

The University of Manitoba

DÜRRENMATT: ES STEHT GESCHRIEBEN AND ITS REVISION

DIE WIEDERTÄUFER

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis compares Dürrenmatt's first play, Es steht geschrieben (first performance in 1947) with the revision, Die Wiedertäufer, which appeared twenty years later. The first play is written with the roaming enthusiasm of youth, eager to try all the ideas a young dramatist dreams of. His theme is serious though: the spiritual struggle of man seeking God. Twenty years later his eagerness has been replaced by experience, but his ideas are still fresh and gripping. His themes now are less concerned with heaven, but centre on man's ability to live on in the modern world, the successful answer is to let life become a stage on which man loses his problems in the delirious whirl of histrionic action.

The plan of this thesis is to examine the plays carefully, in detail, before going on to a critical study of them as drama. This includes the text, the structure, and the staging. In this way the reader gains a close acquaintanceship with the plays before he begins to make judgments about them, which is very important with Dürrenmatt. The plays present many temptations to go off on tangents, and Dürrenmatt himself is sometimes misleading.

The first chapter deals with the text of the plays, examining the kind of line Dürrenmatt uses. His line has the poetic elevation of verse without its usual metrical qualities, and varies in length beyond generally accepted

limits. This results in an interesting configuration, but one difficult to assess. The chapters on scene division, and the use of the stage, which follow, are a study of the various ways Dürrenmatt uses his imagination on stage, and later uses his experience to change many of his experiments into successful practice.

Figurative language and dramatic devices are the subjects of the next two chapters. These are the areas where Dürrenmatt's enthusiasm overflows into profusion. In the first play he experiments endlessly, in the revision he knows how to work effectively towards the ends he has in mind. In the chapter on characterization the thesis again borders on the unorthodox (as in the chapter on the text) because it considers only special characters, with emphasis on the truly individual ones. The role-playing characters are discussed in the chapter on plot, because the plays cannot be said to have plot except for the interaction between these rôles. It is significant that Dürrenmatt keeps a definite separation between the stage and the audience to restrain the audience from sympathetic involvement, but at the same time forces it to think about the problems which the plays present, dropping the curtains before it can reach any convincing answers.

Dürrenmatt believes in a living tradition of drama growing out of the bed of classical drama and nurtured by the great works that have appeared after the Greek beginnings. That we no longer live in a divinely ordered natural world is the stron-

gest factor bringing about change in modern drama, but it does not move Dürrenmatt to the extent of becoming a nihilist, or of treating life as absurd in a pessimistic way. Not daring to react positively against the pessimism of the age, he chooses the Quixotic hero who challenges a mocking world in his weakness and his foolishness, and whose real battle is the struggle to subdue the world and its fears within himself.

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I. The Text

The first encounter with an author is with the text, the lines he has written. With his first line the author begins to make his impact upon the reader, or listener, long before his dramatic intentions or his real poetic skills become evident. Dürrenmatt makes his debut into the world of theatre with a burst of grotesque, expressionistic fervour in the opening scenes of Es steht geschrieben, bringing onto the stage the agitation of the young, romantically rebellious dramatist. The eagerness of the youthful Dürrenmatt breaks through in the lines of the text, overflowing with the endless variety of his enthusiasm, but always under conscious control, sometimes of his wisdom, and frequently of his reckless extravagance. The vitality of his lines and their impact upon the student claim for them a thorough study of their form and style, and the techniques with which he creates them, the individual bricks of the larger structure of the text.

Dürrenmatt uses predominantly a poetic verse style in his first play: poetic in that what the character has to say is fitted into a form of line pre-determined by the author, in that it "aims at a total response which is at least as much emotional as rational", and in that it "relies upon the suggestive and connotative aspects of language." His lines vary, and where the play turns into dialogue they take on more the style of prose, becoming more natural and "subservient to clear and rational

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statement", the form of the line being determined more by the character and what he has to say. This trend is very noticeable in his tenth play, Die Wiedertäufer, where Dürrenmatt's romanticist and expressionistic tendencies are disappearing, and it becomes evident that he is still deeply rooted in the past, in the Greek classics especially, and in dramatists like Shakespeare, or in the more recent Austrian Volkstheater.

Under the spell of the youthful subjectivism of a Romanticist, Dürrenmatt wrote his first play with a freedom that parallels the first plays of Schiller and Goethe. He threw off all restraint, he let his imagination roam at will to create the lines of his text, and to vary them as fancy pleased. This "un-
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restrained self-expression" brings in marks of expressionism, and the characteristically Dürrenmattian use of grotesque elements of style. Hans Mayer says of Es steht geschrieben:

Dürrenmatts erstes Stück, darin stellvertretend für seine gesamte frühe Dramatik, verkündete immer wieder den Primat des Opfers vor jeglicher Aktion. Der Leidende stand moralisch und metaphysisch höher als der Täter. Hierin erwies sich der junge Dürrenmatt in aller Bewußtheit als ein Lehrling Frank Wedekinds und der expressionistischen Dramatiker.³

This inclination towards expressionism was obvious in the painting

¹Irving Ribner and Harry Morris, Poetry: A Critical and Historical Introduction (Chicago: Scott-Foresman, 1962), p. 1. The words in quotation marks are taken from their definition of poetry.

²H.F. Garten, Modern German Drama (London: University Paperbacks, Methuen, 1964) p. 105. Garten uses these words in defining "Expressionism".

³Hans Mayer, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt", Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie (Berlin: December, 1968), p. 494.

and sketching which involved much of his energies during his younger years. Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer mentions this:

Friedrich Dürrenmatt war damals sechszwanzigjährig. Eben erst hatte er sich von der Malerei, vom Studium der Philosophie und der Literatur zur Dichtung gewandt: was er verließ, klingt noch sehr hörbar in sein erstes Drama hinein. Die in der Sammlung Klosterberg erschienene Buchausgabe des Stücks enthält einige Schwarz-Weiß-Blätter des Autors, sie sind eindeutig expressionistisch geprägt. Nicht anders ist die Sprache des Dramas.⁴

As an example Brock-Sulzer quotes the following lines from the play, Es steht geschrieben:

DER WÄCHTER: ...Und prächtig wird sich die siegreiche Stadt in den weißen Leibern ihrer Feinde spiegeln,...

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Laß mich hineintanzen in die Welt voller Kokospalmen und Eisbären, singender Mörder am Galgen und schlafender Blumen am Hügel!⁵

It was partly to get away from his sickening fascination with expressionism that Dürrenmatt turned to writing. Here the subjective freedoms he had assumed were soon challenged by the profounder, universal problems of the world of the stage, and his expression materializes into a style that is pervaded with the elements of parody and the grotesque. Reinhold Grimm sums it up like this:

Ich glaube, unser Befund ist eindeutig. Das Groteske, so lautet er, bildet die Grundstruktur im Werk Friedrich Dürrenmatts - genauso wie sich die Verfremdung als die Grundstruktur im Werk Bertolt Brechts erweist. Daß Verfremdung und Groteske im Bereich der Parodie und des Gegenentwurfs nah mit einander verwandt sind, daß sie hier sogar völlig ineinander übergehen können, darf uns nicht

⁴Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Stationen seines Werkes (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1964), p. 20.

⁵Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Komödien II, und frühe Stücke (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1963), pp. 57 & 110. From here on all references to this play will be acknowledged by the notation "E.S.G., p. ___" attached to the quotation.

beirren.

The study of the lines which build the structure of Dürrenmatt's text is interesting and complicated. His fearless freedom in experimenting with a variety of line forms, and his use of grotesqueness and parody in form as well as in style elements, produce a profusion of forms of expression. His lines are poetic (see page 1), serious, and consciously constructed, and only seldom do they become natural and relaxed dialogue. The most difficult problem to cope with is his variation of the length of his lines. In this he is consistent only in his unpredictability. His lines vary from two metrical feet to the length of a short paragraph. The following is an example of his poetic lines:

BERNHARD KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Ich bin reich und meine Schätze
 füllen die Truhen meines Hauses und die schweren Eichen-
 schränke.
 Auf den Meeren der Erde fahren meine Schiffe und bringen
 mir Gold, Perlen und duftende Öle.
 Ich kleide mich in kostbare Seide und dunklen Sammet und
 hülle mich in die Pelze fremder Tiere.
 Könige und Herzöge sind meine Schuldner.
 Selbst der Kaiser, der stolze Karl, verschmähte es nicht,
 an meinem Tische zu speisen, und sein Maler Tizian machte
 ein Bild von mir, auf dem ich wie ein Apostel aussehe.
 Mein Weib ist schön.
 Ihre Haut ist wie der Schnee, der im Dezember auf den
 Dächern liegt.

E.S.G., p. 26.

These are the first seven 'lines' of Knipperdollinck's introductory monologue, consisting of sixteen such lines. There is no regular metrical rhythm but rather a poetic phrasing which makes the lines

⁶Reinhold Grimm, "Parodie und Grotteske im Werk Friedrich Dürrenmatts", Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift, Band XI (Heidelberg: 1961), p. 446.

flow with a true poetic cadence. The gross irregularity of the length of the lines does not mar this poetic movement but elevates it into a sublimity of style above that of a regular metrical line. It also enables the author to achieve some effects of emphasis which normally come more naturally with prose.

The dialogue parts of Es steht geschrieben vary from a poetic verse line to a poetic prose as the language becomes more natural, and are interspersed with paragraphs which may be as poetically constructed as the verse lines. Only seldom does Dürrenmatt come close to a natural form of discursive dialogue. The difference between verse lines and paragraphs is often difficult to realize, and it is necessary for the student to immerse himself submissively in the text of Es steht geschrieben until he can feel this concept of a "line of verse", or else the whole structure of the text will remain an incongruous mass of words. The lines of verse usually form part of a larger pattern, in contrast to the paragraphs which often stand alone, having a special significance by themselves. This problem of the lines of the text has become simpler in the later play, Die Wiedertäufer, where the forms are more easily acceptable to the conservative student. In the first play Dürrenmatt makes heavy demands on the good graces of the reader who wants to comprehend what he is trying to do.

The influence of Luther upon Dürrenmatt at this early stage is remarkable, although it could be said that the theme of the play, Es steht geschrieben, leads to a reliance upon the Bible and thus to Luther. Taking the Bible as divided into verses, from Genesis to Revelation, Luther's

verses have a style and construction that is definitely similar to Dürrenmatt's lines, although the verse division of the Bible demands a unit that is longer than most of his lines. The careful internal construction of Luther's verses and their poetic style are clearly evident in the play.

A detailed analysis reveals the carefully-built structure of Dürrenmatt's lines. A typical line of verse is the first line of Es steht geschrieben:

DER MITTLERE WIEDERTÄUFER: Gott verhüllte sein Antlitz,
da erlosch die Sonne im Meer und die Schiffe brannten
über den Wassern.

E.S.G., p. 13

The scanning is difficult. The line can be scanned to have ten feet, with a feminine ending, plus an accented syllable at the beginning of the line. The ten feet are mixed, iambic and anapestic. Obviously Dürrenmatt does not work with lines that have regular metric patterns, just as he ignores rhyme completely except on a few special occasions.

The second line of verse, immediately following the above line, reads:

Die Wale wurden ans Land geschwemmt.

E.S.G., p. 13

This line has four feet: three iambs and one anapest. The change in length arrests the reader. Instead of using regularity of line, Dürrenmatt continually changes his lines with no regard for uniformity of length, just as the line itself has no regular metrical pattern. Dürrenmatt's verse is poetical by virtue of more dramatic elements of style than metre or rhyme. It is created to be effective on the stage as a spoken word, which can easily become

monotonous through regularity. Dürrenmatt avoids the danger of monotony with the variety of poetic freedom he assumes, and the carefully structured poetic line of verse he creates.

His lines are made up of units larger than feet. The first line quoted consists of three main parts. It begins with an assertion, "Gott verhüllte sein Antlitz," which is followed by a double antithesis, "da erlosch die Sonne im Meer," and "die Schiffe brannten über den Wassern." Balance in the line does not exist in the length of the assertion compared with the antithesis, but in the dramatic weight of the two parts. The two parts of the antithesis run parallel in construction and are tied into one unit by the fact that both figures centre on the ocean. Each part consists of a main clause and a prepositional phrase, e.g., "da erlosch die Sonne" with "im Meer", and "die Schiffe brannten" with "über den Wassern." The two words, "Meer" and "Wassern", tie the two statements together and reinforce the antithesis. Altogether, then, this line can be broken into five units, which constitute the parts with which Dürrenmatt builds the rhythm of the line, a more dramatic style than a rhythm which depends on metrical feet.

The second line is really the third part of the antithesis in the first line. It is a figure of the ocean and comes as a result of the assertion at the beginning. The result of its standing alone is that the reader is stopped at this point for a moment to let him absorb the effect of the statement. The construction of the sentence, with the verb at the end, strengthens the emphasis of the line.

Generally the lines of dialogue closely resemble the verse.

An example:

ERSTER BÜRGER: Wir wollen hoffen, daß er immer viel
Arbeit haben wird. Nur die praktische Beschäftigung
am Mann züchtet den vollendeten Scharfrichter.

E.S.G., p. 40

The statement is divided into two parts by means of a period.

The second part is an amplification of the first part and gives poetic balance to the whole. Another example of a line of dialogue is:

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Ihr seid nicht gekämmt und nicht
gewaschen, Vierfürst. Ihr erscheint im bloßen Hemd
vor unseren Augen.

E.S.G., p. 84

Here the line is divided with the word, "Vierfürst," and it creates a fine balance within the whole, the second part adding to the argument of the first. A different example is the following:

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Diese Fahne reizt die Unvernunft
und trübt den klaren Sinn der Täufer. Weh dem, der
Verwirrung stiftet!

E.S.G., p. 84

It begins with a parallel statement, using a re-statement of the first assertion, for the purpose of emphasis so that it gives balance to the simpler but more emphatic antithesis, which is derived from the assertion. A large part of the dialogue in the play is made up of poetic constructions as exemplified in the quoted lines, with many other variations. Dürrenmatt writes with the finesse of a poet, and builds each line with careful attention to the effect he wants to create. Some of the dialogue consists of short responses some of it extends into paragraphs, but most of it shows the marks of poetic style.

The language of Dürrenmatt in Es steht geschrieben has been compared to that of the Bible. Urs Jenny refers to his making use of Biblical language: "dessen Sprache sich von den alttestamentarischen Psalmen, der Apokalypse, den deutschen Mystikern nährt,⁷..." Hans Bänziger refers specifically to the long monologues of the play: "Die langen Monologe klingen oft wie Psalme, nicht bloß wie parodierte Religiosität."⁸ Beda Allemann is more general in his statements:

Was Nietzsche mit seinem parodistischen Einsatz der Bibelsprache in "Also sprach Zarathustra" nicht gelungen ist, Dürrenmatt erreicht es scheinbar mühelos: den vollkommen spielerischen Gebrauch des Luther-Deutsch.

...

Dasselbe gilt aber, in einem weitern Sinn, von der parodistischen Sprache dieses Täuferstückes überhaupt: auch in der Parodie der Bibel- und der barocken Amtssprache wird auf dem Wege eines künstlerisch bedenklichen Kurzschlusses ein Formeffekt erzielt, der an sich noch keine künstlerische Gestalt verbürgt.⁹

For a comparison with the monologues, consider the first lines of Psalm 24:

Die Erde ist des Herrn, und was drinnen ist
der Erdboden und was drauf wohnt.
Denn Er hat ihn an die Meere gegründet,
und an den Wassern bereitet.

(Luther)

The sentence consists of an assertion and an antithesis, each of which has a double construction, using repetition for the purpose

⁷Urs Jenny, Friedrich Dürrenmatt (Velber b. Hannover: Friedrich Verlag, 1965), pp. 15-16.

⁸Hans Bänziger, Frisch und Dürrenmatt (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1967), p. 134.

⁹Beda Allemann, "Dürrenmatt-Es steht geschrieben", Das Deutsche Drama vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart, Band 2 (Düsseldorf: Bagel Verlag, 1958), pp. 419,420.

of emphasis. The constructions used in the Psalms are fairly regular and do not show the variations found in Es steht geschrieben. However, the poetic verse of Es steht geschrieben reminds the reader quite definitely of the Psalms, and other Biblical poetry. As the play has a religious theme based on Biblical teachings, it is only proper that it should parody Biblical language, in Allemann's words, where the roles demand it, or just use it naturally where a religious significance is desired in the context. Dürrenmatt finds the language of the Luther Bible very suitable in conjunction with the baroque character of the whole.

Dürrenmatt's style of long lines of varying, often straggling verse is not popular among dramatists. The modern trend is towards a natural, prosaic style of expression; and in the past, when a verse style was thought necessary, it was usually written in a consistently regular style of verse with short lines (compared to the length of Dürrenmatt's lines). Hans Bänziger makes a comparison with several other writers using a similar style:

Das Wort besitzt Dürrenmatt jetzt, wie ihn früher das Bild besessen hatte. Die reimlosen Langverse, die damals nur Claudel, Eliot, Fry kannten, füllen die Bühne mit einem Pathos, dessen sie lange entbehrt hatte.¹⁰

Referring to Dürrenmatt's free rhythms, Christian Jauslin makes the same comparison:

Die Sprache dieser Täufer ist eng an die biblische Sprache der Lutherübersetzung angelehnt, vor allem an die Psalmen. Weiter dienen als Vorbild die freien Rhythmen, wie sie besonders das angelsächsische und das französische Theater kennen, also etwa FRY, ELIOT, und CLAUDEL; von letzterem

¹⁰Hans Bänziger, Frisch und Dürrenmatt (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1967), p. 134.

unterscheiden sie sich aber durch die einfache syntaktische Konstruktion der Sätze. Haupt- und Nebensätze folgen sich nacheinander verschränkt, ein Sprechduktus, der auch allen späteren Monologen des Stückes eigen ist. Man darf diese Sätze aber dennoch mit einem übertrieben-pathetischen Ton sprechen.¹¹

T.S. Eliot made a serious effort to bring poetic verse back into use in twentieth century drama. He did not imitate traditional verse, but experimented very freely, in his first real play, Murder in the Cathedral, in search of a new verse style that would satisfy both him and the public. The lines of the Chorus in this play are similar to many of Dürrenmatt's lines, as an example from the first page shows:

Since golden October declined into sombre November
 And the apples were gathered and stored, and the land
 became brown sharp points of death in a waste of
 water and mud,
 The New Year waits, breathes, waits, whispers in dark-
 ness.
 While the labourer kicks off a muddy boot and stretches
 his hand to the fire, 12
 The New Year waits, destiny waits for the coming.

Generally, however, Eliot uses a shorter, conservative style of line in this play. In later plays he does less experimenting and writes a more uniform style of line, which also becomes less poetic, giving in to the prevailing tendency towards natural speech. In contrast, Dürrenmatt stays with his verse style in Die Wiedertäufer, and refines the structure of his lines.

The comparison with Claudel has more validity. In Partage de midi, Claudel uses a line of verse that varies freely from one word

¹¹Christian M. Jauslin, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Zur Struktur seiner Dramen (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1964), p. 32.

¹²T.S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral (Toronto: Kingswood House, 1959), p. 5.

to six lines of text. However, he uses this style of line consistently throughout the play, without the variation of lines that Dürrenmatt still employs in Die Wiedertäufer. In his earlier plays Claudel uses shorter lines, but in his later plays they become longer, more like paragraphs, though still retaining their poetic qualities. Following are several lines from Partage de midi:

YSE

Je me rappelle! vous laissez pousser votre barbe à ce moment, elle était roide comme une étrille!

Comme j'étais forte et joyeuse à ce moment! comme je riais bien! comme je me tenais bien!

Et comme j'étais jolie aussi!

Et puis la vie est venue, les enfants son venus.

Et maintenant vous voyez comme me voilà réduite et obéissante.¹³

Claudel varies the length of his lines, using many short lines, but he does not let them become too cumbersome the way Dürrenmatt occasionally does. His lines build their rhythm on larger units than metrical feet and these parts are well-balanced in weight and length, so that the lines move with poetic effect. This is similar to what Dürrenmatt does with his predominant style of line.

In the texts of both plays quoted, by Claudel and Eliot, the printed page is laid out so that each line is shown as a separate entity by means of a system of indentation. In this way the reader understands clearly what the writer is doing. In this respect the text of Es steht geschrieben is defective, and the reader needs a thorough acquaintance with the text before he gains an idea of what

¹³Paul Claudel, Partage de midi (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), p. 33.

Dürrenmatt is doing with his lines. In Die Wiedertäufer he has developed a system of punctuation which enables the reader to identify the lines of verse.

Dürrenmatt makes use of the paragraph, sometimes to slow down the movement, and at other times for heightened effect. In the following example Knipperdollinck is talking to his daughter:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Du hast den Becher, meine Tochter, mit jener Sorgfalt auf den Tisch gestellt, die ich immer an dir lobe. Der Becher ist kostbar gearbeitet und es ziemt sich, ihm eine gute Behandlung angedeihen zu lassen. Die Steine, welche du an ihm siehst, haben Kaufleute aus Indien gebracht und das Gold stammt aus Afrika. Sanft strahlt es dein Bild zurück.

E.S.G., p. 27

The simplicity of the style and the absence of ambiguity and grotesqueness make this paragraph so different from Dürrenmatt's normal style that it arrests the reader and demands careful study. The golden cup becomes a figure of his daughter and the sentences build up in slow cadence to carry the full effect of the image across to the reader. The first sentence refers to the cup, in the second sentence the cup becomes the subject, and in the third the parts of the cup are described. The movement is from the general to the particular. The rhythm is smooth, with each sentence ending in a pause enforced by an ending word with slow vowels. The last sentence, "Sanft strahlt es dein Bild zurück.", is very carefully built to provide the climax of the paragraph; structurally, as a finale to the heightened build-up of the preceding three parallel sentences, and poetically, as it completes the image: Judith's image reflected upon the cup, and the cup as an image of Judith. The line itself is very carefully balanced with two slow words at the begin-

ning and two at the end. By virtue of its poetic effect, the paragraph becomes a point in the play where everything stands still, if only for a moment, and the reader sees this lovely, peaceful scene between father and daughter, a glimpse of heaven before hell breaks loose in full fury upon the doomed city. It provides an arresting contrast with the action of the play, an island of reflection with a Keatsian figure made sublime with a poetic profundity rarely found in a paragraph. It is at points like this that Dürrenmatt's greatness shines through the deceptivity of his grotesque surface.

Another example is the speech of the announcer, made when the monk is brought for execution:

DER ANSAGER: Der Rat zu Münster in Westfalen dem Volk zu Münster in Westfalen. Wir haben für gut und billig befunden, den lotterhaften Buben und entlaufenen Mönch, Maximilian Bleibeganz, die Bürger zu schrecken und zu mahnen, durch das Schwert vom Leben zum Tode zu bringen, da er bei einem Weibe lag.

E.S.G., p. 39

In this paragraph Dürrenmatt uses a very regular construction, carefully balanced throughout. It begins with an introductory sentence which is formal and heavy in tone, composed of two equal parts which are antithetic: "Der Rat" against "dem Volk", but at the same time repetitive with "zu Münster in Westfalen" in each part. The main body of the paragraph is split in the middle with the name of the accused, "Maximilian Bleibeganz", and each of the two parts is again divided in two. Each of these parts consists of a statement that contains antithetical elements, e.g., "gut und billig", "Buben" and "Mönch", "schrecken" and "mahnen", and "Leben

zum Tode". The paragraph ends with a clause, "da er bei einem Weibe lag.", which creates a sharp dramatic contrast with its utter simplicity, to the bombastic weight of the accusation of the body of the paragraph. The reader, of course, also knows that the sharing of wives is a part of the program of the Anabaptists and that the whole charge is silly. The intended execution of the monk is a satire on the coming appearance of Bockelson with his wives. The paragraph is carefully structured and does not resemble prose as it is ordinarily used.

In the conversation between the Bishop and Kaiser Karl V, the paragraphs become less structured and more like prose, although the rhythm remains poetic as well as the diction. There are several paragraphs by the Gemüesefrau which are highly dramatic and also very rich in symbolic meaning, but they will be considered in Chapter 6, Characterization.

In the encounter between the Bishop and the Landgraf von Hessen, there occurs an interesting echo-exchange between the latter's two wives.

DER LANDGRAF VON HESSEN: Ich sage: Es klopft.
 CHRISTINE: Mein Gemahl hat ausdrücklich gesagt: Es klopft!
 MARGARETA: Ausdrücklich hat mein Gemahl gesagt: Es klopft!
 E.S.G., p. 89

The two speak together but not in agreement, and usually as an echo of someone. The effect is doubtful, and incongruous with the general style of the play. It seems to be just an experimental trick with Dürrenmatt and he realized afterward that it had little poetic value.

In summary, Dürrenmatt uses language in Es steht geschrieben¹⁴ that is both, poetic and dramatic, whether written in verse or paragraph form, and is easily distinguishable from prose that is normally used in dialogue. He is afraid of falling into definite patterns of writing and as a result uses a profusion of variations which serve to keep his lines alive and vibrant. He never finds himself short of new ideas and in this first play of his, he loves to experiment with them. Sometimes his experiments fall flat, as in the echo-responses between von Hessen's two wives, but the main weakness lies in the number and length of the monologues. Dürrenmatt was fond of his poetic verse and wrote too much of it. It did not take long, though, until he realized that this was a weakness and learned to control his efforts. The play, Die Wiedertäufer, shows a marked change from the first play in the use of language.

The first speech in Es steht geschrieben which is spoken by one of the Anabaptists and consists of ten lines of tersely dramatic verse, has been condensed into three short lines in Die Wiedertäufer, as follows:

MATTHISON: Gott verhüllte sein Antlitz
 Da verließ das Tier mit den sieben Köpfen seine Höhle,¹⁵
 Vom Geklirr seiner Schwingen erbebte Himmel und Erde

¹⁴Poetic in that it carries an elevated tone, relies on the connotative aspects of language, and is consciously structured; dramatic in that it responds very easily to the action of the play whether emotional, ideological, or physical.

¹⁵Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Die Wiedertäufer (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1967), p. 11. From hereon all references to this play will be acknowledged by the notation 'D.W., p. ___' attached to the quotation.

It is now spoken by Matthison, one of the main characters, as part of a conversation. The lines have become shorter and simpler, and can be scanned into feet, but they still do not have a regular metrical pattern. However, the lines are not prose, they are verse by virtue of syntax and diction.

The actors in Die Wiedertäufer are definitely speaking to one another, with more of a personal touch, compared to the poetic declamation used in the first play, but it has still not become a conversational dialogue. For example:

BISCHOF: Erlaubt, daß Wir Euch einen Sessel holen lassen. Er wurde zur Verrammung des Hauptportals gegen vorwitzige Täufer benötigt, nun ist er nicht zur Stelle.

D.W., p. 20

This becomes plain dialogue except for the last clause where the conjunction "und" is omitted. Sometimes the language does become straight dialogue:

FRAU LANGERMANN: Für uns gewöhnliches Volk sind die Andachten des Propheten Rothmann noch immer die besten, nicht wahr, Hellmuth?

D.W., p. 25

This is a simple conversational line, spoken quite in keeping with the actor and situation involved.

The significant difference in this play is that the characters use the style of language that best fits their roles. Bockelson stands out as the character with the most varied role to act in the play, and between the play and the audience, and his lines show the multifariousness needed for this. His role in the play is quite directly stated:

KRECHTING: Ihr seid ein Schauspieler geblieben und habt eine neue Rolle gefunden.

BOCKELSON: Die Rolle meines Lebens,...

D.W., p. 41

Bockelson's part in the plot revolves around the fact that he has lost his place in a theatre company, and has been rejected by the Bishop's theatre group. As a result, he takes destiny into his own hands by turning the world into a stage. Specifically, Münster is going to be the arena where he practices his abilities as an actor. It is a local area, but the consequences of his role spread over far boundaries. He says, "Die Rolle meines Lebens," and it is not only his role on the stage, but his life itself becomes a role he is playing. This leads to complications in understanding the play, for the reader as well as for the associates of Bockelson, as is shown on the page just preceding the above quotation, where Krechting, who is a colleague of Bockelson, is quite confused over his proceedings and gets an explanation as follows:

BOCKELSON: Bruder Krechting, Ihr scheint verwirrt. Ich rezitiere meine alten Rollen. Seneca.

D.W., p. 40

Krechting didn't realize that what he heard Bockelson doing was declaiming some old roles. However, Krechting was justified in his misunderstanding because Bockelson was not only practicing his Seneca, but is also following this role in actual life. His real life and his life on the stage are becoming the same role. The above anecdote leads to the main theme of the play and will be considered in depth in a later chapter. Here it is only necessary to look at the language that Bockelson uses, remembering his complicated role.

In the beginning of the play his utterances have the character of the pentecostalist tent-meeting evangelist, or the political

agitator (shouts of Hitler, perhaps), who works on the psychological frailties of his audience. While Matthison, Rothmann and other Anabaptists are shrieking out expressionistic religious cries from their warped minds, Bockelson is speaking with a cool head lines of which his compatriots do not even suspect the meaning, lines which are consciously executed with controlled purpose. The lines are part of the joint declamation which began with the first three lines quoted from the play.

BOCKELSON: Herr, Herr, laß uns nicht gänzlich im Stiche!

 BOCKELSON: Herr, Herr, deine Feinde verspotten dich!

 BOCKELSON: Herr, Herr, blicke nieder auf unser Elend!

 BOCKELSON: Herr, Herr, erleuchte uns!

 BOCKELSON: Herr, Herr, erbarme dich unser!

 BOCKELSON: Herr, Herr, in tiefster Not schrei ich zu dir!

D.W., pp. 11-12

The lines are exclamations, but also well-worn clichés used in prayer. He is joining wholeheartedly in the general harangue, but the audience is easily clued in to his purpose by the fact that he is not ranting like the others but only repeating very correct statements for an Anabaptist to make. As the tirade of the group turns to a more jubilant mood, Bockelson's expressions dwindle to one-word ejaculations, as: "Jauchzet!", "Singet!", "Preiset!", "Gesegnet!", "Halleluja!", "Hosianna!", and "Amen!". He is using verbs designed to rouse religious fervor, ending with shouts of religious praise.

¹⁶See References to Hitler, Appendix B.

They serve his purpose well, which is to keep the general tirade going while he is keeping cool control of the situation, marking him as the conscious orator that he is. To underline the point that he is orating, the next lines he speaks change completely:

BOCKELSON: Es gilt. Erzittere, Münster in Westfalen!
(Klettert in einen Mistkarren.)

BOCKELSON: Komme Volk! Du sollst von meiner Rednergabe verschlungen werden wie von einem brüllenden Löwen.

D.W., p. 13

Bockelson exposes his role to the audience with two serious lines of dialogue, and the listener needs to be aware that his lines will require careful scrutiny as he moves around in his role. Although he speaks confidentially, his lines still retain their usual poetic style.

To realize the poetic style of Dürrenmatt's verse, it helps to look at examples of lines from other plays. Bertolt Brecht uses natural language in conversation:

DER WERBER: Wie soll man sich hier eine Mannschaft zusammenlesen? Feldwebel, ich denk schon mitunter an Selbstmord. Bis zum Zwölften soll ich dem Feldhauptmann vier Fähnlein hinstellen und die Leut herum sind so voll Bosheit, daß ich keine Nacht mehr schlaf.¹⁷

This is sincere, personal conversation written in simple prose. Brecht moves easily into more colloquial levels of prose but Dürrenmatt never does this. Another dramatist who writes in everyday prose is Arthur Miller. Here is an example:

¹⁷Bertolt Brecht, *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1949), p. 7.

WILLY, (after a pause): I suddenly couldn't drive any more. The car kept going off onto the shoulder, y'know?

LINDA? (helpfully): Oh. Maybe it was the steering again. I don't think Angelo knows the Studebaker.

WILLY: No, it's me, it's me. Suddenly I realize I'm goin' sixty miles an hour and I don't remember the last five minutes. I'm--I can't seem to--keep my mind to it.

LINDA: Maybe it's your glasses. You never went for your new glasses.¹⁸

This is the day-to-day talk of ordinary people. Dürrenmatt never gets down to ordinary conversation like this. He comes close to it occasionally with a few lines of prose but even then the content is never everyday talk, it is still loaded with poetic or dramatic meaning. As Bockelson is an actor within the play, it is especially necessary to watch his lines closely.

In Es steht geschrieben the first meeting of Bockelson with Knipperdollinck is enacted in a dramatic scene with verse which is markedly expressionistic. In Die Wiedertäufer Bockelson puts a large part of this into one paragraph, it becomes too long to be called a line of verse, but it is very poetic prose:

BOCKELSON: Heil dir, Lutheraner, der du wandelst in deiner Gnade und in deinem kostbaren Pelz, eine goldene Kette auf dem Bauch und eine Tochter am Arm, keusch und wohlerzogen!
D.W., p. 17

The language is strikingly similar to the German of Luther's translation of the Bible, an influence that is felt throughout Dürrenmatt's plays. The paragraph is carefully structured, with balanced clauses composed of two equal parts which are sharply satirical in

¹⁸Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman (New York: The Viking Press, 1949), p. 13.

the contrasts they combine: Knipperdollinck walks in Grace and in his costly coat, he carries a golden chain over his belly and a daughter in his arm. The language is elevated and rhythmical.

The previous quotation was spoken under serious circumstances and might be expected to be poetic; however, the following quotation is just a simple request and could be spoken in the simplest prose:

BOCKELSON: Es ist noch früh am Morgen, meine Guten--
ich bitte den Karren in den Schatten zu schieben und
mich noch ein wenig schlafen zu lassen.

D.W., p. 18

The words are simple, everyday prose, but the syntax is poetic, the rhythm flows very smoothly, and the parts are very well balanced with the introductory assertion and the double request that follows. It is as close as Dürrenmatt gets to a prose dialogue.

One of the most moving lines that Dürrenmatt has written is spoken by Bockelson when Matthison has gone out single-handed to execute wrath upon the foe in God's name:

BOCKELSON: Es ist ein feierlicher Augenblick, Bruder
Matthison in den Tod schreiten zu sehen.

D.W., p. 47

Although spoken in dialogue, it is a sublime line. The words "feierlicher Augenblick" and "schreiten" cast a halo upon the departed Matthison, the cadence of the rhythm is perfect, and the line is finely balanced. The irony of the line does not appear in the words, but is quite apparent from the action which shows that it is not Matthison's great moment, but Bockelson's. This line is an opportunity for the actor to bring out the full force of its meaning. In this play Dürrenmatt pays a lot of attention to the pos-

sibilities which his lines offer to the actor.

The lines that Dürrenmatt uses in Die Wiedertäufer are definitely shorter than in Es steht geschrieben. A good place to make a comparison is the monologue that Bockelson speaks after he has established himself upon the throne and in the council of the Anabaptists, and has begun to gather his harem. It is his speech in exultation over his gluttonous eating habits. In Es steht geschrieben this speech consists of 33 lines, varying in length from 3 syllables to 74 syllables. Seven of these lines should be called paragraphs, because they have over 30 syllables each, and make up almost half of the content of the speech. In Die Wiedertäufer this monologue consists of 27 lines, varying from 6 to 26 syllables each, with only five lines requiring more than one line on the printed page. The change to a shorter line is very striking. The following is a good example from Die Wiedertäufer:

BOCKELSON: Ich speiste eben ausgezeichnet
Schlang Koteletts, Entrecôtes und blutige Roastbeefs
In mich hinein, stopfte mich, so schien es, mit der ganz-
gen Tierwelt voll
Begrub sie unter Mais und Sauerkraut und Bohnen und unter
Körben von Salat
Die wiederum begrabend unter runden Käseleibern
Und deckte alles zu mit einem See von Schnaps
Und einem Ozean von Bier

D.W., p. 70

Dürrenmatt has become concerned about being too poetic, a trap into which he fell at the beginning, and which is dangerous for his style of drama. This speech does not work by itself--the actor has to take it and make something out of it, he is forced to be a good actor or else the speech is a failure. In Die Wiedertäufer Dürrenmatt very consciously places a great deal of

responsibility upon the actor and avoids the difficulties he created for a good actor in the beginning by being too verbose. As has been shown, Dürrenmatt is poetic in the dialogue parts, but the longer speeches would be destroyed by a strong poetic rhythm and just become a declamation. In this monologue, the lines are uneven and the rhythm is irregular, but the syntax and diction are still poetic. The tone of the language remains serious and elevated. As a result, the actor has excellent material to work with, a challenge to his abilities. He is not strangled by the long lines he had in Es steht geschrieben.

The scene with Bockelson and Knipperdollinck in their crazy dance over the roofs of the houses provides some more interesting examples of Dürrenmatt's verse. Comparing the two plays, the shortened line is even more obvious. The lines in Die Wiedertäufer become shorter as the action proceeds to the climax, thus allowing the tempo of the action to increase audibly along with the action on the stage. With the shorter lines Dürrenmatt introduces something new:

BOCKELSON: Ich Musensohn
 Dichte aus Lust zur Produktion
 Weiber mir and mein das Gold
 Der liebe Gott hat's so gewollt

D.W., p. 90

The scene contains 59 rhyming lines like these, similar to the songs he uses in other parts of the play. They are rhyming lines used in dialogue, but hardly poetry, keeping in tune with the tenor of his nocturnal extravaganza. Dürrenmatt parodies poetry here, in this scene of despairing insanity, as an intended sarcasm

on poetry, as expressed by Knipperdollinck:

BOCKELSON: Du dchtest, ärmster meiner Untertanen, du
dchtest!
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Aus Verzweiflung, nur aus Verzweiflung.
D.W., p. 90

When in despair, you write poetry; the tone of contempt is quite clear.

Another example of Dürrenmatt's ingenuity with language that deserves notice is found in one of the early council meetings of the Anabaptists. The meeting is not going as Bockelson would have it and he carefully shows no disagreement in the council; however, he keeps the audience well aware of his position. Eight times he speaks up with a single "Amen", and only once with a sentence, which is very smooth sarcasm noticed only by the audience. The way in which Bockelson's words say one thing to those within his circle and something else to the audience is quite remarkable.

By a study of Bockelson's lines it has been possible to take a good look at the variety of lines Dürrenmatt uses in Die Wiedertäufer. In Es steht geschrieben Dürrenmatt experimented and tried many different ways of expression, leaning very heavily towards a long line bordering on the paragraph, or becoming a paragraph, while still retaining its poetic quality. The lines are not cumbersome individually, but collectively this is the effect they create. To counteract this he avoided having lines of the same length together, and interspersed them with many short lines, often just a few words. However, the total effect was still too ponderous and often awkward, despite the lively, expressionistic quality of his verse. In Die Wiedertäufer his lines have been shortened and the variety is now

employed more effectively to enforce the dramatic action, as a study of Bockelson's lines indicates. By examining the lines of one character it also becomes evident that Dürrenmatt is in complete control of his text, and able to fashion it to whatever the situation demands. As Bockelson's part is that of an actor within the play and not only an actor on the stage, there is no anomaly in having such a variety of lines written for one character.

The monologue makes up a very considerable part of the text, especially of Es steht geschrieben. It has sixteen monologues totalling 672 lines.¹⁹ In addition there is the triad by the three Anabaptists, which is spoken similarly to a monologue. In total, this makes 739 lines of speeches spoken as monologues. This constitutes almost one-third of the spoken content of the play--a very formidable part. Dürrenmatt realized afterwards what he had done and was more careful. In Die Wiedertäufer there are eight monologues with a total of approximately 202 lines. This is a sharp reduction in length and, also, the average size of each monologue is less than half of what it was in the first play. The monologue is still important in Die Wiedertäufer, but it becomes a more effective element of drama by virtue of its restricted use.

The discussion will now pass on to a consideration of the diction and syntax of Dürrenmatt's written lines. First of all a look at the

¹⁹The counting of lines is an arbitrary matter. I regard what seems to be verse as being single lines; if they take up more than two printed lines I regard them as prose and drop parts that are less than half a line (solely for the purpose of the comparison made in this specific discussion).

volume of printed text that he transfers from one play to the other.
 There are about 70 lines in Die Wiedertäufer²⁰ which he has taken directly from Es steht geschrieben. About 150 lines are easily recognizable in the new play, having been taken over with some minor changes in them. Thus only a very small part of Die Wiedertäufer has been taken directly from the first play, although many other parts are easily recognizable as coming from the first play. However, the significant point is that Die Wiedertäufer is more than a revision of Es steht geschrieben, it is a new version of the old story - a new play.

In many cases the changes that Dürrenmatt makes are corrections of grammatical errors, or the choice of more effective words. Here is an example:

DER BISCHOP: Ihr erlaubt, daß wir euch einen Stuhl
 holen lassen. Er wurde zur Verrammelung der Türen gegen
 vorwitzige Täufer gebraucht, nun ist er nicht zur Stelle.
 E.S.G., p. 34

BISCHOF: Erlaubt, daß Wir Euch einen Sessel holen las-
 sen. Er wurde zur Verrammelung des Hauptportals gegen
 vorwitzige Täufer benötigt, nun ist er nicht zur Stelle.
 D.W., p. 20

The first sentence has become smoother by dropping "Ihr", and changing "Stuhl" to "Sessel". The "euch" has now been capitalized as it should have been in the first case, as a pronoun of address. In the second sentence "Türen" is changed to "Hauptportal", and "gebraucht" to "benötigt". Both new words carry more poetic weight than the first words did and thus raise the poetic tone of the line. Another example is this:

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The whole play contains about 2450 lines, as printed in the text, including stage directions.

HERMANN VON MENGERSEN: Laß uns den Zweikampf vergessen, den wir, es waren eben neun Jahre her, vor Pavia, im Anblick der versammelten Heere, ausgefochten haben.

E.S.G., pp. 53-54

VON MENGERSEN: Laßt uns den Zweikampf vergessen, Ritter von Büren, den wir, es sind jetzt neun Jahre her, vor Pavia im Anblick der versammelten Heere ausgefochten haben.

D.W., p. 35

The changes here are mainly grammatical. "Laß" is changed to "Laßt", correcting an error that slipped through in the first play. He adds "Ritter von Büren" to make the appeal more personal and direct. The clause, "es waren eben neun Jahre her", which doesn't make much sense, he changes to "es sind jetzt neun Jahre her", which is grammatically correct and much smoother language. He eliminates two commas which again makes for easier reading, and accords with modern practice.

Because Dürrenmatt has, in effect, re-written the play, there are changes in plot, characterization, and tone, and this necessitates changes in most of the parts that he retains in Die Wiedertäufer. Often the changes are only minor even if the part is re-written and the two versions still resemble each other as in the following example:

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Wißt ihr nicht von der schönen Divara, dem Weibe Matthissons?

KRECHTING: Wie bringt ihr die mit der zerfallenen Stadtmauer zusammen?

JAN MATTHISSON:²¹ Der eine bewundert in den Nächten den Busen seiner Frau und der andere füllt Löcher in der Stadtmauer aus.

²¹The inclusion of Jan Matthisson as the speaker here can only be due to poor proofreading, because it clearly is Bockelson who is speaking.

KRECHTING: Es bleibt nichts anderes als solches zu wagen.
 JOHANN BOCKELSON: Verlassen wir uns auf die schöne Divara,
 Bruder Krechting.

E.S.G., p. 53

BOCKELSON: Wißt Ihr nicht von der schönen Divara, dem
 jungen Weibe des alten Propheten?
 KRECHTING: Wie bringt Ihr die mit unserer verzweifelten
 Lage zusammen?
 BOCKELSON: Der eine bewundert in den Nächten den Busen
 seiner Frau, der andere stopft Löcher in der Stadtmauer
 aus.
 KRECHTING: Das wäre Verrat.
 BOCKELSON: An Matthisons Verschrobenheit, nicht an
 unserer Sache.
 KRECHTING: Ich muß es wagen.
 BOCKELSON: Verlassen wir uns auf die Schöne Divara, Leut-
 nant!

D.W., p. 42

The principal change is a strengthening of the argument for making use of Divara to cover up their efforts to fortify the city. "Dem Weibe Matthisons" becomes "dem jungen Weibe des alten Propheten", and "der zerfallenen Stadtmauer" becomes "unserer verzweifelten Lage". Instead of agreeing automatically with Bockelson, as in the first play, Krechting now questions the plan with "Das wäre Verrat." This enables Bockelson to come up with his conclusive argument, "An Matthisons Verschrobenheit, nicht an unserer Sache." To end it, Bockelson addresses him as "Leutnant" instead of "Bruder Krechting", making the conference more official. The effect of the whole argument is a degrading of Matthison's position as commander, as well as a conniving against him. Implicit in the plan, although not stated, is the fact that Bockelson already has the beautiful Divara under his spell. Other minor changes are the capitalization of "ihr" when used as pronoun of address, and, in the third speech, the substitution of a comma for the word "und" to give the line poetic rhythm.

Sometimes, in Es steht geschrieben, Dürrenmatt follows his fancies and does things which appeal to him but aren't successful because they are too confusing. While the blind Krechtling is reviewing the military situation from the city wall, he suddenly breaks out with a confusing address to Solomon, as if he is raving:

KRECHTING: Deine Tische biegen sich unter der Last köstlicher Speisen, Salomo, und deine Weiber tanzen nackt vor den Augen deiner Großen!

E.S.G., p. 95

He is not understood on the stage, and neither can the audience understand this sudden interruption in the conversation. Dürrenmatt quietly changes this anecdote in Die Wiedertäufer so that no interruption occurs and the content remains intelligible:

KRECHTING: Ich sage euch: Seine Tische biegen sich unter der Last köstlicher Speisen, und seine Weiber tanzen nackt vor seinen Großen.

D.W., p. 81

The changes that Dürrenmatt makes are such as could be expected after the twenty-odd years that have passed since he wrote the first play. He corrects errors in grammar, he chooses more effective words, he improves the rhythm of lines, and he changes his mind about some of the rules he broke consciously in the first play, such as the capitalization of pronouns in the second person plural.

He also makes some definite changes in punctuation. It has already been mentioned that he drops quite a few commas, to make for better recitation, but also in line with modern usage. The most noticeable change is that he drops the periods when he is writing verse, thus defining what is prose and what is to be taken as verse. One startling exception is found in the scene with Kaiser Karl V

when the other dignitaries are introduced to him (D.W., p. 59). The dialogue is brief, with no periods, but it definitely is not verse. It is obviously meant to be spoken mechanically. This emphasizes the attitude which this scene develops, which treats Karl V as a statue, maybe of ice.

In summary, several things should be noted. At no time does Dürrenmatt make pretense to naturalism, in style, technique, or content. He follows in the classical heritage of the great masters of drama of the past, as evidenced by the poetic style of all his lines, and the elevated diction and syntax he uses throughout. From this perspective there is no change from the first play to the second. In the first play he allows himself a wide latitude of freedom with expressionistic techniques, such as the opening triad by the Anabaptists, the sudden apostrophe to Solomon by Krechting, or his irresponsibilities with punctuation and grammar, and so on. These items are usually changed in the new play, as a result of Dürrenmatt's maturity; not, however, in a trend to dullness, but to a more effective versatility. He realizes the pitfall of his absorption in his poetic abilities in his early years, and corrects his verbosity to write a text that will be more viable dramatically. In this connection, he also consciously changes his lines so that their cumbersome weight will not limit the actor in his theatrical performance as in the first play, but that instead they will be easily manageable so that they will challenge him to use his abilities as an actor to interpret them. In brief, Dürrenmatt has matured and developed better control of his dramatic techniques.

II. Division into Scenes

Dürrenmatt's first play, Es steht geschrieben, has no formal act and scene divisions of the text. Die Wiedertäufer is divided into two acts, with eleven scenes in the first act and nine in the second. The form of Es steht geschrieben derives from Dürrenmatt's ideas about the use of the stage. In his Theaterprobleme he makes the following statement:

Jedermann weiß, daß sich in ihm Wilders Kleine Stadt verschiedene Personen ans Publikum wenden und von den Nöten und Sorgen der kleinen Stadt erzählen. Damit erreicht Wilder, daß er keinen Vorhang mehr braucht. Der Vorhang ist durch die Anrede an das Publikum ersetzt. . . .

 Wenn nun in neueren Theaterstücken sich der Autor ans Publikum wendet, so wird damit versucht, das Bühnenstück kontinuierlicher zu gestalten, als dies sonst einer Episodendramatik möglich ist.¹

Achieving continuity in the play, instead of breaking it up into pieces by scene and act divisions, is what Dürrenmatt achieved in the first play. He did this by using various devices, such as allowing the characters to speak to the audience. This will be dealt with in the chapter on his use of the stage, but at this point it provides a brief explanation as to why Dürrenmatt does not formally divide Es steht geschrieben into scenes. Similarly, why he does divide Die Wiedertäufer formally into scenes will also be considered in the same chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the actual scenes found in the two plays and the changes that occur from play to play.

¹Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Theater-Schriften und Reden (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1966), p. 110.

Thornton Wilder's Our Town was performed in Zurich in 1939 and made a decided impact on Dürrenmatt. Dürrenmatt was greatly influenced by the play, but the results of the inspiration in his own play are his own and not a copy. While he gives much credit to Our Town for what he does in Es steht geschrieben, it is evident that it is an abstract objective that he has derived from Wilder's play which he is trying to achieve in his own play. He wants to have continuity in his play instead of having it broken up into pieces, and to accomplish this he works without a static stage setting and scene divisions. Wilder does break his play into three acts, and consequently three stage settings, but the stage furniture is simple, and the Stage Manager explains to the audience what each piece represents, and what parts are left to the imagination of the audience. Dürrenmatt is not as naive as this, his fertile imagination brings forth too many ideas he wants to use on the stage, and he has concrete methods to inform the audience what their imagination is to see on the stage, with the result that he is successful in building a continuum of action on the stage throughout the play. His changes in scenery from action to action are considerable, but they are ingeniously executed. This, likewise, will be considered further in the chapter on the stage, but serves here as an introduction to the topic of scene divisions of the text.

In contrast with Wilder's Our Town, Dürrenmatt's play, Es steht geschrieben, is crammed with action, and the location moves from place to place, and the action is not left to the imagination of the audience--the audience sees the action. On the basis of the changes of action, it is possible to count the scene divisions in

2

the play. My count is a total of thirty scenes, although some are two actions blended together, being two scenes in one, and the count could be higher, depending on how actions are counted. This is a high number of scenes and it is important to note that in Die Wiedertäufer it has been reduced to twenty scenes. We shall now look at the text and see what changes he makes from play to play.

This discussion considers what happens to Es steht geschrieben, viewed from the position of the play, Die Wiedertäufer. The first two scenes have been eliminated as they are both introductory in character. The first scene, with the three unidentified Anabaptists howling in front of the curtain, is expressed in Die Wiedertäufer in a few utterings by the prominent Anabaptists-of-the-future who accompany Bockelson on his entrance to Münster. The second scene, with the Monk, a copy of the Stage Manager in Wilder's Our Town, is dropped because Dürrenmatt can now do without Wilder. The third scene, where Bockelson is discovered on the street of Münster, is the main part of the first scene of Die Wiedertäufer. In the fourth scene Bockelson goes to Knipperdollinck's house--this has been changed and also becomes part of scene one in Die Wiedertäufer, with Knipperdollinck and his daughter passing by on the street when Bockelson has been discovered by the guard. Four scenes of the first play have been incorporated into the first scene of Die Wiedertäufer, giving up several of the most impressive scenes of Es steht geschrieben in favor of a more dramatic scene in Die Wiedertäufer, and for greater

²See Appendix A.

ease of production.

The fifth and sixteenth scenes deal with Mollenhöck, as a minor symbolic subplot to the main action, and Dürrenmatt drops them altogether, including Mollenhöck as a character.

The sixth scene is the important meeting of the Bishop and Knipperdollinck, and this takes place in the second scene of Die Wiedertäufer. This scene again is more extensive, including Gresbeck's desertion from the Bishop.

The seventh is the critical scene in which the execution of the Monk is being out-shouted by the market cries of the Gemüsefrau, and then abruptly prevented by Knipperdollinck's action of throwing his money to the poor. This becomes scene three in Die Wiedertäufer, again with additional features like the march to tear down the churches, led by a converted abbess.

The eighth scene shows Bockelson, having usurped Knipperdollinck's place in his home, with his wife Katherina as mistress. In Die Wiedertäufer Katherina has died before the play commences, and Bockelson does not move into Knipperdollinck's house, but into the Bishop's palace, so this scene is also eliminated.

The ninth scene shows Matthisson installed at the head of the Anabaptist council in control of Münster, outlining his plans for the city. This is similar to the fourth scene of Die Wiedertäufer, except that this scene is briefer.

The following scenes take place in the enemy camp with von Büren, von Mengerssen, and the Monk as main characters: the tenth, twelfth, fourteenth, twentieth, and the twenty-ninth. In Die Wieder-

täufer the fifth, eighth, ninth, and seventeenth scenes take place in the enemy camp, with the Gemüsefrau added as main character. The eighth scene is a double scene with the Ägidius gate in the middle between the two enemy camps. (For Es steht geschrieben I divided this into two scenes, the twelfth and the thirteenth). Immediately following this scene is the battle between the two camps, off stage. The eleventh scene of Es steht geschrieben also takes place in front of the gate when Matthisson goes out singlehanded to fight the enemy and is killed by them, shortly before the main battle takes place. In Die Wiedertäufer this is part of the eighth scene as well.

In the fifteenth scene the Bishop is presented with Matthisson's head, corresponding to the eleventh scene of Die Wiedertäufer.

The seventeenth scene is the important conference of Kaiser Karl V with the Bishop. This takes place in the twelfth scene of Die Wiedertäufer with the conference enlarged to include the Reichstag at Worms, and the internal competition to see who can establish the top theatre group.

The eighteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-third scenes show the final degradation of Knipperdollinck and his daughter Judith, as she finally enters Bockelson's harem to save her father. In Die Wiedertäufer, Scenes 7, 13, and part of 14 carry the same parts of the story.

In the nineteenth scene Bockelson appears on the throne as king, with a speech of exaltation celebrating his sensuous appetites, a dramatic monologue exhibiting his harem, ending with the condemnation of Knipperdollinck. In Die Wiedertäufer this comes out dif-

ferently. Scene 6 already shows Bockelson in the Bishop's palace, reciting theatre parts he has played in previous engagements, planning new parts in the theatre of life, which is Münster, and already surrounded with six wives. Scene 10 is a short scene of rejoicing to acclaim Bockelson as king. Scene 14 corresponds to the nineteenth scene of Es steht geschrieben, but it is set later in the play and the military situation of Münster has already become desperate. It is in this scene, too, that he makes the deal with Judith to save her father, and after, by reciting parts of a play, "Judith and Holofernes", gives her the idea of killing the Bishop.

Scene 22 presents the meeting of the Landgraf von Hessen and the Bishop, both caught in a storm, in a peasant's cottage, slightly reminiscent of scenes in Shakespeare's King Lear. This scene isn't needed in Die Wiedertäufer because von Hessen is present at the conference with Kaiser Karl V in Scene 12.

Scene 24 deals with the blind general Krechting, who sighs over the helplessness of the city and is killed by a soldier for faltering in his loyalty. It is this scene from which Dürrenmatt's second play, Der Blinde, was developed. The twenty-fifth scene deals with the awful condition of starvation in the city, and Bockelson's stabbing of Katherina. The events of these two scenes are included in Scene 16 of Die Wiedertäufer, except the stabbing of Katherina, who does not enter into this play.

Scene 26 is a short monologue in which Judith makes up her mind to take the part of the Biblical Judith and kill Holofernes, in this case, the Bishop. It does not appear in Die Wiedertäufer. Scene 27

is Judith's attempt on the Bishop's life, and her tragic failure. It corresponds with Scene 15 in Die Wiedertäufer.

The moon-crazy dance over the roof-tops by Knipperdollinck and Bockelson comes in the twenty-eighth scene, the grand finale of the play before the end breaks in. This action takes place in Scene 18 of Die Wiedertäufer, but it is reduced from nine pages to three and a half, to heighten its dramatic impact on the audience.

In Scene 29 von Büren orders the attack on Münster, which is symbolically performed by the orchestra. In contrast, in Scene 19 of Die Wiedertäufer, Bockelson marches out of the city to be hired as an actor, while the soldiers enter the city hungry for spoil.

Scene 30 finds Bockelson and Knipperdollinck on the wheel and the Bishop in his carriage, but in Die Wiedertäufer, Scene 20, it is only Knipperdollinck on the wheel and the Bishop in the carriage.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Dürrenmatt does a lot of shuffling around with the scenes: moving their position in the play, combining, enlarging, reducing, or adding scenes and making other alterations, as he changes the plot or the roles of the characters. Dürrenmatt's text depends on what he does with the stage. The study of his use of the stage is then of fundamental importance in understanding the plays.

III. Use of the Stage

The following quotations from Dürrenmatt's essay, Theaterprobleme, express his purpose in the use of the stage:

...Die Bühne stellt für mich nicht ein Feld für Theorien, Weltanschauungen und Aussagen, sondern ein Instrument dar, dessen Möglichkeiten ich zu kennen versuche, indem ich damit spiele.¹

...Entscheidend dabei ist, daß mit der Bühne gedichtet wird, um Max Frisch zu zitieren, eine Möglichkeit, die mich seit jeher beschäftigt und die einer der Gründe, wenn nicht der Hauptgrund ist, warum ich Theaterstücke schreibe.²

The parts quoted in Chapter II, "Division into Scenes," p. 1, are also of particular significance here.

His first play, Es steht geschrieben, shows the youthful enthusiasm that Dürrenmatt had for the possibilities that the stage presents to the imaginative dramatist. The audience hears the spoken word, but what it sees on the stage is equally important. Educators claim that visual impulses have a greater effect on the student than aural impulses. Dürrenmatt's early efforts are wholeheartedly in agreement with this statement. There has been much experimentation with the stage during the last hundred years. Many ideas have been introduced and developed with active controversy among their proponents, as dramatists and producers have felt more freedom to work out their inspirations. The ideas have varied from the "Guckkastentheater" of the naturalists and Theatre-in-the-round, to the

¹Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Theater-Schriften und Reden (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1966), p. 92.

²Ibid., p. 105.

theatricalism of dramatists like Genet and Ionesco.

Dürrenmatt studied carefully what others were doing. The naturalists tried to present life as it is so that the viewer could identify himself with it without using his imagination, but Dürrenmatt saw that this was a fallacy, that without using his imagination the viewer could not identify himself with the scene. In other words, there is no such thing as a naturalistic theatre. The viewer has to use his imagination, and it is the opportunity and responsibility of the dramatist to take advantage of this fact and work with it. Instead of letting the imagination of the viewer wander around, the dramatist puts it to work and excites it, in accordance with the designs of his play. This is what Wilder did, but Dürrenmatt found his stage too drab and too undramatic. At the same time, Wilder broke his plays into acts, keeping the stage fairly static during each act. Wilder inspired Dürrenmatt with his stage, but it was just the spark which ignited Dürrenmatt's own fire. This is characteristic of Dürrenmatt. He says in Theaterprobleme: "Die Kunst ist nie wiederholbar,..."³, and this is one of his statements that can be taken seriously, for truly with him, art always takes new forms, even when it builds on the old.

The most significant and all-pervading symbol that Dürrenmatt uses in Es steht geschrieben is light, together with its corollary, darkness; taking physical shape in the form of moon, sun, and stars; becoming abstract in the mental agitations and convictions of the

³Ibid., p. 119.

characters; and taking practical form as the mechanism for the operation of the stage. It is the element that makes a unity out of all the various and conflicting forces, ideas, actions, and characters that constitute the play. By the control of light on the stage, and the visual presentation of the physical objects of light, he manipulates the scenes to make the desired impression upon the audience. This is why the play needs to be seen on the stage to be understood, or should only be read with close attention to the stage directions. Silence is another vital element he uses on the stage, together with music from the orchestra. In addition, as he states in Theaterprobleme,⁴ "Ich liebe das farbige Bühnenbild, das farbige Theater,..." ; he makes use of color for special purposes, but not as something to decorate the stage.

The play has strong epic qualities, similar in part to the plays of Wilder and Brecht, and the theory of epic drama developed by Brecht. The stage is vitally involved in the actualization of epic drama. Epic drama includes ideas such as the play being a series of individual scenes instead of being constructed of several acts with well-connected scenes; emphasis that the stage is theatre with the resulting interplay between stage and audience; or the de-humanization of the stage. These influences are evident in the play, but Dürrenmatt makes his own statements of theory about drama and it is expedient to begin with them. Of greatest importance for consideration here are: firstly, what Dürrenmatt calls "...Die Entstofflichung der Bühne..."⁵,

⁴Ibid., p. 107.

⁵Ibid., p. 105.

taking away the physical being of the stage and rendering it abstract; secondly, using the stage to effect continuity of action, as stated in a previous quotation from Theaterprobleme (Chap. II, Division into Scenes, p. 1)⁶ and thirdly, the use of light as the unifying agent of the various elements of the play, molding the symbols of sun, moon, and stars into the very action of the play.

A study of the play shows that Dürrenmatt is successful in what he attempted to do, in following the guidelines that he set for himself. He is in control of his material. It is important for the student to watch this factor carefully in studying any author, but with Dürrenmatt especially, because otherwise the critic often finds him confusing and disappointing. This remark is valid not only here, but in considering the other topics as well. Dürrenmatt's plays require intensive study with close scrutiny of the movements of the author. He works consciously and with effective control of his text, but sometimes his ideas run wild, especially in his first play.

At a few points Dürrenmatt's staging shows direct copying from Wilder, possibly as a result of an obsession with this dramatist, but they are few and do not seriously detract from the Dürrenmattian quality that pervades. The play opens with three Anabaptists in front of the curtain, in a declamatory tirade of religious fervor that presents the Anabaptists prevailing over a cataclysmic world situation, with an exaggerated and grotesque flow of eschatological language. They smell of onions, they are dressed in rags, their per-

⁶Ibid., p. 110.

sonal appearance is unkempt. The whole affair is set to alienate the audience, from the very first view, from this strange, uncontrollable sect. The three are not identified--it does not matter who they are, they could be any three of the Anabaptists, which is exactly what Brecht does so frequently with his characters in many of his plays. The three leave the stage, accompanied by parodistic notes from the orchestra, and at the same time the Monk appears, playing the same role that the Stage Manager has in Wilder's Our Town. While the Monk is speaking to the audience the curtain rises and he describes the scene, as is done in Our Town. All that is visible is the wall of a house painted on a curtain, the rest of the city scene he outlines verbally to the audience. To the left is a wheelbarrow in which Bockelson is sleeping. This allows the other characters to come from the right and the action to begin, as the Monk departs. After overcoming this first hurdle of attachment to his literary benefactors, Dürrenmatt comes into his own. His stage furniture is minimal and easily moved, some scenes are painted on paper and lowered as curtains, actions occur in different areas of the stage, curtains are lowered in various parts of the stage, the time for changes of scenery is taken up by monologues or the orchestra, and the use of light allows the changes to take place smoothly and without distraction.

Towards the end of this scene, after Bockelson has successfully coped with the guards, he says, "Ich werde gegen den Abend hin zu ihm gehen, wenn die Sonne hinunter ist und es dunkel geworden." (E.S.G., p. 25). With these words the stage is darkened as Bockelson and the guards

move to the extreme left, and the curtain with the painted house wall is raised to reveal the scene inside of the house. Here we find Knipperdollinck at home, after supper, resting and reading the Bible. Very little furniture is required. In the meantime, while the audience is viewing this scene, Bockelson speaks out of the shadow, describing what he is going to find when he goes to see Knipperdollinck. The effect is dramatic and impressive, and when he has finished speaking, he and the guard vanish in darkness, and Knipperdollinck begins to speak to the audience. Judith enters through an imaginary door on the right, serves her father, and sits down at a window at the back. This window and door at the back are needed, but could be done simply, even with a curtain. Shortly afterward, Bockelson enters with a dramatic appearance and takes command of the situation, as he has predicted in the shadow scene just preceding.

As the curtain falls, the attention of the audience is directed at Mollenhöck, who sits in front of the curtain with his feet dangling into the orchestra. An unidentified man with a heavy sack on his shoulders appears from the right, fleeing from the city. This brief incident provides enough time to allow for a change of scenery behind the curtain.

The curtain rises upon an empty stage and the Bishop is pushed in on his wheelchair. He addresses the audience, describing the imaginary palace around him, suggested by some painted walls. Knipperdollinck enters to see the Bishop for a serious discussion. This scene is enacted with very little furniture to keep the eyes

of the audience centred upon the two protagonists and their argument.

As soon as the two finish talking, the stage is darkened and a strong light is cast on the proscenium, from where the Gemüsefrau cries out^{to} the public of Münster, hawking her produce. While the audience directs its attention to her, the stage is cleared--a matter of seconds, and the lights go on again on an empty stage. However, the crowds appear immediately, with a scaffold. This is the most colorful scene of the play, with the crowd dressed in the bizarre costumes of the Middle Ages. While the Gemüsefrau is advertising her produce, the soldiers drag the Monk onto the scaffold for execution, to the delight of the crowd, the whole procedure being broken up by the action of the repentant Knipperdollinck throwing away the gold that he believes is dragging him down to hell, with the whole crowd making a mad rush for the evil gold. The scene ends with everyone leaving, in pursuit of Knipperdollinck and his gold.

Here there appears a break and Dürrenmatt's stage directions are not sufficient. It is almost necessary to lower the curtains for an intermission, although it takes only a minute to prepare the stage. On the left there is a four-poster bed with drawn curtains, further left is Judith, and on the right, Bockelson is installed in Knipperdollinck's home, attended by five maids. The light moves from Bockelson, to the bed, to Judith, as the action moves from one to another. They are all on the stage together, but separated by the light, a technique that de-personalizes the scene into an abstract presentation of the action. It is a strongly Brechtian epic scene.

As the curtain falls, the prophet Matthisson rises up from

the floor in the front of the stage, like a ghost. If the floor of the stage has a trap door it can be done realistically. Otherwise, he could appear on the stage from the dark background while the light is playing upon Judith on the far left. While Matthisson addresses the audience, the stage is changed and the curtain opens upon the Anabaptist council chamber, denoted by five chairs. This scene is interrupted with a period of silence, when the discussion becomes agitated, to emphasize the disagreement of the council. Krechting and Bockelson remain on the scene and a curtain is lowered in front of them--a different technique, because usually the characters walk off the stage when the scene changes.

The curtain that descends is made of wrapping paper with the enemy camp painted on it and a vast heaven, or sky, containing the moon, stars, comets, and planets. On stage are von Büren and von Mengerssen, dressed to the hilt for action, with helmets they open and close every time they speak. The stage being almost bare heightens the symbolic effect of the painted camp and the two soldiers, representing the enemy army ready to advance upon Münster. The stage is intended to excite the imagination of the audience, and especially to draw its attention to the heaven, because the battle is between spiritual forces, and specifically involves the search of man for eternal verity and peace, no matter how distorted or mistaken these aims may be. The half idle, half serious discussion between the two generals objectifies the scene and creates distance between the audience and the stage.

Again, at the end of this scene, Dürrenmatt's stage directions

are insufficient. The enemy generals have left the stage, but the enemy camp remains near, and it is only necessary to push the Ägidius gate and the city wall onto the stage. At first Bockelson and a guard are on stage, but then more citizens appear until Matthisson comes and sends them home. While the gate is opened for Matthisson's vain attack on the enemy, the Gemüsefrau slips out to take advantage of the outside position. It is a silent sign to the audience that the city is lost. After Matthisson has gone to his death, the enemy approaches on the outside of the gate, represented by von Büren, who delivers a warning tirade against Münster. While the light remains on von Büren, Bockelson arises in the orchestra, with a second light focussed on him, his sword stretched out against von Büren while he delivers his counter address. The whole presents a dramatic spectacle, with the Ägidius gate between the two opponents symbolizing the division into two enemy camps. The stage sinks into an uncertain darkness as the orchestra takes over to present the ensuing battle, in sounds. When the battle sounds subside, some straggling enemy soldiers drag themselves across the scene, symbolizing by dramatic suggestion, what has happened to the attacking army. This series of actions, the events leading up to the battle, and the finale, make a most impressive scene. Dürrenmatt is not working with an objective, physical stage; instead, everything is symbolic: the enemy camp on wrapping-paper, the gate which divides the enemies, the wall as Münster, the opposing armies represented by the two leaders, Matthisson executing God's wrath on the enemy, the battle performed by the orchestra, and the beaten enemy soldiers signifying the outcome of the battle. Dürrenmatt has

argued that even on the most naturalistic stage nothing is actually the thing that it represents to be, so why not stop pretending and make the fullest use of the representative or symbolic possibilities of the stage. The stage is a stage and will become most effective if it is used as a stage.

This discussion has only covered about half of the play, Es steht geschrieben, but it suffices to show the manner in which Dürrenmatt uses the stage, and how admirably it becomes an integral part of the play; the printed page and the stage becoming a unity.

Dürrenmatt believes in adapting his art to the requirements of the occasion, and the occasions are never the same. His style of language does not change too much, but everything else changes. His love of variety stems largely from his fertile imagination which is always bringing forth new ideas, but sometimes he also makes changes because weaknesses show up in his work, or simply because he finds better ways of doing things.

One serious problem that every playwright has, is that he cannot control what the producer will do with the play when he gets it into his hands. Dürrenmatt, having spent much time on the stage himself, working with the production of his plays, realizes the problem not only from the author's side, but also from the producer's angle.

Es steht geschrieben never became very popular on the stage, or at least it wasn't being produced very often, partly because of difficulties with its production.

What Dürrenmatt learnt quite early is that stage producers take great liberties with stage directions. Because Es steht geschrieben

depended so vitally on the staging, it was open to the grossest misrepresentation by the producer, or on the other hand, if the stage management was poor, the play was bound to suffer badly. These are obviously some of the reasons for Dürrenmatt's change of attitude towards the stage by the time he wrote the play, Die Wiedertäufer. Here the stage directions dwindle down to almost nothing and the written text becomes the whole play.

Dürrenmatt provides a sketch of the stage and the furniture required for Die Wiedertäufer. It consists of a painted background with a sliding door. In front of this are two wooden scaffoldings to represent the wall of the city. In front of this is a second painted background, to divide the stage into two parts; and in the front, two movable gates, to represent the double gate of the city. The play proceeds without a curtain in the front for scene changes. The actors themselves bring the needed equipment onto the stage and work from scene to scene without interruption. The stage management in this play has a strongly Brechtian flavor; the audience is constantly kept aware of the fact that they are viewing a stage.

The stage directions of the play consist solely of the place of action, and a list of the characters in the scene, with some indication as to what they are doing. For instance, the places of the first four scenes are indicated as follows: "In der Stadt, Agidiitor.", "Im bischöflichen Palast.", "Marktplatz.", and "Sakristei." No descriptions of the locations are given, and the stage furniture mentioned in the preceding paragraph is insufficient for all the different places of the scenes. In many cases the audience

depends on the action to know where it is taking place. This is very similar to a play from Shakespeare, where the action was mainly responsible for interpreting itself without the help of stage furniture. It is the opposite to the tendency of the school of naturalism in drama, where everything is described in the minutest detail.

The list of characters for the scene usually includes a few comments. In the first scene, the characters are called ragged prophets of the Baptists:

Matthison, Rothmann, Krechting, Bockelson, Vinne, Klop-riss und Staprade, zerlumpte Propheten der Täufer be-treten mit ihrer Habe Münster in Westfalen.

In the second scene, Gresbeck brings in the Bishop:

Im bischöflichen Palast. Heinrich Gresbeck rollt den Bischof herein.

In the third scene, the slogans are mentioned from the placards that some of the characters are carrying:

Marktplatz. Das Volk von Münster. Ein Metzger, Gemüsefrau, Langermann mit Frau, Friese mit Frau und Helga und Gisela. Langermann und Friese tragen Inschriften: "Tod den Herren", "Mit Gott und den Wiedertäufern", "Durch die Taufe zur Gnade", "Tut Busse, bekehret euch".

The directions are very minimal and thus, in fact, put the responsibility on the director to interpret the play according to the text. If the author has written a good text this gives him better control over the play, than if he tried to interpret it with heavy stage directions.

Another important feature is that Dürrenmatt makes no special use of light at all on the stage of Die Wiedertäufer. In the first play the manipulation of light was an extremely important device, but in the second play he just drops it. This is, of course, part

of his plan in Die Wiedertäufer of eliminating most of the stage directions. Besides that, however, he evidently realizes that it isn't necessary. The symbols and images he works with don't need all the reinforcement that he has been giving them, and they are actually more effective if left to themselves. All along, Dürrenmatt has had the problem that he does too much of a good thing, he over-emphasizes, he repeats too often, and loses the effect of his symbols and literary devices by overworking them. The play, Die Wiedertäufer, is a move in the right direction. He now has enough confidence in his written text that he can take a chance on the producer who will direct his play.

IV. Figurative Language and Symbols

Dürrenmatt's plays are rich in figurative language and symbols, as well as in diversity of characterization, plot, and meaning. If there is a valid criticism of Dürrenmatt, it is that this richness and diversity tends to lead to confusion, a confusion which can also be seen as a motif that runs through all of Dürrenmatt's plays, just as the motif of the absurd dominates the plays of many other writers today. The motif of absurdity tends to create unity and coherence within a play, as an examination of Samuel Beckett's play, En attendant Godot, will show, but it also leads the writer into a dead end: he is limited as to what he can do within one play, and the next play is bound to be very similar to the former. When life has become absurd everything draws together to a dead end of meaninglessness (words themselves lose meaning because they are being endlessly repeated without any intention of action and finally without a realization of what is being said, because action and meaning in life have ceased to exist--all that is left is an aimless motion towards the end). The very opposite is true of the motif of confusion. It requires that diversity and profusion be operative throughout the play, and that the play may not tend towards only one solution. To the dramatist this offers expanding possibilities and every play becomes a new experience. The result is that Dürrenmatt's plays form a large mosaic, and to understand him as a dramatist it is necessary to study the whole mosaic. In contrast, it is necessary only to read En attendant Godot to gain a valid insight into Beckett's perspective on life, and the meaning that is carried by

his plays.

As has already been pointed out, it is easy to draw the obvious elements from Dürrenmatt's plays, without actually understanding very much about them. However, he often hides matters of vital significance, without repetition. One such case is the metaphor of man's life on earth expressed by the word "herumstolpern". It denotes an aimless wandering, and not walking, but stumbling. In both plays it is the Bishop who uses the word, and this gives it added significance. In the first play he says:

denn das Glück wurde ihm nicht gegeben, und wenn er es hat, ist dies eine große Gnade.
 Notwendig vor allem ist, daß er überhaupt auf der Erde herumstolpert.
 Ich weiß, es ist viel Elend hienieden und viel Verzweiflung and Verworrenheit ohne Ende,

E.S.G., p. 33

Man stumbles aimlessly in misery and doubt, while luck avoids him. This one word says more about the play than all the quotations of grotesque language put together. The aimless stumbling of man in his search for meaning in life, his longing to find God, his attempt to live according to the convictions of his soul, make up the main body of the conflicts of the play, as they do also of man's everyday existence in life. This one word, "herumstolpern", takes the reader right to the heart of the play, in opposition to the decoration of the "grotesque" which establishes the mood of the play, as a mirror of actual life, but otherwise tends to hide the essence of the play from the unsuspecting, hasty reader.

The Bishop uses the same word again in Die Wiedertäufer, as a link to tie it to the first play, but here it leads into a new attitude to life that this play develops.

Das Possenspiel unseres Lebens
 Das mühsame Herumstolpern auf der Flucht vor der Wahr-
 heit und auf der Suche nach ihr
 Wird auf den Brettern leicht, ein Tanz, ein Gelächter,
 ein wohliger Schauer

D.W., p. 19

The farce of life, the aimless stumbling, becomes a dance, by making a stage out of life itself. The bond between the two plays is beautifully expressed by this word, which so clearly and metaphorically presents the theme of both, but also brings in the change in attitude to life that the new plays develops. Life is still "Herumstolpern", but it now becomes light by making it into a stage, a theatre.

There is another metaphor that operates very similarly and which is so useful to Dürrenmatt in Die Wiedertäufer that the reader is almost forced to think that he used the word when he wrote Es steht geschrieben, because he had a premonition that he would need it twenty years later for the revision. It is the word "Gänsemarsch". In Es steht geschrieben it appears only in the stage directions, when Bockelson calls for his wives, sitting on the throne after his royal dinner: "...Die Weiber kommen im Gänsemarsch herein, zuerst Katherina, dann Divara und alle die andern." (E.S.G., p. 81). It carries no special significance here, but in Die Wiedertäufer he picks this word up from the first play, and changes the action to show the difference between the two plays. Again Bockelson is on the throne, and when he calls for his wives they enter as they did in Es steht geschrieben. But now his reaction is different:

BOCKELSON: Nein, nein, nein, nein. Wie kommt ihr wieder herein. Im Gänsemarsch!

(Springt auf, beginnt zu inszenieren.)

Zuerst Königin Divara und dann die andern, gelöst, in natürlicher Majestät. Wer königlich schreitet, gleitet in den Saal. So gleitet er, ihr aber kommt so, ihr schreitet nicht, ihr trottet wie müde Ackergäule. Zurück. Die Vielweiberei ist ein Regieproblem.

D.W., p. 71

What satisfied and pleased him in the first play, has now become a problem. The natural simplicity of the first play is turned into aesthetic beauty, and the harem becomes a theatre group. The naiveté of the first play has become a studied aestheticism in Die Wiedertäufer. The change is significant because Dürrenmatt consciously picks up the word, "Gänsemarsch", from the first play and by using it again gives a definite clue to the changes he is making in the revision of the play. This word, and the previous word, "Herumstolpern", are examples of clues to the deeper meanings in his plays that Dürrenmatt gives to the serious student who is willing to look beyond the obvious elements of style and drama that lie on the surface of his plays.

The main symbol of Es steht geschrieben is light, as was pointed out in the chapter on the use of the stage. Light, and its correlative, darkness, are symbolic of the struggle for light, and against darkness, in man's soul. As the struggle becomes more specific the symbol of light takes on more specific forms, in the shape of moon, sun, stars, planets, and meteors, these symbols bearing varying meanings. The continual use of light in the management of the stage is an effective background for these symbols, and together with them has a unifying effect on the play, blending and holding together what at times becomes an almost hopeless profusion of dramatic devices. However, beyond this function, the symbols of the heavenly bodies

can also be considered by themselves, keeping in mind the symbolic quality of light as a spiritual condition. This aspect of light is brought out early in the play in the conversation between Knipperdollinck and his daughter, as follows:

JUDITH: Ich will euch Light bringen. Die Sonne ist hinter dem Dom und es wird Nacht.

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Laß das! Laß das! Kannst du mir ein Licht in meiner Brust anzünden? Das kannst du nicht.

.
Herr, du schweigst, und ich brauche eine Antwort!

E.S.G., p. 27

The sun is hidden and it has become dark in the breast of Knipperdollinck, but it is there that he is seeking for light, spiritual light for his soul.

The sun is used about twenty times where it clearly has figurative significance, its importance being attested to by the frequency with which it is used. However, from no perspective at all does it become a meaningful symbol, or even a figure that has any kind of uniform interpretation. In the previous quotation it is evident that with the sun hidden, Knipperdollinck finds that his soul is troubled. Bockelson has predicted this just previously, saying that when he goes to see him when the sun is set and it is dark, he will then be worried about his spiritual condition. The figure of the sun is used with a similar meaning in the first lines of the play, which seem to provide a key to its usage, spoken by one of the Anabaptists, "Gott verhüllte sein Antlitz, da erlosch die Sonne im Meer und die Schiffe brannten über den Wassern." (E.S.G., p. 13). The sun goes down when God hides his face, and

trouble floods in upon the scene. In these examples the meaning is negative, depending upon the absence of the sun. Its meaning is directly applied when Matthisson is compared to the sun, by Bockelson, who calls himself the moon:

Also bereitet sich das Volk, den neuen Propheten zu empfangen.
 Dein Los aber, Matthisson, ist, hinunterzusinken in die Nacht.
 Allzulange warst du die Sonne dieser Stadt, und nun will der Mond leuchten!
 Unter deiner Glut verdorrte das Leben, unter meinen Schein wird sich der milde Zauber der Nacht über die Stätten der Menschen breiten,

E.S.G., p. 56

Here the sun is the despotic rule of Matthisson, which has shone down in its full heat of scorching power. In another example, the heat of the sun has had a different effect:

JOHANN VON BÜREN: Wir hatten reiche Beute in Italien.
 Aber ihr wißt, wie in der dortigen Gegend die Sonne vom Himmel brennt und wie man dabei wird. Ich fiel einer paduanischen Signorina in die Arme, Verehrtester!

E.S.G., p. 54

Here the sun has aroused passion, which is the function of the moon, and so the figure is very out of place. Kaiser Karl V refers to himself: "Noch aber ist es dumpfer Mittag und noch bin ich die Sonne, um die sich alles dreht." (E.S.G., p. 69). He is a very different person from the fiery preacher, Matthisson, in fact, he is almost the very opposite, being almost as cold and impassionate as his portrait, painted by Tizian, which he represents in the play. The men are too different to be represented by one figure. Knipperdollinck is addressed with a more complicated form of meaning:

DER NACHTWÄCHTER: Ich bin es, o Sonne der Gerechtigkeit, Mond der Gnade und Blitz der Rache!

E.S.G., p. 78

Here the sun stands for justice, a valid symbol, but this meaning holds only for a few examples. In another case the sun appears in the stage directions: "Am Himmel steht eine gelbe schlechtgezirkelte Sonne mit griesgrämigem Gesicht und brüchigen Strahlen." (E.S.G., p. 86). A false stage is brought on the stage with the enemy leaders gambling away their last possessions. Here the face of the sun heightens the effect of Fate, controlling the fortunes of the luckless gamblers. The feeling of doom is heavy in the scene.

The figure changes again, when Judith has gone to see her father in the darkness with his rats, and he tells her, "Es ist nicht für dich, dieses Dunkel. Du gehörst der Sonne. Geh, mein Töchterchen!" (E.S.G., p. 94). Here the sun denotes the joys of life. Several times it is used for description. Once, when Bockelson is talking to Knipperdollinck, he calls Judith, "Wie Strahl der Sonne in Morgenwolken über Jerusalem!" (E.S.G., p. 29), and again, the Anabaptists in the opening describe Münster: "Gesegnet sei die Stadt, die vor uns liegt in der Abendsonne. Gesegnet ihre Türme und Dächer, vergoldet vom späten Strahl des Lichts." (E.S.G., p. 15). The two quotations are descriptions in traditional form, of the city Jerusalem, of which Münster is a type, in the Anabaptist preaching.

After having seen repeatedly how well Dürrenmatt is in control of his material and uses it as he wishes, it is a shock suddenly to find the confusion that exists in the use of an important figure like the sun, important because he uses it in critical places, and so frequently. Usually Dürrenmatt indicates clearly when he is doing something new, but not this time. There is one example which

may give an intimation of his intentions. The enemy is already in sight and the citizens are gathered at the wall, confident in victory. One of the citizens exclaims:

DER ZWEITE BÜRGER: Ho! Ho! Die Sonne wird auf rote Rosen
scheinen und der Mond auf gelben Knochen liegen!

E.S.G., p. 58

The scene is spoken in a tone of light-hearted, false confidence. The line in particular is a mock imitation of traditional poetry, using over-worked figures. It is a loaded line, using two images to describe the outcome of the battle: the first, victorious Münster with the sun shining on red roses, and the second, the enemy camp with the moon shining on yellow bones. The line is not in Dürrenmatt's style, he does not usually write like this, and the line is evidently put in for a purpose. Just previous to the quoted line, in the same scene, Dürrenmatt uses two other similarly trite figures: "Wie Sand am Meer..." and "...Reiter als schwarze Wolken, in denen sich Blitze bereiten." Dürrenmatt evidently uses the figures here to show his contempt for the traditional use of figures. Likewise his use of the sun as a figure is more a derision of it than anything else.

While the opinion of the foregoing paragraph is not made with any great conviction, it is true that Dürrenmatt drops the figure of the sun completely in Die Wiedertäufer, a very decided change for a writer to make. Reference to the sun is still made in the address to Knipperdollinck by the butcher, and in the description of Münster as a type of Jerusalem. That is all. If Dürrenmatt was careless with his figure, he has corrected it effectively; if he was making a mockery of traditional figurative language, then

he has decided that it is now beneath his dignity as an accomplished dramatist to continue to do so.

The image of the moon, which is even more prominent in the first play than the image of the sun, is generally used in contraposition to the image of the sun. While the denotations of the sun are various: righteousness, authority with high ideals, beauty, victory, etc., the moon generally denotes sensuousness. The difference in meaning between the two images is made very clear by Bockelson after the incident in which Matthisson marches out to his death:

Dein Los, aber, Matthisson, ist, hinunterzusinken in die Nacht.
 Allzulange warst du die Sonne dieser Stadt, und nun will der Mond leuchten!
 Unter deiner Glut verdorrte das Leben, unter meinem Schein wird sich der milde Zauber der Nacht über die Stätten der Menschen breiten,

E.S.G., p. 56

Matthisson was the sun, the literalist who preached the Bible as he understood it, with fiery zeal; who ruled with an iron hand; who cared only that the Truth of God should prevail with no regard for the individual. Bockelson is the moon, which will satisfy the sensuous appetites, the lust of the flesh, the appetite of the stomach, the covetousness for the neighbour's wife and goods, and all under a mock-covering of a literal interpretation of the Bible, tied to a selfishness as inexorable as that of Matthisson.

An excellent example of Dürrenmatt's use of the figure of the moon, as well as of graceful poetic style, is the passage where Bockelson finally acquires Judith:

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Was begehrt ihr in diesem Mondlicht und in diesem Garten, Gräfin Gilgal?

JUDITH (leise): Das Leben meines Vater.

(Johann Bockelson reicht ihr die Hand und sie erhebt sich wie von selbst.)

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Er ist frei.

(Sie steht unbeweglich, die Hand in der seinen.)

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Der Mond spannt durch den Park ein Band von Silber zum Palast. Gott selbst, Gräfin, hat uns diese Straße vorgezeichnet.

(Er führt sie weg.)

E.S.G., p. 88

The moonlight and the garden are the classical situation for a seduction, but the sentences have a freshness about them that makes them new. It is the directness with which the images are used. And then, the gracious sarcasm, God himself has prepared them this path, gives it the genuine Dürrenmattian flavor.

For Knipperdollinck the moon is something else than for Bockelson. This is well contrasted in the scene with their insane dance over the rooftops, just before the final collapse. Knipperdollinck's first lines in this scene give a remarkable picture of Münster:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK'S STIMME: Johann Bockelson aus Leyden, König der armen Stadt Münster, die bleich im Mond einen elenden Teil westfälischer Erde bedeckt, und deren Mauern still das Grauen umfassen, wie die Arme einer Mutter das tote Kind.

E.S.G., p. 102

It is a picture of the stark truth, seen under the moon, that is, under Bockelson's rule. Münster is a fearful, deathly scene under the light of the moon. For Knipperdollinck the moon is not sensuous:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Mond! Mond am Himmel!
Warum bist du rund und hell und rein?
Dein Licht ist kühl und blau über den Dächern and Wällen!

E.S.G., p. 106

To the spiritually-orientated Knipperdollinck, the moon spreads its light of icy purity over the city. If the moon is taken with the meaning that it has for Bockelson, then it becomes the wheel on which our lives are broken:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: O Mond, wie bist du über uns gebreitet
wie ein Rad! An dem wir hängen werden, an dem unsere
Glieder zerbrechen werden.

E.S.G., p. 107

Knipperdollinck is here partaking in the fate of Bockelson, who is dragging the city of Münster down into catastrophe. The sensuousness of the flesh is what breaks the body in the end. But the two are already engaged in their last dance, a lunatic dance that turns everything into lightness, music and smile:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Laß uns den Tanz vollenden!
Laß uns einmal den Tanz unseres Lebens vollenden!
Laß uns tanzen in der schwimmenden Wolke deiner blauen
Flamme!
Alles ist Flötenspiel, alles ist Leichtigkeit!
Ich liebe dich,
Mond! Mond!
Du bist das Lächeln der Welten, du bist gelber Honigs-
kuchen vom Himmel.

E.S.G., p. 107

The scene is hardly in character for Knipperdollinck, and the figure of the moon becomes distorted, but it can be accepted here because Dürrenmatt is trying to create distance between Knipperdollinck and the audience at this point, in preparation for the final scene where he will appear on the wheel. This present scene does that very effectively, as well as showing how lunatic are really all the strivings of man, Knipperdollinck's as well as Bockelson's, influenced by the sign of the moon, the human flesh.

When the enemy has entered Münster and executed wrath upon it, the moon becomes, in the words of von Büren, "Blutiger Mond! Du

schreckliche Fackel des Sieges!" (E.S.G., p. 111). It depends on who is using the figure and where it is being used. As with the figure of the sun, there is no consistent meaning, in the usage of the figure of the moon, that forms a pattern within the play. The other elements of the heavens are used in the same way, for their figurative effect, as and when needed, but as an area of study they are a disappointment because the author evidently has little control over them.

In Die Wiedertäufer Dürrenmatt shows that he is able to learn from his mistakes. He realizes that the classical use of figurative language is not within his tyle, and he drops it. The moon is still used as a figure in the final lunatic moonlight dance on the rooftops, but it naturally belongs there. In the first play Dürrenmatt was experimenting with a myriad of elements, in this play he is in control of his style and works with the elements than he can use most effectively.

There is, however, another critical significance to the change. In Es steht geschrieben the profuse use of figurative language of the elements of the heavens shows that Dürrenmatt's attitude is directed towards the heavens; that is where he looks for guidance and that is where his conflicts and strivings are centred. In Die Wiedertäufer he has greatly reduced the use of heavenly figures and it points to his changed attitude that the aims of life have come down to earth. Maybe there is still hope for heaven, but only maybe, and man must resort to finding a way to live on earth, by his own effort. In this play it is the stage that has become the

main symbol which permeates everything from beginning to end, and unifies the play, in a way which the figures of Es steht geschrieben did not do. However, the symbol of the stage is also the focal centre of the plot in Die Wiedertäufer and it will be considered under that heading.

V. The Grotesque, Parody, and other Dramatic Devices

A. The Grotesque

More articles and papers have been written on grotesque elements and parody in Dürrenmatt's writings than on any other topics in his works. There are good reasons for this. These are predominant elements of his style, in everything that he has written. He is a master of this style of writing and thus lends himself to this line of study. But also, it is relatively easy to study this element of Dürrenmatt and write a satisfactory essay on it, because it is so obvious in his plays and stories. However, it puts Dürrenmatt out of character because he is in reality a serious writer, and this does not appear on the surface of his writings. Dürrenmatt does not use grotesque language because he likes it, but because he is forced to use it, a fact that critics do not always see.

This is tied up with his argument that it is no longer possible to write tragedy, but that comedy is all that is left for today's world. Many arguments have been written about this statement, quite a few attacking Dürrenmatt's position. Those that argue with him on this point fail to read his statements fully and just take certain statements out of context. Dürrenmatt states very plainly what he means by tragedy, and respecting this definition there is little cause for argument with his assertion that tragedy is no longer possible. The ones who argue with him do so on the basis of their own definition of tragedy and are thus talking about something else than Dürrenmatt is.

Dürrenmatt clearly refers to classical tragedy which contains

heroic action, in an ordered universe in which God and heaven are secure. The tragic action occurs as a result of wrongdoing, failure, or weakness, and ends with the act being expiated and a normal situation restored. For many reasons this structure is no longer possible: men are no longer individually responsible for their actions and thus cannot be heroes in the old sense, the concept of an ordered universe has faded into thin air, and the authority of God is no longer felt, it no longer operates. To understand what Dürrenmatt means, it is helpful to compare two plays, for instance, Shakespeare's King Lear, and Dürrenmatt's Der Besuch der alten Dame. In Shakespeare's play, King Lear acts in blindness to break the natural order, and as a result has to pay with his life to restore the situation to normal. The order of God, and his laws of right and wrong are under no doubt; Lear is personally responsible for what he has done and likewise personally pays the price. In Der Besuch der alten Dame, the crime is a boyhood wrong that was condoned by the community and supported by many, thus removing it from personal responsibility. Ill, the original culprit, does act heroically and individually within his own self and in this way becomes a tragic hero, but his death in no way corrects the situation, it only aggravates it. His guilt has been multiplied a thousand times, and with his death the whole community becomes engulfed in guilt. Ill has not been able to right the wrong that he has done, and instead, the awfulness of "sin" grows by leaps and bounds. It is a situation in which there is no hope and no Divine punishment. When there is Divine punishment, there is also hope, because punishment takes away guilt. In Dürrenmatt's play, guilt only begets more guilt,

and iniquity grows upon iniquity. It brings to mind the old Greek plays where one act of revenge always engendered another wrong, that again had to be revenged, and there was no way to make expiation for guilt. However, as has been noted, with Dürrenmatt there is a way for the individual to restore the order of God within his own soul, as Ill does, even though he cannot stop the avalanche of iniquity which he has been incidental in bringing upon his community. This is why some critics argue that Dürrenmatt is writing tragedy, and why he himself says that it is possible to find that which is tragic¹ within his comedies.

In substance, the argument of the previous paragraph is that in a "tragedy" man lives in a world of hope. Hope no longer exists in our world, and consequently Dürrenmatt says that it is now only possible to write comedy. Dürrenmatt takes the position of a positive existentialist. In Es steht geschrieben there is a confused search for the truth and authority of God, but this diminishes in Die Wiedertäufer, except for the role of Knipperdollinck. But there is no response to this search, only the suffering and death on the wheel, the refusal of the individual to surrender to despair. How can this individual face the world? And how can the writer portray him? And how can this play be presented to the audience? Only by the use of the grotesque. The individual has no rational answer to an irrational, godless world, he can only mock it in grotesque terms, like Knipperdollinck throwing his gold out into the streets, going around in a

¹Dürrenmatt, "Theaterprobleme", Theaterschriften und Reden (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1966). Pages 122-23 deal with the specific item. Pages 120-124 deal with Dürrenmatt's definition of tragedy.

torn shirt, and living in the gutter. The writer can only portray him in grotesque terms because nothing that man does really makes sense in view of eternity: Knipperdollinck preaches to the rats in the dark dungeon--if there is no heaven why preach to men? And the writer must make certain that the audience does not develop a sympathy for the individual: the lunatic scene of Knipperdollinck and Bockelson dancing under the moon before the final scene falls is a climactic use of grotesque elements to make sure the audience keeps a proper distance.

As Dürrenmatt has said:

...Die Welt (die Bühne somit, die diese Welt bedeutet) steht für mich als ein Ungeheures da, als ein Rätsel an Unheil, das hingenommen werden muß, vor dem es jedoch kein Kapitulieren geben darf.²

The only answer that it is possible to give this world is the grotesque, the dare, because no rational answer is possible. But this answer man must make, even if it looks silly--he must never surrender to the hopelessness and disorder of the world cosmos. This indomitable refusal to capitulate, no matter what faces man, is what basically differentiates Dürrenmatt's plays from the theatre of the absurd, where there is only a vitiated, purposeless stumbling towards an indefinite end. Dürrenmatt enforces this difference in his Anmerkung zur Komödie:

Das Groteske ist eine der großen Möglichkeiten, genau zu sein. Es kann nicht geleugnet werden, daß diese Kunst die Grausamkeit der Objektivität besitzt, doch ist die nicht die Kunst der Nihilisten, sondern weit eher der³ Moralisten, nicht die des Moders, sondern des Salzes.

²Dürrenmatt, Theaterschriften und Reden. p. 123.

³Ibid., p. 137.

Dürrenmatt's comedies are not nihilistic art, but written in the atmosphere of a moral world, a quality that marks all his works.

In Die Wiedertäufer Dürrenmatt's use of the grotesque moderates because he is now beginning to come to terms with life, and the situation is not quite so desperate. However, it is still the same genre of play, and these elements exercise, if anything, even a greater effect because they are used with some restriction and greater control. Other critics, such as Reinhold⁴ Grimm and Peter⁵ Johnson, have ably analyzed the elements of the grotesque in Dürrenmatt's plays. They are a vital element in his writings and it is important to remember with what purpose he is using them.

B. Parody

Tragedy, in the classical sense, generally works with old, well-known subjects, or myths, presenting them in new form. The dramatic quality lies in the form and not in the material (Stoff). In contrast, comedy depends on new ideas or material to present to the audience. The audience does not know what is going to happen

⁴Reinhold Grimm, "Parodie und Grotteske im Werk Friedrich Dürrenmatts", Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift, XI (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1961), pp. 431-50.

⁵Peter Johnson, "Grotesqueness and Injustice in Dürrenmatt", German Life and Letters, XV (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), pp. 64-73.

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when the curtain is raised on a comedy. This presents a problem in a world where almost every imaginable idea has already been used in drama. Dürrenmatt solves this problem by parodying other material:

Aus diesem Grunde muß denn auch der Künstler die Gestalten, die er trifft, auf die er überall stößt, reduzieren, will er sie zu Stoffen machen, hoffend, daß es ihm gelinge: Er parodiert sie, das heißt, er stellt sie im bewußten Gegensatz zu dem dar, was sie geworden sind. Damit aber, durch diesen Akt der Parodie, gewinnt er wieder seine Freiheit und damit den Stoff, der nicht mehr zu finden, sondern nur noch zu erfinden ist, denn jede Parodie setzt ein Erfinden voraus. Die Dramaturgie der vorhandenen Stoffe wird durch die Dramaturgie der erfundenen Stoffe abgelöst. Im Lachen manifestiert sich die Freiheit des Menschen, im Weinen seine Notwendigkeit, wir haben heute die Freiheit zu beweisen. Die Tyrannen dieses Planeten werden durch die Werke der Dichter nicht gerührt, bei ihren Klageliedern gähnen sie, ihre Heldengesänge halten sie für alberne Märchen, bei ihren religiösen Dichtungen schlafen sie ein, nur eines fürchten sie: ihren Spott. So hat sich denn die Parodie in alle Gattungen geschlichen, in den Roman, ins Drama, in die Lyrik. Weite Teile der Malerei, der Musik sind von ihr erobert, und mit der Parodie hat sich auch das Grotteske eingestellt, oft getarnt, über Nacht: Es ist einfach auf einmal da.⁸

It is through parody that he can take other material and make it his own. Parody implicates the grotesque, and together they build a style that can still effectively get a message across.

The study of parody and the grotesque is an area large enough

⁶Dürrenmatt, Theaterschriften und Reden. pp. 96-7, 121-4, 132. Dürrenmatt discusses his understanding of the differences between tragedy and comedy.

⁷Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Wir können das Tragische aus der Komödie heraus erzielen", Akzente, Zeitschrift für Dichtung, IV, (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1957), pp. 251-3. The possibilities of, and requirements for, comedy and tragedy in the modern world are discussed by the author.

⁸Dürrenmatt, Theaterschriften und Reden, pp. 127-28.

for a dissertation itself. Consequently I shall just examine some of the examples that are relevant for the purposes of the topic of this thesis.

The title of the first play, "Es steht geschrieben," is a quotation from the Bible. It leads into further quotations which are then parodied by the roles that various characters play. Only Knipperdollinck and the Bishop use this first formula from the Bible, "Es steht geschrieben," in their lines, and it is also these two who are most sincere in their efforts to live godly lives. It is also in the lives of these two that the misfortune of misdirected efforts becomes starkly tragic. Their lives become a parody of what they have believed, as Beda Allemann points out:

Dieses gesprochene Wort erweist sich in Dürrenmatts erstem Drama als ein durch und durch parodiertes Wort. Das zeigt sich eigentlich schon im Titel des Stückes: "Es steht geschrieben". Das ist die geläufige biblische Formel für den Verweis auf ein göttliches Gebot, und es ist zugleich die Formel, welche jenen Wiedertäufer-Ernst (oder -Wahnsinn) bezeichnet, den Lebensstil in jeder Einzelheit nach dem göttlichen Gebot einzurichten. Es ist damit das Problem der Tradition in einer für Dürrenmatt charakteristischen Weise aufgegriffen--an dem Punkt nämlich, wo die Tradition zur bloßen Bindung an das, "was geschrieben steht", und damit zum Buchstabenglauben degeneriert.⁹

The words, "Es steht geschrieben," denote the will of God, but in the acceptance of that which is written, the faith becomes stuck in adherence to a literal, written formula, and becomes a parody of a real, godly faith, like Knipperdollinck preaching to the rats.

Its first use occurs in a soliloquy by Knipperdollinck, before

⁹Beda Allemann, "Dürrenmatt-Es steht geschrieben", Das Deutsche Drama, vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart, ed. by Benno von Wiese (Düsseldorf: August Bagel Verlag, 1958), p. 418.

his meeting with Bockelson:

Aber vor mir liegt ein Buch auf diesem Tisch, das brennt
stärker denn Feuer in meinem Gebein.

Da steht geschrieben:

Verkaufe was du hast und gib's den Armen, so wirst du
einen Schatz im Himmel haben, und es steht geschrieben:

Es ist leichter, daß ein Kamel durch ein Nadelöhr gehe,
denn daß ein Reicher ins Reich Gottes komme. Und es
steht geschrieben in diesem Buch, das mich ärgert:

Weh euch, ihr Reichen, denn euer Trost ist dahin!

E.S.G., p. 26

It is repeated three times so that the reader will notice its significance. Overwhelmed by the teachings of the Bible, Knipperdollinck cannot evade the command of God, and goes on to fulfill it to the letter. Can it be judged that, in the light of the teachings of the Bible, his life is what God desires? In today's world it may be almost impossible to ask this question, but it is at least obvious that Knipperdollinck's faith leads to a life that is completely wrapped up in itself, and this is hardly the intention of the teaching of the Bible, or God's will. Wrapped up in his literalism, Knipperdollinck's life becomes a parody of the teachings of the Bible, but also an example of a large segment of the Protestant Church, which has all too frequently wrapped itself up in a literal interpretation of the Bible only to lose sight of the dominant teaching of the Bible to "love thy neighbor" as an example of God's love for mankind.

The Bishop's first use of the formula comes in his meeting with Knipperdollinck:

DER BISCHOF: Was sollen wir auch sagen! Reden nützt so wenig! Es steht geschrieben, wer Ohren hat, der höre, und wer Augen hat, der sehe. Aber wer hat Augen und Ohren! Wenn sie endlich gewachsen sind, sehen wir nur ins offene Grab und hören die Totenglocken. Aber auch das tut nichts.

Über den Gräbern wächst das beste Gras.

E.S.G., p. 36

Here the Bishop uses the formula ironically as he explicates a quotation from the Bible. The quotation makes a persiflage of the whole play, if no one has ears to hear what is said. And in its character, this is frankly what the play is, because much of it is spoken so that no one will listen seriously, as if they had no ears.

The formula is used another four times in the play, twice by Knipperdollinck, and twice by the Bishop. It has special significance when Knipperdollinck changes positions with the night watchman:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Es steht geschrieben: Die Ersten sollen die Letzten und die Letzten die Ersten! Hier, nehmt das Schwert!

E.S.G., p. 78

In itself, this is a statement that depends on the definition given to the words: first, and last; it is by becoming last, or least, that you become first in the sight of God. It is on this occasion that it is also used in Die Wiedertäufer, with a small change:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Es steht geschrieben: Die Ersten werden die Letzten und die Letzten werden die Ersten sein! Nehmt das Schwert!

D.W., p. 68

The statement has become stronger than in the first play. Knipperdollinck takes upon himself the lowest rank in the Anabaptist hierarchy to become first in the Kingdom of God. Is this what the quotation from the Bible means? More likely, it refers to the spiritual state of man than to his social rank. Knipperdollinck

is not sure whether he has understood rightly or not, later on when his conscience bothers him, during the dance in the moonlight:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Meinen Reichtum warf ich weg
Ich suchte den lieben Gott im Dreck

D.W., p. 90

Here he realizes that he has only been parodying the command of the Bible, imitating it in his own way. But then this is really all that man can do, and this is why the lunatic dance under the moon is needed, because even with the best intentions, this is all that man's efforts amount to, because he can never get away from the influence of the moon--man's sensuous, human nature. And man's life becomes only a parody of what he wanted it to be.

The formula is used two times more in Die Wiedertäufer during the council meeting of the new Anabaptist leaders. Matthison says:

MATTHISON: Brüder, wir haben in der Stadt Gottes die Gütergemeinschaft einzuführen, denn es steht geschrieben: Die Menge aber der Gläubigen war ein Herz und eine Seele; auch sagte keiner von seinen Gütern, daß sie sein wären, sondern es war ihnen alles gemeinsam.

D.W., p. 32

He is introducing communal property ownership in the name of brotherly unity and love, a farce and a mockery, because the council itself is hopelessly divided. It is a parody of the Biblical command, and in fact, Dürrenmatt is using it as a sarcasm on the teachings and practice of the Christian Church, where the result so often is that the letter of the law replaces the spiritual meaning that is intended.

The language of both plays is rich in Biblical language and allusions. Many references are made to Biblical events or teachings, which are then used or parodied in the play. In Es steht geschrieben

the first scene with the three fanatical Anabaptists is loaded with apocalyptic language from the Bible, and becomes a prophecy of what is to happen in the play. The destruction of Münster becomes a parody of the last book of the Bible, the Revelation of John. Included is a revelation of the new Jerusalem, the city come down from God, and to the Anabaptists this is Münster, the city which they are taking over with their preaching:

Also ziehen die Täufer aus allen Ländern gen Münster in Westfalen.
 Gesegnet sei die Stadt, die vor uns liegt in der Abendsonne.
 Gesegnet ihre Türme und Dächer, vergoldet vom späten Strahl des Lichts.

E.S.G., p. 15

This is the classical picture of the Jerusalem of Biblical times, the hope of the ancient Israelites, and the proto-type of the New Jerusalem to come at the end of the Apocalypse, for many a Christian. Münster is this city, from which the Anabaptists will surge out to capture the world for God, "tausend mal tausend und zehn mal hunderttausend," (E.S.G., p. 15), a typical Biblical phrase, after which will come the Last Judgment.

In Die Wiedertäufer the parodying of parts of the Biblical story is done with greater consciousness. The prophecy of the apocalyptic action to come, is done with less fanaticism, by the main actors of the play. Matthison refers to one of Christ's parables:

MATTHISON: Wir Täufer sind reinen Leibes
 Wir haben die Sünden von uns geworfen wie der Bräutigam
 die Kleider von sich wirft, wenn die Nacht seiner Hochzeit gekommen

D.W., p. 12

It identifies the movement with the Coming of Christ, which is im-

minent. The reference to the Biblical Jerusalem, of which Münster is a type, is briefer:

ROTHMANN: Zum Zeichen seines Bundes verhieß uns der
Herr eine Stadt
Gesegnet sei Münster in Westfalen, das uns umgibt in der
Morgensonne.

D.W., p. 12

It is the word "Morgensonne", which gives the clue to the Biblical Jerusalem. Matthison looks forward to the early realization of the full promise of God:

MATTHISON: Dann endlich wird der Tag kommen, der ver-
heißen ist
Ein neuer Himmel wird sein und eine neue Erde
Wir werden eins sein mit ihm, der wiedergeboren ist in uns

D.W., p. 13

The parody of these prophecies becomes a disappointment in the end; instead of blessing, the judgment of God falls upon Münster. They have believed in themselves and not in God, as the Bishop warns them: "Doch, daß ihr Täufer an euch selbst glaubt, Knipperdollinck, wird euer Untergang sein." (D.W., p. 22).

With this introduction to this city of confusion, pride, and sin, and as a sign of condemnation against it, Knipperdollinck becomes a type of Christ. He decides to leave everything, his wife, family, home, and money, to leave his position as the richest man in Münster to become the poorest man, just as Christ left his heavenly home to come to this earth and be born in a stable. By his voluntary humility he stands in contrast to the other leaders, which makes them appear to be Pharisees, and like the Pharisees of the Bible, they bring about the condemnation of Knipperdollinck, the type of Christ. His execution is brought about by the enemy, just as the

Romans crucified Christ.

Knipperdollinck's cry to the people to repent is typical of the preaching of Christ:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Busse! Busse! Busse! Wehe!
Wehe! Wehe! Tut Busse und bekehret euch, damit ihr nicht
den Zorn des himmlischen Vaters über euch reizet!
D.W., p. 28

Knipperdollinck's death becomes a parody of the Passion of Christ. Christ's struggle in prayer, in the Garden of Gesthsemane, is enacted on the Bishop's stage by Knipperdollinck, with Bockelson as a mocker, a feature added to the Biblical story:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK (schreit): Zeige dich, Herr, zeige dich,
damit ich deine Gegenwart spüre!
(Starrt nach oben.)
BOCKELSON: Na?
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Keine Antwort.
BOCKELSON: Versuche: Säusle, Gott, säusle! Das nützt immer.
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Säusle, Gott, säusle, damit ich getröstet
werde!
(Starrt nach oben.)
BOCKELSON: Tönte eindrucksvoll.
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Nichts.
BOCKELSON: Tatsächlich. Nur ein zerborstenes Bühnendach
und ein Mond, der durch die Wolken fegt. Donnere, All-
mächtiger, donnere!
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Donnere, Allmächtiger, donnere!
BOCKELSON: Gewaltiger!
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Donnere, Allmächtiger, donnere, zerschmet-
tere mich ob meiner Sünden!
BOCKELSON: Großartig. Wirkt echt verzweifelt. Gratuliere.
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Gott schweigt.

D.W., pp. 88-89

Knipperdollinck is here in his supreme temptation, the wheel is before him, he faces the test of living his convictions to their fatal end or of failing and attempting to flee, he needs an answer from God to give him strength, but no answer comes. The scene takes place on the Bishop's stage, and for Bockelson the whole thing is just

a mockery of faith enacted on the stage of life: he congratulates Knipperdollinck on his good acting. Good acting means successful living. Bockelson goes on in his role and joins the Kardinal's theatre, but Knipperdollinck's role leads him to the wheel: to become the broken body of Christ lifted up into the sky, by the enemy soldiers. On the wheel, Knipperdollinck dies like Christ, with a final cry to God, but no answer. Like the soldiers who stood around the Cross and witnessed that by the testimony of his death Jesus must have been the Son of God, so the Bishop is present by the wheel to testify that Knipperdollinck has found grace: "Der Begnadete gerädert,..." (D.W., p. 94).

Christ performed a dual mission during his stay on earth. His role as a rejected, poor, humble Savior going to the cross is parodied by Knipperdollinck. However, a week before going to the cross, Christ enters Jerusalem like a king, hailed by the multitude. Bockelson's entry as king of Münster, the new Jerusalem, is a parody of Christ's entry, coming just before the defeat of the city, Bockelson is being carried through the street as the crowds sing the Anabaptist song of victory:

DIE MENGE:

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr
 Und dank für seine Gnade
 Darum, daß nun und nimmermehr
 Uns rühren kann ein Schade
 Ein Wohlgefallen Gott an uns hat
 Nun ist erfüllt sein Friedensrat
 All Fehd' hat nun ein Ende.

ROTHMANN: Es lebe König Bockelson!

DIE MENGE: Hosiannah!

D.W., p. 51

Just before the final blow falls on Münster, in the end of the

play, Bockelson presents a parody of the Last Judgment, on the Bishop's theatre:

(Sie improvisieren das Spiel vom Jüngsten Gericht.)
 BOCKELSON: Am Jüngsten Tag, König Bockelson
 Erschien vor Gottes Richterthron
 KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Splitternackt und blutverschmiert
 Hat er dem Herrgott vorrezitiert
 BOCKELSON: Die Engel und Cherubim bleich und verdattert
 Haben mit mächtigen Flügeln geflattert
 KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Beeindruckt vom grausigen Welttheater
 Demissionierte der himmlische Vater
 BOCKELSON: Engel und Heilige stoben davon
 KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Da setzte sich auf Gottes Thron
 Der Täuferkönig Bockelson
 BOCKELSON: Genöß einen himmlischen Augenblick lang
 Den selbstinzenierten Weltuntergang
 KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Und unter donnerndem Applaus
 Ging die Weltgeschichte aus

D.W., pp. 90-91

This is just sheer mockery, or even cynicism, serving very effectively to maintain distance between the audience and Bockelson. It is just after this that Bockelson is received into the arms of the Kardinal as a leading actor, and the audience is expected to regard this development from an intellectual standpoint, void of any sentiment for the actors.

The story of Judith and Holofernes is taken literally from the Bible and used with good effect of both plays. In Es steht geschrieben the idea comes upon Judith in a soliloquy, spoken in a state of dumb despair:

Ich las von Judith, meiner Namensschwester, welche auszog,
 die Juden zu befreien.
 Denn Holofernes, der Feldhauptmann Nebukadnezers, belagerte
 Bethulien und die Not dieser Stadt war wie unsere Not.
 Judith kam zu Holofernes in der Nacht und hieb ihm das
 Haupt ab:
 Also will ich zum Bischof, der mit Schrecken Münster
 umgibt, ihn zu töten.

E.S.G., pp. 98-99

She fails in her attempt because she is a good Christian, unable to tell a lie and unable to kill, unlike her Biblical sister. As it appears, her main motive, unconsciously, has been to get out of the palace of Bockelson, even though it means death for her. The Bishop discovers her plot by looking into her eyes. He gives her what in reality she wanted, without understanding it herself: the Bishop's blessing and forgiveness after the deadly sin she has fallen into with Bockelson.

In Die Wiedertäufer the incident becomes more dramatic. Bockelson wins Judith into his harem with a pardon for her father, who has been sentenced to death. She then accompanies him, together with his group, to the Bishop's theatre to practice a play he has written, "Judith and Holofernes":

Wir aber, meine Lieben und Getreuen, wollen uns in das
 ehemals bischöfliche Theater begeben. Ich dichtete ein
 biblisches Trauerspiel, "Judith und Holofernes", das
 will ich vorrezitieren und alle Rollen ganz allein spielen.
 Kommt meine Fürstinnen, kommt meine Fürsten, Kommt!
 Jerusalem erlebiche, Holofernes steht vor deinen Toren
 Da tritt eine Heldin auf, die nicht erzittert
 Des Unholds Leib in ihrem Schoße bettet
 Den Tod ihm gibt und dich errettet

D.W., p. 73

Judith gets the inspiration and goes on to fulfill her Biblical sister's duty. The Bishop exposes her by questions about Bockelson's dramatic recitations. Her fate is the same as in the first play, but with harsher overtones, because the Bishop refuses her his prayers, as he himself is dumb:

BISCHOF: Seit ich Priester bin, habe ich für die Seelen
 der Menschen gebetet. Achtzig Jahre lang habe ich zu
 Gott geschrien. Jetzt bin ich verstummt. Jetzt bete ich
 nicht mehr für die Seelen der Menschen.

D.W., pp. 76-77

This harshness leaves Judith in a pitiable state, as she faces her fate, and the soldiers come to take her away. However, the Bishop is not to blame, he is much less in control of his situation here than he was in the first play. It is evident that the others' roles weaken as Bockelson's role preponderates in this play.

The parody of the Bible is most important to an interpretation of the plays but another example merits attention as well.

In Es steht geschrieben Dürrenmatt parodies Goethe, as well as the classical Latin, with strong overtones of ridicule. This is the quotation from Goethe's Faust that he has in mind:

FAUST

Habe nun, ach, Philosophie,
 Juristerei und Medizin
 und leider auch Theologie
 durchaus studiert, mit heißem Bemühn.
 Da steh' ich nun, ich armer Tor,
 und bin so klug als wie zuvor! 10
 Heiße Magister, heiße Doktor gar,...

Then, after Faust repeats the sign of the Earth Spirit, he hears voices from the spirit world. This part is parodied by the street sweepers who discover Bockelson:

ERSTER STRASSENKEHRER: Es ist ein frischer Morgen und
 ein Haufen Dreck und Staub am Boden.
 ZWEITER STRASSENKEHRER: Lutum und pulvis. Ihr wißt, ich
 habe Philosophie studiert.
 ERSTER STRASSENKEHRER: Je!
 ZWEITER STRASSENKEHRER: Juristerei und Medizin.
 ERSTER STRASSENKEHRER: Glaubs! Glaubs!
 ZWEITER STRASSENKEHRER: Und Theologie!
 ERSTER STRASSENKEHRER: Ihr gabt euch Mühe, Strassenkehrer
 zu werden.
 ZWEITER STRASSENKEHRER: Seht, in meinem Kopf rappelts.
 Ich bin auf den Hund gekommen, seht ihr! Ich höre
 Stimmen.

E.S.G., p. 18

¹⁰Goethe, Faust. Part I (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1954), p. 179.

It is the street sweeper who uses the words of Faust. He uses Latin to describe the filth on the street; and like Faust, he also hears strange voices, but because he has become a lunatic. He comes from a higher social level and has gone down into the gutter. Faust spoke in irony, "Da steh' ich nun, ich armer Tor!", but when the street sweeper says, "Ich bin auf den Hund gekommen, seht ihr!", it is a statement of actual fact, a sarcastic parody of Goethe and the classics, that shows a youthful, rebellious attitude of derision for the "classical gods" enthroned in academic institutions of learning (This is a prejudice that easily develops among students). Christian Jauslin comments pointedly on this example:

Ist dies einfach billige Parodie eines Klassikertextes, Parodie, die zur bloßen Persiflage absinkt? Sie wäre es, wenn etwa Karl V. oder der Bischof sie aussprechen würde. Daß aber Strassenkehrer und Scharfrichter dies tun, hat doch einen bestimmten Zweck. Es wird nämlich demonstriert, daß die Klassiker heute buchstäblich auf der Straße liegen.¹¹

In Die Wiedertäufer Dürrenmatt has reconsidered this example. He still uses the Latin, in the same way, but he obliterates the quotation from Goethe, leaving just a hint of it behind. It may be a matter of discretion, in part, but Dürrenmatt has definitely gained a deeper respect for the great writers of the past, like Goethe, and realizes that he is deeply indebted to classical drama.

Parody is an important element of Dürrenmatt's writings, it is a form that comes naturally to him, and can become very subtle and difficult to study. Because he parodies naturally, almost un-

¹¹Christian M. Jauslin, Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Zur Struktur seiner Dramen (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1964), p. 37.

consciously, it becomes a basic element of his style, and the reader does not realize how often, or when, he is parodying some other work. Only the obvious examples have been considered here, to do more would require a different framework. Dürrenmatt's use of parody does not change much between the plays except for the refinements expected of maturity.

C. Biblical Language

Because the themes of the plays are religious, it is only natural, although not necessary, that Dürrenmatt should use the language of the Bible in the text. It has already been pointed out that the language is not conversational, colloquial, or prosaic, but instead, poetic and elevated, whether written in prose or poetry. But above all, it is Biblical in character, in its tone, in the words used, and in the numerous quotations, or imitations of such, from the Bible. The total effect is that the plays become almost a parody of the Bible, mocking at it while they explore the consequences of many teachings of the Bible.

Es steht geschrieben begins with a fanatical tirade by three Anabaptists, which parodies the Book of Revelation, and reflects the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Bockelson intentionally uses Biblical language and allusions throughout, with the express purpose of duping the Anabaptists into accepting him and making him their leader. He demonstrates what he can do by just using the right language, and obviously Dürrenmatt is using his example as a condemnation of much that goes on in Protestant churches where religious faith is

often judged more by the language a person uses than by his true convictions. It is a parody of false ecclesiastical practice, that ranges from mild ridicule to sarcasm. In contrast to Bockelson's language, the language of Knipperdollinck is always sincere, and honestly spoken. He is wrapped up in the teachings of the Bible and its language, and they fill the text of his lines. The Bishop's language is as much philosophical as Biblical, but his philosophy is definitely religious. Matthison is the dry legalistic preacher who spouts the Bible in all he says and does. In the enemy camp, the Protestant von Büren and the Catholic von Mengerssen make a mockery of religion in very serious tones. They are religious in name only, and it has never occurred to them that there is anything deeper involved, but religion still occupies a good part of their speech. Kaiser Karl V regards himself to be a Christian ruler and loves to talk about things like righteousness. Whether in sincerity, imitation, mockery, sarcasm, or incidental use, the Biblical language, references, and stories permeate the play.

Although Die Wiedertäufer is changed in many ways, the Biblical emphasis remains just as remarkable. Bockelson now speaks another language, as well--the language of the stage, but his hearers are not always sure which it is that he is using. This play still works with the same themes the first play dealt with, and so the language remains Biblical, in clear contrast to most of the other plays Dürrenmatt has written.

D. Other Dramatic Devices

In Es steht geschrieben Dürrenmatt shows all the exuberance

for variety that a young writer could possibly exhibit. It made this play look like an assemblage of dramatic tricks, but it was very valuable for his career. A writer may receive much criticism on his first effort, but it is not as serious as the criticism he gets later on. It enabled him to test his ideas and observe them on the stage, as well as learn from the criticism he received. Some of these ideas he just dropped, and many he used later when he found need for them.

In the first example to be considered, Bockelson foretells his death, as if it had already happened, the archangel Gabriel having transported him back in time, when he carried him to Münster. This is the incident:

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Johann Bockelson, Schneidergesell, Mitglied eines dramatischen Vereins, Wanderprediger und Prophet der Wiedertäufer, gestorben auf eine grausame und gewalttätige Weise zu Münster in Westfalen am 22. Januar 1536.

DIE WACHE: Ihr sagt, ihr seid am 22. Januar 1536 gestorben?

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Gewiß, ich starb damals. Man folterte mich und warf die Leiche, nachdem ich am Rade gestorben, in ebendenselben Karren, worin ihr mich zur Stunde liegen seht.

DIE WACHE (starr): Dies geschah am 22. Januar 1536?

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Am 22. Januar 1536.

DIE WACHE: Verzeiht, wir haben den 23. September 1533!

JOHANN BOCKELSON (überlegen): Mein Freund, es mag uns Propheten hin und wieder unterlaufen, daß wir die Zukunft mit der Vergangenheit verwechseln.

E.S.G., pp. 20-21

Dürrenmatt does two things here: he tells the audience what will happen in the end, and he brings in the device of confusing, or mixing, time, the past, present, and future. In Die Wiedertäufer he drops the first thing, obviously, because Bockelson does not die.

The second device he includes, having the archangel carry him back a year in time, but it is not an important matter in this play: Bockelson more or less says it to impress the gullible people with whom he talks. The device of presenting the conclusion at the beginning he uses later with stunning effect in Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi, where Saint-Claude is shot right at the beginning. The result is that the story is not important, but the audience is directed at the teaching of the play. In Es steht geschrieben this incident becomes especially effective, when in the final scene, the same people to whom Bockelson talked in the beginning come and take his body from the wheel and put it into the same wheelbarrow in which they discovered him at first. The idea of moving back or forward in time is repeated in the scene with the Gemüsefrau, where she prophesies of all the wars that are still to come, looking forward from 1533, an actual catalogue of historical wars. He makes considerable use of this idea, again, in the play, Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon. It has a strong resemblance to the way the poet, Rilke, uses time in his "Buch der Bilder."

The Anabaptist Matthisson, is allowed to criticize the author, Dürrenmatt, very roundly, in his first main speech:

Um aber die letzten Wurzeln dieser Mißstände bloßzulegen, halten wir es für unsere Pflicht, darauf hinzuweisen, daß der Schreiber dieser zweifelhaften und in historischer Hinsicht geradezu frechen Parodie des Täufertums nichts anderes ist
als ein im weitesten Sinne entwurzelter Protestant, behaftet mit der Beule des Zweifels, mißtrauisch gegen den Glauben, den er bewundert, weil er ihn verloren, eine Art Mischung trauriger Phrasen mit einer skurrilen

Freude am Unanständigen,
 der sich nicht scheut, vor dem Papst selbst den Schwanz
 einzuziehen, diesem Todfeind der Religion, nur um auch
 von dieser Seite seine maßlosen Angriffe gegen uns zu
 erneuern.

E.S.G., p. 48

Dürrenmatt seems to feel that it is necessary for him to make a confession to the audience of his own spiritual state of doubt about his religious convictions. Matthisson not only judges Dürrenmatt but also accuses him of plotting against the Anabaptist movement. This is rather an extreme part for a character to play. It is omitted in Die Wiedertäufer, but the device is used in other plays, for example, Übelohe's speech in Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi, in a monologue scene very similar to the scene with Matthisson.

Kaiser Karl V has a unique clock that he takes with him, a Turk who stands in a chest and beats on the floor with a stick to keep time. This is just a ridiculous stunt, and Dürrenmatt does not repeat it--the audience could hardly be expected to appreciate something like this.

In connection with Kaiser Karl V there is another incident that has a questionable effect. While the Kaiser is talking, his two-months old child starts howling in the back. His attendant explains that this happens whenever there is talk about brutal death, like a hanging, or death on the wheel. The effect is dubious and Dürrenmatt cuts this part in Die Wiedertäufer.

Next Dürrenmatt tries an action scene in monologue, in the form of a pageant. Bockelson, with a glass of beer in his hand, is sitting on the throne on which Kaiser Karl V had sat just previously. He starts with his long speech on food, after which he claps his

hand and three attendants, Moors, appear in a complicated ceremony, and prepare him to sit on the throne, as king. They leave and when he claps again his fifteen wives appear, performing a quiet ceremony before their king, and then gathering behind him. After that the Anabaptist council appears, and then the background fills with soldiers. After another speech, Bockelson claps his hands again and the Moors enter and spread a large map of the world on the floor in front of them. Then Bockelson proceeds to divide up the world among his followers. Nobody except Bockelson has said a word until mention is made of Knipperdollinck's role that breaks the spell of the illusion produced by the false righteousness of Bockelson. It is an impressive pageant, coming just shortly after Kaiser Karl V, the real emperor of the world, sat in the same spot and exercised his imperial powers. The scene was successful and Dürrenmatt retains it, in substance, in Die Wiedertäufer, adding a subdued chorus effect to it. The first speech, on food, is cut in half because it evidently was overdone in the first play. Then his eleven wives appear and salute him with, "Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe." He is not satisfied with their entrance, and with himself as stage director and the women as a theatre group, he begins their stage training. They again salute him in chorus when they re-enter. Then the council enters with the same salute. After that he gives them a sermon to boost their morale, to cope with the difficult situation in which Münster finds itself. The sermon is as much a mocking parody of fanatic evangelical preaching, as that it portrays the tragedy of the historical event of Münster on the stage. Then Judith appears, the

one honest individual, the spell of illusion is broken, and the play returns to normal.

Shortly after this, in Es steht geschrieben, Dürrenmatt tries a stage on the stage scene. Under a grouchy sun, a small stage on wheels is pushed onto the stage with von Büren, the Monk, and the Drummer sitting around a table, gambling. It is a symbol of the ill fortunes that Fate hands out in war. Dürrenmatt does not use this incident in Die Wiedertäufer, but instead makes more extensive use of the idea, partly by playing some scenes in the Bishop's theatre, and otherwise, by making some actions appear as theatre within the actual theatre.

Dürrenmatt tries an experiment with a different type of dialogue with the two wives of the Landgraf von Hessen. These two women always talk together, saying the same thing but with dissimilar sentence order. They also make identical motions on the stage. It is a good dramatic device, but there is little purpose for it here, and he drops it in Die Wiedertäufer.

There is a brief, naive scene of self-identification for Bockelson that is very effective, although somewhat out of place. In a parody of something mythical and old, he falls down flat and kisses his Mother, the Earth, and talks of bringing down the stars to decorate her:

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Ich stehe unbeweglich. Der Himmel wölbt sich um mich wie ein Königsmantel. Ich trage dich, Himmel. Ich stehe fest auf der Erde. Ich bin dein Sohn, alte Erde. Du bist meine Mutter und in den Nächten höre ich dich rufen. Aber ich folge deinem Rufen nicht, denn ich will den Himmel. Ich will ihn mit meinen Händen herabzwingen, Mutter Erde! Mit seinem Feuer und mit seinen Sternen will ich dir einen Teppich bereiten.

(Er legt sich auf den Boden.)

Ich höre dein Herz schlagen und deine Lungen sich weiten
und zusammenziehen. Ich höre dein Blut in uralten Schäch-
ten rauschen, heilige Mutter. Ich küsse dich!

E.S.G., p. 97

This is the real Bockelson, a worshipper of Mother Earth and all that she symbolizes, and if he does have some higher aspirations, to bring down the stars from heaven, it is to decorate the lusts of the flesh on earth. The incident is not repeated in Die Wiedertäufer because Bockelson takes on a different role.

VI. Characterization

1

In this chapter I shall only consider the true characters, and those that perform special functions in the plays. The static characters, Matthisson, Knipperdollinck, Bockelson, and the Bishop, who are also the main characters, are not true characters because they have specific roles to play within which they are confined. It is these roles which constitute the real plot of the play. The action of the revolt of Münster is only the background for the greater spiritual struggle amongst the different roles of these characters. The Bishop's case is special as, besides playing a role, he also speaks for the author, and to some extent acts as an individual in speaking with an honest opinion. In many places he stands above the plot. As the plot consists of the conflict of these roles, and the individual struggle of each, it appears logical to examine them in the next chapter, under the title, "Plot and Theme."

¹A true character is an individual who can develop, and who can make decisions as a free person. Dürrenmatt makes more use of role-playing characters, but the former have a very special significance in his plays. Hans-Jürgen Syberberg discusses Dürrenmatt's characters in Interpretationen zum Drama Friedrich Dürrenmatts (München: Verlag UNI-Druck, 1965). The following quotation is a good statement on Dürrenmatt's uses of characterization:

"Auch die Vorliebe Dürrenmatts, seine Personen als Extremfälle gewisser Leidenschaften oder Erfahrungen zu beschreiben, beweist seine Neigung zur typisierenden Darstellungsweise. So ist die Zachanassian die "reichste Frau der Welt" und Amilian das "tausendfach besudelte Opfer der Macht" und Romulus der "Weltenrichter", alle wollen sie etwas Absolutes, das eigentlich Unmögliche. Es liegt nahe, sie als Verkörperung der Grausamkeit (Liebe), des Patriotismus und der Gerechtigkeit an sich zu deuten. Man wird sie leichter als Funktionen der gedanklichen Problematik verstehen als die sich frei entwickelnden Charaktere oder individuellen Persönlichkeiten mit ihren zufälligen oder erkämpften Eigenschaften, die ihre Entscheidungen aus eigener Freiheit zu treffen imstande sind." p. 123.

That there are similarities between Dürrenmatt and Brecht, in what they are doing in their plays, has already been remarked upon in a number of places. It is no surprise then, that Dürrenmatt's characters do not appear as individuals, but as role-playing characters that almost become puppets as they are manipulated by the author. They are even more so than Brecht's characters. The roles that Brecht's characters play are intended to instruct the audience, but in doing this they sometimes get out of the author's hand and the audience sees them as individuals, and comes quite close to them. An example of a main character doing this is Shen Te, from Der gute Mensch von Sezuan. This rarely happens with Dürrenmatt. The roles that his characters play are usually related to some problem of life, or solution, and this the character has to follow through, unflinchingly, to the final end. The audience sees the role that the character is playing, but not the person, and if there is a possibility of the character getting out of hand, Dürrenmatt goes out of his way to make him ridiculous, as for example he does with Knipperdollinck, to maintain distance between audience and stage, so that the audience will not regard the individual but only the role which the individual is playing.

Judith is the only character of the two plays who is a true individual, and the mark that sets her apart is that she is the only honest person in the play. However, the virtue of honesty is in reality also the mark of individuality. The person who has dedicated himself to a cause, or belief, is also seduced by that cause and finds that henceforth he is only playing a role, in fulfillment of that cause.

Although Judith is only a minor character, she is an important key figure in understanding the scheme of the play, and acts like a barometer telling the weather before the clouds are visible. She is the counterpoise to the other characters, and shows up their lack of character as individuals. And while Dürrenmatt, as author, is apparently wrapped up in the various roles the others are playing, she arouses a curious suspicion in the reader that she has a more important role in the scheme of the play than appears on the surface.

Dürrenmatt treats her very delicately, her lines are some of the loveliest parts, and her death is tragically heroic. Is it possible that secretly she is Dürrenmatt's heroine? It is impossible to conceive of a character like Judith in most of today's drama, because in the "absurdist" and "avant-garde" milieu, honesty of character is an impossible thing. But Dürrenmatt refuses to give up the old ideals even if he has to slip them in quietly without attracting too much attention. It is important not to pay too much attention at the spot where Dürrenmatt directs the spotlight, because he likes to fool his audience, who, he thinks, are too concerned about the obvious and exaggerated parts.

Phyleus and Iole in the play, Herkules und der Stall des Augias, are characters similar to Judith. They can act as free individuals because they are honest, and are not committed to any policy or course of action. Likewise, the interpretation of the play is upset by these two minor characters, who end up leaving in search of the ancient myths, of true love and heroic action, when a sensible solution for the dilemma of the country has already been found. Where Dürrenmatt

puts the emphasis may be uncertain, but it is quite evident that there is more than one interpretation.

In both plays, Es steht geschrieben and Die Wiedertäufer, Judith is present with her father, Knipperdollinck, when he first meets Bockelson. And in both plays she is the only one who sees through Bockelson and his scheming from the very first, because she is the only one that looks from a pure heart. In the play, Der Blinde, the blind man is the only one who can see, but for him this sight is what gives him the faith to stand upright, and alone, while everything around him crumbles and becomes corrupt. Judith is the only one whose sight enables her to recognize evil, because she is the only one who is pure and is not entangled with seducing motives.

In Es steht geschrieben Judith says very little, but at the end of the scene of their first meeting with Bockelson, she is the last one on the stage, and hides her face in her hands, a sign to the audience that she sees what is coming while her father has taken Bockelson up to his room, being taken in himself with Bockelson's promise of hope to lead him to eternal salvation, and while her mother has gone off to prepare him a dinner, already yielding to his physical attractions. In Die Wiedertäufer, in the first meeting with Bockelson, Judith only utters one short sentence: "Laß uns weitergehen, Vater." (D.W., p. 17), but it carries the same meaning as the gesture in the first play.

Judith appears another six times in Es steht geschrieben. The second time is in her father's house, where Bockelson has now taken her father's place. She appears on the side with her face hidden,

in shame of the events that have come about. Alone at the end of the scene, she tells what has happened to her father:

JUDITH: Mein Vater zog hinaus vor die Türe seines Hauses.
 Er verließ, was er besaß, um durch die Gassen zu gehn,
 die im Mondlicht schweigen.
 Arm ist er geworden und nackt und teilt mit den Hunden
 der Straße sein letztes Brot,
 und die Leute, die ihn sehen, zeigen mit den Fingern auf
 ihn und lachen.
 Auch sein Weib verließ er, und sie schläft mit einem
 anderen Manne.

E.S.G., p. 47

After that she appears with her father in his misery and poverty, which she does not understand, but which she shares out of love for him. When she hears that her father has been condemned to death, she sells herself to Bockelson for the price of his life. The paradox is that this elevates her to the palace, out of the misery of her father's poverty. She goes back to her father to tell him of his freedom and to seek his forgiveness for her sin in yielding to Bockelson. He forgives her on account of her innocence, but sends her back. She has already shown her ability to act as an individual, in saving her father, and now she goes on to another action, to save Münster from its enemy, the Bishop. Life in Bockelson's palace is not for her, and the distress of the city haunts upon her mind as she awakes to a great plan to become a Biblical heroine:

JUDITH: Der Winter ging dahin und der Frühling und nun
 ist es Sommer;
 nicht aber ging die Not dahin, und der Hunger wich nicht
 von dieser Stadt.
 Die Menschen sterben auf den Plätzen und ihre Leichen
 werden über die Wälle geworfen.
 Meine Mutter ist tot und mein Vater lebt in der Nacht,
 mir bleiben die Tränen.
 Mein Leib ist zerbrochen und meine Seele erloschen, die
 Hände sind leer und nur Schatten sind, wo ich weile.
 Ich las von Judith, meiner Namenschwester, welche auszog,
 die Juden zu befreien.

Denn Holofernes, der Feldhauptmann Nebukadnezars, belagerte Bethulien und die Not dieser Stadt war wie unsere Not. Judith kam zu Holofernes in der Nacht und hieb ihm das Haupt ab:
 Also will ich zum Bischof, der mit Schrecken Münster umgibt, ihn zu töten.

E.S.G., pp. 98-99

The lines are softly poetic and sublime; the usual grotesqueness has yielded to a serene tone of tragedy: a stanza of classical drama. Then follows a parody of the Biblical story of Judith and Holofernes, but Judith is a Christian with a pure heart and an open conscience, and she fails because she cannot tell a lie, in contrast with the character of the Biblical Judith. She is offered a way of escape from the penalty of her action, but she refuses because she will not tell a lie. She accepts death because otherwise her whole life would become a lie. Her death is not tragic in the classical sense in that it restores a heavenly order which by her faults she has broken, because she has committed no violation of an ordered cosmos, but it is tragic because she has dared to act on the belief that a pure heart and conscience are of the greatest value in the cosmos within which man lives, a position which pre-supposes a classical cosmos in the background of men's existence. In this way, Judith stands in contrast with everything else that is done in the two plays, especially with Bockelson, who in Die Wiedertäufer seems to offer the only way of life that Dürrenmatt can find, that is still open to men.

In Die Wiedertäufer Judith appears only three times, after the first scene in which she is introduced. It simplifies the action but also makes it more effective. Once with her father in poverty, once with Bockelson to beg for her father's life, and in the end with the Bishop, in her last tragic scene. Dürrenmatt has left her

part relatively unchanged.

Katherina, the wife of Knipperdollinck, is a pathetic figure in Es steht geschrieben, who does not at all help the action of the play. Dürrenmatt realized this and dropped her in Die Wiedertäufer by making her death precede the play. Mollenhöck is another figure that is dropped in Die Wiedertäufer. He is used very effectively in Es steht geschrieben to point out the religious disloyalty and weakness of the city. Both, Katherina and Mollenhöck become disloyal to Münster, she by trying to flee, and he by trying to open the gate to the enemy, and both are killed by Bockelson. These acts helped to establish the appropriate character for Bockelson, to alienate him from the audience, and also to demean his own death, so as to remove any vestiges of a tragic death. However, in Die Wiedertäufer Bockelson plays a different role, and it is not in character for him to be a murderer, so it is convenient to drop both Katherina and Mollenhöck from the play.

In Es steht geschrieben there are twenty-eight characters who are not introduced as individuals by name, but remain impersonal, such as guards, street cleaners, soldiers, and so on. All of these, except one, play minor roles in the play, so that this is not really as significant as the number suggests. The exception is the Gemüsefrau, or vegetable hawker. She is not an individual, like Judith, nor does she play a role in the plot like most of the important characters, but she fulfills a special function, or purpose, in the play. She is there to create contrast and relief, very much in the same way that Shakespeare uses Falstaff in King Henry IV. While the crowd is

eagerly anticipating the red blood that soon will gush from the Monk's neck, she is hawking red cabbages to build strong bodies to provide more corpses. She also reminds unmistakably of Mother Courage in Brecht's play, Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder.

The first scene with the Gemüesefrau is the one in which the Monk is to be executed, and Knipperdollinck appears to disrupt the whole scene by throwing away the gold that has until now kept him from entering the kingdom of God. It is one of the most effective scenes that Dürrenmatt has written, a fact which he clearly realizes because he changes it very little, in substance, in Die Wiedertäufer. It is also the most colorful scene in Es steht geschrieben.² Dürrenmatt often gives credit to the Vienna Folk Theatre for inspiration in his writing, and this is one of the few scenes in which the results of this are evident. The characters are colorfully costumed, in great variety: the splendor of the Middle Ages in a fanatical and solemn procession (to quote Dürrenmatt's stage directions, E.S.G., p. 38), celebrating in a jovial, bloodthirsty, and unconscientious mêlée. It is not quite in agreement with the nature of the rest of the play, but without this scene the play would become too serious and heavy. Shakespeare often uses scenes in a similar way to provide relief within a play. This is also the scene where Dürrenmatt slips in some of his choicest satire on war and justice. It is here that Knipperdollinck makes his final decision to follow the written word of the Bible, "Es steht

²Dürrenmatt, "Die alte Wiener Volkskomödie", Theaterschriften und Reden, p. 142.

geschrieben", to give away his money to the poor so that he may be rich in heaven. This most serious action is set in a scene that mocks at everything that is serious, a device that Dürrenmatt uses frequently, to give contrast and balance, and to keep the audience at a safe distance from personal involvement in the action. Knipperdollinck looks far too ridiculous, and his action only increases the avarice of the mob, for the audience to show him any sympathy. The audience barely realizes what Knipperdollinck is doing, and its significance for his life. The key figure of all this is the Gemüsefrau--she makes the scene. Her voice is heard throughout, over everyone else's: the Monk trying to defend himself, the announcer condemning him, the soldiers trying to bring him to the block, the crowd waiting for his blood. Her apples come direct from paradise, her onions promote progress and pregnancies, her beets provide philosophy, and her radishes are red as blood. Her vegetables provide the answers for men's needs: happiness, progress, and learning, and when all the other answers to men's problems are considered, hers may have as much validity as theirs. In the end, when the Monk asks her why she isn't taking any money, she replies, "Ich nehme kein geschenktes. Ich bin eine klassenbewußte Proletarierin." (E.S.G., p. 42). This line has a strongly Brechtian flavor. In her last appearance she has left the city and is peddling wares in the army camps, very like Mother Courage in Brecht's play.

In Die Wiedertäufer the part of the Gemüsefrau is strengthened and her speeches become more sensuous. Her part as a peddler in

the enemy camp becomes more important and she plays a vital role in the intrigues to keep the war going by supplying needed food to Münster. Her part in the two plays effectively creates relief from the serious tone of the action, and also reminds the audience of the indomitable character of Brecht's Mother Courage.

The most difficult character to assess is the Bishop. He has a role to play as a bishop of the Catholic Church, but he also stands above that role--he is the only character who can rise above the actions and dilemmas of the play and comment upon them from an independent perspective. His position changes decidedly between the two plays, reflecting changes in the personal views of the author, Dürrenmatt, over the period.

It is necessary to examine the Bishop's character closely. Critics have made various comments on him, calling him a Protestant in disguise, or a Lutheran at heart. Frequently such remarks appear in popular reviews, or surveys of literature, which usually have a wider circulation than thorough studies do. The Bishop is frankly broad-minded in his religious views, but it must be kept in mind that he lived in a period when there was a widespread demand for reform in the Catholic Church, mainly from loyal Catholics. The spirit of the Renaissance had infected the Church and, while it brought in a drift towards worldliness, it also led people to think individually, as faithful Catholics. The Bishop sees the faults and weaknesses of the Church, and realizes that it has not been infallible in the past, despite its claims. He can be honest, impartial, and tolerant as a man, while at the same time he fulfills

his official capacity as a bishop in the Church faithfully and effectively, often in disagreement with his personal attitude. But his liberal views make him a better Catholic, rather than a Lutheran or Protestant. The Bishop recognizes clearly that the ultimate striving of man is towards God, though it may be from many different directions, and in different ways that he finds God. Knipperdollinck does not find God in a prescribed way, but as an individual, and it is as an individual that the Bishop counsels him:

DER BISCHOF (düster, nach einigem Zögern): Halte, was für Täufer und Bischof gilt: Liebe deine Feinde, wie dich selbst, verkaufe, was du hast und gib den Armen, und widerstehe nicht dem Übel.

E.S.G., p. 37

And it is in the same spirit that he recognizes his spiritual victory, at the end:

DER LANDGRAF VON HESSEN: Ein sinnloses Leben! Verachtet von allen!

DER BISCHOF: In ihrer Qual liegt der Sinn, Landgraf von Hessen.

DER LANDGRAF VON HESSEN (indem er langsam hinausgeht): Weh, ihnen, sie haben Gott verloren.

DER BISCHOF: Wohl dem, der ihn am Rade wiederfindet.

E.S.G., p. 114

The story goes far beyond the argument of being Catholic, Protestant or Lutheran, but becomes a human problem as Dürrenmatt explores the outer limits to which a man must go to find God. Knipperdollinck on his wheel has gained the victory, but the Bishop remains in his wagon and must go on in the everyday world to continue providing the care that the Church has to be ready to give.

The Bishop reveals the same dual role of bishop and man when he sits in his tent, waiting for the capture of Münster, which is imminent within a few days:

DER BISCHOF: Ich bin hier im Lager zu Münster.

.
Diesem erbärmlichen Gerech-sein-wollen, das wir trau-
rigen Menschen vielleicht schon in wenigen Tagen voll-
ziehen müssen. Herr erleuchte uns! Gib uns ein wenig von
deiner Helle, dem Nächsten ins Gesicht zu leuchten, aber
wir sind blind.

Ich werd viele töten müssen, weil ich ein Mensch bin und
verstrickt in meiner Grenze und weil sie den Tod unter
Menschen verdient haben.

Ist es eine Strafe? Ist es eine Sünde? Gott allein weiß
solches und er antwortet uns nicht.

E.S.G., p. 99

He sees the spoiling of Münster ahead and shudders at the thought of it, as bishop and as man, but is helpless as both, and can only pray to God for light. If the Bishop shows sympathy for others, even outside of the Catholic fold, it must be accepted that he is a man worthy of his position. In this way Dürrenmatt has elevated him to a special position in the play, but not from a Catholic to a Protestant or Lutheran. His treatment of the Bishop suggests that Dürrenmatt has a deep reverence for the Catholic Church, but this situation may be incidental within the play. The Catholic Church is subject to human weaknesses and errors like any other human endeavor, but it has striven to maintain a level of action above the pettiness of human strife. It is in this area that the Bishop gets blamed severely for having failed in not being able to handle the situation within the Church at Münster:

KARDINAL:
Waldeck verstand es bloß nicht, mit seinen Schäfchen
umzugehen und ihre Anfälligkeit fürs Phantastische in
den Schoß der Kirche zurückzusteuern. Ein tüchtiger
Dominikaner hätte da längst Ordnung geschaffen und die
Angelegenheit friedlich im Sinne Roms geklärt.

D.W., pp. 60-61

It is the same argument with which the Catholic Church has been

blamed for letting Luther get out of hand by being too narrow and restrictive, but at the same time it avers that it is the purpose of the Church to be large and tolerant enough to do this. This is the perspective from which Dürrenmatt sees the Catholic Church, in this play, and it is within this schema that the Bishop has his elevated position in the play. At times he speaks almost as an individual, generally he holds to his role as bishop, but often he is speaking especially for the author.

Dürrenmatt has the tendency in some plays to treat time as Rilke does, where the phases of time, past, present, or future, may run together or cross over, and time loses its definitiveness. The age of the Bishop at the beginning of the play is 99 years, 9 months, and 9 days, a ripe old age, but the repetition of the nines makes it a mythical age. The Bishop starts philosophizing about life in his first monologue, and then goes into a discussion about time:

Wir leben, wenigstens wir auf dieser Bühne, alle vierhundert Jahre vor euch, und da ist es nun einmal so, daß wir in vielen Dingen törichter, unbeholfener und kindischer sind als ihr und in manchen Dingen tapferer und gröber.

E.S.G., p. 33

The 400 years is the difference in time between the period in which the Bishop is living and the present in which the play is being performed. It serves to connect the action of the play with the present; it also gives the Bishop a special significance in that he performs certain functions in the play, other than just playing a role, and in a way becomes a mythical figure who bridges the time between the age of the historical action and the present. In Die Wiedertäufer this

part is dropped because the Bishop has more of a role to play and less of a function.

What especially sets the Bishop apart from the action of the play and above it, although he is still very much in the centre of the main plot, is that he is able to philosophize on life and comment on the action and actors, in an impartial and independent spirit. His first monologue has some lines of vital importance to an understanding of Dürrenmatt's plays:

Ihr mögt recht haben, meine Guten, aber glaubt mir,
dieses Spiel könnte euch--wenn ihr recht aufmerksam
seid und mir nicht davonläuft--auf einige nicht so un-
wichtige Dinge hinweisen, die bei euch und bei uns ihre
Gültigkeit haben.
Ich bin alt,
und es kommt mir bisweilen in schlaflosen Nächten vor,
als ob Gott uns Menschen zwar viel Verstand und Witz,
aber recht wenig Lebenskunst mit auf den Weg gegeben
hätte,
Wenn ihr nun Dinge zu sehen bekommt, die euch vielleicht
grausam und unsinning vorkommen werden,
so erschreckt nicht allzusehr:
Glaubt mir, die Welt vermag jede Wunde zu ertragen, und
es kommt im großen und ganzen nicht so darauf an, ob
der Mensch glücklich ist oder nicht,
denn das Glück wurde ihm nicht gegeben, und wenn er es
hat, ist dies eine große Gnade.
Notwendig vor allem ist, daß er überhaupt auf der Erde
herumstolpert.
Ich weiß, es ist viel Elend hienieden und viel Verzweif-
lung und Verworrenheit ohne Ende,
doch wenn wir dies nicht so wichtig nehmen auf unserer
Bühne, so geschieht es nicht eurem und unserem Unglück
zum Spott, sondern nur, weil wir das Treiben der Menschen
ein wenig losgelöst von der Schwere der Erde, im Lichte
jener Religionen zeigen wollen, in denen die Linien deut-
licher und unvermischer sind und die Formen sich rein
vom Hintergrund abheben.

E.S.G., p. 33

It is an attempt to look at life from a distance and so be able to bear its pains and dilemmas. It also gives the purpose of

Dürrenmatt's theatre: to remove the strivings of men from the heaviness of the earth into a light in which they can be observed, objectifying them and removing them from the subjective. This is really what Dürrenmatt is trying to do with the whole play. The strivings of the various characters are separated from the rest until they stand alone with them; the audience is alienated from it so that it sees the affair from a distance; in fact, the audience sees its own strivings safely objectified before it so that it can rise above its own doubt and misery. In Die Wiedertäufer this is developed further and this attitude becomes a way of life itself, not just a relief, making life itself into a stage, so that the dilemma of life may be made bearable. And again in Die Wiedertäufer it is the Bishop who is the critical figure, because it is he who has the top theatre group.

The Bishop avoids arguments and can do this because his comments rise above personal opinion, and he is not worried even if they incriminate his own position. When Knipperdollinck visits him, with a troubled conscience, and asks for "The Truth," the Bishop replies ironically: "Und die glaubt ihr von einem Knecht der Kirche zu erhalten?" (E.S.G., p. 35). When Knipperdollinck starts arguing about the coming war between the two parties, the Bishop replies: "Vielleicht wird Gott keinem von uns helfen in diesem Kampfe." (E.S.G., p. 35). Knipperdollinck accuses him that they are not trying to do great things for God, and he answers: "Der Mensch vermag nicht das Große, er vermag nur das Kleine. Und das Kleine ist wichtiger als das Große. Wir können viel Gutes tun auf der Welt, wenn wir bescheiden

sind." (E.S.G., p. 37). Then Knipperdollinck begins to break and asks for help, and gets thrown back at him what is already in his spirit: "Halte, was für Täufer und Bischof gilt: Liebe deine Feinde, wie dich selbst, verkaufe was du hast und gib den Armen, und widerstehe nicht dem Übel." (E.S.G., p. 37). Knipperdollinck still tries to defend himself:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK; (indem er den Bischof wieder frei läßt):
 Steht das nicht auch in den Schriften der Täufer?
 DER BISCHOF: Es steht geschrieben.
 KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Sind Täufer und Christus nicht eins,
 wenn sie das Gleiche sagen?
 DER BISCHOF: Nichts ist eins mit ihm. Er ist das Schwert,
 und wir sind der Leib, der getötet wird.

E.S.G., p. 37

and with this he is finished. Within these quotations the Bishop has said much that comes directly from Dürrenmatt's own troubled soul. Or more simply, the Bishop is Dürrenmatt as he looks upon himself and regards the various dilemmas and solutions of life that plague him. As the other characters are playing out these dilemmas and solutions in their roles, it is through the Bishop that he looks at them to gain some perspective in life. It is the last line that is particularly critical: that Christ is the sword, and we are the body that is to be killed. The answer to this line comes at the end when the Bishop sees Knipperdollinck's body, killed on the wheel. Von Hessen mocks, when he sees the bodies on the wheels, that they have lost God; but the Bishop retorts: "Wohl dem, der ihn am Rade wiederfindet." (E.S.G., p. 114). This is one solution to the dilemma of life, the answer that stands out above the others in Es steht geschrieben.

The function of the Bishop in Es steht geschrieben has been

shown: he is a non-partisan character who stands at a level where he can comment on the others and their roles, and in this way speak for Dürrenmatt, because the roles that the others are playing are in reality the conflicts that are active in Dürrenmatt's own soul, and he needs somehow to get above them and see them objectively. The fact that the Bishop is Catholic and involved in the action is confusing, but it is possible, because both Lutherans and Anabaptists came from the Bishop's flock and had been nurtured by him and were still his responsibility--before God. Dürrenmatt handles this problem with skillful ability, showing his capacity to master the material with which he works.

In Die Wiedertäufer the Bishop changes from being foremost a philosopher and mouthpiece for the author, to where he is more deeply involved in his role, in which he now owns the top theatre company in Europe. As the other role-playing characters lose out and only he and Bockelson are left, the one with the most famous theatre group, and the other who has made the world into a stage, the theme of life as a stage on which man plays his brief part overshadows the other roles. The theme is that on the stage man's life becomes loosed from its subjective moorings and he rises above himself and his problems, so that life itself becomes more distant and bearable. But when the Bishop sees the triumph of the dilettante Bockelson, he is overwhelmed with disgust and breaks out of his role, the crippled ancient gets out of his wheelchair and stands on his feet, and demands that the world become more humanitarian. He is still an individual as well as a role-playing character, but it is the involvement

of his role in the main theme of the play that predominates, and as such is taken up in the chapter on plot.

Kaiser Karl V has been announced to the audience by the Monk, in the beginning, as a great attraction; it is seldom that such a great personage appears on the stage. When he does appear it is as a live imitation of the portrait that the great artist Tizian has painted of him. He is a static figure--just like the portrait, and his one hope is to retire some day to a cloister and spend his time circling the statue of Righteousness. The present does not interest him--he doesn't realize where he is, nor what time it is, unless his master of ceremony informs him. Even this static greatness is deflated in the end when he grants the Bishop a miserly 100 soldiers to fight against Münster, plus another 50 for his gift of the elephant, all picked from amongst his most wretched soldiers. It is time for a break within the play, and this is where the Kaiser comes in, just as the Gemüsefrau did earlier, except that he is not in the least entertaining as she was. The effect is mainly to create distance between the stage and the audience, and to minimize the affair of Münster. As a character, Kaiser Karl V is little more than the picture of himself that he represents (his picture is elevated above the Kaiser himself).

Kaiser Karl changes a little in Die Wiedertäufer. His portrait isn't mentioned, but instead he parades as the emperor of a world-wide empire, and especially a religious emperor, because when people are required to die, they have a right that it be a great and godly dynasty for which they are laying down their lives. Kaiser Karl

does have a few words to say in the action, but beyond that he is more like a statue than an individual.

The Monk is but an ill-defined character in Es steht geschrieben. He starts with a long impersonal monologue of introduction to the audience, which just rambles on. He has a necessary part in the execution scene, but he does not become real as a character. He is seen again in the enemy camp getting the better of von Büren in gambling, after the latter's forces have already been devastated by the enemy in the gamble of war. The Monk serves some functions in the play, but he does not appear as a unity that can be described.

Dürrenmatt takes another look at the Monk and finds a good role for him in Die Wiedertäufer. So far he has never considered the cause of humanism, and as this is a proper opportunity, the Monk becomes a humanist. It gives him a definite part in the scheme of the play, in contrast to his part in Es steht geschrieben, but he still does not become an individual--he is only a humanist, and as such is mocked and rejected at every step. His opening monologue in the first play has been cut out, so that the audience sees him only in his new part. His aim is to change the world by means of reason, but, instead, he lands on the scaffold in the hands of the executioner and no one will listen to his appeal to reason. After he escapes the executioner's sword, he still vows that: "Meine Vernunft wird diese unvernünftige Welt bezwingen." (D.W., p. 30). The Gemüsefrau tells him that the world is not only irrational, but also divided by religious strife, and that the only vital question is where will business prosper. There is no place for reason. He

flees to the enemy and only escapes the gallows there by becoming the army chaplain. He objects that he is a humanist but is ordered to get ready to preach in the evening. He gets by as long as he sticks to his preaching, but when he tries to talk reason the generals soon send him to the gallows. There is no place for reason in the war. Dürrenmatt makes the humanist look ridiculous without even giving him a major role to play. In this day and age, Reason has no place, and cannot even get a good hearing. Dürrenmatt is being very satirical at the attitude towards reason in the affairs of the world, in the role the Monk plays in Die Wiedertäufer.

The other main actors, Bockelson, Knipperdollinck, and Matthisson, have leading roles in the play and are not developed as individuals. Their roles are developed, and the conflicts between their roles become the main plot of the play. In Die Wiedertäufer the Bishop is also in this group of role-playing characters. They will be examined fully in the chapter on plot and not under characterization.

In his use of characterization, Dürrenmatt changes little between the two plays. The story of the plays, similar to the plot of a classical Greek tragedy, is well-known to the reader and thus of no great dramatic interest. The story is only the arena in which the roles assigned to the characters are tested, tried, and found wanting. Only of Judith can it be said that she is an individual, that she does not become enslaved to her convictions or her weaknesses. Her part does not change between the plays. The way that Dürrenmatt handles her part still suggests that she is in reality his secret love, the honesty and pureness of soul that is the dream

of the idealist, but which is impossible in today's world, and would make the play disgusting to society if it were presented with greater prominence, just as Akki and Kurrubi are repulsive to the city of Babylon in Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon.

The figure of the Gemüsefrau becomes more of a character study in Die Wiedertäufer, with a much closer resemblance to Mother Courage of Brecht's play, Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder. It is odd that Dürrenmatt should make this change at the very time he is defending himself against charges that he is being strongly influenced by Brecht's plays. However, Dürrenmatt loves strong characters and from this aspect Mother Courage is really an un-Brechtian character and Dürrenmatt points this up by using her as a type for his Gemüsefrau. The Gemüsefrau in Die Wiedertäufer is a strong, indomitable person who handles her situation, seemingly desperate, very well and shows the possibilities that an individual has even in hopeless situations if he is willing and strong enough to act on his own initiative and to ignore scrupulous notions. When she sees that the situation in Münster is hopeless she gets out and starts up business in the enemy camp. There is no sense in defending a lost cause when there is an opportunity to get out of it and continue elsewhere. It would have been impossible for Matthisson or Knipperdollinck to think like this.

The changes in the Bishop's part are tied up with the change in the theme of the play. Es steht geschrieben represents largely the spiritual struggle within the author himself and the Bishop acts like a commentator in this battle, helping Dürrenmatt to get above

himself. By the time he wrote Die Wiedertäufer Dürrenmatt had progressed a long way towards settling his spiritual instability, and thus the Bishop's function as a mouthpiece for Dürrenmatt diminishes, and he is seen more just in his role as a liberal, moderate bishop, which in turn is overshadowed by the rising prominence of Bockelson's role. The Bishop has rejected Bockelson from entry into his theatre company at the outset, and in retaliation Bockelson turns Münster into a stage and takes over the Bishop's theatre by force. The Bishop's role remains as a weak cry for rationality and moderation, although he rises out of this role at the end with one desperate call for change.

VII. Plot and Theme

...Nie sind in seinen Stücken die Figuren sie selbst, sondern parodistische Spiegelungen ihrer Funktionen in der Welt.

Wilfred Berghahn¹

...Bockelson sees in the Münster situation the role of a lifetime as king of the Anabaptists. With great cunning and dazzling rhetoric he seizes the role and gives a magnificent performance. The princes become his amused and fascinated audience. When the city falls and the Anabaptist rebels are punished, Bockelson is carried out of the city in triumph to become the new leading actor in the Prince Cardinal's company. Through Bockelson "die schlimmst mögliche Wendung," a familiar feature of Dürrenmatt's dramaturgy has taken place.

Margareta N. Deschner²

...An einem Lügner geht die Welt zugrunde, und eine Lüge rettet den Zerstörer: "Es machen alle mit. Das ist das Wunder." Es machen alle mit: auch der alte Bischof, der eigentliche Widerpart des Betrügers, muß sich anklagen, als Komödienfreund ist er nun einem Komödianten gegenüber machtlos.

Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer³

¹Wilfred Berghahn, "Friedrich Dürrenmatts Spiel mit den Ideologen," Frankfurter Hefte, Zeitschrift für Kultur und Politik, XI, (1956), p. 103.

²Margareta N. Deschner, "Dürrenmatt's 'Die Wiedertäufer': What the Dramatist Has Learned", The German Quarterly, XLIV (1971), p. 229.

³Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer, "Die Wiedertäufer (1967)", Dürrenmatt in unserer Zeit (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, 1968), p. 51.

A. Introduction

It is under this aspect that the vital difference between the two plays becomes apparent, and small changes take on great significance. Dürrenmatt attacks the dilemmas of life, examining solutions with severe honesty and exposing their final consequences, but, in sharp contrast to Brecht, he does not come up with good, plausible solutions that he recommends. Where Brecht induces his hearers to think, and gives them the "right" direction, Dürrenmatt leaves his hearers wondering what to think, and expects them to choose their own direction as best they may. Brock-Sulzer quotes a statement by Dürrenmatt:

...Erst kürzlich hat Dürrenmatt auf eine Frage nach seinem "Engagement" geantwortet: "Wenn ich die Lösung wüßte, so würde ich, faul wie ich bin, nur diese Lösung hinschreiben und mir die Mühe des Stückeschreibens ersparen."⁴

The statement is ironical but true: there are no straightforward answers to life's problems, people are too different to be given the same solution, and maybe they are incapable of solving their problems even if given the solution.

It has to be kept in mind that the themes of the two plays are religious, and that the plot deals with the consequences of several religious choices as shown by characters who play the roles involved in these choices. In the first play, the Bishop, besides his role as bishop, also stands above the action of the play as a

⁴Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer, Dürrenmatt in unserer Zeit (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, 1968), p. 54.

rational philosopher and mouthpiece for Dürrenmatt. In Die Wiedertäufer the Bishop's part weakens as Bockelson takes greater prominence. Bockelson becomes the supreme "actor", turning the world into a stage; he is doing more than merely playing a role, he is becoming a true character who takes the opportunities that appear and turns them to his advantage. Knipperdollinck and Matthison faithfully play their roles, to the direst consequence, and grip the attention of the hearer as antagonists of the Bishop and Bockelson. The plot consists of the conflict and interaction among these roles, and if Bockelson seems to triumph in Die Wiedertäufer, it is not that he defeats the others' roles, but that he is successful in coping with the problems of life that face him. However, what is the meaning of the word "successful"? And with the introduction of this question, the interpretation of the plays breaks down again. Knipperdollinck and Matthison have found God in their death, but Bockelson has only found a way to live successfully here on earth, and the Bishop is left on the sidelines with his humanistic approach, stamping his feet in despair. Within the terms of their roles the word "successful" can be applied to Knipperdollinck and Matthison as well as to Bockelson, but within the framework of the play Bockelson's success has greater cogency in the eyes of the audience. But the hearer must beware when Dürrenmatt seems to point in a certain direction, because he only does this to fool the hearer who is looking for easy solutions. As soon as the hearer reflects he has doubts about his conclusions because Dürrenmatt always reveals faults along with verity: he consistently

raises doubts about every solution he presents.

The plays reflect new attitudes that are developing in the world culture, and it is necessary to take notice of some of the changes of the last few decades. We are living in an age in which feelings of patriotism and nationalism are gradually disappearing. In agreement with this trend, these passions have no place at all in Dürrenmatt's plays. European peoples have had forceful reasons to be concerned about the effects of patriotism and nationalism since the last world war, the last tragic catastrophe to be caused by these emotions. Even in America, the national conscience has become uneasy over helpless war victims in Vietnam, and fails to rally in support of the American image as a superpower in that part of the world. The feeling of patriotism is being replaced by a more open attitude to other people. The sense of values with respect to nationalism is changing in the world, especially with the younger generation. It is a novel statement to make, but there is much evidence in the world today that the example of Jesus is taking on a new validity for life, more so than it has for ages. What is taking place today is a re-thinking of the example of Jesus. The values that He stressed pointed to common bonds between peoples instead of the divisive factors that have been operative so frequently. Likewise, the example of Jesus as a hero showed marks of greatness that have seldom been respected in the past. Dürrenmatt does not take up the teachings of Jesus Christ; it is the model of Jesus as a hero that stands out, in contrast to the traditional hero who accomplished great deeds of violence. Violence is no longer a measure

of greatness; it has to accompany nationalism and patriotism as they disappear. Edward Diller has said,

...Dürrenmatt's heros never conquer the world, but they gain a consciousness of soul that makes all the horrors of the world, the threats to their lives, and even death itself bearable and meaningful.⁵

Dürrenmatt's heros are not non-heros, as some have suggested, but modern heros who have greater battles to fight than the traditional hero who fought with a sword. Following the example of Jesus, they face the dilemmas of life and risk their lives to gain victory over the evil of the world and the enigma of life.

B. Plot in Es steht geschrieben

The plot of Es steht geschrieben is built up with a number of parallel lines of action. The intrigues in the Anabaptist takeover and defence of Münster are balanced by the problems of raising and organizing an army to re-capture the city. The story of Münster is the sub-plot that carried the action of the four main characters, each with a role based on his religious position or conviction, which he has to follow out to its "schlimmst mögliche Wendung", its final demand. Matthisson and Knipperdollinck take up their specific religious convictions and work them out to their conclusions, ending in death. Bockelson is the false prophet who likewise comes to an untimely end. The Bishop's role allows him to survive the action, he has to carry on and take care of the situation that is left. This does not set him apart as a greater or lesser hero, it results

⁵Edward Diller, "Despair and the Paradox: Friedrich Dürrenmatt," Drama Survey, V, (1966), p. 133.

from the fact that his role is different.

The role of Matthisson is the least complicated of the four. He rises up like a ghost, through the floor of the stage, a severe prophet, tall and lean, carrying a long sword, the sword of righteousness. He is an austere man of faith, a Pauline saint who lives by the letter of the Word of God, who has been miraculously converted through the voice of God speaking in a clap of thunder on a starlit night. He steps out of the play in his opening address to criticize the author severely for being an unfaithful Protestant and doubting the faith, (which may make the hearer suspect that Dürrenmatt knew just such a preacher in his youth, and is still shivering in memory of his sermons).

Matthisson's faith is dogmatic, like that of the prophets of the Old Testament. God will take care of the people that trust and obey him, and smite any enemies that dare threaten them. His faith is unflinching, uncompromising, and blind: all qualities that are demanded by God's Word. He is completely authoritarian; it never occurs to him that anyone could understand God's Word differently than he does, without being an infidel. He finds little support for his views in the Anabaptist council, but his rule soon comes to an untimely end through his own convictions. In emulation of Samson he goes out to fight the enemy singlehanded and becomes a sacrifice to his own faith. He has dared to live by his faith, and to die by it, as have a great number of Christians in the past, true and faithful to their convictions.

It is the Bishop's soldiers who have killed Matthisson and they send his head, carefully prepared, to the Bishop. He views the

head and holds a long discourse over Matthisson's fate.

DER BISCHOF (zum Kopf des Jan Matthisson): Das bist du also, Jan Matthisson, und ich gestehe, daß ich dich mir so ungefähr vorgestellt habe:
 Das sind deine Augen und das ist dein weißer Bart, länger noch als der meinige, nur nicht mit der gleichen Sorgfalt gepflegt.
 Ich weiß, du hast mich gehaßt, aber ich habe ein größeres Unrecht an dir begangen: Ich habe dich verachtet.
 Nun bist du tot, Jan Matthisson, und ich bitte dich, diese meine Sünde zu verzeihen.
 Ich habe von deinem Tode erfahren, und ich weiß, daß der Herr dich gesegnet hat, denn du fandest ihn in der Stunde deines Todes.
 Du hattest dich ganz seiner Macht übergeben und er hat dich zu deinem Tode geführt.
 Siehe, so wurden deine Augen geöffnet.
 Was ist unser Leben, Jan Matthisson? Irrtum auf Irrtum und ein Fehler nach dem andern, aber laß uns darüber nicht traurig sein.
 Auf irgend eine Weise lernt jeder das Seine und gelangt zu seinem Ziel, auch wenn er es nicht erkennt in seiner Verworrenheit.
 Denn Gott ist gerecht und gibt jedem, was ihm zukommt, und nicht mehr und nicht weniger.
 Auch du hast dein Ziel gefunden, Jan Matthisson, und deinen Sinn.
 Du hast dein Ziel gefunden, als die Schwerter der Landsknechte deinen Leib durchschnitten.
 Aber was sage ich dir von diesen Dingen, du wirst dich nun besser in ihnen auskennen, als ich es vermag. Du zogest aus zu siegen im Namen Gottes und wurdest besiegt in seinem Namen.
 So ließ dich Gott den größten Sieg erringen: den Sieg über dich selber,
 denn der wahre Sieg kommt nur dem Besiegten zu.
 Du wolltest Unmögliches in der Endlichkeit, nun ist dir die Ewigkeit anheim gefallen, in der alles möglich ist.
 Lacht nicht über ihn, ihr Leute!
 Er starb wie ein Kind, aber es steht geschrieben, daß wir wie die Kinder sein sollen.
 Er war ein Grobian, das stimmt, aber an uns liegt es nicht, zu richten über seine Grobheit.
 Sein Tod war lächerlich, aber nur das bleibt bestehen vor Gott, was uns ärgert und über welches wir lachen.

E.S.G., pp. 64-65

Matthisson has played only a small part in the action of the play, but his role is given a lengthy epilogue by the Bishop, in his function as commentator. Matthisson has found God in the death to which

his faith has led him. He has yielded himself completely to God's power and in that way has gained his desire. Somehow, everyone comes to his goal. The significant fact is that, in what he has done, Matthisson has gained victory over himself--- this is what God demands, this is what is meant by "becoming like a child", as it is written. He was a Grobian (a boor) but that does not matter. The Bishop's last line is a comparison of Matthisson to Don Quixote, a favorite hero type for Dürrenmatt. This comes almost as a surprise, because it means that Dürrenmatt attaches a lot of importance to Matthisson's role. Maybe it is true, as Matthisson said earlier, that Dürrenmatt admires the faith that he has lost.

However, Dürrenmatt makes sure that Matthisson's picture does not remain untarnished. He has left the city, Münster, in a sorrowful plight of unpreparedness for the enemy that is gathering outside of its walls. His faith has benefitted no one but himself. His austere character is put in question by his relation with the beautiful Divara, whom he has brought along from his bakeshop in Haarlem, even though she is his wife now. The amount of time he spends with her prevents him from seeing much of what is going on around him in the city. His rude overbearance over his fellow council members makes a negative impression upon the audience. Dürrenmatt shows both sides to his arguments, he vilifies every hero he presents, to maintain a neutral position himself, together with the independence of the hearer, so that the hearer will look at his heroes from a safe distance, and reflect.

While Matthisson's role stood almost independent of the main action of the play, Knipperdollinck's role is just as well-defined, but it becomes more involved in the action. His role is more human and of greater interest. Like Matthisson, he takes the Bible literally, but he happened to focus his attention upon a different part of it and so his life takes a very different course. His life had been wrapped up in worldly goods, his money and his family. The Word of God, "it is written," is asking him to give up his riches and become poor in the sight of God. It is a clear call from God's Word, The Bible, and Knipperdollinck cannot escape from it. When Bockelson appears, Knipperdollinck falls easy prey to his scheming and yields up his wealth and wife to him, to become poor as God has commanded.

There are several questions that Knipperdollinck is faced with. How do you satisfy the demands of God, how do you find peace with God, and how do you cope with the world around you? Knipperdollinck has fallen upon a role that demands self-denial and humility, almost the exact opposite of Matthisson's role as an arrogant crusader, although both are based on a literal acceptance of God's Word. If Matthisson brought Münster to a desperate plight in the face of the enemy, Knipperdollinck must accept even greater responsibility for the tragedy of the city. His faith weakens him, causing him to release his civic powers as mayor and the wealthiest businessman in the city, and letting Bockelson get possession of his private wealth.

Knipperdollinck's weakness allows the false prophet to enter in and bring catastrophe to Münster. Knipperdollinck, however, does

not realize what is happening, because he is involved in a personal spiritual struggle that demands his all and leaves him naked, in his torn shirt, with the rats in the gutter, and finally takes him to his death on the wheel.

In the first appearance of Knipperdollinck and his daughter, Judith, there is a short conversation between the two that sheds much light on the whole play:

JUDITH: Ich will euch Light bringen. Die Sonne ist hinter dem Dom und es wird Nacht.

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Laß das! Laß das! Kannst du mir ein Licht in meiner Brust anzünden? Das kannst du nicht. Und meine Frau, deine Mutter, ist ein schwaches Weib und kann es auch nicht. Und Rottmann kann es auch nicht und Jan Matthisson kann es nicht und er ist Prophet.

KNIPPERDOLLINCK (macht eine Pause, dann düster): Herr, du schweigst, und ich brauche eine Antwort!

JUDITH (am Fenster): Es müssen heilige Menschen sein, die Täufer, weil-

(Sie schweigt, wie erschreckt, als hätte sie ihn gestört.)

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Sprich nur, mein Kind. Du störst mich nicht.

JUDITH: Weil auch ihr ein Täufer seid.

KNIPPERDOLLINCK (heftig): Wer sagt das?

JUDITH (erschrocken): Alle sagen es.

KNIPPERDOLLINCK (langsam): Ich bin kein Täufer. Ich bin nicht heilig. Ich habe keinen Glauben, ich habe Gold.

JUDITH: Sie sagen, ihr hättet die Täufer mächtig gemacht in dieser Stadt.

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Ich war es nicht, und mein Geld war es nicht. Was könnte ihnen solches helfen und meine Stimme im Rat, wenn sie nicht ihren Glauben hätten!

E.S.G., pp. 27-28

None of the Anabaptist evangelists have been able to bring light into Knipperdollinck's troubled soul, as also his wife and daughter have failed. Why is it that later the false Bockelson comes along and easily shows him God's will, and how to obtain peace with God? Dürrenmatt portrays the greatness of Knipperdollinck's faith throughout the play, but in its beginning it is born with the help of false-

ness. Knipperdollinck's second statement, "Herr, du schweigst," is one of the most important comments in the play. This is what Knipperdollinck faces all the way, up to his death. There is an element of contrast between him and Matthisson in this respect. To Matthisson God has spoken, and he is regarded as a prophet, but ironically enough, he cannot help Knipperdollinck, and the impression he makes on the audience is suspect, despite the elegy by the Bishop. It is only in the complete "becoming nothing" of death that Knipperdollinck can meet God, but it is likewise doubtful if this creates an impression of genuineness on the hearer. Knipperdollinck's course is reminiscent of K. in Kafka's Das Schloß, and the use of the same letter, K, suggests that Dürrenmatt had this novel in mind when he wrote the play. The third point of this conversation is Judith's statement, "Sie sagen, ihr hättet die Täufer mächtig gemacht in dieser Stadt.", implying that it is Knipperdollinck's prestige and gold that have advanced the Anabaptist movement in Münster. Knipperdollinck denies this but his denial only convinces the hearers of the truth of the statement. The whole movement is thus made suspect from the start, being built on Knipperdollinck's gold, the evil that is dragging him down to hell, and being shadowed by his faith because only the false prophet could bring light to his soul.

When Dürrenmatt presents a role he invariably presents opposing views of it, and maligns it as well. Like Brecht, he builds distance between audience and the stage and leads the hearer to think about what he sees, but unlike Brecht, he does not induce him to a certain line of thought or action. He respects the independence of the hearer, or better yet, forces him to make his own decisions, that is, makes him responsible. And also, he provides a variety of choices, at the

same time proving them all to be false or imperfect. Or is greatness always associated with mistaken motives, and truth with falsity? This question is a Dürrenmattian postulation that is inescapably present in the play.

When Knipperdollinck meets with the Bishop, before the struggle between the Bishop and Münster begins, the Bishop exposes in stark terms the motives which are driving on the Anabaptist leaders. He says that it is because they cannot conquer themselves that they want to conquer the world. Because the Bishop humbly absorbs all reproaches himself, Knipperdollinck is led on to ask him for help, "Was soll ich tun?". In answer the Bishop throws at him the very thing which Knipperdollinck already has in his soul, and which he is trying to suppress with his hostility towards the Bishop:

DER BISCHOF (düster, nach einigem Zögern): Halte, was für Täufer und Bischof gilt: Liebe deine Feinde, wie dich selbst, verkaufe, was du hast und gib den Armen, und widerstehe nicht dem Übel.

E.S.G., p. 37

This confrontation with the Bishop strikes Knipperdollinck to the soul, and the rest of his life is spent mastering himself until he can lay his soul bare before God on the wheel. He ends his life accomplishing the same thing that the Bishop has commended Matthisson for doing in his death.

Knipperdollinck accepts the challenge from the Bishop, which repeats the demand God has already made upon him, and follows this call from God to the letter. Slowly everything in his life crumbles to nothingness and he becomes a ridiculous spectacle on the stage. All around him life loses meaning as the whole of Münster gets involved

in a senseless battle for its existence, through the religious bigotry arising on all sides. Life becomes absurd all around him and he ends up in darkness, a pitiful spectacle, preaching to the rats--there is no sense in preaching to human beings any more. Another result of his meeting with the Bishop is that he slowly but surely disassociates himself from the Anabaptist movement.

Life has lost all meaning as the crisis approaches its climax in the lunatic dance over the rooftops. In the words of Knipperdollinck, "Laß uns einmal den Tanz unseres Lebens vollenden!" (E.S.G., p. 107). Life is just a crazy dance--a whimper that is often heard in this world. This scene makes a stunning impact upon the audience, with revolting repercussions. In its premiere presentation upon the stage (Zürich, 1947) it caused a near riot. Knipperdollinck and Bockelson become repulsive to the hearer, who can then dispassionately contemplate the final results of their roles. This scene is a careful device to ensure that the audience in no way becomes sympathetically involved with the characters on the stage--they are too absurdly ludicrous.

And then comes the finale--the dance of life has ended, Münster has been pillaged, and Knipperdollinck and Bockelson are seen, dying on the wheel. Then the Bishop appears, to make the last comments over the fate of the two, as he has done previously.

DER LANDGRAF VON HESSEN: Ein sinnloses Leben! Verachtet von allen!

DER BISCHOF: In ihrer Qual liegt der Sinn, Landgraf von Hessen.

DER LANDGRAF VON HESSEN (indem er langsam hinausgeht): Weh ihnen, sie haben Gott verloren.

DER BISCHOF: Wohl dem, der ihn am Rade wiederfindet.

E.S.G., p. 114

After that comes the last utterance of Knipperdollinck, ending with these words:

Die Tiefe meiner Verzweiflung ist nur ein Gleichnis Deiner
Gerechtigkeit,
Und wie in einer Schale liegt mein Leib in diesem Rad,
welche Du jetzt mit Deiner Gnade bis zum Ende füllst!
E.S.G., p. 115

Knipperdollinck has lived out his faith as he understood it, to the last letter of the law, and he has found God in the end. By giving him the last word in the play, Dürrenmatt has also made his the most significant role in the play, in contrast to Bockelson and Matthisson. The Bishop has a more static role as an observer; his convictions are not on trial.

Bockelson enters the stage as a "wolf in sheep's clothing," taking advantage of the religious situation in Münster, by his pretences. However, he gets more leniency from the audience than do Knipperdollinck or Matthisson, because he aptly exposes the deluded bigotry of these two chosen characters. Bockelson has two faces, one for his colleagues whom he impresses as being a faithful believer, and one for the audience to which he makes no pretences of being piously religious. The hearer has to be careful that he is not deceived also by the face that Bockelson presents to him. Bockelson deludes the other characters through their own religious gullibility and this gets the approbation of the audience. He has not found his theatrical abilities profitable on the stage, but in real life the actor soon accomplishes his designs. Compared to the stage, the competition he faces in the world makes him an easy victor. They are all blind in their own conceits, whereas he has been taught to

see, on the stage. But he does not see that he is out of his place in the world, off the stage, and instead of being able to choose his own course as an independent character, he falls hopelessly into the role of the sensuous addict to lust, through the deception of his own vanity.

His talent for acting is ably demonstrated in his first encounter with Knipperdollinck, in the latter's home. Bockelson plays, as an actor, with the commands of the Bible, but he leads Knipperdollinck to meekly obey the Bible to the letter, as in real life.

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Was fragst du nach deinem Lohn? Könnte es nicht sein, daß ich dir die ewige Seligkeit verschaffe?
KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Was du bist, weiß ich nicht und nicht, von wo du kommst. Du bist nackt, ich will dich kleiden, du bist hungrig, du sollst an meinem Tische sitzen, dich dürstet, ich will dir von meinem Wein geben.

E.S.G., p. 29

Knipperdollinck never realizes where he went wrong in his obedience to a clear command from God's Word, but from that moment on Bockelson has the upper hand, as he predicted a little earlier, "Ich werde als ein leuchtendes Meteor durch eure Nächte stürzen!" (E.S.G., p. 23). His meteoric rise is temporarily thwarted by the implacable Matthisson, but he loses no time in having himself installed as king as soon as Matthisson is gone. "In dieser Stunde der Not nun hat der Herr mich zu eurem König erhoben, Dem Antichrist zu widerstehen" (E.S.G., p. 62). But he also adds, to show the new direction that he will take, "Laßt mich siegen im Zeichen des Monds, an ihn kette ich mein Geschick und das Eure!" (E.S.G., p. 62). His followers don't notice this statement; they are tired of Matthisson's bigotry and glad to accept Bockelson's more sensible leadership. The forces of Münster are soon organized,

and her enemies are thoroughly defeated in the ensuing battle.

At the next appearance of Bockelson he is seen on the throne, jubilating over the gigantic meal he has just devoured, and waiting for his fifteen wives to appear. With an impressive tableau he displays his imperial pretensions as he proceeds to divide up the world among his faithful followers. His sensuous nature and his dreams of royal power have triumphed and he is no longer acting, but captured by his own deceits he has sold himself to the temptations of life. As long as he was acting he was successful, but now his meteoric rise soon reverses.

Lest the audience should feel any sympathy with Bockelson, Dürrenmatt introduces a few sordid details. First Bockelson murders Mollenhöck, who has been caught conniving with the enemy. Then, in disguise, at the gate, he catches Katherina, Knipperdollinck's former wife and now one of his own, trying to escape, and he cold-bloodedly murders her (it is enough to bring cold shivers of disgust upon the audience).

The city is beleaguered, and famine decimates it, but Bockelson is found sitting on the steps to his throne, much the worse for drink, at the end of a three-day feast of women, wine, and gluttony. In contrast with the stark picture of the tragedy of dying Münster, which has preceded this scene, this is almost too much for the audience. But the aversion of the hearer is soon turned to amusement as the cook comes crawling in on hands and knees, and then to bewilderment as Knipperdollinck enters through the window, like a ghost, and their crazy moon-dance begins.

In the end, when his body on the wheel is exposed to public view and the guards come along to check, they find that he is already dead. His body is taken down and put into a wheelbarrow to be taken away, by the same two street cleaners that found him in a wheelbarrow in the opening scene. It has happened just as Bockelson predicted at that time. His life has been just like a wheel; it has made one turn and it is right back where it started. He has gone "the way of all flesh" and no comments on his death are needed.

The purpose of Bockelson's role is quite different from those of Matthisson and Knipperdollinck. With them it was a test of their faith, a matter of fulfilling all the requirements of their convictions to the last letter. Bockelson professes to be a faithful follower in the Anabaptist circles, but privately he makes no such pretensions at all. In his dialogue with Mollenhöck he makes a frank confession of his beliefs:

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Sieh in den Himmel!

MOLLENHÖCK: Er ist leer.

JOHANN BOCKELSON: Daran glaube ich.

MOLLENHÖCK: Woran, König Bockelson?

JOHANN BOCKELSON: An den leeren Himmel, an diesen Wall, an Beine und Arme, Gesicht und Hände und an die Erde, unter alles hingelagert wie ein Frauenleib! Es gibt nichts anderes!

E.S.G., p. 66

He only believes in the things that he can see, and heaven to him is empty--there is no God. He has lived and died under the old adage, "Drink, eat and be merry, for tomorrow we die," and religion has helped him to do this, but has meant nothing more to him.

The hearer has been confronted with three different roles: the hero, the ascetic, and the sensualist. They have been shown in the

full development of their conditions, to reveal what is latent and possible within them. The hearer may choose for a moderate form of any one of them but must then realize the possibilities that choice can lead to. The author has left the choice wide open. Each role has been glorified in its own way, but each has also been maligned and made ridiculous. The search for an answer to life's questions is on, and the author is in it together with his hearers, following one direction after another.

In contrast to these roles stands the Bishop, one who, while fanatics come and go, acts as a permanent custodian for Münster, the pawn which the fanatics sacrifice in their game of Fates. The Bishop is left to carry the burden and responsibility demanded from his continuing position. Münster is decimated and torn to pieces. Who cares for the people? Or are they at fault because they have condoned or accepted, and thus aided the perpetrators of ruin? Later, in other plays, Dürrenmatt takes up the question of universal guilt, but in this play it is only a hypothetical suggestion.

As the Bishop is also involved in the main action, it is necessary to consider to what extent he plays a role, compared to the others. He is not a fanatic in his religious views, nor is he a moderate believing in half-hearted convictions. Instead he represents the Catholic Church, in an idealistic conception. It is the Mother Church that he represents, the Church that is large enough to care for all its children, no matter by what means they come to God, as long as they come; but also too large to be able to hold a standard of purity such as a Matthisson requires. Above all, it is large enough that

it does not need to fear criticism or the attacks of fanaticism, because it is humble enough to realize that only God is perfect.

A number of the Bishop's speeches in his dialogue with Knipperdöllinck bring this out clearly:

KNIPPERDÖLLINCK: Gott wird uns helfen.

DER BISCHOF (traurig): Vielleicht wird Gott keinem von uns helfen in diesem Kampfe.

.....
KNIPPERDÖLLINCK: Ihr wißt, daß die Täufer nichts anders wollen, als was Christus befahl.

DER BISCHOF: Wir haben nie gezweifelt, daß die Edleren eurer Sekte solches wollen.

KNIPPERDÖLLINCK: Wer wider uns ist, ist wider Christus.

DER BISCHOF: Wir pflegen auf solche Worte nicht einzugehen.

(Nach einer Pause:) Wir möchten sagen, was wir denken, denn wir sind euch, als euer Hirte, solches schuldig, aber sind wir weiter als ihr, und hat Gott die Zweifel in unserer Brust erstickt?

E.S.G., p. 35

KNIPPERDÖLLINCK: Ihr seid schlechte Gärtner gewesen.

DER BISCHOF: Wir wissen dies und es mag geschehen, daß wir nun verworfen werden. Aber noch seid ihr uns anvertraut. Daß ihr nicht an die Heiligen glaubt, was tut das? Wir glauben vielleicht auch nicht daran. Aber daß ihr an euch selbst glaubt, Knipperdöllinck, wird euer Untergang sein.

E.S.G., pp. 35-36

KNIPPERDÖLLINCK: Und doch habt ihr kein Recht, uns zu richten.

DER BISCHOF: Es geht nicht um die Gerechtigkeit, Knipperdöllinck. Vor Gott sind wir beide im Unrecht, Täufer und Bischof.

.....
KNIPPERDÖLLINCK: Wir wollen das Große, ihr trachtet nach dem Geringen!

DER BISCHOF: Der Mensch vermag nicht das Große, er vermag nur das Kleine. Und das Kleine ist wichtiger als das Große. Wir können viel Gutes tun auf der Welt, wenn wir bescheiden sind.

KNIPPERDÖLLINCK: Gott wird uns helfen das Große zu vollenden.

DER BISCHOF: Vor Gott ist klein, was wir groß nennen.

E.S.G., p. 37

The bishop consistently meets Knipperdöllinck with a humble spirit, and vanquishes him at the end of the conversation. And at the end

of the play he gives Knipperdollinck the benediction, that on the wheel he has again found God. Although Knipperdollinck has wandered from the Catholic Church to become Lutheran, and then has turned to the Wiedertäufer faith, the Bishop still feels responsible for him and is humble enough to respect the spiritual victory that, in his death, Knipperdollinck has won.

The Bishop takes the same attitude to Matthisson, when the latter's head is presented to him, after he has been killed:

DER BISCHOF
 Ich habe von deinem Tode erfahren, und ich weiß, daß
 der Herr dich gesegnet hat, denn du fandest ihn in der
 Stunde deines Todes.
 Du hattest dich ganz seiner Macht übergeben und er hat dich
 zu deinem Tode geführt.
 Siehe, so wurden deine Augen geöffnet.
 Was ist unser Leben, Jan Matthisson? Irrtum auf Irrtum
 und ein Fehler nach dem andern,
 aber laß uns darüber nicht traurig sein.
 Auf irgend eine Weise lernt jeder das Seine und gelangt
 zu seinem Ziel, auch wenn er es nicht erkennt in seiner
 Verworrenheit.
 Denn Gott ist gerecht und gibt jedem, was ihm zukommt,
 und nicht mehr und nicht weniger.
 Auch du hast dein Ziel gefunden, Jan Matthisson, und
 deinen Sinn.

E.S.G., p. 64

Somehow Matthisson has reached his goal, to find God, and that is the thing that matters. The hatreds that have stood between the two in the past can be forgotten: Matthisson has paid his debt and the Bishop acknowledges his own sin.

For Bockelson the Bishop has not a word. Bockelson is a worldly man and has never sought after God. The Bishop has never paid any attention to Bockelson's religious pretensions, being able, in honest spirit, to see through Bockelson quite easily,

just as Judith did.

The Bishop represents an idealistic position, a Church that can recognize true Christian faith, whether it be Catholic, Lutheran, or Anabaptist, and accept it with the same response that God accepts it. Dürrenmatt picks the Catholic Church to fulfill this role because it is the oldest and largest Church, and has shown ability in the past to recognize the need for this attitude. Has the Catholic Church managed to do this? No. No one has managed to fulfill his role in all points, but all three have gone on to fulfill the demands that God has made upon them, Matthisson and Knipperdollinck to their deaths, and the Bishop to continue in his wagon.

C. Plot in Die Wiedertäufer

Whereas in Es steht geschrieben there was one level of plot which contained most of the action, there are two distinct and separate lines of plot in Die Wiedertäufer, running in different directions. The action of Es steht geschrieben is still there: the Anabaptist rebellion at Münster with Matthison, Knipperdollinck, Bockelson and the Bishop, as main personalities. The new line of plot was suggested in the first play, but not developed. Bockelson was an actor and extremely successful as such off the stage, in the theatre of real life. The Bishop suggests that the stage of the play is there to relieve the miseries and cares of the people, at least for the moment. In Die Wiedertäufer these two items are developed to become the key plot line of the play, although not delineated as clearly as the older plot. The world has now become a stage on which man's dilemmas dissolve, but Dürrenmatt is hesitant in the exploitation of the idea.

Jean Genet examines an idea with similar facets in The Balcony, but with strong convictions concerning his material. However, it is not Dürrenmatt's policy to qualify his material with his convictions.

To begin with, we shall look at the obvious plot, the Anabaptist uprising in Münster. This is still the main action of the play and provides the setting for both plots. On the stage it provides the main part of the action and presents an exciting spectacle. Most of the complicated stage directions of Es steht geschrieben have been cut out and the action proceeds with greater force and directness. The intrigues of the Anabaptists, the ouster of the Bishop, the baroque scene with the Monk and the Gemüsefrau, and the grotesque, sarcastic scenes in the enemy camp provide colorful action. The entrance of Bockelson as king, into the Bishop's theatre, with his harem; the pompous Kaiser Karl with his mixed Reichstag; Matthison's heroic parody of Samson's attack on the Philistines; and Judith's futile attempt to kill the Bishop, keep the play sparkling with excitement. But the hearer hardly realizes the full implications of the play until the end when Bockelson walks out of the city and is greeted with competition by the princes to see who can hire him as chief actor. Then he is forced to rethink the whole play, and realizes that the affair of Münster is only the background for the real plot, which can easily escape his serious attention while he is involved in the swift-moving, ever-changing visible action of the play. The primary purpose of Brecht's plays is to exercise control over his audience by means of his dramatic techniques, but Dürrenmatt has far surpassed him in

doing this. The audience soon realizes that Brecht is manipulating it, and can easily rebel against his direction, which is often too obvious. In Dürrenmatt's play the audience barely realizes what he is doing to it; the questions with which he is facing the hearer suddenly loom up when the play is over, and he has no guide as to what direction Dürrenmatt wants him to take. The hearer is forced to think, and also forced to make his own decisions.

Matthison is clearly the Anabaptist leader in this play. He is the first one to speak in the play, and in the three appearances he makes he always speaks first. Knipperdollinck does not enter into the Anabaptist councils, except that he represents them in his meeting with the Bishop, and in the thirteenth scene he is pictured as being the judge in their system, the "Vierfürst von Galiläa", although he hardly knows what he is doing, in a dubious scene. Bockelson makes little pretence to being an Anabaptist although he becomes their king. This leaves Matthison as the chief protagonist of the Anabaptists, which agrees perfectly with his role as an arrogant bigot, a role that he played well in the first play. After his death, his head is again taken to the Bishop, but the latter's benediction has changed a little. It is evident that Dürrenmatt is thinking more carefully and purposefully than he did in the first play.

BISCHOF:
 Das bist du also, Jan Matthison
 Das sind deine Augen, und das ist dein grauer Bart
 Länger als der meine, nur nicht mit der gleichen Sorgfalt
 gepflegt
 Deine Niederlage ist besser als meine
 Du zogst mir entgegen
 Allein, grandios in deinem Glauben
 Ein Grobian, vielleicht, voll finstrer Irrlehren, möglich

Voll Plänen nach Umsturz der Dinge, sicher
 Doch besessen von Gerechtigkeit, getrieben von Hoffnung
 Ich dagegen wollte die Welt nicht ändern wie du
 Ich wollte im Unvernünftigen vernünftig bleiben
 Nun muß ich weiterhin an einer faulen Ordnung herumflicken
 Ein Narr, ein hoffnungsloser Diplomat
 Ein Greis, dem nichts mehr bleibt als greisenhafte Zähigkeit
 D.W., p. 52

Erring and boorish though Matthison has been, he has been possessed with justice, and driven by the hope of changing the world into a better place. It denotes a change in his role from the first play. There his role was quite selfish, to test out his own faith to the final results; here the Bishop sees him from more of a humanitarian viewpoint, having given his life to try and better this world. It makes him resemble Graf Übelohe, in Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi, a Quixotic character, Dürrenmatt's favorite type. In the end of the play the Bishop is left alone, stamping his feet on the ground, and demanding that the world must be changed. It sounds like a vindication of Matthison's role.

The role of Knipperdollinck is defined more clearly in this play than in the first, and he is separated from the others to a greater extent so as to leave a more distinct impression. References to him indicate that he holds a high position with the Anabaptists, first under Matthison and then under Bockelson, but his appearances on the stage do not show this. He breaks briefly into several scenes, but the scenes where he takes prominence are the ones with the Bishop, with Judith, the butcher, and in the lunatic dance with Bockelson. It is in the scene on the market place where he throws away his money, that he enunciates himself clearly:

KNIPPERDOLLINCK:
 Ich war dein Bürgermeister, Volk von Münster. Meine Schiffe
 fuhren über die Meere, Könige und Herzöge waren meine
 Schuldner, ja selbst der Kaiser, der stolze Karl, ver-
 schmähte es nicht, an meinem Tische zu speisen. Ich war
 fromm. Ich ging in die Kirche und gab Almosen. Ich war
 ein guter Sohn der Kirche, doch mein Gewissen peinigte
 mich wie Feuer. Ich wurde Lutheraner, mein Gewissen peinigte
 mich weiter, ich wurde ein Täufer, und immer noch peinigte
 mich mein Gewissen. Aber jetzt, wie ich die Schätze von
 mir geworfen habe, welche die Motten und der Rost fressen
 und denen die Diebe nachgraben, sie zu stehlen, erst jetzt
 erzittere ich nicht mehr vor Gottes gräßlichem Zorn!

D.W., pp. 28-29

None of the religions, Catholic, Lutheran, or Anabaptist, eased
 his conscience, but now that he has given away his possessions, he
 has found peace with God. This clears up the mixed situation of
 the first play where it was the false prophet Bockelson who brought
 light into his soul, and thus confused the picture. Here it is def-
 initely his obedience to the call of God, "it is written", that brings
 about a turning point in his life and initiates his role. He not
 only gives away his wealth but also enters into a life of degradation
 and humiliation before God and the world. However, in the end, in
 his moon-crazy dance with Bockelson, he has doubts whether he has
 done the right thing.

KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Ich floh vor der Sünde und verstrickte
 mich in Schuld, ich suchte Gott in der Armut und bin
 verzweifelt.

.
 KNIPPERDOLLINCK: Meinen Reichtum warf ich weg
 Ich suchte den lieben Gott im Dreck

D.W., pp. 88, 90

Seeking God in poverty and degradation has not made much sense, nor
 has it brought any real clarity into his soul. In fleeing from sin
 himself, he has opened the door to Bockelson and allowed a greater

wave of sin to roll over the city. The whole course has brought him down to despair. But in his eulogy at the end, the Bishop commends Knipperdollinck for finding grace, "der Begnadete gerädert," (D.W., p. 99). Knipperdollinck has played his role and found God, but on what condition is not immediately apparent. Has he chosen the right role, or is it his death through which he has received grace? The suggestion comes through that the role does not actually matter itself. Hans Mayer, in an article on Dürrenmatt dealing with this play, refers to an interesting statement that Dürrenmatt makes in his short story, Pilatus:

...Gott also hat uns fallen lassen. Aber Gott ist einmal dagewesen. Das erkennt der Landpfleger Pilatus in der nach ihm benannten Erzählung vom Jahre 1946. Beim Eintritt des Menschensohnes in der Gerichtshalle hatte ihn der römische Landpfleger noch als "einen Gott" erkannt. Nach der Geisselung verstand er ihn als Gott schlechthin: "Denn alle Dinge, die Legionäre und das Brennen der Fackeln, der Pfahl, der in den Himmel gereckt war, die strengen Quadern der Mauern, die harte Fläche des Bodens, das leise Atmen des Sklaven und die Feuermassen der Gestirne, waren nur da, weil Gott da war und er und nichts anderes, and waren da, weil es zwischen Gott und Menschen keine Verständigung gibt als der Tod, und keine Gnade als der Fluch, und keine andere Liebe als der Haß."⁶

Only death can bring agreement between God and man, a haunting statement, of the type that Dürrenmatt enjoys to leave around to bring shivers of dread to his hearers.

Bockelson's role leads into a new interpretation in this play. His old role is still valid: he is the sensualist who needs to satisfy his appetites, he has the histrionic abilities to infiltrate the Anabaptist

⁶Hans Mayer, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt," Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, Band 87, IV, Dec. 1968, p. 484.

movement and become its leader so that he can satisfy these lusts. But his fellow Anabaptists are repeatedly confused by his histrionic acrobatics, and in consternation, because they do not realize that he is playing a dual role. They understand only the role in which they are involved, and slowly drop out as the situation in Münster deteriorates, until Bockelson finally emerges in his new role.

In the first scene, when Bockelson enters Münster with the other Anabaptists, he reveals his intentions to the audience as soon as he is alone:

BOCKELSON: Es gilt. Erzittere, Münster in Westfalen!
(Klettert in einen Mistkarren.)

BOCKELSON: Komme Volk! Du sollst von meiner Rednergabe
verschlungen werden wie von einem brüllenden Löwen.

D.W., p. 13

The first line, coming as it does after the opening display of Anabaptist oratory, cues off the audience that he is not one of them, he is too sensible for that, he also warns of the fate that the new sect is bringing upon the city. The second line reveals his own ambitions. The Anabaptists will provide him the opportunity and he will take advantage of it to master the situation through their gullibility. To the guard and the two street-cleaners he explains how God spoke to him while he was trying out for the part of King Oedipus in the audience of the Bishop, and he became converted to the Anabaptist faith. The Bishop later explains that he rejected him because he was a dilettante.

It does not take long until Bockelson has moved into the Bishop's palace, which also has the best stage, and is surrounding himself with women. Here he is discovered by Krechting, reciting lines from Seneca,

and the lines sound so applicable to the present that Krechting is confused until Bockelson explains that he is reciting his old roles. When Krechting accuses him of still being an actor who has found a new role, he replies, "Die Rolle meines Lebens," (D.W., p. 41), and a little later adds, "Eine Komödie, die nur halb gewagt wird, ist schlecht, auch unsere Komödie müssen wir ganz wagen" (D.W., p. 41). Then after Matthison has gone to his heroic death, Bockelson proclaims himself chosen of God to be king, is officially accepted by the people in a public procession, and has the stage all set for his new role.

The second act of the play begins with Kaiser Karl V at a special session of the Reichstag at Worms, called to deal with the uprising at Münster. However, the rulers soon begin discussing their theatre groups, and are ready to join battle over a popular actress, Feldstiefel, when the Kaiser reminds them, "Ich dachte, es ginge um eine konfuse innerdeutsche Rivalität; es geht um die Feldstiefel." (D.W., p. 60). But the topic only changes to Bockelson, the actor that the Bishop has rejected, and accusations and rivalries again break out. When the Bishop declares that Bockelson has taken sixteen wives, the Kardinal fires back:

KARDINAL: Großartig, das finde ich großartig. Dieser Bursche ist ein echter Schauspieler, komödiantisch bis zum Exzess. Der schmeißt uns eine Rolle hin, daß wir nur so staunen. Die sechzehn Weiber sollen wir tragisch nehmen?

D.W., p. 61

All this sounds very strange coming from the Reichstag. The main concern of the rulers is their theatre groups and actors. In the words of the Kardinal, Bockelson has flung them a role that astounds them. It sounds almost like a page from Gulliver's Travels. It is evident

that a different world is operating here. Or is it? Have not the ruling hierarchies of Europe been playing politics with the continent just as if Europe were a stage and they were all actors? Dürrenmatt is posing this question to the audience.

At the next appearance Bockelson is on the Bishop's throne, feasting to the progress of his theatrical performance, and amazed at its success.

BOCKELSON:
 Die Hungerjahre, dahingelebt auf kleinen Bühnen
 Erfolglos, ausgepiffen, mit magerer Gage, sind vorüber
 Nie nährte mich die Kunst, bescheiden bloß Zuhälterei
 Nun mästet mich Religion und Politik: Doch sitz ich in
 der Falle
 Ich wurde Täufer aus beruflicher Misere
 Ich brachte, arbeitslos, verworrenen Bäckern, Schustern,
 Schneidermeistern
 Rhetorik bei, sah zu, wie sie die Welt aufwühlten
 Mit gläubigen Ideen, als wär sie Schlamm
 Ließ endlich sie den Krieg entfesseln
 Ja wurde aus einem losen Einfall gar ihr König
 Jetzt, hol's der Teufel, glauben sie an mich
 Mit Titeln überhäuft, grotesken Würden, Ämtern, Idealen
 Und die erzürnten Fürsten, aufgeschreckt
 Weil ihre installierte Ordnung wankt
 Verwechseln mich mit meinen Rollen
 Halten mich für einen rasenden Herakles, für einen blut-
 igen Nero, finsternen Tamerlan
 Noch seh ich keinen Ausweg, laß mich treiben
 Wohin mein Spiel mich treibt
 Umstellt von Frömmigkeit und grausem Plunder
 Es machen alle mit. Das ist das Wunder.

D.W., p. 70

He explains what he has done, in desperation, because he could not get a position as an actor. He has become an Anabaptist out of necessity, then using his histrionic talents he has manipulated the situation and everyone is dancing with him like a puppet show. The rulers have confused him with his roles, and now the roles are the real thing. They see him as a tyrant while in reality he is

only an actor.

The rest of the scene illustrates how he has turned his whole world, as king of Münster, into a stage. His harem of wives appears and he becomes a stage-director, training them as a theatre group. The Anabaptist council enters and he handles them with frank theatricality, very effectively, as many a politician or priest does in his situation. Judith appears to beg for the life of her father and she is gracefully engulfed with lines from Sophocles. Then the assembly moves to the Bishop's theatre where Bockelson will recite a new play he has written, Judith and Holofernes. Here Judith is inspired with her plot to kill the Bishop, and the effects of Bockelson's stage in Münster spread way out beyond its confines.

The next appearance of Bockelson is in the lunatic dance with Knipperdollinck. While Knipperdollinck is overcome with humility and despair, Bockelson is glorying in his histrionic success, being also, at the same time, impressed with Knipperdollinck's performance as an actor, although the latter is not at all acting. The relation between the stage and reality again becomes confused. In mock action, Bockelson leads Knipperdollinck to stage the Passion of Christ in Gethsemane, and a play of the Great Judgment. Bockelson is pleased with the performance:

BOCKELSON: Gepriesen sei deine Verzweiflung, Ärmster meiner Untertanen, sie hält sich ans Religiöse und bordet nicht in politische Forderungen über. Du bist würdig, meine Schleppe zu tragen und mit mir über die Bühne des bischöflichen Theaters zu tanzen.

D.W., p.89

To Bockelson it is great acting, but Knipperdollinck is not acting,

so he goes out into darkness and the wheel, while Bockelson goes out to receive the applause he has earned.

Bockelson goes out through the city gate to meet the rulers and he makes clear to them that he has not usurped them, that he has only played a role, but that role has proved that he deserves the top laurels as an actor. There is an immediate rush to engage him and the Kardinal is successful.

The audience has a right to be astonished at the quick turn of events, and the Bishop expresses the surprise very tersely, "der Verführer begnadigt" (D.W., p. 94), but the basis for this denouement was clearly laid in the quarrel of the rulers at the Reichstag, earlier in the play. How can this outcome be understood? It could be construed as a piece of sarcasm directed at the rulers, but as such it would have only a limited meaning. It is necessary to go back to the Bishop again, to see what light he throws on the matter. In his first speech he intimates frankly what the theme of the play will be:

Ich spreche fließend Latein und Griechisch und liebe
 Homer und Lukian
 Doch am liebsten sind mir die nichtsnutzigen Komödien
 Meine Theatertruppe ist die beste und teuerste im Heiligen
 Römischen Reiche Deutscher Nation
 Das Possenspiel unseres Lebens
 Das mühsame Herumstolpern auf der Flucht vor der Wahrheit
 und auf der Suche nach ihr
 Wird auf den Brettern leicht, ein Tanz, ein Gelächter, ein wohli-
 ger Schauer
 Mitspieler in Wirklichkeit, verstrickt in Schuld, Mitwisser von
 Verbrechen
 Brauchen wir die Täuschung loser Stunden Zuschauer nur zu
 sein.

D.W., p. 19

The effect of these lines is to remove the hearer from the actual action in which Bockelson is involved, to look at the philosophic

meaning of the whole. Also, there are more involved than just Bockelson; all of the rulers have their theatres and appear to be obsessed with them. As the Bishop says, it is on the stage that the farce and aimless wandering of life become light, a dance, a laugh, or in other words, it is here that we can face life and smile again. Bockelson has demonstrated it by turning life into a stage: he has faced the direct threats of life and come out victorious. It becomes clear that the whole play has been re-arranged to make possible this new experiment. It is more than the role of Bockelson, because many of the characters have participated in the competition to form the best theatre group, and thus it becomes the second plot of the play, with Bockelson as the chief protagonist.

Still, there are pangs of conscience telling the hearer that this is all wrong. Münster has been devastated so that the deceiver, Bockelson, could come out of the fracas in triumph. The Bishop calls him a deceiver and gets out of his wheel chair on his crippled legs to demand that this world must become more humane. However, Dürrenmatt always does this, no solutions are ever perfect with him, and the ending of the play is a clear warning to this effect. As soon as people believe that they have the perfect answer, they become fanatics and then the solution becomes worse than the problem it is supposed to cure.

As the role of Bockelson has taken on new importance and given the play a new direction, the position of the Bishop in the play has diminished and become more difficult to explicate. The Bishop is swamped by the tidal wave that Bockelson creates, which sweeps him

on to glory. Are rationality and temperance losing out more and more to be replaced by a new attitude to life, the stage, with which man can face the dire irrationality of existence? However, the last quotation showed that the Bishop himself is involved in this new idea of life as a stage, and he has his own theatre group, reputedly one of the best. What shocks him is that the dissolute, unprincipled Bockelson should get top honours on the stage, and by using his (the Bishop's) stage to advance himself, at that.

The Bishop expresses his role honestly, if in drab terms, when faced with the head of Matthison. After paying tribute to Matthison and the greatness of his goals, his own role seems very ordinary:

Ich dagegen wollte die Welt nicht ändern wie du
 Ich wollte im Unvernünftigen vernünftig bleiben
 Nun muß ich weiterhin an einer faulen Ordnung herum-
 flicken
 Ein Narr, ein hoffnungsloser Diplomat
 Ein Greis, dem nichts mehr bleibt als greisenhafte Zähigkeit
 Behaftet mit einem neuen Gegner

D.W., p. 52

He has tried to use reason in everyday affairs, and he still has to continue with the same work which involves, not greatness on his part, but ever greater humility and self-abnegation. It is as a moderate that he faces Knipperdollinck when he admits: "Daß ihr nicht mehr an die Heiligen glaubt, ist gleichgültig. Wir glauben vielleicht auch nicht mehr daran." (D.W., pp. 21-22). He will not argue for the sake of dogma; it is people that he is concerned with. And here too, he is mocked and condemned. At the Reichstag when the rulers are discussing the war with Münster, he puts in a futile plea for the people:

BISCHOF: Ich muß den Krieg so schnell als möglich beenden.
 Denkt an die Unschuldigen! Denkt an Frauen und Kinder!
 KARDINAL: Es ist nicht unser Krieg.
 BISCHOF: Denkt an das Volk.

LANDGRAF: Waldeck, jetzt wird's peinlich.
KURFÜRST: Ordinär.

D.W., p. 62

He is roundly mocked for becoming sentimental and for being concerned with the fate of innocent people. All his values are being despised and ignored. When Gresbeck returns and seeks forgiveness, he counters him with, "Wir streiken." (D.W., p. 74), and when Judith begs for his prayers, he replies, "Jetzt bin ich verstummt." (D.W., p. 77). He is at the end of his wits, and of his strength to continue. When he sees Knipperdollinck on the wheel, he breaks out with exasperation, but with new purpose:

Steh, Uralter, auf eigenen Beinen!
In Fetzen das Bischofskleid, das Kreuz verspottet durch
deine Ohnmacht
Stampfe in die Erde
Diese unmenschliche Welt muß menschlicher werden
Aber wie? Aber wie?

D.W., p. 95

Where the Monk was mocked off the stage, and to the gallows, for his philosophical approach to reason and humanism, the Bishop, with his attitude of moderation, his spiritual values, and his respect for reason and humanism, wins the final word in the play. It is a definite return to the values and teachings of Christ: the giving of one's self, the recognition of others, the choice of servant instead of ruler. In a way, the Bishop's role stands as an alternative to that of Bockelson. It is also a way of facing life, but it does not have the romantic glamour of the other; instead, it consists of the humdrum life of service, and moderation towards others. It is no wonder that the Bishop stands alone at the end.

Peter Johnson says,

In spite of offering "einen schönen Raritäten-Kasten" Dürrenmatt, like Shaw, achieves dramatic interest and tension largely by means of a conflict of ideas, and he shares with Shaw the rare talent of giving each side powerful arguments which counterbalance each other, thus masking his own viewpoint.⁷

This is a valid appraisal of Dürrenmatt's method of writing drama. He leaves the answers hidden in conflict, and often in doubt; his own viewpoint remains obscured in the pros and cons of many solutions, partly because there is no one perfect solution, and if there were, it would cease to be that as soon as it were proclaimed as such. Man must choose, and accept the demands that go with his choice, and the main criterion is that he is responsible for that choice.

The above statement by Johnson is valid for both plays, as it is a very general analysis of Dürrenmatt's methods. The direction of the arguments of the plays changes decidedly, though. In Es steht geschrieben the direction is man's relationship with God--how does man find and reconcile himself with God. The answers were only found in death. It is the same direction that the church has taken over many centuries, but it left many questions unanswered. Man has a life to live on this earth, and his problem is how to cope with it. As Dürrenmatt grows older this problem confronts him more forcefully, and in Die Wiedertäufer he turns to it with serious vigor. After all, what if there is no God? It would mean that all of man's efforts were wasted, if he spent his whole life trying to find God. Dürrenmatt does not exclude God, but the possibility of the argument is strong enough for Dürrenmatt to direct more attention to the life in

⁷Peter Johnson, "Grotesqueness and Injustice in Dürrenmatt," German Life and Letters, A Quarterly Review, XV, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), p. 264.

this world.

In Die Wiedertäufer Dürrenmatt develops a balance between the two directions: man's life on earth, and his relation with God. The roles are more clearly delineated in this play, and the author is less audible, personally. This weakens the Bishop's role, the Bishop having been an important mouthpiece for Dürrenmatt in the first play. However, the Bishop has the least glamorous role in the play, so it doesn't matter. Matthison and Knipperdollinck are both called by God and fulfill their courses in obedience to that call, finding God in their deaths. Bockelson and the Bishop find that they are tied up with life on the earth. Here there is another counterbalance. For Bockelson there is no God and he is free to surrender himself to his passions and ambitions; the Bishop is God's servant on earth, not sinful by any means, but seeking the middle road of service and dedication.

The Bishop proposes that life on the stage eases life's burdens and helps man to face life; Bockelson goes on to prove that it is a workable premise as he successfully applies it in his life. He turns Münster into a stage and enacts world drama, but it is very similar to what the rulers are doing in reality. The picture becomes confused. As the rulers are engaged in political rivalry among themselves and contend for the best theatre group, it seems that all the world has become a stage. But Dürrenmatt does not let his character overplay his role, and Bockelson explains to the rulers in the end that he has only been playing a role and wants to leave the stage of Münster for the stage of a theatre group. His demonstration has been successful, and with the endorsement given to it by the Bishop, it becomes evident that it is

the major theme of the play. God is not excluded, but to face the dilemmas of life, let life become a stage, and lose yourself in the uninhibited, fantastic whirl of action, the dance of life.

Appendix A.

ES STEHT GESCHRIEBEN

Scene Divisions--Made arbitrarily, for this study.

- Scene 1, p. 13. Die drei Wiedertäufer.
- " 2, p. 16. Der Mönch: Einleitung.
- " 3, p. 18. Bockelson entdeckt, auf den Straßen Münsters.
- " 4, p. 25. Bockelson tritt ein im Hause Knipperdollinck.
- " 5, p. 30. Ein Unbekannter verläßt Münster.
- " 6, p. 31. Der Bischof; Knipperdollinck tritt ein.
- " 7, p. 38. Die Gemüsefrau, der Mönch auf dem Blutgerüst.
- " 8, p. 44. Bockelson, Katherina, und Judith.
- " 9, p. 48. Matthisson, und der Rat der Wiedertäufer.
- " 10, p. 53. Das Kriegslager: von Büren und von Mengerssen.
- " 11, p. 55. Das Ägidiitor--Matthisson's Tod.
- " 12, p. 60. Von Büren: außerhalb des Tors.
- " 13, p. 61. Bockelson: auf der Innenseite des Tors.
- " 14, p. 63. Katastrophe im Lager des Feindes.
- " 15, p. 63. Der Bischof erhält den Kopf Matthissons.
- " 16, p. 65. Bockelson erschlägt Mollenhöck.
- " 17, p. 67. Kaiser Karl V; Besprechung mit dem Bischof.
- " 18, p. 75. Der Nachtwächter, Knipperdollinck und Judith.
- " 19, p. 79. Bockelson auf dem Thron, verurteilt Knipperdollinck.
- " 20, p. 86. Das Lager des Feindes: der Mönch gewinnt das Spiel.
- " 21, p. 88. Judith bittet um das Leben ihres Vaters.
- " 22, p. 89. Der Landgraf von Hessen und der Bischof.
- " 23, p. 93. Judith und ihr Vater.

- Scene 24, p. 94. Krechting wird getötet.
- " 25, p. 95. Unheil vor dem Tor; Bockelson tötet Katherina.
- " 26, p. 98. Judith.
- " 27, p. 99. Judith versucht den Bischof zu töten.
- " 28, p. 102. Der Tanz über die Dächer.
- " 29, p. 111. Von Büren schlägt die Stadt.
- " 30, p. 112. Das Ende: auf dem Rade.

DIE WIEDERTÄUFER

Act I

- Scene 1, p. 11. Münster in Westfalen wird bekehrt.
" 2, p. 19. Der Bischof muß die Stadt verlassen.
" 3, p. 24. Der Mönch kann sich retten.
" 4, p. 31. Das neue Jerusalem.
" 5, p. 35. Die Landsknechte.
" 6, p. 40. Der Schauspieler hat sich installiert.
" 7, p. 44. Knipperdollinck und Judith.
" 8, p. 45. Der Tod des Propheten.
" 9, p. 49. Die Niederlage.
" 10, p. 51. Die Sieger.
" 11, p. 52. Der Bischof und der Kopf Matthisons.

Act II

- " 12, p. 57. Die Fürsten.
" 13, p. 66. Der Vierfürst dankt ab.
" 14, p. 70. König Bockelson.
" 15, p. 74. Judith.
" 16, p. 78. Der blinde Feldherr.
" 17, p. 82. Der Krieg wird gerettet.
" 18, p. 88. Der Tanz.
" 19, p. 92. Die Übergabe.
" 20, p. 94. Der Bischof rebelliert.

Appendix B.

REFERENCES TO HITLER

Maybe no Second War if a Vienna art academy had accepted
young Hitler

By Robert H. Rigg

Special to the Washington Post

WASHINGTON -- "Had just one of the two art academies in Vienna accepted young Adolf Hitler as a student, we might not have had a Second World War. Both academies rejected him, one because he was a high school drop-out." So says Marian McNaughton, an authority on Hitler the artist and curator of \$5 million worth of art -- including Hitler's.

Hidden away in a small, top secret-type safe in a dingy, old government building in Washington are four original, precisely done, water colors by Adolf Hitler, which are valued conservatively at \$20,000 each.¹

The article beginning with these lines appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press on Saturday, June 13, 1970. It has a remarkable resemblance to an incident in Die Wiedertäufer, where the chancellor meets Kaiser Karl V, just before the meeting of the Reichstag.

KANZLER: Majestät haben die Mitglieder der Kaiserlichen Akademie für Malerei in Wien zu bestimmen. Die Liste, Majestät.

KAISER: Tizian, gut, Tintoretto, möglich, Maarten van Hemskerck, tüchtig, Marinus von Roymerswaele, brav, Jan van Amstel, wacker, Altdorfer, na ja, Holbein, geht auch noch, Hagelmeier aus Wien -- Kanzler, unmöglich. Wir sind zwar Habsburger, doch diese wienerische Phantasielosigkeit ist nicht akzeptabel. Müssen wir schon Bäume abgebildet sehen statt Menschen, wie uns der Kerl zumutet, sollten wir eine Ahnung der Kraft verspüren, mit der die Natur diese grossen Pflanzen aus ihrem Schosse treibt, statt dessen erblicken wir nichts als tote Haufen pedantisch gemalten Laubes. Sonst noch was?

D.W., pp. 58-59.

¹

Winnipeg Free Press, June 13, 1970, New Leisure, pp. 12-13.

The similarity between the two anecdotes is striking. Hitler was born at Braunau, in Austria. At the age of nineteen he moved to Vienna and had a difficult time trying to make his way in life. It was during these years that he formed his basic ideas. He wanted to be an artist, but was refused admittance by both art academies in Vienna. His pictures were mostly of buildings, with very few people, and he was referred to a school of architecture. In the play, the artist is accused of "Phantasielosigkeit", basically the same reason for which Hitler was rejected. Hagelmeier paints trees instead of people, while Hitler paints buildings. The coincidences between the two accounts are enough to establish that Dürrenmatt is pointing at Hitler in the play. During the Reichstag, the Bishop's rejection of Bockelson and the trouble it has caused, makes the Kaiser reflect, and after the meeting he calls the chancellor back.

KAISER: Was jedoch den unbegabten Dilettanten aus Wien betrifft --

KANZLER: Der Maler Hagelmeier ist aus der Liste der Akademiemitglieder gestrichen, Majestät.

KAISER: Ein Fehler, Kanzler. Nehmt ihn auf in Gnaden, als Mitglied der Kaiserlichen Akademie kann er ausser der Malkunst niemandem schaden.

D.W., p. 65.

The Kaiser hurries to accept Hagelmeier. The bare thought of the parallel example of Bockelson makes him hastily reconsider his action. During the discussion of the Reichstag this parallel example of Bockelson is brought into clear focus:

KARDINAL: Waldeck, die Landsknechte habt Ihr nun, doch was Bockelson angeht, Ihr hättet ihn engagieren sollen.

BISCHOF: Ich bereue es, Eminenz, das Unheil, das er jetzt anstellt, übertrifft bei weitem das Unheil, das er auf der Bühne hätte anrichten können.

D.W., p. 63.

The Bishop says the same thing of Bockelson -- it would have been better to keep him on the stage, just as the Kaiser decides to accept Hagelmeier into the art academy. Similarly, Hitler should have been accepted into the art academy at Vienna, and the world might have been spared the horrors of the Second World War. The importance this incident has is pointed up by the fact that the Kaiser himself examines the list of nominees for the art academy.

Christian Jauslin has made this remark about Es steht geschrieben:

. . . Das eigentliche Anliegen des Stückes ist jedoch nicht so sehr diese Zeitkritik, als vielmehr das Phänomen als solches. Das Phänomen nämlich, dass es in der Geschichte der Menschheit immer wieder möglich ist, dass ein einzelner Fanatiker ein ganzes Volk zu begeistern vermag und schliesslich ins Verderben stürzt.²

Jauslin clearly infers that Bockelson is a type of Hitler, and his remark is partly true. Bockelson was unscrupulous and able to sway the people, as Hitler was. However, Matthison, Knipperdollinck, and the other Arabaptists were as fanatical as Bockelson was, and had already brought the city to its doom by the time he took over. During his rule Bockelson is a bizarre character, more interested in his lusts than in anything else. Matthisson would have been a better type of Hitler than Bockelson, if he had not pretended to be a sort of pacifist, leaving the fighting to God. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Dürrenmatt was thinking of Hitler when he created Bockelson's role in the play. The oblique references to Hitler in Die Wiedertäufer adequately substantiate this.

2

Christian M. Jauslin, Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Zur Struktur seiner Dramen (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1964), p. 28.

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