GERHART HAUPTMANN: GERMANY THROUGH
THE EYES OF THE ARTIST

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

William Scott Igo, B.S., M.Ed.
Denton, Texas
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Born in 1862, Gerhart Hauptmann witnessed the creation of the German Empire, the Great War, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and World War II before his death in 1946. Through his works as Germany’s premier playwright, Hauptmann traces and exemplifies Germany’s social, cultural, and political history during the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, and comments on the social and political climate of each era.

Hauptmann wrote more than forty plays, twenty novels, hundreds of poems, and numerous journal articles that reveal his ideas on politics and society. His ideas are reinforced in the hundreds of unpublished volumes of his diary and his copious letters preserved in the Prussian Staatsbibliothek, Berlin. In the 1960s, Germans celebrated Hauptmann’s centenary as authors who had known or admired Hauptmann published biographies that chronicled his life but revealed little of his private thoughts.

This dissertation examines Hauptmann’s life from his early childhood through his adult life with emphasis on social and political commentaries found in his works,
diaries, and letters. Hauptmann told of the social problems alcohol and greed created and used historical events to express his concern about Germany's labor and social conditions. He also used historical events to address the political problems that plagued Germans and their government. Even his fairytale, Hannele criticized the Volk's rejection of his view of German nationalism and unity. In all his works, Hauptmann challenged the Volk to find strength within their own souls and to reject the materialism of the modern world.

Hauptmann's published and unpublished works reveal a man who found comfort and strength in the Volk and völkisch Kultur. He yearned for a united German Kultur and shaped his politics and commentaries to achieve unity. This dissertation examines Hauptmann's vision of German unity which winds its way throughout his works, an idea overlooked in other biographies and critiques.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

All too frequently historians attribute the development of a society, a government, or even a nation to a grand philosophical ideal or the political machinations of a powerful person or group. These historians also frequently slight the most obvious element in the development of any social institution, especially a nation. Any society is a reflection of the people who organize it: their common cultural heritage, their identification and acceptance of an ideal-self, and a sense of being and purpose.

Literature exemplifies a people's culture as authors express the ideals, social mores, and societal views the general populace possesses. Through his drama, poetry, and prose writings, Gerhart Hauptmann, whom many literary critics consider the greatest German poet-playwright since Goethe, expressed the social, cultural, and political consciousness of many rural and educated Germans during the Wilhelmine Era, the Weimar period, and the Third Reich. Hauptmann's works shocked the theater-going public, but at the same time they received world-wide critical acclaim and plaudits. In 1912, Hauptmann received the Nobel Prize for Literature. The author of more than forty plays, twenty-
five novels and prose "tales," verse epics and numerous lyric poems, essays, speeches, and voluminous unpublished fragments, diaries, and letters, Gerhart Hauptmann saw his works performed on the stage, shown on the silver screen, and translated into more than thirty foreign languages.

This dissertation will examine the life and work of Gerhart Hauptmann to discern the impact of his social and political commentaries on German life and thought. It will examine Hauptmann's upbringing, his education, and experiences of youth to ascertain the influences that shaped his views and how he expressed those views. As a poet-playwright, Hauptmann lived through and commented upon three of the most spectacular eras of modern German history. His commentaries are a reflection of the German people. Through an examination of his plays, novels, diaries, and unpublished journals and literary fragments, a clearer picture of German culture and society from the Wilhelmine Era through the fall of the Third Reich can be formulated. In other words, a study of Gerhart Hauptmann's life and works is a study of German history from the wars of unification to the destruction of the Nazi Reich in 1945.

During the Wilhelmine era, Kaiser Wilhelm II and his chancellors prohibited the production of Hauptmann's Die Weber (The Weavers, 1893) in both state-sponsored and public theaters. At the same time the state censored Die Weber, the socialists praised the work as a "people's" play. Even
though Hauptmann won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1912, the Crown Prince, in 1913, suppressed Hauptmann’s *Festspiel in deutschen Reimen* (Celebration Play in German Rhyme) when the play did not fit the mold of the new-found nationalistic spirit it was commissioned to represent. Yet, the Nazis later celebrated Hauptmann as a devout nationalist for his 1896 play *Florian Geyer*.

Gerhart Hauptmann was born on November 15, 1862, in Obersalzbrunn, Silesia. The third son of an innkeeper and grandson of a Silesian weaver, Hauptmann grew up with all classes of people, including wealthy guests of his father’s hotel as well as the servants who worked for his father. Robert Hauptmann and his wife, Marie Strähler Hauptmann, often too busy for their children, left the rearing of the children to servants. Young Gerhart frequently walked about the village and saw first-hand the squalor of the miners and weavers, comparing it to the middle-class wealth of his father and his father’s acquaintances. Hauptmann began attending the village school at the age of six; in 1874, at the age of twelve, he joined his older brother Carl at the Realschule am Zwinger in Breslau. Hauptmann studied carelessly while attending school; he spent a great portion of his time sketching and composing fairy tales and crude
poems. The strict religious training at the Realschule, however, did leave a lasting impression on the young boy.¹

Hard economic times fell upon all Germany in the late 1870s, and the Hauptmanns in Silesia felt the financial strain more than most. The middle class, upon whose spending the Hauptmanns prospered, traveled less then they had before, and Robert Hauptmann lost his inn to creditors. The family possessed only meager savings, and since Gerhart was not the best student of the children at the Realschule, Robert sent the youngest son to live with an uncle on a farm. The adventures and zealous religious experiences with the uncle’s family became material for a semi-autobiographical short story, Bahnwärter Thiel (Flagman Thiel, 1888), and novel, Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint (The Fool in Christ Emanuel Quint, 1910).

In 1880, Gerhart Hauptmann returned to Breslau and once again attended the Realschule there. This time, the young man turned his studies to the arts and practiced sculpting and writing epic poetry. In 1882, Hauptmann moved to Jena to live with his brother Carl and his brother’s new wife, but at twenty years of age, Gerhart felt the wanderlust and set off on a long trip through southern France, Spain, and

¹Gerhart Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," Sämtliche Werke, 11 vols. (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1962-1974), 477ff. All that is known of Gerhart Hauptmann’s youth is found in this autobiography which encompasses the events of his youth through the late spring of 1888.
Italy. Upon his return to Jena, Hauptmann began visiting Carl's sister-in-law, Marie Thienemann. Gerhart's and Carl's oldest brother, George, had previously married the oldest Thienemann daughter, and in 1885 Gerhart married Marie; the three Hauptmann brothers had married three wealthy sisters.

The newlyweds moved to Berlin where Gerhart began to write, but his early work was considered trite, and no one published it. Gerhart and Marie's relationship was strained under the burden of financial problems, but Marie's inheritance helped the couple live a comfortable life during these financially troubled times for the young author. After the couple moved to Erkner, a Berlin suburb, Hauptmann fathered three sons, began studying acting, and spent much of his time with other aspiring young artists who also lived in Erkner. Hauptmann began work on one of his more famous works, *Promethidenlos* (*The Fate of the Prometheans*, 1884), put the finishing touches on his book of poetry, *Das bunte Buch* (*The Varicolored Book*, 1884), and later *Fasching* (*Carnival*, 1887), his first complete play.²

One of the most moving experiences for the young author came when Gerhart spent the spring, summer, and early fall of 1888 with Carl in Zurich, Switzerland. Hauptmann

attended lectures on psychiatry, with a social-Darwinistic twist, that the famed professor Auguste Forel presented. From Forel, Hauptmann adopted ideas regarding female emancipation and the evils of alcoholism, two themes repeatedly identified in his first published play, Vor Sonnenaufgang (Before Dawn, 1889) and many plays that followed. In Zurich Hauptmann became close friends with the young right-wing economist Alfred Ploetz, Frank Wedekind, a future author, and others disillusioned with the censorship of Bismarck’s Germany. It was in Zurich that Hauptmann first received the ideas for his plays Vor Sonnenaufgang and Die Weber.

Upon his return to Erkner, Hauptmann began to work in earnest on Vor Sonnenaufgang, which was produced in the Berlin Freie Bühne in 1889. Hauptmann followed its success with numerous other plays until his greatest success arrived with Die Weber in 1893. For his various works he was awarded the Grillparzer Prize on three occasions and the Schiller Prize twice. Even though a panel of distinguished playwrights and critics awarded Hauptmann the Schiller Prize, Kaiser Wilhelm II decried Hauptmann’s works as Socialist and refused to give Hauptmann the awards.

From 1893 until 1913, Hauptmann wrote his best works, the ones that most criticized society and government. Along with those previously mentioned, he wrote Das Friedensfest (The Coming of Peace, 1890), Einsame Menschen (Lonely Lives,
1891), Der Biberpelz (The Beaver Coat, 1893), Hanneles Himmelfahrt (Hannele's Heavenly Journey, or Hannele's Ascension, 1893), Florian Geyer 1896, and many others. As Hauptmann's theatrical life prospered, his marriage began to fail; Marie left him, and he pursued her to America in 1894, but he formally separated from her and his family upon their return to Germany.

Hauptmann led a very public life, basking in the glory his plays achieved. Though his marriage to Marie failed, and they were divorced in 1904, his marriage to his mistress, Margarete Marschalk, seemed to revive him. Hauptmann witnessed the end of the German empire in 1918 and became more public with his politics; his friendship with Walther Rathenau was well known. Hauptmann also witnessed the end of Germany's Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in 1933, an ideology to which, at first, Hauptmann was openly loyal. With the end of the Second World War, Hauptmann had witnessed the rise, fall, resurrection, and subsequent fall of a nation. His works throughout the late Empire, the Weimar Republic, and the Nazi era glorify the common man, explain and criticize social mores and conditions, and praise his vision of the ideal nation he loved.

Many biographies and critical essays on both Gerhart Hauptmann and his works appeared after he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1912. In recent years, Sigfrid Hoefert
compiled an indispensable two-volume bibliography that lists the various editions and translations of Hauptmann's works along with a sampling of criticisms. Hoefert's *Internationale Bibliographie zum Werk Gerhart Hauptmanns* also includes an elaborate listing of secondary works about Hauptmann published between 1886 and 1987. This compilation is not easily found in the United States but should act as the starting point for any scholar interested in Hauptmann's works and works about Hauptmann.¹

After Hauptmann's production of *Die Weber* opened to thunderous ovations, socialists considered Hauptmann their spokesperson in the literary world. Eberhard Hilscher, a Marxist scholar, provides one of the best, most comprehensive biographies. Hilscher's *Gerhart Hauptmann. Leben und Werk* is outstanding in its discussion of Hauptmann during the period of the Weimar Republic and also during the rise of the Third Reich. After first publishing the biography in 1969, Hilscher updated his work and in 1988 added a listing of a few of Hauptmann's unpublished fragments.²

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Because Hauptmann was a naturalist, as well as a social, political, and economic critic, his works received much critical attention. Hermann Barnstorff examined Hauptmann's dramas and prose works in his *Die soziale, politische und wirtschaftliche Zeitkritik im Werke Gerhart Hauptmanns*. This dissertation, expanded into a published book in 1938, keys on the obvious social commentaries in Hauptmann's works. Barnstorff did not investigate all of Hauptmann's writings, but this book offers great insight into Hauptmann's views and criticisms of society.⁵

Karl S. Guthke's article "The King of the Weimar Republic" appears in many compilations and, in a circuitous manner, explicates the "completed" *Sämtliche Werke* which the Propyläen Verlag compiled for the centenary celebration of Gerhart Hauptmann's birthday.⁶ Guthke focuses on the then "new" material found in volume eleven, *Nachgelassene Werke & Fragmente*, that contains much of the political and philosophical writings and aphorisms Hauptmann published, which somehow became lost during the Third Reich and following years. Guthke attempts to show how the

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"socialist" Hauptmann of the Wilhelmine era is the same
"republican" Hauptmann of the Weimar democracy and both are
the" nationalist" Hauptmann who welcomed the Nazis to power.

To truly understand Hauptmann's private political views
one must also inspect his diaries and letters. Hans von
Brecius has made a noble effort to explain Hauptmann’s non-
public thoughts in Gerhart Hauptmann: Zeitgeschehen und
Bewuβtsein in unbekannten selbstzeugnissen: Eine politisch-
biographische Studie (Contemporary Events and Awareness in
Unfamiliar Personal Testimony: A Political-Biographical
Study). This is basically a collection of quotes from the
Sämtliche Werke, volumes six, seven, and eleven, and
hundreds of unpublished diary and journal entries which
afford an illuminating look into Hauptmann’s most personal,
hidden political views, especially during the period of the
Third Reich. 7

Barnstorff’s, Guthke’s, and Brecius’s works are of
immense help in clarifying Hauptmann’s socio-political
ideas. All three, however, fail to provide a complete
clarification because they do not include research in the
numerous letters both to and from Hauptmann. There are
samples in the collection of Thomas Mann’s letters, but most
of the letters Hauptmann wrote have been either lost or

7Hans von Brecius, Gerhart Hauptmann: Zeitgeschehen und
Bewuβtsein in unbekannten Selbstzeugnissen: Eine politisch-
biographische Studie (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1975).
collected in the archives of those who received them. Rudolf Zischer, the Hauptmann archival librarian, has cataloged the letters to Hauptmann, Hauptmann’s diaries, and the Hauptmann manuscripts which Lotho, Hauptmann’s son, bequeathed to the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin. From the numerous letters, it is evident Hauptmann did not throw away many that he received. His second wife, Margarete, and his personal secretary read most of the mail when it arrived and showed only a few each day to the busy writer. Hauptmann answered fewer than he read, and kept even fewer copies of the letters he wrote. What is interesting about the letters Hauptmann received is that the reader can tell something from them about the public reception of Hauptmann’s speeches, published articles, and literary works. This information gives valuable insight into Hauptmann’s popularity and importance in matters of public concern.

All of Gerhart Hauptmann’s dramas prior to 1930 have been translated into English, with Ludwig Lewisohn’s Gerhart Hauptmann’s Dramatic Works the most easy to locate. Lewisohn has divided the dramas into nine volumes with the headings, "Social Dramas," "Domestic Dramas," "Symbolic and Legendary Dramas," "Miscellaneous Dramas," "Later Dramas in Prose," "Poetic Dramas," and "Historic and Legendary

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Dramas." Most of Hauptmann's novels and short stories have been translated, but very little of his poetry. His epic works, *Germanen und Römer* and *Der große Traum*, along with his political essays, speeches, letters, and his autobiography of his youth have not been translated.

Most criticisms and biographies of Hauptmann do not meet the standard set by Hilscher's biography, but each adds a unique view of Hauptmann's ideas. Of the many biographies available, C.F.W. Behl's *Zwiesprache mit Gerhart Hauptmann* offers the modern reader the clearest view Hauptmann possessed of his own work and influence. Sigfrid Hoefert, besides his extensive bibliography, has also published an adequate biography, *Gerhart Hauptmann*, although there is nothing presented that is new when it is compared to Hilscher's updated biography.

From the appearance of Hauptmann's plays in 1891, numerous biographies and criticisms in English have appeared. Among the best monographs is Professor Hugh Garten's *Gerhart Hauptmann*, which "reduce[s] the diversity of Hauptmann's work to four main trends." Garten sees the complexity in Hauptmann's drama, perhaps too simply, in the

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10Sigfrid Hoefert, *Gerhart Hauptmann* (Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag, 1982).

four leitmotifs of naturalism, romanticism, Hellenism, and mysticism. Garten has also written numerous articles and reviews of Hauptmann’s work.

Professor Warren Maurer offers the most current biography-critique with Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 1992. This work follows Maurer’s Gerhart Hauptmann, 1982, and the two give a simple biographical survey along with insightful, new readings of selected Hauptmann works.¹²

While at the apex of his literary career during the Wilhelmine Era, Hauptmann shunned the political spotlight and relied upon his drama to voice his views. During the Weimar Republic, Hauptmann took a more active role in politics, believing in the republic’s early years "that the dynastic-aristocratic leadership had disappeared, it was the opportune moment for the intellectual leaders, especially writers, to emerge."¹³ Hauptmann viewed Weimar Germany as a nation filled with "scholars, historians, archaeologists, philologists, etc. whose names and work are world renowned."¹⁴

During the later years of the Weimar Republic, Hauptmann’s political writings were sprinkled with the


nationalistic chauvinism that attached him to the rising Nazi ideology. While his works are free from specific Nazi ideology, his political sympathies were definitely rightist. Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Bertolt Brecht, and other intellectuals fled Germany with Hitler’s ascension to power. Hauptmann stayed in his beloved Germany, being more than thirty years older than Brecht and thirteen years older than Thomas Mann. At age seventy-one, to uproot himself and family and emigrate from Germany would have been a difficult task. Hauptmann’s literary works became more ethereal, and they do not match his earlier genius. He refrained from social criticism in an age where such criticism often resulted in imprisonment or death. A few pro-Nazi speeches and newspaper articles served to weakly endear Hauptmann to the Nazi Anschluß of Austria. This activity served to literally destroy the world’s acceptance of Hauptmann’s works after World War II.

Hauptmann’s social and political criticism and his influence in the history of German literature are the subject of many articles and discussions in various chapters in literary histories. His dramas have garnered great acclaim, much more than his poetry, short stories, or novels. It is time now for a new look at Gerhart Hauptmann’s literary works and philosophies to see what they reveal as a history of Germany.
This dissertation will first examine the literary heritage that influenced Hauptmann’s age, genre, and works. In the following chapters, this dissertation will trace Hauptmann’s life, chronologically examining those events that influenced his works. It will reveal how those works reflected the social, political, and economic times of three distinct historical eras: the Wilhelmine era, the Weimar period, and the Nazi era. It will also examine how the public and literary world received Hauptmann’s works.

One of the greatest detractions to Hauptmann’s acceptance in the post-World War II period is the fact that he did not flee the Nazis as many of his intellectual contemporaries did. This dissertation will examine Hauptmann’s view of the German people and the German nation to see if there is a continuous thread in his thought or if he only caters to the political ideology and power in the ascendancy. From an examination of unpublished materials and often overlooked published remarks, Hauptmann’s nationalism will become apparent. This nationalistic spirit will be the focus of a later chapter and will then be intertwined with the various eras to show Hauptmann’s steadfast belief in Germany.

A key to understanding Hauptmann’s impact upon the literary world and his country will be an examination of the unpublished notebooks, papers, diaries, and letters found in the archives of the Preußischer Staatsbibliothek, Berlin.
The information contained in these various documents, when combined with Hauptmann’s published works, will give a clear insight into the thoughts and history of not only Gerhart Hauptmann, but also the social and political structures of Germany from 1862 until 1945.

A nation is the reflection of the common culture and the sense of being of the people who organize it. Many historians focus their attention on the political, economic, and sociological development of a nation and rarely identify the importance of the arts in the development of national culture and tradition. Gerhart Hauptmann expressed the social, political, and cultural consciousness of many rural and educated Germans during the Wilhelmine Era, the Weimar period, and the Third Reich, after industrialization and unification failed to provide the level of society and prosperity they had expected. Hauptmann’s dramas, novels, poetry, and theoretical essays and articles depict an original view of German history from unification in the nineteenth century to the fall of the Third Reich in the mid-twentieth century.
CHAPTER II

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHIC HERITAGE

The nineteenth century was a time of political and economic turmoil in Germany. From the remnants of the enlightenment and the philosophy of Immanuel Kant to the militant nationalism of Johann Fichte, the Germans fumbled with the idea of who they were as a people. Their concerns are seen in the romanticism and classic revival of Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, August and Wilhelm Schlegel, and the Grimm brothers. The industrial revolution, responsible for many economic and political changes as Germany leaped into the modern world, also altered the way most Germans viewed their existence and identity.

Social and cultural life was full of uncertainty as Germans struggled to adapt to the rapid changes that had an impact on all Europe. The philosophic beliefs associated with the social changes ranged from the pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer and Max Nordau Friedrich Nietzsche's moralism. It was Charles Darwin's scientific theories that intertwined the changes occurring in politics, economy, and national identity with those social and cultural changes. These rapid changes combined to foster more practical trends in
literature. Gerhart Hauptmann captured the myriad feelings Germans possessed regarding the social, political, economic, and scientific changes that affected them. His thoughts, displayed in his dramas and prose works, spanned the ideas expressed throughout the entire century, and he sought to have the Germans recognize who they were as a people and how their lives were changing. To understand Hauptmann’s literature, criticisms, and his Weltanschauung (world view), it is necessary to examine the philosophies and literature that shaped his time.

More than anyone else, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) undermined the supernatural foundations of the German Weltanschauung. In his two major works, Critique of Pure Reason (1781) and Critique of Practical Reason (1787), Kant sought to preserve a belief in human freedom and abilities. For Kant, the mind did not simply reflect the world around it like a passive mirror, but actively imposed on the world of sensory experience forms of sensibility and categories of understanding. The human mind perceives the world as it does because of its own internal, mental categories. This was Kant’s "phenomenal world."

Beyond this phenomenal world over which "pure reason" was the master, Kant stated there existed the "noumenal" world of moral and aesthetic reality known as "practical reason." An innate sense of moral duty that commanded man to act in every situation as one would have all others act
in the same situation, the categorical imperative, guided reason. Man chose freely to obey this conscience, this imperative action, or to follow another direction.¹

When Kant discusses the ability of man to extend beyond the simple sensory input, he "shows that the human mind is not only a passive recipient of the [surrounding world], but also to some extent the creator of knowledge."² Man realizes that there are limitations on knowledge. These limitations imply "the impossibility of any all-inclusive metaphysical system which could explain everything by a single fundamental concept or principle."³ If there is no single supernatural, metaphysical system, then man must make choices; man must necessarily then be in control of his own life. Kant also suggests that if man has a choice, he is "able to know absolutely what [he] ought to do when [he] want[s] to act rightly."⁴ Kant’s categorical imperative shows that man, if he so chooses, can challenge the constraints society places upon him, and possibly control


³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 308.
society. Kant showed that man could interpret and react to his environment and did not need to rely upon some supernatural entity; man became empowered to accept or change his world.

During the late eighteenth century, rapid changes in German philosophy, which would have an impact on the nineteenth century, took place. During this period of turmoil, the Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress), youthful German poets and dramatists followed Johann Gottfried von Herder's admonition to search for a philosophy, history, literature, and culture that was uniquely German. Herder believed that Germany must "study its past and seek to capture again the naïveté which inspired the poetry of its ancestors" because that poetry is "the true expression of feeling and of the whole soul."

In Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur (Fragments on the New German Literature, 1767) Herder states literature should be judged not from any preconceived standard, but solely in the light of a nation's historical development. Authors must scrutinize each form of literature to discover the spirit which fills the book, poem, or drama. "Each nation must live out its own spirit, must create its own individual forms of language, religion, society, art, literature, and thus help to enrich the human

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race as a whole."\(^6\) Herder rejected imitating classical Greek and Roman literature because he believed the poets of antiquity were right only for their time, "the reflex of their own particular civilization, a magnificent expression of living national forces."\(^7\) The result was a Romantic movement that was distinctively German.

Herder desired life and vitality in the new German literature as seen in his *Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1769* (Journal of My Voyage in 1769). His conversations with the philosophes Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert fostered his "distaste for speculation, [and] for the somber aspects of philosophy, poetry, tales and thoughts."\(^8\) Herder found a new literature in the tales of the common people, the Volk, a peasant class absorbed in practical work, free from the intellectual restraints of reason and the moral tensions that depressed civilized society. The Volk was not the "rabble of the streets which never sings and creates," but was the "body of the nationality."\(^9\)

Herder believed the rustic literature should include "[t]he common folk tales, fairy tales, and myths . . . .

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\(^6\)Ibid.

\(^7\)Ibid., 3.


\(^9\)Ibid., 22:323.
They are . . . the product of the beliefs of the folk or of its feelings, power, and motives."¹⁰ To Herder, folk tales and myths were the truest representations of the common man, literature that is original and spontaneous in expression of the national soul, a mirror of the social, political, and religious environment or the general populace responsible for its existence.¹¹ "[J]ust the fact that it was in the mouth of the people does not dishonor the most noble poetry."¹² The voice of the people did not have to come from peasants; it just needed to come from a representative of the national group.

Because he saw the essence of the people in Volkslieder (folk songs) and Märchen (tales), Herder urged his countrymen to collect all the German folksongs and tales they could to maintain their distinctive German culture and spirit, and to establish a genuine national literature. Herder himself collected many peasant folk ballads and poems in Stimmen der Völker in Liedern (The Voice of the People in Songs, 1778-1779). His unusual capacity for feeling, and his sensitivity of insight and perception made Herder the discoverer of a new German consciousness, a new nationality. Herder and the Sturm und Drang reveal the outline of a new

¹⁰ Ibid., 9:525.
¹¹ Ibid., 9:529.
¹² Ibid., 25:323.
cultural age; they are the forerunners of the nineteenth century realism and naturalism associated with Gerhart Hauptmann.

Basically what Kant and Herder had done was encourage the nation to be its own guide and possess its own identity, free from the encumbrances of outside influences. Because both found the true nature of man to be in the simple people, the language, life, and experiences of the common man became important as representative of the national consciousness. The Stürmer und Dränger (Storm and Stress writers) focused on the daily language and the daily experiences and trials of the Volk. Nothing of the common life remained hidden from the poet’s pen.

From the Sturm und Drang a new, youthful breed of authors sprang forward possessing sympathy for the life of the common man. These authors wrote almost exclusively for the Volk. In this new German literature, the individual reigns supreme, but is in a constant struggle with society. "Society cripples the individual and interferes with his happiness." To achieve happiness, the individual must struggle with society. This struggle is the essence of the social commentary of the German Romantic movement.

In relating the struggle between the newly idealized individual and society with its moral constraints, the

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Romantic authors portrayed the social, political, and cultural climate of the era. Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller had a great influence on Gerhart Hauptmann's dramatic ideas with their subject matter, attention to detail, and reliance upon local dialects in their own works, though Goethe and Schiller used relatively little local dialect. German Romanticism, a clear response to Herder's ideal of Kulturnation, acted as the literary herald for nineteenth century realism and naturalism.

Friedrich Schlegel (1762-1829) shocked the German reading public in 1799 when he published his novel Lucinde, in which he attacked the long-held societal prejudices against women. Even in "enlightened" Europe, especially in Germany, society relegated women to the duties of the house, to clean, cook, and rear a family. In Germany, it was only at the royal court, especially the court of Frederick II, that women publicly exercised any intellectual skill. Schlegel depicted Lucinde, the commoner heroine, as the perfect friend and companion, as well as an unsurpassed lover. Schlegel "unfolds a programme of social reform" with an ideal union of man and woman "based on the freedom of the individual and a harmony and unity of soul which should persist, not merely in this world . . . but in the endless,
nameless world of ultimate reality."¹⁴ Lucinde shocked contemporary Germans and their conservative morals with explicit discussion of sexual activity and descriptions of Lucinde being equal in all ways to the men in the story.¹⁵ Though there is no documented evidence of Gerhart Hauptmann ever reading Schlegel's novel, there is much evidence in Hauptmann's diaries and letters proving he read Goethe, Schiller, and the Grimm brothers. It is not too much to assume that Hauptmann also read Schlegel because of the similarity to Schlegel of Hauptmann's presentation of Helene's relationship to Loth in Vor Sonnenaufgang (Before Sunrise).

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe also greatly influenced Gerhart Hauptmann, at least in style and dress if not in philosophic subject matter. Hauptmann frequently dictated his work, pacing while clutching a volume of Goethe in his hand.¹⁶ Three of Goethe's works especially affected Hauptmann: Wilhelm Meister, Die Wahlverwandtschaften (Elective Affinities), and Faust. In Wilhelm Meister (1821-1829), Goethe presents the basis for the modern novel and,

¹⁴Willoughby, The Romantic Movement in Germany, 29.
more importantly, examines the manner in which human beings come to live moral lives while still acknowledging the life of the senses. In this two-story novel we see the culmination of Herder's *Kulturnation*.

It is an idea, not the plot nor the character development, that holds *Wilhelm Meister* together. One must always be alert to his surroundings and to those experiences and feelings that shape his being. In this way "true happiness is to be found in the satisfaction of special inborn aptitudes different in each individual." People, individually and collectively, must discover their own aptitudes so "they will not only be more helpful and effective as citizens, but will be free from the mental restlessness depicted in the character of Wilhelm Meister and attain what Goethe calls, 'the inward harmony' or unity with oneself." This theme is one of importance throughout Hauptmann's dramas.

Hauptmann's characters, like Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, search for who they are and their place in society. Anyone who chooses a profession "without an inward call to it, must . . . find his condition intolerable. He who has a talent and is born to a talent finds in the same his finest

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18Ibid.
existence."\textsuperscript{19} In and of itself, this idea seems trivial, but in the Germany of the early nineteenth century, the son was expected to follow his father into the same business or follow the father's bidding into another field. The young man "had to be satisfied with his narrow world and had to demonstrate obedience to the rule laid down by the authorities."\textsuperscript{20} Goethe criticizes the narrowness of society's mores and believes man should search for his own life, make his own decisions.

In \textit{Die Wahlverwandtschaften} (Elective Affinities, 1809), Goethe challenged the moral standards of early nineteenth century Germany just as Schlegel had done in \textit{Lucinde}. The sexual adventures Goethe discusses "seemed to justify the rising cry of the new generation for mating by mutual attraction rather than by parental finance or legal bond."\textsuperscript{21} In most marriages the parents selected the spouse or gave approval for two young people to wed. In Goethe and Hauptmann the many characters decide for themselves and challenge the social mores guiding marriage and sex.


Through the role of the unseen, unidentified narrator in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, Goethe criticizes marriage as an institution that interferes with the individual attaining what he desires. Eduard, who wishes to leave his wife, Charlotte, who bore him a son, argues with the Hauptmann over the prospects of the situation. The Hauptmann [the voice of reason and accepted societal standards] points out that Charlotte is a good wife, loyal, and worthy of a faithful husband. Eduard counters with,

> We committed an act of stupidity, and I can see all too well what it was. He who thinks to realize when he is older the hopes and desires of youth is always deceiving himself, for every decade of man’s life possesses its own kind of happiness, its own hopes and prospects. Woe to the man whom circumstances or delusion constrain to reach back into the past or forward into the future. We committed an act of stupidity, but do we have to go on committing it for the rest of our lives? Are there any scruples of any kind which can compel us to renounce that which the customs of age do not forbid us? In how many things of life does a man not go back on his intentions or his acts, and is that to be impossible here, precisely here, where it is a question not of a part but of the whole, not of this or that condition of life but of the whole life complex itself?  

What Goethe exemplifies with Eduard and with Wilhelm Meister is nothing more than his own life and social philosophy. Though Goethe married, he experienced many liaisons during his married life and after his wife died.

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One of Goethe's long-standing friends, and one time rival suitor, Georg Christian Kestner, described Goethe's life as an expression of a new social ideal.

According to his father's intention, he [Goethe] was to practice law at the court here [Wetzlar, the seat of the Imperial Appellate Court]; according to his own he was to study Homer and Pindar and whatever else his genius, his taste, and his heart should inspire. . . . He is quite a remarkable man.\textsuperscript{23}

Goethe's Germany was just becoming German. In the eighteenth century, the leading kingdom in the non-unified Germanies was the Prussia of Frederick II, who ruled from 1740 until 1786. He considered himself "enlightened," but his enlightenment had been French. He invited Voltaire to the court at Sans Souci in Potsdam where the Germans became French in action and language. Voltaire wrote of Frederick, "In Berlin you are composing French verse as it was written in Versailles in the golden age of taste and pleasure."\textsuperscript{24} Intellectuals considered German philosophy, literature, and culture to be tertiary to enlightened French or classical Greek philosophy and literature until Kant and Herder advanced the art of German intellect. Schlegel, Goethe, and others followed. Hauptmann's dramatic naturalism acted as


\textsuperscript{24}Voltaire, quoted in Louis Snyder, Frederick the Great (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 110.
the final knot that tied German culture and philosophy to
its own literature.

Goethe's greatest single work *Faust* represents his
personal philosophy regarding society, man, and man's role
in society. Because of the elapsed time between publication
of *Faust*'s distinct parts, -- Part I first appeared in 1808,
though many portions of Part I had been written many years
earlier, and Goethe completed and published Part II in 1832
-- it is easy to trace the development of Goethe's
philosophy. In Part I, Faust, weary of life, makes a pact
with the Devil's agent Mephistopheles:

Should I ever take ease upon a bed of leisure,
May that same moment mark my end!
When first by flattery you lull me
Into a smug complacency,
When with indulgence you can gull me,
Let that day be the last for me!  

Faust agrees to surrender his eternal soul to Mephistopheles
if he can gain knowledge and discover life's ultimate
pleasure.

In Faust's search for knowledge and pleasure, Goethe
explains his own philosophy of man's role in society. The
first lines of Faust's first monologue again hint at
Goethe's disdain for his society and the ignorance society
maintains. Just as with Wilhelm Meister, Faust recognizes
his ignorance:

\footnote{Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: A Tragedy, Part I*,
trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin (New York: Norton and
Norton Co. Inc., 1976), 40-41.}
I have pursued, alas philosophy,  
Jurisprudence, and medicine,  
And, help me God, theology,  
With fervent zeal through thick and thin.  
And here, poor fool, I stand once more,  
No wiser than I was before.  
They call me Magister, Doctor, no less,  
And for some ten years, I would guess,  
Through ups and downs and tos and fros  
I have led my pupils by the nose -- And see there  
is nothing we can know.  

As a result of his failed search for knowledge, Faust [Goethe] has become a desolate and embittered man, ready to deal with the devil. Part I of Faust is an attack on self-edification, the French Enlightenment and its influence in Germany, and the loss of community that results from selfish behavior, and at the same time praises the unending search for truth and self-development.

In Part II, Goethe introduces Faust to the greater macrocosm of human society, placing him face-to-face with questions of social welfare, government, finance, and war. The essence of Part II is Faust's awakening to the truth of himself in the true Kantian, Romantic sense. Faust orders Mephistopheles to reclaim a swamp and create new farm land for the starving farmers, to build houses for them so he, Faust, may stand "among free people." With this, his last request, Faust dedicates his life to the improvement of

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36 Ibid., 10.

his fellow man and receives the pleasure that had so long eluded him. Faust discovers he is free when he works for the benefit of others, and not self. He overcomes his despair and dies. Mephistopheles orders the demons to transport Faust's soul to Hell, but angels steal it and deliver Faust to heaven.

Through Faust, Goethe challenged the rapidly changing society the French Enlightenment and Napoleonic Wars had fostered. He admonished all Germans to awaken to a new sense of brotherhood, to take charge of their own lives, to treasure their culture and traditions that they neglected during the French cultural hegemony. In the true Herderian philosophic tradition, Goethe believed the love of community would save the Germans and their culture. This self, national discovery is also the theme of Hauptmann's Germanen und Römer (1881), an epic poem based upon the folk legend of Arminius leading the German tribes against the Roman advance.

Following in the footsteps of Herder and Goethe, the Grimm brothers, Jakob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) collected the Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Domestic Tales, 1812-1821). The Brothers Grimm wished to "recapture the moment in which the youthful Germanic spirit awoke and created language and society." The two also

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28 Holborn, Modern Germany, 1648-1840, 522.
collected the *Sagen und Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (German Legends and Folk Tales, 1812-1816). They believed these legends to be the legacy . . . of tradition . . . that follow[s] [the Volk] from remote times, and . . . have become attached to their most intimate concerns. The legends are considered a necessary part of their households, to be discussed with all reverence that is inevitably accorded all righteous things.\(^{29}\)

The collective tales "are thus destined, partly because of their external distribution and partly because of their innermost essences, to capture the pure thoughts of a childlike world view."\(^{30}\)

When *Deutsche Sagen* first appeared in 1816, the spokesman for the publishing house, Nicolai Verlag of Berlin, wrote

Much in the way the child has his own fairy-tale world and believes in it -- and into whose realm of marvels even the adult longingly seeks to transport himself in his thoughts -- the folk too have their own characteristic world of legends bestowed upon them as a companion of their homeland, and to which they are attached in intimate love. . . . No other work can penetrate so deeply into the most intimate secrets and the stirrings of the daily life of the folk.\(^{31}\)

The Grimms did more than reproduce legends in print; they


\(^{30}\)Ibid., 2.

explicated the legends to make the reader aware of their hidden meanings. In so doing they captured the essence of the German peasantry and preserved its cultural heritage as the Sturm und Drang philosophy intended. The Grimm’s work was carried on in Hauptmann’s *Die versunkene Glocke* (The Sunken Bell, 1896) and many other works.

Aside from the well-known fairytales and legends, Jakob Grimm also published his *Deutsche Grammatik* (German Grammar, 1819-1837) to promote and preserve the German language. Because of Frederick II’s love for all things French and Napoleon’s conquest of the Germanies and his cultural aggrandizement, the Germans had misplaced their culture. But the Grimm brothers and the Germans, after Napoleon’s defeat, sought to learn more about their own heritage, including their own language. Jakob also published his *Deutsche Mythologie* (German Mythology, 1835) to assist the German Volk in regaining its misplaced cultural heritage.

Following in the footsteps of Goethe’s first major work, *Götz von Berlichingen* (1772-1773), a historical tale of a German knight who places his loyalty to Germanic tradition above his loyalty to the Holy Roman Emperor who answered to an Italian Catholic Pope, Wilhelm Grimm collected and published the *Deutsche Heldensage* (German Heroic Legends, 1829). In these legends the heroes’ acts and deeds always benefit the Volk and eternal fatherland, Germany. Through these legends, Wilhelm Grimm called for
the unity of the German populace. These popularized legends are reawakened in Gerhart Hauptmann's play regarding the Peasants' Revolt of 1525, *Florian Geyer* (1896). In other works, Hauptmann repeatedly calls for a leader to unite the German people and restore the legendary fatherland.

Another of the *Sturm und Drang*, Romantic authors who is known to have had an impact upon Hauptmann is Johann Christian Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805). Perhaps the best correlation is seen in the ill-fated virtue of their respective heroes. Schiller's Karl Moor (*Die Räuber*, 1781) leads a band of robbers but maintains his virtue and kind heart.

He does not commit murder as we do for the sake of plunder; as to money, as soon as he had plenty of it at his command, he did not seem to care a straw for it; and his third of the booty, which belongs to him by right, he gives away to orphans, or supports promising young men with it at college. But should he happen to get a country squire into his clutches who grinds down his peasants like cattle, ... then, my boy, he is in his element, and rages like a very devil, as if every fiber in his body were a fury.\(^{32}\)

This description is very similar to that of Hauptmann's Florian Geyer. During the Peasants' Revolt, 1525, the knight chooses to punish the lords and businessmen who grew rich from the peasants' work. In the end, Florian Geyer

\(^{32}\text{Johann Christian Friedrich Schiller, "Die Räuber," Werke: Dramen, 2 vols., act 2, sc. 3 (Wiesbaden: Emil Vollmer Verlag, nd), 1:59-60.}\)
dies, as does Karl Moor in Schiller’s play; both sacrifice their lives for the Volk.

We also see the influence of Schiller’s nationalism in Hauptmann’s works and possibly even in his actions. Two of Schiller’s most popular dramas, Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genoa (The Conspiracy of Fiesco in Genoa, 1783), and Wilhelm Tell (1804), reflect his views of Kulturnation. In Fiesco, Schiller has the lowly republican servant, Verrina, drown his benefactor, Count Fiesco, who led a conspiracy to seize Genoa from Duke Andreas. Verrina sees the greed and lust for power in his lord and states, "Away with friendship. . . . You have committed a crime against the majesty of the eternal God in permitting virtue to lead your hands to wickedness. . . ." 33 Verrina’s fear of Fiesco’s tyranny and his resolve to thwart the conspiracy show the triumph of virtue over a corrupted society. It also shows man’s loyalty to the state and an enlightened ruler who cares for the common man.

In Wilhelm Tell Schiller presents the Swiss tale of the legendary hero who led the revolt against the Austrians in 1308. Schiller recounts the Swiss peasants’ Rütli conspiracy to throw off their Austrian yoke. The conspirators wish to maintain their unique heritage and

traditions, "to be a single, united people." Prior to 1308 the Austrians had been the preservers of the Holy Roman Empire. In that year, Henry VII of Luxembourg, a Frenchman, replaced the Austrian Habsburgs as Holy Roman Emperor. It was the French influence, not the Germanic Austrians the Swiss wished to avoid. When, during the Rütli conspiracy, Schiller has the Swiss plotting the revolt, he shows them desiring to be "one blood, one race."

The same themes in Schiller’s dramas can be seen in Hauptmann’s Florian Geyer and Die Weber. In both plays, the peasant folk wish to rid themselves of oppression from outside influence. The peasants wish to throw off the Catholic influence and the weavers wish to throw off the oppression of the middle-class factory owners. In the plays, Hauptmann has the players remain loyal to an ideal of who and what they are, a typical Sturm und Drang ethic. In 1933 Hauptmann refused to flee with other intellectuals from Germany because it was his fatherland and the Führer promised to restore Germany to her rightful position as leader of Europe. The Sturm und Drang philosophy reigned in Hauptmann’s idealism.

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35 Ibid.
Tracing the literary influences of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Hauptmann's works is tedious, but revealing, because the nineteenth century Germany which Hauptmann knew was not simply the result of the literary movements seen in the *Sturm und Drang* and Romanticism; it was also the result of science and industrialization. Charles Darwin's discoveries and theories of natural selection and heredity, together with Arthur Schopenhauer's and Max Nordau's pessimism, and Friedrich Nietzsche's attack on accepted social standards, created social and cultural turmoil after mid-century far different from the early nineteenth century. The upheaval these philosophies created brought an air of realism to literature and served to open the door to Gerhart Hauptmann's ideals.

In 1859 Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published *The Origin of Species*, which carried Isaac Newton's mechanical interpretation of physical nature into the world of living things. While the scientific world already accepted the idea of evolution, Darwin offered "natural selection" as a possible explanation of how it could occur. Drawing on the ideas of Thomas Malthus, Darwin contended that more living organisms come into existence than could survive in their environment. Those organisms possessing a marginal advantage in the struggle for existence live long enough to propagate their kind, thus refining that advantage, a
principle Darwin called "natural selection." The theory showed that traits, good or bad, could be inherited. The idea of inherited traits, or the fear of them, is readily identifiable in Hauptmann's Vor Sonnenaufgang, Das Friedensfest: Eine Familienkatastrophe (The Coming of Peace: A Family Tragedy), Einsame Menschen (Lonely Lives), and many other works.

Just as the Romantic and Sturm und Drang authors were pessimistic about a world engrossed in reason, so too did Arthur Schopenhauer feel pessimistic about his world, one that had just suffered the turmoils of the Napoleonic Wars. Schopenhauer's Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (The World as Will and Idea, 1818) did not elicit much positive commentary from critics upon its publication. From the time of the book's rejection, Schopenhauer acted as its exegete, publishing Über den Willen in der Natur (On the Will in Nature) (1836), Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik (The Two Ground-Problems of Ethics) (1841), and Parerga und Paralipomena (1851; published in English under the title Essays). After the failure of the Revolution of 1848, people tended to accept ideas that focused on astheticism.

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and emphasized the evil and vanity of life.\textsuperscript{37} Darwin's attack on theology and stress upon the struggle for existence and Marx's indictment of poverty helped bring credibility to Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer simply restated the Kantian belief that man recognized the world only through his senses and ideas. But, Schopenhauer expanded Kant's idea, stating the world is "Will," or a force within all living creatures, a force that never rests but seeks survival, satisfaction, and reproduction.\textsuperscript{38}

This will, however, is never satisfied. "As long as our consciousness is filled with will . . . we can never have lasting happiness or peace." The essence of Schopenhauer's philosophy is that man strives for everything but only achieves temporary relief from pain, satiety, never true satisfaction or peace. So, what is the sense in striving? This fatalistic ideal is the foundation of Hauptmann's \textit{Florian Geyer, Die Weber, Und Pippa Tanzt, Das Friedensfest, Einsame Menschen}, and numerous other dramas and novels.

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\textsuperscript{37}Frederick Copleston, "Schopenhauer," \textit{A History of Philosophy}, 3:263.


\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 1:253-254.
\end{flushright}
Max Nordau carried Schopenhauer's pessimism one step further. Instead of focusing on man's view of the general time period as a result of fate, something out of man's control, Nordau believed that man's situation was a result of the modern world, of industrialization. In Die konventionellen Lügen der Kulturmenschheit (The Conventional Lies of Modern Society, 1883) Nordau, asserted that despite its achievements in modern science and technology, modern man and society could never achieve happiness or fulfillment. The conflicts between government and the governed, between political parties, and between social classes were outward manifestations of man's uneasiness, while depression and pessimism were the inward, personal manifestations. This conflict began with Rousseau and the Age of Reason as man sought to find a new reality, one coincidental with nature.

To Nordau, man's pessimism was a result of his expectations of who he was, what the modern world could provide him, and what was actually experienced:

[A]lthough we realize that the struggle for existence is the foundation of our law and morality, we daily make laws and support institutions which absolutely hinder those who are strong and fit for life from using their capabilities. ... Our whole social life is built on premises, handed down from another time, which no longer correspond to our contemporary way of looking at things. ... the form and content of modern social existence are everywhere at variance; every word we speak and every deed we do
is a lie against the truth we recognize in our souls. 40

The common man felt neglected, the fruits of his labor usurped by those who maintained a system to do so.

In his later work, Entartung (Degeneration, 1895), Nordau explicates the ideas he first presented in Lügen but adds additional discussion of how man was now dealing with recognition of the lie. Nordau notes how the overall belief during the last half of the nineteenth century is basically one of "contempt for traditional views of custom and morality . . . It means the end of an established order, which for thousands of years has satisfied logic, fettered depravity, and in every art matured something of beauty." 41

Nordau states that the expression of his idea is found in German literature. "Books and works of art exercise a powerful suggestion on the masses. It is from these productions that an age derives its ideals of morality and beauty." 42 Nordau expressly mentions Gerhart Hauptmann as an artist who "knows how to see reality, and he has the power to render it in poetry." 43 Nordau recognizes the potency critics also found in Hauptmann's work. Hauptmann

42 Ibid., viii.
43 Ibid., 523.
felt the pessimism that Nordau explained and portrayed that feeling in his own dramas.

A philosopher of great intuition, filled with the pessimism of Nordau and Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche also recognized the changes in society and its morality. Whether or not Nietzsche directly had an influence on Gerhart Hauptmann’s ideals is a question of debate. Warren Maurer suggests that Gert Oberembt is correct in his assertion that Hauptmann fashioned the character of Mother Wolff after the Nietzschean Raubtier, the "amoral, vital 'carnivorous animal.'" By the time that Nietzsche published the four parts of Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spake Zarathustra, 1883-1885), Hauptmann was no longer closely connected to the academic community. He would briefly study with Forel in Geneva in 1888, but his studies there dealt with genetics. So, while it is true that Nietzsche’s philosophy received some publicity in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, there is no evidence to support Oberembt’s and Maurer’s assertion.

Nietzsche believed that some people rule and some were ruled. Their disparate views of good and evil, right and wrong, caused turmoil because "the needs of the higher men are often in outright opposition to those of the lower.

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"Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 65. See also, Gert Oberembt, Gerhart Hauptmann, Die Riberpelz (Munich: Schöningh Verlag, 1987)."
Hence the greatest good cannot be a universal good."45 Anyone who rules "must realize this trend of the life-force" and "treat himself as a bridge or a transition between man and a being higher than men, a 'superman' into which man may evolve."46 The overman (Übermensch), who is to be revered, is the being from whom man derives his values. The overman is to guide man to a higher plane of evolutionary development, where he treats the ruled as children.

The idea of a natural leader is a theme in a few of Hauptmann's plays, but to attribute this to Nietzschean influence is not credible. A natural leader is not precisely what Nietzsche meant with the idea of Übermensch. Nietzsche's Menschliches, Allzumenschliches (Human, All too Human, 1878), Jenseits von Gut und Böse (Beyond Good and Evil, 1886), and Zur Genealogie der Moral (Genealogy of Morals, 1887) did not become popular works until Hauptmann left his formal schooling far behind. Hauptmann and Nietzsche may have shared the opinion that German society had crippled itself and was in need of a savior, but this belief was a common one in the late nineteenth century and not particularly indicative of Nietzsche's influence on Hauptmann. The fact that Vor Sonnenaufgang, Florian Geyer,


46Ibid., 499.
and Die Weber may exemplify the belief is not enough to prove that Hauptmann was a conscious follower of Nietzsche's philosophy.

Beginning with the eighteenth century Enlightenment, man's view of himself and his role in society and the world began to change. The German people's struggle to find and express their own culture in accordance with the Sturm und Drang movement paved the way for nineteenth century literary realism. Instead of adopting or adapting to foreign influences, such as was done during the reign of Frederick the Great, Germans turned inward and examined their own völkish legends, myths, and literary heritage. The works of Herder, the Schlegels, and the Grimm brothers all served to awaken the Germans from their cultural dormancy.

This world of social and cultural turmoil is Gerhart Hauptmann's world. His works show the complexities of German society and culture. Hauptmann's life spanned the most tumultuous eras in German history, and he never strayed from his hope of Germany becoming the society he envisioned as a young man. Hauptmann's commentaries are an attempt to reveal a recognition of the inequities that cause social turmoil, to change his Germany for the better, and to resurrect the idealistic themes found in the literature of those who had fashioned his culture.
CHAPTER III
EARLY LIFE AND LITERARY DEVELOPMENT

The 1860s began a period of general economic prosperity and expansionist nationalism for a rising Germany. The German railroad system grew from 6,840 miles of track in 1860 to 11,600 miles in 1870. The mining of coal also increased dramatically. In 1850, Germany produced less coal than either France or Belgium, but by 1871, she produced more than twice as much coal as France. The Riesengebirge mountains of Silesia became one of the budding regions for coal mining under the direction of the new Prussian industrialism. As geologists and miners discovered coal under the farmlands in Silesia, poor farmers instantly became wealthy. Robert and Marie Hauptmann owned and operated the spa-hotel Zur Preußischen Krone in Ober-Salzbrunn, Silesia. The newly-rich, along with Prussian, Russian, and Austrian nobility spent much money and time at the spa. It was in Obersalzbrunn, on November 15, 1862, Marie gave birth to her fourth child, Gerhard Johann Robert Hauptmann.
Because of the many guests visiting the spa, Robert and Marie left young Gerhart with a wet nurse [his parents spelled his given name with a "d"; he changed the spelling to a "t" when he entered school]. Hauptmann would later recall the experiences of his childhood and compare his nurse to a rigid Prussian non-commissioned officer. His earliest memory was that he could neither sit nor lie down because she had "spanked and ripped open" his buttocks and then left him to scream and cry in a darkened corridor of the hotel.¹ This terrifying experience and others similar to it brought about childhood depression and sadness that resulted in Gerhart's escaping from everyday life through daydreams.

But Hauptmann's memory of his early childhood was not all filled with dark thoughts. He had his nightmares, his fear of ghosts, but he also remembered later how much he loved his pet puppy and how much he loved to play. The instinct to play was most important to Hauptmann, because "whoever understood the play-instinct, knew the magic that lived inside him; from play-instinct art awakened."² To assist himself, whether he really understood what he was

²Ibid., 463
doing or not, Hauptmann played with the village children and mastered the local dialect.

At age six Hauptmann began to attend the *Dorfschule* (village school). As an adult, he selectively did not remember his first day at school due to the "fear and trepidation it brought back." The village children with whom Hauptmann played warned him that the schoolmaster, Brendel "flails you if you speak; he flails you if you remain silent, if you must sneeze; . . . he flails you if you enter the parlor." The threat of Brendel’s violence, when matched with the beatings he had received at the hand of his wet-nurse, must have caused the young schoolboy great anxiety. Hauptmann does not discuss his village education except to say that Brendel did not break him and that he resisted the martinet’s military-styled methods of education.

Hauptmann’s distaste for the village elementary school was really a distaste for the pedagogy of nearly all German schools. When he began his education, Prussian authoritarianism, not religious domination, was the basis for almost all education from the elementary schools through the universities. The liberal revolutions of 1848 had opened the way for elementary education to move away from a

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3Ibid., 469.

4Ibid.
church-dominated curriculum. Hoping for the creation of a democratic state, the revolutionaries urged that the responsibility for education should belong exclusively to the state.¹

One of the general features of elementary education in the 1860s and 1870s, as the power of the state manifested itself in education, was the inculcation of the principle of hard work for its own sake. This theory, in part, was the result of Karl Otto von Raumer's ideas on education. Raumer, the Prussian Minister of Education, believed that by using the mechanical efficiency that centralized control afforded, he was following in the path of his predecessors, Karl von Altenstein and Johann Albrecht Friedrich Eichhorn, and moved against any liberalization of elementary education. In 1854, Raumer issued the Schulregulative that reflected the spirit of the age. Raumer aimed the law at curbing the small, single-teacher elementary school like the Dorfschule Hauptmann attended. The state instructed teachers to follow an exact, highly-regimented curriculum.²

In 1872, as Hauptmann entered his fourth year under Brendel's tutelage, Prussia's Minister of Education, Adalbert Falk, issued the General Decree Regarding the

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²Ibid., 36.
Establishment, Task and Aims of the Prussian Elementary School. While being somewhat more liberal than Raumer's decree, allowing multi-class schools, it also mandated an even more restrictive curriculum to better serve Bismarck's authoritarian desires outlined in his Kulturkampf. To Adalbert and Bismarck, education was a method of producing numerous low-level civil servants and industrial workers, obedient subjects. The Prussian discipline to which Brendel, Hauptmann's Dorfschullehrer, subscribed was designed to create unquestioned obedience and subordination to adults and superiors.

Victor Cousin, an Englishman who visited German schools in 1831, found the school children far too serious for their years, too concerned with the idea of responsibility to a higher authority. One of the reasons for this was found in the schoolmaster of the elementary school. According to Cousin, schoolmasters "came from the ranks of 'non-commissioned officers . . . and half-drunken people.'" These instructors collaborated with the state to discourage and suppress individual initiative. Frederick William III

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8Samuel and Thomas, Education and Society, 37.

9Victor Cousin, quoted in Samuel and Thomas, Education and Society, 4.

10Ibid., 55.
reminded Altenstein in 1822 that the preparation of teachers must be kept within strict guidelines for "otherwise there arises the well-founded anxiety that . . . elementary schoolmasters will mould their own inadequate or perverted knowledge according to their own judgement, will spread it among the children and give a wrong direction to their straight and open minds." In 1849, Frederick William IV blamed the 1848 revolutions on the elementary schoolmaster. It is no wonder then, that in 1854 Raumer mandated that teachers limit the study of literature solely to German works and then for the sole purpose of moral education, an aid to religious training. Bismarck admonished a teacher training college saying they did not just represent the Ministry of Education, but that they represented the government. In the 1870s, while Hauptmann attended the Dorfschule, the prevalent thought in Germany was that higher education was for the Junker class, the nobility, and only a few talented bourgeois sons. A Silesian landowner complained about the education the children received because they learned too much and no longer viewed themselves as laborers. This was the narrow-minded, militaristic view of education that desired

11Frederick William III, quoted in Samuel and Thomas, Education and Society, 55.

12Samuel and Thomas, Education and Society, 63.

13Ibid., 6.
the lower classes remain ignorant and submissive to the will of the upper, wealthy class, against which Hauptmann rebelled as a young boy in Obersalzbrunn.

Hauptmann hated and rejected the regimented curriculum as a boy and taught himself to read. From an unnamed aunt Gerhart borrowed German translations of Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" and James Fenimore Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales", and used these to teach himself to read. These romantic novels became the foundation for his dreams and the central theme for his play time. Through "Robinson Crusoe" and the "Leatherstocking Tales", Hauptmann saw the ability of an individual to survive without the assistance or the oppression of others. For one year he played either Crusoe or, with his friends, Indians, with himself taking the role of Chingachgook and his friends the other Indian characters. Even his eldest brother, Georg, took to calling Gerhart by his chosen Indian name. "A youth, who bore my name, I did not recognize. But there I stood as the incarnation of my sole ideal, as Chingachgook." Because of his daydreaming and aberrant play, Brendel named Hauptmann a "Rascal! You good-for-nothing."\(^{14}\)

When he was not playing-out the characters of his romantic heroes, Gerhart spent much of his time with the children of the Krause family who leased rooms on the ground

floor of the hotel. These common Volk welcomed young Hauptmann into their home, and he enjoyed eating meals with them from a communal bowl. The Krause children never grew tired of the fairytales and stories Hauptmann told them. Hauptmann was able to slip in and out of the standard high-German language spoken in his parents' hotel and the Silesian dialect the Krause's and the Volk spoke.\(^15\)

Unknowingly, Gerhart Hauptmann, at a very early age, symbolized the essence of Herder's Kulturnation.

When Gerhart was eight years old, his father took him on a trip through parts of Silesia and eastern Saxony. Gerhart learned about other people, and he saw the plight of the poor working classes who could not afford the luxuries of the hotels and restaurants where he and his father stayed and ate. Robert Hauptmann, on a daily basis, forced young Gerhart to drink a glass of beer that measured the same as his father's. At one hotel, a stranger approached the Hauptmanns and inquired why the father had his son drink so much beer, and whether it was good for such a young child. The elder Hauptmann replied that Gerhart was "an anaemic child, and this mixture of malt, hops, and alcohol was to be taken as medicine."\(^16\) Robert hoped that by drinking alcohol daily, Gerhart would become immune to its effects and not

\(^{15}\)Ibid., 474-477.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 540.
become a drunkard. This lesson stayed with Gerhart throughout his life, and in more than one of his dramas he would focus on the evils of drinking alcohol.

Hauptmann survived the alcohol, the Dorfschule and Brendel, and at the age of eleven he went to Breslau to attend the Realschule there with his brother Carl. Young Gerhart loved the Gothic and Baroque architecture Breslau exhibited and later in his adulthood questioned why he disliked his experiences at the school. The answer, to Hauptmann, was clear. Amid the splendor of the past, reserve officers from the victorious Prussian army acted as instructors, or the instructors acted as if they were members of the Prussian officer corps and treated the students harshly. Hauptmann lamented that the curriculum did not include the lessons of "Lessing, Herder, Goethe, or Socrates, but instead, [included] the Prussian non-commissioned officer."  

In the early nineteenth century Wilhelm von Humboldt and J. W. Süvern designed the curriculum of the Prussian secondary schools. Humboldt desired that education foster the liberal attitude of humanity found in the works of Goethe and Schiller. The secondary school, the Realschule, was not only to provide the necessary classical and scientific education, but also to help them to feel, and to

17Ibid., 623.
teach them of a life filled with emotions, a life worthy of a noble humanity. Schools that followed a classical education received the title of Gymnasium, while the Realschule followed a general education. Humboldt and others preferred the Gymnasium to the Realschule, believing that the classical education in the Gymnasium "was the best preparation for future responsibility." Humboldt hoped that the liberal Prussian reforms would develop patriotic, self-reliant German citizens.

In 1856, Ludwig Wiese, Prussian Minister of Education, decided that the curriculum in the Realschule should concentrate on religious instruction, the classic languages, and mathematics. The result was that schoolmasters increased the studies in those areas but did not lessen the work in other areas. Nor did the teachers forget that they had the duty of representing the state. Hauptmann stated that while attending school in Breslau students stood at attention at their desks when answering the teacher's questions: "What did the apostle Paul say? What did young John say? What did Jesus teach in his Sermon on the Mount?" Hauptmann wanted the lessons taught on the classics in the Gymnasium. Instead, he received and cursed

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18 Samuel and Thomas, Education and Society, 41.


the general education of the Realschule. Countless other men recalled in their memoirs that their education had little to do with the intellectual pursuits Humboldt envisioned.  

Life in Breslau for students of the school was as difficult and rigid as the curriculum and instructors. Cockroaches, fleas, and numerous other bugs crept from the floorboards and walls in the room where he and his brother lived along with nearly thirty other students. The abysmal living conditions and the strident militaristic educational system would later figure in some of Hauptmann’s plays. Hauptmann describes a pedantic school teacher similar to the ones he experienced in Ober-Salzbrunn and Breslau in "Hanneles Himmelfahrt" (1893).  

Hauptmann’s experience while attending the Realschule was not pleasant. Aside from the vermin-infested living quarters and the Prussian schooling, the eleven year old also had no friends. His brother, Carl, made friends and would not help the younger sibling with schoolwork but instead would tease him about his inability to master the lessons. Gerhart considered himself a young Theseus, lost in the labyrinth of the school environment. During a summer

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vacation, Gerhart told his mother of his unhappiness but only received an admonition to work harder.\textsuperscript{23}

Though life and studies at the Realschule in Breslau discouraged him, there were a few experiences Hauptmann remembered from that period that invigorated him. On one occasion, Gerhart walked through the crowded Breslau streets and came upon a bookstore. Since he had two or three marks in his pocket, he entered and looked for a book to read, one other than a schoolbook. He purchased a book of poetry, the poems of the German Romantic, Adelbert von Chamisso. Even though Chamisso had been an immigrant who fled France during the age of Napoleon to live in Berlin, Hauptmann considered the Frenchman to be the "most German of poets." Together with the realm of imagination Hauptmann created in his early childhood and the world of Defoe’s Crusoe and Cooper’s Leatherstockings, the worlds Chamisso depicted in the epic "Salas y Gomez" and the lyric poem "Das Schloß Boncourt," served as a "golden thread that wound its way throughout my entire life." This epiphany turned Hauptmann towards the world of poetry and drove him to become a poet in the spirit of Goethe.\textsuperscript{23}

Shortly after this awakening and discovery of his own being, Hauptmann suffered through the most traumatic

\textsuperscript{22}Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 633.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., 662-664.
experience of his young life. Hauptmann's cousin, Georg Schubert, died. Had any other cousin died, the experience would have had little impact on the young student, but Georg had been the child genius, a prodigy, the pride of the Straehler family. Gerhart's parents had held up Georg as a role model for their son, and no matter what Gerhart did, his efforts never measured up to his cousin's. Hauptmann struggled with a variety of feelings from joy and pleasure to sadness and anxiety at his cousin's death. Georg's death released Hauptmann from the many comparisons that his parents had made, for which he was grateful. Hauptmann also witnessed the sorrow his aunt suffered, and he realized that death was an inevitable aspect of life. This awareness was saddening.\textsuperscript{24}

Gerhart's studies at the Breslau school suffered as he resisted more and more the rigid, structured curriculum. Often Hauptmann felt like an orphan walking the streets of the ancient town. He did, however, become involved with a family who shared his interest in classical German studies. Around 1877 Hauptmann became friendly with a small circle of friends centered around the Weigelt family. It is likely that Hauptmann kept reading the classics on his own time, though he never mentioned that in his autobiography. Each Sunday, at the noon meal, Hauptmann would visit the family

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 667-672.
and discuss the writings and ideas in Chamisso’s poetry, Herder’s *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*, and other authors and works of the German classical and romantic periods. No one inquired as to what school Hauptmann attended nor the level he sat. The family accepted Hauptmann for who and what he was.

The Weigelt family introduced Hauptmann to the Breslau theater where he viewed Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*, Schiller’s *Wallenstein* trilogy, and *Wilhelm Tell*, and Kleist’s patriotic *Die Hermannsschlacht*. Hauptmann became engrossed in the theater and the emotions the plays evoked. Between the plays, his Sunday afternoon discussions with the Weigelts, and his rebellion against the school’s curriculum, Hauptmann’s performance in his studies declined drastically.\(^{25}\)

At the same time that Hauptmann was resisting his schooling, his father’s financial problems caused an even greater adventure in the sixteen year old’s life. Robert Hauptmann possessed an affinity for fine horses, wine, food, and art. For example, the elder Hauptmann owned two valuable paintings, a Raphael and a Rembrandt, and hung them in the ”Blue Room” at the Krone Inn. Robert’s extravagances forced him into debt, and in 1878 the creditors took control of the inn. The general economic downturn in Germany after

\(^{25}\)Ibid., 694-705.
1876 caused fewer people to travel and income at the spa declined. Robert was still the owner, but he was forced to turn over management of the inn to his eldest son, Georg.

Prior to the early 1870s Germany exported more grain than she imported. But the 1870s witnessed a reversal in the balance of trade. The agrarian classes began to experience the same feelings that the industrial leaders had always felt. Whereas industry had constantly called for protective trade practices, the agriculturalists had demanded a free-trade market. The German economists, Eugen Dühring and K. Adler, popularized protectionism after reading the translated works of the American economist, Henry Carey. Now, with the reversals in grain trade, the agriculturalists united with the industrialists and demanded protective economic legislation.

Since Gerhart Hauptmann did not apply himself to his studies in Breslau, and Robert Hauptmann had effectively "lost" his inn, Robert and Marie decided that it was best for the sixteen year old Gerhart to learn a skill, a profession that the boy could maintain for life. Gerhart's parents withdrew the funds for his education and sent him to Lohnig to live with his aunt and uncle, Julie and Gustav Schubert, the parents of his dead cousin Georg. Whatever the circumstances of Hauptmann's stay with his aunt and uncle, this two-year period in Hauptmann's life had an impact upon many of his dramas and stories.
Hauptmann referred to his apprenticeship as the "Lederose experience" and almost all of his memories of this time were negative. Arising at 4:30 each morning to participate in the daily rigors of farm work did not agree with Hauptmann's frail physical constitution nor with his mental outlook on farm life. He gained insight into the deep hatred ("dumpfen Klassenhaß") the working-class farmers held for the monied and propertied Prussian upper classes.26 Hauptmann would deftly expose this feeling in his plays "Die Weber," "Der Biberpelz," "Die Ratten," and "Florian Geyer."

The prevalent idea of society's role and the government's role in the development of the state and culture was found in the writings of the major proponent of traditionalism, Heinrich von Treitschke. Treitschke believed that social and political reform were necessary for the maintenance of the state, but these changes must coincide with the lessons and traditions of the past.

There is no truth more important for the political development of a people, than the old one that a State is maintained by the same forces which have helped to build it up. This is the reason why all healthy States have always had a conservative tendency.27

For political, social, and economic progress, the state,

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Treitschke believed, must have as its core a single, strong nation steeped in its past and possessing great patriotism. The German victories in 1866 and 1870-1871 signalled the eminence of the German people and especially the Prussian state as the one true nation to lead the Germans to their rightful place as leaders of Europe and the world.

Treitschke adamantly insisted that the individual had no right to resist the state nor the nation upon which the state was founded. "[T]he first duty is obedience . . . the upholding of the mother country is a moral duty. . . . The individual should feel himself a member of his State." For obedience to be accomplished -- for the individual to succumb to the will of the state -- the state should institute a system of compulsory education with the state appointing, evaluating, and, when necessary, dismissing all teachers. As was indicated earlier, the Prussian educational system became the basis for German education, and it was this rigorous system Hauptmann despised because of its militaristic style.

Treitschke also insisted that the Church submit to the teachings of the state and that religious instruction fall under the auspices of the state. The conflict between the Lutheran ideal of authority, one that freed the state from ecclesiastical control, and the Catholic ideal of authority, 

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28Ibid., 1:104-105.
one that subjected the state to ecclesiastic control, caused conflict between the Lutheran-Prussian state of Bismarck and the Catholic princedoms now "unified" into a greater Germany. The basically agrarian princedoms recently drawn into the Prussian industrialized state resented the state's control of education that did not include satisfactory religious training. Educational instruction had to be Christian so as to maintain the unity and cohesion of the state.

The consciousness of national unity is dependent upon a common bond of religion. . . . Ritual differences may indeed be endured by a great nation, although with difficulty . . . but the coexistence of several religions within one nationality, involving an irreconcilable and ultimately intolerable difference of outlook upon life can only be a transitional phenomenon. . . . Our State is the state of a Christian people, therefore in the regulation of civil life it presupposes the Christian Church to be the Church of all.29

Not only did the farmers reject the ideals of the wealthy Prussians, they also accused the Lutheran preachers of aligning with the landed Prussian aristocracy, in accordance with Treitschke's philosophy of religion and the state. Theologian Ernst Troeltsch acknowledged that the militaristic character of Prussian authority dominated all facets of public life, including the character and teachings

29Ibid., 1:334.
of evangelical pastors. The historian, Werner Friedrich Bruck believes that almost all of the religious revivals in Germany during the nineteenth century, especially those in the north where the states had been under Prussian suzerainty longer than southern states like Bavaria and Baden, became expressions of Prussian nationalist sentiment.

In 1878, the Evangelical Church Council took the position that the Church should avoid participation in politics and be wary of taking positions on social questions. Later that same year the Church Council ordered pastors not to address social demands to the government, that they did so without the Council's consent or the authority of the Gospel. In 1890, the Church Council somewhat altered its stand on social intervention when it acknowledged that patriotism, declining among the working class, was indeed a social issue the Church needed to address. The Council again switched its views in 1895 when Wilhelm II decided that the working class was beyond sentiments of a patriotic nature. Nevertheless, the Council issued a decree against social preachers and their mistaken views of the church's role in the state. The leaders of the Evangelical Church mirrored the Prussian views, and the industrial working class and the farmers felt slighted after

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their role in achieving German unity and rejected the teachings of the Church as Prussian.

Friedrich Naumann, a protestant preacher and member of the German Reichstag, believed that the people and the church’s leaders should hold the national state and the concept of a national community higher than individualism. Naumann believed that private charitable work could not achieve social reform. Because the individual failed to create an equalitarian, patriotic society, the state must accept the responsibility and impose itself upon the individual. "Hence we do not consult Jesus when we are concerned with things which belong to the domain of the construction of the State and Political Economy. This sounds hard and abrupt . . . but appears to be sound Lutheranism."31 With this philosophy filling the pulpit and the Reichstag, it is no wonder that the poor felt the religious authorities had abandoned them to side with the rising Prussian state. Hauptmann would later note, "The Christian sickness [the purely religious training he received in Lederose] has deprived the peasant farmer of spirit and made him dull."32

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31Friedrich Naumann, quoted in Bruck, Social and Economic History, 65.

32Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary entry, 1892, Nachlaß, Nr. 1, 16.
The Lederose experience also influenced Hauptmann's depiction of other conflicts in German religious life during the nineteenth century in the semi-autobiographical prose works "Bahnwärter Thiel" ("Watchman" or "Flagman Thiel," 1888), "Der Ketzer von Soana" ("The Heretic of Soana," 1918), and "Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint" ("The Fool in Christ, Emanuel Quint," 1910). Aside from the strict Pietism the Schuberts intently practiced, the Schuberts also invited into their home a wandering evangelist who spoke of the impending Apocalypse. The incessant bombardment of apocalyptic teaching led Hauptmann to the point of "religious mania." He could neither work in the field nor sit at the house without focusing his thoughts on the impending end to the world. His pubescent lusts and the fear of eternal damnation for having them drove Hauptmann to have pounding headaches each night as he went to bed. Only a visit home and a talk with his brother Carl led Hauptmann to believe that the emotions and drives he felt were normal and that the end of the world was not at hand. These emotions and instinctive drives would be the basis of Hauptmann's novels mentioned above.

When Gerhart Hauptmann first attended the Realschule he wrote a few poems and short works that his brother Carl thought to be rather good for such a young man. Since most

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of Carl's comments during his first stay at Breslau had been those of ridicule, Gerhart took special note of the praise Carl offered. While an apprentice with the Schuberts, Gerhart, during what little spare time he had, wrote a few poems, or fragments of poems. He hid these notes from his uncle and aunt, thinking that they would condemn his pursuit of art. Hauptmann's aunt and uncle found a few of the notes, those hidden in the horse's manger and various other inconspicuous places, and Hauptmann's uncle confronted his apprentice about them. Hauptmann tried to hide the fact that he had written the poems, but his uncle eased Gerhart's fears saying that the ability to write poetry is "a gift from God." The uncle did not, and could not, stop Gerhart from writing, but stated that the effort would not make the boy a useful "member of society." While Hauptmann gives little importance to these early attempts at writing in his autobiography, they surely led to his first true acceptance of himself as an author.

In 1879, with a renewed vigor for learning, Hauptmann left Lederose and returned to school in Breslau where a series of events occurred that would have a major impact on his future career as well as shaping his view of Germany and himself. While Gerhart had spent the previous year on the

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34 Ibid., 685.
35 Ibid., 744-745.
farm in Lederose, Carl met Alfred Ploetz. When Gerhart returned to school, Ploetz, Carl, Gerhart, and two other students organized a Blutbrüderschaft (Bloodbrotherhood). Not only would this union indicate Hauptmann’s tendency towards ultra-nationalistic sentiments, a topic to be discussed in a later chapter, the Blutbrüderschaft would also indirectly offer him his first true acceptance as an author. Hauptmann wrote a fragment of an alliterative poem, "Hermann," and a fragment of a poetic drama, "Frithiofs Brautwerbung" ("Frithiof’s Courtship"). Hauptmann received his inspiration from and roughly based his "Hermann" on Felix Dahn’s Kampf um Rom.

In the fall of 1880, Hauptmann, who had changed his school -- he was now enrolled at the Breslau Royal Art and Vocational School -- and lifestyle to incorporate a bohemian bent, acceptance of late hours, wearing long hair, heavy drinking, and nudism, received news that the teachers at the school had voted for his expulsion due to "bad behavior and insufficient attention and attendance." Members of the faculty who supported Hauptmann arranged for Gerhart to read Hermann at a meeting of the entire faculty. The poem, which expressed German patriotism and greatness, so overwhelmed

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36 Alfred Ploetz, the son of a plant manager at a soap factory, would become one of the leading sociologists and eugenicists in Germany.

the faculty, imbued as they were with Prussian nationalism, that they voted to allow Hauptmann to return to school under the personal supervision of the noted sculptor Robert Haertel. It would seem that the praise and recognition the faculty heaped upon Hauptmann would bend him to pursue a career in writing, especially since he had been told poetry and the ability to produce it was a gift from God. But Hauptmann remained in art school, pursued his bohemian lifestyle, and studied sculpting for the next two years.

A third event changed Gerhart's life completely. While he and Carl studied in Breslau, their eldest brother, Georg, met Adele Thienemann, one of five daughters of an infirm but very wealthy widower. Georg and Adele became engaged, much to Robert Hauptmann's happiness. "I tell you," he said to Carl and Gerhart, "[we have here] a nest of birds of paradise." On Georg's wedding day, Gerhart announced his engagement to the third Thienemann daughter, Marie. Carl had already betrothed Martha Thienemann; the three Hauptmann brothers were now either wed or engaged to be wed to three wealthy sisters.

Gerhart received much benefit from his engagement to Marie. For a while, the two would meet in Dresden, where she once tried to assist the starving artist financially. Hauptmann would not accept any help, even though he was poor

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38Ibid., 843.
and could have used the money. As the year-long engagement continued, Hauptmann felt even more uncomfortable being around Marie. For three months the two did not see each other but corresponded daily. [Most of these letters are now unavailable, much to the loss of the modern reader.]

Finally, in 1882, Marie could not understand Gerhart's secretiveness and wrote to him saying she would visit him in Breslau. Hauptmann "trembled, anticipating the moment."39 Marie arrived in Breslau and the two toured the city or simply sat on the porch of the hotel. One day, unhappy with Gerhart's poverty, but respecting his pride, Marie took his hand and, without saying a word, "emptied a fistful of gold coins" into it.40 Hauptmann's poverty ended, and Marie continued to send him an allowance and financed his schooling and trips.

Now that Hauptmann's financial situation was more than stable, he turned his attention to intensive studies in all forms of art. Hauptmann's sculpting was pedantic and very unoriginal. His "Sterbende Sigwin," a plaster-of-paris bust, shows a talent for the art of sculpting, but the subject matter and theme are quite boring.41 While trying

39Ibid., 871.
40Ibid., 874.
41See photos in the Preussischer Kulturbesitz, or the statue in Hauptmann's restored home in Agentendorf. Hilscher's second edition biography also contains a photo, though it does not do justice to Hauptmann's talent.
to decide on a career in either writing or sculpting, Gerhart wrote a historical drama, "Germanen und Römer" ("Germans and Romans"). Hauptmann hoped that this drama would challenge the works of Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), whose patriotic Michael Kohlhaas (1810) and Die Hermannsschlacht (Armenius's Battle, 1808) served as the basis for his own "Hermannslied" and "Germanen und Römer."\(^{42}\)

Still undecided about a profession, Hauptmann entered the University of Jena in 1882. Since he had a poor school record, Hauptmann needed Robert Haertel's help to gain admission. In Jena, Hauptmann studied the philosophy of Ernst Haeckel, a follower of Charles Darwin's theories on natural selection and heredity. Haeckel's influence is evident in many of Hauptmann's plays and stories. Gerhart also came under the influence of the philosophies of Spinoza and Schopenhauer. Their skepticism, distilled through Carl's friend, Ferdinand Simon, would envelop much of Hauptmann's personal view of the world and mankind. Hauptmann also studied the works of Plato and the classical Greek philosophers and in so doing developed a love for Greece. These studies, with prodding from Carl and Ferdinand Simon to gain experience, stirred in him a desire to see Greece, and so in 1883, with Marie's money, Hauptmann

set out alone from Hamburg to travel the Mediterranean world of Plato and the Greeks.\textsuperscript{43}

In his autobiography, Hauptmann stated that during the voyage he often sat with and spoke to the crew as they ate their meals. At one mess, Hauptmann revealed to the crew, and seemingly to himself, his early thoughts regarding society and life. Hauptmann related his ideas and plans to found a "utopian colony" and criticized German foreign policies. He believed that achievement of an ideal society in Europe was still possible. He told the crew that he and his friends suffered from "Kulturmüdigkeit" (cultural fatigue) and thought nothing of abandoning a nation that crushed society.\textsuperscript{44}

Hauptmann claimed to be a rebel against "Christianity, its morals, its perversity, its essence, namely what is learned in the Sermon on the Mount."\textsuperscript{45} Hauptmann criticized a school system that did not develop both body and soul but yielded "to the loss of speech and the function of the state." He criticized the church and the middle class principle that debased women and allowed men the right to administer corporal punishment to their wives.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 885-908.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 914.

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid.
Not one of the accepted Hauptmann biographers mention Gerhart's tirade at the crew's dinner table. Perhaps they believe that Hauptmann had created the scene or reported it as he thought it should have been, since Hauptmann wrote his "Abenteuer" in 1937, more than fifty years after the event took place. In any case, Hauptmann reported that at the age of twenty-one he had already formulated many of the ideas regarding Imperial Germany that he would later put on paper in his dramas, which the imperial government frequently censored. Eberhard Hilscher, Sigfrid Hoefert, and Hans von Brecius never mention that Hauptmann's idealism at this early age matched the leftist philosophy of the Social Democrats in Germany shortly after the liberal movement of 1848. They also miss Hauptmann’s idealism regarding the German state and nationalism based upon a pure German Kultur, not one weakened by foreign philosophies.

Hauptmann spent hours with the ship's captain and the chief machinist arguing the philosophy of Goethe and Schiller. They debated the value of Felix Dahn's ideas of the individual in the state as opposed to those of Pericles. They argued whether Luther and Jesus possessed any practical sense; Hauptmann said the two did not. Hauptmann also argued that Charlemagne had destroyed much of the German language and identity in Saxony and that one only had to
look at the conclusions reached by the Brothers Grimm to understand the extent of the damage.\textsuperscript{47}

Hauptmann left the ship and traveled to Rome, "because it was on my way" to Greece.\textsuperscript{48} While in Rome, Hauptmann visited the tomb of Pope Julius II and marveled at Michelangelo's Moses sculpted there. Hauptmann felt he was in heaven with the beauty and impressive art of the Pietà and the Sistine Chapel. Moved greatly by the artistic beauty he saw, Gerhart stayed in Rome and opened his own studio, his first sculpture being a bust of King Lear. Hauptmann also began a larger-than-life statue of a German warrior, along the lines of the Arminius legend which earlier he placed into words in his "Hermannslied." This effort also inspired the literary artist in Hauptmann, and he began work on an epic poem "Promethidenlos," based on the Byronic poem. This artistic creation and the time involved in sculpting nearly killed Hauptmann. The statue shifted and fell. "In short: it was my downfall; we were both broken! Eighty days of difficult labor [was] ruined in this one minute."\textsuperscript{49}

The destruction of Hauptmann's masterpiece sent the young artist into a depression matched only by his frail,

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}, 915-916.
\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, 953.
\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ibid.}, 978.
physical nature. Hauptmann contracted typhus and fell into a semi-conscious state, in which he felt "unspeakably well." 50 Marie joined Gerhart in Rome and with the help of a young doctor nursed Hauptmann back to a level of health that allowed him to travel. She then took Hauptmann back to Dresden, where she nursed him back to full health at her family estate with its tree-lined "romantic manor park." 51 It was here that Hauptmann decided to devote his energies and talents to literature.

While recovering in Dresden, Hauptmann learned that Alfred Ploetz had traveled to America to visit Etienne Cabet's utopian colony. Ploetz wished to reignite the flames of the pan-German and utopian community that, according to Hauptmann, "no longer burned in me." 52 Ploetz, who had emigrated to Zurich because the Wilhelmine government considered many of his writings and speeches to be subversive, wrote to the Hauptmann brothers in hopes of once again fostering the Blutbrüderschaft that they had formed when they had attended school in Breslau. The letters fell into the government's hands and would later lead to problems with the Wilhelmine government for Hauptmann.

50 Ibid., 986.


In 1884, while convalescing, Hauptmann began work on a book of poetry, "Das bunte Buch" ("The Varicolored Book") and continued work on this collection of poems after he was again attending classes, this time at the University of Berlin. Despite its romantic overtones, "Das bunte Buch" reveals Hauptmann's compassion for the poor and socially suppressed. He condemns the city and modernity for corrupting society and the goodness in man. At this time, Carl wed Martha, and the two moved to Zurich so Carl could study at the university there under the tutelage of Richard Avenarius, and to be near Ploetz, who had returned from America, disillusioned with the utopian society he saw there.

While in Berlin, Hauptmann began work on various plays that exhibited his view of society, man, and the German nation. He worked on "Konradin," "Germanen und Römer," and "Tiberius."

These three plays explore the ideas of German nationalism and praise the German Volk. Hauptmann also memorized much of Schiller's Fiesco, commenting that he and Carl both loved the role of Verrina. Verrina, the servant, killed his master in order to end Fiesco's greed and preserve the ideal of the state.

On May 5, 1885, Gerhart Hauptmann finally married Marie Thienemann, and the two established a residence in Berlin.

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53Ibid., 1013.
In the Prussian capital, Hauptmann and his bride frequently strolled the parks, and the young Gerhart marvelled at the Siegessäule (Victory Column) with its golden, shining, winged Nike. Hauptmann freely spent his wife’s money on himself and his friends, and she constantly worried that they might become poor. Hauptmann still had the threat of military duty hanging over his head, but a lung ailment that had caused him to cough-up blood, and the corresponding doctor’s report, finally exempted him from conscription and the threat of future military service. The city of Berlin, even with its demonstration of Prussian, völkisch greatness, interfered with Hauptmann’s creative abilities, and he recognized that he and his bride needed more room, land, and clean air. Therefore, the two moved to Erkner, a suburb east of Berlin.⁵⁴

Life in Erkner was good to the Hauptmanns. In quick succession, the young couple had three sons. The couple lived a life of "hope and anxiety, danger, struggles, defeat and victory."⁵⁵ Because the bustle of city life seemed so far away, Hauptmann considered himself and his family to be pioneers, in his words, "colonists." It is strange that Hauptmann uses the term colonist at this juncture in his autobiography. He suggests that he has done what he desired

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⁵⁴Ibid., 1027.

⁵⁵Ibid.
earlier, but instead of going to America, he had established the colony in his native Germany. The couple and their children felt alive and secure in Erkner.\textsuperscript{56}

Marie’s sister, Frida, fell ill in Dresden, and her illness brought great changes to the Hauptmann household. This illness affected Marie greatly, and she traveled to Dresden to sit and await her sister’s predicted death. Gerhart, "was too selfish to accompany her."\textsuperscript{57} Although there was little to notice at the time, this event signalled a growing strain in the marriage and a new awakening for Hauptmann’s literary career. Hauptmann never described the strain, but from reading his autobiography, one can conclude he did not want to be laden with the responsibilities of marriage and family ties.

Without his wife and children around, Hauptmann began to remember his childhood; the Silesia of his youth appeared before him in his mind’s eye as a long-forgotten wonder. Hauptmann, on impulse, decided to visit his home. He called upon his friend Hugo Schmidt in Berlin, and the two began a trip back to Hauptmann’s youth. When Hauptmann returned to Erkner, he learned of Frida’s death, and four or five days later his young wife returned home.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 1033.

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., 1037.
The winter of 1887 was harsh, and the Hauptmanns left Erkner, travelled to Hamburg, and spent the remainder of the winter with Hauptmann's parents, who had left the hotel to Georg and moved to the port city. This visit must seem trivial to most Hauptmann biographers, because they do not mention it. While his wife and son shared a bed in his parents' home, Gerhart slept on the sofa in the living room. "Memories of Rome wallowed in my head and haunted me." Hauptmann felt he had never completed the artistic work he began in Rome. The thoughts of his unfinished work left a void in his being that disturbed his waking thoughts as well as his dreams. Hauptmann filled this void with hopes and desires for success in his newly-chosen literary endeavor that "burned within" him. He had submitted his play, "Tiberius," to the German Theater, and the directors of the theater had graciously rejected and returned it. The birth of his second son "stimulated his enthusiasm" to succeed in literature, and he wrote a novella, "Bahnwärter Thiel," submitted it for publication and discovered that Georg Conrad, in Munich, planned to print the story in his magazine. Hauptmann's first published success combined with the memory of his reading of the "Hermannslied" in Breslau and Carl's earlier compliments regarding the Breslau poems,

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58Ibid., 1040.

59Ibid., 1044.
drove Gerhart to see in literature a field where he could and would be successful. "Through literary works came peace and constancy." 60

In 1887 Wilhelm Arent, one of Hauptmann's friends and literary colleagues in Erkner, published an anthology of recently composed poems and short stories, pieces by authors not yet widely recognized or accepted. Moderne Dichter-Charaketeré (Personalities of Modern Authors) included Hauptmann's "Bahnwärter Thiel" and a few of his poems along with early works from Julius Hart, Friedrich Adler, Arno Holz, Heinrich Hart, Alfred Hugenberg, and others. This anthology was "among other things proof of the period" which some literary critics and historians sometimes call Young Germany. 61 A few of these young authors, who frequently met at taverns in Berlin and at the Hauptmann home in Erkner, organized a literary fraternity known as Durch. "We abandoned other work to debate and hold lectures."62 These young men discussed the ideas of national unity, the concept of freedom, social justice, and the causes of poverty.

Hauptmann, with his wife and sons, travelled to Zurich, Switzerland, in the summer of 1888 to visit Carl Hauptmann and Marie's sister, Martha, a trip that would greatly

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60Ibid., 1046.

61Ibid., 1047 ff. See also Craig's Germany, 1866-1945, 209-216, and Pinson's Modern Germany, 65-71.

influence Hauptmann's social, political, and literary philosophy. Ploetz and Simon had earlier moved to Switzerland to escape the Bismarckian censors who hounded them for their socialist ideas. Carl Hauptmann, Ploetz, and Simon were studying for doctoral degrees at the University in Zurich; while in Zurich, Gerhart also attended a few lectures at the university. Through his studies at the university, Gerhart met Auguste Forel, professor of psychology and director of the city's mental asylum. Hauptmann suggests that it was Forel whose ideas and "developments had a prevailing influence on me."^63

Hauptmann thought Forel to be practical and more down-to-earth in his ideas. According to Hauptmann, Forel desired a better world, but felt that improvement of the world's state of affairs was a mere dream. "Forel aligned himself with the struggle for women's rights and prohibition. A world without wine, beer, and liquor ... must be better."^64 As stated earlier, these two beliefs -- women's rights and alcohol abuse -- will become major themes in many of Hauptmann's plays and writings and will receive additional attention later. Suffice it to say now, Forel, with his down-to-earth ideas on mankind, psychology, and social causes, deeply influenced Hauptmann. While in

^63Ibid., 1057.

^64Ibid., 1059.
Zurich, Hauptmann's eldest brother, Georg, wrote a letter that has received scant attention from earlier Hauptmann biographers. Because of the letter's timing and Hauptmann's inclusion of it in his autobiography, it appears to be of major importance. Georg wrote, "We have an explosion of motors here . . . . You no longer need a horse to draw a wagon. We have a maneuverable, motor driven balloon; we have a small, lightning-fast boat, without oars. Yes, one day we will probably fly without a balloon." The importance of this letter is that Gerhart commented on the changes taking place in his world, changes that according to Forel and the Young Germans did not necessarily benefit mankind. To Hauptmann, the changes "appeared to be madness;" machines were replacing people.

Indicative of this replacement was the increased poverty Hauptmann witnessed on Freie Straße in Zurich and in Forel's mental institution. Hauptmann saw himself and his circle of friends in Zurich as soldiers, much as the Heilsarmee (Salvation Army), which tried to assist those stricken with poverty in the modern world. Questions of heredity as a factor leading to drunkenness, poverty, and social problems frequently arose in discussions which Forel and Ploetz led. The question of eugenics in society grew in

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65Georg Hauptmann to Gerhart Hauptmann, 1888, GHP, Brief Nachlaß, F, Berlin Staatsbibliothek; See also Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 7:1060.
Hauptmann's mind until he began to write two plays that dealt with social inequality, poverty, and drunkenness with an emphasis on eugenics. Hauptmann began to formulate the outlines for "Vor Sonnenaufgang" and "Die Weber." With these two plays, Gerhart stated, "The spirits have awakened . . . I have awakened."\(^{66}\)

\(^{66}\)Ibid., 1068.
CHAPTER IV

HAUPTMANN'S SOCIAL CRITICISM: 1873 - 1888

In the literature on Gerhart Hauptmann, his biographers and the literary critics focus on Hauptmann’s dramas and his short stories to discern his social, economic and political criticisms of Germany and German society. Few biographers give adequate attention to the poetry and stories Hauptmann wrote prior to his success on the stage of Berlin’s Freie Bühne. Hauptmann believed "art effected justice. . . . My art form is my moral philosophy."¹ In his early works, Hauptmann lays the foundation for the deeper social criticism and his compassion for the common man that makes his drama so forceful and poignant. "Whoever denounces my dramas, denounces his own humanity."² Hauptmann possessed a deep feeling for the common man and his plight as a result of Germany’s rapid growth and industrial expansion. An examination of Hauptmann’s early works, those written before he visited his brother Carl in Zurich during the spring and


summer of 1888, gives clearer insight into Hauptmann's "moral philosophy," his view of his world and society.

Many of Hauptmann's early works are symbolic. In Bismarckian Germany, where any overt criticism of the government or the social system could result in imprisonment, Hauptmann covertly showed his feelings for society and the common man. He believed that art should express the artist's philosophy and "direct mankind of our day to what lies in our hearts." Viewing his age, Hauptmann believed "[d]ramatic art is, so to speak, derived from productive skepticism. . . . You will find tragedy . . . a formula for the painful problem which is life."³ Through Hauptmann's early works and his dramas, we can see his skeptical view of Wilhelmine Germany and the condition of the common man.

As stated in Chapter II, Hauptmann's first literary effort was the alliterative "Hermannslied" ("Lay of Arminius") in 1880 and an epic drama, "Germanen und Römer" ("Germans and Romans," 1881) both depicting the struggle for German independence from the Romans. With recent victories of a now-united Germany over Austria and France, there is little wonder that Hauptmann's first efforts focused on Germany's grandeur, whether real or imagined. These two works are better suited for discussion in a following

chapter on Hauptmann’s nationalism. What is clear is that Hauptmann showed a concern for his nation and its people, even to the point of joining a Pan-Germanic league with his brother and their friend, Alfred Ploetz.

Hauptmann’s concern for Germany and the conditions in which its people lived found its way into two of his earliest works that have gone relatively unnoticed in examinations of his social criticism. "Promethidenlos" ("The Fate of Prometheus’s Children") and "Das bunte Buch" ("The Varicolored Book") both exhibit Hauptmann’s earliest vision of the dismal society that industrialization and urbanization brought to the Volk. Hauptmann began work on both in 1884, five years before the turbulent opening of "Vor Sonnenaufgang."

Through the hero of "Promethidenlos," Selin, Hauptmann expresses his dissatisfaction with the modern world and what it has done to mankind’s innocence. On his voyage to the Mediterranean in 1883, Hauptmann’s ship called at the Spanish port of Malaga. Selin, on his voyage of self-discovery, also calls on the port of Malaga and there meets a prostitute. We see what Hauptmann thought of society with his description of Selin’s encounter.

Who approaches? A child with black locks, a lovely child, as modest as a doe, with lily-white cheeks soft as rose petals, her step is like a fairy’s step. Selin draws near to her, and his pulse stops, here comfort is needed, for here dwells misery.
There he must smell the odor of mold and decay, and he sees worms creeping in her eyes. Hauptmann uses an image of corruption, a worm eating away at the innocence of the young bud, a violation of nature. The woman appears to be a child, a child whore. Just as society attempts to hide the truth of the worm of modernity eating away at the innocence of mankind, the woman attempted to hide her true identity behind the mask of the child-innocent.

Selin, like Hauptmann himself, searches for virtue but cannot find it. "Wherever I directed my steps" said Selin, "I never found virtue in morals. ... But deceit lies at the core of our morals, and truth is choked beneath its steps." All that is pleasurable covers the truth, as "wolves in sheep's clothing." Modernity lies to those who covet what it offers. While offering that which mankind seemingly desires, the modern world covers what it is doing to mankind's innocence. Industrialization and modernity is eating away at the soul of the Volk. Through Selin, Hauptmann vows to expose truth, to "withdraw the mask from the face of lies," to confront mankind with its indifference to itself.


Ibid., 404.

Ibid., 405.
Perhaps Hauptmann's view of man's selfishness and indifference to others stemmed from an incident in 1884, just prior to his working on "Promethidenlos." While studying with a friend, Schidewitz, a pastor's son, at the University of Berlin, Schidewitz became ill. Hauptmann recognized the illness to be as grave as the one he had suffered while in Rome. Schidewitz was delirious with a high fever and Hauptmann asked if a doctor had been called. A doctor was finally summoned, and when he arrived, he asked if anyone had the funds to pay for his services. Since Hauptmann and his acquaintances were poor students, no one could offer the fee; the doctor "made for the door and left." With another friend, Hauptmann took Schidewitz to a Jewish hospital where a young doctor placed the delirious young man in a cold bed on the third floor. The next morning Hauptmann went to visit Schidewitz, but the young man had died during the night. The first doctor's callous approach indicated that material gain was more important than saving the young student, while the second doctor's lack of concern for the penniless student signalled more indifference. These were the attitudes Hauptmann attacked in "Promethidenlos."

If mankind could learn to recognize the indifference that the modern world created, men could "reconcile, forgive

each other, and live in divine, pure peace." Selin believes that to change society and re-create the world as it was designed to be, man simply had to recognize and uproot the evil in men's hearts that modernity had established and replace it with the good found in lost innocence. During the first weeks of his Italian voyage, Hauptmann began to follow his later published advice. "I criticized the contemporary conditions in Germany. . . . We, I said, my friends and I, suffered from cultural fatigue." Hauptmann claimed to be a rebel and struck at the hearts of men hoping to convert them to a course of action more aligned with the past than with the unnatural modern world.

Through Selin, Hauptmann attacked the modern city and offered the realization that the individual's struggle to overcome the evils the modern city created for mankind was in vain. In Naples, "Selin awoke with the greatest sorrow/and at the same time discovered a powerless feeling. . . . With our own strength we strive in vain." The city created and compounded an indifference to human suffering, and the ability to stop or change the progress of this consuming circle lay beyond the ability of the individual himself.

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8Ibid.
9Ibid., 914.
Hauptmann again mixes his own life into the story of Selin when the voyager chances to meet the spirit of the reform-minded Emperor Tiberius on the isle of Capri. While on his own voyage, Hauptmann landed on Capri and met a hermit, possibly a German, who rejected the "personal and cultural opportunities offered by the new German Empire." Tiberius, at one time, rejected the modern world of his own age and sequestered himself on Capri because he could not accomplish the reforms he envisioned for Rome, and he felt threatened by the aristocracy whom he suppressed.

Tiberius's spirit warns Selin of the impossibility of reforming mankind. Selin listens but does not follow the spirit's advice and pursues a course of action that leads to his eventual suicide. Hauptmann, after his stay on Capri and his later visit to Naples, rejected his earlier activist efforts. Through Selin, Hauptmann showed that activism led to despair.

This aversion to action can also be seen in a work Hauptmann began at the same time he was writing Promethidenlos. According to Felix Voigt, Hauptmann began an unfinished verse-epic, "Das Erbe des Tiberius" ("The

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1Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 7:932.

Heritage of Tiberius") while studying in Breslau and at the same time writing Canto XI of "Promethidenlos," when Tiberius appeared to Selin.\(^{13}\) According to Paul Schlenther, "Das Erbe des Tiberius" is a tale of a man who became an embittered idealist because of the treachery and deceit of his friends and followers. According to Tacitus and Velleius, the same reasons led the emperor Tiberius into self-exile on Capri in 26 A.D. Paul Schlenther, Hauptmann's personal friend and his biographer, believes "an unrecognized hero, [Tiberius and later Selin] exposed unjustly to the hate and aversion of the mob, was indeed a proper subject for the sympathy of a social benefactor" [Hauptmann].\(^{14}\) Having spoken with Hauptmann about the characters in "Promethidenlos," Schlenther believed Hauptmann viewed Tiberius as a Promethean. Thus, according to Schlenther, Promethidenlos records Hauptmann's increasing perception of what constitutes social evils and at the same time confirms the artist's pessimism about being able to change the situation.

Hauptmann did offer a solution for Selin and activists who felt compelled to change their worlds. "Can you


\(^{14}\)Paul Schlenther, Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk, 5th ed. (1897, Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1912), 47.
renounce youth? Sing! Compose! That is the courage we need now./ The poets are the tears of history,/ which heated times sip with lust."  

Hauptmann admonishes men to turn to the arts to make society aware of the evils modernity created. He follows his own advice and turns from activism -- the Pan-Germanic movement -- to being an author and playwright. Hauptmann becomes the conscience of his era, writing the truth as he witnessed it. This is most evident in the dedicatory poem to "Promethidenlos."

What we feel, what we intend to say is our duty. In the veins of our times flows state-red blood, red gold, but not in our veins. Link hand-in-hand to form a solid circle and feel what you know, that your foot is on the right track and a hot flame burns in your souls. Gamble, burning heart, and travel. Blood for truth, for light, and you, with tremendous courage for the struggle, we cannot lose.

In a second dedicatory, introductory poem, Hauptmann admonishes the artist in society to maintain his focus on the truth.


16Hauptmann, "Promethidenlos," 4:367. [Was wir gefühlt, was wir gewollt,/ zu sagen ist uns Pflicht./ In unserer Zeiten Adern rollt/ statt roten Blutes rotes Gold,/ in unsern Adern nicht/ Schlingt Hand in Hand zum festen Kreis/ und fühlt, daß ihr euch kennt,/ daß euer Fuß auf einem Gleis/ und eine Flamme glühend heiß/ in euren Seelen brennt./ Poch, glühend Herz, und walle, Blut/ für Wahrheit und für Licht, und du, gewalt'ger Kampfesmut,/ verlisch, verlisch uns nicht.]
I sing free, even if all chains oppress me;  
Bravery is the singer's first duty,  
Whoever locks his sorrow in a safe  
Is a coward and not a singer.  
In the playing of the strings, our weapon flashes,  
And woe to the singer, who sings of peace!  
On his shield must rest truth,  
Which in the struggle he brings to the enemy.\textsuperscript{17}

Hauptmann clearly states the course his actions will take in his own future. He will be the bringer of truth and take that truth into the battle against modernity.

Hauptmann's first attempt to follow his own advice is "Promethidenlos," but his indecision on how to display truth is seen in "Das bunte Buch," a work he began the same year he started "Promethidenlos." Hilscher states "Das bunte Buch," "contains a few socially critical poems, in which they sometimes clearly connect the themes of the later naturalist drama."\textsuperscript{18} It would take an entire book to discuss the social ills Hauptmann examined through the poems in "Das bunte Buch," but a quick glance at a few poems will allow a better understanding of Hauptmann's concern with the modern world.

Hauptmann frequently uses metaphors of dark and light, night and day, to symbolize the evil and good in society. In "Die alte Nacht," he expresses sorrow for society's loss

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, 369.

of love, knowledge, and hope, which represent the "three 
bringers of light" in Hauptmann's age.\textsuperscript{19} Hauptmann 
attempted to mirror what he considered to be the moral 
condition of all mankind found in "Promethidenlos." He even 
got so far as to call himself a "rebel" when he "preached 
that Germany was suffering from a weariness with the way 
things were in present-day society; I criticized 
contemporary conditions, and I castigated Christianity for 
its immorality and unnaturalness."\textsuperscript{20} This critical attitude 
continued in "Promethidenlos" and other early works.

In "Der Wächter," Hauptmann shows the tragedy of 
humanity when a watchman, working hard to assure safe 
passage of the train, but earning only very scanty wages, 
starves to death.

> And so one finally found him, stiff  
> and had him silently and quickly buried.  
> The train boomed and roared along the track  
> the fire burned still today with blood and sweat,  
> And now, as in those days, one baked in bread  
> the early, cold, miserable death.\textsuperscript{21}

The train, modernity, feeds on the blood and sweat of those 
whom it is designed to serve, with a silent indifference 
towards those whom it hurts. The watcher is buried without

\textsuperscript{19}Gerhart Hauptmann, 'Die alte Nacht,' "Das bunte Buch," Sämtliche Werke, 4:49.

\textsuperscript{20}Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 7:914.

\textsuperscript{21}Hauptmann, 'Die Wächter,' "Das bunte Buch," 4:58.
ceremony, just another victim of modernity. Hauptmann uses this same theme later in "Bahnwärter Thiel."

Perhaps the greatest social criticism found in "Das bunte Buch" comes from the historical poem, "Der Tod des Gracchus," a tale of Tiberius Gracchus in ancient Rome, who, as a tribune, attempted land reforms in the second century B.C. This ballad invokes the growing class struggle that plagued Hauptmann's society. "What do I profit from life or death? The poor need bread!/ Which I will offer to them/ and should I become less on their account!" While the Roman society and empire grew, the small landowners, the poor, grew poorer as tributes of grain poured into Rome from conquered territories. The large landowners used laws of debt slavery to enslave the poor. These were the problems Tiberius Gracchus hoped to resolve.

He said, "Where is the citizen's land?
Where is the citizen's bread?
Fire came to his field,
The butcher to his stable;
In his house sits privation,
On his sideboard crouches death,
Disgrace falls on his wife,
He starves in his love."

This is the same situation Hauptmann claimed existed in modern Germany in "Die Wächter." The wealthy, modern world seized its living from the poor or subjected the poor to

\[\text{\[\text{22 Gerhart Hauptmann, 'Der Tod des Gracchus,' "Das bunte Buch," 4:78.}\]
\[\text{\[\text{23 Ibid., 80.}\]}

unfit living and working conditions, causing the poor to suffer.

But, like Selin in "Promethidenlos," Tiberius Gracchus in "Der Tod des Gracchus" dies in vain, trying to help the people.

'Strength, good God, strength. It is death!
If not strength, give the poor people bread.'
So he prayed as he died
His hope shattered into pieces. 24

Hauptmann feels the futility of active reform, especially following on the heels of the aborted reform movements and revolutions of 1848, which tried to obviate the social evils of the modern world.

Das bunte Buch is a recounting of many experiences Hauptmann knew too well. He had seen the conditions of the poor miners and farmers in Obersalzbrunn, Silesia, where, as a young boy, he had walked up and down the streets and visited with the Krause family who lived in the lower level of his father's hotel. He had also witnessed the wealth of the Prussian Junker class, the German aristocracy. Now, at the young age of twenty-two, Hauptmann felt the urge to awaken Germans to the evils that he felt beset the German Volk.

Hauptmann's attitude would quietly change over the next few years. Upon his marriage to Marie Thienemann in 1885, Hauptmann took for himself a more reserved role, one of a

24Ibid., 82.
middle-class husband and father. Following the honeymoon, the couple settled in Berlin which allowed Hauptmann to formulate a realistic idea of the modern city.

The pulse of Berlin was stimulating and able to carry me away. Particularly the demands on one’s hearing because of the unending thunder from the city’s streets which was frightful. ... I could no longer bear Berlin. Here only the struggle [for existence] mattered, to be victorious or go under."

Hauptmann and his family moved to Erkner on the outskirts of Berlin where he lived a comfortable life with his watch dogs protecting him, and his wealthy wife financing his lifestyle of leisure.

In the fall of 1887, just prior to his journey to Zurich to visit his brother Carl, Hauptmann wrote a critical essay on the principle of art reflecting life, nature, as it existed. In "Gedanken über das Bemalen der Statuen" ("Ideas on Painting of Statues") Hauptmann wrote that modern man had the ability to capture nature in a photographic, technical manner (Kunstfertigkeit), whereas life itself, recreated objectively, is art (Kunst). Kunstfertigkeit is "an imitation of nature," the ability to manipulate artistic techniques, while art, Kunst, is a "selection of those outer traits [in nature] that reveal the essence of an object." Hauptmann believed that Kunstfertigkeit was a false


representation of nature because "the product of mere skill is deception, while the product of art [Kunst] is truth." To Hauptmann, art had to represent the truth of life and nature, which was the essence of what he said in both "Promethidenlos" and "Das bunte Buch."

While in Erkner in 1887, Hauptmann wrote his first novella, "Fasching" ("Carnival"), a story of how the modern world destroys a small, yeoman farmer-sailmaker, Kielblock. Through the destruction of the common man, Hauptmann implies society's inevitable destruction. When Kielblock marries, he vows to his young wife that they will live a "merry life from now on." But soon after their marriage, the wife gives birth to their son, who interferes with the couple's enjoying a merry life. They can no longer go dancing, unless they "take the little brat" with them. Instead of enjoying their simple life on their small piece of land, they feel the lure of the city, to travel across the lake to enjoy life, especially when the winter festivals and holidays arrive.

Kielblock's mother lives with the couple, and she represents the voice of the reasonable past. She sits in her rocking chair at the window, resting her feet on a chest

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27Ibid., 896.


29Ibid.
into which she deposits the few extra coins the young family is able to save. She admonishes the young couple for their yearnings, but they do not listen. They sneak a few coins and skate across the lake to join in the winter parties in the city. Kielblock always places a light in the window of their modest home to act as a guide back across the lake after a night of drinking and dancing. The light is the sign for the way home, the path to the past, where Kielblock's mother rests, content with herself and her place in life.

But the temptations of the city weigh heavily upon the young couple. "In their livestock she saw the great reservations to their comfortable life; in the child she saw the same hinderance." On a trip home from the city, across the frozen lake, the two young people with their child lose sight of the candle that burned in the window to signal the way home. Clouds cover the moon, which earlier lighted their way, and without the candle burning in the window, the family loses its way home. They skate too close to open water, over thin ice, and fall through to their deaths. Villagers and fishermen hear the cries for help but only find the corpses beneath the ice. When the rescuers go to the home to inform Kielblock's mother of the tragedy, they find her dead, her arm buried in the green chest "which

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50Ibid., 18.
stood open on the floor, filled to overflowing with gold, silver, and copper coins. . . . Over the bare crown of her head the slight flame of a low-burning candle threw a misty yellow light."\textsuperscript{31} With the death of the "old lady" the past also dies; the Kielblock family could not return to the past and died in between their desires and the past that had been their haven.

The introduction of money in "Fasching" also is a form of social condemnation. The symbol for greed and social corruption, money plays an important role. The Kielblocks had placed their surplus money in the chest in hopes of one day travelling to Berlin to enjoy an extended holiday. The mother acted as the guardian of the hopes and dreams, never allowing the couple to squander away the wealth they had earned. Kielblock's obsession with the money spread to include the mother who moved the large chest from the window to a "windowless alcove" where she buries her hand in the coins. Evidently the stress of moving the chest from the window killed her, because she is found as stone, "sitting over the chest."\textsuperscript{32} The light that had been in the window now dimly lit the morbid scene of the old woman, instead of guiding the couple home.

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 33-34.

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid.
Hauptmann also gives readers a hint of his preoccupation with the importance of rural life, local dialect, and recording life as it really exists, elements of the naturalist genre. When the Kielblock’s speak to each other, they speak in an eastern German dialect, very difficult to translate or understand. "'Nichts is schöner' rief er in das Gewühl,'als so en bißken den toten Mann machen, aber nun hab' ick's ooch dick. Vorwärts, Musik, Musik!'" ('Nothing is more beautiful' he cried out amid the tumult, 'than becoming like a dead man [drunk], but now it's time to live. Let's go! Music! Music!')\(^{13}\) The use of dialect is very important in Hauptmann's rendering of life and art, since it represents an objective view of life, Kunst, whereas a translation, or modernization of the dialect is merely Kunstfertigkeit.

The second novella Hauptmann wrote in 1887 was "Bahnwärter Thiel" ("Flagman Thiel"), a story of an individual at odds with himself, nature, and the modern world. Just as in "Der Wächter," Thiel struggles with the advance of the modern world upon nature and his quiet way of life. Warren Maurer suggests that Hauptmann’s youthful experience when his father lost the Hotel Krone and then managed a railroad depot restaurant subjected the boy to the steam engine, "the embodiment of an awe-inspiring, quasi-

\(^{13}\)Ibid., 23.
diabolical technology." It is true that Hauptmann noted the noise of "these iron monsters of locomotives," but there is no evidence, either in diaries or autobiographies, that the experience of the depot and his father's demotion formed the basis for "Thiel."\textsuperscript{35}

The essence of Thiel is the conflict of new with old and how the new destroys the past. Thiel’s first wife, Minna, dies very early in the story, but Hauptmann describes her as having been bound to her husband by a "spiritualized love."\textsuperscript{36} Thiel marries Lene, his second wife, only to provide a mother for his son by Minna. Lene is described as someone who "lacked soul."\textsuperscript{37} Using sex, Lene dominates Thiel. What Maurer, Hilscher and other biographers of Hauptmann fail to note is that the sexual dominance is equal to a superficial enticement of the natural man whom Thiel represents. Just as the modern world and its technology is without soul, Lene cannot really offer her husband the companionship Minna provided. She gives birth to their child, Thiel’s second, but Lene and the child mean little to Thiel, who seeks solace in the forest, where he acts as a

\textsuperscript{34} Maurer, \textit{Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann} (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1992), 128.

\textsuperscript{35} Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 7:724.


\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 38.
crossing guard for the railroad as speeding locomotives ravage the quiet of nature. He withdraws "into a region of the spirit which he finds in communing with the departed Minna" and divides "his time conscientiously between the living and the dead." Thiel preserves and protects the past from the modern world.

Lene and the locomotives represent the changes the modern world wreaks upon the peace of the past. Thiel has only missed his duty as the crossing guard twice in his life, and both occasions were from injuries that were the result of the train's intrusion into the forest. As a locomotive roared past the guarded intersection, a piece of coal flew from the tender-car and struck Thiel, casting him into a ditch where he shattered his leg. On the second occasion, a passenger on the train threw a wine flask which struck Thiel in the chest. Through these two examples and one other, Hauptmann points out how the modern world destroys peace and solitude. Inadvertently, modernity, in the shape of a piece of coal or a liquor bottle, harms whatever it comes in contact with. On another occasion the train struck and killed a deer as it crossed the track. The deer, similar to rural, natural life, is unaware of the

\[38\text{Ibid.}, 39-40.\]
\[39\text{Ibid.}, 37.\]
danger the train represents. In the instance with the wine flask, Hauptmann shows how the modern world has created a 'disposable' society, where man despoils nature and in turn brings harm to man. No matter what the method and outcome, modernity brings anguish to both nature and man.

Thiel keeps his forest retreat to himself and does not allow Lene to take it away from him as she has taken everything else. When Thiel discovers that Lene has abused his son, Tobias, he takes the family to the watchman's shack, in part so he can keep watch not only on the crossing, but also on Lene and Tobias. But Thiel does not want to share with Lene his forest or his spiritual time with Minna. "It was as if he had something valuable to defend, as if someone were trying to encroach on that which was most sacred to him." Lene decides to brighten the drab, natural, surroundings and she uses a spade to dig up unsightly bushes and shrubs "with the speed and stamina of a machine." While she is at work destroying the forest, Tobias creeps onto the tracks and is killed by an onrushing train. Thiel, goes insane and lashes out at the modern world in the only way he knows. He kills Lene and their child and then waits on the track for the next train to kill

Ibid., 41.
Ibid., 51.
Ibid., 56.
him. The irony of the story comes when the express train approaches, but stops short of hitting Thiel. The train's crew "binds him hand and feet" and delivers him to an insane asylum where he has to spend his days in the care of the modern world he detests. The modern world can do more than simply destroy, it can lead to a seemingly unending suffering.

"Bahnwärter Thiel" first appeared in 1888 in the naturalist journal Die Gesellschaft (Society), which Georg Conrad edited. Germans at once recognized that in Hauptmann a new leader in German literature had arisen. Hauptmann's art not only rivaled Zola's, Ibsen's, and Tolstoi's works but established a German as a leader of the naturalist movement. Nevertheless, after Conrad published Thiel, Hauptmann stopped writing and left Erkner. He then visited his brother Carl in Zurich and entered a new era of his life. But what Gerhart Hauptmann began with his poems and novellas would soon become the reigning art form in Germany. These first ventures into the literary scene served only to whet Hauptmann's appetite for his war against the modern world and criticism of society and social inequities. He would continue the war and criticism through his dramas.

As Hauptmann grew as a man and an artist, as he searched for his personal niche in life, he always found

\[43\text{Ibid., 67.}\]
himself striving to represent truth and defend a way of life he felt was rapidly disappearing. Even in his earliest works, he defends the German past against the onslaught of the modern world in the form of the advancing Roman empire. These two works coincided with his activities in a Blutbruderschaft to organize a utopian Germanic society. Even as that youthful adventure waned, so too did Hauptmann’s passion for action. As seen in "Promethidenlos" and "Das bunte Buch" and in his essays on art and artists, Hauptmann favored the role of harbinger, the singer of truth. In his early works, "Fasching" and "Bahnwärter Thiel," Hauptmann showed how the modern world destroyed almost everything it came in contact with, including mankind. In the autobiography of his youth, in which he dealt with only the years prior to 1888, Hauptmann told of his views of the modern world, its noise and destructive powers. But just as suddenly as he gained fame and recognition for his literary style and subject matter, Hauptmann left his life in Erkner and travelled to Switzerland, where he furthered his worldly education while living with his brother Carl. The ideas Hauptmann gathered in Zurich would serve to solidify his view of his role in life. It also focused his talent for writing dramatic works that would awaken Germans to the evils of the modern world and the plight of the common man who found himself subjected to those evils.
CHAPTER V

HAUPTMANN'S "VOR SONNENAUFgang:" A TUMULTUOUS TRIUMPH

As an artist and a man, Gerhart Hauptmann employed naturalism to express his ideas and feelings, because he possessed a deep desire to picture life, as well as himself, as both actually existed, without the mask of societal constraints. Like Friedrich Naumann, founder of the socio-political Nationalsoziale Verein, in the words of German historian, Golo Mann, Hauptmann desired "to have something better at home than an antiquated, army-dominated caste system without style, riddled with class enmity and selfish quarrels."¹ According to Mann, Hauptmann and other intellectuals, Arno Holz, Richard Dehmel, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, to name only a few, assumed the role of educators to enlighten the general public to the degradation into which society was falling, to picture life as it really was, but not to produce change themselves.² Even if the social drama could not solve Germany's growing social problems, Hauptmann hoped that Germans shared his "courage of . . . convictions and unshakable faith in man," and

²Ibid.
through viewing his plays, would recognize the social problems and then, possibly, rectify them.³

Following on the heels of Germany's Sturm und Drang, and prior to the acceptance of naturalism as an artistic genre, German drama implied a strong belief that middle-class prejudices are the most serious problems facing mankind.⁴ Georg Büchner, author of Dantons Tod (July, 1835) and Lenz (October, 1835), whom many literary critics consider the herald of the naturalist movement in Germany, received little acclaim until after Hauptmann's success, three-fourths of a century later. Unlike other authors of the early nineteenth century, Büchner discussed the oft-censored subject of infidelity and treated religion as a persistent irritant. Believing the bourgeois ruling class exploited the masses, Büchner called for the emancipation of the common man. Büchner, like Hauptmann who followed him, employed dialect and controversial language in dialogue to create a mood or situation.

In the early nineteenth century, however, the middle-class and aristocracy cared little for the common man's plight. The middle class was too self-centered to worry about social problems, except those problems that directly


affected them. The bourgeois classes that had led Germany into the modern world, demanded that literature, especially in the form of the drama, focus on their achievements, sacrifices, and importance in the development of the state.

One of the leading Berlin dramatists of the 1870s, nearly a half-century after Büchner, Paul Lindau, believed that society should leave social problems to specialists -- the sociologists -- and so he addressed the social problems of his time in a superficial manner. Just as the middle-class and the Junkers turned away from the problems facing society, so too did Lindau focus attention on the middle-class and the comparatively trite problems its members faced. Lindau's social plays Ein Erflog (1874), and Gräfin Lea (1879) do little to demonstrate the true social conditions of the era. In Marion, Lindau attempted to show the causes of personal misery. He explained that "prevailing conditions alone are enough to bring about this tragedy" and that misery can "lead inevitably to the weakening of the family and the moral and physical destruction of the individual." Lindau even criticized Heinrich Schaufert, a contemporary playwright, for detailing serious social problems in the highly successful play, Vater Brahmin. Lindau believed social conditions might weaken the family and destroy the moral fiber of the individual, but

\footnote{Paul Lindau, quoted in Osborne, \textit{The Naturalist Drama}, 5.}
plays evoking emotion about social problems served to foster discontent and increase class hatred, which could lead to violence and social ruin. Lindau’s beliefs reflected the majority of bourgeois Germans who desired to be entertained, not confronted with material that might be politically or morally offensive. According to John Osborne, the young naturalists, Gerhart Hauptmann among them, under the direction of Otto Brahm, had to break Lindau’s and the bourgeoisie’s hold on the theater-going public. Their hold weakened with the creation of a private theater troupe dedicated to realism on the stage.

In 1866, the Duke of Saxony-Meiningen organized a theater troupe to present realistic drama for the general populace. The Meiningen Court Theater received continental recognition for its realistic costumes, stage settings, and the use of live animals on stage, not for the content of the plays presented, much to the Duke’s chagrin. "I brought them Shakespeare, Schiller, and Molière, and they are interested in furniture," he complained. The Meiningen troupe relied heavily upon classical plays but also introduced a few new works, the most notable being Henrik Ibsen’s The Pretenders and Ghosts, two of the greatest naturalist dramas to precede Hauptmann’s. The Germans were

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6 Ibid., 6.

7 Herzog Georg II, Duke of Saxony-Meiningen, quoted in Osborne, Naturalist Drama, 10.
now ready to accept Büchner's plays, but his death in 1837 had left the Germans with no replacement.

In 1874 the Meiningen troupe began a series of European guest-performance tours, and, off-and-on, for sixteen years, toured both the major urban areas and smaller cities and towns, performing at festivals and for command audiences. The young drama critic Otto Brahm followed many of the troupe's performances, enthralled by the realism on the stage. Gerhart Hauptmann, while a student in Breslau, viewed the troupe's performances of Shakespeare's and Schiller's plays, and these performances inspired him, though at the time he did not recognize his own talent as a playwright. Brahm and Hauptmann would later apply realism beyond the visual, extending it to dialogue and ignorance on the part of the hero who was subjected to forces beyond his comprehension. This determinism, which Lindau attempted to create in Marion, became a focal point of Hauptmann's plays.

During his visit to his brother Carl in Zurich during the summer of 1888, Gerhart put together the concepts and ideas that became the bases of his dramas. Hauptmann strove to clarify human verities and clearly followed in the footsteps of Schiller, who once stated, "Not only do men imitate one another in learning how to speak and in how to express their feelings, they imitate even more what they see

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Osborne, Naturalist Drama, 12.
on the stage, . . . Art, good or bad, shapes man’s value system.”9 Hauptmann may not have been hoping to have mankind imitate his plays, but, perhaps he was trying to raise mankind’s awareness of the conditions, the truths, that existed for the common man in the modern world and what lay hidden in the rapid and rampant industrial growth the aristocratic Junkers and bourgeois fostered.

According to John Osborne, Friedrich Nietzsche believed art magnified life and brought ideas and events into prominence; it "strengthens and weakens certain values."10 What Hauptmann sought to bring into prominence were the truths of modern society, to strengthen those values that led man to success and to weaken those false values that, at the time, Hauptmann believed were leading society towards degeneration. "Ibsen found poetry in the womb. The truth in defiance of the world . . . [similar to] the exploitation [of truth] which Goethe employed in Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre. . . . The point being, I could use the truth to be [either] useful or harmful."11

Hauptmann grounded his dramas and stories in his native Silesia, reproducing the dialect, nuances, and ideology that


10Osborne, Naturalist Drama, 19-20.

11Gerhart Hauptmann, Nachlaß, Nr. 11, 159, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.
revealed Silesians who suffered under modernity's invasion. That invasion, in Hauptmann's view, was destroying an innocent lifestyle. Hauptmann used the drama to transmit these truths as he saw them. "Naturalism! Realism! Dear God! It is the essence of any art. The tree, in order to grow must sink its roots deep in the earth."\textsuperscript{12} By exploiting his Silesian roots, Hauptmann hoped for an idealistic change.

Drama critic and Hauptmann biographer Warren Maurer believes Hauptmann shared with his friends and mentors "a strong faith in science as the ultimate solution to human problems. . . ."\textsuperscript{13} As stated in Chapter I, August Forel's research and lectures on the inheritance of behavioral traits, along with Alfred Ploetz's similar ideas, had an impact on Hauptmann. Hauptmann began his career at a time when the natural sciences were expanding their previous bounds and engulfing philosophy, religion, and the arts, and he began "illustrating the laws of heredity and pleading . . . for social justice."\textsuperscript{14} At the same time Hauptmann incorporated Forel's views on the subjects of female emancipation and the evils of alcohol. Forel believed women

\textsuperscript{12}Hauptmann, Nachlaß, Nr. 1, 52.

\textsuperscript{13}Warren Maurer, \textit{Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann} (Columbia: University of South Caroling Press, 1992), 12.

should be granted the same rights to education that men received and that alcoholism was a genetic disease that could be passed from one generation to another and was destroying society.

To understand Hauptmann's views of society and why they created such a commotion, it is necessary to understand the political situation that existed in Germany and the impact that situation had upon Hauptmann and his works. In the late nineteenth century, most agricultural business fell under the regulations of industrialization and the protectionism Bismarck and the Junker class imposed. The subsidies the government provided large land holders effectively prevented their being hurt, while the ordinary German citizen paid for the Junkers' gains through cheap labor and high taxes. The subsidies to the large land owners deepened the impact of a continuing, Europe-wide agricultural depression for the small farmers and those subservient to the Junkers.

As if the subsidies did not hurt the small land owners enough, German farmers experienced a series of bad harvests in the early 1870s, and as imports of Russian and American wheat and grain increased, Germans became dependent on foreign grain. In 1874 Germans imported two million tons of Russian wheat. The looming failure of the infant German industrial revolution and the growing dependence upon foreign grain caused small and large landowners alike, along
with the Zentral Verband deutscher Industriellen (Central Association of German Industrialists) to cry out for governmental assistance. In 1878 Bismarck proposed a protective tariff to support the sagging agricultural output. As the tariff improved the economic standing of the privileged Junkers, it also improved the political following of Bismarck’s Conservative Party and enhanced the chancellor’s ability to control the government.

Bismarck’s hold on the political power of the government was still shaky and the Socialist movement grew as the economic situation increased the tribulations the common working man was experiencing. The Socialists gained political strength as the common worker looked for economic aid outside Bismarck’s Prussian, conservative, militaristic design. Ferdinand Lassalle led the early socialist movement, and later, August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht struggled with Bismarck’s Prussian politics.

The creation and rise of the German socialist movement coincided with the growth of German industry and German unification. On May 23, 1863, delegates from the working class met in Leipzig and organized the Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterverein (General German Workers’ Association), the forerunner of the German Social Democratic Party. Ferdinand Lassalle led the fledgling association and told its members that unless the workers gained political power they would
not achieve the social and political rights to which they were entitled.

Historians Koppel Pinson and William Carr both state Lassalle envisioned himself as a dictator of Germany with the support of the masses "provided he pursued a radical social policy [universal suffrage]." 15 Perhaps it was Lassalle's letter to Bismarck spelling out Lassalle's dream of controlling the dictatorship of the working class that frightened the conservative Bismarck and was among the factors that led to the chancellor's suppression of the socialist movement. Perhaps it was Lassalle's successor, Johann Baptist von Schweitzer, a devout Catholic, who helped to push Bismarckian policies. Schweitzer also believed in a proletarian dictatorship, and this belief, when combined with his religious affiliation, may have led Bismarck to attack the socialists, just as he had attacked the Catholic Church in his Kulturkampf. More than likely, however, Bismarck's move against the Socialists and its organization resulted from the work of August Bebel, a socialist leader who rose to prominence in the Reichstag after 1870.

As Bismarck led the march toward German unification, many Germans in Saxony and Bavaria, where the liberal tradition of 1848 still existed, grew disenchanted with Prussia's growing dominance. Amid the ultra-nationalist

15 Carr, A History of Germany, 81. See also Pinson's Modern Germany, 202.
feelings following Germany's unification in 1871, the growing socialist movement received 124,000 votes and sent two representatives to the Reichstag, August Bebel being the most vocal. Bebel's election and the political turmoil in France following the German victory in the Franco-Prussian War helped in prompting Bismarck to action against the Socialists.

On 25 May, August Bebel made an impassioned plea before the Reichstag in support of the Paris Commune. By itself, especially with the defeat of the Communards imminent, Bebel's speech did little to incite the Reichstag. Bebel, however, did incite Bismarck.

The Socialists gained strength in the Reichstag -- in 1877 the Socialists increased their deputies from two to twelve, after receiving approximately 493,000 votes -- and Bismarck grew more and more alarmed. Bismarck's coalition government, in jeopardy of collapsing after his Kulturkampf failed to rid Germany of Catholic influence after the mainly Catholic states of Baden, Bavaria, and Württemburg joined the united German empire in 1871, re-aligned itself towards the political right. Then, in 1878 a plumber's assistant, Hödel, fired two shots at the kaiser's carriage. Bismarck used this assassination attempt to solidify his new

16August Bebel, Aus meinem Leben, v. 2 (Stuttgart: 1914), 223. See also, Bebel, My Life (New York: Howard Fertig, 1973), 236.
coalition’s conservative power against the growing socialist movement. He introduced an Anti-Socialist Law aimed at limiting Socialist involvement in the political arena.

The first time the legislature voted on Bismarck’s proposal, on 25 May 1878, it voted against the Iron Chancellor and defeated the measure. Bismarck persisted, however, especially after 2 June, when Dr. Karl Nobling, an avowed Socialist, attempted a second assassination as the kaiser drove down Unter den Linden. This time the kaiser was severely wounded. Bismarck used the press, denounced the attempt and the socialist movement, and re-introduced his anti-socialist legislation into the Reichstag. During the debate, Bismarck made the assembly aware of how Bebel’s 1871 speech had "opened his eyes" to the dangers socialism presented. Bismarck was able to rally a coalition of National Liberals, Conservatives, and Reichspartei members to pass the Anti-Socialist legislation on 19 October 1878. It was this legislation that led to a ban on public theaters staging plays that espoused socialist philosophies. As a result Otto Brahm and his following opened the Freie Bühne to stage Hauptmann’s plays.

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In August, 1889, Samuel Fischer, founder and owner of the noted publishing house Fischer Verlag, published Hauptmann’s "Vor Sonnenaufgang" in book form. Earlier, in Munich, the editors of the naturalist periodical Die Gesellschaft (Society) had rejected publication of the play, possibly because Hauptmann’s naturalism touched upon subjects the Munich group, like Lindau, felt drama should avoid. So, through Fischer, Hauptmann’s first drama reached the theater-going public in print, two months before Otto Brahm produced the play in Berlin’s Freie Bühne. Otto Brahm became so impressed with realism that he quit writing plays and began directing them. With great anticipation, the public waited for the staging of the first, true German, naturalist play. Warren Maurer’s depiction of the public’s expectation and reception is colorful and entertaining.

Maurer correctly points out that many Germans read and discussed the play prior to its production.\(^{18}\) Theodor Fontane, the playwright-critic, recognized Hauptmann’s intentions. Fontane said "[Hauptmann] presents life as it is, in its full horror. . . . At the same time . . . he displays, in that which appears to the layman to be simply a transcription of life, a measure of art which cannot be imagined any greater."\(^{19}\) Arno Holz, another naturalist

\(^{18}\)Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 20.

\(^{19}\)Theodor Fontane, quoted in Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 20-21.
playwright, called "Vor Sonnenaufgang" "the best drama that has ever been written in the German language."\textsuperscript{20} As stated earlier, many dramatists of the time only superficially addressed the problems facing German society, but Hauptmann focused on the conditions and problems society chose to ignore. In "Bahnwärter Thiel," Hauptmann had suggested the idea that child abuse was one of the factors that led to the literal destruction of Thiel’s family. Margaret Sinden noted Hauptmann’s drama "reflected a highly important social problem -- the effects of industrialization on a former agricultural community."\textsuperscript{21} Whatever the view, Hauptmann depicted drunkenness, adultery, incest, and, some believed, socialism, at a time when the government had outlawed any socialistic endeavors. Hauptmann attacked the hypocrisy surrounding social institutions of the late-nineteenth century and hoped to awaken the populace to action.

Naturalists, especially Hauptmann, found a staunch advocate in Otto Brahm, founder and director of Berlin’s Freie Bühne. If Paul Lindau believed the social problems naturalism addressed existed but should not concern the


\textsuperscript{21}Margaret Sinden, Gerhart Hauptmann. The Prose Plays (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 18.
dramatist, Otto Brahm praised the efforts of naturalism to reveal truth. Brahm defined his program as "setting up a free stage for modern life. Our aspirations shall center on art, the new art which looks at reality and contemporary life. . . . The battlecry of this new art is the one word -- TRUTH! And it is truth . . . which we demand."\(^{22}\)

To achieve truth the naturalist authors first had to overcome existing prejudices against certain themes and material presented on the stage. Heinrich Hart, founder and editor of the naturalist periodical *Kritische Waffengänge* (Critical Conflict) published an essay in 1882, "Für und gegen Zola," ("For and Against Zola") defending naturalism and its provocative ideals.

> If . . . Zola offends our innate sense of decency, even when it is not artistically necessary . . . then I consider him a coarse and uncultured man, and much else besides -- but it does not lessen his aesthetic importance by one jot. . . .\(^{23}\)

Brahm and the naturalists carried realism further to expose the truth of social conflict and class disparity. As with Hauptmann and Young Germany, Otto Brahm broke with metaphysics and relied upon science to help distinguish truth, to reveal life as it actually existed. Brahm’s circle intentionally focused on the "earthly, the purest and


profoudest sum of all that man can see... In 1886, after a single performance of Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Otto Brahm stated, "The path was made clear, and the goal fixed; now it was done, we stepped out on the limb, what could stop us from running this race?"

Otto Brahm led a group of naturalists known as the Ibsengemeinde (Ibsen Commune) that included Heinrich and Julius Hart, Theodor Wolff, and the publisher Samuel Fischer. This 'commune' produced an array of Ibsen's plays: *An Enemy of the People, The Wild Duck, A Doll's House, Pillars of Society*, and in 1889, *Ghosts*. The Ibsengemeinde produced these plays in private theaters, much like the Meiningen Troupe's productions, because the government censored any play in a public theater that aroused the populace towards the evils of society. Paul Lindau argued that to express realism was one thing, but to incite the people concerning social problems was a job best left to the government and sociologists. The Ibsengemeinde discovered that finding owners to open their theater doors was difficult because of Bismarck's and the Anti-Socialist Law, so Brahm and the Ibsengemeinde had opened the Freie Bühne in 1889, expressly for the production of controversial plays and to introduce new plays from German playwrights. Ibsen's

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Ghosts and Hauptmann's "Vor Sonnenaufgang" were the first two plays presented in the Freie Bühne.

One thousand subscribers, including Paul Lindau, supported the Freie Bühne. Brahms theater lived a short life, even after the successes experienced with Ibsen's and Hauptmann's plays. An opening night interruption of Hauptmann's play, along with the negative reviews that followed the opening, caused such a stir that the public thronged to view the new German literary hero's plays. After Hauptmann's "Einsame Menschen" (1891) and "Kollege Crampton" (1892) appeared on the public stage, the Freie Bühne rarely opened. When the kaiser's government denounced Hauptmann's "Die Weber" as a socialist play and denied its appearance on the public stage, the Freie Bühne reopened in 1893 to offer the play.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to dissect Hauptmann's plays in a literary sense -- Maurer, Garten, Sinden, and most Hauptmann biographers do that well -- but to focus on Hauptmann as a historical art fact: to examine the ideas that Hauptmann attempted to transmit to the public regarding society's condition. First, it is necessary to realize that much of "Vor Sonnenaufgang" is both autobiographical and historical. In Act I, it becomes clear that the hero, Loth, had spent time in prison for his part in an attempt to organize a utopian society in America. The Hauptmann brothers' ideas for a utopian society and Ploetz's
visit to America to visit a utopia are both seen in Loth, who then is a representation of both Hauptmann and Ploetz, a representation of anticipated and desired change for German society.

In "Vor Sonnenaufgang," Alfred Loth visits the small Silesian village of Witzdorf to investigate the working conditions of the miners whom the mine owners have allegedly exploited. While in Witzdorf, Loth meets a former friend, Hoffmann, who has married into the wealthy, nouveau riche, mine-owning Krause family. Hoffmann has become one of the worst exploiters of the miners and other local residents. The Krause family, once poor farmers, now has wealth beyond its dreams, owing to the coal deposits found under its farmland, and the family's new lifestyle reflects Hauptmann's views of the modern world's impact upon the soul of the German people.

In Act I, Hauptmann's desire that the public become aware of the common man's situation is noted when Loth remarks that he "might perhaps find ways and means to remove the cause that makes these people so joyless and so full of hatred; one might perhaps make them happier."²⁵ Loth believes that his work is a "struggle for the happiness of all men," and that he would not be content until he "saw an

end of sickness and poverty, of servitude and spiritual meanness." What was it Loth, Hauptmann, saw in Witzdorf and Germany that needed changing for man to be happy? What made Germans so "joyless and so full of hatred?"

The late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, prior to 1914 and the First World War, are similar as far as the German industrial state and the industrial worker are concerned. Between 1907 and 1912, Adolf Levenstein, a factory foreman, conducted a survey of workers in the textile, steel, and mining industries. He received over 5,000 responses, compiled them, and published his findings in The Labor Question in 1912. One of the responses, a forty-eight page letter from Max Lotz, detailed the life of coal miners in the Ruhr Valley. Miners were miners, whether in the Ruhr or Silesia, so Lotz's response is a fair indication of the miners' conditions Hauptmann alludes to in "Vor Sonnenaufgang."

Lotz states, "it's enough for me just to suck in greedily the fresh pure morning air. . . . Every time I breathe in I feel the healing breath very clearly in my

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27Ibid., 78.
28Adolf Levenstein, Die Arbeiterfrage. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sozialpsychologischen Seite des modernen Grossbetriebes und der psychophysischen Einwirkungen auf die Arbeiter (Munich: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1912).
expanded lung lobes . . . that are infected with coal dust." Lotz survives day-to-day knowing his lungs are infected, knowing he will probably die from the dust he breathes.

The incessant coal dust and the usually bad and stale air . . . eat away at the miners' lungs. If you add this to the mining slaves' undernourishment, which is due to the bad and cheap food usually sold in our industrial areas, then it's no wonder that the proletarian sickness, tuberculosis, has become epidemic among the miners.

As Lotz arrived at the mine he collected the token with his identification number on it, 1064, indicating he reported to work. "As usual it strikes me that everyone here is a number. It's just the way galley slaves are treated."

Lotz also complained about the owners cheating the miners of their piecework pay, similar to the exploitation Hauptmann surveyed in "Vor Sonnenaufgang." Lotz specifically pointed out the new cars used for hauling coal to the surface. The new cars, trams, held five to six more shovel-loads of coal than the older cars. The pay rate of 1.2 marks per car (approximately twenty-seven cents) did not change, so that for every eight new trams loaded, the miners


30Ibid., 331.

31Ibid., 322.
lost pay for an entire loaded older car.\textsuperscript{32} Even though Lotz wrote of the cheating and poor life he experienced nearly twenty years after Hauptmann wrote "Vor Sonnenaufgang," Hauptmann was correct in his assessment of the workers, who "stare at one -- so menacing and morose as if [we owners] were actually guilty of some crime."\textsuperscript{33}

Hauptmann stated that "life does not precede art nor art life; rather, art and life are one."\textsuperscript{34} Lotz stated he saw "troubled, grieving, and bitterly downcast faces. . . . you see the secret rage, the inner resentment . . . because the wages he gets are by far not enough to buy what the family urgently needs."\textsuperscript{35} Hauptmann had accurately depicted this exact situation in "Vor Sonnenaufgang" when he has Helene Krause state that the miners sometimes curse the wealthy and do not move when the horse-drawn sleighs approach.\textsuperscript{36} Lotz stated that on those days when the workers and the wealthy owners happened to meet, "the beast in man openly bares its fangs. Acts of violence, brutal crimes, robbery, and bloodshed are its signs."\textsuperscript{37} The problems of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 330.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Hauptmann, "Before Dawn," 33.
\item \textsuperscript{34}Gerhart Hauptmann, "Gegen Hermann Heyermans," Sämtliche Werke, 11:778.
\item \textsuperscript{35}Lotz to Levenstein, The German Worker, 336.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Hauptmann, "Before Dawn," 33.
\item \textsuperscript{37}Lotz, The German Worker, 337.
\end{itemize}
society originate in the degradation the poor experience at the hands of the monied middle class.

Hauptmann also addressed two other facets of nineteenth century life which he considered to be truths, those of alcoholism and eugenic determinism. Many pamphleteers wrote about conditions in Germany regarding the prevalence of drunkenness, which was high not only with men but also among female workers and among children. Hauptmann pointed to the evils of alcoholism as a result of industrialization when, during the dinner scene in Act I, Frau Krause states, "Look here ... them miners o' ours do drink a deal too much. I guess that's true." Kahl, a neighbor, replies, "They swills like pigs." Hauptmann's play, coming two years after

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40 Karl Kautsky, quoted in James, "Drink and the Labour Movement," The German Working Class, 84.
Kautsky's remarks, can be seen as a socialist's drama. But Hauptmann takes the problems of alcoholism and addiction one step further to include the determinist and genetic ideas of Forel. Hauptmann says that the inclination to strong drink is hereditary.

During the dinner scene in Act I, Loth speaks against the use and abuse of alcohol.

Loth: I am a total abstainer.
Hoffmann: And for how long, may one ask, have you gone in for this --
Loth: For life. . . .
Hoffmann: But how in the world did you get into that kind of thing?
Loth: You probably do not know, Miss Krause, nor you either Hoffmann, what an appalling part alcohol plays in modern life . . . Read Bunge, if you desire to gain an idea of it. Worst of all, however, are the far-reaching effects of alcohol which extend to the third and fourth generation. . . . My ancestors, as I happen to know, were all not only healthy and robust but thoroughly temperate people.
I am absolutely determined to transmit un-diminished to my posterity this heritage which is mine.

Helene: And such things are hereditary?
Loth: There are families who are ruined by it -- families of dipsomaniacs.

Unknown to Loth at the time of his tirade against the evils of alcohol, Helene's father, step-mother, and sister (Hoffmann's wife) drink as heavily as Hoffmann, who has a drink in his hand throughout most of the first act.

Later in the play, Loth discovers that Frau Hoffmann's first son died indirectly of alcoholism when he bled to

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\textsuperscript{4}Hauptmann, \textit{Before Dawn}, 51-52.
death after being cut by glass from a broken bottle he thought contained his favorite alcoholic beverage. When Loth also learns that the town's drunk, a man he saw when he first entered Witzdorf, is Helene's father, he believes more firmly that the disease of alcoholism is hereditary. Without speaking to Helene or Hoffmann, Loth Sneaks away from Witzdorf in the middle of the night. In literary terms, this is the tragedy of the play, because Loth has fallen in love with Helene but leaves because of his fear that if they married and had children, the children, too, would become "dipsomaniacs." Helene kills herself as a result of Loth's departure. Since she could not leave the conditions in which she lived, nor could she be happy in a life away from disease and exploitation, Helene chooses to die. As Loth had foreshadowed, she becomes another victim of the "two thousand suicides at the least" each year related to alcoholism.  

When Hauptmann, speaking through Loth, made reference to Bunge during the dinner scene, Hauptmann referred to Gustav von Bunge, the physiological chemist who, in 1885, "denounced alcohol as a threat to health and heredity."  

Alfred Ploetz and August Forel agreed with Bunge. Bunge

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42 Ibid.

believed alcohol threatened heredity and condemned it as a cause of physical deterioration, immorality, criminal activity, and prostitution. Drunkenness resulted in illicit sexual activity that caused unwanted pregnancies, the spread of venereal diseases, and abortion. The influence of Forel, Ploetz, and Bunge is also seen in Hauptmann's *Der Riberpelz* when a "good" man steals while under the influence of alcohol. Frau Wolff plies her husband, Julius, with three glasses of whiskey to "encourage" him to steal two loads of wood their daughter had gathered for her employer.

Forel believed alcoholism was a leading cause of death in the growing cities, an idea found in "Vor Sonnenaufgang." If alcoholism could be eradicated, then a vast range of social evils could be cured. Forel opened the first clinic for alcoholics in Zurich in 1888, the same year Ploetz and Hauptmann studied with him. Hauptmann, his brother Carl, and Ploetz met with the young co-founder of the eugenics movement in Germany, Ernst Rüdin, who also had studied with Forel. Perhaps it is this association which led Hauptmann to investigate more fully the impact of both alcoholism and heredity in society.

Hauptmann's focus on heredity and science stemmed not only from his association with Forel, but also from his loose association with a group of young intellectuals known

"Ibid."
as *Das jüngste Deutschland*, or *Die Moderne* (The Moderns). "Members" of this association included Rüdin, Ploetz, the dramatist-poet Frank Wedekind, the imperial critic Richard Avenarius, and a host of others. Forel and the physicist Karl Steinmetz led the discussions that inspired Gerhart Hauptmann to formulate and attempt to write a semi-autobiographical novel with the hero Franz Loth suffering through the same schoolboy experiences Hauptmann had experienced. Franz Loth also dealt with the issue of heredity, an idea that Hauptmann did not treat until after his stay in Geneva. Although Hauptmann never completed the novel, the idea served as the basis for "Vor Sonnenaufgang." 45

Not only had The Moderns denounced the evils of alcohol, they also called for racial and hereditary purity. Hauptmann’s Loth wanted to preserve his family’s purity and left Helene because her blood and heredity might infect their progeny. Ploetz and Hauptmann seemed to believe that science could bring about social equality faster, with fewer problems, than economic diatribes and party politics, if only biologists could engineer ‘good’ genes. Hauptmann and [Eberhard Hilscher, *Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk mit bisher unpublizierten Materialien aus dem Manuskriptnachlaß des Dichters* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1988), 84.]
the young Germans believed "cultivation of good variations was the only way forward for humanity." 

Paul Weindling states that Hauptmann's character, Loth, is a representation of Ploetz, but it is more likely that Loth represents the semi-autobiographical figure Hauptmann tried to portray in his novel Der Apostel. Just as Loth vowed to refrain from alcohol to maintain hereditary purity, Hauptmann vowed to abstain from alcohol for the same reason. While studying in Zurich, Hauptmann met Johannes Guterzeit, a leader in the back-to-nature movement, who advocated temperance and racial purity. While Hauptmann did not embrace all of Guterzeit's beliefs, the young author did vow to abstain from alcohol consumption. While in college, Loth, like Hauptmann, took part in a utopian society, a blood-brotherhood dedicated to preserving the sanctity of the Germanic race, and like Ploetz, Loth travelled to America to investigate a German utopian society established there. Whether Loth truly is a theatrical image of either Hauptmann or Ploetz is for others to decide; what is important in "Vor Sonnenaufgang" is the belief in the dangers of alcohol and faith in science and heredity to solve society's problems.

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46 Weindling, Health, Race, 76.

47 Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 1058.
Not everyone agreed with Hauptmann’s condemnation of modernity and the problems it created in society. Nor did all the theater-going public accept Hauptmann’s art. When "Vor Sonnenaufgang" premiered on October 20, 1889, it was not without scandal. During the birth scene in the last act, when Hoffmann’s wife is offstage screaming with the pain of delivery, Dr. Isidor Kastan, a prominent Berlin physician and journalist "brandished gynecological forceps and shouted, ‘Are we here in a bordello or in a theater?’" before throwing the instrument onto the stage. According to Eberhard Hilscher, C.F.W. Behl, and other Hauptmann biographers, Kastan organized patrons in the audience to whistle and yell cat-calls to disrupt the play. Why Kastan chose to disrupt the play is a mystery. For the next few days, the Berlin press kept the scandal alive, condemning both the play and Hauptmann’s view of society. Hilscher states that the press portrayed Hauptmann as "the most immoral playwright of the century, [the] ‘poetic anti-Christ.’" Theodor Fontane was one of the noticeable exceptions to this chorus.

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48Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 21. Hilscher, Garten, and Behl give stunning accounts of the event, but only Maurer gives Kastan’s words as quoted from Hans Daiber, Gerhart Hauptmann. Oder der letzte Klassiker (Munich: Molden Verlag, 1971), 51.

49Hilscher, Gerhart Hauptmann. Leben und Werk, 96.
If the naturalists, as Brahm and Hauptmann desired, wished to expose the evils of society, it is necessary to look at the society of Kaiser Wilhelm's Second Reich to see exactly what problems existed and then examine how Hauptmann addressed them. Hauptmann's treatment of living conditions and working conditions for miners, discussed above, was accurate. Other societal problems, however, were just as acute. In outward appearances, social problems did not exist in the Wilhelmine Reich, but the Prussian-led society, with its push for modernization, was supplanting agriculture with industry, bringing jobs and wealth to Germany, but not equally to all social groups. The social evils Hauptmann exposed coincide with the rapid industrial growth and expansion in the Germany which Veblen praised.

Following the Franco-Prussian War and unification of the modern German state in 1871, Germany's economy expanded rapidly under the militaristic, imperialistic, and industrialist direction and determination of Otto von Bismarck. Between 1850 and 1874, entrepreneurs organized eight hundred and fifty-seven corporations. The growth of the pig-iron, coal, and steel industries accounted for most of this growth. In 1843, prior to unification, nearly sixty-one percent of the German population occupied itself in agriculture, while twenty-four percent of the population worked in industrial positions. In 1882 the work force had changed: only forty-two percent of the population was
involved in agriculture and nearly thirty-six percent in industry. By the turn of the century, there had been an even greater increase in the number of industrial workers, while the number of those people employed in agriculture decreased; the figures were thirty-four percent in agriculture and nearly forty percent in industry.\(^5\)

Changes in the population's type of work led to changes in the way the population lived as well, with the most obvious changes occurring in the growth of cities and urbanization of the masses. In 1800 the German population, in what could later be considered the Bismarckian territories, totaled just over twenty-four million. By 1871, the German population had grown to approximately 45.3 million, and to 67.8 million by 1914. Because occupations in agriculture remained basically static for most of the nineteenth century, industries and commerce absorbed almost all the new millions of people. Hauptmann focused on this change in working and living conditions in Der Apostel, Die Ratten, Das Friedensfest, and Einsame Menschen. The impact of industrialization on the displaced farmers who became miners and mine owners in Silesia was great, but the changes in society involved much more than the mines.

\(^5\)Werner Sombart, Die deutsche Volkwirtschaft im 19. Jahrhundert, and Gustav Stolper, German Economy 1870-1940, both cited in Pinson's Modern Germany, 220-222.
The machine age kept the farm worker from continuing in the work done by hand. The new agricultural machinery made farm laborers work even harder than they had before. At planting or harvest time, that work lasted for fifteen, sixteen, or eighteen hours each day, because the farmer wanted to finish the work on his farm as quickly as possible. Alcohol found its way into the common man’s work.

The machine master’s first task in the morning is to give all his men a shot of schnapps. Because of the short night’s rest, a little bad liquor has to revive your flagging energy. And really, the booze does wonders... But this isn’t the only time. Rather, schnapps is given out at regular two-hour intervals... It is, so to speak, the life elixir of the machine personnel... No one... can condemn his use of alcohol.51

Hauptmann was correct when he pointed out that the workers "do drink a deal too much."52 The cause of excessive drinking was not necessarily self-indulgence owing to a lack of self-discipline. Conditions in society and hereditary tendencies led to the excessive use of alcohol.

Because Hauptmann’s "Vor Sonnenaufgang" depicts the hardships of working class miners during a time when the working classes were struggling for recognition, the Wilhelmine government looked upon the play as a Socialist drama. Hoffmann, the product of the new industrial wealth, exploits the rural Volk. Loth, the intellectual, desires to

51 Franz Rehbein, "In the Yoke of Day Labor," in The German Worker, 200.

52 Hauptmann, "Before Dawn," 52.
expose the cruelty of the bourgeois mine owners. The miners and the Krause family suffer from alcoholism, a disease attributed to economic hardships, sudden wealth, and genetic weakness. When Helene commits suicide, she becomes a victim of her genetic background, the fears associated with alcoholism, and industrialization. Hauptmann repeatedly denied that "Vor Sonnenaufgang" was a Socialist drama, but he admitted it was a social drama. Though it is clear that Loth is a composite character who espouses the ideals of both Hauptmann and Ploetz, in 1889 Hauptmann denied the association. "I have, however, as little in common with Loth as with Hoffmann . . . ."51 Later, Hauptmann would agree that the tone of "Vor Sonnenaufgang" was in the vein of reform.52

The social problems which Gerhart Hauptmann illustrated in "Vor Sonnenaufgang" resulted from the rapid changes of industrialization that followed the foundation of the Second Reich. Along with modernization of German industry and society came a new trend in the German theater, naturalism. The works of Tolstoi and Zola filled the theaters in Berlin after the Meiningen Court Theater prepared the theater-going public with its realistic presentations of Shakespeare's and

51Gerhart Hauptmann, "Vor Sonnenaufgang, Erwiderung auf die Kritik," Sämtliche Werke, 11:754.

52Frederick W.J. Heuser, Gerhart Hauptmann: Zu seinem Leben und Schaffen (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1961), 43.
Schiller's plays and introduced Ibsen's plays. The realism in the theater reflected the ills modernization inflicted upon society.

The pains of modernization caused growing discontent in the lower classes. In response to that growing discontent, the Socialist party increased in numbers and gained representation in the Prussian-led Reichstag. Bismarck, having failed to quell Catholic political power during the Kulturkampf, noticed the rise of the political left and decided to halt the advance of the socialists. Bismarck was able to use the two failed attempts to assassinate the kaiser to pass the Anti-Socialist Law of 1878. The government could censor the press and theater from publishing articles or producing plays that focused on the social discontent the advances of the new "Prussian" Germany produced. Many Germans believed that the social ills were a necessary price of modernization, the noted playwright and critic Paul Lindau among them. When Gerhart Hauptmann's "Vor Sonnenaufgang" played in Berlin, it opened in the newly organized Freie Bühne, so as not to fall under the censorship of Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law. The play revealed deplorable working conditions, alcoholism, and exploitation of the workers. "Vor Sonnenaufgang" received a tumultuous response, for and against, both during the opening performance and in the press later. Whatever the response, whether acclaim or rejection, the young German
playwright secured his position as Germany's newest leading dramatist.
CHAPTER VI

WILHELMINE GERMANY AND "THE WEAVERS:" 1890 - 1894

After the opening of "Vor Sonnenaufgang," Gerhart Hauptmann rose to prominence in the German literary world. The government acquiesced to public demands and allowed Hauptmann's work to be published and staged. Samuel Fischer published Hauptmann's next two plays, and Otto Brahm produced them, free from governmental censorship, on the public stage. The two plays, "Das Friedensfest. Eine Familienkatastrophe" ("The Reconciliation," or "The Celebration of Peace: A Family Tragedy," 1890) and "Einsame Menschen" ("Lonely Lives," 1891), focus on the difficulties the modern family experienced. These plays dealt more fully with the ideas Hauptmann explored first in "Vor Sonnenaufgang," but on the individual level rather than the societal level. Perhaps because there was no condemnation of the government's lack of concern for the conditions of the working class, and the focus of the plays was on the family and the individual, the government allowed the plays on the public stage. Hauptmann followed "Das Friedensfest" and "Einsame Menschen" with "Kollege Crampton" ("Colleague Crampton," 1892), a financially successful comedy in which Hauptmann dealt with the conflict between the artist and
society and the perils of alcohol abuse. After this success, Hauptmann once again returned to the problems facing society with the social tragedy, "Die Weber" ("The Weavers") in 1893.

Hauptmann's critics and supporters saw the two family dramas as a movement away from the artform and subject matter Hauptmann had exploited with great success in "Vor Sonnenaufgang." Hauptmann viewed all humanity, every condition of man, as an element of art. "People and art belong together just as soil, tree, and fruit [belong] to the garden." In response to his critics, Hauptmann once wrote, "Every family bears a secret curse or blessing. Find it! Make it your basis [for drama]!" With "Das Friedensfest" and "Einsame Menschen" Hauptmann explored the same ideas he had presented in his first drama.

In "Das Friedensfest," Hauptmann shows the characters subjected to the forces of heredity, environment, and society -- forces the characters themselves do not recognize. Therefore, they are incapable of controlling their responses. When Frau Buchner insists that an individual, Wilhelm Scholz, can change the direction of his life through willpower, Frau Scholz, Wilhelm's mother

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2Ibid., 1042.
responds, "Will, will! Don't say that to me! I know better. A person can will something, and will it, and will it a hundred times, and things don't change."³

If willpower cannot save an individual from his fate, then man is bound by his birth and his heredity, a theme upon which Hauptmann again expounds. During angry outbursts, Auguste and Robert Scholz reveal a common perception of the late nineteenth century: that loveless marriages, arranged marriages, produce inferior children. "We can't help the way we're made. Other people, with all their remarkable ways, aren't a bit better."⁴ Hauptmann had shown that some men felt they were destined to a life of misery because of their genetic heritage. "We're all [the children] rotten to the bone. Rotten in our makeup, completely ruined in our bringing up. . . . It all looks very nice. Christmas tree, lights, presents, family festivities, but it's all on the surface -- a morbid, wretched lie, nothing more!"⁵ Paul Weindling states that sons and daughters of the scientific and academic community often married each other to reinforce the elitism of the community's members. In Hauptmann's drama, Auguste remains


⁴Ibid., 31.

⁵Ibid., 37.
an "old maid," and Robert an alcoholic, angry with the ill-planned marriage between a well-respected doctor and a peasant girl.

Hauptmann's view of the family and the impact of a Darwinian heredity coincides with August Bebel's ideas on female emancipation and the family. In *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1883), Bebel argued that as industrialization expanded, the struggle for survival became more intense and the position of women in society worsened. As the family and individual roles evolved, the evolution challenged former patriarchal assumptions.\(^6\) Bebel continued to say that psychological problems resulted from the repressive bourgeois family. Hauptmann supports these views in "Das Friedensfest," as the reader and audience discover the oppressive nature of Dr. Scholz prior to his return to the family and then repeatedly throughout the play. Frau Scholz, early in the first act, hints at her husband's nature when she tells Mrs. Buchner, "My husband -- he never even ate dinner with us. He lived upstairs, we lived downstairs. He was a regular hermit. If we wanted anything of him, we always had to get at him through Friebe."\(^7\) Young Wilhelm relates his childhood to Ida saying,

They gave me life here, and then right here they, I must tell you, I could almost say, they

\(^{6}\)Ibid., 94.  
\(^{7}\)Hauptmann, "Reconciliation," 13.
systematically spoiled that life, till I loathed it, till I dragged it around and panted under it like a beast of burden, crawled away under the burden, dug a cave for myself, buried myself alive, anything -- oh, I can't tell you what I suffered -- hate, rage, remorse, despair, never a minute of peace! Day and night the same goring, corroding pains (points to his forehead) here! (and to his heart) and here too!\(^8\)

To Frau Buchner and her daughter, Ida, the Scholz family is seen in Wilhelm Scholz, Ida's fiance. Away from his home he is calm, collected, quiet. But when he goes home for the Christmas holiday, he falls into the trap of his family's fate.

Hauptmann's "Das Friedensfest," too, is an account of a real family, Frank Wedekind's family. When the two young men met in Zurich, Wedekind told Hauptmann the story of his family, his authoritarian father, a well-travelled medical doctor, who resided on the second floor of the family house and met with members of his family only when the meeting was unavoidable. When Wedekind told his father that he had decided to become an author, the father forbade the action and the two fought, the son striking the father. The elder Wedekind expelled his son from the home.\(^9\) Maurer suggests that the characters of Robert, Auguste, and Minna Scholz represent Gerhart Hauptmann's own brother, Carl, sister, and

\(^8\)Ibid., 47.

Johanna, and mother, Marie. Hauptmann's own words give
credence to Maurer's view. "He who takes something as an
author that he does not already possess will end up, even as
a master thief, with empty barns." The play, however,
almost mirrors Wedekind's tale, and later, Hauptmann
apologized to his friend for not better hiding the basis of
his drama.

In "Das Friedensfest," Hauptmann again raised the
question of alcohol abuse as he did in "Vor Sonnenaufgang." Friebe, the servant, is seen in Act I taking three bottles
of red wine and one bottle of cognac from the wine cellar
and delivering them to Dr. Scholz upstairs. When Wilhelm
Scholz, his son, faints, Dr. Scholz first calls for some
wine to revive him. After the son and father make peace,
Friebe makes a steaming bowl of wine punch, and it is
evident, according to the stage directions, that the servant
is tipsy. As the family gathers for the opening of the
Christmas presents, Dr. Scholz appears, his "Face heated by
drinking." At the end of the act, Dr. Scholz, angered at

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10 Warren Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann

11 Gerhart Hauptmann, "Kunst und Literatur," Sämtliche
Werke, 6:1035.

12 Frederick Heuser, Gerhart Hauptmann: Zu seinem Leben
und Schaffen (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1961), 230-231.

13 Hauptmann, "The Reconciliation," 77.

14 Ibid., 80.
his second son’s, Robert’s, behavior, falls to the floor and dies shortly after. Just as in "Vor Sonnenaufgang," the abuse of alcohol causes someone to die.

Hauptmann’s "Einsame Menschen" shows the transformation of an individual who struggles with the role of science in the modern world and the artist’s view of society and the family. Through the character of Johannes Vockerat, Hauptmann shows how the modern world mediates the confrontation between science and religion. In his stage directions, Hauptmann establishes that confrontation with various pictures hanging on the walls of Johannes’s home. A pastor in religious vestments, an engraving of Darwin, and an autographed photo of Ernst Haeckel, the German disciple of Darwin, adorn the walls. The conflict comes forward when Johannes’s son is christened. Johannes opposes the religious ceremony but acquiesces to comfort his parents and his wife. When speaking to his friend, Braun, about the ceremony, Johannes says, "You know the light in which I look upon it. Certainly not from the Christian point of view. Yet it is a thing held sacred by so many."\(^{15}\) Even Johannes’s wife, Käthe, recognizes the conflict within her husband. "Johann’s struggles are genuine."\(^{16}\) To preserve


\(^{16}\)Ibid., 142.
peace in a turbulent family, Johannes acquiesces to the demands of the family and allows the ceremony.

The conflict in the Vockerat family is the conflict between religion and belief in natural science, or Darwinian ideology, and Hauptmann's religious ideals are clearly expressed through Johannes'. Hauptmann believed Christianity and organized religion could not lift man to a higher spiritual plane. He believed man lacked a pure Christian faith, and man focused, instead, upon materialism as a god. The elder Vockerats are symbolic of the religious influence, while Johannes, his friend Braun, and Anna Mahr are symbolic of modern scientific ideas. The conflict between the two elements of the family represent the conflict in society between the social structure of the past and modernity. Maurer states that Johannes and Braun are really Carl Hauptmann, a devout student of Haeckel's in Zurich. The parents represent the overly religious aunt and uncle with whom Gerhart spent time while apprenticed to them on their farm. If Maurer's assumptions are correct, and they appear to be, then "Einsame Menschen" is another of Gerhart Hauptmann's semi-autobiographical plays.

The marriage between Johannes and Käthe was one of parental arrangement, and, as seen in "Das Friedensfest," marriage without love or at least mutual attraction is

\[\text{17} \text{Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," Sämtliche Werke, 7:36-71.}\]
doomed. While Johannes and Käthe have tried to accommodate each other and make the marriage a happy one, their ideals are just too different. Max Nordau, incidently, described such marriages.

Although their relationship might remain a formally correct one, the partners in such a loveless marriage are unsatisfied; they always have a torturing sense of anxiety and expectation. They hope for something which might free them from the torpor of a meaningless life. Their whole being, they feel, is fragmented, is longing for a balance which only love can grant.\(^{18}\)

Nordau leaves hope for arranged marriages, like Johannes's and Käthe's, but only if one of the partners does not meet another who fulfills his intellectual needs. Anna Mahr is the outside force that enters the Vockerat family and fills the intellectual void in Johannes's life. Hauptmann's drama reflects Nordau's hypothesis regarding marriage.

Hauptmann offered another view of modern marriage in "Einsame Menschen" when Johannes offers Anna a place in his home, somewhat as a second wife. Max Nordau and others of the time believed that man, by nature, was polygamous. Because Anna brings Johannes his "courage and self-respect," she needs to be a necessary part of his family.\(^{19}\) Hauptmann and his friends in Dresden discussed monogamous and polygamous relationships. "We were afraid of killing the


\(^{19}\)Hauptmann, "Lonely Lives," 256.
fullness of sexual life by favoring a single person. Man was polygamous -- that was completely established physiologically -- and so it was the duty of the woman as friend to grant the man some sexual independence."

Hauptmann's view of marriage is vividly clear in "Einsame Menschen," as is his belief in Darwinian determination.

As stated earlier, the late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of Darwinian theory and its application to society through the theoretical extensions of Ernst Haeckel. After a marine-biological expedition to Italy in 1859, Haeckel presented the theory that all organisms were historically derived from a single ancestor. Haeckel used embryological studies to prove his idea. When the pastor in Hauptmann's "Einsame Menschen" looks upon the autographed picture of Haeckel in Johannes's house and learns that the young man greatly respects the scientist, he sarcastically comments to the elder Vockerat "Man, Mr. Vockerat, man is, you know . . . no longer God's image, you know. The monkey, you know . . . according to the conclusions of natural science, I mean." This comment provokes Johannes who exclaims, "The devil! Can't they let me alone?"

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31 Weindling, Health, Race, and Politics, 41.
33 Ibid., 149.
the character of Johannes and the situations he faces, Hauptmann captures the changes that faced all modern Europeans caught between the recent religious-centered past and the science-dominated present. Hauptmann best exemplifies the era and the changes through Anna Mahr's statement to Johannes.

It is a great age that we live in. That which has so weighed upon people's minds and darkened their lives seems to me to be gradually disappearing. On the one hand we were oppressed by a sense of uncertainty, of apprehension, on the other by gloomy fanaticism. This exaggerated tension is calming down, is yielding to the influence of something like a current of fresh air, that is blowing in upon us from -- let us say from the twentieth century.24

Hauptmann noticed that the world, his world, was changing, and that many complex forces worked on man to form his life.

As Hauptmann continued his writing, he also expanded his dramatic horizons while once again exploring his own past. "Kollege Crampton," Hauptmann's first naturalistic comedy, is a semi-autobiographical play about Hauptmann's art school experience in Breslau. In 1936, Hauptmann admitted to C.F.W. Behl that James Marshall, Hauptmann's art instructor, was the archetype for the character Harry Crampton.25 Josef Block, a friend and former art school classmate of Hauptmann's, told Behl that Marshall took pills

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to "keep himself going, which became stronger when [he] took them with Schnapps." Hauptmann told Behl and Block that to include the drug use would be too harsh and could be "counterproductive to the artistic sense." 

Marshall and Hauptmann had more than a teacher-student relationship while Hauptmann attended the art school. The two would spend evenings drinking to the point of intoxication. What Hauptmann succeeds in doing in "Kollege Crampton" is making light of the serious issue of alcohol abuse. Crampton drinks too freely and is reduced to sign painting (an artist brought to destruction via alcohol) and then is summarily dismissed from his position in the art school. This incident reflects Hauptmann's own experience. As Hauptmann drank more and ignored his studies while at Breslau, the faculty voted to expel him. But, just as Robert Haertel and Marshall rescued Hauptmann, the fictional characters, Professor Kircheisen and Max Strähler, rescue Crampton. While "Kollege Crampton" was a comedic respite from the dramatically charged plays that had preceded it, it still reflected the terrible impact of alcoholism and excessive drinking on German society.

It is ironic that Hauptmann's first comedy, which contained a re-statement of ideas found in "Vor

\[\text{\textsuperscript{26}}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{27}}\text{Ibid., 39.}\]
Sonnenaufgang," proved to be a financial success, while the plays designed to reveal to the public the hazards mankind faced in the modern world were financial failures. With his work on "Einsame Menschen" and the short story, "Der Apostel," completed, Hauptmann again felt the attraction of the weavers' rebellion which had first interested him as a topic for a play in 1888. According to a diary entry in 1890, Hauptmann began rough work on "Die Weber" after completing work on "Der Apostel."\(^{28}\) Hauptmann believed that an author had to experience the feelings associated with the written work. For background in the life of weavers, Hauptmann only had the tales his father had related to him when he was a boy in Obersalzbrunn. Hauptmann had to know more to show the problems of the weavers as accurately as possible. "[T]he 'Weavers' grew closer [in my mind], but I was lacking the material" [for the play].\(^{29}\) Hauptmann moved to Schreiberhau, Silesia, to conduct research for his drama, "Die Weber."

Hugh Garten states that Hauptmann was drawn to the poor and underprivileged because he possessed "a deep sympathy with human suffering, wherever he encountered it, and an awareness of the dignity of man, even in its humblest


\(^{29}\)Gerhart Hauptmann, Notiz-Kalender, 1889-1891, ed. Martin Machatzke (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1982), 259.
forms."

Hauptmann wanted the general populace to recognize the plight of the poor and have pity on them. The influence of Schopenhauer upon Hauptmann is quite clear as he planned to write his play. "Schopenhauer considered pity, love, and love, pity. This kind of pity I would later transmit [into] 'Die Weber.'"

While Hauptmann's wife, Marie, stayed in a hotel, Hauptmann and Max Baginski, a newspaper editor, travelled to many villages in the Eulengebirge countryside, and visited weavers who still sat at their looms and struggled to make a modest living in a modern, industrialized, world. Hauptmann was fortunate enough to talk with a few weavers who had either witnessed or taken part in the 1844 Silesian weavers' rebellion. What Hauptmann saw and experienced during his travels became the central focus of "Die Weber." Though Hauptmann set his play in the 1840s, when the Silesian weavers rebelled, fifty years later conditions were still miserable.

As Hauptmann journeyed throughout his homeland of Silesia, he noted the Eulengebirge "surrounded me with its deep magic. . . . where the incredible light of the sunrise in a clear sky enraptures and dazes [one]. The magical

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31 Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 1079.
silence of the earth is no less." The splendor and magic of the Eulengebirge soon disappeared as Hauptmann and Baginski visited weavers in "scattered huts, which were in alarming decay. . . . [This] was what I desired to see. It was described sufficiently in many ways in . . . 'Die Weber.'" Hauptmann and Baginski noted that the weavers, even after the rebellion of 1844, still lived in abject poverty, but with a greater suffering than what Hauptmann witnessed in Obersalzbrunn. "What the huts of the weavers contained was -- I must say -- poverty in its classic form." The poverty Hauptmann experienced in one hut moved him to use it as the model for the weavers' hut in his drama.

I stood in a house where a miserable man-like creature cried to heaven. He lay in a pile of straw on the bare earth, his entire body covered with scabs; a young wife, who had just given birth, pointed to the infant with a glance which I shall never forget. This baby was covered with scabs. Not even rags were available to wrap the child and give it warmth. Serious, and one-armed, her husband sat at the loom. He was no longer young. He winced with pain. I have exposed the depth [of misery] which was obtained from this hut in my play 'Die Weber.'

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33Ibid., 163.

34Ibid.

35Ibid., 165.
Baginski noted that Hauptmann was "uneasy in the midst of so much misery. It had been a long time since any material had been delivered; nothing to eat, no wood to burn . . . No bread, no meal, no potatoes, neither firewood nor coal." In the village of Kuschbach, more isolated than the other villages, Baginski states Hauptmann was led into a small house by a weaver who carried his swollen arm in a sling. On a couch made of straw . . . lay his sick wife, next to her a small child covered from head to toe with spots. No dress covered the small fever-ridden body; it lay naked in the floor among the litter. The shy father, himself tormented from pain stood close by, helpless.

In another instance, Hauptmann described the hunger and cries of babies due to insufficient food. "The children showed their misery with their crying. Hungry, curly-headed children fought over a crust of bread." Not only had Hauptmann found an infant, dirty, coverless, lying on the floor, he also found children without food.

A historical study of the 1844 rebellion, which appeared while Hauptmann was working on his play, agrees in every particular with Hauptmann's observations. Paul Schlenther states that Hauptmann's "Die Weber" contains "no

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37Ibid., 172.

38Hauptmann, "Erlebnisse," 164.
indication of danger, no expression of grievance, no state of hunger . . . which was not conveyed historically by Zimmermann."39 Schlenther refers to Dr. Alfred Zimmermann, who had written a book entitled Blüthe und Verfall des Leinengewerbes in Schlesien (Rise and Fall of the Silesian Linen Industry), part of which detailed the 1844 Silesian weavers' revolt. Zimmermann wrote,

In most places the people were poverty stricken; no children played in the streets. Using their limited skills they had to help their parents with their work. The barking of dogs which, moreover, was not wanting in most villages, was not heard here. One did not even have scraps for the dogs and had eaten the faithful guardians as welcome nourishment. . . . Most families never saw meat. . . . It was a joyful event if a farmer made a present of buttermilk or potato peelings to a family. One old weaver, through tears of joy, related that to his good fortune two horses in the neighborhood had died which would provide food for a long time to him and his [family].40

In the stage directions for act one, Hauptmann describes the physical misery he witnessed. "The majority [of weavers] are flat-breasted, short-winded, sallow, and poor looking -- creatures of the loom, their knees bent with much sitting."41 He continues his description at the outset

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40Alfred Zimmermann, Blüthe und Verfall des Leinengewerbes in Schlesien: Gewerbe und Handelspolitik dreier Jahrhunderte (Breslau: W.G. Korn, 1885), 241.

of act two. "The warm glow falls on the old woman's face, neck, and breast -- a face worn away to a skeleton, with shrivelled skin and sunken eyes, red and watery with smoke, dust, and working by lamplight . . . a hollow breast covered with faded, ragged shawls."\(^{42}\) This poverty and misery is further shown during the action of act one when a small boy, who is sent to the factory owner Dreißiger's house, succumbs to the hard work and hunger and faints while waiting his turn to sell his parents' material. But Hauptmann takes the incident a step further and shows the middle-class contempt for the weavers when Dreißiger says:

The boy is all right again. [Walks about excitedly, panting.] But all the same it's a disgrace. The child's so weak that a puff of wind would blow him over. How people, how any parents can be so thoughtless is what passes my comprehension. Loading him with two heavy pieces of fustian to carry six good miles! It simply means that I shall have to make a rule that no goods brought by children will be taken over. I sincerely trust such a thing will not occur again. Who gets all the blame for it? Why, of course the manufacturer. . . . Is any blame laid on the father, the parents, that send such a child? -- Not a bit of it. . . . He lives on the fat of the land, and pays the poor weavers starvation wages. You all saw how that fellow, that scoundrel Becker behaved. Now he'll go and spread about all sorts of tales of my hard-heartedness, Is that true? Am I so very unmerciful?\(^{43}\)

Becker, a weaver, spoke when Dreißiger first asked what had happened to the boy. When Dreißiger offered brandy to

\(^{42}\)Ibid., 227-228.

\(^{43}\)Ibid., 222-223.
revive the boy, Becker said, "Give him something to eat, an' he'll soon be all right." Dreißiger replied, "That fellow [Becker] will come to a bad end."

Hauptmann continues to describe the weavers' poverty as the play progresses. Mother Baumert, fearing her husband might drink away their meager earnings -- again Hauptmann includes the impact of alcohol on those people who struggle in the modern world -- states, "What's to become of us if he don't come home? if he drinks the money, an' don't bring us nothin' at all? There's not so much as a handful o' salt in the house -- not a bit o' bread, nor a bit o' wood for the fire." Old Baumert fulfills Zimmermann's description of village life in 1844 when he kills the family's pet dog so he and his family can have a bit of meat with their thin gruel. "It's been two years now since I took the sacrament. I went straight after that an' sold my Sunday coat, an' we bought a good bit o' port, an' since then never a mouthful of meat has passed my lips till to-night." A visitor to the Baumert family, Frau Heinrich, whose son had fainted while waiting to deliver his parents's cloth at Dreißiger's factory, weeps uncontrollably when she thinks of her nine children and says:

"Ibid., 219.

"Ibid., 232.

My children's starvin'. I don't know what to do
no more! I c'n work till I drops -- I'm more dead
than alive -- things don't get no different! . . .
We got a bit o' bread last night, but it wasn't
enough even for the two smallers' ones. Who was I
to give it to, eh? They all cried; Me, me,
mother! give it to me! . . . Our few taters was
washed away. We haven't a thing to put in our
mouths. 47

Hauptmann's description of the weavers' miserable
living and working conditions in the Eulengebirge was so
accurate, "[t]he narrative needed no clarifying remarks.
The drama contained the brutality [he had seen] and would
embarrass most people. [Hauptmann] indicated any error he
made in his report would be seen as entertainment." 48 One
weaver whom Hauptmann and Baginski visited had taken part in
the rebellion and believed that the rebellion could have
been prevented if the factory owners had treated the weavers
fairly. The old man told Hauptmann and Baginski of the
government's inadequate assistance.

He believed they [the weavers] could have stopped
it if they had not agreed that the owners had
conspired with the capitalists to oppose [piece]
work. . . . Once everyone took their work to
Leipzig [to sell] and had to return with it
because a quieter, but similar boycott made sales
impossible. With much animation, the old weaver
spoke of the Lasalle agitation. 49

It seems the old man confused Ferdinand Lasalle's actions in

47Ibid., 234-235.

48Baginski, "Gerhart Hauptmann," in Dichtung und
Wirklichkeit, 172.

49Ibid., 174.
the 1860s with the rebellion of 1844, but the old man did state that the rebellion took place because the manufacturers unilaterally decided to cut the price given for cloth and to boycott some weavers.

The conditions Hauptmann experienced among the weavers in the Eulengebirge in the early 1890s were not much different from those of 1844. Though there is no evidence to support the claim that Hauptmann read Zimmermann, Hauptmann incorporated his personal experiences and the old weaver’s recollection of events with research from texts and newspaper articles to not only depict the conditions of the weavers, but to also accurately depict the short-lived rebellion.

The old weaver whom Hauptmann met in the village of Reichenbach had stated that the weavers could have stopped the rebellion. Hauptmann includes this idea in Act II when the young weaver, Moritz Jaeger, who has just returned from his period of military conscription, incites the Baumert family to the point of at least thinking about rebellion. Jaeger told the Baumerts that the Berlin newspapers printed stories of the injustices in the Eulengebirge, but the government did nothing. His uncle, Old Baumert, says, "Moritz, you’re just the very man we want. You can read an’ write. You understand the weavin’ trade, and you’ve a heart to feel for the poor weavers’ sufferin’s. You should stand
up for us here." Jaeger replied, "I'd do that quick enough! There's nothing I'd like better than to give the manufacturers round here a bit of a fright. . . . If only we could arrange all to join together, we'd soon give the manufacturers a proper lesson . . . We wouldn't need no King an' no government." What Hauptmann clearly shows is that the weavers had to unite, to "join together," to change the injustice, and an outside force had to lead them.

Jaeger proceeds to read the Weaver's Song, "Bloody Justice," to the family.

The justice to us weavers dealt Is bloody, cruel, and hateful; Our life's one tortured, long drawn out: For Lynch law we'd be grateful.

Stretched on the rack day after day, Hearts sick and bodies aching, Our heavy sighs their witness bear To spirit slowly breaking.

The Dreissigers true hangmen are, Servants no whit behind them; Masters and men with one accord Set on the poor to grind them.

You villains all, you brood of hell, You fiends in fashion human, A curse will fall on all like you, Who prey on man and woman.

The suppliant knows he asks in vain, Vain every word that's spoken. "If not content, then go and starve -- Our rules cannot be broken."

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51 Ibid.
Then think of all our woe and want,
O ye who hear this ditty!
Our struggle vain for daily bread
Hard hearts would move to pity.
But pity's what you've never known --
You'd take both skin and clothing,
You cannibal, whose cruel deeds
Fill all good men with loathing.  

The Wilhelmine government, like the Prussian government
before it, outlawed the song because its lyrics led to class
hatred and gave tacit approval to violence.  

In Act IV, Hauptmann submits the view of the
manufacturer to the conditions of the poor. The
manufacturer's view is jaded, a result of Social Darwinism.
Herr Weinhold, a graduate of theology and tutor to the
Dreißiger children, takes part in a friendly debate with
Pastor Kittelhaus on the nature of man. Weinhold states,
"With all due respect, Mr. Kittelhaus . . . I can't think
[that] people have such different natures." The pastor
responds,

My dear Mr. Weinhold, however restless-minded and
unsettled a man may be -- [in a tone of reproof] -- and you are a case in point -- however violently
and wantonly he may attack the existing order of
things, he calms down in the end. I grant you,
certainly, that among our professional brethren
individuals are to be found, who, at a fairly
advanced age, still play youthful pranks. One
preaches against the drink evil and founds
temperance societies, another publishes appeals
which undoubtedly read most effectively. But what

52 Ibid., 253-255.

53 Hans Schwab-Felisch, Dichtung und Wirklichkeit, 140-
160.
good do they do? The distress among the weavers, where it does exist, is in no way lessened -- but the peace of society is undermined. No, no; one feels inclined in such cases to say: Cobbler, stick to your last; don't take to caring for the belly, you who have care of souls. 54

Many middle-class Germans felt that the poor were poor because they were destined to be so.

When Dreißiger joins in the debate, he tells of the morning's incident with Becker. At the same moment, the audience hears muted strains of the Weberlied, "Bloody Justice," coming from outside the Dreißiger home where Becker is leading many weavers in singing the forbidden song. "There they are," Kittelhaus complains, "taking part in this unheard-of mischief, trampling God's law under foot. Do you [Weinhold] mean to tell me that you still defend these people?" Weinhold replies, "After all, they are hungry and they are ignorant. They are giving expression to their dissatisfaction in the only way they understand."

Upon hearing Weinhold's reply, Dreißiger erupts vehemently, dismissing Weinhold from his duties. "Mr. Weinhold . . . I didn't bring you into my house to give me lectures on philanthropy. . . ." 55 Later, Kittelhaus remarks, "I wish I knew what has come over these people. . . . I was of the opinion, that the weavers were a patient, humble, easily-led class." Dreißiger agrees.


55Ibid., 296.
Most certainly that is what they used to be—patient, easily managed, well-behaved and orderly people. They were that as long as these so-called humanitarians let them alone. But for ever so long now they've had the awful misery of their condition held up to them. . . . At last the weaver believes in it himself, and his head's turned. . . . He must have everything of the best.  

Both Kittelhaus and Dreßiger show that the wealthy see efforts to alleviate the weavers' misery only as means to create greater unrest. "[W]ith all their humanitarianism they have only succeeded in almost literally turning lambs over night into wolves."  

Pastor Kittelhaus and Dreßiger, along with two servants, exit the Dreßiger home to quiet the angry weavers after a servant warns the pastor, "Oh sir, please sir, don't do any such thing. Words is quite useless." Following a "roaring" of the weavers from outside the home, Dreßiger hurriedly returns to the room and advises the women to gather together their valuables and run to the carriage to flee the neighborhood. The rebellion has begun. Dreßiger's fear is genuine because the weavers enter the home where they break windows and ransack the place. One weaver shouts, "We'll hang him when we catch him."

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57 Ibid., 307.
58 Ibid., 312.
59 Ibid., 318.
Becker, one of the leaders of the rebellion, talks of spreading the action to other villages. "This is nothing but a beginnin'. When we're done here, we'll go straight to Bielau, to Dittrich's, where the steam power-looms is. The whole mischief's done by them factories." The poor weavers believe their economic situation is a direct result of the introduction of machines into their work place.

Act V takes place in Langen-Bielau, a village with impoverished weavers, one of whom Hauptmann describes in great detail.

Old Hilse is a bearded man of strong build, but bent and wasted with age, toil, sickness, and hardship. He is an old soldier, and has lost an arm. His nose is sharp, his complexion ashen-grey, and he shakes; he is nothing but skin and bone, and has the deep-set, sore weaver's eyes.

The old weaver's daughter-in-law, Louise, speaks of the little food there is to eat and how others have dealt with having little food. "An' when that's all eaten, we'll do as the Wenglers did -- we'll find out where the skinner's buried some stinking old horse, an' we'll dig it up an' live for a week or two on rotten carrion -- how nice that'll be!" The change of scenes from one village to another, the sarcasm in Louise's statement, and the descriptions

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50 Ibid., 319.

51 Ibid., 321.

52 Ibid., 323.
Hauptmann projects serve to show both the reader and the audience that misery and poverty were widespread and not just an isolated occurrence. Hauptmann also shows the common man's perception that the poverty he experienced came about because of industrialization.

As the rebellion deepens, Old Baumert, who marched with Becker to Langenbielau expresses the ideas many, including Becker, have regarding the rebellion. When Old Hilse warns the weavers that they will end up in prison for their actions, Old Baumert states, "I say Becker's right: even if it ends in chains an' ropes -- we'll be better off in prison than at home. You're cared for there, an' you don't need to starve." Becker, Old Baumert, and other weavers face the soldiers who have been sent to quell the uprising. The weavers drive the soldiers away and then ransack Dittrich's house as they did Dreßiger's. The tragedy in the play comes when a stray bullet from the soldiers strikes and kills Old Hilse, the weaver who refused to take part in the rebellion.

Everything Hauptmann described in "Die Weber" is not only authentic in representing conditions of the 1890s, but historically accurate as well. On 4 June 1844 a "mass of weavers from Peterswaldau pulled down and destroyed the
buildings and supplies of twenty manufacturers."

Two preachers, Schneider and Knüttel, attempted to halt "further misconduct." Pastor Kittelhaus's attempt in "Die Weber" reflects the action of Schneider and Knüttel. The manufacturers issued an appeal for aid to the army troops stationed in Schweidnitz. The Leipziger Zeitung reported on 10 June 1844 that troops from Reichenbach had marched to Breslau and the Eulengebirge to put down the revolt.

The Leipziger Zeitung also reported at least one of the causes of the rebellion. According to the article, "The weavers had been, up to now, deeply in debt according to the merchants' records. The merchants desired to [allow weavers to] pay off the debt as best they could through the work." The merchants, such as Dreißiger in "Die Weber," threatened to eliminate piece-work weaving if the weavers continued to work through their loosely constructed union. Dreißiger told his weavers that he was bringing in two hundred new weavers who would do the work and not complain about the wages. Union wages were higher than non-union wages and the threat to boycott union webbing angered the weavers. Hence, the revolt was, "not against the government of authority,

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64 Allgemeine Zeitung, Augsburg, Nr. 164, 12 June 1844, reprinted in Dichtung und Wirklichkeit, ed. Hans Schwab-Felisch, 118.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.
rather against the debt accounts of the merchants and factory owners."\(^67\) The author of the article agreed with the weavers, saying: "These records [of debt], for the most part, should be cut up, destroyed, . . ."\(^68\)

The Kölnische Zeitung on 18 June 1844 reprinted the article "Significant Troop Movements" from the Triersche Zeitung dated 8 June. When the military forces arrived in Peterswaldau on 5 June, they met heavy resistance from the weavers, similar to the scene in Act V of Hauptmann's play. Weavers and their "wives and children had thrown stones at them," and the troops fired their muskets at the rioters.\(^69\) "In one factory building alone, thirteen weavers were shot down."\(^70\) One soldier discovered that his brother was one of the dead rioters. The weavers, shouting for revenge, attacked the soldiers who withdrew towards Reichenbach.\(^71\) Many weavers and soldiers were severely injured in the skirmish at Peterswaldau, while merchants and their families fled for their lives. "The major who gave the first order

\(^{67}\)Ibid., 121.

\(^{68}\)Ibid.


\(^{70}\)Ibid.

\(^{71}\)Ibid.
to fire had his head shattered by a worker's pitchfork."

Just as Dreißiger and his family fled in Hauptmann's play, "Many merchants and owners of the region were stripped of everything and came [to Breslau] with their families." The Schweidnitzer Kreisblatt published an article that reported that rebellious weavers greatly damaged "the homes and factories of the Zwanziger merchants in Peterswaldau and other factories in Langenbielau . . . ."

Even the preachers who attempted to halt the rebellion "have been mistreated."

The rebellion was not limited to weavers in the Eulengebirge. Unconfirmed reports placed the number of rebellious weavers at six thousand, but "significant reinforcements from robbers and smugglers's havens [in Bohemia] who are armed with rifled carbines" assisted the weavers. Bohemians, and other nationalities who had their independence stripped from them, supported most popular efforts that attempted to free the lower classes from the

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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
feudal grip of the landed elite and the economic grip of the growing, industrial middle class.

On 6 June 1844, the military leaders sent to quash the rebellion issued an appeal for peace. Major Graf von Sandreczky-Sandraschütz stated he saw Bielau in a condition which frightened even him. Sandreczky-Sandraschütz asked the people if they still held "a spark of your old love for your heritage in [your] hearts, still a desire for law and order." The major implored the rebels to "renounce all this criminal activity and return to the condition which had, for so long, guarded your fame. I do not make this plea for any other reason than your well being." He hoped that the weavers would lay down their weapons and return to a state of order without his use of force. He did, however, warn the weavers of the outcome if they chose to remain unruly. "Return [to the old ways], I will try to restore order in your midst, which otherwise, through the strength of the army, will once again be upheld." On 8 June 1844, Major von Kehler, the King's Legal Commissioner in Breslau, issued a second appeal, one that carried a more severe warning. The rebels were to end their activities and return


78 Ibid.

79 Ibid., 121.
stolen property within twenty-four hours. Evidently, from reports of soldiers and rebels who were injured in combat, the weavers ignored the major's pleas.

Hauptmann implied that the Prussian government did not care about the plight of the weavers. In Act III, a traveller, while eating at the local inn, remarks on the weavers' situation. "You must be aware . . . that strict investigation has been made by the Government . . ." before a disgruntled weaver rudely interrupts him.

Yes, yes, we all know what that means. They send a gentleman that knows all about it already better [than] if he had seen it, an' he goes about a bit in the village where the brook flows broad an' the best houses is. He don't want to dirty his shinin' boots. Thinks he to hisself: All the rest'11 be the same as this. An' so he steps into his carriage, an drives away home again, an' then writes to Berlin that there's no distress in the place at all. If he had but taken the trouble to go higher up into a village like that . . . to the little out-o'-the-way hovels on the hill above, some of 'em that black an' tumble-down as it would be the waste of a good match to set fire to 'em -- it's another kind o' report he'd have sent to Berlin. They should ha' come to me, these government gentlemen that wouldn't believe there was no distress here. I would ha' shown 'em something. I'd have opened their eyes for 'em in some of these starvation holes.\(^{81}\)

In the early nineteenth century, Prussia, in an attempt to boost its economic situation, instituted a new tariff law. The new law did away with most internal duties and

\(^{80}\)"Bekanntmachung," in Dichtung und Wirklichkeit, 122.

allowed many raw materials to enter Prussia duty-free. Karl Georg Maassen, Prussia's Minister of Finance, organized the customs unions in Bavaria and Württemberg, the Mid-German Commercial Union of Saxony, Hanover, Brunswick, and other small Central-German states, and Prussia's customs union into a single Deutscher Zollverein (German Customs Union) in 1830. One industry that suffered from the formation of the Zollverein was the linen industry. While it is true that the textile industry expanded in the 1840s with the help of the customs union, cotton goods replaced woolen and linen goods, and machinery began to replace hand-looms and spinning wheels.82 Because of these changes, the hand-weavers in Silesia felt the pinch of recession more than other occupations did. The weavers had no means to make up for the decrease in demand for hand-woven woolen material and therefore suffered while the manufacturers and factory owners seemingly prospered.

Even though some newspaper editors agreed with the poor weavers and sympathized with their economic plight in 1844, the general public and the government did not come to the weavers' assistance. Within two weeks the army crushed the rebellion and "the rebellious weavers returned to their work after being promised greater compensation."83 Even after

82Ibid., 28.

the weavers returned to work and the courts began to try the leaders of the revolt, the Kölnische Zeitung continued its assault on the Prussian government and the manufacturers for allowing economic conditions to reach a point that would cause rebellion. "The working class do not demand pity, they demand work which gives bread, and justice which protects and secures their livelihood."84 This idea was a major theme throughout Hauptmann's drama, as he showed the weavers only wanted to have enough food, to have just compensation for the work they sold.

Though Hauptmann wrote "Die Weber" as a historical drama, the play, as shown earlier, also dealt with issues in resent-day Germany. Critics and the public greeted Hauptmann's "Die Weber" with mixed emotions and reviews. Leopold Schönhoff, in the evening edition of the Frankfurter Zeitung said, "One could mockingly call ['Die Weber'] a poor man's drama, but a poor man's drama which sounds an alarm."85 Drama critic Paul Marx disputed Hauptmann's rhetoric. He stated, "'Had this piece played in the 40s, it must drift along with the spirit of the 40s, the political-revolutionary reactionary spirit, which, for example,


85Leopold Schönhoff, Frankfurter Zeitung, 26 Januar 1892, Dichtung und Wirklichkeit, 177.
Heine’s poem "Die Weber" addresses. Paul Marx believed,

Hauptmann’s weavers do not speak and act as 48ers, rather as modern proletariats who have read Marx and Engels. I have heard such judgment over and over again, [and] also read it in print, and I can understand it... In a hundred years of tragic hunger, this was but a single moment in which the sorrowful, for once, marched and took action, as in the drama, the action, Hauptmann captured this one moment. No revolutionary, reactionary movement, no socialist agitations produced the rebellion in the Eulengebirge, but rather the hunger of the poor, harshness of the rich and common misery.

Only one example of revolutionary, Marxist rhetoric appears in Hauptmann’s drama, but critics such as Paul Marx and Leopold Schönhoff viewed "Die Weber" as a socialist’s play and Hauptmann as a voice of socialism. In Act III, while the weavers are imbibing courage -- note again Hauptmann’s statement that the use of alcohol causes men to do something they would not normally do if sober -- the blacksmith, Wittig, enters the tavern. When the weaver, Old Baumert, says he would rather the changes come about peacefully than through violence, Wittig responds,

Rot! How could it be done peaceably? Did they do it peaceably in France? Did Robespeer [sic] tickle the rich man’s palms? No! It was: Away with them, every one! To the gilyoteen [sic] with ’em! Allongs onfong! [sic] You’ve got your work before you. The geese’ll not fly ready roasted into your mouths.

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Ibid., 181-182.

After much bantering between the two, Jaeger finally confronts Wittig.

Look here, Wittig. You've always jawed such a lot about the French Revolution, and a good deal too about your own doings. A time may be coming, and that before long, when every one will have a chance to show whether he's a braggart or a true man.\(^9\)

When Wittig takes exception with Jaeger's implication of cowardice, he reminds the crowd of his involvement in war. Jaeger responds. "You needn't get angry about it. We're comrades."\(^9\) The use of the term "comrades" is the only reference which readers might construe as Marxist, although the idea of revolution being the only means of achieving a sense of equality might also be interpreted as a Marxist idea.

Upon his accession to the Prussian and Emperial thrones in 1888, after the ninety-nine days of his father's reign, Wilhelm II clearly indicated his personal views toward the liberal ideals his father and mother held. Wilhelm called for his personal guards to surround his mother's palace while his personal staff members searched for documents that might hint at evidence of proposed or negotiated liberal changes in the government.\(^9\) In 1889, the kaiser opened the

\(^8\)Ibid., 283

\(^9\)Ibid., 284.

new police headquarters on the Alexanderplatz. The kaiser and his cabinet chose this site because it was close to the homes of the disgruntled industrial workers in the east and northeast sectors of Berlin, where civil unrest was most likely to occur.\textsuperscript{92}

Samuel Fischer published Hauptmann's "Die Weber" at a time when the kaiser placed art and the theater under the strict supervision of his agents. Art, the kaiser announced, should represent the Ideal. The kaiser regarded the stage as, a weapon against non-German type art, a means to control the ideas and thought of the populace. He believed, "The theatre too . . . should contribute to culture of the soul, elevate morals and inculcate respect for the highest traditions of our Fatherland."\textsuperscript{93} The kaiser's conservative attitude and view of art prompted him to state, "Art that transgresses the laws and parameters which I lay down ceases to be art . . . If art is to fulfil its proper role, it must affect people deeply -- but it must be uplifting and not degrading."\textsuperscript{94} The emperor felt that art and the theater could help the lower classes escape the

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid., 124.


doldrums of their daily existence. He admonished authors and playwrights, "when art descends into the gutter as so often nowadays, choosing to represent misery as even more unlovely than it is already, [art] sins against the German people."³⁵

To prevent plays from contaminating the thoughts of the general populace, the Prussian government established a special branch of the police, the Theatersicherheitspolizei, educated men who were somewhat acquainted with artistic problems and were responsible for reading, censoring, and banning plays, if necessary.³⁶ Theater directors had to submit two copies of any play they wished to produce to the special police. The Theatersicherheitspolizei attended rehearsals to insure that the play presented did not stray from the script they approved. If a particular act, scene, line, or word, offended the censor, he had the power to suspend it from the production. When the police granted a permit for a play, that permit was only for that edition of the play at a particular theater. If the director or producer wished to perform the play at another theater, even if the production was to be exactly the same as the one

³⁵Tuchman, The Proud Tower, 305.
previously permitted, the entire routine of submitting the script, rehearsals, and censorship was again followed. Hauptmann's "Die Weber" did not meet the requirements of either the Theatersicherheitspolizei or the kaiser, since the play focused on the tribulations of poor workers and did not present matters in an uplifting manner. The police, at first, requested Otto Brahm to remove "only a few cruel words and a verse of the Weberliede" but then banned the entire play. These "few cruel words" included the "description of the factory owners against those of the weavers in Acts I and IV, the recitation of the Weberliede in Acts II and III, the plundering of the Dreißiger home and factory in Act IV and the description of the rebellion in the fourth and fifth acts." These "few" words showed "the exploitation of the workers in the play in a one-sided characterization [which] made the play propaganda."

As one can imagine, Otto Brahm did not produce Hauptmann's "Die Weber" on the public stage. Although Hauptmann's plays, "Das Friedensfest" and "Einsame Menschen," had appeared on the public stage, Berlin's police intendant banned "Die Weber" as a subversive drama. The

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98 Ibid., 337-338.

99 Ibid., 338.
police used the same argument employed to ban Heinrich Mann's, "Der Untertan" ("The Vassal").

The police is [sic] empowered to forbid the performance of a play if the effect of the performance is considered to be likely to create a danger to public peace, security and order. This does not merely apply to disturbance of order on the part of the spectators through rowdyism or other excesses, but applies also to the consideration that the audience may be inwardly misled to views that endanger public well-being and order. This includes for instance the disturbance caused by the thought that the existing political order does not grant the individual citizen his rights. In particular, the undermining of confidence in the administration of law is a reason to ban a dramatic work.\(^{100}\)

To make sure the play was presented to the public, Otto Brahm reopened the Freie Bühne and produced "Die Weber" in February, 1893. In October of that same year, Bruno Wille produced "Die Weber" at his Neue Freie Bühne. In December, Franz Mehring produced the play at the Freie Volksbühne, and its performances became somewhat like a political demonstration.\(^{101}\)

Ultimately, the courts succumbed to the wishes of the general populace and took a legal position opposite that of the police. The courts were likely to be less tolerant when books and plays defamed individual statesmen, public institutions, or especially the army and the law.\(^{102}\)

\(^{100}\)Oberverwaltungsgericht, Berlin, quoted in Roy Pascal, From Naturalism to Expressionism, 266.

\(^{101}\)Pascal, From Naturalism to Expressionism, 274.

\(^{102}\)Ibid., 266.
Hauptmann's play did not directly attack any notable personages or institutions in a personal manner, the highest regional court overruled the police and allowed "Die Weber" to be produced on the public stage. Hauptmann would later recall the day when he heard the news that the court had released his play for presentation.

It was in the year 1893. . . . I awoke during a scream that echoed in the foyer . . . I thought for a moment the house had been broken into. I recognized the words, "The weavers are free! The weavers are free!" As the horror of my sleepiness lessened, along with the frantic noise from my friends who [then] proceeded in a more sensible speech . . . The Higher Regional Court had lifted the censorship of my play "Die Weber," which had brought joy and caused my friends to go crazy. 103

The "political demonstration" that took place at the Freie Volksbühne would be nothing like the opening of Die Weber on 25 September 1894 at the Deutsche Bühne (German Theater). An arts critic for Das kleine Journal saw and denounced the opening of "Die Weber" as a political statement. "With the stomping of feet and great hullabaloo, the Social Democrats made their entrance yesterday evening into the German Theater. . . ." 104 The critic believed the Social Democrats, waving their red banner, "celebrated a victory" with the regional court's lifting of the police


ban. At the center of the celebration "sat the masters of ceremony, [Paul] Singer and [Wilhelm] Liebknecht. . . ." leaders and founders of the German Social Democrat Party. The critic was definitely anti-socialist because he viewed their actions as "the incontestable truth of their cowardice, their ignorance, and their spiritual inferiority." 

Franz Mehring disagreed with *Das kleine Journal*’s critic’s view. Mehring believed Julius Hart, the naturalist playwright-producer, viewed "Die Weber" as a play that evoked a revolutionary spirit and "social democratic rage" as an "authentic sentiment." Hart and the *Journal*’s critic viewed the play as revolutionary; Hart favored the sentiments and the critic opposed them. Mehring disputed the view of the play as a political tool. "'Die Weber' does not have the revolutionary speech of party politics and Socialists, only the [speech] of universal, great, human nature." 

Paul Schlenther, the famed producer and Hauptmann’s friend and biographer, agreed with Mehring and took a

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105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.


108 Ibid.
valiant stand against the government and its censorship. "Compare the historian’s representation with the author’s rendition in the play," Schlenther wrote. The depiction of "both the factory owner Dreißiger as well as the village police is not considerably different. And, in Hauptmann’s play there is no indication of danger, no expression of grievance, no state of hunger, and also no manifestation of the rebellion, which was not covered historically by Zimmermann." Schlenther criticized the government for censoring Hauptmann’s play but not Zimmermann’s detailed account.

Theodor Fontane, the renowned novelist, also reinforced Schlenther’s opinion. While the play "is a drama of a people’s rebellion," Hauptmann "rebels against the rebellion. . . ." Fontane believed Hauptmann’s subject matter was true and accurate and that the controversy over the play was more revolutionary than what the play allegedly inspired. Fontane stated, "a calculating politician did not write this piece, rather a genuine author. . . ."

The furor over Hauptmann’s play did not stop with its public presentation. Kaiser Wilhelm II, as a sign of

111 Ibid.
displeasure with Otto Brahm and the Berlin Regional Court, canceled his permanent box at the Deutsche Bühne, and the question of the play's morality and meaning continued until the Prussian parliament debated the issue in February, 1895. On 21 February 1895, Representative Dr. Herreman stated the police should be allowed to do its work and close the play, because he, opposed "those whom either completely scorn or initiate other questionable tendencies," which counter "tradition, religion and upset the soul. . . ."\textsuperscript{112} Herreman continued his disparaging remarks. "Our theater has fallen from a position of . . . gifted stimulation to a position of representation of abuse and misconduct, of scoffing beliefs, and sensual titillation, and subversive tendencies."\textsuperscript{113} Herreman also attacked the public's response to Hauptmann's "Die Weber" when he made a reference to the court's judgment which allowed the controversial play to be shown. "If one said, 'The public wants to see such things' . . . then it shows how much the public's feelings and taste have sunk."\textsuperscript{114} According to Herreman, "the interest of [German]


\textsuperscript{113}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{114}Ibid.
decency, our morality" was the true issue at stake in
Hauptmann's play.\textsuperscript{115}

During the debate, Ernst Matthias von Köller, Minister
of the Interior, 1894-1895, continued the assault on
Hauptmann's play. Köller supported Herreman's position that
"Die Weber" was an attack on public decency and morality,
while also alleging that the regional court lifted the ban
because of the income the private theaters drew when showing
the banned play. As the debate waned, Köller warned the
House, "We must just keep the issue open and represent it
honestly . . . the morality of our people is in danger of
being lost."\textsuperscript{116}

Heinrich Rickert, one of the leaders of the Liberal
Association, a splinter political party from the National
Liberals, defended Hauptmann's play and the court's
decision. He agreed that in the "interest of domestic
economy" the ban should have been lifted. Rickert defended
the play, however, not from the issue of domestic economy,
"rather from speculation regarding morality -- to speculate
on the people's craving for pleasure and love of pleasure,
and things of this sort, as the theater" was not the duty of

\textsuperscript{115}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{116}Ernst Matthias von Köller, in Stenographische
Berichte, 376.
the House, but rather the theater." Perhaps it is Rickert's defense of Hauptmann and the public's right to govern its own morality that labeled Hauptmann as the "new national author" of the left. Regardless of the debate itself, Hauptmann's "Die Weber" continued at the Deutsche Bühne.

Throughout the controversy over "Die Weber," the ban, the court battle, the opening at the Freie Bühne, the lifting of the ban, the grand "political" opening at the Deutsches Theatre, and the debate in the Prussian Parliament, Hauptmann never changed his view of his work or of himself. Hauptmann did not become political, even though his plays seemed to call for reform. Malcom Pasley stated, "Hauptmann himself was not deeply interested in the reform of society, as his subsequent career made plain." Camillo Klenze's view of Hauptmann is more in line with Hauptmann's view of himself, "[f]or Hauptmann is neither a Socialist nor a social reformer. He is not primarily interested in the social problem . . . ." Motivated more by aesthetics than politics, Hauptmann rejected socialism

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117 Heinrich Rickert, in *Stenographische Berichte*, 377. See also *Dichtung und Wirklichkeit*, 227.


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and found the socialists' picture of social life to be "disturbing decoration through which one must penetrate." He disagreed with the socialists' view of a standard of art, just as he disagreed with Wilhelm's. "Socialism. It will also bring intellect [thought] under state control... Intellect will no longer be personal. The state must not equal a single mass. It must remain colorful, multishaped." It seems Hauptmann's longing was to discover nobility in those whom society and government cast aside.

The same year that Hauptmann finished writing "Die Weber," 1892, he also completed two other plays, "Der Biberpelz" ("The Beaver Coat") and "Hanneles Himmelfahrt" ("Hannele"). These two plays, though they differed in the ideals presented, confirm Camillo Klenze's view of Hauptmann's political bent. In "Der Biberpelz," the heroine, Frau Wolff, a washer woman, uses her working-class wiles to manipulate the Prussian Junker government, represented by the figure of Baron von Wehrhahn, the Amtsvorsteher (head local official). This comedy-drama allows Hauptmann to criticize social institutions and government without posing a threat to public peace.

120 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, undated, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 2, 47.

121 Ibid., 71, 202.

122 Klenze, From Goethe to Hauptmann, 274.
As Bernhard Zeller reports, the Berlin intendant acting as censor saw Hauptmann’s "Der Biberpelz" as a "miserable concoction . . . without any significant action." This view might have been a stroke of genius on the intendant’s part or an ignorant oversight of blatant satire. Without the controversy that had surrounded "Die Weber," "Der Bieberpelz" did not draw the public’s attention. Perhaps because Hauptmann portrayed a peasant as a thief, the intendant allowed the play to be staged.

The Wolff family represents the general intellectual, moral, and social atmosphere of the late 1880s, a time when Bismarck’s anti-socialist law had an impact upon every aspect of daily life. Frau Wolff, who desires the materialistic advancement the industrial world offered, steals from her employers and from those who employ her husband and her daughters. The theft of firewood, and of course the beaver coat, are the obvious "crimes" in the play. To Frau Wolff, theft is not really a crime, because wealth excuses an action while poverty condemns the same action. When Julius, Frau Wolff’s husband, states he can not steal, an ironic statement since he had just poached a stag, Frau Wolff retorts,

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You're just stoopid, an' that's the way you'll always be. Nobody here ain't been talkin' o' stealin'. But if you don't risk nothin', you don't get nothin'. An' when you're rich Julius, an' c'n go and sit in your own carridge, there ain't nobody what's goin' to ask where you got it! [Even] if we was to take it from poor pebple.\textsuperscript{124}

Gaining wealth justifies the means through which wealth was attained. Frau Wolff knows that if she can somehow obtain the beaver coat, she can sell it for enough money to pay the mortgage and allow for the construction of extra rooms to board summer guests so the family can gain even more money. Frau Wolff represents the Social Darwinian ideal; she takes full advantage of every opportunity, and she succeeds.

Hauptmann, however, thinly disguises the government's crimes in the form of Wehrhahn, who sees his position as a "sacred calling."

Wehrhahn, like the government of the 1880s, sees socialists and subversives everywhere and makes it his duty to root them out.

It is my function here to make careful tests and to exterminate undesirable elements. -- Under the protection of my honourable predecessor, the sphere of our activity has become a receptacle for refuse of various kinds: lives that cannot bear the light -- outlawed individuals, enemies of


royalty and of the realm. These people must be made to suffer.\textsuperscript{126}

Wehrhahn's approach to the left was not unlike an incident Hauptmann experienced while he was a young writer in Erkner, when the Amtsversteher, Oskar von Busse, confiscated Hauptmann's mail, specifically Die neue Zeit, a socialist periodical.\textsuperscript{127}

In the play, Wehrhahn continues his denunciation of those with "leftist" leanings when he denounces the liberal author, Fleischer. "He can put on all the innocent expressions he pleases. We know these wolves in sheep's clothing . . . Well, here, at least, it will be made too hot for them."\textsuperscript{128} The audience knows who has been stealing, and the greatest satire and political statement comes when Wehrhahn says, "And as surely as it is true when I say: Mrs. Wolff is an honest woman; so surely I tell you: This Dr. Fleischer . . . is a thoroughly dangerous man."\textsuperscript{129} Too caught up in his own importance and work to ferret out socialists, Wehrhahn cannot solve the myriad of thefts, even with the thief right under his nose. It is easy, perhaps too easy, to surmise that Hauptmann believes that the Prussian government is so busy rooting out socialists that

\textsuperscript{126} Gerhart Hauptmann, "The Beaver Coat," 420.

\textsuperscript{127} Hauptmann, "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend," 1043.

\textsuperscript{128} Hauptmann, "The Beaver Coat," 487.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 510.
it cannot discern or solve the problems that caused the rise of the socialist movement.

In 1937, Hauptmann claimed that he had intended to satirize the local Prussian administrators that he represented in the character of Wehrhahn. Because film producers in Berlin desired to make "Der Biberpelz" into a movie, Hauptmann revealed many thoughts he had harbored regarding the play. "The comedy 'Der Bieberpelz' is entirely a child of the Brandenburg soil." Hauptmann wrote that he saw himself as a "very ill-bred political author of comedies, who otherwise is a thoroughly great author; only Berlin with its witty dialect could produce a German Aristophanes." The direct reference to the Greek playwright, Aristophanes, who, through comedy, satirized Athenian nobility, politics, and political leaders, is quite clear. Hauptmann considered his treatment of Wehrhahn and Prussian officials as "innocent art, satire." Hauptmann never intended to "defend the deeds [theft and fraud] of the Wolff family," but wanted only to show that "certain, pretentious, overbearing officials" are so hindered by their


131 Ibid., 1156.

132 Ibid., 1156.

133 Ibid., 1156-1157.
own importance "that they cannot see the forest for the trees."\textsuperscript{134}

At the time of Hauptmann's criticism, Wilhelm II reverted to a very conservative form of government. The kaiser turned away from Leo von Caprivi, Bismarck's successor as chancellor and prime minister, and Count Botho von Eulenburg, the initiator of the Anti-Socialist Law of 1878. Both Caprivi and Eulenburg had been more moderate in their politics than the kaiser desired them to be. Caprivi mitigated the policies of Bismarck's \textit{Kulturkampf} and gained the support of the Center Party and some Social Democrats. Eulenburg hoped to placate the farmers and make economic reforms to thwart the growth of the socialists. When their policies failed, and Eulenburg's oppressive \textit{Umsturzvorlage} (a legislative bill against subversion) failed to win approval in the Reichstag, Wilhelm dismissed both men from their positions, replacing Caprivi with Hohenlohe.

Wilhelm II became even more conservative and once again began to take harsh action against the Social Democrats. The kaiser turned to Baron Stumm-Halberg for advice. The baron, a leading industrialist in the Saar basin and a Free Conservative politician, led the kaiser to adopt a "paternal" philosophy regarding rural society. The kaiser's intendants would administer royal policy in the small towns,

\textsuperscript{134}\textit{Ibid.}, 1157.
while the industrial giants would keep the urban workers in line. Hauptmann’s Wehrhahn is a prime example of the royal intendant in the small town.

Hauptmann momentarily discontinued his attack on the modern world in his next play, "Hanneles Himmelfahrt," which he also completed in 1893. In an age of Darwinian science, when many turned away from religion, Hauptmann told of man’s longing for a peace which earthly life could not provide. Hannele’s step-father forces her to work so he can drink himself into a stupor every night. When the young Hannele, thirteen years of age, does not earn enough money, her step-father beats her. The villagers only come to her aid when the cries become unbearable. Hannele seeks escape and throws herself into the icy lake. She is rescued, only to fall into fits of hallucinations and dreams, acted out by various players on the stage. In the end, she dies and escapes the cruelty of the world that neglected her. Though "Hannele" is not a religious play, the appearance of the "Stranger," who acts as a Jesus-like figure in one of the "visions," admonishes man to take care of those around him.

Franz Mehring, the Marxist leader who had praised Hauptmann for "Die Weber," denounced him for "Hannele."

"Never before have we been condemned to witness with our own eyes such a great abuse of such a great talent." 135 Paul

135 Franz Mehring, quoted in Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 51.
Schlenther believes Hauptmann had returned to an earlier, neoromantic ideal, one that Hauptmann revealed in "Das bunte Buch." Hauptmann's "Die Mondbraut" ("The Moon's Fiancée"), a lyric poem in "Das bunte Buch," focuses on a young girl's dreams to transcend life on earth, to find happiness in heaven. "Hanneles Himmelfahrt" and "Die Mondbraut" both reflect Hauptmann's desire to show that the individual should be in command of his heart, feelings, and life.

Perhaps Hauptmann was not digressing from naturalism, as Mehring and Warren Maurer suggest, but was returning to that art form which suited him best in his own mind. In one of his earliest poems, Hauptmann revealed this thought.

Poet, let your soul be as a lyre,
   Let the gentle breeze move you
And the strings must vibrate eternally
   with the breath of the world's pain;
Because the world's pain is the foundation
   of Heaven's longing
Therefore the foundations of your songs
   must be planted in the pain of the earth;
But your head crowned with Heaven's light.\(^{136}\)

This poem reveals Hauptmann's focus not only for the foundation of "Hannele," but for all his work, because he focuses on the trials man endures on earth. The poet must detail the "pain" on earth. The poet's revelation to the public is the way to receive praise (Heaven's light).

Perhaps the explanation for why Hauptmann momentarily left the naturalist mode and returned to the neo-romantic artform lies in the personal turmoil he was experiencing when he wrote "Hannele." During the tribulations with "Die Weber" Hauptmann met, fell passionately in love with, and began an extended extra-marital affair with an eighteen-year-old woman, Margarete Marschalk. When Hauptmann married Marie, he was in need of financial assistance, and after his financial successes in the theater, Hauptmann no longer needed Marie's inheritance and may have felt trapped in a loveless marriage similar to the ones he described in his earlier plays and stories. Marie was not the most beautiful of women and did not enjoy the theater nor the publicity associated with her husband's success.\textsuperscript{137}

Hauptmann first met Margarete when her older brother, Max, collaborated with Emil Strauß to write the incidental music for "Vor Sonnenaufgang." Hauptmann and Margarete met for the second time when Hauptmann hired Max to write the music for "Hannele." When that play premiered, Margarete sat next to Hauptmann, "the picture of health, unsentimental, friendly," so unlike Marie.\textsuperscript{138} Hauptmann and Margarete spent the second half of November together in Berlin. When Marie confronted Gerhart concerning his affair

\textsuperscript{137}Hilscher, \textit{Gerhart Hauptmann}, 179.

\textsuperscript{138}Ibid.
with Margarete, Hauptmann suggested the three live in a ménage à trois, an idea which he had openly favored in 1888 and later suggested in "Einsame Menschen." Unable to handle the situation, Marie, in early 1894, feeling dishonored, left Germany and took her sons to America, where they stayed with Gerhart’s friend, Alfred Ploetz, in Meridian, Connecticut. It was as if Hauptmann’s "Einsame Menschen" had come to life.

Ploetz and his wife, Pauline, had emigrated to America in 1890 in an attempt to secure a large tract of land from the United States government, where the Ploetzes could realize the utopian society Alfred and the Hauptmanns had envisioned years before. When Ploetz could not gain the land-grant, he began work on creating a racially pure breed of Germans. Because of their work, the Ploetzes felt out of place in the close-knit communities in Connecticut, amid people who believed doctors practiced their craft in a greedy manner. Ploetz’s racial hygiene theories forced him to do most of his work in a covert manner through a German secret lodge.139

A short time later, after "Hannele" premiered in Paris, Hauptmann sailed to America, reconciled with Marie, and experienced problems in America regarding his work similar to those he had experienced in Germany. On 18 February

139 Weindling, Health, Race, and German Politics, 70-76.
1894, J. Grunzig, a socialist reporter for the German newspaper, *Volkszeitung*, in New York, interviewed Hauptmann and described the German author as, "pale, clean-shaven, serious . . . with an expression of suffering on his thin, drawn lips." Grunzig asked Hauptmann whether or not he was a socialist. Hauptmann, in his denial of party affiliation, replied, "the poet stands above crenelated party walls . . . he has to keep outside party hate and favor."

Frederick Heuser, professor of German Studies at Columbia University and an admirer of Hauptmann, believed Hauptmann had "to look at life as a human being without preconceived notions of any kind and to reproduce poetically what has happened, . . . unprejudiced by any theory."

Hauptmann's reputation preceded his voyage and many American admirers and detractors wanted to know Hauptmann's political philosophy and ideas regarding social reform.

Prior to Hauptmann's visit to America, few people, even his closest friends, knew of his views regarding his motives for writing his dramas. But, in the United States, when Charles Henry Meltzer of the *New York World* interviewed Hauptmann, the latter gave a concise, albeit deep,
reflection of his motives.

In youth we have illusions. . . . In my earlier works I may have had a touch of the reformer's zeal. I must admit, as if something of the sort guided me in writing "Before Sunrise." Nor will I deny that I have hoped that the well-to-do folks who see my "Weavers" may be moved by the appalling misery which is reflected in that work -- a misery with which I have been brought in contact and which has moved me strongly. . . . I saw nothing but the marvelous material they gave me for writing a great, moving, human drama. . . . Yet, indirectly, "The Weavers" will teach something, I dare say. To the dramatist, however, it is of smaller importance, what he teaches.\(^{143}\)

Hauptmann travelled to America to reveal to the world, inadvertently, that he once had ideals of social reform, but mostly he just wanted to write "great, moving, human drama."

With Hauptmann in America, the Rosenfeld brothers decided to present the author's most recent play, "Hannele," to the public. Hauptmann attended a hearing with the Rosenfelds at New York City's City Hall to receive a permit and quietly listened as Mayor Gilroy denounced the play as risque and offensive "to the decent sense of the community."\(^{144}\) The Rosenfelds had cast Alice Pierce, a minor, to play Hanelle, but, after Gilroy quoted the law regarding child labor, acquiesced and cast an adult, an

\(^{143}\)Gerhart Hauptmann, interviewed by Charles Henry Meltzer, quoted in Frederick Heuser, "Gerhart Hauptmann's Trip to America in 1894," 15.

\(^{144}\)Quoted in Frederick Heuser, Gerhart Hauptmann: Zu seinem Leben, 20.
"overaged" woman to play the role. Even in America, Hauptmann could not escape controversy. Mayor Gilroy and the city council granted a permit for "Hannele" to premiere on 1 May 1894. Two days following the hearing, the Hauptmann family left America for Germany aboard the steamer Auguste Victoria.

Following Hauptmann’s visit, many American theaters produced his plays, and they received the same scrutiny they had received in Germany. On 8 October 1894, Hauptmann’s "Die Weber" premiered at the Thalia Theater in New York City under the auspices of a German labor group known as the "Freie Bühne von New York." Amateurs acted the parts, and the notorious, exiled German anarchist, John Most, played the role of Old Baumert.

The critic for the New York Volkszeitung, possibly J. Grunzig, stated that Most added lines and speeches to "Die Weber" to give the play a more socialist bent. In Newark, New Jersey, the city police banned "Die Weber" because the city had a large German labor population. "The Newark

\[\text{145} \text{Hilscher, Gerhart Hauptmann, 189.}\]

\[\text{146} \text{John C. Blankenagel, "Early Reception of Hauptmann's Die Weber in the United States," in Modern Language Notes, May, 1953, 68:334. John Most, a German immigrant, had served in the Reichstag from 1874 until 1878 when Bismarck instituted the Anti-Socialist Law. He spent much of his adult life in prisons in Germany, Austria, England, and the United States because of his political views of violence to overthrow governments. August Bebel and the leadership of the Social Democrats expelled Most from the SPD in 1880, and he then emigrated to the United States.}\]
authorities may have suspected that under Most's leadership there would be interlarding of lines calculated to stir up the audience to acts of violence. At the same time the Newark police banned "Die Weber," the Volkszeitung headlined an article "Heldenkampf der Weber in Fall River, Massachusetts" ("Heroic Struggle of the Weavers in Fall River, Massachusetts"). The mostly German weavers in Fall River, had struck against the manufacturers who planned to lower wages. The strike was in its eighth week when the Newark officials banned Most's production of "Die Weber." In Chicago, Most presented his socialist version of "Die Weber" on twelve different occasions without problems of censorship.

Shortly after the family returned to Germany, Marie, once again faced with Gerhart's infatuation with Margarete, took the children, moved out of the Schreiberhau home and into an expansive home in Dresden, which Gerhart had built for them. Hauptmann was torn between his family and his love for Margarete. "I have great feelings for my family and how I belong to and with them" he wrote In the fall of 1894, Gerhart also moved away from Schreiberhau and into the Villa Kolonie in Berlin, in the region today known as

\[147\] Ibid., 336.

\[148\] Ibid., 339.

\[149\] Hauptmann, Tagebuch: 1892-1894, 108.
the Grünwald. Hauptmann continued to write, but the conflict he felt between his love for his wife and sons and Margarete kept him from completing any projects for the next two years.

In the four years 1890-1894, Gerhart Hauptmann wrote six plays and a short story that revealed the pressures and conflicts in German society. He had survived the turbulent premier of "Vor Sonnenaufgang," and with "Das Friedensfest" and "Einsame Menschen" again revealed the stress the modern world and its ethical and moral structure placed upon the middle-class family and the individual. Hauptmann returned to Silesia and travelled to the Eulengebirge to visit impoverished weavers to gather information to write a more realistic drama, "Die Weber." The play caused such an uproar, debate over its presentation even reached the floor of the Prussian House of Representatives, where the delegates argued the moral merits of the play and the moral condition of the populace.

Hauptmann continued his social criticisms in a more comedic vein with "Kollege Crampton" and "Der Biberpelz," but in a move away from the naturalistic medium, Hauptmann wrote "Hanneles Himmelfahrt," in which he expressed the moral concerns he held for the modern world. Hauptmann began a extra-marital affair with Margarete Marschalk, which led to a separation from Marie. His trials and tribulations were not ended by this separation; Hauptmann's pen seemingly
went dry. He tried to write, and worked on two other plays and another autobiographical novel that would reveal his view of America and the ties he felt with his family.

The criticisms Hauptmann expressed for the modern world and its treatment of the lower classes gained him great fame and great notoriety. But beneath the criticisms lay a deeper feeling that he had suppressed since his days as a student in Breslau and a member of the Blutbrüderschaft with his brother Carl and Alfred Ploetz. With his own problems outweighing his compassion for the lower classes, Hauptmann became much more nationalistic and hoped for a cultural unification of Germany. Hauptmann's nationalism, a desire to resurrect Germany's Kultur, would occupy his thought for the remainder of his life.
CHAPTER VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HAUPTMANN’S NATIONALISM:

WILHELMINE GERMANY BEFORE THE WORLD WAR

1895 - 1913

Upon his return to Germany from the United States, Gerhart Hauptmann assiduously worked on a project he had begun in 1892. While he continued to explore the abuses of the modern, industrialized world and German society heaped upon the lower classes, Hauptmann’s new project would show a different view, one that indicated a deeper interest in the German people, their nation, and the nation’s future.

Meanwhile, he continued his social criticisms, and those made from 1896 to 1914 are similar to the criticisms he made in his earlier plays. In the years 1895 - 1914, Hauptmann wrote fifteen plays, many poems, and numerous prose pieces, including novels and short stories. There are a few new twists, however, to Hauptmann’s social criticism in the plays "Die versunkene Glocke. Ein deutsches Märchendrama" ("The Sunken Bell: A German Fairy Tale Drama," 1897), "Der rote Hahn. Tragikomödie" ("The Conflagration: A Tragicomedy," 1901), and "Die Ratten" ("The Rats," 1911). The "change" in Hauptmann appeared in two plays of historical significance similar to "Die Weber." In these
historical plays, "Florian Geyer. Die Tragödie des Bauernkrieges" ("Florian Geyer: The Tragedy of the Peasant's War, 1896), and "Festspiel in deutschen Reimen" ("Commemoration Masque," 1913) Gerhart Hauptmann focused his attention on his own nationalism, a "romantic" view of the German people, and the development of the German nation.

Hauptmann chose the Peasant's Revolt of 1525 as the background for a play because, "Then and Now are married to each other," a time when "the German folk first became conscious of itself." Hauptmann's Florian Geyer is not only a comprehensive view of social, political, economic, and religious disunity in sixteenth century Germany; it is also a condemnation of the Germans and their disunity in the 1890s, an admonition that the Volk create a greater Germany.

Numerous political events tore at German unity and led Hauptmann to move away from direct social criticism. He believed political turmoil prevented Germany and the Germans from reaching those social and philosophical heights he thought could be attained. The government began to recognize the value of the German worker, and the kaiser saw a need to change the role of education. While it is true there were political motives for the changes in social and educational policies, the changes marked a movement away

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1Gerhart Hauptmann, quoted in Paul Schlenther, Gerhart Hauptmann, Leben und Werke (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1922), 119.
from the system Bismarck had instituted. Members of the Reichstag argued the issue of protective tariffs, passage of the Umsturzvorlage (legislation to punish "subversive" activities against the existing state order), and passage of the Army Bill. Hauptmann addressed each of these issues in a subtle manner in "Florian Geyer."

On 20 March 1890, Wilhelm II accepted Otto von Bismarck's resignation, and the "Iron Chancellor" retired from the political scene. The young kaiser, who hoped to have a new chancellor more amenable to his own will, had appointed General Leo von Caprivi to succeed Bismarck.² Bismarck had directed efforts to quiet any "leftist" rhetoric, whereas Caprivi made concessions to the left to promote unity and calm political unrest. In an effort to maintain political stability, Kaiser Wilhelm also reflected the influence of the more liberal political viewpoint of the era. On 4 February 1890, Wilhelm issued a decree to improve working conditions for most laborers.

"It is one of the duties of the state administration to regulate the duration and type of work in such a way that the preservation of health, the precepts of morality, the economic requirements of the workers and their claim to legal equality of rights are protected."³

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To ward off strikes and other labor problems that could possibly interfere with Germany's industrial growth, the kaiser also stated, "statutory prescriptions must be considered which will enable the workers through trusted representatives to share in the regulation of common concerns and to protect their interests . . . ." 

Just as Hauptmann had noted in his plays, the industrialists objected to changes that favored the workers. Immediate opposition to the kaiser's program for workers' committees and workers' "representatives to share in the regulation of common concerns" arose, with the Central Association of German Manufacturers leading the dissent. Simultaneously, from his "retirement" in Friedrichsruh, Bismarck traveled about and openly criticized the monarch and Caprivi. The ex-chancellor urged his supporters in the Reichstag to call the Staatsrat (State Council) to subdue the kaiser's reforms. The kaiser took personal control of the Staatsrat and pushed his reform policy past the industrialists, among them Friedrich Alfred von Krupp and Carl Ferdinand von Stumm-Halberg, until the Staatsrat's recommendations supported his program.

The kaiser and his chancellor believed that to defeat the rise of Social Democracy the government needed to take a stand to eliminate those social abuses that fed the ideology

4Ibid.
of the left. Wilhelm II and Caprivi believed, "that the struggle against Social Democracy is the most serious question of our time." Other than the labor question, which the Reichstag had not yet addressed, the government also had to face either rejection or renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, which was to expire on 30 September 1890. Caprivi and the kaiser favored the Anti-Socialist Law if the Reichstag would make the law permanent, but the Reichstag would not agree to a permanent law. Without a permanent law, Caprivi believed a conciliatory approach would achieve a stable government.

On two separate occasions prior to passage of the labor bill, the kaiser proved that Caprivi's program was one of conciliation. On 27 March 1890 a strike erupted in Gelsenkirchen, and the kaiser himself ordered his generals to use repeating rifles against the strikers "at the first opportunity." Then, in late August 1890, the Social Democrats held a grand rally in Berlin. One of the meetings turned into a riot, with Social Democrats fighting the Berlin police. Upon his own initiative, without consulting

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Caprivi or his generals, Wilhelm ordered a brigade of troops away from army maneuvers to reinforce the Berlin police. To the kaiser, the Social Democrats were the direct enemy of his government and German progress, and had to be stopped either through force or law.

It seemed, however, as if Caprivi had read or seen Hauptmann's "Die Weber," when in January 1891, the chancellor led the Reichstag as it passed the Bill to Amend the Law Regulating Industry and Crafts, a workers' protection bill to regulate working conditions. The new labor law forbade work on Sunday and women to work more than eleven hours per day; employers could not hire children under the age of thirteen; children between the ages of thirteen and sixteen could work no more than ten hours per day; the law also empowered the Bundesrat to regulate hours and working conditions in factories. This legislation sparked divisive political turmoil.

In some ways Caprivi matched Hauptmann’s view of the general populace. Hauptmann had implied in his earlier plays that self-interest, rather than loftier goals, influenced the actions of most people. He now stated this idea outright in "Florian Geyer." Hauptmann’s youthful, romantic nationalism, his early nationalist work and the blood-brotherhood, remained in the back of his mind. After

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7Stenographische Berichte, 1890-1892, 1st Session, 4:2764-2765. See also Schuithess, 32:84.
he attended Richard Wagner's funeral in Weimar in 1883, these nationalist feelings again swelled within him, and he wanted to awaken the same nationalist spirit within the German people.

In the "Prologue" to "Florian Geyer" Hauptmann has one character, the clerk Gilgenessig, read from the Twelve Articles of the Peasants. Of particular note is the debate created over the Third Article that calls for the end to serfdom. "Thus the Bible proves that we are free and want to be free. . . . Thus we should willingly obey our elected and rightful ruler, set over us by God, in all proper and Christian matters."\(^8\) A knight, Wolf von Hanstein, agrees with the point of the Third Article. "For what hath the lesser gentry had to fear from the overlords of the church all this time? Tribulation, oppression of body and soul."\(^9\) In response, another knight, Hans von Lichtenstein, says, "Let them ever be plucked . . . ever mown down, be they sown by Luther, Karlstadt, Münzer, Huss or Wyclif."\(^10\) Hauptmann clearly shows that the lords cannot agree among themselves


\(^10\)Ibid., 22.
how to treat the peasants. The same situation faced the German government under Caprivi's chancellorship. Germany's leaders argued over how to treat Germany's general populace who had missed the benefits of industry.

The argument over the Third Article is continued with a discussion of the peasants' Sixth Article. "Sixth, there is our grievous burden of labor services, which the lords daily increase in number and kind. We demand that these obligations be properly investigated and lessened."11 After Gilgenessig reads the demand, Heinz von Stein responds with a view equal to that of the nineteenth century Junkers regarding the poor. "The matter stands thus: the peasant would fain idle about the whole time, [and] show himself in the alehouses . . . ."12 Hauptmann himself had commented in earlier plays that too many workers frequented taverns and drank themselves into oblivion to avoid their everyday tribulations. This argument as to the nature of the poor (peasants) was common among the wealthy and many educated men of the nineteenth century, Alfred Ploetz included. The poor would waste whatever spare time they had. When Hauptmann visited Ploetz in America, the latter had already revised his philosophy. Ploetz now believed socialism and land reform to be utopian ideals that could never be

11Blickle, "Twelve Articles," The Revolution of 1525, 354.

12Hauptmann, Florian Geyer, 23.
reached. Humanitarianism towards the weak and the sick was a barrier to racial, and therefore societal improvement. To further society, Ploetz, along with August Bebel, believed that selective breeding to improve the quality of offspring was best for creating social change.  

Hauptmann believed that the arguments over the nature and treatment of the poor were divisive and led to inaction, which was a much greater danger to German society than improper action. Hauptmann also believed many who spoke for the poor acted out of self-interest. In "Florian Geyer," Geyer's clerk derides one of the knights who disavows the bishop and sides with Geyer because, "there is no value in such brothers. They care naught for divine right. They seek their advantage, as ravens fly to carrion." Even some of the peasants doubt Geyer's intent and view him as self-serving. "In this I trace hellish tyranny, but no sign of Christian humility."  

The lack of unity among the German people was the chief argument for "Florian Geyer." Geyer is the messiah of the poor, the downtrodden, all Germany, a leader who will remove poverty and wretchedness from the land. "Florian Geyer" can

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14 Hauptmann, "Florian Geyer," 52.

15 Ibid., 55.
best be compared to Hauptmann's "Germanen und Römer" (1881), which celebrated Germany's victory over foreign influence to achieve cultural and political unity. But, instead of Germany's victory, Hauptmann, in "Florian Geyer" showed how the modern world destroyed the unity that had made Germany great. Unity gave way to dissension, and the tragedy was that Germany's leaders could not, or did not, recognize the greatness that awaited all Germans (Volk), and because of petty, political differences they prevented German unity.

Hauptmann believed that Germans could regain their unity and their traditions to maintain their distinct Kultur. In Act II of "Florian Geyer," Geyer addresses the common men of Würzburg and appeals to their sense of tradition and unity.

In the Kyffhäuser there is a stir of life. The hidden Emperor hath stirred and stretched. Barbarossa hath risen to his feet and will come forth with all his force. The daughter of the rich man he will give in marriage to the poor. The realm (empire) must be reorganized. This must take its beginning in Franconia. The old imperial constitution is Franconian. . . . We have to elect, we the people, not the princes. . . . We want a German, a people's emperor. . . . I will prepare the way for Barbarossa. 16

In German legend, the Emperor-king, Frederick II (1194-1250), slept under the mountain. Germans later attached the legend to Frederick I (1124-1190). The later was then attached to the barbarian king who defeated the Romans who

16Ibid., 127.
attempted to cross the Rhine and conquer the Germanic tribes. Upon the king's death, the Germans buried him deep under the Kyffhäuser mountain. The legend maintained that whenever the Germans found themselves in dire need, the king would rise again from his tomb under the Kyffhäuser and lead his people in victory over those who threatened the Volk. Geyer's foreign opponent was the Roman Catholic Church, its protector, Charles V, and those princes who would subject the people to the wishes and influences of an interloper. Geyer saw himself as the herald of the king who was due to awaken. The "realm," which Geyer mentioned, referred to the kingdom which Franz von Sickingen hoped to create when he led a group of knights in a rebellion against the Catholic Archbishop at Trier who had usurped temporal power while Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, was away fighting either Francis I or the Turks. Sickingen wanted to force an election of a monarch who would respond more to the needs and desires of the German princes than to an outside influence such as the holy Church in Rome.

For years Hauptmann had focused on the ills that he saw as a plague on German society, especially for the lower classes. In "Florian Geyer" Hauptmann states that these ills had also plagued Germans in the sixteenth century. They, therefore, were not just symptoms of inequities that sprang from the modern world, but were symptoms of a condition of either national character or an innate
character of the German people themselves. In "Germanen und Römer," Hauptmann had envisaged a national character of unity and social equality, and in "Florian Geyer," he developed the connection of Germany past with Germany present. National unity in the first century had given way to dissension in the sixteenth century, and the false sense of German unity found in 1871 was racked with political dissension in 1895. Instead of focusing on the social problems themselves, as he had done in his earlier plays, Hauptmann points to their origins and hints that the origins were not contemporary, the result of industrialization and the growth of a money economy, but were perpetual, the result of the innate character of the German people. Hauptmann saw the lack of unity as a flaw in the German character, which could have dire results for the German nation.

Hauptmann emphasized in "Florian Geyer" that religious change in the Reformation created a split in German society and therefore impeded national unity. In Act II, a blind monk rants against the "pestilential Hussite soup," the "spirit of Wyclif," and the "leprosy of Huss."17 The monk continues to say, "Beware of the hellish, abysmal, devilish, desperate, factious spirits that go about these days and destroy mankind. . . . Urging it upon their hearts as if

Barbarossa were to come again."¹⁸ Each of the religious factions Hauptmann depicted in the sixteenth century, just like the political parties of his own age, promised rewards for the general populace.

The tragedy in "Florian Geyer" becomes apparent when those forces Geyer vainly attempts to defeat proved victorious over the one who placed the Fatherland above his own gain. This conclusion is Hauptmann's condemnation of his Germany and Germans. Just as "Then and Now are married to each other," there were those who wanted the advantages of a united Germany but were not willing to sacrifice their own interests. The nobles rejected Geyer because he was one of them who had forsaken his own. They saw Geyer as destructive to their self-serving interests, their Germany. "If the floods [revolt] undermine it, then all else will plunge after it and sink to the bottom, and naught will remain of the entire great German nation but a heap of wretched stones and ruins."¹⁹ Bubenleben, a peasant spokesman who fights for the peasants' freedoms, warns his fellow peasants against any member of the nobility. He believes the peasants should select leaders from their own ranks. "The leaders should be peasants, the like of us. [If] we take in a man of gentle blood, we smuggle wolf's

¹⁸Ibid., 101.
¹⁹Ibid., 36.
hair into our sheep's wool." Though Bubenleben accepted Geyer's help, he did not believe any member of the nobility should rule over the Volk, because the nobility could never truly understand the peasants' view. "Brothers, we should not put any nobleman over us. Like holds to like. . . . a knight can never turn into an evangelical peasant." Nobles and peasants who were devout nationalists denounced Geyer as a traitor to Germans because he fought against Charles V in his war against Francis I. "Florian Geyer is an outlaw, a foe of the Emperor and the whole German nation. [He] Hath served the French at Pavia." When Francis I of France laid siege to Pavia in 1525, German mercenaries served in both the French and Imperial armies. From the outset, Geyer is doomed to failure because of disunity among his followers and the accusations of treason from those knights whom Geyer trusted for assistance.

What Hauptmann clearly showed was a fault within the character of the German people, the tendency to destroy that which is in the best interest of the community in favor of personal, individual goals. The rebels chose Geyer to lead them, but they still possessed their individual desires for power and land. In Act III, Geyer chastises the peasants

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20 Ibid., 53.
21 Ibid., 80.
22 Ibid., 38.
and many lesser lords and knights who joined the war allied to the peasant cause.

Do you know what you have done? The best of quarrels, the noblest cause, the holiest cause—a cause that God had put once into your hands and perhaps never again—in your hands it lay like a jewel in a pigsty. . . . Each one of you was thinking, like the fool in the comedy: "By rights I should be king." . . . Sweepings, that is what ye are. Dung from the highway, miserable rubbish that God might better have left lying behind the stove, not worth the rope the hangman uses to string you up. 

In the final act, a peasant who served as a mercenary at Pavia shoots Geyer with a bolt from a crossbow, killing the rebel leader. When the knights who were poised to capture Geyer chastise the murderer, he answered them, "Hath not the Steward set a hundred florins on his head?" The irony and tragedy for the German people and their vision of a united Germany is complete. The ones Geyer had tried to help murdered their champion. In the end, self-interest triumphed over national unity.

Hauptmann captured in "Florian Geyer" the political events and machinations he witnessed in nineteenth century Germany. The divisions within the political arena of Germany in the 1890s was exactly the same as the religious dissent that split Germany asunder during the Peasant's Revolt in 1525, but the struggle for control of the destiny

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21Ibid., 169-170.

22Ibid., 261.
of Germany's workers threatened the stability of the entire German nation. To Hauptmann, there was no Florian Geyer to lead a united Germany in the nineteenth century. Too many individuals lined their own pockets with wealth and courted political enemies to ensure power instead of looking to the best interests of the German nation. Even the workers who strove for better pay and working conditions were selfish and looked no further than their own well-being. Too many members of the Volk wanted personal, economic, materialistic gain and were unwilling to sacrifice for the advancement of the German nation.

Though Hauptmann considered "Florian Geyer" to be his best play, critics and the public denounced it. Otto Brahm, Hauptmann's director and founder of the Freie Bühne, wrote to Georg Hirschfeld, one of Hauptmann's most faithful followers and imitators (Hirschfeld wrote Die Mutter in 1896 and Agnes Jordan in 1898), "Hauptmann is enthusiastic regarding "Geyer;" the stage is set. . . . Meanwhile I do not like the language, it is very antiquated and monotone, and has aroused great quarrels, and I am at my wit's end."²⁵ Maximillian Harden, theater critic for Die Zukunft, wrote, "It was a miserable evening, the most miserable I ever experienced in the theater. Not only because the idea was

miserable, but (the play) was without feeling, without a trace, or only a superficial sense of art."\textsuperscript{26} Eberhard Freiherr von Bodenhausen wrote to his father,

The day before yesterday we attended the very interesting premier of "Florian Geyer." From all over Germany came critics. We were all there to celebrate a triumph, to rejoice in Hauptmann's success and show the world that we had the greatest living dramatist. . . . The failure of the work was complete. A dramatic genius should not be exposed to universal disapproval and the work was ever so terrible, . . . a defeat for German literature from which we hopefully will soon recover.\textsuperscript{27}

Emil Strauß wrote a letter to Hauptmann in which he stated, "Your work is a torrent (Strom) of successfully discovered and most sensitive portrayals and tracks of exquisite substance; but your play drowns in the torrent."\textsuperscript{28}

The public had totally missed Hauptmann's message, and the public's reception of "Florian Geyer" nearly shattered him; but his resolve to admonish Germans as to their duty and allegiance to Germany outweighed the rejection.

Following the public failure of "Florian Geyer," Hauptmann stated, "German national idealism is like a

\textsuperscript{26}Maximillian Harden, "Critique of Florian Geyer," reprinted in \textit{Gedächtnisausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag}, 102.

\textsuperscript{27}Eberhard Freiherr von Bodenhausen to his Father, 6 January 1896, in \textit{Gedächtnisausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag}, 102-103.

\textsuperscript{28}Emil Strauß to Gerhart Hauptmann, 12 February 1896, in \textit{Gedächtnisausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag}, 103.
cracked bell. I struck it with my hammer but it did not sound."\textsuperscript{29} The rejection, however, did not hinder Hauptmann.

To "redeem the Geyer disgrace" Hauptmann proposed the idea of a fairytale and wrote "Die versunke Glocke."\textsuperscript{30} Though the play appears as a fairytale, complete with elves, wood nymphs, and other characters, it is also a social drama. Hauptmann wrote Marie and said, "The fairytale, the fairytale! It will give you great, genuine joy."\textsuperscript{31}

In "Die versunkene Glocke," Heinrich, the hero, casts a bell for a mountain-top chapel. He wishes the bell's tone to be clear and resound so that all in the mountains and the valley can enjoy its tone. While Heinrich is delivering the bell, dwarves cause Heinrich's cart to overturn, and the bell tumbles down the mountainside into a lake. Heinrich is injured in the accident, and the water sprite Rautendelein nurses him to health. Heinrich drinks a magic potion so he may stay in Rautendelein's realm and forge a bell that competes with the efforts of the gods. Heinrich's conscience troubles him, and he returns to the valley to his wife and two sons, only to find his wife has died, and the townsfolk turn him away. All Heinrich had wanted to do was

\textsuperscript{29}Gerhart Hauptmann, quoted in Carl Behl and Felix Voigt, \textit{Chronik von Gerhart Hauptmanns Leben und Schaffen} (Munich: Bergstadtverlag, 1957), 42.


\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.
to create beauty for the townsfolk; they shun him. Heinrich returns to the mountain but dies as he drinks another draught of the potion so he can rejoin Rautendelein.

Hauptmann critics believe "Die versunkene Glocke" is an autobiographic portrayal of Hauptmann's life. Heinrich (Hauptmann) is torn between two women, the down-to-earth Magda (Marie) and the sprite Rautendelein (Margarete). The bell ("Florian Geyer") is tossed aside by the elves (the German people) who do not appreciate its intent, the power it possesses, nor the effort taken to create it. Heinrich's return to the valley is Hauptmann's journey to America to reunite with Marie, but their love is dead as is Magda in the play. Because of his relationship with the sprite, the townspeople reject Heinrich, and he ultimately dies when he tries to return to the sprite.\(^32\)

Hauptmann, unlike Heinrich, did not die, and "Die versunkene Glocke" was the new bell he fashioned to rival the plays he wrote before "Florian Geyer." Drama critic Fritz Mauthner wrote, "Hauptmann perceives himself to be Heinrich, whose last work, 'Florian Geyer,' has fallen into the lake. Because he is a complete author, he formed his pain and vision into a drama."\(^33\)

\(^{32}\)Warren Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 73-78.

Even though Hauptmann intended "Die versunkene Glocke" to chastise the German people, and reveal his feelings of social exclusion because of his relationship with Margarete, the public loved the play and flocked to see it. Otto Brahm, who had argued with Hauptmann over the language and stage directions for "Florian Geyer," wrote to Georg Hirschfeld, "Hauptmann, on Sunday, read to me 'Glocke' . . . and I must say: fantastic, grand." Germans and foreigners alike welcomed the new play and publishers translated "Glocke" into many different languages. Americans received it with great enthusiasm. Charles Meltzer's translation "attracted considerable attention" in major U.S. cities such as Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, to name a few. Even with all the national and international adoration for "Die versunkene Glocke," Hauptmann still believed the Germans lacked the national spirit he embodied in the character of Rautendelein. Towards the end of the play, the spirit bluntly informs Heinrich, "You were a straight sprout,/ strong, but not strong enough. You were called,/ but a Chosen One you were not." Hauptmann felt what he wrote; he had been called to be Germany’s

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34 Otto Brahm to Georg Hirschfeld, 16 September 1896, in Gedächtnisausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag, 109.

35 Warren Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 74.

playwright, but he was not chosen to lead the Volk to national unity.

According to Eberhard Hilscher, Hauptmann did not bask in the glory of his triumph with "Glocke", but began to sketch a medieval German legend, Der arme Heinrich, for the stage. Hauptmann still felt a strong sense of nationalism similar to that which he had held earlier when he began writing "Germanen und Romer" while at Breslau and when he joined the pan-Germanic blood brotherhood. "Florian Geyer's" failure did not dampen Hauptmann's feelings. "The sorrow grew if I thought that Germany's culture could not waken an echo of the chivalry of Florian Geyer's age and Hutten's spirit, if I thought faith and love of the fatherland is dead." Hauptmann felt Germans unprepared for the "flood of feelings" "Florian Geyer" inspired.

Something happened, however, and Hauptmann abruptly changed his focus and worked from November 1897 until Fall 1898 on "a realistic drama, 'Fuhrmann Henschel' . . . and put aside Armen [sic] Heinrich.' There is no evidence on exactly what caused Hauptmann to change his focus, but his diary

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Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary entry, 23 July 1897, Nachlaß Nr. 1, 108.

Ibid., 106.

Eberhard Hilscher, Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk, Mit bisher unpublizierten Materialien aus dem Manuskriptnachlaß des Dichters (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1988), 228.
entries give a subtle hint about a conflict between his own nationalistic ideas and those other nationalists presented, specifically Julius Langbehn.

Julius Langbehn, born in 1851, studied the natural sciences and art, and archaeology at the Universities of Kiel and Munich respectively. As Hauptmann had during his own university days, Langbehn led a bohemian, carefree lifestyle. In 1880-1881, Langbehn decided to reject all employment and build a new German culture. "I shall now cease to study the past, instead I shall construct the future." Later, when he informed a friend that he desired financial support, Langbehn wrote, "[My duties] essentially consist of planning, not executing, a reform of the entire cultural life in Germany." To this end, Langbehn spent ten years writing his master work, Rembrandt als Erzieher (Rembrandt as Educator, 1890) and published the work anonymously under the pen-name, "A German." Langbehn's publicity circular which preceded publication, called the book a "bugle call to the young and aspiring German generation of today which represents the future." In the

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41 Ibid., 142.

42 Ibid., 145.
thirty-seventh edition, published in 1891, Langbehn included a chapter discussing and promoting anti-Semitism.

According to Langbehn, Rembrandt was the antithesis of the modern culture which had destroyed the German identity. Science, technology, and commerce must vanish, and a primitive life filled with German individuality should take their place.

It has gradually become an open secret that the contemporary spiritual life of the German people is in a state of slow decay; according to some, even of rapid decay. Science everywhere is dissipated into specialization; in the field of thought and literature, the epoch-making individuals are missing. . . Moreover, the entire culture of the present is . . . turned backward; it is less concerned with the creation of new values than with the cataloguing of old ones. The more scientific it [culture] becomes, the less creative it will be. 43

Langbehn believed Germans needed to re-discover their "Volksthumlichkeit," their sense of a unique, national character.

In a manner similar to Hauptmann, Langbehn criticized urban culture as bourgeois, non-völkisch, a creation of modernity. Berlin exemplified all that was wrong with German culture. The bourgeoisie infected all aspects of German life with a struggle for wealth and its corresponding

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materialism. This commerce and materialism were "corroding
the ancient spirit of the Prussian garrison town."

To counter the rise of materialism and the steady
decline in German culture, Langbehn proposed that art, what
he considered the highest form of truth, replace science.
Whereas Bismarck had created the external unification,
Germans needed a great artist-hero to provide a deeper,
internal unity. Franz Schnabel, who wrote a history of the
nineteenth century that showed the connection between
industrial development and Kultur, believed, "The
fragmentary nature of modern civilization was regarded as
not beautiful; art was looked upon as a means of cohesion,
and to it was assigned the highest purpose." Langbehn,
Hauptmann, and others looked for an art-hero to lead Germany
and heal the divisiveness within the German cultural
community.

Though Hauptmann, too, desired that Germans return to
their past and recapture their volkisch ideology, Langbehn
rejected the nouveau arte and the German naturalists as
coldly scientific. To Langbehn, art should glorify and
enoble the Volk, not expose social and class inequities.
Zola and Hauptmann were archenemies of the people because of

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\(^{5}\)Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten
Jahrhundert*, 2d ed., 4 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder
Verlag, 1937-1949), 1:262.
their realism and "brutality of feeling." Naturalism acted as anti-conservative art that was pushing German art nearer to the modern, republican age, away from Prussian conservatism, which Langbehn associated with a natural, völkisch Germany. Hauptmann prided himself on his realism and believed that the dialect used in Florian Geyer and earlier plays was a true expression of the Volk.

Langbehn never gave a distinct reason for the decline of the pure, Germanic culture. He did, however, point to the Jew as one reason for Germany's decline. Whereas modernity ultimately caused the decay in Germany's culture, the Jew was largely responsible for the destruction of traditional faith and traditional society. Langbehn denounced Jews who abjured their traditional faith to become modern Germans, because he saw the Jew as diluting and contaminating German Kultur. "They are poison to us and must be treated as such. . . . They are prone to democracy; they sympathize with decadence." Langbehn believed Germans to be Aryans and that "only German blood should rule over Germans; that is the first and fundamental right of our people."

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"Langbehn, Rembrandt, 284.

"Ibid., 317."
Hauptmann may have agreed with Langbehn's view of modernity and the city, and their impact on the Volk, but he definitely disagreed with much of what Langbehn wrote and viewed him in a condescending manner. "Langbehn has a reserve of ideas to unite Germany, which he must release. It must, however, be with the best intentions." At the same time, Hauptmann found Rembrandt als Erzieher as a "dishonest stew, not a living piece of meat." To Langbehn, salvation of the Volk and nation would come through art, but art would only occur after the salvation of the nation. Hauptmann saw a need for a revival of the Volk, but that revival needed to come from the Volk itself, not some mystical outside force, or art-hero. "Florian Geyer had been his attempt to revive the nationalistic, primitive ideology of the Volk. Through dialect, Hauptmann hoped to spur the Volk to feel pride in their past. He viewed Langbehn as a "pompous ass" and Rembrandt as "Purchased broth! Indeed, the people gobble-up this stuff; good against the decay of the German culture, German spirit, art, etc. A German genius is not worth much if he must take refuge in such solemn slop and empty words."

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50 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 20 May 1897, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 1, 106.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
The public's acceptance of Langbehn's nationalistic writings were an indication of a cultural spirit (Deutschtum) that spread throughout Germany at the turn of the century. In 1899, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, published his Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Foundations of the Nineteenth Century). An English Germanophile who renounced his English heritage, moved to Germany, and married Richard Wagner's daughter, Chamberlain believed in the Aryan superiority of the German people, as did Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau whose Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines (Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races, 1854) strengthened the cause of racial nationalism in Germany. Gobineau had stated, "I can say positively that a people will never die, if it remains eternally composed of the same national elements." Chamberlain asserted the superiority of Teutons over all the other races of the world. "The awakening of the Teutonic peoples to the consciousness of their all-important vocation as the founders of a completely new civilization and culture" was the major turning-point in the history of Europe.

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Chamberlain attacked Rudolf Virchow, a cellular biologist and founder of Germany’s Liberal Party, and Virchow’s concept of racial equality and supplanted it with his own intuitive concept of Aryan purity in the Teutonic people. He praised the Teutonic heritage as the foundation of civilization. The struggle throughout history was one of Teuton against the non-Teuton, Germanic ideology against non-Germanic. Only the Teuton is capable of creating a culture that encompasses all aspects of life.

A Teuton writes a Critique of Pure Reason, but at the same time a Teuton invents the railway; the century of Bessemer and of Edison is at the same time the century of Beethoven and of Richard Wagner. Whoever does not feel the unity of the impulse here, . . . understands nothing at all of the nature of the Teuton, and cannot in consequence rightly judge the part he plays in the history of the world. . . .

Chamberlain’s Grundlagen sold more than one million copies and became the basis of the ultra-nationalist ideology that, because of its "pseudosophical trimmings," Hauptmann despised. Hauptmann’s rejection of the ultra-nationalist and racist movements did not hinder his own nationalism. In fact, by 1907, Hauptmann openly met and conversed with Chamberlain, even though he rejected some of Chamberlain’s racial theories.

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55Ibid., 1:551-552.

While Hauptmann had been working on his earlier works, "Das Friedensfest," Der Apostle, and "Einsame Menschen," Germany experienced the ultra-nationalist fever spurred on by controversies over a treaty with Great Britain concerning Zanzibar and the "Polish Question." These issues led to the formation of the Pan-Germanic League dedicated to the bringing together of nationally-minded citizens, without consideration of party, in the thought that the accomplished unification of the German race is only the foundation of a larger national development; that is, the development of the German people into a cultural and political world power.\(^57\)

The founders of the League saw their first aim "to work for a united, fundamental patriotic view of life for all citizens, in the sense of creating a National Morale."\(^58\)

On 1 July 1890, Germany signed a treaty with Great Britain, in which Germany agreed to recognize a British protectorate over the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba off the east coast of Africa, and in return Britain ceded the island of Heligoland off the coast of Denmark to Germany. Bismarck and his many aristocratic followers, commonly known as the "Bismarck Fronde," openly opposed the treaty and joined the Pan-Germanic League. Bismarck wrote:


\(^{58}\)Ibid., 34.
The renunciation of ... the commercial city of Zanzibar was a lasting sacrifice for which Heligoland offered no equivalent. Free trade with that single great market on the East African coast was the bridge that joined our commerce with the mainland, which today we can neither dispense with nor replace.\(^59\)

The deposed chancellor continued his attack on the treaty and the kaiser's government when he later wrote, "In the event of war, it would be better for us that Heligoland should be in the hands of a neutral Power. It is difficult and expensive to fortify."\(^60\) Bismarck did not attack the treaty with political rhetoric but, instead, gave valid strategic reasons for his opposition to it.

As to the value of Heligoland; to my mind it is a weakness and a drain rather than a support for Germany in any future war with France... the French navy made no difference to us simply because there was no harbor in the North Sea or the Baltic Sea where the French navy could coal. As long as Heligoland was in the hands of a neutral power, England, it was closed to the French as a coaling station. But in the future, the French fleet needs only to silence the few forts on Heligoland which nothing can fortify against the power of modern artillery and it has a coaling station in the North Sea for further ravages on our coast.\(^61\)

On 24 June 1890 the Kölnische Zeitung and the Frankfurter


Zeitung printed an appeal to the German people to unite against the treaty.

The German people must arise as one and declare that this treaty is unacceptable! . . . The Reichstag will, we hope, go to the government with an overpowering majority and say, "The treaty with England harms our interests and wounds our honor; this time it dares not become a reality! We are ready at the call of our Kaiser to step into the ranks and allow ourselves dumbly and obediently to be led against the enemy’s shots, but we may also demand in exchange that the reward come to us which is worth the sacrifice, and this reward is: that we shall be a conquering people which takes its portion of the world itself, and does not seek to receive it by the grace and benevolence of another people."

Deutschland wach auf!  

The two public announcements caused Dr. Ernst Hasse to join the Pan-German League and later take a permanent position as its leader. Dr. Hasse was a staunch conservative who believed in maintenance of the foundations of the German Empire, a strong army and navy, universal military service, and limits on immigration. He felt Germany possessed enough native man-power and did not need immigration of foreigners, especially Slavs and Jews, who demanded naturalization and rights equal to native-born Germans, a claim that attacked the roots of German character. Immigration also brought with it an inculcation of international political views which would be a menace to the German state.

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It is this internationalism which, opposed as it is to religion and monarchy, is peculiar to the Social Democracy; their stirring up of the masses without offering them a better constructive program; their exclusive demand for rights without recognition of corresponding duties; in a word, their unpatriotic and immoral politics . . . On the other hand, I recognize the justice of the efforts of the working classes to better their commercial and social condition. . . .

With the Pan-German League promoting a vigorous national sentiment, Germany's politics were stretched to the breaking point. Anglophobia and partisanship for Bismarck led to super-patriotism. This nationalist sentiment, when combined with the teachings of the ultra-nationalist Julius Langbehn, tore at German unity.

Perhaps Hauptmann's movement away from nationalistic idealism was a result of the growth of the pan-Germanic movement and the strain Langbehn and Hasse placed upon Germany's unity. Perhaps his public failure with "Florian Geyer" mixed with the trials of his personal life, and the two proved to be too much of a challenge to his nationalistic fervor. Whatever caused Hauptmann to postpone "Der arme Heinrich" also led him to a more prosperous period in his professional life.

Hauptmann and Margarete left Berlin following the disaster with "Florian Geyer," traveled to Italy, and then spent the Christmas season with Gerhart's brother Carl and

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63 Dr. Ernst Hasse, quoted in Wertheimer, The Pan-German League, 1890-1914, 46.
his wife. The visit with Carl turned out to be tumultuous and became the basis for a later, autobiographical narrative, "Buch der Leidenschaft" ("Book of Passion," 1930). Following the visit with Carl, Gerhart and Margarete returned to Berlin and established a residence in the Grünewald, a suburb. Here, Hauptmann finished "Furhmann Henschel," a play about a simple man torn between his promise to his dead wife and his personal needs as a man.

Eberhard Hilscher states "Henschel" is Hauptmann's return to the style of his earlier plays. Thomas Mann called "Henschel" an "Attic tragedy in contemporary, realistic form." Hauptmann based the drama very loosely upon his youth and the Krause family who lived downstairs in the Prussian Crown Hotel his father had owned; he even wrote the play in the heavy Silesian dialect. Otto Brahm, Hauptmann's exclusive director, had to persuade the author to write a version Germans outside Silesia could more easily understand. The revised version was the first in a series of dramas that once again showed Hauptmann at the pinnacle of his naturalistic talent.

In 1899 Hauptmann received numerous awards for his talent in the theater. Rudolf Steiner, drama critic, wrote that Hauptmann's "Henschel" was again a "work of art," which

64Thomas Mann, quoted in Eberhard Hilscher, Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk, 244.
"shines . . . because he is a realistic author." For the second time, the Grillparzer Award committee selected Hauptmann to receive its award as outstanding playwright for "Fuhrmann Henschel." Similar to the adventures with "Hannele," the committee for the Schiller Prize also voted to grant Hauptmann his second prize from them, but the kaiser, still unconvinced as to the validity of naturalistic-realistic drama, again prevented the committee from awarding the Schiller Prize to Hauptmann.

Undaunted by this second rejection, Hauptmann continued to write naturalistic, but warmly accepted plays, which were financially successful. He wrote his next play, "Schluk und Jau" (1890), a comedy, which Hilscher called a "living dream. . . . similar to A Thousand and One Nights, and the Danish comedy Jeppe von Berge by Ludvig Holberg, and Emerson's essay Self Reliance." Karl Ruppel, drama critic for the Berliner Schauspiel, wrote that the audience was easily "carried away" in the magic of the play.

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66Hilscher, Gerhart Hauptmann, 231.

himself called "Schluck und Jau" the "equivalent of 'Hannele.'"

Hauptmann soon followed the success of "Schluck und Jau" with perhaps his greatest work, "Michael Kramer" (1900). Rainer Maria Rilke, Germany's great twentieth-century poet, wrote, "In my opinion 'Michael Kramer' is the greatest piece that Hauptmann has thus far achieved; a masterpiece. . . that one will perhaps only understand and cherish decades from now." Even though Hauptmann added a touch of classicism by having a closing soliloquy, an artistic convention against naturalistic principles, audiences loved "Michael Kramer" and it became one of Hauptmann's most financially successful plays.

In the period following Florian Geyer, Hauptmann became Germany's leading playwright and author. After an extended illness in 1900, he wrote profusely, producing plays, novels, and short stories at an amazing rate. In 1901, he and Margarete, with their one year-old son Benvenuto, moved into a lavish home in Agentendorf, in the Riesengebirge of Silesia. Here Hauptmann wrote "Der rote Hahn," in which he ridiculed the modern Prussian state and its legal system. The following year Hauptmann completed his postponed "Der

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68Gerhart Hauptmann to Otto Brahm, 21 October 1907, reprinted in Gedächtnisausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag, 122.

69Ranier Maria Rilke, quoted in Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 81.
arme Heinrich, eine deutsche Sage" ("Henry of Aue: A German Legend," 1902), where the hero experiences a miraculous cure as he embraces God's mercy.

Hauptmann's successes mounted with "Rose Bernd" in 1903, the same year he wrote two fragmentary works, "Der Venezianer" ("The Venetian," 1903) and "Das Hirtenlied" ("Pastoral," 1904). According to Maurer, in 1903, Hauptmann served on a jury in a trial of a young farm girl accused of infanticide, and by the end of the second day of the trial he had already begun work on "Rose Bernd," which is easily one of Hauptmann's most realistic plays. Not only does it reflect the influence of the trial, but the love affairs of the male protagonist, Flamm, are partially autobiographical. Hauptmann, like Flamm, carried on a love affair with a much younger woman while his sick wife stayed at home. The story also held bits and pieces of Hauptmann's youth, especially the period he spent as an agricultural apprentice to his Pietist uncle and aunt. While Hauptmann worked on the play, Marie initiated divorce proceedings, and, when the divorce became final in 1904, he married Margarete.70

With Hauptmann's success on the stage came public recognition the kaiser could not quell. In 1905, Hauptmann received his third Grillparzer Prize and an honorary doctorate from Oxford University. While in London to

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70Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann, 92-94.
receive his degree, Hauptmann met George Bernard Shaw and became enthralled, once again, with Greek antiquity, when he visited the British Museum and saw the frieze from the Parthenon. This experience led directly to a long-awaited journey to Greece in 1907, where the distinguished author visited Athens, Sparta, Mt. Olympus, and Delphi. Hauptmann wrote of his journey in "Griechischer Frühling" ("Greek Spring," 1908), in which he detailed not only what he saw but the feelings and hopes for Germany he experienced at the time.

In the following year, 1909, Hauptmann received a second, honorary doctorate degree, which the University of Leipzig proffered. As his plays and books grew in public popularity, Hauptmann began a lecture tour that included the cities of Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, Vienna, and Zurich. But, Hauptmann did not rest on these many laurels, as he wrote "Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint" ("The Fool in Christ, Emanuel Quint," 1910) perhaps his best novel, in which he discusses many of his views of religion and the influence organized religion has upon people.

In 1911, Hauptmann wrote one of his most poignant, and timely, social plays, "Die Ratten" ("The Rats"), which many critics considered to be Hauptmann’s most successful tragicomedy. Shortly after he had written "Die Ratten,"

\[^{7}	ext{Hilscher, Gerhart Hauptmann, 257.}\]
Hauptmann commented that, "the idea of the drama consisted of the contrast between two worlds." The two worlds are the Berlin that the government and the outside world sees and the Berlin that exists behind the darkness of the alleys. A tenement house, a converted cavalry barracks, depicts the hidden social structure of Berlin and Germany, with the various floors representing the differing strata and the corresponding ideologies associated with each. Hauptmann wrote, "Such a naturalistic treatment developed from a variety of personalities whom the necessity of life brought together."

In this social drama, Hauptmann shows the nationalistic feelings of the various classes. The aging Hassenreuter, a stage director who represents the middle-class strata, firmly believes in the glories of the German past, the Romantic era of Goethe and Schiller, and is an example of the ultra-nationalism of Langbehn, Chamberlain, and the Pan-German League. In Act I, Hassenreuter chides Johann, a foreman mason, a representative of the working classes, when Johann admits he and his fellow masons are not admirers of Bismarck. "Then you have no German hearts in your bodies! Otto is what I called my eldest son who is in the imperial navy! And believe me [pointing to the infant] this coming

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73 Ibid.
generation will well know what it owes to that mighty hero, the great forger of German unity." 74

In Act III, Hassenreuter argues with a student of theology, Erich Spitta, who wants to become an actor but rejects the Romantic school and its style, and is more attuned to the nouveau arte of the new century. Spitta is politically a Social Democrat at heart and desires to see a change for the better for the common man. Hassenreuter clamors,

You're a symptom. — You are a rat, so to speak. One of those rats who are beginning, in the field of politics, to undermine our glorious and recently united German Empire! They are trying to cheat us of the reward of our labours! And in the garden of German art these rats are gnawing at the roots of the tree of idealism. They are determined to drag its crown into the mire! 75

Hauptmann openly relates the struggle between the two ideologies that were tearing at Germany at the turn of the century. There were those who sided with Bismarck and the Conservative Party and those who sided with the alignment of the Center Party and the Social Democrats.

In the final act, Act V, Johann makes a statement that encompasses the trials besetting the German Reich. In a


75Ibid., 415-416.
rare outburst of emotion, the mason describes the weakened conditions of the German sociopolitical condition. "Listen to the crackin'! Listen how the plasterin' comes rumblin' down behind the wall-paper! Everything's rotten here, everything's worm eaten! Everything's undermined by varmints an' by rats an' by mice. Everything totters! Any minute the whole business might crash down into the cellar." 76 If we take Hauptmann's tenement house as a representation of the social order, then Hauptmann believes something must be done to salvage the structure of German society. Hauptmann's return to naturalism and social criticism once again released his deepest nationalist feelings. He believed that without a strong Kultur, Germany was like the tenement house, rotten within, and ready to crumble.

In 1912 Gerhart Hauptmann won the Nobel Prize for Literature, "primarily in recognition of his fruitful, varied, and outstanding production in the realm of dramatic art" according to the citation. 77 Hans Hildebrand, Acting Secretary of the Swedish Academy, stated that Hauptmann

### Footnotes

76Ibid., 506.

"deals with conditions of the low-class life." But, since Europe seemed to be careening towards war in 1912, Hauptmann let the audience know his view on nationalism and war.

And now let me drink to the eventual realization of the ideal that underlies this foundation, I mean the ideal of peace, which comprehends the final ideals of art and science. For art and science that serve war are neither pure nor ultimate; they are so only when created by, and in turn creating peace.\footnote{Gerhart Hauptmann, "Acceptance Speech," in Nobel Lectures, 122.}

Hauptmann also spoke out against the use of "brute violence" for a nation to achieve its national aims.\footnote{Ibid.} Though the speech was quite short and addressed the necessity for the Swedish Academy’s promotion of the arts and sciences, Hauptmann made clear his view of the tense international situation in Europe.

As the European nations rivaled each other for imperial colonies, and nationalistic ideals grew, nations used the threat of force more and more to achieve their political and imperialistic aims. During the last decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, European nations, through alliances, postured themselves for war. When the German newspapers paid more attention to the theft of the Mona Lisa than the threat of war due to the Morocco

\footnote{Hans Hildebrand, "Presentation Speech," in Nobel Lectures, 118.}

\footnote{Ibid.}
Crisis in 1911, Hauptmann wrote in his diary, "The genuine importance of the theft of the Mona Lisa and the relative unimportance of the Moroccan Affair, in spite of its historical significance makes me hesitate. Politics is like a tempting mistress that makes one slightly blind and speechless."\(^{81}\) Concerning the diplomatic crises just before the First World War, Hauptmann, "There are two possibilities. One can come to blows in the fire of strife, or rekindle the fire of knowledge and peace."\(^{82}\) Hauptmann saw Europe on the brink of war.

Much of Germany's literature reflected the diplomatic sabre-rattling, and it was about this sabre-rattling that Hauptmann expressed his concern in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize. Stefan George, the author who wanted the Germans to turn away from modernity, had condemned industrialized civilization, as Hauptmann had, and founded a "society" based upon beauty and heroic ideals. George believed that Germany would lead the world to salvation from the ills modern civilization had created, and welcomed the heroic posturing of the kaiser and Germany against the foreign powers who represented modernity.\(^{83}\)

\(^{81}\)Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 24 August 1911, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 11b, 421.

\(^{82}\)Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 9 September 1912, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 11b., 460.

\(^{83}\)Stefan George, Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten, ed. Franz Schonauer (Hamburg: n.p., 1960), 113-139.
Even though the cultural spirit of Germany at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries was one of radical nationalism, leaders in Germany could no longer overlook Hauptmann's literary achievements, especially after he received the Nobel Prize in 1912. In April of 1912, the mayor of Breslau, proud to claim Hauptmann as a former student of the university there, commissioned the Nobel laureate to write a play commemorating the centenary of Germany's overthrowing Napoleon's regime in 1813. Hauptmann noted the change towards him after he received the Nobel Prize. "My relationship with modern Germany has changed, naturally, along the lines of reconciliation. How strange, how unexpected! What should I reckon of all this?" Hauptmann realized he had a duty to please the masses and not a minority, to give the masses what they desired. In a letter to Walther Rathenau, the industrial leader and close personal friend, Hauptmann hoped to "revive the Prussian fanaticism of my early years." Hauptmann, however, could not recapture the "Prussian fanaticism" of his youth.

Hauptmann titled his newly commissioned play "Festspiel in deutschen Reimen," and set the stage as a giant puppet

84Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 1913, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 11b, 484.

85Gerhart Hauptmann to Walther Rathenau, July, 1912, GHP, Briefnachlaß I.
show, with actors playing the various roles as marionettes, while a mutilated spectre paces about the stage as a representation of war's aftermath. The cast of characters reads like an historical Who's Who of German nationalist sentiment, and Hauptmann reiterates the various philosophies through the marionettes. "The Director," a representation of fate, leads the parade of nationalists and their ideas. "Rarely I appear before the curtain/ Of that world-stage which I have long directed." As the various puppets are introduced, each espouses his ideal of German nationalism.

Hauptmann shows how, historically, various princes, counselors, the Catholic Church, and especially foreign nations had tried to keep Germany from being a united nation. The Eagle, a representation of unified Germany, states, "The German nation they'll try to kill;/ But try as they will, 'twill oppose them still." The character of Gymnast Jahn (Vater Jahn) claims to be "strictly Teutonic," and proclaims the development of a child: "All Germany's nursing it, dry and wet./ The Child is called: the German idea." He continues to say, "When the child is a man, the

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87 Ibid., 42.
88 Ibid., 51-52.
idea an act,/ Then the new German national state is a fact." Hauptmann clearly delineates Vater Jahn's idea of the developing German state and how the idea lies within the souls of all Germans.

The puppet of Baron von Stein suggests how foreign influences have torn apart the idea of a unified Germany. Stein, Prussia's chief minister under Frederick William III, when Napoleon controlled Europe, viewed Germany in different ways. He saw Germany as a land where internal conflicts "carve us and rend us at will in our meekness,/ Letting outsiders more quickly devour us,/ Grinding us up, in our national meekness." He also saw Germany as a broken statue, "Each stone-cutter (foreign power) takes home a piece as his own./ If Germany is to withstand her foes,/ Indivisible lines must their weapons oppose." Stein saw unity as the only true weapon to oppose Napoleon's domination of German lands.

Gerhard Johann Scharnhorst, during the Napoleonic domination, wanted a German revolt to revive Germany's national spirit. His puppet character, militaristic and brave, states,

Though you may scoff and laugh and jeer, The German idea's no mockery here.

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89Ibid., 53.
90Ibid.
91Ibid.
Here in our kitchen alchemistic
We're making a spirit Germanistic.
Our foundations have managed, as first creation,
The elementary patriot of the German nation.
With citizens, farmers, and workmen around him,
Instead of trying to blight them and slight them,
We take their back bones and try to right them;
Instead of trying to knave and enslave them,
We teach them to walk upright, to save them.
We're going to succeed, is my confident feeling,
In making a German standpoint appealing,
Then heroes will spring up like trees of the forest,
Not women -- excuse me! That point is the sorest.
We'll have warriors then like the sands of the sea,
A reserve of invincible infantry....
Of course we still seek the man of the hour,
To show the way to Germany's power,
To dominate house and palace and steeple,
And lead into freedom the German people.\(^92\)

Hauptmann again shows his view of what the German nation should be, a unified body of all people, without regard to class distinction.

The puppet who represents Johann Gottlieb Fichte stresses the need to "shake off this web of alien texture,/
Return to our German blood and thought./ What should be Germany's basic trait?/ A German soul's independent state."\(^93\) While Fichte refers to his *Addresses to the German Nation*, General Blücher cries for the sabre-rattling nationalism of the early twentieth century. "I for example, as is well known/ Prefer to assume a Teutonic tone./ So I Gebhart Lebrecht Blücher,/ Prefer to your bookworm your

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\(^92\)Ibid., 56-57.

\(^93\)Ibid., 68.
sabering butcher." At this point, Hauptmann has introduced the many facets of Germany's nationalistic spirit within the theme of a puppet show.

When Hauptmann introduces a mother image who is transformed into Athene Germania, he includes much of his own nationalistic ideas. She states, "Forget all envy and civil strife:/ Be as one, show the world the worth of your life." Hauptmann, through Athene Germania, also issues three commands for the German people. "From alien rule make Germany free!/ See that your land united be!/ And yourselves be free! Yourselves be free!"

Perhaps Hauptmann went one step too far in the last lines of the celebration when the Director comments to Blücher, just prior to returning the puppet to its box, "To your country I give it, as destiny's forward --/ Not your joy of battle, but, your [command] forward!"

With the threat of war so close at hand and military leaders bending the ear of both kaiser and the public, "Festspiel" received a more heated response than "Vor Sonnenaufgang." The crown prince, acting as the "Protector" of the centennial celebration, abruptly closed "Festspiel"

\[94\] Ibid., 73.  
\[95\] Ibid., 88.  
\[96\] Ibid., 90.  
\[97\] Ibid., 98.
on 17 June 1913, after eleven performances. The prince found three major problems with the performance. He thought Hauptmann had not given enough attention to the role of the Prussians in the fight for Germany's liberation. He also thought Hauptmann showed too much admiration for Napoleon. Finally, the prince felt the play was too pacifistic and called for world peace when foreign powers were closing around Germany and keeping the nation from its rightful place as a leading power in Europe and the world.\textsuperscript{98} The Prince accused Hauptmann of producing a celebration that favored the views of the Social Democrats and the masses and not the spirit of the age.

Hauptmann had not meant any disrespect for the past or for those who idealized and fought for Germany's freedom. He therefore tried to explain that there was a misunderstanding, that "The entire matter, the whole texture of the attacks which carry with it the illegitimacy of party politics has its source in Berlin."\textsuperscript{99} The monarchist press and critics, however, agreed with the Crown Prince. An article in Deutsche Montags-Zeitung declared that Hauptmann had tried to "destroy the memory of the year 1813."\textsuperscript{100}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{98}Hilscher, \textit{Gerhart Hauptmann}, 298.
\item \textsuperscript{99}Gerhart Hauptmann, "Erklärung," in \textit{Vossische Zeitung}, 18 June 1913, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{100}Deutsche Montags-Zeitung, 23 June 1913, reprinted in \textit{Gedächtnisausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag}, 195.
\end{itemize}
Critics accused Hauptmann of focusing on his personal beliefs, "rather than the understanding of the people, the upbringing of the people. . . . These are important. We had thought the great poet would produce a fiery picture of 1813. None of this was Gerhart Hauptmann able to do."101

Hauptmann was at odds with himself over the controversy his play had caused. "How will I arrange the uproar over 'Festspiel' in my experiences? As a 'mudhole' of life? As an event of inorganic matter; on the other hand I remain the consummate, passive observer."102 In 1912, Hauptmann had been the darling of Germany's literary world. But the conflict between the kaiser's military dreams and Hauptmann's ideal of a spiritual Germany once again came about with the "Festspiel" affair. The relationship between Germany's greatest dramatist and the state was once more hopeless. So, Hauptmann wrote, in apathetic resignation, "I give up!" to the conflict.103

Gerhart Hauptmann experienced more highs and lows in his life between the years 1894 and 1913 than most men experience in their entire lives. The kaiser had banned his plays from the public stage and then succumbed to the

101Ibid.

102Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 30 June 1913, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 11b, 521.

103Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary Entry, 6 October 1913, Nachlaß, Nr. 11b, 532. ("Ich überlasse euch nun das Feld.")
public’s demand for more Hauptmann plays. The dramatist fell out of love with his wife, Marie, and carried on an open, public affair with a much younger Margarete Marschalk. Throughout the entire period, Hauptmann tried to relate his idea of what the German nation should be. He envisioned a Germany where social standing was tertiary to the idea of the state and what an individual offered to the state. He was shocked at the divisions in society and government that party politics caused and sought to address this issue and the ideal state in "Florian Geyer." When the public rejected his idealism, Hauptmann returned to his naturalistic genre and the public again welcomed his work and social criticism. When he tried once more to express his nationalism amid the radical movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the crown again banned his play, "Festspiel in deutschen Reimen." His winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1912 did not abate the criticism heaped upon Hauptmann for his idealism. Just when it seemed that Hauptmann had rung the last chime of his career, he received a reprieve. The First World War would allow Hauptmann an avenue to reenter the hearts of German Volk, and he joined their nationalistic fervor.
When Hauptmann wrote Festspiel in deutschen Reimen in 1913, the German people expected a play depicting Teutonic glory as the Germans ejected Napoleon from the Germanies in the War of Liberation. The Volk desired the sword-rattling nationalism of Julius Langbehn and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, not the philosophic idealism Gerhart Hauptmann proposed, even though the poet stated Germany had been destined for greatness. But Europe was on edge, moving closer to war, and the German Volk, who saw themselves assailed on all sides, desired a more bombastic nationalism. When Hauptmann wrote, "I give up!" he had not surrendered his personal idealism but followed his own advice. He saw his version of nationalism as divisive and joined the Volk. From the threat of war in early 1914 until the uneasy peace of 1918, Gerhart Hauptmann’s public writings and private diaries express his nationalistic feelings that ran the gamut from those of a sightly removed, concerned idealist, to those of a radical nationalist, and finally to those of a man who defended Germany’s honor and dignity following the armistice of 1918.
Tensions mounted over the Balkans in 1913 and the first half of 1914, and the German leaders began to feel war was inevitable. The prime minister, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg noted, "The fight between Slavs and Germans is no longer avoidable. It is bound to come."\(^1\) Kaiser Wilhelm spent the weekend of 12 June 1914 with Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and even though the two men relaxed while hunting, they discussed international politics.\(^2\) Two weeks later, on 28 June, as the kaiser prepared to race his yacht Meteor at the Elbe Regatta, he received word that Serbian terrorists had assassinated Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. The kaiser immediately cancelled the races and hurried back to Berlin. When he read the dispatch from Vienna, the kaiser minuted it: "The Serbs must be disposed of, and that right soon!"\(^3\) The Austro-Hungarian leaders issued an ultimatum to the Serbian government on 23 July demanding a reply within forty-eight hours, despite the


Russian government having warned against such action. On 28 July 1914, despite the Serbians having accepted most of the demands, the Austro-Hungarians declared war on the kingdom of Serbia.

Frightened by reports of the Russians and the French mobilizing troops, on 30 July 1914 the kaiser issued an order of troop mobilization to counter the Russian and French actions. 

News of troop mobilization frightened Gerhart Hauptmann, who recognized the threat to peace in the kaiser's action. "Yesterday was a critical day for all Europe and each European. . . . One felt the foreboding of imminent danger, the collapse of Europe! Every attempt at peace appeared debased with this move. Nothing of value is left." Hauptmann was greatly distressed with the rapid pace of events. "This morning, as I took my walk in the city, I experienced moments of anxiety and stress which were not caused by the walk, but my consideration of the impending murder of so many people."

Hauptmann's fear of war and the destruction it caused was well-founded. In 1866, when Hauptmann was only four years old, a cavalry troop spent the night at his father's
inn in Obersalzbrunn, Silesia. The next morning, "there was a burst of martial music as the cavalry mounted and rode off, (their horses) rearing up and thrashing about." From the tenor of Hauptmann's recollection, the trumpets blaring and the horses rearing excited him as a boy. Hauptmann discovered later that his earliest experience was "shortly before the battle of Königgrätz" where German forces soundly defeated Austrian forces during the Austro-German War. This thrilling experience is the earliest memory Hauptmann recalls in his autobiography.

Sometime after the Battle of Königgrätz of 3 July 1866, German soldiers marched a portion of the 22,000 captured Austrian soldiers into Obersalzbrunn. Hauptmann remembered that, "One wore a white, bloody cloth around his neck. He was Czech and spoke no German. I assumed he had been cut from his head to his trunk and the rag stopped the bleeding." Hauptmann and his brothers felt pity for the wounded. "[Georg] and his younger brother Carl would daily plunder mother's pantry and slip the stolen food to the sick soldiers." Georg wrote letters for the wounded, while

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8Ibid.

9Ibid., 458.

10Ibid.
Carl, whom the young Gerhart greatly admired, gathered flowers to shower German troops that paraded from time to time through the town's streets.

Gerhart Hauptmann's recollections of nationalist spirit and the tragedy of war were combined in these early experiences. He felt the tug of the trumpets upon his soul and the distinct feeling of nationalistic unity, but he also felt the pain and sorrow of the wounded, the result of war. These early experiences, the clash of emotions within the young boy, may have led to Hauptmann's reserved nationalist feelings and his fear for humanity as Europe tumbled into war in 1914.

During the morning of 4 August, French troops marched into Germany in hopes of regaining Alsace and Lorraine, the provinces lost to Germany during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, while Russian troops invaded East Prussia and hoped to march quickly to Berlin. German armies stopped the invaders on both fronts, prompting Hauptmann to write, "The German soil is cleared of enemies."\textsuperscript{11} As the German armies pressed into Belgium and France, Hauptmann wrote, "I cannot deny that I await news of the war. Is our defeat within the realm of possibility? Surely not!"\textsuperscript{12} At that moment, even

\textsuperscript{11}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 13 August 1914, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 7.

\textsuperscript{12}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 16 August 1914, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 12.
to Hauptmann, Germany seemed invincible and the pacifistic poet once again was caught up in the militaristic nationalism he had experienced in 1866.

On 8 August 1914, Henri Bergson, noted French playwright and novelist, delivered a speech at the Paris Academy of Science in which he condemned the German invasion of Belgium and believed the war against Germany was one of civilization against barbarians. Bergson's speech of accusation was published in the German newspapers, and in response to Bergson's charge of barbarism, Hauptmann became a defender of German involvement. Hauptmann wrote an open letter to Bergson, "Gegen Unwahrheit" ("Against Untruth"), published 26 August 1914 in the Berliner Tageblatt, in which he accused Bergson of being a "deluded Gallomaniac." With this letter, Hauptmann became one of Germany's leading defenders.

Hauptmann states in his open letter, "Gegen Unwahrheit," that Germany is the guarantor of European autonomy. He must have viewed Russia's entry into the war and invasion of East Prussia as most Germans did: not only was it a threat to German freedoms, but also European freedoms. Hauptmann, who wanted a united Germany, believed


the war would "guarantee the German people their future existence as a blessing for the world," and he excited the German nationalistic fervor when he accused the French of fighting in 1871, "against [the] German family, German unity, and the German Empire."\textsuperscript{15}

Hauptmann set aside any personal differences he may have had with the royal family and defended the emperor against Bergson's accusations of having secretly planned and started the war. Although he had no knowledge whatever of high decisions of state, Hauptmann declared:

Kaiser Wilhelm II, Supreme Commander of the Reich, has had the most trustful soul and supported the love of peace and peace itself. I repeat! The German people, the emperor . . . have had no other thoughts than to secure the core of the empire, its handiwork: sufficient PEACE!\textsuperscript{16}

In response to Bergson's view that the war was a war to save civilization from the barbarians, Hauptmann wrote, "The war which we direct and which has swung in our direction is a war of justification."\textsuperscript{17} He evidently believed German entrance into the war resulted from French and Russian threats and that to strike first was an act justified by necessity.

Hauptmann also extolled German unity in the noble cause of war. On the battlefields, "socialist [stands] next to

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 844.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
the capitalist, the farmer next to the educated, the prince next to the worker, and all struggle for German freedom, German family life, German art and philosophy.\textsuperscript{18} What Hauptmann hoped to show Bergson and the German people was that they had put aside their petty differences of political affiliation and class distinction and had united to preserve German ethnicity and the German way of life. Hauptmann had reiterated the sentiments of Germany's Imperial Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, who had addressed the Reichstag on 4 August 1914 and said, "We are fighting for the fruits of our works of peace, for the inheritance of a great past and for our future. . . . Our army is in the field . . . behind them stands the entire German nation -- the entire German nation united to the last man."\textsuperscript{19} The politician and the poet, united, expressed the beliefs and idealism of the German Volk.

As the French and Russian assaults were repulsed, the German armies in Belgium met heavy resistance in the form of guerrilla warfare. Martin Gilbert reports that Belgian franc-tireurs, irregulars, hid in ditches and buildings and sniped at German troops that occupied the Belgian

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 847.

villages. The resistance met with savage reprisals which would embroil the civilians of the warring nations. In the city of Hervè, General Erich Ludendorff issued an order of reprisal and troops razed the city. General Karl von Bülow issued two proclamations for the towns of Liège and Hasselt. "With my permission the general in command has burned down the entire locality and about one hundred persons have been shot. Liège, August 22, 1914." The second proclamation stated, "If any of the inhabitants fire on soldiers of the German Army, one quarter of the population will be ordered to be shot. Hasselt, August 17, 1914."

The reprisals in Liège and Hasselt shocked the civilians of the Entente Powers, but no reprisals were more horrifying than those in the university city of Louvain on 20 August 1914. A rumor spread throughout the city that a sniper had wounded a German officer. This rumor received a sense of substantiation when a German soldiers carried a wounded officer and a body, allegedly that of the sniper, through the streets. When the sniping continued, the Germans executed large groups of Belgians and burned much of the city. Romain Roland, the French novelist, wrote an

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30Gilbert, The First World War, 36.


open letter to Gerhart Hauptmann, begged him to voice his disapproval of the reprisals in Louvain, and referred to the German officers and soldiers as "Huns," a greater insult to the German people than Bergson's insult of "barbarian."  

Hauptmann replied to Roland's open letter with an open letter of his own on 29 August 1914, in the Journal de Genève, in which he strongly denounced the nations that warred against Germany and Roland's depiction of the German people. "You direct public words to me which result from the pain of a war Russia, England, and France forced on us." Hauptmann accused Roland of having forgotten his heritage, his German blood, and of once having declared that he was being "torn apart" because he had adopted France as his homeland. Roland had accused the Germans of rejecting French proposals of peace, which caused Hauptmann to respond with both an observation and an accusation. Hauptmann stated, "[I]t does no good for you to adopt a tone that implies that the people of your land, the French, are marching out against us with palm branches, when in reality


25Ibid., 848.
they are completely supplied with cannon, with ammunition, yes, even with dum-dum bullets."

Hauptmann again defended the German invasion of Belgium and the actions of German troops there. He never denied that the Germans violated the 1839 Treaty of London when they invaded Belgium, but he blamed the invasion upon the Belgian government, which, he claimed, had forced the invasion. "The peaceful passage of German troops, a question of life and death for Germany, was refused by Belgium because its government had made itself a tool of England and France." Hauptmann explained away the reprisals as, again, a response to the Belgian government’s actions. "The [Belgian] government then, in support of its indefensible position, organized an unparalleled guerrilla warfare, and by that act . . . struck the horrible keynote

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27 Ibid., 849.
of conflict." Thus, Hauptmann defended German aggression and the reprisals.

German troops, in fact, had violated the terms of Belgium's independence and neutrality when they marched across the Belgium border to attack France. There had been a few cases of detached Belgian soldiers and civilians sniping at German troops, but the extent of the damage they caused was minimal. The Germans responded to the guerrilla tactic with ferocity and did kill innocent civilians. Hauptmann, however, played the role of a passionate defender of the German invasion and alleged atrocities.

Gerhart Hauptmann was not the only member of the intelligentsia to react to Roland's accusations and support Germany's reprisals in Belgium. He joined with ninety-two other distinguished German intellectuals, "of all religious and political persuasions," to sign a declaration defending Germany's invasion of Belgium. The ninety-three intellectuals also asserted the unity of the German people in support of the German General Staff. "As representatives of German Science and Art, we hereby protest to the civilized world, against the lies and calumnies . . . in a struggle which has been forced upon her." These noted men

\[28\text{Ibid.}\]

\[29\text{The Manifesto of the German University Professors and Men of Science," quoted in its entirety in Ralph Lutz, Fall of the German Empire, 1914-1918, 2 vols., trans. David G. Rempel and Gertrude Rendtorff (Palo Alto: Stanford}\]
of art and science believed, "It is not true that Germany is guilty of having caused this war. Neither the people, the Government, nor the 'Kaiser' wanted war. Germany did her utmost to prevent it; for this assertion the world has documentary proof." 30 This august group also accused the Entente powers of atrocities of war. "In the east, the earth is saturated with the blood of women and children unmercifully butchered by the wild Russian troops, and in the west dum-dum bullets mutilate the breasts of our soldiers." 31

Aside from his efforts in defense of Germany's aggression at the outbreak of the First World War, Hauptmann also wrote nationalist poetry to awaken the Volk. Hauptmann wrote "O mein Vaterland" during August 1914, when the war was in its early stages. Its words reflected Hauptmann's nationalism, but it was too erudite, too symbolic, for the masses to understand and was therefore relatively ineffective in inciting nationalistic fervor.

Oh my Fatherland, heavenly Homeland  
How you pale with renewed unity.  
Fear's breath sweeps through field and valley,  
Heavy growth fills the walls of clouds.

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30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 75.
"It was my honor, which was blameless,
My raiment of peace spotless,
That the sudden lightning shines a grey light
Which engulfs me as a worldwide fire."

Is it so ordered I cannot provide for the world!
Alas you, if your heart no longer beats for us,
Your heavenly souls no longer support us
And your shining moments no more receive us!

Oh my Fatherland, heavenly Homeland,
What you say I will surely do:
I will reap, reap and not rest
Until I bind the last sheaf

And only death relieves me of my duty
I am yours ‘til the last breath.
Your harvest should be safe
I swear to you before God’s face.
And I impatiently await a day,
   to stand strong and free in the sun
Where your heaven for us is ever clear
Your sons prove new and true.
Come, Come German Völker of Spring."

Though the poem says what Hauptmann stated in his open letters to Bergson and Roland, the message is much more muted, too difficult for non-intellectuals to understand.

The excitement of the rapid advances of August 1914 wavered when the Germans suffered their first major setback of the war in September 1914, when Anglo-French forces stopped the German advance towards Paris at the Battle of the Marne. A few months later the Germans suffered their first major naval defeat of the war. Off the Falkland Islands, on 8 December 1914, a British flotilla destroyed Admiral Maximilian Graf von Spee’s flotilla.

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The Battle of the Falkland Islands so startled Germans and Hauptmann that he wrote about the defeat: "There has been an English victory at sea. It weighs heavy on my soul. I am offended! Stupefied! But England's naval supremacy enrages me. Why? Because I possess the belief in German naval supremacy. What do I have except for this belief in German supremacy? Nothing! I feel the English naval victory in the Falkland Islands as a blow to my very countenance."\(^\text{33}\)

In these early days of the war, Hauptmann remained extremely optimistic about the war's outcome. On 7 October 1914, the Germans began an artillery barrage of Antwerp and the city capitulated on 10 October. When the Germans entered Antwerp, troops captured a British soldier and published the contents of a letter, dated 28 September, his sister had sent to him. She closed her letter saying, "I wish I was with you. I would like to be a nurse and I am sure I could kill one or two Germans."\(^\text{34}\) This letter infuriated Germans, who easily surmised that British nurses were killing captured, wounded German soldiers. In outrage, Hauptmann wrote "Richard Parkers Schwester" ("Richard Parker's Sister").

\(^{33}\)Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 11 December 1914, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 44.

Richard Parker's Sister, Lord Jesus Christ,  
Is a Beast among men.  
Under the glow of compassion,  
Concealed in the clothes of a Nurse,  
She will murder the wounded in their beds,  
A hyena resides in the sick bay.  
A hunting fox, she will stalk  
And turn the helpless Germans into corpses.  
Forgive her, Lord, Show Mercy.  
She is a Beast,  
Yet, no evil Beast  
Was ever so disgraceful.  
She is known in Hell as Jane:  
Lord, make her the same as the Angels.\textsuperscript{35}

At this time, as the horrors of war and the fears of murder assaulted the senses of most Germans, Hauptmann began work on an epic poem, "Der große Traum," ("The Great Dream"). The death of Marie Thienemann Hauptmann, on 6 October 1914, along with the horrors of war, contributed to Hauptmann's depression, which is evident in his epic. Because Hauptmann did not complete "Der große Traum" until 1942, it is not relevant here. As Walter Reichart points out, however, "The dominant note is one of bleakest despair with human conduct."\textsuperscript{36} Though Hauptmann produced nationalistic sentiments in "Richard Parkers Schwester" and other war-time poems, he still believed war was not the answer to the problems that plagued Germany and mankind.

\textsuperscript{35}Gerhart Hauptmann, "Richard Parkers Schwester," Sämtliche Werke, 11:661. [First published in Kriegzeit, Nr. 11, 4 November 1914.]

Hauptmann’s literary style changed as he sank into depression. His work became much more ethereal, and he modeled his work after the classical Greek styles. He began with "Der Bogen des Odysseus" ("The Bow of Odysseus") and followed it with "Magnus Garbe," two plays that focus on deep feelings of love, and how death does not ever stop those feelings. Hauptmann had noted years earlier (1898), that he intended to write a play based on a Silesian legend about a grave robbery. "Magnus Garbe" is the culmination of his idea, but the play lacked the vitality of his earlier plays when he was focused on social and political issues that were easily recognized and understood. Hauptmann first began his work on "Magnus Garbe" in 1897, after he had separated from Marie and then travelled to Italy with Margarete. It was also the time when he and his brother quarrelled, and Hauptmann may have felt his world slipping away from him. But now, the end of 1914, Marie had died, and the war that had awakened deeply rooted feelings of pride was not progressing as Germans had hoped. Hauptmann became more introspective and his diaries are filled with his private views of life and the war.

As the war continued into December of 1914, Hauptmann found himself longing to take part in the war. Reports of German victories in the East over Russian armies at the battles of Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes combined with the optimistic vision of impending victories over France and led
to Hauptmann’s desire to become a more active participant.

I still want to go to the Front, to experience what the letters and reports describe! I could offer help as a non-combatant. I feel I am unable to withstand the drill of a recruit. Therefore [I could be] a nurse! I have more than the necessary endurance, callousness, [and] objectivity. Nevertheless I don’t know the suitable place for me. How sad.37

Hauptmann added, "Not everyone who willingly stays at home is cowardly. I, for example, at age 52, know I am not a coward. I don’t wish to attack, but am serious about being an underling. Perhaps I can drive an ambulance for the wounded."38 Hauptmann wanted to be a part of, and to take an active, rather than passive role in, Germany’s assumption to cultural and political dominance in Europe.

In "Weihnachten 1914" ("Christmas 1914") Hauptmann continued his nationalistic sentiments, undeterred by the stalemate after the Marne. "Our opponents maintain that they are defending Europe’s peace. This delusion has been injected into France’s bloodstream along with, so to speak, her suicide."39 Most Germans believed that the French were committing suicide by fighting on against an undefeatable German army. Hauptmann even offered a reason for France’s suicidal behavior. "We know full well why they direct this

37Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 31 December 1914, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 55.
38Ibid., 56.
united, unmerciful storm directly at us in the manner that they do. Because we are Europe's backbone. Straight and true is this backbone."

Because he believed the war would soon be over, Hauptmann claimed, "The war is ours; and the coming Peace will find Austria-Hungary and Germany as [Europe's] guardian."

Though publicly Hauptmann showed support for the war, in March 1915, the first hint of disillusionment with the progress of the war and the government's view of the war drifted into Hauptmann's diary. "What security, what a profound outpouring [support for the war], this, destiny's storehouse [Germany]; and into this peace stepped the war [and] it rests here, not in Berlin." Hauptmann believed the kaiser and the General Staff did not feel the pain of war, and that they only counted the dead as total numbers, not as loss of life.

The horror and reality of war struck Hauptmann full force when his friend and fellow author Hermann Stehr died in combat. "On 20 June Willi Stehr fell. Whoever turned to look saw only a broken body, blood, murder, pain, [and] tears: those who turned away saw fame, honor, the

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^40Ibid.

^41Ibid., 869.

^42Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, March 1915, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 68.
fatherland, [and the] future. Look away!" Even though Hauptmann hinted that sacrifices must be made for Germany to win the war when he wrote, "Look away," he nevertheless called the death of his friend "murder."

Hauptmann focused his change of heart about the horrors of war, and how the government reported news of the war, and began work on a novel, *Berliner Krieges-Roman*. In the novel, Berthold Schwarz, a councilman in Berlin, tells his wife he knows what to tell his constituents about the war. "I can admit to that which I believe is necessary [for them to know] and that which appears tolerable." When his wife says he cannot edit accounts of the war, Schwarz replies,

> You must understand my public [responsibility]. There is not a man alive who would not die a thousand deaths if he should pick up the fruits of the storm . . . which is now in motion. Everything is directed to our self-support, our self-assertion. I speak entirely about the spiritual. We must remain spiritually strong and healthy. One can do this only if one takes protective measures, if we proceed, as you and I do, around the people."

Hauptmann never finished the novel and never developed the fragment into a short story. But his view of the government's abridged accounts, if not outright lies, of the

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43 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 2 August 1915, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 81.


War is quite clear. Propaganda is used to maintain morale and keep the nation spiritually strong and healthy, united.

In an unpublished article, Hauptmann further detailed his views of propaganda. Not discovered until Hauptmann's papers and memoirs were released after his death, "Über literarische Kriegspropaganda" (1915) offers great insight into his changing view of war. He wondered whether earlier wars subjected "the truthful and genuine struggle of the armies" to "those undignified battles of pen and words." He stated that the heroic efforts of soldiers at the front are "silent and tragic," lost in the "battles of bragging, the nadir of man's worthlessness." It is clearly understood that Hauptmann's view of the war, its purpose, and the repeated call for sacrifice has changed. Propaganda is "provided through fear and impotence . . . a disgraceful farce." When the truth will not assist the war effort, Hauptmann believes the government purposely either hides the truth, or lies.

War, to Hauptmann, could either be bloody or bloodless; and a bloodless war "has diverse forms." He saw propaganda as a bloodless form of war. "It is difficult to

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47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 870.
determine whether the fact of a bloody war or its satirical counterpart [propaganda] is most productive for mankind. In any case, [propaganda] is the most wretched and shameful."50 The reality of war, the loss of life, the brutality, was not as "wretched and shameful" as the lies, the satire of propaganda the government and its agencies spread to boost the morale of the nation and call for more young men to sacrifice their being for the war and the Fatherland.

With the war dragging on, hundreds of thousands of soldiers killed and maimed on both sides, and amid those reports, Hauptmann began to contemplate a better time, a time of world peace. In another unpublished essay, "Weltfriedensgedanken," ("Ideas on World Peace") Hauptmann offered a few ideas as his "duty to peace."51 After slandering those whom Germany fought and defending Germany's invasion of Belgium, Hauptmann chose "peace and the influential ideals of justice, because only with these [ideals] in union is the light of reason unobscured."52 Even though Hauptmann privately chose peace, he did not openly espouse his ideals.

On 30 August 1916, the Kaiser dismissed General Falkenhayn and appointed Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg

50Ibid.


52Ibid., 872.
to the position of Chief of the German General Staff. Where Falkenhayn subscribed to a conservative concept of war, Hindenburg was able to halt and defeat the hordes of Russian troops invading East Prussia. Hauptmann noted, "Yesterday Hindenburg was named Chief of the General Staff. On my knees to God [I pray] that it is not too late." Hauptmann's nationalism, however, despite his anti-war sentiments, had not changed, and he hoped that Hindenburg would be able to turn the fortunes of war on the Western Front and still achieve peace through victory. He still supported the concept of German unity, and believed it could only be maintained through victory.

On 7 November 1916 voters in the United States re-elected Woodrow Wilson as president. Wilson had always been an advocate for world peace; and now, assured of a second term as president, he sent a request for peace to the leaders of the warring nations. The offer of peace had originated from a head of state of a non-belligerent nation. Hauptmann noted that the Reichstag "knew where the offer of

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51 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 31 August 1916, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 123.

peace originated. I thought it a brilliant maneuver."\textsuperscript{55}

Bethmann-Hollweg, with the Kaiser's support, announced the Germans were ready to negotiate peace.\textsuperscript{56}

Hauptmann also noted that the wheels of war in Germany were like a runaway train and he could only hope Wilson's offer "would be like [a] stone having been thrown [in its path], thereby slowing it down little by little."\textsuperscript{57} On Christmas Day, 1916, Tsar Nicholas II rejected Wilson's proposal.\textsuperscript{58} The German General Staff still believed that Germany was strong enough to win the war and secure a peace based upon victory, and the kaiser ultimately rejected Wilson's proposal.\textsuperscript{59} Hauptmann viewed a German victory as highly improbable.

After the kaiser rejected Wilson's proposal, Hauptmann believed that the German people must prove to the world they

\textsuperscript{55}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 12 December 1916, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 157.

\textsuperscript{56}Foreign Relations of the United States: 1916, Supplement 1, 82. See also: Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlung des deutsches Reichstag, 9-10 December 1916, v.319: 981-996.

\textsuperscript{57}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 12 December 1916, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 157.

\textsuperscript{58}Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916: Supplement 1, The World War, 305.

"valued peace in time of war." He thought that Germany must concentrate on "efforts of peace" to ensure victory. Hauptmann recognized that Germany was losing much of its empire on the periphery. "The Japanese have placed themselves in our position in the South Seas. The Balkans, which had sprang up from our existence [Gebäude], must be cultivated, reconstructed, and included on a broader basis." The German people, as a nation, must turn to their "diligence, duty, and talents" to secure "the place in the sun" which the kaiser had promised. But Hauptmann also spoke of new domestic and international politics. "Next to a suitable policy of expansion, we must also have an internal political reformation, suitable but at the same time inclusive of all institutions [Hauptmann’s emphasis] including: the courts, the military, law, religion, industry, and agriculture." Imperialist expansion was only a part, a small part, of German unity. Political and social reform were necessary for the ideological unity of the Kultur Hauptmann wanted for Germany.

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 881.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
Hauptmann never published "Germany's Duty in the Future Peace" ("Deutschlands Aufgabe im künftigen Frieden," 1916), but related his ideas privately to close friends who were politicians and military leaders. One man with whom Hauptmann became especially close was the director of Germany's economic policy, Walther Rathenau. In an era when men seemed to be guided by emotion and sabre-rattling nationalism, Hauptmann offered a voice of reason in hopes that Germany would plan for the period of peace which was bound to come. While Hauptmann may have been mentally preparing for peace, he never strayed from his views on German unity.

Hauptmann seemed to have two separate views of the war, a public view, and a private view. In his public view, he had become a saber-rattling nationalist, as evidenced by his open letters in response to Romain Roland and Henri Bergson and his participation in the Manifesto of the Intellectuals who supported the war. In his private writings, he is much more reserved, and views the war with a clear, calmer, open mind. Hauptmann had hoped for an early peace, as had the General Staff, the kaiser, and members of the government. As the war continued, Hauptmann became much more reserved than he had been earlier, and more depressed, particularly after his first wife died and friends of his were killed in

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65Brecius, Gerhart Hauptmann, 92-94.
the war. As the Volk was faced with more and more governmental requests for sacrifices, Hauptmann hoped for peace.

The kaiser declared unrestricted submarine warfare against all shipping in enemy waters on 1 February 1917. This single issue caused great conflict between the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, and the new leaders of the General Staff, Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Hindenburg and Ludendorff viewed the Chancellor as a defeatist who worried too much about the possibility of the United States joining the war. Hindenburg believed that submarine warfare would give distinct material and psychological advantages to Germans and make it easier for them to withstand any new enemy offensives in the spring. Bethmann-Hollweg's political support waned as the Center party passed a resolution that stated the ultimate responsibility for such a momentous decision rested with the Chancellor, but that he should follow the advice of the General Staff.  

Bethmann-Hollweg felt that a policy that had the support of all the military leader, the emperor, and a majority of the Reichstag, might be sounder than he had believed. With great reservations, Bethmann-Hollweg agreed with the General Staff's decision to wage unrestricted submarine warfare. Bethmann-Hollweg would later declare, "By the decision of 7

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66Rdolf von Valentini, Kaiser und Kabinettschef (Oldenburg: G. Stalling Verlag, 1931), 144-146.
October 1916 the Reichstag surrendered political power to the military commanders.  

When the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, Hauptmann's nationalist view of the war was quite apparent. He denounced American involvement in a war that he felt did not concern them. To Hauptmann the war was a war to preserve German Kultur, and the United States was cosmopolitan, a mixture of cultures, and could not comprehend the importance of the European war. "America's ridiculous arrogance. Known as the 'New World,' its vanity has gone to its head, and therefore [the United States] views itself better than the old world. . . . Shut up! You social conglomerate. We are Europeans."  

Following the United States' entry into the war, the political scene in Germany changed drastically, and the political unity that had existed when war was declared in 1914 began to disintegrate. The Junker class that ruled and directed the military felt itself threatened by liberals who desired political reform. The Socialists demanded an end to the war; they wanted peace without concessions from the Entente powers. The General Staff believed that a peace which did not provid for annexation of territories gained

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68 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 22 April 1917, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 173.
through war would not fulfill the needs of the German people. A victory, however, would meet the needs of all classes of German society and ensure continued Junker political dominance.

Matthias Erzberger, an economic expert and deputy of the Center party, who once drafted a resolution (1914) that called for a quick victory and annexation of Belgium plus the industrial areas of Longwy-Briey and the French and Belgian Congos, now realized that Germany’s submarine war would not effectively interfere with the Entente’s supplies, since the United States entered the war, and that Germany could not win the war. Erzberger also realized that the Independent Socialists might influence the Majority Socialists to vote against further war credits. At Erzberger’s urging, the Reichstag formed an Inter-Party Committee with representatives from the Center, National Liberals, Progressives, and the Majority Socialists, to draft a peace resolution without annexations.

On 7 April, Hauptmann noted, "The concerns behind the fronts are gradually [becoming] more serious than the battle fronts." It is likely that he was referring to the political situation, because he had met repeatedly with Walther Rathenau and others to discuss Germany’s political climate. Also, Hauptmann’s ideas on German annexation of

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69 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 7 April 1917, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 170.
territory expressed in "Deutschlands Aufgabe im künftigen Frieden," lead to the conclusion that Hauptmann’s diary entry focused on the political controversy between a peace that demanded annexations and a peace without forced annexations.

As the conflicts in Germany’s government continued, Gustav Stresemann, National Liberal deputy, demanded the chancellor resign, because he felt the chancellor was "a weak and irresolute character." Stresemann was a close friend of Count von Bülow, and Erzberger wanted to use this friendship "to induce the National Liberals to support the Peace Resolution in return for Zentrum [Center Party] support in felling Bethmann." On 12 July, the Crown Prince met with Stresemann, Erzberger, and other party leaders to discuss problems within the government. When the Crown Prince reported to the kaiser that Erzberger would most likely join Stresemann and demand Bethmann-Hollweg’s resignation, and Hindenburg and Ludendorff telephoned the Kaiser and offered their resignations saying they could no longer work with the chancellor, the kaiser approached his chancellor and explained the predicament he, as kaiser, was in. As a result of this meeting, Bethmann-Hollweg resigned as chancellor on 13 July 1917.

71 Ibid., 195.
Erzberger hoped that the kaiser would appoint Count von Bülow, chancellor from 1900 to 1908, to the Chancellorship, because the two could work with Stresemann's National Liberals to control the General Staff and effectively call for peace. Bülow was also willing to assist in the formation of a true parliamentary system in Germany, to acquiesce to the Reichstag majority. The kaiser, however, appointed a loyal civil servant, Georg Michaelis, as chancellor. Michaelis did not possess the political acumen to thwart the political machinations of Hindenburg and the General Staff, and Erzberger and Stresemann could not sway the new Chancellor towards a peace policy. The General Staff also lobbied for the dismissal of Wilhelm Groener, who headed the War Office that oversaw industrial and agricultural production, labor, and the general economy. Ludendorff and Hindenburg appealed to the kaiser, and charged that Groener's policies weakened the war effort. Michaelis and the kaiser bowed to the demands of the General Staff, and in August 1917, the War Ministry took control of the War Office, Groener received a field command, and Germany effectively became a military dictatorship.

When the military took control of the government, the General Staff implemented policies that expanded war industry at the expense of public liberties and labor

72 Ibid., 198.
rights. The military repression saw severe restrictions on the right of assembly and added surveillance over meetings where workers and representatives discussed grievances. Also, the authorities used force and militarization of factories to force workers to break any strike.

Erzberger led a united effort in the Reichstag and initiated a Peace Resolution. The Resolution called for "a peace of understanding and permanent reconciliation of peoples. Forced territorial acquisitions and political, economic, and financial oppressions are irreconcilable with such a peace."\(^ {73} \) Michaelis accepted the resolution, but with the attached clause, "as I interpret it."\(^ {74} \) With this statement, Ludendorff, via Michaelis, effectively blocked any peace movement the Reichstag offered.

To counter the coalition Peace Resolution, Ludendorff appealed to the Vaterlandspartei, established in 1916, to oppose the surge of liberal influence in the Reichstag. In September 1917, the Vaterlandspartei submitted its own peace resolution that insisted on continued occupation of Belgium, the industrial areas of France, and strategic areas of


\(^ {74} \) Ibid., 233.
When Michaelis accepted the conservative peace proposal, Hauptmann noted the lack of leadership and direction in the government. "Today Michaelis offers nothing. Michaelis is the nadir. The post of Chancellor should no longer exist."  

Hauptmann, by mid-to-late 1917, had become totally disenchanted with the war, Germany's General Staff, and Michaelis. Being in constant contact with Stresemann, Rathenau, and others in the Reichstag who desired peace, Hauptmann believed the "kaiser under the mountain" needed to rise and once again lead Germany. "Instinctively we long for the one man, all powerful, who can be neither a Ludendorff nor a Hindenburg, because these people are only powerful through the mercy of their kaiser. He must be a man whose effective, dominating force is measured by the ideals of his age."  

To Hauptmann, whose ideals of German unity and greatness had not materially changed since 1913, the General Staff and the chancellor did not represent the

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77 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 23 September 1917, GHP, Nachlaß Nr. 4, 187.

78 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 27 September 1917, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 187.
ideals of peace that were now so important to Germany's survival. Nor did they meet his criteria for leaders who could establish German unity because they based their ideas on militaristic gain and not recognition and maintenance of the unique German Kultur. At a time when it might have been achieved, September 1917, the General Staff's arrogance prevented peace. Hauptmann noted, "The power of ignorance. Germany and England in this war, and the impotence of knowledge."³⁸

The kaiser, at the urging of the Reichstag, replaced Michaelis with Count Georg von Hertling in October 1917. Hertling did not owe his loyalties to the General Staff, nor was he a puppet of the kaiser. In November 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution overthrew the Provisional Government in Russia, and Vladimir Lenin took control of the nation and initiated peace talks. German, Russian, and Austrian emissaries met at Brest-Litovsk in December, 1917, to discuss peace between Russia and the Central Powers. Hauptmann believed that the military needed to remain out of the negotiations. "Imperator -- Cuirass -- Scepter; Helmet with silver trim -- what a comedy -- and why? Is there no shame? What nonsense! Should I walk around in armor? You

³⁸Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 28 October 1917, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 189.
leaders, wear civilian clothes!" Hauptmann believed, as did the new chancellor, the generals needed to fight the war and leave domestic and foreign politics to rational, civilian men.

Early in 1918, late January or early February, the dates are not clear, Eugen Diederichs, a publisher, called a meeting in the small town of Lauenstein to discuss "Problems of Leadership in the State and Culture." Discussants looked for a spiritual rebirth after the chaos of war, but the meeting itself was chaotic and needed guidance. Diederichs wrote to Hauptmann, "Your work binds you. We young men wait on word from a spiritual leader in whom we believe. You, the poet of all suffering men, your word is as powerful as a general’s parade; it would be a call to peace; it would call together the youth of Europe." Hauptmann never responded. When Rathenau and representatives of the Social Democrats appealed to Hauptmann to act as an advocate of peace and unity, Hauptmann noted, "He [Rathenau] demands that I should call

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79 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 17 December 1917, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 196.

80 Eugen Diederichs, Note to Hauptmann, undated, GHP, Briefenachlaß, Nr. 3.

81 Ibid.
for peace, deliver the great moral speech, speak against Potsdam, etc. My refusal is unequivocal."82

Many young, inspired Germans, and experienced statesmen, viewed Hauptmann as the voice of peace and reconciliation. They recognized Hauptmann as a moral leader in Germany and hoped that words from him could place the General Staff in a situation where they had to listen to the will of the people. Many other Germans, however, including the General Staff, still believed the war could be won. Whatever outside pressures assailed Hauptmann, he remained steadfast in his support of Germany’s official political position.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended Russia’s involvement in the First World War. The German press carried reports of the negotiations in January 1918. Hauptmann noted that Leon Trotsky, whom Lenin had appointed to lead the Russian delegation, was not to be trusted. "And now Trotski pretends [Russia] does not want to gain anything (what a lie) . . . Away with Trotski! -- The most humane Russian is [Maxim] Gorki."83 Hauptmann clearly shows his distrust of the Bolsheviks. "Trotski learned . . . from Marx-Engels and

82Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 25 February 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 215v.

83Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 29 January 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 203.
the 'Neue Zeit.'"74 The Bolsheviks had proclaimed the new Soviet Union would represent the masses of oppressed people, but Hauptmann questioned the Bolsheviks, especially Trotsky. "Trotski is a Tsar, he is illogical and if he can he will betray international socialism."75 Hauptmann did not believe that Lenin and Trotsky would initiate a Marxist philosophy in Russia. "In Russia the Bolsheviks push a decoy of socialism which Marx and Engels would send to the gallows."76 Hauptmann may have distrusted the Bolsheviks, but at this time made no criticism of Germany's dictated peace with the Russians.

In terms of the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, the annexationists fulfilled German dreams of territorial expansion to the East. Germany gained all Poland, to be ruled by a puppet state loyal to Germany. Parts of Lithuania and the Ukraine would fall under German suzerainty, much to the pleasure of the military, annexationists in the Reichstag, and the Vaterlandspartei. Austria-Hungary received Galacia and the western Ukraine,

74Ibid., 204. [While living in Erkner, Hauptmann had subscribed to the Marxist Neue Zeit.]
75Ibid., 205.
76Ibid., 207.
including the city of Odessa.\textsuperscript{87} "What is annexation? What it has always been."\textsuperscript{88}

Despite the lift Germany received with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the great German March offensive failed. By June, members of the Reichstag realized Germany could not win the war militarily. Ludendorff and the annexationists could no longer rely upon support in the Reichstag.

In August and September, the Allied armies broke through the German lines in several places. On 8 August 1918, Ludendorff sent General Mertz von Quirheim to assess the situation at the Somme following British and French assaults. When he returned with his report, Ludendorff noted, "The report of the staff officer I had sent to the battle-field as to the condition of those divisions which had met the first shock . . . perturbed me deeply."\textsuperscript{89} The officers had lost control of their forces and many troops were in retreat or had surrendered to the enemy. By mid-September the Bulgarians had sued for peace and the Austro-Hungarians informed the German General Staff that they could


\textsuperscript{88}Ibid., 206.

\textsuperscript{89}Erich von Ludendorff, \textit{Ludendorff's Own Story: August 1914 - November 1918, The Great War from the Siege of Liege to the Signing of the Armistice as Viewed from the Grand Headquarters of the German Army} (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), 331.
no longer wage war. Ludendorff became convinced that the General Staff "now assumed the character of an irresponsible game of chance, a thing I have always considered fatal. The fate of the German people was to me too high a stake. The war must be ended." With material and personnel resources dwindling to nothing, even Ludendorff realized the war could not be won; he informed the kaiser that Germany must sue for peace. The government, which Ludendorff and Hindenburg had thwarted with their demands for resignations and dismissals, now had the difficult task of making peace and salvaging Germany's pride.

Hauptmann noted, on 1 October 1918, "The German skies are dark. The Kaiser concedes to the popular government. The Front in Flanders is breached. The decision is imminent." Prince Max von Baden replaced Hertling as chancellor, and the Progressive, Center, and Social Democrat parties, now had the opportunity to reform the government and end the war. Prince Max approached President Wilson on 3 October, and, as Hauptmann noted, "Our new government has accepted Wilson's Fourteen Points. This is a turning point, especially for the Prussians." The coalition of liberal-

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90Ibid., 332.

91Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 1 October 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 236.

92Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 5 October 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 237.
minded representatives in the government had negated the Prussian militarism that had dominated the German government since the inception of the Second Reich in 1871.

Hauptmann, disillusioned by the sudden turn of events noted, "Perhaps I have only to write about the downfall of my country. Let us be strong in our sorrow. Strong and free in our [pending] bondage. Let us overcome bondage with our spiritual power." Many Germans, including Hauptmann, dissatisfied with the former, Prussian-led government, now hoped for quick changes that would maintain Germany's spiritual and cultural unity. "He [Max of Baden] has a plan. God let it happen -- The government now has a dictator. The Prussians are removed. Good? -- Good! Because the Prussians lost. Prince von Baden -- The Savior of the State -- God's gift!" It appears Hauptmann's "kaiser" had arisen to guide Germany to spiritual greatness. Hope for a peace with honor rested with the new coalition government and its "dictator," for which Hauptmann had wished. Germany's new republic was a restructuring of political fragments, composed of newly born ideas and the remnants of a persistent past.

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93Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 1 October 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 11a, 20.

94Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 3 October 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 11a, 20f.
As before, many Germans hoped Hauptmann would take an active role in the new government, because he had always shown a concern for the Volk and society. Julius Meier-Graefe, a well known German art historian, wrote to Hauptmann, asking him to take a position of leadership. "The Volk, the new Volk, upon whom we must now rely, await from us an announcement of our strengths, . . . they expect the author of the Weavers to be the first in line."95

The public needed more than reassurance of a peace with honor and signals of strength; it needed immediate economic assistance and democratic concessions. Laborers struck in Silesia and called for Kaiser Wilhelm’s abdication and the formation of a republic. In seaports, sailors united with revolutionaries on land to form soviets. Because of the unrest, Hauptmann noted, "Our desire for armistice . . . was the most serious political mistake of the entire war. . . . The petition [for peace] must be a signal of general decline, and it is."96 Sailors from Wilhelmshaven and Hamburg took control of the Hamburg city hall and demanded control of communications and food rations. In Braunschweig, sailors captured the police headquarters, while in Köln, upon the Rhine, an armed garrison seized

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95Julius Meier-Graefe to Hauptmann, 4 November 1918, GHP, Briefenachlaß, Nr. 1.

96Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 4 November 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 9.
control of the town. Kurt Eisner led socialists in Munich and took control of the city on 7 November. The threat of general revolution now materialized and Prince Max resigned for both himself and his government.

Hauptmann had noted earlier the difficulties the new government faced.

It has immense power against it: The historical customs and apathy of the masses. The great willpower, intelligence, and experience of the Old Regime. The people's devotion to the military, the individual states and their kings are insecure. And yet: they [the new government] want to find Germany and finally cast away their blissful servitude.97

With the events of the first week of November, Hauptmann joined the Volk in calling for the kaiser's abdication. "The monster is . . . the reign of the kaiser and his vain, overbearing . . . monarchy."98 With Max's resignation, the kaiser's monarchy "is ended."99 Philipp Scheidemann announced the end of the monarchy and creation of the German Republic, shortly after Prince Max resigned the government. Later that day, 9 November, the kaiser fled to Holland, and then, on 28 November, renounced "for all time claims to the

97Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 20 October 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 239.

98Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 9 November 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 240.

99Ibid.
Throne of Prussia and the German Imperial Throne connected therewith."

On 11 November, representatives of the new government, Matthias Erzberger in the lead, signed an armistice to end hostilities in the Forest of Compiègne. The demands of the armistice were harsh, and Hauptmann noted, "Each inequity which we had committed, will be vastly outdone by our enemies without hesitation. They punish sixty million people who had been misused by their monarch, and for their penance had [already] struggled, suffered, [and] bled with heroism." 

Hauptmann’s sudden about face from his earlier position of support of the kaiser and the war can only be attributed to the deprivations the public suffered in the last year of the war, the vast number of casualties, and the harsh terms of the armistice. Hauptmann had seen the war as an attack on German Kultur, and now, with the armistice, Germany was in a position to lose her Kultur to the cosmopolitan forces of American, European, Russian, and Slav. Due to terms of the armistice, Germany had to withdraw her troops to positions east of the Rhine River, and renounce the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. All hopes of territorial annexation, even

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101 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 5 December 1918, GHP, Nachlaß Nr. 234, 12.
those lands gained as a result of Brest-Litovsk, ended with the armistice. Because the kaiser had led Germany, the kaiser had to accept the blame for the consequences of the loss of German *Kultur*. As Hauptmann had noted in his diary on 5 December 1918, the Allies had destroyed Germany in war and would destroy the nation again in peace.

With the kaiser’s government having collapsed completely, the responsibility to secure peace and construct a new government fell to Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Social Democrats. Following the armistice, Ebert’s Republic had to somehow rebuild Germany amid a sea of nations seeking revenge. "The crisis is monstrous," Hauptmann wrote. "As I wrote in "Florian Geyer," it [a republic] is best for Germany’s health. But it increases insecurity." 102

Hauptmann believed that a republican system would force the populace to take a more active role in the government, but that with a new government in the organizational stages, the old political parties reconstituted themselves under new names, and new political alliances emerged to secure a semblance of order and security in the government.

"Everything is gone that was somehow connected with the Old Regime," Hauptmann sympathized in December 1918. 103 He

102 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 11 November 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 11.

103 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 6 December 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 6, 3.
believed that the new parties needed to, "first understand what the people say," as he implied the old government had lost touch with the people and subsequently fallen victim to a few outspoken men who misled the Volk.\(^{104}\)

Hauptmann never lost touch with the ideals of the Volk and the spirit of Germany's rich cultural heritage, even after the war changed the face of German politics, government, and society. He still shared the pride in the sacrifices through which the Volk and soldiers suffered. When the army returned to Berlin after its defeat on the battlefield, Hauptmann was still proud of those who had sacrificed so much for the Fatherland and cheered the parade.

The troops march in -- All Unter den Linden turned out ... Everything soldier-like, in good order. The popularity of the army is clear. Magnificent troops. No red emblems! The church bells peel. But it is a melancholy day with bright sunshine. I cry out -- "Bravo." Bright sunshine was surely not meant for such a sad day. But I felt, Germany is not dead.\(^{105}\)

Gerhart Hauptmann, the author of so many plays that had criticized the German government, militarism, and the ills of society, cheered those who returned from a valiant war to save the Germany he had ridiculed. In the troops returning

\(^{104}\)Ibid.

\(^{105}\)Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 12 December 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 13.
to peace and Germany, Hauptmann saw the possibility of a new Germany, one not dead, but united in spirit.

He was correct; Germany was not dead. As Hauptmann had noted for so many years, in his published works and private thoughts, Germany was the Volk and its spiritual essence. Eugen Diederichs, Ernst Toller, Theodor Däublens, Julius Meier-Graefe, and Walther Rathenau recognized Gerhart Hauptmann to be a "spiritual" leader when they had asked him to take a role in the changing political climate of 1917. Hauptmann had recognized that the kaiser's era signalled "Germany's greatest, most powerful ascent." When Germany's defeat seemed imminent, Hauptmann, like so many others, hoped the kaiser would take a stand, take control, be the "king under the mountain" for whom the Germans awaited. With the kaiser's abdication, Hauptmann, through his association with Rathenau and leading political figures, was thrust into the political arena. As Germany passed into the period called the Weimar Republic, Gerhart Hauptmann, in literature and thought, searched for Germany's future leader.

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106 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 11 November 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 10.
CHAPTER IX

PEACE, REVOLUTION, AND THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

1918 - 1933

With the end of the First World War and the creation of a new, democratic government in Germany, Gerhart Hauptmann, who had generally remained aloof from the struggles of political life, for a brief while became embroiled in politics. Hans-Egon Hass reported that Theodor Wolff, chief-editor of the Berliner Tageblatt, related a story where Hauptmann stormed into his office a few weeks after the outbreak of the Great War and announced, "I will no longer write; from now on I will only concern myself with politics."  

During the first year of the war, Hauptmann made political statements defending Germany, and wrote jingoistic poems. With the war’s continuation and with his personal tragedies, Hauptmann had removed himself from political life. Following the war, however, Hauptmann once again became involved in politics. The fifty-six year old author addressed national issues in open letters, and expressed his political philosophy to the Reichstag and the world. As the


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Allied powers handed down their decisions at Paris, Hauptmann addressed Germans in his homeland, Austria, and America, and urged them never to lose sight of German unity and culture, which he believed the Peace Conference at Paris was trying to destroy. In a number of public appearances, Hauptmann addressed the issues of nationalism and the rebirth of German culture and the German state.

Although his focus changed dramatically during these years of political upheaval, Hauptmann's literary productivity never flagged. Before the First World War Hauptmann had focused his efforts on social inequities. As the war extended past 1914, and especially after the war, Hauptmann focused much of his literary, non-political writing on more ethereal ideals in imitation of ancient Greek literature. These writings show a spiritual view of the world that Hauptmann had not demonstrated in his earlier works. Despite the new orientation, these writings also reveal Hauptmann's view of the political and social events of the age and his hopes for the German people.

As Germany's defeat in the First World War seemed apparent and uprisings occurred in the military and civilian ranks, Gerhart Hauptmann wrote in his diary about his ideas of war and the government's role in war.

The state has said, have not State and State come to blows? Man and man, people and people have not come to blows. But the State, the States; and

Though this observation was neither discovered nor published until long after Hauptmann's death, it helps explain his philosophy about the peace negotiations. Hauptmann believed the people of a state, not just soldiers, suffered from war, and he believed that peace should be peace, not an attempt at further punishment of a people who had already paid with their blood.

While the Allied Powers debated the fate of a conquered Germany, and Hauptmann wrote and spoke against the rumored provisions of the treaty, a threat to German political unity and the young republic, in the form of the Spartacus Union, a radical, leftist political organization and forerunner of the German Communist Party led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, arose within Germany itself. Because of the revolution that toppled the tsarist regime in Russia in 1917, Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Majority Socialists and Minister-President of Germany's interim government, had allied himself with the Supreme Army Command, now under the leadership of General Wilhelm Groener, who had offered the army's support to the Republic on 9 November 1918.
When a Congress of Councils of the various socialist political parties met in Berlin on 16 December 1918, the Majority Socialists refused to allow members of the Spartacist party to be seated. Walter Lampl, a representative of the Majority Socialists, proposed that Germany's old military system be replaced with a popular militia that elected its own leaders. General Groener threatened to withdraw his support of Ebert's government if the Lampl resolution were put into effect, and Ebert promised not to apply Lampl's resolution to the field army. Angered with Ebert's decision not to remove command of the army from professional military men, the Independent Socialists withdrew from the interim cabinet, and the Spartacists used the political discontent, and their failure to secure representative seats, to prove the government was ineffective and to foment rebellions among the Berlin workers, who demonstrated and rioted.

Hauptmann noted in his diary that the events regarding the workers' uprising was a "demonstration of the condition of anarchy." At a time when the eyes of the leaders of the Allied Powers were watching Germany's attempt at democracy, German political unity, necessary for survival of democracy, was collapsing. In this respect Hauptmann saw the street

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3Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 26 December 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 6, 4.
fighting in Berlin as "more disastrous than the war against a foreign enemy."  

Ebert realized the military forces in Berlin were inadequate to suppress the Spartacist uprisings, so he appointed Gustav Noske as Minister of Defense and authorized him to raise a militia capable of defending the government. Noske discovered he had little support among the working classes for a militia to suppress a workers' uprising, so to save the government from a communist Putsch, Noske called on former military officers who were organizing independent militia units, Freikorps, to preserve the fatherland from the threat of Bolshevism and general chaos.  

On 29 December 1918, representatives of the Spartacist League met in a closed meeting in which they decided to separate from the Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (USPD or Independent Social Democrat Party of Germany). The Spartacists, who desired a revolution of the proletariat, believed the USPD was too reserved and too conservative in its approach to granting political power to the proletariat. On 30 December, Spartacist representatives, under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg, voted to call their new party the Kommunistische Partei.

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4Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 29 December 1918, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 6, 8.

Deutschlands (KPD or Communist Party of Germany) and seek support from workers to begin a revolution. 6

The Spartacist Revolt began in early January 1919 when workers seized a newspaper office and a few public buildings. While the Spartacist leaders debated a course of action, Noske mustered his Freikorps troops and retook the seized buildings on 11-12 January. Later that same night, Freikorps officers murdered the two rebel leaders. 7 When news of Liebknecht's and Luxemburg's deaths spread, Hauptmann, blandly noted, "As one sows, so shall he reap." 8

Hauptmann noted the futility of the revolution and the concept of the Spartacist movement. "For days, bloody street-fighting in Berlin. The Spartacists would create a dictatorship of the proletariat. They armed the workers and set before them the prize of an unarmed, middle-class world. Based on the Russian model, this would be taken as a birthday present for a new mankind." 9 Hauptmann felt that a Bolshevik revolution would "convert Europe into a spiritual


8 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 16 January 1919, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 6, 9.

9 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 8 January 1919, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 14.
graveyard. [It would] cut off, perhaps forever suffocate, the spheres of religion, art, philosophy; in short, all spheres which are the foundation of personal freedom."\(^{10}\)

Because of the assistance the independent militia units had offered, Ebert's interim government was overly dependent upon the Freikorps for its survival. With the threat from the left greatly diminished, Ebert's government, which met at Weimar on 6 February 1919, "was under the protection of [General Ludwig von] 'Maercker's bayonets.'"\(^{11}\) This dependence upon the Freikorps would trouble the new republic in the future.

On 19 January 1919 Gerhart Hauptmann addressed the National Assembly and presented his ideas, "Für das neue Deutschland" ("On the New Germany"). Hauptmann explained how those who had signed the "Manifesto" in support of the war in 1914 had been "confused, fragmented, ready to burst under the sparkling veneer of unity."\(^{12}\) The old empire was ended and a new Germany must be, "more intimate, and honest."\(^{13}\) As he had earlier protested against political disunity that tore at Germany in the 1880s, Hauptmann

\(^{10}\)Ibid.


\(^{13}\)Ibid.
pointed to the recent Spartacist uprising as "wretched party factionalism" that tore at German unity.¹⁴

You must reconcile your differences, reconcile completely, you innumerable, hostile brothers. As long as the workers strike, nothing is built. United and forewarned, a great blueprint can be constructed, stone upon stone. For the first time the German genius must rely entirely upon itself to build its land, homes, and shrines.¹⁵

Hauptmann's address was an echo of Herder's concept of a pure German state, free from foreign influences. Though Hauptmann wrote the address and delivered it before the Reichstag, the address had numerous, notable signatories. Richard Dehmel, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Ernst Troeltsch, and many others, had signed their names to it to signal their approval and support of Hauptmann's ideas. With a sense of stability, and support from highly visible intellectuals, Ebert's government now turned more of its attention to the Allied Powers and the provisions of peace.

At the peace negotiations in Paris, which had begun in January 1919, French and British ministers had no intention of foregoing the gains made in their secret treaties before hostilities ended, even though they had accepted the Fourteen Points as terms for the armistice and peace. The thirteenth point of Wilson's Fourteen Points dealt with the

¹⁴Ibid., 929.

¹⁵Ibid.
Poland would be an independent nation with a corridor of land giving the nation direct access to the Baltic Sea. Upper Silesia would once again be a part of Poland and Germans would be under foreign rule as they had been before Frederick II annexed the area in the 1740s during the War of the Austrian Succession. Hauptmann had moved into a beautiful home, Wiesenstein, near the mountain city of Agnetendorf in the Riesengebirge of Upper Silesia in 1901, and that home would be in the newly formed Poland. The homeland of his youth would no longer be German, which distressed Hauptmann, because a great number of the population in the Danzig Corridor and Silesia was German speaking, and their culture was German.

Another rumored section of the proposed treaty dealt with repatriation of German prisoners-of-war. According to the rumors, prisoners-of-war and civilians, detained due to alleged crimes committed after the cessation of hostilities, were to remain in captivity and were subject to forced labor. As the rumor of soldiers and civilians being enslaved, and news about other onerous terms of the treaty swept through Germany, Hauptmann penned an emotional, open letter to the Allied and American diplomats in Paris.

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It has been said [by] a nation involved in the war at its end, after the signing of the peace treaty and founding of the League of Nations, approximately eight hundred thousand prisoners of war should be kept and enslaved. The new slave holding nation would be France and their slaves would not be blacks, but children of other European lands, my countrymen.\(^\text{17}\)

Hauptmann admonished the French with their own history and philosophy of basic human rights, since it would be the French who would be "enslaving" Germans.

I do not believe anyone would be blind to these deeds, whether with justified or unjustified hatred . . . least of all the French, who certainly had not forgotten that a well-known Lafayette, in 1789, presented to the French National Assembly the resolution of the universal rights of man. This resolution was passed and the first article of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen" stated, "All men are born free and equal and stay that way under the law."\(^\text{18}\)

Hauptmann continued his tirade against the rumored French enslavement of Germans when he wrote, "Germany would be the only civilized people on earth who could say, 'a portion of my citizens groan under the yoke of slavery.' Against France it could be said they are the only slave holding people in the world."\(^\text{19}\)

Hauptmann felt soldiers should not be blamed or punished for their participation in the war, because even

\(^{17}\)Gerhart Hauptmann, "Offener Brief an den Kongress der Allierten in Paris," 2 February 1919, Um Volk und Geist (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1932), 36.

\(^{18}\)Ibid.

\(^{19}\)Ibid., 40.
though they possessed a "sense of duty," they were formerly under the orders of the kaiser, but in any case, were forced into the field." Hauptmann tried to show how German soldiers were no different from French or English soldiers who had fought for their leaders and states, and that to maintain any prisoners after the appointed time of repatriation would be tantamount to an endorsement of slavery. As it turned out, Hauptmann’s call to end slavery was unnecessary; most German prisoners-of-war returned home soon after the German delegation signed the Versailles Treaty.

On 7 May 1919, the Allied Powers submitted the Treaty of Peace to Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau and the German delegation for their acceptance. On 29 May, the German government issued a formal reply to the Versailles Treaty in which it recognized the same problems Hauptmann had noted regarding German unity. Germany had to relinquish lands in Poland, "nearly the whole of the province of West Prussia, which is preponderantly German. . . . We must renounce upper Silesia . . . although it has been in close political connection [and] . . . is distinct in German life."  

\footnote{Ibid.}

\footnote{Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, "German Observations on the Conditions of Peace," The Treaty of Peace, 39.}
Recognizing the Germans made a strong argument for portions of Upper Silesia, the Allied Powers, in their "Reply of the Allied and Associated Powers to the Observations of the German Delegation on the Conditions of Peace, and Ultimatum," rectified the treaty and agreed to allow a small portion of Upper Silesia's populace to vote on union with Poland or Germany, the plebescite to be held in March 1921. At the same time, the Allied Powers issued an ultimatum to the German government to accept the Treaty with rectifications of 16 June as "their last word" or face "such steps as [the Allied and Associated Powers] think needful to enforce their Terms."

Hauptmann saw the ultimatum and the demands of the treaty as "gigantic, and naked as a cynical, cold, angel of death . . . a fuming Moloch, a product of the good and pure genius of mankind and humanity." Walther Rathenau, the industrialist and close personal friend of Hauptmann, who had participated in economic discussions on reparations and payment schedules, believed, "Germany will be one of the poorest of countries. How poor she will be does not depend on herself alone, but on the power and the will for mischief

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23 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 19 June 1919, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 17.
of others — who hate us." He felt the harsh terms would keep Germans from economic recovery, and prevent a political unity and support for the new German republic.

The ultimatum created a condition of near revolt within Ebert’s government, with some leaders in the army and the Freikorps desiring to ignore the demands. In fact, generals Below and Loßberg began to plan a defensive line along the Elbe. Generals Maercker and Pabst, whose Freikorps troops had successfully quashed the Spartacist revolts in January and then again in April, suggested to Noske, Minister of Defense, that he become leader of a military dictatorship. General Groener, a realist, advised Ebert on 23 June, the deadline to accept the Treaty, that military resistance was futile, and that he recommended the government accept the terms. Just minutes before the expiration of the ultimatum, Ebert’s government formally accepted the conditions of the Versailles Treaty.

Hauptmann had hoped a new, united Germany could be created by the sheer will of the German people. "It must be created, an awareness of German unity. . . The nation must penetrate its national treasures of spirit and mind." After newspapers published the territorial clauses the

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Allied Powers demanded, and to which the German delegation agreed, Hauptmann wrote against them. "They [the Allied Powers] have corrupted the protection of a land and a people who have ... laid down their arms." Hauptmann wanted to protect German cultural unity, and in his eyes, the Allied demands destroyed this unity. The Allied Powers were punishing people who had not taken an active role in the conflict, "brave [people] who had lost mothers, fathers, wives, children . . . in defense of their families and land." He believed all Germans needed to be a part of the greater German Kultur, which would cease to exist if Germany lost territory and population, including his homeland of Silesia.

Other intellectuals shared Hauptmann's ideas, and they publicly offered their opinions. The theologian Ernst Troeltsch, one of the signatories to Hauptmann's address "Für das neue Deutschland," tried to explain why the provisions of the Treaty were so harsh. He acknowledged that the German declaration of war and invasion of Belgium made Germany appear to be "exclusively responsible for the war." In his call for a unified Germany, Troeltsch said

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36 Ibid.


the allied delegates at Versailles acted as a "court of inquisition" for an imperialistic "division of the world and the expropriation of land." He chastised the governments of both the Empire and the Republic for failing to show support of a settlement because it "was viewed as defeatism." Because the "political leadership was powerless," the nation divided, the Allied Powers could use "innuendo to prove Germany's desire for world conquest, its war guilt, and its violation of accepted military conduct." In agreement with Hauptmann, Troeltsch believed a weak German government had helped bring defeat and harsh terms to the German people. Paul von Hindenburg termed this weakness as a "stab in the back" to the German General Staff at a time when the government's complete support was necessary for a military victory. The idea that members of the government were responsible for the defeat and harsh provisions of the Versailles Treaty led to further problems.

Mohr, 1924), 314.

Ibid.

Ibid., 320.

Ibid.

On 26 June 1919, upon news that the German government had agreed to the Versailles Treaty, Hauptmann began work on an essay, "Der Friedensvertrag von Versailles," ("The Peace Treaty of Versailles"). Hauptmann probably never intended for the essay to be published, because he wrote it in one of his diary journals. Hauptmann referred to the Treaty and its provisions as "A document, which, in its complete, inhuman reality, signals the nadir of the European soul." He mirrored the thoughts of many Germans, even members of Ebert's cabinet who resigned their positions rather than be associated with the "war guilt" clauses, and felt that the French were using the Treaty solely as a means to punish Germany instead of trying to bring about a lasting peace. "It is Clemenceau's idea, through the blight of Versailles, to suggest to the German people what the blessing of peace should bring: the gruesome torture of a slow, lingering death." Hauptmann even said that Clemenceau would cause the sun to not shine "on Germans and Germany if he could." He even denounced the German delegation for having signed

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35Ibid.

36Ibid., 932.
the document and said that they, and the other delegates had "begun Europe's suicide." 37

The Weimar government's power and political prestige declined even more, especially in the mind of the Freikorps leaders, when the Council of Principal Allied Powers at Versailles ordered Ebert's government to recall Freikorps troops that had been fighting bolsheviks in Lithuania, and return the land to the Russians. After Ebert's government agreed with the Council's demands, Freikorps leaders felt the government had abandoned them and united with political leader Wolfgang Kapp in an attempt to seize control of the government. The Putsch failed. 38

Hauptmann felt the Kapp Putsch had been an attempt to reinstate Prussian ideology into Germany, thus disrupting the political unity that seemingly existed following the Spartacist uprising, and denounced it as "a power of disunity." 39 After the failure of the Kapp Putsch in 1920, and the communist rebellions, the government of the Weimar

37 Ibid., 933.


39 Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary Entry, 20 March 1919, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 6, 29.
Republic settled into an uneasy political existence.\textsuperscript{40} The German people adapted to a rapidly changing world in both the sciences and the arts, and Hauptmann became their unofficial, but commonly recognized, writer laureate. Hauptmann's dramas did not match his earlier plays in depth of meaning, but his prose works explored the political and cultural changes that the German people experienced.

Though his political views were always ill-defined, it seemed to his critics and friends he constantly gave a vote of confidence to whatever policies and parties were in the ascendancy. From 1919 through 1920, Hauptmann made more than a dozen public addresses that called for a renewal of both Germany's cultural tradition and faith in Germany's youth. He suggested a new form of education that would allow the youth to grow without the ideologies of Prussian militarism that had led Germany into war. He presented his ideas on youth and education to the National Assembly on 6 February 1919.\textsuperscript{41}

Hauptmann's involvement in politics and association with governmental leaders did not preclude his love of writing drama and prose works. In 1918 he wrote his most


famous novel, "Der Ketzer von Soana" ("The Heretic of Soana") which young and old enjoyed, though it satirized Catholic-Christian religious practices. Through the work, Hauptmann explained that the human life-force, sexual activity, was stronger than religion and more necessary for survival than religious faith. Hauptmann's experiences as a young boy on his uncle's farm in Lederose had proved to him that Christianity prepared people for death, while sexual fulfillment prepared people for life. When the priest in "Der Ketzer," Francesco, succumbs to his sexual desires, he "took the first enraptured steps" to salvation of his life as a human being. After his venture into his own humanness, Francesco "no longer felt the slightest fear" of eternal damnation and original sin. "No one out there could harm him. His superiors did not have the power, nor could the Pope interfere with his enjoyment." Francesco had taken control of his life, and to live free from the constraints of religious inhibitions proved to be his salvation.

"Der weiße Heiland" ("The White Savior"), which Hauptmann wrote in 1920, his first play written after the Great War, was a historical, poetic drama about the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs in 1520. The play was similar to


43Ibid.
"Florian Geyer" in that it presented the current political turmoil in Germany in the form of a play. When Aztec warriors kill a Spaniard whom Montezuma believes is a "messenger" of the god Quetzacoatl, the king condemns his own son to death for speaking in favor of the violent deed. Montezuma's son, states that the Spaniards were not gods and denounces the invaders. "What madness! Even if these/ Lead the lightning and the thunder,/ Ride the sun's loud braying dragons,/ They are not invulnerable." In a manner similar to "Florian Geyer," Hauptmann's condemnation of the government's acceptance of the Versailles Treaty as control over Germany is seen in the young Aztecs who denounce the foreign control over their empire. Though Montezuma desires support for his acceptance of the invaders, he denounces his own sons for not accepting his wishes.

Poisonous vermin creep around me, Undermining -- cowards false And blind -- the ground on which I tred. You are serpents and not columns! Columns I seek for, and foundations Of my people; pillars, beams, To soar, bear-up, endure, and hold, Against time and eternity, The holy temple of my house. 45

Cortez demands that Montezuma remain a prisoner in his own palace, and when Montezuma refuses, Cortez states, "It


45Ibid., 152.
is best to ratify/ What, denied, would still take place./ For in such ways we [Montezuma] can save/ At least the semblance of our power."The Spanish tell the Aztec king that if he gives in to their demands, his people, will have the illusion that he is their king, when in reality they will be the rulers.

Cortez's statement is a thinly veiled view of the Allied and Associated Powers' ultimatum for acceptance of the Versailles Treaty, and similar in content to Georges Clemenceau's letter of 16 June 1919 in response to Brockdorff-Rantzau's rebuttal of the Treaty's provisions. Clemenceau stated that if the Germans did not accept the treaty as amended, the armistice ending conflict would then "terminate, and the Allied and Associated Powers will take such steps as they think necessary to enforce their terms."

When Montezuma discovers that the Spanish are conquerors, not gods, he calls them "Demons in the shape of men,/ Full of lust and evil within,/ Without heart and without soul?" Cortez's men chain Montezuma and then beat him until he is on the verge of death. Knowing that he is

"Ibid., 267.


Ibid., 314.
dying of wounds "no skill can close," Montezuma can only ask, "Was that for the kingdom's good?" before he curses the "White Savior" and asks his people to "murder, murder without pity" the "robbing fiends." 49

In his two works after the war ended, Hauptmann displayed his contempt for foreign intervention in German affairs, as well as his displeasure with the German government's acceptance of what he considered to be an unfair peace. He possessed a faith in the German people and their desire to be a united people and wrote of them in his plays and tales. The timing of the plays and their ideological content are too similar to political and social events in 1918-1919 to be considered coincidental.

In January, 1921, Hauptmann delivered the most political speech of his public career, "Deutsche Einheit" ("German Unity"), while all Germany celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the German Empire. Hauptmann spoke of unity as the "highest national honor." 50 He viewed the threat from foreign enemies to be over, and saw domestic, political factionalism as the greatest threat to German unity. "As of today, we have no foreign enemies, and hopefully none domestic; [with a] unique exception: the

49 Ibid., 321, 339.

50Gerhart Hauptmann, "Deutsche Einheit," Speech for Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the German Empire, 18 January 1921, Um Volk und Geist, 49.
[political] feud. The feud is not only a dangerous domestic enemy, it is our most dangerous enemy." But Hauptmann had faith in Germans and their ability to rise above petty, political adversity to achieve, and maintain unity.

We momentarily stand in a reconstruction, a monstrous structural crisis, which only the strongest nature can overcome. Yet, we will overcome it! We are bound to believe that this reconstruction will be finally, and ultimately rejected. Actually, we are obligated to this belief! To the belief in our rich and honorable future which will be brought about by our strength in unity . . . . Our password is: Peace at home! Peace abroad! . . . Work for humane progress! We search our hearts and need to think for ourselves, [to find] the wealth of the German spirit! We must become engrossed with German culture and we will find enough treasures, our strongest self-assurance to recover our natural courage and pride.\(^52\)

To Hauptmann, German unity was a product of German Kultur, and the restoration and preservation of that Kultur rested with German youth. "I do not believe in the politicians who already attend to the grass growing on the grave of the German people. . . . New generations must rejuvenate us."\(^53\)

The first real challenge to German unity, after the government ratified the Versailles Treaty, appeared as the March date for the plebescite for Upper Silesia to remain a part of Germany or become part of Poland neared. It was no

\(^{51}\) Ibid.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 56.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
surprise that Hauptmann called for those Silesians who had a voice in their political destiny to remain part of Germany. The vote resulted in a split, with three-fifths of voting Silesians electing to stay a part of Germany while the majority of the population in Cieszyn Silesia voted to remain a part of Poland, and the issue of Upper Silesia being a part of Germany or Poland would be decided by a Board of Ambassadors.\textsuperscript{54}

On 16 July 1921, Hauptmann addressed a crowded Berlin Symphony Hall. He excited the crowd when he said, "We have the right and the duty . . . to speak for a greater, unified German nation."\textsuperscript{55} In his speech, he criticized the Versailles Treaty for dictating Silesia's separation from Germany, even though the Allied Powers had amended their diktat and now would allow the Silesian population to decide its own national preference. Hauptmann excited the crowd further when he placed Silesia in its historical perspective with Germany. "Upper Silesia was already a part of the old Germanic nation at the time of the Roman Empire. After that it was part of Prussia and known therefore [as] a part of the German Empire. On the question of their [Silesians]


Germanness, there is no debate." He warned the "Supreme Council" that Silesia would become a "source of conflict" if Silesians were forced to withdraw from Germany. Hauptmann was providing nationalistic rhetoric that appealed to the German ideology of the time.

In the first half of 1921, Hauptmann had become the voice of German nationalism and unity. During August 1921, Hauptmann vacationed on the island of Hiddensee in the Baltic. While there, he "entertained the idea of his candidacy [for President] and spoke often of politics." The idea of Hauptmann's candidacy had begun in May 1920, when Max Müller, a young friend, critic Julius Meyer-Graefe, and Hauptmann's son, Ivo, met with Gerhart to discuss the possibility of his running for office. Meyer-Graefe and Müller had discussed the ramifications of Hauptmann's candidacy just before the Kapp Putsch, but postponed any serious discussion with Hauptmann because of the political unrest and the chance that the military might create a dictatorship.

On 23 August 1921, Hauptmann received a

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56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 724.
59 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 9 May 1920, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 45.
letter from Prince von Bülow who wrote of Hauptmann’s duty to run for office. "He mentioned my intercession for Upper Silesia and my speech on German unity. ‘If the duty would be laid before me,’ I must remind myself of Florian Geyer -- 'From truth I will never stray.'" Hauptmann "appreciated" the offer for candidacy as the "highest honor" that could be bestowed upon him, but he could not decide if he would be the right candidate for Reichspräzident. He not only feared he might not be the best choice for the office, but also feared that no one other than his friends would want him to run. "I must completely believe that such consent [to announce his candidacy] might not be universally accepted." His candidacy had to be "of the highest and most honorable mandate of the new Germany, rather than a symbol of the unity of domestic peace."

Other events may have helped Hauptmann to decide not to announce his candidacy. Three men, whom Hauptmann admired as stalwarts of democracy and the Weimar government, had been assassinated. Kurt Eisner, an editor for Vorwärts and

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60 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 23 August 1921, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 80, 37. [Von Bülow’s letter was either lost or destroyed, and the only evidence it ever existed is Hauptmann’s diary.]

61 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, n.d., GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 269, 6.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.
leader of the Independent Socialist party in Bavaria, had called for peace in November 1918, prior to the revolution that ousted the kaiser. On 23 February 1919, after elections had ousted the Independent Socialists, a young noble shot and killed Eisner as he walked to Munich’s Landtag to resign his position as Bavaria’s Prime Minister. Hugo Haase, leader of the Independent Socialists, was shot and killed on the steps of the Reichstag. Then, in late August, 1921, Matthias Erzberger, Weimar’s Minister of Finance and the head of the German delegation that had signed the armistice, was shot and killed as he walked in the Black Forest.

Whatever his reasons, Hauptmann issued a public statement denying his candidacy. In a newspaper declaration Hauptmann noted,

Friends share with me over the telephone their desire to know whether I will announce my candidacy for Reichs President. This announcement [Absicht] is of no interest to me. I now announce, after careful and most decisive thought: I will at no time give up my literary career and enter political life. It goes against my inclination and is not suited to me. Therefore, I hope all rumors have been, once and forever, refuted.  

Hauptmann, who had earlier in his life believed and wrote politics was not meant for him, or he for it, now placed

\[^{64}\text{Gerhart Hauptmann, "Dementi der Präsidentschaftskandidatur," Sämtliche Werke, 11: 964.}\]
himself out of harm's way, and outside the conservative
circle that had desired his participation.

In an era of political and social change, Gerhart
Hauptmann was one of the few intellectuals who subscribed to
the idea of democracy. Hermann Glaser points out that
Stefan George believed "art and culture, supposedly the
creations of a few singular individuals, would be destroyed
by the apathetic masses; 'banal mediocrity' must not be
allowed to rule." According to Glaser, even the
unpolitical [sic] Thomas Mann took a stance against
republican government and thought. "Western democracy would
deprive Germany of its best and deepest attribute: its
problematic nature; Germany would become 'boring, obvious,
stupid, and un-German.'"

Walther Rathenau, Germany's Foreign Minister, shared
many of the ideas Stefan George and Thomas Mann possessed.
He believed the Germans of Tacitus' age, "were a loving and
turbulent people," but modern Germans were unoriginal with
"High qualities of intellect and heart . . . , [but] weak." Instead of the "character of will" that Tacitus
described, the modern German "had substituted discipline.

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65Hermann Glaser, The Cultural Roots of National

66Ibid.

But discipline is not nationality; it is an external instrument and when it breaks it leaves -- nothing."\textsuperscript{68}

Discipline led Germans to, "seek no responsibility, obey rather than rule . . . and never question what is imposed upon us."\textsuperscript{69} To Rathenau, the Germans had become apathetic.

Rathenau believed socialism fed apathy that destroyed German culture and prevented Germans from realizing the concept of a united nation. Socialism did not lead to "national dignity nor to any mission for humanity."\textsuperscript{70} Rathenau felt Germans could not comprehend the idea of equality, which was needed for democracy to exist.

The average man, who cannot understand equality of human dignity, equality before God, thinks nothing of demanding equality in externals, equality in . . . vocation. But this sham equality is the enemy of the true, for it does not fit man's burden to his strength; it creates overburdened, misused natures, driving the one to scamped work and hypocrisy, and the other to cynicism.\textsuperscript{71}

Rathenau's public beliefs of Germans not being able to lead their own destiny and his having signed the Versailles Treaty, led to his murder on 24 June 1922. Two days before the murder, on 22 June, Bella Fromm attended an informal dinner party at the Rathenau home. Fromm noted that violence in Germany was widespread, the threat to the

\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{69}Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 119.
republic critical. Rathenau agreed and worried about the radicals from both the right and left who "pop up" in so many groups; "Freikorps, Stahlhelm, National Socialists . . . and whatnot." Rathenau noted his view of Germans after the war ended. "When the war was over, the people could not find their way back to a normal state of life. Now they do not even want to get back into regular activities. The lust to kill and rob is in them." On the morning of 24 March, three former supporters of the failed Kapp Putsch and disgruntled members of the disbanded Freikorps ambushed Rathenau on his way to his office and murdered him.

Hauptmann, Rathenau's long time friend noted, "Rathenau was prematurely taken away [from us] . . . assassinated by a misled German, probably a young man of [a] military nature." Hauptmann shared in the people's grief and was to have delivered the eulogy at the Reichstag on 29 June, but at the last minute he was asked to stand down. "The loss grows more painful and heavier with each day. It is as if I lost a part of my body: personally, and as a German. I

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73 Ibid.
74 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 26 June 1922, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 6, 121.
feel maimed." The labor unions called a national day of mourning and parades in Rathenau’s honor wound through Germany’s cites. “In Berlin alone, the number of marchers was estimated at one million.” Nationwide, more than seven million Germans actively mourned Rathenau’s death.

Hauptmann’s grief for the loss of his close friend in 1922 was mixed with a national celebration of his own birthday. In Breslau, fourteen of his plays were staged in a two week span of time. S. Fischer Verlag, Hauptmann’s exclusive publishing house, reprinted his plays, and they sold numerous copies. Even Hauptmann’s lesser post-war works, "Der Ketzer von Soana" and "Der weisse Heiland," more than doubled their previous sales. According to Eberhard Hilscher, Hauptmann was invited to, and spoke in, more cities during the summer of 1922 than any other author during any other revival of an author’s work in all of German history." One of Hauptmann’s more famous early works, "Hanneles Himmelfahrt," was made into a movie and premiered on 22 April 1922.78

75Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 29 June 1922, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 6, 122.

76Otto Friedrich, Before the Deluge, 115.


78Ibid., 529-530.
Hauptmann’s fame during the early years of the Weimar era grew with the plethora of works he produced prior to his birthday celebration. In 1921, Hauptmann wrote a comedic play, "Peter Brauer" based upon his art school days, and "Indipohdi," a fantasy reminiscent of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Both were a drastic reversal of the nationalistic themes he expressed in "Der Ketzer von Soana" and "Der weiße Heiland." In "Brauer" and "Indipohdi," the characters reveal a lust for life, an optimism not found in the political criticisms of the two earlier works, but felt as the new government and state rebounded from the disaster of Versailles and the attempted Putsches. His most recent novel, "Phantom" (1921), was a money-making venture, filled with murder, sex, imprisonment, and the idea of personal freedom, themes Germans commonly addressed during the early years of the republic. "Phantom" was also made into a movie and released on 15 November 1922.

Thomas Mann, who had earlier denounced the republic, now embraced the left and republicanism, a backlash to the violence of the rightists. In a speech Mann delivered a few months after Rathenau’s murder, *Von deutscher Republik*, he voiced his support of the republic. Karl Guthke states Mann’s speech was "a manifesto for liberalism and parliamentary democracy, a fanfare for the enlightened values of Western humanism and civilization of which he had previously been skeptical, favoring instead such things as
culture . . . monarchy . . . the German soul, and even war to preserve them all." In the same speech Mann publicly stated what most Germans felt, especially those men who had asked Hauptmann to run for the presidency: Hauptmann was the "King of the Republic."80

Hauptmann's published articles express an acceptance of republican idealism, while his plays and prose works display an optimism concerning the new age. In a widely published essay, "Ungebrochener deutscher Idealismus" (1923), Hauptmann expressed his support of democracy in a manner similar to Thomas Mann's defense the previous year. He praised the new Germany that was "not enslaved by princes."81 This idea was repetitive of the anti-monarchical feelings he had addressed when he spoke to the Reichstag on the new duty of education.82 It seems Hauptmann blamed the monarchy for disparity of wealth and social ills. In the era of the republic, Hauptmann


80 Ibid., 373.


believed, each man had the same opportunity to succeed, and
the level of success was based upon personal initiative.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Weimar era, according to many critics of the time,
was an era of decadence. It was the era of dada, an
anarchist art form that ridiculed conventional society and
conventional art. According to the dadaists, Dada had no
meaning. During the first meeting of the National Assembly,
as Ebert founded the new Weimar Republic, Johannes Baader,
Berlin's Chief of Dada, a certified madman according to the
police, disrupted the proceedings and called the republic
itself a "Dadaist demonstration."\footnote{Otto Friedrich, \textit{Before the Deluge}, 148.} Many Germans saw the
Republic as meaningless, or at best, a mediocre attempt at
government.

Hauptmann did not criticize this era as he had
criticized the Wilhelmine era; others replaced Hauptmann as
critics of the Weimar era. Erich Kästner, for example,
author of \textit{Fabian}, a pessimistic mirror of the age, said
Berlin was in decline. Stefan Zweig wrote,

\begin{quote}
The Germans brought to perversion all their
thoroughness and love of system. Made-up boys
with artificial waistlines promenaded along the
Ku-Damm . . . In darkened bars one could see high
officials and bankers courting drunken sailors.
. . . Amid a general collapse of values, insanity
seized middle-class people who so far had been
orderly and rigid. To be suspected of virginity
\end{quote}
would have been considered a disgrace in any Berlin girls’ high school."

According to Henry Pachter, Hermann Hesse and Heinrich Mann showed great contempt for the age. "They flailed the decadent society and its . . . defenders, its hypocrisy, its indifference and complacency . . . its lust-seeking, profit-seeking immorality." Hauptmann displayed an acceptance of the decadence amid an era of peace and German unity.

While Pachter and others note the decadence of the Weimar era, Peter Gay states that the era was one that held the "greatest collection of . . . intellect, talent, and scholarship the world has ever seen." Gay believes the Weimar era to be one of a cultural renaissance, a "Periclean age." Hauptmann’s works and ideas fit into both the decadent Weimar of which Pachter reports and the renaissance culture about which Gay writes.

Most Hauptmann critics and biographers suggest that Hauptmann felt at home in this decadent age. He had a young male companion who accompanied him on nearly all his vacations and took the poet’s dictation of most of his

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86 Ibid., 141-142.


88 Ibid.
literary works. Hauptmann also drank considerably more than he had before 1918. According to Rudolf Zischer, the Hauptmann archivist at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, Hauptmann was seldom seen in private or at public functions without an alcoholic beverage in his hand. When writing, he dictated his works while pacing, a copy of Goethe in one hand and a glass of wine or whiskey in the other.\(^9\) Hans von Brecius also states that the influence of alcohol on Hauptmann's writings is evident because of the script size of the letters when he wrote in his diaries. The more Hauptmann drank, the larger the script.\(^9\) The size of script increased in many of Hauptmann's diary entries after 1914, with a greater frequency after 1922. Perhaps the death of Marie, his first wife, and Germany's defeat in the Great War led to the drinking and hindered Hauptmann's spirit and creative urge.

In a popular novel, "Die Insel der Großen Mutter" (1924), Hauptmann writes a modern-day fantasy, where one hundred women are shipwrecked on a South Pacific island with a lone male survivor, a twelve-year-old boy, Phaon. One of the younger ladies, Babette, gives birth to a son, and even though Hauptmann never states Phaon was the sexually

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precocious father, the innuendo via winks and smirks makes the claim clear. Because of Phaon's ability, the island is soon teeming with male children, and the women see the males as a threat to their well established society. The men are segregated from the women, but a rebellion of sexual lust, in the form of an orgy, follows a few years later, and a new society, a reflection of Weimar's sexual decadence, appears on the island. Hauptmann did not find that the decadence was a flaw in society. Years later he told C.F.W. Behl, "I would surely never have written it [Insel] had I not, for years, seen the many beautiful and often totally naked women's bodies on Hiddensee, and seen what they did there." In 1925 and 1926 hints of a dissatisfaction with the cultural and moral decadence of Weimar can be seen in two of Hauptmann's dramas, "Veland" and the poetic drama, "Till Eulenspiegel," the beginnings of which he read to the Reichstag. Till is an airman returned to society from the Great War after the armistice. He drives his wagon aimlessly throughout post-war Germany, and witnesses the misery of a people who had sacrificed too much of their possessions along with their souls.

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Till falls victim to the despair of the people, and witnesses a further degradation of society through the murder of a pacifist nobleman, the failed Kapp Putsch, and the general strike that ended the rebellion. Till begins to hallucinate, and he becomes bitter in his despair over society's development.

I lament my people! I lament the endless, strenuous, thorny ascent of mankind, I lament perennial war which no peace will ever end, I lament faith, lament both knowledge and error! I lament the Lord on the Cross, the Vicar of Christ and his antipope, Martin Luther -- all these I lament! I lament those, too, who bled for their people, bled for mankind, bled in war, and bled for their faith, Who bled for knowledge and those who bled for error, Who bled for Christ on the Cross, bled for His mighty Sheperd in Rome, and those who bled for Luther!  

Till fought against foreign forces who would dominate the German people, but leaves his culturally destroyed country and travels to Greece, where he finds peace and contentment in a pastoral life. Then, at peace with the world, Till commits suicide, drowning in a mountain stream.

In a letter to his friend Alfred Kerr, Hauptmann said he was compelled to write "Till," because "there was nothing

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\[94\]Ibid., 152.
else to be done; it had to be written."95 He felt the play "was a kind of self-defense against the time."96 In a manner similar to his earlier nationalistic plays, Hauptmann's "Till" signaled his desire for the Kultur that he believed was missing in the Weimar era.

Hauptmann's lack of social criticism during the Weimar era is atypical to his earlier works, since in his earlier plays and writings he had defended German Kultur, the past, and the common man, and stormed against the modern world. Due to the reparation payments and an attempt to thwart French encroachment into the Rhineland in 1923, inflation wreaked havoc among the populace. There was a "faith in the power of science to solve social problems."97 In many industries, machines were replacing manpower. In 1923, for example, men used picks and axes to extract more than half of the coal from mines in the Ruhr. By 1929, workers used explosives, drills, and a mechanized conveyor belt, so that less than ten per cent of the coal mined was extracted by hand.98 Because of the use of machinery and the return of six million soldiers to the work force, there was widespread

95Hauptmann to Kerr, 24 May 1927, Gerhart Hauptmann: Gedächtnisausstellung, 226-227.

96Behl, Zwiesprache, 136.


98Ibid., 115.
unemployment. Hauptmann had once criticized modernity for its machines that had replaced weavers and for its railroads that intruded into rural society; but now he wrote nothing. He had shown how faith in science had led men away from their cultural roots and into a dependence upon the modern world, a dependence which then only exacerbated the social problems modernity had created. His diaries give no hint as to why he did not criticize Weimar society as he had the Wilhelmine period. Perhaps he felt too much a part of a society that was honoring him.

Other problems existed in the Republic which in an earlier age Hauptmann would have assaulted. Farmers could not compete with inexpensive foodstuffs imported from the United States and the Soviet Union. In an effort to cut labor costs through modernization, farmers borrowed money and fell further into debt. The industrial wealth from the Saar and Ruhr valleys that had led to Germany’s economic and industrial competition with the world was now being exported to France and England as part of the reparations payments. With the great numbers of unemployed workers, the Republic printed more money to insure the workers’ livelihoods, in accordance with Article 163 of the constitution. The expansion of economic and welfare provisions had reached the limits of their efficacy, and the German population struggled with inflation, poverty, and social decline.
According to Peter Gay, "there was a deep, widespread discontent with politics in the Republic."99 When Hauptmann had addressed the Reichstag in 1919 on the "Duty of Education," he pointed out that Germany’s government must build for its youth, and Germany’s youth were now "restless . . . [and] often incurably estranged from the Republic."100 Many German youth turned to Stefan George and the various Youth Movements to provide the stability the Republic lacked.

Stefan George was an intellectual giant "looking for heroes in an unheroic time."101 George was anti-democratic, and believed in the natural aristocracy. Through his Blätter für die Kunst he resurrected Friedrich Nietzsche’s idea of the Übermensch, and the teachings of Plutarch, who glorified heroes and great individuals. Peter Gay shows how one member of George’s Kreis, Ernst Kantorowicz, revived the legend of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II, the thirteenth century Kaiser. Kantorowicz denigrated science as the solution to the problems that faced his day and instead believed an understanding of great men, natural aristocrats, would provide the knowledge for Germany’s

99Peter Gay, Weimar Culture, 70.
100Ibid., 77.
101Ibid., 47.
future leaders. Kantorowicz resurrected the myth of the "kaiser under the mountain," waiting to save a dying German people and Kultur.

Many intellectuals in the Weimar Republic saw inflation and the economic problems as moral problems "caused by the irresponsible and immoral behaviour of Germans who abandoned the good habits they had maintained before the War." According to Richard Bessel, the Ministry of Labor believed young women, who were now more decadent and immoral than they had been before the Great War, needed to be taught how to become obedient Hausfrauen. Because the Versailles Treaty forced the end to conscription, young men "who would otherwise have been performing military drill" were now "loose in civil society," which led to an "increase in unruly behaviour and allegedly morally subversive activities such as going to the cinema, visiting cafés, and attending dances." Many intellectuals saw the problems with youth as systemic problems, a dissolution of social and moral standards, a disenchantment with the Republic.

The Wandervogel, a youth movement of the 1920s, viewed industrialization and modernity as "the symbol of the coming

\footnote{Ibid., 49-51.}

\footnote{Richard Bessel, Germany After the First World War (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 246.}

\footnote{Ibid., 250.}
Most members of the Wandervogel were of the middle class, and saw their denial of modernity and their marches through the countryside to visit Germany's past "as a haven from a Germany they could not respect or even understand." Their search for wholeness in a meaningless age led many of them to Stefan George and a search for the return of the "kaiser under the mountain," someone who would provide order, discipline, and meaning to life and Germany.

Hauptmann also awaited the resurrection of the "kaiser under the mountain" to rescue Germany from the cosmopolitan world. Hauptmann's nationalism was still alive despite Germany's humiliating defeat in the Great War and the multitude of civil disturbances that tore at German unity. Hauptmann needed to find the "one" individual, the "savior" who would rescue German culture and lead the German people and nation to a position of prominence in the modern world.

Karl Guthke proposes that Hauptmann stayed involved in politics until 1927, when he wrote what Guthke called, "his last published statement in favor of the Republic." Hauptmann compared Friedrich Ebert with Abraham Lincoln, and

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said he was the "savior of Germany in her most dire need." Guthke says Hauptmann denounces "rightist" circles who were "not grateful" for Ebert's achievements.

There is not any reference to "rightist" groups in Hauptmann's open letter of praise for Ebert, just a denouncement for any group of men "who hide and say nothing but bring about defamation." If Hauptmann denounced the rightist groups, his later transformation to the right would be very difficult to understand. But Hauptmann wrote and spoke too often of those people whom he considered to be out of touch with German heritage, German tradition and Kultur. The evidence of Hauptmann's nationalism and political participation makes his denouncement of those "non-cultural" men more believable than a condemnation of rightist groups that proposed the resurrection of German heritage.

Hauptmann eagerly embraced the idealism of the National Socialists, and in them and Hitler the re-creation of the Volk, German Kultur, and Germany itself, after the Nazis seized power in 1933. He would stay in Germany after 1933, when the intelligentsia fled the Nazis, and suffer the indignities of his association with Hitler's regime. He stayed and witnessed Germany's utter destruction.

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Throughout all of this time, whether in agreement or not with the politics of the age, he remained faithful to Germany.

From Hitler's early days with the fledgling National Socialist German Workers Party in Munich in 1922 to his appointment as Reichskanzler in 1933, Adolf Hitler’s rhetoric spoke to the youth and the old alike who were disenchanted with the economic problems, moral decay, and cultural shallowness of the Weimar Republic. To many Germans, he represented the "kaiser under the mountain" who would once again raise Germany to its rightful place in the world. He played upon von Hindenburg’s "stab in the back" theory to secure the allegiance of those who had been forced to sacrifice during the Great War. He appealed to the youth who had joined the Wandervogel, those who read Nietzsche and George, and he promised a resurrection of the German past. He appealed to all Germans who felt the Allied Powers had cheated Germany at Versailles. Hitler was able to enthrall the masses with promises of what he would do to the Jews, who he said had "stabbed Germany in the back," and promised revenge for the humiliations of the Versailles Treaty and the lost war.

In an age when Hauptmann’s critical voice was silent, Adolf Hitler criticized all that Hauptmann would not. When Hauptmann had once criticized social inequities and moral degeneration, the public had raised him as an icon to German
Geist and unity. Now he seemed to be resting on his laurels and basking in the acceptance he had achieved in society. He still felt there were social ills and injustices, but his pen was silent. Hauptmann left the role of social critic to others and removed himself from the realm of public politics. Adolf Hitler would take Hauptmann's place as social and political critic and begin a movement that would shatter the social, cultural, and political world.
Hauptmann and National Socialism, the Jewish Question, and the Second World War, 1923-1946

Hauptmann's shift away from republican idealism in 1927 was no more than an affirmation of the shift in his literary works of the same period. He had shown his hatred for foreign intervention in German affairs and, like many Germans, felt that Ebert's government had betrayed him by allowing it. Hauptmann's plays reflected both his ideas on German affairs and the decadence of the age, the lack of a German Kultur, and a rise in moral degradation.

After Adolf Hitler's failed 1923 Putsch in Bavaria, Hauptmann placed more blame on the Weimar government for having created a situation that would allow chaos. In 1924, when the mayor of Dessau requested Hauptmann to make a speech in favor of the democrats, Hauptmann wrote an open letter of refusal that was published in both the Berliner Zeitung and the Breslauer Zeitung. In "An die Demokraten in Anhalt" Hauptmann said his support of any political party was a "risky proposition." He wrote, "If I were of your opinion on democracy, I would [come], but I am not entirely of that opinion. One can say and know something good and do
no more than if one had been allowed to mishandle things."¹
This anti-democratic bent is remarkable because he had
written against monarchists, and would do so again, but now,
stood "over there, where the Wartburg youth, where Fritz
Reuter, and where . . . Bismarck had stood."² In his
refusal, Hauptmann hinted that he was moving to the right in
his political ideas.

In 1932 Hauptmann celebrated his seventieth birthday,
and all Germany celebrated the event as "Vor
Sonnenuntergang" ("Before Sunset") premiered in February.
According to Peter Sprengel, Friedrich Ebert began the year-
long celebration stating, "By honoring Gerhart Hauptmann the
German nation honors itself."³ The city fathers in
Frankfurt am Main voted to award Hauptmann their city's
Goethe Prize for literary contributions. In the city of
Breslau, the center of many bad memories for Germany's
greatest living poet, a new theater bearing his name opened,
Theater Gerhart Hauptmann. In Munich, celebrants publicly
re-read Thomas Mann's celebration speech of Hauptmann, "Von

¹Gerhart Hauptmann, "An die Demokraten in Anhalt,"
Sämtliche Werke, 11 vols., ed. Hans-Egon Hass (Propyläen

²Ibid.

³Peter Sprengel, Gerhart Hauptmann: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung
(Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1984), 226.
deutscher Republik," that proclaimed Hauptmann "King of the Weimar Republic," the "spirit of Germany and the Republic."

Following Ebert's speech, and the public's initial exhibition of praise, Hauptmann and Margarete travelled to the United States, where the once ill-received author now graciously accepted a warm welcome. New York City mayor Jimmy Walker gave a lavish reception, in which Hauptmann was the guest of honor and received the Key-to-the-City. On 29 February, Columbia University's President awarded Hauptmann an honorary doctorate. Hauptmann humbly accepted the degree and stated, "If I were not a German, I would be an American."

President Herbert Hoover held a dinner reception in Hauptmann's honor, when Gerhart and Margarete visited Washington, D.C. Not only had Hauptmann received kudos in Germany and Europe for his achievements in literature, he was now recognized by the United States public as a great poet and playwright.

Though he received a well-deserved recognition for his works, his latest drama, "Vor Sonnenuntergang," was a

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Warren Maurer, Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 121.
condemnation of the post-war world and its growing materialism and an expression of his political movement to the right. Matthias Clausen, the protagonist, is a minor civil servant, an industrialist, publisher, cultured, and educated man. The drama opens with a celebration of Clausen's seventieth birthday, complete with music from a jazz band. Clausen, who has just recovered from a three-year-long depression, stemming from the death of his wife, has a renewed energy for life because he has fallen in love with a much younger school teacher, Inken Peters, the niece of a gardener on one of his estates. When Clausen tells his grown children that he intends to marry Inken, they lie, cheat, bribe, and do whatever they can to prevent the marriage, citing their father's recent ill-health as the reason.

When the children and their spouses cannot convince either their father or Inken to quit their plans for marriage, the children convince the preacher to have Clausen declared mentally incompetent. Clausen and Inken flee their city home and attempt to reach Switzerland, where they can marry and live a life free from the children. Clausen's long-time friend, Professor Geiger, tries to help the couple in their escape. The children pursue Clausen and Inken to Inken's father's home, where Clausen, now ill from the escape attempt, kills himself to prevent his being returned to a mental hospital.
Though never really stated, the children object to the marriage because they fear their father will leave his entire fortune to his new bride. Their greed leads directly to Matthias's death, and when the Pastor tries to protect them from seeing their father's contorted, frothing-at-the-mouth body, Geiger asks, in the drama's last line, "But why, Pastor? It has what it wants."

As a social criticism, "Vor Sonnenuntergang" depicts the decline of an entire age in the form of the Clausen family. In his earlier dramas Hauptmann had blamed the decline of the family on hereditary factors, alcohol abuse, and middle-class culture. In this play, he opposed crass materialism that rips apart the family, society, and nations.

As with Hauptmann's earlier works, critics fail to see the nationalistic metaphors in "Vor Sonnenuntergang." Matthias Clausen represents Germany of a past age, a composite figure of Hauptmann and Walther Rathenau, while the son-in-law, Erich Klamroth represents the German who is subject to foreign influences, a person who lies, cheats, and commits bribery to keep Germany from regaining its position of fulfillment in the world. Inken is the new youth that embraces the past, Matthias, and through Inken Peters, Hauptmann condemns the greed and soulless society,

7Gerhart Hauptmann, "Vor Sonnenuntergang," Sämtliche Werke, 3:377.
when she refers to the children and their spouses as "a dehumanized horde." In Inken Peters, Hauptmann shows his acceptance of a youthful, energetic force that struggles against the moral unrighteousness, decadence, and materialism of the Weimar period, the new nationalism of the right.

Adolf Hitler, on 30 January 1933, became chancellor of the Weimar Republic. With the Nazi ascendancy to power, Hauptmann now became more interested in what transpired in the government. In 1917, as the vision of a German victory in the Great War faded and Germans were threatened with the loss of their state and Kultur, Hauptmann had noted that Germans, "Instinctively long for the one man, powerful, an effective, dominant force." He, and many other Germans, longed for the return of the "king under the mountain" to lead Germany to its rightful place in the world. In 1933, following the elections and Hitler's appointment to the chancellorship, Hauptmann made a note, in different colored ink, next to his 1917 entry, "[H.H?]" as if to ask whether Hitler was the one man, the "effective dominant force" for

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8 Ibid., 372.


10 Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary Entry, 27 September 1917, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 4, 187.
whom the people longed. Was Hitler the reincarnation of the "kaiser under the mountain?"

Prior to Hitler's ascendancy to the chancellorship, Hauptmann had referred to him only once, in December 1930, following the landslide election that gave the Nazis representation in the Reichstag. At that time Hauptmann had viewed Hitler as "somewhat anxious with a lack of concern for Jews and capitalists." With the events of 1930-1933, and Nazi propaganda broadcasting over the radio and being shown in the cinema, Hitler was a constant topic of conversation in Germany, and Hauptmann took a closer look at him and the Nazis.

With the elections, and Hitler's appointment as chancellor, the Nazis arrogantly proclaimed "Everybody has to come to terms with the fact that this has been the last multi-party election" in Germany. President Paul von

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11Because of Hauptmann's often illegible handwriting, the first "H" could just as easily have been an "A" with an incomplete closing of the letter. Even if the letter is an "H" as Hans von Brecius also believes it to be, Hauptmann often addressed names in his diaries with an "H" standing for "Herr" such as in "H.B." for Herr Brahm, Otto Brahm, Hauptmann's director. Regardless, the question still exists if [H.H?] stands for Hitler. But in light of the placement and the content of the text, "_ Hitler" is a justifiable assumption.

12Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 14 December 1930, GHP, Nachlaß 7, 252.

Hindenburg issued a decree that prohibited publications and public gatherings that either showed contempt for the government or might endanger the state. Hauptmann believed that Hitler was over-zealous in his quest for power and that the new chancellor showed little concern for Jews and the bourgeois businessman. "Today everything came together in Germany. But Hitler? Dissolution of the Reichstag? . . . No -- I fear this disappointment will not be a disappointment." It seems that Hauptmann saw the republicans viewing the dissolution of the Reichstag as a disappointment to democracy, but he personally viewed the action as a positive step, although he viewed the suddenness of the act as "unsatisfactory to both sides."

It is difficult to ascertain how Hauptmann felt about Hitler's ascension to power. He obviously did not find the rumors that Hitler planned to disband the Reichstag too disagreeable. Because of his connections with the government, Hauptmann understood the disappointment that the Hindenburg Kreis felt because of its loss of political power. Hauptmann, however, showed that he thought Hitler's appointment would not be a disappointment for Germany and the revival of völkisch unity. "New, completely

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14Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 4 February 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 15, 34.

15Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 4 February 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 243.
unpredictable events signal the beginning of a new, greater event. . . . Others have packed their bags and have left. There is nothing more we can do. Today a new age has begun."\footnote{16} There is a hint of trepidation, but not a sense of worry or immediacy.

Hauptmann, at the same time, seems to have revealed his plan to stay in Germany, but away from politics. "A hermitage for quiet peaceful work is now my only goal. The political struggles bother me."\footnote{17} The struggles Hauptmann hoped to avoid, would soon involve all Germans; the publicly proclaimed king of the republic would have to come to terms with the new political power.

On the night of 27 February, the Reichstag building in Berlin burned. Hauptmann noted that the fire symbolized the end of "the Germany in which I lived since 1862, or should I say 1871. How should I approach the advent of a new Germany? [A seventy-one year old man] . . . cannot necessarily greet the new age with the understanding and zeal of youth."\footnote{18} The new era, the Nazi era, frightened the aging poet.

\footnote{16}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 19 February 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 246.

\footnote{17}Ibid.

\footnote{18}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 1 March 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 234, 251.
Hauptmann watched the changes in Germany’s government after 1933, and the persecutions that took place, with a sense of loss and sadness. Intellectuals, who had been threatened with imprisonment after a rally at the Kroll Opera House, where they had voiced their approval of the Weimar Republic and disapproval of Nazi tactics earlier in the month, now came under closer scrutiny, and in March, many intellectuals fled Germany. Thomas Mann and his family, for example, emigrated to the United States, and Stefan George fled to Switzerland. As more and more members of the German intelligentsia, many of them his friends, fled before the swastika, Hauptmann noted, "The German spirit declines, and then it is gone. If a new owner buys a blessing, he can't seize it and trample the seed. He needs the blessing. He would weed [his garden] with caution and not throw out the wheat with the weeds."\(^{19}\) The metaphor is easy to follow. He feared that the Nazis were weeding out the "wheat,"along with the weeds, and that, as the desirable product was removed with the "weeds", the spirit of the land died with it. Hitler’s Sturmabteilung, SA, terrorized Germany, and Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior, established concentration camps for political prisoners. By

the end of March 1933, the Nazi "tribunals" had legally sentenced 100,000 people to terms of internment.20

After the Enabling Act of 23 March legalized Hitler's dictatorship, and the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service of 7 April led to the dismissal of Jews from civil service positions, Hauptmann wrote, "Today: I fear we are lost. Propaganda covered [the Nazi deeds]. We shine on the surface, but are empty beneath."21

By the end of spring 1933, Gerhart Hauptmann was convinced that Hitler was the "kaiser" from under the mountain, returned to unite Germany. In his private notes and diaries, the change in Hauptmann's view is clearly evident. Hauptmann had once again altered his political allegiance to join the political ideology that was in the ascendancy.

On 15 June, Oskar Loerke, a friend visiting Hauptmann at Hiddensee, became agitated with Hauptmann's notion of making peace with the new political power.22 Around the end of June, after reading Mein Kampf and listening to propaganda, Hauptmann believed Hitler was creating the


21Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, Early June, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 15, 90.

Germany he wanted. "Hitler has written a book. It is savage and juvenile. Everything that he wished for we have seen [happen]. The unification of Germany!."3

Symptomatic of Hauptmann’s "peace" with the Nazis was a lecture on Mein Kampf that he prepared, but never delivered. He had an author’s copy, Handexemplar, of Mein Kampf and made marginal notes to compare Hitler’s youth and educational experiences with his own as recorded in "Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend." Approximately one hundred of the 781 pages of Hauptmann’s copy of Mein Kampf contain notes and underscoring.3

To point out all of the similarities Hauptmann noted would require a separate study, but there is one that is worth mentioning. Hauptmann intended to show how he and Hitler both were overawed with the idea of German unification in 1871. Hitler stated, "Are we not the same as all other Germans? Do we not all belong together? ... I ... received the answer that not every German was fortunate enough to belong to Bismarck’s Reich." Hauptmann made a marginal note from his own autobiography, "Bismarck and Moltke, Moltke and Bismarck was in everyone’s voice. In school we sang, 'Die Wacht am Rhine' ('The Patrol on the Rhine') which aroused old Brendel himself. ... Bismarck,

3Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary Entry, late June 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 15, 228.

4Gerhart Hauptmann, notes on Mein Kampf, GHP, Berlin.
Bismarck, Bismarck was the watchword. On 21 March in Berlin the first German Reichstag would open... The respect for Bismarck my father held was unreserved."25 The love of Germany is evident in both citations. It was Hitler's love of Germany that most likely changed Hauptmann's view of the chancellor and allowed him to overlook the Nazi's tactics to achieve unity. Where Hauptmann had always voiced his opinion against governmental suppression of the individual, he now aligned himself with a political ideology that existed through suppression of free ideas. The change in Hauptmann's politics coincides with his history of favoring the political party that held power.

At this time, Hauptmann's view of the Jew's role in German society changed. Prior to late June 1933, Hauptmann had always welcomed Jews to his home and publicly associated with them. In 1913, for example, Hauptmann believed "Antisemitism makes for faulty reasoning."26 As the political climate in Germany changed to embrace the anti-semitic ideas of the Nazis, Hauptmann joined the quiet chorus. In 1926 he noted in his diary "A city like Berlin, it will be ruined by internationals [a Nazi term for non-Germans, specifically

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26Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 5 February 1913, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 11b, 508.
Jews]. Following a change in editors at one of Germany's leading newspapers in 1928, when a Jew became the chief editor, Hauptmann noted, "Irreverence! The Vossische Zeitung is no longer in Christian hands: because the Jews are irresponsibly power hungry." Now, after 15 June 1933, Hauptmann felt that the Jews had used him and profited from his work more than he. He felt the Jews always hid something about themselves.

You loving Jews, what would you do now?  
You have been on earth longer than I.  
You were cold and were covered,  
turned away, cruel on my account!  
I have led the way for you in everything --  
and was barely touched by your goodness --  
However, however! What was underneath your cloak,  
Something about you that remained foreign to me?

There is an obvious touch of sarcasm in this verse. The Jew needed the help of the German, but tried to make him feel guilty for the ill-treatment the Jews had suffered in the past. There is an even further hint that the Jew stole from the German after the German had provided the cloak that clothed him. At his home in Agentendorf, during the summer of 1933, Hauptmann raised the Nazi flag in show of his support for the Third Reich.

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37 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, late 1926, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 51, 76.
38 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, early 1928, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 51, 145.
39 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, Summer 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 15, 153.
Hauptmann’s change regarding Jews led to lasting condemnation from his friends and from strangers in foreign nations. Hauptmann allegedly told a close friend, Erich Ebermayer, when rumors of Jewish persecution and mass murders in eastern Germany reached Berlin, "A few eastern Jews -- my God, they’re not so important." \(^{30}\)

When the various newspapers throughout Europe carried reports of the comment, letters from around the world flooded Hauptmann’s home. Gillis Hammar, a Swede, denounced Hauptmann for his stance against the Jews. \(^{31}\) Thomas Mann, who had modeled the character of Pepperkorn in *Magic Mountain* after Hauptmann, and had once claimed him to be "King of the Republic," now despised Hauptmann for not leaving Germany and for embracing Nazism. Mann noted, "I hate this idol whom I helped to magnify and who rejects a martyrdom which I am driven to embrace for the sake of intellectual integrity." \(^{32}\) Gertrude Brahm, the daughter of Otto Brahm, director of many of Hauptmann’s plays and co-founder of the *Freie Bühne*, wrote to Hauptmann and expressed her dismay and displeasure at Hauptmann’s words. "You have

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\(^{31}\)Gillis Hammar to Gerhart Hauptmann, 20 July 1933, GHP, Briefnachlaß Nr. 3.

good and devoted friends among the Jews. But I must tell you that we Jews may expect some concessions from you because you hoist a swastika above your house which says, 'I close my door to you.'"

The persecution continued. On 10 May 1933, bands of Nazi youths broke into every main library and removed all the books Josef Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, disliked and thought dangerous to the Reich, books by Rathenau, Heine, Remarque, Thomas Mann, Arnold Zweig and many others. In the square in front of Humboldt University, the young members of the SA piled the books and started a bonfire with the books as fuel. As he watched the books burn, Goebbels allegedly said, "Never as today have young men had the right to cry out; it is a joy to live." Hauptmann’s uncertainty with Nazi tactics, and his long-held beliefs against censorship, prompted him to note, "Book burnings! Took place in Berlin this year. Thank God only books!"

As the Nazis strengthened their hold on all aspects of life, Hauptmann privately rendered his thoughts on Goebbels’ censorship of the press and art. "The theater, movies,

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33 Gertrude Brahm to Gerhart Hauptmann, 27 September 1933, GHP, Briefnachlaß, Nr. 1.


35 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 9 September 1933, Nachlaß, Nr. 15, 45.
radio: I fear the authorities will dry it all up."³⁶ Hauptmann later wrote, "You wish to know what stand I take? We had a book burning and now we have numerous censors with power. No one believes that censorship is productive to art. The victory of censorship would mean the death of art."³⁷ Even though he had adopted the Nazi ideology regarding culture and German unity, he detested censorship in any form. To Hauptmann, censorship was too reminiscent of Wilhelmine Germany and led to a weeding-out of a valuable product.

Though Hauptmann openly supported the Nazis, the Nazis did not accept Hauptmann as a great author in the way the republic had done. Franz Koch, a Nazi literary critic, believed Hauptmann's literary characters "were no fighters."³⁸ Koch felt, "he is not really volkhaft [a racial nationalist] as they understand the term. He is not a fighter; he is passive . . . he is a poet not of power but of pity; he is tainted with 'enlightened' ideas."³⁹

Even with his private dissatisfaction with Nazi censorship, Hauptmann came to believe that the Nazis were

³⁶Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, August 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 15, 225.

³⁷Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 14 December 1933, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 632, 44.

³⁸Franz Koch, Geschichte deutscher Dichtung (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1937), 276.

³⁹Ibid.
attempting to maintain a strict unity of German culture. In 1933, Hitler wanted to withdraw Germany from the League of Nations and to rearm the state. In an article published on 9 September 1933, Hauptmann gave his views in support of Hitler and Germany's withdrawal from the League. Since Hitler called for a plebiscite to show approval for his decision to leave the League, the Nazis welcomed Hauptmann's approval. The Berliner Tageblatt and the Stuttgarter Tageblatt both published Hauptmann's open letter to the Germans under the title, "Ich sage 'Ja.'"

Hauptmann wrote there was nothing more important than "the voice of the people." If Germany withdrew from the League, Germans would be free of the foreign influence that contaminated German Kultur. Leaving the League would offer the German population "a bridge to peace over the boiling chaos in Europe." Hauptmann had denounced foreign intervention in German affairs in Der Ketzer and weiße Heiland, and Hitler had promised the German people that he would lead them from the humiliation of the Versailles Treaty. Hauptmann now told the general populace that Britain's Prime Minister, Ramsey MacDonald, had said Germany was no longer England's enemy and that "England is known as


"Ibid."
Germany's best friend and will always stand by her." If this was truly the case, the Germans had nothing to fear by withdrawing from the League. Hauptmann warned Germans that if they did not support Hitler in this plebiscite, there might not be another chance "to cross the bridge to European peace." To Hauptmann, Hitler would guide the Germans who would then lead all Europe and the world to peace.

Gordon Craig inaccurately places Hauptmann's "Ich sage 'Ja'" in historical context. Craig reported Hauptmann's article helped the Nazis maintain their power during the March 1933 elections. Possibly he misread Hans von Brecius' account of the history of Hauptmann's article. Craig's conclusion regarding the article's importance in the plebiscite, however, is valid. With much of the intellectual community having fled Germany in fear of Nazi persecution, to have the poet laureate of the Weimar Republic publicly declare Hitler's decision was correct may have swayed the minds "of people who take the political opinions of film stars and other celebrities seriously." Hilscher and other biographers credit Hauptmann with saving

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42Ibid., 1134.
43Ibid.
Hitler's chancellorship, though there is no evidence to support such a claim.\textsuperscript{46}

As time passed, Hauptmann felt more and more a part of the new Germany. Where he had criticized Wilhelmine society and politics, and basked in public adulation during the early years of Weimar, Hauptmann felt himself drawn to support Hitler's Germany. In January 1935 Hauptmann realized, "I have my duty to do, and my mortal work to complete: so now I will serve the nation."\textsuperscript{47} From what Hauptmann wrote, one would expect an outpouring of nationalistic sentiments similar to his poetry of 1914. Since there were no poems, however, no short stories, and no plays, one could not tell what Hauptmann's "duty" to the Nazi state was. It seems, though, that Hauptmann saw his duty as surrendering to the ideals of Nazi propaganda. "Art is, and remains free, in spite of the 'Chamber of Culture.' Not our livelihood, but art. And German publishers . . . for that reason have seen to it that an author 'of the attic' [a subversive] is not discovered."\textsuperscript{48} This view is a sharp departure from the man who, just a few years earlier, had condemned censorship as a destruction of art. Did

\textsuperscript{46} Eberhard Hilscher, \textit{Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk} (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1988), 410-411.

\textsuperscript{47} Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary Entry, 13 January 1935, Nachlaß, Nr. 104, 14.

\textsuperscript{48} Gerhart Hauptmann, Diary Entry, after 4 April 1935, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 52, 69.
Hauptmann give up and give in to Nazi censorship? Is this why his literary works after 1933 did not have any of the "heart" and power that had made him famous? Or was he blinded by the outside gleam of the Third Reich? One can not tell because even Hauptmann's diaries do not reveal his reasoning.

Hauptmann correctly realized, however, that Germans had surrendered some of their personal freedoms when he noted that art was free, "Not our livelihood." But he had called for this sacrifice in 1921, when he had given a speech celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the German Empire. In 1871 the Volk had to sacrifice some freedoms for the empire to be created. If Germany was to rise from the ashes of the Great War, the disillusion of Versailles, and the decadence of Weimar, and once again be great, the Volk must once again be ready to sacrifice some of its freedoms for the benefit of the state. "We are bound to believe that this change will finally and at last result in our best interests."\(^\text{49}\)

W.B. Pillsbury wrote that a nationalist is someone who "is ready within limits to sacrifice the individual for the group advantage."\(^\text{50}\) Louis Snyder stated a nationalist


"often discards humanitarianism in favor of national interests . . . regards imperialistic expansion as desirable."\textsuperscript{51} Hauptmann's dreams for Germany and the German people illustrated these theories of a nationalist, so there was little wonder at his willingness to sacrifice his personal, individual rights for the betterment of the state. "To stumble in one's nationality leads to the death of the nation. Tradition is the bearer [of nationality]. To be political is not to be nationalistic. My condition is one of basic nationalism."\textsuperscript{52}

Hauptmann's nationalistic ideals and antisemitic feelings grew even stronger as the National Socialists solidified power. He became more adamant about the purity of German \textit{Kultur}, and felt the Jews, and their use of the Hebrew language among themselves, chipped away at German unity. "You Jews. Speak the German language! . . . Unity of soul begins directly with language."\textsuperscript{53} Due to Nazi propaganda and Goebbels' censorship of the press, Hauptmann believed the Nazis were in touch with the \textit{Volk}, and any

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\textsuperscript{51}Louis L. Snyder, \textit{German Nationalism: The Tragedy of a People: Extremism Contra Liberalism in Modern German History} (Harrisburg: The Stackpole Co., 1952), ii.

\textsuperscript{52}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 7 December, 1935, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 230, 48.

\textsuperscript{53}Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 7 September 1934, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 15, 226.
persecutions were necessary because the Jews detracted from German culture and led to a spirit of disunity.

By the end of 1936 Hauptmann's infatuation with Hitler and the Nazis seemed to be waning. In early 1936 -- the exact date is not known -- Hauptmann met Adolf Hitler. Some historians alleged the "meeting" was nothing more than a handshake, and Hauptmann had reportedly called it "the greatest moment of my life." But Hauptmann never mentioned the meeting in his diary, which is amazing for a man who kept notes and commented on every important event in his life. Could it be that the glittering facade of success that covered the hollowness of the Nazi Reich had worn off. "It is too bad: the gay men who refuse the Jewish German spirit have not quite the capability to establish a pure German spirit." In light of this statement, Hauptmann's reported comment regarding his meeting with Hitler may have been a public cover for his interest in the Nazi program, or it could have been invented, as another aspect of Nazi propaganda, to show the public that one of its heroes was fascinated with der Führer.

In 1937 Germans throughout the Reich celebrated Hauptmann's seventy-fifth birthday. The Nazis allowed a


\[\text{Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, before 25 October 1936, Nachlaß, Nr. 52, 249.}\]
grand production of Michael Kramer in the State Theater in Berlin. Josef Goebbels attended the performance, but it was Hauptmann who received the ovation. Though the Nazis had never censored Hauptmann’s writings, his books had been scarce in the early years of Hitler’s Reich. Now, Hauptmann’s works once again appeared in the bookstores that had rarely seen them on their shelves since the Nazis took complete power in 1934. The Nazis viewed "Vor Sonnenuntergang" as a strong critique of Weimar’s decadence, and made a movie based upon it, Der Herrscher (The Ruler) designed as a tool of Nazi propaganda. Hauptmann also published his autobiography, "Das Abenteuer meine Jugend."

Hauptmann appeared to be popular with the German Volk once again, and he began to re-think the views he had recently held regarding Jews. As the persecution of Jews grew more violent than in the first years of the Reich, Hauptmann grew disenchanted with the Nazis. "I am overcome with guilt about the Jews. I do not deny what I did, but what can I do? [The] Brahms have left me [Otto died in 1912 and Gertrude denounced Hauptmann in 1933]; Fischer had published my work and built its acceptance."56 That same year Hauptmann had believed, "I am absolutely contrary to Jews -- I have always felt this way: My men are Goethe,

56Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, mid-1937, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 131, 52.
Wilhelm von Humboldt, Luther, Erasmus, etc." But even as he wrote these words he was unsure of his anti-Jewish convictions because, "The question remains complicated."

In 1938 he published three more literary works that were more ephemeral than his earlier works. Die Tochter der Kathedrale (Daughter of the Cathedral) and Ulrich von Lichtenstein, both published in 1938, were two short-lived productions, so completely uncharacteristic of a Hauptmann drama that they were not mentioned in the 1962 centenary exhibit in celebration of Hauptmann’s achievement sponsored by the Schiller Nationalmuseum, Gerhart Hauptmann: Gedächtnisausstellung.

In March 1938, Hitler ordered the Anschluß of Austria. Hauptmann, as early as 1921, had favored the Anschluß and wrote, "The inseparable unification of German-Austria with the German motherland is the unavoidable, logical, realization of a historical necessity." Hauptmann’s close ties with Austria, because of his Grillparzer Prizes, made the event of Austria’s annexation special for the poet who believed all Germans should be united.

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57Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 25 October 1937, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 52, 252.

58Ibid.

Czechoslovakia was Hitler's next target. Part of the lands promised to Hitler at the Munich Agreement was a portion of Silesia. Hauptmann noted, "We are [again] a family. This evening Germany reunited . . . I feel the event in my blood." But he feared war, as if, for the first time, he saw Nazi militarization for what it really was. "War is in motion! The experience of war [World War I] is set aside. Inside and outside Germany: Power -- War!" Just as the Nazi state seemed to be achieving the unity Hauptmann dreamed about, the threat of dismemberment by foreign powers once again loomed over the heads of the Germans just as it had in 1918, when the Allied Powers defeated Germany.

Hauptmann's sense of dread and his foreboding regarding the approaching war may have shocked him into an awareness of how others had perceived his behavior prior to Nazi expansion, and awakened him to Nazi persecution. Though Hauptmann favored the unification of the German-speaking people, he did not favor war. Hauptmann's rapidly changing opinions may have been the result of his mixing medication for a lingering lung ailment with alcohol. It may have been a form of senility. Maybe he never really settled the

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60Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 1 October 1938, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 117, 149.

61Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 6 November 1938, Nachlaß, Nr. 13, 14.
Jewish Question in his mind and was torn between his lifelong friends and Nazi propaganda. Again, there is no hint at what Hauptmann thought except in his increasingly choppy diary entries.

Hauptmann completely changed his opinion of Hitler, the Nazis, and their censorship and persecution after 9 November 1938, a night known for the destruction of Jewish synagogues and businesses, Kristallnacht. "Many who fly in the fires of German spirit had their wings burned . . . But a spiritual fire is only a metaphor, which does not devour the moths, or the Jews who created much of the German spirit."  

The Jews had helped create Germany and the German spirit that now, in a twisted version of that spirit, outlawed the Jew from society. Hauptmann believed that even though a few Jews "had their wings burned," the flames of the Nazi Kristallnacht could not devour the Jewish contribution to society. Hauptmann noted that the Jew "is the living spiritual bond on our continent."  

It seemed as if the extreme violence opened Hauptmann's eyes to the depth of Nazi persecution and helped him to arrive at an answer to the lingering Jewish Question, at least in his own mind.

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62 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 9 November 1938, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 13, 12.

63 Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 23 March 1940, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 235, 65.
On 1 September 1939, German troops swept into Poland. Within eighteen days, the Polish army was destroyed and Poland partitioned between Nazi Germany and Josef Stalin's Communist Soviet Union. "This cannot be!" Hauptmann silently warned Germans in his diary. "You are being driven, led, pushed as vassals." Hauptmann, the poet who had offered his support to the Reich in 1914, sat silently in his Silesian home, after the invasion of Poland, and warned only himself. Age, illness, and the persecutions of his friends, had destroyed any will he had left to combat the Nazis, even in the written word. "After the awakening, the fear of war pressed [hard] upon my breast: Poland! How much hate he [Hitler] has unleashed on you. We have destroyed Poland [and] have fallen back into the middle ages." Even at sea, the Nazi forces seemed invincible. Hauptmann viewed the war at sea as nothing more than "piracy, infamous barbarism." This criticism of German barbarism, however private it was, came from the same man who angrily attacked the French for using the term to describe Germans who had invaded Belgium in 1914.

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64Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, September 1939, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 240, 9.

65Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 30 December 1939, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 235, 46.

66Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 3 February 1940, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 156, 1.
Hauptmann did not chronicle this war in his diary, as he had the Great War. Perhaps he was too old, too tired, and too depressed at having seen his dreams for German unity vanish in the Nazi terror. The Nazi advances in 1939-40 brought a period of relative peace to Germany until August 1940, when British bombers carried out a raid on Berlin. The damage to Hitler’s capital was minimal, but the raid signalled to all Germans that the war could be brought to them and showed them they were not invincible.

Hauptmann marked his eightieth birthday in 1942. Because of his obvious silence after 1939, at the outbreak of war, the Nazis did not desire to offer a celebration as they had in 1937. Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler’s ideological guide, wrote a letter to Goebbels, and in it called for an official boycott of Hauptmann’s Eightieth Jubilee. Because of military setbacks at Stalingrad, Russia, and in North Africa, Goebbels believed it would be better if there was no interference with the Jubilee. In a letter to Rosenberg Goebbels noted Hauptmann’s stature in Europe and that to force Germans to not celebrate would be nearly impossible. He did say, however, “the state and the party would not officially honor Hauptmann.”

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Baldur von Schirach, early leader of the Hitler Youth and now Gauleiter of Vienna, spent an evening in Vienna with Hauptmann and Richard Strauss, the famed composer, prior to Goebbels's denunciation of the Hauptmann celebration. "The 'Gerhart Hauptmann Celebration Week' took place not only in Vienna, but also throughout the entire Reich with a resounding intensity. Afterwards, Goebbels and Hitler appraised the demonstration" of the Volk's admiration for Hauptmann, when the state had not given an official sanction to the celebration.68 Because of Hauptmann's popularity, the Nazis took a position of silence.

In May 1943, the Allied Powers stepped up their bombing offensive, with a round-the-clock attack designed to disrupt German industry, communications and transportation, and demoralize the German population. "Cologne lies in ashes, Stuttgart and Mannheim, Leipzig, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Bremen, and Berlin, etc." Hauptmann wrote. "What Germany had built in thirty years, is today an expanse of ruins. Look to what end, what our absurd success has brought [us]!"69 German morale remained steadfast despite the massive bombings and destruction. "Bombed out cities: horrible. Yet the immortal men are still full of hope --


69Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 7 December 1943, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 452, 4.
[this is] essential. If there was to be any hope of victory, the German Volk had to be united, hopeful of victory.

When the Allied forces invaded Normandy on 6 June 1944, and the German army could not stop their advances, the hope that Hauptmann had felt essential for victory the month before, now turned to the reality of defeat. Hauptmann based his hope upon the propaganda that Goebbels kept pouring over the radio and in the newspapers. Hauptmann’s senses, however, told him the war was all but lost. When he heard the news that German forces were in retreat only so they could regroup and push the Allies back into the sea, Hauptmann stopped believing the reports. "Organized madness" he thought, "A power without soul."

As the Russian forces advanced from the east and the combined British, French, and American forces advanced from the west, Hauptmann witnessed the end of the Third Reich. He was now eighty-two years old and tired. With Germany lying in ruins, Hauptmann’s home in Agnetendorf remained relatively unaffected. He wrote poetry that was graceful and fanciful. "Harut und Marut" is a tale of two angels who go for a walk on earth, enter a tavern and get drunk and

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70Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, 15 May 1944, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 452, 225.

71Gerhart Hauptmann, diary, after June 1944, GHP, Nachlaß, Nr. 96, 31-33.
make drunken, blasphemous speeches. The angel Anahid follows Harut and Marut, and begins to sing and dance a dance lively enough that even "God in Heaven on his throne/bobbed his head to and fro" to keep time with the song and dance and then ordered his Son to do the same. Throughout his literary career, Hauptmann had allowed his pen to paint a verbal picture of the world around him as he wrote of social injustice and political disunity. "Harut und Marut," however, is a tale that has no noticeable nexus with events in Hauptmann's world. To make any analogy would require a separate study of Hauptmann's unorthodox religious beliefs.

With the new year approaching, Hauptmann declined an invitation to a New Year's Eve party that his friends C.F.W. Behl and Gerhart Pohl had planned. Pohl reported that Hauptmann was sad when he said, "For the first time I can remember, I am going to sleep through New Year's Eve." Two days later, 3 January 1945, Hauptmann's depression deepened. Pohl asked Behl, who knew Hauptmann better than anyone else, "Is he having premonitions of death?"

Behl looked at me. We were united in our love for Gerhart Hauptmann and understood each other.

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perfectly as far as the old Merlin was concerned. Behind his glasses, Behl's kind eyes were filled with a grief that I had never seen there before. 'Since New Year's Eve he has been an entirely different person,' he said quietly.  

On 5 January Margarete became very ill, and had to be hospitalized. Because of the war, and the privations of war, the hospital nearest Agentendorf was filled with patients, and there was no room for Margarete. With the approach of the Russian armies, Behl made arrangements for Hauptmann's papers and manuscripts to be taken to western Germany, where they would be safe, while Hauptmann planned a trip to take Margarete away for a long-needed rest. In early February he took Margarete to a sanatorium a few miles outside Dresden. When news reached Hauptmann that the Russians had advanced to the Oder River, he worried, "What is to happen to Silesia, to Germany and to this crazy world of ours?" Pohl states that the grief over his wife's illness, and the Russian advance, caused Hauptmann to drink more heavily than he normally did.

On 12 February Margarete miraculously recovered from her illness, which had not been as severe as the doctors had thought, and Gerhart immediately stopped drinking and began to eat. The next morning, while on the patio, Hauptmann

74Ibid., 2.
76Ibid.
dictated the poem Zauberblume (Magic Flower), and he and Margarete wondered if they should move down the mountain into Dresden and enjoy a stay on the Elbe River, but decided to stay at the sanitorium and enjoy the view from there. Three hours later Allied bombers destroyed the hotel where he and Margarete usually stayed when they travelled to Dresden.

As he stood on a hill on the evening of 13 February, Hauptmann witnessed the effects of the most destructive fire-bombing raid in Europe. Pohl reported that Hauptmann later told him, "At that moment I wanted to die." In despair, leaning against a tree for support, and weeping, Hauptmann dictated the eulogy for Dresden.

A person who has forgotten how to weep, learns how once more at the sight of the destruction of Dresden. Till now, this clear morning star of my youth has illumined the world. I know that there are quite a few good people in England and America, to whom the divine light of the Sistine Madonna was not known, and who now weep, profoundly and grievously affected by the extinguishing of this star.

And I have lived to see personally the destruction of Dresden by all the hells of Sodom and Gomorrah, caused by the airplanes of the enemy. As I use the words 'live to see' that still seems like a miracle to me. I do not take myself seriously enough to believe that Fate has kept this horror in store expressly for me and in this very spot in the world that is almost the dearest of all to me.

I am very close to leaving this life and I envy all my dead comrades of the spirit who did not live to see this horror.

I weep. Do not take offense at the word

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Pohl, Gerhart Hauptmann, 8.
Representatives from the Breslau Gauleiter’s office met with Gerhart Hauptmann on 29 March and requested that Hauptmann write a piece about the horrible bombing of Dresden. Hauptmann declined, but Pohl had read his lamentation, *Dresden*, and then handed the piece to the representatives and asked that they not change a word of it, but read it and print it as they received it. They desired to have the eulogy read over all radio stations and printed in all newspapers that were not under Russian control.  

On 9 May 1945, Soviet Russian troops entered Agnetendorf and ordered the residents to house displaced refugees. When the Soviet commanding officer, Colonel Smirnov, learned that Gerhart Hauptmann lived on the outskirts of the town, he exempted the Hauptmann home. After Soviet officers visited the author of *Die Weber*, and discovered he was near death, Colonel Smirnov exempted the Hauptmann home from the laws of the district that eliminated German names from streets, stores, and addresses. But Hauptmann lived and continued to write.  

Hauptmann wrote his last open letter to the German Volk on 4 October 1945, as a sign of hope for Germany and the Germans. "There has never been a moment when I did not think about Germany. . . . Every little development was

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80 Ibid., 18-20.
81 Ibid., 26-41.
'weep'; the greatest heroes of antiquity, Pericles and many others, were not ashamed of it.

From Dresden, from its wonderfully sustained nurturing of the fine arts, literature, and music, glorious streams have flowed throughout all the world, and England and America have also drunk from them thirstily.

Have they forgotten that?

I am nearly eighty-three years old and stand before God with a last request, which is unfortunately without force and comes only from the heart: it is the prayer that God should love and purify and refine mankind more than heretofore, for their own salvation.78

This single piece is perhaps Hauptmann’s most poignant prose work. His wish for the world is all he ever wished for Germany, but could not convey to the Volk.

In late March Margarete had fully recovered and the two returned to Agnetendorf. The trip was hazardous, but the German army provided gasoline for a car, and passes to travel freely behind the German lines of defense.

Hauptmann, now weak and spiritually broken, had a full-time attendant who supported him while he walked. When the car carrying the Hauptmann’s reached the Riesengebirge, news that Gerhart Hauptmann was out and about spread quickly, and wherever there was a small hamlet or town, people gathered to cheer their "king."79 Back in his home, Wiesenstein, near Agnetendorf, Hauptmann awaited the inevitable end of Germany, and himself.


79 Pohl, Gerhart Hauptmann, 11-12.
important to me; day and night, in dreams and while awake, Germany. No matter what happens, it is with a deep belief in Germany's new birth, and for that I will not abandon [the Fatherland]."\(^{82}\)

By late May 1946, the Poles had taken over control of all Agnetendorf, now under the watchful eye of the Soviet district governor, Colonel Sokolov. All the Germans in the district had been evacuated to Dresden, with the exception of the Hauptmanns, their servants, and live-in friends. But Sokolov apparently received orders from Moscow to have the Hauptmanns removed, and Smirnov's order of protection was lifted.

Hauptmann had contracted a lung infection while in Dresden, and now the infection spread, causing the eighty-three year old poet to fall into a coma. Smirnov held off executing an order of eviction until either the poet died, or was well enough to move. On 1 June the fever broke and Hauptmann seemed to be recovering. Smirnov issued an eviction order for 6 June, but Hauptmann lapsed back into unconsciousness on the evening of 2 June. On 3 June, having known that he and Margarete were to have been moved, he asked in a stuttering, barely audible voice, "Am -- I -- in -- my -- own -- house?" Hauptmann's lucid moment did not

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last. He fell into a coma and died on 5 June 1946 having never spoken another word.\textsuperscript{83}

Gerhart Hauptmann had witnessed the creation of Germany. He had seen the rise and fall of the Second Reich and had taken an active role in the republic that arose from the humiliation of the Great War. He had identified with the ideological dreams of the National Socialists and watched helplessly as those dreams for a strong, united Germany burned in the rubble of Dresden. At eighty-three years of age, he still maintained a vision of a united, free Germany.

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., 62-67.
CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

The history of modern Germany, from the late eighteenth century until the end of the Second World War, is filled with numerous philosophies that ranged from the advocacy of individual rights and freedoms, to a support of conservative ideals and absolute power to the state. While some philosophies centered around the individual, other philosophies focused on the state, and still other philosophies attempted to combine both ideas.

The overriding philosophy of the era was that of nationalism, and that idea took many forms. While some people believed in a political unification to form a nation, others strove for a deeper form of unity, a unity of Kultur. Boyd Shafer, Hans Kohn, Ernest Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawm note that a nation is comprised of a people who share the same cultural heritage and recognize each other as members of the nation.¹ The one area of nationalism that many

modern historians fail to emphasize is the importance of literature in defining a people’s culture and similarity. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Gerhart Hauptmann’s plays, poems, and prose works show social and cultural growth and the development of nationalistic ideologies in Germany.

Prior to Prince Otto von Bismarck establishing the Prussian-led German state in 1871, the Germans based their philosophical ideas upon the teachings of Immanuel Kant and the authors and philosophers of the Sturm und Drang, and the German Romantic Movement. The philosophy of Immanuel Kant had begun to set limits on human reason, but demanded that the primitive, original genius within man be permitted to express itself according to its own laws of being. Johann von Herder had urged Germans to explore their past and find those connecting factors of language and literature that made them an individual people. Herder’s extension of Kant’s idea was a synthesis of the individual with the concept of a Kultur that is unique to a people. Kant and Herder had encouraged people to accept their own identity, but one that existed within the greater identity of a unique German Kultur.

Following the French Revolution of 1789, liberal ideas and a new concept of the state and nation spread throughout Europe. Friedrich Schlegel, in 1799, shocked the reading public with his novel, Lucinde, that expressed his
revolutionary ideas of female emancipation in all areas of life. Goethe proclaimed the right of the individual to act in accordance with his own feelings and insisted on the right of the individual to set his own standards of living and thought. Goethe’s individualism, as seen in *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*, is tempered with the individual’s need for community. When Faust realized his need for self-sacrifice for the community -- the nation -- he found personal fulfillment. The influence of Schlegel and Goethe is seen in Hauptmann’s characters of Helene in *Vor Sonnenaufgang,* and Florian Geyer, in *Florian Geyer."

The Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm, synthesized Herder’s challenge of a unique Kultur and Goethe’s idea of the individual and the nation. They collected uniquely German tales and wrote them down to enhance German Kultur and preserve German heritage. The legends the Grimm brothers collected reminded Germans of their historic past. Hauptmann’s "Arminius" and "Der große Traum," and the dialect in "Die Weber" hint at the influence of the Grimm brothers upon Hauptmann. Hauptmann’s "Die Weber" is one of the few repositories of the old Silesian dialect in today’s world.

The strength of the community and the glory of the past is the foundation of the themes that Friedrich Schiller wrote about in *Die Räuber*, *Fiesco*, and *Wilhelm Tell*. In each of the plays the hero is able to rise above the trials
of life, and sacrifice self for the sake the community or nation. Schiller showed that the individual is weak without the strength of his Kultur, his nation. The conflict the individual feels between self and the demands of society is a fundamental aspect of the German Romantic movement and literature of the Sturm und Drang. The ideals set forth in Schiller's plays is easily identified in "Florian Geyer" and "Die Weber."

There were other influences upon Hauptmann's naturalism. Charles Darwin, in perhaps one of the most celebrated and controversial books ever written, Origin of Species, had hinted that behavioral traits are inheritable. Hauptmann had studied both evolution and alcoholism with August Forel in Zurich, and the idea of alcoholism as an inheritable trait is shown in "Vor Sonnenaufgang." "Einsame Menschen" is another of Hauptmann's plays that shows the fears of inherited traits.

An additional influence upon Hauptmann's works is the pessimism of the age, indicated in the philosophies of Arthur Schopenhauer and Max Nordau. Hauptmann read Schopenhauer, but whether or not the pessimism in Hauptmann's stories and plays is a result of a direct influence is uncertain. The same holds true for Nordau. In Degeneration, Nordau mentions Hauptmann's plays as a mirror to the age. Though a few literary critics point to an
influence of Friedrich Nietzsche upon Hauptmann, there is no concrete evidence to associate the two.

Gerhart Hauptmann grew up in age when there were too many changes in too a short period of time. Born in 1862, he witnessed the wars of unification, and as a young boy even helped to comfort a few wounded soldiers during the Austro-Prussian War. He attended the village school in Obersalzbrunn and the Realschule in Breslau, where he learned to dislike Prussianism.

Young Hauptmann felt the joy of a unified Germany in 1871, after the Franco-Prussian War and Bismarck's declaration of the German Empire. During the depression of the late 1870s, Hauptmann left school and was an apprentice on his uncle’s farm, where he became engrossed with the Pietist religious mania of his uncle and aunt. He returned to school in 1879, and joined a Pan-Germanic brotherhood with his brother, Carl, Alfred Ploetz, and Ferdinand Simon. Hauptmann and his "blood brothers" were like so many other young men the noted German historian Friedrich Meinecke described. "We Germans often felt so free and proud, in contrast with the whole previous German past, in this mightily flourishing Empire of 1871 which gave living space to every one of us!"\(^2\) They desired a Germanic state free

from foreign influence. While he attended school at this time, he studied the plastic arts, but gained a bit of notoriety for his work on an epic poem on the medieval Germanic legend of Hermann.

Based on the patriotic works of the age that celebrated German military victories and unification, similar to Felix Dahn's *Kampf um Rom*, the young Hauptmann began to formulate his nationalistic ideas. As he formed the basis of his own views on nationalism, he began work on "Germanen und Römer," an epic poem which would illustrate his desire to return to a German past, mythical though it may have been.

At this time Hauptmann met Marie Thienemann, and her wealth would support him as he tried to find his niche in life. He travelled to Italy and tried to become a sculptor. Illness and failure drove Hauptmann to return to Germany, where he married Marie, and the two settled in Berlin. In Berlin, and the suburb of Erkner, Hauptmann began to write. His "Fasching" was not a success, but showed an interest in daily life and life experiences.

In 1888 Hauptmann moved to Zurich for a brief period of time and studied with Alfred Ploetz under the tutelage of Auguste Forel. While in Zurich, Hauptmann met Frank Wedekind, another aspiring author, and had a chance encounter with Johannes Guttzeit, an eccentric, religious zealot. It was in Zurich that Hauptmann received the inspiration for "Vor Sonnenaufgang" and "Die Weber."
Perhaps the entire age of rapid growth that so quickly changed the simple, agrarian way of life that for so long had been at the center of German Kultur caused the pessimism seen in both Schopenhauer and Hauptmann. For Hauptmann's age, industrialization seemed to have destroyed the traditional society, and exposed an irrational side of man.\footnote{George Mosse, \textit{Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich} (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1966), xxiv.}

The replacement of hand-labor with technology intensified the misery of the masses whom technology had displaced, and led to increased social tensions and occasional violence. The inflexible conservatism of the Prussian Junkers quashed even moderate reform and frustrated the growing number of working-class Germans.\footnote{V.R. Gerghan, \textit{Modern Germany: Society, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 82.} Hauptmann believed modernity and the industrialized world were the cause of man's anguish.

The pessimism of the masses in Germany's industrial period following unification in 1871 became the focus of Hauptmann's social criticism and nationalistic idealism. Hugh Garten noted that the characters in Hauptmann's works were "misguided or conditioned by their upbringing and surroundings."\footnote{Hugh F. Garten, "Gerhart Hauptmann," \textit{German Men of Letters}, ed. Alex Natan (London: Oswald Wolff, Ltd., 1965), 244.} From the turbulent opening of "Vor
Sonnenaufgang" in 1889, to "Die Ratten," which premiered in 1911, Gerhart Hauptmann repeatedly attacked the inequities in society, especially for the poor working class which had suffered since the beginning of Germany's industrial revolution. To Hauptmann, industrialization marked the decline of German society and national unity, and his plays show "the society of Wilhelminian Germany . . . in a state of decay."\

In 1896, Hauptmann received Austria's Grillparzer Prize, the first of many awards for his writings, but this was not an age when governments supported voices that criticized them, no matter what the world's view was. Kaiser Wilhelm II could not prohibit Hauptmann from collecting the Grillparzer Prize in Vienna, the first of three. But, on two occasions, the kaiser personally ordered that the planned awarding of the Schiller Prize to Hauptmann be revoked, because Hauptmann had openly criticized the social situation in his Germany; each time, the kaiser ordered the prize be awarded to a lesser talent who glorified the Second Reich. The world recognized Hauptmann's greatness and genius in 1912, when Hauptmann was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Hauptmann would also receive honorary doctorate degrees from Oxford.

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University and the University of Prague. By 1914, though, Hauptmann had spent most of his energy and genius.

The First World War showed Hauptmann to be a devout nationalist. He wrote patriotic poems and composed open letters in defense of Germany's aggression. To Hauptmann, the war rekindled the lost German Geist, which he had tried to illustrate in his 1913 play "Das Friedensfest." He showed his support for the kaiser, and Germany, when he added his signature to those of other intellectuals who signed the "Manifesto" that supported the war effort. Karl Guthke reports that the Kaiser "rewarded his suddenly loyal subject . . . with the Order of the Red Eagle -- Class IV..")

Hauptmann's diary is itself a history of the war. He noted nearly every major event of the war and chastised Germans who did not support the fatherland. At this time, Hauptmann associated with high-ranking members of German industry and government. He became a close friend of Walther Rathenau, Friedrich Ebert, Matthias Erzberger, and others who would later become great political leaders in post-war Germany.

When Wilhelm II's empire collapsed in the Revolution of 1918, and the Germans signed the armistice, Hauptmann never

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strayed from his nationalistic stance. He wrote an open letter to the Allied Powers at Versailles, warning them against treating Germany harshly. With prophetic insight, Hauptmann hinted that a treaty of revenge would only serve to antagonize the German spirit, not break it, and that spirit would later lead to hard feelings between the Germans and the nations of the Allied Powers. He touted the strength of German Kultur, which the Allied Powers could not defeat. Prior to the war, Hauptmann had defended the down-trodden in society. Now, with Germany's defeat, his entire nation was down-trodden, and he defended its culture and people with a passion, especially with the play, "Der weiße Heiland."

Hauptmann made copious entries in his diaries and noted almost daily the events that were taking place in the newly created Weimar Republic. Publicly, Hauptmann "was the most representative figure of Weimar cultural life. . . . [He] was the 'secret emperor' of Germany, . . . the conscience of the nation."

He was the poet "who expresses most strongly the spirit of the new state . . . the poet of democracy and socialism." As if he had a new-found energy, his works once again criticized the age in which he lived. With

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"Indiphodi," "Die Insel der Großen Mutter," and "Till Eulenspiegel," Hauptmann expressed concern over the decadence of the age and a generation of "lost" men and families who suffered because of post-war deprivations.

Leading intellectuals, publishers, and politicians, were familiar with Hauptmann’s vision of Germany and what Germany could be. They asked Hauptmann to run for the presidency of the Republic, but Hauptmann, never saying why, refused. Maybe he just wanted to write. Maybe the assassinations of friends at the hands of right-wing, Freikorps groups convinced Hauptmann to play a less conspicuous role in Weimar politics. He declined an effort to place his name in nomination for chancellor in 1921 and became less vocal in politics, though he basked in the glory of public recognition and accepted the label that Thomas Mann had given him as "king of the Weimar Republic,"

In 1933 Adolf Hitler ascended to the office of Chancellor in Germany’s Weimar Republic. Hauptmann, at first, could not support the Nazi ideas. As time passed, however, he became an ardent public supporter of Nazism. He never said publicly, or privately, why he changed his mind. A prepared lecture, which Hauptmann never made, compared Hitler’s Mein Kampf to his own autobiography. The only other reason for Hauptmann’s change could be in Hitler’s resolve to resurrect a past Germany based solely upon a Germanic Kultur.
When Hitler began to form his government to the exclusion of Jews and those who showed an affinity to foreign influences, many intellectuals fled the country while Hauptmann stayed in Germany. Gordon Craig and Hans von Brecius believe that Hauptmann’s refusal to leave Germany "was more innocence than opportunism, and that Hauptmann should properly be regarded as the quintessential example of the seductibility of the bourgeois mentality."\(^{10}\)

These historians missed the mark in their assessment of Hauptmann and his relationship with the Third Reich. Philosophically, the Third Reich offered a reunification of German Geist, a solidification of Germanic Kultur. Meinecke noted that in Bismarckian Germany, the authoritarian and militarist element "contributed to our way of life . . . [and] accustomed many persons to subordinate their way of thinking to the wishes of their superiors and made them spiritually dependent."\(^{11}\) Hitler’s rhetoric in his speeches and Mein Kampf connected with a deeper sense of Germany in which Hauptmann believed, a Geist that had existed in Hauptmann since his Blutbrüderschaft in 1889. Hauptmann knew what Hitler said and what the Nazis did, to a point, and those actions frightened him. Many who joined Hitler and the Nazis did so out of a desire to resurrect the

\(^{10}\)Gordon Craig, Germany, 1866-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 641.

\(^{11}\)Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, 88.
Germany that the Allied Powers and the Weimar Republic destroyed, as Meinecke noted, "Nationalist ideology, . . . was the main thing with them." Germany was Hauptmann's home, not some foreign land where he would be an outsider. If he deserted Germany, he would be going against all the nationalistic idealism in which he believed. In his own mind, he would be a traitor.

In his numerous diary entries, it is not clear if Hauptmann ever fully resolved the fate of the Jews at the hands of the Nazi holocaust. There was a time when he allegedly approved of the sacrifice of a few "eastern Jews," but this sentiment cannot be verified in Hauptmann's own hand or in his published articles. He did raise the Nazi flag over his home in Agentendorf, and his Jewish friends left him because of it. He admonished himself to resolve the question of the Jews, and later said he had been wrong about his attitude about them. There is no evidence, published or private, that indicates Hauptmann knew of the fate of European Jewry in the Holocaust. It can only be surmised that he fell unwittingly to the propaganda and knew nothing of extermination camps such as Auschwitz and Birkenau, near his homeland of Upper Silesia.

Hauptmann watched the end of the Third Reich -- and his hope for a united Germany -- when he witnessed the fire-
bombing of Dresden in 1945. His lamentation for Dresden expresses his sorrow for all Germany. He experienced the Soviet takeover of his homeland, but to the end of his days, 5 June 1946, Hauptmann stayed faithful to his idea of Germany.

Hauptmann had a vision of German spirit, culture, and unity. In his social and historical plays, he tried to show how society tore at unity by disenfranchising an entire class of people who possessed the true spirit, Geist, of German Kultur that had made Germany great. In his works supporting the wars, empire, and the Third Reich, he called upon the German Geist and Kultur, not a political theory, to unite the German people. Meinecke noted that a partitioned Germany following the Second World War could not stop German unity. Like Hauptmann, Meinecke did not believe unity and strength was based on "a striving of the masses to whom culture meant nothing," but knew, as Hauptmann did, that unity came from an "idea of an inner union of spirit and power."13

There are many problems surrounding any biography of an author, especially one who lived through three distinct historical periods and wrote about and commented on all three.

13Ibid., 109.
Can the biographer look too deeply for hidden meanings in the works of the author? Is there anything that will substantiate why a particular work was written? Is the author a product of his age? Is there enough evidence for the biographer to draw accurate conclusions about the author? There is little in the works themselves to hint at a deeper meaning. When the biographer delves into Hauptmann’s works, especially his autobiographical works, the essence of the other plays, poems, and stories becomes clearer. There are more than five hundred diaries, and thousands of letters in the archives of the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, that clarify Hauptmann’s ideas and views of his own age. This dissertation has shown how throughout Hauptmann’s life there was a thread of an ideal that tied together the three periods of German history through which Hauptmann lived.

Hauptmann’s published autobiographies explain his reasons for writing particular early works. The extension of ideas in these early works, from one to the other, is not too difficult to make. But there seem to be two distinct phases in Hauptmann’s literary career, one pre-1914 and one post-1914. In the first phase, Hauptmann appeared to challenge the state and the specific elements within society he saw as destructive of German Kultur, namely, technology, heredity, increased consumption of alcohol, and political
disunity." At this time, Hauptmann seemed to have courage, a will to oppose the state and its modernity. The student of German history can easily associate the events and ideas expressed in Hauptmann’s plays with the events and ideas of the nineteenth century. The ideas of heredity that Ernst Haeckel and Auguste Forel advocated are easily identified in "Vor Sonnenaufgang." The background of the peasants’ revolt in 1525 and the weavers’ rebellion of the 1840s is too clearly a representation of the social inequities that German workers felt in the nineteenth century. Though the nationalistic ideas Hauptmann expressed in "Festspiel" were accurate, the public wanted a saber-rattling expression of them.

The second phase of Hauptmann’s literary career follows the outbreak of the Great War and the death of his first wife, Marie. His criticisms become more general, aimed at a people who would allow foreigners to dictate how they would live as seen in "Der Ketzer von Soana," and "Der weiße Heiland." In "Der Ketzer," Francesco’s awakening could be seen as an awakening of the German spirit that sheds foreign influence, in Francesco’s case, the Catholic Church. He also criticized a people who had lost touch with their German Geist and become more decadent and materialistic in

"Die Insel der Großen Mutter," "Till Eulenspiegel," and "Vor Sonnenuntergang." In this phase of his life, Hauptmann is more pessimistic about society, more depressed, similar to the character of Clausen in "Vor Sonnenuntergang." After Marie's death, Hauptmann seemed to have lost his drive to challenge the German social system that still disenfranchised the lower classes. With the exception of "Till Eulenspiegel," a play that criticized a nation Hauptmann thought had turned its back on those who had fought against foreign influence, Hauptmann's plays focus on the crass materialism that tore at German Kultur and destroyed the Volk.

Literary critics have tried to show that Hauptmann attempted, but failed, to revive his critical nature after 1918; but they fail to recognize the change in his criticism and the reason for the change. The only thread that winds its way throughout all of Hauptmann's works is one of need for something to fulfill an emptiness within the chief characters of the work. This is the central theme of all Hauptmann works: "there is something missing." If any extension is to be made, it must be that there is something missing within the German nation, something missing within the soul of the Volk. Hauptmann said as much, many times. The Geist that Hauptmann saw missing in Wilhelm II's empire was not found in the Great War. The Weimar Republic could not fill the spiritual emptiness. The Germans turned to
Hitler and the Nazis, but the spiritual fulfillment was fleeting, especially in the wake of persecution and conquest. Throughout these periods, Hauptmann wanted only to see a united German spirit and culture.

Hauptmann believed that people and their literature "absorb their strength from the earth."\(^{15}\) His education was not a formal one, but was one of life experiences. He remembered his childhood and the people with whom he came in contact, and based his stories on his memories of them. Throughout his life he believed, as he noted in his youth, that "The essential feature of our being and life was faith... the irresistible development of mankind."\(^{16}\) He spent his entire life in search of the essence of the faith, the elusive Geist. His work traced the history of Germany and the German people and reflected what he saw and felt regarding both.

This dissertation has examined the works, diaries, letters, and notes of Gerhart Hauptmann to complete a portrait of one of the world's greatest authors and show how he wrote a history of Germany and the Germans through his works. His plays and novels paint a brilliant picture of the Germany in which he lived. From his earliest social


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 1071.
criticisms in "Fasching" in the Wilhelmine era, to a call for German political and spiritual unity following the Great War, Gerhart Hauptmann searched his land and people for a spirit that possibly existed only in myth, or perhaps in his own Weltanschauung. Whatever the belief regarding this great author, when one reads the works of Gerhart Hauptmann, one reads a clear history of Germany, a mirror of what he perceived as the German soul.
ABBREVIATIONS

GHP -- Gerhart Hauptmann papers located in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.
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