MHRA TEXTS AND DISSERTATIONS

VOLUME 21

Character, Ideology, and Symbolism

in the Plays of Wedekind, Sternheim, Kaiser, Toller, and Brecht

M. HELENA GONÇALVES da SILVA

THE MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

TEXTS AND DISSERTATIONS
(formerly Dissertation Series)

VOLUME 21

Editor
H. B. NISBET
(Germanic)

CHARACTER, IDEOLOGY and SYMBOLISM

in the Plays of Wedekind, Sternheim, Kaiser, Toller, and Brecht

CHARACTER, IDEOLOGY and SYMBOLISM

in the Plays of Wedekind, Sternheim, Kaiser, Toller, and Brecht

M. HELENA GONÇALVES da SILVA

LONDON
THE MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
1985

This PDF scan of this work is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0
© Modern Humanities Research Association 2024

ISBN 978-1-83954-658-7
doi:10.59860/td.b38241a

Published by
The Modern Humanities Research Association

Honorary Treasurer, MHRA

KING'S COLLEGE, STRAND
LONDON WC2R 2LS
ENGLAND

ISBN 0 947623 00 0

© The Modern Humanities Research Association 1985

This publication is copyright under the Berne Convention and the International Copyright Convention. All rights reserved. Apart from any copying under the UK Copyright Act 1956, part 1, section 7, whereby a single copy of an article may be supplied, under certain conditions, for the purpose of research or private study, by a library of a class prescribed by the UK Board of Trade Regulations (Statutory Instruments, 1957, No. 868), no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the prior permission of the copyright owners. Permission is not required to copy abstracts of papers or articles on condition that a full reference to the source is shown.

Multiple copying of the contents of the publication without permission is always illegal.

Printed in England by
W. S. MANEY & SON LIMITED
HUDSON ROAD LEEDS

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This is a study of character-presentation in the German drama in the light of the social changes and upheavals in the period that runs from the beginning of the century to the years immediately after the Second World War. In those years many artists who were in the *avant-garde* of the most important artistic movements attempted by means of an anti-representational art to come to terms with a world whose structures and values were in turmoil. In such a revolutionary process the theatre acquired multiple perspectives. Theatricality was emphasized and the *dramatis persona*, although it might still function as a human image of dilemma, became a point of intersection of social phenomena, its experience subject to methods of cross-comparison and classification, or it was turned into a receptacle of an ideal.

This study follows an important process of character-development in the drama of this period: from being a mere 'object', in an atmosphere of great social pessimism or even nihilism, the character eventually re-emerges as a 'subject' in a hopeful demonstration that man can and must change the course of history. For this purpose I have concentrated on five dramatists —Wedekind, Sternheim, Kaiser, Toller, and Brecht — whose visions and solutions highlight the most conspicuous ideological tendencies of their time. This sequence acquires, against the Expressionist background, a particular and coherent historical meaning, leading us through high points in the evolution of twentieth-century social drama, from what may be considered as the last examples of bourgeois theatre (Wedekind and Sternheim) in the years before the Great War, to plays which deal with typical problems of our era such as industrialization, urbanization, mass-society, war, and revolution. In my attempt to clarify this historical unity my choice of examples is more than just a personal one: the plays selected illustrate important developments in the dramatic and stylistic presentation of their themes, and are by consensus amongst the most characteristic of their respective authors.

This sequence, of course, is not the only possible one. Other alternatives would have been, for example, to proceed from Kaiser and Toller, with their cry for the 'New Man', to those writers who, like H. Johst, adhered to National Socialism, or to the radical, anarchic protest of the Dadaists. This, however, would mean losing sight of the ideological evolution that links the five authors in question and, more important, overlooking what proved to be perhaps the richest phenomenon in the theatre of this century, namely the work of Bertolt

Brecht. Not only is his drama the climax of a social movement that goes back to those playwrights who destroyed the foundations of the Naturalist theatre, such as Shaw, Ibsen, and Strindberg; it is also a turning-point in the history of the stage, because it entails a new dramatic technique which, in its potential for wide application, transcends its immediate Marxist implications. In Brecht's dialectical theatre motive and consequence, cause and effect are firmly reconnected and character, no longer peripheral, regains its individual freedom. Unlike some other possible sequences, the one traced in this study does not end diffusely in a series of unrelated experiments and styles or in an ideological impasse.

The four chapters of the work are arranged in chronological order, essential for the ideological understanding of character. The conclusion merely interrelates the four chapters and their findings.

We start with Wedekind, whose drama of revolt seems to deny the last possibility of bourgeois theatre, as it detects the crudest laws of capitalism at work in man's innermost core — the area of the instincts. In Wedekind's grotesque canvas of western civilization — an enlarged reflection of society — man appears to be doomed beyond any possibility of salvation.

Sternheim's reservations about the new century with its prosperous industrial middle class, the growth of working-class power, mass movements, and collectivist ideologies, cause him to resurrect a *Bürger* type more in the spirit of nineteenth-century economic liberalism, obsessed with social status, racing frenetically against the clock, in a desperate attempt to safeguard and vindicate a world of empty symbols and material security. This perspective is destroyed by the world conflict of 1914–1918 which leaves us faced with different sorts of questions, difficult of solution.

With Kaiser, Toller, and Brecht the themes of mass revolution, socialism, and communism assail the stage. They are presented at first in a defeatist mood and then optimistically projected into the future. From Kaiser's concise models of a socialist system of production and a country at war emerges the pathetic image of the human figure as a mere appendix of the machine (army, factory, state), incapable of breaking free. And from the possibility of revolution emerges an ethical conflict of means and ends and the figure of the political leader as an emotional, rhetorical creation. Toller's hopes of a humanist socialism are then demolished by the growing power of the National Socialists and by the Second World War.

The search for an effective ideological theatre finally crystallizes in Brecht's dialectical technique. In it man appears both as a parabolical, representative figure and as an image of human contradiction. The recovery of the individual through the political parable represents a technical and philosophical turning-point in the sequence with which this study is concerned; new developments replace the dramatic experiments and historical pessimism of the first half of the century.

This study, which is fundamentally descriptive and analytical, also pays heed to decisive facts of political and social history and of the dramatists' biography; it likewise takes into account some aspects of the history of ideas and of aesthetic phenomena. The references to sources, influences, and statements of the dramatists themselves are not elaborated for their own sake, but included only as supporting evidence.

CHAPTER I

FRANK WEDEKIND

In Wedekind's plays we encounter for the first time in this century the expression of a total rebellion against bourgeois society. Christian values, bourgeois conventions and social structures are demolished with relentless irony. Influenced by Nietzsche, for whom society was in a state of decadence, his plays defy all traditional standards of morality.

Although, chronologically speaking, Wedekind belonged to the Naturalist generation (1864–1918) he rejected the microscopic perspective of the Naturalists. Neither was he seduced by the pathos of the Expressionists, whose advent he witnessed, maintaining instead a dialectical detachment and offering a grotesque representation of reality (much to the liking of his contemporaries, particularly Bertolt Brecht). But in spite of his modernity Wedekind's rebellion is still that of a Romantic in the nineteenth-century tradition, and it incorporates a forceful defence of individualism.

Wedekind's originality lies in his vision of modern western civilization and in the manner in which he constructs his critique of the bourgeoisie. He never places the burgher in the centre of his plays, as Sternheim does, preferring to select the models for his characters from among those on the periphery of society: artists, adventurers, criminals, prostitutes, and pimps. By placing them in the context of conventional society he creates a clash of principles that brings into the open the true nature of that society. Before the ruthless and amoral behaviour of such characters the 'respectable' citizen feels free to cast off the cloak of sentiment under which he hides and justifies his selfishness. Dr Schön in *Erdgeist* and Konsul Casimir in *Der Marquis von Keith* are instances of the unmasked bourgeois. At the same time, since the instinctive, crude behaviour of this gallery of figures reflects, like a mirror, the predominant stimuli in modern life — money, sex, and violence — Wedekind is putting forward the view that society is intrinsically sick.

It is typical of him to isolate, as he does in *Frühlings Erwachen* and in the Lulu plays, the most sensitive areas — sex and the relationship between man and woman — in a society ruled by tabus, complexes, and prejudices, in order to display the counterfeit behaviour of the human being in the light of a naturalistic philosophy. So he creates a fantastic image of a dynamic, innocent libido, like that of Lulu who, when thrust upon an alienated and perverted

world, brings about a chain of tragedies, exposing civilized man as a creature who has lost touch with nature.

Although his vision may imply a faith in the free expression of man's instinctive energy, in keeping with the reaction of *Lebensphilosophie* against scientific materialism and positivism, it implies above all the realization that man has been thoroughly corrupted by false values and aspirations to the extent that they have built in him a kind of 'second nature'.[1] The adults in *Frühlings Erwachen*, for example, are selfish and cruel while believing themselves to be justified in the light of a common consensus which is, in fact, the offspring of their own deficiencies. And the crimes and violence unleashed by Lulu take place on the primary level of the unconscious.

No wonder irony is the thread that binds together Wedekind's images. In his plays the modern world is disfigured so that it assumes the shape of a circus-arena or a music-hall, where by magic the façade of our civilization falls apart to reveal the spectre of violence and death.

But irony, being merely one solution among others — one that rejects compromise or pseudo-antidotes in view of the impossibility of salvation — was not Wedekind's only answer to the problem of existence. If his scepticism did not permit him to harbour the reformist hopes of the Naturalists or the Expressionists with their longing for the 'New Man', it did not prevent him from indulging in escape into the realm of blissful fantasy, as other writers did, particularly those of the *Jugendbewegung*. But even in such plays as *Hidalla* (1903–1904) he remains aware of the limitations and even the impossibility of permanent escape. Finally, later in life, he became more conservative, embracing some of the traditional values he had rejected before. His play *Franziska* (1911) shows such a reversal, the end of the rebellion. As Paul Fechter notes, something had come between the creative work and the poet.[2] As the *enfant terrible* calmed down, so his work lost in vitality and novelty. This study will be concerned only with those plays where the moral and social revolt is the driving force of Wedekind's originality.

Frühlingserwachen

In this tragedy (1890–91), Wedekind describes the conflict of generations and the victimization of children by the adult world, drawing particular attention to the prejudices concerning sex and the misery of young people subject to a brutal educational system. He contrasts the natural needs of the children to the alienation of the adults, organized in institutions such as the family, the school, and the church, in what appears to be a conspiracy of destruction, as they clamp the child's curiosity in a strait-jacket of tabus and conventional morality. On a first reading it seems that Wedekind is emphasizing the necessity for a radical reform in education, the kind that would allow children to grow up in harmony with themselves and with their environment and which would eventually rid the

world of the type of adult who operates on the level of gratuitous destruction. However, a profounder reading of the play reveals clearly that the children's false education stands as the ultimate manifestation of a society bent on destroying its tender links with nature in an irrevocable pursuit of a doomed civilization.

Thus the eroticism of a group of adolescents is presented allegorically: the chaos of their intimate life reflects the efficient and systematic perversion of their society. Wedekind is pioneering a new style that distinguishes this play from the *Kindertragödien* of the 1890s, like Hauptmann's neo-Romantic play *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* and Halbe's Naturalistic play *Jugend*. He associates realism with the grotesque and the surreal in a combination that clearly points ahead to the stylistic synthesis of the Expressionists. He places the adults, the target of his critique, on the level of caricature, while the children are repeatedly presented in a key of tenderness. Finally, the mysterious 'vermummter Herr' functions like an epilogue, dissolving a symbolic struture into a surrealistic atmosphere. As Arthur Kutscher points out:

> Die Charakteristik meidet wie Gift den Naturalismus und greift zur Stilisierung, hebt also durch Über- und Unterbetonung das Wesentliche heraus. Expressionistische Mittel treten in Erscheinung. Schon die Technik bedingt, daß die Gestalten auf wenige Linien zurückgeführt werden; Wedekind gibt aber nicht bloß die Konturen, sondern das Wesen selbst in festen Strichen. Das Zarte wie das Derbe, das Elegische, das Komische wie das Tragische wird Wort, Bewegung — nicht auch volle Gestalt; das kann und soll es ja auch nicht. Diese Figuren behalten etwas Geistig–Schattenhaftes, Groteskes, aber sie sind von der fantastischen Lebendigkeit der Lenzischen, Grabbeschen, Büchnerschen Menschen.[3]

Wedekind himself explains that he wrote this play in 'conscious opposition'[4] to the German Realism of the time which, in comparison with its European counterpart, was banal and provincial. Nevertheless, and in spite of the schematic structure of the play, we are able to sense the passage of time from one generation to another, at the cost of immense pain and tragedy, as the children plunge into discord with the adult world.

The children's experiences are dominated both by terror of school and of their parents and by a courageous defiance of the tabus imposed on them. Moritz's nightmares about school, for example, do not prevent him from daring to venture into the headmaster's room to find out about his report. Melchior's integrity is evident when he faces the school tribunal, demanding an explanation for his alleged crime in a scene where he is the only human being amidst a group of gangsters in what can only be a pantomime of justice.[5]

Their sensibility, expressed in a lyrical language, is constantly sustained by the presence of nature, to which their intimate outbursts of emotion are related. It is a language of innocence, traumatized by an evil which is not understood but real, and moulded by the struggle of the intellect and of the unconscious for a sense of liberation and identity:

(*Ein Heuboden. — Melchior liegt auf dem Rücken im frischen Heu. Wendla kommt die Leiter herauf*).
Wendla. Hier hast du dich verkrochen? — Alles sucht dich. Der Wagen ist wieder hinaus. Du mußt helfen. Es ist ein Gewitter im Anzug.
Melchior. Weg von mir! — Weg von mir!
Wendla. Was ist dir denn? — Was verbirgst du dein Gesicht?
Melchoir. Fort, fort! — Ich werfe dich die Tenne hinunter.
Wendla. Nun geh ich erst recht nicht. — (*Kniet neben ihm nieder*) Warum kommst du nicht mit auf die Matte hinaus, Melchior? — Hier ist es schwül und düster. Werden wir auch naß bis auf die Haut, was macht uns das!
Melchior. Das Heu duftet so herrlich. — Der Himmel draußen muß schwarz wie ein Bahrtuch sein. — Ich sehe nur noch den leuchtenden Mohn an deiner Brust — und dein Herz höre ich schlagen —
Wendla. — Nicht küssen, Melchior! — Nicht küssen!
Melchior. — Dein Herz — hör ich schlagen —
Wendla. — Man liebt sich — wenn mann küßt — Nicht, nicht! —
Melchior. O glaube mir, es gibt keine Liebe! — Alles Eigennutz, alles Egoismus! — Ich liebe dich so wenig, wie du mich liebst. —
Wendla. Nicht! — Nicht, Melchior! —
Melchior. — Wendla!
Wendla. O Melchior! — nicht — nicht — (*Frühlings Erwachen*, pp. 271 f.)

Although the children's oppression is enhanced by a process of idealization which tends to highlight their confusion and powerlessness, their characterization is never sentimental or moralistic. As F. Rothe notes, the children appear as a metaphor of nature and their innocence exempts them from moralization,[6] while the circumstances of their suffering spring from a process of reality, recognizable in all its distortions: the violation of Melchior's natural curiosity by authoritarian and pseudo-moralistic principles; the survival of Martha as a martyr of parental cruelty and of Ilse as a prostitute; Wendla, sacrificed to social respectability; finally Moritz's suicide. These circumstances all lead us through different channels to the core of a social malaise whose principal agents are the adults, here understood in terms of the secular and patriarchal concept of family and reflecting directly the Wilhelmine authoritarian social system. Wedekind shows a remarkable perspicacity when he integrates the school system into a net of general consensus. Thus teachers, doctor, priest, and parents stand for the same principles. At a time when the system of education was causing countless suicides among students, the author makes it clear that education of that sort is both symptom and cause of a general social evil: it can prevail only as long as it is supported by a puritanical, authoritarian system which the teachers call 'eine sittliche Weltordnung'.

Among the adults, the teachers are presented with the least sympathy. With the emphasis placed on their snobbery, pettiness, and sadism, they appear in caricature, reduced to grotesque, gruesome puppets — comic in the shallowness of their assumed selves and moralistic tone, and terrifying in the immediate repercussions of their abusive power. Their names (Sonnenstich,

Knüppeldick, Zungenschlag, Fliegentod) point to their dehumanization, while the situations in which they appear attest the latter in concrete terms. Thus, during Melchior's interrogation, the serious question of a student's possible responsibility for the suicide of his friend is not carefully considered because of the diversion created by a trifling argument about a window. The teachers take twice as long to decide whether to have it open or closed as to question Melchior. It is clear that they are not interested in finding out the truth, as the truth would automatically reveal the falsehood of their premises and methods of education. The interrogation, a purely bureaucratic procedure and display of power, is simple charlatanism, a convenient expedient designed to impress as an act of good faith and justice. It becomes evident during Moritz's burial that the boy's suicide provides the adults with a strong reason to reinforce, and not to criticize, the prevailing social order:

Der Selbstmord als der denkbar bedenklichste Verstoß gegen die sittliche Weltordnung ist der denkbar bedenklichste Beweis für die sittliche Weltordnung, indem der Selbstmörder der sittlichen Weltordnung den Urteilsspruch zu sprechen erspart und ihr Bestehen bestätigt. (*Frühlings Erwachen*, p. 291)

And just as the priest, embodying the charismatic authority of the church, condemns Moritz in the light of the Christian dogma, defining the Church as a conservative structure which is ready to offer Paradise as a reward for conformity, the doctor, ridiculous in his snobbery and infatuation with the upper classes, points to a society conscious of its class structure in its reverence for social status and privilege (*Frühlings Erwachen*, p. 304).

These characters are not individualized. They appear as social types, and the caricaturesque form they assume polarizes certain predominant features of their society.

The parents, on the other hand, appear in a less violent light. Wedekind abandons the grotesque tragi-comic level to convey them more realistically. The satire is still there, implicit in their contradictory and egotistic reactions to the children; but of equal importance are the confusion and ambivalence which choke them as they must decide whether to protect their children or to submit to social convention.

When Wendla appears pregnant, partly as a result of her mother's failure to explain to her the mechanism of reproduction, her covering up of inhibition through mystification, Frau Bergmann, who is a gentle and loving woman, opts for an abortion despite the risks involved; she fears the shame of public reprobation. And Frau Gabor's belief in a tolerant and liberal education which would take into account the fallacies and shortcomings of society, and would dispense with tabus and punishment, collapses under the pressures put on her by society and more particularly by her husband who, in the quality of father and lawyer, twice condemns Melchior. At first she not only accepts, but also praises the independent behaviour of her son (*Frühlings Erwachen*, pp. 296

and 298). Later, when told about Wendla's pregnancy, she repels him, influenced as she is by the general opinion. Her imagination will not stretch sufficiently to comprehend the sexual initiation of an adolescent in a repressed environment, with all its possible consequences. Thus, although this character carries in a great measure the author's sense of justice, she still responds coherently to the influences of her milieu, bringing the conflict between parental love and social convention to a climax.

Wendla's and Melchior's mothers, conveyed in greater complexity within the perimeter of the conflict between their maternal love and their social bondage, are realistic profiles. Still within this perimeter, but only as a momentary presence on the stage, is Moritz's father, who comes to life through a single utterance made during a key situation which invests him with a psycho-sociological dimension. It is during the ceremony of his son's burial, where he denies their blood relationship after both the teachers and the priest have condemned Moritz. His repeated denial — 'Der Junge war nicht von mir . . . der Junge war nicht von mir . . .' — is like a signature in a contract that safeguards his partnership with society.

Finally we have Martha's father, who is not a true character since we never see him, but is, like a ghost, conjured up by Martha's terror. In him alcohol, associated with violence against his own family, manifests a psychosis, a destructive personality. He crystallizes the sickness and brutality of this community, the chasm between the adult and the child, the negation of nature by civilization.

Social conditioning is a fundamental factor in Wedekind's characters, and indeed in his work as a whole. Like a web, it traps them, deforming and moulding them until their aspirations are compatible with the social system. The discrepancy between the children and the adults lies precisely in the children's greater measure of freedom from such conditioning. The adults, including Frau Gabor, have been absorbed to a greater or lesser degree of consciousness by the values of a pseudo-culture. The children fight this strait-jacket of limitations and tabus and in the process become either neurotic or perish. Those who survive will either grow to be like the adults or will be pushed to the outer margins of society, like Ilse and Melchior. As Alan Best points out:

> It is characteristic of Wedekind that all his plays after *Frühlings Erwachen* . . . are set in just such a vacuum, the artist demi-monde that exists in the fringe of what passes for respectable society, and *Frühlings Erwachen* itself is a brilliant exposure of the social forces that drive the younger generation to turn to such vacua in their efforts to survive when they themselves become adults.[7]

The struggle between both sides is violent and inescapable, as the children's instincts and intelligence are thrown into the social arena to be torn apart by sophisticated weapons: love, religion, education. There is also punishment for

those who resist, like the corrective institutions which, in Herr Gabor's opinion, succeed where other means fail.

One figure is left who does not necessarily belong to the social material of the play but is Wedekind's own philosophical and technical answer to the problem of total despair. It is 'Der vermummte Herr'. Like an allegorical figure in a dreamlike scenario, he appears in the cemetery under a November moon, in tails and top hat, while Moritz, with his head under his arm, entices Melchior, who has just run away from the corrective institution, to join him in the grave. It is here that this mysterious gentleman, who reveals himself to be a materialist, offers Melchior a promise of a good life, demystifies his sense of guilt towards his parents and Wendla, and attributes his present unhappiness to an empty stomach:

Dein Vater sucht Trost zur Stunde in den kräftigen Armen deiner Mutter. Ich erschließe dir die Welt. Deine momentane Fassungslosigkeit entspringt deiner miserablen Lage. Mit einem warmen Abendessen im Leib spottest du ihrer. (*Frühlings Erwachen*, p. 317)

Judging, however, from the fates of the Marquis von Keith, of the adventurers in the Lulu plays, of Hetmann in *Hidalla* and Casti Piani in *Totentanz*, we may suspect that the outcome of Melchior's adventure into alienating hedonism will not be successful. From this perspective, the existential option which this figure, like a *deus ex machina*, introduces, may bring a momentary relief to the tragedy by offering an escape from a desperate *cul-de-sac* through a somewhat fantastic affirmation of life.

We can also explain this scene as Wedekind's attempt to present an adolescent's consciousness recovering from a suicidal journey. In this case both Moritz and the disguised gentleman are projections of Melchior's unconsciousness, personifications of opposite instincts, Eros and Thanatos, fighting for supremacy. In their dialogue, the premature and traumatic wisdom of a child–man combines the bizarre with an intuition that is, in the end, an affirmation of life.

Whatever significance we may assign to the disguised gentleman one thing is clear: Wedekind had no desire to let his hero sink in the deadly waters of despair, particularly when the mechanisms of tragedy are set in motion not by the wrath of gods, but by the mean intolerance and shortsightedness of men. This, it would seem, is the meaning of this extravagant epilogue which contrasts so imaginatively with the previous scene in the cemetery, and which leaves us with the question, so much debated in our time, of whether tragedy can still be written in our century.

This play shows clearly how Wedekind considers 'human nature' to be inextricably part of the whole context in which man finds himself. Historically and philosophically this is of the highest importance: human conflict, social error is no longer explained in terms of fate beyond man; nor is evil a medical or

a narrowly biological problem, but at heart a social problem. But, if this revolutionary concept became the main foundation of Bertolt Brecht's humanism, it also led to a position of desperate impasse, for modern man became the social problem: filled with false dreams and values, a reservoir of aggressivity and neurosis, the embodiment of a routine, a mere appendix of the whole — twisted, faceless, incapable of individual responsibility, blindly weaving a disastrous collective fate — in other words, the main source of his own downfall. This is the ultimate vision of Wedekind, but also of Kaiser and Toller as we shall see. Their defeatism expresses itself in different ways, all of them closely related to the history of their time. Wedekind's vision is essentially prewar, emphasizing the loss of spontaneity and the overwhelming surrender to an adverse civilization. In *Frühlings Erwachen* it is not the fittest who survive but the most corrupt and inhuman, or the conformist. It is they (the teacher, the parents, the doctor, the priest) who initiate each new generation in their rituals of dehumanization. The process is both conscious and unconscious so that in the end a solution is difficult to find because of its moral complexity. The problem grows even more complex as Wedekind clarifies in later plays his understanding of modern man as a receptacle of destructive impulses, damaged in his primary nature, unaware, and yet intensely alive.

Erdgeist and *Die Büchse der Pandora*

If in *Frühlings Erwachen* the children are a foil to the rest of society, exposing its malice and hypocrisy, in *Erdgeist* and in *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1893–94) Wedekind reinforces this vision with a complex gallery of figures, evoked from the peripheries of society to represent the modern urban landscape. They are caricatures and profiles, consuming themselves in a dynamic and colourful combination that, in the end, defines the author's point of view.

In these plays the tension is created through a clash between sexual instinct and civilized morality. But where in *Frühlings Erwachen* the confrontation is between puberty and adulthood — one struggling for the satisfaction of its natural needs, the other forcing their suppression and negation — in *Erdgeist* and in *Die Büchse der Pandora* we can say, among other possiblities, that we are presented with a confrontation, now abstracted onto a quasi-mythical level, between Eros as such and civilized man. And it is the creation of Lulu that lends the plays this mythical quality.

It is clear that Wedekind detaches himself from the subject-matter of these plays. The outrage we sense behind his total sympathy with the children and in the anger with which he looks upon the adults in *Frühlings Erwachen* is here replaced by an explosive irony. The author, now more disillusioned, no longer finds place for the optimism with which he ends *Frühlings Erwachen*, but dresses his despair in the cynical garments of a brilliant performance given in

the training ring of the circus, where we are invited to assess the quality of modern man's life.

It is from the Bohemian milieu of Munich and Paris that Wedekind extracted the models for his characters. But the artists, clowns, adventurers, and criminals who appear here do not differ fundamentally from the bourgeois. The freedom which they seem to enjoy is, paradoxically, only a more audacious and hysterical response to the predominant stimuli of their society: money, violence, and sex. They are not very different from Lulu's husbands who are prototypes of the bourgeois, the only difference being that the latter camouflage their motivation behind a screen of respectability, love, and faithfulness. In levelling out the behaviour of these characters Wedekind is putting forward the thesis that society is totally contaminated.

At the same time, and accommodating his desire to escape the Naturalist theatre of his day, the Bohemian milieu inspired him to open his theatre to pantomime and dance. Emphasizing the physical performance of his figures, he turns his back on the traditional concept of character. They hardly ever abandon themselves to reflection or feel compelled by a sense of morality and inner self to assess their position in the world. On the contrary, they precipitate themselves into patterns of behaviour associated with their own environment, unaware of the reasons that drive them.

Furthermore, their speech is no longer typical of the 'bourgeois drama' with its tendency to be descriptive and rational. It is very limited, serving the needs of communication at a basic level while creating an atmosphere of travesty. A language described by Walter Sokel 'as never heard in actual life and yet remarkably expressive of the alienation, confusion, and hysteria characteristic of modern life'.[8]

The emphasis on gesture and pantomime is an anticipation of Antonin Artaud's discovery that mime contains a non-psychological force, essential for the creation of a new vitality in the theatre. And such a mistrust of introspection and verbal communication also implies a criticism that takes on particularly grotesque overtones: it represents an attempt to recapture the primordial spontaneity of an alogical language, and the directness of gesture which was a component of the *commedia dell'arte*. At the same time, the characters plunge blindly, with no thought, into their destruction, simply carried away by the need to release their passions and ambitions. Here we are faced with an apparent contradiction: these characters seem to act and speak instinctively while being devoid of natural life. Their 'instinctive' reactions are only irrational responses fed by false aspirations that have robbed them of their natural selves and foisted on them a kind of 'second nature'. Precisely that which we consider instinctive in them is, ironically, the proof of their alienation. Consequently we watch them behaving impulsively, but their activitiy aims either at domesticating and exploiting Lulu or at devastating themselves. This facet of

the plays contains, more subtly than any other, Wedekind's view of modern man.

Freud considered man's unconscious to be a reservoir of primitive drives and anti-social urges. But when it was concluded that man had been robbed of his instincts and the unconscious could no longer be the seat of instinctual life, as Freud understood it, the instinct theory was abandoned. Today, the unconscious refers to the particular conditioning of our world view and our capacity to act, which occurred during our early training. This means that with the overthrow of the instinct theory, Freud's biological problem has been reconverted into a social and historical one. This view had already been put forward at the beginning of this century by thinkers such as W. J. Thomas, who spoke of attitudes instead of drives and believed that any action or tendency was ultimately conditioned by values. The human personality, from this standpoint, can be regarded as an organization of attitudes, ready to respond to values. The particularity they assume will depend on the social context. There is no evil in man that is not caused by civilization. The will then consists of internalized social values.

Although Wedekind grasped this view of human personality, without consciously articulating it — namely the view that culture can corrupt the total organism, that the social destiny extends to one's very nerves and blood cells — he does not seem to share the belief that irrationalism is potentially controllable, no matter how deep it goes. This is why it is not correct to see his plays as *Lehrstücke*, in Brecht's sense.[9] He sees modern Western man no longer as a vessel of positive potentialities but as a living creature agitated by desires, impulses, passions, which, although alien to him, dominate him so powerfully that he seems to have lost track of himself completely. In the Prologue Lulu is called 'das wahre Tier, das wilde, schöne Tier' because she is true to her primary nature, while the others are called 'Raubtiere', lower creatures in animal costume (as Eric Bentley sees them, maintaining the bestiary metaphor). In its composition the word 'Raubtier' points to that alienation with all its negative sides.[10] In other words, modern man is so deeply twisted for Wedekind that he sees no way of recuperating his human-ness. It is his irony that converts such pessimistic insights into an outrageous provocation of bourgeois values.

Lulu, on the other hand, stands on a different level of reality. Throughout *Erdgeist* she is defined in different ways. I have just quoted her first epithet — 'das wahre Tier, das wilde, schöne Tier'. In the Prologue we hear:

> Sie ward geschaffen, Unheil anzustiften.
> Zu locken, zu verführen, zu vergiften.
> — Zu morden, ohne daß es einer spürt.

which has caused A. Kutscher to say:

Die Schlange bedient sich der Eva beim Sündenfall, die Schlange ist in Eva, Sinnbild einer weiblichen Kraft. Der Geschlechtstrieb als solcher ist zerstörend. Lulu ist als stetiger Anreiz zu dieser Leidenschaft Prinzip der Zerstörung. (Kutscher, p. 120)

The apparent contradiction between these descriptions renders transparent the ironic nature of this character, for it is precisely Lulu's freedom that unleashes a chain of tragic events; yet the ultimate motivation for the disaster lies not with Lulu but with man, who has lost touch with nature.

In the Prologue she is also described as 'die Urgestalt des Weibes', which points to the essential qualities with which she is endowed. Men call her 'Engelskind' and 'Teufelsschönheit'. Lulu is a creation that claims independence of any historical, cultural, and moral realities. Being essentially instinctive, she is innocent and unpsychological. To Schwarz's questions 'Kannst du die Wahrheit sagen?', 'Glaubst du an einen Schöpfer?', 'Kannst du bei etwas schwören?', 'Woran glaubst du denn?', 'Hast du denn keine Seele?', 'Hast du schon einmal geliebt?', she can only reply, 'Ich weiß es nicht'.[11] All these concepts that make up the bourgeois culture have no significance for her. Kutscher sees her as the personification of an elementary force, 'eine Naturgewalt' (Kutscher, pp. 120 f.). Rothe stresses the double meaning of her mythical traits: a combination of divine beauty and earthly dirt (Rothe, pp. 33 f.). Still along the same lines Bernhard Diebold writes:

Auch Lulu ist nur Deckname einer mythischen Kraft; nom de guerre für den Lebenszirkus. Das Fleisch des Weibes ist namenlos und glitzert jedem in anderer Helle. Die Ehemänner erfinden Namen als formende Gedichte an ihre glühende Substanz . . .[12]

Emrich discovers a morality in Lulu's nature. For this critic she embodies:

nicht nur vital-elementare 'Natur', nicht nur ein höheres, übermenschliches Wesen, sondern sie manifestiert, ja sie *lebt* einen unbedingten moralischen Anspruch. Ihre unbedingte Natur ist unbedingte Moral.[13]

The creation of Lulu seems indeed to obey that kind of necessity pointed out by Ernest Becker as an attempt

to transcend 'mean' present meanings by finding the ideal object, as did Wagner, Michelangelo, Dante, Comte, Mill; one wants to be spared the frustrations of this world, its meanness, its imperfection, its clash with one's unique visions. But to find the ideal in this real world is, of course, impossible; there is no perfect spirit in flawless earthly bodies that will fully support man in all his strivings; there is no 'absolute freedom' in nature that can take determined form and still remain unconditioned. Even if the perfectly free spirit could exist, how could she support man at every point and still remain independent, spontaneous, private, and free? The earthly woman as a metaphysical love is thus an impossible contradiction. The most one can hope for is to be sustained by the fantasy, and in this way gain courage for the everyday struggle.[14]

Lulu acts out in the flesh an ideal principle the author postulates. In the prologue to *Die Büchse der Pandora* Wedekind makes a distinction

zwischen bürgerlicher Moral, zu deren Schutz der Richter berufen ist, und menschlicher Moral, die sich jeder irdischen Gerichtsbarkeit entzieht.
. . . wenn die menschliche Moral höher als die bürgerliche stehen will, dann muß sie allerdings auch auf eine tiefere umfassendere Kenntnis vom Wesen der Welt und des Menschen, gegründet sein.

At this time the theme of love in art and literature implied in general a tragic hostility between man and woman. It is not only Strindberg who registers obsessively the distintegration of love. The artists of *Die Brücke* frequently paint the streets of Berlin crowded with prostitutes, seductive and fatal women. Munch and Kokoschka saw the woman not as a social being but as a devouring force. Also in Kafka's works the woman insinuates herself in a predatory way and never as an agent of redemption. But Lulu, as a sexual, destructive force lives Wedekind's 'human morality' only so that she may clash with the values of bourgeois society.

Wedekind puts her in the flux of twentieth-century civilization, exposes her particularly to the bourgeois culture while keeping intact the purity of her nature. In each situation she is delayed only for as long as is necessary to unmask the falsehood of her partners' positions, thus building up by negation a critique of modern society. Her instability and tragedy become symptomatic of a social malaise as well as of her own integrity, for she can neither be assimilated nor can she compromise. Her portrait in Pierrot costume, present in every 'Station' of the plays, is the leitmotiv that denotes her real role in society, a role which belies those her partners want her to play as Mignon, Eva, Nelli, and as a prostitute. Simple and naive, like Pierrot, she is exploited but she never loses the 'kindlichen Ausdruck' of innocence. It is this innocence and the resulting coherence of attitude that end up by laying bare the immorality of those around her.

Only by being an abstraction can Lulu live in society and remain unsoiled by it. Her tragedy lies in the fact that, in remaining true to herself, she must remain separate and alone and finally be destroyed. But her tragedy, being Lulu's tragedy, is also an abstraction; an abstraction that, in turn, acquires realistic significance in that it reflects the disintegration of the humanist tradition. Lulu is not real, but the murderous conventions and the exploiting materialism that haul her to her destruction are.

Simultaneously Wedekind endows her with attributes that make her a lively feminine figure with a touch of the *femme fatale*. She is not only beautiful; she is equally seductive and capricious. He portrays her by a process of emphasizing her sensuality:

Bei der Schilderung der Lulu kam es mir darauf an, den Körper eines Weibes durch die Worte, die es spricht, zu zeichnen. Bei jedem ihrer Aussprüche fragte ich mich, ob er jung und hübsch mache. (Wedekind, *Prosa Dramen Verse*, p. 945)

It is very likely that Wedekind saw the model for his creation in 'the demi-mondaine type, the luxury concubines of Parisian and London society', as Ronald Peacock suggests by throwing light on Lulu's relation to the courtesans of the nineteenth century, especially in French society. Wedekind, who lived in Paris around 1891–92, 'didn't have to think up Lulu as a pure adventure of his fancy; he only had to look around, and we know that he did that. He could see the models, and furthermore on the scale he envisaged for Lulu'.[15]

It is this level of idealization that establishes the necessary basis from which she then arises to acquire a more complex symbolic meaning, preventing her from falling into pure *Kitsch* and making her clearly a different creature from those *femmes fatales* endowed with sexual magnetism who appear naturalistically in Oscar Wilde's plays.

All these layers of expression are sensed by the old Schigolch:

Rodrigo zu Schigolch. Er habe sie nämlich ursprünglich heiraten wollen.
(*Schigolch sich eine Lilie vorsteckend*).
Ich habe sie ursprünglich auch heiraten wollen.
Rodrigo. Du hast sie ursprünglich heiraten wollen?
Schigolch. Hast du sie nicht auch ursprünglich heiraten wollen?
Rodrigo. Jawohl habe ich sie ursprünglich heiraten wollen!
Schigolch. Wer hat sie nicht ursprünglich heiraten wollen! ! (*Erdgeist*, p. 95)

Lulu. Ich heiße seit Menschengedenken nicht mehr Lulu.
Schigolch. Eine andere Benennungsweise?
Lulu. Lulu klingt mir ganz vorsintflutlich.
Schigolch. Kinder! Kinder!
Lulu. Ich heiße jetzt . . .
Schigolch. Als bliebe das Prinzip nicht immer das gleiche! (*Erdgeist*, p. 42)

Finally, she appears, now and again, in a pedestrian, realistic light. She protests against Schwarz's stereotyped image of her and of their marriage, claiming that she is an individual (*Erdgeist*, p. 47). On the question of Lulu's individuality Emrich notes:

Dieser moralische Anspruch, Person zu sein, ist aber in keiner Weise geistig artikuliert. *Person* wird Lulu nicht dadurch, daß sie bestimmte geistige oder seelische Qualitäten entwickelt, daß sie etwa zu einer interessanten Gesprächspartnerin wird oder sog. geistige *Interessen* entfaltet. Denn gerade die geistige Sphäre ist selbst eine überindividuelle Sphäre; in ihr geht das Personale gerade ins Allgemeine über. Sie kann also nicht primär Personalität begründen. Das, was Lulu ihr Selbst nennt, das sie von allen anderen Frauen *Unterscheidende*, läßt sich weder in eine geistige noch in eine seelische, psychologisch bestimmbare Kategorie fassen. Es läßt sich überhaupt nicht bestimmen. Denn das Individuelle steht per definitionem außerhalb jeder begrifflich allgemeinen Bestimmbarkeit. Es läßt sich nicht in Worte ausdrücken, die ja immer nur Allgemeines, Übertragbares aussagen und allenfalls das Individuelle einzukreisen, nie aber eindeutig zu formulieren vermögen. Die Moralität Lulus — aber auch die Wedekinds — ist nicht definierbar. (Emrich, p. 207)

But Lulu is impossible to define only because, having no roots in history, her individuality constantly dissolves in symbolic overtones. Even in those instances where she lives through a situation with great passion, we realize that the scope of the author is to clarify not her personality, but the so-called civilized principles she clashes with. Nevertheless, in such moments, her humanity becomes palpable to us and we experience it in the light of her personal fate. We are, therefore, not surprised that Karl Kraus[16] and Klaus Völker[17] see her as a feminist whose fall is due to the lack of emancipation in the society she lives in. Particularly in the altercations between her and Schön she reveals to us depths of feeling and thought in an explosion of subjectivity that made Diebold exclaim 'das ist erschütternd . . . Hier bricht Gefühl aus — Wie aus einer Seele. Diese Bestie ist auch Mensch' (Diebold, p. 57):

Lulu. Seien Sie doch ein Mann. — Blicken Sie sich einmal ins Gesicht. Sie haben keine Spur von Gewissen. — Sie schrecken vor keiner Schandtat zurück — Sie wollen das Mädchen, das Sie liebt, mit der größten Kaltblütigkeit unglücklich machen. — Sie erobern die halbe Welt. — Sie tun, was Sie wollen — und Sie wissen so gut wie ich — daß . . .
Schön. (*ist völlig erschöpft auf dem Sessel links neben dem Mitteltisch zusammen gesunken*). Schweig!
Lulu. Das Sie zu schwach sind — um sich von mir loszureißen . . . (*Erdgeist*, pp. 84 f.)

The tone of defiance she gives her words implies an understanding of Schön's character. Here she has finally come to the realization, perhaps only intuitive, that only by her insulting and dominating him can he be made to respect her. Only then will he marry her, as in fact he does. At a stroke, and not without parody, Wedekind defines the bourgeois relationship as essentially sado-masochistic. No wonder we immediately hear Lulu saying 'Jetzt gehen Sie aber bitte. Jetzt sind Sie nichts mehr für mich' (*Erdgeist*, p. 85).

Still another example is when, after their marriage, she has to defend herself against his accusations, pointing out to him his incoherent, fraudulent attitude towards her:

Lulu. (*reißt sich von ihm los, den Revolver niederhaltend, in entschiedenem selbstbewußtem Ton*). — Wenn sich die Menschen um meinetwillen umgebracht haben, so setzt das meinen Wert nicht herab. — Du hast so gut gewußt, weswegen du mich zur Frau nimmst, wie ich gewußt habe, weswegen ich dich zum Mann nehme. — Du hattest deine besten Freunde mit mir betrogen, du konntest nicht gut auch noch dich selber mit mir betrügen. — Wenn du mir deinen Lebensabend zum Opfer bringst, so hast du meine ganze Jugend dafür gehabt. Du verstehst dich zehnmal besser als ich darauf, was höher im Wert steht. Ich habe nie in der Welt etwas anderes scheinen wollen, als wofür man mich genommen hat, und man hat mich nie in der Welt für etwas anderes genommen, als was ich bin. — Du willst mich dazu zwingen, mir eine Kugel ins Herz zu jagen. Ich bin keine sechzehn Jahre mehr; aber um mir eine Kugel ins Herz zu jagen, dafür bin ich mir doch noch zu jung! (*Erdgeist*, pp. 105 f.)

Galloping at the pace of a tremendous passion, Lulu's words betray a sense of reality untouched by illusions or deceptions of any kind. The force of their sincerity renders Schön's pretensions to decency and misfortune spurious whilst setting her on a much higher moral plane. We may therefore say that the Lulu/Schön relationship forms within *Erdgeist* a realistic layer that runs through four consecutive acts amidst burlesque and grotesque elements, creating in a close-up dimension a clash between the 'human morality' and the 'bourgeois morality'. Whereas Lulu's relationship with Goll and Schwarz is drawn along broad lines, underlying schematically and in a series of recurrent, similar scenes the incompatibility between Lulu and them, her relationship with Schön gathers enough detail to permit us to grasp Schön's motives, so that we are then in a position to explain him more thoroughly in a psycho-sociological light. By this we do not mean to say that the Lulu/Schön rapport is just a psychologically more detailed illustration of what happens between Lulu and the above-mentioned characters. Not at all. They all differ from each other, revealing different ways in which man responds to Lulu. They are variations of the same theme. In the Lulu/Schön liaison the theme of misalliance is expanded in a succession of phases that end in a brilliant parody of bourgeois marriage.

Such a 'complex layering of personalities and relationships'[18] turns Lulu into a natural dancer. (Alwa says she came into the world as a dancer.) Let us not forget that the dance became, at this time, distinct from the classic ballet, as the very expression of the individual body, of its spontaneity, emotional and erotic freedom.[19] Ibsen's Nora plays a *tarantella* just before breaking away into freedom; Oscar Wilde's Salome entices Herodes to cut off the head of John the Baptist through her sensual dance; and Hofmannsthal's Elektra leads her husband to death with a frenetic dance that reflects the author's thoughts on the inadequacy of language, as expressed shortly before in his *Brief des Lord Chandos* (1902). Lulu dances first for Goll, in privacy, and later, publicly, in Alwa's ballet. But we never actually see her dancing. We hear the applause and the men's commentaries, particularly those of Escerny who for ten nights studies in her dancing her 'Seelenleben'. But we see her exchanging costumes more rapidly than in real life, as if consumed by the desire to free herself. Her dancing comes to a stop only when she forces Schön to acknowledge their relationship and to break with his fiancée. The moment is highly symbolic, for she, Galathea, dominates Pygmalion, in the same way as the child who sold flowers in the street once seduced Dr Schön, that is to say solely through her elemental force which no dress or role can abate.

We shall now concentrate on the relationship between Lulu and society which is, after all, the central issue of these plays, paying particular attention to the characters' responses to Lulu.

Goll, Schwarz, and Schön try to confine Lulu within their bourgeois modes of life, to reduce her to the object of their possession.

Goll acknowledges and admires her beauty but is incapable of understanding or valuing her natural freedom. Possessing her as a rare and luxurious object for his pleasure alone, he lives in the constant fear of losing her. He has her dancing to the sound of his violin, watches her closely, and often in his impotence he must assure himself by means of physical and psychological terror. This means that he never relates to her in effective human terms, for he has become the instrument of his own jealousy and vanity. He is a caricature of the sadistic and rich old lover.

In Schwarz, Wedekind draws the caricature of the bourgeois artist who has been caught in the web of idealizations and sublimations with which our culture has mystified the issues of sex and love. Socially he lives in an idyll of his imagination that rests on a profusion of pseudo-values which he uncritically accepts. Lulu finds him banal and repellent — which could be seen as a comic inversion of the Pygmalion motif.

Whereas Goll's attitude towards her is, in spite of being perverted, stamped by his strong character, Schwarz's moralistic, idealized view of the relation between man and woman is completely stereotyped. In Lulu he sees the ideal wife, and her beauty has the effect of merely accentuating the illusion in which he shapes his daily life. It is no surprise that, when Schön reveals the truth about Lulu, he is at a loss (*Erdgeist*, pp. 56 f.); his expectations (which were not, in the first instance, founded on reality) crumble and fail, and he rushes to commit suicide. He is one of the best examples of that pseudo-instinctive animal already referred to — a supreme example of alienation.

Schön is the antithesis of Schwarz. As the proprietor of a newspaper he is in touch with reality, selling opinions and images as it suits his interests and using power and influence to promote his friends. But he is a fraud, above all, in his relationship with Lulu: he is ready first to seduce her as her adoptive father, and, when afraid of the social implications of her free sexual behaviour, he pushes her into meaningless marriages while plotting to marry a 'respectable' bourgeois girl himself.

But Schön is a fraud only in a society that is itself a fraud. Having clearly perceived the rules of the social game, he knows as an influential editor how to play his cards best to obtain that which society values most — power and respectability. That is why he insists on surrounding himself with a wall of conventional decorum — the wall Lulu threatens to demolish after their marriage.

His ill-nature and hypocrisy are, however, unmistakable when, for example, he approaches Schwarz, the 'Brotkünstler' whom he made famous, on the subject of Lulu. Ostensibly he draws his attention to the fact that he married a rich woman: 'Du hast eine halbe Million geheiratet!' (*Erdgeist*, p. 52). Failing to understand that Schwarz's life depends on the idealization of Lulu, he asks him not to judge Lulu by conventional standards, though he himself did not

marry her precisely because she did not conform to those standards. When in the end he marries Lulu, he still clings to his bourgeois commitment, as he immediately transfers their relationship to a conventional key. He pretends to ignore her promiscuity, of which he was well aware before, accusing her of ingratitude and finally ordering her to shoot herself:

(*allein sich umsehend*). Der reine Augiasstall. Das mein Lebensabend. Man soll mir einen Winkel zeigen, der noch rein ist. Die Pest im Haus. Der ärmste Tagelöhner hat sein sauberes Nest. Dreißig Jahre Arbeit, und das mein Familienkreis, der Kreis der Meinen . . . (*Erdgeist*, p. 89)

This sentimental jargon is an attempt to cover up the real reasons for his discontent with Lulu, namely that she has become a danger to his social credibility. Schwarz, being a believer in certain principles, had to commit suicide when he realized that he had failed in his aspirations in relation to Lulu. Schön, on the contrary, asks Lulu to destroy herself because, being no believer, he can only *play* the moral game required to protect his reputation. His integration in society is not naive like Schwarz's, for he uses it as a powerful expedient to maniplulate people and situations. We will see this game played even more explicitly by some of Sternheim's characters.

Schön is the character we are able to understand best in these plays. But his individuality, being destitute of humanity, is that of a 'Raubtier'. Unable to stifle his attraction towards Lulu, he attempts to deceive himself, first by denying that attraction altogether, and secondly by assimilating it into a conventional marriage. When he finally realizes that he cannot tame her, he demands her destruction, as if by killing her he could deny her essence. Like the others, however, he must then die, so that Lulu may continue her fatal journey through society.

Schigolch, Rodrigo, Hugenberg, Casti-Piani, all representations of the Bohemian and sub-criminal world, seem to appear and disappear before us with the agility of acrobats. In *Erdgeist*, Schigolch and Rodrigo visit Lulu, enjoying her and her luxurious surroundings. Lulu too responds to them in a relaxed way. They are characterized with scanty means but with great vividness. Rodrigo, the unsuccessful gymnast, but nevertheless infatuated with his muscles, combines ignorance and coarseness with a certain gallantry that renders him comic. Schigolch is the cynical vagabond. There is a mysterious kinship between him and Lulu: she senses his presence before seeing him. As they have known each other since the time Lulu was on the street, he is ambiguously considered as her father and lover. He stands somewhere between both.

The mystery around Schigolch serves to suggest his affinity with Lulu. Of unknown origin, he is not identifiable with any social order. We do not know what he does for a living; he has neither a home nor a family. As a complete outsider, he is out of the reach of the social conventions and is therefore close to

the principle underlying Lulu's creation. It is this dimension and nothing else that keeps him in contact with Lulu until the end of the plays. One must disagree therefore with Emrich when he says:

> Schigolch akzeptiert die versachlichte männliche Welt. Daher überlebt ausgerechnet er, der schon zu Lebzeiten Tote, Lulu und alle an ihrer Tragödie Beteiligten. Lulu aber negiert 'diese Welt' und bleibt dennoch in ihr. Sie hält den tragischen Widerspruch durch, reißt folgerichtig sich und alle ihre Partner in die Katastrophe, der sich einzig Schigolch zynisch zu entziehen vermag, da er von Beginn an außerhalb steht, sich auf Konflikte überhaupt nicht mehr einläßt. Auch und gerade er, der mit seinem 'besseren Ich schon verklärt' ist, ist böse, vielleicht der eigentliche Böse des Dramas, da er alles durchschaut und dennoch bejaht. (Emrich, p. 214)

Schigolch understands the world, does not accept it, but does not fight it. The difference between him and Lulu lies in their particular levels of reality. Lulu, as we have already seen, stands primarily on the level of the myth. Schigolch, on the other hand, is fixed in a particular social reality, of which he is conscious and in relation to which he defines himself. Thus his stance and above all the easy-going attitude with which he responds to life imply a critical detachment as well as the realization of his impotence in face of a reality over which he has little or no power (power here in the sense of a capacity to bring about change). Unlike Schön, the Marquis von Keith, or Casti-Piani he withdraws from the hurly-burly of the world to shape his life in the careless freedom of the vagabond who is at peace with himself. Underlying this attitude there is a peculiar sense of individual integrity, even if it is Bohemian.

Hugenberg is a melancholic, good-hearted adolescent in whom Wedekind wishes to highlight a total lack of orientation. In a way, he is also the antithesis of Schigolch because he displays an acute sense of responsibility sustained by a naive knowledge of the world. Consequently he exposes himself up to the point where the cruelty of society breaks him down.

These characters, who constitute a sort of social fringe, are, with the exception of Schigolch and Hugenberg, distorted in the same way as the rest. This becomes particularly clear at the end of *Erdgeist* and in *Die Büchse der Pandora* where they are all driven by the motive of money, regardless of any other factors. Rodrigo exploits Lulu financially under the threat of betraying her to the police. Casti-Piani wishes to sell her to a brothel in Egypt. It is Lulu's change of fortune that brings into focus their ruthless materialism. Under the protective roof of the bourgeoisie, with Schwarz and Schön, she could not be so easily exploited; now, as an outcast, excluded from society's protection, she becomes an easy target. In *Die Büchse der Pandora* she even ceases to be revered as a beauty to be valued exclusively in terms of material gain. What Wedekind seems to be pointing to is that even that section of society in which one might expect resentment and resistance to the ways of modern capitalism is

in fact openly under its influence. We find in these characters no grain of idealism or revolt. Like the others, they are representative of a social malaise.

Casti-Piani is certainly the most interesting figure. As we see him in both professions, as a policeman and a procurer, we realize that Wedekind is directing us towards the complicity and collaboration between law and crime. Moral values vanish when the factor of money comes into question:

Ursprünglich war ich Stellenvermittlungsagent, bis ich über ein Pfarrerstöchterchen stolperte, dem ich eine Stellung in Valparaiso verschafft hatte. Das Herzblättchen hatte sich in seinen kindlichen Traümen das Leben noch berauschender vorgestellt als es ist und beklagte sich deshalb bei Mama. Darauf wurde ich festgesetzt. Durch charaktervolles Benehmen gewann ich mir aber rasch das Vertrauen der Kriminalpolizei. Mit einem Monatswechsel von hundertfünfzig Mark schickte man mich hierher, weil man wegen der ewigen Bombenattentate unser hiesiges Kontingent verdreifachte. Aber wer kommt hier mit hundertfünfzig Mark im Monat aus? — Meine Kollegen lassen sich von Weibern aushalten. Mir lag es natürlich näher, meinen früheren Beruf wieder aufzunehmen, und von den unzähligen Abenteurerinnen, die sich hier aus den besten Familien der ganzen Welt zusammenfinden, habe ich schon manches lebenshungrige junge Geschöpf an den Ort seiner natürlichen Bestimmung befördert.[20]

So he is not content to exploit Lulu at a personal level, but must invest her in the market. We have now stepped into the area of sex-for-money and money-for-sex. No longer an end in itself, sex is now reduced to an expedient in the economic rat-race.

Wedekind detects corruption everywhere; his characters are living documents of it. Therefore we are not surprised that he should have included in this work the violence of Jack the Ripper, as it becomes symbolic of a process of dehumanization carried to its ultimate conclusion. Nature (Lulu), once violated for the sake of material profit, is then destroyed in a moment of pathological nihilism. What is interesting is that Wedekind establishes an identity between Dr Schön and the emblematic figure of Jack the Ripper when the latter kills Lulu and the Gräfin, repeating then the same words as those uttered by Schön at the sight of Schwarz's dead body. It is as if the bourgeois spirit, reincarnated in Jack the Ripper, came, on Christmas Eve, to avenge itself on Lulu, the earth spirit, thus perpetuating the bourgeois order.

In the composition of such a gallery of figures, Wedekind presents us with different techniques of characterization.

In Schön he uses realistic detail in order to elaborate on Schön's attitude of hypocritcal compromise, which is most clearly illustrated in his marriage with Lulu. Goll and Schwarz are, as caricatures, more economically drawn. The author structures them on the basis of a few elements: Goll's infatuation with Lulu and his ridiculous and cruel jealousy; Schwarz's illusory and thoroughly conventional love for her. All these characters are conceived psychologically, but their psychology, being typical, and not individually elaborated, serves

more to illustrate a social reality than to endow them with individual life. To Rodrigo, Schigolch, Casti-Piani, Hugenberg, and Escerny, Wedekind gives simple profiles whose centres are not visible. In others, like Magelone, Herr Hunedi, Kungu Poti, and Dr Hilti, the author limits our understanding of them to a single situation where they display some sort of idiosyncrasy or aberration. They are flash images of grotesque, neurotic, urban behaviour.

Common to all of them is a sort of negative energy that drives them frenetically to their own destruction. To show their impulsiveness at work is what interests Wedekind — not their motivation or thoughts. If he uses the motif of the dance to suggest Lulu's indomitable eroticism and her mythical ambiguity, he also uses the symbolism of the circus to suggest flexibility, adventure, danger.[21] Their reactions and doings alone characterize them and through them their world. Whatever method the playwright uses, whether stylization or quasi-realism, the aim and the final result remain the same — to make of them an 'observatory' of our modern world. This, then, is why they all blend together, conveying a profound insight into reality.

There remain two characters, Alwa and the Gräfin Geschwitz, who impress us differently because, unlike the others (but along with Schigolch, although in a different way), they stay with Lulu until the end in a more human spirit. But although they are not frozen in a strait-jacket of synthetic morality or of obsessive materialism, they remain unloved by Lulu. Their intellectual superiority is precisely what renders them alien to her. She cannot be embraced by the laws of thought, but only by the pure dynamic of the unconscious. Nevertheless, in spite of this implicit neo-Romantic affirmation of the irrational, their conception discloses a gentler mood on the part of the author. They appear involved in a kind of pathos born of their own self-awareness and their inability to rescue themselves, in spite of the fact that, like the others, they too remain paradigms of the social malaise.

It is as Schön's son, as an unsuccessful writer, and as Lulu's lover that we best understand Alwa. When in Act IV, Scene 8, he declares his passion for Lulu (although by then she is married to his father), we suddenly gain insight into a long path of secret dreams and longings, mutilated by guilt and frustration. When finally, after the death of his father, he decides to run away with her, he is by then already following the inclination to give in to his own fate. He gambles and loses his father's fortune. His masochism becomes more evident in the last scenes in the London attic where he lives with Lulu, now a prostitute, in abject poverty. Although from time to time he still gathers the strength to simulate an opposition to the dark course of his life, he has deterministically accepted his predicament: 'Das ist nun einmal so der Lauf der Welt, wer will dagegen aufkommen' (*Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 198). Alwa's relationship with the outside world deteriorates more and more as he closes his eyes to an unresolved crisis of guilt and inadequacy that hardly ever rises to despair but is soothed in

the torpor of a constant melancholia. But even in Alwa, whose nuances of life reach us in an impressionistic fashion and with sympathy, Wedekind does not abandon the one guiding idea that supports the coherence of these works. Alwa is still the instrument with which the author diagnoses the social reality, although in a less aggressive form.

At one point Wedekind says of the Gräfin Geschwitz:

Die tragische Hauptfigur dieses Stückes ist nicht Lulu, wie von den Richtern irrtümlich angenommen wurde, sondern die Gräfin Geschwitz. Lulu spielt, von einzelnen Intrigen abgesehen, in allen drei Akten eine rein passive Rolle. (*Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 112)

We suspect Wedekind is here using an argument to defend himself against charges of obscenity provoked by his plays, for Lulu remains in fact the central character from the point of view of structure, plot, and symbolism. It is in their interaction with her that the other characters' actions acquire a sharp sociological relevance; she is also, though indirectly, the main tragic figure, because, as already explained, her fate reflects the tragic course of modern society.

Nevertheless, the Gräfin Geschwitz is animated by intense passion, sensibility, and intelligence despite (or because of) her 'Unnatürlichkeit'. Wedekind explains why he was drawn to the choice of such a character:

Trotzdem hätte mich der Fluch der Unnatürlichkeit allein nicht dazu verlockt, ihn zum Gegenstand dramatischer Gestaltung zu wählen. Ich tat das vielmehr, weil ich dieses Verhängnis, wie es uns in unserer heutigen Kultur entgegentritt, tragisch noch nicht behandelt fand. (*Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 113)

His decision to make of her a tragic figure, drawn in the light of compassion, betrays the wish to highlight the tragic dimension of her condition. Society sees 'normality' in the other characters' pathology while isolating people like the Gräfin Geschwitz as an aberration of nature. Wishing, with his usual calculated impertinence, to stress her moral and intellectual superiority, Wedekind lets her comment on the malady of the 'normal' person, thus redeeming (relatively) her situation of ostracism:

Die Menschen kennen sich nicht — sie wissen nicht, wie sie sind. Nur wer selber kein Mensch ist, der kennt sie. Jedes Wort, das sie sagen, ist unwahr, erlogen. Das wissen sie nicht, denn sie sind heute so und morgen so, je nachdem ob sie gegessen, getrunken und geliebt haben oder nicht. Nur der Körper bleibt auf einige Zeit, was er ist, und nur die Kinder haben Vernunft. Die Großen sind wie die Tiere; keines weiß, was er tut. Wenn sie am glücklichsten sind, dann jammern sie, dann stöhnen sie und im tiefsten Elend freuen sie sich jedes winzigen Happen. Es ist sonderbar, wie der Hunger den Menschen die Kraft zum Unglück nimmt. Wenn sie sich aber gesättigt haben, dann machen sie sich die Welt zur Folterkammer, dann werfen sie ihr Leben für die Befriedigung einer Laune Weg. — Ob es wohl einmal Menschen gegeben hat, die durch Liebe glücklich geworden sind? Was ist denn ihr Glück anders, als daß sie besser schlafen und alles vergessen können? — Herr Gott, ich danke dir, daß du mich nicht geschaffen hast wie diese. — Ich bin nicht Mensch;

mein Leib hat nichts Gemeines mit Menschenleibern. Habe ich eine Menschenseele! (*Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 212)

She is not, however, an illustration of an ideal of humanity (notice how Lulu runs away from her). She is on the one level a victim of society's sexual discrimination whom Wedekind wants to defend. On another she can be seen as the intellectual counterpart of Lulu's feminism. Finally, she adds another touch of eccentricity to a parade of figures whose behaviour betrays the anarchy and confusion beneath the civilized order of modern life.

The distortions of these characters are not gratuitously imposed. The author has merely torn man's mask away and exposed him without mystifications. What we see are violence and death directing us to the *grandeur* of a tragedy in which sexuality has ceased to be a source of life or a means of salvation and has become an absurd, destructive force. Let it be emphasized again that the iconoclast Wedekind focuses on sexuality, not as an apostle of pleasure (as is also evident in *Tod und Teufel* and *Hidalla*), but because he recognizes in the manifestations of the libido man's most unconscious and primitive nature. Showing how civilization has distorted man's primary instincts, he is saying that man has damaged himself, perhaps beyond repair. Nor is Wedekind interested in the relations between the sexes in order to show, as Strindberg does, the destructiveness of woman. Wedekind's target is civilization, and in particular Wilhelmine society. And he sees beauty in Lulu's destruction of the symbols of bourgeois culture. In short, Wedekind isolates the issue of sexuality in order to use it as a barometer to measure man's alienation and distortion. In *Frühlings Erwachen*, we witness the devastation of the adolescents' spontaneity by society; and Lulu, the archetype of the innocent libido, causes and undergoes only calamity. The thesis is evident: in bourgeois society man can survive only as a denatured, brutish, evil creature. He has been corroded by pseudo-values, estranged from his human essence. The 'New Man', the embodiment of an ideal of mankind, is not Wedekind's creation. He will be the myth of the Expressionist writers. Meanwhile, Wedekind will go on cynically exploring, from every radical angle (from the child's conflict with the adult, and the egoism between the sexes, to the liberties of the sub-criminal world and the predicament of the bourgeois artist), the deep fissures in the old order just before its collapse in the Great War, leaving us with few illusions about its nature and survival.

Der Marquis von Keith

In *Der Marquis von Keith* (1900) as well as in *Der Kammersänger*, Wedekind abandons the naturalist issue and analyses more closely the problem of integration in a bourgeois society.

Using again the technique of typification, Wedekind penetrates the viscera of society in order to intercept its dynamic forces. The characters appear nailed

to positions from which they never deviate. The author manipulates them as objects of demonstration, and consequently their individual lives are not of primary importance. What is important are the social themes which they disclose in their interaction.

But the analytical theatre of Wedekind is not, as we have already seen, a theatre of abstract ideas: Lulu and her fated partners are living paradigms of the human condition; their dance of death is animated by the irrevocable rhythm of their passions and instincts. And although Keith's individuality hardly develops beyond the conceptual formula responsible for its creation, he too lives through his role with an enthusiasm and vitality that flow from his intuitive response to life. Even those characters in this play who are simplified types of Munich society are also living cells breathing the logic of a system and particularly of their social class, while simultaneously sensing the frailty of their positions: from Consul Casimir who is aware that 'Ich bin heute der angesehenste Mann Münchens, sehen Sie, und kann morgen hinter Schloß und Riegel sitzen'[22] to Anna who craves the security of a wealthy marriage, and the painter Saranieff who does not hesitate to prostitute his girl and his work for money.

Money determines their outlook on life. It also plunges them into a ruthless game in which success goes invariably to the most powerful and cunning, while putting them on a tightrope where they fight their competitors.

The debate between Keith and Scholz, both misfits, constitutes the main argument of the play; and society's response to their intentions and doings leaves us with a conclusive opinion — namely that devious schemes such as Keith's and naive altruism such as Scholz's are easily defeated by society's brutal coherence.

They both wish to be part of bourgeois society for very different reasons. Keith in order to enjoy material and social prestige, and Scholz in order to regain his self-esteem. Behind Keith's wishes lies his calculated self-interest:

. . . die Welt ist eine verdammt schlaue Bestie, und es ist nicht leicht, sie unterzukriegen. (*Der Marquis von Keith*, p. 57)

Man kann seinen Mitmenschen nicht mehr in dieser Welt nützen, als wenn man in der umfassendesten Weise auf seinen eigenen Vorteil ausgeht. (p. 24)

Es gibt keine Ideen, seien sie sozialer, wissenschaftlicher oder künstlerischer Art, die irgend etwas anders als Hab und Gut zum Gegenstand hätten.

Sünde ist eine mythologische Bezeichnung für schlechte Geschäfte. (p. 34)

Die Liebe zu Gott ist überall immer nur eine summarische symbolische Ausdrucksweise für die Liebe zur eigenen Person. (p. 90)

Scholz, on the other hand, believes that every citizen should be a useful member of his community 'weil man als etwas anderes keine Existenzberechtigung hat!' (p. 84). In other words, Scholz approaches society as a moralist, while Keith assesses it as a cynic.

It is through an understanding of bourgeois behaviour that Keith looks for the key to enter high-society life. He pays attention to the exact definition of its values and standards and learns to strike the right effect at the right time (a technique which will be more fully displayed in Sternheim's *Der Snob*). But if his social being has acquired a drive for money and privilege, his instinctive side is repelled by the order they sustain: 'Meine Begabung beschränkt sich auf die leidige Tatsache, daß ich in bürgerlicher Atmosphäre nicht atmen kann' (p. 12). He hopes to conciliate the contradictory tendencies when he has acquired a privileged social position and a substantial material security that will give him the desired independence. In other words, Keith seeks integration into the bourgeosie in order to enjoy its convenience, and above all freedom. Consequently, his primary object is to assure the middle-class that he is one of them, worthy of their trust and respect.

But Keith is an outsider, as his endless efforts to mesmerize the bourgeoisie well show. So he can only 'appreciate the outward mechanisms' (Best, pp. 279 f.) Had he been a bourgeois at heart, he would have been careful not to reveal so bluntly the logic of the social mechanism he has activated, covering up instead the ruthlessness of the game with some sort of moral vindication. He grasps this point when he says to Hermann: 'das glänzendste Geschäft in dieser Welt ist die Moral' (*Der Marquis von Keith*, p. 98).

As the son of a mathematician and a gipsy, he starts with accurate reasoning and ends up following his intuition that finally betrays him to his shrewd and vigilant competitors. Thomas Mann (who, a few years later, would also portray an adventurer and swindler, along the lines of Keith, as the hero of his novel *Felix Krull*) explains his failure as follows:

> weil seine Abenteuerphantasie in die Wolken und nicht auf soliden Grund baut, weil er statt wie seine bürgerlichen Gegenspieler gefälschte Geschäftsbücher zu führen, überhaupt keine führt, sondern sich auf seinen Elan verläßt. Seine Täuschung liegt auch in der Auffassung begründet, daß es innerhalb der Gesellschaft keinen Kampf gäbe.[23]

And Friedrich Rothe gives a similar explanation: 'Keith ist betrogener Betrüger, weil die bürgerliche Gesellschaft "mephistophelischer" ist als er selbst' (Rothe, p. 70).

Scholz is the antithesis of Keith. Lacking any critical insight into society, he longs to be integrated in order to establish ethically his *raison d'être*. Contrary to Keith, he has both wealth and lineage that would guarantee his success if he knew how to exhibit these attributes in the social market. But as a naive idealist, Scholz wishes to be valued purely in terms of personal merit.

Therefore he actually comes to ponder whether his money and name are not obstacles to the purity of his pursuit (*Der Marquis von Keith*, p. 28).

Naivety and moralism are the ingredients that make up Scholz. Because he never looks behind the social screen, he is unable to detect its hypocrisy. Instead, he tries constantly to adjust himself according to his idealized image of society, seeing his failure as the result of his own defective humanity (*Der Marquis von Keith*, p. 56). Had he exploited ethical axioms for the purpose of protecting some kind of opportunism, he would have been accepted. He would then be doing what Keith intended to do in the long run, namely to *play* the moralist. As it is, he speaks an alien language and becomes ridiculous in the eyes of society.

If Keith possesses a social consciousness that enables him to feel society's pulse and a non-conformist temperament by which he is ultimately betrayed (he is neither as innocent and spontaneous as Lulu nor as hypocritical and destructive as her partners: as Rothe points out, 'Er schädigt niemanden ernsthaft und hinterläßt bei seiner Flucht ein geschäftlich gesundes Unternehmen, in dem die Bürger ihr Kapital gut angelegt finden' (Rothe, p. 66)), Scholz never advances from the position of a complete outsider, because he is incapable of understanding the forces at work in the social structure. Keith is not quick enough in covering up deviousness with ethics. Scholz acts purely on moral grounds, as if society were the Eden of the innocent. In a way, they both stand for extreme attitudes which by themselves conflict with the nature of the bourgeois order.

Clearly, we must not disregard Keith's adventurous temperament, as outlined by Thomas Mann and in the foregoing discussion, and so obviously manifested in his intuitive resistance to becoming a cog in the social apparatus (he considers it, for example, 'unter seiner Würde Papiere zu haben'); nor should we ignore Kutscher's interpretation of Keith and Scholz as traits of a basic dualism in Wedekind, already evident in Moritz Stiefel and Melchior Gabor (Kutscher, p. 169). Nevertheless, Wedekind is primarily interested in bringing to the surface a problem of maladjustment which, in turn, opens up a dispute about bourgeois morality. For this purpose, he dissects the bourgeois ideology itself into its main components — Keith's opportunism and Scholz's moralism — in order to test them separately against the system. As the isolation of these two components proves catastrophic, we are led to the conclusion — and here lies the thesis of the play — that only in the hypocritical compromise of using morality to do business, and business to shape morality, can such a system survive as a hybrid organism, simultaneously brutal and rational. Thus Wedekind exposes the implicit contradiction at the heart of liberal philosophy between theory and fact.

Keith's non-conformity is, then, a feature of his temperament that does not run against the philosophical statement which underlies the play. It also endows his character with individuality and gives the play a positive force on which it ultimately depends. For, in the end, what matters is still that spontaneity that is at

the base of Keith's anarchical vitality and that constantly renews his aspirations, as Paul Fechter observes:

> Kaum hat der Marquis wieder Geld in der Hand, das einzige, um das im Grunde sein Ringen geht, da steigen seine Lebensgeister wieder, die Zerknirschung und Niedergeschlagenheit verweht . . . Soeben war er ganz unten — aber der Aufstieg beginnt bereits wieder von neuem, das alte Spiel steht niemals stille. (Fechter, p. 77)

In face of this vitality, Scholz's decision to go into the madhouse to protect himself against an insane world that has mocked in him the moral values it acknowledges is less satisfactory.

Der Kammersänger

In this play (1897), Wedekind's point of departure for his vision of bourgeois society is the predicament of the artist— in this case, the opera-singer Gerardo. Thus, although Wedekind is no longer concerned with a vast social panorama as in the Lulu plays nor with the representation of middle-class ideology as in *Der Marquis von Keith*, he once more chooses an area outside the strict limits of conventional bourgeois society on which to build his social critique. Like the adventurers and criminals in the Lulu plays, Gerardo becomes a mirror of the bourgeois world as he consciously conforms to the demands of an indulgent middle class, sacrificing his personal life and artistic integrity in order to remain at the top of his career.

If Keith hopes to surpass the limitations of the bourgeoisie by becoming part of it, Gerardo proves the opposite, namely, that once inside one cannot be free, not without a loss:

> Meine Ketten sind enger bemessen als das Geschirr, in dem ein Equipagenpferd geht. . . . Aber verlangen Sie die kleinste Äußerung persönlicher Freiheit von mir, so ist das von einem Sklaven, wie ich es bin, zu viel verlangt.[24]

In Gerardo's case it is the impresario who dictates his style of life, from the masks he must wear to the emotions he can have. In other words, his 'reeller Wert' is determined by the purse and taste of the middle-class: 'Wir Künstler sind ein Luxusartikel der Bourgeoisie, zu dessen Bezahlung man sich gegenseitig überbietet' (*Der Kammersänger*, p. 253).

No wonder, then, that in this play the characters obey more clearly than before the plan of a puppeteer. We find no plot, but a simple and economic montage of three situations in which the intellectual and moral character of the opera-singer is tested. On the result of this test the social analysis of the play depends.

But Gerardo suffers his life not as a naive conformist like the painter Schwarz in *Erdgeist*, whose name is also made by a sort of impresario — Dr Schön; Gerardo actually plays an active part in his sinister transformation into a market item, as we can see from the way in which he rationalizes his condition:

Der Maßstab für die Bedeutung eines Menschen ist die Welt und nicht die innere Überzeugung, die man sich durch jahrelanges Hinbrüten aneignet. Ich habe mich auch nicht auf den Markt gestellt; man hat mich entdeckt. Es gibt keine verkannten Genies. Wir sind nun einmal nicht die Herren unseres Geschickes; der Mensch ist zum Sklaven geboren! (*Der Kammersänger*, p. 255)

Gerardo's fatalism is an alibi with which he covers up his ambition. He is the most intelligent of all the characters and his perception of society is frighteningly correct. However, he never considers the possibility of evading his situation, because this would mean for him a less prestigious career. He prefers to bow to the market reality even if it enslaves him.

He could have been a tragic figure — tragic because he cannot realize his talent, in a brilliant career to which he has a right, without surrendering to the abject impositions of a consuming system — if he did not exonerate himself by means of those same principles that reduce him to a market item: 'Aber der Mensch hat seine Pflichten; du hast deine Pflichten gerade so gut wie ich meine Pflichten habe; und die Pflicht ist das höchste Gebot' (*Der Kammersänger*, p. 264). He would have been a character in conflict with society. As it is, Gerardo does not relate the art in which he is engaged to his own experience. So he will sing the tragic love of Tristan, the profound sincerity of two beings that love each other and the social hypocrisy that represses them, while remaining indifferent to the desperate love and death of Helena. In other words, Gerardo subscribes completely to a business mentality that in turn provides him with a justification for his conformism. Wedekind calls him:

. . . eine durch den Erfolg aufgeblasene Philisterseele, die sich des Erfolges wegen für einen Künstler hält und von allen Erfolgsanbetern dafür gehalten wird. Nicht ein großer Mensch, wie er selber es zu sein glaubt, sondern eine Mücke in fünftausendfacher Vergrößerung. (Wedekind, *Prosa Dramen Verse*, p. 947)

The centre of Schön's and Keith's lives is social convention, but they still possess a natural spontaneity: Schön is attracted to Lulu and even marries her, although, in the end, he prefers her death to his social degradation. Keith's plans fail because he is unable to guard himself against the vigilance of his competitors. Gerardo, on the other hand, adheres completely and efficiently to the demands of his social contract.

Wedekind views the predicament of the artist in the bourgeois society in sociological terms: if the artist wishes social recognition, independently of his value, he must allow himself to be assimilated by a commercial culture, thus putting in question the liberating function of art. So art becomes a luxury, a simple matter of style and glamour, or a poor substitute for life, as it is for Walter Buridan, in Wedekind's play *Die Zensur*, who takes refuge in art for fear of marriage and then tries, through a representational art, to recapture life. What such characters never experience is the contradiction between *Bürgerlichkeit* and art, explored by so many writers of the time: Hofmannsthal,

Wedekind himself, Thomas Mann, Kafka, Musil. Even Alwa, who desires to combat conventional artistic taste through a non-naturalistic art, fails without experiencing a conflict in this sense.

Everywhere, within the establishment and outside it, in the sub-criminal world and in the artist's condition, Wedekind shows up the same obsessive patterns of behaviour — man alienated from genuine human values, usurped by a competitive, commercial ideology, violated first in his primary nature and then efficiently transformed into a 'Raubtier'. From this perspective Wedekind's rebellion is total, because it goes deep into the human core; he leaves no social stratum free from his biting satire.

CHAPTER II

CARL STERNHEIM

It is from the middle strata of society that Sternheim draws his characters. His plays parade profiles from different types, from the small-town and provincial philistine to the monopolist tycoon.

The historical ascent of the bourgeoisie in Germany found its first major literary expression in Lessing, reaching its last apotheosis with Sternheim, about a hundred and fifty years later, at a time when the critique of the burgher pervaded world literature: Nietzsche attacks the 'Bildungsphilister'; Chekhov, Ibsen, Thomas Mann, Kafka, Wedekind (as we have seen), and many others demolish the foundations of the bourgeois world in their works. The middle class, as the dominant social and political force, was living through a time of splendour, of national pride, and confidence. However, its twilight was also drawing near as it become synonymous with militarism, colonialism, and moral complacency, as it was shaken by the conflicts of the capitalist state, thereby losing the basis for any relationship with the humanistic ideal that inspired two centuries of writing. Having had hardly enough time to assert its identity before the aristocracy, it was now threatened once more, this time by the working class.

It is against such antagonism towards, or at least disillusionment with, the bourgeoisie that Sternheim's characters, almost all identifiable with the middle class, emerge vitalized by a sense of purpose that seems to restore their *raison d'être*. They never appear as chaotic, confused creatures. On the contrary, they believe in their social condition and role, the purpose of which is personal success. Their role-playing is, therefore, not as in Musil, Pirandello, or Frisch, a necessity in order to relieve their sense of emptiness and to gain a feeling of permanent, absolute being; it is the very means by which they assert their integration in society, their struggle for status and wealth. In other words, aspiration to power and social security and never disintegration of personality, is the reason of their daily metamorphosis.

In this way, they never abandon the concrete level of their private ambitions. And since the bourgeois order is not criticized (as it is in the rest of the authors studied here), the antinomy between the individual and society never goes beyond certain moments of critical revelation, which are soon dissolved in the vitality of self-confidence and in a kind of wit that seeks conciliation and

approval, in an overall enthusiastic attitude that Sternheim himself clarified in his autobiography of 1936:

Dieser Anarchie der Zeit gegenüber . . . gilt es das bürgerlich-Ganze, nicht tragisch verzweifelt, doch von der eigenen Gänze restlos begeistert, an seine Grenzen rasend, zu zeigen![1]

Thus the *dramatis personae* carry, in their success or failure, the apology of the system in which they live, their continued faith in their class. In the end, the alienated person seems to be, for Sternheim, the bourgeois who fails to fulfil his bourgeois aspirations. Nevertheless, we cannot but sense, behind their assertive front — the mask — an enormous vacuum, an absence of moral and spiritual involvement, a total lack of that private space where man's most human emotions abide. Unaware of their limitations and of their hysteria, they live in a world that is morally uncomplicated, simply ruled by the laws of their ruthless appetite for material security and power.

The nature of the struggle in which they engage themselves is totally conditioned by the ideology of mercantilism. What the author euphemistically calls 'eigene Nuance' (a sort of highly individual and selfish freedom) is nothing but their disposition, regardless of any moral considerations, to strive for their interests. According to Sternheim, this is what distinguishes them in a positive sense from the rest of society:

In einem Dutzend Komödien, von 1908 bis 1920, stabilierte ich einiger Bürger irdisches Heldenleben, Bekenntnis zu ihrer und aller Welt Ursprünglichkeit quand même! Helden sind sie, weil sie sich aus gesellschaftssittlichen vorgeschriebenen und zufälligen Zwängen gegen Widerstände immer stärker in die mindestens im Kunstwerk zu fordernde Freiheit hineinspielten . . .[2]

To interpret their self-assertion in Emrich's terms —

Carl Sternheim ist der einzige Dramatiker unserer Epoche, der den unlösbar gewordenen Widerspruch zwischen gesellschaftlichem Zwang und personaler Freiheit radikal, das heißt bis in seine Wurzel durchschaut, gestaltet und bewältigt hat.[3]

— would be giving it a profundity of meaning that surpasses the narrow dimensions of their experience. They project themselves along two single tracks which clearly express the bourgeois double life: that of moralistic formalities and appearances (the mask) and the ruthless reality of their motivation and actions. Underlying this double perspective there is no crisis of sincerity, no individual growth. We are, in fact, left with the impression that Sternheim could only conceive of struggle in terms of social Darwinism.

Sternheim's treatment of the bourgeois is unexpected. The lucidity with which he portrays the cynicism and brutality of the middle class on the one hand and the sheer gusto which he seems to derive from its will to succeed (the irony, although creating ambivalence, never destroys this latter impression) makes us

wonder if he was not trying to cling desperately and nostalgically to the old bourgeois order in a moment when Europe was heading toward war, social revolution, political extremism, and economic and financial crisis. In fact, the raw and naked individualism of his heroes appears to be a strong antidote with which he counter-attacks the image of bourgeois decline in his own time.

If it were not for the overall tone of exaltation, we might argue that Sternheim was trying to correct the German inclination to abstract and idealized thinking which proved to be so fateful in some occasions, and which was so intense in the Expressionist writing of his time. Frequent in his plays is the comic situation where the pragmatic and dynamic hero takes advantage of the romantic convictions and ideals of his fellow-men. During the Great War when an anti-bellicose feeling developed among Expressionist artists, the pacifist Sternheim was critical, like Heinrich Mann, of the classic-romantic tradition. As he says in his novel *Europa* (1920) the Germans have been encouraged by their literature and philosophy to view the world with metaphysical preconceptions, always subordinating their individuality to some kind of higher ideal. The artist should be free from any sort of bias, be it moral or political. But unbiased is exactly what Sternheim is not. His sympathy for the successful burgher is all too evident, generating not so much an equilibrium between materialism and idealism as an embarrassing comicality because it condones and encourages some of the ugliest features of social behaviour —

> Die Maske–Dramen machen die Hellhörigen betroffen, weil die Erfolge ihrer Helden schließlich auf Kosten des öffentlichen Wohls gehen. Für Karriere, Geld und Ehre der Maskes, die sich in politische und wirtschaftliche Schlüsselpositionen lavieren, müssen die zahllosen Opfer solcher Energie darben, leiden und sterben. Das Lachen über Durchschnittlichkeit und Primitivität der Maskes erstickt am Innewerden des Ausgeliefertseins an sie.[4]

It is no wonder that his work had an ambivalent reception. Even today (when there is a renaissance of his plays), he remains as in his own time and after the Second World War an object of controversy. Winfried Sebald's radical thesis, which in John Osborne's opinion helped to assess Sternheim's position with greater precision, explains Sternheim's satire as

> . . . notwendig diffus und . . . Symptom eines neurotischen Geistes. Sternheim fehlten von allem Anfang an die Voraussetzungen zu einer sinnvollen Kritik der Wirklichkeit, für welche die unkotrollierte Aggressivität seiner Schriften noch nicht einmal ein Surrogat ist, weil ihr Autor — seinen Werken zum Trotz — die Wirklichkeit als die beste der möglichen proklamiert und sich jedwedem verschließt, das etwa auf seine Ansichten als Korrektiv wirken könnte.[5]

Emrich considers him instead as an engaged, realist writer who dismissed all ideologies and programmes because he regarded them as an obstacle to the individual pursuit of happiness, breaking thus with the idealistic tradition in literature:

Denn diese Forderung ['eigener Natur' zu leben] erscheint gerade nicht als ein übersinnliches, unerreichbares 'Ideal' oder moralisches 'Postulat' im Sinne Schillers, Kants, Sartres oder Kafkas, an dem der ewig unvollkommene wirkliche Mensch jeweils satirisch oder vom 'Ekel' geschüttelt gemessen und kritisiert wird. Vielmehr werden die 'vorhandenen' Menschen mit all ihren 'besonderen', ihnen 'eigentümlichen' Schwächen, Grenzen, Lastern, Kauzigkeiten, Härten, ja sogar 'brutalen Nuancen' nicht nur 'wirklich gekannt', sondern auch 'mit Inbrunst' geliebt, wenn sie sich nur zu diesen ihren 'Eigentümlichkeiten' bekennen, sie rückhaltlos und mit aller Intensität 'leben'. (Emrich, pp. 11 f.)

Wendler has a similar point of view, and contrasts Sternheim's lucidity with the Expressionist utopianism:

Für Sternheim bestand nicht die Gefahr, einer Ideologie zu verfallen. Seine Welt ist, nicht an sich, aber im Gegensatz zu der vieler Expressionisten, eine klare, gemeisterte, überschaubare, geordnete Welt voller Lebenskraft. Daß auch sie auf schwankendem, irrationalem Grund ruht und gefährdet ist, daß auch in bezug auf sie bei der Frage nach den Konsequenzen der sie begründenden Anschauungen keine befriedigende Antwort zu erhalten ist und nur die Utopie als Ausweg bleibt, liegt an der Forderung nach einem undefinierten und undefinierbaren, sich jeder Verwirklichung entziehenden 'Leben'.[6]

Still for others like Hellmuth Karasek[7] and the GDR critics, Johannes Mittenzwei[8] and Paul Rilla,[9] he is a satirical judge of his time, a perceptive critic of the bourgeoisie.

More recently Rhys W. Williams has concluded that Sternheim's satirical comedies have the purpose of acknowledging man's materialistic drives and intuition as healthy individual manifestations and of destroying comfortable clichés and current ideologies.[10] For H. Reiss Sternheim's pre-1914 comedies are neither satires nor do they glorify bourgeois heroism, remaining essentially ambiguous.[11]

The disagreement about Sternheim's work can also be seen in the different ways critics have understood his treatment of character. If Emrich, for example, points out that his characters are not low, despicable creatures, but people who simply try to assert or free themselves, others like Ludwig Marcuse see them as 'Über-Bürger':

Der Über-Bürger ist eine Entwicklungsphase, eine wertvollere Entwicklungsphase des Typus Bürger, fanatisch gewordener, besessener Büger: keine Erledigung des Bürgers. Sternheim ist kein Satiriker des Bürgertums von einem außerbürgerlichen Pathos her; sondern selbst pathetisch Bürger, Feind nur des unpathetischen, sterilen Bourgeois.[12]

Colette Dimič considers them satirical-grotesque because of the exaggeration of their petit-bourgeois vices and characteristics,[13] Karasek interprets them as projections of negative properties (Karasek, pp. 22–27), and Bernhard Diebold finds no soul in them.[14] Karl Viëtor refers openly to the ambivalence of their nature:

Die Menschen Sternheims sind grauenhaft. . . Aber sie sind was sie sind, so ganz, so saftig und kraftvoll, daß ihr Schöpfer am Ende selbst von ihnen hingerissen scheint. Jeder Schluß einer Sternheimischen Komödie wird zur Apotheose des Opfers. Die Maskes und Schippels imponieren dem Autor irgendwie. Merkt er es nicht?[15]

More elucidating is Rhys Williams's discovery that Sternheim (who thought of himself as the Molière of his time) is particularly fascinated by two of Molière's characters, Dandin and Alceste, because in rejecting the values of their societies they prove the importance of their individual needs. Significant for Sternheim is social and not moral virtue (Williams, pp. 1032 f.).

We shall try to show that, in fact, Sternheim's characters are first of all satirical and programmatic: that is to say, they are criticized and mocked but only to enlighten the burgher about the ways of succeeding in life. This, we shall see, is the reason why they appear grouped into two distinct categories: the hero who fulfils his ambitions, and the others — caricatures of the burgher — who fail and act as a warning to the audience and sometimes to the hero. This is also the reason for their being drawn as profile-types. The author concentrates on their social career, exploring it as a range of possibilities and creating, as a result, a map of necessary stages in the burgher's path to triumph. Important is the process by which he attains his goal. Secondly, the burgher is confronted with members of other social classes — the aristocracy and the working class. Since they merely serve him in the fulfilment of his aspirations, we may conclude that their purpose is to establish his superiority. Finally, Sternheim goes so far as to reduce the revolutionary, real enough in his time, to an inconsequent rebel, a mere caricature and pseudo-revolutionary, inviting thus a comparison between ideologies that inevitably leaves the bourgeois standpoint — that of wealth, security and order — on a higher and apparently more realistic level. These, then, are the conclusions we must ultimately draw unless we wish to believe that Sternheim was a cynic in relation to every class and every ideology. If he were the latter, how are we to explain his exclusive involvement with the bourgeoisie? And why does the humour in his comedies go only half-way, mocking but also applauding? It therefore seems probable that, in spite of the insecurity and decline of the Wilhelmine middle class but also because of it, Sternheim felt that he had to revive the burgher, covering up his mediocrity with a fanatical determination to attain wealth and social recognition. This, then, was Sternheim's subjective answer to the uncertainties of the new century. The perspective is still that of the *bürgerliches Trauerspiel* of the *Aufklärung* — the burgher with his values and aspirations. But Sternheim reverses the ethical content. The result is a shock in the reader or spectator who, according to convention, expects to see Sternheim's heroes condemned and not glorified.

Nor is it correct to deny that there is any human substratum beneath the *Eindeutigkeit* of Sternheim's characters. For his profile of the burgher, although linear, is drawn in such a way as not to exclude a diversity of human aspects, but

rather to absorb them into the prevailing facet of the character's personality, while conveying an impression of individual freedom. So in *Der Snob*, *Tabula Rasa*, and *Die Kassette*, for example, bonds between parents and sons, husband and wife, lovers and friends, are shown to be extinguished by the material greed of the protagonists. From this fusion their intensity and hysteria are derived.

To summarize: Sternheim seems to redirect the function of satire in such a way that, instead of an attack against, it constitutes a corrective of the bourgeois; it exercises him, not in moral virtue, but in the manner (however ruthless) which he should adopt in order to attain power and prestige. This both accounts for the shocking novelty of his comedies, and also explains why he was unwilling to have his work labelled as 'satire' in a traditional sense:

> Ich entfachte zu keiner Erziehung; im Gegenteil warnte ich vor Kritik göttlicher Welt durch den Bürger und machte ihm Mut zu seinen sogenannten Lastern, mit denen er Erfolge errang, und riet ihm, meiner Verantwortung bewußt, Begriffe, die einseitig nach sittlichem Verdienst messen, als unerheblich und lebensschwächend endlich aus seiner Terminologie zu entfernen . . . Auch müsse er fürchten, es käme ihm sonst noch der Proletarier zuvor, der mit Metaphysik und allem Eidos schon kräftig tabula rasa zu machen sich anschickte, nachdem der Adel schon seit Menschenaltern vernünftig und politisch lebe.[16]

Die Hose

Theobald Maske, the hero of this play (1911), is the type of the ambitious, lower-middle class, white-collar worker, who is well aware of his place in the social hierarchy. He uses his conformism as a sort of headquarters from which he cunningly and patiently fights his way up to a more comfortable life.

The action of the play depends on a humorous incident — his wife's drawers fall down on the street on the occasion of the royal procession. The occurrence puts him under strain and anxiety as he fears for his respectability. The play opens with him angrily reproaching Luise, his wife, for having an appearance that does not fit her social position. The comicality of the situation is further expanded when two men, Sacarron and Mandelstam, attracted by Luise's charm on that fatal occasion, rent the two available rooms in their house, thus bringing the events of the day to a profitable outcome. Afterwards, the plot is developed along crossed lines of intrigue between the characters: between Luise and her tenants against Maske, between Luise and Sacarron against Mandelstam, between Luise and Fräulein Deuter — the neighbour — against Maske, between Maske and Fräulein Deuter against Luise. Such an intricate web of interests is then dismantled by Maske's skilful manoeuvre which throws his competitors off balance; and, while his wife gives in, resigned to her domestic role, he wins Fräulein Deuter as a lover.

Maske's 'philosophy of life' can be reduced to a predominant aspiration: to attain stability. For this purpose he makes a careful assessment of his possibilities

within the establishment, concluding that it is advantageous for him to keep well within the silent majority, away from the front line of battle. There, unnoticed, he can build up a comfortable, respectable, and free life:

Meine Freiheit ist mir verloren, achtet die Welt auf mich in besonderer Weise. Meine Unscheinbarkeit ist die Tarnkappe, unter der ich meinen Neigungen, meiner innersten Natur frönen darf.[17]

The modesty and anonymity of his social position serve him, then, as a façade to protect the realization of his 'innerste Natur' or what Sternheim calls 'eigene Nuance'. Obedient and respectful to those above him, efficient and responsible in his job, he is safe to manipulate for his own purposes those who are dependent on him, like his wife, his tenants, and Fräulein Deuter.

To succeed, he must use devices and put on appearances according to the circumstances. In relation to his wife, for example, he welcomed her romantic fantasy and her coquetry before marriage. Now that she is Frau Maske, he demands from her the respectable behaviour of the married woman of his class, regardless of any temperamental inclinations she may have. When Mandelstam wants to rent the room, Maske pretends that it is his wife who decides on matters concerning the house (*Die Hose*, p. 52). In fact, it is soon revealed to us that she can only go along with what he decides. This is what we hear in the privacy of their four walls, when Luise shows reluctance to take Mandelstam into the house:

Eine Krankheit hat er ohne weiteres nicht, ist marode, schwächlich, mark- und saftlos vom Leben in Herbergen und bei Hungerleidern. Das gibt sich wieder. Im übrigen, meine gute Luise, verhältst du dich heut und die nächsten Tage noch still und bleibst mit deinem Maulwerk fort, sonst haue ich dir den Hintern so gründlich voll, daß dir die Sprache für eine Zeit überhaupt vergeht. Danke Gott, blieb deine heutige Schlamperei anscheinend ohne üble Folgen. Hoffentlich ist dir mit voller Deutlichkeit bewußt geworden, wie tief du im Glück sitzt. (*Die Hose*, p. 59)

During the discussion that brings together the two tenants, Maske, ignoring their insulting remarks about him, is happy to offer them a drink, since it is the reconciliation of the two tenants that interests him most, as a guarantee that business will proceed to his advantage (*Die Hose*, pp. 84 f.)

But above all, and together with other properties such as self-reliance and ambition, he must control his impulses. If Wedekind postulated a release of the sexual instinct in order to strike against middle-class morality and chose a woman, Lulu, to incarnate the innocent libido, Sternheim, concerned as he is to preserve the system, disciplines the burgher so as not to endanger the latter's career. Pleasures have to be earned and waited for. Only when he feels economically safe does Maske decide to have an affair with his neighbour. But even then, he is careful to establish the limits of their adventure (*Die Hose*, p. 124).

Home, the sanctuary of the bourgeois family, the private sphere of middle-class moral virtue, was contrasted by writers of the *Aufklärung* for critical purposes with the public and corrupt sphere of the court (see Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*). In Sternheim's plays it becomes a strategical fortress from which the petit-bourgeois fights his daily battles. Home means for Sternheim's hero the cosiness and harmony of a Biedermeier decor as we find it described in *Bürger Schippel*, the submissiveness and dependence of an attractive wife, the routine of daily domesticity and a good table. As we shall see, it is from such a pattern of daily living that the cashier in Kaiser's play *Von morgens bis mitternachts* runs away, in a symbolical gesture typical of so many Expressionist plays, expressing a clear revolt against the dull, mechanical uniformity of petit-bourgeois existence. Sternheim's characters; however, derive from it a tremendous sense of security and an immense pleasure.

Maske actually conditions his beautiful and dreamy wife to believe in the safety of their home by reading to her from a newspaper, with apparent revulsion, the story of the sea-serpent. Sternheim is quoting here one of Honoré Daumier's print series (No. 20), entitled *Les Bons Bourgeois*, a satire of people's gullibility (Daumier's burghers seated around the home hearth, in Biedermeier fashion, appear shocked as the husband reads to the wife the news of a serpent seen in the Indian Seas). According to Rhys Williams the story had been a stock joke on the German stage as early as 1853 with Gustav Freytag's comedy *Die Journalisten* and then in 1901 with Hauptmann's *Der rote Hahn*.[18] But as A. Margaret Rose explains, Sternheim is not showing Maske's gullibility as it would be expected in a traditional satire, but the image of falsity in the thinking of the bourgeoisie which Maske at once represents and, because of his success, overcomes.[19]

Maske succeeds so effectively because of caution and pretence (the mask, as his name metaphorically suggests), but also because of the nature of his opponents; they are caricatures of the romantic lover and the idealist, and their culture, of which they are so proud, consists of a stock of empty formulae which they constantly use only to outdo each other socially (*Die Hose*, pp. 90 f.).

Sternheim is sure to clinch the moral and intellectual superiority of his hero by confronting him with these two pedants, so ridiculous in their unsuccessful pretentions that it is difficult, even for Maske, to take them more seriously than we do. It is precisely in contrast to the hypochrondriacal coiffeur and to the second-rate Don Juan, who are caricatures of the idealist, that the petit-bourgeois Maske shines, and his pragmatic deviousness impresses us for a moment like a kind of wisdom (see Sandig, p. 212).

Furthermore, Sternheim provides him with a wife who is the reverse of Ibsen's Nora. She offers no resistance to her situation, and although like Nora, she would like to liberate herself, she remains unaware of the implications of her domestic situation, escaping into romantic fantasies of the kind she has

about Sacarron, which merely increase her frustration, finally making her resign to her role as Maske's wife.

But Sternheim's sympathetic presentation of Maske on the basis of his self-confidence, shrewdness, and final triumph cannot be morally condoned, although we have to agree that he is more acceptable to our sensibility than the other two male characters. His anxiety to survive comfortably in the rat-race without running risks hinders him from ever daring to move beyond the egotistic, narrow, pragmatic level on which he functions. Consequently, Sternheim's consideration of his hero as someone who 'aus gesellschaftlichen und zufälligen Zwängen sich gegen Widerstände immer mehr in seines Charakters persönliche Freiheit, seine eigene unvergleichliche Seinsweise hineinspielte'[20] make little sense in the light of his permanent need for security. Maske responds to the human community in two basic ways: in an uncritical submission to those above him, and in the control and exploitation of those dependent on him. The latter finds its illustration in the recollections of his own son Christian:

> Ich habe dich von jeher in Erinnerung, wie du im Haus vierfünftel des Platzes einnahmst, jeder Gedanke um dich kreiste. Schon auf dem Gymnasium erhielt ich mich durch Stundengeben, mein Studium und ferneres Leben bezahlte ich selbst.
>
> Wer einen siebzehnjährigen Sohn zwang, das Mittagsmahl in Gegenwart des Vaters stehend einzunehmen . . . [etc.][21]

His constant calculations, his role-playing, his 'Tarnkappe' are the very index of a society that encourages the loss of sincerity and the use of devious methods. His wife's silence, at the end of the comedy, furnishes the last commentary on the life of this couple, in which the birth of a child is planned like the purchase of a commodity.

By giving Maske a privileged position in the plot of this play and by crediting him with the glamour of a hero, Sternheim is postulating a programme, in this case for the lower middle classes, that still captures the illusion of their taking a grip on the forces of history. Not long before, Thomas Mann had portrayed in his novel *Buddenbrooks* (1901) the crisis and decline of the bourgeois order, in the short span between 1835 and 1877. Thirty years later, when the old Europe had changed its face, Arthur Miller was still showing, in his *Death of a Salesman*, the hollowness of such pretensions, in which external success reflects only internal failures. For the moment, an isolated Sternheim still clings to a crumbling middle-class golden dream.

Der Snob

If Theobald Maske's ability to benefit from adverse circumstances is accidentally revealed, Christian Maske, his son, whose existence is also devoted to success, is shown in this play (1914) climbing the ladder of the class hierarchy by consciously remaking his image.

Among those without property, status must be won anew by each generation. Christian Maske is the self-made man whose success rests on a complete lack of moral consciousness. He is possessed by a single impulse, an obsessive drive for power that appears to be almost pathological.

Having laboured 'wie ein Neger', Christian is about to become the managing director of a mining company in Africa, in which he owns a fifth of the shares. However, in order to advance himself in life, he must, in his opinion, get rid of his past: 'Heut ist Abrechnung. Kein Fehler in der Addition und im Kalkül!' (*Der Snob*, p. 142). This is the decision that concludes the exposition of the play and sets the plot in motion as Christian decides to buy his independence, first from the woman who helped to make him and of whom he himself says:

Du hobst mich aus tiefstem Elend, lehrtest mich Kleider anständig tragen, gabst mir, soweit es in deiner Macht stand, Umgangsformen. (*Der Snob*, p. 141)

— and then from his parents, whose modesty embarrasses him. He sends them, therefore, to Switzerland after paying them the expenses of his upbringing, which he had noted down to the very last penny. His behaviour could be seen as a parody of a typical Expressionist dramatic situation where the radical son violently rejects his background, runs away, or kills the father who represents the bourgeois order (see Hasenclever's *Der Sohn* (1914), Sorge's *Der Bettler* (1911)), or as a trivialized counterpart to that pungent letter Kafka would write to his father in 1917. When his father objects to his attitude, Christian has only this to say:

Spürst du nicht, dieser Ton ist machtvolleren Dingen gegenüber eindruckslos? Kommt schon die Stunde, wo wir, einzelnes erläuternd, bequem davon reden können. Jetzt geht's Schlag auf Schlag. Zweitausendvierhundert Franken kommen von mir aus jährlich zu deinen Einkünften. In drei Wochen seid ihr übersiedelt. Hurtig, Vater, mir brennt's in den Eingeweiden. Der Kampf um die sichtbare Stelle im Leben ist gewaltig, der Menschen unzählige. Wo ich einen Fußbreit auslasse, drängt eine Legion den Schritt ein. (*Der Snob*, p. 159)

He uses money not only to camouflage his past, but also to buy his way into the aristocracy. However, the nobility takes pride in a tradition of style that is almost as important as money. Consequently, Maske has to remould his personality in order to display an appearance that does not argue with its decor or betray his social origin. He teaches himself the proper manners of the aristocrat and takes such pains in trying to be impeccable in everything he does and says that it takes him hours to reply to a letter from the Count only because he cannot find the style which will convey the character he is trying to impersonate and which will impress the Count:

'Verehrter Graf Palen, die Einladung zum 26.d. Monats nehme ich mit ergebenem Dank an'. Ergebener Dank? Wollen sehen. 'Empfehlungen an die Kontesse'. Zu familiär. Teils zu ergeben, teils zu vertraut. Vor allem darf er nicht merken, wie

gern ich komme. Das Papier ist falsch. Besser Bogen mit Firmenkopf: Sekretariat der Monambominen. 'Sehr verehrter Graf von Palen'. Wie das eingeschobene 'von' distanziert! Die Sache muß als erste schriftliche Äußerung meinerseits in diesen Kreis hinein tadellos korrekt und doch bedeutend sein. Wie schreibt er selbst? 'Lieber Herr Maske, wollen Sie am 26. mit uns zu Abend essen, en tout petit comité? Der Ihre'. Auf schlichtem billigen Papier. Das hat Ton freundschaftlich oberflächlicher Vertrautheit. 'Abend essen' ist himmlisch! Bleiben wir um einen Grad förmlicher, aber so, daß immerhin — ich möchte eine lateinische Vokabel einstreuen, die den Tenor männlich macht.

Wie wird man mit vier, fünf Silben solchen Gehirnen einen Augenblick wichtig? Das ist eine Preisfrage, aber sie muß gelöst werden. Einen Fünfsilber mit viel Vokalen und rollendem Takt für den Anfang. (*Er geht durchs Zimmer*).

Dúm da da dúm da. Unaufgefórdert. Die zweite Silbe ist für mein Ohr länger als die erste. Falscher Takt. — Pränumerando — das ist's im Ton, gibt aber natürlich keinen Sinn. Dúm da da dúm da. Ich muß es finden. (*Der Snob*, p. 146.)

Sternheim is here clearly ridiculing Christian Maske's snobbery. But however ridiculous he may appear to us in his strenuous efforts to appear faultless, he actually impresses the Count by the excellency of his manners on all occasions. Even if the parody is extended to the aristocracy, our criticism of Maske loses impact because we are led to acknowledge his success.

Appearance, since money is no problem, is the main preoccupation in Maske's life. For its sake he casts off sentiments and family bonds without the slightest regret. So obsessed is he with the impression he may make on high society that, when his marriage with the Count's daughter, Marianne, is completely settled, he does not any longer hesitate to call his parents back, as he now thinks that they may help to project an image of himself as the prodigious child who was capable of surmounting the limitations of his birth. Another obvious example of his use of mask is when he learns of his mother's death from his father. He leaves the room immediately to return, without showing any grief, dressed in black. Image becomes a substitute for his lack of feeling. The moment is rather grotesque, particularly as he soon intends to exhibit, in a public monument, a filial dedication which he never had:

Ich werde mit dem Architekten, einem Bildhauer wegen des würdigen Grabmals gleich mich ins Vernehmen setzen. Niemandem kann ich anvertrauen, wie ich an ihr gehangen. Vielleicht findet der Künstler den Ausdruck dafür. (*Der Snob*, p. 184)

We can, although rarely, trace vestiges of authenticity in this character, but only when he fears being unmasked, as when the Count appears unexpectedly and finds him with his father, who has just arrived from Switzerland. Having had no time to improve his father's appearance, Christian is then in a panic and loses control of the situation. As the Count takes the old Maske for a drink, his thoughts run wild:

Was war das plötzlich fur ein Ton von ihm? Habe ich einen Fehler gemacht? (*Am Fenster*).

Er läßt ihn vor sich in den Wagen steigen? Welch umständliche Höflichkeit. — Ich habe einen Fehler gemacht! Meine Hilflosigkeit, meine Verlegenheit um ihn hat er bemerkt. Bin ich rot, blaß?
(*Er läuft zum Spiegel*).
Ich zittre ja wie Espenlaub!
(*Er springt auf einen Stuhl am Fenster*).
Er offeriert ihm eine Zigarre. Beide lachen übers ganze Gesicht. Worüber? Über mich? Herrgott, einen furchtbaren Fehler habe ich gemacht! Wollte ich nicht auftrumpfen, habe ich vor fünf Minuten hier nicht geschworen, mich mit ihm brüsten, rühmen zu wollen? Hatte ich doch den einzig richtigen Instinkt. Und nun wird er es Marianne, wird es der ganzen Familie klatschen, ich wollte meinen Vater verleugnen. Kann er nicht behaupten, ich hätte ihn ehemals totgesagt? Das leugne ich ihm aber brüsk ins Gesicht ab. Gegenmaßregeln! Schnell! Was? (*Der Snob*, p. 192)

But even if he fails to understand the Count's motives for being so amicable towards his father and has therefore a moment of panic, he quickly recovers and uses the unexpected encounter to his advantage, as he realizes that his father's robust personality will only add mystery to his own image.

This episode pierces through Maske's façade and reveals a very frightened man. But it also shows that the more insecure he feels, the greater is his need to hide behind false pretences, a quality common to all Sternheim's heroes. His life becomes more and more a masquerade, where his self vanishes under layers of deceit. On the wedding night, for example, aloof to the Baroness's charm, he is restless because he is unsure of his acceptance by the aristocrats; in a state of suspicion and irritability, he interprets the conversation between Marianne and her maid as an intrigue against him. It is his father who, stirred by the wine, comes in and restores his confidence, reassuring him of their success with the nobility. Exuding confidence and flair again, Christian Maske re-enters the game to exploit it to its utmost potentiality. He gives Marianne an account of his immense economic power, conferring on himself the epithet 'genialer Mensch', which, in his opinion, is a result of his breed. When the maid mentions the family jewels which Marianne wore at her wedding, Christian, feeling again less important, gives an aura of mystery to his mother, telling his wife that she was painted by Renoir and giving a totally different account of the episode of Luise's drawers. The story is so stylized that Marianne's commentary is: 'Du hast die Gabe, Menschen plastisch zu machen' (*Der Snob*, p. 211). Enthusiastic over with Marianne's astonishment, and forgetting altogether his previous praise of his humble family background, he then goes as far as to invent a final story in which he becomes the illegitimate son of a viscount. He does finally put himself on the same social level as his wife, and as he had intuitively perceived, this last revelation demolishes the Baroness's prejudices:

Und mir ist, als ob doch eine letzte Wand zwischen uns niederfällt, als ob erst jetzt ich ungehemmt in dich versänke. (*Der Snob*, p. 214)

But behind Maske's triumph Sternheim is also disclosing a symptom of the familiar 'feudalization of the middle class'[22] in Wilhelmine Germany, although the author's point of view remains bourgeois.

In this profile Sternheim conveys two sides of his character, the frightened petit bourgeois, and the brilliant, successful snob. We could ask whether he combines these two facets of the character because he actually wants to uproot him, or whether he is simply alerting the audience to the possible hazards that may creep into the bourgeois's path to triumph. The latter interpretation seems more plausible, because what we see here is panic not as a paralysing agent, or as a means of breakthrough to a more conscientious view on life, but as a source of further ruthless action which will, in the end, guarantee his triumph. Once again we are told that the bourgeois is not only capable of overcoming the risk but of beating the system itself. Besides, just as in *Die Hose*, the main character is portrayed in a number of situations where he is confronted with other characters who are by no means morally superior to him. The Count, for example, is only interested in Maske's money. He actually resents his intrusion into the family (*Der Snob*, p. 173). And Marianne, although claiming to love him, can discard class prejudice only when he lies about his origin. We would in any case be missing the point if we were to argue, as Paulsen does, that Sternheim is in favour of the aristocracy.[23] He seems to admire their life-style, but what really interests him is the decline of the nobility because it provides an excellent opportunity for the burgher to display his skills at grabbing the habits and mannerisms of a class that for so many centuries was the bearer of culture and good taste.

Sybil is perhaps the only figure who could function as Maske's alter ego if Sternheim had not left her too much in the background and without emotional force. There are one or two occasions when she functions as a corrective to Maske, particularly when she reproaches him for wanting to buy his parents' silence:

> Dein Vater, deine Mutter sind nicht Luxusgegenstände. Liebst du sie wirklich, treibe den Kult im Kämmerlein. Doch opfere sie nicht der Eitelkeit, daß bei dir alles sein muß, wie der gute Ton es vorschreibt. Du willst die Gräfin heiraten. Tu's. Aber gib ihr mit deinen Eltern kein Gleichnis, aus dem sie dich beurteilen kann. Bleib ihr fremd und geheimnisvoll. Du hast so viel, was keiner außer dir besitzt, du mußt nicht auch noch Eltern haben. (*Der Snob*, p. 181)

But on the whole she is a peripheral character. We could indeed say that she might have offered much more to the play than what is actually demanded of her, had Sternheim developed her as a foil to Maske. She would then have qualified Sternheim's standpoint as anti-bourgeois. But flat as she is, her reproach of Maske loses weight in face of his success, which is complete and defies any sense of morality, forcing us to agree with Diebold when he says of Sternheim: 'Durch sein Nicht-ethisch-sein-Wollen versagt er sich den Rang eines Satirikers' (*Diebold*, p. 115).

1913

In this play (1915) Sternheim follows the destiny of the Maske family further. The main character is still Christian Maske, now an old monopolist with three grown-up children. But the picture we are offered differs greatly from that of the snob. Still retaining the furious energy that made him a rich man, but also weakened by old age and by the impact of the war, Christian Maske takes less cover in dissimulation, and resorts instead to strategy. Although the play deals essentially with Maske's struggle to hold on to power, it also treats the role of the industrialist in the pre-war years. Sternheim was against World War I. Together with Franz Werfel, Heinrich Mann, Leonhard Frank, and René Schickele, he writes for the pacifist journal *Die Weißen Blätter*, founded in Zurich in 1914. In this play, he projects his pacifist view into the attitude of the main character. But in so doing, he is somehow damaging the work's coherence since the hero is not only obsessively bent on power but also lacks every human quality.

The action revolves around the struggle for control of the family firm between father and daughter. Having made a deal with the Dutch Government for the production of arms, Sofie, a very ambitious and ruthless woman, threatens to oust her father, Christian Maske, from the position of supremacy in the family business while he is in bed recovering from an illness. When he learns about it, he feels betrayed and tries to engage his other two children in the conflict against Sofie. But in vain: Philipp Ernst, an effete dandy who lives only for pleasure and luxury, remains quite aloof to the alarm of his father. On the other hand, Ottilie, whom Maske tries to win with flattery and seduction,[24] is too busy weaving a romance with Wilhelm, her father's secretary and a pseudo-socialist.

The antagonism towards Sofie, which Maske tries to spread in the family, is of no effect, although he does not give up, driven as he is by the determination to destroy her grip on him. Yet, despite what the play may appear to convey, he is not fighting for pacifism, nor is he sincere when he speaks against a consumer society, justifying the right to strike:

> Weil ihm der Dreck über denselben Leisten, den wir ihm aufhängen, endlich zum Hals heraushängt, weil er vielleicht wieder einmal Anständiges in der Hand haben will. Weil der massenweise Verschleiß aller Lebensutensilien ihn erzogen hat, auf das einzelne nicht mehr zu achten, und er Gefühle, Urteile und sich selbst hinwirft und verbraucht wie das übrige und ihnen keine Qualität mehr geben kann. Weil ihn das endlich in tiefster Seele ekelt. Oft habe ich euch gesagt, laßt neben dem rastlosen Nachdenken, wie man von dem gleichen Artikel in derselben Zeit das Doppelte und Vielfache herstellen kann, in allen Betrieben, Laboratorien darüber arbeiten, wie gleichzeitig Materie verbessert würde. (*1913*, p. 284)

His daughter's criticism points to his incoherence when she replies that he cannot operate in accordance with two contradictory principles — unscrupulous capitalist economy and selective production:

Solche Gedanken finde ich im Gegenteil ganz neu an dir; vielleicht schon die Früchte der Kreyschen Lehrsätze und erste Angstzustände. Wer hat Kapitalien gehäuft, monopolisiert und unablässig fusioniert? Wer hat immer neue Millionen aus der Vorstellung gestampft, die jetzt verzinst werden sollen? Womit um Gotteswillen? Unsere Generation hat den Industriestaat fertig von euch übernommen und lehnt für seine Basis alle Verantwortlichkeit weit von sich ab. Jedes Rezept habt ihr uns und das Hauptbestandteil aller Rezepte übermacht: Skrupellosigkeit. Wir gründen wie ihr, weit vorsichtiger und geschäftskundiger sogar, ohne freilich irgendwie sehen zu können, wohin das alles geht. (*1913*, p. 285)

It is clear that Sternheim is introducing into his play a dialogue about the course of German history, and particularly German industry, but it is by no means the axis of the play. It stands as a side issue and fails to merge with the characters' motives. In Kaiser's *Gas* plays, such a theme is presented in its widest implications, emerging as a debate about capitalism versus socialism, around which a vast panorama of social forces and interests is then created. But in *1913* the question is debated by two members of the bourgeoisie who have basically the same interests, even if they appear to have different views. Christian Maske envelops his intentions in a moralistic veil — the mask that deceives no one and least of all his daughter, who resembles him too much not to understand that what he really longs for is to put a brake on her ambition, and resume his supremacy over the firm. There is plenty of evidence to substantiate this interpretation. To Ottilie he says:

Mit allen Hunden ist sie gehetzt. Was hat sie in kurzen Wochen meiner Krankheit, in meiner Stellvertretung für sich ausgerichtet! Von der Morgenröte an läßt sie Telegraphendrähte nicht kalt werden. Dieses Weib denkt in Entladungen, jeder Federstrich ist ein Puls in ihr Konto. Ein Tag Abwesenheit kostet mich Prestige, Macht, Vermögen. (*1913*, p. 226)

And to Wilhelm he admits:

Für die Welt bleibt's ein Erfolg, der ihre. Ich brenne, ihr Dessin zu kennen, versichere Sie, sie hat einen Saltomortale gesprungen, mich in den Schatten zu drängen. (*1913*, p. 231)

We are observers of a pitiless and ruthless struggle for power.

The moment when he enthusiastically declares to his secretary that he would be willing to serve the communist revolution (p. 252) can only be understood, if we insist on looking for psychological coherence, as the hallucination of a mind fanatically bent on the destruction of its opponent. The fever of a future victory makes him forget for the time being that, like his daughter, he too would be on the opposite side of the revolution.

As his bond with his children does not produce results, and the socialist revolution draws no nearer, Maske is then left on his own to face Sofie. Just as she hastily converted herself to Protestantism to sell arms, so Christian Maske enters the Catholic Church in order to undermine her plans. This is the card

that he so triumphantly lays on the table. But by then the emotional turmoil of days of anxiety and hate choke him, and he dies a sudden death.

The scene of Maske's death is grotesquely sinister and has symbolical dimensions that once again give the play an historical framework. After his argument with Sofie, she runs away, frightened by his wrath. Shouting furiously, he runs after her. In the next room he meets Wilhelm who, on his way out to organize the revolution, has found a trunk with luxurious English clothes that, shortly before, Ottilie, Philipp, and one of their friends had been trying on, and has dressed himself in them. The old man doesn't notice the change and also mistakes Ottilie for Sofie who comes in at this moment. The macabre quality of this scene lies not just in Maske's death but also in the unmasking of Wilhelm. Both the pacifist (Maske) and the socialist (Wilhelm) — let us so call them for the sake of argument — perish, one at the hands of history, with Sofie the symbol of monopolist and plutocratic capitalism, and the other by himself. Thus, the finale swerves away from the bourgeois play to touch on a much wider theme. Yet, as we have said before, the personification of ideological trends around a socio-political issue is not enough to liberate the play from its basic bourgeois domestic plight, since the protagonists' motivation is still that of Theobald Maske or the Snob, and the intrigue itself remains strictly locked inside a bourgeois family. Let us therefore try to understand the reasons that made Sternheim, at the risk of being incoherent, mingle these two different spheres in this play. In an essay called *Das gerettete Bürgertum* he points out:

> Sieben Komödien schrieb ich von 1908–1913. Die letzte, die des Vorkriegsjahres Namen trägt, zeigte, wohin in aller Einfalt des Bürgers Handel gediehen war. Vom Dichter gab es nichts, nur noch von Wirklichkeit hinzuzusetzen. Trotz vielfach öffentlicher Darstellung und Verbreitung durch Druck hatte niemand gemerkt, wohin mit meinem Werk mein Wille ging.[25]

There is no doubt that *1913* casts light on the role of the industrial bourgeoisie in the period just before the outbreak of the war. Sternheim looks at it critically. The Maske family and in particular Sofie, the younger generation, is an object of satire: it represents those magnates who, for profit, fed the war machine. What Sternheim seems to ignore is that they were made of that aggressive individualism, typical of all his heroes, which turned them into 'the nearest counterpart to the grimly sardonic drawings of George Grosz'.[26] After all, *1913* is part of a trilogy and must be analysed in its overall context. Consequently, even when he speaks through Maske against war industrialists, Sternheim fails to develop an historical and ideological argument with profoundity. On the contrary, by simply unmasking Wilhelm as a false revolutionary, by dismantling Maske's pretence as a socialist, and by allowing the intrigue to turn into a struggle between father and daughter for personal power, he is avoiding a critique that could go all the way to the foundations of bourgeois

ideology, falling thus in a deadlock that might be mistaken for a non-ideological commitment (in Emrich's terms).

It should nevertheless be clear by now that Sternheim's vision of history is pessimistic. Of course the war was shaking Europe's economic, social and political structures, dispersing artists and intellectuals, destroying the concept of international socialism, and displacing the individual in favour of the masses. It is not surprising that Sternheim's faith in progress, in bourgeois freedom and liberal enterprise was being shattered. Such apprehension is also evident in the flight of Carl Wundt (the hero of his novel *Europa*) to the East Indies from a moribund old world, a flight undertaken in the hope of rescuing the remnants of his individuality (hardly related to the myth of the Expressionists' 'New Man', symbol of a desire for radical social change and brotherhood), according to that particular conception of individualism which Meinhard Winkgens called 'private mythology'.[27]

Bürger Schippel

We saw how Wilhelm — an apostle of working-class revolution — ends up in *1913* dressed as a dandy in fine English clothes, thus betraying his hidden bourgeois aspirations. In *Bürger Schippel* and *Tabula Rasa* Sternheim gives us an image of the worker as a frustrated bourgeois with the sole ambition to belong to the middle class. This insistence on considering every social class from a bourgeois angle is typical of Sternheim. The working class as a threat to bourgeois stability had found its way into social drama with Hauptmann's *Die Weber* (1892) and was later to reassert itself in Toller's *Masse-Mensch* (1920) and *Die Maschinenstürmer* (1922). Against this tendency, Sternheim's workers are all busy trying to escape from their origins into the bourgeois world of money and appearances, snatching every opportunity for that purpose. This is the reason why they are shown only in the process of becoming bourgeois. It seems, therefore, that Sternheim regarded the bourgeoisie, in spite of its shortcomings, as the safest social class. So the burgher remains the model, the foil to the worker. Only when the worker acquires the burgher's shrewdness and skills is he then presented on the heroic level like Schippel, in the end, and Ständer in *Tabula Rasa*.

In *Bürger Schippel* (1912), the most successful of all Sternheim's comedies, two threads of plot are woven together by a special event — an annual song contest. In each of them the author confronts figures from different social strata: Schippel, proletarian and bastard, is called in reluctantly, indeed summoned, by three petit bourgeois characters — Hicketier, Wolke, and Krey —to substitute for the tenor of their quartet who has just died; and under cover of the alarm and confusion that Schippel's presence brings to the quartet, Thekla, Hicketier's sister, indifferent to the moral and social conventions of her society and more particularly of her social rank, indulges in a romance with

the prince. Thus, while the antagonism between Schippel and the bourgeoisie generates the comic tension of the play, the affair between Thekla and the prince provides peripheral relief from which the comedy draws a critical perspective.

The problem is that we cannot accept such a perspective without objection. Sternheim revives a liberal-provincial atmosphere but gives it a twist: a caricature of Hans Sachs, a prince who falls in love with a semi-liberated bourgeois woman, not only creates a brilliant parody of romantic literature but also creates a fanciful intrigue, removed from immediate historical reality, which contrasts with Schippel's realistic envy of the bourgeoisie. The effect is ambivalent: Schippel's coarseness and middle-class aspirations may seem repulsive in relation to Hicketier's class identity and Thekla's intelligence but, since they are related to the harsh facts of his life,[28] they also render Hicketier's stereotyped attitudes more grotesque and the affair between Thekla and the prince more fabulous.

It is, of course, true that, in Hicketier, he draws a caricature of the provincial burgher. But to balance this criticism of the middle-classes, he creates Thekla, who represents the positive image of the bourgeoisie. In contrast Schippel, the proletarian, alone represents those of his condition, and is a continuous object of ridicule. He is not only scoffed at because of the motivation behind his efforts to improve his social status, but above all because of his uncritical aping of middle-class formalities. He is, indeed, the character who gets the roughest side of the author's tongue:

Alle, die aus der Tiefe zur schwindelnden Höhe der Volksverführer inzwischen Angelangten und immer noch Anlangenden, haben ihr Urbild in dem auch heute mentalen Bastard Schippel! Heil![29]

Hicketier, Wolke, and Krey are profiles of provincial philistines still in the comic tradition of nineteenth-century literature. In Hicketier, a well-to-do goldsmith, who, according to his wife, cannot live without symbols (*Bürger Schippel*, p. 471), Sternheim explores the hypocritical compromises that nourish the burgher's protected existence. Dressing his household with sacred symbols to cover up the lack of a genuine life, he is thrust into a state of strain and anxiety by Schippel's demands and by Thekla's commitment to the prince, which all of a sudden threaten to destroy his respectability.

We first meet him in a mood of indignation at having to invite the low-ranked Schippel to join the quartet. The letter he has written turns out to be an order (p. 474), and only after much lamentation and discussion does he accept the need to rewrite it, hiding his humiliation in a sentimental recall of the last wishes of the deceased tenor whom Schippel is meant to replace.

His metaphoric existence reaches hallucinatory moments when, satisfied with himself after a good rehearsal, he indulges in an imaginative reunion with his sister, with whom he had quarrelled hours before because of a love-letter

whose author's name she would not reveal. Looking up at her window he composes:

Ohne Gutenacht, ohne sich noch einmal sehen zu lassen. Das wird nun Tage und Wochen so gehen. Ich war wegen des Briefs zu heftig, zu schnell. Dank des Fürsten für die gestrige Hilfe. Unsere Lieder hat sie mitangehört; sie muß bewegt, im Fluß sein. In ihrem Köpfchen, in der Brust kämpfen Trotz und Liebe. Kind, Kind, schläfst du schon? Aber blitzschnell war ich maßlos um dich besorgt, stockte mir der Atem. Weiß nicht, was es bedeutet. Dringe ich jetzt in das Chaos ihrer Seele, verderbe ich mir alles. Könnte ich in ihrer Nähe nur hören. —
(*Er summt*):
'Hören, hören, was sie will . . .'
Wohlklang aus dieser Proletarierbrust! Nicht rissig, unsicher wie der Pöbel singt, sondern der Welt und aller Zusammenhänge bewußt. Alle guten Geister segnen dich! Dein Bruder, noch immer das Herz zerrissen von Bedenken, wollte nur — versteh mich doch in deinen Träumen. Gute Nacht.
(*Er wirft gegen das Fenster eine Kußhand und geht ins Haus*).
(*Bürger Schippel*, p. 522)

In a passage of this kind, Sternheim's understanding of the burgher's psychology is excellent. Hicketier, in a mood of condescending paternalism, addresses an image of a helpless, sentimental sister who bears no resemblance to Thekla. This exalted sentiment towards his sister runs parallel to his optimism about the quartet winning the contest. So immediate reward following a good action becomes a symptom of the burgher's guilt and need for compensation. And as Thekla is not in her room but in the garden, in the prince's arms, Hicketier's sentimentality disintegrates into parody and caricature.

The basic trait of Hicketier is the ingrained need to be cowed into conventional standards of behaviour. After an unpleasant scene with Schippel, he readmits him to the quartet because he then feels committed to the prince. Later on, he may feel insulted by Schippel's demand for Thekla's hand, but when he discovers her affair with the prince, he is ready to give her to him, as it is a good opportunity to restore his sister's 'honour' while thinking out a way of assimilating Schippel to bourgeois decorum (*Bürger Schippel*, p. 532). When Schippel whispers to Krey, who is at this moment Thekla's fiancé, about her involvement with the prince, Hicketier demands a duel between them, even if it is not favoured by the participants. There is also some wild parody in this scene, as it is Schippel who comes out intact after having slightly injured his opponent, without even realizing what he was doing. Nevertheless, Hicketier immediately feels compelled to acknowledge the symbolic occasion that has granted Schippel the right to become a burgher:

Dieser Tag soll Folgen haben. Das Andenken an das von Ihnen Geleistete darf nicht verloren gehen, und ich setze mich dafür ein, daß Ihnen die höheren Segnungen des Bürgertums voll und ganz zuteil werden. Auf Wiedersehen, lieber Herr Schippel.
(*Er zieht mit Anstand den Hut vor ihm*). (*Bürger Schippel*, pp. 552 f.)

If in Hicketier, Sternheim is caricaturing submission to the world of appearances and formalities, in Wolke and in Krey, satire is carried to absurdity in their cartoon-like appearances and gestures and in the vacuum of their existence which for them is, paradoxically, the guarantee of their security and comfort. By their lack of vitality and purpose these two figures resemble some of the characters who later appear in Ionesco's and Beckett's plays.

Schippel is less stylized than the other characters. He is more deeply motivated and has a flamboyance that is unmistakably his. Nevertheless, he is also made to carry a more general significance as Sternheim's image of working-class aspiration by virtue of his place in the design of the comedy. As a result of a deplorable childhood and uncongenial living conditions, he dreams of middle-class life; he notices only its glamour, as is evident when, in Hicketier's house, he cannot help savouring the pleasures of bourgeois comfort in anticipation of his future:

(*steht mitten im Zimmer, sieht sich nach allen Seiten um*)
Ich wittre mich. Wollust, nach der ich dreißig Jahre gehungert. Nicht länger streune ich in Winde, von einem Tag zum andern wurde ich ein regelrechter Name, bei dem Leute sich etwas einbilden. Der dicke Hicketier dachte gestern bestimmt beim Einschlafen: könnte ich den Schippel!
(*Er geht schleichend herum*).
Plüschmöbel! Eure Herrschaft rechnet mit mir. Ich darf mich in euch auslümmeln.
(*Setzt sich breit in einen Fauteuil*).
So ein Bilderalbum gemütlich ansehn.
(*Er beginnt, in einem Photographiealbum zu blättern*).
Kommt einer, stehe ich auf, sage ganz pomadig: Mahlzeit; ich bin hier recht, wurde gerufen, beinah mit Gewalt herangeschleppt. Brave Herrschaften zusammen, Verwandtschaft, honorig, würdig. Goldene Broschen und Ketten. Dicke Siegelringe. Guten Tag, Herr, gefreut, Ihre Bekanntschaft zu machen: bin hier Kind im Haus, kann tun und lassen, was ich will. Aber Herr Schippel! Ein kleiner Rülpser, Pastorchen. Nach einem guten Essen bei Freunden erlaubt.

(*Bürger Schippel*, p. 503)

When he sees the opportunity to climb the social ladder, he ambitiously attempts to ascend it in one quick go. He demands first that the members of the quartet should greet him in public, and immediately afterwards he asks for Thekla's hand. His craving for status is almost demoniacal. It is indeed extraordinary that Sternheim, in his desire to reveal that the worker's sole ambition is to reach the middle strata of society, moulds his workers with exactly the same behavioural traits as his bourgeois heroes, Theobald and Christian Maske. They are burghers before they know it.

It is then clear that Sternheim imbues this character with resentment against the bourgeoisie, not because the bourgeoisie is the core of a society that depends for its wealth on people like him, but simply because he is not one of them. The moment when he refuses Thekla's hand symbolizes his final

metamorphosis into a bourgeois for, having known that she has been the prince's lover, he does not wish to infringe the bourgeois code of honour.

But although the design of the play and the main character's motivation favour a more general interpretation, Sternheim's purpose does not quite come across, because the character in question is not big enough to carry such a thesis. And for theatrical purposes it is best, perhaps, to regard him as an individual case, as Reinhardt did very successfully in the first production of this comedy on 5 March 1913 in the Deutches Theater in Berlin, as was recorded by Thea Bauer-Sternheim:

> Reinhardt hat den Schippel mit dem unvergeßlichen Abel nicht als klassenbewußten Proletarier gezeigt, wie später Granach ihn gab und so viele andere, sondern in seinem Werdezustand, was der Komödie ein ganz anderes Relief gab. (*Gesamtwerk*, I, 596)

Finally, the character of Thekla rests on a contradiction that once again betrays Sternheim's unproblematical view of the middle class. In her relationship with the prince and with her brother, she appears to be a mature, intelligent person, fully conscious of her social position. However, in the end she bows to her brother's imposition of a hasty marriage to Schippel and then to Krey, neither of whom is worthy of her. The outcome is not in accordance with her character, and we ask ourselves how she can possibly marry such Philistines. She could have resisted her brother, and either remained single or waited for a more suitable partner. However, resistance on her part would probably throw her into conflict with her class and such an outcome would run against the author's intention, because it would entail a more serious critique of middle-class values as well as depriving him of the heroine who, in the play, represents in a superficial manner a positive side of her social group. As it is, we may conclude that Thekla is not a very coherent character and consequently her role, as a foil to Schippel and the other burghers, is less effective.

Tabula Rasa

Ständer, the hero of this play (1916) is a worker who, through cynicism, ensures himself a bourgeois life style and a comfortable retirement.

In relation to Bertha, his maid, he defends the ideal of socialism in order to exploit her. When she asks him for a rise in her salary, he refuses, claiming that she works for him of her own free will and that her salary can only be regarded as a present from him, as if the Utopia of a free society were already a reality.[30] 'Was sollte die Welt denken? Ein Arbeiter, der für sich arbeiten läßt, ein Proletarier, der Sklaven hält!'[31]

Ständer pretends to be concerned about the workers' condition, showing anger to his niece Isolde about the way the working class is so easily contented and distracted from its rights. However, his apparent identification with the

workers has the sole objective of safeguarding his position in the firm. As he fears to see his financial privileges denounced, he summons up Sturm, in his real opinion a trouble-maker, to urge the workers to protest and to take action, hoping that the confusion will divert attention from his case. Meanwhile, as he realizes that Sturm's radical ideas about a total revolution could be too dangerous, and since the ideology of a social democracy, preached by his friend, Artur Flocke, would be too mild for the moment to accommodate his interests, he has no hesitation in setting both Sturm, the radical, and Artur, the 'revisionist' (representative of two tendencies in the SPD of the time) against each other, without anybody realizing it, in order to create the appropriate balance of confusion. When Sturm, unsure of Ständer's intentions, questions him, the latter reassures him about his political belief, with words that mean the opposite of what they say:

Sturm. Mir geht's um mein Evangelium. Steh mir Aug in Auge: Bist dus?!
Ständer (*mit großer Geste*). Bis in den Tod von deiner Rasse. (*Tabula Rasa*, p. 205)

This shows how all the way through he is capable of holding the reins of the action, reacting not only to situations but also creating them (see Mennemeier, p. 118), until his intentions are safely realized despite the various events that at first threatened him.

He not only takes advantage of Flocke's position, which, like his own, is vulnerable, but he also uses the latter's naivety and good faith to deceive and destroy him. Flocke's compliance is important to him, because he needs to engage people in his cause and because such a bond of trust will be very useful at a later stage when he is on the horns of a dilemma. He will be able then, in an apparently generous attitude, to reject his own promotion to managing director (he knows the responsibility would kill him), recommending Flocke for the position instead. He himself, enjoying his image as a bastion of the workers and also of the firm's interests, could not simply refuse the assignment. But having Flocke by him, he can safely withdraw without losing face.

When Sturm accuses him of being responsible for Flocke's collapse, Ständer openly justifies his attitude on the basis of individual freedom: 'Ohne böse Absicht für ihn. Mich im Augenblick zu retten. Er hätte auch ablehnen können, ablehnen müssen' (*Tabula Rasa*, p. 244). The cool cynicism with which Sternheim explores this final situation is offputting, if we consider that the doctor, when predicting Flocke's early death, used similar words, thus lending them authority and reinforcing Ständer's view (p. 236). Furthermore, Flocke's physical collapse is contrasted with a detailed statement of Ständer's good health and potentiality, to which his name, with its obvious sexual connotations, already pointed:

Viel das wissen Sie, kann ich als Arzt nicht feststellen. Stehen Sie als Menschengebäude vor mir, sehe ich deutlich nur die Fassade. Die ist solid.
(*Befühlt ihm den Kopf*).

Auch die Wetterseite, Schieferdachung. Der innere, grobe Mechanismus, Luft — und Heizungsschläuche —
(*Er hat ihm das Instrument auf die Brust gesetzt*).
Tief und ruhig atmen! Teufel — Lungen wie ein Brabanter Ross. Das Herz? Ein Strombagger, Schiffspumpe. Nerven? Das System der Lebensreizempfänger und -verwerter?
(*Er schließt mit den Händen Ständers Augen und öffnet sie wieder*).
Phantastisch jung und sprühend lebendig.
Von da aus werden Sie hundert Jahr. (*Tabula Rasa*, p. 237)

This seems to be a clear instance of Sternheim's insight into how one should look after oneself.

Sternheim's consistent method of contrasting different personalities for satirical purposes, of indirectly placing his heroes on the pedestal of exemplary behaviour, is very evident here. Ständer is a foil to Flocke. However, as in the plays previously analysed, we are not mesmerized. On the contrary: Ständer's triumph rests on his friend's failure and we cannot help feeling slightly sorry for Flocke, because, although he too is corrupt, he is also naive, stupid, and weak, failing to see through Ständer's intentions.

Sternheim does not stop here. At the end of the play he gives us a kind of epilogue, a conversation between Ständer, the realist bourgeois, and Sturm, the idealist revolutionary, which provides his hero (and we can safely say that Ständer's words are valid for all Sternheim's heroes) with an ideological substratum that explains his behaviour:

Wie hoffst du, unübersehbare, auf immer tollere Fruchtbarkeit gestellte Menschheit mit einem Fischzug zu heben aus dem Teich jahrtausendalter Zwangsvorstellungen; wie sie zu erlösen von Begriffen, die durch geschickte Bildung endgültig scheinen? Wie kannst du, die Männer vom Weg ihrer historisch beglaubigten Tugenden, Weiber aus den Schlupfwinkeln der ihnen zugewiesenen Vortrefflichkeiten locken? Wer spült die Milch im Frauenleib rein von den Giftkeimen des nicht Sein–, sondern Scheinenwollens, die, dem Säugling eingeflößt, ihn später zwingt, eine bürgerliche Geltung zu behaupten, der keine menschliche Bedeutung entspricht? Und doch bekennen wir vor unserem Gewissen, wir besseren Menschen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, daß alle geerbte Lehre nicht mehr wirksam ist unter Hundertmillionengruppen, die einzig der Sinn der Selbsterhaltung durch Zusammenschluß noch bewegt. Für den Volksführer aber ist es besonders sündhaft, weiter Ideale zu predigen, die das Gewissen des Einzelnen zur Voraussetzung haben. Geht hin und formt voraussetzungslos die Sittenlehre, in der zum erstenmal die Masse des Volks als das zu hegende Einzelwesen erscheint. (*Tabula Rasa*, p. 246)

Ständer rejects traditional values because they mean falsity, servility, and passivity, and he rejects social and political ideals such as communism because they are illusions, lies fit for the masses. In his opinion, only in selfish individualism can man express his freedom. However, when in the end he claims that the time has come for him to enjoy the secret demands of his nature (p. 247), we cannot but wonder what kind of freedom he can enjoy after having thought

for forty years of the day of his retirement and unscrupulously insured that he would have a good pension and a solid bank account. If Sternheim is saying that Ständer is one of those 'bessere Menschen' whose social awareness has enabled him to surpass the economic limitations of the working class without falling prey to dangerous political involvement, then we have to conclude that the author is either being naive or is simply using the lowest bourgeois terms of reference. Ständer's 'human nature' finds its expression in the kind of material well-being that results from a lifelong ruthless pursuit of egotistical goals. This is the freedom that Maske and Ständer understand and desire, forgetting that the devious ways they resort to mould their personalities, making them obsessively greedy and competitive. There is consequently no point in arguing about a release of the 'self' in Sternheim's heroes; on the contrary, after enduring a somewhat difficult period of struggle, during which they gradually devote themselves to success within the status quo, they then experience the freedom of the animal in the zoo, which, after a period of time, learns to derive the maximum advantage and pleasure from its confined space, and can no longer distinguish its jail from the jungle. In this way, we may understand why the characters experience their individuality only when they are being bourgeois prototypes, mistaking freedom for the capability to manipulate all sorts of circumstances to their advantage.

In the plays considered above, three categories of characters have been distinguished: the first comprises Sternheim's heroes — the petit bourgeois civil servant Theobald Maske, the industrialist Christian Maske, Thekla the liberated bourgeois, and the petit bourgeois worker Ständer. They are a foil to the other characters, exhibiting their weaknesses by contrast. In the second category are included all the other middle-class non-heroes who, through their failure and absurd whimsicality, assert indirectly the value of material achievement and individual, ruthless ambition: they are caricatures of the bourgeois — Sacarron and Mandelstam, dandies of rhetorical culture with no basis in reality; Flocke, who fails to grapple with the subtle snares in the hunt for success; Hicketier, comically trapped in the mail of his conventional armour; Wolke and Krey who, by means of deceitful panaceas, have made reality into a much more sober and secure condition than it really is. They are mirrors of bourgeois failure and disaster and the object of Sternheim's satire. Finally, the third category includes characters from other social strata, who exist only in their function of paying homage to the burgher. They all have a motivation that urges them to enjoy the bourgeois values of wealth, status, and respectability — Schippel, the proletarian, who, by putting his aspirations into practice, becomes an official member of the middle class; the aristocracy, in its desire for a fusion with the middle class, is equally presented on a bourgeois platform.

Another method of encouraging a favourable opinion of the middle class is by contrasting some of its heroes with pseudo-revolutionaries: the abortive activities of Wilhelm in *1913* and of Sturm in *Tabula Rasa* deride the cause they claim to defend. Even if we argue that they are mere caricatures of individuals with certain political aspirations, to whom we should not assign a general significance, we cannot ignore the fact that, in the architecture of the plays, their ideology is the exact reverse of that of the clever, sensible burgher. Sternheim habitually arrives at a general and positive statement about the burgher by confronting opposite beliefs and experiences, ideologies and classes. His is a method of elimination which leaves the bourgeois hero alone on the heights of glory.

In the light of what has been said, it is possible to understand why Sternheim's comedy is never 'black' as in Dürrenmatt, for example, where the grotesque is a mask which covers the deep anguish inherent in his vision of the world, and never sufficiently ironical to prevent our deriving a sense of triumph from his heroes' determination. Like Molière[32] — and he liked to compare himself to Molière — Sternheim writes for a particular audience whose vices and virtues he knows well. But unlike him, he shows no inclination to direct the burgher towards the path of virtue; on the contrary, it seems that, having perceived the precariousness of the society of his day, on the eve of the First World War, he engages in a series of theatrical demonstrations of how the burgher should act to save both himself and the bourgeois order. It is no wonder that some of his public did not laugh at his heroes. They suspected that his aggressive energy, his ambivalent mockery, was dangerous; or they simply could not bear to see publicly acknowledged and sanctioned their own moral marasmus. Others preferred to believe that his solutions were fantastic fairy-tales.

We can finally conclude that both Wedekind and Sternheim belong essentially to the last phase of Wilhelmine Germany; their drama is deeply involved with the decline of the *Bürgertum*. Wedekind is drawn to the lower fringes of the theatrical world, to the circus, music-hall, and the company of freaks, crooks, and perverts, and these enable him to denounce, in a grotesque and radical form, the deep-seated hypocrisy and cruelty of the bourgeoisie. Sternheim's heroes, on the other hand, are either directly extracted from the middle classes or associated with them; and although they are reduced to typified profiles in their sole preoccupation with wealth and social advancement, they are both satirical and parabolical. On the one hand, they unmask the weaknesses of bourgeois behaviour, and on the other, they encourage the practice of bourgeois vices in the struggle for survival. Such inversion or, at least, ambiguity is related to Sternheim's anxiety about the fate of pre-war Europe.

One thing is clear: bourgeois art had passed out of fashion because the middle class was no longer in safe possession of the world it had brought into existence between 1830 and 1890. Its assumptions came under threat when the individual's existence appeared to be contingent and meaningless; and the tendency to

question middle-class values, the movement towards revolutionary art which began around 1890, now engulfed the whole of modern art, literature, drama, painting, and cinema.

Naturally, it was easier to trace the collapse of the humanist tradition than to make adjustments to the new world that was arising. Wedekind attacks society for its hypocrisy and materialism without foreseeing a new synthesis. Lulu's anarchical, instinctive, amoral behaviour is no ideal. She is a means of challenging and shocking the bourgeois mentality, of spotlighting its pretences and assumptions. On the other hand, Sternheim's attempts to revive the bourgeois will and optimism culminate merely in an embarrassing exposition of the crudest bourgeois vices. His characters are accordingly types, his heroes embodiments of fierce materialistic drives, no longer reflecting an ideal of totality and harmony. Even if the bourgeois continues to appear occasionally in more traditional form, such characters usually assume distorted proportions, either larger or smaller than life. It is this dehumanization of the bourgeois which points to the closing phase of the bourgeois drama.

CHAPTER III

GEORG KAISER AND ERNST TOLLER

Sternheim places the philistine, eager to blow the trumpet of his ego, at the centre of his plays. Craving for social recognition, the philistine persistently learns how to manipulate people and situations, resorting for that purpose to all sorts of masks and devices. However, such hysterical self-assertion cannot close the frightening chasm that has opened in the modern world. The philistine may choose to juggle with opportunity, in a mood of defiant obstinacy, but he cannot avoid being finally removed from the apex of history. Indeed in the play *1913* Sternheim points apocalyptically to the termination of his career: Sofie enters the period of large industrial monopolies, the years of the late capitalist expansion that would culminate in world disaster and bring about a new era.

Both Wedekind's and Sternheim's neo-Romantic assertion of the individual (even if in Wedekind's case this assertion is part of an overall pessimistic vision of man and society) speaks for an epoch which, however threatened from within and from without, still possessed an individual human dimension. Man remains at the centre of their plays, even if merely to assert his destructive and materialistic tendencies, in spite of being reduced in his human potential so as to appear as caricature, type, profile, or mere embodiment of drives and obsessions. But with the preparations for the First World War and then with its consequences, the scene changes drastically. The growth of German nationalism, the speedy development of technology, the experience of the trenches, the defeat of the Fatherland and the resentment over the terms of Versailles, the post-war political instability of the Weimar Republic which continued with revolutionary and counter-revoluntionary initiatives until 1923, and the catastrophic inflation — all of these factors made man appear more contingent than ever. It is from such chaos — political, economic and social — and also from the repercussions of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union that the themes of war, revolution, and the 'New Man' find their way into the drama of the Expressionists.

In Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller, as in most writers of the time, these themes are permeated with a spiritual longing, which is expressed in symbols and in a language that are essentially Christian. Their 'New Man' remains on the level of Utopia. But in Kaiser this utopian dimension contrasts with the

stark realism of his vision of man trapped in the modern city, as a cog in the machine of production and war. As Kenworthy says:

> There would seem, therefore, to be a paradox within Kaiser himself: emotionally he wishes to believe in the possible realization of his vision in a breed of men self-disciplined, peace-loving and ready to make personal sacrifices for the general good; but his perception and intellectual comprehension of the world of reality lead him to doubt if the obstacles in the way of its fulfilment can ever be overcome.[1]

And in Toller what emerges is the insuperable abyss separating the leader's plea for pacifism and the blind desire of the masses for revenge. But if Kaiser's pastoral Utopia is a mirage that grows out of the urban, industrial nightmare, Toller's humanist socialism is also a mirage that grows out of the war, the failure of the revolution, and the approaching reality of National Socialism.

Thus, whereas in Wedekind's and Steinheim's work rebellion against and reinforcement of bourgeois values pointed to the inevitable outcome of a major crisis, to the disintegration of old attitudes and patterns, with Kaiser and Toller we actually perceive a new stage of civilization as we descend into a hell where modern man is tortured in a variety of ways: at the front in conflict with his brother; at home surrounded by sterility and indifference; at work confined by the demands of the machine; in the revolution as the instrument of ruthless and ambitious leaders. No wonder we find the human being now reduced to minimal dimensions and no longer in the foreground, not even as a reduction, but either half-vanished in the hollowness of his depleted self or fused in the anonymity of the masses.

A. Georg Kaiser

It is this new epoch that inspired Georg Kaiser to create a new dramatic texture. Acutely aware of the catastrophic direction in which history was moving, he distilled in his plays the most frightening images of modern life: the automation of the human being, and moral indifference. In his plays, man is delineated in terms of his social function, and the more the circumstances define him, the more blurred the distinction between him and his environment becomes. The loss of individual consciousness accounts for the apathy with which he faces his predicament and for the confusion and helplessness with which he endures it. He is the victim of what he can no longer understand or control. Consequently, he appears as the point of intersection of social forces. In other words, Kaiser gives theatrical expression to the loss of human identity by displacing his *personae* from the centre of the stage where the social relations and power mechanisms responsible for man's predicament are displayed in model constructions of economic and political systems. Particularly in the *Gas* plays, this dehumanization finds immediate expression in the biomechanization of the worker, who appears as an extension of the machine,

reduced to a speaking image of a mere part of his body — the hand, the arm, the foot; and it is expressed in the highly stylized structures of the economic and political organizations to which he is subordinated. Critics such as Diebold accordingly describe Kaiser as 'ohne jegliche Tradition' and 'modern in furchtbarster Bedeutung'.[2]

Different critics have emphasized different aspects of Kaiser's work: Klaus Kändler, for example, emphasizes the condition of the individual trapped in the mechanical laws of society;[3] Königsgarten sees, in the first place, the clash of the individual with the whole;[4] Manfred Kuxdorf points out that the evil of society is actually rooted in the individual, an evil not inherited in his nature but acquired through a false social conditioning.[5] Although all these aspects are fundamental, what impresses us most in Kaiser's drama is still the extent to which he depicts man paralysed in his will, functioning by reflexes, in an environment that is, in its bureaucratic and technological complexity, no longer comprehensible to him. It is this sort of atrophy that, according to Paulsen, makes him indistinguishable from the machine:

> Der Mensch, um den es Kaiser sonst immer geht, und der von ihm auch hier mit lauter Stimme und etwas deklamatorisch *gefordert* wird, ist an einer erschreckenden Atrophie erkrankt. Es ist als ob der Dichter demonstrierern wollte, wie wenig sich der nur denkende Mensch von der Maschine unterscheidet, die er geschaffen hat. Der Anblick auf den wahren und ganzen Menschen fehlt also nicht, aber er erhebt sich kaum über das Negative.[6]

And for Ronald Peacock, Kaiser's characters have

> lost the conception of their own nature as something they might still have; they cannot think themselves out of their situation; they are all engaged in a constrained misdirection of their natural feelings, ignorant of how their humanity has already slipped beyond their reach.[7]

Alongside this dark perspective of mankind Kaiser's plays also reflect, even if only for a time, faith in man's power to regenerate himself. The cry for the *Mensch* emerges, with dizzying intensity, from the pain of his characters' predicament. Indeed, the longing for the 'New Man' who embodies the opposite of what man is now, mechanized and egotistical, and which is an obsessive theme in Expressionist drama, acquires particular acuteness in Kaiser's work as it grows dialectically out of the images of barren, concrete towns and the robot-like denizens of the industrial age. From 1902 on, when he starts his career with *Schellenkönig*, this theme led him to produce drama after drama, with a break only between the years 1933 and 1938 when he writes about the subject of love in *Rosamunde Floris* (1936–37), *Alan und Elise* (1938), and the novel *Villa Aurea* (1938–39). The theme of the 'New Man' reappears in the years of exile, bearing now a political significance that was lacking before: in *Der Soldat Tanaka* (1940), *Das Floß der Medusa* (1943), and

also the Greek dramas that, in Kenworthy's view, mark the final stage in the development of this theme which is now transposed onto a mythic level (Kenworthy, p. 189).

Like Zarathustra who considers himself the prophet of the Superman —

Was groß ist am Menschen, das ist, daß er eine Brücke und kein Zweck ist; was geliebt werden kann am Menschen, das ist, daß er ein *Übergang* und ein *Untergang* ist.[8]

— the poet must prepare mankind for the arrival of the 'New Man':

Der Mensch dieser Zeit muß sich entschließen: sich als Übergang für kommende Menschheit zu sehen.
Wir wissen, daß wir heute nur Leitung des hochgespannten Funkens sind, der in entfernter Zukunft erst zündet . . .[9]

But the ideas of the Superman preached by Zarathustra are essentially different from those of the prophet of the 'New Man'. The Christian ideal of love for one's fellow men, denounced by Zarathustra as escape from the self, is for the Expressionist poet the basis for a spiritual and social evolution, a belief that also opposes the deterministic views of the Naturalists and above all the New Man of the Nazis who was to be part of a military unit in the conquest of *Lebensraum* and the creator of a master race through selective breeding and an ethnic culture. But the actual emergence of the 'New Man' (as opposed to the materialistic, schizophrenic, alienated human being) in the core of society, as the result of a cultural and social revolution, is absent in Kaiser's plays. The programme of his Nietzschean manifesto, *Der Kommende Mensch* (1922), by which man is to transcend the machine-age environment and return to a more natural existence, is totally idealistic. As Manfred Kuxdorf explains:

Die Idee der Erneuerung bei Kaiser kann nicht ideologisch fixiert werden, sondern soll durch Freimachung der humanen Kräfte im Individuum vor sich gehen. (Kuxdorf, p. 127)

However, the obsessive presence of this idea in the poet's mind reaches us in two basic forms. Firstly, the individual undergoes a transformation, and from then on he clashes with society until, totally isolated, he commits suicide; this happens to the protagonists of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (1916), *Kanzlist Krehler* (1922), and *Nebeneinander* (1923). Or secondly, once he has undergone a change, he then tries to revolutionize the lives of those around him, but nevertheless fails in his goal, as in the *Gas* plays (1918–20) and *Gats* (1925).

Both the cashier in *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and Kanzlist Krehler are protagonists of the petit bourgeois. Once awoken to the emptiness of their lives, they cannot help clashing with their families, jobs, and society in general. They both commit a crime: the cashier robs the bank where he works, and Krehler kills his father-in-law to prevent him from supporting his family, whom

he wants destroyed. Krehler seeks refuge in his imagination and remains unconcerned about the future of mankind. The cashier's egotism is not so complete. In the end, he still attempts, although in vain, to experience love for his fellow-men. In *Gas II* the multi-millionaire worker destroys himself and the working masses because they remain deaf to his pacifist message.

Love is the motivation of the protagonist of *Nebeneinander*. He goes through several 'Stationen' — the Elvira Pension, the casino, the police station — without finding charity but only contempt and indifference, until he is taken for a madman. He finally kills himself. Through suicide the social order resists change, while the impracticability of the 'New Man' is demonstrated.

In the centre of these plays is the fate of one individual whose experiences antagonize society, and not a conflict of individuals. The issue in question is therefore the schism between individual and society. His struggle becomes symbolic of that of modern man, as his anguish and the situations in which he finds himself are typical of modern existence. Their tragic outcome is then seen as the result of the social relations that permit no genuine responsibility. Either as cogs in the social machine or as rebels, men are condemned to isolation and ultimately to self-destruction. Kaiser explores these figures in their role as types and victims, from whom we cannot expect redemption. And he directs our attention towards those factors which are responsible for their destruction. Thus, a comprehensive view of society, through stylized images of typical social phenomena, acquires a powerful relevance; it constitutes a logical denunciation of modern life's values and structures.

Von morgens bis mitternachts

The main character in this play appears, generally speaking, as a 'contrapuntal necessity', although we also find naturalistic moments where he is vested with personal nuances of experience. It is from such naturalistic elements that the play derives an immediate basis for empathy, while a sequence of images associated with the main figures's adventures slowly builds up a picture of modern urban life. All the other figures are distributed in a stylized, dialectical pattern, always in a functional relationship with the social themes. In the end, the emotional loudness and the social criticism converge on the main character, transforming him into a symbol of martyrdom in modern western civilization.

Up to the moment when the cashier becomes conscious that he is a criminal (at the end of the 'Second Station'), the action unfolds in the slow tempo of realistic presentation. The first scene is regularly punctuated by the cashier's routine of paying, receiving, and adding up, which his silence, the vulgar humour of the fat gentleman, the petty insinuations of the bank manager, and the embarrassment of the Italian lady merely accentuate. Not even the appearance of a beautiful and elegant woman distracts this human machine from its steady rhythm. It takes the contact of her hand on his to awaken him

sensually. But as soon as this happens, impulsive action follows — a consequence of the release of the human element which was previously ossified in the apathy of mechanical reactions. And to our surprise, we hear him giving orders and leaving the bank in a hurry with the large sum of 60,000 marks.

Detail suggests the milieu of this provincial bank and also casts a reflection on the town to which it belongs. This is particularly evident in the astonishment, admiration and suspicion caused by the lady's outfit and perfume, and in the affability of both the fat gentleman and the manager, which carries suggestions of malicious, petty gossip or café talk.

Immediately afterwards Kaiser gives us the first variation on the theme of expectation and dissillusionment as the cashier, after taking for granted the ill reputation of the lady, realizes that she is not interested in him. And when the last moment's impressions gradually coalesce and he finally faces the possible consequences of his criminal action, he rebels against authority in a mood of impertinent cynicism:

Jemanden rufen? Allerweltsleute rufen? Alarm schlagen. Großartig! — Dumm. Plump. Mich fangen sie nicht ein. In die Falle trete ich nicht. Ich habe meinen Witz, meine Herrschaften. Euer Witz tapp hinterher — ich immer zehn Kilometer voraus.[10]

Kaiser provides his character with a psychological motivation that is borne in upon him from the outside — it is the dehumanizing routine of his job, the boring and petty atmosphere surrounding him, that are responsible for a condition of apathy, manifest in the automation of his gestures and in his silence. Eros is not so much the cause of the criminal act as the releasing agent of a repressed ego, starved of the means to assert itself. In this way, the character grows out of the social material of the play, but still remains three-dimensional.

In the next scene Kaiser changes technique. The cashier is on the run, determined not just to escape justice but also to buy fulfilment from society. So the story of his fate continues to develop. Yet his attitude is not what we expected. His astonishment at the frailty of the human condition, his cold calculation and defiance are infused with a sense of humour that dissolves the otherwise suffocating anguish of the scene into the grotesque. Above all, we are surprised that someone as bland as he and in such a difficult situation should say that he wants to find out the value of money. At this unexpected point we realize that Kaiser has moved away from a close-up study of character to a more abstract type of construction. Isolating money, the most fundamental axis of our modern world, Kaiser initiates here the demystification of the consumer society which, in Paulsen's view, itself reaches a mystical dimension:

Das Geld ist eben die moderne Form des Schicksals für Kaiser, unter dem der Mensch steht, das er sucht und gleichzeitig flieht, von dem er sich das Paradies

erhofft, so lange es noch in weiter Ferne liegt, das ihm aber in den Fingern brennt, wenn er es besitzt. (Paulsen, p. 13)

Money is indeed the essential instrument of Kaiser's denuncation. In denouncing its non-value, Kaiser is denouncing the commodities of a society based on forged expectations. The cashier is first obliged to use it and then to reject it. All his movements are therefore fixed by this factor, which, like a dynamo, propels the action and brings a particular fate upon the character in question. Thus, the author is not concerned with money in relation to the personality of its owner, but as the agent which exposes a social and moral malaise.

The plot also disintegrates at this stage. Although the presence of the main character will be maintained in every scene, situation begins to function, from now on, as the main source of dramatic motivation. In other words, the centre of the play has been shifted outwards, so that we may feel the determining force of external factors.

The family scene at the beginning of the second part, for example, while still widening our understanding of the cashier's motivation for the crime, stands primarily as a caricature of the institution of the family. Kaiser creates, in the realistic setting of a lower middle-class home, a stylized picture in which mummies, embalmed in a daily routine of domestic tasks, represent the mother, the wife, and the two daughters; they behave compulsively, repeating each other's utterances over and over again. The poverty of their inner life is indicated by their lack of energy and incapacity to use language and also by the way in which linguistic habits determine their activity:

Frau. (*kommt*). Es ist Zeit, daß ich die Koteletts brate.
Erste Tochter. Lange noch nicht, Mutter.
Frau. Nein, es ist noch nicht Zeit, daß ich die Koteletts brate (*Ab*).
Mutter. Was stickst du jetzt?
Erste Tochter. Die Langetten.
Frau (*kommt zur Mutter*). Wir haben heute Koteletts.
Mutter. Bratest du sie jetzt?
Frau. Es hat noch Zeit. Es ist ja noch nicht Mittag.
Erste Tochter. Es ist ja noch lange nicht Mittag.
Frau. Nein, es ist noch lange nicht Mittag.
Mutter. Wenn er kommt, ist es Mittag.
Frau. Er kommt noch nicht.
Erste Tochter. Wenn Vater kommt, ist es Mittag.
Frau. Ja (*Ab.*) (*Von morgens bis mitternachts*, p. 485)

Kaiser's method of unrealistic presentation highlights the grotesque character of a mode of existence where human beings have been reduced to hollow speaking figures to whom the upsetting of their daily routine can be fatal (the death of the grandmother). The cashier in his slippers and jacket, smoking his pipe, as he has done for many years, appears later as the spokesmen of its barrenness:

Alte Mutter am Fenster. Töchter am Tisch stickend — Wagner spielend. Frau die Küche besorgend. Von vier Wänden umbaut — Familienleben. Hübsche Gemütlichkeit des Zusammenseins. Mutter — Sohn — Kind versammelt sind. Vertraulicher Zauber. Er spinnt ein. Stube mit Tisch und Hängelampe. Klavier rechts. Kachelofen. Küche, tägliche Nahrung. Morgens Kaffee, mittags Koteletts. Schlafkammer — Betten, hinein-hinaus.
Vertraulicher Zauber. Zuletzt — auf dem Rücken — steif und weiß. Der Tisch wird hier an die Wand gerückt — in gelber Sarg streckt sich schräg, Beschläge abschraubbar — um die Lampe etwas Flor — ein Jahr wird nicht das Klavier gespielt . . . (*Von morgens bis mitternachts*, p. 488)

The motif of boredom, standing for lack of vitality, stagnation, and dehumanization, which never undermine the will of Sternheim's heroes, now becomes fundamental to Kaiser's characterization of the bourgeois family. And if this lack of vitality is closely related to images of illness, decay, and death, so frequent in the literature and art of this period, it also foreshows those characters which come after Auschwitz, particularly in some of Ionesco's and Beckett's plays.

There is accordingly a shift of emphasis from the main character to an aspect of life, from realistic and individual characterization to a more abstract and typified construction, as the characters become more clearly subordinated to the ideological scheme of the play. In the image of the cashier's family, we can see the model for the following scenes, in which Kaiser brilliantly selects from the most typical leisure activites modern society offers: sport and sex.

In his new role of pleasure-seeker, displaying signs of wealth (*im Frack, Frackumhang, Zylinder, Glacés; Bart ist spitz zugestutzt; Haar tief gescheitelt*), the clerk pours large sums of money into the six-day bicycle race, not for the love of the sport itself, but to spur the crowd into hysteria, mistakenly seeing in its collective enthusiasm the expression of brotherhood and freedom (p. 498). But the ecstatic vision soon collapses as he watches people withdrawing into reverent silence at the arrival of the royal family. Both reactions of the crowd, the one following the other, reveal that the psychological and social functions of sport are to free the individual from his repressed self so that he may then easily yield to society's norms.

The emphasis is clearly on the crowd's behaviour, which we hear throughout the scene and which gains ideal proportions in the cashier's ecstasy. Yet the ideal of 'freie Menschheit' transcends not just the reality of the moment but also the character's quest. We have heard him, not long before, demanding restitution from society from a purely egotistical point of view. But Kaiser clearly disregards the psychological coherence of his character, because he also wants to use him for a moment as the receptacle of a yearning for an ideal.

The next stage of the clerk's search for fulfilment takes place in a Berlin night-club where he is about to taste the pleasures of the senses. Women, champagne, and caviar are the luxuries he has exchanged for money. By

rendering the situation grotesque, Kaiser creates a kind of atmosphere that strikes the public with the force of a *Verfremdungseffekt*. The girls, ugly or alcoholic, are pathetic figures with no emotional life or individuality (one even has a prosthesis); impersonating masks, their existence is just a tragic lie. And although the pathos of the situation is slightly relieved by the comic clash between the cashier's hopes and the gruesome reality, we cannot escape the feeling that these characters are victims of the same maladjustment as he is, particularly as the scene ends with the consumptive waiter committing suicide after being robbed of the cashier's payment — a brief but powerful example of the moral indifference and corruptive power of money.

The skill and ease with which Kaiser combines the individual and the social, the realistic and the abstract, can best be appreciated in the final 'Station', in a shelter of the Salvation Army. Here, in the presence of the cashier, a racing cyclist, a prostitute, a father, and a clerk publicly confess their sins. These, related to sport, sexuality, family, and bank robbery, are clearly the cashier's own sins. What we see is a spectrum of evidence of direct relevance to the main character, bringing forth his guilt and repentance. The strategy is simple: the author strips his character naked by projecting his experiences into other characters, thus creating a dramatic tension which is subsequently resolved in the cashier's new attitude towards life:

Ich bin seit diesem Vormittag auf der Suche. Ich habe Anstoß bekommen, auf die Suche zu gehen. Es war ein allgemeiner Aufbruch ohne mögliche Rückkehr — Abbruch aller Brücken. So war ich auf dem Marsche seit dem Vormittag. Ich will euch mit den Stationen nicht aufhalten, an denen ich mich nicht aufhielt. Sie lohnten alle meinen entscheidenden Aufbruch nicht. Ich marschierte rüstig weiter —prüfenden Blicks, tastender Finger, wählenden Kopfs. Ich ging an allem vorüber. Station hinter Station versank hinter meinem wandernden Rücken. Dies war es nicht, das war es nicht, das nächste nicht, das vierte — fünfte nicht! Was ist es? Was ist es nun, das diesen vollen Einsatz lohnt? — Dieser Saal! Von Klängen durchbraust — von Bänken bestellt. Dieser Saal! Von diesen Bänken steigt es auf — dröhnt Erfüllung. Von Schlacken befreit lobt sich meine Seele hoch hinauf — ausgeschmolzen aus diesen glühenden zwei Tiegeln: Bekenntnis und Buße! Da steht es wie ein glänzender Turm — fest und hell: Bekenntnis und Buße! Ihr schreit sie, euch will ich meine Geschichte erzählen. (*Von morgens bis mitternachts*, pp. 514f.)

The result is that, at this moment, the main character, who went through the stages of the Cross as in the old morality play and now feels redeemed, regains his personal life without ceasing to be the symbol of modern man as well as a device which the author freely manipulates in the process of unveiling social reality.

The exposure of religious sentiment and ritual as fiction and the condemnation of money — the latter is still the epicentre of the play — can be seen in the avidity with which the people in the hall try to get hold of the stolen money which the cashier has thrown away, and in his betrayal to the police by the girl.

Image by image Kaiser has constructed the labyrinth of the modern city with all its negative sides: alienated masses, moral degradation, individual isolation. With the Industrial Revolution in the middle of the nineteenth century and the consequent growth of the cities as large markets of work and pleasure, the metropolis invaded literature and art as a rich source of metaphors, displacing nature and provincial life. Berlin (for Kaiser, Toller, and Grosz), Oslo (for Munch), Munich (for Wedekind and Kirchner), and Chicago (for Brecht) become mythical images of a terrible social pessimism, of a technological civilisation that threatens to devour man's soul.

Of course, the cashier is not a model human being. His hope of finding a more meaningful life in pleasurable commodities reveals the extent to which he has been conditioned to identify glamour with happiness. But this is precisely the point which the play is making, namely that society's markets may offer temporary narcotics but cannot provide a substitute for man's humanity and freedom. The clerk awakes partially to his deception but, lacking any sort of social and political understanding, he sublimates his frustration in religious longing. Only at the end, when the police arrive, does he realize that his quest for happiness is incompatible with reality. But despite the religious imagery, he dies a death as senseless as his life — the outcome of man's search for God in a post-Nietzschean time.

We have seen how Kaiser, starting from a particularized, realistic presentation, soon arrived at a more general type of symbolism. In the second part of this play many figures appear in groups: the family, the Jewish gentlemen, the girls, the people of the Salvation Army. Because the type or group has replaced the individual, the characters are never identified by names but only by their social function and external appearance. The main character, however, retains to the end both private and general dimensions. If, on the one hand, he is a particular case, he is also transfigured to become the symbol of man who, in search of happiness, experiences first disillusionment and then nihilism. Each 'Station' is for him a new source of flagellation until he succumbs. But above all, he is the means the author uses to denounce society's values.

No doubt Kaiser was influenced by Strindberg, who became famous in Germany through Reinhardt, particularly between the years 1913 and 1916. His play *Road to Damascus* (1898) became a model for the Expressionists, with its structure in episodic 'Stationen' in which only the central character comes alive. It is the antithesis of the classical drama of conflict, recalling the medieval religious play, Goethe's *Faust*, and the drama of the *Sturm und Drang*, Kleist, Büchner, and Grabbe. But we must not forget also the impact of the silent films with their rapid and linear succession of images. In fact, Kaiser's play could well be silent, for gesture transforms the figures into farcical types, while the clerk's death (he dies with his arms outstretched like Christ on the Cross) symbolizes man's suffering. Gesture conveys a vision, but also a protest as the

characters appear in pantomimic attitudes: the cashier mechanically counting money; the bank manager indulgently caressing his stomach; the mother about to cook the cutlets for the family; one daughter embroidering and the other playing the piano; the hysteria of the crowd; the purposeless movements and empty faces (masks) of the girls in the night-club.

Thus, in conjunction with the theme of man's transformation, a complex tableau of man's existential condition develops as the most forcible and coherent vision of the play. The same happens in those dramatic works where the 'New Man' resorts to revolutionary action, trying in vain to make those around him aware of their predicament and the necessity for a change. But while he is real enough to us through the passion that animates his rhetoric, those whom he addresses become palpable to us through the nightmarish, oppressive forms they assume. They are still people, but encased in grey uniforms and functional, geometric spaces, behaving like automata, no longer knowing what freedom is, serving a false, cruel, new god — technology. All this is presented, through a combination of cubism and surrealism, in a double perspective of rigidity (physical and spiritual enslavement) and disintegration (emotional chaos and destructive impulses). Such is the obsessive vision of the *Gas* plays. The other two works of this tetralogy, *Die Koralle* and *Gats*, function respectively as a kind of introduction and epilogue to the theme of social transformation.

The 'Gas' Trilogy

In these plays Kaiser develops further the social critique which he so consistently presented in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. He no longer concentrates on the different aspects of society such as family life, entertainment, love and sex, religion, but focuses exclusively and in an obsessive measure on the dehumanization of man in a technocratic, planned, and centralized society. With incisive insight, he detects its dynamics and amplifies them until its diabolical consequences — exploitation of people, war, and the production of poisonous gas — are brought home to us in terrifying, cosmic dimensions. Written immediately after the First World War, these plays bear witness to the author's struggle against nihilism, particularly in the finale of *Gas II*.

The *Gas* plays will be considered together, as they show a clear line of development, in their social vision and techniques, from a democratic to a totalitarian model of society; from a profile of a highly modern industrial complex to an almost cubistic composition of an economic and political system, in an idiom that is far more revolutionary than much of literary Expressionism. The sociological implications of *Die Koralle* will be more briefly considered, as the conflict of generations leads from a capitalist to a socialist model of production, and so to the heart of *Gas I*.

Georg Kaiser saw ahead of his time, for he assessed with astonishing lucidity the consequences of technological expansion in the service of economic and political arbitrariness. The nightmare at which Sternheim merely hinted in his play *1913* is here scrutinized in a dramatic structure that defines with objectivity a model of society where men are mere functions, crippled by a system of division of labour:

Mädchen. Von meinem Bruder sage ich das! — Ich wußte nicht, daß ich einen Bruder hatte. Ein Mensch ging morgens aus dem Hause und kam abends — und schlief. Oder er ging abends weg und war morgens zurück — und schlief! — Eine Hand war groß — die andere klein. Die große Hand schlief nicht. Die stieß in einer Bewegung hin und her — Tag und Nacht. Die fraß an ihm und wuchs aus seiner ganzen Kraft. Diese Hand war der Mensch! — Wo blieb mein Bruder? . . .[11]

The biomechanization of man (Lukács called it 'Verdinglichung')[12] happens, in this case, because a part of the person's body has been usurped by the machine and kept in constant activity, dislocating him until he has become a dead, dried shell from which life has been sucked away. No playwright until then had given such poignant expression to the deadening effects of the Industrial Revolution. An ultimate step in this direction would be to show, instead of human figures, just a hand, a foot, an eye, which would represent man as a reduction (although the problem of communication would become more difficult and would endanger the very possibility of making theatre). The man portrayed here is the negation of man as a synthesis, as a harmony of the physical and the spiritual, the ideal of the classics. Kaiser defined him in his essay *Der Kommende Mensch*:

Wie ist der Mensch dieser Tage? Noch fehlt ihm die Zusammenfassung seiner Kräfte. Das Wunder der Vielheit seiner Fähigkeiten wird mißdeutet: er unterliegt der Versuchung *eine einzelne* Fähigkeit auszubilden. Er wird Spezialist! (*Der Kommende Mensch*, p. 568)

Although, according to the author, he can be recovered, since he is from the beginning a totality, his atrophy is due to environmental influences and the dissipation of his energy makes it impossible for him to fight his condition. Pessimism is, as we shall see, the predominant note of these plays.

It is not only the industrial workers who appear in situations of extreme victimization. Kaiser's vision comprises, in fact, a complex of social relations in which men, representing different classes and professions, appear as puppets responding to reflexes. They are completely encased in routine, and incapable of expanding. We find here no traces of the traditional image of the person with a moral sense, free will, and knowledge of good and evil, typical of the liberal societies of the nineteenth century and still alive in the work of Ibsen and Chekhov, where people relate to each other in a human and geographical context (family, friends, society in general; town, village, countryside, etc.).

Wedekind and Sternheim still hoped to resolve the problem of loss of individuality through a change in man's social attitudes: Wedekind by encouraging man's elemental nature against conventional bourgeois morality and Sternheim by encouraging the burgher's faith in the principle of individual enterprise to the exclusion of morality. In the *Gas* plays, however, bourgeois society crumbles under the scaffolding of technical expansion and centralization of power. This is the age when the individual, in spite of his material comfort, can only survive within the group where he performs a particular function. He surrenders his identity to the group, but the group, being inserted in a hierarchical chain of obligatory and abusive relations, is itself only a cell in a huge mechanism controlled from above.

No wonder the masses have a powerful dramatic presence in some of Kaiser's plays, not because circumstance, milieu, time, and space become through them a particular living reality (as happened in nineteenth-century drama with the *dramatis persona* 'Volk') but because they are the very image of post-war society in their conformism, confusion, and suffering.

No wonder either that brute matter, the product of their labour, becomes their logical counterpart, developing a dynamic of its own[13] (from coal to gas to the explosion), creating a functional environment (machines, motors, cables, steel, concrete) and imposing a mechanical rhythm upon man.

Kaiser's society is, therefore, no longer a human concept but the product of economic and political forces that transcend the individual. The individual cannot make decisions that matter, unless they aim at reinforcing the prevailing order (for example, the chief engineer's power derives from the importance of his work for the industrialists and politicians). Forced to absorb the false stimuli, his life is impoverished until he grows into a distortion of the human being. (In *Gas II*, at the end, the workers themselves become mass murderers, ready to use the poisonous gas on others.)

Poverty, which was such an important element in Büchner's *Woyzeck* and Hauptmann's *Die Weber*, is not at the root of the workers' disgrace on this occasion. The multi-millionaire's son has solved the problem by administering his father's industry according to socialist principles. In *Die Koralle*, the conflict of generations assumes, in Act III, clear sociological dimensions as the conflict between capitalism (the father representative of the old order) and socialism (the son representative of the new order). The multi-millionaire's motivation merely serves the purpose of reinforcing his son's views. It is indeed interesting to see how, in this play, Kaiser condenses in the father the psychological trauma associated with the experience of poverty. The multi-millionaire, traumatized by a childhood of poverty, avoids at all costs any contact with misery, escaping with his family into a world of luxury where he can repress the memories of his past. His fear of poverty is so formidable that he would rather be rejected by his children, murder his secretary and double,

assume the latter's identity and be condemned for his own murder, than put into practice his son's socialist views. The horror that haunts the multi-millionaire becomes then the very measure of a form of experience that must be abolished. His own character vindicates the son's programme for social justice and renders anachronistic the physical image of starved, sickly workers. In *Gas II*, on the other hand, the workers' conditions are shown frequently, precisely because their alienation and reification are a much more recent and complex problem than the question of poverty. In them, we never notice any signs of material need, for they share the profits of their factory. Instead, we stare at the destruction of their humanness, presented to us in all its starkness.

Before the explosion in *Gas I*, they are passively aware of their conditions (pp. 39 f.), but afterwards they strike to have the engineer dismissed, because he created the formula for the gas which caused the disaster. But they are not prepared to halt the production of gas for which they still require the formula. Through this paradox, Kaiser allows us to perceive their psychology: they wish to punish the engineer as an outlet for their fear and guilt — in other words as a means of recovering their confidence and self-esteem — while carrying on as before.

The engineer's words which encourage their professional pride and competitive spirit, reminding them that they are powerful because they are producing the most modern form of energy on which other industries depend (pp. 48 f.), provide the explanation of their behaviour. The stimulus he evokes is in open contradiction with the workers' situation: false expectation is thus one of the basic motives on which the masses act. Their concept of power does not spring from their quality of life and from their existence as a politically organized class, but from the facile belief that they are the indispensable propellers of a vital economic system. They fail to realize that such a belief is being fed to them by groups with particular interests. In other words, they resort to solidarity only to reinforce their accommodation to the *status quo*, thus helping to strengthen it. In the words of Herbert Marcuse:

> Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system itself appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole.[14]

This also explains why they follow the engineer's proposals rather than those of the multi-millionaire's son who wants, at all costs, better living conditions. To remain with the engineer is to guarantee that nothing will change.

When they finally decide to rebel, out of sheer exhaustion, they revindicate for a moment their right to a fuller life. This is expressed in the image of a complete day — morning, afternoon, and evening — and in a decisive as well as visionary tone which lends significance to the girl's gesture (pp. 71 f.) of releasing her hair from under the grey scarf (a symbol of their enslavement). At

first sight, it may seem that, where the well-intended plan of the multi-millionaire's son and then the multi-millionaire worker failed, brutal exploitation finally shocks them into realizing the predicament they are in. But it is not so: as soon as they understand that they may have to work for the enemy, as the result of defeat, they orgiastically acclaim the chief engineer's latest invention — the 'Giftgas'. Like a *Deus ex machina* the poisonous gas brings their motivation into the open; they are bent, once more, on power. 'Sind wir mächtig?!' (p. 83) is the question they anxiously wish to have confirmed. Thus, Kaiser carries the alienation of these people to its ultimate conclusion — their transformation into mass murderers.

Their pursuit of power is irrational since they fail to grasp the contradiction they are in. Under the stimulus of working for themselves, they end up working many hard and long hours. Thus their material well-being costs them a depreciation of their lives. In *Gas I* the deadening effects of their work crystallize in the image of man as a living corpse: ' . . . mein Mann — der einen Hochzeitstag lebte — und sein lebelang gestorben war?' (p. 42). In *Gas II* (which for Ernst Schürer is an allegorical presentation of the Great Offensive that, after the defeat of Russia, would also end the war in the west),[15] they are forced to work beyond the limits of human endurance, experiencing themselves essentially as things, capable of behaving one-dimensionally only, with no initiative of their own.

The dehumanization of the workers is matched to an equal degree by the behaviour of other social groups such as the white-collar workers, the army officers, the industrialists, and the technicians. If the clerk cannot imagine himself being anything other than a clerk, the officer would rather commit suicide than take up a different job that would enable him to pay his debts. And the industrialists, guardians of a common policy, will safeguard the mechanism of production at any cost, without hesitating to turn someone who is on their side into a scapegoat so that production will not stop:

Fünfter schwarzer Herr. Warum streiken die?
Zweiter schwarzer Herr. Weil der Ingenieur nicht entlassen ist.
Fünfter schwarzer Herr. Warum wird er gehalten?
Zweiter schwarzer Herr. Warum?
Vierter schwarzer Herr. Weil er eine Marotte ist!
Dritter schwarzer Herr. Das ist richtig!
Erster schwarzer Herr. Es kann noch einen anderen Grund haben. Der wird von prinzipieller Bedeutung. Der Abschied des Ingenieurs wir gefordert — das konstruiert die Schwierigkeit. Stellen die Arbeiter einem von uns Forderungen — so muß er unbedingten Widerstand leisten. Das ist hier geschehen — und in Konsequenz bleibt der Ingenieur auf seinem Posten!
Dritter schwarzer Herr. Sie vergessen dabei, daß er nicht einer von uns ist. (*Gas I*, pp. 31 f.)

Finally, the yellow and blue figures — the technicians in *Gas II* — are like computers, registering with hallucinating speed the losses and advances both in

productivity and in the battlefield. For them, workers and soldiers are simply means to an end.

Kaiser lets his characters manifest themselves through the same type of behaviour. We can hardly make any distinction between those who are dominated and those who dominate. In the vicious circle of their mutual dependence, they display the same stereotyped orientation to ensure the growth of production in which their ideology is actually embodied. If the workers, as non-entities, wear grey uniforms, the industrialists, who represent a separate area of interests, wear the same black suits, the same hats, and express themselves in the same mimicry. The only difference lies in the degree of suffering, which is inevitably higher for the workers.

Their language, too, is one-dimensional: depersonalized, clipped, and tense almost to the point of hysteria, and with a rhythm that is not natural in human discourse but which corresponds to the artificial environment in which they all live; its poor range of expression, in which repetition checks all movement, reflects their hollowness and mechanization:

Zweite Gelbfigur (*vor rotheller Scheibe*). Meldung von Bedarfzentrale. Anspruch für dritten Distrikt zwei Quoten mehr. (*Scheibe verlöscht*).
Erste Gelbfigur (*umsteckt roten Stöpsel*).
Fünfte Gelbfigur (*vor grünheller Scheibe*). Meldung von drittem Werk: Leistung ein Strich unter Auftrag. (*Scheibe verlöscht*).
Erste Gelbfigur (*umsteckt grünen Stöpsel*).
Dritte Gelbfigur (*vor rotheller Scheibe*). Meldung von Bedarfzentrale: Anspruch für zweiten Distrikt drei Quoten mehr. (*Scheibe verlöscht*).[16]

Only when deflected by fear and horror does it contain traces of emotion. But it never reveals patterns of a free sensibility, pointing instead to the epicentre of an epoch shaped by war, mass culture, and functionalism.

However, if the individual as such can no longer survive but must be aggregated, the masses seem to be one amorphous organism. It is to the crowds of workers that the multi-millionaire's son addresses his appeal for a radical transformation of their lives, but with no success. Neither the individual nor the masses can challenge the system, Kaiser brings into the open its inner structure and shows how it functions.

Kaiser was trying to create a 'scientific' theatre that would provoke his audiences to think. Indeed, we look upon the viscera of a totalitarian state in which technology, industry, army, and state cooperate closely with each other: the engineer's inventions speed up production as well as being used for the creation of war material; the workers, like prisoners in labour camps, are forced to extreme efforts in a maddening process of insatiable production to sustain the slow trench warfare. The democratic liberties which they seem to enjoy in *Gas I* prove to be no more than a façade to ensure the peaceful functioning of the whole (*Gas I*, pp. 54 f.).

By juxtaposing different aspects of society, Kaiser builds a geometrical and abstract model which is extraordinarily synthetic, but also true. The axis on which these aspects turn is the dehumanization of man and society. This is the basis of Kaiser's violent composition, punctuated as it is by the staccato of the machine, by the anguish and protest of the workers, and by the exhortations of the prophet of the 'New Man' — the latter voice expressing Kaiser's own preoccupation more directly. The pathos that derives from the workers' inability to step out of their condition, and the idealism that radiates from the multi-millionaire's struggle to rescue them, give a human quality to what would otherwise be a hysterical prophecy of large-scale disaster. But as it is, the workers are still alive within their limitations and suffering. It is the fundamental truth of their dehumanization which, in turn, animates with gruesome colours the power relations, the ideology which holds such a society together.

By placing his characters in a network of economic and political forces, Kaiser creates a model of a society in motion, as different social groups, all dependent on each other, assume different positions in order to protect their interests: the industrialists, who in *Gas I* appear outlined against a backcloth of industrial relations (they are ready to negotiate the workers' demands to return to the factory), are out of sight in *Gas II* as state and industry merge into a repressive mechanism that safeguards productivity.

By juxtaposing different interests and forces through a clever use of perspective and lighting, Kaiser was giving concrete form to different kinds of human energy, as he was himself to explain in his essay *Formung von Drama* (1922). No wonder that, when these plays first came out, people interpreted them as figments of the imagination, not very far from science fiction; they were described as typified, abstract, or symbolic. But although these dramas looked forward to a type of society that did not become a reality until the 1930s and 1940s, total war and total mobilization during the First World War had already transformed nations into war-machines while technology underwent a speedy development.

It is true that Kaiser often resorts to grotesque modes of representation to lend impact to his vision: he emphasizes the automation of people, the absorption of critical intelligence by industrial and military ideologies to the extent that the former no longer performs a corrective role but rather vindicates the system by wrapping it up in a veil of false rationality (as in the reasons advanced for continuing the production of gas).[17] But because the models here portrayed are logically consistent and analytically true, and because they have immediate reference to our time, we cannot help being impressed and moved by them.

But not all of the figures are mere social types: the engineer's fidelity to technology, which gives him his *raison d'être* , also lends him a symbolic quality which transcends his one-dimensional outlines. Through him, Kaiser is censuring

uncritical surrender to science and technology (a theme which Dürrenmatt was later to treat more directly in *Die Physiker*). It is precisely because of his inflexibility that he embodies the spirit of the modern age. It is also at this level that his opposition to the multi-millionaire's son and to the multi-millionaire worker acquires its full impact, for the latter are defeated not by a particular man but by the spirit of an epoch.

Both multi-millionaires embody an ideal of man — the 'Mitmensch' — and act therefore as a foil to the other figures and more particularly to the engineer. The plan of the multi-millionaire's son for an agrarian colony (inspired, according to Manfred Durzak, by Gustav Landauer's model of a co-operative),[18] is radically opposed to the type of industrial society in which they now live:

> Grüne Linien — Straßen mit Bäumen gesäumt. Rote, gelbe, blaue Ringe — Plätze bewuchert mit Pflanzen, die blühen aus Grasfläche. Vierecke — hineingestellt Häuser mit kleinem Gebiet von Eigentum, das beherbergt! — Mächtige Straßen hinaus — erobernd eindringend in andere Striche — betreten von Pilgern von uns —die Einfachstes predigen: — uns!! (*Gas I*, p. 26)

This idealization *à la Rousseau* is a manifestation of an epochal longing for life away from the hell of the industrialized, urban centres. But because the ideal of 'l'homme de la nature' is so utopian, and because it is evoked here for the purpose of social and cultural criticism, Kaiser is careful to give the character of the millionaire's son a certain coherence, rooting him in a family background which gives him some complexity (*Die Koralle*). His concern for the workers' material well-being is the first stage in his development towards becoming a complete person. The second occurs when, after the explosion, he becomes aware of the danger in which the workers live. It is then that he proposes to them a radical change in their lives. But his words fall on deaf ears. *Gas I* ends with him wondering: 'Wo ist der Mensch? Wann tritt er auf — und ruft sich mit Namen: — Mensch?' (*Gas I*, pp. 57 f.).

But, in spite of such developments, we never feel that he has become a full personality, precisely because his attitudes are determined only by the ideal. He is both rejected by the workers and rendered ineffective by the establishment (he is removed from his own factory by the state authorities). Not only does he not understand the deep-seated effects of social conditioning on the workers, but he is also shocked by the government's plans to rebuild the factory in order to produce gas for belligerent purposes. He fails to foresee the events, because he has little political insight. On the other hand, the ideal which he defends cannot readily carry conviction, since its uncompromising nature would require the total disintegration of existing social structures and values.

In *Gas II* the multi-millionaire worker no longer seeks salvation in an agrarian society, but exhorts the workers to labour hard to rebuild the 'Reich' (*Gas II*, pp. 85 f.). His exhortation, more realistic than the measures advocated

by his grandfather, aims at securing peace; but it also contains echoes of Kaiser's hope that used rationally, technology may help to bring about social and political justice:

> Wohlbestand bei wenig Arbeit: Rationalisierung der Industrie, Verbesserung und Allgemeinbesitz der Produktionsmittel, Reduzierung der Arbeitszeit auf dreißig Stunden in der Woche, Technologen an die Front! — Nur wenn die Sorge um das tägliche Brot verschwindet, werden auch Militarismus und Nationalismus keine Interessenten mehr finden. Für Menschen aber, die um ihr Leben bangen, ist der Henker immer der weisere.[19]

Such a view does not contradict the message of *Gas I*, where industry is condemned not as an evil *per se* but as a misuse of power. And the green paradise, the promised land, envisaged by the multi-millionaire's son serves to display in contrasting relief the gruesome course of industrial development and its consequences.

It is nevertheless difficult to determine the precise meaning of the biblical phrase 'Baut das Reich!!'. It is perhaps the product of various historical influences, including Christianity and Marxism as well as others from Kaiser's own period. The multi-millionaire's son and the multi-millionaire worker seem to be fashioned in the image of the prophets of the Old Testament. Their exhortation to a more human existence, accompanied by the evils that befall men, and will go on befalling them if they do not change their lives, is reminiscent of God's curse on the Jewish people. In this light, the engineer appears as the false prophet who seduces the crowds to worship the pagan god — technology. However, this kingdom of the future is not some kind of afterlife. On the contrary, it is supposed to be the land of the future, where men will no longer be slaves to the machine but use it to their common advantage, ensuring freedom and avoiding war — a dream that no doubt corresponded to the deep wishes of the German people who were tired of war and suffering.

From this perspective, the smashing of the container of poisonous gas by the multi-millionaire worker seems like an act of revenge in line with the Old Testament, against blind, self-destructive man. It could also signify, as Sokel suggests, the only means by which the 'New Man' achieves union with mankind.[20] In any case, the final chaos reflects Kaiser's loss of faith in the possibility of man's recuperation.

It is interesting that *Hölle Weg Erde*, the only play in which the 'New Man' succeeds, was written in the same year as *Gas II*, which perhaps confirms the chimerical nature of the 'New Man'. Belonging more to the rarified heights of idealism than to the concrete historical world, the 'New Man' was indeed a problem which the Expressionists never solved satisfactorily. Kaiser tried to get round it when he said: 'Es kommt nur darauf an: den Menschen zu sagen, was sie sind — nicht was sie sein sollten'.[21]

But although the 'New Man' may not be real to us, an alternative concept of humanity is nevertheless reflected in the spiritual longing he symbolizes, contrasting in *chiaroscuro* with the biting social analysis. And in *Gas I* the Utopia of the 'new Man' projects a hope into the future that lifts the play from the depths of a punitive reality.

Both multi-millionaires are then born in Kaiser's own hopes and despondency. But they acquire a more objective value by virtue of the structure of the plays, which confronts them with the engineer in a debate about the quality of life in *Gas I*, and with war and pacifism in *Gas II*. Their opposition gives the plays a dialectical matrix, around which images of modern man's existential condition are then arranged in a logical and critical sequence. For this reason, Kaiser was called a 'Denkspieler', and he himself defines the task of writing a play as 'einen Gedanken zu Ende denken'.[22] Plato's dialogue form, as it appears in *The Symposium* and *The Death of Socrates*, was a strong influence on his dialectical style of writing.[23]

After 1920, Kaiser's pessimism becomes more accentuated. The sacrifice of the 'New Man' becomes utterly absurd and senseless. In *Gats*, the Captain swears never to set foot on the street 'wo die Herde completter Bestien trottet!'[24] Kaiser himself, in spite of being familiar with socialist ideas through Toller and Gustav Landauer, expresses, in an interview with Ivan Goll, this same feeling of isolation and hostility towards the masses:

> . . . ich kann fast gar nicht mit den Menschen leben. Ich kenne sie schon, bevor ich mit ihnen in Berührung komme. Sie langweilen mich gründlich. Die Menge macht mich melancholisch. Die Stadt macht mich krank. Ich komme nur in Geschäften nach Berlin und verkehre dort mit keiner literarischen Persönlichkeit. (*Werke*, IV, 584)

With the outbreak of World War II, Kaiser turns once more to the theme of social transformation in *Der Soldat Tanaka* (1940) and *Das Floß der Medusa* (1943). The simple-minded but courageous Tanaka dies for an inconsequential denunciation of the Japanese system, as his words are never heard outside the court-room; and Allan fails to arouse any hope for the young generation because all the other children are egotistic. Like the protagonists of *Gas I, Gas II*, and *Gats* these figures remain isolated, exceptional individuals. Kaiser's avenue of hope is cut off completely in the final dialogue in which the pilot tries to rescue Allan but the latter would rather die than rejoin mankind:

> *Pilot.* Die Menschen werden einmal besser sein — und wie die Kinder sein.
> *Allan.* Es werden die Kinder wie die Gewachsenen sein — weil sie als Kinder schon wie Erwachsene sind![25]

Childhood, the object of Wedekind's defence and the last refuge of the multi-millionaire in *Die Koralle*, the virgin soil in which the new gospel could best flourish, is also repudiated.

Individual efforts to reform mankind fail completely. One may say that Kaiser's drama is a last attempt to give the individual hero a valid voice. The idealism with which he rehearses the belief in the re-education of man by means of one individual's influence upon the group, leads to negative results. The discrepancy between reality and vision is already evident in the way in which Kaiser arranges his figures: on the one hand, the average man appears as a stylized type, with little life of his own, operating within a fixed scheme of limited goals; on the other hand, the prophet of the 'New Man', who lives for the advent of social change and announces it in sweeping statements, remains aloof from *Realpolitik*. They are totally out of touch with each other. But even when Kaiser lets the average man undergo a transformation towards more human values, the result is still negative. When the bank clerk and Krehler rebel against their meaningless lives, they may move away from a socially accepted pattern of behaviour, but they also head towards a dangerous encounter with what lies beneath the crust of civilized order. They soon end up caught in the dilemma of having neither the possibility of surviving in their new life, which they can never fully develop, nor of resuming their previous existence. Suicide or the outsider's existence is all that is left for them, as was already the case with Wedekind's heroes.

We can conclude from such displays of human behaviour and tragedy that, however genuine Kaiser's desire for man's transformation may have been, and however insistently he may have clung to it, the rational eye with which he analysed the human condition, trapped in a madhouse of egotism and violence, eventually dissolved any hope of a better world.

Kaiser arrives at the same pessimistic conclusion as Wedekind and Toller, although through a different perception and by different means of formal presentation. For Wedekind, the alternative ideal of humanity was to be salvaged from the wreck of man's instinctive behaviour. Like D. H. Lawrence after the First World War, he postulates a return to a more instinctive kind of behaviour which would, in due course, discredit the bourgeois mode of life. This is the reason why the range of his characters stretches from children to the adventurers of the sub-criminal world. But he finds no solution there: the children are irrevocably at the mercy of the adults, while the non-bourgeois display even more emphatically the worst impulses of the bourgeoisie. The result is provocative satire. Kaiser, on the other hand, hopes for a social transformation under the individual guidance of a leader (prophet, artist). His solution is therefore a more political one, for it implies a belief in the re-education of the masses and in the need for fundamental economic and political changes. But the masses remain aloof from the leader, and the prophet of the 'New Man' opts for collective suicide in a total surrender to nihilism.

B. Ernst Toller

Toller did not possess the histrionic virtuosity of Kaiser, but his plays are imaginative and above all moving in their relation to the political conflicts of his time. In his powerful urge for brotherhood, he is perhaps the most sincere representative of the Expressionist drama.

Like Kaiser he did not write social plays in the traditional sense of handling a specific social problem (*Die Maschinenstürmer* is the only play that would fit into such a category). Instead, what we find is a large array of social phenomena around a central figure who carries the meaning of the play, a meaning which has broad philosophical, moral and ideological implications.

This figure, close to the ideal of the 'New Man', and often a potential leader of the masses, is never fully individualized. His involvement with the remaining characters is half-detached; he develops symbolically as the instrument whereby the author discloses a particular reality, and he is the ultimate exponent of the author's humanist convictions. Images of bourgeois and working-class life, war, mobilization of the masses, and revolution flow past this central figure, sometimes in a linear sequence, sometimes simply juxtaposed, in a dreamlike association. Their sequence rests on a logical perception of social reality, but their main impact lies in their emotional loudness and in the almost religious vehemence that distinguishes them fundamentally from Kaiser's rational and formal constructions.

Toller's heroes are therefore immediate vehicles for his ideas and yearnings. It is they who sustain his vision from hope through struggle to despair: Friedrich's inner conflict between the Jew, the bourgeois, and the socialist in *Die Wandlung* (1918), and Sonja's defence of the sacredness of human life against the demands of the Revolution, in *Masse-Mensch* (1919), are poignant images of Toller's social commitment. Accordingly, their language possesses a cathartic quality that derives from their highly emotional and exhortative tone. *Hinkemann* (1921–22), on the other hand, as the allegory of the defeated soldier, representative of the moral breakdown of a whole generation, grows out of Toller's disillusionment and despair.

The remaining characters appear as outlines of social types and groups: the mother, the husband, the doctor, the Jewish uncle. They are all thinly characterized, more like evocative images of a familiar background, immediately recognized by their typical appearance and utterances. Often they border on caricature as their behaviour and speech come into open contradiction with the morality of the play. The author always relates their aberrations and distortions to their commitment to false moral principles and cultural values.

Die Maschinenstürmer (1920–21) and *Hinkemann* follow a much more realistic presentation, with a plot set in motion by characters who, in some

cases, are truly three-dimensional. They are at the opposite pole from *Die Wandlung* and *Masse-Mensch* where the 'New Man' is exalted in a typical Expressionistic style, in a lyrical language and in a stylized, open landscape of social phenomena, populated with figures that are mere human shadows, together constituting a formal harmony that is the nearest expression of the ideal. What is interesting is that this tendency towards realism coincides with Toller's growing political and philosophical disillusionment. In other words, disbelief in revolution and ideology brings about a return to realism — the last phase of Toller's search for a mature dramatic representation of historical man's complexity.

This does not mean that Toller drops altogether in these later plays the abstract symbolism that characterizes *Die Wandlung* and *Masse-Mensch*, but merely that he combines it with a more traditional style. The symbolism still enables him to present a highly suggestive, panoramic view of society, while the greater realism allows him to elaborate a differentiated and precise image of social circumstances and spiritual moods.

Toller's plays show where he stood politically — as one who firmly rejected capitalism, but who was nevertheless aware of the dangers of hasty or false solutions coming from the Left. Like Eisner, Landauer, and Hiller he is still within the tradition of the *Aufklärung*, believing in man's emancipation and progress through reason. For him, progress towards a socialist society could be achieved only through an inner transformation of man (which Wedekind, ironically enough, had portrayed as an impossibility) and the priority of the individual over any dogma or ideal. Thus, he views the worker more as an agent of general social change than as the instrument of the proletariat's historical emancipation. For this reason, he dwells emphatically on the ethics of political ends and means and on the question of political leadership in a revolution. The figures of the leader and the masses occupy, then, a prominent place in his plays; for in their interaction, Toller finds the best possible demonstration of the ethics of political responsibility.

Toller's image of the masses is a tragic one. They function for most of the time as the vehicle of the leader's ambitions, absorbing them and carrying them out. Here and there, they may appear with a life of their own, as one or more people step out to express a dissident opinion, to make some comment with a bearing on the ideological conclusions of the play. *Die Maschinenstürmer* is the only work where the masses crystallize into individuals, in their outpouring of rage, despair, and guilt as they confront the machine. But they are not capable of expressing coherently what moves them, what determines their actions as a politically conscious group. In any case, they are more revolutionary than the masses in Kaiser's plays, for they no longer appear as mere prisoners of the factory but are actually on the streets, ready, however inadequately, to fight for their rights. Nor are their leaders representative of the Establishment as the

engineer is in the *Gas* plays. What they do have in common with Kaiser's masses is their thirst for revenge and power, and their readiness to kill and die. In their willingness to die an anonymous and blind death, they are the very reverse of the ideal of the 'Mensch', the 'New Man' who, through socially responsible and peaceful action, would be the founder of a better world.

It is particularly their gullibility and their victimization that causes Toller to reflect on the effects of irresponsible leadership. He creates two types of leader: the pseudo-leader, ambitious and ruthless but with an aggressive rhetoric and violent measures which are attractive to the crowds, and the positive leader whose cautious proposals estrange him from popular sympathy. It is often only through his death, which takes the form of a sacrifice with heavy Christian overtones, that he reaches the hearts and understanding of his fellow men.

Such political cautiousness on Toller's part has often been criticized as lack of ideological firmness, or interpreted as a sort of a non-political humanism. For Czech–Johberg, for example, Toller was a failed communist and, as such, dangerous to the cause of the Revolution.[1] Post-war critics emphasized his political preoccupation, either condemning or praising him according to their own ideological standpoint. Of two anthologies of his work, the one edited in East Germany by Uhse and Kaiser ignores his Expressionistic phase and gives prominence to plays such as *Die Maschinenstürmer* and *Feuer aus den Kesseln*,[2]whereas the other, edited in West Germany by Hiller, pays special attention to the plays and poems of his youth.[3]

Echoing Sokel's view of Toller as a socialist 'aus Gefühl' and a politician against his will whose inspiration was 'romantic-dionysiac' and not political,[4] Tancred Dorst's play *Toller*, in the late 1960s, dwells on the conflict between the poet and the revolutionary who is incapable of taking hold of reality.

In the 1970s, more attention has been paid to the cultural and literary context in which Toller was writing. Werner Geifrig, for example, defends the view that Toller, although a convinced socialist, fought his struggle against war and capitalism, after 1916, in Expressionist terms.[5] And Carel Ter Haar, while stressing the existential dimension of Toller's plays, concludes that the proletariat was for him a 'metaphor of mankind'.[6]

More recently René Eichenlaub, arguing that Toller's political commitment made him Brecht's natural predecessor, maintains that, between 1917 and 1924, Toller's socialism was directly influenced by Landauer and the political Expressionism of the time.[7]

We cannot say, however, that Toller's political commitment was more imaginative than real, as it was indeed for so many Expressionists. After all, he took part in the Bavarian Revolution in 1919, as the head of the government

and later as the commander of troops at Dachau. He was also arrested for high treason and sentenced to five years in jail. While he was in prison, the German theatres staged his plays, showing in a poignant way his continued preoccupation with politics. On 30 September 1919, *Die Wandlung* opened in Berlin, calling for pacifism and brotherhood; on 29 September 1921, *Masse–Mensch* was seen for the first time at the Volksbühne in Berlin, displaying the moral dilemma of a revolutionary who cannot reconcile bloodshed with revolution —an immediate reflection on the political events of 1919; on 30 June 1922, *Die Maschinenstürmer* was presented at the Großes Schauspielhaus in Berlin, inspired by the disastrous rebellion of the English weavers of Nottingham in 1820 against the difficult working conditions created by quick and profitable industrialization; and on 17 January 1924, *Hinkemann*, the story of a war invalid with no illusions, was performed in Dresden, causing the most serious riot occasioned by any of Toller's productions. As one of the most outspoken and politically active poets of Expressionism, he was forced to go into exile. He continued to fight for his socialist convictions until the eve of the Second World War when, isolated and with the spectre of Nazism before him, he committed suicide in New York. Every stage in his life seems to suggest that his cautiousness towards radical leftist solutions sprang not from a bourgeois mentality or from abstract idealism, but rather from a lucid and uncompromising understanding of political experience. The ephemeral dream of the *Räterepublik* was a turning point in his thinking; thereafter, he abandoned orthodox Marxism for an independent socialism similar to that of Landauer.

Die Wandlung

This play (1917–19) proclaims Toller's belief in the urgent need for man's transformation. The 'New Man' is not, as in Kaiser, the Nietzschean 'Übermensch'; he is of Christian and Marxist inspiration. Yet, in contrast to what happens in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, the main character's 'Passionsweg' leads him, in the end, to happiness in a responsible communion with other people.

In the first scene, the author draws together family, educational, and social spheres in order to situate the main character, Friedrich, in a defined context where he acquires a particular identity. He is a Jewish sculptor in conflict with the values of his bourgeois family, friends, and class. Longing for a more vital integration in the social community, he joins the army in a colonial war: 'Oh, der Kampf wird uns alle einen . . .'.[8]

Toller draws on personal experience for his hero. He too was a Jew and an artist who, like so many others, went to the Great War in the hope of creating a better world. But what he endured and saw at the front, between March 1915 and May 1916, shook him to the point of a nervous breakdown. From 1917

onwards he became, according to René Eichenlaub (Eichenlaub, p. 57), ferociously opposed to war and a committed socialist. Let us not forget that patriotic enthusiasm had broken down by 1916 among the Expressionists, as is evident from the number of pamphlets, manifestos and appeals issued at that time, rising to a radical anti-war protest by 1917.

Friedrich, however, is not fully individualized. From the beginning, his precarious condition as a Jew and artist becomes, in combination with a far-reaching critique of society, the very image of European man in the years before and immediately after the war. As an alien with no sense of belonging, a stranger to his family and to the faith of his fathers — in a word, an outcast in every sense — he is the symbol of man in search for a meaningful life, in a particularly critical period of European history. In the answer he gives his mother, when she asks him where he has been during the day, the spiritual crisis of a whole generation is reflected:

Auf der Wanderschaft, Mutter. Auf der Wanderschaft . . . Wie immer. Schau mich nicht so an, Mutter . . . ich sagte es doch, auf der Wanderschaft. Wie Er, Ahasver, dessen Schatten zwischen geketteten Straßen kriecht, der sich in pestigen Kellerhöhlen verbirgt und nächtens draußen auf frierenden Feldern verfaulte Kartoffeln sammelt . . . Ja, ich suchte Ihn, meinen großen Bruder, Ihn, den ewig Heimatlosen . . . (*Die Wandlung*, p. 245)

We cannot therefore agree with Sokel when he defines the theme of individual isolation in Toller's plays in terms of the *Sehnsucht* of the homeless Eastern European Jew (Sokel, p. 182). The question of Jewishness, as well as that of the artist, is here part of a larger canvas of historical crisis, to which at first the war, and later pacifism and revolution, become the antidotes and solutions.

The next few scenes begin to demystify the religious and metaphysical dimension which the war has acquired for Friedrich (and indeed for so many artists, writers, and intellectuals of the time including Thomas Mann, Fritz von Unruh, Toller, and Döblin, who was still defending it by 1917).[9] They also destroy the cult of the war hero, and reveal the unbridgeable gap between the ideal of brotherhood and reality. The symbolical use of space (the desert) and time (one hour after sunset) structures the scene in such a way that emotional loudness sounds forth from almost every detail. Toller's synthetic method of characterization becomes evident as his figures appear ready-made, determined by an ideological scheme that is being put forward. In their predicament — wounded, moribund, dead — Toller highlights the brutality of the war, while their utterances — incoherent, delirious, and visionary — suggest its insanity. Meanwhile, a debate about the causes of the war is being communicated to us in short but powerful arguments, reaching a climax with the crucial question 'For what?', which is immediately followed by a cynically paradoxical answer:

Wofür? Für die Herren. Den Wilden die wahre Religion bringen? Mit Morden und Sengen. Ich bin der Erlöser, juchhe! Laß dir den Schädel zertrümmern, und die Seligkeit erwartet dich. (*Die Wandlung*, p. 250)

It is then that Friedrich restates once more his belief in the Fatherland: 'Es muß sein, es muß sein! Um des Vaterlandes willen!' (p. 250). The others demystify this belief with the notion of war as colonialism and class oppression: 'Vaterland! Kenne kein Vaterland. Kenne Herren, die pressen und Arbeiter, die sich schinden' (p. 250). In other words, a war is being fought against the natives because there is an army of soldiers ready to be sacrificed and a class of workers (as we saw so clearly in Kaiser's play *Gas II*) producing the material of warfare and sustaining the economy of the country.

The appearance, in the end, of another victim — a madman — is yet one more element which adds power and veracity to the soldiers' argument. Yet the alienated hero returns to the front.

At this point Friedrich is seen as a 'Fremder' not because he feels homeless, since the other soldiers admit that they too have no fatherland ('Wir sind ja schließlich alle ohne Vaterland. Wie die Dirnen.'), but because, unlike the others, he does not reject the war. Even after he has been made a war hero, he will remain a 'Heimatloser' for as long as he remains alien to the feelings of brotherhood and pacifism.

The next scene completes the war coverage. Here, Toller manages to dispense with characters altogether, resorting to a group of skeletons in a grotesque, senseless dance. The scene is bizarre, as the skeletons behave towards each other with inhibition, covering up their sexual parts. The comedy is macabre, as it exposes the theatricality of human behaviour, more concerned with irrelevant, conventional prudery than with the destruction of human lives (the figures never comment on their being mere skeletons). Once more the image strikes our emotions, creating that atmosphere of devastation and nothingness that awaits those who go to the front. In the suggestive force of this caricature of fraternity, Fritz Droop saw one of the most powerful images (together with the dream scene in *Hinkemann*), in Toller's work.[10]

Friedrich as a paradoxical figure acquires gigantic proportions in the third 'Station' where, wounded in a hospital after the killing of 10,000 men, he longs more than ever for brotherhood. He almost becomes a split personality, undergoing an individual crisis that will eventually precipitate him into a radical humanitarian attitude:

Zehntausend Tote! Durch Zehntausend Tote gehöre ich zu ihnen. Warum quirlt nicht Lachen? Ist das Befreiung? Ist das die große Zeit? Sind das die großen Menschen? (*Augen starr gerade aus*) Nun gehöre ich zu ihnen. (*Die Wandlung*, p. 255)

Simultaneously, the juxtaposition of two opposite spatial dimensions (in his nightmares Friedrich longs to climb a mountain and reach its peak while still

feeling trapped in the desert) endows the scene with a strong symbolic quality: the flatness and aridity of a desert becomes the image of man's existential baseness and agony, whereas the desire to climb a mountain and reach the heights becomes an expression of sublime freedom, vitality, and life itself.

In a realistic, psychological play this tension in Friedrich's development would be presented in a more personal and closely knit context. As it is, the character is dissected into conflicting tendencies, so that he may bear the general symbolism of the play while still conveying the impression of individual conflict.

His spiritual longing is also used as a kind of backcloth that accentuates the confusion and absurdity of other figures. The doctor, for example, becomes a caricature in his pedantic confidence in his ability to cure Friedrich (p. 254). And through the nurse, whom Friedrich believes on awakening to be the Mother of God because of her gentle manner, Christian charity assumes the form of a paradox, that same paradox which is inherent in Friedrich's search for love in the war; for she happily acknowledges the enemy's destruction as God's wish (p. 255). The officer, as a caricature of blind obedience, is suggestive of a whole system of hierarchical discipline, ready to serve as an instrument of power. These are good examples of how Toller resorts to a typified, emblematic method of characterization by selecting and condensing in one figure the predominant features of whole institutions such as the medical establishment, the Church, and the army.

If in the fourth scene Toller makes a statement through surrealistic and grotesque imagery, in the sixth scene he uses the technique of film to organize space in such a way that parallel lines of action are juxtaposed. By a skilful use of lighting, images, arranged by association, merge in a single movement of action. The use of this technique is remarkable if we think that the German film, although at the time it was already celebrating one of its great successes — *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari* — only developed fully after the First World War. The characters in their demonstrative roles are manipulated with ease and freedom; furthermore, inserted in a vast social background, they seem to hold a monologue with the world, as sides of an argument that gradually develops into an ideological thesis.

The focus of the action is a parade of dismembered bodies, held together by artificial devices in a room of a hospital which, in spite of being large, gives the impression of claustrophobia and pain (the ceiling is low and the beds, filled with war casualties, all in grey shirts, are lined in rows). The doctor arrogantly presents them as an illustration of scientific progress, of medicine's ability to cope with war's destructiveness:

> Ja, meine Herren.
> Wir sind gewappnet gegen alle Schrecken.
> Wir könnten uns die positive Branche nennen,
> Die negative ist die Rüstungsindustrie.

Mit andern Worten: Wir Vertreter der Synthese,
Die Rüstungsindustrie geht analytisch vor —
Die Herren Chemiker und Ingenieure
Sie mögen ruhig Waffen schmieden
Und unerhörte Gase fabrizieren,
Wir halten mit. (*Die Wandlung*, p. 256)

Through him, as through the engineer in the *Gas* plays, we glimpse the dark force of modern science and technology expanding through destruction, while the listeners (with the exception of the one who resembles Friedrich), are like an extension of himself, silent phantoms mesmerized by the display of authority. In the end this group of cripples with their slaughtered selves, responding mechanically to stimuli, is a document of horror that reduces the professor's claims to a farcical proceeding:

Ein Sanitätssoldat winkt. Wie aufgezogene Maschinen schreiten von irgendwo sieben nackte Krüppel. Ihre Körper bestehen aus Rümpfen. Arme und Beine fehlen. Statt ihrer bemerkt man künstliche schwarze Arme und Beine, die sich automatisch schlenkernd bewegen. In Reih und Glied marschieren sie vor die Leinwand. (p. 256)

Having watched the circumstances that led Friedrich into the war, and his experience at the front and consequent hospitalization, we now see him ready to face the critical point in his development towards the 'New Man'. His collapse in face of the professor's horror show has already warned us of his emotional disposition, but it is only in the sixth 'Station' that he undergoes the transformation.

The moment of the *Aufbruch*, like any other crucial moment in Toller's dramas, is achieved through a gradual convergence of highly emotional individual situations: his confusion and impotence at chiselling the statue of the hero which is to remind people of their duty towards their Fatherland; his rejection by his girlfriend, Gabriele, who fears being disinherited; and finally his recognition of his war companion, now an invalid and a beggar. They provoke in him the shock of a total demystification:

Wahnsinn befällt mich. Wohin? Wo bist du, Ahasver, daß ich dir folgen kann? Freudig will ich dir folgen. Nur fort von hier. Millionen von Armstümpfen recken sich um mich. Schmerzgebrüll von Millionen Müttern tost durch den Raum. Wohin, wohin? Dort Wimmern ungeborner Kinder, dort Weinen Irrer. O heiliges Weinen! Geschändete Sprache! Geschändete Menschen! . . . Um des Vaterlandes willen . . . Gott . . . kann ein Vaterland das verlangen? Oder hat sich das Vaterland an den Staat verschachert? Spekuliert der Staat damit zu schmutzigen Geschäften? Ward der Staat Zuhälter und das Vaterland eine getretene Hure, die jeder brutalen Lust sich verkauft? Ausgestattet mit dem Segen der Kupplerin Kirche? Kann ein Vaterland, das das verlangt, göttlich sein? Wert, seine Seele dafür zu opfern? Nein, tausendmal nein! Lieber will ich wandern, ruhelos wandern, mit dir, Ahasver! (*Stürzt auf die Statue*). Ich zertrümmere dich, Sieg des Vaterlands. (*Die Wandlung*, p. 265)

At the same time, each of these situations opens up to a wider level of significance. Thus the moment when he recognizes his war companion, the cripple evokes a stark vision of the brutality of war, while Friedrich's artistic impotence becomes symbolical of a turning point in the aesthetic experience of many Expressionists. After the Great War, they searched for new varieties of content and form that would convey not only the phenomenon of the first total war in the history of mankind, but also the need for a social commitment which for some, like Kurt Hiller and Ernst Toller, became an imperative. Friedrich's new perception also carries, from now on, a moral quality which is responsible for his gradual expansion into the symbol of the 'New Man'.

Both levels of symbolism, private and more general, converge constantly, thereby defining the ideological contents of the play. At times, the transition from one to the other is clearly evident, as happens when, after Friedrich's destruction of the statue in a moment of total despair, a sister ('Die Schwester') appears mysteriously at the open door and in ecstasy invests him with a mission, preparing him for a new life:

> Dein Weg führt dich hinauf.
> . . . Zu Gott, der Geist und Liebe und Kraft ist,
> Zu Gott, der in der Menschheit lebt.
> Dein Weg führt dich zu den Menschen. (pp. 265 f.)

The transition to the visionary plane is made at the cost of the late introduction of an unexpected figure. Of course she can be understood simply as a personification of Friedrich's consciousness. Just as the skeletons could be seen as the image of Friedrich's nightmare — an illumination of his gradual, subconscious comprehension of the absurdity and horror of the war — the sister could be the image of that which, at the moment of suicide, points out to Friedrich the path to life, very similar to the 'vermummte Herr' in *Frühlings Erwachen*. In this case, Toller may be externalizing an inner stage of the character's development which would fall in with the dreamlike fluidity of the play. This same technique is again clearly used in the last 'Station' when Friedrich dreams that two mountaineers (one resembles him, and the other is a friend) attempt to climb a dangerous cliff. The image explains poetically Friedrich's inner conflict between the desire to start a new life and the tendency, still alive in him, to remain a conformist.

The fifth 'Station' inaugurates a different phase in the main character's experience and in the structure of the play. In his new mission, Friedrich starts covering several stages of man's life and, like a torch, unveils a kind of reality that needs to be transcended. Thus, in a series of illuminations, we are offered a microcosm of a whole social system where people are humiliated and enslaved by all kinds of mystifications and harsh material conditions. Its pathos assaults us in a 'Schrei' of agony and protest. Because the main character's crisis has been overcome, the emphasis now falls entirely on different aspects of life.

These are presented in a synthetic scale, so that we may grasp the reasons for man's transformation and also the obstacles which await him on his way to becoming truly *Mensch*.

Characterization is achieved by suggestion rather than by extensive description. In a series of images which indicate the moral disintegration of a family and the deadly effects of factory work, the human figures are elements in a wider composition distinguished by sombre colours, slow tempo, and plaintive, subdued sound effects. In such an atmosphere, the night-visitor, for example (whom Toller characterizes with a few sinister traits: 'um seinen Totenschädel einen dicken Schal gebunden'), acquires fatal connotations, suggesting the pernicious reality of the factory (p. 268). This suggestion is also confirmed by the dying prisoner, who looks like Friedrich and has just attempted suicide because of his appalling work conditions (pp. 270 f.).

But Toller also goes beyond a purely social significance when he associates the worker's suicide with the Crucifixion of Christ. Through this symbolic extension of the character, the death of Friedrich as worker becomes also the death of Friedrich as son, lover, soldier, and husband. In other words, it stands for the rejection of all those ways of life which Friedrich adopted in his search for brotherhood. It is also the prerequisite for his rebirth as a different person, as the 'New Man' and leader of the masses.

In fact, in the tenth scene, Friedrich, the 'New Man', actually refers to his own transformation in biblical images:

> Mir ist, als ob ich heut
> Zum erstenmal erwache,
> Als ob ich eine schwere Grabesplatte fortgewälzt
> Und auferstehe.
> Das erdgefesselte Gefäß zerbricht.
> Der Richter ward zum Angeklagten,
> Der Angeklagte ward zum Richter.
> Und beide reichen sich verzeihend blutbefleckte Hände.
> Und beide tun ihre Würde, ihre Schmach
> Wie Dornenkronen von sich ab.
> Anbricht der Morgen.
> Der Nebel teilt sich.
> Ich weiß den Weg zur Arbeitsstätte,
> Nun weiß ich ihn. (*Die Wandlung*, p. 273)

His resurrection also finds expression in the image of the woman bearing a child in a pool of sunlight under an infinite sky. By means of biblical imagery and light, Toller, like Kaiser in *Die Bürger von Calais*, conveys the ideal implications of the birth of the 'New Man' as a hope to mankind, while the chorus of prisoners, who not long before echoed Friedrich's lament in an expression of sorrow, now sing a hymn of joy as they face the perspective of a happier future opening up to them:

Ein Kind.
Wie lange ist es her . . .
Daß wir ein Kinderlachen hörten . . .
Wie lange ist es her . . .
Daß wir mit Kindern spielten. (p. 273)

Having revealed and denounced man's social condition through Friedrich's various experiences, Toller sums up, in a conclusive gesture, the main stages of the *Passionsweg*. For this purpose the author groups different figures as mouthpieces in a rhetorical but concise recapitulation of the different stages hitherto traversed. An old gentleman tries to arouse people's patriotic feelings by invoking the glorious imperial days. A professor puts forward the view that science and education will solve all problems. A priest proposes resignation. What Toller does here is very similar to the confessional scene at the Salvation Army meeting in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. Several experiences in the cashier's quest for personal fulfilment are alluded to in references to other people's sins. Here, what went before is briefly suggested by figures who, like posters, speak for particular values. The result is the same: we are given a very quick but nevertheless panoramic view of all those aspects of life which have proved to be negative, thus preparing us for the final conclusion — the need for a social revolution conducted by the masses under responsible leaders. This theme is also briefly developed by Kommis and Friedrich when they argue in the interests of the proletariat, one proposing a take-over by force and the other warning against violence and false leadership (p. 276).

This technique of communicating the meaning of the play by summing up what went before is also employed at the end in connection with the main character when he is confronted with a number of figures: mother, uncle, doctor, and madman. The mother and the uncle consider him a sham, a failure who has betrayed his Jewish heritage; the doctor sees him as a psychopath; the madman mocks his intentions of social reform, insisting that mass suicide is the only solution for mankind. In other words, a criterion of 'normality' is implicit in the doctor's prognosis, which accommodates the culture that Friedrich is rejecting; its sectarianism is embodied in the mother and uncle, and its nihilism in the madman.

The main character is fundamental to the structure of the play, and he therefore assumes an extraordinary variety of nuances: he is either segmented into different roles or exemplifies states of mind. Nevertheless, whatever variety of forms he may assume, his ultimate significance derives not from a consistent personality but from the objective reality that causes his character to undergo transformation. Furthermore, he also becomes, in the end, a symbol of poetic vision, saturated with a kind of spirituality that sets him beyond the individual and social spheres:

Der Mensch im expressionistischen Drama ist ein Zeichen, eine Deutung bereits, er bleibt nicht mehr er selbst, sondern wird zu der Sehnsucht, die hinter ihm steht,

dem Drang, der Brunst, dem Verlangen. Das aber heißt: dieser Mensch ist ein Symbol.[11]

In no other playwright considered here, with the exception of Bertolt Brecht, do poetry and politics mix with such ease and certainty. The difference between them lies in Brecht's ability to master this style to the point where poetry and politics cease to fill the character merely from outside but become the very texture of his life. Thus, Toller already provides a point of departure for understanding Brecht's theatrical achievement.

Masse–Mensch

Having given birth to the 'New Man', Toller now reflects on the possibility of his success as a leader of masses. This reflection confronts him with the problem of political activity and revolution, and particularly with the problems of means and ends and mass behaviour.

Toller saw the threat to the working-class coming from both Right and Left. But whereas the threat to man's integrity and survival from the capitalist system is never doubted (it is suggested as before in all its sombre aspects), Toller now dedicates his play to the question of revolution, to dangers from the Left itself which can destroy the cause of socialism. Since Toller had himself been involved as a leading protagonist in the political events of 1919, *Masse–Mensch* is also his attempt to come to terms with his guilt in relation to the victims of the Revolution. Not only is it dedicated to one of those victims, Sonja Lerch, who was imprisoned and later committed suicide, but the main character actually carries her name. No wonder *Masse–Mensch* revolves around the dilemma of a political leader (the woman Sonja) who recognizes the urgent need for political change, but rejects the use of violence. She is nevertheless pressed by the impatience of the masses and the criticism of a Communist leader to accept the tactics of armed revolution, subsequently experiencing an acute crisis of guilt when faced with the loss of human lives.

As in *Die Wandlung*, the theme is expanded from the individual to the abstract, universal level. Irene Sonja, or simply the woman, is the positive leader. She appears simplified in her individual traits and enlarged in her symbolic, moral, and political significance. On the other hand, the negative leader — the nameless one — is simply a mouthpiece within a dialectic concerning means and ends. His advocacy of violent means is the antithesis of the woman's exhortation to apply peaceful political pressure for gradual social change.

If the masses in *Die Wandlung* are moved by Friedrich's appeal to reason and charity, in this play they at first embody hatred; but in the end, when confronted with death through a violence that they themselves kindled, they appear reduced to a single voice of despair. Walter Sokel, who was critical of

the optimism of *Die Wandlung*, maintains that the tragic intensity of this play is largely due to the breakdown of Toller's faith in reason and in man.[12] And Werner Geifrig points out that Toller failed to find a solution to the conflict between the masses and the individual, the politician and the artist (Geifrig, pp. 216–23). Toller himself acknowledged that it was the unbridgeable gulf between his ideal of society and the world of *Realpolitik* that made him write *Masse–Mensch* (*Prosa* etc., p. 175). He wished to see individual and responsible action shaping history. For this, he knew, man had to regain his humanity, like Friedrich, through renunciation, error, and pain. But in spite of the doubts that may have tormented Toller, he continues to analyse the capitalist order into patterns of behaviour, cultural prejudices, moral beliefs, economic interests, and the exploitation of the worker by the machine:

> Maschinen pressen uns wie Vieh in Schlachthaus,
> Maschinen klemmen uns in Schraubstock,
> Maschinen hämmern unsre Leiber Tag für Tag
> Zu Nieten . . . Schrauben . . .
> Schrauben . . . drei Millimeter . . . Schrauben . . . fünf Millimeter,
> Dörren unsre Augen, lassen Hände uns verwesen
> Bei lebendigem Leibe . . . (*Masse–Mensch*, pp. 305 f.)

A war is waged to protect the ambitions of a few, like the bankers, who in the second scene appear dehumanized, like calculating robots, dancing to the sound of rattling coins; it is they who decide to create a brothel at the front to improve the soldiers' disposition, thereby revealing the economic interests behind the ideal of Fatherland. These are powerful images of Toller's continuing ideological commitment.

Other figures like the woman's husband, the priest, and the officer contribute to the social critique from other angles. Sonja's husband, a kind of civil servant, justifies his standpoint with the arguments of the repressive intelligentsia:

> Staat ist heilig . . . Krieg sichert Leben ihm.
> Friede ist Phantom von Nervenschwachen.
> Krieg ist nichts als unterbrochner Waffenstillstand,
> In dem der Staat, bedroht vom äußeren Feind,
> Bedroht vom innren Feind, beständig lebt. (*Masse–Mensch*, p. 299)

In the different roles in which he appears, he always remains the 'Masse–Mensch', imbued with the prevailing ideology. As a husband he lacks deep feelings for Sonja. The effort he makes to rescue her from being executed is motivated by his desire not to be associated with the workers' rebellion. And in his profession, he appears uncritical and servile. The priest's insistent reference to the Christian concept of original sin (p. 329) turns him, in contrast to the woman with her moral readiness to die for an ideal of man, into a mouthpiece of reactionary doctrine that reduces *ad absurdum* any attempt to bring about a

better world. The officer to whom Sonja's execution is entrusted is, like the priest, an instrument of an institution:

Die Frau. Sie werden mich erschießen lassen?
Der Offizier. Befehl Befehl. Gehorchen gehorchen.
Staatsinteresse Ruhe Ordnung.
Offizierspflicht.
Die Frau. Und der Mensch?
Der Offizier. Jede Unterhaltung mir verboten.
Befehl Befehl. (*Masse–Mensch*, p. 330)

In *Die Wandlung* the breakdown of the priest points to the impotence of religious faith when it comes to assuaging man's suffering, although it can also be interpreted as a crisis of faith suffered by one individual. In *Masse–Mensch*, on the other hand, the priest speaks for the Church, he is the Church. This method of representation rests on a stylization of character and situation whereby nobody and nothing is individualized: the nameless one is a projection of the masses in so far as he embodies their aggressivity; the bankers, the officer, and the priest all share the same mentality; finally, and contrary to what happens in *Die Wandlung* and in *Die Maschinenstürmer*, no individual entities emerge from the masses. Toller points through their behaviour to the standardization of life, to man's lack of private and critical dimensions, to his transformation into an appliance that ensures the functioning of the system.

Together with these scenes in which the characters are symbols of the capitalist order, we also find more fantastic, surrealistic situations where they are vehicles for the ethics of the play. The fourth scene, for example, contains a prophecy and a moral statement on the holocaust of the war. In a yard, lit only by a lachrymose lamp, a watchman sings a lament on life and condemned men with ropes around their necks and vigilant workers perform a ritual of death ('Totentanz') in a dreamlike atmosphere. Toller makes a guard and a prisoner (who resembles Sonja's husband) merge for a brief moment into one figure in order to illustrate the meaning of the woman's words as she instructs the guard:

Gestern standst du
An der Mauer.
Jetzt stehst du
Wieder an der Mauer
Das bist du,
Der heute
An der Mauer steht.
Mensch
Das bist du.
Erkenne dich doch:
Das bist du. (*Masse–Mensch*, pp. 314 f.)

In other words, the author does not hesitate to use blatantly illusory effects in order to give his convictions material form. This method is fully developed in the sixth scene, where it appears in a very complex form.

Once again the scene is like a dream, peopled with figures from the woman's unconscious: the shadows of those killed during the insurrection ('Schatten ohne Köpfe') give material form to the woman's guilt, calling her a murderess while she appears, symbolically, imprisoned in a cage; the bankers on the other hand are evoked by the woman's defence mechanism, since they, as symbols of the capitalist order, are to be blamed for the social unrest; the guard, who seems to play both the role of the judge and the therapist, seems to be a creation of her own sense of moral objectivity in a desperate attempt to seek justice. Every time she feels overwhelmed by guilt the guard quickly provides excuses, restoring her emotional balance:

> . . . Masse ist schuld.
> . . . Leben ist schuld.
> . . . Mensch ist schuldlos. (pp. 322 f.)

On the other hand, when she tries to escape responsibility by blaming God for the bloodshed, he reproaches her severely:

> Wurm!
> Gottesschänderin! (pp. 323 f.)

As in *Die Wandlung,* the different sides in the conflict are revealed not through self-revelation, but by an external method of representation that turns every inner state of the character into an image. Thus Toller makes full use of surrealistic effects to convey his political convictions, in keeping with Silvio Vietta's comment on Expressionist writing in general and on Toller in particular:

> Die surreale und groteske Qualität der expressionistischen Literatur ist, in ihrer geglückten Form, nicht einfach, wie in der Forschung immer wieder behauptet, visionär subjektiv, sondern durchaus eine Form von Mimesis objektiver Wirklichkeit. In seinen besten Szenen verwirklicht Toller, worum sich der spätere Surrealismus in seiner politischen Phase bemühte: Traum und Politik literarisch so zu vermitteln, daß die traumhafte Qualität von Literatur politische Erkenntnis ermöglicht.[13]

Toller's acute sense of responsibility in relation to those several hundred persons who were massacred during the Munich Revolution inflicted on him a long-lasting guilt. It was this which led Georg Grosz to believe that he was not suited to be a leader of the masses because he was too honest and not sufficiently hard and ruthless,[14] and H. F. Garten to maintain that he was never able to outgrow this experience.[15] Toller's sense of loss was therefore founded on historical failure and more particularly on his political activity between November 1918 and May 1919. It was the waste of human lives that induced in him the conviction that a political transformation was desirable only if achieved by peaceful means, through full individual, responsible participation:

Tat! Und mehr als Tat!
Mensch in Masse befreien,
Gemeinschaft in Masse befreien. (*Masse–Mensch*, p. 327)

Wife, leader, and prisoner are states in an expansion of the main character's life. Even Sonja's conflict with her husband merely gives her the opportunity of justifying her commitment to socialism, of showing her refusal of bourgeois values but also of the working class revolution, of showing an attitude of irreconciliation which is

bei keinem Autor so deutlich wie bei Ernst Toller. In seinem 1919 in Gefangenschaft geschriebenen Drama 'Masse–Mensch' steht 'Die Frau', der bürgerlichen Klasse entstammend und mit einem Mann dieser Schicht verheiratet, aber für die Sache des Proletariats engagiert, so ausweglos zwischen Bürgertum und Proletariat, wird so auseinandergerissen durch den Widerspruch zwischen ihrer ethischen Maxime der Gewaltlosigkeit und dem gewaltsamen Mittel des Klassenkampfes, daß eine politische Solidarisierung mit keiner sozialen Gruppe mehr möglich ist. (Vietta and Kemper, p. 182)

But above all, she appears as the exact counterpart of the false leader whose dogmatic manipulation of the masses contrasts sharply with her call for conscious action. What starts as a not-too-firm antagonism finally grows into a radical polarity, so that she can stand at the end as a symbol of ethical politics.

Finally, as a prisoner of herself (her guilt) and of society's laws, waiting to be sentenced for mutiny, she is thrust into a state of conflict which is necessary for her final enlightenment and catharsis. The moment of *Auflösung* arrives when she rejects her husband's denial of her commitment to social and political change. (This is, of course, the phase of political Expressionism which found it impossible to accept bourgeois values.) Sonja summarily accuses the capitalist state, and by implication her husband:

. . . Wer schuf jene Hölle?
Wer fand die Folter eurer goldnen Mühlen,
Die mahlen, mahlen Tag und Tag Profit?
Wer baute Zuchthaus . . . wer sprach 'heilger Krieg'?
Wer opferte Millionen Menschenleiber
Dem Altar lügnerischen Spiels der Zahl?
Wer stieß die Massen in verweste Höhlen,
Daß heute sie beladen mit dem Sud des Gestern,
Wer raubte Brüdern menschlich Antlitz,
Wer zwang sie in Mechanik,
Erniedrigt sie zu Kolben an Maschinen?
Der Staat! . . . Du! . . . (*Masse–Mensch*, p. 325)

These different functions of the main character render her individuality vague and emphasize her ideal associations, which become dominant at the moment she undergoes a sacrificial death. Although, on a realistic level, those critics are right who claim that she would be much more useful to the cause of

socialism if she chose to stay alive, her death is nevertheless the ultimate illustration, in aesthetic and didactic terms, of the pacifist Revolution in which she believes. This is evident in the breakdown of the two prisoners who, on hearing the shooting by the firing squad, ask themselves 'Schwester warum tun wir das?' In this light, we can understand that not only Sonja's but also Jimmy's death (in *Die Maschinenstürmer*) functions as means of persuasion — not, however, in the sense of the young comrade's death in Heiner Müller's play *Mauser*, which is hailed by the chorus as a necessity to the cause of the Revolution. In Müller's play, as well as in Brecht's *Die Maßnahme*, the question of the individual versus history is seen within a rigid ideological, abstract scheme.[16] It would be a mistake, however, to see in Toller's 'socialism with a human face' a confusion of poetry and politics, as J. Bab does when he argues that Toller was a dilettante and not a dramatic poet since he dreamed as a politician and treated politics as a poet.[17] It is easier to agree with Hermann Kesten when he includes Toller, who was neither a nationalist nor an orthodox communist, in the humanist tradition of the rational drama along with Lessing and Schiller:

> Ein visionärer Rationalist, hinreißender Rhetoriker und nüchtern sparsamer Prosaist, poetisch durch die delikate Aufrichtigkeit des Gefühls und der Vision und die magere Reinheit der Sprache und der Anschauung, ein geborener Theatraliker und wirkungssicherer Szeniker, war er der legitime Erbe der rationalen deutschen Dramatikerschule, der Lessing und Schiller, mit ihrem großem fühlenden Herzen, mit ihrem spinozistischen und kantianischen Moralpathos.[18]

Die Maschinenstürmer

In this play, we watch Toller's optimism gradually disintegrating and giving rise to a bitter scepticism, a shattering of belief. For this, the failure of the Bavarian Revolution was responsible, as is clear from a letter which he wrote at the time of conceiving *Masse–Mensch*:

> Draußen: Blut–Mord–Qual–Hunger–Not der Millionen. Das drückt viel schwerer. Und die Ahnung um das Schicksal Europas in den nächsten Jahrzehnten. Die unfaßbare Gewalt, die zu dem einen furchtbaren Weg führt. Könnte ich nur wie früher an Neugeburt, an reineres Werden glauben. Menschheit — immer hilflos, immer gekreuzigt. Gerechtigkeit — ein bitterer Geschmack ist auf meiner Zunge. Ich habe an die erlösende Kraft des Sozialismus geglaubt, vielleicht war das meine 'Lebenslüge', vielleicht . . .[19]

In fact, the behaviour of the masses degenerates progressively in his work. If in *Masse–Mensch* they are led by deceit to their destruction, here they actually kill the man who wants to lead them out of their miserable predicament (although, in the end, they cannot escape a feeling of guilt and confusion).

In this play, Toller resorts to a more realistic presentation of character and situation. It is as if the need for an abstract, symbolic style, adequate to the capitalist system with its institutions, power groups, types, and values, and

realized in that perfect piece of Expressionist dramatic writing, *Die Wandlung*, becomes less pressing as Toller's belief in political and social change becomes less hopeful. It is as if, by means of a hybrid style, he hoped to scrutinize more closely the reasons why the masses behave like prisoners of necessity, what Büchner had found it so hard to comprehend when he asked in perplexity about the horrors of the French Revolution: 'was ist das, das in uns hurt, lügt, stiehlt und mordet?' So he chooses a theme that Hauptmann had successfully treated in 1892 in his play *Die Weber*, but he goes beyond Hauptmann's materialistic conception of the weavers' motivation. Toller could never forget the image of apathy conveyed in that Naturalist play by the masses, who are moved only by hunger and despair. He wished to go deeper and look for more subtle but nevertheless determining causes. He gives us a close-up of the intense dependence of the common people on each other, of their anxiety about their basic subsistence, and of the pathos of their suffering. He shows them in alternating moods of despair and resignation, one moment betraying each other and advising their wives to prostitute themselves, the next watching their children slowly starving or being corrupted and wishing they were dead. And although they are also characterized through a profusion of environmental and atmospheric details — the makeshift, squalid interior of their homes, the food they eat, their tattered, starved children, their alcoholism — milieu never dominates the general movement of the play as it does in Hauptmann's work. An ideological motivation is also disclosed through a symbolism and dialectical language typical of his previous plays. The workers, for example, stand for a whole social class in their desperate attempts to negotiate better working conditions, in their ever-increasing frustration that finally degenerates into a hatred that compels them to murder their leader and destroy the machines. Furthermore, Toller includes in the play figures who function primarily as participants in a dialectic about human rights: Ure, the factory owner, Jimmy, the workers' spokesman, and Henry, Ure's administrator and Jimmy's brother. They constitute a triangle which articulates the ideological content of the play.

The confrontation between Ure and Jimmy develops the argument about the immorality of capitalism. Ure manipulates some of the most revolutionary ideas of the time in order to safeguard capitalist interests. Darwinism, for example, is understood not as a descriptive theory, but as a justification of class oppression and imperialism:

> Und zeugt ein adlig mächtiges Geschlecht.
> Der Sieger pflanzt sich fort, nicht der Geschwächte!
> Dem rücksichtslosen Kampf der Interessen
> Entwächst die Harmonie der Welt.
> Wer oben bleibt, bleibt oben nach Naturgesetzen,
> Die unserm Menschensinn für immer unergründlich
> Bleiben. Nur so entwickelt sich Kultur. (*Die Maschinenstürmer* pp. 369 f.)

While Jimmy sees in money the root of social evil:

> Ich nenne Euch das ewige Naturgesetz,
> Von dem Ihr spracht. Das ewige Naturgesetz heißt
> *Geld* ! Wer Geld besitzt, kann Arbeit schaffen,
> Und so er Arbeit schafft, zum Herren über Massen
> Sich erküren.
> Nicht Geist erwählt den Adel! Geld Bestimmt ihn! . . . (p. 369)

But although these figures are clearly Toller's means of social, political, and economic criticism and of arousing the audience's political awareness they are not simplified. Jimmy, a committed man from the beginning (his role as responsible leader does not alter), is rooted in a domestic background which in part absorbs his political activity, transforming it into a cause of family conflict and at the same time lending him a certain complexity.

The same applies to Ure and Henry Cobbett. The former, although a negative figure, is not just a mouthpiece for an ideology of profit. He has a distinct profile, like Sternheim's characters, and is delineated in a variety of situations that show how completely he has espoused the values of capitalism. He bribes John Wible to betray his companions and plots the arrest of Jimmy and of the most militant weavers. He also incites John to direct the weavers' anger against the machine, so that the government may feel obliged to support and protect him against the workers. His ruthlessness is seen most clearly during the inspection of his factory when, through heavy moralizing, he succeeds in making the health inspector oblivious to the appalling conditions in which women and children are working (p. 380). Shrewd and agile, he actually attempts to neutralize Jimmy's activities by seducing him on to his side. When Jimmy refuses, he is perplexed: '. . . ein Narr . . . Ein sonderbarer Narr . . . Ein gläubiger Narr . . . Ein gefährlicher Narr . . . Ein Mann! Ein Mann!' (p. 371). He admires him because he recognizes in his strength an inbred quality, a gift of nature. Toller here shows in operation the crude laws of the jungle which Ure respects and which point to his dehumanization.

Henry is a foil to his brother, but he, too, displays a personal motivation. His fear of losing his social status and of experiencing once more the weavers' dreadful indigence (pp. 346 ff.) explains why he cooperates with Ure; and his hatred of the masses, which he so contemptuously exhibits, attests his insecurity as well as his determination to transcend his working-class heritage. Insisting on viewing the social reality from the perspective of the privileged, he looks for vindication in middle-class values such as that of the self-made man. His and his mother's ill-concealed guilt at their middle-class existence lends them a certain tragic quality.

Somewhere in a middle ground, between Ure and the workers, is the weaver John Wible, the character with most depth in the play. Like the rest of the weavers in Nottingham, he is in great material need. But unlike the others, his

ambition makes him gradually succumb to corruption. He starts by asking his wife to give herself to Henry Cobbett, and he himself becomes an informer. But in contrast with Henry Cobbett, who succeeds in making the transition to the middle class, John Wible remains a poor worker, suffering intensely for his disloyalty and with acute feelings of hatred and revolt towards his employee who robbed him of everything: wife, friends, and dignity. He gives vent to his hatred of Ure immediately after having betrayed the workers' plans to him:

Du . . . Du Blutsauger du! Der eine hungert, der andere läßt hungern . . . ist da ein Unterschied? . . . Alles Pack! Da wie da! Alles Pack! Und wenn du glaubst, Ure, daß ich dir auf deinen Geldseim gekrochen bin wie eine Laus auf deinen ranzigen Speckwanst . . . bäh . . . bäh . . . Ich Verräter? Unsinn! Proleten müssen mit Ochsenziemern angetrieben werden. Blut heißt die Peitsche, die sie aus trägem Schlafe reißt! (p. 358)

It is interesting that, just like Henry Cobbett, John Wible tries to make sense of his disloyalty, arguing that the only way to shake his companions out of their lethargy is by leading them into a clash with authority. But the proof that these are inadequate rationalizations is his paralysis and terror during the frenetic destruction of the machine and the murder of Jimmy, of which he was the instigator.

Frustrated ambition, dislocated anger, and guilt turn John Wible into a dangerous leader. His thirst for violence and social advancement project him as a forceful figure. He is the model of that pseudo-leader against whom Toller's heroes incessantly warn the masses.

This combination of realism and abstract, symbolic representation generates a disparity of perspective, from the close-up view of a suffering community of workers to a level of political didacticism which is relieved only by the poetical and philosophical figures of the old Reaper and the beggar. As the most unequivocal and complete product of this environment, the old Reaper is also part of the social and political canvas. But, in his bewilderment over the human condition, he is more than just an old, demented victim, heavily traumatized by poverty and suffering. His fear and confusion grow into the suspicion that God has abandoned the world. Filled with a sense of helplessness and absurdity, he is the most fearful counterpart both to the weavers in their struggle for justice and to Toller's socialist ideal. Through him, and later through Hinkemann, Toller combines his social preoccupations with an existentialist anguish.

On the other hand, the beggar with a sense of humour that rests on a disillusioned and almost cynical view of mankind, is Jimmy's counterpart, and it is he who supplies the ultimate corrective reflections on the philosophy of the play:

Bettler. . . . Sag' einmal, Freundchen . . . Du bist deiner Leute sicher?
Jimmy. Es sind Arbeitsmänner!
Bettler. Doch Menschen.
Jimmy. Arbeitsmänner halten ihr Wort!

Bettler. Einige schon. Alle? . . . Das ist fraglich. Halten alle Menschen ihr Wort, sind alle Menschen mutig, aufrecht, treu, selbstlos? Nein. Warum sollten es alle Arbeitsmänner sein? Weil sie 'Arbeitsmänner' sind? Du siehst sie, deucht mich, wie du sie sehen *möchtest*. Du hast dir neue Götter erschaffen, die heißen 'heilige Arbeitsmänner'. Reine Götter . . . treue Götter . . . weise Götter . . . vollkommene Götter . . . Englische Arbeitsmänner von 1815, du Träumer! (pp. 377 f.)

Toller speaks here against the mythification of the worker as a common fallacy among socialists and communists. The philosophy underlying these figures marks a definite transition from an idealistic to a more realistic, but also fearful, perspective of man and history, no doubt the result of Toller's apprehension about the evolution of the Weimar Republic.

Hinkemann

In this play, Toller no longer deals with political action in the context of a specific situation. As in *Die Wandlung*, he returns to a more ample reflection on life, with the difference that Hinkemann's decision to commit suicide is the very antithesis of Friedrich's final belief in humanity. In fact, we find here no 'New Man', no hero who fights the evils of society, no champion of mankind. The main character is a victim of war and society's indifference, scourged pitilessly, not by anyone in particular but by a whole social and cultural system, so that, in the end, his suffering appears as the result of a faceless destiny. He consequently has something of the tragic dimension of the classic hero. The evil that befalls him — humiliation, abuse, and indifference — manifests itself in an anonymous, complex form as it infiltrates itself through all sectors of life, private and public.

We must not forget that Hinkemann's final tragedy takes place immediately after the war, in a bankrupt Germany. In this sense, the play is a kind of epilogue to the war. Nevertheless, the feeling of powerlessness which emerges from it is also rooted in a deep scepticism towards the revolutionary role of the working class and towards the dream of the socialist state, which seems to lie crushed under the weight of materialism and violence. We can see Toller's revolutionary faith losing ground as Hinkemann's intense suffering renders ideological promises ineffective. This is the ultimate feeling evoked not only by *Hinkemann*, but also by *Hoppla, wir leben!* (1927). Toller is now close to Kaiser's position in the *Gas* plays.

Critics have pointed out a change in this play towards realism and objectivity. Some have gone so far as to call it an 'orthodox, realistic drama'.[20] As in *Die Maschinenstürmer*, realism is indeed a strong element in the construction of character and plot, and it points, as already mentioned, to Toller's scepticism concerning the possibility of a deep social transformation. Once the proclamation of a Gospel of Salvation ceases, so does the Expressionist style, which encompassed a view of a whole society and sometimes even of modern

western civilization, lose its impact. For Expressionism was from the start the language of the Utopia, whether through war, the 'New Man', or the Revolution. This shift towards realism was common to other writers: Werfel's *Bocksgesang* (1922), Unruh's *Bonaparte* (1927), Johst's *Thomas Paine* (1927), are only a few examples.

However, *Hinkemann* is not a purely orthodox, realistic drama since the main character remains a symbol — no longer of the 'New Man', but of working-class failure, of Toller's disillusionment, or as Carol Peterson points out, of the post-war chaos:

> Ist in Woyzeck die leidende Kreatur Mensch trotz ihres typischen Zeitgewands bis zum überzeitlich-Exemplarischen gesteigert, so daß sie uns heute nicht weniger stark anrührt als die Menschen vor hundert Jahren, so bleibt Hinkemann doch ganz überwiegend ein Repräsentant der chaotischen Zeit nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg.[21]

Furthermore, there is still an ideological infra-structure on which the symbolism of the play ultimately rests, and which is responsible for a fair amount of stylization of character and situation. This hybridization of form, more successful here than it was in *Die Maschinenstürmer*, does not create any serious inconsistency; the emotional and conceptual content remains genuine and fluid.

The drama originates in Hinkemann's anxiety and develops as he attempts to overcome his limitations in the domestic and social spheres until his efforts are publicly mocked.

Only the working class is represented in this play. No doubt Toller wishes to point out that the social evils in question are particularly detrimental to the worker, rendering him ineffective and passive by undermining his class identity and therefore his feeling of solidarity with those of his own social standing. What we see is a whole environment that offers no comfort to its people, neither in the form of resistance to oppression nor even in the form of charity. Forgetting their common misery, the workers, in their frustration, compete with and crucify each other.

Hinkemann's suffering and also his humanity are first revealed through the motif of the torture of the finch, which brings back to him his own mutilation and forces him to reflect on human suffering and cruelty (*Hinkemann*, pp. 397 f.) He comes to realize that a severe change has taken place within him, a sort of *Aufbruch*, leaving him in a state of hypersensitivity that causes him to perceive life as a hell beyond redemption. It is on this insight that Toller founds his character's fear of ridicule and humiliation, a fear which is further accounted for by Paul Grosshahn's explanation that the worker takes excessive pride in his virility because it is his only means of self-assertion in a competitive society, and a source of pleasure for which he does not have to pay.

The main character's personal life takes on a more disturbing quality when he becomes an occasion for satire. In this process, Hinkemann is brought face

to face with a stall-holder who is looking for a strong man for his show, capable of killing rats with his mouth. The jobless ex-soldier Hinkemann, who cannot bear cruelty, acepts the job for Grete's sake, reminding us of Woyzeck, who, for Marie's sake, also endured the most undignified labour.[22] But in spite of the pathos surrounding Hinkemann, the central attention falls on the stall-holder and particularly on his staccato utterances which, like sharp arrows, serve as an indictment of a whole popular culture of which the acts in his show, which all concern violence and sex, are an immediate illustration:

Ach so. Kinderleicht. Maul aufgepaßt! Volk ist keine Lämmerherde. Nur Friedensapostel glauben die Rosine. Haben keine Ahnung vom Geschäft. Volk will Blut sehen!!! Blut!!! Trotz zweitausend Jahre christlicher Moral! Mein Unternehmen trägt dem Rechnung. So harmoniert Volksinteresse mit Privatinteresse. Verstanden? Keinen Dunst natürlich. (pp. 404 f.)

In the same way, in Act II, Hinkemann is confronted with other characters who appear as mouthpieces of certain ideologies and beliefs. The scene, which takes place in a public house, revolves around a dialogue between Hinkemann and a group of working-class men whose names (Michael Unbeschwert and Max Knatsch as Marxists, Sebaldus Singegott as a Christian, and Peter Immergleich as the indifferentist) point to the simplistic assumptions they defend. Hinkemann, reassured for a moment by his wife's loyalty, postulates love as the only panacea for mankind's misery, telling them the parable of the war-cripple who could only resume living through his wife's love. At this point Paul, who has meanwhile been rejected by Grete, comes in and for the next few moments returns the play to its original realistic level, revealing Hinkemann's handicap and job and causing an explosion of laughter. The dramatic impact of Paul's words is enormous; for it destroys not only Hinkemann's self-respect before his friends, but also his last hope which lay in his belief in his wife's solidarity with him. Thereafter, the author once more freezes his figures into patterns of opinion, while Hinkemann, with great emotional vigour, appears in the role of denouncer. We have reached the climax of the play. Hinkemann's humanity is, as usual in Toller's plays, symbolized by light. His biblical turn of phrase and implacable words denounce his working-class companions as frauds:

Worte habt ihr, schöne Worte, heilige Worte vom ewigen Glück. Die Worte sind gut für *gesunde* Menschen! Ihr seht eure Grenzen nicht . . . es gibt Menschen, denen kein Staat und keine Gesellschaft, keine Familie und keine Gemeinschaft Glück bringen kann. Da wo eure Heilmittel aufhören, da fängt unsere Not erst an.
Da steht der Mensch allein
Da tut sich Abgrund auf, der heißt: Ohne Trost
Da wölbt sich ein Himmel, der heißt: Ohne Glück
Da wächst ein Wald, der heißt: Hohn und Spott
Da brandet ein Meer, das heißt: Lächerlich
Da würgt eine Finsternis, die heißt: Ohne Liebe
Wer aber hilft da? (p. 418)

Once Hinkemann's degradation has taken place in the circle of people who should support him — wife, friends, and companions — Toller places him at dawn in a street in the West End, where the suffering and cruelty we have so far witnessed are integrated into a much wider context. This, according to F. Droop, is one of the highest moments in the play, one of the most powerful scenes in all of Toller's work (Droop, p. 23). It is here that, in an extraordinary flux, bizarre documentary elements are associated with Hinkemann's predicament, giving it a universal meaning and making it symbolic of ordinary man's condition. Space itself quickly expands to the point where 'der Raum . . . ist die Welt selbst, man weitet ihn gern übermäßig aus' (Paulsen (1935), p. 185). Hinkemann, the mutilated being, becomes the symbol of man. At the same time and, in a delirious state, he is made to interpret his situation in the light of what goes on around him.

Consequently, the images that follow each other in rapid succession should be presented on stage in such a way as to suggest both the objectivity of their meaning and the world of Hinkemann's nightmares and fears. Only in this realist-surrealist combination will they be congenial to Toller's usual method of working. The figures seem to have been conjured up by magic; unrelated to each other, they are nevertheless associated like variations on the same theme, appearing and disappearing in a tempo that is truly musical: a group of war invalids shout alternately anti-reactionary and victory slogans; newspaper-boys announce the latest news — the deportation and murder of Jews, sensational sex scandals, fire and pestilence, a rebellion of the workers, an invention of poison gas, a report on the stock-exchange, etc.; two old Polish Jews complain about the horrors inflicted on their race; an old waffle seller claims that the Messiah is the only hope for old women; a man sells some sort of miraculous cure for impotence; a group of prostitutes enthusiastically identify Hinkemann as the Homunculus, immediately abandoning him for a group of soldiers.

The dehumanization of man is either reported, as in the case of the newspaper-boys, or presented in concrete form through figures who have been reduced to mere signposts. In some cases the reification of human beings is illustrated through their characterization as mechanical devices: 'Liebesmaschinchen', 'Kontrollzähler', 'Gummiknüppel', 'Flammenwerfer'.

The dialogue between Hinkemann and the stall-holder synthesizes the meaning of the different images, and offers a commentary on this piece of almost documentary performance. Hinkemann's vision that men are still in a state of war, murdering each other and simultaneously laughing, is complemented by the stall-holder's reply:

Na denn schön, wenn Sie sehend geworden sind. Dann müssen Sie auch sehen, daß kein Mensch mehr an Krieg denkt. Mit Kriegsgreuel–Panoptikum verdienen Sie heute keine zehn Pfennig mehr. Aus! Jetzt ist Kultur Trumpf in Europa! Hundert-

prozentig kann man dran verdienen! Wie das sich wieder regt. Wie das tanzt und juchzt und sich auf Schenkel klatscht! Machen Sie nur Augen auf. Man muß was leisten! Leistung! Das ist Schlüssel zu unserer Zeit! Gleichgültig was! Weltboxer! Volksführer! Valutaschieber! Wettbankdirektor! Sechstagerenner! Borgeschgeneral! Schimmytänzer! Fachminister! Revancheagitator! Sektfabrikant! Prophet! Meistertenor! Völkischer! Wotanidenhäuptling! Judenfresser! Geschäft blüht! Man muß Konjunktur ausnützen! Selbst mit schwarzer Schmach kann man sich heute gesund machen! Nötige Quantum Ethos bekommt man gratis geliefert. Haha! Mal in Hamburg ne Negerin gekitzelt . . . Rasse, sage ich Ihnen! . . . Also morgen wieder pünktlich! (p. 420)

Hinkemann's hopeful belief in love has collapsed in a society ruled by chaos, violence, and selfishness. It also becomes clear why the themes of *Gemeinschaft*, solidarity, and peaceful revolution are gone. In their place stands — but only for a while — the ideal of private love. And if it is true that love is 'the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence', and that 'any society which excludes, relatively, the development of love, must in the long run perish of its own contradictions with the basic necessities of human nature',[23] then Toller's vision is indeed terrifying.

The social pessimism of the play is also channelled into a metaphysical and poetic mood. This happens when Hinkemann, experiencing a brief moment of peace ('Die Straße ist völlig leer. Selbst die Laternen sind ob des Soldatenereignisses klein und dunkel geworden. Die Militärmusik verklingt in der Ferne'), gets up, looks at the sky and, overwhelmed by the insignificance of man in the whole of the cosmos, wonders: 'Und über mir der ewige Himmel . . . Und über mir die ewigen Sterne' (p. 424). At this moment, new depths in his character seem to emerge, giving him a melancholic resonance which is useful in his final confrontation with Grete. It also becomes clear that the amount of suffering he has endured has made him capable of detaching himself from the immediate grip of his own and man's condition in general. Like a spectator, he grasps, without cynicism but with enormous melancholy, the ephemeral nature of life. The tragic intensity of his character is softened by tender despair. We can best sense this marvellous modality of personal feeling in another situation when, about to strike his wife, he sees her, perhaps for the first time, and senses the common pain:

Was . . . was starrst du mich so an? . . . Wie blicken deine Augen drein? . . . Ich will kein Mensch heißen, wenn in deinen Augen ein Falsch ist! . . . Die Augen kenne ich! . . . Die Augen habe ich gesehen in der Fabrik . . . die Augen habe ich gesehen in der Kaserne . . . die Augen habe ich gesehen im Lazarett . . . die Augen habe ich gesehen im Gefängnis. Dieselben Augen. Die Augen der gehetzten, der geschlagenen, der gepeinigten, der gemarterten Kreatur . . . Ja, Gretchen, ich dachte, du bist viel reicher als ich, und dabei bist du ebenso arm und ebenso hilflos . . . Ja, wenn das so ist, wenn das so ist . . . dann sind wir Bruder und Schwester. Ich bin du, und du bist ich . . . Und was soll nun werden? (p. 432)

Brotherhood in suffering is here invoked not as a force for social revolution, but as an anchor for resignation and death. The problem of suffering appears to be too complex for an ideological solution.

So far, we have seen how Toller resorts to a very subtle combination of realism and more abstract symbolism in the creation of Hinkemann. He appears three-dimensional in his multiple facets — as a proletarian, a married man, and a war-invalid, yet also stylized as a symbol of working-class helplessness, a mouthpiece of its despair, an image of Toller's disillusionment with ideology and revolution, and a symbol of man's tragic existential condition. The foregoing remarks have attempted to explain how the author has so successfully distributed these layers of meaning. And in the process, interpretations have been offered of minor figures like Paul Grosshahn, a mouthpiece and illustration of Toller's views on the working-class preoccupation with virility, and the stall-holder whose horror-show mirrors the craving of the masses for cruelty and the sensational. Then there are the rhetorical figures in the public house with their different beliefs whose role is only to be tested and negated in their insensibility towards Hinkemann. Like the stall-holder, they are reduced to an ideological function, although the latter is cut in a more grotesque and fantastic format. Finally, an extreme degree of stylization is reached in the street scene, where the figures are no more than surreal outlines of human types. Their rapid and stereotyped manifestations constitute the background against which Hinkemann's final development is projected. Altogether they are the material from which Toller constructs a monument of pessimism.

The character deliberately excluded hitherto is Grete. She is developed purely inwardly, acting out her complex emotions, and is never forced to play roles other than that of her personal tragedy. This she does with the profound despair of the simple and insecure woman of her class. While the other figures illustrate and interpret culture in an explicit way, she never steps out of her situation as Hinkemann's desperate and repentant wife. Whereas Eugen Hinkemann is led out of doors to be exposed to other people's reactions, thereby giving rise to discussion and judgement of social phenomena and particularly of working-class behaviour, Grete's turmoil mirrors society from within. Before her involvement with Paul, she feels ashamed of her husband, she resents, pities, and fears him. Afterwards, she feels guilty. What is important is that she loves Eugen all the time but cannot resist society's prejudices. The motivation of her actions is subconscious, for she has no full understanding of what is happening to her. At first it is her insecurity (she has been pushed into the position of outsider by her husband's condition) that makes her look for reassurance in Paul (Paul being the healthy, the 'normal' man). The proof that she is never interested in him is the fact that she hardly notices his attempts to seduce her, as her mind remains involved with

Hinkemann. As soon as she sees him in his repellent and degrading job, she discovers that she still loves him and incurs feelings of guilt. It is tragic and not without irony that, by the time she tries to reshape her relationship with her husband, he is already too much destroyed to be saved.

Hinkemann and Grete are victims of the same culture, with the difference that Hinkemann commits suicide because he sees no sense in life. Grete, however, never rises above her personal tragedy, killing herself because she believes that she lost her husband's love. In her blind, fateful suffering she stands only for the common person of her class, whereas Hinkemann's suicide symbolizes the defeat of hope and the will to go on struggling for life. He is the symbol of the failure of socialist dreams. 'Wie hat Toller in den Jahren des Exils gelitten', says Kesten, 'um Deutschland, um Europa, um alle Leidenden! Er hatte politische Klugheit und sah mit klarem Blick in die blutige Zukunft. Er fuhr von Land zu Land, sprach und schrieb, warnte und beschwor — und sah den blutigen Schatten Hitlers über dem Welthimmel emporsteigen' (Kesten, p. 260). But already before Toller's exile, Hinkemann stands as the antithesis of that hope in reason and the word that we found in *Die Wandlung*.

As we have seen, the petit-bourgeois world of the Naturalists loses relevance with the Expressionists. In its place we find new themes: the masses, war, and revolution. In its larger sociological dimension, the Expressionist drama suggests reality more than it defines it: figures, situations, scenery become emblematic like points of reference within a large-scale denunciation of social values and political systems. The emblematic characters announce themselves and describe themselves, and in so doing, they portray the world. But it is a world ready-made, reduced to typified moments. Even when they appear as exponents of class conflicts, the concepts they expound (whether it be socialism versus capitalism, or humanitarian socialism versus working-class revolution) are mere rhetorical formulations. So the ideological and dialectical aspects of this drama — which constitute its very backbone — are more formal and exhortative than organic.

Permeating its dialectical structure there is a vision of the world that expands and contracts in a feverish rhythm — the rhythm of the soul — in which the voice of the prophet calls mankind to brotherhood. The best expression of this vision is the interior monologue which pours forth in a dreamlike flux. It is very different from the traditional aside, for it is a direct representation of the character in the process of transcending reality.

We have seen how these two poles — the dialectical and the visionary — produce, on the one hand, an intensification of the object to the point where it appears distorted and hallucinatory. The workers, the factory, the night-club, the home acquire in Kaiser's plays sharp, almost metallic lines, in a perspective that is both futuristic and absurd. On the other hand, they create a fluid world,

encompassing the dreamlike states of mind of Toller's characters and the landscapes that contain them.

In a way, these aspects of Expressionism (which, as we have seen, coexist in the same play) suggest from the start that its ideal of the 'New Man' is irreconcilable with reality. But it is only with the catastrophes of the Great War, the definite failure of revolution, and the advent of Nazism that Expressionism, as a cultural and aesthetic phenomenon, loses its unity and strength:

> Der Prozeß, welcher zwischen 1919 und 1923 abläuft, repräsentiert das Zuendekommen einer literarischen Entwicklung, deren poetische Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten ausgeschöpft sind und zu automatisierten, schablonisierten Verfahren degenerierten. (Korte, p. 237)

Looking for continuity, some writers, like Johannes R. Becher, still go on searching for the 'New Man' in the communist world; other like Hanns Johst, seek him in the Nazi universe. Many also turned to the iconoclastic spontaneity of Dadaism. In any case, the search for a new answer to the problem of man's relationship with society and its poetical formulation was on. For even those who went back to traditional forms such as Realism already had to resolve the problem that Stuart Parkes defines in relation to a later generation of writers: 'how far is a complacent acceptance of traditional dramatic forms and techniques suitable for any attempt to produce effective theatre . . .?'[24] The answer had to be both a philosophical and an aesthetic one. Such an answer would be the achievement of Bertolt Brecht.

CHAPTER IV

BERTOLT BRECHT

When Brecht started to write and involve himself with the Munich artistic scene, literary Expressionism was already declining. Being younger than the majority of the Expressionists, he never really experienced the traumatism of the Great War which had such a tremendous impact on dramatic Expressionist writing. His military service only lasted a few months, and he was never at the front. And although, during the Bavarian Revolution, he was a member of a council of soldiers at a hospital in Augsburg, his own comments about this event remain contradictory. The importance of the war and of the Revolution, which explains not only the tone of urgency but also the mood of defeatism in most Expressionist writing, was not decisive for Brecht. On the contrary, with such historical events behind him and in the political and economic chaos of post-war Germany, he could look down on the Expressionists' revolt, apocalyptical visions, and desperate cry for the 'New Man', and turn instead to Marxist dialectics for a more reliable and hopeful foundation for his theatre.

Understanding man as a historical phenomenon, subject to constant change and also increasingly maturing, Brecht attempts to do for the proletariat what Lessing had done in the eighteenth century for the rising middle class — to make the theatre a didactic institution. He neither hates nor exalts but ridicules; he does not display anger but tricks the audience into thinking; and he always asks for change even when he is asking for sympathy.

Disliking the Aristotelian notion of *catharsis* and the subjective idealism of the Expressionists, Brecht moves away from tradition, including that of social realism with its exemplary heroes. The positive hero was, of course, already absent from the late bourgeois drama but the reason for this absence — the crisis of European values and structures — was only vaguely articulated. And although such a crisis is present, with great poignancy, in Expressionist drama, it usually encompasses the characters themselves, rendering them emblematic and rhetorical. In Brecht's late plays, however, it is to be found in the very core of their characters, unfolding dialectically through the alienation technique (itself ideological) which shocks the audience and the reader into thinking. As a result, his characters are both individual and parabolical.

Brecht's *dramatis personae* were not always created in this fashion. Up to the late 1920s, they are possessed by a Büchneresque dementia, deliriously

proclaiming, in the first person, their author's anarchism and his obsessions (particularly with death and obscenity), in a rhythmic prose that is both coarse and tender. In their nihilism and irreverence, we can see Brecht tearing to pieces the idealism of the Expressionists — a first symptom of his quest for a new sort of objectivity. Baal, *poète maudit* with echoes of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud, is Brecht's defiant reply to Hanns Johst's highly idealized image of the poet Grabbe in his play *Der Einsame* (1917). Schlink and Garga embody Brecht's cynicism towards the Expressionists' cry for brotherly love and the 'New Man'. In their mutual, vicious degradation for no apparent reason, Esslin sees the mark of the Theatre of the Absurd, while Robert Brustein sees it as a symptom of nihilism:

> Brecht combines Büchner's sense of the anarchy, chaos, and isolation of nature with Wedekind's and Strindberg's perception of man as a wild beast. But Brecht denies even the possibility of a clean kill that one finds in *Woyzeck*, denies even the ecstasy through cruelty that informs *Erdgeist* and *Miss Julie*.[1]

No doubt Brecht's anarchic vision of the human condition at this time was related to his personal experience of a changing Europe. The middle-class values he was taught as a child (his father was the managing director of a paper mill and his mother was the daughter of a civil servant) had been shattered by the mass slaughter of the war and by the cynicism of the 1920s. In the place of the grandeur of the *Reich* he saw ruins, unemployment, starvation rations, galloping inflation, and still the determination to restore the country's military power which, with the exception of the newly constituted Communist Party (whose leaders were assassinated in the first two months of the Armistice), encountered no serious resistance. No wonder the characters he then created stand erratically alone against dark forces that seem beyond them. Human solidarity is totally missing from the urban jungle, be it Chicago or that other symbolic abstraction, Mahagonny. And the denial of life is evident in the homosexual motif, which is present in some of these characters (and in his Eduard II), and in Baal's disgust with pregnancy. Brecht's later delight in the female figure — Mutter Courage, Shen-Te, Grusche, all instinctive mothers, all superb roles for actresses — reflects, of course, his fruitful relationship with his various female collaborators, including his wife Helene Weigel; but it is above all the result of his new attitude towards life which included a rejection of conventional middle-class love and marriage.[2] These characters are already instruments of Brecht's existential and social revolt, but not yet a revolt with alternatives.

It was Marxism that restored Brecht's faith in man and, through man, in history; but this happened, ironically, when Europe was still in ruins and after over twenty million people had died. In the following period, the conception of his figures is governed by socio-economic and political concern. In *Mann ist Mann* (1924–25), for example, the simple Galy Gay is uprooted from his quiet

life to be transformed into an efficient war machine, ready to kill by reflex, in the British-Indian army. This theme had already been treated by the Expressionists, particularly by Reinhard Goering in his tragedy *Seeschlacht* (1917); but in Brecht, the old pathos is replaced by a cool dialectic, which demonstrates how Galy Gay's gullibility is manipulated by military interests. And in *Die Heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe* (1929–30) Pierpoint Mauler, the king of canned meat, causes the bankruptcy of whole industries by his ruthlessness on the Stock Exchange, and has starved workers beaten up by the police.

Typical of this period is a gallery of thieves, swindlers, whores, brothel-keepers, gangsters, businessmen, and Nazis, in an amusing and chaotic association that betrays the influence of Wedekind and the cabaret world of Munich and Berlin. These figures from the underworld serve the playwright as a grotesque representation of the capitalist system and the bourgeois order. In *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1928) Mackie Messer, a stylized mixture of Casti-Piani, Jack the Ripper, and Dr Schön, is a thief, a rapist, and a murderer with bourgeois habits. Brecht makes him a prosperous banker, thus emphasizing, in a direct way, the relationship between business and crime; and Peachum's market of beggars and cripples only flourishes because he knows how to appeal to people's sentimentality. Flat and caricaturesque, these figures highlight, in a sharper manner than in Wedekind's plays, such opposites as hypocrisy and respectability, brutality and kindness. When he shows Mackie being reprieved from the gallows by the Queen and compensated with a peerage and gifts, or when he portrays prostitutes, thieves, and criminals speaking of love, marriage, and loyalty, Brecht is deliberately shocking the audience into reason.

Up to the time of Brecht's exile, such characters are either caricatures, abstract social types, or mouthpieces of cynical wit in an essentially theatrical idiom. Social conditions are also wildly exaggerated: the America of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1928–39) and *Die Heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, and the eighteenth-century London of *Die Dreigroschenoper* are obviously distorted for the sake of social criticism. The sense of the grotesque with which Brecht infuses character and situation, and his counterpointing of the characters' relationships with music, pauses, and announcements, give the plays a sharp edge.

There is a shift towards a more impersonal representation in his didactic plays *Der Jasager* (1920–30) and *Der Neinsager* (1930), as well as in *Die Maßnahme* (1930), where Brecht's allegiance to party discipline and his yearning for a Marxist order come very close to orthodox Communist thought.

It is only between 1937 and 1945 that Brecht's theatre attains that synthesis of humanism and politics which characterizes his greatest plays: *Mutter Courage and ihre Kinder* (1939), *Leben des Galilei* (1938–39), *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (1938–40), *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti* (1940–41), *Schweik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (1941–44), and *Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis* (1944–45). The

characters in these plays acquire a greater complexity. They no longer function basically as personifications of social attitudes and drives, but are activated by dilemmas and moral conflicts which they themselves experience intensely. In other words, the histrionic directness with which the earlier characters interacted is now replaced by emotional depth, conflict, and occasionally even pathos. When Galileo surrenders to the demands of the Inquisition, he is also preparing the way for a lifelong humiliation and self-reproach. A schizophrenic condition, a permanent state of guilt and anxiety, is the price which Shen Te pays for her modest survival as shopkeeper and owner of a small tobacco factory. And Mutter Courage's imperative will to remain in the battlefield is accompanied by agony over the loss of all her four children, one by one. As mother and merchant, she experiences the war both as the devil and as her (and her children's) bread, enduring it as a great tragic heroine would submit to the incomprehensible forces of destiny.

The question we have to answer is why individuality now becomes central to the life of these characters. Does it mean that Brecht has abandoned his parabolic, political theatre for a more ambiguous representation of life? For many critics, such as Ronald Gray and Roy Pascal, this is indeed the case:

> It is the 'human comedy' that Brecht seems most of all bent on showing in these works, and the Communist implications are at most a side-issue, for all that he may have thought otherwise.[3]

> there is no modern state and capitalism, no organized working-class or party. The social conflicts that characters get involved in are highly personal, and their resentment, rebellion, or bewilderment find no social movement or ideology there to clarify or help; their action and resistance depends entirely on the strength of their natural, impulsive, non-theoretical feeling, the compulsive drive for survival, especially, for the woman, survival of the family. Thus their social involvement must derive from an instinctual cluster of drives, from an inner voice and inner assurance, which alone tells them what is good.[4]

Martin Esslin also concludes that, from 1937 onwards Brecht

> had thrown off the shackles of political propaganda and had begun to write a series of plays which showed his talent not only undiminished, but considerably matured and purged of the more puerile antics of his *enfant terrible* period.[5]

This later development, it would seem, is strongly related to Brecht's anarchical temperament (even as a Marxist he could not escape the spell of the cabaret and of Wedekind's influence) which made him respond more promptly to the critical than to the utopian side of Marxism. After all, the most fundamental principle of his epic theatre (or rather his dialectical theatre, as he later preferred to call it) is the V-effect, defined in 1933 immediately after his visit to Moscow, by which he aims at freeing reality from the strait-jacket of habit so that it may be perceived critically. But perhaps more important than

his anarchical temperament or cultural influences is the historical context in which he lived, so full of tragedy, surprises, contradictions, and knavery. It is only understandable that, in the late 1920s and 1930s, when he wrote his more aggressive political plays, he may have hoped that the time of the Millenium was closer. The appearance of Nazism only seemed to confirm the necessity for a radical solution. But afterwards came the experience of exile in the United States and of party politics in East Berlin. It is symptomatic that almost all of his late heroes find themselves persecuted and on the run, face to face with the problem of survival. As Roy Pascal says, they are 'concerned with survival rather than change, persistence rather than struggle' (Pascal, p. 15). In fact, the death and suffering of German refugees preoccupied Brecht from 1933 on. And his own guilt at surviving while others died prompted him to write one of his most moving poems *Ich, der Überlebende*. In exile, Brecht witnessed the alliance between Hitler and Stalin — a shock that must have made him more cautious about his communist politics. In 1947, the year he left the USA (and also the year in which Germany was effectively divided), he experienced the beginning of MacCarthyism, after the presentation of the Marshall Plan and the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine. Ironically enough, it was also the year in which Andrei Zhdanov rose to eminence in the Soviet hierarchy, with the well known consequences for art, literature, and philosophy. Still in that year, Soviet control spread over Eastern Europe, and the Cold War began officially. In 1953, in East Berlin, witnessing the workers' riots against the state and their subsequent military repression, Brecht saw the first dramatic example of what Ernst Fischer would call 'Panzersozialismus'. Three years later, Khrushchev would read the report denouncing Stalinism in the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. In that same year, the Hungarian Revolution broke out.

Brecht's experiences of such historical turbulence may well explain why he avoids characters and situations that might suggest an idealized version of communist man and society. With the exception of *Die Mutter* (1930–32), a very free adaptation of Gorky's novel, in which Pelageya Vlasova becomes an activist in the October Revolution, and *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar* (1937), in which Teresa Carrar goes out to fight against Franco, Brecht created no class-conscious workers. Furthermore, the masses, a constant presence in the Expressionist drama, in spite of the philosophical and technical problems this always involved, are practically absent from his plays. And he never really followed the constant requests of the German authorities who urged him to write a propaganda play on some contemporary issue. When, on one occasion, he did start to work on such a play, which was to have dealt with the life of a Stakhanovite worker, Hans Garbe, he abandoned the project as soon as he realized that it would not meet with the approval of the Party authorities. Years later Peter Hacks, another Marxist in whose plays we also find no positive heroes, would comment with some perplexity:

Von manchen Stellen unseres Landes wird die wunderliche Forderung erhoben, daß die Kunst eine Kunst für das ganze Volk sein sollte. Das ist die Forderung nach einer homogenen Kunst für eine homogene Bevölkerung, die Forderung nach den abgeschafften Widersprüchen. Das heißt, kurzum, . . . das Ende der Kunst.[6]

Brecht's refusal to dwell on burocratic Utopianism in the manner of so many Socialist Realists (Utopia appears only in the prologue of *Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis*, in *Die Tage der Commune*, in *Coriolan* and in some of Brecht's poetry), is evident in his definition of realism:

. . . eine Art . . . , bei der die Welt, die dargestellt wird, keine bloße Wunschwelt ist, wo die Welt nicht so dargestellt wird, wie sie sein sollte, sondern so wie sie ist.[7]

It is also evident in the importance he gives to the quality of naiveté in art: 'Das Naive ist eine ästhetische Kategorie, die Konkreteste.'[8] We understand, then, why praise from the USSR only became public after Stalin's death when there were more flexible criteria of appreciation. Like his Galileo, Brecht thought 'die Wahrheit ist das Kind der Zeit, nicht die Autorität'.[9] So the author of the poem *Lob des Zweifels* insisted on seeing man from a critical angle and transformed the stage into a kind of laboratory where human contradiction and error became sharply visible from a socio-political perspective. Marxist theatre meant for him an aesthetic and didactic process of interrelating individual and social circumstance with such rigour and subtlety that human complexity, however irrational and paradoxical, could always be critically assessed and corrected. In this aspect lies the main difference between Brecht and Piscator, whose spectacular performances, intended for the masses, were presented from the point of view of a revolutionary determinism; for Piscator wished the public to experience directly the proletarian Utopia, in a complete merging of auditorium and stage. Consequently, the search for a political theatre that was intended to be anti-bourgeois and ant-illusionistic ended up in an almost baroque concept of a magic mechanism, as illusionistic as the one from which it tried to escape. If we also compare Brecht with Artaud, who was almost the same age as Brecht and, like him, rebelled against bourgeois values, it becomes clear that, whereas Brecht was able, through Marxism, to channel all the chaotic exuberance of his early work into his late parabolical figures, thereby keeping them intensely alive while manipulating them for demonstrative purposes, Artaud's conception of a Theatre of Cruelty remained an extreme reaction to the old psychological drama. And as Werner Mittenzwei points out, 'after Auschwitz the Theatre of Cruelty has no longer a chance'.[10]

Brecht's later plays, then, are the culmination of a social movement in twentieth-century German drama. The search for a new humanity, for a dialectic of historical change which started even before the bourgeois 'heroes' were dumped in the common graves of the First World War, and which asserted itself throughout the first three decades of the century through revolt,

ambiguity, and very often despair and utopian dreams, finds solid roots in Brecht's humanism. In a synthesis of poetry, caustic social analysis, and unfailing faith in man's historical responsibility lies the arresting power of Brecht's later plays. One must therefore disagree with critics such as Herbert Luethy who, in his essay on Brecht, argued that the poet's political convictions were a limitation to his creative talent.[11] Or Henry Adler, in whose opinion Brecht was inferior to Shaw and Ibsen because

they are aware of the essential problems of human nature, of human development, of the inner conflicts of man's mind and feelings and their outward expression not only in his relations with his fellow men but with his sense of life on this planet in the universe.[12]

Marxism may have seemed to be a limitation in the earlier years of Brecht's political drama, but the short experiment with orthodoxy proved to be a necessary stage for the ripening of his talent. What Michael Hamburger says with specific reference to Brecht's later poetry is also true of his late drama:

In den späten Gedichten ist die Härte mehr als bloß eine Geste, so daß Brecht nun auch Zärtlichkeit und Sanftheit zulassen kann, wie auch jene Liebe zur Natur, die ihm immer unbehaglich war, weil er sie verdächtigte, Überbleibsel von Genußsucht, Ästhetizismus und Idyllik der Bourgeoisie zu sein.[13]

His dialectical materialism gave him a basis on which he could create, permitting him also to merge novelty and tradition with ease, to use all sorts of devices, so long as they rendered the ideological content more incisive, the characters richer, and the plays more poetic:

Gerade der sozialistische Standpunkt ermöglichte es Brecht, auch die besten Traditionen des Humanismus in seinem Werk dialektisch aufzuheben; Traditionen, gegen die ein großer Teil der bürgerlichen Schriftsteller sich so selbstzerstörerisch wendet.[14]

Marxism remained, then, the ultimate source of his inspiration. It is indeed possible, judging from his pre-communist writing (Brecht's early poems, collected in the *Hauspostille*, bear witness to the poet's horror at his age, and the meaningless of individualism and love), that he might have succumbed to the cynicism and despair of the first half of the century. For Brecht's early protagonists seek vainly for unity in a Spinozistic sense, as Otto Best points out:

. . . die Natur [ist] zunächst Fluchtraum, worin der aus der Gesellschaft sich Zurückziehende, der Outcast, Selbstverwirklichung als 'Freiheit, unterzugehen' findet und zugleich die Unmöglichkeit der Einswerdung erfährt.[15]

We may conclude that, once he had got past the first surges of enthusiasm for the new ideology, during one of the most disastrous periods of modern history, Brecht simply experienced and expressed the sort of relaxation and freedom that are particularly congenial to the great artist. Though exposed to many

historical vicissitudes, he had matured as a thinker, playwright, and *Regisseur*. The result was the creation of characters and situations which, while they are both entertaining and moving, also call for a process of recognition whereby alternatives and choices become explicit to the audience. Sometimes the characters themselves see the alternatives, as Galilei does; at other times, the audience alone becomes aware of it, as in *Mutter Courage* and *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*.

Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder

Brecht wrote *Mutter Courage* during exile when World War II was just beginning. The subject was no doubt suggested to him by the approaching world conflict and also by his knowledge of the Thirty Years War (for Brecht one of the large-scale wars which capitalism spread over Europe)[16] as depicted in the seventeeth-century picaresque novel *Simplicissimus* by Grimmelshausen whom Brecht considered a realist.[17] The profit-motif underlines the epic structure of this play, and is always seen from the perspective of Anna Fierling, a canteen woman who follows the armies of Charles X of Sweden for twelve years.

Mutter Courage is an embodiment of contradictory forces, of which she herself remains totally unaware. Her concern to provide for the well-being of her children causes her to seek profit in the war, and at the same time blinds her to the simple fact that she may lose them. As time goes by all her children are actually killed, one by one. What was apparently her original motive for remaining in the battlefield vanishes; but she remains, like an old trooper, for the war has become her home and her *raison d'etre*. In this tragic mixture of motherly devotion and mercantile spirit lies the fundamental paradox of this character. Through it, Brecht highlights an enigmatic but common aspect of social behaviour while putting across a pacifist message.

To this end, he endows his heroine with three basic dimensions. She displays temperamental elements such as vitality, instinctive shrewdness, common sense, and motherliness. These are combined with elements of character such as greed and cunning. Then, taking advantage of her cynicism and resilience, Brecht puts into her mouth some of his own thoughts on war, heroism, and mankind in general. For most of the time, the three levels interact simultaneously. In any case, they never destroy the coherence of her character.

Mother Courage inspires sympathy in the audience because we recognize her strength to go on fighting for the survival and improvement of her family's condition. She comes from Bavaria with her three children to the centre of the fighting for the sake of profit-making. Although this is a risky decision, her determination, vitality, and devotion to her children are clear from the first scene of the play. Alarmed but not intimidated, she pretends to have supernatural powers and casts deadly spells on a sergeant and a recruiting officer who

try to entice her sons, Eilif and Schweizerkas, to enlist. Together with this resilience and sharpness, she also possesses great emotional strength, as we can see from the firmness with which she endures the sight of Eilif's body, denying his identity in order to save her own and her daughter Kattrin's life. Helena Weigel's stylized playing of the part emphasized her emotional intensity under tremendous self-control: her hands in her lap, her eyes closed, yet with her head thrown back and mouth agape, she was as though petrified by the tragedy.[18] Finally, she is most tender in her relationship with her mute daughter, Kattrin. She is well aware of Kattrin's suffering through the horrors of war, and she tries constantly to appease her anxiety by encouraging her hopes of marriage in peacetime. She even rejects the cook's invitation to take up business with him in Utrecht in order to remain with her daughter. Such is Mutter Courage — faithful, perceptive, and unsentimental:

(*mit einem Teller Suppe*:) Kattrin! Bleibst stehn! Kattrin! Wo willst du hin, mit dem Bündel? Bist du von Gott und allen guten Geister verlassen? (*Sie untersucht das Bündel*). Ihre Sachen hat sie gepackt! Hast du zugehört? Ich hab ihm gesagt, daß nix wird aus Utrecht, seinem dreckigen Wirtshaus, was solln wir dort? Du und ich, wir passen in kein Wirtshaus. In dem Krieg is noch allerhand für uns drin. (*Sie sieht die Hose und den Rock*). Du bist ja dumm. Was denkst, wenn ich das gesehn hätt, und du wärst weggewesen? (*Sie hält Kattrin fest, die weg will*). Glaub nicht, daß ich ihm deinetwegen den Laufpaß gegeben hab. Es war der Wagen, darum. Ich trenn mich doch nicht vom Wagen, wo ich gewohnt bin, wegen dir ists gar nicht, es ist wegen dem Wagen. Wir gehn die andere Richtung, und dem Koch sein Zeug legen wir heraus, daß ers find, der dumme Mensch. (*Sie klettert hinauf und wirft noch ein paar Sachen neben die Hose*). So, der ist draus aus unserm Geschäft, und ein andrer kommt mir nimmer rein. Jetzt machen wir beide weiter. Der Winter geht auch rum, wie alle andern. Spann dich ein, es könnt Schnee geben.[19]

Such qualities, which really make up the best of her character, are hardly visible in the last scene of the play. Broken down by toil and suffering, she is kept alive by an almost mechanical impulse for survival. Singing a lullaby to the dead Kattrin, she then covers her, gives some money to the peasants to provide for her burial, and returns to her wagon, her last child. In her mind is the sole idea of moving forwards.

Profit-making is, however, the impulse to which she responds most promptly, although it overwhelms and very often contradicts her humanity and motherly feelings. Thus, Eilif is eventually taken away by the recruiting officer, because his mother is too involved in doing business to pay attention to Kattrin's desperate warning. She also cannot bring herself to sell her wagon to Yvette in order to raise a ransom to exchange for Schweizerkas's life. And when she finally does, she haggles for so long about the amount she has to pay for her son's life that she loses him. Finally, she continually exposes her children to the dangers of war for the sake of business, even taking unnecessary risks, as her name, Mutter Courage, ironically tells us; for it derives from her

pulling her wagon across the lines of Riga for fear of wasting fifty loaves of bread. She follows every event strictly from the point of view of her business. When, at the end of the sixth scene, she exceptionally curses the war, immediately after her daughter has been assaulted, Brecht gives the following scene the title 'Mutter Courage auf der Höhe ihrer geschäftlichen Laufbahn', thus reducing her earlier curse to an incidental remark. In her fear of peace, she turns to the Chaplain for assurance that the war will go on. And when assured, she even grows insensitive to Kattrin's longing for peacetime:

Sei vernünftig, der Krieg geht noch ein bissel weiter, und wir machen noch ein bissel Geld, da wird der Friede um so schöner. (p. 1403)

She does not allow pity to disturb her mercantile plans, and refuses, for example, to give some shirts for bandages to dress wounded peasants.

But if Mother Courage appears to be, as Brustein says, 'an image of the "little people", beleaguered by forces beyond their control, yet resiliently continuing to make their way' (Brustein, p. 271), she is also reprehensible inasmuch as she risks the lives of her children. In spite of occasional resignation and disillusionment, as when she sings the 'Lied von der Grossen Kapitulation', she accepts the war as an adventure and is ready to endure its consequences for the sake of profitability:

Courage is not just a passive sufferer, playing on the sentiment of the audience, but also an active source of suffering. She may be a victim of the war, but she is also an instrument of the war, and the embodiment of its evils. (Brustein, p. 271)

Of course, Mother Courage is not rich. She has hardly enough to live on, and her anxiety about the security of her children's future is indeed an important aspect of her psychological make-up. But the problem as to whether Mother Courage's poverty explains or even justifies her business opportunism does not seem to interest Brecht (although it is an interesting question whether a certain degree of poverty can make a mother blind to risk). What is crucial to the interpretation of the play is the fact that, regardless of her poverty, she believes in the economic miracle of the war, accepting for the sake of its opportunities every sort of brutality, including even the death of her children:

. . . Wenn man die Großkopfigen reden hört, führens die Krieg nur aus Gottesfurcht und für alles, was gut und schön ist. Aber wenn man genauer hinsieht, sinds nicht so blöd, sondern führn die Krieg für Gewinn. Und anders würden die kleinen Leut wie ich auch nicht mitmachen. (p. 1375)

Brecht's critical perception of this character is also evident in the way he introduces some of the scenes only with such information on the development of the war as affects, in one way or another, Mother Courage's business. We hear, for example, that Tilly's victory at Leipzig costs Mother Courage four shirts. Had Brecht wished to justify Mother Courage's behaviour by means of

the motive of poverty, he would certainly have endowed her with a different sensibility, an occasional touch of revulsion, perhaps, or even a conflict within herself, as he does with Shen Te. But she never for a moment questions her presence in the battlefields, not even when her children are struck down. In the end, all is lost and she is alone, in her ragged jacket and with her nearly empty wagon, persisting still on the path of the camp-follower, and leaving behind her the already forgotten Kattrin. (Helena Weigel's performance gave a proper emphasis to this side of her personality when, at this point, she took back the last coin from the amount she had given the peasant for Kattrin's burial, thereby detaching herself from Kattrin's fate.) We now cannot help feeling and thinking that her drive for business has turned into a mere compulsion: 'vielleicht geschehn noch Wunder: Der Feldzug ist noch nicht zu End!' (p. 1438).

In this extraordinary figure, Brecht thus presents a typical case of the misdirection and absurd downfall of the common person who is lured, for false reasons, to support the war.

Many critics have remained sceptical about the ideological meaning of Mother Courage. In the discussion between Brecht and the Communist Party's favourite playwright, Friedrich Wolf, Wolf argued that Mother Courage would have been more effective had she drawn some consequences from her experience.[20] Brecht, however, insisted that if Mother Courage learned nothing, the public could learn something by watching her. So he left her untaught and unteachable; for he knew that to change Mother Courage would mean spoiling her coherence and diminishing the impact of the play. But this does not mean, as we have seen, that he left the public total freedom of judgement. He was careful to fill the play with incidents and statements that clarify its meaning and render Mother Courage's folly evident. He even uses her as a direct vehicle of his denunciation of the war, of his assault on the audience's complacency, but always with great sensitivity, so as not to interfere with her basic psychological make-up; he uses some of her fundamental traits as a vehicle of social analysis. Thus, in the words of her naive opportunism, Brecht finds an appropriate means for a brief but concrete allusion to the starvation of the peasants:

Sie haben nicht. Sie sind ruiniert, das ist, was sie sind. Sie nagen am Hungertuch. Ich hab welche gesehn die graben die Wurzeln aus vor Hunger, die schlecken sich die Finger nach einem gekochten Lederriemen. (p. 1361)

And in her matter-of-factness, ingenuity, and suspicion of other people's motives he finds a voice to demystify both heroism and virtue:

Schad um den Feldhauptmann . . . , daß er gefalln ist, heißt es, war ein Unglücksfall. Es war Nebel auf der Wiesen, der war schuld. Der Feldhauptmann hat noch einem Regiment zugerufen, sie solln todesmutig kämpfen, und ist

zurückgeritten, in dem Nebel hat er sich aber in der Richtung geirrt, so daß es nach vorn war und er mitten in der Schlacht eine Kugel erwischt hat — . . .
Mir tut so ein Feldhauptmann oder Kaiser leid, er hat sich vielleicht gedacht, er tut was übriges und was, wovon die Leute reden, noch in künftigen Zeiten, und kriegt ein Standbild, zum Beispiel er erobert die Welt, das ist ein großes Ziel für einen Feldhauptmann, er weiß es nicht besser. Kurz, er rackert sich ab, und dann scheiterts am gemeinen Volk, was vielleicht ein Krug Bier will und ein bissel Gesellschaft, nix Höheres. Die schönsten Plän sind schon zuschanden geworden durch die Kleinlichkeit von denen, wo sie ausführen sollten, denn die Kaiser selber können ja nix machen, sie sind angewiesen auf die Unterstützung von ihre Soldaten und dem Volk, wo sie grad sind, hab ich recht? (pp. 1399–1401)

She warns her children, one after the other, to beware of virtues: Eilif against showing too much bravery, Schweizerkas against honesty, and Kattrin against love and compassion (pp. 1357 f.) and she slaps Eilif in the face when he tells her of his deeds (pp. 1367 f.). The demystification of virtue is completed in 'das Lied von Salomon, Julius Cäsar und andere große Geister' (pp. 1425 ff.) which she sings together with the cook, reminding us also of the irony of Grimmelshausen, for whom 'schöne Tugenden' were envy, hate, suspicion, jealousy, contempt, and meanness.

Brecht's dialectic of virtue is not a straightforward one. Virtue is here criticized, as it is in *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* and to some extent in *Leben des Galilei*, insofar as it reflects a defective society, as a symptom of social *malaise*. In a just and free society (Communist society?) there should be no need for it. 'So ist die Welt und müßt nicht so sein!' sings the cook, indicating the alternative to the audience. In this light, we can understand the double significance of Kattrin's sacrifice at the end, which is both tragic and heroic, and the revolutionary content of Mother Courage's reversal of the traditional concept of courage:

Die armen Leut brauchen Courage. Warum, sie sind verloren. Schon daß sie aufstehn in der Früh, dazu gehört was in ihrer Lag. Oder daß sie einen Acker umpflügen, und im Krieg! Schon daß sie Kinder in die Welt setzen, zeigt, daß sie Courage haben, denn sie haben keine Aussicht. Sie müssen einander den Henker machen und sich gegenseitig abschlachten, wenn sie einander da ins Gesicht schaun wolln, das braucht wohl Courage. Daß sie einen Kaiser und einen Papst dulden, das beweist eine unheimliche Courage, denn die kosten ihnen das Leben. (p. 1404)

The growing relevance of the concept of 'Freundlichkeit' in Brecht's later work, pointed out by such critics as Walter Benjamin,[21] Marianne Kesting,[22] and Günther Anders,[23] should also be remembered in this connexion.

The same dialectical technique is used, though to a lesser degree, with the other characters. They are closer to being embodiments of particular types of behaviour, adding comic detail to a war landscape and complementing Brecht's assault on militarism and opportunism.

The Chaplain, for example, who for a great part of the play hangs around Mother Courage without knowing what to do with himself, is a source of comedy in the tradition of *commedia dell'arte*. He complains about the small chores he is

asked to do, for according to him they are below his rank (p. 1406), picks on the Cook out of jealousy, and even makes marriage proposals to Mother Courage. Brecht maintains the comedy even when the Chaplain illustrates, as Brecht himself puts it in his *Modellbuch*, 'die Rolle, die der Glaube an einem Glaubenskrieg spielt'.[24] We are reminded of a conversation he had with Ernst Schumacher when he argued that today's problems are

> . . . vom Theater nur soweit erfaßbar, als sie Probleme der Kömodie sind. Alle anderen entziehen sich der direkten Darstellung. Die Kömodie läßt Lösungen zu, die Tragödie, falls man an ihre Möglichkeit noch glaubt, nicht.[25]

We see the Chaplain changing robes anxiously according to whether it is the Catholics or the Protestants who are winning, while simultaneously passing abstract and pompous comments on the moral legitimacy of the war (pp. 1373 and 1401).

To justify a conflict that is fought for economic reasons, although in the name of religion, he finds himself in the paradoxical situation of having to deny the most fundamental Christian principle of love for one's fellow men:

> Strenggenommen, in der Bibel steht der Satz nicht, aber unser Herr hat aus fünf Broten fünfhundert herzaubern können, da war eben keine Not, und da konnt er auch verlangen, daß man seinen Nächsten liebt, denn man war satt. Heutzutage ist das anders. (p. 1364)

But neither his religious prejudices nor the occasional opportunism obliterate his humanity. It is he, after all, who forces Mother Courage to provide the shirts to dress the wounded peasants. And he is not altogether indifferent to the tragic fate of Mother Courage's family. In his naive belief in the utility of the war he is also a victim, like the rest of 'die kleinen Leut'.

It is, however, Kattrin's fate that more intensely communicates Brecht's anti-war protest. Being mute, she cannot express in words the revulsion she feels for it, although it is stamped on her face from the first moment she appears on the stage. While Mother Courage looks ahead into the future with determination, Kattrin remains enveloped in apprehension. In the painful sounds she utters, in the gestures she makes in great emotional agitation, Brecht conveys a poignant image of suffering that runs throughout the play like a contrapuntal, silent commentary. After following her mother's meanderings through twelve years of horror suffered in silence, she expresses her agony in action, through the voice of a drum that saves a town from being slaughtered. This is a moment of great dramatic emotion, for we are confronted with a gesture of unequivocal significance. Against Mother Courage's acquiesence in the war, Brecht presents Kattrin's absolute revolt.

The well-known Soviet critic and producer Boris Zakhava did not like the instinctive and almost pathological side of Kattrin's sacrifice.[26] But as Mordecai Gorelik explains:

Both Kattrin and the audience feel emotion during that scene, but it is an emotion pervaded by thought: and the thought is that this mute girl, who longs for a home and children but is no matrimonial bargain, especially after she has been disfigured by some soldiers, is selling as dearly as she can a future that contains no hope.[27]

Kattrin has experienced and understood in her simple but truthful way what her mother could never understand, and she acts accordingly. She drums louder and faster when she sees the soldiers coming back to kill her. Her courage has immediate repercussions: the young peasant who, for fear of losing his life, was willing to show the soldiers the way to the town, now fearlessly asks Kattrin not to stop; and his mother, who had earlier knelt down and prayed to God for those who were going to be murdered, casts herself across her son's body to protect him from being struck for a second time by a soldier's pike. Kattrin's sacrificial death is therefore not a final note of sentimentality. It is an incitement to rebellion against the folly of war. Finally, the delicacy and controlled emotion with which Brecht draws the encounter between Mother Courage and her dead daughter dissolves the dramatic moment of her death into an instance of melancholic sadness, in which an elegy for the fallen girl and the poet's pity and disapproval for the wretched Courage echo each other.

Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan

In this play Brecht's use of the alienation technique involves the whole main character, splitting it into two contrasting personalities, Shen Te, the good woman, and Shui Ta, the ruthless cousin. Through her physical metamorphosis and character deformation Brecht is saying, in theatrical terms, that Christian ethics in a capitalist society are a contradiction. In this way, the conflict between ethics and economics is dramatized with great precision within one character, and not in the usual terms of a clash between individual and society (as happens, for example, in Dürrenmatt's black comedy *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (1956)). And although, through the motif of the metamorphosis Brecht provides a release for a partly unconscious psychological process, he does not fall into subjectivism or simple character analysis; for, in an inexorable dialectic, he relates Shen Te's moral dilemma to social circumstances. Brecht also avoids writing a traditional problem-play, because the main question — of how Shen Te can remain virtuous and survive in an unjust society — is, from the beginning, only part of a concatenation of arguments and evidence that tests the practicability of individual altruism in a pre-revolutionary society.

It has been argued that Brecht's ending is more open than he himself suspected, because a revolution could never eliminate such phenomena as self-interest and competitiveness (as Toller suggested in his tragedy *Hinkemann*). But Brecht is not ideologically dogmatic to the point of writing mere propaganda plays, and the spectator or reader may indeed have opinions and solutions different from those suggested in his work. There is,

nevertheless, an optimistic logic in these later plays, derived from that Marxist interpretation of history on which their ideological and aesthetic coherence depends. For we are made to perceive that Shen Te's deceitful stratagem and her friends' selfishness are a result of their milieu and poor material conditions. A solution is therefore suggested by the very way in which the problem is presented, and the play is not as open-ended as it appears.

To meet the demands of such a dialectical perspective, the characters fall into a very complex pattern in which they function both ideologically and dramatically. They address the audience directly, for example, presenting them with an explanation, a suggestion, or a particular problem. Shen Te's apology for her double-faced friends contains a critique of the social system in which they live, and consequently appeals to the audience's sympathetic understanding of their cunning and ingratitude:

> Sie sind schlecht.
> Sie sind niemandes Freund.
> Sie gönnen keinem einen Topf Reis.
> Sie brauchen alles selber.
> Wer könnte sie schelten?[28]

And the grandfather explains, singing the 'Lied vom Rauch', that poor people's resignation and apathy are the result of hunger and a continuous struggle for survival, a point also confirmed by Shen Te:

> Sie antworten nicht mehr. Wo man sie hinstellt
> Bleiben sie stehen, und wenn man sie wegweist
> Machen sie schnell Platz!
> Nichts bewegt sie mehr. Nur
> Der Geruch des Essens macht sie aufschauen. (p. 1537)

Occasionally, the characters unmask themselves in a didactic process, emphasizing their own hypocrisy, selfishness, or false pretensions. Herr Shu Fu's self-indulgent address to the audience, after he has offered Shen Te accommodation for her homeless friends, contrasts with his intention of seducing her:

(*aufstehend, zum Publikum*) Wie finden Sie mich, meine Damen und Herren? Kann man mehr tun? Kann man selbstloser sein? Feinfühlinger? (p. 1550)

But the fraud is clearly perceived by the audience, not only because, in his almost fastidious planning of a *rendezvous*, he shows how eager he is to dine with her, but also because they recognise in him the man who, for no reason at all, crippled Wang, the water-seller. A similar contradiction is established when Frau Yang praises her son's working success in Shen Te's tobacco factory, because the audience knows by then how Shen Te had to be rescued by Shui Ta from the bankruptcy caused by Sun's exploitation of her love for him. And, as if this were not enough, Frau Yang's words are followed by the 'Lied

vom achten Elefanten' sung by Sun's fellow-workers, which tells us how Sun was promoted for betraying them to Shui Ta. And similarly, when we later see him claiming his rights as the father of Shen Te's child, we know that he is merely hoping to become the factory owner.

The parabolic quality of the characters is also evident in the stylization of the town of Sezuan and its inhabitants. It is reduced to the dimensions of one of its shabby quarters where Shen Te buys her shop with the gift of the gods. Material and moral misery is its prevailing feature: most of the people are half-starved beggars, whole families are unemployed, and children search for food in the public dustbins. A large number of these people live from petty criminal activities, theft in particular. Always on the brink of survival, they are indifferent to other people's misery. The social strata range from this desperate sub-proletariat to a commercial lower middle class, represented by the barber, Herr Shu Fu, and by Shen Te's landlady, Frau Mi Tzue. Contemptuous of everyone below their social position, they are the 'respectable' people of the area. Somewhere in between are Sun and his mother, prototypes of petit-bourgeois pretentiousness, as we can see in the sixth scene where they keep up appearances in a cheap restaurant while waiting for the wedding between Sun and Shen Te to take place in Shui-Ta's presence:

Frau Yang (*im Abgehen zur Shin*): Ich bin entzückt von meinem Sohn. Ich habe ihm immer eingeschärft, daß er jede bekommen kann. Warum, er ist als Mechaniker ausgebildet und Flieger. Und was sagt er mir jetzt? Ich heirate aus Liebe, Mama, sagt er. Geld ist nicht alles. Es ist eine Liebesheirat! (*Zur Schwägerin*): Einmal muß es ja sein, nicht wahr? Aber es ist schwer für eine Mutter, es ist schwer. (*Zum Bonzen zurückrufend*): Machen Sie es nicht zu kurz. Wenn Sie sich zu der Zeremonie ebensoviel Zeit nehmen wie zum Aushandeln der Taxe, wird sie würdig sein. (*Zu Shen Te*): Wir müssen allerdings noch ein wenig aufschieben, meine Liebe. Einer der teuersten Gäste ist noch nicht eingetroffen. (*Zu allen*): Entschuldigt, bitte. (*Ab*). (p. 1555)

Finally the policeman, also a type, is the representative of the law in Sezuan; and as, according to Brecht, the law is on the side of the rich in a capitalist society, he is a close friend of Shui Ta and on good terms with the 'respectable' people of the quarter. It is he who advises Shen Te to marry for money while criticizing her for her past life as a prostitute (p. 1598).

It is, however, the gods who best disclose the parabolic nature of the play. They belong to the old tradition of the popular theatre that reached its apogee in Raimund's Viennese magic-plays of the last century. The story itself has its origins in the Bible (Genesis 19), while the motif of the prostitute's hospitality is already present in Goethe's poem 'Der Gott und die Bajadere'. The novelty in this play is that when the same gods who rewarded Shen Te are faced with the ultimate consequences of their intervention, they prefer to ignore the matter. They entrench themselves in a conservative position, uttering platitudes of ascetic dogmatism such as 'suffering purifies' and 'good triumphs in the end',

thereby revealing that their original mission, if not merely abstract or absurd, was hypocritical. Their response to Shen Te's cry for help is merely to disappear in a pink cloud. In the end, they only help those who help themselves or, as Samar Attar says, their intrusion 'proves that god, if not dead, is at least ineffectual and without any moral authority'.[29] By making them capitulate in the face of Shen Te's dilemma, which is concrete[30] and inevitably complex, in the classic scene of the trial where they and not Shen Te are being judged, Brecht is showing that religion is a farce, an illusion.

Brecht's bitter criticism of Christian religion runs throughout his work, from Baal's blasphemies and Johanna's renunciation of individual goodness and demand for social change to the powerful, retrograde, and corrupt image of the Church in *Leben des Galilei*. And if in *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* the gods, in a parody of the classical *deus ex machina*, are judged and implicitly found guilty, in a poem which Brecht wrote around 1931, *Die drei Soldaten*, God is actually put against a wall and shot for failing to help the poor.

We can also agree with Volker Klotz's remark that they embody the conscience of bourgeois society in its final evasion of the basic problems of life.[31] This would also help to explain the differences among them — the confidence and optimism of the first god, the pessimism and apprehension of the second, and the compromising attitude of the third — which, taken together, seem to suggest the enthusiasm, fear, and realism of the bourgeois mentality. But perhaps this Holy Trinity could also stand for any sort of authority, even intellectual authority, with a grain of self-deprecatory bonhomie, on Brecht's part. For according to Esslin, the origin of the play is to be found in Brecht's biography, in an incident of 1926 when he, Döblin, and Bronnen met with a poor reception in Dresden, which inspired Brecht to write a poem about three writers who appear as gods able to threaten rain and flooding.

Although the characters are dependent on the ideological design of the play, Brecht also shows them in genuine human situations, often of a very contradictory kind, which give them a dimension of individuality and freedom. On the one hand, they are abstract types, categorized products of social conditions and circumstances, but in a wider sense, they are also reservoirs of a deep humanity that transcends any simplistic causality.

A good example is Wang. He functions as the middle man between gods and humans, and therefore has a clearly philosophical function. A deist, he finds it very difficult to reconcile social evil and necessity with religious principles. He therefore pleads on behalf of Shen Te and of mankind for compromise and moral relativism, haggling with the gods for more accessible laws, for benevolence instead of love, for fairness instead of justice, for decency instead of honour (pp. 1577 f.) But this function does not exclude other facets that lend him a certain complexity. Like Shen Te, he is a moral person who is forced to be

dishonest in order to survive (he uses a false water measure); he is also aware of the conflict between the crude laws of survival and the idealistic principles of religion. In addition, he is an essential feature of life in Sezuan, roaming the town in rain and sun, selling his water, watching with concern Shen Te's progress and disappearances, threatening Shui Ta and pleading for her in court. All this renders him, after Shen Te, the most sympathetic of all the characters.

Or let us look at Sun in Scene Three: with a rope in the pocket of his torn clothes, his eyes are fixed on an aeroplane and then in search of a tree to hang himself — he is all solitude and despair. And yet, in his frustration at not being a flier, he still shows contempt for the prostitutes who pass by him in the park; perhaps this is a sign of a self-respect that will soon vanish. In his meeting with Shen Te (for Henning Rischbieter one of the most remarkable and impressive love scenes in world literature),[32] he reveals emotional vulnerability, rejecting her at first but then responding quickly to her 'Freundlichkeit'. By the time he has finished telling her his story, Shen Te is moved to tears and a feeling of tenderness has grown between them (pp. 1522 ff.). However, Sun is also the man who will eventually not hesitate at the thought of throwing Shen Te back into poverty and prostitution so that he may fulfil his dream, and he will seek promotion by betraying his fellow-workers to Shui Ta. Naturally, the negative development which he undergoes is portrayed as the outcome of an ambition which is frustrated by an unjust social system; but the combination of human motivation, poetry, and social analysis also gives this character a depth that goes beyond a purely sociological function.

Brecht also gives us glimpses of poor people's psychology which are perspicacious and realistic pictures. Shin's vicious attitude towards Shen Te, to whom she sold her shop because she could not profit from it, is an indication of class resentment, for she has become a beggar after belonging to the commercial petit bourgeoisie. She not only expects Shen Te to feed her children and lend her money, but also makes her feel guilty at her own material situation (p. 1500). This resentment, however, has deeper roots. It reflects, in all its irrationality, the jealousy of such people at the good fortune of others; for since there is not enough for everybody, some must inevitably be deprived — a fact which, in their struggle for survival, they know instinctively. Envy and fear can also turn into cruelty, as when the carpenter is ruined because Shui Ta refuses to pay him the money he asks for. Their reactions to his despair ('Die Frau quietscht vor Vergnügen') reveal the destructive element within them (p. 1513). This aggressiveness towards one another is sublimated into controlled tension in face of authority. When the barber smashes Wang's hand, their advice is to call the police rather than the doctor, because he may get compensation. However, when they are asked to testify, they deny any knowledge of the incident (p. 1537).

Finally, Shen Te's personality is perhaps the best image of this fusion of the parabolic and the dramatic. In *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*, Brecht allows Puntila's 'Güte' to manifest itself only under the effects of alcohol, and thereby unmasks it as mere sentimentality, treacherous to those who rely on it. Likewise in this play, he lets genuine goodness be thwarted by society, thereby showing its ineffectiveness in correcting social injustice. But if Shen Te's split personality — a neat geometry that highlights the contrast between the ineffectiveness of altruism and Shui-Ta's successful ruthlessness — helps to clarify the ideological thesis of this work, her experience is also movingly individual. For the two sides of her personality, being neither totally good nor evil, activate within her a permanent state of conflict. Accordingly, the moral dilemma in which she finds herself touches both the good woman and the wicked cousin, permeating them to the point where we sense that they are indeed one person: Shen Te is repelled by what Shui Ta does while yet condoning him, and Shui Ta cannot altogether free himself from Shen Te's acute moral consciousness. This interpretation of the character agrees with Brecht's working notes of 1939, which explain that Shen Te must not be 'stereotyp gut' any more than Shui Ta must be 'stereotyp bös'.[33] Thus, the intensity of Shen Te's conflict, while illuminating the dichotomy between her inner world (natural goodness and hope) and the outside world (corruption and competitiveness), also becomes symptomatic of a tragic divorce between reason and instinct, to a point of almost total rupture.[34]

We can see how Brecht, in spite of working with a simplified model of reality in order to build up his social critique, the backbone of his plays, can evoke a poetic sensibility, a feeling of real conflict, a depth of human experience quite unique in modern drama. He never seems to lose his grip on his characters, preventing their fading into shadows of humanity, being ossified into abstract types, or converted into mathematical reductions. Neither does he let them founder in an exuberant subjectivism, which would render everything else peripheral. He reveals them through their environment and vice versa. This juxtaposition gives them a solidity which cannot easily be destroyed, and which was probably what impressed Georg Kaiser when he wrote in 1943 to his friend Julius Marx about *Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan*:

> Haben Sie sich im Schauspielhaus Brechts Stück angesehen? Ich las es hier und bin bezaubert. Das ist eine Dichtung, die mit Vertrauen erfüllt. Wenn man das könnte. Oder sehen Sie sich die Aufführung nicht an — Sie würden nie wieder einen Federstrich tun. Ein großer Dichter lebt in dieser Nachzeit — und das ist Bert Brecht. Amen.[35]

As we have seen, Kaiser's plays were also dialectical, but his characters were either symbols of an ideal of humanity or stylized images of the 'Masse-Mensch'; he must have been struck by the potential of Brecht's drama, in which

humanness rather than its absence speaks through the encumbrances it has to fight with on a stage that claims to be a school of a new social order.

Leben des Galilei

For many critics, this play is the finest example of Brecht's shift towards a more conventional realism and away from his more dialectical form. This interpretation is supported by the central character's complexity and overpowering personality, and also by the author's change of mind about Galileo's recantation, often seen as poor patchwork to force the play into an ideological frame. But in reality, none of the versions of the play is un-Brechtian, for each displays that subtle interrelation of character and social elements which is characteristic of Brecht's late plays. Brecht's interest in the seventeenth-century scientist is carefully measured, calculated in such a way that it becomes part of a dialectic concerning the scientist's social commitment but also the pressures and tactics of institutionalized power. Consequently, the incidents of Galileo's life, the situations in which he finds himself, should not be staged as merely biographical episodes but as typical instances of a confrontation between individual freedom and repressive authority, truth and obscurantism, reason and irrationalism. Brecht himself pointed out that the Church does not stand only for Catholic authoritarianism, but for any repressive power at any time in history. The play should be produced, according to him, in 'large, calm lines', in order to bring out those nodular points where reason and obscurantism defy each other. And the emphasis given to the ethics of social responsibility in the so-called American version of 1945–46, in which the issue of Galileo's survival consequently recedes into the background, gives rise not to contradiction but greater complexity as the image of the original scientist, a sly, cunning character related to Schweik or Azdak, merges with the second, a more reflective type of person. The final synthesis achieved in the last scene of this version, with its eminently clear message, opens up a new perspective.

The change in the main character, from a heroic Galileo who tricked the Church in order to write his *Discorsi* to an undignified Galileo tortured by the guilt of his recantation, which he considers, in the end, a crime against mankind, is the result of Brecht's historical experience. The German communist exiled in Denmark had to re-think, by force of circumstances, the role of the intellectual in relation both to the democratic cause of the masses and to fascism (which he believed had to be combated as a more violent form of capitalism).[36] Science, technology, and progress had also been important issues for him since his ideological conversion, and particularly since science and technology had now turned into evil instruments in the hands of the state. But in view of his own expatriation and the loss of so many acquaintances who had simply vanished in Germany and in the Soviet Union, these questions, although important, naturally became secondary to his preoccupation with

survival. Furthermore, the successive trials of the Old Bolsheviks, after the murder of S. M. Kirov in 1934,[37] could not but shock an avantgarde intellectual like Brecht in their Kafkaesque absurdity. So the Galileo of the first version can also be seen as an anti-Stalinist creation.

But later, after he had witnessed the mobilization of American society which culminated in the Manhattan Project and the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Brecht had to re-think his Galileo, as he himself admits in the preface to this second version:

> Von heute auf morgen las ich die Biographie des Begründers der neuen Physik anders. Der infernalische Effekt der Großen Bombe stellte den Konflikt des Galilei mit der Obrigkeit seiner Zeit in ein neues, schärferes Licht.[38]

Brecht now brings to the foreground the scientist's responsibility in relation not only to authority, but above all to the masses. He still refuses to make Galileo a martyr of progress because he could not, after all, ignore the historical Galileo. It is one thing to exploit a particular facet or potentiality of a historical character, as has been the custom from Shakespeare's Richard III to Tolstoy's Kutuzov, Robert Graves's Claudius, or Hochhuth's Pope Pius XII; but it is quite another to destroy its historical credibility or write alternative history. But there is still another reason. Brecht, the Marxist, preferred to believe that, instead of undergoing martyrdom, the scientist, if endowed with a political consciousness, could always use to his advantage whatever means and influences were at his disposal. The optimism of this attitude becomes particularly evident if we compare it with Dürrenmatt's paradoxical view of the modern scientist's predicament in his play *Die Physiker*, where a lunatic asylum is the only sanctuary in a world that has gone mad. We can indeed say that this optimistic evaluation of the scientist's possibilities is the weakest spot in Brecht's attempt to establish a connexion between the seventeenth-century hero and the fathers of the atomic bomb; for at all times in history scientists have often been impotent before the powers of the state, and never more so than in Hitler's Germany and in Stalin's Russia. No wonder that both the British–American actor Charles Laughton and the German communist Ernst Busch felt instinctively the compulsion to interpret Galileo's recantation as something positive, as was the case in the first version. By stressing the importance of survival, they automatically rendered more sinister the pressures to which the scientist was exposed. But as George Steiner says:

> the conception of tragedy as waste rather than predestined or inevitable disaster, is central to the art of Brecht. This was bound to be the case. The Marxist world view, even more explicitly than the Christian, admits of error, anguish, and temporary defeat, but not of ultimate tragedy. Despair is a mortal sin against Marxism no less than against Christ.[39]

Yet however limited his model may be, it is nevertheless still realistic. This has been confirmed, after Brecht's death, by the example of A. Sakharov,

ironically enough the father of the Soviet Union's hydrogen bomb, in his struggle (and writings) against arbitrary authority, in which he has displayed a political alertness and resilience very like the qualities proposed by Brecht.

This latter interpretation of Galileo remained in the final version, staged by Brecht himself in 1955 in East Berlin. By then, he must have felt thoroughly justified, for both the USA and the USSR had meanwhile exploded their first hydrogen weapons, in 1952 and 1953 respectively.

In his play, Brecht presents a dialectics of history in which the rising middle class of the seventeenth century, anxious for progress, and the Catholic Church, reactionary and authoritarian, impinge upon Galileo's political alienation. The socio-political situation in Italy and Europe, as Brecht saw it, should have allowed Galileo to live and triumph with his truth. His error was to have underestimated those powers which were working in his favour, like the popular support he enjoyed with the crowds who looked upon him as their liberator and hailed his name in the streets of Italy, and the progressive bourgeoisie, impatient to expand economically, as represented in Vanni:

Wenn man je versuchen sollte, etwas gegen Sie zu machen, dann erinnern Sie sich bitte, daß Sie Freunde in allen Geschäftszweigen haben. Hinter Ihnen stehen die oberitalienischen Städte, Herr.[40]

He also fails to take into account the prestige he enjoyed abroad. It is Cardinal Barberini himself, already elected Pope, who warns the Inquisitor that both Versailles and Vienna would gladly welcome him:

Schließlich ist der Mann der größte Physiker dieser Zeit, das Licht Italiens, und nicht irgendein Wirrkopf. Er hat Freunde. Da ist Versailles. Da ist der Wiener Hof. Sie werden die Heilige Kirche eine Senkgrube verfaulter Vorurteile nennen. Hand weg von ihm! (p. 1324)

The Church hierarchy itself confesses to Galileo that it needs him more than he needs it. The cautious way in which its members proceed to dissuade him from publicizing his theories is also symptomatic of their fear of shocking public opinion. If on the one hand they show him the instruments of torture, on the other hand they send him precious gifts.

Galileo's weakness, according to Brecht, is that his humanistic values and his prophecies of the approaching new age were not rooted in *Realpolitik*. Brecht emphasizes the scientist's naivety and his lack of political sensibility in contrast with the sophistication of the Curia Romana and the power of the emergent revolutionary forces. But the scientist is a complex personality, neither a hero nor a criminal, much less a god that failed (as Communism was to Koestler, Spendler, Silone, Wright, and Fast). Harold Hobson seems to suggest as much when he says:

The point of *Galileo* is that men do not today live in an age of reason simply because at a particular moment in the seventeenth century Galileo recanted before the

Inquisition, instead of standing firm. As in one view humanity is saved by the grace and death of Christ, so, in Brecht's, by the life and disgrace of Galileo, humanity is damned. Galileo is nothing more nor less than Brecht's Antichrist. He is the God who failed us.[41]

Galileo is more a Prometheus who has failed man; he is not a Carlylean hero, but someone closer to Plekhanov's vision of the role of the individual in history, so popular among the revolutionary intelligentsia of the first half of our century. In this connexion, Brecht is careful to show Galileo in a variety of positive attitudes, as for example when he decides to remain inside the walls of plague-infested Florence for the sake of carrying on his research work (p. 1273), or when he complies with the Church only after he has seen the instruments of torture. Up to the moment of his recantation, his belief in reason and in the new age is an important ingredient of his character:

Ich glaube an den Menschen, und das heißt, ich glaube an seine Vernunft! Ohne diesen Glauben würde ich nicht die Kraft haben, am Morgen aus meinem Bett aufzustehen (p. 1256)

In his day-to-day life he actually puts such beliefs into practice, openly defending the peasants against Ludovico's prejudices and thereby undoing his daughter's engagement:

Für die neuen Gedanken brauchen wir Leute, die mit den Händen arbeiten. Wer sonst wünscht zu erfahren, was die Ursachen der Dinge sind? Die das Brot nur auf dem Tische sehen, wollen nicht wissen, wie es gebacken wurde; das Pack dankt lieber Gott als dem Bäcker. Aber die das Brot machen, werden verstehen, daß nichts sich bewegt, was nicht bewegt wird. Deine Schwester an der Olivenpresse, Fulganzio, wird sich nicht groß wundern, sondern vermutlich lachen, wenn sie hört, daß die Sonne kein goldenes Adelsschild ist, sondern ein Hebel: die Erde bewegt sich, weil die Sonne sie bewegt. (p. 1310)

When the Medici and the intellectual establishment of Florence gather together to rebuke his telescope, Galileo insists that they should speak in Italian so that Federzoni can understand their conversation. Nor should Galileo's passion for his work be understood in negative terms. Brecht associates it throughout the play with his revolutionary zeal, with his hopes of better days for mankind. Galileo is a passionate nature bent on scientific work; his major fault is to believe that reason and truth are enough to guarantee his achievement. Had he reckoned with the Church's opposition, had he foreseen its pedantic and inflexible scholasticism, he would have realized that it was necessary to fight for the truth on a broad political basis. But he knows how to be tactful only when it comes to safeguarding his daily work, as is painfully clear from the letter he writes to the Grand Duke of Florence, seeking his patronage (p. 1259). His recantation is, according to Brecht, an act of political incompetence, because he has missed every opportunity in his favour. We can thus understand why the issue of martyrdom, considered both by Andrea

('Unglücklich das Land, das keine Helden hat!') and by Galileo ('Nein. Unglücklich das Land, das Helden nötig hat (p. 1329), is of no real importance to Brecht. Galileo is only condemned because, as a genius of his time, with the moral duty and the political opportunity to apply science to the living conditions of a Europe still stifled in ignorance and superstition, he nevertheless surrenders to authority.[42]

His final confession of guilt, his obstinate writing of the *Discorsi* at great personal sacrifice and his decision to send the work abroad, show how much he has changed. He is no longer the naive enthusiast who could speak passionately of the new age, of the social revolution which his discoveries would unleash, and who could then submit to the demands of the Inquisition. Nor is he the fearless charlatan who would pretend for the sake of a few *skudi*, while defending the sanctity of the truth, that the telescope was his own invention. As a true scientist who has meanwhile grown older and wiser, he recognizes his errors and irresponsibility, teaching Andrea that science for science's sake is a dangerous and criminal attitude. However, as a prisoner of the Church, he becomes acutely concerned with risk, protecting the shreds of his freedom in a dogged and lonely struggle, in which we recognize the psychological traits of the Galileo of the first version.[43] He leaves to Andrea the difficult task of crossing the frontiers to Holland, and he becomes guilty of collusion with the Church against those same people he so proudly defended, as we can see from his ambiguous letter to the Archbishop, justifying the exploitation of the poor in the name of love and faith (p. 1332). Consequently, for Galileo, there is no question of redemption or absolution. As Brecht says, Galileo is ready 'den leichten Weg zu gehen und seine Vernunft in niedriger wie in hoher Weise zu verwenden'.[44]

Much more negative than Galileo's weaknesses and errors (which, after all, are manifestations of a free and creative spirit) is, in Brecht's dialectics, the hierarchic image of the Roman Catholic Church, which stands for authority in general while it crushes the individual in the name of established order. The hierarchy's hypocrisy is metaphorically demonstrated in the masked ball where Cardinal Bellarmin, in a ritualistic and elegant dialogue with Galileo, justifies the Church's temporal power and magnificence in the interests of mankind and particularly of the poor. Thus the dance of masks is effectively used by Brecht to unmask the ideological nature of religion as the 'opium of the masses'. In addition, the dogmatism and authoritarianism of the Church are displayed in the Cardinal's rejection of Clavius's confirmation of Galileo's theories. The sheer impossibility of a scientific refutation leads the prelates to a peremptory retrenchment within the bulwarks of discipline, established order, and authoritarian rhetoric:

Ich höre, dieser Herr Galilei versetzt den Menschen aus dem Mittelpunkt des Weltalls irgendwohin an den Rand. Er ist folglich deutlich ein Feind des Menschengeschlechts! Als solcher muß er behandelt werden. Der Mensch ist die Krone

der Schöpfung, das weiß jedes Kind, Gottes höchstes und geliebtestes Geschöpf. Wie könnte er es, ein solches Wunderwerk, eine solche Anstrengung, auf ein kleines, abseitiges und immerfort weglaufendes Gestirnlein setzen? Würde er so wohin seinen Sohn schicken? Wie kann es Leute geben, so pervers, daß sie diesen Sklaven ihrer Rechentafeln Glauben schenken! Welches Geschöpf Gottes wird sich so etwas gefallen lassen? (p. 1281)

It is therefore from in its interaction with the dominant social forces of his time, as a 'phenomenon of social dialectics'[45] that we should assess the significance of Galileo's recantation. In the end, we must conclude that Galileo's complexity is effectively dramatized while providing occasion for socio-political analysis and for a final statement (Galileo's last words to Andrea) on the scientist's duty to live in touch with the realities of his time. This synthesis of sociological thought and the expression of individual freedom is Brecht's achievement within the drama of our century.

It is a striking fact that the *modus operandi* of Brecht's dialectical theatre does not necessarily depend on a Marxist world view. It can also be constructed from a liberal, social democratic, or even Christian perspective, so long as it rests on a belief in man's ability to alter the course of history and in the didactic potentiality of the stage. This particular aspect and the influence it has had on the art of the drama throughout the world confirm that we are no longer dealing with just another experiment, however brilliant, but with a successful, although complex, technique of wide theatrical application.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have traced a clear line of technical development in dramatic character presentation during a particularly turbulent period of German history and culture. An analysis of five major playwrights — Wedekind, Sternheim, Kaiser, Toller, and Brecht — has shown how character, after appearing as a stylized image of modern man at the mercy of social forces, re-emerges as something specifically individual in a type of theatre that is clearly ideological.

The first two chapters of this study dealt with what were considered to be symbolically the last gleams of bourgeois drama. Wedekind's total revolt against bourgeois morality caused him to measure the extent of the damage to man's innermost core — the area of human instincts. Consequently his characters, whether caricatures of the bourgeois or typified presentations of the outsider, are embodiments of aggressive, materialistic, and perverse drives. They are moved by a negative energy that keeps them intensely alive while they remain prisoners of a mechanism of false conditioning that has robbed them of consciousness, of that area of feeling where freedom and creative reason reside. In the end, what they offer us is a grotesque panorama of man, deeply twisted by the values of a declining bourgeois culture.

Wedekind detects the evil of bourgeois society in the impulsive, almost instinctive behaviour of his figures. He is bent, on the one hand, on a radical criticism which traces the ultimate consequences of a false culture; he also attempts to show that modern Western man, damaged in his primary nature, is doomed. It can therefore be argued that his plays represent a sort of final stage in the development of bourgeois drama.

In contrast to this uncompromising rebellion, we have seen how Sternheim tries to resurrect the burgher in an escapist attempt to turn his back on the new century with its powerful industrial middle class, its class conflicts, and the threat of communism. However, his *Bürger* are anachronisms, survivors of a nineteenth-century provincial, liberal world. At the same time, because of their dislocation in time, they become types obsessed with social status and power, excessively anxious to vindicate themselves through material and social success. Finally, their fierce materialism and lack of a moral centre (all they possess is a moral mask) reveal Sternheim's ambivalence towards his heroes, who are intended to contrast with other social types, particularly the proletariat and the revolutionary, whom Sternheim conceives as caricatures.

In these first two dramatists considered here, the dramatic character is an image of the bourgeoisie no longer in a crisis of identity or purpose (as in Ibsen or Chekhov), but in complete surrender to a negative, frenetic *Trieb*, a sign of its irrevocable downfall.

With the First World War and the collapse of the old imperial Europe, with a sudden speeding up of technological development and the repercussions of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union, a new series of problems arise. The frustration of the urban working class, crushed by the terrible demands of a hard, long, and utterly fruitless war, leads to social and economic uneasiness and class struggle. For a time, socialism and communism are looked upon as better alternatives to a decadent capitalism. It is precisely in this period that the masses and the figure of the political leader make their impact on the stage. However, as post-war economic and political stability deteriorate and the threat of yet another war grows, the hopes invested in the working class and in a new socio-political order dissolve in scepticism and despair.

In Kaiser, this transition is clearly visible. In his play *Von morgens bis Mitternachts*, a small-town bank clerk tests through money the different possibilities of the capitalist way of life, the glamour that only money can buy. In his fruitless pursuit of a *modus vivendi*, he is Kaiser's instrument in unmasking the values of the capitalist society. And in *Die Koralle*, the downfall of capitalism and the rise of socialism are symbolically projected through a conflict of generations between father and son. However, socialism is not the solution either, as it fails to correct the distortions in a society which, for its own ends, does not hesitate to turn man into a cipher or a mere cog in the machine of the Establishment. In Kaiser's plays *Gas I* and *Gas II*, the worker, although operating within a socialist system of production, is presented as a reduction, as an extension of the machine, with no life of his own. Without a name and in a grey uniform, he appears numb, alive only in that part of his body that operates the machine. Even when his enslavement by an ideology of production grows beyond his endurance and he attempts to free himself, his aggressivity is easily directed towards 'the external enemy' and away from the primary causes of his exploitation.

Kaiser's representations of the human figure, highly reduced and functional, trapped in the assembly line or in a managerial, bureaucratic group, at the mercy of industrial disaster and of productivity targets determined by the country's victories or losses at the front, express the highest degree of dehumanization in all of the dramatic characters we have considered. It was from this defeatist vision of modern Western man, and in particular of the workers' condition in a socialist system, that both his Utopia of the 'natural community', of the 'New Man', and his nihilism emerged.

With Toller, we encounter the figure of the political leader, in whose influence on the masses Toller is particularly interested. Subject to delirious

outbursts and charged with a profound compassion, he is an emotional and rhetorical creation. He rises to a spiritual dimension (and thereby partakes of the symbolism of the 'New Man') in a series of symbolic situations in which his guilt for having incited the masses to violent action gives way to a sort of wisdom that asserts the need for a pacifist revolution. This process usually ends up with his sacrificial death.

In any case, Toller's plays, like those of Kaiser, remain short of a solution for the transformation of society. While the moral implications of a bloody working-class revolution are painfully weighed by the leader, the masses — a single body (except in *Die Maschinenstürmer*) with a single voice (they are 'Masse–Menschen') — go on being seduced into self-destruction. Finally, the figure of Hinkemann provides a powerful symbol of a demoralized working-class. Toller's pessimism coincides with the rise of the National Socialists to power and with the fall of the Weimar Republic.

Neither Kaiser nor Toller succeeds in giving the worker the dramatic status which the bourgeois enjoyed in the two previous centuries. Although he may have been regarded by the new ideologies, Communism and Nazism, as the potential source of a regenerated society, he remains without a face, submerged in the masses, manipulated by false leaders. He is, in fact, less human than Wedekind's and Sternheim's bourgeois. This is largely because the working class gained much of its significance from the Marxist ideology, which presented it as a revolutionary but also a collective force. At the same time, communism was still too much of a new experience, still in its first stages of development and far from the ideal, with no consistent image of a new man to offer.

Through Brecht's ideological optimism, and only in his mature plays, man (not merely the worker) regains his individuality in a theatre that is now more subtly political. It was Brecht's commitment to a didactic, political theatre that made him search and find a method of creating characters with a multiple function: individual, representative, and parabolical. By relating individual, common people, in common situations, to a political dialectic, Brecht also allows them to function as commentators on the action, as voices of protest, as embodiments of aspirations and ideas. In this way, he simultaneously provides a continuous basis for identification and a continuous means of alienation, alternately inviting the audience to relate to his characters and to maintain a critical distance from them.

This synthesis of humanism and politics in Brecht's mature plays was achieved through his commitment to Marxism. However, the ultimate implications of this approach to character transcend the ideological beliefs of the author. Philosophically speaking, they are compatible with any optimistic belief that puts man at the centre of history. Therein lies the relevance of Bertolt Brecht — he re-directs the *dramatis persona* to the centre of the stage,

not as a vessel of absolute individualism but as an agent involved, responsibly or irresponsibly, in the course of history.

Finally, it must be emphasized that this study has not been concerned with a random selection of authors and topics, but has followed a logical, technical development of character presentation in the light of the historical and cultural events of the first half of the century. The authors and plays we have dealt with are high points in this development, which leads from a vision of modern Western man reduced more or less to a type, representative of a social class or group, a profile, a caricature, or an abstract symbol of an ideal, to his eventual re-emergence as a three-dimensional character. The different stages in this sequence are intimately connected with the crisis of bourgeois values (Wedekind and Sternheim), with socialism and the hopeful yet fruitless movements of the masses to bring about a revolution (Kaiser and Toller), and with fascism and its antidote — political awareness (Bertolt Brecht). It is interesting that the re-emergence of the dramatic character as an individual took place within the context of effective political parables, as if the only way for man to regain his status as an individual were through a profound commitment to society.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

CHAPTER I

1. According to F. Rothe ('Frühlings Erwachen, Zum Verhältnis von sexueller und sozialer Emanzipation bei F. Wedekind', *Studi Germanici*, 7 (1969) No. 1, 30–41) Wedekind was familiar with the work of Freud and, more importantly, with the work of Wilhelm Reich, who exposed the social causes of sexual repression in the light of the bourgeois struggle for survival.
2. Paul Fechter, *F. Wedekind, der Mensch und das Werk* (Jena, 1920), p. 111.
3. Arthur Kutscher, *Wedekind* (Munich, 1964), p. 78.
4. Klaus Bohnen, 'Frank Wedekind und Georg Brandes: Unveröffentlichte Briefe', *Euphorion*, 72 (1978), 114.
5. *Frühlings Erwachen*, in Frank Wedekind, *Ausgewählte Werke*, edited by Fritz Strich, 5 vols (Munich, 1924), I, 289; all subsequent quotations are from this edition.
6. Friedrich Rothe, *Frank Wedekinds Dramen. Jugendstil und Lebensphilosophie* (Stuttgart, 1968), p. 8.
7. Alan Best, 'The Censor Censored: An approach to Frank Wedekind's "Die Zensur"', *German Life and Letters*, 26 (1973), 279.
8. Walter Sokel, *The Writer in Extremis* (Stanford, California, 1969), p. 63.
9. D. G. Lorenz, 'Wedekind und die emanzipierte Frau. Eine Studie über Frau und Sozialismus im Werke Frank Wedekinds', *Seminar*, 12 (1976), 56.
10. Compare 'Kunst und Sittlichkeit', in Frank Wedekind, *Prosa Dramen Verse*, selected by H. Maier (second edition, Munich, 1960), p. 933: 'Trotzdem gibt es verschiedene Arten Sittlichkeit: Krähwinkler Sittlichkeit. Hannoversche Sittlichkeit. Preußische Sittlichkeit. Deutsche Sittlichkeit. Menschliche Sittlichkeit. Sittlichkeit des Soldaten (blinder Gehorsam). Sittlichkeit des Künstlers (für eine Überzeugung einzutreten).
    Nun kommt ein Gebiet, wo es keine Sittlichkeit mehr gibt, weil das Elend zu groß ist. Raubtiermoral. Alles mitten in der christlichen Kultur.'
11. Frank Wedekind, *Erdgeist*, in *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vol. II, p. 34.
12. Bernhard Diebold, *Anarchie im Drama* (Frankfurt a.M., 1921), p. 49.
13. Wilhelm Emrich, *Protest und Verheißung* (second edition, Frankfurt a.M., 1960), pp. 207 f.
14. Ernest Becker, *The Structure of Evil* (New York, 1968), p. 198.
15. R. Peacock, 'The Ambiguity of Wedekind's Lulu', *Oxford German Studies*, 9 (1978), 111.
16. Karl Kraus, 'Die Büchse der Pandora', in *Deutsche Dramaturgie vom Naturalismus bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Benno von Wiese (Tübingen, 1970), pp. 44 f.
17. Klaus Völker, *Frank Wedekind* (Velber bei Hannover, 1965), pp. 35 f.
18. Edward P. Harris, 'The Liberation of Flesh from Stone: Pygmalion in Frank Wedekind's *Erdgeist*', *The Germanic Review*, 52 (1977), 53.
19. On this matter see Wolfdietrich Rasch, *Zur deutschen Literatur seit der Jahrhundertwende* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 60–69.
20. Frank Wedekind, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, in *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 164 f.
21. Compare 'Zirkusgedanken', in Wedekind, *Prosa Dramen Verse*, pp. 878–88. Wedekind appreciated the spirit of the circus from the intellectual perspective found in the painters of a later generation such as Picasso, Beckmann, and Rouault.
22. Frank Wedekind, *Der Marquis von Keith*, in *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vol. III, p. 79.
23. Thomas Mann, 'Über eine Szene von Wedekind', in *Schriften und Reden zur Literatur, Kunst und Philosophie*, Vol. I (Hamburg, 1968), p. 92.
24. Frank Wedekind, *Der Kammersänger*, in *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vol. II, pp. 250 f.

CHAPTER II

1. Carl Sternheim, *Vorkriegseuropa* (Amsterdam, 1936), p. 139.
2. Carl Sternheim, *Gesamtwerk*, edited by Wilhelm Emrich, 10 vols (Neuwied, 1963–76), VI, 313: all quotations are from this edition.

3. Wilhelm Emrich, Preface to Carl Sternheim, *Gesamtwerk*, I, 5.
4. Holger Sandig, *Deutsche Dramaturgie des Grotesken um die Jahrhundertwende* (Munich, 1980), p. 212.
5. Winfried Georg Sebald, *Carl Sternheim, Kritiker und Opfer der Wilhelminischen Ära* (Stuttgart, 1969), p. 38.
6. Wolfgang Wendler, *Carl Sternheim: Weltvorstellung und Kunstprinzipien* (Frankfurt a.M., Bonn, 1966), p. 262.
7. Hellmuth Karasek, *Sternheim* (Velber bei Hannover, 1965).
8. Johannes Mittenzwei, *Carl Sternheims Kritik am Bürgertum im Rahmen einer Darstellung des Pessimismus* (dissertation, Jena, 1952).
9. Paul Rilla, 'Sternheims Bürgerkomödien', in *Literatur, Kritik und Polemik* (Berlin, 1950), pp. 90–97.
10. Rhys W. Williams, 'Carl Sternheim und Molière', in *Weimarer Beiträge*, 29 (1983), 6, 1034.
11. Hans S. Reiss, '"Sternheim — ein Satiriker!"?', in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift*, 57 (1983), 321–43.
12. Ludwig Marcuse, 'Das expressionistische Drama', in *Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1925), p. 150.
13. Colette Dimič, *Das Groteske in der Erzählung des Expressionismus, Scheerbart, Mynona, Sternheim, Ehrenstein und Heym* (dissertation, Freiburg, 1960), p. 113.
14. Bernhard Diebold, *Anarchie im Drama* (Frankfurt a.M., 1921), p. 115.
15. Karl Viëtor, 'Carl Sternheim', in *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Literatur*, 2 (1920), No. 7, 120.
16. Carl Sternheim, *Berlin oder Juste milieu*, in *Gesamtwerk*, VI, 140.
17. *Die Hose* , in Sternheim, *Gesamtwerk*, I, 96.
18. Rhys W. Williams, 'Carl Sternheim's Use of the Sea-Serpent Topos: An Amplification' in *Arcadia*, 11 (1976), 3, 288–90.
19. A. Margaret Rose, 'The Sea-Serpent Topos in Daumier's "Les Bons Bourgeois" and in Sternheim's "Aus dem bürgerlichen Heldenleben", in *Arcadia* 10 (1975), 2, 183.
20. Carl Sternheim, Preface to *C. Sternheim und seine besten Bühnenwerke*, by Manfred Georg (Berlin, 1923), pp. 7 f.
21. *Der Snob*, in Sternheim, *Gesamtwerk*, I, 150.
22. Egon Schwarz, 'The Nobility and the Cult of the Nobility in the German Novel around 1900', in *German Quarterly*, 52 (1979), 2, 171.
23. Wolfgang Paulsen, 'Carl Sternheim: Das Ende des Immoralismus', in *Akzente*, 3 (1956), 287.
24. *1913*, in Sternheim, *Gesamtwerk*, I, pp. 227 f.
25. 'Äußerungen Sternheims zu *1913*', in *Gesamtwerk*, I, 577.
26. Walter Sokel, Introduction to *An Anthology of German Expressionist Drama: A Prelude to the Absurd* (New York, 1963), pp. xxiv-v.
27. Meinhard Winkgens, 'Shaw und Sternheim: Der Individualismus als Privatmythologie', in *Arcadia*, 12 (1977), 32.
28. *Bürger Schippel*, in Sternheim, *Gesamtwerk*, I, 481.
29. 'Äußerungen Sternheims zum *Bürger Schippel*', in *Gesamtwerk*, I, 595.
30. See F. N. Mennemeier, *Modern Deutsches Drama*, I (Munich, 1973), p. 114.
31. *Tabula Rasa*, in Sternheim, *Gesamtwerk*, II, 164.
32. Sternheim wrote an essay on Molière and adapted *L'Avare* for Max Reinhardt. He also saw with Thea a performance of *Georges Dandin* around 1909 in Paris.

CHAPTER III (A)

1. Brian J. Kenworthy, 'Georg Kaiser', in *Modern Language Studies* (Oxford, 1957), 99.
2. Bernhard Diebold, *Der Denkspieler George Kaiser* (Frankfurt a.M., 1924), p. 26.
3. Klaus Kändler, 'George Kaiser — Der Dramatiker des "Neuen Menschen"', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität*, 7 (1957–58), no. 3, 279.
4. Hugo F. Königsgarten, 'Georg Kaiser', in *Deutsche Dichter der Moderne*, edited by H. O. Burger (Stuttgart, 1952), p. 789.
5. Manfred Kuxdorf, *Die Suche nach dem Menschen im Drama Georg Kaisers* (Berne, 1971), pp. 18 f.
6. Wolfgang Paulsen, *Georg Kaiser. Die Perspektiven seines Werkes* (Tübingen, 1960), p. 62.
7. Ronald Peacock, 'Public and Private Problems in Modern Drama', in *Theatre in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Robert W. Corrigan (New York, 1963), p. 310.
8. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, in Nietzsche, *Werke*, edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, I, 6 (Berlin, 1968), pp. 10 f.

9. Georg Kaiser, *Der Kommende Mensch*, in *Werke*, edited by Walther Huder, IV (Frankfurt a.M., 1971), pp. 567 f.: all quotations are from this edition.
10. 'Von morgens bis mitternachts', in Kaiser, *Werke*, I, 480.
11. *Gas I*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, II, 39 f.
12. Georg Lukacs, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (Berlin, 1968).
13. See Rudolf Bussmann, *Einzelner und Masse. Zum dramatischen Werk Georg Kaisers* (Kronberg, 1978), p. 67.
14. Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Abacus edition (London, 1972), p. 17.
15. Ernst Schürer, 'Die Gas-Dramen', in *LGW-Interpretationen*, edited by Armin Arnold (Stuttgart, 1980), p. 97.
16. *Gas II*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, II, 79.
17. See *Gas I*, pp. 48 f. and *Gas II*, p. 65.
18. Manfred Durzak, *Das expressionistische Drama. Carl Sternheim, George Kaiser* (Munich, 1978), pp. 156 f.
19. *Gespräch mit Julius Marx*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, IV, 618.
20. Walter H. Sokel, *The Writer in Extremis* (New York, 1959), p. 202.
21. *Aphorismen*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, IV, 630.
22. *Der Mensch im Tunnel*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, IV, 579.
23. See *Das Drama Platons*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, IV, 544.
24. *Gats*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, II, 447.
25. *Das Floß der Medusa*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, III, 818.

CHAPTER III (B)

1 Erich Czech-Johberg, *Die Politiker der Republik von Ebert bis Schleicher*, second edition (Leipzig, 1933), p. 63.
2. Ernst Toller, *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Berlin, 1961).
3. Ernst Toller, *Prosa Briefe Dramen Gedichte* (Hamburg, 1961).
4. Walter Sokel 'Ernst Toller', in *Deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by H. Friedmann and O. Mann, fourth edition (Heidelberg, 1961), II, 300.
5. Werner Geifrig, 'Ernst Toller — Dichter und Politiker *zwischen den Stühlen*', in *Vergleichen und Verändern*, Festschrift Helmut Motekat (Munich, 1970), 216–23.
6. Carel Ter Haar, *Ernst Toller: Appell oder Resignation* (Munich, 1977), p. 143.
7. René Eichenlaub, *Ernst Toller et l'Expressionisme Politique* (Paris, 1980).
8. Ernst Toller, *Die Wandlung*, in *Prosa Briefe Dramen Gedichte*, p. 247: all subsequent quotations are from this edition.
9. See Hermann Korte, *Der Krieg in der Lyrik des Expressionismus. Studien zur Evolution eines literarischen Themas* (Bonn, 1981), p. 105.
10. Fritz Droop, *Ernst Toller und seine Bühnenwerke. Eine Einführung. Mit selbstbiographischen Notizen des Bühnendichters. Die Wandlung, Masse–Mensch, Die Maschinenstürmer, Eugen Hinkemann*, second edition (Berlin, 1922), p. 23.
11. Wolfgang Paulsen, *Expressionismus und Aktivismus* (Berne, 1935), p. 195.
12. Walter Sokel, 'Dialogführung und Dialog im expressionistischen Drama', in *Aspekte des Expressionismus*, edited by Wolfgang Paulsen (Heildelberg, 1968), p. 74.
13. Silvio Vietta and Hans-Georg Kemper, *Expressionismus* (Munich, 1975), p. 204.
14. George Grosz, *Ein Kleines Ja und ein großes Nein* (Hamburg, 1955), p. 269; 'Toller hatte in der Münchner Räterepublik eine Rolle gespielt und war gleichzeitig ein erfolgreicher, überall aufgeführter Bühnenautor gewesen. Er hatte eine beträchtliche Popularität erlangt und mußte diese dann dauernd rechtfertigen. Anstatt zu verschwinden und weiter Stücke zu schreiben, versuchte er eine Art Führer zu werden. Er war jedoch keine Führernatur; er verwechselte Dichtung mit Politik und seine blendende Rednergabe, die ihm immer großen Beifall eintrug, mit wirklicher Überlegenheit. So wurde er nie mehr als ein feuriger Agitator.
. . . Zum wirklichen Führer fehlte ihm eigentlich alles, in erster Linie die Härte des Willens und die Verachtung der Masse. Er war romantisch und sentimental und sah Schwalben und Menschen poetisch.'
15. Hugh F. Garten, *Modern German Drama* (London, 1959), p. 139.
16. For the comparison with Heiner Müller's *Mauser* and Brecht's *Die Maßnahme*, see Alexander von Bormann, 'Nämlich der Mensch ist unbekannt. Ein dramatischer Disput über Humanität und Revolution', in *Wissen aus Erfahrung* (1976), 850–80.
17. Julius Bab, *Befreiungsschlacht. Kulturpolitische Betrachtungen aus literarischen Anlässen* (Stuttgart, 1928), p. 107.

18. Hermann Kesten, *Meine Freunde, die Poeten* (Munich, 1959), p. 259.
19. Ernst Toller, 'An Tessa', in *Briefe aus dem Gefängnis*, p. 42.
20. R. Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas, *Expressionism in German Life, Literature and Theatre* (Cambridge, 1939), p. 68.
21. Carol Petersen, 'Ernst Toller', in *Expressionismus als Literatur*, edited by Wolfgang Rothe (Berne, 1969), p. 581.
22. See Wilhelm Emrich, 'Von Georg Büchner zu Samuel Beckett', in *Aspekte des Expressionismus*, edited by Wolfgang Paulsen (Heidelberg, 1968), pp. 21 f.
23. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (Unwin Brooks, London, 1969), p. 94.
24. Stuart Parkes, 'West German Drama since the War', in *The German Theatre*, edited and introduced by Ronald Hayman (London, 1975), p. 146.

CHAPTER IV

1. Robert Brustein, *The Theatre of Revolt* (London, 1970), p. 248.
2. See James K. Lyon, *Bertolt Brecht in America* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1980), pp. 221–31.
3. Ronald Gray, *Brecht* (Edinburgh, 1961), p. 14.
4. Roy Pascal, *Brecht's Misgivings* (The 1977 Bithell Memorial Lecture), Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London (London, 1977), p. 16.
5. Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (London, 1973), p. 61.
6. Peter Hacks, *Das Poetische — Ansätze zu einer postrevolutionären Dramaturgie* (Frankfurt a.M., 1972), p. 94.
7. Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, 20 vols. (Frankfurt a.M., 1967), xv, 340; all subsequent quotations are from this edition.
8. M. Wekwerth, 'Auffinden einer Ästhetischen Kategorie', in *Sinn und Form*, Second Special Brecht Issue (Berlin, 1957), p. 267.
9. *Leben des Galilei, GW*, III, 1269.
10. Werner Mittenzwei, 'Brecht und kein Ende oder das Ende der Brecht-Bewegung', in *Sinn und Form* (1968), no. 3, p. 582.
11. Herbert Luethy, 'Vom Armen Bert Brecht', in *Der Monat* (Berlin, 1952), No. 4.
12. Henry Adler, 'To Hell with Society', in *Theatre in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Robert W. Corrigan (New York, 1963), p. 260.
13. M. Hamburger, 'Brecht und seine Nachfolger', *Literarische Erfahrungen* (Darmstadt, 1981), p. 109.
14. Werner Mittenzwei, *Brecht: Von der Maßnahme zu Leben des Galilei* (Berlin, 1965), p. 314.
15. Otto F. Best, *Bertolt Brecht. Weisheit und Überleben* (Frankfurt a.M., 1982), p. 121.
16. See *Materialien zu Brechts 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder'*, edited by W. Hecht (Frankfurt a.M., 1964), p. 17.
17. For a comparison between Brecht's *Mutter Courage* and Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* see K. Knight, *Simplicissimus und Mutter Courge*, in *Daphnis*, 5 (1976), 699–705.
18. See Bertolt Brecht, *Theaterarbeit, Sechs Aufführungen des Berliner Ensembles* (Berlin, 1960), p. 265.
19. *Mutter Courage, GW*, IV, 1428.
20. See Bertolt Brecht, *Theaterarbeit*, p. 255.
21. Walter Benjamin, *Versuche über Brecht* (Frankfurt a.M., 1966), pp. 81–83.
22. Marianne Kesting, *Bertolt Brecht in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg, 1957), p. 87.
23. Günther Anders, 'Brecht-Porträt, Tagebuch-Aufzeichnungen', Santa Monica, 1942–43, in *Merkur*, 11 (September, 1957), 845–47.
24. *Materialien zu Brechts Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*, edited by Werner Hecht (Frankfurt a.M., 1966), p. 31.
25. *Brecht-Jahrbuch 1980*, edited by J. Hermand (Frankfurt a.M., 1981), p. 191.
26. Boris Zakhava, 'Sila i Slabost Teatra Brekhta', in *Znamya* (Moscow, August 1958), p. 165, translated by Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, p. 194.
27. Mordecai Gorelik, 'Rational Theatre', in *Brecht Heute–Brecht Today*, edited by John Fuegi (Frankfurt a.M., 1971), p. 52.
28. *Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan, GW*, IV, 1502.
29. Samar Attar, *The Intruder in Modern Drama* (Cirencester, 1981), p. 87.
30. See Hans Pabst, *Brecht und die Religion* (Graz, 1977), p. 138: 'Brecht geht es nicht um die Darstellung der Eigengesetzlichkeit christlicher Normen, sondern um ihre Verwendung als Spiegel ganz konkreter Mißstände, was besonders im *Leben des Galilei* deutlich wird'.

31. Volker Klotz, *Bertolt Brecht. Versuch über das Werk* (Darmstadt, 1957), pp. 18 f.: 'Diese Götter haben nichts mit dem christlichen Gott zu tun — man hat in ihrer Dreizahl recht oberflächlich eine Parodie auf die Trinität Gottes sehen wollen. Sie sind viel eher eine Personifikation des bürgerlichen Gewissens, das durch eine kleine Geldspende sich selbst zu beschwichtigen sucht, im übrigen aber angesichts der sozialen Mißstände resigniert und vor dem schlimmsten die Augen schließt'.
32. Henning Rischbieter, *Bertolt Brecht* (Hannover, 1968), II, 35–39.
33. Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal 1938 bis 1942*, p. 116.
34. See Robert Brustein, *The Theatre of Revolt*, pp. 254–55: 'in a sense, all of Brecht's later characters are split, vacillating between reason and instinct as dizzily as Classical heroes vacillate between love and duty. These conflicts suggest some of the contradictions inherent in Brecht's double revolt. As a Marxist, Brecht is convinced that society is based on rational self-interest, and believes that a more unselfish use of reason will bring about a more perfect man and a more benevolent world. As an existential rebel, however, he is more dubious about the power of human reason; and his own vestigial anarchism forces him to deal with the wildness of the instincts and the irrationality of life — in short, with imperfectibility'.
35. Unpublished letter of 24 February 1943 from St. Moritz, in E. Schürer, *Georg Kaiser and Bertolt Brecht* (Frankfurt a.M., 1971), p. 58.
36. The role of the intellectual is also discussed by Brecht in his theoretical writings on theatre, in *Me-ti*, in the *Flüchtlingsgesprächen*, and in the *Schriften zur Politik und Gesellschaft*.
37. On this matter see Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror. Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* (New York, 1968).
38. Bertolt Brecht, *Stücke*, III, 195.
39. George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (London, 1961), pp. 341 f.
40. *Leben des Galilei*, *GW*, III, 1317–18.
41. *Sunday Times*, 19 June 1960.
42. Galileo is an example to other scientists (and intellectuals in general) and not really a 'scapegoat' required by Brecht 'for the failure of science to create a social ethic that would have made Hiroshima unthinkable' as A. D. Keith argues in *Towards Utopia — A Study of Brecht* (Oxford, 1978), p. 92.
43. As L. Linde Thomas explains, 'Galileo steht stellvertretend für diejenigen, die glauben, durch eine teilweise Anpassung das Ordnungssystem überlisten zu können': 'Ordnung und Wert der Ordnung bei Bertolt Brecht', in *Germanic Studies in America*, No. 310 (1979), 111.
44. *Kleines Organon für das Theater*, *GW*, XVI, 692.
45. Helmut Jendreiek, *Bertolt Brecht* (Düsseldorf, 1969), p. 258.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General

Artaud, Antonin, *The Theatre and its Double*, translated by M. C. Richards (Grove Press, 1958)

Bablet, D. and J. Jacquot (eds), *L'Expressionisme dans le Théâtre Européen* (Paris, 1971)

Bentley, Eric, *In Search of Theatre* (New York, 1953); (ed.) *The Theory of the Modern Stage* (Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, 1968)

Bruno, Edoardo, *Dialettica del Teatro*, second edition (Rome, 1973)

Brustein, Robert, *The Theatre of Revolt* (London, 1970)

Büttner, Ludwig (ed.), *Das europäische Drama von Ibsen bis Zuckmayer* (Frankfurt a.M., 1960)

Carter, H., *The New Spirit in the European Theatre, 1914–24* (London, 1926)

Denkler, Horst, *Drama des Expressionismus Programm Spieltext Theater* (Munich, 1967)

Diebold, Bernhard, *Anarchie im Drama* (Frankfurt a.M., 1921)

Dosenheimer, Elise, *Das deutsche soziale Drama von Lessing bis Sternheim* (Constance, 1949)

Durzak, Manfred, *Das expressionistische Drama* (Munich, 1979)

Emmel, F., *Das ekstatische Theater* (Prien, 1924)

Fechter, Paul, *Das europäische Drama. Geist und Kultur im Spiegel des Theaters*, 3 vols (Mannheim, 1956–58)

Fiebach, Joachim (ed.), *Von Craig bis Brecht* (Berlin, 1977)

Garten, H. F., *Modern German Drama* (London, 1959)

Geissler, Rolf (ed.), *Zur Interpretation des modernen Dramas* (Frankfurt a.M., 1960)

Grimm, Reinhold (ed.), *Episches Theater* (Cologne, 1966)

Hayman, Ronald (ed.), *The German Theatre* (London, 1975)

Heufer, Joerg (ed.), *Das Vaterbild als Kennzeichen literarischer Weltdeutung* (Cologne, 1975)

Ihering, Herbert, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht. Vier Jahrzehnte Theater und Film*, 3 vols (Berlin, 1961)

Kändler, Klaus, *Drama und Klassenkampf* (Berlin, 1974)

Kerr, Alfred, *Die Welt im Drama* (Cologne, 1954)

Kesting, Marianne, *Das epische Theater*, vol. 36 (Stuttgart, 1959)

Klotz, Volker, *Bürgerliches Lachtheater. Komödie, Posse, Schwank, Operette* (Munich, 1979)

Kraus, Karl, *Literatur und Lüge* (Munich, 1963)

Lämmert, Eberhard, 'Das expressionistische Verkundigungsdrama', in *Literatur und Gesellschaft vom Neunzehnten ins Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*, edited by J. Schrimpf (Bonn, 1963)

Löwenthal, Leo, *Das Bild der Menschen in der Literatur* (Berlin, 1966)

Lukács, Georg, 'Größe und Verfall des Expressionismus', in *Probleme des Realismus* (Berlin, 1955)

Maione, Ítalo, *Dall'Expressionismo al Neorealismo Tedesco* (Naples, 1957)
Marcuse, Ludwig, 'Das expressionistische Drama', in *Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1925), II
Melchinger, Siegfried, *Drama zwischen Shaw und Brecht*, fourth edition (Bremen, 1961)
Mittenzwei, Werner, *Gestaltung und Gestalten im modernen Drama*, second edition (Berlin, 1969)
Musil, Robert, 'Expressionismus', in *Tagebücher, Aphorismen, Essays und Reden*, edited by A. Frisé, Tagebuch Heft 10 (1918–20)
Muschg, Walter, *Von Trakl zu Brecht: Dichter des Expressionismus* (Munich, 1961)
Palmier, Jean-Michel, *L'Expressionisme et les Arts* (Paris, 1979)
Pandolfi, Vito, *Il Teatro Expressionista Tedesco* (Bologna, 1956), II
Paulsen, Wolfgang, *Expressionismus und Aktivismus. Eine typologische Untersuchung* (Berne, 1935); (ed.) *Aspekte des Expressionismus* (Heidelberg, 1968)
Peacock, Ronald, 'Public and Private Problems in Modern Drama', in *Theatre in the Twentieth Century*, edited by R. Corrigan (New York, 1963)
Piscator, Erwin, *Das politsche Theater* (Berlin, 1920)
Sandig, Holger, *Deutsche Dramaturgie des Grotesken um die Jahrhundertwende* (Munich, 1980)
Sokel, Walter H., *The Writer in Extremis* (Sanford, 1959); *An Anthology of German Expressionist Drama: A Prelude to the Absurd* (New York, 1963)
Strelka, Joseph, *Brecht Horvath Dürrenmatt* (Vienna, 1962)
Styan, J. L., *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1981)
Szondi, Peter, *Theorie des modernen Dramas*, fourth edition (Frankfurt a.M., 1967)
Vietta, Silvio and Hans-Georg Kemper, *Expressionismus* (Munich, 1975)
Vondung, Klaus (ed.), *Kriegserlebnis. Der erste Weltkrieg in der literarischen Gestaltung und symbolischen Deutung der Nationen* (Göttingen, 1980)
Wekwerth, Manfred, *Theater in Veränderung* (Berlin, 1960)
Wellwarth, Georg E., *The Theatre of Protest and Paradox* (New York, 1964)
Wiese, Benno von (ed.), *Das deutsche Drama. Vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart. Interpretationen* (Düsseldorf, 1958), II
Willett, John, *Expressionism* (London, 1970)
Williams, Raymond, *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*, third edition (Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, 1978)
Ziegler, Klaus, *Das deutsche Drama der Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1954)

Chapter I: Frank Wedekind

Bab, Julius, 'Wedekind und das tragische Epigramm', *Deutsche Dramaturgie vom Naturalismus bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Benno von Wiese (Tübingen, 1970)
Best, Alan, 'The Censor Censored: An Approach to Frank Wedekind's *Die Zensur*', *German Life and Letters*, 26 (1973), 278–87
Bohnen, Klaus, 'Frank Wedekind und Georg Brandes. Unveröffentliche Briefe', *Euphorion*, 72 (1978), 106–19
Chiarini, Paolo, 'Il *vuoto* e la *forma*. Per una lettura della *Lulu* di Wedekind', *Studi Germanici*, 14 (1976), 27–40
Emrich, Wilhelm, 'Frank Wedekind. Die *Lulu*-Tragödie', in *Protest und Verheißung* (second edition, Frankfurt a.M., 1960)
Fechter, Paul, *Frank Wedekind, der Mensch und das Werk* (Jena, 1920)

Firda, Richard A., 'Wedekind, Nietzsche and the Dionysian Experience', *Modern Language Notes*, 87 (1972), 720–31
Gittleman, Sol, *Frank Wedekind* (New York, 1969)
Harris, Edward, P., 'The Liberation of Flesh from Stone: Pygmalion in Frank Wedekind's *Erdgeist*', *The Germanic Review*, 52 (1977), 45–52
Hibberd, John L., 'Imaginary Numbers and Humor: On Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen*', *Modern Language Review*, 74 (1979), 633–47
Irmer, Hans-Jochen, *Der Theaterdichter F. Wedekind. Werk und Wirkung* (Berlin, 1975)
Jones, R. A., 'Frank Wedekind, Circus Fan', *Monatshefte*, 61 (1969), 139–56
Kaufmann, Hans, 'Zwei Dramatiker: Gerhart Hauptmann und Frank Wedekind', *Krisen und Wandlungen der deutschen Literatur von Wedekind bis Feuchtwanger* (Berlin, 1966)
Kayser, Wolfgang, 'Wedekind, Schnitzler, Il teatro Grotesco', in *Das Groteske* (Stalling, 1957)
Kotowski, Georg, *Das Wilhelminische Deutschland* (Frankfurt, 1965)
Kraus, Karl, 'Die Büchse der Pandora', *Deutsche Dramaturgie vom Naturalismus bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Benno von Wiese (Tübingen, 1970)
Kutscher, A., *Wedekind, Leben und Werk* (Munich, 1964)
Lorenz, D. G., 'Wedekind und die emanzipierte Frau. Eine Studie über Frau und Sozialismus im Werke F. Wedekinds', *Seminar*, 12 (1976), 38–56
Mann, Thomas, 'Über eine Szene von Wedekind', in *Schriften und Reden zur Literatur, Kunst und Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1968), I
Marcuse, Herbert, *Eros and Civilization* (London, 1969)
Masini, Ferruccio, 'F. Wedekind: uomo del circo e nudità tragica', *Frank Wedekind. I Drami Satanici* (Bari, 1972)
Michelsen, Peter, 'Frank Wedekind', *Deutsche Dichter der Moderne*, edited by B. von Wiese (Berlin, 1965)
Osborne, John, 'Anti-Aristotelian Drama. From Lenz to Wedekind', *The German Theatre*, edited by R. Hayman (New York, 1975)
Panofsky, Dora and Erwin, *Pandora's Box. The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol*, second edition (Kingsport, 1962)
Peacock, Ronald, 'The Ambiguity of Wedekind's Lulu', *Oxford German Studies*, 9 (1978), 107–18
Prang, Helmut, 'Das deutsche Lustspiel von Wedekind bis Dürrenmatt', *Geschichte des Lustspiels*, edited by A. Kroner (Stuttgart, 1968)
Quiguer, C., 'L'érotisme de Frank Wedekind', *Études Germaniques*, 17 (1962), 14–33
Rasch, Wolfdietrich, 'Sozialkritische Aspekte in Wedekinds dramatischer Dichtung. Sexualität, Kunst und Gesellschaft', *Gestaltungsgeschichte und Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1969)
Ritter, Naomi, 'On the Circus-Motif in Modern German Literature', *German Life and Letters*, 27 (1973–74), 273–85
Rothe, Friedrich, *Frank Wedekinds Dramen. Jugendstil und Lebensphilosophie.* (Stuttgart, 1968)
Schumann, Willy, 'Frank Wedekind — Regimekritiker? Einige Überlegungen zur Majestätsbeleidigung in den *Simplicissimusgedichten*', Seminar, 15 (1979), 235–49
Seehaus, Gunther, *Frank Wedekind und das Theater* (Munich, 1964)
Sokel, F. W., 'The Changing Role of *Eros* in Wedekind's Drama', *German Quarterly*, 39 (1966), 201–07
Ude, Karl, *Frank Wedekind* (Mühlacker, 1968)
Völker, Klaus, *Frank Wedekind* (Velber bei Hannover, 1965)

Chapter II: Carl Sternheim

Blei, Franz, *Über Wedekind, Sternheim und das Theater* (Leipzig, 1915)
Brombacher, Kuno, *Der deutsche Bürger im Literaturspiegel von Lessing bis Sternheim* (Munich, 1920)
Chick, Edson, 'Sternheim's *1913* as Satire: Fantasy and Fashion', *Studies in the German Drama* (Chapel Hill, 1974), 213–24
Dedner, Burghard, 'Aufklärungskomödien im Massenzeitalter. Über Carl Sternheims Beziehungen zum Publikum', *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 19 (1975), 284–305
Dimič, Colette, *Das Groteske in der Erzählung des Expressionismus. Scheebart, Mynona, Sternheim, Ehrenstein und Heym* (dissertation, Freiburg, 1960)
Eisenlohr, Friedrich, 'Der Dichter Carl Sternheim und seine Zeit', in *Carl Sternheim: Aus dem bürgerlichen Heldenleben* (Berlin, 1974)
Emrich, Wilhelm, 'Carl Sternheims *Kampf der Metapher*', in *Geist und Widergeist* (Frankfurt a.M., 1965)
Freund, Winfried, *Die Bürgerkomödien Carl Sternheims* (Munich, 1976)
Georg, Manfred, *Sternheims beste Bühnenwerke* (Berlin, 1923)
Gittlemann, Sol, 'Sternheim, Wedekind and Homo Economicus', *The German Quarterly*, 49 (1976), 25–30
Haida, Peter, *Kritische Information. Komödien um 1910* (Munich, 1973)
Karasek, Hellmuth, *Carl Sternheim*, second edition (Hannover, 1970)
Krojanker, Gustav, *Juden in der deutschen Literatur* (Berlin, 1922)
Jahn, Wolfgang, 'Sternheims Bürger in der ständischen Gesellschaft. Zu *Bürger Schippel* und anderen Komödien', in *Wissenschaft als Dialog* (Stuttgart, 1969), 249–70
Linke, Manfred, 'Carl Sternheims Werkstatt. Verschollene Werke und nicht verwirklichte Pläne. Ein Bericht', in *Literaturwissenschaft und Geschichtsphilosophie*. Festschrift für W. Emrich (Berlin, 1975), 490–506
Mann, Otto, 'Sternheims Bürger Schippel', in *Das deutsche Drama vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by B. von Wiese (Düsseldorf, 1958), II
Mennemeier, Frank N., 'Ein lustiges Lustspiel? (Carl Sternheim)', in *Modernes Deutsches Drama* (Munich, 1973), I
Mittenzwei, J., *Carl Sternheims Kritik am Bürgertum im Rahmen einer Darstellung des Pessimismus*, dissertation (Jena, 1952)
Reiss, Hans S., '"Sternheim — ein Satiriker!"?', *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift*, 57 (1983), 321–43
Rilla, Paul, 'Sternheims Bürgerkomödien', *Literatur Kritik und Polemik* (Berlin, 1950)
Rose, Margaret A., 'The Sea-Serpent Topos in Daumier's *Les Bons Bourgeois* and in Sternheim's *Aus dem bürgerlichen Heldenleben*', Arcadia, 10 (1975), 184–89
Schneider, Karl L., 'Des Bürgers gute Stube. Anmerkungen zur Raumsymbolik in Sternheims *Bürger Schippel* und Kaisers *Von morgens bis mitternachts*', in *Wissenschaft als Dialog* (Stuttgart, 1969), 242–48
Sebald, Winfried G., *Carl Sternheim. Kritiker und Opfer der Wilhelminischen Ära* (Stuttgart, 1969)
Stadler, Ernst, 'Die Hose, Die Kassette, Bürger Schippel, Der Snob', in *Dichtungen*, edited by Karl Schneider (Hamburg, 1954), II
Wendler, Wolfgang, *Carl Sternheim — Weltvorstellung und Kunstprinzipien* (Frankfurt a.M., 1966)

Williams, Rhys W., 'Carl Sternheim und Molière', *Weimarer Beiträge*, 29 (1983), 6, 1030–1047; 'Carl Sternheim's Image of Marx and his Critique of the German Intellectual Tradition', *German Life and Letters*, 32 (1978–79), 19–29; 'Carl Sternheim's Use of the Sea-Serpent Topos: an Amplification', *Arcadia*, 11 (1976), 288–90

Winkgens, Meinhard, 'Shaw und Sternheim. Der Individualismus als Privatmythologie', *Arcadia*, 12 (1977), 31–46

Wolff, Kurt, 'Carl Sternheim', in *Autoren, Bücher, Abenteuer* (Berlin, 1965)

Zweig, Arnold, 'Versuch über Carl Sternheim. Ausgewählte Werke', in *Essays* (Berlin, 1959), I

Chapter III(A): Georg Kaiser

Adling, Wilfried, 'Georg Kaisers Drama *Von morgens bis mitternachts* und die Zersetzung des dramatischen Stils', *Weimarer Beiträge*, 5 (1959), 369–86

Bussmann, Rudolf, *Einzelner und Masse. Zum dramatischen Werk Georg Kaisers* (Kronberg, 1978)

Denkler, Horst, *Georg Kaiser: 'Die Bürger von Calais'. Drama und Dramaturgie* (Munich, 1967)

Diebold, B., *Der Denkspieler Georg Kaiser* (Frankfurt a.M., 1924)

Durzak, Manfred, 'Georg Kaisers Theorie des Dramas', in *LGW–Interpretationen zu Georg Kaiser*, edited by Armin Arnold (Stuttgart, 1980)

Elbe, Anna Margarethe, *Technische und soziale Probleme in der Dramenstruktur Georg Kaisers* (Cologne, 1959)

Fechter, Moses J., *The Social Dialectic in Georg Kaiser's Dramatic Works* (Philadelphia, 1933)

Fritze, Hanns H., *Das Problem der Zivilisation im Schaffen Georg Kaisers* (dissertation, Freiburg, 1955)

Garten, H. F., 'Georg Kaiser and the Expressionist Movement', *Drama*, 37 (1955); 'Georg Kaiser Re-examined', in *Essays in German and Dutch Literature*, Institute of Germanic Studies (London, 1973), pp. 132–55

Goulden, William D., *Die Problematik der Wirklichkeit in den Dramen von Georg Kaiser* (Cologne, 1953)

Huder, Walther, 'Der Epiker Georg Kaiser', *Sinn und Form*, 12 (1960), 897–908

Kändler, Klaus, 'Georg Kaiser, der Dramatiker des *Neuen Menschen*', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität*, 7 (Leipzig, 1957–58), 279–303

Kauf, Robert, *Faith and Despair in Georg Kaiser's Work* (Chicago, 1955)

Kenworthy, Brian J., 'Georg Kaiser', *Modern Language Studies* (1957); 'Die Dramen 1928–45: Apotheose der Subjektivität', in *Interpretationen zu Georg Kaiser*, edited by Armin Arnold (Stuttgart, 1980)

Königsgarten, Hugo F., *Georg Kaiser* (Potsdam, 1928)

Kuxdorf, Manfred, *Die Suche nach dem Menschen im Drama Georg Kaisers* (Berne, 1971)

Last, R. W., 'Symbol and Struggle in Georg Kaiser's *Die Bürger von Calais*', *German Life and Letters*, 19 (1965–66), 201–09

Loram, Ian C., 'Georg Kaisers *Der Soldat Tanaka*, vollendeter Woyzeck?', *German Life and Letters*, 10 (1956–57), 43–48

Mennemeier, F. N., 'Satire und Utopie (Georg Kaiser')', in *Modernes Deutsches Drama* (Munich, 1973), I

Paulsen, Wolfgang, *Georg Kaiser. Die Perspektiven seines Werkes* (Tübingen, 1960); 'Georg Kaiser im expressionistischen Raum. Zum Problem einer Neudeutung seines Werkes', *Monatshefte*, 50 (1958), 289–303
Petersen, Klaus, *Georg Kaiser: Künstlerbild und Künstlerfigur* (Berne, 1976)
Reichert, Herbert W., 'Nietzsche und Georg Kaiser', *Studies in Philology*, 61 (1964), 85–108
Riedel, Walter, *Der Neue Mensch. Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Bonn, 1970)
Shaw, Leroy R., *The Playwright and Historical Change. Dramatic Strategies in Brecht, Hauptmann, Kaiser and Wedekind* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1970)
Schlaffer, Hannelore, *Dramenform und Klassenstruktur. Eine Analyse der dramatis persona 'Volk'* (Stuttgart, 1972)
Schürer, Ernst, *Georg Kaiser und Bertolt Brecht. Über Leben und Werk* (Frankfurt a.M., 1971); 'Die Gas–Dramen', in *LGW–Interpretationen zu Georg Kaiser*, edited by Armin Arnold (Stuttgart, 1980)
Viëtor, Karl, 'Der Denkspieler Georg Kaiser', *Berliner Tageblatt*, No. 230 (16 May 1925)
Winckler, Wolfgang, *Vision und Figur. Versuch einer Deutung des Dramatikers Georg Kaiser als eines Gestalters von Träumen* (Marburg, 1957)
Ziegler, Klaus, 'Georg Kaiser und das neue Drama', *Hebbel-Jahrbuch* (1952), 44–68

Chapter III (B): Ernst Toller

Adams, Marion, '*Volk, Masse* und *Pöbel* im Frühexpressionistischen Sprachgebrauch', *Akten des VI. Internationalen Germanisten-Kongresses* (Basle, 1980), 273–81
Bell, Claire H., 'Tollers *Die Maschinenstürmer', Monatshefte*, 30 (1938), 27–41
Breloer, Heinrich, *Georg Kaisers Drama 'Die Koralle'. Erfahrung und ästhetische Abstraktion. Mit biographischem Aufriß* (Hamburg, 1977)
Cafferty, Helen L., 'Pessimism, Perspectivism and Tragedy: *Hinkemann* Reconsidered', *The German Quarterly*, 54, (1981), 44–58
Droop, Fritz, *Ernst Toller und seine Bühnenwerke. Eine Einführung*, second edition (Berlin, 1922)
Eichenlaub, René, *E. Toller et l'Expressionisme Politique* (Paris, 1980)
Frühwald, Wolfgang, 'Ernst Toller', *Handbuch der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur* (Munich, 1965)
Frühwald, Wolfgang and John Spalek (eds), *Der Fall Toller. Kommentar und Materialien* (Munich, 1979)
Geifrig, Werner, 'Ernst Toller — Dichter und Politiker *zwischen den Stühlen*', in *Vergleichen und Verändern* (Festschrift Helmut Motekat), (Munich, 1970), 216–23
Hoelzel, Alfred, 'Betrayed Rebels in German Literature: Büchner, Toller, A. Koestler', *Orbis Literarum*, 34 (1979), 238–58
Kaufmann, Eva, 'Zwei Dramatiker im Epochenbruch' (Zu Friedrich Wolf und Ernst Toller), *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena*, 17 (1962), 58–62
Kesten, Hermann, 'Ernst Toller', in *Meine Freunde die Poeten* (Munich, 1959)
Lehnert, Herbert, 'Fragwürdigkeit geistiger Politik. Brechts *Trommeln in der Nacht* und Tollers *Hinkemann', Akten des VI. Internationalen Germanisten-Kongresses* (Basle, 1980), pp. 104–11
Marnette, Hans, *Untersuchungen zum Inhalt-Form-Problem in Ernst Tollers Dramen* (dissertation, Potsdam, 1963)

Mennemeier, F. N., 'Auf dem Weg zum Proletarierdrama', in *Modernes Deutsches Drama* (Munich, 1973), I
Serke, Jürgen, 'Ernst Toller. Opfergang für die Vision vom gütigen Menschen', in *Die verbrannten Dichter* (Weinheim, 1977)
Sokel, Walter, 'Ernst Toller', in *Deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by H. Friedmann and O. Mann, fourth edition (Heidelberg, 1961), II
Ter Haar, Carel, *Ernst Toller. Appell oder Resignation* (Munich, 1977)
Zanasi, Giusi, 'Note sul Teatro di E. Toller', *Studi Germanici*, 10 (1972), 619–47

Chapter IV: Bertolt Brecht

Benjamin, Walter, 'Was ist episches Theater?', in *Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M., 1955), II
Bentley, Eric, 'Bertolt Brecht and his Work', in *Private Life of the Master Race* (London, 1948)
Best, Otto F., *Bertolt Brecht Weisheit und Überlebung* (Frankfurt a.M., 1982)
Bohnen, Klaus, 'Naivität bei Brecht? Aus Anlaß der Kopenhagener Erstaufführung von *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*', *Brecht-Jahrbuch*, edited by R. Grimm and J. Hermand (Frankfurt a.M., 1981)
Bruno, Edoardo, 'Lo Spettatore nel Teatro di Brecht', in *Dialettica del Teatro* (Rome, 1973)
Buck, Theo (ed.), *Zu Bertolt Brecht. Parabel und episches Theater* (Stuttgart, 1979)
Desuché, Jacques, *Bertolt Brecht* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1963)
Esslin, Martin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (London, 1973)
Fehn, Ann C., 'Vision and Blindness in Brecht's *Leben des Galilei*', *Germanic Review*, 53 (1978), 27–34
Frisch, Max, 'Brecht ist tot', *Die Weltwoche* (Zürich, 24.8.1956); *Tagebuch 1946–49* (Frankfurt a.M., 1950)
Gray, Ronald, *Brecht* (Edinburgh, 1961)
Grimm, R., *Bertolt Brecht*, second edition (Stuttgart, 1961); 'Brecht, Artaud und das moderne Theater', in *Nach dem Naturalismus. Essays zur modernen Dramatik* (Kronberg, 1978)
Haas, Willy, *Bert Brecht* (Berlin, 1958)
Haus, Heinz-Uwe, 'Zum Gebrauchswert der Methode Brechts: Fragen und Thesen oder die Philosophie eines Praktikers dazu', *The German Quarterly*, 54 (1981), 34–48
Keith, A. D., *Towards Utopia — A Study of Brecht* (Oxford, 1978)
Klotz, Volker, *Bertolt Brecht. Versuch über das Werk* (Darmstadt, 1957)
Luethy, Herbert, 'Vom Armen Bert Brecht', *Der Monat* (West Berlin, 1952), No. 4, 22–37
Lyon, James K., *Bertolt Brecht in America* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1980)
Mayer, Hans, *Bertolt Brecht und die Tradition* (Munich, 1965); *Brecht in der Geschichte* (Frankfurt a.M., 1971)
McLean, Sammy, 'Messianism in Bertolt Brecht's *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* and *Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis*', *Seminar*, 14 (1978), 268–84
Mennemeier, Franz N., 'Brecht. *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*', in *Das deutsche Drama*, edited by B. von Wiese (Düsseldorf, 1958), II
Mittenzwei, Werner, *Bertolt Brecht. Von der 'Maßnahme' zu 'Leben des Galilei'*, second edition (Berlin, 1965); 'Brecht und kein Ende oder das Ende der Brecht-Bewegung', *Sinn und Form* (Berlin, 1968) 571–89; 'Der Realismus-Streit um

Brecht. Grundriß zu einer Brecht–Rezeption der DDR', *Sinn und Form* (Berlin, 1977), 160–90; 'Brecht und die Schicksale der Materialästhetik', in *Kampf der Richtungen* (Leipzig, 1978); *Brechts Verhältnis zur Tradition* (Berlin, 1973); *Der Realismus-Streit um Brecht* (Berlin, 1978)

Münsterer, H. O., *Bert Brecht* (Zürich, 1963)

Muschg, Walter, *Von Trakl zu Brecht* (Munich, 1961)

Pabst, Hans, *Brecht und die Religion* (Graz, 1977)

Pascal, Roy, *Brecht's Misgivings*, The 1977 Bithell Memorial Lecture (Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1977)

Rischbieter, Henning, *Bertolt Brecht* (Hannover, 1968)

Rohrmoser, Günter, 'Brecht. *Leben des Galilei*', in *Das deutsche Drama*, edited by B. von Wiese (Düsseldorf, 1958), II

Rülicke, Käthe, '*Leben des Galilei*. Bemerkungen zur Schlußszene', *Sinn und Form*, 9 (Berlin, 1957), 269–321

Sartre, Jean Paul, 'Brecht et les Classiques', *World Theatre*, 7 (Paris, Spring 1958)

Schürer, Ernst, *Georg Kaiser und Bertolt Brecht. Über Leben und Werk* (Frankfurt a.M., 1971)

Schumacher, Ernst, *Brecht. Theater und Gesellschaft im 20. Jahrhundert*, third edition (Berlin, 1981)

Schwarz, Peter P., 'Legende und Wirklichkeit des Exils', *Wirkendes Wort*, 19 (1969), 171–85

Thomas, L. Linda, 'Ordnung und Wert der Ordnung bei Bertolt Brecht' (Berne, 1979)

Wekwerth, Manfred, 'Sechs Punkte zum erzählenden Arrangement Bertolt Brechts', *Theater der Zeit*, 11 (1956)

White, Alfred, D., *Bertolt Brecht's Great Plays* (London, 1978)

Willett, John, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht. A Study from Eight Aspects*, second edition (London, 1964)