

Second Dymphna Clark Lecture

WOMEN, HISTORY, SCIENCE AND ETHICS

Identity in Diaspora: a case study of the refugees from fascism in the 1930s

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Anne [Buttsworth] is someone I have always been a little in awe of ever since she was my school captain at Ainslie Primary. And I'm just waiting for her to remind me that my topic today is *Women, History, Science and Ethics* but I am not talking about women, science or ethics, especially not about the weekend's main topic science - unless you take science in the broader sense of meaning *knowledge* in general. But, as if in compensation, I am going to dedicate this moment to two women. Firstly, of course my mother for whom this lecture is named. I chose this particular topic because it is a part of my work she began to help me with before her death. Mum was the consummate scholar and had a formidable mind. She gave up her academic career to become a devoted wife and mother of six children but she nevertheless didn't lose sight of scholarship completely as her six books attest. The other woman to whom I dedicate this talk is Anne's late mother, Ella Buttsworth, who was left a widow in the 2nd World War and obliged to take the opposite route from my mother, the route from an 8:30 to 5 grind in the public service and yet she was still able to do a splendid job as a mother, as we all appreciate today. Nevertheless Ella, despite the impressive way she overcame her particular adversity, stands in our memory as a reminder that the costs of war are with us for life.

In recent years scholars in a variety of fields have been interested in the phenomenon of diaspora. Many have sought ways to analyse the impact on cultural, ethnic or national identity when large numbers of people from one ethnic group or country find themselves, whether by accident or design, scattered over many other countries. The classic diaspora was of course that of the Jews after they fled their homeland. But I am looking at those Germans who in the 1930s fled their homeland after Hitler came to power.

Just a bit of background. The Nazis came to power in Germany in stages over the months January to March 1933. On February the 22nd the Reichstag, the parliament building, burned down. The Nazis accused the communists of starting the fire and arrested a group that included a Dutchman and 3 Bulgarians led by Georgi Dimitrov, the Comintern leader in Berlin and conducted a famous trial against them. An international defence effort was mounted which unbelievably succeeded and most of them were acquitted. But the fire became an excuse for mass arrests and murder of leftists. 160,000 communists were arrested in the first year alone. And so people began to leave in droves, especially left inclining intellectuals and there were an awful lot of them, plus other categories of anti-fascists or people persecuted by the Nazis including of

course the Jews. Many of them were also leftists. Often had been hounded out of their positions in the universities, the arts, law or commerce.

That was the diaspora and they scattered all over the globe. Some went to other parts of Europe where German was spoken such as Prague, Vienna or Zurich, some to Belgium, Holland, Palestine or Latin America. Brecht and others went to Denmark. Some, like the famous theoreticians of literary history, Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer who were Jews, could still get academic jobs in Istanbul, a German sphere of influence, as did the famous chemist F. G. Arndt, father of A.N.U.'s Heinz Arndt and grandfather of Bettina. Very few came to Australia. At the Evian conference on 1937 about the Jews Australia refused to take any on the grounds that that would cause racial tensions. *Mutatus mutandis*, things don't change much and we had to wait for the arrival of the Dunera with a famous boatload of Jews extradited from England.

The two centres of the diaspora were Paris and Moscow. The Soviet Union was quite tough about taking in these refugees, too, and essentially accepted only Communists. Nevertheless by 1936 there were 4,600 of them living there and many more came after Austria and Czechoslovakia fell to the Nazis. But France in the mid-thirties, the time of the Popular Front an alliance of leftist and anti-fascist parties under Leon Blum, was fairly open to accepting them and there were, variously estimated, 10 -30,000 there at its height. But after Blum resigned in 1938 and Hitler began to occupy ever more of Europe and it became harder to gain entry to France and in many cases the refugees had begun to leave for America, mostly for New York or, for several leading writers, Hollywood. But Paris was always the intellectual centre of the diaspora, though many of the organizations and events there were secretly bankrolled by the Soviet Government. Moscow was also important as the place that published more texts by the diaspora than anywhere else - up to 250 titles a year in German, plus three major periodicals that were contributed to and circulated throughout the diaspora.

Although, then, the people in this diaspora were very different both ethnically and culturally than most we see in the world today, and the causes of the anti-fascist diaspora were in many cases different from those of today which sometimes are largely economic, still many of the experiences and problems are similar.

Obviously, I can't cover all of this today so I am just going to touch on a couple of general features of this exodus diaspora before going on to cover that central problem of all diasporas thinking through some notion of identity in their new and scattered locations.

The first of these, very familiar today as Australians are particularly aware, was the problem of borders. How to get across them, how to get visas to get some sort of temporary travel document or legal residence. Crossing borders was of course also a psychological and existential problem. Many agonised over whether, for instance, they should take out citizenship in the country where they happened to find refuge, and a lot of literature generated in the diaspora touches on the poignantly of crossing borders especially crossing the border of Germany recalled as a moment of both nostalgia and liberation.

But now, since it is after all the late afternoon, an anecdote, or rather a true story, about how one of the anti-fascist exiles crossed the Australian border. In 1934 the Australian branch of the international group *The Congress against War and Fascism* decided to hold a congress in Melbourne and invited as the star attraction the famous Czech born journalist Egon Erwin Kisch who came from Europe to address it. But there was a small problem: in 1920 the Immigration Act had been amended to prevent the entry of communists and anarchists and he was a communist.

He was given a visa in France but Australian officials were alerted to who he was. They decided to wait until Kisch's boat, the *Strathaird* docked in Fremantle, search his cabin, and if they found communist agitational material to deny him entry. But they didn't find it. By the time the *Strathaird* berthed in Melbourne, however, they were better prepared. Kisch was administered the infamous dictation test. Since he knew quite a few European languages they gave it to him in Scottish Gaelic. He failed and Menzies, then Attorney-General, addressed the Parliament in the words, "I declare for the third and last time that he shall not set foot on the soil of the Australian Commonwealth." The Victorian High Court dismissed an appeal lodged on Kisch's behalf and the *Strathaird* quickly pulled out of Melbourne. But a determined Kisch leapt from the ship 18 feet down to the wharf, spraining his ankle. He was gathered up and returned to the ship. However, Kisch then leapt a second time, this time breaking his leg painfully in two places. Again, he was placed on the ship and proceeded to Sydney in agony with his leg unset. In Sydney the political climate was more favourable and Evatt was an activist for the Kisch cause at the High Court. There the argument was made that Scottish Gaelic should not be considered a European language in the terms of the Immigration Act since in 1747 George II, in the aftermath of that particularly brutal battle of Culloden, had banned the language. Kisch was allowed to enter but was not able to attend the anti-fascist congress and had to agree to leave Australia promptly, but the result of this was much more publicity for the Congress, that was well-attended.

The case of Kisch provides a particularly dramatic example of travel and closed borders. Accurately it could be seen as an example of the central role played in the story of the exiles of transcending borders. And this gets at the heart of the general pattern of diaspora activity, and also at its dilemmas. The exiles were forever travelling, forever on the move. Brecht said of them, "We change countries more often than we change out shoes." But travel was not just a practice, a fact of the diaspora, it was also a **value**. Central to their ethos was the dream of a trans-national community, later as the community of the diaspora, scattered over many lands or, more idealistically, a trans-national community of those opposed to fascism, sometimes a sort of imagined international community of the left. And, indeed the members of this community were chronically on the move, whether to the interminable international anti-fascist *pow-wows*, which for the leftists were essentially a version of the *Grand Tour*, or on a visit to the Soviet Union which had become a necessary component of one's socialist upbringing. The two biggest *pow-wows* of these years were both billed as, *Congress for the Defense of Culture*, the first held in Paris in 1933 and the second held in Valencia in 1937, and in Madrid as Franco's bombs were falling all around. Australians like Nettie Palmer and Katherine Susannah Pritchard were among the many delegates. One aspect of this travelling mode among the anti-fascists was a somewhat Bohemian life style. Many of them kept mistresses, and of course every port of call offered another opportunity for another mistress. The women, though often servicing the men so to speak, were more monogamous about it.

This brings me to the one woman who I can use as a major example of the anti-fascists, the German journalist Maria Osten who became the mistress of the leading Soviet journalist Mikhail Koltsov. Koltsov was also the head of the biggest publishing conglomerate in the Soviet Union, that published newspapers, magazines, books and also the lead of the Foreign Commission of the Writers Union. Maria, thanks to this liaison, became a leading player in the anti-fascist cause and an international jet-setter. She and Koltsov might be described as international adventurers, except that they were also Soviet bureaucrats. During the Civil War Malroux had them both flown into Republican Spain illegally in a gun-running plane and there they became close friends of Hemingway who included them in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* where Kolstov features as Karkov.

But all the time Maria was administrator facilitating the trans-national fraternity of the anti-fascists. She also created, as it were, a trans-national community in miniature in her private life. In 1934 when she and Kolstov were visiting the Saar she adopted a young boy from a Communist family, Hubert, and in 1936 while she and Kolstov were travelling she plucked a baby from the smouldering ruins of a bombed house where his parents had been killed and named him Jose, or in Russian Olya, short for Joseph. Joseph guess who? This trans-national family, each of the members of which came from a different country, had no legal connection to the others, a family truly in the idealistic spirit of the anti-fascist movement, unravelled tragically in the late 30s when Kolstov was purged. Maria was then in Paris. Hubert threw out his adoptive mother but nevertheless failed to save himself and Olya from the camps. Maria, after tending the dying Margarete Steffin (one of Brecht's multiple mistresses during his Moscow visit en route for the U.S.) was herself arrested and perished.

Despite such pitfalls and setbacks to the movement, intransigent borders, lack of cash, changes of government and the Soviet purges, despite their very peripatetic existence, people of the diaspora, or more particularly its intellectual leaders, kept trying to rethink cultural identity in their new trans-national context. Given such complexities, questions of identity and allegiance were particularly fraught. How were they to define themselves? What would be their new mission? Were they to be a part of the larger, international set of anti-fascist intellectuals such as particularly emerged at the time of the Paris Congress, and therefore not specifically German? (A typical authoritative characterisation of this transnational group, after the Paris Conference, was writers of international significance like Gide, Malraux, Barbusse, Nexo, Huxley, Heinrich Mann, and Feuchtwanger.) Or were these exiled intellectuals *primarily* outcasts defenders and preservers of the true German cultural heritage? Or, again, perhaps in reality they were essentially subjects of Moscow's communist Empire.

To varying degrees the exiles might be characterised as all of the above. They belonged, simultaneously, to different groups, each defined by one of the above possibilities. The exiled intellectuals were, *negotiating*, shifting and competing forces of reality. Obviously, there were economic considerations involved as these exiles sought to continue intellectual activity in emigration. The opening up of the main German-language periodicals in the Soviet Union as outlets for the emigration enabled many to publicize their ideas and ameliorated their economic situation. At the same time the periodicals increased the economic dependence of many of them on the Soviet Union. There were other *migr* periodicals published in other major cities of Europe, but most of them struggled to continue publishing and few lasted more than a year. Contributors to the Soviet periodicals who resided overseas received their royalties in gold roubles. This made publication highly desirable to writers, most of whom were otherwise struggling.

Leon Feuchtwanger, a prolific producer of novels that mediated on the fate of the successful Jew in a range of historical periods, from Roman times through several periods of German history to the exile of the present day. The Soviets published these novels in Russian translation, giving them generous print runs, and Feuchtwanger became one of the most popular novelists in the Soviet 1930s.

Most of the intellectuals of this *group* sought to think through new versions of identity that ignored ethnic particularly and would, of course, stand in stark contrast in that regard to the platform of the Nazis, their arch-rivals as formulators of cultural identity, most were Jews but this fact rarely entered into their discussion of identity. An exception would be the exiled Jewish intellectuals including Feuchtwanger sought a secular cultural identity, essentially a secular

faith. Its mantras were foregrounded at the 1935 Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture, which, on broad terms, defined the platform of a transnational cohort of anti-fascist intellectuals for the Front years. The anti-fascist writers stood for *Reason, Humanism and Culture*; the Nazis represented, in their counterposed characterization, *Unreason* (or an obtuse irrationality not unlike that which abounded in the Middle Ages) and *barbarity (Barbarei)*. They were destroyers of culture *Kulturzerstorer*, even subhuman creatures, beasts of prey (*Raubtiere*).

But the noble ideals the anti-fascists championed - culture, humanism, reason - were all too general, as was perhaps inevitable in a tenuous alliance such as the Popular Front in culture. The challenge was to specify: which culture? Which humanism? Some paid lip service to supporting the culture of the oppressed and colonised from what was later called the Third World, some countries of which were represented at the Paris Congress, others championed a Soviet humanism which has nothing in common with bourgeois humanism. But more frequently their formations were concerned with a culture somehow related to Germanness.

A key dilemma for the anti-fascists was how to define their mission, to define that secular religion known as culture, given that they were essentially transnationals, diasporic, and stateless. It is widely believed that cultures are intrinsically incomplete and need the supplement of the state to become truly themselves. Yet Germany, which might be seen as potentially these exiles nation, the locus and guarantor of their culture, has never been a well-defined geopolitical entity, as was especially apparent when the Nazis were laying claim to the greater Germany. For these Germaphone exiles defining their own nation was particularly problematic because they formed a diaspora of individuals from different countries (Germany, Austria and to some extent Hungary and Czechoslovakia). In their efforts to transcend the *Blut und Boden* particularly and racial essentialism of Nazi culture, they constantly faced the danger of veering off into the vapid generalisation of the *Boden-less*.

One solution, for some, was to define culture and nation in terms of assimilation into Stalin's Soviet Union. Recurrently and especially in articles published in *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* and in poetry and fiction published in *Das Wort*, the exiles made declarations about how the Soviet Union was their true *Heimat*. Such psychological conflict was always available to resolution by seeing the Soviet Union as a higher-order *Heimat*, the true home of Marxism where the class struggle had been waged and won, making it, as Willi Bredel put it in a 1937 editorial for *Das Wort*, national in a higher sense. Fritz Heckert, in a 1935 article entitled 'Moscow, the Center of Communist Thought', poised an imaginary line from Trier, the birthplace of Marx, to Moscow, where the communist world of ideas gave Marx a deeper and broader reading. A more elaborate version of this kind of grafting of the German tradition onto the Soviet Union can be found in one of the most canonical sources among these *migr* publications for a definition of humanism, Alfred Kurella's 1936 'Birth of Socialist Humanism', published in *Internationale Literatur* in 1936. Kurella saw the origins of socialist humanism in a bourgeois humanism that reached its flowering in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the writings of figures like Goethe and Schiller who, in his account, urged men to return to more humane ideals of man as a counter to the politics of commerce. Then a major step forward in the understanding of humanism came with the early Marx, or more specifically with his Economic and Political Manuscripts of 1844. The manuscripts deal with the problem of alienation, and, by stressing that point in his discussion of it, Kurella was able to identify the proletariat as the bearer of true humanism and to proclaim the Soviet Union its spiritual *Heimat*.

Another problem was the assimilation, and especially linguistic assimilation, many resisted this. Most striking in this respect was Johannes Becher, the chief editor of *Internationale Literatur* from 1933 to 1945. Although he lived in an apartment building for Soviet writers, Becher refused to learn Russian because he wanted to remain German and did not want Russian to affect his work. In consequence, every morning Hugo Huppert was expected to come to him and report on events in the Soviet Union he had learned from the day's newspapers. Yet the same Becher who, at the Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture in 1935, maintained this Congress is not a world congress because such and such a number of countries have sent people to it, but rather because it expresses a world force: the best of the past has been united with the struggle of the working class we speak different languages and, despite all our divisions and differences, yes, there is something higher, binding and common to us all.

A different version of this position was presented by Theo Balk, a German delegate to the next international Congress for the Defense of Culture, held in Valencia, Madrid, and Paris in the summer of 1937 as the Spanish Civil War was in progress. My brigade, he reported, speaks 20 languages, and yet we all share an international language.

These sorts of statements appear not only quixotic but also at cross purposes with one of the heartfelt causes of the exiled German intellectuals to preserve German culture and language, saving it from the desecration and distortions of the Nazis. The Germans were trying to keep together their version of what is called a diaspora nation. Becher articulated their hopes in the very same speech to the Paris Congress. The word of writers can return those who are separated. Traditionally, Germany has reckoned the right of citizenship in terms of blood, not possession of the language. Yet the *migrs* made language the criterion for membership in the diaspora nation. In a 1937 speech that the playwright Ernst Toller made to the German *migr* community in New York, he declares:

In reality, no dictator robs a writer of his native country. The language is an organic part of the native land [Heimat], the earth that nourishes it, the earth in which it grows. An artist is responsible for the values of his culture. It is his task to awaken a spontaneous sense of humanity, freedom, justice and beauty, and to be their advocate he should not nationality but the unity of nations. As long as we *migrs* remain true to our ideas we will earn that *Deutshtum* we believe in. On your soil grew Goethe and Beethoven, Schiller and Holderlin, Bach and Buchner, Lessing and Marx.

We will note here the same problematic tension between the call of the national and that of the international that plagued the rhetoric of the entire Popular Front in culture. Significantly, perhaps, recent theoreticians of diaspora have begun to react against the shrill binarism of much postcolonial theory arguing that there is no necessary contradiction between the call of the national and what they prefer to call the call of the cosmopolitan rather than the international.

An important source for this position, a 1998 collection of articles edited by Pheng Cheuh and Bruce Robbins, is called *Cosmopolitics*, but subtitled *Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*. In his introductory letter to this article, Cheah asserts that cosmopolitanism primarily designates intellectual ethic, a universal humanism that transcends regional particularism, but now, with globalisation, cosmopolitanism is no longer merely an ideal project but a variety of actually existing practical stances. The contributors to the volume explore in different ways what it is to have complex, multiple identities, a simultaneity of attachments and memories. Others have also explored this phenomenon. Jonathan Boyarin's work on the Jewish diaspora, for example has led him to point out that it often entails, multiple experiences of *rediasporization*, which do not

necessarily succeed each other in historical memory but echo back and forth. Paul Gilroy, in his seminal 1993 work *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, analyses the black cultural tradition as historically decentered, a tradition that cannot be reduced to any national or ethnically-based origin, in part because so much of its history involves migration, exploration, interconnection, and travel.

As James Clifford points out in one of the main texts of this recent cosmopolitan trend, his 1997 *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*: [w]hatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist. Translation multi-centerdness and multiple adjacencies are all endemic to the diasporic condition, and the Germanophone refugees from Nazi Germany were no exception. But in their case de-centeredness had its limits. They needed a narrative to counterpoise to the Nazi, and a cultural identity that accommodated changed conditions, but they also needed a cultural alliance broader than their relatively small numbers could provide.

Toller's above-cited address to the German exiles in New York, quite typically for these exiles, keeps shifting positions as it seeks to accommodate these disparate purposes. It starts off with an organicist account of the German language that approaches *Blut und Boden* rhetoric, but quickly veers away to talk of those general ideals: humanity, freedom, justice and beauty - that the German artist must purvey in the service of a unity of nations. Toller then beats a partial retreat to the nationalist ideal as he invokes the ideal of *Deutschtum*, but he essentially resolves this tension by intoning the great names of the German culture (Goethe, Beethoven etc.).

Culture, and especially literature, is more portable more translatable than language as spoken speech, less mired in linguistic particularity. Doubtless this is one reason why today literature is such a concern of those who proclaim a post-postcolonialism. Its theoreticians urge that we move beyond the schematic juxtaposition of the metropolitan and the subaltern found in analyses of postcolonial literature. They suggest that we discuss the sort of literature previously called postcolonial as belonging to that more august category of world literature, where it can be seen as neither purely subaltern nor purely metropolitan and yet at the same time both. Similarly, in this earlier, Popular Front, moment literature was promoted as the force that is both grounded in the local or national, and at the same time transcends it. Thus, in the above-cited section from Becher's speech to the Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture, his assertion that we speak different languages and, despite all our divisions and differences, yes, there is something higher, binding and common to us all was preceded immediately by the words: at this Congress the unreal concept of a world literature has acquired a quite immediate and very contemporary significance.

In this Popular Front moment, it became more problematical for the anti-fascist leftists to foreground class struggle or allegiance to communism or socialism (although most of them, to varying degrees, accommodate these values in their accounts). In their place, the twin values of Culture and Literature were hypostatized into a variable secular religion that united the anti-fascists in an international movement. The Soviet writer Sergei Tretakov titled his collection of essays about the fraternity of anti-fascists people of one bonfire, *Liudi odnogo kostra*. The bonfire could be taken as a metaphor for that fire and light emanating from true literature that guides and warms, sustaining the faithful as it draws them in transnational fraternity to its flames. But actually, the bonfire here also has a more specific referent. His fraternity is of those whose literary works were burnt by the Nazis in the great book burning of 10 May 1933, a date which,

for this movement, was more of an originary moment than the Nazi ascent to power a few months earlier. As James Clifford notes in *Routes*, for diasporas a shared ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance may be as important as a projection of a specific origin or even the goal of return by the refugees, something absolutely essential for presenting the cause as a crusade. But it was a crusade of culture. The exiled writers were to rescue this fair maiden movement that was in the words of the Paris Congress title for the Defense of Culture, and it was a point of pride to have one's books burnt. One of their number, Oskar Maria Graf, had had his works consigned to the flames only selectively, and in an open letter titled *Burn Me*, he appealed to the Nazis to burn the rest.

At the centre of so much activity for and by this Moscow-centred emigration was almost sacral belief in literature, a faith shared by anti-fascists throughout the world. For a start, though their Paris Congress in 1935 was held for the Defense of Culture, it was actually a congress of writers. Thus, for example, the very same Kurella who posited a trajectory for socialist humanism through Schiller and Goethe to Marx and ultimately to the Soviet Union, wrote movingly of how he read Shiller's play in his Soviet exile and was able to conjure up to himself all his old friends and associates from Germany (several of whom had fallen victim to fascist terror) as if they were sitting together in one auditorium. As Becher had said in Paris, [t]he word of writers can return those who are separated. In Kurella's account, the tremendous impact of Schiller's play and its ability to transcend so many borders (including death) centers on the famous words by the Marquis de Posa: Give [us] freedom of thought, *Gedankenfreicht*. This was a line which the Nazis cut of the text in Germany because it elicited so much applause but they cut it out in vain, because audiences began to applaud at the moment when those words should have been said.

Pierre Bourdieu and others have written of literature as a form of cultural capital. But in the exiles case it arguably had more to do with legitimisation. This could be seen as an exploration for the ubiquitous, ritual incantations in the exiles' speeches and writings of lists of great writers or great books (such as we saw in the above-cited quotation from Toller's speech in New York). The claim to stand for true literature was, in the logic of their position, also a claim to stand for the true Germany. While the exiles saw themselves as producing and revering great literature, they saw the Nazis as purveyors of trash, *Leserfrass*.

What, then, is world literature? Is it a hybrid comprising titles from different cultures? Is it a literature which happens to have a transnational readership, or is it, defined more ambitiously, a world-historical literature, by analogy with Hegel's world-historical hero? Is it in some way a literature whose authors have divined the essential for that time, or even for all time, so that they rise above [their] prosaic particularity through the transfigurative power of art, to become the bearer[s] of a universal humanity? As is clear from Toller's New York address, and his formulations there were typical of these exiles, the Germaphone intellectuals aspired to the latter. What we find on the pages of the various anti-fascist journals is a new, or perhaps more accurately revised, transnational canon of great literature and a new sense of the relationship of the local canon to the transnational. Most of the exiles wrote of world literature, but the latter term was, de facto, synonymous with European literature. The choice of which texts to favour within European literature was largely a function of the political realities of the times. Most articles implicitly or explicitly saw culture in terms of a consensual canon of European literary works, most of which were French or German, with more Spanish authors added as the Civil War intensified. The great authors of classical Greece and Rome were not particularly evident and, with the exception of Shakespeare, English writers were rarely listed, let alone Americans (other than, occasionally, established leftists such as Theodore Dreiser or Mike Gold). French, or

rather Romance literature in general, was the preoccupation of many exiled German theoreticians of literature at this time.

Most German *migr* intellectuals, in seeking models from their own culture to guide them in an uncertain present (and to counterpoise to the models of the Nazis), promoted an edited version of a particular strand of the German cultural tradition that could be construed as both national and cosmopolitan. Inasmuch as it was first introduced by Goethe, world literature, the recurrent slogan, indeed ideal, was an idea that conveniently could be taken as representing the German tradition or even as showing Germans to be pioneers in cultural internationalism. But world literature was an ambiguous concept, even for Goethe, who to some extent promoted it in the context of his successes in getting his works published in other (European) countries.

A reflected account of the German literary tradition was presented fairly systematically to foreground the ideals of humanism, justice and above all world literature. Many of the German anti-fascist journals had a special section on cultural heritage in which the writings of some earlier German figure, generally in abridged, and therefore edited, form was presented, with an introductory article, as a model for thinking about cultural identity in the exiles present situation. The focus was on a group of writers who published between the second half of the 18th century and approximately 1831 or 1832 (the year of Hegel's and Goethe's deaths, respectively). This is a period that within Germany embraces the late Enlightenment and early Romanticism. Its principal figures, such as Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Herder, Hegel, the brothers Alexander and Wilhem von Humboldt, and their perceived heirs from later years, such as Holderlin[?], differed among themselves in many ways in their accounts of German cultural identity, but they are generally classified as progressive nationalists. As such, they contrasted with the kind of nationalism that characterised Bismarck and the German state after unification. An important feature of this group is that it defined nation by language and culture. In fact, many of them set their accounts of German cultural identity off against the tyrannical and autocratic regimes then in power in the various principalities of Germany at that time. In the pre-unification period these German writers had no all-powerful German nation to oppose, but neither did they have one with which to identify. Thus, their writings had particular resonance for the Germans in exile trying to define Germanness outside any specific geographical boundaries or divisions to define diaspora nationhood, some by invoking the concept of *Kulturnation* that in its genesis goes back to Wieland in the late Enlightenment.

Curiously, the new proponents of a post-postcolonialist cosmopolitanism, many of whom represent diasporas from Africa or Asia, sometimes also discuss this concept in terms of the writings of Kant and Fichte, more specifically in terms of Kant's essays *Idea Toward a Universal History in a Cosmopolitan Respect* (1784) and *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project* (1796), and Fichte's *Address to the German Nation* of 1808. Cheah, for example, writing in his introduction to *Cosmopolitics*, points out that both Kant and Fichte wrote at a time that Europe was made up of absolutist dynastic states, the popular national state did not exist, and the doctrine of nationalism had not yet been fully articulated. Consequently, he argues, even when, as in these cases, cosmopolitanism is diluted in its usage to designate a universally normative concept of culture identified with culture with the culture of a certain ethnolinguistic people it is still compatible with nationalism because the national culture in question is not yet bonded to the territorial state and can be accorded world historical importance without being imperialistic.

The German exiles *Kulturerbe* did not often extend to Kant, but for them Fichte's *Address to the German Nation*, proved a grateful text. Like Toller in his New York speech, it stresses the

groundedness of the German language in its soil and folk, yet saw within the German tradition and the history of the development of the German language great potential for a true cosmopolitanism whereby Germans might become world citizens of the spirit.

This spirit however tended to prefer to waft around some cultural traditions more than others. On the pages of the early journals during the years of the Popular Front, the *Kulturbere* is presented more frequently in terms of a Franco-German particularly in discussions of literature. It is doubtless that for this reason that, for example, among Goethe's works, *Hermann und Dorothea*, which includes the French Revolution in its purview of Germanness, was cited more on the pages these journals than his major works such as Faust.

The privileged position that the philosophers and the French Revolution in these exiles account of the *Kulturbere* presents an act of casuistry. They largely edited out the fact that the favored group of German writers and thinkers from the late 18th and early 19th centuries that were featured on the pages of these journals opposed the Francomania of the German establishment and gentry of their time. Many of them were even ambivalent towards the French Revolution, hardly a useful fact for those who hoped to use their writings as the basis for an international culture centered around a Franco-German axis.

Thus, these journals promoted a version of that ideal of world or European literature even in their pious excavations into the *Kulturerbe*. They deftly revised the period of German *Geist*, highlighting the way writers from the disparate German principalities yearned for a German nation but were but were inspired in this very yearning by the French philosophers and the revolution that those philosophers had helped mastermind. This provided an allegorical model for their own position as exiles scattered over disparate lands in a diaspora, but most often looking to some kind of socialist model for their country of origin.

The weighting that at any particular moment an individual writer of this emigration gave to *Deutschtum*, to France, to Europe, or to the Soviet spiritual Heimat was one of the many variables balanced in the struggle to define cultural identity at a time of multiple crises. In response to the crises they tended to formulate their identity in some Eurocentric version of the trans-national. Today world literature has lost its Eurocentric focus almost completely. But the problem of negotiating a diasporic identity remains.