

REALITIES AND DYSTOPIAS: THE LITERARY RESPONSE TO THE RISE OF
FASCISM IN 1930s EUROPE IN KATHARINE BURDEKIN'S *SWASTIKA NIGHT*

by

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the growing influence of fascist movements throughout Europe in the 1930s and their interactions with prominent intellectuals. It looks at how literary figures responded to their new political movement, mainly those who used their craft to create a warning to their readers. The thesis focuses specifically on Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night* (published under the pseudonym Murray Constantine) and the author's use of dystopian world-building to share her concerns about the impending fascist success. Unlike Orwell's and Huxley's dystopian works around this time, Burdekin's novel presents a unique discussion of how gender and sexuality are affected by fascism. This thesis compares the expression of gender and sexuality and the recreation of a fascist government to true history of the German Nazi Regime.

I. Introduction

After World War I, Europe witnessed the birth of fascist ideology. Many intellectuals embraced fascist ideologies in academic spaces, even creating fascist newspapers, literature, and films. This ideology quickly gained prominence in Italy, eventually spreading to Spain, Germany, France, and beyond. By far the longest lasting fascist regime was that of nationalist Francisco Franco, guiding a fascist Spain that lasted from 1939-1975. Sympathizing members of the intellectual community in other countries throughout Europe, notably Spain and Italy, used all forms of media to spread fascism. Writers have taken the fear of their environment and placed it into the imagined realm by creating dystopian-fascist societies. By fully comprehending how individuals at the time processed the stress of their realities by embracing fascist ideologies, we can better understand how systems under fascism endanger personal security, particularly for writers – mostly those who write from typically marginalized viewpoints, such as queer writers, women writers, radical writers, and writers of color – that are especially vulnerable to fascist systems. Despite this overtly frightening period where fascism – in multiple senses – did win, its success is rarely discussed with its historical contemporaries, World War I and World War II.

For this paper, I will be referring Louie Valencia's definition of fascism in *Antiauthoritarian Youth Culture in Francoist Spain: Clashing with Fascism*. Valencia provides twenty-two tenets of fascism. Of those, relevant to this study in particular are the following:

- “2. Fascism appeals to an idealized, utopian future...
3. Fascism uses hegemonic and binary categorization...
4. Fascism promotes nationalistic ideology...
5. Fascism uses exclusion to create homogeneity...

6. Fascism relies upon collaborationist and appropriative efforts...
7. Fascism reflects a deformed Nietzschean belief of a 'will to power' and a belief in an *Übermensch*...
8. Fascism aggrandizes militarism, order and process-driven bureaucracy...
9. Fascism uses forced or coerced labor...
13. Fascism depends upon misogyny and heteronormativity...
14. Fascism is queerphobic...
15. Fascism relies on a central, strong male figure who acts as the authority, or 'father,' to the country...
17. Fascism expels intellectualism and critical thinking from the public sphere...
19. Fascism advocates for expansionism and colonialism...
22. Fascism depends upon surveillance" (36-40).

With these tenets functioning as the primary foundation of fascism, I hope to apply them to Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night* to discover what fascist trends she successfully detected in Nazism and what elements she incorrectly observed. Burdekin's constructs her imagined fascist world mostly using dialogue between the Knight von Hess, the keeper of a hidden historical manuscript, and Alfred, a British pilgrim who suspects an underlying truth of the regime. The reader learns of details of the Hitlerian regime's coming to power alongside Alfred, and this allows the reader to understand more fully the possibility of this imagined reality, especially as it draws influence from Burdekin's political reality. With this in mind, I will validate (or question) the accuracy of the text as a reader who has observed both the fall of the Nazi regime and the success of Francoist Spain.

II. The Life and Work of Katharine Burdekin

British author Katharine Burdekin, who frequently published under the pseudonym Murray Constantine, wrote frequently of women's political situation in her historical moment. Burdekin, born Katharine Kay, was born in a position of high

financial privilege. She and her three siblings had a governess growing up, and her two brothers went on to attend Oxford, but she was not allowed. She married Bulford Burdekin, an Australian classmate of her older brother, and they had two children together. Following the publication of her first book, *Anna Colquhoun* (1922), she separated from her husband and became romantically engaged with a woman, with whom she raised her two children and her partner's one child. When Burdekin first began writing, she published under her legal name, but once she started writing dystopias, beginning with *Proud Man* (1934), she began using the pseudonym, Murray Constantine. *Proud Man* tells the story of an androgynous alien who comes to England in Burdekin's time and criticizes the social enforcement of gender onto young children. *The End of This Day's Business* (1989), which was written two years before *Swastika Night* but published posthumously, functions as an inverted tale of *Swastika Night*. In *The End of This Day's Business*, Burdekin presents a utopia where women have complete domination over men, but she still provides a critique of this superiority, as the book's finale includes a mother and son being put to death after the mother's attempt to educate the child about the true history of the supposed utopian government. Burdekin's prominent feminist theme functioned with anti-totalitarian and anti-fascist themes, as well. Yet, the repetitive feminist sympathies throughout her work led many to believe that Constantine was a woman (Patai iii). In both *Proud Man* and another of her works, *Quiet Ways* (1930), Burdekin relates the danger of violence and militarism to the danger of masculinity. In all of her works, male pride is directly related to and responsible for militaristic violence. In addition to the critique placed on masculinity specifically as an indicator for violence, Burdekin also provides a critique on gender roles and how they

force people to perform in society. This critique of gender is most clearly seen in her novel *Proud Man*, which was written before *Swastika Night* but published posthumously (Silverman).

Burdekin's novel appears as one of the first explicitly anti-fascist novels among many of the 20th century. As one of the forerunners in this field – along with predating the second world war – Burdekin's awareness of the underlying motives and trends of Nazism is considerable. Having been republished in the 1980s after its rediscovering by Daphne Patai, the novel is more recently being referred to as a pioneer in the dystopian and sci-fi sphere. Burdekin's novel in many ways opened the conversation on gender, sexuality, and power. In this paper I argue that – in addition to some errors and false ideological assumptions – *Swastika Night* correctly predicts multiple elements of a fascist government, namely the reimagining of an idealized German past with the goal of increasing land holdings and establishing a near impenetrable gender binary and divide.

III. The Rise of Burdekin's Imagined Hitlerian Feudalism

Katharine Burdekin's 1937 novel, *Swastika Night*, creates an imagined world in which German Nazism is the established global order. The novel depicts a world divided between Nazi Germany and Japan after their triumph in the Twenty-Years War—predating later dystopian novels such as Philip K. Dick's *Man in the High Castle* (1962), which also use this premise. Germany functions as a feudal system, with a reigning Knight over each segment of the country. The Knights hold the highest rank in The Nazi political system, and in their allotted piece of land, they are responsible for all that live within its boundaries. Nazis under any specific Knight perform physical labor for and

receive food and housing from their reigning Knight. Hermann, a twenty-five-year-old German Nazi, lives above a barn on his Knight von Hess's land. In this society, there is a complete division between men and women, as women are herded like breeding cattle and restricted to living in cages. Women are believed to be soulless beings who simply mimic the emotions felt and expressed by men. Their perceived inhuman internal qualities are heightened by their distinctive physical appearance. The standard woman under this feudal Nazism was "hairless, with naked shaven scalps," with "that horrible meek bowed way they had of walking and standing, head low, stomach out, buttocks bulging behind – no grace, no beauty, no uprightness, all those were male qualities" (Burdekin 12). Burdekin's designation of women's physicality contradicts the expectation modern readers have of women under fascism, that is emblems of femininity and serious focus on beauty. This removal of beauty from all women also serves as not only a way of erasing female sexuality, but also of erasing male sexual desire directed at women.

After the men have their sermon from the reigning Knight, von Hess, the women are herded in the room to receive their monthly reminders of their duties as women to be submissive and bear strong men. Hermann, who just finished listening to the male version of the sermon, hides in the Swastika shaped chapel to overhear the Knight von Hess's sermon to the women. Consumed with thoughts of the threatening decline of female infants, von Hess accidentally instructs the women in the chapel to bear women. To calm their confusion, von Hess convinces them that they stupidly misheard him, yet he fails to realize that the women were not the only ones who had heard. This discomfoting statement weighs on Hermann until he is reunited with his British friend,

Alfred, who suddenly discloses his plans to overturn the Nazi Empire. Upon seeing a specific “gleam and a dangerous look that went with it,” in Alfred’s eyes when von Hess runs into him, he successfully identifies Alfred – and consequently Hermann – as a man with a revolutionary mind and dangerous thoughts, and he ultimately decides to share his ancestor’s, Fredrick von Hess’s, centuries old book that contains the true history of the Empire and other societies (Burdekin 45). This history tells the story of the success of the Nazi Empire, the Reduction of Women (or the eradication of the female soul, feminine beauty, and feminine sexuality), and most importantly for Alfred, the erasure of Memory – orchestrated by Fredrick von Hess’s fellow knight, von Wied. The information affirms for Alfred what he already suspected – that there was much more to British history than they were told by the Germans – and that they too had a strong empire in place of the various English-speaking tribes they had been told was their heritage. On the contrary, Hermann is extremely agitated with this information, and he repeatedly tells both Alfred and von Hess that he doesn’t wish to know the true history of his reality and instead wishes to live in ignorance. He repeatedly claims that the deep thinking caused by the full understanding of the Empire’s history is much too difficult, and he would rather focus his energy on what he knows he can accomplish, manual farm labor.

Von Hess’s decision to include Alfred in this highly exclusive sharing of history would not have occurred without his sons’ deaths. Since the original Fredrick von Hess – who lived in the first century of the Nazi Empire – recorded his history, he and every male child that inherited the role of Knight transferred the book and the oral story to their male children. This oral and literary tradition depends exclusively on the patriarchy. Therefore, the book falls into deep danger when the current von Hess loses all of his male

children. His quickly aging body and the dangerous gleam in Alfred's eye push him to treat Alfred, a British pilgrim, as his own son and include him in the storytelling tradition. The book and von Hess's introductory history show the truth that Alfred had always known had existed. Before the revelation von Hess gives to Alfred, there is subtle play between the two to determine if the other questions the standardized truth as he does. In these instances, it is never quite a matter of thinking outside the norm, but rather recognizing the fundamental truth, that is Hitler is not God. Hitler, as shown by a photograph the von Hess family has managed to save since Fredrick's book, is simply a relatively short man with dark eyes and "an unmistakable bulginess below the arch of the ribs," which clearly contrasts with the circulated image of Hitler as a Godlike creature with "colossal height, long thick golden hair, a great manly golden beard spreading over his chest, deep sea-blue eyes, [and] the noble rugged brow" (Burdekin 67, 66). In addition to the revealing truth that Hitler did not have the physical attributes of a Greek god, Alfred and Hermann also struggle with the image of a teenage girl who is standing and smiling next to Hitler and is just "as lovely as a boy" (Burdekin 68). They discover that women once did have beauty and grace, but in order to remove their overwhelming power of rejection, they were forced to become unhuman breeding machines.

Their conversation about the true nature of Hitler delves into more of the world-building that Burdekin presents in the novel in contrast with the true realities of the years preceding WWII. Von Hess tells them of von Wied's elimination of collective memory and the complete destruction of anything that told stories of the past, including books, art, pictures, statues, etc. The campaign for removing these historical emblems revolved around the fear of Memory, or "the shadows of these old ideas and of these vast old

Empires” that were reminding Germans that power can change, and that other civilizations had once had it (Burdekin 78). Von Wied used this fear to recreate history, and in doing so also more permanently established the developing social placements from Hitlerian government. Von Wied accelerated the Reduction of Women, believing that the possibility of female and rejection and the traditional nuclear family were both contemptuous to the developing idea of the German Man. Fredrick von Hess attempted to fight the absurd hysteria spread by von Wied and the Council of the Inner Ten, but he ultimately failed. Instead of sacrificing his life, he left to England and secretly raised sheep for their skin to create the secret book that has been passed down so many generations. After five years of carefully selecting the information he could fit within the pages and writing the manuscript, he shared the collection with his son, and the morning after took his own life. After sharing this story with Alfred, von Hess asks of him the same questions that the von Hess patriarch typically asks of their son, which is the guard the book with their life. The meet to discuss the contents of the book and Alfred’s plan to protect it, and Hermann ultimately decides – since he cannot bear to suffer alone with this information once Alfred has completed his pilgrimage and returned to England – that he must be condemned as a Permanent Exile and sent to England with Alfred. Alfred leaves Germany first and shares the story of the book and von Hess with his son Fred. Hermann soon follows and the three of them create a space under Stonehenge that could serve as their workspace delving into the manuscript, since the Germans feared the ruins were haunted and avidly avoided them. They spend months uncovering the manuscript and talking with the local nomadic Christians, especially the patriarch Joseph Black. One evening, a group of five Nazis encounter a Christian who is erratically talking of armed

ghosts under the ruins. The leader of group convinces them to go check, and they find Hermann and Alfred (right after Fred escapes with the manuscript). They shoot Hermann twice, and in a surge of anger after a Nazi kicks Hermann's deceased body in the face, Alfred tries to fight him, but is ultimately murdered himself. Fred sees his father on his deathbed and informs him the Joseph Black has the manuscript, and that Christians are the best source for holding the key to the mental revolution against Hitlerism.

IV. Reimagining the Teutonic Knights

Burdekin's fascist dystopian world is controlled by the Teutonic Knights in a feudal system. Each knight is given a portion of land to control crops, the productions and sermons of the church, and the men living within its boundaries. The feudal system greatly depends on the seventh and fifteenth tenets of fascism listed in the introduction – which state that fascism depends on a patriarchal, central authority figure and faith in an *Übermensch*. Of course, there is *der Führer* who originates from Hitler's original reign after the Preliminary Attack (WWI), but there is not much said about the process of passing the title after Hitler's death. The Council of the Inner Ten – consisting of the highest Knights (including both von Hess and von Wied) – functions as the most prominent decision makers. *Der Führer*'s ultimate authority was even questioned after von Wied successfully managed to create the Fear of Memory across all Germans, and he had little choice but to continue with von Wied's erasure of history. In the quotidian life of German Nazis, the reigning Knight has the most influential power, and despite von Hess's knowledge of the past, he validates his highly influential position. When discussing with Alfred the freedom he has in engaging with and purchasing items from

nomadic Christians, von Hess argues, “Feudal aristocracy, for ours is in feeling feudal, has great advantages,” for his “Bavarian Nazi boys, are better off under me than under the Army Knights and sergeants. That is a cold, uninterested discipline, mine is a paternal rule. Until men can rule themselves, a father is a better thing to obey blindly than a government” (Burdekin 145-146). By viewing himself as the father of his people in his land, he is more able to rationalize his position regardless of its violent past. By creating a father-like image of a ruler, the imagined German family is established as a communal organization, one in which everyone must participate and be subservient in.

With the foundation of the dystopic world as a regressive form of government from the medieval world, it is fitting that the enforcers also have their origins from the same time. Alfred discovers in von Hess’s manuscript that the Teutonic Knights were not only militaristic Christians who “went to convert the heathen Slavic Prussians,” but also were much older than Hitler’s reign (Burdekin 171). Burdekin’s use of Teutonic Knights in the novel come from a prominent movement amongst nationalist Germans after WWI. The Order of the Teutonic Knights originated in Palestine in the 1190s, with the motivation to wage war against non-Christians. After centuries of maintaining military prowess, the Order saw its finality after its defeat by a Polish-Lithuanian army in 1410. This triumph allowed the Prussia and Poland to reject the foreign conquerors and encourage the eventual secularization of the Order in 1525 (Burleigh 24). The Order’s origin of controlling land for centuries and then losing that power is rewritten in Burdekin’s world, where the Teutonic Knights have not only established their power in all German territories but have also always possessed it.

While many historians of the mid 1700s to 1800s had a negative view on the

Order of the Teutonic Knights, some praised and validated its colonial aspects. Johannes Voigt, a German historian from this period who focused on Prussian history, argued that “since in the eyes of the medieval Church, the surviving pagans were a horrible and outrageous blot that it would be entirely praiseworthy and spiritually rewarding the eradicate,” and even more, “if the Order had not conquered the Prussians, the task would have been carried out by the Russians or Lithuanians and the Prussians would have been denied the benefits of ‘the German spirit,’ ‘German law,’ German customs,’ ‘German bourgeois life,’ and so forth” (Burleigh 26). Voigt’s defense of the Order of the Teutonic Knights is rooted in the belief of German cultural superiority. This nationalist spirit continues into the early twentieth century, where the Knights continued to grow as an ahistorical representation of the national push during the Weimar period. In a campaign poster, the German National People’s Party show a Teutonic Knight being attacked by a socialist and a Pole (cite image, Burleigh 27). Here, the Polish again are imagined as a heathen that threatens the German idea and German power. The image also insinuates that the German National People’s Party promotes an antiquated, colonial Germany. In addition to the political campaign, the Knights appear in Dr. Käthe Schumacher’s (member of the Easter Marches Association) book *Unsere Ostmark* (1923), where she argued that “the knights had returned to the East – ... to find ancient, indeed pre-historic tribal homelands of the Germans – to breed ‘superman’” (Burleigh 28). In this way, the colonial ambition of the Knights is erased, as they are no longer ‘fixing’ heathen Polish lands, but instead reclaiming their own that had been lost and will use them to create their *Übermensch*.

Hitler used this recreated Knight imagery in his defense for expansion into

Russian land by saying that they would have to “‘follow the road of the Knights of the Order’ if the nation was to have ‘its daily bread’” (Burleigh 29). In the years preceding the second World War, the Order of the Teutonic Knights lost their true history of violent Christian crusaders – that were eventually defeated by those they conquered – and became reimagined as righteous irreligious military power, one that would carry the ultimate expansion of the Nazi Empire. Burdekin identifies the German reimagining of the medieval world and constructs her dystopic world around it. Burdekin’s Knights hold the power and nostalgia of their medieval predecessors, without any knowledge of the medieval world in any quantity. As the history of pre-Hitlerian world does not exist for either the privileged Knights, Nazis, or their conquered, there is no reference of nostalgia for the Knights to draw from. Having already conquered most of their desired land (outside of the Japanese Empire), the most substantial issue for the current Knights is to simply hold onto the power they currently have. This poses little problem for a primary reason; fascism depends upon a central, male figure for national identification. However, the Knights also act as a central, male figure within their own mini-societies, and therefore rule much more like a protective patriarch than a land-hungry lord. Even while possessing knowledge of the past, von Hess is unable to separate his identity as ‘father’ to his people from the oppressive, colonial past of Germany. As von Hess can criticize and see through the flaws of the Hitlerian society, he is unable to fully remove himself from his birthright.

V. Nazi Book Burning and the Erasure of History

Altering history played a significant role in the Nazi regime’s climb to power. By

rewriting history and current events, the regime validated their increasing power – such as in the Reichstag Fire, which removed constitutional protections and allowed the regime to arrest opponents and radicals without charges. The creation of national threat – established by Hitler’s statement claiming the communist had burned the Reichstag building, which house the German parliament – allotted freedom of action to Nazis and played a significant role in their conquering of the German government. Fredrick von Hess “admits that there was tampering with historical facts even in Hitler’s lifetime,” yet the most significant altering of the history of the world falls under von Wied, who is condemned as the “Father of Lies” (Burdekin 80). After being in power for over a century, the Hitlerian regime becomes dissatisfied with the near global domination they share with Japan. The power they had created still had the possibility of being threatened by empires of the past, and they did not want anyone to have any knowledge of other empires or other ways of living. This erasure of memory is acted out by destroying “every book and picture and statue that could remind Germans of old time,” which consequentially includes Hitler’s own writing (Burdekin 79). While von Wied convinces the populous to fear knowledge and encourage the historical rewriting, the process was largely orchestrated by the Knights and the Nazis under them. In pre-WWII Germany, scholars and students themselves played a substantial role in the encouragement of book burning and the overall Nazification of German intellectual organizations and communities.

In pre-WWII Germany, scholars and students themselves played a substantial role in the encouragement of book burning and the overall Nazification of German intellectual organizations and communities. For these intellectual groups, book burning represents a

cultural German revival, as the “flames are to be a signal fire for the awakening of youth, for the heroic, for spring’s awakening, but tamed by the bourgeois virtues” (Mosse 144). The fires acted a method to remove current German ideals and regress back towards an idealized past, as seen in the reimagining of the Teutonic Knights. Burdekin notices that fascism cannot exist without this recreation of the past, and thus recreates in von Weid’s Erasure of Memory. As von Hess understands it, Hitler performed a noticeable but rather small amount of historical erasure and rewriting on his climb to power in comparison to von Wied. However, von Wied’s Erasure of Memory had much different motives than the national book burning that “was staged in all university towns on May 10, 1933” (Mosse 143). For the Nazis, book burning encouraged a regressive shift in culture via a revival, but for Burdekin’s Nazis, book burning functioned as a way to remove people’s access to knowledge and history. However, the main motivator for book burning in both worlds was an attempt to become holy, which at least by Nazi definition, is accomplished. A young Nazi recruit who partook in the nation-wide book burning event “was blessed in church before departing with his regiment” and said, “Now we are made holy” (Mosse 147). Likewise, there is a similar spiritual feeling in Burdekin’s imagined world, but one that shows the result of a 700-year Nazi regime. Von Hess, in lamenting on the loss of creativity and artistic invention in the world shows the true result of a fascist regime and says, “We are Germans. We are holy. We are perfect, and we are dead” (Burdekin 121). The result of the proclaimed holiness and rebirth given to German Nazis who burned their history is recognized by Burdekin as a voluntary crucifixion without a revival.

While von Hess appreciates the importance of and continues to share the

historical manuscript, von Hess also mulls over the significant burden of having to be *the* truth holder. The transfer of knowledge, in this specific case, is much more challenging than the usually patriarchal transfer – as von Hess has to gage Alfred’s authenticity. Von Hess’s resistance towards accepting the Truth asserted by the Empire originates from his receipt of his ancestor’s book, but Alfred’s hesitance towards the Empire’s Truth is much deeper. He was able to look at his reality and notice that falsities that surrounded him, such as the assertion that no English Empire existed, only small English tribes. In this way, Alfred appears in the text as a much more prophetic savior of History, heightened by how he also comes from outside. Alfred’s excitement upon learning the suppressed truth of history contradicts the feeling of burden von Hess expresses towards having to be the keeper of all of this information. When questioning whether Hermann would be able to handle the historical truth of the nation, von Hess argues, “But truth is an intolerable burden even for a grown man. I shall be glad enough myself to throw it off” (Burdekin 54). Von Hess admits to the similar feelings Alfred mocks in current and historical Nazis, the unwillingness to look critically at one’s own reality. Von Hess falls into the trap of rejecting other’s experience under the system, especially women. He explicitly shares his own pain in holding onto the manuscript and the isolation it requires, yet he fails to see the isolation that is forced onto Christians and women under this system. Burdekin’s critique of von Hess’s ability to fully recognize the pain of marginalized people suggest a broader critique on liberal and progressive political entities, who express discontent with their system yet enforce that it stays intact.

VI. The Woman's Role under Burdekin's Nazism and Hitler's Nazism

For Burdekin, the Reduction of Women – von Wied's construction that resulted in the defeminization and permanent imprisonment of women – occurred because of women's inaction in response to the explicit misogyny expressed by Nazis in the early days of the regime. When Alfred is asking von Hess how the women of the time responded to von Wied's demands of their ugliness and inhumanity, von Hess responds that the women did what they always do, and "once they were convinced that men really wanted them to be animals and ugly and completely submissive... they threw themselves into the new pattern with a conscious enthusiasm that they knew no bounds" (Burdekin 82). Their reasoning for the immediate acceptance of women of their new social role occurred because the women believed if they obliged to their men that they would be loved for it. Recognizing Katharine Burdekin's own history with her husband, it seems clear that this passage mimics Burdekin's own voice, as she believes that the increase of misogyny at this time could not be countered with a general female surrender, and that women had to fight against the changing expectations of the patriarchy.

In von Hess's view, men's original distrust and hatred of women came from their sexual power over them. With women being beautiful and longed after by men, they had the ability of rejection. Knowing that at any moment a woman could reject a man infuriated them, especially von Wied, who theorized that "the rejection-right of women was an insult to Manhood [and] that family life was an insult to Manhood" (Burdekin 81). While many of the time were accepting of von Wied's arguments and propaganda, there were some who opposed. One such girl – who had expressed judgement of the German ideal for women and who "didn't mind Hitler being God but couldn't see why

women should be ugly” – was found dead off of a road with her eyes ripped out, scalped, covered in stab wounds, with her nipples cut off (Burdekin 84). Even knowing this story and recognizing the clear consequence for women who provided any form of negative feedback towards von Wied’s legislation, von Hess still expresses that women submitted in order to feel male love and validation.

Compared to Burdekin’s imagined reality of women living under Nazism, the stated belief for Nazis in the 30s regarding women revolved more around a return to the traditional family life, which included restricting women to the house. For Hitler, equal rights for women meant “they receive the respect they deserve in the sphere nature intended for them,” and this belief was shared throughout the Nazi party – whose public statements regarding the role of women “emphasized only their place in the home as wives and mothers, removed from politics, public responsibility, the professions, and ideally the paid workplace” (Eley 93). The re-envisioned domestic appealed to the Nazi party for several reasons; primarily, the domestic home and the nurturing female figure of a wife and mother would provide a copying method for the men who leave the house to fight and work against the enemy. Also, by creating a dependent relationship of the family onto the regime, “the boundaries between ‘public’ and ‘private’” could be and were “effectively dissolved” (Eley 97). The missing element of surveillance gifted by the family home in Burdekin’s world is replicated as surveillance under feudalism. All the men who worked under a specific Knight also lived on the property such as Hermann who has a small room in a barn on the Knight’s farm. The proximity of the Knight, and the authorities directly below him, acts as a surveillance replacement for the Nazi removal of private and public. In both worlds, there is no independent living outside of

the regime.

VII. Conclusion

Considering Katharine Burdekin had little reference for a successful fascist world outside of current German politics in her time, she creates a mostly accurate world. She establishes quickly in the novel that one of Nazism's primary concerns is a return to an idealized past, and she does this by organizing the political structure in a feudal system and giving Teutonic Knights control over these lands. While this novel was most accurately and a successful warning against fascism to any who reads it, there are still some elements that were underdeveloped and could have increased the effectiveness of the novel. Clearly, women have no voice in Burdekin's world, so a novel without female characters would make sense; however, Burdekin includes two substantial female characters, Marta and Ethel. Both of these characters insinuate they also have a hidden awareness of their world comparable to Alfred, yet Burdekin only references them for a singular scene. Revealing the psychological effect that 700 years of sexual violence and captivity has onto a women would have incredibly deepened Burdekin's discussion on gender.

However, the conversations she highlighted in the novel regarding gender and womanhood prove a principal foundation of fascism, which is that it forces gender into a strict binary. In this world, this binary also heavily restricts how people perform their sexuality. The enforced imprisonment of women and the removal of their sexuality in turn forces men to reject their heterosexuality. As identified by Burdekin, the rigid establishment of gender binary transcends into other areas of personal relationships and personal expression for all people, not just women and queer individuals.

Burdekin's *Swastika Night* laid the groundwork for dystopian literature; works like George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) refer to many ideas first expressed in this novel. The resurgence of her novel after its republication in the 1980s gave light to the role that women played in these developing anti-fascist movements. Burdekin's early awareness of fascism's fundamental faults, such as the book burning to death of cultural creativity pipeline, proves her unique awareness of the world around her. Even the heroes of her text fail to truly relate to and fight for the more marginalized in their society. Burdekin's ability to create a dystopic world that so accurately represented the conversations and growing violence of the 1930s translate in her novel as a timely recreation of many people's fears of a Nazi victory.

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