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The Language of Political Messianism
Religion in National Socialist Propaganda Poetry

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Abstract. Although National Socialism profoundly distrusted Christianity (and Catholicism in particular), its main thinkers did not think it wise to reject it altogether, precisely because the two thousand year old Christian myths, images, and symbols are an integral part of Western world view. Völkisch ideology rejected Jesus Christ as a historical figure, but instead tried to associate him with the vitalistic concept of Aryan life force. In propaganda literature, such as Heinrich Anacker's, Christ was fitted into the Germanic foundations of National Socialism, which cleared the way for the representation of Adolf Hitler as a secularized Messiah in the Third Reich.

Keywords: National socialism, Political religion, Propaganda, Heinrich Anacker, Adolf Hitler.

1. Introduction

Nazi distrust of Christianity led ideologues such as Eugen Diederichs and Julius Langbehn to reject Jesus Christ as a historical figure and instead try to associate him with the vitalistic concept of Aryan life force. In this way, Christ was fitted into the Germanic and mystical foundations of Nazi ideology, which cleared the way for the representation of Adolf Hitler as the secularized Messiah in Nazi Germany. Under National Socialist rule, the opportunities for literary expression were systematically eliminated by the Nazi regime that attempted to impose an uncompromising unity upon all cultural spheres, seeking to replace the textual subtleties and polysemic creativity with a style of writing that exemplified the coming of a new era. Poetry – often written to be sung and thus to be collectively performed in a liturgical manner – had an

Nazi Party propaganda postcard showing an illustration by Hubert Lanzinger *Der Bannerträger,* ca 1934-36, © US Army Center of Military History.

important ideological role as part of the propaganda apparatus. In this paper, we will focus on the religious structures in Heinrich Anacker's party poetry.

Heinrich Anacker (1901–1971) was a prominent Swiss-German Nazi poet, whose poetry was characterized by its emphatic ideological praise of National Socialism and clearly informed by Christian faith. His propagandistic poems in *Die Fanfare. Gedichte der deutschen Erhebung* (1936) are characterized by a confessional bias and an almost liturgical type of verse. What emerges in these verses is a form of secular chiliastic mysticism, whose ultimate source lies in the poet's devout adoration of Adolf Hitler, who is represented in metaphorical chains ranging from "high priest" and "Redeemer" over "Christ" and "martyr" to "angel" and "God's Son." The theme of his stereotypical Nazi poetry is the eradication of anxiety and personal loss through eschatological absorption into the national-racial collective thanks to the guiding leadership of a political "Messiah." Through the devices of politicized religious language, Nazi poets sought to idealize and sacralize the ideology and policy of the new state, providing them with an aura and mystique that would camouflage the political pragmatism and violence upon which they were based. The political messianism of Nazi totalitarianism in the selected poems will be analyzed by linking the theories of political religious discourse to theories of the language of the "Third Reich."

Although modern historians rarely refrain from describing Hitler as the National Socialist "Messiah," he never actually referred to himself either as a "Messiah," "Savior," or indeed "Redeemer." Rather, it was his admirers and followers who ascribed this role to him (Schreiner 2003: 38). As early as the 1920s, during the years of strife following the First World War, Julius Streicher, later the editor of the *Stürmer*, wrote: "A man has arisen, who will succeed in saving our people – Adolf Hitler. Blessed by God, he will shield the people from the worst" (Streicher, cited in ibid., 29). Otto Bangert also saw Hitler as the "people's savior and hero [...] driven by that unrelenting determination that we call fate" and aware of his "universal historical mission" (Bangert 1930: 144). Even after seizing power, the upper echelons of Nazi officials used religious discourse to legitimize Hitler's leadership. Joseph Goebbels, for example, wrote that Hitler "fulfilled the law that was bestowed on him as a servant of God" (Goebbels 1943: 14). Hermann Göring saw Hitler as "the savior," whom "the Lord God has given to the German people" (Göring 1934: 31). "The people love Adolf Hitler," he asserted, "because we believe, deeply and steadfastly, that he has been sent by God to save Germany" (ibid., 52). In his autobiography published after the Second World War, Gerhard Schumann also admitted that for him and his circle of acquaintances at the time, Hitler was "the God-sent leader and savior of the Reich" (Schumann 1974: 144). Nevertheless, in spite of this adulation, the extent to which the terms "Messiah" and "messianism," both rooted in religion and recognized primarily in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), are applicable or relevant to a political ideology such as National Socialism raises an important question.[1]

Even though the outcome may have proved very different, the secularization of Europe that began with the European Enlightenment did not signal the end of messianism. The modern age in Europe was characterized by figures and movements that "certainly deserve to be called messianic, although at first glance they cannot or can only to a limited extent be associated with the conventional image of the Messiah" (Hillerbrand 2016: 5). It was only in the early 19th century that "messianism" began to be coined as a term and then transposed to the field of politics and political theory. According to Schreiner,

1 For further historical literature on Nazi messianism and apocalypticism, see e.g. Bärsch (1998), Brokoff (2001), Herbst (2010), Hesemann and Meiser (2004), Redles (2005), and Rissmann (2001).

the term "messianism" can be traced back to the Polish mathematician and philosopher Joseph Marie Höené Wronski (1776–1853), who lived in Paris. Wronski used messianism as "a term for a system of innovative, avant-garde ideas and expectations from which, if these were realized and fulfilled, an ideal social and political order could emerge" (Schreiner 2003: 7). This led to the inclusion of the term "messiah" in the prevailing political vocabulary "to express hopes and expectations for the arrival of a political savior and a redeemer." It is precisely this expression of "hope for a savior" that underlines the constitutive conditions for messianic movements (ibid.). The *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* describes three conditions that have proved to be contributing factors in the emergence of messianic movements – at least politically:

1. The emergence of a crisis situation that serves as a catalyst or starting point and which is perceived by members of a particular society as a threat to its social, political, ethical, and religious survival;
2. The emergence of a charismatic leader who is able to consolidate an awareness of this crisis and demonstrate solidarity with the fate of the community;
3. An experience of a visionary or vocational calling as well as a mission to assemble and save – often with an analogy to biblical prophets or savior figures such as Moses and especially to the messianic mission of Jesus, whose work, suffering, and resurrection are then transferred or transposed to the "present-day Messiah." (Kasper 1998: 164)

As in Max Weber's theory of charismatic rule, a crisis situation – whether political, social, ethical, and/or religious – seems to be a fundamental condition for the emergence of a messianic figure of authority. The crisis situation experienced during the 1920s in post-war Germany also seems to fulfill this social condition, as set out above. According to Schreiner, the most important reasons for "the impatient waiting for a charismatic bearer of hope" were "the defeat in [the] war, the collapse of the Kaiserreich, Imperial Germany, and last but not least, the doubts over the ability of parliamentary democracy to be able to act" (Schreiner 2003: 26). This third factor, however, also stipulates that the charismatic figure of power should fulfill a further condition. To be perceived as a Messiah figure, this long-awaited leader should feel a sense of calling, a vocation, to this "messianic mission." According to Hans J. Hillerbrand, this is why messianism always includes a message that promises "salvation from the present evil" (2016: 9). "Salvation" is not necessarily to be interpreted as the freeing from sin, but also as freedom "from the hardships of daily life," namely "from earthly suffering, disease and famine, envy, war and violence" (ibid., 8). Whether these statements were taken seriously is a matter of debate, but Hitler had already presented himself several times as a new Christ figure. Volker Ullrich, for example, asserts that one reason for this was Hitler's refusal to subject the NSDAP's 25-point program to revision, on the grounds that "[t]he New Testament is also full of contradictions, but in no way did this hinder the spread of Christianity" (Ullrich 2013: 232). Alfred Läpple also pointed out that Hitler increasingly attributed the word "Providence" to himself: "Hitler always referred to "Providence" or to the "Almighty" when there was an assassination attempt on him that had failed or when there had been a particularly bloody victory" (Läpple 1980: 28). Also in *Mein Kampf*, he seems to have seen or projected himself as both "the instrument and the executor of divine providence" (ibid.): "I believe that in resisting the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord and taking action, in the spirit of the Almighty Creator" (Hitler 1943: 70).

Ullrich also draws on Max Weber's charismatic theory of domination to emphasize the social relationship between the charismatic leader figure and the movement. To be effective, according to Weber, "the charismatic politician

needs a community of followers who are convinced of his 'extraordinary' abilities, which enable him to believe firmly in his calling" (Ullrich 2013: 148). However, it was not only a question of someone like Hitler believing in himself as a leader, or indeed as a savior or messiah; it was also important, an essential ingredient even, that the movement recognized him as such. The quotes from Streicher, Goebbels and Göring above illustrate the extent to which Hitler was seen, or at least was portrayed, as the "Savior of the Nation" by Nazi officials. Ordinary people seem to have believed in Hitler's mission as well. Victor Klemperer, for example, reports how he witnessed an admission or a profession of faith in Hitler three times by three different people: "I believe in him" (Klemperer 1970: 131), "I believe in Hitler" (ibid., 134), and "I believe in the Führer" (ibid., 135). It was precisely this professed "faith" in the "Führer" that produced countless poems of praise for him as the "Führer," of which the poem by Heinrich Anacker, which will later be subjected to literary analysis, is considered exemplary. Hans Jörg Schmidt describes Hitler's emergence as *the chosen one* as a topical reference point for occasional lyricists, a phenomenon that was particularly widespread in celebratory or "occasional" Nazi poetry, as a form of adoration (Schmidt 2007: 102–103). In this context, in *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, Klemperer also emphasizes the religious rhetoric of Nazi discourse: "Nazism was accepted by millions as gospel because it appropriated the language of the gospel" (Klemperer 1970: 117).

2. Political Messianism

In his collection of poems *Die Fanfare. Gedichte der deutschen Erhebung* (1936) ("The Fanfare: Poems on the Rise of Germany"),[2] Heinrich Anacker mentions Hitler's name in twenty-three different poems and ten times in combination with his first name Adolf. He uses the title "Führer" in twenty-two poems, and the National Socialist "Heil" formula appears twice, once in combination with his name ("Heil Hitler": HA107, v.14), and once in combination with his denomination "der Führer" ("Heil dem Führer": HA39, v.13). In Anacker's anthology, which is considered exemplary of this type of affirmative, declarative Nazi poetry, Hitler appears not only as a purely political leader, the "Führer," but almost as a figure sent by God to be the savior of the fatherland and a redeemer of the people. The attribution of redemptive qualities to the political "Führer" led to a quasi-messianic portrayal of the National Socialist "Führer," who transcends the purely human dimension and thus appears as a pseudo-deity.

Although the title of the poem "Adolf Hitler als Mensch" ("Adolf Hitler as a Human Being") (HA108), which is presented as an introductory poem, suggests otherwise, the content of Anacker's poem refers precisely to this superhuman quality of the "Führer."

Adolf Hitler as a Human Being (HA108)
This is how the world sees him: dressed in a suit of metal armour,
His hand on his sharpened sword –
But we know him in his heart to be kind
Beneath his cloak of hard steel.

As children proclaim it with radiant happiness
That meet with him somewhere,
Animals with their mute look
Bless his calm benevolence.

For the deepest root of all his actions
Is an all-embracing love –
He is the last and the poorest among us
As our Comrade Leader-in-Arms, he remains.

This is how the world sees him: dressed in a suit of metal armour,
His hand on his sharpened sword –
But we know him in his heart to be kind
Beneath his cloak of hard steel!

The fact that Hitler is praised in this poem for his love for the people, the fatherland, and his mission or policy of

2 All references to poems from *Die Fanfare* will be abbreviated as 'HA' followed by the corresponding page number and verse line.

peace, but meanwhile simultaneously appearing as the greatest warlord of all time, presents a strange paradox for Walter Knoche (1969: 21). This double-sided portrait of the "Führer" is further emphasized by the notable juxtaposition of "we" and "they." In the first and last verses in particular, Anacker clearly distinguishes between the impression he makes, with a striking use of the opening word, the "world" (v.1, 13) to describe Adolf Hitler, and the contrast that is drawn with the "we" (v.3, 15) that follows. The "Welt" (World) primarily represents and throws light on only an outer perception of his appearance, showing him as a strong, vigorous person ready to fight. With his "sharpened sword" (v.2, 14) and dressed in armor made of "metal" (v.1, 13), Anacker describes Hitler as a medieval knight rather than a modern soldier. However, through the collective and collectivizing "we," we can see through this outward appearance. Beneath his "cloak of steely hardness" (v.4, 16), there is apparently a "kind heart" (v.3, 15), hidden from view, which only "we" (v.3, 15) know about. In the following sections, the meaning of this collectivizing "we," with which "the German people" – i.e., the Aryan successors, perhaps even the National Socialist "believers" are associated – throws further light on the rise and success of Hitler as both a charismatic leader and the long-awaited savior of the fatherland. In the second verse, the introduction of "children" (v.5) and "animals" (v.7) serve to "proclaim" and announce his alleged good-heartedness (v.5).

As a literary symbol, the child generally represents innocence and in this sense is able to speak the truth without any prejudice (see "Kind" in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 180). After the children "meet with him" (v.6), they are filled with a "radiant happiness" (v.5) as they spontaneously announce or "proclaim" (v.5) "it" (v.5), i.e., Hitler's "kind heart." Animals also "bless" (v.8) the work of Hitler,[3] not with words but with their "dumb [or mute] look" (v.7). This unusual connection or even wordless communication with children and animals serves to underline the extraordinary – even supernatural – qualities of the "Führer," which will be described later in relation to the messianic portrayal of the "Führer" as a Messiah. The reason – described as the "root" (v.9) – of Hitler's goodness is finally exposed in the third verse. His motivating force is projected as "his all-embracing love" (v.10), literally his "people-embracing love." Everything Hitler does, he does out of his evident love for the people. In doing so, he is not above the people but among the people. This love also appears to be boundless and unconditional, as in the description "left to the last and is the poorest of us / as our fellow-comrade leader" ("Kam'rad") (v.11–12). Both the second verse as well as the last two verses spontaneously evoke associations with the life of Jesus Christ, as revealed in Christian scripture. Hitler's positive relationship with children, for example, presented in the second verse, reminds us of Jesus's invitation to let the little children come to Him.[4] In the third verse, Anacker implies that Hitler, like Jesus, did not feel himself to be above the people, but simply as standing in their midst and even actively seeking contact with those on the fringes of society. Luke and Matthew repeatedly depict Jesus as a friend of the poor, publicans, tax collectors, the sick, etc.,[5] while Anacker describes the "Führer" briefly and concisely as the "Kam'rad," comrade (v.12), who is the "last and the poorest of us" (v.11). Finally, the last verse literally echoes the first verse, as if to emphasize

3 Although Knoche notes that the adjective "mute" is already correctly used in connection with the "animals," it seems difficult for him to imagine that the animals actually "blessed" Hitler's work (see Knoche 1969: 22). But it seems inappropriate – as with any interpretation of poetry – to question the text's sense of reality in terms of content. With the animal as a literary symbol, Anacker is simply enhancing the representation of the "Führer" by having him apparently communicate with the voiceless animals.

4 See Mt. 19:13–15; Mk. 10:13–16; Lk. 18:15–17.

5 See Lk. 7:34, 14:13; Mt. 11:5, 19.

both the outer strength as well as the inner goodness of the "Führer."

Despite these implicit and explicit references to the life of Christ, as well as the poet's attribution of superhuman qualities to the "Führer," Anacker does not represent the "Führer" as merely "human." The following analysis of Anacker's anthology *Die Fanfare* will focus more distinctly on the allegedly superhuman characteristics of Hitler – or at least his portrayal as superhuman – by highlighting several characteristics of the figure of the (political) Messiah.

Three aspects or viewpoints are essential when considering messianic individuals and movements, namely that of the messenger, the message, and the movement that he engenders or which carries him: "An ambassador proclaims a message that is considered 'new,' and around which a movement is formed" (Hillerbrand 2016: 2). It is precisely these three factors that play a central role in the messianic stylization of the "Führer" in propaganda poetry. It is for this reason that Hans Otto Seitschek distinguishes three phases in messianic movements, the first two of which are also addressed in Anacker's poetry: firstly, the waiting and hoping for the Messiah, who comes into the world to bring salvation; secondly, the unconditional following the Messiah receives when he appears and when, as it were, he is in the world; and thirdly, the expectation of the return of the Messiah when he is taken from the world for a certain period (Seitschek 2005: 31–32).

The first phase – waiting and hoping – is related directly to the social precondition of a messianic movement, namely the crisis at the time. More precisely, propaganda authors such as Anacker describe the period between the defeat of the First World War and the success of National Socialism in the 1930s as a time of destruction, hopelessness, and bondage. The analysis of his poetry that follows also demonstrates how Anacker links this period of crisis in his poetry with a longing for a strong, quasi-divine leader and, beyond that, with a message of salvation that promises hope.

With references to unstinting loyalty, the blind obedience of the people, and the Hitler salute, Anacker goes on to introduce the second messianic phase: the unconditional acceptation by the movement of Adolf Hitler and his accession to the figure of the Messiah. This also draws a parallel with Max Weber's theory of charisma. Here, not only does the charismatic leader claim himself as the highest authority, but his followers also accept absolute obedience as their duty (Lepsius 2006: 175). Nonetheless, Anacker did not only write about the people's subservience to their leader; he also addressed an alleged belief in the divine power of the "Führer," an aspect which is of primary importance in a religious (and political) personality cult. A deity is substantiated "firstly by the attribution to him on the part of the believers, secondly by his supposed superhuman activity, and thirdly by the belief in his omnipresence" (Schmidt 2007: 99). Here, the analysis focuses on the one hand on the religious connotations that are denotated to a leader – such as "savior" and "redeemer" – and on the other on descriptions of what are believed to be his superhuman qualities.

Since the third phase in Messianism, in the National Socialist sense, takes place only after the disappearance of the Messiah – that is, after the collapse of National Socialism – it should come as no surprise that this phase was not actually addressed in the poetry written during the early years of the Nazi regime. Nonetheless, in stylizing the "Führer," propaganda authors were certainly inspired by the life of the Christian Messiah. Propaganda authors such as Anacker and Otto Bangert explicitly compared Adolf Hitler with Jesus Christ several times in their poetry. As early as the late 1920s, Bangert, for example, wrote:

> It is only out of this apocalyptic mood that the appearance of Hitler can really be grasped; and it is completely irrational and almost mystical in its effect. His unique power lies in the overwhelming certainty of his mission and his power, which is sure to take place during a declining age, just as Jesus once walked over the dying ancient world. So too Hitler's followers

> are not self-interested egoists, like the spiritualized heaps of the old parties, but instead are believers, disciples and idealists, because an ever-lasting Germany is at stake. (1930: 147)

Anacker was also no stranger to drawing parallels in his poetry with the life and work of Christ. As some of the features of the life of Jesus's life – e.g., his teachings and his suffering – are considered messianic in the New Testament but are not associated with the image of the Messiah in the Old Testament, we will also examine symbolic language drawn from the Christian tradition as well as from the biblical world of images.

3. Salvation in Crisis

The first phase of the messianic process, namely the waiting and hoping for a messiah figure, is used as a theme in four of Anacker's poems. Three of these poems – "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12), "Durchhalten, zum Endkampf bereit" ("Persevere and Prepare for the Final Battle!") (HA38), and "Wir warten!" ("We are Waiting!") (HA50) – describe a period of several years of waiting, while "Am Abend des 5. März" ("On the Evening of March 5") (HA76) represents a period of only several hours' waiting. This last poem belongs to the fourth theme of "The Rise of Germany" that Anacker explored in his anthology. All thirty-four poems on this theme deal to a greater or lesser extent with the conditions in which power was seized in the Germany of 1933. In "Am Abend des 5. März," Anacker describes the evening of the federal elections on March 5, 1933, only six days after the Reichstag fire. Until after the end of the Second World War, these were the last elections in which more than one party took part. It was at this election that the National Socialists (NSDAP) and the Conservatives (DNVP) won by a narrow majority, after which the National Socialist dictatorship finally began. In this poem, Anacker describes how "The feverish waiting begins / For the numbers that mean victory" (HA76, v.2–3). This period of waiting is only short, however, because in the last verse, a rallying cry sounds:

> And 'ere the morning dawns
> Hurry around from country to country,
> That Germany, hammered awake,
> Is committed to the work of Adolf Hitler! (HA76, v.13–16)

Although the NSDAP emerged as the victor at the elections in 1933, the final verse of the poem already bears witness to the personality cult around Adolf Hitler. "Germany" (HA76, v.15) did not vote for the NSDAP, it reminds us, but "declared its support for the work of Adolf Hitler!" (HA76, v.16). By combining the verb "sich bekennen" (to acknowledge, recognize in oneself, profess) and the prepositional object "zum Werk Adolf Hitlers" (the work of Adolf Hitler), Anacker uses a predicative strategy that emphasizes the people's devotion to the "Führer." The use of the reflexive verb "to profess" also implies more than just "electing a party"; it also means "to bear witness to one's faith." This reflexive form of the verb "to profess" is used here as elsewhere to declare support openly for a particular religion, e.g., in the phrase "to profess one's faith, i.e., Christianity. In this sense, the fact that Germany, according to Anacker, has professed its faith in the work of Hitler clearly invokes the sense of a religious confession. This feeling is reinforced by the use of a second predicative strategy in the noun "Werk" ("Work") (HA76, v.16). Germany has not simply professed its faith in the principles, ideology, and convictions of Hitler's party manifesto but rather in his "work" on Earth. In Otto Bangert's poem "Adolf Hitler," which dates from 1926, he talks of his "holy work," which prompts an association with the works of God or indeed with the works of mercy, as described in the Gospel of Saint Matthew (Mt. 25:34–46).

While Anacker's "Am Abend des 5. März" was written only a few hours before the election results were announced, three of his other poems allude to a much longer and more difficult period of waiting. In the opening poem of the anthol-

ogy, "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12), the length of the period of waiting is stated very precisely:

> We fought bitterly for twelve years;
> We learned to wait in silence... (HA11/12, v.1–2)

As the date of the constitution – January 31, 1933 – was added to the poem, along with the date of the first edition of the anthology (1933), we can deduce that the period of waiting began in 1921, when Hitler was first elected party leader of the NSDAP. This "wait" (HA11/12, v.2) was, according to the first verse, marked by a period of struggle and bitterness. The anaphoric "we" at the beginning of the verse draws attention to the fact that it was the people who were waiting for a savior or redeemer. With the parallel construction at the end of the poem, the circle closes, and the devotion to Hitler becomes apparent:

> We swear it to you this day:
> Adolf Hitler, we remain loyal to you! (HA11/12, v.29–30)

With the word "Sehnsucht" (longing, yearning) (HA11/12, v.21), a term which also seems to have met with Hitler's approval, Anacker increases the emotional attachment of the people: "The longing of the German people, you have made it come true" (HA11/12, v.21). The use of substantives such as "Werk" (HA76, v.16) and "Sehnsucht" (HA11/12, v.21), in connection with the name of the "Führer," enables them to be presented as extremely positive and even quasi-religious qualities attributed to Hitler.

The last two poems do not allude to a precise period of waiting. Rather, a reference is made to a period of "feverish waiting" (HA76, v.2), while in "Durchhalten, zum Endkampf bereit!" ("Persevere and Prepare for the Final Battle!") (HA38), the waiting is described as a difficult and nerve-racking period:

> I know, comrades, how hard it is,
> This waiting, this idle waiting;
> I know how the heart devours,
> This waiting, this waiting, this waiting ... (HA38, v.1–4)

The lyrical I here addresses the "comrades" (HA38, v.1) and seems to share their feelings of frustration. Their waiting seems to be pointless, "tatlos" (HA38, v.2). The gemination of "Dies Warten" (HA38, v.4) in the fourth verse also underlines the passivity and the frustration that arises from waiting. In the second verse, this is accentuated: the comrades are not only waiting "idly" but are also "full of burning impatience" (HA38, v.8). The lyrical I, however, asks them three times to obey "the Führer's commandment" (HA38, v.6, 13, 20). Using quotation marks, Anacker employs a strategy of perspective and allows the "Führer" to repeat his "commandment" himself: "Persevere and prepare for the final battle!" (HA38, v.7, 14, 21).

In "Wir warten!" ("We are Waiting!") (HA50), the comrades are not asked to follow the commandment of the "Führer" while they are waiting but to wait for a precise "sign" or "signal" (HA50, v.1) from the "Führer":

> We all wait for the signal!
> We wait, we wait. (HA50, v.1–2)

Here, too, the anaphoric use of the personal pronoun "we" catches the attention; in the second verse, the gemination of the phrase "we wait" again emphasizes a passivity, the indication of which is a "sign" being awaited, which is explained further in the second verse:

> We await our Führer's call!
> We wait, we wait,
> Like horses, faithful to their task
> With impatiently beating hooves
> On clinking stones, pawing the ground. (HA50, v.6–10)

With this parallel construction, the frustration of waiting is accentuated a second time. Just as in the maxim "Persevere and Prepare for the Final Battle!" (HA38), the word "impatient" (HA50, v.9) illustrates this eager waiting. However, this impatience is not directly related

to those in this poem who are waiting but is illustrated in the allegory of the horse, waiting "with impatiently beating hooves" (HA50, v.9), to complete its task.

Adolf Hitler was expected not only to lead the people out of the political crisis that the Weimar Republic was experiencing but also to embody a symbol of freedom and so assume the role of savior and liberator after the long period of struggle and suffering. The rise of the NSDAP – during the period from the end of the First World War until the Nazi party came to power in 1933 – was referred to in Nazi rhetoric as the "period of strife," the "Kampfzeit," which, from a Nazi perspective, was characterized as a period of terror and oppression (Schmitz-Berning 2000: 347). In his poems, Anacker also describes the recent past, of what was then a united Germany, as a difficult and unfortunate period. In his opening poem, Anacker considered the "Kampfzeit" to have begun in 1921, when Hitler was elected party leader of the NSDAP. The first verse of the opening poem "Dem Führer!" makes reference to this period in no uncertain terms: "We fought bitterly for twelve years" (HA11/12, v.1), where the "path" of events is described as "a single sacrificial course" (HA11/12, v.3). In the poem "Preußens Erhebung" ("The Rise of Prussia") (HA67/68), Anacker explores the theme of "bondage" or "servitude" (HA67/68, v.26) with explicit reference to "the bloody chains / The devilish pact of Versailles" (HA67/68, v.27–28). In numerous poems, Anacker adopts the literary symbol of "chains" to symbolize bondage and oppression,[6] often alluding to a future of freedom and liberation. In "Die Fahnen verboten" ("The Forbidden Flags") (HA14), he uses the chain symbol to call for protest, with: "Break the chains!" (HA14, v.21). In "Gegen Versailles!" ("Against Versailles!") (HA18), freedom is portrayed as a form of encouragement or hope, with: "We have carried the yoke for fourteen years – / Yet our chains are still to be shed…" (HA18, v.17–18).

The end of this period of bondage and the prophecy of freedom is invariably understood in connection with the rise of the NSDAP in general and the "Führer" in particular. Thus Anacker writes in "The Rise of Prussia," "Only with swastikas can salvation come near" (HA67/68, v.29), seeing in the symbol of the swastika the hope of salvation. The last verse of this poem finally explains very explicitly that "with Hitler" (HA67/68, v.34), there is hope in a "Germany of freedom and honor" (HA67/68, v.35):

> The flag is waving that shows us the way;
> From the ground the armies already grow.
> The long gagged eagle circles –
> With Hitler in the old Prussian spirit
> For a Germany of freedom and honor!
> (HA67/68, v.31–35)

By explicitly associating Hitler with an idea of freedom in his poems, Anacker clearly portrays him as the long-awaited savior of the fatherland; hence, the last verse of "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107), declares: "Heil Hitler, with the Führer will come freedom and bread!" (HA107, v.14). The poem "München grüßt Adolf Hitler" ("Munich Greets Adolf Hitler") (HA85) repeats this formula and also explicitly designates Hitler as the savior of the fatherland: "Adolf Hitler, die Führer zu Freiheit und Brot!" (Adolf Hitler, the savior of the fatherland!) (HA85, v.17–18). Earlier, in the second poem in the anthology, "Die Fahnen verboten" ("The Forbidden Flags") (HA14), Anacker explicitly proclaims the "Führer" to be the savior. In the first verse, Anacker describes the Weimar period as a communist and Jewish regime: "The hatred of the Reds rules, / envy of the Jews rules" (HA14, v.3–4). In the following verses, a hope for a better future can already be foreseen when Germany "rises from shame and ruins" (HA14, v.19) as "The holy Third Reich" (HA14,

6 See "Kette" ("Chain") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 180.

v.20). In the last verse, Hitler is at last named as the savior of the fatherland:

> Only Hitler will save us!
> Only Hitler will set us free! (HA14, v.23–24)

The anaphoric use of "Only Hitler" (HA14, v.23–24) emphasizes that "only" the "Führer" can bring salvation and freedom to the people and the fatherland. The sacralization of the "Führer" figure as savior is further enhanced by the fact that the allusion to "freedom" (HA14, v.8) is presented in the second verse as a "salvation" (HA14, v.8). Moreover, the people do not appear to have the founding of a new German Reich in mind, but rather want to fight "for Germany's resurrection" (HA14, v.12) by Hitler's side. Germany would then resurrect under the leadership of the new Messiah as "the holy Third Reich" (HA14, v.20).

The alleged trust in the "Führer," as the savior of the people and founder of the new German Reich, underlies the numerous expressions of loyalty to the "Führer" in Anacker's poems, in which the people are also implicated as its successors. The motif of loyalty to the "Führer" is reflected both in oaths of loyalty and in a description of the physical and sentimental expressions of this loyalty. Thus, the opening poem "Dem Führer!" ("To the Führer!") (HA11/12) ends with an oath:

> We swear it to you this day:
> Adolf Hitler, we remain loyal to you! (HA11/12, v.29–30)

In "Potsdam I" (HA93), Anacker combines this literal oath of allegiance with a description of the raising of the hand, which is understood as a physical representation of loyalty to the "Führer":

> There he twitches hot through every German heart –
> Up goes the hand that takes the oath of allegiance:
> "Sunward with Hindenburg and Hitler,
> In Potsdam's timeless young heroic spirit!" (HA93, v.9–12)

Raising the hand or arm in the "German salute" or "Hitler salute" had already appeared during the 1920s before it was later introduced in Nazi Germany as an official greeting ritual, mostly in combination with the words "Heil Hitler." Indeed, not raising one's hand could arouse suspicion of being hostile to the NSDAP and its leader.[7] In his biography of Adolf Hitler, however, Volker Ullrich claims that the use of this greeting was by no means dictated by a mere compulsion to participate but was often an expression of inner conviction (Ullrich 2013: 572). Even the literal "Heil Hitler" greeting could be interpreted in a certain sense as embodying an oath of allegiance, as the use of alternative greetings was regarded as a deviation and a provocation.[8] Anacker introduces these forms of greeting in various poems: "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107), for example, ends with "Heil Hitler, the Führer to freedom and bread!" (HA107, v.14). In "Kameraden, Tritt gefaßt!" ("As comrades, step firmly!") (HA39), Hitler is not mentioned by name, but the "Heil" formula is closely combined with his title of "Führer":

> Comrades, raise your hands!
> Let our voices roar like a thunderous choir:
> Hail to the Führer! Hail to the flags! (HA39, v.11–13)

Not only is the literal salvation formula connected with the physical expression of loyalty of the Hitler salute, the meaning of the oath of allegiance is also intensified with a hyperbole in "thunder [...] like a thunderous choir" (HA39, v.12). The fact that the oath of allegiance became a quasi-religious act is illustrated in the poem "Aufsteigen, du Jahr der deutschen Schicksalswende!" ("Arise, You the Year in which Germany's Fate shall Change!") (HA24), with: "We raise our hands to the

7 See "Deutscher Gruss" ("German Greeting") in Schmitz-Berning 2000: 141–142.
8 See "Heil Hitler" in ibid., 301.

holy oath" (HA24, v.4). By using the adjective "holy," Anacker characterizes the oath of allegiance by likening it to something superhuman.

In "Durchs Brandenburger Tor!" ("Through the Brandenburg Gate!") (HA69), the "oath" (HA69, v.12) is also accompanied by a salute, raising the hand. Furthermore, Anacker adds quotation marks here – as he did in "Potsdam I" (HA93) – as a way of substantiating the loyalty of the people to the "Führer" as an allegedly verbatim quote:

> Again, call and song swell to the elemental choir:
> To the guide we raise our hand in hot luck.
> Oh, how it burns eye to eye, transfigured by holy light!
> And every look is like an oath: "We stand in loyalty and duty!
> We know only one vow and one will:
> We follow you, Adolf Hitler, until Germany is free and great!" (HA69, v.9–14)

With a hyperbole, Anacker emphasizes that the people "know only one vow and one will" (HA69, v.13) and that "Adolf Hitler" will be "followed" "until Germany is free and great" (HA69, v.14) again. The "Führer" is thus again explicitly connected with the idea of freedom and, in this sense, implicitly characterized as the savior of the people. This oath of allegiance – besides the raising of the hand – is also emphasized by mentioning other physical signs. Not only can loyalty to the "Führer" be recognized in words, but it can also be perceived in a "look" (HA69, v.12). Loyalty to the leader is therefore not only presented in precise terms, but it also finds expression in sentimental formulations. As Anacker writes in "Heraus zu neuem Kampf" ("Off to a New Struggle") (HA31), "Der Führer kann auf uns verlassen" ("The Führer can count on us") (HA31, v.13), and in "Am Abend des 5. März" ("On the Evening of March 5") (HA76), a religious feeling is awakened with the expression "sich bekennen zu" (to confess, profess). The "Führer" is not only followed for rational reasons, but he also occupies a special place "in the heart" (HA107, v.1) of his followers, as is also expressed in the poem "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107). In this poem, emphasis is especially placed on the unconditional nature of discipleship, as demonstrated in "We followed you blindly and with a stormy urge" (HA107, v.11). The fact that "dir" (you) (HA107, v.11) undoubtedly refers to the "Führer" is explained again in the last verse of this poem in "Heil Hitler" (HA107, v.14). In "Treue!" (HA27), the symbol of the heart appears again as a technique to intensify the meaning:

> The heart always beats the same for
> The Führer, for the Reich. (HA27, v.7–8)

Since the Middle Ages, the heart has become more and more a symbol of love, both in the profane and religious sense, in that it has been considered to represent the connection, the covenant, through which man or man and the divine are tied.[9]

4. The Divine Nature of the "Führer"

Besides Anacker's explicit portrayal of Hitler as the "savior" or "liberator" of the people, which appears several times in his poems, the "Führer" also seems to possess superhuman, even possibly God-like qualities. The children and the animals in the poem "Adolf Hitler als Mensch" ("Adolf Hitler as a Human Being") (HA108), which is the opening poem of the anthology, symbolize, even typify, the belief in the superhuman work of the "Führer." Since time immemorial, children and animals have been considered "irreplaceable in their unbiased judgment" and have been "regarded as indicators of supernatural forces in their behavior (Schmidt 2007: 109).

> As children proclaim it with radiant happiness
> That meet with him somewhere,

9 See "Herz" ("Heart") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 153.

Animals with their mute look
Bless his calm benevolence. (HA108, v.5–8)

The fact that the "calm benevolence" (HA108, v.8) of the leader is "proclaimed" by the children and even "bless[ed]" by the animals once again explicitly highlights the religious or superhuman qualities of the "Führer."

Highlighted to special effect, Schmidt has also interpreted the voice of the "Führer" as part of his superhuman work (2007: 109). Not only does Hitler convey his ideological conviction in an appropriate and rational manner, he suggests, but his message is also conveyed in "Und ihr habt doch gesiegt!" (HA86) as a "wonderful word" (HA86, v.1), whereby the alliteration of the letter 'W' accentuates the essence of wonder and wonderful and places it in the foreground. With this focus on his voice, Anacker also addresses the belief in the omnipresence of the "Führer" as an essential messianic characteristic. As in the opening poem "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12), Anacker describes how Hitler's "voice" "sounds in the eternal choir" (HA11/12, v.9). By presenting the voice in "Adolf Hitler im Rundfunk" ("Adolf Hitler on the Radio") (HA83) as "penetrating everywhere" (HA83, v.3) and as an "invocation" (HA83, v.4), Anacker uses a predicative strategy to emphasize the omnipresence and superhuman aspect of his voice.

Adolf Hitler on the Radio (HA83)
Once we had to travel far through the Gaue,
To hear the Führer only once.
Now his voice penetrates everywhere,
Stirring in hot conjuring.

He speaks of Germany, of Germany alone,
Of targets that seemed distant;
He admonishes us to complete his work
In Frederick's service.

Millions hear him, serious and silent
In their deeper listening –
Rushing through the people who seek freedom,
Like the flow of a holy spring!

The first verse pinpoints the description of the alleged omnipresence of the voice of the "Führer." Whereas in the past – expressed in "Once" (HA83, v.1, line 1) – the people had to make a special effort to hear the "Führer" and his voice, "Now" (HA83, v.1, line 3), by contrast, his voice penetrates everywhere. In the second verse, the three aspects of National Socialism as a messianic movement come together. Thus, it is not only the notion of the messenger, whose voice expresses quasi-magical qualities with words such as "stirring" and "invoking" (HA83, v.4), but also the message and the idea of movement that are stressed. Here, the "Führer" speaks "of Germany alone" (HA83, l.5), where the meaning and importance of collective identity in the image of "Germany" are accentuated by means of repetition. Furthermore, the "Führer" calls his followers to be "the completion of the work" (HA83, l.7), which implies and indeed requires their active participation in its foundation, as we are reminded in the poem "Die Fahnen verboten" (HA14), which was also evoked by National Socialism in its concept of "resurrection." The third verse intensifies the omnipresence of the voice by using a hyperbole to accentuate the effect intended: that it is not only the people in the immediate vicinity who hear it but "millions" (HA83, v.9). In "Steig' auf, du Jahr der deutschen Schicksalswende!" ("Rise, You Year of the German Turn of Fate!") (HA24), Anacker uses a similar intensifying strategy by using a hyperbole in his claim that the entire "world listens to our Führer's words" (HA24, v.14). The voice here also seems to create a certain effect on the listeners, as they seem to be "more deeply moved" (HA83, v.10) by his message. As seen in the first verse, the voice in the last line is also assigned quasi-supernatural properties when represented as "Rushing [...] like the flow of a holy spring" (HA83, v.12).

In "Sieg der Treue" ("Victory of Loyalty") (HA89), Anacker describes Hitler's message neither as "wonderful" nor as a fresh breeze, but instead makes an explicit comparison with a "flash of lightning," literally, an "ignited beam of weather" (HA89, v.4):

Thirteen years ago, in this very hall,
The great Genesis began:
Here for the first time the Führer threw
Like a flash of lightning
His iron ideas to the people. (HA89, v.3–5)

In many cultures, lightning (and thunder) is understood as a symbol of the presence and power of a god. Thus, in ancient mythology, a flash of lightning is attributed to the god or "father" of the gods, Zeus or Jupiter.[10] In Luke's Gospel, the return of Jesus Christ is also associated with lightning: "For as the lightning, flashing from one part of heaven, lights up the other, so it shall be with the Son of Man when his Day comes" (Lk. 17:24). In this poem, Hitler is presented as having exposed or "thrown" his ideas or "thesis" to the people "thirteen years ago" (HA89, v.1) in the same way as Zeus: in a flash of lightning.

5. The "Führer" as Savior and Redeemer

The end of the period of struggle of the 1920s, and with it the prophecy of freedom, is invariably connected with the rise of the NSDAP in general and with the "Führer" in particular. As indicated earlier, in the poem "Preußens Erhebung" ("The Rise of Prussia") (HA67/68), Anacker uses the swastika as a symbol of hope for salvation or indeed as a symbol of salvation itself. In a majority of the poems, however, the "Führer" himself functions as a symbol of hope through the poet's depiction of him as a savior or liberator. The verb "to redeem," placed in connection with the word "Führer," also confers a quasi-messianic aura to the poem in "flags [...] adorned with Pentecostal wreathes" (HA115):

Now finally after a time of darkness, we can
Rejoice in the future again,
And the flags, dedicated to the dead,
Redeemed by the Führer, liberated by the Führer,
Are adorned with Pentecostal wreathes. (HA115, v.11–15)

Besides the verb "liberate," Anacker also makes use of the highly religious connotation of the verb "redeem" and relates this to the symbol of the flag. The annual consecration of national flags, with Hitler touching the so-called "bloody flag," interpreted as a quasi-religious act in the form of a "consecration" of the flags, was examined in greater detail by Herybert Menzel in his analysis of "people" in the anthology. In "Die erwachte Nation" ("The Awakened Nation") (HA79), Anacker takes up the verb "redeem" again, although in this poem it remains unclear what exactly was intended by "the Führer's act of redemption" (HA79, v.10). Even though Anacker did not use the word "redeemer" as a noun in his poetry, Knoche believes that the word "redeemer" is implied or at least indirectly referred to, without being specifically named. In his opinion, the adjective "redeemed" (or "saved") retains an undeniably religious connotation (Knoche 1969: 20–21).

The references to salvation and "Heil" ("Hail") that Anacker employs in poems such as "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107) and "Kameraden, Tritt gefaßt" ("Comrades, Tread Firmly!") (HA39) can also be characterized as messianic. However, while the first association that the word "salvation" triggers, in the minds of most Germans today, is the so-called German salute, the notion of salvation did not make its entry into German history only through the Nazis. Rather, it underwent a profound transformation. Sabine Behrenbeck, in her contribution to the concept of "salvation" in the German collective memory, describes how the NSDAP did not reinvent this greeting – as with many other aspects in its propaganda. Rather, the greeting had been used for much longer in sports associations (like the 'Gut Heil' in the Turner Movement of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn) and as a toast among students. Many national or patriotic movements

10 See "Gewitter/Blitz und Donner" ("Thunderstorm/Lightning and Thunder") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 129.

also adopted the salute, and in Austria it even became a form of patriotic greeting among those who identified themselves collectively as "all Germans." Behrenbeck claims that in the early days of the party, the Sturmabteilung (SA) assemblies of the NSDAP did not have a specific salute of its own, but rather followers often responded with salutations of approval after speeches. From late 1922 onwards, Hitler often concluded his speeches with formulas such as "Heil euch!" or "Heil Deutschland." The party is therefore seen as having followed in the tradition of other national or patriotic circles. From this, the Hitler salute gradually developed, on the one hand carrying the meaning of "Save us, Hitler!" and, on the other, expressing a desire for a healthy and strong leader. In any case, the salute is seen as having adopted a characteristic close to a profession of faith (Behrenbeck 2005: 310–314). Nonetheless, the idea of salvation still reflects Christian tradition.

In the New Testament, the realization of salvation is exclusively bound to Jesus Christ and refers to all forms of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual need. Jesus Christ is understood to be at the center of a universal history that runs from the creation of the world to its completion in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God means liberation from sickness and suffering, salvation from immediate dangers in life, reconciliation with God, and resurrection and eternal life (ibid., 316).

With the Hitler salute, however, "salvation" is connected not so much with Jesus as with the "Führer," a stance that again confers and reinforces this messianic quality attributed to the "Führer."

> You taught us to kneel
> Before the high altar of the Fatherland, (HA11/12, v.22–23)

In Anacker's opening poem, Hitler is characterized as a "teacher," as Jesus Christ was. The kneeling posture, adopted in prayer, is primarily recognized in religious contexts as a means of inculcating an attitude of prayer and a symbolic expression of surrender and devotion. Hitler, by extension, also appears to have taught this very precise, physical expression of prayer. In doing so, he followed the example of Christ, just as, according to the evangelists Matthew and Luke, Jesus taught his disciples to pray (see Mt. 6:9–13; Lk. 11:1–4). Indeed, the Lord's Prayer is still recited today as the central prayer belonging to all the various Christian denominations.

In the same poem, the suffering aspect of messianism is also addressed. In the first verse, the time before Hitler's rise is described as "a single sacrificial course" (HA11/12, v.3), a time when people fought and waited in silence for him (HA11/12, v.1–2). Also, in "We All Carry your Image in our Hearts" (HA107), the period is presented as an unfortunate era, with the poet's reference to "You preceded us in years of suffering" (HA107, v.3). The analogy with the suffering Christ, however, is explained further in "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12):

> But you lived the most painful thing for us;
> You were the one who waited most of all:
> You tore up the orders grown weary. (HA11/12, v.6–8)

The description of the "Führer" here is reminiscent of the New Testament story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. This story is related by three of the four evangelists: Mark, Matthew, and Luke. They recount how Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with his disciples after the Last Supper. Jesus knows that pain and death await him over the next few days – his last 'sacrificial walk,' so to speak – and he becomes afraid. He asks his disciples to stay awake and pray with him, but they all fall asleep. In Mark and Matthew, Jesus turns no less than three times to find his disciples sleeping, asking them again to watch and pray with him (Mk. 14:32–42; Mt. 26:36–46; Lk. 22:40–46). With the words "der Wachste" ("the one who is the most awake of all") (HA11/12, v.7) and "die Müdegewordnen" (the people who have "grown weary") (HA11/12, v.8), Anacker seems to refer indirectly to this story, again using the substantive as

a strategy of allusion to the expectations of the people, their waiting and having grown tired of the current situation. The triple repetition, as well as the use of anaphora in the personal pronoun "you," also seems to support this hypothesis.

In the Old Testament prophecies, the Messiah is characterized as the (re-) builder of the temple. In the second book of the prophet Samuel, we are told: "He will build a house for my name and I will give eternal existence to his royal throne" (2 Sam. 7:13). The prophet Zechariah also writes, "and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Here is a man whose name is Branch; for where he is, there will be a branching out, and he will rebuild the temple of the Lord'" (Zech 6: 12). Although Anacker did not portray Hitler as the temple builder, he plays on this theme in "Dem Führer!" (HA11/12), in which he alludes to this. Here, not only does Hitler establish "the foundation of the Third Reich" (HA11/12, v.16), but he also taught the people to kneel "before the High Altar of the Fatherland" HA11/12, v.23), where the metaphor of the "high altar" invokes and emphasizes the association with the building of the temple. In "The People Have Spoken" (HA77), the association with the temple is absent, but Anacker nonetheless characterizes the "Führer" as the "builder of the empire" by adding the reference in apposition (HA77, v.15) after his name:

> But then begins the mighty construction,
> And he finds no equal on earth ...
> Let the towers rise into the eternal blue,
> As it proclaims in a show of glory
> Adolf Hitler – the builder of the Reich! (HA77, v.11–15)

This "kingdom," which is explicitly described as "holy" (HA14, v.20) in the poem "The Flags Forbidden" (HA14), for example, is also raised to the realms of sacred, where the reader can find "nothing like it on earth" (HA77, v.12). Thus, not only does the "kingdom" appear metaphorically as a "kingdom of God," but the "Führer" himself, as the "builder-owner," also appears as superhuman.

Another similarity with the biblical Messiah is found in the allegory of bread. In both "Munich Greets Adolf Hitler" (HA85) and "We All Carry your Image in our Hearts" (HA107), Hitler is characterized as a liberator by the poet in his use of a predicate, "to the Führer, to freedom and to bread" (HA85, v.17; HA107, v.14), where the apposition connects the title of "Führer" with the literary symbol of "bread." The *Metzler Lexikon literarischer Symbole* describes bread as a symbol of (1) what is essential, the essence, (2) agriculture, (3) community, and (4) the bodily presence of Christ.[11] In the context of Christian religious discourse, the explanations given for the first and fourth symbols are of particular importance. The evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell of how Jesus broke bread at the Last Supper and gave it to His disciples, saying: "This is my body" (Mk. 14:22; Mt. 26:26; Lk. 22:19). The fourth evangelist, John, characterizes Jesus as "the bread of life" (Jn. 6:48) and "the living bread which came down from heaven" (Jn. 6:51). The *Metzler Lexikon literarischer Symbole* notes that the line "Give us this day our daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:11) still belongs to both the core and general stock of quotations, even in post-religious times and across different fields.[12] Bread as a collective symbol thus characterizes the "Führer" as the provider of bread, which is essential in life, and forms the basis of the connection with Christ and the Christian representation of this relationship.

Besides the literal oaths of allegiance and the description of the physical aspects of the Hitler salute, the trust or belief in the "Führer" is also expressed in other contexts, as in connection with the symbol of light or the sun. In "Wintersonnwend" ("Winter Solstice," 1931) (HA21), the "Führer" and the National Socialist swastika symbol are associated with this

11 See "Brot" ("Bread") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 55.
12 See ibid.

traditional sign of the sun by the anaphoric use of the word "upwards":

> Upwards with Hitler and the swastika!
> Upwards in the sign of the sun! (HA21, v.14–15)

This upward movement is also physically represented by the raising of the hand in the Hitler salute. In "Potsdam I" (HA93), the Hitler salute is not associated with the usual formula of salvation but with an exclamation, in which the upward movement, in the direction of the sun, is expressed in the simple expression "sunward":

> There he twitches hot through every German heart –
> Up goes the hand as it takes the oath of allegiance:
> "Sunward with Hindenburg and Hitler,
> In Potsdam's timeless young heroic spirit!" (HA93, v.9–12)

Klaus Vondung claims that the National Socialists adopted the symbolism of the sun from cosmological sun myths. In mythology, the sun is traditionally presented as a symbol of goodness, life, and power, in contrast to darkness, which represents the world of evil and death. It follows that National Socialism adopted solar symbolism as part of this good-evil polarization by identifying itself with the world of light and assigning its opponents to the world of darkness (Vondung 1971: 186).

The symbol of light has been used in opposition to darkness since ancient times and is interpreted as an attribute of the divine.[13] Similarly, Jesus Christ declared himself: "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). In the Christian tradition, the feast of light par excellence is Christmas, which commemorates the birth of Jesus.[14] The National Socialists tried to include Christmas in their own annual calendar, as shown, for example, in the Sonnet "Frontweihnacht" ("Christmas at the Front," 1931) (HA23):

> Thus, we enter the silent Christmas night celebration ...
> Lift up your eyes, people! On the horizon
> Ascends your star: the liberator approaches you, too! (HA23, v.11–13)

Although Hitler's name is not specifically mentioned in this poem, it can be assumed, with reference to the anthology as a whole, that here the "liberator" (HA23, v.13) is the "Führer." Anacker intensifies the religious connotation of the liberator in this poem by alluding twice to the feast of Christmas. The "Christnachtfeier" (HA23, v.11) is first mentioned to establish the temporal frame of this poem. Then, he takes the star symbol from the Christmas story, with which the birth of the new king, Jesus, is announced. As the evangelist Matthew writes:

> When Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea in the time of King Herod, astrologers came to Jerusalem from the East and asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have seen his star rise and have come to pay homage to him." (Mt. 2:1–2)

In Anacker's poem, a guiding "star" (HA23, v.13) also rises. Here, however, it is not the birth of Christ that is announced but the coming of the new Messiah, Adolf Hitler. The symbolism of light is thus indirectly present throughout the collective symbolism of Christmas.

6. Conclusion

The myths and symbols of National Socialism were superimposed upon those of Christian thought. The appeal to solemn ceremonies, public rituals, and apocalyptic and chiliastic thought can be found in Nazi language, which is, after all, a language of faith, piety, and devotion (Mosse 1993: 10–11). One of the major functions, as George Orwell in *1984* has it, of totalitarian language is its ideological use: "The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits of the devotees [...], but to make all other

13 See "Licht" ("Light") in ibid., 205; "Sonne" ("Sun") in ibid., 354.
14 See "Weihnachten" ("Christmas") in ibid., 418.

modes of thought impossible" (Orwell 1954: 257).

The fact that Anacker so pointedly describes the "Führer" as "Mensch" in the title of his poem, chosen by Anacker as an introduction to his anthology, raises the question of how the "Führer" was perceived by his contemporaries. Volker Ullrich also gives the title "Der Mensch Hitler" to one of the twenty-one chapters of his extensive biography of Hitler.[15] For Ullrich, the question of who Hitler was, the man who moved into the German Reichstag, the Chancellery, on January 30, 1933 at the age of only 43, is difficult to answer. He pinpoints one explanation for the difficulty encountered in the deliberate staging of Hitler in his own presentation of himself "as a politician who, completely identical with his role as leader, had renounced all private ties and pursued his historical mission alone" (Ullrich 2013: 422).

Firstly, the numerous instances of the word "Führer" and the name "(Adolf) Hitler" in Anacker's anthology, *Die Fanfare*, bear witness to the great importance of this theme in his poetry. Moreover, literary analysis has highlighted the extensive sacralization of this theme through his frequent identification of the "Führer" as a messianic figure. This messianic characterization has been substantiated through a comparison with a list of characteristics of a messiah that has been compiled. The first two phases in messianism as described by Seitschek – the waiting and hoping for the Messiah and the unconditional following of followers – were particularly accentuated, largely through a range of literal and physical oaths of allegiance. Nonetheless, that believers ascribed the role of Messiah to the "Führer" was primarily exposed through the poet's own perspective. As a National Socialist poet, Heinrich Anacker was considered a believer, at least to a certain degree. In this respect, then, his messianic characterization of the "Führer" can largely be perceived as a projection or image as conveyed by a believer. This belief in the superhuman work of the "Führer" as a Messiah and in his omnipresence has been demonstrated, principally through this sacralized voice. Finally, parallels have also been drawn with Jesus Christ as the Messiah. In Anacker's poetry, therefore, the "Führer" is perceived as having taken on a role where his teachings and his suffering were paramount, to the extent that, at times, he is explicitly described as the builder of the kingdom. Moreover, as a leader or guide, he often appears in connection with the symbols of light and bread. Like Jesus Christ, the "Führer" is characterized as a bringer of salvation.

Although this official party literature was supposed to be one propaganda device among many others and was thus meant to convince readers of the truthfulness and almightiness of the new regime, it is difficult to gauge the reception of these texts. However, in his essay "What National Socialism Has Done to the Arts," Theodor W. Adorno emphasizes the rather limited influence of Nazi art on the whole of German society. Artistic expressions such as Nazi music or Nazi poetry never really caught the attention of the majority of the German population. Nazi art, as he has it, was "limited to the most fanatic groups of the Nazi movement and never got hold of any responsible artist, nor of the bulk of the population, just as official Nazi poetry never became really popular" (Adorno 2002: 383).

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15 Religious interpretative approaches to the figure of Adolf Hitler can also be found in other biographies than that of Volker Ullrich. See for example Fest (1989: 354), Schirrmacher (2007), and Telesko (2004: 14).

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