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# Nazi discourses on 'Rausch' before and after 1945: codes of emotions and experiences

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After years of studying public celebrations, constructions of collective memory, nationalist politics of history and similar problems, Malte Rolf and I became aware of the fact that something important was missing: How do we explain effects like enthusiasm, fanaticism, collective violence or fraternization, appearances often described during festivals or mass gatherings? Even if we consider the fact, that enthusiastic organizers or observers often invented or exaggerated such collective feelings and even, if we study sources critically and sceptically, we would still have to deal with the problem that the *talking* about collective emotions is indeed important for the study of public celebrations and other mass gatherings. As ye-witness of the fall of the Berlin wall on 9 November 1989, I also personally experienced the psychological and physiological effects dramatic political events can have on the individual beyond emotionalized discourses.

When studying the most extreme examples of emotionalized and enthusiastic manifestations during mass celebrations in the 1930s – in Nazi Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union or during the irredentist hysteria of "National Christian" festivals in Hungary (the 900$^{th}$ anniversary of King Saint Stephen in 1938) – we observed that people who participated in such organized events would talk retrospectively about specific experiences they have had during the celebrations. In Nazi Germany they would very often use the word "Rausch" to describe this state of mind. Since then, we began to become interested in the relationship between totalitarian movements and dictatorships and similar emotional codes. Very soon, we discovered that there was a

great interest among scholars, students and the media in this topic. We organized two conferences in Berlin and Potsdam, the first exactly two years ago (6-7 December 2002) and the second one year ago (11-13 December 2003) inviting mainly younger historians, philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, and others to discuss the problems related to particular expressions of collective emotions within dictatorships. Last year, we edited a special issue of the "Zeitschrift fuer Geschichtswissenschaft"[1] . Next year, we will publish a book on "Rausch und Diktatur".

In the following paper I try to will explain why a study of different uses of the German word "Rausch" in the context of the history of Nazism could offer new insights into the cognitive structures and mentality of Nazis and their followers before and after 1945. This paper is not offering a totally new interpretation or theory nor is it the conclusion of a larger research project. What I will do is to try to identify some key problems regarding the attitudes and language codes of persons who enthusiastically supported this totalitarian movement. I understand such an approach as a continuation of the pioneer work of Victor Klemperer on Nazi language, "Lingua Tertii Imperii", and of more recent research in the aesthetics of Nazism and studies of the role of rituals, collective violence and concepts of masculinity.[2] The analysis of the particularities of the Nazi code of enthusiasm will also provide us with

[1] Klimó, Árpád v.; Rolf, Malte, „Rausch und Diktatur", in: Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 51/10 (2003), pp. 877-895.

[2] Klemperer, Victor, LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen [finished 1946], Reclam: Leipzig, 19. Aufl. 2001; for a critique of Klemperer and an overview on the most recent works on the language within National Socialism, see: Greule, Albrecht; Sennebogen, Waltraud (ed.), Tarnung – Leistung – Werbung. Untersuchungen zur Sprache im Nationalsozialismus, Peter Lang: Frankfurt a. M. usw. 2004, p. 11-29; Friedländer, Saul, Reflections of Nazism. An Essay on Kitsch and Death, Harper & Row: New York et. al. 1984; Behrenbeck, Sabine, Der Kult um die toten Helden. Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten und Symbole 1923 bis 1945, SH-Verlag: Vierow bei Greifswald 1996; Reichardt, Sven, Faschistische Kampfbünde. Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im italienischen Squadrismus und in der deutschen SA, Böhlau Verlag: Köln, Weimar, Wien 2002; Brockhaus, Gudrun, Schauder und Idylle. Faschismus als Erlebnisangebot, Antje Kunstmann: München 1997.

key elements for the comparison with other totalitarian systems such as Italian Fascism or Stalinism.

"Rausch" was one of the key words and metaphors[3] used by the Nazis. It was taken from a tradition that goes back to Romanticism, Nietzsche's concept of the Dionysian, as well as to ideas of more or less sophisticated philosophical and esoteric movements or drug experiencing artists of the *fin de siècle*.[4] Because of this particular tradition, the word carried a certain Anti-bourgeois, "bohemian", rebellious connotation and it therefore was a word often used, but which did not gain "official" status like "fanatical" [fanatisch] or "heroic" [heldisch]. The Nazis spoke sometimes of "Rausch" in a rather shameful manner, which makes it even more interesting.[5]

The word was used to express individual and collective experiences of ecstasy believed to represent some of the unique traits of National Socialist "spirit" and practice.[6] "Rausch" is not easy to translate into other languages because it transports a large set of different meanings

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[3] As key word „Rausch"can be understood as "a key to understand whole domains of cultural attitudes, values and behaviours", see: Wierbicka, A, Understanding Cultures through their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, Japanese, Oxford UP: New York 1997; as metaphor it describes extraordinary individual experiences described as emotionally overwhelming.

[4] On the particularities of the Nazi language, Friedländer described with reference to Syberberg's film about Hitler, it's aesthetic character and ecstatic effects: „A first glance reveals that this language is one of accumulation, repetition, and redundancy: a massive use of synonyms, an excess of similar epithets, a play of image sent back, in turn, from one to the other in echoes without end. This is not the linear language of interconnected argument nor of step-by-step demonstration; this is, under a less immediate but no less systematic and no less effective form, the circular language of invocation, which tirelessly turns on itself and creates a kind of hypnosis by repetition, like a word that is chanted in certain prayers, a dance that persists in the same rhythm unto frenzy, a call of the tom-tom, or quite simply, the heavy music of our parades, the muffled stomping of marching legions." Friedländer, Reflections of Nazism, p. 50.

[5] Cfr. the detailed study: Wolf, Antonius, Wandel im Jargon des Nationalsozialismus. Analyse der ideologischen Sprach in einer Fachzeitschrift für Sonderschullehrer (1934-44), PH: Freiburg i. Br. 1991, p. 97.

[6] The most famous representative of the second thesis is sociologist Zygmunt Baumann. This distinction is connected to an endless and complex discussion on the „modernity" or the „modernizaton effects" of National Socialism. For a recent see: Bavaj, Riccardo, Die Ambivalenz der Moderne im Nationalsozialismus. Eine Bilanz der Forschung, Oldenbourg: München 2003.

which are related to different discourses and lexical fields. The paradox experiences and contradictory emotional processes the word describes - feelings of exaltation and power of the individual on the one hand, feelings of disintegration of the self and of fusion with a collective body on the other - leads us to one of the most discussed questions in recent historiography of National Socialism: Was Nazism an Anti-modern rebellion taking place in one of the technologically advanced Western societies or was it the most extreme expression of the contradictory effects of Western modernity itself? In the following I will argue that both questions lead us away from some specific historical problems of the Nazi period. But at the same time we can not totally ignore them if we want to compare National Socialism with other totalitarian dictatorships such as Stalinism and Italian Fascism.

## I.

Before analysing the use of "Rausch" in detail, I will begin with some general remarks on the context of its use: Similar to the adjective "fanatic", "Rausch" gained during National Socialism a far more positive connotation than it had had before.[7] It was not used primarily to signify "drunkenness" or "intoxication" caused by alcohol or other drugs like it did during the Kaiserreich, the Weimar Republic and again after 1945 in West and East Germany. When paging systematically through the most relevant German encyclopaedias between the early 19th and late 20th Century we find exactly one entry under "Rausch", where it is not primarily

[7] According to Klemperer, "fanatisch" was originally the description of a religious person (Fanatiker) who is getting ecstatic inside the temple, the sacred area (fanum). "Da der NS auf Fanatismus gegründet ist und mit allen Mitteln die Erziehung zum Fanatismus betreibt, so ist fanatisch während der gesamten Ära des Dritten Reiches ein superlativisch anerkennendes Beiwort gewesen." See: Klemperer, LTI, p. 77, 80. Similar things happened to other words such as „betreuen", „aufziehen", „Rasse" etc. See: Berning, Cornelia, Die Sprache des Nationalsozialismus, in: Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung 1960-63. For propaganda, speakers of the NSDAP should use words like „Stärke", „Glaube", „Gefühl", „Gemeinschaft", etc. For the "Redner-Fernkurse", which 6000 active members took before 1933, cfr. Sösemann, Bernd, Propaganda und Öffentlichkeit in der "Volksgemeinschaft", in: Sösemann, Bernd (ed.), Der Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Gesellschaft, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Stuttgart München 2002, pp. 114-154, p. 120.

related to alcoholism or drug abuse.[8] In this entry in "Meyer's Lexikon" dated 1942, "Rausch" is first defined as

Q"a mental state of extraordinary, enraptured vitality, vivacity, elatedness, of extraordinary forces of emotion and will, the expression particularly of the exaltation of youth or youthfulness, (quote Goethe: "Youth is drunkenness without wine"), a natural state, which was considered by Nietzsche and Klages as the condition of the creative life not stunted by intellect, which is a vital-mental basis or a supporting condition of all creative inspiration."[9]

Only put in brackets the article also speaks of the "sometimes pathological or criminal character of this state of mind" and the meaning referred to alcoholism or drugs is only mentioned at the end.

Since the period of National Socialism we find the word used for describing extraordinary emotional experiences related to the Nazi world. In her recently published book on the Nuremberg *Reichsparteitag*, Yvonne Karow speaks of a "cult of self- extinction" [kultische Selbstauslöschung].[10] This state of mind was connected to the idea of being entirely part of the movement, of enthusiasm for the Regime and "fanatical" devotion to the *Fuehrer*. But "Rausch" was also used after the fall of the "Third Reich". Former fanatical supporters of the Nazi Party and its mass organisation would retrospectively describe their personal "Rausch" when talking about their personal experiences during the years of the Regime. From a totally

[8] Cfr. Brockhaus' Konversations-Lexikon, 14. Aufl., 13. Bd., Leipzig, Berlin, Wien 1895, Sp. 648; Meyer's Großes Konversationslexikon, 6. Aufl., XVI. Bd., Leipzig, Wien 1909, S. 638; Meyers Lexikon, 7. Aufl., IX. Bd., Leipzig 1928, Sp. 1635; Der Große Brockhaus, 16. Aufl., 9. Bd., Wiesbaden 1956, S. 569; Der Neue Herder, Bd. 5, Freiburg 1968, S. 329; Bertelsmann Universal Lexikon, Bd. 2, Gütersloh 1976, S. 529; Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon, 9. Aufl., XIX. Bd., Mannheim, Wien, Zürich 1977, S. 632; Meyers Grosses Universal Lexikon, Bd. 11, 1984, S. 441; Das Neue Fischer Lexikon, Bd. 8, Ffm. 1981, S. 4931; GDR: Meyers Neues Lexikon, Bd. 11, Leipzig 1975, S. 374; BI Universal Lexikon, Bd. 4, VED Bibliogr. Institut: Leipzig 1990, S. 302.

[9] Art. „Rausch", in: Meyers Lexikon, 8th edition, Vol IX, Leipzig 1942, col. 108.

[10] Karow, Yvonne, Deutsches Opfer. Kultische Selbstauslöschung auf den Reichsparteitagen der NSDAP, Berlin 1997.

different perspective, critical observers of Nazism would also use "Rausch" to describe mass enthusiasm as irrational behaviour of crowds during the years between 1933 and 1945.[11] An analysis of key words used by the Nazis can offer us insights in the world the Nazis imagined and constructed by language, but it would be misleading to believe that this imagined world gives access to the National Socialist mind. A study of the language practices of Nazism and of observers of Nazism will tell us a lot about emotional codes and rules of "speaking emotions" within the totalitarian system.[12]

But we should take the warnings of Erhard Schuetz serious who wrote recently that "we are much more than we think influenced by the basic myths of cultural self-interpretation of National Socialism. […] The pathos of self-exaltation and self-enrapture [Selbst-Berauschung] belonged certainly to one of the essential functions of the self-image of the 'Third Reich', but to comprehend this function, we will have to investigate its contexts then just looking at the ritualised combination of signals typical for the usual TV documentary."[13]

## II.

With help of the following three examples I would like to demonstrate how "Rausch" was used with different aims and within different contexts by Nazis and on Nazism. The questions

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[11] I will not treat the concept of "Political Religion". See my critique: Klimó, Árpád v., Das Ende der Nationalismusforschung? Bemerkungen zu einigen Neuerscheinungen zu ‚Politische Religion', ‚Fest' und ‚Erinnerung', Neue Politische Literatur 48 (2003), pp. 271-291; Klimó, Árpád v., Rolf, Malte, Rausch und Diktatur, Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 51/10 (2003), pp. 877-895.

[12] Even studies of the language practices of National Socialists stressed the importance to make a difference between language and context, which is somewhat less sophisticated: Maas, Utz, „Als der Geist der Gemeinschaft eine Sprache fand". Sprache im Nationalsozialismus. Versuch einer historischen Argumentationsanalyse, Westdeutscher Verlag: Opladen 1984, p. 9.

[13] Der Berliner Germanist Erhard Schütz hat aber im Bezug auf den Nationalsozialismus zurecht darauf hingewiesen, das wir „viel stärker als wir glauben […] geprägt (sind) von den Grundmythen kultureller Selbstinterpretation. […] Der mediale Erinnerungsblick auf die totalitären Systeme der Vergangenheit schwelgt geradezu in Wiederholungen ihrer heroisch-gewaltigen Gesten. Gewiss hat das Pathos der Selbsterhebung und Selbstberauschung eine wesentliche Funktion im Selbstbild des ‚Dritten Reichs', aber um diese Funktion zu erfassen, muß man einiges mehr auf deren Kontext sehen als das in den ritualisierten Signalkombinationen der einschlägigen Fernseh-Dokumentationen geschieht. " Schütz, Erhard, Wunschbilder des Nationalsozialismus in Kultur und Künsten, in: Der Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Gesellschaft. Hg. v. Bernd Sösemann, DVA: Stuttgart, München 2002, S. 221-238, hier S. 222.

arising from these quotations will give me the opportunity of further developing the problems and possible research directions related to a study of emotional codes of Nazism.

(1) In "Mein Kampf" [1925/26], Adolf Hitler wrote the following sentence:

Q"The individual leaves his small workplace or the big factory, where he regards himself a little person, and enters for the first time a mass meeting and is surrounded by thousands and thousands of people of the same conviction, and he as a searcher gets caught in the mighty effect of the suggestive **Rausch** and enthusiasm of three- to four thousand others, […] in this moment he falls under the sway of what we call mass suggestion."[14] UQ

In this quotation Hitler was, in his role as a leader of a radical political movement, reflecting on the possible effects of recently debated techniques and methods of mass psychology and manipulation techniques, prominently popularized by Gustave Le Bon and others.[15] The function of the word "Rausch" in this context seems to correspond to the English word "rapture" signifying "a state or experience of being carried away by overwhelming emotion, […], an expression or manifestation of ecstasy, passion or extreme delight".[16]

Hitler draws the image of a powerless and depressed German worker, a "man from the street" who gets suddenly enraptured by the experience of a collective manifestation of feelings and believes he shares with thousands of others. The image of the suppressed ordinary German who's doing his job honestly but without the hope of a proper recognition of his work was a routine element of the nationalist discourse in Weimar Germany interpreting the Versailles treaty as a result of an evil-minded international conspiracy. The underlying pessimistic and negative narrative made it possible to represent the Nazi movement and its leader as a

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[14] „Wenn der Einzelne aus seiner kleine Arbeitsstätte oder aus dem großen Betrieb, in dem er sich recht klein fühlt, zum ersten Mal in die Massenversammlung hineintritt und nun Tausende und Tausende von Menschen gleicher Gesinnung ums sich hat, wenn er als Suchender in die gewaltige Wirkung des suggestiven Rausches und der Begeisterung von drei- bis viertausend anderen mitgerissen wird, [...] dann unterliegt er selbst dem zauberhaften Einfluß dessen, was wir mit dem Wort Massensuggestion bezeichnen." Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, München 1935, p. 536; for a short critique of Hitler's simplistic understanding of propaganda and publicity, cfr. Sösemann, Propaganda, p. 116.

[15] For a deeper understanding of the complex discourses on "mass psychology" at the end of the 19th Century, see: Jaap van Ginneken, Crowds. Psychology & Politics, 1871-1899, Cambridge 1992.

[16] ‚rapture', in: Longman Dictionary of the English Language, 1984, p. 1227.

political “saviour” of the German nation. The “Rausch” caused by the mass gathering in this context described the mental condition necessary for the emotional – the Nazis would have said “instinctive” - understanding of the Nazi teachings.[17] In the eyes of the Fuhrer, the “Volksgenossen”, the members of the German Volk, needed a specific rapture in order to be able to experience and believe the promises of a bright Nazi future. Also Goebbels felt “berauscht” when he heard his idol Hitler speaking in the mid-1920s.[18] In the quotation, “Rausch” is defined as a state of mind that makes the “believer” able to “see” and “understand instinctively” a special reality and a particular “truth”. This corresponds to the definition of “Rausch” in the aforementioned encyclopedia article from 1942.

(2) A slightly different use of “Rausch” can be found in my second example representing a perspective “from below”, from the lower ranks of the Nazi movement, and a retrospective use of the word. The reference is taken from a book by Renate Finckh, who had entered the BDM in her province town (Ulm) as a teenager.[19] In this autobiographical text, Finckh tried to reconstruct her feelings and the reasons of her enthusiasm when being a part of the Nazi movement:

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[17] It was the idea to create a Nazi theater similar to the classical greek, in which spectators would experience again a cultic unity, in order to „lead the community of the acting and the receiving close to the mystery of a metaphysical Weltanschauung” Hanns Johst, Vom neuen Drama, cited in: Behrenbeck, Kult, p. 243. „Im Unterschied [zu den Demokratien, AvK] ist es aber gerade das gemeinsame Gefühl kollektiver und affektiver Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gemeinschaft, das von totalitären Regimen ständig mobilisiert wird. Die ästhetische Dimension ist ein Kernerlement bei ihren Anstrengungen, die Massen zu mobilisieren.“ Friedländer, Saul, Die Faszination des Nationalsozialismus, in: Die Verführungskraft des Totalitären. Hg. v. Klaus-Dietmar Henke, Hannah-Arendt-Institut: Dresden 1997, p. 25.

[18] Goebbels Tagebücher, 1925 ???

[19] Finckh was born in November 1926, she studied German (Tuebingen, Bonn), lived for years in France, had eight children and is still active in democratic antifascist education projects in schools. See: www.autoren-bw.de, 30.10.2004. Her book “Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit” was shortlisted for the “Deutscher Jugendbuchpreis” in 1979.

Q"(Finally) someone needed me! The feeling to be an important part of a wholeness, of not to have to stand at the margins anymore just watching – this feeling was new to me and it was like a **Rausch**."[20]UQ

Finckh, who called her book a "document of emotions" (Gefuehlsdokument), tried to describe her adolescent fanaticism, which retrospectively caused her a feeling of guilt and shame.[21] After the war, she felt betrayed by her parents who had been Nazis since 1933. In the emotional relationship to the Regime and its principles described in her book, juvenile frustration and rebellion mixed with the feeling of belonging to and sharing a political belief with millions of Germans. The "Rausch" of this young and low ranking girl in the apparatus refers to at least three aspects: First, it signifies a state of mind, in which the individual was particularly susceptible for the Nazi promises of belonging to a united and strong collective body. This corresponds to the use of the word in "Mein Kampf" and in "Meyer's Lexikon", so it seems as if this denotation was part of the semi-official Nazi language. Second, it expresses an enthusiastic feeling which is caused by the young girl's experience of the symbolic transfer of power and responsibility by the Nazi Regime. Finckh believes that her susceptibility to Nazi fanaticism had to do with psychological problems caused by a difficult family situation, a complicated relationship with her father, and a series of humiliations experienced in her peer group. The book is influenced by psychoanalytical theory and it must also be interpreted within the context of the German debate on guilt and the shocking experience of leftwing-terrorism in 1977. But I am not an expert enough to judge whether an analysis of individual psychological problems of the Germans during the Nazi era will lead us to a better understanding. Therefore, I think it is more promising to examine the third aspect included in the word: "Rausch" can also be understood as a linguistic tool to minimize personal responsibility. Thus, it should be translated as "frenzy", if we understand "frenzy" as a

[20] Finckh, Renate, Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit, Signal-Verlag: Baden-Baden 1979, p. ??]

[21] In an interview, Finck called her book a "document of emotion" (Gefuehlsdokument). Cfr. Martin, Elaine, The Role of Memory in Women's Autobiographies of the Nazi Era: Stern, Finckh, Hannsmann, see: http://bama.ua.edu/~emartin/publications/isseiart.html, 30 october 2004.

**"**temporary madness, a state of uncontrolled mental or emotional agitation, intense, often wild, and often disorderly, compulsive, or agitated activity".[22] But the reduction of personal responsibility and guilt was not only an important issue in the retrospective autobiographical discourse on Nazism. It was also a necessary prerequisite and an important condition for the radical Fascist practice of power, as we shall see when discussing the third example.

(3) In my third example, "Rausch" is not only related to collective emotional situations important for the integration of Germans into the movement and the regime, but rather connected to the aspect of collective violence against the imagined enemy. The writer Erich Kernmayr used the word as title for his autobiographical novel about the War against the Soviet Union. His book "The Great **Rausch"** was published 1949 in Zurich and re-published several times in West-Germany.[23] In this book, Kernmayr tells the story of his adventures as officer of the Waffen-SS [he was Sturmbannführer] during the war. He portrays himself as an experienced, well trained, reflecting officer, who was sceptical when he heard about the decision to attack the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941. His scepticism, as he writes in the book, was not shared by large parts of the German population:

Q" On the third day we finally advanced quickly towards the east. Everywhere in Silesia people would stand outside waving. A true **Rausch** had caught them. Veterans from the first Russian campaign [First World War] would untiringly give us advices of how to annihilate the Cossacks and the Russian infantry. Women would drag food and cigarettes in such great amounts, that we could not refill them, let alone consume them. Kids would shout with joy and completely strange girls would fling their arms around our necks and kiss us. Soon the smell of burning villages was in the air. Further away, the thunder of guns was rolling."UQ

In the end of the novel Kernmayr comes to the conclusion that "the Great Rausch is finally over. From now on firm and logical sobriety must lead us."[24] He is convinced of the fact that the war was lost, because the Germans had not been "rational" enough, but megalomania, an emotional, irrational mental state had caught hold of them. This could lead us to the

[22] Longman Dictionary of the English Language, 1984.

[23] Kern [Kernmayer], Erich, Der grosse Rausch. Russlandfeldzug 1941-45, Thomas Verlag: Zürich 1949, p. 10.

[24] Kern, Rausch, p. 199.

conclusion that he uses "Rausch" in a similar way as Finckh, in order to minimize the responsibility of the German people. But because Kernmayr was and remained a convinced Nationalist, militarist, anti-Semite and even one of the first and most notorious revisionists active in Austria and Germany after the war, we should think about another possibility of understanding his use of the word.[25] Let's take a closer look on his application of "Rausch". In the novel quoted above, the word signifies a collective state of joy, characterised by an abundance of food, tobacco and alcohol and the sexual connotation of "Rausch" is also present in his text. This means, that he uses the word as a metaphor, which contains the older negative semantic connected to "drunkenness" and "intoxication". For him, this mental situation has a very negative impact on the Germans, because it helps to spread an unfounded optimism and a dangerous presumption. When reading the whole novel, it becomes clear that Kernmayr is convinced of the fact, that the war was lost because he and other soldiers of the German army had let themselves being caught by this "Rausch". Therefore he and his comrades-in-arms could not act "logically" anymore. Veterans, children, women, girls – all those, who were not fighting in the war, are represented as the "feminine", chaotic crowd. If we consider Kernmayr's extreme militarism, his glorification of the male soldier he celebrated in various war novels and short stories, we can interpret his use of "Rausch" for describing a mental situation during the Second World War as an attempt to stick to the ideal

[25] Kernmayr, journalist and writer, was born in Graz 1906, he died in 1991. He had some trouble with the West German judicial authorities, as he writes in his introduction to the book: Kempka, Erich, Die letzten Tage mit Adolf Hitler, Verlag K. W. Schütz: Pr. Oldendorf [Göttingen] 2nd ed. 1976, p. 9. Here he wrotes about the „brainwashing" by the Allies against the Germans in East and West after 1945, which was directed against their „historical consciousness" and aimed at their "Volkstod". His language corresponded to the Nazi jargon, he wrote about Kempka as a "hard man" with "persönliche Bescheidenheit" and "selbstverständliche Kameradschaft", who fought against "lies" spread by the "enemies" of the German people. Some data on his person in: Kernmayr, Erich, in: Wer ist Wer? XIV, Bd. I, Berlin 1962, p. 730. Anti-semite is f. e. his characterization of the „Jew Bela Kun" in his revisionist pamphlet: Kern[mayr], Erich, Von Versailles zu Adolf Hitler: Der Schreckliche Friede, Schütz: Göttingen 1961 (Deutsche Trilogie 1), p. 81; during the Nazi era, Kernmayr wrote several novels and short stories: Kernmayr, Erich Knud, Der Marsch ins Nichts, Wiener Verlagsgesellschaft: Wien 1943.

of the hard, logical, masculine fighter who must be emotionally armoured against dangerous influences from female or other "weak" persons who are lead by their emotions. Kernmayr's work is a manifestation of the belief in the gendered Fascist image of the "fighter" elaborated and propagated by intellectuals such as Ernst Juenger and others, but particularly cultivated by the SS. Kernmayr was one of the first and most active apologists of the "clean" and "honourable" Waffen-SS. The underlying concepts of racially pure, ideal masculinity has been studied by Theweleit and by younger scholars who focused on the centrality of collective violence combined with emotional dependence within masculine groups inside the Fascist movements, mostly lead by demobilized and often traumatized officers from the Great War, who were unable to find their place in the post-war societies.[26] But we should pay attention to Kernmayrs sharp distinction between the elitist masculine "rational" violence of the SS and the somewhat more plebeian, impulsive violence of the SA and the Fascist squadristi, which was described by Sven Reichardt in the following way:

Q"Violent acts arose from the life practice of fascists and solidified the life style that granted them their identity. For the Fascists not the aim, but the movement was 'everything'. Violence was an end in itself, insofar as it represented an intrinsic part of the political life style of fascist actors. Acts of violence were thus not only the result of a deficient life situation of the movements' members. Independent of their relative social deprivation, acting violently also 'made sense' because it turned members into copartners of the totally substitute world of the fighting corps and secured them prestige and reputation in its everyday life."UQ[27]

Related to the aforementioned image of the deprived German worker and the cult of the German people as a victim of an international conspiracy, "Rausch" signifies within the context of "plebeian" Fascist violence a state of mind in which the use of force against the "other" was important for the emotional integration of the individual in the imagined Nazi

[26] Theweleit, Klaus, Männerphantasien, Bd. 1, Roter Stern: Frankfurt a. M. 1977;

[27] Reichardt, Sven, Formen faschistischer Gewalt. Faschistische Kampfbünde in Italien und Deutschland nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Eine typologische Deutung ihrer Gewaltpropaganda während der Bewegungsphase des Faschismus, in: Sociologus 51/1-2 (2001), pp. 55-88, hier p. 81. Karl Mannheim called Fasism „the Evangelium of Violence."

community and a necessary condition for the use of violence against the imagined enemy. Very differently, the incorrigible SS officer Kernmayr treated this "Rausch" of the irrational and plebeian masses of the SA, the ordinary Fascist, as a danger to "masculine rationality". In his interpretation of the causes for the military defeat of the Germans in 1945 "Rausch" was the "irrational" element of National Socialism and of "proletarian" groups like the SA that lead to a "weakening" of the masculinity of the German fighters. The difference between the hard, "rational", and "masculine" violence of the SS as opposite to the "chaotic", "irrational" "Rausch" of the German population is based on the idea of creating a super-Human masculinity of Aryan fighters – a kind of "New Man" as a result of National Socialist racist politics. We will find similar ideals in the self-images of other technocratic executioners of National Socialism, men who considered themselves temporarily as being part of a "rational" German elite for which the planning and killing of millions of people represented an experience of modern technology and racial hygiene – not "fanatic" representatives of the younger "generation of the unbound" ("Generation der Unbedingten") as they have been called by Ulrich Herbert and Michael Wildt recently.[28] This leads me to the conclusion that National Socialist mentalities included both "modern" and "anti-modern", "rational" and "irrational" attitudes and self-images. The different uses of words like "Rausch" provide some indications to the understanding of the various self-descriptions of Nazi leaders and followers.

III.

As I mentioned at the beginnig of my talk, "Rausch" was also used in anti -fascist, anti-Nazi discourses by intellectual observers such as Adorno, C. G. Jung, the Protestant theologian Hans-Joachim Schoeps or the sociologist Franz Neumann in order to highlight the irrational

[28] Wildt, Michael, Generation of the Unbound, Yad Vashem: Jerusalem 2002; Herbert, Ulrich, Best, 1996.

and unintelligible aspects of Nazism.[29] Thei attempts to understand National Socialism as "irrational" or "religious" phenomenon, which were later taken up by other interpretations using concepts like "manipulation" or "seduction of the masses" are to a certain degree misleading. Today, the sharp distinction between "rational" and "irrational" behaviour and ideas has been philosophically and scientifically blurred, as we now understand emotions as an important part of the cognitive process.[30] Therefore the crimes committed during the Nazi period cannot be excused and personal responsibility cannot be minimized by hinting at the "irrational" aspects of the political culture of the regime which the different meanings of the German word "Rausch" can grasp only partially. A thorough analysis of the way the word was used, of the different meanings it contained, and of the different contexts it referred to can lead us to a better understanding of the linguistic practices and their impacts on

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[29] Adorno described 1933 as the "moment of deadly sadness, of a half-conscious commitment to calamity, which accompanied the *cheatingly imposed* **Rausch** [Orig.: "angedrehter Rausch"], the torchlight processions and all the drumming." „das Moment tödlicher Traurigkeit, des halbwissend einem Unheilvollen sich Anvertrauens übersehen, das den angedrehten Rausch, die Fackelzüge und Trommeleien begleitete." [Minima Moralia. Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben, Ges. Werke, Suhrkamp: Bd. 4, Ffm. 1980, 115 [erstm. 1951]
C. G. Jung used a similar metaphor in a paper written in London, in 1939: "We do not know whether Hitler is going to found a new Islam (He is already on the way; he is like Mohammed. The emotion in Germany is Islamic; warlike and Islamic. **They are all drunk with a wild god**." The collected works of C. G. Jung, Bd. 10, Civilization in Transition, Princeton 1970, p. 281. Similarly, Schoeps would call Nazism a "return to Baal, the god of fertility and of vital forces, and Moloch, the god of power, who had to be placated by human sacrifice, both of whom, as symbols of a 'Volksgemeinschaft' founded on blood and oriented to power, rejected the Tablets of the Law." Anonymous [Hans-Joachim Schopes], Der Nationalsozialismus als verkappte Religion, in: Eltheto (1939), S. 93-98. Finally, Franz Neumann re-introduced Behemoth, the monster of Jewish apocalyptic tradition, born of chaos and spreading terror on the eve of the end of time, for a description of Nazism.

[30] There is a broad discussion on the significance of emotions in history: See: Frevert, Ute, Angst vor Gefühlen? Die Geschichtsmächtigkeit von Emotionen im 20. Jahrhundert, in: Perspektiven der Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Ed. by Paul Nolte, Beck: München 2000, pp. 95-111, p. 106: "Läßt sich die Geschichte des 'Dritten Reiches' schreiben, ohne Furcht und Elend, ohne Rausch und Ekstase, ohne Haß- und Unsicherheitsgefühle, ohne das Gefühl der Demütigung und Erniedrigung, aber auch das des trotzigen Stolzes und der national-völkischen Überlegenheit einzubeziehen?" For a critique of the traditional and negative discourse on „masses" see: Genett, Timm, Angst, Haß und Faszination. Die Masse als intellektuelle Projektion und die Beharrlichkeit des Projizierten, in: Neue Politische Literatur 44 (1999), pp. 193-240.

totalitarian realities. The fact that Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were enemies who tried to destroy each other should not obscure the other relevant fact that these dictatorships observed each other and that they shared some common cultural and ideological elements. Recent studies of Stalinist culture explored f. e. new insights into the ways Gorky and others popularized Nietzscheanian concepts like the "super-Human" in the Soviet Union.[31] In the following discussion we should therefore not only focus on comparative aspects of the topic, but we also keep the ideas of reciprocal observations and transfer of concepts and ideas in mind.

[31] Günther, Hans: Der sozialistische Übermensch. M. Gor'kij und der sowjetische Heldenmythos. Stuttgart, Weimar 1993.