

Mittellage-Discourse in Twentieth Century Germany: Ernst Jünger's Case

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I. Introduction

It is well known that after the World War II researchers of modern German history have repeatedly emphasized the peculiarities of Germany compared to the West; particularly regarding modernization and nationalism¹. Indeed, until 1945, there were many German intellectuals who were hostile to the West [*Antiwestler*], making a sharp distinction between the West and Germany and praising Germans' uniqueness [*Deushtum*]. They thought that they had to "protest" against Western domination of the world², and dreamed of a new world order led by Germany. And the catastrophic end of this dream in 1945 led post-World War II scholars to focus on Germans' peculiarities compared to the West.

However, since the end of the last century, it has been brought to light that modern German history cannot be defined simply through its relations with the West, and needs to be considered through multifaceted relations with other nations³. This is because the West was never the only other for Germans. In other words, the German national consciousness was formed by a complex mixture of relations and attitudes toward their neighbors on all sides in Europe and residents outside Europe.

1 For instance Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944); Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951); Helmuth Plessner, *The Belated Nation*, (1935; 1959); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871-1918* (1973); Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* (1984) and Heinrich August Winkler, *The Long Road West: 1789-1933* (2000).

2 German writer Thomas Mann (1875-1955), who is regarded as one of the leading exponents of *Mittellage*-discourse in twentieth century Germany (cf. Schoch 1992), cites in his book *Considerations of a Non-Political Man* (1918) Dostoevsky's view that the outstanding characteristic of Germans is their "eternal protest [.....] against the Roman world" (Mann 1956, 34).

3 Cf. Matsumoto 1999; Ito 2002, II; Sakai 2003, 10, & 230; Konno 2003, 227-229; Konno 2007, 2, & 370; Gruner 2008.

How can we then analyze modern German history through this updated perspective? One method considered effective is to focus on discourse regarding Germany's *Mittellage* [central position]. *Mittellage*-discourse refers to the perception of the fate and mission of the German nation based on the understanding that Germany is located in the *Mitte* [center] of Europe (often in a more limited sense, between the Latin West and the Slavic East). The recognition of *Mittellage* had a strong influence on German foreign policy and diplomatic thought after 1871, on military operational planning, and at times on civilian peace movements. It remained a focus of interest for a wide variety of intellectuals in Germany and abroad throughout the 20th century.

In terms of research history, *Mittellage* has been the subject of active consideration, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, when several elements of its discourse were analyzed. Jacques Le Rider's writings during this period dissected *Mittellage*⁴ into three important points: a fatalistic thinking, a striving for self-sufficiency, and a perceived responsibility. The first, *a fatalistic thinking*, covers both the negative and positive effects of Germany's *Mittellage*. Negative effects include Germany being perceived as a place in danger of being attacked from all sides; a place of confusion where the trends of confrontation between East and West are sharpened, and a place of division⁵. Some positive effects, on the other hand, would be considering Germany as a place where the essence of Eastern and Western culture condenses and is sublimated to the highest level⁶. The second, *a striving for self-sufficiency* is presented in relation to *Mittellage*'s negative effects, asserting that Germany should either block the influence of

4 In his study of the history of *Mitteleuropa*-ideas, Le Rider writes: "To say that Germany is part of Central Europe always implies that Germany is also the center of Europe. This narcissistic self-perception of the nation as the center of a continent, as the point of contact between the civilization of the West and the East, brings with it the image that this space must always defend its identity against extremes. It is only a small step from the idea of the »Mittellage« to the notion of the »right middle« between two »extremes«. The German-speaking world therefore likes to see itself as a place of balance between the Western and Eastern models" (Le Rider 1994, 11).

5 Faulenbach (1980) highlights *Mittellage*-discourse as a fatalistic thinking among German historians during the Weimar period (27-31).

6 Cf. Schultz 1989.

the East and West⁷, or digest it within itself, and proceed along the *goldener Mittelweg* [golden middle way], so as to no longer be disturbed⁸. The third, *a perceived responsibility*, goes further from the self-sufficiency and assigns to Germany the role of redeeming or renewing the world. Here, Germany, as the embodiment of the desirable middle, is understood to have the mission of mediating the conflict between the West and the East and bringing stability to Europe and the rest of the world.

There are also studies that refer to the background factors in the development of *Mittellage*-discourse, particularly, discourse of cultural gradient, i.e., the perception that cultural standards decline as one moves from the West to the East. A. J. P. Taylor claims that this perception defined the attitude of Germans as people in the *Mitte* towards their Eastern and Western neighbors: they revered and eagerly imitated the Westerners, but despised and ruthlessly invaded the Easterners, because they regarded the West as culturally advanced, and the East culturally inferior⁹.

Although much has already been discussed regarding *Mittellage*-discourse, this does not mean that there could not be more room for further research. Existing research has only described general trends, so there is still significant room for their findings to be supplemented or partially modified by case studies. Thoughts, including *Mittellage*-discourse, are after all the property of concrete individuals, and therefore the understanding of these thoughts can only be carried out by dedicated study of said concrete individuals. And the more individual findings contributed to research, the more room there will be for said research to be further refined.

7 During the East-West divide after the World War II, this type of argument developed into being called neutralism between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Cf. Conze 1969; Dohse 1974; Müller 1989, 70f.; Zitelmann 1993; Hillgruber 1984, 161; Zimmer 1997, 27f.

8 This type of argument was accepted as *Mittellage*-discourse and also as Germany's *Sonderweg* [special way]-discourse. Cf. Hinde 1998; Le Rider 1994, 11.

9 Taylor 2001, 1-5. Taylor sees this "dualism" has been consistent in the history of German nation from the crowning of Charlemagne as the emperor of Rome to the occupation of Europe by Nazi Germany. Jürgen Elsässer also considers this "dualism" and argues that Germans' contempt for the East has hardly been reflected upon so far, and that *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [struggle to overcome the negatives of the past] of postwar Germany must be not only reflection and reverence to the West ("westernization of Germans"), but also overcoming contempt for the East ("easternization of Germans"). Elsässer 2005, xii, & 47-48.; Other essays that refer to Germans' disdain for the East: Matsumoto 1999, 96; Ito 2002, 249; Konno 2007, 370-371; H. Takahashi 2007; Itabashi 2012, 108-109.

In this paper, we would like to first focus on *Mittellage*-discourse of Ernst Jünger (1895-1998), a German writer who experienced the larger part of German history in the 20th century and was known as a radical German nationalist in his young adulthood (ca. 1923-1931). Even after he broke away from nationalism, he continued to write about Germany's *Mittellage* in Europe and the world, and the future of Germans. In his patriotic narratives, *Mittellage*-discourse appears repeatedly, albeit intermittently.

By looking at Jünger's *Mittellage*-discourse, two major points can be confirmed. The first is the usefulness of dividing *Mittellage*-discourse into the three types outlined above. Jünger's arguments for *Mittellage* generally fall within the scope of fatalism, and as Germany's situation becomes more urgent and his awareness of the crisis becomes more acute, additional demands for independence and perceived responsibilities are developed. There are no arguments that deviate from these three categories.

Secondly, Jünger's writings teach us that Taylor's understanding of "cultural gradient" has room for revision: Among German intellectual discourse after the Romantic period, the evaluation of Germans' neighbors did not always decline from West to East, and was sometimes reversed from a kind of Rousseauian or Tacitusian perspective ("the fallen civilized West and the innocent wild East"). As will be seen below, there are many instances in Jünger's *Mittellage*-discourse where the affinity for the East exceeds that for the West. In order to fully grasp *Mittellage*-discourse, it is necessary to take a closer look at the Germans' evaluations of their neighbors.

The texts to be analyzed will be selected in chronological order so as to easier visualize Jünger's shift from romanticizing the East. Chapter II examines the post-World War I period, followed by Chapter III, which deals with texts written during World War II, and Chapter IV, which deals with texts written during the Cold War. Chapter V reviews the discussion thus far and address further issues.

II. Mittellage-discourse after World War I

The first document we will examine is “Caspar René Gregory,” published in 1928. This is a memoir to a real person Caspar René Gregory (1848-1917), and in it we can see the locus of reflective thinking about Germans as a people of *Mitte*.

The book that contains this text, *Die Unvergessenen [The Unforgotten]* (1928), is a collection of memoirs about 44 German soldiers who died in World War I. The 44 men are considered to be outstanding people who should be remembered and honored as role models for the Germans¹⁰. Jünger was the editor of the book, and also wrote the memoir for Gregory. Gregory was born in the United States, a descendant of exiled Huguenots. He studied the Bible in Germany, became a naturalized citizen, and later became a professor of theology at the University of Leipzig.

In his memoir, Jünger gives a very detailed introduction to Gregory's achievements and personality. Three points given about Gregory's character are of particular interest. The first is a deep love of humanity and compassion for others that has a religious basis. The second is his ability to put beliefs into practice in response to reality. The third is a combination of youthful, passionate feelings with a mature judgment that directs them. These three points are important because they are often understood as Eastern (Russian) or Western (French) traits, and Gregory is exemplified as a man who combined them in a harmonious way.

Looking at the traits one by one, we can see how Gregory's complex character is formed. The first trait, a deep love and compassion for humanity, is described by Jünger by saying Gregory had “a faith in the divine that breathes in all living things.” All living things “belong to God's creation” and have their share of divinity. This is why everyone and everything can be the object of “reverence,” and here arises the

¹⁰ This has to do with the fact that Junger himself was a veteran of the First World War and was very proud of his experience and outstanding military service, and also that he had lost many of his superiors, subordinates and colleagues in the war. Incidentally, before *Die Unvergessenen* he had published a number of political articles in which he demanded the revolutionary establishment of a new political order in which war veterans would occupy leadership positions.

“compassion, even deeper than that which can be acquired through enlightenment” (Jünger 1928, 119 & 125) ¹¹.

It should be noted that this compassion, based on a pantheistic vision of the world, is often considered a Russian characteristic. One of Jünger's contemporaries who possessed this view was Walter Schubart (1897-1942). In his book *Europe and the Soul of the East* (1938), he wrote that it is not the will to power that drives the Russian people, but the sentiments of reconciliation and love. The Russians do not divide the world in order to dominate it, but reconcile it by joining what is separated. They do not doubt or hate, but trust deeply and fundamentally. In others they do not see an enemy but a kindred spirit. And all of this is based on the recognition that the world we live in is a holy one¹². Jünger, too, suggests a kinship between Gregory's love of humanity and compassion and that of the Russians by pointing out Gregory's strong interest in Tolstoy or the fact that Gregory, like Tolstoy, was called a “early-Christian” (Jünger 1928, 124)¹³.

However, Gregory's personality was not entirely Russian. He had nothing to do with the self-destructive rashness and aimlessness that are said to be characteristic of Russians¹⁴. Jünger acknowledges the similarities between Tolstoy and Gregory in their early-Christian beliefs, but says that they are nevertheless “very different” (124). It is

11 The compassion “which can be acquired through enlightenment,” which Jünger refers to as “shallower” than that rooted in creationist beliefs and pantheistic worldviews, refers specifically to that which has been refined into a legal form, such as the Declaration of Human Rights, and has become autonomous and separate from concrete individuals and objects. Jünger refers to this formalized compassion somewhat disparagingly by calling it a demand for “the equality of all those who have human faces” and associates it with the “resentment of the oppressed” (Jünger 1928, 124f.).

12 Schubart 1979, 16. When Jünger was writing his memoirs for Gregory, this book by Schubart had not yet been published, but it would later have a strong influence on Jünger after he learned of it in the early 1940s. However, Schubart had already by that time been taken away by the Soviet state police and disappeared forever. Schubart was almost unknown in Germany, but he became a recognized name when Jünger mentioned Schubart's works in his book.

13 Being a “early-Christian” means pursuing a “direct imitation of Christ” (Jünger 1928, 124), that is, neither a mastery of theological knowledge nor observance of church rituals, but a daily practice of Christ's way of life. This original way of being a Christian was passed down from the Eastern Orthodox Church to the Russian Orthodox Church, and has long remained as a characteristic of Russian Christianity. Cf. Y. Takahashi 1989, 89.

14 Among Jünger's contemporaries, Nikolai Berdyaev pointed out the formless and aimless nature of the Russian people in his Dostoevsky-essay (1921). A German translation of this essay was published in 1925.

well known that Tolstoy was a confused individual who carried serious conflicts between his beliefs and reality, and continued to be tormented by feelings of depression and self-denial¹⁵. In Gregory's life, on the other hand, there was a “close connection between faith and realistic lifestyle” (123): His life was an honest expression of his belief.

Here we find Gregory's second attribute, the ability to act on his beliefs in response to reality (something often considered lacking among Russians).

Gregory's way of responding to things is clearly distinguishable from Tolstoy's in that he usually reaches his conclusions very quickly, and these conclusions are usually in perfect harmony with reality. In other words, Gregory's way of responding was something that came from the depths of his heart, but had a practical nature. (124)

Gregory was able to transform his compassion for humanity into “social actions” without hesitation, even in situations where the question of “whether or not it was appropriate for a German professor to do so” might arise (124)¹⁶. In such actions, his “practical nature” was demonstrated to the fullest.

This provides evidence to support that Gregory had demonstrated French characteristics in addition to his Russian ones. This is because the “practical nature” that Gregory is said to have possessed is commonly understood to be a characteristic of the Latin nations¹⁷.

15 Before and after his “conversion” to the Christian faith, Tolstoy seems to have continued to worry about his role in reality. From this point of view, the following sentences in Tolstoy's *Confession* (1882) seem to have accompanied him throughout his life: “five years ago, a strange state of mind began to grow upon me: I had moments of perplexity, of stoppage, as it were, of life, as if I did not know how I was to live, what I was to do, and I began to wander, and was a victim to low spirits. (...) I felt that the ground on which I stood was crumbling, that there was nothing for me to stand on, that what I had been living for was nothing, that I had no reason for living.” (Tolstoi 1899, 12, & 14)

16 Jünger notes that Gregory “for example, picked up a barefooted boy injured by a shard of glass in a wheelbarrow and drove him all the way to his home in Leipzig, or took over the job of rolling stock on a cold rainy night to let the soaking wet streetcar crew warm himself up by a cup of coffee at a nearby eatery.” He notes also that Gregory “stood in line at a bakery for exhausted women during wartime, protecting a Jewish immigrant family from the teasing of passengers on a third-class trip through the Mediterranean” and belonged to a Christian workers' association to “improve the conditions of the workers” (Jünger 1928, 124f.).

17 For example, Madame de Staël (1766-1817) stated in her *On Germany* (1810; 1813) that many of the people of the “Latin intellectual countries” (Italians, French, Spanish, Portuguese) who

Gregory's third attribute, the combination of youthful passion and mature judgment that directs it, can also be understood as a synthesis of Russian and French characteristics. Let us begin with the following evaluation of Gregory's death in battle:

This sacrifice, though it was made in the splendid fire of an emotion that had not diminished with age, was made with the perfect clarity of a spirit that had reached the highest degree of maturity, and deserves even more recognition as such. (118)

When Gregory was already a university professor and renowned biblical scholar, he “enlisted as a war volunteer at the advanced age of sixty-eight, and suffered the fate of a soldier as a second lieutenant at seventy-one” (118). His departure for the war, which might seem unreasonable, was the result of a passionate sentiment that was not typical for someone his age, but simultaneously displayed the mature judgment of the wisdom that would come at his stage of life. What Jünger sees in Gregory's last years is a rare harmonious combination of the temperaments of Germany's Eastern and Western neighbors:

This was Gregory's nature, and those who are able to give objective and clear expression to the movements of their souls are indeed of great educational value to us Germans. On the one hand, though we praise "Latin clarity," we are shocked by this clarity, as if we were being accused of our own personality deficiencies. On the other hand, we are both disturbed and fascinated by the radiance of the powerful but undirected soul forces inherent in our Eastern neighbors. [.....] We tend to lose sight of the correct harmony

“inherited their culture and language from the Romans” “have inherited the ingenious skill of the Romans in the handling of worldly affairs.” (de Staël 2000, 23). The “depth of mind” that Jünger refers to in contrast to the “practical nature” was, in de Staël’s understanding, something that Latin people tended to lack. The Latin peoples, she said, “are less inclined to abstract ideas than the Germanic peoples, and seek more worldly pleasures and interests.” Or “the Germans often make the mistake of putting into conversation things that are only fit for books, and the French sometimes make the mistake of putting into books things that are only fit for conversation” (25f.).

between the reality of our soul and the factual reality, which is why figures like Professor Gregory have such a calming effect. (124)

What is interesting about the above quote is that, first, it suggests that the union of the characteristics of the East and West is the ideal of the German people. Germans tend to “lose sight of the correct harmony between the reality of [their] souls and the factual reality.” In other words, they are unable to express their beliefs and ideals in reality, in an appropriate way, and as a result, they tend to be hostile to reality, ignore it, or lose their beliefs and ideals and become desperate¹⁸. For such Germans, Jünger presents Gregory as the best example of “what a living example should be” (129).

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the East and West are considered to be both attractive and threatening. Jünger says that the “Latin clarity” of the Westerners is, for Germans, not merely an object of admiration, but also a sharp blade to hurt them. In fact, many Latin intellectuals were proud of their rationality (clarity of their mind) and more or less disdainful of Germans as an incomprehensible and irrational people¹⁹, and Germans since the Renaissance had been sensitive to this disdain, and not rarely counterattacked against it²⁰. Jünger also argues that Germans find the intense and unstable disposition of Easterners to be both unsettling and fascinating. Indeed, contemporary Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) had said that for the people of the West, Russians were extreme, irrational, and unearthly people²¹. However, among some Germans, these traits were linked to enviable traits as well, such as an

18 Incidentally, this is in line with what Berdyaev described as the characteristics of Russians (“*Russians are either apocalypse fanatics or nihilists*”). Jünger’s view of Germans has much in common with Berdyaev’s and Schubart’s views of Russians.

19 Some intellectuals whom Jünger is known to have had some affinity with, for example, Caesar (100 B.C.-44 B.C.) and Tacitus (ca. 56-120) in ancient times and Voltaire (1694-1778) and Stendhal (1783-1842) in modern times, expressed their pride in the rationality and sophistication of their own people and their contempt for the irrationality and coarseness of Germans. Even Madame de Staël, who favored Germany, thought that German language lacked the clarity of French.

20 In this connection, the following statement by Jünger is suggestive. “*The German language belongs to the proto-languages, and as a proto-language [Ursprache] it instills an insurmountable mistrust into the sphere of civilization, the world of cultured behavior*” (Jünger 1930, 26).

21 Cf. Berdyaev 1978, 19, & 194ff.

unbridled vitality which was not seen in Westerners, who often suffocated under existing forms²².

The above suggests that Jünger almost reversed the traditional assessment of East and West. The low cultural standards, vulgarity, and barbarism, which were usually regarded negatively as “characteristics of Easterners,” were usually perceived positively by him, with an impression of strength, freedom and intrigue²³.

We examined above Jünger’s *Mittellage*-discourse after World War I, using his memoir for Caspar René Gregory as reference. The contents of the memoir can be seen as a synthesis of fatalistic thinking (demonstrating the negative effects of *Mittellage*) and a striving for independence. Here, Germans are portrayed as a marginal, young nation in the *Mitte* of two extremes (the East and West), unable to become either of them (in this respect, it is more self-criticism than a negative effect). However, this is not to say that Germans have no model to follow. By presenting Gregory's character as a “living example” for Germans, Jünger tried to encourage Germans to reach a stage of maturity where they could combine the virtues of their “neighbors” from the East and West. In this respect, we can also see the demand for self-sufficiency in Jünger’s narratives. In the chapter below, the next phase of Jünger's *Mittellage*-discourse will be discussed.

22 German writer Ernst von Salomon (1902-1972), often associated with Jünger, provides testament of this phenomenon. Salomon, who went to Latvia as a volunteer soldier after World War I, recalled his confrontation with the Red Army, and wrote that “behind the eerie darkness lurked an obscure and amorphous force. It blocked our way, making us half admire and half hate it.” (Salomon 1933, 66) Another representative German who was strongly fascinated by Russia was Thomas Mann. Both Jünger and Mann were heavily influenced by the Dostoevsky boom in the early twentieth century (that began with Moeller van den Bruck). Cf. Weiß 2005; Schüddekopf 1972; Koenen 2005.

23 Therefore, while the National Socialists, who dreamed of a new world order led by Germans, and with whom Jünger shared to some content a similar philosophy, were notorious for their disdain of the Slavs, Jünger had decent sympathy toward “Eastern neighbors.” Possible reasons for this sympathy are, negatively, that Jünger was an anti-Western polemicist at that time, and positively, that he perceived the German “character” to be very similar to that of Russians. According to him, “German traits” do not have “a preferred form that can speak for them,” and therefore, in terms of discourse and propaganda, Germans are unable to compete with the Westerners, who are skilled in self-styling (Jünger 1928, 118). However, it is precisely because of Germans’ inferiority in self-styling that they possess an indefinable and powerful force that is difficult to grasp (cf. Jünger 1930, 21f.). Such an understanding of “German traits” is very similar to the German (and even Russian) stereotype of Russians.

III. Mittellage-discourse during the World War II

In Jünger's *Mittellage*-discourse during the World War II, two points are worthy of attention. The first is the recognition of Germany as the *Zentrum* [center] where opposing cultures of East and West clash, and the premonition that Germany, from its *Mittellage*, will bring about a renewal, which is assumed to be something good. The second is the declaration that Germany has found itself to be a country where negative European trend begin to accelerate.

The first can be found in a journal entry dated August 21, 1943. At the time, Jünger was stationed in Paris as an officer of the *Wehrmacht* (the unified armed forces of Nazi Germany). From his experience of observing pro-German French people, who went beyond mere sympathizers, he wrote the following:

By the way, I have noticed that a love for Germany is found only among a few residents who still have a certain fundamental strength in their hearts, apart from those who are bought with money, of course. This is the hidden undercurrent that manifests itself similarly to how some Germans love Russia, and this undercurrent is countered by the forces that seek order on the model of the West. New formations will emerge from the clash between the two. And the center, above all, will be the stage for that clash. (Jünger 1950, 384)

At the outset, it is striking to note that the pro-German attitude of the French and the pro-Russian attitude of the Germans are seen as essentially the same thing: a longing for a less marshaled, simplistic (“fundamental”) Eastern life compared to the more formal and order-oriented West²⁴. Here again, as in the previous chapter, this

24 In his study of the prejudices of neighboring nations against Germans, Manfred Koch-Hillebrecht points out that the prejudices of Westerners against Easterners originate in the image of ancient barbarians, that Easterners are often regarded as backward, rural, and obsolete, but also as people who have not yet experienced cultural depravity and exhaustion of their vitality, and that the image of Germans in France corresponds to the image of Russians in Germany. (Cf. Koch-Hillebrecht 1977, 245-246, & 248.)

primarily occurs from “cultural gradients”-recognition, but the evaluation of Eastern and Western cultures is reversed. Through the suggestion of the closeness of Germans and Russians (both as being people of the East), a more favorable attitude toward the East is shown.

In the last section, Germany is said to be the focus of the conflict between the West and the East, and the expectation is expressed that something new (good) will come out of Germany from this conflict. At the root of this expectation is the idea, formulated in the context of German *Lebensphilosophie* [philosophy of life] that “culture is renewed through the constant confrontation between »forms of life« and »life itself«.” For example, in his essay *The Conflict of Modern Culture* (1918) Georg Simmel (1858-1918) argues that “life” (living things; especially: human) produces various cultural “forms” such as laws and customs, but that these products eventually harden into an autonomous order that binds the life which first produced them. This life then, feeling restricted, attempts to break down the order. Simmel argues that new forms are born out of this conflict, and that this continual renewal of forms is the history of culture²⁵. Jünger diverts this opposition between “forms of life” and “life itself” to the geographical East-West axis: to the opposition between the more rustic Eastern world (closer to raw life) and the formal and orderly Western world (farther from raw life). This geographical appropriation of the arguments of *Lebensphilosophie* can already be seen in Schubart's *Europe and the Soul of the East*²⁶, mentioned in the previous chapter. Jünger, who was

25 Cf. Simmel 1968, 11-12. Jünger expressed similar ideas in, for example, *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* [Combat as Inner Experience] (1922), *Vom Geiste* [On the Spirit] (1927), and *Die totale Mobilmachung* [Total Mobilization] (1930).

26 In Schubart's terminology, “Europe” refers to the West and “Russia” to the East, and likens form and the soul (lifeless form vs. formless life) to a “glass” and “wine.” Schubart argues: “The coming Russia is the refreshing wine that can revive the exhausted life of modern humanity, and Europe is the sturdy vessel that should hold this wine. Without a solid form to collect the wine, the wine must drip to the ground, and without the wine to fill this form, the gorgeous glass becomes nothing more than a cold, empty decoration deprived of its role. Only where there is wine and a glass, mankind can drink and share it with joy. Modern Europe is form without life. Russia is life without form. In the former, the soul has left the form, and an empty vessel has been left behind. In the latter, life has not yet attained a new form” (Schubart 1979, 349). Incidentally, it is interesting to note that for Madame de Staël, the same role is played by Germans. “It is not possible that the literature and philosophy of the German writers, the most cultured and the most contemplative of Europe, should not be worthy of a passing mention. Indeed their literature is accused of being in poor taste, their philosophy of being full of madness. But even if a literature is not worthy of the French code of good taste, it may contain

working intensively on Schubart's book at this time, adopted Schubart's scheme and identified Germany as a place where a new phase of culture through East-West confrontation would begin²⁷.

However, Jünger does not always see *Mittellage* in a positive way. The description of Gregory's memoir in the previous chapter can also be read as a negative perception that Germans are sandwiched between two extremist neighbors who are unable to provide solid guidance to live by. In addition, Jünger admitted to a negative perception, which was very popular since the establishment of Imperial Germany, that “*Germany is in danger of military encirclement by the neighboring countries of the East and West. Two-front war is the fate of the Mitte and a classic threat to it*” (Journal on February 28, 1943: Jünger 2015 [vol. 3], 14-15)²⁸.

Linked to such negative perceptions is the second recognition mentioned above: the understanding of Germany as the *Zentrum* [center] where negative trends in European first erupted on a large scale. In October 18, 1944, he wrote the following in his journal:

Kniébolo broadcast on the radio that they will begin forming Volkssturm battalions. This is a new preparatory work for the measures to annihilate the entire population. We have seen drastic actions like this from him before, time and time again: the blowing up of synagogues²⁹, the wiping out of Jews, the bombing of London, air strikes, and so on.*

new ideas [.....]. French literature is threatened with exhaustion. Now it seems necessary to revive the French spirit itself with a more vigorous sap” (de Staël 2000, 27f.).

27 However, Jünger did not adopt Schubart's argument as it was. Indeed, Schubart argued about the confrontation and mediation of Eastern and Western cultures, but he does not mention Germany's *Mittellage*, and regarded Germany as a member of “Europe” in the West. He assigned the role of mediator for East-West conflict to Russians (considering them people of the East). “*The accent of the human innovation which is involved in, or even consistent with the reconciliation of the East and West must be on the side of the life, the side of Russians, not on the side of form. [.....] In the core question of existence, Europeans must model themselves after the Russians, and not vice versa. If the European is to ever hope to achieve the goal of eternity, he must give in to the Russian and Eastern assessment of the world*” (Schubart 1979, 349).

28 In both Imperial Germany's military and government, while the aim was to prevent a recurrence of the siege situation during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), it was recognized as the fate of *Mittellage* that the Latins and Slavs would collude to attack the Germans. Cf. Kōsaka 1978; Görlitz 1998.

29 This may refer to the bombing of the Tłomackie Synagogue in Warsaw (May 16, 1943) which was carried out as proof of the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (April 19 - May 16).

These dreadful actions are now carried out on the largest scale against Germans. He first shows that such behavior is rational and feasible, destroys the preventive measures, and then gives the masses a chance to agree. The enthusiastic cheers that greeted him on the stage were, in essence, a consent to self-destruction, the most nihilistic act of all. It is therefore frightening that the extraordinary applause for the agitators' music has remained uninterrupted to this day. Of course, Kniébolo is also a European phenomenon. Germany as a center will always be the first place where this kind of thing comes to be seen in a radical way. (Jünger 1950, 562)

* *Kniébolo*: Hitler's nickname in Jünger's journals

Jünger describes here his impression of the Nazi movement (and of German people who continued to support it³⁰) that drove Germans toward mass destruction, mass murder, and mass suicide³¹, with regard to Hitler's order to organize the *Volkssturm*, which was ultimately nothing more than a mishmash of citizen armies³².

This concept of abnormality stems from the Germans' history of mass destruction and genocide. However, as the description at the end of the quoted passage suggests, Jünger does not see this as a characteristic of Hitler or the National Socialist movement, nor as an aberration of the Germans alone, but as an "European phenomenon."

Afterwards, "7,000 of the captured Jews were shot, 7,000 were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp, 15,000 were taken to the Lublin concentration camp, and the rest were sent to labor camps." (Hilberg 2012, 390)

- 30 According to Ulrich Herbert, after the attempted assassination of Hitler on July 20, 1944, "there was no longer any sign of disturbance or attempted overthrow in Germany. Rather, the report conveys the relief and joy of the people that Hitler had survived the assassination almost unscathed. »Almost without exception«, reports came in unison from all regions that »ties to the Führer had been strengthened and their trust in the leadership had been reinforced.« / Even non-Nazis rejected assassination »because they were convinced that only Führer could overcome the current situation and that his death would result in chaos and civil war.« The myth of the Führer was indeed damaged to a great extent by the military situation and air raids, but it was still functioning." (Herbert 2021, 237f.)
- 31 While Sebastian Haffner calls the so-called "Nero Order" of March 1945 "an order that no German should survive" or a "death sentence" for Germans (Haffner 2017, 287-294), Jünger took the preceding order to organize *Volkssturm* as a death order.
- 32 Hitler's proclamation to establish *Volkssturm* for the impending mainland battle, was issued on September 25. It was officially announced in mid-October, and then men between the ages of 16 and 60 were mobilized. Cf. Kershaw 2021, 137.

What he is referring to here is, what he calls “nihilism³³”: a mental illness that originates in modern Europe, a disease that includes “the demonic impulse toward hatred, division, and extermination” (Jünger 1949: 77), the “persecution” of certain classes, ethnicities, races, and faith groups that stems from this “demonic impulse”, and “ruthless thinking” (16) of theories and ideologies that justify such behaviors³⁴.

The peculiarity of Germany as the *Zentrum* is that it is “the first place where this kind of thing comes to be seen in a radical way.” Rather, being the catalyst of this radicalism makes it the *Zentrum*³⁵.

We examined by far the *Mittellage*-discourse during World War II, using Jünger’s journal entries. Here, the fatalistic and negative effects seem to be predominant. In the first quote, the conflict between the Western culture, which is well-structured and estranged from the raw life, and the Eastern, which lacks form yet and is close to the raw life, is discussed, and Germany is mentioned as the point of conflict between these two sides. This can be seen to have positive effect as well, if the *Mitte*’s negative impact of being a meeting point where opposing cultures clash can ultimately bring forth a new

33 Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, nihilism in Jünger’s terminology fundamentally refers to the fact that the belief in the divine has been lost or skeletonized since the late Middle Ages or early modern times. Moreover, it includes at least (a) the development and use of technology as a means of self-help by modern people who have lost their connection with God, (b) the absence of the meaning of death (and consequently the meaning of life) that has become more serious with the development of technology, (c) the loss of the compassion and respect for others based on the belief in creationism, and therefore (d) an abnormal coldness and aggression toward others. Cf. Nogami 2020.

34 In *Der Friede [The Peace]* (1945) which Jünger was writing at this time, he said that nihilism “built its capital” especially in Germany and Russia (Jünger 1949, 61). Germany may have represented race hatred and Russia class hatred. In a journal entry dated December 7, 1941, a French writer Louis-Ferdinand Céline (1894-1961) is portrayed as a nihilist who understands both Nazi and Bolshevik violence. This is when Jünger met Céline at the *Deutsches Institut* in Paris. “He said he was surprised that we, as soldiers, did not try to shoot, tie up, and eradicate the Jews. [.....] »If the Bolsheviks were in Paris,« he said, »they would show you how they search every single dormitory, every single house. I know what to do with a bayonet. « I learned a lot from listening to him ramble on like this for two hours, because I understood the tremendous power of nihilism from watching him. These people only listen to one melody. But the melody is unusually powerful. They are like steel machines that continue on their way until they are crushed.“ (Jünger 1950, 72f.)

35 The image of such a *Zentrum* may be easier to understand if we think of it in the volcano metaphor that Jünger liked to use (Jünger 1930, 11). The whole disease of nihilism lies underground like magma, but once the crater opens, it foams up and erupts at once, and the “burning crater” expands while collapsing the surrounding areas. If Europe is a volcanic zone of nihilism, then Germany, as its “Zentrum,” is its crater.

era, as would be Jünger's expectation. However, in the second quote, Germany is seen as the place where the unfavorable trends of the whole of Europe first reach their extremes. This negative perception of *Mittellage* was maintained and developed after the World War II. We will see this in the next chapter.

IV. Mittellage-discourse during the Cold War

After 1945, living in the western part of a divided Germany, Jünger began to understand the fate, history, and courses of the German people from *Mittellage* more than before. There are four distinctive points in this period of his writings to discuss: (A) neutralism, (B) the appeal for European integration, (C) the shift in the sense of belonging from the East to the West, and (D) reflections on the inability of Germans to achieve political unification.

(A) First, regarding neutralism: in his essays *Über die Linie [Across the Line]* (1950) and *Der Waldgang [The Forest Walk]* (1951), Jünger, fearing that Germany would be made the front line in a proxy war between the United States and the Soviet Union, expresses his opposition to the steadily advancing rearmament of both German states, and urges the East and West Germans not to take sides with either the U. S. or the USSR.

Defeat is always miserable. But [.....] defeat also has many advantages. Defeat is shut out of action, and therefore shut out of the complicity that is tied to action. In that sense, defeat has a moral advantage. [.....] / We should not give up this and other advantages merely to participate in suspicious actions. Shadows of new conflicts are already falling over our country. Germany's enemies would like to use Germans to their advantage. This is because of the Mittellage of Germany, but also because of the fundamental strength hidden within the Germans. This gives the Germans an advantage, but brings new dangers. (Jünger 1951, 35)

So far Jünger has discussed the significance of Germany's *Mittellage* from the viewpoint of Germans themselves. Here, however, he refers to its significance from the perspective of the U.S. and the USSR. Beyond being in the *Mitte* of Europe, Germany is now in the *Mitte* of the U.S. and the USSR, at the forefront of the global confrontation between them. Because of this geopolitical importance, Germany has become an entity that both sides “would like to use (...) to their advantage.” Moreover, Germans have untapped, powerful potential³⁶ (in Jünger's terminology: *Elementarkraft* [fundamental strength]): they can be made to be useful pawns if guided successfully.

Amidst the “new danger” that arose after the war, Germans had to first adopt a sober attitude toward ideology. Germans in the East and the West have been imbued with grandiose ideologies such as “Conquer Imperialism,” and “Defend the Free World,” and were about to be turned into mercenaries of their own hegemonic powers. However, “*the era of ideology, as it was still possible in 1918, has passed. Ideology is now only a very thin layer of make-up of the great powers*” (36). Jünger stresses that Germans have been disillusioned by ideologies in the periods leading up to the end of the National Socialist era, that they have already “paid their tuition fees,” and that they cannot afford to become accomplices in the “suspicious actions” of the U.S. and the USSR. Nevertheless, if Germans succumb to the lure of an ideology that is so “thin” that its true intentions are transparent, Germans will end up realizing “*the darkest of all current threats*”, that is, “*German armies turning on each other*“ . (Jünger 1952, 115)

Based on this understanding, Jünger advocates a neutralist position. In addition to Jünger, journalist Paul Sethe (1901-1967), Jacob Kaiser (1888-1961) of the Christian

36 This is an idea which Jünger has long been fond of. In *Die totale Mobilmachung [The Total Mobilization]* (1930) for example, he refers to the patriotic fervor of the German war volunteers at the outbreak of the First World War and says, “*This uncertain fervor that flared up for Germany, which could neither be explained nor seen, did in fact produce a work so powerful that it shook other nations to the bone. What would have happened if this fervor had already had a direction, a consciousness, a form?*” (Jünger 1930, 22), insists that “*the primordial material, the primordial power that resides in the innermost recesses of the nation, has been left untouched*” even after the defeat in the war (21). In *Der Friede [The Peace]* (1945), too, he argued that after the World War II, Germans “*still retain powerful reserves in themselves.*” (Jünger 1949, 63).

Democratic Union, and Ernst Niekisch (1889-1967), one of the closest friends of Jünger, have called for German neutrality as “the third” to mediate the East-West conflict.

However, during the Cold War, even though in the form of neutralism, the *Mittellage*-discourse generally did not have the same importance as it did. As the division of Germany became permanent, the self-perception of *Mitte* as independent from the East and the West became untenable. Even the neutralism of outspoken and influential commentators such as Sethe and Kaiser remained the opinions of a political minority, and Jünger's neutralism, like Niekisch's, has received little attention to date.

(B) The appeal for European integration emerged as means to break through this situation. In *Der Friede [The Peace]* (1945), which he wrote during the World War II, Jünger had already called for the establishment of a federal European state. It called for exemption from punitive treatment of Germany, but he himself had come to regard such integration as a fantasy after experiencing the harsh postwar conditions of occupation, partition, land reduction, and expulsion. However, as it became clear that it was not only Germany but Europe as a whole was divided and in danger of nuclear war, Jünger became convinced again of the necessity of this demand. In *Der Waldgang*, he writes:

The growing tension between the East and West threatens to choke off the right path. This is as certain as the fact that a table cannot stand on two legs. It needs at least three. Whichever side, if we get caught up in the conflict between the East and West, we are playing a fool's game. The division of Germany, and indeed of Europe, cannot be stopped in this way. The division can only be ended by the European elites, under increasing pressure, grasping their own unity and drawing conclusions from it. This will at the same time put an end to our serious historical conflicts, such as Franco-German and Polish problems. (Jünger 1952, 69f.)

It is well known that after the World War II, when the fall of Europe was fully underway, various European integration movements, partly originating in the interwar

period, were revitalized³⁷. Jünger's call for integration was among such various voices. Based on the sober recognition that Germans could not be a powerful political entity in world history (Jünger 1951, 36), he now called for Eastern and Western Europe to break away from each hegemony and unite, thus standing as a balancer to both hegemonic powers. There is nothing particularly unique about this argument, but in the study of Jünger's thought, this call for integration marks a drastic change from his aggressive nationalist discourse of the Weimar period.

In this development of thought from the demand for neutrality to the demand for European integration, Jünger's perception of the *Mittellage* undergoes a major change. The East is still a Slavic (Russian) world, no matter how much “internationalism” is advocated there. However, the core of the West is no longer the Latin (French) world, but the United States. Therefore, Germany no longer occupies the *Mittellage* within Europe, but rather between America and Eurasia. Moreover, the *Mitte* itself has now expanded beyond Germany to the whole Europe. It can also be seen as the embedding of Germany in Europe.

(C) This change resulted in a shift in the sense of belonging from the East to the West. This is because, among the “neighbors” of the East and West in the pre-1945 *Mittellage*-discourse, the West (France) became even closer in the context of the demand for European integration, while the psychological distance to the East (Russia) only increased as the Cold War took off.

This shift was a significant change, given that Jünger initially felt a closeness towards the Russians (i.e., the East) much more than the West. This change can best be confirmed in the essay *Der gordische Knoten [The Gordian Knot]* (1953), which does not contain *Mittellage*-discourse in the proper sense; Germany is seen as a member of the West, not as the *Mitte*. On this basis, the contrast between the East and the West is repeated. Compared to the magnitude of the differences between the East and the West, the differences between regions inside the West (for example, between Germany and France, or between East- and West-Germany) are said to be insignificant. In this respect,

37 Cf. Itabashi 2016; Kitamura 2014.

it is also possible to see Jünger recognize the “embedding of Germany in Europe” at this time.

However, European integration to the extent that it could be autonomous as a third pole did not become a reality; the Germans themselves became more accepting of the division of Germany, and even positive attitudes regarding the split seemed to spread throughout. As a result, the demand for neutrality and integration was de-emphasized in Jünger's writings. This was not because he approved of the East-West division of Germany and the East-West confrontation in the world. Rather, what characterizes his texts from the 1960s onward, when the tension between the East and West became increasingly intense, is his frustration or resignation at the fact that the division and confrontation could not be resolved at all, and a solitary thought that tries to accept the unacceptable.

(D) This is how reflections on the inability of Germans in political unification emerged. In his essay *Der Weltstaat [The World-State]* (1960), Jünger writes:

German national politics included so much baroque politics. The interests of the princes and the ties with Austria made it necessary to do so. Germany's Weltpolitik also contained a large amount of national politics. This is the reason why Germany was not able to conduct genuine Weltpolitik against Russia, which was its true test. In neither world war was Germany able to conduct Weltpolitik in a proper way, before or after the fighting. Such a waste of energy is in sharp contradiction with the fact that German metaphysics has the power to encompass the world and the Earth, and to contain within its own framework the various discords of today. (...).

Today's division [of East/ West Germany] is the outward manifestation of this split, which has reached its depths and extended far into the past. In Germany, the Reformation and the various revolutions were not resolved in an »either alpha or beta« manner as in England and France, but rather left undecided as »both alpha and beta«. Nor was the formation of the nation-state a one-shot success as in Italy. The aforementioned split was at work in these matters. (Jünger 1960, 34f.)

Jünger suggests here that Germans suffer a serious “split” between their omnipotence in thought and inability in politics: In philosophy Germans are extremely inclusive. They can see “the unity of the many” like an almighty being because German metaphysics, which has “the power to encompass the world and the Earth,” sees the unity of opposites. It sees all conflicts in the modern world as a milestone on the road to a final unity that however, in politics, can never be achieved. They cannot realize even the political unification of themselves. Even after accomplishing their own nation-state, they could not resolve the non-unity of their “baroque politics,” i.e., the division and competition among princes in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

Germans’ trouble with politics also manifested itself in foreign affairs. From the end of nineteenth century, German politic leaders advocated *Weltpolitik* [world politics], but in reality, it was only politics for German nation (“national politics”), rather than the literal sense of the word. The term *Weltpolitik* that Jünger refers to is the effort to realize a *Weltstaat*, a political unity of all mankind on a global scale³⁸ that matches the grand scale of “German metaphysics.” In *Der gordische Knoten*, he suggests that those who engage in *Weltpolitik* in this sense must be able to treat others with tolerance and welcoming (Jünger 1953, 115ff.). He also emphasizes that the people of the East, represented by the Russians, are fundamentally different from Europeans, including Germans. This is why he writes that Russia is “the true test” of German *Weltpolitik*. Germans must be tolerant and welcoming of the Russians, if they want to practice honest *Weltpolitik*³⁹.

Jünger believes that the “split” of Germans in thought and politics originates in the “far past,” and he recognizes the “outward manifestations” of this split in the conflicts and hostilities after the Reformation, the unsuccessful revolutions, the delay in the formation of the nation-state, and the division of postwar Germany into East and West. Although the details of the “far past” which he refers to are unclear, it is likely that the split of Germans had already begun with the unresolved contradiction between

38 Jünger continued to dream of the coming of the *Weltstaat* from the early 1930s until his final years in the 1990s. Cf. Nogami 2020.

39 From this perspective Jünger examines Hitler's policy toward the East and concludes that “*from the very beginning he lacked the qualities to preside over a great empire*” (Jünger 1953, 139).

the pursuit of universalist ideal of a Christian world, which began with the crowning of Charlemagne, and the absence of a solid political unity⁴⁰.

It is noteworthy to recognize the irony that Germans' inability to achieve political unity is not because they are exclusive, but because they are extremely inclusive in their philosophy. Germans do not discard diversity (the "either alpha or beta" approach), but try to include and rebuild everything (the "both alpha and beta" approach)⁴¹.

However, if this is the case, then the reason for Germans' political division is not only because of their inclusive thinking, but also because of the diversity of the human society itself. This is the essence of Jünger's understanding of the *Mittellage* in this period. Continuing from the previous quote, he writes:

This »both alpha and beta« way of thinking was often complained about. And in various historical circumstances, these accusations were right. But there was something else, something more, lurking here, which could not be reduced to the defects of the German character: Therein lurked the fate of the Mitte. In the Mitte, problems cannot be solved as simply and clearly as they can be in the periphery. Because of this fate, the nation-state in Germany could not be constituted as firmly as in other countries, and confidence in the nation-state was lacking from the beginning. Even today, this lack of confidence can be seen in the various symbols of the nation-state, such as the national flag and national anthem. The nation-state has never really taken root in Germany.

The fact that the world-dividing-line divides our country and its capital in two pieces is also related to this fate. This bifurcation is understood both as a national destiny and as more than that: a global destiny (Jünger 1960, 35f.).

40 If this is the case, then the state of imperial disunity that prevailed before the Reformation, from the "Concordat of Worms" in the 12th century to the 15th century, when the Habsburgs took the throne, can also be counted as the "outward manifestation" of the "split" of Germans.

41 In this context, following statement is remarkable. "*When Germans express their respect [.....], it is always for a specific person, a special person, a unique person, with all his strengths and weaknesses. This is an extraordinary characteristic of Germans. This is particularly evident in the German animal tales, in which every animal has a special name and a special character, a characteristic that has its basis in the German temperament*" (Jünger 1928, 11). This quote is from the Preface of the memoir collection *Die Unvergessenen* mentioned in Chapter II.

The Germans have been trying and failing at the impossible task of actualizing the “both alpha and beta” philosophy⁴². However, at the root of this is the fate of Germany as *Mitte*, and a place where many different things in the world come together and accurate. In this respect, the “both alpha and beta” philosophy of Germans is proof to the fact that the Germans honestly face the diversity of the world, and the failure of the Germans is also a manifestation of the plurality of the world that can never be unified.

Jünger’s comments on Germany in its *Mittellage* seems to have gained a dark and resigned tone as time passes⁴³. Probably for him at this time, the idea of *Mittellage* made it easier to accept as years as years passed without resolving the division of the German nation into its Eastern and Western parts. To speak of national destiny and to juxtapose it with global destiny is to be convinced of the absurdity of national division and confrontation, reducing the self-blame that comes from this frustration.

In twentieth century Germany, *Mittellage*-discourse was revitalized after the World War I, subsided after the World War II, and then re-emerged in the 1980s and 1990s⁴⁴. As in the case of the *Mittleuropa* [central Europe]-discourse, the first trigger for its reemergence was the peace movement against the decision to deploy the Pershing II missile in 1979 and 1983⁴⁵. Then in the 1990s, after the collapse of East Germany and the reunification of Germany, it was discussed very actively (perhaps on the largest scale ever) by all political affiliations.

Strangely enough, Jünger did not participate in the boom of *Mittellage*-discourse around the time of German reunification. His *Mittellage*-discourse seems to have been completed in the 1960s. When he came to see the broken Berlin Wall on

42 Germans’ »both alpha and beta« philosophy that Jünger mentions may have been taken from Jacob Kaiser’s neutralist arguments. In 1947, Kaiser stated: “Those who want to make Germany better can only start from the fact that Germany is situated between the East and the West. The conclusion to be drawn from this fateful but at the same time heavy responsible situation is not an »either alpha or beta« between East and West, but »both alpha and beta« that mediate communication between nations and reconcile their interest.” (Kaiser 1988, 274)

43 This can be seen as an accurate reflection of the vicissitudes of German history, or as a record of the deepening “desertion” or “quietism” that has been pointed out in Jünger studies.

44 Cf. Schoch 1992; Zimmer 1997.

45 Cf. Gruner 2008, 242ff.

November 10, 1989, what came to his mind was not the reemergence of *Mittellage*-problems, which troubled politicians, journalists, political scientists and historians in and outside of Germany at that time, but the coming political order, the *Weltstaat*, where it is totally unclear who would occupy the *Mittellage*.

Finally, our country also received some good news. I felt it like rain after a long time of thirst in the desert. I had never doubted that one day reunification would be achieved. But little did I believe that I would be able to experience it during my lifetime. What I had in mind that day was not a national awakening, but rather the dissolution of national boundaries within a general development that would lead to a Weltstaat. (Jünger 2015 [vol. 7], 387)

Above, we examined the *Mittellage*-discourse in the post-World War II (Cold War) period, continuing to look at Jünger's essays. What is key here is a fatalistic (negative) argument, but a demand for self-sufficiency in the form of neutralism is also presented. The "appeal for European integration" seems to be a complementary argument to the striving for independence but it can be regarded as a perceived responsibility, as long as it is also the call for the establishment of a third pole which would alleviate the East-West conflict and bring stability to the world. The *Weltstaat*-essay contains a key part of Jünger's *Mittellage*-discourse in terms of both volume and content, where the fatalistic (negative) perception is predominant, which may function as a kind of convenience for understanding, justifying, and accepting the undesirable current situation.

V. Conclusion

In this paper, we have traced the development of *Mittellage*-discourse in 20th century Germany by looking at Ernst Jünger's case, in order to confirm the validity of the three categories of *Mittellage*-discourse and the need to revise our one-sided understanding of how German intellectuals evaluated the "cultural gradient."

In conclusion, the results of this paper indicate that Jünger's *Mittellage*-discourse fits into the three categories, as pointed out at the end of Chapter I. In addition, among the three categories, it is almost exclusively developed in the context of fatalism (especially when negatively impacted), followed by a striving for self-sufficiency, and to the weakest extent, a perceived responsibility

Moreover, there are elements in Jünger's *Mittellage*-discourse that fall outside the Taylorian schematic understanding of the “cultural gradient” idea among Germans (worshipping the West and shunning the East). It is evident in Jünger's arguments, there was a *Mittellage*-discourse that criticized Westerners as “detractors from fundamental life”, while affirmed Easterners as its “preservers”, even though during the Cold War, the gap with the Western world, which was once viewed critically, was dissolved, and as a result, the sense of belonging to the Eastern world, which had previously been quite strong, was weakened. In any case, the views of Germans toward their “neighbors” are diverse, including unstable factors influenced by historical conditions. In this respect, the analysis of *Mittellage*-discourse needs to be conducted in a more detailed manner, incorporating findings from other fields such as prejudice studies.

Although there are still many issues to be examined⁴⁶, we would like to conclude our discussion by sketching out the possibilities for the development of an important topic dealt with in this paper, namely the understanding of the German tendency towards a “both alpha and beta” philosophy (accepting diverse things as diverse while attempting to unify them, which is extremely difficult), discussed in

46 At least two points should be mentioned here. (1) possibility and forms of the *Mittellage*-discourse on the geographical north-south axis: In this paper, *Mitte/Mittellage* is used exclusively in the sense of a middle between the East and the West. However, even if not so popular as on the east-west axis, there could still be possibilities of *Mittellage*-discourse on the north-south axis. This is because the adjective “Latin” used by Jünger was from Germany's point of view originally meant to indicate Italy, or the southern world, rather than France, and Germans’ “anti-Roman sentiment” pointed out by Dostoevsky, Thomas Mann, Carl Schmitt, and Plessner, as well as the “Nordic race” ideology in modern Germany, was also based on the north-south axis. (2) In Aryan race ideology, “Aryans and Semites” replaces “Latins and Slavs,” forming the two extremes of the dichotomy “Westerners and Easterners.” Since this contrast goes beyond the boundaries of Germany, it is difficult to say whether we can find any discoverable material in Jünger's texts, but it is a subject that should be paid close attention to in order to describe concretely the aspect of Jünger's confrontation with National Socialism. For these themes and their interrelationship, Matsumoto (1999) gives great suggestions.

Chapter III, as symbolized by the debate over whether Herder was a multiculturalist or a nationalist, the understanding of Germans as people who respect diversity seems to be as classic as the understanding of them as hereditarian, exclusive people. As for Jünger himself, it seems that he understood Germans in the former direction: as people who value diversity. At the beginning of the Nazi regime, he refused to cooperate with the regime by expressing his support for the position of a botanist Friedrich Merckenschlager (1892-1968), who refuted Hans F. K. Günther (1891-1968)'s idea of a “Nordic race” and claimed that Germans were a mixed race⁴⁷. If this was an expression of his pride as a member of the people who loved diversity, then the postwar division of Germany, which he regarded as a consequence of Germans’ ethnic character, might have been something acceptable for him as typically “German.” Further study to examine the relationship between these issues is necessary.

47 See Jünger's letter to Carl Schmitt on June 26, 1934. (Jünger & Schmitt 1999, 34-35.) In this context, following statement by Alexander Abusch is also noteworthy: “*Germany is a country in the center of Europe. Ancient and medieval migrations and great expeditions, as well as early modern military invasions, passed through German territory and left their mark on the face of the nation. In the early years of German history, a lot of Roman blood came into Germany. The first monasteries, the rule of the Frankish kings, the love of the Hohenstaufen emperors for their Italian territories, and later the Habsburg period with its Spanish-Flemish orientation, facilitated the entry of Latin culture into Germany. Even in the 19th century, after the partition of Poland, Slavs continuously migrated into the Germany and integrated into the German nation. From France, 20,000 persecuted Huguenots came to Prussia under the »Grand Elector«.* Some of their descendants rose to the highest Junker aristocracy and to the »Electorate« of the Nazi SS. During the Thirty Years' War, Friedrich II's Seven Years' War, and Napoleon I's conquest wars, many foreign troops remained on German soil for decades. As a result, there are few people in Europe who are made up of as many different races as the German people are today. On the other hand, the blood of the British, French, and Italian people has been inherited from the Germanic tribes of the era of ethnic migration.” (Abusch 1955, 3.)

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