the portrayals of the body after the gap in correspondence and included the (chronically) ill as well as the (war) injured body. As explained in the analysis, both men had aged significantly when they revived the correspondence with the Belau-Levins after 1945. Due to his chronic illness, this is particularly reflected in Reinhard Koester's letters. In contrast to his pre-war writing, the body is narrated solely as the origin of his physical decay and the symptoms that entails. Koester avoids giving an introspective of his emotional mindset in relation to the experiences he has made. I interpret Koester's narration of bodily sickness to serve as a method to avoid discussing the inconvenient topic of the Third Reich and the persecution of the Belau-Levins. The constant use of irony and sarcasm, as well as the adaptation of elements from established literary trends and a cold attitude favouring rationality over affect emphasize the writer's distant attitude towards the narrated events. Both letter writers turn to a mode of depiction that resembles the journalistic, factual style of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. I read this unaffected and rational style as *neusachlich*. While the fact that these epistolary texts show such a striking resemblance with a literary movement is interesting, it is additionally insightful to go beyond the identification of their style and ask for a possible reason for this stylizing of their texts. One explanation, I suggest, might lie in the highly complicated communicative atmosphere of the postwar era and especially between persecuted emigrants and un-persecuted individuals who had remained in Germany during the Third Reich. This conflictual situation, which the friends found themselves in when they first revived their correspondence, was addressed by Unold and Koester with the stylization of their letters which claimed to provide an authentic stating of facts when re-telling their memories of WWII.

Research on how German society had dealt with its Nazi past has shown that the ways of remembering and narrating their own experiences had been problematic for Germans, in the private as well as in the public spheres.[443] How those, who had not been persecuted during the Third Reich, narrated their own experiences and memories of WWII remained an issue, not only in the *Nachkriegszeit* represented in the correspondence examined here, but up until the turn of the millennium and later, when the generation of witnesses had become very old and started dying. In their book *Narratives of Trauma: Discourses of German Wartime Suffering in National and International Perspective*, Helmut Schmitz and Annette Seidel-Arpaci state that German (war) trauma had been impossible to articulate "either as a result of a causal nexus between guilt, shame and trauma in the immediate postwar period, a self-inflicted silence about suffering that was complicit with the silence about the Holocaust, or as the result of a belated acknowledgement of responsibility for Nazi crimes in which the Germans' own suffering became taboo".[444] Whether the here described causal nexus between guilt, shame, and trauma applies to the letter writers at the time frame examined in this thesis cannot be determined on the basis of the sources available, but this statement summarises the problematic communicative atmosphere of the *Nachkriegszeit*.[445] Taking this into account, it is not speculative to assert that the epistolary correspondence with their persecuted friends meant a confrontation for the two men who had remained in Germany. My analysis has shown that the letter writers deliberately stylised their letters and such a phenomenon is substantiated, for example, by the recent anthology *Trauma, Experience and Narrative in Europe after World War II* in which the authors seek to define narrative forms of trauma. They argue that memories are a way of storytelling and that a "narrative constitutes a kind of distancing effect from events as they are remembered" and that "through this 'epistemic distance' it becomes possible to reconsider meanings, re-evaluate experiences and

[443] Further (recent) publications on the topic include Jan-Werner Müller, 'Germany's Two Processes of "Coming to Terms with the Past"— Failures, After All?', in *Remembrance, History, and Justice*, ed. by Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2022), pp. 213–236; *Trauma, Experience and Narrative in Europe after World War II*, ed. by Ville Kivimäki and Peter Leese (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); *Narratives of Trauma: Discourses of German Wartime Suffering in National and International Perspective*, ed. by Helmut Schmitz and Annette Seidel-Arpaci (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2011).

[444] Seidel-Arpaci, Annette and Schmitz, Helmut, 'Introduction', in *Narratives of Trauma: Discourses of German Wartime Suffering in National and International Perspective*, ed. by Helmut Schmitz and Annette Seidel-Arpaci (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 1-17, p. 6.

[445] See for example the secondary literature on the discourse on German victimhood which I have named in Chapter II of this thesis.

think through possible avenues of response".[446] All these dynamics have become apparent as epistolary practices of the writers discussed here. In this chapter, I have demonstrated that drawing on elements of the literary movement of *Neue Sachlichkeit* as a result of this 'epistemic distance', enabled the writers to create distant, journalistic, and precise texts.

As stated, I interpret the *neusachliche* stylisation of their texts as based on a continuation of pre-war and pre-Fascist styles which was employed during their formative years. I argue further that this coincides with the fact, that the demands of *neusachliche* literature were ideal to narrate time of crises or trauma as objective observations. The use of this style in their correspondence enabled the writers to create an unaffected narrator who narrated experiences in a journalistic and neutral tone and thus emphasized two things: 1) that the letters gave truthful accounts (of the writers' suffering during WWII and postwar) and 2) that the writers had had the role of passive and uninvolved citizens who were left with no other option, but to observe the actions of the National Socialist government. The use of this style shows a coping mechanism to narrate experiences in the conflictual ways of communicating following WWII, trauma, and mutual recriminations outlined above.

Unold's texts show a remarkable lack of hierarchical structure, and opposing content is merged without any classification. This observation supports my statement that the calls of younger writers for a new language system, a 'clear' break after 1945, emerged not only from a desire to move on but had very substantial roots in society's inability to apply a value system to experienced events. The hierarchy-free narrative is, however, also a characteristic of *neusachliche* reporting of facts – uncategorized and unjudged. Overall, Max Unold's texts show this neutral and rational tone and a strong emphasis on the text being a statement of facts with, to today's reader, an unsettlingly, uninvolved narrator who seems to take pride in being unimpressed and unaffected by life's brutalities. As I have show, the only exception here is his narration of his own illness: on the few occasions when Unold portrays his own calamities, his *neusachliche* maxims lose their validity and he modifies his writing style.

[446] Leese, Peter, 'The Limits of Trauma: Experience and Narrative in Europe c. 1945', in *Trauma, Experience and Narrative in Europe after World War II*, ed. by Ville Kivimäki and Peter Leese (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 3-27, p. 16.

I have identified not only elements of *neusachliche* literature in both writers' letters but also a general unaffected rationality which can be traced back to the interbellum mindset of the 'Verhaltenslehren der Kälte', an approach to life that demands the exclusion of affects and emotionality which is ideally equipped for times of crises and therefore serves both writers in performing their identities of uninvolved observers.

I have shown how letters crystallize certain discourses established at the time of writing a letter and those formed during the writers' artistic and linguistic socialization, by which I mean the points in their lives when they reflected on their own identity and manifested a certain idea of it. I have additionally shown that although their correspondence displays a narrative of disruptive, historical events, the letter writers' language did not crucially change to reflect this, rather it followed the continuities of literary history and stuck with the literary trends of their formative years. In other words, I argue that the tone is not entirely re-invented after WWII although the goals of their identity performances have changed. These communicative goals that motivate the identity performances in the correspondence will be illustrated more detailed in the following chapter on representations of ageing.

Chapter IV: Representations of Age(ing)

Aim of the chapter

In this chapter I will examine representations of age and the process of ageing in Max Unold and Reinhard Koester's letters to the Belau-Levins. The analysis will include observations on the presentation of the often-employed opposites of youth and old age and their characteristics, as well as the related topic of death, as the inevitable result of ageing.

I have chosen the letters under examination in this chapter based on the way in which they deal with such topics and because they are the letters that relate to their writers' later years. I will investigate six of Reinhard Koester's letters sent to Edinburgh from January 1948 until February 1956, when he writes his last letters from a hospital in Berlin, shortly before his death in June of the same year. Of Unold's letters I will examine seven of those letters written from December 1946 to October 1962.

In selecting these letters, I have made the decision to examine the representations of age(ing) written from the perspective of old(er) age. This approach promises to be most enlightening, as it still includes young age and the associated topoi because, as I will show in the following, the narration of age is often binary in structure. I will demonstrate in the following analysis that, whilst youth can be narrated on its own, age is often narrated in its juxtaposition with youth. In the letters chosen for this chapter, Unold and Koester are between sixty-one and seventy-nine years old. The process of ageing and the two poles of youth and old age are matters discussed very regularly during the two decades of the letters I have chosen.

In the previous analytical chapters, I examined the correspondence with a focus on the representation of spaces and the body. These chapters provided numerous insights into Max Unold's and Reinhard Koester's use of narratological strategies and the cultural and literary tendencies that had influenced both. These findings and the question of how the letters

function within the writer-addressee relationship will be considered further in this chapter. Moreover, I will analyse the representation of ageing written from the standpoint of old age. Thus, I will not only illustrate the writers' adaptions of culturally constructed topoi of old age but also show the deliberate ways in which they utilized them to perform their desired idea of their own identity within the frame of letter writing. My set focus on the process of ageing therefore discloses once more the strategies that the writers use to manipulate the portrayal of themselves and thus their relationship with the addressee(s).

I will employ a close reading approach analysing the language, its tropes, and the images it creates, in other words the performance of the letter-writing persona in the texts. With the biographical knowledge gathered on the letter writers, the scoping of their texts for clues of where their language originates from, is a fruitful approach to deliver results in relation to the possibilities that created topoi offer in terms of narrating autobiographical experiences. Thus, it delivers an analysis of the writers' self-portrayals or, in other words, performances of an identity. Through the close reading analysis, I show that their writing can be read as 'playing' with certain stereotypes, and these are especially apparent in their writing of old age.

The representations looked at here are, to a great extent, self-representations of the letter writers as old men. In this chapter, I will first illustrate the representations of age(ing) in the letters discussed, and subsequently demonstrate how certain elements are inscribed in the linguistic patterns. Their use of language, of self-representing will give insights into whether they were influenced by the cultural frame they were brought up in and, more importantly, what strategies they follow in performing an identity through the act of letter writing.

First, I will introduce a small corpus of relevant works on the topic of both narrating (old) age and writing from the perspective of old age which the following analysis has drawn from and to which it aims to contribute. This analysis first examines the letters written by Reinhard Koester, who died in 1956 – the first of the four correspondents to die. The analysis of Koester's 'old age-letters' is divided into the examination of Koester's immediate postwar letters and the narrating of a 'sudden ageing', his narration of age(ing) from his increasingly dysfunctional body, the binary structured representation of the topic and finally his use of elements of the grotesque in the representations of age(ing). A last subdivision is dedicated to Koester's last letter written before his death; I analyse it as a life review dealing with the

topic of German guilt as it is written in the face of death, as part of Koester's 'old-age style'.[447] This letter marks an exception as it addresses the topic of German complicity and the Holocaust directly, whereas I interpret the remaining letters by Max Unold and Reinhard Koester to revolve around this important aspect without directly addressing it.

The second part of the analysis is dedicated to Max Unold's letters from 1946 to 1962 and I have further divided this analysis into three parts. The first part examines Unold's more immediate postwar presentations of ageing and death and reveals his narration to be staged as a product of crises. The two subsequent parts focus on how Unold's narrates age in the context of a bourgeois identity and elaborates on his emphasis on a representation of the old man as a studious and 'fit' member of society, even in the face of death.

Framework

This chapter draws on the works of scholars who have looked at the topic of age and ageing from different viewpoints including its representation in literature, its cultural discourse, or the ongoing demographic developments in Germany. For this thesis I have drawn extensively from Miriam Haller's series of articles[448] in which she applies Judith Butler's 'Gender trouble'[449] theory to the cultural construction of age and ageing.

Miriam Haller's adaptation of Judith Butler's performance theory is useful for my analysis because it probes stereotypes of age perception and representation. Her essays as a whole

[447] This term is drawn from Stuart Taberner and will be explained in the following section. Cf. Taberner.
[448] The following essays by Haller have been particularly helpful for this chapter: Miriam Haller, 'Undoing Age. Die Performativität des alternden Körpers im autobiographischen Text', in *"Für dein Alter siehst du gut aus!": Von der Un/Sichtbarkeit des alternden Körpers im Horizont des demographischen Wandels. Multidisziplinäre Perspektiven*, ed. by Sabine Mehlmann and Sigrid Ruby (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), pp. 215–234; Miriam Haller, '"Unwürdige Greisinnen". "Ageing Trouble" im literarischen Text', in *Alter und Geschlecht: Repräsentationen, Geschichten und Theorien des Alter(n)s*, ed. by Heike Hartung (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), pp. 45–64; Miriam Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung', *Bundesakademie für kulturelle Bildung*, (2004) <https://www.kubi-online.de/artikel/literarische-stereotype-des-alterns-strategien-ihrer-performativen-neueinschreibung> [accessed 9 May 2022].
[449] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

explore the cultural discourse of ageing from the perspective of performance theory, which I have referred to in more detail in the introduction of this thesis. As stated in the introduction, my analysis discusses performances of identity. As this chapter will show, the writers' play with stereotypical portrayals of ageing is not undertaken to undermine or deconstruct the stereotypes of age(ing). The term 'performance' describes what I have identified in the letters' texts – an employment of narratological strategies to act out and tailor a deliberate identity on the 'stage' that the human practice of letter-writing provides for the two men.

To support and develop her theories of age(ing) stereotypes, Haller adduces several examples of (mostly) twentieth century literature. These novels and her approach deduced from performance theory deliver new conclusions on the ageing discourse and its development throughout the twentieth century. [450] In this analysis I will use some of her results and terms used in her essay on literary stereotypes of ageing and expand on them in relation to epistolary correspondence.[451]

According to Haller, ageing as motif in literary texts is characterized by a binary structure.[452] Not only is age often presented in comparison to youth, but according to Haller its representation often oscillates between the two poles of glorification or romanticisation, as in the omniscient old on the one hand, and on the other hand, deterioration, as in the ridiculous old.[453]

In her essay on stereotypical representations of age in literary texts, Miriam Haller identifies three different strategies used throughout literary history. These can be subsumed under the terms 'Alterslob', 'Altersspott' and 'Altersklage'.[454]

Haller also makes the useful connection of different topoi and the established stereotypes in the literary presentation of age. She claims, for example, that the use of 'Altersspott' is

[450] In her essay, Haller, for example, examines the possibilities of deconstructing established norms of age; this process is what she subsumes under the term 'undoing age' and she states that her aim is not to abolish categories of age altogether but to create new possibilities to create daily life at an old age. Cf. Miriam Haller, 'Undoing Age. Die Performativität des alternden Körpers im autobiographischen Text', p. 219.
[451] Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[452] Cf. Miriam Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[453] Cf. ibid.
[454] Cf. ibid.

commonly connected with topoi of "der oder die "kindische Alte",[455] equipped with features such as "Lüsternheit, Geschwätzigkeit, Geiz, Gier, Trunk- und Streitsucht".[456] In postmodern literature, some of the topoi are disconnected from their usual stereotypes. The "verliebte Alte", for example, is then also a possible topos of 'Alterslob',[457] which proves the eventual variability of the long-established stereotypes of age(ing).[458] Before this, the representation of age(ing), which had been established for centuries, allowed little mutability, and resulted in age commonly taking on an allegorical and symbolical role within the binary structure based on young and old.[459]

The following analysis will build on and apply the terms *Alterslob*, *Altersklage*, *Altersspott* and their associated topoi, which I will illustrate in the main section of this chapter. Identifying which of the three the writers use will help to identify what topoi of age they deliberately inscribed in their narration of age and consequently what identity they were eager to perform.

Whilst Haller applies approaches of performance theory to various literary texts to bring to light the margins within which society constructs and deconstructs age(ing), other scholars have focused more specifically on the varieties in representations of such in literary works.

The following works have been influential for this chapter as they deal with literature published during Koester's and Unold's formative years: First, Esther Bauer's essay on masculinity in crisis in Mann's *Tod in Venedig* and Frisch's *Homo Faber*. Bauer examines the two male protagonists not in relation to their sexuality, as has often been done previously, but with a focus on their age(ing). Interestingly, Bauer reads both men as fearful of losing their masculinity, which, she argues, is inscribed, and postulated by bourgeois society. This fear, she illustrates, is a result of their own ageing, and the following chapter draws from these impulses, as the two male letter writers discussed in this thesis both led sexual relationships with the letters' addressee – a topic, albeit excluded from their texts, present in

[455] Cf. Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[456] Ibid.
[457] Haller provides Gabriel García Márquez' *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985) as an example of the new attribution of the topos 'old and in love'.
[458] Cf. Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[459] Cf. ibid.

the correspondents' ideas of their own identities. Bauer's essay is a close reading analysis through the lens of ageing studies of literary fiction with the aim of revealing the thoughts of the author and, consequently, of society surrounding the authors. I aim to deliver similar insights in the following analysis; however, my analysis is based not on fiction but on 'factual' epistolary communication and thus extend the lens of ageing studies which has until now mostly been applied on fictional literature. Additional works from which this chapter draws are Astrid Paul's book on death in the literature of the fin de siècle, of which especially the observations on a more distant dealing with the topic of age and death compared to that of the century prior have enriched this analysis as well as Shuangzhi Li's dissertation on decadent literature and its fascination with youth. Often, papers on the topic of youth consequently also discuss age and ageing and masculinity, as is the case in Li's book but also in an intriguing paper by Birgit Dahlke in which the author works out the nuances of the 'Jugendbegriff' of the fin de siècle and draws conclusions on male identity, the crisis of masculinity as well as male friendships. [460]

Stuart Taberner's book on ageing and old-age style must be named as another influential work for this chapter. In his book, Taberner first provides a demographic overview of the age structure of Germany society in the past decades to which he aims to relate the analysis, which forms the main part of his book. He analyses the work of four German novelists, whom he calls '45ers', because they, as he argues, belong to the generation "without guilt"[461] – Grass, Klüger, Wolf and Walser – and their writing about their own ageing and old age. Taberner sets out to investigate the way each author's old-age style purposefully manipulates the narrating of growing old to *perform* ageing and thus have a positive effect on his or her literary "life review".[462]

[460] For detailed reading see: Esther K. Bauer, 'Masculinity in Crisis: Aging Men in Thomas Mann's "Der Tod in Venedig" and Max Frisch's Homo Faber', *The German Quarterly*, 88.1 (2015), 22–42; Astrid Paul, *Der Tod in der Literatur um 1900: Literarische Dokumentationen eines mentalitätsgeschichtlichen Wandels [dargestellt an Theodor Fontanes 'Der Stechlin', Thomas Manns 'Buddenbrooks' und Arthur Schnitzlers 'Sterben']* (Marburg: Tectum-Verlag, 2005); Shuangzhi Li, *Die Narziss-Jugend: eine poetologische Figuration in der deutschen Dekadenz-Literatur um 1900 am Beispiel von Leopold von Andrian, Hugo von Hofmannsthal und Thomas Mann* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013); Birgit Dahlke, *Jünglinge der Moderne: Jugendkult und Männlichkeit in der Literatur um 1900* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006).

[461] Taberner employs Sigrid Weigel's term here: Sigrid Weigel, *Generation: zur Genealogie des Konzepts, Konzepte von Genealogie* (Munich: Fink Verlag, 2005), p. 273.

[462] Taberner, p. 195.

In line with what I bring to light in this chapter, Taberner reveals his chosen authors' performances of ageing in their texts and their motives for such narratological strategies. In particular, Taberner's argument of the old man's urge to play a (last) role in, what will define his identity, is a feature that is inherent to both Koester and Unold's old-age writing. Also supporting Miriam Haller's ideas of a performative re-inscription "of stereotypes of ageing",[463] Taberner argues that these performances are more deliberate, more purposeful in old-age style as this urge to play a last role in the performance of one's identity intensifies in old-age writing.[464] He links this back to one's eagerness to rewrite one's identity and to have the last word on it. Whilst I support the finding that the performances of an identity that one can detect in (letter) writing are deliberate and purposeful, my thesis' results counteract Taberner's conviction that such an effect becomes more striking in old-age style. The intensity of the performances detected in this thesis are not solely linked to age – their purposefulness is recognizable throughout the decades and therefore all ages of the writers. However, as this chapter will show, old-age style reveals different purposes behind such deliberate performances, triggered by, and this is congruent with Taberner's line of argument, the limited time left to contribute to one's own image.[465]

These observations on "performance[s] of old age"[466] and the useful definition of self-justification as a typical feature of "life review"[467] find their way into the following analysis. At the same time, my examinations of the old-age correspondence between Unold, Koester and the Belau-Levins, verify and extend Taberner's efforts as they expand research on old-age writing to epistolary texts with 'real' correspondents and their relationships.

[463] Cited as in Taberner, p. 25.
[464] Cf. ibid.
[465] Taberner suggests that a certain freedom that comes with old age, in terms of a liberation from the restrictive norms one has to stick to when young, is a typical feature of old-age style. He elaborates: "Decades earlier, in 1954, Gottfried Benn had likewise spoken in *Altern als Problem für Künstler* of a 'liberation from vain love and passion' and the possibility of a movement that is 'schwerelos, schwebend' (weightless, suspended), though he also suggests that some old-age writing is simply 'versteint' (turned to stone). For some this freedom may be psychologically linked to the imminence of death. For others it is more mundanely linked with the attainment of financial security and cultural capital." Taberner, p. 24.
[466] Taberner, p. 62.
[467] Cf. ibid., p. 43.

Representations of Age(ing): Reinhard Koester

Narrating a very 'sudden' ageing

I will begin this analysis with Reinhard Koester's first letter to arrive at Anicuta and Ernst Levin's home in Edinburgh in January 1948. The couple had been receiving letters and postcards from their close friends, Unold and Koester, since shortly after WWII. Max Unold had contacted them as early as 1946 but did not receive a reply until late 1947. This can be deduced from a letter, in which Unold is overjoyed to have received an answer after a year-long wait ("Das war eine wahre Herzensfreude Euer Brief nach so langer Zeit! Fast hatte ich die Hoffnung aufgegeben (man weiß nicht wie Emigranten eingestellt sind) und dann diese lieben, ausführlichen Zeilen. (…)").[468] A remarkable shift in identities has occurred, brought up in all clarity, although perhaps not deliberately, by Max Unold as he refers to them as emigrants and thus assigns them to this vast group of people, who are unknown to each other – it is a term that emphasizes the difference in identity between the old friends and also cements the unspoken 'us' in opposition to 'you' as 'the other'.

Only three weeks after Max Unold had received his first reply from his old friends, the 'Emigranten', Reinhard Koester makes his first attempt to get in contact with Anicuta Belau again. Anicuta's decision to answer Unold's letter in December 1947 awakens the old rivalry between the two men. As mentioned in Chapter II, Koester, after he had heard about the reply from Scotland, begins his first letter with an accusation about why Anicuta had written to Unold but not to him. All his complaining was in vain, and another two and a half years passed until Koester received his first mail from Edinburgh, not a letter but a postcard from Anicuta Belau.[469]

As this letter from January 1948 is his first letter after 11 years, it contains a summary of the past years, his professional difficulties, the end of the war, flight and return to Berlin – I paid

[468] Max Unold to Anicuta and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.
[469] His, similarly overjoyed, reply from August 1950 will be looked at in parts in the following.

great attention to those passages in Chapter II. This chapter will focus on the passages in this letter which remained unanswered, which refer to the letter writer's own age and the time passed between the last personal encounter of the correspondents.

At the time of writing the letter, Reinhard and Ellen Koester had returned to Berlin with their 10-year-old daughter Katharina. Although the family had found their apartment to be intact[470] and despite their domestic happiness, Koester's reports evoke a grim scene. Regardless of his successful professional activities at the time (symptoms of his illness that force the end of his career first appear in 1949) he claims that their daughter, the only thing representing youth and future, is his only source of happiness:

> Seit Mitte 46 bin ich Chefredakteur des von mir gegründeten „Puck", einer satirischen Zeitschrift des britisch lizensierten „Telegraf", der verbreitetsten Berliner Tageszeitung. Seitdem geht's uns wieder einigermaßen gut- wenn uns die Steuer nicht auffräße. (meine einzige freude ist unser töchterchen [sic] kathrinchen [sic] ….) Sonst lebe ich hier recht hoffnungslos von Tag zu Tag dahin, und ich wundere mich, dass ich immer noch den Humor für meine Zeitschrift aufbringe. Vor ein paar Tagen habe ich zum ersten Mal seit Anfang 1945 wieder mal eine Flasche (scheußlichen) Wein getrunken, den es als Weihnachtszuteilung gab. Und für die paar Zigaretten, die ich zur Arbeit haben muss, gebe ich mein halbes Gehalt aus, soweit es mir die Steuer lässt. Da denkt man sehnsüchtig an die Zeit zurück, wo wir damals noch allabendlich unseren guten Pfälzer Rotwein auf dem Tisch hatten und Du dazu deine Brasil rauchtest- (…).
>
> Heute nachmittag gehen wir zur Muschelkalk, die ich seit 8 Jahren nicht mehr gesehen habe. Von alten Freunden ist außer Unold, der alle Jubeljahr mal einen recht trockenen Brief schreibt, niemand mehr da. Nur mit Asta Nielsen[471] korrespondieren wir jetzt wieder. Sie lebt in Kopenhagen und schreibt uns entzückende Briefe. Sonst ist das Leben freudlos und leer.[472]

[470] "In Guben erlebten wir das Kriegsende in seiner grausigsten Form. Vierzehn Tage mit dem Kind im Keller ohne Wasser und Licht bei schwerstem Beschuss von beiden Seiten. Dann wurden wir ostwärts getrieben, und konnten erst Mitte Juni nach Fußmärschen von insgesamt 300km wieder nach Berlin kommen. Dafür fanden wir wenigstens unsere Wohnung unbeschädigt wieder." Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

[471] Asta Nielsen (1881-1972) was a Dutch movie star who reached great fame through her acting in German silent films in the 1920s and 1930s. Nielsen lived in Berlin where she associated with Ringelnatz, this is most likely how Reinhard Koester and she met. Nielsen left Germany for Denmark in 1936.

[472] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

Although there is some reason for happiness – a stable although presumably not large income, a happy marriage, a healthy child – Koester describes his life as empty and without any joy. When he admits their daughter as his only source of happiness, he emphasizes this statement with an ellipsis at the end of the sentence. This ellipsis allows several interpretations. It could simply mean an attempt to dramatically emphasize the misery he experiences, however, it could also imply that he did not think it necessary to elaborate further, as if there was a common understanding on how life was without joy and lacking a deeper meaning – "leer" as he indicates at the end. If Koester thinks it a convention to portray life (albeit possibly not constantly perceiving it that way) as a great bleakness, the question remains which social frame established such an understanding of life.

Is it life perceived by older persons who are no longer the 'epitome of joy', the way Koester describes his daughter, or is it after all, postwar life perceived by those, who had witnessed a world before the war? Koester's choice of the impersonal pronoun ("da denkt man sehnsüchtig (…) zurück") to describe his longing memories of the times before the war, indicates his assumption that he is stating a longing experienced not only by himself but collectively. Koester's text also displays the diremption of the time. It switches between bemoaning the current misery and the reminiscing addressed above. The characterization of life's misery shows elements of both describing life as an older person (Koester is sixty-three years old in January 1948) and life during the instability of occupation after a lost war.

It is therefore difficult to properly make a distinction between the two developments. Older age and military defeat and the subsequent postwar life occurred simultaneously for both Koester and Unold. For example, as Koester states that all the old friends are gone ("ist (…) niemand mehr da") he does not specify the reasons for this. Whether most of the friends he refers to have died a natural death, which would be connected to their increasing age, or whether some of them, like the Levins, were forced to leave Germany or even killed, remains unclear and the borders between one and the other are blurred by the letter writer's vague wording.

As established, postwar life and old age are experienced by Koester simultaneously which makes it more difficult for the researcher to clearly identify the root of his unhappiness. It is,

however, possible to state that his bemoaning of the economic situation and the difficulties in obtaining alcohol, coffee or cigarettes is directly linked to the shortage of such goods in postwar Germany. Additionally, the letter writer's lament over the repetitive monotony of daily life ("Sonst lebe ich hier recht hoffnungslos von Tag zu Tag dahin (…)") and the overwhelming absence of joy or excitement ("Sonst ist das Leben freudlos und leer.") can be identified as a stereotypical form of *Altersklage*. Such lamentation features precisely what Haller has made out to be the characteristics of *Altersklag*e – the loss of joy of life and the inability "Präsenz zu leben"[473] – in which life is portrayed as merely a repetition of known experiences which results in the feeling of numbness that is inscribed in the letter.

This last sentence before the salutation intensifies the great hopelessness and to end the letter with such a strong feature of *Altersklage* is a deliberate decision that underlines how Koester summarises his general situation. Absolute hopelessness, paired with physical or psychological exhaustion, often introduces the occasion of death in literature, as Astrid Paul has proven in her examinations of the portrayal of death in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*.[474] Koester's path of suffering only begins a year later, when the first symptoms of his physical decay appear, and, in his role of narrator of his daily life he, of course, cannot introduce what he does not know. The intersections of the examined epistolary portrayals and those of literature become more striking as our letter writers age. Undoubtedly, Koester achieves a dramatic effect with this way of ending his first letter, a strategy already detected in the letters of his younger self. [475]

Although, at the time of this very first letter, Koester can still rely on his good health, the long gap in correspondence gives the impression of Reinhard Koester having aged very suddenly. His writing follows a pattern of lamenting which, whether motivated by the economic situation in Germany or factors of daily life related to his age (death of many friends, lack of motivation, lack of new experiences), endorses the impression of a life full of sacrifices. I have made similar observations in Chapter II when I pointed out the metonymical narration of Germany as a sacrificial space. In relation to narrating his age(ing), Koester again draws on

[473] Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[474] Cf. Paul, p. 60.
[475] As depicted in Chapter III.

this emphasis of the 'bitter sides' as a strategy to form the identity of a 'victim' who bore sacrifices. During the long gap in correspondence, Reinhard Koester had become a parent and an old(er) person at the same time.[476] This simultaneity of developments has a significant impact on his writing about his young daughter, for it enables him to write about youth from the perspective of age. This phenomenon emphasizes his employed *Altersklage*, and it appears very frequently in his letters, as I will illustrate in the following section.

Narrating age from a dysfunctional body

Reinhard Koester did not receive a reply to his letter of 1948, and it was not until August 1950 that he was sent a postcard by Belau to which he reacted as enthusiastically as one would expect. I studied his response regarding its portrayal of the body in Chapter III, for it contains Koester's report on the first symptoms of his illness, his paralyzed body parts, and the treatments he had been undergoing. This means I have explored Koester's focus on the body in the abovementioned chapter but in connection with the narration of age and death, I bring to light more aspects of his narrative techniques. With the naturalistic description of his body's decay, Koester makes use of a stereotypical element of *Altersklage*, the bemoaning of a failing body, which is, as I will demonstrate, often paired with the emphasis on the unaffected mind.

Although Koester's postwar letters are mostly of a *neusachliche* tone, some passages of his presentations of ageing are in accordance with early Expressionist poetry, as represented by Georg Heym, Gottfried Benn, or Jakob van Hoddis.[477] This discovery is also due to the common preoccupation with ageing and death in early Expressionism and Koester's later letters. In accordance with such observations, when writing about his own medical treatment and

[476] Reinhard Koester's only child Katharina was born on 30 May 1938 when Koester was 53 years old.
[477] These three are named here as they all belonged to the 'Neue Club', founded in 1909, which gave young artists of the Expressionist scene a platform for their art. Most artists performing at the club based in Potsdamer Straße, were contemporaries of Unold and Koester as well as the Belau-Levins and it is to be assumed that all of them took note of these tendencies and e.g., the scandal following the publication of Benn's 'morgue' poems. For detailed info on the 'Neue Club' see: Wolfgang Paulsen, 'Schriften des Neuen Clubs 1908—1914', *Colloquia Germanica*, 19.3/4 (1986), 364–364; Wolfgang Paulsen, *Deutsche Literatur des Expressionismus* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1983).

impending death, Koester's descriptions show an, occasionally unsettling, delight in the display of science and the way it deals with human deterioration.[478] Similar to the features of Expressionist writing – a movement Koester would have considered himself part of – he uses remarkably unembellished language to state his situation and a distinctive enthusiasm about portraying the 'ugly' scientific aspects of physical illness and its treatment. This writing style endorses the misery of his state as he employs the stereotypical pattern of *Altersklage*:

> Im Krankenhaus hat man mich von oben bis unten durchleuchtet, geröngt, hat mir Blut abgezapft und Nervensaft aus dem Rückenmark, um zu der Feststellung zu gelangen, daß ich vollkommen gesund sei. (…) Jetzt schlucke ich Tröpfchen und Pülverchen, die auch nicht mehr schaden als die 3-400 Spritzen aller Art, die man mir vorher hereingejagt hat. Immerhin habe ich mich allgemein etwas erholt und sehe blühender aus als je vorher, denn als ich ins Krankenhaus eingeliefert wurde, war ich nur noch ein Skelett von 94 Pfund, an dem die Schwestern nur mühsam eine Stelle entdecken konnten, wo unter der Lederhaut noch ein bisschen Fleisch war, worin sie ihre Spritzen bohren konnten.[479]

This passage shows once more the already detected *sachliche* tone and an unadorned stating of facts in Koester's writing. Although such writing forms a classic *Altersklage*, as in bemoaning the decreasing state of the ageing body, at the same time, its naturalistic wording ("hereingejagt", "Skelett", "durchleuchtet") creates a distance to the events told. I suggest that this distance, created by the ironic tone with which the narrator describes the doctors' approaches, can be read as an attempt to maintain control over both his 'Alter' and his 'Klage'. As the writer's health deteriorates, he is less successful in employing this technique to maintain control and avoid emotional statements, as I will show in this chapter.

Besides the strikingly realistic representation of medical treatments, Koester's choice of words enhances the dichotomy between young and old. The adjective "blühend" to describe

[478] This is in line with, for example, the tendencies of Expressionist poetry by Gottfried Benn. When, in 1912, Gottfried Benn published his infamous 'morgue' poems, literary critics throughout Germany were of one mind in their dismissive reviews, with the exception of more progressive papers, e.g. the *Berliner Post*. The fact that these papers' statements can easily be applied to Koester's text speaks to his Expressionist nature. The southern German newspaper *Augsburger Abendzeitung* postulates in the spring of 1912: "Pfui Teufel! Welch eine zügellose, von jeglicher Herrschaft geistiger Sauberkeit bare Phantasie entblößt sich da; welche abstoßende Lust am abgründig Häßlichen, welches hämische Vergnügen, Dinge, die nun einmal nicht zu ändern sind, ans Licht zu ziehen..." As cited in: Rainer Schmitz, *Wilder Ekel – Geiles Grauen* (2012) https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/wilder-ekel-geiles-grauen-100.html [last accessed 12 April 2022].
[479] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

his state after a hospital stay, evokes images of youth and especially life, both connected in the associative expression "aussehen wie das blühende Leben". In contrast to such life-affirming expressions, the morbid nouns of "Skelett" and "Lederhaut" stand out, as well as the lack of "Fleisch". Furthermore, Koester includes his young daughter and her vivid fitness in the contrast, thus not limiting the dichotomy to states represented by himself, sick or less sick. At a later point in the letter, after having described his family's constant battle with poverty and scarce food supplies, he expands the dichotomy and includes his daughter's youth as follows:

> (…) Umso erstaunlicher ist es, daß mein Töchterchen, mein Kathrinchen, trotz allem ein bildhübsches, gesundes und ewig vergnügtes Mädel von 12 Jahren geworden ist mit einem Körperchen wie aus Stahl.[480]

I have already examined this passage regarding its representation of the body and its martial language in Chapter III, but the additional function of contrasting Koester's age and his sense of his body failing him should also be noted. The narrator here intensifies the *Altersklage* by the direct opposition with youth.

One of the common features of depicting older age, as can be concluded here, and especially when a person is physically constricted, is the emphasis on the fit mind unaffected by old age. We find passages to support this in Koester's (and Unold's) letters, for example in the former's closing lines of the letter discussed here:

> (…) Der Kopf ist bis jetzt noch ziemlich rege, aber was nützt das in dieser herrlichen Zeit, in der die meisten Verleger pleite sind und die anderen nichts oder fast gar nichts bezahlen. So leben wir von Sozialunterstützung und gelegentlichen Almosen eines entfernten Vetters. So leben wir alle Tage...[481]

Although eager to state that his mind is still working fine, Koester relativises his statement as he anticipates it could, however, deteriorate in the future ("bis jetzt"), but submits to the constant creating of opposing pairs (young vs. old, body vs. mind) and, as I would like to

[480] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[481] Ibid.

suggest, marks the first step of detaching the person(ality) from the body and thus from death itself, a technique often used in representations of death in literature.

As an illustration of such techniques, Astrid Paul's examinations of death in fin de siècle literature should be mentioned here once more. In her observations on Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, Paul remarks that most of the dying figures (especially those of the later generations, when death was increasingly scientified and no longer included as a natural part of life) are deprived of their individual characteristics when it comes to the process of dying.[482]

Dying (and the prior illness) is often narrated by narrating the body, its (decaying) functions, frailty, and loss of control. Thomas Mann's narration, for instance, achieves the "Entfremdung des sterbenden Körpers von der Persönlichkeit der Figur"[483] and he stages his figures' deaths according to their contemporary perception of death. Hanno Buddenbrooks's death, which is set to occur as early as 1877, is narrated with a peculiar neutrality and thus, according to Paul, in line with the increasing rationalising of how to deal with the sick and dying at the end of the nineteenth century.[484] Considering these convincing arguments, Koester's depiction may not only pick up on Expressionist as well as (*neu)-sachliche* tendencies, but also draws on the cultural conventions of death and dying at the time, which were portrayed not only in the literature of the twentieth century on the theme of the "wissenschaftliche Kälte des Sterbemilieus",[485] but at the end of the previous century in anticipation of these conventions.

Furthermore, these results support my theory that the detachment of mind from body, as executed by Koester in the letter cited above, can be understood as a step towards achieving a neutral role as narrator of his own aging process. Unlike Thomas Mann, who, in his fictional text, installs a heterodiegetic narrator equipped to present each figures' decay with neutral detachment, Koester does not have the necessary distance. His letter-writing persona is, after all, an auto-diegetic narrator (as he himself is the protagonist of his own 'plot' so to say) and

[482] Cf. Paul.
[483] Paul, p. 67.
[484] Ibid., p. 68.
[485] Cited as in ibid., p. 67.

in need of specific modi operandi (such as introducing a detachment of mind from body), if he desires to achieve the same distant tone.

Summing up the various elements of Reinhard Koester's representation of age(ing) that I detect in his letters so far, I reach the following conclusions. In his depiction of having become old (and eventually chronically ill) Koester follows the patterns of *Altersklage* established through literary history. This involves the description of the body forsaking its owner, as well as lamentations on the old person's hopelessness, a lack of joy due to the repetitiveness of life ("So leben wir alle Tage…"),[486] and the absolute absence of "faustisches Streben",[487] which is an attitude very much attributed to the young.

I further detect that Koester drew closely on Expressionist writing regarding its affirmation of science and its (medical) techniques but, in terms of his tone, he sticks to the unaffected and observing style of interbellum *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Regarding the narration of the process of dying, the letter writer follows the shift towards a rationalising of death and physical procedures that was evident in the late nineteenth century.

Koester contrasts his *Altersklage*, which he has put into a *neusachliche* form, with 1) his daughter's young age and fitness and 2) his own mind and intellect, which, he claims, is unaffected by the process of ageing. Both the unaffected mind and his daughter's youth are motifs that reappear in almost all the letters leading up to his death.

[486] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 30.8.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[487] Miriam Haller writes on this: "Detailliert wird in der Altersklage der körperliche und geistige Verfall beschrieben. Der Verlust der Lebensfreude wird beklagt, ebenso wie die Unfähigkeit, Präsenz zu leben. Alles erscheint nur noch als Wiederholung des Ewiggleichen, als Refrain vergehender Zeit – vom faustischen Streben, zumindest ein einziges Mal noch zum Augenblick zu sagen, 'Verweile doch! du bist so schön!'" Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.

The binary structure of writing age: old and young

In November 1951, over a year later, Koester, for the first time, introduces the word 'Greis' to speak of his own person, and almost every following letter features this term or similar expressions ("der alte Knacker", "der alte Trottel") to refer to his old age.[488] Although enriched with the familiar sarcasm, the letter shows his sentimentalism when anticipating his own death. He has been ill and in pain for over two years at the time of writing the letter and the text shows a first anticipation of his death, staged by the letter writer as a longing for such:

> Es geht [illegible] nichts als vorwärts mit mir. Ich warte auf den Tag, an dem es mir erlaubt ist, die Tür hinter mir zuzumachen- mit nicht allzu schlechtem Gewissen denen gegenüber, die ich zurücklasse.[489]

The longing for death, here described as a wait until he is 'allowed' to die, might be a genuine state of mind owing to the years of agony that already lie behind the letter writer, but it also fits into the topoi of *Altersklage*. Koester does not suppress his surrender – the 'Bürgertum' of the Kaiserreich, in which he grew up, would have interpreted a death longing as such – but openly admits that he is looking forward to leaving this world. As I stated before, it is striking that he takes up the role of a memento mori within the epistolary exchange of the group of friends. As I will discuss, it is also interesting that Max Unold evades such morbid prospects by simply stopping the correspondence once his health deteriorates and he finds himself 'waiting' for death.

Koester's letter from 1951 – he still has over four years to live – moves from expressions of his longing to die, to the antithetical portrayal of old and young, to closing reminiscing remarks about his and Belau's last encounter:

> Und ich wäre eigentlich doch so gern ein „Dandy-Greis" geworden, der mit seiner Tochter den ersten Tango getanzt hätte, dass die Leute gesagt hätten „Donnerwetter, der alte Trottel tanzt noch passabel, und die Kleine, die eigentlich

[488] "Ich bin ja nun auch 67 Jahre alt geworden- und kann es trotz der immer noch halbgelähmten Füße und der verkrampften rechten Hand nicht recht begreifen, daß ich so ein alter Knacker sein soll." Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 09.05.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3. Other letters contain the modified versions "Tattergreis" or "rüstiger Greis".
[489] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 25.11.1951, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

> seine Enkelin sein Könnte- alle Achtung!“ Aber der liebe Gott, der zu mir wenig lieb war, hat es anders gewollt. Macht nichts-[490] wenn ich es nur noch fertig bringe, Kathrinchen über den Berg zu bringen. Grüß Deine Anica und Deinen Mann. – Ob wir noch einmal einen Abend lang zusammen lachen können? Herzlich Dein alter Koester Achja, noch einmal lachen können wie früher- und sei’s nur wie damals, als Du bei uns in der Bayerischen Straße warst! Wenn’s auch ein Lachen quandmème [sic][491] war. –[492]

Again, we find a confrontation of the letter writer’s imagined old self, which he here describes as both a “Dandy- Greis” but also, in line with the stereotypical *Altersspot*’ as “alte[n] Trottel”, with the youth his daughter represents. In this passage he narrates the missed opportunity of a dance between father and daughter. An imaginary audience’s comment, in direct speech, refers to Katharina Koester as “die Kleine” who could have been her father’s “Enkelin”, both terms strongly emphasizing her youth. The exclamation at the end of the direct speech additionally tells the reader of her pleasant looks and thus completes the stereotype of youth and beauty.

Such pairing occurs very regularly in Koester’s letters, one could explain it merely with his fatherly love and pride and, although that must have influenced his writing, it is important to take his profession as a writer into account here. It can be assumed that Koester knew of the charming effect of pairing young with old, ingeniously done in literary texts that all the letter correspondents were certainly familiar with, for instance the Major and Hilarie as a nineteenth century example[493] or Gustav Aschenbach and Tadzio in the famous (albeit failed) attempt to overcome decadent writing at the fin de siècle.[494] Following these techniques of narrating age, which seem to strive for a complete avoidance of narrating age on its own, Koester here demonstrates his writing skills and education to his addressee, in other words he performs his identity as a novelist. Besides that, he emphasizes his close relationship with his daughter, an achievement proudly endorsed by his patriarchal wish to successfully see her “über den Berg”.

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[490] Koester scribbles these last lines upside down on the sides of the paper.
[491] Koester incorrectly uses the ‘accent grave’ instead of ‘accent circonflex’, an odd mistake since he was Molière-translator and thus proficient in French.
[492] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 25.11.1951, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[493] *Der Mann von funfzig Jahren* (1821/1829) is, as a novella, a part of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*. It sketches a love quadrangle between young and old (both sexes in both ages) and debates the legality of incestuous lovers and their wish to marry.
[494] Thomas Mann’s *Tod in Venedig*, published in 1911.

As a postscript, Koester adds another reminiscing remark, a nostalgic reference to Belau's visit to Berlin in 1936, the friends' last encounter and a time often remembered in their correspondence (Koester's wife Ellen also reminisces about this visit in her correspondence with Belau). Such a desire to re-live older times may also have its origins in the process of ageing, as, to an extent, a 'decadent' thirst to regain the lost joy and feelings of younger age, but in the epistolary context it also serves the obvious purpose of including the addressee. There seem to be two reasons for the writer's regular reminiscing: the urge to resurrect long-lost youth, a sensation which, in the literary examples named above, often initially entices the old figure with the young antagonist, and, at the same time, the attempt to win over the addressee with constant mention of their shared memories of a cheerful past.[495]

It may have been such nostalgic impulses that led Reinhard Koester to express his wish for Ernst Levin to join the group of "alten Münchnern", a term he uses to refer to himself and Belau as well as Unold. The desire to emphasize only the positive of all shared memories is expressed by him in a frank manner as he mentions that one should celebrate a "Festwoche der Erinnerungen", solely to remember "alles Schöne und Lustige".[496] His wish to gain Levin as an additional correspondent remains unfulfilled until shortly before his death; until then he continues his correspondence with Anicuta Belau who seems to have overcome her infamous 'Schreibfaulheit' and has begun to send Koester and his family care packages with food and clothes on a regular basis. As a result, most of Koester's letters of the 1950s contain his expressions of thanks followed by lamentations on the bleakness of life. Such laments are aimed at postwar life in general but also his very own situation without income and in bad health. The depiction of his poor physical state is often closely intertwined with his astonishment about how old he has become. The following letter from 1952 contains another example of a remarkably plain style and scientific language:

[495] How cheerful this past was is debatable. The adverb 'quandmême' allows the assumption that the letter writer here aims to refer to the fact that the correspondents generally were not in a state of happiness during the time referred to (the year of 1937, shortly before Anicuta Belau's emigration to Edinburgh).

[496] "Ich freue mich vor allem darüber, dass wir alten Freunde wenigstens brieflich wiedergefunden haben- und ich würde mich noch mehr freuen, wenn dein Mann der Vierte im Bunde wäre und sein wollte. Ich träume immer noch davon, dass wir alten Münchner uns doch noch mal wiedersehen müssten und wir noch einmal eine 'Festwoche der Erinnerungen' feiern könnten, bei der nur alles Schöne und Lustige erwähnt und belacht werden dürfte. Aber das wird wohl ein Traum bleiben." Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 10.07.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

> (…) Ich bin ja nun auch 67 Jahre alt geworden- und kann es trotz der immer noch halbgelähmten Füße und der verkrampften rechten Hand nicht recht begreifen, daß ich so ein alter Knacker sein soll. Vor fünf Wochen habe ich von der Deutschen Weinwerbung GmbH., für die ich vor 14 Jahren eine „Weinfibel" geschrieben habe, die in einer Auflage von 100 000 Exemplaren als Werbebroschüre verbreitet ist, und für die ich nun wieder so was schreiben soll, eine Kiste mit wundervollen Spitzenweinen bekommen, die mich wieder etwas aufgepulvert haben. Aber nun geht der Segen zu Ende- und dann ist es wieder zappenduster. Als ich am Ostermontag zum ersten Mal im Garten war, hat ein Grippe-Virus die Gelegenheit benutzt, sich bei mir einzunisten und sich zu vermehren: das hat mich wieder ziemlich zurückgeworfen, nachdem es langsam wieder aufwärts gegangen war. Es ist nicht mehr viel los mit uns allen, scheint es.[497]

This passage contains further elements of *neusachliche* writing and the, now very regularly employed *Altersklage*. After first expressing his disbelief about having become so old, Koester goes on to, ironically, depict the positive effects of drinking wine and then how he fell ill with influenza. The more imaginative narration of a personified influenza virus, however, almost counteracts the objective style; the graphic description of the virological processes of the virus using the human body as host and then reproducing itself again shows features of a strong affirmation of science, a mentality endorsed by the increasing tendency in the arts to rationalise death and physical procedures before and especially during WWI. This tendency to admire the scientific stems from a general rise of the sciences at universities and research institutions at the fin de siècle. WWI, as the first modern war, resulted in more literary processing of its experiences such as naturalistic descriptions of wounds, decay, sounds etc. This was mostly represented in Expressionist poetry (e.g., Georg Trakl) as well as *neusachliche* literature of the late 1920s – Expressionism and *Neue Sachlichkeit* are in fact counter-movements but, as with many artists of the multi-faceted period that is often insufficiently referred to as 'Modernism', both tendencies are to be found in Koester's literature and, as I have shown, also in his private correspondence.

In this analysis I have illustrated how with increasing age and declining health, Reinhard Koester narrates his own figure as "alter Trottel" undergoing significant medical treatments and thus merges the stereotypical use of *Altersspott* and *Altersklage*. I have identified that he

[497] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 09.05.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

has employed the pattern of *Altersklage*, which is typically a narrating of decay, in a *neusachliche* manner. The strong focus on the scientific process of his body's decay and the cold distance maintained in the tone of his narrating voice throughout all the descriptions prove this. Moreover, I have shown how the narration of his physical decay is intensified with the binary structure of his narration – as he counterpoints the description of himself with that of his young daughter.

I argue this shows once more the careful consideration of Koester's text as well as his connection to the literary movements of his younger years: Expressionism and *Neue Sachlichkeit*. His stereotypical representation of ageing and age, which I categorise as an oscillation between misery and mockery reveals 1) his own dependence on performative inscriptions of norms (regarding the perception of old age) and 2) his desire to paint a picture of a life of sacrifice.

Although he remains silent about the sense of unease that is palpable in his epistolary interactions with the Belau-Levins, his writing patterns and strategies reveal his attempts to deal with exactly this uneasiness. With the strategies mentioned above, Koester ascribes himself the identity of a miserable victim (not only of age and illness but also of his country's development) and thus attempts to evoke the reader's sympathy (or most definitely manipulate her judgement of his actions).

Both the identification of his purposeful (as in the purpose to perform the identity of a victim) use of *Altersklage* and *Altersspott* as well as his employment of linguistic elements of literary trends confirm that the letter writer used the correspondence to tailor his identity. As briefly mentioned, Stuart Taberner sees this as a feature of a "life review"[498] and part of old-age style. It is convincing that, as he argues, with greater age, writers intensify their identity performances in texts as they are running out of time to do so. However, in the example discussed here, the phenomenon seems to have multiple origins. As I explained, old age and postwar reality happened simultaneously to Koester and Unold. Due to his financial situation and his poor health, the former experienced both more intensely than the latter. Due to these

[498] Cf. Taberner, p. 43.

simultaneous developments, a clean separation of the narrative reactions to them is not entirely possible and any interpretations based thereon would be merely speculative. Whether part of old-age style or not, Koester's purposeful narration (of his own ageing and, as we have seen also other themes) reveals two things: that the revived correspondence with his friend and former lover who had emigrated forced him to articulate an account of his actions and that in doing so, he found the opportunity to deliberately style it in a certain way and thus tailor his own life review.

Age(ing) and dying – a grotesque experience?

With Koester's increasing age and deteriorating health, the elements of, previously rarely included, *Altersspott* increase. On a pencil-drawn Easter bunny on the writing paper of the letter discussed above, Koester comments:

> (…) der „mühevolle" Osterhase war mein Werk. Und so, wie er Eier legte, schreibe ich jetzt. Mit zwei Fingern der linken Hand und einem recht ramponierten Gehirn-Eierstock, wenn Du das als Engländerin nicht als shoking [sic] empfindest.[499]

Koester inscribes his, always latent, sarcasm here, however, this passage bears more than simply sarcasm, rather I argue that it evinces features of the grotesque. With the pairing of such bizarre word games with the abovementioned emphasis on the body and its organs and functions, Koester's narration of age(ing) seems to move towards a flight from reality. Grotesque writing, which is interestingly categorised by Miriam Haller as one of the topoi of *Altersspott*,[500] initially means a process of uncertainty or a disturbance explained as a failure of the "Kategorien unserer Weltorientierung".[501] A grotesque tale additionally aims to mix

[499] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 09.05.1952, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[500] Cf. Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[501] Wolfgang Kayser, *Das Groteske in Malerei und Dichtung*, Rowohlts deutsche Enzyklopädie (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1960), p. 199.

the borders of comedy and tragedy, human and animal[502] and it is further classified as an attempt for a "gleichzeitig[es] Erregen von Grauen (bis hin zum Schock) und Lachen".[503] The "shock" is even referred to directly in the letter discussed here. Other techniques used by writers of grotesques, such as the blurring of the borders between comic and tragic and the inclusion of animal motifs and phantasms, become increasingly more apparent in the correspondence during Reinhard Koester's last years.

A letter by Koester from almost one year later in January 1953 contains further striking examples of such a use of animal motifs. The first written page of the letter alone contains five stylistic devices borrowed from the animal world:

> Liebe Anicuta und Aneka, das war mal wieder eine schöne und liebe Überraschung, als Euer nachträglicher Weihnachtsgruß eintraf! Kathrinchen hat sich wie ein Dackel auf meine arme Couch geworfen und vor Freude mit beiden Beinen in der Luft gestrampelt, als sie die beiden Schachteln mit den Bonbons bekam. Und das Schokolade-Pulver kam gerade jetzt wie gerufen. Denn unser großes Kalb (sie ist nur um 3-4cm kleiner als Ellen und ich) hatte am letzten Ferientag etwas Fieber und konnte ein paar Tage nichts essen außer Keks. Wahrscheinlich weil sie zu doll mit Rodelschlitten und Skiern herumgetobt hatte. Denn wenn es Schnee gibt, ist sie außer Rand und Band: das hat sie von meinem Dackel Florian geerbt. Jetzt war sie ein bisschen spitzmäusig geworden und sollte viel Milch trinken- aber sie behauptete sie schmecke nach Lebertran (die Hysterische Ziege!), und wollte sie nicht trinken. Aber mit Eurem Schokoladenpulver vermischt säuft sie sie literweise.[504]

The text impressively blurs the boundaries of reality, and thus achieves an almost disconcerting atmosphere. The reader can no longer trust normative events, the "Dackel Florian" is personified to be related to Koester's daughter, the daughter herself is metaphorically first described as a calf, then a goat, attributing her with the features "big" and "hysterical". Even the couch ("meine arme Couch") is personified to be suffering, when Katharina Koester throws herself on it, overjoyed by the goods that have arrived from Edinburgh.

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[502] Cf. 'Groteske', in *Metzler Literatur Lexikon* ed. by Dieter Burdorf, Christoph Fasbender and Burkhard Moennighoff (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), p. 297.
[503] Ibid.
[504] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 14.01.1953, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

In line with the postulate of grotesque writing to suggest and bring forward cultural change, the unsettling effect of such a play with realities enables thoughts that were assumed to be impossible, and it allows the narrator to flee all substantiality. Koester's writing here subversively, albeit playfully, undermines stereotypical norms and thus offers new perspectives and "die Möglichkeit einer ganz anderen Welt, einer anderen Weltordnung, eines anderen Lebens".[505]

The grotesque elements therefore shake up the rules of Koester's reality and I would like to conclude that, by crafting this text, the letter writer himself flees his own misery and creates a more cheerful scene. Additionally, he demonstrates his own literary skills and most certainly hoped to entertain his letter's addressee. The deliberate inclusion of grotesque elements continues as Koester moves on to thank Anicuta Belau for her packet. In the following passage, Koester's narration once more employs the *Altersspott*, whilst at the same time mirroring writing styles of the grotesque in order to realise the dynamic of the "binäre Rahmen der Heterogenität von 'alt' und 'jung'":[506]

> (…) Und Ellen profitiert insofern davon, als sie jetzt– wie viele alte Damen– jede Woche ein „Kaffeekränzchen" hat, das rundum geht. Die Woche findet es bei uns statt. Und da kann sie ihren Ratsch-Schwestern eine Kanne dicken Kaffee vorsetzen: du lieber Gott wird das ein Geschwabbel geben. Und wenn der Höhepunkt der Ratsch-Kaffee-Orgie erreicht ist, muß ich vielgeprüfter, alter, kranker Mann mich den Hyänen zum Frass vorwerfen, weil die alten Weiber dann noch einen vollendeten Kavalier sehen wollen. Und der bin ich ja– Gott sei's geklagt! – noch immer. Geistreich, galant und die Höflichkeit selbst. Aber das brauch ich dir ja nicht zu sagen: du kennst mich ja von früher! (…) [507]

Once more this passage offers more than one level of interpretation, when anticipating the "Geschwabbel" at his wife's coffee gathering ("Kaffeekränzchen"), Koester leaves room for interpretation. Whether such "Geschwabbel" refers to the coffee in the pot sloshing back and forth or the elderly bodies of the many women (Koester has made a remark about his wife's weight gain at another point) tightly packed together and about to begin gossiping[508] remains

[505] Michail Bachtin, *Literatur und Karneval: Zur Romantheorie und Lachkultur*, (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1990), p. 26.
[506] Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[507] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 14.01.1953, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[508] After all, 'Geschwabbel' also refers to 'Geschwätz'.

unvoiced. However, much more clearly drawn is the picture of the 'geschwätzige Alte', a stereotypical display of age and a feature of *Altersspott*, indicated through the nomination "Ratsch-Schwestern", another animal metaphor ("Hyänen") as well as his own role, narrated again with the usual ironic tone, as the beau and gentleman within those 'hyenas' of elderly[509] women.

In the respect of stereotypical topoi related to *Altersspott* (such as garrulity, lasciviousness, avarice, greed, aggressiveness)[510] Miriam Haller mentions several of Molière's plays[511] as literary historical examples for *Altersspott* displayed in the known topoi. These texts and their particularities were all too familiar to Reinhard Koester, given that the translating of several Molière texts had been his most stable source of income for decades, and up until now, his name is mostly found in connection with the German translation of the famous French writer.

This proves once more that the letter writer is, in his role as a writer, extremely self-aware, and that he puts thought and effort into his texts sent to his former lover, in this case, possibly not only to impress her but as an expression of thanks for her care packages sent to his family – intellectual entertainment as payment (Danksagung) so to say. Koester's self-imposed requirement to entertain by creating "eine(r) andere(n) Weltordnung, ein(es) anderes(n) Lebens"[512] becomes even more apparent in the closing passage of the same letter, where he dissolves the limitations of nature. His narration here allows for play where the old protagonist of his letters becomes young, and he thereby narrates the topos of the 'kindische Alte' in a literal dimension. Based on his medication that, according to his doctors, promises rejuvenation, a process about which Koester is doubtful, the narrating voice unravels a highly grotesque story in which the protagonist becomes a child, and later a young adult, again:

> (…) Und nun soll ich auch ein Hormon- Implantat in den Bauch kriegen. Danach wird man wieder ganz jung und quicklebendig. Darum versuche ich jetzt schon vorsorglich, meinen Schlafrock gegen eine [sic] Matrosenanzug einzutauschen,

[509] Whether they were in fact old should be doubted strongly. Ellen Koester, according to her grandson Pascal Lang, was born in 1904, which would mean she was 49 at the time of this letter. Koester, however, narrates his wife and her friends as elderly "Ratsch-Schwestern".
[510] Cf. Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[511] Molière's *The Miser* (1668) as well as *The School for Wives* (1662), as named in: ibid.
[512] Bachtin, p. 26.

> und dann muß Ellen mit Kathrinchen und mir– einen rechts, eine links an der Hand- auf den Buddelplatz gehen. Sandformen zum Kuchenbacken habe ich mir schon zurechtgelegt. Wenn das nur meiner väterlichen Authorität nicht zuviel Abbruch tut! Jedenfalls siehst du, liebe Anicuta, wie stark altersverblödet ich bin, und daß es ohne Hormonzufuhr nicht mehr geht. (…) Wenn die Hormon-Kur wirklich glückt, könnte ich vielleicht auch mal als Austausch-Student nach Edinburgh kommen; das wäre aber eine Freude– wie? Und nun Schluss mit dem Quatsch.[513]

The narration is divided into two units by an insertion in which the letter writer emerges before the narrator to justify such a narratological experiment with his own age ("altersverblödet"), an obvious execution of *Altersspott*. Koester successfully undermines his own old age through the grotesque narration of becoming a child again – a technique, he then, however, explains with a certain 'Narrenfreiheit' available only to the "altersverblödete" old man. Although not justified with 'Altersblödheit', Stuart Taberner notes a similar evocation of the liberty gained in old age, the "privilege of the elderly to be scandalous"[514] in Grass's old-age writing. I argue that Koester shows a similar sentiment here: he has used grotesque elements in his professional oeuvre, but in his private correspondence as an old man he uses them as a strategy to detach himself from his ageing self and remain in control.

Moreover, this use of elements of grotesque and playing with stereotypes of old age are a deliberate narratological strategy of the letter writer that yet again liberates him from writing about other topics that have remained untouched since the friends' correspondence was taken up again after WWII. The last letters sent before his death, support this thesis of a deliberate decision to entertain and distract in Koester's earlier writing as they show a writer who has gone back to earnest narration. This proves what has been explained above: the staging of old-age ridicule (or as Koester calls it: "altersverblödet") served as a narratological tool rather than reflecting his actual state of mind. In the following section I will discuss a rare break with the silence previously upheld in the letters.

[513] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 14.01.1953, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[514] Taberner, p. 82.

Breaking the silence – in the face of death

The following letter is a peculiarity as it is the only letter that Reinhard Koester sent to Ernst Levin and not to Anicuta Belau. As one can take from the letter, it was Ernst Levin who had made the first step and written to Koester. From the correspondence preserved in the EL Collection, it is evident that Koester had always been a close friend to Belau after their relationship in the 1910s but that the two men had never formed a friendship. We can only speculate on what moved Levin to write personally to Koester in 1956, although there is a high probability that it had to do with Koester's ill health and the increasing possibility of his approaching death.

What is particularly interesting for this thesis, however, is that in his reply, Koester takes the opportunity to create a review of his Third Reich experience, an important aspect of his life review. As Stuart Taberner has set out, a crucial part of life review in old-age writing is a need for self-justification[515] and, as I will show with the following letter excerpt, this can be detected in Koester's writing. His report oscillates between a display of sympathy for Levin's losses and a call for vindication:

> Lieber Levin,
>
> Du hast mir mit deinem menschlich – warmen Brief eine große Freude gemacht. Hab Dank dafür! Aber ich habe es auch begriffen, dass du dich damals, als ich wieder Verbindung zu Anicuta gefunden hatte, nach 25 Jahren, nur mit einem „Gruß Ernst" meldetest.
> Zwar weiß ich nicht, wie viel trauriges [sic] und grauenhaftes [sic] du unter dem Naziregime erlitten hast, jedenfalls hat man dir deine mühsam erbaute Existenz als Arzt vernichtet. Und wenn dann noch Verluste von Verwandten und Freunden dazukommen, ist es schwer, den einzelnen von dem Volk zu trennen, das so viel Grauenhaftes tat oder geschehen ließ. Freilich habe ich mich all die bitteren zwölf Jahre lang von jeder Verbindung mit 'der Partei' fern gehalten, obwohl es uns jahrelang sehr dreckig ging, und man mich zweifellos mit offenen Armen entgegen genommen hätte. Darum war es eine hässliche Enttäuschung zu sehen, dass es kaum einem (außer den ganz kleinen) geschadet hat, „mitgemacht" zu haben, und dass heute wieder unzählige 100%ige Nazis auf hohem Posten sitzen. Aber lassen wir das begraben sein. (…) [516]

[515] Taberner, p. 43.
[516] Reinhard Koester to Ernst Levin, 28.2.1956, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

Several observations need to be specified regarding this passage. What may look, at first glance, like a mere expression of sympathy with Levin as a victim of Nazi persecution (albeit some formulations come across as a bit bumpy, such as "wenn dann noch Verluste von Verwandten und Freunden dazukommen"), is, in fact, a multi-layered statement on several topics. This letter sent from his hospital bed, which he must have dictated to (most probably) his wife, breaks with the features of his epistolary texts outlined so far. The passage shows an eagerness to 'come clean' and write off a feeling of guilt that is denied its raison d'être at the same time. Koester claims he has not participated in the "Grauenhaftes" and describes this participation as an active and passive act with the expression "tat oder geschehen ließ" by the German people. He claims to have been on the same side as Levin and his family. Within his multi-layered statement the letter writer acts out the performance of an identity; Koester shapes this identity to his needs and what is initially intended to be a call for redemption, is in fact a testimony of the letter writer's inner split, his feeling of guilt and shame and possibly also anger, as he hints, about the failed denazification of postwar Germany.

Although age, ageing or dying is not made a topic in this letter, this writing as can be classified as 'old-age style'[517] for its performance follows the purpose[518] of maintaining a "degree of agency"[519] when it comes to defining one's actions in the past, which will, post-mortem define one's identity. As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, I regard identity performances in writing not solely as a feature of old-age writing, the letter writers' eagerness to tailor their identity has been apparent throughout their correspondence and I view this as a phenomenon disconnected from their age. However, and this is apparent in the example cited above, old-age style reveals perhaps a more urgent purpose behind such deliberate performances. The passage was written in the face of death which, I argue, triggered the letter writer's need for justification and led to the performance exemplified here.

[517] 'Old-age style' is a term used by Stuart Taberner as a feature of 'old-age writing'. The latter is characterized as "texts by authors of advanced years in which growing old is not only a theme but also a philosophical category" Taberner, p. 16.
[518] Stuart Taberner names such purposefulness as one of the characteristics of old-age style (literary) performances: "I want to suggest that the quality of performance that characterizes literary old-age style is more deliberate, even *purposeful* (…) " Ibid., p. 25.
[519] Ibid.

In other words, although his age and the imminence of his death are not directly addressed here, his writing's purpose, that of a desire for vindication in the face of death, can be interpreted as a feature of old-age-writing and as Koester's reason to break with the silence. For the first time Reinhard Koester addresses Ernst Levin himself and admits to the injustices Levin has experienced. Although this passage does not contain an authentic 'coming clean', the feeling of guilt and eagerness for justification is inscribed in these lines.

To specify this, nowhere in this passage does Koester admit to such a feeling of guilt, he merely states he understands the difficulties the victims of Nazi persecution (and this includes Levin[520]) might experience, when asked to separate the individual from the people ("den einzelnen von dem Volk zu trennen ") – only to then provide his addressee with instructions on how to carry out this separation. By telling him that he did not, by his definition, participate and that such was at the cost of many sacrifices (emphasized by the adjectives "bitter" and "dreckig" as well as "hässliche Enttäuschung") Koester attempts to present to Levin a way of how to approach the previously addressed separation of "den Einzelnen von dem Volk".

I argue that Koester attempts to re-write his identity and that this passage is a performance that has the purpose of declaring his solidarity with Levin by creating his own identity also as that of a victim. I have identified this strategy before in Koester's epistolary output but in this letter, Koester addresses the persecuted Levin directly and names the Fascist atrocities for the first time. Taberner concludes that the deliberate performance of writing intensifies with old age, a development which he ascribes to the writers' urge to 'have the last word' on the manifestation of their identity.[521] The letter displays Koester's last attempt at tailoring his own role, and his urge to repair and redeem his "biographical ruptures"[522] could consequently be read as phenomenon of old-age writing. However, I suggest reading it as, additionally, a case of the addressee shaping the content.[523] This is the first (and only) letter exchanged directly between Koester and Levin himself and it is likely that this very fact led Koester to an

[520] We recall only Ernst Levin was Jewish and directly persecuted. Anicuta Belau, a Catholic by birth, had merely followed him into exile to be with her husband (albeit they were separated) and daughter. This appears to have made a crucial difference for Koester, who, only in direct contact with Levin, addresses the topic of persecution.
[521] Cf. Taberner, p. 25.
[522] Ibid.
[523] Cf. Stanley, 'The Epistolarium', p. 203.

eventual stating of (some) of the comitted Nazi crimes. It is possible that, in his prior correspondence with the non-Jewish Belau, Koester found it unnecessary to extensively address the matter of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust and, in particular, his own approach to it.[524]

I conclude that a combination of both Taberner's suggested intensified identity performance in old-age writing to 'have a say' in one's account and the content-shaping factor of the addressee should here be seen as a reason for Koester's break with the silence regarding these topics that he otherwise maintains. The way in which he ends this brief passage is again in line with the silence that had dominated the previous correspondence. Embodying the collective approach of most Germans in the 1950s, he concludes with the idiom "aber lassen wir das begraben sein".

Reinhard Koester – synopsis of insights

As shown, the topic of age is an omnipresent element of Koester's postwar letters: his process of ageing, the decay as well as his lack of joy and hope as an old man are recurring motifs in his texts. These motifs are often narrated with techniques that had been established throughout literary history: the binary structure of young and old, the patterns of *Altersklage* and *Altersspott* with their associated topoi, and the narratological detachment of mind and body. I have described that Koester's narration of ageing as *Altersklage* shows features of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and that, when he narrates age as *Altersspott*, his narration is influenced strongly by grotesque writing.

By drawing on these established patterns, the letter writer reveals, as shown previously by my analysis, his role as creator of a narrating voice and the intentions that led him to crafting such consciously styled texts. I have identified that Koester frequently employed grotesque

[524] As discussed in Chapter I, Koester dedicates only a single sentence in a letter from 1948 to the topic: "Hat Ernst Verwandte verloren durch die Nazi- Barbarei? (…) ". Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.1948, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

writing in addition to elements of *neusachliche* literature and Expressionist poetry. And furthermore, he achieved a narratological detachment of mind and body, all of which he did to claim the role of a neutral narrator in the process of dying. The identification of literary elements show that he (as a man and artist) had been strongly influenced by the cultural conventions of his own intellectual and classically educated social circle, and the conventions established during his formative years, the last years of the *Kaiserreich*. His narrator's use of elements of the grotesque, which I have shown furthermore allow a flight from reality and the miseries of his illness, additionally underline the letter writer's identity as a skilled writer.

I have explained how Koester's last letter before his death marks an exception as he breaks with his previously employed strategies because it addresses the former unspoken elements. This breaking with the silence is, as I explained, motivated by the letter writer's eagerness to defend, and justify his actions during the years of the Third Reich. I have therefore shown that the purpose of this letter is to perform a deliberate identity and influence the reader (in this case Ernst Levin) in his judgement.

Overall, this section has sustained my previous argument, expressed in Chapter II and III, that Reinhard Koester attempts to perform a victim identity through his narrating of the postwar era as misery. By identifiying the established stereotypes in the narration of age(ing) which he plays with, I further endorse my assertion that 1) the letter writer followed literary continuities that had its foundation in his formative years and 2) that he used the correspondence as a platform to act out his highly styled performance of an identity, a feature of his letters that, as shown, intensified with his increasing age and approaching death.

Representations of Age(ing): Max Unold

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, Max Unold did not update his friends Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin on the developments from his falling ill to death in the way that Reinhard Koester did. Whereas Koester reported meticulously on his illness and wrote his last letter to Edinburgh only twelve weeks before his death, Max Unold ceased sending out reports as soon as the symptoms of his heart condition worsened. Age and the process of ageing nevertheless found their way into Unold's letters after the gap in correspondence, and his narratological strategies to display such are the subject of analysis in the following sections of this chapter. As stated, the most remarkable difference to Reinhard Koester's letters is most definitely Unold's choice to deliberately end the correspondence with the beginning of the deterioration of his health. Where Koester had carefully introduced the topos of the unaffected mind to secure a neutral narrating voice, Unold refused to narrate his dying at all.

A close reading analysis will bring to light Max Unold's narratological use – albeit him having a different intention – of the abovementioned topos of a mind detached from its old body. The discussion will further illustrate Unold's employment of the patterns of *Altersspott*, *Altersklage*, *Alterslob* and the purposes this served in performing his identity. Furthermore, this analysis will explore the representation of age in both the immediate postwar years as well as the 1950s, a time represented as a collectively perceived period of misery by Reinhard Koester and as quite the opposite by Max Unold.

"Unsere Gegenwart – so verschieden von den Erinnerungen" – age and death as part of times of crises

Unold's first letter to the emigrant couple after the long gap in contact since 1938 arrived in Edinburgh in December 1946. It was sent from the outskirts of Munich, Ebenhausen, which was the village, Unold and his wife had fled to during the last years of the war, and where they stayed until living conditions in the Bavarian state capital improved again. In 1946, years of uncertainty lay behind Max and Grete Unold, his art studio and several of his paintings had

been destroyed in the air raids, their friends scattered around Europe as Unold hints by writing "die alten Freunde sind in alle Winde verstoben".[525] Some of this uncertainty is represented in this letter, for example when Unold cautiously states "ob wir uns je wiedersehen, ist zweifelhaft"[526] and, when he further expresses his anxiety about whether they will decide to pick up correspondence again: "Und ob überhaupt je einer von Euch sich zu einer Antwort entschließt? Es würde mich sehr freuen wenigstens ein Lebenszeichen zu erhalten und eine allgemeine Schilderung Eurer Existenz. "[527]

The atmosphere of the 'Nachkrieg' resonates within these lines, a time marked by many people waiting and hoping for a 'Lebenszeichen' of lost or, as in this case, estranged friends, or family. Despite this letter being the first letter sent to Edinburgh after 1945 and albeit it also containing much sad news, Unold begins with a rather boastful announcement and states in the very first sentence:

> Gestern haben wir eine Ausstellung eröffnet, und ich habe dabei eine schöne Rede gehalten. Man hat mich nämlich zum Präsidenten des Berufsverbands bildender Künstler gemacht.[528]

A reader familiar with Unold texts is accustomed to such a lack of modesty, as it seems to be one of the artist's characteristic features. However, it remains surprising that, although he was, as stated, insecure about the friends' attitude towards reviving the correspondence, he did not begin the letter in a more cautious manner. Eventually, the topics of ageing and death find their way into the letter as Unold reports several death notices of the previous years:

> Grete hat Schmerzliches erlebt. Ihre einzige Schwester, Euch auch bekannt samt ihrem Mann, Dr. Kaiss, starb eben heute vor einem Jahr in der Tuberkulose- Klinik Harlaching, & deren einziges Kind, Gretes innig geliebter Neffe, wurde diesen Mai 20 Jahre alt von unbekannten Tätern ermordet. Auch meine Eltern sind nicht mehr. Sie hatten beide fast das 86. Jahr vollendet, und diese Welt war nicht mehr ihre Welt. (…) Gescher wurde als Chefarzt eines Berliner Lazaretts nach der Besetzung von Scharlach weggerafft; Lona Muschelkalk ist mit seinem jetzt 7-jährigen Söhnchen in seiner Heimat an der Mosel.[529]

[525] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 03.12.1946, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13.
[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid.
[528] Ibid.
[529] Ibid.

As noted previously, in a letter from 1948, Reinhard Koester had claimed that many of his old friends had gone, without specifying the reason for his lonely situation.[530] Unold is more specific when reporting the same phenomenon, and names precisely who died when, and what the cause of each death had been (either the medical condition or, as above, even murder).

Such narration explains the deaths from old age (as in the report about Unold's parents) or physical illness (as with Grete Unold's sister) as well as because of the danger of the increased criminality during the immediate postwar era in Germany (the murder of their nephew).[531] Unold's eloquence is noticeable in this short passage: he reports four death notes with a different verb or phrase for each case. The narration is naturalistic with the last report about their mutual friend Dr. Gescher, second husband of Lona Ringelnatz, Joachim Ringelnatz's widow. This line is scribbled on the sides of the letter as a postscript and the phrase "von Scharlach weggerafft", bears an intimidating personification of the disease that impressively emphasizes the exceptionally rough environment that a "Berliner Lazarett[s] nach der Besetzung" must have been.

The fact that he had lived through times of crises is emphasized again, when Unold chooses the more delicate expression "sie sind nicht mehr" to report the deaths of his parents and says that they had left a world no longer theirs. Such remarks on the incompatibility of the old and new world – although Unold remains shy of a defining these worlds – come up frequently in the postwar letters. In the same letter, Unold goes

[530] Reinhard Koester to Anicuta Belau, 7.1.48, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[531] Harald Jähner writes in his book on the immediate postwar years in Germany, which he has named 'Wolfszeit' to reflect the 'homo homini lupus est'- atmosphere of the time: " 'das Phänomen des Verbrechens', schrieb der Kriminologe Hans von Hentig 1947, 'hat in Deutschland Umfang und Formen angenommen, die in der Geschichte der westlichen Kulturvölker ohne Vorbild sind'. Die allgemeine Auflösung der Rechtsnormen schien für Hentig eine neue Phase des zivilisatorischen Zusammenbruchs einzuleiten. Dabei schockiert ihn nicht die große Zahl der Kapitalverbrechen. Mochte auch der enorme Anstieg von Mord, Raub und Todschlag noch so erschreckend sein – 1946 wurden allein in Berlin 311 Morde erfasst –, die Vielzahl der kleinen Delikte beunruhigte Hentig viel mehr. Er sprach wie sein Kollege Karl S. Bader von einer 'Entprofessionalisierung der Kriminalität', ihrem Einwandern in die alltägliche Lebensführung der breiten Masse." Harald Jähner, *Wolfszeit: Deutschland und die Deutschen: 1945-1955* (Berlin: Rowohlt Berlin, 2019), p. 231.

on to state that his "und wohl auch eure Gegenwart ist so verschieden von den Erinnerungen" and thus again manifests the perception of two disparate lives in one.[532]

The following discussion, although not closely tied to the representation of age, is necessary for an overall understanding of the shift that had occurred during the gap in correspondence, as the letter writers had not only aged but taken on new identities within their relationship as the world around them continued to change. The reasons for their mutual friends to be scattered across Germany or Europe were multi-faceted. One reason was a general flight to countryside, away from Germany's bigger cities, an example both the Unolds and the Koesters followed in the last year of the war. A second reason was, of course, the emigration of many like-minded artists and intellectuals, whether they were persecuted like Ernst Levin and his daughter, or not. I have briefly touched upon the matter of emigration without having been persecuted, and the justifications for remaining in Germany by the claim of some Germans to have been in 'inner' emigration in Chapter I. The topic developed into a cultural debate that was of ongoing public interest in Germany and beyond for the decades following WWII.

Before German conscience and guilt became a widely discussed debate, those who had remained had already been directly confronted with their decision in a personal context. One of these contexts was, for example, Unold's and Koester's revived correspondence with the persecuted and emigrant Levins. Nevertheless, none of the letters sent to the friends in Edinburgh contains Unold's thoughts on his decision to stay in Germany throughout the years of Fascist rule, although he had certainly known many people who had left. It is difficult to be sure whether this stems from an uneasiness regarding any discussion of his decision or a dismissal of having had the option to leave altogether. The fact that he stages the Levins as those with active power in their new role as the "Emigranten" supports the latter assumption. The opening line of a letter in 1947 ascribes clear roles to the correspondents: it stages the Belau-Levins as 'the emigrants' who 'actively left' while Unold himself and his remaining in Nazi Germany are not up for discussion at all:

[532] For example, when Max Unold mentions the past, it is never quite clear whether he refers to pre-war times or pre-Third Reich times altogether.

> Das war eine wahre Herzensfreude Euer Brief nach so langer Zeit! Fast hatte ich die Hoffnung aufgegeben (man weiß nicht wie Emigranten eingestellt sind) und dann diese lieben, ausführlichen Zeilen (…). [533]

He himself, as marked with the impersonal pronoun 'man', remains passive. The use of the impersonal pronoun additionally emphasizes that it was the collectively perceived impression that those who stayed in Germany depended on the attitude of the emigrants, it even suggests that the collective had little understanding of such attitudes, but rather than discussing the matter, accepted a passive role in these dynamics.

A small, and presumably unintended glimpse into more daily life confrontations with Nazi opponents and emigrants is given by another passage in one of Unold's later letters. In 1960, he sentimentally writes about him and his wife reminiscing about memories they hope to share with the Levins and mentions a line from a song[534] written by the Austrian songwriter and conductor Robert Stolz (1880-1975), a contemporary of the letter writers discussed in this thesis. Stolz had lived in Berlin since 1925 and from 1936, when he had left Germany for Vienna, saved several lives by smuggling persecuted men and women from Germany into Austria. After the annexation of Austria in 1938, Stolz decided to emigrate to New York with posts in Zurich and Paris. Stolz was a successful, commercial music producer and returned to Austria in 1946, and, most importantly for my argument, was a very well-known and popular figure in the entertainment business in both Austria and Germany in the decades after the war. Unold's very brief reference to his song 'Salome', clearly a song recited or possibly mocked by the four friends, illustrates how current figures like Robert Stolz, non-Jewish Germans, who had emigrated based on their beliefs and principles, were present in the daily life of the Bundesrepublik. This further allows the suggestion that their presence constantly confronted figures such as Unold and Koester, possibly even more so than those who had remained in Germany and actively supported Nazism.

[533] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

[534] "Eure Antwort auf unsere Karte aus Memmingen hat uns sehr gefreut. Wir ersahen daraus, daß auch ihr die Vergangenheit nicht ganz vergessen habt, und es liesse [sic] sich mancherlei darüber sagen, z.B. wie uns nicht selten dies oder das einfällt, was Eins von Euch Beiden gesagt hat, oder was an gemeinsam Erlebtes erinnert, etwa 'murrgen oder ubermurrgen' oder 'der junge jüdische Forscher aus Wien' im alten Schlager 'Salome' - vielleicht habt ihr sowas selber vergessen aber wir denken gelegentlich noch daran, wie es so geht." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 02.05.1960, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 2/3.

With not only the Belau-Levins and other intellectual friends but also several well-known figures of the new Bundesrepublik confronting Unold with his own path, it is even more plausible, that he emphasized his past years as an exceptional time of crisis in his postwar letters. Anything connected to his younger self is shown as completely incompatible with his present self as an old man. This technique cannot simply be tied back to the, often incomprehensible, process of ageing, but further involves a deliberate (narratological) exclusion of the years of Fascist rule before WWII.

The hard-working old man: writing age towards a bourgeois identity

Whilst Reinhard Koester presented a very physical approach to the topic of ageing and eventually dying, Max Unold narrates the topic of age more subtly. One reason for this may lie in his much better health, but his ending of the correspondence as soon as it deteriorates, reveals his character as the driving force that will not allow him to admit great weaknesses.[535] This does not mean that Unold denies his age or the process of ageing altogether, but, I argue, he inscribes more affirmative topoi into his narrating of age. The letters from 1946 to 1962 display no significant use of the patterns of *Altersspott*, a narratological technique frequently used by our other letter writer. Max Unold uses stereotypical elements of *Alterslob* and, with increasing age, the pattern of *Altersklage* finds its way into his letters.

This more positive representation of older age does, however, also include a portrayal of Germany as a miserable place to be immediately after the war. As illustrated, Koester sticks

[535] Unold's last letter to be found in the EL Collection is dated 30 October 1962. Signs of severe health constraints are not discussed in it, however, Unold makes a remark about not being able to drink and celebrate as he used to. Other than this, the letter writer does not show any deviations or narratological novelties regarding a narration of age(ing): " (…) Bei mir muß es um 10:00 Uhr zu Ende sein, sonst habe ich eine erbärmliche Nacht." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 30.10.1962, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

to this conviction throughout the 1950s, and Unold mainly presents the same picture from 1946 until about 1950.[536]

Of these two established literary strategies, Unold uses *Altersklage* only from the year 1959 on and always in connection with *Alterslob*, as will be elaborated on in the following section. In fact, the only indicators used to refer to a person's old age in Unold's letters after WWII are found in the letter writer's signature, then often reading "euer alter, Max Unold"[537] or other common tropes, such as belonging to "altes Eisen".[538]

My analysis of his letters has brought to light an interesting pattern. I argue that all of Unold's letters sent to Edinburgh after the war create an image of the letter writer as a studious and hard-working man, albeit old.

As cited above, the very first letter from 1946 already included the information that Unold had given a speech to open an art exhibition and the following letter from December 1947 contains further elaborations on his appointment as president of the 'Berufsverband bildender Künstler' ("ein schöner Titel, nicht wahr").[539] Although Unold, in some instances, performs the narration of his newly gained titles as ironic statements,[540] the redundant mentions creates the image of a busy and influential man.

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[536] For example, in December 1947 Unold bemoans the lack of wine and/or restaurants: "Es gibt in Mü. kein Lokal, wo man sich treffen möchte, Vorkehrungen sind schwierig, und die absolute 'Trockenheit' ist bei längerem Zusammensein unerträglich. Daran könnte man jetzt das Lied von der schönen Vergangenheit anschließen, aber warum sollen wir uns damit traurig und wehmütig stimmen!" Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

[537] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 16.4.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.

[538] "Zur Zerstreuung habe ich ihr ein Heft geschickt, daß sie weiß, was heut 'Münchner Leben' ist, es unterscheidet sich in manchem von dem, was wir einst darunter verstanden, z.B. auch im Fasching, wo wir ein Fest mitgemacht haben, das so laut war infolge non stop Musizierens von 2 Jazzkapellen, daß wir um halb zwei Uhr halbtaub nach Hause gingen. Wir gehören eben zum alten Eisen, daß will uns bloß noch nicht so recht einleuchten." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 26.3.1953, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13.

[539] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

[540] " (…) aufgrund meiner Anstellung „Präsident des Landesberufsverbandes Bildender Künstler Bayern"- Ein schöner Titel, nicht wahr, aber ich bin jetzt außerdem auch noch Senator geworden, nämlich Mitglied des Bayer. Senats! Das ist eine Art Ständekammer oder Oberkammer (doch ohne dessen Macht) bestehend aus 60 Leuten der Wirtschaft, der Arbeiterschaft, den Universitäten etc., dazu bestellt, Gesetze des Landtags zu revidieren und selber Anträge einzubringen. Was dabei herauskommt, weiß man noch nicht, an sich wäre es eine ganz vernünftige Einrichtung, ich meinerseits hoffe nur, dass sie nicht ganz zu oft tagt denn meine Malerei ist mir wichtiger als meine Ämter, vor dem Titel ihr aber hoffentlich entsprechenden Respekt habt!" Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

Thus, the letter writer stages himself as someone who stays a "wirkende Kraft der Geschichte",[541] a term used by Miriam Haller in her essay on stereotypes in the representations of age and, as she explains, a feature which, if attributed to a person, excludes them from being old.[542]

Such writing against his own ageing does not have to have been a deliberate strategy and it is possible it came to Unold naturally, as it corresponded with his own self-perception. Whether as a strategic technique used to manipulate the image drawn in his texts, or true to his own perception, Unold employs such youth-affirming narration subsequently in every letter to the Levins and extends this, as I will demonstrate, to the narrating of his male friends.[543]

In his second letter from December 1947, he emphasizes that his work as a painter is still the most important to him despite all the titles: "(…) Ich meinerseits hoffe nur, dass sie [the Bayer. Senat] nicht ganz zu oft tagt denn meine Malerei ist mir wichtiger als meine Ämter (…) ".[544]

The juxtaposition between the titles he has gained, and his painting serves a well-established topos, namely that of the incompatibility of the identities of 'Künstler' and 'Bürger'. Both types are often seen or created as opposite pairs (especially in fin de siècle literature) and by mentioning his continued work at the easel[545] in the same sentence as his public posts, he merges the allegedly incompatible qualities in his own person. In the following letters throughout the years of the 1950s, Unold continuously finds a way to include his public duties. An example from 1950 reads as follows:

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[541] Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[542] On this matter, Haller cites Simone de Beauvoir with a convincing summary of how literature had overlooked the old for centuries. She argues that the fact that representations of age always followed the same patterns (*Alterslob*, *Altersspott*, *Altersklage*) prevented a subjective representation of the old person portrayed as diversely as the young person. De Beauvoir explains this lack of diversity with the old person's lost position of a "wirkende Kraft der Geschichte". Cf. ibid.
[543] Although Unold also portrays his (or their mutual) female friends' professional qualities, with increasing age, his reports focus more on the occupations of his male friends; this need not necessarily be deliberate; it might be linked to earlier deaths among his female friends or the coincidental fact that some of these friendships cooled off with increasing age.
[544] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 17.12.1947, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.
[545] He does so again at a later point again when he writes to the couple: " (…) So konnte ich auch wieder das Malen anfangen, das so schwierig ist wie eh und je, aber ich stehe wenigstens jeden Tag an der Staffelei." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 02.05.1960, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 2/3.

> (…) Nun mache ich aber wirklich Schluss! Ich mußte heute vormittag eine Kunstausstellung mit einer Rede eröffnen, also bin ich froh, bald ins Bett zu kommen. Das Wetter ist scheußlich, naß und ungemütlich: man müsste einmal wieder die Kälte wegsaufen nach altem Rezept. Wenn ihr, soviel Breitgrade weiter im Norden mithelfen würdet, könnte man es mit vereinten Kräften vielleicht schaffen![546]

The reference to the united drinking works as a reference to former times, when they were last united, and of course, much younger. As usual, age is not referred to directly, but unspoken, it resonates within that which is narrated: the letter writer describes his fatigue from opening an art exhibition, an event, which, in their younger years, would have been a welcome reason for the celebrating mentioned, and not reason for an early bedtime.

The creation of a hybrid existence of artist and bourgeois, which I explain further in the following, serves several purposes. One of these purposes is the avoidance of admitting (his own) age, which he achieves by redundantly narrating his busy schedule, as performed in the letter cited above.

The pairing of the opposites of artist and bourgeois has been used in literature before. Again, we find a parallel in Thomas Mann's Venice novella, where the protagonist Gustav Aschenbach is the embodiment of both characteristics in one man. Although considering himself an artist, Aschenbach has incorporated "die Leistungsethik des Bürgers"[547] and is fixated on delivering the utmost performance at all times. [548]

As detailed in Chapter I, Max Unold was extremely productive in the years between 1944 and 1948. This period, initiated by his move to the countryside in the last year of the war, is considered his most productive, only comparable to his younger years from 1910-1913.[549] Throughout the 1950s, although he was still painting, as he claims in his letters, Unold's output decreased again. When he tells the couple about his latest eye surgery, however, he includes yet another remark about his everlasting work ethos:

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[546] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 16.4.1950, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 1/3.
[547] Paolo Panizzo, 'Der Keim einer sittlichen Verderbnis: Ausnahmezustand in Thomas Manns Venedig-Novelle', in *Literatur des Ausnahmezustands (1914 - 1945)* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015), p. 29.
[548] Cf. ibid.
[549] Cf. Ruck, *Max Unold (1885-1964) und die Münchner Malerei. Mit einem Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde*.

> Ich bin jetzt auf beiden Augen staroperiert, brauche zwar drei Brillen, komme damit aber recht gut zurecht. So konnte ich auch wieder das Malen anfangen, das so schwierig ist wie eh und je, aber ich stehe wenigstens jeden Tag an der Staffelei.[550]

Painting is represented as a difficult artistic process and the additional "wie eh und je" denies any challenges in that context to be age-related. This statement is very much in line with the image of the struggling artist that Unold has sketched before.[551] In this image, the artist, although talented and rich in creativity, meets difficulties when attempting to give form to his art.

Overall, I can note at this point, that I have found the following interesting elements in Unold's display of age. I have shown that the letter writer emphasizes the fact that he is still actively painting and, in doing so, facing the same struggles he has always faced. These statements stand against his usual narration of the postwar world as being so different from 'their' old world, as it stages a state unaffected by the world's developments. His existence as an artist, as he narrates it, knows no age. A form of retirement does not exist for him, something that differentiates him for example from Ernst Levin, who enjoyed several years of retirement before his death. This presentation is in line with a previously mentioned topos. This topos supports the idea of the ageing artist who works ambitiously and tirelessly, as Shuanghzi Li points out regarding the characteristics of Mann's Gustav Aschenbach.[552] In a similar way to Aschenbach, whose body also shows signs of weakness which contrasts with his zeal for work, being an aged artist carries a sort of greatness for Unold. The narrator in *Tod in Venedig* describes reaching this stage as most desirable to the protagonist:

> Auch wünschte er sich sehnlichst alt zu werden, denn er hatte von jeher dafür gehalten, daß wahrhaft groß, umfassend, ja wahrhaft ehrenwert nur das Künstlertum zu nennen sei, dem es beschieden war, auf allen Stufen des Menschlichen charakteristisch fruchtbar zu sein.[553]

This passage reflects and propagates an attitude, life- and age-affirming and to an extent self-righteous, that I have also found in Unold's postwar letters. The inner weakness of his physical

[550] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 2.5.1960, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 2/3.
[551] As outlined by Unold in his letter to Levin from 1935 – discussed in Chapter I: Max Unold to Ernst Levin, November 1935 (no day indicated), LHSA, EL Collection, Box 1 4/5.
[552] Li, p. 219.
[553] Thomas Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig: Novelle* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 2001), p. 21.

condition is, although mentioned from the late 1950s on, repeatedly narrated solely under the guise of the 'great master'. This is evident in the following letter, which combines both physical weakness with the artist's unwavering zeal for work:

> (…) Wir sind ja auch ein altes Paar und wissen wie es ist, wenn eines um das andere bangen muß, drum hätte ich auch bälder geantwortet, wenn nicht bei uns gleichfalls allerlei losgewesen wäre. (…) mußte ich daran denken, auch mein linkes Auge staroperieren zu lassen, weil ich damit schon fast gar nichts mehr sah. Ich habe Euch wohl schon früher von dem Entwurf eines großen Gobelins für Memmingen geschrieben, den konnte ich gerade noch zu Ende bringen, und die Ausführung in der Manufaktur wird dieser Tage beginnen.[554]

Now seventy-four years old, Max Unold experiences restrictions inflicted by his own age, but narrates them only with reference to his commission, which he has completed despite his illness. This endorses once again his identity performance as an artist who works incessantly and with the utmost discipline. I conclude that such narration also detaches – in the same way as executed by Koester – the mind from the (failing) body, by staging the fit and eager mind as a counterweight to the body's weaknesses.

Interestingly, the representation of Unold's own ageing seems to be narrated as an almost invisible process that progresses whilst the subject continues his quest as an artist. Although Unold does not narrate age as a dichotomy of young and old as visibly as our first letter writer did, it would be short-sighted to argue Unold does not employ such a dichotomy at all.

As established, he presents age through narrating the topos of the old yet hard-working artist. This topos accredits certain attributes to the artist that are usually used only in connection with the bourgeois. Unold endorses this 'bürgerliche' existence by repeatedly mentioning his new role within the Bavarian establishment. Thus, the letter writer develops a hybrid identity – that of artist and bourgeois in one person. In this image, the dichotomy of young and old is subtly inscribed. The figure of the artist is staged as the part symbolizing youth, with its attributes of being reckless, passionate, and sensual, whereas the bourgeois mirrors the attributes symbolizing age: thinking and acting rationally, being virtuous, ambitious, and disciplined.

[554] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 21.2.1959, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

I therefore conclude that Unold's texts also follow a representation of age(ing) that is structured binarily into young and old. Whilst not specifically mentioned, age is constantly narrated in relation to youth, for example as 'physically old, but intellectually young'. This interpretation leads directly to the fact that, like Koester, Unold also detaches his slowly failing body from his mind and his existence as an ever-striving artist. He does so by employing topoi of decadent literature, for example the tension between artist and bourgeois and the artist's ever-striving nature, and further creates a hybrid identity to endorse the dichotomies of young and old, creative, and disciplined.

This endorsement of the hard-working old man results in a continuous use of *Alterslob*. The patterns of *Altersspott* and *Altersklage* are not directly employed until Max Unold's last letters from 1959 on, when he eventually uses the common *Altersklage* to lament on physical restrictions. His immediate counteracting of such laments with reports about his work ethic, however, exclude a detailed 'Klage'.

In the following section I will illustrate Unold's extensive use of *Alterslob* in his representations of ageing. I argue that the continuity in this pattern regarding a positive narrating of old age reveals his eagerness to uphold the image of himself as a successful old man and, at the same time, it shows that he, in opposition to Koester at the end of his life, does not harbour regrets regarding his participation in the Third Reich or a desire to vindicate his actions.

Narrating deaths and the employment of Alterslob

In this analysis I have concentrated on the representation of the letter writer's own age(ing). In the following section I examine the reporting of the ageing and death of others. Giving reports of mutual friends' fates has been a fixed part in Unold's letters and, as such, has been analysed in the previous chapters. After Max Unold summarized the deaths of those who had died before his first letter to Edinburgh was sent in 1946, he tells of many more deaths of

mutual friends in the following years. A striking example is the death note of Unold's close friend, painter Josef Achmann,[555] which reads as follows:

> Sehr betrübt hat uns vor 14 Tagen die Nachricht vom Tode Achmanns. Er lebte ja schon seit gut zwanzig Jahren in Schliersee, im Perfall-haus,[556] das ihm die Magda Lena vermacht hatte, aber wir sahen uns ein paarmal im Jahr, wenn er zu einer Jury hereinkam, ich habe ihn auch einmal draußen besucht, wobei er sich nur ärgerte, weil ich schon um halb ein Uhr nachts ins Bett ging. Er starb an einem Herzschlag, sozusagen mitten aus einer angeregten Kaffeeunterhaltung heraus; ich konnte ihm einige Worte des Nachrufs am Rundfunk widmen, habe auch draußen am Grab gesprochen, aber nun ist eben wieder einer von der Neuen Secession dahingegangen! Und einer, mit dem ich mich sehr gut verstand![557]

The letter is undated, but as Achmann died on 25 October 1958, it can be concluded it is from autumn of the same year. As described by Ines Haslbeck, in her dissertation on Achmann's life and work, the artist died "plötzlich und unerwartet an einem Herzinfarkt".[558] The narrative about the friend dying whilst having had a lively chat is added only by Unold and is purely fictional, indicated slightly by the adverb "sozusagen". This remark about Achmann's sudden death together with the anecdote about Unold's visit to Schliersee, where the friend seemed to have been eager to stay up late, strengthens the narrative of the old-yet-fit man. This topos is taken to extremes here, as it stages the friend as someone with a fit mind (as the "angeregt" implies) detached from his, in fact, dying body. I argue that, by dismissing the friend's age and reporting mainly his intellectual qualities, Unold performs an unspoken *Alterslob*, where he does not mention age even in the face of death. He denies old age and thus silently performs an ultimate praising of the old man.

The section is structured by a rapid enumerating of events, differentiated by commas and semicolons. The letter writer successfully goes on to expand and apply the *Alterslob* to his own person. The narrating of his involvement in the obituaries again contributes to the image

[555] Josef Achmann (1885-1958), German painter and graphic artist. Unold met Achmann during the early years in Munich (most probably at the Akademie der Künste in 1907-1908). Achmann was Vice-Chairman of the *Münchner Neue Secession* until it was dissolved in 1937 (Unold had been Chairman until 1937). For detailed information on Achmann's life and art see: *Ines Haslbeck, Josef Achmann 1885-1958. Nur wer sich wandelt, bleibt sich gleich* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Universität Regensburg, 2019).
[556] Villa in Schliersee. Achmann's wife Magda Lena (d. 1940) was descended from the prominent Perfall family, and after her death the family provided the financially instable Achmann with the villa in Schliersee in the Bavarian countryside, where he lived from 1940 until his death in 1958.
[557] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, undated, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 2/3.
[558] Haslbeck, p. 17.

of him as an indispensable and actively participating member of society. As I explained earlier in this chapter, it is these attributes that protect one from being represented as old. They are used when staging the topos of the old artist who, at an old age, develops an ambition usually attributed only to youth. In another letter that I previously discussed in Chapter III, written just over a year later, the narrator follows the same pattern and directly mentions the aspired 'Fleiß' despite old age, when reporting on painter Willi Geiger:

> Vor einiger Zeit ist Naesi Teutsch gestorben, die ja schon seit vielen Jahren gelähmt war. Er wurde nach 45 wieder Akademieprofessor, ist nun pensioniert und malt u.a. gelegentlich einen seiner Enkel. Willi Geiger, 80 vorbei arbeitet auch noch fleißig, obwohl er neulich schwer krank war, seiner Frau Klara ist von der Trambahn ein Fuß abgefahren worden.[559]

Whilst the note about Naesi Teutsch's death and suffering remains brief, the men's activities are narrated in more detail. Teutsch's husband Walter,[560] an Expressionist painter and illustrator who had been banned from exhibiting in 1939, was rehabilitated and made a professor again in 1946. This development, narrated by Unold with the brief temporal reference "nach 45", receives more attention than Naesi Teutsch's experiences although she had most probably also been well known to the Levins. This again shows the letter writer's eagerness to emphasize reports on their peer group's continued existences as artists and academics, rather than the deteriorating health of most.

The narrating voice then makes the observations on the studious ("fleißig") Geiger whilst elliptically narrating his age with the "80 vorbei". I again here identify the topos of the old man whose creative mind, although physically weakened ("obwohl er neulich schwer krank war"), never ceases to strive for success.

This example further endorses Unold's eagerness to describe himself and the men surrounding him as "Moralist[en] der Leistung".[561] The men that find their way into his correspondence with the Belau-Levins (including himself), are all displayed in this positive light as they are reported to be working endlessly despite their increasing age. Interestingly,

[559] Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 2.5.1960, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 18 (ii) 2/3.
[560] Walter Teutsch (1884-1964), painter, who, like Unold, studied art with Moritz Heyman and Hugo von Habermann at the Akademie der Künste München. He contributed numerous drawings to 'Simplicissimus' from 1910 and 1928, and, like Unold, was a member of the art movement the 'Neue Gruppe' founded in 1946.
[561] Panizzo, p. 37.

Unold makes one exception in this positive portrayal of the ageing men surrounding him. His reports on the mutual friend (or 'rival') Reinhard Koester are of a different tone. None of the elsewhere incessant *Alterslob* of his studious friends[562] finds its way into the portrayal of Koester's last years. In contrast, Koester's occupations are, as examined in Chapter III, narrated as failures and Unold emphasizes his poverty. Even after Koester's death in 1956 Unold strikes a reproachful tone for never having received a letter from his widow,[563] a last reference to his disdain for Koester's way of living and ultimately also of his dying.

Max Unold – synopsis of insights and concluding remarks

If a narration is as committed to stress the topos of the successful and studious old man as Unold's epistolary output of his last years is, there is no room for the narratological patterns of *Altersklage* or *Altersspott*. Max Unold narrates the old man as active and virtuous and in remarkable contrast to Reinhard Koester's representation of the old man as pitiful. His narrating of the postwar world, although staged as utterly different to the world "von früher", does not evoke the misery depicted in Koester's postwar narration, which I interpret as a misery narrative of old age.

As mentioned before, both letter writers narrate age through narrating youth or attributes ascribed to youth. This binary structure has been used frequently throughout literary history and it is often orchestrated as age representing intellectual depth and wisdom versus youth

[562] Interestingly, the majority of the men mentioned developed from young artists, who were eager to belong to the Secession movement, a group founded with the aim of breaking away from institutional control over the arts in Bavaria, to members of such institutions as old men in the Bundesrepublik. This was the case for Willi Geiger, Unold himself, Josef Achmann and Georg Britting (who, together with Achmann, had been publisher of the magazine 'Die Sichel' in the 1920s, developed into a popular essayist in the Third Reich and eventually became member of the Academy of Fine Arts Berlin from 1958 until 1964).
Cf. Akademie der Künste, *Literatur- Mitglieder*
https://www.adk.de/de/akademie/mitglieder/index.htm?we_objectID=52983 [last accessed 14 April 2022].

[563] "auf ihrer [Lona 'Muschelkalk' Ringelnatz] Postkarte erwähnte sie auch, daß sie durch die Zeitung vom Tod Reinhard Koesters vernommen hätte, und diese Mitteilung (…) ist bisher die einzige Kunde von seinem Ableben. Der letzte Brief von ihm (eigenhändig) war am 19. April geschrieben, voller Galgenhumor und Optimismus, und was seine Frau hinzugefügt, klang auch ganz zuversichtlich. Ich habe ihr auf die Meldung von Lona hin kondoliert, bin aber auch bis jetzt noch ohne Antwort, was mir kaum verständlich ist." Max Unold to Anicuta Belau and Ernst Levin, 10.07.1956, LHSA, EL Collection, Box 13 1/4.

symbolizing sensual vitality and beauty.[564] Throughout literary history, youth has been illustrated as usually careless, sensual, and free. The characteristic features that young people lack are then, ideally, developed throughout life and fully matured in old age: sense, diligence, and wisdom. Therefore, the two opposite pairs are, from a narratological vantage point, extremely compatible. One has what the other does not, and the old envies and desires the young.

I have found similarities in the two letter writers' narration regarding the binary structure of youth and age in the representation of age(ing) and the narratological detachment of mind and body. In this chapter, I have identified this approach in both letter writers' texts and have defined its underlying literary strategies (and applied them to Unold and Koester's patterns) as: *Alterslob* positively differentiating age from youth to valorize age whilst *Altersklage* on the contrary negatively differentiates age from an idealized image of youth, especially regarding the limitations of the aged body.[565] In employing these contrary patterns in presenting old age, the two letter writers in a way confirm one of Haller's results: that the representation of age often oscillates between the two poles of glorification or romanticisation.[566] In line with this statement, in this chapter I have argued that one letter writer depicts the old man merely as omniscient and successful, whilst the other switches between the old man as miserable or ridiculous, but always through the portrayal of deterioration.

As broadly outlined above, I have pinned down Unold's additional binary structure of his narrating of age as one that performed a hybrid identity of 'artist' and 'Bürger'. Regarding Unold's use of the topoi of *Alterslob* to narrate his identity as that of a statesman, it is enlightening that Miriam Haller points out that these topoi are typically used to achieve a justification of the old man as exactly that: a statesman, or else, as "Familienoberhaupt, als großmütiger Großvater, als platonischer Liebhaber oder als altersweiser Gelehrter und Künstler".[567] The uniting of both 'social types' in his own person is, I contend, yet another way of clinging on to youth. Both existences keep the figure 'young' – the bourgeois, as an

[564] Cf. Li, p. 215.
[565] Cf. Haller, 'Literarische Stereotype des Alter(n)s und Strategien ihrer performativen Neueinschreibung'.
[566] Cf. ibid.
[567] Ibid.

active part of society and the artist in its symbolic function as the passionate and ever-striving youth.

This does not mean that Unold denies his age or the process of ageing altogether, but, I argue, he inscribes more affirmative topoi into his narration of age. These affirmative topoi result in the epistolary performance of a successful and active member of society, which, according to his presentation, had recovered quickly from the, no longer mentioned, years of fascism, defeat, and occupation.

What is the strategy behind this more affirmative portrayal of life in postwar Germany as an aged man? Both letter writers, I argue, have the same aim: to deal with their unease regarding the past and to avoid a discussion of their potential ways of complicity with the Third Reich. However, they have very different strategies to deal with this predicament.

I have shown in this chapter that, whilst Reinhard Koester attempts to perform a victim identity through his narrating of 'postwar old age' as misery, Max Unold chooses the opposing method, and throughout the whole of the 1950s, narrates his life, age and involvement in the art and political scene in Bavaria as a story of success. This approach is effective in its aim to neglect any further mention of the unstable years immediately postwar and, more importantly, those that had eventually led to Germany's defeat. It is debatable, however, whether this form of narration is still a deliberate technique to distract the reader from the Nazi past. More, it seems to me, the letter writer has, as he has overcome the immediate postwar era, found his way back to his usual, self-righteous self-presentation. The analysis of his narration of age has shown that the letter writer's first eagerness to avoid the topic of Nazi crimes and an emphasis on his political neutrality (for example, his staging of himself as a passive observer in a safe, uninvolved space), has given way to an indifference regarding these themes. I can therefore state that Unold, unlike Koester, does not articulate any feelings of remorse or guilt. Although both letter writers' portrayals often revolve around themselves, Unold's focus during his last years is merely on presenting a positive image of himself, and he consequently excludes any negative aspects of his own ageing, an exclusion that is exemplified in his ending of the correspondence as soon as his health forces him to give up his active role in society.

As illustrated, both letter writers play with established stereotypes in order to endorse their identity performances as old men. I have identified the topoi they employ as originating from literature of the fin de siècle and was able to show how Koester additionally adapts the writing styles and tone of such texts, whereas Unold remains the neutral observer equipped with a *neusachliche* "Ich-Verpanzerung"[568] within which he has always created his narrating voice.

With the focus I set in this chapter, I was able to disclose once more the strategies the two letter writers used to tailor their own identities and thus to influence their relationship with the addressee(s). The identification of the writers' use of narratological stereotypes when portraying ageing and old age allowed me to draw conclusions on the quality of their identity performances. More specifically, by pointing out which of the narratological patterns (*Altersklage*, *Altersspott* or *Alterslob*) the letter writers employed, I was able to show what features they were eager to inscribe into their representations of age(ing) and consequently what identity they wanted to perform. As I have shown in this chapter, an emphasis of *Altersklage* led to the description of old age as a miserable state and thus resulted in performing the identity of an unfortunate, pitiful old man; the use of *Altersspott* embodied the pattern of *Altersklage* but added the element of irony, a technique that created the performance of the aged man as intellectual and witty but equally pitiful whereas by employing *Alterslob* the letter writer was able to depict old age positively and as a desirable state to be in– and this enabled performing the writer's identity as successful and admirable.

On the whole, this chapter endorsed what the previous chapters have brought to light. That both letter writers produced highly styled texts with deliberate patterns and narratological strategies borrowed from literary trends of their formative years and that, in doing so, they used the postwar correspondence with their emigrant friends as a platform for tailored identity performances.

[568] A term first used by Carl Schmitt, the "eiserne Subjektivität" and other features of such "Ich-Verpanzerung" are explored in more detail in the seminal book by Helmuth Lethen: Lethen.

Conclusion

The approach of giving private correspondences a close reading has been undervalued in research. Such analysis has often been reserved for fictional letters, for example in epistolary novels. In contrast, factual letter correspondences have often been conceptualised as historical documents. In this thesis I argue that while such work is valuable for historical research, it neglects the carefully crafted linguistic properties of such texts. I therefore conducted a textual analysis of a lengthy correspondence to fill this gap in working with factual letter correspondences.

In this thesis I have confirmed general statements on the epistolary form made before by MacArthur (1990) [569] and Stanley (2004),[570] such as the use of a letter-writing persona and the creation of plots,[571] the texts' dialogical and perspectival nature, as well as the proposition that letters can be performances of the self by the writer.[572] I have furthered these findings with the identification and classification of the letter writers' writing patterns, literary devices, and linguistic strategies used to achieve their communicative goal and to execute their deliberate identity performances. These aspects have received little attention so far in lengthy close reading analyses and thus my thesis provides a methodological and substantive gain on the matter. As I indicated, one exception is Els Andringa's work on letters by German novelists in exile. Her aim, similar to mine in this thesis, is to reveal the linguistic strategies of the letter writers by means of close reading. However, the nature of the corpus I work with differs drastically from Andringa's and I was therefore able to expand her concepts to apply them to letters written by private and unknown individuals.

With regard to the corpus of my thesis, I hope to have contributed useful insights to a somewhat neglected field – the other corresponding side of 'migrant letters', the letters of those who decided to remain in their home country yet maintained an epistolary exchange

[569] MacArthur.
[570] Stanley, 'The Epistolarium'.
[571] Cf. MacArthur, p. 119.
[572] Cf. Stanley, 'The Epistolarium', p. 203.

with those in exile. In this respect I have also closed significant gaps in the biographical research undertaken so far on the letter writers of this thesis, painter Max Unold (1885-1964) and writer Reinhard Koester (1885-1956). I have provided new information on Reinhard Koester's young years in Munich at the fin de siècle and his postwar years including his death. Furthermore, I have brought to light the hitherto unknown romantic relationships both Koester and Unold had had with Anicuta Belau before she married Ernst Levin in 1917.

My thesis provides a further stepping-stone in our knowledge of 'migrant correspondences' for it illuminates the side of those who were not persecuted during the Third Reich and who decided to stay in Germany. As this side of the correspondence maintained or revived with those who were persecuted and consequently emigrated has been given comparably little attention by research, the type of corpus examined in my thesis is underrepresented in scholarly research. I have worked with a selected corpus kept in the EL Collection and it is through my archival research that the uncatalogued letters have been considered and scoped for academic research for the first time and the materials of the collection been made more accessible for future researchers. It is my hope that the categorisation of the materials that I offered in Chapter I can inspire other researchers to work with the EL Collection so that these versatile materials gain further academic attention.

Furthermore, I hope that my example of applying narratological and close reading analyses to epistolary texts to better understand the processes at work in letter correspondences can provide other researchers with a new tool to work with epistolary material and especially lengthy correspondences held in personal collections, such as the EL Collection.

This discussion of the correspondence between Max Unold, Reinhard Koester and Ernst Levin and Anicuta Belau and the ways in which the two letter writers revived their friendship with the emigrant couple since 1946 has uncovered the function the letters held within the writer-addressee relationship. I pointed out that both writers inscribed their own identity performances into the correspondence by using the letters as a stage for their created 'plots' as they summarised and narrated their lives during the Third Reich, WWII, and postwar Germany. My reading furthermore proves that they did so with different communicative goals, and it offers an interpretation of both men's writing as a deliberate construction of plots by means of narratological strategies. I demonstrated that both writers' communicative

goal was a tailoring of their self-representation and especially their role during the years of the Third Reich. I have argued that a sense of uneasiness regarding their German past is tangible in both men's correspondence, and that they avoided a discussion of the crimes committed by the Nazi government, crimes that of course included the persecution of the letters' recipients, Ernst Levin, and his family.

Within the deployed narratological strategies, which I read as tailored to influence the reader's judgement, I have further identified the employment of stylistic devices and writing patterns that are fundamental to the literary movements of Expressionism, *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and Naturalism. More specifically, the thematic orientation of the individual chapters on the narrating of spaces, the body and the process of ageing allowed for a demonstration of the continuous focus on stereotypical topoi regarding these themes and how all narration was carefully crafted to act out a performance of the self. My original argument is that the identification of the strategies used in the postwar correspondence by Unold and Koester can help to better understand the narratological possibilities of letter writing, that is, for example, the letter writers' personal goals regarding the representation of their selves.

After I introduced the EL Collection and the selected letter writers and their recipients in Chapter I, in Chapter II I brought to light the metaphorical and metonymical narrating of spaces. This revealed that both letter writers performed their identity as victims (of war) and as passive, uninvolved citizens (during Fascist rule); I stated how this performance is achieved by an emphasis of 'Innerlichkeit' within the narrated spaces and a staging of German spaces as sacrificial and thus opposing spaces of exile as spaces of prosperity.

Chapter III then investigated the representations of the body, including the young and old, injured, and ill body. I confirmed the previously detected identity performances and expanded the argument with the identification of Koester's style as Expressionist and *neusachlich,* and Max Unold's linguistic employment of an equally *sachlich* and unaffected rationality. This chapter further explored how a plain and rational narrative style is ideally equipped for the writers' narration of their experiences in times of crises and that this style crucially mirrored the interbellum paradigm of 'Verhaltenslehren der Kälte'.

In Chapter IV, I mapped out the representations of old age and the process of ageing and, in doing so, I confirmed once more the letter writers' creation of a narrating voice and their intentions that led to the crafting of such carefully styled texts. The analysis showed that both men gave their narration of age a binary structure and narrated age through youth or attributes ascribed to youth, always with the communicative goal of tailoring their identities to those of a victim of war on the one hand and a successful statesman on the other. The analysis furthermore demonstrated that both writers were strongly influenced by the cultural conventions of their own intellectual and classically educated social circle, and the conventions established during their formative years. Moreover, in this chapter I explored the different approaches both ageing men took regarding a narration of their activities during the Third Reich, and illustrated how one was afflicted by feelings of remorse and a desire for vindication, whereas the other had moved on from the topic and into the new Bundesrepublik within which he inscribed himself as an active and influential figure.

Taken together, these chapters prove how the revived correspondence forced the writers to take a narrative position in regard to their past and present actions. This fact, although applicable to all private correspondence, is crucial in the correspondence between persecuted émigrés and their non-persecuted friends examined in this thesis. I have shown how the writers, forced to tell their emigrant friends about their experiences and role during the years of National Socialist rule in Germany, have consequently utilised the letters as a platform for deliberately tailored performances of identity. Once identified as such, the analysis of these identity performances allowed glimpses into the writers' personalities and their communicative goals. I have demonstrated, amongst other details, how within these communicative goals, Reinhard Koester attempted to flee the misery of his reality, how he yearned for vindication which he had silenced for a long time and admitted to only in the face of death. I have furthermore shown how Max Unold's staged himself as a victim of war which eventually developed into an eagerness to emphasize his successes in a striking need for approval and recognition and, in contrast to the ageing Koester, with an astonishing indifference regarding any moral reckoning.

This concluding synopsis has shown how this thesis fills a considerable gap as it takes into account the constructed linguistic properties of letters and by showing the fruitfulness of a

close reading approach provides another tool to work with lengthy private correspondences. However, the size of the Ernst Levin Collection exceeded the scale of my PhD research, which led me to be selective in choosing which letters to analyse. This describes one limitation of this thesis, namely a limitation in scale. Whilst I have selected the correspondence which, in my view, was the most enlightening for the questions I wanted to ask, there are several more correspondences kept in the EL Collection which remain unexamined. Therefore, the EL Collection offers a great deal more research material that would profit from a close reading analysis as I have presented in my work.

A second limitation regards the correspondence I analysed and again arose from the selective nature of a PhD thesis. To answer my question for identity performances after the years of the Third Reich and the experience of WWII in this thesis, I have focused solely on the letter writers' postwar exchange with sporadic consideration of some of the prewar letters. Other topics regarding the lives of the four correspondents and their relationships could of course be discussed if one undertook a detailed analysis of these earlier texts. A close reading analysis might then answer additional questions, for example, how the letter writers experienced and narrated their postings during WWI in the 'Feldpostbriefe' sent back to Anicuta Belau, how Belau's own attempts at an artistic career during the years of the *Schwabinger Bohème* in the *Kaiserreich* were discussed amongst the male friends, or how the identity performances of the rival men changed and adjusted according to different stages in their (romantic) relationships (with one another).

In relation to the main interest of this thesis, other private correspondences of emigrant friends with those who stayed in the home country could, if examined with the same close reading approach, further our knowledge of the narratological strategies of such participants of the Third Reich whose postwar correspondence forced them to position themselves. This thesis identified the topic of 'German guilt' as lingering between the lines in the correspondence and, whilst it is to be assumed that this phenomenon could be observed in other correspondences between correspondents with similar roles, it would be enlightening to know more details regarding the narratological execution of this status quo: for example, do other epistolary texts of this kind show similar features of identity performances and if so, what are the underlying communicative goals that can be identified? Do other letter

correspondences also reveal the extent to which the letter writers were influenced by their education and formative years in the way certain themes are narrated as topoi and with elements of literary trends? If so, is this tendency also to be found in letters written by individuals who were not by profession connected to the fine arts? And, as a larger-scale field of interest, can further studies confirm the finding of the use of narrative-theoretical tools of fictional texts in the factual epistolary texts, in other words, do letter writers' actively blur the boundaries between fictional and factual writing to perform their deliberate identities and manipulate the reader's judgement?

In spite of not having been able to address the above outlined correlations on a larger scale, this thesis hopes to both have confirmed and expanded existing knowledge in the field of epistolary studies as well as giving an impetus to further studies on private correspondences.

In conclusion, I have offered a new way to fruitfully connect tools from literary analysis with factual, epistolary materials. This approach has revealed some of the key features of these texts, their letter writers' communicative goals, and their inclinations regarding the ways in which they wished their identities to be perceived and judged by a reader. The epistolary performances revealed their sentiments regarding their past experiences of war, flight, and defeat, and these gained insights compellingly confirmed previous and ongoing research on German ways of re-narrating their part in German Fascism.

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