I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941 Study Guide

I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941 by Victor Klemperer

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Introduction

Victor Klemperer wrote his diaries during the twelve years of Hitler's rule. The English version of *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941* was published in New York by Random House in 1998 (with a second volume covering the years 1942-1945), but the diaries have an interesting history. After Klemperer's death in 1960, his diaries were taken to the Dresden State Library. Walter Nowojski, a former student of Klemperer's, found them and, recognizing their historical value, typed the handwritten diaries in German. Finally, a small Berlin publisher agreed in 1995 to publish the manuscripts in German as a single volume covering the years 1933 to 1945. Klemperer's diary quickly became a bestseller despite its length (1,500 pages) and price (well over sixty dollars).

The diary is considered important as a detailed account of the spread of Nazism in Germany and the reception of Nazi ideals by the population. It represents the unusual perspective of a Jew throughout all twelve years of Nazi power. The diary's unique contribution to the field of Holocaust literature is its step-by-step presentation of the systematic dehu-manization and persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany.

Some readers focus on the fact that Klemperer knew Germans who were sympathetic to him as a Jew at a time when it was unpopular to be so. Others hold the diary up as evidence that the horrors of the Holocaust were widely known at the time, an issuethat has been sharply debated over the years. Regardless of the reader's or scholar's interpretation of the diary, its important historical value is universally recognized.

Author Biography

Victor Klemperer was born October 9, 1881, in Landsberg-on-the-Warthe in the province of Brandenburg, Germany. Klemperer was the youngest in a family of three other brothers and four sisters. When Klemperer was nine, the family moved to Berlin, where his rabbi father, Wilhelm, was summoned to a liberal Reform Synagogue. As an unorthodox rabbi, Wilhelm was supportive of his four sons converting to the national religion, Luther-anism, in adulthood.

Klemperer married a concert pianist named Eva in 1906. His brothers disapproved of the union because they thought Eva was their brother's social inferior. As for Eva's family, some of her relatives disapproved of her marrying a Jewish man. During World War I, he served as a cannoneer in the German army, earning a Distinguished Service Medal. This service, along with his marriage to an Aryan woman, protected him from deportation to the concentration camps that sealed the fates of millions of Jews during Hitler's rule.

Upon returning from his service in World War I, Klemperer worked for a few years as a freelance journalist. In 1920, he accepted a position at Dresden Technical University as a professor of Romance languages and literature. He occupied this position until 1935, when he was forced to retire. After World War II, he was reinstated.

From the age of seventeen, Klemperer kept a detailed diary of his life. He continued writing during the Nazi years, despite knowing that if the Nazis discovered his diary, he would be killed. The exercise of writing his thoughts and interpretations of changing Germany was a necessary outlet for him, and it was also his personal brand of heroism. He was determined to "bear witness" to the horrors he saw, no matter the risk.

At the beginning of 1945, Klemperer was one of only 198 registered Jews still in the entire city of Dresden, all of whom were still free because of their marriages to Aryan spouses. On February 13, all Jews who were deemed fit to work were to report for deportation in three days. This meant that their "privileged" status would come to an end. Klemperer knew this was a death sentence, so when the Allies bombed the city that very evening, he and Eva took advantage of the chaos and escaped Dresden. Eva tore the yellow star from his clothing, and they kept running for three months until it was safe. After the war, the couple returned to Dresden, and Klemperer joined the Communist Party.

Klemperer died of a heart attack while attending a conference in Brussels, Belgium, in 1960, nine years after Eva's death. His diaries were taken to the Dresden State Library where one of Klemperer's former students found them and, recognizing their historical value, began transcribing them for publication. The diary was a bestseller in Germany, and critics generally voice their hope that the diary will be as widely read in its English translation.

Plot Summary

Chapter One: "1933"

In *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941*, Klemperer begins by writing of day-to-day cares and his efforts to make progress on building a small house on the plot of land he and his wife have purchased in Dolzschen, just outside Dresden. Although Klemperer finds the house to be worrisome, his wife is desperate for it, so he wants to see it built for her sake.

Klemperer and Eva suffer from a variety of aches and pains. Because of Eva's declining health, Klemperer often does the domestic chores in addition to working as a lecturer at Dresden Technical University. He is a professor of Romance languages and literature, but the Third Reich's influence threatens his position.

The Klemperers are social people, frequently entertaining guests and visiting friends' homes. Hitler's regime sends waves of fear into every corner of their lives, and they express their uncertainty about the future. Klemperer identifies himself strongly with Germany and is outraged at the rise of the current "un-German" regime. Even though he no longer adheres to the Jewish faith, the regime sees anyone who is one-quarter Jewish by descent to be a Jew, and the restrictions are already beginning.

Chapter Two: "1934"

Because Klemperer fought at the front in World War I and because he is married to an Aryan (of Indo-European descent), he is protected from the fate of most other German Jews. He continues to worry about Eva, who is both sick and depressed. The only thing that energizes her is gardening on the land in Dolzschen.

In addition, Klemperer's outlook is grim regarding his career, his health, and their financial situation. The house is expensive, and they have only begun landscaping and building the cellar. A much-needed break comes in July when a friend is able to loan them money for their house.

Gradually, the Klemperers' friends begin to seek ways to leave Germany. This sickens Klemperer because he feels completely devoted to his country, especially as it suffers the shame of the Nazi regime.

Klemperer works slowly on his book about French literature and also begins a new study about the Third Reich's use of language.

Chapter Three: "1935"

Klemperer is officially dismissed by the university, which causes him great worry because "retirement" income is half what he has been making. He begins looking for positions in other countries but has no luck. Having no other choice, he writes to his brother and asks for a loan, which is granted.

When the restrictive Nuremberg Laws are enacted, further stripping Jews of their rights, more of the Klemperers' friends move out of the country.

Klemperer enrolls in driving classes so that he will have better mobility, especially since Eva's health leaves her too weak to walk.

Chapter Four: "1936"

Klemperer passes his driving test and purchases an inexpensive car. Although he enjoys the freedom of a car, he finds that it creates a new set of worries. Eventually, he learns to relax and take pleasure in his and Eva's drives. Unfortunately, as the year progresses, his money problems prevent him from driving very often.

Meanwhile, Klemperer makes slow progress on his writing projects. In October, he encounters an obstacle when he is told at the library that Jews are no longer allowed in the reading room. Instead, he will have to take with him whatever books he needs.

To Klemperer's surprise, there are a few Germans who go out of their way to be kind to him because they are sympathetic to the plight of the Jews.

Chapter Five: "1937"

Klemperer is distraught at the news of the deaths (by illness and suicide) of some of his friends. To add to Klemperer's hopelessness, he becomes even more pessimistic about the political situation in Germany. He fears that Hitler will remain in power for a very long time.

Klemperer makes progress on his French literature book and his language study. While both he and Eva suffer from repeated bouts of illness, he also begins to experience harassment, as when an official checks his garden for weeds and forces him to pay a hefty fine.

Chapter Six: "1938"

Klemperer's hopelessness about the reign of the Third Reich becomes more and more pronounced, and he feels certain he will not live to see a neworder. To make matters worse, anti-Semitism mounts, and Jews are barred from certain occupations.

Policemen visit Klemperer, asking if he has any weapons. When he answers that he probably has his saber and bayonet from World War I, they search the house until they find the saber, though not the bayonet. Klemperer is taken into custody, not formally charged with anything, and released a few hours later.

Chapter Seven: "1939"

The Klemperers experience severe depression and ongoing health problems. Klemperer progresses with his work on the literature book, but it is slow. His plans to write a study of the language of the Third Reich are progressing, and he notes his observations on the topic.

Rations and restrictions on purchases make it difficult for Klemperer to secure all of the goods he and Eva need. Although shopkeepers claim there are shortages, Klemperer suspects otherwise.

Someone tries to assassinate Hitler by setting off a bomb. Because the perpetrator is a Jewish man, Klemperer expects the worse for himself and waits for the police to come get him, but they do not.

Chapter Eight: "1940"

The Klemperers receive terrible news that they must surrender their house and allow someone to rent or buy it. Because of Klemperer's Jewish status, he and his wife are forced to live in a Jewish ghetto called the Jews' House. They find a tenant, Berger, whom they like, and make the deal they are ordered to make.

The Klemperers find the Jews' House cramped, chaotic, and stark, but they try to make the best of it. While not particularly fond of many of the other people living there, they remain friendly for the sake of solidarity. Klemperer notes that the one good thing that has come from moving to the Jews' House is that Eva has learned to enjoy walking again.

More restrictions are placed upon Jews; they are no longer allowed to enjoy public parks or lending libraries. They are also subject to a curfew of eight o'clock, after which they must remain in their ghetto apartments.

Chapter Nine: "1941"

Klemperer inadvertently violates a blackout (leaving the window curtains open during a bombing raid) and is sentenced to eight days in prison. During his stay, he finds that time moves very slowly, and he feels that he is trapped in a dismal cage. Above him, he hears another prisoner pacing back and forth for hours at a time. Prisoners are not allowed to converse during outdoor exercise times, and every rule comes with a threat

of punishment. When he is released, he feels such relief that he is actually happy for a few days.

The most humiliating blow comes when the Jews are instructed to wear identifying yellow stars. Klemperer dreads the day this policy goes into effect, and afterwards Eva does the shopping and other public chores. Klemperer's sense of shame is profound, and he feels that this experience is worse than his prison stay. His only comfort is that the star identifies him to Germans who are sympathetic: He goes to the market and receives produce he would not otherwise be able to secure.

Klemperer writes that there are shocking and terrifying reports of Jews being transported to Poland. All he knows is that they must go with only the clothes on their backs and without any possessions. In world news, Japan declares war on the United States.

When the Nazis plan an inventory of all Jews' household items, Eva must remove Klemperer's diary from their apartment at once. They take it to a friend's house where it will be much safer.

'1933'

'1933' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1933 aggregate forty-six pages and fifty-one entries, including: one entry for February; two entries for January and May; four entries for June, August, September, and October; five entries for July, November, and December; seven entries for April; and eight entries for March.

Victor Klemperer, the diarist, is a Jew who has converted to Protestantism and is married to a non-Jewish 'Aryan' wife, Eva. Klemperer served in the German armed forces during World War I and spent time on the front-line during combat before becoming sick and invalided home. Klemperer is somewhat alarmed when the Nazi party takes power in January as a result of a valid national election; Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany in late January and his vitriolic anti-Semitic rhetoric immediately comes to the forefront of national politics. Throughout the remainder of 1933, Klemperer finds the national political situation to be vague and confusing. Most media outlets are limited to essentially propagandistic articles and they often carry news pieces written by Nazi party officials. While several 'left' newspapers continue to print real news, most mainstream papers begin to parrot the official party-line interpretation of events. Coupled with the poor economic climate of the times, the Nazi party ascendance leads to many demonstrations and assemblies taking place around the nation. Many people, particularly Catholics, Communists, and Jews, are discharged from their employment. Boycotts of Jewish-supplied goods and services become fairly frequent, although they appear to remain on a predominantly local level. The government uses various subtle methods to harass Jews and other so-called undesirables.

Klemperer notes that many Catholics, Communists, and Jews with considerable wealth or internationally desirable skills emigrate from the country; meanwhile, those who remain behind face, as a group, massive job loss, and constant hazing. Klemperer notes that writing letters and making telephone calls becomes politically dangerous for Jews, Catholics, and Communists; thus, families and friends begin rapidly to lose track of each other. Many of the entries for 1933 dwell on Klemperer's existing theory of national characteristics—that is, he feels there is a definitive and essential 'German' national character that will ultimately repudiate the hatred and anti-Semitism of Hitler and the Nazis. As the year progresses, Klemperer begins to question his theory of national characteristics.

Eva, Victor Klemperer's wife, is reported as being infirm and sickly on a nearly daily basis. She appears to suffer from nervousness and depression. Nevertheless, her actions are reported as often being fairly physical. Throughout the diary, the contrast of Eva's reported physical activity level and Klemperer's portrayal of her as nearly an invalid is notable. Eva's birthday is July 13, 1882, Victor's is October 9, 1881; the Klemperers are thus between 52 and 61 during the period covered by volume one of the

diary. Eva apparently feels trapped and isolated, living in an apartment in the urban center of Dresden, and the Klemperer's have purchased an empty lot in the suburb of Dtzlzschen. Although Klemperer holds severe doubts about his ability to pay for home construction, Eva is determined to have a house built on the lot. Thus, throughout the end of 1933, the Klemperers hire workers to build a fence around the entire lot and then pay to have them excavate a cellar.

'1934'

'1934' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1934 aggregate fifty-eight pages and sixty-two entries, including three entries for April, May, June, July, and December; four entries for March; six entries for January, February, August, and November; eight entries for October; and eleven entries for September.

Throughout 1934, many Jews immigrate to Palestine. The stringent Palestinian immigration policies, however, require a potential immigrant to demonstrate a considerable financial net worth; this puts Palestine beyond the reach of many Jews. Nazi centralization of power and rhetoric continues throughout the year and their ideology becomes pervasive. Klemperer notes that many—he claims most—of his 'Aryan' associates and friends are anti-Nazi, but nevertheless remain quiet and subservient, which rears some political backlash. Meanwhile, many Jews accept the Nazis, much to Klemperer's amazement, and feel that as soon as the Nazi's anti-Semitic program is fully established, life will more-or-less return to normal, albeit with many financial and political restrictions placed upon Jews.

Throughout the year, Klemperer worries about finances and his own personal health—two themes that consume his attention. He also notes Eva's continued nervousness and illnesses. Clinically, it appears that both Klemperers are depressed and perhaps hypochondriacs as various medical examinations fail to reveal any objective medical problems. Throughout 1933 and early 1934, Klemperer has been involved in a lawsuit with a publisher. The suit and counter-suit are based upon Klemperer's submitted manuscript, against which advance compensation had been issued, which was hand-written and apparently nearly indecipherable. Klemperer notes his handwriting is difficult to read even for himself; nevertheless, the suits settle in Klemperer's favor during July, with the results easing his financial situation somewhat. Klemperer then manages to secure a fairly large house loan to complete the initial rounds of construction funding. Even these financial successes are hampered by various Nazi-political-fund drives, which though ostensibly voluntary, are *de facto* a mandatory tax; they are quite considerable percentages of income. The home building in Dtzlzschen continues, but only at a snail's pace for want of funds. By October, the house is completed enough that the Klemperers move in, yet for the next many months they will live in the confusion of internal carpentry, painting, and general construction. Eva requires expensive and extensive dental work, but for the most part contents herself with major gardening and planting projects in the new yard and enjoying her several pet cats.

Klemperer, a professor of philology and romance literature at a local university, finds Nazi ideology and politics infiltrating academic thought. All professors are expected to give the Nazi salute at the beginning of lectures; Klemperer avoids this procedure at the peril of losing his employment. Throughout the year, more associates lose their jobs and more so-called undesirable elements immigrate to various foreign locations; Palestine,

the United States, and the Soviet Union being favored destinations. Beyond giving lectures, Klemperer works on a variety of projects intended for publication. His major effort is devoted to a book he refers to as *The Eighteenth Century*, a philological review of literature from the indicated period. Secondary efforts include a book dealing with Nazi terminology (he usually refers to this project by the name 'LTI') and a personal life history. Klemperer returns to the lecture circuit as school resumes in November.

In mid-July, Klemperer discusses what he refers to as the Rtzhm Revolt; the event is usually known in English-language countries as the 'Night of Long Knives'. On one night, Nazi elements arrested and executed numerous political leaders—former acquaintances and allies of Adolf Hitler—who belonged primarily to the SA, or Sturmabteilung, a political organization that has enabled the Nazis to come to power. Klemperer mistakenly believes this event demonstrates the essential weakness of Hitler's government, and he muses that it may signal the imminent downfall of the Nazis. In reality, of course, the event purged many of Hitler's enemies and consolidated Nazi power. In mid-July, Klemperer discusses what he refers to as the Dollfuss Affair: the Nazi-sponsored assassination of Engelbert Dollfuss, the Chancellor of Austria. He once again mistakenly believes that this event will trigger international opposition to the Nazi party and hasten the downfall of Hitler and his government. In reality, of course, the event eventually enabled Hitler to seize Austria in 1938 without overt military action. Klemperer notes that munitions manufacturing is increasing throughout the nation. In August, Paul von Hindenburg dies, and Adolf Hitler assumes the office of President as well as Chancellor; the consolidation of power is unprecedented but fully supported by the government. Klemperer characterizes the action as a coup d'ytat, and wonders how long the illegitimate Nazi government can possibly survive. By the end of the year, the Saar region votes by plebiscite to attach itself to Germany, a move that Klemperer finds as distressing as predictable.

'1935'

'1935' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1935 aggregate forty-two pages and forty-four entries, including: one entry for July and August; two entries for December; three entries for March and November; four entries for January, April, June, September, and October; and seven entries for February and May.

Many Catholics, Communists, and Jews who have not yet been forced from the employment are asked to resign; coupled with the constant hazing and flimsy offers of retirement compensation, some so resign their posts. Those who refuse to resign are often subsequently fired without any retirement compensation. Klemperer, always fretting about bills and money, hangs on to his position tenaciously, though at the end of April he receives a planned termination notice. At the end of the semester, he is removed from his job and learns that his position will remain open and be filled by a younger man—a non-Jew. Because he is a combat veteran of World War I and married to an Aryan woman, he will qualify for reduced-rate retirement pension payments. Even though Klemperer bemoans the greatly reduced pay, he will eventually come to see his pensioned status as a great blessing. He also notes that the university library constantly surrenders books to the authorities—books that have failed censorship or are not deemed fit for the average person. Usually the texts are destroyed and compensation is never offered to the university. All of these discriminatory actions are legalized by the passage of the so-called N'rnberg Laws of Citizenship and Race, enacted in 1935.

Klemperer's brother Georg, always emotionally distant, emigrates; first to Rome, then planning to continue on to the United States. Georg sends Klemperer a considerable sum of money and urges him to flee Germany. Klemperer considers the offer but declines to emigrate; he considers himself a loyal, patriotic German and believes that the Hitler government must fail within months or, at the worst, within a year or so. He further considers that his specialized education and limited skills make him unsuitable for employment outside of the German educational system—a strange attitude given his recent termination from that system. Throughout the 1934-1936 period, Klemperer often considers his option of emigration and, unfortunately, determines to remain in Germany. He eventually uses most of Georg's money to pay off the construction loans obtained on his new home and, later, to build a garage for a newly purchased automobile.

Eva's health continues to be marginal and she embarks upon a months-long, difficult, and costly regime of dental treatment. She prefers general anesthesia for the more rigorous procedures, though Klemperer worries about the safety and cost of the procedure. In February, the Klemperers witness the accidental collapse of an advertising billboard and the subsequent injury of two elderly bystanders. Klemperer ponders on the nature of fate, comparing life to a lottery in which some draw a black lot. Eventually, Eva's dental work is completed. Klemperer goes through a bout of influenza.

Most of the general house construction is completed and Eva works relentlessly in the gardens of the home. Two verandas are added to the house and various minor internal improvements are completed. As the home construction continues, Klemperer continues work on his book, *The Eighteenth Century*; it consumes most of his time. During the year, he learns how to use a typewriter and begins to learn how to type. Although he had previously considered typing to be a superfluous skill, now without a transcription secretary, he finds the personal skill to be of immeasurable worth. He delights in the knowledge that, even should he die, his typewritten manuscript will be ready for publication.

The Nazification of Germany continues. The names of the months are altered to the ancient German names. Hitler proclaims compulsory military service. Prisons are reportedly vastly over-capacity with political inmates. Laws are passed which make race-discrimination legal and various forms of interactions between Jews and non-Jews illegal; for example, new 'inter-racial' marriages are prohibited. The politicized and specialized language of the Third Reich continues to seep into common, everyday usage; Klemperer constantly compares it to the forms of speech used in discussions of religious dogma. Communists, Catholics, and Jews continue to be singled out for denigration and poor treatment. Klemperer's dentist one day mentions that the Nazis "have broken their word to everyone, except to the Jews" (p. 130). Toward the end of the year, shortages of food and various others materials becomes common, and Italy commences the Abyssinian War. Klemperer notes that full-scale persecution, including lengthy prison terms, begins for Jehovah's Witnesses. He wonders how long the Hitler government can last and anticipates a quick demise with, he hopes, a return to normalcy. His theory of the essential character of the German nation is, by now, nearly entirely abandoned.

'1936'

'1936' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1936 aggregate fifty-eight pages and sixty-one entries, including: one for February and November; three for January; four for March and December; five for April and September; six for August and October; seven for May; nine for June; and ten for July.

In January of 1936, Klemperer completes a course in driving and receives his driving permit. The occasion is one of great pride, excitement, and dreadful worry about actually driving alone. The passion for driving, along with the purchase of a used automobile, consumes much of Klemperer's thoughts and diary throughout the year. In March, he buys a used 1932 Opel with six cylinders yielding thirty-two horsepower. The car is expensive and requires costly and constant maintenance, repairs, and gasoline. In addition, automobile insurance is costly and a new garage is constructed, along with a driveway that Klemperer refers to as a 'garage access'; this all strains his finances beyond a reasonable limit. Most of the remaining entries for the year dwell at length on the extremely high costs of maintaining the car, which breaks down constantly. These automobile fault-finding entries are interspersed with lengthy discourses on the minutiae of driving—doubtlessly interesting to Klemperer but to a modern reader only distantly charming in their napve enthusiasm. He routinely notes down miles driven, speeds achieved (often exceeding 30 mph), routes taken, and the particular challenges of driving in various weather conditions and traffic patterns. All of this is rather uninteresting to the reader. The driving also consumes huge amounts of money and financial worries consume Klemperer in nearly every diary entry after the purchase of the Opel. He sells many books and rare coins to pay off his debt and is overjoyed to receive more funds from his brother Georg. Toward the end of the year, Eva's state of health markedly declines and Klemperer fights through a prolonged bout of sickness. Both individuals appear to be depressed much of the time.

Meanwhile, those who previously fled the country begin to write. Many have found new employment and consider themselves properly re-established. Having been unemployed for one year, Klemperer views these letters with mixed emotion—occasionally happy that his acquaintances are succeeding, but also envious of their skills which he considers greatly more marketable than his own. Most of the letters he receives from abroad strongly advise him to flee Germany as quickly as possible, where layoffs and dismissals of Jews continue. The mass emigration of Jews has had the effect of separating friends and relatives, and Klemperer often wonders where prior acquaintances have settled and what they might be doing. Many diary entries record the minutiae of a plethora of social calls amongst an ever-dwindling social network of friends and acquaintances. Some of the Klemperer's dearest friends are Gusti and Karl Wieghardt. Although Gusti's enthusiasm for Communist greatly frustrates Klemperer, the two couples have been close friends for years. However, at the end of July, Klemperer learns that both Gusti and Karl have severely criticized his driving skills to others. He is

so outraged and offended that he breaks off all contact with them. It should be noted that Klemperer himself often writes that he is an unskilled driver.

One high point in the year occurs in early May, when Klemperer completes the first volume of *The Eighteenth Century* and places the packet into storage. However, by August, his hopes for publication are smashed when his manuscript is roundly rejected due to lack of market interest. In mid-May he begins to use the typewriter for the diary that previously has been kept by hand. Entries throughout the middle of the year are often introspective or contemplative; for example, Klemperer wonders in July "What was I, what am I?" (p. 175). He often deplores intellectuals who knowingly support the Hitler government, claiming they are far worse than the average workingman who really knows nothing. From time to time, he mentions that he collects stamps; for example, he notes that Eva's birthday card came from Italy, bearing Scott #363. Klemperer's youngest sister, Wally Sussmann, dies from cancer, and he attends the funeral and cremation in Berlin.

As the 1936 Olympics approach, the blatant anti-Semitic behavior of most citizens in the larger urban centers is deliberately curtailed. Anti-Semitic newspapers, billboards, and displays are all removed during the Olympic period in an attempt to demonstrate to the international community that Germany is a happy and unified nation. Klemperer worries that the post-Olympic period will be full of a renewed anti-Jewish sentiment; in fact, the return to anti-Semitism is rapid but does not escalate as quickly as feared. He criticizes the Olympics on two grounds; first, that athleticism is held above intellectualism and that athletic feats are adjudicated so closely; and second, that the Olympics are entirely politicized. He is particularly vituperative of Helene Meyer, who won the fencing silver medal for Germany—she was a Jew.

In August, the Spanish Civil War erupts and Klemperer considers what the effects of the conflict might be within Germany. He is rather convinced that the outcome of the Spanish Civil War will signal the likely future of the Hitler government; in fact, Klemperer's analysis survives the test of time. He notes that the Nazi party begins a systematic hate campaign against the loyalist Spanish, a campaign that even eclipses the one aimed at the Russians. Meanwhile, anti-Jew laws continue to be enacted in Germany. For example, Jews are excluded from using certain public facilities such as library reading rooms. Klemperer notes that a tremendous military re-arming continues throughout the nation. Various anti-Jew laws are passed that forbid Aryans from fraternizing with Jews. Throughout Germany, priests and theologians are expected to incorporate National Socialist ideas into their religious services. Those who refuse are dismissed from their posts. A two-year conscription program is announced and generally accepted without criticism. Various Nazi social programs, such as the Hitler Youth, enjoy nearly universal popularity. Hitler Youth indoctrination is so complete that returning youth often rail against their parents for failing to properly espouse National Socialism. Thus, enthusiasm for Nazism spreads. Klemperer notes that Nazi doctrine is gradually polluting all sections of the population. One curious example noted is the use of propagandistic slogans as postmark cancels.

'1937'

'1937' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1937 aggregate forty pages and thirty-eight entries, a volume low, including: one for December; two for February, March, and November; three for April, June, July, and October; four for May and August; five for January; and six for September.

The cost of maintaining and repairing the car continues to consume Klemperer's attention throughout 1937. Even as he discusses the uninteresting technical process of driving, however, he becomes a better driver. By mid-year, he and Eva are taking long country drives for pleasure, rather than in an agony of worry. To mitigate the high cost of maintenance, Eva often serves as an amateur mechanic. As usual, Klemperer's other consuming worry is money—he considers stopping smoking to save money but disregards it as unworkable. He nevertheless notes the he is far better off, financially, than many. Occasional unexpected gifts from Georg help Klemperer pay bills and buy cigars. In October, Klemperer learns that his sister-in-law Maria, Georg's wife, has died.

Klemperer notes the crashing of the *Hindenburg* and takes a grim satisfaction that the tragedy reflects poorly on the Hitler government. He also notes that the government is increasingly spreading virulent anti-Catholicism messages. Even with all of this, he concludes that Hitler's position is firmly entrenched and that the Nazi party will exist long after his own death. Meanwhile, the Spanish Civil War continues and Nazi Germany backs the Franco fascistic regime. Late in the year, Italy's dictator Mussolini visits the Third Reich amidst pomp and circumstance. In late 1937, Hjalmar Schacht is retired as the minister of economics. Klemperer spends much introspective time pondering whether Hitler and his virulent anti-Semitism are abnormal or if they are a previously unseen but existing element of the national German psyche. For most of 1937, he finds himself believing that most Germans have always been, somewhat, anti-Semitic. The rapid escalation of anti-Semitic behavior in all aspects of life helps to convince him.

In May, Klemperer and Eva take a five-day automobile vacation. The first drive is to Strausberg to spend some time with Grete Riesenfeld, Klemperer's widowed and probably senile sister. Grete then accompanies them to Berlin where they enjoy the company of the Jelski family, spend a few evenings with Heinz Machol, and visit with the Sussmann family—all relatives in one way or another. While in Berlin, Klemperer learns that anti-government elements frequently hand-copy thousands of subversive or censored handbills and distribute them secretly; he finds this resistance highly encouraging. Later in the year, the Klemperers take an eight-day automobile vacation to the coast and enjoy the North Sea area.

Georg arrives in Newtonville; Betty remains in Cleveland. Several acquaintances—those who are able—emigrate. Prdtorius dies at age 71. Klemperer feels very old and is often under the weather. The town mayor begins a sustained program of harassment—

the Klemperer's are fined for having weeds, are required to have professional gardeners, and are told that their roofing material is not acceptable. During the last few months of the year, Eva has constant problems with nervousness, and her dental health continues to deteriorate. Throughout the year, Klemperer continues to work on his book *The Eighteenth Century*.

'1938'

'1938' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1938 aggregate forty-two pages and forty-five entries, including: two for February, July, and August; three for March, September, and October; four for January, April, June, and November; six for May; and eight for December.

Those Jews who can manage, emigrate. Klemperer half-heartedly begins to send out job applications to other countries; he does not feel particularly German any more. The Nazi government continues to fire people for political reasons and various individuals are forcibly expelled from the country. Meanwhile, letters arrive from emigrants of prior years; in general, the news is good and they have established themselves in foreign countries. Jews, Catholics, and Protestant ministers are all targets of discrimination and hatred. Throughout the year, anti-Semitism continues to become ever more virulent. The Nazi government even establishes offices of so-called science; their disgusting pseudo-science putatively explains racial inferiority as a natural law. Klemperer's fence corners are plastered with a yellow sign announcing the property to belong to a Jew. He begins to feel that all Aryan Germans are just like Hitler in their hatred of Jews, and his depression continues and deepens. He frets about his heart condition and worries that, at 59 years of age, he will soon be dead like his siblings Berthold and Wally. In the middle of the year, Jews are required to use a 'Jewish' name for easy identification; thus, Victor officially becomes 'Victor-Israel'.

In April, the Klemperers take a trip to Strausberg and visit with Grete. She then accompanies them on their excursion, which makes its way to Berlin. In May, the Klemperers travel to Breslau; throughout the year, they make several other smaller excursions by automobile. Georg sends three considerable sums of money throughout the year; Grete occasionally sends small sums. The Klemperers make a surprise visit to Grete on her birthday; on this occasion, Grete and Klemperer reminisce about their father with a surprising degree of antipathy.

Hitler continues to make various consolidating moves in government and his power seems absolute. France and England negotiate and compromise. Klemperer seems especially disgusted with Chamberlain's compliant negotiations. As the year progresses, Germany annexes Austria in a non-violent political victory known today as the Anschluss. Hitler makes an official visit to Italy and it becomes evident that he is now Mussolini's master. Frequent rumors of various sorts begin to widely circulate and anti-government 'underground' short-wave broadcasts are occasionally reported. Klemperer notes reading about the establishment of what will eventually be known as the Volkswagen factory. Czechoslovakia is partitioned and Germany claims a huge part of the country. Hitler's position as head of state seems unassailable. Numerous—almost endless—rallies are held, full of pomp and celebration.

In the latter part of the year, the German army mobilizes and Chamberlain continues to make conciliatory gestures. Klemperer concludes that Hitler is a political genius and that the viable existence of German Jews is decidedly short lived. A widespread pogrom occurs in November; the event has subsequently come to be known as Crystal Night, or *Kristallnacht*, though Klemperer does not use the name. He instead refers to it as 'the catastrophe' or in vague terms. Apparently, the pogrom did not touch the Klemperers directly, but the blatant disregard for law displayed by the Nazi regime, along with their illogical but virulent hatred of Jews, forced Klemperer, as well as tens of thousands of others, to finally come to terms with the genocidal hatred of Hitler. From this point on, Klemperer generally abandons his forced optimism, desires to be elsewhere, and begins to look forward to a future of obvious uncertainty. He also reports on hearing rumors of Buchenwald, the infamous concentration camp. Also from this period reliable news—particularly international news—becomes virtually unobtainable; thus, Klemperer lives from day-to-day, wondering about what is really happening and trying to piece together an accurate picture through sifting rumor, official broadcasts, and occasional underground communications.

The year ends in prolonged bouts of illness for both Klemperer and Eva. During October, Klemperer becomes very ill and cannot obtain decent medical attention because he is a Jew. He thus takes a bold and dangerous automobile trip to Berlin where he obtains illegal treatment from his ex-brother-in-law Sussmann; a catheter drains bloody urine and Klemperer is instructed to seek hospitalization. Instead, he returns home via automobile and is involved in an accident wherein the car skids down an embankment and is heavily damaged. Eva receives a blow to the face and Klemperer is shaken; nevertheless, they return to their home.

In November, the police search their home, and a saber—Klemperer's World War I weapon—and various books are confiscated. Klemperer is taken to the police office but fortunately not arrested. However, there are mass arrests of other Jews and the Nazi regime imposes a 'billion-Mark' fine on the Jewish citizenry supposedly in response to Crystal Night. Curfews for Jews are enacted and various public facilities—including libraries—are placed off-limits to Jews, and Jews are forbidden to drive. Without access to the library, Klemperer's work on *The Eighteenth Century* ceases and he begins work on his personal memoir. He hears rumors that in Berlin Jews have been forcibly relocated to ghettos. All of this causes a massive panic and nearly every Jew remaining in Germany, including Klemperer, immediately tries to emigrate. Klemperer manages to secure two berths on an ocean line—but their steaming date is a distant June 1939 (in any event, Klemperer never again refers to the arranged passage). Various letters from recent emigrants make it obvious that emigrants face difficult times in foreign countries.

'1939'

'1939' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1939 aggregate thirty-eight pages, a volume low, and forty-five entries, including: one for May; two for January and March; three for April, June, and July; four for October and December; five for November; six for January; and eleven for September.

The year is marked by constantly diminishing food rations, shortages of nearly every commercial item, enforced blackouts, ever-mounting taxation, various bans, and constant mobilization for war. The English blockade makes food and commercial items increasingly difficult to obtain as the year progresses. Klemperer struggles against noting down broad historic events—such is not the purpose of his diary. Instead, he desires to focus on his personal daily life. War with Poland dominates much of the diary. For the most part, Klemperer speculates and reports rumor and innuendo as, wisely, he does not trust the official news media. He fights a daily battle with fear, noting "as I lie down to sleep I think: 'Will they come for me tonight? Will I be shot, will I be put in a concentration camp?'" (p. 307). In the latter part of the year, even veteran forces are mobilized, and Klemperer hears widespread complaining. Then France and England enter the war. Klemperer expects Germany to suffer quick setbacks, but is disappointed by Germany's astounding victories on the field of battle. As the conquest of Poland is rapidly completed, all hope of a rapid German defeat is lost. In November, an unsuccessful attempt is made to assassinate Hitler; Klemperer expects immediate anti-Semitic reprisals, but such do not appear to materialize. Many diary entries detail various unsuccessful attempts at emigration—they read like he is grasping at straws.

Klemperer spends some time pondering the relationship between Jews and the historic German nation—he maintains that Jews have long been fully integrated and that only obscure racial hatreds exist; there is no real division. He comments that Nazi science long ago ceased to correspond to any reality. For example, newspaper articles speak of 'Nordic blood' and insist that the SS must deliberately breed Nordic blooded individuals to escape the taint of Jewry. Interestingly, Klemperer uses the word 'Axis' to describe the German-Italian alliance for the first time on April 9, 1939. He also mentions the joyous celebration of the return of the famed Condor Legion in June. Amidst the despair, he takes time to note that Eva's garden is flowering beautifully in the spring.

Anti-Semitic discrimination continues and becomes pervasive. Special required 'Jew' identity cards are issued. Those who are able, emigrate. Gusti Weighardt writes that she is traveling to London. Klemperer drops his old grudge and is happy for her success. Throughout the middle part of the year, Eva's health is poor. Grete apparently suffers a complete mental collapse and, after a complication of a heart attack, is placed into a sanatorium. The Klemperers' house is again searched and news of Jewish houses being confiscated by the government begins to circulate. Jewish bank accounts are frozen, ready cash is seized, and Jews face much stricter rationing than Aryans. Some

Jews commit suicide. Then in December, the Klemperers are notified that their house will be rented, beginning April 1940, to an Aryan—they must move to the Dresden ghetto. Needless to say, the news is particularly crushing.

Early in the year, Klemperer begins in earnest upon his memoirs; he continues to work on them throughout the remainder of the diary as time permits. He continues to make inquiries into emigration but concludes that his efforts are probably meaningless. For example, when he applies to the American Consulate in Berlin, he is assigned to an immigrant waiting list and receives the number 56,429. He begins to sell various personal items to pawnbrokers even as he sinks into the awful despair of hopelessness. Diary entries are scarce for a period of time during which Klemperer is apparently completely despondent.

'1940'

'1940' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1940 aggregate forty-two pages and fifty-four entries, including: one for February; two for January and March; four for April, June, August, September, October, and December; six for November; seven for July; and twelve for May.

The year is bleak—shortages of everything, wild rumors and rampant speculation, and anti-Semitic hazing and persecution are commonplace. Throughout the year, the war continues to expand in scope and the expansion becomes marked in the latter half of the year. Minor acts of resistance infrequently occur and anti-government rumors sometimes are heard. The black market flourishes. War profiteering is commonplace and nearly everything is arranged under the table. By the end of the year, clothing has become so scare that recently-deceased are stripped before being cremated; Klemperer dresses nearly in rags. In December, Jews are ordered to wear yellow armbands.

The Klemperers suffer from depression and ill health. In particular, Klemperer notes that during December, Eva suffers a prolonged period of illness and depression, doing little more than playing solitaire for hours on end as she grows increasingly thin and pale. Elsewhere, Grete's health deteriorates until she suffers a complete mental breakdown and is hospitalized. Klemperer's diary entries are interesting in that they mention packing and moving while simultaneously recording the Nazi victories over France. In May, Klemperer sends his stamp collection and important papers to Annemarie Ktzhler for safeguarding. He makes a huge conflagration of dozens of years' worth of other accumulated papers as he cleans his house. In April, the Nazi party takes control of the Klemperers' house and turns them out; they secure a two-room apartment in the Dresden ghetto in a building Klemperer refers to as the Jews' House. Amazingly, Klemperer is occasionally charged for renovations or improvements to his seized 'private' property. Klemperer records the wide range of opinions held by Jews living in the ghetto—many are remarkably pro-Nazi or pro-Germany. Some diary entries note appreciation for the smallest things in life—a good cup of coffee, a beautiful evening walk. Their eviction is, needless to say, a low point in their life's experiences.

An endless discussion about warfare fills the diary; most consider an amphibious landing in England completely impossible. This, of course, contrasts with the successful American-British-Canadian amphibious landings on D-Day, only a few years distant. Rumor and speculation about the likely end of the war is rampant. As the year progresses, war becomes general and its effects commonplace. Bombings occur in the West, then in Berlin, and then occasionally in Dresden. Eventually, the entire European continent is embroiled in the conflict. Credible rumors circulate that Jews in occupied Poland are treated very severely. During the year, so-called mixed-race Jews, previously allowed in the military, are excluded and treated as Jews. Various political alliances are forged between Germany and her erstwhile opponents.

News of widespread destruction from aerial bombardment in western Germany circulates, and refugees begin to move east. Some bombings are particularly devastating to Berlin and Hamburg. The Nazis occupy Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and France. The so-called 'Battle of Britain' commences; Klemperer does not use the name but does refer often to the effects. The pending invasion of England is called off and Klemperer notes with surprise that many troops are being sent to the East.

'1941'

'1941' Summary and Analysis

The entries for 1941 aggregate ninety pages, a volume high, and 103 entries, also a volume high, including: four for January; five for February; six for August; seven for March and April; eight for October; ten for November; thirteen for September; and sixteen, a volume high, for July and December. Of particular note is the twenty-six-page entry for July 6, which summarizes Klemperer's eight-day prison sentence.

The beginning of the year is marked by decreasing food supplies, and by a marked decrease in the quality of foods that are available. One evening, the Klemperers forget to enforce the mandatory blackout, and a policeman comes who points out an infringing window. Klemperer is quite obviously concerned and spends several days awaiting a heavy fine, but such a fine does not arrive. He is eventually notified that he will serve a prison sentence. He appeals the sentence, which delays but not overturns it. He learns that in June he will have to begin an eight-day imprisonment. It is interesting to note how the nature of gifts changes during the year: in the early portion of the year, gifts among friends typically consist of money, bottles of alcohol, and books. By the end of the year, gifts consist of ounces or grams of coffee beans or fruit juices, moldy fragments of meat, or individual cigarettes. By mid-year, meat and greens are virtually unobtainable for Jews.

The winter is exceptionally cold and very little coal for heating is available; additionally, most winter clothing has been confiscated or simply worn out and replacements are unobtainable. Thus, most of the tenants in the ghetto spend a miserable winter. Klemperer is forced to sell his automobile at a loss because Jews are not allowed to own them. In addition, ever-increasing and Byzantine taxes are placed on Jews and over half of Klemperer's meager income is taken by taxation. In March, he learns that Georg has had a stroke and that his cousin Otto, the famous conductor, has a brain disease that leads to a form of madness. Throughout the year, Klemperer makes many notes on the Nazi's peculiar use of language, particularly on their constant use of superlatives.

By mid-year Klemperer consoles himself with the 'long view' of events. He reasons that although Hitler might persist for many years, he will surely not persist for twenty years—and after all, what are a few decades in the grand sweep of history? However, in April, the British Expeditionary Force collapses in turmoil and flees the continent, pursued by the Nazi war machine. In May, the news of Hess' defection circulates through the underground, although theories on the rationale behind the move are varied with some feeling it must represent some type of secret Nazi plot.

Eva's health continues to be tenuous. By April, she suffers a complete collapse and spends many days in bed. By the end of the year, she is much recovered. In May, Karl Weighardt, Gusti's stepson, briefly visits. Klemperer finds him Aryan, distant, and

argumentative, and the purpose for his visit remains questionable. In addition, in May, Klemperer makes a brief reference to the Sonnenstein 'crematorium' to whence mentally ill Jews and others have been deported. In fact, the program was an extermination program and Klemperer's note is significant in that it represents his first definitive mention of mass killings during the Nazi-perpetrated Holocaust. Also in May, Klemperer makes reference to the Nazi invasion of Crete and the sinking of the British warship Hood and the German warship Bismarck. On June 22nd, Klemperer notes the astounding news that Hitler has invaded Russia to popular acclaim; on the following day, he reports to the police station to begin his eight-day prison sentence.

Klemperer's post-imprisonment diary entry reads as a polished essay. Indeed, he notes that the entry has enjoyed extensive re-writing and revision. He discusses at great length the physical mechanics of being imprisoned in Cell 89, and then spends a considerable amount of time considering the subtle psychological effects of imprisonment. His introspection is interesting and reveals a vulnerable and accessible personal side rarely found elsewhere in the diary. When the time of his release approaches he is overwhelmed by feelings of fear, wondering if he will be released as promised and realizing that he could be held indefinitely at the pleasure of the police with no recourse to assistance. In general, the entry is a masterpiece of the psychology of being imprisoned. Fortunately, Klemperer is released as promised.

Much of the remainder of the year's entries is concerned with the progress of the general European war. News of the Russian front is scarce and rumors circulate that the Nazi offensive is bogging down. By the end of July, Klemperer is convinced that the German offensive has come to a standstill, and the unmistakable signs of heavy military losses become increasingly apparent. He notes the strong Russian military resistance around St. Petersburg and Moscow. Political tension between the United States and Germany continues to mount. Klemperer notes the widespread imprisonment of Catholic priests and the credible rumors that the mentally ill are being routinely euthanized. By mid-year, Jews are required to wear a yellow armband when venturing into public—Klemperer and others find this new requirement especially repugnant and embarrassing. On a personal note, tobacco use by Jews is prohibited. Klemperer, formerly a pack-a-day equivalent smoker, finds the absence of tobacco unpleasant and begins to smoke tea leaves. Food continues to be scarce, and in September, Klemperer weighs 154 lbs. and Eva weighs 123 lbs. On his sixtieth birthday, Klemperer notes with mild surprise that he has lived longer than his brother Berthold and sister Wally, both of whom died at age fifty-nine.

Toward the end of the year, massive deportations of Jews to Poland have begun. Klemperer and others apparently believe that deported Jews are destined for forced-labor camps and do not suspect genocide. Christians of Jewish extraction are not immune to the harsh treatments as Klemperer, a Protestant, is obviously aware. In fact, he notes that his Christian church begins to exclude Jewish members in various ways in an attempt to avoid further Nazi harassment.

In October, Klemperer's typewriter is confiscated—the remainder of the diary for 1941 is hand-written. Also in October, Jewish emigration from Germany is officially banned,

ending Klemperer's lengthy but half-hearted attempts to flee the country. A continuous deportation of Jews to Poland occurs, mass arrests of Jews and others grow in frequency, and various 'disappearings' are described. Those deported are presumed to have been sent to forced labor camps; in reality, the Nazi genocide was by this time occurring. In December, Klemperer reports the event that today is usually referred to as the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. He also reports that the Nazi advance into Russia has stalled outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Historically, the Nazis never captured those two cities. The diary concludes with the note that Germany has declared war on the United States.

Characters

Berger

Berger is an aryan shopkeeper who is chosen as the Klemperers' tenant when they are forced to leave their house and live in the Jewish ghetto. He is sorry that they are getting such a bad deal, but is glad for himself. Sympathetic to the mistreated couple, he is friendly and brings them honey, which the Nazis had forbidden Jews to have.

Harry Dember

A friend of the Klemperers, Dember is a physicist who is very anxious. He characterizes the Jews as hoping for deliverance from an outside force, such as an invasion or German defeat. Dember isbitter and pessimistic and eventually finds work with the University of Constantinople in Turkey.

Eva Klemperer

Eva is Klemperer's Aryan wife. Although many Aryan spouses give in to public and political pressure to leave their Jewish spouses, Eva remains loyal and dedicated to her husband throughout the trying years of the war. She is a concert pianist whose physical ailments and emotional depression prevent her from playing music very often. The only thing that seems to keep her going is the cottage they are trying to build in Dölzschen. She is an avid gardener who thrives on working on the land while they await the money needed to build the house itself.

Throughout the book, Eva suffers from a variety of ailments, ranging from serious dental problems to swollen ankles. Klemperer also describes her frequent anxiety attacks and bouts of hysteria. At the beginning of the book, she still manages to find the energy and strength to work on the landscaping for the house. Klemperer worries about his wife but sees that this is the only activity that brings her any hope or joy, so he allows her to continue working hard. Eva is a woman obsessed with the house, and when Klemperer fears for their financial future, he keeps spending money on the house only for Eva's sake. When she returns home, however, she has no strength for housework, so she lets her husband perform domestic chores.

Georg Klemperer

Klemperer's older brother, Georg, is a successful doctor who has left Germany and is living elsewhere in Europe. His sons live in the United States, and he tells Klemperer that if the situation in Europe worsens, he will go there, too. In 1935, he does so, but he is disappointed that his age prevents him from acquiring the type of position he had expected. He begins working on his memoirs.

At key times, Georg lends Klemperer much-needed money, but he does not understand the resolute patriotism that keeps him in Germany. Georg tries to convince Klemperer to leave Germany and start a new life where it is safe, but Klemperer dismisses his brother's advice because he feels misunderstood.

Victor Klemperer

Klemperer is the diarist whose writings make up the entire text. His father is a rabbi in a Reformsynagogue, so Klemperer and his siblings are accustomed to very liberal religious practices. Klemperer, like all three of his brothers, converts to Lutheran-ism in adulthood, a decision that is supported by their father. Still, in Nazi Germany, anyone who has one Jewish grandparent is regarded as Jewish, so Klemperer is subject to persecution. He is spared the deadly fate of the concentration camps, however, by virtue of his marriage to an Aryan woman, Eva, and his service in the German army during World War I.

As the diary opens, Klemperer is a professor at the Dresden Technical University. He loves lecturing and interacting in the academic community but soon realizes that because students are discouraged from taking his courses (Nazi policies limit his effectiveness; for example, he is not allowed to administer tests), he will be forced to retire. Klemperer and Eva have recently purchased a small plot of land in a town just outside Dresden, and they are planning to build a cottage. The Klemperers enjoy an active social life in the beginning, but as their friends gradually leave the country, they come to rely more on each other for meaningful interaction. Klemperer is an avid reader and writer whoenjoys reading aloud to Eva, and the two often engage in intellectual discussion. During the course of the diary, Klemperer discusses two major works he is writing. One is an academic survey of eighteenth-century French literature, and the other is a study of the Third Reich's use of language. The latter would become a highly respected study and is still read by historians and language specialists today.

Klemperer expresses his fear of death although his expressions of this fear have a casual, matter-of-course tone. He only expects to live a few more years, an expectation that affects his plans for new projects. When he is particularly disheartened, he often reminds himself that Eva needs him, a thought that motivates him to keep trying to find money, to keep working around the house, and in general to keep trying to improve their situation. He also suffers from a number of ailments, and he is frequently depressed as a result of the disastrous circumstances in which he finds himself.

Despite his difficult lot in life, Klemperer maintains a detailed journal (at great personal risk) in which he writes his thoughts, feelings, and observations. His careful records of the day-to-day struggles of a man in his precarious position give his diary a great deal of historical weight. In addition, the diary fulfills Klemperer's dream of writing his memoirs for publication, an ambition he felt he never accomplished.

Johannes Köhler

Johannes Köhler is an Aryan man who, along with his wife, maintains a very close friendship with the Klemperers. He teaches history and religion and feels tremendous weight on his conscience because of the behavior of government officials. He considers teaching another course less relevant to current events, such as medicine or business. Klemperer refers to Köhler and his wife as the "respectable" Köhlers because they are married; in contrast, they have another friend, named Annemarie Köhler, who lives with a man, and so Klemperer jokingly calls them the "unrespectable" Kohlers. Klemperer admires Johannes Köhler and his wife because, although they come from a different background than the Klemperers, they deeply despise Hitler's regime.

Auguste Lazar

Auguste "Gusti" Lazar is a longtime friend of the Klemperers. She is an author of books for children and young adults. In the dairy, Klemperer refers to her by her married name, Wieghardt. She is optimistic and believes that the Nazi regime will not last. In Klemperer's first entry of 1935, he writes that she expressed her opinion that the regime will not last the year. She later realizes that the regime will last much longer, so she goes into exile in England in 1939, only to return to Dresden in 1949.

Frau Lehmann

Frau Lehmann is the Klemperers' maid, who is eventually forced to stop working for the Klemperers because they are categorized as a Jewish household. Her affection for the couple, however, leads her to visit them occasionally in the evenings.

Lissy Meyerhof

Lissy Meyerhof is a friend of the Klemperers who manages to keep her position as a social worker because of her service as a nurse during World War I. She is industrious and optimistic. After the Klemperers are sent to the Jews' House, she occasionally sends them packages containing such items as socks, coffee, and tea.

Präatorius

Präatorius is the builder contracted by the Klemperers to build their house. While he waits for them to come up with the money needed to begin work, he stays abreast of their financial affairs. Once building begins, he is fair and negotiates with them when unexpected expenses arise.

Sandel

Sandel is a Polish Jew who cheats Klemperer out of 240 marks and refuses to pay it back. He led Klemperer to believe that he could take the money and make more money with it, but instead he spent it while he was drunk. Sandel believes that Klemperer will not report the incident because Jews should protect each other. Klemperer, on the other hand, feels that not reporting it will make his friends think he lacks integrity for protecting a Jew. Reluctantly, he reports it to the police, and even though Sandel admits his wrongdoing, the police tell Klemperer that they can do nothing to recover his lost money. When Sandel tells the police that he was with Nazi officials when he spent the money, the entire matter is dropped. Klemperer is secretly relieved to have the matter behind him.

Jule Sebba

Jule Sebba is a friend of the Klemperers who makes plans to move his family to Israel. He is a lawyer and teacher in Germany, but he plans to open a candle-making business after he moves. Once he arrives in Israel, however, his original business plan fails and he makes a meager living giving cello lessons and performing at music concerts. Before he leaves, he explains to Klemperer that the reason he must go is that the Nazi regime is making life for the Jews bad now, but the situation will only escalate into "unimaginable and bloody chaos." He adds that after the regime finally falls, there will be nothing left because all other institutions and structures have been destroyed.

Johannes Thieme

Johannes Thieme is a young man who lived with the Klemperers for a number of years beginning in 1920. He was like a foster son to them and called them mother and father. When he visits the Klemperers in 1933, he declares his support of the new regime. This disgusts Klemperer, who sees Thieme as a conformist with bad judgment, and he ends the relationship.

Victor Klemperer

Eva Klemperer nye Schlemmer

Johannes Thieme

Dr. and Mrs. Wilhelm Klemperer

Georg and Maria Klemperer

Berthold Klemperer

Felix, Betty, Ilse, and Kurt Klemperer

Grete Riesenfeld nye Klemperer

Hedwig Machol nye Klemperer

Marta Jelski nye Klemperer

Martin Sussmann and Wally Sussmann nye Klemperer

Eduard Franke and Walter Franke

Otto Klemperer

Dr. Auguste Weighardt-Lazar ("'Gusti' Weighardt")

Annemarie Ktzhler (The "Respectable" and "Unrespectable" Ktzhlers)

Prdtorius

Objects/Places

The House in Dtzlzschen

Mostly due to Eva's constant desire to own a home, the Klemperers purchased a vacant lot in Dtzlzschen, a suburb of Dresden, sometime prior to 1933. The lot was fenced in 1933 and a cellar was excavated in that year. Over the next year and a half, the house was built. Due to the expense of stone, the house was built mostly of wood—for that time apparently an unusual construction practice. The Klemperers moved in while interior construction was still ongoing. Thereafter, Eva spent most of her time and a considerable amount of funds gardening and preparing the yard. After Klemperer learned to drive and purchased a vehicle, a garage was added to the property. In 1940, the Klemperers were forcibly evacuated to a Jewish ghetto and the house was rented out to an Aryan. The Klemperers derived some income from the ever-diminishing rental payments for the next several months. After the conclusion of World War II, the Klemperers were able to regain the house.

Iduna

Iduna is the name of a large insurance company. Klemperer holds at least one Iduna policy, the nature of which appears somewhat complex and is not discussed at length. Klemperer must pay into the policy during January of each year. He is also able either to withdraw from or borrow against the policy. By 1938, he deems the policy worthless because it has been entirely leveraged. This does not much concern him, however, because he rightly judges that shortly the policy will be legally released from payment due to the enacting of every-more virulent anti-Semitic laws.

Klemperer's Memoirs or Memories (Curriculum Vitae)

Throughout the diary, Klemperer often voices a great desire to write his personal memoirs. In nearly every case he follows up the notation with a dismal projection of his putatively rapidly approaching death and concludes that the memoirs will never be finished, much less published. Klemperer eventually starts work on his memoirs in 1938 and they are finally published in 1989 under the title *Curriculum Vitae*.

LTI or Lingua tertii imperii

Throughout the diary, Klemperer often voices a great desire to write a philological analysis of the terminology of the Third Reich. He usually notes that the completion of such a volume is highly improbable. Nevertheless, the diary frequently contains notations about certain commonly used words. In fact, Klemperer did complete such a work after the war and it was published in 1947 under the title *Lingua tertii imperii*, that

is, *The Language of the Third Reich*. Except for his diary, it is Klemperer's most-enduring work.

The Eighteenth Century

Throughout the middle of 1938, Klemperer works with great determination but little enthusiasm on a philological analysis of French literature of the eighteenth century. He often amusingly refers to the work as '18iime', 'XVIIIiime', or 'Dix-huitiime', though he officially acknowledges it as *The Eighteenth Century*. Nearly every diary entry contains a passing remark concerning the progress of the work. Klemperer completes the first volume of the book in 1936 and places it in storage. It is refused for publication, not on the grounds of the author's race, but rather because it would be financially unmarketable. Klemperer finds the refusal crushing, though he determinedly continues work on the second volume. When his access to public libraries is forbidden under race laws in mid-1938, Klemperer iis forced to stop working on the book.

Eventually, the book was published. The first volume was entitled *Geschichte der franztzsischen Literatur im 18 Jahrhundert, Bd. I: Das Jahrhundert Voltaires* and was published in 1954. The second volume was entitled *Geschichte der franztzsischen Literatur im 18 Jahrhundert, Bd. II: Das Jahrhundert Rousseaus* and was published in 1966. Today the volumes are not considered particularly academically insightful.

The Nuremberg Laws

The Nuremberg Laws were a series of laws enacted in Nazi Germany during 1935. Based on putatively scientific distinction between the so-called races of humanity, the laws were the allegedly legal foundation of most of the latter anti-Semitic practices of the Nazis, including the holocaust. The laws established one's race (either Aryan, Jewish, or mixed) and allowed for purposeful discrimination based solely on that characteristic.

Anschluss (Anschluss TZsterreich)

The Anschluss is the name given to the 1938 annexation of Austria into 'Greater Germany' by the Nazi regime. The process was political and markedly without military action, though German troops did enter the country. The Anschluss is discussed at length in the diary, and Klemperer concludes that it is proof of Hitler's utterly secure position as leader. Internationally, the Anschluss was seen as proof of Germany's military and political will. Note that Klemperer does not use the term itself.

Ghetto

As used in the diary, any area in which Jews live as a group through involuntary sequestering. Klemperer refers to his building within the Dresden ghetto as a Jews'

House. The Nazis used the ghettos to seclude the Jews and keep them imprisoned. As World War II progressed, the ghettos became increasingly horrific places in which to live, though at all times they were preferable to the concentration camps.

Buchenwald (Concentration Camp)

Klemperer mentions Buchenwald by name as early as November 1938, and in various subsequent diary entries, he states that an individual has returned from Buchenwald. Established in July 1937, the camp served initially as a prison and slave-labor camp for Jews convicted of a range of so-called crimes. Although Buchenwald was technically not an extermination camp, it housed approximately 250,000 people during its Nazi operation, of which perhaps 56,000 died. Conditions in the camp were notoriously brutal. After the capitulation of the Nazi regime, the Soviet occupying forces utilized the camp to house German prisoners. It was finally abandoned in 1950. During the period covered by the diary, Buchenwald was nearly exclusively used for male inmates and was apparently commonly viewed as a prison camp from whence individuals were somewhat likely to return.

Sonnenstein Crematorium

In 1941, Klemperer makes a brief reference to the Sonnenstein 'crematorium' to whence mentally ill Jews and others were deported. The location was one of the first Nazi extermination camps and was used to murder and cremate thousands of predominantly mentally ill inmates. Many of the staff were later sent to other execution camps in an attempt to hide the horrors of Sonnenstein.

Themes

Disillusionment

From the beginning of the diary, Klemperer expresses profound disillusionment with Germany and with his own life. He is disheartened at the way Hitler has assumed power and at how the German people welcome him and believe what he tells them.

On May 13, 1934, Klemperer expresses his disappointment with his fellow Germans:

The masses let themselves be talked into believing everything. If for three months all the newspapers are forced to World War, then the masses will believe that it really did not happen.

Klemperer finds the Nazi regime to be "un-German," and he is disturbed by the ways he sees people in his own circle of friends and colleagues changing to suit the regime.

Klemperer is tormented by his deep love of his country and his complete powerlessness to save it. On March 20, 1933, he writes,

I think it is quite immaterial whether Germany is a monarchy or a republic□but what I do not expect at all is that it will be rescued from the grip of its new government. I believe anyway that it can never wash off the ignominy of having fallen victim to it. I for my part will never again have faith in Germany.

He adds on April 3rd of the same year, "Everything considered un-German, brutality, injustice, hypocrisy, mass suggestion to the point of intoxication, all of it flourishes here." Similarly, on February 21, 1935, he notes, "The sense of justice is being lost everywhere in Germany, is being systematically destroyed." Klemperer's sense of identity is wrapped up in his patriotism, as evident in this comment from the March 30,1933, entry: "In fact I feel shame more than fear, shame for Germany. I have truly always felt a German."

At the same time, Klemperer feels ongoing helplessness in his personal and professional life. He agonizes over his health, Eva's health, money, his career, and his writing. On May 15, 1933, he confides, "I have given up thinking about things. I feel it's all coming to an end." On June 17 of the same year, he asks, "Does it make any difference at all *what* I spend the remainder of my time doing? Just do something and forget oneself."

On his birthday, October 9, 1933, he writes,

Birthday wishes: To see Eva healthy once again, in our own house, at her harmonium. Not to have to tremble every morning and evening in anticipation of hysterics. To see the end of the tyranny and its bloody downfall. See my Eighteenth Century finished and published. No pains in my side and no thoughts of my death.

He immediately adds, "I do not believe that even one of these wishes will come true for me." Klemperer also feels increasingly alone as people around him either leave the country or adopt the new ways. What was once a vibrant social life for the Klemperers becomes a life of quiet disappointment.

He continues to write as an outlet, but at times, even this practice is insufficient. He remarks on November 25, 1938, "I completely lack the peace of mind to write." Still, he manages to complete a lengthy entry.

Perhaps the greatest despair and loss of control experienced by Klemperer is the day when he must wear the identifying yellow star. On September 15, 1941, he writes, "I myself feel shattered, cannotcompose myself." Five days later, he writes, "Yesterday, Eva was sewing on the Jew's star, I had a raving fit of despair."

Political Divisiveness

As Hitler's leadership gains momentum in Germany, Klemperer finds himself increasingly at odds with those around him. He is quick to express his opinions and finds himself so infuriated with others that he ends relationships. This happens partly because of the fundamentally incompatible points of view being expressed and partly because Klemperer loses respect for people who readily accept the new ideology rather than resist conformity by thinking for themselves.

On March 17, 1933, Klemperer writes about a visit from Johannes Thieme, a young man who came to stay with the Klemperers in 1920 and called them mother and father for a while. Klemperer writes:

Thieme□of all people□declared himself for the new regime with such fervent conviction and praise. He devoutly repeated the phrases about unity, upwards, etc.... He is a poor swine and afraid for his post. So he runs with the pack.... [H]e is absolutely at the mercy of every influence, every advertisement, everything successful. Eva already realized that years ago. She says, "He lacks any sense of judgment." But that he would go so far ... I am breaking with him.

In reviewing the year 1933, Klemperer writes about how he has lost two friends due to political differences. His entry on December 31 reads,

This is the characteristic fact of the year that has come to an end, that I had to break with two close friends, with Thieme because he is a National Social ist [Nazi], with Gusti Wieghardt because she became a Communist.

In April of the following year, he writes that his friend Grete shocks him because she has allowed everything German about herself to fall away and instead takes a completely Jewish point of view of things. Klemperer is unable to understand how anyone can separate such core pieces of his or her identity, and it disgusts him.

Preoccupation with Death

While reading Klemperer's diary, readers may be struck by his casual references to his own death. Although he says he feels horror at death, his tone indicates otherwise. For example, on July 20,1933, he writes, "But there are countless people who have the strength for some kind of simple belief (or *unbelief*). *I* only have the quite childish horror of the grave and of nothingness□no more than that."

Klemperer seems preoccupied with the deaths of men his age and makes a point of noting their names, ages, and causes of death. On July 20,1933, he reports, "Frau Blumenfield's brother, the missionary preacher, was here for a visit with his wife, fell ill suddenly and died very quickly after an unsuccessful gallbladder operation, fifty-four years old." At the time of this entry, Klemperer was 52.

On June 11,1935, he comments on an obituary: "Heiss died on May 31. The obituary notice shook me, not because I loved him, but because the man was my generation, barely five years older."

The historical context of Klemperer's preoccupation with death is important because during the years covered in this volume of his diary, the mass extermination of Jews was not yet in force. In addition, because of the censored press, it is unlikely that he knew the full extent of the violence being committed against Jews throughout Germany. Thus, his preoccupation with death is not an indication that he has resigned himself to dying at the hands of the Third Reich but an indication that he is simply resigned to dying soon.

His feelings about his own death arise from his declining health and his general sense of hopelessness. Klemperer is depressed throughout 1933-1941, so the threat of death is not met with the same sense of dread and panic that a man with a full and happy life would feel. On September 27,1934, he casually remarks, "But my first year of retirement will begin in 1935, and soon after that I shall be buried."

Irrepressible Will

In the diary entry for March 13, 1941, Klemperer notes "*Language: Irrepressible will*" (p. 378). His citation refers to the Nazi use of the term and intends to record the malapropism for consideration in his later work *Lingua tertii imperii*. The use incidentally and accidentally encapsulates the diary's essential theme; the irrepressible will of Klemperer, his wife, his community, and the Jews. When Hitler assumed political control in 1933, most of the world viewed him as little more than a ridiculous, if vitriolic, politician with a penchant for theatrical hysterics. Within months, his consolidation of power and increasing popularity dispelled any misgivings about his ability to rule; within the year, his hate-mongering anti-Semitism proved him one of the great monsters in the history of the world.

The diary records the day-by-day attack on dignity and normalcy inspired by Hitler's fear and hatred. Klemperer notes the confiscation of money and property; the forced humiliation of special identification and, later, armbands; the despair caused by poverty and semi-starvation; and ultimately, the deportation of the Jews to ghettos. At the conclusion of the diary, Klemperer notes that massive deportations of Jews to Poland have begun—although he does not realize it, he is witnessing the beginnings of genocide. Throughout this all, he maintains his essential German-ness and a strongly humanistic nature that refuses to be dominated by fear or quelled by hatred. Thus, while Hitler espouses the ephemeral and evil Nazi 'irrepressible will', Klemperer and his fellow-Jews demonstrate the fact of irrepressible will. The ragged but persistent demand to survive and supersede the Nazi regime forms the diary's central theme of the irrepressible will of the individual.

Language and Thought Control

In July 1943, Klemperer overhears an unknown man state that the Nazis "[e]stablish their spirit from their language" (p. 403). This chance comment, overheard by a professional philologist, encompasses one of the diary's essential themes—the Nazi attempt at thought control through language control. Probably no other person in Germany during the period of the diary was better equipped to record, evaluate, and report on the Nazi pollution of the German language than Victor Klemperer, a professionally trained philologist and specialist in literature, and a Jew married to an Aryan woman. His military service made him keenly aware of the nature of warfare, his education and intelligence made him keenly aware of the influence of language and the potentials of politics, and his diary habit allowed him to record, day-by-day, objective observations. The resulting diary is incredibly insightful and allows an in-depth analysis of the gradual perversion of language by the Nazi regime toward its ultimate goal of controlling the thought of the nation.

The diary records numerous ways in which the Nazi regime controlled language. Private media was effectively abolished and replaced by a massive apparatus of State-sponsored propaganda; words, phrases, and entire forms of speech were utilized to misguide, obfuscate, and direct access to the truth. Klemperer reports that the Nazi's control was so complete that upon returning from summer camps (sponsored by the so-called Hitler Youth movement), German youth would often viciously criticize their own parents' lack of enthusiasm for Nazi doctrine. The commonplace notation of words, phrases, phraseology, and even punctuation used by the Nazi government formulates one of the diary's prominent themes.

The Holocaust

The diary is significant largely because its author, a Jew, experienced and recorded the day-to-day reality of life in the early years of Nazi Germany: from the assumption of political power by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime, through the declaration of war on the United States of America, and the stalled Nazi attack on Russia. Although Klemperer

could not know it at the time, the rumors that the German advance had ground to a halt were predominantly true; the next four years would see the slow but ultimate defeat of Nazism, the death of Hitler and his evil henchmen, and the near-complete destruction of Germany.

The diary also contains a litany of abuses of power perpetrated by the Nazis and aimed toward Jews, Catholics, Communists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the mentally ill. Klemperer describes the day-by-day enactment of ever-more brutal and repulsive discriminations aimed at so-called undesirable elements within the Nazi state. Jews were subjected to humiliation, hazing, and ultimately displacement, deportation, and genocide. The vast and incomprehensible horror of the Holocaust is here reduced to an intelligible step-by-step progress of persecution and hatred. First, the Jews are forcibly unemployed, then their properties and monies are confiscated and their families scattered. They are subjected to a plethora of bans and restrictions which limit their ability to emigrate, own real property, succeed in most aspects of life, and even obtain sufficient food and clothing. Then they are forced from their homes and concentrated in ghettos. By the last diary entries, Klemperer is recording rumors that vast number of Jews and Catholics are begin deported to Poland. He wrongly assumes them to be destined for forced-labor camps; the horror of the extermination camps was at that time little more than incredible speculation. The incredible personal impact provided by the diary is, of course, its most enduring feature and provides one of its dominant themes.

Style

Detailed Entries

Klemperer's diary is full of minute details about his private life, the books he is writing, and the events occurring in Nazi Germany. These details are what give the diary its historical significance as well as its human dimension. At times, however, readers may find the level of detail a bit difficult to absorb. While the reactions of people to the Third Reich are fascinating, the recurring lists of his and Eva's ailments, as well as notations of the amount of money spent on cat food and of what plants and shrubs have been purchased for landscaping, can seem a bit mundane.

Klemperer had been an avid diarist since the age of seventeen, and it is clear that by the time he reached his fifties, he was not at all self-conscious in his entries. He wrote for himself, not for posterity, which is why the entries often contain minute detail about topics that are of little interest to the reader. They do, however, provide insight into Klemperer's personality and show him to be an ordinary man.

The details about the rise of Nazism, on the other hand, are both intriguing and historically important. Because Klemperer refuses to accept the Third Reich, he is affronted by its appearance in every aspect of his life. He sees it as the reason he is forced to retire from his position as a university professor, and he also sees it in toothpaste packaging; its pervasiveness horrifies him.

On March 22,1933, for example, he notes, "A young man with a swastika comes into the school on some official errand or other. A class of fourteen-year-olds immediately begin singing the Horst Wessel Song [aNazi song]." Other images serve as "signs of the times," such as when Klemperer receives a cat magazine displaying a swastika or when, in 1935, the Nazis try to create German names for the months.

Later, the realities of ever-present Nazi power take on a more sinister quality. Klemperer explains on September 18, 1941, that when one person in the Jewish ghetto visits another, he or she rings three times. He adds, "That has been agreed, so that no one catches fright. A simple ring could be the police."

Blend of Formality and Informality

Klemperer's writing is formal in tone but informal at times in content and sentence structure. Hisdiction and vocabulary frequently remind the reader that he is an academic and that he is accustomed to speaking and writing in a lofty, cerebral manner.

He relates the progress of his book on eighteenth-century French literature, and he includes new observations for his study of language in the Third Reich. Such writing is familiar to him, so it finds its way into his personal writing. When discussing his friends, he often describes their fundamental philosophical differences or his close observations

as to why he admires or respects them. In such cases, the content is centered on analytical thinking. In these ways, Klemperer's diary is formal.

In other ways, the diary is quite informal. Because Klemperer did not intend the diary to be published, he was comfortable writing incomplete sentences that nevertheless expressed a complete thought. An example is in the March 27, 1933, entry: "The Köhlers depressed and cautiously gritting their teeth." On July 20,1933, he simply notes, "Political situation bleak," and on July 14, 1934, he writes, "The terrible uncertainty." Such phrases and incomplete comments fully express Klemperer's state of mind at the time of each entry.

In addition, he writes about domestic details such as his love for his cats, the latest gossip about a friend, or Eva's swollen ankle. Together, the formal and informal elements of Klemperer's diary provide a full portrayal of the man behind the diary.

Perspective

The diary, as expected, is related in the first-person perspective with a very limited knowledge of events outside of the author's immediate personal sphere of observation. Klemperer routinely notes his frustration with the media and news outlets, which present only the politically motivated 'correct' interpretation of events; he often refers to these reports as 'opaque' and worthless. The diary's personal perspective, however, is also its signal characteristic. Often regarded as the premier non-fictional text about an average life in the Nazi Third Reich, the day-by-day recording of events and the occasionally introspective examination of living conditions make for an incredibly interesting and easily accessible narrative.

As a Jew and a thinking, educated man, Klemperer was, from the first days, both an opponent and a critic of the Nazi ideology. As the Nazi party consolidates power and increases the virulent abuse and, later, genocide of the Jews, Communists, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others, Klemperer's perspective remains essentially unchanged—he stands as a witness to the horror and records his personal experiences and thoughts with the belief that, one day, he might publish them in some format.

Tone

For the most part, the diary is written in a subdued, intimate, and personal tone. The style is sparse; indeed, the brevity of many sentences makes them grammatically incorrect. Nevertheless, the author does not intend to produce a polished piece of literature; rather, he viewed the diaries as what they in fact are—a repository for personal thoughts and experiences organized in a chronological format with a focus on day-to-day minutiae. The tone thus derived is largely accidental; that is, Klemperer was not seeking for a specific tone or texture. Rather, the tone of the volume is serious and full of pathos. Klemperer obviously did not intend the diaries to be 'personal'; they largely were written as source material for later projects and clearly were meant to be suitable for perusal by a broad audience.

The tone is also inconsistent. At times, Klemperer is joyful and exultant; other times he is tired and worn out. Usually he is despondent and verging upon a depression held in check only by his outrage at the events occurring all around him. These shifts in tone occur rapidly. For example, in 1936, he writes happily about obtaining a driving permit and purchasing a beautiful used automobile. Within just a few weeks, he writes despondently about the difficulties of driving and his subsequent description of the vast cost and mechanical capriciousness of the automobile is depressing and angry. His frolicking tone used to describe a lengthy automobile trip without significant incident is intended to be happy and joyful; instead, to a modern reader, it is comical due to passages such as "I drove into a difficult gas station at a dashing angle", "the warning sign 'Potholes!' was quite unnecessary, one noticed them anyway", and "at points I had reached a speed of over 30 mph" (p. 163).

Structure

The 519-page text is the first of two volumes composing the wartime diary of Victor Klemperer (the first volume, considered here, spans the time period of 1933 through 1941; the second volume spans 1942 through 1945). The first volume consists of the diary entries, forty-six pages of notes, a three-page chronology of Klemperer's life, a fairly comprehensive index, and a concise but well-written Preface. The Preface is particularly useful upon an initial reading of the text as it provides a basic overview of Klemperer's entire life.

The diary proper is divided into nine one-year sections. Within each section, every diary entry is entitled with its date of entry and all entries are presented in a rigidly chronological order, as would be expected. The entries for individual years average about fifty-one pages in length; 1939 includes the least amount of writing at only thirty-eight pages, while 1941 includes the most at ninety pages. The Preface states that the entries have been lightly edited and abridged to fit the format and length of the published text; bracketed ellipses ("[...]") are found throughout the entries. The diaries have been previously published, both in German and in English translation, in various formats and with varying amounts of editing. The Preface refers to a few prior formats; in fact, the diary has been published in twelve languages and in various formats and a bewildering array of editions.

In general, Klemperer consistently made diary notations but was by no means a daily diarist; in an average month, he would perhaps make four or five entries, and in an average year, perhaps forty to sixty entries. Each entry is generally about one page in length, with the twenty-six-page entry of July 6, 1941 being a notable exception. Often, periods of days or even weeks separate entries. As one might anticipate, Klemperer's notations were based upon the availability of time and energy and the content was strongly tied to the momentary present events of the immediate period in which the entry was made. Although numerous entries recall prior events or speculatively consider the future, the main thrust of nearly every entry is a recording of contemporaneous events. Klemperer wrote much of the diary by hand, but beginning in mid-1936, began to use a typewriter when one was available. Originally written in German, the diary is

here presented in an English translation. Klemperer often used foreign words or phrases and such passages are retained here in their original language. The English translation attempts to retain the brevity and often grammatically incorrect construction of the original, as can be evaluated by reviewing the following quotations.

Historical Context

Hitler's Rise to Power

Anne Frank and her family were in hiding from June 1942 to August 1944. World War II lasted from 1939 to 1945, involving the United States, Japan, Russia, and most of Europe. While the causes of the war are complex, historians agree that without Hitler's regime, there would have been no World War II at that time.

Following World War I, Hitler began to develop his idea of a master Aryan race. This vision included enlarging Germany by overtaking neighboring countries. The National Socialist Party, or Nazis, believed in a totalitarian government thatwould, in theory, fairly distribute wealth and provide full employment.

Faced with economic hardship and political uncertainty, Germans were responsive to Hitler's impassioned speechmaking. Hitler maintained that radicals and Jews were to blame for Germany's problems, adding that the Aryan race was naturally superior and, thus, destined to rule the world.

In 1933, Hitler became the chancellor of Germany, and, contrary to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (which ended World War I), Hitler began to build his military. Because these efforts went unchallenged by other European countries, Hitler's war machine was soon well armed. This rearmament created jobs, restored the economy, and stoked national pride, which increased public acceptance of Hitler.

Armed with a strong military, Hitler invaded Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938 and set his sights on Poland after France and Britain declared war on Germany. The Allies, however, had not been strengthening their militaries, so they were no match for Hitler's forces. In 1939 and 1940, Hitler invaded Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France. In 1941, he broke his pact with Stalin and invaded Russia.

Hitler's social design involved banning all other political parties, censoring publications that were not pro-Nazi, and forbidding interaction between Jews and Aryans. Increasingly restrictive measures against Jews followed; they were forbidden to hold public office, teach, practice law or medicine, work in the press, or run businesses. Property was seized, fines were imposed, and emigration was stifled. The Nazis had lists of all Jews in each area and forced them to wear identifying yellow stars.

These measures were the reason that Anne Frank's father moved his family to Holland when Hitler came to power in 1933. Hitler's anti-Semitism was absolute, and the Nazis engaged in the systematic killing of "undesirable" and "inferior" segments of the population that included not only Jews, but also gypsies, the mentally retarded and disturbed, and homosexuals. The Nazis viewed these groups as subhuman and often made them work under harsh conditions so that the regime could capitalize on their labor before killing them.

When defeat of the Nazis was imminent, they continued to kill as many prisoners as possiblebefore the Allies could liberate their camps. At the end of the war, six million Jews had been killed, a number representing two-thirds of the world's Jewish population at the time.

Persecution of German Jews

As soon as Hitler became Germany's chancellor, he began enacting laws that would empower his regime and limit the civil liberties of the people. These limitations were especially strict for Jewish citizens. In February of 1933, Nazi officials declared boycotts on Jewish businesses; the next month violence against Jews and their businesses intensified when the Nazis announced that the German police would no longer defend Jewish citizens or their property. Soon, Jewish judges and lawyers were pulled from cases before being forced to retire.

In April, Hitler enacted laws that would reduce the legal rights of Jews and thus pave the way for harsher persecution. Four hundred laws were enacted to seriously limit the freedom of German Jews. Jews could not sit on juries, professional Jews such as lawyers, doctors, and dentists were no longer allowed to practice, university enrollment was reduced, and attendance at cultural events was forbidden.

In September of 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were enacted, which prohibited marriage between Jews and non-Jews, made extramarital relationships between Jews and non-Jews illegal, limited Jews' ability to hire female domestic help, and prohibited Jews from flying German flags. Hitler summarily blamed all of Germany's problems on the Jews, even as the Jewish population began to dwindle.Once he had reduced their status, he instituted more drastic solutions to what he called the "Jewish Question."

Once the Nuremberg Laws were in place, the elimination of Jews became a top priority in the regime. On November 9, 1938, an event known as *Kristallnacht* ("the night of broken glass") took place. It involved the destruction of two hundred synagogues and a thousand Jewish businesses. In addition to the irreparable property damage, many Jews were beaten and killed.

Because other countries were unwilling to allow German Jews to immigrate, Hitler began forcing Jews to move to ghettoes. This would be the transition step to his "final solution." Reinhard Heydrich, an SS leader, organized the *Einsatzgrup-pen*, an elite killing squad created for the sole purpose of massacring Jews. However, Heydrich soon found that his squad could not kill people as fast as he would like, and there was a danger to the sanity of the members of his elite group.

The next step was to starve as many of the people in the ghettoes as possible, while using others to construct concentration camps. Many of these laborers were literally worked to death; the lifespan of laborers forced to work on building Auschwitz was only three or four months.

Once the concentration camps were complete, Nazi officials devised very efficient means of genocide. Soon, Jews from all over Europe were transported by train to the concentration camps, where most would meet their deaths. Once they arrived, their heads would be shaved so German manufacturers could use the hair. Any valuables had to be surrendered to the officials at once.

The numbers are staggering. In two months' time in 1942, three hundred thousand Jews from Warsaw were gassed at Treblinka. On one day in July of 1944, officials at Auschwitz killed 34,000 prisoners. In all, 750,000 were killed at Auschwitz, and one and a half million died in Maidanek. By the end of the war, the Nazis had murdered six million Jews.

Critical Overview

Critics overwhelmingly praise Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941* for its accessible style, its compelling story, and its historical significance. Peter Gay of *New York Times Book Review* comments, "To read Klemperer's almost day-to-day account is a hypnotic experience; the whole, hard to put down, is a true murder mystery□from the perspective of the victim."

Because Klemperer never intended his diary for publication, critics find that it rings true. Omer Bartov of the *New Republic* observes, "Klemperer's diary has the immediacy and the poignancy of unedited notes written in the thick of experience."

That Klemperer dreamed of writing his memoirs but feared they would never be completed is ironic given the global audience his diary has reached. The character of Klemperer himself is, in fact, part of the book's appeal. Critics commend him for his humanity, integrity, courage, and insight. Gay notes that Klemperer's "observations, including pitiless self-examinations, are unblinking; his reflections are remarkable for their precision and their penetrations."

A *Publishers Weekly* reviewer finds that Klemperer's understanding of the ramifications of the rise of Nazism has "the kind of clarity that usually comes with hindsight." As well, commenting at length on Klemperer's character, Bartov writes:

What is remarkable about Klemperer's diaries is that he has clearly understood the nature of the Nazi regime and the extent of the public's support for Hitler, but refuses to modify his view that those who brand him un-German are themselves un-German.... He thus remains the only true German in a country that denies his right to exist there.... For all his refusal to accept the realities of his situation, for all his doubts, his terrible loneliness, his terror and his delusions, Klemperer displays remarkable courage in the face of an inconceivable material and psychological catastrophe.

In a review for the *Nation*, Silvia Tennenbaum commends Klemperer as a diarist, noting that the title of the book:

says it all. Never has a victim observed his victimization with greater insight. Never has a victim described the apparatus of state-inflicted persecution with greater fidelity. Never has the isolation of living in a world that wishes one's people dead been rendered with greater pathos. Every act of cruelty as well as every gesture of kindness is scrupulously recorded.

Literary and historical scholars value *I Will Bear Witness* as a treasure of Holocaust literature. As a first-hand account of what it was like to be in Nazi Germany, the diary provides crucial details about the nuances of Jewish persecution. Tennenbaum goes so far as to proclaim, "Nothing I have read before made the years of Nazi terror soreal." In addition, Gay is quick to note "even the reader familiar with Holocaust material must be gripped by these pages." As well, a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* calls it "one of the

most important [diaries] to come out of Nazi Germany." The reviewer adds that the diary's historical contribution is its record of the "insidious progress" of policies that reduced the status of Jews in German society.

Richard Bernstein of *New York Times Book Review* praises the book as a diary that is "full of pain and anger, but also full of shrewd observationson the nature of the Nazi regime and the quality of the response of the German people to it." Furthermore, in *Commentary*, Daniel Johnson praises the diary as a great work that is among the most readable and revealing first-hand accounts of Nazi Germany. As well, Bartov summarizes Klemperer' s contribution to Holocaust literature:

What we have in this extraordinary book, then, is a view of German society under Nazism by the perfect insider who is rapidly transformed by the regime's ideology and its internalization by the population into the ultimate outsider, a Jew in a racist, violently anti-Semitic land which succeeds in bringing about the social death of its Jewish citizens before it condemns them to physical annihilation.

Comparisons to Anne Frank's diary are inevitable, but critics are quick to note how fundamentally different the two accounts are. A reviewer for *Time* calls Klemperer's diary "richer and more profoundly disturbing" than Frank's diary. Crediting both diaries as valuable and insightful, Johnson points out what he sees as the core difference between the two diaries: "It is Anne Frank's childish naivete that lends her journal its unforgettable charm, and her fate that renders it unbearably poignant; by contrast, the relatively happy end of Klemperer's war is less obviously tragic."

Bernstein acknowledges that while the two accounts show how Nazi rule was experienced by individuals, Klemperer's diary is, after all, that of "a sophisticated, assimilated, cosmopolitan, middle-aged man striving to maintain self-control and dignity as the only world he knows crumbles around him for no reason." Concurring, Tennenbaum finds that Frank's sentimental diary is read tearfully and hopefully while Klemperer's diary is not at all sentimental in its unblinking look at every "shocking" detail. She concludes that Klemperer's diary "allows no tears but breaks our hearts instead."

The diary contains lessons that can be appreciated by virtually any reader. Bartov is especially drawn to the lesson of human nature's tendency to overlook wrongs committed against others, as long as the danger remains distant. He explains,

The world that we see through Klemperer's eyes is a world in which most (though not all) Germans gradually turned their backs on the Jews, excluding them from their midst partly out of prejudice or conviction, partly out of fear and opportunism, and partly out of indifference and moral callousness.

Other critics find in Klemperer's diary a warning to the present against the repetition of the past. Johnson concludes his review with the following observation:

Truly to immerse oneself in this modern classic is to find oneself wondering, and not for the first time, whether the mentality of national self-deception and willful ignorance that it so brilliantly depicts will ever, like the ideology of National Socialism, fade into history.

Finally, a reviewer for *Newsweek* remarks, "The overwhelming theme of Klemperer's diary is that it can happen here: modern society can plunge into brutality. Day by day, he shows precisely how."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Bussey holds a master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and a bachelor's degree in English Literature. She is an independent writer specializing in literature. In the following essay, she discusses the importance of Klemperer's imagery to help the modern-day reader understand the slow spread of Nazism in Germany.

Contemporary readers of Klemperer's astonishing *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941* are struck by the unexpected details the diarist notes from his daily life. Klemperer demonstrates how the influence of Nazism was pervasive and penetrated every facet of daily life. Further, he shows how the ever-present images of Hitler and the swastika affected the psyches of the citizens of Germany, having a profound influence on the ways they behaved and treated one another. Modern readers, knowledgeable about the horrors of the concentration camps and the inhumanity of the Holocaust, do not understand how such an unimaginable evil escalated.

Klemperer's diary depicts those tiny steps with which Hitler's regime took power and gradually evolved into what is perhaps the most infamous tyranny in history. Klemperer shows how Hitler's officials were so adept at public relations that they were able to garner widespread support. The diary is thus extremely valuable to modern readers because Klemperer provides startling and memorable images of a Germany moving steadily toward the worse.

Klemperer concentrates on two forms of Nazi imagery: ordinary objects and people's behavior. Both are equally disturbing. While shopping, Klemperer encounters everyday objects somehow transformed by the new regime. On March 22,1933, Klemperer observes, "In a pharmacy toothpaste with a swastika." Eight days later, he notes, "In a toy shop a children's ball with the swastika." Later, on October 30,1934, Klemperer writes, "I received a magazine with a swastika on the cover: 'The Care of the German Cat.'"

Later, in October of 1939, Klemperer describes walking through a market where many of the retailers' goods were replaced by pictures of Hitler. Klemperer certainly understood that toothpaste, toys, and cat magazines had nothing to with political events, but he also understood that they did have something to do with political strategy.

Similarly, when Klemperer tells about the Nazis' attempts to create German names for the months of the year, he sees it as a ridiculous effort, but a potentially dangerous sign. The imprint of the swastika on so many ordinary things sends a clear message that the regime is everywhere and controls everything, and to be outside the regime is to be alone.

While on the surface, such "marketing" measures appear to be a simple means of getting in touch with the people, they are really intimidation. Such tactics were designed to lead to only one conclusion, which Klemperer labels the thought process of Nazism: "Hitler IS Germany."

The other type of imagery Klemperer provides is imagery of people's reactions to the growing Nazi influence. In September of 1935, Klemperer describes signs being displayed by ordinary citizens who have fallen under the spell of Nazism. One sign reads, "Who buys from the Jew, is a traitor to the nation," while another reads, "No Jews do we want, in our fair suburb Plauen."

The schools were a focal point for Nazi efforts. On March 22, 1933, Klemperer describes this disturbing scene:

Fraulein Wiechmann visited us. She tells how in her school in Meissin all are bowing down to the swastika, are trembling for their jobs, watching and distrusting one another. A young man with the swastika comes into the school on some official errand or other. A class of fourteen-year-olds immediately begins singing the Horst Wessel Song [a Nazi song].

The son of one of Klemperer's friends communicates another school-related incident. The boy was a "passionate Nazi" until he began thinking for himself and became disillusioned with what he saw. Klemperer tells the boy's story on September 27, 1934:

The leaders□fellow pupils□take more money from us for excursions than they spend. It is impossible to check, a couple of marks always goes into their pockets; I know how it's done, I've been a leader myself.... One fellow, who was really poor, a leader for some time, is now riding a motorcycle ...□ 'Don't the others notice too.'□'They're so stupid,' and then: 'No one dares say anything or talk to the others. Everyone is afraid of everyone else!'

This example of boyhood abuse of power demonstrates how receptive young minds were to the Nazis. They readily accepted positions of power and had no problem taking advantage of one another. Teachers were not immune to Nazi influence, either. On October 19, 1935, Klemperer explains that many teachers provide "character sketches" of their students. Commenting on a Jewish student, one teacher wrote that he "shows all the characteristics of his race." These sketches were designed to help assess the suitability of very small children for the "national community."

Another type of behavior seemed innocent enough but had harsh consequences. Modern readers can readily identify with the practice of making jokes about current events. Apparently, the same was true in Nazi Germany, as Klemperer explains on January 13, 1934. He writes that jokes about conversations in heaven are very popular, and that the best one at the time involves Hitler asking Moses, "But you can tell me in confidence, Herr Moses. Is it not true that you set the bush on fire yourself?"

Klemperer adds, "It was for such remarks that Dr. Bergsträsser, an assistant in the mechanical engineering department□an Aryan, by the way□ was sentenced to ten months in prison by the special court."

Klemperer not only shows the reader how people behaved, he offers some explanation as to why. He writes with great disgust about the manipulation of the media. First, the Nazis banned publications that were not in their favor. Securing "forbidden "

newspapers was a serious crime, as Klemperer notes when a friend of his smuggles newspaper clippings with him back from Bohemia.

Second, the National Socialists saturated the newspapers and radio broadcasts with pro-Nazi propaganda, even going so far as to cast news in a more favorable light. They made light of defeats and exaggerated their victories. The effect was that Germans, like Klemperer, began to feel that the Nazi regime would last a very long time.

This "whitewashing" extended to lesser incidents, too. On May 15, 1933, Klemperer writes about a Communist who came under scrutiny by the Nazis:

The garden of a Communist in Heidenau is dug up, there is supposed to be a machine gun in it. He denies it, nothing is found; to squeeze a confession out of him, he is beaten to death. The corpse brought to the hospital. Boot marks on the stomach, fist-sized holes in the back, cotton wool stuffed into them. Official post-mortem result: Cause of death dysentery, which frequently causes premature "death spots."

Klemperer discusses another Nazi control tactic: preaching against the individual and for the group. By encouraging people to act as a group, the Nazis positioned themselves as the leaders of the groups. In addition, they reduced a lot of dangerous independent thinking that would create resistance to their ideologies and policies.

They reduced the importance of the individual and exalted the importance of the whole, and in so doing made their followers more compliant. To the true followers, nothing was as important (not even themselves) as the good of the regime.

The next step was to provide ongoing "education " for the public, especially for young people, about the Nazi ideology. On September 4, 1934, Klemperer reports, the Reich Educational Ministry declared, "A total science of people and state based on the National Socialist idea is at the heart of the non-denominational school." In other words, the Nazis planned to perpetuate themselves by recruiting and instructing school-aged children attending public institutions.

Readers may notice that most of the examples of Nazi imagery occur toward the beginning of the diary. This is so because the early diary depicts theearly years of Nazism, when the signs of the times were subtler and seemingly harmless. A toothpaste box and a child's ball are not on the same scale as the gas chambers at Auschwitz, but by providing these early images of Hitler's grip, Klemperer shows how one escalated to the other. He does modern readers a great service by demystifying the harrowing omnipotence of Hitler, and somehow reminds them that the German people were, after all, people subject to the same influences as anyone else.

Does this mean that Klemperer's diary is a warning not to let the past be repeated? Not necessarily, but it is a tool for understanding how such a dark chapter in world history methodically evolved. Although his diary was never intended for publication, Klemperer's inclusion of these striking images makes Nazi Germany more tangible for readers who otherwise have no context for knowing what it was like.

Source: Jennifer Bussey, Critical Essay on *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941*, in *Nonfiction Classics for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

In the following review, Tennenbaum shares her experience reading Klemperer's diary, stating "nothing I had read before made the years of Nazi terror so real."

The closer we get to the millennium, the clearer it becomes that the Holocaust is the defining event of our century. The unspeakable suffering the German nation under Hitler inflicted on the Jews has become the model we refer to when we speak of man's inhumanity to man. We still suffer its aftershocks. It called into question our trust in "civilization" and created a disquietude between Germans and Jews that may take another hundred years to dispel. It is hardly surprising, then, that the Holocaust brought forth a vast outpouring of literature. The victims often clung to hope with a vow to "tell the world what went on here." But when liberation arrived at long last, an odd thing happened. Although the discovery of the death camps was greeted with shock and incredulity, it soon became clear that the world didn't really care to *keep* hearing about them. The end of the war brought joy and relief to the victors, a bad conscience and the wish to forget to the vanquished. Both wanted to return home and tend their own gardens. Only the survivors had nowhere to go; they became a nuisance, emotionally crippled reminders of a chapter in human history that left all who lived through that time feeling guilty.

Many years passed before we heard survivors' voices calling to us. Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* appeared; the words of Elie Wiesel; the scholarly researches by Lucy Davidowicz and Hannah Arendt; Paul Celan's poetry; Primo Levi's stories; Ida Fink's and Aharon Appelfeld's novels. And countless memoirs, oral histories of ordinary people. Whenever the flood of material□not all of it literature□seemed to crest, another wave came along and swept yet more scraps upon the shore. The need arose to secure Holocaust memories in a safe place□hence the creation of the Holocaust Museum. Such an official ingathering would guarantee that the important original materials had been unearthed, classified, analyzed and computerized. What remained was to sift through it carefully, write commentaries, interpretations and theses.

But closure is hard to come by.

In autumn 1995, fifty years after the end of the war, the Aufbau Verlag, a publishing house in what had been the German Democratic Republic, brought out a 1,600-page diary, written between 1933 and 1945 by a professor of Romance languages named Victor Klemperer. It is a day-by-day account of life in Dresden, in the heart of Nazi Germany, by a baptized Jew who managed not only to survive but to outlive the Third Reich. Its German title, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten* (I Want to Bear Witness to the Very End), says it all. Never has a victim observed his victimization with greater insight. Never has a victim described the apparatus of state-inflicted persecution with greater fidelity. Never has the isolation of living in a world that wishes one's people dead been rendered with greater pathos. Every act of cruelty as well as every gesture of kindness is scrupulously recorded.

Among the watchful victims of the Holocaust, Victor Klemperer stands alone. Whereas Anne Frank's *Diary* was used for sentimental purposes serving as a shrine that welcomes tearful pilgrims and the hope of redemption Klemperer's work is so utterly unsentimental, so unsparing in its shocking detail, that it allows no tears but breaks our hearts instead.

The massive two-volume edition had become a bestseller in Germany by the time I arrived to spend the winter of 1995-96 in Frankfurt am Main, where I was born. I bought the diaries and began reading them immediately, propped in my bed, night afternight, in a furnished studio at the university's guest house. Achingly spellbound, reading till 2 or 3 in the morning, it still took me almost three months to finish them. (That I was reading them in the land from which my family was exiled when I was 8 years old seemed a bitter, ironic coda.)

This fastidiously factual record, filled with touchingly honest familial details, trivial jealousies, petty quarrels, reports on illnesses, real and imagined, also contains sharp political insights, academic deliberations and vivid descriptions of the author's ever-worsening ordeal. Nothing I had read before made the years of Nazi terror so real.

I began, as it were, to walk in the author's footsteps. I watched his world shrink, month by month, year by year, until what once had been existed only in his memory. The restrictions imposed on the Jews were so bizarre that one might have thought they had sprung from Kafka's fevered imagination. Jews were forbidden to use the telephone, keep pets, go to the movies, subscribe to newspapers, use the library, buy flowers, smoke. They couldn't own typewriters or furs, go for a boat ride down the Elbe, visit a park or be seen on the streets at certain hours.

It wasn't hard to place myself into that world. I knew the landscape well, I had loved it once. I'd come back to search it for traces of my past and found that only the pictures in the museums still spoke to me of bygone days. When the Jews disappeared the beauty of the landscape was diminished, the shapes of the cities changed, the music stopped. No wonder that except in the homes of friends I can find no comfort there. Melancholy fills my heart.

No, not melancholy; the word I want is *Wehmut*, or "pain of the spirit."

Victor Klemperer (1881-1960) was born in the small town of Landsberg-on-the-Warthe, in the eastern part of the state of Brandenburg. He was the youngest of eight children of a rabbi. When he was 9, the family moved to Berlin because Rabbi Wil-helm Klemperer received a call to the pulpit of the Reformed Synagogue. The move was greeted with relief by the entire family, not only because life in the German capital was more exciting than life in the provinces but because the congregation did not ask the family to observe strictly orthodox ritual practices.

Growing up in the shadow of three older, successful brothers gave Victor little chance to gain self-confidence. (He was, however, an obsessive diarist from the age of 17.) He quit his studies early, but returned to them sporadically. He found it hard to settle on any

one discipline until he was drawn to eighteenth-century French literature and the Enlightenment. He graduated, married in 1906 and sought employment in Berlin as a journalist. He seems to have worked very hard and gained a modicum of success. (The diaries clearly show his competitive streak.) In 1914 he completed his doctorate and found a teaching job□which he left to join the army one year later. (Since he served at the front, he was allowed moments of reprieve during Hitler's reign. But this alone could not have saved him.)

Those youthful years carry the seeds of many of the resentments Klemperer addresses in his journal. He cannot shake his sense of inferiority vis-àvis his brothers, who helped him out financially now and then and considered him a dilettante. They also disapproved of his marriage to Eva Schlemmer, a pianist and musicologist they thought socially inferior. That she wasn't Jewish obviously didn't matter; they no longer thought of themselves as Jews either. By the time World War I began, all of Rabbi Klemperer's sons had converted in order to advance their careers.

In 1920 Victor received a chair in Romance languages and literature at the Technical University in Dresden. As the diaries begin, in January 1933, he and his wife have just bought a piece of land in Dölzschen, a suburb in the hills above Dresden, and are planning to build a small house. Domestic matters make up a good portion of the text in the first years under Nazi rule and provide us a wonderful, novelistic sense of who Victor and Eva Klemperer□Mr. and Mrs. K.□are. We find out that they have two cats, that they both suffer from depression, that they love the movies and that Eva isa passionate gardener. We learn that the author worries about money, and that his wife is not a devoted *Hausfrau*. We meet their friends and hear the gossip about them. We are told that he likes to read to her. We know whether it's raining outside or the sun is shining, and are privy to his thoughts concerning one or another work in progress. Above all, we are kept abreast of political developments.

The emerging scene envelops us slowly. Each day adds more homey details, but from the very beginning the political situation provides an ominous, though relatively distant, accompaniment. The National Socialists are in power, Hitler has been made Chancellor, the terror has begun. It mounts swiftly, though it hasn't yet reached the middle-class enclaves of Dresden. (On March 22, 1933, K. reports that Blumenfeld's maid has quit, saying she's found a permanent job: "The professor will soon no doubt not be in a position to keep a maid much anymore.") But there is still time for K. to learn to drive, to buy a used car so he can take Eva for drives in the country, where they can briefly forget the endless bureaucratic chicanery: harassment by the Nazi mayor, the loss of his job (in 1935). As more and more of their friends and acquaintances emigrate, their isolation increases.

In the years ahead, the political drumbeat will grow louder, demand more and more of the diarist's attention, until it is finally all that matters. It is death at the door, hunger in the belly, fear in the heart. The greatness of the diaries lies in the way they portray the inexorable push of history against the life of one man and his wife. The machinery of the entire German state is harnessed to "cleanse" the nation of its Jews. I know of no other text that describes the relentless course of this demented idea□which will play itself out

on every inch of land conquered by the Wehrmacht□with equal intelligence and humanity. Most Holocaust-memoirs are□by their very nature□limited in vision. They report what can be seen from behind barbed wire, amid the cries of the dying, or what takes place in the sealed ghetto. Great historians may write brilliantly, great novelists movingly, but the great diarist brings you directly into the mind and the belly of his society.

Klemperer was a scholar as well as an acute observer. A photo taken of him, standing in front of his house with Eva, shows a smallish, balding man in a dark three-piece suit, with large ears and sagging shoulders, who stands almost shyly behind his wife. His demeanor is professorial; it strikes the viewer as, well, typically Jewish. Eva is the more conspicuous of the two, in her white summer dress, thick-rimmed glasses, a turban and pearls, holding a cigarette in one hand. She is not a pretty woman. What is evident in the photo is their attachment□ they are a couple bound by love. It is a love, I suspect, common to many childless couples.

It was Eva Klemperer who□literally□saved her husband's life. Jews married to gentiles were spared almost to the end, an odd kind of exemption, considering that the Nazis thought of such marriages as *Rassenschande* (miscegenation), which turned the gentile partner into a pariah or, if she was a woman, a whore, and threatened the German *Volk* with the deadly virus of racial impurity.

It was Eva too□depressed, suffering from migraines□who went where he could not go, did what he could no longer do. She stood in line for the meager rations at the grocery store and, above all, she traveled into the countryside every couple of weeks, carrying the diaries to a friend's house, where they were safely stored in a trunk. Had they been found, the Gestapo would unhesitatingly have murdered anyone connected to them, however slight that contact might have been. Among the themes winding their way through the diaries, the most compelling is what Klemperer calls LTI, or *lingua tertii imperii*, the language of the Third Reich.

LTI, published in book form in 1947, is a brilliant study of the way the Nazis distorted and deformed the German language to serve their needs. The party's propaganda apparatus was quick to understand how to utilize the power of radio and talking pictures to manipulate the masses. Once the opposition had been brutally strangled and every independent news source silenced, the government could broadcast its version of the day's events and its hateful diatribes against the Jews to millions without fear of contradiction. The screaming voices of Hitler, Göbbels et al. were heard not only in the kitchen and living room of every German home but in every public place. It was an intrusion no one could escape.

LTI served as the voice of propaganda, but its twisted vocabulary also defined the government's anti-intellectual, anti-humanist *Weltanschauung*. It perfected the deceitful habit of using euphemisms to hide the true nature of a thing. Propaganda and brute terror, hand in hand, sent an entire nation plunging into barbarism.

Klemperer called his work on the diaries his "balancing pole." It kept him from falling into theabyss. At age 60 and ailing, he was sent to work in a factory. In winter's freezing weather he had to go out and shovel snow. And still he wrote, passionately and rigorously. As his situation worsened, his entries grew longer. He wanted to keep the German language, the language of Goethe and Lessing, Schiller and Heine, alive. It□more than a sprinkle of baptismal water□was what bound him to Germany and made him feel that he, and not the brutish brownshirts, was representative of the true Germans.

K. introduced LTI by quoting Franz Rosen-zweig's dictum *Sprache ist mehr als Blut* (Language means more than blood). In his own diaries he wrote, "*Der Geist entscheidet, nicht das Blut'* (the spirit, not blood, is decisive). These assertions defied the mythology of a nation that had, ever since Bismarck coined the phrase "blood and iron," believed fervently in the mystical qualities of the fluid that courses through our veins. Small wonder that German Jews disputed such dogma. In the century and a half before Auschwitz, it was an article of faith for the vast majority of these German Jews that something called the German-Jewish symbiosis existed. Despite an occasional anti-Semitic incident, wasn't there an unshakable bond between the two nations, and hadn't it engendered a resplendent Jewish renaissance? And wasn't that bond grounded in language? (Didn't the German Jews disparage Yiddish precisely because they□ too!□thought it a bastardization of German?) Paul Celan, who wrote, "*Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland"* (Death is a master from Germany), knew the allurement of the "pure" German spoken by his mother in the polyglot city of Czernowitz. He continued to write his agonized, intensely lyrical poems in German, even "after Auschwitz."

Victor Klemperer felt himself to be German to the marrow of his bones. He firmly believed he could shed his Jewishness more quickly than his Germanness. He shared the fruits of German *Kultur*; the German *Geist* was alive in him. This is why, during the first few years of his long banishment, he so desperately insisted that he embodied what was truly German.

One of the effects of the *lingua tertii imperii* was to sever the connective tissue of language between the Third Reich and its still-trusting Jews. One of the terrible effects of exile□especially for those who live by the word□is to be rendered mute by loss of the mother tongue.

K.'s deep commitment to the French Enlightenment and Revolution was a reflection of the thesis that both had influenced the great German poets and thinkers in the age of Goethe. They fell into bad repute only in a reactionary Germany that came to reject (in the name of Rousseau and Romanticism, K. would argue) the clarity of the spirit for the murk of emotion, mysticism, blood. By 1871 France had become the enemy; after the defeat of 1918 she was the archenemy. K. never fully understood that it was academic suicide, in that time, to champion Voltaire and the *philosophes* and to find any redeeming value in the concept of *liberté, egalité, fraternité.*

It was the very problem of language that kept Klemperer from trying to leave Germany, as others in his family (including his famous cousin Otto) had done. He cannot imagine immigrating to France (to teach the French about their own literature?). Palestine repels him. He makes abundantly clear how hostile he is to Zionism, voicing outrage at the displacement of the indigenous Arab population and comparing the Zionists' goal of "returning the Jews to the land" to the "blood and soil" philosophy of the Nazis. (In 1998 some of us might think him prescient.)

The prospect of going to America (despite the movies) seems equally hopeless to K. He fears he is too old to learn English and that his work, the one safe harbor in a world gone insane, will crumble. He was probably right. There were some German Jews who were willing to face death (most likely as suicides the night before they were called to report for deportation) sooner than life in a faraway country. The poet Gertrud Kolmar was such a one. Stefan Zweig fled to South America, only to kill himself there. K. decides to bear witness to the bitter end.

In May 1940 the final degradations commence. The Klemperers are forced to move from their home into a "Jewish" house in Dresden. Beginning on September 19, 1941, all Jews are required to wear the yellow star. This is a moment of the deepest humiliation for Klemperer. His own words, as they appear in the German edition, make this□and many other subtle points□very clear. The much-edited English edition does not. Perhaps this is the moment to voice my disappointment at the way Random House has handled this project. First of all, it has been three years since the German publication. This might be forgiven if it were the complete edition we held in our hands. It is not. It is volume one of two. This one ends on December 31, 1941. The second (which Random House plans to publish next August) covers the period from January 1, 1942, until June 10, 1945, when the author and his wife return to their home in Dölzschen.

K. writes, *"Am späteren Nachmittag stiegen wir nach Dölzschen hinauf"* (Later that same afternoon we climbed the hill to Dölzschen). This is the last sentence of the diaries as published in Germany. It is profoundly moving in its brevity because it carries the fullness of the unbearable, unbelievable joy that has come to them at last. The twelve bitter years of exile are over.

The two volumes cannot be split asunder like this: Their literary life lies embedded in their seamless totality. Just think□the first eight years of the Third Reich take up volume one, the last three and a half years volume two. This means that an incredible amount of material is crammed into these last, worst years of the Nazi period. Forget about the cuts; they leave out a great deal but might be acceptable if we had the entire narrative before us. In the second volume, the situation for the Jews grows more perilous by the day; K.'s entries become longer and follow one another more closely. At the same time, news of German reverses on the Eastern front has filtered in, and there are moments of hope. One of the few remaining spots where Jewish men can gather and talk freely is the cemetery□the earth of new graves smells fresh, the thick greenery surrounds them with country peace. K.'s writing becomes richer, flows more smoothly and with greater urgency and deeper emotion. K. has decided the diary will be his legacy of heroism.

The description of the final four months of the war takes up 173 mesmerizing pages of the German edition. On February 23, 1945, Klemperer is called to the office of the head of the Jewish community and given some evacuation notices to pass around. His own is not among them, but he feels certain that the end for him is coming. He is mute with horror, but continues to take note of everything around him, so he can record it when he returns home. That very night British planes rain fire on Dresden and reduce most of the city to ashes. The Klemperers are separated but both survive, and when the morning dawns and they see the devastation around them, they realize that they are free: FREE AT LAST! Eva cuts off K.'s detested star and the two of them join the stream of refugees headed south toward Bavaria and the approaching US Army. All this, of course, is missing in this edition, although its editor and translator, Martin Chalmers, briefly refers to it in his preface.

Klemperer and his wife returned to Dresden after the war, which meant living in the Soviet zone and, later, in the GDR. K., who had been a bourgeois liberal and anti-Communist before the war, joined the Communist Party. Given his experience under the Nazis, his alienation from the society he'd known before Hitler and his preference for "simple " working-class people, this was hardly surprising. (German conservatives blame him for this.) He lived a full and productive life in East Germany; Eva died in 1951 and he survived her by nine years, perhaps never able to escape the feeling of February 22-24, 1945, when he noted (in my rendition from the German): "Whenever I looked back at the heap of cinders that had been the city, I had, and still have, the atavistic emotion: *Yahwe*! It was there, in that place in Dresden, where they burned down the synagogue."

Source: SilviaTennenbaum, "A Season in Hell," in *Nation*, Vol. 267, No. 16, November 16, 1998, pp. 12-19.

Quotes

"This address not bad, and with the equality of all Christians emphasized by a curious gesture—the palm of the hand tilted and brought down in front of the eyes like a roller blind: We do not recognize the limits of races and nations—altogether topical and bold. But then at the grave a downright comical cinema scene. An old man, white nautical beard, fat, red, blue-tinged face, preached yet again, a Bible in one hand, waving a pince-nez in the other, bawling, weeping, very long and quite childishly sectarian. 400 years before, the wise men of the Bible foretold the Savior down to the smallest detail, described his grave face exactly, etc. And thus we are happy in our faith...Abrupt contradictions followed one another with remarkable napvety: 'He is sleeping until the Resurrection—he is not sleeping, he is already in heaven, we rejoice—we must have consolation.' (I have never encountered such a muddling of the two ideas of being asleep and being on the other side and of being rewarded or atoning as yesterday.) But there are countless people who still have the strength for some kind of simple belief (or *unbelief*). I only have the quite childish horror of the grave and of nothingness—no more than that." July 20, 1933, p. 25

"Yesterday Hitler put on a big show in front of his Reichstag. A loudspeaker was mounted on a statue in the fountain at Chemnitzer Platz; I heard a few sentences of Hitler's speech as I went to get a taxi in the evening. The voice of a fanatical preacher. Eva says: Jan von Leyden. I say: Rienzi. Today I read the whole speech in the *Freiheitskampf*. I almost feel pity for Hitler as a human being. The man is lost and *feels* it; for the first time he is speaking without hope. He does not think he is a murderer. In fact he presumably did act in self-defense and prevented a substantially worse slaughter. But after all *he* appointed these people to their posts, but after all *he* is the author of this absolutist system. [...] The dreadful thing is that a European nation has delivered itself up to such a gang of lunatics and criminals and still puts up with them.

"Tremendously interesting were Hitler's words about the threat of 'National Bolshevism.' He boasts about having 'exterminated' the Communists. He organized and armed them, he brutalized and poisoned them with his racial theories. What maintains Hitler now is only the fear of the chaos to follow. But we shall have to pass through that. Because: all the newspapers mentioned a small group of mutineers and seven executions. Now Hitler says he 'put seventy-seven against the wall,' and talks about a conspiracy that extended throughout the SA, which also involved three leaders of his praetorian guard, the SS.

"And how nauseating: In the reports at the beginning of July the pederast group was pushed into the foreground. As if only they had 'mutinied,' as if Hitler were a moral character. But after all he knew what the inclinations of his intimate friend and chief of staff were, after all he tolerated the sentencing of a large number of people accused of slandering Rtzhm in this respect, and this time after all it was not about 175 and the 'revolt' did not originate only with pederasts.—But of course, Frdulein von R'diger and Co. will now believe with a vengeance in their heaven-sent pure F'hrer. Eva says, the

R'diger woman and Thieme represent Hitler's followers: hysterical women and petit bourgeois." 1934, pp. 74-75

"Who can give me a guarantee that the black lot will not be drawn here?—Today, on leaving, Eva smoked a cigarette to the end outside the dentist's door. So we arrived a moment later than usual at the stop on Albert Platz, where there is a flimsy wood and cardboard construction advertising Winter Aid. A strong west wind has been blowing uninterruptedly since yesterday. As we are three steps away from it, the column sways and falls. The large group of waiting people scatters, two elderly people, a man and a woman, are struck and lie beneath it. The old man, his face red, screams—perhaps a seizure, certainly shock—and is pulled out and carried away, the lady limps pitifully and is led away to a car. It could have happened to us too. The black lot can be drawn anywhere. Fate?— " 1935, pp. 109-110

"A civil servant is not allowed to consort 'with Jews and disreputable elements.' The foreign affairs situation is completely confused, but it doubtlessly presents the Hitler government with the greatest opportunities. The huge German army is feared and used by every party: perhaps Germany will do a deal with England, perhaps with Italy, but a deal will certainly be done and to the advantage of the present government. And I certainly no longer believe that it has enemies inside Germany. The majority of the people is content, a small group accepts Hitler as the lesser evil, no one really wants to be rid of him, all see in him the liberator in foreign affairs, fear Russian conditions, as a child fears the bogeyman, believe, insofar as they are not honestly carried away, that it is inopportune, in terms of Realpolitik, to be outraged at such details as the suppression of civil liberties, the persecution of the Jews, the falsification of all scholarly truths, the systematic destruction of all morality. And all are afraid for their livelihood, their life, all are such terrible cowards. (Can I reproach them with it? During my last year in my post I swore an oath to Hitler, I have remained in the country—I am no better than by Aryan fellow creatures.)" 1936, p. 165

"If one day the situation were reversed and the fat of the vanquished lay in my hands, then I would let all the ordinary folk go and even some of the leaders, who might perhaps after all have had honorable intentions and not know what they were doing. But I would have all the intellectuals strung up, and the professors three feet higher than the rest; they would be left hanging from the lampposts for as long as was compatible with hygiene." 1936, p. 184

"When politicians idealize rural labor, they are always being hypocritical. Rousseau has never triumphed to such a degree nor been taken ad absurdum to such a degree as today. The posthumous unmasking of Rousseau is called Hitler.

"We have rediscovered the cinema at Freiberger Platz: It has the most naive (truly proletarian and enthusiastic) audience, it is cheaper than the other cinemas (80Pf for a seat in the stalls against 1.50M or 1.30 elsewhere), it has a good program, good projection, and the most spacious parking lot, a real harbor. We saw a revival of *Maskerade* there, Paula Wessely's earliest and most famous film. [...] In the supporting program the opening of the Dresden-Meerane autobahn and a part of Hitler's speech.

Without the least exaggeration: The man shouts in a strained voice like a drunken and paranoid laborer. The choice of words and the content corresponds to the tone: This is the greatest feat that has ever been accomplished. A couple of foreigners come to our country and in time more, and in the end they have to accept us after all and no longer believe the Jewish lies of the foreign press (sic!). The mixture of absence of dignity, megalomania, impotent fear is frightful. The only thing more frightful is that Germany allows itself to be governed by that." 1937, p. 230

"March 30, Wednesday evening

"Sometimes I draw a certain comfort precisely from the terrible hopelessness of the situation. This is a peak; nothing, neither good nor evil, can remain in a state of superlatives. The hubris, the brutality, the cynicism of the victors in their 'election speeches' is so monstrous, the threats and abuse of other countries assumes such lunatic forms, that the counterstroke must come some time. And we two have got so used to our poverty and troubles, that again and again there are nevertheless hours that are bearable. Reading aloud in the evenings, the work on the Dix-huitiime, no matter how pointless it is. Today the short theory section on didactic and descriptive poetry was finished. A compilation of my own ideas? Valuable, valueless? At any rate written, worked.

"The creation of legends in the middle of the twentieth century: Vogel, the grocer, in all seriousness and quite shocked tells me something that is 'certainly true and vouched for' and is circulating secretly, because dissemination carries the threat of prison: A man in Berlin takes his wife to the hospital so that she can give birth. A picture of Christ hangs over the bed. The man: 'Nurse, that picture must go, I don't want the Jewboy to be the firsy thing my child sees.' The nurse: She herself could not do anything about it, she will report it. In the evening he gets a telegram from the doctor: 'You have a son. The picture did not need to be removed, the child is blind.'

"Frau Lehmann, our cleaning woman, showed me her daughter's vocational school-leaving certificate: Conduct very good. *Ready for action.*

"Less than a week after the occupation of Austria the map of the new 'Greater Germany' was hanging in a shop window on the Altmarkt. It must have been printed long before the business.

"[...]

"April 5, Tuesday

"Yesterday the announcement of the death of Felician Gess at the age of 78. His life's work appears to have consisted of a publication on the Saxon duke Ludwig the Bearded and his relations with Luther. But he was always an upright Teuton and in 1920 objected to my appointment. Now my most intimate enemies at the university, the two Ftzrsters with their three eyes and Don Quixote Gess, are in Valhalla, and I hope I shall never see them again. But on the one hand: How petty and comical my battles and troubles of those days seem to me now; and on the other: How deeply Hitler's attitudes are rooted

in the German people, how good the preparations were for his Aryan doctrine, how unbelievably I have deceived myself my whole life long, when I imagined myself to belong to Germany, and how completely homeless I am." 1938, pp. 252-253

"But who is playing this game, and who is outplaying the other? Hitler? Stalin?—I am just reading the first few pages of the Tocqueville, which Frau Schaps gave me in 1924. No one, not even the most significant and knowledgeable contemporaries, anticipated the course of the Revolution. Every page of the book surprises me with analogies to the present. (It is my blackout reading. It's dark at six, and I cannot write downstairs. Though I shall soon have to get over this I cannot.)

"October 6, Friday

"The day before yesterday, October 4, another house search: library. Two Gestapo men (very polite) looked for books to be confiscated, catalog in hand..." 1939, pp. 314-315

"The 6th air raid warning yesterday was not without its comic side. Sunday at about quarter to ten. Nothing happened, but the all clear did not come for a good two hours, and everyone who was at the cinema or cabaret had to go down to the city cellars. I felt it was some kind of revenge. The restaurants had been terribly crowded and we had been held up having our (ever more tasteless, expensive, unpleasant) meal in the Monopol and had missed our last bus. Taxi without exception occupied. I felt as if I were a hunted animal, had awful problems with my heart. I waned to telephone the police, my wife has sprained her foot, could the infringement of the curfew please be excused—then we caught a taxi after all (shared with another party), and were here at eight. Deeply depressed by the wretchedness of being without rights. Then came the air raid warning. We did not go down to the cellar." 1940, p. 361

"Only comfort: the failure of the Italians in Albania (no longer in Greece!) and Africa, the English offensive. ??????? ????." 1940, p. 365

"To make matters worse an agitated recriminatory conversation with Eva. Her old complaint: that I hadn't listened to her and had built too late, that I had been the cause of 'years of torture' for her, that I had not signed the house over to her in time to give us security. It hurts me greatly to be accused like this. And yet she is no doubt partly justified. Building the house was completely against my nature, education, family *pressure*, advice of everyone around me, I did not at all feel equal to it. Perhaps during all these years I have had no less sorrow than Eva, but I always believed that I was putting her interests before mine and doing what was humanly possible for her. She seems to think differently. Discussions are of no help at all, they only make Eva even more miserable and myself also. I often say to myself now: Why all this offense over what is past? W e are so close to the end.—" 1941, p. 374

"All these years I had taken it for granted that my writing came first, I had taken Eva's music making for granted as a pleasant sideline. How much was my love worth, when in Leipzig your musical need came more keenly to the fore with the urge to stand on an equal footing with my philology? I was only able to free myself of my egoism after hard

inner struggle, and this struggle was not only an inner one, I allowed you to suffer from it for a long time. I was deplorably jealous of your music. Jealous love is a contradictio in adjecto—jealousy is the opposite of love, is envy, is selfishness. And then, in the twenties, how great was my sympathy when illness and accident expelled you from your true profession? It was considerable certainly, as considerable as sympathy can be, and that is not very great; but was I not often also jealous of your depression, did I not sometimes think back to our early days, when a single interest was enough for us? Each time I thought of what now stood in the way of our working together as completely as we had once done, each time I reproached myself forcefully for my egoism. And then, as you searched ever more desperately for a substitute for the music that was slipping away from you, for your reduced mobility, when it was a question of the garden, of a house of our own, how long did I resist, how belatedly—and almost too late—give way. Why? And suddenly my pride, which I had nourished the day before, collapsed. The villa! And I had believed myself free of the bonds of traditional ideas. A villa is something altogether unrespectable, is hubris, if it is not backed up by a very fat bank balance. How often did you calculate for me the possibility of building a simple house with limited financial means, how often list the practical advantages of a house of our own, how often point out to me all the houses being built by petit bourgeois clerks! The fantasy of a villa instilled in me the fear that it would be my downfall, the fear of financial entanglements and burdens held me back again and again. Can I grant myself extenuating circumstances, did this grapping with my own fear, did your depression perhaps cause me just as much suffering as it did yourself? Or are these only excuses? It's easy for Catholics, they fetch absolution for themselves. It's easy for anyone who can fetch forgiveness for himself somewhere. But if one settles accounts with oneself, forgiveness is self-deception. Can the intention, to do better in the future, help me? First of all, it is very questionable whether I still have a future (at 60 and in the clutches of the 3rd Reich), second, doing better never wipes out what one has done badly before, and third—I have always told myself that the opposite of every proverb is also true (the first step is always the easiest; you can teach an old dog new tricks...), but one, about the road to hell being paved with good intentions, is absolutely to the point..." 1941, p. 411

"Big news yesterday evening. (1) Japan declared war on the USA on the eighth (or seventh?). Everything about it is inexplicable and incalculable. Why? (Triple Pact bound to respond: if war is declared on *it*?), why now? With what prospects? What effect on the relationship Germany-USA and what on Russia-Japan? Of course according to today's Japanese telegrams a whole US squadron has already been annihilated. Goebbels' and Asian style.—Paul Kreidl thinks: Now *all* opinion in the USA will be for war with Germany. (2) The military bulletin says, henceforth it is necessary to reckon on the winter and otherwise rest. Therefore the attack on Moscow and Petersburg appears to have been unsuccessful. And how often have they already said: Russia *completely* beaten. (Exactly like last year: England *is* already dead.) (3) From Africa only reports of continuing heavy fighting. In NS style that now means: The English offensive is gaining ground." (1941, p. 449)

Adaptations

I Will Bear Witness was adapted for the stage by Karen Malpede and George Bartenieff and premiered off-Broadway in the 2000-2001 season. It was presented as part of the "Classic Stages / New Visions" series (see the Web site: http://www.nypost.com/theatre/031201a.htm). The one-man show, directed by Malpede and starring Bartenieff, is scheduled to be performed at theaters around the world. For example, The Vassar College's Jewish Studies Program will present *I Will Bear Witness* at the Bardavon 1869 Opera House (see the Web site: http://www.vassar.edu/relations/011107.klemperer.html); *I Will Bear Witness* is also scheduled to be performed at the Ko Fest (see the Web site: http://www.kofest.com/performances).

Topics for Further Study

Suppose you were to leave behind a diary that would preserve an important chapter in your life. What part of your life would it be? Consider the events of your life, both personal and historical, and choose the time you feel is most important. Write between seven and ten diary entries in which you relate these events for posterity. Include a short introduction explaining why you have selected this particular time in your life and what you hope readers will learn from reading it.

Research the Jim Crow laws, which sustained racial segregation in the American South during the first part of the twentieth century. Compare these laws to the Nazis' increasingly restrictive measures inflicted on Jews in Germany. Draw conclusions about the similarities and differences that you identify. Do you think such situations could happen in today's world? Why or why not? How do you think Klemperer would answer this question?

Choose an event from Klemperer's diary that you found especially intriguing. Find three pieces of music that capture the feeling and atmosphere of that episode. Try to find three pieces that are as different from one another as possible.

You are a substitute teacher for a high school English class that is finishing a study of Holocaust literature. Prepare for a class discussion. Create a graphic organizer that compares and contrasts Klemperer's diary with Anne Frank's. You will want to generate thought-provoking discussion during your class, so come up with at least three questions that will prompt your students.

Research a personality test, such as the Myers Briggs test, which is based on the psychological theories of Carl Jung. See if you can determine Klemperer's personality type, paying close attention to such qualities as his academic nature, his competitive streak, his patriotism, his devotion to his wife, and his relationships with his friends. Once you have determined his personality type, read more about that specific profile. What new insights do you gain from this exercise? Explain how it casts one or more of the events of the diary in a new light.

Compare and Contrast

1930s: Germans often keep private diaries in which they can express their true opinions and feelings. Fear of discovery is a risk, and many diaries are self-censored by using pseudonyms, euphemisms, and vague references.

Today: In the United States, freedom of speech is a constitutionally protected right enjoyed by all citizens. Americans freely criticize the government and its institutions.

1930s: Klemperer writes on March 17, 1933, that some German papers are permanently banned while others are sometimes banned for a few days. Government control of the press becomes an important means of influencing public opinion and maintaining support for the regime.

Today: Freedom of the press is protected by constitutional law in the United States. No matter how extreme the point of view, anyone has the right to print a newspaper expressing it. This freedom extends to harsh criticism of the government and its officials.

1930s: On April 20, 1933, Germany celebrates the Day of the Nation, the Fuehrer's (Adolf Hitler's) birthday.

Today: In the United States, influential leaders do not declare their birthdays national holidays. Only a few such birthdays are recognized in the United States, and each of these birthdays was declared a holiday after the honored person's death as a tribute to that person's life and contribution. Americans recognize Martin Luther King Day (to honor the birthday of the civil rights leader) and President's Day (to honor the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln).

1930s: Klemperer's annual salary as a professor of Romance languages and literature at Germany's Dresden Technical University is the equivalent (according to today's foreign exchange rates) of $4300.

Today: Primarily because of inflation, but also due to increased cost of living and various other economic and cultural differences, the average annual salary of a U.S. professor of Humanities or Liberal Arts is around $65,000.

What Do I Read Next?

The classic autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) is a thoughtful telling of Douglass's life first as a slave and then as an abolitionist in America. Despite suffering extreme oppression and humiliation, he was determined to become educated so he could be a leader for his people. His recollections of his past are marked by keen observations and a striking ability to recognize hypocrisy and abuse of power.

Anne Frank's diary, published as *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952), is often discussed in the context of Klemperer's diary. Frank was a teenage Jewish girl who went into hiding with her family and four other people in Amsterdam after the Nazis occupied Holland. It has become a classic in young adult nonfiction.

Thomas Keneally's moving novel *Schindler's List* (1993) is based on the true story of German industrialist Oskar Schindler, who was so horrified by the Nazis' mass murder of Jews that he employed thirteen hundred Jews in a manufacturing facility. At great personal and financial risk, he remained dedicated to saving as many Jews as he could.

Nora Levin's *Holocaust Years: The Nazi Destruction of European Jewry*, 1933-1945 (1968) remains one of the key studies of the Nazi persecution of the Jews from the year of Hitler's rise to power through the end of World War II.

The philosophical question at the center of Simon Wiesenthal's *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (1998) is whether evil can be forgiven. The author recalls his experience in a concentration camp and the day a dying Nazi soldier asks him to forgive the evils done to the Jews. Over fifty great thinkers, including the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, address this difficult question.

Further Study

Hahn Beer, Edith, *The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust*, Rob Weisbach Books, 1999.

In this memoir, the author recalls her experience as a Jewish woman acting the part of a Christian wife to a Nazi officer. Although her husband knows about her true heritage, he keeps her secret. When he is sent to Russia, she becomes a strong, independent woman who is able to save herself and her infant daughter under the most dangerous circumstances.

Klemperer, Victor, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1941-1945*, translated by Martin Chalmers, Random House, 2000.

This is the second volume of Klemperer's wartime diary. It relates the events leading up to the end of the war, including Klemperer's summons for deportation, his and Eva's escape from Dresden, and the end of the war.

_____, *The Language of the Third Reich*: LTI, *Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook*, translated by Martin Brandy, Athlone Press, 2000.

Klemperer's study of the language of the Third Reich is described in his diary. Today, this study is considered one of the most important of its kind in researching the Third Reich.

Schleunes, Karl A., *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews, 1933-1939*, University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Schleunes provides a detailed account of the development of the Nazi regime with regard to their policies toward the Jews prior to the mass executions that took place in concentration camps. Originally published in 1970, this book opened the way for additional historical studies of the Holocaust.

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Nonfiction Classics for Students (NCfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NCfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on

□classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NCfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NCfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NCfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NCfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NCfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Nonfiction Classics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NCfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NCfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Nonfiction Classics for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Nonfiction Classics for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NCfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Nonfiction Classics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NCfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Nonfiction Classics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NCfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Nonfiction Classics for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NCfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Nonfiction Classics for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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