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Georg Büchner's Woyzeck: An Individual's Struggle Between Society and Religion

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GEORG BÜCHNER’S WOYZECK: AN INDIVIDUAL’S STRUGGLE BETWEEN SOCIETY AND RELIGION

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ABSTRACT

German dramatist Geog Büchner is considered one of the most influential writers during the revolutionary Vormärz period in the nineteenth century. Büchner is considered a leading figure in modern theater in Germany, having inspired Realism and Naturalism in Germany, but he is also considered to be a revolutionary, as he challenged society with realistic views on morality, social inequalities and the paradoxes of human-nature, and rebelled against the idealistic philosophies established in the Enlightenment. Büchner was a passionate writer who fought for the poor, and with his progressive works he anticipated a restitution of human rights. One of the most perplexing aspects of Büchner’s work is the seeming contrast between the tortured, often immoral and insane characters and the obvious sympathy of the author for his characters. In his fragment Woyzeck one finds the crossroads of morality and violence, of desperation and sympathy. His characters are a very real demonstration of the inner sufferings of humanity, although Büchner does little to provide a solution to them. The purpose of this paper is to investigate and understand Büchner’s motives for the play. To do so one must research his historical background as well as the author’s own aesthetic, political, religious and social views. Since Büchner died before his drama Woyzeck was finished, it has remained a fragment. This paper also considers two versions of this fragment; the first version in discussion is reconstructed by Werner R. Lehmann, and the second by Fritz Bergemann. In the conclusion only one version will be chosen as the best resolution to the work.
INTRODUCTION

One of the most perplexing aspects of Büchner’s work is the seeming contrast between the tortured, often immoral and insane characters and the obvious sympathy of the author for his characters. Büchner’s concept of man is depicted within such contradictions of religion, nature and society, and his characters are a very real demonstration of the inner sufferings of humanity, although Büchner does little to provide a solution to such conflict (Schmidt 2). Büchner challenged discrepancies in religion and society, by criticizing the German ideals of the Enlightenment, specifically the scientific beliefs of the time, political authority, as well as society’s view of morality. These social and religious discrepancies are especially seen in his fragment Woyzeck, where a man whose victimization and desperation leads him to murder and possible suicide. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the influences on Büchner that lead him to write about the crossroads of morality and violence, of desperation and empathy.

In this paper I will provide historical background on the life and work of the writer Georg Büchner, as well as critical research relevant to the writing of his drama Woyzeck, as pertaining to Büchner’s aesthetic, religious and social views, as well as political goals. Many consider Georg Büchner to be a leading figure in modern literature, a true visionary for realism and naturalism during a time of waning feudalism, political unrest, and brewing revolution, which evolved into the Freiheitskriege from 1813-1815 near Leipzig, and later arose to a revolt in upper Hessen in 1830. Büchner made a radical departure from the traditions of society, its morals, customs, religion and politics. In doing so he anticipated a restitution of human rights. A characteristic that is seen in all of Büchner’s work is his rejection of German reason established in the Enlightenment, and the rejection of classic traditions in literature. His creative attempt in writing shows the reality of several contradictions, the most important being the human condition in a world of suffering and hopelessness caught between the ideals of Christianity and the limitations of nature and society. Büchner made a point to question the paradoxes of man’s existence, ridicule the ideals of the Enlightenment, and challenge society’s artificial morals with demonstrations of nature and other scientific facts of the human nature. In his drama titled Woyzeck, his anti-hero1 is dehumanized under the unfavorable ideals of his
superiors. The concepts of nature, free will as a religious and modern scientific ideal, and determinism will be discussed in this paper. Suicide will also be discussed in terms of Büchner’s *Mitschrift “Über den Selbstmord”* and his thoughts on the topic, on one hand, as a religious blasphemy as believed in the Christian church, which has eternal consequences, and on the other hand, as a psychological illness that should be judged less harshly, that is as a civil crime. Since the play was unfinished at Büchner’s untimely death, there have been several attempts to establish a finished product, to suppose what Büchner had originally wanted from his piece. In Bergemann’s edition, the protagonist commits suicide after killing his lover, and in Lehmann’s edition, however, it is believed that he simply walks away from the crime scene and in the end tried for his crime. These two versions of the same piece have been debated as to which resolves the work most successfully, and in this paper I will attempt to make a case for both versions, but in the end only one will be chosen as the true resolution to the work.

To begin with, we will look at Büchner’s early life, his family and the influences he experienced as a child taking religion courses at a private school in Darmstadt. The culmination of academic, historical, social and political factors are what formed Büchner into the young revolutionary and leading literary dramatist that he became, establishing a new approach to theater and German literature, Büchner’s work is known to have inspired Realism and Expressionism movements in Germany. The French Revolution, which began on the 14th of July 1789, with the storming of Bastille in Paris marked the beginning of a new time with new political ideas (Wallman 4). The rights of freedom, the abolishment of privilege as well as the end of feudalism, would soon take over Europe and Napoleon Bonaparte would give many a hope for a new reform. After the defeat of Napoleon and the “Freiheitskriege” (1813-1815) in Germany, the state of Europe was in need of restoration. The *Wiener Kongress* (1814-1815) came together on the principle of reform and restoration, but would soon after disappoint with its new order. Germany was consolidated from three hundred States to thirty-eight, partly due to the fall of the Holy Roman Empire just eight years earlier, and these states were put under the leadership of Austria and Prussia. The territorial changes were not the only thing that came to criticism. The congress of Vienna was the beginning of a conservative order, which was a reaction to the liberal and nationalistic ideals of the French Revolution. In order to keep social order in Germany, the Monarchy did not dissipate. Other principles kept were tradition, the importance of community and organized religion, in
contrast to the chaos of the French Revolution. The Congress of Vienna put these social orders into noticeable effect in 1815. But this extreme conservatism encouraged radical revolutionaries, such as Georg Büchner, who challenged the old traditions of the Monarchy and fought for a new reform.

The protagonist in Büchner’s Fragment Woyzeck, his struggle and suffering as an individual, is the main focus of this paper. He is an “archetype of the late 19th and 20th century everyman on the lowest rungs of the social ladder; he is the archetypal underdog, passive and bewildered, almost featureless, more defined by what happens to him than by his own actions,” which accounts for the fascination and variety of “diverging interpretations” (Mitgutsch 152). One circling question for Büchner is: what is it that defines us as humans? Is our circumstance and human nature pre-determined or is it up to the individual and free will to determine his/her destiny? Is it the causal motives of our place in society, our work, spirit, reason, or our morals which lead us to our actions? There are many factors as to what exactly is happening to our protagonist/victim. Readers question what is happening internally and externally to the protagonist that would lead him to such suffering, isolation, desperation and ultimate ‘crime of passion.’ Through his work Woyzeck Georg Büchner offers readers a springboard for debate upon which people discuss and think about the conflicts of the human condition. One must attempt to go beneath the surface and search for the parallels of his character’s words to find Büchner’s thoughts on life, death and morality.

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1 The figure Woyzeck has often been named this, since he contradicts most of the preconceived notions of a protagonist in a tragedy, in relation to the antiquity, such as his low social standing and apparent lack of strong qualities. See Ritscher, Hans. Grundlagen und Gedanken: Georg Büchner Woyzeck. Frankfurt am Mein: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1997 (37)
CHAPTER 1
GEORG BÜCHNER’S CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Karl Georg Büchner, the eldest of five children, was born in 1813 in the village of Godelau Germany near Hesse-Darmstadt. It has been said that Büchner’s talents derived from his parents. His father, Ernst Büchner, was an army surgeon in a French regiment and a “fervent admirer of Napoleon,” and his mother, Caroline Büchner, born Reuß, was known to be “most pleasant and entertaining” (Schmidt 2-3). There had been most notable differences in the character of his parents, who are thought to have laid the ground stones in Büchner’s life and character. His mother was a “believing Christian and his father, however, had turned from Christianity and grew ever closer to atheism,” as it was believed that science made him a skeptic of religious questions (Wagner, 10). Büchner’s father, having experience in the military, was known to be very strict, and exhibited a strong authoritative father-figure behavior; whereas Büchner’s mother had almost the opposite characteristics, such as gentleness, understanding, kindness and sympathy for others. From his father it is safe to say that Büchner did not learn much about religion, but rather an early knowledge of science and authority. Caroline, however, schooled her son during his childhood years in arithmetic, writing and reading, especially German literature and poetry; her favorites were Goethe, Schiller, and Körner (Wagner, 12). Religion was also a topic discussed according to her own beliefs and she taught him “die Verantwortung dem Mitmenschen gegenüber”, as well as “Mitleid und Hilfsbereitschaft gegenüber Unterdrückten und Zukurzgekommenen” (Wagner, 14).

As a young child Büchner was greatly influenced by his mother and she home schooled him until the age of eight when he entered a private school in Darmstadt in 1821. But, as discussed later, the ideas learned in Religionsunterricht, as well as those ideas surrounding the Enlightenment, would serve as a background that would shape and develop his thoughts on politics, society and aesthetics. Although Büchner did reject some of those ideals and traditions from the Enlightenment, he was very much influenced and inspired by science and the workings of nature, as opposed to Christian beliefs, such as the purpose of man, his morals and the expectations of the church. As a young boy Büchner experienced that the reality of life was a strong contradiction to the ideals he learned in Religionsunterricht. Büchner’s
family had the advantage of middle class status, but most people in Darmstadt during that time were forced to live a life of hunger and pain, which was very different than the expectations expressed through the ideals of Christianity, about how the humble and poor ought to live, as it states in Matthew 5:5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” It is interesting that meek is synonymous with poor, mild, humble, lowly, pious and even weak. This characteristic is socially contradictory, since it is society who tells us that it is the strong, who conquer, receive admiration and favor. Büchner was aware of the face value of such inequalities in society; that is, the strong versus the weak. Furthermore, for the sake of prosperity it is the foolish who work hard to keep others down, so that they might gain. This contradiction seems to be repeated throughout history, and it is in Georg Büchner’s letters and works, that we find this conflict between religion and society.

In her book *Georg Büchners Religionsunterricht: 1821-1831*, based on her doctoral dissertation in 1997, titled “Büchners evangelischer Religionsunterricht, Darmstadt 1821-31,” in 1997, scholar Wendy Wagner gives an in depth report on Georg Büchner’s early life, his essays, and a detailed account of the subjects he learned, his professors, and their teachings within the *Religionsunterricht*, and how these influences were the building blocks of Büchner’s life, and enriched his passion for helping the underprivileged. Wagner states that the eight- to twelve-year-olds at Dr. Weiterhausen’s *Lehranstalt*, during Büchner’s youth, were made aware of the contradiction between the religious ideals and the political reality. The main religious *Vorbild* being that one should lead “ein ruhiges und zufriedenes Leben in aller Gottseligkeit und Ehbarkeit” (qtd. in Wagner 75). But it would be hard to say whether or not the children could fully understand the social-economic situation in Hessen in relation to the political coherences, because in actuality these children were able to observe more frequently the many poor people as opposed to the fewer rich people in their surroundings. The rich were considered “die herrschenden Machthaber,” who judged the poor (Wagner 75). Wilhelm Hamm had described Darmstadt as being the “Stadt der Tugend.” In a certain measure it was a model for many other cities (Wagner 75). Hamm described the Darmstadt society as mostly poor and humble, and the differences between the poorest of the poor and the rich were easily identifiable. It seemed an almost impossible task for the middle class citizens of Darmstadt to satisfy “den Erfordernissen der Ernährung und des Wachtums einer kräftig heranwachsenden Jugend” (Wagner, 75). The main meal of the day for children, like
Büchner, who was considered middle-class, was a water-based soup with bread and a couple eggs. Frugalness and sporadic fasting were not just for reasons of being economical but were also for health conscience reasons. Wagner believes that it was the societal discrepancy between a religious attitude, “einem Sich-Aufbäumen-Wollen” and a political reality, “einem Sich-Nicht-Aufbäumen-Dürfen”, that caused the most confusion in the heads and hearts of children (Wagner 77). It was indeed hard during the Restauration for the younger generation to understand the contradiction between a political reality and religious ideals, that is, to live a quiet and peaceful life ‘durch Ehrbarkeit und Gottseligkeit’, and also accept the ‘political status quo’ (Wagner 75). Few were able to witness the social-economic situation in Hessen first hand, although middle class was on the rise, Georg Büchner had the advantage of coming in close contact with many people, as his father was a doctor and certainly private house calls to the few wealthy families in Hessen would not have out of the ordinary in his household. The closeness of the small city brought “Büchner in nächste Berührung mit allen Schichten der Bevölkerung: der Stadtarmut, dem Kleinbürgertum, der Bourgeoisie und dem Feudaladel” (Wagner 76). Büchner’s protestant influences during his school years awoke his passion for social injustice and need to help the misfortunate: “Die protestantische Insitenz auf Güterteilung, dem gleichen Rechte aller auf die Schöpfung, hat möglicherweise in diesen frühen Schuljahren auf Weitershausens Institut den Grundstein für Büchners späteren Haß gegen die Reichen gelegt, und seine tiefe Teilnahme an der sozialen Not der Armen geweckt” (Wagner,77). It is this contradiction, where we find on the one hand, the protestant church claims for equality of mankind through creation, and on the other hand, the political and social laws, which maintained the belief in hierarchy and social inequality. As a young man, Büchner had been educated under religious teachings to believe that every man is equal but had experienced the extreme opposite since during his youth Germany had been coming out of agricultural feudalism and industrialism was on the rise. Poverty was at an extreme high and the social hierarchy of feudalism still existed, and the political restrictions of the Vienna Congress did not help. The working middle class was a very small percent, to which Büchner’s family belonged, but the relationship between the rich and the poor was quickly escalating to a social revolution.

Although Büchner had more advantages growing up than most, such economic hardships were hard to ignore and seem to be what inspired the themes presented in his plays.
Each of his heroes “Danton, Lenz, Leonce, and Woyzeck” seems to “lose belief in his own superiority over the outside world and finds himself in conflict with the forces of his own nature, of history and of society” (Schmidt 3). It was during those school years from 1821 to 1831 that he developed his thoughts on politics, religion, society and aesthetics. He was a supporter of Menschenrechte and of the poor, he condemned the political system and those, mainly the Aristocracy, for the suffering and exploitation of the people in Hesse in his hometown of Godelau, and he was also aesthetically drawn to the Romantic ideals of beauty and nature (Schmidt 2). Büchner was not only interested in social and religious influences on man, but also took a more scientific, even medical, approach to the sufferings and inner workings of his fellow man to justify their actions, what makes people do what they do, as Büchner stated in a letter to his bride, “was ist das, was in uns lügt, mordet stiehlt?” (Lehmann 256). Büchner took the natural scientific approach to define this physically, anatomically and psychologically. Büchner believed that the laws of nature had a greater influence on man and his destiny. This was not a radical idea, since Jean Jacques Rousseau raised a similar view in his Social Contract as well as his Discourse on Inequality. In Discourse on Inequality, he states, “Everything issuing from nature is true; nothing in it is false except what I myself have inadvertently put in of my own” (Rousseau 25). Rousseau and Büchner are both aware of social and political development within humanity and the negative effects such as corruption and oppressive conformity within modern society. Rousseau, on the contrary, had an optimistic view of nature, as well as human nature, and with a serious study of man, a close examination, one will find that men are equal. Rousseau took to the ideals of nature, that is, he believed in a pure state of nature and the pure laws in which the savage man lived, in order to find the solution to social coherence. Idealistically Rousseau believes in the possibility of a better society, which is only possible through compassion and sympathy for others. On the one hand, Büchner was idealistic in his beliefs in liberty and equality, but Büchner’s belief in the laws of nature, on the other hand, are considered to be very scientific, rational, almost agnostic approach to life. Büchner was not necessarily considered an Idealist, but rather an early Naturalist, as he used historical material for his dramas, he maintained the realities of the human existence in which the individual and his behaviors were influenced by his environment, which could be explained physically and psychologically. According to the majority of the population who were of catholic and
protestant faith, however, this belief in the observance natural processes to explain human actions was considered very agnostic. This does not mean that everyone who was scientific or rational during that time would be considered agnostic, if one considers during Büchner’s time there was the influence of German Romanticism, where religion, philosophy and criticism were of great importance. In the words of Friedrich Schlegel, “the essence of religion is to think, poetize, and live in a godly fashion” (Blankenagel 6), the influence of religious teachings were considered a very important part of daily life. Romanticism, on one hand emphasized the imagination, ambitions and spiritual longing, in which man attempts “at encompassing the totality of human experience,” so Büchner’s attempt on the other hand was totality explained by scientific reason (physiology), which would then limit man to his surroundings (Blankenagel 7). After all, the remnants of feudalism were still limiting man’s experience on earth, and the poor were certainly not able to “widen the human horizon” (Blankenagel 7). As will be discussed further on, because of the influences from his family, his surroundings, and studies, Büchner often found that his beliefs were in limbo between the spiritual and the scientific.

From his writings it is clear that the young author was determined in speaking his mind on political and social issues. Perhaps this came naturally to this intelligent young man, but even his teachers’ methods of instruction at his school in Darmstadt inspired Büchner to think and speak logically and openly as a child. Wendy Wagner reports that during the years in which Büchner was a student at Dr. Weiterhausen’s Lehranstalt, there had been a pedagogical advancement in the teacher’s education technique: there was openness to creative learning that was even applied to the Religionsunterricht called the Socrates method, modeled after Socrates own method of lecture and open dialogue. The Methode des Sokratisierens, in light of Dr. Weiterhausen and his colleague Salzmann, is adopted to be the didactic “Lehrer-Schüler- Gespräch” through which the children would be taught about an “enlightened Bible-Christendom” within the restraints of a “vernunftgemäßen Offenbarungsglauben” (Wagner 33). The Socrates method is a teaching and learning process, that was practiced especially during Latin and Greek instruction at the Lehranstalt, where there would be “certain hours, in which the children were allowed to speak freely and harmlessly, in order to accustom them to ‘the free word’ and to the ‘arrangement of train of thought’”(Wagner, 15). Unfortunately this approach was not used or taken up by the educators of other subjects. Wagner believes that
“the ten-year religious instruction (1821-1831) had allowed for the entire foundation for Büchner’s previously mentioned interest on social-religious questions and the close connection with reformational endeavors” (Wagner 8). In 1823 the subjects that the students were tested on included “Religion und Sittenlehre, Lautiren und Lesen, deutsche, lateinische und französische Sprache, Arithmetik, Naturgeschichte und Naturlehre, mathematische Geographie, deutsche Sprach- und Gedächtnisübungen, Gesang’ und körperliche Übungen” (Hauschild qtd. in Wagner 17). Not only did the pupils learn many subjects, but it also seems they did not have much free time. The children went to school all year from 7-4pm with 2-3 hour lunch break, as vacation in today’s meaning did not exist back then. Free days one generally used for excursions or to busy oneself in the library or learning a trade in the printing shop set up for students (Wagner 15). Büchner entered the elementary school in the spring of 1821 and is said to have left in 1825, a total of four school years, and had been instructed in the following subjects: “Religion, mathematische Geographie, Französisch, Griechisch, Naturlehre, Geschichte, und Musiklehre”(Wagner 16). Wagner was also able to find and research important sources relevant to Büchner’s early years at the school, such as the teacher handbooks, the sermons from Heinrich Palmer, as well as Büchner’s school notes on the ethics taught in the Religionsunterricht. From such documents one can find the religious and philosophical emphasis that is most apparent in his later works and letters, and also Büchner’s own view of general religious knowledge, Bible knowledge and especially his ‘world viewing tolerance’ (Wagner, 18). Although the school Mitschriften had been written while he was just a teenager, they are still relevant to his later writings and works, as Büchner only lived to the young age of 23. Although Büchner tried to implement much of the Christian ethics he learned from his mother, he did not, however, entirely follow the ways of religion and the ideas brought to him in the classroom. For example, the protestant view that man is created to have a personal relationship with God does not appear to be fully considered by Büchner although he comes close in his novella Lenz; instead Büchner follows more closely to the laws and beauty of nature. Other protestant views that might have been a possibility to Büchner are holding to such duties as, “doing good to your neighbor, distance oneself from evil, especially murder, which is only justifiable in self-defense” (Wagner 72). The primary textbook used in the Religionsunterricht was Die Lehren der Weisheit und Tugend. It is considered an anthology of Christian ideas, which it poeticized; it took parts of
the Old and New Testament, chose central themes and focal points of Christian duties and is a poetically designed Catechism of Christian teaching, which focused on biblical role models as examples (Wagner 72-73). For example, one focal point for Protestants is that God is not interested in our conduct, but rather who we are as human beings, for life is a test in order to prepare us for eternity. Büchner was made aware that life, even the Christian life, is no stranger to conflict, pain and suffering, which is something that Büchner struggled with growing up.

Büchner does believe, as will be mentioned later, that “life is development” there are ups and downs, good days and bad days, and “the individual is not exhausted by self-preservation” (Schmidt 1). This human feature of self-preservation is also seen in Rousseau’s *Discourse on Inequality*. The themes presented in Büchner’s work often reflect the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau, although Rousseau’s ideas on the state of nature seem to be idealistic, as opposed to Büchner’s logical and rational approach to man in nature. It appears that Büchner was exposed to, and may have even read much of Rousseau’s writings, considering Büchner’s popular drama *Danton’s Tod* and the fact that he studied the French Revolution at the University of Straßburg. One instructor at the private school in Darmstadt, Niemeyer, was wary of letting his students be influenced by such negative, skeptical work, from philosophers such as Rousseau. Wagner quotes Niemeyer on such writings, “Als negativen Ausfluß aufklärlicher “Neuerungssucht” betrachtet [Niemeyer] allerdings die “Zweifelsucht [gegenüber dem] Christentum“ und deren Verbreitung durch all die „atheistische[n], deistische[n] und skeptische[n] Schriftsteller“ wie “Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, Mirabeau” und dem “wolfenbüttelsche[n] Fragmentist[en]” (Wagner 142). The “Wolfenbüttel Fragments” were posthumous excerpts from Reimarus’s (1694-1768) critique of revelation-believing Christianity, of which Lessing, who was considered a religious rationalist, serialized as “Fragments of an Unnamed” and supplemented them with provocative comments of his own (Yaffe 3). From Niemeyer’s statement, one could assume then that the students at the school, like Büchner, had been exposed to such material, or even just the opposite. Dr. August Wilhelm Niemeyer, who wrote a school book specially for the upper classes in Gymnasium “spoke freely about the ongoing protestant battle against the cutting edge school theology that was against pietism,” and he talked very positively about the “herbeigeführte religiöse Denkfreiheit” through the Enlightenment (Wagner 142). Niemeyer was cautious of secular....
literature and philosophies, and most likely wanted to protect his students from it, with the good intentions of emphasizing religious role-models and religious teachings. None of this would prevent Büchner from having radical political ideas or speaking out against the obvious religious and social-political inconsistencies. Büchner went on to discover a love for political thought, which he was finally able to freely discuss among friends later on at the University of Straßburg, where he would study medicine and the fatalism of the French Revolution. It wasn’t until he left Darmstadt, that he was fully able to contrast and comprehend the political and social restrictions placed upon the masses in his home town. The free thinking and education prepared Büchner for future political activity and revolutionary writing.

As mentioned above, Jean Jacque Rousseau’s ideas on social equality, and social freedom reflect Büchner’s own ideas quite often. To begin with, Rousseau believes that the first sign of conflict that brought mankind out of the ‘state of nature’ was when natural man needed to preserve his lot, his possessions and his personal well-being. The savage who is perfectly healthy and at peace in nature, what sort of misery could exist there? Is it possible that Rousseau would be describing the Garden of Eden here as being ‘the state of nature,’ since his concept is based on the laws and harmony of nature instead of divine rule? It seems that Rousseau’s *Discourse on Inequality* is devoid of any religious influences. It is true that most people complain of their existence, and Rousseau believes that divine and human law do little to relieve this disorder. “Who has ever heard of a free savage, who dreamt of complaining about his life or killing himself?” (Rousseau 43). Such philosophical ideas of self-preservation and suicide presented by Rousseau seem to be reflected in Büchner’s letters and dramas, where one finds the fight for survival, the slavery and domestication of man, the struggle of mental well-being, the suffering and torment of the human soul, seen in *Lenz* and *Woyzeck*, as well as man following his natural desires i.e. the forces of nature. The disadvantages for domesticated animals are the same for man himself, “in becoming sociable and a slave, he becomes weak (his instinct weakens), fearful, and obsequious; his soft effeminate way of life ends up draining him of both strength and courage” (Rousseau 31). Büchner, like Rousseau, pities the weak and the poor, those subjected to beastly treatment, and he fights for humanity and the rights of man. In a letter to his parents we find Büchner’s hate for the law, in which he criticizes the German law:
Straßburg, April 5, 1833- “…wenn in unserer Zeit etwas helfen soll, so ist es Gewalt. Wir wissen, was wir von unseren Fürsten zu erwarten haben. Alles, was sie bewilligten, wurde ihnen durch die Notwendigkeit abgezwungen. […] Man wirft den jungen Leuten den Gebrauch der Gewalt vor. Sind wir aber nicht in einem ewigen Gewaltzustand? Weil wir im Kerker geboren und großgezogen sind, merken wir nicht mehr, daß wir im Loch stecken mit angeschmiedeten Händen und Füßen und einem Knebel im Mund. Was nennt Ihr denn gesetzlichen Zustand? Ein Gesetz, das die große Masse der Staatsbürger zum fronzenden Vieh macht, um die unnatürlichen Bedürfnisse einer unbedeutenden und verdorbenen Minderzahl zu befriedigen? …dies Gesetz ist eine ewige, rohe, Gewalt, angetan dem Recht und der gesunden Vernunft, und ich werde mit Mund und Hand dagegen kämpfen, wo ich kann.“ (Lehmann 248)

This letter shows Büchner’s criticism specifically of the increased taxes in the Grand Duchy of Hesse. “As of 1830, the increased taxes exacerbated poverty particularly among the farmers and the petty bourgeoisie. The citizens of this small, backward, agricultural state clearly suffered the sort of political misery which Büchner was to experience personally. The wealthy bourgeoisie were only interested in its own financial gain” (Schmidt 6). In his letter we find Büchner’s passion for taking part in fighting for the rights of the German people, to which, he says, one must use violence in order to get the response that they want. He seems outraged by the political structure and what they consider ‘lawful,’ as it is those structures, which supported feudalism and turned the masses of citizens into “toiling cattle.” This is an extreme image, and it appears that Büchner empathizes with the poor. This virtue of “empathy” is also described by Rousseau in his Discourse on Inequality as a universal virtue that is inherent in all humans and so natural that even beasts themselves show discernable signs of it. It is this virtue that keeps man (in most cases) from doing wrong (Rousseau 45).

As we see from his writings, Büchner’s passions for helping the poor and unfortunate came to a culmination and led him to create Der Hessischen Landbote, which he co-wrote with an acquaintance Friedrich Ludwig Weidig, as well as die Gesellschaft der Menschenrechte in the year of 1834. In fact, similar motives that were in the letter to his parents in 1833 against the Duchy of Hesse are seen in Der Hessische Landbote:

“[Nach der Befreiung Frankreich im Julius 1830] In Deutschland und ganz Europa aber war große Freude, …und die unterdrückten deutschen Länder rüsteten sich zum Kampf für die Freiheit. Da ratschlagten die Fürsten, wie sie dem Grimm des Volkes entgehen sollten, und die listigen unter ihnen sagten: Laßt uns einen Teil unserer Gewalt abgeben, daß wir das übrige behalten… Das Volk traute ihnen leider und legte sich zur Ruhe.- Und so ward Deutschland betrogen wie Frankreich.“ (Lehmann 224)
Also in the *Hessische Landbote* Büchner compares the constitutions of Germany to an empty straw “woraus die Fürsten die Körner für sich herausgeklopft haben” and legislatures are “nichts als langsame Fuhrwerke…woraus man nimmermehr eine feste Burg für die deutsche Freiheit bauen kann” (Lehmann 224). Büchner set out for the truth and wanted to uncover the injustices against the freedom of the German people. The lives of the most insignificant captivated Büchner. Their suffering, pain, and loneliness, are found in many of his characters. It is apparent that politics and society contradict greatly the laws of nature, in which man, woman, and beast are equal, as it is with nature and the simple man with whom Büchner most easily identifies. Büchner believes that Germany must have freedom in order to prosper again. The inequalities among the German people are mostly due to the oppression of the legislatures, society’s materialistic viewpoint and scientific idealistic perspective, which Büchner satirizes and criticizes in his dramas.

Rousseau’s philosophy on social inequality is similar to Büchner’s, and Rousseau’s theory is based on his theory on the state of nature and savage man, as mentioned above, which is quite different than the view held by the Christian theologians. Christian theologians believe that the world, the creation of man, his earthly and heavenly design, is only possible through the power of God. According to the Bible, the state of nature is found in Genesis. In the beginning man and woman were punished for their betrayal of God’s orders, which resulted in their being exiled from the Garden of Eden. Thus since man’s fall from paradise in the Garden of Eden, man’s conflict and suffering were created from that original sin and from that point on, free will became man’s destiny. But as many Christians know, the wages of sin are death. Free will, as believed by the Protestants, is a gift of God, to freely choose to love and glorify God, which is better than forced love and glorification. Out of a separation from God life became a challenging test in order to prepare man for the next life, beyond the boundaries of the temporary physical world. Free will is a gift of God given to man. Therefore, the reasons for such suffering and pain are partially created by man, to have the choice, although in some supernatural eternal plan, free will is imposed by God, for God. If there weren’t suffering and pain, we would have no reason to call on God for help, strength, hope and mercy. On the topic of suffering Wagner states: “nur ein Leben in tiefster Gottesergegebenheit dazu befähigt, die vielen Prüfungen des Lebens zu bestehen, ohne zu klagen…Wobei, auch wenn Gottes Wege unergründlich sind, alles, was des Menschen
Schicksal ist, von Gott kommt und daher gut ist, auch das Leiden’ (Wagner 72). It seems that the concept of free will and suffering go hand in hand, both of which seem to have fascinated Büchner and his writings. With suffering he found empathy, as well as and an unconventional judgment imposed on the poor, caused by politics and society. If free will is a possibility, the poor seemed to have had no rights to express free will or morality, for that matter. Büchner was quick to satirize free will and the ideals behind it held by the scientists and philosophers during the Enlightenment.

According to many philosophers and theologians, human history owes a lot to free will, for without it our world might be without reason, progress or technology. On the other side of the debate, an atheist would consider free will to be inherent in all men, resulting from fulfilling our passions and desires, and therefore, the individual causes his own inflictions. It was the individual who induced his exit and departure from the order and pure laws of nature. Rousseau is a good example of this, as his writing omits the case for God completely and makes a strong philosophical case for the points mentioned above. Interestingly, for Rousseau humanity is not issued by God, but rather ‘issued from the hands of nature’ (Simpson 16). In the pure state of nature, man had no moral or social obligation, therefore, it was a place ‘without rule, bonds, covenants, and hence artifice or conventions of any kind (Simpson 17). Rousseau’s view on freewill, found in his Social Contract, is based on reason and the power to decide. His remark on freewill is this: “Nature commands every animal, and the beast obeys. Man experiences the same impression, but he recognizes himself free to acquiesce or resist; and it is mainly in the consciousness of this freedom that the spirituality of his soul exhibits itself” (Simpson 99). Büchner contemplated the argument of suffering from a religious and atheistic standpoint in his early youth, although he initially learned of the teachings of Jesus and the laws of God, he was also taught some of the agnostic, rational, and progressive ideas of the Enlightenment, where such authors and ideas like Rousseau’s may have been discussed. “Politically, [Büchner] owed his position to Rousseau and the Jacobins, his philosophy was largely determined by the influence of Fichte, and aesthetically to the Storm and Stress […] and finds himself in conflict with the forces of his own nature, of history and society” (Schmidt 2). In his life, Büchner had not exactly opposed the ideals of Protestantism or the idea of ‘the God within us’ (Blankenagel 5). There does seem to be a strong Christian base to his writings, because on one hand he very much agreed with some
Christian ethics. On the other hand he did highly downplay the significance of the individual, and the individual’s spiritual purpose, since Büchner discovered through daily observation that suffering was inescapable. Büchner also contemplated the individual’s destiny and power of the forces of nature, that is, determination. This view holds that free will is not a possibility, because one would already be predisposed to certain actions and characteristics, such as criminal behavior, and ultimately one would not be held accountable for their actions. This philosophy was probably largely influenced by social inequalities and the mass amounts of those subjected to dire poverty as well as other agnostic philosophies of the Enlightenment. It is apparent that throughout his short life Büchner was torn between contradictions of religion and nature, man’s autonomy and his existence as a moralistic individual (Schmidt 2).

As a young man Büchner was persuaded by his father to pursue a medical career, so after his years at the Gymnasium in Darmstadt, he began his studies in French Philosophy, as well as medicine, in November 1831 at the University of Straßburg. He would later continue with his studies of medicine at the University of Gießen in 1833 (Hasselbach 5). In Gießen he published a revolutionary pamphlet called the Hessische Landbote, in January of 1834 along with friend, and Rektor Weidig, “which encouraged peasants and laborers to revolution” (Nickisch 37) and caused him to flee the country to Zurich, Switzerland. During his years in Straßburg Büchner seemed to have immersed himself into his studies, and complained of social and political grievances as well as loneliness and boredom.

While he was studying in Straßburg, Büchner turned his attention to ‘Naturwissenschaft,’ or ‘Naturphilosophie,’ which was largely explored by authors such as Goethe and Schiller, two important leaders of romantic literature, who captured well the philosophies of nature, which Büchner read and studied by influence of his mother. In a letter Büchner wrote to his brother Wilhelm in 1836 while he was working on his piece Lenz, we can see his efforts in studying natural science, as well as his contempt for German academia:

Büchner’s medical efforts, however, had not been put to waste; he was well educated in anatomy and was also a professor at the University of Zurich in October of 1836, where he held a lecture titled “On Cranial Nerves” (Über Schädelnerven). It had been noted that it “drew unsettling philosophical conclusions from scientific observations” (Nickisch 37). For example, in his lecture Über Schädelnerven, Büchner writes:

“Die Natur handelt nicht nach Zwecken,… sondern sie ist in allen ihren Äußerungen sich unmittelbar selbst genug. Alles, was ist, ist um seiner selbst willen da. Das Gesetz dieses Seines zu suchen, ist das Ziel der teleologischen gegenüberstehenden Ansicht, die ich die philosophische nennen will…So wird für die philosophische Methode das ganze körperliche Dasein des Individuums nicht zu seiner eigenen Erhaltung aufgebracht, sondern wird die Manifestation eines Urgesetzes, eines Gesetzes der Schönheit, das nach den einfachsten Rissen und Linien die höchsten und reinsten Formen hervorbringt…” (Lehmann 236)

In this view, the laws of nature are what determine the purpose of living things, that is, man is pre-determined in a universal order and which also governs our desires and possibly our ‘free will.’ The forces of nature can be considered internal, even one’s physicality, in which case would oppose our morals that are determined by religious and social laws. The philosophy of nature guided Büchner in his study of medicine, but specifically man’s genetic predisposition and anatomical workings that would explain the causes of one’s actions. Büchner also took interest in factual, historical cases for his dramas. He is known to have studied the French Revolution, to which he described it as ‘fatalism of history,’ which will be discussed in more detail later.

For his drama Woyzeck, Büchner drew his inspiration from a historical murder case and victimization of a Johann Christian Woyzeck, who murdered his girlfriend in a fit of jealous rage after he found out she had made plans to entertain a handsome soldier. Büchner made his own scientific observations from the case findings of Dr. August Clarus, who examined Johann Woyzeck and claimed the man was under a ‘false clarity.’ Woyzeck was ultimately held completely accountable for his actions, since he should have been able to ‘control’ his emotions (Richard 82). However, Büchner developed a more critical approach, which weaved socioeconomic, spiritual, philosophical and physiological elements together (Nickisch 37). In his drama he challenges his audience to decide what drove this anti-protagonist Franz Woyzeck to commit murder and if, in the end, decisions were made based on one hand, the forces of society, religion, or on the other hand, nature. Of course there are many factors in Franz
Woyzeck’s case, as to why he committed the murder, his social standing being a major motive, but one also must take his mental and physical condition into consideration. Büchner was one of the first authors to include medical and psychological aspects to weave such elements together in a drama. As mentioned above, Büchner’s Woyzeck is based on a real murder case, which happened eight years after Büchner was born. There had been a similar debate in the real case of Christian Johann Woyzeck, who killed his girlfriend Johanna Christiane Woost on June 21, 1821 in Leipzig, in a fit of rage and jealousy. Woyzeck was put under close observation and examination as to whether or not he was legally sane. Although he suffered from schizophrenia he was diagnosed as sane, which made him fully responsible for his crime. According to the first “Gemützustand des Inquisiten” of Court councilor Dr. Clarus, it was believed that Johann Christian Woyzeck was rational, and capable of making such a decision, despite his hallucinations and overall mental health (Hasselbach 88). Following this report, Dr. Clarus found new evidence that Woyzeck did indeed have mental confusion, to which he requested a response from the medical department, and after a thorough examination the final judgment was passed that Johann Christian Woyzeck would be executed by sword on August 27, 1824 in Leipzig.

From Büchner’s anatomical scientific research and his later drafts on the fragment Woyzeck, one finds that he has a combined knowledge of modern science, the theories of the Enlightenment, as well as sympathy for “Naturphilosophie” and the romantic ideals that remained influential until about 1830. Because of his fondness for natural science, he also maintained an anti-idealistic position with regard to aesthetic matters (Gray Richard, 80). The definition of the philosophy of nature around the 1880’s, also called “Naturphilosophie,” is still similar to the approach that Büchner took. In a broad sense it “called for a direct observation, correct anatomy, and the acceptance and the depiction of that which is” (Esslin 69). Büchner’s beliefs on the “Meaning of life” did not exactly align with Christianity but rather, his knowledge of medicine and natural science seem to have guided his own philosophy, that all humans were under the influence of the power of nature, that even man’s free will can be manipulated under its power over reason with passion and desire. Furthermore, “he did not share the belief that everything is determined by its purpose” instead, “development is the purpose of life, life itself is development, and therefore life itself is purpose” (Schmidt 1). From his lecture in Zurich „Über Schädelnerven“ Büchner discredits
the possibility that man and animal have an eternal plan or even a purpose designed specifically for itself when he says „Wir haben nicht Hände, damit wir greifen können, sondern wir greifen, weil wir Hände haben“, and that “alles was ist, ist um seiner selbst willen da“ (Lehmann 235). In the scene Wirtshaus, Büchner is criticizing the purpose of man in a theological approach. One could imagine Büchner speaking through the words of the Erster Handwerksbursch when he stands on the table and preaches:

> “Warum ist der Mensch? Warum ist der Mensch?  - Aber wahrlich ich sage euch, von was hätte der Landmann, der Weißbinder, dier Schuster, der Arzt leben sollen, wenn Gott den Menschen nicht geschaffen hätte? Von was hätte der Schneider leben sollen, wenn wer dem Menschen nicht die Empfindung der Scham eingepflanzt, [...] Darum zweifelt nicht, ja ja, es ist lieblich und fein, aber alles Irdische ist eitel, selbst das Geld geht in Verwesung über” (Lehmann 172).

This speech seems to go against Büchner’s previously mentioned theory on the purpose of man that, “alles was ist, ist um seiner selbst willen da,” and here in the apprentices’ monologue we see piestic undertones, for it is God, who creates the individual’s to his purpose. Although the statement is religious, it is not very positive; that it was God who had given man the feeling of shame. Büchner is also criticizing the materialism of society, and their need for clothing to cover their shame, only so that one can make a living. In relation to the definition of vanity in according to morality, Büchner is also criticizing those, who have put much of their worth and status into temporary physical things, “alles Irdische ist eitel, selbst das Geld geht in die Verwesung über” (Lehmann 172). This is similar to what the Barber states in H1,10 Ein Wirtshaus, a scene which was later cut out of the final version. Here the figure Barbier states, “What is man? Bones! Dust, sand, dirt. What is nature? Dust, sand, dirt” (Lehmann Erste Fassung:Szenengruppe 1, 129). Here again, “all that is earthly is passing and will eventually decay,” and just as God formed man from dust, man will also turn to dust when his days are over. Indeed, Büchner questioned all aspects of the individual’s existence in his works, and how man is a victim caught between religious and societal ideals.

Contradictions in morality and freedom of the will are some themes Büchner came to criticize in his works. While studying in Gießen, professor Gerichtspsychiater Adolph Henke wrote in his “Lehrbuch der gerichtlichen Medizin”, for a Giessener University course in which Büchner visited in 1834 states: „Durch Vernunft und Freiheit erhebt sich der Mensch über das Thier. Nur vernünftige, das heißt, Der Selbstbestimmung fähige, freie Wesen sind im Stande, sich gegen den Trieb der Sinnlichkeit zu Handlungen zu bestimmen. [...] Da der Mensch als
Vernunftwesen Affect und Leidenschaft beherrschen kann und soll” (Dedner 168). This quote seems to summarize the themes above and what sort of thing Büchner had learned during those years. As will be discussed later, in his drama Woyzeck, Büchner criticizes the ideas of the Enlightenment and emphasizes the dangers of the idealization of the human.

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3 Translation my own.

4 Translation my own.


7 I will also be using Lehmann’s complete edition of Georg Büchner’s letters and works when discussing scenes from Büchner’s drama Woyzeck.
CHAPTER 2
LETTERS AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

One could maintain that as a revolutionary writer Büchner anticipated a modern era, as he had a realistic way of seeing the world, which he successfully incorporated into his work, but he also sought after a much-needed social and political change. Büchner’s critical observation of man’s inner workings, the irrational especially, is much influenced by his study of science. “Büchner’s position as natural scientist might at first glance appear to make him an unlikely critic of scientific reason, [but] by the same token, as a natural scientist he gained a perspective that permitted him to perceive the development of modern science from within” (Gray 80). Büchner’s “dramatic-aesthetic practices” are largely pessimistic and as we see in Woyzeck, the treatment of socio-political issues and scientific developments during the Enlightenment are at many times grotesque (Gray 79). In order to criticize society and challenge Christian ethics, Büchner took a different approach, influenced by the Enlightenment, and opened the scientific world to the world of literature and the stage.

In his fragmentary drama, Woyzeck, he combined his pessimistic view of life; a life full of violence, suffering, desperation, hopelessness, isolation, the dehumanizing oppression of man, with an extreme form of realism in which the individual is a product of his environment. In a letter to his fiancé in 1833 he describes his own isolation and frustrations with the world. This quote emphasizes his feelings on the political and societal paradox of the time:


In this quote we see a direct association with the French Revolution, when he speaks of “Fatalismus der Geschichte.” The individual has no specific individuality, but yet the human condition is a force no one can escape; man is only the foam on the wave and greatness are mere chance. This quote represents determination, and Büchner himself feels that he has only a mechanical identity, whose soul is taken away from him (Burwick 6). If man’s purpose and genius a mere coincidence then what, he questions in the same letter, “is it in us that lies,
murders, steals?” (Lehmann 256). This seems to be more than a political or societal paradox, as it is also a religious paradox. In his drama Woyzeck social determinism is one factor which may have caused the protagonists hopelessness and desperation, for his poverty was out of his control to improve. It is possible that Woyzeck is pre-destined for a life of solitude and suffering. This question of the human condition is brought up many times in his works and letters. Büchner’s sympathy for the individual is seen again almost a year later in a letter to his family:

An die Familie. Gießen, Februar 1834- “Ich verachte niemanden, am wenigsten wegen seines Verstandes oder seiner Bildung, weil es in niemands Gewalt liegt, kein Dummkopf oder kein Verbrecher zu werden, weil wir durch gleiche Umstände wohl alle gleich würden und weil die Umstände außer uns liegen. Der Verstand nun gar ist nur eine sehr geringe Seite unserse geistigen Wesens und Bildung nur eine sehr zufällige Form desselben […] Jemand kränken, ist eine Grausamkeit; ihn aber zu suchen oder zu meiden, bleibt meinem Gutdünken überlassen.” (Lehmann 253).

Büchner makes it clear that the circumstances, which make us who are, are outside of us. This reflects once again the idea of social determinism, which acts as a force of nature, that we would all become the same, for example a criminal or an idiot, if born under similar circumstances. Here, our reason and intellect are a small part of our being, and even our education is a coincidence. People like Woyzeck, who were mentally ill, unintelligent, and a criminal, would not have been ‘accepted’ in society, for they would be scorned. Büchner did not ignore the effects of a mental illness and in his opinion Woyzeck was powerless not to become a criminal, since all of the forces in his life drove him to commit murder. Politically the ways of the monarchy, the rulers, and property owning aristocracy caused many to suffer, and it is this political relationship between the rich and the poor, that makes him “rasend;” In a letter to his friend August Stöber in December 1833, Büchner writes, it is “das arme Volk, [das] geduldig den Karren [schleppt], worauf die Fürstin und Liberalen ihre Affenkomödie spielen” (Bergemann 397). In the letter to his family in February 1834 he says, “Aristokratismus ist die schändlichste Verachtung des Heiligen Geistes im Menschen; gegen ihn kehre ich seine eignen Waffen: Hochmut gegen Hochmut, Spott gegen Spott” (Lehmann 254). Büchner wanted to impose his beliefs, in order for his readers to realize that it is necessary to change the political system in order to improve such suffering and poverty.

Other central motifs in Woyzeck are “social determinism”, the place in society in which one is born, and “sympathy” (Richards 28). Some critics question whether Woyzeck is
driven into madness by his poverty. It is certainly apparent that Büchner felt sympathy for the poor, uneducated and underprivileged, since they, the common folk, “whom he risked his life for in revolutionary activity,” were the closest to nature (Richards 21). Büchner does not degrade those who are thought to be inferior; instead he critiques those who believe they may treat others as inferior. To Büchner these men who treat others as inferior have “fallen out of nature, out of the power and the truth of real life” (Richards 22). Instead of idealizing man, Büchner observes him and views him just as he is; he immerses himself in “the life of the most insignificant person,” with the “primary intention to depict the suffering, oppressed being, who was powerless not to become a criminal” (Schmidt 32). His intention is to make known the causes behind his characters thoughts, actions, and existence, in order to draw sympathy from his audience.

It is clear that Büchner not only searched the outer forces like politics and society to explain the reasons behind the individual’s, but also the inner conflicts, such as spirituality and mental illness as well. Indeed the psychological aspects and descriptions of characters like Lenz and Woyzeck were the first of its kind to describe mental illnesses like schizophrenia. The figure Woyzeck, for example, reveals his inner battle with characteristics as violence, hallucinations, paranoia, and delusions. In Freies Feld, Die Stadt in der Ferne, for example, Woyzeck’s paranoia and audible hallucinations are affecting his reality. In this scene he is afraid that the Freemasons are out to get him:


We also see a great influence of Christianity in his writings, such as in Lenz, as this receives a much more positive influence of God, since Lenz seeks out help from the pastor Oberlin. The piece follows Lenz’s development and how the Oberlin seeks to comfort the sick author with Bible passages. Despite his doubts in religion, Lenz seems to hold on to the hope of God and is determined to find inner peace. Religion is also a major theme in Büchner’s Woyzeck, who’s protagonist lives in an almost God-less world, where the pessimistic aspects of human existence i.e. suffering, are portrayed to the extreme, as personified by the figures of the Hauptmann and the Doctor. Woyzeck is a believer, but his faith and trust in God do not seem to rescue him from the ideals of society. It is in Danton’s Tod and Leonce and Leona that readers find Büchner’s personal doubts on the Christian faith. For example, in Leonce und
Lena, during her preparation for her wedding Leona says: “Mein Gott, mein Gott, ist es denn wahr, daß wir uns selbst erlösen müssen mit unserm Schmerz? Ist es denn wahr, die Welt sei ein gekreuzigter Heiland, die Sonne seine Dornenkrone, und die Sterne die Nägel und Speere in seinen Füßen und Lenden?”(Lehmann 103). These inherent contradictions of religion are set against the harsh reality, which Büchner reveals in his works and letters. Büchner mocks society and rebels against traditions and ideals, in which he fights for the underprivileged man. We see a less enthusiastic approach to Christianity, a dangerous concept of morality, and the paradoxes of human existence.

The theme of morality is closely woven within Büchner’s social revolt, and one will find in his plays, Eros is a large of a theme as part of his rebellion. “Eros is inextricably intertwined, and like many revolutionary writers before him, he pushed the envelope with themes of sexuality, their consequences or lack there of” (Reinhold, 30). In Büchner’s fragment Woyzeck, society’s moral purpose and the social consequences of poverty are criticized, and in the protagonist’s case immorality is blamed on the demands of nature, which are indisputable (Richards 133). During Büchner’s time, the poor were not entitled to morality, as morality was tied to wealth and status, which did not help the case for the poor, because then they were looked down upon more and treated more unjustly. The more the poor were suppressed, the more the wealthier seemed, or were able to, possess. In Woyzeck we see the societal oppression of an individual, where Armut, poverty, is placed in the forefront and our hero is just a poor soldier struggling to survive. Woyzeck is betrayed by his lover Marie and therefore he is socially and morally ruined. Then in a jealous rage and an act of desperation he decides to murder her, and commits suicide. The play however, is not focused on Woyzeck’s passions or jealousy, but rather that of Ausbeutung- exploitation and gain of his oppressors, who already have a bit of wealth and status (Glück 185). Büchner is making a strong point when he uses a figure like Woyzeck as his protagonist, whose poverty is of the extreme and whose existence is oppressed that of an object. Through the figure Woyzeck Büchner makes a strong case for social determinism and for the fatalism of human existence. Although Woyzeck believes in God he is not entitled to morality, for reasons found in and determined by the political system and social ideals, which both benefit from his exploitation.
On the topic of morality, passion should not be considered a vice or anything immoral. For without it, would we ever have hope or love, or any revolutionaries like Büchner for that matter. In his book *Love, Lust and Rebellion* critic Reinhold says that “man’s happiness and joy are intrinsically linked with the totality of his social and metaphysical, even aesthetic revolt” (Reinhold 37). Passions can be used for the development, as well as the destruction, of humanity. Without passion, we would not have joy, sadness or fear, interest or reason, for that matter. In his *Discourse on Inequality* Rousseau argues the importance of the passions; he writes:

“Whatever moralists say about it, the human understanding owes a great deal to the passions, which, by common consent, also owe a great deal to the understanding. Reason develops through the activity of the passions; we seek to know only because we wish to enjoy, and it is inconceivable that a man who had neither fears nor desires would bother to reason. The passions, in turn, originate in our needs and owe their progress to our knowledge, for we can desire or fear things only if we can form some ideas of them in our mind or through a simple impulse of nature.” (Rousseau 34)

Rousseau believes that man’s passions lead him to new discoveries, advancement and reason. It is apparent that Büchner draws his influences from nature and history, which is most notable in his figures. Even his ideas on morality are influenced in nature and history. Again his aesthetic and philosophical views on social and moral freedom parallel Rousseau’s writings quite closely. For one to be ‘moral’ in religious terms, then it is safe to say that one might have to deny passion. For controlling one’s urges is a sign of free will as well as having physical and spiritual strength. The Christian view, however, believes that morality and one’s actions are governed by free will, because if “die Absicht seiner Handlungen mit dem Gesetz Gottes übereinstimmt, so sind sie sittlich bzw. Moralisch, und der Handelnde ist zurechnungsfähig” (Wagner 150). Büchner certainly believed in passion, he himself was a passionate man, who fought for what he believed in. It was with relationship between morality and poverty that Büchner felt the most outraged. In order to make a point on this subject, he must not make his leading figures moral heroes, but rather real individual’s who struggle with morality like everyone else. In a letter to his parents Büchner he expresses his restlessness, not being able to separate himself from the harsh reality of poverty; he writes:

Straßburg Anfang August 1835- „Ich kann doch aus einem Danton und den Banditen der Revolution nicht Tugendhelden machen! [...] Der Dichter ist kein Lehrer der Moral, er erfindet und schafft Gestalten, er macht vergangene Zeiten wieder aufleben, und die Leute mögen dann daraus lernen, so gut wie aus dem Studium der Geschichte und der Beobachtung dessen, was im menschlichen Leben um sie herum
Büchner is aware of immoralities in the world, and does not want to be a teacher of morality through his work. Even he cannot hide such things, as one is face with reality everyday, that to completely avoid such immorality, he says one must not read history and should walk blindfolded through the street (Lehmann 272). In this letter almost one year later he tells his family that he is on no account part of the so called “Young Germany:”


This quote refers directly to his piece “Dantons Tod.” His sentiments are clear for the representatives of the middle class and aristocracy, those who hold such high standards for themselves, who believe they are entitled to morality because of the money in their pockets and their place in society. Although Büchner alone could not win the revolution, he did, however, impose his views on injustice and social freedom whenever he could. Büchner does not want to be associated with the writers of the ‘Young Germans;’ at the same time, he rebels against the ‘moral’ standards of the king, for example, who banishes ‘immoral’ books, but yet if his biography were ever published “es wäre das Schmutzigste, was je geschrieben worden!” (Lehmann 279). By this time in 1836 Büchner witnessed the first publication of his drama Danton’s Tod, and it seems that Büchner had already begun to receive backlash for its controversial themes, not to mention a warrant for his arrest after the publication of the Hessischen Landbote. In the letter to his parents in January 1836, he almost contradicts his purpose with his writings when he says, ‘nur ein völliges Mißkennen unserer gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse konnte die Leute glauben machen, daß durch die Tagesliteratur eine völlige Umgestaltung unserer religiösen und gesellschaftlichen Ideen möglich sei” (Lehmann 279). Either he is a pessimist or he does not want to worry his parents about his political involvement. Indeed Büchner challenged society’s view of morality and traditional value system. In his work his characters status, moral obligations, as well as their
external constraints, may have driven them to despair, but passion and love seem to be the driving force of all mankind. So if status and moral obligations are the most important aspects of existence, the imbalance between nature, society and religion, create a violent and desperate aspect to existence.

8 In this chapter I will be using Lehmann’s collected edition Georg Büchner: Werke und Briefe, when quoting Büchner’s letters.


10 This relates to Büchner’s aesthetic appeal, that was applied during the Storm and Stress, which seemed to accept human nature, in its simple, elemental and original form, rather than to idealize man, as opposed to the ‘genteel society’ in which he lived. See Schmidt’s Complete Works and Letters, 31.

11 Translation mine.
CHAPTER 3
MORALITY AND WEALTH

Morality, exploitation, and social inequalities, are guiding themes in Büchner’s *Woyzeck* and *Danton’s Tod*, and may be explained by Rousseau’s idea of vanity. Vanity is the antagonist of morality, and this characteristic is what led man out of the ‘state of nature’ in the past, to acquire goods and materials that are not vital to his survival. The term ‘vanity’ in society is defined as finding meaning, worth and short term pleasure in temporary physical things such as beauty, objects and qualities, such as expensive clothing, appearance, accomplishments and skills. Vanity breeds inequality among men and supports inferiority, weakness, and imperfection. Rousseau stated that vanity is one of the reasons that brought the savage man out of his perfect state of nature, because he had fear, passions and desires that were “only concerned with his well-being,” and protecting what belonged to him. The desire to be better off than someone else economically goes back to the innate feeling of self-preservation and inner well-being as described in Rousseau’s *Discourse of Inequality*. Vanity pressures one to want, acquire, and possess more than one’s neighbor, or simply to be “better than someone else,” regardless of one’s vices (Simpson 14). Vanity of course is related to wealth, because it drives one to acquire more and more, and eventually one is able to buy education, ‘culture,’ beauty, status, and power, which correlate to self-esteem and identity. Morality is correlated with being good and virtuous, and historically morality also became associated with wealth, that is, if one had enough wealth and power, one could also afford to be indulgent in many areas, but also passing moral judgment on those deemed inferior. Also, the characteristics and virtues in regards to morality were only reserved for those of high status, because a poor man might not be able to afford marriage, the proper clothing or even feed his family. It is safe to say that it is immoral to steal food, but is it immoral to steal food for your starving children? It is a much higher crime to let your children die of starvation, than it is to steal a bit of bread. A poor man is the victim to social inequality, abuse, ridicule so that the rich men may maintain and enjoy their possessions and self-esteem even more. But the need for luxury is only created by society’s standards and Rousseau believes that “[the rich] would not enjoy their wealth if the poor did not suffer. It is in order [for them] to be admired and to look down upon the less fortunate, men desire power
and possessions…[thus] inequality is the whole object of their striving, not the fulfillment of any immediate needs” (Simpson 15).

There is obviously a moral judgment that is connected with the body and sexuality that has existed within society, which acts as an external force, as well as moral law within religion, which acts as an internal force. Religious tradition maintains that the body is sacred, if one acts righteous by keeping his or her body pure they are able to achieve a higher spiritual end. But if one is immoral one is deemed sinful, and unworthy, and self identity is affected, since immorality is associated with feelings of shame and guilt. Morality within society has evolved throughout history; it broadly applies to personal morals as well as to conventional systems within the community, such as religion, education and other secular areas. One might ask the question “are there any laws of morality that derive from nature itself or whether all morality is relative to culture and convention?” (Simpson 25). That is to say, it would be impossible to know, whether the laws and traditions of morality originated from nature, so they must have only developed through the conventions of society.

In continuation with the theme of morality, the ethics of right and wrong, morality is also a decision. Despite popular belief that we don’t have a choice when it comes to our desires and passions, or even our economic standing, the individual always has the power within himself to decide from good and evil, as believed by many during the Enlightenment and those of Christian faith. This choice of course relates to the gift of free will. One should consider that morality is intertwined with freedom of the will, because when one is moral, one is able to ‘control’ one’s thoughts and actions against natural sinful urges. To be able to ‘control’ one’s actions, is an act of free will. Because of free will, there is reason, progress, growth in fields of economics, politics, medicine, etc. The term ‘free will’ that I will be using, as defined by the leaders of the Enlightenment and is similar to that of the Christian view, is the differentiated between reason and desire, and suggests that one must suppress or control those ‘natural’ feelings and urges and use reason and logic instead. In the religious view, “man is equipped with a conscience, he must learn to decide between good and evil, [and] he must rely on God’s word in order to carry the victory of virtue” (Wagner 21). Ultimately the choice can be bad or good, dependent or independent from spiritual influence. Even secularly free will is also the choice one makes between good and evil, right and wrong, as well as animalistic urges vs. reason. But are these natural feelings and urges so wrong?
Again, this is determined by what each individual understands as being good, our morals. In the secular view of ethics, mankind is believed to have an inherent good, an ability to understand and rationalize our behavior, that is, to make a choice for the betterment of oneself, outside of external forces. On account of free will one should also be held responsible for their actions, which are considered bad or unacceptable. The ability to reason and to choose puts mankind at the top of the animal kingdom in nature, but where we exist in nature is a phenomenon in itself. Many Christians believe in determinism, that man is on the earth for purpose, but that would leave little room for freedom of the will— that is, do we ever have a ‘choice?’ Büchner struggled with the idea of determinism and predestination, because that would signify that man has no control over his actions and his place is determined by something supernatural, outside of space and time. These inconsistencies of predestination, the fatalism of history, free will and the moral expectations of society and religion, are what Büchner struggled with throughout his life, which caused his rebellion against society.

Despite what Büchner learned growing up and the contradictions of morality in society and the Christian faith, it is nature, its beauty and its laws, which seem to have given Büchner a feeling of hope. The state of nature allowed for determinism, in which every living thing has its own purpose, as well as sympathy for man’s passions and animalistic desires, where one is justified in enjoying nature’s simple pleasures. In his drama Woyzeck societal determination, the struggle to be moral, and the expression of free will, adds to the main character’s confusion, as well as his emotional and physical destruction.

The anti-hero of Woyzeck is Franz Woyzeck, a poor soldier and barber, and the ultimate sufferer, a puppet of hierarchy and social power. He is “seen as the passive protagonist” and the helpless victim of society, whose silence is the acceptance of a life of isolation and frustration that many can identify and sympathize with (Mitgutsch 153). Much of the discrepancy between Woyzeck and his oppressors, even Marie, was this idea of morality paralleling wealth with Christian purity. We see the contrast from the religious view of morality, the Christian viewpoint of good and evil, and the social view of morality, which is based on wealth, intelligence and physical characteristics. The religious background and social influences are apparent in Woyzeck’s cryptic language, prophetic speeches and his justification for murder. Woyzeck accepts the ideology of what is “Tugend”, which his oppressors deny him. Through this idea of virtue as a measurement of wealth, or vice versa,
he is in a position of self-recognition, but also without purpose (Glück 197). Woyzeck’s disorientation, however, results in an extreme catastrophe, guided through the “Herrenmoral” and the representation of “Sünde,” which is an example of his passivity and acceptance of his eternal fate as “Knecht,” because even in heaven he will have to help with thunder (Glück 197). His obsessions and disorientations seem to be rooted in fear of God, which is symbolized in his fear of the Freemasons, as well as his ultimate judgment and punishment for his own sins, for which he faces extreme pain, anxiety, and overall destruction.

To begin with, in H4,5, the scene with the Hauptmann and Woyzeck, is called Der Hauptmann Woyzeck in Lehmann’s version, is also known as Beim Hauptmann in Bergemann’s version. Here we see the religious and social contradictions of virtue and what it is to be moral. This scene gives the most prominent example of the idealization of society’s moral standards, the contradictions of the rich and the poor, the oppression of the poor, and the demands of this social system. Here, Woyzeck is shaving the Hauptmann’s face, which is one of his three jobs, and the Hauptmann opens the scene by barking commands at him, “Langsam, Woyzeck, langsam; ein’s nach dem andern” (Lehmann 148). He proceeds to talk about the weather and indirectly invalidates and humiliates Woyzeck. He tells Woyzeck “Er sieht immer so verhetzt aus. Ein guter Mensch tut das nicht...der sein gutes Gewissen hat“ (Lehmann 148). The Haupmann tells him to slow down, because a good person takes his time, and has control over his own physicalities, which refers to free will and morality. This term “guter Mensch” also referred directly to Dr. Johann Christian August Clarus’s report on the real life case, “[Johann Christian Woyzeck] habe sich daher auch geärgert, wenn die Leute von ihm gesagt hätten, daß er ein guter Mensch sey, weil er gefühlt habe, daß er es nicht sey“ (Dedner 141). The real Johann Christian Woyzeck struggled with his own goodness, but this appeared to be an internal conflict relating to Selbstkenntnis. This account from Dr. Clarus in comparison to Büchner’s Mitschrift zur Sittenlehre is very interesting. Büchner writes: “Ein guter Mensch muß um sich zu bessern immer vollkommer und hierdurch Gott ähnlicher zu werden suchen/ Um sich aber zu bessern muß man nicht nur wissen, [welche] Fehler man hat../ Dieses {n}ennt man sich selbst erkennen oder die Selbst{er}kentniß” (Wagner 226). In Büchner’s view “goodness” is a Christian virtue, but, as will be explained later, the Hauptmann’s view of goodness has to do with a physical attribute, not to mention wealth.
In Lehmann’s version of the ‘shaving scene’ the Hauptmann contradicts himself a few lines down by saying “Er ist ein guter Mensch” but “er hat keine Moral!” (Lehmann 148). The Hauptmann believes that “Moral ist ein gutes Wort” relating to the blessing of the Church, as his child is “ohne den Segen der Kirche” (Lehmann 148). This relates to Woyzeck’s child, Woyzeck’s Unehelichkeit and his position as a soldier. Historically a marriage to Marie would have been impossible “da er und seine Verlobte dazu jeweils 600 Gulden Vermögen hätten nachweisen müssen” (Dedner 31-32). Not to mention that soldiers during this time were not allowed to get married, for example, “der Unehelichkeit seines Kindes bezieht sich u.a. auf die Heiratsbestimmung des Militärs,” and Woyzeck is nonetheless too poor to afford the church’s blessing for his illegitimate child (Dedner 32). Without wealth or status, he is also denied the benefits of education, or the expectation for social advancement, and he eventually sells his body to science for a little extra income. In reaction to the Hauptmann’s insult on Woyzeck’s poverty and morality, Woyzeck responds like a faithful Christian, “Der Herr sprach: Lasset die Kindlein zu mir kommen.” Like many Christians, he believes that the poor and meek have more favor with God. Woyzeck continues to discuss his morality with the Hauptmann in relation to wealth, “Wir arme Leut. Sehn Sie, Herr Hauptmann, Geld, Geld. Wer kein Geld hat. Da setz eimal einer seinsleichen auf die Moral in die Welt. Man hat auch sein Fleisch und Blut. Unseins ist doch einmal unselig in der und der andern Welt” (Lehmann 149). In this statement we see the main conflict arising for much of Woyzeck’s suffering and powerlessness. He is a poor man, and if he had money, he would be entitled to morality in terms of society’s standards. But he is also aware that morality has to do with ‘flesh and blood’ and natural physical urges, therefore he blames his immorality on his social standing. This idea of vanity arises again in relation to morality and virtue; where the individual desires to possess things mostly in order to be regarded as ‘better.’ Vanity, in the case of the savage, as well as Woyzeck’s case, has created the root of violence and social inequality. To Büchner, being a moral person does not need to rely on wealth, because he too is a man of flesh and blood and cannot help it, when “einem nur so die Natur kommt” (Lehmann 165).

The conflict of morality and wealth is most apparent in this concept of vanity, in the sense that ‘it pushes many people into squalor and misery because the wealthy and powerful rely on the existence of the disadvantaged in order to satisfy their desire to be envied’
(Rousseau 14). Woyzeck envies the Hauptmann and his riches, and in Woyzeck’s case, poverty makes him unmoral: “wir gemeine Leut, das hat keine Tugend, es kommt einem nur so die Natur, aber wenn ich ein Herr wär und hätt ein Hut und eine Uhr…ich wollte schon tugendhaft sein. Es muß was schönes sein um die Tugend, Herr Hauptmann” (Lehmann 149). Here Woyzeck appears to have self-recognition and accepts his position in society “wir gemeine Leut, das hat keine Tugend,” and he is also aware of his fate, that even as a poor man “müßten wir donnern helfen” (Lehmann 149). He believes, and accepts, that he must live a life of slavery and hard work, and even in heaven he will receive no rest or reward.

Because he has no money, he knows that he cannot afford to be moral according to society’s standards; he cannot afford to get married, pay for his child’s blessing in the church, and he can hardly support his girlfriend Marie by working three jobs. But the Hauptmann does believe that Woyzeck is a good person, but according to society’s standards Woyzeck is not considered a moral man. Wendy Wagner states: “Bevor der Glaube oder die Religion, sprich die Tugend, im Leben der Menchen sich entfalten und gedeihen kann, brauchen sie Arbeit und eine wirtschaftliche Situation, die es ihnen ermöglicht, in ihrem Glauben aufzugehen und ihm gemäß zu handeln” (Wagner 134). Woyzeck, however, is excluded from this statement, because he does not have an economic situation, and therefore, since he is poor he is not entitled to morality. Here Büchner shows the extremes of ‘immorality.’

The Hauptmann and the Doctor are aware of their status, and in order for them to enjoy it (in the case for Rousseau’s definition of vanity) they must make Woyzeck suffer. Just as the Hauptmann mocks Woyzeck for not being virtuous and always in a rush, the Doctor uses the ideal of free will to scold Woyzeck in order to maintain his power over him. In the scene Beim Doktor the Doctor tells Woyzeck that he has witnessed him ‘relieving himself’ on the wall in public like a dog. The Doctor scolds him and tells him that has free will and he can decide for himself, that it is possible control his natural urges with reason: “Der Mensch ist frei, im Menschen verklärt sich die Individualität zur Freiheit”(Lehmann 150). If Woyzeck truly used his free will, he might not have accepted being treated as a Versuchstier, but unfortunately, he again accepts his position as an object. The Doctor wants to be admired and envied, which, would not be possible unless Woyzeck stays in his position of poverty and abuse. As Rousseau states: “the ardent desire to raise one’s relative fortune less out of genuine need than in order to place oneself above others, instills in all men a black inclination
to harm another” (Rousseau 15). Indeed, as mentioned above, Woyzeck is just a *Versuchstier* to the Doctor. He agreed to a contract with the Doctor, and for a certain amount of time is on a diet of peas, and must let the Doctor routinely measure his ‘progress’ by taking a urine sample, measuring his pulse, etc. On one hand the Doctor believes “es gibt eine Revolution in der Wissenschaft”(Lehmann 151), but on the other hand, Woyzeck allows the Doctor to mistreat him and take his mental illness for granted. With the relationship between the Doctor and Woyzeck Büchner is satirizing modern science and the world of academia.

Woyzeck accepts his place in society and does nothing to fight his oppressors, and it is this position of the low and oppressed, that made Büchner shutter.

The figure of the Doctor is meant to be a caricature of idealistic philosophies of science during Büchner’s era. „Durch Vernunft und Freiheit erhebt sich der Mensch über das Thier. Nur vernünftige, d.h. der Selbstbestimmung fähig, freie Wesen, sind im Stande sich gegen den Trieb der Sinnlichkeit zu Handlungen zu bestimmen“ (Dedner 40). Even Dr. Clarus believed that God had placed man’s free will above the power of nature. Dr. August Clarus, who examined and victimized Johann Woyzeck, claimed that Woyzeck was under a false clarity. The real Johann Christian Woyzeck, who murdered his girlfriend after a jealous rage, was thought to have suffered from schizophrenia and was ultimately held completely accountable for his actions, since he should have been able to control his emotions (Richard 82). The figure of the Doctor in Büchner’s drama seems to delight in observing Woyzeck’s misery and “physical distress” (Richards, 55). As demonstrated in the scene *Beim Doktor*, the Doctor says, “Woyzeck, Er hat eine aberratio… Er ist ein interessanter casus. Subjekt Woyzeck Er kriegt Zulag. Halt er sich brav. Zeig Er sei Puls! Ja…”(Lehmann 168). To him Woyzeck is just an interesting case (an object), he is not even regarded as a human. Also, in the scene *Der Hof des Doktors*, in order to demonstrate the difference between subject/ object and animal instinct, the Doctor throws a cat out of the roof window onto the courtyard below (Glück 199). Woyzeck catches the cat and is ridiculed for doing so. The Doctor reduces Woyzeck to the likes of a beast and invalidates him in front of the students, as he is an “interesting case” (*Beim Doktor*, Lehmann 168). The Doctor tells him to move his ears like an animal: “Woyzeck, beweg den Herrn doch einmal die Ohren….Bestie, soll ich dir die Ohren bewegen, willt du’s machen wie die Katze! So meine Herrn, das sind so Übergänge zum Esel…”(Lehmann 175). Not only is he compared to a beast, but a donkey no less, which
is most recognized as a work animal often abused, but Esel is also a Schimpfwort, meaning a
dumb person. The Doctor, the Hauptmann and even the students of the Doctor are referred to
as being “Herrn.” During that time Herr is defined as an Erwachsene who is „nicht ganz
niedrigen Standes“(Dedner 34-35), so therefore, Woyzeck is put in his place again; he is not
even considered to be an adult. He is just a poor soldier, who is someone of the lowest class
rank. Of course, in order for the Doctor to enjoy his success Woyzeck must indeed suffer.

In the scene Strasse the Doctor and the Hauptmann also tease Woyzeck about Marie’s
infidelity, which sparks Woyzeck’s jealous rage, not to mention the erratic investigation of
Marie’s sin and the final decision to murder her. They taunt him asking: “hat er noch nicht
ein Haar aus eim Bart in seiner Schlüssel gefunden? ...ein Haar von einem Menschen...eines –
eines Tambourmajor? He, Woyzeck? Aber Er hat eine brave Frau“ (Lehmann 169).
Woyzeck begins to show his desperation when he says, “Herr, Hauptmann, ich bin ein arm
Teufel, - und hab sonst nichts auf der Welt Herr Hauptmann, wenn Sie spaßmachen-
“(Lehmann 169). Woyzeck makes it clear, that although he is just a poor man, Marie means
the world to him. In those times, however misogynistic it seems, women were still
considered to be ‘property.’ Marie is all that he has left in the world. And if one were to
continue down the lines of vanity equaling morality, based on what one possesses
materialistically and financially, that entitles one to morality, then Marie is Woyzeck’s last
chance at morality. In Woyzeck’s eyes they are together, because of the bond they share
through their child, she belongs to him, like a possession. This is made clear in the Wirtshaus
scene when he says, “Der Kerl, wie er sie an ihr herumgreift, an ihrem Leib! Er, er hat sie –
wie ich zu Anfang” (Lehmann 172). These actions by the Doctor and Hauptmann put more
focus on the social inequalities of the time, in which Büchner most criticized and wanted to
expose in its entirety.

Woyzeck and Marie’s relationship is also influenced by the demands of society, above
all morality. As mentioned above, because of their status, they were not able to get married.
Marie is affected by the same conditions as Woyzeck. Although she is supported by him
financially, economically and materialistically that is not enough. In the Kammer scene,
H4,4, Marie longs to have the finer things, such as jewelry, nice clothes and handsome men to
kiss her hand (Lehmannn 163). She cannot escape the demands of society and the vanity,
which would make her as grand as women with finer possessions, “Unsereins hat nur ein
Eckchen in der Welt und ein Stückchen Spiegel, und doch hab ich ein’ so roten Mund als die großen Madamen mit ihren Spiegeln von oben bis unten… Ich bin nur ein armes Weibsbild!” (Lehmann 164). Marie appears to be independent, in that she is not legally bound to Woyzeck, as they are not married; however, her desire for money is apparent and she is heavily dependent on society for survival. Without a husband, even a man such as Woyzeck, it would have been nearly impossible to be a single mother and have your child survive during those times. She has good fortune in that she is attractive and receives such attention from the Drum Major, who could improve her social status. Both Marie and Woyzeck symbolize the innocence and truth of nature; they represent the Volk, the common, poor people who, to Büchner, are preferable to the bourgeois, ruling class, since it is they who disrupt the harmony of existence (Richards 24).

Like Woyzeck, Marie follows her natural urges, for example, her sexual attraction to the Drum Major, and because of her desire for social improvement, and material and physical needs, she submits to her attraction to the Drum Major, Woyzeck’s competition. Marie, unlike Woyzeck, is “drawn as a vital and warm person, and the emphasis on her motherly love conflicting with her sexual needs makes her more, not less, sympathetic” (Mitgutsch 157). She is aware of her immorality and she struggles with her own life. Like Woyzeck she is isolated from the world and I believe she acts out of desperation of a situation that she herself cannot control. She is stuck in her societal position, and she describes herself as a whore, but longs to be like the great ladies with mirrors from floor to ceiling, who have gentlemen kiss their hands. Marie first notices the Drum Major from a window overlooking the street. She finally meets him, however, during the carnival when she is brought down to the front of the crowd to observe the carnival act and a man’s clock, which she had great interest in. When Marie meets the Drum Major the attraction is noticed right away. In the scene Buden.Lichter.Volk.(H2,3) the Drum Major says, “Halt! Siehst du sie! Was ein Weibesbild!” (Lehman 162). The relationship progresses and when the Drum Major and Marie are in her room alone together she herself lets her ‘animal’ attraction to him be known in the Kammer scene (H4,6), “Über die Brust wie ein Rind und ein Bart wie ein Löw, So ist keiner! – Ich bin stolz vor allen Weibern”(Lehmann 167). Her pride, which is related to vanity, is evident; she is proud to be with the Drum Major and wants him to show off. Marie’s infidelity first comes into question by Woyzeck in the Kammer scene (H4,4)
sitzen, ihr Kind auf dem Schoß.) Here, Woyzeck notices her new earrings, but does not question her, but the guilt of her actions is already prominent. After her earrings are noticed she reluctantly tells Woyzeck, “ein Ohringlein; hab’s gefunden.” Woyzeck leaves her without further questioning, although it is very suspicious that she found them, “zwei auf einmal” (Lehmann 164). In Büchner’s view, it seems that her ‘sinful’ actions were the consequence of nature, as in her attraction for the Drum Major, over which she had no control. Her other motive, of course, is her desire for economical, as well as social improvement. In Marie’s opinion, despite her poverty and the fact that she is just a poor “Weibsbild,” her beauty rivals those of higher status, when she states, “ich [hab’] einen so roten Mund als die großen Madamen” (Lehmann 163). In Woyzeck’s eyes her actions were evil, sinful, and immoral, and she must be punished. In Mariens Kammer, Marie is aware of the damage and guilt that her infidelity has caused:

Marie: “Ich bin doch ein schlechter Mensch! Ich könnt’ mich erstechen. – Ach, was Welt! Geht doch alle zum Teufel, Mann und Weib!” (Lehmann 164).

She knows of her sin and her guilt overwhelms her, “although [her sinful action] was inevitable,” (Nickish 43). She wants the Lord’s forgiveness, as we see in the scene with the “Narr”, Marie reads a passage from the bible aloud:


Her self-reflection and prayer is religiously symbolic to her redemption. Both Marie and Woyzeck are aware of their poverty, and here it appears that Marie is asking God to give her more “money” in order to be redeemed. She too is not entitled to morality because of her poverty. For Marie, her redemption should exist outside of her social standing and condition, but since she cannot afford to pray, then her sins cannot be forgiven. Her spiritual existence is different than Woyzeck’s, because first of all, Marie cannot accept her suffering, and she seeks out redemption. Woyzeck, however, accepts this suffering, and, before he commits murder, he would even give up his redemption in order to kiss her once more, “Was du heiße Lippen hast…heiß, heiß Hurenatem und doch möcht’ ich den Himmel geben sie noch einmal
zu küssen” (Lehmann, 177). In this one word, hot, “life and sin become one for Woyzeck” (Richards 41).

Marie’s social standing and subsequent guilt make her more sympathetic to her audience. As in most tragedies we sympathize with those who suffer and therefore, it would be hard to consider her a bad or sinful person. Through Marie’s betrayal, however, Woyzeck’s life loses meaning and focus, and in the end their simple relationship brings out nature’s own course of life and death. Her actions become Woyzeck’s obsession and drive him into a deeper despair and isolation from society (Mitgutsch 156). Woyzeck even leads Marie away from the city and into nature in order to kill her. The imperative of the voices, which he only hears when he is in nature, lead him to make the decision to kill Marie. In the scene Freies Feld (H4,12) he says, “Ha was, was sagt ihr? Lauter, lauter, -stich, stich die Zickwolfin tot?...Soll ich? Muß ich? Hör ich’s da auch, sagt’s der Wind auch?” (Lehmann 172). Despite his visual and auditory hallucinations in the scene leading up to Marie’s Murder, Marie mit Mädchen vor der Haustür (H1,14),16 we find that Woyzeck appears to be rational. He makes up his mind that he will murder Marie and we see the foreshadowing of his crime:

Woyzeck: Marie!
Marie: (erschreckt), was ist?
Woyzeck: Marie wir wollen gehn s’ist Zeit.
Marie: Wohinaus?
Woyzeck: Weiß ich’s? (Lehmann 175)

According to his knowledge of the Bible, it is ‘right’ and ‘natural’ for Woyzeck to kill Marie, although it is an immoral, criminal act. She is an adulterer, a sinner, and therefore her sinful actions are only redeemed by death. He senses her sin and foreshadows the justification for the murder in the scene Auf der Gasse (H4,7) when he says, “Adieu, Marie, du bist schön wie die Sünde-. Kann die Todsünde so schön sein?” (Lehmann 166). Woyzeck loved Marie, and she was the only thing left in his life that was of value to him. When he loses her he loses everything. When he discovered her relationship with the Drum Major, his primal reaction of rage and jealousy drove him to kill Marie, which is considered to be an act of rebellion against society. Marie rationalized her infidelity, “Ach! Was Welt? Geht doch alles zum Teufel, Mann und Weib,” and Woyzeck in his own way, rationalized her death, because she was a sinner (Lehmann 164). Perhaps Woyzeck had the same revelation in order to justify her murder “that everything goes to hell anyhow.” Although the Hauptmann and the Doctor

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suppressed his free will and morality, Woyzeck is aware of what he is doing. If it weren’t for free will, Woyzeck would not know the difference between good and evil, and he makes his decision based on a last attempt at ill-fated morality, albeit, a poor choice, since murder is never considered moral. This action symbolizes his suffering and self-destruction, in that he kills Marie, the most important thing in his life in of a fit of rage and desperation. It is this action that many have debated, in considering whether or not Woyzeck should be held accountable for his crime.

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\text{12 See Figure 1 and Figure 2 for Lehmann’s reconstructed scene sequencing of } \textit{Woyzeck}. \text{ Page 57-58; 59.}
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\text{13 One may find this scene in Bergemann’s } \textit{Lese und Bühnenfassung} \text{ of } \textit{Woyzeck} \text{ on pp. 159-161. and in Lehmann’s version on pp. 164-166. Bergemann uses H4,5 as the very first scene in his version, for the purpose of emphasizing the motive of poverty and social class (Richards 53).}
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\text{14 I will be using Lehmann’s } \textit{Lese- und Bühnenfassung} \text{ when quoting scenes from Büchner’s drama } \textit{Woyzeck}, \text{ unless otherwise indicated. See Lehmann, von Werner R. } \textit{Georg Büchner: Werke und Briefe}. \text{ Hanser Verlag: München, 1980. pp. 159-180.}
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\text{15 Emphasis is mine.}
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\text{16 See Figure 1, Lehmann’s scene reconstruction, page 57.}
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CHAPTER 4
WOYZECK’S SUFFERING AND DESPERATION

Many critics of Büchner’s fragment consider it to be one of the best tragedies in literary history. George Steiner, for example, states that, “Büchner’s Woyzeck is a singularity of genius” and “it will not be until Woyzeck that lower-class speech, that inarticulacy, articulates the terror and the pity of tragedy (Steiner 7)." Steiner continues, “Büchner makes emotions prosaic so as to declare a world, a human circumstance, empty of God” (Steiner 11). The fragment is thought to be empty of God because it “transpires in a world of which God, if ever He was, is unaware” and “it defies Christian optimism” (Steiner 7; 13). Furthermore, Steiner believes that an absolute tragedy, like Woyzeck, is “immune to hope,” and is defined as “a legacy of guilt, the paradoxical, unpardonable guilt of being alive, of attaching rights and aspirations to that condition, condemns the human species to frustration and suffering” (Steiner 4). The anti-protagonist Franz Woyzeck is considered to be the perfect symbol for human suffering. Aesthetically Franz Woyzeck does not symbolize the typical hero of a tragedy in the classical sense of Antiquity, in relation to Plato’s Spartan, which was the “dramatization of a perfect and noble life” (Steiner 2). Woyzeck is a soldier, lower class, and because of his social standing, he suffers in every way possible: emotionally, physically, psychologically, and even spiritually. Indeed Woyzeck becomes a product of his environment, he is oppressed by the institutions of the nineteenth century (as represented by the figures of the Doctor and the Hauptmann), and many of his decisions are based on the forces of nature, more specifically animalistic nature. As a result, his free will is suppressed and his passions, desires and obsessions seem to take over uncontrollably.

According to Büchner’s beliefs, nature determines our conditions socially and physiologically, therefore Woyzeck was seemingly predetermined to victimization, merely a puppet whose strings are being pulled by some higher power. Johann Christian August Heinroth, a professor from Leipzig, also took part in the debate on the case of the real Woyzeck. From his text in 1833 „Grundlage der Criminal-Psychologie“ Heinroth states his „Theorie des Bösen in ihrer Anwendung auf die Criminal-Rechtspflege: Man sage, was man wolle, aber ohne gänzlichen Abfall von Gott gibt es keine Seelenstörung. Wo Gott ist, ist Kraft, Licht, Liebe und Leben; wo Satan ist, Ohnmacht, Dunkel, Haß, und überall Zerstörung. Ein böser Geist also
Heinroth also believed that the soul cannot sicken, but has the capability to separate itself from good and is capable of sin, which would affect the body, an idealistic direction in psychology (Dedner 168). Heinroth’s also quote is similar to Büchner’s letter to his bride in 1833, his doubt on the individual’s importance, the ‘fatalism of history,’ and the mastery of the genius is a puppet play (Lehmann 256). If genius is a puppet play, then who is pulling the strings? Is it God or the Devil? Perhaps it is not religious at all, as the forces behind Woyzeck’s actions are diverse; he has a fear of God and the apocalypse, not forgetting that society’s moral demands and nature’s animalistic urges pull our protagonist in many directions. Therefore he struggles with the concept to control his own free will. His free will is also oppressed just like everything else in his poor life, but not until he decides to kill Marie is he finally able to express himself, a sign of self-recognition. Another example of self-recognition happens in the Kaserne Szene (H4,17)-Woyzeck is going through some personal belongings. His words are very prophetic in his own suffering as related to Christ:


This quote reflects the ethics of Christianity, and it appears that Woyzeck accepts his suffering as his godly duty. Jesus of course is the ultimate example of suffering, and in this scene Woyzeck becomes almost rational and sympathetic to his situation. Even Jesus was born to a simple family “aus neidrige[n] Stände[n]” and it was the poor herdsmen to whom Jesus’ birth was first announced, so it would seem that the lowest on the social ladder, should be of noblest worth in heaven (Wagner 53). The poor are part of the Christian body which function as different parts of Christian service, and there is an underlying equality among all parts of the body, “und wenn ein Glied leidet, so leiden alle Glieder mit, und wenn ein Glied wird herrlich gehalten, so freuen sich alle Glieder mit” (Wagner 64). The figures in the Old Testament were also used as models for those ‘who go through constant tests, [who] endure their belief in God, and those who had reached societal greatness through patient perseverance’ (Wagner 72). In the Christian view „Schmerz und Zerstörung” are the preconditions to „Leben und Freude“ (Wagner 158). But it is the differences in the social sphere, its limits, ideals and expectations that allow Woyzeck no opportunity of social
advancement. Woyzeck’s world is made up of many contradictions; his existence is one of hopeless suffering.

How does one deserve so much suffering? Woyzeck is mistreated, betrayed, beaten like a dog by the Drum Major, and never fully respected by any of his peers. In relation to Woyzeck, the educated class seem to be barbaric, and keeping with their arrogance, Woyzeck is compared to the inferiority of a monkey. This takes place at the fair when the “Ausrüfer” vor einer Bude says: “Sehn Sie die Fortschritte der Zivilization. Alles schreitet fort, ein Pferd, ein Aff, ein Kanaillevogel! Der Aff ist schon ein Soldat, s’ ist noch nit viel, unterst Stuf von menschlichen Geschlecht!” (Lehmann 137). Woyzeck not only has fallen to the bottom of society he also seems to have fallen to an eternity of servitude. This eternal servitude appears in the scene with the Hauptmann, known as Hauptmann.Woyzeck (H4,5):

Wozyeck: “Unseins ist dich einmal unselig in der und der andern Welt, ich glaub’
wenne wir in Himmel kämen so müßten wir donnern helfen.” (Lehmann 164)

Just as there is a social hierarchy on earth, a hierarchy also exists in heaven. Büchner, however, does not judge the “Woyzecks” of the world; instead he sympathizes with them and wants to persecute those responsible for the poor soldier’s destruction. Woyzeck represents those subjected to the unfavorable ideals and traditions of society. As mentioned earlier, Büchner anticipated a restoration of human rights, and freedom.

Büchner shows us how the ultimate suffering of the individual is the struggle to exist in accordance within the laws of nature and the ideals of society. Some believe that Woyzeck’s decision to murder Marie, however passionate his crime is, is also seen as an attempt to have control over something he felt was beneath him: Marie. Woyzeck aspired to be ‘virtuous’ like the Hauptmann, and in order to do that, he needed to show that he was above someone else. This idea of control and possession also has a connection with the theme of vanity. In vanity, one always wants to acquire more and more, and since wealth and the amount one possessed equaled one’s morality, Marie would have been Woyzeck’s last chance at morality; she was the only good thing he had left in his life, as well the opportunity to have a little empowerment over something else. When Woyzeck lost Marie to the Drum Major, he has lost everything. Although morality is a goal in humankind, this ideal does not make Woyzeck more empowered. Instead Büchner “reveals to the audience the dehumanization of the individual and a grotesque tortured soul,” since Woyzeck offers up himself as a soldier as
well as for scientific experimentation (Mitgutsch 157). The audience witnesses the impact of
society’s demands in Woyzeck’s physical and mental deterioration. If one just considers
Woyzeck’s condition and all that he experienced such as physical, mental, and spiritual
destruction, as well as hate, and probably darkness too, then perhaps it is the sinful urge of the
devil who was pulling Woyzeck’s ‘strings.’ After all, Woyzeck should know that morally,
murder is a crime, on earth and in heaven. As one will find in Büchner’s first draft (H1,12:
_Freies Feld_) Louis (Franz) quotes, “Du sollst nicht tödten” (Krause 208).18 Woyzeck was
able to quote scripture, but in the end those words did not really have an effect on his actions.

As we already know, Woyzeck was effected by many factors, from which he suffered
mentally, physically and spiritually. He was suffering from malnutrition, he was exploited (a
_Versuchstier_) he feared the rapture, not to mention he was restless, he was seeing apparitions,
and his speech became sporadic and broken. Clearly Woyzeck was suffering from a mental
illness, and although he believed he was killing Marie for her sins. Woyzeck couldn’t take the
suffering any longer, thus in Bergemann’s version he expresses himself through suicide, his
one final act of rebellion. Unfortunately, when Marie had the chance to exercise free will, she
chose to be with the Drum Major, and because of this Woyzeck made his final choice to kill
her for her sins. It is no wonder then that many consider the main theme of Büchner’s
_Woyzeck_ to be the “fatality of the poor,” as Woyzeck is at the complete mercy of his
environment and is the subject of suffering and frustration because of his natural born position
in society. It is no wonder then that Büchner had such sympathy for the poor, having
witnessed their social hardship and emergency as a young child, alongside a much different
political situation, set the ground stone for his hate of the rich and sympathy for the poor,
which eventually took on a new form of social awareness to that of personal involvement and
Büchner suffered the injustices in his own right. To him, “Die Armen sind die Guten, die
Reichen, die Schlechten” (Wagner 74). The poor, who are considered ‘good’ here, are also
able to have moral freedom, even if their civil freedom is quite limiting, they should still be
able to decide between what is right and wrong. Moral freedom however, can be at odds with
civil freedom, especially if there are social injustices, and therefore a person might purposely
break the law to raise awareness. Moral freedom does not have to be limited to the religious
sense, as it can be applied to all peoples to serve their own principles and actions; then moral
freedom is used ‘to refer to principles of right conduct’ (Simpson 95). Suffering might come
to be when a person’s civil and moral freedoms are limited externally or internally and his well-being is severely affected, as was Woyzeck’s.

Suffering as a theme in Büchner’s work, comes to a perfect example in Woyzeck with the Grandmother’s “anti-Märchen.” In the Grandmother’s tale, there is nothing warm or comforting, all the child experiences is being alone and having no hope. That seems to be the symbol for much of the world’s suffering, because in the tale, everything is “tot,” father, mother, the moon, etc. There is no longer the beauty of God’s creation, all that is left is cold and empty, and in fact, there is no mention of there being a God to comfort the child. As scholar Wendy Wagner states, “Büchner behält im Märchen der Großmutter wesentliche Elemente der Parabel von Agnes Franz bei (Kind, Alleinsein/ Verlassensein, Vater und Mutter tot, das Kind weint, Todeswunsch, Himmel, Sonne, Mond) ergänzt andere (Sterne). Sie werden jedoch in seiner Verarbeitung jeglichen christlich-positiven Inhalts beraubt, ja, Büchner verkehrt ihn in sein Gegenteil. Sein Märchen ist eine Umwertung christlicher Werte” (Wagner 131).19 Agnes Franz’ Parable, “Des Knaben Traum” begins much like Büchner’s. A poor orphan boy “allein in der Welt” cried and was distressed that he “kein Herz finden kann[,] das sich [s]einer an[nimmt]” (Wagner 130). The child in Büchner’s fairy tale is thought to represent Woyzeck, but in a way, it also represents the child of Woyzeck and Marie. After both Marie and Woyzeck are killed (Woyzeck dies either through suicide or execution), the child is left alone in the world, abandoned, its social status the lowest of the low. Considering the quality of life during that time, without his mother Marie the child will probably die too. Suffering is the theme here in this fairy tale, which conjures up deep feelings of sympathy and pity, caused by the play’s “negative images of alienation and destruction” (Richards 46).

Woyzeck’s words and visions, although sometimes cryptic, are profound, deep and yet simple and seem to echo the injustices of the world, paralleling the looming fear of imminent judgment day (Schmidt 35). In the historical case of Johann Christian Woyzeck, who murdered his girlfriend Christiane Woost, there are many instances of vision and audio hallucinations found in the report of Dr. Clarus that are similar to our protagonist Franz Woyzeck. Dr. Clarus interviewed Johann C. Woyzeck after the murder in 1821 and asked of his circumstances, to which he said that he “es sehr gut gehabt, sich zur Zufriedenheit seiner Ober aufgeführt” (Dedner 128). This can be compared with Büchner’s scene with the
Hauptmann and Woyzeck, in which Woyzeck continues to follow orders, and agrees with the Hauptmann, for example he says “Ja wohl, Herr Hauptmann” (Lehmann 164). Dr. Clarus also mentioned that he had dreams of the Freemasons, that their business could be dangerous, and that they were after them. 

This is the first scene, *Freies Feld* (H4,1), in the fragment where our protagonist suffers from a hallucination, “Es geht hinter mir, unter mir…hohl, hörst du? Alles hohl da unten. Die Freimauer!” (Lehmann 160). On one occasion during a hike Johann C. Woyzeck overheard men speaking about the free masons, who were rumored to be able to kill a man with a needle; from then on Woyzeck busied himself with this image, and on one occasion he dreamt of the free masons, “er sehe drei feurige Gesichter am Himmel, von denen das mittlere das größte gewesen, daß in dieser Zahl auch das Geheimniß der Freimauer liegen könne…” (cf. H4,1) (Dedner 142). With further investigation of Johann C. Woyzeck, his mental illness became more apparent in his physical condition, “daß es ihm keine Ruhe lasse (cf. H4,10 *Keine Ruh),” (Dedner 133). When he stayed with an Unteroffizier during Christmas of 1820, “Woyzeck behauptet, daß er auch hier Stimmen gehört, und sonderbare Träume gehabt habe, ohne sich etwas merken zu lassen“ (cf. H4,13 und H1,8)(Dedner 134). Johann C. Woyzeck also heard voices, commanding him to kill Woostin, at the time he bought the knife, “Stich die Frau Woostin todt! (cf. H4,12 und 13); wobei er gedacht: das thust du nicht, die Stimme aber erwiedert habe: Du thust es doch“ (Dedner 135). At the examination of Woyzeck, it was noticed within the first few minutes that he suffered from body trembling (cf. H3,1) and he could not hold his head still, and his pulse and heart beat accelerated and quickened (cf. H3,1; H2,7). In another circumstance he also suffered from “allgemeine Hitze im ganzen Körper, und Schweiß vor der Stirne gehabt” (cf. H1,3) (Dedner 144) another example of physical internal suffering. One can find through the examination of Dr. Clarus, the parallels of Büchner’s drama and the historical Woyzeck, his mental illness, in which he heard voices, he suffered from hallucinations, and felt an unrest as well as shaking and body sweats. Büchner represented all of elements to human existence in his character Woyzeck. Because of his illness part of his identity is lost, as he becomes obsessed with visions and other sensations; he is unable to function in society, even Marie is afraid of him, “Der Mann! So vergeistert. Er hat sein Kind nicht gesehen. Er schnappt noch über mit den Gedanken” (*Die Stadt* H4,2, Lehmann 161). Woyzeck’s physical and mental suffering emphasize the extremeness of his situation, and instead of being cared
for and helped, Woyzeck is left alone to suffer. His condition of poverty and his illness reflects the lack of sympathy of society for the poor.

The theme of suffering is also one way in which Büchner criticizes society. Woyzeck might suffer internally but much of it is due to outside forces, specifically Marie, the Drum Major, the Captain and the Doctor. The love that existed between Woyzeck and Marie is destroyed when she pursues a relationship with the Drum Major. To Woyzeck that relationship is sacred, and she is all he has left in the world. When Marie betrays Woyzeck, he is isolated from everyone. Just as Büchner had sympathy for the poor, Woyzeck too was in need of love and sympathy. The Captain and the Doctor however, are specifically caricatured and criticized for their lack of understanding, for it is they, “who have completely lost their connections to life and who live in an unnatural world of rigid laws through which they attempt to tame and control nature,” as well as Woyzeck (Richards 24).

Büchner’s last words, as described in Caroline Schultz’ Tagebuchaufzeichnungen, on his deathbed are eerily piestic: “We don’t have too much pain; we have too little, for through pain we go to God. We are death, dust, ashes; how can we complain?” (Bergemann 615). Although Büchner is considered a nihilist and a pessimist these words seem to reflect a more positive view and attaches a positive value to human existence – “through pain we go to God,” as though he knew all along that suffering would bring us closer to God. It also appears that he has hope of an eternal life in heaven and that perhaps suffering on earth wasn’t as pointless as he had previously thought. Suffering, isolation, and emptiness are used in Woyzeck as a social criticism but also to represent humanity, the human condition and the consequences of poverty. The play also has religious undertones that emphasize, as well as to justify, Woyzeck’s fear and obsession with the end of the world and eternal judgment. Despite the religious undertones it is the grandmother’s fairytale that ultimately symbolizes Woyzeck’s fate.

In order to decide the best resolution of Woyzeck, it is important to discuss Büchner’s thoughts on suicide and the religious, societal, and political associations accordingly. One could argue that Woyzeck redeems his own suffering as well as his crime by committing suicide, as seen in Bergemann’s 1958 version in the Lese und Bühnenfassung of Woyzeck. This version for the play’s ending could very well summarize Woyzeck’s existence, and indeed his fate; it is almost as if Woyzeck feels guilty for even existing, when he tells the
Hauptmann, “Ich bin ein armer Kerl” (Lehmann 166). Suicide would thus, be a result of Woyzeck’s inner suffering and (social) desperation. His obsessions took control of him “Er schnappt noch über mit den Gedanken” (Lehmann 161). Because of Woyzeck’s inner struggle, suicide may be the best resolve for his crime. Unlike the historical case of Johann Christian, where he was tried and found to be guilty for the murder of his girlfriend, and was eventually killed publicly as punishment for it. In Bergemann’s version of the play, Woyzeck takes it upon himself to resolve his crime and commits suicide. As mentioned earlier, it is his final act of free will, the thing he was denied. When regarding the theme of freedom and slavery, suicide on one hand, can be seen as an act of rebellion and courage, for standing up to one’s oppressors. On the other hand it is seen as an act of utter desperation, hopelessness, probable depression where one just gives up, because to go one more day living would be impossible.

One of Büchner’s school essays, which is quite relevant to the topic of suicide, is his Mitschrift: Über den Selbstmord. Eine Rezension (Lehmann 196). It is important to consider Büchner’s earlier writings on suicide, and what that would imply for his protagonist Franz Woyzeck. In his essay, Büchner took the natural anatomical approach to justify the reasons why one would take his life, a complete avoidance of the protestant principles of his schooldays (Wagner 197). To begin with, Büchner believes that the Selbstmörder, should not be deemed or reproached as unintelligent, because what has become unerträglich, lies in the nature of man, and even if his earthly circumstance has too become unerträglich, he should not be called unintelligent (Lehmann 197). Büchner sympathized with the individual who has an “unbearable circumstance, a hopeless security and an unrecoverable position. Suicide goes against our nature, while in our nature lies our purpose, thus suicide could be named as one of nature’s most disputed or most unnatural acts, and it is a very weak objection of a very different meaning” (Lemann 197). Indeed, in the Christian view suicide is also seen as unnatural. Wendy Wagner states the Chistian view of harming oneself, i.e. committing suicide, “Die Sorge um den Körper wird vor allem alles Unrechtmäßige, der Gesundheit Abträglich, unterlassen. Dazu gehört jegliche „Geringschätzung und jedes leichtsinnige oder schwermüthige Daranwagendes Lebens“ einschliesslich des Selbstmords und des der Keuschheit und Sittsamkeit entgegenarbeitenden und in jeder Hinsicht „gefährlich[sten]
Büchner believed that man only commits suicide when he is mentally, physically or psychologically unstable, and it should not necessarily go against Christian morals. In the case of *Kato von Utika*, a roman who fought against Cesar, Cato is considered a criminal in the “christliche Standpunkt,” and a hero, “von seinem eignen” (Lehmann 202). Büchner believes that it is Cato who should be justified in all laws of human understanding, and not those of Christentum, for the teachings in the same regard must be false, for our religion can never offer us a “Wahrheit, Größe, Güte, und Schönheit,” to recognize it or honor it, and can never allow us to condemn a recognized moral act (Lehmann 198). Because “was sittlich ist muß von jedem Standpunkte, von jeder Lehre aus betrachtet sittlich bleiben. Ob man aber wirklich beweisen könne, daß ein Selbstmord wie der des Cato dem Christentum widerstrebe ist eine andere Frage, denn es wäre unmöglich, daß eine Religion, welche ganz auf das Prinzip der Sittlichkeit gegründet ist, einer sittlichen Handlung widerstreben sollte” (Lehmann 198). Cato was seen as a hero and his death is an act of patriotism, as he gave up his life for his country. As mentioned earlier, Büchner believes that life is development, and if one is suffering physically or mentally, he is not a “Selbstmörder, er ist nur ein an Krankheit Gestorben” (Lehmann 199). If one kills himself from such incurable suffering, he is deemed sick, but if he suffers from melancholy and he kills himself with a clear mind, he is considered weak. In the latter case, perhaps the Selbstmörder is not aware of the harm he is doing to himself, because “wen eine solche geistige Krankheit zum Tode treibt, der ist eben so wenig ein Selbstmörder, er ist nur ein an geistiger Krankheit Gestorbener” (Lehmann 200). Perhaps in this situation, one wishes to relieve himself of the pain and melancholy, or to relieve the world of his insignificant presence, that he would be doing the world a favor by removing himself from it. Murder is a biblical crime, as written in the Ten Commandments, “thou shalt not kill,” and it is also a civil crime, in some cases punishable through execution. But if a man is not rational, he is not capable of free will or even morality for that matter, and the question remains, if he should be held accountable for his actions. In Cato’s case, he is seen as a hero, who wanted to win freedom for the citizens against slavery. Woyzeck, however, suffered from “geistige Leiden” and should only be considered a “Verirrter nicht Verbrecher” (Lehmann 200).
Virtue, however, gives an individual authority over his life, as well as harmony with himself. Büchner states this in his *Mitschrift* on Cato von Utika, “Die Tugend sei die wahre, von Lohn und Strafe ganz unabhängige Harmonie des Menschen mit sich selbst, die durch die Herrschaft über die Affektionen sinnlicher Lust und Unlust voraus; sie mache den Weisen nicht gefühlslos, aber unverwendbar und gebe ihm eine Herrschaft über sein Leben, die auch den Selbstmord erlaube“ (“Cato von Utika“, Lehmann 203). Büchner believes that Cato died a virtuous death, as he had mastery over his own life, and in this case his suicide is deemed honorable. Cato fought in a political battle against Cäsar, and his fate took on an even greater meaning, as he died as a service to his country, thus, he became a symbol of roman greatness—a sacrifice (Lehmann 205).

The question of whether or not Franz Woyzeck commits suicide has been a critical debate since its first publication by author and journalist Emil Franzos in 1875, although it has been said that his edition was anything but critical (Richards 2). Büchner is known for taking real historical figures for his material, such as his drama *Danton’s Tod, Lenz*, and *Woyzeck*. Büchner creates a sense of authenticity to the events and figures on which he writes, and as a naturalist and realist he was sensitive to the characters language, mannerisms, setting, time, etc. He uses the significance of historical sources in his dramatizations, which brings me to the point that in the historical case of the victimized Johann Christian Woyzeck, who is one of three men, Büchner used to create his figure Franz Woyzeck. The historical Johann Christian Woyzeck did not commit suicide; he was tried for his crime and was beheaded as punishment. Now, if Büchner would have changed the historical facts in order for the purpose of making a social and moral point, in which his protagonist commits suicide instead, that may very well be a possibility. In the next chapter, I will discuss the different endings from Bergemann and Lehmann, and decide which conclusion is most consistent with Büchner’s style and preliminary first drafts.

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17 Translation is my own.
130.
19 Agnes Franz was a schlesien author, who wrote a similar parable to that of Büchner’s called „Des Knaben Traum.“ See Wagner pg. 130.
21 Translation is my own.
22 All translations for Büchner’s *Mitschrift: Über den Selbstmord*, found in Lehmann’s edition of *Georg Büchner: Werke und Briefe*, are mine.
CHAPTER 5
BERGEMANN VS. LEHMANN

In this paper I have only focused on two interpretations of Büchner’s fragment, Werner R. Lehmann (1967), and Fritz Bergemann (1924). Both authors have identified Büchner’s preliminary first drafts H1 and H2. What remains of Büchner’s fragment are, a preliminary draft H1, H2 which are added scenes that are essential to H1, the incomplete final draft called H4 and two remaining scenes in H3 that are thought to have been added between the first two drafts and the final version. Both Lehmann and Bergemann have reconstructed the order of the scenes from Büchner’s manuscript, an almost impossible task, considering that many of the drafts were unreadable, some of the pages were chemically treated, and because of the manuscripts incompleteness, some scenes were left out and some had even been enhanced. Although attempts have been made to complete the fragment, as there are noticeable gaps and incomplete scenes, the unfinished text remains problematic, as Büchner died in the midst of revisions. I have included a side-by-side comparison of Bergemann’s and Lehmann’s final scene construction for their *Lese- und Bühnenfassung* of Büchner’s *Woyzeck* in Figure 2 on page 61. Readers will find that the bodies of the two versions do not vary greatly, but it is the conclusion of the drama, which has caused much debate since Büchner’s untimely death. In Bergemann’s first edition of the *Lese und Bühnenfassung*, our protagonist commits suicide after the murder of his lover. In Lehmann’s *Lese- und Bühnenfassung*, however, readers will find that Franz Woyzeck does not commit suicide, and is left alive at the end of the play. Both editors attempted an interpretation of Büchner’s fragment, which they feel represented the will of the author. It has been said that Bergemann’s edition follows classic drama conventions and Lehmann’s edition is a more accurate interpretation of the original manuscript, that is, a historical-critical edition (Richards 52). In his second edition (1926) Bergemann reconsiders the state of Büchner’s manuscript, and views his original edition as a “fragment that is lacking not only the conclusion but also the final dramatic arrangement” (Richards 52). Critic Ursula Paulus finds it unfortunate that Bergemann published subsequent editions with different arrangements of scenes, in order to appeal ‘aesthetically’ to the reader, and that these “basic departures” are in fact an interpretation that take away from the poet’s final and most complete version (Richards 52-53). Bergemann may have had good intentions in his scene arrangement,
but the closed form may also take away from the work’s legitimacy and Büchner’s own arrangement. Bergemann has been criticized for making changes to certain scenes, as Richards states, “To intensify the play’s social criticism, for example, Bergemann makes changes that place greater emphasis on Woyzeck’s poverty and inferior class status and on the abuse he suffers at the hands of his social superiors; motivated by his attempt to make Büchner’s play accord with the conventions of classical drama“(Richards 53). For example, in the scene Die Stadt, which takes place in Marie’s room, Bergemann adds material that connects the preceding and following scenes together, such as Marie’s greeting “Hast du Steck en geschnitten für den Hauptmann?” (Bergeman 163), as well as Woyzeck’s additional comment on saving money for the fair, “Heut abend auf die Meß! Ich hab wieder was gespart” (Bergemann 163). Lehmann puts Auf der Gasse, where Woyzeck confronts Marie for her infidelity, before the scene Straße, where Woyzeck is teased by the Doctor and the Hauptmann, which takes away from the emphasis, “the increased emotional impact” of the damage that has been caused to Woyzeck (Richards 12). Bergemann, however, does the opposite, which is more consistent with the mood and overall atmosphere of betrayal, where he combines H4,9 with H2,7 and directly following is the scene Mariens Kammer, H4,7.

With the early editions of Bergemann, one finds that his goal was to emphasize that Woyzeck “is a victim of his class and his desperate poverty” and “he allows himself to be used like a guinea pig for science, he undermines his health, and when his mind breaks down under the strain, he feels compelled by seemingly exterior forces to kill [Marie] and to take his own life” (Richards 6). One change that he made, in order to emphasize Woyzeck’s poverty, was to move the scene Beim Hauptmann from H4,5 to first position. Along with the Bergemann’s conclusion that goes against Büchner’s historical source for the play, where the real Woyzeck was held accountable for his crime, it has been said that Bergemann also contaminated H4, the final draft, by combining scenes from the first draft, H1. For example, H4 as a fragment lacks the final dramatic arrangement, therefore in order to portray the “catastrophe of the murder,” Bergemann include the last scene of H1 Gerichtsdienar.Artz.Richter (Richards 7). One may also find that H3, the Verstreute Bruchstücke, may connect H1, and H4, as Lehmann concludes. Furthermore, Bergemann does not include a very important scene that would change the whole conclusion of the drama, a scene in which Büchner added in H3, Verstreute Bruchstücke, namely Der Idiot.Das Kind.Woyzeck. In Bergemann’s edition of Woyzeck, the final scene is Am Teich,
where he combines H1,19, H1,20, and H1,16. In *Am Teich* Woyzeck is washing the blood off him and throwing the knife further and further away from him. The drama ends without Büchner’s original conclusion in H1, *Gerichtsdiener.Arzt.Richter*. In the last scene *Am Teich*, two people hear something in the water, as though someone were dying:


Fort! Es ist nicht gut, es zu hören!”

Erste Person: “Uu! Jetzt wieder! – wie ein Mensch, der stirbt!”

They go off in search of the noise. Bergemann made a note on the bottom of page 184, where he gives readers an optional ending with the judicial aftermath: “Anderer Ausgang mit Rückkehr Woyzecks vom Teich und gerichtlichem Nachspiel.” On page 538 he makes the assumption: “Hier endet Woyzeck nach S. 184, und er nun auf S. 184 erst folgende, schon erwähnte Auftritt der beiden >Leute< (aus H1, S. 521) soll, um zu einem Abschluß zu gelangen, das Ertrinken Woyzecks andeuten.” He goes further to suggest to readers an alternative ending to Woyzeck. To which he adds, “who ever rejects this temporary solution, in order to stay with the Author’s original concept, is able to attach, on the abandonment from H (the declaration of the original scenes, which are a summery of the manuscript), the scheme of the following scenes, which do not freely give any rounded down ending” (Bergemann 539). The alternative arrangement of concluding scenes appear similar to Lehmann’s, in which Woyzeck would not commit suicide. It reads as follows:

“ >Magareth und Louis< (Bergemann 520; H1,15), >Es kommen Leute< (Bergemann 523; H1,16), >Louis allen< (H1,19) und >an einem Teich< (Bergemann 523; H1,20), dann die erschütternde Szene >Idiot. Kind. Woyzeck< (Bergemann 537; H3,2) und zuletzt aus h2 die drei Zeilen >Gerichtsdiener. Barbier. Arzt. Richter< (Bergemann 524; H1,21).

This new arrangement of scenes implies that instead of drowning himself, Woyzeck is in a scene with the Karl, the town idiot, and the child. The last scene in Bergemann’s suggested alternative conclusion, *Gerichtsdiener.Barbier.Arzt.Richter.*, is as follows:

Pol: Ein guter Mord, ein ärchter Mord, ein schöner Mord, so schön als man ihn nur verlangen tun kann; wir haben schon lange so keinen gehabt.

Barbier: *Dogmatischer Atheist. Lang, hager, feig, gutmütig, Wissenschaft.*” (Bergemann 524).
Here, the Barbier (or barber) has the final words. I believe Bergemann is assuming that the final scene is the actual civil trial where Woyzeck is accused of the crime; in this case the Barbier is Woyzeck, which could be a strong argument that would leave Woyzeck alive at the end of the play (Richards 34). Woyzeck uses similar words, as did the Barbier in the previously mentioned scene. One can see the similarity of Franz’s words in the Buden scene, which was later cut out for Bergemann’s final edition. In this scene, called Öffentlicher Platz.Buden.Lichter (H2, 3) there seems to be a slight connection between Franz and the Barbier, from H1.21:

„,(Franz. Das will ich dir sagen, ich hatt’ ein Hundele, das schnuffelte an einem großen Hut und könnt nicht drauf, und da hab ich’s ihm aus Gutmütigkeit erleichtert und hab ihn drauf gesetzt. Und da standen die Leute herum und die klatschten.))

Herr. Grotesk! Sehr Grotesk!


Franz. Ich bin ein dogmatischer Atheist. Grotesk."

(Bergemann 527-528)

It is apparent that the words „dogmatischer Atheist“ connect the two figures, Woyzeck and the Barbier, together. But as critic Hans Winkler says, “it makes no sense that Büchner’s hero, who is called Louis in the first version, would be identified in the play’s final scene as “Barber” rather than by name” (Richards 35). Plus, the description of the Barbier who is “Tall, thin, cowardly, good natured scientific” does not at all relate to Woyzeck, and that this person demonstrates that the Barbier is a completely different person (Richards 35). In fact, the Barbier figure was eliminated altogether in the final version of both Bergemann’s and Lehmann’s edition of the play. Perhaps it was Bergemann’s intent, that through Woyzeck’s suicide, he gives the figure an end to his suffering and is redeemed.

In Lehmann’s version (Lese- und Bühnenausgabe) however, the last few scenes are as follows, >Woyzeck an einem Teich<, >Strasse<, >Gerichtsdienner. Artz. Richter,< and the last scene >Der Idiot.Das Kind.Woyzeck<. The scene Der Idiot.Kind.Woyzeck was added in the middle of revisions before Büchner died, also known as H2.3, and it appears that Bergemann did not take this ending into consideration until after his first edition of Büchner’s Woyzeck.

Critic J.
Elema concludes that H4 was indeed in proper chronological order and sequence, which integrates scenes from the first two drafts, that are also in proper sequence (Richards 56). J. Elema also sees some merit in H3,2 with the Idiot’s words as “an anticipation to Woyzeck’s drowning” (Richards 57), but not the final scene, as the logical scene placement would put H3,2 before the “Court clerk” scene, but would also anticipates further development (Richards 57). Büchner’s fragment provides us with everything needed for Woyzeck’s arrest and sentencing, not to mention possible execution, which happened to the real Johann Christian Woyzeck. Although he may have had good intentions, Bergemann did not need to change any of the scene sequencing, because all of the material for Büchner’s drama is present, and as Elema states, “Bergemann’s desire to strengthen the socially critical content of the play is an attempt to improve upon what needs no improvement, and it changes the author’s intention” (Richards 57). Lehmann has also criticized Bergemann’s text, which he claims “is based on the editor’s normative aesthetic assumptions with regard to drama and on his subjective aesthetic judgment”(Richards 58). As opposed to the scene development offered by Bergemann, where he combines material from H1 and H4, Lehmann took the last revisions made by Büchner into consideration, that is, he follows the already natural scene sequencing with H4, then connects it to H3, which connects back to H1, and ends the piece with H3,2, Der Idiot. Das Kind. Woyzeck. The scene Der Idiot. Das Kind. Woyzeck. is thought to have been the last scene added in revisions before Büchner’s death. If this were intended to have been the last scene, it would fit chronologically, since the line “Der ist ins Wasser gefallen” would indicate that Woyzeck is returning from the crime scene:

Karl: hält das Kind vor sich auf dem Schoß. Der is in’s Wasser gefallen, der is in’s Wasser gefallen, wie, der is in’s Wasser gefallen.

Woyzeck: Bub, Christian.

Karl: sieht ihn starr an. Der is in’s Wasser gefallen.

Woyzeck: will das Kind liebkosen, es wendet sich weg und schreit. Herrgott!

Karl: Der is in’s Wasser gefallen.


Karl: sieht ihn starr an.

Woyzeck: Hop! Hop! Roß.

This would maintain that Woyzeck did not commit suicide, but rather left the crime scene and comes upon Karl the Narr and his son, Christian. Karl points out that Woyzeck is wet, “Er is in’s Wasser gefallen,” and implies that he has come from the murder scene after washing the blood off of him. It is unclear as to why Bergemann would omit such an important scene, other than it did not fit in with his plans for the effect of a classically closed-ended drama. The boy is fearful of Woyzeck, and he does not recognize him as his father, so he turns to Karl for comfort. Here, Woyzeck is like a stranger to his own son, who he has not seen in several days, “Der Franz ist nit gekommen, gestern nit, heut nit, es wird heiß hier” (Lehman 174). This adds to the feeling of abandonment and isolation and connects directly to the themes presented in the Grandmother’s fairytale. Bergemann’s Lese und Bühnenfassung, however, offers readers a tragic end to a tragic life, in which Woyzeck commits suicide. Woyzeck’s suicide would be a great ending to complete the social tragedy and would symbolize Woyzeck’s desperation, distress, and his downward spiral of self-destruction. Bergemann’s ending would fit for the reason of keeping to the social content and the style of classical drama. But since Büchner is considered an early realist and expressionist, Lehmann believes that Büchner would have wanted to follow the historical case of Johann Christian Woyzeck. Lehmann’s scene alignment does not orient itself to the classic form of drama; instead Büchner would have left the open form, in which Woyzeck is left alive and alone at the end of the play and the possibility of his trial and execution. But as mentioned above, this would emphasize the theme of isolation that was represented by the grandmother’s fairytale. In this case, Woyzeck would be left awkwardly alone on stage, rejected by his son, in a world void of God, “[es] war ganz allein und da hat sich’s hingesetzt und geweint und da sitzt es noch und ist ganz allein” (Lehmann 176). This view is very pessimistic and would leave no room for the possibility of Woyzeck’s redemption. The figure of Woyzeck holds many tragic elements, although he is a passive figure, he is driven to murder by his circumstance, external force, as well as the inner conflict, which makes his situation harder to determine. Woyzeck can no longer find comfort in his surroundings or in his faith; he is left alone to suffer, as if he was “fated” for a life of isolation and hopelessness.
23 For more scene comparisons see Krause, Egon. *Georg Büchner Woyzeck: Texte und Dokumente*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1969. (pp. 164-165)

See also Hinderer, Walter von. *Büchner Kommentar zum dichterischen Werk*. München: Winkler Verlag, 1977. (pp. 178-185)

24 See Figure 1 for Lehmann and Bergemann’s scene reconstruction of Büchner’s *Woyzeck*. Page 60-61.
25 See Figure 1 on page 60.

CONCLUSION

Both Bergemann and Lehmann make an interesting case for the correct ending of Büchner’s Woyzeck, but only one can be considered the best resolve for the work. On one hand we have Bergemann’s added emphasis on Büchner’s social criticism and Woyzeck’s suicide, which would highlight Woyzeck’s desperation and defeat in society. On the other hand, we have Lehmann’s attempt at correlating the already roughly sequenced fragment, so as to keep with what Büchner may have wanted. When faced with the conclusion of Woyzeck walking away from the crime, the obvious rejection from his child, one finds the final tragic moment, of awkward and absurd isolation (*Entfremdung*) from society. Either way, if Büchner had chosen to have his protagonist drown himself or be tried and executed, Büchner defines for us the complexity of Woyzeck’s behavior, the inner suffering, along with external forces, which gives readers a choice between the forces of nature and society, the absurdities of religion and science. These aspects challenge humanity and give readers a new perspective to human existence. As critic Curt Nickisch writes, “Considerable debate has arisen concerning even the proper order of the scenes, and one can reasonably surmise that Büchner would have concluded the play with Woyzeck’s trial and execution. Dr. Clarus indicated that Woyzeck’s death was to be an example, and one might imagine that Büchner’s depiction of the execution “would have been an example indeed” (42). Dr. Clarus offered a betterment of society, for example, in his *aufklärisch Kriminalprozess* Johann Christian Woyzeck is given a thorough investigation. In his *Woyzeck Gutachten*, Document 2, Dr. Clarus states:


Dr. Clarus’ judgment on Johann Christian Woyzeck is one based on *Wahrheit* and *Verstand*, and not one of *Gefühle*. It seemed to be a moral lesson that the “Jugend” should learn from Woyzeck’s case. In the introduction of Clarus’ account, a picture was painted without sympathy, although it was known that Johann Christian Woyzeck too suffered from mental illness. Dr. Clarus states that it was through “ein unstätiges, wüstes, gedankenloses und unthätiges Leben von einer Stufe der moralischen Verwilderung zur andern herabgesunken”
that Johann Christian Woyzeck destroyed another human life, and that he „nun, ausgestoßen von der Gesellschaft, das seine auf dem Blutgerüste durch Menschenhand verlieren soll“ (Dedner 123).

Just as Johann Christian Woyzeck was made to be an example of right and wrong, so is Franz Woyzeck an example of morality- politically, socially, religiously, and economically. Both Marie and Woyzeck are judged according to their morality, and despite their situation, they are seen as having free will. They know right from wrong, good from evil. They are tragically linked together in their social determinism and their fate. It is very much a social and political criticism, as Woyzeck represents those, for whom Büchner fought in his pamphlet Der Hessische Landbote. Woyzeck and Marie’s poverty play a large roll in their morality- their actions and characteristics. As much as they are governed by ‘nature,’ they still possess free will. Büchner offers readers a political and social agenda as well as protestant introspection, as we see with Lenz and Woyzeck. Büchner was a realist, his characters were honest and simple and at times satiric.

As a tragic figure, Woyzeck’s subsequent suicide would have been an ideal tragic end in the classic style of drama. This ending would symbolize the act of giving up one’s soul after years of oppression, an idealistic achievement of an absurd and extreme existence. As one might think, using the words from Büchner’s own Mitschrift, that when one commits suicide when he is mentally, physically or psychologically unstable, he should not be held accountable for such a crime. But Büchner is not known to be idealistic, because in fact he rebelled against idealism. He preferred to show the reality of life; the totality of human existence. Just as the historical Johann Christian Woyzeck was declared ‘sane’ in Dr. Clarus’ account, Büchner’s Woyzeck had also displayed signs of rationality, for example, the buying of the knife and his eerie coherence the moment leading up to Marie’s murder. His suicide would have been the greatest act of free-will, and it would have given our ‘hero’ an honorable death, one last sense of meaning and freedom. For Bergemann this was the best option for Woyzeck. But Büchner himself stated quite the opposite in Über den Selbstmord, “Suicide goes against our nature, while in our nature lies our purpose, thus suicide could be named as one of natures most disputed or most unnatural acts” (Lehmann 197).27

If we take Lehmann’s version into consideration, what sort of example would have been made by Franz Woyzeck’s trial and subsequent execution? This ending would still
convey Büchner’s motives to criticize society’s morality, as well as the idealism of freedom of the will, and it would still convey the tragedy of a man’s soul that could not be redeemed, even through death. Throughout the play, Franz Woyzeck is related to the likes of an animal, a “Hund” not an Egoist (Beim Doktor Lehman 167; Kramladen Lehmann 173). Franz Woyzeck is a slave to his oppressors; he is an example of extreme poverty, and inner human suffering, which is the result of social, political, and economic exploitation. His poverty impacts not only his morality, but also his belief in right versus wrong and good versus evil, which is effected by all three dramatic motives. Thus, the best resolution to the drama should be Lehmann’s version, who took Büchner’s last revision into consideration. Franz Woyzeck should be left alive at the end, and should be given a trial, as did the historical Woyzeck. As we know, suicide would go against Büchner’s beliefs of nature as well as his protestant background. As we have seen by evidence in H 3.2 (Woyzeck.das Kind.Narr) Woyzeck is left alone at the end of the play, which not only relates to the theme of social criticism, it accentuates it, and gives a new motive for what a tragedy is. As Lehman concluded, H3.2 fits with the closure of the „Kind Handlung des Dramas, und es bringt das Motiv der Isolation, das im ganzen dramatischen Konzept sich zusehends verdichtet“ (Lehmann 389). One cannot deny the importance of H3.2 and as Lehmann explains, „Szene H3.2 stellt nicht nur einen notwendigen Bestandteil des Werks dar, sondern auch die gegebene Schlußzene. Nicht nur erlaubt die Schlußposition ein Beibehalten der Szenenfolge von H1, sondern sie spitzt die innere Konsequenz der Figur Woyzeck auf eine einzigartige Weise zu, die dann einen dramaturgisch „offenen“, vom Gesichtspunkt der inneren, persönlichen Tragik Woyzecks aber endgültig „geschlossenen“ Schluß zuläßt“ (Lehmann 389). Indeed, this scene offers the most dramatic effect for the conclusion of Woyzeck. Our protagonist’s struggle came to an end, in one act of desperation; he is left a victim in a world of hopelessness and isolation, a tragic fate in a violent world.

Through his fragment Büchner presents readers with the crossroads of spirituality and sensuality, of wealth and morality, and of suffering and empathy. In order to present us with these themes, Büchner departed from the traditional style of drama, and in his realistic style of literature, he gives readers all the pieces and motives necessary for the human condition, and what it is in us, that lies, murders and steals (Lehmann 256). Historically the individual is caught between the idealization of religion and society, the forces of human nature, and the inescapable forces of social determinism. Having grown up among those in poverty, in the
midst of political unrest, he anticipated a renewal of human rights by challenging the conservative traditions of society. Büchner challenged his audience the most with his theme of morality, in which he criticizes those who treat others as inferior, and makes it clear that we would all become the same under similar circumstances (Lehmann 253). Büchner makes a strong case for the fatalism of history, and he challenges readers to consider the facts in opposition, what it is that defines us as humans. Through his drama *Woyzeck* Büchner questions our freedom, which is set against the imperatives of social hierarchy and political injustice, as well as our morality, set against the vanity associated with wealth and status. Büchner does not give us a solution to this problem, but rather provides us with the facts, so that we the readers would be sympathetic to make the change in our own lives and others.

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27 Translation is mine.
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<td>2. Die Stadt* (Louise)</td>
<td>2. Marie mit ihrem Kind am Fenster. Margareth (2)</td>
<td>2. Marie mit ihrem Kind am Fenster. Margareth (2)</td>
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<td>5. Der Hauptmann, Woyzeck (1/3 der Seite unbeschrieben) (5)</td>
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<td>7. Marie. Woyzeck (1/5 der Seite unbeschrieben) (Franz)</td>
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FIGURE 1: Georg Büchner’s *Handschriften* of *Woyzeck*: H1, H2, H3, H4. Overview of the handwritten scene sequences of Büchner’s *Woyzeck*, as given in *Georg Büchner: Werke und Briefe*, by Lehmann (383-385). The scene development in Lehmann’s version, according to his *Lese- und Bühnenfassung*, is found in parentheses. Figure 1 continues onto page 61.
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<td>(I. Fassung, 2. Szenengruppe)</td>
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<td>18. Kinder (25)</td>
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<td>19. Louis allein (23)</td>
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<td>20. Louis an einem Teich (24)</td>
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<td>2. Der Idiot. Das Kind. Woyzeck (27)</td>
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FIGURE 1. Cont’d.
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<td>8. Beim Doktor (H4,8)</td>
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<td>9. Strasse (H4,9; H2,7 (ein großer Teil))</td>
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<td>11. Wirthaus (H4,11)</td>
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<td>25. Strasse (H1,18)</td>
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<td>27. Der Idiot.Das Kind.Woyzeck (H3,2)</td>
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Holly Elizabeth Fulkerson was born in Peru, Indiana 1980. She spent the first eight years of her life in Peru, Indiana, until her father received a new job position in Clemson, South Carolina. At a young age Holly found she had a talent for drawing and planned to become an artist until she discovered her love of the German language at D.W. Daniel High school at the age of seventeen. After Holly graduated High School in the fall of 1999 she decided to go to College of Charleston to pursue an undergraduate degree. In spring 2002 she had the experience of studying abroad in Tübingen Germany, and had been awarded the German Friendly Travel Scholarship. Her experience in Tübingen expanded her knowledge and love for the German language. In fall 2003 Holly received a double major in German and International Business. In January 2004 Holly began working as an Assistant at International Programs at Florida State University. She enjoyed working with students and encouraging them to study abroad. In the fall of 2005 Holly began her career as a Masters student in the College of Arts and Science at Florida State University as well as a teaching assistant in the Department of German. In the spring of 2005 Holly was accepted as a participant in the Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange, for the year 2005-2006, which focuses on giving participants education and professional training in Germany. Holly focused on language and educational management and worked at an elementary school during her internship phase in her host town of Osnabrück, Germany. As part of her teaching responsibilities at the elementary school Holly was able to start a new internet reading program with grades 1-4, she taught a AG class called “Life in America,” and she was able to help with courses such as Math and English. She also had the advantage of living with a wonderful host family during her stay in Osnabrück, which helped her to improve language proficiency immensely. Since her return to FSU in 2006, Holly has continued the pursuit of her Masters degree in German Studies. Because of the experience at Florida State University, the experience of teaching German at a University level, as well as the connections she has made in Germany and in Tallahassee, Holly would like to one day work and live in Germany. Holly would like to work as an English Instructor in Germany after her completion of her Masters Degree and hopes to one day work at a study abroad institute in Germany. She
would also like to continue to inspire students to learn a foreign language and help others to have the opportunity and experience of studying abroad.