Hoerspiel, an introduction to its development and present significance

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THE HOERSPIEL
AN INTRODUCTION TO ITS DEVELOPMENT
AND PRESENT SIGNIFICANCE

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Marconi invented the wireless in 1886, the development of radio broadcasting has progressed on a world-wide basis. Hertz, in Germany, was the first to demonstrate the production and reception of radio waves in 1887. Oliver Lodge in England developed a system of wireless communication using the Morse Code in 1894. The American, Lee DeForest, revolutionized transmitters and receivers with his development in 1906 of the three-element vacuum tube. After 1906 technical development became less and less the result of individual scientists working independently. In recognition of the commercial applications, the new medium of radio communication was subjected to thorough experimentation and rapid improvement by fast-growing, electronic corporations. ¹

The development of radio as a literary medium, however, progressed at a much slower pace. The first performance in history of a radio drama was an adaptation of Scott's Rob Roy. This drama, adapted especially for radio by R. E. Jeffrey, was broadcast on October 6, 1923 from Glasgow, Scotland. It is, therefore, the first radio drama in history even though it was not material originally written for that medium. The first drama written

originally for radio is considered to be Richard Hughes' *Danger*
broadcast on January 15, 1924, from London by the BBC.\(^2\)

Due to the fact that the audience was unable to see the performance, i.e., since the visual element of the drama was lacking, Hughes felt it necessary to place the action within the complete darkness of an underground mine. One derives a sense of location from the liberal use Hughes makes of sound-effects and music to give the impression of being in a cave. Thus, hollow-sounding voices, echoes, and the sound of splashing water reinforce the listener's imagination, which in turn enhances the sense of predicament surrounding the characters of the play.

Other writers of this early period in radio drama were impressed by Hughes' example. Many thought that all radio plays must necessarily take place in the dark or that one had no alternative but to deal with the subject of supernatural beings: "Da das Hoerspiel keine leibhaftigen Menschen zeigen kann, folgerte man, hier habe man es eigentlich mit Gespenstern zu tun."\(^3\) Experience since then has shown this need not be the case. The critic, Dieter Wellershoff, with reference to this lack of the visual element in radio, has said: "Es ist nicht sein (des Hoerspiels) Mangel, sondern seine eigenartige Chance, dass es keinen kompletten Schauplatz, keine leibhaftigen Menschen zeigen kann, und es braucht deshalb auch nicht die Unsichtbarkeit des Geschehens


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 165.
zu kompensieren."\(^4\) This obvious difference between radio drama and its older cousin the stage drama is emphasized by the following quote from Stanislavsky: "When you are in verbal intercourse on the stage, speak not so much to the ear as to the eye."\(^5\) Thus, the visual element is indispensable for a successful stage production; but sound is all that radio has to offer—one-dimensional, electronically reproduced sound.

As was previously mentioned, the lack of the visual element in the radio drama can be turned into one of its greatest advantages. There is, consequently, more freedom of movement in radio than on the stage. The radio dramatist need not concern himself with scenery or with the transportation of his characters from one place to another, or even from one time to another. Through the use of sound-effects and music, the listener is transported through limitless time and space. As one drama critic expressed it, "...a word, a sound-effect, a strain of music, and in a split second the listener is emotionally part of the dramatic thought of the author."\(^6\) Only the medium of radio permits such lightning shift of scene from past to present to future, and from the outer reaches of the universe to the depths of the sea.

Dependence on hearing alone for dramatic effect obviously has its disadvantages, too. It is more difficult to attract and

\(^4\)Ibid.


sustain the listener's attention by sound alone. The author must begin his story with an effective, dramatic, and appealing action in order to draw the listener's attention. Afterward, the listener's own active involvement in the drama will keep him listening. In addition, fewer characters should be used in radio drama than on the stage, since it is difficult for the listener to keep clear and separate the relationships between many characters. For this reason, it is necessary for the author to reduce the number of subplots to a minimum, if not eliminate them entirely.

It can be seen that the radio drama, like the novel, appeals to the individual in the isolation of his own mind. Then, too, both radio and the novel enlist the active participation of the individual, that is, the use of his own imagination to a great degree. Radio drama, appealing as it does to the sense of hearing alone, demands that the hearer fill in the other details of sense perception and thus awakens the listener to an active, creative participation within the dramatic situation. The listener identifies himself strongly with the characters of the drama and becomes deeply involved with their thoughts, their actions, and their emotions. Whereas one can easily take a passive role when it comes to watching a stage production—letting, so to speak, the action simply pass before him—the same person hearing a drama from a radio speaker must actively add to the action his own experience and understanding. Schwitzke says, "Das Höerspiel ist nicht, wie das Theater oder wie der Film oder wie sogar in
hohem Grade das Fernsehen, das man innerhalb einer kleinen Gruppe, etwa der Familie, geniesst, eine öffentliche Repräsentation. Sondern, obwohl der Rundfunk ein 'Masseninstrument' ist, wendet er sich immer nur an den Einzelnen in seiner Isolierung, wie immer wieder bis zum Überraschend, aber richtig formuliert wurde. Selbst wenn zwei miteinander hören, sind es—nicht anders als wenn zwei miteinander im gleichen Buche lesen—zwei getrennte Vorgänge, zwei völlich verschiedene und eigene, weil ganz und gar innerliche Welten, in denen sich die beiden befinden. Darum ist auch ein sogenannter Gemeinschaftsempfang bei Hörspielen undenkbar.  

It is paradoxical that radio—essentially one of the mass media broadcasting at one time to millions of listeners—is nevertheless directed to the individual in the privacy of his own room or car. There is hardly a medium of mass communication that offers greater intimacy than radio. Precisely because of the intimacy of radio, authors such as Guenter Eich, Max Frisch, Friedrich Duerrenmatt, and Ilse Aichinger have turned their talents to Hörspiel writing. These modern authors are seeking contact with the individual, with the single human being who is isolated and insulated from the often de-humanizing influences of social masses. "Sieht man im Film, wie sich die Leute ausziehen," says Duerrenmatt, "so hört man im Hörspiel, wie sie miteinander flüstern."  

7 Schwitzke, Das Höerspiel, p. 109.  
9 Elizabeth Brock-Sulzer, Friedrich Duerrenmatt (Zuerich: Peter Schifferli, 1960), p. 73.
To whisper in the ear of the individual; to oppose with a still, small voice the blaring multitudes shouting for conformity—this is the intimate contact the Hoerspiel writers are seeking; this is the essence of communicating with individuals en masse. In contrast to Duerrenmatt's "whisper," the common form of so-called "mass communication" can be illustrated by the following example.

The common situation comedy one sees on television today is almost always pre-recorded. Generally, there is no live audience during the recording, yet the director of the program invariably feels it necessary to add what is called canned laughter. This is recorded audience laughter that is edited into the program at appropriate places (usually after humorous spoken lines or actions) and sometimes inappropriate places (after lines or actions which only the director sees as humorous). The individual viewer at home thus feels he is part of a large audience, and when he hears the canned laughter he knows something that was said or done is funny. Obviously the director is none too confident the viewer would laugh of his own accord, hence this example of the appeal to mass conformity in mass communication. The viewer is not allowed to react as an individual, but is forced to become part of a mass audience. He must be directed to respond in the same way the characters of the play are directed to act. This is mass communication at its worst. It strips the viewer of his individuality and hints uncomfortably at Orwell's

An interesting sidelight to this discussion is brought out by the following fact: In contrast to the situation in the U.S.A. and those countries with highly authoritarian regimes, the *Hoerspiel* as a literary form is prevalent in Germany, England, Italy, France, the Scandinavian countries, and—above all—Japan.10 One can readily understand why totalitarian countries, with their emphasis on social conformity, would reject an art form which seeks out the individual in his separateness from the masses. What is ironic, however, is that the U.S.A., with its emphasis on individual freedom, has no significant literature for radio drama. The reason for this seeming discrepancy would involve a comparison between commercially sponsored and publicly supported radio programming, which is outside the scope of this paper.11

Obviously only a few representative *Hoerspiel* authors and dramas can be considered here. It is hoped that those selected will, however, illustrate the attempts of *Hoerspiel* writers to communicate with human beings as individuals. Furthermore, the dramas herein discussed will be limited to those written in German and broadcast originally by the German radio system. Hence, the term *Hoerspiel* will be used throughout in contrast to *radio drama* to remind the reader of this limitation. My own personal experi-

10 Schwitzke, op. cit., p. 155.
11 At this writing (1967) the U.S. Senate has under consideration a proposal for publicly supported television programming.
ence in hearing examples of Hoerspiele results from listening to several tape-recordings. These recorded Hoerspiele were supplied by the German Consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany. Although most of the dramas discussed within this paper I have read but not heard, they are, nonetheless, presented from a perspective based on personal knowledge of, and appreciation for, radio drama techniques acquired by means of these tape-recordings.

One final qualification of these terms is necessary. Radio drama is the all inclusive, general term which refers to any form of dramatic presentation on radio. This would include such programs as serial dramas, dramatic readings, and adaptations of stage plays, novels, or biographical dramatizations. The Hoerspiel also falls within this general classification but is to be further distinguished in the following manner: a Hoerspiel is an author's original creation, written expressly for the radio medium, and is a single, unified work of dramatic art. Thus, all Hoerspiele are radio dramas, but some radio dramas cannot be considered Hoerspiele.

With this specific definition in mind, we will consider the development of the radio medium in Germany and of the Hoerspiel.
CHAPTER II

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT

OF RADIO IN GERMANY

Before turning to a consideration of the Hoerspiel as an art form, it will be necessary to summarize briefly the history of radio broadcasting within Germany. According to Arnim P. Frank,¹ the man who was mainly responsible for the technical and organizational founding of German radio broadcasting is Hans Bredow. Bredow began his career as an electrical engineer at the Gesellschaft fuer drahtlose Telegraphie, m.b.H. In 1917 he directed the use of radio for the war effort on the western front. By 1921, radio communication was considered important enough in Germany to warrant the establishment of a special government post. This was the Technical Secretary of State. The title was changed to Radio Commissioner in 1926. As the first man to hold this position, Bredow was empowered to oversee the regulation and improvement of the new technology.

During his term of office, Bredow planned the construction of nine radio transmitters. The first of these began broadcasting in Berlin on October 29, 1923. The studio was known as the Radio-stunde AG im Berliner Vox-Haus. The last of the nine transmitters,

¹Arnim P. Frank, Das Hoerspiel (Heidelberg: C. Winter Universitaetsverlag, 1963), pp. 47-49.
the Ostmarken-Rundfunk AG Koenigsberg, was completed June 15, 1924.

On May 25, 1925 the Reichsrundfunkverband was created to administer the affairs of these nine broadcasting stations. By July of the same year, this organization had purchased the majority of stock shares in the radio industry. Only a year later, however, the newly formed Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft (RRG) took over control. Its source of income was a monthly fee collected by the post office from every owner of a radio receiver. After the installation of a Political Commissioner of Radio in 1932 under the administration of von Papen, the RRG became completely government controlled. Such control, of course, influenced the programming.

Under National Socialism, Hans Bredow was replaced by Eugen Hadmonsky as director of radio broadcasting. Hadmonsky was directly responsible to Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda after 1933. The propagandistic misuse of German radio did not end until after the war in 1945.

With Germany divided into Allied Zones of Occupation after the war,² the radio industry was reorganized in each zone according to the practice of the particular occupying government. Radio in the British sector, for example, was modeled after the BBC. Thus, Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk became a separate, centralized organization with its two main studios in Cologne and Hamburg. The Sudwestfunk was similarly organized under the French with main studios in Baden Baden, Freiburg, and Mainz. In the American zone, how-

² Ibid., pp. 56 & 57.
ever, a decentralized organization of the radio system resulted in four independent broadcasting centers: Bayrischer Rundfunk in Munich, Sueddeutscher Rundfunk in Stuttgart, Hessischer Rundfunk in Frankfurt am Main, and Radio Bremen. Also placed under joint allied control was RIAS (Radio im amerikanischen Sektor) in Berlin. The Soviet zone at first organized its system with a minimum of government control. Radio in this zone, however, soon became a disseminator of government policy.

With the formation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the radio systems of the western zones became the responsibility of the new government. By 1954 Germany had nine independent broadcasting centers that were tax supported and that operated on a non-profit basis solely for public service.
CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOERSPIEL IN GERMANY

German radio broadcasting began in Berlin in 1923.\(^1\) Radio at this early period concentrated on broadcasting general information, musical entertainment, religious services, and educational topics. The unique concept of the Hoerspiel as something distinct and separate from the theater stage was not fully recognized by dramatists at this early stage. Radio was simply another possible outlet for stage productions; it was not at all recognized as a distinct medium for drama in its own right. Of course, the lack of the visual element was accepted, but more as an inconvenient limitation rather than as an opportunity to be explored. Nevertheless, there was a certain amount of attention being paid to programming of a dramatic nature. Radio producers simply took already existing material and presented it for broadcast as originally written. The traditional, familiar works of Hans Sachs, the classics of Goethe, the modern works of Hofmannsthal were being performed according to their original stage productions. Other popular plays presented on radio were Kleist's "Der zerbrochene Krug", Schiller's "Wallensteins Lager", Hebbel's "Nibelungen", and Hauptmann's "Hanneles Himmelfahrt".\(^2\) Thus, a complete break


from the tradition and familiarity of classic stage production was avoided. The idea was to use radio as a form of the stage—an unseen stage, to be sure—but at least one that was more widely available to greater numbers of people. The actors themselves were in complete agreement with this concept of radio drama even to the point of appearing in costume for the broadcasting of a play although there would be no spectators to see them perform. Other early attempts at radio drama took the form of recitations and stage plays which were merely read before the microphone.

There was a general dissatisfaction, though, with the mere broadcasting of stage productions. Whether this dissatisfaction arose from the quality of the productions or from the lack of success and approval is difficult to determine. Perhaps it was due to a combination of both factors. In any case, authors began to take notice of the fact that radio had specific peculiarities (the lack of the visual element being one of the most important) that were incompatible with the straight, simple reproductions of stage plays.

Since the radio dramas mentioned above were adaptations of stage plays, they cannot, therefore, be considered as the first Hoerspiele to be broadcast in spite of the fact that they were some of the first dramas to be heard over the radio. It is somewhat difficult to indicate what really was the first Hoerspiel. Both F. H. Tebertius’ "Anke" (1923) and Rolf Gunold’s "Belinzone" (1924) are

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3 Ibid., p. 54.
considered to be the first *Hoerspiele*, but neither was ever broadcast. The reason for this in the case of "Belinzone" was its gruesome subject matter. The play dealt with a horrible train wreck in which Gunold used a great many sound effects to impress upon the listener the full reality of screeching wheels, crashing metal, and the agonizing wail of human beings suffering a ghastly death. Precisely because it was too macabre, the *Berliner Funkstunde* decided not to broadcast it. Gunold's expert use of sound effects, however, gave rise to the term *Geraeuschsinfonie* which applied to these early attempts (including Hughes' "Danger") at radio drama. Two other examples of the *Geraeuschsinfonie* that may be mentioned are Oskar Moehring's "Sturm ueber dem Pazifik" and "Einsturz" by Heinrich Mayer. Gunold, turning away from the "too macabre" realities of life as depicted in his first attempt, had much better success with "Spuk", a *Hoerspiel* dealing with unreality and based on themes of E.T.A. Hoffmann. It was broadcast in Breslau in 1925 and is considered by many to be the first broadcast of an original *Hoerspiel*.

Soon other authors followed Gunold's example and began writing *Hoerspiele*. Walter Erich Schaefer wrote "Malmgreen" in 1926. This story pointed out the disparity between inner greatness and national hero worship. In the same year Ernst Johannsen wrote

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4 Frank, *Das Hoerspiel*, p. 50.
5 Ibid.
"Brigadevermittlung", which concerns the fate of a soldier. Joh­hannsen introduced a new technique in his play—that of using ex­tensive telephone conversations. As the person in the radio au­dience listens in on both sides of these conversations, he feels an intense and intimate participation in the development of the action. One can see here an early recognition of the distinctive techniques required in a Hoerspiel.

Two other significant authors in this early period are Herm­mann Kesser, who wrote "Schwester Henriette" (1929), and Hermann Kasack, who wrote "Ballwechsel" (1930). Kesser and Kasack became important innovators by introducing in their plays a change from the standard practice of dramatizing outward events, to expressing the thoughts and monologues of the individual characters. Even more unusual in this regard in Eduard Reinacher's "Der Narr mit der Hacke" (1930), in which the author uses a man's conscience as the theme.⁷

As writers became more interested in developing the Hoerspiel into a new and separate art form, they began to employ various styles of dramatic presentation particularly designed for radio broadcasting. The following brief survey of the several categories into which Hoerspiele are grouped is taken from Das Hoerspiel (pp. 74-77) by Heinz Schwitzke, who is currently the director of Norddeutscher Rundfunk in Hamburg:

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⁷Ibid., pp. xii & xiii.
Das experimentelle Geraeuschoerspiel. The first of these styles of radio drama was popular about 1929. The peculiarity of this type was its abundance of sound effects and "scene" changes. The author tended to be preoccupied with the technical possibilities of producing mental impressions and dramatic effects on the listener. It was as though he were playing with a new toy, experimenting with every possible aspect of its technical capabilities just to see what that new toy could really do. These were not excellent plays by any means. They were simply too noisy.

Pionier-Hoerspiel. This type also employed dramatic effects, but in a subtler, less extensive way. Adventurous explorations of unknown polar regions or the heights of unconquered mountain peaks, and similar scientific expeditions were presented in a narrative, reporting fashion. The superabundance of dramatic effects in the Geraeuschoerspiel gave way to the greater importance of the narrative, that is the epic element, in the Pionier-Hoerspiel.

Das oratorisch-balladeske Hoerspiel. Within this form are blended the poetic attributes of the ballad, the lyric, the epic, and the dramatic. The narrative is still important, but it does not constitute the sole appeal to the listener's interest. Bertold Brecht's "Flug der Lindberghs" (1929) is representative of this type. Even contemporary writers have made use of this peculiar form as Weyrauch in his "Totentanz" (1961), and Ingeborg Bachmann in her "Der gute Gott von Manhattan" (1956). Closely related to this
Hoerspiel form is the Kantate, which emphasizes the narrative even less and creates a style of declamatory, hymnaic verse-drama in which the lyrical element predominates. Leo Weismantel's "Totenfeier" (1931) is typical of the form. During the Hitler regime, it became quite popular because of the ease of adapting it to political propaganda.

Dramatische Reportage and Zeithoerspiel. The narrative quality of the earlier Pionier-Hoerspiel was the basis for the development of these next two types. In both, the author attempts to interpret and criticize current world events of historical significance in the manner of a dramatized documentary. Ernst Johannsen's "Brigadevermittlung" (1929) has become the model for these types. Closer to our own time is the play "Die japanischen Fischer" (1955) by Wolfgang Weyrauch, which tells a poignant tale of the consequences suffered by a group of Japanese fishermen who are accidentally exposed to lethal radiation from nuclear tests in the Pacific. Because the drama is based upon a true incident, it has more immediate appeal and thus seems to acquire greater significance.

Dialogisierte Novelle. As with the Zeithoerspiel, the dialogisierte Novelle accents the story element of the play. In the latter case, however, the fact of whether the story is based on an actual occurrence is not important. Typical for this form is "Verwehte Spuren" (1935) by Hans Rothe. The story centers around the
frantic searching and near-hysteria of a young girl whose mother mysteriously disappears during the World Exposition of 1867 in Paris.

Das Hoerspiel mit innerem Monolog. The first real progress toward developing the Hoerspiel into a distinct art form is not evident until the appearance of the type known as the Hoerspiel mit innerem Monolog. The unique characteristic of this form Schwitzke calls "In-sich-hinein-Sprechen." The audience is allowed to listen in on the thought process or stream of consciousness taking place within the mind of the character. An early example of this technique would be Kesser's "Schwester Henriette" (1929), which consists almost entirely of inner monologue. The technique blends well with the outward conversation in that the audience hears both the dialogue and the personal thoughts of the speakers. Somewhat related to the aside in stage drama, inner monologue has the advantage of not disrupting the progress of the play even when used extensively. It becomes a tightly integrated element, and may even be the structural focus of the drama. The listener distinguishes between outward conversation and this inward verbalized thinking through a change in the quality of the speaker's voice—a hollower sounding voice, or perhaps the quality of voice commonly experienced over the telephone (both of which are produced through the use of specially filtered microphones). One often hears this type of inward thought process in the later Hoerspiel dramas.
There is hardly a Hoerspiel written today that does not include the technique to some degree. Two examples, which may be mentioned here, are Herbert A. W. Kastin's "Der Taucher" and "Die seltsamste Liebesgeschichte der Welt" (1953) by Peter Hirche. Because of the importance of the technique of inner monologue, a brief summary of these two examples is in order.

The story of the "Taucher" involves postwar deep-sea diving projects, the purpose of which was to salvage whatever possible from the many warships that were sunk during the war. One diver accidentally becomes trapped in the hull of an old ship deep beneath the sea. While the diver awaits help, he carries on an extensive inner monologue which dramatically portrays his emotions, his apprehensions, and his dreams and fantasies as they become increasingly hysterical with the progressive lack of oxygen. Here, too, sound effects and music play a key part in transporting the listener into the very depths of the sea and the vortex-like vertigo which the diver suffers.

The technique of inner monologue may sometimes lead to a certain amount of confusion. A dramatic character with a rich imagination is able to carry on a conversation with himself involving as many different voices as he chooses, the result of which may well be a complex debate. Is this monologue or dialogue?

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8 This Hoerspiel was commissioned in 1963 by Inter Nationes in Bad Godesberg and was made available to me on tape-recording by courtesy of the German Consulate in Seattle, Washington.
Actually, the question is not too important, but the technique is. It is this technique, expertly handled by Peter Hirche, which justifies the title of his **Hörspiel**, "Die seltsamste Liebesgeschichte der Welt." The entire story takes place within the mind—whether of one or two persons is difficult to say at first. It is a love story, but the lovers remain unidentified, and are only referred to as "he" and "she". The strangeness of their relationship rapidly unfolds as the listener discovers that these two people have never once seen each other, yet they carry on long conversations entirely within the mind. Whether it is his mind, or hers, or the minds of both is unknown. All one can determine is that they love one another, but cannot be together. Their conversations take place any hour of the day and at any place. There is not the slightest suggestion, however, that this is a case of extraordinary powers of mental telepathy. It is simply a tale of fantasy. Here is how it begins:

\[\text{sie} \quad \text{Antwortest du, wenn ich dich rufe?} \quad \text{Antwortest du?} \\
\text{er} \quad \text{Immer.} \\
\text{sie} \quad \text{Du hast mich nicht vergessen?} \\
\text{er} \quad \text{Wie könnte ich das.} \\
\text{sie} \quad \text{Wir haben lange nicht miteinander gesprochen.} \\
\text{er} \quad \text{Lang oder kurz. --War es nicht gestern?} \\
\text{sie} \quad \text{Vor Jahren zum letzten Mal.} \\
\text{er} \quad \text{Ich habe darauf gewartet, dass du wieder an mich denkst.} \\
\text{sie} \quad \text{Ich glaube, ich war noch ein Kind, als wir zuletzt miteinander gesprochen haben.} \\
\text{er} \quad \text{Jeden Abend vor dem Einschlafen.} \\
\text{sie} \quad \text{Weisst du noch, worüber wir sprachen?} \\
\text{er} \quad \text{Natürlich, du dachtest immer, ich wäre ein schwarzer Mohr.}^{9}\]

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Hirche's "Liebesgeschichte" is one of the best modern examples of the totally different and unique character of the Hoerspiel. His play could not be produced successfully on stage. It is pure Hoerspiel.

It can be seen that the decade between 1923 and 1933 was a prolific period of early Hoerspiel literature. Within this ten year period some of the most popular writers, such as Fred von Hoerschelmann and Guenter Eich, to name only two, began their careers as Hoerspiel dramatists. Unfortunately, the type of drama that was normally heard on the German radio during the time Hitler was in power had no real literary value. As the government of Hitler took over complete control of radio broadcasting, Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry censored all programming. Hoerspiele that did not conform to, or speak favorably of the policies of National Socialism were not allowed to be broadcast. Examples of Hoerspiele that did conform are Eberhard W. Moeller's "Der Weg zum Reich", Richard Euringer's "Deutsche Passion", and especially the Hoerspiele of Josef Martin Bauers. Bauers' drama "Der einige Bauer" is only one of many examples of the type of literature called Blut und Boden which glorifies heroic peasant life.10

After the end of World War II, the Hoerspiel developed into three main groups. The first of these, which shall be termed Zeitgeschichtliche Hoerspiele, treats the questions of war, guilt, 

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10 Frank, Das Hoerspiel, p. 53.
restoration, and brutality, and undertakes an analysis of the moral and ethical conditions of contemporary life. Bochert's "Draussen vor der Tuer" (1947) is the classic forerunner of this group. The story portrays a soldier returning home to find that all his former ties with home and family, with society, and with himself have been destroyed.

The authors of the second main group of Hoerspiele to develop after the war concerned themselves with questions of reality. These dramas consisted of dreamlike situations created either as an experiment in fantasy or as a parable-like representation of modern life. To this second group belong some of the best and most famous contemporary German dramatists. The Hamburg studio of Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk first broadcast "Traeume" by Guenter Eich in 1951. In this series of Hoerspiele, Eich explores the depth of the human subconsciousness. Another of this type by Eich considers the problem of self-identity. It is entitled "Die andere und ich" and was broadcast in 1952.

Finally, there are authors of lyrical, fairytale-like Hoerspiele who experiment with fantasy, sometimes merely for its own sake (as in the case of Hirche's "Liebesgeschichte"), but more often to consider the problem of the dehumanizing effects of mass society upon the individual. Two representative authors of this group are Ingeborg Bachmann, an Austrian, who wrote "Die Zikaden"

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(1955) and "Der gute Gott von Manhattan" (1950) among others; and Ilse Aichinger, whose "Knoepfe" was written in 1953. Other authors who have treated the role of the individual in modern society are Guenter Eich, Peter Hirche, Heinrich Boell, and the Swiss, Friedrich Duerrenmatt.  

The remaining chapters will be devoted to a discussion of Hoerspiele which illustrate the three groups mentioned. The dramas will also serve to exemplify the definition of Hoerspiel previously offered on page 8. The chapters will be organized in the following manner:

First group (Zeitgeschichtliche Hoerspiele):
- "Gaeste aus Deutschland" by Christian Ferber
- "Das Schiff Esperanza" by Fred von Hoerschelmann
- "Die Maedchen aus Viterbo" by Guenter Eich

Second group (Identity-Reality):
- "Die andere und ich" by Guenter Eich
- "Naechtliches Gesprach mit einem verachteten Menschen" by Friedrich Duerrenmatt.

Third group (Dehumanizing influence on the individual of modern technology and mass society):
- "Die japanischen Fischer" by Wolfgang Weyrauch
- "Knoepfe" by Ilse Aichinger

\[13\] Ibid., p. 61.
CHAPTER IV

ZEITGESCHICHTLICHE HOERSPIELE

Georg Seidel, whose pen name is Christian Ferber, was born in Eberswalde in 1919. Ferber studied at Munich and Muenster, and later became editor of the Munich publishing house, Piper. Since 1956 he has been connected with the newspaper, "Die Welt."¹

As an example of Zeitgeschichtliche Hoerspiele, Ferber's "Gaeste aus Deutschland," centers around one particular World War II incident which took place on a small island off the coast of France. The action begins about twenty years after the end of the war. Frau Klieber and her son Franz are visiting for the first time a small French resort island which the author does not identify by name. It is a nostalgic visit, for Frau Klieber's husband was the German officer in charge of occupation forces on the island during the war. Frau Klieber never saw her husband again after the war, since he was executed for treason because he gave the island over to the allied forces without a fight. In the three years of German occupation, Kommandant Klieber grew very fond of the island and also of M. and Mrs. Cremier, whose hotel, the Auberge des Pins, the occupying forces used as headquarters.

Kommandant Klieber wrote many letters to his wife describing in detail the charming area around him to which he became so attached. Because it was the last place in which he had been happy,

Frau Klieber has long wished to visit the island in order to see for herself what she had already envisioned from her husband's letters. There is, however, another, more subtle reason for her visit. Frau Klieber has always considered her husband's death as a personal sacrifice to preserve the island and the people he had learned to love and respect. Now she feels a need to visit the island in order to prove to herself that it was worth the sacrifice. The people of the island, however, do not recognize the Kommandant's action for what it was. They believe he knew the German cause was lost and surrendered out of fear. Hence, they feel they owed the preservation of their homes and lives to the approaching allied armies and the work of the French underground. The Kommandant's friend, Cremier, is the only person on the island who has some understanding of Frau Klieber's visit:

Sie sind hier, Madame Klieber und ihr Sohn, weil sie meinen, hier bei uns, auf der Insel wuerde der Kommandant in Ehren gehalten--denn sie sind der Meinung, dass er mit seiner Kapitulation die Insel vor Tod und Zerstorung ge­rettet hat. Doch niemand ehrt hier den Oberstleutnant Klieber. Aber noch mehr: den gleichen Oberstleutnant Klieber haben die Nazis einen Verraeter genannt, weil er die Insel kampflos geraeumt hat. Gestorben ist der Oberstleutnant unter sehr merkwuerdigen Umstaenden mitten unter seinen Kameraden hinter Stacheldraht...Madame Klieber kam ins Gefaengnis, der Sohn in ein Lager...Alles fuer die Rettung der Insel, dachten sie, und dachten, darum waeren sie vielleicht willkommen.2

The first indication of this misunderstanding occurs on the ferry boat carrying Frau Klieber and her son to the island. Franz, the Kommandant's son, is speaking to the ferry boat con-

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2Ibid., p. 114.
ductor, Charlot:

Franz: Sie (die Insel) ist ganz unzerstoert geblieben, nicht wahr?
Charlot: Wie bitte? Oh, ja, ganz wie frueher.
Franz: Da haben Sie Gleeck gehabt. Ich meine, als Deutscher reist man hier oft mit schlechtem Gewissen. Der Krieg, nicht wahr?
Charlot: Monsieur, das ist alles lang vorbei und vergessen. Dass es nicht wiederkommt---das ist die Hauptsache.
Franz: Da haben Sie recht. Stimmt es, dass der deutsche Kommandant freiwillig uebergeben hat, um der Insel den Krieg zu ersparen?
Charlot: Der Kommandant? Ach so. Nun ja, er war eben kein Narr. Da war der Maquis, und da waren die Alliierten, die hier auf dieser Landzunge vorrueckten---und die amerikanischen Flieger...
Franz: Er wird ja trotzdem den Befehl gehabt haben, zu kaempfen.
Charlot: Ach, Befehle, Monsieur... 3

Franz, who is not so emotionally involved and nostalgic as his mother, suspects early in the play that she may be deceiving herself into thinking the Kommandant is considered a hero on the island. He tries to prepare her for the disappointment:

Franz: Mutter--ich will doch bloess, dass du nich entaeuscht wirst.

3Ibid., p.91.
Frauen—die wissen es dann noch besser als Sie. Darum bin ich hier, Monsieur und Madame.—Oh, Franz, für was hältst du mich eigentlich?^4

Further clarification of the "unehrenhafte Handlung" is brought out by the following conversation between Simone and her father, Cremier (the owner of the hotel where the Kommandant had his headquarters, and where the Kliebers are preparing to stay):

Simone: Vater?
Cremier: Simone?
Simone: Nein. Es ist zu albern.
Cremier: Sag es trotzdem.
Simone: Ich werde im nächsten Monat neunzehn. Ich...Ich habe in einem Roman gelesen, da wurde ein Mädchen einundzwanzig, und seine Mutter sagte ihm an diesem Tag, es haette...Nein, es ist wirklich zu albern.
Cremier: Es haette einen anderen Vater?
Simone: Ja.

Thus, during the occupation there was the rumor that the Kommandant and Cremier's wife, Louise, were lovers. Even though this was not true, the fact that both Cremier and Louise became intimate friends with the German officer was sufficient reason for the townspeople to believe the rumor and to condemn the Cremiers as traitors who collaborated with the enemy.

The collaboration, however, was not treasonable; rather, it grew out of mutual respect, fondness, and human understanding. Cremier was actually the one who succeeded in convincing the

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4Ibid., p. 94.
5Ibid., p. 97.
Kommandant to give up the island without a fight in order to avoid useless bloodshed. One of the members of the local French underground, Grandpierre, witnessed this scene from a distance and later describes it as follows:


Grandpierre admits he did not hear what was being said, but his assumption that Klieber and Louise looked like lovers became the basis for the rumor that they were lovers. Cremier tries to convince Grandpierre of Louise's real mission:

Cremier: ...Taten sie irgend etwas, das dir ein Recht gibt...
Grandpierre: Lieber Gott—wie sollte ich damals...
Und dann kam Louise zurueck. Man hatte das Haar abgeschnit-

6Ibid., p. 117.
ten und das Gesicht beschmiert, und die Milch aus dem Topf war in den Sand gelaufen, als man sie die Dorfstrasse hinuntertrieb. Und hier an der Auberge fand sie einen Posten, der sagte ihr: Deinen Mann wirst du nicht wiedersehen...? In despair because she is suspected of collaboration with the enemy, accused of an illicit affair with the Kommandant, and frantic because her husband has been taken from her, Louise commits suicide by drowning. Both truths are thus made known. Frau Klieber learns how and why Louise died; and the townspeople, in turn, discover the injustice they have committed against the Cremiers and the Kommandant.

The basic problem brought out by the Hoerspiel is not only the tragedy of the situation, but also the conflict between a soldier's duty and his conscience as a human being. Cremier was the first to realize the Kommandant's moral struggle:


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7 Ibid., p. 118.
It is then that Louise makes her final, successful plea which transforms the Apparat back into the man.

There is a tremendous contrast between M. Cremer's repetition of the word Befehl in the above passage and the tone given this same word by Charlot, the ferry boat conductor (cf. p. 26) when he says only once, "Ach, Befehle, Monsieur...". Charlot's understanding of the Kommandant's action represents that of the whole island while Cremer knew and understood how painfully Klieber was struggling with his conscience. The strange part of it is that Klieber is not even a speaking character in the drama; rather it is the interpretation which others put on his action and his struggle that becomes the focus of the entire play. Ferber, perhaps, wished to emphasize one specific act and all the circumstances which led up to that act, rather than the person committing the act.

In this particular Zeitgeschichtliches Hoerspiel, Ferber looks at a situation which, in retrospect, acquires an even greater sense of tragedy than was at first supposed. The townspeople can no longer celebrate with jubilation on the anniversary of the day the island was liberated from the Germans. That event has been spoiled by the realization of their own brutal crime. They can no longer look upon Kommandant Klieber as their hated

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\[8\] ibid., p. 115.
enemy, but must now recognize in him some of the very same basic ideals which they themselves so proudly hold.

Thus, through a nonexistent character, Ferber forcefully reveals the faults of blind social or national allegiance. Interestingly, Ferber does not offer a case of one-sided condemnation. The concerted reactions of each one in the mob which forced Mme. Cremier to suicide are just as detestable as the blind allegiance the German soldier gave to his Fuehrer. In each situation the individual had lost his sense of identity as an individual human being and had become merely an unthinking cog in a social machine.

One could hardly say this play is distinctly Hoerspiel, or that it could only be heard and not seen. On the contrary, it could easily be produced on stage. There is little, if any, of the characteristic technique of monologue used to represent inward, verbalized thinking and stream-of-consciousness. There is no disregard of the sense of time and place. One obvious dramatic technique Ferber did use is evident in the passage spoken by Frau Klieber (cf. pp. 26-27) in which she tells her son what she is not going to say to others and thereby reveals to the listener the entire background of the plot. Such a technique could also be employed on the stage, however.

Here is an example of an original Hoerspiel that exhibits a closer affinity to the elements of stage drama than to radio drama. This is entirely conceivable. The Hoerspiel contains within it elements of both the stage and the radio medium. The
author himself is the only one to determine how far the drama will lean toward one direction or the other. Just as stage drama can be adapted to radio, the fact that a drama was originally written for radio does not exclude it from being produced on the stage. Ferber's drama was written for radio, and it is naturally, if not distinctively, accommodated by that medium.

The author or the second Zeitgeschichtliches Hoerspiel to be considered is Fred von Hoerschelmann who was born in Hapsal, Estonia, in 1901. He studied the history of art and literature, and also theater and philosophy at Dorpat and Munich. From 1927 to 1936 he worked as a free-lance writer in Berlin. He spent the years between 1942 and 1945 as a soldier in Poland. Since 1945, he has lived in Tuebingen and has become well known as a dramatist and Hoerspiel author. 9

As in the case of many contemporary authors, Hoerschelmann was deeply influenced by World War II. The effect of such a calamity is understandably far reaching—not only in geographic terms, but also in terms of time. Some people cannot even now forget the war years, as witness the long-lived desire for vengeance represented by Chariot and Grandpierre in Ferber's work. Among those who cannot forget are also some who glorify and romanticize the excitement of the war. To this latter group belongs Captain Grove of Hoerschelmann's "Das Schiff Esperanza."

The time of the play is some years after the war. Captain Grove took active part in the marine warfare; but now, in peacetime, he commands an old decrepit freighter. He drinks excessively—perhaps, in order to embellish the memory of heroic deeds so much the better. "Die Esperanza ist kein Torpedoboot," the mate, Bengsten, must remind the captain, "und wir haben keinen Krieg mehr." No more war—for Captain Grove, it is too bad.

Ever since the war ended, the captain has not returned even once to his own family in Germany. His son, Axel, who is now a grown man, has been working as a seaman on merchant ships, perhaps out of some former admiration or respect for his father's profession. Coincidentally, Axel obtains a job on the Esperanza—his father's own ship. Unknown to Axel, however, the ship his father commands smuggles passengers from Germany to America. That is, the passengers think they have bought their way to America, but Captain Grove has no intention of risking the dangers involved in such smuggling. After the passengers have spent many days in the dark hold of the ship dreaming of a fresh beginning in a new country, the Captain simply deceives them into thinking they are, at last, near the shore. He has them transferred to a small boat at night, and then leaves them in the middle of the sea to drown while he and his ship profit from the high price they had to pay. The sailor who actually carries out the deception explains how simple it is:


Axel's father is not without some remorse or, at least, misgivings concerning these murderous activities. In fact, he wants as little to do with the actual, physical execution of the operation as possible. He reveals a sense of guilt when he says threateningly to the mate, "...Und das übrige, das erledigen Sie, verstanden, das geht mich nichts an, ich schlafe jetzt."  

Das übrige, of course, refers to the business of leaving the smuggled passengers out in the middle of the ocean. Previous to this, the captain had also exhibited a deep guilt complex about his part in the murders. In a somewhat drunken state he said to Bengsten, "Wir gehen morgen auf Dock, da wird der ganze Dreck von der Esperanza heruntergekratzt, bis aufs blanke Eisen... Und dann wird sie schneeweiss gestrichen, wie ein Bananenschiff, wie eine Braut, das unschuldigste Weiss, das es gibt."  

Now with his own son on board, the captain feels even

11 Ibid., p. 104.
12 Ibid., p. 99.
13 Ibid., p. 98.
greater contempt for his part in the smuggling and murdering.

He seeks to change all the past and live up to the respect he wants and needs from his son. His appearance and whole outlook on life undergo an amazing change as Bengsten readily notes:

Bengsten: Donnerwetter, Kapitaen! --Wie machen Sie das?
Grove: Was mache ich wie?
Bengsten: Dass Sie hier an Bord so ein bluetenweisses Hemd haben? Mit gestaerktem Kragen? Wer hat Ihnen das gewaschen?
Bengsten: Es macht Sie richtig jugendlich. Oder kommt das, weil Sie sich rasiert haben? Und der Rock sieht auch so sonderbar aus...
Grove: Ich habe ihn gebuerstet. 14

It is too late for new beginnings, however. Axel learns of the smuggling operation by accident. He discovers the latest victims hidden in a locked compartment in the hold of the ship. Their pitiful situation, plus the fact that a woman is among them, arouses Axel's sympathy. He still does not know that these people are going to be left at sea to drown; the fact of the illegal smuggling alone is enough to arouse his indignation. When he confronts his father with these findings, the captain tries to defend his position:

Grove: Du bist ein Mann und keine alte Tante. Und das Leben ist eine wueste Sache, man kann nicht hindurchschweben wie irgendein Engel. Man schwimmt im Dreck, und man strampelt sich frei, wenn man nicht ersticken will, und man wird dreckig dabei.15

Out of respect for his son's feelings, however, the captain decides not to murder this latest group of passengers but set them

14 Ibid., p. 107.
15 Ibid., p. 119.
ashore as even they themselves expect to be. The problem of what to do with the passengers is discussed between the captain and the mate:

Bengsten: So wie immer.
Grove: Nein, diesmal nicht. Diesmal werden wir die Leute richtig an der Kueste absetzen.
Bengsten: Das gibt Tols eine dolle knallerei mit der Kuestenwache, und Sie verlieren die Barkasse. Nicht so einfach.
Grove: Wir werden Neumond haben, diesmal. Und wir werden es versuchen, diesmal. Ich denke, es wird das letzte Mal sein.¹⁶

Thus, the captain has decided to forego his profitable smuggling business for good—all for the sake of his son. Unfortunately, Axel unwittingly revealed the name of the ship to the passengers. The captain could not now let them live for fear that one of them might identify his ship. Once again Captain Grove must rationalize his sense of guilt for what he feels he is forced to do:

Grove: ...Und wenn ich bedenke, was man mir alles zugefuegt hat, ohne mich zu fragen, ohne ueberhaupt hinzusehen,--einer will den andern fressen, aber der haertere Brocken bleibt uebrig. So ein Kind begreift naturlich nicht, dass man hart sein muss auf dieser Welt, wie die nun mal ist, wenn man nicht gefressen werden will. Gar nicht erst nachdenken. Und was man tut, das hat, gerade dadurch, dass man es tut, seine besondere Richtigkeit. Finden Sie nicht, Bengsten?

¹⁶Ibid., p. 109.
Both Captain Grove and Bengsten agree that they are capable of deciding who is worthy enough to be allowed to live. It is no crime, therefore, to liquidate those who are worth nothing at all to them. As the captain logically expresses it: one can strike out a "nothing" without affecting the world one iota. The entire rationalization, however, depends greatly on the condition that one does not personally know these "nothings". Consequently, the captain refrains from having direct contact with his illegal passengers. Bengsten, on the other hand, does not philosophize about the matter ("Man sollte nicht so viel nachdenken, Kapitäen."), and his conscience is apparently not bothered by the murders.

Thus, the original plan to leave the passengers in the sea to drown is to be carried out after all. This time something goes wrong: one of the passengers, Megerlin, is discovered left on the ship. There were seven passengers in all that were supposedly to be smuggled to the coast. The sailor who rowed the passengers away from the Esperanza swore that he did let seven passengers off. Megerlin himself explains:

Grove: Was heisst das?
Megerlin: Als ich sagte, dass ich nicht mehr mitmache, da sagte das Mädchen, ob ich das im Ernst meine, und ich sagte, natürlich voller Ernst. Und dann sagte sie, dass dann an meiner Stelle ein anderer das Schiff ver-

\[Ibid., p. 124.\]
lassen wuerde...

Grove: Wer?

Megerlin: Das sagte sie nicht. Aber sie haetten es besprochen. Noch als wir diese steilen, eisernen Treppen heraufgingen, und ich ging als letzter, das Maedchen vor mir,—da kam jemand und sagte, jetzt kehren Sie um, wenn Sie wollen. Und ich kehrte um und ging zurueck. Und der andere ging als letzter...

Immediately the captain suspects who it was that took Megerlin's place—his own son, Axel. He rushes through the ship trying to find his son. "Das kann doch nicht sein," he tries to convince himself, "das ist doch unmoglich, das--Axel, Axel!"19

The pitiful way in which the father calls in vain for his son poignantly reminds one of David's lament for his son, Ab solom (2 Samuel:19), and also of Rigoletto's cry for his daughter, Gilda, in the final scene of Verdi's opera. In each case the futility of the call punctuates the father's anguish. The realization that he is now personally involved in the deaths is made brutally apparent to the captain. His guilt can no longer be rationalized away.

Turning for a moment to technical aspects of production, it is interesting to note that, compared to Ferber's Hoerspiel with its relatively few and common sound effects, Hoerschelmann adeptly employs a great number of sound effects in addition to the radio technique known as Akustikwechsel. Here, a striking difference is made between sounds and voices supposedly heard in the open air (such as on the deck of the ship) and those heard in an enclosed area (such as the cabin rooms or the ship's hold). De—

18 Ibid., p. 128.
19 Ibid., p. 129.
gree of resonance may come closest to explaining what this difference in tonal quality is. Voices and sounds in the open air have very little resonance and exhibit a quality of "thinness". These same sounds acquire a deeper resonance and "fullness" when they are surrounded by walls that reflect the various sound waves. Depending on the type of material the walls are made of, the size and shape of the enclosure, and the type and number of objects within that may absorb sound waves, the tonal quality of sounds produced inside such an enclosure will vary. This variation of tone is then used to inform the listener where a sound is taking place. In the case of Hoerschelmann's drama, the tonal quality varies from the "thin", distant sounds heard in the open air to the more resonant, "full-bodied" tones heard in the captain's cabin, or the muffled, non-reverberating tones of the close, confining ship's hold. By coupling this variation of tonal quality with accompanying sound effects of wind, sea, birds, ship's bells, creaking doors, and droning motors, Hoerschelmann succeeds in conveying a very concrete mental image to his listeners.

"Painting" a mental image for the listener is not the only purpose of sound effects, however. Wagner, the master of the musical leitmotiv, proved how dramatically effective the repetition of certain sounds can be. Hoerschelmann, too, employs the technique of repetition to heighten and intensify the climax of the drama. For example, Captain Grove could not imagine Axel being anywhere else but in the ship's engine room hammering off the rust from a chain. Bengsten had ordered Axel to do this in
order to be sure he would not witness the operation of abandoning the passengers.

Grove: Wie haben Sie Uebrigens meinen Sohn dazu gebracht, ausserhalb seiner Wache eine ganz ueberfluessige Arbeit auszufuehren?


Grove: Er lasst sich zu viel gefallen. Das ist doch eine Extraarbeit, und ausserdem nachts.

Bengsten: Jedenfalls, er ist noch dran.

The captain can hear the pounding of the hammer and is confident of his son's whereabouts. The hammering noise periodically recurs to remind the captain as well as the audience that Axel is still working. In the final scene, the captain suspects that his son went along with the abandoned passengers in spite of the pounding hammer which he still hears. He races to the engine room in a desperate effort to disprove his fears:

(Eine Tuer fliegt auf. Und das laute Haemmern.)

Grove: Axel! Axel!

(Haemmern hoert auf.)

Alter Matrose: Ich bin nicht Axel...

Grove: Was machen Sie hier? Wo ist mein Sohn?


Grove: Aber mein Sohn... Vorhin war es doch mein Sohn?

Matrose: Nein, Herr Kapitaen. Ihr Sohn hat mich gebeten, an seiner Stelle--warum denn nicht, Herr Kapitaen? Das ist doch nichts Verbotenes? Er gab mir ein Pfund Tabak, und...

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Axel is gone. The father feels a sense of anguish which is deepened by the mistaken assurance of his son's safety. It was this assurance that was conveyed by Hoerschelmann through the careful, skillful insertion of the right sound effect at the right time.

The tragedy of Captain Grove's position stems in part from the fact that he was forced out of a passive, impersonal relationship with his victims into one of personal involvement. Even sadder, however, is the fact that this shift was brought about through the unwitting sacrifice of his own son—a revelation which increased immeasurably the anguish of personal guilt for Captain Grove. The author emphasizes here that the individual and his personal relationship to other individuals is vitally important. Only tragedy can come of viewing the world as consisting of nameless, faceless masses. Ours must be a human concern on a personal level; otherwise it becomes too easy to discount human beings as mere "nothings", the extermination of which will not change the world in the least—or, as Bengsten quips, might even make the world better for it.

Hoerschelmann does not leave the listener without some consolation, however. An optimistic look toward the future is represented in the figure of Megerlin. Perhaps it is because he had decided not to run away, but to accept his responsibilities back home that Megerlin loses his earlier anxiety about the uncertain future. He begins to relish the good feeling of knowing he has made a right as well as courageous decision:
Megerlin: Herrlich...herrlich...Ich glaube, das war so ein Augenblick, wo sich plötzlich das ganze Leben verändert. Das war, als ich hier sass und auf einmal bemerkte, dass ich mitten in einer riesigen Nacht dasass, mit dem Ozean ringsherum, ebenso riesig wie die Nacht, der lebte und bewegte sich schwach im Dunkeln, und ein ganz zarter Wind fasste mich, und--sehen sie,--da auf einmal hatte ich das Gefühl, ganz frei zu sein, und alles, was geschehen war, das ist ganz unwichtig,--nur die Welt, die ungeheure Welt liegt da und atmet mich an. Ich bin nur ein kleiner Angestellter, und ein unehrlicher dazu--22

Again, in the last moments when the captain is frantically racing back to the spot where his son might still be alive, Megerlin speaks a final note of optimism. What is done is done; it is time now to demonstrate with confidence and faith what one can do for the future:

Megerlin: Jetzt hat das Schiff gewendet. Fahren wir wieder zurück auf das offene Meer? Wie herrlich...Das dunkle Meer...das dunkle Schiff...der dunkle Himmel...Aber es wird immer heller, immer heller. Jetzt wird sie bald erscheinen, die Sonne, --kaum zu glauben, dass in dieser Dunkelheit und dieser Stille der Tag einbrechen wird. Wie ich mich darauf freue. Als wäre ich von neuem zur Welt gekommen, eine ganz andere, herrliche, riesige Welt...23

This is clearly meant to represent the so-called "existential plunge". At a moment of being reduced to complete aloneness in a gigantic night surrounded by a gigantic ocean, Megerlin finds his freedom to start anew. He alone must make the decision, however. He must decide to commit himself and his faith as an individual to the responsibilities that are his.

Thus, the author sees the hope of a future in spite of the

22Ibid., p.129.
23Ibid., p. 130.
pessimism and defeatism of the early postwar years in Germany. His is a call to forget the past and to face the future with hope—as even the name of the ship, Esperanza, inspires.

A final example of this type of Hoerspiel is Guenter Eich's "Die Maedchen aus Viterbo" (1953). A short biographical sketch of the author follows before turning to the drama.

Eich was born in 1907 in Lebus an der Oder. After attending schools in Finsterwalde, Berlin, and Leipzig, he studied law and sinology in Leipzig, Berlin, and Paris. He worked as a freelance writer from 1932 until the Second World War. For a time he was an American prisoner of war until he was released in 1946. In 1953 he married Ilse Aichinger, who is also a well-known writer and Hoerspiel dramatist. They currently reside in Lenggreis, Oberbayern. 24

Eich's drama, "Die Maedchen aus Viterbo", represents the predicament of those Jews who were forced into hiding, sometimes for years, in the attics and basements of friends during Germany's National Socialist period. Two such people are the main characters in the play, namely, seventeen-year-old Gabriele Goldschmidt and her grandfather, Robert. The action, which takes place in Berlin in 1943, is as follows.

Gabriele and her grandfather have been hiding in the home of Frau Winter for some time. Being the young girl that she is,
Gabriele is naturally bitter about her restricted situation. She has counted all the stripes in the wallpaper and discovered that there are as many stripes as days in the year— they have been hiding in this same room for three years! The long imprisonment has made Gabriele feel very old. She can no longer act and think as a normal seventeen-year-old girl:

Gabriele: Wir sind beide fast gleich alt. Die fuenfzig Jahre machen keinen Unterschied, jeder Tag zaeht hier fuer ein Jahr.
Goldschmidt: Zu wenig.
Goldschmidt: Und die Wuensche?
Gabriele: In eine Siebzehnjaehrige verwandelt, meinetwegen. Aber was wuensche ich mir denn? Es ist alles sehr unbe-stimmt.
Goldschmidt: Nachts durch einen Park zu gehen, vielleicht?
Gabriele: (ernst) Und jemand waere bei mir, der mich liebt. Niemand liebt mich.25

To Gabriele, the situation is just like a bad dream:

Gabriele: Ein schlechter Traum, sag es doch! Ein siebzig-jaehriger Mann und seine Enkelin, die sich verstecken muessen, drei Jahre in der Wohnung einer edelmuetigen Vermieterin, koennen nicht auf die Strasse--alles Ge-heimnisse der alten Mamsell, zu schlecht erfunden, als dass eine Sekunde davon wahr sein koennte, sag es doch!26

For the grandfather, a dream does not necessarily have to be a bad one. Even though he knows it is only wishful thinking, what else do they have left? "Ich war ein Lehrer," says the grandfather about the dream from which Gabriele had just awakened.

26 Ibid., p. 4.
him, "Ich erkannte dich nicht. Ich dachte, du waerest ein Maedchen, das Antonia heisst." His own name in the dream is that of Bottari, a teacher. He goes on to describe how a group of schoolgirls and their teacher, visiting the catacombs in Rome, lose their way in the maze of passages. Gabriele seems to recognize the situation:

Gabriele: (nachdenklich) Woher weiss ich das alles schon?
Goldschmidt: Ich kann es dir sagen.
Gabriele: Die Wirklichkeit, nicht wahr?
Goldschmidt: Die illustrierte Zeitung, mein Kind. Eine von den alten Nummern, die Frau Winter uns brachte. Ein Bericht ueber die Katakomben, erinnerst du dich?
Gabriele: (dem Weinen nahe) Ich will mich nicht erinnern.
Goldschmidt: Es wurde von einer Schulkasse erzaehlt, die sich in den Gaengen verirrt hatte. Faendest du das besser als hier?
Gabriele: Ich faende es besser. 27

Anything would be better than the long, drab imprisonment she has endured. The story of the schoolgirls lost in the catacombs is, for Gabriele, a situation much preferred to the one in which she and her grandfather now find themselves. Gabriele wishes to forget who she is, what she is, and where she is—particularly when airplanes, droning overhead and dropping bombs, press a frantic reality hard upon them. The grandfather sees an opportunity to get his granddaughter's mind off one of these attacks by asking Gabriele in what frame of mind she imagines the lost schoolgirls to be. She answers:

Gabriele: Aehnlich wie uns. Oder etwas besser. Bomben sind

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
nicht über ihnen.

Goldschmidt: Höre nicht darauf. Denk an die Katakomben und an die Mädchen aus Viterbo.


(Die Geräusche des Angriffs brechen plötzlich ab)

With a little applied psychology, the grandfather succeeds in occupying Gabriele's distraught mind by spinning an imaginary tale around the magazine article. Soon the all-clear signal announces the end of the air attack. Gabriele, no longer distracted by her imagination, returns to her former, bitter, cynical outlook:

(Entwarnungssignal)

Gabriele: (abschließend) So.

Goldschmidt: Entwarnung?

Gabriele: Alles hat ein Ende, nur--

Goldschmidt: Höre auf!

Gabriele: Oder gefällt dir das besser: was nicht ist, kann werden.

Goldschmidt: Ich hatte eine furchtbare Hoffnung, Gabriele.

Gabriele: Du übertrifft mich noch.

Even Gabriele, though, cannot maintain this attitude for very long. She, herself, must make some attempt to find a way out of their seemingly hopeless plight:

Gabriele: ...Wir freuen uns. Alles geht gut. Die Mädchen aus Viterbo werden gefunden.

Goldschmidt: Sie wurden nicht gefunden.

Gabriele: So?

Goldschmidt: Sie kamen nie wieder ans Licht.

Gabriele: (nach einem kurzen Zögern) Ich glaube nicht daran, dass man sich in den Katakomben verirren kann. Eine Erfindung für die Leser von illustrierten Zeitschriften. Nein, Grossvater, alles endet so gut wie bei uns!

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Ibid., p. 10

Thus, she prefers to romanticize the story of the schoolgirls, and retells it with a wishful, happy ending wherein the girls are all rescued by the heroic efforts of a young boy who loves one of them. She ends this version with the joyous words, "Sie haben uns gefunden!—Wir kommen, wir kommen—!" The grandfather, however, sees through her childish, wishful thinking, and although it was good to soothe Gabriele's disturbed mind during the air-attack, he now feels that she may be withdrawing too far from a sense of reality:

Goldschmidt: Gerettet.
Gabriele: Ja.
Goldschmidt: Das hoert man gerne.
Gabriele: Was meinst du, Grossvater?
Goldschmidt: Und von wem gerettet?
Gabriele: War es nicht ganz einfach?
Goldschmidt: Von Emilio, Emilio Postino.
Gabriele: (verlegen) So habe ich ihn genannt.
Goldschmidt: Sehr huebsch erfunden. Der Name, und er ist Tischlergeselle, die Kommode, die vom Wagen faellt, die tausend Lire--
Gabriele: Und? Was willst du sagen? Von wem gerettet, fragst du?
Gabriele: (unsicher) Da ich die Geschichte erfunden habe.
Gabriele: Ich lasse sie, wie sie ist.
Goldschmidt: Mir ist, als müsstest du sie noch einmal erzählen.
Gabriele: Ich müsste? Wer soll mich dazu zwingen?

Goldschmidt senses that Gabriele's fanciful, romantic version of the story is becoming an escape mechanism to her. He wants to make sure that she recognizes her story for what it is, and so suggests that she must retell it. In the meantime, Frau Winter, the landlady, comes home with some food, and they return to the old, dull, routine existence they have been living for the past three years. This time Frau Winter is upset. It is suspected that the Goldschmidts are hiding in her home. They now have to find another place, and she suggests a certain Frau Kallmorgen whom she proposes to visit that very evening in order to make the arrangements. The grandfather suspects, however, that they are going to be found by the Gestapo that night, and Gabriele must be prepared for this possibility. To do this, he returns to the story of the schoolgirls:

Gabriele: Sag du etwas!
Goldschmidt: Vielleicht: Unsere Geschichte?
Gabriele: Du hältst an den Illustrierten fest, Grossvater!
Anschliessend eine Partie Halma und ein Duett--
Goldschmidt: Kein Halma und keine Illustrierten. Keine Ausweichmöglichkeiten, kein Abbild, kein Bericht, nein, die Geschichte selbst!
Gabriele: Geschichten erzählen! Vor einer Stunde war's noch zu verstehen. Aber jetzt?
Goldschmidt: (zögernd) Eigentlich: Nur jetzt.
Gabriele: Die Mädchen sind gefunden. Was weiter!
Goldschmidt: Ich weiss nicht, ob sie gefunden oder nicht

Ibid., pp. 29-30.
This version does not seem to resolve their plight either. Will the girls in the catacombs be found and saved? Will Gabriele and her grandfather be found and arrested? Perhaps the answer does not matter; perhaps it is all the same. "Die Gleichgültigkeit, Gabriele?" to which she replies, "Weisst du Besseres?"  

Soon an answer to their situation does come. They hear someone ringing at the door, and know that they have been found:

Forced now to face reality, Gabriele finishes the story with its true, pessimistic implications. The schoolgirls, lost in the catacombs, wish to be found but are not. Gabriele and Goldschmidt do not wish to be found but are. Both situations point toward one conclusion: no escape. It was impossible to hide undetected forever. The Gestapo are already heard breaking

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34 Ibid., p. 36.
35 Ibid., p. 43.
36 Ibid., p. 44.
into the house, and Gabriele and her grandfather are resigned to the inevitable:

Gabriele: Hoerst du?
Goldschmidt: (ruhig) Sie brechen das Schloss auf.
Gabriele: Das war bisher nicht ueblich. Wie schade, dass wir Ausnahmen sind.
Goldschmidt: Sorge dich nicht, wir sind keine.
Gabriele: (spoettisch) Sich nicht ruehren, hat Frau Winter gesagt.
Goldschmidt: Mach dich bereit, Gabriele.
Gabriele: Sorge dich nicht. Ich bin es.
(Naeherkommende Schritte. Die Tuer wird aufgerissen.)
Goldschmidt: Ja, wir sind da.37

Because their very lives depended on it, Gabriele and Golds­
schmidt became virtual prisoners in Frau Winter's apartment. What kind of a life is it, however, to live in complete isolation and in constant fear of discovery and death? To Gabriele, it is an unbearable existence from which she must find some form of escape, even if it is only an imaginary one. The parallel story of the schoolgirls is to her such an imaginary escape in that she finds it easier to invent a plausible means of being saved. To Gold­
schmidt, such a departure from reality may be diverting tempor­arily, but he insists that they must, at last, return to reality and face with courage their inevitable fate.

The preceding drama falls within the context of Zeitge­
schichtliche Hoerspiele in that it considers the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany. Many post-war German writers dealt with this subject to condemn the horrors of the persecution and to remind their contemporaries of the dangers of such scape-

37 Ibid., p. 46.
goatism and intolerance. Goldschmidt and his granddaughter are two, simple individuals, whose story brings the plight of the Jews down to a more human and personal level which can be better understood and appreciated. There is no mention of mass concentration camps, or mass murders, or mass graves. The fact that millions of Jews were put to death during these times is an abstraction much like the concept "million" itself. Both are difficult for the human mind to comprehend. Just as in Hoerschelmann's drama in the preceding chapter, one must learn to know the individuals involved, and the situation must be portrayed on an intimate, personal level before any real understanding of it can arise.

In contrast to Hoerschelmann, Eich's Hoerspiel goes beyond the simple application of sound effects. Besides the sounds of footsteps, air attacks, and air-raid warning signals, Eich employs techniques of the instantaneous cut and the gradual blend or fade out. In the first instance, the progress of a scene is suddenly broken off and left suspended while another scene takes place, after which the suspended scene is again continued. An example of this technique takes place during one of the air attacks when Gabriele and Goldschmidt are first discussing the situation of the schoolgirls in the catacombs:

(Die Geraeusche des Angriffs brechen ploetzlich ab)
In den Katakomben

Bottari: Sparen wir die Kerze. Blase sie aus, Bianca!
Bianca: Reicht sie nicht bis man uns findet?
Bottari: Natürlicher würde sie reichen.38

Suddenly, the sounds of the air attack are cut off, and the listener finds himself within the dark, quiet catacombs. The shift back to Gabriele and Goldschmidt is not so sudden, but, using the second technique mentioned above, rather blends for an instant the two levels of reality together; as in the following example:

Bottari: Ich werde rufen. Das kann jedenfalls nicht schaden.
(er ruft) Hallo!--Hallo!--Hallo!
(Die Rufe ausblenden)
(Pause)

Entwarnungssignal

Gabriele: (abschließend) So.
Goldschmidt: Entwarnung?39

The focal point of this "blending shift" from one scene to the other is the change from Bottari's call to the sound of the all-clear air-raid sirens. One experiences this same sensation when awakening from a dream hearing a sound which, at first, seemed to be part of the dream, but is then recognized as a different sound taking place outside the dream. For example, thunder might be confused with the sound of drums in the mind of a person who is dreaming.

Thus, there are two levels of experience which Eich por-

38 Ibid., p. 11.
trays in this Hoerspiel. The first level, that of a real but hopeless situation, blends in almost imperceptibly with the second level, which is unreal but much more acceptable. This is particularly so in Gabriele's case, since she so desperately wants to live a life other than the one now forced upon her.

The parallel situations complement one another but are distinguishable in the minds of Goldschmidt and Gabriele by an awareness which separates reality from fantasy. Such awareness can become less than distinct, fusing the sense of reality with that of fantasy and confusing the mind to the extent that even one's own sense of identity and orientation to one's environment is lost. Goldschmidt himself began the story about the girls in the catacombs for the express purpose of diverting Gabriele's mind from the harsh reality of their situation; yet he did not wish his granddaughter to become so engrossed in this bit of escapism as to lose all sense of reality. As it turned out, he had little cause for worry since Gabriele never really lost sight of her self-awareness nor the reality of their predicament.

This questioning of identity is exemplified in the opening lines of Eich's Hoerspiel, "Der Tiger Jussuf" (1952), where Jussuf says, "Ich moechte mich vorstellen, Hoerer, aber wer bin ich? Ich koennte nicht einmal sagen, dass die Stimme, die du vernimmst, mit Sicherheit die meine sei." Eich further explores these vacillating experiences of the mind in such collections of Hoerspiele

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as *Traeume* (1953) and *Stimmen* (1958).

Thus, Eich becomes the obvious choice of author to introduce the second group of *Hörspiele* to be considered: namely, the group dealing with questions of identity and reality.
Guenter Eich is consistently interested in the question of identity and the individual's view of reality. The question "Who am I?" is dramatically portrayed by Eich in many of his Hoerspiele. In the first play to be discussed within this chapter, Eich probes the question of self-identity and seeks to relate this question to reality. In Eich's view, it is not sufficient merely to answer the question "Who am I?"; but the answer itself must somehow reflect reality—if, in fact, reality as such is also identifiable. To illustrate further, consider an insane person who claims to be the King of Spain. This claim seems far removed from the generally accepted interpretation of reality. Nevertheless, to the insane person, his sense of identity corresponds perfectly with his own interpretation of reality. He can only wonder why those around him refuse to recognize his reality. Granted, this is an extreme situation, but it reveals the basis of Eich's contention that reality is not a fixed, concrete entity interpreted and recognized in the same manner by everyone. Rather, one's sense of reality depends upon individual interpretation to a large extent, and, conversely, this same individual interpretation depends on one's sense of identity, thus leading one full circle right back to the original question, "Who am I?" In the Hoerspiel "Die andere und ich", Eich does not presume to offer a solution
to this circular dilemma, but rather expresses in dramatic form the fact of its existence. How the author accomplishes this task will be best illustrated by a summary of the Hoerspiel.

It is Ellen Harland's 41st birthday. She is married, has two children, and is on a European vacation tour with her family. The weather is hot and sultry, making the drive at the moment uncomfortable. The children, Bob and Lissy, are restless and talkative. Ellen feels hot and wishes to stop someplace to go swimming. Her husband, John, is anxious to drive on to Florence in order to visit the Uffizi galleries. There is heard the sound of music from the radio of the open-top car.

From the very beginning, Ellen, acting as narrator, intimates a concern with the problem of self-identity: "35 Grad Celsius im Schatten und ein Gespräch mit Radiomusik—so nichtssagend, so unauffällig ging es vor sich, dass ich in ein anderes Leben fuhr."¹ The "other life" is represented in the drama by the character Camilla who is actually Ellen's alter ego. Ellen continues to describe the trip and the scenery, and relates how she finally convinces the family to make an extra stop along the coast to go for a swim.

Frequently interrupting the running dialogue of the play, Ellen narrates in the fashion of a flash-back, informing the listener with details on what is about to happen. During her narrat-

tation, Ellen mentions the name Camilla, but so far the listener does not know how this character relates to the story.

On the way to Porto Garibaldi, where they plan to swim, they pass through a small village called Commacchio. Ellen is anxious and concerned over the poverty which is evident throughout the village. While describing this particular village, she notices an old woman glancing in their direction. Somehow Ellen is struck with the strange sensation that this particular woman is quite familiar to her. She soon forgets this moment and the poverty of Commacchio as they enter Porto Garibaldi and make ready to enjoy a refreshing swim. However, her memory of the old woman's glance persists, and, while swimming, Ellen muses about the strange feeling it still gives her:


It is at this point that Ellen's alter ego, Camilla, takes an active role in the continuation of the story. Ellen actually suffers an accident by which she almost drowns. From this instant

2Ibid., p. 175
in the drama to the very end, all the action is a manifestation
of Ellen's subconscious mind embodied in the character Camilla.
Eich is using here the traditional notion that one's life flashes
before him in the final seconds before death. The story continues
under this condition of hallucination and yet, the conscious per­
sonality of Ellen persists in the narration.

Having a need to satisfy her curiosity, Ellen decides to
go back to Commacchio and seek out the old woman she saw on the
bridge. Ellen finds herself entering a house which at once seems
strange and yet familiar to her. She describes the scene thus:

Die Häuser sehen alle gleich armelig aus, in eines davon
trat ich ein. Ich hatte nicht das Gefühl, mich in dem Haus
zu irren. Meine Augen gewöhnten sich rasch an die Finsternis.
Ich befand mich in einer Küche, eine Frau stand am Herd und
sah mich mit einem etwas stumpfen Lächeln an. Im ersten
Augenblick meinte ich, die Alte zu erkennen, die ich suchte,
aber sie konnte es nicht sein, sie war viel jünger. Es
verwirrte mich, dass ich nun doch in das falsche Haus ge­
raten war. Was sollte ich dieser Fremden sagen? Wie sollte
ich ihr erklären, was ich wollte? Ja, was wollte ich ueber­
haupt?3

Uncertain now who it is she is seeking, Ellen begins talk­
ing to the woman she finds in the house. In the course of this
conversation, she makes a frightening discovery:

Camilla: Ich suche jemanden.
Mutter: Ja?
Camilla: Eine alte Frau.
Mutter: Eine alte Frau? Es gibt eine Menge alter Frauen
in Commacchio.
Camilla: Ich weiss ihren Namen nicht.
Mutter: Gibt es hier jemanden, den du nicht kennst?
Camilla: Ich kenne niemanden hier.
Mutter: Was soll das heissen?

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3Ibid., p. 176.
Camilla: Sie stand draussen am Wasser, als wir mit dem Auto vorbeifuhren.
Mutter: Eindringlich: Wer?
Camilla: Sie sah mich an, als ob sie mich kennte.
Mutter: Sicher kennt sie dich.
Camilla: Aber woher?
Mutter: Camilla, was ist dir?
Camilla: Wer ist Camilla? Sie verwechseln mich.  

The woman claims to be Ellen's mother and calls Ellen by name, Camilla. Ellen immediately explains who she is, that she lives in Washington, her husband is a government official, she is 41 years old, has two children, and that they are all on a vacation tour of Europe. She tries to prove her point by arguing, "Ich bin nie in Commacchio gewesen. Ich bin ganz zufaellig hier-her gekommen. Mein Gott, ich habe Sie bestimmt noch nie gesehen." The mother carefully observes to Ellen that she looks like Camilla and that she is wearing Camilla's dress and jewelry. Unable to counter this, Ellen begins crying. The mother consoles her and gently berates her for not wanting to recognize her own mother.

From this point, Ellen herself is in doubt about her true identity: "Ploetzlich kam mir der Gedanke, dass sie recht haben koennte. Hiess ich nicht wirklich Camilla? War ich nicht wirk-lich ihre Tochter? Ellen Harland? Wer war Ellen Harland? Das hatte ich vielleicht nur getraeumt." Also from this point to almost the very end of the drama the dialogue is carried on by characters relating to Camilla and her life. Ellen, however, is

\[4\text{Ibid.}\]
\[5\text{Ibid., p. 177.}\]
\[6\text{Ibid.}\]
still heard periodically as the narrator.

Accepting now her role as Camilla, she asks her mother if
she has ever acted this strangely before:

Mutter: Ach Camilla, du machst mir oft Sorgen.
Camilla: Sorgen?
Mutter: Ja.
Camilla: Bin ich oft so verändert?
Mutter: Du bist es immer wieder.
Camilla: Habe ich schon öfter etwas gesagt wie heute?
Mutter: Nein, noch nie. Wie hast du mich erschreckt, Kind!
Camilla: draengend: Wie bin ich sonst? Wie bin ich, Mutter?
Mutter: Oft so, als warest du nicht da. Du hörst nicht, du antwortest nicht, du schaust viele Stunden lang auf einen Fleck und gehst durch die Stadt wie eine Mond-suechtige.7

Camilla's irrational behavior is explained, then, by the
recognition that she is mentally unbalanced. Camilla learns she
has a suitor named Giovanni. She is told by the mother that Gio­
vanni has asked several times for her hand in marriage, but each
time Camilla has run away. Giovanni has come once again, perhaps
for the last time, to ask Camilla to marry him. The parents im­
press upon her the fact that they are poor and Giovanni is rich,
and that they are also indebted to him. Camilla decides this
time to accept. Her decision makes her parents happy, but she
thinks whatever she does or says is actually immaterial since she
still feels basically that she is Ellen Earland and that she is
merely playing a role as if in a play:

Das alles kam mir wie ein Spiel vor. Ich stand auf den
Brettern einer Bühne und bewegte mich. Ich brauchte nur
hinter die Kulisse zu gehen und es war vorbei. Ich konnte
mitspielen, was hatte ich zu fürchten?8

7Ibid.
8Ibid., p. 178.
Camilla’s father impresses upon her the importance of the situation and leaves. Giovanni asks her to marry him, but says not to be too quick with an answer. While Giovanni awaits Camilla’s answer, Ellen thinks to herself:


In spite of all appearances, Ellen still believes she knows exactly who she is, and she still makes a sharp distinction between herself and this person called Camilla. A shock awaits her, however, as soon as she returns to Porto Garibaldi after accepting Giovanni’s proposal. While seeking her family, she thinks about what she has just done to the lives of several people whom, she believes, she does not really know:


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9 Ibid., p. 179.
allem konnte ich wohl sagen, dass ich ein gutes Werk getan hatte.\textsuperscript{10}

When Ellen arrives at Porto Garibaldi, she senses that something is different about the village. It appears to be in poorer condition than she had previously noticed. There are no automobiles about the streets. She can no longer find her own car. Everything seems changed. All of a sudden she discovers that she is now living in the year 1910! It is August 5th, Ellen's own birth date. At last she begins to comprehend what has happened to her:


Heute, am 5. August 1910, schrie in Cleveland ein Kind. Sie schrie, Ellen, die mir mein Leben stahl, die sich bequem einrichtete in ihrem bequemen Dasein und mich erbarmungslos zurückließ in der stinkenden Lagune von Comacchio. Ja, sie liess mich in Comacchio zurück, denn wohin anders sollte ich jetzt gehen?\textsuperscript{11}

Having nowhere to turn, Ellen resigns herself to live the life of Camilla. She marries Giovanni and works with him at his fishing trade. Still, she yearns to escape the small village and journey to America—to Cleveland. She persuades Giovanni to work toward this goal, but it takes years to save enough money for the trip. In the meantime, the war breaks out and Carlo, Giovanni's

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 181
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 182
helper, enlists; but he always returns during his furloughs to help Giovanni. Besides, he is secretly in love with Camilla.

Giovanni feels he has enough money at this point to go to America. Camilla, however, has changed her mind. She is soon to bear Carlo's child and she no longer wishes to leave him or Commacchio. Giovanni accepts the child as his own and even finds joy and pride in him. The happiness does not last long, though, as Giovanni soon afterward is lost at sea while fishing and is never found again.

Now Camilla begins a new life with Carlo. She marries him and has three more children. Carlo has since changed, however. He has become a good-for-nothing who drinks away most of their money. He soon despairs to the point where he confesses to Camilla that it was he, Carlo, who was actually responsible for Giovanni's death. No longer able to live with his guilt, Carlo hangs himself.

Camilla's mind begins to degenerate at this point and her thoughts wander more and more to a life far away in Cleveland. She thinks with bitterness of Ellen Harland who had stolen her life from her and was living happily married where she, Camilla, should now be.

Many more years pass. Camilla's children are grown and have left home. Her two sons have both died in the Second World War. Her daughters are married and have children of their own. Camilla is very old now, but still she must work cleaning fish by hand and washing them in a pond. One day, while thus occupied,
she hears an automobile with its radio loudly playing pass over
the bridge not far from her. Ellen, as narrator, describes
Camilla's thoughts of this moment:

Eines Sonntags stand ich hier, als ein grosses offenes
Auto von Ferrara herkam. Es naeherte sich rasch mit seiner
Kadionmusik, und ein Gefuehl von Bangigkeit erfulle mich,
as ich sah und hoerte....Als es bei mir vorbeikam, nur
durch das Wasser von mir getrennt, blickte mich eine Frau an,
die darin sass, und ich erkannte sie....Ellen Harland fuhr
dort vorueber,—ich hatte sie vergessen. In diesem Augen-
blick aber kam alles wieder. Ich selber war es ja, und
mein Leben war es, das vorueberfuhr. Das Auto bog in die
Kurve, ich machte einige Schritte, es war mir, als musste
ich fliegen koennen, als hinge noch einmal alles davon ab,
sie zu erreichen. Ich fiel und fuchlte das Wasser um mich
steigen, es drang mir in Mund, Nase und Ohren und betaubte
mich.12

At the same instant that Camilla dies, the scene shifts
to the sand beach in Porto Garibaldi where Ellen is just regaining
consciousness after having almost drowned moments before. At
first she does not recognize where she is or who is gathered
about her. It is her own family once again. They assist her
back to a hotel.

The next day, after regaining her strength, Ellen takes
the first opportunity to return to Commacchio. She is too late,
however, as she discovers that Camilla is already dead. As she
steps into the room where Camilla lay, her last words are: "Ich
oeffnete die Hammertuer. Im Luftzug flackerten zwei Kerzen, die
zu Fuessen von Camilla brannten. Ich ging hinein und machte die
Tuer hinter mir zu. Wir waren allein."13

12 Ibid., p. 197.
13 Ibid., p. 199.
After having read or heard the *Hoerspiel*, one may ask: Is Ellen or Camilla the real protagonist? It would be difficult to determine this. However, Eich is not essentially concerned that the two characters be separately identified, if they are, in fact, two separate characters. Indeed, the similarity between Ellen and Camilla rather than the disparity is actually emphasized, as if Ellen were to say of Camilla, "there, but for the grace of God, go I." It is only a matter of accident in the last analysis which determines the outward form of a human life. In spite of the external differences between Ellen's life in Cleveland and Camilla's life in Commacchio, and in spite of the differences of heritage, standards of living and opportunity, Ellen and Camilla resemble one another through the much more elemental fact that they are both human beings, both women with the same needs for love and individual expression, the same basic desire for a rich, happy, and fulfilled life. It is on this level that self-identity, reality, and interrelationships seem to mingle into one all-inclusive existence.

In this particular *Hoerspiel*, Guenter Eich employs no special sound effects. He concerns himself more with the total effect upon the listener of the strange situation relating Ellen to Camilla. One almost unobtrusive technique Eich employs, however, is the lightning shift from one time to another or one place to another. Even the listener shares the sense of shock Ellen feels when she suddenly becomes aware that the year is 1910. Perhaps in this way, Eich symbolizes the connection between the
concrete here and now (Ellen) with the abstract not here and not now (Camilla). One can thus experience life subconsciously as Ellen does or vicariously through others as Camilla does in a sense. Are these experiences less than real? If they form a part of one's total experiences in life, are they then equally valid under the term "reality"? Included in this consideration of reality could be effects of mind-expanding drugs which enable the conscious mind to perceive "reality" in a matrix of variations heretofore unknown.

In summary, the question of reality is an open-ended one. It began with the question "who am I?" and continues with the question "How do I relate to others?" The word others, however may include those unknown as well as known, those unseen as well as seen, those living in the past or future as well as the present. The word others may include those of one's own household or neighborhood or homeland, or it may reach out further to include foreign lands, different worlds, new universes, ad infinitum. If one recognizes "reality" in all these aspects, however, then "reality" must be a limitless totality of existence, the sum of which the individual can never completely know.

The second drama to be considered within this chapter concerns a more definite, if rather limited, concept with regard to reality. In Duerrenmatt's Hoerspiel, "Naechliches Gespraech mit einem verachteten Menschen" one specific, inescapable fact of reality is emphasized: the existential reality of death.
For the purpose of biographical information, Friedrich Duerrenmatt was born in 1921 in Konolfingen, the Canton of Bern, Switzerland. The son of a pastor, Duerrenmatt attended the Gymnasium at Bern and studied philosophy and theology at the University of Zuerich. He became established as one of the most popular contemporary European dramatists with the appearance of "Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi" in 1952. Another famous success was "Der Besuch der alten Dame" in 1956. Duerrenmatt satirizes society and exposes the absurdity of modern times with sharp, pitiless cynicism tempered at times with humor and clever wit. He seeks to anger his public and shake them out of their lethargy.\(^1\)

In the Hoerspiel "Naechtliches Gesprach mit einem verachteten Menschen," Duerrenmatt presents a basic existential point-of-view. By way of a dialogue between two symbolic figures, Der Mann, representing human life, and Der Andere, who is the executioner in the drama and thus representative of death, Duerrenmatt explores the essence of life and the absurdity of resisting the inevitability of death. Life is the all-important element of human existence. In the words of the executioner, "...Alles, was man verlieren kann, ist das Leben, etwas anderes als das Leben gibt es nicht..."\(^15\) Death, however, is also a part of living. One must not scorn it or refuse to accept it. Even so, man has a natural tendency to do that very thing: to refuse to accept

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\(^1\) Charles Moritz (ed.), *Current Biography*, 1959, pp. 102-4.
\(^15\) Michel, *Spectaculum*, p. 51.
death, to resist death, and to rebel against it with all his will to live. This is particularly true for many who fear death as a hidden, unexpected threat that strikes blindly and unjustly. The criminal, too, who loses his life prematurely as punishment for his crime, rejects and resists his death, however vain the attempt may be. Such a response is a natural result of the instinct for self-preservation. It is what the executioner in Ouerrenmatt's drama terms a "healthy" death, the sort which he himself admires as evidenced in the following passage:

Der Andere: Nichts schien mir naturlicher, als dass ein Kerl sich wehrte, wenn er sterben musste, wenn sich zwischen ihm und mir ein wilder Kampf entspann, bis ich seinen Kopf auf dem Richtblock hatte. So sterben die wilden Burschen aus den Wäldern, die im Jaehzorn toeteten oder einen Rabnuord unternahmen, um ihrem Maedchen einen roten Rock zu kaufen. Ich verstand sie und ihre Leidenschaften, und ich liebte sie, war ich doch einer von ihnen. Da war Verbrechen in ihrem Handeln und Gerechtigkeit in meinen Henken, die Rechnung war klar und ging auf. Sie starben einen gesunden Tod. 16

The executioner likes the clarity of the situation. A criminal must suffer death, but he fights that punishment even though it is all in vain. "Es ist sinnlos mit mir kämpfen" the executioner must remind his current adversary. A "healthy" death is one like this which can be clearly understood and accepted.

What of those, however, who are not guilty of such a crime? They, too, must one day face the "executioner". Der Andere explains that these fall into two categories, the first of which is made up of those who scorn death:

16 Ibid., p. 52.
Der Andere: ...Und dann waren andere, die starben anders, obgleich es mir manchmal scheint, dass es doch ein gleiches Sterben war. Die behandelten mich mit Verachtung und starben stolz, Herr, hielten vorher prächtige Reden über die Freiheit und über die Gerechtigkeit, spotteten über die Regierung, griffen die Reichen an oder die Tyrannen, dass es einem kalt über den Rücken lief. Die, denke ich, starben so, weil sie sich in Recht glauben und vielleicht auch recht hatten, und nun wollten sie zeigen wie gleichgültig ihnen der Tod war.17

Such a death as this seem right to Der Mann. He, too, feels pride and a sense of righteousness, and he much prefers this death to the second alternative which the executioner next describes:

Der Mann: ...Auch ich wollte sterben wie ein Held. Und nun bin ich mit dir allein....Auch mir bleibt nichts anderes übrig, als umzukommen, wie die Tiere umkommen.

Der Andere: Es gibt ein anderes Sterben, Herr.

Der Mann: So erzähle mir, wie man in unserer Zeit anders stirbt denn ein Tier.

Der Andere: Indem man demütig stirbt, Herr.

Der Mann: Deine Weisheit ist eines Henkers würdig! Man soll in dieser Zeit nicht demütig sein, Dube! Man soll auch nicht demütig sterben. Diese Tugend ist heute unanständig geworden. Man soll bis zum letzten Atemzug gegen die Verbrechen protestieren, die an der Menschheit begangen werden.

Der Andere: Das ist die Sache der Lebenden, aber die Sache der Sterbenden ist eine andere.18

Der Mann is understandably bitter about the fact that he must die. In panic, he resorts to the very common attitude of rebellion and scorn about which the executioner had just been speaking. The emotional turmoil of Der Mann, facing his own impending death, does not permit him to agree with the suggestion of a "humble" death. Der Mann, who is a writer and champion of freedom, feels he should be given a proud death, the death of a

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. 53.
hero, a death that others would recognize and honor as contributing to the struggle for a better human existence:

Der Mann: Mein Tod soll in dieser Nacht nicht versinken wie ein Stein versinkt, lautlos, ohne Schrei. Mein Kampf soll gehört werden. Ich will durch dieses offene Fenster in die Strasse hineinschreien, hinein in diese unterjochte Stadt!
(er schreit) Hört, ihr Leute, hier kämpft einer mit seinem Henker! Leute, springt aus euren Betten! Kommt und seht, in welchem Staat wir heute leben!

Duerrenmatt recognizes here an overpowering desire on the part of one about to die to feel that his death is not in vain, and that others must be called upon to witness to this fact; otherwise the meaning of that person's life would be negated. Consider the soldier, who, when going into battle, convinces himself that even though he may die, his death is for a worthy cause, a cause which gives meaning to the life thus sacrificed. It is in tribute to this meaning in life that the medals are conferred and the soldier is honored—not in honor of the death itself. By the same token, the premature death of an innocent child is thought to be more pathetic and incomprehensible for the reason that the child died in vain, thus obviating any potential meaning the course of his life might have acquired.

In Duerrenmatt's play, Der Mann demands the hero's death; he requires the recognition by others that his death is not in vain so that his life may consequently have meaning. It is for this reason he cries out into the streets to let everyone know

19 Ibid.
that here and now one mortal man is struggling, not in vain, with
death. Unfortunately, his cries fall on empty streets. There are
none to heed his plea for recognition of the meaning of his life:

Der Mann: ....Hilfe!

Stille

Der Andere: Es bleibt still auf der Strass.
Der Mann: Als ob ich nicht geschrien haette.
Der Andere: Es kommt niemand.
Der Mann: Niemand.
Der Andere: Nicht einmal im Haus hoert man etwas.
Der Mann: Keine Schritte.

Stille

Der Andere: Schreien Sie ruhig noch einmal.
Der Mann: Es hat keinen Sinn.
Der Andere: Jede Nacht schreit einer so wie Sie in die
Strassen dieser Stadt hinein, und niemand hilft ihm.
Der Mann: Man stirbt heute allein. Die Furcht ist zu gross.

Stille

One of the most simple yet profound existential truths is
here expressed: one dies alone, without help from others and
often without even the awareness on the part of others of one's
own death. This comes as a painful realization to all who need
death in order to affirm life, saying, in effect: "I am dying,
therefore I must have lived." It is a strange life, however,
that has little meaning unless or until one dies in a way which
is recognized by others as worthy. This is the proud death, the
hero's death, the kind of death many secretly desire because the
lives they lead would otherwise by meaningless. Is the meaning

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 54.}\]
of life, then, dependent on and determined by the chance occurrence of an appropriate death? Sartre, the existentialist philosopher, would say no: "Death is accidental in its occurrence and therefore absurd: far from giving a life its meaning, it may leave that meaning in doubt and suspense."\(^{21}\)

Each individual thus must acquire a meaning for his life during the living of that life. *Der Mann*, however, refuses so far to accept this concept. By crying out for witnesses to his heroic struggle with death, he hopes to verify the meaning of his life post factum. No one, unfortunately, hears his cries.

One might assume that the executioner, constantly concerned as he is with death, would be able to comprehend death entirely. Yet, even he finds it difficult to understand the full significance of the "humble" death which he himself had suggested earlier. It stands between the hero's death and death as punishment or atonement, that is, the two types of death which are understandable and acceptable. What is one to think, however, of those who die both humbly and innocently without remorse or scorn, the way children so often die? The executioner is somewhat unsure of himself on this point:

Der Andere: Nichts ist so schwer zu verstehen wie die Demuetigen, Herr. Schon bis man sie nur erkannt, geht es lange. Zuerst habe ich sie immer verachtet, bis ich erkannte, dass sie die grossen Muster des Sterbens sind. Wenn man wie ein gleichgueltiges Tier stirbt, so ergibt man sich mir und lasst mich zuschlagen, ohne sich zu wehren. Das tun auch die Demuetigen, und doch ist es

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Although the executioner cannot understand this type of death, nevertheless he has learned one important fact from it with which he tries to console Der Mann:

Der Andere: Ihren Leib kann ich nehmen, Herr, der ist der Gewalt verfallen, denn alles, was in Staub zerfaellt, ist ihr unterworfen, aber wofuer Sie gekaempft haben, darueber habe ich keine Nacht, dann es gehoert nicht dem Staub. Dies ist, was ich, ein Henker, ein verachteter Mensch, von den Unschuldigen lernte, die mein Beil faellte, und die sich nicht wehrten: dass einer in der Stunde seiner ungerechten Todes den Stolz und die Angst, ja, auch sein Recht ablegt, um zu sterben, wie Kinder sterben, ohne die Welt zu verfluchen, ist ein Sieg, der groesser ist als je ein Sieg eines Maechtigen war.23

As the uselessness of further struggle becomes apparent to Der Mann, he finally begins to resign himself more calmly to the inevitable. "Das Sterben ist eine gar zu schwere Kunst", he admits, but it is significant that he now refers to death as Kunst instead of senseless, animal-like extinction. Thus, there exists the art of dying as well as the art of living, although, for some, this may simply be two ways of saying the same thing.

Having accepted his fate, Der Mann is now able to make a philosophical conclusion about life in general and about his own death in particular:

22Michel, op. cit., p. 55.
23Ibid., p. 56.
Der Mann: ...Ich habe für ein besseres Leben auf dieser Erde gekämpft, dafür, dass man nicht ausbeutet wird wie ein Tier, welches man vor den Pflug spannt: da, geh, schaff Brot für die Reichen! Im weiteren, dass die Freiheit sei, damit wir nicht nur klug wie die Schlangen, sondern auch sanft wie die Tauben sein können, und endlich, dass man nicht krepieren in irgendeinem lehmigen Feld oder gar in deinen roten Händen; dass man diese Angst, diese unwürdige Angst nicht durchmachen muss, die man vor deinem Handwerk hat. Es war ein Kampf um Selbstverständlichkeiten, und es ist eine traurige Zeit, wenn man um das Selbstverständliche kämpfen muss. Aber wenn es einmal so weit ist, dass dein riesiger Leib aus einem leeren Himmel in das Innere unseres Zimmers steigt, dann darf man wieder demütig sein, dann geht es um etwas, das nicht selbstverständlich ist: um die Vergebung unserer Sünden und um den Frieden unserer Seele. Das weitere ist nicht unsere Sache, es ist aus unseren Händen genommen. Unser Kampf war ein guter Kampf, aber unser Untergang war ein noch besseres Untergang. Nichts ist verloren von dem, was wir taten. Immer aufs neue wird der Kampf aufgenommen, immer wieder, irgendwo, von irgendwem und zu jeder Stunde.24

Somewhere, somehow the struggle is carried on by someone.

Life goes on even though the individual must die. Bad though it be, the struggle for the obvious in life (such as freedom and meaningful satisfaction) continues. What is not so obvious, however, is only realized at the very moment of death itself—"dann geht es um etwas, das nicht selbstverständlich ist: um die Vergebung unserer Sünden und um den Frieden unserer Seele."

Moments before the vital cord is cut, stripped of all protection, and forced to face utterly alone the overpowering reality of death, Der Mann discovers that life was, after all, worth living and worth struggling for. He learns to accept death humbly and to die the way children do, "...ohne die Welt zu verfluchen."

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24Ibid., p. 57.
A dramatist would find it somewhat difficult to produce a play such as this one on the stage. There is very little action and a great deal of philosophical discussion. As a Hoerspiel, however, with a duration of approximately thirty minutes, it easily stimulates the listener's imagination, puts him in the place of Der Mann, and provokes him to consider the most fundamental aspect of human existence. In addition, Duerrenmatt employs a very effective radio technique. Since radio is completely dependent upon sound, the absence of sound becomes strikingly noticeable. Duerrenmatt uses quietness in a way that heightens a climactic point and causes the listener to strain his powers of attention. This is particularly well done when Der Mann cries out into the streets to let everyone know he is now fighting for his life; yet his cries are met with absolute stillness (cf. p. 71). Through the use of this stillness, Duerrenmatt emphasizes the loneliness of death. In the case of radio, therefore, the more pronounced contrast between sound and silence, as opposed to the stage, enables Duerrenmatt's drama to be tense and stimulating to the imagination, where the same drama on stage might have tended toward boredom.
CHAPTER VI

HOERSPIELE REPRESENTING DEHUMANIZATION

OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Sidney Harris, the columnist and social critic, has written: "the core problem of our time, indeed, has little to do with capitalism or communism or any other ideology...The core problem has to do with the progressive dehumanization of human beings everywhere in the world, on all sides of every curtain." In this final chapter, two Hoerspiele shall be discussed which serve to indicate a definite concern on the part of many Hoerspiel writers for the problem of dehumanization within contemporary society.

The first example will be Weyrauch's "Die japanischen Fischer", the second will be "Knoepfe" by Ilse Aichinger.

As an introduction to the first author, Weyrauch, whose father was a land surveyor, was born in Koenigsberg in 1907. He attended a Gymnasium and later a drama school in Frankfurt am Main. He worked as a professional actor for a while and then continued his education by studying history, German literature, and Romance languages and literature. After 1933 Weyrauch lived in Berlin where he became editor of the Berliner Tageblatt and also of the novels division of a local publishing house. From 1950 to 1958 he was editor of the Rowohlt Publishing House in Hamburg. Weyrauch

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1 Editorial in the Billings Gazette, June 12, 1967.
now lives in Gauting near Munich. In addition to poems and short stories, Weyrauch has written the following **Hoerspiele**: "Woher kennen wir uns bloss" (1952), "Vor dem Schneebegirge" (1954), Die japanischen Fischer" (1955), "Indianische Ballade" (1956), "Anabasis" (1959), and "Heute Abend kam Besuch" (1960)\(^2\).

The Hoerspiel "Die japanischen Fischer" is written as a warning to mankind with regard to the development of the hydrogen bomb. It is significant that the Japanese not only had to suffer the horrors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, but now, in time of peace, the Japanese (represented by a group of fishermen) again must suffer from accidental contamination by radioactive material during nuclear tests in the Pacific. The voices of the fishermen explain their own innocence in the matter:

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(Viele leise Schritte)
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The story is narrated by one central character called Susushi. Except for Susushi's wife, all the other characters are


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 159.
simply referred to in general as fishermen, fishermen's wives, fishermen's children, etc. The plot is as follows: a group of fishermen are out in their boats off the coast of Japan catching tuna as they have done so many times before. However, during the night as they are sleeping, Susushi, who is keeping the night watch, suddenly observes a bright flash of light in the sky. It is something he has never seen before, but he senses danger and immediately calls the others to waken:

SUSUSHI: i.3.R.: Wacht auf.
FISCHER: Was ist, Susushi?
SUSUSHI: Wacht auf, wacht auf.
FISCHER: Warum schreist du so?
SUSUSHI: Wacht auf, wacht auf, wacht auf.
FISCHER: Da soll man schlafen koennen.
SUSUSHI: Es hat geblitzt.
FISCHER: Es kann nicht geblitzt haben.
FISCHER: Der Himmel ist voll von Sternen.
SUSUSHI: Es hat geblitzt, wie ich es noch nie habe blitzen sehen.
FISCHER: Vielleicht war es ein Komet.
FISCHER: Oder ein Scheinwerfer von einem Riesenflugzeug.
FISCHER: Oder du bist eingeschlafen und hast getraeumt.
SUSUSHI: Aber jetzt, aber jetzt traume ich. Ich sehe etwas, das es nicht gibt.
FISCHER: Diesmal hat Susushi recht.
FISCHER: Es ist ein Ding am Himmel, das aus der Hoelle stammt.4

The fishermen, at first skeptical of Susushi's report, now see for themselves the evidence of the mushroom cloud rising. Although they speak of the atom with such primitive expressions as the "green dragon", and of the mushroom cloud as having a "head",

4Ibid.
"neck", and "body", they nevertheless realize the full significance of the danger to which they have just been exposed. They know fully what consequences the atomic explosion can bring. There is mention of Nagasaki and then there are cries and prayers to God to have mercy and spare them from the effects of the atom. With such prior experience in mind, the fishermen are understandably afraid for their lives. Susushi urges them to return home. They must undergo tests to see if they have been contaminated by radioactivity.

At first, upon their return home, they try to act normally. They bring the boats in to shore, and they prepare their fish to be sold at market. Soon it becomes evident, however, that everything is far from normal: the fishermen become ill, and the fish, it is discovered, are spoiled and not fit to eat. More important, the fishermen themselves have been physically altered by the exposure to the bomb test. Susushi tries to explain this to his wife:

SUSUSHI: Ich bin nicht so wiedergekommen, wie ich weggefahren bin.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Liebst du mich nicht mehr?
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Ich kann dich nicht sehen. Es ist Nacht.
SUSUSHI: Ich werde eine Kerze anstecken.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Wie siehst du aus?
SUSUSHI: Wie ein Mann, der den gruenen Drachen getroffen hat.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Was ist das?
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Du meinst das Atom.
SUSUSHI: Als deine Mutter noch lebte, erzaehlte sie immer
von der Matte, auf der du lagst, als der grüne Drache zum erstenmal kam. Er blies einen grossen Wind vor sich her, der dich mit der Matte hochhob und wegtrug. Weit, sehr weit. Als du wieder auf der Erde lagst, war die Matte so eng um dich gewickelt, als ob sie dein Kleidchen wäre.

SUSUSHIS FRAU: Das Atom ist in dich hineingefahren.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Deine Haut ist ganz schwarz.
SUSUSHI: Ich habe auch keine Haare mehr.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Aber es ist doch kein Krieg.
SUSUSHI: Sie haben Versuche gemacht.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Wachsen deine Haare wieder?
SUSUSHI: Ich weiss nicht.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Wird deine Haut wieder richtig?
SUSUSHI: Weiss nicht.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Steckst du an?
SUSUSHI: Kann sein.
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Und da kommst du in die Huette?
SUSUSHI: Hast du mir nicht geschworen, dass du mich bei meiner Rückkehr genauso liebhaben wuerdest wie bei meiner Abfahrt?
SUSUSHI: Warum blaest du die Kerze aus?
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Es war der Wind.
SUSUSHI: Warum bist du aufgestanden?
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Ich weine. Ich hole mir ein Taschentuch.
SUSUSHI: Wo bist du?
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Hier.
SUSUSHI: Warum sprichst du so leise?
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Ich weine.
SUSUSHI: Es wird kalt. Warum hast du die Tuer aufgemacht?
SUSUSHIS FRAU: Es war so heiss.
SUSUSHI: Warum verlaesst du mich?
SUSUSHI: Du ekelst dich vor mir.5

Theirs is not the only personal tragedy resulting from the radioactive exposure, however. The situation within the entire village continually degenerates. People become ill and children

5Ibid., p. 168.
die from eating the spoiled fish. Soon a special commission of officials arrives, and, in the course of their investigation, it is deemed necessary to close down the market place. Everything is contaminated with radioactivity. Case after case of such contamination is discovered until the whole village begin to despair of their very existence. The women are especially sensitive to the future consequences of such a tragedy as they have just experienced:

With increasing dejection, the entire village see no solution to their dilemma except death. The women cannot understand why men do such things to one another, and they wonder if God himself is in agreement with such behavior. There is only one way to learn if God is in agreement, and that is to ask him. In order

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 175.}\]
to do this they must first go to him in death. Death is not only the means by which their questions may be answered, but it is also deemed a necessary precaution in order to prevent further contamination of neighboring villages with radioactivity. Thus, the villagers, as a body, decide to commit suicide by placing themselves in the middle of a forest fire which they ignite. In addition, suicidal death (particularly by fire) is vivid proof to themselves that they are not cowards despite the fact that they could no longer withstand the suffering caused by the radioactive burns. And finally, they wish to become examples to the world of what consequences may follow such experimentation with nuclear bombs. Susushi, the last voice to speak, concludes with this warning to the world:


By the time one comes to the end of the drama, one realizes that Susushi has been narrating the events in the manner of a flashback, and that at this point the villagers are leaving their homes and quietly walking toward the forest for the purpose of self-immolation. From the beginning, one continually hears the soft footsteps and whispers of the villagers. These sounds mean little to the listener at first, however, until they gradually gain meaning as well as momentum when the climax of the drama

7Ibid., p. 178.
is reached. Weyrauch employs these strange, subdued sounds to attract the listener's attention and arouse his curiosity. The constant recurrence of whispers and soft footsteps imparts to the listener a quiet, secretive agitation somewhat similar to the moribund atmosphere surrounding a sick person about to die. Because of the proximity of the radio loud-speaker, the whispers and furtive footsteps are more effectively conveyed to the radio listener than would be possible in the case of a theater audience. Where such tense quietness tends to be lost on the stage, it succeeds in stimulating the radio audience to listen carefully, expectantly, and even anxiously.

Weyrauch accomplishes this effect by the application of three different microphone positions which he designates in the following manner: "Sprecher im 1. Raum: so dicht wie möglich am Mikrophon. Sprecher im 2. Raum: normales Mikrophon. Sprecher im 3. Raum: weit entferntes Mikrophon." The first position thus places the microphone as close to the source of sound as possible which imparts a sense of intimacy. This position is used for Susushi's narration of the story as in the opening lines:


In the second position, the microphone is at normal distance from the sound source for normal voice production. This position

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8 Ibid., p. 154.
9 Ibid., p. 155.
is used for the voices of the villagers as they converse with each other as when they are discussing the events leading up to the catastrophe:

STIMMEN VON FISCHERN i.2.R.: Wir fingen den Thunfisch. Wir fingen ihn in denselben Fischerguenden wie immer....

For the third position, the microphone and the source of sound are far apart. This gives the impression of distance and expanse, and is used for the voices heard on the beaches, in the fishing boats, or when the fishermen call out "Fisch zu verkaufen" in the market place. Particularly interesting is the fact that the third microphone position is also used when Susushi returns to his wife and speaks to her of what has happened (cf. p. 81).

One would have expected the use of the second microphone position in the case of only two people conversing--more so, since the two are man and wife. In this instance, however, Weyrauch seems to suggest not only the physical distance through the use of the third microphone position, but also the emotional separation which has occurred between Susushi and his wife due to the repulsive consequences of the radiation exposure.

Thus, by way of these variations, the listener achieves total involvement, that is, from an intimate, personal involvement with Susushi, to the broad, over-all involvement with the entire village. The listener not only becomes identified with a particular character such as Susushi, but he also feels a sense

10Ibid., p. 159.
of identification with the whole Japanese village. From here it would be a simple matter to extend this identification to the whole world and all of humanity. Finally, Weyrauch's use of the several microphone positions strikingly emphasizes the overall idea of dehumanization. The play opens with the microphone in first position stressing the close, personal involvement between Susushi and the audience, but then progresses to a point where the third microphone position is used for the scene portraying Susushi and his wife to underscore the dehumanizing, alienating effects of the radiation poisoning. It is a clear example of form supporting idea, and, at the same time, illustrates how intimate as well as expansive the Hoerspiel can be.

The author of the final Hoerspiel to be considered is Ilse Aichinger. She was born in the year 1921 in Vienna and spent most of her childhood in Vienna and Linz. After the Second World War, she studied medicine for a while and began writing.

Aichinger's first novel, Die groessere Hoffnung, won her recognition in 1948. She also received the Preis der Gruppe 47 in 1952 and the Immerman Preis der Stadt Dusseldorf in 1955.

Ilse Aichinger, who is married to another famous Hoerspiel author, Guenter Eich, resides with her husband at Bayrisch Gmain in Upper Bavaria.11

Aichinger's drama "Knoepfe" is fantastic in plot, but it

11 Frenzel, Daten deutscher Dichtung, p. 266.
is also a parable; and like all parables, the story is designed to point out a moral. The moral, as indicated by the title of this chapter, concerns the problems of dehumanization in today's technological society. In contrast to "Die japanischen Fischer", however, where mental and spiritual dehumanization comes as a result of physical deterioration in health and appearance, the dehumanization in "Knoepfe" arises out of those forces within society and industry which depersonalize the individual psychologically and reduces a human being to an almost inanimate level of existence—an existence comparable to that of an ornamental button. Such an existence may be useful for a specific purpose, but it is totally useless in and of itself.

In Aichinger's Horspiel, the industry cited as an example harboring this dehumanizing force is a seemingly ordinary button factory. The psychological process of dehumanization is presented in the parable as a physical metamorphosis that strikes even the uninhibited imagination as weird.

The story begins with a conversation between the characters Ann and John. Ann is trying to describe a strange whirring sound which she hears periodically behind a wall at the button factory where she has recently been employed. The following scene, which actually takes place in the factory, is introduced by this very same whirring sound, muffled somewhat, as if coming from another room. Ann comments upon the sound, but Rosie, one of the other workers, expresses her unconcern about the matter: "Das hoere ich gar nicht mehr. Und wenn du einige Zeit hier
Ann, however, senses a strangeness about the sound and about the whole atmosphere surrounding the factory that makes her apprehensive. "Und wenn ich zehn Jahre hier wäre," she confesses, "ich würden immer neu erschrecken." The other women are not concerned with the sound; they are not interested in where it comes from nor why it exists. They surmise it derives from the machinery which produces the buttons, but, since the process is a secret one in order to insure uniqueness, they never dare to raise any question about it lest they lose their jobs. They are quite content to perform their duties of counting and sorting the buttons. Ann, though, is not satisfied to remain indifferently ignorant. She desires to know where all the buttons come from and how they are made. Speaking outside the factory, John, Ann's suitor, seeks some explanation on the matter from her:

John: Und woraus werden sie gemacht, Ann?
Ann: Aus Zwirn und Schildpatt und Elfenbein.
John: Ich meine die in eurer Abteilung.
Ann: Wenn ich das wüsste!
John: Und wenn du sie anührst, wenn du sie zwischen den Fingern hältst, tausendmal jeden Tag?
Ann: Dann weiß ich auch nur, woraus sie nicht sind, John.
John: Aber es muss doch etwas geben, mit dem du sie vergleichen kannst. Wie aus Holz oder Glas—
John: Wenn es kein Unsinn waere?
Ann: Wir müssen froh sein—

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12 Hoerspiele (Frankfurt am Main und Hamburg: Fischer Bucherei, 1961), p. 44.
Ann: Ach Gott, John!
John: Du bist anders heute. Auch dein Gesicht.
Ann: Es ist nur dunkler geworden. Das wenige Licht von vorhin ist auch verschwunden.
John: Wir wollen gehen. Aber bring morgen einen Knopf mit, Ann, bring einen mit!

The listener, by this time, suspects something uncanny is involved with the production for the buttons—particularly in the department where Ann works. It takes the next scene within the factory to enlighten him fully. Ann observes a change in Jean's appearance and remarks upon this in the following exchange:

Jean: Kannst du mir den Spiegel herüberreichen, Ann?
Rosie: Hübsch bist du, Jean.
Jean: Lass mich in Frieden, Rosie.
Rosie: Ich meine es ernst: Findest du nicht auch, Ann, dass Jean heute ihren hübschen Tag hat?
Ann: Ich finde, dass Jean verändert aussieht.
Jean: Das ist nicht besonders nett von dir, Ann. Das hiesse, dass ich sonst--
Jean: Glatt?
Ann: Dir steht kein Haar zu Berge!
Jean: Weshalb sollte mir denn ein Haar zu Berge stehen?
Ann: Ich meine: dir fliegt nichts im Wind.
Jean: Wie soll etwas im Wind fliegen, wo kein Wind ist?
Rosie: Ann brauchte es fertig. Der floegen auch noch im luftleeren Raum die Haare.
Ann: (ängstlich): Im luftleeren Raum, jetzt weiss ich's, Jean. So siehst du aus.
Rosie: Jean, du bist ganz in Ordnung.

Later, as quitting time arrives and the women begin to leave for home, Jean, herself, notices that she feels somewhat strange:

Jean: Ich fuehle mich muede, Rosie. Und ich haette nichts

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13 Ibid., p. 46.
14 Ibid., pp. 47-48.
dagegen, wenn meine Augen nicht immer kleiner davon würden.

Rosie: Solange du noch heraussiehst—

Jean: Bis Bill kommt, sehe ich nicht mehr heraus.

Rosie: Wenn Bill kommt, gehen dir die Augen auf.

Jean: Ich wollte, er kaeme schon. Dann duerften sie mir ruhig zufallen.

Rosie: Ich gehe jetzt auch Jean.

Jean: Rosie!

Rosie: Wolltest du noch etwas?

Jean: Alles wird kleiner, wenn man so muede ist.

Rosie: Schlaf ruhig, bis Bill kommt.

Jean: Mir scheint, dass auch mein Mund kleiner wird, Mund und Augen—

Rosie: Schlaf ruhig, es ist kein Mensch im Haus.

(Sie oeffnet die Tuer)


Rosie: Ich lasse die Tuer auf, Jean.

(Ihre Schritte, die sich entfernen)

Jean: --so gross wie die Tuer, wie die offene Tuer, hoerst du mich, Rosie? Ich kann die Augen nicht mehr schliessen. Als bleiben sie immer so, klein und halboffen, als haette ich zwei Luecken im Kopf, sonst nichts.15

With some imagination, one realizes that Jean is describing herself as if she had the physical appearance of a button. After everyone but Jean has left, Bill, one of the two executives in the factory, enters to confirm the transformation:

Jean: Ich fuehle mich sonderbar heute.

Bill: Krank?

Jean: Nicht krank, nur etwas muede. Ich fuehle mich sonderbar wohl, Bill. Ganz sonderbar wohl, so glatt und rund.

Bill: (vergnuegt): Das ist aber gut, Jean. Das ist gut, wenn du dich so fuehlst!

Jean: Es ist ganz beruhigend.

Bill: Und was wollen wir tun?

Jean: Alles, was du willst.

Bill: Die Galerien?

Jean: Niets, wo ich schauen muss.

Bill: Oder etwas Musik?

15 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
Jean: Nichts, was ich hören muss.
Bill: Dann bleibt nur eines, Jean.
Jean: Das wäre möglicher.
Bill: Dann bist du wohl so weit?
Jean: Dann bin ich so weit.
Bill: Dann haetten wir dich, Jean.
Jean: Noch kleiner als ich dachte.
(Das Geräusch hinter der Wand, sehr stark)

Jean is not the only one to be transformed in this manner. Rosie, another longtime worker, is being subtilely prepared by Jack, the other of the two executives, for the same fate. In one scene, Jack is accompanying Rosie home. She expresses her preference for the factory and for Jack over her own home:

Rosie: Jetzt könnte man endlich mit mir unter die Leute gehen. Wirklich, dass du nicht längst schon mitgekommen bist, Jack!
Jack (ungeduldig): Ihr wohnt sehr weit draussen.
Jack: Ja?
Jack: Ja, weshalb eigentlich?

Eventually Rosie confesses disdain for the drab existence of her home life and expresses her desire to return to the factory:

Rosie: Hier muss ich alle Kraft zusammennehmen, damit ich nicht zuruecklaufe, zu dir, Jack--
Jack: Ja?
Jack: Weshalb gehen wir dann weiter?
Rosie: Ja, weshalb gehen wir weiter?
Jack: Und weshalb sollst du alle Kraft zusammennehmen, wenn es auch einfacher geht?

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16 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
17 Ibid., p. 50.
Rosie: Ich weiss im voraus, was meine Mutter sagen wird, und unser Vorgarten sieht genauso aus wie alle andern. Wir haben auch Strabblumen an den Fenstern.

Jack: Ich kanns mir vorstellen.

Rosie: Und unsere Vorhaenge haengen genau so weiss und lahm herunter wie ueberall. Es ist kein Unterschied.

Jack: Ich weiss.

Rosie: Wir wollen umkehren, Jack.

Rosie seems now to be almost to the same point of submission as Jean had been earlier.

By this time, it is assumed that Jean has taken ill since she has not shown up for work. This places more work on fewer people making it necessary for everyone to work longer hours and on Sunday. In addition, a new button is to be produced, the event of which calls for a celebration. For those such as Rosie, these opportunities for more activity in the factory are welcomed.

During the celebration of the new button, it is learned that Jean will not be returning to work anymore. In her honor, the button is named Jean. Ann, however, has not given up hope of rescuing Jean. She knows now that somehow the disappearance of the person, Jean, is definitely connected with the appearance of the new button called Jean. Somehow, Ann feels if she could only assemble all the individual buttons of this new kind into one pile, Jean herself would reappear. It is too late for this, though, as Bill already has an order from a local distributor for the new buttons and he must deliver them at once. Ann, becoming more desperate in her efforts to save Jean, follows Bill to the

18 Ibid., p. 51.
local dealer and tries to retain the whole supply. She is again too late: the buttons have been further distributed to a small store and are already being sold to the public.

By now, Bill knows what Ann has been attempting. He tries to convince her in subtle terms to give up the strange notion she has about the buttons. He is unsuccessful, however, and, realizing he is losing her, he turns to John and offers him an attractive position at the factory in hopes of reaching Ann indirectly through the person she loves. Thus, if John can be persuaded to work for the factory, Ann might become less troublesome and rebellious. Then too, John is out of work and certainly needs the job. This is Bill's plan; but again he fails because John refuses the position. "Ich habe Ann lieber an meinem Arm als in der Tasche,"19 is his final argument, referring, of course, to the possibility that Ann may be turned into a new issue of buttons as was the case with Jean.

It would be too simple to conclude with the cliche "Love conquers all" in interpreting the events which saved Ann from the fate that overcame the others. Yet, love certainly was a deciding factor. In more general terms, Ann's salvation was a result of her unwillingness to sacrifice her individuality and her personal uniqueness within the confines of a certain social system: namely, the button factory. She would not allow the factory to become her sole reason for being. She would not succumb to the

19 Ibid., p. 79.
social pressures which could have reduced her to an inanimate existence. The love Ann shared with John gave her a sense of individual worth and personal dignity—qualities which prevented her surrender to the drab conformity of life that can overcome one. Even Rosie realized that her life outside the button factory was monotonous when she complained to Jack about the boring sameness of the houses in her neighborhood. The difference in her case was that she merely traded one type of conformity, which she did not like, for another type which, worthless as it was, she did like. Thus, at least, she made a choice. In the case of Jean, the first of the girls to undergo transformation, she did not even realize that her type of existence was one which could dehumanize a person. She had much too weak a sense of individual character to make her even conscious of what was happening to her. By contrast, Ann, who had John's sincere love to support her sense of self-respect and individuality, was fully cognizant of the consequences of such social conformity. She had the courage to be suspicious where the others were content to be secure and unquestioning. She was anxious about the strange whirring behind the wall from the very first day of employment. She wondered about the noise and also about where the buttons were coming from in the first place. At one point, Bill, chiding her for being so suspicious all the time, says to her: "Sie denken immer, Ann! Das ist schlimm mit Ihnen. Gibt es denn keinen, der bereit wäre, es Ihnen abzugewöhnen?" To which she replies in a forthright, almost brazen manner: "Ich bin froh, dass ich's mir
The other women in the factory do not presume to wonder; they do not dare to think, lest they find themselves out of work. They choose security over freedom, conformity over individuality, and, eventually, sterility over creative vitality.

The problem of conformity is an extensive one, and is becoming continually worse. As John expresses it toward the end of the drama: "...es gibt zu viele Knoepfe auf der Welt. Und eines Tages wird es mehr Knoepfe geben als Hoecke, um sie daranzunehmen." Thus, if present social conditioning persists, a time will come when there will be too many conformists and not enough individualists to set the standards with which others are to conform! This will inevitably produce a senseless mass conformity, the consequences of which would be no less dangerous than utter chaos but in the opposite direction: namely, apathy.

Turning briefly to the techniques Aichinger employs in this particular Hoerspiel, it is noticeable that the author actually uses only a few common sound effects such as footsteps, sounds of rain, a door, a window, a clock, etc. There are also differences in sounds emanating from indoors as opposed to those sounds originating outdoors. This helps the listener realize where a dialogue takes place, i. e., either inside the factory or outside on the street. The difference is indicated in the script

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20 Ibid., p. 54
21 Ibid., p. 79
by the words im Freien or Raum in der Fabrik, and sometimes simply auf der Strasse. Of course, the most important sound effect is that of the whirring machine which, presumably, has very much to do with the strange process producing the buttons. At first, Ann attempts to describe the sound and her feelings about its strangeness. Then, in the next moment, the scene of the action shifts to the factory with that very sound being heard. The author has very simply prepared her listeners psychologically to wonder about the sound from the outset. Later, it becomes evident that the sound comes from some sort of diabolical machine which can transform human beings into buttons. This idea is reinforced in two instances. First there is the dialogue between Jean and Bill where Jean is ready for the process to be applied:

Bill: Dann bist du wohl so weit?
Jean: Dann bin ich so weit.

Bill: Dann haetten wir dich, Jean.
Jean: Noch kleiner als ich dachte.

(Das Geraeusch hinter der Wand, sehr stark)\textsuperscript{22}

In the second instance, Rosie is speaking to Jack about the ludicrous theory Ann has just admitted to her in regard to the production of the buttons and the strange disappearance of Jean. Rosie, however, thinks Ann has been affected by the heat in the factory:

Rosie: ...Weisst du, was ich denke: die Hitze hier ist ihr zuviel geworden.
Jack: Sicher.
Rosie: Und was denkst du?
Jack: Ich denke: Wie gut, dass sie dir nicht zuviel geworden ist, die Hitze, Rosie!

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 50.
Rosie: Mir wird sie nie zuviel.
Jack (zaertlich): Ja, das ist gut.

(Das Geräusch hinter der Wand)23

The immediate occurrence of the sound behind the wall in each case dramatically reinforces acceptance of Ann's theory. Also, the listener realizes that Rosie, too, although not quite yet ready, is certain to be the next victim.

One final technique needs to be mentioned. It is an effective technique and one that is used in films as well as in the Hoerspiel. It is basically a carry-over or continuation of a conversation from one scene into another. For example, one person may ask another person a question, whereupon the scene suddenly shifts before the answer to the question is given. The characters involved in the conversation may or may not be the same in the different scenes. What is important is the thread of conversation which continues uninterrupted in spite of the shift in scene. The principle has also been used for excellent dramatic effect on film. An example is the British-made film, Girl With The Green Eyes. During the course of a single dialogue between a man and a woman, the scene shifts time and time again from the beach to a nightclub to an apartment to a restaurant, etc.; but there is no break in the conversation, no loss in continuity of thought. Aichinger applies this same technique, though less extensively, in Knoepfe. In the following example, the scene begins first of all in the factory:

Jean: Wenn er einen verkauft, lebt er lange davon. Bill sagt, allein die Provision--

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23 Ibid., p. 71.
During the above conversation, which concerns the manufacture of the buttons, the scene shifts from the factory out into the street. In addition, the person Ann speaks to is no longer Jean, but rather John; and yet, the thread of the conversation is a continuous one.

In the British film cited above, the purpose of the technique was to give the illusion of an extensive period of time in which the man and woman were becoming acquainted. Somewhat the same illusion is intended by Aichinger. Although the time period involved in shifting from the scene in the factory to the scene on the street is actually instantaneous, the very fact that there is a shift in scene leads the listener to assume that the conversation is being repeated or extended after a certain lapse of time has occurred.

Related to this same technique is the "flash-back" which is also familiar and quite popular in the art of film-making. In this case a person is first describing an incident which took place at an earlier time; then, in the middle of the description, the scene shifts and the action described is seen or (as in the case of a Höerspiel) heard as if it were taking place then and there. One

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24 Ibid., p. 46.
purpose served by this technique is to avoid lengthy description in preference to dialogue and action, which are more appropriate to drama in opposition to narrative works.

There are several instances of the "flash-back" in Aichinger's Hoerspiel. The following will suffice as one example:

John: Und dann?

(Im Laden)

Ann: Guten Abend.
Verkäufer: Abend Fraulein.
Ann: Ich komme wegen der Knoepfe....
Verkäufer: Es tut mir leid, Fraulein, aber selbst, wenn ich es wollte, könnte ichs nicht mehr. Auf Jean lagen schon so viele Bestellungen hier, dass wir sie gleich weitergegeben haben, gerade, bevor Sie kamen—
Ann: Weitergegeben?
Verkäufer: Ja. An einen kleinen Laden.

(Raum wie vorher)

John: An welchen Laden, Ann?
Ann: Er nannte ihm mir. Es war irgendwo weit draussen... 25

It can be seen that the process is merely reversed in order to return to the present time situation; i.e., the action discontinues and the description is again carried on. This can be accomplished simply by means of the dialogue; but, as in the example above, a change in acoustics helps the listener make the necessary mental shift in time as well as place.

These final Hoerspiele are only two examples of the attention so many writers are giving to the question of dehumanization in

25 Ibid., p. 72.
modern society. One could cite other works, such as Ingeborg Bachmann's "Die Zikaden", or even Kafka's "Die Verwandlung", which, although no Hoerspiel originally, would certainly lend itself well to the radio medium. In other words, Hoerspiel writers are very much involved with the vital questions of man's philosophical, sociological, and existential mode of living. Thus, the Hoerspiel has literary significance which offers innumerable, relevant, and soul-searching ideas to anyone who would listen.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Although a definition of the term Hoerspiel was offered in the introductory chapter, such a definition is insufficient for a thorough understanding of the art form. It is not possible to abstract a meaningful definition of Hoerspiel without experiencing the art form for oneself. The same limitation exists when one tries to describe a picture to a person who has never seen the picture in question, or when one attempts to describe a song with words to someone who has never heard the melody. Such abstract descriptions are helpful guides, but they acquire real meaning only after one has previous, personal experience of the art form in question to which one can relate. A description of a picture is never the same as seeing it, and a verbal interpretation and description of a symphony can never be the same as hearing it.

This is also true in the case of the Hoerspiel. There is, however, one advantage: the Hoerspiel, unlike the symphony or a painting, consists of words—words which can also be written and read as well as heard. Thus, the plays herein described can be appreciated abstractly for the ideas expressed through words; and the dramatic techniques and the use of sound effects can even be appreciated with the help of some imagination. Yet, still lacking is the complete, auditory experience of the drama as originally created by the author. To use another analogy, it is much the same as reading a poem which was originally intended to be heard.
A second problem for the American student who becomes interested in the Hoerspiel is his lack of familiarity with the genre itself. He has had no long and direct experience of this particular art form. Given the development of American radio, which from the beginning has been a commercial venture dependent on advertising revenues, it is not surprising that serious radio drama has failed to flourish in this country. Light radio entertainment undoubtedly sells the sponsor's product more successfully than do plays concerning identity and reality. The prevalence and importance of the Hoerspiel in Germany is reflected both in a sizeable body of critical work dealing with it and a rather elaborate terminology referring to it, e.g., Hoerwerk, Klangbild, Hoerbild, Geräuschsymphonie, and of course, Hoerspiel. The lack of an equivalent terminology in English reflects the relative unimportance most persons in the United States place upon radio drama as an art form. The same conclusion, however, is more obviously arrived at by merely listening to any radio station in the United States. There simply are no broadcasts of radio plays which can be considered serious dramatic literature in the tradition of the Hoerspiel.

Thus, where there is a vital, important, and rich tradition of an art form, there is a correspondingly rich, full, and varied terminology that refers to it. The exact opposite is true where the art form has a poor tradition, is dying out, or is already dead, as is the situation in the United States. American radio once did have an important, growing tradition of drama. The "Lux Radio Theater" broadcasts heard during the 1940's and early 1950's
need only be mentioned as a case in point. Here again, though, the situation involves a discussion of the commercial aspect of American radio which cannot be treated here. More often than not, the average person looks back not on the type of drama heard on "Lux Radio Theater", but rather remembers American radio drama with such examples as "Henry Aldrich" and "Life with Luigi". Admittedly, these are dramas under the most liberal use of the term, but they cannot compare with Hoerspiele as herein defined.

In spite of such handicaps to the student of radio drama, the examples of Hoerspiele which have been described and discussed nonetheless speak well for themselves as an introduction to this unique literary art form, even though the introduction be incomplete without that essential familiarity which can only come from hearing the dramas performed. The examples offered, it will be remembered, were divided into three groups illustrating styles and themes of some contemporary Hoerspiel dramatists. First of all, the Zeitgeschichtliche themes dominated many Hoerspiele written soon after the end of World War II. It was as though the dramatist were asking his listener to stop a moment and to re-evaluate the recent past events leading up to one of the most devastating catastrophes of all time. As the wounds healed and the horrors were forgotten, the Hoerspiel dramatist turned to another question of evaluation which seemed to confront a nation renewing and rebuilding itself: the question of self-identity and of ultimate reality so deeply probed by such authors as Eich and Duerrenmatt. And, thirdly, with the development of nuclear weapons during
the war and the subsequent cold war, and with the ever-accelerating technological advances of a new age, the question of the effects of these on the individual, human personality were explored by such authors as Weyrauch and Aichinger who condemn the dehumanizing effects of highly industrialized, technological societies.

These three themes, and the questions the Hoerspiel dramatist raises through them, parallel three basic concerns of the writer in general: a political concern, a social concern, and a personal concern. The political concern is a direct result of World War II. Writers have emphasized a re-evaluation of the war, Germany's actions during it, her responsibility for it, and her sense of guilt from it (Zeitgeschichtliche Hoerspiele). After the pain of the war somewhat subsided, the Hoerspiel dramatist turned to the social concern for interrelationships and an emphasis on the question of ultimate reality and the search for individual identity within the social group (Reality-Identity Hoerspiele). The search for identity, in turn, centered upon the individual person and his need for freedom and the fullest possible realization of his potential (Hoerspiele portraying dehumanization). Thus, the Hoerspiel dramatist takes his place among other writers who are concerned over the degeneration of integrity and morality within society; who are disturbed by the phenomenon of alienation and separation from self; and who are troubled by the depersonalization and dehumanization of the individual. The Hoerspiel writer, recognizing these forms of contemporary malaise, seeks to warn each listener of the debilitating apathy and despair which is eroding the sense of excitement and
involvement or "Engagement" that an individual can experience in life.

Speaking out so clearly and relevantly to the individual today, Hoerspiel dramatists reflect a widening concern for the rights of individuals under any form of government, within any structured, established social system. Through the Hoerspiel dramatist's peculiar form of expression, he has thus achieved the monumental task of reaching out to "engage" individual persons en masse, without thereby sacrificing the human, personal identity of the individual as is so often the result in mass communication.

Referring precisely to this intimate, personal characteristic of the Hoerspiel, Arthur Pfeifer, an early theoretician of the art form has written: "Hier und nur hier, ...ist das wirklich Gespräch der Menschenseele mit sich selbst moeglich."¹ The Hoerspiel, then, is one more experience which can further man's attempts to become ever more humane and to commune with his own soul.

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