

# U. S. Students Responses: T&S

## Curriculum Units 1 & 2

*Ms. Jeanette L. Jones's course in "World History from 1500", 10th Grade, Second Semester, [Pembroke Hill School](#), Kansas City, MO, USA, submitted electronically on [Seesaw](#), March 2019.*

### **Mia Randolph, March 28, 2019**

In the play "Love in the Time of Hitler," we are offered a different perspective into what was held important in the time of Nazi Germany. The play features 2 characters, Hilde and Roland, who are convinced that they have found love through a letter correspondence. They had only met briefly previous to their separation, and had not known each other that well. Hilde becomes infatuated with Roland through looks alone. What she is convinced is love at first sight would in today's world be described as lust, takes over her thoughts and she writes to Roland once he leaves with very sappy letters almost like what I would think of as an obsessive stalker. They grow closer over time through their letters, and Roland begins to fall for her too. In many ways the play offers interesting perspectives into how the ideas and criteria of relationships can change over time. For example, there is a large age difference between the two that in today's world would be considered gross or inappropriate. Also, the fact that two people can fall in love through correspondence, while can be compared to online dating today, seems simply like a romantic idea from faraway. We can ask ourselves what relationships in today's world hold important. While back then, simply writing letters and getting to know a person through their words could be enough to announce the engagement and get married, people today would need more. History changes not only the world surrounding us but the ways people live in it as well, and how we adapt the expectations of the public opinion.

### **Edward Fromm, March 27, 2019**

In the play, there is a very odd dynamic in the relationship between Hilde and Roland. To begin with, the massive age difference between them was appalling. While in adulthood, age gaps like that aren't very common, they are acceptable and not something that stands out, but the fact that Roland is an adult and she is a teenager not only makes it pretty much unacceptable, but also frowned upon and quite staggering. While many people would immediately place the blame upon Roland because he is the older of the two, it wasn't entirely his fault. In fact, it is made clear that Roland wasn't initially extremely interested in her, and it was Hilde that was attempting to start a relationship with him. Although Roland definitely should not have agreed to have a relationship with her, he did it anyway and the reason outside of loving her his unknown to me. My first thought was that he was gay, considering the way he acted, using the relationship as cover, but after further consideration is discounted that, and I still really don't understand his interior motive, because in my mind, I see no possible way that he didn't at least think that maybe having a relationships with a teenager wouldn't be a great idea.

## **Jet Patterson, March 27, 2019**

Hilde and Roland's correspondence was telling of the lack of privacy in the time of Nazi Germany. Initially, I had assumed that Hilde had not approached Rowland in person because she was shy or weary of their 13-year age difference; but after reading her first letter where she said, "I want to ask you a great favor: that you grant me a chance to talk with you; I must speak with you" it became clear that her reasoning was at least partially to avoid being seen in public with him. Neither Hilde nor Roland included a return address in their letters for fear of being discovered. Knowing this, it seems that there would have been unfavorable social repercussions if the couple of different classes were found out. The idea of honor was brought up throughout their writing, explaining how tradition and class were of importance at the time. It seems that in the end, it was not their difference in age, but their different roots that kept them apart in the beginning of their relationship.

## **John Moore, March 27, 2019**

According to Ronald, in Nazi Germany studies were more important than relationships: You asked whether I have I already felt this pure love? Yes, I have fallen quite in love three times and know that it was true love. I did not declare myself and pushed back my emotions because I still wanted to pursue my studies and believed that the time had not yet come for such things (26-29). Holder states that a relationship in Nazi Germany requires both people to be of the same status. "Yet I know that our relationship is not allowed to be because I am not of the same status as you." Ronald correctly states that life in Nazi Germany was filled with hard times. It seems that in Nazi Germany life was good for those in government or the SS, because the country had gained a lot of wealth since 1933, and because anyone in the SS could force another person to their will. Life was not good for the average citizen however, due to their rights being stripped from them, such as free speech, and having many norms placed on them. Men were told that it was their main job to fight, and were sent into the army. Women were told that it was their main job to make children, and women who gave birth to four children were given the cross of honor of the German mother.

## **Innis McLiney, March 27, 2019**

"Love In The Time of Hitler" gives us a unique opportunity to understand the lives that people in Nazi Germany lived. The piece shows us how hard these times were for people outside of the star dark way of telling it. It shows us a true first person point of view on the situation. This gives us insight on how lovers of this time communicated. We know that people were mostly writing letters in Nazi Germany and that this was a normal practice. However, people would generally write a return address on their letters so that the person receiving the letter could write back. Roland and Hilde did not have the luxury of writing a return address on their letters because of the way the Nazi's ruled. They feared that their letters would be intercepted and their personal sat at and information would be known, had they written return addresses. I understand that this is a fairly minor inconvenience but, having to worry that the government is going to steal your mail is a much larger one. From this we can guess that the Nazi's were brutal to their citizens in many other ways. Obviously, it is known what the Nazi's did to the Jews and this had an effect on the love lives of others. Roland had to be certain that Hilde came from a respectable family,

he had to make sure that she wasn't Jewish. Most of the time, two people so deeply in love would have met and if they hadn't, it's best to judge her off of the way that she is, not the way her family is.

## **Tristan Wells, March 27, 2019**

The relationship between Roland and Hilde in a way demonstrates the opposite of what their contemporary society and the Nazis wanted. First, as mentioned in Act 1, Scene 1, the two characters are somewhat separate in society due to "material reasons" (p.6 p.11). The two of them differ in terms of class, and at this time it was taboo for the two of them to be together. Second, Hilde's role in the relationship goes against the norms of current society. Like today, in their society, the man was supposed to be powerful and the man was supposed to ask and propose to the woman. However, Hilde decides to engage with Roland first and openly prods him to love her. Third, Hilde's place in society went against the norms and expectations of Nazi Germany. The Nazis believed that women ought to work at home and occupy a different place in society than men. Hilde does factory and housekeeping work to support herself and lives much like an independent man (p.6). Fourth, Roland's place in society also contradicts the norms of Nazi society. The Nazis were incredibly conservative and believed that men ought to work in jobs of action and physical labor. Roland, on the other hand went to school to study music and worked as a schoolteacher.

## **Joseph Barewin, March 27, 2019**

Love in the Time of Hitler was much more "normal" than I expected. Sure there are a few irregularities for the time such as age and social class but it is not as if the two individuals were forbidden by law to stay apart. What caught me off guard was the normality of the relationship with one character desperate for love with the other slow to come into the relationship. Besides actually being a part of the war, the relationship does not seem to change too much because of the war around them. The biggest issue was the time apart from one-another, wishing instead to be together. Some other oddities come from Hilde's aggressiveness for the relationship. She truly believes after seeing him in the church choir that he is the one for her. This was rather odd for the time that the younger female would be aggressive towards the older male and you can tell Roland is shocked and embarrassed about her.

## **Nicholas Trainor, March 27, 2019**

Hitler and his far right party of Nazi men were active around 1930 in the nation, Germany. The party began as a group of nationalists and racists and became a large army with anti-Semitic ideas and anti-Marxist themes. During the play, *Love in the Time of Hitler* we were introduced with two characters which happen to be real people who lived during the time of the Nazis. The two people were Hilde, a younger girl, and Roland, an older man. These two secretly sent messages back and forth to each other throughout the years which not only having been very restricted and illegal to do, it did not seem as if Roland had the same liking for her as she did for him. It was quite strange for them to be sending messages back and forth to each other as they are in completely different social classes. Roland is very high up in the classes, however, Hilde is not. It seems odd for the two to have a relationship, however back in those years it was seen

as being very normal and easily accepted. These letters sent to one another help to describe what relationship was like back during the 1930s. It shows the roles by each person and what has changed.

## **Benjamin Graves, March 27, 2019**

Life in the time of Hitler according to the love letters that we have read was not as black and white as it may seem. Although with all the information we now possess about Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, it was not clear at the time for the German people that the Nazis were evil. Good people who wanted to help their nation and other people could and did join the Nazi Party. Was everyone who joined the Nazi Party evil? It would seem that some joined the Nazi party out of ignorance or a need to survive. The two lovers that we learn about in these letters were suspicious and wary of the state they lived under however. They had codes in their letters to avoid their true intentions or opinions from being discovered by the state. These precautions lend them slaves to the idea that they had to have some inclination or idea of the true nature of the Nazi government before the end of the war. Is knowing and doing nothing wrong in this scenario? His membership in the Nazi party never progressed from being just another member so perhaps they never knew and were just cautious. Perhaps he joined to have some measure of protection because of what the Nazis were doing to people across Germany.

## **Tyler Large, March 27, 2019**

From the play "Love in the Time of Hitler" we can see certain things about what life in Nazi Germany is like. I think the climate of Germany can best be described by Roland saying that we live in hard times. This is reinforced by the fact that Roland and Hilde have to communicate in secrecy and without return addresses on their letters so that people can't delve into their personal lives through their mail. The corruptness of society in Germany shows through the people who take mail. Although it is a minor issue, it does not allow for citizens to have a true sense of security or privacy in their lives. Another crucial element of life in Germany during this time is that attention should be paid to social classes. In the play Roland has to make sure that Hilde is from a solid respectable family/social class because he barely knows her. It is important for him to know because of the prejudice that was happening to Jews during this time period. This prejudice was being taught all throughout Germany to the youth through children's books. In these books they would dehumanize Jews and teach children how to spot a Jew and what to do if they saw one. Since there was so much hatred towards the Jews, Roland and all of Germany had to be aware and pay attention to others' social status and family.

## **Ben Medlock, March 27, 2019**

During the mid-nineteenth century, Hitler and his Nazi party became in control of the lifestyles of all Germans. Because of the fascist ideals that were enforced, the main focus became the prosperity of the country in a political sense. After World War One and the fall of Germany as a global super power, Hitler rose to power and introduced his resolution for their failure. He wanted his country to regain its power and shared a path that he believed would allow that to happen. This philosophy urged the people of Germany to disregard selfish desires and only think about how they can benefit their country as a whole. Restrictions of such selfish desires

are clearly exemplified in "Trug und Schein". Hilde and Roland only talk formally to each other even as their relationship grew stronger. "Sie", a formal German pronoun, continued to appear in their messages as open display of affection was looked down upon in Society. The massive push for military revival is forced upon Roland when he is forced to relocate for lack of participation in a socialist group called the NSDAP. The somber tone of the play reflects the how a lot of Germans felt during this time due to the suppression of individualism.

## **Meg Mooney, March 27, 2019**

What I noticed during and after reading the first act in the play, it is obvious how Hilde loves Roland on another level in comparison to how much he loves her. As the couple has around a 15 age year gap, that is very difficult to connect to each other, and it is shown quite often how they struggle with their conversations together. Hilde engages in conversation with Roland, and she is the one who wants to create a relationship with him. She approaches him with a letter and claims how she really wishes to talk to him...yet he does not seem as interested in her. He is describes as "embarrassed" when he opens the letter that Hilde gave him. Yet, he respects her completely and answers respectively with promise not to mock her in any way shape or form, which is a good sign. It was odd how she called him "Mr. Nordhoff" at first yet, she was embarrassed and nervous as well. Roland calls his love for her "pure love" which makes it mean something very special to her. Just as an observation, all of her letters are much longer in length compared to his letters to her. She might have used more effort and time in her letters than he did. They're love seems confusing, but so far it is beginning to look good.

## **Luke Donovan, March 27, 2019**

Love in the time of Hitler seemed very hard to sustain. As we see in the play, Hilde and Roland mainly communicate through letters, and although they did this before the war, it made it even harder for them to see each other or even send letters. Many men were called to serve their countries in this war, and they moved around frequently, making it hard for them to maintain a relationship. The Nazis also reviewed all letters that were sent in and out of the country, so Hilde and Roland (and many other people) were forced to filter what they said, because of the fear of being imprisoned if they said too much or said something wrong through a letter. The woman also suffered to maintain relationships too, as many were forced to work long days of labor in factories, so even if their husband or significant other was not deployed to fight in the war, there was a good chance it was hard for the woman to make time to spend with their significant other. In Roland, and Hilde's case, they were forced to take breaks from correspondence, due to his training or deployment, and they had to be permitted by the government to take a leave of absence from serving the Nazi party and be able to see each other. I imagine most couples during this time period went through the same struggle as Roland and Hilde, and it must have effected relationships even more when children and families were involved.

## **Jackson Hargroves, March 27, 2019**

Love in the Time of Hitler begins during the early stages of Nazi Germany. The full-fledged oppression has not yet begun, at least not for Hilde and Roland. They keep their relationship

hidden for a long time, as its nature is controversial and they are afraid of what would happen if it was to be revealed. The gender roles are very limiting, as women are expected to stay at home and not have ambitions beyond their husband and family. However, Hilde breaks these boundaries, as she, not Roland starts their correspondence. This throws him off guard, as his upbringing has taught him to be wary of women who express themselves confidently towards men they do not know. He at first suspects Hilde to have fleeting feelings for him, and so he puts up “a defense against the ugliness and the invasive intrusions” to protect his “belief in a pure love” (5). Their continued discourse of this honesty in love sets the stage for further steps in their relationship. The play also shows how citizens of Germany during this time period have to be cautious of other people snooping through presumably private business. Roland even takes the extra step of warning Hilde to “please do write without return address as I too have done so as to deprive those who like to pry into other people’s secrets (and in a small town that can include the mailman)” (4). This shows the lack of basic privacy that nearly everyone else can depend on.

## **Emily Vega-Gonzalez, March 27, 2019**

According to “Love in the Time of Hitler,” there is an understanding of a strange dynamic between people. We also learn that Nazi Germany was very different and weird in some sense. Based off the communication between Hilde and Roland, we come to a sense that maybe women tried to be more courageous and brave in a social sense. Typically, men are the ones who start communication and make the first move towards women, but Hilde made the first move by writing letters. With that being the only source of communication and mail carriers being the median, we can assume that privacy was not too present. Mail carriers probably looked through the letters since they definitely had access to all mail they were transporting. Finally, with the age difference, we can assume that age gaps weren’t much of a problem during that era and romance wasn’t TOO difficult to deal with. Overall, the sense of women making the first move in this specific piece of literature also shows that as a general idea, men shouldn’t instigate everything and women should have more roles in society even though this is strictly about romance.

## **Aidan Colligan, March 27, 2019**

By far, my favorite aspect of this series of letters is Roland’s personality. Considering we come from a different time and place, Roland often seemed rude to me; he seemed suspicious and even condescending at first glance. For example, when Hilde first asks to meet in person, he responds: “It is quite improbable that I will come. Please write to me of your concerns.” I think that the way Roland speaks points to both his time and status. Even though there was little mention of the actual war or the outside world, I find it interesting to see how these outside events lined up with people’s personal lives. Roland’s voice in these early letters is one of authority; the kind associated with wealth and education. Of course, these things are relative to their time, and what 1930’s Germany considered valuable education was probably different from our current society. It also makes me wonder about what an ‘average’ love story might have been like at this time. This particular story seems so far-fetched that it makes me wonder if an average couple then in any way resembles an average couple today, or how far-fetched this story might have seemed when it was playing out.

## **Daniel Allen, March 27, 2019**

When reading *Love in the Time of Hitler* in class, the age difference between Hilde and Roland really startled me. Roland was 13 years older than Hilde and they had much different backgrounds and a different status in society. Hilde was still in school when they met and Roland was teaching her at the time. Their age difference caused them to be secretive about their letter writing between each other. People started to get suspicious such as the mailman as he would look through their letters to be involved in their gossip. Hilde started the relationship which was very weird for the time because the men were usually the ones who would go after the women after the man had become successful and could support the women. Hilde was very outgoing with Roland as she made it seem like she was head over heels with Roland and he did not like her as much. My class thought Roland might have been homosexual because of his actions of waiting to marry a woman so long. After talking to Dr. Bergerson over skype I do not think he is anymore. I believe that the harsh Nazi society in Germany during the time period drastically had an impact in his decisions in his life.

## **Addison Schmidt, March 27, 2019**

When reading *Love in the Time of Hitler* in class the majority of the students along with myself were caught off guard by the dynamic between the two people, Hilde and Roland. For starters their age difference was weird to me because of the 13 year difference along with their apparent different backgrounds. I think their age difference and class difference could have been reasons for the continued formality (especially Roland's) in the letters they shared. Hilde was the one to initiate the relationship and press it which was an uncommon thing for women at this time to do. Because of his actions in response to her letters it did not seem like he cared for her as much as she made it clear she cared for him and in present day we'd describe her as being clingy. At first I thought he might be homosexual because of his actions, but after talking with Dr. Bergerson I no longer believe that to be true. Now I think his demeanor towards her was a reflection of the harsh and serious Nazi society in Germany during period. They also hid their relationship for sometime which I think could be because of the time period and the war. Dr. Bergerson told us that it gets quite interesting in later scenes and so I hope to read more in the future.

## **Charles Doering-Powe..., March 26, 2019**

Hilde and Roland's relationship is one with many aspects that were weird. Their relationship is weird, mostly because of their dynamic. First, the way that they were forced to communicate was odd and put a damper on the extent that their relationship could have reached. I think that, because they knew that the postman would read every single letter that they sent back and forth, they had to limit what they said to each other to not be seen as "weird" or "different". Another aspect that was weird, in my opinion, about their relationship was the age gap. The 13 year age gap didn't really seem weird to them, but, from a future perspective, a 13 year gap between two people in a relationship is so odd. This age gap also plays into the "teacher" aspect of not only their relationship, but many other relationships during their time. Men were seen as the ones who were supposed to guide, lead, and be the head of the house and the more important partner in the relationship. This belief that men were superior to women makes

Hilde's attempts at love more or less courageous, as not many women were bold or courageous enough to reach out to the man first. It was believed that the man had to instigate conversations and relationships, and Hilde was one to defy that stereotype completely. So, according to Act 1, Scene 1 of "Love in the Time of Hitler", we know that love in Nazi Germany was a little bit weird. We know that age gaps weren't weird, that they could only communicate via mail (obviously), meaning that the postman read all of their conversations, and we know that men were superior and the head of the relationship.

## **Griffin O'Donnell, March 26, 2019**

The story of "Love in the Time of Hitler" provided me with a new perspective of how life in Nazi Germany was lived through the eyes of the citizens. This story reminds the reader of the smaller things that were going on in Germany at the time. If the relationship between Hilde and Roland were to be discovered both parties would be in trouble. At that time Germany was extremely formal and they were both breaking the formality which could have serious social consequences. Also the German people were very interested in any form of gossip, even the mail man was no stranger to snooping through other people's business. Their relationship, even by today's standards, was a little uncommon in regards to the age gap. Love is love but to me thirteen years is a little too far apart especially when you consider the fact that at the time of the first letters delivery Hilde is only eighteen. If their relations were discovered Roland would be in huge trouble even though he was hesitant about the situation. Taken out of context, It appears to the reader Roland could be taking advantage of the young girl. However, a more thorough dissection of the text would prove that Roland is tired of having heart broken and he wants to find a woman to settle down with.

## **Lillian Thorne, March 26, 2019**

Love in the Time of Hitler was particularly strange because of the age difference in their relationship and their constant formality with each other. Of course, I am looking at this with modern lenses, but an 18 year and a 30 year old at the time being together is not abnormal as much as it is today. Today, this usually looked as out of the ordinary. Another thing that I commend for Hilde, is the fact that she is pursuing the man in the situation, which seems progressive for her time. Hilde is obviously falling in love much quicker than Roland, which she literally tells him pretty early on in their writing relationship. This is because in their society a man must have a formal education and start a career before he could marry someone. Hilde, a lower class women going after a man in the Bourgeois is frowned upon. Roland questions her family and upbringing, because he wants a woman with a respectable upbringing. I am surprised that he still continues writing to her after he finds out that she is in a lower class, so he must have had feelings for her, but he could not explain them in writing to her. Also, they go far into their marriage and still use the formal tense with each other which highly confuses me. I think maybe the class difference is the reason for their continuing use of formality with each other. Overall, their relationship is strange to me, but it is interesting to learn about love during this time.



## **Alisha Castaner, March 26, 2019**

During the time that these letters were written, the Nazi party was gaining popularity in Germany. Hilde Laube, an eighteen year old young woman who was born into the working class, fell in love with 31-year-old Roland Nordhoff. During their exchange of letters in Act 1 Scene 1, they discussed the problems that could occur if they continued to write these letters. Hilde also emphasizes continuously that she doesn't feel as if she belongs with her love because she is of the working class and he is of the bourgeois class. During this time, the class structure was purely individual. If you were of the working class you had to marry a working class. It was against the norm to cross over into any class. Also, people of the upper class felt entitled to be treated as a higher class. Furthermore, women during the time of WW2 were not really expected to work or be a part of society. While deviating from the norm, Hilde was not following any of society's expectations. She was a single woman working to support herself and her poor family. Also, she deliberately asked out a male that was of a higher class and was 13 years her elder. She very much differed from the normal, German, Nazi, young, girl that modern Americans were expecting from when the letters were released. This was interesting because out of the hundreds of letters that they sent, Hilde never gives up when fighting for her love and life.

## **Julian Nunez, March 26, 2019**

I found pretty much the whole play to be interesting, in general. For example, it displays a general day to day routine. This is seen through Hilde and Roland getting the mail and reading each other's letters all the way to their outfits and actions as told by the script. As well, it displays that people of that time were very nosy in other people's mail or business, with the quote, "Please do write without return address as I too have done so as to deprive those who like to pry into other people's secrets (and in a small town that can include the mailman)" (4). This also goes to show that there was virtually no privacy back then. The letters give a sense that religion was a large part of German culture with Roland and Hilde referring to God quite a bit throughout act 1, scene 1. Also, Hilde is an excellent example of a normal woman living in Nazi Germany. She tends to show her more feminine qualities in her letters and with the service jobs that she had. And, Roland is as well seen to be a normal man living in Nazi Germany. He joins the Nazi party, he is a believer in God and his teachings, and he is a well educated middle-class male.

## **Cooper Starks, March 26, 2019**

Love in the Time of Hitler was particularly because we got catch a glimpse of everyday life during the Nazi reign. In perspective of a modern relationship, getting to know someone by writing letters that has a 12 year age difference is odd and not common. Also the aggressiveness of Hilde to form this relationship is pretty unheard of for a female and is embarrassing to Roland during this time. Hilde's ambitiousness is put on display when joined the church choir to be closer to him. In the beginning Roland, "shocked and agitated" by the letters he was receiving and pushed back all emotions for her. Also, during this period family legitimacy and respectability was taken in account before in a relationship, which Roland highly questioned. By the end of the letters, Roland began to become more open to Hilde. This closed

off relationship really shows how confined and limited the people were to live freely without criticism in Germany during the Nazi era. This story also portrayed the boldness of a woman who was willing to step of the confines and go after the man she loved, even though women weren't supposed to be as open about the feeling as they are now

## **Charlotte Lawrence, March 25, 2019**

Love in the Time of Hitler gives important insight into relationships during a period of anxiety, but that doesn't excuse the fact their love was super weird. First of all, Roland is thirteen years Hilde's senior. Even then that age difference raised some eyebrows. Second of all, they come from completely different background, they have completely different ideas of how the relationship should work. Third of all, Roland seems to not care about Hilde at all. I wrongfully assumed Roland to be a homosexual because of his indifference toward a young, beautiful and enthusiastic woman. At first, my assumption of Roland's sexuality clouded my thinking. His lack of attention and attraction towards Hilde was surprising, but after the Skype call, the video, and just general conversation, I now understand he was simply caught off guard. For a working-class woman to be so blunt and daring in expressing herself, Roland's reaction seems fitting. Their relationship warranted public scrutiny, and since she was of a lower class was not socially acceptable. However, I wish we had read a few more of the letters because Dr. Bergerson says that she teaches him to let down his guard and open up to her. This story proves love can endure even the harshest of environments.

## **Zoe Jonas, March 25, 2019**

Love in the time of Hitler was a really interesting play. It was strange to hear them talk about day to day life when the holocaust was going on. I think the play makes a comment on the social interactions during that time. In the script they are very distant from each other but in the video they are physically close to each other which makes an interesting feeling of intimacy. I also think that the sternness of Roland is reflective of the society and culture of Germany during World War II and the love sickness of Hilde shows that, even though there is a terrible war, that she was still able to fall in love.

## **Dominica Siragusa, March 25, 2019**

It's clear that the relationship between Roland and Hilde is quite unusual from our own modern perspective. The significant age gap for one, and the way they treat their relationship themselves, while commonplace at the time, would now be considered very strange. But also some aspects of their relationship made it strange for their own time also. The fact that social status would make their relationship scandalous, along with the fact that a woman is pursuing a man versus the opposite is now pretty normal. It shows how Nazi Germany was sexist in their views of women because they were supposed to be in a completely different social circle than men and were supposed to only stay within the jobs they believed they were made to do such as being mothers and caretakers(Craig 770). Hilde stepped out of many of the things that were expected of her when she pursued Roland. Also the comment that people could read their mail because it was legal at the time shows how Nazi Germany would surveille their population to make sure that people were behaving how they were supposed to. Roland reacts in a way a bit

more normal for the time in the face of Hilde's affections. He acts in a modest and indifferent way to her letters. What's interesting is that as time goes on he begins to feel affection towards her, despite the societal beliefs of the time.

## **Ethan Wolf, March 25, 2019**

I find it interesting that in the countless amount of letters that they wrote to each other that they never mentioned some important events that were happening parallel to these written letters. Neither Hilde nor Roland ever mention the Depression that Germany fell into during the 1920's. I imagine that it would have taken a large toll on their life, especially Roland's who was born into "a bourgeois family" that must have been hit hard by the depression. It seems that these star crossed lovers were two busy talking about love to speak about reality. The flurry of letters they sent to each other focus more on exploring each other's feelings than speaking about current events. The most they speak about current events is major events that go on in their lives. It is worthy to note how unique Roland and Hilde's relationship is as they basically only talk through letters for a long period of time. Long distance relationships now are already difficult, but waiting to receive letters everyday would make one almost impossible to maintain a healthy relationship. While Roland and Hilde give us an in depth look at what life was like in Nazi Germany but they are also a great example of how history tells a different story when experienced.

## **Aidan Manivong, March 25, 2019**

Looking through Modern lenses, Hilde and Roland had an odd relationship, with their age difference and the fact that even after their marriage they were still incredibly formal when speaking towards one another, but during the age of Hitler, disregarding their individual social status, their relationship was normal. As Dr. Bergson stated, a man would have to establish himself, through education and his career before he could be married, which is one of the reasons why during their time the age difference was not a big deal. A 30 year old man marrying an 18 year old woman seems a bit odd in modern times, but in the 1930's it wasn't odd, if anything it was normal. Their formality when speaking to each other, even after marriage seems strange, one of the main points mentioned in the video chat with Dr. Bergson, but again, in the age of Hitler it wasn't that strange. In regards to their individual social status, this relationship was very "scandalous". Hilde was a woman of lower status, while Rolaf was a professor and in the military. Out of all the things we thought was strange through or modern lenses, the one thing we don't view as strange in a relationship in modern times was the main factor that made Hilde and Rolaf's relationship scandalous.

## **Isaac Appel, March 25, 2019**

The two characters, Hilde and Roland, show life as a normal day to day routine. They were average and showed how people acted during the time period. In the letters they are able to show how overlooked the working people were. Alongside these details they provide insight into the role of religion in Germany. The letters also help to humanize the members of the Nazi pretty who were in the dark about many of the sufferings of the Jews and other peoples who were oppressed by the German government. While Roland is shown to be a religious yet mostly

apathetic person, we learn that he grows to love Hilde and that he has joined the Nazi party. Hilde is a good example of the typical woman in Nazi Germany. She shows herself as the perfect woman for Roland by sharing her more “feminine” qualities, giving examples of the service jobs she had. Roland of course is sexist because of his Nazi views of how women should act.

## **Fatemeh Farassati, March 24, 2019**

Hilde and Roland's relationship is quite odd. The mentor and mentee aspect can be considered weird, as one would think that, at the time of Nazi Germany, husbands and boyfriends weren't concerned with teaching their wives and girlfriends, as the gender roles of the time indicated that the woman was subservient to the man. That's not to say Hilde or Roland refuted these gender roles though. Hilde often defers to Roland, even on matters of opinion. Their age gap may have had something to do with this deference. Though the age gap wasn't odd, I'm sure that Roland was considered by Hilde as a wise man who knew so much more than her. Yet, even with these constraints on her power in the relationship, Hilde acted as an incredibly free woman, as she spoke against political aspects she believed were wrong. And, to his credit, Roland did not make an effort to stifle Hilde's expression. Though he was slightly aloof in the beginning, Roland grows to love Hilde. We never truly get the sense that their love is equal, but it is definitely mutual. All in all, the love between Roland and Hilde does not quite fit into the mold of relationships at the time. Instead, though it has its faults, it seems more liberal and genuine. Perhaps this is because the medium of letters allowed for increased honesty, and therefore, a truer relationship.

## **Alexandra Pierce, March 12, 2019**

Life during Nazi Germany, according to the love letters of Hilde and Roland, was a highly oppressive and dark time, even for people connected to the Nazi party. The love of Hilde and Roland took place in secret, relying on letters with coded messages and no return addresses to get to know one another and fall in love. They were extremely afraid of their relationship being discovered by their friends, family, and people in their communities, only meeting a handful of times before getting engaged. It must've been really difficult to maintain the secrecy of their love in spite of the people who would read their letters and the gossip their relationship would've caused. Before we skyped Dr. Bergerson, I had trouble comprehending Roland's feelings for Hilde or why he was so stiff with her. However, after he explained Roland's inability to love for a time that stemmed from a lack of parental love attention, I was able to understand that Roland's cold and rude nature did not come from homosexuality, rather, the rigid definition of love at the time. Additionally, it was very bold of Hilde to send the initial letter to him in a time when the man was expected to make the moves and pursue the woman. By initiating the relationship and disregarding the potential consequences, Hilde revealed herself to be very outspoken and independent, characteristics uncommon in women of the time. Overall, the play was very telling of how the darkness of the Nazis affected everything in society, even something as pure as love.

## **Alice Guo, March 11, 2019**

I thought the way that Roland's and Hilde's affection grew for each other was very unique. I have never heard of people who had to build their relationship off of mainly writing letters, and was quite impressed by the way that they were able to become more open with each other after a while. Hilde was obviously much more open from the very beginning, so it was Roland who went through the most change. He who often "pushed back [his] emotions," became much more open with Hilde. In the beginning, he seemed very uncomfortable with Hilde writing to him, as he was "shocked and agitated" by her confessions. He also doubted her family and the respectability of them. But by the last letter in Scene 1, Roland has clearly stated his belief on the matters of love, showing that he is more willing to share with Hilde now. I was also surprised at Hilde's boldness in her feelings towards Roland. Most women during this time were expected to be more silent on their feelings and opinions, but Hilde was exactly the opposite. She was bold enough to go after a man who was much older than her and who had a higher status than she had. I think Roland's and Hilde's secret relationship shows how difficult it was for people to be able to live freely during the time of the Nazi Party.

## **Jenna Swank, March 9, 2019**

I found Hilde and Roland's story very interesting because they were an unlikely couple that fell in love. They were 13 years apart and not at the same social status, yet she found a way to communicate with him. While Roland was apprehensive at first, he eventually came around. With every letter they sent, I learned more about everyday life at that time. I learned more about relationships and how it was frowned upon to meet without a chaperone. That is why they wanted to keep their relationship a secret. Neither of them put return addresses on their letters because they were afraid of wandering eyes. Roland said, "please do write without return addresses as I too have done so as to deprive those who like to pry into other people's secrets" (20/21). I did not even think about that being a problem. The letters also gave me more insight on a woman's position in a relationship. Hilde came on strong when she first started talking to Roland, and that seemed to scare him. It was like he did not know how to react. I found that interesting because nowadays it doesn't matter who makes the first move. The actor in the play did a really well job of showing Roland's shock, and that helped me see how unusual it was for a woman to be so bold. Overall, I really liked the play. It was an interesting way to learn more about Germany after WW1.

## **Randi Hendricks, March 8, 2019**

I found it interesting that Roland and Hilde were able to marry despite their class differences. Since Roland came from a middle class family and was well educated, it would not be normal for him to marry a woman like Hilde, who was of low class and not well educated; as she only attended primary and middle school. At that time period, class separated people and restricted who people can associate with and who people may not. Both Roland and Hilde, knew how different their social status and education was, but, in the end, it did not matter to them because they loved each other. For example in act one scene one, Hilde describes her worries on this when she writes: "Yet I know that our relationship is not allowed to be because I am not of the same status as you" (6). Roland is also seen to be worried about Hilde's status when he writes:

"Do you not come from a respectable family?" (6). I assumed that this class barrier would make Roland's family members disapprove of the marriage of Roland and Hilde, and I was both right and wrong. When I asked this question to the author of the play, he said that Roland's family members disapproved at first, but once they meet Hilde and realized what a kind woman she was, they gladly approved.

## **Emerson Pereira, March 8, 2019**

Love in the Time of Hitler provides viewers a comprehensive story of a secret couple in Germany. While the age difference would be considered sick in today's day in age, the loving couple met at 18 and 31. It is quite interesting to compare a love story such as this to that of today. The focuses were completely different; rather than focused on true love, it was based solely on appearance and a short meeting. While some may believe in love at first sight, I find it interesting how easily Hilde "falls in love" considering she doesn't really even know the man. Further, they are highly focused on Hilde's families status. Something that is considered less in a relationship today, the couple struggles with accepting the difference in status. Fairly uneducated, Hilde is somewhat "below" her significant other. It confuses me how they fall in love, as I feel as if with such formal conversation, they can never truly know each other. And if the marriage was not for status, but yet for love, how could they consider themselves in love if they had brief knowledge about each other.

## **Pablo Legaz, March 8, 2019**

With every letter that Hilde and Roland wrote to each other, we learned a little bit more about Germany in the early nineteenth century. This includes information ranging from what relationships were like back then, all the way to the living conditions post world war one. Today, we all have our phones that we can use to communicate with other people. Hilde and Roland did not have that same privilege. They knew that any letter they sent to each other could make their relationship public. At the time, this would've been a problem for them. As Dr. Bergerson said, in the letters Roland and Hilde sent to each other, they talk about meeting together in person which is frowned upon by society unless you are married to the person. The letters also show us a lot about nazi soldiers as well. The letters don't portray Roland as some evil person at all. Instead they show him being as being a nice guy who does not know how to express his love to Hilde. I found it interesting how that in none of the letters, they ever mention anything about the depression or they inflation that they faced at this time.

## **Elle Murphy, March 8, 2019**

Love in the Time of Hitler: A Courtship in Letters demonstrates how women are treated and how they are thought about. In Act 1, Scene 1 Hilde mentions how it would be embarrassing for Roland if someone saw her address on the letter she sent to him. While I understand that it is a small town and they need to get their entertainment somewhere, the fact that Hilde describes it as embarrassing says a lot. If it is scandalous for a woman to write a man, it shows how uptight they were and how improper it was for Hilde to do that, showing her courage. Roland agrees with Hilde on how it is embarrassing for people to see that he is writing back to her, he even refers to her as a secret further proving how improper it was. Then in scene 3, Roland is talking

to his friend who says that a woman only wants a child and makes the husband her puppet. The friend also says that the arts of the wife is also the arts of seduction, and he says that the wife seeks to hold the husband back from his work as well as pull him down. It is mentioned in the textbook that the man is expected to be the one in the workforce. These statements obviously paint the wife in a negative light for no reason other than he can. This demonstrates that some men thought that women did not truly love their husbands but just wanted to use them. It is very obvious that he views women as a distraction and lesser, something that a lot of people must have thought. It is ironic that he thinks this because the textbook said that women gained respect from being wives and mothers. Hilde, who is currently working at the time, goes against the current belief of the time that women should stay at home. Also, another thing that we see in the play is the focus on family as they talked about needing a genealogical chart for military service and Roland asked about whether Hilde came from a good family or not. This might be because you were counted as a Jew if you had one grandparent who was a Jew, and sexual and romantic relationships between a German citizen and a Jew (who was not counted as a citizen) were prohibited.

## **Louisa Gear, March 8, 2019**

I find the power dynamics between Hilde and Roland incredibly interesting. I understand now why we got the sense that he did not love her as deeply, if at all. It's not only his age that plays into this dynamic, but their class difference. He comes across as so stoic in the letters because of the way he was raised in his high class family, the way he was taught by his father. As Dr. Bergerson understands it, "his heart was frozen". However, as their love continues to develop, and as his heart unfreezes, there are still dynamics of power that are not equal and may never have become truly equal because of her status as a woman. She saw him as a teacher, still sought his permission for her work, her financial life, and her actions as his wife. But she possessed a freedom that most other women in the world did not share. She was willing to speak out in the sphere of love, and in the political sphere- willing to oppose the expectation when she believed it was wrong. Whether this freedom was possible because of her own grit and courage or because of the deep love between Roland and Hilde, this story doesn't only defy what we understand as a love story. It defies our understanding of gender status in Nazi-era Germany.

## **Liam Weaver, March 8, 2019**

In the context of the time period, 1938, according to the letters, it is interesting that they did not speak of the depression at all. When they tell each other about their backgrounds, Hilde says that she "descended from a completely honorable family. I grew up in home as an only child and was not forced to do without any of the things that were necessary to make me into a real, proper, striving human being. Still I have had to forsake my greatest wish for material reasons" (Baker i. i.). She says nothing of the economic depression; albeit likely that reminiscing about it brings back bad memories. The textbook makes a huge deal about the depression's effect on what was to become Nazi Germany, and even about how it helped the Nazis rise to power. Another way that Hilde contrasts the textbook is in the role of women. The textbook gives a depiction that the Nazis found the increasing freedoms given to women before their rise culturally weak. Women were supposed to be childbearers, and only work in occupations such as factories if absolutely necessary (Craig 770-772). Hilde does follow this to the extent of her

occupation working in making clothes. However, she is outgoing and full of energy. This freedom is exactly what the Nazi's would have called "culturally weak." This video made me come to the conclusion that although they may have tried, the Nazi's could not monitor and control all that people did. I have learned that the general and big picture definitions given by the textbook do not always reflect everyday life of the average person. It was enlightening to see something from a different perspective and gave us a variety of views.