Selfhood, Place, and Ideology in German Photo Albums, 1933–1945

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Do photographs open a window onto the ideology of the National Socialist dictatorship? The popularity of television histories of this period suggests that they do. Yet, as many expert commentators have argued, the apparent authenticity of historical photographs can often be deceptive.[1] Photographs have certainly been subject to deliberate manipulation.[2] But even with apparently "naïve" photographs—as in the case of millions of amateur snapshots taken in this period—the images still present historians with innumerable challenges, not least with respect to interpretation. They do show us glimpses of quotidian moments and visceral experiences that rarely find their way into written documents—in part because many such moments were too "ordinary" to merit recording in a diary, letter, or other self-consciously reflexive "ego-document," and in part because photographs obviated the need to translate embodied and affective experiences into written language.[3] In spite of this apparent immediacy, such snapshots nevertheless reveal less about the time in which they were taken than many written sources do, not least because amateur photography was a peculiarly conservative medium.

The speed of innovation in photographic technology generated much excitement in the first half of the twentieth century, as we shall see. But this new technology did not automatically produce new visual imaginaries and expressions. The research for this article, as well as for a larger research project on photographic practice in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, involved studying several hundred private photo albums made by Germans during the Nazi regime, and looking through many thousands of individual

photographs from the same period.[4] It is tempting to conclude from such a sample that

most of these photos reflect the conventions of the genre more than they do one particular

moment in time, let alone specific political dispositions or unique personal experiences.

While the events depicted in amateur snapshots may have been intensely personal and "of

the moment" for those who were present in front or behind the camera, the resulting

images are often almost indistinguishable from one another. From a baby's first steps to

high school graduation, from a christening to a wedding, from a Sunday picnic to a beach

holiday, a repertoire of conventional life milestones and their attendant "appropriate"

poses and settings fill the pages of these albums. They resemble similar scenes

photographed in the decades before and after the Nazi period, as well as comparable

photographs in British or American albums of the same era. Neither the behavior of those

being photographed (their actions, poses, and inevitable smiles), nor that of the

photographers (their choice of the picturesque setting, the angle, lighting, and focus)

changes dramatically in this time, or in distinctly recognizable patterns. Unless a

photograph contains accidental clues about its temporal context, such as a distinctive new

piece of technology or fashion, it is often impossible to tell whether an image of civilian

life that survived outside the context of an album and without a caption was taken in

1920, 1930, or 1940.

This is not just because those engaged in the production of these photographs

failed to think or live outside conventions, or to do away with pictorial precedents.

Family photos are nearly always acts of preemptive commemoration. Their purpose is to

represent the moment: not just for immediate consumption, but also as it is to be

remembered in the future, and by future generations.[5] The fact that this future is never

wholly knowable, and that the value judgements of its inhabitants are unpredictable, means that it is perfectly rational to take photos in a style that is relatively risk-adverse, thus tending to privilege the generic over the idiosyncratic and original. Such limitations notwithstanding, this article argues that photographs can tell us particular and particularly important things about Nazi Germany that are not easily apparent in other types of sources. At the same time, it also demonstrates that photographs offer significant insights into movement and rootedness, a sense of new beginnings, subjectivity, as well as the authenticity of time in the political imaginations of Germans living under National Socialism.

Much of this depends, of course, on how we understand the category of "the political." Historiographical controversies about life in Nazi Germany have long focused on the regime's ability or inability to extend its ideological tentacles into the private sphere. Where Roger Griffin saw the birth of new, distinctly modern fascist subjects united in a single *Volksgemeinschaft*, a cohort of skeptical historians has treated such ambitions as propagandistic hyperbole or window-dressing for political coercion and terror.[6] Moving beyond this dichotomy, another group of cultural historians has turned to the study of subjectivities as a realm in which politics and selfhood commingled, without seeing individuals as either victims or resisters.[7]

All these historiographies describe important aspects of life in Nazi Germany. But where photographs can make the greatest contribution is not in clarifying "facts," but in exploring mentalities, behaviors, and practices. If we focus on what National Socialism *meant* to people, rather than what it tried to *do* to people, a much more amorphous anthropological picture emerges. Rituals and practices, and the objects and spaces in

which these were performed, defined people's sense of selfhood and shaped how they engaged with the political world around them, as well as how they pulled that world—its phrases, images, and objects—into their own. Written sources, which are, by definition, laborious to produce, requiring effort, deliberation—and, in Nazi Germany, also a careful calibration of possible political consequences—capture such transfers only in highly mediated ways. The majority of Germans living through the Third Reich left no such sources behind. Taking photographs was a ubiquitous practice, however, and became second-nature to such an extent to many that it became an integral part of lived experience. Photos are thus particularly suited to exploring the experiential dimension of life in Germany between 1933 and 1945. They are not "objective" documents showing whether or not people resisted or were "duped" by the fascist regime and its ideology. Rather, photos are part of what people did *with* this ideology, and how they translated it back into a sense of selfhood. Viewed in this way, the apparent ordinariness of many of the images in question does not detract from their political relevance: asserting ordinariness in the face of the extraordinary is, in itself, an immensely political act—and one that requires careful decoding on the part of the historian.

For many Germans, the caesura of 1933 was not as marked as it appears with the benefit of historical hindsight. Technological and economic change occurred more incrementally than regime change, but it arguably did more to transform quotidian practices and subjectivities. Consumerism, new leisure practices and industries, as well as new media spectacles certainly helped redraw the boundaries between the public and private spheres. Some in the Nazi leadership regarded such developments as "transmission belts" for dangerous notions of individualism, gender equality, and

"decadent" sexualities that were at odds with "healthy Aryan" lifestyles and the united *Volksgemeinschaft*. Others, meanwhile, tried to capitalize on the real or perceived economic successes that facilitated mass consumption.[8] Organizations such as Strength through Joy (*Kraft durch Freude*) linked leisure to politics, as did official products such as the *Volksempfänger* (a radio receiver) and the much anticipated and heavily advertised *Volkswagen* automobile, to name but the most iconic.[9] Seemingly mundane practices—from driving cars to drinking Coca-Cola, from seaside holidays to gymnastics—took on a significance far beyond the "purely private," functioning as arenas in which political identities and ideological preferences were formed, performed, and contested. Beyond direct cooptation by the regime, private photographs offer insight into the ways in which people embraced such practices to fashion new identities and new modes of participation in the public sphere. Photography not only documents such activities, but was itself a new form of mass consumption: people bought cameras, films, albums and picture frames, instruction books, new and better cameras. And photography proved to be an incentive for embarking upon new forms of consumer behaviors as well. Photos turned fleeting experience into a status symbol that could be displayed as a prized possession.

As the Introduction to this issue notes, photography had long historical roots, but its social life underwent a dramatic transformation in interwar Germany. Two factors proved decisive. In the first place, the circulation of professional photographs increased significantly. Cheaper printing techniques facilitated the proliferation of photos in magazines and illustrated newspapers, and on advertising posters. When Janet Ward writes of the Weimar years as an epoch defined by "surfaces," she is speaking to no small extent about the reproduction of photographic images.[10] Second, taking photographs

became easier and more affordable as Germany led the world in the development of a new type of camera: lightweight, compact, extremely easy to use, and affordable. Iconic brands included Leica, patented in 1925, and Zeiss Ikon's Contax, on sale beginning in 1933. Countless cheaper versions of the same basic camera type came onto the market in the 1930s and early 1940s.[11] Photography quickly became a favored pastime for millions of German hobbyists. Leica alone sold a quarter of a million cameras by 1939, by which time an estimated seven million Germans owned a camera.[12] To that figure one must add all those part-time photographers who were handed a camera by friends or family members. Albums that show the same group of people with one individual at a time missing from each image—because they were taking the shot—are evidence of this.[13] Even those who did not participate behind the camera became involved by virtue of being in front of it. In short, being photographed by fellow soldiers, classmates, tourists, and work colleagues became a normal and regular experience for most Germans during the 1930s and 1940s.

Contemporaries were conscious of the transformative effect of this pervasive new practice. While some, such as László Moholy-Nagy, expressed excitement about the mass medium, others were alarmed by these developments.[14] But irrespective of the particular cultural pessimism of the extreme Left and Right, the sense that photography constituted a new language that would rival the written word was pervasive: it arose from the interrelationship between the viewing and the taking of photographs, and the fact that both became mass pursuits in this period. As the gaze of the professional photographer was imitated and appropriated by an army of lay photographers and snapshotters, people came to view photographs not just as aesthetic representations created by experts, but as a

communicative practice in which everyone shared: those who produced it professionally, and those who consumed it and used it in their own private lives. For many ordinary Germans, then, photography became a language for expressing and sharing in a new *zeitgeist*. This not only encouraged and enabled the staging of large-scale photogenic events, such as the annual Nazi Party rallies or the Olympic Games, which have been central to the literature on fascism as "spectacle." But the impact of photography also reached far deeper into more quotidian lives, transforming the spatial and temporal parameters in which such lives were experienced and understood.

To acknowledge this deeper impact is to move beyond the confines of the concept of photography as propaganda. Certainly, propaganda photography exerted an important influence, but to think of photography in the Third Reich *primarily* as propaganda entails the danger that one identifies as significant only those features that directly correspond to that already known and recognized as "typical" of the regime and its ideology. Bernd Hüppauf has argued in an essay about the photos of World War II—programmatically entitled "Emptying the Gaze"—that "these photographs are customarily read... as illustrations of the well-known story of the immoral and barbaric ideology of the Nazi system. As long as the answer to the question as to what they show is known in advance, they will remain silent... Only focusing on the concreteness of details ... will make visible what can be seen in the photos."[15] Francis Guerin subsequently used this quotation to frame her discussion of a range of images, including so-called trophy pictures by German soldiers on the Eastern front, the not-quite "private" snapshots of the professionally trained Eva Braun, and ghetto photographs.[16]

But what of photographs that depict more quotidian experiences of less obviously disrupted lives? One obvious difference lies in the fact that in German family photos of scenes of leisure, relaxation, or celebration, the individuals or groups depicted usually had significant agency in the production of the image. They chose or at least consented to having their photo taken; they posed, perhaps even dressed, for the camera; and they often played a role in deciding which images were kept and which discarded. This coproduction of the image by the photographer and the photographed differed from most perpetrator photographs, which robbed victims of much of this agency. And yet, there were also important similarities. For one, both types of photo drew heavily on preexisting templates. They mobilized collective memories, rhetorical clichés, and habitual poses. Though each deployment of such precedents may be subtly different from the next, not only the photos that deviated from the convention were significant. Affirming a shared gaze can be just as meaningful as its subversion: lack of originality turns images into instruments of normalization.

The second commonality of photos of the most extraordinary *and* most ordinary aspects of life under the Third Reich is that all of them confer authority. As this article contends, taking a photograph puts the photographer, as well as those who pose for the camera or help with the *mise-en-scène* of the objects and spaces to be photographed, in charge of framing the meaning of the moment and how it will be remembered in the future. By monumentalizing experience in such tangible ways, photography created opportunities for political mobilization that went far beyond the confines of what is traditionally understood as propaganda photography. In this regard, however, snapshots are anything but simple: they, too, require careful decoding.

<H1> "DOING NOTHING"? ACTION AND ITS ABSENCE</H1>

<TQ>[Figures 1 and 2 near here. <CAP>Figure 1. </CAP> <CAP>Figure 2. </CAP></TQ>

The two examples in Figures 1 and 2, dating from 1941 and 1942, respectively, are in many ways typical of the genre of private snapshots taken during the Third Reich. They show ordinary scenes—indeed, scenes that are remarkably uneventful. At first glance, this absence of content makes them seem radically removed from the world of politics, and, indeed, from the world of work: they capture leisure and contemplation, and their format, too, is unassuming. The first image was developed in the cheapest possible format (the size is 5.4 by 4.2 cm). Its owner, shown on the right-hand side of the photo, is the author's father, Horst Umbach, who has kept this image from his schoolboy days in an envelope all his life. Horst did not own a camera as a fifteen-year-old, but did become a passionate hobby photographer in the postwar period., He nevertheless collected many photographs during the 1940s: most of these feature him alone or with friends, and some were taken with a camera he borrowed from those friends.

This particular image (Figure 1) was taken when a class of pupils from the Breitenfelderstraße school in Hamburg-Eppendorf—a *Mittelschule* (secondary school) less elite than the classical *Gymnasium*, but more academically rigorous than the basic *Volksschule*—was requisitioned to help with the potato harvest in Ovelgönne, just south of the Elbe River. The picture shows three friends lying in the grass, and were it not for the extreme economic turbulence of the times, we might classify their milieu as middle

class. But for many German families, the war simultaneously opened up new opportunities and rendered social survival more precarious. This was certainly true for the Umbachs, and in making sense of these images, it is worth briefly reflecting on this background.

In the Weimar years, Horst's parents, both of whom came from relatively humble, provincial families, moved to Hamburg to try their hand at a more bourgeois lifestyle. They danced, partied, and tried new drinks and new sports, including horseback riding. But their aspirations largely ended in failure. Horst's father designed a new car, the *Umba-Wagen,* and tried to set up a manufacturing plant, but never got beyond building a prototype and producing advertising materials—before the hyperinflation put a quick end to his dreams. He wore shoes with leather soles but walked to work for hours every day because he could not afford the tram fare. Horst's parents divorced in 1936, leaving a single mother of two struggling to put food on the table.

In some ways, the war made a difficult situation more difficult. In other ways, though, it opened up new opportunities. Horst's mother was drafted into war service as a telegraphist. The family now lived in an apartment block, the so-called Breitenfelder Burg, in Eppendorf. They subsidized the 72-RM rental payments by subletting one of the three rooms in the apartment to a medical student. Such stories illustrate the difficulty of classifying the practice and motifs of amateur photography in straightforward "class" terms. By 1942, when the second image (Figure 2) was taken, the now regular nighttime bombings of the city in the wake of Winston Churchill's Area Bombing Directive led to the child evacuation program (*Kinderlandverschickung*): the Breitenfelderstraße school pupils and their teachers were evacuated to rural Franconia as a result. Numerous photos

were again taken, and Horst purchased copies from his classmates to assemble his own small album. Together with thirty-two other photos from the same trip, he arranged them in a pocket-sized album measuring 9.5 by 15 cm, and decorated the cover with pressed flowers (Figure 3), including an *Edelweiss*. This, he explains today, constituted a piece of Bavarian exoticism.[17]

<TQ>[Figure 3 near here. <CAP>Figure 3. </CAP></TQ>

Photos in this album show the pupils at play, exploring the area, climbing, canoeing, and, as in these photos, doing not very much at all: relaxing, taking a break, resting, or reading. Like those from the summer of 1941, these images seem far removed from the public face of National Socialism. Indeed, they appear almost as its emotional antithesis: we see calm rather than activity, contemplation rather than paramilitary drill, individualism rather than collectivism. Both of the photographs seen here, like many other pictures from these two collections, show boys together, yet they display no visible sense of community: they act individually, alongside one another. Even the most militarized youngsters would occasionally enjoy breaks, of course. Yet the frequency with which such breaks and withdrawals—rather than the activities between them—were photographed is noteworthy. In fact, this conspicuous inactivity struck one British interlocutor as distinctly "German" when we compared these photographs to her own husband's wartime snapshots.[18] British youngsters photographed each other during sporting activities much like their German counterparts often did, but she still thought it "strange" that Horst's photographs contained so many examples of people "doing nothing."

These teenagers from Hamburg apparently considered doing nothing to be important: worth recording, worth preserving, worth spending meagre resources on. It would be tempting to interpret such images as evidence of an "inner emigration" or "resistivity."[19] These pupils do not look like ardent young Nazis, and they might have been using photography for a conspicuous display of individualism. The book Horst recalls reading in this photograph was Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*—a novel published in 1922 that remained a popular staple on German middle-class bookshelves even after the Nazi regime had stripped the author of his German citizenship. It is interesting to consider the particular way in which reading is performed in this photograph in the context of a novel about self-exploration and the troubled inner lives of Europe's *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie. Thomas Mann wrote the *Reflections of a Non-Political Man* at about the same time: a paradigmatic text for those who saw true contemplation as somehow rising above the vulgarity of traditional politics.

Neither of these books—nor Horst's pose, for that matter—were genuinely "non-political.," however A similar photo of him from 1944, taken after he had joined the air force's training program, features him looking demonstratively contemplative in the face of imminent total defeat—while reading Heinrich Schliemann's report of the archaeological excavation of Troy.[20] Such literary poses provided vantage points from which one could regard the spectacle of everyday life from a position of seemingly cultural (and, if desired, ideological) superiority. But they were mediated by wider pictorial contexts in multiple ways. When asked why this and so many other photos like it were taken at such a difficult time, Horst responded: "We were reading so many illustrated magazines back then."[21] In his recollections at least, there was thus an

important link between the consumption of published images, on the one hand, and the production of one's own "private" photographs, on the other. The link with the print culture of the time was not necessarily that of a direct imitation. Rather, this was a shared pictorial imaginary, on which both professional and amateur photographs of the period were drawing.

THE NATURAL GERMAN

Part of what renders Horst Umbach's photos so distinctive is the fact that what is, in some ways, a typically bourgeois practice and pose—the silent, contemplative immersion in "serious" books—is here transplanted into the open air. This seemingly paradoxical move was not just an act of youthful transgression: the pose of reading in nature had, in fact, its own ideological traditions. Reflecting on these is not about uncovering a direct "precedent," but rather about tracing the contours of something more diffuse: a collective pictorial memory, a repository of "thinkable" visual configurations and stereotypes, which underpinned, animated, and made possible the aesthetic self-stylization of teenagers in photos such as Horst's.

<TQ>[Figure 4 near here. <CAP>Figure 4. </CAP></TQ>

One of the most influential images that defined such quasi-literary ways of posing outdoors is British painter Joseph Wright of Derby's 1781 portrait of 'Sir Brooke Boothby," a pioneer of the cultural movement of eighteenth-century sentimentality (Figure 4). Unlike his peers in contemporaneous portraits by Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, or Johann Zoffany, who preside over landscapes as territorial possession,

Brooke Boothby reclines in a forest, at ease with seemingly untamed nature. His pose

suggests no sense of ownership. Instead, he communes with his environment, the

contours of his body blending organically into those of the river embankment on which

he rests. The book in his hand is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1762 novel *Emile*, and

Boothby, a leading Rousseauist of his time, had paid for the English-language translation

he is clutching.[22] Rousseauism was understood as offering an antidote to cultural

alienation through seeking inspiration in nature. As such, it is sometimes seen to signal a

retreat from politics—if by politics one means official, public and formalized forms of

political behavior. To find traces of it in these photographs from the 1940s would

therefore resonate with a reading of those photographs as anti-political. Yet, anti-politics

can be a powerful political practice in its own right.

The further evolution of this pictorial convention makes this clear. Sentimentality

was predicated historically on a rejection of the alleged decadence of the formal courtly

culture widely associated most closely with France. In Germany, it was promoted

visually by artists such as Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki, director of the Berlin

Kunstakademie, who created over 6,000 art works, mostly aquafortes, and 4,000

drawings, many of which illustrated literary texts.[23] In 1779 he published a series of

engravings titled "Natural and Affected Acts of Life," with a commentary by Georg

Christoph Lichtenberg. The first two sets of these engravings juxtapose German ways of

living life "naturally"—in conversation, instruction, and prayer, for example, or by taking

promenades—with "affected" French ways of performing the same actions.[24] The

German way is depicted as one of quiet introspection, modesty, and sensibility; all

outdoor pursuits are in harmony with the surrounding natural landscapes. The

corresponding French affectations are associated with pompous rococo costumes, with exaggerated gesticulation, and, in the outdoor scenes, with the trimmed, geometrical hedges of a baroque garden.

Such national dichotomies provided useful ideological ammunition when the conflict with the French turned violent during the era of Napoleon's occupation of the German Reich. Painters such as Caspar David Friedrich and Georg Friedrich Kersting drew on this imagination when they produced patriotic images that commemorated the anti-Napoleonic "Wars of Liberation" as an uprising of Germanic energies infused and rendered authentic by their synergies with natural forces. The French appeared as an alien presence on German soil, alienated from place and from nature itself.

<TQ>[Figure 5 near here. <CAP>Figure 5. </CAP></TQ>

In Georg Friedrich Kersting's *Auf Vorposten* (Outpost Duty) of 1815 (Figure 5), which commemorates a fallen martyr, the uniform identifies the protagonist as a member of the German volunteer units. It shows him not engaged in military action, but at rest, the contours of his body melting into those of his natural surroundings. Caspar David Friedrich's famous 1814 painting of *The Chasseur in the Forest* makes a similar connection, depicting the German military victory by showing a single French soldier being physically and spiritually overpowered not by an army, but by the German forest. In such images, nature—or, better said, the presumed German ability to commune with nature—bestowed moral legitimacy on one national culture while denying the same to others. This notion was put to manifold use during the Third Reich: the policy of "Germanizing" the East through gigantic programs of reforestation drew on this association, as did the promotion of encounters with German and Nordic landscapes in

the *Strength through Joy* holiday programs.[25] Such attitudes and behaviors were not the products of a singular "Nazi ideology," however: such images contained templates of meaning that spoke to different constituencies, ones to which they often appealed precisely because they were ideologically malleable.

One particularly prominent and widely distributed set of images that staged the connection with landscape as part of a "Nazified gaze" were official ones taken by Adolf Hitler's photographer of choice, Heinrich Hoffmann. These photographs were published in periodicals and in bestselling coffee table books that claimed to show "the Führer as nobody knows him." Titles such as these were highly suggestive, inviting readers to imagine that they were being offered privileged insights into moments of genuine selfhood and privacy.[26] In the examples shown here (Figures 6 and 7)—one of which was, it is important to note, selected as the cover image for the volume of the same title— the Führer is shown in poses that echo those of Kersting's heroes: picnicking, resting, or quietly contemplating his surroundings. His body blends harmoniously into the surrounding landscape, with which he appears to be communing: a true German thinker, immersed in the quiet contemplation of nature and the enjoyment of its authenticity.

<TQ>[Figures 6 and 7 near here. <CAP>Figure 6. </CAP> <CAP>Figure 7. </CAP></TQ>

Hoffmann's particular talent for producing images such as these lay not just in the clever use of particular iconographic traditions, but also in his ability to recast such traditions in an idiom of apparent spontaneity reminiscent of snapshot photography. Many of Hoffmann's images are off-center or "wonky," and thus appear to capture a seemingly random part of the action. Where Hitler is seen interacting with ordinary

people, one often sees only a part of his body—sometimes as little as one hand reaching

into the scene from beyond the camera. But the images nevertheless focuses on his

presence, which is reflected in the emotionally expressive faces of those he touches. The

seemingly casual framing of the action in such shots conjures up the excitement of the

moment and thus serves as a counterpoint to the calm composedness of more obviously

staged propaganda imagery that usually documented official occasions. By making much

of the photographic vernacular in this way, Hoffmann also encouraged amateur imitation:

some of his published pictures show members of the Hitler Youths taking their own

photo of the Führer, for example. Disseminating such images as propaganda material

provided the ultimate sanction for the private production of images. The photographer's

gaze onto the Führer, they imply, is one in which everyone could partake.

"GOOD TIMES"

It was not just the practice of taking photos that officials encouraged, but also the

associated habit of arranging these images into albums. The regime produced and

distributed a variety of albums to encourage individuals to keep such records to document

their service in the armed forces, in the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labor Front, or

DAF), and in other auxiliary organizations—as the readymade title pages with decorative

embossed metal lettering suggested. Similar albums with a more civilian focus were

produced as commercial products for sale to Germans who might have wished to create

their own albums documenting "historic" events, such as the 1936 Olympic Games.

Thousands of these albums can still be found in archives today.[27] Homemade album

covers were often elaborate, multimedia artifacts, no less ambitious than their professionally produced counterparts. They were important "frames" that defined the *raison d'être* and emotional tone of the photos they contained. Like Horst's miniature album, the example shown in Figure 8 combines different media: the cardboard cover combines a black-and-white landscape photograph with a hand-painted blue sky, while a large, calligraphic caption, written across the image of a shining sun, proclaims the word *holidays* (*Ferien*) in large letters. The album documents a 1941 family summer vacation in Kirchberg, and the cover sets an appropriately cheerful tone.

<TQ>Figure 8 near here. <CAP>Figure 8. </CAP></TQ>

The photos inside this album show the family mostly outdoors. Time spent in an unfamiliar environment provided the cue for performing a spirit of exploration and outdoor fun, in which geographical and individual mobility were closely intertwined. Yet, even here, most photos were not action shots. Throughout this album, the emphasis, as in Horst's photos, is on images depicting the protagonists taking a break, relaxing, and adopting contemplative poses in the landscape.

The persistence of the holiday-album genre well into 1944 is remarkable, given the turn the war had taken by this point. On some level, of course, it is not surprising that Germans in the Third Reich often took vacation as an occasion for taking photos; the practice was certainly familiar during the postwar decades. Photos tend to document events seen as significant, either because they are milestones in a life narrative, such as weddings, birthdays, and christenings, or because they open up new experiences and perspectives, such as a trip away from home. The intensity with which such trips were

undertaken and staged for the camera under the Nazi dictatorship is nevertheless remarkable given the conditions of total war.

Both before and after the outbreak of war in 1939, countless albums were made of seemingly constant vacations, from short weekend excursions to longer holidays. Some albums feature, in a single year, winter holidays, Easter holidays, Pentecostal holidays, one or two summer holidays, mid-autumn holidays, and Christmas holidays. Such albums not only convey a strong narrative of "good times," but also project travel and the exploration of new landscapes and environments as a central goal. These types of encounter forged "character," and invited comparisons between personal experience and the broader spirit of the times. This enabled a transfer of photographic perspectives and poses from regular holiday albums to ones that documented absences from home occasioned by military service or various labor and auxiliary services.

<TQ>Figure 9 near here. <CAP>Figure 9. </CAP></TQ>

At first glance, the next album cover (Figure 9) looks like yet another collection of holiday snapshots: a photo of a picturesque landscape in the snow traversed by skiing tracks, physical markers of that all-important movement through space, has been glued onto a linen-bound album cover. It takes up the entire surface of the cover, and it has been stitched on by hand with a rough thread. A handwritten inscription in the top right-hand corner designates the album as a souvenir of "happy times" ("*Schön war die Zeit*"). Yet, this album does not commemorate a vacation: it documents a young woman's public service, first in the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Reich Labor Service), from April to October 1943, and then in the Auxiliary War Service (*Kriegshilfsdienst*) until May 1944.

Many pages in this album are indistinguishable from typical German travel albums of this time. They show the protagonist frolicking on meadows, cycling, climbing mountains, sitting by rivers. Other photos show her performing agricultural labor with her female "comrades," and entertaining visiting soldiers. The accompanying captions, nearly always ending in an exclamation mark—"A happy gathering!," "Happy Breaktime!," "A lovely summer's day!," "Jolly Lasses!"—convey a sense of unremitting jolliness. Occasionally—especially in other albums documenting similar scenes—captions appear to be quoting lyrics from popular musical films of the time. It was in this way that Germans could cast the occasion of being away from home—on labor duty, on child evacuations, and even at the front—as a positive holiday experience, without identifying with any explicitly political rationale for such undertakings. Instead, such holiday-style albums asserted happiness in the face of separation from loved ones, physical exertion, and possible danger, and facilitated participation in a *zeitgeist* defined through new beginnings, mobility, and generic excitement. Circumventing the need for explicit political verbalization, photography of this kind entailed a certain affective alignment with some of the ways in which the regime sought to "naturalize" its political ambitions in terms of the shared sentiments, aspirations, and instincts of the imagined community of the *Volk*.

<H1>"ON THE ROAD"</H1>

<TQ>Figure 10 near here. <CAP>Figure 10. </CAP></TQ>

Certain motifs stand out in the family albums of this period. One is a focus—with an intensity bordering on fetishization—on the roads as the sites of movement, and on the vehicles used for getting around: cars, motorbikes, bicycles, and, occasionally, cruise ships. In soldiers' albums, horses and military vehicles often take pride of place in at least half of their photos, the vehicles typically shown with their occupants either inside of them or standing proudly next to them (Figure 10).

<TQ>Figure 11 near here. <CAP>Figure 11. </CAP></TQ>

Some photo albums depict a vehicle entirely on its own, often anthropomorphizing it. One inscription (Figure 11) mentions the car's pet name, *Opelchen* (the term literally translates as "Little Opel," but plays on the similarity with *Onkelchen*, a common term of endearment for an uncle or other close family member), and the album makes it the active subject of a narrative sequence that runs over several captions, describing *Opelchen* whizzing over what are referred to as "the Führer's roads." This and the following three pages of this album show different stretches of the route being travelled, each shot harmoniously blending the road and the landscape, each stretch identified by place names in the captions (but with no other visible landmarks), until the destination is finally reached.

The historiography has not been silent about the idolization of the motorway in National Socialism.[28] There is a clear sense in these pictures that roads—including, but not only, the new motorways—are seen as spaces of a peculiar charismatic power, as trajectories, literally and metaphorically, for transporting smiling travelers into a brave new world. At the same time, these travel photos are marked by an air of relaxation, leisure, and pleasure. Outdoor relaxation is, then, again a leitmotif: travelers are shown

sunbathing, sleeping, and picnicking in pictorial narratives that are less concerned with speed than with rest. Again, one might be tempted to see in this emphasis on non-action a moment of *Resistenz* to the official, utilitarian, and technological view of the motorway. And yet, like the photograph of the youths reading outdoors (Figure 2), these images, too, did not exist in isolation from professionally produced and published photographs. Two examples, taken from distinct yet extremely popular genres of the time, illustrate some of the connections between public images and private snapshots.

One example comes from the illustrated monthly publication *Unser Schwabenland* (Our Swabia). Founded in the mid-1920s, it was coproduced by Swabian homeland protection associations (*Heimatvereine*) and commercial partners, including associations for the promotion of tourism. It operated after 1933 under the oversight of the *Gauleiter*. The magazine combined explicit reflections on National Socialism with coverage of Swabia's economy and assets, such as industrial products, urban development, tourism, popular festivals, and, last but not least, stories about expatriate Swabians in the United States and elsewhere. One of its stated aims was to promote identification with the Swabian homeland, which it cast as a space that was simultaneously about tradition and progress, ostentatiously celebrating folk costumes alongside the technological superiority of high-tech wares "made in Swabia." In photographic terms, the image of the Swabian *Heimat* the journal promoted was Janus-faced as well. On the one hand, there was an emphasis on rural settings and the recreational and spiritual benefits of urbanites reconnecting with the region's agrarian roots. On the other hand, modern technology and modern sensibilities shaped such encounters. The countryside was no longer an untouched repository of "authentic"

lifestyles to be venerated from an appropriate distance. Rather, it was portrayed as something within easy reach for modern city dwellers and car drivers, a space readers were encouraged to visit and "consume" on weekend outings and tourism.

<TQ>Figure 12 near here. <CAP>Figure 12. </CAP></TQ>

The cover image of the March 1938 issue (Figure 12) folds many of these themes into one pictorial representation. It promotes the industrial region of Swabia through its flagship product, the Mercedes car, while at the same time promoting an idyllic view of rural Swabia. To that end, it features a young girl with plaited hair presenting an urban woman, elegantly dressed in a grey flannel suit, with handpicked daisies from the meadow. Above all, it suggests harmony: city and countryside do not collide; they are happily reconciled in a moment of respite. The car has stopped; even conversation has stopped, as the protagonists immerse themselves in the sights and smells of nature. The pages of the magazine were filled with similar photos showing Swabians and visitors enjoying this archetypal German *Heimat*, traversing it by car—but experiencing its meaning and beneficial effects on physical and mental health in moments of relaxation and quiet contemplation of the natural settings and scenic views.

A second example of this type of image comes from another popular genre of German print culture during this period: the illustrated coffee table book. In an investigation of photography and sense of space in German culture, Celia Applegate has argued that books such as these signaled a move away from an "authentic" to a "fake" sense of place under National Socialism. She, too, sees such photos embedded in older iconographies, notably drawing "on long-established traditions of place representation and pitch[ing] this new infrastructural wonder [the motorway] as the means by which

German, indeed ur-German, love of home and of travel would be reconciled and fulfilled." Yet, crucially for Applegate, such photography had the effect of eliminating the very sense of place it claimed to showcase:

<EXT> But a funny thing happened in the process of building the autobahn and selling it to the German people—place itself disappeared. … The regime's photographers themselves contributed to the task of erasure even while celebrating the 'new' landscapes the autobahn created. The glossy photography books of Erna Lendvai-Dircksen and Wolf Strache, among others, were remarkably inadequate in their portrayal of Germany's distinctive place-ness… [T]he blandness of the images seemed to emphasize photography's capacity to abstract from the world, not capture it. The details of place disappear in vistas of landscape that could be anywhere.[29]

It is true that the motorway photos by Lendvai-Dircksen and Strache conjure up a sense of speed, expansive space, and auratic technology. Yet, the perception that they necessarily eradicate either the sense of the past or the distinctiveness of place by doing so may relate more to the actions of the Nazi regime than to the photos themselves. What makes Lendvai-Dircksen's image (Figure 13) of a traditionally attired German carpenter, hammer in hand, standing next to the wooden support frame of a new motorway bridge "bland and inauthentic," while similar depictions of the glories of German *Handwerk* and labor from the 1920s are not?

<TQ>Figure 13 near here. <CAP>Figure 13. </CAP>]

Lendvai-Dircksen was not the only photographer publishing in the Third Reich to use the medium in order to pull different temporalities into a single space. Like the photographs of roads found in family albums discussed earlier, published photos of German motorways also often show drivers and their families taking a break from their travels, resting next to their car or using a purpose-built picnic spot. The motorway became domesticated in such photos, and its everyday users became its symbolic owners. The term *gemütlich*—cosy, homely, sentimental, at ease—in the caption of the next image (Figure 14), also from *Unser Schwabenland,* signifies both.

<TQ>Figure 14 near here. <CAP>Figure 14. </CAP>]

By "grounding" new infrastructures such as motorways in the traditional attributes of place, and conspicuous performances of contemplative times of rest, these photos can certainly be seen as ideological tools in the domestication of modern technology. Applegate is right to suspect that such photos, when publicly reproduced, served propagandistic intentions. But it is unlikely that such intentions fully controlled the meanings of such photos for those who looked at them. They do not, therefore, necessarily constitute aberrations from longer histories of ordinary Germans negotiating the experience of time and space. Such continuities of pictorial "meaning-making" can be obscured by the moral censure that inevitably accompanies the analysis of cultural practices under Nazism. But the medium of photography itself may have also contributed to Applegate's assessment: like the technology of motorway construction, photography as a technology of mass production triggers a suspicion that the significance or uniqueness of what is photographed may disappear—like the aura of the work of art in Walter Benjamin's "age of technological reproduction."[30] Because the mass (re)production of

photography was a twentieth-century invention, it is easy to assume that its relationship to tradition, place, and authenticity is necessarily problematic. But it is worth pausing to ask what exactly constitutes the novelty of photography in engaging with place.

Photography owed much to other genres of visual representation; in landscape or portrait photography, no neat dividing line separates painterly from photographic representation. The pictorial culture promoted by the Nazi regime to celebrate the motorways encompassed many genres, including traditional oil painting. Figure 15 is an image of a postcard showing one of a range of oil paintings from the exhibition *Des Führers Strassen in der Kunst* (The Roads of the Führer in Art). Such images did not necessarily hollow out the German tradition of *Heimat*; they reinvented it, precisely by detaching its representation from a purely backward-looking, nostalgic discourse, and making variegated *Heimat*s compatible with a visual discourse that embraced modernity and change. Far from making the imaginary of *Heimat* unusual, such political appropriations helped boost its popularity in the postwar years by "modernizing" the genre.[31]

THE IDEOLOGICAL VERNACULAR

<TQ>Figure 15 near here. <CAP>Figure 15. </CAP>]

What then, if anything, was so specific about photography in in the modernization of *Heimat*? Through its openly technical quality and the speed with which it was produced—compared to a painting, or even a sketch—photography transported a distinctly modern temporality into the human relationship with nature. Although cars,

roads, and other emblems of the technological conquest of space were favorite motifs in private and public photography during the Third Reich, photographs did not rely on such props to visualize "harmony" between man and nature, movement and rootedness, new beginnings and authenticity: the speed inherent in a photo's production already transported such dialectics into every image. It also made such relationships thinkable as a collective imaginary. In a different political context, one might have spoken of the "democratization" of the human relationship with landscape and space. Photography also invoked another dialectic in the interplay between spontaneity and intuition, on the one hand and scientific accuracy and veracity, on the other. Unlike art, it could claim to represent self-evident truths in an objective way that did not depend on the opinion of the photographer. Inadvertently or not, this assumes an important dimension in the specific political context in which it was situated.

The category of race was central to the many varied discourses that together constituted Nazi ideology. All these discourses assumed that the "truth" of racial characteristics was not just intellectual or spiritual, but also visible to the naked eye, i.e., something that could be documented photographically. Physical attributes were deemed to indicate a hierarchical order among imagined ethnic groups or "types." Pseudo-scientific experts theorized about skull shapes and nose sizes that conformed to Aryan ideals.[32] But race was not just physiognomic: it was also thought to relate to habitus and character, which, in turn, manifested themselves in interactions between people and their environment. To put it in a different way, racial membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft* implied ways of being attached to place. Alongside physiognomic representations, professional ethnographic photographs portrayed the habits of different races.[33] It was not

so much attachment to the (ultimately liberal or constitutional) idea of the nation-state that determined racial "health." Rather, the "earthy" particularity of the German tribes and their native regions created the cultural identity of the *Volksgemeinschaft.* This quality of being rooted in particular traditions and places—even if this, in turn, inspired highly dynamic and mobile behaviors—was what distinguished Germans from the "unhealthy" and "degenerate" absence of such rootedness in iconic diasporic "races" such as Jews and gypsies.[34]

Viewed against this background, it is problematic to assume that the "blandness" of landscape photography under National Socialism eliminated place-based identities. Such a view cannot account for the centrality of race in depictions of people in landscapes. That is not to say that there was a fixed correlation between race and place in these photographs. The rootedness of the tribe in its regional habitat, the *Landschaft*, was a metaphor that remained flexible and malleable; indeed, tribes that inhabited fluid and contested "border regions" were particularly valued and valorized.[35] What mattered was the ability to root one's identity in a given place; the exact scope and location of *Heimat* could be renegotiated as political, economic, and territorial contexts evolved. Photographers exploited this flexibility to offer a whole host of what might be called *Deutungsangebote*, or templates of meaning, from which actors could choose what spoke to their own political agendas and emotional dispositions. What the photographs of Germans being in and with "nature" had in common was that they fused traditional markers of place-based identities (such as folklore), or iconic ways of designing houses and landscapes, with a gaze that was often intensely rational, typologizing, encyclopedic, and, at times, positively scientific.

<TQ>Figures 16 and 17 near here. <CAP>Figure 16. </CAP> <CAP>Figure 17. </CAP>]

There are thousands of propaganda images that illustrate this linkage. What is less often recognized, however, is how deeply such practices reached into much more vernacular, seemingly apolitical forms of photography. The two photos shown here (Figures 16 and 17) exemplify the naturalization of this gaze. They were published in a 1940 instructional manual on taking color photographs. Two directly adjacent pictures show young ladies in folkloristic attire. One is a portrait of a young woman who supposedly represents the characteristic physical features, as well as the traditional regional dress of Carinthia; although the portrait serves no obvious scientific purpose, it resembles images that one finds in official Nazi tracts about racial science. The other photo, which appeared in the same publication, is much more playful: a lipstick-wearing, scantily-clad, sunbathing young woman is using a headscarf with folkloristic motifs to shelter her eyes from the brightness of the sunshine. And yet, she, too, represents an ideal German, clearly of Aryan descent, in her self-assured and conspicuous enjoyment of the freedom the Third Reich offered for those whom the regime classified as part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

As the presence *in a single publication* of both a traditional "documentary" photo of place-based identity and a lighthearted and consumerist take on the same theme makes clear, understanding the sense of place in German photography in this period cannot just be a question of identifying the reach of official Nazi propaganda. The meaning of place, so powerfully bound up with ideas of belonging and identity, preoccupied Germans in multiple ways, and photography was an arena in which literally millions of Germans

could participate in defining its significance. It was the malleability of this ideological trope that enabled its ready absorption into vernacular modes of image production, not a singular scientific meaning.

Private photo albums, especially those that included the experience of travel outside the *Altreich* (either touristic travel before the war, or travel in newly occupied territories during it) paid particular attention to capturing modes of attachment to place, and to the notion of place-based "character." Such albums often contained features such as maps (hand-drawn or pasted in and marked with highlighter pens) that identified the locations where the photos in the album had been taken. Such features enabled a spatial plotting of the observations documented in the photographs. For example, a hand-drawn map was included as a frontispiece in an album created by a school teacher employed at an elite Napola (*Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt*, or NPEA) school, the NPEA Klotzsche, which documents a trip across the Balkans he organized with his pupils in 1938 (Figure 18).

<TQ>Figure 18 near here. <CAP>Figure 18. </CAP>]

The photos show landscapes and people encountered on the trip, but the focus is very much on the relationship of those people to the landscapes. The images are accompanied by captions identifying "ethnic types." Rather than just focusing on physiognomy, they make such classifications on the basis of distinctions among desirable, authentic, and active ways of inhabiting places—and their antithesis (i.e., undesirable, inauthentic, and inactive ways). German settlers are depicted as upright and dynamic, traversing the beautiful landscapes with elegant strides, while so-called Balkan types are shown in

urban settings, passive to the point of laziness, typically sitting or lying on the street (Figure 19).

<TQ>Figure 19 near here. <CAP>Figure 19. </CAP>]

What is being implicitly drawn here is a fine yet decisive dividing line between spending quiet time in nature and being merely idle. The German *Pause* (break, rest time, recreation period)—as it was captured in and staged for thousands of professional images and private snapshots in the Nazi era—was a deliberate, reflective time, thinkable only in dialectic tension with action, movement, and transformation. It was distinctive from the mere absence of action or will, which could be described as idleness. This dialectic is staged in two ways in the photos. First, it emerges from the rhythm of the album—the *Pause* is that which punctuates the movement and action gleaned from the inclusion of maps—and from the photos of roads, cars, bicycles, and wide open spaces already traversed. Second, the dialectic is also present in individual shots of quiet moments in nature. These are not photos devoid of action; the action is merely turned inward. Germans reclining in the great outdoors did not photograph themselves "slouching," the way the locals do—these "Balkan types" who, the juxtapositions imply, lack inner discipline.

Members of the *Volksgemeinschaft* "relaxed," that is to say, in a disciplined way. Relaxation was the crowning achievement of a life well lived: like a mountaineer posing on a summit after a perilous ascent. Having fun was serious business and it is significant that the majority of captions under such photos end in rhetorical exclamation marks. The album of the auxiliary services discussed earlier displays not just a break and a lake, but a "Happy Break!" and "Rotgüldensee in September!" The protagonists' ability to establish

significance through deliberate downtime relates to their position within a "meaningful" landscape. Its very contemplation is the task in which those who appear to be relaxing are, in fact, engaged. The meaning of the landscape is communicated visually through an adherence to traditions of landscape aesthetics that designate it as space produced by harmonious interactions between nature and culture: green pastures; gentle, rolling hills; elegant, free-standing trees in the foreground, darker woods in the background; and, last but not least, human settlements nestling harmoniously in the center of such lush green settings—or perched on hillsides, like the ruins of castles admired from the picnic site off the *Reichsautobahn*. A sunny sky—blue or structured by elegant cumulus clouds—forms a natural vault over such spaces. Because such landscapes constitute a "text" that is "legible," individuals passing time within it are not so much "doing nothing" as engaging in an act of symbolic and immersive reading. This affinity explains the popularity of the motif of outdoor reading: a novel like *The Magic Mountain* does not distract from the experience of being in nature. Instead, it is a metaphor for the proper habitation of the civilized—and therefore legible—landscape.

This "way of being" in landscapes also played an important role in the occupation of conquered territories during the war. In the sample of soldiers' albums from the front available at the German Historical Museum's archive in Berlin, there is an interesting differentiation between the ways in which foreign landscapes were "legible" and thus, potentially at least, culturally meaningful spaces; or "empty",—and hence, intrinsically meaningless—or awaiting (German) intervention to give them meaning. Some of these differences may reflect the personalities and politics of the individuals who made them, but such differences also occur in different albums made by the same person while

engaged in different military campaigns. In the example reproduced in Figure 20, a German soldier—who describes himself elsewhere in the album as an "incorrigible individualist," and who clearly prefers to be photographed in pensive and "restful poses—composed a page about the *Vogesen* / *Vosges* region in eastern France invaded by German troops in 1940. The three shots that depict him were obviously posed and taken by a fellow soldier. In the first image, he scales the steep slope of a mountain; in the second, he drinks from a well, evidently on top of the mountain; and, in the third, he is depicted from behind, glancing back into the valley, in a pose reminiscent of the figures invariably shown from behind in Caspar David Friedrich's spiritual landscapes.[36] Such a staging might suggest a recoding of this French landscape as Germanic—and is hence a form of intellectual or spiritual "occupation"—it nevertheless works with, rather than against, what is already there: a "civilized" and thus "beautiful" European landscape.

<TQ>Figure 20 near here. <CAP>Figure 20. </CAP>]

The same soldier's album then documents his service on the Eastern Front in 1941 and 1942, before he was killed in battle in the Soviet Union. The mood changes significantly: photos of German war dead and makeshift graves abound, with captions underscoring a sense of melancholy and mourning, including occasional expressions of doubt, such as "Why all this bloodshed?," and farewell messages to fallen comrades. The way the landscape is captured changes accordingly. Germans are now depicted acting in a featureless, muddy desert (*Schlamm*)—a term also used in the captions. The latter also accentuate the greyness of the landscape photographs, which characteristically combine close-ups of water-logged soil and an empty, flat horizon—and which is likened to the

greyness of the German soldiers' faces (Figures 21, 22), which, they say, seem to be marked by death.

<TQ>Figures 21 and 22 near here. <CAP>Figure 21. </CAP> <CAP>Figure 22. </CAP>]

To some extent, such a representation of landscapes in Eastern Europe builds on and is informed by the colonial trope of "empty" space as a space to be conquered.[37] Yet, these are not optimistic images; both their affective tone and the accompanying captions suggest skepticism and pessimism—though not open political opposition, or sympathy with the victims of German military aggression and genocide. Still, the tone of this album does not suggest that the war effort is experienced as a conquering—much less a "civilizing"—mission; the landscape remains fundamentally alien and unknowable. The featureless emptiness of the space, which the captions underscore repeatedly, is linked to the experience of mental and moral disorientation. Military action loses its clear sense of purpose, and the unboundedness of the terrain in which it takes place chimes with the failure of existing templates of "meaning-making." The sense of purpose, or *telos*, dissolves in the endlessness of the landscape.[38]

A final page from the same album suggests that the very category of "experience,"—which was so central to both the official and the vernacular discourses of the Third Reich—disappears along with this loss of purpose. The page is poignantly titled "The experience of Uschakova" (Figure 23): the German term for experience, *Erlebnis*, places a particular emphasis on being *alive*, i.e., experiencing is a way of being alive, of living in and through events. Yet, this kind of "life" experience, so frequently invoked by Nazi propaganda, is turned here into its precise antithesis: the words are framed only by

soldiers' graves. Against empty horizons, lining, as the other caption indicates, the "grey roads" that traverse the Russian landscape, they stand as silent witnesses to the end of all experience.

<TQ>Figure 23 near here. <CAP>Figure 23. </CAP>]

CONCLUSION

Soldiers' albums from World War II are marked by great differences in atmosphere, tone, and, occasionally, overt political commentary.[39] The argument is not that the album just discussed is in any way representative of the experience, mentality, or ideology of the German Wehrmacht in the East *in toto*. Indeed, no photographs should be read, individually or collectively, as directly illustrative of an ideology that supposedly fueled the Nazi war in the East. What this article argues is that private and professional photographs—images made for personal consumption, as well as those intended for political and commercial persuasion—existed in a relationship with one another. But this relationship was not a straightforward story of "influence"; rather, it involved multiple appropriations and reappropriations of visual templates, even overtly propagandistic ones, which, in turn, were constructed from older conventions and pictorial precedents. Images, the recent historiography on "spectacle" has argued, were central to the success of fascism.[40] Yet, the same images also lent themselves to the fashioning of more individual identities, as well as to the telling of stories that deviated from official propaganda narratives. "Spectacle" during fascism was not merely an ideological ploy used by a regime to manipulate a population. It was coproduced by countless actors, from above, from below, and, most typically, from in-between. The political significance of

image-making cannot be reduced to the influence of Nazi ideology. Indeed, in a minority of instances, it could even be used to celebrate and memorialize poses and attitudes that clashed with certain aspects of what is normally considered to be a part of the National Socialist belief system.

In a different sense, however, mass photography has to be considered an enabling factor for the Nazi regime's reach into the constitution of individual subjectivities. The arrival of the camera in practically all domains of private life—which coincided in Germany with the Nazis' rise to power—transformed Germans into political actors in ways that formal political organizations or top-down propaganda could never have achieved on their own. The presence of the photographer turned those being photographed into performers: almost all aspects of life change for and through the gaze of the camera, as they now became acts of representation and commemoration. Even where the camera was temporarily absent, behavior was no longer naive; it was seen through the prism of photographs of similar scenes, which were reenacted, appropriated, or subverted.

The mass production of photographic images during the Third Reich thus opens more than just a window onto aspects of the human experience about which written sources often provide more mediated evidence. When people staged their lives for the camera as they wanted them to be recorded, seen by others, and remembered by posterity, boundaries between private and public lives faded. This did not turn people into Nazis per se, but it did prove conducive to the ambitions of totalitarianism: as a form of affective and performative political behavior that transcended that which had traditionally been defined as the business of politics. Experience itself thereby assumed a new

significance as it was captured, memorialized, preserved, and displayed in photographs. This in itself was not unique to life under National Socialism. But the valorization of experience within the political imagination of National Socialist Germany cannot be understood without it. Photography did not produce the Nazi view of "experience" on its own. But it did make it thinkable. Without the material reality of photographs, constant discursive invocations of experience in the contemporary print culture and political speeches would have rung hollow. Photographs turned experiences into material realities—and thereby arguably did the same for ideology.

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[1] Historians have persuasively argued that photographs are more usefully thought of as performative props than as documents of historical reality. See, e.g., John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1988), 60–65; Wolfgang Hardtwig, "Performanz und Öffentlichkeit in der krisenhaften Moderne. Visualisierung des Politischen in Deutschland 1930–1936," in *Strategien der Visualisierung*, ed. Herfried Münkler and Jens Hacke (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2009), 71–92. For a fuller discussion of photography and performativity, see the editors' introduction to this special issue.

[2] The 1995 *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht* exhibition was a classic controversy about both deliberate and accidental falsifications of historical photographs (the latter due to mislabelling). The exhibition relied heavily on photographs to document atrocities committed by ordinary Wehrmacht soldiers in World War II. See the overview in Francis

Guerin, *Through Amateur Eyes: Film and Photography in Nazi Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 37–92.

[3] Mary Fulbrook and Ulinka Rublack, eds., "Ego-documents," special issue, *German History* 28, no. 3 (2010). The introduction (pp. 263–72) explores the pivotal role of ego-documents in recent German historiography. The contribution on the Nazi period, Nicholas Stargardt's "The Troubled Patriot: German *Innerlichkeit* in World War II" (pp. 326–42) reveals the limits of such sources. Under this regime in particular, writing was subject to both formal censorship and informal self-censorship, and it was generally confined to individuals with very particular agendas—in this case, an educated, deeply reflexive pastor who saw the act of writing as a negotiation between his role as a soldier for the Third Reich and his Christian conscience.

[4] The principal archives consulted for these projects are the Photoarchiv des Deutschen Historischen Museums, Berlin; Archiv des Schulmuseums Hamburg; the photographic collection (uncatalogued albums) of the Landesarchiv Berlin, Berlin; as well as the detailed catalogue of the photographic collection of the Kempowski Archive, which is part of the Literaturarchiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin. The author would like to thank the staff in all these archives most warmly for their support and cooperation. The author has also acquired a personal collection of around fifty private albums documenting civilian life in Germany during the Nazi period, as well as a smaller number of British and American albums from the same period.

[5] Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[6] Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a New Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007). Among those who have emphasized the limits of fascist ideology's reach into everyday life are Richard Evans; see, e.g., his monumental trilogy *The Coming of the Third Reich*, *The Third Reich in Power, 1933–39*, and *The Third Reich at War* (London: Penguin, 2003, 2005, and 2008); also see Jill Stephenson's numerous works on women and the Nazi state, such as "Nazism, Modern War and Rural Society in Württemberg, 1939–1945," *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 3 (1997): 339–56; for Italy, see Richard J. B. Bosworth, "War, Totalitarianism, and 'Deep Belief' in Fascist Italy, 1935–43," *European History Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2004): 475–505. An instructive survey of the current state of the debate about coercion and consent in the Third Reich is Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto, eds., *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[7] Particularly interesting methodological arguments of this nature have been advanced in Alon Confino, *A World without Jews*: *The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); Stargardt, "The Troubled Patriot"; Michael Wildt, *Hitler's "*Volksgemeinschaft*" and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion: Violence against Jews in Provincial Germany, 1919–1939* (New York: Berghahn, 2011). Private life as a key site of the political history of National Socialism is also the theme of the ongoing research project "Private Life under National Socialism" at the Institute for Contemporary History, Munich-Berlin under the direction of Andreas Wirsching and Johannes Hürter.

[8] Hartmut Berghoff, "Enticement and Deprivation: The Regulation of Consumption in Pre-War Nazi Germany," in *The Politics of Consumption: Material Culture and Citizenship in Europe and America,* ed. Martin Daunton and Matthew Hilton (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 165–84; Jonathan S. Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[9] Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kristen Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); Wolfgang König, *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft. "Volksprodukte" im Dritten Reich: Vom Scheitern einer nationalsozialistischen Konsumgesellschaft* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004); Bernhard Rieger, *The People's Car: A Global History of the Volkswagen Beetle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Silke Horstkotte und Olaf Jürgen Schmidt "Heil Coca-Cola! Zwischen Germanisierung und Re-Amerikanisierung: Coke im Dritten Reich," in *Amerikanische Populärkultur in Deutschland*, ed. Heike Paul and Katja Kanzler (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2002), 73–87.

[10] Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[11] By 1937, Zeiss had established marketing branches in Berlin, Vienna, Cologne, Hamburg, Brussels, London, New York, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and Tokyo, with other firms acting as sales agents in Montreal, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Singapore, Melbourne, Sydney, Bangkok, Cairo, Haifa, Johannesburg,

Stockholm, Amsterdam, Paris, Milan, Madrid, and Shanghai. [IS THIS NECESSARY]

The spread of cheap cameras accelerated in the 1930s with models such as the so-called

Agfa Box produced by Photo-Porst in Nuremberg, initially sold for 16-RM in 1931, then

in a new version for 4-RM in 1932. See Timm Starl, *Knipser. Die Bildgeschichte der*

privaten Fotografie in Deutschland und Österreich von 1880 bis 1980 (Munich: Koehler

& Amelang, 1995), 95–98.

[12] Starl, *Knipser,* 98.

[13] This phenomenon was particularly apparent in the photo albums of school trips

and wartime child evacuation programs (*Kinderlandverschickung*, or KLV) available in

the archive of the Hamburger Schularchiv. In cases where albums document the same

trip, up to a third of the same photographs would appear in more than one: most negatives

were printed multiple times and shared among all the children who had appeared in front

of the camera.

[14] We cite László Moholy-Nagy's comments in this introduction to this

issue.[PLEASE PROVIDE FULL CITE] On his writings, and also on those of Walter

Benjamin and other contemporary commentators, see Vicki Goldberg, ed., *Photography*

in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico

Press, 1988), esp. 339.

[15] Bernd Hüppauf, "Emptying the Gaze,"**<<PLEASE PROVIDE FULL**

CITATION FOR THE VERSION CITED IN GUERIN>> cited in Francis Guerin,

Through Amateur Eyes, vii. Hüppauf published a fuller version of this essay as

"Emptying the Gaze: Framing Violence through the Viewfinder," *New German Critique*,

no. 72 (1997): 3–44. Hüppauf's focus here is on atrocity photos, but his points are also

informed by his work on out-of-focus photography by artists such as Gerhard Richter,
which he believes restores an openness to the gaze obscured by overfamiliarity with
iconic motifs and postures in photographs. See Bernd Hüppauf, "Die Wiederkehr der
Unschärfe," *Merkur*, no. 659 (Mar. 2004): 211–19; idem, "Zwischen Imitation und
Simulation. Das unscharfe Bild," in *Bild und Einbildungskraft,* ed. Hüppauf and Christian
Wulf (Munich: Fink, 2006), 254–77.

[16] Guerin, *Through Amateur Eyes*.

[17] There was likely no intentional link, but it is nevertheless worth noting that this
rare alpine flower was symbolically associated with the emblem of an elite German
mountain division in both world wars.

[18] Mrs. Doreen Laven, in discussion with the author, Canterbury, April 2014. Her
husband Peter Laven, who was born in July 1923, served in the British army during the
occupation of Italy between 1943 and 1945.

[19] The term *resistivity* was popularized by literary scholars commenting on
authors who operated within Nazi Germany but at arm's length from the regime. See Neil
H. Donahue and Doris Kirchner, eds.*, Flight of Fantasy: New Perspectives on Inner
Emigration in German Literature, 1933–1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2003). A related
but more nuanced category is Martin Broszat's term *Resistenz,* which is sometimes
translated as "resistivity." It denotes not so much resistance per se as refusal, e.g., in
everyday behaviors that evaded the regime's more totalitarian aspirations in the private
sphere, but that were not intended as oppositional acts in a political sense. Alf Lüdtke has
been pivotal in developing the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* ("stubborn idiosyncrasy"). See his
Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den

Faschismus (Hamburg: Ergebnisse, 1993). For a recent survey of the state of this debate, see Elissa Mailänder Koslov et al., "Forum: Everyday Life in Nazi Germany," *German History* 27, no. 4 (2009): 560–79.

[20] Heinrich Schliemann, *Trojanische Alterthümer* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1874).

[21] Horst Umbach, in discussion with the author, Wedel/Hamburg, Aug. 2013.

[22] Frederick Cummings, "Boothby, Rousseau, and the Romantic Malady," *Burlington Magazine* 110, no. 789 (1968): 659–66. On the wider context, which associated immersion in nature and its spirit with the productive energies of "genius," see also the 1788 essay [okay?] by Karl Philipp Moritz, "Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen!," in *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Poetik*, ed. H. J. Schrimpf (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1962), 27–78.

[23] C.G. Boerner, *Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki (1726–1801) und seine Zeit* (Düsseldorf: Boerner, 2001); Werner Busch, "The Reception of Hogarth in Chodowiecki and Kaulbach," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 46 (1992): 9–19; Renate Krüger, *Das Zeitalter der Empfindsamkeit. Kunst und Kultur des späten 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland* (Vienna: Schroll, 1972).

[24] Ingrid Sommer, ed., *Der Fortgang der Tugend und des Lasters. Daniel Chodowieckis Monatskuppfer zum Göttinger Taschenkalender, mit Erklärungen Georg Christoph Lichtenbergs*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Insel, 1977).

[25] Useful surveys on these two examples are included, respectively, in Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*, and in Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). The latter study looks at reforestation in the East.

[26] The close cooperation between Hitler and Hoffmann in both staging these photos and then selecting the right ones for circulation is discussed in Rudolf Herz, *Hoffmann und Hitler. Fotographie als Medium des Führer-Mythos* (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1994)

[27] Many of these albums survive in the photo archive of the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin. See Bernd Boll, "Vom Album ins Archiv. Zur Überlieferung privater Fotografien aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg," in *Mit der Kamera bewaffnet. Krieg und Fotografie*, ed. Anton Holzer (Marburg: Jonas, 2003), 167–81.

[28] Thomas Zeller, *Driving Germany: The Landscape of the German Autobahn, 1930–1970* (New York: Berghahn, 2007); James D. Shand, "The *Reichsautobahn*: Symbol for the Third Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History* 19, no. 2 (1984): 189–200; William Rollins, "Whose Landscape? Technology, Fascism, and Environmentalism on the National Socialist *Autobahn*," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, no. 3 (1995): 494–520.

[29] Celia Applegate, "Senses of Place," in *The Oxford Handbook of German History,* ed. Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). The references to the photography volumes are Erna Lendvai-Dircksen, *Reichsautobahn. Mensch und Werk* (Bayreuth: Gauverlag Bayreuth, 1937); Wolf Strache, *Auf allen Autobahnen. Ein Bildbuch vom neuen Reisen* (Darmstadt: L. C. Wittich, 1939); Strache, *Donnernde Motoren* (Stuttgart: Tazzelwurm Verlag A. Jauss, 1942).

[30] Walter Benjamin**,** *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt/Main.: Suhrkamp, 1963).

[31] For a fuller version of this argument, see Xosé M. Núñez Seixas and Maiken Umbach, "Hijacked Heimats: National Appropriations of Local and Regional Identities in Germany and Spain, 1930–1945," *European Review of History* 15, no. 3 (2008): 295–316.

[32] Ulrich Hägele, "Der zerstörte Blick. Fotografie im Dienst unmenschlicher Wissenschaft," in *Sinti und Roma und Wir. Ausgrenzung, Internierung und Verfolung einer Minderheit*, ed. Ulrich Hägele (Tübingen: Kulturamt, 1998), 95–124; and idem, "Die Visualisierung des 'Volkskörpers'. Fotografie und Volkskunde in der NS-Zeit!," *Fotogeschichte. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie* 82, no. 21 (2001): 5–20. The extent to which these and related classificatory practices permeated more general political consciousness is explored in Claudia Koonz*, The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[33] Alexa Stiller, "On the Margins of *Volksgemeinschaft*: Criteria for Belonging to the Volk within the Nazi Germanization Policy in the Annexed Territories, 1939–1945," in *Regionalism between Heimat and Empire: Identity Spaces under National Socialism*, ed. Maiken Umbach and Chris Szejnmann (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 235–51. The idea of an ethnically specific habitus is encountered in a wide variety of sources, including photojournalism. See Elizabeth Harvey, "Ich war überall. Die NS-Propagandaphotographin Liselotte Purper," in *'Volksgenossinnen'. Frauen in der NS-Volksgemeinschaft*, ed. Sybille Steinbacher (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 138–54; idem, "Seeing the World: Photography, Photojournalism and Visual Pleasure in the Third Reich," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. Pamela Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d'Almeida (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), 177–204.

[34] Martina Steber, "Regions and National Socialist Ideology: Reflections on Contained Plurality," in Umbach and Szejnmann, *Regionalism*, 25–42. On the relationship between German "tribes" and regions, see also Ulrich von Hehl, "Nationalsozialismus und Region," *Zeitschrift für Bayrische Landegeschichte* 56, no. 1 (1993): 111–29; Kurt Düwell, "Regionalismus und Nationalsozialismus am Beispiel des Rheinlands," *Rheinische Vierteljahresblätter* 59 (1995): 194–210; Umbach and Núñez Seixas, "Hijacked Heimats."

[35] Thomas Williams, "*Grenzlandschicksal*: Historical Narratives of Regional Identity and National Duty in Gau Oberrhein, 1940–1944," in Umbach and Szejnmann, *Regionalism*, 56–71.

[36] See, e.g., Werner Busch, *Caspar David Friedrich. Ästhetik und Religion* (Munich: Beck, 2003); Cordula Grewe, *Painting the Sacred in the Age of Romanticism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

[37] On the iconography of representing East European landscape as both empty and marked by the practices of "idle" races in German discourse, from propaganda to school textbooks and feature films, see Sheona R. Davies, "Imagining Germany's Medieval Past, c. 1920–1945: Knighthood and the Mission in the East" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nottingham, 2013); David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape and the Making of Modern Germany* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2006), 251–311; Thaddeus Sunseri, "Exploiting the *Urwald*: German Post-Colonial Forestry in Poland and Central Africa, 1900–1960," *Past & Present* 214, no. 1 (2012): 305–42; Sabine Wilke, "Romantic Images of Africa: Paradigms of German Colonial Paintings," *German Studies Review* 29, no. 2 (2006): 285–98. On empty space and German cartography in the East,

see Henrik G. Herb, ed., *Under the Map of Germany: Nationalism and Propaganda, 1918–1945* (London: Routledge, 1996). An interesting new interpretation of the idea of empty space and German warfare—in which the inability to master nature, rather than a vision for doing so, radicalizes colonial violence—is Philipp N. Lehmann, **"**Between Waterberg and Sandveld: An Environmental Perspective on the German–Herero War of 1904," *German History* 32, no. 4 (2014): 533–58.

[38] Nazi propagandists were well aware of the problem. Rather than denying the disorientating, "uncanny" nature of the landscapes of the East—which were, for many, the direct antithesis of the German idea of *Heimat*—commentators insisted that the ability to transform gradually one into the other was the key to a successful colonization effort. See Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), esp. 119–46.

[39] The most authoritative study to date is Petra Bopp, *Fremde im Visier. Fotoalben aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2012), which documents an exhibition with the same title. See also Willi Rose, *Shadows of War: A German Soldier's Lost Photographs of World War II*, ed. Thomas Eller and Petra Bopp (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004); Bernd Boll, "Das Adlerauge des Soldaten. Zur Photopraxis deutscher Amateure im Zweiten Weltkrieg," *Fotogeschichte* 85–86, no. 22 (2002): 75–87; Holzer, *Mit der Kamera bewaffnet*; Kathrin Hoffman-Curtius, "Trophäen und Amulette. Die Fotografien von Wehrmachts- und SS-Verbrechen in den Brieftaschen der Soldaten," *Fotogeschichte* 78, no. 20, (2000): 63–76.

[40] Fascism was central to the evolution of "full-blown 'audio-visual regimes,' telegenetic media cultures, and the more general 'visualization of politics.'" See Paul

Betts, "The New Fascination with Fascism: The Case of Nazi Modernism," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37, no. 4 (2002): 542. The idea of fascism as the aestheticization of politics was pioneered by its contemporary critic Walter Benjamin in his "Theories of German Fascism: On the Collection of Essays 'War and Warriors' by Ernst Juenger," *New German Critique*, no. 17 (1979): 120–28 (this was a translation of the original piece published in 1930). See also Rainer Stollmann and Ronald L. Smith, "Fascist Politics as a Total Work of Art: Tendencies of the Aesthetization of Political Life in National Socialism," *New German Critique*, no. 14 (1978): 41–60. In recent years, the notion of fascism as spectacle has been employed by Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff , eds., *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Envisioning Modernity: Desire and Discipline in the Italian Fascist Film," *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 1 (1996): 109–44; Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a New Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007).