5

The Isolated Individual

The previous chapter explored how several of Hochwälder's characters look to a higher order and authority for guidance on how to behave, only to discover too late that their faith has been misplaced, leaving them alone to bear the consequences of their actions. A related theme, repeated throughout Hochwälder's work, is the fundamental isolation of the individual from others: characters repeatedly demonstrate that they alone can be held accountable for their behaviour, which ultimately cannot be controlled or predicted by others.

Hochwälder again and again demonstrates in his dramas that individual characters do not really know one another, that individuals often give one another very little support, and that social conventions of behaviour provide very weak control over human actions. The isolation of individuals proves to be a major factor in the tragic outcomes of plays such as "Jehr", "Trommler" and "Virginia. Schauspiel in fünf Akten"[1], while in a more light-hearted vain, mistaken identity and misconstrued behaviour, based on false assumptions about others, form the basis for the plots of several plays such as *Die unziemliche Neugier. Musikalisches Lustspiel,* "Die verschleierte Frau. Komödie in drei Akten"[2], and *Der Unschuldige*[3]. Be it comedy or serious drama, the fundamental isolation of characters from each other is a recurring theme.

This is often emphasized by the settings of the plays. Many dramas take place in locations removed and disconnected from the wider world, such as "Jehr", where the house is an hour's walk from the village ("Jehr", 18), and "Virginia", where the size of the estate is such that one must ride for more than six hours to reach its boundaries ("Virginia", 2), while *Der Flüchtling* and "Die verschleierte Frau", are set on borders. Such isolation may be chosen deliberately as a means of withdrawing from society, as is the case in the plays "Der Prozeß", *Die Prinzessin von Chimay*, and *Lazaretti oder Der Säbeltiger* or may result from a combination of external factors such as political circumstances or the weather: thus, disparate groups of refugees find themselves thrust together in exile in "Casa Speranza", trapped by the snow and the dictates of the Prussian invader in *Hôtel du Commerce*; or brought together by the night and the weather into the relative isolation of the lodgings of *Die Herberge* or the "hospitality" of the castle in *Donadieu*. It is also the night that seems to trap Valmont with his alter-ego Bloner in *1003* and cuts them

[1] Fritz Hochwälder, "Virginia. Schauspiel in fünf Akten", ts., 1951, Hochwälder Nachlaß, Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Wien.
In previous chapters such isolation has also been noted in the plays, "Der liebe Augustin" and *Donnerstag*.

[2] Fritz Hochwälder, "Die verschleierte Frau. Komödie in drei Akten", ts., 1946, Hochwälder Nachlaß, Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Wien.

[3] *Der Himbeerpflücker*, which will be examined in the next chapter, could also be included in this group.

off from the outside world until morning. On a grander scale the brave social venture of *Das heilige Experiment* takes place in Paraguay, far removed from "civilisation".

But, even when the isolation is not emphasized by the physical surrounding, for example in "Trommler" and "Der liebe Augustin", the individual, although surrounded by others, may be utterly alone. In the latter play, as was noted earlier, the protagonist stands isolated in the community, both when coping with his wife's illness, and during the plague, when he alone is able to provide any light relief. When the crisis has passed, he is again isolated by his cynicism, which puts him apart from those around him. In Hochwälder's radio play, "Trommler" (1932), the protagonist is also cut off from those around him, not, because of general selfishness and cruelty, but because, after years of absence, he is no longer part of the community. His parents, too, are isolated from the rest of the population, having withdrawn and become bitter and introverted, since the loss of their son.

"Trommler" is the earliest Hochwälder drama to explore the potential incongruity between external appearances and the individual within. The lengthy opening scene shows a confused Trommler struggling to come to terms with the fact that no one recognizes him in his home village, so much has he changed. Far from the welcome a returning soldier might expect, this lack of recognition leaves him alienated and feeling as if he were already dead[4]. He tells his friend Karl, who also did not recognise him at first, "Mir ist, wie wenn ich an mein' eigenen Grab stünd..." ("Trommler", 12), and when he sees his name on the war memorial observes: "In Marmor eingraviert! Das löscht niemand mehr aus" ("Trommler", 13). He believes he smells of decay ("Trommler", 15) and claims "Ich bin gfalln [sic], Karl, sag ich dir! Mich hebt keiner mehr auf!" ("Trommler", 16). The scene ends in an Expressionistic manner, typical of the tenor of the entire play, with Trommler insisting on his right to scream, "Lass mich schrei'n. Lass mich schrei'n..." ("Trommler", 17). Far from providing him with the relief he seeks, alcohol merely accentuates his morbid thoughts: "[...] Einen Toten schüttens mit Spiritus an, dass er nicht faulig wird. Ich habs mal wo g'lesen - der ist gut Karl!" ("Trommler", 37). He finds little comfort in the tavern where everyone, except his friends Karl and Anna, sees him as an annoying stranger. His isolation is most clearly demonstrated when he clashes with teenagers playing skittles. The youngsters, who were just babies when he left, hold him up to ridicule when he makes a fool of himself trying to play ("Trommler", 40-42). Not only is he not recognized in his old home village, he is also excluded from social activities that played a role in his former life.

While the early part of "Trommler" is an interesting exploration of the alienation and isolation of the individual, attention quickly turns to the parents' murderous intentions, relegating the *Titelheld* to a passive victim [see Chapter 1]. Yet to a certain extent, each of the three main characters are fundamentally isolated from others when making the decisions which contribute to

[4] This is a very early example of Hochwälder's penchant for prophetic insights that allude to the eventual outcome of plays.

the tragedy. Trommler's inability to cope adequately with the shock of his reception leads to him making the fateful decision not to reveal his true identity to his parents, while the mother's obsession with finding her son and her husband's weakness in the face of this determination lead to Trommler's murder.

Isolation is also a major factor in the other play Hochwälder wrote in 1932, "Jehr", a drama about incest, which was performed at the Kammerspiele in Vienna in 1933. The dialogue in the play is often stilted, ambiguous and difficult to understand, and while this in part emphasizes the isolation of the characters and their inability to communicate adequately with one another, it is also a legacy of the influence Expressionism had on the play. As a result, it remains far from clear throughout the play just what has taken place between father and daughter and how much Jehr's behaviour is caused by guilt and fear about what he might do, and how much is a result of what he has done.

The dramatic action centres around stonemason Jehr's battle with the sexual attraction he feels for his only daughter Elise, who, as she develops into a woman, looks more and more like his late wife, who died in childbirth. Matters are complicated both by the fact that their guest, Klotzfeld, is also sexually attracted to Elise, and by her blossoming relationship with the young man, Ergfrei.

The seclusion of the Jehr household[5] accentuates the domestic tension and disharmony[6], and this isolation from the outside world pervades the whole play, conveying an oppressive, claustrophobic atmosphere, which contributes to incestuous temptation. Jehr reveals to Murk just how hard he finds the situation: "Ich hab' furchtbare Angst --- Wir sind so allein und einsam hier draussen" ("Jehr", 7), and he complains that: "In letzter Zeit wird mir die Luft zu eng" ("Jehr", 8), a feeling which later explodes in the Expressionistic cry: "Es ist zu eng!" ("Jehr", 42). It is a feeling which Klotzfeld understands: "Ach... das Alleinsein... Ich versteh's schon..." ("Jehr", 46), recognizing that the temptations both he and Jehr feel are a direct result of their seclusion: "[...] In der Stadt kommt so was nicht vor. Da kriechen die Menschen übereinander hinweg, dass schon jeder den Stiefel eines Fremden ins Maul kriegt [...]" ("Jehr", 54). Even Elise, who for the early part of the play seems largely unaware of what is happening around her, eventually finds this solitude very difficult to bear, particularly after Klotzfeld's departure: "Es ist ja so furchtbar draussen" ("Jehr", 73).

However, while this isolation leads to such difficulties, the outside world is also threatening for an over-protective Jehr, who had his first sexual experience when he was Elise's age ("Jehr", 19). For this reason, he initially refuses to employ Muck, who would provide them both with much needed company, for this womaniser would pose a moral, and, it is implied, physical threat to Elise:

> [...] Ich hab' ein junges Weib im Haus. Das ist meine Tochter und an die

[5] The walk through the woods to the village takes an hour ("Jehr", 18).

[6] Cf. Murphy, 29.

darf mir keiner ran. - Ich weiss, wie du's getrieben hast in diesem Haus. Das gibt ein schönes Beispiel für ein junges Blut! [...] Sie weiss nichts, noch immer nicht -- ("Jehr", 5)[7]

Reluctant to take on extra staff, Jehr has also felt obliged to give up lucrative work that would have required travelling, for fear of leaving Elise alone ("Jehr", 4). He also refuses to let her go to another dance in the village, after allowing her to go to her first on her birthday and then sitting up waiting and worrying for her to return: the "fremden Burschen" are too great a threat ("Jehr", 24). Not only does this further separate them from the outside world, it also causes friction between father and daughter, adding to an already strained atmosphere.

Certainly, the only impact the outside world has on the Jehrs is negative. Gossip, seemingly started by Klotzfeld ("Jehr", 53), drives Jehr still further to introspection as he tries to ignore it ("Jehr", 68, 70), and helps deny Elise any outside support she might otherwise have received, since both her boyfriend and her friends avoid her because of the rumours ("Jehr", 72 and 75).

Cut off from the world around them, it is not surprising that an unhealthy mutual dependency has developed between father and daughter. Jehr tells Muck: "Wenn sie nicht wäre - ich hielt das Leben nicht aus! Wir sind allein hier draussen!" ("Jehr", 5)[8], and he later repeats these sentiments to Klotzfeld: "Wenn sie nicht wär, hätt' ich längst meinen eigenen Grabstein in Arbeit" ("Jehr", 19), a sentiment echoed in Murk's song, sung just before Jehr's death: "Den ersten Grabstein aber/ Den macht der G'sell fürs Meisterlein..." ("Jehr", 67). This dependency also explains his ecstatic joy when Elise rejects marriage to Klotzfeld to stay with her father, although he knows the danger this presents ("Jehr", 66). Her steadfast loyalty to her father reinforces his dependence on her and even when things become so bad that she turns to Ergfrei for help, she cannot break completely from him ("Jehr", 77).

Jehr at least partly recognizes the dangers such dependency poses, as the early conversation with Murk shows. However, his dependence on his daughter and his distrust of the outside world make it impossible to find a solution, although he does attempt to alleviate the problem as the situation becomes increasingly precarious. After initially rejecting the suggestions of others, in desperation he takes them up, only to find each attempt to avert disaster thwarted. Klotzfeld tells him he should find a new wife ("Jehr", 21) and, following the first violent encounter with Elise, Jehr pursues this idea only to have it flatly rejected by his daughter ("Jehr", 33). Muck also proposes a marital solution, suggesting that Jehr find a husband for Elise. At first, Jehr

[7] Bortenschlager [*Der Dramatiker Fritz Hochwälder*, 25-26] suggests the text implies that Murk may even be Elise's father. However, this view may be discounted since Muck reveals that he worked for Jehr for two years ("Jehr", 2), and yet Elise still recognizes him when he returns ("Jehr", 6), which would be unlikely were she only two when he left. Bortenschlager's error is, however, indicative of the problems posed by the rather stylised dialogue.

[8] This is, of course, a prophetic statement, for Jehr commits suicide when he loses his daughter.

thinks there is plenty of time for that ("Jehr", 6), but then seizes on the idea when confronted by Klotzfeld's departure, offering him Elise ("Jehr", 61), only for Elise to reject this idea ("Jehr", 64-65). In a last attempt to avoid disaster he invites Muck, who earlier had been seen as a threat to his daughter, back to work for him, as a way of breaking their isolation:

> Seit der Klotzfeld weg ist ... da ist's in diesem Haus furchtbar! ... Aber du warst ja noch nicht allein. Warst du schon allein? Ach, das ist's nicht! Ganz allein, sag ich dir, - ganz allein: da stirbt man... aber du! Denk dir: du bist mit wem und solltest allein sein, denn so stehts überall geschrieben... Du! ... aber ...(verstummt). ("Jehr" 68-69)

But this decision comes too late to save the situation and stop Ergfrei intervening and taking Elise away.

Matters are made worse by Klotzfeld. While his presence in the house does prevent father and daughter being alone together, he also suffers from the isolation and loneliness, and is drawn to Elise. On the night of her fifteenth birthday he attempts to seduce her in her room, only to be rejected ("Jehr", 30). It is perhaps his own sensitivity to temptation that leads him to suspect that something untoward is going on between father and daughter, and he uses this to threaten Jehr, as a way of diverting attention away from his own questionable behaviour ("Jehr", 35).

Thereafter, he keeps his distance from the Jehrs ("Jehr", 36-37), but still visibly struggles to suppress his desires, with Elise observing: "Er wird ganz käsig im Gesicht, wenn er mich sieht" ("Jehr", 37). The scene when a drunken Jehr begs Klotzfeld to come drinking and whoring with him, despite being full of ambiguous, Expressionistic dialogue, is also revealing. Klotzfeld concedes: "Der Verdruss sitzt mir schon selber in den Gliedern, seit letzter Zeit..." ("Jehr", 44) and the vocabulary he uses in the conversation subtly changes after mention of prostitutes is made. He specifically confirms that Elise is alone upstairs: "Allein ist sie oben, sagen sie..." ("Jehr", 46) and having beforehand expressed on three occasions the desire to go "hinein" to sleep ("Jehr", 43), now insists that: "Ich will hinauf" ("Jehr", 46, 47). Finally, he agrees to go off with Jehr, rather than going inside, but his insistence that they should not go to the tavern is notable for its failure to repeat his rejection of visiting the brothel ("Jehr", 47).

Repeated reference to his fevered state at once refers to his poor health and his unhealthy attraction to the girl. He tells Ergfrei: "In diesem Haus sitzt das Fieber" ("Jehr", 52), and concedes that: "Seit einigen Tagen hab ich Fieber!" ("Jehr", 54). But when Ergfrei suggests: "Sie reden im Fieber" ("Jehr", 53), he insists he is in full control of his senses. Despite this disclaimer, when speaking to Elise at times he seems delirious, exclaiming: "Fieber! Lucilia Cäsar. . die [sic] grünschillernde Schmeissfliege...", and moments later: "Ich Ich [sic] phantasiere" ("Jehr", 56). However, there is a strong suggestion that his illness is merely the pretext from escaping a dangerous situation:

KLOTZFELD: Ich hab alles ordentlich zusammengerichtet. Wegen schwerem Fieber. Die Lunge ist verlumpt. Ich muss in die Stadt!
ELISE: Was? Sie wollen weg?
KLOTZFELD: Sagen wir: die Lunge! Ich habe meine Koffer gepackt. Ich fahre morgen.
ELISE: (weinerlich) Oh, das ist aber schade...
KLOTZFELD: Heul nicht! Du bist kein Kind mehr, Liesel. ("Jehr", 57)

This is then made more explicit to Jehr:

KLOTZFELD: Ich muss wegfahren, Jehr! - Sie wissen ja, warum...
JEHR: Warum?
KLOTZFELD: (scheu) Die Lunge...
JEHR: Lüg nicht!
KLOTZFELD: Gut! Wissen Sie, Jehr, - wer will, dass nichts geschieht, der steckt den Kopf in den Sand... Ich fahre zur Stadt.
JEHR: Nichts geschieht! ("Jehr", 61)

His behaviour in dropping broad hints to Ergfrei about what is happening in the house is never adequately explained. Revenge for his own rejection by Elise seems more likely than a concern for her welfare, for his methods of drawing attention to the incestuous situation are decidedly underhand. He is well aware that he must be cautious in what he is doing, or he could be in trouble himself: "... Man könnte mich einsperren ..." ("Jehr", 52), and he tells an uncomprehending Ergfrei to watch out for anything that is not right in the Jehr household, and, more importantly, to listen for gossip before going to the police. Klotzfeld clearly intends to start the rumours: "...Nun: Falls Sie irgendwas merken, und wenn in der Stadt geredet wird; - der Tratsch wird ja von einem Wirtshaus ins andere...: [sic] Dann gehen Sie sofort zur Gendarmerie..." ("Jehr", 53).
His guilt about his own unsavoury lust for Elise prompts his initial violent rejection of Jehr's crude suggestion he marry her:

JEHR: Dir die Elise! Sie heiratet dich!
KLOTZFELD: Nein!...
JEHR: Ich geb sie dir. (Lauernd) Willst noch heute raufkriechen zu ihr?...
KLOTZFELD: (donnernd) Schweigen Sie! ("Jehr", 62)

Yet, if it is revenge he seeks, he is still persuaded to go along with Jehr's desperate plan, only to find his marriage proposal earns another rejection ("Jehr", 65).
While his departure removes one problem from the home, the gossip he spreads, and the fact that father and daughter are now even more isolated creates further difficulties. During the play, Jehr turns more and more to alcohol, which, far from being a solution exacerbates the situation, and affects his work and mental state ("Jehr", 76). It also contributes to violent outbursts against

Elise. The first of these comes when Elise returns from the dance, and still excited tries to teach her father to dance. Their physical proximity makes it difficult for him to restrain himself, and under the influence of alcohol he sees his dead wife in Elise ("Jehr", 28). Struggling with his own passion, he roughly pushes his daughter away, frightening and confusing her with his brutal response ("Jehr", 25-27).
A second major confrontation comes when Jehr forbids Elise to go to another dance. Although the argument here remains verbal rather than physical, the sight of Jehr standing up with an open razor in his raised hand effectively conveys the simmering violence ("Jehr", 41-42), an image later invoked in conversation by Elise:

> ERGFREI: Und ist es gemütlich mit ihm [Jehr]?
> ELISE: (fast singend) Oh ja ... Nur wenn er dasteht: mit dem blitzblanken Messer in der Hand, und der weisse Schaum ums Gesicht, - da tun einem die Augen weh ... ("Jehr", 48)

In this later scene, it is also revealed how bad things have become after Klotzfeld's departure, and that Jehr has threatened Elise with a kitchen knife ("Jehr", 76).
Already isolated, Jehr now has no one to turn to, for not only is the one person upon whom he relies the object of his desires, but also her behaviour contributes to the temptation he feels. On the threshold of adulthood, Elise is caught between naivety and partial adult awareness. In the second scene of the play she behaves like a typical adolescent: the excitement of her first major social event leaves her hot and flushed, she experiments with make-up with her friend Trude, and exchanges a first kiss with Ergfrei ("Jehr", 17). This excitement is carried into the scene where she tries to teach Jehr to dance, oblivious to the difficult situation in which she places Jehr.
However in the next few scenes she shows that she is not completely naive. Firstly, she seems quite able to deal with the advances of Klotzfeld and notes herself that she is no longer twelve years old ("Jehr", 50). Then in a rather ambiguous exchange with her father about his plan to remarry, it seems she is more aware than might be expected of the emotions he is feeling:

> ELISE: Wir brauchen niemand, Vater.
> JEHR: Und wenn ich ...
> ELISE: *Das tust du nicht* ...[my italics]
> JEHR: Ja, freilich ... nein ...
> ELISE: Gehst schlafen...
> JEHR: Lass dunkel. Ich geh ...
> ELISE: Gute Nacht.
> JEHR: Hab keine Angst. Ich wollte nur mit dir drüber ...
> ELISE: *Was sollt es auch sonst sein* ...[my italics] ("Jehr", 33-34)

Her reaction when overhearing Klotzfeld tell Jehr he knows what is going on is even more revealing: she sinks down the bed covering her face with her hands ("Jehr", 35). This and earlier incidents such as Elise's talk about her father to her friend Trude, which prompts her companion to exclaim: "Dass du überhaupt von etwas anderem redest!" ("Jehr", 11), and the dance scene with Jehr when she says: "Mit dir möcht ich am allerliebsten tanzen" ("Jehr", 25), demonstrate a fixation with the father, which may not be an uncommon psychological trait in teenage girls, but in the peculiar environment of the Jehr household, accentuates an abnormal situation.
To complicate matters further, there is the relationship between Elise and Ergfrei, and the suggestion of a pregnancy. In the scene where Ergfrei has sneaked into Elise's room it is hard to ascertain what has gone on between the youngsters. Certainly, Ergfrei behaves in a guilty fashion telling Elise to tidy her bed ("Jehr, 45), and he is keen to make sure with Elise that nothing has happened ("Jehr", 46-47). Elise also seems guilty and is keen to avoid her father learning of the visit ("Jehr", 56-57), although even if it were an innocent meeting both can be certain that Jehr would be angry. The exchange between Elise and Klotzfeld, just after Ergfrei has gone, is, at best obscure, yet seems to suggest that a sexual encounter has taken place, but that Elise may be too innocent to comprehend fully what has happened:

ELISE: Es ist ja nur ein Bub aus der Tanzschule.
KLOTZFELD: Als ich vorbeischlich, hab ich nicht gehorcht ...
ELISE: Meinen Sie ...
KLOTZFELD: Weisst du denn überhaupt was?
ELISE: (verständnislos) ("Jehr", 57)

Ergfrei's guilt about this meeting seems to be rekindled when Elise comes to visit him, three months after Klotzfeld has left, showing all the signs of being pregnant ("Jehr", 74-75). Again he is at pains to confirm that nothing happened, and again Elise's answer is ambiguous:

ERGFREI: (rauh) Hab ich dir was getan? Ich? ...
ELISE: Ich versteh dich nicht.
ERGFREI: Sag mirdas! [sic] (Fasst sie)
ELISE: Mein Gott ...
ERGFREI: Jetzt sag die Wahrheit!
ELISE: Ich weiss nicht ...
ERGFREI: (lässt sie los) Nein, nein ... unmöglich! ... ("Jehr", 75)

From this, it remains far from clear who is the father of the unborn child is, and their further conversation does nothing to enlighten the audience. Ergfrei learns that things have deteriorated far enough for Elise to concede that her father "ist mir im tiefsten zuwider" ("Jehr", 76), yet she remains loyal, and even devoted to Jehr, refusing to leave her father when Ergfrei says she should come to him ("Jehr", 77). This ambiguity about Elise's pregnancy continues

in the penultimate scene, where Ergfrei confronts Jehr and tells him he must go. Jehr makes repeated and ambiguous reference to being the father ("Jehr", 78-79), while also suggesting that Ergfrei may have got Elise pregnant: "[...] Ich bin der Vater! Das Mädel ist widerwillig. Sie [Ergfrei] haben sie verdorben, Sie! Sie!... Erwischt ich Sie vor einem Monat, dann ..." ("Jehr", 78)[9].
Significantly in this scene, Ergfrei must concede that Elise still does not want to leave Jehr ("Jehr", 78), but he forces Jehr to allow her to go with the threat of involving the police, backed by a letter he has from Klotzfeld ("Jehr", 81). Yet despite this, it remains unclear if Jehr is guilty of anything but an unhealthy desire for Elise. He is aware of the gossip in the village, and the letter Ergfrei produces may be enough reason for him to give up.
The scene closes with Ergfrei being surprised by the voice of Murk upstairs, which must come as a shock to him after he has formed a picture of the situation from what Klotzfeld and Elise have told him. It also emphasizes Jehr's failed attempts to avoid disaster ("Jehr", 83).
With Elise gone Jehr's isolation is complete, and unable to cope with the loss he takes his own life. The callousness of society toward his plight is underscored by the reaction of the two *Tippelbrüder* who heartlessly note the effect of a mouthful of water and a bullet to the head, before sharing Jehr's money:

> KURT: [...] Der Schädel zerrissen wie'n Papiersack.
> HEIN: Drum liess er das Wasser in den Mund..[sic]
> KURT: Tja! ... Das gibt sein Wirkung...
> HEIN: Da liegt seine Brieftasche.
> KURT: Das Blut schwimmt fast schon herein.
> HEIN: Wir teilen ehrlich. ("Jehr", 87)

In "Jehr" the protagonist is isolated from the community both physically and emotionally, and denied the support and help that might have averted disaster. Left alone to fight his inner battle with evil he cannot cope.
Hochwälder's play, "Virginia" (1951) also has a protagonist facing terrible temptation, while virtually cut off from the outside world, and the *Titelheldin* too is destroyed by the dark side of her character, although in her case there is no doubt she has succumbed to her evil desires. When facing this temptation, Virginia is effectively totally alone: she has been sold by her uncle into a marriage to a man she detests; the man she loves is absent; her one confidante, her servant, Concha, stoically adopts a fatalistic view of life, putting her faith in God; and the man to whom she turns for help, Pedro, is so brutalised by his own existence that he only thinks of his own advantage.
The play, also shared a similar fate to "Jehr", never to be revived after its debut, premièring in Hamburg in 1951, under the auspicious direction of Erwin Piscator[10], despite efforts by the dramatist to rework the play completely

[9] Why Jehr refers to a month ago remains unclear: the encounter between the young couple took place 3 months earlier, the period of time since Klotzfeld left ("Jehr", 72), and for Elise to be showing signs of pregnancy presumably more than a month must have past.

[10] Bortenschlager attributes much of the play's failure to Piscator's misguided concentration

in the late 1970s[11].

The play is loosely based on the Jacobean play, *The Changeling*, by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, which Hochwälder first became aware of through an essay by T.S. Elliot[12]. While Hochwälder makes significant changes to the English play, its influence[13], and, perhaps more importantly, Elliot's interpretation of it, is clearly visible in "Virginia". Elliot's comments on the heroine of *The Changeling* might equally apply to Virginia in Hochwälder's drama:

> [...] what constitutes the essence of the tragedy is something which has not been sufficiently remarked; it is the habituation of Beatrice to her sin; it becomes no longer merely sin but custom. Such is the essence of the tragedy of Macbeth - the habituation to crime. And in the end Beatrice, having been so long the enforced conspirator of De Flores [who has committed murders on her behalf], becomes (and this is permanently true to human nature) more his partner, his mate, than the mate and partner of the man for the love of whom she consented to the crime. Her lover disappears not only from the scene but from her own imagination [...][14].

Indeed in "Virginia", the man for whom the protagonist commits the crime, Francisco, unlike his counterpart, Alsemero, in *The Changeling*, does not even appear in the play. As such, he remains an idea of decency and humanity, rather than a physical presence, which Virginia embraces from the outset, but which becomes completely alien to her as she enters the criminal, immoral world of Pedro and her dead husband, Ignacio. Having conspired to kill Ignacio, she must then embark on further crimes with her co-conspirator to cover-up the murder, and is drawn more and more into a brutal, inhumane world, in

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on social criticism rather than the themes of love and violence [Bortenschlager, *Der Dramatiker Fritz Hochwälder*, 90]. Certainly, Piscator does not seem to have made a favourable impression on Hochwälder, and in a letter referring to the later play, *Der Himbeerpflücker*, Hochwälder recounts how he rejected any suggestions of further collaboration:
[...] Erwin Piscator wollte das Stück für seine Berliner Volksbühne haben aber wie es so bei ihm geht; er mutete mir zu - vor 2 Monaten in Berlin - das Stück um- und umzuschreiben, in einer von ihm gewünschten dramaturgisch idiotischen Weise, worauf ich das Stück nahm und veschwand. Wenn er einen Blödsinn schreiben will, steht ihm seine eigene - nicht vorhandene - Feder zur Verfügung [...]
- Brief an Ernst Waldinger, 24. Aug. 1965, Dokumentationsstelle für neuere österreichische Literatur, Wien.

[11] Cf. Bortenschlager, *Der Dramatiker Fritz Hochwälder*, 90.

[12] Hochwälder acknowledged this in a letter to Ian Loram [Loram, "Fritz Hochwälder", 12]. The essay he refers to is: T.S. Eliot, "Thomas Middleton", *Selected Essays*, by Eliot, 3rd ed (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 161-170.

[13] Bortenschlager goes so far as to provide a brief synopsis of *The Changeling* in his examination of "Virginia" [*Der Dramatiker Fritz Hochwälder*, 88-89]. Unfortunately this is somewhat inaccurate since Bortenschlager's version of events has the protagonist's husband killing both his wife and her accomplice, before himself, at the end of the drama. In fact she and her partner in crime commit suicide and the hapless husband is left to utter the epilogue [Thomas Middleton, and William Rowley, *The Changeling*, 1622, ed. Patricia Thomson, (London: Ernest Benn, 1964), 89-93].

[14] Elliot, "Thomas Middleton", 164.

which she is increasingly reliant on Pedro, demonstrating the validity of the words of another Hochwälder villain, Fouquier: "[...] wenn man mit einem Fuß ins Verbrechen gestiegen ist, nimmt es den andern von selbst hinein" (I, 305).

The absence of Francisco contributes to the isolation that is very important in the drama, and which clearly sets it apart from the Jacobean tragedy[15]. The play is set in the Mexico of the right-wing dictator Porfirio Diaz, and the outside world is a brutal, threatening place, which has delivered the young Virginia into the arms of a man she does not love, and whose lifestyle she despises, built as it is on the exploitation of others. She is, however, both emotionally and physically isolated, and her only confidante is her servant, Concha, who warns her that their relationship may be terminated by Ignacio if they are seen to be too close, for on his huge estate he is absolute master:

> Ein Herr ist er - und was für einer! Sechs Stunden Ritt und man ist noch nicht an der Grenze seines Grundbesitzes, fünfzigtausend Hektar Land, du mein Heiland! Wem im ganzen Distrikt gehören noch fünfzigtausend Hektar, zweitausend Peones allein auf der Kaffeeplantage, dreitausend Seelen beherrscht er als Patron - was sollte so einer nicht wagen? ("Virginia", 2)

Virginia seems to be a victim of a social order which places money and power above all else, and, since her uncle needed money, she has been forced to marry a slave-trader, who is nearly sixty years old ("Virginia", 3). Yet, while Virginia bemoans her fate, Concha matter-of-factly consoles her with the advice: "Es gitb [sic] Schlimmere. Und unter den Schlimmen ist ein grosser Herr immer noch der Beste" ("Virginia", 3). To make matters worse, Virginia has overheard how her husband nearly bankrupted her uncle just to gain her hand, but even this does not shock the experienced Concha:

> Ja, so geht es zu. Ja, so läuft sie, diese Welt. Wir Schwachen können nichts machen dagegen. Dass du dich empörst, aufspringst und davonläuft, das kommt aus deiner reinen Unschuld, woher solltest du auch wissen was Leben heisst... ("Virginia", 4)

But isolation and loneliness do not affect just the victims of such a society, they also trouble the successful. It is for this reason that Ignacio has married Virginia:

> [...] ich bin einsam, entsetzlich einsam - wie jeder es werden muss, der die Torheit begeht, nur für sich zu leben... Ich bin alt und wer mit mir zu tun bekommt, wagts nicht, mir in die Augen zu blicken... Wo finde ich noch einen Menschen, der fähig ist, mich zu lieben? Unter den Kerlen vielleicht, die von mir abhängig sind, die mich umarmen und ihren Bruder

[15] Not only does Middleton's play abound with far more characters, it also has the added complication of the comic sub-plot, which has been attributed to Rowley [cf. Marion Wynne-Davies, ed., "*Changeling, The* 1622)", *Bloomsbury Guide to English Literature*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1989), 396].

nennen, wenn ich sie bewirte? Zu deutlich lese ich in ihren Gesichtern die Frage: Wann, Freundchen, erwischt es dich, du Reicher, Mächtiger? [...] ("Virginia", 10)

He also seems to be a victim of the dehumanizing society in which they live, and argues that for all his wealth and power he is powerless to change things:

> Woher solltest du wissen, dass einer wie ich sein Leben lang so handeln muss, wenn er nicht im Dschungel liegen bleiben will und verrecken! Wenn einem Tag für Tag [illegible word] Hass ins Gesicht schlägt, wenn man von Kind auf erfährt, dass man mitleidlos zutod getreten wird, so man nicht die Kraft hat, selbst zu treten - wie sollte man da nicht hart und gewissenlos werden? - Aller Besitz im Land ist auf Beherrschung und Zwang gegründet! ("Virginia", 9)

Furthermore, he is well aware of how unjust his actions are:

> [...] Glaubst du, ich erkenn für gut an, was ich tue? - Keiner weiss so gewiss wie ich, dass es die schlechteste aller Welten ist, die ich verteidige. Aber was kommt, wenn sie fällt? - soll ich untätig warten bis der Damm bricht und wir alle ersaufen wie die Ratten? ("Virginia", 27)

Yet Ignacio's attempt, through marriage, to escape the trap he is in, leads to his demise, just as ultimately Virginia's efforts to free herself for the one she loves will prove self-defeating, for they both make the mistake, acknowledged by Ignacio, of living only for themselves.

The fate of both rests in the hands of the *Capataz*, Pedro, a man as isolated as the others and brutalised by the system in which he must try to survive, he has been denied the human relationships that Virginia and Ignacio seek, and like them can think only of himself. A totally immoral character, who can claim to have no conscience ("Virginia", 85), in many respects he embodies evil in the play. As in Middleton's play, the heroine is instinctively repulsed by her future partner in crime and cannot bring herself to take the letter from his hand ("Virginia", 15)[16]. Yet, following the English model[17], physical contact also precedes the murderous contract struck between the two, when Virginia puts her hand on Pedro's shoulder ("Virginia", 35), and in both plays this symbolises the start of the protagonist's corruption[18]. However, on this point there is one significant difference between the two plays, for unlike Middleton's De Flores, Pedro is not in love with Beatrice, and is prepared to exploit

[16] In *The Changeling* such is Beatrice's revulsion at De Flores that she is not prepared to wear a glove he returns to her [I.I, ll. 226-227].

[17] Middleton, *The Changeling*, II.2, ll. 79-86.

[18] A similar visual symbolism is used when Virginia allows Ignacio to embrace her and calls him "Du" for the first time, with the sinister overtones of telling him he is not yet her husband, since the marriage has not been consummated ("Virginia", 30). This again can be seen as an indication that she is moving into a corrupt world she once so despised.

her like anything else to get what he wants: money and power. He is trapped by his debts to his master, Ignacio, and his hitherto miserable existence leaves him fearless for his life, but determined to avoid the whip ("Virginia", 31). His is an inhuman, brutal existence and the image of a chained dog is used to describe his position by both master and servant:

> PEDRO: [...] ich weiss schon, dass ich nichts bin als ein Hund - ein abgerichteter, scharfer, unentbehrlicher Köter - dafür lieg ich auch an der Kette, ich kann nicht weg, nicht einmal träumen mag ich davon [...] ("Virginia", 16)

> IGNACIO: [To Virginia] Benütze ihn als Kettenhund, dem [sic] man sich Räuber und Diebe vom Leib hält: So eine Bestie bleibt harmlos, solang sie fühlt, dass ein überlegener Herr da ist. ("Virginia", 28)[19]

The imperative Virginia issues Pedro: "[...] ändre [den Weltlauf], Hund" ("Virginia", 31), indicates her refusal to accept her lot, but the plot to kill her husband not only leads to the dog being let off his chain, but also removes the only one who might hold him in check: Ignacio.
Indeed, it is Pedro's desire to break from his former life as a dog, which persistently motivates his behaviour after Ignacio is dead, and is in sharp contrast with Middleton's De Flores, who acts from love[20]. Pedro forces his attentions on Virginia because he is now in a position to do so, but also to reinforce his new status. He insists that he remove her necklace, partly because he has already had to bow before her to retrieve the ring she dropped in her haste ("Virginia", 50-51), and partly because she is still unwilling to let him touch her, indicating she does not view him as the equal he has become: "Ich knie nicht mehr vor Ihnen [...] Ich will, dass Sie mich so behandeln, wie es einem freien Mann zukommt" ("Virginia", 52). It is this physical contact that gives him the idea that he might take more than just jewels for his reward, expressed in terms of his new status to a horrified Virginia :

> VIRGINIA: Du Hund...
> PEDRO (brüllt sie an): Ich bin die längste Zeit ein Hund gewesen! Ich werde Ihnen schon zeigen, dass ich es nicht mehr bin! Ich werd mich

---

19 Pedro is repeatedly referred to as a dog throughout the play (Cf. "Virginia", 19, 13, 64)

20 This is expressed nowhere more poetically than in the fifth act, when De Flores confesses all before dying:
I lov'd this woman in spite of her heart;
Her love I earn'd out of Piracquo's murder.
[...]
[...] her honour's prize
Was my reward; I thank life for nothing
But that pleasure; it was so sweet to me
That I have drunk up all, left none behind
For any man to pledge me.
- *The Changeling*, V.3.
In contrast, Pedro simply views Virginia as further proof of his new status and a reward to be taken.

bezahlt machen wie ich es will! ("Virginia", 54)

Pedro is no longer prepared to be given his reward "wie Knochen einem Hund" ("Virginia", 57), and is well aware that Virginia is powerless to discipline him: "Wer sollte mich peitschen? - Der einzige Mann, der das könnte, liegt in der Schlucht. Den fürch ich nicht mehr..." ("Virginia", 55).
But while this opportunistic exploitation of Virginia further binds them together in her eyes, Pedro is well aware that it is impossible to escape his past completely as long as he is with her:

> PEDRO (bricht in Gelächter aus): Bei mir! Bei mir bleiben! Die hochmögende, feine und reiche Gutsherrin - bei mir, einem freigelassenen Kettenhund, einem von Kindheit an durchgewalkten, ausgekochten, durch alle Dreckpfützen gezogenen Einpeitscher! - Wen es da nicht lächert, der bleibt sein Leben lang ernst! Bei mir bleiben, bei Mir!
> VIRGINIA: Hast du mich nicht erpresst, Hund!
> PEDRO (wieder ernst): Hab keine Lust, alte Geschichten aufzuwärmen. Jetzt gehts um andere Dinge, was damals war, gehörte zu meinem Lohn. Schwamm darüber, vergessen, aus! [...] Nichts hab ich hier, und wnn [sic] du mir den Gutshof überschreibst. Hier -wo mich jeder kennt und weiss, wie lang ich im Dreck war, ein armseliger Hund unter der Peitsche eines harten Herrn, hier sollt es für mich Befriedigung geben? ("Virginia", 81-82)

However, while Pedro eagerly seizes his chance to improve his lot, it would be mistaken to view Virginia as the victim of the machinations of an amoral Iago-esque figure, for she is very much the instigator of her own downfall. Her darker side is clear even in the early scenes, when, bitter about a marriage she does not want, she laughs at the prospect that her much older husband will die before her ("Virginia", 3) and then predicts his early demise: "Er wird nicht lange leben" ("Virginia", 5). At this stage she is still fundamentally innocent and good, as her description of Francisco and what he represents, indicates ("Virginia", 4-5), but already the seed of what is to come has been sown. Her hatred of her husband becomes open revolt when she receives a letter from Francisco[21], and she declares she will always be his, much to the horror of the pious Concha:

> VIRGINIA: Nur ihm will ich gehören! Ihm - nur ihm!
> CONCHA: Gib mir den Brief! Du hast kein Recht, ihn zu behalten! [...] Noch heute nacht gehörst du deinem Mann!
> (Pause)
> VIRGINIA (leise): Verdammt will ich sein, wenn ich es zulasse.
> CONCHA (weicht erschrocken vor ihr zurück)

[21] Just how entwined her fate is to Pedro is indicated by the fact that it is he who brings her the letter, having waited until after the wedding to deliver it, by which time it is too late to stop the nuptials taking place.

VIRGINIA: Verdammt will ich sein!
CONCHA (bekreuzigt sich)
VIRGINIA: Verdammt! Verdammt! (presst den Brief an ihre Brust)
("Virginia", 17-18)

Yet, despite her stated determination, unlike Beatrice in *The Changeling*[22], she does not seem to have a premeditated course of action, and her scheme arises from opportune circumstances. She is left alone with Pedro against her will, having tried to persuade Ignacio to take his *Capataz* with him ("Virginia", 27-28), and the murder plan results from the subsequent conversation she has with Pedro. Even in this, her anger at the restrictions placed upon her demonstrate that initially she has no intention to use Pedro to gain freedom ("Virginia", 30-31). It is only when she discovers that they both have in common a dream of freedom, and when Pedro explains that money is the key to such desires, that the idea of killing Ignacio develops ("Virginia", 31-33). Yet despite Pedro's amoral and mercenary nature, Virginia is the instigator of the crime and he merely gives the plan to kill Ignacio substance, once he has been plied with drink and tempted by riches ("Virginia", 33-39). However, once the pact between them has been made, control quickly passes to Pedro, who, with his experience of the ruthless world, sees to the practicalities of the plot, and whose cold-bloodedness is in sharp contrast with her trembling ("Virginia", 37-39)[23].
Virginia's tragedy is that in her very efforts to reject her husband and the life imposed upon her, she effectively destroys the moral basis upon which her desired life with Francisco must be based. By taking this first step into the world of exploitation inhabited by Ignacio and Pedro her isolation becomes complete, for she cannot return to that of Concha and Francisco, and becomes increasingly dependent on a man who has no need of her. She, like Jehr before her, is left to grapple with her conscience on her own.
This dilemma is first explored in theological terms with Concha, whose simple piety exposes the fundamental self-destructive tendency in Virginia's desire to break free:

CONCHA: Du musst dich in dein Schicksal fügen. Die Menschen leben nicht wie sie wollen. Gott zwingt sie in die Richtung, die er für gut hält. Gegen seinen Willen geschieht nichts.
VIRGINIA: Nichts?
CONCHA: Kein Stäubchen fliegt auf, das er nicht lenkt.
VIRGINIA: Wenn Gott alles lenkt, dann haben wir keine Verantwortung.
CONCHA: Was redest du - keine Verantwortung - - - Gott ist in dir und berät dich - - du musst ihm bloss gehorchen
VIRGINIA: Wenn Gott in mir ist - habe ich dann nicht Macht über ihn?

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22 Cf. *The Changeling*, II. 2, ll. 41-45.

23 This fear of evil evokes the earlier play, *Der öffentliche Ankläger*, and Pedro's later words echo the sentiments of Fouquier: "Angst! - Wer einmal Angst hat, dem ist ohnehin nicht mehr zu helfen" ("Virginia", 65).

CONCHA: Es könnt einem bange werden, wenn man dich so einfältig schwatzen hört - - - wenn du über Gott, der in dir ist, Macht haben willst, dann wird er dich vernichten - - - ("Virginia", 41)

As in Middleton's drama, the tool the protagonist wishes to use to save herself for the man she loves, turns on her and thwarts that aim by demanding her sexual favour as reward. Virginia has merely exchanged one prison for another and can only despairingly exclaim: "die Rache greift nach mir..." ("Virginia", 58)[24].

Having fallen to Pedro, Virginia is cut off forever from the man she loved and bound to her partner in crime. At the start of the fourth act Virginia already expresses doubts about Francisco ever joining her ("Virginia", 60-61) and her reliance on Pedro is demonstrated in her strong defence of him ("Virginia", 62-63). Her words suggest that Francisco will no longer be able to fulfil her needs, now that she has become part of the world of power and corruption: "Was nützen mir die Braven und Guten? - Redensarten freilich sind überall billig zu haben! - Ich halte mich an den, der mir das Gesindel vom Leib hält, und alle Welt ist voll Gesindel!" ("Virginia", 63). Indeed, the gulf that has opened between Virginia and Francisco is nowhere made clearer than in Pedro's admiring account of his meeting in town with Francisco, when he portrays him as a decent, hard-working man, worthy of respect for his exploits in the brutal world of the oil fields. Pedro even goes so far as to compare Francisco with the painting of angels in the church ("Virginia", 72)[25].

That Francisco is capable of surviving in the world without sacrificing his principles is clear from this, but the modest lifestyle he espouses in his refusal to make use of ill-gotten gains is far removed from that which Virginia now desires: "Einen Hausstand gründen mit dem Erbe eines Sklavenhälters, der ihm die Braut weggekauft hätte - nein, lieber würd er zusammen mit ihr Hungers sterben!" ("Virginia", 72). Values she once shared ("Virginia", 4-5), now seem ludicrous to her:

> Bin ich dazu geschaffen, auf einen Kerl zu warten, der sich einbildet, ich würd ihm in eine armselige Dschungelhütte folgen, um dort an seiner Seite vor Langeweile zu verdorren?
> Soll ich wirklich mit einem grünen Jungen leben, der mit ganzen zweitausend Pesos heimkommt - einem Sümmchen, das mir meine Indios in einem halben Tag erpflücken, ohne dass ich den Finger rühre?

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[24] This is clearly taken from Middleton:
BEATRICE: Vengeance begins:
Murder, I see, is followed by more sins.
Was my creation in the womb so curs'd,
It must engender with a viper first?
- *The Changeling*, III.4, ll. 163-166.
The snake imagery is carried over by Hochwälder in the stage instructions: "(immer vor ihm, wie vor einer giftigen Schlange, die Treppe hinauf zurückweichend)" ("Virginia", 58).

[25] This provides a strong religious image to contrast with that used by Virginia when Pedro first makes his sexual advances. She calls him a "Teufel", a title he finds preferable to being called a dog ("Virginia", 55).

Soll so ein Bürschen [sic] mein Leben begleiten? - jetzt [sic] wo ich einen Mann brauche voll Kraft und Hass! ("Virginia", 74)

Through his very decency, Francisco would be a constant prick to Virginia's conscience, just as Concha has become: "Ich will dein blödes Ammengewäsch nicht länger hören! Ich hab es satt, seit Wochen satt! Verschon mich mit deinen Ermahnungen und deinen Gejammere [sic]!" ("Virginia", 75). It is her conscience that now leaves her fully isolated from those who care for her, for she cannot confide in anyone about what she has done, and this forces her to turn to Pedro, whose own moral stance is not dissimilar to the *Nicht-Mensch* Bloner in *1003*; a man for whom the voice of conscience is something to despise:

VIRGINIA: Wir haben ihn ermordet!
PEDRO: Was weiter?
VIRGINIA: Nur wir beide wissen es. Wie sollten wir weiter leben, einer ohne den andern?
PEDRO: Das ist es! Deshalb flieh ich vor dir! Glaubst du, ich wüsste nicht, dass ich dir entfliehen muss? - Ich ertrag dich nicht, du bist mir widerwärtig! Und warum? Weil du im Grunde deines Herzens moralisch bist, ganz hoffnungslos moralisch, mit schlechtem Gewissen vollgestopft! Wie? Ich sollt ein Weib mit mir schleppen, das mir das Leben verpestet durch Gewissen? - Ich selbst hab keins und duld auch um mich keines! Was ich getan hab, ist über mich gegangen, spurlos, wie ein Schatten über einen Stein. In dir aber sitzt es und wird bleiben, bis dass du stirbst! Und drum: Adios.
VIRGINIA: Das ist es! Du willst mich mit meinem Gewissen allein lassen, hoffnunglos allein, bis es mich affrisst [sic] bei lebendigem Leib! Mit wem soll ich leben, zu wem sprechen? Wem mich anvertrauen? Wer sollte mich trösten, wer mich umarmen? Oh, es kommen mir Worte in den Sinn, die uns die gute Schwester im Colegio vorgelesen hatte... Damals war ich blind und taub dafür. Jetzt höre ich sie Nacht für Nacht... "Kann einer Feuer in seinem Busen verbergen, ohne dass seine Kleider brennen? Oder auf glühenden Kohlen gehen, ohne seine Füsse zu versengen?" - Ich kann es nicht. Ich muss dir folgen [...] ("Virginia", 84-85)

This dependency seals Virginia's fate, for having left her old world, she cannot survive on her own in the ruthless world inhabited by the likes of her dead husband and Pedro. That Pedro has no intention of making a new life with her is made clear when he draws his machete before leaving at the end ("Virginia", 87): if it is to take death to separate Virginia from Pedro, as it was to separate her from Ignacio, it is not a step from which he will shrink. Like the mother in "Trommler", Virginia destroys the ends she seeks by the means she uses.
The theme of isolation is not just restricted to the portrayal of the physical and emotional in Hochwälder's plays. In several of his comedies humorous

situations are contrived on the basis that individuals fail to recognize or really know the nature of those closest to them, therefore being in a most fundamental way cut off from their nearest and dearest. This is particularly true in three plays, *Die unziemliche Neugier*, "Die verschleierte Frau", and *Der Unschuldige*, in which the bonds of marriage are shown to be none too strong. While the intent of each of these plays is to provide humorous entertainment, the events portrayed nevertheless have a serious edge.

The earliest of the three, the 1934 comedy, *Die unziemliche Neugier,* provides a pleasant contrast to the unremitting gloom of the plays written earlier. Hochwälder described the work as "Eine Jugendsünde, deren ich mich nicht zu schämen brauche"[26], and clearly thought enough of the work to include it in the third volume of his collected dramas. The deftness of comic touch, which distinguishes the play from its predecessors, makes it tempting to dismiss the drama as nothing more than an entertaining, well-constructed distraction[27], and certainly, as in *Hôtel du Commerce*, Hochwälder deliberately brightens the denouement in comparison with the play's literary inspiration, in this case Cervantes' "The Novel of the Curious Impertinent"[28]. Nevertheless, although this tale of intrigue and deception borders on farce, both in subject matter and style, the potentially disastrous consequences of the behaviour of the characters are still alluded to: the marriage might well have been ruined and Lotario is nearly killed.

The plot revolves around the disparity between appearances and reality, between "Schein" and "Sein", for the outward signs of love, friendship and fidelity are exposed as fraudulent deception. The catalyst for the comic plot of intrigue and counter-intrigue is the hapless Anselmo, whose apparent complete ignorance of human nature and exalted view of both friendship and marital fidelity inadvertently lead to him being made a cuckold. In his desire to test his wife's faithfulness through the advances of his friend, Lotario, he does not consider the consequences of success or failure in the venture, or any unexpected side-effects. This despite the fact that in his opening lines, when bemoaning the fact he has seen so little of his friend since marrying, he recognizes that matters of the heart may take precedence even over friendship: "Die Vernachlässigung deiner Freundespflichten kann nur eine Ursache haben: Liebe" (III, 9). Lotario has been at pains to avoid arousing gossip by being seen too often in the company of Camilla, for he is far more aware of how looks can deceive: "[...] es geht nicht um die Wahrheit. Es geht gegen den

[26] Anonym, "Hochwälder und Tessen", *Südost Tagespost* [Graz], 29. Juni 1984. Incidentally the play has seen two productions, years apart, under different names from that by which it was published. It was first performed in Vienna at the Theater für 49 in 1936 under the name "Liebe in Florenz", and revived in 1984 in the Joanneumhof in Graz under the title "Liebe und Lügen in Florenz".

[27] As one critic rather disparagingly put it: "Das Publikum darf sich an niveauvoller, aber letzlich belangloser Unterhaltung, der die bürgerliche Kritik das Prädikat 'zeitlos' zu verleihen pflegt, delektieren" [Gregor Mayer, "Das Sommertheater hebt an", *Volksstimme* [Wien], 20. Juni 1984, 9].

[28] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Life and Exploits of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*, Trans. Charles Jarvis, (London: Bliss Sands and Co., 1897), 173-202.

Schein" (III, 10). However, Anselmo claims to be unconcerned by mere appearances but wishes to find the truth behind them, and thus hatches his plan for Lotario: "So wirst du durch Lüge die Wahrheit erfahren" (III, 12).
It is only later in the play, after having been racked with anxiety, that Anselmo recognizes the danger of his scheming:

> [...] Gesetzt, ich sehe und höre mit an, wie du [Lotario] Camilla schwach machst! Ein junges hübsches Eheweib ist schließlich kein Engel, muß kein Engel sein, da es doch aus Fleisch und Blut ist... Nun, sie wehrt sich, erliegt nach langem Sträuben klagend und seufzend deinem heißen Begehren, deiner ungestümen Werbung... Was - sage mir! - was sollte ich dann tun?... Es gäbe ja doch nur eines: fortgehen von hier, verzichten und - verachte mich nicht, Lotario! - ihr zu verzeihen... Ja! verzeihen... (III, 52)

Anselmo's initial naive view of acceptable behaviour is not shared by any of the other characters. At first, Lotario chooses to ignore his friend's request and only pretends that he has attempted and failed to seduce Camilla (III, 14-17). While he believes he is doing his foolish friend a favour, he is, according to Anselmo, betraying the trust of that very friendship (III, 18-19).
Such behaviour is also found very insulting by the women of the household, Camilla and Leonella, who clearly believe that Lotario's duty should be to try to seduce Camilla:

> LEONELLA: [...] Wär ich an seiner Stelle, ich wüßte mich in Abwesenheit des Herrn besser mit Euch zu unterhalten...
> CAMILLA: Wahrlich, es sieht aus, als wäre er gar kein Mann! [...] (III, 16)

Such sentiments are again repeated by the women when Anselmo gives Lotario a chance to make up for deceiving him the first time he left them alone:

> LEONELLA: Ich verstehe den gnädigen Herrn nicht! Abzureisen, und einen jungen, hübschen und gescheiten Mann, überhaupt einen Mann, sage ich, im Haus zu lassen! Was sollte geschehen, wenn dieser Mann seine Augen zu meiner Herrin erhöbe?
> CAMILLA: Das sollte er nur wagen! - Aber der denkt gar nicht an so etwas!
> LEONELLA: Der Lümmel! (III, 21)

If such conversations belie the innocence that Anselmo would so dearly wish to have confirmed in Camilla, it also quickly becomes clear that Lotario, despite his earlier protestations to the contrary (III, 10-13), does not believe her so pure as to be above temptation. Having incurred her wrath by his earlier rude behaviour, he intercepts her letter of revenge to Anselmo, in which she

lies that he has tried to seduce her, and plots his own vengeance by the very means of which he has been accused. This proves to be none too difficult a task, and while making a pretence of resistance for appearances' sake, Camilla quickly gives in to Lotario's romantic advances (III, 25-27).
So by the end of the first act, Anselmo has been deceived by both friend and wife. Lotario and Camilla must now attempt to maintain the appearance that everything is in order for Anselmo's benefit. Matters are further complicated by the sighting of Leonella's lover, which again sets Lotario and Camilla at one another: Lotario, enraged and jealous that Camilla has deceived him with another, plots to avenge himself by suggesting to Anselmo that she is attracted to him (III, 35-36), and when she discovers this, she is horrified by his betrayal and attack on her honour, and plans her own revenge (III, 38).
Following the seduction, it is Lotario's turn to underestimate Camilla. While he showed himself quite capable of reading her when it came to seduction, his behaviour now hardens her murderous resolve. He not only manages to insult her by laughing in her presence about his successful seduction (III, 38; 51) and later regretting it ever happened (III, 50), but also adds to her feelings of remorse by saying he feels guilty about further deceiving his friend (III, 50-51).
Yet for all his guilt about duping Anselmo, and despite claiming to despise Camilla (III, 52), it is the suggestion that in future he may again enjoy intimate relations with her that persuades him to go along with the plan to trick Anselmo into believing all is well (III, 51). The weapon of seduction is now turned back on him.
Indeed, Camilla's machinations dominate the last act of the play, for not only must she persuade her husband of her fidelity, but also reconcile him with her manipulative maid, Leonella, who knows more about events in the household than Camilla would like. In the contrived scenes played out for Anselmo's benefit she achieves all bar her revenge on Lotario (III, 54-57). Now in a position of power over her husband, who shamefully admits all, she demands that he break all contact with Lotario (III, 61). However, she is still vulnerable from Lotario, who has seen just how far she was prepared to go to be rid off him. Yet in a final twist of unexpected behaviour, Lotario's parting letter does not betray her, as she fearfully expects, but wishes them well for the future and informs Anselmo that he has absconded with a sizeable sum of his money (III, 62-63).
The play, then, is a comedy of errors, in which the characters repeatedly misjudge one another, demonstrating just how insubstantial the relationships between them really are. At the end there is little to suggest such a state of affairs will not continue. The women, are left to triumph in this battle of the sexes, as the final song proclaims (III, 63-64) and there is much dramatic irony in the final exchange when Anselmo gives Leonella his blessing to marry:

> LEONELLA *will seine Hand küssen:* Ich danke Euch, gnädiger Herr!
> ANSELMO *zeigt auf Camilla:* Da, bei dieser bedanke dich!

LEONELLA *küßt Camilla die Hand:* Ich will mich bemühen, in allem und jedem meiner gnädigen Herrin nachzueifern: Auch in der Ehe.
ANSELMO *salbungsvoll:* Das tue, mein Kind! (III, 63)

As in *Hôtel du Commerce*, Hochwälder largely remains true to the outline of the original story, but chooses to deviate from his literary model in the final scenes, for the sake of a comic happy ending. Cervantes' story is a much more salutary tale. Fearing that Leonella will tell the truth when Anselmo sees her lover, both Camilla and Lothario [sic] flee, one to a convent the other from Florence. Anselmo learns what has taken place from a stranger, and writes down the story of his "foolish and impertinent desire"[29] before dying of sorrow. Camilla, who has actually fallen in love with Lothario, likewise dies of grief when she learns he has fallen in battle: "This was the end of them all; an end sprung from an extravagant rashness at the beginning"[30].

The folly of an idealized, unrealistic and ultimately unattainable view of love is also central to Hochwälder's comedy "Die verschleierte Frau" (1946). Etiènne and Anne Gontaut, the married couple at the centre of the play, have endured years of separation, caused by the chaos of the war, secure in the knowledge that the strength of their love will overcome all hardship. They are reunited in unusual circumstances only to find that the relationship they thought so perfect was lacking the vitality of passion, and that they did not know each other, or indeed themselves, as well as they thought. This carnal side of love is represented by the other characters in the play; Gontaut's young fellow officer, Dubois, who has known nothing but purely physical relationships, and Anne's mother, Hélène, who is experienced enough to realize that a healthy relationship must have a physical component.

But whereas, like *Die unziemliche Neugier*, the play has at its heart misconceptions about love, unlike its predecessor its setting is firmly contemporary, taking place just after the war. This is, as Eileen Murphy has observed[31], one of its greatest weaknesses; for while a contrived plot may work in the context of a historical farce, the realistic setting of "Die verschleierte Frau" undermines the rather far-fetched basis upon which the plot rests: fate brings the couple together at the isolated mountain post; he only glimpses her legs and is consumed by passion; and somewhat implausibly, rather than rushing into his arms when she recognizes him, she chooses to test his love.

The strong spiritual but unnatural character of the Gontauts' love is revealed by Gontaut in the first act, as a response to Dubois' annoying tales of romantic conquests. Gontaut reveals that he does not even have a photograph of his wife, in sharp contrast to the pin-ups that adorn Dubois' locker, and does not need one: "In mir ist sie - wie sie war - auch ohne Bild. Das brauche ich nicht" (DVF, 10); for him her external appearance was always "gleichgültig" (DVF, 11).

Anne later expands on the nature of this relationship to her rather incredulous

[29] Cervantes, 201.
[30] Cervantes, 202.
[31] Murphy, 141.

mother: "Wir fühlen gleich, wir denken gleich, wir haben einander immer verstanden. Wir hatten nie den geringsten Konflikt" (DVF, 20), and furthermore: "Meine Beziehungen zu Etienne [sic] - unsere Liebe - - war nie durch eine niedrige Regung getrübt - wir hatten auch als Brautleute, nie unreine Gedanken oder Begierden" (DVF, 21). It is this idealised view of their love that prompts Anne not to reveal herself to Gontaut: "[...] fühlen muss er es. Und er wird es fühlen - - er wird es spüren - es wird eine Unruhe über ihn kommen, gewaltig - wenn er nur einen Augenblick lang mit mir in diesem Haus ist -" (DVF, 20)[32]. Indeed, her faith in Gontaut is not completely misplaced, for he does experience powerful feelings; but the lust he experiences when he gets a fleeting glimpse of her legs as she goes upstairs (DVF, 17-18) is far from that which she envisages he will feel.

The wholly spiritual nature of this love is quite incomprehensible to the earthier Dubois and Hélène. The young officer has only known purely physical relationships with the opposite sex, and such encounters are recalled with glowing testimony to the physical attributes of the women in question (DVF, 3-6). When he learns of Gontaut's wife he immediately wants to know what she looked like, and while Gontaut at this stage can only respond with incomprehension, Dubois inadvertently points to what will soon be a revealing attribute:

> DUBOIS: Was hatte sie - um ganz deutlich zu werden - was hatte sie für Beine?
> GONTAUT: Beine?
> DUBOIS: Ja - was hatte sie für Beine?
> GONTAUT: Sonderbare Fragen - stellst du - -
> DUBOIS: Bitte, das ist gar nicht sonderbar. Nichts an einer Frau kann einen Mann so berücken, auf den ersten Blick - als schöne Beine.
> GONTAUT: Du denkst nur Niedriges - wenn du eine Frau nur von fern siehst - - (DVF, 11)

Unable to understand that there may be more to love than just sex, Dubois even goes so far as to suggest that Anne might have found another: "[...] der nicht nur mit dem Kopf lieben kann, sondern einen der aufs Ganze geht, auf den ersten Blick, unbändig, stürmisch, mit Gewalt vielleicht -" (DVF, 12), and if this is the case, Gontaut can only blame himself: "Und deine Schuld ist es, wenn sie dir Hörner aufsetzt!" (DVF, 12).

Anne's mother, Hélène, has much in common with Dubois, having left Anne's father, because the relationship lacked any physical spark (DVF, 22). She certainly shows instant sympathy for Dubois' embarrassment over the pictures on his locker: "- Ah - Erinnerungen - -" (DVF, 16) and, like the young soldier, pities her daughter, blaming Anne's father for her daughter's

[32] Anne's behaviour here, and her failure to reveal her identity to her husband, is reminiscent of Trommler's actions toward his parents. In neither play is the justification for such action convincing, one might justifiably expect the joy of seeing one's loved ones again to outweigh all other considerations, but the decisions are crucial to the development of the plot.

puritanical denial of the physical side of a relationship (DVF, 22-23). The parallels between Hélène and Dubois are demonstrated in the advice both offer on the opposite sex: Dubois tells Gontaut: "Du kennst die Weiber nicht - in diesem Punkt ist eine wie die andere" (DVF, 12), while Hélène informs her daughter: "Dein Mann ist eben auch nur ein Mann wie jeder andere" (DVF, 24). Furthermore, if Dubois suggests that Anne may have found another lover, Hélène thinks the same is possible of her son-in-law (DVF, 24), and she shares Dubois' belief that Gontaut has done Anne a disservice by not bringing any physical passion to their relationship: "[...] dieser Mann - dein Mann - - der - der hat es überhaupt nicht verstanden, dich aufzuwecken - - ja, ja - du bist noch genau so starr, so unbeugsam so unmenschlich... wie du schon als Kind warst" (DVF, 21-22). The relationship described by Anne can only be a "wässriges Verhältnis" (DVF, 21) for Hélène, and she dismisses Anne's foolhardy idea of testing her husband's love as "eine blödsinnige romantische Überspanntheit!" (DVF, 19).

Given the idealized expression of their love, by both Anne and Gontaut, it is highly ironic that it is through a glimpse of her legs (DVF, 30-31) that Gontaut is finally awoken to the physical side of love, and doubly ironic that through this behaviour Dubois is made aware of feelings other than those of the flesh. In a passage full of dramatic irony Gontaut describes how lust has pushed all memories of his wife from his mind:

> [...] diese Frau, der ich jahrelang treu war - - sie ist - Ihr Bild, das so lebendig war in mir - es ist weg, mit einem Schlag! - - Ich versuche an sie zu denken - ununterbrochen - - ich zwinge mich dazu, aber ich kann es nicht - - es ist alles was für sie da war - - wie weggewischt - verschwunden als hätte ich sie nie gekannt - ich versuche mir ihr Gesicht zu vergegenwärtigen -- aber es ist undeutlich, verschwommen, wie hinter einem Schleier - ja: wie hinter einem Schleier - - ich kann nur an diese Frau denken - an diese - dort oben - - (DVF, 36)

To satisfy his desires Gontaut is prepared to go to any lengths, even blackmail, and is willing to sacrifice his friendship with Dubois. Dubois, however, for the first time in his life, views a woman as more than a potential conquest but as the object of a higher love, and demonstrates this new-found emotion when he rips his treasured photographs from the locker (DVF, 43). He only reluctantly agrees to act as an intermediary between Anne and Gontaut, as means of keeping his obsessed friend away from her, allowing him the chance to help her escape.

But Anne is also affected by the unexpected turn of events, and while she initially angrily rejects Gontaut's advances, they arouse in her hitherto unfelt emotions, to the delight of her mother:

> ANNE: [...] wenn ich jetzt an ihn denke, an ihn - - an diesen - - dann kommt eine Unruhe über mich, die ich bisher nicht gekannt habe - - ich glaube es sprengt mir die Brust - ich möchte huntereilen [sic] - zu

ihm - und ihm mit beiden Fäusten ins Gesicht schlagen - mit beiden Fäusten - -

HELENE: Aber Kind - was ist denn auf einmal in dich gefahren - du glühst ja - -

ANNE: Ich habe noch nie jemanden gehasst - - ich habe dieses Gefühl nicht gekannt - jetzt - jetzt hasse ich! Ich hasse ihn! Ich hasse ihn!

HELENE: Wie glühend du bist - wie lebendig! (DVF, 50)

The mother is correct in noticing a change in her daughter, for it is confirmed by the conversation between Anne and Dubois, in which she questions her hitherto held beliefs:

ANNE: Und Sie - - Sie velassen den Dienst, Sie desertieren -

DUBOIS: Das ist mir gleichgültig - wenn ich Sie -- nur ansehn darf, Ihr Antlitz. Ihren Mund. Ihre Augen. Ihr Haar. Wenn ich nur Ihre Stimme hören darf - Ihre schöne Stimme - -

ANNE: *(leise)* Was wollen Sie... von mir?

DUBOIS: Nichts will ich von Ihnen - nichts! Es ist mir etwas geschehn, was ich nicht gekannt habe: - ich begehre nicht - ich liebe!

ANNE: Liene [sic] ... Ist das - - wirklich - - Liebe? (DVF, 56)

It is Hélène who recognizes the need to bring the couple together, and firstly dissuades Anne from simply fleeing by suggesting she get revenge on Gontaut by seeing him incognito (DVF, 50-53), and then, when Gontaut is so horrified by the lengths to which Dubois has supposedly gone on his behalf that he does not wish to go up to her, she comes down and gets him (DVF, 67).
When husband and wife finally come together it is no longer with their shared idealized love but with an awareness of what has been missing from their life, which is reflected in mutual recriminations. Gontaut, while still unaware who she is, apologizes for his appalling behaviour, but blames her for taking his wife from him, by arousing in him previously unknown feelings:

Ja - - Sie - - Sie - - haben mir meine Frau genommen! Meine Frau - die ich seit Jahren nicht mehr gesehn habe, sie, die bisher Halt und Richtung meines Lebens war - die irgendwo im Elend lebt und sich Stunde für Stunde in Sehnsucht nach mir verzehrt - diese Frau haben Sie in mir ausgelöscht. Ob sie nun lebt und auf mich wartet - in mir ist sie tot, weg, fort für immer. - Und Sie sind es, die sie getötet haben! [...] Ich will nichts mehr von Ihnen - auch wenn ich es bekäme. Nur das was ich an Ihnen gefunden habe - behalte ich für mein Leben! [...] Wie froh bin ich jetzt - dass alles so gekommen ist. Hätte mein Antrag Sie willig gefunden - ich hätte in Ihren Armen nur den niedrigen Trieb erfahren - um alles was ich bisher hatte, umso schmerzlicher zu entbehren. So komme ich von Ihnen los mit einer grossen Sehnsucht: in dieser Welt ein Weib zu finden, an dem beides ist - beides untrennbar. (DVF, 71-72)

He now realizes that he never properly loved Anne: "Geküsst habe ich sie - wie man eine schönes Buch liest. Ohne Körper aber kann keine Liebe sein [...]" (DVF, 73).
Having listened to Gontaut describe her failings as a wife, Anne responds by blaming him for the lack of passion in their relationship, echoing sentiments expressed earlier by her mother and Dubois:

> Ja, du hast recht, ich sehe es ein: ich war dir keine vollkommene Frau. - Aber warum war ich es nicht? [...] Weil du kein richtiger Mann warst! Was warst du für ein Mann - wenn du mich nicht aufwecken konntest? - Was bist du für ein Mann, der eine Frau gewinnen will durch Erpressung und Gewalt? - - Vom ersten Blick gehörte ich dir an - warum hast du mich nie genommen? - Warum hast du all das, was ich dir als Fremde wurde, in deiner eigenen Frau nie aufgeweckt? - Warum? Weil du die Leidenschaft nicht gehabt hast - darum hast du sie auch nicht bekommen! (DVF, 74)

But, while both Gontaut and Anne now are fully aware of the feelings they have been missing, it is the entrance of Dubois which makes it clear to them that they do, after all, really love one another. The hapless officer bursts in on them brandishing a revolver, determined to protect Anne, only to be taken aback when she steps between them to protect Gontaut with the explanation, significantly expressed in the future tense: "Er - soll - mein Mann - werden - -" (DVF, 76). Despite all that has taken place between them, they still are in love and, as the closing scene, which has them staring into one another's eyes, clearly implies, can build on their relationship with this newly won knowledge. The attempt to separate and ignore the baser side to one's nature is not only wrong but ultimately self-defeating. The fundamental isolation between them, which had little to do with the war and the geographical distance between them, has been broken.
While Anne and Gontaut held the misguided notion of understanding one another completely, and in doing so denied a very real part of their nature, in Hochwälder's comedy, *Der Unschuldige* (1958), such is the fundamental isolation of individuals from one another that family members and a friend who have known the protagonist for years, believe him quite capable of committing a murder of which he is innocent. The relationships between characters are built on social norms of behaviour, rather than genuine understanding, or anything as remotely idealistic as love. This comedy of errors is caused by the mistaken action of city workers in digging up Christian Erdmann's treasured rose garden, where they uncover a skeleton. In the space of six and a half hours the veneer of bourgeois respectability is stripped from the protagonist, as he is suspected by all of murder, only for the façade to be easily restored once the misunderstanding has been cleared.
The play had a rather long gestation period; begun in 1948 it was completed and first performed in 1958. Hochwälder claimed he only finally completed the comedy to serve as a vehicle for the acting talents of Attila Hörbiger, who had so impressed him in the role of Andusz in *Die Herberge* in 1957[33]. How-

ever, Hochwälder's dismissive claim: "Dies war der ausschließliche Zweck des kleinen Stückes", must be approached with caution, since not only was the play conceived before Hörbiger came into consideration, it also examines a theme which occurs throughout Hochwälder's *œuvre*, albeit more seriously elsewhere: the potential for evil in every individual, which may be disguised by outward appearances. It is this aspect that gives the play a much darker edge than the two comedies just discussed, which, while also examining the disparity between *Schein* and *Sein*, do so on a much more trivial level, with plots restricted to purely romantic interests and with unambiguous happy endings[34]. *Der Unschuldige* is deliberately open ended, and neither Julius nor the audience can be absolutely sure whether Christian is joking when he says he may be a murderer, for as the play has shown, appearances can be very deceptive.

Several commentators have noted the deliberate allusion to the Everyman tradition in the play, which also features strongly in Hochwälder's next play, *Donnerstag*; Wilhelm Bortenschlager refers to the protagonist as a banal "Jedermann und Haustyrann"[35]. The protagonist's name, Christian Erdmann, evokes both the wayward Christian of the medieval morality plays and, with the surname "earth man" or "man of the earth", a modern Adam. Holdman sees a deliberate effort at "universalizing" in the alliteration of the names of his family members, Christine and Charlotte[36], and Thomas Haley has seen an echo in the gardener's name, Krott, which he observes is colloquial for caked mud[37]. Holdman devotes some space to exploring the *Jedermann* influence and notes the roles fulfilled by other characters: Petternigg as the messenger of death[38]; Krott, Julius and the ominously named Stark as the false friends, to whom Christian turns for help[39]; and Breitnadler, who represents *Glaube* and *Caritas* and arrives armed with *Gute Werke* to save Erdmann at the end[40].

But, while the play does have elements of the *Jedermann* tradition, unlike *Donnerstag*, it is not the protagonist's soul which is fought over, but his good name, and unlike the medieval tradition, enlightenment and a recognition of the errors of one's ways are not delivered at the end[41]. The disparity be-

33 Bortenschlager, *Der Dramatiker Fritz Hochwälder*, 119.

34 According to Bortenschlager [*Der Dramatiker Fritz Hochwälder*, 120], the play was inspired by a rather serious and tragic court case in 1928, in which a respected businessman was accused of murder, only to be acquitted. His reputation, however, was so damaged that he committed suicide while still proclaiming his innocence.

35 Bortenschlager, *Der Dramatiker Fritz Hochwälder*, 120.

36 Holdman, 75. Although strictly speaking there is no true alliteration in his wife's name, and perhaps the daughter's name merely reflects the egotistical nature of the protagonist; bestowing the female equivalent of his own name on his child.

37 Haley, 107. For some reason this is the only name in his translation that he changes into an English equivalent, so any connection between it and the protagonist is not conveyed.

38 Holdman, 77.

39 Holdman, 77-78.

40 Holdman, 79-80.

41 The view expressed by both James Schmitt ["The Theme of Responsibility [...]", 92] and

tween appearances and reality remains unresolved, and social conventions are exposed as simply imposing a superficial order on things. At the end the re-establishment of acceptable appearances is all that is required to restore order.
The basis for suspecting Christian of murder is established in the opening breakfast scenes. What would otherwise merely seem examples of petty temper tantrums from an egocentric, domineering domestic tyrant, about whom his daughter says: "Alles dreht sich um ihn" (II, 142), take on a sinister aspect in light of the body in the garden. By the time breakfast is completed, all the damning circumstantial evidence against Christian has been introduced.
The play begins with Charlotte and Christine being informed by Mizzi that excavations have begun in Christian's prize rose bed: "[...] beim Rosenbeet, das niemand anrühren darf!" (II, 141). Christian, it is quickly revealed, has already made a fuss with the council about the work, and so when the gruesome find is made, suspicion immediately falls on him.
The suspected victim is also introduced before Christian even appears on stage, when Charlotte reveals to her daughter that the man she loved before marrying Christian mysteriously disappeared: "Spurlos, ja: von einem Tag zum andern, bis heut weiß niemand, wohin..." (II, 143).
Furthermore, it is also revealed, before the protagonist's appearance, that he is quite capable of violence. Krott has failed to report events in the garden because, as Mizzi reveals, he has learned of the dangers of disturbing the sanctity of Christian's breakfast:

> Vor dem Frühstück traut sich der Krott nicht mehr zum Herrn Direktor, seit der ihm einen Stiefel angeschmissen hat, wie er unlängst hinauf ist, melden, daß eine Lieferung Tulpenzwiebeln gekommen ist. Der Krott hat noch heut einen blauen Düppel an der Stirn, weil ihn der Herr Direktor grad mit dem Stiefelabsatz getroffen hat. (II, 141)

This is later confirmed by Krott himself (II, 151), and then Christian himself demonstrates his violent temper by roughly grabbing Krott and throwing him into a chair (II, 176). Later still, he physically threatens Petternigg (II, 173).
Violence is also conveyed in these opening scenes by Christian's passion for the cheese he is served for breakfast: the wall still bears the fat stain from where he has previously thrown an unsatisfactory cheese (II, 142)[42], and an unripe Camembert is the source of further consternation this morning (II, 144-145).
Finally, Christian's own words over breakfast will come back to haunt him. What might normally be dismissed as his "Redensarten" (II, 147), or self-important, hollow boasting, takes on greater significance once the remains of a dead man are found. It is Christian himself who suggests things are not as they seem:

Thomas Haley [108] that Christian's experiences produce a more thoughtful and humane man at the end of the play, one who is aware of his own fallibility, will be challenged below.

[42] As in *Donnerstag* a *Fettfleck*, this time on the wall rather than on a suit, represents human foibles.

> Ihr wißt nicht, mit wem ihr es zu tun habt. Manchmal seh ich drein, als könnt ich nicht bis drei zählen, aber das ist Maske, Verstellung, im Ernstfall ist mit mir nicht zu spaßen, da bin ich zu allem fähig - ich wäge meine Worte: zu allem! [...] Wer verbürgt, daß alles in meinem Leben war, wie es scheint, wo steht geschrieben, daß ich nicht geheime Wege gehn kann? [...] In meiner Vergangenheit gibt es Dinge, die nicht ans Licht dürfen - ah, wenn ihr wüßtet, was in diesem Hirn, in diesem Busen schlummert, wenn es eines Tages erwachte und aufstünde - die Haut würde euch schaudern, die Haut! (II, 147-148)

To make matters worse, Christian goes on to threaten Breitnadler, the man Christine wishes to marry, suggesting he has the power to make him disappear without a trace (II, 149), and furthermore states: "ich bin in meinem Leben mit andern Bräutigämern fertig geworden" (II, 148). While Christian elaborates that he refers to using his influence to deny Breitnadler funding, his words will take on a quite different hue in the light of the discovery outside.

As the circumstantial evidence mounts against Christian, the patina of bourgeois respectability proves to be very thin. One by one all the characters suspect the worse of him, falling into two camps: those who wish to distance themselves from getting involved in the mounting scandal, and those who support him until the end but still believe him capable of murder. The middle-class world portrayed in the play, clearly place the importance of appearances above all else, a fact recognised by Christian when he tells Julius: "[...] was kauf ich mir für mein reines Gewissen, wenn mein guter Ruf flötengeht?" (II, 160).

In such a world, gossip can be just as damaging as any concrete evidence of a crime, and this is embodied in the character of Petternigg, who first brings the news about the grisly find under the rose garden. The nosy neighbour, with an ear for gossip and scandal, clearly relishes the prospect of the good name of the far more successful Erdmann being damaged. In the end, according to Petternigg, success, and therefore Petternigg's failures, are immaterial, only one thing matters: "Daß der Name ohne Makel bleibt, einzig darauf kommt es an" (II, 152). This, it would seem, is far more important than the truth, for, as he later emphasizes, that is something only the individual can know: "Die entscheidenden Dinge bleiben geheim, begraben im Herzen derer, die sie kennen" (II, 171). Such a philosophy, not far removed from that expressed by Julius and then Christian at the end, conveniently allows Petternigg to suspect the worst. He clearly believes Christian guilty of foul play, an opinion which has been reinforced by Krott's misguided efforts to repair the damage to the rose garden, which looks suspiciously like an attempt to cover up the evidence (II, 155). He betrays the mentality of the good burgher with his continuous emphasis on appearances: he believes Christian was mistaken in making such a public fuss about the council's excavation plans (II, 153); warns his neighbour not to endanger his good name as an "Ehrenmann" (II, 155); suggests they outwardly treat the event as a "Bagatelle" (II, 156); and promises to keep an ear to the ground to hear what "die bösen Zungen" are saying about it (II, 156). As for his own behaviour, he sanctimoniously claims to be only

interested in doing what is right and proper for a good neighbour: "Ich vermute nichts. Meine Pflicht ist, Ihnen Beistand zu leisten, alles andere ist mir gleichgültig" (II, 156).
However, just how far this neighbourly duty extends, becomes apparent at the next meeting between the men in the afternoon, when Petternigg is at pains to distance himself from the scandal brewing around Christian:

> Ich möchte vorausschicken, daß ich nicht beabsichtige, mich in Dinge einzumengen, die mich nichts angehn. Was ich tun konnte, um Ihrer Familie gefällig zu sein, ist heut vormittag geschehn. Inzwischen hab ich Augen und Ohren offengehalten und mit Schrecken erkannt, daß es nicht ratsam ist, in die Affäre verwickelt zu werden. Sie und ich - wir haben immer gute Nachbarschaft gehalten, und dazu gehört, daß jeder für sich einsteht und den andern aus dem Spiel läßt. (II, 171-172)

Now convinced of Christian's guilt, and indeed able to add his own piece of damning circumstantial evidence, Petternigg wants to repay his debts so that he cannot be incriminated by links to the "murderer" (II, 172-175). Implicit in this conversation is the threat that Petternigg could harm Christian by going to the authorities if he wished, an action he later readily takes (II, 191-193).
Like Petternigg, Mizzi, or rather her fiancé, Karl, is also concerned primarily with appearances and the risk of being tainted by association. As a public servant, he is not prepared to have his good name linked with a house of ill-repute, and insists that Mizzi give notice (II, 165). While Mizzi does not openly say she believes Christian guilty, later, when subjected to abuse from Christian, she, like Petternigg, threatens him with the possibility of testifying in court, suggesting that she does believe he has something to hide.
The desire to distance oneself from the suspect is not confined to domestic staff and neighbours. Christian's daughter, Christine, perhaps understandably considering her father's attitude to the man she loves, also refuses to be caught up in her father's problems, although in the first act she had promised, along with her mother, to stand by him (II, 155). She correctly sees that her father wishes to couple her with the ambitious lawyer Stark, in doing so not only finding her, in his eyes at least, a very eligible husband, but also helping to extricate him from his present predicament. He later admits as much to Julius (II, 160). Like Petternigg and Mizzi, Christine refuses to have her own position compromised by her father's difficulties, again showing little concern for his real innocence or guilt:

> Ich weiß nicht, was an den Gerüchten ist, die man über dich verbreitet, will es auch nicht wissen. Führ deine Sache, so gut du kannst, verteidig dich mit allen Mitteln, aber laß mich aus dem Spiel, verdirb mir nicht mein Leben! (II, 169)

Even those who stand by Christian demonstrate that they believe that he is

capable of committing murder. Charlotte promises to support him (II, 155, 166, 167), but after their breakfast conversation, feels it necessary to ask him whether he has kept any dark secrets from her (II, 167). Julius, who nonchalantly philosophizes that one can never truly know another intimately (II, 180-182), clearly suspects Christian of the crime, when referring to "damals" (II, 158), and when warning his friend against turning to the authorities: "Weil die Polizei genauso gefährlich ist wie das Verbrechen" (II, 160). The mistreated but loyal Krott, also shows a readiness to believe the worst of Christian. Unable to say whether his master has someone on his conscience (II, 178), his misguided efforts to protect Christian by accepting the blame himself, show he believes his master guilty (II, 197-199). Indeed, the efforts of Krott and Julius to defend Christian in front of Stark simply serve to convince one and all, including Charlotte, that he is guilty of murder by providing a likely victim in the form of his former rival for Charlotte's love (II, 195-201).

As the "Mordskandal", which Christian unsuspectingly predicted at breakfast, develops, the play takes on the overtones of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, which shows such a marked influence on the plays, *Der öffentliche Ankläger* and *Der Befehl*. Christian is not prepared to stand by and do nothing: "[...] ich muß handeln" (II, 160)[43], yet his subsequent efforts, like those of Fouquier-Tinville and Mittermayer, seem to further ensnare him.

The second encounter with Petternigg, provokes another violent outburst from Christian (II, 173), and when Christian catches sight of himself in the mirror after Petternigg has made a hasty retreat, he is taken aback to see the murderous potential in himself and acts out an imaginary murder (II, 175). Shaken, he now begins to wonder whether he is really guilty and turns to Krott and Julius to find out just how bad he was in his bachelor days, unable, like Mittermayer in the later play, to remember himself. Krott when pushed, describes his master in those days as "schrecklich" (II, 177), and describes his master's drunken excesses. Now plagued by guilt, particularly in respect to the way he has treated his trusted servant, he asks: "Was war ich für ein Mensch, Krott... was war ich für ein Mensch?" The gardener's response is a far cry from the image the protagonist attempted to portray at breakfast: "Jesus mein Gott und Herr -: ein starker Mensch, ein schwacher Mensch, eben ein Mensch..." (II, 179).

His conversation with Julius is even less reassuring, for his friend is unable to enlighten him: "Wir wissen kaum, was in uns selbst steckt, geschweige im andern" (II, 180). Furthermore, he may well be guilty of the terrible crime:

> CHRISTIAN: [...] Die Wahrheit, Julius -: bin ich ein Mörder? [...]
> JULIUS: Respekt - du suchst dir gleich das Feinste aus.
> CHRISTIAN: Wie, was?
> JULIUS: Mord.
> CHRISTIAN: Ist mir ein Mord zuzutraun?

[43] In *Lazaretti oder Der Säbeltiger* Oedipus' guilt is seen as his determination to act [III, 273].

JULIUS: Natürlich.
CHRISTIAN: Hör ich recht?
JULIUS: Das Urverbrechen steckt in jedem - ausnahmlos.
CHRISTIAN: Auch - in dir?
JULIUS: Selbstredend. Es wird bloß nicht in jedem frei. Zum Beispiel: ich - hätt es in dieser Richtung nicht weit gebracht, mir fehlt Anlage, Begabung, Talent. Ich seh im Mörder eine Art von Künstler, unbeherrscht, naiv, intensiv [...] (II, 180-181)

Not that the fact that Christian may be guilty would affect their friendship, for their relationship is not, apparently, based on truly knowing one another: "Die besten Freunde sind einander fremd, im Grund. Jeder haust auf einer hoffnungslosen Insel, in Einsamkeit" (II, 181).
Such philosophising merely serves to shake Christian's crumbling values still further, and lead him to doubt the substance beneath the bourgeois exterior of his world, a world in which, until that morning, he had complete faith:

[...] Dann stimmt meine Welt nicht! [...] Wenn jeder einsam ist, ausgesetzt, hoffnungslos allein, der schlimmsten Übeltat fähig - dann war ich bis zur Stunde ein lebensblinder Narr, der an Güte und Wärme glaubt, an Liebe, Freundschaft, Frohmut, Geselligkeit, an alle Herrlichkeit der Erde... Und sieh! -: jählings streck ich die Hand aus, such Stütze, Hilfe, und stoß ins Abgrundleere... Gott helf mir armem Tropf, etwas muß verkehrt gewesen sein in meinem Leben... Wie konnt ich bloß so unbefangen fröhlich, so stolz und selbstgerecht sein? [...] Mein Gott, was ist das für eine Welt und lohnt es überhaupt, da zu sein? (II, 181-182)

However, the protagonist does not have much time to dwell upon such depressing thoughts, for the ambitious lawyer Stark arrives, and immediately starts antagonizing the understandably sensitive Christian (II, 183-188). Infuriated by the aspersions cast upon his name, he accuses himself of murder, in the belief that the resulting investigation might clear his name (II, 189). However, far from proving his innocence, the investigation conducted by Stark produces even more damning evidence about Christian's past (II, 195-200). Just before Breitnadler's fortuitous appearance, everyone, including Charlotte, think Christian is guilty of murder (II, 200). He stands fully isolated and alone.
With the arrival of the proof that Christian could not have killed the man found in the garden, the protagonist is again able to assume control of his house. With magnanimous gestures he brushes aside the events that have threatened to destroy his world with the rather ambiguous: "Wenn alles Irrtum war, Verblendung, Täuschung; bloß eine Seifenblase, die zerstiebt, eh man sie betrachtet - und nichts anderes haben wir erlebt, das ist sonnenklar! - dann habe ich mich nicht minder geirrt, getäuscht und betrogen, jawohl - das gesteh ich, das geb ich zu!" (II, 203). Yet, if these comments suggest that Christian has recognized the lack of substance to the foundations of his former life, he busily goes about reestablishing it, and insists the whole affair should be seen as just

a passing cloud (II, 206)[44]. He is quickly able to reassert his position in the family, by showing surprising benevolence in his moment of triumph. Having recognized that the likes of Breitnadler do, after all, have a place in the world, he blesses his daughter's marriage to the academic (II, 204). Then reassuring his wife that all is forgotten, he quickly diverts her attention to the forthcoming wedding (II, 205-206).

Petternigg, Krott and Mizzi all express delight: "daß alles wieder in Ordnung ist" (II, 204-205) and Petternigg even has the nerve to ask for the money he has repaid to be returned to him (II, 204). Finally, as if to underline that order has indeed been restored, as if nothing has happened, Christian insists that he and Julius play their regular Friday game of chess (II, 206)[45].

However, the final scene between the two friends reveals that the events have indeed left their mark. Whereas earlier, Julius had remained calm and philosophical while Christian succumbed to panic, the roles are now reversed, with Julius decidedly uncomfortable, having doubted his friend, who relishes the advantage he now has over his chess opponent. Echoing the breakfast scene, which contributed so much to the doubts surrounding Christian, the protagonist throws Julius' earlier words back in his face: "Alles ist mir zuzutraun, restlos: alles!" (II, 207). Nothing has been proven, save that he did not kill the man found in the garden: he may still be a murderer. Talking "sub rosa"[!], Christian even goes so far as to sketch a hypothetical murder scenario to his horrified friend (II, 207-209); maybe the circumstantial evidence that seemed to build around him did indeed point to murder. Christian takes great delight in telling Julius, he cannot ever know who is before him: "Ein Freund, ein Fremder, ein Schuldiger, Unschuldiger" (II, 209), and the play ends with his "Höllengelächter".

The delight with which Christian unsettles his friend in this final scene belies the suggestion that the protagonist has undergone some "inner enlightenment"[46], and is somehow a better person at the end[47]. Indeed his make-believe scenario, strongly echoes his earlier efforts at breakfast to paint himself as more important and powerful than he really is. However, after all the events that have taken place, neither Julius nor the audience can be quite sure how much is bravado and how much may be true, for as Christian eagerly reminds Julius: "Das Urverbrechen steckt in jedem - ausnahmslos" (II, 181, 207).

Der Unschuldige, like the plays before it, draws attention to the fundamental isolation of individuals from one another. Christian, like Trommler, Jehr and Virginia, finds himself, at least momentarily, completely cut-off from those around him, with no one to turn to for support. It also becomes clear in this comedy, as in the earlier plays, *Die unziemliche Neugier* and "Die verschleierte Frau" that characters do not really know one another nor of what they are

[44] Christian uses similar imagery at breakfast when he senses something is wrong (II, 144).

[45] The ending of *Die Prinzessin von Chimay* is very similar, with order apparently being re-established by a game of cards [see Chapter 6].

[46] Schmitt, "The Theme of Responsibility [...]", 92.

[47] Haley, 108; Schmitt, "The Theme of Responsibility [...]", 92.

capable. Such isolation may lead to actions which would normally be considered outside the bounds of normal behaviour.
The ambiguous, open-ended conclusion of this last comedy, *Der Unschuldige,* however, raises far more clearly issues which will have a direct relevance in the plays in which Hochwälder openly examines the Nazi past. The superficial nature of the social mores in the comedy reflects more that just a critique of bourgeois manners[48], but also implies a means of disguising the truth, of concealing what lies just below the surface: appearances are all important. The ease with which social acceptability can be so readily dropped and then re-established demonstrates its inadequacies in controlling human behaviour, and this point will again be made, with far more bite in Hochwälder's modern *Volksstück, Der Himbeerpflücker,* in which acceptable social behaviour can be changed as circumstances dictate. The even more difficult question of how to behave when the social order itself is morally corrupt, and what therefore constitutes ethically acceptable behaviour is examined in "Holokaust. Schauspiel in drei Akten"[49].
Der Unschuldige also shows that evil does not necessarily bear any distinguishing external features, for just as the innocent Virginia proved capable of murder, so might Christian be. As Donald Daviau notes:

> Der Unschuldige [ist] eines von Hochwälders provozierendsten Stücken auf Grund des zweideutigen Endes und des ernsten Themas, das darin anklingt [...]: das Böse trägt das gleiche Antlitz, wie wir es alle haben, und man kann es nur unter besonderen Umständen identifizieren[50].

This potential for evil, which may be hidden beneath a pleasant, decent exterior, can lead, as Daviau sketches in his essay, to a kind of Jekyll and Hyde conflict, and again this is nowhere more closely explored than in a drama directly concerning the Third Reich, the case of Mittermayer in *Der Befehl.*
In these three dramas, *Holokaust, Der Himbeerpflücker* and *Der Befehl,* Hochwälder explores themes already touched on in his other dramas and relates them directly to recent European, and indeed his own personal history, raising the question of how the atrocities of the Nazi period could come to pass.

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48 Hugo Huppert interpreted the play in social-critical terms befitting the newspaper for which he wrote: "[...] wer Menschen ausbeutet, geringschätzt, niederkonkurriert, übervorteilt, endlich noch schmäht, der ist dank seiner bürgerlich-antisozialen Situation im Grunde einsam, verlassen, isoliert" ["Die bösartige Vereinzelung", *Volksstimme* [Wien], 7. März 1975].
Certainly this applies to Christian, but while middle-class values and pretensions are held up to ridicule, the fundamental isolation of individuals from one another is not restricted to class by Hochwälder, as has been seen in other dramas.

49 Fritz Hochwälder, "Holokaust. Schauspiel in drei Akten", ts., 1961, Hochwälder Nachlaß, Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Wien.

50 Daviau, "Der innere Konflikt [...]", 917.