

THE BROTHERS MANN
AND
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

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BY
JULIA SABINA RITTER, B.A.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of
my father Rudolf Oscar Hugo Ritter.

Gone but never forgotten.

DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas.

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AUTHOR: Julia Sabina Ritter, B.A. (McMaster University)

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ABSTRACT

In the years preceding the First World War, Thomas and Heinrich Mann had each formulated his own distinct intellectual and social world views.

Thomas had been greatly influenced by three very creative spiritual mentors of the nineteenth century: Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche. In his writing, Thomas emphasized the development of the individual and he was preoccupied by the effects of disease and decadence.

Heinrich, on the other hand, strongly influenced by French writers, such as Emile Zola and Paul Bourget, stressed social aspects and the role of the individual by criticizing the prevailing conditions. He had also developed a theory of "literary politics" which called for the 'literary engagement' in the political life of the nation.

The outbreak of the First World War saw the brothers embroiled in a major ideological conflict which led to an eventual break in their relationship.

Thomas along with many intellectuals became swept up in the prevalent war hysteria and wrote several articles extolling the virtues and benefits of war.

Heinrich was one of a small number of intellectuals who found this war enthusiasm totally offensive and wrote his

famous Zola essay criticizing those who enthusiastically supported the war. His essay became the catalyst for the ideological conflict which broke out with his brother, who for his part felt personally attacked by it.

As a result, Thomas wrote his voluminous Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man. In them, as well as extolling the virtues and superiority of German 'Kultur', he criticized his brother for supporting Germany's enemies.

The main purpose of this thesis will be to examine the Mann brothers' ideological and ultimately fraternal conflict as seen against the background of the historical, political, social and cultural realities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis will be to compare and contrast the political and intellectual development of two great twentieth century German literary figures: Thomas and Heinrich Mann. The two brothers seemed to embody two aspects of German intellectual life. The respective development of their progress in political thinking brought them for a time into a diametrically opposed position. Each of them was in spirit a very humane individual. Their positions mirrored the political dichotomy of the Western world. Each wanted the realization of a state that would allow for the greatest good for the greatest number, but each was convinced at least for the period we are studying here that his own solution was the most efficacious for the German nation. Each was preeminently an intellectual, which means that neither ever worked out for himself any systematical program for political or social action, which might have proved effective in bringing about beneficial social change. They were products of an era and educational system which assigned roles in society according to one's social class. They had never been 'schooled' to political action. The class to which they belonged, "das Großbürgertum", saw its function as being the accumulation of wealth and an acceptance of political power

and responsibility resting with an aristocratic noble class. The class from which they came had in a sense been unable or unwilling to take advantage of the Revolution of 1848 and was by and large content that the status quo was in their own best interest.

The direction each ultimately took was representative for a large bloc of intellectuals, all of whom shared the same aspirations and background, all of whom saw nothing odd in the fact that all argumentation and restructuring took place in the world of the mind rather than in the public arena. The polarization of the brothers' political and intellectual differences came to the fore during the First World War. It was then that the celebrated ideological conflict between those differences surfaced. Heinrich's Zola essay (1915) became the catalyst for this quarrel and Thomas' Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man (1918) its climax. What becomes clear from their quarrel was that the two men embodied the split that existed in the 'German soul', hypothesized by so many German authors, the division between the 'Classical' rational agentic West (Heinrich) and the 'Romantic' irrational quietistic East (Thomas). By the time their conflict had run its course, each had become aware of his own one-sidedness: Thomas in the end moved over to Heinrich's camp; Heinrich for his part, disillusioned with the everyday reality of a democratic/republican form of

government pressed on to an even further journey toward the left.

The main focus of this thesis is the fraternal conflict. The historical background will be examined to help explain and explicate the sequence and progress of the brothers' opposing political and social views. Most relevant for our purposes is the period just prior to and the six years following the First World War.

One revealing aspect of their political and intellectual development is the early period of their literary careers. Though from 1895-1896, among their other interests, both brothers became involved with the radical right wing magazine Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert, something the brothers did not want to be reminded of in later years, because by the turn of the century, each had become firmly committed to a literary career. Throughout these years, however, there was in their writings ample evidence of contradictory views.

Thomas had become interested in the writings of Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche. He was always emphasizing the role of the individual; he was preoccupied with effects of disease and decadence.

Heinrich, on the other hand, had developed a theory; of 'literary politics' which called for the intellectual's 'literary engagement' in the political life of the nation; he

stressed social aspects in his writing by criticizing the prevailing conditions; he was strongly influenced by French writers, such as Emile Zola, Paul Bourget and Guy de Maupassant, and by French culture.

We will attempt to show how certain of their works are either harbingers or outgrowths of their political and social convictions: it would be impossible within the scope of his M. A. thesis to cover all the nuances of every work (Joseph und seine Brüder by Thomas and Der Kopf by Heinrich, for example).

The works dealt with will be: Buddenbrooks (1901), Royal Highness (1909), Frederick and the Grand Coalition: an Abstract for the Day and the Hour (1914), Thoughts in Wartime (1914), The German Republic (1922), and The Magic Mountain (1924) by Thomas Mann; Professor Unrat (1905), Der Untertan (1918), The Meaning and Idea of Revolution (1918), and Empire and Republic (1919) by Heinrich Mann.

The following satirical anecdote written by Franz Blei in 1922, offers an interesting insight into the brothers' differences and similarities.

Der Thomasmann und der Heinrichmann gehören zu einer Familie mittelgroßer Holzböcke. Sie sind von verschiedener Farbe bei sonstiger Gleichheit der Lebensweise und Natur. Man findet sie immer auf demselben Baum lebend, aber auf dessen gegengesetzten Seiten, da sich die beiden Holzkäfer durchaus nicht leiden können. Bohrt der Thomasmann unten an einem Baum, so sitzt auf dem gleichen der Heinrichmann oben. Findet der eine die bebohrte Linde saftig, so findet sie der andere morsch, und

umgekehrt. (...) Was die Farbe anlangt, so zeigt der Thomasmann schwarz-weiß-gestreifte Flügeldecken, während die des Heinrichmanns blauweißrot mit manchmal auftauchenden, doch bei menschlicher Annäherung rasch wieder verschwindenden roten Tupfen sind. Diese roten kleinen Tupfen lassen sich übrigens durch leichtes Reiben entfernen. ¹

¹Franz Blei, Großes Bestiarium der Modernen Literatur, (n.p., 1922) p. 47, as cited by André Banuls, Thomas Mann und sein Bruder Heinrich, (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH., 1968), p. 7.

PART ONE

ANTECEDENTS TO THE FRATERNAL CONFLICT

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

Before the literary careers of Heinrich and Thomas Mann can be examined, it might be helpful to take into consideration the times in which they lived - one of the most turbulent periods in German history: the political unification of Germany, the industrialization of the middle class², two world wars, and the establishment of two new classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The social, economic, political and cultural changes to be discussed below had a tremendous effect upon the Mann brothers and their writing reflects the impact. It may prove revealing to examine at some length these changes in Germany, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, since they are

²The traditional German middle class, that is, the mercantile class was faced with a crisis as the result of the advent of industrialization in the late nineteenth century. Their previously secure social status was being undermined by the rise of the new bourgeoisie, or entrepreneurial middle class and the rise of the working class.

the backdrop against which the eventual conflict of the brothers takes shape.

POLITICAL ASPECTS:

The Franco-Prussian War 1870-1871 was the last dramatic act undertaken by Bismarck towards his goal of unification of the North German Confederation with the German southern states. Bismarck believed that war with France would bring the southern German states into the North German Confederation. Napoleon III hoped he could regain his reputation and fortunes from this war. Bismarck was able after France's defeat to form a united Germany and on January 18, 1871 the establishment of the Second German Empire was proclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors of the Palace at Versailles. France was humiliated and seeds of hatred sown between France and Germany. The event at Versailles proved to be a clear demonstration of German military pomp and supremacy, foreshadowing a new wave in German politics. In 1871, a peace treaty was signed at Frankfurt under the conditions of which France had to pay an indemnity of five billion francs; until the amount was paid in full, France had to endure a German occupation in Paris. Even more fateful was the enforced cession of the province of Alsace and part of French Lorraine to Germany.³ Prussia and Bismarck would

³Marshall Dill, Jr., Germany: A Modern History, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1970), p. 145.

dominate this newly formed German Empire from its inception in 1871 until the latter's dismissal in 1890.

"The foundation of the German Reich was preceded by nothing but - as people said at the time - Bismarck's 'great successes', the war against Austria, the annexations, the North German Confederation, the military alliances with the southern states, the 'customs parliament' set up by blackmail, and finally the 'treaties of alliance' concluded in the flush of victory in 1870."⁴

Until Germany's unification Bismarck had pursued a policy of armed aggression; after 1871, he pursued a policy of alliances in support of peace. In 1888, Bismarck restored the Three Emperors' League, an alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. He managed through a subsequent system of alliances to confirm his policies as viable and beneficial towards securing his goal of maintaining peace by increasing France's isolation. Not until the mid-eighties was this relative quiet disturbed by periodic unrest in the Balkans.⁵ Bismarck, however temporarily, had secured peace successfully.

The year 1888 marked a turning point not only for Bismarck in particular but for Germany in general. Bismarck

⁴Golo Mann, trans. Marian Jackson, The History of Germany since 1789, (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1968), p. 197.

⁵Dill, Germany, p. 183-184.

had been able to maintain absolute political power as long as William I lived, but when that monarch died in 1888 and his son and successor, Frederick III lived to reign as emperor only ninety-nine days, Frederick's son William II ascended the throne to begin a thirty year reign. Bismarck thought he could come to terms with the new monarch. William II had hated his parents and he had impatiently waited for his father's death. Unlike his father whose views had been liberal and pro-British, his traditions were the old Prussian conservatism. Since he had worshipped his grandfather, he at first revered Bismarck as a trusted and faithful advisor.⁶

Their first major conflict came in 1890 over the issue of the renewal of the anti-socialist law and reflected their conflicting views on social democracy. Bismarck wished to renew the law, which branded all socialist institutions, publications and meetings as illegal. Bismarck was concerned about the implications of the increasing labour violence and felt this law would put an end to socialist activity.⁷

⁶Mann, Germany since 1789, p. 246.

⁷The fusion of the two socialist groups of Marx and Lassalle at the Gotha Conference in 1875 resulted in the formation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Bismarck believed that the development of this organized working class movement represented a grave peril in light of the party's growing strength in the cities and industrial areas. In 1878, two attempts were made on William I's life and Bismarck used these incidents as a pretext in stopping further growth of the socialist movement. Consequently, in the same year, Bismarck passed the Anti-Socialist Law which prohibited all socialist meetings and publications; the law remained in effect until 1890.

However, William II intended to give labourers concessions and even allow the formation of an International Labour Conference in Berlin. These solutions put William II in a positive light as the defender of the oppressed. No compromise proved possible and in 1890, Bismarck was dismissed and the era of the 'blood and iron' Chancellor came to an end. He had been partially responsible for his own demise. The Iron Chancellor had always treated his and Germany's international opponents much better than his domestic ones. In dealing with his domestic opponents, he had lacked moderation and a sense of proportion. Because he had feared he would be overthrown, he had been unwilling to train an able successor and was succeeded by a series of inept Imperial Chancellors. His system of alliances later proved to very rigid and dangerous when under the direction of less able-minded statesmen. His one great achievement remained the system of alliances, which preserved peace in Europe for more than a generation.

Germany was now embarked upon a new stage in her development. It soon became apparent that the reign of William II was Bismarck's Germany without Bismarck. The course of both domestic and foreign affairs in the 1890s showed signs of weakness since various pressure groups soon

began to exert their influences on the Emperor, who could not cope with the forces surrounding him.⁸

ECONOMIC ASPECTS:

The last thirty years of the nineteenth century witnessed a period of great transformation, not only in political life but in the economic and social spheres as well. The relatively peaceful decades prior to the First World War saw a great internal expansion in Germany, which experienced explosive developments in every walk of life: the population increased dramatically, the structure of society changed, big cities sprang up, agriculture declined and, as industrialization expanded, the nation became increasingly dependent upon foreign trade.⁹ A constant increase in Germany's population formed the human underpinning for the rise in industrialization. The French indemnity of five billion francs resulted in a substantial boost to the German economy in the 1870s. The French money was used in part to pay for building projects and military expansion. The rest was given to the individual states for local building programmes, railway construction, repayment of war loans and payments of pensions to widows, orphans and invalids. The provinces of Alsace and Lorraine with their well developed

⁸Dill, Germany, p. 195.

⁹Mann, Germany since 1789, p. 199.

textile industry and rich deposits of minette ore and potash also significantly contributed to German economic growth.¹⁰

Better living conditions developed, primarily due to improved hygiene, medical care and housing; the death rate of infants decreased and the life expectancy of the individual increased accordingly. The greatest rise in population was especially noticeable in the cities and industrial areas: 'Der Sog der Großstadt'. In one generation, Germany's population almost doubled.

Although Germany had become highly industrialized by the turn of the century, agriculture nevertheless continued to play a major role. Production increased with the introduction of more scientific methods of cultivation and chemical fertilizers. Germany was undergoing the transition from a predominantly agricultural economy to a streamlined industrial state. While it took England over a century to complete its transition, Germany was to experience hers in about thirty years, the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Rapid progress was made after 1850 in the transportation, mining, and chemical industries; the growth of banks, stock companies, and credit institutions fostered the expansion of industrialization. By the end of the century, Germany had taken the lead in large-scale corporate

¹⁰Gordon A. Craig, Germany, 1866-1945, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 79-80.

enterprise and mass production in Europe. The Germans had also become especially adept in the application of scientific research to technology.¹¹

SOCIAL ASPECTS:

Not surprisingly, this rapid industrial growth placed a tremendous strain upon the old established social order. One of the major effects of industrialization was the emergence and politicization of two new social classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie were basically those members of society who had emerged as industrial entrepreneurs. This new middle class had undermined the old traditional middle class of the German 'Bürger', who had dominated business life in Germany prior to the advent of industrialization. A traditionalist mentality, high esteem for work and discipline, a strong sense of moderation and propriety, a great emphasis on respectability and personal character, and an acceptance of authority, status and 'sense of place' were the hallmarks of the German 'Bürgertum'. The 'Bürger' tended to be conservative and suspicious of change or experimentation; they were marked by their old fashioned, perhaps somewhat formal bearing; politically, they were firm

¹¹Robert Anchor, Germany Confronts Modernization: German Culture and Society, 1790-1890, (Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1972), p. 108-109.

believers in civic-mindedness, local self-determination and responsible involvement in politics. Their presence was predominant in traditional businesses such as small-scale trading and manufacturing. This class, the original German 'Bürgertum', was, however, in decline by late nineteenth-century in Germany.¹²

In contrast to them, the new industrial bourgeoisie tended to display characteristics markedly opposed to those of the old German 'Bürger'. Generally, these new arrivals can be described as being politically progressive in their thinking. They incorporated all the new trends of an industrialized country, such as, entrepreneurial capitalism, financing and "cartelization of shipping and commerce."¹³ Differences between these two supposedly allied or at least equal social classes can be described in the following manner: members of the traditional mercantile class emphasized austerity and hard work; they were proud of their civic virtue and sense of community; and they considered themselves cultured, composed and responsible. The members of the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, on the other hand, stressed conspicuous consumption and display; they seemed

¹²David Gross, The Writer and Society: Heinrich Mann and Literary Politics in Germany, 1890-1940, (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980), p. 8.

¹³Ibid., p. 9.

indifferent to local politics and were unconcerned that their economic acquisitiveness was uprooting the social order; they appeared superficial, pretentious and unconscionably greedy.¹⁴

The working class emerged at the same time as the new bourgeoisie a product of the same 'revolution'. This new class of workers did not, however, share in the new wealth enjoyed for the most part by the entrepreneurs and industrialists. Instead, the workers saw themselves exploited and unjustly treated. Although Bismarck in the 1880s had initiated a system of social insurance, providing the workers with accident or sickness coverage as well as disability and old age pensions; but nothing had been provided for the improvement of working conditions. Bismarck had done nothing for healthy workers; there was no limit placed on the hours of work, no provision for a minimum wage nor the enforcement of factory inspections. He wanted insurance but did not want state intervention in the industrial process itself.¹⁵ The working class consequently increased its support for the Social Democratic Party, which tended to sympathize with the workers' lot. Due to the various splinter groups within this party, however, they

¹⁴Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁵Mann, Germany since 1789, p. 226.

would have little effect on practical politics until the advent of World War One.

In general, the social development in Germany in the late nineteenth century took place in a climate of class tension. Positivism, materialism, and an ensuing disillusioned pessimism, became increasingly prevalent in German thought; nationalism, imperialism, and the worship of power increasingly evident in political life.¹⁶

Together with Germany's rapid economic expansion in the late nineteenth century, there arose a spirit of aggressive nationalism. This nationalistic expansionist fervor found its roots in Prussia's history and its development in Germany's desire for further expansion. Other great European powers viewed this as a threat. Germany ultimately developed an ideology, which claimed German superiority over other Western nations. German theoreticians found a justification in the concept of German 'Kultur'. The superiority of German culture, (felt by Schiller and Fichte to be a compensation for political ineptitude), became a powerful slogan to whip up nationalistic passion. Self-deceit bred a radicalism, which believed that Germans have a distinct anthropological character that destines them for rule.¹⁷

¹⁶Anchor, Germany Confronts Modernization, p. 110.

¹⁷Roy Pascal, The Growth of Modern Germany, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1969), p. 70.

In extension of this elitist mentality, many Germans felt that Jews, for example, constituted an alien element in society and that their influence was subversive to the foundations of the Reich¹⁸; latent atavistic feelings of anti-semitism surfaced. For centuries, deprived of holding land or plying trades, the Jews had gravitated towards careers in commerce and finance. When a great economic crash descended upon Germany in 1873, many Germans suffered great financial losses in the subsequent depression. Many Europeans, and amongst them many Germans, felt that the Jews were at the root of Germany's economic upheaval and in addition, that the Jews were totally responsible for destroying a healthy and prosperous society. One journalist of the time even claimed that the Jews were spearheading capitalism, concentrating on trading with the products of the work and intellectual achievements of others, and, in operating through the stock exchange, were sucking the marrow out of the bones of the German people.¹⁹ This anti-semitism often found followers too in the Student Clubs predominantly comprised of upper class students, priding themselves on their duelling, drinking, and loyalty to the established

¹⁸Craig, Germany, p. 154.

¹⁹Hajo Holborn, A History of Modern Germany, 1840-1945, Volume 3, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1969), p. 281.

order; they became seedbeds of reactionary anti-semitic views.²⁰

In focusing on the early political beliefs and literary careers of Heinrich and Thomas Mann, we intend first to consider their family milieu as seen against the background of the above depiction of Bismarckian and Wilhelmian Germany.

Luiz Heinrich Mann was born on March 27, 1871 in Lübeck, the first son of Consul Thomas Johann Heinrich Mann and his wife Julia Mann, née da Silva-Bruhns. Four years later, on June 6, 1875, Heinrich's birth was followed by his brother's, Paul Thomas. Later two sisters and a brother were born: Julia, 1877; Carla, 1881; and Victor, 1890.

The Manns belonged to the old mercantile class and held a prominent position in Lübeck. The father was a successful grain merchant there and provided his family with a comfortable standard of living. As Heinrich and Thomas became older, their father hoped that they would follow in his footsteps. Instead, both Heinrich and Thomas wished to pursue literary careers.

It must be remembered that during the late nineteenth century, the traditional middle class, or 'Bürger', found itself in crisis, caused by the rise and flourishing of a new

²⁰Pascal, Modern Germany, p. 71.

entrepreneurial middle class, the bourgeoisie; the old guard was forced to contend with the reality of modernization. Some, however, (Heinrich Mann, Sr.) refused to adapt the old traditional 'bürgerlich' lifestyle in an accommodation to prevalent entrepreneurial spirit. The conflict was the one between mercantile and industrial capitalism: the old commercial and trading interests against the new entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, its risk-capital and laissez-faire ethic. The mercantile class tried to conserve the old established ways; the new money wanted a shift in the distribution of power, a liberalization of finance and trade legislation, and a re-appraisal of class privileges. Ultimately, Big Business together with capital and science won out over the individualism of the mercantile class.²¹ For the Manns, the ultimate outcome was a significant drop in economic stability and prosperity. Mann Sr. fought against the new spirit of commercialism by upholding the traditional middle class way of life - a totally quixotic attitude at the time. In a word, "the father embodied what Thomas referred to as 'Lebensbürgerlichkeit'."²² Their father's inability to accept and adapt to the changing times only further

²¹Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 10.

²²Ibid., p. 11. "The traditional middle class style of life, with its traditional straight forwardness and overwhelming sense of duty".

encouraged Heinrich's and Thomas' desire to pursue a career other than business.

While their father embodied all the typical characteristics of a respectable German 'Bürger', it was the mother who provided the brothers with an artistic and cultural outlook on life. Julia Mann was Brazilian and she had an 'artistic' disposition. She was the centre of the family both in practical aspects and on the emotional level as well. In fact, it was their mother who was to have a far more decisive influence over Heinrich's and Thomas' early development. Introducing her sons to her own unique outlook on life, that of the outsider and artist, she also encouraged them to be different, to appreciate fully what art had to offer them. The brothers ultimately perceived their parents as representatives of opposing world views: the father - 'bürgerlich', punctual and exact, ethical and duty-bound; the mother - artistic, sensitive and musical, emotional and spiritual. The father's style was less appealing than the mother's, who was much more attractive; hers was the one which, it appears the brothers tended to imitate.²³

In general, the brothers shared a childhood that was fairly harmonious. They spent their free time staging puppet plays, drawing and, naturally, experimenting with writing.

²³Ibid., p. 14.

It appears, however, that Heinrich felt embarrassed by his younger brother's devoted adoration. Even though Thomas had various acquaintances and schoolmates, these could not in any way be compared to the relationship he had with his older brother. Though their relationship was not as yet marked by hostility or rivalry, it was not really one of friendship. The relationship between the little and the big brother was characterized by a mixture of awe, admiration, affection, anger and envy. Heinrich continually took the lead, showing the way; and the younger brother constantly struggled to keep up, catch up, hold on.²⁴

Their sibling rivalry can be seen in their respective experience with formal schooling. Heinrich and Thomas were both critical of the existing school system that advocated the ideals of Prussian militarism, strict discipline, and tyrannical behaviour on the part of the schoolmasters. Despite their mutual dislike of the school system, Heinrich was prepared to conform to the demands made upon him in the classroom. In fact, he did very well, managing to attain grades of A's and B's in most of his courses. In addition, he successfully finished the 'Gymnasium' with the completion of his 'Abitur', enabling him to go to university. Whereas

²⁴Richard Winston, Thomas Mann: The Making of an Artist, 1875-1911, (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1981), p. 74.

Heinrich was enjoying such success at school, a completely different situation developed for Thomas. He tended to rebel against the system, and this caused him to do poorly in school. As he himself later admitted, "School I loathed. ...I despised it as a milieu, I was critical of the manners of its despots, and I soon found myself in a sort of literary opposition to its spirit, its discipline, and its methods of teaching."²⁵ Thomas' disillusionment with school resulted in academic failure. He seems barely to have passed any of his courses and in fact only just managed to complete his 'Gymnasium' course. Thomas was bound to feel a certain amount of envy for his older brother although he still admired him. Throughout his life Thomas would make every effort to be better than Heinrich no matter what hurdles he would have to overcome to do so. It would seem at least probable that Thomas' determination to surpass his older brother in all respects may have stemmed in part from the fact that Thomas felt somehow inferior in the shadow of Heinrich's early successes at school. The brothers remained throughout this time on friendly terms with each other. Their father's death in 1891 brought about the dissolution of the family firm and the removal of the family to Munich - an

²⁵Thomas Mann, Lebensabriß, Die Neue Rundschau, June 1930, as cited by Nigel Hamilton, The Brothers Mann: The Lives of Heinrich and Thomas Mann, 1871-1950 and 1875-1955, (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1978), p. 35.

epochal change for a family so rooted in the old Hanseatic traditions of Lübeck.

From 1896 to 1898, Heinrich and Thomas spent time in Italy together, which gave them a unique opportunity to experiment with different writing styles and discuss the problems of their chosen literary careers.²⁶ There, the brothers wrote several novellas and began work on major novels, Thomas on Buddenbrooks and Heinrich on Im Schlaraffenland. This was the most harmonious and happy time the brothers would spend together. In fact, they even collaborated on a book, a confirmation and birthday present for their younger siblings, Carla and Victor. The book, which was the only collaborative work of their lives, was entitled The Picture Book for Good Little Children (1897).

It is most revealing that Thomas became quite conscious of the national, i.e. German, quality of his character while spending time in the foreign surroundings of Italy. Thomas, unlike Heinrich, seems to have been less sympathetic to the Latin world of Italy²⁷ perhaps because he could not adapt to the language nor to the strange exotic culture so different from Germany's. Thomas did not feel at home in Italy; Heinrich on the other hand loved it. Heinrich

²⁶Winston, Thomas Mann, p. 74.

²⁷Ibid., p. 75.

did feel at home in Italy, just because it provided such a contrast to his native land; he could speak its language and loved its art and monuments. In Italy he did not have to associate with Germans, something he abhorred; he could also be alone there.²⁸

The brothers' sojourn in Italy marked a turning point not only in their literary careers but also in their personal relationship. Thomas would soon enjoy the first fruits of success with Buddenbrooks and Heinrich would experience failure with his novel Im Schlaraffenland; as a result their relationship would become strained. In order to gain a better understanding of the growing differences between the two it might prove helpful to turn to the political beliefs they held at the turn of the twentieth century.

²⁸Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 56.

CHAPTER TWO: THE BROTHERS' POLITICAL BELIEFS

The development of Heinrich's political beliefs can be traced throughout his work. At the beginning of his literary career in the early 1890s, he was an arch-conservative; but by the turn of the twentieth century his political beliefs had undergone a dramatic change to liberalism. It must be kept in mind that his political evolution from right to left wing politics has to be seen within the political, economic, cultural and social conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany.

After his father's death in October 1891, Heinrich became (oddly enough when one considers his ultimate political leanings), even more conservative in his political thinking. One critic feels that it was as though Heinrich was determined to prove now a sense of responsibility, which he had not been able to show while his father was still alive.²⁹

In his earlier, conservative phase, Heinrich had developed a specific concept of the writer's role in society.

²⁹Ibid., p. 42.

According to him, the writer was to be viewed as an extraordinary individual who was not required to work doing menial tasks for a living. The writer, in his view, had a special task to fulfill in society. Exactly what the task entailed Heinrich had not yet had the opportunity to set out, (as a matter of fact he never did). But he did know that he was interested in aestheticism, in the refinement of literature, elements of fin-de-siècle Germany embodied in the literary movement called Impressionism.³⁰

Impressionism was characterized among other things by a revulsion to an industrialized Germany with its crass commercialism and materialism. The Impressionists found their contemporary Germany vulgar and dehumanizing and the harsh realities of a modernized industrialized Germany came under their severe criticism.³¹ Characteristic of the Impressionists was their rejection of the notion that man was the product of his environment. To their view, man was responsible for shaping his destiny by grasping his innermost being and fashioning it according to his desires. As a result of this withdrawal into the labyrinth of the self, however, the Impressionists tended to lose touch with the reality of the external world.

³⁰Gross, The Writer in Society, p. 32.

³¹Ibid., p. 27.

They stressed the unique constantly; their manner of writing was exquisite. As their watchword they employed 'aristocratic individualism'.³² One thinks of the works of Theodor Fontane, Arthur Schnitzler, Detlev von Liliencron, René Schickele and Stefan Zweig.

Heinrich gravitated towards Impressionism in the 1890s and he reveals his leanings quite clearly in the following excerpt taken from a piece entitled My Plan, written on November 11, 1893:

If I am generally drawn to analysis, I believe it is only that of the haute vie or rather the elegant life which has been appointed as my subject matter. The moral disposition that I wish to address myself to, one finds only there. A cosmopolitan, cultured and ceremonious existence (which is the last cultural legacy of the old world) I must at all events acquire so that I can have the occasion and the space to express the form and utterance of that which, I now 'feel' more than I 'know' ... At present I lead the cosmopolitan life as well as I can within my limited means. 33

It was not only Heinrich's style, form and psychological emphasis which identified him with the Impressionists, but the thematic content of his work as well. Some historians of German Impressionism established that the

³²Ibid., p. 28.

³³Heinrich Mann, "Mein Plan", November 11, 1893; in Heinrich Mann 1871-1950; Werk and Leben, p. 55, as cited in David Gross, The Writer and Society: Heinrich Mann and Literary Politics in Germany, 1890-1940 (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980), p. 29.

Impressionist movement was dominated by a series of polarized motifs: the split between art and life; decadence, dilettantism; the difference between appearance and reality; eroticism, the daemonic woman; the bourgeois citizen versus the 'Lebenskünstler', 'Nietzscheanism' and 'Renaissancism'. If one accepts these definitions as distinctive, Heinrich's early prose sketches were unmistakably Impressionist in orientation.³⁴ This phase in Heinrich's writing became, however, less and less evident as the 1890s progressed. In fact, by the turn of the century, Heinrich had clearly left that mode behind him. The Impressionistic period was, however, an important phase in his development since it was during this time that Heinrich came to identify himself with neo-conservatism, the basic political orientation of the Impressionists.

The term neo-conservatism, however, must be understood from an Impressionist point of view and not by its usual political connotations. For the Impressionists, neo-conservatism was a cultural concept resisting the tendencies of modernity, favouring instead the renewal of existing institutions. The Impressionists were elitist, believing that decaying social forms could be reawakened by the sensitive few who would impart the needed values to society.

³⁴Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 31.

They despised industrialism, bourgeois philistinism, and the oppressiveness of urban life and were convinced that 'salvation' would come only through a supranational and aesthetic aristocracy of superior individuals.³⁵ But prior to 1895, Heinrich did not consider himself to be an active politically oriented writer. He was still interested in the aesthetic qualities of life and communicated this in his writing. It was to be his involvement from 1895-1896 with the radical right wing journal entitled Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert that marked Heinrich as a politically active writer.

The new stage in Heinrich's political development can be identified as one of political reaction. In fact, the Heinrich Mann of the 1890s was an outspoken opponent of everything that had even the faintest association with liberalism or socialism. Heinrich was not alone in this since many young writers and intellectuals of fin-de-siècle Germany embodied such radically rightist tendencies. The declining prestige and social status of the 'Bürger', that is of the traditional middle class, caused many writers and intellectuals to try to defend the old social order from the rapid modernization and industrialization taking place in Wilhelman Germany; they became conservative in order to

³⁵Ibid., p. 39.

defend the old order of things on the basis of moral and aesthetic criteria. Such an attitude proved ultimately sterile and unimaginative, but it was in many ways a typical response to the realities of post-Bismarckian Germany.³⁶ In addition, these writers from the 'old' middle class saw their previously stable existence challenged by the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie from above and the working class and Social Democrats from below.

Most of them, then, responded to the historical situation initially by what one might call an escape into aestheticism: art, literature or music.³⁷ Heinrich as one of them went this route; refusing to become involved in his father's business, by choosing instead a literary and artistic way of life he showed he was prepared to judge his world by aesthetic criteria. Removing himself both mentally and physically from the 'new' middle class life, Heinrich chose Italy for a while where, living as something of an 'Empfindungsdilettant', he was able to concentrate his attention on the world of form and 'eigentümliche Kunst'. In his opinion, the best way to deal with the vulgarity of contemporary life was to shun it.³⁸

³⁶David Gross, "Heinrich Mann and the Politics of Reaction", Journal of Contemporary History 8 (January 1973): 127.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 128.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 129.

During his involvement with the right wing journal entitled Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert: Blätter für Deutsche Art und Wohlfahrt founded in 1890, Heinrich was to become even more reactionary, discovering very specific targets, which he now openly criticized. He disapproved in general of the bourgeoisie but directed his attacks in particular at the Jews. This journal's programme itself called for a healthy modern realism in art and literature and a revived national German consciousness; it was hostile to all modern trends: socialism, liberalism, science, technology, industrialism, the metropolis - in short, to everything which in some way contradicted the tried and true virtues of the old German 'Volkstum'.³⁹ Heinrich took over as editor of this journal from April, 1895 until December, 1896 and during this time wrote more than thirty articles dealing with the pre-industrial, time-honoured traditional German community, based on the values of family, work, religion, and 'Heimatliebe' now threatened by the twin evils of capitalism and social democracy.⁴⁰

Heinrich directed most of his criticism here against the Social Democrats. This working class party embodied the

³⁹Ibid., p. 131.

⁴⁰David Roberts, Artistic Consciousness and Political Conscience: The Novels of Heinrich Mann 1900-1938, (Frankfurt am Main: Herbert Lang and Company Ltd., 1971), p. 11.

progressive ideals of industrialization and adhered to the idea of an internationalist policy; Heinrich strongly opposed this since he felt that socialist internationalism was an essentially evil force ruthlessly cutting out national consciousness, replacing it ultimately with a standardized and 'rootless' frame of mind. To destroy the national principle of nationhood, as the socialists threatened to do, would be to destroy what he felt to be the very source of Western culture. Mann was convinced that the monarchical principle and the feeling for hierarchy were firmly implanted in the German mind. To suppress these attitudes by emphasizing proletarian internationalism would be to strike at the root of German consciousness and dissolve a system of order into chaos.⁴¹

Liberalism for Heinrich was the catchword for an ideology he found all too pervasive and harmful in fin-de-siècle Germany. Because Liberalism advocated democratic ideas, parliamentarianism, the preeminence of moneyed interests and the disintegration of moral value, he considered it destructive of the society he accepted.⁴² The Liberals were the right party for the newly emerged entrepreneurs and businessmen of the bourgeoisie since its

⁴¹Gross, "Heinrich Mann", p. 133.

⁴²Ibid., p. 133.

economic policy of laissez-faire, something in the bourgeoisie's best interest, enabled them to accumulate more economic power and material wealth. Heinrich saw them and their undermining of the old social structure as the cause of an overturn of the previously stable economic and social conditions. As he saw it, the consequences of Liberalism "were economic anarchy and ruthless, aggressive individualism."⁴³

In attacking both socialism and liberalism, Heinrich thought he began to see a connection between these two political ideologies and the Jews and turned his attention to what was called the "Jewish question" in an article entitled Jüdischen Glaubens, August 1895. It seemed to him that the Jews as an undesirable element that was foreign to the society were in effect helping to destroy the traditional values of a predominantly 'German' middle class society. In his article, Heinrich proposed that their 'harmful influence' should be opposed by a healthy, 'spiritual' kind of anti-semitism:

The Jews...are not persecuted as a 'people' because they have not earned that name yet. The only reason they are set upon is that they are the embodied negation of both nationality and faith. And so they are tormented not so much for themselves, but as concepts of that which is destructive and degenerate. They are, in many respects, our bad conscience because they remind us

⁴³Ibid., p. 135.

daily of the price that has to be paid for the misunderstood notion of freedom. ...It is for us, therefore, to reaffirm the condition of our healthy nature, in order to make the ominous signs of decline disappear. Everyone who would then be a protector of the natural and social conscience would by nature be an anti-semite. 44

It must be pointed out, however, that Heinrich's anti-semitism was 'intellectual' and based on cultural ideals, rather than an outgrowth of popular anti-semitism, which was hatred 'pure and simple'. In fact, Heinrich avoided any type of organized political anti-semitic movement.

Another issue with which Heinrich concerned himself was that of war as a political instrument. In the mid-1890s, Heinrich was far removed from the anti-war position he would assume during the First World War. It is instructive to examine his pro-war attitudes. At this point Heinrich viewed it as being beneficial to any given society since it would (in terms of the popular Social Darwinism) ensure the survival of the fit as opposed to the unfit. War also brought 'order' to society and this was a guarantee of a sound culture. Peace, he saw, paradoxically, as destructive of order and culture since it fostered free and ultimately revolutionary play of ideas.⁴⁵ In an essay entitled The

⁴⁴Heinrich Mann, "Jüdischen Glaubens", in Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert, Berlin. Jg. 5 (1894/95) H. 110. S. 455-462, as cited by David Gross, "Heinrich Mann and the Politics of Reaction", Journal of Contemporary History 8, (January 1973): 137.

⁴⁵Gross, "Heinrich Mann", p. 138.

Morality of War and Peace, which he wrote for Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert in September/October 1895, Heinrich expresses his sentiments on war in a manner startling when one considers his later development: - almost twenty years later, his view on war had evolved into a radically different point of view. In light of his future political development it is interesting to quote at some length an excerpt from the essay mentioned.

For us today, war is a model of the true social order. ...Without war there would be no concept of heroism; with it comes all moral and aesthetic value. Even painting and art would not be worthwhile if it were not for war. Homer, the Nibelungenlied, the Parthenon frieze, the dying gladiator...would all be gone. ...For it is precisely in war that everyone's consciousness becomes simple and complete. A warlike epoch lifts its children to heights that are usually thought unreachable in ordinary times. The view from above is comprehensive and simplified. Commonplace, petty attitudes disappear; envy and greed are silenced, and honesty replaces the usual hypocrisy of daily life. Those who are enemies try to come to terms with their hostility, and in this way they become real and respectful friends who feel themselves lifted up, through their participation in great designs; into a single unified purpose. The life interests of the individual are set aside, because the life of the individual in itself is no longer considered of great importance. ...Such a condition among men is not brought about by works of culture (if it is necessary to contrast war and culture) but is produced only by war. Certainly this is brutal, but then so is truth. 46

⁴⁶Heinrich Mann, "Kriegs- und Friedensmoral II", Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert, Berlin. Jg. 6 (1895/96) H. 1. s. 17-26, as cited by David Gross, "Heinrich Mann and the Politics of Reaction", Journal of Contemporary History 8, (January 1973): 139-140.

The topics discussed above are only a sampling of the wide range of topics Heinrich wrote about while editor of Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert.⁴⁷ It must be remembered that Heinrich dealt with the themes of socialism, liberalism, anti-semitism and war from an intellectual and aristocratic, neo-conservative viewpoint. He never adopted the radical view of the folk-oriented 'völkisch' right wing. Heinrich's world view in the 1890s was characterized by a mixture of reactionary and forward-looking tendencies, which he had tried, unsuccessfully, to integrate. From the conservative standpoint he even emphasized the importance of the monarchy and the organic conception of society. But at the same time he was also genuinely concerned with social conscience, political responsibility, and the evils of capitalism. Conservatism was simply the form into which he cast his ideas.⁴⁸ But once he had left Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert, his conservative outlook withered and republican and democratic ideas began to grow.⁴⁹

⁴⁷For a more in-depth discussion of Heinrich's involvement with this magazine consult: Manfred Hahn, "Heinrich Mann's Beiträge in der Zeitschrift 'Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert'", Weimarer Beiträge, Jg. 13, H. 6. (1967): 996-1018.

⁴⁸For a summary of Heinrich's opinions as expressed in the articles he wrote for Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert see: Gerhard Loose, Der junge Heinrich Mann, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979), p. 138-139.

⁴⁹Gross, "Heinrich Mann", p. 145.

After leaving the journal, Heinrich entered a transitional phase in his political development. Previously, seeing the writer's role in society as having a special status but no specific social function, he now in the decade between 1896 and 1906 began to formulate a particular concrete idea in regard to the writer's function in society. In light of the corruption, authoritarianism, nationalism and militarism in Wilhelminian Germany, the writer should become 'engaged'. In other words, the writer has to assume a politically more active role via his writing. Seeing the writer's role politicized, he still at the same time began to place more emphasis on the function of 'Geist' or 'spirit'. The spiritual realm soon became "synonymous with morality, intellect, and reason. When this happened, the man of spirit became nothing other than the 'geistige Mensch', the engaged literary intellectual."⁵⁰ In fact, by 1910, Heinrich had developed a distinctive concept of 'literary' politics. What this concept involved was that in order to achieve significant beneficial changes for society, the writer had to serve a decisive role in it; the writer in addition, would adhere to democratic and humanitarian principles as a guide for him in his work. Literature would in effect become a form of political action.⁵¹ Other

⁵⁰Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 110.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 111.

intellectuals such as Ludwig Rubiner, Franz Pfemert, Erich Mühsam, René Schickele, Kurt Hiller and Lion Feuchtwanger, had also come to the same conclusions and in so doing they had renounced, as Heinrich had, their earlier 'aesthetic' view of life. Such intellectuals now proposed that the only way in which higher ideals could be realized was to assimilate 'Geist' (spirit) and 'Tat' (deed) to fight in letters and literature for freer and less corrupt social conditions.⁵² Heinrich's theory of literary politics found supporters in many writers during the period just prior to the First World War. By some intellectuals, such as his brother Thomas this new politically active 'Literat' was viewed with apprehension; by others, such as René Schickele and Lion Feuchtwanger, with enthusiasm.

Heinrich had, in the course of a decade, been transformed from a conservative to a liberal writer. According to him now, "if the German Literat could politicize his reading public; if he could embody democratic ideals in his work; and if he could fight against dangerous social tendencies through the 'force of words', then it might be possible to change drastically the contours of existing reality."⁵³ Subsequently, Heinrich's work became a form of

⁵²Ibid., p. 116.

⁵³Ibid., p. 123.

social criticism. In order to make his impact upon the reading public, he chose two media, the novel and the political essay. From this time on Heinrich was considered a radical. He was one of the first important German writers who pointed out that the existing social reality of Wilhelmian Germany was in desperate need of change: a change to be brought about by democracy. Democracy was hardly considered by many Germans to be a desirable alternative to the existing authoritarian, monarchical and militaristic regime. But Heinrich wished to see a republican system of government replace the present monarchical and aristocratic one, one his brother, as we shall see, still considered to be an inherent and indispensable part of national life in Germany.⁵⁴ In the years prior to the First World War, at the same time that Heinrich was pursuing the liberal and democratic principle, Thomas embarked upon a completely different 'political' development. It is to Thomas that we now turn.

When discussing his political beliefs prior to the outbreak of the First World War, one must tread with caution. In his early years as a writer in the 1890s and up until 1914, Thomas considered himself to be nonpolitical. The

⁵⁴Marianne Doerfel, "A Prophet of Democracy: Heinrich Mann, The Political Writer, 1905-1918", Oxford German Studies 6 (1972): 93.

phrase 'nonpolitical' signified for him not so much political disinterest, as political thoughtfulness; this was a pose essentially intellectual, metaphysical, ethical and personal. Politics for him was preeminently an internal affair dealt with in the abstract.⁵⁵ It must be understood that Thomas was deeply rooted in his middle class ('old' mercantile 'bürgerlich') background. He was the epitome of all that the 'Bürger' stood for, even as the social status of this old-fashioned mercantile class was being threatened by the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. The admonition from Schiller's Braut von Messina certainly seemed sound to Thomas, "Ruhe ist der Bürger erste Pflicht". Nevertheless, although Thomas considered himself nonpolitical, he was in effect conservative and nationalist, both preeminently 'politicized' concepts. In fact, in the mid-1890s when his brother became editor of Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert, Thomas contributed approximately eight articles and reviews.⁵⁶ Both Thomas and Heinrich have tended to overlook their involvement with this

⁵⁵Andrew White, Thomas Mann, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1965), p. 82.

⁵⁶There is not a great deal of information on the brothers' collaboration on this radical right wing magazine. There is, however, one source which offers some information on this subject: The published letters, in 1975, between Thomas and Otto Grautoff. Nevertheless, this period in the brothers' lives has been generally ignored.

radical right wing magazine since it was something they did not wish to be reminded of.⁵⁷

In 1896, the brothers' involvement with the journal came to an end; Thomas, though, unlike Heinrich, did not change his conservative views. Thomas' reaction to his brother's evolution towards liberalism was a combination of wonderment and a lack of understanding. He saw Heinrich's political development as something quite remarkable and as a sign of maturity. He wondered if he himself would ever reach such a stage in his own life. In a letter dated February 27, 1904, Thomas reveals his thoughts regarding his brother's liberalism:

Viel merkwürdiger, seltsam interessant für mich, immer noch ein bißchen unwahrscheinlich ist die Entwicklung Deiner Weltanschauung zum Liberalismus hin, ... Seltsam, wie gesagt, und interessant! Du mußt Dich wohl ganz ungeahnt jung und stark damit fühlen? Wirklich, ich würde Deinen Liberalismus als eine Art bewußt eroberte Jugendlichkeit auffassen, wenn er nicht, wahrscheinlicher, ganz einfach "Reife des Mannes" bedeutete. Reife des Mannes! Ob ich's auch soweit bringen werde? Fürs Erste verstehe ich wenig von "Freiheit". Sie ist für mich ein rein moralisch-geistiger Begriff, gleichbedeutend mit "Ehrlichkeit". (Einige Kritiker nennen es bei mir "Herzenskälte".) Aber für politische Freiheit habe ich gar kein Interesse. 58

⁵⁷For further discussion of this topic consult: Gerhard Loose, Der junge Heinrich Mann, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979), Chapter 7, p. 102-144.

⁵⁸Thomas Mann - Heinrich Mann Briefwechsel 1900-1949, with a Foreward by Hans Wysling (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1968), p. 25.

According to Thomas, politics was not compatible with intellectual life and should in fact be kept separate from the intellectual sphere. Thomas' disregard of politics gave him a form of intellectual freedom. This had its roots in his 'old' middle class origins. Moreover, "the typical middle class German like himself is by custom and desire indifferent to politics", Mann says, "because he himself is so much more interested in the things of the mind, and this devotion is good because it tends to make him humane."⁵⁹ According to Thomas, the writer need not concern himself with politics. It was his task, rather, to provide his reading public with high ideals of aestheticism and humanity. Men, in his opinion, can be truly freed only by the cultivation of the mind. Further, this freedom of the mind can only be achieved if there exists some type of central authority, preferably a strong monarchy, which can keep order in society and, at the same time, allow religion, scholarship and art to remain free. Politics only made men vulgar, stupid and uncultivated.⁶⁰ There is of course a great deal of the self-serving about the nature of this artistic argument.

⁵⁹W. H. Burford, The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation, 'Bildung' from Humboldt to Thomas Mann, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 228.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 231.

It is difficult to see Thomas' early 'political' development before the First World War as something separate from the opinions he expresses in his voluminous war-time book Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man. This book is the crystallization of his non-political thinking prior to the war. Basically, Thomas there does his utmost to defend the uniqueness of the German, non-political, old 'Bürger' tradition. His definition of the Bürger as un-political is the characteristic of his own 'bürgerlich' youth. In an article, Thomas Mann - Der Unpolitische in der Politik, one critic condensed an account of Thomas' views on the function of art and politics and the way these found their expression in his work as irony. According to him for the young Thomas Mann, art allowed the intellectual to escape the reality of life; politics was considered a betrayal of the spirit; by avoiding all social obligations and rules, the artist secured spiritual freedom. Thomas viewed all political power struggles with contempt and insisted upon the supremacy of the spirit. This viewpoint resulted in Thomas treating 'life' in an ironic manner.⁶¹

In the years prior to 1914, Thomas did not write anything political. He concerned himself instead with such themes as the tension between the 'Künstler' and the

⁶¹Hans Wysling, "Thomas Mann - Der Unpolitische in der Politik", Neue Rundschau, 91, H. 2/3 (1980): 36.

'Bürger', sickness or decadence as opposed to health, and death versus life. With all these themes, Thomas was interested in writing about the development of the individual rather than about social interaction, a phenomenon close to Heinrich's heart. In 1913, Thomas wrote an essay drawing a distinction between his brother and himself: Der Literat und der Künstler. The essay was felt to be a fine and profoundly perceptive one, not unsympathetic to the literary man (Heinrich) who had scorned popular success and "pleaded the cause of humanity."⁶² It is revealing to quote a passage in which Thomas describes a 'Littérateur'. It is also interesting to note that even at this early date Thomas considers his brother a radical. However, the bitterness and pain which would later surface when Thomas attacked his brother in Reflections, were not yet in evidence.

He (the Littérateur) is radical, because radicalism means purity, nobility and profundity. He despises half-way thinking, cowardice in logic, compromise; he lives in protest against corruption of the idea through reality. ...The Littérateur is upright to the point of absurdity, he is honourable to the point of saintliness, yes, as wise man and judge he is related to the prophets of old. ...His feeling for beauty, his sensitivity over anything common, ridiculous, unworthy leads to the destruction of all inferior passions, of ill-will, of envy, of the lust for power, of vengeance, of jealousy. ...Yes, if he is by birth a judge, called upon and gifted with the ability to penetrate things with sharp words, then it is, when all is said and done, his "cleverness" that proves stronger than his "love of

⁶²Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 139.

virtue": his knowledge of the heart, his knowledge of many-sidedness and the profound injustice of human behaviour which enables him to understand, to forgive, which lead him to goodness... 63

In the years preceding 1914, Thomas was a firm adherent of the established order; he was quite naive in this respect and showed no foresight in respect to the coming catastrophe. Unlike Heinrich, Thomas at this point neither could nor would acknowledge the fact that Wilhelmian Germany was corrupt. When war finally did break out in 1914, Thomas was completely taken by surprise.

⁶³Ibid., p. 139.

CHAPTER THREE: THE INFLUENCES ON THEIR INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

In his Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man, Thomas Mann outlines 'a triple constellation' of eternally united spirits who exercise a profound influence on him: Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche. This chapter will attempt to show their impact on his writings.

Thomas Mann felt that at least until his own time these three constituted the major expressive power of the nineteenth century. He saw their creative and governing fates as being deeply and inextricably entwined. He felt himself as their disciple though he found it impossible to separate out the debt he owed each individual one of them. He saw his own morality (he equates it with pessimism) as being Schopenhauer's and the basis for his own psychological mood. This together with the writings of Nietzsche and the music of Wagner constituted the ethical atmosphere in which he wrote.⁶⁴ In order better to understand what appears to be Thomas' naivete in being so surprised by the outbreak of the First World War, it may be helpful to examine his

⁶⁴Thomas Mann, trans. Walter D. Morris, Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man, (New York: Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., 1983), p. 54.

indebtedness to three very creative spiritual mentors of the nineteenth century.

It was in the late 1890s that Schopenhauer's works took on such great significance for the young Thomas Mann. Schopenhauer's philosophy emphasized the idea of the world as manifestation of the will. That is, life is driven by the force of the WILL and not by reason. Schopenhauer took the Kantian concept of spiritual freedom and transformed it into WORLD WILL. According to Schopenhauer, human beings are basically miserable creatures and life for them is a constant struggle. However, there is one way that one can redeem life and that is through art, either music, painting, or writing. It followed that only the artist can rise beyond the pain and trouble of everyday existence. Schopenhauer felt that political change could never alleviate the misery of man, and he had consequently no interest in history. It was only in philosophy and art that man's nature and destiny might be recognized and a way to salvation found.⁶⁵ According to Schopenhauer, there is far more misery than pleasure in life. The 'realistic' outlook on life was enthusiastically embraced by Thomas. The influence which Schopenhauer had on Thomas was intellectual and spiritual. For Thomas, reading Schopenhauer was like metaphysical intoxication, a

⁶⁵Holborn, Modern Germany, p. 122.

'passionate, almost a mystical experience', rather than a merely intellectual one. Schopenhauer's words articulated much of Mann's own longing.⁶⁶ Thomas was impressed by the emphasis Schopenhauer placed on art and above all on music in his system of philosophy.⁶⁷ Schopenhauer, "the anti-historical, anti-political, pessimistic, metaphysical thinker, touched a hidden string in the German soul, and his greatest pupil, Richard Wagner, one of the other great influences on Thomas, became the best loved and probably the most 'German' composer."⁶⁸

Wagner saw himself as called to raise the Germans out of their materialism and out of their bondage to what he felt to be a false morality.⁶⁹ He considered himself a philosopher as well as a composer. He was a "metaphysician whose thoughts were dominated by the concept of salvation - salvation of the people by the hero, salvation of man by woman, salvation of life by death..."⁷⁰ Models for the heroes of his dramatic 'Gesamtkunstwerke' (opera) were taken

⁶⁶R. A. Nicholls, Nietzsche in the Early Work of Thomas Mann, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1955), p. 2.

⁶⁷Walter E. Berendsohn, trans. George C. Buck, Thomas Mann: Artist and Partisan in Troubled Times, (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1973), p. 17.

⁶⁸Mann, Germany since 1789, p. 142.

⁶⁹Holborn, Modern Germany, p. 393.

⁷⁰Mann, Germany since 1789, p. 238.

from the past of German mythology. Wagner was very much in tune with Schopenhauer's pessimistic views on life. However, Wagner saw that the way for man to achieve salvation was not to suppress human desires but rather to intensify 'love' which would ultimately lead to the elevation of man. Wagner was more concerned with self-fulfillment than with redemption.⁷¹ Greatly impressed by Wagner's operas, Thomas praised him "as a psychologist, as a discoverer of myth for the opera, as a synthesizer of the arts."⁷² In fact, Wagner embodied for Thomas all the good characteristics and achievements of the nineteenth century. But even more interesting subsequently was the fact that Thomas began to consider "the possibility of employing musical structure as the framework for prose. (...) To construct a novel that would sound like, and essentially be, a musical piece in prose became one of his ambitions."⁷³

In order to show the bonding power which according to Thomas united them in the realm of art, it may prove interesting to cite a short passage in which Thomas describes his relationship to Wagner.

Rarely, I imagine, would the influence of Wagner be as strong and determining on a non-musician - and on an even more decidedly non-dramatist - as I must

⁷¹Holborn, Modern Germany, p. 394.

⁷²Berendsohn, Thomas Mann, p. 15.

⁷³Winston, Thomas Mann, p. 43.

confess to be the case with me. It did not have any effect on me as a 'musical dramatist' but as an artist as general as the modern artist par excellence, as Nietzsche's criticism has accustomed me to seeing him, and in particular as the great musically epic prose writer and symbolist which he is. 74

Friedrich Nietzsche completed the trinity which had such a decisive influence on Thomas. Nietzsche strongly criticized the state of politics and the arts in nineteenth century Germany: he viewed them as being decadent. For Nietzsche, the power of the WILL was all important. Nietzsche developed too the concept of the 'Super-man' who would embody high moral ideals and so restore morality to the existing degenerate society. These 'Super-men' would be a natural nobility that proved its mettle by defying the sham values of modern life and would possess the maximum will to power, which he felt to be the true and only essence of life.⁷⁵ For Thomas, Nietzsche's influence was, again, both intellectual and artistic. Thomas used Nietzsche's works and life as far as they related to him personally: a struggle with problems and experiences which were close to his own; in Nietzsche he found his own ideas and feelings more clearly expressed, thought out on a wider scale.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Thomas Mann, trans. Walter D. Morris, Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man, (New York: Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., 1983), p. 55, as cited by Berendsohn, Thomas Mann, p. 15.

⁷⁵Holborn, Modern Germany, p. 398.

⁷⁶Nicholls, Nietzsche, p. 4.

While Thomas was concerning himself with the writings of such 'typically German' figures as Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche, Heinrich's interests fell upon, significantly enough since his development was always guided preeminently by foreign stars, Paul Bourget, even though this first well-known influence was conservative politically. According to Bourget, the family constituted the important social unit in society and "was the crucial medium for regenerating a decadent social reality."⁷⁷ Heinrich adapted Bourget's theory and incorporated it in his first novel entitled In einer Familie (1894). Heinrich attempted to show that familial relations brought stability, permanence, and order to society; while the new bourgeoisie with their emphasis on conspicuous consumption in support of the new spirit of commercialism only accentuated the tendencies of disintegration. Subsequently, perhaps, the world would not be in as bad a shape as it was if the family unit could be restored to the old-fashioned mercantile traditions.⁷⁸

In the years after 1897, Heinrich turned to other French novelists as well. These included Balzac, Zola, Hugo, Maupassant and Anatole France. From these French models, Heinrich learned how to improve his writing style,

⁷⁷Gross, "Heinrich Mann", p. 130.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 131.

assimilating the techniques of their novels. An even more significant development was that Heinrich began to take up the ideals of French civilization, considering them superior to those of German 'Kultur'.⁷⁹ Heinrich began to view France as embodying certain rational moral, spiritual, and political values which he saw Germany as a whole lacking. These 'progressive' ideals made France in his eye a humanistic and enlightened country. Germany, on the other hand, had, he felt, not yet accepted these rationalistic values; Heinrich felt they should be transplanted to Germany.⁸⁰ France was in his eyes to become a role model for Germany. According to Heinrich, Germany would be better off if she were to become a democratic country like France. There was an additional feature in France which Heinrich found most admirable: the French displayed very little of blind reverence and obedience and therefore had more 'spirit', 'Geist', than Germany did. In fact, Heinrich thought he saw a lively sense of political responsibility, sustained by strong currents of liberal humanism, manifested both in French literature and in the French people. He also felt that France with its existing ostensibly democratic culture, offered the liberal-minded, politically committed writer an opportunity to exercise an

⁷⁹Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 90.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 90.

influential role in society. In Germany, writers, had no similar traditions to draw on and consequently they tended to ignore political involvement. This is why Heinrich, who wanted to be an effective rather than ornamental author, sometimes regretted that he was not writing for a French audience.⁸¹ It is hardly surprising that he and Thomas would come to a break in their relationship during the crisis of war. Yet, for the time being they continued to communicate with each other despite their increasingly diverging political world views. Meanwhile, Thomas was enjoying his first taste of literary success with Buddenbrooks, even though, perhaps even because, its publication created a great scandal in Lübeck where the citizenry took great pains to discover which characters in the novel corresponded to local individuals.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 91.

CHAPTER FOUR: THOMAS' TREATMENT OF THE BROTHER-CONFLICT AND HEINRICH'S TREATMENT OF HUMAN BROTHERHOOD

Thomas Mann was very much concerned with the theme of the brother-conflict, which is private, familial and immediate. Heinrich, on the other hand, concerned himself with the theme of human brotherhood, which is political and public.

It is of course dangerous to attempt to see too much that is autobiographical in an author's works. But it is nevertheless very helpful to examine the fraternal situations and relationships, which Thomas depicts in Buddenbrooks and Royal Highness. (It would lie outside the scope of this thesis to even attempt an analysis of a work so comprehensive in its treatment of the brother-conflict as is Thomas's Joseph und seine Brüder!) We can at least see here evidence of Thomas' concern, even obsession with 'the problem'. Heinrich for his part never accorded the fraternal relationship any great importance in his literary works. The absence of this theme in Heinrich's books may speak volumes about their relative psychological realities.

The publication of Buddenbrooks in 1901 brought Thomas his first great literary success and his first taste of recognition as an accomplished writer. The novel dealt

with the rise and fall of a prominent merchant family. The weight of the element of decline was quite evident and its significance articulated in the subtitle: "Decline of a Family". The theme of the book, the disintegration of the middle class, creates an atmosphere where art flourishes as a result of intensified refinement of culture. Considering the unfortunate fate of the family, one would have to call the underlying point of view pessimistic.⁸² In addition, Thomas masterfully depicts the brother relationship between Thomas and Christian Buddenbrook. The complexity and tension inherent in Thomas' concept of brotherly love is embodied in these two figures. Even though the two share a common genetic, familial, traditional, and cultural heritage, they are in many respects diametrically opposed to each other: in personality, disposition, talents, views of life and even in appearance.⁸³

Christian and Thomas Buddenbrook, sons of one father, make manifest the inner conflict of the family. Christian can be seen as the visible embodiment of the physical decay, that is, the physiological side. He is forever complaining of various aches and pains: for example, the unspecified

⁸²Berendsohn, Thomas Mann, p. 23.

⁸³Zsuzsanna Ozsvath, "Thomas Mann's Family of Brothers: Familiar, Unexpected and Distant Kin", Research Studies 51 (1), (March 1983): 26.

pains in his left leg - his doctor could not explain what was causing it. Christian attempts to describe it as a torment, repeatedly occurring on the left side, the same side as the heart. 'Strange', he finds it 'just strange'. But aside from a general observation that his nerves are 'short', there is nothing 'real' to put one's fingers on.⁸⁴ Thomas, on the other hand, embodies the psychological aspects of decay. His state of 'corruption' was psychological. His 'breakdown' was never obvious, only relatively late in life does Mann allow him to articulate his own inner emptiness. The ultimate realization for him is of the emptiness and meaninglessness of the preservation of form where all feelings have been carefully excised. Mann has depicted here the 'straw man' his brother Heinrich accused him of being.

Christian lives a parasitic life of self-indulgence as opposed to Thomas' life of self-discipline and sense of duty. In dialogue form between Thomas and Christian there is clear illustration of their differences. Thomas begins at one point by criticizing Christian's total lack of responsibility, shown in the way he leads his life. According to Thomas, Christian does not have the faintest idea what it means to work for a living. Instead, he spends

⁸⁴Thomas Mann, Buddenbrooks, (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1922), p. 246.

his time preoccupied with the theatre, loafing about and wasting his life with feelings and emotions, which, in Thomas' opinion, have no significant bearing on everyday life.⁸⁵ Christian's response to Thomas' criticism is expressed in the following manner. He first agrees with Thomas and tells him that everything he has just said was true. In fact, that was the very difference between them. In the past, Thomas had also gladly gone to the theatre and had liked to read novels or poems. However, as Christian points out, Thomas had always understood these pastimes in relationship to the respectability of work and the seriousness of life. But this is what differentiates Christian from his brother, the fact that Thomas must see everything as serious and respectable while Christian has no room in his life for what he saw as a sham respectability.⁸⁶

Their reactions to their father's death further illustrate the differences. Thomas remains steadfast and stern, almost devoid of emotion. Of course Thomas had the ability to feel pain, yet he would not kneel down at his father's grave; he would never act, for example, like his sister Tony, who could sob openly like a child: all this Thomas found terribly embarrassing.⁸⁷ Christian, however,

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 271.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 271.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 219.

was far less reserved. Although he is not able to show his feelings openly, he is affected by his sister's emotional outburst to the point that he loses his composure. He even shows the need to hide in a corner somewhere, something his brother would never do.⁸⁸

The relationship between Thomas and Christian can be summarized in the following manner. Christian accepted the fact that his older brother was more respectable, more serious and more industrious than he himself was. In effect, Christian accepted his brother for what he was. Thomas, on the other hand, was irritated in the extreme by what appeared to be his younger brother's lack of industriousness, respectability and seriousness.⁸⁹

The brothers' hostilities to one another reach a climax on the occasion of their mother's death. Thomas accuses Christian of being a good-for-nothing who has squandered his money on useless frivolities. He also says that he will not have any sympathy if Christian becomes insane. Christian reiterates his accusation of Thomas' self-righteousness. In Christian's opinion, Thomas is an egoist. But Thomas defends his way of life. He has become what he is because he did not want to become like his brother. He saw

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 219.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 229.

Christian's way of life as a threat to his own personal existence.⁹⁰ Thomas sees to what end feeling may lead, and how this constant preoccupation with feeling marks a disintegration of which Christian is the realization.

The treatment of the brother problem is analogous to the relationship slowly developing with his own older brother Heinrich. One thing was certain, Thomas felt more confident as a writer after the success of Buddenbrooks. Heinrich describes his younger brother's newly acquired self-assurance in the following manner:

Once this novel had appeared with its attendant success, I never saw him suffering from life again. Or rather he was now strong enough to deal with it. The last capable man of the family was by no means gone. My brother showed throughout, the constancy of our father as well as the ambition which had been his virtue. 91

Of all Thomas' writings Royal Highness (1909) never achieved the fame of his other stories. It was basically a fairy tale in which Thomas depicted some of his own personal experiences during his courtship and marriage to Katia Pringsheim.

Among other things in this novel, Thomas makes allusions to his relationship with Heinrich in his portrayal of the one between Klaus Heinrich and his older brother, the

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 493.

⁹¹Heinrich Mann, Ein Zeitalter wird besichtigt, (Berlin 1947), as cited by Nicholls, Nietzsche, p. 20.

Archduke Albrecht. Albrecht is described as being sickly, wise and shy - whereas Klaus Heinrich the younger brother, is a "Sunday's child" for whom everything comes up roses.⁹² After Thomas' success with Buddenbrooks, Heinrich felt keenly his own lack of success; in the face of his younger brother's growing popularity and achievement, he felt himself a failure. There is an apparent incorporation of this in Royal Highness where Thomas Mann introduces the theme of resignation and has the Grand Duke Albrecht abdicate by degrees in favour of his younger brother, who is healthier, more popular with the people, and enjoys the role of representation.⁹³

In the light of Thomas' later development, some other aspects of Royal Highness deserve mention. The depiction of Klaus Heinrich shows resemblance to the reigning monarch, William II, who also had a crippled left arm. In addition, Thomas was thought by some to have distorted the portrayal of court life and misrepresented the education of a prince. Thomas' novel was even seen by some as a mockery of the royal family.

Another aspect of the novel was the emphasis given the role of representation as it was seen not only by the

⁹²Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 115.

⁹³Ibid., p. 115.

aristocratic prince of the story but also by the figure of a vaguely scurrilous writer. The essential point which Thomas wished to make here was that representation as a function was not always to be of the moment in works of art. More important was the fact that a symbolic life embodied the sum total of the individual's talents and experience and his impact on the world.⁹⁴

Certain critics of the time found Thomas' Royal Highness flawed and described it as having little substance, as being too sweet and as being political since they saw in the spirit underlying the little principedom as being democratic; one of love and dedication to the good of the people.⁹⁵ But in fact, Thomas disagrees strongly and states that was not his intent, that the accent on the political is a false understanding of the book, as he explains in a letter to his friend Kurt Martens dated January 11, 1910:

It is certainly a misunderstanding to regard Royal Highness as a book of social criticism; and what you call the "altruistic" - and Bahr and my brother the "democratic" - element in it is only one of its implications. Although its artistic merit is not based on that, perhaps its intellectual or ethic merit is, and if the book is read at all in the future it may possibly be for the sake of this element. ...At any rate you are perfectly right in saying that henceforth "democratic" books cannot seriously be expected from me. ...Insofar as I can

⁹⁴Harry Pross, "On Thomas Mann's Political Career", Journal of Contemporary History 2, (1967): 66.

⁹⁵Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 129.

foresee my future work, it certainly will have nothing whatever to do with democracy.⁹⁶

This is quite an ironic letter considering Thomas' future political development.

We see that Thomas denies here a specific political ideology in his works, certainly at least in the time prior to the First World War. The main thrusts of Heinrich's works, on the other hand, was exactly that. In apparent complete disregard for familial tensions, he makes the dramatic conflicts in his novels the result of social problems, showing an individual in conflict with wider society.

Heinrich's Professor Unrat, a novel of social criticism, appeared in 1905. In it, Heinrich sets out to criticize the existing educational system, which he considered corrupt because "it propagated a false and dangerous set of values."⁹⁷ Heinrich focused his attention on the character of a North German high school teacher called Professor Rat. Rat embodies all the really 'immoral' values prevalent in Wilhelmian Germany. He is a tyrant who is hated so much by his pupils that they give him the nickname Unrat,

⁹⁶Thomas Mann, Letter to Kurt Martens, January 11, 1910, as cited by trans. Richard and Clara Winston, The Letters of Thomas Mann, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 54.

⁹⁷Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 131.

which adds to his name a negative and degrading meaning. (His real name meant "counsel" or "advice" but the nickname meant "garbage").⁹⁸ The story unfolds as Rat-Unrat follows his most detested students to a seedy nightclub called the Blue Angel. However, in his attempts to discredit his students, he himself falls prey to the seductive singer of the nightclub, 'Künstlerin' Rosa Fröhlich, and becomes entangled in an obsessive affair with her to the point of total self-degradation.⁹⁹ Rat-Unrat becomes such a disgraceful and despicable man that he is eventually dismissed from the school. He marries the Künstlerin Fröhlich and ends up a humiliated, miserable and broken man.

Rat-Unrat's personal breakdown is not, however, symbolic of an imminent social breakdown, because after he is committed to an asylum, the decadent and immoral tendencies prevalent in society continue to flourish.¹⁰⁰

By concentrating on the schoolmaster and not on the students as his main object of criticism, Heinrich was able to show how Unrat embodied certain qualities typical of the period. Regimentation, submission, and blind obedience were the principal values prevalent in the classroom and they were

⁹⁸Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 92.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁰⁰Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 130

the ones to which the schoolmaster adhered.¹⁰¹ Rat-Unrat is in Mann's eyes merely a product of his environment. As an educator and civil servant, Rat-Unrat is fulfilling his role in a society which had contributed to the development of his immoral and tyrannical character. He is a firm adherent of the established order and as depicted he can be considered as being at the same time both tragic and comic.¹⁰²

The entire educational system is seen as being based on hatred. Rat-Unrat hates his students and they in turn hate him. In Heinrich's opinion, the atmosphere of hatred evident in the spread of resentment and mistrust among the students as well as the teachers, resulted from an educational system which was intended to produce an acquiescent and non-thinking mass of obedient individuals who followed orders without question. But in the eyes of one critic: "Even the students' derision of Rat-Unrat fits into the scheme of things, for antagonism is the motive force of social life and the lubricant which keeps the wheels of society running."¹⁰³

The book, when it first appeared, was a comparative failure but when republished in 1916, over 50,000 copies were

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 132.

sold.¹⁰⁴ However, it would be the film version entitled The Blue Angel, which appeared almost thirty years later, that would make Heinrich famous. Meanwhile, Heinrich had written a novel far ahead of its time. Thomas' reaction to his brother's book was to call it 'superficial, incredible and unconventional' even though he himself had criticized the educational system in Buddenbrooks, Royal Highness and Tonio Kröger.¹⁰⁵ Thomas seemed to consider only the novel's faults; this may have been due to the fact that he failed to recognize its revolutionary style. Heinrich's extraordinary descriptive techniques, which captured the seamy side of life and the authoritarian features of the classroom made this novel one of his most realistic to date. Heinrich's marvelous depiction of Rat-Unrat was in fact a self-caricaturization, which Thomas seems to have ignored.¹⁰⁶

The brothers had, as can be seen, developed completely different artistic and political outlooks by the years just prior to the First World War. Even their personal lives had taken different courses. Thomas had enjoyed success and popularity while Heinrich was experiencing failure and relative obscurity. Thomas had also settled into

¹⁰⁴Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 93.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 93.

a comfortable bourgeois existence with his wife Katia, whom he had married in 1905. Heinrich, on the other hand, had found it hard to settle anywhere permanently, for any length of time, and his affairs with actresses (shades of Christian!) had for the most part caused him nothing but heartbreak. By the eve of the First World War, the brothers' relationship was strained. That relationship would be put to a severe test during the war and eventually ended in an open break. The catalyst for this turn of events would be Heinrich's Zola essay; it was followed in due and deliberate course by Thomas' Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man. A discussion of this ideological conflict between Heinrich and Thomas will be discussed in the following chapter.

PART TWO

THE BROTHERS' CONFLICT AND BREAK

CHAPTER FIVE: ANTECEDENTS OF THE BROTHERS' CONFLICT

The outbreak of World War One in August 1914 had profound effects in every sphere of European life. In keeping with this thesis' major concern, we will investigate the underlying causes of the war as they become apparent in the brothers' conflict.

In the years prior to 1914, Europe had become divided into two major rival camps. The Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy on one side; the Triple Entente of France, Russia and Britain on the other; each was gradually but constantly increasing the size and power of its armies and navies. Germany's pursuit of world power had caused suspicion and apprehension abroad among the colonial powers. "Public opinion in other European nations slowly came to sense a threat, less because of the goals of German foreign policy per se than the crude, overbearing style that Germany projected on the international scene."¹⁰⁷ Economic rivalries

¹⁰⁷Andreas Hillgruber, trans. William C. Kirby, Germany and the Two World Wars, (London: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 9.

surfaced; the acquisition of various territories for colonization and imperial occupation further increased the friction among the large European nations. The widespread growth of nationalism contributed its part. When war was declared in August 1914, nationalistic fervor became a dominant force all over Europe.

The prevalent mood at the outbreak of war in 1914 among a vast majority of Germans was one of optimism; the war was greeted with widespread enthusiasm because many thought that it would be short lived; it was seen as a great liberating force by which Germany could prove her military might against her enemies. "The German people had gone to war deeply convinced that it was fighting a war forced upon Germany by the enemy powers, against which she had not entertained any ideas of conquest. (...) For decades, the Germans had been told that Germany was destined to become a world power but could not hope to survive as a great nation unless she faced up boldly to this destiny."¹⁰⁸ The prevalent mood of war hysteria will be discussed in greater detail later, especially in regard to Heinrich and Thomas Mann.

The war was of course not shortlived, differing in many respects from any previous war. Entire populations of

¹⁰⁸Holborn, Modern Germany, p. 446.

all warring nations became involved in the war effort. The men were recruited for military service, while the women and children worked in the factories. The advances in technology introduced the use of weapons and machines never before used: tanks, for example, submarines, airplanes, poison gas. Civilian populations were also subjected to extreme hardships. Food, clothes and other necessities were rationed. Civilians for the first time had to endure air raids, gas attacks and other atrocities. The war was total in every respect.

The end in 1918 saw Europe in ruins. Germany was defeated and faced the humiliation of the Versailles Treaty. It is against this background that the well documented war time quarrel between Heinrich and Thomas Mann will be examined.

Fundamental to their political and ideological conflict were the veiled allusions contained in Heinrich's Zola essay of 1915. Thomas unfortunately interpreted various sections in the Zola essay as pointed attacks on him personally rather than as attacks against the intellectual he represented. His reply was subsequently published in the form of a six-hundred-page collection of essays entitled Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man (1918). Throughout the course of his book, Thomas constructed a defence of all those traditional German values which he felt his brother had

renounced. Heinrich had become for him the detested "Zivilisationsliterat", the figure Thomas chose as his main object of criticism. In Thomas' view, the "Zivilisationsliterat" embodied all those qualities and opinions he considered un-German.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Thomas, like many intellectuals of the time, was caught up in the widespread war enthusiasm. The outbreak of war came unexpectedly for Thomas, yet it was almost a physical release to him because he felt himself so personally involved in his country's destiny. Thomas saw Germany surrounded by countries who despised it, and he stepped forward as defender of the cultural heritage of a Germany under siege.¹⁰⁹

Thomas had been declared unfit for military service; he felt then that the only way he could effectively serve his country in its hour of need was to use his writing. Consequently, Thomas wrote two essays in which he defended Germany's honour against the onslaught of Entente propaganda. In the early months of the war Thoughts in Wartime (1914) and Frederick and the Grand Coalition: An Abstract for the Day and the Hour (1914), were a direct result of Thomas' patriotic zeal.

¹⁰⁹Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 158.

Before discussing these two essays it might be helpful to examine the general intellectual response to the outbreak of war in order to better understand why Thomas responded to the war in the way he did.

Thomas was among those intellectuals who viewed the outcome of war optimistically. The war was to bring great 'glory' for Germany and prove her a 'great power' to be reckoned with. This patriotic approach to the war was transformed "into a systematic mystique",¹¹⁰ more commonly referred to as the 'Ideas of 1914'. This ideology emphasized Germany's higher cultural and social development and saw it as being superior to that of her enemies; it followed that Germany's culture must be defended. The war was seen as the only means of attaining recognition and a superior political position in Europe. Her 'defensive struggle' was seen as a higher conflict between her own superior social and cultural forms and her enemies' inferior ones. Britain's was in such a view a non-culture based on commercialism; that of France, a result of a superficially rational civilization; Russia's, of barbarism. Alone Germany's culture had a depth which justified a claim to world-power status, enviously denied her by the rest of Europe. War represented a legitimate method

¹¹⁰T. J. Reed, Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 181.

of achieving this.¹¹¹ Thomas greeted the 'Ideas of 1914' with enthusiasm although he gave them a more ideological emphasis. (This will be seen more clearly in his Reflections). However he realized that the war necessitated total involvement on the part of the German people, even of the intellectuals.¹¹² It is not difficult to see why Thomas undertook the writing of his wartime essays, he was simply accommodating himself to the popular intellectual spirit of the time. Stefan Zweig summarized to what degree this war enthusiasm had permeated the various levels in German society, especially those of the intellectuals, writers and professors.

Fast alle deutschen Dichter, Hauptmann und Dehmel voran, glaubten sich verpflichtet, wie in urgermanischen Zeiten als Barden die vorrückenden Kämpfer mit Liedern and Runen zur Sterbebegeisterung anzufeuern. Schockweise regneten Gedichte, die Krieg auf Sieg, Not auf Tod reimten. Feierlich verschworen sich die Schriftsteller, nie mehr mit einem Engländer Kulturgemeinschaft haben zu wollen, ja mehr noch: sie leugneten über Nacht, daß es je eine englische, eine französische Kultur gegeben habe. 113

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 181-182.

¹¹²Klemens von Klemperer, Germany's New Conservatism: Its History and Dilemma in the Twentieth Century, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 52.

¹¹³Stefan Zweig, Die Welt von Gestern, (Frankfurt am Main, 1970), p. 169f., as cited by Peter Richner, Thomas Mann Projekt eines Friedrich-Romans, (Zurich: Juris Druck Verlag, 1975), p. 72.

A further illustration of Thomas' war euphoria can be found in a letter to his brother on August 7, 1914. In it, Thomas writes that although he realizes that he will have to be careful with his money, he nevertheless is happy that he will have had the opportunity to experience such a great event as the present war.

I feel still as though in a dream - and yet one ought to be ashamed for not having considered it possible or seen that the catastrophe must come. What an affliction! How will Europe look, inwardly and outwardly, when it is over? Personally, I shall have to prepare myself for a complete change in my standard of living. If the war goes on for long I shall without doubt be what one calls "a ruined man". In God's name! What significance has this against the revolution, the spiritual revolution which such great events must bring with them! Shouldn't one be thankful for such a completely unexpected opportunity to witness such great things? My main feeling is one of enormous curiosity - and, I admit, the deepest feeling of sympathy for this detested, enigmatic and fated Germany, which, if it didn't exactly rate "civilization" as man's highest estate, at least has taken upon itself to destroy the most depraved police-state in the world. 114

Heinrich did not, to put it mildly, share Thomas' enthusiasm for the war. While Thomas viewed the war as a liberating and purifying process, Heinrich could view this war only with disgust. (Cf. his earlier praise of war as such!, p. 34-35). According to Heinrich, war could cause only catastrophe. This was in great contrast to the 'Ideas

¹¹⁴Thomas Mann, Letter to Heinrich Mann, August 7, 1914, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 159-160.

of 1914', which had seen war as a salvation and an uplifting experience for Germany. Heinrich expanded upon his negative and pessimistic outlook in respect to war. A war always results from a bad epoch and corrupt social conditions. It evolves from an age permeated with hatred, resentment, and exploitation, and it always leads to the intensification of immorality. Regardless of a war's origins, the outcome will always be a triumph of destruction over construction, of death over life.¹¹⁵ Like Thomas, Heinrich saw writing as the way of expressing his feelings about the war.

In the early days of the war, Thomas and Heinrich maintained the brotherly relationship despite their opposing views. The year 1915 marked the appearance of Heinrich's Zola essay, and as a consequence the beginning of the breach.

Heinrich was one of the rare few who did not fall under the spell of the war hysteria that swept over Germany in the first stage of the war. He was considered an outsider by the entire Mann family. His mother even tried to convince him to change his unpatriotic attitude towards Germany.

My dear, good Heinrich, don't speak out against your fatherland because it now defends itself with all its might; - it only wanted to demonstrate its loyalty to its own allies and was forced into this struggle which will cost its life - or so the enemy would like. Some distinguished diplomats had seen the war coming even earlier because Germany was

¹¹⁵Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 158.

growing too large and powerful; hence the Entente between the Allies. (...) Understand me, Heinrich and don't speak ill of Germany to others! 116

His mother's desperate appeal fell on deaf ears. Heinrich could not go against his innermost feelings and beliefs. By late 1915, Heinrich was prepared to break his silence. Meanwhile, Thomas had been kept busy with his own war essays, and it is their early wartime writings which will now be taken into consideration.

¹¹⁶Julia Mann, Letter to Heinrich Mann, October 1, 1914 in Heinrich Mann Archive, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 165.

CHAPTER SIX: HEINRICH'S POLITICAL WRITINGS

Heinrich for his part had evolved a stance which could not have been predicted from his youthful enthusiastic espousal and support of the traditional values of the establishment. That phase was really very short-lived. His admiration for French letters led him more and more to adopt the liberal attitudes, which the French writers proclaimed. His most famous statement expressing outspoken support for their liberal ideas was his famous essay on the French 'Literat' Zola, appearing in the magazine Die Weißen Blätter in November 1915.

Although his anti-war sentiments were generally known, Heinrich had not until this time made a public statement about the war. Thomas' writings favourable to the war, which appeared soon after its outbreak in August 1914, greatly distressed Heinrich. After the appearance of Thomas' essay, Frederick and the Grand Coalition, in which he glorified war and justified Germany's march into neutral Belgium, Heinrich took the opportunity to make his views known and produced the Zola essay, which in fact served a double purpose. First, it was a criticism, though veiled, of those intellectuals who like his brother had been swept up in the war hysteria. Secondly, the essay would portray the

collapse of Louis Bonaparte's Second Empire as an analogy to the imminent downfall of Wilhelmian Germany in 1918. The Zola essay was also ultimately an autobiographical sketch. In his portrayal of the French writer Zola and his involvement with the Dreyfus affair in 1897, Heinrich revealed his own innermost thoughts and convictions regarding politics, the role of the writer in society and literature and the importance of Geist (spirit). Due to censorship during the war, Heinrich was forced to subdue the language and content of his Zola essay significantly. He overcame such limitations by employing veiled allusions in the presentation of his views. It was, however, quite evident to a great majority of his readers what the essay was about. Thomas in particular felt personally attacked by certain remarks that Heinrich made in the Zola essay. The seeds were planted for their celebrated war time quarrel, one not resolved until 1922.

The Zola essay contained many remarks on France's Second Empire which were obviously meant as references to Wilhelmian Germany. Heinrich was hardly a great admirer of Wilhelmian society, one he considered corrupt and degenerate. The predominant militarism and all that embodied - strict obedience to authoritarian rule - were anathema to Heinrich. Unlike Thomas, who endorsed the "might-is-right" mentality in his Frederick essay, Heinrich did not agree with this type of

militaristic attitude.

Niemand im Grunde glaubt an das Kaiserreich, für das man doch siegen soll. Man glaubt zuerst an seine Macht, man hält es für fast unüberwindlich. Aber was ist Macht, wenn sie nicht Recht ist, das tiefste Recht, wurzelnd in dem Bewußtsein erfüllter Pflicht, erkämpfter Ideale, erhöhten Menschentumes. Ein Reich, das einzig auf Gewalt bestanden hat und nicht auf Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Wahrheit, ein Reich, in dem nur befohlen und gehorcht, verdient und ausgebeutet, des Menschen aber nie geachtet ward, kann nicht siegen, und zöge es aus mit übermenschlicher Macht. Nicht so verteilt die Geschichte ihre Preise. Die Macht ist unnutz und hinfällig, wenn nur für sie gelebt ist und nicht für den Geist, der über ihr ist. Wo nur an die Macht geglaubt wird, eben dort hat sie aufgehört, zu sein. Und seht, wohin sie euch bringt! 117

While in Prague in 1916 to give a reading from his Zola essay, Heinrich made the following introductory remarks in reference to France's Second Empire. The French Empire had experienced a total catastrophic collapse. However, empires do not simply collapse by accident, they usually are riddled with corruption, injustice and deception.¹¹⁸ Heinrich was of course referring to Wilhelmian Germany. In the essay itself, he makes reference to the present catastrophe, that is to the outbreak of the First World war.

Einer, der äußerlich nichts vor Augen hatte, als was alle vor Augen hatten, Macht, Glanz und Erfolg, hatte diesem Reich und dieser Zeit dennoch stärker

¹¹⁷Heinrich Mann, Zola, (Hamburg: Claassen Verlag, 1960), p. 199-200.

¹¹⁸Alfred Kantorowicz, "Zola-Essay - Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen", Geschichten in Wissenschaft und Unterricht 11 (1960): 259.

und tiefer in die Augen gesehen als alle. Die Geschichte vollzog sich im Sinn eines noch ungeschriebenen Buches. Die Katastrophe trat ein, als sei sie eine ästhetische Notwendigkeit - als wäre er selbst, der sie vorherbestimmt hätte, der Richter, und sein Werk das Ziel des Geschehens gewesen. 119

This passage alludes to his writing before 1914, in which he criticized Wilhelminian society. His novels and essays had contained prophetic proclamations of the events which did take place in Germany during the war. Much of his work had been censored due to the outspoken and forthright manner in which he criticized his society. Years before Germany entered the war and was forced to face her ultimate defeat, Heinrich could foresee the turn of events. Because his predictions had come to pass, he felt that people in part blamed him for what had befallen Germany. But it seems evident that Heinrich had been among the very few who had had a very realistic view concerning Germany's affairs and their culmination in a disastrous war. In this respect at least he undoubtedly was the greater realist of the two brothers. He was aware of a Germany full of ambitions and illusions, of power and conformity, with no rational pattern to allow for the evolution of political or moral respectability.¹²⁰ His judgement of Germany's fate was never optimistic. Those

¹¹⁹Mann, Zola, p. 166.

¹²⁰Doerfel, "Prophet of Democracy", p. 103.

Germans who would risk their lives to defend Germany's honour would become demoralized. Germany would be conquered even before the collapse.

Nicht nur mit kämpfen müßt ihr für sie, die das Vaterland sind, ihr müßt mit fälschen, mit Unrecht tun, müßt euch mit beschmutzen. Ihr werdet verächtlich wie sie. Was unterscheidet euch noch von Ihnen? Ihr seid besiegt schon vor der Niederlage. 121

There are numerous autobiographical allusions in his portrayal of Zola. Zola was a committed writer who criticized the times in which he lived. Advocating the relationship between power ('Macht') and spirit ('Geist'), Zola had provided a working model for a committed writer. Heinrich held Zola in high esteem as "a moralist, driven by his sense of public responsibility."¹²² For Heinrich, Zola was the embodiment of France, evolved to its present rational and spiritual level via the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. According to Heinrich, Zola's writing revived the ideals of the Revolution with its struggle for truth, justice, equality and the pursuit of happiness.¹²³ Zola's struggle for truth and justice became exemplified by his

¹²¹Mann, Zola, p. 200.

¹²²Doerfel, "Prophet of Democracy", p. 103.

¹²³Ernst Keller, Der Unpolitische Deutsche: Eine Studie zu den 'Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen' von Thomas Mann, (Bern: A. Francke Verlag, 1965), p. 26.

defence of Captain Dreyfuss who in 1897 had been unjustly accused of military treason.

Heinrich's theory of literary politics as formulated by 1914, necessitated the writer's playing a more active political role in society. The writer's work should serve a definite social and moral purpose; a politicization should take place allowing him to help bring about significant social changes, beneficial for all concerned. "Der Roman soll nicht nur schildern, er soll bessern."¹²⁴ And further: "Er weiß, sein Werk wird menschlicher dadurch, daß es auch politisch wird. Literatur and Politik, die beide zum Gegenstand den Menschen haben, sind nicht zu trennen..."¹²⁵

According to Heinrich, Geist (spirit) and Tat (deed) were closely bound to one another. The politically committed writer must act. Politics are the foundation for truth and justice. Concerning Zola, he writes:

In seinen Anfängen hatte er das politische Handwerk verachtet, wie nur je ein Literat. Jetzt sah er wohl, was die Politik in Wirklichkeit war: "das leidenschaftlich bewegte Feld, auf dem das Leben der Völker ringt, und wo Geschichte gesät wird für künftige Ernten von Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit." Literatur und Politik hatten denselben Gegenstand, dasselbe Ziel und mußten einander durchdringen, um nicht beide zu entarten. Geist ist Tat, die für den Menschen geschieht; - und so sei der Politiker Geist, und der Geistige handle! ¹²⁶

¹²⁴Mann, Zola, p. 158.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 169.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 212.

In Zola, according to Heinrich, the Geist (spirit) functioned as the antagonist of action, power and state. 'Geist' was the human capability to pursue truth and strive for justice; the state served merely a functional purpose.¹²⁷ As Heinrich reveals via his characterization of Zola, Geist was most significant for the artist since it raised him to a higher level, enabling him to fulfill his political role in society.

Die Erfahrung der Weltbeherrschung vermittelt Kunst haben ihn die Weltüberwindung gelehrt, die Geist heißt. Die größte Kunst war doch nur der Weg des Geistes. Geistige Liebe war, unerklärt, schon in der ersten Menschendarstellung dieses Künstlers. Sie erklärt sich, und es ist Wille zur Vergeistigung. Wer auf so großen Vorgängen fußt, wer den Geist erlebt und erfahren und in langer Arbeit den Willen erworben hat, aufzustehen für ihn, ist von einem Geschlecht, das Zola nachfolgt und ihn ansah, ein geistiger Mensch genannt worden. Keineswegs die selbstgenugsame Erkenntnis macht den geistigen Menschen aus, sondern die Leidenschaft des Geistes, die das Leben rein und den Menschen ganz menschlich will. Er erkennt Vergeistigung nur an, wo Versittlichung erreicht ward. Er wäre nicht, der er ist, wenn er Geist sagte, ohne Kampf für ihn zu meinen. Er ist gewillt, Vernunft und Menschlichkeit auf den Thron der Welt zu setzen, und ist so beschaffen, daß sie ihm schon jetzt als die wahren Mächte erscheinen, als jene, die, Zwischenfällen zum Trotz, zuletzt doch jedesmal allein aufrecht bleiben. 128

¹²⁷Joachim Müller, "Die kulturpolitische Position des Essayisten Heinrich Mann", Jena Universität Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift, Gesellschafts und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe 23 (1974): 167.

¹²⁸Mann, Zola, p. 208-209.

Another reference which calls attention to Heinrich and his own perception of writing was the sentence that "Writing was battle in as much as it was at the same time duty and destiny."¹²⁹ Yet another passage discusses the merits of truth as revealed by Heinrich via Zola:

"Ich habe die Gabe des Lebens. Denn ich habe die tiefste Leidenschaft für das Leben! Was ist das, die Gabe des Lebens? ...Es ist die Gabe der Wahrheit." Die Wahrheit lieben: anders wird keiner groß. Alle ihre Mächte lieben, Wissenschaft, Arbeit, Demokratie: diese große, arbeitende Menschheit, die hinauf will, los von den Beschönigungen und Ungerechtigkeiten der Vergangenheit. Sich als einen der ihren fühlen und als nichts weiter; im Leben stehen wie alle Welt, dann kann man schildern, was alle Welt erlebt. Nur nicht sich abseits und besonders dünken; teilnehmen als einer unter vielen an der großen Untersuchung über das Jahrhundert, über das moderne Leben. Seine Zeit lieben! 130

Such statements scattered throughout the Zola essay not only reveal Heinrich's political and literary convictions, they also reveal how closely Heinrich identified himself with Zola. Zola, the one most important model for Heinrich, was a socially critical, epic writer who had the courage to become socially committed.¹³¹

The original 1915 edition of the Zola essay contained numerous uncomplimentary references to Thomas and other pro-

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 167.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 167.

¹³¹Müller, "Die kulturpolitische Position", p. 168.

war intellectuals. In 1931, Heinrich revised those sections which were the most undermining; however, he retained some of his other original critical comments. Much of Heinrich's criticism was an attack directed against those intellectuals' misguided support for the war. Heinrich also wished to point out that their criticism of democracy and progress was unjustified.

In the original 1915 edition of the Zola essay, Heinrich makes various condemnatory comments about the intellectuals in the French Second Empire, but implicitly the remarks were directed at his brother. For example:

Ihr Talent wirkte modern, ihr Geschmack war oft der zarteste. Gaben sie sich pessimistisch, leugneten sie geistreich den Fortschritt und gar die Menschheit, indes es ihnen nie beikam, zu leugnen, was bestand und gefährlich war: wir sahen gewollte Paradoxe darin, verwöhnten Überdruß am Einfachen und Echten, keineswegs stichhaltig, weder vor ihrer eigenen Vernunft noch vor den Ereignissen. 132

There are other significant passages critical of Thomas. Heinrich abhorred all those corrupt and destructive attitudes prevalent in Wilhelminian Germany, upheld by Thomas in his condoning of the war.

¹³²The copy of the Zola essay which I have is the revised edition in which these critical comments have been omitted. However, the original comments of the 1915 edition of the Zola essay can be found in: Alfred Kantorowicz, Heinrich und Thomas Mann: Die persönlichen, literarischen und weltanschaulichen Beziehungen der Brüder, (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1956), p. 24.

Jene waren oft die verlockenderen gewesen, auch für ihn selbst wohl; jetzt macht es nichts aus, daß man in eleganter Herrichtung gegen die Wahrheit und gegen die Gerechtigkeit steht; man steht gegen sie und gehört zu den Gemeinen, Vergänglichen. Man hat gewählt zwischen dem Augenblick und der Geschichte und hat eingestanden, daß man mit allen Gaben doch nur ein unterhaltsamer Schmarotzer war. Sogar die Gaben kamen jenen jetzt abhanden, Zola sah die gehaltensten Dichter unvermittelt den windigsten Journalismus treiben. 133

Heinrich castigated the irresponsibility of all intellectuals in their mindless support of the war.

Durch Streberei Nationaldichter werden für ein halbes Menschenalter, wenn der Atem so lange aushält; unbedingt aber mitrennen immer anfeuernd, vor Hochgefühl von Sinnen verantwortungslos für die heranwachsende Katastrophe, und übrigens unwissend über sie wie der Letzte! 134

His comments were most offensive to Thomas. But it was especially the second sentence of the Zola essay, which he saw as a direct personal attack against himself:

Der Schriftsteller, dem es bestimmt war, unter allen das größte Maß von Wirklichkeit zu umfassen, hat lange nur geträumt und geschwärmt. Sache derer, die früh vertrocknen sollen, ist es, schon zu Anfang ihrer zwanzig Jahre bewußt und weltgerecht hinzutreten. 135

¹³³Mann, Zola, as cited in Kantorowicz, Heinrich und Thomas Mann, p. 25.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 25.

¹³⁵Mann, Zola, p. 154. The second sentence as cited in Kantorowicz, Heinrich und Thomas Mann, p. 26. The meaning in English could be stated as: Creative writers who are destined soon to dry up are the ones who sound off.

Heinrich later removed this sentence. He even wrote to Thomas that this second sentence had nothing to do with him. In actual fact, this sentence could not realistically describe his brother as an artist.¹³⁶ However, Thomas would not accept any of Heinrich's attempts to explain himself. It was too late, he had been too deeply hurt to listen to reason.

In the 1931 edition of the Zola essay, Heinrich lets stand the accusation that the pro-war intellectuals exploited the war situation for their own benefit. It seemed to Heinrich that these intellectuals enjoyed glorifying the war so that they could profit from other people's suffering.

Ihre Gesinnung verlangt nicht, daß sie Verbannung und Schweigen ertragen. Im Gegenteil ziehen sie Nutzen daraus, daß wir anderen schweigen und verbannt sind; man hört nur sie, es ist ihr günstiger Augenblick. Man müßte sie sich ansehen, ob es nicht auch sonst schon die waren, die das Profitieren verstanden. 137

It angered Heinrich that intellectuals like himself who fought for truth and justice were ostracized while these other intellectuals were praised for their glorifications of

¹³⁶Mann, Zola, as cited in Kantorowicz, Heinrich und Thomas Mann, p. 26.

¹³⁷Mann, Zola, p. 225.

the war.¹³⁸ He accused them also of being more at fault for the war than those who wielded political power. Heinrich never would have imagined that so many intellectuals, among them his brother, would go to the length of endorsing war atrocities.¹³⁹

Heinrich eventually condemns pro-war intellectuals totally. He asserts that Zola's sentiments are a mirror of his own:

Mit Zorn und mit Schmerz nahm Zola damals die Trennung vor von denen, die er trotz allem für seinesgleichen gehalten hatte. Dulden und Hinfristen war nicht länger erlaubt, die äußersten Prüfungen waren angebrochen und verpflichteten die Geister, streng und endgültig gesondert

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 226. "Waren solche Schriftsteller etwa Kämpfer? Oder lag es vielmehr in ihrer Art, was die Macht - die Macht der Menschen und der Dinge - herbeiführte, zum Besten zu werden, und auch zu ihrem eigenen Besten? Wie, wenn man ihnen sagte, daß sie das Ungeheure, das jetzt Wirklichkeit, daß sie das Äußerste von Lüge und Schändlichkeit eigenhändig mit herbeigeführt haben, - da sie auch ja immer in feiner Weise zweifelnd verhielten gegen so grobe Begriffe wie Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit."

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 226. Wir waren zu duldsam. Im äußersten Fall, nein, dies glaubten wir nicht, daß sie im äußersten Fall Verräter werden könnten am Geist, am Menschen. Jetzt sind sie es. Lieber als umzukehren und, es zurückbannend, hinzutreten vor ihr Volk, laufen sie neben ihm her und machen ihm Mut zu dem Unrecht, das es tut. Sie, die geistigen Mitläufer, sind schuldiger als selbst die Machthaber, die falschen und das Recht brechen. Für die Machthaber bleibt das Unrecht, das sie tun, ein Unrecht, sie wenden nichts ein als ihr Interesse, das sie für das des Landes setzen. Ihr falschen Geistigen dreht Unrecht in Recht um, wenn es durch eben das Volk geschieht, dessen Gewissen ihr sein solltet...".

hinzutreten, die einen zu den Siegern des Tages,
die anderen zu den Kämpfen für die ewigen Dinge. 140

In one critic's view the Zola essay constituted Heinrich Mann's own 'J'accuse', addressed to the political system of his country. He warned the intellectuals that scepticism and misanthropy could not create new realities. Knowledge for its own sake should not be the essential for the intellectual unless it implied moral progress.¹⁴¹

Thomas, already at work on his own wartime book, Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man, decided to defend himself in it against his brother's accusations. Thomas' Reflections from this point on would constitute not only a defence of old, traditional German values, it would be a "self-justification vis-a-vis his brother."¹⁴²

At the outbreak of war in 1914 then, each was accusing the other of opportunism. "Heinrich said Thomas had sold out to militarism in order to be accepted as a 'national poet'. Thomas said Heinrich was merely joining in the already massive chorus of recrimination against Germany."¹⁴³ Each felt that he had come forward as the defender of the

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 226.

¹⁴¹Doerfel M., "Prophet of Democracy", p. 103.

¹⁴²Reed, Thomas Mann, p. 193.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 202.

minority cause. Heinrich defended morality against the mindless German war hysteria; Thomas defended Germany's isolated position, her honour against European hostility.

"The relationship between my brother and myself, delicate for years, was no longer tenable after the outbreak of the war. I would gladly have kept it going for a while longer, come what may and cost what it might; but my brother's political passion is stronger than his human feelings; he despises Germany, or at any rate the Germany of this war, too intensely to have forborne branding my attitude as a crime against justice and truth, and making the break. A painful and shameful affair. I gladly do him the honour of believing that he too suffers on its account."¹⁴⁴

A more popular and more well-known exposition of Heinrich's jaundiced view of patriotic nationalistic fervor was his Der Untertan (translated as Man of Straw). Due to censorship the book was not accepted for publication until 1918, but he had actually finished it even before the Zola essay and shortly before the outbreak of the war.

The book centers on the character of Diedrich Hessling who develops from a dreamy, delicate child into a power hungry capitalist and a patriot extremist.¹⁴⁵ Hessling was the epitome of the new middle class, which supported and sustained the authoritarian, militaristic monarchical system

¹⁴⁴Richard Winston, "Being Brothers: Thomas and Heinrich Mann", in Ralph Ley et al, Perspectives and Personalities: Studies in Modern German Literature Honouring Claude Hill, (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1978), p. 159.

¹⁴⁵Gross, The Writer in Society, p. 138.

in Germany. Hessling's education has instilled in him the notion that it is his duty to be a loyal and obedient subject by supporting the status quo. "The individual acquires value only in so far as he is incorporated into an organization that supports and promotes the existing social order, e.g. the student corporations, the army, and the civil service. These allegiances lead him quite automatically to the unquestioning acceptance of the prevailing social norms, and to recognize that his 'uppermost duty' is loyal adherence to the ruling powers."¹⁴⁶ It is exactly this type of loyal subject mentality which Heinrich found so abhorrent. This reverence for authoritarian rule, power and blind obedience was in Heinrich's opinion the basis for the corrupt and degenerate society Wilhelmian Germany proved to be.

Attainment of power becomes an obsession with Hessling. Eventually, he is successful in attaining social, economic and political power in his hometown of Netzig. However, Hessling abuses his political power and does not think twice about suppressing those who are weaker than himself. In fact, Hessling becomes so totally engrossed in his pursuit of power that he comes to identify himself with

¹⁴⁶Doerfel, "Prophet of Democracy", p. 97.

the person of the Emperor William II.¹⁴⁷ He even grows a moustache in imitation of the Emperor.

Hessling reaches the point where he will do anything for his country and for its ruler: he becomes a one hundred and fifty percent, true-blue nationalist. The climax of Hessling's career comes at the end of the book where he makes a speech on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument in honour of the centenary of the birth of William I. In this speech, utilizing nationalistic rhetoric, Hessling extolls Germany's history.

Rendered efficient to an astonishing degree, full of the highest moral strength for positive action, and in our shining armour, the terror of all enemies who enviously threaten us, we are the elite among the nations. In us, Germans master-culture has for the first time attained heights which will never be surpassed, by any people be they who they may! 148

¹⁴⁷Heinrich Mann, Man of Straw, (Markham: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1984), p. 44. "There on the horse rode Power, through the gateway of triumphal entries, with dazzling features, but graven as in stone. The Power which transcends us and whose hoofs we kiss, the Power which is beyond the reach of hunger, spite and mockery! Against it we are impotent, for we all love it! We have it in our blood, for in our blood is submission. We are an atom of that Power, a diminutive molecule of something it has given out. Each one of us is as nothing, but massed in ranks as Neo-Teutons, soldiers, bureaucrats, priests and scientists, as economic organizations and unions of power, we taper up like a pyramid to the point at the top where Power itself stands, graven and dazzling. In it we live and have our being, merciless towards those who are remote beneath us, and triumphing even when we ourselves are crushed, for thus does power justify our love for it!"

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 290.

Hessling continues his speech by making reference to France and Napoleon, Germany's hereditary foes. He also refers to the rise of democracy, which originated in France and should therefore not be allowed to flourish in Germany. The German people must hinder the spread of democratic ideals.

And the soul of the German being is respect for power, power transmitted and hallowed by God, against which it is impossible to revolt. Therefore we must, now as always, regard the defence of our country as the highest duty, the Emperor's uniform as the supreme distinction, and the making of arms as the most dignified honour. (...) The turbid stream of democracy, flows unceasingly from the land of our hereditary foe and German manliness and German idealism alone can dam the tide. 149

Such patriotic rhetoric demonstrates clearly the rise and acceptance of authoritarianism and foreshadows its end products: National Socialism and Hitler; one critic even described Hessling as "an anticipated version of the Nazi."¹⁵⁰

Hessling's one political opponent is Netzig's old town councillor, Old Buck. Old Buck was a liberal in the spirit of the 1848 Revolution. Condemned to death in 1848 for his revolutionary activities, he is a survivor; he had managed to attain his influential and prestigious position in Netzig and was now threatened by Hessling's rise to power.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 292.

¹⁵⁰Doerfel, "Prophet of Democracy", p. 97.

Old Buck cannot come to terms with the political spirit of the times which rests upon the new dominance of power Hessling represents; and his old-fashioned gentlemanly conception of political decency makes him an easy mark for the 'new man' Hessling.¹⁵¹ There is a scene in which Old Buck attempts to defend himself during a town council meeting when Hessling is trying to obtain the necessary funds for the monument dedicated to William I. At the same time, Old Buck is trying to win support for the construction of the Liberal Infant Asylum. This scene marks Old Buck's downfall, and it is revealing to examine his speech as he attempts to defend the Liberals against Hessling's newly formed Emperor's Party. He warns against entrusting welfare to bayonets as soon as the workers start demanding their rights. In addition, he describes how the Bourgeois' passivity works against its own best interests. Old Buck continues with his stream of criticism. He castigates the new class by comparison with the old which preferred honour to profit, and criticized servile materialism severely.¹⁵² The Liberals have however, lost their influence and Old Buck is forced to face his defeat.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁵²Mann, Man of Straw, p. 256-257.

Old Buck's son Wolfgang becomes another victim of Hessling's ruthlessness. It is through Wolfgang that Heinrich reveals to the reader an analysis of Hessling's character, which is actually a characterization of the subject (der Untertan).

I will not speak of the ruler, but of the loyal subject, who (sic) he has molded; not of William II but of Diedrich Hessling. You have seen what he is like! An average man, with a commonplace mind, the creature of circumstance and opportunity, without courage so long as things were going badly for him here, and tremendously self-important as soon as they had turned in his favour. 153

Wolfgang continues his characterization of the 'new man' as swaggering, aggressive, an alleged personality craving for effect at any price. Further, Wolfgang shows how Hessling brands contrary opinions (anders Denkende) as enemies of their country, though they constitute two-thirds of the nation.

Romantic prostration at the feet of a master who just confers enough of his power upon his subjects to enable them to crush lesser men. And as neither master nor slave exists, either in law or in fact, public life becomes wretched mummery, opinion appears in costume parts,... 154

Heinrich conveys in his depictions an insight into his reading of the political and social conditions of Wilhelmian Germany. His portrayal of Hessling as

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 168.

representative of the loyal subject mentality was quite accurate but it is doubtful whether Heinrich would have been effective in awakening social conscience or goading people into doing something about their conditions even if the book had appeared before the war. The book lacks positive figures who might be offered a suggestion for a means of obtaining a better life in the future. Heinrich had been unsuccessful in conveying the notion that human beings could in any way change the situation they were in.¹⁵⁵ Despite these faults, Man of Straw, remained one of Heinrich's most successful satirical and socio-critical novels dealing with the Wilhelmian era.

¹⁵⁵Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 138.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THOMAS' POLEMICAL AND POLITICAL WRITINGS

As a means of clarifying for himself the depth of his feelings for what he saw as an almost universal assault on all that he held dear, Thomas over the four years of the war produced a series of 'apologia'. Significant among these are Thoughts in Wartime, Frederick the Great and the Grand Coalition: An Abstract for the Day and the Hour, and the massive and comprehensive work Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man.

The main theme of his first defence (Thoughts in Wartime, 1914) was the presentation of the characteristics of culture, which for him was synonymous with Germany, as opposed to the characteristics of civilization, which word for him meant the Western Powers. "'Culture' implied an almost 'tribal sense of unity, of strength, form, energy', however 'adventurous, scurrilous, wild, bloody and fearful' - whereas 'civilization' on the other hand indicated 'reason, enlightenment, softening, good breeding, scepticism, dissolution - the conquest of the mind'."¹⁵⁶ Differentiating between culture and civilization, Thomas embarked upon a

¹⁵⁶Thomas Mann, Thoughts in Wartime, (1914), as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 161.

defence of the advantages of war. War could be spiritually uplifting, a cleansing process and bring with it a profound sense of hope. (Cf. Heinrich's earlier statements, p. 34-35).

Krieg! Es war Reinigung, Befreiung, was wir empfanden, und eine ungeheure Hoffnung. Hiervon sagten die Dichter, nur hiervon. Was ist ihnen Imperium, was Handelsherrschaft, was überhaupt der Sieg? Unsere Siege, die Siege Deutschlands - mögen sie uns auch die Tränen in die Augen treiben und uns nachts vor Glück nicht schlafen lassen, so sind doch nicht sie bisher besungen worden. ...Was die Dichter begeisterte, war der Krieg an sich selbst, als Heimsuchung, als sittliche Not. Es war der nie erhörte, der gewaltige und schwärmerische Zusammenschluß der Nation in der Bereitschaft zu tiefster Prüfung - einer Bereitschaft, einem Radikalismus der Entschlossenheit, wie die Geschichte der Völker sie vielleicht bisher nicht kannte. 157

The essay was filled with patriotic rhetoric, which was in tune with the general feeling of war euphoria. Thomas also praised German militarism, which "is in truth the expression of German morality ... and is not peace that element of civil corruption which appears frivolous and contemptible to it? Germany is warlike out of morality - not out of vanity or glory-seeking or imperialism ... Germany's whole virtue and beauty - we have now witnessed it - first flowers in war."¹⁵⁸ In glorifying Germany's virtue and its

¹⁵⁷Thomas Mann, Thoughts in Wartime, (1914), as cited by Friedrich Albrecht, "Beziehungen zwischen Schriftsteller und Politik am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts I", Weimarer Beiträge 13, H. 3 (1967): 381.

¹⁵⁸Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 162.

military 'morality', Thomas also criticized Germany's enemies severely. Thomas strongly disapproved of France's conduct of the war. He also condemned England for her "arrogance in wanting to 'teach Germany democracy' by striving for her military defeat."¹⁵⁹

As Thomas' first political utterances in the early stages of the war, Thoughts in Wartime seemed to him a quite accurate articulation of his own defence of Germany's honour against Entente propaganda. If nothing else, it served as a catharsis of his feelings.

Mann's central aim in his Gedanken (Thoughts in Wartime) was to demonstrate the identity and unity in the name of 'Kultur' of Germany, the land of the poet, with Germany, the land of the soldier. It was his contention that the spiritual 'Weltgegensatz' was mirrored in the military conflict between Germany and the Entente (typified by France) and that as once the spirit of 'Literatentum' had threatened to undermine ... 'Dichterum', so now the forces of 'Zivilisation' were attempting to destroy the land of the 'Bürger' and of 'Kultur'. ¹⁶⁰

Thomas' justification for Germany's role in the war was also completely in accord with the prevailing almost hysterical enthusiasm for the war.

In a letter that Thomas wrote in February 1915 to his friend Ernst Bertram, he explains his incentive in writing

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 162.

¹⁶⁰A. Williams, "Thomas Mann's Nationalist Phase: A Study of 'Friederich und die große Koalition'", German Life and Letters 22 (1968-69): 148.

his wartime essay.

My Thoughts in Wartime ... are in fact an action, fought out of anger, out of the heartfelt wish to come to the help of my affronted nation whose mighty musical soul is as yet still little cultivated and somewhat inarticulate in comparison with the western powers. My heart is German; but a stronger stream of Latin-American blood enables me to see that what the Paris orators and advocates can do, I can do also. 161

Soon after Thoughts in Wartime appeared, Thomas had already begun work on another wartime essay dealing with Frederick the Great. In this essay, Thomas draws a parallel between the events of the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914: the formation of a European coalition against the newly formed Prussian state; Prussia's defensive war of aggression; Prussia's invasion of neutral Saxony in analogy to the invasion of Belgium.¹⁶²

Thomas' characterization of Frederick takes as its starting point Frederick's youth. The young Frederick is portrayed as a nice young man who enjoys the life of an aesthete. He has no interest in a military career. Ill-treated by an overbearing father, Frederick becomes more and more rebellious. He finds comfort in music and writing even though his father strongly disapproves of such 'effeminate'

¹⁶¹Thomas Mann, Letter to Ernst Bertram, February 1915, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 164.

¹⁶²Marleen Schmeisser, "Friedrich der Große und die Brüder Mann", Neue Deutsche Hefte 90, H. 9 (1962): 97.

behaviour. Thomas describes Frederick in the following manner:

And this nice young man is a crown prince, with a perfectly well-known past that has been somewhat dissipated and by turns alarming and alarmed; by way of being a libre-penseur too, a pert young philosopher and littérateur, author of the highly humanistic Antimachieveli. He is totally unmilitary, so far as can be seen, a civilian of civilians, even effeminate; runs up bills, and has his heart set on the poms and vanities. And now this young man becomes king... 163

As soon as Frederick became king, there were great expectations amongst the populace that Frederick would finally bring an end to the dominance of Prussian militarism. Frederick, however, who had previously shown no interest in military matters, would now, after his father's death, continue a rigidly military policy. As Thomas points out in his essay:

The slack and rather sensual young philosopher comes out as an impassioned soldier; he has no thought of weakening the military basis of the State. Weaken it? He strengthens the army by fifteen battalions, five squadrons of hussars (introduced on the Austrian model), and a squadron of gardes du corps, bringing it up to a round ninety thousand men. The uniform once cursed and jeered at he is never seen out of. His conservatism extends to the existing military ranks. 164

¹⁶³Thomas Mann, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter, Frederick the Great and the Grand Coalition: An Abstract for the Day and the Hour, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), p. 144.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 146.

Frederick became then a great military man who would soon gain the reputation of being ruthless and untrustworthy. According to one critic, Frederick was Mann's symbol for the elemental, metaphysically orientated German 'Volk', he was one embodiment of the daemonic force that had guided the course of German history.¹⁶⁵

In his portrayal of Frederick's struggle to secure Prussia's reputation as a military force of which the rest of Europe should take heed, Thomas alludes to Germany's struggle to establish herself as a leading world power.

But this beggarly young Prussia, with its poor two million souls, had measured itself beside, or against, Austria, as an equal; it had squeezed in among the great powers of Europe, and claimed to speak in all their counsels as one of them; it had forced them to reckon with Prussia as a political factor not merely weighty, but even decisive - for Frederick had managed to stage himself in the popular imagination as the balance-wheel of European equilibrium, at least so far as the relations between France and Austria were concerned. Now, it is very hard on Europe to be forced to change its attitude like that. She struggles, ... she denies the new factor any political, cultural, above all any moral justification, she cannot utter enough spite and venom against the newcomer, she sees nothing but a speedy ruin in store for him; ... 166

In effect this is how Germany was treated again in the Entente propaganda. Germany was seen as the aggressor, the

¹⁶⁵Williams A., "Thomas Mann's Nationalist Phase", p. 150.

¹⁶⁶Mann, Frederick the Great, p. 152.

relatively new country trying to gain military prestige and world power for herself. Once again the rest of Europe, this time both France and England, would not accept the new Prussian aggressiveness any more than continental Europe had condoned Frederick's actions in 1756.

Thomas made allusion to Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium in 1914 by presenting the analogy of Frederick's invasion of neutral Saxony.

- Frederick gave the order to cross the Saxon frontier. The Saxon frontier! Why, but Saxony was neutral, wasn't she? Saxony was not playing! - That was all one; on the twenty-ninth of August Frederick, with sixty-thousand moustaches, invaded Saxony. What a hubbub arose in Europe at this unheard-of breach of peace, this attack on the rights of nations! We have no idea - or, rather, yes, perhaps just lately we have had an idea. 167

Thomas then proceeds to give a summary of Frederick's excuses for undertaking such outrageous action. "And what follows reads substantially like Germany's official explanation in 1914 of her attack on neutral Belgium."168

But let us listen to Frederick before we listen to Europe; according to him his breach of the law was due to the following reflections and considerations. He had to be absolutely certain of Saxony, in order that she might not fight on the wrong side when she had the chance. (...) By occupying the country and disbanding the army or incorporating it in his own, he should have a secure base for his operations against Bohemia. As for neutrality, there was none, in any true sense

167Ibid., p. 193.

168Erich Heller, Thomas Mann: The Ironical German, A Study, (New York: Paul P. Appel, Publisher, 1973), p. 125.

of the word. In her heart, and with all her evil-disposed intentions, Saxony was with the coalition, though cowardice prevented her from admitting where she stood. Frederick, in breaking the letter of the law, in violating a neutrality that stood (sic) on paper, whereas its own betrayal did not so stand, was actually by the sternest necessity. 169

Thomas was clearly accepting Germany's policy of defensive aggression in 1914. Thomas was in fact supporting Germany's 'Machtpolitik'. Perhaps a more appropriate motto would be: 'Might is right!'. Thomas' defence of German aggression was based on three complementary arguments. First, he saw no difference between a defensive and an offensive alliance; secondly, what mattered in terms of history was victory; and, thirdly, aggression was justifiable if it furthered that nation's historical mission, which was certainly true of Germany since it was a relatively new power.¹⁷⁰

By using Frederick's policies as the proper measure, Thomas hoped to show that Germany's aggression was warranted and that Germany was simply fulfilling her destiny as one of the leading powers in Europe. "Spurning customary clichés, Mann did full justice to the king's unlovable personality in order to bring out by contrast the essential righteousness of an act performed in the name of manifest destiny."¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹Mann, Frederick the Great, p. 193.

¹⁷⁰Williams, "Thomas Mann's Nationalist Phase", p. 150-151.

¹⁷¹Pross, "On Thomas Mann's Political Career", p. 69.

Thomas' Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man marks the summation and crown of his wartime writings. In it, he vehemently defends not only Germany's honour and traditional values against Entente propaganda but also himself against his brother's criticisms. His most violent and emotional attacks are directed against the detested 'Zivilisations-literat', civilization's literary man, "a Claudius-like traitor who scorned his nation's values and accepted those of its enemies."¹⁷² The literary prophet of civilization was the western democratic liberal who was totally committed to reason, optimism and progress.¹⁷³ For Thomas it was Heinrich who championed such western democratic ideals. Thomas detested Heinrich's admiration for French culture and literature, felt by Heinrich to be spiritually superior to Germany's. In addition, Thomas had no patience for his brother's literary politics. According to Thomas, literature and politics should be kept separate from one another since literature would not change anything in the political realm, and since nothing done in the political sphere could enhance the quality of literature. Moreover, Heinrich's appeal for

¹⁷²Thomas Mann, trans. Walter D. Morris, Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man, (New York: Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., 1983), p. viii.

¹⁷³Joseph Warner Angall, ed., The Thomas Mann Reader, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), p. 492.

the politicization and democratization of Germany was totally unrealistic and would remain unheeded in Thomas' opinion. In Thomas' view, the Germans were a nonpolitical people who simply had no use for politics. Thomas would also contrast the inward, musical 'culture' characteristic of the Germans with the outward, rhetorical 'civilization' characteristic of the French.¹⁷⁴

The years spent writing the Reflections were his most difficult, as he reveals in the prologue. He also points out that his defence of Germany's unique culture and character necessitates reflection backwards to the past. He realizes that this rearguard action seems pointless in light of the present-day realities of modernization and industrialization: however, it is in the past that he can find the justification for his apolitical stance. Thomas also mentions that his contemporaries will accuse him of being a person who thinks bad thoughts, has a mean disposition and a bad character; they will accuse him, he fears, of supporting and defending what is dying out and falling away, of opposing what is new and necessary, to do violence to the times themselves. To this he would reply that one can serve 'the times' in more ways than one, and that his is not necessarily the wrong, bad, and fruitless way.¹⁷⁵ Thomas would also give some

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 492.

¹⁷⁵Mann, Reflections, p. 9.

insight into why he wrote the Reflections, as the following passage illustrates:

Yes, it is the work of an artist, and not a work of art; for it stems from an artistic nature that is shaken in its foundations, endangered in its vital dignity, and called in question, from an artist who is disconcerted to the point of crisis, who absolutely could not express himself in any other way. (...) thanks, that is to the intellectual conditions of the times, to the agitation of everything calm, to the shaking of all cultural foundations, to an artistically hopeless turmoil of thought, to the naked impossibility of creating something on the basis of an existence to the breaking-up and impugning of this existence itself by the times and their crisis, to the necessity of understanding, clarifying and defending this existence that had been called into question and brought into distress, and that could no longer be understood as a firm, self-evident and instinctive basis for culture; thanks to a pressing need, therefore, for a revision of all the foundations of this artistic nature itself, for its self-study and self-assertion, without its activity, impact, and cheerful fulfillment, its every action and creation, seemed from now on to be quite impossible. 176

Our main concern in discussing the Reflections will be to examine Thomas' portrayal of the 'literary prophet of civilization', (that is, his criticism of his brother Heinrich). It must be kept in mind that Thomas had been deeply wounded by his brother's Zola essay and that consequently his references to the Literat (Heinrich) in the Reflections are often emotionally charged and full of bitterness. In his references to the 'Zivilisationsliterat',

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 3.

Thomas cannot avoid the subject of politics. It is the political realm with which the 'Zivilisationlitterat' closely identifies himself, and which Thomas is most critical of. It is not only Thomas' discussions of the 'Zivilisationslitterat' which are interesting but also his notions about the relationship between politics and the German people.

Thomas felt that the German people would never be able to love democracy because they could not love politics itself: and he felt that the much decried 'authoritarian state' was the very one that was proper and becoming to the German people, the one they basically wanted.¹⁷⁷ It appears that Thomas had no confidence in their ability to change; he believed that the German soul would never be receptive to the reconstruction of the state in accordance with 'rational' political concepts.

Thomas' differentiation between German culture and Western civilization was developed from his reading of German history. German culture was for him the sum total of a long-standing Romantic tradition. Romanticism stressed the importance of the soul, idealism and Gefühl (emotion); the Romantics emphasized in addition, the role of the individual as incorporated in the idea of 'das Volk'; the Volk in its uniqueness make up the integrity of the nation. Western

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 16-17.

civilization, on the other hand, was rooted in the tradition of Classicism. The Classical mode of thinking did not stress the individual aspects but rather the social ones. The uniqueness of a nation as such was not emphasized; instead, everyone in the nation was ultimately unique, and in the uniqueness, equal; a society's potential could be rationally achieved through education.¹⁷⁸ Thomas himself typifies his characterization of the German Bürger in those sections in which he defends Germany's traditional values based on Romantic concepts.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, one of which is entirely dedicated to the 'Zivilisationsliterat'.

In its first, entitled The Protest, Thomas discussed Germany's unique situation in respect to the rest of the world and especially to Europe: Germany has always been considered as the 'protesting' kingdom; and the present war was an opportunity for Germany to defend herself against Western civilization. Thomas makes the following statement about Germany's 'protestantism'.

In my opinion, then, there has been the most complete unanimity from the first moment that the intellectual roots of this war, "the German war", as it is called with every possible justification, lie in Germany's inborn and historical "protestantism", that this war is essentially a new outbreak, perhaps the grandest, the final one, as some believe, of Germany's ancient struggle against

¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. 17-18.

the spirit of the West, as well as the struggle of the Roman world against stubborn Germany. I will not be dissuaded from the belief that all German "patriotism" in this war ... was and is, in its essence, instinctive, innate partisanship for precisely this protestantism ... 179

According to Thomas, the present war signified therefore, Germany's eternal protest against the universality and sameness of the West so that she could preserve the uniqueness and individuality totally characteristic of Germany.

In the chapter entitled Civilization's Literary Man, Thomas focuses his attention on what such a figure represents. Thomas points out that the 'Zivilisationsliterat' in bringing about Germany's democratization would rob Germany of its unique character;

Whoever would aspire to transform Germany into a middle-class democracy in the Western-Roman sense and spirit would wish to take away from her all that is best and complex, to take away the problematic character that really makes up her nationality; he would make her dull, shallow, stupid, and un-German, and he would therefore be an anti-nationalist who insisted that Germany become a nation in a foreign sense and spirit. 180

Germany's problematic character stems in part, he finds, from its geographical position, surrounded by other national states and lacking natural boundaries in the East and West. A kind of political unity had been achieved only late and

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 36.

this contributed even further to an already constantly unsettled and undefined position.

Thomas then gives a detailed account of what the 'Zivilisationsliterat' stands for. He draws the reader's attention to the fact that there are German intellectuals who wish to see Germany become a part of 'western civilization'. "... for it is very important and interesting - that there are German intellectuals who not only do not join in the 'protest' of their own community against the Roman West, but who even see their true mission and destiny to be part of a passionate protest against this protest, and who promote with all the power of their talents the intimate union of Germany with the imperium of civilization."¹⁸¹ Thomas continues: "... our antiprotestors give their struggling country no support and sympathy but enthusiastically confess themselves, as far as such confession is permissible today, to be for the enemy, for the world of the West, of the entente, and especially of France,..."¹⁸²

Thomas then identifies who this type of German intellectual is, but who we know is none other than his brother Heinrich.

The German proponent of this literary civilization is obviously our radical literary man, the one I

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 37.

have come accustomed to call "civilization's literary man" - and I do so because the radical literary man, the representative of the literarized, politicized, in short, of the democratized spirit, is a child of the Revolution, spiritually at home in its sphere, in its country. ... To put it more precisely, being a literary man is almost the same as being a Frenchman, indeed, a classical Frenchman, a revolutionary Frenchman; for the literary man receives his greatest traditions from the France of the Revolution. His paradise lies there, his golden age. France is his country; the Revolution is his grand period. 183

According to Thomas, then, the 'Zivilisationsliterat' felt and thought exactly in the same concepts as the Entente propaganda. "In short, he thought as did every Tom, Dick, and Harry among our enemies abroad, ..."184 The 'Zivilisationsliterat' views the war just as the Entente does. "He sees the war in which we are engaged entirely as the entente does, as a struggle between 'power and spirit' - this is his principal antithesis! - between the 'saber' and the idea, the lie, and the truth, barbarism and justice."185 It is at this point that Thomas makes reference to Heinrich's Zola essay. In Thomas' opinion, the war for the 'Zivilisationsliterat' was a repetition of the Dreyfus affair. "According to the analogy of this case, whoever is engaged in a struggle on the side of the civilization entente

183Ibid., p. 37.

184Ibid., p. 39.

185Ibid., p. 39.

against the forces of the 'saber', against Germany, is an intellectual. Whoever feels differently, whoever, ... remains loyal to Germany, is lost, a traitor to the intellect who stands against justice and truth - ..."¹⁸⁶

Essentially, Thomas believes that the 'Zivilisationsliterat' wishes with all his heart for Germany's defeat and humiliation so that democracy will triumph. As Thomas points out in the following statement:

... today he (the 'Zivilisationsliterat') wishes for Germany to be beaten and converted by the entente - its victory would be the victory of literature for Germany and for Europe, it would be his victory, just as its defeat would be his: so much has he made the cause of rhetorical democracy his own. He wishes, therefore, the physical humiliation of Germany because it would include her spiritual defeat; he wishes the collapse - but one says it more correctly in French: the debacle of the Kaiserreich because such a physical and moral debacle would ... finally, finally bring the warmly wished for, palpable, and catastrophic proof that Germany has lived in lies and brutality rather than in truth and spirit. ¹⁸⁷

Thomas also accuses the 'Zivilisationsliterat' of being hypocritical. Even though the 'Zivilisationsliterat' is appalled by the horrors of war, he supports the victories of Germany's enemies while at the same time he condemns Germany's brutality. In effect, the 'Zivilisationsliterat' does not criticize the war as such, but rather he disapproves of the war because it is a German war.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p. 41.

In short, he does not so much find fault with the war as with Germany, ... His attitude toward the war vacillates between humanitarian disgust and the greatest admiration for the military accomplishments of the enemies. ... He is delighted by the accomplishments of the powers of civilization; he admires their war materiel, their armor plates, concrete fortifications, aircraft formations, and poison and choking gas bombs, without asking how this fits the image of noble weakness, while he finds the same things on the German side disgusting. 188

But, ironically, the 'Zivilisationsliterat' did not in fact hate Germany; on the contrary, he felt somehow personally responsible for Germany's fate; Germany could not be saved from barbarism if she were democratized. Thomas even admits that this progress was inevitable yet he was opposed to it. "With whip and spurs he (the 'Zivilisationsliterat') is hastening a progress - that to me, not seldom at least, seems irresistible and fated, and that I for my modest part am destined to further; but to which I nevertheless, for unclear reasons, am putting up a certain conservative resistance."189

Thomas ends this chapter by pointing out again that the 'Zivilisationsliterat's' aim is basically the democratization of Germany (which, for Thomas was tantamount to her de-Germanization).190

188Ibid., p. 42-43.

189Ibid., p. 45.

190Ibid., p. 46.

Thomas' own convictions are delineated in the chapter entitled Burgherly Nature. In Thomas' opinion, ethics and not aestheticism is of fundamental importance to German burgherly nature. As he reveals in the following passage:

For ugliness, sickness, and decadence are ethics, and never have I thought myself in the literal sense as an 'esthete', but always as a moralist. Thus it was German, thus it was burgherly; estheticism in the literal sense, the ecstasy of beauty, that is, is the most un-German thing in the world and the most unburgherly at the same time; ... for the German and the burgherly character are one and the same; if 'spirit' is at all of burgherly origin, then the German spirit is burgherly in a special way, German culture is burgherly, the German burgherly nature is human - from which it follows that it is not, like the Western one, political, ..., and will only become so on the way to its dehumanization. 191

Thomas then proceeds to discuss the relationship between 'burgherly nature' and politics. According to Thomas, this relationship to politics is basically nonexistent. "For German higher culture thoroughly resists being politicized. Indeed, the political element is lacking in the German concept of culture."¹⁹² Thomas elaborates on his own burgherly background which offers him the reason for his nonpolitical stance, especially during the war.

For I am nonpolitical, national, but nonpolitically disposed, like the German of the burgherly culture and one of romanticism, which knew no other political demand than the highly national one for

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁹²Ibid., p. 78.

emperor and empire, ... But I know very well that I am also a burgher in my attitude toward this war. The burgher is national in his essence; if he has been the bearer of the idea of German unity, it is because he has always been the bearer of German culture and way of thinking. ... and my participation in this war has nothing at all to do with world and economic dominance; it is rather nothing more than participation in that passionate process of self-knowledge, self-limitation, and self-reinforcement to which the German culture has been forced by terrible spiritual pressure and attack from without. 193

Thomas makes clear that the German burgher does not believe that politics can have a humanizing effect on people. On the contrary, "he (the German burgher) will never come to believe that the state is the purpose and meaning of human existence, that the destiny of the human being is found in the state and that politics makes people more human. (...)

In the end, being a German burgher is not the worst thing one can be. German burgherly nature was always German humanity, freedom, and culture."¹⁹⁴ He finds historical reasons for this particular German trait: since the articulation of the individual personality was disallowed in the political sphere in Germany, it had to be articulated in the spiritual realm; German culture allowed the internationalization of the individual spiritual development within the confines of the external world but it did not allow political development.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 81-82.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 97.

The chapter entitled "Against Justice and Truth" contains some of Thomas' most violent attacks against his brother, the 'Zivilisationsliterat'. There is one section in particular where Thomas refers to Heinrich's Zola essay verbatim. He begins this discussion of Zola with the following statement: "The political acid-sprayer was aimed and it hit."¹⁹⁵ Whom did the 'Zivilisationsliterat' hit, none other than his brother, and he certainly did hit hard. Thomas makes reference to those passages in the Zola essay which he felt as personal attacks. It is revealing to cite the passage in which Heinrich refers to Thomas as a parasite since Thomas' reaction to it is expressed in his book. Heinrich's definition of Thomas was that his articulation of the individual is petit-bourgeois and parasitic.

Now it makes no difference if one stands in elegant array against truth, against justice; one stands against them and therefore belongs to those who are common and ephemeral. One has chosen between the moment and history, and one has admitted that with one's talents one has still been an entertaining parasite. 196

Now follows Thomas' reaction:

It was no pleasant business copying that: but now I am happy that it stands (sic) there: not merely in that European magazine (Die Weißen Blätter), but also here in this book. For it belongs in this book, which is to be a document and to remain such when the waters recede. It belongs in this book,

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 138.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 139-140.

which is filled with the conviction that the present war is being fought not only for power and business, but also, and especially, for ideas, ... European wars, as far as they are fought intellectually, and this they must always be, will be at the same time German fraternal wars; ... 197

The ideas which Thomas is referring to are those which can be traced back to the Romantic tradition and its concept of war when the total energies of the nation were to be directed towards the articulation of its 'Germaninity'. In addition, when Thomas speaks of European wars as being German fraternal wars he is referring to the conflict with his brother. Their quarrel exemplifies the conflicting ideologies which became apparent in Germany as a result of war.

In another section, Thomas discusses the significance of his Reflections. He realizes that he must face the inevitable, that is, the advent of democracy. This passage can also be interpreted as his self-justification against his brother. It is necessary to cite this passage in some detail in order fully to appreciate Thomas' feelings.

What more is this long monologue and writing than a glance back at what I was, what I was for a while with good reason and honor, and what I, without feeling old, will obviously no longer be able to be? No, I am scarcely as ignorant as I can be about the significance of the hour, for I even know that he who does not succeed in coming to tolerable terms with the new times will be old and will always be a man of yesterday. 198

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 156-157.

Thomas also admits that he must accept the inevitability of the coming of democracy. But that does not mean that he can simply forget about his stand during the war; it was an integral part of his personal development. He also feels that he is the real representative of the German soul because Heinrich was so radically influenced by French ideas.

Thomas expresses his views on the subject in the longest chapter in Reflections entitled Politics. He looks on politics as being a realm which belongs to the democratic individual, in other words, to the 'Zivilisationsliterat'.

This stamps the political sphere, therefore, as inferior, because it is a nonpersonal sphere; in it, opinions do not confer rank. Political opinions lie on the street: Pick one up and attach yourself to it, and to many, possibly to yourself, too, you will seem more respectable than before, but this is based on illusion. ... Neither does the fact that a person is a democrat signify anything about his worth and rank; every idiot is a democrat today. ... Politics is the sphere of the (democratic) individual, not of the (aristocratic) personality. 199

According to Thomas, the democratic sphere signifies insecurity, opportunism and superficiality. The aristocratic sphere, its opposite, security and stability.

In yet another passage, Thomas describes politics as something inferior and evil.

Politics makes one rough, vulgar and stupid. Envy, impudence, covetousness, is all it teaches. Only spiritual education liberates. Institutions are of

¹⁹⁹Ibid., p. 184.

little importance: character is all important.
Become better yourself! And everything will be
better. 200

The reason politics makes one stupid, according to Thomas is because the articulation of thoughts can be considered properly as something belonging only to the realm of 'Geist'. Politics on the other hand, does not take the spiritual realm into consideration.

He gives voice to what he sees as desirable, politically speaking.

I want monarchy, I want a tolerably independent government, because it alone guarantees political freedom, both in the intellectual and economic sphere. (...) I do not want the parliamentary and party economic system that causes the pollution of all the national life with politics. (...) I do not want politics. I want objectivity, order and decency. 201

According to Thomas, politics is a pollutant because it caters to 'vulgar' special interest groups, something not socially or intellectually productive to society.

In Thomas' opinion, the coming of democracy will signify the dominance of politics in all spheres of life.

Once more: democracy means the dominance of politics. Nothing may, nothing will exist - no thought, work, or life - in which politics does not play a part, where political feelings and connections are not maintained. 202

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 187-188.

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 188-189.

²⁰²Ibid., p. 200.

Thomas now turns his attention to criticizing the 'Zivilisationsliterat's' literature, which should serve a political function.

Literature and politics, he teaches, both have the human being as their subject; ...: one cannot (must not) deal with one without the other. And since it is - can be - may be - only one politics; the humanitarian-democratic one, the one of progress, there is and may be therefore only one literature: the one directed toward humanitarianism and democracy - the only one that, in all its conceptions, incessantly pursues humanitarian-democratic progress, insinuates the concept of democracy into every work, into every beautiful creation, into all art, leaves this didactic-voluntaristic-political intention half-hidden and half-evident. 203

Music is of course known the world over as an integral part of German culture. However, as Thomas makes apparent, there is no place for music in the world envisioned by the 'Zivilisationsliterat'. On the contrary, such a man would replace the preoccupation with music (an art notably personal and a-political) with an active concern for the establishment of democratic political systems; a socially concerned literature.

There is, I say, nothing strange in the fact that civilization's literary man is quite ill-disposed towards music - German music, that is - ...; on the other hand it is understandable that every mind in any way musically attuned and inclined is opposed "in the conservative interest" to the progressive plans of civilization's literary man, to his declared will to replace the national supremacy of

²⁰³Ibid., p. 224-225.

music with the democratic dominance of politics and literature. 204

In Thomas' opinion, the German people should be permitted to cultivate their individuality of soul in music and remain unconcerned with the day-to-day necessities of political compromise and decision.

Thomas continues his criticism of the 'Zivilisationsliterat' in the following chapter entitled On Virtue. According to Thomas, the 'Zivilisationsliterat' embodies those characteristics which are attributed to a radical left wing kind of politics like Jacobinism.

The human being, human rights, freedom, equality, reason, the people, the tyrants: he deals with these concepts with the same bewildering certainty that the Jacobins did, and like the Jacobin, he formulates a radical dogma from them whose radicalism certainly seems to be a more conscientious mind to be frightful superficially. 205

In Thomas' opinion, the 'Zivilisationsliterat's' democratic ideals are superficial because he made no concrete proposals for his program.

Thomas continues his characterization of the 'Zivilisationsliterat' as a Jacobin.

Above all, he has his instinct to pay exclusive attention to the political side of things, not their moral side, to be incomparably more interested in rights than in duties; to neglect

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 231.

²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 281.

conscience, but to give "pride in being a member of the human race" a wicked overnourishment. 206

Thomas poses a rhetorical question in reference to the complete politicization of all spheres of life. He asks whether anyone would want to live in such a world which the 'Zivilisationsliterat' considered to be an ideal one.²⁰⁷

In the chapter entitled Some Comments on Humanity, Thomas makes reference to his conception of what democracy should be:

... not ... pretension, arrogance, insulting demand, but resignation, modesty, renunciation, humanity. Democracy should once again be what it was before the invasion of politics into God's world (Eden): brotherhood above all differences. Democracy - ... - should be morality, not politics; it should be goodness from person to person, goodness from both sides! For the master needs the goodness of the servant just as much as the servant needs the goodness of the master. 208

Thomas and Heinrich basically want the same thing, namely, a better place to live in this world; paradise on earth. However, their ideas about how to achieve this goal are completely different. Thomas wished to see that the differences between individuals remain; he stressed the importance of the soul; and, he was concerned about the moral

²⁰⁶Ibid., p. 282.

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 287. "Art politicized, intellect politicized, morality politicized, the idea, all thought, feeling, desire, politicized - who wants to live in such a world?"

²⁰⁸Ibid., p. 357.

development of the individual's potential. Heinrich wished to see the amalgamation of differences between individuals; he stressed the importance of the state's concern for bodily welfare; and, he was concerned with the social and political development of the community.

In the chapter entitled On Belief, Thomas elaborates further on his concept of democracy as an ideal, not as something realizable.²⁰⁹ Following these comments, Thomas draws attention to the paradox evident in the belief in war. War causes much human misery and suffering, yet it is during the experience of war that people often begin to have more faith in others, that they begin to believe in progress, freedom and equality. In effect, people start to have a stronger belief in those political ideals which the 'Zivilisationsliterat' embodies.²¹⁰ Thomas ends this chapter by drawing attention to how the 'Zivilisationsliterat' conceives of religion: it is commitment to the spirit.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 364. "As far as democracy in Germany is concerned, for example, I believe completely in its realization: this is precisely what makes me pessimistic. For it is democracy and not its realization, that I do not believe in."

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 381. "The fact is paradoxical and remarkable enough that the European war has greatly strengthened the belief in 'the human being', in a goal of happiness for the development of the human race, in progress toward the ideal, in an earthly kingdom of God and of love, a kingdom of freedom, equality, brotherhood - in short, that it has greatly strengthened the revolutionary optimism a la française and brought it to a veritable hothouse blossoming."

However, his own concept of the spirit is not to be understood in religious terms; Thomas makes clear his view that for the 'Zivilisationsliterat', religion means literature, politics and democracy in combination.²¹¹

In the chapter entitled The Politics of Estheticism, Thomas draws the reader's attention to the fact that the 'Zivilisationsliterat' does not want to admit that France was capable of committing atrocities. He turns a blind eye to this fact, focusing his attention instead on Germany's actions: yet the present war showed many examples of Allied guilt. Thomas shows this type of thinking as being unfair and unrealistic. As Thomas states, basically for Heinrich, France is not a reality but an idea; this conceptualization is the result of exotic aestheticism.²¹²

It is interesting to note Thomas' summarizing remarks in the last chapter entitled Irony and Radicalism, where he denies the basic assertion of the 'Zivilisationsliterat'; he

²¹¹Ibid., p. 394. "But one knows, of course, what civilization's literary man understands by 'spirit'. He understands literature by it, he understands politics by it, together with that thing called: democracy. And this he calls religion!"

²¹²Ibid., p. 414. "He is careful not to take notice of French reality, either through literature or even personal observation, through personal compassion, which is really the path of love. For him, France is not a reality, but an idea."

says in his paradox that the human question could be decided spiritually but never politically.²¹³

Many critics have pointed out that the Reflections mark an important phase in Thomas' intellectual and artistic development. Without it, Thomas might never have written The Magic Mountain. The years which he had spent on his self-evaluation and self-justification, had taken their toll. In 1918, Germany found herself defeated and humiliated after four years of war. As Thomas admitted, "When I wrote the last word of the Reflections, I no longer stood where I had when I wrote the first word. But the Germans, he added, still stood there."²¹⁴

Not only had Thomas extolled Germany's virtue and culture in the Reflections, he had also defended his personal decision to be a non-political writer. By re-examining his artistic, intellectual and political beliefs, he had found it necessary to attack the 'Zivilisationsliterat's' notion that

²¹³Ibid., p. 434. "What is this world? It is the world of politics, democracy; and that I had to take a position against it, that I had to stand with Germany in this war, and not, like civilization's literary man, with the enemy - this necessity stands out clearly to every discerning person in everything I wrote and put together in fifteen years of peace. But the impression that I stand alone today among German intellectuals with my belief that the human question is never to be solved politically, but only spiritually-morally, can be simply nothing more than an impression, it must be based on delusion."

²¹⁴As cited in Angall, Mann Reader, p. 493.

all art should have political consequences in order for it to be effective.²¹⁵ Thomas also stood by his belief in an 'ideales Deutschland', which according to the 'Zivilisationsliterat' is a myth.

All in all the Reflections were a summing up of Thomas' own still exceedingly 'Romantic' reading of the German "soul". What becomes clear from reading the Reflections is that Thomas persisted in upholding the concepts of classical idealism and classical Romanticism at a time when these ideals had lost any usefulness they might once have had. They simply were not applicable anymore. Throughout the war he continued to defend what he felt to be Germany's "superior culture", in disregard of the political realities around him. It must be remembered that Thomas was strongly rooted in his upper middle class upbringing, that he had led a very sheltered existence with no notion of the political realities of everyday life. He tended to be more introspective, concerning himself with the intellectual and theoretical rather than with the practical realities. This is very clear in his book, which showed no comprehension of contemporary political and social realities; there was no concrete evidence that he had the slightest understanding of

²¹⁵Hans Eichner, "Thomas Mann and Politics", in Hans H. Schulte and Gerald Chapple, ed., Thomas Mann: Ein Kolloquium, (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1978), p. 13.

the "Volk". His 'Volk' were still the happy farmers of Schumann's song, not the weavers, for example, described in Hauptmann's drama.

In a letter dated January 5, 1918 which bears the notation "NOT SENT", Heinrich makes references to Thomas' Reflections. Heinrich offers an insight into the nature of their ideological conflict by interpreting Thomas' book as his brother's constant need to upstage him. Unlike Thomas, Heinrich does not constantly compare himself to his brother. According to Heinrich, Thomas is not capable of freeing himself from the fraternal relationship, which was hindering him from thinking and acting independently. As Heinrich states in the letter: "As far as I am concerned I see myself as an independent human being, and 'my experience of the world' is not fraternal but simply my own. You do not get in my way".²¹⁶ As far as Heinrich is concerned everyone is entitled to his own opinions.²¹⁷

Heinrich interprets Thomas's actions during the war as just another way in which Thomas was trying to prove himself not only to his brother but also to others. But, it must be remembered that Thomas was living through what became really a socially uprooting revolutionary time in German

²¹⁶Heinrich Mann, Letter to Thomas Mann, January 5, 1918, as cited in Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 184.

²¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 184. For entire letter see Appendix A.

history. The form of government changed, the aristocracy was stripped of their special privileges, the working class became a stronger social and political force and the Social Democratic Party became more popular, to mention only a few of the changes. Yet, this should not obscure the fact that Thomas was deeply hurt by his brother; his Reflections were filled with emotional outbursts attempting self-justification for his pro-war sentiments. On the other hand, when one looks back now and examines the Reflections and the circumstances surrounding the brothers' conflict, it would seem that Thomas was overreacting. In later years, Thomas never refuted the Reflections even though he no longer believed much of what he had written in his book. But, the book remained an integral part of his personal development. A more detailed discussion of Thomas' changing political views and the brothers' reconciliation will be given in the next chapter.

PART THREE

THE BROTHERS' RECONCILIATION

CHAPTER EIGHT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND RECONCILIATION

The widespread feeling of war enthusiasm which had prevailed in Germany in 1914, deteriorated into one of disenchantment and revulsion; the shortage of food, clothing and other essentials throughout the war, had rendered living conditions in Germany unbearable. Germany's defeat was inevitable. William II's popularity was quickly diminishing, even threatening his future as Kaiser. Discontent surfaced also within the army and the navy, both completely exhausted and war weary; major uprisings spread. The real revolutionaries were to be found in the ranks of the Socialist Party, who by now had divided into two opposing groups: the Spartacists, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, wanted to turn Germany into a Soviet Republic; the Majority Socialists wanted to establish a parliamentary democracy.²¹⁸ The result of this split in the Socialist Party was a struggle for absolute power which in the months

²¹⁸Peter Gay, Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider, (New York: Harper and Row Pub., Inc., 1970), p. 12.

following the end of the war would determine Germany's future.

Before the outbreak of the November Revolution, however, two decisive events had taken place. The first, the abdication of William II on November 9, 1918; this date also marked the proclamation of the Republic by the Socialist Phillip Scheidemann; the Wilhelmian Empire had come to an end. The second was the revolt of the sailors in Kiel which set off a series of revolutionary events all over Germany. "One of the strangest things about the November 1918 Revolution was the speed with which the soldiers' and workers' soviets, or councils, mushroomed all over Germany in a matter of days."²¹⁹ The uprisings took place most notably in Berlin, Bremen, the Ruhr area and Munich and were prompted by a desire for peace rather than for radical social change.²²⁰

After much turmoil, the way was open for an election on January 15, 1919 and the National Constituent Assembly was ultimately convened. Though the Majority Socialists failed to capture a majority, a democracy had been established. On February 6, 1919, Friedrich Ebert, the first president of the

²¹⁹Alex de Jonge, The Weimar Chronicle: Prelude to Hitler, (New York: Paddington Press, Ltd., 1978), p. 12.

²²⁰Holborn, Modern Germany, p. 512.

Republic, opened the Constituent Assembly at Weimar and the Weimar Republic was born.

The first four years of this newly founded Republic would prove to be quite turbulent, plagued as it was by a number of crises: an astronomical inflation, the bloody civil war, the re-emergence of the military as a factor in politics, the frequency of political assassination, the imposition of the Versailles Treaty, the Kapp Putsch and other attempts at internal subversion, the French occupation of the Ruhr.²²¹

Amidst all this political and social chaos was one positive note: the tremendous growth and development of the cultural life in the Weimar Republic. In the 1920s, Berlin was a major cultural centre with cabarets and theaters and an incredibly rich musical, literary and artistic life. Against the background of the confused political events in Weimar, it all seemed that moral authority, and indeed all talent flowed through exclusively cultural elements.²²² The Weimar era witnessed moreover great advances in technology and science; in architecture, there was the Bauhaus movement; painting and theatre were marked by the Expressionist movement; important artistic successes were produced by the German film industry,

²²¹Gay, Weimar Culture, p. 11.

²²²de Jonge, Weimar Chronicle, p. 169.

for example, The Blue Angel, based on Heinrich Mann's novel Professor Unrat.²²³

Whatever notable achievements there were in the cultural sphere of Weimar, the fact could not be altered that in balance serious problems were prevalent that threatened the very life of the Republic. One major inherent weakness was the lack of any type of distinguished Republican Establishment. Germans of the Weimar generation tended to describe themselves as 'good democrats', though the term democracy was an abstract one and perhaps meaningless. From the outset, the Republic failed to separate itself fully from the preceding regime.²²⁴

This turbulent background makes more understandable Heinrich and Thomas Mann's subsequent change in political views. Their ideological conflict during the war had been a long and bitter one. Of the two, it was Thomas who had been more emotionally affected by the entire incident, and he rejected Heinrich's initial attempt towards a reconciliation. They did not renew their relationship until January 1, 1922 when Thomas sent a short note to his brother who had been quite ill in hospital.

Before examining the exchange of letters which led to their eventual reconciliation, it is revealing to consider

²²³Dill, Germany, p. 325-326.

²²⁴de Jonge, Weimar Chronicle, p. 186

two articles which dealt with the brother's views regarding the possibility of world peace.

At Christmas in 1917, the magazine Das Berliner Tageblatt had proposed the topic regarding the possibility of world peace, and had requested various writers to respond. Heinrich submitted an article on December 25, 1917, entitled "Leben - nicht Zerstörung" (Life - Not Destruction). In it Heinrich was optimistic that world peace could be achieved to the degree that democracy was the answer.

Wir sollen wissen und uns bewußt bleiben, daß die Ansichten und Urteile, die uns den Krieg als erträgliches Auskunftsmittel oder gar als befreiendes Erlebnis zeigten, falsch waren und niemals richtig werden können. Die große Zeit soll künftig der Friede sein: das Leben, nicht seine Zerstörung. Der Friede soll erhöht und bereichert werden durch wahrhaftes Erleben.

Wir Deutschen haben, nun wir zur Demokratie heranwachsen, vor uns das allergrößte Erleben. Ein Volk erlangt nicht die Selbstherrschaft, ohne über den Menschen viel zu lernen, und mit reiferen Organen das Leben zu handhaben. Güte und die Annahme einer menschlichen Gleichheit, jene schöne Vorliebe des gereiften achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, warum sollten sie nicht wiederkehren - und auf festerem Erdboden vielleicht, seitdem er so viel Blut getrunken hat? Demokratie, Erkenntnis, Friede sind Wege. 225

Thomas' article on the same subject appeared on December 27, 1917 entitled "Weltfrieden?" (World Peace?). From the title one can already anticipate the fact that

²²⁵Heinrich Mann, Life Not Destruction, December 25, 1917, as cited by Kantorowicz, Heinrich und Thomas Mann, p. 32-33.

Thomas is sceptical about the prospects of world peace and about democracy. In view of Heinrich's response to it, it is important to quote from Thomas' article at some length since he felt that it was a message to him personally.

Selbst das größte Gefühl wird klein, wenn es sich aufputzt mit großen Begriffen; ein bißchen Güte von Mensch zu Mensch ist besser als alle Liebe zur Menschheit. So ist es, glaube es nur! (...) Werde besser du selbst, weniger rechthaberisch, - dünkelt, weniger angreiferisch - selbstgerecht, bevor du den Philanthropen spielst. Es mag einer großen Sukzeß haben, der sehr schön zu sagen versteht: "Ich liebe Gott!" Wenn er aber unterdessen seinen Brüder hasset, dann ist, ..., seine Gottesliebe nichts als schöne Literatur und ein Opferrauch, welcher nicht steigt ... - Weltfriede ... Keinen Tag, auch in tiefster nationaler Erbitterung nicht, bin ich des Gedankens unfähig gewesen, daß der Haß und die Feindschaft unter den Völkern Europas zuletzt eine Täuschung, ein Irrtum ist - ... 226

The two articles illustrate the brothers' differences of opinion, but Heinrich interpreted Thomas' article, mistakenly, as "an olive branch of peace"²²⁷, and he subsequently, proceeded to write a letter to Thomas which had the title "Attempt at Reconciliation", dated December 30, 1917. This first attempt at a reconciliation with his brother proved futile. In it, Heinrich had set out to clarify many of Thomas' misconceptions in regard to their quarrel; he re-stated his political stance during the war in

²²⁶Thomas Mann, World Peace?, December 27, 1917, as cited by Kantorowicz, Heinrich und Thomas Mann, p. 33-35.

²²⁷Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 179.

light of their intellectual and artistic differences even before the war.

(The letter is given in its entirety in the appendix since it will be helpful in understanding Thomas' later response.²²⁸) A short abstract from another letter, dealing with the Zola essay, will serve to illustrate Heinrich's point of view.

It was in my protest, entitled Zola, that I took issue with those who, as I saw it, were rushing forward to do damage. It was not aimed at you but against a legion. (...) you yourself write sadly (sic); - and your final argument should only be the reproach of brotherly hate? I can assure you, if not prove to you, that it is not true. I have never acted on that emotion - and have, on the contrary, tried to act against it... 229

The letter is a moving one although it contains to the point of injustice, vestiges of their overwrought quarrel.

Thomas refused Heinrich's valiant first attempt at reconciliation. He was simply not prepared to forget as easily as Heinrich was, all the pain he had suffered. Thomas had watched his 'glorious' war become a bloodbath unparalleled in the history of Europe and had devoted two years of his life to defend Germany's position. At the expense of neglecting his real vocation as a writer of

²²⁸Heinrich Mann, Letter to Thomas Mann, Versuch einer Versöhnung, December 30, 1917, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 181. For entire letter see Appendix B.

²²⁹Ibid., as cited in Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 181.

fiction, he had felt compelled to produce the voluminous self-justification of his Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man; he could not bring himself to give in to what was, objectively, a self-righteous and rigid offer of reconciliation.²³⁰ His reply followed on January 3, 1918.²³¹ The letter was highly emotional, but Heinrich might have expected its tone since he had previously predicted Thomas' response to the war.

Despite the letter's tone of stubbornness, could the answer have been simply stubborn pride? Could it not rather have been much more a statement on Thomas' part that he had finally achieved his independence of his brother, an indication that he had finally liberated himself from the fraternal bond he felt as a hindrance in his pursuit of finding himself and his personal freedom.²³² It is not necessary to quote Thomas' letter in full in order to attain an insight into the inner turmoil Thomas was experiencing at the time: a few sentences will show the anguish.

But things which you allowed yourself to say in your Zola essay and expected me to take - no, I have never allowed myself such liberties or expected any man to put up with such. (...) It is

²³⁰Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 181-182.

²³¹Thomas Mann, Letter to Heinrich Mann, January 3, 1918, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 182-183. For entire letter see Appendix C.

²³²Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 182.

not true that my conduct in the war has been "extreme". Yours was, in fact to the point of being utterly detestable. But I have not suffered and struggled for two years, neglected my dearest projects, ... just to answer a letter which - understandably - exudes triumph, ... and concludes that I need not regard you as an enemy. 233

Heinrich's response to his brother's refusal for a reconciliation was a combination of anguish and understanding.²³⁴ On January 5, 1918, Heinrich, who was in Munich, sat down to write a letter in response to Thomas' remarks. The letter bears the heading "NOT SENT". Perhaps Heinrich felt that his reply would not accomplish anything positive. The appearance of the Zola essay, Thomas' Reflections, and these letters marked the brothers' ideological conflict which had become such an intellectual cause célèbre during the war.²³⁵ In the light of these circumstances, Heinrich's letter is very touching. Only a few sentences will be cited here to grasp the emotional content.

The second sentence of the Zola article has nothing to do with you and the few pages that do would still stand almost word for word if only other people were at fault. (...) Self-righteousness? Oh no - rather a feeling of guilt with those who like me, know how much we who led the art and

²³³Heinrich Mann, Letter of January 3, 1918, as cited in Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 182-183.

²³⁴Heinrich Mann, Letter of January 5, 1918, see Appendix A.

²³⁵Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 183.

intellect of our generation were responsible for allowing the catastrophe to take place. (...) ...in short, your inability to ever grasp the real seriousness of anyone's life but your own. (...) The inability to take another person's life seriously in the end leads to monstrous things -

...

I do not know if anyone can actually help his fellow-men "to live"; but for God's sake don't ever allow our literature to help them die! (...) - if God wills, you will have another 40 years to prove yourself, if not to "assert" yourself. The hour will come, I hope in which you will see people, not shadows; and then perhaps me. 236

The last paragraph of this letter would prove to be a prophetic proclamation on Heinrich's part. It quite accurately foreshadowed Thomas' eventual conversion to democracy during the years of the Weimar Republic.

Their first exchange took place before Thomas had finished work on his Reflections. Perhaps it was due to this that Thomas could not accept his brother's initial proposal for reconciliation. If Thomas had accepted, perhaps he would never have finished the Reflections and he must have been aware that the Reflections constituted a crucial point in his personal development as a writer; for his own sake, he refused Heinrich's offer.

But there were other reasons: as Heinrich so aptly had observed in his unsent letter of January 5, 1918. Thomas was incapable of relating to people and events outside

²³⁶Heinrich Mann, Letter of January 5, 1918, see Appendix A.

himself. Thomas could not take another person's life seriously because at this stage at least he was too wrapped up with his own inner struggles and concerns.²³⁷ Evidence of what Heinrich called self-indulgence can be seen by the fact that Thomas never made any reference in his war writings to the atrocious realities of war. To Thomas at the time, war was seen in the abstract as something glorious and beneficial. But by 1918, Thomas had to face the harsh reality that Germany was going to be defeated, quite a different situation when compared to Germany with its initial successful invasion of Belgium in 1914. Thomas could not accept Heinrich's appeal because it was becoming more and more apparent that Heinrich had been right all along; it was easy for Heinrich to be humble now in his hour of triumph.²³⁸ Yet, how could Heinrich possibly feel triumphant when Europe lay in ruins and millions of innocent people had sacrificed their lives? In his letter to Thomas that he never sent, he had posed this question. However, it is probable that if he had sent it, an ultimate reconciliation would have been even more difficult.

In March 1918, with the completion of the Reflections, it was evident that Thomas had reached a new

²³⁷Reed, Thomas Mann, p. 224.

²³⁸Ibid., p. 224.

phase in intellectual as well as personal development. Thomas had reached the ultimate "limit of his conservative and self-justificatory self. Thereafter he wrote no further war propaganda. (...) But once this self had been turned over in all its contradictions, nuances and subtleties: once Thomas had proved himself as an independent personality, a mind distinct from Heinrich's, there was no threat: and the way to eventual reconciliation was open."²³⁹

In a letter written on April 18, 1919, to Karl Strecker, a writer who had praised the Reflections, Thomas offers an insight into his newly acquired feeling of self-confidence and outlines the differences between himself and his brother. This letter offers a positive picture of their opposing world views and drops what some critics feel to be the spiteful and negative tone of the Reflections. The letter is cited in its entirety in the appendix²⁴⁰, since it offers a confirmation of Thomas' imminent change of attitude in respect to his brother and his brother's political views. Thomas states that he can see the differences of temperament, character, morality and experience only when critics make a comparison and set one brother up against the other. Their

²³⁹Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 197.

²⁴⁰Thomas Mann, Letter to Karl Strecker, April 18, 1919, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 198. For entire letter see Appendix D.

conflict was founded on oppositional principles which nevertheless were firmly based in a deeply-felt brotherliness. Thomas sees here too the differences as being those inherent to the country at large: the nordic-Protestant and Roman-Catholic; emphasis on conscience and emphasis on activistic will; ethical individualism and socialism.

It appeared that Thomas had put the differences behind him. He was now ready to plunge himself into his fiction and begin creating again. He was finished clamouring for the war and against his brother. As early as 1919, Thomas was already showing signs of his conversion to democracy. "Despite his own acknowledged conservatism he welcomed democracy not only because he felt it historically inevitable, but because he discovered - to his own surprise - that democracy was really no more than a new word for what we know as classical humanism".²⁴¹

Thomas still refused, however, to renew immediately his relationship with Heinrich. But in January 1922, Heinrich was admitted to hospital with an acute attack of appendicitis. Complications arose when Heinrich developed peritonitis, his condition becoming so serious that Thomas came to the realization that in a life-threatening situation, they should put their differences behind them. Consequently,

²⁴¹Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 199.

Thomas took the necessary step; the brothers were reunited after what had been a long and emotionally very taxing quarrel. The decisive move was made on January 31, 1922.

Dear Heinrich,

Accept with these flowers my dearest wishes - I was not permitted to send them earlier. Those were difficult days that lie behind us, but now we are over the hill and will get better - together if in your heart you feel as I do.

T. 242

The brother's relationship would be quite harmonious and would last right until Heinrich's death in 1950. In time, Thomas came to forget about the Zola essay even though he could never forgive Heinrich for writing it. With their ideological conflict behind them, Thomas and Heinrich embarked upon a new stage. During the Weimar Republic, they formed a mutual bond in support of the forces of democracy and the Republic. It is to this period in their lives that we now turn.

²⁴²Ibid., p. 202.

CHAPTER NINE: THEIR EVOLUTION IN THEIR POLITICAL THINKING

Not strangely, since we are dealing with two very fine and alert minds, each of the brothers continued to develop as long as life lasted. Neither ever remained static. The directions each took may have taken them to different points but the points were along the same road. Since Heinrich's "liberalism" ante-dated Thomas' by almost twenty-years, it is perhaps no wonder that Heinrich's ultimate political position was more radical than his brother's. What is important is that each developed at his own rate in his own way.

At the end of World War One, Thomas finally awoke from his "Zauberschlaf". The horrendous aftermath of the war forced Thomas to come to the realization that the German 'Kultur' which he had extolled throughout the war had in the event given rise to widespread destitution and destruction exactly as Heinrich had anticipated. The spirit of democracy, whose arrival Thomas had both predicted and fought, had in the course of time prevailed in Germany. And now Thomas considered the new German Republic as something good, at least better than he had expected and certainly

preferable to the society preceding it.²⁴³ In effect, Thomas had evolved towards the views Heinrich propounded during the war.

Thomas' switch to democracy in the 1920s appeared to refute the arguments set down in his Reflections. This is partially true, as will be seen. In a famous speech Von deutscher Republik (The German Republic), October 15, 1922, Thomas makes his first public statement in support of the Republic. This speech was written on the occasion of Gerhart Hauptmann's forthcoming sixtieth birthday. In it, there is ample evidence of Thomas' newer political views. One of the most noticeable is his changed perception of war. Whereas, in 1914, he had been swept up by the war hysteria, now, after the defeat in 1918, Thomas faced and expressed some harsh realities.

War is a lie, its issues are a lie; whatever honourable emotion the individual may bring to it, war itself is today stripped of all honour, and to any straight and clear-eyed vision reveals itself as the triumph of all that is brutal and vulgar in the soul of the race, as the arch-foe of culture and thought, and vileness. 244

Thomas then came to the point of the speech, support for the Republic.

My aim, which I express quite candidly, is to win you ... to the side of the Republic; to the side of

²⁴³Winston, "Being Brothers", p. 359.

²⁴⁴Thomas Mann, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter, The German Republic, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), p. 9.

what is called democracy, and what I call humanity, because of a distaste which I share with you for the meretricious overtones of the other word. (democracy) 245

Thomas anticipated that this change, so different from the negative view of democracy he had expressed in his Reflections, would cause a reaction from his audience and he therefore tried to justify his new political stance. He said that they must be wondering about his apolitical and anti-democratic book (Reflections) and would now think of him as a renegade and a turncoat. But he retracts nothing: he had told the truth then, and he tells the truth today. It is not fair to criticize this, because after all he is a conservative and it had been his natural role in the world to preserve and not destroy.²⁴⁶

In the concluding statement Thomas praises the Republic and democracy which he sees as the embodiment of the rule of humanity and humane ideals.

We shall do well to be concerned with ... our own national concern, that is, with humanity. Humanity ... is truly the German mean, the Beautiful and Human, of which our finest spirits have dreamed. We are honouring its explicit, legal form, whose meaning and aim we take to be the unification of

²⁴⁵Ibid., p. 11.

²⁴⁶Ibid., p. 22. There is an interesting comparison here with Gottfried Benn's early stance regarding the establishment of the Nazi State (Antwort an die literarischen Emigranten, May 1933, read over the radio) with his eventual disillusionment and refusal to deny his early naive stance. (Der neue Staat und die Intellektuellen, 1934 and Kunst und Drittes Reich, 1941).

our political and national life, when we yield our still stiff and unaccustomed tongues to utter the cry: "Long live the Republic!" 247

Thomas' argument that his Republic speech was a logical continuation from his Reflections, can be interpreted two ways. Thomas was right if one compares his concern with humanity in 1922, that is with 'Menschlichkeit' and 'Humanität', with the same concern for humanity he had in 1914-1918. Both in the years 1914-1918 and 1922, Thomas was advocating the kind of state which he felt would enable people to develop their individual potential without turning every personal utterance into a matter of politics and ideology. In 1914, Thomas felt that the authoritarian monarchy characteristic of Germany, was the best protection against the intrusion of politics into the private sphere; however, by 1922, Thomas had come to the realization that this type of state belonged to the past, and that guarantees for privacy could indeed be offered also by a modern democracy.²⁴⁸ Thomas was quite right in insisting that there were no inconsistencies to be found between his Republic speech and his Reflections. He now "claimed that the phrase 'deutsche Republik' was as fitting and natural as the phrase 'deutsches Volk'." ²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 45.

²⁴⁸Eichner, "Thomas Mann and Politics", p. 15.

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 15.

It must be pointed out that the concept of humanism with which he is primarily concerned at this time, is a new, personal fulfillment of the ideal of 'Humanität', of Weimar humanism. Thomas has no interest in the Rousseauistic humanitarian type²⁵⁰ he had attacked in his Reflections.²⁵¹ He had come a long way in his political thinking.

After the reconciliation, the brothers became closer not only in a personal sense but politically as well. Before examining the climax in Thomas' personal political development as expressed in his novel The Magic Mountain, it will help to discuss the change in Heinrich's political views.

Heinrich was not plunged into pessimism by Germany's collapse in 1918. He thought optimistically that through that collapse fate had given the country the possibility of embarking upon a new, hopefully better, stage in her development. With the collapse of the Wilhelmian Empire and the founding of the new German Republic in November 1918,

²⁵⁰In 1762, Rousseau wrote Le Contrat Social containing his political theory and humanism: Man is born neither good nor bad, but with certain potentialities he strives to realize. There is a close connection between the structure of society and the moral psychological condition of the individual. Man cannot be truly free unless he is emotionally secure, which will only come about in a society of equals where each man depends on a system of laws which are the same for all men and are made by the entire community.

²⁵¹Bruford, The German Tradition, p. 243.

Heinrich was confident that an age of democracy would now be ushered in. He felt that the Germans should accept defeat and turn it into a victory for democracy.²⁵² During the November Revolution in Munich, Heinrich had become swept up by the revolutionary spirit. On November 8, 1918, the leader of the independent Socialist Party (USPD) Kurt Eisner, proclaimed the establishment of a Bavarian Democratic and Social Republic. Real political power was held by the various workers', soldiers' and peasants' councils (Räte). Many left-leaning intellectuals such as Heinrich, Martin Buber, Wilhelm Herzog and Ernst Toller supported Eisner's Republic. It was Eisner's intense idealism and his commitment to pacifism, humanism and ethical socialism which greatly appealed to these writers. Eisner was also a writer who like them believed in bringing higher ideals to the masses as well as transforming society in accordance with higher moral and spiritual values.²⁵³ Eisner's assassination in February 1919 came as a harsh blow for Heinrich. Eisner had been, in his opinion, "the true representative of humanitarian democracy and ethical socialism."²⁵⁴ After Eisner's death, Heinrich began to undertake a more active literary role in the struggle for democracy.

²⁵²Gross, The Writer and Society, p. 186.

²⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 182.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 194.

In one of Heinrich's first essays entitled Sinn und Idee der Revolution (The Meaning and Idea of Revolution), which appeared in December 1918, he outlined some of his views regarding the new Republic. According to Heinrich, a German victory would have prevented the Revolution from taking place and the corruptness and authoritarian rule of the Wilhelmsian era would have been allowed to continue after the war. In the event, their overthrow permitted the advent of democracy and the formation of the Republic. Heinrich strongly felt though that the Republic could be successful only if the German people supported republican principles wholeheartedly. What this entailed was that ideals would have to be placed above personal advantage, the welfare of the individual above the demands of ultimate power.²⁵⁵ For these republican principles to take hold he did not feel it was necessary to alter the whole structure of German society. According to Heinrich, the key to a healthy republic was not social and economic transformation but rather spiritual and moral change, a change much more important than the former.²⁵⁶ At this early stage Heinrich was still optimistic

²⁵⁵Ibid., p. 186-187.

²⁵⁶Ibid., p. 187.

about the Republic's success.²⁵⁷

In May 1919, Heinrich wrote another essay entitled Kaiserreich und Republik (Empire and Republic) in which he now acknowledged the fact that the Republic had serious problems. The terms of the Versailles Treaty had imposed harsh peace terms on Germany and they in turn bred feelings of bitterness and revenge. Heinrich realized it would be impossible to change the spiritual and moral values necessary for the triumph of democratic ideals now, in such an atmosphere of widespread discontent. There were other obvious shortcomings. Heinrich could not perceive any kind of general enthusiasm for political reform. This situation arose partly because militaristic values were re-emerging and becoming a decisive influence even in everyday affairs. There was also widespread social injustice, for example, child labour, exploitation of women in the work force and the difficulty in the organization of labour unions.²⁵⁸ In short, Heinrich was noting the same criticisms of the conditions in the new Republic which he had seen from 1900-

²⁵⁷Ibid., p. 183-184. Heinrich's alternative, then, was to found a council for intellectuals which would represent what he called the 'geistige Arbeiter', the 'mental' as opposed to the 'manual' workers of Munich. (...) On the whole, none of these councils of intellectuals were very effective and hence most disappeared by the early months of 1919."

²⁵⁸Ibid., p. 189.

1918 when criticizing Wilhelmian society. However, by 1919 there was one difference. Previously these problems had existed within an authoritarian and tyrannical state. The only hope of solving these problems had seemed the introduction of a new form of government. By 1918, though, even with the establishment of a new Republic to replace the Empire, the problems still continued to exist. According to Heinrich, something else would be required in order to transform the Republic into a functioning and generally acceptable democratic state.²⁵⁹

Before focusing his attention on how democracy could become a reality to the people of the Weimar Republic, Heinrich first outlined what he felt to be a crucial issue: the Germans as a whole had not divorced themselves from pre-war authoritarian ideals and were not ready to embrace democratic ideals. The Germans would have to come to an appreciation of the fact that the Republic was indeed better than a monarchy which had upheld authoritarianism and militarism that had in turn produced a corrupt and degenerate society.²⁶⁰ In Heinrich's opinion, the only way democratization could become reality was if the German mode of thinking could be transformed by means of moral and

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 189-190.

²⁶⁰Ibid., p. 190.

intellectual changes. It was the individual's responsibility to become more involved in governmental processes, at the same time to place more emphasis on the values of freedom and democracy. This was all very idealistic; however, Heinrich hoped that the typical German citizen would do this if encouraged by an exemplary model.²⁶¹ He then revived his old theory of literary politics in which the intellectual would now assume an active role in educating the German people about democratic principles. Basically, it would be the intellectual's task to act as moral guide, educators in popular democracy as well as constructive critics, and thereby ensure that the Weimar Republic become a success.²⁶² Between 1920-1923 Heinrich personally assumed the responsibility for performing each of these tasks. To fulfill this spiritual obligation took a lot of effort and hard work entailing speeches, essays and public appearances. He knew that the only way the Republic would become truly democratic was for Germany to become a land filled with genuine democrats.²⁶³

By 1920, Heinrich had changed his political views from liberalism to socialism, though his concept of socialism

²⁶¹Ibid., p. 190.

²⁶²Ibid., p. 191.

²⁶³Ibid., p. 191.

was hardly a Marxist one. His socialism was not based on economics nor on the idea of class struggle. Instead, the term socialism was to be interpreted in an ethical and emotional context. According to Heinrich, socialism was seen as the moral impulse necessary for the attainment of human dignity, freedom and equality.²⁶⁴ Heinrich's concept of socialism was not based on historical materialism but rather on love and the idea of humanity. In summary, Heinrich's concept of socialism could be described as an extension of what he called the "will to goodness".²⁶⁵

By 1920, then, Heinrich had completed his political development from a left wing liberal to an ethical socialist. He, like many left wing intellectuals at the time, now began actively to defend the Weimar Republic, despite its shortcomings, by doing everything in his power to improve conditions which would ensure a victory for democracy, that is, an unequivocal majority in the Reichstag.²⁶⁶

After 1920 and up until 1923, Heinrich continued to view the progress of democracy with optimism. At this point he still had high hopes that the Republic would become a democratic state. But certain events in the year 1923 marked

²⁶⁴Ibid., p. 193.

²⁶⁵Ibid., p. 193.

²⁶⁶Ibid., p. 201.

an important turning point for all of Germany. High inflation developed in that year; the French occupied the Ruhr district (for non-payment of reparations) for the greater part of 1923, causing much suffering and economic distress, and the ensuing monetary inflation wiped out the middle class. These events in turn lead Heinrich to reformulate his views in regard to the problems of the Weimar Republic.

The essays Heinrich wrote in 1923 were based on three important ideas central to his views. He felt that the industrial bourgeoisie had acquired too much wealth by gaining control of the state; they were using it, he could see, to their own economic advantage. He felt always that if spiritual values were given priority over material gains, the spirit of democracy would prevail. Soon disillusioned, he came to the realization that it was necessary to regulate wealth and power more extensively. He realized too that more socialization would be required before a firm basis for a free and genuinely republican society could be laid. Heinrich felt that he had not accomplished enough with his previous literary speeches and novels in support of democracy. The old private interests, he knew, still had enough power to operate without being checked; democracy had become nothing more than a catchword. The remedy for this kind of deterioration was in Heinrich's opinion to turn

Weimar into a socialist republic as opposed to the capitalist republic it had become. It would appear that Heinrich was gradually losing faith in the Republic which he saw as more interested in the domination of capitalistic ideals rather than democratic ones. In fact, the democracy for which Heinrich had risked his reputation was rotten at the core. It was the French who set its downfall in motion by demanding payment of reparations and by occupying the Ruhr.²⁶⁷ Heinrich was constrained to continue in his support of a government in which he was gradually losing faith. In a book entitled The Brothers Mann, one critic states that there is something moving and sad about Heinrich's stand to support a government he knew to be corrupt, incompetent, forever made up of coalitions, at the mercy of reparation overseers and its own ruling industrialists.²⁶⁸

A great deal of poignancy is seen in the fact that this writer, who more than any other, had been in the vanguard of the fight for the establishment of democracy in Germany, was becoming paralysed creatively by its ineffectiveness, once that democracy had arrived.

²⁶⁷Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 216.

²⁶⁸Ibid., p. 216.

In showing the change in Thomas' stand some observations will follow about Der Zauberberg (The Magic Mountain), published in 1924. He had begun the work on this novel before the outbreak of the First World War, but the war had interrupted him. Instead of continuing the work on his novel, he had concentrated on the Reflections. It is in The Magic Mountain that abstract concepts of the Reflections and their refutations are realized in concrete terms.

The hero of the novel is Hans Castorp, a representative of the mercantile middle class who comes in contact with a wide spectrum of colourful and interesting characters at a sanatorium. These figures are portrayed as a microcosm of pre-war society, each character a representative or personification of a particular type of pre-war idealism. The most striking and interesting characters who have the greatest influence upon Hans Castorp are two opposing types: Settembrini and Naphta. Hans finds himself caught between the views the two attempt to force upon him; he refuses to choose sides and instead draws his own conclusions, synthesizing their conflicting idealisms.

The one Settembrini, is an Italian humanist and a Freemason. He is a "vanguard fighter for the idea of humanity, of progress, of democracy, of world peace, ..."²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹Berendsohn, Thomas Mann, p. 74.

He is an advocate of reason and introduces Hans to the concept of 'Geist' and what exercising his inner freedom can mean for him.²⁷⁰ In sum, Settembrini is in fact the formerly detested 'Zivilisationsliterat' of the Reflections, representing in a way, Thomas' brother Heinrich. But he is presented in a positive light; Thomas' hostility to his brother's liberal way of thinking is no longer evident; hatred has been turned into the humour of irony - Settembrini is a 'parody' of Heinrich. Settembrini's political outlook is to be regarded as, at least to a degree, justified.²⁷¹

Settembrini's political and spiritual opponent is Naphta, an Eastern convert from Judaism who had been trained as a Jesuit. Naphta "represents the intellectual revolt against reason in Thomas Mann's pre-war Europe."²⁷² In Naphta's opinion, Europe is on the road to an inevitable catastrophe brought about by fierce rivalry among the capitalistic nations. A war in Naphta's opinion could in all probability solve many of Europe's problems.

All in all Settembrini is the democratic rationalistic West representative and Naphta the Byzantine totalitarian East. Politically, Settembrini is the liberal;

²⁷⁰Bruford, The German Tradition, p. 210.

²⁷¹Ibid., p. 211.

²⁷²Ibid., p. 215.

Naphta, the conservative. Hans is representative of Germany and stands between the two, preferring the luxury of staying in the middle but ultimately having to choose.

The chapter entitled Schnee (Snow) becomes the climax in Hans' intellectual and personal development. Hans experiences a 'revelation' which helps him to come to terms with the opposing world views of Settembrini and Naphta. One day, Hans goes skiing in the mountains but gets caught in a snowstorm; exhausted he falls asleep. He dreams seeing an idyllic sunny 'classical' landscape where people are enjoying life to its fullest.

...Menschen, Sonnen- und Meereskinder, regten sich und ruhten überall, verständig-heitere, schöne junge Menschheit, so angenehm zu schauen - Hans Castorps ganzes Herz öffnete sich weit, ja schmerzlich weit und liebend ihrem Augenblick. 273

Hans' impression of the wonderful and beautiful scene in front of him has a profound positive effect upon him.

Das ist ja reizend! dachte Hans Castorp von ganzem Herzen. Das ist ja überaus erfreulich und gewinnend! Wie hübsch, gesund und klug und glücklich sie sind! Ja, nicht nur wohlgestalt - auch klug und lebenswürdig von innen heraus. Das ist es, was mich so rührt und ganz verliebt macht: der Geist und Sinn, so möchte ich sagen, der ihrem Wesen zugrunde liegt, in dem sie miteinander sind und leben! 274

²⁷³Thomas Mann, Der Zauberberg, (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1924), p. 449.

²⁷⁴Ibid., p. 450.

But the idyllic suddenly evaporates as Hans is confronted with a grisly and revolting scene. His gaze is drawn to a temple in which he sees two old women rending and devouring a child's corpse.

Zwei graue Weiber, halbnackt, zottelhaarig, mit hängenden Hexenbrüsten und fingerlangen Zitzen, hantierten dort drinnen zwischen flackernden Feuerpfannen aufs gräßlichste. Über einem Becken zerrissen sie ein kleines Kind, zerrissen es in wilder Stille mit den Händen - Hans Castorp sah zartes blondes Haar mit Blut verschmiert - und verschlangen die Stücke, daß die spröden Knöchlein ihnen im Maule knackten und das Blut von ihren wüsten Lippen troff. Grausende Eiskälte hielt Hans Castorp in Bann. Er wollte die Hände vor die Augen schlagen und konnte nicht. Er wollte fliehen und konnte nicht. 275

He tries to close his eyes to this but cannot. This dream represents a realization of the forces which underlies the positions of both Settembrini and Naphta. Settembrini's world is the elegance, the refinement and form of the 'classical' humanistic state of mankind; Naphta's knowledge of the dark side is incorporated in the figures of the naked savagery which is taking place at the very 'heart' of an Apollonian city! The 'classical state' is Thomas Mann's vision of civilization as a 'trotzdem' in the face of chaos - it is his answer to the horror which he must acknowledge as being there. Hope lies in mankind's possibility of positive response. The dream is also symbolic of Thomas' sympathy

²⁷⁵Ibid., p. 451.

with death. In the end, as Thomas points out, "interest in death and disease, in the pathological, in decay, is only a kind of expression of our interest in life, in man ... and ... that the experience of death is ultimately experience of life, and leads to man."²⁷⁶

Hans Castorp, fascinated throughout the book by sickness and death, learns a valuable lesson from his dream which had shown him where mankind's civilization had come from and what underlies it. In order to comprehend life completely, it is necessary to understand the abysses of the human soul, which include cruelty, sickness, sin, passion and death. A new humanism is the equivalent of brotherhood among men in the future.²⁷⁷ Hans comes to these conclusions after analyzing his dream as he realizes that he has escaped death.

... Ich will dem Tode Treue halten in meinem Herzen, doch mich hell erinnern, daß Treue zum Tode und Gewesenen nur Bosheit und finstere Wollust, und Menschenfeindschaft ist, bestimmt sie unser Denken und Regieren. Der Mensch soll um der Güte und Liebe willen dem Tode keinen Herrschaft einräumen über seine Gedanken. ²⁷⁸

He realizes that death should not be allowed to rule over one's thoughts completely, but that one must, however, be aware of the fact that death will always be an integral

²⁷⁶Berendsohn, Thomas Mann, p. 124.

²⁷⁷Ibid., p. 75.

²⁷⁸Mann, Zauberberg, p. 452-453.

aspect of life. Knowledge of death emphasizes the importance of the present moment, for it is only in the present moment that one can fully experience 'Güte' und 'Liebe'. It is death that signifies the 'Gewesene', which represents the historical element; whereas 'Güte' und 'Liebe' have to do only with the here and now.

In real terms, this passage articulates Hans Castorp's (and by extension may perhaps be considered Thomas Mann's) transition from the 'apolitical' man to a preeminently politically oriented thinker; it is the political moment and not the historical that becomes important. In effect, The Magic Mountain constitutes Thomas' "Betrachtungen eines Politischen".

CONCLUSION

The brother's celebrated war-time quarrel was the reflection and result of differing political beliefs and intellectual developments prevalent in nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe.

Heinrich, a conservative in the 1890s during the early phase of his literary career when, as editor of the radical right wing magazine Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert, he wrote articles hostile to socialism, liberalism and industrialism: he had even written an article there in which he extolled the benefits and advantages of war. After leaving Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert, his conservative outlook waned, to be replaced by republican and democratic ideals. During the period just prior to World War One, Heinrich formulated his own theory of 'literary' politics calling for intellectuals to assume a politically more active role by way of their writing, the writers were to adhere to democratic and humanitarian principles, using them as guidelines for their work and literature; they would by affecting men's minds in the final analysis effect political action. Important to this theory was to be the amalgamation of 'Geist' and 'Tat'. It envisaged a struggle through the

medium of literature for better conditions: social, cultural, political and economic.

It was then too that Heinrich became fascinated by French writers and culture. In Heinrich's opinion, the government and people of France had realized certain moral, spiritual and political values in which Germany as a whole was sadly lacking. It was the progressiveness of their ideals which made France in his eyes a humanistic and enlightened haven.

Heinrich wrote several novels which were highly critical of the corrupt and degenerate social conditions prevalent in Wilhelminian Germany. He demonstrated in them the arrogance of the officialdom, the toadying and kowtowing to those same officials; the crass materialism of the 'new' bourgeoisie; the corrupt morals of an increasingly important aristocracy.

Thomas in the period preceding the First World War, considered himself to be apolitical. This phrase signified for him not political disinterest, but rather political thoughtfulness, a pose essentially intellectual, metaphysical, ethical and personal. To his view, literature and politics were to be kept separate from one another since literature would not change anything in the political realm, and, certainly history and his personal experience had taught him, that nothing done in the political sphere could enhance

the quality of literature.

While Heinrich concerned himself with the mutual effect of the individual and society on each other, Thomas stressed the spiritual and intellectual development of the individual sometimes to the exclusion of the social context.

The brothers' differences can be seen as representing different elements, all part and parcel of the German culture. Thomas, the nordic-Protestant with its emphasis on conscience and austerity and ethical individualism; Heinrich, the Southern, Catholic, public and mediterranean with its emphasis on activistic political will and social interaction. For a much longer time than Heinrich, Thomas was reluctant to analyse so critically the values and culture within which his development had taken place; basically he felt at one with it. Indeed, he always felt more at one with it than his brother.

In 1945, after the outbreak of the open quarrel, Heinrich, in an essay entitled Mein Brüder, showed great insight into Thomas' development. In it he showed great compassion and understanding for the difficulties Thomas experienced when confronted with his brother's realistic and prophetic vision of the way things were to develop. In 1914, afterall, the values Thomas held dear might well have been realized, given different people and different circumstances.

Ich hatte mein zeitgenössisches Deutschland früh
angezweifelt, zum berechtigten Unwillen meines

Bruders ... Er hat Deutschland, wie es war, vormals gehalten gegen die Wut der Welt und gegen eigene Bedenken. Sein Gewissen hatte einen schweren Weg, bis es gegen sein Land entschied ... Ihn mußte, mehr als die meisten, sein Deutschland enttäuschen. Was es seither aus sich gemacht hat - oder wie es erlaubt hat, daß man es zeige - Feind der Vernunft, des Gedankens, des Menschen: ein Anathem, das traf ihn persönlich, je später es ihn traf. Er fühlte sich verraten ...

Ein Überraschter in seinem Zorn muß wohl achtgeben, damit er nicht mit wenigen Bösewichtern, oder mit einem gerade lebenden Geschlecht von Boshaften, die Nation verwirft. Wenn wir nunmehr besprechen, was dieses Zeitalter tut, seine ganze schöne Bescherung, - wir reden selten und knapp: aber eher bin ich es, der in dem unglücklichen Land unseres Ursprunges keinen monströsen Einzelfall erblickt. 279

As we have seen, Thomas moved from what was actually an extremely conservative position to a realization that the values he considered 'conservative' were just as timely and real for the liberals of his Age as they were for him. The times had changed and the people who represented the values he had always held dear now came in different costume: republican, socialistic, democratic. He had always believed in an aristocracy of the heart (Buddenbrooks, Royal Highness). Now he came to the realization that the aristocratic possibility was not confined to people like Morten Schwarzkopf and Imma Spoelmann but could be found also in the socialists and democrats of Heinrich's Armen.

²⁷⁹Heinrich Mann, Mein Bruder (1945), as cited by Kantorowicz, Heinrich und Thomas Mann, p. 47-48.

Fundamentally, both brothers shared the same beliefs: (1) in the basic goodness and decency of humanity and in the dignity of the individual; (2) that individual actions have an influence, politically and socially; (3) in the benefit of the development of individual potential; (4) both abhorred political and social injustice.

Even though these their basic ideals resulted in disillusionment time and again, by the end of World War One both were well aware that the democratic state, as messy and imperfect as it was, was nevertheless at least a possible form within which the individual could breathe and survive.

Both had come along an arduous and difficult path. In the light of their early positions, their respective developments were extraordinary. From a bookishly, passive quiescent acquiescent intellectual in World War One, Thomas moved to become an active public figure forthrightly and vehemently expressive on public platforms in valiant attempts to 'do' something about the horror and tyranny of Hitler. Heinrich who had been so outspoken from 1913-1933 became increasingly withdrawn from the public scene. Part of this was of course due to language difficulty inherent in exile; (Heinrich was also blocked from France by the occupation and Vichy government) - he was still at the time of his death - thinking of 'moving on' - to the East to the workers' paradise where recognition and respect were promised him.

The brothers had come to a point where the conviction of their shared beliefs united them and made a fraternal co-existence possible. It would be looking to simplistically at their reconciliation as an easy one - it was an acceptance of differences, an agreeing to disagree. Their fates reflect distinctions within the historical realities of their time. One can only hope that their ultimate reconciliation will prove prophetic for the two German Republics.

APPENDIX A

Heinrich Mann, Letter to Thomas Mann, "Not Sent", January 5, 1918, as cited in Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 183-185.

Dear Tommy,

In the face of such bitterness I ought to keep silent and accept the 'separation for all time' in the way you present it. But I want to try every channel. I want to help you as far as possible to see things later, when all this is over, more justly. To a letter which betrayed not tenderness or suchlike but only arrogance I had to dictate to my wife the appropriate reply. But I never deliberately part for ever. I wait until the other party makes some effort towards rapprochement. That is the nature of my zealot's frivolity.

I did not seek an argument, not even over four pages - and it is with great regret I learn that one simple statement of opinion on my part has caused you to spend two years formulating a reply. I think it better - as long as consideration of my reputation does not oblige me to do otherwise - if I do not read your book - not out of disregard but because I prefer a normal natural relationship to you to a polemical one. As far as I can see you have underestimated your importance in my life as far as feelings are concerned, and overestimated it as far as intellectual influence is concerned. You have suffered from the latter. You must accept the truth of this, it is not meant abusively like the style of your letter, which shows more pathos than ethos. As far as I am concerned I see myself as an independent human being, and my "experience of life and the world" is not fraternal but simply my own. You do not get in my way. For instance I would be truly gladdened if you were to write something other than absurdities about French actions and virtues; whereas you - if it ever occurred to me to acknowledge Frederick of Prussia, do you know what you would do? You would throw all your notes to your Frederick in the fire.

"In inimicos" you once said, a 22 year old sitting at the piano in the via Argentina trento quattro, with your back turned to me. That is the way it has remained for you. But

you are still young, I can still dissuade you from it before it is too late, for it wasn't good for you then, nor is it now. Stop relating my life and actions always to yourself, it has nothing to do with you, would be precisely the same if you did not exist. The 2nd sentence of the Zola article has nothing to do with you and the few pages that do would still stand almost word for word if only other people were at fault. But some of these others have thought better of their attitudes, and I am again on friendly terms with them. I never separate deliberately for ever.

Self-righteousness? Oh no - rather a feeling of combined guilt with those who, like me, know how much we who led the art and intellect of our generation were responsible for allowing the catastrophe to take place. Self-probing, struggle is something others, perhaps more modest minds than you, have gone through, but after it came regret and renewed energy - not only "self-assertion" (which does not warrant such pains), not only "suffering" for the sake of oneself, this furious passion for your own "I". You owe several narrow but private works to this passion. You also owe your complete lack of respect for anything which doesn't suit you to it, your "contempt" which is more unreliable in you than any other person I know; in short your inability ever to grasp the real seriousness of anyone's life but your own.

Around you are irrelevant extras who signify "the people" to you, as in your hymns of Royal Highness. Extras have their own destiny, or even ethos? - Your ethos, who says I did not acknowledge it? I have always known it, I respected it as your subjective experience, and where portrayed in your works I did not long molest you with my reservations about its value for other people. But if I too consider myself in such a way, how does it appear to you? As the picture of a play-acting braggart and glittering hack. You poor fool!

The inability to take another's life seriously in the end leads to monstrous things - and so you find my letter which was an act of simple friendliness - "exuding triumph". Triumph over what? That everything "stands" well with and for me, namely the world in ruins and 10 million corpses rotting. That is some kind of justification! That is satisfaction to the ideologist! But I am not the kind of person to cut the misery and death of whole people according to the fancies of my spirit, not I. I do not believe the success or victory of any matter is worth discussing where we human beings perish. Every bit of better humanity that can be won will taste bitter and sad after the last, most terrible things that are still in store for us. I do not know if anyone can actually help his fellow-men "to live";

but for God's sake don't ever allow our literature to help them to die!

And they still go on dying; - you, however, who applauded the war and continue to do so, who considers my conduct as utterly abominable - I who put on a play that became no small mirror of our present situation and was the very first to give some hope for the future to the tormented - if God wills you will have another 40 years to prove yourself, if not to "assert" yourself. The hour will come, I hope, in which you will see people, not shadows; and then perhaps me.

H.

APPENDIX B

Heinrich Mann, Letter to Thomas Mann, Versuch einer Versöhnung, December 30, 1917, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 181.

Dear Tommy,

Your article in the Berliner Tageblatt has just been read aloud in my presence. I do not know if it struck the other listeners, but to me in certain passages it sounded as though addressed to me, almost as a letter. For this reason I feel I must answer, even if it is done without recourse to the roundabout way of the press, and with the sole intent of telling you how misguided is your reproach of brotherly hate. - There is no "I" in my public utterances, and for that reason also no brother. They are directed - at least I intend it so - beyond myself, my middle-class position, my advantage or disadvantage, and relate solely to an idea or theme. Love of humanity (in political terms: European democracy) is of course love of an ideal; but whosoever can lift his heart that far into the distance will also have proved his goodness in the particular ... I know that in the course of the years I have shown some of this goodness, and can remember cases where I showed more than I received. I have read all your work with the best will in the world to try and understand and sympathize with it. But I have known your intellectual hostility from the beginning, and if your extreme response to the war came as a surprise to you it was for me quite predictable. This knowledge however did not stop me from often loving your work, even more frequently from studying it and time after time from publicly acclaiming it or defending it; and consoling you, when you doubted yourself, as a younger brother. Though I received almost nothing in return from this, I did not let myself be defeated. I knew that, in order to stand secure, you needed to hold yourself back, even to shun people, - and because of this I always got over your attacks - they stem as far back as an article in a magazine called the "Freistatt" up to your latest book - without great difficulty. Overcame them and did not reply to them - or only on one occasion when it was no longer a case of personal views, no longer literary preference or spiritual justification at stake, but a case of the very greatest emergency and danger. It was in my protest, entitled Zola, that I took issue with those who, as

I saw it, were rushing forward to do damage. It was not aimed at you but against a legion. And today, instead of a legion, there are only a few desperate ones; you yourself write sadly; - and your final argument should only be the reproach of brotherly hate? I can assure you, if not prove to you, that it is not true. I have never acted on that emotion - and have, on the contrary, tried to act against it when I tried to get us together again at a time when it looked hopeless. Our letter about the birth of our child was not well received. Perhaps my efforts today will get a better reception. This would be possible if your latest claim against me is dictated by sorrow: for then you would see that you do not have to look upon my words as those of an enemy.

Heinrich

APPENDIX C

Thomas Mann, Letter to Heinrich Mann, January 3, 1918, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 182-183.

Dear Heinrich:

Your letter comes at a moment when it is physically impossible for me to reply properly ... However I wonder whether there is any sense in trying to compare the mental torment of two years into a letter which would have to be much longer than yours. I believe you implicitly when you say that you feel no hatred towards me. After the unleashing outburst of the Zola essay and considering the way everything stands with you and for you at the moment, you have no reason to. The phrase about fraternal hate was in any case rather a symbol for more general discrepancies in the psychology of the Rousseauiste.

If you have found me a difficult brother, I naturally have found you even more so; that was in the nature of things; and I too did my honest best. To this day I praise at least two of your books in the teeth of everyone else as masterpieces. You forget or are silent about the way you so often mishandled my simplest and strongest feelings with your justification of passion, before I could react with as much as a sentence. Of course my claim was as little personally directed at you as any of yours. Our fraternal experience of life and the world is bound to colour things personally. But things which you allowed yourself to say in your Zola essay and expected me to take - no, I have never allowed myself such liberties or expected any man to put up with such. That you believed, after the truly French spitefulness, the defamations and slanders of this glittering piece of sham whose second sentence was already an inhuman excess, you could "seek a rapprochement" although it seemed "hopeless" - this demonstrates the frivolity of a man who has "lifted his heart far into the distance". Incidentally my wife wrote at length at the time to yours, delicately and warmly, and received effronteries in reply.

It is not true that my conduct in the war has been "extreme". Yours was, and in fact to the point of being utterly detestable. But I have not suffered and struggled for two years, neglected my dearest projects, sentenced myself to silence as an artist, probed, compared and asserted myself just to answer a letter which - understandably -

exudes triumph, sees me at the head of a "few desperate men" searching for last-ditch arguments, and concludes that I need not regard you as an enemy. Every line of your letter was dictated by moral smugness and self-righteousness. Don't expect me to fall sobbing on your breast. What lies behind me was like starving in a galley; all the same I thank you for the knowledge that I stand less helplessly exposed to your zealot's tongue today than in the days when you could hurt me to the quick with it.

You and your sort can call me a parasite if you like. The truth, my truth, is that I am none. A great bourgeois artist, Adalbert Stifter, once said in a letter: "My books are not simply poetic creations, but as moral revelations, as human dignity preserved with great seriousness, they have a value which will last longer than the poetic." I have a right to repeat those words, and thousands who I have helped to live - although without reciting the Social Contract, one hand on my heart and the other outstretched - see it, this right.

Not you. You cannot see the right and ethos of my life, because you are my brother. How was it that no one else ... referred the invectives of the Zola article to himself? Why was it all, in its savage polemic, aimed at me? Fraternal experience drove you to it. Take Dehmenl, who sent me thanks and congratulations from the trenches for my war articles in the "Neue Rundschau". You can show the greatest warmth to him at the dress-rehearsals and he can do likewise, for though you are radically different intellectually you are not brothers and therefore there's room for you both in the world. - Let the tragedy of our brotherhood take its course to the bitter end.

Sorrow? It is bearable. One grows hard and blunt. Ever since Carla killed herself and you broke with Lula for life such separations for all time are nothing new in our family circle. I have not enjoyed this life. I despise it. But one must live one's life to the end as best one can.

Farewell T

APPENDIX D

Thomas Mann, Letter to Karl Strecker, April 18, 1919, as cited by Hamilton, The Brothers Mann, p. 198.

You judge between my brother and myself, placing the one above the other. As a critic you have the right to do so. But this is neither the intention nor the meaning of the book, and the antithesis itself strikes me as too important and symbolic for me really to welcome the intrusion of this question of rank and worth; I believe only in differences in temperament, character, morality and experience which have led to an antagonism that may be regarded as "significant" in the Goethean sense, an opposition of principles - but based upon a deeply-felt brotherliness. In me the nordic-Protestant element is uppermost, in my brother the Roman-Catholic element. With me, accordingly, the emphasis is more on conscience, with him more on the activistic will. I am an ethical individualist, he is a socialist. However, this antithesis might be further defined and formulated, it reveals itself in the realm of intellect, art, politics - in short, in every relationship. Any assignment of rank must be purely subjective, depending on personal affinity and sympathy. Indeed, in the end I think I get off lightly when I declare that the matter cannot be decided objectively.

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