



# *The Politics of Blood-brotherhood in German Literature and Culture*

## RESEARCH TOPIC

“Blood-brotherhood”  
(Blutsbrüderschaft) = the fraternity  
between two heroic individuals,  
usually men, and often former  
*enemies*. They usually injure each  
other (‘blood’) to become ‘brothers.’

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the Nazis’ idealization of  
blood ties and genetics, what  
happened to “blood-brotherhood” in  
Hitler’s Germany (1933-1945)?

## OUTLOOK

- ⇒ Developing a concept of “blood-  
brotherhood” before and after Nazi  
Germany as an ideologically *subversive*  
rather than affirmative concept.
- ⇒ Interpreting it in selected classics of  
modern German literature.
- ⇒ Identifying and assessing potential  
“exceptions.”
  - ⇒ No study of modern blood-  
brotherhood exists yet, although it is  
one of the emotionally most charged  
and prevalent concepts in the German  
culture.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

With one **exception**,\* I found **NO**  
reference to “blood-brotherhood”  
in military magazines, editorial  
correspondence, or Joseph  
Goebbels’ speeches from the  
heyday of the Third Reich.

As this propaganda calls for the  
mass-fraternization of the people  
(“das Volk”) as a genetic *collective*,  
it appears to exclude fraternal  
*binaries*.

\***Exception:** The propaganda film *Blood-  
Brotherhood* [Blutsbrüderschaft] (1941),  
banned by the Allies after 1945; available only  
archivally. Goebbels disapproved of it, however,  
because it presented the two blood-brothers as  
World War I veterans rather than members of the  
“Sturmabteilung” (SA), Hitler’s military  
police. It did also not tie the male bond directly to  
the fascist collective. (Söhnker, Hans. ... *und kein  
Tag zuviel*. Frankfurt a. M: Ullstein, 1974. 145)



## RESEARCH LOCATIONS

*German National Archives, Berlin; Media  
Library of the Konrad-Wolf University for  
Film and Television, Potsdam.*

Dr. A. Dana Weber, FYAP 2014

Department of Modern Languages  
and Linguistics, German program

Diffenbaugh 316, aweber@fsu.edu