

### III. THE VOLKSSTÜCKE

Das Volksstück (...) hat als Blubo sich verdächtig gemacht, längst ehe die Abkürzung über das Abgekürzte die Wahrheit sagte. Unbekümmert (...) gab die Gattung zu verstehen, kleinstädtisches, ländliches Leben, die Reste des vorindustriellen Zustands, taugten mehr als die Stadt; der Dialekt sei wärmer als die Hochsprache, die derben Fäuste die rechte Antwort auf urbane Zivilisation. (Theodor Adorno) (1).

The following examination of the Volksstücke, hitherto the focal point of Horváth scholarship, has three main intentions. Firstly, the present state of knowledge about the Volksstücke will be ascertained. Leading on from this, an attempt will be made to reconstruct the image of the Volksstück that existed in the period Horváth was writing. Particular emphasis will be placed on the later development of the genre after 1850 as a rural Volksstück. Horváth critics have all too frequently associated Horváth's Volksstück with the tradition of the Viennese Popular Comedy of Raimund and Nestroy. It would seem more logical that his Volksstück is in fact a reaction against a more contemporary development, still very much alive as a dramatic form. The second section will be devoted to an analysis of Die Bergbahn, Horváth's first Volksstück, which has been neglected in favour of the four later works. For this reason the play will be analysed separately and examined in its context as a reaction against the conservative ideological component inherent in the rural Volksstück by this time. Horváth himself described it later as a "skizzenhaften Versuch" (II,663) but it nevertheless reveals the seeds of the later mature Volksstücke and carries out equally effectively the genre critique of the Volksstück. The four works Italienische Nacht, Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald, Kasimir und Karoline and Glaube Liebe Hoffnung will be understood as formally and thematically closely related works. Therefore specific motifs and elements associated with the genre will be analysed to demonstrate how Horváth reverses expectations, rids the Volksstück of ideological encrustations and imbues it with new critical possibilities.

1. Afterword to Hochwälder's Der Befehl, Graz, 1967. Cited by Jürgen Hein, 'Volksstücke', Deutsche Literatur. Eine Sozialgeschichte, Bd.9, hrsg. von Alexander von Bormann, Horst Albert Glaser, Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1983.

## 1. Survey of Secondary Literature

The overwhelming bulk of critical literature that has appeared in the last decade has tended to concentrate exclusively on the Volksstücke written between 1929 and 1932 whereby, naturally enough, different accents have been set. This research can be divided into the following categories: 1) analysis of language; 2) social criticism in the plays written between 1929 and 1932; 3) formal aspects of the Volksstücke. It can be stated from the outset that the studies that have hitherto appeared do not approach the Volksstücke as comedies. Both Hummel and Kurzenberger(2) whose doctoral theses appeared within a year of one another devote considerable space to the problems of analysing the epic elements in the plays. The need to demarcate Horváth from Brecht reflects the dominance of the latter as a yardstick throughout the 1960s and early 1970s for any discussion of epic theatre. Hummel contrasts the "verfremdende, demonstrierende Form des Theaters bei Brecht" with "Horváths ironisch-realistische(m) Volksstück" which is "nur pointierend und andeutend"(3). More important, however, is the function of the individual in Horváth's plays: "Der Einzelne ist bei Horváth nicht 'Spiegelfall' der Gesellschaft (wie bei Brecht), sondern absolutes Individuum"(4) who is demonstrated to be at least partially responsible and guilty for the social condition. The severe drawback to Hummel's study is his vague use of the term Volksstück for he draws on the whole body of Horváth's dramatic work to illustrate his arguments without differentiating between the various generic designations. In the introduction he notes that humour has a different function in Horváth's Volksstücken than in the old Volksstück which he defines as an "Element der kritischen Demaskierung", however, "sie reizt kaum je zu einem befreienden Lachen"(5) and this insight is not developed in the rest of his thesis.

The publication of Kurzenberger's thesis in 1974 marks an important stage in Horváth scholarship for he in fact addresses all of the above-mentioned categories and points out the methodological difficulties of each, whereby he emphasises the

2. Reinhard Hummel, Die Volksstücke Ödön von Horváths, Baden-Baden, Johannes Hertel Verlag, 1970. Hajo Kurzenberger, Horváths Volksstücke, München, Fink, 1974. This thesis was completed in 1971.

3. Hummel, p.68.

4. Ibid., p.136.

5. Ibid., p.10.

problem of language and includes comparisons with Handke and Nestroy. Kurzenberger, too, does not deem it necessary to include a definition of the Volksstück but proceeds on the assumption that these works constitute the apex of Horváth's work. However, unlike Hummel, he focuses almost exclusively on the four Volksstücke written between 1929-32. For Kurzenberger, the key to all aspects of Horváth's Volksstücke lies in the dialogue. The question of their epic structure can be approached with "den am Dialog gewonnenen Ergebnissen" which suggests that, "in den Volksstücken eine ganz spezielle Variante jener epischen Struktur" can be realised, "die als Wechselbeziehung zwischen dramatischer Aktion und Reflexion auf diese beschrieben wurde"(6). While the Brechtian version has recourse to a whole arsenal of newly developed techniques such as banners and direct commentaries, the Horváthian technique is more subtle: "Ziel und Reflexion fallen, wie wir am Dialog gezeigt haben, meist ununterscheidbar in eins"(7). The function of the 'Autor' is crucial as a central formal category whose analysing perspective transmits the dramatic action with a view to uncover and unmask the social and political forces at work (8). It is most evident in Horváth's stage directions, his "szenische Sprache", which provides a contrastive effect constituting in essence the most important structural principle of epic theatre. In Horváth's Volksstück this is specifically evident through the use of music and songs which, in Kasimir und Karoline for instance, take on the importance of a whole scene and rank with action and dialogue as determinants of consciousness and reactions(9).

Under the heading 'Satire oder "Realismus"' Kurzenberger turns to the problem of satire or parody in the Volksstück and argues that Horváth is susceptible to the very kind of kitsch that he is attempting to unmask. This is then the key to the apparent inexplicable contradictions in Horváth's work, especially as he "in seinen späten Stücken dem erliegt, dessen dämonischen Grund er zuvor aufzudecken half"(10). Kurzenberger explains Horváth's contradictory attitude to satire as a desire to prevent his portrayal of reality being seen as a distorted caricature which is allied to his very evident understanding and empathy with his own characters. He cannot, however, prove this

6. Kurzenberger, p.90.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p.91f.

9. Ibid., p.95.

10. Ibid., p.112.

supposition but deduces it from the few remarks made by Horváth's friends regarding his particular weakness for the Prater and the 'demi-monde' rather than from the works themselves. Kurzenberger is on firmer ground when he analyses the function of kitsch elements as 'Verfremdungseffekte'. The use of popular music and songs moves the spectator to an identification which has the "bösaartig kalkulierte Funktion des Köders"(11). The empathy of the spectator with the kitsch experience is destroyed by then confronting him with the opposite emotion. The expected empathy is created to be negated and in this way the spectator is brought to a critical standpoint(12). This is a valuable insight for the present study for, although Kurzenberger makes no mention of it, Horváth uses this same process on the larger scale of genre critique. The spectator is enticed with the bait, the promise of a certain theatrical experience engendered by the subtitle and, through the consequent dismantling of the consciously or sub-consciously expected elements, is moved to a critical standpoint.

Kurzenberger's final chapter is devoted to the problem of the "gesellschaftliche(n) Wirklichkeit im Volksstück". He maintains that the exact determination of the relationship between the aesthetic and the social in literature is "das wichtigste methodologische Problem innerhalb der zeitgenössischen Literaturwissenschaft"(13). First of all he tests the social 'truth' of Horváth's Volksstücke by comparing them with a non-literary source, in this case Kracauer's Die Angestellten and asks what formal problems are raised by dealing with this type of material. His means of comparison are extremely limited, for although there are a number of interesting parallels between Horváth and Kracauer, a more broadly based study is required to do justice to the problem(14). However, he arrives at an important insight when he addresses the question of how the "Vermittlung zwischen Ästhetischem und Gesellschaftlichem im Volksstück konkret aussieht". He suggests that Horváth's incorporation of social reality in his dramas becomes an increasingly subtle process which can be illustrated by studying

11. Kurzenberger, p.116.

12. Ibid., p.117.

13. Ibid., p.123.

14. This has been provided by Axel Fritz and J-C. François, cf. footnote 33. Also Manfred Pichler, 'Von Aufsteigern und Deklassierten. Ödön von Horváths Analyse des Kleinbürgertums und ihr Verhältnis zu den Aussagen der historischen Sozialwissenschaften', Über ÖvH 2.

the 'Vorstufen'. These often contain explicit political discussion and were discarded in favour of the artificial dialogue that uses socially determined language for fear of presenting simple, monocausal explanations for complicated social phenomena. Horváth's characters are not helpless puppets manipulated by omnipotent social and economic forces but they reveal through their language the social determinant of their personalities(15).

Although Kurzenberger provides many valuable insights into the mechanics of Horváth's Volksstücke, he neither attempts to define the genre closely nor concerns himself with the comedy intention of these works. In addition, the chapter dealing with the epic nature of the Volksstücke omits any reference to the relationship between comedy and epic theatre, a connection which Brecht himself was very much aware of(16).

Herschbach's thesis of 1973(17) cannot be considered a major contribution to Horváth scholarship. It provides a long but superficial history of the Viennese Popular Theatre yet fails to illustrate any significant parallels between this tradition and the Horváthian Volksstück.

Horváth scholarship is characterised by a great number of article-length studies which appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s and deal with the Volksstück in generalised terms with much repetition of information. One of the more perspicacious of these articles is that by Rotermund on the revival of the Volksstück in the Weimar Republic(18). He views the rejuvenation of this genre by Zuckmayer and Horváth in terms of the general revival of comedy genres in the second half of the 1920s as a reaction against the excesses of Expressionism. He cites Karl Mannheim's theory of this period as one characterised by an "Aufsagung der Utopie" and an "allmählicher Senkung der utopischen Intensität." This was reflected in the drama as a "Wendung vom utopischen Wandlungsdrama zur Komödie einer resignierend-zynischen Sachlichkeit"(19). Rotermund sees Hor-

15. Kurzenberger, p.144.

16. cf. Reinhold Grimm, 'Komik und Verfremdung', and Helmut Arntzen, 'Komödie und Episches Theater', both in Wesen und Formen des Komischen im Drama.

17. Robert A. Herschbach, The 'Volksstück' of Ödön von Horváth: Text and Context, Ph.D, Univ. of Massachusetts, 1973.

18. 'Zur Erneuerung des Volksstückes in der Weimarer Republik: Zuckmayer und Horváth', Über ÖvH.

váth's chief contribution to be the application of "Bewußtseinsanalyse in zeitkritischer Absicht." Furthermore, his plays are determined by a circular structure in thought, speech and dramatic construction which he terms "die Wiederkehr des gleichen Schlechten"(20). He also observes the function of music and songs in their relation to speech and action as one of contrast or intensification and suggests it is a truly Horváthian innovation that cannot be traced back to the Volksstück genre.

Hansjörg Schneider(21) too compares the "Kontrastwirkung" in Horváth's plays with the function of music in the traditional Volksstück where it "nicht unbedingt mit dem Bühnengeschehen zu tun haben mußte"(22). Schneider suggests that this genre had forfeited its artistic force by the turn of the century: "Dieses dramatische Genre war (...) in Konkurs gegangen. Inhaltlich verwässert und verflacht (...) (es) stellte eine Scheinwelt dar, die die Wirklichkeit längst widerlegt hatte"(23). Another frequently cited article is that by Herbert Gamper, 'Horváth und die Folgen'(24), which discusses the term Volksstück in relation to Horváth and his epigones of the late 1960s. Gamper indicates the impossibility of applying the term to all these writers and demands that the Volksstück "als so etwas wie eine jederzeit zu aktualisierende Kategorie" be removed from the critical vocabulary and instead be applied only to "historisch genau abgegrenzte Phänomene"(25). However, it remains unclear whether Horváth's use of the term is also rendered thus 'invalid'.

The articles by Stoljar and Reinhardt(26) do not deal with genre problems at all. Stoljar provides yet another introduction to Horváth although Horváth research was certainly far enough advanced by 1977 to dispense with it. Reinhardt's argument is essentially contained in his title which he illustrates with

19. Rotermond, p.20.

20. Ibid., p.36.

21. Hansjörg Schneider, 'Der Kampf zwischen Individuum und Gesellschaft', Über ÖvH.

22. Ibid., p.68.

23. Ibid., p.60.

24. Herbert Gamper, 'Horváth und die Folgen: Das Volksstück? Über neue Tendenzen im Drama', Theater Heute, 1971, Sonderheft, pp.73-77.

25. Ibid., p.77.

reference to three plays: Zur schönen Aussicht, Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald, Pompeji, representing the early, middle and late phase.

There are only two other major studies that concern themselves with the genre problem posed by the term Volksstück. Gerhard Melzer's thesis comparing tragicomedy in the work of Karl Kraus and Horváth has already been mentioned in the introduction. His study restricts itself to the Volksstücke, which limits its usefulness for analysing Horváth's notion of comedy. Although he traces the development of the tragicomedy back to the 18th century as a reaction to a radically altered "Weltzustand", Melzer focuses on its manifestation in the 'Moderne' as the discrepancy between "Sein und Bewußtsein" (27) which he considers the central feature of modernism. This is demonstrated in Horváth's characters by their inadequate grasp of the social forces shaping their consciousness. By being exposed to "anonymen, irrational-rationalen Mächten" the idea of the tragic experience must be modified, for in fact many more people can assume tragic functions in view of a highly unstable reality. Melzer suggests that the three basic concepts of traditional tragedy - the tragic hero, guilt and fate - have been rendered questionable due to the revolution amongst the "Unterbau der Gesellschaft" (28). These elements can be found in Horváth's Volksstücke but in a different form corresponding to the modern world and infused with humour, which has a distancing, satiric function. The tragic notion of fate has little value in a secularised world and thus its tragic conflict has to be internalised as conflict of purely human dimensions. Horváth's characters make numerous references to 'Schicksal' but these dominating forces are much more immediate and controllable than they realise. In Italienische Nacht "bestimmen sie (Leni und Karl) ihr kleines, triviales 'Schicksal' selber. Daß sie es nicht wissen, macht einen Gutteil ihrer Tragik und ihrer Komik aus" (29). These characters reveal a similarly confused notion of guilt which Melzer describes as a "Spannungsverhältnis von 'objektiver' Schuld und 'subjektiver' Schuldlosigkeit" (30). They

26. Margaret Stoljar, 'The drama as metaphor: meaning and structure in Ödön von Horváth's Volksstücke', AUMLA, 48 (1977), 333-350; Hartmut Reinhardt, 'Demaskierung als moralische Provokation. Beobachtungen zum dramatischen Verfahren Ödön von Horváths', Wirkendes Wort, 3/25 (1975), 197-214.

27. Gerhard Melzer, Das Phänomen des Tragikomischen, p.61.

28. Melzer, p.25.

29. Ibid., p.78.

are in fact unaware of their guilt and responsibility and seek instead to lay the blame on 'fate' - either the war, or the inflation of the early 1920s. Guilt and the tragic hero are also linked but although the antique hero in conflict with fate was also helpless, Horváth's figures are embroiled in conflicts of human making. Characters such as the Schupo in Glaube Liebe Hoffnung are able to abdicate their responsibility for Elisabeth's fate by recourse to bureaucratic directives and are unable or unwilling to decide whether a regulation is just or unjust. Although this moral and ethical impotence may bring him into the realm of a helpless comic figure, the consequences of this inaction for Elisabeth are definitely tragic. The actual decision making belongs to the sphere of collective-anonymous 'Instanzen' which leads ultimately to the "Destruktion des Schuldbegriffs, der durch eine vage Vorstellung von Mitschuld ersetzt wird"(31).

Melzer's book provides a theoretical classification of the ill-defined concept of tragicomedy although the argument is in fact little more than an expanded and detailed continuation of Dürrenmatt's famous essay in Theaterprobleme on the impossibility of writing tragedy in the modern age. However, the major problem in his argument relating to Horváth is his total disregard of the term Volksstück, both in respect to its contemporary meaning and Horváth's understanding of it. He attempts to impose a generic classification on plays which have a different primary intention. He justifies his method with the argument that "Gattungen" as "die Summe technisch-formaler Kunstgriffe" have little validity in modern drama and that tragicomedy should be seen as a "Phänomen" rather than as a "Konglomerat verschiedener Bauformen" (32). If tragicomedy is to be viewed as a phenomenon and not as a genre then his choice of Kraus and Horváth, or in fact of drama rather than prose, is completely arbitrary and should be allied to notions such as the grotesque and the fantastic. This demonstrates the weakness of illustrating the validity of an aesthetic category on the basis of only two authors where neither the definition of the concept nor the works of the authors receive detailed attention.

The book that best synthesises the various strands of Horváth scholarship is Jean-Claude François's broadly based study: Histoire et fiction dans le théâtre d'Ödön von Horváth(33). The title gives an indication of François's method

30. Ibid., p.92.

31. Ibid., p.114.

32. Melzer, p.34.



which is to demonstrate the interaction between Horváth's poetological and social-critical intention. It provides extensive information on the political, social and economic background to the 1920s and 1930s although much of this material is already available in Axel Fritz. François displays in fact a cavalier disregard for the last decade of Horváth scholarship by making no reference to this material except in the case of specific information - dates, statistics etc. He nonetheless includes a detailed and up-to-date bibliography but appears not to have utilised it in his text. This ought not to be viewed as Gallic disregard for foreign endeavours, for Horváth scholarship as a whole demonstrates a tedious repetition of 'insights' into such elements as language, music and songs and the 'Demaskierung des Bewußtseins' without due reference to previous research. François's ideas on these topics do not break new ground to any great extent although he does construct a number of tables and indices that give a structuralist gloss to the mechanisms underlying the 'Demaskierung des Bewußtseins'.

He is more innovative when discussing the dialectics of form and content in the Volksstück. The important formal elements of the Volksstück tradition are: the Viennese tradition of Raimund and Nestroy with its fairy-tale components; the growth of the Boulevard repertoire in the suburbs which replaced the former as the main source of mass entertainment; the appearance of the rural Volksstück after 1850; the operetta with its music, trivial content and the insistence of the triumph of fortune over misfortune. However, François, too, tends to see the Volksstück as passé by the 1920s because of Horváth's comment that the term has "für uns junge Menschen nur noch einen historischen Wert"(I,11). Horváth's reference is certainly to a past era in the Volksstück tradition, but whether it be to the theatre of Raimund and Nestroy or to Anzengruber is unclear. The genre itself was still flourishing throughout the 1920s but not as a respected dramatic form. François places Horváth's Volksstücke in the "grande tradition comique de la critique des moeurs par le rire - castigat mores ridendo"(34) and ascribes to him considerable originality in the method of creating humour with tragic motifs. For, although the plays begin as farces, they end tragically. This "mélange des genres" achieves a disturbance of

33. Jean-Claude François, Histoire et fiction dans le théâtre d'Ödön von Horváth, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1978. His original thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle, submitted in 1977 included an analysis of the prose works but this was omitted from the published version as the prose works are not readily available in French.

34. François, p.228.

the audience's expectations. He argues also that Horváth, like Brecht, was attempting an 'Umfunktionierung' of a genre which leads finally to its 'Aufhebung', whereby the Volksstück, or the operetta in Brecht's case, is "conservée, supprimée et hissée à un niveau supérieur"(35). Although François's study resembles this thesis in method in some respects, it differs in two important points: firstly, he does not perceive this process in action in the other comedies, and even excludes Die Bergbahn; secondly, he analyses different elements from the ones in this study so that both investigations should be seen as complementary.

Martin Walder's thesis is concerned primarily with the psychological structures motivating the characters and seeks to demonstrate their lack of consciousness or individuality through an analysis of the dialogue of Italienische Nacht and Kasimir und Karoline(36). He also devotes a short excursus to the problem of Horváth's contradictory utterances on the subject of tragedy and comedy. For Walder the central feature of Horváth's drama is the "uneigentliche Bewußtsein". This has a comic effect when the spectator can observe its inauthenticity because "(komischer) Prozeß und (tragisches) Resultat sind im dramaturgischen Kräftefeld völlig ineinander verhängt, indem jeder 'Schritt' des uneigentlichen Bewußtseins sein Quantum an Scheitern mindestens latent in sich trägt"(37). Walder is referring here to the comic elements in the plays rather than to their function as comedies with specific generic constituent elements. He completely ignores the problem of genre and genre expectation and provides no critical analysis of Horváth's concept of the Volksstück.

Winston's Close Readings(38) which was submitted as a thesis in 1974 deals only with the first three Volksstücke: Die Bergbahn, Italienische Nacht and Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald. She concentrates chiefly on identifying images and symbols together with a close analysis of the dialogue without addressing the question of the Volksstück as an historical and contemporary dramatic form.

From the middle of the 1970s a number of studies appeared which moved away from the by then well-covered topics of

35. François, p. 259.

36. Martin Walder, Die Uneigentlichkeit des Bewußtseins: Zur Dramaturgie Ödön von Horváths, Bonn, Bouvier, 1974.

37. Ibid., p.59.

38. Winston, Close Readings, p.129.

linguistic analysis and the socio-historical background to the discussion of Horváth's notion of genre. F.N. Mennemeier(39) was perhaps the first to subject a Volksstück to detailed generic analysis. He saw in Italienische Nacht all the elements of a satirical 'Posse' with a social-critical edge, although Horváth's 'Posse' lacked "das befreiende Komische: auf Possenhaftes weist (...) die offene dramatische Form, die Anordnung des Geschehens in Gestalt von 'Bildern', auch die musikalischen und tänzerischen Einlagen"(40). Although Mennemeier considers Horváth's Volksstücke "Anti-Volksstücke, Volksstück-Parodien", this does not reduce them to a level of mere parody of specific works; they reveal a complex structure of their own, particularly in the use of music. However, it is the element of music which leads Mennemeier to argue that "Horváth's Volksstück-Parodien" must be seen as "parodierte Possen. Denkt man an die naiv-affirmative Funktion, die die Musik in den Possen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts hatte"(41). There are two immediate objections to this view: first, it ignores Horváth's own repeated insistence that he abhors parody, one of the few statements that remained consistent, in comparison to his views on satire. Secondly, Mennemeier is exceptionally vague and too generous in his definition of the Volksstück. It may be a rewarding scholarly exercise to uncover various literary elements in Horváth's plays but the fundamental intention of his Volksstücke lies in the fact that they are Volksstücke, and not 'Possen' or 'Schwänke', with quite specific generic expectations. Although the Volksstück and the 'Posse' were practically indistinguishable in Nestroy's time, by the turn of the century they were quite autonomous dramatic genres.

The importance of genre expectation for the understanding of Horváth's Volksstücke is recognised in three articles that appeared in 1979. Dirk Bruns (42) focuses mainly on the relationship between Horváth and the KPD and argues that his development from a militant left-winger of the late 1920s to a distanced critical observer in the later Volksstücke can be attributed to the sectarian mentality of the Communist Party. He observes also that Horváth's Volksstücke "tend to destroy the

39. F.N. Mennemeier, Modernes Deutsches Drama 2, München, Fink, 1975.

40. Ibid., p.17.

41. Ibid., p.31.

42. Dirk Bruns, 'Horváth's Revival of the Folk Play and the Decline of the Weimar Republic', new german critique, 18 (1979), 107-135.

structural features of this traditional Austrian-German genre and rely heavily on the expectations of sanguine and spirited entertainment aroused by the term 'folk play' (43). Bruns interprets this as a "realisation of Bloch's challenge to united front politics to place emphasis on the old forms that are familiar to the petty-bourgeois" (44).

Helmut Pollow (45), an East German critic, arrives at similar insights regarding the function of the term Volksstück using the critical method of 'Rezeptionästhetik'. He focuses on Horváth's intention to effect a change in consciousness on the part of the spectator rather than in the dramatis personae as some critics have argued: "Nun wird das traditionelle Erwartungsmuster gegenüber dem Volksstück von Horváth bedient und zugleich gebrochen, sowohl in der Fabelführung wie auch in ihrem Ende." This is done to achieve what Pollow calls a "produktive Rezeptionshaltung" which might then effect a "Bewußtseinsveränderung". The principle at work in the plays is the "Aufbau der Idyllik (des 'Volksstückes'), des Erwartungsmusters der Zuschauer" (46) only then to destroy it. By using specific structural elements such as 'Bilder', seasons and music which influence the 'Rezeptionsvorgang' by means of contrast, comment and 'Verfremdung' the spectators' imagination is theoretically activated. The article has two major flaws: first, the writer has seen fit to ignore entirely all scholarship west of the Iron Curtain and in fact his argument resembles that put forward by Volker Klotz in Dramaturgie des Publikums. Secondly, he uses the term 'Volksstück' without defining it precisely. It is unclear which Volksstück Horváth is supposed to be utilising. Again, if Pollow had taken cognisance of the scholarship devoted to the problem that has appeared in the last decade he could not have applied the term so loosely.

For a detailed analysis of the term Gerd Müller's (47) historical approach provides a sound introduction with valuable material on the changing notions of the Volksstück. However, his

43. Bruns, p.107.

44. Ibid., p.121.

45. Helmut Pollow, 'Ödön von Horváth zum Beispiel. Zur Rezeption von Dramatik der zwanziger Jahre', Weimarer Beiträge, 6 (1979), 143-153.

46. Ibid., p.148f.

47. Gerd Müller, Das Volksstück von Raimund bis Kroetz. Die Gattung in Einzelanalysen, München, R.Oldenbourg, 1979.

introductory statement: "Autoren, die heute Volksstücke 'wie Horváth' schreiben, wollen damit andeuten, daß sie sich um die Produktion einfacher, übersichtlicher Bühnenwerke bemühen"(48), suggests that either Müller or these authors underestimate the complexity of Horváth's work. The chapter on Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald cannot be considered a contribution to Horváth scholarship for it simply provides a summary of it. In the chapter on Fleißer's Pioniere in Ingolstadt Müller explains the violent reaction to the play because writers of Volksstücke had to expect to be measured against a "Rahmen von Vorerwartungen" influenced by the complex associations conjured up by the notions of 'Volk' and 'Volksliteratur': "Die wilden Proteste gegen ihr Stück besonders bei den völkischen, deutsch-nationalen, und konservativen Kritikern und Zuschauern erklären sich teilweise aus den unterschiedlichen Auffassungen von dem, was die Gattung des 'Volksstückes' literarisch leisten kann"(49). This reaction will be examined in more detail in the next section.

Some studies of individual Volksstücke provide useful generalisations for the plays as a group. A.F. Bance, in his article on Kasimir und Karoline (50), sees the comedy of the Volksstücke as primarily linguistic in nature: "the inherent comedy of people trying to cover up their helplessness with a debased language like a badly-cut, mass-produced coat that fits all and none"(51). He argues validly that the distribution of speeches between different characters in earlier and later versions is: "a clear indication of the loss of individuality, and of the collective nature of the language"(52). Jürgen Hein on the other hand(53), when dealing with the same play focuses on the problem of the Volksstück and 'Volkstheater' where he is able to apply his broad knowledge of this field. He states that the term Volksstück only came into general use after 1850 and that "Gegenstandsbestimmung und Begriffsgeschichte interferieren und machen eindeutige Definitionen unmöglich"(54). The confusion

48. Ibid., p.10.

49. Ibid., p.159.

50. A.F. Bance, 'Ödön von Horváth: Kasimir und Karoline', Austrian Life and Literature 1780-1938. Eight Essays edited by Peter Branscombe, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1978.

51. Ibid., p.84.

52. Ibid., p.89.

53. Jürgen Hein, 'Ödön von Horváth Kasimir und Karoline', Deutsche Dramen, Bd.2, Königstein/Ts., Athenäum, 1981.

arising from the term together with its myriad related genres ('Posse', 'Lokalstück', 'Bauerndrama', 'Schwank' and 'Genrebild') can be attributed to the frequently changing and often unclear meaning of 'Volk' and 'Volkstümlichkeit'. He sees Horváth's real artistic achievement in those plays where his much vaunted "Synthese von Ernst und Ironie" is actually achieved. Those plays, however, where the elements are not synthesised are then below this standard "und so der Alternative von Melodrama und schlechter Posse zufallen"(55). It is thus from this synthesis that the tragicomic character of the plays result. Yet Hein does not specify which plays fail to reach this standard, although one can speculate that works such as Don Juan, Der jüngste Tag on the one hand, and Rund um den Kongreß together with the exile comedies on the other, could be classified under these rubrics, at least if one were to accept the present critical consensus.

Alfred Doppler is one of the few critics to have recognised that Horváth reshaped elements of the traditional Volksstück, other than just music and language, for his critical purpose. Doppler indicates the importance of the "Uminstrumentierung" and the "Funktionswechsel von vertrauten Volksstückelementen und (...) von vertrauten Elementen der literarischen Tradition". For example, "Feste und Feiern" lead to "Entfremdung und Einsamkeit; Heirat und Verlobung (...) besiegeln das Unheil", the "Naturidylle" is unmasked as a "böse Idylle" and the emotional relationships are shown to be in a "deprimierte(m) Zustand"(56). Some of these elements such as festivities and the depiction of nature will be examined in the following analysis.

## 1.2 Towards a Definition of the Volksstück

When Horváth states his intention: "Mit vollem Bewußtsein zerstörte ich das alte Volksstück, formal und ethisch - und versuchte als dramatischer Chronist die neue Form des Volksstückes zu finden", he does not specify what he understands exactly by the old form except that these plays depict "die sogenannten ewig menschlichen Probleme"(I,11f.). In order to analyse the constituent elements of this genre and Horváth's utilisation of them the contemporary notion of the Volksstück in the 1920s must be ascertained. Volker Klotz claims this to be

54. Ibid., p.45.

55. Ibid., p.47.

56. Alfred Doppler, 'Bemerkungen zur dramatischen Form der Volksstücke Horváths', Horváth-Diskussion, p.17f.

the key to understanding the essence of Horváth's dramaturgical method which he terms 'Reagenzdrematik': Horváth can, however, only carry out his programme: "wenn das alte Volksstück als Kunstgebilde und als Bild im Bewußtsein des Publikums vorhanden ist. Da es aber - anno 1932 - nur noch verschwommen als geschöntes Wunschbild existiert, ist es zunächst einmal aufzurufen, herbeizuzitieren"(57). This 'Wunschbild' or 'Vorstellungskomplex' was created in a tradition which extended from Raimund, via Anzengruber, Schönherr, Ludwig Thoma to contemporaries of Horváth such as Billinger(58) In the following chapter an attempt will be made to reconstruct the image of the Volksstück as it was understood by Horváth and his contemporaries.

The majority of Horváth scholars who have analysed the Volksstücke in depth either ignore the question(59) or just provide a brief history of the Volksstück tradition. The latter approach is of doubtful value because it tends to pursue an historical investigation in the light of modern research that pays little attention to the contemporary reception of figures such as Raimund, Nestroy, Anzengruber, Schönherr and others in the 1920s and 1930s. The reassessment of these writers and their work by literary historians may in fact bear little resemblance to their importance in the time Horváth was writing. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide such a complex 'Rezeptionsgeschichte' and its value would probably be scant, for the vexed question of the influences on Horváth has not been sufficiently clarified. Although it is well established that he was a writer highly conscious of literary and intellectual movements, he provides frustratingly few references to possible mentors.

The connection between Viennese Popular Comedy and Horváth, although apparent and often mentioned, is not without its difficulties(60). The uncritical association of 'Volksstück' with 'Volkstheater' is the first problem. Although Horváth stated his longterm goal to be the creator of a "wahrhaftiges Volkstheater" (VIII,660), his genre designation Volksstück should

57. Volker Klotz, Dramaturgie des Publikums, München, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1976, p.127.

58. Ibid., pp.183, 187, 197f. Alfred Doppler in his essay on Geschichten also cites Ludwig Anzengruber as the important figure in the Volksstück tradition against which Horváth was reacting: Alfred Doppler, 'Ödön von Horváth: Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald', Das österreichische Volksstück, p.80.

59. Particularly Hummel and Melzer attempt no definition of the Volksstück.

not be construed as a reference to the halcyon days of the Viennese Popular Theatre. It has been amply demonstrated that Horváth was in the first instance a social critic and not intent on regenerating a dead tradition. In addition, the term Volksstück as opposed to 'Volkstheater' only came into general use after 1850, in a time when the Viennese Popular Theatre was already in decline(61). It was only once the institution had ended that the Volksstück began its 'Eigenleben'(61a) as a literary form.

The exponents of the Volksstück - Anzengruber, Schönherr, Thoma, Horváth, Brecht and the modern generation of Sperr, Kroetz, Bauer etc.- have frequently attempted to idealise the genre. The reason for this can be seen from the word's constituent parts: 'Stück' for and/or about 'das Volk', which suggests an inherent democratic essence that many other dramatic genres lack. The association of 'Tragödie', 'Komödie', 'Konversationskomödie', 'Posse' and 'Schwank' range from aristocratic exclusion to lowly 'Volksverdummung'. All the above writers were (or are) socially committed, a contract that stipulates a twofold mandate: to present plays about the people for the people. Whatever the 'Volk' was represented as (for Anzengruber, Schönherr, Thoma and Brecht it was the rural community, for Horváth, Kroetz and Bauer the urban petite-bourgeoisie) the actual performance conditions normally precluded fulfilment of the second part of the contract. Anzengruber and Schönherr were premièred at Vienna's bourgeois theatres - Theater an der Wien, Theater in der Josefstadt and even the Burgtheater. Horváth's plays found support amongst intellectual theatre

60. cf. most recently Hellmuth Himmel, 'Ödön von Horváth und die Volksstücktradition', Über ÖvH 2, who observes correctly that the Volksstück derived not from the 'Possen' of Raimund and Nestroy but "aus der von Friedrich Kaiser geschaffenen Gattung des moralisierenden 'Lebensbildes'", although the true creator of the Volksstück is Anzengruber, p.46. This view is shared by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler who considers Kaiser to be the "missing link" in the development of the Volksstück between Nestroy and Anzengruber, 'Die Unbedeutenden werden bedeutend. Anmerkungen zum Volksstück nach Nestroys Tod: Kaiser, Anzengruber und Morre', in: Die Andere Welt, Hg. Kurt Bartsch et. al., p.139.

61. Jürgen Hein, 'Das Volksstück. Entwicklung und Tendenzen', Theater und Gesellschaft. Das Volksstück im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, Düsseldorf, Bertelsmann, 1973, p.11.

61a. Ibid., p.19. The 'Volkstheater' was ultimately squeezed out and replaced by the 'Bildungstheater' and the 'Boulevard-theater'.



managers such as Ernst Josef Aufrecht and Max Reinhardt(62). The true popular theatre of the latter half of the 19th century and this century is in fact the Boulevard theatre whose fare of farces and undemanding entertainment has remained constant up until the present day. This is then the eternal dilemma or contradiction of this genre: that any Volksstück attempting a complex and often ruthless, unidealised portrayal of its subject will overtax, or in Horváth's case alienate its intended audience.

Horváth has provided a clear statement of his relationship to the Volksstück tradition associated with Anzengruber. In a version of the 'Gebrauchsanweisung' he states:

"3. Das Stück darf also nicht anzengruberisch gespielt werden. Es basiert auf den Traditionen der Volkssänger"(63).

This suggests that it was the more resilient strain of the South German rural Volksstück which had determined the audience expectation of the genre and in the hands of such writers as Ludwig Anzengruber and Karl Schönherr had conquered the major German speaking stages from Vienna to Berlin. Anzengruber certainly made the Volksstück a vehicle for social and political comment but, although his plays were by no means simple peasant romps, he did not place the form itself in question. He saw the Volksstück as having a twin function: didacticism and entertainment: "Das Volksstück (...) soviel ich weiß, hat alle Zeit, nach Maßgabe der herrschenden Anschauungen, die Absicht des Belehrens mit der zu unterhalten, verbunden"(64), but the formal requirements were quite simple: "Volksstücke benannte er zumeist jene seiner Bühnenerwerke, die Gesangseinlagen hatten"(65), and the setting could be either rural or urban.

When Horváth warns against performing Kasimir und Karoline in an 'anzengruberisch' style he is presumably protesting against

62. Italienische Nacht and Kasimir und Karoline were both Ernst Josef Aufrecht productions and Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald was premièred at Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater. Reinhardt also engaged Horváth to write a revue together with R.A. Stemmele, Walter Mehring and Felix Hollaender (VIII,727-29).

63. Mat KK, p.112.

64. Quoted by Adalbert Schmidt, 'Ludwig Anzengruber Das vierte Gebot', Das österreichische Volksstück, Wien, Ferdinand Hirt, 1971, p.60.

65. Ibid.

excessive realism, the second of the five 'Verbote' that he lists(66). Anzengruber has been established as an important precursor of Naturalism as Heinz Kindermann somewhat grandly states: "Heute wissen wir, daß da vor Tolstoy, Zola und Hauptmann, einer aufgestanden war, der den dichterischen Weg zur nicht beschönigten Wirklichkeitsgestaltung schon längst kannte und ihn in gültiger Weise einzuschlagen begann"(67). The final important difference is the attitude to dialect: "4. Allerstrengstens verboten, Dialekt zu sprechen"(68). An indispensable ingredient of the anzengruberian Volksstück is dialect for its rustic humour and autochthonous characters whose use of dialect supposedly demonstrates an intact relationship to their rural traditions and environment. For Horváth linguistic humour does not arise from earthy 'Bauernhumor' but from the new 'Bildungsjargon' his characters speak: "Die Stücke sind keine Dialektstücke sondern hochdeutsch - sie müssen hochdeutsch gesprochen werden, durch diesen Gegensatz des Bildungshungers und des Nichtanderskönnens in puncto Trieb (infolge unseres Erdendaseins) entsteht ja bereits die Ironie"(69). This process he terms the "Komik des Unterbewußten"(VIII,663). This detailed catalogue provides ample evidence that Horváth felt that the central intention of his Volksstücke was being misunderstood and instead they were being produced in a style which associated them with precisely the tradition of the reactionary 'Heimatstück' he was reacting against. The ideological connotations of this tradition will be examined below in 2.1.

A glance at recent glossaries of literary terms, i.e. post-1945 and pre-Horváth boom, reveals that the Volksstück was still associated with the earlier tradition of the Viennese Popular Comedy. Herbert Seidler sees the literary pinnacle of the Volksstück "in den Lustspielen Raimunds und in den Komödien Nestroys" even though no play by Raimund bears the subtitle Volksstück and only a few of Nestroy's extant works, although none of the major ones, are so designated. Seidler lists the three main forms of the Volksstück: "1) Die Zauberstücke 2) Die

66. "(...) in diesem Stück ist keine Milljöhsschilderung. 2. Realistisch zu spielen. Das Stück muß überspitzt werden, es kann gar nicht genug übertrieben in Maske und Kostüm auf realistischer Basis gespielt werden", Mat KK, p.112.

67. Introduction to Dichtung aus Österreich: Drama, hrsg. Heinz Kindermann, Margaret Dietrich. Wien und München, Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1966, p.60.

68. Mat KK, p.112.

69. Mat KK, p.113.

Parodie und Travestie 3) Die Lokal- und Sittenposse; diese nimmt ihren Stoff aus den Vorfällen des Alltags, ist derb, führt in den Realismus"(70). For Sedler, the Volksstück is a Viennese speciality and an historically completed genre. Gero von Wilpert also bases his definition on a description of the Viennese Popular Comedy:

Form, die (...) durch Einlagen von Musik, Gesang und Tanz sowie Anwendung von Effekten, Sentimentalitäten u.ä. niederen Elementen dem Geschmack des Großstadtpublikums entgegenkommt, ohne den oft ernsten und z.T. selbst tragischen Grundton zu verlieren (...) Während das bayr. V. (Thoma) mehr bäuerlicher Situationsromantik zuneigt, kann das psychologische Bauernstück der Alpenländer (Schönherr) nur noch im weitesten Sinne als Volksstück bezeichnet werden(71).

The exclusion of Thoma and Schönherr because of their deviance from the paradigm based on the plays of Raimund and Nestroy illustrates the erroneous equation of a literary form post-dating 1850 with an earlier theatre form.

Definitions of the Volksstück by scholars thoroughly versed in the history of literature reveal serious drawbacks when attempting to reconstruct the model of the old Volksstück that Horváth sought to regenerate. Recourse to non-specialist lexica and encyclopedias intended for a general public ought to provide a more accurate approximation of the "Kunstgebilde und Bild im Bewußtsein des Publikums"(72). It appears, however, that the term became widespread only in the latter half of the 20th century. Meyer's 17 volume Großes Konversationslexikon of 1907 does not list the term, nor do Trübner's Deutsches Wörterbuch (1939-1957), Hermann Paul (1908), Kluge's Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (1934), and Das Neue Welt-Lexikon (1937). However, in the 1966 edition of the Brockhaus Konversationslexikon the following definition can be found:

ein im Unterschied zum volkstümlichen Spiel bäuerlicher Herkunft für ein städtisches Publikum berechnetes Theaterstück meist gefühlvoller, derb heiterer Art. Es

70. Kleines literarisches Lexikon Bd.3 'Sachbegriffe'. Hrsg.von Horst Rüdiger and Erwin Koppen, Bern, München, Francke, 1966, p.443.

71. Wilpert, Sachwörterbuch der Literatur, p.837.

72. Volker Klotz, Dramaturgie des Publikums, p.187.

## Towards a Definition of the Volksstück

nähert sich oft dem Lokalstück. Das Volksstück wurde bes. gepflegt in München und Wien, wo es sich von Stranitzky über Lokalposse und Zauberstück bis zu Raimund, Nestroy und Anzengruber entwickelte(73).

The components of sentimentality mixed with crude humour appear to be still the dominant connotation of this genre despite the efforts of Horváth and Brecht(74).

A more fruitful avenue of investigation of the contemporary notion of the old Volksstück is provided by the theatre criticism of the day in which the drama critics were challenged by some playwrights' use of this genre. It is evident from the reactions of critics to plays by Thoma, Marieluise Fleißer and Horváth that an expectation associated with the Volksstück was already present and firmly entrenched.

The première of Ludwig Thoma's Volksstück Magdalena in 1912 appears to have caused the critic Alfred Kerr to reject the author's choice of subtitle which reveals Kerr's own concept of the genre: "Kein 'Volksstück'. Vielmehr das Gegenteil eines solchen: in knapper Wucht (...) (Im Volksstück liegt Beschönigendes, Trostvolles, Einrenkendes, Begütigendes, Schwindelhaftes: hier nichts dergleichen"(75). For Kerr, the play transcends this "flache Gattung"(76) and belongs rather in the ethereal realm of antique tragedy. His insistence on the contrived nature of the Volksstück-world gives an indication of its place in the critical hierarchy at this time. It also casts light on the prevailing idea of the genre, that is, on the mass of its products rather than on its artistic highpoints. If Kerr associates phrases such as 'Schwindelhaftes' with the Volksstück then he is evidently not thinking of dramatists such as Anzengruber in the first instance (whom he admired)(77), but of the evolution of the Volksstück away from critical, didactic aims to its absorption by the commercial theatres as an unproblematic

73. dtv-Lexikon, Bd.9, München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag 1966, p.262.

74. Even modern dictionaries such as the recent 6 volume Duden and the revised Wahrig (1978) continue this definition. Duden:"für ein breites Publikum bestimmtes, meist humoristisches Bühnenstück; Wahrig:"volkstümliches Theaterstück für ein städtisches Publikum."

75. Alfred Kerr, Theaterkritiken, hrsg. von Jürgen Behrens, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1971, p.79.

76. Ibid., p.81.

comedy genre, hardly distinguishable from the 'Bauernschwank'.

The critical reaction to Marieluise Fleißer's 'Komödie' Pioniere in Ingolstadt adds to the picture of the Volksstück in the 1920s for, despite its subtitle, many critics apparently detected an abused Volksstück in Fleißer's play. Dr Felix Zimmermann for the Dresdener Nachrichten:

Erst sieht es aus, als ob ein Volksstück mit Natur, Gemüt und Innigkeit sich entwickeln wollte und dann offenbart sich ein Abgrund von Unnatürlichkeit, Roheit und Lüsterheit (...) sie (Fleißer) läßt sie (Bertha) Dinge daherreden, die niemals aus wirklicher Naivität, sondern nur aus Verdorbenheit herkommen können (...) Wer nur einen Augenblick glaubt, daß der Dialog dieser Szenen naiv und volksmäßig wahr sei, hat jedes Gefühl für Reinheit und Wahrheit verloren(78).

Zimmermann's list of prerequisite components for the Volksstück is not characterised by its preciseness. Presumably, the setting in a small Bavarian town combined with the opening scene of the soldiers' arrival accompanied by martial music and looked on in admiration by the townspeople triggered off the necessary association. Accordingly, the 'Volk' is 'naiv' and 'volksmäßig' and thus possessed of 'Reinheit und Wahrheit'; an artificial construct which closely resembles the 18th century notions of Herder and exhibits the covert desire amongst certain sections of the educated middle classes to keep the rural population in just such a state. Thus, the direct and often vulgar references to sexuality in Fleißer's play were not in themselves as shocking as the fact that they came from the mouths of provincial and poorly educated teenagers who had been hopefully kept in blissful ignorance of such matters. Zimmermann's concept of a natural, naive Volksstück motivated by a romantic, idealised notion of love suggests that this genre was now associated with a rural or provincial setting where the decadence and depravity of urban life had not yet penetrated.

The Berlin première a year later on 1 April, 1929, caused one of the great theatre scandals of the Weimar Republic, whereas the Dresden production had passed uneventfully. This was partly due to Brecht's directorial involvement which emphasised the sexual element by non too subtle innuendo(79). The critical

77. Kerr actually saw Horváth as an Anzengruber epigone, cf. his review of GNW (Mat GNW,117).

78. Materialien zum Leben und Schreiben der Marieluise Fleißer, hrsg. von Günther Rühle, Frankfurt a/M., Suhrkamp, 1973, p.60.

reaction was divided predictably between liberal and left-wing adulation and right-wing condemnation. Amongst the latter the highly regarded Paul Fechter (who had awarded Carl Zuckmayer the Kleistpreis four years earlier) wrote: "Ein Volksstück ist geplant, ein Soldatenstück - von einer Frau, die erstens keinen Funken Instinkt für wirkliches Volkswesen hat und überdies als Frau bei einem Thema wie diesem fehl am Platze ist" (80). Fechter reacted presumably to the same signals as his ideological compatriot in Dresden only to be repulsed by the sexual element which is apparently absent in the true 'Volkswesen'.

Kurt Pinthus too defined Fleißer's plays as Volksstücke: "Die Fleißer schreibt Volksstücke. Sie gibt die volkstümlichste Sprache und dennoch die kompliziertesten Gefühle" (81). That Pinthus was surprised to discover emotional complexity in this genre is testimony to its association with the trivial entertainment of 'Bauernkomödie'. It is important to note that neither of Fleißer's Ingolstadt plays actually carries the subtitle 'Volksstück', yet their dramatis personae, setting and dialect-tainted language sufficed to generate these connotations.

The performances of Horváth's Volksstücke during the Weimar Republic caused similar critical division along ideological lines. Italienische Nacht, a political comedy, as he termed it, elicited a milder response than had been expected (82), but the subtitle Volksstück was not accepted without question. Arthur Eloesser, for the Vossische Zeitung:

Horváth nennt seine 7 Bilder aus dem heutigen politischen Leben ein Volksstück. Das ist immer Entschuldigung für einen freundlichen Mangel an Wirklichkeitsnähe, an Folgerichtigkeit, aber wir können sie wohl nicht annehmen in einer Zeit, wo das deutsche Volk leider ganz andere Stücke aufführt (BS IN, 160).

He does not, however, accuse Horváth's play itself of lacking 'Wirklichkeit' or 'Folgerichtigkeit' that the subtitle connotes, but perceives in fact that mixture of 'Ernst' and 'Ironie' that Horváth was striving for.

79. cf. Ernst Josef Aufrecht, Erzähle, damit du dein Recht erweist for an account of the première and its consequences.

80. Materialien zum Leben und Schreiben der Marieluise Fleißer, p.80f.

81. Ibid., p.87.

82. Aufrecht, op. cit., p.121.

Despite the wide critical response to Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald, the critics found little difficulty with the designation Volksstück. Ernst Heilbronn understood Horváth's intention to be: "dem sentimentalen, verkitschten Wiener Volksstück die "Wahrheit" entgegenzustellen"(83), which suggests that the Volksstück, at least the Viennese variety, had forfeited its social-critical legacy left by Anzengruber. For Ihering, the play was the "literarische Reaktion auf die Legende Wien" and can only be understood, "wenn man das kennt, was über Wien geschrieben und gesungen und gefilmt wird"(84). For Ihering, Horváth's models were not only the Volksstück, but also the kitschy Volkslieder and the spate of films that Kracauer mentions in his history of German film(85). He cannot, however, accept Horváth's use of the Volksstück which he mistakes for satire. In comparison to Italienische Nacht where political parties, types and slogans were successfully satirised, this method cannot be applied to a whole city: "Eine Satire kann man als literarische Reaktion schreiben, aber nicht ein Volksstück, nicht das Bild einer Stadt. So gerät Horváth in das Kalenderdeutsch hinein, das er ablehnt"(86). Ihering misunderstood the play's intention on two counts: first, Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald is not a satirical attack on Vienna. Horváth defends Kasimir und Karoline against this accusation in the 'Gebrauchsanweisung' where he also rejects the label of parodist:

Ich hasse die Parodie! Satire und Karikatur - ab und zu ja. Aber die satirischen und karikaturistischen Stellen in meinen Stücken kann man an den fünf Fingern herzählen - Ich bin kein Satiriker, meine Herrschaften, ich habe kein anderes Ziel, als wie dies: Demaskierung des Bewußtseins. Keine Demaskierung eines Menschen, einer Stadt - das wäre ja furchtbar billig! Keine Demaskierung auch des Süddeutschen natürlich - ich schreibe ja auch nur deshalb süddeutsch, weil ich anders nicht schreiben kann (VIII,660).

83. Die Literatur, January, 1932, (Mat GWW,122).

84. Berliner Börsen-Courier, 3/11/1931, *ibid.*, p.110.

85. Siegfried Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler: "The escapist tendency (of the films after 1924) seems to have been very strong during those years (...) The favorite method was to metamorphose certain real towns or landscapes into imaginary locales where all one's yearnings would be fulfilled (...) The paradise of paradises was Vienna", p.140f.

86. Mat GWW, p.111.

## Towards a Definition of the Volksstück

This was probably intended as an answer to Alfred Polgar's interpretation of Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald as a "Volksstück und die Parodie dazu"(87). Secondly, Thering's contention that Horváth involuntarily fell victim to the clichés he was criticising has been repeatedly rejected by a succession of studies and Horváth's use of language is now recognised as one of his most influential innovations.

The appearance of Zuckmayer's Der fröhliche Weinberg prompted a critical response, as exemplified by Monty Jacobs's review, which expressed a confirmation of traditional Volksstück elements: "Die Luft des Volksstückes weht um sie (the characters). Trinken, essen, Schweine schlachten, raufen und sein Mädel ins Heu werfen - das ist ihre Atmosphäre"(88). The brawl at the end of the second act confirms for Monty Jacobs the direct line between the "Raufszene" in Anzengruber's Kreuzschreiber and Zuckmayer; he even confers on the latter the honour of being the former's heir apparent. Bernard Diebold suggests also that Zuckmayer's play represents the predictability of the genre: "Man weiß gleich, wie in jedem Volksstück, daß die Jugend siegen wird, und daß sich am Schluß die richtigen kriegen werden (...) Und manche Freuden der anderen verzögern das Glück der Liebenden; Geschäfte, Bacchanale, und mancherlei Liebesleben in der Natur"(89). Felix Hollaender points out the long genealogy of Zuckmayer's 'Lustspiel' that begins with the 'Lokalposse' of Niebergall and extends via Kotzebue, Benedix, Anzengruber to Ganghofer, Thoma and Hauptmann which encompasses the rural and urban Volksstück(90).

The 'Kunstgebilde' of the Volksstück that emerges is predictably a diffuse one. It is clear that the term has ideological as well as literary connotations which render the reception doubly difficult. However, it is possible to make the following generalisations:

1) The Volksstück was seen chiefly as a comedy form, as is evidenced by the reaction to Der fröhliche Weinberg. Serious Volksstücke were viewed as a challenge to the genre.

2) The Volksstück had shifted its emphasis from an urban

87. Die Weltbühne, 17/11/1931, *ibid.*, p.120.

88. Vossische Zeitung, 23/12/1925, cited in Rühle, Theater für die Republik, p.669.

89. Franfurter Zeitung, 26/12/1925, Rühle, *op. cit.*, p.672.

90. 8.Uhr Abendblatt, 29/12/1925, *ibid.*, p.672.



## Die Bergbahn and the Critique of Heimatdichtung

form - in the 'Lokalpossen' of Nestroy, Niebergall, Benedix etc. - to the depiction of rural village life. This is to some extent the legacy of Anzengruber which was continued by a horde of greater and lesser writers of Volksstücke. Linked to this focus on rural life is the expectation generated by the 'Heimatkunst'-movement that the depiction of this milieu will be in some way idealised, more intact than that of the urban spectators for whom the plays were in the first instance intended.

3) The elements of music, song and dance that were integral to the Viennese Popular Comedy, and were continued by Anzengruber, could be seen as optional extras, especially by post-naturalist writers such as Schönherr and Thoma who were writing for a new set of theatre conventions and could not justify characters suddenly bursting into song as their predecessors were wont to, unless the atmosphere allowed it e.g. festivities or public house scenes.

4) No normative expectations regarding fit subject matter for a Volksstück are evident. The irate response to Fleißer's depiction of sexuality suggests that a social rather than a dramatic taboo had been breached, for eroticism is indeed the motivating force of all comedy where moral lapses (e.g. adultery and cuckolding) provide the mainstay of many comic situations. However, Kerr's reaction to Thoma's Magdalena indicates that, while moral transgressions are certainly expected in the Volksstück, actual criminal acts, whether they be prostitution or murder, begin to test the boundaries of the genre. This is linked to the expectations of the comedy form that requires restoration of social order, so that a transgression by a character of a judicial code must entail the due process of law and punishment, whether it be a fine, jail-term or even execution, none of which has any place in the happy-ending of comedy.

## 2. Die Bergbahn and the Critique of Heimatdichtung

In a review of a recent production of Die Bergbahn Urs Allemann writes:

Horváth bedient sich in der Bergbahn vom Dialekt über die Weibertragödie bis hin zum Berg, der sich sein Opfer holt - aller Elemente des alpenländischen Heimatstücks, um dessen Logik auf die Füße zu stellen, es durchsichtig zu machen auf die in ihm mystifikatorisch verpuppten Erfahrungen realer gesellschaft-

## Die Bergbahn and the Critique of Heimatdichtung

licher Auseinandersetzungen(91).

In this description Die Bergbahn can be seen as a rehearsal for the mature Volksstücke. Depicted on stage are brutal violence, bawdy songs and natural disasters subsumed under the designation 'Volksstück'. The dramatis personae: Tyrolean villagers co-opted to work high up in the mountains, an itinerant unemployed hairdresser, a nameless engineer and a company director, represent a constellation which fulfils Horváth's determination to depict 'heutige Menschen aus dem Volke' (I,11) and also retains the clash between the urban intruder and the rural inhabitants, a favourite topic in the rural Volksstück of the 19th century. However, the traditional conflict is placed in a modern political context of class struggle and the age-old problems of love and money, determined by inheritance, are replaced by the struggle between labour and capital.

Before an analysis can begin, the important differences between the two versions must be established. Revolte auf Côte 3018, the earlier version, was premièred on the 4 November, 1927, and Die Bergbahn on the 4 January, 1929. However, both plays were published by the Volksbühnenverlag in 1927 so it can be presumed that the revisions were carried out almost immediately after the première of Revolte. The substantial revisions pertain solely to the ending and a rearrangement of scenes to compress the play from four into three acts. The first act of Die Bergbahn consists of Act one and Act two of Revolte and takes place entirely inside the barracks whereas Revolte opened on a background of glaciers and mountain scenery. This change replaces an image associated with the alpine 'Heimatstück' by the deidealised setting of the barracks which conveys the stronger political implications of the workers' spartan living conditions. The dialogue, however, remains practically unchanged. The substantial changes occur after the death of the engineer. In Revolte the scene switches back to the barracks and ends with Moser's death in the snowstorm. In Die Bergbahn such cinematic techniques have been replaced by reversing the order which is a more practical continuity for theatre conditions. Pragmatic considerations of this nature were probably not the only reason. The change of locale provides the play with an entirely different focus, borne out by the addition of dialogue with political overtones at the close of Die Bergbahn:

AUFSICHTSRAT Wäre das Wetter nicht umgeschlagen, wäre alles in Ordnung.

REITER Die Ordnung!

91. Urs Allemann, Theater Heute, 3, 1977, p.7.

SIMON Einmal schlagt jeds Wetter um. Nur kane Angst! (I,99).

Weather as a symbol of political climate and the patent victory of natural forces is given further emphasis by the fact that Horváth shifted this scene from inside a barrack to an exterior location. This ending with its implied revolutionary note is overtly political compared to the final image of Moser dying like an animal in the snow in Revolte.

In this chapter the revised version Die Bergbahn will be referred to unless otherwise stated. It is the intention here to scrutinise Horváth's utilisation of the Volksstück. The obvious alpine setting, struggles with the elements and Anzengruberian dialect distinguish Die Bergbahn from the later urban Volksstücke. The overt melodrama of the closing scenes contrasts also with the typically anti-climactic endings of these later plays.

In the meagre amount of critical literature on this play, commentators have noted Horváth's debt to established dramatic forms and his intention to make use of an existing popular genre to uncover the lies and illusions which that genre unusually serves to perpetuate(92). On this point there is agreement but the debate centres on the question of which genre exactly is intended. Winston suggests it was inspired by the spate of mountain films which were popular in Germany during the twenties and it should be seen as a "counter-version to the heroics of Dr Arnold Fanck's mountain spectacles"(93). To Dr Fanck should be added the name of Luis Trenker, the acclaimed Tyrolean climber and film maker. Jean-Claude François stresses the play's naturalistic heritage and finds its model in Hauptmann's Die Weber because of its conspicuously similar subject matter. He observes the parallels in some characters:

On retrouve chez Horváth comme chez Hauptmann, la peinture différenciée d'un milieu d'ouvriers, qui comprend des résignés ou des "non-violents" (Hilse chez Hauptmann, Oberle chez Horváth) et des impatients, avides d'action (Bächer et Jäger chez Hauptmann, Sliwinski et Simon chez Horváth)(94).

The chief difference, however, lies in Horváth's modernity and

92. Krishna Winston, Close Readings, p.52.

93. Ibid., p.51.

94. François, op. cit., p.137. See also Kurt Kahl, 'Der Dramatiker der Krise', Mat ÖvH, p.155.

## Die Bergbahn and the Critique of Heimatdichtung

radicalism, evident in the dramatisation of a topical event with explicit criticism of capitalism and the profit motive. He notes also the echoes of the later Austrian Volksstück tradition contained in the subtitle, and mentions Anzengruber's Der Meineidbauer because both plays contain a female character named Vroni/Veronika - an extremely specious comparison, for there the similarity ends. Karl Schönherr is the other important representative of this tradition and François suggests that Schönherr's Der Weibsteufel may have inspired Horváth because the theme of jealousy between two men is common to both plays - again a somewhat vague comparison in the light of the minor importance it plays in Die Bergbahn and its centrality in Der Weibsteufel(95). He also detects traces of Expressionism in the final scenes with their symbol-laden stage directions and the stichomythic language(96). This view is echoed by Axel Fritz:

Dieses pathetische Ende, in dem die Naturgewalten triumphieren und der Ingenieur den Tod des klassischen Bösewichts erleidet (...) muß als ein Versuch des noch unerfahrenen Autors angesehen werden, dem Konflikt, dessen überaus diesseitige Bedingungen so eindeutig dargelegt werden, eine Lösung im Zeichen 'höherer Gewalt' zu geben, als ein letzter Tribut an expressionistischen Ausdruckswillen(97).

and by Dieter Hildebrandt in his excellent monograph on Horváth:

Bei allem expressionistischen Zacken und Zucken, bei auch gelegentlichen Ganghofereien der Sprachgebärden, wird hier mit großer Subtilität und einer verblüffenden ökonomischen Kenntnis das kapitalistische System gewissermaßen durchschaut(98).

These broad and often inaccurate attempts to bring the play into focus in terms of established traditions and genres by scattering such names as Anzengruber, Schönherr, Hauptmann and Ganghofer tend to concentrate on Horváth's supposed debt to these writers but they fail to show his original development of the forms he alludes to.

The only study yet to appear which attributes to the play

95. François, p.158.

96. Ibid.

97. Axel Fritz, Horváth als Kritiker seiner Zeit, p.141f.

98. Hildebrandt, op. cit., p.37.

any high degree of sophistication is Ansgar Hillach's article 'Das Volksstück als Kosmologie der Gewalt. Psychologie und Marxismus in Ödön von Horváths Revolte auf Côte 3018'(99). Hillach sees the play in terms of Marxist analysis which is "an naturgeschichtliche Vorstellungen angeschlossen, wie sie Friedrich Engels späterhin vertreten hatte", combined with the "trieb-dynamischen Modell Freuds"(100). Freud's model is based on the two drives 'Libido' and 'Todesangst' which according to Hillach can be seen as the direct result of the extreme experiences of war and inflation(101). Hillach's argument is unsound regarding the Freudian psychology for two reasons. The reference is presumably to Jenseits des Lustprinzips (1920), but Hillach provides no footnotes to indicate his sources. However, there is no mention of 'Todesangst' in this essay but rather of the 'Todestrieb' as the instinct opposing the 'Libido'. Freud does deal briefly with the former in the essay Das Ich und das Es (1923) but attributes to it no great importance(102). Secondly, the assertion that Freud's intense interest in the death instinct was due to the First World War, although widely held by his disciples, is no longer accepted by recent scholarship(103).

Hillach is on firmer ground when he suggests that the figure of Moser exemplifies the "Aggressionstrieb im Sinne Sigmund Freuds als in der Natur des Menschen verankert, und unverkennbar (...) Die Roheit des Zuschlagens verweist auf einen Triebstau, dessen Grund nicht nur in der Person Veronikas liegen mag, sondern wie aus den folgenden Szenen deutlicher wird, sich als Klassenhaß identifizieren läßt"(104). To Hillach's twin models

99. Ansgar Hillach, 'Das Volksstück als Kosmologie der Gewalt. Psychologie und Marxismus in Ödön von Horváths Revolte auf Côte 3018', Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift, 12, (1974), p.223-243.

100. Ibid., p.226.

101. Ibid., p.227.

102. Sigmund Freud, 'Das Ich und das Es': "Der volltönende Satz, jede Angst sei eigentlich Todesangst, schließt kaum einen Sinn ein, ist jedenfalls nicht zu rechtfertigen". Werkausgabe in zwei Bänden, hrsg. von Anna Freud und Ilse Grubrich Simitis. Frankfurt/M., S.Fischer Verlag, 1978, Bd.1, p.400.

103. For a discussion of this misconception see Frank J. Sulloway, Freud, Biologist of the Mind, London, Fontana, 1980, p.395.

104. Hillach, p.230.

of Marxism and Freudianism should be added a third: Darwinism, especially with reference to this scene. Moser explains his brutal beating of the outsider Schultz thus: "Vieher san wir alle. I, er und du a" and then later: "Was macht denn der Hirsch, wenn a Fremder über sein Rudel kimmt, ha? Der rauft damit! Und dersticht ihn! Der Stärkere den Krüpl, verstehst?!" (I,27,31).

## 2.1 Heimtdichtung and the Volksstück Tradition: Anzengruber, Schönherr, Zuckmayer

Attention will now be focused on the play's function as a radical 'Gegenbild' to the conservative currents of the time which has hitherto been ignored. Hillach does suggest that with this play Horváth "setzt (...) unauffällig wie radikal die Zerstörung der alten (und gerade wieder auflebenden) Volksstück-Form durch Anknüpfung am naturalistischen Drama ins Werk"(105). If *Die Bergbahn* is seen in the context of its time, 1926/27, its proximity to and distance from the rejuvenated Volksstück is remarkable. The mention of the 'auflebenden' Volksstück is probably a reference to Carl Zuckmayer, Richard Billinger and perhaps to Karl Schönherr(106).

It is necessary to look briefly at the work of Ludwig Anzengruber, Karl Schönherr and Carl Zuckmayer in more detail and their relationship to 'Heimtdichtung'.

The most conservative and naive of the literary movements which constituted the tangle of impulses and styles around the turn of the century was 'Heimtdichtung'. It should be best seen as a reaction to Naturalism and the latter's preoccupation with industrialisation, technology, materialism and the sordid fates of the urban dweller, although the roots of 'Heimtdichtung' predate Naturalism and can be found in the mid-nineteenth century. The catch-cry 'Los-von-Berlin' or 'Los-von-Wien' and the return to the unspoilt nature and intact peasant communities was in itself harmless enough. However, attached to the 'Heimtdichtung' was a strong nationalistic and racist movement whose main theorist was Adolf Bartels, co-editor of the periodical *Heimat. Blätter für Literatur und Volkstum*. Bartels and the other co-editor, Lienhard, represented the two opposite

105. Hillach, p.200.

106. To this list can be added the Ingolstadt plays of Marieluise Fleißer: Fegefeuer in Ingolstadt (1926) and Pioniere in Ingolstadt (1929).

poles of the movement: aggressive nationalism versus apolitical 'Naturschwärmerei'. Martin Greiner outlines the positions thus:

Bartels gibt der Heimatkunst, zum Unterschied von Lienhard, eine betont nationale, völkische Tendenz (...) Deutschheit wird (...) zum Inbegriff des Biologisch-Gesunden und Ethisch-Hochwertigen(107).

It is little wonder then that Bartels gravitated into the National Socialist camp together with a host of 'Heimatkunst' exponents and became associated with the infamous 'Blut-und-Boden' literature which demonstrated a close kinship to 'Heimatkunst' in its: "Verherrlichung des Bodenständigen, Volkhaften, Bäuerlichen als Idealisierung der ursprünglichen, naturhaften, bäuerlichen Lebensform der Germanen"(108). The essential difference between the two movements lies in the degree of political engagement. 'Blut-und-Boden' was part of the National Socialist doctrine and it was made to perform blatantly political roles: glorification of war, dissemination of antisemitism and justification of territorial claims. On the other hand 'Heimatkunst' can be characterised as being politically naïve: either completely lacking political content, or tacitly supporting the status quo. An important distinction must be made between the German and the Austrian varieties of Heimatkunst. The former saw its main enemy in Naturalism, which appears scarcely to have concerned the Austrian tradition, and possessed strong links to the movement of 'Deutschnationalismus' whereas Austrian Heimatkunst, rooted in a 'Mehrvölkerstaat', lacked this aggressive nationalistic tendency(109).

Since the main interest of this movement was for an autochthonous literature and art, reflecting the concerns of the people (although their notion of 'Volk' often appears to be

107. Martin Greiner, 'Heimatkunst', Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, 2.Auflage, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1958, p.630.

108. Gero von Wilpert, Sachwörterbuch der Literatur, 5.Auflage, Stuttgart, Kröner, 1969, p.98.

109. The Austrians on the other hand were waging a full-scale war on the representatives of decadent modernism such as Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler; cf. Karlheinz Roszbacher, 'Programm und Roman der Heimatkunstabewegung', Deutsche Literatur der Jahrhundertwende, hrsg. von Viktor Žmegač, Kronberg/Ts., Scriptor Verlag, p.141.

limited to the rural dweller) it is little wonder that they saw in the Volksstück a genre well-suited to their ideology. They saw in it specifically a comedy genre with a tradition untainted by Gallic or other influences. Lienhard perceived in the Volksstück a comedy tradition with links to the 'healthy' renaissance period of Shakespeare and Lope de Vega:

(...) es ist die landschaftliche Frische, es ist das viele Licht, Luft, Liebe, Leben, das diese lebensvollen Dichter einer gesunden Zeit durchflutet und anstrahlt. (...) Wir dürfen unser Ideal einer Komödie nicht nach dem französischen Lustspiel zuschneiden. Das Groteske und Burleske gehört durchaus in unser Volksstück. Es muß in eine landschaftliche Stimmung getaucht sein(110).

For such a Volksstück they needed to look no further than to the work of Ludwig Anzengruber. However, Anzengruber's relationship to Heimatsdichtung remains contradictory. Although he was certainly not a member of the movement itself (which only gathered momentum after his death in 1889) he has been recognised as a precursor of it. At the same time certain elements in his work - anti-clericalism, the influence of Feuerbach and Darwinian determinism - anticipate Naturalism, the very movement against which Heimatskunst reacted so rabidly. It seems that his choice of subject matter: the rural milieu, depiction of the problems of village life and the use of dialect, qualified him for conditional inclusion by the theorists of Heimatskunst. In 1897 Ernst Wachler wrote of Anzengruber and Peter Rosegger: "Wir sehen die Werke dieser volksmäßigen Dichter mehr als Vorbereitung, denn als Vollendung an"(111). Bartels himself held them in higher esteem: "Ludwig Anzengruber und Peter Rosegger nähern sich dem großen Jeremias (Gotthelf) sogar wieder in der Allseitigkeit und Treue ihrer Darstellung"(112). However undeserving Anzengruber may have been of such generous praise by Bartels and cohorts, dubious accolades of this nature doubtless earned him a reputation as a 'Heimatsdichter' and stamped his work in this mould, as is evident in Horváth's negative attitude to the "anzengruberisch" Volksstück(113).

110. Friedrich Lienhard, 'Vom Reichtum deutscher Landschaft' (1900), reprinted in Literarische Manifeste der Jahrhundertwende 1890-1910, hrsg. von Erich Ruprecht and Dieter Bänisch, Stuttgart, J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970, p.341.

111. Ernst Wachler, 'Eine Dichtung der Volksgesamtheit', *ibid.*, p.327.

112. Adolf Bartels, Heimat, *ibid.*, p.335.



Karl Schönherr is also considered to be an exponent of 'Heimatlidhtung' in the Austrian tradition. Schönherr, a Tyrolean doctor who turned to writing in Vienna, was one of the most important and respected dramatists in Austria from 1900 to 1938. The highpoint of his career belongs to the first two decades of this century. The locale of his plays was almost exclusively the Tyrolean Alps, and its mountain dwellers are characterised as rough, pious and often humorous individuals with resilient ties to their environment. Schönherr's portrayal of these figures is by no means uncritical and is frequently marked by considerable psychological acumen, yet the plays are situated securely in the 'Heimatlidhtung' tradition. However, the theatre historian Heinz Kindermann argues strongly against his inclusion in this movement: "Es geht hier also, selbst in den Bauern Dramen, keineswegs um 'Heimatlidhtung' sondern um eine Leidwelt"(114). This attempt to disassociate Schönherr from a movement which carries negative connotations should be seen in the light of Kindermann's own ideological leanings and not be given too much consideration(115). The titles alone show the author's affinity to 'Heimatlidhtung': Erde, Glaube und Heimat, Volk in Not, Ein deutsches Heldenlied, to name only three. Erde deals with the theme of inheritance in a peasant milieu. The 'Großbauer' Grutz, a virile, vital septuagenarian is the central character and his longevity precludes his pusillanimous son from inheriting property and marital status. Thus denied access to wealth and wife Hannes, the son, forfeits all respect from the limited community. This deadlock is broken when Grutz believes himself to be near death and even has a coffin built for the

113. Recently, there have been attempts to rehabilitate Anzengruber and the term 'Heimat' in Austrian literature; cf. Josef Donnenberg: "Anzengruber hat eine sozial aufklärerische und kämpferische Heimatliteratur geschrieben (...) Mit ihm hat in Österreich die Verknüpfung von Heimatgedanke und literarischem Realismus begonnen", 'Das Thema HEIMAT in der Gegenwartsliteratur und Anzengruber als Schlüsselfigur in der Tradition der Heimatliteratur', Traditionen in der neueren österreichischen Literatur, hrsg. von Friedbert Aspetsberger, Wien, Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1980, p.73.

114. Heinz Kindermann, Dichtung aus Österreich, 1966, p.65.

115. Jost Hermand states bluntly the reason for Kindermann's opposition to 'Neue Sachlichkeit' in the 1930s: "So schrieb der spätere Nazi Heinz Kindermann 1930: 'Nichts mehr vom Krieg und Revolution und Welterlösung!', 'Einheit in der Vielheit? Zur Geschichte des Begriffs "Neue Sachlichkeit"', Das literarische Leben in der Weimarer Republik, Hg. Keith Bullivant, Kronberg/Ts., Scriptor Verlag, 1978, p.74.

occasion. Hannes suddenly becomes eligible and there is vigorous competition for his affections between the two maidservants. However, Grutz recovers, thwarting his son's opportunity and the play closes as Grutz looks forward to spring and new life: "Frühjahr ist! Den Pflueg eingspannt und reißt mier Erde und Acker auf: der Boden will sein Samen, die Sonn scheint schon bruetig"(116). This rebirth is symbolically realised as Grutz then smashes his coffin to pieces with an axe. Thus the status quo has been re-established, fertility and vitalism triumph, and the traditional way of life as symbolised by Grutz has been affirmed. Implicit, indirect social criticism of the inheritance customs fades against Grutz's glorious celebration of life. Despite its masterful construction, vigorous characterisation, pathos and psychological discernment Erde fulfils unquestionably the key requirements of 'Heimatsdichtung'.

This tradition, manifested in poetry, prose and drama as well as in the visual arts, is the wider literary context against which Die Bergbahn should be seen. The contemporary context is evident in the revival of interest in the Volksstück during the 1920s. Here, credit must be given, not to Horváth, as Willi Cronauer claims (I,11), but to Carl Zuckmayer's Der fröhliche Weinberg which had its première on 22 December, 1925. This production and play marked the transition from the visionary, revolutionary ecstasies and abstractions of Expressionism to the concrete realities of the 'Neue Sachlichkeit'. It was presented in the form of a rowdy, riotous Volksstück which ends with a quadruple marriage feast. Alfred Kerr wrote in his review: "Vier Paare. Sic transit gloria expressionismi (...) Also der bewährte Heimatspaß. Alles in Wonne. Zuckmayer wird volkstümlich. Ein deutscher Besitz"(117). Nevertheless the play was decried by the right-wing press and nationalist groups caused scandals and disrupted performances claiming: "daß es sich bei dem Stück um eine ganz unglaubliche Schweinerei handelt, die die christliche Weltanschauung, die deutschen Sitten, die deutsche Frau, die deutschen Kriegsverletzten, das deutsche Beamtentum in der gemeinsten Weise verhöhnt"(118). Zuckmayer had raised the ire of various conservative and nationalist groups through his portrayal of a 'Corpsstudent' and other 'völkisch' minded characters. But, perhaps even worse, it was the atmosphere of open sexuality and

116. Karl Schönherr, Erde, Gesammelte Werke, hrsg. von Vinzenz Chiavacci, Wien, Donau Verlag, 1948, Bd.1, p.622.

117. Alfred Kerr, Theaterkritiken, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1971, p.130.

118. Zeit und Theater, Bd.4, hrsg. von Günther Rühle, Berlin, Ullstein, 1972, p.773.

bacchanalian revelry abounding with images of potency and fertility which gave the greatest cause for alarm. Gunderloch, the father (normally the obstacle to sexual union in the traditional Volksstück and thus representative of established morality), declares to a potential son-in-law: "Wenn Sie zu mir komme und sage mir: Ihr Klärche kriegt e Kind, un ich bin de Vatter. Dann hawwe Sie mein Sege un mein halbe Weinberg. Vorausgesetzt, daß das Mädchen freiwillig un mit Vergnüge bei der Sach is"(119).

In contrast, the liberal press welcomed the play unanimously for its earthy humour, reality and rich character portrayal. It was the element of recognisable 'reality' as opposed to artistic reality which the conservative critic and future Nazi Paul Fechter stressed when presenting Zuckmayer with the Kleist prize for his play because: "Zuckmayer in dieser Komödie der Durchbruch ins Wirkliche, und zwar ins lebendige, nicht artistische Wirkliche gelungen ist, der mir heute für das Theater eine der entscheidendsten Forderungen zu sein scheint"(120). Although Zuckmayer's return to contemporary German rural reality may have appeared innovative, there was no doubt as to the anachronistic form he had chosen. Bernhard Diebold wrote in the Frankfurter Zeitung 26/12/1925: "Zuckmayers Lustspiel ist ein ungemein heiteres und ungeniertes 'Volksstück mit Gesang' und könnte an Behaglichkeit von anno sechzig datieren. Es ist im literarischen Ton so wunderschön unzeitgemäß, als hätte man die Gründerjahre nie erlebt, geschweige Weltkrieg, Papiermark und Ruhrbesetzung"(121). Recent criticism confirms Diebold's view. Erwin Rotermund in his article on Horváth and Zuckmayer criticises the latter's total focus on the 'Dionysisch-Triebhafte' to the detriment of effective satirical attacks on the social and political constellations which appear in his viewfinder(122). Zuckmayer appears caught up in the intoxicating vitalism of the traditional Volksstück and indicates no inherent criticism of, or possibilities of reform for the form itself:

119. Ibid., Bd.3, p.50.

120. Ibid., p.771. The difference between Der fröhliche Weinberg and Horváth's Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald is clearly illustrated by Fechter's vicious attack on Horváth when he was awarded the Kleistpreis in 1931, cf. Krischke, p.115.

121. Bernhard Diebold, Theater für die Republik, hrsg. von Günther Rühle, Frankfurt/M., Fischer, 1967, p.673.

122. Erwin Rotermund, 'Zur Erneuerung des Volksstückes in der Weimarer Republik: Zuckmayer und Horváth', Über ÖvH, p.26.

Wenn man an Brechts Hinweis auf die "derben" Späße und die "billige Sexualität" im "gewöhnlichen" Volksstück denkt, wäre sogar die Frage zu stellen, ob Der fröhliche Weinberg wirklich über sie hinauskommt oder ob dieses Stück solche Phänomene nur restauriert(123).

While Zuckmayer evidently made no attempt to radicalise the Volksstück it must be stressed that the play's conservatism lies in its formal aspects and thematically is not to be associated with the politically conservative or naive 'Heimatsdichtung'. On this point Zuckmayer may be permitted to have the last word:

sie (die Nationalsozialisten) fühlten sich in den komischen Figuren des Stückes, denen ich die alten und neuen, 'völkischen' und antisemitistischen Phrasen in den Mund gelegt hatte, mit Recht porträtiert (...) Noch dazu waren sie empört, weil das Stück ihnen etwas wegnahm, was sie gepachtet zu haben glaubten: deutsche Landschaft, deutsches Volkstum ohne 'Blut-und-Boden' Geschwätz(124).

The bestowal of the Kleist prize conferred on the play the critical seal of artistic quality and thus elevated it above the level of 'Bauerndichtung' to which it is not entirely dissimilar. One can speculate that Fechter's text was known to Horváth who, no doubt impressed by the critical and popular success of Zuckmayer's play, may have noted carefully Fechter's call for a return to reality as a decisive requirement for contemporary theatre. Thus Zuckmayer and Horváth have a common point of departure but Die Bergbahn contains formal and thematic elements which are truly innovative.

123. Ibid.

124. Carl Zuckmayer, Als wär's ein Stück von mir, Frankfurt/M., Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1966, p.350.

## 2.2 The Politisation of the Volksstück

The première of Die Bergbahn on the 4 January, 1929 at the Volksbühne am Bülowplatz was guaranteed to ignite a political controversy extending beyond any ex- and implicit political content in the play itself. The departure of Piscator from the Volksbühne in June, 1928 and his bold experiments in proletarian-revolutionary theatre resulted in a drawn out and bitter debate between the conservative and progressive wings of the movement of the Volksbühne on the direction the theatre should take. The choice of Die Bergbahn to represent the policy of the Volksbühne management in its only remaining theatre meant that the play would be viewed with additional political significance. Thus the play's reception was coloured from the outset by its implications for the Volksbühne debate and suffered a predictable fate by becoming a grindstone for the political axes of the radical voices in the controversy. In addition, it is clear from the reviews that the director Victor Schwannecke utilised all the techniques at his disposal to defuse the political edge of the play and refashion it as a traditional Volksstück in the style of Anzengruber or Ganghofer and present it as a compromise to the warring factions. Nevertheless, some critics were able to perceive the concealed generic intention of the play: "Schwanneckes Absichten gingen offensichtlich darauf aus, das Drama Horváths als Volksstück zu inszenieren, was es nur in sehr bedingtem Sinne ist"(125). In the SPD paper Vorwärts, the reviewer writes that Horváth modestly terms his play: "ein Volksstück (...) Er faßt das Wort in einem höheren Sinne auf, als man früher oberflächlich unter diesem Genre verstanden hat"(126). Both the liberal critics Alfred Kerr and Kurt Pinthus recognised important innovations for the genre and for theatre in general. Kerr, in particular, was impressed by the blending of proletarian consciousness with an alpine milieu: "es hat außerdem ein Verdienst: indem es Proletarier des Gebirgs mit ihrem beginnenden Dämmer von Klassenwillen, mit ihrem Übergang von Klage zur Anklage zeigt. (...) Ein Hinüberwehen von der industriellen Ebene zur Bergeinsamkeit"(127).

The conservative and nationalist critics were not

125. Kleine Zeitung, no name. 8/1/1929, reprinted in Günther, Anhang II, p.77.

126. Vorwärts, Dgr. 5/1/1929, *ibid.*, p.81.

127. Berliner Tageblatt, 5/1/1929, *ibid.*, p.79. Pinthus retitled it "ein soziales Zeitstück (...) ein bisher auf der Bühne noch nicht gezeigtes Milieu", 8-Uhr-Abendblatt, 5/1/1929, *ibid.*, p.80.

surprisingly repelled by the 'Tendenz' and stressed Horváth's Hungarian and aristocratic background. The play was rejected as an outdated neorealistic piece(128), decried as "ein proletarisches Rührstück"(129), or it shocked because of its language which was: "oft zu bewußt vulgär in den Kraftausdrücken der Gasse", whose author demonstrably lacked "Herz" and "Mitgefühl"(129). Such reactions make clear that Die Bergbahn contained elements and a political direction which incurred the displeasure of the conservative and nationalist quarters. It evidently did not fulfil the promise of the subtitle despite the attempts by the director to smooth it into this mould.

Nevertheless, the critical attack from this quarter appeared to gratify the author which suggests that he deliberately intended to upset their expectations by depicting the "Kampf zwischen Kapital und Arbeitskraft"(I,10) in the traditional locale of the 'Heimatstück'. In a letter written in January, 1929, shortly after the Berlin première he makes no attempt to conceal the group he most fervently wished to offend:

Hast Du meine Kritiken gelesen? Die Münchener Weltblätter haben mal wieder richtig gefälscht. Wenn ich einen von diesen Verleumdern erwische, kriegt er ein paar Ohrfeigen. Ich verstehe ja die Wut: ganz Bayern bringt seit 1914 keinen Dramatiker heraus und nun kommt ausgerechnet ein 'Ausländer', der 'ein bodenständig-völkisches' (sic) Stück schreibt, das einzige, das die Bayern haben. Die Wut dieser Nationalisten ist ja verständlich. Ich habe mir erlaubt durch ihre Rechnung einen dicken Strich zu machen(130).

The apostrophic isolation of 'bodenständig-völkisches' indicates Horváth's ironical usage of the term and suggests that it is a quotation from one of the irate reviews in the right-wing papers: in the eyes of the nationalists it is precisely this element that is lacking. However, the ultimate insult to their

128. Emil Faktor, Berliner Börsen Courier, 5/1/1929: "Alles in allem ein naturalistischer Jahrmarkt mit antikapitalistischen Redensarten", *ibid.*, p.78.

129. Neue Preussische Kreuzzeitung, -hl, 5/1/1929, *ibid.*, p.83: "Der Stoff ist von vorgestern geholt und mit tendenziös-propagandistischen Schlagworten von vorgestern gewürzt."

129. Julius Knopf, newspaper unknown, 5/1/1929, *ibid.*, p.82.

130. 22/1/1929 to Lotte Fahr, in Krischke, 63.

sensibilities lies in the fact that a so called foreigner should depict the milieu and characters that were hitherto the preserve of pure-blooded 'Heimatchdichter' and further more that this depiction with its unmistakably left-wing overtones contradicted totally the apolitical stance expected of writing with an alpine setting. He makes reference again to this review in an autobiographical piece written for Der Querschnitt in 1929 where he reiterates his criticism of the nationalist ideology and perceives in fact the need for total social upheaval in order to destroy the "nationalistischen Verbrechen":

Ich glaube, es ist mir gelungen, durch meine 'Bergbahn' den Beweis zu erbringen, daß auch (ein) nicht 'Bodenständiger', nicht 'Völkischer', eine heimatlose Rassenmischung, etwas 'Bodenständig-Völkisches' schaffen kann, - denn das Herz der Völker schlägt im gleichen Takt, es gibt ja nur Dialekte als Grenzen (VI,10).

It is clear from Horváth's use of the words 'bodenständig' and 'völkisch' that both terms were already ideologically tainted by the 'Heimatkunst' movement and also by the growing 'Blut-und-Boden' mysticism of Nazi literary theorists. However, by successfully crossing the borders of dialect and depicting the South German alpine milieu he demonstrated the hollowness of such theories which saw German literature as being the product of some racial wellspring, inaccessible to the "heimatlose Rassenmischung".

In the opening stage direction of Revolte Horváth establishes the three central protagonists in his drama: nature, labour and capitalism. "Breiter Gratrücken. Gletscher ringsum. Rechts Arbeiterbaracke Nummer vier der Bergbahn A.G."(I,21). In Die Bergbahn nature has been removed to leave just the barracks and the 'Bergbahn A.G.', "Arbeit" and "Kapital"(I,61), perhaps a not unintentional sharpening of focus on these elements in the light of the revised ending.

The opening scene between Schulz, the itinerant North German barber, and Veronika contains the seeds of a conflict in the best Volksstück tradition: the stranger from the city intrudes into the unspoilt, intact peasant environment and attempts to lure away the unspoilt village lass. This opening, which appears to place Die Bergbahn on very familiar ground, gives rise to expectations which are promptly disappointed. The potential romance is cut off in the bud by the excessively brutal beating Moser hands out to Schulz. Although a certain amount of rural exuberance in the form of 'Ohrfeigen' is acceptable to the old Volksstück, the violence that Horváth demands certainly oversteps the bounds associated with this still fundamentally comic genre.

## The Politisation of the Volksstück

The Moser, Schulz, Veronika triangle then submerges but reappears on a subliminal level as a possible motivation for Moser's attack on the Engineer. After the beating the focus of the play centres on the political themes indicated by the setting.

The next indirect reference to the division between management and workforce manifests itself in the symbol of meat:

SCHULZ Eßt ihr hier alle Tage Fleisch?

VERONIKA Ah! Die Schnitzel da san für an hohn Herrn, an Direktor. Der is d'Bergluft nit gwohnt, drum muß er fest essn (I,63).

The image occurs again when Simon explains to the simple-minded Hannes how food illustrates the difference between a 'Direktor' and a worker:

SIMON Dafür is er a Direkter und du bist bloß der Arbeitsmann. Er dirigiert und schluckt Schnitzl mit Salat und sauft sein Champagnerwein, daß ihm die Sauce bei der Lefzn runterrinnt - und du darfst di schindn und hast an Schmarrn! (I,68).

The discussion is then continued on a more sophisticated level. The workers display a firm grasp of Marxist vocabulary and at the same time express in vivid, original imagery the hypocrisy of the contemporary political constellations. Sliwinski recognises the mechanism of a capitalist society which bestows profit and praise on all except the worker whose labour produces the goods and whose life may be sacrificed:

Da liest Überall vom Fortschritt der Menschheit und die Leut bekränzn an Ingineur, wie an Preisstier, die Direkter sperrn die Geldsäck in d'Kass und dem Bauer blüht der Fremdenverkehr. A jede Schraubn werd zum "Wunder der Technik", a jede Odlgrubn zur "Heilquelle". Aber, daß aner sei Lebn hergebn hat, des Blut werd ausradiert! (I,71).

The reference to 'Bauern' living from the proceeds of tourism suggests that the traditional social structures so fondly treasured by the exponents of 'Heimatsdichtung' have become obsolete. This is also evident in the status of the Tyrolean workers themselves who, in the 19th century, would have had the choice between remaining on the land as 'Bauernknechte' or joining the urban drift to the industrialising cities. As it is, the construction of the cable-car will provide no continuity of work for as soon as the winter sets in they will be dismissed and their outlook is bleak:



MAURER I weiß net, wo i nachher hin soll!

SLIWINSKI I a net.

HANNES I scho.

SIMON Du scho! Freilli! Du rollst di in dei Dorf retour und hütst die Gäns im Stall! (I,75).

Hannes remonstrates that he will in fact turn to stealing. Whatever their futures, the rural existence is stripped of all traces of romanticism and 'Naturschwärmerei'. Despite the picturesque backdrop of mountains and glaciers their status, conditions of employment and consciousness resemble that of the urban proletariat.

Maurer, one of the more articulate of the group, analyses the obvious injustice in patent Marxist jargon:

MAURER Des Grundübel, des is die kapitalistische Produktionsweise (...) Die Befreiung der Arbeiterklasse -

SIMON (unterbricht ihn) Des san Spruch (...) Und weist warum? Weil mans nur hört, aber nicht spürt! (I,72).

Simon refers to a political agitator and speech-maker who, after his election address, goes bowling with a police officer and: "Lauter Kränz habns gschohn, lauter Kränz! An Kenig habns stehn lassn, a jedesmal!"(I,72). The jargon of the bowling alley has political overtones as Axel Fritz suggests:

Hinter diesem Bild könnte sich ebenfalls eine Anspielung auf das Verhalten der sozialdemokratischen Regierung seit 1918 verbergen, die zwar den 'König' nicht stehen ließ, aber mit Hilfe seiner Truppen alle radikalen, revolutionären Ansätze unterdrückte und 1925 die Fürsten entschädigte(131).

The workers can be divided into three broad groups: the radicals Mauer, Xaver, Sliwinski and Simon; the moderates Oberle and Reiter; and the apoliticals Moser and the dim-witted Hannes. Despite his apolitical stance and silence Moser becomes the reference point for the discussion on revolution and violence; youthful fervour opposing the prudence of age (Oberle). Sliwinski believes that the seizure of power can only be obtained by violence:

131. Axel Fritz, op. cit., p.164.

## The Politisation of the Volksstück

SLIWINSKI Mit der Faust! (Er schlägt auf den Tisch). Und, wenns an Oberle a net passn sollt - (I,72).

For his part, Oberle doubts the efficacy of violence. His exhortations to temperance are based on traumatic years as a prisoner-of-war in Asia. They fall, however, on deaf ears and he refers to Moser as proof that physical violence is pointless: "Der Moser weiß, daß durch Gewalt nix gedeiht. Nix (...) da gabs bloß Blut. Sonst nix!" (I,73). Oberle is interrupted by an involuntary symbolic illustration of his argument as the bruised and bloodstained Schulz stumbles in. Hillach sees quite correctly in the character of Moser and his proclivity to violence the concealed but central theme of the play: "Gewalttat wird, als notwendiges Mittel der Revolte und der Befreiung, zum geheimen Zentralthema des Stückes"(132). Although Moser embodies the possibility of violent revolt, and in the final scene indeed carries it out, Simon is the principal verbal promulgator of armed uprising inspired by the example of the Russian revolutionaries: "Die sprengen die ganzn Paläst und Museen, alles, von dem der arbeitende Bürger nix hat! (...) die habn alles anbohrt, auch an härtestn Marmor, Pulver neigsteckt und angsteckt! Piff! Paff!" (I,81).

The final clash between labour and capital is enacted by Moser and the Engineer, neither of whom are conscious representatives of these factions. However, they are the only figures to undergo any discernible development in the play and thus lay claim to being the central figures in the conflict. Horváth labels the Engineer as representing "die Stellung der sogenannten Intelligenz im Produktionsprozeß"(I,10). This intelligence reveals itself as a single-minded drive to realise his aspirations to build the 'Bergbahn', uncomplicated by ethical or political considerations: "Über der Person steht das Werk"(I,84). He embodies the optimism and preoccupation with technology which partly characterised the mood known as 'Neue Sachlichkeit'(133). Nevertheless, his attitude to the workers in normal circumstances is shown to be respectful if distanced.

132. Hillach, p.230.

133. Horst Denkler writes of the 'Neue Sachlichkeit': "Die Stoffwahl ist (...) von den herrschenden Zeitideen, Technik, Amerikanismus, Massenerlebnis, Nationalismus, Marxismus (...) geprägt. 'Sache und Stil. Die Theorie der "Neuen Sachlichkeit" und ihre Auswirkung auf Kunst und Dichtung', Wirkendes Wort, 1968, p.178. Horváth is clearly interested in these concerns and like many writers of the 'Neuen Sachlichkeit' did not view the developments uncritically: cf. Brecht, "Die neue Sachlichkeit ist reaktionär", in: 'Die neue Sachlichkeit' (1928), Gesammelte Werke 15, p.161.

However, the twin exigencies of weather and pressure by the 'Aufsichtsrat' to complete work regardless of human cost betrays his ruthlessness. The 'Aufsichtsrat' reveals himself as a profit-hungry capitalist representing a multi-interest concern: "Der A.G. ist es völlig piepe, ob sie an Konserven, Spielwaren oder Bergbahnen verdient"(I,84). He demonstrates equally little concern for the workforce: "Pack kennt keine Pflicht. Mehr Energie, Herr! Mehr Faust! (...) Die unter allen Umständen ungerechtfertigten, jeder Grundlage entbehrenden Beschwerden der Belegschaft sind strikte zurückzuweisen"(I,85). Under threat of dismissal and the probable loss of his patent for the construction of the cable-car, the Engineer adopts the language of the 'Aufsichtsrat' in the final confrontation with the workers. He becomes - as he promises - 'rücksichtslos', abuses the workers as "Ungebildetes Pack" (I,93) and refers to Oberle in language which subtly suggests affinity to English colonialism(134): "Und Hände hoch. Hoch, my boy!"(I,94).

The decisive action which transports the revolt from sullen rebelliousness to violent and fatal confrontation is Moser's physical attack on the Engineer. In the course of the play Moser, initially characterised as a brutal bully, grows to question the validity of his actions and shows remorse over his assault on Schulz. Yet at no time does he reveal a political consciousness. His attack on the Engineer is motivated by loyalty to traditional values - in this case respect for the dead combined probably with sublimated guilt feelings resulting from his own treatment of Schulz. Whatever his motives, he initiates the attack and becomes the 'revolutionary' who dies for the cause. This is a generous interpretation, for none of the deaths which occur - Schulz, the Engineer, Oberle and Moser - can claim any noble cause or consequence or even symbolic significance(135). The death of Oberle is especially senseless as he is shot down while trying to pacify the situation. Finally nature in the shape of the snowstorm overshadows the whole revolt with futility and absurdity for, even if the Engineer had won the confrontation, work could not have continued. If martyrdom is to

134. Winston, op. cit., p.65. She goes on to say: "Here we have an example of how 'Bildungsjargon', precisely because it is a borrowed language, can reveal a speaker's unconfessed allegiances and values".

135. Although Schulz's death - a careless accident - provides the catalyst for the revolt there is no evidence to interpret it in terms of Christian martyrdom as Winston does: "Schulz becomes the martyr whose death reveals the callousness of the Engineer and emboldens the workers to defy a system that threatens to destroy them all", *ibid.*, p.57.

be sought, then Moser is the worthiest candidate. His sacrifice contains the seeds of a revolutionary spirit: "Na, ihr dürft net verreckn! Ihr müßt nunter und scharf auffaßn, daß ka Tropfn Blut vergessn werd - verstehst? - Vergeßt uns net"(I,96). The same spirit is expressed by Simon in the weather metaphor at the end of the play in the passage already cited: "Einmal schlagt jeds Wetter um. Nur kane Angst!"(I,99).

Weather transcends a mere natural phenomenon and attains poetic force as an oblique mirror of human and social conditions. The oppressiveness and menace of the weather which infuses fear into the workers is reflected against a background of social and political oppression. Horváth imbues nature with non-naturalistic qualities as is evidenced in Moser's death scene. The stage direction reads: "Er nickt ein; in der Ferne heult der Sturm: Kreatur! Kreatur!"(I,96) an echo of the Engineer's death cry, and the wind becomes the sound of the drums and marching of a firing squad. He requires nature to reflect Moser's delirium and at the same time be a concrete manifestation as the snow falls and engulfs him.

Nature has been traditionally associated with the Volksstück because of its rural context where it has a dominant, positive symbolic force in that it emphasises the natural order in contrast to the decadence of urban life. The natural rhythms and seasons are often important elements in the Volksstück - especially in Schönherr's work - an aspect which Horváth has retained and slightly modified. Nature triumphs over the technological power of modern man or, it could be argued, over capitalism in an age of new optimism and technology cult. It is also evident that through the sudden onslaught of the storm the Tyrolean workers are no longer able to work in harmony with the seasons. The company's desire for quick profit enforces on them a working rhythm which is both unnatural and ultimately dangerous. The victory of weather highlights also the impotence of the workers in their struggle against the system despite the final, prophetic "Einmal schlagt jeds Wetter um". This was perhaps Horváth's belated optimistic note in the revised version. It is not surprising then that the later Volksstücke have an urban setting where the crucial problems and the "maßgebenden Schichten" are to be found. The function of nature in this new context will be analysed in 4. under the heading of the Stadt/Land contrast where it is used more effectively to criticise the form itself.

The impartiality of nature's destructive forces allows Horváth to maintain a neutral position. Although his sympathies lie unquestionably with the workers, the revolt depicted lacks the implications of a full-blown revolution. It is typical of

his work that he outlines positions and social forces, allows them to interact but refuses to commit himself to a rigid ideological stance. Contemporaries have testified both to his interest in and overt sympathy for the lower echelons of society and to his steadfast refusal to join the KPD, although he allegedly distributed pamphlets for the party at the time Die Bergbahn was written(136). Compared to the cynical attitude towards politics presented three years later in Italienische Nacht, Die Bergbahn still contains the clearest political statement of any of his plays. More important though is its contribution to the rehabilitation of the Volksstück. Horváth's expressed intention to attack the German nationalists provides the clearest confirmation that his new Volksstück was no longer a genre to be associated with the conservative and often racist 'Heimatkunst' movement. He had begun a process of genre and social criticism which was to culminate in the four mature Volksstücke of 1930-32.

In view of the harsh, unrelenting and pessimistic outlook of the play it is clear that it disappoints any comedy expectation associated with the Volksstück. Even the element of music, certainly a characteristic feature of the traditional Volksstück, refuses to fulfil the expectation of uncomplicated entertainment. Anzengruber saw 'Gesangseinlagen' as the key constituent element of his Volksstücke(137) but their function is limited to entertainment and information or at the most enables the possibility for self-reflection. Die Bergbahn contains songs but they differ from the Anzengruberian tradition in two important respects: they are integrated realistically into the action and are not anti-illusionistic couplets in the style of Raimund, Nestroy and Anzengruber; secondly the content of the three songs is either blatantly bawdy, or ironical.

The context of the songs, the evening meal of the workers, one of whom provides accompaniment on the harmonica, takes on the character of a mini-'Volkfest' with its atmosphere of eroticism and revelry. Kasimir und Karoline is the play which is centred entirely on this phenomenon and its recurrent string of associations: music; dancing; women and reproduction. All this preoccupies the Tyrolean workers:

136. Geza von Cziffra relates in his memoirs a comment Horváth made to him: "Ich sehe die Dinge nur von der menschlichen Seite. Ich will nur den Kampf des Individuums gegen die Übermacht der Gesellschaft zeigen - egal welcher Gesellschaft. Ich bin kein Pragmatiker und auch kein Marxist." Cited in: Krischke, p.68.

137. See note 65.

SIMON A Tanz ohne Dirn, is wie a Stier, der net springt.

REITER Zum Landler ghört a Mensch, wie a Köchin zum Kaplan!

MAURER (singt)

Guten Morgen, Herr Pfarrer  
Wo is der Kaplan?  
Er liegt auf der Köchin  
und kraht wie a Hahn!

(Schallendes Gelächter)

XAVER Kreuzkruzefix! War scho höchste Zeit, daß an was  
Weiblichs zulauft! Alls kannst unmögli nausschwitzn!

SIMON (singt)

Und Keiner ist so eigen  
Und Keiner so verschmitzt  
Als wie der, der ins Bett macht  
Und sagt, er hätt geschwitzt -

From outright bawdy the music takes a sentimental turn, as Horváth's stage directions specify, and the lyrics reflect a bitter irony in the light of the following disaster, to say nothing of the workers' daily existence:

Denn auf den Bergen  
Da wohnt die Freiheit  
Ja, auf den Bergen  
Da, is es scheen - (I,68-69).

Such sentiments have an additional ironic ring in the context of the political discussion preceding and following the songs (this function foreshadows Horváth's complex arrangement of music and songs in the mature Volksstücke). In Die Bergbahn he presents an unidealised portrayal of his Tyrolean characters whose songs reflect their instinctual needs, and at the same time these songs reveal to the audience the trivial and artificial image the workers hold of themselves and their surroundings. By this juxtaposition of songs - the bawdy and the sentimental - both dimensions of their psychological make-up are linked: the harsh, obscene aspects can co-exist with the wish-fulfilment image derived from trivial 'Heimatsdichtung' and operetta which, although the everyday experience of the workers contradicts it, has found a way into their subconscious. This split consciousness is the hallmark of Horváth's dramatis personae. Thus it is not surprising that the comedy form with its tradition of artificial conventions combined with social criticism is the only literary form able to expose successfully the artificial constructs from the world of entertainment, theatre and film

which have crept into the consciousness of his half-educated characters.

In view of its unrelenting harshness and few concessions to the usual comic content of the Volksstück, Die Bergbahn can be considered Horváth's most uncompromising anti-Volksstück. It is also his most overtly political play and by combining the associations of a 'Heimatstück' with serious political debate the play conveys implicit criticism of the former and introduces the latter into a previously apolitical dramatic form.

### 3. 'Volksfeste' and Eros

STADTRAT: Ich wußte es doch, daß so ein zwangloses gesellschaftliches Beisammensein, uns Republikaner menschlich näherbringen würde (I, 128f.).

The statement by the Stadtrat at the commencement of the Republicans' 'Italian Night' expresses in nuce the function of such gatherings in Horváth's work, that is to say, the exact inverse of the Stadtrat's vain belief: they are more often than not violent and ultimately destructive in their effect on human relationships (138). For the purposes of the following analysis, a 'Volksfest' will be defined as any type of social gathering ranging from the 'Heurigen' in Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald to the institutionalised enjoyment engendered by the 'Oktoberfest'. The definition is deliberately wide because the dramaturgical functions are similar whatever the scale of the celebration and the importance it occupies in each play. Most importantly, 'Volksfeste' conjure up a false atmosphere of gaiety in a threatening, uncertain world of economic depression. The 'Volksfest' provides also the ideal opportunity to present the interaction of the "bestialischen Triebe" on which the struggle of the individual and society is based, for alcohol combined with the erotic atmosphere of such celebrations acts as a catalyst to unleash these instinctual drives.

The importance of the erotic element is related also to its

138. cf. Ingrid Haag, 'Ödön von Horváth und "die monströse Idylle"', where the function of festivals is examined against the background of National Socialism: "Vor dem Hintergrund (...) des aufkommenden Nationalsozialismus gewinnt die Flucht in die Idylle des Festes und Horváths Entlarvung der Illusion ihre eigentliche Dimension: Die Idylle wird zur "monströsen Idylle", zur Grundsituation einer präfaschistischen Gesellschaft", Recherches Germaniques, 6 (1976), p.154.

traditional association with comedy and with the Volksstück in particular. The connection between comedy and fertility festivals for example reaches back to the rituals performed for the Gods of fertility, Demeter and Dionysos which mark the beginnings of Attic Comedy(139). The celebratory feast to conclude the comedy has an unbroken lineage extending via Aristophanes and Renaissance comedy into the 19th century as the symbolic representation of a new society(140). With reference to Aristophanes's Frieden Wilfried Malesch indicates how the reversal of the unifying function of the 'Fest' demonstrates the contrast between the antique play and modern political comedy: "Das Fest bezeichnet den entscheidenden Unterschied zu modernen politischen Schauspielen, die vielleicht ein solches Fest auf der Bühne vorstellen, aber nicht ihre Zuschauer am Siege des Vorgestellten auch selber teilnehmen lassen können"(141).

The function of the 'Volksfest' in the Volksstück in the later part of the 19th century must be examined for its ideological as well as for its dramatic purpose. For its ideological proponents the rural Volksstück provided a vehicle for the demonstration of traditional customs and practices. The unspoiled rural dweller could demonstrate his close kinship to land and tradition, not only by use of dialect but in his practice of dances and songs. Here, it was held, one could still find that which was purely German, untainted by the cosmopolitan intermixture of Slavic, Gallic and Jewish influences in the urban centres. The inevitable consequences of such celebration: intoxication, 'lascivious' behaviour, and more often than not physical violence, provided not only vigorous entertainment and cheap comedy, but in the eyes of some zealots achieved an idealising quality of direct emotional expression transcending the restrictions that verbal exchanges place on the characters. Traces of this notion can be found in the definition of 'Fest' contained in the Kröner Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde:

Im Volksleben aller Zonen und Zeiten bringt der

139. cf. Klaus Eder, Antike Komödie, München, dtv., 1974, p.20f.

140. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: In comedy "a new society crystallises around the hero (...). The appearance of this new society is frequently signalled by some kind of party or festive ritual (...) Weddings are most common (...) The banquet at the end of The Taming of the Shrew has an ancestry that goes back to Greek Middle Comedy", p.163f.

141. Wilfred Malesch, 'Theoretische Aspekte der modernen Komödie', Die deutsche Komödie im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert, hrsg. von Wolfgang Paulsen, p.29.



Rhythmus des Naturjahres (Jahresfest, Frühlingsfest, Sonnwendfest, Herbstfest), der Wirtschaft (Saat, Ernte, Ausbruch), des Kultjahres (Opferzeiten, christliche Gottes- und Heiligenfeste) Einschnitte mit sich, die durch Arbeitsruhe, Gottesdienst und Gemeinschaftsmahl hervorgehoben werden. Spiel, Wettkampf, Musik und Tanz gesellen sich hinzu. Trinken und Raufen beschließen nicht selten die gesteigert erlebte Befreiung aus dem Alltag und Ich(142).

If Eros is "the presiding genius of comedy"(143) which must nonetheless adhere to social norms, then the 'Volksfest' intensifies this element until it liberates itself from the bounds of social convention and becomes a dominating force which Horváth's characters are only dimly aware of and are often unable to contain. The occasion of an 'Oktoberfest' or an 'Italian Night' provides a socially sanctified opportunity to follow sexual drives in a manner which often borders on the animalistic. This removal of social restraints is demonstrated by the Zauberkönig, in the scene 'Beim Heurigen' where the "große weinselige Stimmung" (Horváth's stage direction, I,218) allows him to fondle a girl's breasts. She, far from reproaching him, actually remonstrates with her partner who attempts to prevent the activity: "Das sind doch meine Putten"(I,219). The Zauberkönig himself remarks later in the scene that it is obvious human beings are "verwandt mit der Tierwelt"(I,225), which is both garbled Darwinism and a vague response to the deteriorating behaviour in the course of the celebrations.

This erotic atmosphere is the setting of an entire play in Kasimir und Karoline. It is indicated at the commencement of the play by the appearance of the Zeppelin as a phallic symbol which literally overshadows the 'Wies'n' and figuratively the whole play, transforming the characters into a frenzy of excitement. Although the significance of the airship has been interpreted in other ways by most critics(144), a sexual interpretation finds direct parallels in Freud's Traumdeutung: "Als ein ganz rezentes Traumsymbol des männlichen Genitals ist das Luftschiff zu erwähnen, welches sowohl durch seine Beziehung zum Fliegen wie gelegentlich durch seine Form solche Verwendung rechtfertigt"(145). Although the application of Freudian and Jungian theories of symbols in literary interpretation is both

142. Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde, hrsg. von Erich und Beitzl, 3. Auflage, Stuttgart, Kröner, 1974, p.211.

143. cf. Frye, op. cit., "The presiding genius of comedy is Eros and Eros has to adapt himself to the moral facts of society", p.181.

widespread and disputed, Freud's theories seem particularly relevant for two reasons: first, it appears beyond any doubt that Horváth was acquainted with Freud's writings. Thus it is a case of Horváth incorporating these ideas into his work and it is of no interest here whether the ideas themselves are still acceptable to modern psychology or literary criticism. Secondly, Freud's theory of symbols is particularly relevant to the study of 'Volksfeste' because of the common theme of sexuality, and because Freud himself stressed that the symbols he analysed in the Traumdeutung were not a cryptic system of mysterious signs known only to the psychoanalyst but were quite familiar in everyday life:

Diese Symbolik gehört nicht dem Traum zu eigen an, sondern dem unbewußten Vorstellen, speziell des Volkes, und ist im Folklore, in den Mythen, Sagen, Redensarten, in der Spruchweisheit und in den umlaufenden Witzen eines Volkes vollständig als im Traume aufzufinden(146).

The subconscious association of air-ship and sexual desire presumably motivates Schürzinger's initial advance on Karoline:

KAROLINE: Was schauns mich denn so blöd an?

SCHÜRZINGER: Pardon! Ich habe an etwas ganz anderes gedacht.

KAROLINE: Drum. (Stille)

SCHÜRZINGER: Ich habe gerade an den Zeppelin gedacht. (Stille) (I,257).

The same covert sexual association recurs when Karoline defends herself against Kasimir's reproaches: "KAROLINE: Eigentlich wollte ich ja nur ein Eis essen - aber dann haben wir über den Zeppelin gesprochen"(I,268). This is in fact the only

144. Hans Joas sees the Zeppelin as demonstrating the contradiction whereby the masses rejoice at a technological marvel that wastes money which could be better used to help them, and Helmuth Karasek discerns in the air-ship a "Traum vom Fliegen", in the sense of freedom. Both studies are entitled 'Kasimir und Karoline' and are found in Mat KK, pp.47 and 72 respectively.

145. Sigmund Freud, Die Traumdeutung, Frankfurt/M., Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1977, p.296.

146. *Ibid.*, p.291.

significant subject of conversation that surfaces in response to Kasimir's intimations of Karoline's unfaithfulness.

An explicit mention of the Zeppelin as a sexual symbol can be found in an early draft of Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald where Agnes (Marianne) relates a dream about her mother to Alfred: "(...) und sie hat das Fenster aufgemacht und hat gesagt: Schau hinaus, mein Kind, draußen fliegt der Zeppelin. ALFRED: Zeppelin ist natürlich ein Symbol, ich habe also doch richtig vermutet"(VII,156f.). Alfred had suspected Agnes to be:"ein unerlöster Mensch" and "etwas gehehmt", particularly after having seen her in a bathing costume (VII,156). This demonstrates clearly that Horváth had read his Freud: the sexual connotations of flying, the air-ship, Agnes's 'Wunschtraum' of sexual liberation, and Alfred's analysis of her 'symbolic' dream offer a succinct summary of Freud's theory of dreams. The Zeppelin features again in the final version of the play in the scene 'Im Maxim' in the second tableau - introduced by the Conférencier as "unser Zeppelin"(I,228) - where three naked girls appear, one of whom holds a model air-ship, another a propeller and another a globe. The image is presented to the accompaniment of martial music - 'Fridericus rex'- which sends the audience into a patriotic and militaristic fervour. The psychological link between sexuality and militarism has been pointed out by Wilhelm Reich (a pupil of Freud) in The Mass Psychology of Fascism(1933):

From the point of view of mass psychology, the effect of militarism is based essentially on a libidinous mechanism. The sexual effect of a uniform, the erotically provocative effect of rhythmically executed goose-stepping, the exhibitionistic nature of militaristic procedures, have been more practically comprehended by a salesgirl or an average secretary than by our most erudite politicians(147).

Although the Zeppelin constitutes the dominant sexual image in Kasimir und Karoline, practically all activities take on erotic connotations. Karoline's repeated desire to ride on the 'Achterbahn' reflects perhaps an ungratified urge which Horváth links to sexuality. For example, the satisfaction of this desire is dependent on the financial 'potency', or impotence as the case may be, of the men she associates with. Also, the actual physical excitement which the ride engenders, the undulating motion, has unmistakable sexual connotations which are obvious even to those unversed in psychoanalysis. Merkl Franz interprets

147. Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, trans. by Vincent R. Corfagno, Penguin, 1969, p.66.

Karoline's action in allowing herself to be treated to a ride by Schürzinger as tantamount to unfaithfulness: "MERKL FRANZ: In puncto Achterbahn und Karoline-(Zu Erna). Wenn du mir so was antun würdest, tät ich dir ja das Kreuz abschlagen"(I,263). Even the less thrilling toboggan allows the men to indulge their voyeuristic urges by looking up the skirts of the women as they slide down: "(Jetzt rutschen gerade Elli und Maria in der Rinne herunter und man kann ihnen unter die Röcke sehen. Und die Luft ist voll Wiesenmusik)"(I,271). The juxtaposition of this mildly erotic activity and the omnipresent 'Wiesenmusik' points to an interdependence between the two elements(148). The activity with the least ambiguous sexual connotations is horse-riding in the Hippodrome, at least for Rauch and Speer:

RAUCH: Ein Talent! Da wackelt der Balkon! Radfahrende Mädchen erinnern von hinten an schwimmende Enten.

SPEER: (wendet sich wieder dem Flaschenwein zu) Mensch Rauch! Wie lange habe ich keinen Gaul mehr unter mir gehabt! (I,298).

In a notebook entry entitled 'Wiesenbraut und Achterbahn: Ein Abend auf dem Oktoberfest', Horváth depicts the consequences of the intensified erotic atmosphere of the 'Volksfest' with its illusion of freedom and pleasure:

Unter einer Wiesenbraut versteht man in München ein Fräulein, das man an einem Oktoberfestbesuch kennen lernt, und zu dem die Bande der Sympathie je nach Veranlagung und Umständen mehr oder weniger intimer geschlungen werden (...) Seit es eine Oktoberfestwiese gibt, seit der Zeit gibt es eine Wiesenbraut. Die Wiesenbraut verläßt die Ihren, verläßt ihr Milljöh - geht mit Herren, die sie nicht kennt, interessiert sich wenig für den Charakter, mehr für die Vergnügungen. Die Wiesenbraut denkt nicht an den Tod. Die Wiesen-

148. Air-ships and 'Achterbahnen' represent also technological achievement and know-how which is the male domain. This is even more evident in the automobile which is the most obvious indication of the male economic 'potency'. It becomes a type of recurrent leitmotif in Kasimir und Karoline which influences human relationships. It is no coincidence that Kasimir and Karoline's relationship begins to founder after the former has lost his job as a chauffeur. Kasimir's own vain attempt to pick up Maria and Elli hinges on his lie that he is the owner of a 'Kompressor', and Karoline appears willing to exchange sexual favours for a trip in Rauch's cabriolet as a symbol for her upward social mobility.

## 'Volksfeste' and Eros

braut opfert ihren Bräutigam, sie denkt nicht, sie lebt. Sie verliert ihre Liebe wegen einem Amusement. (...) Aber bald ordnet sich wieder alles - und die Wiesenbraut ist ausgeschaltet. Nur im Märchen bekommt die Wiesenbraut einen Prinzen. In Wahrheit versinkt sie in das Nichts sobald die Wiese aufhört (II,659f.).

This anticipates the predicament of Karoline and indicates an indissoluble link between the atmosphere of the Oktoberfest and the casual sexual relationships implied in the term 'Wiesenbraut'.

The theme of sexuality is not just present in the machines of the Oktoberfest with their undulating motion and phallic forms. Horváth is also concerned with the potentially exploitative nature of the relationships formed in the festive, unreal mood of such a celebration. Inherent in the nature of a 'Volksfest' is the abnormal intermingling of various social strata. In an early draft of Italienische Nacht, a prince receives assurance that he may attend such a celebration:

PRINZ: Sicher sind auch nette Mädeln dabei. Ich mag so Volksfeste! Ich bin für die Frauen aus dem Volke (BS IN,116).

Presumably, the "Frauen aus dem Volke" will be easy prey for his attentions, for he is indeed a prince and accessible for the duration of the festivities, but no longer, because: "Nur im Märchen bekommt die Wiesenbraut einen Prinzen". The illusion of social equality is paramount in the lecherous designs of Rauch and Speer as they rejoice in the only form of democracy that offers them any benefits:

RAUCH: Da sitzt doch noch der Dienstmann neben dem Geheimrat, der Kaufmann neben dem Gewerbetreibenden, der Minister neben dem Arbeiter - so lob ich mir die Demokratie. (Er tritt mit Speer an die Hühnerbraterei) (I,272).

The stage direction provides an ironical counterpoint to Rauch's concept of democracy for they are the only ones who can afford such a delicacy as Horváth indicates in the previous scene. The illusion of carefree social intercourse of all classes implicit in the notion of the 'Volksfest' becomes doubly ironic in the light of the disintegration of the relationship of the title characters. It is precisely the class difference between the unemployed proletarian Kasimir and his white-collar bride which the latter seizes on to justify their increasing incompatibility. The compulsive need to consume expensive entertainment exacerbates their already modest financial position. Kasimir

quite rightly perceives their visit to the Oktoberfest as being incompatible with his present situation and the general economic misery: "KASIMIR: Gestern abgebaut und morgen stempeln, aber heut sich amüsieren, vielleicht sogar noch mit lachendem Gesicht!" (I, 257). Horváth points out that even a 'Volksfest' is stratified and certain pleasures are denied to the broad masses of the people. Karoline, however, seeks to distract herself through the festive atmosphere from precisely the private and public hardship and refuses to see a connection between the two.

Karoline's expectations of the Oktoberfest find remarkable parallels in Kracauer's sociological investigation into this new class and its demands for entertainment and diversion:

Nichts kennzeichnet so sehr dieses Leben (der Angestellten), das nur im eingeschränkten Sinne Leben heißen darf, als die Art und Weise, in der ihm das Höhere erscheint. Es ist ihm nicht Gehalt, sondern Glanz. Es ergibt sich ihm nicht durch Sammlung, sondern in der Zerstreung (149).

Kracauer reports the creation of gigantic pleasure palaces in which one "für billiges Geld den Hauch der großen Welt verspüren kann" (150). The choice of images to fulfil the escapist yearnings of harassed urban office workers also presents parallels with Horváth's 'Volksfeste', for not only can they enjoy the atmosphere of 'Beim Heurigen' with a painted backdrop of Vienna by night, but also "Bayrische Landschaft: Zugspitze mit Eibsee - Alpenglühen - Einzug und Tanz der bayrischen Bua'm, Schuhplattlerpaare". As Kracauer observes, they are not surrounded by the world as it is but as it is depicted in popular songs: "Die Geographie der Obdachlosenasytle ist aus dem Schlager geboren" (151). This mentality is presented in Kasimir und Karoline through the song 'Solang der alte Peter' with its specific references to Munich's geography and is even more intensively conveyed in 'Beim Heurigen' in Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald by a succession of songs conjuring up 'Wiener Gemütlichkeit'. Although the characters in both plays are in fact resident in the city they sing of, the songs connote a

149. Siefried Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.91; cf. Kurzenberger pp.123-29 for a detailed discussion of these parallels.

150. Ibid., p.95.

151. 'Obdachlosenasytle' is a reference to the situation of this class as being intellectually homeless in comparison to the class-conscious proletariat.

kitsch-ridden mentality and bear as much resemblance to Munich or Vienna in the 1930s as the fake Viennese atmosphere in the Berlin nightclub.

Physical violence is not common in Horváth's Volksstücke, although it is ever present in the language(152), except in the overtense atmosphere of the Oktoberfest or the 'Italian Night'. Although in the latter it does not come to blows through Martin's timely appearance, the potential for large-scale violence is given. The reasons are political and cannot be related directly to either the atmosphere of the fascist 'Deutscher Tag', or the Republican 'Italienische Nacht'. Yet it is significant nonetheless that Horváth selected such a "zwangloses, gesellschaftliches Beisammensein" to portray the hardening political tensions in Germany around 1930 which were erupting frequently into open violence. This is another example of his method of employing contrastive effects to expose contradictions and hollowness(153). He contrasts for example the exit of the fascists accompanied by martial music - the 'Bayrischen Präsentiermarsch'- with the entry of the Republicans and the 'Gladiatorenmarsch'(I,126) which connotes the politically aggressive stance of both sides.

The supposedly unconstrained gaiety of the Oktoberfest and the violence of Merkl Franz, and later the wholesale brawl at the end of the play, highlight the discrepancy between Rauch's idealised notion of democracy and the real tensions that the Oktoberfest in fact exacerbates rather than submerges. Horváth uses here contrastive humour by introducing scene 102 in the first-aid clinic with the orchestral piece "Bist du's lachendes Glück?" which is followed by a succession of wounded and limping bodies. This scene is also found in earlier drafts but with a precise division of sides along political lines: roughly, conservative Nationalists versus proletariat (VII,254f.). In the final version Horváth has discarded this simplistic version for a more complex motivation which cannot be reduced to ideological or economic causes. In reply to Karoline's question as to the causes of the brawl, the 'Sanitäter' replies:"wegen nichts (...)  
Die Leut sind halt alle nervös und vertragen nichts mehr"(I,314f.). The nationalistic doctor is similarly at a loss to explain such aimless aggression:"Ein schöner Saustall sowas!

152. Oskar's ju-jitsu is a notable exception together with his attempt to throttle Marianne in the final scene.

153. This is particularly true of the music and songs. Kurzenberger suggests that this use of contrastive effects is one of the chief characteristics of epic theatre and is Horváth's special contribution to this form of theatre.

Deutsche gegen Deutsche!"(I,315), implying that such aggression could be better channelled against Germany's enemies. An explanation can be found in the actual spark which began the brawl - the drunken Speer attempting to get into a car with the two girls Elli and Maria. If one takes the situation of Kasimir and Karoline as being not atypical - and Horváth took pains to stress the "Allgemeingültigkeit dieser Menschen" in the 'Gebrauchsanweisung'(VIII,664) - then the sexual frustrations that he suggests can result from impoverishment are exacerbated by the festive atmosphere. Thus Speer represents both wealth (the rental car) and sexual success (the two girls) and is consequently a provocation for the bystanders who, assisted by the disinhibiting effect of alcohol, give vent to their aggression.

Just as the central intention of Kracauer's book is to present the social dislocation evident in this newly emergent class, so too has the nature of the traditional 'Volksfest' been distorted: both the Oktoberfest and the 'Heuriger' were large scale commercial operations by the 1930s and had little in common with their origins as seasonal festivals. The participants reveal little understanding of or interest in the traditional and ritual functions of such festivities. Apart from the instinctual gratifications described above they show in the main a conscious determination to drown out reality in a haze of alcohol and song. Thus instead of celebrating the passing of winter, a wine harvest, or a birth, the 'Volksfeste' provide a form of escapism for the modern city-dweller, reflected in the Zauberkönig's remark: "Ein jeder Erwachsene hat seine Sorgen, und heut möcht ich alles vergessen! Heut kann mich die ganze Welt!"(I,219). The prospect of furious celebration imbues Kranz, in Italienische Nacht, with a sense of superiority over the "Malefizfaschisten" who he believes would be intensely irritated if they could see: "wie ungeniert wir Republikaner uns hier bewegen"(I,129). The Zauberkönig expresses the same sentiments of almost despairing determination after the debacle at Maxim's by writing postcards, "damit die Leut vor Neid zerplatzen"(I,230). If Horváth's main intention is the 'Demaskierung des Bewußtseins' then the whole gamut of human failings that he exposes so mercilessly is placed under a magnifying glass in the context of these gatherings.



#### 4. The 'Stadt-Land' Contrast

The importance of this theme in the Viennese Popular Comedy has been recognised in recent research. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler demonstrates that the popular image of the stupid rustic as an object for cheap farce had already been altered, in some instances before Raimund, and problematised. It must be stressed that the plays of the early 19th century, the 'Lokal- and Besserungsstücke' had an urban setting as a rule. In Franz von Heufeld's comedy, Der Bauer aus dem Gebirge (1767) where the title indicates from the outset the town versus country contrast, the peasant who leaves his rural environment is shown to be in total harmony with it, in contrast to the confusions of the city: "In seiner Heimat ist das Verhältnis von Arbeit und Genuß noch in Ordnung. Der Gegensatz von Armut und Reichtum ist dort aufgehoben"(154). This theme is continued by Ferdinand Eberl in his three 'Eipeldauer Possen' (1796-97) which present a similar situation. The crisis of city-living is shown to have political and economic causes whereas the peasant visitor, Eipeldauer, exemplifies health and vitality. Although Schmidt-Dengler makes no reference to the reemergence of this pattern in the late 19th century, the foundations for the programme of 'Heimattichtung' are foreshadowed here. The rural environment is apparently shielded from the vagaries of daily political and economic changes and symbolises the vitalism which was central to the philosophy of the movement.

For Raimund the rural idyll was still important, for all antagonism is suspended there. The unifying force is nature, but true harmony is only reached by those, "die der Natur entstammen und ihr verbunden bleiben. Ihr steht eine durch krankhafte Züge stigmatisierte Zivilisation gegenüber"(155). By 1844 in Nestroy's Die beiden Herren Söhne this contrast is depicted already as a conscious and contrived image. Vinzenz, a young man from the country ironizes the cliché: "In der Stadt sind's wenigstens so dumm und glauben, was vom Land kommt, ist unverdorbene Natur; das hat mir ein Milchmädels g'sagt"(156).

Nestroy's fine nose for a cliché had detected a structure in European thought that had its roots in the 18th century with Rousseau and the bucolic or pastoral poetry which contained

154. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'Das Kontrastschema Stadt-Land in der Alt-Wiener Volkskomödie', Theater und Gesellschaft, hrsg. von Jürgen Hein, p.59.

155. Ibid., p.67.

156. Ibid., p.64.

renouncement of decadent civilisation as its major theme. It is all the more surprising that this central theme in recent German literature, as Friedrich Sengle terms it(157), should be practically ignored by contemporary Germanistik. This has ideological reasons, for, although Sengle can find no post-1945 research, he lists many studies pre-1945 and even pre-1933 that deal with the topic of rural literature: 'Bauernndichtung' and 'Dorfgeschichte', but they tend to elevate the rural environment to the level of myth(158).

The depiction of rural village life found its main literary expression in the prose genre, 'Dorfgeschichte', whose exponents include Gotthelf, Hebel, Keller and Anzengruber(159). It appears to fulfil a similar function to that of exotic novels dealing with far-off lands: "Der Bauernstand wurde dem Bürger 'nahegebracht'"(160) but by a writer who possessed sufficient distance from rural life to depict it 'objectively'. This reinforced the 'Wunschtbild' component in the form which catered chiefly to an escapist orientated reading public. The city as a 'Schreckbild' became then a constituent element of the form as a constrastrive image even if the action in the story was confined to a rural setting.

The dramatic equivalent of the 'Dorfgeschichte' emerged much later as the rural Volksstück in the plays of Friedrich Kaiser and Ludwig Anzengruber who had used the stories of Auerbach (the main exponent of the 'Dorfgeschichte') as a basis for their plays(161). The main difference between their work and the traditional 'Dorfkomödien' or 'Bauernschwank', apart from a basic seriousness of purpose, was a conscious choice in favour of the rural setting in opposition to the city. Anzengruber displays a tendency towards idealising the rural when he writes of his 'Bauernkomödien'(162): "Diese vielbesprochenen Bauernkomödien sind nur aus dem Grunde Komödien mit Bauern geworden, weil sich

157. Friedrich Sengle, 'Wunschtbild Land und Schreckbild Stadt: Zu einem zentralen Thema in der neueren deutschen Literatur', Studium Generale, Jg.16, Nr 10 (1963), pp.619-631.

158. Ibid., p.619.

159. For an exhaustive and perceptive study of this genre cf. Uwe Baur, Die Dorfgeschichte, München, Fink, 1978.

160. Sengle, op. cit., p.620.

161. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'Ödön von Horváths Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald und der triviale Wiener Roman der zwanziger Jahre', Über ÖvH2, p.58.

derlei Konflikte in der Stadt in sehr unpoetischem Lichte zeigen würden"(163). German literature would have to wait for Naturalism before the city became a fit poetical setting once more. Then it was celebrated (by some) as a "kosmisches Ereignis", and even a few Expressionist writers managed "hymnische Töne zum Lob der Großstadt"(164), whereas for others, such as Trakl, Heym, Kafka and Döblin, the city elicits precisely the opposite response.

The theme of the 'Stadt-Land' contrast receives an ironical treatment in Georg Kaiser's Nebeneinander Ein Volksstück 1923. The play can be interpreted as a milieu depiction of the year 1923, a self-satire on the part of Kaiser, and as a parody of three literary forms: the Expressionist 'Stationendrama', the rural Volksstück and the 'neusachliche' comedy, which correspond to the three strands of the interwoven plot. It is the second strand, Luise's story, which is of interest here. Luise, the suicidal girl, does not in fact take her own life as she threatens in the suicide note but returns to her sister in the country and begins a romantic attachment to the 'Diplom Ingenieur' Franz Krüger. Luise's escape from the corruption of Babylonian Berlin to the stability of a rural existence is alluded to immediately by her sister: "Hier hat sich nichts verändert (...) Ein rabiater Winter. Ihr in der Stadt spürt nicht die Natur, wenn sie Ernst macht - wir haben das hier aus erster Hand"(165). Luise confirms her sister's distrust of the city: "schickt uns nicht in die Städte, wo Asphalt der Grund und Häuser der Wald sind"(166). The rural idyll of the sister and her husband, the 'Schleuseninspektor', is disturbed, however, by discordant notes. The Engineer rejects Luise out of hand on discovering that she has a 'past'; both he and the 'Inspektor' reveal themselves through their jargon to be former 'Couleurstudenten'. In addition, the inspector is obsessed by technology so that the technology cult of the 1920s and neo-romantic nature worship find an uncomfortable conjunction. Nevertheless, as befits a Volksstück, Luise and Franz are reconciled and their story ends harmoniously to the strains of

162. For Peter Rosegger, the city was an 'Eiterbeule', Sengle, op. cit., p.627.

163. Ibid., p.620.

164. Ibid., p.627.

165. Nebeneinander, Georg Kaiser Werke in drei Bänden, hrsg. von Klaus Kändler, Berlin, Aufbau Verlag, 1979. Bd.1, p.514.

166. Ibid., p.516.

## The 'Stadt-Land' Contrast

lute and violin music from a group of passing 'Wanderjugend'. This provides the ending with a combination of triviality and a marked ideological note, namely a 'völkisch' one. Kaiser's critical view of this type of Volksstück is clearly revealed in the contrast of the trivial idyll with the tragedy of the pawnbroker in Berlin who actually does commit suicide after having failed to track down either Luise or Neumann, both of whom are granted a Happy Ending. Kaiser also omits any depiction of the 'Volk' in the countryside but includes a broad canvas of contemporary life in Berlin, which points to the direction the modern Volksstück must take.

Horváth was keenly aware of the 'Stadt-Land' contrast, as a short piece written after his move to Berlin in 1924 illustrates. He entitled it "Das Werden eines neuen gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins" but it is better known by the title "Flucht aus der Stille". He finds the rural, village existence by no means idyllic: "Gewiß haben hier die Leute auch genau die gleichen Eigenschaften, Tugend und Laster wie der einzelne Städter" (VIII,657); yet it lacks the "Fluidum der Wandlung" that can be observed first hand in the city, for the rural dweller belongs to "der sozialen Schicht, die untergeht" (VIII,658). Most important, however, is the material support that only Berlin can really offer a young writer: "bekanntlich braucht man zum denken einen Stuhl, auf dem man sitzt" (VIII,658).

Horváth's anti-Heimatkunst position is best expressed in a short prose piece entitled 'Hinterhornbach' where he describes the bigoted, ignorant and superstitious inhabitants of a tiny village, "in einem der finstersten Winkel des heiligen Landes Tirol": the priest who forbids dancing, "und der erst vorgestern eine weibliche Seele von der Kanzel herab verdonnerte, weil sie mit bloßem Hals auf dem Felde gearbeitet hat"; the great-grandmother, "die in der Kirche auf der Hurenbank sitzen muß, weil sie vor fünfundsechzig Jahren ein außereheliches Kind neben ihren vierzehn ehelichen bekommen hatte." Moreover, the body of a fallen mountain-climber lay rotting because the inhabitants refused to pay for his burial; the village bull had needles strewn in his hay; and they all believe in a local ghost named 'Buhz' who is held responsible for most of the natural mishaps that occur (167). The story concludes with the date: 15 March, 1930. Hinterhornbach actually exists and Horváth often spent holidays there in an old 'Bauernhaus' that belonged to friends. An acquaintance who accompanied him on a number of

167. 'Hinterhornbach' was first published in the Berliner Tageblatt on the 30 March, 1930; reprinted in Jean-Claude François 'Ödön von Horváth 4 Prosatexte', Recherches Germaniques, 5 (1975), p.327f.

## The 'Stadt-Land' Contrast

occasions reported: "Dieses Dorf war damals derart versteckt und unbekannt, daß man das Gefühl hatte, von der Gegenwart in die Vergangenheit zu schlüpfen (...) Ödön studierte die Bauern und die dortigen Gepflogenheiten sehr genau" (Krischke,91).

However, such persons and places clearly do not occupy a central position in his work. Horváth reiterated often enough that the contemporary political and economic forces and their effects had to be studied "von der Aschingerseite aus"(II,663), i.e. the world of the proletariat and petite-bourgeoisie in the metropolitan centres. The transplanting of the Volksstück from a rural to an urban setting implied an obvious departure from expectations of a Volksstück, as has been demonstrated in section 1.2. Nevertheless, the sociological significance of 'Volk' as the lower echelons of society corresponds almost exactly to Brecht's definition in his essay 'Volkstümlichkeit und Realismus': "Es liegt im Interesse des Volkes, der breiten, arbeitenden Massen, von der Literatur wirklichkeitsgetreue Abbildungen des Lebens zu bekommen, und wirklichkeitsgetreue Abbildungen des Lebens dienen tatsächlich nur dem Volke, den breiten, arbeitenden Massen"(168). The true 'dramas' of the Weimar Republic - inflation, unemployment and the clashes between extremist political groups - were most easily observable in larger centres with their effect on lower income groups. The fluctuations of a capitalist market economy have replaced nature to provide the requisite blows of fate.

Die Bergbahn, despite its alpine setting, contains a number of elements that reverse the normal expectations associated with the rural Volksstück. These have been enumerated above in section 2. and are in fact references to the town-country contrast of the Volksstück tradition: the triangle of Schulz, Veronika and Moser is potentially a drama in itself which would require Veronika to run off with Schulz only to return repentant to her long-suffering peasant bridegroom, Moser. That Horváth refuses to develop such a romantic thread amounts to a rejection of a traditional Volksstück element. Even Italienische Nacht, which is set specifically in a South German small town, contains references to the town-country contrast. The make-up of the characters and their concerns are more metropolitan than rural. Martin works "am laufenden Band"(I,112) and is a worker with proletarian concerns; Betz is the epitome of the educated civil servant; and even the Stadtrat is possessed of a superficial education. They occupy a position mid-way between rural and urban but reveal little contact with the countryside and its way of life. The fact that it is an SPD town suggests a very considerable working population. Nevertheless, Martin is

168. Brecht, Werkausgabe 19, p.323.

frustrated by his small "Betätigungsfeld" and yearns for a "Metropole"(I,115) whereas the Stadtrat emphasises his peasant origins which enable him to appreciate the wonders of nature better than Betz:"Die Wunder der Schöpfung - es gibt nichts Herrlicheres. Ich kann das besser beurteilen, weil ich ein Bauernkind bin"(I,131). However, his estrangement from the land is revealed by his almost shamefaced admission that he has purchased a section - an action irreconcilable with his ideological convictions. This shows his relationship to the land as being decidedly that of the urban dweller.

Although the small town milieu is in keeping with the Volksstück, the inhabitants, particularly in their high degree of politisation, act against the setting. As was shown in the Bergbahn, the political activity against the background of the alpine scenery was clearly conceived as an anti-Volksstück component. In the same way, the actions of the characters in Italienische Nacht should be judged against the background of the milieu. The small town atmosphere is clearly not rural; it has progressed beyond the bounds of the 19th century 'Dorfgeschichte' and provides a cross-section of German society without the actual immediate experience of mass-living that metropolitan centres such as Berlin, Munich or Hamburg implied. The "Kleinstadt 1930-" is in fact a key stage direction. It allows the political and social conflicts to be acted out on a small scale, to be demonstrated in a manner which would pose considerable difficulties for the dramatic form in a big-city setting. The actual intermingling of various social strata seen throughout the play is only conceivable in the small town milieu.

A brief observation by Ernst Bloch from 1924 entitled 'Die kleine Stadt' contains a number of interesting parallels to Horváth's treatment in his Volksstück:

Wenige leben gern in kleineren Städten, diese selbst leben kaum mehr (...) Immer weniger Originale durchsetzen die kleine Stadt, immer weniger Sprache, die noch im eigenen Saft kocht, immer weniger Landbrot, gute alte Zeit in der Zeitung. Statt dessen herrscht die Phrase von gestern, und wie die Läden ihre Konserven haben, so kommt die öffentliche Meinung fertig gesetzt, frisch gekirnt, als Abhub aus Berlin (...) fruchtlos erbittert macht sie die Menschen, die darin interniert sind(169).

Horváth suggests also that the small town is cut off from the

169. Ernst Bloch, Erbschaft dieser Zeit, Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp, 1962, p.32.

## The 'Stadt-Land' Contrast

real consequences of Germany's political turmoil as the opening words of the play indicate: BETZ: Martin. Was gibts denn Neues in der großen Welt?"(I,103). The town experiences the turmoil of economic and class injustice that Martin reports vicariously, via the newspaper, just as Bloch indicates. The absence in this play of the direct consequences of the depression, i.e. unemployment, that is central to the three following Volksstücke cannot be explained by the time of writing. By mid 1930, when the play was completed, unemployment had reached nearly three million and was climbing monthly. Because small towns were not so immediately and acutely susceptible to economic fluctuations, they represent a false haven from real political activity: the slogans of politics can be paraded without any real obligation to convert words into action; an activity which the republicans are seen to excel at. The small town provides then an ideal setting for an older literary theme - 'die kleinbürgerliche Idylle' - with its implied flight from political and social realities. The central conflict in the play is not between Republicans and Fascists but between private and political loyalties. Political activity implies for the person concerned a renouncement in some way of self-gratification or self-interest. The 'Wirt' actively espouses a non-political standpoint in favour of his business interests and because of harassment from his wife. The petit-bourgeois attitudes of the characters are revealed to the extent that private interest prevails over political commitment. Even Martin betrays the overriding personal motivation of his decision to defend the beleaguered Republicans when he abruptly changes his mind on seeing the mark on Anna's neck made by the 'Faschist'. Karl's comic conflict revolves around the struggle between his erotic desires - "KARL: (to Martin) Du hast halt keine Konflikte mit deiner Erotik"(I,140) - and his loyalty to Martin and the party. In fact, the relationship between Karl and Leni illustrates most clearly the underlying theme of 'kleinstädtischer Geborgenheit' to which they are unconsciously attracted. Leni pulls Karl out of his self-pitying despair, caused mainly by the recognition of the fact that his erotic drive is the stronger one, by suggesting she 'save' him with 4,000 marks and that they set up together a 'Kolonialwarenhandlung'. Marriage and the establishment of a small business, both of which ought to be anathema to a socialist like Karl, epitomise the petit-bourgeois idyll.

Although the setting of Italienische Nacht in a small town is not an obvious reversal of or departure from a traditional element of the Volksstück tradition, Horváth still imbues the genre with a fresh dimension by demonstrating the nature of political activity in a provincial centre where the comedy of politics can be shown, rather than its tragedy which was being enacted on the streets of Berlin. Horváth explained his

standpoint by insisting that the play was not directed against politics as such, but against "die Masse der Politisierenden, gegen die vor allem in Deutschland sichtbare Versumpfung, den Gebrauch politischer Schlagworte"(II,658).

The small town as a psychological determinant received its baptism of fire as a subject of literary investigation in the Ingolstadt plays of Marieluise Fleißer. She illustrated the potential for tragedy in the claustrophobic and psychologically repressive environment of such a restrictive society. The reaction of the town itself to the plays mirrored exactly the conditions she endeavoured to portray(170). Bernhard Diebold termed her characters "den Typus der unbarmherzigen Idylle"(171) and Walter Benjamin admired her determination to show the complexity of provincial life, for the literary "Sachverwalter des Landschaftlichen und Stürmischen sind beinah immer verstockte, reaktionäre Geister"(172).

Horváth returned to this setting in Der Fall E.(VII,21-64) which dealt with the true case of a teacher in Regensburg being dismissed for alleged communist sympathies(173). This was probably written late in 1930 just after Italienische Nacht. The character Elli is forcibly committed to a mental institution where she dies soon afterwards. The material is clearly that of a tragedy set in a provincial centre where religious bigotry and political oppression work hand in hand. The claustrophobic element of this milieu also plays an important role, for Elli has been spied on and finally betrayed to the police by an acquaintance. Horváth's intention to fashion this material into a small town tragedy can be seen in the notes to a planned novel entitled Der Mittelstand. Under the heading 'Tragik und Überwindung des Mittelstandes' the following chapters were sketched out: "Tragik: die wertvollen Söhne verlassen den Mittelstand; Die Lehrerin von Regensburg (Die Spitzel)" (VIII,650). From the fragment that Horváth completed it seems clear that the play would have taken the form of a 'Zeitstück', for it is almost totally devoid of Horváthian Volksstück elements(174).

The radical reversal of the 'Stadt-Land' contrast is to be

170. cf. Materialien zu Marieluise Fleißer, pp.91-132.

171. Franfurter Zeitung, 24/11/1929, *ibid.*, p.144.

172. Die literarische Welt 39 (1929), *ibid.*, p.140.

173. For details of the actual case, cf. Jürgen Schröder's excellent documentation Horváths 'Der Fall E. oder Die Lehrerin von Regensburg', Suhrkamp, 1982.



found in the three following Volksstücke with their urban settings. Horváth's method is to dismantle the idealised notion of the countryside as a refuge from the malaise of city life. While the conditions in Vienna and Munich during the depression, the struggle of the proletariat and the ideology of the petite-bourgeoisie are the central concern in these plays, the countryside as a potential avenue of temporary escape is hinted at. The process of disillusionment is achieved partly by depicting negative experiences in this hitherto safe haven. A recurrent situation in the Volksstücke and in his prose writings of this period is the excursion to the country followed by the seduction of the central female character. This is Rauch's plan when he invites Karoline for a ride in his Austro-Daimler to Altötting but the heart attack prevents him from carrying out his scheme. In a draft version of Glaube Liebe Hoffnung Elisabeth accepts a ride from the medical student Eltz who fakes a breakdown on a lonely country road in order to seduce her(175). Horváth provides the scene with suitably overcharged 'Naturstimmung' as the act takes place: "(Wolkenbruch, Blitz, Donner, Sturm und Nacht - aber rasch zieht das Unwetter vorbei, der Mond steigt hinter dem Wald empor und scheint. Und das Orchester intoniert nun pianissimo das 'Frühlingsrauschen'" (VII,292). This indicator of a supposed storm of passion followed by the symbolic appearance of Luna the goddess of love is an ironical counterpoint to the entirely unemotional nature of the sexual encounter. Furthermore, this rural romp is to have dire consequences for Elisabeth as it contributes in part to her dismissal.

In the novel Der ewige Spießer(1930) Anna Pollinger takes the first step towards prostitution in a clearing in a forest adjoining Munich. Anna's excursion with the playboy Harry Priegler in his sports car is depicted as an escape from the city to the countryside: "Die Stadt mit ihren grauen Häusern war verschwunden, als hätte sie nie in ihr gewohnt"(V,256). Nevertheless, in a dark side-road in Forstenriederpark on a "stimmungsvoll(en)" September evening Anna Pollinger finally heeds Kastner's advice and becomes 'praktischer'. Again Horváth provides an ironic backdrop of nature clichés for this scene which spells her emotional death: "Das war auf einer Lichtung, da

174. cf. 5. 'Die kleinen Verbrechen' for a more detailed discussion of this fragment.

175. This is actually alluded to in the final version: "ELISABETH: Ich wollte nämlich Zeit sparen und bin mit einem Auto gefahren, und zwar direkt in der Luftlinie - aber plötzlich hat die Ölzufuhr ausgesetzt und ich habe in einer Scheune im Wald übernachtet"(I,340).

sie zum erstmalig Geld dafür nahm. Droben standen die Sterne, und ringsum lag tief und schwarz der Wald (...) Es war ein Fünfmärkstück, und nun hatte sie keine Gefühle dabei, als wär sie schon tot"(V,261). In the 'Märchen vom Fräulein Pollinger' (a fairy-tale incorporated in the novel but also published separately) Anna had similarly disillusioning experiences with the natural environment. She joins her boyfriend Fritz on a 'Bergtour' for a very specific reason:"Und er setzte ihr auseinander, daß bekanntlich die Erschütterungen beim Abwärtssteigen sehr gut dafür wären, daß sie kein Kind kriegt"(V,75) so that the mountains function as a death motif rather than as a place of recreation and natural vigour. In the fairy-tale 'Schneewittchen' for example, the mountains are often a place of refuge and succour. Horváth's use of the fairy-tale mirrors in many ways the dramaturgical process he was employing in his comedies. This hitherto harmless and 'volksverbunden' prose form is revitalised to convey direct social criticism.

Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald illustrates in the most complex fashion the 'Stadt-Land' contrast. This is seen not only in the alternation of scenes between Vienna and the surrounding countryside but also because the characters themselves are conscious of it and refer to it. However, the play demonstrates clearly that human beings, despite their delusions to the contrary, are equally destructive, instinctual and egotistical in the woods or on the streets. Although most of the action takes place in various scenes in Vienna, key events happen in the Vienna Woods adjoining the city, and 'Draußen in der Wachau'. It is significant that none of the characters has a real tie to the land. Even Alfred's mother and grandmother are employed by the state to manage the castle as a tourist attraction and cannot be considered countryfolk. They are not involved in any meaningful productive process and their existence approximates to the 'Angestellten' status of urban office workers.

The contrast operates on one level as a patently false notion in the consciousness of the characters. They are seen to cling to the 19th century 'Heimatkunst' ideals of an invigorating and 'pure' rural existence. On another level the contrast manifests itself as a subtle reversal of expectations associated with the rural Volksstück. The title itself evokes of course the Strauß waltz of the same name but also the woods of Vienna where the city dweller can feel himself to be in the midst of nature. The Strauß waltz contains the same contradictions and inconsistencies that Horváth is attempting to point up; namely, that Strauß composed these waltzes (also An der schönen blauen Donau) evoking country dances and festivities for the grand balls of Vienna.

## The 'Stadt-Land' Contrast

The play opens with the setting 'Draußen in der Wachau', geographically a rural setting, but as already indicated, life in the 'Häuschen' is almost that of a state employee. It is also spring, the season of comedy, except that the scene provides confirmation neither of a comic mood nor of a rural Volksstück - the concerns are with business, gambling and petty bickering. The connotations of the urban dweller's view of the country become evident during the picnic in the Vienna woods. The atmosphere acts as an erotic stimulus to the characters:

VALERIE: Darf ich meinen Kopf in deinen Schoß legen?

ZAUBERKÖNIG: Auf der Alm gibts keine Sünd!

VALERIE: (tut es) Die Erd ist nämlich noch hart - heuer war der Winter lang. (Stille. Leise.) Du. Gehts dir auch so? Wenn die Sonn so auf meine Haut scheint, wirds mir immer so weißnichtwie - (I,185).

The reference to the 'Alm' is ironically intended by Horváth. It refers to the 'Sennerinnen', the young alpine shepherdesses who tended their flocks alone up on the mountain pastures and were therefore considered to be still innocent. The irony is apparent in the age and appearance of the couple as well as through their obvious lascivious desires. Marianne is moved by the immediacy of the Danube and the woods to reflect on the relationship between modern man and nature:

MARIANNE: Die Donau ist weich wie Samt -

ALFRED: Wie Samt.

MARIANNE: Heut möcht ich weit weg - heut könnt man im Freien übernachten.

ALFRED: Leicht.

MARIANNE: Ach, wir armen Kulturmenschen! Was haben wir von unserer Natur! (I,188).

Despite this list of moral restrictions they overcome civilisation's strictures to embrace passionately. Nature functions then as an element of romantic kitsch and is invoked to provide the impetus for overcoming their 'civilised' inhibitions.

The 'Stadt-Land' contrast is illustrated most graphically in the transition from the ecstasy of the warm spring night in the Vienna woods, complete with fire-works and starlit sky, to their furnished room in the 8th Bezirk. The stage direction reads:

## The 'Stadt-Land' Contrast

"(Der Tag ist grau und das Licht trüb)"(I,195). It is exactly a year since their first meeting. Alfred alludes to the contrast in order to rid himself of the child:"...es ist doch nur im Interesse unseres Kindes, daß es aus diesem feuchten Loch herauskommt - hier ist es grau und trüb, und draußen bei meiner Mutter in der Wachau scheint die Sonne"(I,197). It is Horváth's final and most bitter irony that the most evil deed in the play, the killing of the child, should occur in the sunny Wachau, committed by the grandmother, traditionally a positive character who represents the continuity and traditional values of past generations. The grandmother justifies her actions with reference to a brand of bigoted morality which prefers a dead child to an illegitimate one for the sake of the family reputation. Although this morality cannot be traced exactly, its nearest parallels seem to be found only in the deepest rural recesses of Hinterhornbach. The grandmother by her morality and by her age represents a link with the supposed intact world of 19th century rural life, the source for both the Volksstück and 'Heimatkunst' and must be understood as a critique of them.

In an earlier version of the final scene the child dies by drowning in the Danube which reflects an ironic light on Alfred's following conversation:

ALFRED Unsere Donau ist halt was Schönes. Wie die so dahinfließt - das ist schon sehr schön.

DIE TOCHTER Ich wollt, ich wär in Wien.

ALFRED Und ich wollt, ich könnt immer heraußen sein - so still vor sich hinleben, in so einem Häuschen, und nichts mehr hören -

DIE TOCHTER Was kann man denn hier heraußen schon werden?

ALFRED Und was bin ich in Wien geworden?

DIE TOCHTER Ich wüßt schon, was ich machen tät in Wien! Ich käm schon durch!

ALFRED Auch Sie würden ihnen nicht entrinnen -

DIE TOCHTER Wem?

ALFRED Den Männern.

DIE TOCHTER Na das würde ich aber schon selber in die Hand nehmen! (VII,203).

In this short exchange Horváth's use of the 'Stadt-Land' contrast is succinctly expressed. The Danube is shown to be an agent of death yet possesses in the consciousness of Alfred kitsch associations engendered probably by the Strauß music, just as the kindly old grandmother could be reutilised as a link to the 19th century and romantic notions of rural life. The daughter is intent on testing all the pleasures wicked Vienna has to offer - Alfred is right to warn her, for he is the type to take advantage of her. His dream of a quiet existence by the river is similarly immediately recognisable as a kitsch idea in the light of his attempt to lead a quiet life as a respectable citizen. Neither the town nor the country offer a safe haven when peopled by Horváth's dramatis personae.

##### 5. "Die kleinen Verbrechen" and Criticism of the Judiciary

Jürgen Hein lists the following motifs as central to the traditional Volksstück for they belong to the activities of daily life, the essential material of this genre: "Essen und Trinken, Feste und Alltag, Liebe und Streit, kleine Verbrechen und moralische Entrüstung, Hoffnung auf gesellschaftliche Anerkennung, sozialen Aufstieg und Glaube an Moral und Gerechtigkeit"(175). Crime and punishment, and particularly the framework of a trial have a long genealogy in both comedy and tragedy; the trial format with its unity of time, action and place is ideally suited to the dramatic form. Northrop Frye has observed that the action of comedy "in moving from one social center to another is not unlike the action of a law suit", there being "different versions of the same situation, one finally being judged as real and the other as illusory." With reference to Shakespeare he points out how often the action of Shakespeare's comedies "begins with some absurd, cruel or irrational law"(176).

In the Cronauer interview Horváth claims that criminality is central to all drama, that crime and guilt infuse all dramatic characters:

Es ist Ihnen vielleicht schon aufgefallen, daß fast alle Stücke irgendein kriminelles Moment aufweisen - ja: daß die weitaus überwiegende Zahl aller Dramenhelden bis zu den Statisten sich irgendeines Verbrechens

175. cf. footnote 53.

176. Northrop Frye op. cit., p.166; and for a discussion of the trial in drama cf. Emil Staiger, Grundbegriffe der Poetik, Zürich, 1961, pp.175-81.

schuldig machen, also eigentlich keine ausgesprochenen Ehrenmänner sind(I,14).

He asks further what can motivate spectators to view such offerings and then to leave the theatre "ethisch erregt"? He suggests that a cathartic reaction is produced in the spectator, a participatory experience resulting in the "Befriedigung assozialer Triebe"(177).

Horváth announced his interest in small crimes in the 'Randbemerkung' to Glaube Liebe Hoffnung where he claims that this predicament or problem was brought to his attention by the journalist Lukas Kristl. Kristl criticised the traditional concern by dramatists with so-called capital crimes which occurred relatively seldom and asked:

warum sich also diese Dramatiker fast niemals um die kleinen Verbrechen kümmern (...) deren Tatbestände ungemein häufig nur auf Unwissenheit basieren und deren Folgen aber trotzdem fast ebenso häufig denen des lebenslänglichen Zuchthauses mit Verlust der bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte, ja selbst der Todesstrafe ähneln (I,327).

This material then was ideally suited to the Volksstück. Kristl's intention was to write a play "gegen die bürokratisch-verantwortungslose Anwendung kleiner Paragraphen" with the hope (recognising that such laws must always exist in an organised society), "daß man jene kleinen Paragraphen vielleicht (...) humaner anwenden könnte"(I,327). Horváth, however, states his central concern as being to demonstrate once again universal problems, namely "den gigantischen Kampf zwischen Individuum und Gesellschaft"(I,327). More importantly, the criminal problem provides the ideal field to demonstrate the workings of the human psyche, the motivating force of which are "bestialische Triebe" but these basic drives ought not to be judged in rigid categories of good and evil. Here Horváth is expressing, although none too clearly, a concept of ethical relativity based on an interpretation of Freud's theory of instincts(178).

Questions of ethical or moral responsibility are of course the stuff of drama, but more specifically the problem of culpability in the eyes of the law, or criticism of that system

177. cf. Joanna Barbara Matuszczak, Asoziale Figuren im Werk Ödön von Horváths, Ph.D, New York, Univ. of Stony Brook, 1977. She uses these theoretical statements as the starting point for her thesis and observes that for a number of characters criminality is positive behaviour and a welcome form of deviation from the mediocrity of 'Spießertum'.

of law which has no flexibility towards the psychological and environmental influences on human behaviour plays an important role in Horváth's Volksstücke. The world of comedy and the Volksstück, while certainly capable of dealing with small crimes and larger moral transgressions, requires a restoration of justice: the wrong-doer sees the error of his ways, or the wrongfully accused receives redress, but the judicial system itself is never called into question(179). The thematisation of small crimes in Horváth's Volksstücke suggest that this simple equation is no longer valid; the radical questioning of values in the 20th century has brought with it criticism of the system which dispenses justice. By means of depicting minor criminal transgressions Horváth is able to call into question major ethical and moral views.

Criticism of the judiciary as a literary theme is a feature of modernism in which Zola's celebrated open letter to the president of France in 1898, 'J'accuse', occupies a pivotal position. It demonstrated in a spectacular way the power of the writer to influence political and legal processes. In the Weimar Republic such criticism found expression in the form of the politically motivated 'Zeitstück'. These plays were often concerned with particular laws such as §218 (the law regarding abortion) or capital punishment(180). The Dreyfus affair was the subject of a play which provided one of the most successful productions of the Volksbühne in the late 1920s: Die Affäre Dreyfus by Hans José Rehfisch und Wilhelm Herzog, which had its première on 24 November, 1929. The concerns of fin de siècle France were mirrored in the Weimar Republic: anti-semitism, caste morality and a judicial system blind in the right eye.

Although Horváth cannot be considered a typical representative of the 'Zeitstück' writers, two plays: Sladek, oder Die schwarze Armee (1927) and the fragment Der Fall E.

178. Freud posits the existence of two basic instincts: Eros and the destructive instinct in Jenseits des Lustprinzips (1921). cf. Hans-Ulrich Lindken, 'Illusion und Wirklichkeit': "Nicht die Traumanalyse und der durch die Analyse entfesselte Eros bestimmen Horváths Vorstellungen in der ersten Linie, sondern der Aggressions- und Todestrieb", p.27.

179. In Der zerbrochne Krug, it is only the dispenser of justice Adam, who is demonstrated to be corrupt; the system itself, as represented by Walter, does finally restore harmony and justice.

180. A definitive study of the 'Zeitstück' has yet to be written but for a useful definition cf. François, Histoire et fiction, p.142f.

(1930) are based on actual events with documentary material as the basis for dramatisation(181). Sladek contains vehement criticism of the judicial system as a bastion of right-wing conservatism and thus scarcely capable of passing unprejudiced decisions. The scene anticipates the arrangement of forces in similar conflicts in the Volksstücke. The forces of law and order are allied with the church to confront the 'offender' with the combined legal and moral might of society. The stage direction for the trial scene illustrates this vividly: "(Mit Richter, Staats- und Rechtsanwalt: Unter dem Gekreuzigten)" (II,470). However, Sladek is being tried for murder and not for a minor crime. His lawyer attempts to exempt Sladek from blame in the matter by arguing that his client is depersonalised due to his age. Unaware of the former glories of the Wilhelmine Empire Sladek has fallen victim to moral paralysis: "Ohne Sinn für Moral neigt er alles allgemeinmenschlich - Gefühlsmäßige und grübelt über lauter Selbstverständlichkeiten: Es beschäftigt sich nur mit sich selbst, aber ohne jede Kultur. Ich bitte um mildernde Umstände für ein Gespenst: Hier sitzt die Zeit der Inflation"(II,474). The trial ends with a combined call from the judge and prosecution for Sladek to think of God: "Gott kennt Sie, Sladek"(II,475), to which Sladek replies, in a manner anticipating Marianne's conflict with God in Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald: "Mich kennt kein Gott. Meine Herren, was ist das: Gott? Ein alter Mann mit einem langen Bart. Was kennt der? Nichts kennt der, denn der lebt zu sehr weit droben"(II,476). The prosecution's plea for life imprisonment and "Aberkennung der bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte" is only mildly more severe than that of the defence which demands that Sladek be examined for mental illness which could also result in his social ostracism.

In Der Fall E. the school teacher Ella Waldt is dismissed from her position without compensation for alleged communist sympathies. In this work fundamental questions of law and individual rights are raised and shown to be entirely relative. Ella was tried and convicted by the bureaucracy without recourse to a court of law. The fragment echoes Sladek's trial in a number of ways: Ella is actually driven to insanity by the situation and dies in a mental institution; the representatives of religion, in this case her father and the 'Leichenbitter', are shown to connive with the authorities to bring about her

181. The material for Sladek was gathered during 1926 when Horváth was associated with the 'Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte' (II,662) but this was not the source for the 'Fall E.' as the editors of the Gesammelte Werke suggest. This case attracted wide press coverage. Horváth probably learned of it through Die Weltbühne of which he was a regular reader, cf. Über ÖvH 2, p.210 and Schröder's documentation.



dismissal; the legal system itself offers little hope for her. Connivance between the religious and legal systems is seen during the 'Elternversammlung' when the senior teacher offers to attempt a 'Gnadengesuch' on her behalf. She dismisses this quasi-religious notion (which implies an acceptance of guilt) and demands instead her rights:

ELLA: Gnade? Ich verlange mein Recht! Niemals Gnade! Mein Recht! Hören Sie: mein Recht!

HAUPTLEHRER: Ich habe hier nichts mehr zu suchen.- (Ab) Wen die Götter vernichten wollen, dem nehmen sie zuerst den Verstand (VII,41).

The 'Anwalt' explains to her how society destroys its potentially harmful members: "Wie plötzlich alle Gesetze aufgehoben sind, das war schon immer so - die Gesetze stehen gegen den Menschen, und wenn nicht, dann werden sie eben gebrochen. Der Einzelne ist schutzlos" (VII,36). However, he later adopts the same tactics as Sladek's lawyer and organises her committal to a psychiatric institution in order to secure her a pension.

In Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald Marianne endures a twofold process of social excommunication: first through her relationship with Alfred and the birth of their child which results in exclusion from her social environment, and moral rejection by the church, as evidenced in the confession scene. Nevertheless she is still able to carry on until the second blow falls: her conviction and imprisonment for petty theft. Like Ella she has lost her will to resist and this will is broken by experiences at the hands of the authorities and not through any moral censure that family or church can impose on her:

VALERIE: Zu guter Letzt ist bei einer solchen Liaison überhaupt nie jemand schuld - das ist doch zuguterletzt eine Frage der Planeten, wie man sich gegenseitig bestrahlt und so.

MARIANNE: Mich hat man aber eingesperrt. (Stille) Sie haben mich sehr erniedrigt.

OSKAR: Die Polizei trägt allerdings keine Glacéhandschuhe (I,246).

The contrast between a moral transgression and a legal one is made clear here. The former, explained in Valerie's vague and verbose astrology, appears to have lost its potentially destructive consequences which the same situation had for Hebbel or Ludwig Thoma in their treatment of the Magdalena 'Stoff'.

This is contrasted with Marianne's two brief utterances separated by a 'Stille' where obviously her independent spirit has been broken and she is now capable of 'reintegration' into the society she sought to break out of. Oskar's reply reveals ill-concealed satisfaction at the treatment meted out to her. The other 'crime' committed is the murder of Marianne's baby, for which there is no justice. Horváth points to a connection between the Christian morality of the grandmother and the official world through the impersonal and bureaucratic language she employs in the letter:

DIE GROSSMUTTER: (Geht gebeugt auf und ab und diktiert) Wertes Fräulein! - Jawohl: Fräulein! - Leider müssen wir Ihnen eine für Sie recht traurige Mitteilung machen. Gott der Allmächtige hat es mit seinem unerforschlichen Willen so gewollt, daß Sie, wertes Fräulein, kein Kind mehr haben sollen (...) Aber trösten Sie sich, Gott der Allmächtige liebt die unschuldigen Kinder. Punkt. Neuer Absatz (I,248f.).

Marianne recognises immediately that the grandmother is responsible for Leopold's death which is shown by her spontaneous reaction to kill the old lady with the zither. Oskar, however, prevents Marianne from taking justice into her own hands and strangles her until she desists. In the face of this heinous crime, for which there is clearly no justice forthcoming from the legal system, it is doubly ironical that the omnipotent God is also on the side of the evil-doers, or at least the grandmother, Oskar and the Zauberkönig all evoke God in the final scene (and elsewhere in the play), which appears almost as a collusion against Marianne.

In Kasimir und Karoline the one small crime committed by Merkl Franz, breaking open automobiles, will certainly have fatal consequences according to Erna:

Weil er doch schon oft vorbestraft ist - da hauns ihm jetzt fünf Jahr Zuchthaus hinauf wie nichts - und dann kommt er nicht mehr heraus, weil er sich ja während seiner Vorstrafen schon längst eine Tuberkulose geholt hat - Der kommt nicht mehr heraus! (I,318).

The gap between 'Justiz' and 'Gerechtigkeit' is also illustrated graphically in the figure of Speer, a representative of the judiciary ("ein hoher Justizmann"). In the course of his increasing intoxication he picks up two prostitutes and becomes involved in a mass brawl. Despite the severe injuries incurred there are no legal proceedings even though Speer is the indirect cause of the fight. In addition, during the play he is shown to

be autocratic, jealous of his friend Rauch (he even attempts to assault him) as well as drunken. There is also an allusion to the collusion between the judiciary, the military, and fascist ideas:

SPEER: Haben Sie schon mal einen Richter gesehen, der kein Offizier war? Ich nicht!

RAUCH: Es gibt schon einige.

SPEER: Juden! (I,301).

The clash between secular and religious moral codes (whereby the law itself is a development and concretisation of religious doctrine) is signalled in the title of Glaube Liebe Hoffnung which Horváth claims: "könnte jedes meiner Stücke heißen"(I,328). This is significant as far as it implies strongly that Horváth sees the gulf between the theoretical philosophy of the Judaic-Christian religious tradition and the actual betrayal of its tenets in practice; especially as religion is shown repeatedly to ally itself with the powerful and the oppressors rather than with the oppressed. The title can be interpreted in a variety of ways: an ironical counterpoint in the light of the obvious failure of basic Christian doctrine to be integrated and practised in the judicial system; and the total absence of caritas in the play although this was decreed by Paul to be the most important of the three: "Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe, diese drei, aber die Liebe ist die Größte unter ihnen" (I Corinthians 13:13). In one of the early drafts of the 'Randbemerkung' Horváth claims that this title is not intended ironically (Mat GLH,65) and that there is evidence to suggest that these triple tenets of the Christian faith do in fact play a role in Elisabeth's psychological make-up. In the discarded 'Monolog' Elisabeth asserts her determination to continue: "Ich glaube noch daran, daß ich Glück haben muß - das ist der einzige Glaube, der mir geblieben ist. Und der Glaube versetzt Berge und ich werde den Kopf nicht hängen lassen" (Mat GLH,41). The reference to faith moving mountains is significant for it is found in the same letter to the Corinthians. Her conception of faith and belief is however clearly a secular one, understood as worldly good fortune.

Although this monologue was later rejected, its sentiments are contained in Elisabeth's recurrent phrase: "ich werde den Kopf nicht hängen lassen". It gradually becomes a pathetically absurd standpoint in the face of the overwhelming social and legal united front opposing her. These forces of oppression manifest themselves in the encounter between Elisabeth, die Prantl, Frau Amtsgerichtsrat and the Präparator. The dialogue

"Die kleinen Verbrechen" and Criticism of the Judiciary

revolves around the absurd misunderstanding of 'Versicherungsinspektor' and 'Zollinspektor':

DIE PRANTL: Ruhe!

PRÄPARATOR: Ruhe!

DIE PRANTL: (droht mit dem Zeigefinger) Fräulein, Fräulein - wer schreit hat unrecht.

PRÄPARATOR: (schreit) Unrecht! Jawohl!! (Stille) (I,342).

The word play on 'Unrecht' introduces the legal aspect and demonstrates an ironic double standard. The repeated calls by Die Prantl for Elisabeth to remain silent, not to offer any defence and thus imply admittance of guilt, foreshadows the actual court-case. In the same scene, the Frau Amtsgerichtsrat, an unofficial representative of the judiciary, explains to Elisabeth that justice and the law are not necessarily synonymous:

ELISABETH: (fährt plötzlich los) Ich bin doch keine Betrügerin!

FRAU AMTSGERICHTSRAT: Darauf kommt es auch nicht an, Fräulein! Sondern ob der Tatbestand des Betrugers erfüllt ist, darauf kommt es an! Sonst würd sich ja die ganze Justiz aufhören! (I,343).

Elisabeth's confession that she has a previous conviction produces an almost hysterical reaction on the part of the Präparator and her immediate dismissal indicates the circulus vitiosus that faces any previous offender. It suggests further that the law is intended for the judicial system and not for the defendant:

FRAU AMTSGERICHTSRAT: (...) aber tuns die Verhandlung nur ja nicht in die Länge ziehn durch unnötige Verteidigung!! (I,345).

The depressing picture of bureaucratic manipulation depicted during the 3rd 'Bild' "Vor dem Wohlfahrtsamt" is intensified further by hints of collusion between various branches of the state apparatus when the Amtsgerichtsrat and his wife appear. He and the 'Regierungsrat' of the Social Welfare Office are revealed to be friends, and the 'Sanitätsrat' has offered him advice on his intestinal problems. The discussion between the couple provides ironically the main comic relief with the implication that only the ruling class can afford to squabble over such

trivial problems. The Frau Amtsgerichtsrat is able to practise her profession as a traveller in corsets in order to free herself from her husband's purse strings, whereas the same job is absolutely crucial to Elisabeth's existence. The collusion between the Christian world view and the judiciary is also made explicit through the use of religious phrases by those in positions of power. For example, it is the Schupo who voices the title of the play in order to buoy up Elisabeth's flagging spirits: "Ohne Glaube Liebe Hoffnung gibt es logischerweise kein Leben. Das resultiert alles voneinander" (I,353). Elisabeth's death is provided with visual symbolism that has unmistakable religious connotations. As she dies Horváth specifies three times in the stage directions that the policemen put on white gloves before they go out to parade. The allusion here is to Pilate (the impartial bureaucrat) washing his hands of Christ's death and to the situation of the police and the judiciary abdicating responsibility for their part in Elisabeth's death.

The dramatic model which Horváth's Volksstücke and particularly Glaube Liebe Hoffnung resemble in respect to the theme of criminality is Gerhart Hauptmann's 'Diebskomödie' Der Biberpelz (1892). In his afterword to the Propyläen edition, Hubert Razinger terms the play a "Komödie der Gerechtigkeit" in its double meaning of dealing with the judicial system as well as providing justice for the comic heroine Frau Wolff in that she escapes punishment although justice in the official sense has not been done because the case remains unsolved. In the play's milieu, characters, dialect and comic action there are formal resemblances to the Volksstück which antecede naturalism: "Was Hauptmann damit erreicht, ist aber schon fast etwas Übernaturalistisches: die Wiedergabe der Volksseele, womit die Komödie zugleich zum Volksstück im besten und zündendsten Sinn des Wortes wird"(182). While Frau Wolff may resemble Elisabeth and Marianne in her "Sehnsucht nach ein wenig Glück"(183) and is also only involved in petty crimes, as befits a Volksstück or comedy, she provides Prussian officialdom with a resilient and superior opponent who ultimately triumphs over the unjust law or system (to use Northrop Frye's model). This ensures both a comic mood throughout the play as well as an ending in keeping with the comedy form(184). Minor injustice (i.e. her theft to support her family) can be accepted if no major injustice is committed and the ruling powers are revealed as ridiculous. The open ending regarding the fate of the liberal Dr Fleischer that has been suggested (i.e. the 'Sozialistengesetze') is quite

182. Hubert Razinger, 'Nachwort', Der Biberpelz, Propyläen Textausgabe, Berlin, Ullstein, 1959, p.69.

183. Ibid., p.71.

acceptable to comedy for this is indeed the main social-critical point of the play. In contrast to this relatively harmonious outcome Horváth's heroines, who actually commit misdemeanours and are dealt with by the authorities for these minor offences, are denuded of any resilience and commence a downward descent as opposed to Frau Wolff's upward path.

The fact that Horváth has chosen minor offences and that the actual laws involved are not specifically criticised demonstrates the main difference between his Volksstücke and the other 'Justizstücke' of the time and reveals a concern with the effects of the judicial system as a whole rather than interest in one particular law. In an early draft of the 'Randbemerkung' entitled "Über die Entstehung meines Volksstückes 'Glaube Liebe Hoffnung'" he refers specifically to these plays: "Wenn schon Justiz, dann muß es schon ein richtiger korrekter Mord sein, oder Justizmord - das ist die Hauptsach, auch in den Tendenzstücken" (Mat GLH,63). On the manuscript the word 'Tendenzstücken' is crossed out and replaced by: "Justizstücken, die sich mit den Folgen beschäftigen. Es interessiert nur der hingerichtete Führer, niemals aber die 1000 Jahre Zuchthaus für sein Gefolge" (Mat GLH,65) As mentioned already, plays devoted to these capital crimes were not Volksstücke and certainly not comedies but were given a variety of generic terms. Horváth's use of the genre Volksstück reflects his concern with ordinary people caught up in the "Maschinerie der Paragraphen", an early title for Glaube Liebe Hoffnung. The predicament fulfils the key requirements of the Volksstück, at least according to Hein's recipe: its everyday nature combined with the "moralische Entrüstung" of society. These are both underpinned by the fundamental "Glaube an Moral und Gerechtigkeit" which is crucial to the ordered world of the Volksstück. Horváth's Volksstücke place these basic tenets in question, particularly the notion of justice in so far as it is derived from the judicial system. Because the Volksstück concerns itself with the broad populace, it can only demonstrate small victories over the system, whether political, religious or judicial. When these various pillars of the ruling apparatus are shown to be in collusion then the small man is revealed to be helpless with no possibility of recourse, and the

184. The ending has been the subject of some critical dispute: cf. Jürgen Jacobs 'Hauptmanns Der Biberpelz und Der rote Hahn', Die deutsche Komödie, hrsg. von Walter Hinck, p.197ff.; and Fritz Martini, 'Der Biberpelz: Gedanken zum Bautypus einer naturalistischen Komödie', Lustspiele und das Lustspiel: "Das Ende des Spiels öffnet das Bewußtsein des Zuschauers der Einsicht, daß die hier sich darstellende Gesellschaft - 'unten' wie 'oben' - in einer Welt des eigentlich kriminellen Scheins lebt", p.235.

reaction of his fellow citizens is precisely as ruthless and heartless as that of officialdom.

## 6. The 'Happy-endings' of the Volksstücke as Disappointed Utopias

DER RITTMEISTER: Ende gut, alles gut! (I,238).

The assertion that a comedy must have a happy-ending is of course a commonplace and is scarcely given serious scholarly attention, apart from passing acknowledgement of its existence as a popular definition of comedy. It is therefore surprising that this basic component of comedy, or at least of the expectation of a comedy has been overlooked, whereas the function of the ending in narrative prose is receiving critical attention(185). Walter Hinck has provided a stimulus to rectify this oversight in a published lecture entitled significantly: 'Vom Ausgang der Komödie: Exemplarische Lustspielschlüsse in der europäischen Literatur'(186). In this limited format Hinck is able only to isolate the servant figure and examine his changing status from Beaumarchais to Brecht. He indicates also the importance of the utopian moment in comedy, the possibility of a better world that is implied even in the ending of a cruel comedy such as The Merchant of Venice:

Ein Sieg der Utopie über die Wirklichkeit, gewiß! Ein Glück zudem, woran der Außenseiter nicht teilhat. Aber diese Utopie besitzt doch die Kraft, von der Ernst Bloch spricht: der Hoffnung und dem Handeln ein Ziel, eine bessere Welt dringlich zu machen. Eine Welt öffnet sich, in der auch Vorstellungen wie die vom Goldenen Zeitalter und vom Ewigen Frieden angesiedelt sind(187).

This notion proceeds much further than just reconciliation or restoration of harmony amongst a certain configuration of characters. Northrop Frye discerns a similar impetus underlying

185. cf. Marianne Schuller, Romanschlüsse in der Romantik: zum frühromantischen Problem von Universalität und Fragment, München, Fink, 1974.

186. Walter Hinck, Vom Ausgang der Komödie: Exemplarische Lustspielschlüsse in der europäischen Literatur, Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977.

187. Ibid., p.14.

most European comedy except that it is firmly limited by social reality; it must radiate a sense of conformity with the audience's moral expectations:

Comedy usually moves toward a happy-ending, and the normal response of the audience toward a happy-ending is "this should be", which sounds like a moral judgement. So it is, except that it is not moral in the restricted sense, but social. Its opposite is not the villainous but the absurd (...). The society emerging at the conclusion of comedy represents a kind of moral norm, or pragmatically free society (...). The movement from pistis to gnosis, from a society controlled by habit, ritual bondage, arbitrary law and the older characters to a society controlled by youth and pragmatic freedom is (...) a movement from illusion to reality(188).

Ernst Bloch devotes a short chapter in Das Prinzip Hoffnung to the problem of the happy-ending entitled: 'Happy-end, durchschaut und trotzdem verteidigt'. He recognises this principle as an integral element of the capitalist world view in its function as a false harbinger of a better life:

Wo die Arbeit gar keine Freude macht, muß die Kunst dazu herhalten, Spaß zu sein, fröhlicher Schwindel, aufgesetztes happy-end (...) Die Besucher der Kinos und die Leser der Magazingeschichten erblicken rosenrote Aufstiege, als wären sie in der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaft die Regel, und nur der Zufall hätte sie für den zufälligen Beschauer verhindert(189).

He suggests that in a capitalist society there is a moral component contained in the happy-ending, for not everyone can find wealth, only the virtuous, and misery and poverty are thus reserved for the evil and morally deprived. However, the greatest obstacle to the establishment of the socialist utopia is the all-pervading nihilism and hopelessness that capitalism engenders. This must be overcome before the realistic happy-ending based on a radically altered working relationship can be realised. The notion of hope must be kept alive as the motivating force moving towards a better future.

Bloch's conception of the utopian requirement in art points,

188. Frye, op. cit., p.167.

189. Ernst Bloch, Das Prinzip Hoffnung, Bd.1, Suhrkamp,1959, chap. 32.



in keeping with his Marxist world view, to changing the world depicted. For Frye, the world, in the comedy, can at best be improved somewhat. Two quite different concepts of comedy are indicated here: the former suggests that the central thrust of comedy is social criticism, an attempt either to alter the world depicted or to imply that the world must be changed before the utopian moment can be made possible. The latter suggests that traditional comedy accepts the status quo and restores harmony by punishing, victimising, improving or excluding any trouble-makers at the conclusion, (whereby Frye stresses that the "fundamental principle of comedy is to include rather than exclude") (190).

If Northrop Frye's model is accepted as representative of the mainstream European comedy tradition (which he certainly intended it to be), then Horváth's Volksstücke deviate from the convention in a quite obvious manner. There are very few statements as to the specific nature of the Volksstück ending in relation to comedy in general but Brecht's comment can be assumed to be accurate which places the Volksstück securely in the framework of Frye's model: "Die Bösen werden bestraft und die Guten werden geheiratet, die Fleißigen machen eine Erbschaft und die Faulen haben das Nachsehen" (191). Artur Kutscher permits the 'Volksstückschluß' more scope: It may be tearful, sad or touching but never depressing or pessimistic. It must reinforce and confirm the popular moral norms: "Er (the ending) muß einen Sinn haben, der das Gewissen beruhigt und die gütigen moralischen Werte bestätigt. Die Bösen und Hartherzigen müssen ihre Strafe finden, und die Braven und Schwachen ihre Belohnung. Der Sieg darf nur dem Würdigen zuteil werden" (192). The Volksstück, while it may be permitted a serious tone, establishes at its conclusion the moral and social world of the traditional comedy.

The critical literature on the endings of Horváth's Volksstücke has concentrated on their circular structure. The carousel form in modern drama has been analysed by Reinhold Grimm (193) and a number of critics have placed the Volksstücke in this pattern. Rotermund for example considers the action of

190. Frye, op. cit., p.166.

191. Brecht, 'Anmerkungen zum Volksstück', Schriften zum Theater, Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp, 1957, p.115.

192. Artur Kutscher, Grundriß der Theaterwissenschaft, München, 1949. Cited in Kurzenberger, p.99.

193. Reinhold Grimm, 'Pyramide und Karussell', strukturen, Göttingen, Sachse & Pohl, 1963.

Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald to reveal a circular movement: "(...) am Schluß sind die schlechten Verhältnisse des Anfangs wiederhergestellt; die Wiederkehr des gleichen Schlechten könnte man als Strukturprinzip des Werkes bezeichnen"(194). Winston points out that in Italienische Nacht an "impression of circularity" is created by the introduction of contrasting images of night and day, sleep and watchfulness at the beginning and end of the play(195). According to Dirk Bruns the plots of the Volksstücke manifest themselves as "a fateful circle which imprisons the characters - a movement of closure" and Horváth destroys the audience's expectations of a happy-ending aroused by the generic classification(196).

While this rare example of critical consensus suggests that circularity is indeed an important structural element in the plays, there is no detailed description of the complex process that this circularity implies on both a psychological and formal level. It is insufficient to state that the happy ending of comedy is parodied in some way to disappoint audience expectations and that the ending is in fact tragic or no better than the beginning. Parodying the happy-ending has in fact a long tradition in German comedy as Arntzen points out(197) and is no special innovation by Horváth. Arntzen argues nevertheless for interpreting the ending of Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald as such a parody which: "eher als Zerstörung der Komödie oder gar als Ende eines Trauerspiels gelten kann"(198) because it renders the utopian moment meaningless and thus places the form itself in question. Arntzen ignores of course Horváth's repeated denial of elements of parody in his works and claims to be able to find "viele parodistische und satirische Stellen"(199). The main drawback of Arntzen's as well as the other exegeses is their tendency to extrapolate from one play and claim it as a valid structure for all the Volksstücke. The following analysis will examine various techniques Horváth employs, for each of the four Volksstücke provides its own variation of the disappointed happy-ending.

194. Rotermond, 'Die Erneuerung des Volksstücks', p.36.

195. Winston, Close Readings, p.141.

196. Bruns, 'Horváth's revival of the Folk Play', p.125f.

197. Helmut Arntzen, 'Horváth Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald', p.247. He cites as an example Lenz's Hofmeister.

198. Ibid.

199. Ibid., p.248.

Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald is characterised by a feigned reconciliation which is forcibly manufactured by the characters themselves. This is more clearly evident in the second to last scene - "Und abermals in der stillen Straße im achten Bezirk" - which provides a false happy-ending. Structurally it mirrors 'scene 2' of the first 'Bild', whereas the first and last scene of the play are both set in the 'Wachau'. In this scene Valerie achieves a general reconciliation and thus a feigned comedy ending. The actual repetition of the words 'versöhnen' and 'aussöhnen' which occur ten times in the course of the scene leaves no doubt as to its function. The Rittmeister insists that his disclosure at Maxim's was motivated purely by altruism in an effort to reconcile Marianne with her father: "versöhnend hab ich wirken wollen, versöhnend - und derweil hat sich eine Tragödie nach der anderen abgerollt"(I,237). Oskar and Alfred form a united front in their common distrust of Marianne and women in general, although Alfred is grateful to Oskar for having helped him achieve a reconciliation with Valerie. She in turn exerts pressure on the Zauberkönig to settle his differences with Marianne for then the business (the 'Puppenklinik') may be saved and a rosy outlook is assured: "VALERIE: (...) es wird alles wieder besser, besser, besser"(I,242). This reconciliation is worth examining in more detail for it provides valuable insights into the values and priorities of Horváth's 'Kleinbürger'. First Valerie stresses the business interest that would be gained; next they assure themselves that Marianne is scarcely a fully accountable human being:

VALERIE: (...) das ist doch nur ein dummes Weiberl - ein ganz armes dummes Weiberl -

ZAUBERKÖNIG: Dumm ist sie schon. Saudumm! (I,242).

followed by an appeal to his sentimentality and familial pride as a grandfather:

ZAUBERKÖNIG: Großpapa?

VALERIE: Ja. (Stille) (I,242).

At this point the 'Realschülerin' begins her music again, a Strauß waltz which provides the last straw: he is convinced. Thus Valerie appeals in turn to his greed, pride as a business-man, status as a patriarchal progenitor and is aided by the opportune influence of music which evokes a harmonious world: together they provide a combination of irresistible appeals to the petit-bourgeois consciousness. She continues her reconciliatory 'Stöberei', as she terms it, with Oskar and

Marianne. As Marianne enters the 'Puppenklinik' to see her father her final words reflect the coercive nature of the happy-ending Valerie is trying to bring about:

MARIANNE: Es ist mir nämlich zu guter Letzt schießwurscht - und das, was ich da tu, tu ich nur wegen dem kleinen Leopold, der doch nichts dafür kann (I,247).

and Horváth's stage direction provides the final ironical note, suggesting that life in the 'Stillen Straße' has indeed come full circle: "Sie öffnet die Tür und das Glockenspiel erklingt, als wäre nichts geschehen" (I,247).

Theoretically, the play could now end(200): the couples have been reunited and all obstacles to an ordered world have been removed with the exception of Marianne's child. The final scene provides then this state of affairs through premeditated murder to ensure that outwardly the prerequisites of comedy are fulfilled(201) and demonstrates at the same time the cruel deception at the root of this expectation. The reunion of Oskar and Marianne is a reversal of perhaps the most treasured comedy tradition: the tyrannical father coerces his daughter to marry against her will for financial reasons. This basic plot could have two possible outcomes in the normal genre scheme. A tragic one if she chooses death rather than a loveless marriage (the bourgeois tragedy); or a comic one if she and the man of her choice manage to outwit the father or convince him of the unworthiness of his choice. The marriage here, however, unmasks the hollowness of the convention for, as Dieter Hildebrandt sees it: "Sie stirbt den grausamsten, quälendsten Tod, den es bei Horváth gibt: den langsamen Tod in der Ehe"(202).

In Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald, Kasimir und Karoline and Glaube Liebe Hoffnung it is immediately evident that one female character places herself outside the pale of her society. The

200. Jean-Claude François suggests that the failure of the relationship between Alfred and Marianne is the true ending, Histoire et fiction, p.243. Hummel even proposes that the play ends three times: after the scene in Maxim, the second to last and final scene which "hält ein Stück offen, zeigt seinen Ausschnittcharakter", p.59f.

201. "Denn dies vor allem verlangt das Grundmodell (of the Volksstück): die Auflösungen der Verwirrungen und Rührseligkeiten im alles harmonisierenden Ende", Kurzenberger, p.99.

202. Dieter Hildebrandt, Horváth in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten, p.73.

motivation is always to improve one's material or emotional situation, or, to use Arntzen's term, she embodies the utopian component of comedy, the search for a better world. In Italienische Nacht this desire is represented by Martin, and to a lesser degree by Karl, through their ostensible commitment to socialist ideals. The Marxist utopia is referred to in an exchange between the Stadtrat and Martin, although neither specifies exactly what they mean:

STADTRAT: Oder glaubst denn du, du oberflächlicher Phantast, daß kurz und gut mit der Verwirklichung des Marxismus kurz und gut das Paradies auf Erden entsteht?

MARTIN: Was du unter kurz und gut verstehst, das weiß ich nicht. Ich weiß auch nicht, was du unter Paradies verstanden haben willst, aber ich kanns mir lebhaft ausmalen, was du unter Marxismus verstehst. Verstanden? Was ich darunter versteh, daran glaube ich (I,105).

However, the only hint Martin gives of a better future is his own personal advancement by seeking a larger centre for political activity. Karl, as has been shown, is caught up in a continual struggle between his political and his erotic commitments and confesses to Leni that the future therefore appears black (I,119) so that her offer of marriage and 4,000 marks is in fact fulfilment of his notion of utopia: "Ich hab ja schon immer von der Erlösung durch das Weib geträumt, aber ich habs halt nicht glauben können"(I,145). Personal interest triumphs over political principles when Martin returns with his comrades to save the Republicans and thus guarantee a happy-ending. This is then confirmation of Betz's warning to Martin that instincts can interfere with political ideals (I,112f.). However, the central reversal of the comedy convention is to be found in the perspective presented by the Fascists. In the 4th 'Bild' the 'Faschist' extols to Anna the closest approximation of utopian ideas to be heard from any part of the political spectrum, and couched in vague bombast and pseudo-religious terminology. He maintains: "Wir haben hier eine Mission zu erfüllen", and to Anna's question as to the future he replies: "Ich darf darüber nichts sagen, weil das ein heiliges Geheimnis ist"(I,122). Although no new society is visible at the end of this political comedy, and the cracks in the old one are made even more visible, the only utopian glimpses provided of Hinck's 'Goldenes Zeitalter' come from a source which make this a very pessimistic comedy indeed.

Karoline's utopia on the other hand is of a personal nature - "eine höhere gesellschaftliche Stufe und so"- because she has no particular 'Zukunftsblick' in her present occupation in terms

of increased earnings, to which Rauch replies: "Zukunft ist eine Beziehungsfrage" (I,305). She explains to Kasimir at the end of the play her motivation for leaving him: "Ich habe es mir halt eingebildet, daß ich mir einen rosigeren Blick in die Zukunft erringen könnte" (I,321). She sums up the play and her failed attempt at achieving her modest materialistic utopia in a soliloquy: "(vor sich hin) Man hat halt oft so eine Sehnsucht in sich - aber dann kehrt man zurück mit gebrochenen Flügeln und das Leben geht weiter, als wär man nie dabei gewesen" (I,322). As in Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald the prerequisite couples are formed, but their constitution provides no grounds for optimism. Schürzinger returns to Karoline hopeful for a promotion which has been gained through her 'prostitution'. He raises her spirits for a happy-ending by inculcating into her the inane phrases of Couéism - "es geht immer besser" - (203) which she repeats 'tonlos'. Their relationship is based on her broken will and disappointed desire for a better life which is indicted by her passive acceptance of Schürzinger's kiss: "(sie wehrt sich nicht)" (I,323). Kasimir and Erna have formed a 'Notgemeinschaft' characterised by their common acceptance of disillusionment:

KASIMIR: Träume sind Schäume.

ERNA: Solange wir uns nicht aufhängen, werden wir nicht verhungern (I,323).

Their relationship is expressed in the distorted form of a kitsch song which laments the transience of all things and constitutes the final scene:

ERNA (singt leise - und auch Kasimir singt allmählich mit:)  
Und blühen einmal die Rosen  
Wird das Herz nicht mehr trüb  
Denn die Rosenzeit ist ja  
Die Zeit für die Lieb  
Jedes Jahr kommt der Frühling  
Ist der Winter vorbei  
Nur der Mensch hat alleinig  
Einen einzigen Mai (I,324).

It can be interpreted to mean that the indestructible, if tarnished hope of these characters for eternal love is in itself a distorted form of hope for a non-alienated relationship. The song also points out how these false notions emanate from an 'artistic' source - songs, books, plays, films - and place the individual in a continual tension between his or her personal

203. Axel Fritz terms Emile Coué a "psychologischer Heilpraktiker" who had nonetheless widespread influence, p.275.

situation and the happy-ending that trivial art demands, and in a capitalist society this must have the natural corollary of lowering one's self-esteem as Bloch has demonstrated. This idea is also reflected when the Rittmeister places his seal of approval on Valerie's plan of general reconciliation: "Ende gut, alles gut"(I,238) whereby this reference to a comedy by Shakespeare is intended less as a literary allusion than as a reiteration of the deeply embedded wish-fulfilment desire that the title expresses.

Marianne's fate is also depicted as an unsuccessful attempt to defy social constriction and to seek a better life. She expresses this desire to Alfred in an image of transcendence: "Und ich geh direkt aus mir heraus und schau mir nach - jetzt, siehst du, jetzt bin ich schon ganz weit fort von mir - ganz dort hinten, ich kann mich kaum mehr sehen. - Von dir möchte ich ein Kind haben -" (I,191f.). Yet this is interpreted by society as an act of almost revolutionary proportions as Valerie indicates: "Und die hat sich eingebildet, die Welt nach ihrem Bild umzuformen - aber die Welt folgt halt doch nur dem Verstand"(I,242). Marianne's final words in the play as she accedes to Oskar's offer of 'love': "Ich kann nicht mehr. Jetzt kann ich nicht mehr"(I,251) reveal the impossibility of attaining even a small degree of independence and individuality.

In Glaube Liebe Hoffnung Elisabeth is motivated by a similar desire to improve her lot and to become financially independent in a time of unemployment and open hostility to women working. Despite her increasingly desperate predicament, Elisabeth's recurrent phrase radiates hope: "ich lasse den Kopf nicht hängen", which she repeats even in her last moments of delirium.

The generic classification of this play is problematic(204) although Horváth critics have invariably included the play among the Volksstücke. If the ending of a play, however, is taken as a key indicator of genre, then Glaube Liebe Hoffnung appears to resist inclusion under any comedy classification. Herbert Gamper has demonstrated through an analysis of the recurrent death images that the structure of the play resembles indeed a dance of

204. In an early draft of the Randbemerkung to Glaube Liebe Hoffnung Horváth writes: "Ich habe ihm den Untertitel gegeben "Kleinbürgerliche Komödie" denn das individualistisch erlebte und gelebte Schicksal ist immer Komödie, selbst wenn es auf den Kothurnen des Trauerspiels daherschreitet (Mat GLH,56). (...) So entstand dieses Stück. Ein Volksstück mit dem Titel Glaube Liebe Hoffnung gab ich ihm (sic) (...) Die große Komödie Glaube Liebe Hoffnung. Und dieser Titel ist nicht ironisch gemeint" (Mat GLH,64).

death(205). He discerns parallels between the "Übergangszeit vom Spätmittelalter zur Neuzeit (...) die große Zeit der Totentanz-Darstellungen", which was "eine Zeit des Zerfalls aller Lebenswerte", and Horváth's time, the end of the "bürgerlichen Zeitalters"(206). The dance of death was not only a pictorial representation and intensification of the memento-mori topos but was also depicted as a real dance, a "Reigen, in den die Toten als Wiedergänger die Lebenden hineinzuziehen suchen"(207). A 'Reigen' implies again a circular structure. This can be seen in the fate of Maria in the 3rd 'Bild' who will be in precisely the same predicament as Elisabeth after she has been released from prison. In this reading then, Elisabeth's suicide can be interpreted as an escape from the 'Reigen' of bureaucracy and hopelessness which has reduced her to starvation:"Ich bin doch nur ins Wasser, weil ich nichts mehr zum Fressen hab"(I,377). She has lost the battle between individual and society and the latter celebrates its victory symbolically by a parade marking the dawning of a new day. Order has been restored as befits comedy but at a price that no comedy can afford.

An earlier version sees Elisabeth forced into a strait-jacket while the parade marches by, which conveys in visual terms her predicament. In the light of this ending the final version also seems optimistic. Assuming that the individual can never win once engaged in the struggle with society and bureaucracy, then suicide is one of the few active expressions of free will left to the individual. The other alternative is cooperation with the authorities, which is explored in a variant entitled 'Epilog'. Elisabeth betrays Maria to the police for reasons that are not entirely clear. The play concludes with a parade which includes all the characters except: "Maria, die zur Zeit keine Paraden sehen darf (...) Und die Sonne scheint und der Himmel lacht"(BS GLH,129). This ending corresponds more closely to the other Volksstücke with its explicit ironic celebration - a forced comedy ending is appended to action which does not organically produce it. The fact that Horváth finally rejected this effect is consonant with changing the subtitle from Volksstück to 'Totentanz' reflecting the different intention of the work. This contradicts Gamper's assertion that Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald ought to be considered a "großer Totentanz"(208) because images of death are found in it too. While acknowledging the importance of this

205. Herbert Gamper, 'Todesbilder in Horváths Werk', Horváth-Diskussion.

206. Ibid., p.67f.

207. Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde, p.823.



element in many plays his argument must deny any importance whatsoever to the genre designations, for Gamper can find these images in most of the plays. Accordingly, at least half of Horváth's comedies could be termed 'Totentänze' of varying dimensions(209).

If the utopian possibility is an essential component of the comedy intention, then Horváth's Volksstücke simultaneously affirm and negate it. It is affirmed in the longing of certain characters to transcend and improve their social or personal situation which they express through a preoccupation with 'Zukunft' and 'Hoffnung'. However, the social and personal environmental forces always gain the upper hand and reveal these modest yearnings to be truly utopian in the now common meaning of the word: foolishly idealistic. Thus the endings of Horváth's Volksstücke demonstrate no development towards a better society, just the triumph of the existing one which also destroys or severely punishes these disruptive elements.

208. Gamper, *Ibid.*, p.67.

209. It must be noted here that for the actual première on the 13 November, 1936 in Theater für 49 in Vienna the subtitle was altered to Ein kleines Volksstück and the title itself to Liebe Pflicht Hoffnung, Krischke, p.224.