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Lucinda Rennison

**Rolf Hochhuth's interpretation of  
history, and its effect on the  
content, form and reception of  
his dramatic work.**

Thesis submitted for the degree  
of Ph.D., University of Durham,  
December 1991.

This thesis attempts to account for the diversity and occasional inconsistency that characterise Rolf Hochhuth's theoretical essays and plays.

Initially, the nature and extent of several philosophical, historical and literary influences upon Hochhuth are discussed in order to build up a broad picture of the author's concept of historical events and the individual's role in them.

A selection of plays is presented in the light of these findings. They include the much-discussed earlier plays, directly concerned with history and its presentation, and later works within which Hochhuth speculates about a possible future. Parallels are drawn between the arguments presented in these plays and those ideas which he has elucidated in his theoretical work. Hochhuth's fluctuating and eclectic choice of dramatic structure is then examined as a possible consequence of the diversity of these same ideas.

A new area of interest is seen to emerge in Hochhuth's writing during the 1970s in a series of plays about women. His theories - and questions - concerning history are again viewed as the motivation for these works, and their reflection in the content and structure of Lysistrata und die Nato and Judith is illustrated in detail.

The thesis establishes the uncertain and speculative nature of Hochhuth's attitude to history. In the context of a brief discussion of the reception of his plays, therefore, a final chapter indicates the dangers of adopting a narrow ideological perspective when approaching Hochhuth's work. This may have the effect of highlighting the author's failings, and produce a negative overall evaluation. A broader perspective which does justice to the diverse arguments and questions explored in his writing would seem to offer a more fruitful approach to Rolf Hochhuth.

**ROLF HOCHHUTH'S INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY,  
AND ITS EFFECT ON THE CONTENT, FORM AND  
RECEPTION OF HIS DRAMATIC WORK.**

**LUCINDA JANE BRUNSON**

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**Submitted for the degree of Ph.D.**

**UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM,  
Department of German**

**December 1991**



**26 AUG 1992**



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List of abbreviations used for editions of primary texts by Rolf Hochhuth in this thesis:

- AD - Alle Dramen, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1991
- AT - Alan Turing, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1987
- BA - Die Berliner Antigone, Rowohlt (rororo 1842),  
Reinbek 1982
- G - Guerillas, Rowohlt (rororo 1588), Reinbek  
1977
- H - Die Hebamme, Rowohlt (rororo 1670), Reinbek  
1980
- H/EGE - Die Hebamme, Komödie, Erzählungen, Gedichte, Essays,  
Rowohlt ('Die Bücher der 19' Band 203),  
Reinbek 1971
- H/VEG - 'Vorstudien zu einer Ethologie der Geschichte' in  
Die Hebamme, Komödie, Erzählungen, Gedichte, Essays
- Ju - Judith, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1984
- KK - Krieg und Klassenkrieg, Rowohlt (rororo  
1455), Reinbek 1971
- LN - Lysistrata und die Nato, Rowohlt (dnb 46),  
Reinbek 1973
- PM - Panik im Mai, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1991
- R-R - Räuber-Rede, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1982
- S - Soldaten, Rowohlt (rororo 1323), Reinbek 1981
- S14 - Sommer 14, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1989
- SdE - Spitze des Eisbergs, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1982
- SSe - Schwarze Segel, Rowohlt (rororo 5776), Reinbek 1986
- St - Der Stellvertreter, Rowohlt (rororo 997), Reinbek 1983
- T38 - Tell 38, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1979
- TD - Täter und Denker, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt,  
Stuttgart 1987
- TJ - Tod eines Jägers, Rowohlt (dnb 68), Reinbek 1976
- YSA - Von Syrakus aus, Volk und Welt, Berlin 1991

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## INTRODUCTION

The 19th century in Germany saw the emergence of a new understanding of the historian's task. Modern writers, including Ranke, Droysen and Mommsen, turned away from the customary rhetorical, poetic representation of the past towards a factual and scientific approach. In doing so, they sought a form of absolute truth, aiming to eliminate the role of the imagination as far as possible - 'nur kein Erdichten, auch nicht im Kleinsten, nur kein Hirngespinst.' In reality, however, they were of course still writing to be read, and bare 'facts' presented without narrative ability did not reach the reader: 'bei der Historie gehört das Vermögen der Wiederhervorbringung dazu'.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the historian became recognised as a scientist, therefore, his work remained an art in a certain sense. Post-modern trends in criticism once again underline this aspect of the historian's work, emphasising the significance of his imaginative and narrative skills in presenting a specific picture of past events to the reader.

Authors of literary texts, be they novels or plays, have drawn upon historical material for centuries. Whilst the earliest motivation for this - in epic poetry and legend - may have been to preserve



past personalities and events for posterity, modern authors, Schiller for example, used historical figures in order to convey moral or aesthetic truths concerning mankind in general. The same combination of fact - documentary material - and literary interpretation, albeit with a differing emphasis, is inherent in the work of both the historian and the writer of literature.

With this in mind, it is surprising that only very recent research has accepted an interdisciplinary approach to history and literature.<sup>3</sup> During the 1960s, for example, after the huge stage success of his drama Der Stellvertreter in 1963, Rolf Hochhuth was heavily criticised on either historical or literary grounds. Whilst some critics limited their attacks to the veracity of Hochhuth's assertions or the validity of his evaluation of the situation during the years of fascism, others approached his dramatic structure and language in the context of literary history, largely ignoring the content and intention of the play.<sup>4</sup>

This raises the question as to whether such a divisive approach can be applied to Hochhuth's work at all - and as to the form of approach which might be considered more fitting.

Hochhuth describes the motivation for his dramatic writing in the following terms:

Aus dieser meiner Unzulänglichkeit gegenüber der Geschichte, die ich vergebens zu verstehen suche (...) wurde ich hinsichtlich geschichtlicher Themen produktiv.<sup>6</sup>

From this comment, it is clear that he views history as an area of uncertainty, as a field for speculation. In this sense, Hochhuth echoes the attitude of the early modern dramatists summarised by Benno von Wiese in his study of German tragedy:

Nicht der Mythos, wohl aber die Geschichte ist der Träger des modernen tragischen Weltbewußtseins; denn sie ist eine Macht, die bereits bei Grillparzer den Menschen der zeitlos kosmischen Ordnung entfremdet, bei Grabbe und Büchner aber als ein ehernes, wider-göttliches Gesetz verstanden wird, dem der Mensch wie eine Marionette verfallen ist.<sup>6</sup>

Hochhuth's opinion in this context also reflects on his concept of the historian's work. He understands the task of the historian as primarily one of interpretation. The first reason for this is involuntary, since the documentation available is often incomplete or unreliable, and 'Zum Faktum verhält das Dokument sich, darf man ihm trauen, wie zur Vase die Scherbe' (§ 91). Secondly, however, Hochhuth observes the dominant aspect of interpretation as an active choice by the historian, so that historical 'truth' is a fluctuating concept:

daß beinahe jede neue Generation von Historikern, auch von Staatsmännern auf Grund neuer Erfahrungen einen neuen - und wiederum natürlich nur zeitlich bedingten, nämlich *ihren* Horizont entsprechenden, und nur - somit auch - zeitweise "wahren" Sinn

in den Verlauf und in die Massaker  
hineindichte, hineindeute. R-R 210

Hochhuth extends this awareness of the subjectivity of historical 'knowledge' to apply to his own work in the speech given on receiving the 'Geschwister-Scholl-Preis' in 1980:

die deprimierende Erfahrung, die jeder macht, der eine Geschichte oder gar Geschichte erzählen will - nämlich wie armselig lückenvoll alles bleibt, was man darstellt, wie subjektiv auch schon in der Auswahl dessen, was man zur Sprache bringt oder was man nur um das Recht bringt, Sprache zu werden... R-R 218

When this acute consciousness of ambivalence, of the absence of 'truth', is taken into account, it is clear that a reading of Hochhuth's work will demonstrate no closed world view or definitive historical or political philosophy. It is important to remember that he regards dramatic literature as a highly political medium which cannot be read in terms of solely aesthetic criteria - 'Politik (ist) die *Conditio sine qua non* des Theaters' (SdE 223). It is likely to prove equally difficult to appreciate Hochhuth's work from a critical standpoint based on just such a definitive political and historical philosophy. Criticism of this nature tends towards the use of specific labels, and was prevalent in Germany during the 1960s and 1970s<sup>7</sup>, but it is debatable whether Hochhuth's plays ought to be approached from this angle.



The following study seeks to examine several influences, literary and philosophical, upon the dramatic work of Hochhuth. Whilst the terms 'historical philosophy' and 'understanding of history' are - necessarily - used to refer to Hochhuth's ideas, these are applied to a variety and combination of aspects and never to an all-embracing philosophy. The plays chosen for analysis include the earlier works which deal directly with historical themes and employ much documentary material, but also later plays in which the association with historical theory and factual material cannot be so easily traced. Nevertheless, an attempt to draw parallels between the author's ideas of history and the content and style of these plays will be made. The development of this relationship will be examined and key elements of its impact upon the plays' reception will be considered.

Footnotes:

1 - Leopold von Ranke, Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber, (Sämtliche Werke 33-34) Leipzig 1874, p.24

2 - Leopold von Ranke, 'Idee der Universalgeschichte' in Vorlesungseinleitungen ed. V. Dotterweich and Walter Peter Fuchs, München 1975 p. 72

3 - 'New Historicism', a critical approach emerging in the USA of the late 1970s and early 1980s, once again emphasised the interpretative and imaginative aspects of historical research,

and its basis in sources which are themselves an interpretation of events.

4 - The former approach is characterised by the criticism of Wilhelm Alff, 'Richtige Einzelheiten - verfehltes Gesamtbild' (published in Summa iniuria, ed. F.J. Raddatz, Reinbek, 1963, p.124ff). Alff doubts Hochhuth's evaluation of the Pope's actual and moral influence during the war years, and examines the truth of several minor facts used in the play. Der Stellvertreter as a dramatic work is not considered.

The latter method can be seen in Rainer Taeni's study, 'Der Stellvertreter: Episches Theater Oder Christliche Tragödie' in Seminar Vol.2, No.1, Spring 1966, p.15ff

5 - 'Herr oder Knecht der Geschichte?' Rolf Hochhuth in interview with Irmtraud Rippel-Manß in Journal für Geschichte No. 1, 1979 p. 32

6 - Benno von Wiese, Die deutsche Tragödie von Lessing bis Hebbel dtv, München 1983 p. 19

7 - 'Die Epitheta, mit denen in den Jahren vor und nach 1970 literarische Werke vorzugsweise nicht nur charakterisiert, sondern gleich auch bewertet wurden: "affirmativ" bzw. "reaktionär" und "progressiv" oder gar "subversiv", zeigen deutlich genug an, wie sehr die angenommene Einstellung des literarischen Textes zum Geschichtsverlauf die Motivation zu seiner wissenschaftlichen Befragung lieferte.' Eberhard Lämmert, 'Geschichte unter wechselndem Blick' in Geschichte als Literatur, ed. Hartmut Eggert, Ulrich Profitlich and Klaus Scherpe, Stuttgart, 1990, p.416

## CHAPTER ONE - THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

In both his essays and his plays, Hochhuth has given us direct and indirect evidence of his understanding of history. These sources can be examined in order to ascertain which intellectual stimuli have led him to formulate his ideas. These influences may be positive; in the sense that Hochhuth has directly assimilated particular ideas from a specific source, or negative; in the sense that his response to particular philosophies has enabled him to consolidate his own viewpoint as a contrast.

An example of the latter, negative influence is the Christian ideology and its understanding of the historical process.

Hochhuth's critique of the Christian standpoint begins with the early poetry and is very clearly illustrated in the play most obviously concerned with Christian ideals, Der Stellvertreter.

In the poem, 'Bergmänner und Bischöfe' (BA 41), God is satirically portrayed as an absent-minded creator - he has forgotten earth and rediscovers it only to be amazed by religious practice there. Hochhuth's main target is the church as an institution rather than the Christian faith in its essence, but even

here his irony is the result of a deep sense of injustice on earth. The miners are seen as 'verrußtes Gesindel', sweating to survive, the church as a 'Prachtversammlung in Seide und Gold'. God's reaction to the miners' struggle is revulsion, 'er krümmt sich vor Ekel', but Hochhuth points out that it is his indifference which has brought about the situation:

Neulich hat Gott die Welt entdeckt  
 - zufällig und zum ersten Mal,  
 seit er sie zum Leben erweckt.

God's very existence is thrown into question because of this appalling lack of responsibility.

In 'Deus absconditus?' the question of God's existence is more seriously raised. Hochhuth's problem is in reconciling the concept of a caring, all-powerful God with the atrocities of war. In doing so, he raises an aspect of the Christian faith, indeed of belief in any good god, which has concerned theologians for centuries. The vindication of God despite the evil in man and the world, known as theodicy, is the subject, for example, of Leibnitz' Essais de Théodicée, written as early as 1710.

Philosophical discussion rejecting the idea has formulated four possible alternatives: firstly, that God wants to overcome evil, but cannot; secondly, that he does not want to, but can; thirdly, that he does not want to and cannot; finally that he wants to and can. The latter is impossible in the face of the

world, since such a God would have already eradicated evil. The three other possibilities either disprove God's omnipotence or his love. Hochhuth's conclusion in his poetry reflects the second of these alternatives; that an omnipotent God could only exist in the face of Auschwitz and Hiroshima were he morally unacceptable. A morally unacceptable God is himself a paradox - a being capable of guiding individuals on the one hand and allowing the destruction of millions on the other: 'Fügung, die Auschwitz fügt und Hiroshima?/Kinder ertränkt, verhungern läßt, verbrennt?' (BA 48) The very title of the poem reflects Hochhuth's sense of God's absence - 'Deus absconditus?' God is not simply, Hochhuth seems to suggest, far removed and concealed from man in the Old Testament sense of 'absconditus'. In the context of the poem, the question mark of the title serves to show that this concept of God is so unacceptable to Hochhuth that he prefers to see historical events as independent of any divine working - indeed sees in the pattern of history the conclusive proof of God's now permanent absence.

The same theme is picked up in Der Stellvertreter by the character most expressive of evil, the 'Doktor'. The fact that he is portrayed as loathsome does not invalidate the logic of his arguments. His very

existence, Hochhuth implies, ought to be a challenge to God. His question, 'Finden Sie's denn tröstlicher, daß Gott persönlich/ den Menschen am Bratspieß der Geschichte dreht?' (St 198), reflects Hochhuth's own doubt in God, and it is the doctor's opposite, Riccardo, a Christian capable of the ultimate sacrifice, who voices the incompatibility of God and Auschwitz most definitively:

Leichen - ein Fließband mit Leichen,  
 ein Äserweg ohne Ende, die Geschichte...  
 Wüßte ich, daß - ER zusieht -,  
 (mit Ekel) ich müßte... IHN hassen.  
 St 215

Yet Riccardo dies in faith. Does this perhaps indicate that Hochhuth himself cannot entirely reject the possibility of a good God, despite all his logical arguments to the contrary? The root of this question lies in the character of Riccardo himself. Hochhuth's general picture of humanity is negative, yet Riccardo - and he is not the only one of Hochhuth's characters to do this - rises above this to a state of moral integrity reflected in his actions. It is difficult to explain this seeming paradox without some concept of spiritual guidance and motivation. In the same sense that the evil of the 'Doktor' throws God's existence in question, Riccardo's selfless sacrifice appears to point to a caring God. Whether this God really exists is perhaps not the essential question, since the very concept of

him can provoke moral goodness in certain individuals.

Alongside the insoluble paradox of God and the horrors of history lies Hochhuth's conviction that historical facts provide no evidence of progression in world events. The Christian viewpoint clearly contradicts this, for according to it God not only guides and controls the course of history, he will also bring it to its joyful conclusion in 'a new heaven and a new earth'. (Revelation 21:1) Hochhuth illustrates this Christian conviction in the words of the Pope in Der Stellvertreter. Events there are seen to follow God's plan: 'Gott lenkte doch die Ströme Europas/ Sehr selten in eine Richtung, in ein Bett.' (St 169). 'Auch diese Stunde war die Stunde Gottes./ Der Herr hat Uns zum Heil entschieden.' (St 169). Yet, Hochhuth argues, mankind is not progressing - indeed he has not learnt from history and continues to repeat his own mistakes.' God's ways may be mysterious, but Hochhuth is not prepared to accept that the 'way' of history is progress towards an ultimate goal; 'Es gibt gar keinen Zweck über das Leben einer Generation hinaus, es geht nicht aufwärts, sondern weiter.' (H/VEG 370). Still less is he prepared to accept the horrors of history - and their culmination in the 20th century - as legitimate

'milestones' along a planned path, as the quotation above indicates: 'Fügung, die Auschwitz fügt und Hiroshima...'

Not only is Hochhuth unconvinced of divine guidance in the scheme of historical event,<sup>s</sup> he is concerned at what may be the results of faith in God and belief in a glorious future. He is convinced that this certainty may often lead to indifference or inactivity in the present. The danger of trusting in God, in other words, is that man fails to take matters into his own hands and try to improve the situation.

Fontana, for example, justifies the Pope's lack of action to Riccardo with the Christian's total trust in God, which involves, however, no active participation in events - Riccardo's own desire to act is seen as disobedience to God's will:

Die Weltgeschichte ist noch nicht zu Ende,  
die Besetzung Rußlands noch kein Sieg.  
Der Papst wird wissen, daß sein Einspruch  
ohne Wirkung bliebe oder die Kirche  
in Deutschland aufs schwerste gefährden  
würde

St 85

In Räuber-Rede, Hochhuth's direct statement indicates that nearly twenty years after writing St, he is still concerned by the complete acceptance and therefore inactivity involved in Christian faith - for the Christian historian, he writes, the life of



an individual, or even of very many, is secondary to the ultimate plan. The advocate of this philosophy

kümmern die Abfälle querweltein der  
Rollbahnen historischer Prozesse nicht,  
weil er nicht nur einzelne, sondern ganze  
Generationen (...) noch für nichts  
erachtet, wenn es ihm gilt, im Wortsinn,  
den Beweis 'anzutreten', daß die Geschichte  
ein unaufhaltsamer Heilungs- und  
Läuterungsprozess sei R-R 211

Whilst the individual may play a significant historical role, in doing so, he is God's 'instrument' - and unable, by his own effort, to alter God's chosen course. Obviously, a writer as concerned with the fate of individuals as Hochhuth, who views their moral decisions as the basis of historical events, cannot accept the Christian philosophy.

This aspect invites analogy between the Christian and the Marxist philosophies of history when examining their respective influences on Hochhuth's standpoint. In Historical Materialism, the Marxist view, the relative insignificance of the individual also leads to a denial of his influence over historical events. Hochhuth's contrasting viewpoint is voiced by Arthur in Judith:

Absurd, die Theorie,  
es komme nie auf einzelne an,  
sondern immer nur auf 'Hintermänner', die  
sie  
'anonyme gesellschaftliche Kräfte' nennen:

als ob die nicht auch versammelte einzelne  
wären. Judith 156

It is impossible for Hochhuth to accept the ultimate responsibility of 'anonyme Kräfte'. He is convinced that the role of the individual in the shaping of history should be rated highly, and he rebels against the idea that world leaders, for example, are mere pawns subject to more powerful influences:

diese bis zum Überdruß wiedergekäuten,  
durch keinen einzigen unangepaßten, eigenen  
Gedanken erhellten Beteuerungen, das  
Individuum habe heutzutage kein Gesicht  
mehr, habe Handlungsbefugnis selbst dann  
nicht, wenn es ein Staatschef ist, es sei  
austauschbar wie Flaschen: R-R 75

The topic is discussed by Edward and Arthur in Judith - Edward putting forward once more the view that 'Herrscher....sind .... meist austauschbar wie Coca-Cola-Flaschen.' (Judith 156). Arthur's arguments are more convincing - ultimately he comes to the logical conclusion that belief in the diminished responsibility of the individual has further consequences: an advocate of this theory

müßte so viel Anstand haben,  
Kriegsverbrecher-Prozesse als inhuman zu  
bekämpfen  
Denn wäre der einzelne nicht  
verantwortlich,  
wer dürfte ihn verantwortlich machen?  
Judith 156

Hochhuth's refusal to accept the Marxist interpretation of history has brought him into sharp confrontation with many of his contemporaries,

including Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse. Their disregard for the significance of the individual presents the main barrier, and Hochhuth's reaction to Marcuse's philosophy, Vorstudien zu einer Ethologie der Geschichte will be discussed in more detail from this point of view in Chapter 4 (see below pp. 141-165).

Although Hochhuth's social criticism, in Krieg und Klassenkrieg, for example, reflects the opinions of Marxist critics in its assessment of the present, he and they differ greatly in their understanding of past historical development and of developments in the future. Hochhuth sees one of the chief failings of Marxism in its emphasis on private property as the root of political power and the exploitation which results from it. He counters this theory with two main arguments. The first is that political power, on a large scale, is in itself corrupt, whether its origins be in property or not:

Ein besitzloser proletarischer Diktator,  
ein Stammeshäuptling, der nicht das Kapital  
hat, einen Lendenschurz zu kaufen - sind  
ebenso tyrannisch wie ein absoluter  
Monarch, dem persönlich dreißig Prozent des  
Staates gehören. H/VRG 355

In Hochhuth's opinion, Marx, realising that within the capitalist system ownership and power were concomitant, made the mistake of assuming that

corruption and the misuse of power were also determined by ownership and thus peculiar to the capitalist system.

allein das kapitalistische Raubwild vor Augen.... kam dem Genie nicht der Gedanke, daß nicht das Raubwild die Staaten hervorbringt, sondern umgekehrt: daß die Staaten, das heißt, der Besitz über ihren Machtapparat, das Raubwild gebären.

H/VEG 357

The second and most important argument hinges on Hochhuth's picture of humanity. A system based on public, rather than private ownership can never succeed, since it fails to satisfy man's unchanging need for material confirmation of his own existence and importance:

Nur Eigentum, nur Verantwortung schützen den Menschen vor dem alles lähmenden und ihn vor sich selbst entwürdigenden Gefühl, jede seiner Leistungen sei völlig irrelevant für die lebensbestimmenden Mächte Politik und Wirtschaft.

KK 33

Man, in Hochhuth's view, needs to possess in order to feel any sense of his own worth. Without personal property, man not only becomes devalued in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of others. This idea is reflected in Die Hebamme, when the poor living in the slums are rejected and criticised by the rest of the local society portrayed. At the same time, the inhabitants of the slum barracks have attempted to rescue some of their self-respect by procuring large and expensive televisions, whilst their clothing

reflects poor taste and bourgeois ambitions: 'die gar nicht billigen, äußerst spießbürgerlichen Attraktionen des letzten Winterschlußverkaufs' (H 92). A further indication of Hochhuth's extremely negative view of human nature is the added comment that these material goods - shreds of 'respectability' for the slum-dwellers, were 'gekauft auf Kosten der Ernährung der Kinder' (H 92).

This picture means that Hochhuth can only reject any hope for a new world and a new kind of humanity - the vision based on Marxist teaching and developed by Herbert Marcuse. In Hochhuth's opinion, man will remain as he is; in general lacking in will and character, in the case of some outstanding individuals, capable of exceptional achievement.

In both Christian and Marxist philosophy, the individual is of little significance because of the relative importance of an ultimate aim: According to Christianity, God's kingdom on earth, according to Marxism, the classless communist society.

Whilst advocates of both philosophies are certain of their aims and history's development towards them, they are less precise when explaining the role of the individual: Hochhuth quotes Brecht's comment on this with respect to Marxism in Räuber-Rede:

'Das Gesetz der Reflexion der Elektronen an dem Kristall ist also ein statisches. Es bestimmt nur das Verhalten einer großen Anzahl von Elektronen, es versagt aber bei

der Frage nach dem Verhalten eines einzelnen Elektrons.' Brecht zitiert das, um hinzuzufügen: 'Auch der historische Materialismus weist diese "Unschärfe" in bezug auf das Individuum auf.'

R-R 78

Hochhuth himself rejects an ultimate aim, seeing history as without development or progress, 'Ich glaube nicht an den Fortschritt in der Geschichte'<sup>22</sup>. Hochhuth's philosophy cannot be reconciled with either of the two world views discussed up to this point. They have certainly provided him with stimulation in his dramatic, and especially in his essay work, but only in a negative sense.

Where then, if at all, can parallels be drawn between Hochhuth's understanding of history and that of others? In answer to the direct question 'Wie ist Ihr Verhältnis zur deutschen Fachhistorie?'<sup>23</sup> Hochhuth predictably rejects modern, Marxist historical philosophies, but refers to nineteenth century historians who have influenced his thinking. Amongst these, Rainer Taëni sees the main influence upon Hochhuth as being that of the historian Oswald Spengler: the essential parallel lying in Spengler's theory of the repeated emergence and decay of cultures:

(stattdessen) beruft er sich auf Oswald Spengler, jenen Geschichtsphilosophen, der die Menschengeschichte als eine Kette

wiederkehrender            Entwicklungstendenzen  
begriff<sup>4</sup>

Hochhuth's own use of the image of the chain to describe historical events is used by Taëni to support his argument. It is interesting that whilst Hochhuth does quote Spengler in his creative work it is not directly this aspect of his philosophy, but two connected ideas which are raised. Thus he prefaces the poem 'Ein Rad dreht sich' (BA 14), with Spengler's rejection of the idea of an 'Endziel' in history. Lack of aim implies lack of progress, which is in turn an inevitable outcome of repeated historical patterns - Taëni's insistence on Spengler's influence, however, does not appear entirely justified. In Guerillas, Spengler is once more mentioned, but again in a slightly different context - Hochhuth praises his insight into the true distribution of world power:

Spengler zuerst hat gesehen, daß  
Weltherrschaft ein negatives Phänomen ist:  
nicht Überschuß an Kraft auf der einen -  
sondern Mangel an Widerstand auf der  
anderen Seite.                            G 149

The reason for Hochhuth's failure to acknowledge a debt to Spengler becomes evident in Vorstudien zu einer Ethologie der Geschichte. Here Hochhuth states clearly that whilst agreeing with Spengler's chief theory:

daß "die Weltgeschichte keine Einheit des  
Geschehens ist, sondern eine Gruppe von bis  
jetzt acht hohen Kulturen, deren

Lebensläufe vollkommen selbständig, aber in  
 durchaus gleichartiger Gliederung vor uns  
 liegen." H/VEG 383

he believes it to be very strongly influenced by the  
 work of another historian, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-  
 Moellendorf. Hochhuth refers to a lecture delivered  
 at the University of Göttingen to mark the Kaiser's  
 birthday in 1897:

Wilamowitz nennt seinen sehr bedeutenden  
 Vortrag 'Weltperioden' - und fraglos  
 verdankt Spengler ihm 'seine' Grundlagen,  
 ohne das je, meines Wissens, irgendwo  
 dankbar angemerkt zu haben. H/VEG 418

The words of Wilamowitz' lecture - 'in den  
 Marmorhallen von hundert kleinasiatischen Städten  
 wuchern die Dornen und kauern nur vereinzelt  
 verkümmerte Barbaren: Wüstensand wirbelt über dem  
 Göttergarten Kyrenes' (H/VEG 418) - have an obvious  
 echo in Hochhuth's poetry:

ein Tempel allein,  
 dem mit den Betern auch Gott starb,  
 behaust nur Sandwind 'Machwerk' BA 11

Hekatomben hat Geschichte weggeschoren,  
 wüstgelegt, genarrt, von nirgendwo  
 und um nichts nach nirgends deportiert.  
 'Geschichtsatlas' BA 16

Spengler's failure to acknowledge the influence of  
 Wilamowitz, and the parallels between their work, are  
 the subject of Hochhuth's later essay "Wilamowitz und  
 sein Erbe Spengler" in Täter und Denker (1987).



F. J. Raddatz, on the other hand, does not mention either Spengler or Wilamowitz. He underlines the extensive influence of Jacob Burckhardt, even going so far as to maintain '(das Gedicht) entstand, wie alles, was er später schrieb, unter dem Einfluß Jacob Burckhardts'<sup>5</sup>. Raddatz wrote this essay for publication in 1981, and we can presume that he had read Tell 38, a work which is relevant to this question. Here Hochhuth explains the significance of the Swiss historian for his work, pointing to Burckhardt's insistence on the central role of the individual in history - a concept in which Hochhuth maintains his own firm belief:

Daß ich immer immun war gegen diese fast allein meinungsmachende Nachkriegsschule der Entmündigung des einzelnen: ... das verdanke ich Jacob Burckhardt, der mich nachhaltiger programmiert hat als jeder - als jeder - andere Autor T38 13f

As was outlined above, Hochhuth has a belief - parallel but contrary to his negative view of mankind as a whole - in the possibility of 'greatness' in the individual. This is a reflection of Burckhardt's concept of 'Große Männer', which he introduces in his series of lectures 'Über das Studium der Geschichte'. If aspects of Burckhardt's theory concerning the great men of history are examined in conjunction with the character of Churchill in Soldaten, the extent of Burckhardt's influence on Hochhuth becomes evident.

According to Burckhardt, great men of history, as opposed to the great artists, poets or philosophers, whom he also analyses, have certain specific qualities. One of these is an ability to grasp historical and political complexes far beyond that of those around them: 'Das große Individuum übersieht und durchdringt jedes Verhältnis, im Detail wie im Ganzen, nach Ursachen und Wirkungen'<sup>6</sup>. This ability is coupled with an extraordinary strength of will, 'Abnorme Willenskraft, welche magischen Zwang um sich verbreitet und alle Elemente der Macht und Herrschaft an sich zieht und sich unterwirft'<sup>7</sup>. Hochhuth describes Churchill in the following ways, so that the logical conclusion is his classification of the Prime Minister as a historical 'great':

Nicht nur seine vorschnelle Hand, auch der "Strom" seiner Worte schaffen sofort ein Kraftfeld, das sich alle Argumente des Partners zuordnet wie Eisenfeilspäne einem Magneten. § 72

Immer muß der atmosphärische Druck spürbar bleiben, den Churchills Gegenwart selbst über den kleinsten "Freundes"-Kreis legte: "Niemand wagte es, eine Konversation zu verfolgen, die nicht seine Zustimmung zu haben schien; niemand wagte, sich irgend etwas herauszunehmen. § 96

Further evidence of Burckhardt's considerable influence on Hochhuth's portrayal of Churchill is offered in Hochhuth's own stage directions. Hochhuth refers to an actor's ability to transform the naked, massive figure of Churchill emerging from his bath

into a mythical moment, pointing out that the myth surrounding a historical personality is, according to Burckhardt, a prerequisite to greatness:

Magie muß im Spiel sein - weckt sie der Akteur, strahlt er sie aus, so ist in seiner Verkörperung nachvollzogen, was Churchill selber erreichte: daß die Phantasie vieler "von selbst an einer solchen Gestalt weiterbildet". Darin sieht Burckhardt die Vorbedingung, daß "Größe möglich wird". § 123

It is not exaggerated to maintain that the central role of the individual in history, a conviction which Hochhuth developed under the influence of Burckhardt, becomes a dramatic programme to which Hochhuth adheres. Whilst remaining aware that the 'great men' are a small minority, and that the majority play a role more passive and suffering than active, he endeavours to write:

(Stücke) in denen zur Hauptsache werden die Darstellungen der von der Geschichte aufs Rad geflochtenen einzelnen, die im Zeitalter der Wehrpflicht ja tatsächlich nur mehr in den seltensten Ausnahmefällen aus freien Entschlüssen in die Räder der historischen Prozesse einzugreifen versuchen, um dann meist von den Vernichtungsmaschinerien zerissen zu werden. T38 17

## Footnotes:

1 - One example of this failure to learn given by Hochhuth: 'Unsere Großväter - zum Beispiel - waren nicht dümmer, nicht weniger geschichtekundig als wir, während sie glaubten und sich dafür aufrieben, daß ein europäischer Staat ohne Kolonien buchstäblich verhungern werde; daß folglich "Seegeltung" Voraussetzung sei für "Weltgeltung" und diese wiederum für eine europäische Macht die Überlebensvoraussetzung. Sie kannten - viel genauer als wir - jede Einzelheit aus der Antike, und dennoch waren sie fest überzeugt, Großbritannien und Kaiser-Deutschland hätten nichts "Lebenswichtigeres" zu tun als eben Weltmächte, folglich See-Mächte zu werden. Sie *wußten*, daß die Athener sich genau in *dem* Moment ihrer Geschichte, als sie dies auch geglaubt und die Sizilische Expedition gestartet - ruiniert hatten; sie *wußten*, wie Spanien und Portugal sich durch Expandieren - ruiniert hatten. Aber, wie es im Prediger Salomo heißt: Wissen hilft zur Klugheit nicht.' H/VEG 422f

2 - In interview with F.J. Raddatz, 'Mein Vater heißt Hitler', ZEIT-Gespräche, Frankfurt/Main 1978, pp 21-27

3 - In interview with Irmtraud Rippel-Manß, 'Herr oder Knecht der Geschichte?', Journal für Geschichte 1, 1979, pp 32-34

4 - Rainer Taëni, Rolf Hochhuth, Autorenbücher 5. München 1977, p. 22

5 - F. J. Raddatz, 'Der utopische Pessimist' in Eingriff in die Zeitgeschichte, Ed. Walter Hinck, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1981, p.34

6 - Jacob Burckhardt, Über das Studium der Geschichte, Ed. Peter Ganz, München 1982. p.394

7 - Jacob Burckhardt, *ibid.* p.395

## CHAPTER TWO - DRAMATIC INFLUENCES

Rolf Hochhuth is conscious of being heir to a great literary heritage, frequently referring to earlier playwrights in his essay work. The most significant study of this kind is Räuber-Rede, in which Hochhuth presents a positive response to Schiller's plays on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the premiere of Die Räuber. Hochhuth was of course conscious that his own work had been compared with that of Schiller (see below, footnote 10), and there is surely an element of self-justification in Hochhuth's defence of the classical author's work:

Schillers *Dramaturgie*, der mehr noch als seiner Sprache, mehr als dem Gehalt seiner Stücke vorgehalten wird, sie sei verjährt, ist im Gegenteil durchaus verbindlich für uns heute, R-R 91

Schiller is by no means the only author with whom Hochhuth has concerned himself, and references to Goethe, Lessing, Büchner, Hebbel and Kleist, for example, can be found in his prose writing. It is striking that Hochhuth consciously turns back to previous centuries in his studies, but an explanation for this is offered in his rejection of much modern theatre. Again as an act of self-justification in the face of harsh criticism for his traditional approach,

Hochhuth condemns the use of the surreal and absurd in drama as pandering to the wishes of the critics:

Trotzdem ist die Versuchung, ins Surrealistische auszuweichen, für den Anfänger fast zwingend, schon deshalb, weil er dann vor Scherereien mit hochdotierten Feiglingen der Kulturindustrie sicher wäre  
H/EGE 323

Once again conscious that his work has been seen as mere documentation, Hochhuth underlines his position in a later essay, making clear that he is opposed to the documentary theatre of the 1960s - 'wozu noch eine Welt der Bühne, wäre sie nur identisch mit der Bühne der Welt..' (LN 8).

Indeed, Hochhuth's concern to explore the motivation, capabilities and limitations of the individual do reflect the classical era's studies of humanity and moral idealism, and this and his own demonstrated interest in earlier dramatists necessitate a comparison between his work and that of certain writers.

The extent to which Hochhuth believes in the possibility of individual action as an influence on historical events has already been outlined. The individual who does act, and whose actions have, in Hochhuth's view, significantly altered the progress of history, bears full responsibility for the state of affairs which emerges.

The most frequent example of such an individual in Hochhuth's work is Churchill. From the detailed portrait in Soldaten through frequent mentions of him in various works up to the prose text, Alan Turing, the focus has been on Churchill's moral conflicts, his freedom to act, and the consequences of his action for thousands. In S, the chief decisions provoking conflict are illustrated as the bombing of German cities and the murder of Sikorski. Churchill has already decided in favour of the former before the play begins. We are aware of his moral conflict only because of the emotion and aggression with which he reacts to the arguments of Brooke, who still opposes the policy.

Brooke, machen Sie ein Ende mit Ihren Vorwürfen.

*(Die Stuhllehne muß wieder herhalten - und der Empire-Stabschef:)*

Wir haben uns den Städten nicht -  
spañeshalber zugewandt. S 6

Hochhuth sees positive consequences of both moves in the resulting allied victory and the freeing of Europe from fascism. Whether in these cases the end justifies the means is open to debate, but it is most important to remember that Hochhuth sees the full responsibility for the actions, as well as for the results, lying at Churchill's door. It may be presumed that Hochhuth accepts the 'decisions' made by Churchill as he presents them in the play.

Certainly his overall evaluation of the man and his function in the politics of this century can be seen to be constantly if grudgingly approving. In an interview with Irmtraud Rippel-Manß,<sup>1</sup> Hochhuth refers to Churchill as 'Retter der Freiheit Europas bis zur Elbe'. Whilst there is an element of irony in the qualification - 'bis zur Elbe', Hochhuth's portrayal of Churchill is one of a 'great man', as we have seen above.

The British Prime Minister is also repeatedly featured in Hochhuth's prose - for example in 'L'Impromptu de Madame Tussaud' (BA pp.51-90), 1971, Atlantik Novelle, 1985 and in Alan Turing, 1987. Here again a decision taken by Churchill, and resulting in the death of thousands, is pin-pointed as a moral dilemma. Churchill, although aware of Nazi plans to bomb Coventry, gave no warning to the city. The reasons may seem convincing, but the consequences were no less terrible:

nun fragte der Group Captain mich am Telefon, ob Coventry gewarnt werden dürfte. Selten im Leben war etwas so schmerzlich wie dieses Nein, das ich sagen mußte - oder meint jemand von Ihnen, bitte, ich hätte anders entscheiden dürfen? Um die Zivilisten einer Stadt zu evakuieren - preisgeben, daß wir die feindlichen Befehle lesen können? AT 55

Thus the civilians of a city are sacrificed to the higher aim of victory and a free Europe. It is interesting to note the certainty with which



Churchill states his case, a certainty which is dominant among those of Hochhuth's characters who determine the course of events. It is undeniable that a difficult moral decision has been taken, but the criteria by which this is done are understood to be clearly defined. The possibility of a false decision is not ruled out, but absolute commitment to those made and acceptance of all imaginable consequences is understood.

Wenn ich mir anmaße, dies Land zu führen:  
erkläre ich mich einverstanden,  
am Tower Hill geköpft zu werden,  
wenn wir den Krieg verlieren. § 69

Churchill was in a position of political power in which his decisions had a significant influence. What, however, of the individual whose tangible field of influence is limited? Whilst demonstrating the undeniable strength of one individual, Hochhuth frequently reveals the impotence of the majority. The tendency is for him to portray an elitist society, in which a small number of individuals are determining a course of events which will have consequences for millions. Hochhuth repeatedly denies the concept that an individual can be a mere cog in the workings of history - yet it seems here that he provides evidence to refute his own arguments.

In the same book, Alan Turing, Hochhuth maintains, as he has already done in VEG, that no individual is interchangeable:

Absurd, das Gerede, jeder von uns sei nur  
ein austauschbares Rädchen im Ablauf von  
Geschehnissen, die weit hinausgreifen über  
unsere individuellen  
Eingriffsmöglichkeiten; AT 67

Ironically, this opinion is put into the mouth of Churchill, who has just finished talking about the deaths of those unwarned civilians in Coventry. Later in the book, and indeed already in VEG, Hochhuth shows his awareness of the fact that thousands die anonymous deaths - their fate determined by the actions of a few. 'Im selben Maß, in dem die Zahl derer wächst, über die entschieden wird, nimmt die Zahl derer ab, die entscheiden:' (AT 169).

It seems that a paradox is emerging. Hochhuth lays stress not only on the ideal of individual significance, but also on the reality of individual moral action in recent history. At the same time, however, we are confronted with the realities of war, in which thousands of individuals are physically unable to determine their own fate, let alone that of others. Whilst unable to determine their fate, however, they have themselves, personally, still to face the resulting pain, fear and consequences of their actions, although these may have been forced upon them. Hence Hochhuth feels justified in reverting to Rilke's concept, when he speaks - despite the anonymity of war death - of the individual's 'personal' death.

doch stirbt jeder Mensch als Individuum  
<seinen> Tod im Sinne Rilkes, so wie er  
dazu verurteilt war, <seinen> Partner zu  
lieben oder nicht zu lieben, sein Leben  
hinzuschleppen, sei es als Unternehmer oder  
als Ausgenommener, als Verwalter oder  
verwaltet. H/RGE 317

The key to the paradox lies in a distinction which is made between external events or restrictions and inner moral conflicts and, significantly, moral freedom.

It may thus seem to be a paradox that Hochhuth, otherwise so insistent on individuality, uses a particular device in the cast list to Der Stellvertreter. Here numerous roles are listed together, with the comment that 'es im Zeitalter der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht nicht unbedingt Verdienst oder Schuld oder auch nur *eine Frage des Charakters* ist ob einer in dieser oder jener Uniform steckt' (St 14) (my italics). It becomes rapidly clear, however, that Hochhuth's intention is not to doubt, by this means, a certain autonomy of the individual. The individual may find himself, outwardly, in any position or political camp as a mere consequence of fate. Hochhuth does not believe, in the context of modern society, that there is any way out of this outward compulsion. In this sense, the individual is not free. In the sense that he can make of these outward fetters what he, his character and his moral convictions individually determine, however, he is

not entirely limited. Hochhuth emphasises his opinion here with an example of limited freedom of action in the context of a dictatorship. The direction of Hochhuth's statement is clear, despite his repeated qualifications ('meist', 'mehr oder weniger').

Ich dächte doch, vom Führer persönlich (oder soll vielleicht auch Hitler schon kein Individuum mehr gewesen sein?) bis zum letzten seiner Ausführer, der als Blockwart die Wahl hatte - er hatte meist die Wahl, vergessen wir das nicht -, einen ihm denunzierten (Schwarz Hörer) nur zu warnen oder aber vor den Volksgerichtshof zu schleppen, gab es Freiheit des Subjekts und gibt es sie stets - mehr oder weniger.

H/RGE 320

#### SECTION I: Hochhuth and Friedrich Schiller

It is at this point that Hochhuth's convictions provoke comparison with the philosophy and dramatic theory of Schiller. Hochhuth himself is convinced that the same basic principle underlies both the dramatic works of Schiller and his own. It is perhaps an exaggeration to describe Hochhuth as a declared disciple of Schiller, but his enthusiasm for Schiller's dramatic theory goes so far that he refers to him, in Räuber-Rede, as 'den obersten Gesetzgeber in Fragen des Dramas' (R-R 39).

Schiller also portrays most emphatically the fates and the actions of individuals in his plays. He is,

however, according to Hochhuth, equally well aware of the external pressures facing these individuals and by no means portrays them as free in action, despite their status. The example which Hochhuth uses to illustrate his point is that of Wallenstein:

Wie oft sagt allein Schillers Wallenstein, daß er der Gefangene seiner militärisch-gesellschaftlichen Bedingtheiten sei? Wo wäre denn Schiller so naiv, Wallenstein - souverän zu zeichnen? R-R 80

The limits are limits in freedom to take action, but the character as such is undetermined by this restriction. There are also examples - Don Carlos and Ferdinand are two - of characters who are strong enough to attempt action in the face of the evident external restrictions. They take, in Hochhuth's words, a 'Schritt vom Wege' (R-R 87), as did the imaginary 'Blockwart' of whom Hochhuth speaks in the quotation above (p. 38).

Hochhuth sees Schiller's dramatic themes as being of great general significance, his main concern being 'politics' in its widest sense. In order to convey his ideas, Schiller nevertheless used the familiar or the personal sphere. Faced with the challenge of the Thirty Years' War, Schiller takes as his motif the events surrounding Wallenstein; when his concern is to criticise existing social structures, he portrays the love story of Ferdinand and Luise or Karl Moor's temporary rejection of his social position. This

reduction of the wider theme into a more intimate sphere is of course an element of Aristotelian theatre. Schiller intends to improve his audience through theatre, and in order to achieve the level of identification with his characters necessary for this purpose, the sphere of action is adjusted. The audience is to associate with and to feel with the characters on a specific level, that is, in so far as they can recognise the characters' individuality and humanity. Few can imagine themselves in Wallenstein's role as commander, but many feel with him in his sense of isolation and betrayal. This sense of common human experience, which unites all the spectators and the stage characters they watch, is for Schiller the essential ingredient of theatre:

Jeder einzelne genießt die Entzückungen aller, die verstärkt und verschönert aus hundert Augen auf ihn zurückfallen, und seine Brust gibt jetzt nur *einer* Empfindung Raum - es ist diese: ein *Mensch* zu sein.<sup>2</sup>

Hochhuth, for his part, has taken over this concentration on the 'Mensch' as the centre of drama. In a similar way to Schiller, whom he quotes, 'Immer im einzelnen nur habe ich das Ganze erblickt' (H/EGE 318), Hochhuth hopes to convey the political concerns of today's world in the personal sphere. When asked by Theater heute to answer the question 'Soll das Theater die heutige Welt darstellen?' (an extended version of this interview was published in H/EGE pp.

317-326), Hochhuth's first response was to say 'Den heutigen Menschen soll es darstellen, ja' (H/EGE 317). Through a portrayal of people, individuals, in today's world, therefore, the larger whole is conveyed in Hochhuth's opinion.

It is because of his concentration on the individual in drama and perhaps to a certain extent because of his self-imposed association with Schiller that Hochhuth has been said to employ conventional Aristotelian means in his plays. Whilst it is clear from what has been said so far that both Hochhuth and Schiller have sought to broach topics of wide political significance in their works and have chosen to do this by use of the private sphere as a setting, it will be seen that in the field of aesthetics their approach has less in common and that perhaps even Hochhuth himself overestimates Schiller's influence.

In 'Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet', Schiller considers the possible influences of the theatre in various aspects of human life. Allied with the law and with religion, he sees its spheres as numerous - private and public life, education, tolerance, patriotism may all be improved by a judicious use of 'der bessern Bühne'.<sup>3</sup> Although he is optimistic enough to hope that the theatre exercises, or can exercise, so much influence, one of

Schiller's chief reasons for praising the theatre in this essay is its function as uplifting relaxation:

Wenn Gram an dem Herzen nagt, wenn trübe  
Laune unsre einsamen Stunden vergiftet,  
wenn uns Welt und Geschäfte anekeln, wenn  
tausend Lasten unsre Seele drücken und  
unsre Reizbarkeit unter Arbeiten des Berufs  
zu ersticken droht, so empfängt uns die  
Bühne - in dieser künstlichen Welt träumen  
wir die wirkliche hinweg, wir werden uns  
selbst wieder gegeben, unsre Empfindung  
erwacht, heilsame Leidenschaften  
erschüttern unsre schlummernde Natur, und  
treiben das Blut in frischeren Wallungen.<sup>4</sup>

One of the sources of this effect, the combination of relaxation and yet of stimulation, is the sense of aesthetic pleasure which is, or should be gained in the theatre. This pleasure is in turn created by the element of beauty, whether it be in content, form or interpretation of the drama presented.

Schiller's reflections on beauty are best known from the 'Kallias' letters, which will be examined presently. Firstly, however, it is interesting to see how Hochhuth stands with reference to Schiller's viewpoint in 'Die Schaubühne'. He is less confident in the power of theatre in social fields, seeing its value in the demonstrative sense. Hochhuth is aware of a positive aspect in so far as theatre can report on circumstances and publicise evils, but is pessimistic as far as drama's active interference is concerned. He laments what he sees as a loss of aesthetic pleasure in connection with the theatre,



presumably including his own work when he decries the lack of the erotic element in modern literature, 'die Vertreibung des Eros aus der Kunst' (H/EGE 324). Erotic, in Hochhuth's terms, is a word used almost synonymously with beautiful - 'wer noch auf Schönheit beharrt, auf Eros' (H/EGE 325) - lack of 'Eros' in art is equivalent to lack of aesthetic stimulation and fulfilment. Obviously this is a desirable element in theatre for Hochhuth, but he gives no indication here as to how it can be reintroduced.

Bearing Hochhuth's association of beauty - the aesthetically pleasing - with the erotic in mind, certain aspects of his dramatic work become clearer. Plays in which women play a significant role, such as Lysistrata and Judith, have been criticised for their 'pralle Erotik'<sup>66</sup>, seen as a 'heiße Männerphantasie'<sup>67</sup>. Hochhuth's portrayal of women will be discussed in more detail below (Chapter 5). At this point, it is important to remember, whether we share his understanding of the erotic or not, that Hochhuth is consciously using scenes of explicit nakedness or love-making in order to avoid the dangers of 'Verfremdung'. In this sense, despite its sometimes apparent superfluousness, Hochhuth's 'eroticism' is for him not only an aesthetic, but a political act:

Unser Zeitalter jedoch, in dem Verfremdung ein Modewort ist, hat sich in den Künsten so weit der Natur entfremdet, daß nur mehr belächelt wird, wer noch auf Schönheit

beharrt, auf Eros - "der alles begonnen".  
H/EGE 325

Schiller, in Kallias oder über die Schönheit,<sup>7</sup> does not associate beauty with the erotic. He constantly explains the phenomenon of beauty in the context of freedom. Freedom, or the illusion of freedom in an object leads to its appreciation as 'beautiful'. He makes clear his idea of freedom as being a kind of autonomy or self-determination, 'Frei ist ein Ding, das durch sich selbst bestimmt ist oder so erscheint' (Kallias 57). In the section of the work concerned specifically with art, 'Das Schöne der Kunst', Schiller lays down the criterion for beauty in art as 'Freiheit der Darstellung' (Kallias 57). He goes on to explain this as a means of presenting the subject so that it appears to the imagination as free, as self-determining. The problems in the way of this presentation lie with the artist himself, and, more importantly, with the medium. How can the nature of the subject be clearly portrayed as pure and self-determining when the nature of the medium is likely to interfere? The medium, in order for Schiller to see beauty in art, has to be subordinated to the subject, to the idea:

Bei einem Kunstwerk also muß sich der *Stoff*  
(die Natur des Nachahmenden) in der *Form*  
(des Nachgeahmten), der *Körper* in der *Idee*,  
die *Wirklichkeit* in der *Erscheinung*  
verlieren. Kallias 59

In the case of poetic art, the difficulties are intensified. The poet is required to convey his subject, which he presumably has clearly before him in his imagination, to the imagination of the reader or listener through the medium of words. Schiller sees two main obstacles to this which only the great poet can overcome. The first is language's nature as a general medium. It has to have general application, since one and the same word, or concept is used to refer to or describe thousands of individual objects or situations. The poet's aim, however, is to convey to another's imagination the exact and individual idea which he himself has conceived. The second problem lies in the fact that it is the intellect which is addressed by language, whereas it is the imagination to which the poet hopes to appeal. Language consists of concepts, whereas the poet's subject is an image, an idea within his own imagination. To achieve beauty in poetic art, therefore, and to please the reader or audience aesthetically, the poet has to exercise a command over language which subdues the nature of language itself and overcomes the limits set out in general concepts and grammatical rules. In Schiller's words:

Die Natur der Sprache (eben diese ihre Tendenz zum Allgemeinen) muß in der ihr gegebenen Form völlig untergehen, (...) Frei und siegend muß das Darzustellende aus dem Darstellenden hervorscheinen, und trotz allen Fesseln der Sprache in seiner ganzen

Wahrheit, Lebendigkeit und Persönlichkeit  
vor der Einbildungskraft dastehen.

Kallias 64f

If we reconsider the main tenet of 'Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet' in the context of what has just been outlined, it is clear that Schiller's didactic aims in the theatre may come into conflict with his aesthetic sense. If an appeal purely to the intellect is without beauty in Schiller's own terms, the question is how to combine an appeal to both the intellect and to the sensual imagination in art, since art which has a didactic purpose must necessarily address the intellect of the observer.

Good art, according to Schiller, does not make obvious that it has a moral intention. Since beauty is inherent in self-determination, art must at least appear to be existent for its own sake and not merely as a means towards an educational end:

Die Schönheit oder vielmehr der Geschmack  
betrachtet alle Dinge als *Selbstzwecke* und  
duldet schlechterdings nicht, daß eines dem  
andern als Mittel dient oder das Joch  
trägt.

Kallias 49

It is sufficient for the moral intention of a work of art to be concealed - knowledge may not be directly presented or taught in the art work, but must be enticed from the reader or audience in a situation which gives the appearance of being natural:

Daher kommt es, daß die moralische  
Zweckmäßigkeit eines Kunstwerks, oder auch

einer Handlungsart, zur Schönheit derselben sowenig beiträgt, daß jene vielmehr sehr verborgen werden und aus der Natur des Dinges völlig frei und zwanglos hervorzugehen den Anschein haben muß, wenn diese, die Schönheit, nicht darüber verlorengelien soll. Kallias 27

Moral or didactic aims, therefore, can find themselves in conflict in the creation of the poetic work. In this case, the moral intention is to be subordinated to the aesthetic claim of the work.

Hochhuth's view of art itself as a political act - in other words his complete rejection of a possible concept 'art for art's sake' - tends to overlook the conflict between didactic intention and aesthetic pleasure which Schiller discussed in Kallias. Hochhuth sees ideal theatre as theatre which openly provokes political and moral discussion - theatre in which there is no attempt to appear self-determining or as 'Selbstzweck'. This is all too clear in his tribute to Piscator, published in Die Hebamme/EGE (pp. 455-460), which he closes with the emphasis that the stage should be viewed as a political tribunal. This is not to say that he confuses theatre with political information - or even seeks to make theatre out of documentation, as some of his contemporaries have done. Hochhuth argues vehemently against the use of mere documentary material, which reduces theatre to the level of a kind of amateur 'Tagesschau'.

wer nicht 'dem Naturalismus in der Kunst offen und ehrlich den Krieg' erklärt, der

muß heute vor jeder Wochenschau kapitulieren, schon deshalb, weil sie uns 'den rohen Stoff der Welt' viel drastischer und vollzähliger vorstellen kann als die Bühne,... R-R 92

In his dramas, it is the content and the 'message' of the work which have a superior role for Hochhuth. When, in Räuber-Rede, Hochhuth writes 'es ist der Stoff, der die jeweils ihm zukommende Form dem Stückeschreiber aufzwingt' (R-R 91), it is this superior role to which he is referring. The form of the drama appears, logically, as something by no means natural, but as a means towards an end - the revelation of the ideas and, usually in Hochhuth's work, of the facts which have prompted the work in the first place. As Hilde Spiel, writing in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, puts it:

doch ist alles zu vorsätzlich als Vehikel seiner Meinungen konstruiert, um auch nur jene Wahrhaftigkeit zu erreichen, die das Theater vorspiegeln kann.<sup>e</sup>

It is not possible to take Hochhuth's comment here ('Stoff, der die...Form dem Stückeschreiber aufzwingt) as a direct inversion of Schiller's 'Bei einem Kunstwerk also muß sich der *Stoff*...in der *Form*...verlieren' (Kallias 59). Whilst Hochhuth is referring to the content and ideas of the drama, Schiller is clearly referring to the medium of art, in this case language and the technical aspects of

theatre. Hochhuth's interpretation of Schiller in this context is, however, also important.

Hochhuth sees Schiller as a forerunner of epic theatre and of Brecht in one important aspect. Quoting the prologue to *Wallenstein* (in Räuber-Rede 90), he maintains that Brecht's concept of alienation in the theatre was anticipated by Schiller - Schiller writes here that drama 'die Täuschung, die sie schafft, / Aufrichtig selbst zerstört'.<sup>29</sup> It is obvious in the context of Schiller's other theoretical writing and indeed in the plays themselves, which are clearly illusionary theatre, that it cannot be alienation in a Brechtian sense which Schiller is referring to in the prologue to *Wallenstein*. Any device which would make obvious the mechanisms of theatre and draw attention to the structure of language within a play detracts from its artistic merit in Schiller's eyes.

Hochhuth fails to make the distinction between reality and truth which is apparent in Schiller's aesthetics. Drama has, in Schiller's view, (as of course in Hochhuth's) to reject absolute realism - it does not copy reality, and in this sense does not aim to project reality directly to the audience. It must, however, appear real, or truthful enough in its entirety to convey an idea without direct appeal to the intellect. The appearance of reality is upheld in

the course of a play, whereas Brecht's theatre constantly makes the audience aware of the stage and directly appeals to them intellectually. Hochhuth is in a curious position. Not only his philosophy of the individual draws him to Schiller, but also his awareness of the need for aesthetic pleasure in the theatre. However, for all his avowed rejection of Brecht, Hochhuth is drawn to the epic and anti-illusionary theatre - its methods are necessary to him, since his object in writing is an intellectual rather than an aesthetic appeal, despite his regrets as far as the latter is concerned.

Parallels are often drawn between Hochhuth and Schiller when the dramatic characters of both authors are analysed.<sup>10</sup> Both are felt to build their drama around confrontation between the idealist and the realist. Hochhuth refers to this aspect of Schiller's plays when he describes them as 'aus dem immerwährenden Zweikampf zwischen Staatsräson und individueller Moral ... <entbunden>' (R-R 55). It is true that this same constellation of idealism and realism can be found in Hochhuth's own work. Whether Pope and Riccardo, or Churchill and Bishop Bell - conflicts certainly arise in which moral idealism is opposed by political necessity.

If Schiller's aesthetic criteria are once again applied, however, the figure of Riccardo, for



example, can be said to be a failure. We are all too aware of the arguments which speak for his actions and above all, of the conflict within him (between fear, doubt and conscience) in his most morally idealistic acts, the decision to go to and to stay in Auschwitz. This constant awareness detracts from the aesthetic appeal of the character in Schiller's terms:

Daher kann eine moralische Handlung niemals schön sein, wenn wir der Operation zusehen, wodurch sie der Sinnlichkeit abgeängstigt wird. Kallias 32

In summing up the correlation between the dramatic work of both authors, therefore, it is first important to note that the significant source of their plays is in both cases the individual in a historical context. Both wish to demonstrate the moral, if not physical freedom of the individual and the extent to which individual actions determine the course of events.

When it comes to the question of how this aim can be realised in drama, however, the two differ. Schiller is concerned with the development of a dramatic form and illusion of truth or reality which will provide a means of achieving this aim within the limits of his own aesthetic criteria. Hochhuth, although he believes himself to have faith in the same aesthetic principles as Schiller - 'Schillers

Ästhetik....ist klassisch....weil sie zeitlos gültig ist' (R-R 84) - is in an ambivalent position. Despite his aesthetic demands on a play, he attaches a superior significance to the intellectual impact of his work, with the consequence that his own dramatic form may often appear tentative and fluctuating (see the discussion of St and its productions, pp. 92-98 below).

## SECTION II: Hochhuth and Georg Büchner

Hochhuth is often described as one of the first writers of 'documentary' theatre during the 1960s. However, the technique of studying - and integrating - documentary material in the process of creative writing is far from new. Schiller was an historian, and studied historical documents in great detail before composing Wallenstein and Don Carlos, for example. Hochhuth's approach, however, also reflects that of Georg Büchner. Büchner's studies of medicine and history were the basis of his drama. In this

context, his play Dantons Tod will be used as a point of comparison with Hochhuth's work.

It is clear that Hochhuth himself is aware of the significance of Büchner for his own dramatic presentation of history. In his essay, 'Büchner lesen, um Marx zu retten', (Schwarze Segel, 1986, pp. 29-42), Hochhuth clarifies his ideas concerning Büchner's philosophy and its relevance to his own way of thinking. He presents Büchner principally as an expert on human nature, maintaining that - although a political and social idealist - Büchner was free from the blind optimism which Hochhuth associates with the later Marxist movement.

Büchner's observation of the French Revolution in Dantons Tod illustrates two factors which are decisive in Hochhuth's own rejection of an ultimate historical goal: the impossibility of a consensus of opinion on the nature of this goal, and the unchanging, basically negative character of humanity. Danton is rejected and brought down by his own allies in the revolution, whilst their lack of compromise will be shown by history to be equally ineffective in the long run - bringing Napoleon to power in a state of semi-monarchy. Despite changes in system and social improvements, human existence does not alter at its most basic level. Danton voices this, the

reason for his pessimism and later despair, when persecuted by his previous companions:

..des Abends in's Bett und morgens wieder heraus zu kriechen und einen Fuß immer so vor den andern zu setzen; da ist gar kein Absehens, wie es anders werden soll. Das ist sehr traurig und daß Millionen es schon so gemacht haben und daß Millionen es wieder so machen werden''

This expression of despair at his basic inability to alter life reflects Büchner's own views of mankind. As Peter von Becker writes in his criticism of Dantons Tod

als naturwissenschaftlich Gebildeter, anthropologisch Spekulierender (war Büchner) auch skeptisch gegenüber den Möglichkeiten einer vollkommenen >Humanisierung des Menschen< '2

This is reflected and expanded on in Hochhuth's writing. Since human nature does not and cannot alter or progress, he argues, history cannot possibly progress towards a theoretical target, an 'Endziel'. Instead, he emphasises the possibility of improvement on a minor but continuous<sup>ous</sup> scale. Hochhuth sees reason for optimism in these 'Nahziele' and a motivation for political activity despite overall pessimism regarding the lessons of history.

Büchner's 'Der Hessische Landbote', written in fact with the optimism of a twenty-one-year-old, is cited by Hochhuth as an example of a plausible 'Nahziel'. Hochhuth emphasises that the plea for radical change in the state of Hesse was bound to a

particular time and place in its aims and might thus have proved possible to realise, 'zeitlich und sachlich begrenzte Einzelziele mögen jedes Einsatz wert sein:' (S Se 41) . As a contrast, he criticises the 'Communist Manifesto', which in his opinion lacks immediate relevance to existing conditions and a particular location, and the aims of which he rejects as utopian and essentially unattainable as a result. Büchner, in Hochhuth's opinion, fully recognises that human nature is lacking, without giving up hope for change in the human situation as a result. He is a pessimist, but by no means a nihilist;

die eine Hälfte des Gesichts ist melancholisch dem Abgrund zugewendet, dem Wissen, daß Geschichte ist, was uns mißglückt - die andere schaut unoptimistisch aber gerade deshalb zu Taten entschlossen auf die Barrikade. S Se 34

The idea of a pessimist who rejects the existence of any ultimate aim for humanity, whilst seeing and striving for the realisation of smaller, attainable improvements in human society is discussed by Hochhuth in VEG. He uses the example of Sisyphus, 'die politisch vorbildlichste' (H/VEG 400) figure of mythology, to illustrate his viewpoint. Sisyphus, guilty of rebellion against the gods, is punished by being given a repetitive task with no end. The parallel is clear for one who recognises the true nature of man - the attaining of minor improvements

in human existence does not alter the fact that it is basically negative, and there can certainly be no hope of finishing the task of improvement. Nevertheless, the individual may feel himself compelled to act - to rebel against the wrong of existing circumstances, compassion for his fellow men driving him on. The knowledge of one's ultimate ineffectuality is tantamount to the 'punishment' of Sisyphus. Once again, Hochhuth sees his own ideas reflected in the work of Büchner. He quotes Philipp Wolff-Windegg's evaluation of Büchner's dramatic characters and their motivation: 'Mitleid, Barmherzigkeit mit dem Menschen, der zum "Muß" verdammt ist.' (H/VEG 401). In Büchner's play, Danton's words confirm the importance of this compulsion arising from compassion, compassion which may even lead to bloodshed: 'Es muß, das war dieß Muß. Wer will der Hand fluchen, auf die der Fluch des Muß gefallen? Wer hat das Muß gesprochen, wer?' (Dantons Tod 46). Yet at the time at which we see Danton, he is already paralysed by inactivity and despair. His past actions have not led to improvement, despite the bloodshed of the radical party. Danton has begun to see himself as a puppet in the hands of fate. 'Puppen sind wir von unbekanntem Gewalten am Draht gezogen;' (Dantons Tod 46).

In both the private and the public sphere, Danton is paralysed in the face of approaching death. His declaration at the start of the play, 'Nein Julie, ich liebe dich wie das Grab' (Dantons Tod 14), already introduces an ambivalence between life and death, activity and passivity. Büchner himself, the author of the Hessische Landbote, a call to political engagement and action, also experienced this paralysing sense of life as a performance: 'das ewige Orgellied....ich verfluchte das Konzert, den Kasten, die Melodie und - ach wir armen, schreienden Musikanten!''<sup>3</sup> His are also, as Hans-Thies Lehmann writes of Danton, 'offene Diskrepanzen der Erfahrung....zwischen dem Engagement und dem Blick aufs eigene Dasein als (bloßes) Schauspiel''<sup>4</sup>. It is significant that Büchner makes no attempt to resolve the conflict between personal despair and political commitment; Dantons Tod answers no questions, the conclusion is left open. This indicates that the conflict will continue, that revolution will not achieve perfection and thus an ultimate goal - for humanity does not change - but that political activity is still essential. As Hochhuth writes in VEG, 'Es gibt gar keinen Zweck über das Leben einer Generation hinaus, es geht nicht aufwärts, sondern weiter' (H/VEG 370).

It is interesting at this point to consider the motivation of some of the main characters in Hochhuth's drama alongside that of Danton. There are several examples of a compulsion to act which arises from compassion. Initially, Riccardo, in St., is compelled by Christian compassion with his fellow men to approach members of the Catholic Church, finally the Pope, in an attempt to relieve the Jews. In the course of the play, however, this more simple compulsion is complicated by a new sense of 'Muß'. Once he has seen that the Pope will undertake no action, Riccardo feels driven to make a symbolic sacrifice, not just for his fellow men, but for the reputation of the Catholic Church. In the place of its leader, Riccardo offers all he can - his own life - in an attempt to cleanse the Church of its failing. His religious faith in fact takes him further than the worldly scepticism of Danton. Both are aware that their own action will change nothing in the long-term - Riccardo cannot, by his sacrifice, even hope to alter or improve the present. His pity for his fellow men drives him to a symbolic act, and even the lessening of his faith in Auschwitz does not enable him to withdraw, for his obligation is not to God alone, but to his own conscience as the representative of a compassionate creed. Yet in despair, Riccardo's fatalism in Auschwitz reflects



Danton's impotence in Büchner's play. Faced with the chance of escape, his choice of words is significant, expressing both his religious conviction and the compulsion to serve which remains untouched by his horrific experiences: 'Und was hätt' ich auf dem Gewissen, wär' ich nicht hier? .... Ich - sühne, ich muß es tun.' (St 216). A comparison with Danton is complicated by the religious aspect of Riccardo's motivation to act, but the most obvious parallel between them is their basic recognition that action will bring about no real change. They have both been compelled to act despite pessimism - Riccardo's religious hope is destroyed (albeit rekindled at death) by the horror of Auschwitz, yet he cannot and will not escape. Whilst Danton knew no limits, since he was prepared to kill, wound and destroy in order to bring about change, Riccardo is by comparison a passive hero. His nature precludes the use of violence, or he might have sought to destroy those whose impotence in the face of the Nazis led to the continued persecution of the Jews.

In Hochhuth's more recent work we can find a closer parallel to Danton - perhaps surprisingly, this is a woman. It is with the heroine of Judith that Hochhuth has created a character most reminiscent of Büchner, despite the more obvious comparison with Hebbel which

the title and plot of the play immediately invite. (Parallels between Hochhuth and Hebbel will be discussed below).

Judith is a woman of her time, no political aesthete, but a chic, lively member of her social group, a consumer, sexually active and attractive. Hochhuth takes pains to portray her as a successful journalist and specifically points to her love of the physical pleasures of life despite her widowhood:

irgendwann lachte ich doch wieder und war  
stolz,  
als erste Zeitungen meine Artikel druckten  
- ja, und Gerald lehrte mich dann,  
auch mit einem anderen so gern zu schlafen.

Ju 184

Danton was the great epicurean of the French Revolution. Whilst fighting against injustice and privilege, he enjoyed many of the pleasures of the rich; a fact which Büchner illustrates as contributing to his downfall;

Bürger:  
Danton hat schöne Kleider, Danton hat ein  
schönes Haus. Danton hat eine schöne Frau,  
er badet sich in Burgunder..... Was hat  
Robespierre? der tugendhafte Robespierre.  
Dantons Tod 63

The same contradiction is taken over by Hochhuth and expressed in Judith's self doubt and awareness of her own privileged position;

Hier ist mein Defizit im Menschlichen,  
- ich schlafe auch immer sozusagen mit ihm  
(Gerald) als...  
als...dem Repräsentanten dessen,  
den ich töte, und an den ich doch niemals  
auf Hautnähe herangekommen wäre,

ohne mit Gerald zu schlafen. Ju 182

Despite these advantages and her - in a sense - sexual contact with the power she hopes to destroy, Judith's sense of injustice compels her to act. Outrage at the arbitrary actions and words of a leader, and compassion for the masses who are at his mercy, are the motivation for her decision. Since she sees no alternative to violence, she is prepared to kill - compelled to kill, in fact, a compulsion which she is unable to escape. As did Büchner, Hochhuth emphasises the word 'muß' in Judith's dialogue: 'Gott weiß - welche Erlösung es für mich wäre, / müßte ich nicht morden....' (Ju 180), 'damit wächst die Notwendigkeit/ von Attentaten...' (Ju 129). In order to underline Judith's inability to do otherwise than kill, Hochhuth sets her wish to bear a child in conflict with her actions, reflecting the ambivalence between life and death expressed by Büchner:

Du weißt, wie sehr ich ein Kind wollte.  
Doch seit ich begriff, daß ich handeln muß  
- gab ich acht, nicht schwanger zu  
werden...  
Denn ein Kind soll nicht - ich will nicht,  
daß ein Kind...eine Mörderin zur Mutter  
hat. Ju 202

In this sense Judith, as Danton, sacrifices her own life, albeit with less fatalism and cynicism, to her 'cause'. Her ultimate fate may also be execution. To complete the parallel, as Hochhuth himself points out in Judith through Gerald - 'Jedes Geschichtsbuch sagt

doch, daß immer/ - fast immer - ein noch Gefährlicherer kam!' (Ju 204), Judith's act will change little, perhaps merely be a precursor of a worse state of affairs. The positive acquisitions of the French Revolution also had to be weighed not only against its bloodshed and violence but also against that which followed during the Napoleonic Wars.

It has been indicated that Hochhuth's philosophy as a politically active pessimist closely reflects that of Büchner, and that this philosophy has also provided Hochhuth with the motivation for some of his dramatic characters. To what extent, however, does Hochhuth's dramatisation of historical event compare with Büchner's adaptation of the French Revolution? Büchner produced no theoretical work concerning dramatic theory, and information we have comes from his letters and the study of the play itself. Certainly, Hochhuth's initial step, in the writing of *St*, for example, can be compared with that of Büchner - both considered an intense and detailed study of historical documents and other material to be an absolute necessity before any attempt to dramatise history. In a letter to his family of 28 July 1835<sup>15</sup>, Büchner describes the ultimate task of the historical dramatist as 'der Geschichte, wie sie sich wirklich begeben, so nahe als möglich zu kommen'. Hochhuth, in

interview with F.J.Raddatz, resumes this conviction in his own words: 'Büchner hat seine Quellen bis zur Langeweile ausgebeutet...'<sup>6</sup>, and in his essay 'Zu "Soldaten": Gegen die "Neue Zürcher Zeitung"', makes it his own, despite the awareness that a play may suffer as a result:

je sklavischer man den Tatsachen der  
Historie Mitspracherecht auch im Kunstwerk  
einräumt, je verdrossener muß man mit  
Schiller seufzen: 'Meine Geschichte hat  
viel Dichterkraft in mir verdorben'.  
KK 193

Despite this recognition of the importance of historical accuracy, both authors have also sought to recreate the atmosphere of an era and characters within it, and both, in the illusionary sense of theatre, have attempted to draw the audience into their created world and into identification with their characters. Büchner, in the same letter, underlines the importance of this identification. In his opinion, dramatic characters should be 'Menschen von Fleisch und Blut....deren Leid und Freude mich mitempfinden macht und deren Tun und Handeln mir Abscheu oder Bewunderung einflößt'<sup>7</sup>.

This in turn raises the question of the social and moral impact of drama. Büchner sees the theatre as a moral institution only in so far as the lessons of history may also influence future generations' moral

thinking. The audience is free to take a didactic view of his plays, just as they are free to learn from history itself:

Der Dichter ist kein Lehrer der Moral, er erfindet und schafft Gestalten, er macht vergangene Zeiten wieder aufleben, und die Leute mögen dann daraus lernen, so gut, wie aus dem Studium der Geschichte...<sup>10</sup>

He denies that the function of the stage is to show an ideal moral world and his plays demonstrate this conviction with an at times brutal realism. Büchner rejects Schiller as a dramatist who, as a result of his moral intention, offers an ideal of the world and of human action alongside his depiction of the true nature of things.

By contrast, Hochhuth admires Schiller greatly and himself illustrates the moral alternatives faced by his characters as well as the actual decisions made and historically documented. This is frequently done in the presentation of an idealised antagonist to the main character. Thus, for example, history is not only shown as it was, in the actual decisions and actions of Churchill, but also as it might have been, in the opposing idealism of Bishop Bell and General Sikorski. It is left to the audience to decide which of these alternatives should have been in a morally ideal world.

Hochhuth is more consciously didactic than Büchner. The latter, whose drama also had political

intention and impact, chose to allow historical facts and the identification of the audience with his characters<sup>to</sup> speak for themselves. Hochhuth chooses to point out alternative attitudes and actions directly, demanding a more immediate moral reaction from his readers or audience.

### SECTION III: Hochhuth and Friedrich Hebbel

Although the original story of Judith and Holofernes is taken from an apocryphal book of the Old Testament, it is vital to consider the extent to which the tragedy Judith by Friedrich Hebbel offers parallels with Hochhuth's own play concerning the assassination of the American president.

The act of assassination upon which Hochhuth's play is based can be compared in several ways with that carried out by Hebbel's main protagonist. Both acts are based on the assumption that the death of one individual can, and in all probability will, change the course of future events. In Hebbel's play,

Holofernes is his army. He appears irreplaceable both to himself and to his followers, an alternative at the time of the action is inconceivable, and for Holofernes himself, a justification for his continued tyranny: 'Wer sich aus der Welt wegdenken und seinen Ersatzmann nennen kann, der gehört nicht mehr hinein!'<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the announcement of his death does then lead to the collapse of his own forces and the triumph of the people of 'Bethulien', despite the fact that they have been weakened by long days of siege.

This certainty is lacking in Hochhuth's version of the play, but the question is raised as to the significance of the individual and the historical impact of his or her assassination. During the party with friends, Judith and Arthur defend their own position that individuals, rather than circumstances, are responsible for historical developments - a position which leads to their inner conviction that the president must be killed in order to put a stop to the production of poison gas. However, modern society rarely presents a clear cut situation in which the direct consequences of an act of assassination could be pin-pointed. Whilst Hebbel was able to indicate the immediate victory of the besieged town following Holofernes' death, Hochhuth must leave many questions open. Would the



assassinated president have sold and used the weapons he produced? Would his successor continue with the same policy? Can assassination possibly be justified if, as in this case, it is seen as a 'preventative' measure?

The wider scale of modern history also prevents Hochhuth's portrayal of an immediate, one to one confrontation between the assassin and the victim. Hebbel, on the other hand, offers a vivid portrayal of Holofernes and his brilliance and tyranny. Although there is no comparable figure in Hochhuth's Judith, the same ambivalence in character is a feature of certain protagonists in his work. This aspect, and its implications, are discussed in more detail below (Chapter 6). Hebbel's Judith finds herself admiring Holofernes despite his brutality, for his determination, his courage, his calling to power:

Du bist groß und andere sind klein.  
(Leise.) Gott meiner Väter, schütze mich  
vor mir selbst, daß ich nicht verehren muß,  
was ich verabscheue! Er ist ein Mann.

Hebbel, Judith 62

This is the same awe and admiration for the powerful individual which is evident in Hochhuth's approach to Churchill, Bismarck, Stalin and Hitler. This awe is always, to varying degrees, accompanied by horror and disgust at the misuse of power, as is that of Judith in Hebbel's play.

Obviously Judith's words above also have a sexual implication, especially in the context of her disappointment in her husband and in her present suitor Ephraim. Holofernes' sexual domination and victory over Judith motivate the assassination as an act of personal revenge, quite apart from the plight of her countrymen. Indeed, Judith's act has been read as a purely self-centred one, and as such irreligious, despite the fortunate consequences for her people:

Sie hat in dem Mann, der ihrem Gott Prügel androht, nicht nur den Feind gesehen und ihren Gott schon vor der Vergewaltigung nahezu vergessen. In der Rache ihrer selbst macht sie sich, aber auch Holofernes vollends zu einem höheren Wert als Gott und sein Volk.<sup>20</sup>

This sexual aspect is lacking in the main part of Hochhuth's play, where Judith's victim does not appear, and only briefly - in the moment of death - comes into contact with the heroine. It is echoed, however, in Hochhuth's prologue. There a Russian peasant woman, serving the Nazi Commissar of the occupying forces in Minsk - and sexually exploited and humiliated by him - blows up and destroys her enemy. The maiming of her brother in the Vietnam war also provides Hochhuth's Judith with a personal, if not sexual, motive alongside her purely political desire to protect future generations. The two authors can thus be compared in their recognition that

political outrage alone often presents insufficient motivation for a deed of such weight.

A more direct parallel lies in the attitudes of both women to motherhood, before and in the context of their deeds. Initially, both very much want a child, Hebbel's Judith expresses this wish most emphatically, as the justification of a woman's existence:

Ein Weib ist ein Nichts; nur durch den Mann  
kann sie etwas werden; sie kann Mutter  
durch ihn werden. Das Kind, das sie  
gebirt, ist der einzige Dank, den sie der  
Natur für ihr Dasein darbringen kann.

Hebbel, Judith 17f

This very submissive and traditional role is not entirely in keeping with her character throughout the rest of the play. However, the notion of motherhood is linked with that of sexual fulfilment, and the intensity of her wish to bear a child may reflect her attempts to stifle and yet justify frustrated sexuality. There is evidence of her sensuality in the portrayal of her wedding night: 'als er zuletzt meine Hand faßte und etwas sagen wollte und nicht konnte, da war mir's ganz so, als ob ich in Brand gesteckt würde, als ob es lichterloh aus mir herausflammte'. (Hebbel, Judith 15). Hebbel's Judith, in the moment of her decision to kill, then begins to see this burden of childlessness as a predestined blessing. Hochhuth's Judith also abandons her plans

to conceive a child at the moment in which she decides to assassinate the president. Neither woman wishes to expose a child to the shame and horror of a mother capable of a brutal murder. In the case of the biblical heroine, this shame would be compounded by the need to revenge the father, in other words, by murdering the mother Judith in turn. Judith's decision is therefore a conscious decision to put an end to the chain of bloodshed.

At the close of the play, Hebbel's heroine fears that she may be carrying the child of a man who has defiled her, yet whom she has admired despite herself and whom she has killed for largely personal reasons. Surprisingly, since Hochhuth's Judith does not have a relationship with the president, this theme is reflected in his work. It is one of the president's close advisors, Gerald, who would be the potential father of Judith's child. Gerald and the president are closely associated and in killing one, Judith is symbolically killing the other, the possible father of her child. Gerald himself underlines this almost symbiotic relationship between himself and the president after the murder:

GERALD: Daß du auch mein Leben vernichtet  
hast,  
war dir gleichgültig? (.....)

GERALD: Meine Existenz ist auch zum Teufel:  
hättest mich nicht hindern sollen,  
dein Flakon gegen mich zu benutzen. Ju 203

The emphasis placed on the individual's contribution to historical developments in both works appears to be considerable. However, in the case of Hebbel, this initial impression proves deceptive. There have been widely differing interpretations of Hebbel's philosophy in this respect. Some critics see his tragedies as illustrative of contemporary philosophy in the early 19th century, in particular of that of Hegel. Hebbel is said to view history as a dialectic progression towards the realisation of human reason and freedom. As would certainly appear to be the case in Judith, the individual's activity is then part of a broader framework in which every event is planned and guided by an omnipotent God. Figures of historical greatness are therefore those whose personal aims and interests happen to coincide with those of the historical process. In the words of Georg Lukács; 'Etwas muß entstehen, und es gibt immer einen Menschen, dessen persönliche Ziele, Talente und Verhältnisse mit dieser Notwendigkeit zusammenfallen.'<sup>21</sup>

This certainty cannot be compared with Hochhuth's conviction that the individual is free, morally if not physically, to make decisions and change the course of events. For Hochhuth, there is no long-term plan, only direct reactions to a particular

situation, and the acts of individuals in his plays are purely self-motivated.

Hochhuth himself has adopted this Hegelian evaluation of Hebbel's historical philosophy. In his criticism of Agnes Bernauer in the essay Räuber-Rede, Hochhuth underlines the social consequences of Hebbel's belief in God's plan, and the role of the individual as a divine instrument. Hochhuth rejects this philosophy as a thesis likely to provoke complacency and acceptance of the unacceptable. Above all, it is the denial of the individual's value and autonomy which motivates Hochhuth's negative criticism:

Während Hebbel, (...) sich der Macht ideologisch an den Hals warf (...) - und mitleidlos die Ermordung seiner Bernauerin mit dem Frevelgeschwätz rechtfertigte: "Das Individuum, wie herrlich und groß, wie edel und schön es immer sei" müsse "sich der Gesellschaft unter allen Umständen beugen..." R-R 71

In Hebbel's work, having fulfilled his or her calling, the 'great individual' is frequently spiritually or physically destroyed. God, as he is portrayed by Hebbel, does not appear capable of achieving his ends without the tragedy of an individual, in this particular case that of Judith;

Gott hat sich Judiths Weiblichkeit bedient; sie war ein Werkzeug, durch das er sein Ziel erreicht hat, aber er konnte es durch sie nur so erreichen, daß sie nach getanem Dienst der tragischen Vernichtung anheimfällt.<sup>22</sup>

This destruction of the human individual offers motivation for another interpretation of Hebbel's work. His plays have also been read as demonstrating the insoluble conflict between the interests of the individual and objective reality. Therefore they are less a demonstration of God's plan than of the seeming absence of order in the world; 'der absolut unverständliche und unangemessene Kausalitätsmechanismus der äußeren Welt.'<sup>23</sup>

If Hebbel is thus interpreted, then his world view is pessimistic, even nihilistic, expressing 'die absolute Chaotic der äußeren Wirklichkeit'<sup>24</sup>, and it is closer to that of Hochhuth. Hochhuth has described the key factors in the historical process as being chaos and absurdity; 'wahrhaftig, ihre Wirklichkeit.....läßt sich nicht steigern durch Verlagerung in eine absurde Welt' (H/EGE 323).

There is an even closer parallel between the personal destruction of Hebbel's heroes and Hochhuth's concept of mankind doomed to ruin and failure - 'der Verdacht, daß diesem Scheitern ein *Zwang* zugrunde liegt; Religiöse mögen ihn Verhängnis nennen.' (H/VEG 400).

In this case, the true contrast between the two authors does not lie in their understanding of history, but in the consequences they draw from it. Both may be pessimistic and see the individual doomed

to destruction, but Hochhuth - and here his understanding of Büchner illuminates his viewpoint and distances him from Hebbel - accepts this as a motivation towards short-term political activity and improvement. Hebbel - as Hochhuth's own criticism of his work, cited above, indicates - is drawn into acceptance of whatever fate may have to offer; 'daß alles gut sei, was Schicksal ist, daß der Mensch alles auf sich nehmen müsse, was unvermeidlich, weil das menschliche Leben kein wahrhaftigeres Ziel hat'<sup>25</sup>.

## Footnotes:

1 - Irmtraud Rippel-Manß, 'Herr oder Knecht der Geschichte?', Journal für Geschichte 1, 1979, p.33

2 - Friedrich Schiller, 'Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet' in Vom Pathetischen und Erhabenen, Reclam, Stuttgart 1970, p.13 (Nach Schillers Sämtliche Werke, ed. Eduard von der Hellen, Stuttgart/Berlin 1904/5)

3 - Friedrich Schiller, Vom Pathetischen p.10

4 - Friedrich Schiller, Vom Pathetischem p.13

5 - Otto F. Beer, 'Dr. Lysistrate probt neuen Aufstand', Süddeutsche Zeitung 25.2.1974, p.12

6 - Urs Jenny, 'Fünf Minuten vor Armageddon', Der Spiegel, No. 47/1984, p.242

7 - Quotations from the 'Kallias Briefe' are taken from Friedrich Schiller, Kallias oder über die Schönheit, ed. Klaus Berghahn, Reclam Universalbibliothek, Stuttgart 1971.



- 8 - Hilde Spiel, 'Eine erotisch-atlantische Aktion', Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 25.2.1974
- 9 - Friedrich Schiller, Wallenstein I, Reclam Universalbibliothek, Stuttgart 1977, p.6
- 10 - See: Walter Hinderer, 'Hochhuth und Schiller - oder: Die Rettung des Menschen' in Eingriff in die Zeitgeschichte, ed. Walter Hinck, Reinbek 1981, pp. 59-78  
 Erwin Piscator, Vorwort zu Der Stellvertreter: 'Es sieht, wie das Drama Schillers, den Menschen als Handelnden...' (St 7).
- 11 - Georg Büchner, Dantons Tod Kritische Studienausgabe mit Quellen, Aufsätze und Materialien. Ed. Peter von Becker. Syndikat Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1985. p.38 (Further quotations from Dantons Tod from this edition)
- 12 - Peter von Becker, 'Die Trauerarbeit im Schönen'. In Georg Büchner, Dantons Tod, Kritische Studienausgabe. Peter von Becker, 1985, p.83
- 13 - Brief an die Braut, März 1834. Georg Büchner, Werke und Briefe. Hanser Verlag, München 1980, p. 255
- 14 - Hans-Thies Lehmann. 'Dramatische Form und Revolution'. In Peter von Becker; Georg Büchner, Dantons Tod Kritische Studienausgabe, p.118
- 15 - Georg Büchner, Werke und Briefe, p.272
- 16 - Fritz J. Raddatz, ZEIT-Gespräche. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1978, p.23
- 17 - Georg Büchner, Werke und Briefe, p.272f
- 18 - Georg Büchner, Werke und Briefe, p.272
- 19 - Friedrich Hebbel, Judith, Reclam, Stuttgart 1984, p.46 (Further quotations from this edition)
- 20 - Birgit Fenner, 'Judiths Unbedingtheitsspiel. Der Kampf um Anerkennung und Selbstfindung der Frau bei Hebbel' in Friedrich Hebbel. Neue Studien zu Werk und Wirkung Hg. Hilmar Grundmann, Heide/Holstein 1982, p.40
- 21 - Georg Lukács, 'Hebbel und die Grundlegung der modernen Tragödie' in Friedrich Hebbel, Hg. Helmut Kreuzer, Darmstadt 1989, p.68
- 22 - Helmut Kreuzer, 'Die Jungfrau in Waffen. Hebbels 'Judith' und ihre Geschwister von Schiller bis Sartre' in Kreuzer, *ibid* p.293

23 - Klaus Ziegler, 'Die Wendung zur Wirklichkeit' in Kreuzer,  
ibid p.151

24 - Ziegler, ibid p.153

25 - Lukács, ibid p.51

## CHAPTER THREE - THE PAST

For Hochhuth, the focus of drama, as of history, is to be found in the actions and the decisions of the individual. Whilst he consistently emphasises the continuing worth and responsibility of the individual despite the anonymity of the technological age, it is difficult to identify a "dramatic programme" on this or any basis in conjunction with his work. In his own words, no play can be written according to a theory - indeed the process is often the reverse; theories may be developed on the basis of drama, so that in a certain sense there are as many theories as there are plays:

Nach Theorien ist ein Drama sowenig zu bauen wie ein Baum oder ein Mensch - und auch sein Fortgang, seine Entwicklung lassen sich nicht anhand bereits bewährter Überlegungen vorausbestimmen.... wie der Ausgang des Lebens, der Tod, fast so viele verschiedene Ursachen hat, wie es Individuen gibt, so gibt es ebenso viele Theorien des Dramas wie Dramen! - nicht nur: wie Dramatiker. SdE 232

To what extent, therefore, is the dramatic structure of Hochhuth's plays born of their historical, philosophical and political content? The following chapter will analyse the three plays most directly concerned with historical events, Der Stellvertreter, Soldaten and Sommer 14, and examine

differences and similarities in their structure in the context of Hochhuth's philosophy.

SECTION I: Der Stellvertreter

The premiere of the first of these plays, Der Stellvertreter, took place at the 'Berliner Volksbühne' under the stage direction of Erwin Piscator on 20.2.1963. Riccardo was played by Günther Tabor, Gerstein by Siegfried Wischnewski and Pius XII by Dieter Borsche. The book edition from Rowohlt publishers appeared simultaneously.

It would be difficult to cite another example of a play which has aroused so much attention, discussion and dissent. Such was the reaction in the press that after six months, a collection of reviews and comments, also published by Rowohlt', could choose its contributions from over 3000 written pieces. Yet the bulk of this reaction concerned itself with the verity of Hochhuth's facts - an approach he himself invited by emphasising his own accuracy and the use of documentary material<sup>2</sup> - or with the moral, ethical question whether the Pope should indeed have spoken out against the Nazis. Egon Schwarz, in his

retrospective article "Rolf Hochhuths >Der  
Stellvertreter< ", writes;

in der ganzen angehäuften Literatur ist  
sehr wenig von den künstlerischen  
Qualitäten des Stücks die Rede und um so  
mehr von seinen theologischen,  
geschichtlichen und ideologischen  
Implikationen.<sup>3</sup>

This raises questions, however, about the extent to which the artistic and the ideological qualities of any play can be so radically divided. In the following, the aesthetic properties of Hochhuth's play will be examined in the context of his historical beliefs, in order to determine the extent to which the two aspects are interdependent and should therefore be considered as a whole in any evaluation of Der Stellvertreter.

In his foreword to Rohwohlt's first edition of Der Stellvertreter, written on 6.11.1962, Piscator describes the play as 'bereits in seiner literarischen Fixierung vollgültig episch' (St 10). What exactly did Piscator mean by the term epic? We may surmise that he is not referring to the distinctions between epic and traditional theatre made by Brecht, but to his own convictions as a director. Piscator believed that the realities of life in the 20th century demanded a more complex dramatic form than inherited traditions allowed. The

term epic points to its affinity with the narrative form, the portrayal of a wider scope of events usually linked with the novel rather than with the theatre. The new drama's comprehensive quality also earned it the name 'totales Theater' - a phrase which Piscator also uses to describe St in his foreword. (St 9). The new dramatic form was conceived and put into practice by Piscator in his own theatres prior to and during his exile in the USA after 1934:

Mittel wie Projektionen, Filme, laufende Bänder, Kommentare etc, nannte ich, noch bevor Brecht seinen Begriff des "Epischen" formuliert hatte, epische Mittel. Sie durchsetzten die Aufführung mit wissenschaftlichem, dokumentarischem Material, analysierten, klärten auf.

St 10

Der Stellvertreter appeared 'epic' to Piscator because it offered a wide-ranging panorama of an era; it included elements illustrative of 'die Weitläufigkeit und Kompliziertheit, die Totalität unserer grundsätzlichen Lebensprobleme' (St 9) - documentary, scientific and political material.

One scene which clearly illustrates this aspect of Hochhuth's work is the second, 'Der "Jägerkeller" in Falkensee bei Berlin'. In it Nazi officials, officers and industrialists of relative importance are introduced to the audience. Documentary facts are integrated into the dialogue, so that, for example, the audience learns the following;

In Dänemark gibt's keine Judensterne!  
 Der König hat sich bis heut' erfolgreich  
 widersetzt. St 34

Gerade in Preßburg hat doch die Regierung  
 die getauften Juden den anderen  
 gleichgestellt-  
 ich nehme an, nur deshalb, weil ein  
 Priester  
 Regierungschef dort ist. St 35

The choice of a skittle alley as a setting underlines the contrast between the protagonists' jovial, casual approach and the import of the issues they are discussing. It is common to combine business and pleasure; when the business involves transport of Jews to Auschwitz and forced labour in the Ruhrgebiet, the pleasure appears both grotesque and cynical. Hochhuth illustrates the shocking acceptance of Nazi ideology at all levels of society, showing the way in which ordinary people suppressed all thought of the consequences - evil was lent the protection of routine, everyday business. This is an understanding of the Nazi era which was much discussed in the post-war period, and reflects, for example, Hannah Arendt's report on the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem<sup>4</sup>. These figures are not true characters despite their names and actual historical roles, a fact which is underlined by Hochhuth's dramatic method: 'Die zu Gruppen von zwei, drei oder auch vier Personen zusammengefaßten Figuren sollten jeweils vom gleichen Schauspieler verkörpert werden' (St 14).

This device has been questioned<sup>6</sup>, as directly opposing Hochhuth's own conviction that the individual is important - that individual decisions determine historical events. In fact, however, there is no contradiction here. Hochhuth has never maintained that circumstances leave all individuals equally free to act, or that all individuals have the strength of character to act. In fact his general picture of humanity is a negative one, and he has always maintained that only a small number of outstanding individuals make history: 'Die Zahl jener, die wirklich etwas erreichten, ist zu allen Zeiten stets sehr, sehr klein gewesen.'<sup>6</sup> The scene 'Jägerkeller', in illustrating the mass of Germans who by their weakness of character 'allowed' history to happen without actively 'making' it, demonstrates Hochhuth's pessimistic view of humanity, but does not contradict his view that individuals can alter the progress of historical events. As far as the content of this scene is concerned, it also provides essential evidence against those critics who see in Der Stellvertreter a vindication of the German people at the expense of the Catholic Church.<sup>7</sup>

The scene is epic, both in Piscator's sense of totality, but also - limitedly - in the Brechtian sense. Despite Hochhuth's belief in the unchanging nature of man, which precludes a Brechtian approach



to drama, history is here portrayed as an appeal to the intellect of the audience, and in a sense of outrage, the inevitability of events is certainly questioned. In this context, Hochhuth's conviction that the study of history reveals a pattern of cyclic developments is important. Present situations can therefore be assessed in the light of the past, and in theory, mankind could effectively improve upon the present and the future by applying the lessons of the past. The fact that Hochhuth is pessimistic about the effectiveness of this approach - in politics as in drama - does not detract from his aim to enlighten and to improve:

Man muß danach streben, die Welt wirklich zu verbessern. Aber ich muß gestehen, daß ich tief pessimistisch bin, ob solche Verbesserungen je gelingen können. Das heißt aber nicht, daß man es nicht versuchen soll.<sup>e</sup>

In this scene the figure of the 'Doktor', described by Hochhuth as having 'das Format des absolut Bösen' (St 29), has the first of only two brief appearances before the Auschwitz act. In this way, continuity appears to be upheld, but closer examination reveals a direct contrast between the content and form of the two scenes. Even among the cynical characters of 'Jägerkeller', the doctor is apart, cool and detached - and capable of shocking even them. Hochhuth makes

clear that this is no bourgeois type, but a semi-human creature who cannot be judged by the same criteria as the other Nazis portrayed:

Die Selbstsicherheit, mit der er jetzt die Versammelten dermaßen provoziert, wie nur er allein es sich erlaubt, deutet an, daß er eine mythische Figur ist - unfasslich, von keinem irdischen Vorgesetzten zu kontrollieren. St 41

In 'Auschwitz oder die Frage nach Gott', the doctor is shown in his true element. Hochhuth himself had already expressed concern at any attempt to convey an impression of Auschwitz on the stage:

Der Mensch kann nicht mehr erfassen, was er fertigbringt.  
Daher hat die Frage, ob und wie Auschwitz in diesem Stück sichtbar gemacht werden soll, uns lange beschäftigt.  
Dokumentarischer Naturalismus ist kein Stilprinzip mehr. St 178

Despite his reservations, he undeniably does try to bring Auschwitz to the theatre; a courageous undertaking only eighteen years after the end of the war. Most directors, however, made considerable cuts to this act. Piscator's version of this act, for example, reduces it to:

nur noch ein kurzer Epilog, die Auseinandersetzung Riccardos mit dem Lagerarzt, der die Dimension des Bösen bekommt, die Statur Satans, eines gefallenen Engels, der mit seinen Morden von Gott eine Antwort erzwingen will. Schüsse, Todesschreie, das Ende.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, it is the demonic figure of the doctor who dominates the scene. Here, this symbolic

character is placed in a fitting context. The sparse, naturalistic stage directions of the previous acts are rejected in favour of an atmospheric portrayal. Giving the following instructions concerning the setting in Auschwitz, Hochhuth leaves much to the director: 'Das Bühnenbild ist durchaus gespenstisch traumhaft..' (St 182). A realistic, documentary style, Hochhuth implies, cannot be adopted here. Instead, emphasis is placed, through the dominant figure of the act and through the scenery, on the surreal - 'Hält man sich so weit wie möglich an die historische Überlieferung, so sind Sprache, Bild und Geschehen auf der Bühne schon durchaus surrealistisch.' (St 179). Despite this conscious acceptance of the surreal, however, Hochhuth wishes to avoid the tendency to alienate, which might distract from the facts of Auschwitz, making the past appear unreal. He categorically rejects the use of imagery and metaphors to represent the horrific reality of the concentration camps. In his opinion, there is a danger that the facts may be suppressed, that responsibility may be avoided:

Metaphern verstecken nun einmal den höllischen Zynismus dieser Realität, die in sich ja schon maßlos übersteigerte Wirklichkeit ist - so sehr, daß der Eindruck des Unwirklichen, der von ihr ausgeht, schon heute, fünfzehn Jahre nach den Ereignissen, unserer ohnehin starken Neigung entgegenkommt, diese Realität als

Legende, als apokalyptisches Märchen  
 unglaublich zu finden.. St 179

Whilst certainly not alienating the facts, Hochhuth's version of Auschwitz is in stark contrast to the rest of the play. An atmosphere of unreality does prevail - and is accentuated rather than lifted by the violent conclusion. The discovery of Gerstein and Jacobson in the camp and Riccardo's attempt to shoot the doctor provide echoes of the Wild West or of gangster movies:

*Riccardo (hat) sich nach Gersteins Pistole  
 gebückt, hebt sie auf, zielt mit dem  
 Schrei-)*

RICCARDO: Vernichte ihn!

*(- auf den Doktor - und wird von der  
 Maschinenpistole des...SS-Mannes nieder-  
 geschossen St 225*

Once more, this kind of action tends away from reality into an imaginary world. Hochhuth repeatedly emphasises man's inability to comprehend his own past actions. In doing so, he admits the limits of his own historical understanding. Elsewhere, he has expressed his incredulity at man's capacity for self destruction<sup>10</sup>. History, he has indicated, has always been absurd, surreal. 'Auschwitz oder die Frage nach Gott' is the formal expression of this aspect of Hochhuth's theory of history. Here we no longer observe thinking moral individuals whose actions determine events - the dominant factor in Hochhuth's historical philosophy - but demonic forces at work in

an area beyond his understanding. In a sense, therefore, he is a prey to his own fears of alienation. Whilst not shying away from the facts, he is unable to place the responsibility for fascism solely at the door of individuals. The root, as it is implied in this act, lies with demonic forces beyond man's control.

That the demonic madness of a few individuals should 'infect' the population of entire countries is a phenomenon which has also concerned other authors. An obvious example is presented by Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus, in which the mediaeval legend of Faust is echoed in the setting of pre-war Germany. The composer, Adrian Leverkühn, begins an association with a mysterious demonic figure, 'selling' himself to him and to disease in order to fully realise his musical talent. The narrator, Leverkühn's childhood friend, recounts the following parallels between the growing ascendancy of disease, the composer's increasing genius and the political developments in Germany during the 1930s.

Hochhuth's approach to the political 'insanity' of fascism reflects this plane, and he even adopts - a direct parallel to Mann's work - the demonic figure of mediaeval legend. Fearing a general abdication of responsibility, however, Hochhuth rejects an entirely mythological interpretation of events as it is

suggested in Mann's work. The final act of St is in marked contrast to the scene in 'Jägerkeller', in which fascism is demonstrated as a phenomenon growing through the weaknesses and the compromises of ordinary citizens. Whilst Hitler's followers are seen as human beings, there is something demonic in Hochhuth's view of his closest minions and the dictator himself. Just as it proved impossible to place Auschwitz on the stage in a traditional or epic mode, Hochhuth rejects the possibility of Hitler as a dramatic figure:

ich glaube, daß der Mann, der Auschwitz erfunden hat, kein normal empfindendes Wesen ist, sondern ein Monstrum, ein Kranker. Das ist für eine Tragödie vollständig uninteressant.''

The dominant factor in Hochhuth's philosophy, however, remains the key role of the individual in historical events. As might be expected, the greater part of Der Stellvertreter emphasises this. The main tenet of the play, that the Pope should have spoken out against the deportation of the Jews, is firmly based in this conviction. The Pope, in a position of authority, both political and moral, ought, Hochhuth argues, to have made his damnation of the events clear. His influence as an individual may have been sufficient to change things in concrete terms, but even if this were not the case, his moral standpoint

would have given thousands of others, the ordinary Catholics, a spiritual basis for opposition. The Pope, therefore, was in a position to influence historical events - as indeed he also did by his silence. Riccardo, by contrast, has limited freedom to act - as a simple priest, his opportunities to alter historical events are far fewer and must be more stubbornly fought for. His actions illustrate the inner moral freedom of the individual even when faced by outward limitations. Compelled by his sense of outrage, Riccardo follows through the consequences of his original aim to convince the Pope. Finally, unable to do more in real terms than attempt to save Jacobson by his actions, he expresses his idealism by taking the path to his death in Auschwitz. The possibility of taking an active role despite a pessimistic sense of inevitable failure has been discussed in the context of Büchner's influence on Hochhuth above (pp. 54-57).

The conflict between political necessity and idealism outlined here is clearly a reflection of the antithesis of classical drama, and the scenes in which Riccardo and the Pope or his representatives appear are the most traditional in the whole play. These scenes dominate, and often the entire play was judged on such a basis.<sup>12</sup> There is a gradual build-up of tension towards Riccardo's confrontation with

the Pope, despite our awareness that he cannot succeed. Hochhuth uses the structure of the play to evoke this tension; from scene to scene, we follow Riccardo from his first realisation of the facts in the office of the Papal Nuncio in Berlin through the entire church hierarchy, as he makes repeated attempts to reach the Pope before the climax in the Vatican. With each appeal, his outrage and sense of impotence grows. He returns to Rome and to his father with the confidence of moral integrity: 'Ich gab mein Wort, / daß der Papst protestieren wird -' (St 79). This confidence fails as the scenes progress, giving way to emotion and even aggression:

Eminenz: Hunderttausend Judenfamilien  
in Europa stehen vor ihrer Ermordung  
schlimmer, Eminenz; *kann* es doch nicht  
kommen! St 98

RICCARDO (*schreit*): Ich kann es nicht ohne  
Sie!  
(*Indem er sich erhebt, mit letzter  
Anstrengung*)  
Wenn Sie nicht helfen, Pater General....  
dann muß ich auch für Sie beten...  
St 131

The moment towards which these scenes develop, when Riccardo stands before the Pope with the conclusive words - 'Gott soll die Kirche nicht verderben, nur weil ein Papst sich seinem Ruf entzieht' (St 176) - can be compared to the dramatic climax of traditional tragedy. It is also inevitable that Riccardo's outbreaks of feeling, his moral integrity, and the



unrealistic idealism which leads to his inevitable failure lend him the status of a tragic figure. As can be seen from these examples, Hochhuth uses emotive language to arouse the empathy of the audience in a sense far removed from the intellectual appeal of the epic in drama.

Three aspects of Hochhuth's dramatic form have been illustrated. The bulk of St is traditional theatre, whilst certain scenes, noticeably 'Jägerkeller', are largely epic. This scene presents a much wider panorama than is usual in drama, and is intended as a didactic, informative appeal to the intellect of the audience. Finally, 'Auschwitz oder die Frage nach Gott' moves away from both these tendencies. It is surreal rather than realistic, and its main character - in his demonic incarnation of evil - is closer to the mystery plays of the middle ages rather than epic or classical drama.

As has been indicated, these three stylistic aspects are logical reflections of corresponding aspects in Hochhuth's historical philosophy. The dominant factor is his belief in the significance of moral choices and the role of the individual in the historical process, reflected in the classical facets of his drama. However, his belief in the cyclical nature of history - and thus in its relevance for

both the present and the future - demands an intellectual, didactic emphasis. Thirdly, there are aspects of history for which Hochhuth can offer no explanation in either of these contexts. His only alternative is to see them as the workings of forces beyond his own sphere of understanding; demonic influences illustrated in the stylistically 'surreal' approach to his final act.

The problem inherent in this somewhat contradictory picture of history is the danger that as a result, the differing aspects of Hochhuth's style may also fail to cohere.

A brief examination of some productions of St will demonstrate this problem more fully. In Theater heute of May 1964, several theatres revealed and commented on their intentions in producing Der Stellvertreter. Imo Moskowicz' production in Frankfurt, for example, was conceived explicitly as Riccardo's biography: 'In Frankfurt gibt die Biographie Riccardos den Ausschlag' (Theater heute 5/1964, p.30). By contrast, in Düsseldorf, Hansjörg Utzerath's production adopted a style which can be justifiably referred to as 'epic':

Entsprechend verwendete die Inszenierung die Spielweise der dramatischen Chronik. Es entstand eine Verfremdung, indem die Bilder nicht als 'illusionistisches Theater' abgewickelt wurden, sondern der dokumentarische Gehalt mit den sichtbar

gemachten Mitteln des Theaters aufgezeigt  
wurde: Theater heute 5/1964, p.31

Helmuth Krapp, in his comments on the Frankfurt production, already begins to contradict himself, however. The production aimed, on the one hand, to concentrate on Riccardo, and yet on the other hand, it was felt to be necessary to play the 'Jägerkeller' scene, albeit cut to some extent. The reason is given as the director's conviction that the play loses its balance without this scene and that a possible consequence would be the 'scheinbare Entlastung der Nazis' by contrast with the Curia.

However, as we have seen above, the scene is untypical of the play as a whole and stands alone as a semi-comic, epic scene descriptive of the life and attitudes of the Nazi and industrial leaders. It does not advance the action surrounding Riccardo and can be seen as relevant only to the role of Gerstein among the main protagonists. The task of incorporating this scene, therefore, into a production which aimed to present Riccardo and his conflicts, was considerable. The press comments on the Frankfurt production in this respect are predictable. The 'Jägerkeller' scene was seen to be an appendage, largely superfluous, and detrimental to the unity of the production as a whole. Thus, for example, Tilmann Moser comments in the Stuttgarter

Zeitung of 18.2.1964 on the unity of the action surrounding Riccardo in contrast to the seeming redundancy of the scene at Falkensee:

.....Gesamtabsicht, das Stück auf Riccardo, Gerstein, den Kardinal und den Papst zu konzentrieren .... Dadurch erreichten diese Teile eine faszinierende blockhafte Geschlossenheit, an die die Eichmann-Szene in Falkensee und das jäh abfallende Ende im Lager von Auschwitz beinahe beziehungslos angehängt oder vorgespannt erschienen.

The problem appears to be that a scene of this nature cannot be integrated into a production which is essentially constructed along traditional theatrical lines. Not only do the comments of Helmuth Krapp himself support the view that the production was conceived as a biographical drama concerning Riccardo, but other press reports following the premiere underline the basic concept as traditional. This applies to the style of acting - the Deutsche Zeitung of 19.2.1964 describes this as an 'identifizierende Spielweise', and also to the costume, if not necessarily to the scenery employed. This is described, in contrast, by the same writer, Hans Daibler, as 'ein Verzicht auf ein Bühnenbild'. This does not, however, have to imply that no attempt was made to produce 'Theater' in a traditional sense. Whilst a near empty stage may reduce the quality of realism in a production, it does not by necessity involve the introduction of alienation into a play

which is otherwise being interpreted in a traditional manner.

Apart from the scene at Falkensee, the other chief problem facing a director wishing to concentrate on the traditional elements in St is how to conclude the play. Obviously Hochhuth's final act cannot be staged as it is written. In Frankfurt it was decided to reduce the act to dialogue - 'Aus dem 5. Akt, Auschwitz, ist der wesentliche Dialog zwischen dem Doktor und Riccardo herausoperiert.' (Theater heute 5/1964 p.31). In addition, the monologues of the old man and girl were taken as the final conclusion to the production. The general consensus of opinion is that this final act was a failure after the success of the Papal scenes:

nach diesem Punkt sinkt auch die ganze Inszenierung in sich zusammen.

Stuttgarter Zeitung 18.4. 1964

Mit einem Wort, der gesamte Schlußakt ist in Frankfurt mißlungen, und zwar war er nicht nur dramaturgisch, sondern - was in diesem Falle schlimmer ist - politisch unmöglich. Die Welt 22.2.1964

The unity of the action surrounding Riccardo's and Gerstein's struggle against the obstinacy of the Curia is one explanation for this failure. As did the scene in Falkensee, the final act appeared to be no more than a disturbing addition. An explanation for the uneasiness of some critics may also be sought in this scene's failure to become part of the whole as

far as style as well as content was concerned. The act is described in the above article by Tilmann Moser in the following way:

Im Dunkeln brüllen ein paar SS-Bonzen herum, unkenntlich und mit Mühe verständlich. Dann gaukeln Häftlinge vorüber, im grotesken Hüpfschritt. Das Unheimliche ist intendiert, aber nicht gefunden.

Hochhuth himself emphasises that reality should not be imitated in his final act at Auschwitz. Any dramatic tension in the play is concluded when Riccardo makes his dramatic gesture in defiance of the Pope in the 4th Act. The director hoping to produce St as a basically traditional, dramatic play is faced with the choice of cutting out this final act, with its surreal negation of human responsibility, or damaging the unity of his concept by playing it, in whatever form.

Whilst Moskowicz may have encountered certain problems and not entirely solved them in his Frankfurt production, it is evident, on the basis of contemporary reviews, that Hansjörg Utzerath in Düsseldorf came upon even more difficulties in his 'epic' interpretation of the play. The aim of the Düsseldorf version was, aside from the declared use of epic means in interpretation, 'trotz aller.....Kürzungen einen möglichst umfassenden Gesamteindruck des Stückes zu vermitteln' (Theater

heute 5/1964 p.31). The problem inherent in this is the sheer volume of Der Stellvertreter. From a purely practical point of view, therefore, it is scarcely surprising if the production was seen to be 'verworren und verwirrend' (Die Zeit 10.4.1964). Adding to this confusion, however, was the marked strangeness in various decisions made by Utzerath. The choice of full costume, for example, was at variance with other decisions, including the use of an empty stage and visible technical equipment.

The most significant problem, of course, is the playing of the Papal scenes. These can scarcely be incorporated into a purely anti-illusionary interpretation of the play with any success. There is undeniably an element of dramatic tension in Riccardo's conflict with the Pope, there is development in the characters of both Riccardo and of his father and the role of the Cardinal demands a traditional, realistic interpretation in order to be successful. Utzerath's very different approach led to a reduction in the emotional and dramatic effect of the scenes in the Papal Palace: 'Übrigens geriet in Düsseldorf die zentrale Papstszene leider ausgerechnet zur schwächsten der ganzen Aufführung' (Die Welt 29.2.1964).

However much one can explain the weakness of the Papal scenes in Düsseldorf with Utzerath's intention

to put the blame chiefly on the side of the Gestapo (a view strengthened by his inclusion of the scenes in the 'Jägerkeller' and in 'Gestapo Hauptquartier'), this intention is, essentially, foreign to the play itself, where Hochhuth very clearly emphasises the Church and the Pope. A production of St of which it can be said that the director

arrangiert sie (die vatikanische Seite) auf nebenbei, gibt ihr sogar geringere Lautstärke und verwischt die Konturen der Persönlichkeiten, bis aus dem Kardinal eine absolute Null wird. Sie interessieren ihn nicht. Mittag 29.2.1964

would be unacceptable as a version of Hochhuth's play. The Papal scenes as such either destroy the unity of concept in an epic version of the play, or emerge as weak if this concept is well adhered to.

In conclusion, these failures point to a lack of structural unity in Hochhuth's play as a whole. There is no reason why drama should not be a combination of techniques, but at this stage in his work, it appears that Hochhuth has not yet found a combination of styles which renders his ideas truly 'playable' for the director. In a comparative study of Soldaten and Sommer 14, an attempt will now be made to trace Hochhuth's later endeavours to overcome some of these problems.



SECTION II: Soldaten

Hochhuth's second theatre play, Soldaten, was awaited with great excitement prior to its premiere at the West Berlin- 'Freie Volksbühne' on 9th October 1967. This was partly due to the success and scandal associated with the author's name following his first play, St., but also because of rumours that Hochhuth would again treat a theme guaranteed to arouse emotions on all sides. Winston Churchill was to be heavily criticised for his actions during the war, even accused of murder<sup>13</sup>.

After the premiere, however, the prevailing atmosphere was one of disappointment. Probably almost any play would have been disappointing after such anticipation, but it is nonetheless interesting to assess other factors which may have contributed to the drama's poor reception.

Soldaten is structured around two main themes; the first of which is the question of air-warfare and its limitation, the second the fate of Poland - and more specifically her prime-minister in exile, Sikorski, - prior to and including his death in the summer of 1943.

The play emerged out of Hochhuth's concern over the first of these two themes. When asked about his intention in writing Soldaten, Hochhuth replied: 'Ich

wollte ein Stück über den Luftkrieg schreiben.''<sup>14</sup>

Shocked by the fact that there was no international regulation to limit the scale and the choice of targets in air-warfare - a fact which was daily present in atrocities reported from Vietnam in the late sixties, we should remember today - Hochhuth conceived his play as a plea for new legislation. Hence it is subtitled 'Nekrolog auf Genf', in reference to the first Geneva Convention in 1864. Hochhuth sets his scenes in 1964, the year marking the hundredth anniversary of international agreement on the conventions of land and sea warfare. In doing so, he wishes to draw attention to the agreement's limitations: 'Die Genfer Konvention wirkt sich heute so aus, als wäre es nicht ihre Aufgabe, Rotterdam zu schützen, sondern den Mann, der Rotterdam zerstört hat.''<sup>15</sup>

In order to establish the relevance to 1967 and to avoid the impression of a drama concerned only with the events of the Second World War in retrospect, Hochhuth uses the technique of an outer framework. A bomber pilot, Dorland, reviews his own activity in the war, looking back and protesting in the form of a series of scenes presented as 'Das Londoner kleine Welttheater'. By using this powerful epic device, Hochhuth at once makes it clear that he himself has a

didactic aim. He is also able, with this form of alienation, to avoid some of the problems inherent in the dramatisation of recent events well known to all and especially likely to affect the characterisation of famous personalities. The framework is vitally important to the overall structure of the play and cannot be cut without the loss of a sense of unity and much of the impact of Hochhuth's intended 'message'.

The fact that he chooses an ex-bomber pilot as his 'narrator' shows that Hochhuth is once again concerned with the impact of large-scale world events on the lives of individuals, despite their anonymity in the modern world and especially in a war situation. The choice of the name Dorland - the putative author of the mediaeval morality play, Everyman, is symbolic in this respect. *Everyman*, any man, and yet an individual responsible for his own actions and with his own resulting conflicts and conscience, Dorland was directly responsible for the deaths of thousands. Here he is comparable to Churchill, the main protagonist of the play within a play, who is indirectly responsible, through his orders, for the deaths of even more citizens. Here there is a reflection of Der Stellvertreter, in which Hochhuth already tried to make clear that in his view the fact of mass death does not mean that the



individual does not die his own vitally important death. In 'Soll das Theater die heutige Welt darstellen?', he makes a direct comparison between the thousands who died in gas chambers and as a result of bombing:

Es ist so inhuman wie die per Fernschreiber  
verordneten Ermordungen selbst, zu  
ignorieren, daß der einzelne heute wie  
immer individuell sein Leid, sein Sterben  
ertragen muß, gerade auch dann (...) wenn  
er nicht mehr allein stirbt, sondern  
gleichzeitig mit achthundert Menschen (...) in  
der gleichen Gaskammer, wo er seinem  
Mörder sowenig ins Auge sehen kann wie der  
Städter dem Bomberpiloten... H/EGE 317

Victims burned or bombed to death in Dresden and Hamburg, cannot, of course, be portrayed as individuals. Hochhuth symbolises them in the charred figure of a dead woman in Dresden, an image which constantly reappears to Dorland after he has witnessed the results of his own bombing raid.

Clearly Hochhuth faces a dilemma. The 'Massenschicksal' of war victims concerns him greatly, but, as he himself is aware, the stage is only suited to the portrayal of individual and personal fates. 'Auf der Bühne wirken nur Menschen; ein Problem, das sich nicht personalisieren läßt, bleibt ein intellektuelles Kreuzworträtsel'.<sup>16</sup> He is obliged to reach a compromise between the giving of information concerning the fate of many, and the more dramatic portrayal of single lives. In St. he

overcame this problem in the character of the Jesuit, Riccardo, whom he sent to Auschwitz to share the mass fate of the Jews. The victim of bombing, however, cannot be shown in any dramatic sense - Hochhuth cannot offer any direct counterpart to those with the responsibility for the deaths and the dramatic conflicts they face. He does, however, give us in Sikorski a victim of war tactics whose situation and personality lend themselves well to dramatisation.

The second theme of the play is thus appropriate and necessary to the overall structural balance. It is important to note at this point that the subject, Churchill's condonement of, or involvement in, the death of the Polish leader General Sikorski, was taken up by the media to an extent which is not justified by its original standing in the play. In fact the episode takes up most of the scene 'Das Schiff', but recurs only briefly in the other two scenes featuring Churchill, where the bombing of German cities is the chief topic. Before the premiere and after, the implication in the media was that the 'Sikorski affair' was the dominant or even sole aspect of the play. Ironically, it was even thought necessary to ban the play in England and write a whole book refuting Churchill's involvement'<sup>7</sup>, whilst in fact this is only really hinted at in the play, whatever views Hochhuth may have uttered elsewhere.'<sup>8</sup>

The Sikorski episodes within the play have a definite function - they enable Hochhuth to illustrate the fate of one victim among many, and to dramatise this end as the downfall of a tragic individual. Clearly, Sikorski's fate is unusual, and cannot be compared to those of the masses. There are, however, considerable echoes of Riccardo and his individual stand against the Pope's failure to act in St.

Both men are making a stand for a just and essential cause - Sikorski for the state of Poland and for the Polish people, Riccardo for the salvation of the Jews in Europe. Both feel a deep personal commitment towards the issue for which they are fighting. Sikorski sees himself as not only a political, but also the emotional leader of his people, whilst Riccardo personally adopts the charitable role which he, as a priest, would like to see represented by the Church as a whole.

They face, in the figures of Churchill and Pope Pius XII, similar antagonists in one respect. Although Churchill is more sympathetically portrayed than the Pope, both have an essentially worldly, realistic, even cynical outlook on events which enables them to take difficult decisions with apparent coldness. To complete the analogy, both Riccardo and Sikorski seal their fates in a single

defiant act.

The symbolic act of pinning the Jewish star to his soutane before the eyes of the Pope obliges Riccardo to leave the path of the Church and follow the Jews to his death. Similarly, Sikorski's declared intention to request an investigation into the deaths of Katyn marks the break with Churchill and prompts the latter's desperate move against him.

Since Riccardo is clearly a tragic figure in *St.*, it is interesting that such a close comparison can be made. Hochhuth conceived of *Soldaten* as Churchill's tragedy, yet it is more difficult to establish obvious characteristics of the tragic hero in his portrayal than in that of Sikorski. He is shown from a different point of view, such that his decisions and his ability as a statesman are emphasised, whereas his inner conflicts are only hinted at. This tendency will be discussed more fully below (see pp. 109f and 116f)

One of the chief problems in seeing Churchill as a tragic figure is our knowledge, whether it be from the play or from elsewhere, of his ultimate triumph in his personal struggle in the Second World War. Although, as Hochhuth suggests, he may have been compelled by outward circumstances to acquiesce in

the death of a friend and give orders which led to thousands of anonymous deaths, he is seen as the man who liberated Europe from dictatorship, and as such, it is difficult to associate him with the essential failure of a tragic figure.

However, whether Sikorski and Churchill can be seen as tragic or not, the situation of their conflict is a tragic one - so that the play can be justifiably titled 'Tragödie', even if not in a strictly traditional sense. The Sikorski scenes in Soldaten are dramatic in a way which Hochhuth failed to achieve in St. There Hochhuth made the mistake of portraying the Pope in such an unsympathetic light that his two antagonists were far from balanced. The Pope's lack of moral integrity, as portrayed by Hochhuth, is perhaps best summed up by his association with Pontius Pilate, as he symbolically washes his hands (St 176) whilst Riccardo's last impassioned plea for help is ignored. In Soldaten, however, Sikorski and Churchill are both undeniably right in their own ways. Neither is portrayed as morally weaker than the other - the only difference is that Churchill is subjected to greater pressures from external necessity, whilst Sikorski follows an inner voice. Sikorski is perhaps a lesser statesman, since he refuses to acknowledge pressure from outside. This refusal could even be interpreted as



stemming from pride - a tragic flaw - once again pointing to Sikorski rather than Churchill as the true tragic hero in Soldaten. The important point is that in Hochhuth's terms the whole situation is a tragedy, since one of the two men, both morally correct in their attitudes and action, is doomed to bow down - in this case to die:

Tragödien setzen bekanntlich voraus,  
erstens, daß jeder ihrer Kontrahenten recht  
hat; zweitens, daß er sein Recht nicht  
preisgeben kann. ID 111

A similar situation arises within the context of Hochhuth's other major theme. Here, in the discussion of air-warfare, he employs the historical figure of Bishop Bell of Chichester as an antagonist to Churchill. In their confrontation in the scene 'Der Park', similar aspects are evident to those raised in connection with Sikorski and Churchill.

It can be argued that both men have a morally valid standpoint. Bell, for his part, whilst accepting the necessity of war and the deaths of thousands of servicemen and women, is true to his principle that innocent citizens should be protected and spared. Churchill is committed to ending, and winning, the war as soon as possible (also to save lives) with whatever means appear necessary. His standpoint, as opposed to that of the Bishop, is clarified in a few of his own words: 'Sie töten

keinen, Sie helfen keinem - / Ich töte, weil anders nicht zu helfen ist.' (§ 169)

The unlikelihood of victory without the loss of many more lives is thus underlined. Hochhuth sees a tragedy in Churchill's position - hence, he has always been able to maintain that Soldaten was not written in criticism of, but out of admiration for him<sup>28</sup> - in order to achieve an aim set by others as well as by himself, Churchill is forced to sanction the deaths of thousands. The fact that he abhors this situation, viewing all death in war as tragic, is indicated when Hochhuth has him exclaim:

Aber muß ich nicht *täglich* kraft meines  
Amtes junge Männer, die nichts begehren als  
zu leben, abkommandieren in die Schlacht, in  
den Tod! Ich bin's müde, Bischof, es ekelt  
mich.... § 159

The Bishop's position is, in fact, no less tragic. He is aware that Churchill's appraisal of his position is accurate, and that through his praiseworthy scruples he will achieve little or nothing. His powerful affirmation - 'So wahr ich Brite bin: Heiligabend bomben Sie *nicht*' (§ 165) - although in the play and historically true, was, on reflection, a minor achievement in terms of lives saved.

Despite its undeniably tragic aspects, however, the overall effect of this scene is a tendency to weaken the play in traditional dramatic terms. The dramatic conflict between the two men is coexistent

with much dialogue which has an obvious didactic aim. Their argument often becomes an abstract discussion regarding, chiefly, the two concepts of power and morality. When, for example, events from the past - including the campaigns and successes of Bismarck - are quoted, this points to Hochhuth's general interest in the concept of power and its corruptive aspects. We know from other works that Hochhuth has concerned himself with the two ideas in an abstract sense<sup>20</sup>, and that he is especially interested in their manifestation in the personality of Bismarck as well as in that of Churchill<sup>21</sup>.

This scene, in fact, epitomises the whole of Soldaten. It combines tragic and dramatic with epic and very clearly didactic tendencies. This dramatic form began to emerge in Der Stellvertreter, but is more evident in Soldaten.

One of its obvious characteristics is Hochhuth's presentation of Churchill. As has been mentioned above, Churchill, the main protagonist in a play described as a 'Tragödie', has only some of the traits associated with a tragic hero. Hochhuth also, in the style of an epic writer, concentrates on facts - external aspects of Churchill as a historic figure. This explains the mass of information to be gained from both dialogue and stage directions. It also explains his attempts at accuracy when concerned, for

example, with Churchill's speech, the characteristics of which are described in detail:

Seine geliebten Vergleiche aus der Geschichte  
Großbritanniens, aus Gibbon, aus der  
Tierwelt, der Jägersprache und Anatomie  
(...) teilt er wie Tritte aus, heftig,  
belläufig, gutmeinend, brutal, je nachdem...

§ 49

Many productions have interpreted this in such a way that they felt it necessary to fill the role of Churchill with a Churchill 'look-alike'. Similarly, the critics measured the success of a production in terms of the level of photographic and audible realism achieved.<sup>22</sup> Yet this approach is not called for, since Hochhuth is aiming at information, in a didactic sense, and not at realism comparable with that of the naturalist stage. One clear pointer towards this intention is the use of the framework, such that Soldaten is a play within a play. Any device of this kind destroys the illusionary features of the theatre by reminding the audience of its technical aspects. It should always be remembered that Hochhuth very consciously writes for the reader as well as for a theatre audience. In doing so, his chief concern is to reach the widest possible audience and to inform the reader about his theme as graphically as possible<sup>23</sup>. It could still be argued that the author presents too much detail concerning Churchill's mannerisms and outward appearance.

Hochhuth certainly became fascinated with the personality of Churchill, and this, coupled with a tendency to 'collect' minor journalistic details, offers an explanation for the play's excesses in this respect.

As in Der Stellvertreter, the style which consists of Hochhuth's combination of techniques is in fact fitting when viewed in the context of his historical philosophy. Bearing in mind his subsequent aim for the reader or for the audience, the technique is born of a didactic necessity. A basic pessimism underlies Hochhuth's view of history, although he denies that he is a real pessimist. In his opinion, humanity 'en masse' has created for itself - through its own unchangeable evil nature - intolerable conditions in which the individual attempts to live out his own personal history. Hochhuth claims that he believes passionately in this individual, personal history - and that the single person has certain freedoms to decide his or her own fate. He does not deny, however, that this freedom is only existent within a limited framework of external pressure.

This is essentially the precondition for traditional tragedy. The individual, or hero, decides and acts within a certain context according to his personality. The external context, however, and the general negative nature of mankind, and of the hero -

to a lesser degree - determine that exactly this action will lead to downfall. We are reminded of Brecht's characteristics of the dramatic stage, which portrays - 'Die Welt, wie sie ist', 'der unveränderliche Mensch' and 'seine Triebe'. The traditional dramatic or tragic form offers Hochhuth an ideal framework in which to present this aspect of his philosophy.

Yet despite his general pessimism, Hochhuth is paradoxically hopeful that certain improvements may be made in the conditions in which most individuals are called to take action:

Da nicht der Mensch verbessert werden kann,  
müssen seine Institutionen immer erneut  
derart abgesichert werden, daß sich seine  
Natur im Staat nicht ausleben darf.

H/VEG 355

Thus, Hochhuth's dramatic aim also involves the demonstration of this possibility. In order to do so, he has to inform the audience of facts and figures, and break his own dramatic tension, returning an audience's thoughts to their own world. This, of course, is reminiscent of Brecht's description of the epic theatre, where the emphasis is on the audience. For Brecht, epic theatre 'Macht ihn (den Zuschauer) zum Betrachter', 'weckt seine Aktivität', 'vermittelt ihm Kenntnisse'. All these are ideals of Hochhuth's own form of theatre, despite his tendency to amalgamate traditional means with epic features. It

could be argued that the underlying ambivalence, even paradox, in his philosophical standpoint obliges Hochhuth to employ a similar stylistic ambivalence in his first play, which becomes more apparent in Soldaten.

In order for the play to be a success, the same ambivalence would be necessary in production. Most productions of S were not well received. If their general starting points are examined, it can be seen that they failed to accept Hochhuth's mixed style, and the question is raised as to what extent this failure was linked with their poor reception.

In Berlin, the framework of Soldaten was radically cut. The director, Hans Schweikart, chose to shorten the long opening scene and to delete the concluding dialogue entirely.

Obviously, Soldaten must be shortened for the theatre, and there are good reasons to abridge the first scene. The effect of this scene as it stands in the written version is insufficiently direct as an introduction to an evening's theatre. Within one scene, Hochhuth attempts to introduce an important figure, Dorland, and to use satirical parody in the portrayal of minor characters. Some of these figures - Hochhuth himself does not call them true characters<sup>25</sup> - may serve a general purpose, conveying Hochhuth's criticism of blind obedience and of





detail and to the individual in the biographical scenes concerning Churchill. If this short dialogue is added, the illusion is broken and those watching are reminded of the rehearsal situation and of Dorland's function as a director. These final words are also important to Hochhuth's didactic intention, raising so directly through the outrage of Dorland's son the question of Sikorski's death.

The effect of Schweikart's decision to play the first scene and miss out the final words is doubly confusing. The audience inevitably asks what happened to the figure of Dorland and what function within the play the first scene was intended to have.

Apart from creating some confusion, Schweikart's approach to Soldaten put huge demands upon his actors. Omitting the final scene and focusing on a realistic, illusionary reproduction of historical events, he demanded that the actors themselves give convincing portrayals of well-known historical figures. It must be remembered that in 1967, far more than today, most theatre-goers would have been well acquainted, not only with Churchill's appearance, but also with his voice and mannerisms. In Berlin, the public also knew the face, voice and mannerisms of O.E. Hasse, who took the role of Churchill. Prominent actors in almost all the roles were faced with a double problem - not only the usual casting aside of

their own identities, but also the taking on of those of recent prominent historical personalities. It is hardly surprising that such comments as the following resulted: 'der große O.E.Hasse ist nur ein kleiner Premierminister' (D.E.Otto in Vorwärts 19.10.1967). Obviously, the difficulties would have been reduced, had Schweikart taken Soldaten at face value and allowed his actors to play actors portraying historical figures.

Two productions of Soldaten stand out as having been well received both by press and public. These two, in Bochum and in London, were different in their realisation. Whilst the London version consequently cut all but the three central scenes, in Bochum the prologue and epilogue were both played to the full and cuts were made in the body of the play.

The first approach is obviously a simplification of a complex play. Naturally, the focus is then on the figure of Churchill and his decisions and actions during the later war years. Hochhuth has clearly documented these, but only some insight is given into Churchill's possible psychological conflicts. The dialogue does not give sufficient indication of his motives, hopes and anxieties to justify the production of Soldaten as a purely psychological study of the war leader. As an example, the conflict

he experiences in determining Sikorski's fate is only hinted at in dialogue with Brooke:

PM (*eine Geste, der Stabschef solle bleiben - dann werbend, um selber sicherer zu werden*): Brookie, was soll ich denn *tun* mit Verbündeten, die gegen unsern Retter Rußland offen Front machen!  
 Das schlägt General Grot-Rowecki in einem Kabel an Sikorski vor, das wir mitgelesen haben. Im Ernst: seine Warschauer Untergrund-Armee soll künftig nicht mehr nur auf Deutsche- auch auf die Sowjets soll sie schießen! Wegen Katyn.  
 Hochverrat ist das, Brooke - Hochverrat.  
 S 106

Hochhuth's foremost aims are entirely different and purely didactic; to raise the question of the regulation of air-warfare and to awaken interest in the circumstances surrounding Sikorski's death. When these aspects are not raised in the prologue, to be echoed throughout the inner scenes, the audience does not become aware of Hochhuth's didactic and at times very critical approach.

In the inner scenes, Hochhuth's sympathy with and admiration for Churchill are dominant. The framework shows the reverse aspect - criticising his policies and directly raising the question of his responsibility for Sikorski's death. In omitting the critical framework and choosing John Colico to play a very realistic Churchill, the London production was a compromise. In this form, Soldaten was acceptable to

sensitive audiences for whom Churchill and his greatness were already an accepted 'myth'.

Bochum, by contrast, retained the framework entirely, and even emphasised its function. This was achieved by the simple device of keeping Dorland on stage to direct the action during the course of the Churchill scenes. The audience was constantly reminded that these were a rehearsal for 'Das Londoner kleine Welttheater'. In the same way, it was not found necessary (indeed was not possible) to choose prominent actors or a Churchill 'look-alike'. In Bochum, Walter Uttendörfer consciously played an actor playing Churchill - leaving himself scope to differ in his portrayal from the historically known figure.

Cuts were made in the body of the play (Hochhuth himself gives guidance as to where this can be done); these included the omission of the love story between Churchill's secretary and a Polish officer. The dialogue of this episode is at times very weak<sup>26</sup>, and its omission does not detract from the play.

The basis for the Bochum production was therefore an epic structure with emphasis on Hochhuth's didactic aims. With less concentration on Churchill, the result is a more general parable concerning morality and the exercise of power. Insight is given into the decisions and conflicts of a leader, using

Churchill as a modern example. However, Hochhuth's fascination with Churchill as a character was overlooked to some extent, and the production adhered less closely to his use of biographic detail.

What comparisons, if any, can be made between Hochhuth's first two dramatisations of past events, Der Stellvertreter and Soldaten? Firstly, there is very little in Soldaten which reflects the Auschwitz act in Hochhuth's first play. The unimaginable is conveyed on stage by one devastating image - 'der Tod'. Despite the fact that it is a real photograph, however, this image is uncanny, incongruous. Hochhuth emphasises this in Dorland's monologue following the appearance of the dead woman, 'Augen und Fleisch herausgeschmolzen/ nur ihr Nasenbein, unerklärbar,/ war noch bedeckt mit Haut' (§ 19) and also in his instructions for her projection to the audience to the accompaniment of special music:

*(Das Licht hat schlagschnell den Steinmetz und seine Statue verlassen. Hinter Dorland - und die Orchesterprobe hat geholfen, durch bestimmte Klänge diesen Moment vorzubereiten, dieses sehr reale Foto transparent zu machen:)* § 17

Hochhuth uses this haunting image to present that which cannot be staged - the bombing and burning of a city - and in this sense, it can be seen as a parallel to his attempts to show Auschwitz. However,

in this much abbreviated form, a poignant reminder of those aspects of history beyond human comprehension is neatly incorporated into the play as a whole.

One essential difference between the two plays is the emphasis on the epic in S. Hochhuth's didactic aims predominate, in relation to both air-warfare and to Churchill as the embodiment of political power. Soldaten was not, to the same extent as St., written as 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung', but as a play posing questions for the present. The framework is the clearest indication of this intent:

Hochhuth added the frame in order to show more clearly than in *The Deputy* that his interest in the past was determined by the need to teach a moral lesson for today, rather than to advance an historical thesis in dramatic form<sup>27</sup>

Structurally, the frame is a suitable basis from which Hochhuth can develop his combination of techniques. The moral conflicts, personal development and tragedies of individuals can be presented within a context which nonetheless emphasises the theatre as an institution and confronts the audience on an intellectual rather than an emotional plane. Only cuts which retain this structure retain the essence of the play - others destroy its aesthetic coherency, so that elements of epic and traditional theatre, as in Der Stellvertreter, appear side by side - often

seeming disjointed, rather than forming a coherent whole.

SECTION III: Sommer 14

'Den Einbruch des Irrationalen in ein Zeitalter können wir nicht deuten.' (H/VEG 413).

With this comment, Hochhuth shows an awareness of his own limitations when contemplating the course of history. He recognises a point beyond which rational explanation fails, and reason and logic no longer present a basis for the evaluation of events. We have already seen indications of this helplessness in the face of history in Hochhuth's dramatic work - in particular in his portrayal of Auschwitz in Der Stellvertreter. 'Der Mensch kann nicht mehr erfassen, was er fertigbringt.' (St 178)

In Sommer 14, Rolf Hochhuth considers a specific historical period during which he recognises 'den Einbruch des Irrationalen', dramatising the series of events which led up to the outbreak of war in 1914. The basic structure of Sommer 14 is simple: several

factors leading to the conflict are illustrated in thirteen self-contained scenes or pictures, interspersed by songs and monologues, and preceded and followed by a prologue and epilogue (which Hochhuth here calls the 'Nekrolog').

One of the main reasons for the First World War, in Hochhuth's eyes, was the irrational desire for it within many sections of the community. This desire was so strong in some political groups that they did not shy from the systematic removal of pacifist opponents. In Sommer 14, Hochhuth offers two examples of this by describing the assassinations of Jean Jaurès and of Émile Zola. More important than these isolated incidents, however, is the overall will to destroy, an almost pathological need for war after a long period of peace. Indeed, this need is indirectly referred to as a mental illness suffered by the majority during this period:

Nicht nur sind der Geist eines Zeitalters und seine Geisteskrankheiten oft in den gleichen Personen; sondern je ausgeprägter einer vom Geist der Epoche ist, je stärker auch befallen von ihren Geisteskrankheiten.

Sommer 14 109

A pathological desire for self-destruction is echoed in the image of lemmings which arises several times during the play (S14 21, 32, 78, 335) and which is most poignantly drawn in the song 'Das Lemminge-Lied' (first published by Hochhuth in 1987<sup>2e</sup>):



Die Briten, die Deutschen - noch  
 neunzehnhundert  
 als die zwei Weltmächte verhaßt, weil  
 bewundert,  
 folgten ökologisch-blind dem Zwang

sich zu ruinieren, denn ihr Drang,  
 Ideale, 'Glauben', Volksvermögen, Blut  
 (jedes ihrer Schiffe 'ruht'

längst als Schrott, meist ohne Kampf vertan)  
 an die Flotten zu vergeuden, war vom Wahn  
 gegenseitiger Bedrohung angeheizt. S14 78

The use of a recurrent image is new in Hochhuth's work - indeed imagery and metaphors have always been used sparingly, since Hochhuth is sceptical about their effectiveness, preferring to state his view of reality directly<sup>28</sup>. In this case, however, Hochhuth's aim is to underline the irrational, apparently instinctive death-wish of much of Europe's population leading up to 1914. This widespread feeling cannot be conveyed by the presentation of facts alone, and such comparisons are useful in the engendering of an atmosphere. In addition, the repetition of specific images links various scenes of the play, thus constituting an aspect of its compact structure despite the diversity of its themes.

The author had already speculated on this aspect of war as early as 1968 in his study VEG (see H/VEG p.404ff 'Gefühlsüberschwemmungen als Kriegs-"Gründe"'). Here he describes humanity as essentially self-destructive, and the outbreak of war as

dependent on a fatal desire for chaos and violence despite man's intelligent awareness of its horror:

wie erklärt sich anders als durch Verhängnis die Blindheit, mit der die Europäer...sich binnen zweier Generationen für ein 'Ziel', das keines war, aus dem Kreis der Mächte, die in der politischen Arena zählen, hinauskatapultiert haben? H/VEG 403

In St., we are aware of Hochhuth's inability to comprehend Auschwitz, stylistically present in the tendency of the final act to drift into the realms of the unreal and even the surreal. In Sommer 14, Hochhuth consciously adopts two techniques by which he conveys the irrational. The first is a steady build up of atmosphere, a realistic demonstration of the attitudes and feelings of the people involved, which will be discussed in detail below. The second is the technique of the framework - the prologue and the epilogue - which provides the author with an 'objective' mouthpiece for his own viewpoint. The technique of the framework in Hochhuth's previous work can be found in Soldaten, where it was used as a device to alienate the reader or audience from events both recent and based on historical fact. In this way, it lent the play general, as well as specifically historical, relevance and pointed towards present and future events in the context of the past. In Sommer 14, the framework is also used in this way, along with the monologues, but is new in so

far as its characters are mythical, and the setting is the underworld. The parallel to Goethe's Faust (there a 'Prolog im Himmel', here in Hades) can be seen as a further conscious theatrical device - an association with the stage of the past reminds the audience that this too is only theatre. The two prologues are in fact put to similar use. As a step further than his use of photo material to represent death in Soldaten, Hochhuth here creates the dramatic figure of death. Death discusses humanity and the concept of war objectively with his two minions, a centaur and Daidalos. Death shares his author's awareness - from the perspective of 1914 - of the past, the present and the future, which enables him to see reflections of previous events and to draw parallels with events to come. This not only means that Hochhuth can comment on the events of the play, but also on possible future events:

...sechsmal mehr Tote zwar,  
 doch weltgeschichtlich die Zäsur  
 bringt erst der dritte Weltkrieg: Star..  
 sie nennen's, glaub ich, SDI. S14 30

He is also able to voice his views concerning the nature of mankind in general - an extension of the alienation in the prologue to Soldaten:

TOD: Wer Menschen aufklärt über ihre Rechte  
 hört man dem zu, du meinst, sie kämen?  
 Ist ihnen nicht Betrug und Selbstbetrug  
 viel lieber, weil sie gern zur Schlachtbank  
 schreiten? S14 32

Sprecht nicht verächtlich von versunkenen  
 Reichen:  
 Geschichte ist, was jedem Volk mißlang.  
 Aufstieg wie Fall ein Knüppeldamm von  
 Leichen,  
 Ordensband gestern - morgen schon der  
 Strang. S14 34

That these are Hochhuth's own views upon humanity can be seen in parallels with other works by the same author: in VEG, he comments on the rise and fall of civilisations and political powers - 'wer eine Witterung für Geschichte hat, der spürt: noch immer folgte der Nike die Nemesis' (H/VEG 388), whilst in Soldaten, Churchill's pessimism reflects that of 'der Tod' here - 'Geschichte ist, was uns mißglückt' (S 161).

There is, however, irony in the characterisation of death as he appears in human myth. A key aspect of our image of death is that he comes personally - be it in the guise of an old man, a youth or a woman - to each individual. Here, during the First World War, death is 'anachronistisch geworden, der Krieg ist ihm über den Kopf gewachsen'<sup>30</sup>. Hochhuth underlines this irony with death's own words:

Ich bin kein Massenmörder; meiner Hände  
 Arbeit hat einzeln stets den einzelnen  
 entführt..  
 Und hat nicht jeder Mensch dies Recht  
 erworben?  
 Wer in der Masse aushielt, dem gebührt  
 zu sterben, wie die Ahnen einst gestorben..  
S14 22

The problem of mass death has arisen before in Hochhuth's work, but here its significance as the negation of one of Hochhuth's basic beliefs - the importance of the individual - is expressed for the first time through one of his dramatic characters.

The predominance of the irrational in Sommer 14 is new in Hochhuth's work for the stage. However, he has examined the concept as a recurrent historical phenomenon in his essays<sup>31</sup>. The irrational is not something to be dismissed as incomprehensible and therefore irrelevant, but as an aspect of history which should be anticipated and calculated - as far as this is possible - for it is a real factor determining present and future events:

Nur sollte diese Vorstudie Belege bringen für die in jede historische Betrachtung einzukalkulierende Tatsache, daß die vielleicht entscheidenden Kräfte, Ideen, die eine Epoche den Weg bestimmen - inkalkulabel sind.  
H/VEG 413

In an article for Der Spiegel (No. 26/1984), 'Sarajevo, Eine Lehre, die vielleicht sehr aktuell ist', he drew attention to parallels between 1914 and the arms race of the late 1970s and early 1980s, as established historians had already done<sup>32</sup>.

Despite the new emphasis in Sommer 14, the play also has many features which reflect Hochhuth's previous

dramatisation of historical events. Once again, one of his chief aims is to inform the reader or audience factually. There were of course rational causes for the First World War, and Hochhuth illustrates these in semi-narrative scenes which recall, for example, the wealth of detail in the 'Jägerkeller' scene of St. One of these reasons for war was the enlargement of Kaiser Wilhelm's fleet to pose a threat to the Royal Navy. The Kaiser appears in a scene at Kiel, 'Kaiserwetter', where naval parades have escalated during the first years of the century into a show of military strength highly provocative to both Germany and Great Britain. The enlargement of the German fleet, for Hochhuth one of the most significant reasons for war, recurs in several of the scenes which precede and follow 'Kaiserwetter', which is centrally placed within the work. (See scenes II, V, IX, XIII). A second reason is touched upon in this scene when Admiral Tirpitz says to the Kaiser:

Euer Majestät Flotte hat mehr geleistet zur  
Vollbeschäftigung an der Ruhr und in  
Oberschlesien als der Kohlebergbau. S14 182

Here Hochhuth draws attention to industry's way of capitalising on the war situation. By means of warped industrial calculation, war could be made to seem desirable. Not only did the production of arms and the reduction of the workforce through the army create wealth for factory owners, it provided

employment - although often in intolerable conditions - for many thousands. The financial background to war is illustrated further in the eleventh scene, in which the owner of a munitions factory is seen donating two old masters to a Washington art gallery. His daughter accuses him of easing his conscience and condemns his use of war as a profit-making opportunity. In the monologue 'einer feinsinnigen Munitionsfabrikantin', the conscience-salving argument of the employment brought by the production of weapons is once again voiced:

Die Industrie  
 - sie lag noch nie  
 in besseren Händen  
 als während des Krieges:  
 Rekord-Dividenden,  
 am Tage des Sieges  
 ist's damit vorbei! . S14 221

Hochhuth argues in his earlier work that although industry may capitalise upon war, there are other outlets for capitalist gain; industry seldom actually causes hostilities:

Marxisten würden jetzt sagen, das kapitalistische System verhindert die Anwendung von Vernunft, weil an Krieg und Ausbeutung besser verdient wird; ein Kurzschuß: die Sanierung von Slums, die Bewässerung von Wüsten könnten ebenso großartige Geschäfte sein und bessere noch als der Vietnam-Krieg. H/VEG 401

In previous plays, Hochhuth's conviction that individuals still play an essential role in the development of history was seen to be dominant. This

conviction has by no means been cast aside in Sommer 14. Indeed, we are given very clear evidence of how a series of individuals played their role in the outbreak of war. However, the author has never introduced so many prominent personalities into one work. Whilst remaining true to his basic philosophy that one individual's sense of moral responsibility and thus his actions can alter the path of history, Hochhuth here chooses to present numerous individuals in various situations which culminate in one overwhelming event; the outbreak of war.

The individuals in fact range from the Kaiser himself to historically minor figures whose enthusiasm for war - in a group - was one factor leading to its outbreak. One example is given in the wife of a Russian prince who is so drunk with enthusiasm for the hostilities to begin that her only fear is the possibility of a false alarm:

Und ich dachte,  
 wir feiern heute Papis Telegramm,  
 er hat mir verschlüsselt telegraphiert,  
 daß wir spätestens Ende des Monats  
 im Krieg sind...  
*ängstlich*  
 Aber wenn er doch vereitelt wird, der Krieg?  
 S14 242

As in previous plays, Hochhuth does not shy away from the use of historical figures as his protagonists. Almost half of the many characters who appear in Sommer 14 are historically verifiable and



play their own historical roles within the play. The fact that these figures often appear weak - the Kaiser is again an example - does not mean that their role is less significant. By this means, Hochhuth intends to show that the masses are often made to suffer by the moral inadequacy of their leaders:

...das vielleicht quälendste Problem der Geschichte: in diesem Mißverhältnis zwischen der Bedeutungslosigkeit, dem Unprofilieren, Farblosen, der Austauschbarkeit einer Person - und dem zuweilen Ungeheuerlichen, was sie anrichtet, nur weil zufällig sie in dieser Woche an diesem Ort diesen Auftrag erfüllt...  
Sommer 14 201

As in his other works, Hochhuth is presented with the problem of how to demonstrate the individual fate of the masses. They are represented chiefly in the monologues. Hochhuth regularly intersperses songs and monologues, which are epic devices and used to comment on the action in the narrative scenes. The monologue itself is not entirely new. There were monologues in Der Stellvertreter, which aimed to personalise the fate of the millions of anonymous Jews who died in Auschwitz<sup>33</sup>. Here too, the monologue is the representative voice of those who would otherwise not be heard at all. The fate of this majority is determined by the individuals at the top, and only rarely do they have the opportunity or the courage to reject or rebel against this leadership. However, Hochhuth chooses to illustrate this as a

theoretical possibility in 'Gehorcht nicht! Monolog eines Gefallenen'. reminiscent of Wolfgang Borchert's 'Dann gibt es nur eins!'

Wer getötet wird, sollte einen Sinn  
in seinem Tod entdecken...das kann kein  
Soldat,  
der nichts getan hat als gehorcht.  
Gegen bessere Einsicht - gehorcht.  
Gehorcht nicht! Gehorcht nicht! S14 276

Sommer 14 is a structurally very different work from Hochhuth's previous plays, despite occasional echoes of earlier works. It consists of a series of episodes, scenes or pictures, each complete in itself. There is no continuous plot or action, no traditional development in the characters, no dramatic tension in the usual sense. Above all, there is no tragic hero, or dominant individual in relation to whom the events of the scenes can be shown. However, the scenes are linked, not only by their relevance to the final episode in which war is declared. Throughout, there are repeated motifs, parallels with and echoes of some or all of the other scenes. In this way the play is quite subtly woven into a whole, enclosed and commented upon by the framework. There are, for example, two scenes on board ship in which the Kaiser, at Kiel, is presented as a parallel to Churchill, who is seen travelling across the Atlantic with his mother. The latter scene takes place on board the 'Lusitania', and Churchill's

plans to refurbish the ship as 'bait' for the German navy emerge in dialogue. Later scenes include further discussion and warnings concerning the ship in 'Leonardo and Renoir' and culminate with the 'Monolog einer mit der "Lusitania" Untergegangenen'.

Similarly, there are two scenes which take place in cafes; in the first, news of the assassination which supposedly led to the outbreak of war arrives at a cafe in Sarajewo. We are reminded of this again in the tenth scene, when the French pacifist Jaurès is assassinated from the street whilst speaking in a Paris cafe. This death in turn reflects that of Zola and the political 'assassination' of Caillaux alluded to earlier in the play. These are just two examples of the way in which each scene is linked to one or more of the others thematically and linguistically (in the recurrence of imagery - see above page 123, or in reflections of previous dialogue).

Despite its lack of continuous action, Sommer 14 does move towards the concluding scene in which Germany declares war. More and more rational and irrational evidence gradually emerges, building up momentum towards the climax at which point war is declared. Hochhuth has succeeded, in his mosaic of scenes and monologues, in conveying the atmosphere of pre-war Europe. This atmosphere; the acceptance of war as

necessary, inevitable, even desirable, was, in Hochhuth's opinion, one of the chief factors contributing to its outbreak. In presenting a series of events which, on the surface, also played their part in the conflict, Hochhuth builds up a picture of this readiness and acceptance - criticising the madness (which had at the time affected almost all the population) through the mouths of his mythical characters.

As yet, Sommer 14 has been produced only once, at the Vienna 'Akademie Theater', with its premiere on 18.12.1990. The general reception of this production was negative, although the book - published in September 1989 - received some positive reviews<sup>34</sup>. In this context, it is important to examine those features of the work which were most frequently criticised.

The first of these was Hochhuth's language -

Der eigentliche Grund für diese Sterilität liegt in Hochhuths Sprache. Sie wirkt völlig papieren, vermittelt keine Spur von jener Wirklichkeit, um die es dem Autor geht<sup>35</sup>

Hochhuth's language has been criticised in the past, and it is true to say that on occasion, he lacks the ability to create convincing dialogue. We have seen examples of this in Soldaten (see above p. 114, and p. 118). However, in S14, it is often the case that

apparently weak utterances within the dialogue are actually historical quotations, of which Hochhuth employs many in his work. Thus, for example, the words of Madame Caillaux at the close of scene I - 'Rühren Sie mich nicht an, ich bin eine Dame' (S14 45) cannot be attributed to Hochhuth. In the same review, the scene in which a Russian prince and his wife feature is singled out as the 'Höhepunkt unfreiwilliger Komik und geschmacklicher Entgleisung'. In Soldaten, the sexual relationship between Helen and Kocjan also displays some poor dialogue (see page 118 above), and it could perhaps be argued that Hochhuth is not at home in the portrayal of sexual relationships. However, it must be emphasised that once again, the scene in S14 is firmly based in fact: The mood and atmosphere, the general tenor of the princess' words (to be compared with Hochhuth's quotation, S14 223) and the 'Pushkin game' with the wine glasses are historically attested.

A second aspect of the play which was criticised was the length and detail of the author's stage directions, without which, it was felt, the dialogues might be difficult to follow. 'Die Dialoge erscheinen in der Buchausgabe nur noch sporadisch zwischen Hochhuth's Zwischentexten..', '"Sommer 14" ist ein Stück für den Historikerstammtisch'<sup>32</sup>. When cleansed of journalistic rhetoric, these quotations serve to

indicate an aspect of Hochhuth's work which has been apparent since Der Stellvertreter. His plays are intended for the reader, and not simply for the stage. Obviously, the reader becomes aware of more factual information, but it is not true to say that the scenes of Sommer 14 are incomprehensible without the stage directions. Indeed, the characters provide a considerable amount of historical information in their dialogue.

Once again, Hochhuth has written a work which the critics see as too long. The actual dialogues, however, are not of unplayable length. Only minor cuts were made in Vienna - the result was three hours in length. It is essential to retain each scene, since cuts in the text destroy the play's underlying structure. If linking themes and linguistic echoes have been omitted, then the play may appear incoherent. Sommer 14 is - from the point of view of length - much easier to stage than either St or S, if directors cut sparingly and with an awareness of the structure. For such a monumental work, the choice of the small 'Akademie Theater' also seems strange. The panoramic, epic nature of the play calls for a larger context.

In conclusion, it has been seen that in Sommer 14, Hochhuth has moved away from the absolute dominance

of the single individual, without altering his belief in the significance of the individual in history. As a result, the traditional elements in the structure of his earlier plays are no longer relevant. Instead, the structure reflects his didactic aim; to illustrate an era, he presents a panorama in thirteen separate scenes. He has developed upon the technique of the framework already used in § to make it an adequate platform for his own observations on the pattern of history and on the nature of man.

Within this context, the irrational has gained new emphasis. Thematic echoes between scenes and a new use of imagery help maintain the unity of the piece, but also reflect this irrational element, and help to build up the fatal atmosphere. Sommer 14 is structurally coherent in a sense in which Hochhuth's previous plays concerning historical events were not; however, it is true to say that this coherence is at times tenuous, and that thoughtless alterations in production may render it invisible.

## Footnotes:

- 1 - Summa iniuria oder Durfte der Papst schweigen? Hochhuths "Stellvertreter" in der öffentlichen Kritik. Rowohlt, Reinbek bei Hamburg, September 1963
- 2 - The "Historische Streiflichter" as a whole are an indication of the importance Hochhuth places on the veracity of his play, in these, he also rejects any manipulation of 'reality' - 'Die Wirklichkeit blieb stets respektiert' (St 229)
- 3 - First Version in Germanic Review, 39/1964, 211/30. This revised version was published in Hinck, W. (ed.) Rolf Hochhuth - Eingriff in die Zeitgeschichte, Reinbek 1981, p.117
- 4 - Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil (revised and enlarged edition, Penguin, London 1965.) 'Eichmann was not Iago and not Macbeth, and nothing would have been farther from his mind than to determine with Richard III "to prove a villain" .... The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal.' (P.276, 287)
- 5 - Susan Sontag, 'Gedanken zu Hochhuths "Der Stellvertreter"', Eingriff in die Zeitgeschichte Reinbek 1981, p.114
- 6 - Martin Esslin, 'Ein Dramatiker, der politische Bomben legt.' in Hoffmeister, R., (ed.) Rolf Hochhuth - Dokumente zur politischen Wirkung, München 1980, p.128
- 7 - See Cardinal Montini, letter to The Tablet, republished in Hoffmeister, R., Dokumente p.41
- 8 - Martin Esslin, Jenseits des Absurden, Wien 1972, p.140
- 9 - Dieter Hildebrandt, 'Bruchstücke eines großen Zorns' Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 22.2.1963
- 10 - See H/YEG 400 'Wer oder was sonst erklärte das Mißlingen ausnahmslos jeder gigantischen Anstrengung der Menschheit, nicht nur, soweit die auf Erreichung eines Endziels im Sinne des Eudämonismus gerichtet gewesen ist, sondern auch nur auf die Errichtung und Erhaltung eines wenige Generationen überlebenden menschenwürdigen Staates?'
- 11 - 'Rolf Hochhuth und die Soldaten', interview in Die Zeit, No. 40/1967
- 12 - 'Es ist der Kampf zwischen den absoluten Forderungen des Ideals der Gerechtigkeit und einer "Realpolitik" (...), die ihren wirklichen Namen nicht offen auszusprechen wagt.' Georges Hertz, 'Rolf Hochhuth, "Der Stellvertreter"', reprinted in Raddatz, (ed.), Summa iniuria p.64



- 13 - In an interview given before the premiere, Hochhuth contributed to this speculation, not only by discussing the themes of his play, but also by introducing his 'secret witness', the name - and even the whereabouts of whom - he refused to disclose. See 'Hochhuth und die Soldaten' Die Zeit No. 40/1967 p.19
- 14 - *ibid.*
- 15 - In Martin Esslin, 'Wahrheit und Dokumentation'. Ein Gespräch mit Rolf Hochhuth. Jenseits des Absurden, Europa Verlag, Wien 1972, p.135
- 16 - Esslin, *ibid.*, p.136
- 17 - Carlos Thompson, The Assassination of Winston Churchill, Colin Smythe Press, Gerrard's Cross 1969
- 18 - See Der Spiegel, Nos. 41/42 1967, 'Dieser Pole starb gelegen' and 'Noch fünfzig Jahre Schweigen'
- 19 - In the interview in Die Zeit No.40/1967, 'Hochhuth und die Soldaten', Hochhuth emphasised that his admiration for Churchill had also survived the writing of Soldaten
- 20 - See H/VEG Part 2 'Nicht ihre Ideologie bestimmt das Verhalten einer Großmacht'.
- 21 - Täter und Denker 'Bismarck, der Klassiker'.
- 22 - This is particularly relevant in the case of John Colico, who played Churchill in Toronto and London. Gideon Freud, writing in Handelsblatt 20.12.1968, raises the question of his success: 'Gibt Colico Churchill theatralisches Leben? Oder "mimt" er den großen Mann und nimmt ihm daher dramatische Substanz?'
- 23 - 'Außerdem will ich, daß meine Stücke *gelesen* werden. In wie vielen Städten und Theatern hat man mich nie aufgeführt - da kann man dann die Bücher lesen.' In 'Rolf Hochhuth, "Mein Vater heißt Hitler"' F.J. Raddatz, ZEIT-Gespräche, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 1978, p.23
- 24 - *ibid.* Confronted with the question of the mass of detail in his work during this interview with F.J. Raddatz, Hochhuth replied 'der Journalist in mir arbeitet'.
- 25 - The stage direction referring to such a figure - 'der deutsche Oberst': 'nur Parodie macht anhörbar, was er mit nationalem Ernst, zunächst als Deutscher, dann als Amerikaner, hier kundgibt, kein Charakter, nur ein Potpourri' § 12
- 26 - HELEN: Sind Sie immer so zäh?  
KOCJAN: Zäh? - Was ist zäh?

HELEN (amüsiert): Was Gutes - im Krieg: geduldig, entschlossen.

KOCJAN: Oh - aber nicht was Gutes, meinen Sie, für den - die Liebe?

HELEN (mit Spott): Vorsicht, Sagen Sie: Privatleben, das genügt. Liebe ist für Friedenszeiten.

KOCJAN (düster): Im Gegenteil - da ist sie nicht so nötig.

§ 58

27 - Margaret B. Ward, Rolf Hochhuth, Boston/USA 1977, p.63

28 - 'Lemmings' in War hier Europa? dtv, München 1987, p.124

29 - Der Stellvertreter 178, 'Andererseits schien es uns gefährlich, im Drama zu verfahren wie etwa Celan in seinem meisterhaften Poem "Todesfuge", das die Vergasung der Juden völlig in Metaphern übersetzt hat....Denn so groß auch die Suggestion ist, die von Wort und Klang ausgeht, Metaphern verstecken nun einmal den höllischen Zynismus dieser Realität'

30 - Albert von Schirnding, 'Tragisches Lehrstück', Süddeutsche Zeitung, 13/14.1.1990, p.192

31 - H/VRG 399ff., 'Sarajewo, Eine Lehre, die vielleicht sehr aktuell ist' Der Spiegel 26/1964

32 - Hochhuth himself quotes from Karl-Heinz Janßen, Krisen-Parallelen. Wie war das 1914? (see S14 247f)

33 - Der Stellvertreter p.179ff

34 - See, for example, Fritz Fischer, 'Hochhuth läßt die Toten tanzen', Die Welt No.236, 10.10.1989, p.3

35 - 'Buchhalter-Dramatik', in Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 22.12.1990, Fernausgabe No. 297

36 - Robin Detje, 'Das Fest der falschen Glatzen' Die Zeit 28.12.1990

## CHAPTER FOUR - THE FUTURE

## SECTION I: 'Der alte Mythos vom "neuen" Menschen'

This essay, published in its extended form in Die Hebamme ("Die Bücher der 19", Band 203, Rowohlt 1971), is Hochhuth's most substantial attempt at presenting his views as far as the study of history is concerned. It has been cited frequently above, since it expresses views which were already firmly established and put into practice in St and S. However, the essay was actually written at the same time as Hochhuth's third theatre play, Guerillas. For this reason it is useful to examine the two in conjunction.

Guerillas seemed to mark a departure from Hochhuth's previous work. The plot was no longer closely linked with historical event and the main characters were no longer famous people from recent world history. On the basis of his conviction that the individual still had significance in the progress of history, Hochhuth had tried, in Der Stellvertreter and Soldaten, to trace the possibilities and the consequences of individual action. Ursula Reinhold sums up this concern in the following:

.....versucht er moralische Alternativen im geschichtlichen Gang selbst aufzufinden und die Handlungsmöglichkeiten des einzelnen in ihm zu erkunden.'

In effect, however, Hochhuth had not departed from his main theme in Guerillas. He even considered, in his plans for the play, the inclusion of Che Guevara as a main character<sup>2</sup> - a decision which would have made parallels with his earlier plays more obvious. As it is, the connections are many. Hochhuth recognises repeated patterns in the course of history - the basic nature of events recurring to give a cyclic picture. This belief paves the way for plays about the future which are nevertheless firmly rooted in the past. Observation of the past is followed by projections of a possible future on the basis of those patterns which are described in the essay, VEG. The moral alternatives of the individual and his opportunities for decisive action can then be examined within this new framework of projected reality. At this point, therefore, the essay will be examined in detail in order to pinpoint the historical patterns identified by Hochhuth and employed in his projection of a possible future.

The essay's title points towards Herbert Marcuse, the German Marxist philosopher whose studies on man and society - originally published in America - had a

strong influence on the thinking of young German intellectuals during the 1960s. Hochhuth's title implies scepticism at and criticism of Marcuse's concept of the 'neuer Mensch', mankind freed from the repression and manipulation of the advanced industrial society into a state of individual freedom and social harmony. The subtitle, on the other hand, >Vorstudien zu einer Ethologie der Geschichte<, is indicative of Hochhuth's interest in ethology and its relevance for the study of human behaviour in a historical context.

Hochhuth begins the study with a direct attack on the ideas of Marcuse, describing his historical viewpoint and subsequent attitude towards the immediate and distant future as a semi-religious vision divorced from observation of historical fact and social reality. To support his own view Hochhuth cites the ideas of Karl Jaspers, whose historical understanding, as he sees it, is based upon a certainty that events are recurrent rather than progressive. Hochhuth speaks of mathematical and physical proof that this is the case - whilst failing to elaborate with any evidence of a convincing nature.

The ultimate reason, it seems, for the difference in outlook between Hochhuth and Marcuse, is a

different evaluation of mankind and his qualities. Hochhuth readily admits that he views human nature as unchangeable, whereas Marcuse's Marxian historical perspective and concept of the future is based on man as a being capable of change, development and improvement towards the "neuer Mensch" of a new society.

Hochhuth feels that past events have taught that mankind is unchanging and that a major feature of his unchanging nature is a capacity for evil. Inevitably, in post-war Germany, he points to Auschwitz as evidence of man's inability to alter his essentially cruel nature. The only hope for improvement in society, therefore, lies with the regulations and the institutions man has created for himself:

Da nicht der Mensch verbessert werden kann,  
müssen seine Institutionen immer erneut  
derart abgesichert werden, daß sich seine  
Natur im Staat nicht ausleben darf.

H/VRG 355

Later in his essay Hochhuth returns to this idea. The same institutions, created by man, appear to him one of the few areas in which he is able to recognise any form of progress.

Referring to his own creation, Wiener, in the play Guerillas, he describes him as a left-wing thinker who nevertheless rejects Marx and would reject Marcuse. Hochhuth does not refute the idea that he and Wiener have much in common - 'tatsächlich haben

sie (Hochhuth and Wiener) <Schick>; erstens vor der Geschichte, zweitens vor allen Ideologen.' H/VEG 355.  
The following description of Wiener is also an indication of Hochhuth's attitude<sup>23</sup>:

so sieht er Fortschritte allein in Institutionen oder wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen, etwa dort, wo ein Parlament, sogar das Bonner, eine Diktatur abgelöst hat, oder in der Medizin.

H/VEG 359

The danger in this statement is the false distinction made between history in general, in an almost abstract sense, and the history of human institutions. The latter is of course an element of the former and to recognise progress in one demands recognition of a certain level of progress in the other. This recognition does not necessitate belief in or acceptance of a comprehensive theory within which history is seen as continual progression towards a final aim. Nevertheless, there is something of a contradiction inherent in Hochhuth's belief in 'real' progress here and his outright rejection of it within a larger context.

The 'Fortschritte' given as examples above in turn raise some questions. Since Hochhuth's opinion, based on observation of historical event, and to some extent borrowed from other philosophers (see above Chapter 1), is that history has a recurrent pattern,

even progress such as that in the emergence of a parliament may be looked upon with scepticism. If the principle of recurrence is accepted as a basis, then presumably the established democracy is only likely to be succeeded by a further dictatorship. In the context of Guerillas, presuming the success of the coup after Nicolson's death, the question arises of how Hochhuth sees its positive acquisitions being retained. The only alternative would seem to be, in the words of Thomas Jefferson quoted by Hochhuth in his introduction to the play 'alle zwanzig Jahre in den USA eine "kleine Revolution".' (Q 12).

In the second section of his essay, Hochhuth argues that power over his fellow man corrupts man and is the only important aspect determining the attitude of one to another. Hence the failure of Marxism in the practical context - a redistribution of personal wealth is insufficient, since there are nonetheless individuals and states who exercise power over others. His argument is that wealth, as the factor determining power and the resulting suppression, does not need to be personally owned. The oppressors of today can be equally corrupt simply as a result of their control over wealth which is technically public. The essential factor is 'Verfüugungsmacht' (H/VEG 356), which cannot be equally divided.



At this stage Hochhuth scarcely seems to doubt the fact that the human being, given power to an extent which outweighs that of his neighbours, inevitably does become an oppressor. Later it will be shown that his evaluation of man is not as categorical as it may appear here (see below page 152ff). However, here the opinion is underlined on an international scale by reference to colonial powers of the past, which now, stripped of their power, appear 'zivilisiert' (H/VEG 358). Most people would agree that today world peace is to some extent dependent on fear - fear that a war could mean not only the destruction of the enemy, but also of oneself. Hochhuth extends this idea to argue that human nature is such that there would be constant war, were the majority of states not too small and powerless to act: 'Jeder Staat hat genau das Maß von Anstand, das dem Maß seiner Angst entspricht.' (H/VEG 358). As a logical parallel to this, he sees growth of power *inevitably* leading to brutality and war as a result of human nature, : 'Nicht mehr übersehbar, daß jeder Goliath unerträglich ist.....weil er ein Goliath ist.' (H/VEG 358). The argument may appear banal, but Hochhuth's assertion is clear - he is once again accentuating his extremely pessimistic, negative view of humanity.

Hochhuth's next point - his own personal views are again presented through the figure of Wiener - is to introduce a work by Ludwig Marcuse, who was a philosopher, journalist and literary critic in the Berlin of the 1920s, forced to leave Germany for the USA as a Jew in 1933. This study - Pessimismus, ein Stadium der Reife<sup>4</sup> - is for Hochhuth a confirmation of many of his own historical theories. He considers it a dangerous sign that the works of Ludwig Marcuse are largely ignored today in favour of those of Herbert Marcuse and would rather see young people reading the former. On closer examination, however, the question that has to be raised is to what extent Hochhuth's views really are confirmed by Ludwig Marcuse's theories.

As was said above, the single most important aspect of Hochhuth's historical perspective is his concept of human nature. This concept has been based on observation, both of present day man and of historical events. He underlines his opinion that man's unchanging nature is the only sound basis for historical study:

das "einzige bleibende Zentrum", der  
unveränderbar "duldende, strebende und  
handelnde Mensch, wie er ist und immer war  
und sein wird". H/VRG 354

Ludwig Marcuse, on the other hand, rejects any such factor as a basis for historical understanding. The

evidence of the past, he maintains, is in every case insufficient to make any prognostication as far as the future is concerned and it is man himself who contributes largely to this eternal uncertainty:

Und wirklich hat sich schon zu viel Zeitliches als "ewig" aufgetan - und damit eine aufhebbare Not stabilisiert. Man sollte nicht einmal sagen: es sei die ewige Natur des Menschen, zwei Arme und zwei Beine zu haben. Wir kennen nur die Vergangenheit. Pessimismus 23

There is of course no reason why Hochhuth's and Ludwig Marcuse's theories should be alike in every aspect. The most disturbing factor, however, is the apparent confusion in Hochhuth's standpoint which arises when his quotation from Marcuse in this section is examined. Hochhuth is attempting to argue that pessimism does not inevitably lead to inaction. Without entirely justifying the seeming paradox he claims that 'gerade die Pessimisten die politisch aktivsten Kämpfer und Revolutionäre gewesen sind.' (H/VEG 359). This is already one step further - a step which Marcuse does not take. Hochhuth's first quotation from Marcuse is by no means complete. The original text following the word 'Disharmonie?' is as follows:

Es ist nicht die "Innerlichkeit", die den Pessimismus schafft, und nicht die Aktion, die ihn zerstört....Pessimisten wurden von ihren Erfahrungen so überwältigt, daß sie nicht handeln konnten - das ist ein psychologisches Faktum; andere handelten. Und handelten -unabhängig vom

Pessimismus. Denn es verträgt sich jeder  
Wille... (my underlining)

Pessimismus 231

Marcuse's chief point here is that pessimism must not necessarily lead to inaction, just as presumably an optimistic outlook does not inevitably bring forth action. The pessimist may be an activist despite his conviction that nothing is alterable, but certainly not because of this conviction, as Hochhuth would have us believe here. It is not possible in the context of the entire quotation from Marcuse to say that he proves (nachweisen) that the pessimists of the world have been the most committed revolutionaries and reformists. It will be necessary to come back to the contradiction inherent in Hochhuth's belief that pessimism is a motivation of political activity - at this stage it is sufficient to note that an attempt to consolidate his view by means of "evidence" from Ludwig Marcuse in fact underlines the paradox inherent in it and exposes discrepancies between their views.

Hochhuth now returns in his essay to the ideas of Herbert Marcuse, in the context of a parliamentary approach to political activity. Once more, Hochhuth's reaction to Marcuse is spontaneous and full of feeling:

Hütet euch vor diesem Philosophen, der da  
sagt: Massenparteien seien obsolet -

anstatt euch zu analysieren, daß genau deshalb selbst die Gewerkschaften in dieser "Demokratie" da drüben politisch total unwirksam sind, weil sie sich als politische, als sozialistische Vereinigungen niemals verstanden haben, H/VEG 362

Hochhuth is of course referring to the USA. He argues that the reason for the ineffectiveness of established parties lies not in the fact that they are centralised, or established, but that in the fact that they are too much under the control of 'apolitische finanzielle Interessenverbände' (H/VEG 362). In Guerillas, this is one of the chief aspects of Hochhuth's negative picture of the USA. Constant stress is placed upon the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few; '(die) Herrschaft der zweihundert Millionäre über die zweihundert Millionen' (Q 11, see also 112, 125, 131, 157) and upon the lack of a workers' party; 'das einzige zivilisierte Land des Planeten..., in dem niemals bei irgendeiner Wahl eine Arbeiterpartei auch nur hätte kandidieren dürfen!' (Q 10, see also 79, 110, 130, 157, 173). The same two basic ideas also form an essential part of the picture built up in Hochhuth's essay 'Angst vor der >>Schutz<<-Macht USA', first published in 1968:

Daß, mit einem Wort, Amerika nicht gesunden kann, solange es das einzige zivilisierte Land dieses Planeten bleibt, das niemals einer Arbeiterpartei auch nur das geringste Mitspracherecht eingeräumt hat!

KK 146

He continues to argue in favour of the parliamentary system, giving examples of social 'progress' made as a result of socialist party action. (The nationalisation of mines and steel industry in Great Britain, the reduction of working hours in Germany.) Hochhuth's central argument reflects his constant emphasis on the individual:

Es kommt immer auf das Individuum an, ob es sich innerhalb einer Organisation anpaßt oder ob es eine Persönlichkeit bleibt, das heißt: die Organisation *sich* anpaßt.

H/VRG 363f

A political party, therefore, is dependent on a limited number of politicians within it and its success or failure in Hochhuth's terms dependent on the policies of these few outstanding individuals. Thus, at a later stage in his essay, he encourages the students of the sixties not only to vote - in opposition to Marcuse's idea of the 'große Weigerung' - but to infiltrate the political parties themselves:

Der Unterwanderung des Parlaments stand Dutschke bisher verneinend gegenüber, wegen der uralten Devise: wer vierzig Tage mit den Feinden lebt - der gehört zu ihnen. Aber das stimmt nur, wenn der Angepaßte von Charakter niemals mehr als ein potentieller Mitläufer gewesen ist. (Nachtrag: ist dagegen einer von Charakter zuverlässig - so weicht auch jahrelanges Absitzen von Parlamentsbänken ihn nicht auf).

H/VRG 373

Once again, Hochhuth's viewpoint carries with it a visible paradox. On the one hand convinced of the irretrievable failings in human nature, he now

appears, on the other hand, to put his entire trust in individual human beings. The right-thinking individual, the left-wing socialist activist, is the only hope for minor improvements in the human condition as a whole. How does Hochhuth justify his belief in the existence of such selfless individuals in the face of his convictions about human nature? It is only logical to presume that he does believe that man, in exceptional cases, is capable of something other than the moral failure of which he accuses the race in general. He has of course demonstrated this conviction in the structure of his previous plays. Riccardo, Gerstein, Sikorski, Bishop Bell - and, in a certain sense, Churchill - are all traditional heroes who act with an outstanding sense of moral integrity and political conscience. This being the case, however, it is hard to see how he can so energetically refute the possibility put forward by Herbert Marcuse that man in general may be educated towards a new consciousness. The only other conclusion to make is that Hochhuth believes in a morally capable and numerically limited elite. This conclusion is supported by a reading of other essays by Hochhuth. In 'Die Sprache der Sozialdemokraten', for example, written after the parliamentary debate on the 'Notstandsgesetze', introduced in 1968,

Hochhuth calls upon just such an elite to act in a time of crisis:

*Eines gibt Hoffnung: Männer - ich spreche im Plural, so hoffnungsvoll bin ich -, Männer wie Otto Brenner, die handeln können. Wir alle können ja nur reden. Brenner und drei oder fünf weitere allein können auch handeln!*      KK 136

This chosen group in fact reminds one of Herbert Marcuse's own concept of a present day elite - also discussed in an interview with Georg Wolff and Helmut Gumnior in Der Spiegel: this elite would, according to Marcuse, be initially necessary in order to govern the new society which he foresees. They would exercise control as a minority group morally and intellectually further advanced than the majority:

*Die Zensur sollte ausgeübt werden von Menschen, die durch ihre Ideen und ihr Tun Zeugnis davon abgelegt haben, daß sie um die gegebenen Möglichkeiten eines Lebens ohne Angst und Unterdrückung wissen und für die Realisierung dieser Möglichkeiten arbeiten.<sup>5</sup>*

Hochhuth would certainly refute any such comparison, since he rejects out of hand the form of quasi Platonic state put forward by Marcuse, where the ideal is enforced upon its inhabitants to some extent. This open coercion is foreign to Hochhuth's philosophy. He lays emphasis on the individual's right to ownership and leisure, whilst failing to analyse the extent of ordinary 'freedom':

*Ach, warum sollen jene, die acht Stunden am Fließband schufteten oder in Gruben: warum sollen die nicht kaufen, was ihnen Spaß*



macht, zum Beispiel eine Campingausrüstung?  
 Weil ihr Ausbeuter auch an diesem ihrem  
 Konsum wieder verdient?...Laßt doch jedem  
 Individuum die Freiheit, selber und ganz  
 allein darüber zu befinden, ob es denken  
 will - oder nur konsumieren. H/VEG 371

Here he overlooks the fact, one which he himself is anxious to point out on other occasions, that this 'Freiheit' is largely illusionary. The mass media (perhaps more excessively in the USA, and it should be remembered that Marcuse's writings are based on his observations of American society) operate on human consciousness to such a degree that the average individual is no longer in a position to decide whether or not he wishes to think or consume. The process of consumption has become almost a biological need, as Marcuse rightly points out in 'An Essay on Liberation', published in 1969:

The so-called consumer economy and the politics of corporate capitalism have created a second nature of man which ties him libidinally and aggressively to the commodity form. The need for possessing, consuming, handling, and constantly renewing the gadgets, devices, instruments, engines, offered to and imposed upon the people, for using these wares even at the danger of one's own destruction, has become a 'biological' need.....<sup>6</sup>

Hochhuth ignores or fails to recognise this need and maintains that the individual has a right to continue in his present 'freedom to decide'. To maintain this, however, is surely no less idealistic than Marcuse's vision of the new society.

Hochhuth emphasises his rejection of Marcuse once again at the beginning of Part 9 of this essay. Here the rejection is of any system based on a dogmatic view of history - the belief that one has a 'total' picture of history is said to be a prerequisite for totalitarianism. Marcuse's concept of a temporary censor, mentioned above, is cited as evidence of this totalitarian tendency.

Jaspers is again quoted and Hochhuth lays emphasis on two points. The first is that general philosophical conclusions about the course of history, quite apart from their dangerous nature, have little practical relevance when it comes to mastering a specific political situation. Secondly, Hochhuth states his opinion that human insight into history is limited. This latter is important, since it brings, according to Hochhuth's interpretation of Jaspers, freedom to take political action. The individual without an all-encompassing historical philosophy is free to concentrate on the particular problems and particular solutions presented by day to day politics. His lack of dogmatism frees him to accept compromise, makes him open to new solutions.

The problem which arises here is the necessary motivation of this individual. As Hochhuth rightly points out, dogmatic historical views have an element

of the religious. Belief, whether in religion or in progress, is ultimately concerned with the future, often a distant future:

das Phantom einer Gesamtkultur, deren Stufen auf einer nach oben führenden Treppe durch den Reinigungs- und Heilungs-Prozeß Weltgeschichte gekennzeichnet seien, ist des Gläubigen liebstes Denkspiel; einst führte diese Treppe ins himmlische, seit Marx führt sie ins irdische Paradies,...

H/VEG 381f

This orientation towards the future provides the motivation for present activity. Faced with Hochhuth's view of history, however, there can be no general motivation to political activity. We are reminded of the pessimist, who according to Hochhuth, is motivated to action through his pessimism. This was a paradoxical assumption similar to the one which is made here. Once again, the assertion has to be limited. Lack of a comprehensive historical philosophy does not motivate political activity, but it may, if personal motivation is already present, perhaps lift the barriers to action which a dogmatic world view inevitably erects.

Hochhuth's chief problem is in explaining this personal motivation. The non-dogmatic individual is concerned with the present, the pessimist is driven to concentrate on the present by his rejection of future improvement. But does lack of faith in the future necessarily, as Hochhuth hopes and maintains,

mean that the individual strives to improve the here and now?

der Anblick eines Ungläubigen, der weder trostlos noch zynisch noch inaktiv ist, sondern im Gegenteil: gelassen, hilfreich und so human, dafür zu arbeiten, daß der Mensch - eben weil er später nichts zu hoffen haben wird, sondern verwest - auf dieser Erde volle Entschädigung für die Tatsache erhält, daß er über sein Leben hinaus nichts zu hoffen hat. H/VEG 382

Those who do, motivated in this way, strive to improve the present, are a minority to the same extent as those whose motivation stems from faith in a political or a religious whole. Hochhuth comes to this conclusion - it appears - with a certain reluctance; history is made by a few exceptional individuals, and their convictions and motivations are of little relevance 'solche Menschen, als einzelne, gab es von jeher und wird es immer wieder geben - als einzelne, als Ausnahmen.' (H/VEG 383). In drama, however, such an uncertain basis as a motivation for the actions of a character can present a weakness in the play, as proves the case in Guerillas. (See below p 170f).

Whilst he seems to reject any all-embracing philosophy of history, it is interesting to note at this point how often Hochhuth himself falls into the temptation of sweeping statements concerning its understanding. His language becomes emphatic and

emotive in such circumstances, as we can see from the following quotations from VEG:

das Gesetz der Geschichte: die Menschheit taumelt in die Irre, so wie sie in den Ersten Weltkrieg taumelte - begeisterte Volksmassen in allen betroffenen europäischen Hauptstädten -, obwohl auch der Weg zur Vernunft, zum Frieden offenstände. 403

Daß Nahziele immer wieder erreicht wurden, ein Endziel bisher aber nicht, ist im Hinblick auf die jahrtausendlange Strecke, die Menschen bisher schon zurückgelegt haben, als ein Gesetz anzuerkennen; 416

ein unabwendbares Gesetz der Geschichte... das Gesetz der Befristung, das noch jedes Weltreich geschaffen und wieder abgeschafft hat. 420

daß *Potenzverschleiß die einzige konstante Aufgabe der Geschichte ist.* 422

Auch dies ist ein historisches Gesetz: daß jede Generation den Konfliktstoff, der nötig ist, um ihre Potenzen abzubauen, erst selber aufhäufen muß. 424

Obviously, Hochhuth himself, despite his reservations, is incapable of entirely rejecting the concept of laws which are relevant to history as a whole. The 'laws' above are keys to two very important aspects of his attitude.

Hochhuth's belief in a recurrent pattern in history has already been mentioned above. It is also evident here in the 'Gesetz der Befristung, das noch jedes Weltreich geschaffen und wieder abgeschafft hat'. Hochhuth is following, to some extent, the ideas of Oswald Spengler, historian and philosopher,

who produced a detailed theory of history in his work Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Hochhuth quotes Spengler and the latter's idea that history is not one unit, but a series of (eight) cultures - each separate and yet related in so far as they are identically constructed. Each of these cultures has risen and fallen without passing anything on to the next - our own culture is at present the last and in Spengler's theory, already showing signs of inevitable decay. Hochhuth writes (s. H/VEG 383) as if he agrees with Spengler - and his poetry also reflects this belief, if we consider 'Ein Rad dreht sich' or 'Kreislaufstudie':

- und es wechselt wie die Kleider

Nur die Rassen -, das Geschlecht des homo  
faber.

Neue Stile nur, wo er dem Kandelaber

Der erlöschenden Kultur noch Licht entnimmt  
für den seinen.

BA 12f

A later version of 'Kreislauf-Studie' (published in Schwarze Segel, Rowohlt rororo, Reinbek 1986) indicates that Hochhuth's convictions have not changed. On the contrary, here the successive cultural epochs are more clearly referred to:

Der erlöschenden Kultur noch Licht  
entnimmt,  
der er - meist - 'verbrannte Erde'  
zubestimmt:

Wie die Christen ihre ordinären Siege  
krönten durch Vernichtung der Antike

Schenkten Spanier Holocaust als Segen  
Christi - Inkas und Azteken

Und den Genocid die Weißen den Indianern  
USA: frei von Roten! Den Amerikanern.

S. Se 52

In VEG, this understanding of epochs provides the background to the long sections on overpopulation and starvation. Just as Spengler foresaw the 'Untergang des Abendlandes', so Hochhuth sees, in the growing divisions between the well-fed and largely white population of the western world and the poor coloured population of the Third World, the basis for racial war and the destruction of the present dominating culture:

dann weiß der Entrechtete, der sich befreien will und wird, der Hungernde, ob weiß, ob farbige: daß er es genau auf dem Wege tun muß, den Herbert Marcuse als obsolet verwirft, auf dem der Gewalt, getrieben von den größten und 'vordergründigsten' materiellen Bedürfnissen.

H/VEG 392

With equal enthusiasm, Hochhuth accepts the theory of Freimut Duve in Der Rassenkrieg findet nicht statt that racial war is inevitable, whether hunger is still prevalent in the poorer countries or not. This of course fits in with his theory that the decay of each culture can be predicted and is illustrated in the downfall of previous races and cultures. More importantly, however, this idea that mankind is capable of preventing starvation, war and cultural decay, but does not do so - introduces a second

important aspect of Rolf Hochhuth's historical viewpoint.

This is, (as we have seen above, p. 86f and 121ff.), that there are forces to be considered in an analysis of history which are neither predictable, controllable nor even, to a large extent, recordable.

These forces are discussed in parts 13 and 14 of VEG and are illustrated with the example of the First World War, its causes and its outcome. Twenty years later, this subject was still one of fascination for Hochhuth and provides the basis for the play Sommer 14, examined above. Hochhuth raises the question whether mankind, for all its intelligence, has an inborn tendency towards self-destruction:

ob ein Zwang, ein Verhängnis waltet, der die rational nicht zu deutende Tatsache zwar nicht erklärt - was 'verhangen' ist, läßt sich nicht klären - , aber doch einkalkulierbar macht, die Tatsache, daß die Menschheit die Mittel zu ihrer Rettung besitzt, auch die Intelligenz zu deren Anwendung - nicht aber die Vernunft und nicht die Moral, es zu tun.

H/VEG 401

For the sake of convenience, this mysterious 'Zwang' can be referred to as fate or doom. Although he later denies that he is a defeatist, the existence of an incalculable aspect in history is clearly intended to be one of the chief conclusions reached in this essay. Once more paradoxically, Hochhuth pleads for an understanding of history in which this



incalculable aspect is taken into account - an attempt to rationalise the irrational:

Nur sollte diese Vorstudie Belege bringen für die in jede historische Betrachtung einzukalkulierende Tatsache, daß die vielleicht entscheidenden Kräfte, Ideen, die einer Epoche den Weg bestimmen - inkalkulabel sind. H/VEG 413

Sommer 14, his later work on the subject, can be seen as a dramatic parallel to this theoretical writing - as an attempt to illustrate the irrational. What is puzzling in this context, however, is the statement that knowledge of the work of doom or fate in historical event can also, like pessimism (to which it is of course linked) provoke rather than limit political commitment:

je bedrückender das Wissen um diesen Zwang ist - je vehementer kann es die Aktivität in uns anheizen, zu helfen, ihn abzuwenden.  
H/VEG 400

This appears completely paradoxical. There is inherent in the word 'Zwang' the implication that it cannot be staved off, more than temporarily, and the knowledge that our activity is doomed to failure is scarcely likely to provide a spur to it. This is one of the chief contradictions in Hochhuth's work. He is unable to provide sufficient motivation for his own conviction that the individual has a moral responsibility to work for change and improvement in human society. If the intelligent individual is really aware of Hochhuth's 'Zwang zum Scheitern'

(H/VEG 421), he will logically reject responsibility - unless he is inspired by religion or another belief, the very motivation which Hochhuth rejects because of its dogmatism. A further possibility, that the individual may have essentially personal motives for morally correct action, is not examined at this stage in Hochhuth's work. Indeed, Nicolson, the main character of Guerillas, has every personal reason not to act - within existing economic conditions, he is one of the most wealthy men in the USA, and one of the most powerful. As has been seen in a discussion of the later play, Judith, (see above p. 68) Hochhuth does accept personal reasons as an at least partial motivation of political action later in his development as an author.

As was evident from his subtitle, Hochhuth has attempted in this essay to approach history from an ethological point of view - that is to say, has based his analysis on general observations about human character and behaviour. The result is at times confused and paradoxical, but certain conclusions can nonetheless be made concerning his work.

Of great importance is the fact that Hochhuth views mankind as essentially morally corrupt. He provides a tentative and unsatisfactory explanation for this in the idea of 'Verhängnis'. The suggestion

is that man's evil may lie in a predestined moral incapacity to do right, even when he is capable of recognising it. Observation and recognition of the above lead Hochhuth to the conclusion that history, as the record of mankind, has no goal - to the state of pessimism.

Whether we accept his reasoning or not, Hochhuth's opinion is that this state of pessimism often leads the individual to positive political commitment and activity. In a moral sense, Hochhuth holds the individual responsible for change. This change can only be expected when short term targets are set, but can offset the moral incapacity of the majority of mankind, or of mankind as a corporate body. The word used to describe the short term targets, which can be anything from the end of a war to shorter working hours, is 'Nahziele'. Great emphasis is put upon the role of the individual in the realisation of these - the only form of historical progress in which Hochhuth appears to believe.

SECTION II: Guerillas

In Guerillas, which appeared in 1970, readers of Hochhuth's first two plays may have missed the sheer mass of documentary information which had filled both the text and the supplementary material of the previous works. His third play was indeed the first of which Hochhuth could truthfully say that he had avoided the 'Tatsachenschutt' (R-R 90) of reality, despite the pressure to document facts which he continues to experience: 'heute sprechen wir von der erdrückenden, das freie Spiel erdrückenden Macht des Dokumentarischen' (R-R). On close reading, however, Guerillas does reveal the same documentary tendencies of the earlier plays, albeit to a lesser extent. It contains considerable information which points to a very real setting in the USA and defines the time of the action very specifically. The following and many other examples point to 1967/8 as the period during which we are to imagine the action taking place: the murder of Martin Luther King and the 1969 presidential elections are being planned:

Soll ich's ihm sagen? - hat keine Bullen.  
 Du brauchst ja auch nur wegzufahren.  
 Schießen tut ihn ein anderer - den  
 Niggerpope,  
 den Luther King. Q 56

Nixon weiß seit seiner Schlappe  
 sogar bei den Gouverneurwahlen  
 für Kalifornien:

daß er niemals im ganzen Leben wieder  
aufgestellt würde,  
wenn er jetzt durchfällt,  
durchfällt zum drittenmal. Q 126

One consequence of this new field of action was the need for Hochhuth to develop an entire cast of imaginary characters. He uses these characters to carry the two main arguments of the play - those for and against the seizure of power through a coup d'etat. Wiener, Mom and Maria present differing standpoints critical of the use of violence and force to change society. Mom attempts to improve the world through charity, despite her blindness towards true suffering and poverty - 'Du weißt, ich interessiere mich für Geld nicht!' (Q 67) - she is an amusing, largely sympathetic stereotype of a wealthy, middle-aged American woman. What she says bears little weight, since she herself has been intentionally conceived with little weight. The same can be said for Maria, despite her later involvement in revolutionary action in South America. Her motivation there appears to be blind devotion to her husband - 'Was Nic macht - das sagt mir mein Instinkt, /der mir den politischen Verstand ersetzen muß:/das kann nicht falsch sein.' (Q 65) - and in these circumstances she provides no argument for revolution. She herself is unconvinced by argument of the necessity for violence as a means to change, but is swayed by her emotions.

'Aber ich flehe dich an, / trenne dich von denen, die Gewalt brauchen.' (G 102). She is also a stereotype - that of the temperamental, Latin American, female.

Wiener is the most convincing of these opponents to the coup, since he is presented as having well-defined and viable political viewpoints. It has been said above that he can be closely associated with Hochhuth himself in the context of several arguments which the latter puts forward in VEG. Here Wiener is said to be left-wing, clearly Hochhuth's estimation of his own standpoint - 'Da er Gewissen hat, steht er natürlich links, wie in einer hungernden Welt jeder anständige Mensch.' (G 355). He rejects, as does Hochhuth, ideologies of all kinds, since they lead to dogmatism and stagnation. Experience of Auschwitz has given Wiener a pessimistic and unchanging view of humanity as a whole. Hochhuth is in the same way marked by Auschwitz - not as a direct victim, of course, but in terms of its meaning for his personal development as a German in the post-war world and in the impression it has made upon his own pessimistic view of mankind's capabilities. Yet Wiener cannot be entirely associated with his author, tempting as this is after reading VEG. Wiener presents one central point of opposition to Nicolson, despite the fact that they have much in common. In G, he opposes Nicolson's action on the grounds that he uses

violence to achieve his ends - however admirable these may be. Here Hochhuth's opinion is that of his main character:

Natürlich setzt Nicolson auf Gewalt - und er hat recht damit; denn Gewalt hat darin ihre Rechtfertigung, daß man sie gegen die richtet, die sie ausüben.<sup>7</sup>

In his essay 'Angst vor der >>Schutz<<-Macht USA', Hochhuth has already given an indication of his acceptance of violence under certain circumstances. Discussing the murder of the Kennedy brothers, he presents violence as the only possibility for reform in a context where peaceful methods have failed: 'Erst daß sie sterben mußten, enthüllt, daß keine Hoffnung mehr ist ohne Gewalt; ob mit ihr, wer vermöchte es zu sagen.' (KK 175) Certainly, Hochhuth's apparent acceptance of violence must be seen in a limited sense - since he also embraces the idea of a coup d'etat as a means of reducing violence (see below page 178).

The three char<sup>u</sup>acters, Wiener, Maria and Mom, are the only ones to argue, albeit weakly, the peaceful alternative to Nicolson's coup. Since Nicolson, the main protagonist and key figure in the coup plans, is a more convincingly rounded figure, the play as a whole provides a rather black and white picture. Hochhuth's intention is very clear - once again, his

didactic aim is significant - but the play lacks the drama inherent in an equal contest between two valid ideals. However, the main character himself is not entirely successful, for we do not have an answer to the question why he breaks out of his own milieu in order to attempt to change the face of American society. We are faced with the morally right-thinking and exceptional individual who differs from his fellow men for reasons which Hochhuth himself cannot explain clearly. This lack of evident motivation is a reflection of the paradox inherent in Hochhuth's concept of individual action despite an overall negative view of mankind and pessimistic approach to history - a paradox which has been pointed out above. Overlooking this basic lack of motivation, Margaret Ward<sup>68</sup> describes Nicolson as a classic tragic hero. His failing, as she sees it, is his hubris - his attempt to take part in, even to control, too many laudable plans to reduce injustice. Since Hochhuth had once again described Guerillas as a tragedy and chosen as his structure the five act form of classical drama, it seems fair to accept this approach to Nicolson as a starting point.

Nicolson's involvement in so many fields is a considerable problem in his credibility as a dramatic figure. Hochhuth's desire to show the advantages of infiltration as a means towards social reform has



caused him to go too far in his portrayal of Nicolson. Not only is he a Senator - not entirely incredible - he has infiltrated to a position from which he has been chosen to take on special responsibilities for the defence of city areas against guerillas. As Hochhuth himself points out, the best guerillas are those who come from the establishment - 'Denn, so sagte Guevara: "Vom Anti-Guerilla-Krieger zum Guerilla-Kämpfer ist es nur ein kleiner Schritt."' (H/VEG 372) - but here, it seems, he goes one stage too far. Added to this is Nicolson's ownership of an armaments factory, which gives him access to nuclear warheads, and his work in South America, credible perhaps, since his wife is conveniently Argentinian, but rendered less so by a personal friendship with Che Guevara, thinly disguised as Major Adams in the play. Hochhuth has gone so far that experts on American society reject Nicolson as a legal and practical impossibility.<sup>8</sup> It is too much to swallow that this man, second only to the US President in influence - one might suppose - should also be one of Hochhuth's moral elite. Hubris is only a possible failing within a credible framework - beyond this point the hubris becomes that of the author, rather than of the protagonist.

The death of a tragic hero should be a certain and tragic waste, but this cannot be said of that of

Nicolson in Guerillas. His death is tragic in the sense that he has no alternative but to accept it, despite its injustice, he is completely at the mercy of his political enemies. However, these opponents are themselves defeated by Nicolson's death. With him, they lose a chance to discover the plot to overthrow the US Government. We are led to suppose that the coup will go on, that there is still considerable hope for an ultimate victory for Nicolson's cause, and thus for him too, albeit posthumously. His personal end, therefore, does not carry with it the weight and hopelessness of complete tragedy.

Hochhuth departed from the classical structure of tragedy in Guerillas to a certain extent. This tendency towards more epic portrayal has already been noted and commented on in both Der Stellvertreter and Soldaten. In his third play, the tendency takes on a very concrete form within the play, a form which can be compared with the framework technique used in Soldaten. Before many of the scenes and each act, Hochhuth has attempted to integrate short scenes - 'Vorbühnen' - in front of the main curtain, complete with banners and signs reminiscent of Brecht. These scenes include much of the documentary material which points directly to the time and place of the main

action - they can be said to colour the picture of the USA in the late sixties with which the audience is confronted. However, they vary in quality, and some are entirely unsuccessful. In particular, the scenes in which the defence mechanisms of the presidential car are described and in which two officials engage a convict to murder Martin Luther King have only an obscure relevance to the main action. Their laborious attention to detail renders them undramatic, and the latter also touches upon a sensational topic without properly developing the idea. This introduction of characters and dialogue which have nothing to do with the main theme, but introduce other thoughts and accusations concerning American politics, is reminiscent of the semi-satirical scenes within the framework of Soldaten. As in the earlier play, these scenes do not become part of the whole, and the 'Vorbühnen' are left somewhat on a limb. It might have been better, from the point of view of coherent structure, if all these scenes had been relevant to the main action and played by its protagonists, as were VI and VII. As it is, the ideas of a number of them would be better expressed in separate notes or essays, and they tend to distract the audience's thoughts from the real issue at stake in the play. It is not surprising, therefore, that the director of the premiere in

Stuttgart, Peter Palitzsch, chose to omit all but one of these scenes. This scene, 'Vorbühne VII', was played as a form of prologue to the production. Later directors followed his example, and the documentary material incorporated into the 'Vorbühnen' was either cut or presented in the form of other epic devices, such as projection.

At the heart of Hochhuth's theme in Guerillas is social concern for the material welfare of the individual. Just as he is convinced of the individual's political influence, he is anxious that the individual's significance and his daily needs are considered within the social sphere. It was in this context that he wrote, in 1965, 'Der Klassenkampf ist nicht zu Ende', later published in Krieg und Klassenkrieg. This essay criticises the Germany of the 'Wirtschaftswunder', since many of its citizens were still living in squalor. The fact that the country's economy had largely recovered and that it was regaining world status meant little to him as long as some people were inadequately housed or underfed. The parallels to Guerillas are clear; in this earlier essay, Hochhuth has already pleaded for a redistribution of wealth as one remedy to the injustices in German society. As in the USA, he sees the seeds of an economic oligarchy in Germany;

Heute           drehen           höchstens       noch  
zweitausendfünfhundert   Bundesbürger   (und

ihre Zahl verringert sich schnell) Kraft ihres Besitzes oder ihrer Kommandogewalt über die anonymen Kapitalgesellschaften die Lenkräder der Wirtschaft und damit der Regierung. KK 24

Guerillas is set in the USA, but Hochhuth makes clear that he feels it to be equally relevant to the whole of Europe and in particular to the Federal Republic. The USA is seen as a centre among satellites, and considerable change in Washington would lead to change in the rest of the western world in Hochhuth's opinion.

Investiert nun einer in Europa Überlegungen in ein Drama, das die USA zum Schauplatz einer Revolution durch Infiltration macht, so zunächst deshalb, weil im Zentrum, nicht aber bei den Satelliten eines Systems, ob im Westen, ob im Osten, der Coup d'Etat erfolgen muß. G 17

The relationship between the USA and Germany, and the dependence of the latter upon the former is repeatedly emphasised in 'Angst vor der >>Schutz<<-Macht USA'. The USA are referred to as 'Wirtschafts-Okkupanten' (KK 159), and the relevance to Europe of criticism primarily concerning the States is also indicated, 'Daß in den USA nur übertrieben anschaulich wird, was sich in deren Satellitenstaaten wie der Bundesrepublik proportional auch vollzieht .....ist nicht mehr zu verheimlichen.' (KK 171).

The changes to be demanded by the leaders of the coup in Guerillas had already been discussed by Hochhuth

in the part of VEG which was written for the 1969 elections in Germany.<sup>19</sup> Although Hochhuth himself refers to the play as 'eine Utopie' (Q 23), raising expectations of a politically and socially ideal future, his reforms, when examined, prove to be very modest in their nature. Within the play, the most detailed information concerning these changes is given in the 'Vorbühne III', during which one of the guerillas discusses policy with a leader of the student movement who has pledged to help them. The two major aspects appear to be the foundation of a political party to represent the workers of America and a redistribution of wealth. The latter is clearly of more relevance for German audiences. (See the quotation from KK 24 above). Both are mentioned in VEG and in 'Angst vor der >>Schutz<<-Macht USA' - with his repeated emphasis on the former, Hochhuth throws doubt on the democratic status of the USA :

Die USA sind der einzige Staat der Welt, in dessen Parlament, Senat oder Kongress, niemals der Abgeordnete einer Arbeiterpartei auch nur Zutritt hatte! .... (Daß) nämlich die USA keine Demokratie sind, sondern eine Finanz-Oligarchie, so weit entfernt von einer Republik wie Portugal?  
H/VEG 361

His chief concern, however, as can also be seen from this quotation, is the fact that the wealth of the USA is unfairly distributed among its population - that a few hundred individuals have financial power

over millions. Hochhuth's demands do not go beyond reform of the present democratic and capitalist systems in the West. He by no means questions the right to private property - indeed he sees it as a pre-condition of freedom for the individual. In this sense Hochhuth is an absolute defender of the capitalist system, as being the only system in which the competition between individual owners weakens their position and makes them tolerable for 'der kleine Mann'. 'Doch ist es der kontrollierende Rivale allein, der dem Machthaber.....noch Aufmerksamkeit für das Lohntüten-Individuum abzwängen kann.' (H/VEG 357). Reform, in Hochhuth's view, would be a distribution of wealth such that more people are put in the position of rivals, and presumably more concern is thus shown for the worker and his conditions and pay. The term Utopia, with its connotations of social perfection, certainly does not appear to apply here. Hochhuth's vision of a possible future is quite realistically based in the conditions and the system of the present.

In the context of these rather modest aims for reform, the coup d'etat appears an extreme means towards change. Although less destructive than civil war or revolution, it is rarely entirely without violence and bloodshed. Still, one of Hochhuth's motives in sanctioning such action is that it is

likely to prevent civil war in a country in which civil disturbance is becoming a regular event. The coup is thus seen as a form of violence to be employed in order to prevent greater violence in the future. 'Deshalb will ich wie Mirabeau das Blutbad verhindern, / durch Staatsstreich, der allein / die soziale Revolution legal herbeiführt.' (Q 157). In this sense, Q was guaranteed to make Hochhuth unpopular with the extreme left-wing, since his coup has the specific aim of preventing more radical social upheaval in the form of a true civil war or revolution. The coup as such also appeals to Hochhuth because of its emphasis on the individual's action - its success depends on the infiltration of state institutions and other influential bodies by a relatively small group of people. The idea of infiltration had already been discussed with relevance to West Germany in VEG. Whilst the coup as such is not mentioned here - Hochhuth remains moderate in his suggestions - the principle is the same when he calls upon Germany's students to follow the advice of Dutschke rather than Marcuse. Dutschke's call to infiltrate the police and the army is developed by Hochhuth to include political life:

hält die Neue Linke sich fern von den noch demokratischen Parteien FDP und SPD, anstatt auch die zu unterwandern - so wird



sie eines Morgens aus der Zeitung  
erfahren....., daß sie liquidiert ist.

H/VEG 374

This basic principle is taken to its limit, the coup, in the plot of Guerillas. Hochhuth uses information from the book Coup d'Etat, A Practical Handbook by Edward Luttwak'' as a basis for his strategy. Both writers lay emphasis on the fact that a coup has by definition no political bias. It can be used by left or right wing forces to bring about any form of government from dictatorship to republic. Luttwak would no doubt see the USA as a poor target for a coup - one of his ideal pre-conditions is lack of economic development - but in theory any country can become a target, providing the political climate is temporarily or permanently unstable. Hochhuth indicates the political temperature in his play through the constant mention of the 'heißer Sommer' which has preceded the action.

As has been briefly mentioned above, the coup appeals to Hochhuth as a means towards reform because of its emphasis on a few individuals who have infiltrated the existing system. Hochhuth has always laid great weight upon the moral and political significance in the work of a man or woman who is compelled by conscience to work for the good of society as a whole. It is surely not pure chance that he himself has remained a somewhat isolated figure

politically, not wishing to be associated with any specific political party or with the extra-parliamentary opposition with whom he constantly held discussions and public arguments during this period. His stand taken in Guerillas underlines his position as an uncompromising figure between all stools. As has been said, he alienated the left with his rejection of revolution and adherence to the capitalist system, while the more moderate were appalled by his seemingly casual acceptance of violence. His picture of America was declared positive and negative, but unanimously incorrect or superficial.<sup>12</sup>

The fifth part of VEG, entitled 'Ein Halsband verändert keinen Hund', is relevant to this attitude and to what have been described as the far too modest demands for change expressed in Guerillas<sup>13</sup>. Here Hochhuth places emphasis on the character of those who wield political power - taking such figures as Marx, Attlee, Stauffenberg and Dubcek as men who were able to use the existing system to a positive end. The structure of society, therefore, is of secondary importance to Hochhuth, since he is of the opinion that the great individual will achieve his aims within it. Indeed, the average human being requires sharp controls - from the state apparatus - since his irretrievable nature is immoderate, almost

rabid. Thus the guerillas in Hochhuth's play only seek to modify the existing system - the fact that the capitalist system maintains significant financial control over the mass of humanity is accepted as a basis for their 'new' society. There have always been and will always be, in Hochhuth's opinion, individuals of such a high calibre that they can work according to moral ideals within almost any system. In Guerillas, one of the modest demands of the rebels is the founding of a workers' party. This raises the question of the effectiveness of reform which has been - in a sense - forced upon the masses. As was mentioned above (p. 152ff), Hochhuth's philosophy here is based upon the concept of a moral and political elite - whether a new political party in the USA would be a good thing or not is debatable, but it is doubtful whether a party founded in this way by such people could take over the function for which it is intended, namely to represent the working class. Hochhuth himself is almost obliged to believe this, since his faith in the mass of humanity is so limited and he has no hope that man's basic nature will change. The elite, therefore, is all that mankind can depend on in a struggle to improve political conditions in the world. Guerillas has to portray plans for a coup, since Hochhuth cannot believe in revolution. He constantly repeats his

opinion that even the famous revolutions of the past emerged due to the work of a small elite and that the 'people' are incapable of bringing about change. With this in mind, it is clear why Hochhuth denies any affiliation with Marxism, and why Marxist thinkers reject his work. Whilst Hans Heinz Holz' accusations of fascism<sup>14</sup> are exaggerated, his fixed concern with the individual can be interpreted as an 'aristokratisches Menschenbild'<sup>15</sup> and his overall standpoint as rather conservative. This aspect of criticism of Hochhuth's work will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. There is evidence in Guerillas that Hochhuth himself would consider his standpoint conservative in a certain sense - and that he does not always consider a conservative attitude a negative one:

Demnach ist der Konservative humaner,  
weil er sich dank seiner Einsicht  
ins ewig Gleichbleibende der Menschennatur  
damit begnügt, die Institutionen zu  
verbessern  
- anstatt den Menschen selber verbessern zu  
wollen,  
was nur mit Terror geschehen kann.     G 159

In Guerillas, Hochhuth does not depart from one of his main concerns in the earlier plays - the idea of the individual as a significant moral and historical force. The change lies in his contemplation of possible future events after two plays in which he demonstrated and emphasised the importance of

particular individuals in the past. Hochhuth's hope for the future is based on this belief in outstanding characters and the key figure in Guerillas is consequently a man of considerable political influence and moral integrity who seeks to reform his country. Hochhuth's faith in the moral elite arises out of necessity, since he does not believe that the average man can be improved and mankind as a whole is seen as aggressive, destructive and blind. The moral elite, which instinctively works for good within this framework, is a difficult idea for the reader to accept and one which recalls the discredited concept of elitism during the fascist era. Hochhuth offers no explanation as to why such individuals should emerge - just as in Guerillas it is difficult to ascertain why Nicolson is moved to work against his own class interests. Again, the only explanation offered is the paradoxical idea that a pessimistic view of humanity and awareness of its doom is likely to spur the individual into political activity. Hochhuth's trust in such elite groups is such, however, that he is prepared to contemplate violence as a means towards their aims.

Hochhuth's work altered radically in the plays which followed Guerillas. After three plays which he had described as tragedies, Hochhuth surprised the German

public and the critics by writing Die Hebamme, a comedy. In choosing a woman as the main protagonist in the play, Hochhuth also began a series of works in which women played a prominent role. Whilst still projecting his observations of the past into possibilities for the future, in this sense Hochhuth also examined a further field of speculation. The prominent individuals of history have been male, but what might the consequences be if these individuals, now and in the future, proved to be predominantly female?

## Footnotes:

- 1 - Ursula Reinhold, 'Drama und Geschichte bei Rolf Hochhuth', Weimarer Beiträge 23, 1977. p.100
- 2 - See Alex Natan, 'Hochhuth geht in Stellung', Christ und Welt, 31.1.1969
- 3 - The same sentiment is expressed by Hochhuth in the stage directions to G (p150), where the above quotation from H/VEG 355 is repeated.
- 4 - Ludwig Marcuse, Philosophie des Unglücks - Pessimismus - Ein Stadium der Reife Diogenes, Zürich 1981
- 5 - Der Spiegel, No. 35/1967, p.114
- 6 - Herbert Marcuse, 'An Essay on Liberation', Penguin, London 1969, p.11
- 7 - Interview with Rolf Hochhuth, 'Das System muß von innen gestürzt werden', Konkret, No. 11, 21.5.1970
- 8 - Margaret Ward, Rolf Hochhuth, Twayne's World Authors Series 463, Boston 1977, p. 92

- 9 - George Günther Eckstein, 'Zu Hochhuths Guerillas - eine amerikanische Stimme.' Merkur, Heft 270, January 1970, p. 993ff
- 10 - See in particular sections 4 - 7, H/VEG pp.360-374
- 11 - Edward Luttwak, Coup d'etat - A Practical Handbook, Cambridge (Massachusetts) 1979
- 12 - 'Die Vorstellung, daß zu einer Stunde X Revolutionäre die Macht ergreifen würden, ist in einem durchorganisierten Staat wie den USA undenkbar' Dieter Bachmann, 'Schiller, Hochhuth und die Polit-Burleske' in Die Weltwoche, No. 21, 22.5.1970, p.31
- 'Schlechte Utopie vom guten Kapitalismus'  
'Sein Stück ist, richtig betrachtet, sogar proamerikanisch'  
Both in Deutsche Volkszeitung No. 22, 29.5.1970, p.14
- 13 - In Jürgen Kramer, 'Idealistische Recherchen zwischen Christus und Marx', Stuttgarter Zeitung 19.5.1970, p.14
- 14 - Hans Heinz Holz in 'Hochhuth erinnert an Karl May', Frankfurter Rundschau, 19.1.1971, p.8
- 15 - Jürgen Kramer (ibid.), Stuttgarter Zeitung, 19.5.1970

## CHAPTER FIVE - THE WOMAN

SECTION I: Die Hebamme

The first of Hochhuth's plays featuring women in a primary role is Die Hebamme. This is also the first of Hochhuth's dramas which he refers to as a comedy. In fact, it had been his intention to write a comedy for some time', and he had worked on a sketch called 'Der Arbeitgeber', which was never completed. In the context of this unfinished play, he gives some insight into possible reasons for the new choice of genre:

Es ist natürlich klar, daß das Stück sich auf Fakten aus unserer heutigen Welt stützt. Aber die Figuren sind alle erfunden, der Konzern ist erfunden, in dem das Stück spielt usw. Das ist die einzige Möglichkeit, um die Dinge nicht so befrachten zu müssen und trotzdem einigermaßen gerecht bleiben zu können.<sup>2</sup>

In order to express specific ideas or criticism of existing circumstances, therefore, the author may be free to invent comic characters and their setting. On the other hand, it is important to note that Hochhuth rejects the possibility of caricature. He sees an essential element of humour in the audience's ability to recognise, even identify with the characters, or 'types' presented:



Daß der Mensch auch in der Komödie ein Bruder des Jedermann zu sein hat, ein exemplarischer Mitbürger, unser eigenes Ich in jenem Sinne, den Goethe gemeint hat, wenn er sagte, er habe nur immer von sich selber zu sprechen brauchen, um damit auch auszusprechen, was seine Zeitgenossen, seine Mitmenschen an Problematik belastet habe oder an Freuden erheitert - das, meine ich, ist selbstverständlich. SdE 243

A second significant factor in Hochhuth's concept of comedy is his emphasis on its underlying seriousness. Theatre, even comic theatre, is a tribunal, a public stage upon which matters of general concern can be openly voiced and discussed: 'Sozialkritik ist eine viel zu ernste Sache, um sie ohne Humor zu betreiben.' (SdE 243).

A brief résumé of Die Hebamme demonstrates the serious nature of the play, and its links with previous works by Hochhuth. The central character takes the initiative in a successful attempt by slum dwellers to improve their conditions and move into a new estate originally intended for military personnel and their families. There is no doubt that this is the act and the inspiration of an individual - there is every indication that the majority would have been unable to improve their lot without Sophie's, the midwife's, leadership. As we have seen above (p. 143ff), Hochhuth appears to view the 'masses' in a largely negative light. Once again, they are portrayed as incapable of bringing about change without the guidance of an elite:

Die Zahl der Feiglinge ist lähmend. Sophie muß sich beherrschen, sie verspürt jenen Ekel, der einen König zu dem Seufzer gebracht haben soll: >>Ich bin's müde, über Sklaven zu herrschen<< Die Hebamme 100

For a second time (compare above p. 182), this aspect of Hochhuth's work was criticised on political grounds; '(die Hebamme...ist) von einem Geist getragen, der, unfreiwillig, arg in die Nähe des Faschismus gerät.'<sup>3</sup> This accusation of fascism provoked a discussion among the critics in which Hochhuth was not only defended<sup>4</sup>, but in one case even more categorically denounced.<sup>5</sup> As a recurrent element in the reception of Hochhuth's work, the implications of these responses will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

At this point, it is interesting to examine the question of Sophie's gender in more detail. Why does Hochhuth portray this outstanding individual as a woman? On a very superficial level, Sophie's gender is an aid to Hochhuth's plot. Sophie is employed as a midwife, and in this way has both access to, and the trust of, the slum dwellers. She is also able to play the role of a general's widow, a useful means towards obtaining finance which she uses for charitable purposes.

Here, however, the necessity and the extent of Sophie's femininity ends. Hochhuth even goes so far, in his description of the main character, as to

negate his own choice of sex for the title role - 'Die männlichen Hormone überwiegen schon lange - zwar hat, was sie sagt, Gemüt - doch von Gemütlichkeit keine Spur.' (H 10). In this context it is especially surprising that at a later stage Sophie should be credited with a tragic past - a miscarriage and a husband who died young. A strictly 'female' fate, which is of course seen to be compensated for in the delivery of over 50,000 babies in the service of other mothers.

The overwhelming impression given by Sophie in Die Hebamme is that she appears neither particularly male nor female, but asexual, indeed not entirely human. She has no depth as a character, and is presented as a figure with little feeling or emotion. She is cold and purposeful:

*alles an ihr ist sozusagen geschnürt,  
beherrscht, was noch unterstrichen wird  
durch die schwarze Samthalsbinde, die sie  
stets trägt, weil das Wackeln ihres Kopfes  
sie kränkt: H 10*

We are given only brief glimpses of her past life and of her possible personality. Only once in the play does she appear moved, although involved in both emotive and stressful situations, and this is occasioned by the memory of her old friend Emilie: 'Sie ist plötzlich so bewegt wie im ganzen Stück nicht wieder, sie muß sogar das Taschentuch in ihrer

*Handtasche holen.* (H 84). Sophie's existence appears to be concentrated on one ultimate aim, which, like that of the elite in *Guerillas*, is the righting of social injustice. As in the earlier play, it becomes evident that *Die Hebamme* is a dramatic confrontation with matters already examined in Hochhuth's essay work and social research. The main theme of the play, a denunciation of the temporary and degrading housing provided for the very poor during the 1960s in certain West German cities, formed the introduction to Hochhuth's socio-political arguments in 'Der Klassenkampf ist nicht zu Ende', 1965:

Selbst in Bonn, der Residenz jenes Staates, dem Kanzler Erhard öffentlich nachsagt, er habe ihn dank seiner sogenannten sozialen Marktwirtschaft von allen Proletariern gesäubert, gibt es am Dransdorfer Weg ein Großfamilien-Ghetto. Hier heißt es "das graue Lager". An den Müllrändern der anderen westdeutschen Städte haben die Baracken andere Namen, etwa "Sanssouci".

KK 21

In a letter to the Chancellor, Willy Brandt, in March 1971, Hochhuth approached the subject of the slums once more, calling for social measures to rehouse the estimated 800,000 Germans living in unacceptable conditions.<sup>6</sup>

The figure of Sophie herself poses an unanswered question. Why does she - comfortably well off - take up the cause of the poor beyond the commitment required by her profession, even to the extent of

engaging in technically illegal actions? We are again reminded of Guerillas. Just as he failed to show why Nicolson's political activity took on a particular direction in the earlier play, so Hochhuth fails to demonstrate the source of Sophie's motivation here. 'Das soziale Gewissen ist an keine Klasse gebunden und keiner Klasse verschlossen.'<sup>7</sup> However, in this respect, there is a significant difference to the earlier play, for there is a mysterious element to Sophie's entire existence. This begins with her basic asexuality, which was noted above. She is less a creature of flesh and blood than a fairy-godmother, who waves a magic wand (albeit here a rather unorthodox and strictly speaking illegal one) to right a situation in which justice clearly has to be done. As if to crown the implausibility of the whole affair, Hochhuth has Sophie conveniently die at the end of the final courtroom scene. Here, far more than in Guerillas, Hochhuth has presented the audience with a utopian world. The deserving receive new homes, mere bureaucracy is flouted, and the heroine cannot be punished for her 'misdeeds', since she dies contentedly, having achieved her aims.

Hochhuth's understanding of comedy makes the genre a natural choice in which to present this kind of utopia. Comedy cannot merely reproduce existing circumstances, but should pave the way, through

humour, for greater understanding and possible change:

Wäre die Komödie ebenso triste wie der Alltag, so könnte sie den nicht einmal auslachen - doch nur lachend kann sie ihren Zweck erfüllen: Propaganda für die Vernunft, das heißt Politik zu machen. Das gelingt nie durch Nachahmung des bereits Vorhandenen. LN 9

In this sense, it is less significant than in Guerillas that the main character's motivation is not entirely clear, or that other characters may be seen to lack depth, often representing only a specific element of human nature. (Preller, for example, is used to demonstrate man's universal susceptibility to bribery). It may be argued that Hochhuth lacks ability in the writing of humorous dialogue, or that certain situations which arise in Die Hebamme are more tasteless than amusing (the crashing of the fire-brigade, for example). This line of criticism was indeed taken by many reviewers - 'Hochhuth hat zum Humor ein ähnlich inniges Verhältnis wie ein Seehund zur Sahara.'<sup>6</sup> However, it should not be overlooked - in the context of Hochhuth's comment above - that this comedy was politically effective, and that changes were made in the situation of the slum dwellers in Kiel and Kassel after its production.

Is it pure chance that Hochhuth's first comedy, his first play which might be said to come to a happy and just conclusion, is dominated by a figure who - outwardly at least - belongs to the female sex? Until this play, Hochhuth's female characters were in a minority. Even here, Sophie is one of only two female characters named. The other, Frau Kruppsch, is one of the slum dwellers and her role is of little significance. She appears briefly, to put forward the position of the women living in the slums, and, in the court scene, breast-feeding her baby. However, this interlude serves an essential function, giving the author an opportunity to express his reverence for the mother and - more importantly, as will be seen below (p. 202ff) - his conviction that there is something more humane in the essentially female than the male:

Sie stillt, nachdem sie kurz aufgestanden war und sich gesetzt hat, ungeniert weiter..... Es ist ohne Übertreibung atmosphärisch spürbar, wie durch diese erotische Momentaufnahme alle Anwesenden, sogar Maise, eine Spur menschlicher sind als vorher.... H 158.

It is interesting to note that the ending to Die Hebamme, although not out of place in a utopian comedy, was not positively greeted by the critics. Its ultimate avoidance of a political solution in the apotheosis of the main figure was even seen as a

betrayal of Hochhuth's more serious theme<sup>2</sup>. However, the ending may have been directly determined by Hochhuth's view of the woman and her role in history. The mysterious nature of Sophie's character, and the emphasis of the author on the humane qualities of women have been mentioned. It seems possible that these qualities - in a political context - may be associated with a positive political and historical outcome.

SECTION II: 'Frauen und Mütter, Bachofen und Germaine Greer'. Studie zu einer neuen Lysistrata.

Lysistrata und die Nato, first published in 1973, presents a stark contrast to Die Hebamme, although both plays are described as comedies and both title roles are female. Considerably younger than the 'Hebamme', Lysistrata herself is described as widowed, attractive and a highly educated woman successful in teaching and political careers. Whilst the theoretical background to Die Hebamme could be traced to Hochhuth's earlier political essays and had already been explored in Guerillas, the basic theme of the later play was quite new; a woman herself and the extent of her social and historical role.



Hochhuth examines the question in detail in the essay which accompanies Lysistrata, 'Frauen und Mütter, Bachofen und Germaine Greer', beginning in the following way:

Ist es boshaft, am Ende einer 'Lysistrata' zu fragen, warum ein *Mann* es sein mußte, der dieses Weiber-Rezept erfand? Die vielgehörte Ausrede, 'die gesellschaftlichen Bedingtheiten', Jahrtausendelange Unterdrückung durch die Männer-Tyrannen habe es den Frauen verwehrt, Autorinnen zu sein, ist unzutreffend. Lysistrata 183

Although he refers specifically to women's failure to become authors, Hochhuth challenges the assumption that women have played a subordinate role in the determining of history as a whole because of their constant suppression by the male sex. It is difficult to explain, otherwise, the use of inverted commas in 'die gesellschaftlichen Bedingtheiten'. Obviously Hochhuth is unconvinced that social conditions detrimental to women's intellectual and political development existed in previous centuries. His following argument that many men as well as women were socially restricted is obviously true but scarcely relevant.

He goes on to bring evidence, quoted from Das andere Geschlecht by Simone de Beauvoir, of female influence on the course of historical events.

Das Leben der Salons nimmt einen neuen Aufschwung ..dank ihrer beschützerischen und inspiratorischen Funktion bilden die Frauen das Lieblingspublikum der

Schriftsteller...nacheinander nehmen  
 Madame de Prie, Madame de Mailly, Madame de  
 Chateauneuf, Madame de Pompadour, Madame du  
 Barry Einfluß auf Ludwig XV.; es gibt kaum  
 einen Minister, der nicht eine Egeria hat  
Lysistrata 190

If these examples are examined closely, however, it can be seen that the general truth is that the women have had an influence *through* men. Their role has still been subordinate, in so far as they have played a supportive or modifying role. Men, in other words, have made history, whilst 'their' women have in turn influenced them. By quoting Aristotle<sup>10</sup>, Hochhuth seeks to emphasise women's importance, but he is unable to hide the fact that they have had a secondary role in the course of world events. He only underlines this with the importance he attaches to the woman's ability to bear children - in keeping with the title of this introduction, he constantly reverts to this - and the suggestion that a satisfying historical role is that of mother to a (male) child who determines the course of history:

Als 'genüge' es nicht für Leben und  
 Geschichte, einen Franklin Roosevelt  
 geboren zu haben. Was aber an  
 Außerordentlichem leisteten die Frauen  
 sonst?  
Lysistrata 198f.

As we have seen in the examination of Guerillas (see above page 142f), Hochhuth's study of the past course of events is also coupled with speculation

about the future. In so far as he observes and comments upon repeated patterns and 'laws' of history, Hochhuth's viewpoint may be described as a form of Historicism. Where laws can be recognised, certain ~~pres~~<sup>as</sup>umptions can be made about society and future events. One of the patterns Hochhuth recognises is that of rise and fall; that which has flourished for a certain time inevitably declines: 'wer eine Witterung für Geschichte hat, der spürt: noch immer und ohne Ausnahme folgt der Nike die Nemesis.' (H/VEG 388).

At first glance, Bachofen may seem to be a curious ally for Hochhuth in this respect. His main concern is to portray history as progress towards a kind of spiritual and cultural perfection (a concept abhorrent to Hochhuth), the beginning of which fulfilment could be seen, according to Bachofen, in Ancient Rome. Within this march of progress, however, Bachofen maintains that there has been a tendency towards recurrence. He does little to resolve the paradox in his own theories. Das Mutterrecht contains these simultaneous and contradictory beliefs without explaining them fully. In reading the following - 'Der Kreislauf des Lebens führt das Ende von neuem in den Anfang zurück' - , as Bachofen puts it in his introduction to Das Mutterrecht, we are reminded of Hochhuth's verse. Poems such as 'Kreislaufstudie',

'Ein Rad dreht sich' and 'Geschichtsatlas' reflect the same understanding of past civilisations and their tendency towards 'Nike' and 'Nemesis'.

Both Hochhuth and Bachofen take their study of past events, in conjunction with this belief in repetition, as a basis from which the future can be foreseen and possibly even influenced. Bachofen's famous work, for example, lists and describes past societies in which he believed there was evidence of female dominance or even complete control. He himself was appalled by the possibility of a return to circumstances in which women might take over the primary role in society. His book Das Mutterrecht was therefore written as a warning to his contemporaries of the chaos that would ensue if this came about. It is the book of a nervous male scholar written in the context of an emerging women's movement.

Hochhuth uses Bachofen's research in an entirely different fashion. If there is to be an improvement in the state of world history, he argues, there must be an escape from the established patriarchal systems of government - an escape from male dominance. This only appears possible to him if women develop an alternative and refuse to take on the characteristics of the male;

Die Frauen müssen aus dem, was sie von den  
Männern *unterscheidet*, nicht aber aus dem,

was sie mit ihnen verbindet, ihre Kraft zur  
Machtergreifung ziehen. LN 207

In the essay VEG, Hochhuth had already speculated on possible reasons for the fall of the civilisation of today (see H/VEG 393ff). Here, he examined the possibility that the black and coloured races, spurred by hunger and injustice, might precipitate the fall of the at present dominant white civilisation. In a similar sense, the fall of the male-dominated civilisation is long overdue, if the pattern of rise and fall is to continue in the distribution of world influence and power. Hochhuth speculates upon an improvement in world affairs if women were to take over the reins. The question arises as to what kind of society would emerge in this case. In attempting to answer this question Hochhuth again looks to the - distant - past. It is in the work of Bachofen and his (now largely rejected) descriptions of gynaecocratic societies that Hochhuth finds a precedent for his own vision of a society in which women would take over a primary role in the determination of history.

This alternative society - the 'Gynaikokratie' of Bachofen's Mutterrecht - would be dominated by female values. On the one hand, Hochhuth says that these values are uncertain today, since women have been too

eager to copy men when they have worked their way into a position of influence.

Doch Ehe, Staat, Wirtschafts-Darwinismus, das Imponiergetue des Wettrüstens und 'Religion', also der Wahnwitz der Ideologien: können gewiß nicht von jenen Frauen unterlaufen, untergraben, vernichtet werden, die nicht das spezifisch Frauliche in den Haushalt des öffentlichen Lebens einbringen, sondern ihre ganze, oftmals bedeutende Kraft zur Emanzipation damit verschleifen, den Männern so ähnlich wie möglich zu werden. LN 216

On the other hand, it can be deduced from this quotation that Hochhuth does not doubt that such a thing as 'das spezifisch Frauliche' exists. He never directly pinpoints this quality, but there are indications of the direction his thinking takes in the second half of this essay.

Firstly, Hochhuth takes over certain aspects of the 'mutterrechtliche Gesellschaft' as portrayed by Bachofen and attempts to apply them to the present. One of these aspects, and for Hochhuth a vital one, is the comparative sexual freedom of such societies. Hochhuth associates this sexual freedom with natural humanity and female attitudes - 'einer volkstümlich aphroditisch-hetärischen Lebensauffassung' (Lysistrata 210). However, it is debatable whether such a presumption can be made, since it is sexual freedom which leads to female dominance - and not, as appears to be the case in Hochhuth's view, females

who dominate and then introduce a way of life and of sexuality which is natural to them. As more recent ethnological and anthropological research (in particular that of Claude Lévi-Strauss, see Les structures élémentaires de la parenté, 1949) has indicated, the term 'female dominance' cannot be used without qualification in this context, either, since matrilinear societies, which frequently evolved when sexuality was expressed freely within a group, were not necessarily 'gynaecocratic'.

So gewiß freilich vielerlei Völker mutterrechtliche Familienformen durchlaufen haben, so gewiß fällt diese Zählung nach der Mutter, Ehrung des Weibs samt allen erdhaften, isishaften Symbolen nicht mit einem politischen *Matriarchat* zusammen.<sup>12</sup>

Children inherited name and social standing from the mother for the simple practical reason that the identity of the father could not be established. The position of the woman could be equally subordinate or even humiliating in such a society. In rare cases the matrilinear system also led to a certain dominance of and respect for the woman, especially for the mother, but this was not the rule.

A connection is made between sexual and political freedom and equality in Bachofen's work and Hochhuth takes up this idea himself. Whilst society remained unstructured and dominated by women, Bachofen observed a (to his understanding) dangerous equality

between its members. Writing in Die Zeit, the Berlin legal historian, Uwe Wesel<sup>13</sup>, sums up this attitude:

Demokratie war für ihn das weibliche Prinzip der 'ununterschiedenen Masse', die am Anfang der menschlichen Entwicklung stand und dann Gott sei Dank abgelöst worden ist vom männlich-geistigen Prinzip der gesellschaftlichen 'Gliederung', wo eben nicht alles gleich ist.

Although Bachofen was attempting to warn against the decay of patriarchal values, he provided many theorists with evidence that there was nothing inevitable about patriarchal or even patrilinear societies. His Das Mutterrecht was seen as a revolutionary piece of work by many socialist thinkers.

Die Geltung des Mutterrechts bedeutete Kommunismus, Gleichheit aller; das Aufkommen des Vaterrechts bedeutete Herrschaft des Privateigentums, und zugleich bedeutete es Unterdrückung und Knechtung der Frau.<sup>14</sup>

Hochhuth applies the association of the female with the democratic in a very general way. He speculates that the woman, through the means of natural humanity expressed in sexuality, may weaken the man and introduce a more humane society;

Und wer, wenn *nicht die Frauen*, sollte - ohne Terror, ohne Zwang, ohne Blutvergießen - dieses immer erneut zu leistende Geschäft, die Schwächung des Mannes - und somit auch seiner Staaten - zum Zweck der Humanisierung übernehmen, also den Aggressions-Abbau in Alltag und Allnacht?

LN 213f



In Lysistrata, Hochhuth presents a dramatic illustration of the possible effects when the women of today use their sexuality actively. By this means, Hochhuth suggests, women may weaken men and through them male strongholds in society, thus winning power themselves.

It is in this respect that the author compares his own ideas with those of the Australian feminist, Germaine Greer, and he cites her attitude as it is presented in The Female Eunuch.<sup>15</sup>

Frauen sollten bewußt promiskuös sein...Es ist gefährlich, den Sex als revolutionäre Taktik zu meiden mit der Begründung, daß er in den heute möglichen Formen unerheblich und versklavend sei, wenn Sex andererseits die wichtigste Konfrontation ist, in der sich neue Werke herausbilden können.

Lysistrata 229

It is relevant to note that the combination of promiscuity and sexual activity as a tactical means in the war of the sexes which emerges here is Hochhuth's own. The above quotation is taken from the introduction to The Female Eunuch, where Greer describes possible reactions to her book - 'It might even be thought to suggest that women should be deliberately promiscuous' (The Female Eunuch 18) - and from a much later chapter, entitled 'Rebellion'. Greer continues, in her introduction to the book, to explain why she does indeed condone, if not exactly propagate, promiscuity in certain circumstances. Her

interest here lies not so much with the tactical use of sex, but with the attitudes which accompany open sexuality among women - 'It (her book) certainly maintains that they should be self-sufficient and consciously refrain from establishing exclusive dependencies and other kinds of neurotic symbioses.' (EE 18).

Greer is by no means as optimistic about the effects of female promiscuity as Hochhuth, who appears to see in it a revolutionary means towards a liberal society or at least a means towards the complete breakdown of male dominated institutions. Greer is concerned with the possible positive and negative psychological effects of promiscuity on individual women. Her concern is such that she is also aware of the damaging effects of sexual freedom under present circumstances.

Too often the errant women abuse themselves with excessive shame and recrimination, degrading themselves more in their own estimation than they do by their behaviour. The compulsiveness of this behaviour is the direct result of repressiveness in education: women are drawn to sexual licence because it seems forbidden and exciting, but the price they pay for such delinquency is too heavy. EE 266

In Greer's view, therefore, there is no way in which a new and free attitude to sex can be simply put into practice, as it appears to be in Hochhuth's play, since a prerequisite to it is a massive change in

attitude. There is, however, an apparent lack of awareness that psychological changes must precede the physical which marks Hochhuth's attitude towards female sexuality as he describes it in Lysistrata.

His inability to escape the myth of motherhood as a woman's true fulfilment also differentiates his ideas from those of Greer. She sees in the family, as it stands today, one of the chief factors limiting women's fulfilment. In the Western world it is true to say that the family unit is still a patriarchal one and as such that it underlines masculine domination and female dependence. In this sense, Greer's attitude is not so much an embrace of promiscuity, but a rejection of enforced monogamy - and a questioning, for example, of the automatic guarantee of paternity offered in the family. Once again, promiscuity is not something to be desired for itself, or something which itself reaps real rewards, but may be a passing necessity:

the unwillingness of women to commit themselves with pledges of utter monogamy and doglike devotion might have to be buttressed by actual 'promiscuity' to begin with.

FR 324

Certainly motherhood, not entirely rejected as a possibility, has a rather different significance to Greer than Hochhuth's attitude cited above (see p.196).

When children are falsely presented to women as their only significant

contribution, the proper expression of their creativity and their lives' work, the children and their mothers suffer for it.

EE 65

A second vital aspect of Hochhuth's theories in Lysistrata is, after the active 'use' of sexuality, a more passive means towards influence. Again he compares his ideas to those expressed by Greer in The Female Eunuch. This passive aspect is the withdrawal of labour, the simple and tested means of the strike towards a personal or political end. His quotation from Greer: 'Ich schlage eine Waffe vor, die beim Proletariat in hohen Ehren steht, die Versagung von Arbeit.' LN 224. Greer is concerned above all with unpaid work in the home or in other situations in support of the husband or perhaps father. Hochhuth is well aware of this, and his women in Lysistrata do withdraw their voluntary work in the home and in caring for children. However, the most important factor for the men and women of Hochhuth's play is undoubtedly the withdrawal of sexual 'favours' in the women's struggle for influence. Obviously, Hochhuth was attempting to write a comedy, and there is more inherent humour in sex than in housework, but the fact remains that in placing this emphasis he distances his own work from that of the feminist.

Greer herself refers to Lysistrata, but, it must be added, in a rather different context. Whilst

Hochhuth's characters are using the withdrawal of sex (a form of labour?) as a punishment for their men, Greer rejects sexual favours as a reward for aggression and violence and approves any change in women's attitudes which would prevent this kind of tacit approval of war:

We are not houris; we will not be the warrior's reward. And yet we read in men's magazines how the whores of American cities give their favours for free to the boys about to embark for Vietnam.

EE 317

The difference may seem to be slight, but it is in fact basic and illuminates the glaring contrast between Hochhuth's ideas and those of Greer. Whilst he himself may perceive their opinions as similar in essentials, such differences as this make clear that Hochhuth is a long way from emancipation as understood by feminists such as Greer. His characters withdraw sex - that is, they withdraw, as it were, a service. Whilst they may occasionally refer to their own frustrations, there is little doubt that it is the men who are to suffer - in simple terms, in Hochhuth's world men are sexually active, women are the sexual objects. His idea of emancipated and effective action on the part of women is for them to merely use this existing circumstance by withdrawing themselves as objects. The idea is not new. As Greer points out, unhappy wives have been using similar tactics for generations:

It is true that even in reasonably elevated strata of English society...sex is granted to the husband as a reward for something accomplished or as a consolation for some setback. The blackmail is that there is nothing in it for her, so that her husband feels both bestial and grateful when she allows him the use of his conjugal hole....In every case the woman herself is also the loser, EE 289

The final point here is the important one. As long as sex is used as a weapon, and woman willingly remains in her position as a sexual object, there is unlikely to be any revolutionary change in the structure of society. As Greer so bluntly puts it: 'Women who fancy that they manipulate the world by pussy power...are fools. It is slavery to have to adopt such tactics.' EE 328.

Hochhuth most certainly understood this essay as a reflection of his - as he saw it - positive attitude towards the emancipation of women; 'Mein Stück ist durchaus eine Huldigung an die Frau.'<sup>16</sup> However, it was rejected in feminist circles. The well-known German feminist Alice Schwarzer interpreted the essay as 'offener Sexismus'. Writing in Der Spiegel<sup>17</sup>, she paraphrased Hochhuth's recipe for feminine fulfilment with biting irony - 'diesen Zustand, in dem Helena ihr höchstes Glück im Aufmuntern von Greisen sehen würde, nennt Hochhuth dann >>Matriarchat<<' - and recommends 'das erfüllende Leben eines Strichjungen' to its author. Whilst her mode of writing is

polemical, there is some truth in her observations, as we have seen above. In an apparently progressive search for new social and political values in the emancipation and fulfilment of women, Hochhuth fails to progress beyond established conservative associations with 'das ewig Weibliche'.

Some clear impressions of Hochhuth's attitude towards the woman have already been gained from a close reading of his essay 'Frauen und Mütter...'. It is now necessary to examine the extent to which these impressions are confirmed in the drama Lysisträte und die Nato, and what effect the ideas have upon the structure of the play itself.

### SECTION III: Lysisträte und die Nato

Lysisträte und die NATO, entitled 'Komödie' by the author himself, was received very differently by the press and by the public, as indeed was his first comedy, Die Hebamme. Whilst theatre audiences clearly enjoyed the play - it was seen by over 48,000 enthusiastic theatre-goers in its first season - the critics took a largely negative standpoint.

Hochhuth had proclaimed as early as 1963 in his essay 'Soll das Theater die heutige Welt darstellen?'

that the main concern of drama, whether it be tragedy or comedy, was to emphasise the responsibility of the individual - 'Das ist doch die wesentliche Aufgabe des Dramas: darauf zu bestehen, daß der Mensch ein verantwortliches Wesen ist.' (H/EGE 319). In all his plays since, Hochhuth had been anxious to demonstrate the truth of this conviction. Lysistrata is no exception. Individual islanders are seen to take their fate into their own hands and win a minor victory in the face of outside pressure from their own government and a world power. The significance of the individual, then, is the basic theme of Lysistrata and Hochhuth's preceding plays. As an important foreground, Hochhuth's second comedy also has two main political concerns. The first of these is the threat posed by NATO to a small Greek island, and the author criticises a policy which, in the event of war, would reduce the island, as a proposed military base, to an obvious and vulnerable target. The second theme is that of female emancipation, both sexual and socio-economic.

A combination of political themes was not new in Hochhuth's work. In Soldaten he had also attempted to convey both his criticism of existing regulations on air warfare and his doubts surrounding Churchill's involvement in the death of Sikorski. Die Hebamme, however, had only one direct political theme, and



Lysistrata is Hochhuth's first comedy in which he attempts to broach more than one serious topic.

Problems inevitably result when an author pursues a moralising, didactic aim in a comedy. Whilst the serious theme cannot be allowed to dominate, it should also - if a play is to be effective in its author's intended sense - still be recognisable within the wider framework of the play. Comedy, therefore, may sugar the pill of criticism - as Hochhuth himself acknowledges in his as yet unpublished 'Essener Vorlesungen' - but not sweeten it beyond recognition:

Sozialkritik ist eine viel zu ernste Sache, um sie ohne Humor zu betreiben. Auch hat sie deshalb einen Anspruch auf Unterstützung durch die Komödie, weil sie nur noch Zuhörer findet, wenn sie sich unter humoristischer Tarnkappe in unsere von Wohlstand platzende Gesellschaft einschleicht. SdE 243

According to critical opinion, Hochhuth's play and the early interpretations of it fall into this second trap. The underlying seriousness of the play, and especially the theme of war, so important to a discussion of NATO strategy, was felt to be largely lost, whilst the theme of emancipation came across with only limited success. The dominant opinion was that once again, Hochhuth had overreached himself. Reviewers' comments illustrate the fact that often one or more of the main themes of the play were seen to be neglected:

So blieb von allem etwas, aber das Entscheidende ging verloren. Allein der im Programmheft ausgedruckte verkürzte Titel *Lysistrate* beweist, daß alle politischen Aspekte entfielen. <sup>18</sup>

In Wien jedenfalls ging man der prallen Erotik, dem Deftigen und Zotigen dieser Dialoge in geradezu prüder Weise aus dem Weg. <sup>19</sup>

Hochhuth could not, of course, be held responsible for directors' cuts and other aspects of interpretation which led to the play being received as either one-sided or lacking in political significance. On the other hand, the play is overloaded in many ways. The director is forced to cut, unless courageous enough to present at least five hours to the public.

If the director chooses, as in the Vienna premiere, to cut much of Hochhuth's rather puerile eroticism, little remains to justify the title of comedy. There are a few techniques, borrowed from the tradition of the 'Volkstück' - an aging father who mishears and misinterprets much of the dialogue, a priest who protests excessively against the immorality of others whilst thinly disguising his own lusts, for example - but most of the humour of the play, albeit on a primitive level, is in the crude and overtly sexual nature of some dialogue and events. Unfortunately, it is this humour which illuminates Hochhuth's true attitude towards women.

This attitude, as has been indicated above, is not as generous and emancipated as he himself would perhaps like it to be. The essential facts of this play, however, cannot be viewed as entirely deprecatory. It is when the details of plot, scene and most especially of Hochhuth's language are examined that his true picture of the woman emerges and the play is reduced to a farce, its setting, the tavern, to little more than a brothel.

Why, for example, does Kalonike play a role in the proceedings? It may be logical that an old man should require the assistance of a young waitress or waiter in his bar - but where is the dramatic necessity for Kalonike's and Stavros' romp on the couch before the play has even got underway, not to mention her antics in the cellar with the shepherd? As we have seen above, Hochhuth looks to sexual promiscuity as a means towards a more humane and free way of life. However, if it is Hochhuth's intention to show the joys and advantages of promiscuity for a young woman in this sense, he does little to proclaim Kalonike's freedom and independence with episodes such as the following:

Eher lustlos nimmt er sie da weg und schubst sie zartrauh auf das Sofa mit der hohen Lehne, das er herumdreht - während sie schon darauf liegt -, damit aus der Eingangshalle (und vom Parkett her) nicht zu sehen ist, was man auf ihm veranstaltet.

LN 16

Stavros is established in this brief episode as not only dominant but domineering, whilst the sexual act is not only hurried and awkward - but also described as something which 'man...veranstaltet' - both the pronoun and the verb proving apt in the circumstances. Kalonike remains in the classic female role of object.

In a later version of the play, published in 1991,<sup>20</sup> Hochhuth has made alterations which suggest that he himself was not entirely satisfied with the role of Kalonike. The opening scene with Stavros is retained, but introduced by a ballad sung by the couple, 'Trauersong der Blitzableiter', in which the threat to the island from the military is underlined and sexuality as an alternative to male aggression is introduced. The relationship with the shepherd is replaced by an affair with Tsifras, one of the husbands, thus eliminating a rather extraneous element in the plot.

Other songs have also been added, and all are concerned with the woman's ability to weaken man's potential for violence. They draw attention to Hochhuth's serious theme, at the same time reflecting the sensuality of the women and the peace-making qualities accorded to them by Hochhuth's rather bawdy concept of promiscuity: 'Das Schwert bricht in der Scheide.' (AD 1430).

Although these alterations do help to clarify Hochhuth's intention to combine the vulgar and the bawdy with a moral purpose, there are still examples of his desire to present an erotic and sexually uninhibited atmosphere which ultimately reflect an essentially conservative understanding of sexual roles. The fact that the tavern is famous for its steam-bath in the cellar provides the author with more opportunity to show half-clothed bodies ('Zuweilen sieht man im Schwaden die Kleider fallen - wenigstens derer, die es sich leisten können, nackt gesehen zu werden...' Lysistrata 100), whilst it is tempting to assume that the scene treading grapes is especially designed to accommodate obviously titillating descriptions of the working women:

sie trägt beim Stampfen keinen  
Büstenhalter..ihre Brüste, fest wie  
Boxhandschuhe,... machen dem Popen, weil  
der nicht aufhören kann, sie anzusehen, vor  
allem auch ihre schweren nackten Schenkel,  
den 'bösen Blick'. Lysistrata 115

Hochhuth's descriptions of the women on the whole are dominated by a lewd emphasis on their bodies - an emphasis which not only contrasts with his more reserved physical descriptions of the male characters, for example Giorgos, ('sehr groß, <<wie ein Berglöwe>>, plötzlich, eindrucksvoll in seiner Kraft und Schönheit' Lysistrata 41), but also

demonstrates a crude concept of the female form. In the course of the play, the simply naked is increasingly confused with the sensual, and the sensual and the erotic with the crudely sexual. In his attempt to convey an erotic and sexually free atmosphere in the tavern and among the women, Hochhuth achieves only the sense of sniggering prurience generally expected in cheap farce. Once these aspects of the play have been cut, however, Hochhuth's moral and political aims become all too apparent, and the play loses its status as a comedy.

Other weaknesses also emerge. The characters he produces are largely wooden and the dialogue often appears as a contrived means towards his ultimate aim. Rather than credible human beings, Lysistrata and the Minister, for example, are spokesmen for Hochhuth himself. This is often thinly disguised. The reader or audience constantly has the feeling that many maxims could not convincingly stem from anyone other than Hochhuth himself. Occasionally characters refer to West Germany in unlikely situations, reflecting Hochhuth's ultimate concern with his own country. This is especially noticeable when Hochhuth uses Lysistrata as a mouthpiece for a sarcastic aside concerning Germany's politicians which is clearly his own:

Wozu ablenken - ich kenne keine deutschen  
Minister

außer Brandt und Strauß und diesem - wie  
 heißt der,  
 der aussieht wie ein bedeutendes  
 Marzipanschwein? LN 77

Not only do the dramatic characters have a tendency to speak in maxims - a style well known from Hochhuth's essays - they may directly utter dialogue which originally appeared word for word in these essays. When Lysistrate says, for example, 'Der Rang eines Kriminellen bemißt sich nach seiner Fähigkeit, /staatliche Lizenzen für seine Verbrechen einzuholen' (LN 80), she is literally quoting Hochhuth's stage directions to Die Hebamme (18). Obviously, the character Lysistrate loses much conviction in the light of this all too intimate relationship with her creator. Hochhuth is well aware that the reflection of his or her creator in a character detracts from the artistic effect of a play by putting too much emphasis on the didactic aim of the play and neglecting its form. He repeatedly points out that a character should not be confused with the writer and that the author does not automatically share the views of his dramatic protagonists. In Räuber-Rede he says:

Sicher darf der Dramatiker nicht wie der Lyriker - sonst müßte er sich ja hüten, andere als harmlos gute Normalverbraucher zu gestalten - persönlich haftbar gemacht werden für jedes Bekenntnis, für jede Behauptung, die seine Gestalten aussprechen, und natürlich so überzeugend

aussprechen, wie sie lebendig sind.  
R-R 32

It is exactly the latter ability to convince which Hochhuth often fails to achieve. His characters lack 'life' - and this is largely because he is unable, whilst pleading the disinterest of the author, to keep his own views and style from emerging in the mouths of his main protagonists. This need to convey one's own viewpoint is reflected in a common stylistic feature of Hochhuth's work. It is a feature of Hochhuth's writing that his dramas include very detailed theoretical passages - comments on the action and at the same time short essays concerning the history, background or philosophy behind the plot. This began with his 'Historische Streiflichter' as an epilogue to Der Stellvertreter and has continued to his most recent plays, although the 'essays' are increasingly included in the preamble to each act or even reduced to comments within the text, rather than confined to a separate text. Although followed by a long essay on the role of the woman, Lysistrata does not lack these shorter, interposed comments on the female sex. Of course, in this kind of context it is difficult to avoid a tendency towards generalisation, since there is no possibility of simultaneously maintaining the plot and formulating a reasoned argument within these interpolations. As a



result, however, most of these comments and brief discussions appear as throw-away remarks with little value. They do, on the other hand, illuminate the author's spontaneous opinion on various topics. It is interesting to note that these generalisations, when they concern the female sex, are neither original nor positive:

ist eine Frau einer anderen nicht  
gleichgültig, dann stets aus Neid.

LN 21

diese Quälsucht darf nicht individuell ihr  
angelastet werden, denn sie ist in allen  
und vermutlich besonders ausgeprägt in der  
ganzen Gattung Weib. LN 143

If a director does not, for whatever reason, cut much of Hochhuth's 'eroticism' in Lysistrata und die Nato, he has equal problems in production. The political theme of war is not funny - or intended to be - and the producer who concentrates on Hochhuth's claim that Lysistrata is a comedy will almost inevitably be left with the scenes concerning the women's 'Ehestreik'. As has been said, this theme is approached with a near puerile interest in the female body - although its motivation and outcome is serious enough. Because of the mass of lewd dialogue surrounding the women it is, however, too easy to overlook the fact that Hochhuth also approaches emancipation as a social and political concept and not only in terms of promiscuity. The balance of the

play in this respect is miscalculated. In fact, the moving forces in the play, those which finally result in the women's victory, have little to do with sex. The real success comes from the women's withdrawal of labour on their farms, their intention to set up a weaving co-operative, and Lysistrate's sheer deviousness in her blackmail of the Minister and the theft of the soldiers' film of Aphrodite. Hochhuth allocates little dialogue to these events, however, and instead emphasises the new-found 'dionysische Gesinnung' of his female characters.

Lysistrate und die Nato is relatively easily cut from the director's point of view. Its more serious and sententious aspect is not *combined* with humour - 'weil sie nur noch Zuhörer findet, wenn sie sich unter humoristischer Tarnkappe.....einschleicht' - it exists in juxtaposition to comedy. Indeed, the structure of the play is such that Hochhuth's choice of form appears to reflect his all too clear-cut world view. As has been shown, comedy is conveyed almost exclusively by the women; by the tendency towards lewd portrayal and overemphasis on the sexual aspect of their new-found freedom. The political world, which includes the 'male' concept of war, remains distant and is chiefly populated by men, with the exception of Lysistrate herself. The male and the female exist in juxtaposition - that neither truly

meet is emphasised by the poor level of communication between the women and their husbands - Hochhuth propagates, either consciously or subconsciously, Bachofen's exaggerated division of human societies into areas governed by gender-determined principles - the rational male world as opposed to the physical, material world of the woman.

In Lysistrata, Hochhuth chose to entirely adapt an ancient legend to a modern setting - in Judith (1984) another, this time biblical, legend is chosen as background to the two main events of the play. In both cases, mythology and legend do more than simply offer an interesting plot. In Lysistrata, the past emerges from the sea bed to support the women in their plans for the island and the discovery of the statue of Aphrodite marks a turning point in the events which Hochhuth underlines:

diese eben gemeldete <<Ankunft>> der Göttin auf dieser militärbedrohten Insel ist für Lysistrata schon die Zusicherung des Sieges der Frauen über die lebenbedrohenden Männerpläne! LN 93

In Judith, the biblical figure of Judith who killed for her people is constantly evoked as an example and as a moving force behind the actions of the two modern day protagonists, Jelena and Judith. It would be careless to dismiss the significance of myth and legend within these two plays as mere chance. As was noted above, the tendency of women characters in

Hochhuth's work to be associated with mystery began in the figure of Die Hebamme. A similar attitude to women is evident in Bachofen's work which has obviously significantly influenced Hochhuth. There women are associated with religion, seen as 'die Hüterinnen des Mysteriums' (Das Mutterrecht 26), and whilst the phallic male principle is associated with the sun and with light, woman is seen as closely connected with the moon and with the mysteries of the darkness. Do Hochhuth's female characters who play a historical role, or who - in the case of his utopian visions - might do so, appear somehow captive within other, semi-mythological forces? This would not be entirely out of keeping with Hochhuth's view of history - for he emphasises the element of mystery within its development, as has already been indicated above and is most obviously illustrated in Sommer 14. In his essay, 'Frauen und Mütter..', there is an indication that Hochhuth would welcome the open acceptance of this element in human affairs as a balance to man's essentially rational nature;

Hier gilt es, die Grenzen männlicher Erfahrung, männlicher Fähigkeit - ja die der männlichen Einbildungskraft weit hinter sich lassen und sich 'der Vertrautheit mit den dunklen Tiefen der menschlichen Natur...die Erregbarkeit der weiblichen ... Gefühlswelt' (Bachofen) in die Arme zu werfen.  
Lysistrate 217

Since part of the myth and the metaphysical aura surrounding women is, for many men, the mystery associated with their sexuality, it is not unexpected that both Lysistrata and Judith are plays with heavy emphasis on sex. In Lysistrata, this is essential and obvious to the plot - Hochhuth can perhaps be criticised for his approach to the subject, but its existence in the play is justified. However, in Judith, as will be seen, the situation is more complex.

#### SECTION IV: Judith

It is important to remember that part of the myth of the biblical Judith and her counterpart in Nazi times, Jelena, hinges on the sexuality involved in their acts. Hochhuth is aware of this, as the following two quotations show:

Magie - wie schon in alten Zeiten,  
als es doch Regel war, daß Feldhauptleute  
umkamen durch das Schwert  
- daß dieser eine Holofernes  
uns deshalb überliefert wurde,  
durch Mythen, durch Märchen:  
weil eine Frau es war,  
die ihn beseitigt hat:  
Das zündet - wie in der Mitwelt in der  
Nachwelt.

Judith 128

Der Augenblick, wo .....die Waffe sichtbar  
wird, die einen Tyrannen vernichten soll:  
ist die Sekunde der Erkenntnis in jenem  
Sinne, den die Bibel meint, wenn Luther

immer wieder den Akt übersetzt: 'sie  
 erkannten einander'... Schon zu Ende des 2.  
 Jahrtausends hieß es im babylonischen Epos  
 'Gilgamesch': 'In meinem Schlafgemache  
 wohnt der Tod..' Judith 37

In order to preserve this connection, and establish once again the myth surrounding the woman who kills, Hochhuth has taken a female character as the active protagonist in his modern day drama. The problem he has faced and not solved, however, is the sexual connection between Judith and the President. Both Judith in the bible and Jelena commit what can be termed as partly sexual acts in their assassinations - both are sexually misused and humiliated by their victims, for both, the murder is an act of personal revenge as well as one aimed at saving others. Hochhuth's Judith has no personal connection with the President and absolutely no sexual motive for killing him. As a result, although she has reasons, political and personal (her brother's handicap) for the assassination, there is no relevant reason why, at this level, Hochhuth should choose a woman as his main character. More especially, there is no relevant and convincing reason why the play should be so much centred on the sexual.

Gerald, as Judith's lover, is unnecessary to the development of the play - as a well-known journalist it is probable that she would gain access to the President at some stage without his help. The sheer

superfluousness of much of Hochhuth's physical description of Judith,

Ihr starkes löwinnenblondes Haar....ist so geschnitten, daß ihr sehr schöner, langer, kräftiger Nacken frei liegt - für die Sonne und für Gerald's Küsse, eine ihrer erogenen Zonen.  
Judith 55

and the dramatic irrelevance of such scenes as the following, raise the question why Hochhuth indulges in so much reference to his idea of sexuality and to the sexual act itself.

Er hat sie bei den schönen nackten Schultern gefaßt unter dem schon tief offenen Hosenanzug, den er, vor ihr auf die Knie sinkend, in den Händen behielt, die an ihr herabglitten - so steht sie nackt vor ihm.  
Judith 106

It is possible that in this way Hochhuth seeks to compensate for the lack of true sexual motivation for the assassination - thus aiming to restore some of the erotic mythology in the main plot of Judith. Hochhuth's association of the erotic and the beautiful has been discussed above (see Chapter 2, p. 43f). It is unfortunate that his concept of the erotic is clouded, not only by a tendency to confuse it with the purely sexual, but also by a vision of the woman as a sexual object or as a sensual and destructive force.

Two elements combine in the impression gained by reading Hochhuth's plays concerning women and their role in world events, past and future. He would like

to see them take a more important, active role, but cannot escape his concept of them as dominantly sexual beings - paradoxically both passive and yet threatening to the man. The latter viewpoint again reflects the underlying significance of Das Mutterrecht, and - as has been pointed out by a female critic of Judith - it is a phenomenon of male psychology not only shared by Bachofen and Hochhuth.<sup>21</sup>

As a result, Hochhuth's vision of a female, active role, as can be seen in those plays which really feature women, is limited to the use of their bodies in a sexual context - a use which he justifies by comparing it with the physical commitment of the soldier, even putting this association into the mouth of a woman. Jelena says, in Judith:

Wenn ein Mann seinen Körper einsetzt,  
einen Kampf zu entscheiden,  
dann ist das heldenhaft - bei Frauen aber  
hurenhaft:  
Wo nur Männer die Bücher schreiben, da muß  
ja  
ein solcher Unsinn verbreitet werden.  
Judith 120

In this context, however, it is most strange that Hochhuth's Judith, despite the legends associated with her name and the stress placed on her sexuality, neither has a sexual motive for her act, nor employs sexual tactics in carrying it out.



Julian Exner, writing in Der Tagesspiegel, draws attention to a criticism of Hochhuth's Judith which was frequent after the Glasgow premiere:

'Oh God, it sounds so banal!' stöhnte die  
 Titelheldin von Rolf Hochhuths  
 'Judith'....und obwohl Trauerspiele, zu  
 denen das Stück laut Titelblatt der Rowohlt  
 Ausgabe gehört, Furcht und Mitleid erregen  
 sollen, löste sich Gelächter aus dem  
 Publikum...<sup>22</sup>

The characters were wooden and the dialogue banal in the opinion of many of the critics gathered in Glasgow. Considering that Hochhuth had once again chosen a serious and highly relevant theme - the assassination of a major public figure - the accusation of banality is surprising. Yet the general feeling was that this serious and interesting theme had become largely lost in a confusing and extraneous plot.

Obviously Hochhuth had attempted to discuss the general question of political assassination within the context of a more specific legend - that of Judith, the biblical figure who saves her people by murdering Holofernes. It could be argued, therefore, that the machinations of the plot, including the prologue in Nazi Germany and the emphasis on Judith's sexuality in her relationship with Gerald are essential to Hochhuth's reiteration of the Judith legend, even if they do cloud the more general issue at stake. It is clear from Hochhuth's emphasis on

Judith as a highly attractive woman sexually, that he is compelled by her legend. It is perhaps not necessary to interpret the legend as a male castration phantasy, but the destructive sexual connection between victim and woman is essential to the psychological drama of the story. In the main plot of Hochhuth's Judith this connection is lacking - the President does not appear, Judith has no personal contact with him. It is small wonder that the drama is defective as a result - 'ein Judith-Drama, in dem Holofernes nicht auftritt, ist, was immer es sonst sein mag, tote Hose.'<sup>20</sup>

Not only this lack of personal, sexual motive for murder makes the character of Judith wooden and weak. Both she and her brother are convinced that the President should die because of his agreement to resume the production of chemical weapons after their abuse in the Vietnam War. This motive to kill is also unconvincing, since it is based on the possibility of future horrors rather than as a reaction to past events. It is not out of the question that someone should decide to kill on this basis, but not in keeping with Hochhuth's pains to show us Judith's conscience. It is also difficult to accept, in this context, that Judith should take the entire risk of the deed upon herself or that her brother should agree to this - we are made aware of his fears for

Judith and own sense of responsibility: 'Kommst du um, Judith, vergiß das nie - mache ich auch sofort ein Ende.' (Judith 180). Above all, as a motive to kill, the modern day Judith's is belittled rather than elevated by its juxtaposition with Jelena, who kills an active Nazi, murderer of thousands, and with the biblical Judith, who also acts to save her people from destruction. Judith's killing falls into the category of preventative action, and murder to prevent murder is a paradox difficult to motivate and to defend.

Bearing this in mind, remarkably little is done to explain Judith's standpoint. There is a marked lack of serious discussion in the play - it is limited chiefly to the 'party' scene, in which arguments for and against political assassination are presented with wine and dessert. There are, in fact, too many other 'trappings' of the plot - sex, poisoned microphones, trips to the USSR and Italy etc. - to allow for political discussion without the play once again stretching to prohibitive length, a characteristic feature of Hochhuth's work.

Hochhuth has in fact punished himself by adopting the Judith legend as a basis for his play. Without Holofernes, Judith's sensual nature has to be established by other means. The 'sexual trappings' are a logical outcome of this need, but at the same

time they are not only irritating, but detract from the political discussion which is intended. Hochhuth not only delights in elaborating on this aspect of his plot, he also has a tendency to enjoy the kind of properties normally encountered in a spy story - poison gas in lipsticks and microphones, CIA agents collecting messages hanging in trees and so on. Inevitably, when such trivia take up a major part of the play it is easy to overlook the serious and highly topical theme.

Judith, as a stage character, was also found to be confusing and contradictory by the critics, and as a result, the role an extremely difficult one for an actress to interpret:

Not the least peculiar thing about the character of Judith...is that she says the most rabidly fanatical things while remaining as cool and suave as a glamorous hostess at a Washington cocktail party. <sup>24</sup>

Anne Lambton in der Titelrolle weiß nicht recht, wohin sie zwischen Salome, Jeanne d'Arc, Mata Hari and Alexis Carrington Colby den Schwerpunkt legen soll. <sup>25</sup>

The reason for this confusion lies in the play and not in the lack of acting ability amongst those who have attempted the role of Judith. Hochhuth fails to portray a woman convincingly as a successful journalist and assassin, because this role does not fit in with his concept of women as a whole. When Judith is first introduced to the audience,

Hochhuth's concept of woman is fairly obvious. Not only does he dwell on her height, her clothing and her hair in a way he does not in the case of Arthur, for example - he also includes the following remarks concerning her character:

Sie hütet sich überhaupt, zu viel zu denken, sie mißtraut dem Denken.....  
Ju 55

Nur gesteht sie sich ein, selten bis nie Lust zu verspüren, auch einmal eine namhafte Frau zu interviewen. Ju 54

daß sie rasch anfällig ist für die geistige Auffassung jener Männer, die mehr als Mann als durch Geist sie beeindruckt haben.  
Ju 54

Curious remarks indeed with which to introduce a successful journalist - who presumably does think, is sexually but by no means intellectually impressed by Gerald and whose only interview in the play is with Jelena, another woman! These remarks are more fitted to describe 'woman' as Hochhuth has already outlined his views of her in the essay 'Bachofen und Greer'. There he writes of woman's 'Kopistennatur', of her tendency to take on the interests and passions of the man she loves and of her disinterest in or rivalry towards other women. He does not appear to realise the contradiction inherent in applying these characteristics to his own heroine in Judith.

In discussion, in fact, Judith develops in a way which has already been observed in the characters of

Lysistrata. Much of her dialogue appears to reflect Hochhuth's own thoughts and is couched in his terms. As early as 1968, in a Konkret article, 'Angst vor der <Schutzmacht> USA', Hochhuth had voiced his uncertainty with regard to the position of the USA towards Europe. In an article in Die Zeit, 19.8.1983, entitled 'Wann brennen wir?', Hochhuth once again discusses USA policy - and more especially, the new intimations from President Reagan that he would view an atomic war, limited to European territory, as a possibility. In this article, Hochhuth speculates upon a typically negative American view of Germany, which appears to have its roots in the persecution of the Jews in the Nazi period:

Aus Tanten also machten Deutsche  
Seife;.....Warum also, wenn schon leider  
Gottes ein Dritter Weltkrieg probiert  
werden muß, dann als dessen Clinch-Feld  
nicht die beiden moralisch demnach ohnehin  
nicht überlebensberechtigten Germanys?<sup>26</sup>

Hochhuth's fear of war - more particularly his fear of war in Europe, in Germany - is constantly reflected in Judith. The same negative attitude to Germany is voiced by Gerald, and Judith retorts, with Hochhuth's own indignation - 'Du schickst die Juden vor, weil du selber/ die Deutschen für grade gut genug hältst,/uns den nächsten Kriegsschauplatz zu stellen!' (Ju 105). Hochhuth's particular fear of the Reagan administration is articulated at a later

moment by Judith - 'Neu ist an dieser Administration, / daß sie den Krieg erstmals wieder als gewinnbar ausdenkt.' (Ju 186).

Is Judith, therefore, a mouthpiece for Hochhuth's views? Her fears and arguments would be more logical were she a German rather than an American journalist, and it is true to say that she, more than any other character in the play, voices Hochhuth's opinions quite obviously. It may be this fact which led to heavy criticism of Hochhuth after the publication of the play - since it was frequently presumed that he, like his heroine, advocated the assassination of Reagan.<sup>27</sup> It is certainly arguable that Judith does not live up to the description of her which Hochhuth gives at the start of the play because in the course of it she develops more and more into the intellectual reflection of her creator.

After the discussion of these plays it may be said that Hochhuth seeks to explore the possibilities of a world order dominated by female as opposed to male values. His basic conviction is that such a world would prove more humane - hence the utopian nature of both Die Hebamme and Lysistrata und die Nato. The latter play closes on a more tragic note, as male values in the world outside of the island utopia take over once more, and news of the military putsch

reaches the protagonists. This only serves to underline the contrast between Hochhuth's observations of the world in the past and the present and his speculations concerning a future dominated by female values.

However, Hochhuth's utopian concept of a female world falls down in his excessive emphasis on sexuality and a tendency to adhere to conservative, even reactionary views in this respect. Women appear chiefly as sexual objects, despite their seemingly active roles. The plays support the view that Hochhuth associates the woman with the darker aspects of human existence, with myth, religion and mystery. This provides a link with the element of the inexplicable and the mysterious in history which has been illustrated in the study of his earlier plays and of Sommer 14. This element was presented as essential and significant in any attempt to analyse historical events and predict possible future developments. Bearing in mind the association with women, this is an indication of Hochhuth's conviction - also expressed in 'Frauen und Mütter...' - that women have always played a significant, if indirect, role in history.



## Footnotes:

- 1 - 'Ein Lustspiel schreiben und dann sterben...', interview in Vorwärts, 26.10.1967
- 2 - Interview in Vorwärts, 26.10.1967
- 3 - Hellmuth Karasek, 'In Hochhuths Kreißaal' Die Zeit 12.5.1972
- 4 - Renate Voss, 'Entgegnung auf Hellmuth Karasek' Die Zeit 9.6.1972
- 5 - Arnold Blumer, 'Das Menschenbild in Rolf Hochhuths "Die Hebamme"', in Text und Kritik Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold, No. 58 April 1978, p.31-40
- 6 - Rolf Hochhuth, 'Brief an Bundeskanzler Willy Brandt' 6.3.1971 in Dokumente zur politischen Wirkung Ed. Reinhart Hoffmeister, Munich 1980 p.182f
- 7 - Konkret No. 11, 21.5.1970
- 8 - Hellmuth Karasek, 'In Hochhuths Kreißaal' Die Zeit 12.5.1972
- 9 - Annemarie Czaschke, Frankfurter Rundschau, No. 107, 9.5.1972. '(eine) Anarchistin, die...noch zur christlichen Heiligen umstilisiert wird. Die Obdachlosen wurden auf der Bühne abermals verraten.'
- 10 - 'Was ist denn aber für ein Unterschied, ob die Weiber geradezu den Staat regieren, oder ob die, welche ihn regieren, sich von den Weibern beherrschen lassen?' LN 187
- 11 - J. J. Bachofen, Das Mutterrecht, suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft 135, Frankfurt/Main 1975, p. 41
- 12 - Ernst Bloch, 'Bachofen, Gaia-Themis und Naturrecht' in Materialien zu Bachofens 'Das Mutterrecht' ed. Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs, Suhrkamp Frankfurt/Main, 1975, p.358
- 13 - Uwe Wesel, 'Der Patriarch, der das Matriarchat entdeckte' Die Zeit No. 48, 20.11.1987
- 14 - From August Bebel, Die Frau... Quoted here from Materialien zu Bachofens Das Mutterrecht suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft 136, Frankfurt/Main 1975, p. 346
- 15 - Germaine Greer, The Female Eunuch, Paladin London, 1987. Quotations are taken from this edition, with the abbreviation EE
- 16 - Rolf Hochhuth, Konkret 31.3.1974

- 17 - Alice Schwarzer, 'Der Mann und die Peitsche', Der Spiegel 7.1.1974
- 18 - Walter Biemdick, 'Lysistrate und die Nato?' Die Tat No.52, 2.3. 1974
- 19 - Otto Beer, 'Dr Lysistrate probt neuen Aufstand', Süddeutsche Zeitung 25.2.1974
- 20 - Inselkomödie in Rolf Hochhuth, Alle Dramen, Rowohlt Reinbek 1991, pp. 1315-1526
- 21 - Margarete Mitscherlich-Nielsen, 'Judiths Attentat' Titel No.4/1984 p.70
- 22 - Julian Exner, 'Blondes Gift im Weißen Haus' Der Tagesspiegel 16.11.1984
- 23 - Urs Jenny, 'Fünf Minuten vor Armageddon' Der Spiegel No. 47/1984
- 24 - Allen Wright, 'Hochhuth unequal to task' The Scotsman 12.11.1984
- 25 - Julian Exner, 'Blondes Gift im Weißen Haus' *ibid.*
- 26 - Rolf Hochhuth, 'Wann brennen wir?' Die Zeit 19.8.1983
- 27 - A particularly emphatic example of this interpretation can be found in the popular press. Rainer Bieling, 'Bringt mir den Kopf von Ronald Reagan' Zitty Nr2/1985.

## CHAPTER SIX - THE IMPACT

Whatever one's opinion of Hochhuth's qualities as a dramatist, it is impossible to overlook his impact on the German theatre from the 1960s onwards. The question is why Hochhuth has taken on such a special role and continues to do so even today. After several plays which have proved unsuccessful in the theatre (notably Judith and Unbefleckte Empfängnis), Hochhuth's work is still noticed and reviewed by well-known critics and is sponsored by leading theatres.'

The first aspect which has had its influence upon Hochhuth's status as a dramatist is the choice of themes with which he has concerned himself in his plays. From his debut with St., Hochhuth has chosen, almost without fail, topics which aroused an unprecedented interest. In 1963, when Der Stellvertreter first appeared before the public, it is important to remember that Hochhuth's approach to Germany's recent past was new. Whilst German writers had already made numerous attempts to come to terms with the years of fascist rule, the majority of these were in lyric or narrative form. Successful novels of the period, for example, included Günter Grass' Die Blechtrommel (1959) and Katz und Maus (1961) and

Heinrich Böll's Haus ohne Hüter (1954) and Billard um halb zehn (1959). Drama was less frequent, and it is possible that some writers were hesitant before the essentially public medium of the stage. Indeed, one of the most successful and certainly one of the earliest post-war dramas, Draußen vor der Tür (1946) by Wolfgang Borchert, was prefaced with the words: 'Ein Stück, das kein Theater spielen und kein Publikum sehen will.'<sup>2</sup>

Criticism of the Church's role during the period of Nazi rule had also emerged, and once again it was Böll's writing which had made an impact ('Brief an einen jungen Katholiken' 1958). However, Hochhuth's play was new in that he portrayed prominent historical figures, as opposed, for example, to Borchert's very general 'Oberst' and 'Direktor'. These well-known personalities were not only placed in the limelight of the theatre, but Hochhuth also rejected a purely speculative reconstruction of the past, and claimed documentary authenticity for the events of his drama. Hochhuth's unsettling approach to the faults, not only of Nazi Germany, but also of the Catholic Church, aroused the feelings of all those directly or indirectly involved.

Later plays also moved the press and public because of their courageous examination of highly relevant political topics. In his work, Hochhuth has

always sought to voice the concerns which he senses are those of the ordinary man on the street. He is aware that the ability to articulate these concerns is lacking in most cases: he would like, in his writing, to express possible viewpoints on behalf of a silent majority:

Man muß dem Publikum Stücke bringen, die das artikulieren, was es selber sagen möchte und was es nicht sagen kann, weil es weder den Apparat hat noch die dramatische Begabung.<sup>3</sup>

As far as his approach to the available and collected material is concerned, great controversy has always surrounded Hochhuth's name. He was acclaimed, after the staging of St at the 'Volksbühne', by many, including Piscator, the director of the production, as the originator of a new kind of theatre. In his foreword to the published edition, Piscator praises Hochhuth's work as 'Ein episches Stück, episch-wissenschaftlich, episch-dokumentarisch, ein Stück für ein episches, "politisches" Theater, für das ich seit mehr als dreißig Jahren kämpfte:' (St 9). In doing so, Piscator associated the play with his own documentary theatre of the 1920s, closing the circle of his activity as a director, but also preparing the way for critics to acclaim Hochhuth as the innovator of a new kind of documentary drama in the Federal Republic:

Rolf Hochhuth löste mit seinem....Buch-Drama *Der Stellvertreter* in Deutschland die Flut der politischen Dokumentarstücke aus.<sup>4</sup>

Die Uraufführung des *Stellvertreters* ... bezeichnet eine Zäsur der deutschen Theatergeschichte und brach einer neuen Richtung der politischen und geschichtlichen Dramatik Bahn: dem realistisch-kritischen Dokumentarstück...<sup>5</sup>

In retrospect, Hochhuth thus became, against his own will and opinion, the father of documentary theatre. Later critics have, however, tended to count Hochhuth among the more conservative of modern playwrights as far as the structure of his works is concerned. Again, this line of approach may stem from Piscator's foreword to the play, in which he describes it as 'ein Geschichts-Drama im Schillerschen Sinne.' (St 7) Certainly when we consider Hochhuth's approach to the stage - the concentration of his dramatic message in the actions of one decisive individual with whom the audience may identify - the resulting plays do reflect German classical drama in many respects, as has been seen in Chapter 2. Hochhuth's work is in fact documentary only in so far as he studies and employs documents in order to build up an essentially factual setting for his characters, but it cannot be compared with more developed documentary theatre in which the imagination was allowed very little freedom at all and even the dialogue was taken largely from existing documents.

Die Ermittlung by Peter Weiss is an example of this strict documentary form used to dramatise the recent past during the later 1960s.

As can be seen from the above comments, as far as the structure of Hochhuth's plays was concerned, it can be interpreted and analysed in differing ways. This complexity has led to lasting interest and to detailed discussion of his work from an aesthetic point of view.

It was logical that, following the publication of St., Hochhuth should earn the antagonism of the Catholic Church. In doing so, the play also shook the roots of West German society in the 1960s. As Jan Berg points out in his study of the play's reception, the close correlation between churches and state in the Adenauer era meant that an attack on the Church (as which Hochhuth's play was usually read) was interpreted as an attack on the ethical basis of society:

In der als 'Stunde Null' ideologisierten Nachkriegszeit, die als Situation eines Wertevakuums verstanden wird, fungieren die Kirchen vorrangig als ethische Autorität..<sup>6</sup>

The resulting sense of outrage was of course predominant in the more right-wing groupings of the German political scene - the Christian Democrats and especially the Christian Socialist Union in Bavaria. With his polemic essay work Hochhuth did much to

increase this antagonism. In 'Der Klassenkampf ist nicht zu Ende', published in Der Spiegel (No. 22/1965), he underlined the social conditions under which a large number of West Germans were still living despite the 'economic miracle' of the post war years and the considerable affluence of a certain proportion of the population. This appeal for change was couched in terms of biting criticism for those responsible:

"Sozialpartnerschaft", dies böseste Wort ist eine Schlaftablette, in jedem Betrieb gratis verteilt, die den fleißigen, brauchbaren Habenichtsin den Traum vom sozialen Frieden entrücken soll, währenddessen die reichen Asozialen die totale Machtergreifung vollziehen. KK 30

It was this essay which elicited the now famous response from the Chancellor at the time, Ludwig Erhard, that Hochhuth could only be regarded as 'der ganz kleine Pinscher'.

Hochhuth's social criticism, which has been repeated and developed in many essays since, leading to his rejection by the Right, may appear to place the author firmly in the left-wing camp. He himself has underlined rather than qualified this, even to the extent of apparent radicalism, by open criticism of the SPD as well as of the Conservatives: 'Die CDU hat immerhin doch noch en linke Flügel - die SPD nur noch ene linke Vergangenheit' (H 78), 'Weiß ja nun nicht, ob den jewählten Vertretern der SPD das



anjenehm ist, durch einen Arbeiter vertreten zu werden' (H 24). To accept this evaluation as a radical - or even as left-wing -, however, would be to ignore Hochhuth's continued sympathies for the less than radical Free Democratic Party.<sup>26</sup> These sympathies are also based on an awareness that the FDP, along with the 'Green Party' in recent years, provide an additional democratic balance to the two major parties and should not be allowed to lose their place in parliament by gaining less than 5% of the vote.

Hochhuth has never been an active member of any of the established parties, nor, as in the case of his literary contemporaries, Martin Walser and Franz Xaver Kroetz, for example, of the Communist Party in Germany. Therefore political antagonism towards him is often conveniently veiled as criticism of his dramatic technique, or as defence of other institutions, principally of the church. As late as 1986, during a visit to the Pope in Rome, Helmut Kohl expressed his aversion to the work of the playwright in an apology to the papacy for the criticism inherent in St.<sup>27</sup> In doing so, Kohl indicated the general evaluation of Hochhuth's work and person in right-wing circles - as well as a confused understanding of the purpose of literature in general, and of St in particular.

The 'left-wing radical' Hochhuth has, however, been criticised even more virulently in his 'own' left-wing circles. When his demands for social change are considered, and at this point the changes proposed in the play Guerillas are illuminating (outlined in Chapter 4), it would not be sup<sup>r</sup>prising<sup>1</sup> were Hochhuth condemned as too restrained in his demands. Indeed, this is the criticism of some socialist thinkers, that his failure to see the masses as the source of revolution and change and his insistence upon a basically capitalist system indicate a bourgeois attitude:

Daß mit der Entstehung der sozialen Antagonismen in der Arbeiterklasse auch die Kraft heranwächst, die für ihre eigene Befreiung sorgen wird; bleibt von Hochhuth unerwähnt. Dafür werden von Hochhuth Figuren ersonnen, deren Handlungsmaßstab die sozialen Interessen der Volksmassen bilden, die jedoch 'stellvertretend' für die geschichtsunmündigen und handlungsunfähigen Massen handeln.<sup>10</sup>

This criticism is much more intense than that from the right, however, where particular utterances or reform proposals have been the catalyst. In this case, Hochhuth's entire dramatic programme, his language and his basic understanding of history and of human society have been negated.

The discussion between Hochhuth and Theodor Adorno concerning dramatic practice is illuminating in this

respect. This discussion arose from a series of questions posed to Hochhuth and other modern dramatists by Theater heute in 1963 (published with the title, 'Soll das Theater die heutige Welt darstellen?' in Hebamme, EGE 1971). When asked about the means and content of modern theatre, Hochhuth referred to the work of Georg Lukács during the 'Realismus- Expressionismusdebatte' of the 1930s. Lukács then pleaded for the use of realistic means to portray the modern world in drama. He considered it a necessity to grasp the literary heritage of classical German drama, in which the fate of the individual was represented realistically to exemplify a whole; even if this whole was one in which the individual had little or no status, as in the atomic age. In the interview with Theater heute, Hochhuth underlines primarily the need to acknowledge anew the individuality of each person despite the growing anonymity of much of society and to base drama on this need: 'Ein Drama, das den Menschen als Individuum achtet, braucht über diese Achtung hinaus kein weiteres "Engagement"' (Hebamme, EGE 320). It was exactly this emphasis which provoked criticism from Adorno. As he, the much older man, had already done in the 1930s, Adorno rejected realism as a modern dramatic technique. His argument was that drama or literature in general should reflect

existing circumstances, and that the insignificance of the individual was today such that any dramatic programme based on individual decisions according to free moral criteria was an anachronism.

Adorno's starting point was the absurdity and chaos of the atomic age. In his view, any classical or traditional approach to drama evaded this factor in reality. In actual fact, however, as Jan Berg points out, 'Hochhuth and Adorno are in agreement, at least on the former of these two observations. In contrast to Lukács, for whom a total, rational picture of the world existed, reflected in dramatic tradition, Hochhuth also sees the world as governed by irrationality and absurdity - "Das Absurdeste, was es gibt" aber ist - nicht das absurde Theater, sondern, laut Goethe, die Geschichte.' (Hebamme, EGE 323) His reaction, however, is to confront this chaos (which he does not shy away from portraying, as two examples, St and S14, indicate) with an individual capable of sensible moral decisions and a rational, logical dramatic structure. In this way, the contrast between the chaos portrayed and the means of portrayal becomes a pointer towards Hochhuth's intention. The largely pessimistic context is thus illumined by the optimism of the individual and his achievements, however small or temporary. Hochhuth

equates the stage with confrontation - both between individuals and within a single character. The latter confrontation or conflict is frequently provoked by the chaos and absurdity of the surrounding world - Hochhuth's first main character, Riccardo, is an example of a dramatic figure facing just such a situation.

In a period during which political thought and literary criticism were dominated by forms of socialist thinking, an author laying stress on the significance of the individual was liable to negative reception, and Hochhuth was not the only writer to be credited with little political understanding as a result.<sup>12</sup> Rarely, however, was criticism so virulent as that which Hochhuth received from the left. It is ironic that the play which evoked the harshest reception, from Hellmuth Karasek in Die Zeit, 12.5.1972, was Die Hebamme, a play despised by the right wing for its social criticism - and successful in eliciting an improvement in social conditions in both Kiel and Kassel. In his review, Karasek tentatively voices the suspicion that Die Hebamme could be interpreted as fascist in tendency. Considering Hochhuth's constant criticism of the Hitler regime, this evaluation appears outrageous at first glance and certainly calls for examination. In

his article, 'Das Menschenbild in Rolf Hochhuths Komödie Die Hebamme', published in Text und Kritik (Heft 58, April 1978, 31ff), Arnold Blumer discusses the problem, coming to the conclusion that Karasek's remark was justified.

Both authors claim to recognise an 'anti-democratic' attitude in Hochhuth's play. This line of criticism was also taken with respect to other writers during the 1970s, so that Hermann Hesse, for example, could be interpreted as expressing contempt for the parliamentary system in Steppenwolf<sup>13</sup>. However, Karasek and Blumer attack Hochhuth's work in a particularly aggressive style. Many of his characters, they write, are party officials in the democratic system of the FRG, but are portrayed as foolish idiots at best, as corrupt villains at worst. Blumer even directly compares Hochhuth's words to those of Hitler:

Die Ähnlichkeit zu dem, was Hitler von der parlamentarischen Demokratie hielt, ist frappant: Demokratie war für Hitler gleichbedeutend mit "Jämmerlichkeit, Murkserei, Verfall, Dummheit, allgemeiner Verlogenheit und Betrugerei"<sup>14</sup>

Both writers, however, allow too little for the fact that Die Hebamme is intended as a comedy. It is arguable that the means are weak, but in his form of satirical comedy, Hochhuth aims to ridicule the characters by exaggeration of their features. Since

the characters are here party politicians, it is party politicians who appear ridiculous - since the characters in comedy are typified rather than true individuals, Hochhuth also collects all the negative characteristics of politicians (who can deny, for example, the existence, albeit among a minority, of corruption?) and concentrates them within a small number of dramatic figures. This technique, therefore, is independent of the state system which Hochhuth is describing and cannot be judged 'anti-democratic'. In his essay work, Hochhuth may also at times appear excessively critical of democratic societies (the quotation above, p. 242, from Krieg und Klassenkrieg is an example of the aggressive style which Hochhuth adopts in his social criticism), but it is important to remember that this exaggerated harshness is a stylistic device (again, perhaps not the most sophisticated device available to an author), and one which does not reflect the author's basic conviction that democracy is the best available political system. Any further doubts in Hochhuth's belief in democracy and a pluralist party landscape are surely stilled by such comments as the following:

die Auslöschung aller Freiheit, die ihrer Natur nach niemals in *einem* Staat, in *einem* System, *einer* Religion oder Partei zu finden ist - sondern allenfalls zwischen mehreren... H/VEG 358

Blumer goes on to criticise Hochhuth's use of tautology as a stylistic device. He not only sees this as reflecting Hochhuth's low opinion of his readers' intelligence (repetition being used as a way of conveying information to even the slowest), but also as a further fascist aspect. Again, Hitler's recommendation of tautology as a propaganda method is cited in comparison. Hochhuth does indeed repeat many of his ideas, presenting ever more examples, frequently taken from other writers, philosophers and historians. It is possible to view this method as 'scheinwissenschaftlich', as Berg and Blumer do, because Hochhuth rarely makes specific and verifiable references to other authors. He seldom, even in his essay work, gives references for his quotations, simply choosing<sup>o</sup> to identify his source in very general terms. The result, when reading some of his polemic work, is a sense of being overwhelmed by information and indeed, repetition. This, however, is once again a stylistic device, it may be said, a stylistic failing, and does not reflect Hochhuth's basic attitudes. Tautology has played a part in rhetoric since Ancient Greece, and it would be a mistake to associate this device, which naturally was also used by the Nazi regime, with fascism. Blumer inadvertently refutes his own argument, in fact, by pointing out the frequent use of tautology in



advertising. Advertising may be intended to influence (perhaps manipulate) the masses, but is surely not necessarily fascist?

Whilst the criticism of Hochhuth's language as fascist can be refuted, it is interesting to return to one aspect of Karasek's original article which is justified. This hinges on Hochhuth's choice of the single strong individual as a central pivot around which the action of his drama is based. As Karasek puts it:

ein resoluter Einzelner muß diesen ganzen Saustall von Rechtsstaat doch einfach aufräumen. So jubelt das Stück nach dem starken Mann, der hier eine starke Frau ist.<sup>15</sup>

The problem here is that Hochhuth does indeed, not only in this play, but in many of his others, show the impotence and the faults of the masses in contrast to the positive moral action of one strong individual. His is a form of elitist thinking (perhaps most evident in Guerillas, as was discussed above) which does to some extent reflect the concept of the 'Herrenmenschen' derived from Nietzsche and cultivated by the Nazis. The most suspect element of this attitude for the left-wing thinker (also indicated above in the quotation from Ursula Reinhold, see footnote 10) is the belief that the masses are unlikely to change - human nature for Hochhuth being a constant - and that the only hope

for social improvement, reform, revolution, lies with those individuals who stand out because of their moral resolution.

However, it is vitally important to remember in this context that Hochhuth's feelings towards these 'strong men' (or women) are characterised by considerable ambivalence. Unable to reject the idea entirely, for he sees evidence for it in the lives of many (Caesar, Bismarck, Churchill are historical examples who have concerned him deeply), Hochhuth's fascination with and admiration for the achievements of these people is coupled with horror and fear in the face of their power and some of their deeds. The concept of power, and the iniquity which Hochhuth associates with any kind of absolute, or even excessive power or influence, was discussed in his essay 'Der alte Mythos vom 'neuen' Menschen': 'Die Riesen gehorchen nicht mehr dem Gesetz, wonach sie begonnen, sondern dem ihrer Riesenhaftigkeit, die sie gleich macht.' (H/VEG 358). The means towards power, therefore, is for Hochhuth unimportant - power in itself leads to misuse. Thus the figures of Churchill and Hitler, and their actions during the Second World War, could in fact be logically compared in Soldaten, much to the outrage of Churchill's admirers. This ambivalent and contradictory attitude is an essential aspect in Hochhuth's study of a series of

authoritative 'father figures'. In the aftermath of the Second World War, it was not unusual for the younger generation to question and to criticise the attitudes and actions of their fathers during fascism. The 'traditional' generation conflict was intensified by a sense that the older generation had failed to provide an authoritative moral and ethical example during the war years. The theme is one which has been examined by other authors of the post-war generation, for example by Martin Walser in his play Der Schwarze Schwan (1964). This feeling of betrayal, of a lack of authoritative example, is best understood in the context of Hochhuth's own words to F.J. Raddatz in Die Zeit of 9.4.1976:

..die schaudervollste Vaterfigur, die denkbar ist: Mein Vater heißt Hitler. Für mich, den ehemaligen Pimpf in Hitlers "Jungvolk", den Schwiegersohn einer von Hitler enthaupteten, den jugendlichen Augenzeugen vom Abtransport der Juden - für mich liegt die Auseinandersetzung mit Hitler allem zugrunde, was ich schrieb und schreibe.

Hochhuth's fascination with powerful historical and political figures and his utopian attempts to create the benevolent figure of absolute authority have already been indicated. As an author, however, Hochhuth was also faced with the question of an aesthetic, literary 'Vorbild'. His continuing fascination with the father figure is revealed in his dramatic monologue, Tod eines Jägers (1976), which

concerns the suicide of the famous American author, Ernest 'Papa' Hemingway. Hemingway incorporates both the immensely powerful sportsman and soldier and the contemplative artist: *'da aber doch unser alter Mann mit guten Gründen ebenso unter die Tatmenschen wie unter die Kontemplativen gerechnet werden kann, ...'* (TJ 83). Hochhuth shows the author troubled by self-reproach before his death, having failed - as a man of considerable influence and authority - to write and to act according to his conscience. Aware that he has always been admired as a 'strong man', Hemingway is seen to regret his lack of moral leadership in the past, his glorification of an elite to the cost of the majority:

Der Journalist in mir ist schuld,  
daß ich kaum Blick fürs Alltägliche hatte,  
sondern nur fürs Sensationelle und für  
Privilegierte,  
von denen ich selber einer war: TJ 57

It is apparent that Hochhuth's ideal is of an author as a figure of moral and aesthetic authority, and Hemingway's doubts almost certainly reflect his own. The author Hochhuth takes on an ambivalent role. Admiring Hemingway's qualities (as is evident in his comparison between Churchill and the writer which follow the above words), he nonetheless - in the role of the younger generation - criticises the old man's lack of positive example. As an author himself, he shows understanding for his protagonist, putting

himself in the role of the 'inadequate' father-figure:

Die Ohnmacht auch der Literatur vor der  
Gesellschaft (.....)  
jeder Schriftsteller, und hätte er sogar  
das Ding da von der schwedischen Akademie:  
kann doch nur meinem Harry Morgan  
nachsprechen:  
"Ein Mann allein hat keine verfluchte  
Chance  
nicht..." TJ 101

Later work shows Hochhuth's continued concern with the generation conflict. In 'Fehler und Söhne' (Von Syrakus aus 9ff), for example, he is firmly established in the role of the older generation, and his own problems as father lead him to conclude that 'Väter leiden unter den Söhnen nicht weniger als umgekehrt die Söhne unter den Vätern' (VSA 11).

An ambivalent attitude to the father, the original figure of authority, is a much discussed theme in psychology and Freudian analysis. There have been many expressions of the conflict in literature in the past, an example, of course, being the work of Franz Kafka. It is possible that in his 'Brief an einen Sohn', written in 1985, Hochhuth was aware of the analogy with Kafka's famous 'Brief an den Vater'. Although it may seem a trifle far-fetched to compare Kafka and Hochhuth, the same combination of deep admiration and love for the father and dislike, hatred and fear is revealed in Das Urteil, for example. Kafka's work was a confrontation with his

real father and their difficult relationship - this short story expresses his feeling of failure in taking over his father's place in the business world, his sense that he is an inadequate or unsuitable son, as opposed to the 'friend in St. Petersburg'. The expression of fear and weakness in this story even extends to an acceptance of the unjust condemnation to death spoken by the figure of authority, the father. This deeply subjective approach to writing is in stark contrast to Hochhuth's highly political, historical starting point. Yet born when he was, exposed as a child and a teenager to the height and the fall of the Nazi regime, the sense of Hochhuth's remark (above p. 253), becomes more clear. In the same interview, Hochhuth briefly lays aside his relationship with his true father - it was 'eine sehr enge, positive' - which had little relevance to his later writing. Indeed, children at the time were given little opportunity for a subjective confrontation with themselves or with their families. Instead they were subjected to the authority of the state, and an attempt was made to win them as political supporters of the dictator at an early age. Hochhuth's fascination with figures of historical, political and literary authority and his examination of the possible benevolent use of absolute power (in Guerillas for example) appear as a logical

consequence of his early exposure to dictatorship and to the personality of Hitler.

In the light of what has been said, it appears that a major fascination of Hochhuth's work, and one which has kept him a leading role in German literature for almost three decades, is its seeming ambivalence. With his controversial themes, his style and his moral attitude, Hochhuth has provoked readers and audiences of vastly differing convictions. Since his first success, it has proved impossible to compartmentalise his work, whilst he himself has not been 'adopted' by specific political or literary groups. This individualism has proved one of Hochhuth's greatest strengths, and the complexity and variety of his work is such that it has always met with interest, whether negative or positive.

Footnotes:

1 - Sommer 14 was commissioned and sponsored by the Vienna 'Burgtheater' in 1988

2 - Wolfgang Borchert, Draußen vor der Tür mit einem Nachwort von Heinrich Böll, Rowohlt Reinbek 1991, p.5

3 - Interview in Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt No. 52, 28.12.1986

- 4 - Marianne Kesting, 'Rolf Hochhuth: Völkermord in Jamben' in Panorama des zeitgenössischen Theaters, München 1969, p.324
- 5 - Helmut Kreuzer, 'Der Einzelne in der Geschichte' in Antipodische Aufklärungen - Festschrift für Leslie Bodi, Ed. Walter Veit, Frankfurt/Main
- 6 - Jan Berg, Hochhuths "Stellvertreter" und die "Stellvertreter"-Debatte Scriptor Verlag, Kronberg, 1977
- 7 - In a speech to party members of CDU and CSU in Düsseldorf, 9.7.1965: 'Da hört der Dichter auf, da fängt der ganz kleine Pinscher an'.
- 8 - See Dieter Gült (Ed.) Wählen - aber wen? p. 47ff, Hamburg, 1986. Here Hochhuth writes 'Ich wähle, wie sonst auch, die FDP, obgleich ich mit Sebastian Haffner der Meinung bin, die BRD sollte mehr Wechselwähler haben.'
- 9 - Fritz J. Raddatz reports on Kohl's attitude and words in Die Zeit, 4.7.1986
- 10 - Ursula Reinhold, 'Drama und Geschichte bei Rolf Hochhuth' Weimarer Beiträge 23/1977, 12, p.111
- 11 - 'Zweitens bleibt in der Kontroverse zwischen Adorno- und Hochhuthanhängern völlig unerkannt, daß Hochhuth überhaupt nicht - obwohl man gerade das kritisiert - eine der bürgerlichen Aufklärung verpflichtete Geschichtsauffassung vertritt, sondern Geschichte stets fatalistisch und biologistisch als Katastrophengeschichte versteht.' Jan Berg, Hochhuths "Stellvertreter" p. 86
- 12 - Writing of Günter Grass' political commitment during the election campaigns of 1965 (Grass spoke frequently in favour of the SPD), Gertrude Cepl-Kaufmann decries the author's emphasis on political personalities: 'Die Personalisierung im Problembereich Politik steht in der Gefahr, komplexe Probleme auf den Bereich individueller Sozialkontakte zu reduzieren. Eine Vereinfachung der Geschichte ist zweifellos damit verbunden.' Günter Grass. Eine Analyse des Gesamtwerkes unter dem Aspekt von Literatur und Politik, Scriptor Verlag, Kronberg/Ts, 1975, p.33
- 13 - Andrew Hollis, 'Political Ambivalence in Hesse's "Steppenwolf"' in Modern Language Review Vol.73, 1978, p. 110ff: 'the reader is confronted with a view of the bourgeoisie that is confused and disturbingly arrogant, implying criticism of both their psychology and their system of government; parliamentarianism.'
- 14 - Arnold Blumer, 'Das Menschenbild in Rolf Hochhuths Komödie "Die Hebamme"', in Text und Kritik No.58, München, April 1978
- 15 - Helmut Karasek, 'In Hochhuths Kreißsaal' Die Zeit 12.5.1972



CONCLUSION

One of the most important aspects of Rolf Hochhuth's understanding of historical events to emerge is his total rejection of any system or plan underlying them. This pessimistic acknowledgement of chaos as opposed to order as the dominant feature in history clearly sets him apart from any historical philosophy which aims to explain past events as part of a coherent whole. In a period during which German historical philosophy and literary criticism were dominated by variations of Marxism - an attempt to provide a political, rational explanation of world history - Hochhuth's attitude is an obvious exception.

Some affinities have been established with 19th and early 20th century philosophers. Among these is the historian Oswald Spengler (whom Hochhuth himself sees as having been considerably influenced by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf). Whilst Spengler, however, sets up a definitive system of rising and falling civilisations - the impending fall of the most recent, our present western culture, is discussed in his main work, Der Untergang des Abendlandes, - Hochhuth accepts only a general concept of rise and fall. Thus he observes certain features of history as repetitive, whilst each civilisation follows upon the last,

failing to learn from it. Mistakes as well as successes can be seen to be constantly repeated. Hochhuth makes use of the image of the chain to describe this concept of historical events.

Nur um "aus"zuleben - ist Geschichte!  
Und die Umwälzung der Machtgewichte

Hat nur *einen* Zweck: Potenzverschleiß.  
Fortschritt, Endziel gibt es nicht; ein  
Kreis

- je ein Kettenglied an vielen Ringen -,  
schließt sich wie ein Mensch stirbt; von  
Gelingen

Sprechen nur die Heilsverkäufer: es ist aus!  
PM 18

The most striking influence upon Hochhuth's thinking, however, as was underlined by F.J. Raddatz in the context of Hochhuth's own words,<sup>1</sup> appears to be the work of the 19th century historian Jacob Burckhardt. There are two essential features of Hochhuth's philosophy which closely reflect that of Burckhardt, the first of these being the total rejection of progress in human affairs or of a planned or logical course of history. Burckhardt '(warnt) vor jeder Konstruktion von Gesetzmäßigkeiten im Geschichtsablauf und vor allem Fortschrittsoptimismus... und (beläßt) dem historischen Geschehen seine ganz unerforschliche Rätselhaftigkeit'<sup>2</sup>. This irrational, mysterious - senseless - aspect of history is also dominant in Hochhuth's view.

Woher der Abgrund zwischen den bewundernswerten Leistungen der Medizin, unser Leben zu verlängern - und dem offensichtlich nicht zu zügelnden Trieb ganzer Völkerschaften und Kontinente, sich in Katastrophen zu stürzen? H/VEG 403

Secondly, Burckhardt can be seen as a forerunner of the 20th century existentialist philosophers in that he placed his greatest emphasis on the role of man in history and turned away from rational attempts to explain man's existence. Hochhuth's emphasis on man, on the actions of the individual, has been demonstrated as a motivating factor in his work: 'Das ist doch die wesentliche Aufgabe des Dramas: darauf zu bestehen, daß der Mensch ein verantwortliches Wesen ist.' (H/EGE 319)

Hochhuth's historical ideas are relevant to his understanding of a German literary heritage, influencing his acceptance of those authors with whom he feels a special affinity, and whose work is to some extent reflected in his own. Hochhuth has approached the work of several 'classical' German authors in various essays.<sup>23</sup> The name most associated with his is perhaps that of Schiller, but as has been suggested above, this association is - whilst justified - often lent too much weight. Hochhuth has in common with Schiller his concentration on the individual in a historical context and his use of the exemplary in a single character to point out more general historical

truths. However, the world views of the authors, and above all their aesthetic understanding, differ. Hochhuth's didactic aim dominates, his appeal is to the intellect of the viewer or reader in an attempt to change and improve reality through his work - 'Man muß danach streben, die Welt wirklich zu verbessern'<sup>4</sup>. Schiller underlines the concepts of beauty and truth - the moral and didactic aim of his writing was intended to remain secondary to these.

Hochhuth's work has been compared with that of Georg Büchner less often, although in his essay work it is clear that Hochhuth has concerned himself with Danton and Woyzeck.<sup>5</sup> Büchner's intensive use of documentary material and emphasis on the didactic role of drama point to his work as influential. Perhaps the most significant factor, however, is a parallel between the world views of these two authors, which is pointed out by Hochhuth himself in VEG.<sup>6</sup> Both are pessimistic about mankind in general, reject any optimistic historical philosophy, and yet hope - and seek to act - to bring about improvements. The individual in both authors' work acts - the exact motivation of these individuals is unclear, in the face of such general pessimism - to bring about minor, short term improvements. These specific, limited goals are described as 'Nahziele' in Hochhuth's work, and it is the striving towards them which rescues his writing

from a nihilistic world view. 'Nahziele werden erreicht, weil es sie gibt. Ein Endziel gibt es nicht...' (H/VEG 416).

A final literary influence on Hochhuth which must be mentioned is that of Friedrich Hebbel. A comparison is provoked by Hochhuth's adaptation of the apocryphal legend of Judith also treated by Hebbel in one of his major works, Judith. Hochhuth in fact rejects Hebbel, interpreting his work as demonstrative of a philosophy in which the individual has little value, although he or she may be the pivot of events, and is portrayed only as a tool within a higher plan.<sup>7</sup> Hebbel's plays, however, can be read differently. They may be seen as an illustration of the individual's short-term achievements in altering the course of history, despite his ultimate destruction in the chaos of world events.<sup>8</sup> Looking specifically at the two Judith plays, one very obvious comparison can also be made between the two authors. With respect to this legend, neither portrays Judith as fully altruistic in her actions. As opposed to Büchner's main protagonists, and to those of Hochhuth's earlier plays, the heroines of both Judith plays are shown to act upon personal motivation. Hebbel concentrates the personal motivation of his heroine upon the sexual element of the Judith legend - and the theme of sexuality is emulated by Hochhuth - whilst Hochhuth introduces a

crippled brother as a further motivation to his character. This parallel is significant for the development of Hochhuth's work inasmuch as it may reflect a growing awareness that compassion and humanity alone are insufficient motivation to act in the face of overwhelming pessimism. This pessimism characterises both the author's world view and that of many of his leading characters (Gerstein, Nicolson, Sophie, for example).

Hochhuth's ideas indicate a variety of influences, and he has 'borrowed' from numerous other authors and philosophers. His dramatic form can be described as equally eclectic. Firstly, it must be said that Hochhuth does not rigidly adhere to the accepted division of literary genres. Thus, whilst all the works studied here are dramas written for the stage, each is also obviously, and intentionally, written as a 'Lesedrama'.<sup>29</sup> The reader is as important as the audience in Hochhuth's concept of his own work, and this aspect is reflected in the mass of comment, interjection and information included in the published text, and of which the theatre audience is frequently unaware.

Taken purely as theatre plays, the works studied display an amalgamation of traditional and epic dramatic styles, and also include elements reminiscent of the mediaeval mystery play. When this ambivalence

of style is considered in the light of Hochhuth's equally eclectic historical philosophy, it can be seen to have logical origins. The author's belief in the central historical role of the individual has led him to build up his dramatic work around a central biographical core, for example borrowing the traditional five act structure and term tragedy from classical dramatists. Secondly, whilst rejecting an overall world view, Hochhuth does believe in the repetition of historical patterns, and - in this context - in short term, limited possibilities for improvement and change. His didactic aim to illustrate such possibilities has led him to adopt some aspects of epic theatre. Finally, Hochhuth feels helpless in the face of history, more especially in the face of its inexplicable absurdity. This mysterious aspect, as an element in the nature of man and of events independent of him, leads to the tendency towards mystification and allegory typical of the mystery play.

The balance of these various stylistic elements varies from play to play. Again, an examination of Hochhuth's historical starting point in the case of each drama demonstrates a logical relationship between style and 'message'. Thus in Soldaten, for example, the personality of Churchill has such weight in Hochhuth's understanding of British involvement in the

Second World War that the biographically oriented central part of the play pushes the speculative, didactic element into the framework alone, whilst the irrational is minimally represented in the recurrent figure of death as a charred corpse. Thus the structure of the play is a direct result of Hochhuth's image of Churchill, a powerful and dominant image recurrent in much of the dramatist's work, including his lyric poetry:

Der mehr Völker, Armeen, Schiffe bewegt hat;  
mehr Seiten geschrieben, mehr Reden gehalten  
als jeder - als jeder! - andere...

'Churchill' PM 110

On the other hand, Hochhuth approaches the First World War from a different standpoint. Here, in Sommer 14, his emphasis is on the irrational and the atmospheric, whilst not denying the significant roles of numerous individuals. The result is a much less traditional structure; one in which a collection of 'Momentaufnahmen' is presented as a collage intended to reflect the character of a specific era.

A key work for the understanding of Hochhuth's historical standpoint and thus of his plays is the essay 'Vorstudien zu einer Ethologie der Geschichte'. This essay confirms three essential aspects of Hochhuth's historical perspective. The first is that history, whilst incoherent and senseless as a whole, does display patterns and cycles which repeat



themselves. Secondly, that mankind is on the whole morally evil, but that an elite exists, and that its actions and words can lead to improvement, even guiding the path of history onto a more positive course. Finally, Hochhuth again admits to a basic helplessness when confronted with the absurdity of historical events and the irrational actions of mankind in many contexts. These three aspects provide the basis for a series of utopian plays about the future. In these it is an enlightened individual, or group of individuals, who brings about effective and positive change in society, or attempts to do so.

The first of these plays, Guerillas, can be read as a dramatic illustration of the essay, VEG. In this play, Hochhuth places emphasis on a limited historical improvement - in the constitution of the USA. This reduction is essential, since he is pessimistic about lasting and wide-scale change and wholeheartedly rejects any world view based on this possibility. In this context, however, a problem emerges in Guerillas which has remained unsolved, namely that of convincingly motivating his main characters. These characters are credited with the moral integrity to attempt short-term improvement, often at a disadvantage to themselves and despite an overall pessimism concerning the effectivity of their actions. A stark contrast emerges between this elite and the

masses, who are characterised negatively. In Guerillas and Die Hebamme, social change is brought about by such an elite, the masses are rejected as a basis for revolution and improvement. These two plays perhaps illustrate most clearly Hochhuth's absolute emphasis on the individual, not only in a social context, but also - speculatively - in a historical role.

In the light of what has been said, several factors may have played a part in a new development which emerged in Hochhuth's writing following the completion of Guerillas. Three plays in which women are given the leading roles enabled the author, for example, to speculate upon the significance of personal motivation for political action. Study of the essay 'Frauen und Mütter' reveals that Hochhuth adheres to a largely traditional image of the woman, and the association of the woman with the personal sphere is a part of this image. The desire to consider alternative motivation to that of Nicolson, in Guerillas, may have been a result of the author's own awareness of the contradiction inherent in a pessimist who acts to bring about change despite a deep conviction that the world and the mass of mankind cannot ultimately be improved. A second traditional association of the woman with myth and mystery, with the night as opposed to day, also makes the choice of women as main characters logical in the context of Hochhuth's

interest in the mysterious, the 'triebhaft' in human nature and in historical events. Finally, Hochhuth's pessimism in the face of the masses, coupled with a desire to strive for improvement, may have led the author to the woman, or women, as historically active figures. In the essay 'Frauen und Mütter', Hochhuth emphasises male dominance in the past, such that his pessimism, engendered by the horrors of history, is also centred around 'man' as a whole. There is a certain hope associated with women, on the other hand, whose world view has not yet been tried and tested. Hochhuth expresses optimism in conjunction with his vision of society dominated by women, associating the female with virtues essentially more humane.

Hier gilt es, die Grenzen männlicher Erfahrung, männlicher Fähigkeit - ja die der männlichen Einbildungskraft weit hinter sich lassen und sich "der Vertrautheit mit den dunklen Tiefen der menschlichen Natur...der Erregbarkeit der weiblichen Gefühlswelt" (Bachofen) in die Arme zu werfen. Frauen werden herausspüren, wie das zu tun ist...."der unterjochende Zauber des dionysischen Kultes" wird sie dann wie vor Urzeiten auf den rechten Weg führen, der die Männerwelt zerstören kann, die nicht einmal fertigbringt, die Umwelt vor der Zerstörung zu bewahren. LN 217

An overall examination of Hochhuth's dramatic work leads to the conclusion that it is dominated by the powerful individual. Although he has experimented to escape this dominance - Lysistrata und die Nato and

Sommer 14 are two examples showing several individuals with equal political and historical significance - the concept of an intellectual, moral and political elite remains central. Despite his commitment to the improvement of social conditions, the portrayal of this elite and his disregard for, even defamation of the masses, has made Hochhuth particularly unpopular with the left. He himself offers a plausible explanation for the dominance of the strong individual in his work by pointing out the psychological consequences of a childhood under the dictatorship of Hitler and his patriarchal image (see above p. 253f). Seen in this light, it is also plausible that this authoritative father figure, which constantly re-emerges in Hochhuth's work, should have a dual, ambivalent nature. The simultaneous aspects of benevolence and evil in the father figure which has thus been created come to be seen as a historical necessity in Hochhuth's view - 'daß...der Trieb zum Bösen ein Wesenselement auch des Guten sein muß, wenn er stark sein will' (§ 90f).

Certainly, an approach to Hochhuth's work in the context of a defined historical ideology cannot do justice to the variety of his ideas and style. If, on the other hand, the eclectic nature of his historical philosophy and dramatic technique is accepted, some

insight can be gained into the developing content, style and reception of his plays.

Footnotes:

1 - Fritz J. Raddatz, 'Der utopische Pessimist', in Eingriff in die Zeitgeschichte p. 34

2 - Philosophisches Wörterbuch (Kröner), ed. Georgi Schischkoff. Stuttgart 1978, p. 90

3 - These essays include:

Räuber-Rede, Drei deutsche Vorwürfe. Schiller/Lessing/  
Geschwister Scholl, Reinbek, 1982

'Lessing' in Täter und Denker p. 224ff Stuttgart, 1987

'Büchner lesen, um Marx zu retten' in Schwarze Segel p. 29ff,  
Reinbek, 1986

4 - Martin Esslin, 'Wahrheit und Dokumentation. Ein Gespräch mit  
Rolf Hochhuth.' Jenseits des Absurden p. 140, Vienna, 1972

5 - 'Büchner lesen, um Marx zu retten', Schwarze Segel p. 29ff

6 - See H/VEG p. 359 and 400f

7 - Räuber-Rede p. 71

8 - See for example Klaus Ziegler, 'Die Wendung zur  
Wirklichkeit' in Friedrich Hebbel ed. Helmut Kreuzer, Darmstadt,  
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9 - See interview with F.J. Raddatz in ZEIT-Gespräche p. 22f,  
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- Räuber-Rede, Rowohlt, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1982
- Schwarze Segel. Essays und Gedichte. Rowohlt (rororo 5776), Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1986
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- Tell 38. Rowohlt, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1979
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