

*Hauserstücke*  
Representations in Twentieth-Century German Film and Theater

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On 14 December 1832, a young man walked into the Court Garden of the Orangerie in Ansbach. The young man was looking for another man, who had claimed that he would give the young man information about his mother.

While at the Court Garden, the young man was stabbed, and three days later, he died in bed from his wounds.<sup>1</sup> This young man

was Kaspar Hauser, whose tombstone declares that he was the “enigma of his time, unknown his birth, dark his death.”

However, with this death, Kaspar Hauser went from simply being the “enigma of his time,” to being an enigma for all time since his death as well.<sup>2</sup> Between his

mysterious appearance in Nuremberg in 1828 and his equally mysterious death in 1832,



Figure 1: Kaspar Hauser’s gravestone<sup>3</sup>

Kaspar Hauser became a public fascination, and a source of endless speculation. For where did this boy truly come from and who was he? How did he come to Nuremberg and how did he actually die? Even before his death, rumors were beginning to run rampant that the boy was of royal blood or that he was playing everybody for a fool and knew exactly what he was doing. The rumors continued after his death, and the mystery of Kaspar Hauser exists to the present day.

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *Lost Prince: The Unsolved Mystery of Kaspar Hauser* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 19, 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes Mayer and Peter Tradowsky, *Kaspar Hauser, das Kind von Europa: in Wort und Bild dargestellt* (Stuttgart: Urchhaus, 1984), 648. The inscription reads, “Hic jacet Casparus Hauser, aenigma sui temporis, ignota nativitas, occulta mors.” See figure 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mayer and Tradowsky, 648.

Now, this is all very fascinating, and others have filled pages upon pages with ink regarding Kaspar Hauser's background, life, and death. The first men to write about Hauser were those who had actually known him personally while he was still alive. Hauser himself also wrote a short autobiography of his life as he recollected it.<sup>4</sup> The two most prominent men to write of Kaspar Hauser in his time were his first teacher, Georg Friedrich Daumer, and a lawyer, Paul Johann Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach, who dedicated an immense amount of time to helping Hauser, as well as attempting to solve the mystery of his true identity. Through observations, interviews, and investigations Feuerbach originally set out merely to discover who Hauser truly was, which led to his eventual publication of *Kaspar Hauser: Beispiel eines Verbrechens am Seelenleben des Menschen*. As Feuerbach examined Hauser's case, he attempted to prove in an organized, precise, and rational manner that Hauser was indeed the rightful Crown Prince of Baden and son of Stéphanie de Beauharnais, the Grand Duchess of Baden.<sup>5</sup> Feuerbach published his book only four years after Hauser's appearance in Nuremberg in 1828, and he was instrumental in Hauser's life even before then.<sup>6</sup> On July 11, 1828, two months after Hauser's mysterious appearance in Nuremberg on May 26, Feuerbach visited the young man where he was being held by city officials.<sup>7</sup> Seeing that Hauser desperately needed help, Feuerbach and Mayor Binder chose to place him under the teaching and care of Georg Friedrich Daumer.<sup>8</sup> A student of both Georg Wilhelm Hegel and Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, Daumer took Hauser into his home, and in a year and a half, he taught the young man "to speak, to draw, to play the

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<sup>4</sup> Kaspar Hauser, "Selbstbiographie," in Masson, *Lost Prince*, 187-195.

<sup>5</sup> Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach, "Kaspar Hauser: Beispiel eines Verbrechens am Seelenleben des Menschen," *Lost Prince: The Unsolved Mystery of Kaspar Hauser*, trans. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 74-158.

<sup>6</sup> Masson, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Masson, 4, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Masson, 8-9.

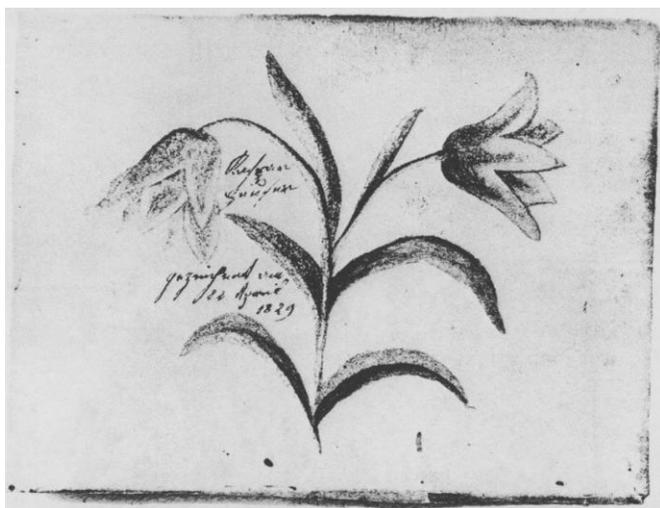


Figure 2: Hauser's first watercolor painting<sup>11</sup>

piano, and to wonder about his own past.”<sup>9</sup>

Eventually, after Kaspar Hauser's death, Daumer set his own thoughts on the matter down, and published his book, *Kaspar Hauser: Sein Wesen, seine Unschuld*.<sup>10</sup>

Since these first important contributions, thousands of books, articles, and other literary and artistic works have

been created about the life and death of Kaspar Hauser.<sup>12</sup> Despite this massive amount of literature, some writers are still trying to bring the story of Kaspar Hauser into a broader popular consciousness, as Jeffrey M. Masson has tried with his translation of Feuerbach's book as well as a compilation of other *Hauserstücke* from his lifetime.<sup>13</sup> And yet, what is almost as curious, if not more so than the enigma himself, is how Kaspar Hauser has captured the minds of so many writers and artists. What is so appealing about this young man that works have continued to be written about him in the 176 years since his death? Not simply biographers and historians have produced material on Hauser, but also novelists, poets, playwrights, filmmakers, essayists, and songwriters have all lent their talents to this subject.<sup>14</sup> The name Kaspar Hauser has even been

<sup>9</sup> Masson, 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> Georg Friedrich Daumer, *Kaspar Hauser: Sein Wesen, seine Unschuld* (Goetheanum: Rudolf Geering Verlag, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> Mayer and Tradowsky, 783.

<sup>12</sup> Masson, 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> Masson, 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Suzanne Vega, “Wooden Horse (Caspar Hauser's Song),” *Solitude Standing* (A&M Records, Inc., 1987). Ed. Ulrich Struve, *Der Findling: Kaspar Hauser in der Literatur* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992). This book contains the lyrics to German songs about Hauser such as: Johann Jacob Lewerer, “Lied,” (1828) 25; Anonymes Bänkellied, “Kaspar Hauser: Das ungelöste Rätsel von Nürnberg,” (1834) 63-64; Paul Verlaine, “Gaspard Hauser Chante,” (1873/81) 91-93; Hans Lindenmeyer, “Kaspar Hauser: Historische Ballade im Moritätenstil,” (1927) 226-228; Reinhard Mey, “Kaspar,” (1968) 273-274.

used by two different writers, the poet Kurt Tucholsky and the playwright Jörg Mager, as a pseudonym.<sup>15</sup> The works cross all artistic periodic boundaries from Biedermeier (when Hauser first appeared) and Romanticism, to Expressionism and Dadaism, as well as post-Modern and New German Cinema; they belong to a vast range of philosophical schools, and they cross language barriers, being published in both German and English. Kaspar Hauser's name has even been lent to a psychological syndrome, and is a go-to example for many psychological and linguistic cases.<sup>16</sup>

This vast body of literature and art has readily lent itself to literary and historical analysis in both languages, and the interpretations are endless. One of the most comprehensive analyses is Ursula Sampath's book on the twentieth century German-language literature regarding Kaspar Hauser.<sup>17</sup> In examining the body of German works, Sampath created a series of groupings for his literary treatment. She described the five uses of Hauser's life as having different symbolic meanings: Hauser as the "outsider," as the "noble savage," as a "redeemer figure," as a "tabula rasa," and as a "tool for social criticism."<sup>18</sup> The first metaphor Sampath describes, that of Hauser as an "outsider," breaks down further into three subsets: "the negative fairy tale," "the embodiment of the poet's alienation," and "the 'human condition.'"<sup>19</sup> In describing "the negative fairy tale," she explains that in the literature, there is a tendency towards the unhappily ever after, and that "[i]nvariably, modern works on Kaspar Hauser emphasize, even seem to relish the negative turn of events. They do not gloss over the death of the innocent."<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>15</sup> Struve, 169, 174.

<sup>16</sup> John Money, *The Kaspar Hauser Syndrome of "Psychosocial Dwarfism"* (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1992).; Rev. J.A.L. Singh and Robert M. Zingg, *Wolf-Children and Feral Man* (U.S.: Archon Books, 1966).; Douglas Keith Candland, *Feral Children and Clever Animals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Ursula Sampath, *Kaspar Hauser: A Modern Metaphor* (Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House, Inc., 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Sampath, 23, 58, 79, 99, 118.

<sup>19</sup> Sampath, 23, 29, 44.

<sup>20</sup> Sampath, 25.

second subset concerns itself with the empathy that poets felt for Hauser. They themselves felt isolated from their own contemporaries and they reached out to the symbol of Hauser, because he “did not belong” in his era, much as they felt they did not belong in theirs.<sup>21</sup> The third subset, which overlaps heavily with the second, is the idea of “the ‘human condition,’” in which everyone, not only the artist, feels isolated on their own personal island. Thus, Hauser is a shoe-in candidate for the symbol of disappointment and loneliness in one’s own life.<sup>22</sup> Sampath’s second metaphor is that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “noble savage.”<sup>23</sup> This idea follows the philosophical premises outlined by Rousseau that arrive at the notion that the savage is noble because he is still living in harmony with Nature, and because he is not yet corrupted by society.<sup>24</sup> The third metaphor that Sampath expounds is the idea of Hauser as a “redeemer figure.”<sup>25</sup> This is a bit tricky, as Hauser is most certainly “a very human figure (and a pitiful one at that).”<sup>26</sup> Perhaps a better term for this metaphor would be Hauser as martyr, in the sense that these literary works can be read as stories of a “pure and blameless victim” who suffers, and is eventually killed for what appear to be circumstances beyond his control.<sup>27</sup> Then again, this aligns fairly well with traditional Christian ideas, as Sampath argues in her interpretation of the literature. In her discussion of the fourth metaphor, that of Hauser as a “tabula rasa,” Sampath sets forth the idea that he is also emblematic of the “new man,” one who “presented his contemporaries with a unique opportunity not only to observe man’s development, but to mold him according to their current ideals.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Sampath, 32.

<sup>22</sup> Sampath, 44.

<sup>23</sup> Sampath, 58.

<sup>24</sup> Sampath, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Sampath, 79.

<sup>26</sup> Sampath, 85.

<sup>27</sup> Sampath, 85.

<sup>28</sup> Sampath, 99.

Sampath's final metaphor is perhaps the most complex, as it could also be considered an umbrella over the other four metaphorical interpretations. Her discussion of Hauser as a "tool for social criticism" involves both the retreat of the writer from his world around him and his involvement within his world, as reactions to that very same all-encompassing world.<sup>29</sup> It is this problematic "perennial vacillation between the rejection and acceptance of communal responsibility" that she deals with for most of this segment of her argument.<sup>30</sup> The way that Sampath sees it, these artists are intensely aware of the shortcomings of their society, and they have no problems whatsoever in expressing their disdain. Despite this, very few artists have been able to set forth solutions to these shortcomings through Kaspar Hauser.<sup>31</sup> A few, however, have taken tentative steps towards rectifying the inadequacies of their society, and instead of retreating from society at large, they have through their work taken up the mantle of communal responsibility for the problems at hand.<sup>32</sup>

In all of these various representations of Kaspar Hauser, Sampath argues, the figure can be seen as belonging to one or more of these metaphorical meanings. Such is the case with Jacob Wassermann's novel, *Caspar Hauser oder die Trägheit des Herzens*, in which Sampath argues that Hauser can be construed as the tragic fairy tale outsider, as an innocent childlike savage, and as a saintly figure who has endured his suffering commendably.<sup>33</sup> Her argument then, is that regardless of medium, whether poetry, drama, or novel, all Kaspar Hauser literature fits into at least one of these types, and while certain time periods lend themselves more towards

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<sup>29</sup> Sampath, 118.

<sup>30</sup> Sampath, 121.

<sup>31</sup> Sampath, 129-130.

<sup>32</sup> Sampath, 130.

<sup>33</sup> Sampath, 24, 67, 84. The corresponding evidence Sampath outlines for her argument can be found in: Jakob Wassermann, *Caspar Hauser oder die Trägheit des Herzens* (Zurich: Carl Posen, 1947), 40, 384, 137, 440.; Jakob Wassermann, *Caspar Hauser: The Enigma of a Century*, trans. Caroline Newton (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1956).

one or another type, no specific medium belongs explicitly to one type. Poets writing about Hauser immediately before and during World War I were exceedingly concerned with the alienation of man from society, and they utilized Hauser as a symbol for this isolation they felt. Georg Trakl, Kurt Tucholsky, and Hans Arp all gave voice to their frustrations through Kaspar Hauser.<sup>34</sup> Sampath also argues, however, that poetry, as well as the other mediums concerned with Hauser, can fall under a variety of symbolic usages. She shows this through the examination of the Hauser poetry of Klabund, Peter Härtling, and Klaus Mann. Sampath argues that Klabund's Hauser is "applicable to all mankind," while Härtling's Hauser "suggest[s] that the childlike spirit has power over the forces of Nature."<sup>35</sup> Along with these two interpretations, is that of Mann, whose "Legenden," Sampath argues, showcase a similarity between Kaspar Hauser's life and the life of Jesus Christ. This far-reaching similarity is backed up in Sampath's argument by Hauser's encounters with some of the more colorful dregs of society, much like the Gospels' stories of Jesus among the lowly.<sup>36</sup>

Sampath chooses to examine the literature from a more analytical standpoint, as opposed to taking a more historical view.<sup>37</sup> She does briefly discuss at times the influence of history and society on the writers; however, it is not an over-arching goal of hers to illustrate how or how

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<sup>34</sup> Sampath, 35, 55, 38-39.; Georg Trakl, "Kaspar Hauser Lied," *Dichtungen und Briefe: Band 1* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1969), 95. Note: originally published in 1913.; Kurt Tucholsky, "Namensänderung," *Der Findling: Kaspar Hauser in der Literatur*, ed. Ulrich Struve (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992), 169. Note: originally published 1918.; Hans Arp, "kaspar ist tot," *Der Findling: Kaspar Hauser in der Literatur*, ed. Ulrich Struve (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992), 170-171. Note: originally published in 1919.

<sup>35</sup> Sampath, 45, 75.; Klabund, "Der arme Kaspar," *Der Findling: Kaspar Hauser in der Literatur*, ed. Ulrich Struve (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992), 184. Note: originally published 1922.; Peter Härtling, "kaspar," *Mein Gedicht ist mein Messer: Lyriker zu ihren Gedichten*, ed. Hans Bender (München: Paul List Verlag, 1961), 164-165.; Härtling, "nachricht von kasper," *Mein Gedicht ist mein Messer: Lyriker zu ihren Gedichten*, ed. Hans Bender (München: Paul List Verlag, 1961), 165.

<sup>36</sup> Sampath, 88.; Klaus Mann, "Kaspar Hauser singt," *Gedichte und Chansons*, ed. Uwe Naumann and Fredric Kroll (Schriesheim, Germany: Verlag Frank Albrecht, 1999), 18.; Mann, "Kaspar Hauser," *Gedichte und Chansons*, ed. Uwe Naumann and Fredric Kroll (Schriesheim, Germany: Verlag Frank Albrecht, 1999), 20.

<sup>37</sup> Sampath, 7-8.

much the artists' worlds affected their writing.<sup>38</sup> She also discusses the history of Kaspar Hauser himself, and gives a short, but detailed introductory of his brief public life.<sup>39</sup> She looks only at the twentieth century artists' views and usages of Kaspar Hauser, and discusses the artistic influences of previous and contemporary writers on the Hauser authors.<sup>40</sup> Ursula Sampath's five metaphorical categories and their subsets do help to shed a great deal of light on the many artistic uses of Kaspar Hauser in the German-language literature, and in truth, it is possible to see these trends throughout the entire body of twentieth century literature. When one centers upon a specific type of literature though, such as the performance literature of theater and film, and examines the history of twentieth century German speaking nations alongside that specific type of literature, a more concise trend begins to appear.

In this case, I have chosen to examine specifically those works which were created for the theater and film, and in looking solely at these two types of media, a common thread appears in the portrayal of the figure of Kaspar Hauser. For these playwrights and directors, Hauser is such a malleable figure, that it is possible for them to mold him to their ideas. Once they have finished shaping their Hauser character into their own vision, they are also able to shape his world around him. In essence, these directors and playwrights are using Hauser's early nineteenth century and Hauser himself to comment on their own time socially and politically. They do not merely comment, though; I believe that these writers and directors are making specific complaints against the world around themselves, and are using the figure of Kaspar Hauser as a funnel for their critical thoughts.

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<sup>38</sup> Sampath, 29-32.

<sup>39</sup> Sampath, 9-12.

<sup>40</sup> Sampath, 14-22.

Even though the vast body of work on Kaspar Hauser is in both German and English, the artistic half of the body is overwhelmingly originally in the German language. This is especially true in the realms of theater and film, as only two dramas, a Danish performance piece entitled *Kaspariana* and a British play called "...and from the night, Kaspar," as well as one American miniseries, "The Mystery of Caspar Hauser," have been produced in languages other than



*Caspar Hauser (Michael Landon) wird von der Nürnberger Polizei verhaftet.*

German.<sup>41</sup> Thus, I will be focusing on the German-language films and dramas which center upon Kaspar Hauser. It is within these pieces that one sees a distinct trend of socio-political critiques. Through the character of Hauser, German playwrights have continued in Feuerbach's critical footsteps.

While Feuerbach criticized his and Hauser's own time period, these

Figure 3: Still from "The Mystery of Caspar Hauser"<sup>42</sup> artists have sought to showcase their criticisms, not of Feuerbach's Biedermeier, but of their own respective time periods. Through the fascinating history of Hauser and the multitudes of stories about him, these artists have concocted their own stories and versions of Hauser's life and death.

<sup>41</sup> Marc Fumaroli, trans. Frank Paul Bowman, "Eugenio Barba's 'Kaspariana,'" *The Drama Review* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1968): 46-56.; Carlo Pietzner, "...and from the night, Kaspar," *Who was Kaspar Hauser?: An Essay and a Play* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1983).; "The Mystery of Caspar Hauser," *Telephone Time*, dir. Arthur Hiller, Quintex Entertainment & CBS, 1956, videocassette. See figure 3.

<sup>42</sup> Struve, 250. This was Michael Landon's first major role, before becoming famous on the television series *Bonanza*.

In doing so, they have transformed Kaspar Hauser from “a stranger, who was killed by a stranger” into a symbol for political disquiet.<sup>43</sup>

The particular twentieth-century artists who have written and directed German works about Kaspar Hauser which this paper will be examining are Kurt Martens, Victor Curt Habicht, Emil Pirchan, Jörg Mager, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Peter Handke, Werner Herzog, Dieter Forte, and Peter Sehr. Given the tumultuousness of the German-speaking world in the twentieth century, these artists produced some very insightful criticisms through the eyes and experiences of the nineteenth-century Kaspar Hauser.

The first two playwrights, Kurt Martens and Victor Curt Habicht, produced their work at the turn of the century, before the outbreak of World War I. Martens published his play, entitled *Kaspar Hauser: Drama in vier Akten*, in 1903, and seven years later in 1911, Habicht published his play, *Kaspar Hauser: Ein Spiel*.<sup>44</sup> Kurt Martens lived from 1870 until 1945, when he took his own life after the firebombing of Dresden in February of that year.<sup>45</sup> His original occupation was as a civil servant; however, in 1896 he began to write literature full time.<sup>46</sup> Although he was mainly a writer of novels and novellas, Martens also published this play about Hauser, as well as two literary analysis books on German literature.<sup>47</sup> Habicht, on the other hand, is a relative unknown. Sampath and Struve wrote very little about Habicht, and the actual text itself written

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<sup>43</sup> Mayer and Tradowsky, 662. The inscription reads: “Hic occultus occultu occisus est.”

<sup>44</sup> Kurt Martens, *Kaspar Hauser: Drama in vier Akten* (Berlin: F. Fontane, 1903).; Victor Curt Habicht, “Kaspar Hauser: Ein Spiel,” *Spiele* (München: E.W. Bonsels & Co., 1911). There is some confusion as to Habicht’s last name, which I have been unable to figure out. In both Struve and Sampath’s books, he is credited as “Victor Curt Bihacht,” and his book of plays is published under the name of Bihacht; however the name used in the *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*, as well as WorldCat is Habicht. I believe his name to actually be Habicht, and Bihacht to be a confusing and unfortunate typo.

Struve, 152; Sampath, 26, 55, 139.

<sup>45</sup> Henry Garland and Mary Garland, “Kurt Martens,” *The Oxford Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 599.

<sup>46</sup> Garland, 599.

<sup>47</sup> Garland, 599.; Kurt Martens, *Literatur in Deutschland: Studien und Eindrücke* (Berlin: E. Fleischel & Co., 1910).; Martens, *Die deutsche Literatur unsrer Zeit in Charakteristiken und Proben* (München: Rösl, 1922).

by Habicht contains no biographical information.<sup>48</sup> According to the *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon* I finally found out that Habicht was born in Nahe near Idar-Oberstein on 16 May 1883.<sup>49</sup> He was a Doctor of Philosophy, and a professor at Technische Hochschule Hannover, as well as an art historian, lyricist, storyteller, and dramatist during his lifetime.<sup>50</sup> The majority of his works were written later than *Kaspar Hauser: Ein Spiel*, mostly between the years of 1914 and 1930.<sup>51</sup> On 10 July 1945, Victor Curt Habicht died in Hannover.<sup>52</sup>

Prior to World War I, artists were already beginning to feel isolated within their own world. At the end of the nineteenth century, writers began to perceive a period of “cultural disintegration” as a result of the Industrial Revolution’s “relentless drive for economical and technical progress.”<sup>53</sup> As an offshoot of this feeling, the artistic period of Expressionism began to emerge in the German-speaking world. Beginning in the 1890s, the younger generation was experiencing a growing feeling of being stifled by the older generation. After “the unification and industrialization of the German empire,” this younger generation was searching for a way to get out from under the values and social mores of the previous generation.<sup>54</sup> In the café culture of the big cities, such as Berlin and Munich, this younger generation found their literary outlet in the “discussions [that] set up an alternative imaginary world almost as a surrogate for the shortcomings of Wilhelmine life.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Sampath, 26, 55.; Struve, 152.

<sup>49</sup> “Habicht, Victor Curt,” *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*, vol. 7, ed. Bruno Berger & Heinz Rupp (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1968), 31.

<sup>50</sup> “Habicht, Victor Curt,” 31.

<sup>51</sup> “Habicht, Victor Curt,” 31.

<sup>52</sup> “Habicht, Victor Curt,” 31.

<sup>53</sup> Sampath, 29.

<sup>54</sup> Brian Keith-Smith, “Expressionism,” *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, vol. 1, ed. Matthias Konzett (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), 261.

<sup>55</sup> Keith-Smith, 262.

To discuss this reaction to pre-1914 Germany and thus the reactions of Martens and Habicht, we need to take a few steps back in time. The period of the Second Empire lasted from January 1871 until November 1918, and both the proclamation of establishment and proclamation of defeat were made in the palace at Versailles. This period can be divided roughly into two halves, that of Bismarckian Germany and its politics between the beginning of the Second Empire and 1890, and that of Wilhelmine Germany and its politics, which lasted from 1890 until the end of World War I.<sup>56</sup>

Bismarckian Germany receives its name from Otto von Bismarck, who as the Reich Chancellor as well as Prussian Foreign Minister, he brought government and decision-making under himself, placed “the monarchy in the political shade,” and enjoyed “many of the prerogatives of autocratic power within the executive.”<sup>57</sup> The system of Imperial Germany under the Constitution and Bismarck was vastly complicated, and as such has been described “as a military monarchy, a pseudo-constitutional state, a semi-constitutional state with parliamentary or plebiscitary additions, a Prusso-German semi-autocracy, and a pseudo-parliamentary regime.”<sup>58</sup> As powerful as Bismarck was, he was, in the end, still dismissed from his position of Reich Chancellor, which brought about the other half of the reign of the Second German Empire, that of Wilhelmine Germany.

After 19 years of power, Otto von Bismarck was dismissed by Wilhelm II, the grandson of Wilhelm I in March 1890.<sup>59</sup> Brought about by “the advent of the brashly self-assertive young Kaiser,” the changes that occurred in politics, society, and economics, were characterized by the

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<sup>56</sup> John Breuilly, “Introduction to Part II: 1871-1918,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 145.

<sup>57</sup> Katharine A. Lerman, “Bismarckian Germany and the Structure of the German Empire,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 155.

<sup>58</sup> Lerman, 149.

<sup>59</sup> Lerman, 166.

“shifting cultural climate under the impact of new intellectual currents...and ideological challenges.”<sup>60</sup> Wilhelm II also held a personal conviction that it was “his divine right to rule” over the Second German Empire, and as Kaiser, he “was wholly unwilling to play the modest role within the political system which his grandfather...had accepted.”<sup>61</sup> Because of this belief, Imperial Germany before World War I was an awkward “juxtaposition of anxiety with hubris and ambition,” which gave rise to political mobilization and mass politics.<sup>62</sup> This new trend of political mobilization enabled, and indeed encouraged “new forms of organization and popular protest among those who had previously lacked a political voice” under previous forms of German government.<sup>63</sup> This was most widely represented by the rise of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) in the 1890s; in fact, the SPD held the majority in the Reichstag in the years preceding World War I.<sup>64</sup>

At the same time that the Second German Empire was being shaped by its politics at all levels, so too was it becoming influenced by the emerging cultural and intellectual developments of the era. These developments formed the core of Modernism, which “witnessed a far-reaching revolution in painting, architecture, music, literature, and indeed in almost every other art form... and was nourished by – a similarly radical questioning of previous assumptions in scientific and philosophical life.”<sup>65</sup> The beginning of the Modern Period was characterized by an “intellectual disdain for the emerging mass society and its culture,” along with an overarching “mood of

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<sup>60</sup> Katharine A. Lerman, “Wilhelmine Germany,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 199.

<sup>61</sup> Lerman, 208.

<sup>62</sup> Lerman, 199.

<sup>63</sup> Lerman, 201.

<sup>64</sup> Lerman, 201-202.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew Jefferies, “Imperial Germany: Cultural and Intellectual Trends,” *German History Since 1800* ed. Mary Fulbrook, (London: Arnold , 1997), 182.

malaise.”<sup>66</sup> Culture of the period had a distinctly nationalistic tint to it which was influenced by the view that smaller German states could utilize their own cultural advances “as a counterweight to Berlin’s hegemony.”<sup>67</sup> At the beginning of the Second German Empire the arena of visual art was overwhelmingly conservative and stifling in its presentation and subject matter, and it also failed to adhere to any singular artistic style.<sup>68</sup> The largest personal contribution to Berliner culture that Wilhelm II made was the commissioning of the *Siegesallee*, which “was an ambitious double row of 32 marble statues, designed to venerate the history of the Hohenzollerns,” one of the noble houses of Prussia.<sup>69</sup> After the *Siegesallee* was completed in 1901, the Kaiser made a grandiose speech before all who had worked on the project, in an attempt to forward his view that art should be viewed “as a body of unchanging, eternal values, which could be used to uplift and educate the German nation... to appreciate truth and beauty.”<sup>70</sup>

Wilhelm II’s views on art were not widely shared by the majority of those in the cultural “know” in the German speaking world. Many artists began to buck “the idea that cultural values were somehow permanent and unchanging, [and] that the rules of art had been laid down centuries before and would only be challenged by fools and charlatans.”<sup>71</sup> This new cultural vantage point was brought about by some of the most critical and challenging thinkers of the Second German Empire, such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner. Alongside the advent of Nietzsche’s and Wagner’s works, German literature was experiencing a radical change in both theme and content. This radical change evolved into the style of Naturalism in literature and

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<sup>66</sup> Jefferies, 182.

<sup>67</sup> Jefferies, 183.

<sup>68</sup> Jefferies, 183-185.

<sup>69</sup> Jefferies, 187.

<sup>70</sup> Jefferies, 187.

<sup>71</sup> Jefferies, 187.

theater, as well as the Secessions from the established salons and academies in art circles.<sup>72</sup> Architecture and design broke away from traditional styles as well, branching off into the *Jugendstil*, which is the German term for the *art nouveau* style that was present throughout Europe at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>73</sup> *Jugendstil* was eventually co-opted into mass manufacturing, but it originally represented an important break in tradition for three-dimensional art.<sup>74</sup>

Imperial Germany was also altered by technological advances of the era, such as the telephone, typewriter, camera, gramophone, and radio, as well as new discoveries in the natural sciences, including x-rays, radioactivity, electrons, Max Planck's quantum theory, and Albert Einstein's theory of relativity.<sup>75</sup> These and other technological advances helped to alter the theater, which allowed for playwrights to break conventions in drama, and open the door to Expressionistic drama.<sup>76</sup> One of the most influential thinkers of the time, whose work inspired the Expressionism movement, was Sigmund Freud; his invention of psychoanalysis, along with the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899, were driving impetuses for the characteristic elements of Expressionistic artwork.<sup>77</sup> Expressionism was founded by two fine art groups, *Die Brücke* and *Der Blaue Reiter*, in Germany.<sup>78</sup>

It was into this new Expressionistic culture, which was seen "by the German establishment...as an embarrassment, by their contemporaries and Dadaists as inadequate, by the activist writers as irrelevant,...and despite their talk of revolution, by major Marxist critics as unavoidably bourgeois," and defined by pieces such as Franz Kafka's *Verwandlung* and Alban

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<sup>72</sup> Jeffries, 189.

<sup>73</sup> Jeffries, 190.

<sup>74</sup> Jeffries, 190.

<sup>75</sup> Jeffries, 194, 196.

<sup>76</sup> Jeffries, 194-195.

<sup>77</sup> Jeffries, 196.

<sup>78</sup> Jeffries, 196.

Berg's operatic adaptation of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, that Martens' and Habicht's Kaspar Hausers entered.<sup>79</sup>

*Kaspar Hauser: Drama in vier Akten* focuses itself solely on the death date of Kaspar Hauser, and portrays him in a singularly distinct manner. In Martens' drama, Hauser is imbued with an amazing sense of self-knowledge, which he uses to rise up in opposition to Lord Stanhope, his would-be adopted father, as well as the Royal House of Baden.<sup>80</sup> At one point in the drama, Hauser even claims to call for the support of the masses, shouting, "Geht's mit den großen Herren nicht, so ruf' ich das Volk."<sup>81</sup> After this proclamation is made however, this theme is not continued to be developed at all by Martens.<sup>82</sup> The Hauser that is portrayed in Martens' drama is both aware of and concerned with the *Prinzentheorie*, and it is this theory that Hauser uses to plot his uprising against Baden, in order to reclaim his birthright as the crown prince of Baden.<sup>83</sup> The fact that Martens was still concerned with the possible royal lineage of Hauser mirrors the fact that the *Kaiserreich* under Wilhelm II was an empire, complete with its own ruling family. At the same time, the Second German Empire was still regionally fractioned into culturally distinct states, who were vying for political power within the *Kaiserreich*. Martens also begins to look to the masses as a subject, and writes of Hauser's uprising, even though it still leads to his inevitable death. This mix of optimism and pessimism reflects the changing tides from Naturalism to Expressionism, as portraying reality as one truly saw it changed to reality as one perceived it to be. Martens is thus the stepping stone into the twentieth century view of a Hauser figure that is able think critically about the world in which he lives, and

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<sup>79</sup> Keith-Smith, 261.

<sup>80</sup> Struve, 112.

<sup>81</sup> Martens, 119.

<sup>82</sup> Sampath, 132.

<sup>83</sup> Struve, 112.

this awareness is utilized by Martens to comment on the slow-growing power of the masses, as with the rise of the SPD. Though, as merely the first step, Martens still defers to the ruling, if ineffectual, power of the imperial Kaiser.

Victor Curt Habicht goes a separate direction in his interpretation of Kaspar Hauser, as opposed to Martens. Habicht's Hauser is also aware of his royal blood; however, he utilizes his knowledge to pursue a different route. In Habicht's one-act play, Hauser falls in love with a princess, and pursues the relationship throughout the play, until she spurns him.<sup>84</sup> This is a result of Hauser's inability to prove what he knows, namely, that he is indeed the crown prince of Baden.<sup>85</sup> This in and of itself is a departure from most other depictions of Hauser, in that the playwright has ignored Hauser's actual history, and has presented him with a doomed love. The other major departure that Habicht chooses to elaborate upon is the notion of suicide, as opposed to death by another's hand. Habicht portrays Hauser as a forlorn and hopeless individual after his rejection by the princess, and after the accusation that he is a fraud, only masquerading as a member of the royal family.<sup>86</sup> After these events, Hauser, in Habicht's interpretation, turns to suicide as his only way out, and possibly as his only form of redemption. At the time of Hauser's death, his detractors claimed that he had committed suicide, instead of being stabbed by a mysterious assailant in the Orangerie; however, Habicht is the only artist who chooses to end his fictional Hauser's life in such a manner.<sup>87</sup> Habicht, like Martens, is still concerned with the idea of Hauser's royalty, yet his ultimate choice to have his protagonist kill himself reflects a different societal trend in Imperial Germany. Hauser's suicide can be seen as a reflection of the

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<sup>84</sup> Struve, 152.

<sup>85</sup> Sampath, 26.

<sup>86</sup> Struve, 152.

<sup>87</sup> Sampath, 55.

permeating sense of malaise felt by Germans and artists within the Empire around the turn of the century.

After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the German-speaking world was thrust into a new form of violent turmoil, one in which human life was made insignificant and fighting was depersonalized, and thus those fighting were desensitized. During the war, as well as immediately afterwards, artists responded in their works to this rising, worrisome disillusionment and lack of concern for humanity sweeping through not only the military, but also the civilian population. In reaction to the horrors of trench warfare, the use of poison gasses, and other new technology, such as airplanes and tanks, German-speaking writers used their pens and typewriters to condemn and critique the war, its leaders, and its supporters. Writers such as Erich Maria Remarque and Karl Kraus wrote fictional experiences of Germans and Austrians in their works, *Im Westen nichts Neues* and *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, respectively.<sup>88</sup> The end of World War I led to the creation of the Weimar Republic in Germany, and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into an array of new nation states. The end of Imperial Germany, and its replacement by a republic set a new stage for the continuing Expressionistic theater, one in which the emphasis on Hauser's supposed royal bloodlines, such as in *Martens*, would be supplanted by an emphasis on Hauser as a symbol of the people, of the proletariat even.

Although the geographical, national, and political landscape of the German-speaking world was about to be completely altered, artists continued to tell Hauser's story in their own Expressionistic way. In 1917 in Germany, Emil Pirchan continued to tell his version of Kaspar

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<sup>88</sup> Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. A.W. Wheen (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1929). Karl Kraus, *The Last Days of Mankind: A Tragedy in Five Acts*, trans. & ed. Frederick Ungar (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1974). Note: originally published 1919.

Hauser's story through theater.<sup>89</sup> Born in Brünn, Austria in 1884, Pirchan attended *die Akademie der Bildenden Künste*, where he studied architecture under Otto Wagner.<sup>90</sup> After he had completed his studies, Pirchan moved to Munich, where he founded an art school for scenery, graphic design, and poster design in 1913.<sup>91</sup> In December 1918, he first began his work in stage craft as a set designer and constructor, which he continued to do throughout his life, at the same time as pursuing other artistic venues.<sup>92</sup> Pirchan moved to Berlin in 1919 to design and construct set pieces, as well as costumes for the 1919-1920 theatrical season of *das Staatliche Schauspielhaus Berlin*, including the October 1919 performance of *Maria Stuart*, and the December performance two months later of *Wilhelm Tell*.<sup>93</sup> Through the symbolism of color, Pirchan brought a whole new Expressionistic viewpoint to Shakespeare's *Richard III* in November 1920 and *Othello* a year later, also in November.<sup>94</sup> Throughout his life, Pirchan designed sets for productions outside of Germany, including productions in Buenos Aires, Prague, Zürich, Barcelona, Vienna, Salzburg, and Innsbruck.<sup>95</sup> Emil Pirchan died on 20 December 1957, a "Pionier des Expressionismus auf dem Theater," in Vienna.<sup>96</sup>

At the same time that his theatrical career was beginning to take off, Emil Pirchan began his literary career as well. He began publishing in 1916, and he continued his literary forays by writing *Ansbach: Ein Dramolett* in 1917.<sup>97</sup> The *Miniaturdrama* concerns itself with the events

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<sup>89</sup> Emil Pirchan, "Ansbach: Ein Dramolett," *Der Findling: Kaspar Hauser in der Literatur*, ed. Ulrich Struve (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992), 163-168. Note: originally published in 1917.

<sup>90</sup> Erika Schepelmann-Rieder, *Emil Pirchan und das expressionistische Bühnenbild*, (Wien: Bergland Verlag, 1964), 8.

<sup>91</sup> Schepelmann-Rieder, 8.

<sup>92</sup> Schepelmann-Rieder, 12.

<sup>93</sup> Schepelmann-Rieder, 13, 16-17.

<sup>94</sup> Schepelmann-Rieder, 35-36.

<sup>95</sup> Schepelmann-Rieder, 66-67, 69-70, 72.

<sup>96</sup> Schepelmann-Rieder, 59.

<sup>97</sup> I was unable to track down a stand-alone copy of Pirchan's *Miniaturdrama*, so the closest source to a primary one that I have been able to find is the six-page part that Struve included in his compilation of Hauser literature. Given

right before and immediately after Kaspar Hauser's stabbing in the Court Garden of the Orangerie.<sup>98</sup> Pirchan paints the death of Hauser in his play as an anti-Napoleonic plot, setting him as the son of Stéphanie de Beauharnais, and thus a threat to the Crown of Baden.<sup>99</sup> Towards the climax of the play, *der Fremde* informs Kaspar Hauser that he must die, and that he, *der Fremde*, is going to be the one to kill Hauser.<sup>100</sup> Immediately after the stranger has stabbed Hauser, and left him bleeding in the snow, the gardener from the beginning returns to speak once again with the stranger.<sup>101</sup> The stranger exclaims to his friend, Gaston the gardener, "Bald stirbt auch dieser Napoleonide...Alle, alle von der verhaßten Brut müssen so sterben, wenn unser Frankreich, wenn Europa, leben soll!"<sup>102</sup> Utilizing the Napoleonic family as a symbol for all royal families, and in particular the Imperial German family, Pirchan was able to criticize monarchical and imperial government, while also calling for a government of the people. In the same scene, Pirchan also criticized the immense loss of military and civilian life, as well as the incredible loss of innocence, that was brought about by World War I. In portraying Kaspar Hauser as a simple man, who merely wants to know about his family, and is guilty only of his ancestry, Pirchan gave a timely critique of what is often lost in war and the struggle for power.

Along with the confusion of a world thrown into war with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914, and the subsequent re-ordering of the German-speaking world after the Great War, the world was experiencing another type of upheaval. Originating in Germany, but springing to life first in Russia, was the new political theory of communism. Karl Marx's theory of communism had resulted in the formation of the

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the way that the six pages read, it is distinctly possible that they comprise the entire *Dramolett*. Pirchan and his *Dramolett* are never even mentioned by Sampath in her analysis of the literature.

<sup>98</sup> Struve, 163.

<sup>99</sup> Struve, 163.

<sup>100</sup> Pirchan, 167.

<sup>101</sup> Pirchan, 163, 168.

<sup>102</sup> Pirchan, 168. "Napoleonide" is the spelling used in the text.

*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (KPD) in 1918. The KPD was becoming a significant factor in German politics following its founding, and communist thought in the years leading up to and following 1918 was becoming grafted into the counter-culture during Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany. The politics and communism of the KPD were directed at the working-class, and “provid[ed] a spectre of unrest and red revolution which frightened ‘respectable’ Germans.”<sup>103</sup> After the end of World War I, Expressionism was still a prevalent art form in the German-speaking world, although it quickly became dissatisfied once again with the world in which it existed.<sup>104</sup> After this dissatisfaction and disillusionment began to sink in to Expressionist artists, those who were “sympathetic to the left, together with journalists and critics, continued to provoke the bourgeoisie and the new republican establishment with work that was frequently satirical and deliberately shocking or shrill.”<sup>105</sup>

This proletariat-based political theory and party form the backbone of Jörg Mager’s version of Kaspar Hauser’s story. Mager published his play, *Die Entartete Prinzess*, under the pseudonym Kaspar Hauser in 1922.<sup>106</sup> This in and of itself is confusing. It is a distinct possibility based on my research, that Jörg Mager is simply yet another pseudonym for the prolific, multi-named Kurt Tucholsky. Sampath makes no mention of Mager or his play in her book, and Struve mentions only that Kaspar Hauser is a pseudonym for the mysterious Jörg Mager, he of no birth or death dates, and cites him as “Kaspar Hauser” in the table of contents.<sup>107</sup>

As far as the actual primary sources go, there is *Proletarisches Kasperle Theater*, which contains

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<sup>103</sup> Richard Bessel, “Germany from War to Dictatorship,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 255. My semi-sarcastic quotations around “respectable” added.

<sup>104</sup> Elizabeth Harvey, “Culture and Society in Weimar Germany: The Impact of Modernism and Mass Culture,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 280.

<sup>105</sup> Harvey, 280.

<sup>106</sup> Kaspar Hauser, “Die Entartete Prinzess,” *Proletarisches Kasperle Theater* (Berlin O.: A. Hoffmanns Verlag GmbH, 1922).; Jörg Mager, “Die Entartete Prinzess,” *Der Findling: Kaspar Hauser in der Literatur*, ed. Ulrich Struve (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992). Note: originally published in 1922.

<sup>107</sup> Struve, 174, vii.

the play “Die Entartete Prinzess” by one Kaspar Hauser, as well as *Die Entartete Prinzess* by itself in book form by one Kurt Tucholsky. Both of these were published by what appears to be the same publishing company in 1922.<sup>108</sup> So perhaps, one could conclude that indeed, Jörg Mager is yet another name for Kurt Tucholsky.

Kurt Tucholsky was born in Berlin-Moabit on 9 January 1890, and he committed suicide in Hindås, Sweden on 21 December 1935.<sup>109</sup> In between these dates, Tucholsky recorded one of the most prolific, satirical, and controversial careers in Weimar Germany, and perhaps in all of German literature. Tucholsky’s literary interests ran the full gamut of possible publications, writing approximately “two and a half thousand essays, travelogues, feuilletons, political manifestos, monologues, reportages, poems, glosses, drama and book critiques, aphorisms, and chansons.”<sup>110</sup> This vast array of literature was published under not only Tucholsky’s real name, but a variety of pseudonyms, especially as a contributor to the left-wing journal, *Die Weltbühne*.<sup>111</sup> These pen names suited Tucholsky for a variety of reasons, and he amassed quite a few of these names during his lifetime: “Peter Panther, Theobald Tiger, Ignaz Wrobel, Kaspar Hauser, Schigolch, Horatio von Massarena, Paulus Bünzly, Theobalb Körner, Old Shatterhand u.a.”<sup>112</sup> Tucholsky used these names, and his vast assortment of literature to criticize heavily that which he saw as wrong and problematic with Germany after World War I, and also to attempt to push for what he believed were better ideals to motivate Germany to shift herself into being a

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<sup>108</sup> Kurt Tucholsky, *Die Entartete Prinzess* (Berlin: A. Hoffmanns Verlag, 1922). This book is only housed in die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (so says WorldCat), so unfortunately, light might not be shed on this conundrum.

<sup>109</sup> “Tucholsky, Kurt.” *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*, vol. 24, ed. Hubert Herkommer & Konrad Feilchenfeldt (Zürich: K.G. Saur Verlag, 2004), 69.

<sup>110</sup> Istvan Deak, “Tucholsky, Kurt (1890-1935),” *Modern Germany*, vol. 2, ed. Dieter K. Buse & Jürgen C. Dörr (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 1016.

<sup>111</sup> Deak, 1016.

<sup>112</sup> “Tucholsky Kurt,” *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*, 69. I believe that “u.a.” stands for “und andere,” meaning “and others.”

better nation, concerned for the welfare of all who lived within her borders.<sup>113</sup> Unfortunately, much of Tucholsky's railings fell on deaf ears, as Germany became the foundation for Adolf Hitler and his National Socialism. It has been argued that Tucholsky was the mouthpiece for "Germany's Homeless Left," that is those individuals of a left-wing political stance, but who chose to associate themselves with neither the Social Democrats, nor the communists.<sup>114</sup> At the same time however, Tucholsky did write for a variety of left-wing journals, newspapers, and magazines, oftentimes with communist leanings.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, it is not too far of a stretch to assume that it is possible that Tucholsky is the true author of *Die Entartete Prinzess*, as found in the compilation, *Proletarisches Kasperle Theater*.

*Die Entartete Prinzess* is an interesting work for its confusing authorship; however, it is also very interesting in its portrayal of Kaspar Hauser, who in this version is named Kasperl.<sup>116</sup> Not only does the title itself translate to "The Degenerate Princess," but it also refers to a princess named Espera (short for Esperanza), who attempts to defy her parents by refusing to marry the prince of Kaputzien, because she instead believes that, "Die Prinzessin möcht auch zu gerne hörn, wie Du Dir die Hilfe fürs Volks denkst!"<sup>117</sup> At the end of the play, Espera and Kasperl have succeeded in circumventing her parents' trickery, marry each other as prince and princess, and then throw it all away, to become leaders of the new *Menschenland*.<sup>118</sup> By symbolically throwing away their royal garb, and wearing the clothing of the people, Espera and Kasperl are written as new models of leadership for the proletariat, in which even those of royal bloodlines can overcome the petty bourgeoisie world to have a place among the masses. In

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<sup>113</sup> Deak, 1016.

<sup>114</sup> Deak, 1016.

<sup>115</sup> Deak, 1016.

<sup>116</sup> Kaspar Hauser, "Die Entartete Prinzess," 2.

<sup>117</sup> Hauser, 21.

<sup>118</sup> Hauser, 23-24.

addition, the cover of the three-play *Proletarisches Kasperle Theater* features a caricature in which the working man has clubbed, or is about to club, the king, the Kaiser, and a clergyman.<sup>119</sup> In this portrayal of Hauser as the Kasperl character, he again is in command of his own self-knowledge of who he is, and where he belongs in the world. In the same token, however, this self-knowledge is of his role as the working-class proletariat. Also of note is the fact that so far, this is the only Kasper Hauser story with a happy ending. After having called the *Hofleute* “schlimmer als Bestien... Menschenfresser seid Ihr geblieben!” Kasperl is still able to marry the princess, who had been disguising herself as the chamber maid, and neither of them lose their lives as the curtain falls.<sup>121</sup>



Figure 4: *Proletarisches* cover<sup>120</sup>

Kurt Tucholsky takes a large political step to the left in his interpretation of Hauser. This is theater aimed specifically at the proletariat, although this is a gentler text in that the bourgeoisie and even the royalty need not die (as long as they change their support to the working class), to succeed in their communist goals. In writing *Die Entartete Prinzess*, Tucholsky has curbed some of his biting wit, to push for what could still seem plausible under Weimar Germany: a more-or-less radical shift to the left. This is perhaps Tucholsky at his most

<sup>119</sup> See figure 4.

<sup>120</sup> Struve, 176.

<sup>121</sup> Hauser 23, 24.

optimistic, as he gives support to a collaborative venture which German politics of the inter-war period could have embarked upon.

On the other hand, this may be Tucholsky at his most sarcastic, and most cynical, since Kasperl is also a common traditional name for a foolish character in puppet theater. Ruth Gross elaborates on the tradition of *Kasperletheater*, which

designates puppet theater in Austria and Southern Germany. It got its name from Kasperl...the naïve country bumpkin who with his charm, humor, and common sense, became the hero of Viennese comic theater as well as a certain kind of marionette theater in the eighteenth century. At their inception, Kasperl plays brought a new dimension...the diminutive –erl. Because of his designated smallness, Kasperl allowed audiences to feel superior to him and therefore could never be considered as dangerous, no matter how aggressive or impudent he became.<sup>122</sup>

By choosing to model *Die Entartete Prinzess* around a traditional fool in puppet theater, Tucholsky may be rejecting the entire idea that the classes can work together towards a harmonious goal. By using the elements of *Kasperletheater*, Tucholsky may have been looking forward to the route Germany was on: one in which the political left was not be the dominant trend, and one in which a serene and bloodless collaboration of the classes was not to be the case. In *Die Entartete Prinzess*, Tucholsky is not glorifying the communist left; he is mocking those optimistic individuals who were still looking for a peaceful future.

To shift gears slightly, it is necessary to take a few steps back, and jump over to Vienna, before further pursuing the discussion of the next text, which is Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Der Turm*.<sup>123</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, Vienna was still under the control of the Austro-

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<sup>122</sup> Ruth V. Gross, "Kaspar/Kasperl: Repetition and Difference in Handke and Drach," *The German Quarterly* 54, no. 2, (March 1981), 154.

<sup>123</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Der Turm," *Dramen IV* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 1958). Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "The Tower (1927)," *Three Plays*, trans. Alfred Schwarz (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1966).

Note: There are two versions of *Der Turm*; the version I am working with is the one originally published in 1927, which is found in the English translation by Schwarz (Sampath refers to this version as Turm II in her book). The

Hungarian Empire, yet it was already experiencing enormous shifts in the intellectual and cultural currents. Men such as Sigmund Freud, though co-opted by the Expressionists in Germany, were originally the products of the Viennese café culture that was blossoming throughout this time period. In this era of *fin de siècle* Viennese liberal culture, playwrights and authors were beginning to come to terms with their shifting world as “new social groups raised claims to political participation,” and as new trends in political policy came to fruition.<sup>124</sup> As the 1900s arrived, two authors in particular attempted “to orient themselves in the crisis of liberal culture and to formulate conceptions of the relationship between politics and the psyche.”<sup>125</sup> These two playwrights were Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Arthur Schnitzler. Hofmannsthal’s life and his literary career spanned this era of radical turn of the century change from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to that of the Austrian nation after World War I. His last work, *Der Turm*, written two years before his death in 1929, was perhaps his greatest drama, and along with being a drama centered around a Kaspar Hauser-esque character, Sigismund, is perhaps one of the most explicitly political dramas dealing with a Hauser figure. Hofmannsthal worked and wrote the tragedy of *Der Turm* for over twenty-five years, and it “embodied...his experience of the decline and fall of the Habsburg Empire.”<sup>126</sup> The Habsburg family had been the dominant ruling family in Austria since 1278, when Rudolph I defeated the Bohemian king Přemysl Otakar II, and came into control of the Austrian lands, and what is now Vienna.<sup>127</sup> From then until 1918, the Habsburgs had been the controlling power in Austria, as well as the vast amounts of other territory that the Empire controlled. Austria, like other Western European countries was affected

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first version, published in 1925, is much less like the Hauser story, and could be considered a first draft for Hofmannsthal’s final 1927 published vision. The earlier version is found in *Dramen IV* (called *Turm I* by Sampath).

<sup>124</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 5.

<sup>125</sup> Schorske, 5.

<sup>126</sup> Schorske, 21.

<sup>127</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Modern Austria: Empire & Republic, 1800-1986* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 4.

by the changing industrialization in the nineteenth century, although the Hungarian lands remained much more agricultural than its counterpart in the Empire.<sup>128</sup> It was under the dual monarchy before World War I, that nationalism felt its most strident push in Austria-Hungary from people of all nationalities.<sup>129</sup> The three Austrian German political parties of the pre-war period were the Liberals, the Social Democrats, and the Christian Socials.<sup>130</sup> Politics became more confusing, as Georg von Schönerer began his Pan-German party, which advocated for the unification of all German-speaking lands into one nation, and which had a distinctly anti-Semitic attitude. The Pan-German party, as well as the Christian Social party each had this anti-Semitic leaning because of their populist base, which also helped to elect the anti-Semitic Karl Lueger as mayor of Vienna five times.<sup>131</sup>

As the political world of Austria changed from one wracked by questions of nationalism under the rule of the Emperor Franz Joseph, to one at war with the world, to a fledgling nation trying to repair itself after World War I, so too did the cultural world of Austria shift in enormous ways. Not only was Freud an instrumental part of Vienna's changing cultural landscape, but also the art and literature were experiencing dramatic changes. Architecture changed in enormously visible ways, with the construction of the *Ringstrasse*, as well as the rise of Urban Modernist architecture, under Camillo Sitte and Otto Wagner.<sup>132</sup> This was followed by the Secession movement in Austria which was embodied by the iconic artwork of Gustav Klimt.<sup>133</sup> The Secession, of course, then opened the door for even more explosive and

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<sup>128</sup> Jelavich, 77.

<sup>129</sup> Jelavich, 80.

<sup>130</sup> Jelavich, 83.

<sup>131</sup> Jelavich, 89, 87.

<sup>132</sup> Schorske, 25.

<sup>133</sup> Schorske, 84, 208.

experimental artwork, such as the twelve-tone musical compositions of Arnold Schönberg, and the paintings and writings of Oskar Kokoschka.<sup>134</sup>

After having lived through these changing ideals in Austrian art and literature, as well as politics and culture, Hofmannsthal tackled his most challenging work. Over the twenty-five years that he worked on *Der Turm*, Hofmannsthal saw and experienced this artistic shift in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. This experience led him to state that “[i]t is hard to grapple with an existing social order, but harder still to have to posit one that does not exist.”<sup>135</sup> In the course of his literary career, Hofmannsthal ceased to try to “project” a way to utopia; instead, in *Der Turm*, he “struggled once more to point the way to utopia.”<sup>136</sup> Originally, Hofmannsthal set out to re-imagine Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s drama, *La Vida Es Sueño*, into German, however, he did not quite abandon that drama, more he merged it with the story of Kaspar Hauser, and infused the imprisoned prince Sigismund with characteristics of Hauser.<sup>137</sup> Trapped in the tower, the same tower from which the tragedy gets its name, Sigismund is ignored by his father, King Basilius, and kept company only by his servant, Anton, and his teacher, Julian, the Governor of the Tower, and occasionally Brother Ignatius and a physician. Drawing on both the political problems of his time, as well as the advances in psychology, Hofmannsthal weaves his Kasper-like character into a rich psycho-political drama, in which

[t]he father justifies political repression, as the Austrian liberals had done, by the rationale of order based on law. His subjects, his imprisoned son among them, are excluded from participation in the ceremony of the whole; hence they turn to aggression. Where law ignores instinct, instinct rebels and subverts order. Politics is here psychologized, psychology politicized. The poet-prince, however, masters his aggressions and seeks to redeem the society with a new dynamic form of social order, a form inspired by the unifying, non-repressive paradigm of art. Where the father justifies

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<sup>134</sup> Schorske, 322.

<sup>135</sup> Schorske, 279.

<sup>136</sup> Schorske, 318.

<sup>137</sup> Sampath, 16.

his rule by law, the son aspires to a rule by grace. The attempt fails, and the drama ends in tragedy. The masters of political manipulation organize in their own interest the chaos unleashed by the overthrow of the father and his old law. It is too late for a politics based on law alone, too soon for a politics of grace which sublimates instinct. The poet-prince dies, like Hofmannsthal, leaving his message for future generations.<sup>138</sup>

Sigismund is eventually betrayed by his former mentor Julian, who wishes for a more violent revolution, and who receives what he wants when Sigismund is shot from below the window from somewhere among the masses of people outside.<sup>139</sup> As the fatal shot takes its effect, Sigismund dies as the curtain falls.<sup>140</sup>

As the era of Weimar Germany came to a close, and was succeeded by the era of National Socialism, Kaspar Hauser drifted away from the realm of literature and theater. Despite the tendency of *Nazizeit* literature to look back on previous famous German texts and stories, Hauser was completely ignored from 1931 until 1955.<sup>141</sup> This is not so surprising though, when one thinks of the physical and mental tribulations that Hauser overcame after having been locked up and abused for as many years as he was, and then compares the state Hauser was found in when he was discovered in Nuremberg, to some of the German population who suffered the worst under Nazi Germany: the physically and mentally handicapped. Most likely, state sponsored or state approved literature would not focus on a man who could possibly represent one of the groups being persecuted by the Nazi state.

After World War II ended in Europe on 8 May 1945, it still took about ten years for Kaspar Hauser to return to the literary circles in the German-speaking world. Given the themes of the literature of the time, such as Nelly Sachs' *Gedichte* and Paul Celan's "Todesfuge," as well as the work of other *Gruppe 47* writers, it is possible that literature needed those ten years to

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<sup>138</sup> Schorske, 21-22.

<sup>139</sup> Hofmannsthal, "The Tower," 241.

<sup>140</sup> Hofmannsthal, "The Tower," 241.

<sup>141</sup> Struve, 240, 247.

deal exclusively with the immediate past.<sup>142</sup> Perhaps only after this notion of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* had been explored for a time, could literature possibly be able to return to other themes of the past and future.

After World War II, the cultural and political landscape of Germany was again rapidly changed, and again by outside forces, as well as inside forces. Germany was divided into four occupation zones, under the former Allies: France, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. These occupation zones soon became permanent borders, as the three zones held by the Western Allies became West Germany, or the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (BRD), and the zone held by the Soviet Union became East Germany, or the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR). The capital city of Berlin was split into two halves one western, capitalistic, and culturally influenced by the United States and Great Britain, and the other eastern, communist, and influenced by the Soviet Union. This separation was made even more permanent by the construction of the Berlin Wall, beginning on 13 August 1961. The anxiety, frustration, and suspicion that was created by the separation of Germany into two new German nations, one on either side of the Cold War, influenced artists, writers, playwrights, and now filmmakers on both sides of the Wall.

Peter Handke was born on 6 December 1942, in Griffen, Austria.<sup>143</sup> From 1961 through 1965, Handke studied law in Graz, and became infamous for his outburst at the 1966 meeting of *Gruppe 47* at Princeton.<sup>144</sup> At the same time, Handke received legitimate literary success for the publication of his experimental dramas, as well as his traditional dramas, like *Kaspar*, which was

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<sup>142</sup> Nelly Sachs, *Gedichte*, ed. Hilde Domin (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977).

Paul Celan, "Todesfuge," *Deutsche Gedichte*, ed. Elisabeth K. Paefgen & Peter Geist (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 2005).

<sup>143</sup> Helga Schreckenberger, "Handke, Peter (1942-)," *Modern Germany*, vol.1, ed. Dieter K. Buse & Jürgen C. Dörr (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 434.

<sup>144</sup> "Handke, Peter," *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*, vol. 7, ed. Heinz Rupp & Carl Ludwig Lang (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1979), 259. See also Schreckenberger, 434.

published in 1967.<sup>145</sup> Handke continued his literary career, writing dramas, novels, poetry, radio plays, and screenplays, through the 1990s, and is still alive today.<sup>146</sup>

Handke's *Kaspar Hauser* returns to an idea closer to what earlier, pre-twentieth century writers were depicting when they wrote about Hauser. All of the self-awareness granted to Hauser by early twentieth century playwrights is gone, replaced by forced knowledge from the outside, what Handke terms "speech torture."<sup>147</sup> Handke focuses on Hauser's use of language and his learning of language by speaking in a disjointed manner, with the actor portraying Hauser wearing a mask. This separation of the main character from the audience has a disconcerting effect, which works well with the disconcerting language of the play. In the end, one can assume Hauser has died from his attempts to integrate himself into society through language, as Hauser, and the replica Hausers who appear towards the end of the play, fall backwards through the curtain, as it engulfs them to end Handke's drama.<sup>148</sup> Through *Kaspar*, Handke is able to "criticize stereotyped, predictable language and perceptions," as well as "illustrate the role of language as mediator in an authoritarian system and its devastating power over the individual."<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Schreckenberger, 434-435.; Peter Handke, *Kaspar and Other Plays*, trans. Michael Roloff (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969). Note: originally published in German in 1967.

<sup>146</sup> Schreckenberger, 434-435.

<sup>147</sup> Handke, 59.

<sup>148</sup> Handke, 140.

<sup>149</sup> Schreckenberger, 435.

Throughout the drama, Hauser is forced by the other actors, the other voices, onstage to expand his language, starting with his only words, “I want to be a person like somebody else was once.”<sup>150</sup> At first, he repeats the words over and over again to himself, then the other actors join him onstage, and push him in advanced vocabulary to force him to learn through his only words. As the actors begin to shout orders at Hauser, his language becomes increasingly disjointed. As the others continue to force Hauser to speak, he finally “utters a normal sentence: At that time, while I was still away, my head never ached as much, and I was not tortured the way I am now that I am here.”<sup>151</sup> Even with that success though, the prompters continue to push and needle Hauser to obey their commands and to reach further with his language. Until the end of the drama, the prompters and Hauser recite platitudes, sayings, and clichés back and forth. Hauser finally speaks full, meaningful monologues by the very end of the drama, whereupon he realizes that the other actors – now all wearing Hauser masks – have tortured him since his first step into the “real world.” With that knowledge, Kaspar Hauser and all the other Hausers fall down behind the curtain to shrill noises.

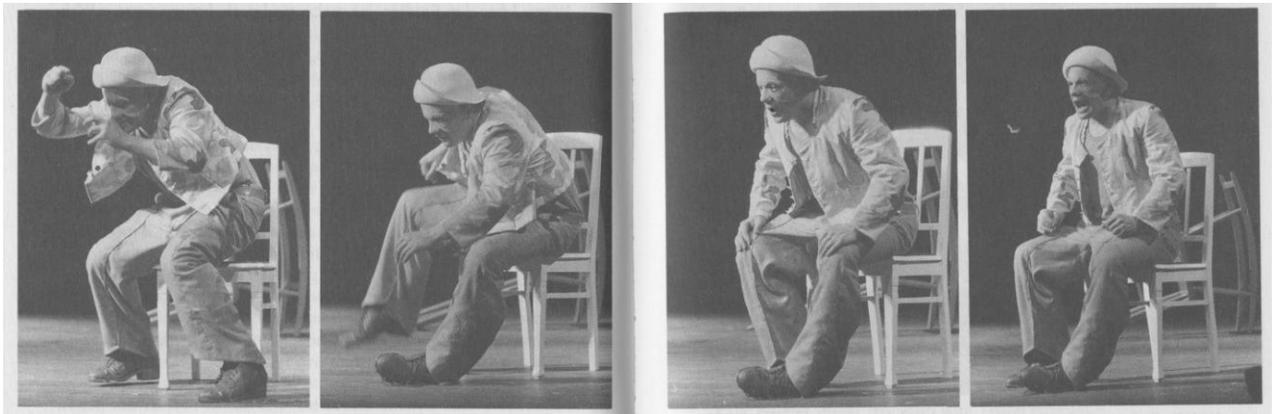


Figure 5: Series of photographs of Kaspar Hauser from *Kaspar*<sup>152</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Handke, 65. See figure 5.

<sup>151</sup> Handke, 77.

<sup>152</sup> Struve, 270-271.

In much the same way that Hauser was forced by the other actors to learn the language of the world out of his sole beginning sentence, so too were the BRD and the DDR forced to relearn how to live in the post-war period, while the inhabitants of both nations had to relearn a new set of terminology and vocabulary. Living in separate political systems, East and West Germany operated under different sets of rules, with different prejudices against their surrounding worlds. Their language was altered in small ways, such as the necessary terms for communism as opposed to capitalism, and the new names for the two Germanies, as opposed to a single German nation. Through the use of propaganda and media, East and West Germany learned the new language of post-war Germany; what on one side was called *die Berliner Mauer*, on the other side was called *der antifascistische Schutzwall*. This medium for language acquisition is what Handke is criticizing, for when he wrote his play, he was certainly dealing with these problems.

In the 1960s and 1970s, West and East Germany were coming to terms in their own ways with Germany's past. In the BRD, children and teens were taught a form of state-supported guilt for Germany's Nazi past, while in the DDR, schools and politicians passed the blame onto West Germans. East Germany argued that good, communist East Germans could not have participated in the horrors of the Holocaust, because communists were among those persecuted early on, and until the end of World War II by the Nazis. The two countries had completely different systems of government and economics, and were seen by the United States and the Soviet Union as the front line of the Cold War. After the construction of the Berlin Wall, travel between the two nations was limited and heavily restricted. To control the population, East Germany created a strict secret police, known as *die Stasi*. Since Germany had been split into two halves, some families were also separated from each other. With one nation living behind the "Iron Curtain," the BRD and the DDR were forced to live separate sides of the Cold War. At the same time that

politics were being shaped by outside forces, culture in West Germany was being shaped by the inside forces of the New German Cinema.

Born Werner Stipetic in 1942, Werner Herzog is a self-taught filmmaker who has made his own distinct mark on the New German Cinema of the twentieth century.<sup>153</sup> Some film analysts have argued that he was “misleadingly” lumped together with the New German Cinema for the “sumptuous, Brueghel-colored features [that] he directed in the 1970s.”<sup>154</sup> Herzog has produced and directed short films and feature length films, and has presented films in both narrative and documentary format. He began his film career in 1967, and continues to direct and produce movies.<sup>155</sup> Along with his other films whose subject matter is the trials and tribulations of the outsider, Herzog debuted his film about Kaspar Hauser, *Jeder für sich and Gott gegen alle*, at the Cannes Film Festival in 1974 to critical acclaim.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Marc Silberman, “Herzog, Werner (1942- ),” *Modern Germany*, vol.1, ed. Dieter K. Buse & Jürgen C. Dörr (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 458.

<sup>154</sup> Tom Webber, “The Dream Weaver,” *New Statesman* 135, iss. 4779 (13 February 2006): 43.

<sup>155</sup> Silberman, 458.

<sup>156</sup> *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle*, dir. Werner Herzog, 110 min., Filmverlag der Autoren, 1974. Struve, 290.

One of the most interesting features of Herzog's portrayal of Kaspar Hauser, is in the casting choice he made for the character. Bruno S. was born on 2 June 1932, and at the age of three, he was placed in a home for the mentally ill by his mother.<sup>157</sup> Over the course of the next twenty years, Bruno S. was in and out of homes such as the first one, reform schools, and prisons, before being the subject of a quasi-documentary, *Bruno der Schwarze*.<sup>158</sup> Before portraying Hauser, Bruno S. worked as a factory warehouseman, and sang in street courtyards with his accordion for passing change.<sup>159</sup> Bruno S. was twice as old at the time of the filming as Hauser was at his death, yet his

“round, expressionless face” makes him seem “ageless” to some.<sup>161</sup>

His mannerisms and speech also help to make Bruno S. fit very well as a non-actor into the role of Hauser. Being of a slighter stature, and possessing an awkward gait,

Figure 6: Bruno S. as Hauser in Herzog's film<sup>160</sup>



<sup>157</sup> Struve, 290.

<sup>158</sup> “Herzog in Dinkelsbühl,” *Sight and Sound* 43, no. 4 (Autumn 1974): 213.

<sup>159</sup> “Herzog in Dinkelsbühl,” 213.

<sup>160</sup> Struve, 292.

<sup>161</sup> “Herzog in Dinkelsbühl,” 213. See figure 6. While the anonymous author of this article believes that Bruno S. possesses ageless features, I disagree. Bruno S. does portray Hauser well; however, I felt it was disconcerting to have an actor who is and looks like he is in his mid-thirties play an eighteen year old. Which is another tool Herzog uses to his advantage in his telling of Hauser's story. By painting Hauser as an even more awkward and disquieting figure, he succeeds in making Hauser not only an outsider in his world, but an outsider to the viewer as well. In this way, Herzog is telling the audience that they do not necessarily need to feel sympathy for Hauser, and they should not feel empathy for him.

Bruno S. moves in a way that seems to match the halting gait Hauser would have most likely used when he was first left in Nuremberg; being from Berlin, he “pronounces the pure German text he has to speak with a mixture of hesitancy and over-emphasis.”<sup>162</sup>

*Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* is a singular experience of a film, which critiques the society around itself at every turn. At the center of the film is Hauser himself, who through well-meaning and misguided notions attempts to conform himself to society. The film is framed by one of the other most interesting characters of the film, the town registrar or secretary of Nuremberg. When the secretary first encounters Hauser, after Hauser has been dropped in



Figure 7: Deciphering Hauser’s anatomy<sup>163</sup>

doctors, who unceremoniously slice him open in an attempt to discover why he was the way he was.<sup>164</sup> Again, the city secretary is there to jot down notes, and at the end, after having looked at Hauser’s brain and observed an abnormal enlarged area, the secretary is satisfied – all is well in the world, there is a reason for everything – and walks home on his merry way. In Herzog’s version of Kaspar’s story, his

Kaspar emerges suddenly and is thrust into the life of the philistine bourgeois, the passion for history develops in him, that slow deadening of what was spontaneously human in

<sup>162</sup> “Herzog in Dinkelsbühl,” 213.

<sup>163</sup> Struve, 301.

<sup>164</sup> See figure 7.

him. In the end, as Kaspar died, people searched desperately for some sort of deformity in him; that the deformation was in the bourgeois society to which he wanted to adjust himself was what they were all blind to.<sup>165</sup>

As if to further emphasize this point, Herzog is one of the few re-tellers of Hauser's story to incorporate and point out the idea that Hauser, in his time, was most likely the butt of at least a few derisive stares. Herzog takes this even a step further by showcasing a scene at the county fair, in which Hauser and three other companions are called the "Four Puzzles of Our Time," and are seen as a sort of side-show attraction. This scene, while jolting and disjointed, shows how easily those who are innocent can

be exploited by those who have tossed their innocence aside.<sup>166</sup>

Herzog has managed in this film

(which truly deserves a second, and possibly third viewing) to

showcase an entire slew of

problems with society in Hauser's

time, in the 1970s, and still today,

especially the views that society holds against those it deems as less than normal. In Herzog's

*Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle*, the townspeople are representative of any "authoritarian

social structures" that wittingly or unwittingly "deform human identity."<sup>168</sup>



Figure 8: Three of the "Four Puzzles"<sup>167</sup>

<sup>165</sup> David L. Overbey, "Werner Herzog's Every Man for Himself," *Sight and Sound* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1975), 74.

<sup>166</sup> Overbey, 75. Two of the other sideshow attractions were previously in other Herzog films: Helmut Döring from *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, and the South American flute player Hombrecito from *Aguirre, Wrath of God*. See figure 8.

<sup>167</sup> Struve, 297.

<sup>168</sup> Silberman, 458.

By the late 1960s, West Germany was experiencing a change in the cultural and political realms. This change was especially noticeable in the attitudes and beliefs of students of the time. Students were protesting against foreign policy, and were actively creating their own “post-material values,” with which they questioned every part of their world around them.<sup>169</sup> When the Shah of Iran visited West Germany on 2 June 1967, demonstrators against the visit came into confrontation with the police. Unfortunately, a student, Benno Ohnesorg, was shot and killed.<sup>170</sup> Gaining momentum from this tragic event was the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (SDS), which promoted a radical leftist politics. They viewed Ohnesorg’s death as a confirmation of “their Marxist analysis of post-war West Germany as a state dominated...by the dehumanizing forces of capitalist accumulation and state control.”<sup>171</sup> One of the goals to which the SDS was very devoted to was the idea of a “Marxist utopia of working-class revolution.”<sup>172</sup> While their extra-parliamentary opposition was challenge to post-war political sentiments, the student movement helped to break ground for other movements, such as the environmental, women’s, and peace movements, of the 1970s and 1980s.

On 14 June 1935, Dieter Forte was born in Düsseldorf, and later he studied advertising. Forte worked in television after completing his studies, and later he made the switch to theater as the dramatist for the Basler Theater. He has written plays for both the stage and radio, as well as the screen, including *Kaspar Hausers Tod: Ein Theaterstück* in 1979.<sup>173</sup> The drama was originally commissioned by the *Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe*; however, it was first

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<sup>169</sup> Mark Roseman, “Division and Stability: The Federal Republic of Germany, 1949-1989,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 378.

<sup>170</sup> Erica Carter, “Culture, History and National Identity in the Two Germanies since 1945,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 447.

<sup>171</sup> Carter, 448.

<sup>172</sup> Carter, 448.

<sup>173</sup> “Forte, Dieter,” *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*, vol. 5, ed. Heinz Rupp & Hildegard Emmel, (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1978), 368.

Dieter Forte, *Kaspar Hausers Tod: Ein Theaterstück* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 1979).

performed on 21 April 1979, at the *Staatstheater Wiesbaden* under the direction of Horst Siede.<sup>174</sup>

*Kaspar Hausers Tod* begins at Hauser's grave, where many of the people from his life are attending his funeral.<sup>175</sup> In doing so, Hauser is not a character in the drama; instead he is the subject of the drama, around whom all the other characters revolve. Another interesting character choice of Forte's is the inclusion of Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach, who in reality died before Hauser.<sup>176</sup> Throughout the play, these individuals who had been a part of Hauser's life, such as Feuerbach, Georg Friedrich Daumer, and other important officials and their wives who lived in Ansbach, discuss Hauser and his death. At the end, all are still of different minds as to what really happened about Hauser, and even more importantly, they are still of different minds as to why Hauser had to die:

Binder: Er ist nun tot, vielleicht mußte es so sein. Denken Sie nur an den Badischen Hof.

Tucher: Ich denke an Kaspar Hauser.

Hickel: Die Institutionen, mein Lieber, das zählt, das bleibt. Menschen – Menschen sterben.

Daumer: Oder werden umgebracht.

Hickel: Wenn es sein muß. Es kommt vor. Es ist nicht schön. Es ist nicht gut. Aber es muß zuweilen sein. Menschen sterben sowieso. Institutionen sterben nie.

Kolb: Und wenn sie noch so tot sind, sie bringen um.

Hickel: Sie lassen umbringen. Von Menschen, durch Menschen, Menschenwerk. Eine Institution befleckt sich dadurch nicht....Der Mensch ist nicht wichtig. Die Institutionen sind wichtig.<sup>177</sup>

This question of why Hauser died or had to die is central to Forte's play, which portrays Hauser as a symbol of "Tod durch politische Einflußnahme."<sup>178</sup> Hauser in Forte's drama represents more than simply his own tragic death for political reasons; he becomes a symbol for others in

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<sup>174</sup> Struve, 311.

<sup>175</sup> Forte, 7.

<sup>176</sup> Forte, 9.

<sup>177</sup> Forte, 69.

<sup>178</sup> Forte, preface.

all time periods, who are silenced for political reasons. Hauser thus becomes emblematic of protesters, such as Benno Ohnesorg, who are killed merely for their socio-political beliefs. This use of Hauser looks back from Forte's vantage point of 1979 to the late 1960s and the 1970s, when there was a student protest culture, and when there were instances where individuals were suppressed for their radical ideas and ideals.

This symbolic use of Hauser, as well as the lower class characters of the drama, establishes Forte as one of the most biting critics to use Hauser against the establishment. Even though the characters are criticizing the Biedermeier period in their commentary after the funeral, it is truly 1970s West Germany that Forte is criticizing. According to Sampath, Forte admitted that he believes that history repeats itself. This belief led him to leave the biting barbs that his characters throw at "the stultifying social atmosphere of Metternich's time" in his drama.<sup>179</sup> He also intended for his audiences to understand that while the lines the characters delivered spoke of the Biedermeier, Forte's dialogue is actually a condemnation of the *Verfassungsschutz* that had arisen after the 1960s. Forte and other writers and artists, Sampath writes, "were chafing under various restrictive laws, which the (West) German government had decreed in the name of...counteract[ing] remnants of the student unrest and left-wing terrorism."<sup>180</sup> This is most actively seen in the body language of the working-class characters as they usurp the furniture of the middle-class characters, and then keep the middle-class stuck in the room until the end of the show, when everyone leaves the house. Forte has not depicted a full-scale uprising, yet the very end of the drama shouts out a call of warning, when the night watchman calls out the time:

Hört ihr Leut und laßt euch sagen,

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<sup>179</sup> Sampath, 133.

<sup>180</sup> Sampath, 133.

Die Glocke, die hat zwölf geschlagen.  
 Löscht das Feuer und das Licht,  
 Daß bei euch kein Brand ausbricht.<sup>181</sup>

The next uprising to occur in Germany would in actuality be a peaceful uprising. In 1989, the DDR was coming to an end. After Hungary opened its border with Austria, East Germans took advantage of the route to escape to West Germany. At the same time, in September 1989, demonstrations were beginning to take place in Leipzig. Beginning with a Monday evening service at the Nikolikirche, participants would then process out into a demonstration march.<sup>182</sup> The emphasis of these marches was to show the administration that the citizens of the country were “the people” of the country, and that they wanted freedom of speech, press, travel, free elections, and political reform. As demonstrations spread from Leipzig throughout East Germany, the one of the largest peaceful revolutions was occurring. In response to the pressure from the people, on 9 November 1989, border crossing points along the Berlin Wall were opened for the first time since 1961.<sup>183</sup> After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the two Germanies began in 1990 to reunify into one German nation. Since the reunification of Germany, Germans have continued to come to terms with their past; this time, they face the challenge of merging two distinct pasts into a unified future.

Released in 1993, just a few short years after reunification, Peter Sehr’s *Kaspar Hauser* is the most recent work in film about Hauser. Having left Germany behind, Sehr was studying at Oxford University as a doctoral candidate in biophysics when Werner Herzog’s *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* was released in Great Britain. After seeing the film, Sehr decided that was exactly what he wanted to do: make a film about Kaspar Hauser. Sehr admitted that he left his

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<sup>181</sup> Forte, 73.

<sup>182</sup> Jonathan Osmond, “The End of the GDR: Revolution and Voluntary Annexation,” *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold, 1997), 460.

<sup>183</sup> Osmond, 463.

home country of Germany, and turned his back on much that was German, because of his “disgust” with its National Socialist past. After viewing Herzog’s film, he felt, in his own words that “[t]his film marked the first time [he], living abroad, had been touched by something that was German.” So, believing that “making films must be beautiful,” Sehr returned to Germany and became involved in the film industry in Munich. Sehr abandoned his doctoral studies and his biophysics research to dive headlong into extensive Kaspar Hauser research, at which point he arrived at the conclusion that the Royal House of Baden was to blame for the whole mystery of Kaspar Hauser. As Sehr believes (and as his film shows), Hauser’s imprisonment in the cellar, his abandonment in Nuremberg, and his murder at the Orangerie were all a part of a long and complex plot to switch the seat of power in Baden from one brother to another.<sup>184</sup>

Peter Sehr, much like Werner Herzog, uses quite the interesting individual for his Kaspar Hauser. In Sehr’s case however, his Hauser auditioned for the role, and was never a patient in a mental facility. Andre Eisermann, Sehr’s Hauser, is the product of a circus family, including a contortionist grandmother. Eisermann portrays a very convincing Hauser, and the film received much critical acclaim at its release, winning top German awards for best film, director and actor.<sup>185</sup>

Peter Sehr’s *Kaspar Hauser* explicitly critiques and comments on society and politics. The film opens with Hauser’s birth to the Grand Duke of Baden and Stéphanie de Beauharnais, and is followed quickly by the plotting and kidnapping of the royal baby. The baby is switched with a servant’s child who is mercilessly struck so that it will die, not immediately, but a few days later. Hauser is taken first to a hiding place where he is cared for gently; however, the

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<sup>184</sup> Justine Elias, “A Tale Worthy of the Brothers Grimm,” *The New York Times* section 2 (2 June 1996): 22. *Kaspar Hauser*, dir. Peter Sehr, 139 min., LFA, 1993.

<sup>185</sup> Elias, 22.

Baden plotters strike again, when they shuttle him off to the cellar where he is kept until the day he is dropped in the middle of Nuremberg. Throughout the rest of the film, the men and women who created the original plot are continually scheming and having to deal with the fallout of Hauser's growing notoriety. Eventually, the same man who struck the servant's baby is sent to kill Hauser, but he fails in his attempt. Sehr depicts Lord Stanhope also as an agent of the Baden crown, working to destroy Hauser, who renders him as a disreputable individual so that no story Hauser tells will be believed. Eventually, after Stéphanie finally sees Hauser and realizes it is her long-lost son, the stranger who tried to kill Hauser the first time, returns to the Orangerie to finish the job.

The film ends with a screen shot of a paragraph detailing how the files that the House of Baden holds on the case of Kaspar Hauser have never been opened. Sehr avidly believes that the entire story was a master plot by the House of Baden, which, he believes, they still have yet to admit.<sup>186</sup> Instead of dealing with the struggle between society and the individual, as other artists have done, Sehr goes straight for the political jugular, albeit a political jugular more than 150 years old. In the same token, Sehr admits that he made this film specifically to wrestle some of his historical German demons.<sup>187</sup>

Whether prompted by Peter Sehr's film, or not, in the spring of 1996 researchers set out to determine, through DNA tests, whether Hauser truly was related to the House of Baden.<sup>188</sup> If the results have been published, I have been unable to find them. Perhaps the mystery of Kaspar Hauser will forever remain a mystery. Maybe it is a good thing for it to remain a mystery.

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<sup>186</sup> Elias, 22.

<sup>187</sup> Elias, 22.

<sup>188</sup> Elias, 22.

Since the release of Peter Sehr's *Kaspar Hauser*, there has been no film or play which concerns itself with Hauser. This creates a fifteen year gap between the most recent film and the present day. It is possible that no playwright or director has felt the need to revisit the Hauser story since then. At the same time, it is interesting that a figure, who for so long has been such a popular tool of criticism, is standing by unused in the past decade and a half. Perhaps Hauser is no longer the medium through which artists wish to vent their grievances with the world. Perhaps

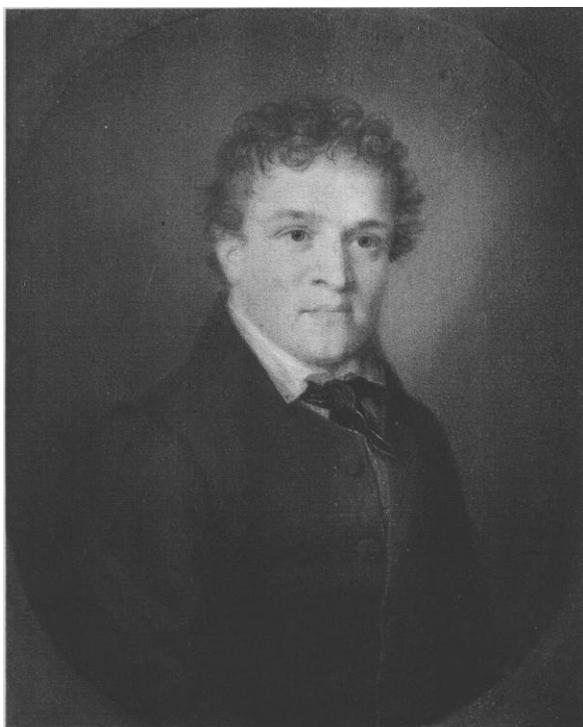


Figure 9: Portrait of Kaspar Hauser<sup>190</sup>

the story of Kaspar Hauser will resurface with a new generation of directors and playwrights.

Anais Nin once described the story of Kaspar Hauser as “far more beautiful than that of Christ...Never was the ugliness of the world more clearly depicted.”<sup>189</sup> Kaspar Hauser has been the subject of thousands of literary works, which have tried to understand him, to use him, to mold him, and to criticize the world with him. Poets have used him as a metaphor for their own alienated feelings, and one wild and crazy poet in

particular went so far as to use Kaspar Hauser as

one of his many pen names. Yet no one truly knows who Kaspar Hauser was. Which leads one to wonder: would everyone stop writing about him if the world knew the truth of what happened to Hauser all those years ago? Or would that simply make him even more fascinating and an even more readily malleable figure for political discontent?

<sup>189</sup> Overbey, 74.

<sup>190</sup> Mayer & Tradowsky, 503.

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Abstract:

Kaspar Hauser has been called the enigma of his time, an unsolvable puzzle, and the child of Europe. He was in the public eye for only five years in the early nineteenth century, yet his artistic appeal continues to the present day. After his death in 1832, many have tried to understand who Hauser really was, whether fraud or Crown Prince of Baden. This thesis concerns itself specifically with the appeal Hauser has had on the performance tradition, theater and film, since 1900. Playwrights and filmmakers of twentieth century Germany have molded Hauser to fit their view, not of his period, but of their own time period. In those works dealing with Hauser or a Hauser-esque character, the artists have found a medium with which to critique the socio-political landscape of their generation. Concerning itself with nine different German-language works of the 1900s, this thesis shows the artists' use of the malleable Hauser character to critique Imperial Germany, turn-of-the-century Vienna, Cold War Germany, and post-*Wende* Germany. Kaspar Hauser becomes, not simply the enigma of his time, but a symbol of political disquiet for twentieth century German playwrights and directors.