

2. The 'Märchenform' and Reflexions on Exile

In an interview with the Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung on 14 September, 1933 Horváth announced his search for new comedy forms in an effort to adapt to the conditions of theatrical exile and at the same time to express his ideas, albeit in a codified form:

Mein neues Stück soll eine Märchenposse werden, aber ohne Zauberei. Ich halte die Form der Märchenposse gerade in der gegenwärtigen Zeit für sehr günstig, da man in dieser Form sehr viel sagen kann, was man sonst nicht aussprechen dürfte(1).

Despite the early date the reference can only be to the 'Märchen' Himmelwärts', published in 1934, but which he had clearly conceived during 1933. Horváth's experimentation with this comedy form, with its echoes of the Viennese Popular Comedy, go back even further into the 1930s. Amongst his papers were found notes and fragments for a play of the same name, subtitled "Zauberposse in zwei Teilen mit Vorspiel und Epilog, Gesang und Tanz. Von Ödön von Horváth. Musik von Kurt Weill" (VII,699). The editors suggest that this was conceived before the Nazi takeover in 1933 because of references to the National Socialists and Communists which obviously predate January, 1933. The editors stress also that this fragment has no connection with the later Himmelwärts (VII, 699) for the former tells the story of a certain Kasimir's journey into space by rocket and his arrival and experience in the land of Arcadia. The political references are oblique although the mood of mounting nationalism and the sentiments of Hindenburg are discernible in the speech of the 'Präsident der Republik' at the launching of the rocket: "Wir alle würden ohne Zaudern unseren letzten Tropfen Blut für unser Vaterland vergießen, wenn einmal der Ruf erschallt! Unser innigstgeliebtes Vaterland - es lebe hoch! Hoch! Hoch!" (VII,66). Kasimir's departure from earth corresponds with the play's departure from recognisable social reality. Kasimir finds himself in a paradise above earth where all beings have been transformed into 'Feen und gute Geister', where the state has been abolished and replaced by a true collective and where Kasimir will lose all his human failings, "denn der Mensch ist weder gut noch böse - und er kann gut und böse werden, je nachdem"(VII,72). The price he must pay is to participate in the choir but with no solo appearances as the Vorsitzende explains: "Du bist nur ein Teil und mußt alle deine egoistischen Triebe unterdrücken"(VII,72). Arcadia is also a veritable 'Schlaraffenland' where all desires are immediately fulfilled, except those for women, which has practical considerations as the

1. Quoted in Krischke, p.184.

'Pantoffelheld' points out:

Mädchen kann man sich nicht wünschen! Das gäb ja ein
fürchterliches Durcheinander! Dann täten sich ja die
Mädchen auch Männer wünschen! (...) Und was glauben
Sie, was sich da manche alte Schachtel zusammenwünschen
tät! (VII,75).

The tongue-in-cheek utopia which Horváth conjures up can be seen as an idealised counter-image to the disillusioned utopias of the Volksstücke. It is of course characteristic of Horváth's experiments in dramatic forms that he alludes to the Viennese 'Zauberposse' to realise these ideas. Kasimir's first image of Arcadia is in fact a Biedermeier house (VII,68), suggesting the period of the Viennese Popular Comedy. However, the play never proceeded past the stage of a typescript and when compared to the Volksstücke which are contemporaneous with it, the work appears to be no more than a clever idea decorated with a few Horváthian jokes which derive in some part from the South German dialect shadings. This type of humour was to be developed more consequentially in the later Himmelwärts.

Another dramatic work which never passed beyond the stage of a fragment - the so-called 'Original Zaubermärchen' - is also linked to the experiment with the 'Märchenposse'. The editors can offer no date of writing but the motifs contained in it - the military, the unspecific geographical allusions, the references to enemies beyond the mountains - all suggest an affinity to the novel Ein Kind unserer Zeit (1938). However, this and other later prose works may have in fact utilised much earlier plans and sketches to which the 'Original Zaubermärchen' belong. It is in the first instance a satire on militarism and nationalistic statecraft. The fantasy element which the title implies is contained in a new secret weapon created by an Inventor. It is a cannon which can destroy insects at a great range. At first the military establishment is not impressed by a weapon which cannot destroy human beings until the General explains how the destruction of the insects must result in the death of all plants and flowers: "Wenn man die kleinen Blümlein nicht mehr hat unter Strauch und Baum (...) die seelische Widerstandskraft wird gebrochen (...) Stellens Ihnen vor, eine Welt ohne Blumen!" (VII,58). The General concludes his presentation of the weapon with words which have unmistakable associations with National Socialist vocabulary: "Ich finde es wunderbar - hoffentlich wird es zur Ehre und Würde unserer Nation beitragen! Zum Wohle unseres Vaterlandes! Für ein starkes Reich!"(VII,59).

Here Horváth is treading ground which was only to be explored fully in the 1950s with work of the so-called Theatre of the Absurd. It is linked also closely to the 'Posse' Rund um den Kongreß in its intentionally overdrawn situation and characters, vague topical allusions and grotesque exaggeration for comic effect. The use of the genre 'Posse' or 'Märchenposse' appears to be directed towards creating an impression of a fantasy world where criticism of the real world could still be expressed but only as vague parallels and not as specific references.

2.1 Hin und Her: "Eine Posse mit Gesang" and the Exile Predicament

The central problem confronting the commentator of plays such as Hin und Her is Horváth's reconciliation of the serious predicament of exile and its associated problem with the uncomplicated, almost anachronistic genre of the 'Posse' in the mould of Raimund and Nestroy. The grotesque 'Posse' Rund um den Kongreß had not received a production, so presumably Horváth could hardly afford such literary experiments and consequently Hin und Her bears the characteristics of the conventional 19th century 'Posse mit Gesang'. The ancestry of the play was immediately recognisable, as the critic for the Neue Zürcher Zeitung at the première in Zürich on the 13 December, 1934 reveals:

Hin und Her bringt einen famosen Komödieneinfall (...) Dieser Einfall ist wirklich bester Komödienstoff, weil er an das tiefste Wesen der Komödie, an die umgekehrte Tragödie, röhrt (...) Eine prächtige Idee, dieses Hin und Her, her und hin, aber sie wird in Horváths Stück so zerdehnt, daß ihre komödienhafte Wirkung allmählich verlorengingt (...) darin liegen Beziehungen zum Volksstück der Raimund und Nestroy. Auch in der Verbindung mit der Musik von Hans Gal (...) wird die sympathische Anknüpfung an die volkstümliche Kunst der alten Donaumonarchie deutlich(2).

The reviewer, however, makes no mention of the real political situation underlying this "prächtige Idee", the fate of the gathering flood of political refugees from Nazi Germany. Even if this was not a major problem when Horváth first conceived the play (although he had certainly left Germany promptly after the Nazis came to power), by December, 1934 the number of refugees

2. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 14/12/1934, cited in Günther, p.187, Anhang II, Nr.106.

had developed into a major political concern(3). The disinclination of the reviewers to mention the exile or refugee problem is undoubtably linked to Switzerland's unsympathetic treatment of the émigrés. In comparison to Czechoslovakia or Austria, where the exiles were able to reside without undue harassment, Switzerland provided major bureaucratic hurdles for the would-be emigrant(4). This confrontation with unpleasant political realities may have also contributed to the failure of the play which received only two further performances.

In an interview given to the Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung on the 14 September, 1933, Horváth expressed his central intention in Hin und Her as: "es soll zeigen, wie leicht sich durch eine menschliche Geste unmenschliche Gesetze außer Kraft setzen lassen", and relates that he read a newspaper article describing almost to the last detail the plot of the play which he had already written. He insists that this was purely coincidental: "In meinem Stück ist freilich von Phantasiestaaten die Rede, es ist dabei an keinen der existierenden Staaten speziell gedacht." He describes his play as a 'Posse mit Gesang' and with a typically Horváthian comment assumes the pose of the naive poet: "und man sagt, daß es in mancher Hinsicht an Nestroy und Raimund erinnert"(5). This coquetry revealed itself as just that in 1934 when he began adapting plays by both Raimund and Nestroy into film scripts. More important, however, is the question of whether Horváth was fully aware of the gravity of the situation he utilises, its direct reflection of the plight of the thousands of political refugees, and whether his choice of comedy form to depict it can be justified.

Recent commentators take the view that Hin und Her was an artistic faux pas. F.N. Mennemeier considers that this type of uncomplicated comedy was ill-suited to its time: "(...) in die damalige politische Realität paßte dergleichen Poesie kaum noch

3. Hans-Albert Walter estimates that by autumn 1933 the majority of literary and political exiles had already left Germany, numbering several thousand. By 1935 81,000 Jews had left Germany and constituted the bulk of a substantial refugee problem. Walter, Deutsche Exilliteratur, Bd.1, pp.202-205.

4. For a detailed discussion of the various countries cf. Walter op. cit. Bd.2; on the situation in Switzerland after 1933 he writes: "Der deutsché Flüchtlingsstrom sollte möglichst am Land vorbeigelenkt werden und, wenn dies nicht möglich war, die Schweiz lediglich transitär berühren", p.110; cf. also Hans-Christof Wächter, Theater im Exil, pp.241-243.

5. Krischke, p.172f.

hinein"(6). Kurt Kahl suggests that the form of the play was dictated to a large extent by commercial considerations: "Daß er dieses ernste Thema in die Form einer Posse goß, daß er bestrebt war, den Leuten auch etwas zu lachen zu geben, mochte damit zusammenhängen, daß er es nicht nur geschrieben, sondern auch aufgeführt sehen wollte"(7). These comments reflect a superficial reading of the play and fail to grasp that Horváth's intention is not only to criticise the inhumanity of certain bureaucratic procedures governing the passage between countries but that he lays completely bare the mechanics of comedy that constitute the 'Posse' form. This process of revealing the artificial conventions of money, romantic attachments and happy-endings that motivate the 'Posse' leads to the recognition that the real world is in fact the inverse of the comedy world; that the situation depicted in Hin und Her would, if taken to its logical conclusion in the real world, end in tragedy, as the reviewer of the première correctly observed: comedy is "die umgekehrte Tragödie".

A careful reading of the text reveals that Havlicek's predicament is not just one of homelessness or unemployment but that it resembles almost an existential identity crisis. This is expressed most directly in scene 34 which concludes the first part. After the two heads of state have departed Havlicek is left alone and hears a cock crow: "Das war ein Hahn. Ist es denn schon so spät oder so früh? Und ehe der Hahn dreimal kräht, wirst du mich dreimal verraten - Gott, was für ein tiefes Wort!"(III,243). The allusion is to Christ's prophetic words to Peter that he will deny his master three times before dawn; Havlicek feels similarly betrayed and abandoned. In the following song he laments his predicament by linking bureaucratic language with Biblical/religious images:

(...) und weh dem armen Untertan (...)
her und hin (...)
ohne Stempel gibts kein Leben
ohne Stempel gehts daneben,
ohne Stempel kannst riskieren
bis zum jüngsten Tag zu spazieren (III,243).

The final two lines place his situation almost in the realm of a fundamental identity crisis:

mich wunderts nur, daß ich noch bin,
bei alldem Her und Hin (III,243).

6. F.N. Mennemeier, Modernes Deutsche Drama 2, p.41.

7. Kahl, op. cit., p.63.

The denial of a home and roots through political fiat can produce grave psychological disorder by removing a key layer in the constitution of the personality. That Horváth is alluding also to a philosophical interpretation is suggested by the first person form of the verb 'sein'. Havlicek's bewildered cry as the curtain falls expresses in essence his doubt as to his very existence. The concept of belonging as a precondition of existence occurs during the first encounter between Havlicek and the 'Grenzorgan' Konstantin:

HAVLICEK Aber: (...) wohin gehör ich denn dann, bitte?

KONSTANTIN Dann nirgends.

HAVLICEK (lächelt) "Nirgends" - Unfug. Man ist doch immerhin vorhanden (III,210).

Not only is Havlicek no longer "vorhanden"(9) but later Konstantin denies even his existence as a person when asked who he is: "Niemand. Ein amtlicher Fall"(III,212).

This has undoubtedly comic possibilities and indeed echoes Bergson's definition of the comic reduction of a human being to a mechanical object(10). Whereas the Bergsonian characters are types whose rigidity functions to warn society of just such inflexibility and are consequently punished by society with corrective laughter, Havlicek's reduction to this comic level is not due to an innate foible but is in fact imposed on him by the two societies or political systems he is caught between. Thus the individual is reduced by the society to a cog or object in its machinery and ground down to size in order to function smoothly, or, in Havlicek's case, be rejected. This image of machinery is actually used by Konstantin to answer Havlicek's protest that such laws leading to his situation are inhuman: "Im allgemeinen Staatengetriebe wird gar oft ein persönliches Schicksal zerrieben"(III,210)(11). This is indeed the language of tragedy and Havlicek's predicament is potentially a tragic one.

9. It is interesting to note that Heidegger's tripartite construction of existence includes, as well as 'Dasein' and 'Existenz', 'Vorhandenheit' to designate the ontological term 'existentialia' or, in other words, simply being-at-hand. This term is in fact not crucial to his definition of 'Dasein'.

10. Bergson's term is "une certaine raideur de méchanique"; the comic character is comic because he or she is not an individual but a type imprisoned in the corset of whatever foible gives rise to this mechanical inelasticity. Henri Bergson, Le Rire, Paris, 1922, p.10.

even though from a social and personal point of view he resembles more closely a comic rather than a tragic hero. The notion of the machinery of state grinding the individual into dust in an anonymous bureaucratic procedure represents an essentially twentieth century concept and anticipates remarkably Dürrenmatt's much quoted remark: "Kreons Sekretäre erledigen den Fall Antigone"(12), symbolising the impossibility of tragedy in the twentieth century. The conclusion of the play, as will be discussed later, demonstrates in its flurry of dispatches and decrees a deus ex machina; in other words an artificially contrived solution to an essentially insoluble predicament.

The use of the deus ex machina is only one of a number of comedy devices that are utilised and exposed to show unashamedly the mechanics of comedy at work. The use of asides in Hin und Her is an innovation for Horváth's comedies and they provide a somewhat antiquated flavour; 'Beiseitesprechen' was of course a standard device for the Viennese Popular Comedy but it fell out of favour during the latter half of the 19th century with the rise of realistic 'Konversationskomödie' which tended to eschew all such unnaturalistic comedy techniques. Horváth's resurrection here of the aside can only be viewed as a deliberate anachronism. Furthermore, it is applied sparingly to highlight selected contrivances of the traditional comedy plot which is openly laid bare. The final resolution of Havlicek's plight i.e. his marriage to Frau Hanusch and the accompanying salvation of her hostel from bankruptcy with the ten thousand reward, is hinted at in no uncertain terms at the beginning of the play with an aside from Havlicek:

FRAU HANUSCH (...) Ohne Mann geht halt kein Hotel! Zwar gearbeitet hab ja immer nur ich, gekocht, gewaschen und buchgeführt, er hat ja nie etwas getan, mein Seliger - immer hat er nur mit die Stammtischgäst getrunken und Karten gespielt, aber es muß halt wer da sein zum Repräsentieren.

HAVLICEK (beiseite) Das wäre ein Beruf für mich. (...)

FRAU HANUSCH (...) Wenn ich bis morgen mittag keine zehntausend auftreib, dann lösche ich mich aus! (III,212).

A central plot element has been established with money playing a central role, as befits traditional comedy (cf. chap. II,1.), in

11. cf. Horváth's original titles for Glaube Liebe Hoffnung: "In der Maschinerie der Paragraphen. In die Maschine geraten. Von der Maschine erfaßt!", Mat GLH, p.64.

12. Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Theaterprobleme, p.120.

its function as a prerequisite for happiness. The fact that Havlicek receives exactly the amount that Frau Hanusch needs is an additional example of comic 'Zufall'.

The association with the Viennese Popular Comedy tradition is strengthened further by the use of songs. As in the plays of Raimund and Nestroy the songs in Hin und Her interrupt the action, they explore and reflect various situations in the play in the convention of the operetta with no attempt to provide a realistic excuse for characters suddenly bursting into song as is the case in Horváth's Volksstücke. Like Nestroy, Horváth utilises fully the convention of the song to criticise and reflect. In the first song 'Möglich' sung by Havlicek, three important recurrent themes are introduced: the combination of the political, "Ob man auch dann den neuen Gast/ nicht ohne Paß in' Himmel läßt?"; with the personal romantic sphere, "Ob so ein reizendes junges Weib/ auch in der Eh' ein Engel bleibt? Möglich"; and hints at the necessity of compromising one's personal utopia, "Ob der am Ende nicht besser fahrt,/ der sich die Illusion bewahrt? Möglich"(III,226). The connection between politics and love is established also in Frau Hanusch's song "Nur leider war es damals noch nicht Brauch". In the song she laments the lack of freedom of her generation in matters romantic compared to the present which applies equally to politics:

Wenn über diesen oder jenen Fragen
die Volksvertreter sich die Köpf einschlagen,
so schickt mans heim, sperrt d'Buden zu
und hat vom ganzen Parlament sei Ruh (III,252f.).

Frau Hanusch invokes a utopia where politics would be abolished and human relations harmonious:

Heut hat mir träumt von einem fernen Land,
wo Politik ist gänzlich unbekannt,
dort ist man friedlich und human,
sogar die Frau vertragt sich mit ihrem Mann,
dort kennt man weder Neid noch Streit - (III,253).

Unfortunately, this state of affairs is also "noch nicht Brauch". However, Frau Hanusch's apolitical sentiments cannot be construed as reflecting a similar stance on Horváth's part. On the contrary, he indicates that Havlicek's problem is to some extent his own responsibility because of his ignorance of and disinterest in political affairs: "Aber ich lese ja nie eine Notiz, höchstens die Todesanzeigen"(III,210).

The characters themselves correspond broadly to the most enduring of comedy constellations: the irascible father opposing his daughter's marriage because her choice does not measure up to his criteria of money or social rank. In the case of Szamek, who has no social status to protect, the traditional element of money is paramount: "(...) gegen deinen Konstantin hab ich nur das eine, daß er nämlich kein Geld hat (...) Reich sollst du heiraten, sehr reich, damit auch dein armer alter Vater was von dir hat"(III,220). Into this configuration Havlicek enters and assumes the function of the necessary go-between, traditionally the role of a slave or servant except that Havlicek is a passive rather than a willing intrigant. Characteristically Horváth fully utilises the old pattern but infuses it with his own critical content. Again he returns to his recurrent theme of the exploited woman and the disenchantment of marriage. In the passage already quoted Frau Hanusch describes the division of labour in her marriage which appears to be typical. The depiction of the marital relations between the Privatpädagoge and his wife reflects a similar situation but the quarrel intensifies beyond comic amusement to present a small cameo of the exploited woman. His wife is treated as a chattel until she expresses with real anguish her own needs after he complains about the inadequate worms: "Genug! Ich möcht mich doch auch mal erholen, Zeitung lesen oder Roman - wer fragt mich, wer ich bin?"(III,214). Horváth's following stage directions as she rushes across the bridge indicate unmistakably the grave tone of the scene, especially her reply to Szamek's inquiry as to her husband's fishing success: "(Musik verstummt. Stille. Frau schaut ihn an, antwortet nicht, sondern lacht nur, und zwar derart, daß es dem Szamek etwas kalt am Rücken wird)"(III,214). This scene receives then an ironical counterpoint, or reinforcement, for as she departs Eva enters bringing coffee for her father and Mrschitzka, i.e. carrying out exactly the same 'function' in respect to the male world as the 'Frau'. The inequitable division of roles is highlighted further by the fact that the character of the 'Privatpädagoge' is depicted by his professional standing whereas she is simply designated as 'Frau'.

All the relationships are characterised by varying degrees of inequality, exploitation or even brutality. Eva is fully aware where she rates on Konstantin's scale of priorities and appears to ascribe this emotional hardness to an innately masculine quality: "Auch über mich geht sein Gesetz hinweg, und das ist sogar recht so, denn darum ist er der Mann"(III,225). When she later puts her suspicion to the test and finds it confirmed she is moved to reflect on the tragicomic behaviour of men:

EVA Komisch seid ihr Männer.

KONSTANTIN (unangenehm berührt) Komisch?

EVA Ja. Ich denk jetzt speziell an den Papa - daß er sich neuerdings wieder dem Alkoholteufel verschrieben hat, das ist tragisch (III, 232f.).

She continues to relate how her father had abused her dreadfully in his drunken state and how she eventually realised that he did not mean her at all but his deceased wife, Eva's mother. Szamek in Eva's depiction is a prototypical Horváth 'Spießer', closely akin to Der Zauberkönig, Stadtrat, Merkl Franz, who all, especially under the influence of alcohol, demonstrate a behaviour towards women which is no longer comic. Kurt Kahl points out the dangerous, demonic dimension of Szamek's personality which is often overlooked: "Szameks Weinseligkeit etwa täuscht bei den Aufführungen immer wieder über seine gefährliche Distanz hinweg. In seinem sturen Pflichtfeifer und in seinem primitiven Chauvinismus ist er geradezu erschreckend" (13). It is interesting to note that both of these qualities can equally be applied to Konstantin so that Eva's marriage at the end of the comedy signals in reality the beginning of the same domestic tragedy that her mother experienced.

The ending of the play is conceived as a satire on the happy ending of comedy which is traditionally characterised by marriage, preferably several, and the reconciliation of animosities. In the case of reconciliations Horváth takes pains to indicate that they are not effected through any change in character or moral insight. Szamek, for example, accedes to his daughter's marriage only because of Konstantin's newly acquired ten thousand: "Zehntausend ist auch kein Hund. Meiner Seel, jetzt freuts mich erst wieder, diese Heiraterei" (III, 268). Similarly the appearance of the Privatpädagoge ("gut gelaunt") together with his wife, is not an indication of a new understanding between them, or due to an acknowledgement on his part of his unfair treatment of his wife but because she finally brought him some decent sized worms. It is clear also that the marriage between Havlicek and Frau Hanusch is contingent purely on his new-found wealth rather than on any profound romantic attachment. At the same time as the happiness of the couples is called into question, Horváth makes use of the whole arsenal of comedy signals. Havlicek is saved by special dispatch, a telegraphic "reitender Bote", and Eva announces that she is already pregnant which provides indeed the oldest symbol of comedy: that of fertility and rebirth. This news is then given another symbolic

13. Kurt Kahl, op. cit., p.64.

blessing by Frau Hanusch to placate Szamek: "Aber Herr Szamek! Ende gut, alles gut!"(III,270). Szamek's reply suggests, however, that the political division between the two states will not be healed by a private union: "Ich hab ja immer schon gewußt, daß die Leut dort drüben einen falschen Charakter haben!"(III,270). A rapturous finale belongs also to the conventions of musical comedy and a finale is duly provided by Horváth to complete the play's structural resemblance to the traditional Viennese 'Posse'. Under closer scrutiny, however, the finale reveals itself to be far from harmonious. The title of the song 'Ohne Grenzen' refers to both political borders as well as to moral restrictions, linking again the political and private spheres as in the other songs. Havlicek uses a word play implied by the title to convey the idea of political boundaries restricting the boundless human spirit. In his case the boundary disappeared 'plötzlich', allowing him to live in the "alten, niegekannten Heimat (...) die man ohne Grenzen liebt!" (III,271). The irony here is quite evident. Not only was the decision to open the border an arbitrary one and not based on any notions of law or justice, but he is now forced to give expression to patriotic fervour for a country he has never known. This is the attitude implied in Szamek's stanza where it is suggested that the very existence of borders defines the political outline of states and guarantees law and order. The latter notion is picked up by Konstantin:

Wenn ein jeder so war, wie er ist,
Na servus! Das wär ein feiner Mist.
Na gute Nacht, das wär ein Erwachen!
Da hätten wir alle nichts zu lachen! (III,271).

'Grenzen' are not only for the regulation of social behaviour but the transgression of them provides an essential element of comedy. This corresponds exactly to Bergson's definition of the comic: laughter functioning as a social regulator, as the expression of society's collective punishing laughter. 'Grenzen' can also be understood as the moral norms against which youth can quite freely transgress but which the older generation must respect so as not to endanger its chances in the eternity stakes: "Wir reiferen, gesetzteren Leut,/wir denken an die Ewigkeit"(III,272). They are also necessary to regulate the turmoil of the human subconscious with its drives, instincts and desires as the Privatpädagoge points out with obvious Freudian overtones:

Vor allen Dingen leiden wir
An einem schrecklichen Gewirr
Von Wünschen, Begierden, Gedanken,
Von Trieben, gesunden und kranken,

(...) Wies heutzutag der Fall ist,
Wo kaum noch wer normal ist (III,272).

This dark side of human nature must therefore be controlled as Havlicek comments:

In Anbetracht solcher Innenleben
Muß es eben Grenzen geben (III,272).

The final couplet:

So ziehen wir die Konsequenz:
Es lebe hoch die schöne Grenz (III,272).

provides an ironical seal of approval for the root cause of the problems explored in the play. It could be countered that Horváth's use of comedy conventions in Hin und Her is in fact no different from any other comedy utilising the same techniques and which provides simple uncomplicated entertainment. An operetta such as Die Fledermaus reveals a similar degree of self-conscious artificiality in its contrived plot, revolving around marital peccadillos, cheeky servants and a happy ending: Dr. Falke even announces at the end that now his 'comedy' is over. However, in the course of Die Fledermaus, or of any other work in this genre, there is never a single moment when serious problems and situations present themselves. Horváth's critical comedy functions precisely on the dialectic of the artifices of comedy being contrasted with the harsh reality of the real world: in this case, the plight of political refugees and 'Heimatlose' with their associated problems of identity crisis and political disorientation; the altogether unhealthy relationship between the sexes; and the helpless predicament of the individual in the face of anonymity of bureaucratic arbitrariness.

2.1.2 Fairy-Tale Elements

A discarded scene entitled 'Der Spiegelschrank', belonging to an early draft of Hin und Her reveals that Horváth's intention was to fashion the play more in the mould of Raimund's 'Zauberposse', whereas the final version bears a far stronger resemblance to the 'Lokalposse' of Nestroy. The removal of this fairy-tale like scene may have been motivated by the fear that this would reduce the play's critical edge. A reference to 'Spiegelschrank' can be found in scene 17 of Hin und Her (III,224) where the scene presumably was to be inserted. In the final version Havlicek tries to impress upon Konstantin the desirability of marriage and mentions his Spiegelschrank: "(...)

Einen großen, schönen. Wo man sich so ganz sehen kann. Auf einmal". Havlicek then changes the subject and returns to the problem of his homelessness. The fragment could have interrupted the action here as a dream-like interlude. It begins with a song by the Wunschtraum and an argument between it and the Angsttraum. This is followed by the appearance of the Königin der Nacht who, as a character from Mozart's Zauberflöte, has clear associations with Viennese theatrical tradition. She mediates between the Wunschtraum and the Angsttraum and asks what they would have done to the man on the bridge, i.e. Havlicek. The Wunschtraum (a female) "hat (dem) einen Paß vorgegaukelt und jetzt hat sie ihn zum Generaldirektor eines Chemietrusts gemacht, ein großer Erfinder, der Herrscher auf dem Gebiet der Drogerie" (VII,321). The Angsttraum caused him to dream of dying at the gallows because he had no passport. The Königin der Nacht reproaches both:

Das ist auch übertrieben! Er soll die Wirklichkeit träumen! Er soll den wirklichen Traum träumen, so wie es ist! Keine Angst und keinen Wunsch! Die Wirklichkeit - Er soll seinen Paß behalten, gut, und dann soll ers sehen, wie er ist! (VII,321).

The action then moves to Havlicek standing before his 'Spiegelschrank' from where various characters issue forth: Eva is married to Havlicek and dances for him but her social status is the opposite of that in reality: "Sie ist aus gutem Hause, fabelhaft reich! Ihr Vater wollte sie mir zuerst nicht geben, aber dann hat er mich gebettelt, daß ich sie nimm! He, Herr Rockefeller, stimmts?" (VII,322). Szamek then appears from the closet, confirms this and mentions that the prince who wanted to marry her has disappeared; the prince then appears as the figure of Konstantin and admits defeat to Havlicek:

KONSTANTIN Sie haben nur gesiegt, weil Sie einen Paß haben -

HAVLICEK Aber was für einen Paß! Ganz neu! (Wunschtraum kommt und verabschiedet sich) (VII,323).

Havlicek's Wunschtraum utilises to some extent the elements of Freudian dream psychology despite the fact that the latter is satirised in this scene; cf. the Königin der Nacht: "Ihr Träume müßt zusammenhalten, besonders jetzt, wo Ihr analysiert werdet!" (VII,321). The elements combine the fairy-tale with the realistic, psychological dream of the Freudian mould. The realistic elements are the wish-fulfilment component of Havlicek's dream. His promotion to director of a chemical firm corresponds to the fact that in the play he was indeed owner of a 'Drogerie' (III,207). Szamek's poverty and obsession with money

sees him transformed into Rockefeller, a rich father who will doubtlessly ensure Havlicek's financial security. Havlicek's expressed desire for a wife(III,224) is projected on to Eva whom he treats as a sex object and hopes thus to arouse envy: "zerspringen sollen sie vor Neid!"(VII,322). This provides an unusual glimpse into Havlicek's subconscious, that "Gewirr/Von Wünschen, Begierden, Gedanken,/Von Trieben, gesunden und kranken"(III,272). This dimension of Havlicek's personality is revealed only in the dream sequence and is not hinted at in the rest of the play. The representation of Konstantin as a prince combines most clearly the fairy-tale notion of dream with the realistic dream conception. In reality Konstantin wears a uniform and is the main obstruction to Havlicek's happiness; therefore, in Havlicek's Wunschtraum he is transformed into a defeated figure who can no longer offer resistance. The mirror itself is a popular object in the fairy-tale where it can function as a source of information and prophecy; in Raimund's 'Zauber Märchen' Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind a mirror opens a vista from the real world into the 'Feenwelt' of the Alpenkönig.

It is interesting to note that Thomas Mann attempted a similar exploration of the fluid borders between dream and reality in his story Der Kleiderschrank! Eine Geschichte voller Rätsel (1899). Here the traveller Albrecht van der Qualen leaves his train and moves into a hotel room where he finds a naked girl in his closet. Although the closet does not have a mirror his hotel is described as "Das Haus mit den Spiegelscheiben"(14). The girl returns night after night to tell him stories until she disappears, returns again but tells nothing more. The conclusion points to a dream experience: "wie lange dauerte das (...) wer weiß es? Wer weiß auch nur, ob überhaupt Albrecht van der Qualen an jenem Nachmittage wirklich erwachte und sich in die unbekannte Stadt begab; ob er nicht vielmehr schlafend in seinem Coupé erster Klasse verblieb"(15).

Horváth's eventual rejection of the scene was probably motivated not only by the incompatible mixture of genres and styles but he may have also realised the difficulty of dream representations in drama. Since Freud has shown the complexity of the realistic psychological dream and its need for careful analysis, the drama is not an adequate means to represent this complexity. A scenic representation, which Horváth attempts here, is technically more difficult and makes such a 'Traumeinlage' the focal point of the play. It is clear from the

14. Thomas Mann, Die Erzählungen, 1968, p.118.

15. Ibid., p.120.

Himmelwärts: Märchen or Mysterienspiel?

final version that Horváth was not concerned in the first place with an exploration of the dream/reality question in the tradition of Tieck but intended the scene more as an attempt to modernise the fantastic scenes from the Viennese Popular Comedy. The scene would have doubtlessly gained undue weight and seriously distorted the rest of the play(16).

2.2 Himmelwärts: Märchen or Mysterienspiel?

The elements of the fairy tale in the 'Märchen' Himmelwärts are not at all evident, which implies that the subtitle was intended mainly to conjure up the expectation of uncomplicated entertainment, a promise that the play, intentionally or not, to a large extent fulfils.

Most commentators find unmistakable echoes of a specifically Austrian theatrical tradition, that of the Baroque Mystery Play, visible mainly in the representation of Heaven, Earth and Hell by means of a three layered 'Simultanbühne'. Kurt Kahl finds in it not only a "modernes Mysterium" but discerns traces of "Raimunds Feerien" and "Nestroy's frühe Zauber-Märchen":

Man erinnert sich an Grillparzers Glück im Winkel, wie es vor allem in Der Traum, ein Leben postuliert ist, wenn man das Happy-End dieses Horváthschen Mysterienspiels betrachtet: ein gewissermaßen österreichisches Glück, das auf Selbstbescheidenheit gegründet ist(17).

However, Kahl argues that these elements function on the level of association rather than as a direct influence:

Ein direkter Einfluß der österreichischen Geistes- und Bühnentradition dürfte jedoch bei diesem Stück schwer nachzuweisen sein(18).

Yet the unambiguous Austrian character of the play, particularly in the language and characterisation, suggests a thinly veiled attempt by Horváth to ingratiate himself into the Viennese theatrical landscape(19).

16. For an analysis of the dream in drama cf. Pfister, Das Drama, p.295-298.

17. Kurt Kahl, op. cit., p.65.

18. Ibid., p.66.

Himmelwärts: Märchen or Mysterienspiel?

Gisela Günther considers Himmelwärts to be the first play in which Horváth establishes a synthesis between the Volkstheater of the 19th century and contemporary political and social events. Also new is "der Hinweis auf einen möglichen harmonischen, utopischen Ausweg"(20). The subtitle and the locales are reminiscent of Raimund and thereby establish a connection with the baroque Volkstheater. Günther's discussion of the play restricts itself to an analysis of the reviews of the première on the 5 December, 1937 at the Freie Bühne in der Komödie, Vienna. In this production the characters spoke in broad Bavarian dialect which removed the play from its Viennese setting, although the Baroque Volkstheater that one critic mentions(21) is a peculiarly Viennese element and has little to do with the Bavarian Volkstheater, which derives in the main from 'Bauerntheater'. The shift in locale was intended probably for reasons of general "Lustspiel-Rezeption (...) Himmelwärts - im österreichischen Idiom geschrieben - gewinnt bei einer Vorstellung in Wien zusätzliche Naivität durch den Transport nach Bayern"(22). This production included also the addition of songs, probably to strengthen its resemblance to the traditional 'Zauberposse' as well as to attract the undemanding operetta and film musical audience. While Dieter Hildebrandt can dismiss the play as trivial and politically naive(23), Günther maintains that it continues Horváth's central intention of rehabilitating the Volksstück:

Dieses Genre (the trivial Volksstück) wurde in Wien noch geliebt und gepflegt, als Horváth in seinem 'Märchen' Himmelwärts traditionelle Dramaturgien aufnahm und sie mit neuem, kritischem Inhalt füllte. Seine Absicht bestand darin, durch den Kontrast 'Neuer Wein in alten Schläuchen' auch in Österreich die Rehabilitierung des Volksstückes in Bewegung zu setzen. Doch hier hat sich die Gattung inzwischen in einem Maße

19. Here Kahl appears to contradict himself again: "Der kabarettistische Charakter der Szenen, das Eingehen auf das Wienerische, der Verzicht auf den deutschen Hintergrund - all das beweist, wie sehr dem Autor daran gelegen war, sich die Wiener Bühnen aufzuschließen", p.68.

20. Günther, op. cit., p.103.

21. Oskar Maurus Fontana, in Der Wiener Tag, 7/12/1937, cf. Günther, Anhang II, Nr.112.

22. Günther, op. cit., p.104.

23. Hildebrandt, Ödön von Horváth, p.94f.

verbraucht, daß die Innovation nicht mehr sichtbar werden kann(24).

The central question then concerning this play is to what extent Horváth has applied or failed to apply his method of genre critique with sufficient consequence to the epigonic Volksstück tradition of Raimund and Nestroy. It seems less likely that Horváth was attempting to rehabilitate a peculiarly Austrian Volksstück as Günther would like to suggest - Raimund and Nestroy, particularly the latter, had long since established themselves on most German speaking stages - than that he was seeking to strike certain responsive chords in a Viennese audience through the subtitle and content. He could no longer afford to raise the ire of the audience and thus alienate them. Horváth was no doubt still well aware of the scandal that the première of Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald had caused in Vienna(25). More recently there had been a libellous attack on Horváth published by a certain 'Tarzan' in the right-wing and anti-semitic Viennese paper, the 12-Uhr-Blatt, the midday edition of the 8-Uhr-Blatt on 15 September, 1933. The première of Horváth's 'Posse' Hin und Her had been announced by the Deutsches Volkstheater for autumn of that year and the smear campaign was clearly intended to have the première cancelled, in which it was successful(26). Such considerations probably ensured that Horváth wanted to have popular uncontroversial success in order to gain access to the Viennese theatres. However, there was not a single production of a new Horváth play in Vienna until December, 1935 when the unsuccessful Mit dem Kopf durch die Wand was staged. (There had been a production of Kasimir und Karoline in February of the same year).

Unfortunately, the result echoed less a 'Zauber-Märchen' than it resembled Ludwig Thoma's Der Münchner im Himmel or Walter Hasenclever's comedy Ehen werden im Himmel geschlossen (1928). The latter in particular, a widely performed 'succès de scandale', bears strong similarities to Himmelwärts. Hasenclever's play is set both in heaven and on earth but lacks

24. Günther, op. cit., p.85.

25. Austrian and German right-wing groups attempted to have the play banned through diplomatic intervention by claiming that the work was a monstrous "Verächtlichmachung Österreichs und seiner sozialen und gesellschaftlichen Einrichtungen". The attempt was unsuccessful. For a full account of this incident cf. Krischke, p.116.

26. Horváth began proceedings for libel in which he was moderately successful, cf. Krischke, p.118f.

the infernal locale. On the other hand the characterisation of the heavenly host - God as a golf-playing gentleman in knickerbockers, and Magdalena as a spendthrift society woman - goes much further as religious satire, as was evidenced by the scandals it caused(27). Perhaps mindful of the fate of Hasenclever's play in Vienna, Horváth includes on the heavenly plane only a representation of Saint Peter.

In the face of these manifold pressures, to what extent does Horváth succeed in infusing a critical dimension into the Märchen? At first glance the play could be dismissed as a travesty of Goethe's Faust - the pact with the devil and the occasional allusions to Goethe contribute to this impression. For example, the 'Autogrammjäger' ponders over the vagaries of human fortune: "- es ist ein eigen Ding um den Erfolg: entweder kommt er oder er kommt nicht. Sehr eigen"(III,297). The connection with Werther's "Es ist ein einförmig Ding um das Menschengeschlecht" functions only on the level of a learned joke or as 'Bildungsjargon'. When, however, Lauterbach, the hapless assistant director, is sent back to Earth to begin life again, his lament has profounder ramifications: "Auweh, auweh! Sich wieder einschalten in den Lauf dieses erdgebundenen Planeten, wo man Gutes möcht und Böses darf? Also packens wirs an, aber diesmal ohne Illusion!"(III,308). This can be read as a genuine comment on the pessimistic nature of the moral structure of Germany where the principle of evil had, by 1934, clearly established its supremacy. The reference to life without illusions reflects a commitment to one of the key tenets of Horváth's world view which he repeatedly stated to be his central task as a writer. Lauterbach's reluctant return to a human existence can be interpreted only as a Christian attitude based on the dualism of redemptive good in preference to worldly suffering. The central question must concern itself with whether worldly suffering and evil constitutes an eternal feature of the moral order or whether the prevalence of evil is linked specifically to the new political conditions. There are other references which can only be construed as direct criticism of the Nazis:

ST. PETRUS-Schauns gestern zum Beispiel habens auf der Erde drunten wieder einmal eine Masse Leute unschuldig hingerich-

27. In Berlin, Weimar and Frankfurt charges of blasphemy were laid against the play but were rejected by the public prosecutor. In Vienna, however, the church had more success and three actors were actually convicted for disturbing the peace and were sentenced to two weeks imprisonment. Kurt Pinthus, Foreword to: Walter Hasenclever, Gedichte, Dramen, Prosa, hrsg. von Kurt Pinthus, Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1963, p.42f.

tet - lauter Fehlurteile und trotzdem kommens alle miteinander in die Höll! (III,299).

It could also be an allusion to the bloody street battles between right and left-wing groups in Vienna from the 11-16 February, 1934, which resulted in the crushing of the socialist uprising. Here it is ironical that these 'innocents' cannot be saved by divine justice either, so that both the heavenly and worldly orders seem to be seriously awry or perhaps even in collusion. It is also certainly more than coincidence that Horváth specifies the overture to the Meistersinger to be heard at the beginning of the first scene on Earth where Luise is waiting at the stage door(III,277). Not only would Wagner conjure up strong associations with the Nazis, but this piece was supposed to have been a favourite piece of Hitler and one which he knew by heart(28). Jean-Claude François even recognises in the scenes set in hell "une allusion voilée aux premiers camps de concentration: stricte hiérarchie, organisation militaire, culte de chef"(28a). However, the obvious discrepancy between the horrors of even the first camps and Horváth's somewhat comic representation of hell does not support any direct link between the two.

2.2.1 Compromise and Conscience: Horváth and National Socialists

The key to the play's structure and thereby to its weaknesses lies in the comic framework of heaven and hell with earth providing the serious core. Almost the entire humour of the play derives from the scenes set either above or below earth and it is therefore at the middle level that attention must be directed to find the core of the play. The representation of the theatre world has unmistakable parallels with Horváth's own situation, as commentators have pointed out. François indicates Horváth's familiarity with the world of opera because of his marriage to Maria Elsner and his negative experiences with theatre directors attempting to have his plays staged in Vienna(29). The same argument is put forward by Hildebrandt, albeit two years earlier(30), while Kurt Kahl goes even so far as to interpret the devil's pact with the Intendant as an indirect allusion to the danger of performing his plays: "So löst der

28. John Toland, Adolf Hitler, New York, Ballantyne Books, 1976, pp.43,183.

28a. François, Histoire et fiction, p.276.

29. Ibid., p.275.

Autor, den niemand spielen wollte, das Rätsel, wieso ein völlig amusischer Mensch Intendant werden kann - auch der Intendant seines Stükess hat mit dem Teufel abgeschlossen"(31).

The predicament of Luise, the untalented would-be opera singer, who concludes a pact with the devil in order to advance her artistic career and attain fame and fortune, reflects a new interest on Horváth's part in personal problems of his art: honour and compromise. That this is his central concern in the play has been given fresh weight by the revelation in Krischke's biography that Horváth applied for admission to the 'Reichsverband Deutscher Schriftsteller' (RDS), the newly formed Nazi writers' guild. Horváth lodged his successful application on the 11 July, 1934, during the period he spent in Berlin, ostensibly to study the new regime at first hand, but when he was in fact trying to earn a living as a script writer for the film industry(32). It is impossible to determine whether Himmelwärts was completed before or after his application to join the new organisation(33). The exact date is probably not important because this was not the only compromise he made with the new regime. Horváth refused to sign the protest organised by the PEN Club against the burning of the books on the 10 May, 1933. In a recently discovered, undated letter to a certain Dr. Stern, Horváth demands emphatically that his signature not be included on the protest telegram sent to the PEN Club:

30. "Es scheint auch, daß er mit der Figur der anti-chambrierenden Luise Erfahrungen porträtiert hat, die er nach seiner Heirat mit der Sängerin Maria Elsner und bei ihrer Übersiedlung nach Wien gemacht hat - Erfahrungen mit einer österreichischen Kulturbanausie, die sich's immer schon gerichtet hat und vor dem Risiko eines neuen Talents 'dichthält'", Hildebrandt, Horváth, p.94.

31. Kahl, op. cit., p.67.

32. June 1933 saw the foundation of the RDS into which the major German writers' guild, the SDS, of which Horváth was a member, was more or less forcibly incorporated. The SDS was formally dissolved in December of the same year. Membership of the RDS was a prerequisite for having work published in Germany, as its articles clearly stated: "die Mitgliedschaft (wird) entscheidend dafür sein, ob ein Schriftwerk in Deutschland verlegt werden kann oder nicht"; but membership had the following preconditions: "Mitglied der RDS kann jeder deutschblütige Schriftsteller werden, der politisch einwandfrei im Sinne des neuen Staates ist. Entscheidung liegt bei der Reichsleitung". Cited in Hans-Albert Walter, Deutsche Exilliteratur 1933-1950, Bd.1, Darmstadt und Neuwied, Luchterhand, 1972, p.179.

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Stern! Heute vormittag teilte mir ein Herr, dessen Name ich leider nicht verstand, den Text des telegraphischen Protestes an den Penklub mit. Dieses mir heute mitgeteilte Telegramm kann ich leider unmöglich unterschreiben. (Es weicht in mancher Formulierung beträchtlich von dem ab, was Sie mir gestern telephonisch mitgeteilt haben, so z.B., kann ich doch nicht im Namen der österreich. und geflüchteten Schriftsteller sprechen, da ich weder Österreicher noch geflüchtet bin. Ich bin bekanntlich ungarischer Staatsbürger(34).

Important is not only the fact that Horváth did not ally himself with the protests against the new regime but he did not consider himself an exile with all the social, political and economic ramifications that this status implied. Later in the same year, on 7 September, 1933, he wrote to Dr. Fritz Landshoff, head of the German section of the Amsterdam publishing house Querido, refusing publication of a scene from one of his plays:

Gestern schrieb ich Ihnen und zwar betr. eines Abdruckes irgendeiner Szene aus einem meiner Stücke in der 'Sammlung'. Nun muß ich Ihnen aber heute leider folgendes mitteilen: gestern, das heißt, bis gestern hatte ich nur zwei Beiträge gelesen (Roth und Kesten), heute Nacht das ganze Heft. Wie ich Ihnen bereits im März sagte, will ich prinzipiell an keiner Zeitschrift mehr mitarbeiten, die sich (und seis nur in Glossenform) mit Politik beschäftigt. Seien Sie mir nicht böse, lieber Doktor Landshoff, und verstehen Sie bitte meinen Standpunkt(35).

Die Sammlung, edited by Klaus Mann, was dedicated to political
33. Himmelwärts was published by 'Der neue Bühnenverlag für Kulturpolitik' in 1934 which, according to the editors of the Gesamtausgabe (IV,652), also brought out Ernst Barlach's collected works. This assertion appears erroneous. First, there is no record of a collected edition of Barlach's works ever appearing before 1956, let alone under the Nazis for whom Barlach was a decadent author whose works were burned and banned. Secondly, it seems unlikely that a publishing house with such an ominous name would engage in such an operation. Their acceptance of Himmelwärts is not linked with Horváth's membership of the RDS, for he signed a contract with the Verlag on 19 April, 1934, although it is not clear if the play was completed at this time.

34. The full text of the letter is reproduced in Krischke, p.175.

ends, although it called itself a "ganz literarische(s)" periodical. This was stated unequivocally by Mann in the foreword to the first number which appeared in September, 1933: "Eine literarische Zeitschrift ist keine politische; die Chronik der Tagesereignisse, ihre Analyse oder die Voraussage der kommenden macht ihren Inhalt nicht aus. Trotzdem wird sie heute eine politische Sendung haben"(36). It was presumably the foreword that Horváth then read, in which Klaus Mann expresses unmistakably "daß (er) die Abhängigkeit der Literatur von der Politik, der Kunst von der Gesellschaft erkannt und daß er die Leitlinie seiner Zeitschrift dieser Erkenntnis gemäß konzipiert hatte"(37). It is difficult to accept that Horváth could have been naive enough to believe that such a publication, published in exile by an exiled author, might be free from any political activity. It was clearly not the political tenor of the periodical that he was objecting to (its contributions and principles could not have been closer to his own writing) but the fact that it was political in any sense and clearly opposed to the Nazis(38). Horváth was obviously convinced that there was no real obstacle to his continued activity as a writer under the Nazis as long as he was careful not to attract the wrath of the administration by openly espousing antifascist causes and organisations. This effort was to a large extent in vain. His parents' house in Murnau was searched by the S.A. In November, 1933, he returned to Austria, and in December went to Budapest in order to renew his Hungarian passport. In March, 1934, he returned to Berlin to work as a script writer. It appears that he did not inform his friends of this decision - Csokor addressed his correspondence with Horváth to a hotel in Vienna(39), evidently under the impression that his closest friend was still

35. Ibid.

36. Cited in Hans-Albert Walter, Deutsche Exilliteratur 1933-1950, Bd.7, p.242f.

37. Ibid., p.244.

38. Horváth anticipated correctly the Nazi reaction: on the 10 October, 1933, the 'Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums' announced in the Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel a warning with regard to German authors writing for exile periodicals and in particular Die Sammlung. The threat was directed, however, chiefly at the publishing houses of exiled but not yet banned authors such as Thomas Mann, Musil, Döblin, Schickele and Stefan Zweig, all of whom promised to contribute to Die Sammlung and all of whom then publically retracted their pledges under pressure from their respective publishers. For a full account of this controversy cf. Walter, Bd.1, p.245.

in Austria. Although he worked in Berlin continuously throughout 1934, his position there was becoming increasingly untenable. He returned to Austria in September, 1935, and on a visit to his parents in August, 1936 he was informed by the police that he must leave Germany within 24 hours(40).

It has been necessary to discuss more fully the details of Horváth's biography as a possible key to the new themes in the plays such as Himmelwärts and Mit dem Kopf durch die Wand. In both these plays the notion of artistic integrity or conscience plays an important role - in the former it is implied through the background of the film industry. In the speech entitled 'Was soll ein Schriftsteller heutzutag schreiben?' Horváth expresses unequivocally the writer's ultimate commitment to his own conscience:

Aber es gibt nur eine wahrhafte Zensur: das Gewissen! Und das dürfen wir nie verlassen (...) Ich habe für den Film z.B. geschrieben wegen eines neuen Anzugs und so. Es war mein moralischer Tiefstand. Heut hab ich noch eine Krawatte davon ... (...) Aber: Nur Freude und Erfolg, d.h. Geldverdienen - das geht nicht! Damit versündigt er sich gegenüber seinem Talent. (...) Verantwortung, d.h. nichts anderes, wie einfach ausgedrückt: Gewissen (VIII,669-671).

It is very apparent that the film industry represents for Horváth the act of reducing all things to a financial value which is expressed through the use of the word 'verwerten' in Mit dem Kopf durch die Wand. Semper, the cynical film producer, reads everything sent to him: "vielleicht willst der liebe Gott, daß man was entdeckt, was sich verwerten läßt"(IV,331). Even the Unbekannte herself admits blithely to the Marquis her reason for accepting his invitation: "und (ich) bin her zu Ihnen, vielleicht um etwas zu erfahren, was wir verwerten können, filmisch und dergleichen"(IV,373). The pernicious influence of this world leads even the Marquis to break his word, to betray his aristocratic code of honour. This scene, which constitutes the serious core of the play, can also be read perhaps as a cipher for Horváth's own compromise of his ideals and conscience. The scene stands out from the rest of the rather hectic comic action as though it had been written in a different key - the understanding between Huelsen and the Marquis that the latter has

39. Krischke, p.202.

40. Ödön von Horváth Leben und Werk in Daten und Bildern, hrsg. von Traugott Krischke und Hans Prokop, Frankfurt/M., Insel, 1977, p.182.

committed grave and perhaps irreparable harm to his *raison d'être* when he denies the presence of Huelsen's fiancée, the *Unbekannte*, in his house:

HUELSEN (...) es ist mir bekannt, daß ein Marquis de Bresançon noch nie sein Ehrenwort brach. (...) (fixiert ihn) Er ist lieber gestorben.

MARQUIS Sie haben recht. (Stille)

HUELSEN Verzeihung!

MARQUIS Bitte! (Huelsen rasch ab durch die Tapetentüre. Marquis sieht ihm in Gedanken versunken nach) (IV,378).

The loss of integrity which this scene implies prepares the way for the ending of the play. Thus devoid of important moral scruples, it is a logical step that the Marquis should participate in the film industry. The apparently harmonious ending entirely brought about by the *deus ex machina* of the Marquis's offer to finance a film signifies that the moral values of the film industry are those that prevail at the end of the play.

Similarly the only scene in *Himmelwärts* which achieves any real dramatic tension through the typically Horváthian economy of language is the confrontation between Luise and the Teufel which culminates in the dissolution of the pact and the end of her career as an opera singer. Although the Teufel provides for comic relief in the scene, Luise's predicament is presented on an entirely serious level. This is demonstrated from the outset with a recurrent image of death found in a number of Horváth's plays: LUISE (fletscht die Zähne vor dem Spiegel) Ich lebe nur meinem Beruf (III,310). Herbert Gamper's interpretation of the images of death has already been mentioned in II,6. Gamper points out how Horváth utilises a frequent motif from medieval Dance of Death depictions: death fetching a woman who espies death behind her in a mirror. He illustrates this with reference to the scene in 'Bild 3' in Glaube Liebe Hoffnung where Maria admires her new dentures in a mirror and sees reflected in it a detective approaching: "Die Konstellation ist auch diejenige des Bildes von Baldung-Grien (Die Lebensalter des Weibes) bzw., wenn man berücksichtigt, daß der Kriminaler, in Szene 12, Maria 'mit sich abzerrt', diejenige des Bildes aus dem Basler Totentanz"(41). Gamper lists various other references to teeth, mirrors and lipstick in association with death but omits mention of this example in *Himmelwärts*. Accordingly the image of Luise looking in the mirror could signal her impending 'seelische(n) Tod', which in this case is not 'gesellschaftlich vermittelt' but

is the result of universal human weaknesses: pride, vanity and selfishness. In the ensuing conversation with the devil, whereby the stage directions insist that she look in her mirror(III,312), it becomes clear that she is facing a type of spiritual death, and has lost everything "Was einen Menschen zum Menschen macht":

LUISE (starrt in den Spiegel und spricht zu sich) Luise! Luise! - bist allein im Zimmer und gehst durch alle deine Zimmer und in jedem sitzt eine Luise, und nur im Salon sitzen zwei, und die eine schwört: "Nie wieder, nie wieder!" Und die andere sagt: "Du kannst doch nicht schwören, du hast doch keine Finger, keine Hand, keinen Arm"

TEUFEL Was sind denn das für Gefühle?!

LUISE (brüllt sich im Spiegel an) Meine privatesten Gefühle. Pfui Teufel! (Sie spuckt sich im Spiegel an, fährt hoch und eilt zitternd hin und her) (III,312).

Luise conjures up a complex of images which point to a severe personality crisis: loneliness and isolation are expressed in the image of the empty rooms. Luise appears to feel oppressed by the emptiness of her 'Heim', her refusal to accept a husband and family. This is given further weight by her next speech, where she remembers a sleigh ride with her husband on a snowy winter's night where she resisted his attentions for fear of having children: "Aber ich konnt doch kein Kind gebrauchen, versteht denn das niemand? Ich konnt doch meine Tourneen nicht absagen und überhaupt dieser ganze Beruf, ich war ja gefangen"(III,313). The image of snow in Horváth's later works is invariably connected with emotional coldness and death(42). Her rejection then of home, husband and family can only be interpreted as the signal for her emotional death. Thus, Luise can be added to the list of the central characters in Horváth's later works who all suffer from an identity crisis, as Jürgen Schröder points out: "Wie ihn (Horváth) selbst sehen wir die wichtigsten Figuren seines Spätwerks in schwere Identitätskrisen verstrickt (...) Und eng verschwistert damit sind die Motive der Heimsuchung, des Schuldkomplexes und des Strafbedürfnisses"(43). The latter three

41. Gamper summarises the significance of this as follows: "Entblößte Zähne, festzustellen auch im Vorgang des Schminkens der Lippen, signalisieren Todesverfallenheit. In der Regel ist der bedeutete Tod gesellschaftlich vermittelt, aufzufassen als seelischer Tod, als Vernichtung dessen, was einen Menschen zum Menschen macht, sich selber sein lässt", 'Todesbilder in Horváths Werk', p.76.

42. cf. the final scenes in Don Juan and Ein Kind unserer Zeit.

Figaro läßt sich scheiden

manifest themselves in the image of limblessness which renders Luise incapable of swearing an oath^(43a). The inability is linked undoubtedly with the notion of honour, conscience and moral integrity.

The 'kleinbürgerliche Idylle' which Horváth creates for Luise - represented by the sleeping couple in a small room bathed in moonlight - is harmonious in the satisfaction with modest joys. It is clearly conceived in the spirit of Frau Steinthaler's insight into the true nature of Christian forgiveness and caritas:

FRAU STEINTHALER (lächelt still) Sie habens auch noch nicht erfaßt.

AUTOGRAMMJÄGER Was?

FRAU STEINTHALER Daß man sich um die andern kümmern soll, um nicht gestört zu werden (III,319).

This is then followed by the scene on earth where Lauterbach, now a waiter, befriends Luise and thus leads her away from an intended suicide, and in doing so demonstrates a practical example of Frau Steinthaler's new world view.

The total harmony on all three levels of the play - even the Teufel still cherishes hopes of someday returning to heaven and insists that his good works be noted - is unique in Horváth's oeuvre. There are no uncertainties or doubts hanging over the fairy-tale ending and in this way the promise of the subtitle is fulfilled. It is therefore significant that only a comedy which remains totally in the realm of fantasy can attain such a harmonious conclusion.

3. Figaro läßt sich scheiden

The title implies exploration beyond the Happy Ending of comedy. The play itself is an exploration of the future, not only of the everyday reality of marriage and relationships but of the future in the political as well as in the private sphere. The discord of Figaro's private relationship is inextricably linked with the contradictions in his political development. An

43. Jürgen Schröder, op. cit., p.131.

43a. Admittance to the RDS was contingent of course on swearing an oath to the Führer.

Figaro läßt sich scheiden

analysis of the play must integrate disparate elements. Its central movement - escape from revolution to exile - cannot be understood just as an abstract, timeless depiction of revolution and emigration as universally applicable experiences but is connected closely to the events of post-1933 Europe. In a foreword written for the complete 13 Bild version which was substantially abridged for the première in Prague, 1937, Horváth stated unequivocally the relevance of the play to his particular time:

Die Komödie 'Figaro läßt sich scheiden' beginnt einige Jahre nach Beaumarchais 'Hochzeit des Figaro'. Trotzdem habe ich es mir erlaubt, das Stück in unserer Zeit spielen zu lassen, denn die Probleme der Revolution und Emigration sind erstens: zeitlos, und zweitens: in unserer Zeit besonders aktuell. Unter der in dieser Komödie stattfindenden Revolution ist nicht also die große Französische von 1789 gemeint, sondern schlicht nur eine jegliche Revolution, denn jeder gewaltsame Umsturz läßt sich in seinem Verhältnis zu dem Begriff, den wir als Menschlichkeit achten und mißachten, auf den gleichen Nenner bringen. In der 'Hochzeit des Figaro' wetterleuchtet die nahe Revolution, in 'Figaro läßt sich scheiden' wird zwar voraussichtlich nichts wetterleuchten, denn die Menschlichkeit wird von keinen Gewittern begleitet, sie ist nur ein schwaches Licht in der Finsternis. Wollen es immerhin hoffen, daß kein noch so starker Sturm es auslöschen kann (IV,653).

As Horváth himself emphasises, it is fruitless to seek one specific revolution as a key to the play. However, there are unmistakable topical allusions to the so-called National Socialist revolution and the depiction of exile in the play reflects without a doubt the predicament of Horváth and other tens of thousands of refugees from Nazi Germany. The paramount importance of 'Menschlichkeit' as the key human quality in opposition to the barbarity of the Nazi regime is stated not just in the preface but is restated throughout the play. The only optimistic perspectives in this otherwise pessimistic comedy are made visible in the few instances when humanity is demonstrated. This quality is represented chiefly by Susanne: her spontaneous, emotional responses are contrasted to the calculating self-interest of Figaro, but glimpses of it are caught also in the actions of other figures.

The complexity of the play, its frustrating ambiguity(1), centres on determining Figaro's exact position regarding the revolution he abandons and then embraces. On the one hand Figaro

"Figaro wird bürgerlich"

is the prototypical opportunist who offers important qualities and skills for the revolution, on the other he appears to be devoid of any ideological motivation, and even utters Nazi-like sentiments when it seems apposite. A comparison of two variants in the 13 Bild version in 3.2. will help to resolve some of these contradictions and ambiguities.

3.1 "Figaro wird bürgerlich"

Horváth's Figaro is considerably modified from the likeable, scheming and wily protagonist of Beaumarchais's two plays. The revolutionary plea by Beaumarchais's Figaro in V,3 of Le mariage de Figaro to acknowledge the rights of innate intelligence over the right of birth, and for the freedom from censorship of speech and expression, contains also the seeds of Horváth's bourgeois Figaro. As Beaumarchais's hero relates in his famous monologue, his development from a homeless orphan, stolen by bandits, to servant to Count Almaviva included the acquiring of the accoutrements of the middle-classes: education, manners and a variety of professions (Horváth's Figaro summarises these achievements to the border-guards(IV,410)) until he is able to participate in public debate on the role of money and interest. While the earlier Figaro embodies the talents and energy of the rising middle-class, restless for power, and indeed prophesies that their revolutionary aspirations will replace the decaying aristocracy, Horváth's character reveals the negative traits of this class. His Figaro, devoid of principles and of any concept of honour, distinguishes himself chiefly by his remarkable willingness to compromise and make concessions in order to gain acceptance. These were of course central questions for Horváth and his fellow exiles, attempting to maintain their principles and resist the temptation to compromise in the face of severe hardship.

In an early sketch of the play Horváth traces the fortunes of his protagonist as follows:

II. Stadium: Figaro (wird bürgerlich): Ich hab einen entscheidenden Fehler begangen. Ich hab für die Liebe meine Überzeugung geopfert. Nein, nicht geopfert, ich hab es für nicht so wichtig genommen,-

III. Stadium: Figaro: Ich hab recht gehabt. Die Liebe ist wichtiger als jede Überzeugung (VIII,718).

(1) Jean-Claude François, Histoire et théâtre, p.287.

This comparison returns in the final version as the struggle between "Redlichkeit und Verstand" as will be seen below. Figaro's descent into the depths of moral indifference reaches rock bottom in his ultimately vain attempts to be accepted by the inhabitants of Großhadersdorf. He justifies this new petit-bourgeois existence as a form of freedom: "Meine Freiheit äußert sich nicht zuletzt darin, daß ich heucheln darf, und geheuchelt muß werden, sonst liegen wir eines Tages draußen im Dreck!" (IV,427). This is a complete reversal of all the values that Beaumarchais's Figaro once stood for and signifies a profound character change for Susanne who can scarcely recognise the man she married:

SUSANNE: Mein Figaro freute sich über die Zukunft, wenn ein Gewitter am Himmel stand, und sprang ans Fenster, wenn es einschlug, aber du? (...) Mein Figaro saß im Kerker, weil er seine Meinung schrieb, du würdest dich nicht mal trauen, heimlich seine Schriften zu lesen! Mein Figaro war der erste, der selbst einem Grafen Almaviva auf der Höhe seiner Macht die Wahrheit ins Gesicht sagte, du wahrst die Form in Großhadersdorf (IV,432).

The tension between them and their opposing world views culminates in Susanne's affair with the Forstadjunkt. Although only hinted at in the shortened Prague version, the scene 'Sylvesterfeier' (VII,329-337) contrasts Figaro's 'Bürgerlichkeit' with Susanne's 'Menschlichkeit'. The latter manifests itself in her confession to him of her affair with the Forstadjunkt, when he clearly prefers to accept lies and self-deception in order to preserve his precious respectability. It is this admission with its protracted consequences - their divorce, Figaro's departure from Großhadersdorf in the face of local intolerance and return to the Schloß - that eventually results in their reconciliation.

Figaro's insight into the error of his ways happens, however, much later. On his return home he expresses to Fanchette how Susanne's betrayal has forced him to recognise his previous emotional weakness: "Du hast dich zu entscheiden: Redlichkeit oder Verstand. Bist du nur redlich, mußt du opfern, hast du nur Verstand, wird dir geopfert. Ich hab mich entschieden" (IV,444). 'Verstand' here means clearly self-interest as opposed to self-sacrifice and certainly does not correspond to the values of 'Menschlichkeit'. An example of the latter is given by the Gräfin in the preceding scene where she offers to forgo a meal to enable her husband to go to a café and thus forget his worries (IV,435).

The final reconciliation between Figaro and Susanne is not the simple comedy ending that the final stage direction implies, for their previous dialogue suggests that it is Susanne who must compromise her 'Menschlichkeit' rather than Figaro his 'Verstand'. Susanne returns to Figaro under similar conditions as Marianne or Elisabeth:

SUSANNE Ich bin zu dir zurückgekommen, weil mir meine Arbeitsbewilligung entzogen wurde.

FIGARO Das freut mich.

SUSANNE Nur weil ich draußen nichts mehr zu essen hatte, bin ich zu dir zurück. (...)

FIGARO Warum belügst du dich selbst? Tuts dir wohl. Mir macht's nichts aus. (Stille)

SUSANNE Hast Gewissensbisse gehabt? (Sie grinst)

FIGARO Wenn du mich so fragst, sag ich nein.

SUSANNE Warum hast du mich gerufen?

FIGARO Weil ich dich brauche.

SUSANNE (höhnisch) Zu was denn?

FIGARO Ich bitt dich, frag nicht so dummm! (Stille) (IV,462).

There is a strong element of defeatism and a broken will in Susanne's admission. The experiences of exile were such that she could no longer maintain her ideals and principles; she too must compromise her position and this relativises the apparent reconciliation and happy ending.

3.2 Children, Comedy and Utopia

IRENE: Kinder sind doch die Zukunft (III,198).

Jürgen Schröder has remarked: "Fast alle Schlüsse der späten Werke stehen im Zeichen der Kinderwelt"(2), and interprets this as evidence of a desire by Horváth's characters, like that of the author according to Schröder, to return to the mother, which in psychoanalytic terms indicates a regressive tendency. While this

2. Schröder, op. cit., p.144.

corresponds neatly to his somewhat convoluted and highly speculative psychoanalytic thesis, there is also ample evidence to suggest that in Figaro läßt sich scheiden children are primarily concerned with the future. Children, or lack of them, is the key to marital discord between Figaro and Susanne and thereby to their future happiness, and children are also depicted as the key to the new world order being created in the land of revolution and much attention is paid to their upbringing.

The place of children in drama has yet to be examined thoroughly, and in particular their varying functions in tragedy and comedy. Children have been used by the tragic dramatist since Medea where they are invariably victims and their death serves to intensify the experience of horror (the death of MacDuff's children in Macbeth is an example of this function). Children as innocent babes are an indispensable element of the 'Bürgerliches Trauerspiel' beginning in the 18th century and continuing through into Naturalism where, as illegitimate offspring, they give rise to suicides and/or infanticide with the concomitant social ostracism and tragic consequences for the mother.

The comedy tradition, however, appears to have little place for children either as infants or as speaking *dramatis personae*, and important German comedies in particular are devoid of children in the 18th and 19th centuries. One reason is perhaps the ability of children to evoke immediate empathy which is counter productive to the distancing effect which comedy seeks to achieve. A second reason is their innocence - which makes them such effective victims in tragedy - because totally innocent characters are also of little interest to a genre motivated by manipulating human foibles. There are naturally notable exceptions to this tendency, provided in the main by French comedy. For example, Fanchette in Le mariage de Figaro, is described by the author as "une enfant de douze ans, très naïve", although she is already the object of the adolescent desires of Cherubino and, it is hinted, is fancied also by the Count himself(3). With the inclusion of this child in the web of sexual intrigue which motivates the play, she is placed in the interesting position of being on the threshold between girl and woman. The inclusion of children in the sexual intrigue had been illustrated in an earlier French comedy, Molière's Le Malade Imaginaire (1673). Although the child here, Argan's daughter Louison, is not the actual object of sexual desire, she is asked

3. Beaumarchais, Théâtre Complet, p.256. Horváth seizes on this imputation, and in his version Fanchette and the Count are revealed to have had a sexual liaison, the main cause of Pedrillo's hatred of his former master, cf. (IV,440,459).

by her father to report in detail on her older sister's rendezvous with her lover. Louison provided the model for a large number of similar wily and cheeky children in later French 17th century minor comedies(4).

Despite the example of Molière and Beaumarchais, German comedy has consistently eschewed the use of children for any important dramaturgical purpose. However, children are seen to be the logical result of marriage, the most important expectation in comedy, and are always hinted at as possibilities in comedy which abounds in the hope of extra-marital sexual activity. Pregnancy has traditionally little place in the festival atmosphere of the happy-ending although rebirth, fertility and continuance are all important symbols of comedy at its deepest level. This unconscious expectation of comedy is clearly articulated when Gunderloch in Der fröhliche Weinberg, actually insists of his daughter that she must first become pregnant to gain his blessing for her marriage, and thus demonstrate the fertility of both herself and her husband.

It is therefore valuable to examine the type of future perspectives that Horváth offers through children which, as Schröder has very correctly observed, occur frequently in the exile works. Even earlier, in Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald, Marianne's child suffers a fate befitting a Naturalistic tragedy; in Die Unbekannte aus der Seine "der kleine Albert" will inherit the legacy of guilt and a petit-bourgeois façade of respectability bestowed on him by his father; Hin und Her ends with an announcement well-suited to Der fröhliche Weinberg, that Eva is already two months pregnant, which provides little joy for her father but in fact only confirms his prejudices regarding the morality prevailing in the neighbouring country.

The problem of the future manifests itself in Figaro lässt sich scheiden in a variety of ways. Figaro refuses to let Susanne conceive a child because of his concern for the future

4. These plays were written by the actor-playwrights of the 17th century travelling theatrical troupes for their own children. cf. Alison Grear's forthcoming article in Revue d'histoire du théâtre, 'Les enfants dans le théâtre français du dix-septième siècle'; cf. also Roselyn La Place, 'Les théâtres d'enfants au XVIII siècle', Revue d'histoire du théâtre, 1980, Nr.1, pp.21-31. The child theatres of 18th century France were mainly dance and pantomime troupes and, because of the prohibition on the spoken word, the children did not actually speak on stage but were dubbed in by actors in the wings. The 17th century players, performing abroad, were under no such restrictions and frequently used children as actors in adult plays.

and jeopardises in the process their marital future; Figaro, by virtue of his ability to foresee the future, spectacularly confirmed in his prognosis of the impending revolution, can be considered to be almost obsessed by what he considers a bleak future; the important theme of the revolution and its future course is a central concern of the play and one of its most controversial aspects; a future perspective is offered by the children in the new 'Findelheim'.

It is evident from the outset that an important comedy convention is reversed in this play: the marriage of Figaro, far from sealing his happiness, appears to have laid the basis for discord within himself. He explains to the border-guards: "Alles habe ich gesehen, getan, genossen, jede Täuschung war geschwunden, ich war nur zu sehr erwacht, bis ich dann - geheiratet habe! Das war der Markstein in meinem Leben, die große Um- und Einkehr, denn seit jener Hochzeit des Figaro bin ich ein anderer Mensch" (IV, 410). The transformation is certainly for the worse, as the comparison between Beaumarchais's idealist and Horváth's 'Spießer' reveals. The centre of discontent lies not in the fact that the adventurer has been domesticated but that Figaro refuses steadfastly to 'complete' the marriage with children. To support his argument he is able to cite not just the present upheavals but also his proven prophetic gifts. Even in Großhadersdorf, which is far from any major junction or fortification, it would be irresponsible to bring children into a world where nothing is safe from destruction:

Sie werden aber auch das Wertlose zerstören und die Erdbeben werden vollenden. Wir leben in einer Völkerwanderung, Susanne, und nie noch haben Menschen mit mehr Recht wie du und ich sagen dürfen: nach uns die Sintflut! Setz du dein Kind in die Welt, setz es nur! Es wird in einer Mondlandschaft leben, mit Kratern und giftigem Dunst (IV, 430).

The images anticipate not only actual historical events but form the basis for his last comedy, Pompeji, where the central metaphor of upheaval is an earthquake.

Nevertheless, it is finally Figaro's contact with the children from the orphanage which results in his change of attitude and effects a reconciliation with Susanne. In the Prague version the children are shown to be the children of the revolution and receive corresponding indoctrination and propaganda to fuel their hatred of the deposed aristocracy. They have been taught that all Counts are criminals and therefore deserve execution, or even worse, life-imprisonment. In the original version there are two earlier scenes with the children.

In the one variant Figaro holds a speech on the occasion of his appointment as the new 'Schloßverwalter' (5), in which he extols the virtues of sacrifice in unmistakably Nazi 'Blut-und-Boden' vocabulary, and he addresses the teachers in particular to stress that they must inculcate the same values into the children:

Vergessen Sie nie, man muß es bereits den Kinderseelen einhämtern, daß, wenn nicht ein Jeder opfert, alles seinen Sinn verlöre. Hiedurch hebt man einerseits das Selbstgefühl des einzelnen Menschen, weil er sich wichtig vorkommt, andererseits kassiert man auch gleich das Opfer ein. Das ist die pädagogische Lösung eines volkswirtschaftlichen Problems (VII,347).

Fanchette immediately takes violent issue with Figaro for such a cynical attitude:

FANCHETTE Mir ist nur übel (Zu Figaro). Daß du lügst, das hab ich gewußt, wir lügen ja alle. Daß du aber die Kinder so belügen kannst -

ANTONIO (fällt ihr ins Wort) Warum nicht? Sie sind ja unsere "Zukunft"! Aus Kindern werden Männer (VII,348).

Antonio's sarcastic remark stems from his opposition to the direction in which the revolution is moving (he listens to foreign radio broadcasts (VII,346)) and it reflects a resigned acceptance that the children must be developed into soldiers to carry out the revolution's aggressive designs. He yearns for the stable life under the Count and sees little value in the "future" the revolution is attempting to create. In its blinkered forward-looking perspective, it neglects the achievements of the past, particularly the cultural assets. The clash between past and present is embodied in the tension between Antonio and Pedrillo. He scolds the children whereupon Pedrillo defends them in the type of National Socialist jargon that Figaro uses later in his speech:

PEDRILLO (...) Wo früher geschminkte Vergangenheit frivole

5. This scene appears to belong to Act II, iii, (IV,443) and not to the final Bild (IV,456) as the editors of the Gesammelte Werke claim. This can be seen from Antonio's line "(Bei Seite) Ich könnt schon sprechen, aber ich werd mich hüten" which occurs in the variant and in II,iii, and from the fact that it depicts Figaro's return. The other variant, (VII,341-346) which will be discussed below shows Figaro already established at the 'Schloß' and acquainted with the children and is presumably intended as either the penultimate or the final scene.

Scherze trieb, wächst nun ein starkes Geschlecht der Zukunft heran, froh, frei und gestählt (...)

ANTONIO (...) Wer bist denn du? Der blödeste aller Schloßverwalter! Siehst nur die "Zukunft", die "Zukunft"! Aber daß das kunstvollste Inventar im Keller vermodert, all die Bilder, Möbel, Gobelins, das ist dir wurscht (IV,437).

In another version of the scene with the 'Findelkindern' a completely different future perspective is indicated. The scene depicts a meal with the children where Figaro presides(6). One child, however, refuses to repeat the revolutionary grace - "Tod und Vernichtung unserer Feinden!"(VII,344) - because he claims he does not have any enemies. This child, ironically named Cäsar, expounds a type of pacifist Christian ethic to a disbelieving Figaro:

FIGARO Wenn dir aber einer eine hinhaut, dann haust ihm doch eine zurück?

CÄSAR Nein.

FIGARO Und warum nein?

CÄSAR Weil mir keiner eine hinhaut, wenn ichs nicht möcht (...)

CÄSAR Neulich hat mir zwar einer eine hingehaut (...) Ich hab ihm keine zurückgehaut (...) Weil er mir zu klein war (VII,344).

This child's moral standpoint effects a transformation in Figaro, who suddenly sees the revolution and its future possibilities in a new light, especially with regard to the upbringing of children:"Jaja, wenn mir seinerzeit eine Revolution ein Kinderheim beschert hätte, hätt ich mich vielleicht auch vorteilhafter entwickelt - "(VII,345). If this scene had in fact been intended for the final version, as opposed to the indoctrination speech, then Axel Fritz's claim could be supported, that Figaro's final acceptance of the value of 'Menschlichkeit' and his belief in the revolution are due to his contact with the children:

Diese letzte Phase seiner Entwicklung erwächst aus dem

6. The editors of the Gesammelte Werke offer no indication as to which scene was intended to be performed but offer them simply as variants. It seems however unlikely that Horváth had not decided for one or the other, because they provide a radically different interpretation of Figaro's view of the revolution.

Umgang mit den Kindern, die er keineswegs indoktriniert, wie es die Ansprachen der Vorstufe ahnen lassen (...) Aus diesem direkten Kontakt leitet sich seine letzte Wandlung her und ist zugleich eine persönliche Wiedergutmachung an Susanne(7).

Two objections, however, can be levelled at this interpretation: first, the 'Umgang' with children in the abridged version is restricted solely to the admonitions regarding their prejudices and to the suggestion that they break windows rather than "politisierten", which scarcely testifies to a positive attitude towards children; secondly, the editors of the Gesammelte Werke stress that the longer version is not a 'Vorstufe' but a parallel version and that the omission of certain scenes could be adduced to consideration for the émigrés living in Prague(8). Without the scene with Cäsar there is insufficient motivation for Figaro's new trust in the future which he expresses to Susanne: "(...) Aber heute, heut hab ich keine Angst mehr vor der Zukunft -" (IV,462). As the Prague version stands, Figaro's trust in a more humane revolution, which triumphantly concludes the play and which effects a happy-ending for all concerned, has little to do with the new breed of children as exemplified by Cäsar. Their destructive tendencies have simply been diverted away from the political sphere and channelled into mindless vandalism as the final stage direction indicates(IV,464); hardly an optimistic perspective, and certainly devoid of that utopian possibility which the comedy form demands.

7. Axel Fritz, op. cit., p.172. François, however, omits the scene with Cäsar in his reconstruction of the 13 Bild version; op. cit., p.292.

8. "Die vom Verlag Max Pfeffer, Wien-London, 1937 als unverkäufliches Manuskript vervielfältigte und in Prag uraufgeführte Fassung von Figaro lässt sich scheiden in neun Bildern (...) weist gegenüber einer im Nachlaß aufgefundenen Fassung in dreizehn Bildern so wesentliche Unterschiede auf, die nicht mit den Bestrebungen Horváths zu kürzen, zu verknappen, zu konzentrieren erklärbar sind" (VIII,718).

3.3. Revolution, Emigration and the Fictional World of Comedy

Critical work on Figaro lässt sich scheiden has focused almost exclusively on Horváth's depiction of revolution and emigration, hardly surprising in view of his expressed concern with these two problems in the preface to the play. While there is general critical consensus on the accuracy of his depiction of the exile predicament, most critics reproach Horváth with a lack of a clear political and historical context in his portrayal of revolution. Axel Fritz notes that Horváth's refugees flee into "die moderne Wirklichkeit eines Gastlandes (...) hinter der man unschwer die Schweiz der dreißiger Jahre erkennt". However, by allowing his characters to return, "stellt Horváth das Geschehen außerhalb der Möglichkeiten, die in der realen Situation der damaligen Zeit begründet lagen"(9). Even more disturbing for Fritz is the depiction of a socialist revolution of the proletariat where one hears "Spuren faschistischen Sprachgebrauchs" and unclarity regarding the question as to just which revolution the émigrés are fleeing; these he considers to be "schwerwiegende gedankliche Schwächen", which follow from the lack of a convincing historical and political anchor for his "Revolutionsbegriff"(10).

Jean-Claude François, who like Fritz is concerned primarily with the social criticism in Horváth's plays, considers his attitude to revolution to be ambiguous. He interprets Figaro's return as being motivated by the desire to pursue a career more lucrative than that of a barber in Großhadersdorf and devoid of any idealism, which is difficult to reconcile with the left-wing critic of the late 1920s(11). Gisela Günther also takes issue with the play which shows "in erschreckendem Maße einen Verlust an politischer Realität". Because there are no clear points of reference for Horváth's revolution - its refugees resemble in fact the revolutionaries of 1789 - the figure of Figaro loses precise contours: "Die gesamte innere Biographie des ehemaligen Wortführers der Revolution ist zu Beginn unglaublich und schwammig"(12). These weaknesses can be explained as a "Reaktion auf eine für Horváth schwer zu analysierende Wirklichkeit, und als Antwort auf die Bedürfnisse des Wiener Publikums, das sich den sozialkritischen Aspekten seiner Stücke verschloß"(13). Mennemeier/Trapp also preoccupy themselves with the question

9. Axel Fritz, op. cit., p.115.

10. Ibid., p.168, 172.

11. François, op. cit., p.294f.

12. Gisela Günther, op. cit., Anhang I, p.31.

which revolution Horváth is depicting and conclude that it more closely resembles the French Revolution of 1789 than that of the Third Reich, although it is impossible to gain an accurate perspective: "Diese Unbestimmtheit der Perspektive, die dahin tendiert, Revolutionen als Naturkatastrophen aufzufassen, ist eins der irritierenden und schwachen Momente des Stückes" (14).

The factor common to all these critics is the reproach that Horváth fails to provide a recognisable historical and/or political framework for his revolution. The strong 'Realitätsbezug', an element so praised by Horváth scholarship in the *Volksstücke* and most other works preceding 1933, is absent here and held up as the major weakness of the play. On the other hand, there is total critical consensus on the accuracy of the exile situation portrayed in the play, especially in the unabridged version. François has constructed a chart containing the important differences between the two versions and demonstrates that four important, topical subjects for the exile community were deleted by the abridgement: belief in the rapid overthrow of Hitler; many of the exiles, like Graf Almaviva, believed in 1933 that they would be home by Christmas; the refusal of foreign governments to join their condemnation of the 'Barbarian' Hitler; xenophobia in their respective countries of exile; the ineffectual aid organisations (15).

Hans-Christof Wächter maintains the "Schicksal des Exils" to be the central motif in the play. Primarily Horváth sought to illustrate the discrepancy between the heroic and often overblown self-image of the exiles who held themselves to be the sole focus of moral opposition to Hitler. Furthermore, the play presents a relentlessly pessimistic view of the reality of emigration and its crippling effect on the will and resistance of many émigrés. He adds that its call for critical self-appraisal was not heeded: "Eine (...) von Horváth geforderte selbstkritische Einsicht in die gefährdete Situation des Emigranten gelang jedoch nur wenigen" (16).

The position of the émigrés is summed up succinctly by Pedrillo on Figaro's return when he accuses him of betraying the revolution: "Ein Emigrant ist immer ein Hergelaufener und hat auch kein Zuhause, denn er hat es verraten" (IV, 440). This

13. Ibid., p.32.
14. Mennemeier/Trapp, Exildramatik, p.98.
15. François, op. cit., p.292f.
16. Wächter, Theater im Exil, p.41f.

applied equally to the countries where they sought asylum as to the country they had fled. Many had to cross borders in exactly the way the play begins, by night and in the hope that by morning they would be on foreign soil. Walter relates many such escapes as the only possibility for those who stood high on the Nazis' list of proscribed persons(17). Similarly, the impassioned plea dictated by the Fräulein Doktor in the "Büro des Internationalen Hilfsbundes für Emigranten" is, despite its melodramatic tone, an accurate description of the plight of many refugees, including writers such as Horváth: "(Diktiert) (...) Lindert das grausame Los der Emigranten, dem sie schutzlos preisgegeben sind, denn die Emigration zerstört alles: Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung - wie viele verzagen, verkommen, bringen sich um!"(VII,337f.). The long list of exiled German writers who committed suicide before the end of the war amply demonstrates this. Moreover, her harsh and cynical appraisal of bureaucratic procedure regarding the issuing of the crucial work permit: "... Eine Arbeitsbewilligung wird oft nur erteilt, um widerrufen werden zu können"(VII,340), holds true for a number of governments, particularly Switzerland.

There is clearly a discrepancy here between the vague, and apparently intellectually confused depiction of revolution and the exact, in part relentless portrayal of the exile predicament in the same play. Rather than ascribe this discrepancy to a weakness in the work, it is crucial to examine how this divergence is in fact the essential structural intention of Figaro lässt sich scheiden. There are without doubt two distinct worlds created in this play: the real world of emigration, easily recognisable and historically situated, and the Schloß, the place of revolution, and an entirely fictional world. It is no coincidence that this world, with the exception of the children, is populated entirely by characters from literature i.e from Beaumarchais's comedy(18).

The real world into which Beaumarchais's figures cross over in the first scene contains a whole host of new characters and situations. Particularly the scenes in Großhadersdorf have the

17. Walter, Deutsche Exilliteratur, Bd.1, 'Weitere Fluchtfälle im Jahre 1933', pp.228-233; cf. the account of John Heartfield's adventurous escape across the Riesengebirge to Czechoslovakia, p.229f.

18. Axel Fritz recognises two distinct 'Zeitebenen': the 18th century world and Horváth's own time: "Einzig das gräfliche Schloß stellt als historische Architektur eine natürliche Verbindung zwischen beiden Zeitebenen her"; he even suggests that this could be communicated scenically by having historical costumes and a modern scene design. Fritz, op. cit., p.272.

dramatis personae and situations of the Volksstücke. The 'Silvesterfeier' is a prototypical 'Volksfest': against a background of festivities there is an orgy of lying, deception and small-minded nastiness (*Spießertum*) revolving around the question of Susanne's affair with the Forstadjunkt. The situation contains all the prerequisites for domestic tragedy in the Horváthian mould. The tragic vein in the emigration scenes is strengthened by the use of death imagery, familiar from *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald, Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* and *Die Unbekannte aus der Seine*, and at odds with the tone of comedy. In I,iii, Figaro impresses upon Susanne that a world has collapsed and that the Graf and Gräfin have lost contact with reality: "(...) da wurde es mir plötzlich klar, daß ich zu Scheintoten rede". It would have been better if they had remained and been executed: "(...) Es ist eine Welt zusammengebrochen, eine alte Welt". He continues with a series of images of death:

Sie liegen aufgebahrt in den Grand-Hotels und halten die Pompesfunebres für Portiers, die Totengräber für Oberkellner und die Leichenfrau für die Masseuse. Sie wechseln jeden Tag die Wäsche, es bleibt aber immer ein Totenhemd, parfümieren sich, es riecht aber immer nach Blumen, die auf einem Grab verwelken (IV,417).

It is Susanne who next uses such images when she attempts to explain to Figaro her extreme discontent with their petit-bourgeois existence in Großhadersdorf, consisting of compromise and Heuchelei: "In diesem Nest verkomme ich (...) Großhadersdorf ist der Tod" (IV,428). When Figaro remains unmoved by her ploy of a feigned pregnancy and goes even so far as to reproach her for such irresponsibility she accuses him of killing their relationship: "(...) nie würde ich dir dein Kind zeigen, nie! Du verdienst es ja nicht anders, du bist der Tod! Der Tod!" (IV,431). Not only does the sojourn in exile result in the death of their relationship but leads directly to the death of the Gräfin and to the physical and mental debilitation of the Graf.

Their eventual return to the land of revolution is a return to the fictional world of Beaumarchais blended with fairy-tale elements. Horváth accords the Schloß - "Vor dem herrlich barocken Schloßportal" - an ironical description which contrasts with its supposed new revolutionary role. The Schloß represents the feudal world of the Graf; it conjures up associations with the fairy-tale; it also has a more recent literary heritage with strong Austrian connections, the so-called 'Schloßgeschichten' of the fin de siècle where the milieu evoked is frequently that of the decaying aristocracy(19). The movement to and from this

castle takes place, as befits a fairy-tale, through "tiefen Grenzwald" in "stockdunkle(r) Nacht"(IV,403,454).

Despite Pedrillo's loud threats and revolutionary slogans the laws operating at the castle appear to respond to the mild and generous laws of comedy rather than to the harsh inexorability of tragedy which prevails in the world of exile. For example, Figaro's sudden appointment as Schloßverwalter, with its equally abrupt reversal of fortunes, is clearly a comedy device and does not need exact motivation, the lack of which one critic bemoans(20).

The question must now be addressed as to the reason why Horváth should want to transform this "alles andere als heiteren Stoff in eine Komödie"(21). The answer can be found by looking at the ending.

In Easter 1936 Csokor wrote to Ferdinand Bruckner:

Horváth arbeitet jetzt an einer brillanten Komödie 'Figaro läßt sich scheiden' - eine Art Fortsetzung von 'Figaros Hochzeit' -, nur daß der berühmte Monolog des hier zum Emigranten gewordenen Figaro nicht mehr revolutionär sondern kleinbürgerlich-reaktionär klingt; erst am Schluß findet er wieder zu sich und damit auch wieder zu seiner Suzanne (IV,653).

Csokor's comment "erst am Schluß" suggests that a contrived comedy ending, leaving central problems unsolved, has been manufactured, a question with which recent Horváth criticism has been concerned.

Early critics such as Kurt Kahl find: "diesem Happy-End haftet nichts Satirisches an, eher Wunschtraumhaftes, ein Anflug naiven Märchendenkens"(22), whereas Walter Huder discovers in the ending "eine eklatante Komödie vom 'Sieg der Menschlichkeit'" and a "sarkastische Idylle"(23).

19. Examples of 'Schloßgesichten' can be found in the work of Ebner-Eschenbach and Kafka.

20. Günther, Anhang I, p.32.

21. Mennemeier/Trapp, op. cit., p.98.

22. Kurt Kahl, op. cit., p.76f.

23. Walter Huder, 'Ödön von Horváth: Existenz und Produktion im Exil', p.240.

Die Komödie des Menschen: "Rückzug aufs Allgemeinmenschliche"

Walter Hinck, too, considers this final idyll to be "problematisch": "Über die szenische Idylle breitet sich der zarte Goldton einer befriedeten patriarchalischen Ordnung (...) eine neue Domestikenhaltung unter veränderten Herrschaftsverhältnissen". The ending is problematised even further as Figaro bears strong resemblance to the type of opportunistic 'Kleinbürger' who were useful to Hitler(24). As was demonstrated in 3.2. there seems to be little hope for optimism regarding the creation of a new world order. The new signs of 'Menschlichkeit' that Figaro reveals - his slightly changed attitude to Susanne and humane treatment of the Graf - only come about in the fictional world of the castle and were impossible in the real world of exile. At the end of the comedy they inhabit a world where literary solutions to real problems are possible but must be interpreted therefore as being inherently artificial. As these characters dwell in the world of comedy, it is little surprise that they are able to experience an ending befitting the comedy tradition; and as the comedy world is especially artificial, its solutions are the precise inverse of what can be expected in reality.

4. Die Komödie des Menschen: "Rückzug aufs Allgemeinmenschliche"

The final phase in Horváth's comedy production was outlined by the author on a manuscript leaf entitled "Komödie des Menschen". This plan provided for a new direction in his work and included the expressed rejection of his complete dramatic production from Kasimir und Karoline to Der jüngste Tag. The new programme is clearly linked with the extreme uncertainty of the exile years and the two extant plays of this period Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji reflect in their 'historical' contexts similar periods of transition and upheaval.

Es ist vielleicht grotesk, in einer Zeit, die wie die, in der ich lebe, unruhig ist, und wo niemand weiß, was morgen sein wird, sich ein Programm im Stückeschreiben zu stellen. Trotzdem wage ich es, obwohl ich nicht weiß, was ich morgen essen werde. Denn ich bin überzeugt, daß es nur einen Sinn hat, sich ein großes Ziel zu stecken. Zur Rechtfertigung und Selbstermunterung.- (...) So habe ich mir nun die Aufgabe gestellt, frei von Verwirrung die Komödie des Menschen zu schreiben, ohne Kompromisse, ohne Gedanken ans Geschäft. Es gibt nichts Entsetzlicheres als eine schreibende Hur. Ich geh nicht mehr auf den Strich und

24. Hinck, Das moderne Drama in Deutschland, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973, p.130.

will unter dem Titel "Komödie des Menschen" fortan meine Stücke schreiben, eingedenk der Tatsache, daß im ganzen genommen das menschliche Leben immer ein Trauerspiel, nur im einzelnen eine Komödie ist(1).

Horváth's insistence on a caesura in his work at this point is not borne out by the works he produced. The movement towards examining recurrent problems or structures in society was already evident in Figaro in its preoccupation with the ideas of compromise and revolution. Don Juan kommt aus dem Krieg and Der jüngste Tag see a serious examination of moral concerns, particularly guilt, and both plays are replete with images of cold and snow, the 'Zeitalter der Fische' as it was to be later termed in Jugend ohne Gott.

Horváth's exploration of such principles finds echoes in the work of a number of exile authors which Mennemeier/Trapp term the "Tendenz zu ahistorischer Situationsbewältigung", leading to a "Rückzug aufs 'Allgemein-Menschliche'"(2). A large number of works of this period eschewed a deliberately political perspective in favour of generalised dramatic 'Entscheidungssituationen'. Although such plays appear to be totally apolitical, the authors note: "Bei genauerer Betrachtung jedoch erkennt man, daß sie sich manchmal dennoch recht prägnant mit dem Exil im allgemeinen oder einer politischen Situation im besonderen auseinandersetzen"(3). They suggest that the reasons for this approach can be found in these writers' meagre theoretical insight into the problem of Fascism which seldom transcended the specific events at hand. Although Pompeji is included under this rubric they do not specifically level such criticism at Horváth's portrayal of Fascism. Indeed, his novel Jugend ohne Gott provides an analysis of certain aspects of Fascism in a way which clearly transcends 'Tagespolitik'. Mennemeier/Trapp see in Pompeji "wesentlich ein Gegenwartsdrama (...) Es handelt vom Exil und dem 'Tanz auf dem Vulkan', d.i. der Zeit vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg"(4).

1. The manuscript of this plan is reproduced in Krischke/Prokop, Ödön von Horváth Leben und Werk in Daten und Bildern, Insel, Frankfurt/M., 1977, p.193. Despite its title, Ingrid Haag's article 'Zu Horváths "Komödie des Menschen"', Austriaca, 14, 1982, does not deal specifically with these plays. She wants to apply it instead to Horváth's total dramatic oeuvre.
2. Mennemeier/Trapp, op. cit., pp.57-66.
3. Ibid., p.58.
4. Ibid., p.63.

Historical Background of Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji

The representative works of this category of exile drama were written in the main during or immediately after the Second World War: Georg Kaiser's Der Floß der Medusa (1940), Geiseln (1947) by Rudolf Leonhard, Hochwälder's Der Flüchtling (1948) and Walter Hasenclever's Münchhausen (1934). They all emphasise the importance of certain basic human values in the face of various, mostly extreme situations. Der Floß der Medusa (1940/43), which anticipates in its dramatis personae and theme William Golding's Lord of the Flies, depicts the potential evil in children and only the sacrifice by one of them points to the possibility of higher human values in an otherwise pessimistic view of human nature. Geiseln demonstrates the triumph of solidarity and humanity amongst a heterogeneous group of prisoners condemned to death; Der Flüchtling explores the problem of responsibility and political action and the guilt of those merely obeying duty; Münchhausen has a considerable component of irreality in its depiction of the world as the title might suggest. His world constitutes "eine Oase der Menschlichkeit. Heiterer Lebenssinn, Geselligkeit, Freundschaft sind die einzigen Werte, die dort zählen"(5).

The two works under discussion: Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji anticipate these later plays in the search for and restatement of crucial humanistic ideas. Indeed it is their retention in the face of upheaval and barbarity which provides the optimistic tone of these two comedies.

4.1. Historical Background of Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji

According to the manuscript plan Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji constitute the first stage of the "Komödie des Menschen"; for the second stage works entitled "Die Pythagoräer" and "Die Diadochen" were planned. The common factors that link these four plays may provide a clue to the intention of the two finished comedies.

The Pythagorean school, founded by Pythagoras of Samos in the 5th century B.C., was a sectarian community following an antidemocratic and aristocratic ideology. It promulgated a strict moral code with emphasis on ascetic values and it also practised communal ownership of property and goods. The movement attained a considerable following in Southern Italy and Sicily and also included women amongst its members. Its most important legacy is in the field of mathematics and astronomy (the Pythagoreans already held the belief that the earth was

5. Ibid., p.65.

orb-shaped). The main source of dramatic interest that this sect may have provided for Horváth was its persecution after 450 BC. It culminated in a brutal massacre where the followers were locked in a temple which was then set on fire. There are clear parallels here between this group and the Early Christians in Pompeji(6), although such an ending is hardly the stuff of comedy.

The 'Diadochoi' or the 'successors' is the term given to the generals of Alexander the Great who divided up his empire after his death. The power struggles between them resulted nevertheless in the establishment of several enduring political centres where in particular the socio-economic conditions of the 'Sklavenhalterordnung' were further developed. This period provides parallels through the importance of a decaying empire and the problem of slavery which is the central theme in Pompeji(7). Alternatively, the diadochi are associated with the flowering of the Greek New comedy of Menander whose texts were adapted by Plautus. Under the diadochi the so-called Alexandrian Comedy and farce came to fruition, about which, however, little is known. This period saw the spread of Greek drama, and in particular, comedy from Italy to the Indus(7a).

The period portrayed in Ein Dorf ohne Männer is situated at the beginning of the reign of the legendary Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus; popularly known as Matthias the Just. It extended from 1458 to 1490 and is generally regarded as a 'Blütezeit' in Hungarian history. The portrait of Matthias in Horváth's play as a young king intent on justly serving his people and fighting corruption amongst the aristocracy is indeed based on historical fact:

The reforms introduced by Matthias all served the same purposes, the defence of the rights of the common man,

6. Das große Lexikon der Antike, Johannes Irmscher, München, Heyne, 1962, p.456.

7. Ibid., p.130. This lexicon is an East German work, published under licence in the West, and is unique among the various reference works consulted in mentioning slavery as an important element in this period.

7a. Jacob Burckhardt notes: "In the time of the Diadochus, Dionysian drama reigned everywhere, at the courts and army camps as well as in cities (...) If in the orient, from the shores of the Nile to the Tigris and the Indus, any one thing held the Greeks together it was the theatre". History of Greek Culture, London, Constable, 1963, p.272.

the speeding up of procedure, the prevention of bribery. Earlier than in many countries of Europe, the administration of justice in Hungary was made independent of political administration(8).

More important perhaps than his legal reforms and concern for the common man, was Matthias's position as a patron of the early renaissance. He made his court a centre of humanist culture which included the establishment of one of the most important renaissance libraries, and can be considered "the zenith of a Hungarian, almost nationalistic, civilisation"(9). It is the transition from a feudal to a renaissance world view which comprises the central theme of Ein Dorf ohne Männer. Its central element is an implied plea for a treatment of human beings in accordance with principles which can be loosely subsumed under the epithet humanist. Humanism, with its blend of Classical and Christian ideas, provides a common theme for both plays. In Pompeji the transition is depicted from the exploitative and barbaric 'Sklavenhalterordnung' of the Romans to the gentle precepts of early Christianity.

4.2 Humanist Ideas in Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji

The medieval and renaissance worlds are indicated at the beginning of Ein Dorf ohne Männer by the juxtaposition of locale and temporal setting. Horváth specifies in his stage directions the visual signals of the Middle Ages: "Saal in der Ofner Burg mit hohen gotischen Fenstern"(IV,467) but the period is "Während der Türkenkriege - in der frühen Renaissance"(IV,466). The play opens also with the exercise of brutal power and corruption by the Statthalter who fully exploits the possibilities that the feudal system permits, particularly in his treatment of the 'Leibeigenen', that social class which had not yet attained full human status. The Hofbeamte warns, however, that there are signs of unrest amongst the people: "das Volk murrt (...) und zwar gefährlich tatsächlich"(IV,468), and they are aided in their protests by the new king Matthias who has attained great popularity amongst his subjects, "Weil er mit besonderer Vorliebe seine eigenen Minister einsperrt"(IV,469). There are constant references to the clash between the medieval and renaissance world views whereby Matthias is constantly identified with promoting basic humanistic values of reason, tolerance and the

8. Denis Sinor, History of Hungary, London, Allen and Unwin, 1959, p.128.

9. Ibid., p.133.

intrinsic value of all human beings whatever their social standing. This is illustrated initially in Matthias's efforts to stamp out corruption and promote justice. The campaign brings the young king into conflict with his Statthalter, "ein dicker Magnat" (IV,469), who represents the arbitrary power of a feudal despot:

STATTHALTER Der junge Herr scheint ein Idealist werden zu wollen, er kümmert sich ein bissel zu viel um unsere Leibeigenen. Die Gerechtigkeit ist zwar eine schöne Sache, eine gute Sache, aber wer die Macht hat, der braucht sie nicht (IV,470f.).

Matthias's idealism manifests itself in the belief that the exercise of power is not an end in itself but can be used to benefit his people. Furthermore he dismisses his Statthalter when the latter attempts to resist the king's anti-corruption measures by a deception: "Ich verstehe nicht, was hat er eigentlich gegen die Korruption? Was hat ihm schon die Korruption getan? Wo doch die Korruption gewissermaßen die pikante Sauce ist für diese ganze fade Regiererei!" (IV,487). Matthias indicates where his priorities lie when he orders the actors to be placed in chains for using their talent not only to deceive their king, but "was noch schlimmer ist, ihr eigenes Volk zu betrügen" (IV,488).

Matthias demonstrates also an attitude to human behaviour which is almost a deliberate anachronism. His efforts to improve the judicial system are motivated by the modern idea that human beings are driven to crime by an unjust system rather than by any innate proclivity. This mixture of modern behaviourism and Marxist sociology is explicitly expressed in the variant where Matthias arrives in Selischtje to observe whether the Graf has in fact kept his promise. As well as forgiving the Graf his plot and in fact discharging all his debts, he announces that 300 robbers will be settled in the village instead of the soldiers that were originally envisaged:

Habt nur keine Angst, sie werden nicht mehr rauben! Selischtje ist doch so lieblich - und die Erde ist gut, sauber die Höfe und jeder hat sein Feld. Warum sollten sie rauben, wenn sie arbeiten können? Ich glaub es nicht - ich glaub es nicht, daß es in meinen Landen dreihundert geborene Räuber gibt! (VII,402).

The medieval fatalistic view of human nature is challenged here by an optimistic humanistic notion informed by a partially secular idea that man is to some extent in control of his own destiny.

Humanist Ideas in Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji

The rationalistic, secular component of humanism is also alluded to in the play. There is a clear tension between medieval superstition and modern reason which includes the questioning of the nature of God. These new ideas, implicit in Matthias's rejection of witchcraft and interest in astronomy are linked to the situation of women: the two ideas are depicted as being intertwined in some way. Horváth's concern with the situation of women has been one of the main areas of interest for Horváth scholarship. It is not intended here to examine in detail the depiction of women in Ein Dorf ohne Männer; this has been covered already by Neikirk(10). Important, however, is the relationship between the Graf, his wife, die Blonde, and Matthias. It reflects in miniature several important points of tension in the transition between the medieval and the renaissance worlds. The relationship between the Graf and his wife is determined by the popular image of feudal master and Burgfräulein. He keeps his wife imprisoned in his castle and denies her any sort of freedom, motivated by his belief that she belongs to a family which carries a curse. Curse represents both a popular motif of tragedy and signals the Graf's entrenchment in medieval superstition: "Du hast mir den Fluch ins Haus gebracht. Nun haben wir es zu tragen, du und ich. Wir sind aneinander gekettet vor Gott"(IV,501). His wife however expresses doubt in this God:

BLONDE (leise) Wenn ich nur mal mit Gott sprechen könnte -

GRAF Das kann man immer.

BLONDE Findest du? (IV,501).

The Graf's accusations regarding her family and its curse reveal his belief in alchemy, witchcraft and rejection of modern astronomy:

GRAF Eine Frau, deren Tante als Hexe verbrannt wurde! Deren Großvater mütterlicherseits mit Satansrezepten Gold kochte, und deren Onkel man beide Ohren abschnitt, weil er behauptete, die Erde drehe sich um die Sonne! Eine segensreiche Rasse! (IV,501).

She has already come into contact with these new ideas, which include doubt in the existence or efficacy of God, and her enforced confinement has caused her to embark on an even more subversive course of action: she has begun to engage in independent thought. She only chooses to join the 'Muster' being

10. Joan Cantwell Neikirk, The role of women in the works of Ödön von Horváth, Ph.D Wisconsin, 1971, p.178-181.

sent by the Graf so as to have the opportunity to tell the king "Etwas vom Schicksal der Frauen in seinem Reich"(IV,502). Even before she has this opportunity, it is revealed that the king has a somewhat progressive attitude towards women; or at least he questions the automatic assumption that both by virtue of his station and his sex he can extract sexual favours from his guests. He expresses his 'Gewissensbisse' regarding this subject to the Hofbeamten: "Der König kann jedes Weib haben - theoretisch. (...) ich müßte sie ja beschützen, anstatt - Nein, ritterlich ist es nicht, unser Benehmen! Man müßt auch den freien Willen des Weibes achten"(IV,509). He surprises the Blonde in his unequivocal rejection of her family curse and other such superstitions:

MATTHIAS Ich glaub so wenig an verfluchte Geschlechter, wie an Hexen!

BLONDE (starrt ihn an) Ihr glaubt nicht, daß es Hexen gibt?

MATTHIAS Nein. Ich bin ja nicht blöd (IV,534).

She asks if he believes that the earth orbits the sun and repeats the story of her unfortunate uncle who had his ears cut off for telling such a story "im Casino". Matthias replies that there must be some foundation to the idea, if someone is prepared to undergo such a sacrifice, and suggests a compromise solution that perhaps both the sun and earth orbit each other. This comment illustrates both his receptivity to the revolutionary ideas of the renaissance as well as sympathy for those who are prepared to stand up for their beliefs; or in other words, respect for those who believe in an idea, and ultimately are prepared to suffer for it. It is clear that this aspect of the human condition attracted Horváth to the period of the early Christians and their persecution as will be seen in Pompeji.

The connection between treatment of women and the renaissance is illustrated further in an exchange between the Hofbeamten and Matthias. The former reproaches the king for providing such a lavish reception for these women by sending the Hussars as an escort: "Wieso? Ich wollt den Frauen eine Freude machen! Wie unlängst diesem Sternucker aus Bologna - den ließ ich doch auch mit Husaren abholen!"(IV,506). The stargazer from Bologna can only be Copernicus (1473-1543) who lived from 1496-1500 in Bologna, and although this would place him historically outside Matthias's reign, it is most likely that this is another deliberate anachronism on Horváth's part to highlight in popular terms Matthias's actual patronage of the renaissance in Hungary(11). The main point here is the equation of the importance of the treatment of women and the revolutionary

scientist Copernicus: both receive equal attention from the king and are thus equally important components of the humanist world view. This has of course no historical basis but indicates that Horváth was in the first instance concerned with restating essential humanist values, not as an historical movement, but rather as 'Menschlichkeit', which is reflected in his unbroken concern with the predicament of exploited women as a contemporary problem.

The central themes in Pompeji - slavery and the persecution of the Early Christians - provide another ideal 'historical' framework in which to explore and restate those values which Horváth held to be crucial for the core of his idea of 'Menschlichkeit'. There is a drastic contrast between the dehumanising brutality of slavery and the - still - pure ideals of the first century of Christianity. The comedy form provides a love intrigue and contains the essential components of the 'Konversationsstück': money and a romantic intrigue. Horváth's recourse to this comedy form is fitting in the light of Bayerdörfer's essay on the origins of the genre in the work of Plautus to whom Horváth refers in the opening prologue. In Pompeji, however, money takes on a wider significance than just as an element of the plot. It recurs continually as the motivating force of the slaves' actions because their human value lies precisely in their market value. Lemniselenis expresses the condition of slavery as that of being "ein Ding mit menschlichen Allüren" (IV,628). Thago intends to sell Lemniselenis because he would otherwise have to keep her while he is away; Toxilus embroils himself in crime in order to buy Lemniselenis free; she only finds value in him in as far as he can provide the 600 'Silberlinge'(12); her brother is a counterfeiter; she was sold by her father into slavery for the price of a good meal(13). The extent to which money is the corrupting factor in human relationships is expressed by Lemniselenis: "der Mann, der mich freikaufen würde, der wäre der erste und einzige Mann, den ich lieben könnte"(IV,602). And she assures her father that she does not love Toxilus at all: "Ich hab ihm ja nur ein großes Theater vorgespielt und er ist mir auf den Leim gegangen - morgen bin ich ihn los! (...) Jetzt nütz ich jeden aus, für meine Freiheit bin ich zu allem fähig!(IV,618). It is suggested that the old system of beliefs, the Roman gods, propagates cruel and mercenary

11. There is evidence of considerable intercourse between centres of the renaissance in Italy and Matthias's court. cf. Simon, p.128ff.

12. 'Silberlinge' have also a religious connotation as the term for the 30 pieces of silver which Judas received for his betrayal of Christ.

teachings, at least the conception of love associated with 'Amor' as Lemniselenis understands it bears little resemblance to the commonly held notion of romantic love: "Jetzt nehm ich Abschied von meinen Idealen. Lebt wohl! Denn wenn sogar Amor es nicht fertig bringt, daß einer für einen stiehlt, dann gibt es keine Hilfe mehr"(IV,624). This is a response to Toxilus's refusal to commit a crime to obtain her freedom. It is a restatement of Matthias's theory that in an unjust system people are driven to unjust behaviour; when, however, the system, in this case the system of beliefs, is changed for the better, a corresponding alteration in human actions can be effected. Lemniselenis's movement towards Christianity is hinted at in the 5th Bild when she claims before the Praetor that no person is wholly innocent: "PRAETOR (stutzt) Ein gefährliches Wort. Dafür lassen sich Leute im Zirkus zerreißen. Wie kommst du zu dieser Ansicht?"(IV,635). Although she replies "Ganz von allein"(IV,635) she is presumably under the influence of Matrosa who has already joined the new religion. When in the following scene Toxilus is about to be thrown to the lions, she sends him a letter in which a radical shift in her emotional makeup is evident. Toxilus's example of self-sacrifice, in his case motivated by love, is echoed by the Christians who are prepared to sacrifice their lives for their beliefs, and it is this type of action which effects a change in Lemniselenis: "Mein lieber Toxilus! Ich hätte es nie für möglich gehalten, aber seit ich weiß, daß Du meinetwegen zum Tode verurteilt wurdest, liebe ich Dich unendlich. Sei frohen Mutes, ich bin immer bei Dir und Du wirst nicht sterben"(IV,639).

The final scene in the catacombs provides ostensibly a happy ending but the appearance of the letter writer, obviously St Paul, raises certain questions regarding the future implied by this ending. Horváth is perhaps pointing up the discrepancy between pure Christianity as a form of 'Ursocialismus' and its later accretion of dogma and doctrine which contradicted the original liberating and utopian impulses. The apparent utopia suggested by the ending - the eruption of Vesuvius burying the old barbaric Roman world of gladiators and slavery, followed by the seeds of early Christianity beginning to flower - must itself

13. The entry on slavery in Das große Lexikon adopts Marx's analysis of slavery in the history of the production process and it contains certain correspondences to the situation depicted in Pompeji. Slavery is summarised as the economic relationship where "Der Mensch wurde Ware". Indebtedness is listed among the sources of slavery together with warfare, piracy, etc.: "Es kam vor, daß Eltern ihre Kinder in die Sklaverei verkauften, um sie in Zeiten der Hungersnot vor dem Tode zu bewahren", p.513. In Pompeji, there were apparently no such altruistic motives motivating Parasit's decision to sell his daughter into slavery.

be called into question. The position of St Paul in the evolution of Christianity is a controversial one. Nietzsche, although hardly a supporter of Christianity in any form finds much to admire in the figure of Christ and his precepts which he compares to a buddhistic "Friedensbewegung", whereas St Paul neutralised the positive impulses of the early Christians: "(...) er hat prinzipiell das ursprüngliche Christentum annulliert"(14).

The Marxist view too draws a very clear distinction between 'Urchristentum' and the direction it takes under the influence of Pauline doctrine. Ernst Bloch compares the former to a revolutionary underground movement preaching both earthly freedom and religious salvation and devoid of any trace of "Knechtsinn": "Es fehlten die Millionen Prediger der Demut, die hernach daraus eine Sklavenmoral einzurichten beauftragt waren"(15). Pauline teaching insisted, however, that Christians could only expect freedom in the hereafter, in the Kingdom of God and from this point on its revolutionary component disappeared: "Von Paulus ab wandelt die Gemeinde grundsätzlich sozialkonservative Wege" which leads ultimately to the slave morality of the church(15a). Paul's appearance at the end of Pompeji is not characterised by tolerance or even Christian love and forgiveness. He appears to be a rather irritable individual whose stern admonition - "Redet doch nicht so viel, Gott hört Euch auch, wenn Ihr schweigt!"(IV,645) - corresponds to the tone of his letters with their often harsh and moralising strictures. If one considers his controversial remonstrances in Romans 13,1-7, to obey civil authority as appointees of God, it is clear why the church lost its revolutionary impulse; and his message to slaves - Ephesians 6,5-9 - to obey their masters cannot offer much succour to Toxilus, Lemniselenis and Matrosa.

14. Nietzsche, Aus dem Nachlaß der Achtziger Jahre, Werke IV.
Hg. Karl Schlechta, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Wien, Ullstein, 1969,
p.247.

15. Ernst Bloch, 'Aporien und Erbe an die Trikolore: Freiheit,
Gleichheit, Brüderlichkeit', Karl Marx und die Menschlichkeit,
Reinbek bei Hamburg, rororo, 1968, p.54.

15a. Ibid., p.54, 56.

4.3 Ein Dorf ohne Männer and Pompeji: Sources and Models

4.3.1 Die Frauen von Selischtje by Koloman Mikszáth

A comparative study of Horváth's comedy and Mikszáth's comic novel has already been undertaken by Árpád Berczik(16). His research shows that Mikszáth's book, published in 1901, spawned half a dozen dramatic treatments of the story, invariably in the form of comedies or comic operas. The 'Stoff' itself cannot be traced beyond Mikszáth who it seems based his novel on the local tales and folklore about the beautiful women of the village Selischtje. He had ample opportunity to become acquainted with the legend as political representative of the region for many years. The village actually exists and was (or is) renowned for its beautiful women(17).

The versions of Horváth and Mikszáth begin in the same way. The Statthalter receives petitioners and the same condition is set in order for the Graf to receive his desired 300 soldiers. In Mikszáth's story the 'Muster' is invited to the king's 'Lustschloß' where he decides to play "eine kleine Posse". The court jester Mujkó assumes the role of the king while the king and his courtiers masquerade as servants. The banquet, a type of pastiche of the Arthurian Round Table, is the central scene in the novel, but Horváth dispenses with it altogether and has the action take place offstage. The resolution resembles the variant of Horváth's play; the Graf's deception must be punished, so Matthias arranges to visit Selischtje in order to see for himself if the 'Muster' is indeed representative. The Graf thereupon rounds up 300 beautiful women from Siebenbürgen who are settled in Selischtje. The king, however, never comes and it is this concentration of feminine beauty in one small village that explains Selischtje's reputation. Instead of the 300 robbers that Horváth provides, Mikszáth has 300 captured Czech soldiers resettled there, a solution which was hardly possible for Horváth in view of the play's première in Prague, as Berczik notes(18).

Berczik also documents in detail Horváth's debt to the German translation of the book(19), passages from which he quite blatantly copied word for word: one example will suffice although Berczik lists a great many.

16. Árpád Berczik, 'Ödön von Horváth und Kálmán Mikszáth', Arbeiten zur deutschen Philologie, Hg. Lajos Nemedi, Bd.7, Debrecen, 1973, pp.61-82.

17. Ibid., p.68.

18. Ibid., p.70.

Mikszath sinniert über die neuen Erfindungen:
"Die fein zugespitzten Bemerkungen schlummerten noch unter jenen Steinen, aus denen die Schulen dereinst gebaut werden sollten" (S.14).

Matthias warnt seinen neuen Statthalter mit den Worten:
"Wir leben in einer rauhen Zeit. Die fein zugespitzten Aperçus schlummern ja noch unter den Steinen, aus denen dereinst die Schulen gebaut werden (IV,490).

Thus Horváth's claim in his preface that his comedy is only loosely based on "einzelne(n) Motive(n) jenes Romans" is manifestly erroneous. This note may have been intended to prevent any complications over copyright which he clearly had infringed.

Berczik, who can ill conceal his admiration for the great Mikszáth, nevertheless finds merit in Horváth's play, especially in its depiction of women. This is in contrast to Mikszáth who expresses little interest in the situation of his women, whereas Horváth depicts them as objects of exchange and manipulation in a world firmly controlled by men: "Und doch stoßen wir eben in seinen Frauengestalten auf einen unerschütterlichen Glauben an den Humanismus, wenn dieser Glaube mit wahrer Liebe verbunden ist"(20). The humanist component is mentioned elsewhere as the positive facet in a play which he otherwise severely criticises in terms of its sterile language, unsympathetic portrayal of the Hungarian national hero Matthias, and its insufficient concern with the historicity of the 'Stoff' in the author's only historical play, "das sich noch dazu in der Blütezeit Ungarns abspielt"(21). It also lacks any effective social criticism: "Anstelle einer Zeitkritik versuchte er es mit anderen Darstellungsmitteln, vornehmlich poetischer Natur, zu denen auch das immer stärker bevorzugte Märchen zu rechnen ist"(22).

Berczik provides little discussion on the question of the comedy form of Ein Dorf ohne Männer, except to suggest that the exposition of the play with its depiction of the disgruntled, downtrodden populace and its exploitation by the Statthalter is the stuff of social drama and anticipates that the play will explore the misery of the peasants. It begins thus in a tone which "kaum noch in eine Komödie hineinpaßt". Instead, however,

19. Ibid., p.74f.

20. Ibid., p.71.

21. Ibid., p.80.

22. Ibid., p.79.

of pursuing the social component, logical in a play dealing with Matthias the Just, "hat Horváth sein Stück - besonders was die Variante betrifft - in eine leichte Komödie verwandelt"(23). It is clear from this statement that Berczik demonstrates an inflexible understanding of what the comedy form can deal with in subject matter and he overlooks furthermore the proliferation of comedy motifs, especially in the many variations on intrigues, role-playing and impersonation which provide the central comic ideas of the play.

4.3.2 Plautus's Persa and Ein Sklavenball

The sources of Horváth's final comedy Pompeji have received no critical attention. It is a revision of a three act farce entitled Ein Sklavenball mit Gesang und Tanz in drei Akten. This version includes a beginning which is almost identical to that of Pompeji with the same characters and similar motifs. With the departure of K.R.Thago and family Toxilus falls in love with Lemniselenis. To obtain the desired sum of 600 pieces of silver he arranges with an escaped slave Bagnio that the latter should steal Thago's money and give him the required amount to buy Lemniselenis's freedom. The plot succeeds, although not without much commotion, as Bagnio and his two henchmen are discovered. When the slavedealer Dordalus and the reluctant Praetor arrive to purchase Lemniselenis, Toxilus is able to offer the full price. The Praetor, however, becomes suspicious that a mere slave should be in possession of such a large sum of money and is about to arrest Toxilus when Bagnio rushes on to announce that K.R.Thago's galley has been sunk by a freak thunderstorm with all aboard drowned. In the absence of Thago's evidence, the Praetor is forced to release Toxilus, and all the slaves unite to celebrate their master's demise in a 'Sklavenball' with dancing and singing.

The action is punctuated throughout with songs and Toxilus at one point even addresses the orchestra conductor directly. This places the play in close proximity to the Viennese 'Posse mit Gesang'. Despite the play's frivolous and somewhat hectic action there are nevertheless serious undertones which are developed more fully in Pompeji. Much of the dialogue dealing with the new creed of Christianity which Matrosa, Lemniselenis's attendant, has embraced, is transposed and rearranged in the later play. Her image of an "anderen Welt" below ground in the catacombs where candles burn eternally is conjured up at the end of Sklavenball after a threatening outburst of thunder and

23. Ibid., p.73.

lightning. This possibility is then of course realised in Pompeji.

The model on which Sklavenball and Pompeji are based is Plautus's slave-comedy Persa. This rough farce has most of the same main characters but bears little resemblance to the Horváth comedies either thematically or in terms of plot. It revolves around an intrigue by the slave Toxilus, whose master is absent, to buy the freedom of his beloved Lemniseleensis. To do this he enlists the aid of a Parasite Saturio, his daughter and another slave, Sagaristio, who has a somewhat dubious background. The plot centres on the slavedealer Dordalus being duped of the required sum of money for Lemniseleensis's freedom. Sagaristio masquerades as a Persian (hence the title) and sells a Persian slave-girl (Saturio's daughter) to Dordalus. Once the deal has been completed Saturio appears and claims back his daughter as a freeborn maid without having to compensate the dealer, as permitted under Roman law. The play ends with an orgiastic celebration of singing and dancing among the slaves with Dordalus appearing to receive both verbal and physical abuse, particularly from the cheeky slave-boy Paegnium whose attentions are definitely of the homoerotic kind.

Richard Mellein gives the following summary of the play's position in Plautus's oeuvre and the critical reaction:

Der künstlerische Wert dieses "Sklavenstücks" wurde von vielen Kritikern (...) ernsthaft in Frage gestellt. Man tadelte die maßlose Derbheit (Verherrlichung der Homoerotik), die Anspruchslosigkeit des Themas und die Dürftigkeit der Komposition. Doch will der Persa in erster Linie als ein Ballett- und Singspiel genommen und als solches mit eigenen Maßen gemessen werden(24).

The form of Persa as a musical comedy is doubtless one of the reasons which attracted Horváth to this play. The festive atmosphere at the end of both Persa and Sklavenball provides a celebration of freedom from slavery, a liberating impulse which is at the very heart of the comedy form. Horváth's exact debt to Plautus's play lies not just in the dramatis personae but a comparison of the two texts reveals that, as with Ein Dorf ohne Männer, Horváth has borrowed whole sections from his source and incorporated them in the new play. In this case, his source is the translation by Ludwig Gurlitt which appeared in 1922. Compare for example Toxilus's opening song in Persa where he laments his love-struck condition:

24. Kindlers Literatur Lexikon, Bd.17, p.7388.

Wer eingedrungen ist als armer Bursche und als erster in
Der Liebe Pforten, hat mit seiner Qual die Qualen selbst
besiegt
Des Herkules. Denn lieber als mit Amor möchte ich den Kampf
Bestehen mit dem Löwen, Hirsch, der Hydra und dem Eber aus
Ätolien, den stymphalischen Vögeln und dem Riesen Antäus
selbst:
So quäle ich Ärmster mich um einen Pump und hör' als Antwort
nichts
Von denen, die ich bitte, als das Wort "Ich habe selber
nichts" (p.327) (25).

and Toxilus's condition in Sklavenball after he has heard how Lemniselenis yearns for him:

Achjaja, wer als Habenichts eindringt in die Pforten
der Liebe, der überflügelt mit seiner Qual selbst die
Qualen des Herkules. Lieber als mit Amor möcht ich mit
der Hydra selber kämpfen - oder mit dem Eber aus
Ätolien, den stymphalischen Vögeln, ja lieber sogar mit
dem Riesen Antäus persönlich! So martere ich mein
Gehirn: woher nimmst du sechshundert Silberling? Und
ich weiß doch im voraus: die, die ich um einen Pump
bitten könnt, die würden alle nur sagen: "Ich habe
selber nichts" (IV,557).

Plautus's Toxilus claims that "Kupido hat mein Herz durchbohrt" (p.329), whereby Horváth takes this image literally and provides it with an acoustic stage direction: "(Die Luft klingt. Lemniselenis blickt empor und ruft) Amor, Amor! - Dort fliegt er, dort!"(IV,554). The central theme of Sklavenball is the impossibility of love amongst slaves which is explored in more complexity in Pompeji. This problem is already mentioned explicitly in Persa when Sagaristio listens to Toxilus lamenting his romantic attachment to Lemniselenis and remarks derisively: "Ja, lieben denn die Sklaven auch?", to which Toxilus replies: "Was soll ich tun? Den Göttern trotzen nach Tita-
nen-Art?"(p.329). This exchange has its exact parallel in Sklavenball:

TOXILUS Amor hat mein Herz durchbohrt.

BAGNIO (stutzt) Wer? Ja, lieben denn Sklaven auch?

25. All quotations from the Persa are from the following edition: Die Komödien des Plautus, übersetzt von Ludwig Gurlitt, Bd.3, Berlin, Propyläen Verlag, 1922. The page number is given immediately after the quotation.

TOXILUS Was tun? Den Göttern trotzen? Bin ich ein Titane?
(IV,561).

The price of Toxilus's love has also been borrowed unchanged from Plautus: the "sechshundert Silberlinge" correspond exactly to the "sechshundert Drachmen"(p.331) in the original, although as mentioned above, the change from 'Drachmen' to 'Silberlinge' conveys a religious connotation.

The characters themselves reveal a number of interesting parallels and differences in the adaptation. The wily slave figure of Toxilus remains the same for both plays except that Horváth's Toxilus has clearly a more complex moral consciousness than his Roman ancestor. While the former reveals considerable understanding of the ethical implications of his crime, the latter is motivated only by the extent to which he can succeed without punishment. Furthermore, his motivation appears to be on a lower instinctual level than Horváth's character, as the final scene in Persa amply illustrates, but then the concept of love has changed considerably in the intervening two millennia. In the prologue to Sklavenball Toxilus reveals his consciousness of the archetypal nature of the slave/servant figure which was conditioned to a large extent by the comedies of Plautus; he describes himself as:"Ein Mann voll geistiger Kraft und Gewandtheit/ Voll Witz und Gesundheit"(IV,542).

In contrast Lemniseleenis has undergone considerable modifications. In the Persa she has little dialogue and appears only twice in the whole play. However, Saturio's daughter Lucris who is 'sold' to Dordalus as a Persian slave provides for more dramatic interest. In the bargaining scene she manages to answer all of Dordalus's questions without speaking a single untruthful word and at the same time preserving her fake identity. While the slave class could quite happily indulge in lies and forgery to deceive a 'leno', or slavedealer, the conventions of Roman comedy forbade such moral transgressions on the part of a free woman. It is in addition an entertaining comic device to maintain a deceit by speaking the truth. In an earlier scene between Lucris and her parasite father she raises the possibility of being sold by him for the sake of his appetite, an idea which Horváth actually incorporated into Sklavenball and Pompeji. In the former Lemniseleenis tells how her father, a parasite(26), sold her into slavery for "ein opulentes Menü"(IV,553). In

26. The parasite belongs to the pantheon of stock characters in both Greek and Roman comedy. He is a joker, always on the lookout for a free meal and eager to amuse a prospective host. cf. G.E. Duckworth, The Nature of Roman Comedy. A Study in Popular Entertainment, Princeton Univ. Press, 1952, pp.265-267.

Pompeji Horváth has the opportunity to incorporate this stock figure in Bild 4 when Lemniseleenis seeks refuge with her brother Bagno, the counterfeit. The exchange between Parasit and Lemniseleenis has been taken almost word for word from Gurlitt's Plautus translation:

LEMNISELEENIS Gewiß, Papa, wir lebten in Dürftigkeit, doch ist ein bescheidenes Leben besser, als wenn sich die Armut mit der Unehrenhaftigkeit paart. Dann wird die Armut noch bitterer.

PARASIT Willst du denn die Welt ändern? Du bist ja unausstehlich!

LEMNISELEENIS Papa, auch der Menschen Schande hat Unsterblichkeit. Sie lebt noch fort, wenn man sie schon gestorben glaubt (IV, 619).

The scene in Plautus reads:

LUKRIS Gewiß, Papa, du hast die Macht:
Allein, Papa, wir leben zwar in Dürftigkeit,
Doch ist ein Leben, so in Mäßigkeit geführt
Und in Bescheidenheit, doch besser. Aber wenn
Zur Armut sich Unehrenhaftigkeit gesellt,
So wird die Armut bitterer, der Ruf verliert.

SATURIO Du bist ja unausstehlich! (...)

LUKRIS Papa, der Menschen Schande hat Unsterblichkeit:
Sie lebt noch fort, wenn man sie schon gestorben
glaubt (p.359).

The character of Dordalus, the 'leno', is also worthy of comparison because of the changes he undergoes between the Sklavenball and Pompeji. In Persa he fulfills the comic function of the scapegoat or figure of fun who is duped, then mercilessly scorned, tormented and exposed to the cruellest of comic laughter. His exclusion from the harmony of comedy represents an exception to the otherwise very reconciliatory Roman Comedy which attempts to include rather than exclude. Manfred Fuhrmann suggests that the reason for this can be found in his social role: "Die hellenistisch-römische Komödie zeichnet den Kuppler mit unerbittlicher Stereotypizität als negative Figur. Er tritt dort stets als Bösewicht schlechthin, als die Kontrafraktur aller bürgerlichen Tugenden auf". The exclusion of the 'leno' could itself be seen as a type of reinstatement of order where this character intrudes into the ordered bourgeois world but "wird

zurückgeschlagen und für die Zukunft unschädlich gemacht"(27).

In Persa (III,3) Dordalus is introduced by Toxilus in a plethora of abuse which is returned in equal measure by the slavedealer. This torrent of vitriol reads almost as parody of the stereotype since the exchange is clearly demonstrated to be a ritual of greeting between the slave and his dealer and is not indicative of any particular depth of ill-feeling on either side. The rhetorical device of heaping epithet on epithet recurs in Sklavenball in Bagnio's description of K.R.Thago: "Dort habt Ihr also besagte Villa (...) derweil ist es nur der ländliche Lustsitz eines alten Wucherers, Erpressers, Wechsel- und Kontofälschers, Witwen- und Waisengeldbehälters! Das lebt sich, diese punische Banksau, Zinsenhengst von Cäsars Gnaden -" (IV,558). Horváth places the capitalist Thago in the same moral category as Plautus's 'leno'. While both professions are legal and in fact integral to the society, they are both morally reprehensible. In Persa the slave Toxilus is able to utilise a multitude of deceptions in the form of lies and forgery to attain his end without fear of punishment although the slavedealer himself commits no crime except to practise his profession. Similarly, Bagnio, who is based on Sagaristio in the Persa, justifies his life of crime by saying (or better singing) that he does no more than follow his ex-master's example:"Machs doch, wie der Herre Dein/Achte weder Sein noch Mein!/Nimm, was er den Sklaven nimmt/Und Dein ganzes Leben stimmt!" (IV,558). By transposing some of the attributes of Plautus's Dordalus to his Punic money-lender Horváth points to the paramount importance of the figure of the capitalist as a representative of the exploitative relationship which reduces human beings to a ware in the same way as slavery. Consequently, in Sklavenball Dordalus is no longer a central character. Toxilus describes him as a "schäbiger Geizhals" (IV,550) and although the slaves were all at one time his "Ware" they do not hold him in any particular fear or regard. In Pompeji, however, he undergoes a change for the better, as Toxilus insists: "Dordalus in Pompeji ist zwar auch nur ein Sklavenhändler, aber in dieser verdammten Branche gibs noch massivere Lümmel (...) Mit Dordalus kann man sogar reden und ich bin überzeugt, wenn das Fräulein artig zu ihm ist, verschafft er ihr noch einen bedeutend besseren Posten" (IV,600). The full extent of the adaptation in this character is demonstrated by his first speech which is the text of Bagnio's abuse of Thago, now repeated by Dordalus who is theoretically equally deserving of such criticism. The exchange between Dordalus and Toxilus which follows is on the level of friendly bantering. In Pompeji

27. Manfred Fuhrmann, 'Lizenzen und Tabus des Lachens - Zur sozialen Grammatik der hellenistisch-römischen Komödie', Das Komische, pp.65-101, p.88f.

Dordalus has become a reluctant cog in an inhuman system in which he attempts to preserve the utmost humanity that the system allows, even though his supposed self-sacrifice is hardly to be taken literally.

Horváth's debt to Plautus lies chiefly in the area of character, humour and milieu. The mechanics of Plautus's intrigue are ignored altogether even though they offer inherent possibilities for role playing and impersonation which are utilised so exhaustively in Ein Dorf ohne Männer. The masks are identified instead with fixed social roles, a modern idea conveyed in visual terms by an ancient comedy convention. The liberating impulse in the Persa is the duping and humiliation of Dordalus, the symbol of enslavement, but it exhausts itself in the orgiastic celebration at the play's conclusion which is devoid of any enduring perspective of freedom, as Mellein points out:

(...) erst die wichtige Schlußszene zeigt, daß sie (the slaves), unvertraut mit den Bedingungen der Freiheit, gar nicht in der Lage sind, diese auch zu genießen, sondern viel mehr ohne Maß und Ziel in eine stumpfsinnige Orgie verfallen (27a).

Doubtless, the themes of freedom and slavery, which provide the serious dimension to the Persa, attracted Horváth to the play. In the first version, Sklavenball, where the slaves' freedom is engineered by a crude deus ex machina, the treatment of this theme hardly transcends that of Plautus. In Pompeji, however, the liberating impulse suggested by Matrosa's "lieber Gott der Sklaven" (IV,576) and only hinted at in Sklavenball, is explored more fully.

4.4 Social Roles and Role-Playing

As was examined in 3.2.1., comedy has continually utilised the existence of fixed social roles as the source of its somewhat limited fund of stock characters. European comedy up until the late 18th century provided little opportunity for its stock figures, however subtly they may have been drawn, to escape from their social roles. It is only with Beaumarchais's Figaro that the possibility of upward mobility for the servant figure is seriously presented and its coincidence with the most important political and social revolution in Europe since the Reformation

27a. Richard Mellein, 'Persa', Kindlers Literatur Lexikon Bd.17, München, dtv, 1974, p.7388.

signals the disintegration of this stock repertoire in serious comedy. Horváth deliberately uses anachronism to blend the modern idea of role-playing with historical situations where in the comedy of the time such complexity did not exist. The humour of the commedia dell'arte for example is motivated by the mechanical notion of behaviour cemented into a comic role from which the character will never escape. The masks of Arlecchino and Dottore elicited an immediate expectation of behaviour which the performer, despite individual variations, satisfied. The *dramatis personae* of Plautus, which doubtless exerted influence on the commedia dell'arte, are limited in the same way. The comedy depends on how successfully familiar elements are varied in terms of plot, language and comic 'Einfälle', and not by introducing new or interesting characters. The opening of Pompeji alludes to this comedy tradition and proceeds immediately to turn it upside down as each character removes a mask to reveal a face and personality contrary to the one evoked by the mask.

Alle Personen tragen pompejanische Masken, die die wesentlichen Züge ihrer Charaktere, so wie man sich selbe eben landläufig vorstellt, darstellen sollen. In diesem Sinne steht Toxilus mit der typischen Prologmaske vor dem Publikum(IV,593).

All characters belong to contemporary stock characters:

K.R.Thago ist ein gütiger Börsianer, Lemniseleinis ein freches Dirnchen, Matrosa eine alte Dirnchenmutter, Idiotima gepflegt, versnobt, mit dem leeren Lächeln der Gesellschaftsdame, Gloriosus eitel und aufgeblasen, Paegnium ein pfiffiger Spitzbub, der Aufseher roh und niederrächtig, die Sklaven und Sklavinnen niedergedrückt, geschunden, bemitleidenswert armselig, so wie es sich eben gehört (IV,593f.).

Both plays, while deriving much of their humour by blending modern stock characters with ancient ones - e.g. the Jewish business man K.R.Thago and the entrepreneurial Bademeister - are directed towards liberating certain characters from precisely these roles.

The choice of historical settings allows not only the opportunity to explore certain crucial universal human values but permits the possibility of examining vividly the modern idea of role-playing as socially imposed behaviour. In the rigid systems of the Roman and medieval worlds individuals were bound to a far greater degree by their social role, to the extent that the lower strata were hardly granted individuality apart from their roles.

In Pompeji and Ein Dorf ohne Männer there are in addition to the continuous assuming and discarding of roles - particularly the latter - various intrigues which require impersonation, a level of self-conscious allusion to comedy. Pompeji begins with a quotation from Plautus's Poenulus, the play immediately following the Persa in the Gurlitt translation which Horváth again has transposed almost literally with only minor changes(28). Poenulus in turn includes references to its model in a Greek play The Carthaginians(29). The removal of the masks functions to emphasise the artificiality of comedy. There are also direct references to the theatre as such. Dordalus for example, bemoaning the boredom of the gladiatorial combat and the persecution of the Christians, prefers the theatre: "(...) aber ich bin eh kein besonderer Anbeter der zirzensischen Spiele, ich bin mehr fürs ernste Theater, Operetten und so -" (IV,639). His characterisation in the stage directions as a "melancholischer Librettist" (IV,606) suggested from the outset his affinity with this form of theatre.

The unmasking of the opening scene is an unambiguous reference to the 'Schein/Sein' convention of comedy. It is important to note that while most of the main characters remove their masks to reveal contrary expressions and personalities the members of Thago's family prefer the persona of the mask to their real self. Gloriosus is a vain braggart as his forerunner in the Plautus play of the same name would suggest. His mask conceals, however, an anxious, feminine visage which he rejects when he sees himself in his freshly polished shield and prefers 'Schein' to 'Sein': "(entsetzt, denn er sieht sich ohne Maske) Was? Das soll ich sein?! (Er herrscht Paegnium an) Ich seh mich noch immer nicht!"(IV,598). Idiotima's mask is removed to reveal "eine verhärmte, früh gealterte Frau" and an argument between Idiotima and Gloriosus is stifled by her slaves forcibly reattaching the mask to their mistress; the implication being that true feelings are repressed by artificial appearance. These characters' expressed preference for appearance, for an artificial role, over reality places them in a different category

28. Gurlitt's translation reads: "Behaglich laßt euch auf den Sesseln nieder, die/Ihr hungrig oder satt hierher gekommen seid!/Doch wer vom Tische kommt, der hat das bessre Teil./Wer hungert, esse sich an unsern Witzen satt"(p.415).

29. The prologue begins: "Ich fange an mit einem Zitat aus dem Achill,/Dem Trauerspiel des Aristarch," and continues: "Doch, wenn's euch recht ist, will ich auch den Namen euch/des Lustspiels nennen (...) die Komödie heißt Karchedonius", (p.415, p.417). The ancestry of Poenulus is however unclear; cf. Duckworth, p.52f.

from the slaves Toxilus and Lemniselenis who strive to cast off the social roles imposed on them. The extent to which mask and personality are interrelated is demonstrated by the reappearance of K.R.Thago, a "guter Börsianer", in the sixth Bild as an imprisoned Christian. He appears without a mask and is recognised by neither of his close acquaintances Dordalus and Praetor: "Du erkennst mich nur nicht, weil du mich ohne Maske siehst" (IV,640). The discarding of the mask is equated then with a change in consciousness, a visual correlative to the "Demaskierung des Bewußtseins" of the Volksstücke. Mennemeier/Trapp advance the view that the use of masks in Pompeji is a substitute for the earlier, subtle critique of language and point to a connection with Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald where Marianne attempts unsuccessfully to rebel against her "soziales Rollengeschick":

Jene Benutzung theatraleisch sinnfälliger Masken kann als Ersatz für die von Horváth nunmehr aufgegebene subtilere Dramaturgie künstlerischer Sprachkritik (deren wesentliche innere Struktur ebenfalls ein ständiges Maskieren und Demaskieren war) gedeutet werden (30).

The link to the phrase "Demaskierung des Bewußtseins", coined in the 'Gebrauchsanweisung' is hinted at in Sklavenball during Toxilus's prologue: "Verzeiht, daß ich mich demaskiere/Doch hoffe ich, daß Ihr mich auch ohne Maske goutieren werdet-" (IV,542). The excision of this couplet is the only substantial alteration to the prologue which is transferred unchanged to Pompeji.

In the Lustspiel Ein Dorf ohne Männer impersonation, deception and intrigue are the basic comedy conventions at work. An intrigue is of course the basic comic idea supplied by Mikszáth's novel. Around this one intrigue or deception Horváth elaborates several others until appearance and reality on several levels are intermingled only to be untangled and reinstated in their proper relation at the conclusion. Recourse to intrigue and its corollaries, deception and impersonation, implies that the central intention of comedy is with its inverse: the obfuscation and final reestablishment of truth. The plot by the Graf of Immenstadt to deceive the king by having three beautiful

30. Mennemeier/Trapp, op. cit., p.64; cf. also Hartmut Reinhardt: "Diese Demaskierungen gewinnen im Stück (Pompeji) insofern Funktion, als sie den Widerspruch zwischen aufgezwungener Sozialrolle und wirklicher Individualität aufzeigen", 'Demaskierung als moralische Provokation', Wirkendes Wort, 3/25 (1975), p.213.

women masquerade as three representative females of the village Selischtje, must according to the laws of comedy be uncovered and its perpetrator punished, or at least rebuked and set on the path of honesty.

The object of the deception, Matthias, is himself particularly fond of impersonation in order to control better the affairs of state. He disguises himself to spy on the Statthalter who in turn arranges a small deception in the form of a playlet by hired actors - "Komödianten"- who impersonate peasants offering their thanks to the Statthalter for his boundless generosity:

HOFBEAMTER Gottlob halten sich Euere Komödianten bereits seit Stunden bereit.

STATTHALTER Hoffentlich haben sie auch ihre Rollen anständig gelernt!

HOFBEAMTER (lächelt hinterlistig) Gewissenhaft, Exzellenz! Gewissenhaft!

STATTHALTER Wie sehens denn aus?

HOFBEAMTER Wie eine wirkliche Deputation.

STATTHALTER Wahrheitsgetreu?

HOFBEAMTER Das echte Volk (IV,486).

The Statthalter's question "Wahrheitsgetreu?" alludes ironically to that particular complex of comedy meanings associated with impersonation, make-believe and deceit. Matthias uncovers this plot in a way which anticipates the unmasking of the various characters in *Pompeji*. During the rehearsal he is posing as a guard: "(Er öffnet rasch sein Visier; es ist Matthias)" (IV,488). The motif of play-acting is continued by the Hofbeamten who feigns surprise at being promoted to Statthalter although Matthias knows that he knows and terms him "ein großer Komödiant" (IV,490). During the entry of the deputation from Selischtje Matthias continues to remain in disguise, this time as an adjutant to the Hofbeamten in order to ascertain the reaction of his subject to the king.

The invitation to the 'Muster' to attend a banquet at the king's 'Lustschloß' sees Matthias assume yet another disguise. Here, however, his continual masquerading seems to be related to a personal insecurity with the opposite sex. He senses that his status precludes the women from reacting to him in a genuine

fashion and suggests that he come "inkognito". The retort by the Hofbeamten: "Ob Ihr aber als Adjutant in der Praxis prompte Erfolge haben -" (IV,509) confirms his suspicion that any success he may have will be directly related to his role and the right of the king to possess any woman he chooses and not to any intrinsic personal attributes:" MATTHIAS (Er sieht an sich herab) Hm. Schon möglich, daß ich nicht direkt praktisch wirk - (Er lächelt ein bißchen traurig)"(IV,509). His role-playing is intended to ensure that the affections directed towards him are genuine and not a response to his power and royal status. Horváth is not depicting Matthias's problem as being one particular to kings but implies that there is a universal identity problem in the discrepancy between social role and true self in interpersonal relations. At this point the impersonation assumes the complex dimension of intellective role-playing discussed in Zur schönen Aussicht and transcends the fictional role-playing which is otherwise the dominating type utilised. Matthias's lack of perspicacity in such matters is shown in his choice of women. He expresses interest in 'die Rote' who reveals herself later to be the epitome of the fortunehunter, intent only on attaching herself to the man with the highest status. His ploy to conceal his identity and thus ensure truthful responses is only partially successful. He learns from Thomas that the king is being continually deceived and discovers from him the deceit carried out by the Graf. In other words the truth can only be attained through deceit as the Blonde says: "manchmal kommt man ohne einen kleinen Betrug nicht dazu, die Wahrheit zu sagen"(IV,519). However, her responses to him are conditioned by the knowledge that he is the king. She in fact utilises this situation for her plea for better treatment of women in his kingdom.

In the variant yet another intrigue is conducted on a massive scale. The Graf arranges for three hundred beautiful women from Siebenbürgen to be resettled in Selischtje before the arrival of the king to ascertain whether the 'Muster' is indeed representative of the village. The king arrives incognito as usual but is recognised immediately by the Schwarze. It transpires that the whole plot had in fact been planned by the king to punish the Graf for his original deception. Here again there is an almost ridiculous arrangement of intrigue, counterintrigue and impersonation which carries this comedy convention to absurd lengths(31).

31. cf. Rainer Warning, 'Elemente einer Pragmasemiotik der Komödie', who discerns in this technique a comedy convention.